

The blessings of my life for which I am most grateful to God:

The accomplishments of my life for which I would like to be remembered:

The pastor will conduct a Christian funeral or memorial service which bears witness in the presence of death that Jesus Christ has conquered death and raises God's children from death to eternal life. This service makes of the occasion of death a time in which the hope of the gospel is reaffirmed by friends and relatives with solemn joy.

The funeral service for church members is an act of public worship and should be held in the church with the casket closed, all in order that the worship of those assembled may more naturally be directed to the author and finisher of our salvation.

Once you have completed this form, you should make a copy of it. Keep the copy for your files and send this form to the church office where it will be kept on file.

Memorial Arrangements



*First Presbyterian Church
Sarasota, Florida*

A POLICY FOR FUNERALS

The resurrection is a central doctrine of the Christian faith and shapes Christian attitudes and responses to the event of death. Death brings loss, sorrow, and grief to all. In the face of death, Christians affirm with tears and joy the hope of the gospel. Christians do not bear bereavement in isolation, but are sustained by the power of the Spirit and the community of faith. The church offers a ministry of love and hope to all who grieve.

The service on the occasion of death ordinarily should be held in the usual place of worship in order to join this service to the community's continuing life and witness to the resurrection. (Directory for Worship 14—4.1000)

Because of its affirmation of faith in the resurrection and commitment to providing a community of concern and support, the session urges that members of the congregation hold funerals or memorial services in the church sanctuary or chapel. Such a service is a witness to the resurrection, and ordinarily such services are held in the places set apart for the corporate worship of God. At times of death, the bereaved are not called upon to face death in isolation from other Christians. They can and should be sustained and upheld by the Christian community. The sanctuary or chapel is the environment in which the church family normally gathers for worship, and that space reminds us that God is the God of all the times of our lives.

The Service of Worship

This service may be observed before or after the committal of the body. The service may include hymns, scripture, an exposition of the Word, recollections of aspects of the life of the one who has died, and prayers of thanksgiving, intercession, and supplication. The service may include other actions common to the community of faith and its cultures when these actions do not detract from or diminish the Christian understanding of death and resurrection.

When the casket is present, it is closed in order that attention in the service be directed to God. Any fraternal, civic, or military rites should be conducted separately.

Fees for church members

Because the pastors are ordained to minister to people in their times of need and because a funeral or memorial service is one of those times, leadership in this service of worship is part of our pastor's ministry and no fee is required. There is no fee for the use of the sanctuary or chapel. If music is desired, the church organist will play, the fee is \$150. If a soloist is requested through a pastor to sing, a fee of \$50 is required. If a family friend is invited to sing, they may negotiate an honorarium with the soloist.

Fees for nonmembers

Nonmembers of the congregation are asked to provide the following fees: pastor, \$200; organist, \$150; soloist, if requested, add \$50; use of the sanctuary \$300; sexton \$150 (to cover costs of janitorial and other services).

Luncheons/Receptions

At the death of a church member, the Board of Deacons, as part of its ministry to the bereaved, will, when requested, host a light lunch for the family or a reception for the worshiping community. When a lunch is requested the family is asked to provide the food. With either a luncheon or a reception, the church will provide coffee, tea, etc.

Preparation for Death

Because it is difficult under emotional stress to plan wisely, all members of the congregation are encouraged to discuss and plan in advance the arrangements that must be made at the time of death, including decisions about Christian options for burial, cremation, or donations for medical purposes. These plans should provide for arrangements that are simple, that bear witness to the resurrection hope, and in which the Christian community is central. You may want to complete the form, "Memorial Funeral Arrangements," (available at the church) containing such plans; it will be kept on file in the church office.