

Celebrating God's Presence in Life, in Death, and in Life Eternal

"In life and in death we belong to God."

This is the opening phrase in
The Presbyterian Church (USA)'s
Brief Statement of Faith

*A Guide to Funerals and Memorial Services at
Second Presbyterian Church
Carlisle, Pennsylvania*

Second Presbyterian Church and its ministers (including pastors and volunteers) want to assist you and your family in your time of grief. We hope that the information in this brochure will be helpful as you plan a funeral or memorial service.

As Christians our hope at the time of death is rooted in the unshakeable conviction that God is with us in all times and circumstances. We call Presbyterian funeral or memorial services “Services of Witness to the Resurrection,” reflecting our confidence that Jesus broke the bonds of death and that just as God the Father raised His child, Jesus, so will God raise all of His children. In each funeral or memorial service we seek to remember faithfully, give thanks to God for our loved ones, mourn our loss, and celebrate the hope we have in Jesus Christ.

At the time of death the family of the deceased will usually be invited to meet with the pastor to plan the service. We want to help you to create a service that is worshipful, faithful, personal, uplifting, and encouraging. Whether the arrangements are held at the church or at a funeral home or at a combination of the two, we will work to ensure a meaningful worship time.

A Typical Chain of Events When a Loved One Dies

- A loved one dies
- A funeral home (or cremation society) is notified and the body of your loved one is placed in safekeeping, usually at a funeral home.
- A pastor is notified by the family or the funeral home.
- The family has an initial meeting with the funeral home, usually within 24-hours of the death, to make basic tentative decisions regarding the date, time, and location of the service, etc. Once the date, time, and location have been cleared with a pastor (a quick call can usually do this), arrangements can be announced.
- Other matters, such as casket selection (if applicable), etc., might also be discussed during this initial meeting with the funeral home. Sometimes these discussions can be very hard for people who are grieving deeply. If you would like, a pastor or another representative of the church will be privileged to accompany you to help you make these decisions.
- The family meets with a pastor to plan the service and reflect on the person’s life.

Some Key Questions in Planning Arrangements

- Do you wish to use the Second Presbyterian Sanctuary or Chapel or do you wish to have the service in a room at the funeral home? If desired, all the arrangements (including pre-service visiting hours, the service itself, to the memorial repast) can be held in the church building. Ordinarily there are no fees for using the church building. You may also choose to have a portion of the arrangements take place at the church with the rest at a funeral home.
- Do you wish to have a “funeral” service (with the casket present during worship) or a “memorial” service (with no casket present)? Do you wish to have the urn present in the case of cremation?
- Do you wish to have “visiting hours” the day before (or the day of) the funeral? This can occur at the church or a funeral home.
- What music do you wish to have? This includes instrumental music at the beginning of the service, singing of hymns by the congregation, solos offered by a friend or a church soloist, and music after the end of the service. The pastor and music director can guide you and offer suggestions. As with all services of worship, the music needs to be sacred in nature. Other pieces of music can be appropriately incorporated in visiting hours or a memorial reception after the service. The singing of familiar hymns can bring great comfort to a grieving congregation.
- What scripture passages do you wish to have read? Is there someone special you wish to present a reading (or readings)? Up to four readings may be chosen. The pastor can assist you with this. Only scripture is read during the service. Other types of readings (poems, etc.) can be offered as part of the family’s remembrances or the pastor’s sermon. They can also sometimes be included in written form in the funeral bulletin.
- Do you wish to have a friend or family member share their memories of the deceased? Up to three people can be invited to share briefly (three to five minutes each or a total of up to 10 to 12 minutes). Written thoughts are best; they keep a person focused (and can be passed to someone else in the event of difficulty in speaking). Don’t feel any pressure, however, to invite people to do this. Each family has different needs and interests.
- Do you wish to create a memory collage or table for the church lobby or rotunda?

- Do you want to create a photographic slide presentation? If so, they are shared most appropriately during visitation or a post-service meal.

Further Considerations

Here are a few additional considerations that you might wish to discuss with the church and/or the funeral director.

- If the casket is present for the funeral, it is important to consider arranging for pallbearers. Pallbearers are often required to lift the casket into the hearse and from the hearse to the graveside. You can supply volunteers from your family or the church can provide volunteers (simply tell us what your needs are). The funeral home can also provide them for a fee.
- At both memorial and funeral services, the family sometimes wishes to recognize persons who have been important to the loved one. They may do this by naming these persons “honorary” pallbearers. They sit together and precede the casket out of the sanctuary. They do not need to do any physical lifting of the casket.
- If the service is at the church we will prepare a bulletin and arrange for ushers to pass them out and seat people.
- During the service the family may wish to light a memorial candle (in the case of a cremation) or place flowers on the casket, if present. This is completely optional.
- A funeral “pall” (i.e., an ornate fabric casket cover) will be placed over the casket during the service. In keeping with the Reformed tradition, the casket is closed during the service.
- In memorial services (i.e., without a physical body present) some families choose to bring the ashes (or “cremains”) into the sanctuary for the service. Other families choose to have a simple photo represent their loved one.
- If young children are present you may wish to ask the pastor to offer a time in the service that focuses specifically on their needs and their grief.
- In the case of cremation, ashes can be committed to the ground immediately before or after the service or this can be delayed until another time. The church has a beautiful and peaceful Memorial Garden on its grounds for the interment of ashes if you should so

choose. Please request a separate brochure about our Memorial Garden.

- You do not need to purchase or rent an urn. The church has one to loan out.
- If you would like a guest pastor to participate in the service, please discuss this with a Second Presbyterian pastor first and he or she will extend the appropriate invitation to that pastor.

Reception

After the service many people wish to have a reception or “repast.” This is helpful because it allows families and friends to gather and share stories and memories, and offer support to one another. Second Presbyterian has rooms available to host receptions of various sizes. Please let us know as soon as possible if you want to use the church for your reception.

How We Can Help

The Pastor (or Pastors) will offer pastoral care and meet with the family upon notification of the death of the loved one to discuss all aspects of the service and plan it together. The pastor will also work with the funeral home to ensure that the arrangements are handled faithfully and with care. The pastor will conduct the service and will usually go to the cemetery for the committal (if any). Both pastors will be available for any follow-up care which may be needed or requested.

The Music Director will provide music before, during and after services held in the church building. If there is a soloist, the music director will rehearse with and accompany the soloist. All music before, during, and after the service shall be sacred in nature, reminding people of the hope we have in Jesus Christ. Every attempt will be made to honor any requests the family may have for music. If you would like to invite a guest organist to participate, this invitation can be extended by our Music Director.

The Property Manager or Custodian will be needed for most services at the church, especially if you choose to have a reception at the church, to prepare and reset the sanctuary, set up and remove tables, etc.

Events on the Day of the Service

A typical service lasts between 30 and 60 minutes, depending upon the number of hymns and guest speakers.

Typical Schedules:

- A) Internment of ashes or committal of casket
Service at church or funeral home
Repast at the church or elsewhere -- optional

- B) Service at church or funeral home
Internment of ashes or committal of casket
Repast at the church or elsewhere -- optional

Visiting hours can occur the day before the service or immediately prior to the service.

Interment need not be on the same day as the service.

Frequently Requested Scripture Readings:

Psalm 23
Psalm 46:1-5, 10-11
Psalm 121
Psalm 139:1-12
Ecclesiastes 3:1-8
Isaiah 40:1-11, 28-31
Isaiah 40:28-31
Isaiah 43:1-3a, 18-19, 25
John 14:1-6, 25-27
Romans 8:28-35, 37-39
1 Corinthians 4:16-5:1
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
Revelation 21:1-4, 22-25, 22:3-5

Frequently Requested Hymns:

Amazing Grace	280
Be Thou My Vision	339
For All The Saints	527
Great is Thy Faithfulness	276
How Great Thou Art	467
Lift High the Cross	371
Near to the Heart of God	527
Be Not Afraid	
Be Still My Soul	
In the Garden	
It is Well, with My Soul	
On Eagle's Wings	
Rock of Ages	
The Old Rugged Cross	

Sample Order of Service (Funeral or Memorial)

- Musical Prelude (musical suggestions are welcomed)
- Scripture Sentences, Greeting, and Words of Welcome
- Hymn or Solo (optional)
- Prayer
- Scriptures (up to four; selected with input from the family)
- Words of Remembrance (from friends and family, up to 3 people,

10-12 minutes total)

- Meditation (Pastor)
- Hymn or Solo (optional)
- Prayer
- The Lord's Prayer
- Hymn or Solo (optional)
- Commendation and Blessing

Memorial Donations in Lieu of Flowers

Sometimes families wish to suggest that, in lieu of flowers, memorial contributions be made to a charity to honor their loved one. Second Presbyterian Church has a Memorial Fund which is designed especially for this purpose. In the past donations have been used to fund special musical events, ministries for children and youth, aid to people in need, and a wide variety of other ministry purposes. Checks can be made payable to "Second Presbyterian Church" with the deceased's name in the memo area. Personal notes of appreciation are sent to each donor by the congregation and a complete list of donors is issued to the family. Memorial gifts to the church are tax deductible. If the family wishes to choose another charity, this is, of course, perfectly acceptable.

Memorial Repast Information

To provide grieving families an opportunity to fellowship with friends and family, the Hospitality Committee in cooperation with the congregation, will provide either a light or full repast at the family's request.

The food is purchased from a local vendor.

The Light Repast consists of cookies, fruit platter, coffee and tea.

The cost is approximately \$2 per person.

The Full Repast has a selection of small sandwiches, vegetable, fruit and cheese platters, potato or macaroni salads (if desired), chips, pretzels, and cookies or other desserts. Coffee, tea and punch are also available. The cost is approximately \$5 per person.

The congregation, at no additional charge, provides desserts, cookies, and helps prepare and serve at the repast.

Please contact the pastors or Debra Brandberg, for more information.

Planning Notes:

second
presbyterian church

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