



Service of Witness to the Resurrection

Guidelines for a Christian Funeral

Pioneer Memorial Presbyterian Church

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In life and in death we belong to God.

from A Brief Statement of Faith

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the central doctrine and affirmation of the Christian community. It is the basis of our life, worship, and belief. Most especially, it influences how we as Christians approach death and grief and how we celebrate the promise of the resurrection of life. The funeral or memorial service is an act of worship for the gathered community. Our grief and loss will always be deeply felt but God's assurance and promise are the basis of our celebration of the service of witness.

The Directory for Worship of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) offers specific guidance concerning our distinct Presbyterian practices on the occasion of death and provides the basis for all Services of Witness to the Resurrection conducted at this church.

1. Members are encouraged to openly discuss their concerns and desires about burial, cremation, autopsies and organ donation both with their families, physician and pastors.
2. Families are urged to contact the pastor immediately upon the death of a member so that the pastor may offer the church's full ministry of comfort, guidance, care, and hope in the power of resurrection.
3. The pastor is available to assist you in making arrangements for a service. **Before making any definite arrangements with the funeral home or mortuary, the family should consult the officiating pastor to avoid scheduling conflicts.**
4. Normally, funeral/memorial services are held in the church sanctuary with a pastor of this congregation officiating. Others may participate as invited by the pastor.
5. The pastor will involve the family in the planning of a service to include appropriate Scripture passages, hymns, and other music. Members of Pioneer are encouraged to submit the *Personal Preferences for my Funeral/Memorial Service* paperwork to the church office. This planning document allows you to state your preferences for the service, leaving your family with a few less decisions to make at the time of death.
6. A casket, when present, must be closed before the service begins and shall remain closed during and after the service.
7. The use of church facilities for Visitation and for Services of Witness to the Resurrection is available at no cost for all members of Pioneer.
8. Receptions following the service are hosted by the Deacons, whose office is one of sympathy and service. Receptions are held in the fellowship hall and are provided at no cost to the members of the church. Contributions to the Board of Deacons are welcome at any time to support this ministry.
9. Many families choose to ask friends to designate memorials to the church, charities or other worthy causes. Pioneer gratefully receives these gifts and generally designates them to the General Memorial Fund.

Sample Order of Worship for a Service of Witness to the Resurrection

Prelude
Call to Worship
Hymn
Prayer
Readings from Scripture
Meditation
Reflections from Family and Friends*
Affirmation of Faith
Prayer of Thanksgiving and the Lord's Prayer
Hymn
Commendation & Blessing
Postlude

**Arrangements for family and/or friends to speak is arranged in consultation with the pastor*

Selected Readings from Old Testament Scripture

Psalms 23
Psalm 46:1-5, 10-11
Psalm 90:1-10, 12
Psalm 103
Psalm 121
Psalm 130
Psalm 139:1-12
Job 19:23-27
Isaiah 40:28-31
Isaiah 40:1-11
Isaiah 65:17-25
Ecclesiastes 3:1-15

Selected Readings from New Testament Scripture

Matthew 18:1-5, 10
Mark 10:13-16
Luke 23:33, 39-43
John 11:17-27
John 14:1-6, 25-27
Romans 8:14-23, 31-39
Romans 14:7-9, 10b-12
1 Corinthians 15:20-26, 35-38, 42-44, 50, 53-58
2 Corinthians 4:16-5:1
2 Corinthians 5:1-10
Hebrews: 11:1-3; 13-16; 12:1-2
Revelation 21:1-4, 22-25; 22:3-5