

A Presbyterian funeral or a Service of Witness to the Resurrection is first and foremost a worship service. Although the worship service should comfort those who mourn, we come primarily to recall our profound gladness and joy in Christ, our living Lord, emphasizing life lived in trust and service to God. Within the Christian faith, we offer God both praise and thanksgiving for the hope of eternal life we know in Jesus Christ and for the life of the deceased.

#### **A WORD FROM THE SESSION**

On behalf of the entire church family, the Session wants to offer sympathy and assistance during a time of bereavement. Regardless of the circumstances, we are never completely prepared for the loss of a loved one. Yet, we are not alone to face death apart from other Christians. Our church family wishes to provide comfort and help. The bereaved should be aware that they and their loved ones will be in our thoughts and prayers.

#### **ARRANGEMENTS**

When death has occurred or is imminent, the pastors or church office should be notified promptly. The church office will notify the church family via e-mail.

One of the pastors of the family's choosing will want to meet with the family and possibly the funeral director during the process of making arrangements to ensure harmonious coordination of events and details.

Interment, cremation, or donation of the body for medical purposes are all legitimate Christian methods of disposition of the body. The Memorial Garden and Columbarium is an area provided on premises of Guilford Park Presbyterian Church for the deposit of cremains, either by scattering in the Garden or interment in a Columbarium niche; please see the Memorial Garden and Columbarium brochure for details.

For reasons of order, all funeral bulletins will be produced and printed at Guilford Park Presbyterian Church.

#### **THE SERVICE**

##### **Where and Who is in Charge**

*"The service on the occasion of death ordinarily should be held in the usual place of worship [the sanctuary] in order to join this service to the worshipping community's continuing life and witness to the resurrection. The service shall be under the direction of the pastor."* (Book of Order, W-4.10003)

Others may be invited to assist in the service with advance approval of the officiating pastor and no more than 3 speakers are allowed. We strongly suggest that speakers talk no more than 5 minutes each.

##### **When**

The worship service may take place before or after burial and committal of the body or ashes.

##### **Before The Service**

*"In order that attention in the service be directed to God, when a casket is present it ordinarily is closed."* (Book of Order, W-4.10005)

The casket will be closed either at the funeral home prior to transportation to the church or prior to the service in the funeral home. This is in order to focus the service on God. At the time of the closing, the pastor will ordinarily gather the family together around the casket for a prayer and final goodbye. If at the church, the casket should be placed in the center of the sanctuary in front of the chancel. Also, a few flower arrangements, ordinarily two on the sides and one in the middle, may be placed in the sanctuary.

The family may receive guests in the Fellowship Hall or Parlor prior to the worship service. Shortly before the service begins, guests will be asked to proceed to the sanctuary in order for the family to have some moments of privacy. At the designated time, when worshippers are gathered, the family will be escorted by the pastor to the sanctuary. The entrance of the pastor signals the congregation to stand while the family enters the sanctuary. The family is seated at the front in a section of reserved pews.

##### **During The Service**

The service should be a reflection of the love and hope offered by the promise of resurrection to those who grieve. In the Reformed tradition, the funeral service is always a witness to the resurrection. The service will be conducted with dignity and simplicity and will contain the following elements: Scripture, Proclamation of the Word, prayers, music appropriate for worship which affirms God's power over death, the promise of resurrection, and the assurance of the Communion of the Saints. Additional scriptures may be read; hymns sung; an affirmation of faith by the people is appropriate. Gratitude to God for the life of the one who has died may be expressed in various ways. The service concludes with a prayer or a hymn, and the commendation and benediction. When a casket is present, the recessional ordinarily consists of the pastor preceding the casket, followed by the pallbearers, honorary pallbearers, the family, and the remainder of the congregation.

##### **After The Service**

*"Members and friends of the family of the one who has died may gather at the graveside or crematorium for a service of farewell, which is to be conducted with simplicity, dignity, and brevity."* (Book of Order, W-4.10006)

At the death of a church member or the death of an immediate member of the family, the church, as part of its ministry to the bereaved, provides a reception of beverages in the Fellowship Hall either prior to or immediately after the service. This ministry is made available upon request by the family to the pastor.

*"Any fraternal, civic, or military rites should be conducted separately."*

(Book of Order, W-4.10005)

#### **FEES**

The service and facilities of Guilford Park Presbyterian Church are available to members without charge. Furthermore, the pastor/s consider their participation as a regular part of the ministry provided by them and the church. Other fees are as follows:

- The fee for the Organist or pianist is a minimum of \$150 and is to be paid directly to that person by the family. Any guest organist must be approved by the Organist of the church.

- The fee for a soloist provided by the church is a minimum of \$100, paid directly to that person by the family.
- If there are guest musicians or soloists, the pastor must approve and their expense is also to be borne by the family and the minimum fee for each is \$100 to be paid directly to them.

For non-members with a Guilford Park pastor presiding,

- The fee is \$250 for the use of the sanctuary. If the use of the Fellowship Hall is also requested, the fee is \$100. Both fees can be waived at the discretion of the pastor.
- The Pastor's fee for presiding at a non-member funeral is \$250 and should be paid by the family directly to the pastor.
- Organist/pianist fees as per above.

Non-member funerals without a Guilford Park Pastor presiding are not allowed.

#### MEMORIALS AND WILLS

Gifts to the church's Memorial Fund are always appropriate. They will underline your loyalty to the church, and the importance of it in the life of the deceased. The family may desire gifts to the Memorial Fund in lieu of or in addition to flowers. Other charities may be designated through the worship bulletin or in an obituary.

Making a will is one of the most important acts of a lifetime. Christians should realize that if they do not have a will, they may miss forever the opportunity to perpetuate their Christian influence and carry forward their Christian work in the final disposition of their resources. If you leave no will, the laws of the state determine who shall receive your money and property. In effect, the state may replace your wishes with a formula that does not consider very important factors. Only through a legal will can you provide for those you love, the church, and special causes that are important to you. Please remember Guilford Park Presbyterian Church in your will and designate the bequest to the Endowment Fund. A member of the Finance and Stewardship Committee will be happy to speak with you; please call the church office (288-5452) for a name and number of a committee member. Your bequest will be a fitting witness that furthers the ministry and mission of Christ's Church.

#### PERSONAL PREFERENCE FORM

In addition to these guidelines, there is a form available from the pastor or church office that may be used to indicate personal preferences relating to final rites. It may be continually revised or amended through the years. You may wish to furnish the church a copy while retaining the original in a secure place known to the family. Such thoughtful preparation can ease the trauma of death for family and friends.

We hope that these guidelines will be helpful to the church family. Their purpose is to provide a sense of order and direction during a time of loss, sorrow and grief.

**Revised by Session: 9.20.15**

## GUIDELINES for a Service of WITNESS TO THE RESURRECTION



*"The resurrection is a central doctrine of the Christian faith and shapes Christians' 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."*

#### GUILFORD PARK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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