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*Faith Presbyterian Church
 A Witness to the Resurrection*



In Life and in death we belong to God. Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, we trust in the one triune God, the Holy One of Israel, whom alone we worship and serve.

“A Brief Statement of Faith” lines 1-6

We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord’s.

~ Romans 14:7-8

Approved by Faith Session on February 18, 2020

Witness to the Resurrection
A Planning Guide to Services at Faith Presbyterian Church

In Baptism each Christian shares in Christ's dying and rising, and receives the promise of eternal and abundant life in him. We understand the Christian funeral to be the completion of Baptism. In the face of death, we affirm with tears and joy the good news of the gospel and the hope of the resurrection. We do not grieve in isolation, but are sustained by the power of the Holy Spirit and the community of faith. [Directory for Worship– W-4.0701]

The purpose of this booklet is to assist members and friends of Faith Presbyterian Church in the realistic considerations involved in the death of a loved one and to guide the family in dealing with their loss in a way that witnesses to our faith in Jesus Christ as Lord over life and death.

Pastoral Staff

Upon the death of a member or participant in the life of the congregation, the Pastor of the church should be notified as soon as possible. The Pastor desires to know of those who need comfort and counsel as they face death. By being involved early in situations of death or impending death, the Pastor can help with the necessary decisions regarding funeral homes, disposition of the body, and service arrangements, as well as caring for the spiritual needs of those involved.

Choosing a Service

All services conducted by Pastor of the church are Services of Worship for the community of faith. While the form of services may differ, each is a Service of Witness to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Memorial Service

The Memorial Service is a service where the body is not present. Interment of the remains in a Service of Committal has either preceded the memorial service or will take place at a later time.

Funeral Service

The Funeral Service is a service where the body is present in either a casket or an urn. The casket, when it is present, is to be closed, and is normally covered with the Church's Pall. The Funeral Service is concluded with a Service of Committal at the burial site.

Graveside Service

The Graveside Service is a service that takes place at the burial site (ex.; cemetery or memorial garden). The Service of Committal is a part of the Graveside Service. This service may or may not be combined with a funeral or memorial service.

Memorial, Funeral, and Graveside Services are acts of worship among the Christian community. The purposes of these services of worship are to glorify God, to affirm our belief in the resurrection of the body to life everlasting, and to comfort the bereaved. In a Service of Witness to the Resurrection, we worship God and witness to the promise of the resurrection of the body, as we do every Sunday. Therefore, it is appropriate to have the service itself mirror a regular Sunday morning service. In such a way we witness to the understanding that we worship God, not the deceased. And we give thanks to God for the life of the deceased in the context of that worship.

Location and Leadership of the Service

The service of witness to the resurrection is most appropriately held in the congregation's usual place of worship, demonstrating continuity with the community's faith, life, and hope. When there are important reasons not to hold the service in the usual place of worship, it may be held in another place, such as a home, funeral home, crematorium, or graveside. It may be observed on any day, and may, with the approval of the session, occur as part of the Service for the Lord's Day. The service may take place before or after the committal of the body. The service is under the direction of the minister of the Word and Sacrament of the congregation in which it is held. Others may be invited to share in leadership at the discretion of the minister of the Word and Sacrament.

[Directory for Worship – W-4.107]

The church sanctuary is the most appropriate place for a Memorial or Funeral Service. It is there that the community gathers to worship God every Sunday, where we baptize, celebrate marriage, gather at the Lord's Table, and remember the love and grace of God. It is the place where we are surrounded by the symbols of our Christian faith. In this place we have tangible reminders of the "great cloud of witnesses" that surround us and the community of faith that supports us with compassion and love.

The Order of Worship

The service begins with sentences of Scripture, bearing witness to the resurrection and the living hope we have in Christ. Worshipers may sing hymns, psalms, and spiritual songs that affirm our faith in the resurrection, everlasting life, and the communion of saints. The act of confession and pardon may be included as an opportunity for healing and reconciliation. Scripture is read and the Word is proclaimed, expressing our trust in the risen Lord; an affirmation of faith may follow. Prayer is offered: giving thanks to God for life in Christ, the promise of the gospel, the life and witness of the one who has died, the comfort of the Holy Spirit, and the presences of the community of faith; Making intercessions for those who grieve, those who minister to the bereaved, and all who suffer loss; asking for faith and grace in this time of loss; and concluding with the Lord's Prayer (if not included in the eucharistic liturgy.) The Lord's Supper may be celebrated, with the approval of the session. The service ends by commending the one who has died to the care of the eternal God, committing the body of the deceased to the place of disposition (unless this is performed at another time), and sending the people forth with God's blessing.

[Directory for Worship – W-4.10004]

Bulletins appropriate for the Service are printed by the church office and are provided at no charge. An appropriate picture of the deceased may be printed on the back page of the bulletin

Scriptures

The Scriptures are a rich source of comfort and assurance in times of grief. The Pastor will guide the selection of appropriate scripture passages and would welcome suggestions of those with particular meaning for the family or the deceased.

Hymns

Hymns should be chosen which affirm the goodness and grace of God and give comfort and support to those who grieve. Normally, hymns are chosen from books used by this congregation. Copyright laws also govern our use of other music. The Pastor and the Director of Music will help guide the selection of appropriate hymns.

Additional Music

The church's Director of Music will provide suitable sacred music and is available for consultation with the family concerning these musical selections. Pre-recorded or taped music is not in keeping with Faith's style of worship. All music included in the Service will be approved by the Pastor and Director of Music.

The Pall

The church provides a white pall for every Funeral Service which may be used to cover the casket during the service. It represents the covering of the Christian by the righteousness of Christ and alludes to the baptismal waters of death and new life in Jesus. Since righteousness is an unmerited gift from God and all people stand equal in the eyes of God, the outer appearance of the casket in its cost or beauty is of no consequence to the Christian community. Use of the pall focuses the service on the goodness and grace of God. If a casket is present at the Funeral Service, it is normally covered with the pall furnished by the church.

Family Remembrances

In preparation for any Service focused upon our Witness to the Resurrection the Pastor will, at the invitation of the family, help guide any family members or close friends invited by the family to share a brief remembrance of the deceased, in the preparation and presentation of such remembrances.

Cremation Urn

In the case of cremation, the urn containing the ashes may be present. When this is the case, the urn is to be placed on an appropriate stand, apart from the Communion Table. It is also appropriate for the urn to be present only at the time of committal, following or preceding the Funeral Service.

Flowers

In keeping with the principle of Christian simplicity and in an attempt to avoid ostentation, flowers are only to be placed on the two flower stands in the Church Chancel. This will encourage worshipers to focus their attention on the promises of Scripture and the grace of God. Typically, the family of the deceased will furnish the arrangement of flowers for the service.

Other Fraternal, Civic, or Military Rites

"Fraternal, civic, or military rites are to be conducted separately" from the funeral service in the church. [Book of Order, Order of Worship – W-4.10005]

The service of worship is an act of the Christian community in which the wider community is welcome. If other rites take place, these rites shall be conducted apart from the service and place of worship. If the family wishes to have an American flag placed on the casket, the graveside would be the appropriate place.

Expenses to the family

There are no charges or fees for use of the church's facilities, or for the services of the Pastor or the Director of Music. The only costs to the family will be for the flowers the family provides at the service, an honorarium for the Director of Music (if desired), and for any additional musicians and vocalists the family may request.

Refreshments

As an expression of the congregation's care and compassion, *light* refreshments may be provided by the church following the funeral or the graveside service.