



**Planning a Funeral  
or Memorial Service**  
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*Planning A Funeral or Memorial Service  
A Service of Witness to the Resurrection*

In a time of loss, emotions are very much on the surface of our lives. Some decisions have to be made quickly, and we may not be at our best under such stress. The following guidelines and suggestions for planning a memorial service are offered in an attempt to make that part of the grief process a bit less stressful.

Whether a funeral (a service where the body is present) or a memorial service (where a body is not present), the service has the same components. And, as a service of worship, the first step in the actual planning is speaking with the pastor who will be officiating at the service. Under normal circumstances this will be the pastor of Old Stone Presbyterian Church. This conversation will also allow you to confirm necessary scheduling and availability.

*The Tone of the Service*

A funeral or memorial service is a service of worship, and as such serves three main purposes:

- to offer an occasion for a gathered community to give thanks to God for the gift of life and for the eternal meaning brought to life by Jesus Christ;
- to offer particular thanks for the life of the one who has died, expressing gratitude for the qualities and characteristics of that person before God;
- to deal compassionately with the grief being experienced by family and friends of the deceased. The individual components of the service should serve one or more of those purposes. The tone should be reverential, though particular memories may evoke laughter or tears.

### *Readings*

As with any worship service, the heart of the service will be the reading of scripture. While it is normal to have one or more readings from the Old Testament (Hebrew Bible) and the New Testament, there is no set rule about how many or which scriptures are read. A list of frequently read passages is found at the end of this document.

### *Music*

Music can be a wonderful way to remember and claim the faith that walks alongside us throughout our lives. It is normal to sing one or two hymns in a service. A list of suggested hymns (those chosen most frequently for funeral services) can be found at the end of this document. Final selection of hymns should be made in consultation with the officiating pastor.

If there are other musical requests (special music, musicians, or vocalists) we will do our best to accommodate them, but all music in this service of worship should be sacred music, music whose focus and intent is to glorify God. The fees for any special music (soloists or musicians in addition to the accompanist) will need to be negotiated and paid by the family, although there is a base fee for the accompanist (see pricing guide).

### *Proclamation*

At the service the pastor will offer a sermon- a time to proclaim the truth of scripture and how the Word of God is Good News. This proclamation will, most often, include reflections on the one who has died. It is the hope that this time will speak to the different emotions and needs of those who have gathered.

It is not necessary or required for anyone else to speak, and often loved ones find it to be too difficult to speak, but if the family wishes for someone to do this (either a family member or someone who is close to the family) it is helpful to do so in conversation with the pastor coordinating the service. These remarks should be, approximately, five minutes in length and these remarks go much smoother (for the speaker and the congregation) when they are written down in advance.

Many families have the idea of opening the floor for people to share memories and stories. This is a wonderful idea, but it almost never works out the way that they hope and is therefore discouraged. If the family would like for there to be a time of sharing memories there are many ways this can be accomplished outside of worship and the church is able to help facilitate that if it is of interest.

### *Ushers*

The church will arrange for several ushers to help with the service.

### *Flowers*

If desired, the family may arrange with a florist to place one or two flower arrangements (there are stands on either side of the communion table. Additionally, though not necessary, flowers can be placed in the area where the family will gather before the service and then used in the area where the reception will be held.

### *Reception*

The Presbyterian Women will provide a reception for church members, if requested, following the service, either in the fellowship hall or activity room.

### *Bulletins*

After the pastor has discussed the service with the family, the church office will produce and print a worship bulletin for the memorial service.

### *Inurnment of Ashes*

There are spaces available in the Old Stone Memorial Columbarium. The fee for one of these spaces is \$1,250 which includes all costs directly associated with inurnment and inscription of names and dates on the faceplate. For more information and to receive the complete set of forms and policies, please contact the church office.

### *Financial Arrangements*

Since funerals require special services on the part of the church staff, the following fees apply. The fees for facilities are made payable to Old Stone Presbyterian Church and checks for individuals (minister, accompanist, and sexton) made payable directly to them. If there are special circumstances affecting these fees, please discuss them with the church office before the service.

Church members:		Non-Members	
Sexton	\$150	Sexton	\$200
Accompanist	\$150*	Accompanist	\$200*
Minister	\$0	Minister	\$300

\*If additional soloists or musicians are hired, those fees will need to be negotiated with them as well as fees for additional rehearsal time with the organist.

*What the order of worship might look like:*  
**A service of Witness to the Resurrection  
in memory of**

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Words of Grace and Welcome

\*Hymn

Prayer

Old Testament Readings

New Testament Readings

Remembrances

Meditation

Prayer of Thanksgiving and the Lord's Prayer

**....Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

\*Hymn

\*Benediction

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\*All who are able, please stand....

## *Possible Scripture Readings*

### **Old Testament (Hebrew Bible)**

Job 19:23-27	I know that my redeemer lives
Psalms 23	The Lord is my shepherd
Psalms 27:1, 4-9a, 13-14	The Lord is my light and my salvation
Psalms 42:1-6a	As a heart longs for flowing streams
Psalms 46:1-5, 10-11	A very present help in trouble
Psalms 90:1-10, 12	Teach us to number our days
Psalms 103	Bless the Lord, O my soul
Psalms 118	Open the gates of righteousness
Psalms 121	I lift up my eyes to the hills
Psalms 130	Out of the depths I cry to the Lord
Psalms 139:1-12	Whither shall I go from Your Spirit?
Isaiah 25:6-9	God will swallow up death forever
Isaiah 26:1-4, 19	God will keep them in perfect peace
Isaiah 40:1-11	Comfort, comfort my people
Isaiah 40:28-31	They shall mount up with wings as eagles
Isaiah 43:1-3a	I have called you by name; you are mine
Isaiah 44:6-8	I am the first and the last
Isaiah 55:1-3, 6-13	Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters
Isaiah 65:17-25	I create new heavens and a new earth
Ecclesiastes 3:1-15	For everything there is a season

### **New Testament (Epistles)**

Romans 5:1-11	Hope does not disappoint us
Romans 6:3-9	Baptized into Christ's death, raised to life
Romans 8:14-23, 31-39	Nothing can separate us from God's love
Romans 14:7-9, 10b-12	Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's
1 Corinthians 15:3-8, 12-20a	Christ raised from the dead
1 Corinthians 15:20-24	In Christ shall all be made alive
1 Corinthians 15:53-58	Death swallowed up in victory
2 Corinthians 4:16 – 5:1	If this earthly tent we live in is destroyed
2 Corinthians 5:1-10	We have a house not made with hands
2 Timothy 2:8-13	If we died with him, we shall live with him
Hebrews 11:1 – 12:2	Faith, the great cloud of witnesses
1 John 3:1-3	We are the children of God
Revelation 21:1-4, 22-25	A new heaven and a new earth
Revelation 22:1-5	The Lord God will be their light

## **New Testament (Gospels)**

Matthew 5:1-12a

Matthew 25:1-13

John 3:16-21

John 6:37-40

John 6:47-58

John 11:17-27

John 11:38-44

John 14:1-6, 25-27

The Beatitudes

The last judgment

God so loved the world

Whoever comes to me I will not cast out

Whoever believes in me has eternal life

I am the resurrection and the life

Lazarus raised from the dead

In my Father's house...

let not your hearts be troubled

## *Suggested/Frequently Chosen Hymns*

Certain seasonal hymns (such as Advent and Christmas hymns) are certainly appropriate during those seasons:

A Mighty Fortress Is our God (260)  
Abide With Me (543)  
Christ Is Risen! Shout Hosanna! (104)  
For All the Saints (526)  
From All That Dwell Below the Skies (229)  
Give to the Winds Thy Fears (286)  
God of Our Life, Through All the Circling Years (275)  
Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah (281)  
I Greet Thee, Who My Sure Redeemer Art (457)  
Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise (263)  
Jesus Christ Is Risen Today (123)  
My Faith Looks Up to Thee (383)  
My Shepherd Will Supply My Need (172)  
Our God, Our Help in Ages Past (210)  
Praise, My Soul the King of Heaven (478)  
Precious Lord, Take My Hand (404)  
The Lord's My Shepherd, I'll Not Want (170)  
The Strife Is O'er (119)  
What Wondrous Love is This? (85)