



# Funeral Services

*Christians believe that life in Christ is a life abundant and triumphant. To come into relationship with God in Christ is to "pass from death to life". For this reason, when a Christian physically dies, he or she passes from an earthly relationship with God to a complete one. Funerals for Christians should witness to this belief. With this in mind, your pastors recommend the following practices to guide you and your family in this time of need.*



## Notify Your Pastor

When a relative nears death or dies, regardless if he or she is a church member, contact one of your pastors so that he might be present to offer prayers and comfort. Church friends, small group members, and neighbors also stand ready to help at this time. Arrangements for the funeral service (time, place, customs to be observed) are made by the family in planning with the funeral director and in consultation with the officiating pastor. Individuals are encouraged to place their wishes on file with the funeral director of their choice, pastor, and lawyer. These arrangements should be kept with the will and important personal papers and a copy should be kept by the next of kin.

## Calling Hours

Visitation and viewing at the funeral home or church before the funeral offers an important experience for the family to meet friends, to share their grief and to sense the reality of the death.

## A Service in the Church

The Christian funeral is a service of worship and thanksgiving to God for a life, and it has its greatest meaning in the church. Singing of congregational hymns, prayers of praise and thanksgiving, sermon and scripture readings are expressions of this belief. A church funeral is encouraged by your pastors.

### Teaching

The Christian understanding of death will be brought before the congregation through sermons and other teachings so that the funeral and burial practices will be consistent with our Christian beliefs. A pastor should be notified, as soon as possible, if death is expected or when it occurs. Your pastors desire the privilege of being with the family at this time to offer counsel and to pray with them. The pastors also want to help the family deal with their grief, ashes, placing them in a cemetery or distributing them in another location.

## Making Arrangements

### The Casket

A dignified funeral in the church, held with a closed casket, can effectively emphasize the deeper meaning of the occasion. A memorial service is also an appropriate expression of our Christian faith. Opportunity to view the body should take place before the service. When the casket is present it should be closed in advance of the funeral service.

The closed casket helps direct our thought away from the physical aspects of death and instead moves us toward God and eternal life. It is a witness to the Risen Lord Jesus Christ.

It is further suggested that the casket and all services be in keeping with the family's financial resources. Good stewardship indicates frugality in all things. A pall covers the casket during all funerals in the church. It presents a visible symbol of the faith of the deceased.

### Music

Music should be selected to express the hope and triumph of the Christian faith. Consultation with the organist and/or pastor may be helpful in selecting the music. Congregational singing is usually appropriate in a service which is held in the church. Your pastors are open to your suggestions of "favorite and meaningful" hymns of the deceased.

### Flowers & Memorials

When flowers are used, they should be simple and tasteful. Memorial gifts to the church or other charitable organizations may be encouraged through the newspaper funeral notice, weekend program and parish newsletter. Please refer to the pamphlet "Gifts of Love" for more information about ways that people may choose to remember a loved one through gifts.

### Live-Stream

Funeral services can be live streamed if there are family members who are unable to attend.

## Post-Funeral

### Burial

Ground burial is the most common practice of caring for the body. A committal is usually held by the pastor to bid final farewell and to affirm our faith in God's mercy and triumph over death.

### Cremation

Modern cremation is a process for returning human remains to the elements. This is a very appropriate and direct way of carrying out the words of the Christian committal service "earth to earth, ashes to ashes and dust to dust..." The family has the option of retaining the ashes, placing them in a cemetery or distributing them in another location.

### Gifts

An honorarium to the pastor is not expected for church members. Non-members are requested to provide a gift for pastoral services. There is a fee for the organist. In addition, if service falls on a weekend, custodial and tech fees may apply. If the service is held in the church, these are arranged by the pastor and funeral director.



*The pastors will be pleased to address any questions you may have. The funeral director of your choice will supply information on relative funeral costs and other arrangements on request.*