

# Helping You and Your Family Plan a Funeral



**St Paul Presbyterian Church**  
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## **A WORD FROM THE SESSION**

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

## **ARRANGEMENTS**

When death has occurred or is imminent, the pastor or church office should be notified promptly. With your permission, the church office will notify the congregation via e-mail, saving you many phone calls.

The first step after a death is usually for the family to meet with a funeral home to make the arrangements. The pastor may attend this meeting with you, but it is not necessary. At this meeting, the date and time of the service will be determined in consultation with the pastor. Interment, cremation, or donation of the body for medical purposes are all legitimate Christian methods of disposition of the body in the Presbyterian tradition.

## **THE SERVICE**

Shortly after the arrangements have been established, the pastor will want to set up a time to meet with the family to plan the funeral service. Following this meeting (and often at the same meeting), the pastor will meet with as many family members and friends as possible to discuss the life of the deceased. The pastor will use these comments to guide in preparing the funeral.

### Where and Who Leads the Service

Services may be conducted at the church, funeral home, or graveside. However, the service *"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."* (Presbyterian Church (USA) Book of Order). Others may be invited to assist in the service at the discretion of the pastor through consultation with the family.

### When

The worship service may take place before or after burial and committal on any day of the week. However, due to other church activities (in particular, on Wednesday afternoons and Sunday mornings) not all times are possible. The pastor must be consulted before the service date is set.

### Before the Service

The church is pleased to host a visitation prior to the service. At this time the casket, if present, may be open as people pay their last respects. Once it is time for the service to begin the casket is closed *“in order that attention in the service be directed to God”* and the hope of the resurrection (Book of Order).

Ordinarily, the family gathers in the Fireside Room north of Fellowship Hall prior to the service for prayer with the pastor. At the designated time, when worshipers are gathered, the family will be escorted by the pastor to the Sanctuary where they will be seated at the front in a reserved section of 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. Elements of the service typically include:

- Reading(s) of Scripture by the pastor or others.
- Singing of hymns, psalms or spiritual songs, which affirm God’s power over death, Belief in the resurrection of life everlasting and the assurance of the communion of saints.
- Reflecting on the life of the one who has died. Family members and guests may be invited to speak.
- Giving of a sermon or other exposition of the Word.
- Giving thanks to God in prayer for life in Jesus Christ, the promise of the gospel, the gift of the Holy Spirit, the community of faith.
- Commending the one who has died to the care of God.

### Scripture Passages Often Used at Funeral or Memorial Services

Psalm 23	The Lord is my shepherd
Psalm 46	God is our refuge and our strength
Psalm 90:1-10, 12	Teach us to number our days
Psalm 121	I will lift up my eyes to Hills
Ecclesiastes 3:1-15	For everything there is a season
Isaiah 40:28-31	Those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength
John 3:16-21	God so loved the world
John 11:38-44	I am the resurrection and the life
John 14: 1-6, 25-27	I go to prepare a place for you
Romans 6:3-9	Baptized into Christ's death, raised to life with him
Romans 8:31-39	Nothing can separate us from the love of God
1 Corinthians 15:3-8, 12-20a	Christ raised from the dead
1 Corinthians 15:20-24a	In Christ all shall be made alive
1 Corinthians 15:35-44	The natural body and the spiritual body
1 Corinthians 15:50-57	We shall all be changed
Ephesians 2:1,4-10	Saved by grace through faith
Revelation 21:1-4, 22-25; 22:3-5	A new heaven and a new earth

### Music and Video Tributes

Arrangements for music are made with the pastor. A variety of musical instrumentations are appropriate. Normally only the church organist, or one approved by the pastor, plays the organ. As the service is an act of worship, the music should be sensitive to that nature. If the family has a song they would like to share that would not be appropriate for a service of worship they may play it before or after the service or during the reception.

Video memorials, either prepared by the family or funeral home, are normally shown before the service begins. They may also be replayed during the reception after the service. An audio visual technician from St Paul will be required if a video is to be shown in the sanctuary.

### Recording the Service

St Paul recognizes that there are often family members and friends who cannot attend services. Due to this, the church will, upon request, provide families with an audio and/or video recording of the service. If the family desires, the video service will be uploaded to YouTube and a link provided to the family. This link may be set to be private or public.

### Hymns Often Used at Funeral or Memorial Services

A Mighty Fortress is Our God	In the Garden
Abide with Me	Lead On, O King Eternal
Be Thou My Vision	O God, Our Help in Ages Past
Amazing Grace	O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing
Blessed Assurance	O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go
Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah	On Eagles' Wings
Here I am Lord	The Lord is My Shepherd
How Firm a Foundation	

### Printing a Worship Order

Depending upon the funeral home and the family's desire, the pastor will either submit the service order to the funeral home for inclusion in their pamphlet or the church will print a bulletin. However, a bulletin is not always necessary.

## **AFTER THE SERVICE**

### Other Rites and Committal Services

Fraternal, military, community, or other rites in keeping with the Christian tradition may take place in the sanctuary and should be conducted separately from the service of worship, usually following the benediction or at the graveside service.

A service of committal may take place at the graveside or in the columbarium either before or after the worship service. This service of farewell for family and friends is one of simplicity, dignity and brevity, usually lasting no longer than five minutes. It will include brief readings from scripture, words of committal, prayers, final blessing and dismissal, entrusting the one who has died to the care of God. It is also possible to hold only a graveside service, which would include scripture readings, brief remembrances of the deceased

and prayers similar to those in a full service, including the prayer of committal.

### Receptions

As part of its ministry to the bereaved, the church will coordinate a reception in Fellowship Hall either prior to or immediately after the service. The reception may consist of either beverages and snacks or a simple meal. This ministry is available upon request by the family to the pastor. The family is responsible for the cost of the food. The family may also elect to have the reception catered.

## **MEMORIAL GIFTS**

The family may choose various organizations as the recipients of memorial donations. This should be included in the notice published in the newspaper and the worship bulletin. The pastor or a member of the stewardship committee would be happy to work with you before or after the service to determine appropriate designations of memorial money, such as the building fund, a particular ministry of the church, or the purchase of an item to further the ministry of the church.

Gifts given to St Paul Presbyterian Church will be acknowledged to the donor for tax purposes and a list of those giving such gifts will be provided to the family for appropriate acknowledgment. It is the church's policy for all memorials to be entered in the memorial book that is displayed in the sanctuary entryway and that memorial plaques not be installed.

## **GRIEVING BOOKLETS**

Grieving is a long and often challenging process. Our Deacons would like to offer you a series of four brief, but helpful booklets entitled *Journeying Through Grief* by pastor and clinical psychologist, Dr. Kenneth Haugk. Each book focuses on what you will likely be experiencing at that point in grief—offering understanding, empathy, compassion, and hope. Pastor Bill or one of the deacons will contact you about this ministry.

Please contact the pastor if you would like additional recommendations for books on grieving or grief support groups.

## FEES

There are no building usage fees for members of St Paul Presbyterian as this is part of our ministry to our members. The following are suggested minimum fees:

	<b>Members</b>	<b>Non-Members</b>
Use of Sanctuary	\$0	\$150
Pastoral Services	\$150	\$250
Organist or Pianist	\$150	\$150
Organist/Pianist for each soloist or performance accompanied	\$25	\$25
Soloist	\$150	\$150
Audio/Visual Technician	\$100	\$100
Video & Projection	\$50	\$50
Use of Fellowship Hall or Family Activity Center for reception	\$0	\$50/hour

Financial arrangements are typically made through the funeral home, but may also be made directly with the individuals.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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*Approved by session 4/21/16*