



GUIDE TO PLANNING A FUNERAL

Introduction

Whenever a death occurs, a family is plunged into a sea of powerful emotions. Central Presbyterian Church shares in your loss. We are here to support you during this difficult time—our church staff, our deacons, our entire community of faith. Please do not hesitate to let us know how we may be of help in the days ahead.

The funeral is one important way that we minister to the bereaved, and extend the pastoral care of the church. The staff, Worship Committee, and Session of Central Presbyterian Church have prepared this guide to assist you in all the details of planning the funeral.

In our Presbyterian tradition, a funeral is first and foremost a service of worship, in which we gather to give voice to our sorrow, to thank God for the life of our loved one, and to entrust this companion of ours into the hands of God. In all that we do, we witness to Christ crucified and risen as the center of our worship, and the source of our hope and consolation.

Funerals at Central are conducted under the supervision of the pastor. The pastor welcomes assistance from funeral directors, and will work closely with them in all of the arrangements. Other clergy may be invited to participate at the request of the family and the approval of the pastor.

The Presbyterian Church (USA) offers a number of guidelines concerning funerals,

which shape the way we approach funerals at Central. These guidelines can be found in the *Book of*



Order, our denomination's Constitution, and in the *Book of Common Worship*, a Presbyterian liturgical resource.

At Central, funerals are dignified occasions, rooted in strong and time-tested liturgy. At the same time, they offer ample opportunities to personalize the service so that it reflects the life of your loved one. The pastor will meet with your family in planning the service, and welcomes your input along the way.

The Setting

When a member of the church dies, it is always preferable to have the funeral at the church. Our church is a sacred space full of rich symbolism, beautiful music, and a sense of history. It is a place where your family may have celebrated important rites

of passage, such as baptisms, confirmations, and marriages. It is a place where your loved one may have worshiped regularly for years. So most families find that a funeral in such a setting is much more meaningful than in a funeral home.

However, when it is not possible to hold the service at the church, the service may be held in a funeral home, or at the graveside, or some other location.

Ideally, the body or ashes of the deceased are present during the service.

When a casket is present, it remains closed during the service. If you desire, the casket may be open at the church for a time prior to the service.

Flowers are welcome in the Sanctuary. In keeping with the simplicity of Presbyterian worship, generally flowers should be limited to one or two arrangements

tastefully done. Flowers may not be placed on the communion table.

Some families may wish to have photographs of the deceased displayed for the funeral. A single photograph of the deceased may be displayed in the Sanctuary during the service. The visitation or reception offers good opportunities to display photographs and other memorabilia.

Throughout the service, the paschal candle will be lit and placed near the casket or urn. This is a large, very prominent candle that is lit each year on Easter, and remains lit during the Great Fifty Days of Easter. It is a reminder to us of the resurrection of Christ, and so is lit during a funeral as a witness to our Easter hope.

Likewise, white and gold paraments—embroidered silk hangings—will be on the pulpit and lectern. White and gold are the liturgical colors of Easter, so are also reminders to us of the promise of resurrection.

Family members are invited to sit in reserved pews at the front of the Sanctuary. Please let us know how many pews should be reserved.



Paschal candle

The Shape of the Funeral Liturgy

There are generally four components to the funeral service.

Gathering

Family and friends gather, together with the whole assembly. The casket is processed in from the back of the church, with family members following behind. The assembly is welcomed in the name of God, and summoned to worship. A hymn may be sung.

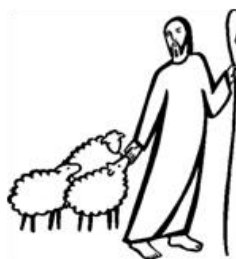
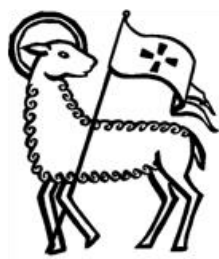
A prayer is offered, giving thanks for the life of the departed and asking for God's compassion for the days ahead.

Word

Generally, there are two or three readings from Scripture—often one from the Old Testament and one from the New Testament—that speak words of comfort and hope. A short homily is preached by the pastor, which aims to lift up the story of this individual who has died, and connect it with the promise of God's story. Music underscores the themes of Scripture and sermon. A creed may be included, affirming the faith of the church.

Printed Bulletins

Central Presbyterian Church will prepare a printed bulletin which will be available to each person in attendance. For the cover, you may choose from among several different liturgical symbols, such as the ones below. If you desire another symbol or image, you may share your idea with the pastor. Or you may have a picture of the deceased on the cover. You will need to tell us approximately how many people you expect at the service, so that we can provide sufficient orders of worship.



Commendation

A time of remembrance may be included, with friends or family members offering words of testimony to the life of the deceased. Music may be included here, too. Prayer is offered, commending the deceased to God. Usually, the Lord's Prayer will be said by the whole assembly.



"Jesus Blesses the Children"
stained glass window

Sending

A concluding hymn may be sung. The benediction is given. Finally, a procession forms to escort the casket from the Sanctuary, with the pastor leading and the family accompanying the casket.

If you desire, you may have the funeral home print a program with color photographs of your loved one, a full obituary, and a poem or reading. If the funeral home is to print a program, the order of worship for the service is usually inserted into the program.

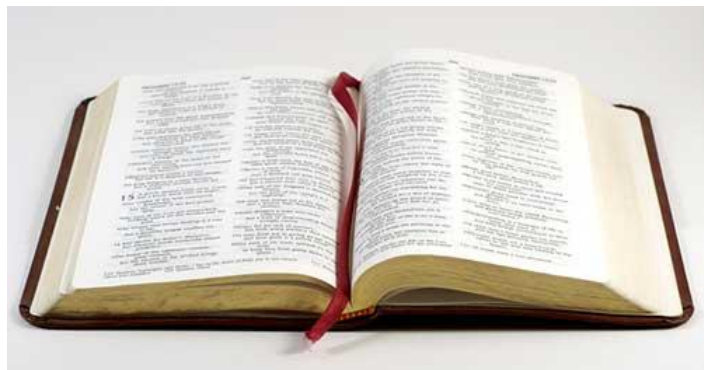
Scripture Readings

Below are some passages of Scripture which are especially appropriate for a funeral and/or committal. This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

Please let the pastor know if your loved one had particular passages of Scripture that were meaningful.

Family members may be invited to do the readings in the service, if you so choose.

The New Revised Standard Version of the Bible is used at Central Presbyterian Church.



Old Testament

Ecclesiastes 3:1–15	For everything there is a season
Job 19:23–27	I know that my redeemer lives
Isaiah 25:6–9	God will swallow up death forever
Isaiah 40:1–11, 28–31	Comfort my people
Isaiah 43:1–3a, 18–19, 25	When you pass through the waters, I will be with you

Psalms

Psalms 23	The Lord is my shepherd
Psalms 46:1–5, 10–11	A very present help in trouble
Psalms 90:1–10, 12	Teach us to number our days
Psalms 91	The one who dwells in the shelter of the Most High
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	Where shall I go from your spirit?

Epistles

Romans 8:31–39	Nothing can separate us from the love of God
I Corinthians 15:51–57	Where, O death, is your victory?
Revelation 7:9–17	The saints worshipping before the throne of God
Revelation 21:1–6	A new heaven and a new earth
Revelation 22:1–5	The Lord God will be their light

Gospels

Matthew 5:1–12a	The Beatitudes
John 11:17–27	I am the resurrection and the life
John 14:1–6, 25–27	In my Father's house are many dwelling places

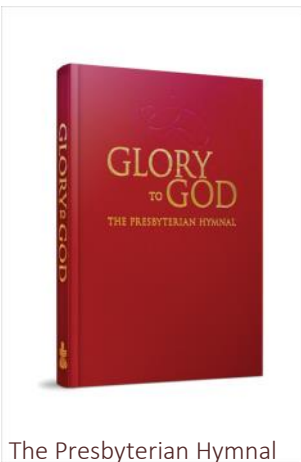
Music

Music is a very powerful means of giving expression to our emotions. At Central, we value traditional sacred music, befitting the dignity of the occasion.

The music for the funeral will be under the supervision of our music staff: music director Rich Dewein and organist Lois Harms. Both are very talented church musicians with decades of experience. They are available to consult with you in selecting music that will be appropriate. If our organist is unavailable for the service, she will secure a qualified substitute.

There is generally an organ prelude and postlude to set the appropriate tone upon entering and leaving the Sanctuary.

The singing of hymns, psalms, and spiritual songs is especially suitable for a funeral, as it enables the entire assembly to participate. It is appropriate to include two or three hymns in the service. Hymns to be sung must be found in our Presbyterian hymnal, be relatively familiar and accessible so that the full assembly will be able to join together in singing, and be hymns that lift up the promise of resurrection, the hope of eternal life, and the communion of saints.



The Presbyterian Hymnal

Below are some hymns that are especially appropriate for funerals. You might well think of others which are not on the list, which you may feel free to suggest to the pastor and music staff.

- 687 *Our God, Our Help in Ages Past*
- 1 *Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty!*
- 236 *The Strife Is O'er*
- 806 *I'll Praise My Maker*
- 375 *Shall We Gather at the River*
- 801 *The Lord's My Shepherd, I'll Not Want*
- 802 *The King of Love My Shepherd Is*
- 803 *My Shepherd Will Supply My Need*

- 821 *My Life Flows On*
(*How Can I Keep from Singing?*)
- 402 *How Lovely, Lord*
- 649 *Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound*
- 43 *You Who Dwell in the Shelter of the Lord*
(*On Eagle's Wings*)
- 834 *Precious Lord, Take My Hand*
- 835 *Just a Closer Walk with Thee*
- 775 *I Want Jesus to Walk with Me*
- 836 *Abide with Me*
- 839 *Blessed Assurance, Jesus is Mine!*
- 840 *When Peace like a River (It Is Well with My Soul)*
- 326 *For All the Saints*
- 366 *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling*
- 643 *Now Thank We All Our God*

If a soloist is desired, our music staff may be able to make a recommendation. It is appropriate to include one or two solos in the funeral, if you wish. Any soloists or other musicians that you might wish for consideration to participate must be approved by our music staff.

Music which is secular in nature may be included at the visitation or reception, but is not appropriate for a service of worship.

The playing of recorded music in the Sanctuary is not permitted.



Central's 39-rank Aeolian-Skinner pipe organ

Remembrances

We welcome family members and friends to offer words of remembrance during the funeral service. Up to three people may be invited to speak, if you wish. These speakers should be selected carefully. It is generally wise to ask each speaker to address one particular aspect of a person's life, and to speak for no more than five minutes. Do keep in mind that sometimes people may wish to speak at a loved one's funeral, but when the moment comes they find that their heightened emotions make it difficult.

If there are several people who wish to participate in sharing memories or stories, consider having each of them write down something, and then designate one person to gather those together and offer them on behalf of the whole family.

It is not advisable to have a general time of sharing open to the whole congregation during the service.

Bear in mind that there are other good venues for sharing memories and stories, such as a visitation before the funeral, or a reception afterwards. Often people find it easier to speak in a less formal setting such as this.

Also bear in mind that the pastor will make it a point to offer stories from the life and experience of your loved one. After getting to know a person in the course of pastoral ministry, and after spending time meeting with the family, a pastor is usually able to craft a homily that offers a good portrait of a person's life.

Committal

Typically, committal will follow the funeral at some point, though in some circumstances it may precede the funeral.

This is a brief service where close friends and family gather at the grave-side to say farewell, and your loved one's remains are committed to the earth. The com-



mittal includes several prayers and one or more readings from Scripture.

One tradition some families choose is to have the casket lowered as a part of the committal, and to cast dirt on the casket. This is a way of marking the completion of this human journey, and of giving expression to the truth from Scripture, "From dust we came, and to dust we shall return" (Ecclesiastes 3:20). Other families choose simply to leave a flower on the casket before departing the cemetery.

Fraternal, Civic and Military Rites

The *Book of Order* of the Presbyterian Church (USA) states: "The [funeral] service shall be complete in itself, and any fraternal, civic, or military rites should be conducted separately" (W-4.10005).

This is not intended to diminish these aspects of a person's life, but to preserve the integrity of Christian worship. Displays of fraternal, civic, and military ritual and symbolism have their appropriate place either before or after the Christian funeral occurs.

Scheduling the Funeral

Typically, a funeral will occur within a week of a person's death. However, sometimes there may be circumstances that require holding the service at a later time.

Scheduling a funeral at Central requires finding a time that will accommodate your family's needs, as well as the schedules of staff members, and the building use calendar. Our church is frequently in use with weddings, concerts, and other church and

community programs. Often, these events have been planned months in advance and cannot be changed. However, we will certainly make every effort to accommodate your schedule and find a day and time that suits your needs.

A funeral could be as short as 20 minutes or as long as an hour, depending on the circumstances.

Typically, a funeral may last about 45 minutes.

Visitations and Receptions

A time of visitation often precedes the funeral. Sometimes, the visitation takes place at the funeral home the day before the funeral. However, sometimes families choose to have a time of visitation at the church immediately prior to the funeral. We can accommodate a visitation in the East Parlor and Narthex.

Sometimes, families will want to have a reception of some kind following the funeral service. Central can accommodate a reception or luncheon in either the East Parlor or larger Fellowship Hall upstairs. You would be responsible for arranging for food or catering services. Our deacons can be available to help host, if necessary. Alcohol may not be served on

church grounds.

If you would like to explore having either a visitation or reception at the church, please contact our

Office Manager, Kimberly Sanford. She will be happy to assist you with the details.



The East Parlor is an ideal and flexible gathering place for receptions and visitations.

Expenses

For a funeral that takes place at Central Presbyterian Church, there are typically some modest fees for staff people for the extra time that is put into preparing for and leading the service.

These fees, payable at the time of the funeral, may be provided to staff members directly by your family, or they may be included in the overall cost of the funeral, with the checks issued by the funeral home.

Pastor \$250 for a non-member
No fee is required for the funeral of a church member, since this is a routine part of pastoral ministry. Families

may choose to make an honorarium, which is at their discretion.

Organist	\$150 (\$175, if extra rehearsal time with a soloist is needed)
Soloist	\$100
Audio Technician	\$50
Video/Graphics Technician	\$100
Custodian	\$100

Church Staff

The Rev. Wallace W. Bubar

Pastor

Kimberly Sanford

Office Manager

Rich Dewein

Director of Music

Lois Harms

Organist

Sheryl Puderbaugh

Director of Adult Education & Mission

Randi McNally

Director of Children's Ministry

Ben Patzlaff

Director of Youth Ministry

Kim Coulter

Director of Communications

Marc Michaelson

Finance Director

Leslea Phelps

Nursery Coordinator

Mary Pohlmann

Children's Music Director

Sue Hudson

Morgen Bells Director

Laura Payne

Wedding Coordinator

Maria Sharpe

Custodian

Tim Clark

Resident Caretaker

We strive to be a Christian congregation dedicated to a strong tradition of worship, committed to spiritual inquiry and growth, caring for one another and bearing witness to God's love in the world.

—Mission Statement

Memorial Gifts

Sometimes families will ask that, in lieu of flowers, gifts be made in memory of their loved one to a particular charitable organization.

Central Presbyterian Church has a memorial fund where gifts of this nature may be directed, and specified for particular areas of ministry such as music or Christian Education. And the church also has a Foundation, which supports the preservation and upkeep of our historic building. Central is always profoundly grateful for memorial gifts which help to ensure the continuing vitality of our church for generations to come.

Should you wish to learn more about memorial gifts, please speak with the pastor.



Contact Information

3829 Grand Avenue

Des Moines IA 50312

Phone: 515-279-3658

Fax: 515-279-3651

E-mail:

wbubar@dmcp.org (Pastor)

rdewein@dmcp.org (Director of Music)

lois.harms@gmail.com (Organist)

ksanford@dmcp.org (Office Manager)

Website:

www.dmcp.org