

Funeral and Memorial Services



Sewickley Presbyterian Church



*Jesus said ... "I am the resurrection and the life.
Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live,
and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.
John 11:25-26*



Funeral and Memorial Services at Sewickley Presbyterian Church

One of the most tender and painful occurrences in life is saying that final, earthly farewell to those we love. This guide is intended to help plan for this inevitable journey.

The resurrection is the central doctrine of the Christian faith and shapes Christians' attitudes and responses to the event of death which often brings loss, sorrow and grief. In the face of death, Christians affirm with tears and joy the hope of the gospel. Christians do not bear bereavement in isolation but are sustained by the power of the Spirit and the community of faith. The church offers a ministry of love and hope to all who grieve. (*Book of Order, W-4.10001*)





What is the first step in arranging a service at Sewickley Presbyterian Church?

When a death occurs, the church should be notified immediately by calling 412.741.4550. It is important to meet with a member of the pastoral staff who will guide the family through this difficult time and assist in funeral arrangements, including working with the funeral director to ensure that all plans reflect the utmost dignity and respect.

What is the purpose of the service?

The Christian funeral service is first and foremost a service of worship of the triune God that bears witness to the faith of the Church. Its purpose is to:

- proclaim the resurrection of Jesus Christ;
- remind the congregation of Scripture's promise of eternal life;
- comfort those who grieve; and
- give thanks to God for the life of the deceased, demonstrating how God's grace was experienced in and through the deceased's life.

While the wishes of the deceased and the family of the deceased will be taken into careful consideration, all aspects of the service will be under the direction of the pastor leading the service to ensure that it glorifies God, the author of life and salvation.

What is the difference between a funeral and a memorial service?

In a funeral service, the body or ashes (cremains) of the deceased are present, either in a casket or urn. If no body or ashes are present, it is termed a memorial service. The basic elements of both services are the same.



What are the appropriate elements of the service?

Integral components include the singing of hymns, readings from Scripture, the proclamation of the gospel, and prayers of thanksgiving for the deceased and of comfort for those who grieve. Typically there are readings from both Old and New Testaments, demonstrating the continuity of God's promises throughout Scripture. All elements of the service should be consistent with the biblical affirmation of God's power over life and death.

What kind of music is appropriate in the service?

Music in a funeral or memorial service should be appropriate to a service of worship and emphasize God's grace and majesty, Christ's victory over death, and our hope of eternal life. The music should not dominate the service but should contribute to the spirit and flow of the liturgy. Most of the musical selections should be hymns sung by the congregation. If a vocal solo is desired, arrangements must be discussed with the Director of Music Ministries. Other special music, such as instrumental solos, may be performed during the prelude or postlude at the pastor's discretion. The pastor has the final approval on all musical selections.

Are eulogies allowed?

Typically, up to three people may share reflections about the deceased's life and faith. Reflections should be no longer than five minutes.

Is there also a graveside service?

A graveside service, known as a committal, may be conducted at the final resting place. It may take place before, after, or occasionally, in lieu of the service at the church. Graveside services are generally brief and consist of readings from Scripture and prayer along with opportunities for the family to share a few words about the deceased.



Are civic organization rituals allowed during funerals and memorial services?

Fraternal or civic rites, such as the Masonic ritual, should be conducted at an alternative time at a funeral home or some other location with members of those organizations attending rather than during the Christian service of worship. Military rites may take place at the graveside. (*Book of Order, W-4.10005*)

Where are services conducted at Sewickley Presbyterian Church?

Funeral and memorial services are held either in the sanctuary or the chapel.

When are services held at Sewickley Presbyterian Church?

The date and time of the service are decided jointly by the family of the deceased and the church staff to be as mutually compatible as possible.

Is membership at Sewickley Presbyterian Church required for a service to be held?

Ordinarily, services are performed only for members of the church. On occasion, services for non-member believers may be held at the church at the clergy's discretion.

Who performs the service?

Generally, one or more of the pastors of Sewickley Presbyterian Church will plan and lead the service. At the family's request and the pastor's discretion, other Christian clergy, family or friends may be invited by the pastor to participate in the service.



What about pallbearers?

When a casket is present, pallbearers are welcome but not necessary.

Are caskets open or closed during the service?

The casket remains closed during the service and is typically covered with a pall in order that attention is directed to God. A pall is a white cloth that symbolizes baptism, the resurrection, and that we have been clothed in Christ (*Galatians 3:27*). The church's pall is available upon request.

Are there guidelines about floral and photo tributes to the deceased?

Having one or two floral arrangements in the sanctuary or chapel is generally preferred to multiple tributes so as not to distract from the focus of the worship service. Although flowers are often sent to both the funeral home and the church in acknowledgement of the deceased, flowers and photographs are more appropriately viewed in the Robinson Room during the reception. Many families ask that gifts to favorite charities and church be considered in lieu of flowers.

What are the anticipated costs associated with funerals and memorial services?

A separate form is provided to families with current recommendations and fees. Listed fees include: the officiating pastor honorarium; graveside service; music ministry charges; use of building and custodial charge; bulletins; sound personnel; optional reception costs.



Will the church provide bulletins?

The church will provide a printed order of worship for memorial or funeral services held at the church. Ordinarily, the office requires at least two business days to prepare the bulletin. Families should suggest the number of bulletins to print.

Planning one's own funeral or memorial service:

Members are encouraged to plan in advance with a pastor any preferred arrangements at the time of death as well as components for the service of worship. Decisions should also be made regarding options for burial, cremation, or donation for medical purpose.

Additional information may be obtained by calling
the church office at 412.741.4550.

You may download a PDF of the PC(USA) *Book of Order* by visiting:
<http://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/constitutional-services/constitution/>



Suggested Scripture Passages

Old Testament

Job 19:23-27	Psalm 91
Psalm 1	Psalm 100
Psalm 16	Psalm 103
Psalm 23	Psalm 112
Psalm 27	Psalm 121
Psalm 30	Psalm 139:1-18
Psalm 33	Ecclesiastes 3:1-15
Psalm 34	Isaiah 25:6-9
Psalm 43	Isaiah 40:6-11
Psalm 46	Isaiah 40:28-31
Psalm 61:1-5	Isaiah 43:1-5
Psalm 63:1-8	

New Testament

John 3:16-21	Galatians 4:4-7
John 5:24-29	Ephesians 2:1-10
John 6:35-40	Philippians 3:7-14
John 6:47-51	Philippians 3:20-21
John 11:17-27	Colossians 2:9-15
John 14:1-7	Colossians 3:1-4
Romans 6:3-11	1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
Romans 8:14-15	Titus 3:3-7
Romans 8:31-39	Hebrews 9:23-28
Romans 14:7-9	Hebrews 11:13-16
1 Corinthians 15:20-26	Hebrews 12:1-2
1 Corinthians 15:50-58	1 Peter 1:3-9
2 Corinthians 4:16-5:1	Revelation 7:9-17
2 Corinthians 5:1-10	Revelation 21:1-5
Galatians 2:15-21	



Suggested Hymns

These hymns may be found in
Glory to God, The Presbyterian Hymnal.

1	Holy, Holy, Holy
14	For the Beauty of the Earth
35	Praise Ye the Lord, the Almighty
39	Great Is Thy Faithfulness
43	You Who Dwell in the Shelter of the Lord (On Eagle's Wings)
69	I, the Lord of Sea and Sky (Here I Am, Lord)
177	I Will Come to You (You Are Mine)
260	Alleluia! Sing to Jesus
263	All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name
265	Jesus Shall Reign Where'er the Sun
268	Crown Him with Many Crowns
269	Lead On, O King Eternal!
275	A Mighty Fortress Is Our God
321	The Church's One Foundation
326	For All the Saints
331	God of the Ages
353	My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less
354	Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory
366	Love Divine, All Loves Excelling
370	This Is My Father's World
375	Shall We Gather at the River
442	Just As I Am, without One Plea



Suggested Hymns

These hymns may be found in
Glory to God, The Presbyterian Hymnal.

450	Be Thou My Vision
462	I Love to Tell the Story
463	How Firm a Foundation
611	Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee
620	Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven
625	O Lord My God (How Great Thou Art)
634	To God Be the Glory
643	Now Thank We All Our God
645	Sing Praise to God Who Reigns Above
649	Amazing Grace
686	God of Our Life
687	Our God, Our Help in Ages Past
804	Rejoice Ye Pure in Heart
826	Lift High the Cross
829	My Faith Looks Up to Thee
833	O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go
834	Precious Lord, Take My Hand
835	Just a Closer Walk with Thee
836	Abide with Me
839	Blessed Assurance, Jesus Is Mine
840	When Peace like a River (It Is Well)
846	Fight the Good Fight



Sewickley Presbyterian Church

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