

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.
(Romans 8:38-39)

When the Time Comes



*A guide for funerals,
memorial services,
and related matters.*

Heritage Presbyterian Church

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Dear Beloved in Christ,

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). As Christians, we believe this promise to be true, and we proclaim this good news even in the face of death.

In the Reformed Christian Tradition, “a Christian funeral is a service of worship held on the occasion of a person’s death. In this service we give thanks and praise to God for the gift of life, seek God’s help in time of need, witness to the hope of the gospel anchored in the resurrection of Christ, remember the life of the deceased, and offer support and comfort to the grieving. It is characterized by simplicity, dignity, and gratitude” (Book of Common Worship, 769).

One of the privileges as a pastor and a congregation is to journey with families in times of grief and loss. We hope that the information in this booklet will help to provide answers to many of your questions about the decisions you are making during this time. Please know that you are not in this alone. We are here to support you however we can spiritually, emotionally, and tangibly through physical presence and expressions of care. This is one of the primary roles of our Deacons as well.

This booklet can also serve as a planning booklet for those who wish to discuss their wishes with the pastor and their family in advance. When preparations are made and discussed with others, survivors are relieved of some of the difficult questions as to what is right and have the satisfaction of knowing that they are doing what their loved one would have wanted.

May God hold you and your family in love during this time.

Grace and Peace,

Rev. John McCrosky

Interim Pastor, Heritage Presbyterian Church
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Suggested Order of Worship

Prelude

*At the end of this time, the family is led by the pastor
into the sanctuary and is seated.*

Welcome and Opening Sentences

Call to Worship and Prayer

Hymn

Readings from Scripture

Sermon

[Hymn, if desired]

Affirmation of Faith

Expressions of Gratitude and Remembrance

*Brief prepared comments from family members or friends arranged in advance.
Typically no longer than 3 to 5 minutes each.*

Prayers of Thanksgiving and the Lord's Prayer

Hymn

Commendation

Blessing

Postlude

*During this time, the pastor guides the family as they depart from the sanctuary.
The congregation will be dismissed after the family has processed.*

This is simply a template for worship planning.

*The pastor will guide you through selecting different elements
and making decisions about any omissions or additions you wish to make.*

Scripture Readings

The following are offered as suggestions of passages that proclaim the hope of the resurrection and love of God through Jesus Christ. The family is also welcome to select other favorite passages. The pastor is also happy to select appropriate scripture readings for the day.

Job 19:23-27	<i>I know that my redeemer lives</i>
Isaiah 40:1-11	<i>Comfort my people</i>
Isaiah 40:28-31	<i>Those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength</i>
Isaiah 65:17-25	<i>I create new heavens and a new earth</i>
Ecclesiastes 3:1-15	<i>For everything there is a season</i>
Psalms 23	<i>The Lord is my shepherd</i>
Psalms 46:1-5, 10-11	<i>The Lord is a very present help in trouble</i>
Psalms 121	<i>I lift up my eyes to the hills</i>
Psalms 130	<i>Out of the depths I cry to the Lord</i>
Psalms 139:1-12	<i>Where shall I go from your spirit?</i>
Matthew 5:1-12a	<i>The Beatitudes</i>
Matthew 18:1-5, 10	<i>The greatest in the kingdom of heaven</i>
Matthew 25:31-46	<i>As you did it to one of the least of these</i>
Mark 10:13-16	<i>Let the children come to me</i>
Luke 23:33, 39-43	<i>Today you will be with me in paradise</i>
John 3:16-21	<i>God so loved the world</i>
John 11:17-27	<i>I am the resurrection and the life</i>
John 14:1-6, 25-27	<i>Let not your hearts be troubled</i>
Romans 8:14-23, 31-39	<i>Nothing can separate us from the love of God</i>
Romans 14:7-9, 10b-12	<i>Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's</i>
1 Corinthians 15:20-26, 42-44, 50, 53-58	<i>Death is swallowed in victory</i>
2 Corinthians 4:16-5:1	<i>Visible things are temporary, invisible things eternal</i>
Philippians 3:20-21	<i>Our citizenship is in heaven</i>
Colossians 3:1-17	<i>Set your minds on things that are above</i>
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18	<i>The comfort of Christ's coming</i>
Hebrews 11:1-3, 12:1-2	<i>Faith and the cloud of witnesses</i>
Revelation 21:1-2, 22:3-5	<i>A new heaven and a new earth</i>

Hymns

The following hymns from *Glory to God, The Presbyterian Hymnal* are particularly appropriate for funeral or memorial services. Families are welcome to select other hymns or spiritual songs to be included, or to choose not to include congregational singing.

- 649 Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound
- 275 A Mighty Fortress Is Our God
- 836 Abide With Me
- 450 Be Thou My Vision
- 326 For All the Saints
- 14 For the Beauty of the Earth
- 686 God of Our Life
- 1 Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty!
- 624 I Greet Thee, Who My Sure Redeemer Art
- 12 Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise
- 269 Lead On, O King Eternal
- 824 Near to the Heart of God
- 643 Now Thank We All Our God
- 833 O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go
- 987 O God, Our Help In Ages Past
- 620 Praise, My Soul, The King of Heaven

Special Music

All music should bring glory and honor to God. Additional music, including solos or instrumental pieces, can be appropriate. The pastor will guide you in discerning and making decisions on music.

The pastor will also facilitate communication between the family and the church pianist regarding any requests for instrumental music before, during, or after the service. The Pianist may be also available for accompaniment, if needed, and will discern necessary rehearsal.

Any musicians using church instruments must be approved in advance by the HPC Pianist. Pre-recorded music must fall within copyright licensing (music staff will advise).

Affirmations of Faith

The following are from the confessional statements of the Presbyterian Church (USA), and proclaim some of what the church has believed throughout the ages. Families are also welcome to select another statement from our confessions or similar appropriate words, including those found in Scripture (such as Psalm 23, Romans 8:38). Including this is a way for the congregation to remind ourselves of the faith of the church.

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Heidelberg Catechism, Q. 1

What is your only comfort, in life and in death?

That I belong—body and soul, in life and in death—not to myself but to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ, who at the cost of his own blood has fully paid for all my sins and has completely freed me from the dominion of the devil; that he protects me so well that without the will of my Father in heaven not a hair can fall from my head; indeed, that everything must fit his purpose for my salvation. Therefore, by his Holy Spirit, he also assures me of eternal life, and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for him.

From A Brief Statement of Faith (PCUSA)

In life and in death we belong to God. Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, we trust in the one triune God, the Holy One of Israel, whom alone we worship and serve. . . With believers in every time and place, we rejoice that nothing in life or in death can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Arrangements

The pastor will work with the family for all aspects relating to the worship service. The pastor will also help coordinate conversations with the funeral home director and any additional church members and groups providing support to the family. A Deacon will accompany the family as well, providing care and assisting with plans surrounding the service

Timing

In most cases a service takes place within a few days of death, but a memorial service at a later date is also appropriate. The pastor will advise the family of the availability of the church and will arrange a time to meet with the family to plan the service.

Gathering before the Service

The Pastor will arrange for a private gathering space for the family approximately 30 minutes prior to the service and will meet with the family before the service for prayer and to lead them to the Sanctuary.

Committal Service

The main service may precede or follow a brief committal service at the burial site (the committal may also be included as part of the service if no burial is planned) or may occur at another date and time. Typically, the committal service is attended by members of the family and close friends.

Livestreaming the Service

With advance notice, it may be possible to arrange for the service to be livestreamed to accommodate loved ones unable to attend the service.

Reception

The HPC Presbyterian Women are available to assist with coordinating, preparing, and serving refreshments in the Fellowship Hall after the service if desired.

Flowers

Flowers for the service or reception are welcome and can be delivered to the church during normal office hours, within one hour of the service, or as arranged with the church office/pastor. All flowers should be removed by the funeral home or family after the service unless other arrangements have been made.

Arrangements (Continued)

Memorial Gifts

The church appreciates any memorial gifts that family or friends wish to make. Contributions to the general Operating Fund allow the church to use funds for the area of greatest needs. For specific gifts, the pastor can advise the family to the appropriate designated fund or provide suggestions for specific uses of memorial funds.

Honorariums

Providing space and services for families is a ministry of compassion on behalf of our congregation. Our annual operating budget includes the expenses of these services, including facilities costs and additional pay for our pianist and a/v and technology specialist. Families wishing to contribute to these expenses for the service are encouraged to make a gift to the Operating Fund (suggested amount - \$250). Any honorarium for the pastor is at the family's discretion and should be given to the pastor directly.

Columbarium Garden

Our church has a columbarium garden intended for members and their immediate families. Space can be reserved any time in advance. Please contact the church office for a copy of the application and acceptance form.

Coping with Grief

Our support of you and your family does not end with a memorial service. The pastor is available to continue meeting with you and your family as you mourn your loss, and also has recommendations for area counselors and grief support groups. Deacons and other caregivers in the congregation provide additional support through prayers, meals, and visitation. Grief is an ongoing process, and we will continue this journey with you in the days, weeks, months, and years to come.

Planning Guide

Full Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Date of Death: _____

Scripture Readings (usually 2, but can include others)

Hymns (usually 2 or 3)

Special Music (optional - sung or instrumental)

Affirmation of Faith (if desired)

Family Members or Friends to Speak (optional)

Other Wishes (note if military honors or other special ceremony)

Advanced Planning Information

The pastor would be happy to meet with you further to discuss your wishes. In addition to the reverse side, please also complete the information below. Then, provide copies to several close family or friends as well as the pastor.

Name: _____

I would like to have the following relative(s)/friend(s) oversee the arrangements for my memorial service:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

I have made the following arrangements in advance: (If marked, please include additional information of where to find details).

- ☐ Living Will (file with your physician, too)
- ☐ Last Will and Testament
- ☐ Funeral Home _____
- ☐ Donation of body for medical purposes
- ☐ Organ Donation
- ☐ Burial Arrangements
 - ☐ Cremation
 - ☐ Cemetery or Mausoleum
- ☐ Memorial gifts