

Service of Witness to the Resurrection

held at

Williamsburg Presbyterian Church (PCUSA)

Funeral and Memorial services provide an immensely important time and place for loved ones...

- ◆ To express the love they feel and to give thanks to God for the gift of the life of the deceased. All life is a unique and unrepeatable wonder. Others will want to and need to respond in affection and gratitude for that gift;
- ◆ To grieve and to celebrate in community as God has called us to do, rather than in isolation. A funeral/memorial service can be a blessed connection point out of which flows much encouragement and strength;
- ◆ To encounter the love and power of God, through readings, prayers and music, renewing all for the adventure of on-going life, and teaching over again what life and love is about.

CHOICES TO BE MADE

A number of choices will need to be made beyond that of burial, cremation, organ or other donation for medical purposes before the service can be planned:

- ◆ Will there be a viewing? Viewings are possible even when the deceased has made arrangements for organ donations.
- ◆ Will the body be cremated or donated?
- ◆ Does the deceased have a burial plot or columbarium niche?
- ◆ Will the service be a funeral or memorial service? Funeral services have the casket or urn present in the service; memorial services take place after the burial or inurnment (placing of the urn in a columbarium niche).
- ◆ Will the burial or inurnment be a continuation of the worship service or take place before or after an extended time after the service?
- ◆ Will there be a reception following the worship or committal service?

POLICY

The Session (the governing body of this congregation) has set forth the following criteria for funerals/memorial services held in the Williamsburg Presbyterian Church. These criteria are principles which seek to preserve the sanctity of worship and celebration of the gift of life of the deceased.

POLICY (continued)

The service itself is under the direction of the officiating pastor and will include scripture readings, hymns, brief sermon and prayers that affirm God's power over death, belief in the resurrection and assurance of the communion of saints. Family members and/or friends may be invited to share in the service at the invitation of the pastor.

The service is complete in itself and any fraternal, civic or military rites must be conducted at a separate time and place.

I. Dates and Times

- Days and times may be established based upon the availability of the pastor and of the sanctuary.

II. Who May Have a Funeral/Memorial Service at Williamsburg Presbyterian Church?

- The deceased is an active member of the church;
- The deceased is a long term visitor who regularly attended the church or participated in its programs and outreach on a regular basis;
- The deceased has not regularly attended the church but family and friends who are church members request to have a service conducted;
- At the discretion of the pastor.

III. Clergy

One of the pastors of the Williamsburg Presbyterian Church will officiate at any funeral or memorial service conducted here. If the family of the deceased desires that another pastor assist in the service, the officiating pastor will consult with the Senior Pastor before giving approval and will then extend an official invitation if approval is given.

IV. Music

- When the organ is to be used for any service, the church organist will be the first organist asked to play. If he is not available, he must approve another qualified organist. The organ in the sanctuary may not be used without prior approval.
- The officiating pastor must also approve all musical selections to be used for the service. Bear in mind that any music selected should be appropriate for any worship service in the church. Taped music is not permitted.

V. Funeral/Memorial Service Coordinator

- The Board of Deacons provides a Funeral/Memorial Service Coordinator whose role is to help with the logistical matters associated with each funeral/memorial service.
- Upon learning that a funeral/memorial service is required, the Church Administrative Assistant will arrange for the Funeral/Memorial Coordinator to contact you concerning family wishes etc. She will also notify the Elders and Deacons and request their attendance.

VI. Decorations

- The communion table and baptismal font must remain in the sanctuary. No decorations are to be placed on the communion table. A table may be provided if so desired for the placing of honors, fraternal insignia etc.
- Flowers and greens may be placed only in locations agreed upon with the officiating pastor.
- Arrangements should be made with the Funeral/Memorial Service Coordinator regarding the disposition of the flowers after the service.
- The Sanctuary will seat about 450 persons.

VII. Viewing

As regards the viewing of the body, we shall try to honor the wishes of the deceased and family. The casket may be open prior to the service but must be closed at the beginning of the service. The urn used may be placed at the front of the church on a suitable table or stand.

VIII. Reception

- Stevenson Hall (the Fellowship Hall) and kitchen of our church are available for receptions before or after a service.
- If requested, the Board of Deacons will make arrangements for a light reception of punch and cookies. A family deacon will work with the family to determine the anticipated number of attendees, the desired room arrangement for a standing reception and other details related to the reception.
- The members of a Presbyterian Women's Circle may assist in preparing and conducting light refreshments for spouses of a Circle member if requested.

VIII. Reception (continued)

- If the family requests a reception to be prepared by the church, a donation to the church building fund will be gratefully accepted in appreciation for the services of the church and in loving memory of the deceased.
- If the family/friends choose to have a catered reception, the church office can assist in identifying local caterers. In such cases, the caterer is responsible for cleaning the kitchen and ware used during the reception. The expense of the catered event is the responsibility of the family/friends.

IX. Parking

Parking is extremely limited. The main parking lot behind WPC is owned and operated by The College of William & Mary and is normally made available to the church for funerals and memorial services at the church. When available, and in Christian fellowship, the Williamsburg Baptist Church (next door) may allow us to use their available parking spaces for funerals and memorial services. The church office staff or the deacons will confirm availability. Other parking is available at the City Parking Garage, in the WJC Library parking lot and at curbside on the street.

X. Fees for Personnel Services

There are no fees for services. Honoraria for pastors, organist and other musicians are at the discretion of the family. If needed, the Director of Administration may be able to provide helpful suggestions.

Please do not hesitate to contact the pastor, church office staff or your family deacon with any questions or concerns you may have regarding the celebration of your loved one's life at the *Service of Witness to the Resurrection at Williamsburg Presbyterian Church*.



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HELPFUL RESOURCES TO AID WITH PLANNING

Our Christian Tradition as found in the “Presbyterian Book of Common Worship” <http://bookoforder.info/Book-of-Common-Worship.pdf> contains a vast wealth of wonderful resources dealing with the subject of death and with the hope we have in Christ. The following materials are examples which may be of some encouragement or inspiration and the pastors can assist in developing others:

Scripture Passages

Deuteronomy 33:27	The eternal God is your dwelling place
Psalms 23	The Lord is my Shepherd
Psalms 46	God is our refuge and strength
John 11:25-26	I am the resurrection and the life
John 14	In my Father’s house are many mansions
Revelation 3:20	Behold, I stand at the door and knock
Revelation 7:16-17	On what heaven will be like

Hymns of Hope and Comfort

A Mighty Fortress
Amazing Grace
Blessed Assurance
How Great Thou Art

Music of Comfort

Bach Choral Preludes
Mozart Requiem
Bach Jesu Joy of Man’s Desiring

Books that Deal with Death, Grief and Hope

Richard Watts	Straight Talk about Death with Young People
George Westberg	Good Grief
C.S. Lewis	A Grief Observed
C.S. Lewis	The Problem of Pain