

SERVICE OF DEATH AND RESURRECTION GUIDELINES

THE PROMISE OF RESURRECTION

Resurrection is a central doctrine of the Christian faith and shapes our responses to and attitudes concerning death. Loss, sorrow, and grief are natural emotions at such a time. In facing death Christians affirm the hope of the gospel and are sustained by the power of the Holy Spirit and the community of faith. While the service should comfort those who mourn, its primary purpose is to offer God praise and thanksgiving for the hope of eternal life we know in Jesus Christ and for the life of the deceased.

ARRANGEMENTS AT THE TIME OF DEATH

When death is imminent or has occurred, the pastor(s) or church office should be notified promptly. The pastor(s) are available to meet with the family and funeral director during the process of making arrangements to insure harmonious coordination of events and details. No final arrangements should be made or announced without consultation with the pastor(s).

A church-owned pall is available and may be used at the funeral home prior to the service if requested, or it may be placed on the coffin upon arrival at the sanctuary. The pall has historic significance in the tradition of the church. It affirms our equality in Christ. It is also symbolic of our baptism in which we are "buried with Christ in death.... so that we may be resurrected with Christ into life everlasting." A church-owned decorative urn is available for those persons who have chosen to be cremated. A church-owned Pascal Candle is also available upon request.

Interment, cremation, or donation of the body for medical purposes are all legitimate Christian methods of disposition of the body.

THE SERVICE OF DEATH AND RESURRECTION

WHERE

This is a service of Christian worship; therefore, it should be held in the church if at all possible and at a time when members of the congregation can be present.

Ordinarily the service shall be under the direction of the pastor(s). If the service is to be held in the church and led by anyone other than the pastor(s) of that congregation, it should be done at the invitation of that pastor.

(Book of Worship, p. 139)

WHEN

The worship service may take place before or after burial and committal of the body. When possible, the services should not be scheduled on Sunday due to other activities in the church.

Military rites may be conducted with the approval of the Director of Music Ministries. Fraternal and civic rites should be conducted separately.

HOW

We gather to praise God and witness to our faith as we celebrate the life of the deceased. We come together in grief, acknowledging our human loss, seeking God's grace, that in pain we may find comfort and hope.

The service will be conducted with dignity and simplicity and will contain the following elements: Scripture, prayers, psalms, affirmation of faith by the people, proclamation of the work, music appropriate for worship which affirms God's power over death, the promise of resurrection, and the assurance of the communion of the saints. Gratitude to God for the life of the one who has died may be expressed in various ways.

BEFORE THE SERVICE

The family may receive visitors and guests at the church. Shortly before the service begins the family will be given an opportunity to have some moments of privacy.

At the designated time, the family will be escorted to the sanctuary. The minister(s) entrance signals the congregation to stand while the family enters the sanctuary. The family is seated in a designated section of reserved pews.

DURING THE SERVICE

The family and friends of the one who has died may gather at the graveside or at the Memory Garden for a service of farewell, which is conducted with simplicity, dignity, and brevity. If burial has preceded the memorial service, friends may be received afterwards in the church.

FLOWERS

No more than five (5) flower arrangements, including the floral spray which is laid on the casket, may be placed in the Sanctuary. Other flowers may be placed in the narthex if so desired.

MEMORY GARDEN

Upon request, those individuals who have chosen cremation may be laid to rest in the Memory Garden, located at the south entrance of the church building.

MEMORIALS

Gifts to the church or other charitable causes are appropriate. They may be designated through the worship bulletin or by other means employed by the family.

FEES

The facilities of First United Methodist Church are available to members without charge. Furthermore, the pastor(s) consider their participation a regular part of the ministry provided by the church. A fee of \$100 is to be paid before the funeral for the organist/pianist. If the family has invited other guest musicians, not including the organist/pianist, their expenses are to be born by the family. In the event that lengthy travel by a pastor is required, the family may wish to defray this expense.