

Westminster Presbyterian Church
Guidelines for Funeral, Memorial, and Committal Services

The resurrection is a central doctrine of the Christian faith and shapes Christians' attitudes and responses to the event of death. Death brings loss, sorrow, and grief to all. In the face of death, Christians do not bear bereavement in isolation but are sustained by the power of the Holy Spirit and the community of faith. The Church offers a ministry of love and hope to all who grieve. As this is the basis of a Christian funeral/memorial service defined by the Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Session of Westminster Presbyterian Church has set forth the following policies for funeral/memorial services that occur at the church.

General Provisions

1. If you have suffered the death of a loved one, you are encouraged to call the church office at 315-253-3331 immediately in order to schedule a meeting with a staff pastor to arrange the details of the service.
2. The date for a funeral or memorial service must be approved by the church office before scheduling it with the funeral home or announcing it to the public.
3. A funeral service is a worship service in which a casket containing the body, or an urn containing the remains, of the deceased is present.
4. A memorial service is a worship service in which no physical remains are present. A memorial service may take place before or after the remains have been interred.
5. A committal service is a brief worship service that may take place at the actual place of interment.
6. Either a funeral or a memorial service may also include a committal service. In some instances, only a committal service, with neither a funeral or memorial service at the church, is desired by the family.
7. Note that there is no smoking permitted anywhere within the buildings of the Westminster Presbyterian Church.

Pastor/Officiant

8. Ordinarily, the Pastor of Westminster Presbyterian Church will officiate at each funeral/memorial service and/or committal. In rare cases, another pastor may act as supervising pastor, as long as that pastor is a member of good standing in the Presbyterian Church (USA). The Pastor of Westminster Presbyterian Church must approve this request before the other pastor is contacted. The PCUSA supervising pastor has discretion regarding whether non-PC(USA) pastor may participate in the service, and to what extent.

Service at the Church

9. Church members are encouraged to use the church for funeral/memorial services. Just as we are baptized by God in church and have been nourished by God through the church, so it is wholly appropriate that thanksgiving to God for our lives should be offered in church. In the Presbyterian tradition, a funeral/memorial service is considered a service of worship and will be approached with the dignity and

joyful celebration accorded worship. Memorial services at Westminster Presbyterian Church must follow appropriate worship practices that are consistent with Presbyterian, Reformed theology and tradition. A typical order of worship will include the following: prelude and postlude of sacred music, hymns and songs of praise and faith, scripture lessons from the Old and New Testaments, a message that expresses thanksgiving to God for the life of the deceased and reminds all of Christ's resurrection and promise of eternal life, prayers of thanksgiving, and a benediction. In consultation with the Pastor, other elements, such as remarks from family members and friends, may be included in the service. The officiating Pastor shall make the final determination on the elements of worship.

10. As indicated below, certain limited decorations or personal mementoes of the deceased may be placed within the sanctuary during the service. However, the sanctuary will prominently display both the baptismal font and the serving accessories of the Lord's Supper, in their usual locations. These may not be removed.

Music

11. All music to be part of the funeral or memorial service will be appropriate for use within the framework of a Christian worship service. Determination of appropriateness of music selections is at the sole discretion of the WPC Pastor, in consultation with the WPC Music Director. As a general guideline, sacred music; or non-sacred music that nonetheless points toward God or which recognizes our eternal relationship with God; may be considered "appropriate;" however, final approval remains at the Pastor's discretion. Music that directs attention to the deceased rather than to God, or music with lyrics (whether the lyrics are sung or the song is performed only instrumentally) that are inconsistent with general Christian moral/ethical teachings, as understood by the Pastor, will not be considered appropriate.
12. Except under unusual circumstances, the Music Director/Organist shall perform all organ music to be part of the funeral/memorial service.
13. Due to the complexity and historical significance of our church organ, any request for another organist to perform during the service will be subject to review and approval of the Music Director.
14. When a substitute organist is requested, the Music Director will be due a coordination fee for review, approval, and consultation with the other organist. This coordination fee is also due if the family wishes to have other musicians perform as part of the service, without use of the organ. If the family wishes to have other musicians or vocalists performing in conjunction with the organ, additional fees may be due to cover necessary rehearsal times. Such fees will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Music Director, in conversation with the couple. If there is no music of any kind planned for the wedding, there shall be no fees due the Music Director. Music fees are detailed below.

Cremation

15. Cremation is an entirely appropriate alternative for Christians. Orders of worship for the memorial service and/or committal remain the same in cases of cremation.

Casket/Cremins

16. The casket or cremains of the deceased may be present for the service and shall arrive at the church at least 45 minutes before the beginning of the service, unless the family has made arrangements for it to be onsite even sooner for visitation/viewing before the service.
17. In order that worship may focus on God and upon the gift of resurrection, rather than upon the earthly remains of the deceased, the casket will be closed during the service. A white pall will be placed over the casket during the service, symbolizing our baptism, our equality before God, and the joy of our inclusion in Christ's victory over death.

Flowers

18. The use of flowers and other forms of decoration are not required and should be limited in order that they do not distract from the purpose of worship. A few simple flower arrangements adequately symbolizes God's gift of new life. Other arrangements may be placed in the Narthex, or if being used for viewing and/or reception, in the Social Room.

Pictures and Photography

19. If the family wishes, one or two simple framed photographs of the deceased may be displayed in the sanctuary during the service. These may be placed on the Lord's Table, provided they do not intrude upon the serving elements of the Lord's Supper, which may not be moved and which must remain visible in their central location on the Table.
20. Larger photo displays of the deceased, videos, and slide shows are encouraged outside of the sanctuary and the worship service, appropriately located in the Narthex, or if being used for viewing and/or reception, in the Social Room. A TV with DVD player, as well as a video projector and screen, are available for the family's use in the Social Room. Use of this equipment must be made in advance during planning of the service with the church office.
21. Photography is not permitted in the sanctuary during the service.

Bulletin

22. The church office staff will produce a basic bulletin for funeral or memorial services. Special requests, such as the inclusion of a photograph, should be made as early as possible. Coordinate with the church office if bulletins will be prepared and provided by others.

Visitation/Viewing at the Church

23. The family may desire a time of visitation/viewing to take place at the church. In such cases, this would be located in the Social Room. This must be coordinated with both the funeral home and the church office. When visitation/viewing is desired immediately before the worship service, it shall conclude no later than 30 minutes before the scheduled service time. The immediate family will have an opportunity for a final viewing, and will then momentarily step out of the Social Room while the casket is closed, the pall placed, and is moved into the sanctuary.

24. Regardless of whether visitation/viewing is scheduled at the church, the Pastor will meet briefly with the immediate family approximately 15 minutes before the service begins, offer prayer, and escort them into their reserved seats just before the service begins.

Military, Civil, and Fraternal Recognition, Rites, and Ceremonies

25. Caskets are sometimes draped with the national flag, signifying respect and paying tribute to the memory of members of the armed forces or veterans and their honorable and faithful service to his/her country. Ordinary, the national flag is not displayed in the sanctuary in recognition that it is a place of worship directed to the God of all nations and peoples. Usually, a white pall is placed over the casket during the service, signifying baptism, equality of all God's children and the hope of the resurrection. At the request of the family of the deceased veteran or member of the armed forces, the national flag, draped on the casket or folded for a memorial service/urn, is permitted.

26. Law enforcement officers and firefighters pledge to serve the public good and risk their lives daily in their duties. A flag draped casket or cremains with the folded national flag is permitted for deceased first responders at the request of the family.

27. Military, civil, fraternal, or similar honors or rites are appropriate outside the liturgy of the worship service, either before or after the service (in the narthex, social room or on the lawn, at the funeral home during visitation, at the cemetery).

Committal Service

28. The Pastor is available to lead a committal service at any local place of interment, either in addition to a funeral/memorial service, or by itself. This very brief service typically includes scripture, prayers, words of committal, and a benediction. It does not include personal remembrances or other components of a funeral/memorial service, but may include military, civil, or fraternal rites as mentioned earlier.

Reception after the Service or Committal

29. The Social Room is available for a reception following a funeral, memorial, or committal service if the family requests. The church will provide punch and cookies (or coffee and tea) for a light reception at no charge to members. If the family wishes additional items, such as meat/vegetable/fruit trays or similar items, there will be a fee to offset their costs. If the family wishes a more substantial meal, they must make arrangements to have it catered by outside parties. Family members are always welcome to supplement the light reception with food provided by themselves.

30. The possession or consumption of alcohol anywhere on church premises is prohibited.

31. Coordinate the anticipated number of reception guests, any A/V setup required, room arrangement, and other reception concerns, with the church office as soon as possible during planning.

Fees

32. There is no charge for use of the building for the services of Active Members of Westminster Presbyterian Church. For the purposes of these policies, "Active Members" of the congregation are those individuals who have been listed on the official roll of Active Members for at least one year, or who, in the absence of being

on said roll, have exhibited a commitment to the congregation, for the same length of time; AND who exhibit both regular participation in the life and activities of the congregation as well as financial support of the church. "Active Member" fees apply to these individuals and their immediate household; including their legal spouse or otherwise recognized cohabitating partner; their children; and other cohabitating family members. "Non-Member" fees shall apply to all others.

33. There is no mandatory honorarium for the Pastor officiating the funeral, memorial, or committal service for the services of Active Members of Westminster Presbyterian Church or their immediate household, as defined above; although a voluntary honorarium is appropriate. For all others, the fees identified below will apply.

34. The fees for the Music Director/Organist, applicable to all, are as identified below.

Fees Applicable to Non-Active Member Households Only

Use of Sanctuary	\$200
Use of Social Room	\$100
Pastor Honorarium – Funeral or Memorial, no Committal	\$200
Pastor Honorarium – Funeral or Memorial, with Committal	\$250
Pastor Honorarium – Committal only	\$100
Light Reception (punch & cookies only)	\$100
Reception with sandwich/veg/fruit trays	\$100 plus cost of trays

Fees Applicable to Active Member Households

Use of Sanctuary	\$0; donation appreciated
Use of Social Room	\$0; donation appreciated
Pastor Honorarium – Funeral or Memorial, no Committal	\$0; donation appreciated
Pastor Honorarium – Funeral or Memorial, with Committal	\$0; donation appreciated
Pastor Honorarium – Committal only	\$0; donation appreciated
Light Reception (punch & cookies only)	\$0
Reception with sandwich/veg/fruit trays	cost of trays
Custodial Fee	\$0

Fees Applicable to All

Music Director/Organist – performing solo	\$150
Music Director/Organist, performing, coordinating with other musicians/vocalists	\$175-200
Music Director/Organist, non-performing, coordinating with other organist or other musicians/vocalists	\$100

Amended (sections 25-27) 10/17/16 by session