

## **Funerals**

"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 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.

Because it is difficult under emotional stress to plan wisely, the session should encourage members to discuss and plan in advance the arrangements which will be necessary at the time of death, including decisions about the Christian options of burial, cremation, or donation for medical purposes. The plans should provide for arrangements which are simple, which bear witness to resurrection hope, and in which the Christian community is central.

The service on the occasion of death ordinarily should be held in the usual place of worship in order to join this service to the community's continuing life and witness to the resurrection. The service shall be under the direction of the pastor. Others may be invited to participate as leaders in the service at the discretion of the pastor." (*Book of Order*)

## **Funeral Policies**

1. When a death occurs in the church community, the minister ought to be contacted immediately. This creates an opportunity for the minister and church family to offer support and solace, and allows the benefit of the minister's experience in making funeral arrangements.
2. A funeral service, called a Service in Witness to the Resurrection, is a worship service. It is recommended that, whenever possible, it be held in the church and incorporate regular elements of divine worship such as hymns, scripture readings and prayers.
3. The minister can help the family select hymns, scriptures and other elements of the service to ensure the centrality of God's love in Jesus Christ and the hope of resurrection.
4. Public viewing of the physical remains may be arranged for prior to the service, if it is held in the church, or at the funeral home prior to the church service. Ordinarily, the casket will be closed during the funeral service itself.

5. Families are encouraged to recommend to concerned friends and loved ones the opportunity of making memorial gifts to the church or designated charities. Church members are reminded of the importance of stewardship and the importance of acts of thoughtfulness and practical concern to the living during the grieving process.

6. Any special arrangements or requests, such as PowerPoint video presentations or music CD's to be played in the sanctuary prior to or during the funeral service should be submitted to the church office at least 24 hours prior to the service. If the sound system is used for a funeral or memorial service by a non-member of the church, a personnel fee of \$50.00 will be charged.

7. Because the funeral service is considered as one of the ordinary functions of the church, no fees of any kind are charged for the use of the church's facilities or its personnel by members.

8. Non-members may submit a church use form for approval by the session for use of the sanctuary for a funeral or memorial service and/or the social hall for a family gathering following a funeral service held at the church or at another location. The church use fee is \$50.00. If a meal is prepared for a gathering following the funeral, an additional personnel fee of \$50.00 will be charged, plus billing for the actual costs of food.

9. If you wish to use the church facilities for a funeral service and/or fellowship lunch following the funeral, please contact the church office as soon as possible at 724.637.2436.