



# Funerals at First Presbyterian Church Mankato, Minnesota

In a Christian church setting, a funeral is most simply described as a celebration of life for someone who has recently died. In the Presbyterian (PCUSA) Church this typically includes special prayers, scriptures and hymns chosen by the family; a sermon; and other optional components meant to uplift the spirit and honor the memory of the departed. Usually a funeral includes either a casket or an urn present for the service, while a memorial service does not include a casket (and therefore can take place later at the discretion of the family).

Using ceremony and ritual to honor those who have died has been practiced by all cultures for millennia. Death and the subsequent planning that follows can often occur when we least expect it. We may not be prepared for what can be a detailed process and the many questions that come up, especially if your loved one did not provide any verbal or written instructions for their service. When a family chooses to have their service in a church, it may be helpful to have some guidance throughout the process.

The following policy for funerals is a guide for you and your family as you navigate the decisions you have to make regarding a funeral or memorial service held at First Presbyterian Church – Mankato.

## **The Role of the Church**

- ❖ The Pastor and other friends and members of the church community may spend time with the family before and/or after the death of a loved one.
- ❖ The FPC Pastor serves as the officiant for funeral services unless otherwise arranged with the FPC Pastor. The Pastor may also assist with the burial service, which may be public or private at the family's discretion. The Pastor helps the family plan the funeral or memorial service. This may include the selection of scriptures and hymns.
- ❖ The Pastor will help coordinating services of the FPC organist and soloists for the funeral service unless otherwise arranged. The Pastor and organist may be consulted for requests related to music and licensing.
- ❖ The FPC Administrative Assistant puts together a simple bulletin for the service which may include an obituary written and provided by the family (electronic format requested).
- ❖ If desired, the Pastor can act as an advisor in designating memorial money to the church.

- ❖ If desired and requested, a team at FPC is willing to provide bars/cookies, coffee and lemonade for a reception in the Fellowship Hall and/or can also serve as hosts if family members wish to have a luncheon in the Fellowship Hall after the service.
- ❖ FPC works with the funeral home and family to secure dates and times for the funeral and any other scheduled activity involving the church such as visitation, burial and lunch.

### **The Role of the Funeral Home**

While the church is responsible for planning and executing the ceremonial aspects of the funeral, the funeral home assumes a much different role. **If a funeral home is NOT used, the family is responsible for taking care of these arrangements.**

Here are some ways in which the funeral home aids the family after a loved one has died:

- ❖ A funeral director from the funeral home (such as Mankato Mortuary) meets with the family and maps out a schedule, and they communicate the desired date and time of the service to the church.
- ❖ They help the family prepare and file the obituary notice and may contact the local radio station and/or newspaper to submit the obituary and provide details regarding the service date and time.
- ❖ The funeral home processes all legal documents required of the family and mortuary. They attend to the preparation and filing of necessary authorizations and permits and the recording of vital statistics.
- ❖ The funeral home also helps to coordinate the work of other parties whose services are needed in conjunction with the funeral itself, such as cemetery managers, vault companies, cremation services, etc. They also contact local law enforcement in the event of a procession to the cemetery.
- ❖ If the deceased was a member of the military, police force, a fraternal organization, left behind a group of employees, etc., arrangements can be made to have a local group or organization participate in the service.
- ❖ The funeral home assists the family to determine the menu and/or details for the luncheon taking into account church policy and communicates with the church regarding those needs.
- ❖ The funeral home coordinates flowers and anything else being displayed and contacts the church to secure access for delivery.

- ❖ On the day of the service, staff assistance from the funeral home is provided prior to, during, and following the funeral as well as the visitation (which usually takes place either the night before or in the hours before the service). They may bring flower stands, a screen for slide shows, and/or other requested furniture not provided by the church, and they act as ushers for the service.
- ❖ If a burial is part of the schedule, the funeral home coordinates with the cemetery if chairs and/or a canopy are desired at the gravesite.
- ❖ So that the family doesn't have to write separate checks, the funeral home collects and disperses the appropriate financial compensation to those participating from the church.

In review, the roles of the church and the funeral home are very different. To reiterate this important point, **when there is no funeral home involved, it is the job of the family to assume responsibility for the above list of arrangements if a church funeral is still desired.** Whether a funeral home is used or not, there are a few things that the family of the deceased is responsible for taking care of regarding a funeral service:

- ❖ Securing a date and time for the service that works for the church pastor and funeral home.
- ❖ The ordering of flower arrangements (in lieu of flowers, options can be discussed and designated as a memorial).
- ❖ Estimating the number of guests to ensure that there is adequate seating and enough catered food.
- ❖ Writing an obituary and/or providing information about the deceased to be included in the funeral service.

## FUNERAL HONORARIUMS

	<u>Member</u>	<u>Non-Member</u>
Church Building <i>Sanctuary/Fellowship Hall/Kitchen</i>	\$300	\$400
*Pastor	\$250	\$350
Organist	\$175	\$250
*Other Musicians	by agreement	by agreement
Custodian	\$100	\$200

\*If the Pastor or other staff are asked to travel for an out-of-town funeral and/or burial, a \$50 + mileage additional honorarium is graciously requested for the extra time.

\*Occasionally the family may request music requiring extra rehearsal, such as the inclusion of an amateur choir or ensemble. An additional \$50 honorarium is requested for the extra preparation time.

\*If there are special circumstances regarding fees and/or church membership, please talk directly to the Pastor. Amendments to this policy can be discussed on a case-by-case basis at the Pastor's discretion.

## FOOD OPTIONS

There is a lot to plan, and sometimes it is easier to start with the less personal and more practical tasks during what may be an emotional time. First Presbyterian Church works with local businesses to provide catered meals, which typically take place after the funeral or memorial service. \*Please talk with the funeral home to determine menu ideas; the church is not involved in making these decisions.

- ❖ The church, if asked, will provide cakes/cupcakes/bars/cookies, coffee and lemonade. Family members are expected to have all other food catered.
  - In cases where a funeral home is involved, the funeral home will contact FPC to start the meal planning process.
  - When a funeral home is NOT involved, the family will contact FPC directly.
- ❖ First Presbyterian Church does not possess catering equipment such as food warmers. Assume that the caterers will need to provide full service unless other arrangements are discussed with the FPC funeral luncheon coordinator.
- ❖ FPC is a green-friendly facility and discourages the use of paper/plastic tableware.
- ❖ In all cases involving food provided by FPC, a contribution to the FPC Funeral Fund is greatly appreciated.
- ❖ Any time the kitchen is used for a funeral, the church member volunteer contacts members to serve. The servers make coffee, prepare the desserts, and provide plates, silverware, and glasses/cups. Due to state laws and regulations, servers are also responsible for running the dishwasher and handling clean-up. If you are a family member, please allow the servers to do their work so that you can participate in the funeral gathering to celebrate the life of your loved one.

\*If you have a special or unusual circumstance regarding food, please talk to the Pastor directly. Amendments to this policy can be discussed on an individual basis.