

# *Planning Guide*

## *For*

### *Your Service of the Resurrection*

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.

(W-6.3006) From The Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (USA)

Planning Your Service of the Resurrection  
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# SERVICE OF RESURRECTION

## **Estate Information**

- Will
- Financial Accounts
- Life Insurance

## **Military Service Information**

- Veteran's Burial Benefits

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*Notes:*

# Forward

A service in celebration of one's entering into resurrection is more than a memorial service and certainly more than a funeral service. In this service ***we gather to remember and celebrate.***

We *remember* our loved one's life and accomplishments. We celebrate that they have been freed from all earthly pain and are now in the glorious company of the LORD our GOD and all the saints who have gone before. We celebrate that the one we have loved has entered into the life that God, our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer, originally willed for us, promised us, and continually works in us throughout our lives. We celebrate the eternal life of self-fulfillment that comes in loving, praising, serving God, and living in peace with fellow human beings.

Life in heaven can be described as entering into "rest" (Hebrews 4:1), but that does not mean lying down and doing nothing forever. It means rest from all the frustration, conflict, and self-contradiction that results from our self-destructive attempts to live without or against God and other people. It means coming to rest without true selves as we live in free and open community with the all in the Kingdom.

## Resurrection of the Body

"Some hard and painful experiences in our lives are simply the result of our being finite creatures. It is part of our creaturely existence that here is decay as well as growth, age as well as youth, loss as well as gain, pain as well as pleasure, sickness as well as health, death as well as birth. Creaturely life at best is fragile, vulnerable, and temporary. Scripture is quite honest about this. Human beings are like the flowers of the field that blossom, live for a while, then wither and die (Psalm 103:15; Isaiah 40:6-7). Some suffering and death are the result of our own or others' sinfulness, but according to scripture, suffering and death as such are not evil. They only mean that we are creatures and not God. Unlike the Creator, we creatures do not live forever."

"Because God raised Jesus from the dead, we may be sure that God will do the same for everyone. (1 Corinthians 15:12-22; Romans 8:11). Once again we see that Christian hope for the future is based on what has already happened in the past."

"The key to understanding hope for bodily resurrection lies in the fact that for the biblical writers "body," or "flesh," is a synonym for "human being." Resurrection of the body means resurrection of a *person*. To hope for it is to hope that my human self, the person that "I" am, will live again. I will not be someone or something different from who and what I am now. I will be *myself*. The same holds true, of course, for other people.

"Now for the biblical writers (as for realistic modern people), it is impossible to think of a human being without a body. How can anyone be a distinct, recognizable individual person without a body? Without ears, eyes, mouths, hands, feet, and the male or female identity that make us the men and women we are, how could we love, praise, serve, and live in communion with God? How could we recognize, communicate with, and relate personally to other people? Resurrection of persons means necessarily resurrection of their *bodies*."

Many ask what to expect from their resurrection body. Would it be the same old version we have a death, arthritic or deformed? The apostle Paul said that we will have perfect "spiritual bodies" (1 Corinthians 15:42-44). We cannot and need not try to conceive exactly what that might mean. But if we follow the rule that our best clue to what is going to happen to us is what happened to Jesus, we may say that our resurrected "spiritual" bodies will be something like his resurrected body. First John 3:2 says that we do not know what we will be, but we do know that we will be "like him."

According to the Gospel stories of Jesus' post resurrection appearances (Matthew 28:9-10; Luke 24:13-50; John 20:11-29; 21:1-13), the disciples recognized the risen Jesus as the same earthly Jesus they had known before. He was no disembodied ghost. He walked and talked, ate and drank, and could be touched. He had a *body*. But it was a mysteriously *different* body. It was so transformed that even those who knew him best did not always recognize him. He could suddenly vanish from sight or appear in a room with locked doors. Whatever we make of the details of these strange stories, they tell us there was both continuity and discontinuity between the physical-earthly and the spiritual-resurrected Jesus. He was the same person in a different way.

This is our hope, that "we will still be the individual human beings we are now, with the ability to have a genuinely personal relationship with God and other people, (including those who have gone before us and those who will come after us) in the eternal "communion of the saints."

*When will our resurrection happen?* The New Testament gives us two different answers to this question. On one hand we are told that we may expect to be with Christ immediately at our death. In Luke 23:42 Jesus says to the dying thief, "Today you will be with me in Paradise." In Philippians 1:23 Paul expresses his longing to "depart and be with Christ." On the other hand, Paul tells us that there is something like a waiting sleep of all the dead until they are all raised at the same time in what was later called "a general resurrection" at the end of history (1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

...We may believe that Jesus' promise to the thief on the cross applies to each one of us; *This day*, at the very moment of death, we will be raised to be with Christ. For us, all the heartache, pain, suffering, and injustice that are part of human life in this world will be over once and for all. But they will not be over for those who still live and will yet live in such a world. If God is a God who loves and suffers with and for a suffering world, then that is also true of those who live in communion with God. As God will never rest until God's plan to create a whole new heaven and earth is fulfilled, so the dead who are with God will not find perfect rest until then. Until that time comes, those who have died and share God's eternal life still live in their own way as we do "between the time". For them too the kingdom of God has already come in all its fullness, but they too still wait for the time when there will be no more mourning or crying or pain or death anymore, for anyone, anywhere (Revelations 21:4). They do not wait to get their bodies back so that their own eternal happiness may be complete; they wait for the restoration of all creation, for their own joy in living with God will not be complete until it is shared by everyone ..."

Christian Doctrine by Shirley C. Guthrie, Westminster-John Knox Press: Louisville. 1994, pages 393-96.

# Common Questions

## WHY HAVE A FUNERAL OR MEMORIAL SERVICE?

*It is appropriate for worshipers to sing hymns, psalms, spirituals, or spiritual songs which affirm God's power over death, a belief in the resurrection to life everlasting, and the assurance of the communion of saints. Scripture shall be read; a sermon or other exposition of the Word may be proclaimed; an affirmation of faith may be made by the people. Aspects of the life of the one who has died may be recalled. Prayers shall be offered giving thanks to God...making intercessions ... lifting supplications ... The service ends by commending the one who has died to the care of the eternal God and sending the people forth with a benediction. (W-4.10004)*

## WHERE SHOULD THE SERVICE BE HELD?

*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. (W-4.10003) Your service may also be held at the funeral home. Your funeral director will work with you on this.*

## WHEN SHOULD A SERVICE BE HELD?

Timing should take into consideration the needs of you family. Funerals normally occur within several days of the death. Memorial services can take place at any time. Your funeral or memorial ... *service may be observed on any day. (W-4.10003).* Of course, the time and place is subject to time commitments of both the church and pastor. It is important for your loved ones to contact the pastor prior to finalizing the plans at the funeral home.

## WHAT TYPES OF SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE?

**The funeral service** is one in which the casket is present. *When a casket is present it ordinarily is closed. (W-4.10005)* The funeral service is ordinarily held within a few days following the death.

**The memorial service** is one in which the body is not present. It may be held days, weeks, or even months after death. Sometimes families prefer that the cremains be present for such a service. The choice between a memorial or funeral service is based solely upon the wishes and desires of the family. Sample orders of worship are on p. 6.

## WHAT IS A COMMITTAL SERVICE?

It is appropriate that *members and friends of the family of the one who has died should gather at the graveside or crematorium for a service of farewell... This service is simple and brief. It includes Scripture readings, prayers, words of committal, and a blessing reflecting the reality of death, entrusting the one who has died to the care of God, and bearing witness to the faith in the resurrection from the dead. (W-4.10006)*

## CAN MY CLUB'S RITUAL BE A PART OF THE SERVICE ?

*The service shall be complete in itself, and any fraternal, civic, or military rites should be conducted separately. (W-4.10005)*

## WHAT ABOUT DISPOSITION OF THE BODY?

Many people have questions about appropriate and "faithful" disposition of the body after death. This should be done with respect. However, this can be accomplished in many ways. Here are a few options:

- **BURIAL** is the most common. *Genesis* reminds us that we are created from the dust of the earth. And when we have no more use for an earthly body we return it to the earth from which it came. Burial may be either in the earth directly, in a mausoleum, or in an above-ground crypt.
- **CREMATION** is not contrary to Christian belief. The body returns to dust whether by natural means or by an accelerated means such as cremation. The cremains may be disposed of either by burial, placement in a niche, scattered (laws permitting) or be retained by relatives.
- **DONATION** of various organs to benefit others or of the entire body for research is also an option. It is a generous act which offers one's body for the benefit of others. If you choose to donate your body or various organs, pre-arrangements must be made with a medical school or donor center.

### **SHOULD MY PLANS BE PLACED IN MY WILL?**

DO NOT place your funeral plans in your will. Quite often the will is not read until well after the time of death. This means that your plans may not be honored simply because they were not discovered in time. Give copies of your plan to your family or a close friend and discuss it with them. A copy of your plans along with plans for the service should be filed with the church. They will be kept in a secure file until needed.

### **SHOULD I CHOOSE THE SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR MY SERVICE?**

Scripture readings can be chosen by you or the pastor. Scripture that will comfort and provide hope in the resurrection of Christ are often used. Your personal favorite scripture passages would also be appropriate. Examples are on p. 6-7.

### **WHAT IS APPROPRIATE MUSIC FOR A SERVICE?**

Since a funeral or memorial service is a celebration of the resurrection of Christ and the hope we have in Him, it is appropriate that the service be uplifting and joyous. Appropriate music for the service would include resurrection hymns, other hymns, songs, spiritual songs, and classical music which reflect the hope and joy we have in Jesus Christ. Since this is a service of worship, care should be taken to avoid music which does not speak to the hope, joy, and comfort we experience through God's love. Examples are on p. 8.

### **WHAT FLOWERS ARE APPROPRIATE FOR A SERVICE?**

Since flowers are a gift of beauty from God, the choice of flowers and amount used should be a personal preference. Your wishes regarding flowers should be recorded in your funeral plan and shared with family.

### **ARE THERE OTHER EXPRESSIONS BESIDES FLOWERS?**

Flowers are the most common form of expression, however, not the only one. To provide a longer term expression of love, you may encourage friends and family to make a memorial gift to the church, charity or organization of your preference. These gifts are received in the name of the one who has died and the immediate family is notified of these gifts.

### **WHEN SHOULD I BEGIN PLANNING?**

It is never too late. Many people try to avoid thinking about death as long as possible. However, it is important to make your wishes and plans known. This is a way of showing love for your family by sparing them some of the many decisions which must be made when a death occurs.

### **WHAT ARE SOME OF THE RESOURCES ?**

- LIVING WILL** - will enable you to record your wishes about the use of life support systems.
- WILL** - is crucial, especially if you have children.
- PERSONAL INFORMATION SHEET (Included)**- is a document in which you record important information to assist the pastor / family at the time of your death. This may include information about personal preferences in scripture and music along with funeral / memorial services plans, etc.

# *Worship / Scripture / Music Examples*

## **WORSHIP**

Order of Worship suggestions from the Presbyterian Book of Common Worship

Prelude  
[Placing of the Pall]  
Sentences of Scripture  
Hymn  
Prayer  
[Remarks from family / friends]  
Readings from Scripture  
Message  
Lord's Prayer  
Affirmation of Faith  
Hymn  
Benediction  
Recession

## **SCRIPTURE** *(select from this list or other applicable favorites)*

### Psalm 124:8

Our hope is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

### Romans 6:3-5

Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

### John 11:25-26

"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.

### Revelation 21:6; 22:13; 1:17-18; John 14:19

I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. I was dead and behold I am alive forever and ever; Because I live, you also will live.

### Matthew 11:28

Come to me all who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.

### 1 Peter 1:3-4

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you,

### Psalm 46:1

God is our refuge and our strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear.

### John 14:27

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.

Psalm 103:13; Isaiah 66:13

As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him. As a mother comforts her child, so I will comfort you, says the LORD.

Deuteronomy 33:27

The eternal God is your dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms.

Romans 8:38-39

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Revelation 1:17-18

Do not be afraid, I am the first and the last, and the living one; I was dead, and behold, I am alive forever and ever.

Isaiah 41:10

Do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand.

Matthew 5:4

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

2 Corinthians 1:3-4

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.

1 Thessalonians 4:14, 17-18

We believe that Jesus died and rose again; and so it will be for those who have died in Christ. God will raise them to be with the Lord forever. Comfort one another with these words.

Romans 14:8

If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.

Revelation 14:13

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, says the Spirit, and their deeds follow them.

John 10:14; Isaiah 40:11

Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me. He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom."

## MUSIC

### Selecting Music for your service

- I. Structure
  - A. Hymn of Praise (strong and God-centered)
  - B. Sermon Hymn (confident faith, perhaps favorite hymn of family)
  - C. Closing Hymn (affirming the resurrection)
  
- II. Special Music
  - A. Soloists
    1. Soloist / choir / praise team normally not scheduled
    2. Considerations from a singer's standpoint
    3. Music needs to be accessible
    4. Difficulty of emotions on a singer
    5. Appropriateness for the service
    6. Accompaniment
    7. Scheduling and compensation
    8. Outside people using the instruments
  - B. Pianist / Organist
    1. Normally our own organist / pianist
    2. Prelude music sets the tone and can include favorites
    3. Contemporary music
    4. Compensation
  - C. Non-worship music
    1. This can be used before the service starts or during the reception
    2. Appropriateness and availability of sound system
  
- III. Use of video / slide shows
  - A. More people would like to incorporate this before the service starts. It needs to be carefully coordinated with the staff.
  - B. Not every format can be shown in the sanctuary.
  
- IV. Final Notes: If you have questions about appropriateness of songs or other matters, do not hesitate to ask the staff. If you would like a particular piece of music, we can assist you in procuring a copy to have on file.

#### Hymn of praise examples

*Praise to the Lord, the Almighty  
For the Beauty of the Earth  
From All that Dwell Below the Skies  
All Creatures of our God and King  
Immortal, Invisible, God Only-Wise  
Now Thank We All Our God*

*We Praise Thee, O God, Our Redeemer,  
Creator  
Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee  
All Hail the Power of Jesus Name  
Our God, Our Help in Ages Past*

#### Sermon hymn examples

*Blessed Assurance  
Be Still, My Soul  
How Great Thou Art  
Love divine, All Loves Excelling*

*Great is Thy Faithfulness  
Amazing Grace  
My Faith Looks Up to Thee*

#### Closing hymn examples

*Thine is the Glory  
The Strife is O'er  
For All the Saints*

*God of Grace and God of Glory  
Alleluia, Alleluia, Give Thanks  
The Day of Resurrection*

# Planning Your Service of the Resurrection

Return completed form to the Pastor or Church Office: (Make copies for family members. This copy is kept on file in the Pastor's office.)

## Personal Information

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (home) \_\_\_\_\_ (work) \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security Number \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Place of Birth (city) \_\_\_\_\_ (county) \_\_\_\_\_ (state) \_\_\_\_\_

Marital Status  Married (name of spouse) \_\_\_\_\_  Never Married  Widowed  Divorced

Education \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation / Career History \_\_\_\_\_

Places of residence throughout your life \_\_\_\_\_

Interests & hobbies \_\_\_\_\_

Church background \_\_\_\_\_

Other Organizations \_\_\_\_\_

**Personal Information (con't)**

Parents (provide names and phone numbers) \_\_\_\_\_

Siblings (provide names and phone numbers) \_\_\_\_\_

Children (provide names and phone numbers) \_\_\_\_\_

Other Family Contacts (provide names and phone numbers) \_\_\_\_\_

**Preferences for my funeral / memorial service**

Location of service of worship: \_\_\_\_\_

**A. I prefer a service: (choose one)**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Funeral** (with casket)

Do you prefer that the Funeral Pall be placed on the Casket? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **Memorial** (without a casket)

**B. I prefer: (choose one)**

\_\_\_\_\_ Burial: Place of Burial: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Cremation: Place for ashes \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Donation for medical research of transplant:

Enter location for donation: \_\_\_\_\_

**I prefer: (choose one)**

\_\_\_\_\_ Public Interment or \_\_\_\_\_ Private Interment

**C. Name / Address / Phone number** of memorial society or funeral home where you have made arrangements: \_\_\_\_\_



