FUNERAL/MEMORIAL SERVICE POLICY

Funeral/Memorial Service Policy

THE FUNERAL SERVICE AND MEMORIAL SERVICE

1. **In the presence of death, Christians witness to their faith that God, in Jesus Christ, has conquered death and raises His people from death to life eternal.** In order that those who are bereaved may find strength and comfort in the presence of God, and support from the people of God, it is appropriate that a service of worship be held. When a service of worship is held, it should be conducted by a minister and shall be under the authority of the minister and the session. A service held in a church provides the best setting for turning the hearts of those bereaved to the comfort of God to be found in Christ, but circumstances may suggest another setting.
2. **The funeral or memorial service should be conducted with dignity in consideration of the life and circumstances of the deceased, and the pastoral needs of the family, congregation, and community.** As our Lord Himself wept at the grave of Lazarus, beholding the tears of Mary and the others, so it is appropriate that due place be given for the grief which is present when a loved one dies.
3. **The worship service must include a witness to the resurrection and the promise of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.** Believers have the sure and certain hope that Jesus Christ has conquered death, has gone to prepare a place for them, and will come again to receive them to Himself, that where He is, they may be also. Assurance should be given that when believers are absent from the body, they are present with the Lord, awaiting the blessed day of Christ's return when all who are in their tombs will hear the voice of the Son of Man, and those who have believed will come forth to the resurrection of life.
4. **The worship service should include the reading of appropriate passages from the Holy Scripture and the offering of prayers of thanksgiving, intercession, and supplication.** Personal remarks about the deceased may be made to give honor to whom honor is due and thanksgiving to God for benefits received and a good example given, as appropriate in each case. However, due care should always be taken to keep the focus of the service on God, who helps and comforts those who grieve, and to whom alone all praise belongs. Intercessions should not be offered in behalf of the dead, nor attempts made to speak to the dead. If songs or other music are included, they should be appropriate for the worship of God. When the casket is present, it should remain closed during the worship in order that those present may more completely be directed to God. The service should be closed with a benediction unless followed by a service of committal to which all are invited.

5. **The service of committal should be done with Scripture and prayer, and the service closed with a benediction.**

The Directory of Public Worship – Associate Reformed Presbyterian General Synod, approved in 2007.

Specific Information to First ARP Church, Gastonia

1. The minister and/or associate pastors of First ARP Church will conduct the funeral service. Any requests for another pastor to assist in any part of the service must be approved by the minister of First ARP Church.
2. The minister will meet with the family to make all of the arrangements for the funeral service. The minister is available to go with the family to the funeral home to assist in making arrangements if the family desires.
3. If at all possible, funerals should not be scheduled on holidays or Sundays.
4. Paraments will be changed to White.
5. Childcare will not be provided by the church for a funeral.
6. If so desired, First ARP Church will provide the printed bulletin for the Funeral or Memorial Service that is held in the church. Information for the bulletin should be provided to the minister of our church within 24 hours of the service.
7. No pictures of the deceased may be placed at the front of the sanctuary on display during the service as to direct the focus of worshippers toward God. (Pictures from the family may be displayed at the Visitation).
8. All music used shall be appropriate for a Christian service of worship and shall be approved by the Director of Music and the Minister.
9. One flower arrangement will typically be placed on the flower stand at the front of the church appropriate for worship and to naturally direct worshippers toward God. (Other flower arrangements may be placed in the Welcome Center or at the visitation in the chapel area or the fellowship hall (wherever the visitation takes place). The family will be responsible for supplying the flowers and ordering them.
10. Use of a casket spray, American Flag or the church Pall are acceptable.
11. Please see the ADDENDUM for Bereavement Ministry Policy regarding meals for the family and the options.
12. Ushers – if the family has any specific persons that they wish to usher, the family should indicate their wishes on the form provided. If no ushers are requested, our usher ministry will select the ushers for the service.
13. Sound System – the church will secure someone to work the system during the service. If other microphones are needed, please indicate the number of microphones and other equipment that is needed to accommodate musicians, etc. Please indicate all needs on the form.

14. If the family would like the service recorded and/or live-streamed, this should also be indicated on the form.
15. There is no charge for use of the church facilities by church members.
16. Special requests for use of our church facility for a non-member for a funeral would go through the Facility Request Procedure and Form.
17. Honorariums are appropriate for those serving the family. Appropriate amounts are: Minister(s): - $200 (if one minister) $100 each (if two ministers), Organist - $150, Vocalists: $75 - $100, Sound Technician - $75.
18. The Church Administrator shall take care of the following details as requested by the Minister after being in contact with the family:
    - Have Paraments changed to White.
    - Furniture moved (when necessary).
    - Register stands placed at entrances.
    - Be in touch with Organist, vocalists, when necessary.
    - The family is responsible for providing and ordering the flowers.
    - Make sure the bulletin is typed and in the Sanctuary prior to the service.
    - Reserve the Chapel/Fellowship Hall for visitations and/or lunch – receptions.
    - If a meal is provided, arrange for those to wash dishes.
    - Be in contact with the custodian.

Example/Suggested Funeral/Memorial Service Order

- Prelude
- Processional
- Words of Welcome
- Invocation
- Hymn
- Old Testament Lesson
- Special Music
- New Testament Lesson
- Message of Hope
- Hymn of Response
- Benediction
- Recessional
- Postlude

Committal Service (either prior to or after service) could be family only, could be public.