

TIPS ON PLANNING A

Funeral



[FPCI.ORG/FUNERALS](https://www.fpci.org/funerals)

Funeral Planning Guide and Worksheet

The Christian Funeral Service

This service is a gathering of family and friends, who form a community of hope. A funeral or memorial service is a rich opportunity to recall the promises of God through Christ. Because of His suffering, death, and resurrection to new life, each time we gather to worship upon the death of a loved one, we do so in the context of God's promise. Every funeral includes praising God in Christ who is our hope and our salvation, even as we remember the deceased and give thanks to God for the time shared with that person.

Christians view death as another step in our life as children of God. Yet, Christians also experience death as a time of loss when sorrow, grief, and bereavement are both natural and appropriate. These two truths inform the Christian funeral service and guide the church in its ministry to those who have lost a loved one to death, affirming with both joy and tears the promise and hope of the Good News of Jesus.

A funeral or memorial service should be comforting to those who mourn as well as bear witness to our faith in Jesus Christ. The concern of gathered friends does minister to our grief but, above all else, a funeral is a service of worship to God. There, in God's presence together, we witness to our faith in the communion of saints, the resurrection of the body, and the life ever-lasting. In doing so, the assurance of God's love and salvation in Christ become a ministry, especially to the bereaved. Since a funeral is a service of worship, all that takes place should be consistent with this principle.

This Funeral Planning Guide and Worksheet is designed to:

- to provide a tool for planning for the future when your life on this earth ends, and
- to support and guide families making plans upon the death of a loved one.

In the first days following a loved one's death, the family makes an average of 200 decisions. During such an emotional, stressful and demanding time, plans that have been made earlier lighten the load after death.

If you've not made advance plans, this guide will be helpful to you as you arrange for services and burial of your loved one.

This guide will walk you through a series of questions. Your responses can be marked on the worksheet at the end. The Pastor is available to discuss any items with you. When you are finished, please share your worksheet with a family member or friend who will act on your behalf after your death. It would also be helpful to contact the pastor to share your worksheet so that it can be held in safekeeping for the future.

Planning Faithfully, Choosing Wisely

Am I a member?

One of the most common misunderstandings we encounter at the church is over membership. Membership in the Presbyterian Church (USA) operates differently than other denominations. Every year First Presbyterian church pays the national church \$45 per member on our rolls, therefore we regularly adjust our membership rolls to reflect active participation either in attendance or financial contributions. If it's been a while since you worshiped with us or since you contributed financially to the church, it's probable that you are no longer a member. This isn't anything you did wrong; it's simply financially infeasible to keep people on the rolls indefinitely. Please verify with the office or a pastor to determine if you are a member before meeting with a funeral director.

If I choose cremation, do I need to secure the services of a Funeral Director?

We highly recommend working with a Funeral Director. This professional will ease the strain upon family members by coordinating all the details and thus contributing to your wishes being carried out with dignity and honor. Even if cremation is your desire, a Funeral Director handles many details that are not taken care of by the church, the Pastor, or family members. Attempting to save money by not using a Funeral Director is likely to cause confusion and frustration at a time when you most need guidance and support.

Should I make arrangements with a funeral director?

Making the decision to arrange some aspects of your funeral and/or burial is helpful. An appointment with a funeral director in advance of death is a wise step to help you decide what you and your family need from the many services available. If you are a family member caring for a dying loved one, making an initial contact now with a funeral director can be very helpful and will lessen the decisions and demands you'll face upon death.

When a funeral director is not involved additional planning by the family is needed, including, but not limited to: ushers to handout bulletins and direct people to be seated. Additional items to provide: a guest register, container for cards of sympathy, transferring floral arrangements and memorabilia to the reception.

How soon after death does a funeral or memorial service take place?

We recommend holding a service within a week or two following death. Waiting longer may delay the grief work that follows the death of a loved one and impact your sense of closure. If a funeral or memorial service is to be followed by a burial that same day, the schedule of the cemetery workers dictates when burials are held. Surcharges apply for weekend burials, and burials are not available on holidays.

What fees are associated with a funeral or memorial service at FPC Southampton?

All fees are coordinated with the Funeral Director. If you are not using a funeral director, the cost is \$800 and covers the pastor, musician, custodian, and office support. You may pay the church directly prior to or on the day of the service.

Who makes arrangements for the musician(s)?

The pastor assists in helping families coordinate music for all funerals. If you arrange for a vocalist apart from the music director, you must arrange to pay that person directly.

A family friend is a pastor, can they be included in the service?

While your friend will certainly be honored to help, friends of the family, even pastors, need time to grieve losses. By asking them to help with the service, you are denying them an opportunity to show up as a friend and grieve alongside of the family. It is also very hard for a family friend to say, "no" to people they love and who are grieving. Please take all of this into consideration before you request their participation.

May we have a visitation at the church the evening before the service, or must that take place at a funeral home?

The visitation the day before a service generally occurs at the Funeral Home.

Who is responsible for producing the order of worship and bulletin?

After the service has been planned with the Pastor, the church office produces the service program.

Who is responsible for submitting the death notice and obituary to the newspaper?

The Funeral Director can take care of this for you. A full obituary normally appears 2-3 days before the visitation and funeral. There is a cost for this, and the Funeral Director can assist you. Notices to other newspapers can also be handled by the Funeral Director at your request.

Who plans the reception following the funeral or memorial service?

The family is responsible for arranging the catering for a luncheon or reception following the service, including servers. Presbyterian Women or The Board of Deacons, may also be available to help with the serving. A free-will donation to the group would be appropriate. The office has a list of several restaurants in the area that are familiar with catering at FPC. The Dining Hall or Parlor are generally available, please let the pastor know if you would like to use the space.

Who is responsible for the floral arrangements following the service and/or reception?

The floral arrangements belong to the family. It is the family's responsibility to remove the flowers from the church. They may choose to take arrangements to their home, to nursing homes, or other places where others may enjoy the beauty. Arrangements may be donated for use in Sunday worship or to enjoy in the office.

What if I desire to have memorials directed to FPC or other organizations?

This is an honorable thing to do. FPC and any other organizations you choose are blessed when memorials are directed to support their ministries and missions. The Funeral Director will be happy to include any memorial designation(s) in the notices about the funeral service. All memorial gifts received directly by FPC will generate an acknowledgment to you and shared with the congregation in the weekly bulletin.

FUNERAL PLANNING WORKSHEET

When planning your funeral, or a funeral for a loved one, there are many choices to make. Facing some of those choices now will make the process less demanding for your loved ones later. This Funeral Planning Worksheet will lead you through a variety of decisions. After death, a Pastor of FPC will meet with family members and review your worksheet to form the funeral or memorial service.

This worksheet may be used by:

- an individual making their advance plans known, or
- a family planning the funeral of a loved one nearing death or recently deceased.

Please supply as much information as you wish to share on any parts of the worksheet.

Guide for the Christian Funeral of _____

First, Middle (Maiden), Last

Date Completed: _____

When you have completed this worksheet, please consider sharing it with the FPC Pastor. Your information will be kept in a confidential file available only to the Pastor of FPC. It will be used in consultation with your family or whomever you have directed to carry out these wishes upon your death.

Also, after completing the worksheet, consider telling someone you trust about it. You may wish to discuss with them what you have written to be certain that it is clear. Consider providing copies to your family or Funeral Director.

Visitation

A Visitation is an informal gathering for friends and family to express sympathy, view photographs/video tribute, etc.

Will a Visitation be Held?

Yes or No

Location of Visitation

Funeral Home or

Other: _____

Will the Remains be Present at the Visitation?

Coffin with Viewing of Body

Closed Coffin

Urn with Photograph next to it

No Remains Present

Time of the Visitation

Evening Prior to the Service

Before the Service Only

Both

Displays

Photographic Displays

Mementos (Awards, Certificates, etc.)

Bible of the Deceased

Video Tribute

Other: _____

Christian Worship Service Plans

Location of Service

FPC

Funeral Home, Name: _____

Cemetery (A Graveside Service Only)

Other: _____ (i.e. Care Facility Chapel, etc.)

Will the Remains be Present at the Worship Service?

Yes (Coffin or Urn with Ashes)

No

Readers

___ The Pastor who officiates will read.

___ I would like this/these person(s) to read at my service:

Bible Readings

___ The Pastor may choose the readings.

___ My family will choose the readings.

___ I have chosen the readings as indicated here. (Circle up to 3)

Suggested Readings:

Old Testament

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

Job 19:23-27

Isaiah 40:1-11, 28-31

Isaiah 40:28-31

Psalms 23

Psalms 34

Psalms 46:1-5, 10-11

Psalms 90:1-10, 12

Psalms 121

Psalms 130

Psalms 139:1-6, 13-18

Psalms 149

New Testament

Colossians 2:6-19

Colossians 3:12-17

1 Corinthians 13

1 Corinthians 15:51-58

2 Corinthians 4:16-5:1

2 Corinthians 9

1 John 4:7-12

Romans 6:3-11

Romans 8:31-39

Romans 14:7-9, 10b-12

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Revelation 21:1-4, 22-25, 22:3-5

Revelation 22:1-5

Gospel

Matthew 5:1-12a

Matthew 6:25-34

Luke 23:33, 39-43

John 11:17-27

John 14:1-6, 25-27

Other Readings Selected:

Congregational Hymns

- The Pastor who officiates may choose the hymns.
- My family will choose the hymns
- I have chosen the hymns as indicated below.

Suggested Hymns

I Know That My Redeemer Lives!
 Love Divine All Loves Excelling
 O God, Our Help in Ages Past
 For All the Saints
 The King of Love My Shepherd Is
 Lift High the Cross
 Great is Thy Faithfulness
 A Mighty Fortress
 My Faith Looks up to Thee
 My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less

Amazing Grace
 How Great Thou Art
 This Is My Father's World
 What a Friend We Have in Jesus
 On Eagle's Wings

Other Hymns Selected:

Soloist

If possible, I would like this vocalist to sing: _____

Remembrances to be shared during worship by family or friends.

Yes or No

I would like a reception following worship.

Yes or No

Funeral Home

Preferred Company _____

(Specific arrangements in advance at the funeral home of your choice are encouraged.)

Have Pre-Arrangements Been Made?

Yes or No

Disposition of the Body

- Embalm Body *(Usually required if unrefrigerated over 24 hours before burial.)*
- Cremate Body Shortly After Death
- Cremate Body After Visitation and/or Service

Burial Wishes

- Bury Coffin/Urn in Cemetery
- Other: _____

Bury Coffin or Urn

- Before Visitation
- After Visitation but Before Funeral Service
- After Funeral Service but Before Luncheon Reception
- After Luncheon Reception
- At a Later Date:

Eligible for Military Honors

Yes or No

Names of Pall Bearers

(Six Pall Bearers needed when there is a coffin for burial. Honorary Pall Bearers may also be named if no coffin.)

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Cemetery

I have made arrangements for my burial.

Name of Cemetery _____ Location of Cemetery _____

I do not have arrangements for my burial. I suggest the following arrangements:

Desired Expressions of Sympathy

Flowers

I desire Memorial Gifts in lieu of Flowers

Memorial Suggestions

FPC's Memorial Fund

Other: _____

Obituary

Full Name *(including Maiden Name)* _____

Birth Date and Location _____

Parent's Names *(including Mother's Maiden Name)* _____

Marital Status, Marriage Date, and Name of Spouse _____

Other Marriages/Divorces/Spouse(s) _____

Names of Children

Additional Next of Kin

Important Documents and Advisors

It is important that survivors be able to locate vital records and important documents. Before your death, you should have a current will/living trust and related health care directives which express your wishes on important personal, financial, medical, and charitable issues for your survivors. If you need information regarding estate planning, planned giving, and/or the inclusion of a Christian preamble for your will, please consult your legal or financial advisor.

Location and Date of Will/Living Trust

Location of my Living Will

Attorney/Will Preparer

Power of Attorney/Financial

Power of Attorney/Health Care

Executor of Will/Estate

Guardian (for Minor Children)

Additional Comments:

Personal History

Record additional information including place(s) of residence, special events, hobbies/interests, schools attended and degrees received, accomplishments, memberships, employment history, volunteer activities, military service, etc. Include as many full names, city of residence, birth and death dates, etc. as possible. All this information is important to your family.

This information does not need to be prepared in paragraph form.

Personal History Prompts

Were you named after a family member or does your name have a special meaning? Do you have a nickname that your siblings or friends call you? How did you get it?

What are your parents' names? Did your parents have siblings? Who were your grandparents and what were they like? Did you see them much as a child? Who were your siblings and what are/were they like?

Where did you grow up? What was it like growing up in your house? How did your family spend time together when you were young? Did you have a best friend? What did your friends do for fun when you were young? What were their names? Did you have a favorite toy as a child? Did you get an allowance? How much was it? What did you spend your money on? What schools did you attend as a child? Did you have a favorite subject in school or a favorite teacher? Why? Names? What is the most important lesson that your parents taught you? What did you want to be when you grew up?

Personal History Prompts

What was your first job? Did you attend college? Did you serve in the military?

Were you married? What is/was your spouse's full name? How did you meet your spouse? What was your marriage proposal like? When did you get married? Where was your wedding? Who was your matron of honor/best man?

Where have you lived? Tell me about your first house.

If you have children, what is your favorite memory with them? What kinds of things did you like to do most with your children? Do you have a favorite family vacation memory? Do you have a holiday tradition? What is your favorite thing about the holidays?

Do you like to travel? Where have you traveled? What is your favorite city, why?

Personal History Prompts

When did you become a member at First Presbyterian Church? What impact has the church had on your life? What kinds of church activities do you remember fondly? In what ways has the church changed over the years? What remains the same? Have you found a particular bible passage or hymn comforting or helpful? Why is it helpful?

What makes you happy? Have you ever owned any pets? What was your first pet? What could you tell me that I would be surprised to learn about you? What is the earliest memory that you have? How do you handle stress? When you reflect on your career or calling, can you remember a time that was particularly challenging/rewarding? What is the most challenge thing you have ever had to do?