

# FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

*Witness to the Resurrection*

*Funeral, Memorial and Committal  
Policy & Planning Guide*





## *Our Service*

“For we do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord’s. For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.”  
--Romans 14:7-9



Christians recognize the inevitability of death. In the presence of death, Christians witness to their faith that God, in Jesus Christ, has conquered death and assures us of the hope of everlasting life. The Christian service at the time of death is an affirmation of the hope of the gospel. Therefore, the service is called a Witness to the Resurrection.

When a death has occurred the Pastor should be notified immediately, in order that the Pastor may help the bereaved in relating the reality of death to the sustaining reality of the Christian community and the hope to which it witnesses. If the Pastor is not available, then one or more of the Elders should be called to serve until the Pastor arrives.

# *Our Policy*

- A Witness to the Resurrection Service ordinarily takes place within days following a death. A closed casket or urn may be present. A service where the remains are not present may occur at a suitable time for the family.
- The Witness to the Resurrection Service is usually held in the church and is under the direction of the Pastor. If the family wishes to have a Pastor from another church assist in the service, the First Presbyterian Church Pastor shall extend the invitation.
- If there are remains of the deceased, a closed casket may be placed at the foot of the chancel steps. Cremains in an urn may be placed at the top of the chancel steps on the table provided.
- The casket or urn is covered with a white pall while in the sanctuary. The church will supply the palls.
- The Witness to the Resurrection Service is an act of public worship. It includes provisions for singing hymns, confession, reading of scripture, prayers of thanksgiving and intercession, and affirmation of faith.
- Music expressing Christian praise, faith, and hope preceding and following the service shall be agreed upon by the Pastor, Director of Music Ministries, and the family.
- A Committal Service takes place at a cemetery or columbarium and may precede or follow a funeral or take place separately.

Witness to the Resurrection Services and Committal Services are held for First Pres Salisbury members, their immediate family, and friends of our faith community. These services praise God for the gift of life, witness to our trust in God's gift of eternal life in Jesus Christ, remember and celebrate the life of the deceased, and minister to the bereaved.



# Guidelines

## Upon death

- Notify the pastor.
- Notify the church office.
- Schedule a meeting with the pastor.
- Complete the End of Life Planning Form included in this booklet, if possible, and bring it to the meeting with the pastor.

## Flowers

Shortly after notifying the church office, you should receive a phone call from the flower coordinator about the Sanctuary flowers.

- The family will provide altar flowers for the Sanctuary at their expense if flowers are desired.
- Altar flowers are to be delivered to the Sanctuary.
- Florists should use a 6-inch pot. This size will slide into our flower urn.
- The flowers should be in a flat-back formation, as they will sit against a wall.
- The altar flower arrangement is the only arrangement that may be in the Sanctuary. All other flowers, plants, etc., will be used in the reception area.
- Following the service, all flowers/plants must be removed from the church property.
  - The only exception is if the altar flowers will be used for Sunday worship through prior agreement.

## Reception/Meal

- The church will provide a meal for family members or a simple reception where the family may greet guests.
- A contribution to the Martha Ministry fund to assist with costs is appreciated for large receptions.
- Pictures and memorabilia may be displayed on a single table during the meal or reception.
- A pictorial video may be played during the meal/reception.
  - + The video must be in .mp4 format.
  - + The video must be on a flash drive and turned into the church office at least one day before the service.
  - + The .mp4 video will be shown without music.

## Visitation

- Visitations may be held before or after the service.
- Visitations may be held in conjunction with a reception.

## Bulletins

- The Church will provide bulletins for the service.
- The obituary will be inserted into the bulletin.
- No pictures will be used in the bulletin.

## Music

- The family may choose up to three hymns to be used during the service. No pre-recorded music is allowed.
- Soloists and special musicians may be used upon approval of the Director of Music Ministries.
- The family is responsible for the payment of soloists and special guest musicians.
- All music must be appropriate for worship services, and the Director of Music Ministries has final approval.

## Live-streaming

Live streaming or recording can be a wonderful way to include distant loved ones in the funeral service. At First Presbyterian Church, live streaming or recording is possible. Upon request by the family at the planning meeting, the pastor will inquire if our AV Team is available to provide this service. Given the time and intensity of live streaming and recording using our system, we may lack the required resources.

## Ushers

- The Church will provide ushers for the service.
- Ushers will greet guests, hand out bulletins, and assist guests to their seats.
- Handicap seating for wheelchairs is available.
- Hearing Assist earplugs are available upon request.

## **Pallbearers**

- If the casket is in the Sanctuary, the family will be responsible for arranging for pallbearers.
- The funeral home will transport the casket to and from the Sanctuary to its final resting place.

## **Funeral Palls**

- The church will provide a pall for the casket or urn if present during the service. This white drape recalls the white robe that is the garment of baptism and serves as a reminder that through baptism, we have “put on Christ.”
- Flower sprays or national flags are not to be used in the worship service.
- The pall is not to be used outside at the graveside or the columbarium.

## **Columbarium**

First Presbyterian has a columbarium for member use. Please see the Columbarium Policy for purchasing requirements for a niche, plaque, or brick.

- Upon meeting purchasing requirements, see the Business Administrator to complete the paperwork and arrange for payment.
- A niche will fit up to two containers of ashes. Niche measurements: 9" deep, 13" wide, 9.5" high

## **Memorials**

Monetary gifts may be given in memory of your loved ones. This often happens in lieu of flowers.

Common designations are:

- TWAM (Teens With a Mission)
- General Fund
- Music
- Community Ministries

Other charities may be designated.

# Fees

## **Sanctuary:**

No fee for the use of the Sanctuary for weekday services.

## **Weekend services, Friday 12:00-3:00/Saturday 9:00-1:00:**

To be good stewards of the use of facilities and support staff,  
a fee of \$200.00 is required

**Services are not scheduled on Sunday.**

## **AV Fees (checks made payable to technician):**

- Level 1: \$50, includes mic set up for pastors and organist
- Level 2: \$100, includes mic set up, testing, and soundcheck for musicians/special music
- Level 3: Live streamed service - Only if the AV Team is available will this be possible. If it is possible, the fee is \$150

## **Musicians:**

- Organist: No fee. However, the family may wish to provide an honorarium to the organist (\$150.00 suggested amount)
- Other musicians/soloists: the Director of Music Ministries will notify the family of the fees.

## **Pastors:**

No fee. However, the family may wish to provide an honorarium (\$150.00 per pastor is the suggested amount).

# END OF LIFE PLANNING FORM

Deceased Name: Title, First, Middle/Maiden, Last

Address

Next of kin or contact person: Name, Address, Phone, Email

Funeral Home: Name, Address, Phone, Contact Name

Type of service desired: Service at church, Funeral Home, Graveside, and/or Columbarium inurnment

Hymn Choices: limit to 3

Preferred Scripture Verses: limit to 4

# Notes





# *Church Contact Information*

**Rev. Josh Musser Gritter**

Co-Senior Pastor

616-218-5375

[pastorjosh@firstpressalisbury.org](mailto:pastorjosh@firstpressalisbury.org)

**Rev. Lara Musser Gritter**

Co-Senior Pastor

630-222-5363

[pastorlara@firstpressalisbury.org](mailto:pastorlara@firstpressalisbury.org)

**Rev. Hannah Ostlund**

Associate Pastor

540-621-8497

[pastorhannah@firstpressalisbury.org](mailto:pastorhannah@firstpressalisbury.org)

**Christina Lewis**

Business Administrator,

Columbarium Contact

704-636-1321

[clewis@firstpressalisbury.org](mailto:clewis@firstpressalisbury.org)

**Christine Mowery**

Office Administrator

704-636-1321

[cmowery@firstpressalisbury.org](mailto:cmowery@firstpressalisbury.org)



Where God's Love is Alive for Mission

First Presbyterian Church  
308 W Fisher St  
Salisbury NC 28144  
[www.firstpressalisbury.org](http://www.firstpressalisbury.org) 704-636-1321

(Policy and Planning Guide approved by Session 6/19/2023)