



## Calvary Presbyterian Church Session Policy Statement Conduct of the Church's Witness to the Resurrection: The Christian Funeral

"Death is swallowed up; victory is won!" 2 Corinthians 15:54

The belief that life in the risen Christ undoes even the sting of death has typified the liturgy of the Christian funeral from the earliest traditions. Thus, it is with sensitive respect for the full impact of death—its sadness and grief—that Christians dare to celebrate the funeral liturgy. Without attempting to hide the reality of death under superficial ceremony, the Service of Witness to the Resurrection invites all concerned—family, friends, pastors, musicians, and church members—to accept courageously the death of a person and to surround that death with the church's liturgy, allowing the death and resurrection of Jesus to give Christian meaning to each death.

Sections W-4.01 and W-4.07 of the Directory for Worship of the PC(USA) offer specific guidance concerning our distinct Presbyterian practices on the occasion of death, and therefore, provide the basis for all Services of Witness to the Resurrection conducted at this church.

1. Families are urged to contact the pastor immediately upon the death of a member so that the pastor may offer the church's full ministry of comfort, guidance, care, and hope in the power of resurrection.
2. The pastor is available to serve as your spiritual counsel when making arrangements for a service, including being your support at the Funeral Home and/or in meetings with the undertakers.
3. The pastor will seek to involve the family in the planning of a service. The nature of the involvement will vary with each situation, but selection of appropriate Scripture passages, hymns, and other music, will ordinarily be done jointly with the pastor and the family. Members of Calvary are encouraged to submit the "Christian Witness in the Event of Physical Death" paperwork to the church office. This planning document allows you to state your preferences for the Service, leaving your family with fewer decisions to make at the time of death.
4. Services of Witness to the Resurrection shall be under the direction of one of Calvary's pastors. Other clergy or lay leaders may be invited at the pastor's discretion.
5. The solidarity of the bereaved and the community of faith at the time of death is extremely important. All members of the church are encouraged to participate, when possible, in every Service of Witness to the Resurrection conducted at Calvary, and to remember that families need care long after the service is over.

6. Families of members of Calvary are encouraged to select the church Sanctuary or Chapel as the location of the Service. The church is the place in which one is baptized, united with the people of God, and nourished in the Christian faith. Thus, it is appropriate that the last service in a Christian life also be conducted in the church.
7. For Services held at the church, there is either a main Sanctuary that seats approximately 900 people or a Chapel that seats approximately 125. For specific capacity requirements, please discuss with the pastor. The use of church facilities for Visitation and for Services of Witness to the Resurrection is available at no cost for all members of Calvary, \$500 for non-members.
8. The following church staff whom you would like to include in the Service may be compensated at these suggested rates:
  - Pastor honorarium: \$400
  - Organist/Pianist honorarium: \$350
  - Soloist honorarium: \$200
  - Video services: \$250 for livestreaming and a digital copy of the service
9. Memorial services with or without the presence of a casket or of cremains are consistent with our Christian traditions. A casket, when present, may be open prior to the service but will be closed before the service begins and shall remain closed during and after the service.
10. To emphasize the Christian belief and hope in the resurrection of the body, and to help recall that death is the beginning of a new dimension of life in Christ, the liturgical color of white shall be used. The Easter spirit should permeate all aspects of our funeral customs.
11. Music that is appropriate for Christian worship should be selected for the Service. Music for the service shall be under the direction of Calvary's staff musicians. Other musicians can be invited to participate in the service at the discretion of the Director of Music Ministries.
12. If you would like to host a reception after the Service at Calvary, there are two spaces available: Calvin Hall, that can accommodate a maximum of 150 people seated or 450 standing, or the Lounge, that can accommodate a maximum of 50 people seated or 75 standing. The use of either of these spaces are available at a fee of \$300 for members of Calvary, \$1000 for non-members. There are no restrictions on using outside vendors to host the receptions. A list of suggested vendors to cater your reception is available upon request. Limited choices of alcohol are permitted under the existing Calvary Alcohol Policy. A cleaning deposit may be required.
13. An invoice will be provided following the service. Please write and mail one check to Calvary Presbyterian Church for all suggested fees.
14. Memorial gifts to continue the Christian Witness of the deceased in the never-ending mission of Christ's Church, will be accepted with gratitude.

### **Checklist for the Family After You've Talked with the Pastor:**

1. Email obituary and photo of the deceased to the pastor for the service bulletin.
2. Do you want a guest book for people to sign as they arrive for the service? If so, purchase one and bring to church.
3. Do you want a table with photographs of the deceased to be set up outside the sanctuary? We can provide the table and tablecloth.
4. For flowers, if the family wants to provide flowers for the service, the church can coordinate those deliveries with the florist. If you do not want friends and family to send additional flowers, please consider adding, "In lieu of flowers, please donate to (charity in memory of our loved one" in the obituary.
5. Confirm with pastor:  
Do you want the service to be livestreamed and/or recorded?  
Have you communicated your requests for music, scripture, other readings?
6. If other people are going to speak at the service, they need to have their remarks printed out/written down. (We recommend a total of 10 minutes for remembrances, usually 3 minutes per speaker is a good length. This can be worked out with the pastor.) Pastor will need to know the names and order of who is speaking. The pastor is available as a back-up to read people's remarks if that task seems overwhelming in the service.