

Southminster Presbyterian Church
7001 Far Hills Avenue, Dayton, Ohio 45459
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Funeral Policy

The Christian Funeral

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is a central doctrine of the Christian faith and shapes our attitudes and responses to the event of death. Death brings loss, sorrow, and grief to all. In the face of death we affirm with tears and joy the hope of the gospel. We 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

Planning Arrangements

Because it is difficult under emotional stress to plan wisely, church members are encouraged to discuss and plan in advance the arrangements which will be necessary at the time of death. A family or individual does well to make arrangements with a funeral director prior to the need for the director's services. The pastor is available for consultation and support at the time of these arrangements. A family or individual may also meet with the pastor to establish preliminary plans for the funeral or memorial service. All plans should provide for arrangements which are simple, which bear witness to resurrection hope, and in which the Christian community is central.

Our Christian faith supports burial, cremation, or donation of the body of the deceased for medical purposes.

Counseling on the Occasion of Death

One of the most valuable services the Church provides its members at the time of death is that of pastoral counseling. The pastor should be consulted immediately when a death occurs, for he/she is uniquely equipped to give those Christian services which the bereaved family needs, discuss with compassion and objectivity those important decisions that the family must make and help the family arrange the Services.

Funeral or Memorial Service

The Christian funeral service, before the committal of the body, or the memorial service, after, is a service of worship. The service ordinarily should be held in the church sanctuary in order to join this service to the church's continuing life and witness to the resurrection.

This service may be observed on any day.

The service shall be under the direction of the pastor. Others may be invited to participate as leaders in the service at the request of the family and at the discretion of the pastor. The pastor will ordinarily meet with the family of the deceased prior to the funeral to speak together of the life of the deceased, to discuss plans for the service, and to pray.

The funeral liturgy seeks to meet the stark fact of death directly, while giving an undaunted witness to resurrection. The scripture, hymns and other service elements will affirm God's power over death, our belief in the resurrection to life everlasting, and the assurance of the communion of the saints. Aspects of the life of the one who has died may be recalled, as appropriate.

This service may be observed before or after the committal of the body. In order that attention in the service be directed to God, when a casket is present it ordinarily is closed.

The worship service is complete in itself and any civic or military rites should be conducted separately.

Usually, the funeral director will furnish ushers and/or programs. Though not obligatory, if necessary, upon request, the church will provide this service. If needed please contact the church office.

Committal

Members and friends of the family of the one who has died should gather at the graveside or crematorium for a service of farewell, which is to be conducted with simplicity, dignity, and brevity. The service includes readings from Scripture, 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 faith in the resurrection from the dead.

Reception Following the Services

The church has a number of rooms suitable for a reception following the funeral, memorial service, or graveside committal. Refreshments are furnished without charge. If this service is desired please contact the church office. Ordinarily at such a reception, when everything else has been tended to and all public services have been completed, the family can take its first steps toward recovery.

Use

Pastoral care and use of the sanctuary shall be made available, primarily to church members and their families. While church affiliation is not a prerequisite, this is a Christian church dedicated to Christian services.

Fees

No fees are charged by the church nor by the church staff for any aspect of the funeral or memorial service. It is customary, however, to offer an honorarium to the Pastor and any soloist.

Memorials

Memorial gifts in the name of the deceased will be gratefully received by the church in accordance with the church memorial policy. Gifts received will be acknowledged to both the donor and the family of the deceased.

Adopted by the Administration Council on September 4, 2007