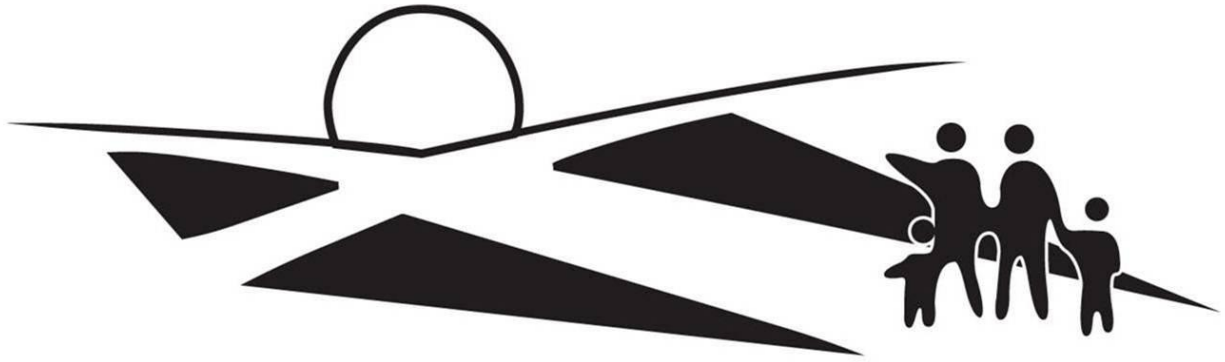


# A Guide for Funeral Planning



## *A Family of Believers*

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***I Am The Resurrection And The Life. Those Who Believe In Me,  
Even Though They Die, Will Live...***

**The Gospel of John 11:25**



Talking about death is never easy. However, discussing funeral arrangements for you and your loved ones can be made easier by talking about them in advance.

It is difficult to make wise decisions when you are grieving. Therefore, it is important to plan in advance the arrangements which will be necessary at the time of death. This booklet has been designed to answer questions you may have about the funeral process and to assist you in the planning process.

*What does my faith say about how we are to dispose of the body?*

Many people have questions about appropriate and "faithful" disposition of the body after death. This should be done with respect; however, this can be accomplished in many ways. Here are a few options:

**BURIAL:** This is the most common. *Genesis* reminds us that we are created from the dust of the earth and when we have no more use for an earthly body, we return it to the earth. Burial may be either in the earth directly, in a mausoleum, or in an above-ground crypt.

**CREMATION:** Cremation is not contrary to Christian belief. The body returns to dust whether by natural means or by an accelerated means such as cremation. The cremains may be disposed of either by burial, placement in a niche at a mortuary, scattered (laws permitting), or be retained by relatives.

**DONATION:** Donation of the entire body to a medical school for research or donation of various organs which may benefit the living is also in keeping with the Christian faith. It is a selfless and generous act which offers one's body for the benefit of others. If you choose to donate your body or various organs, pre-arrangement must have been made with a medical school or donor center.



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### *Where and when should the service be held?*

It is normal to have the service in the Church Sanctuary. What we commonly call a funeral is officially a worship service bearing witness to the resurrection and therefore most appropriately takes place in the church.

Services normally take place within a few days of death. But may take place later. It is important to contact the pastor prior to finalizing plans with the funeral home.

### *What is the difference between a Funeral Service and a Memorial Service?*

The *funeral service* is one in which the casket is present and is ordinarily held within a few days following the death.

The *memorial service* is one in which the body is not present, it may be held days, weeks, or even months after death.

### *Why have a public service?*

For many the funeral or memorial service is a necessary way to formally say good bye. Many people feel that a service makes the death “real” and helps them learn how to live without the person in their life.

### *What is a committal service?*

A committal service is a brief service conducted at the gravesite. This service is simple and brief. It includes Scripture readings, prayers, words of committal, and a blessing. This service may be held before or after the service in the Church.

### *What is a funeral reception?*

Many families desire to have a reception or luncheon following the service. The Deacon of First Presbyterian Church will take care of all the arrangements for this. Simply let the pastor know when you are making your plans. You will need to know an approximate number of people and the type of food you would like. The expense for this meal is handled through the Funeral Home.



### *What music is appropriate?*

Since a funeral or memorial service is a celebration of the resurrection of Christ it is appropriate that the music be uplifting and joyous. Appropriate music for the service would include Easter hymns or other songs which reflect the hope and joy we have in Jesus Christ. It is not inappropriate to include favorite or familiar songs of the deceased; however these will need to be discussed the inclusion of secular songs with the pastor.

### *What are ways people can express their appreciation of those who have died?*

While flowers are the most common form of expression, they last for only a short time. To provide longer term expressions of love, you may encourage family and friends to make a memorial gift to First Presbyterian Church or to medical or charitable institutions which have been meaningful to the deceased or the family. If a memorial alternative to flowers is desired, be certain to inform the funeral home and to include it in the newspaper announcements.

First Presbyterian Church maintains a Memorial Wish List to assist families in directing their memorials to necessary areas in the life of the congregation. In addition to the Memorial Fund there exists an Endowment Fund, Scholarship Load Fund, and a Mission Fund.

Designated gifts to First Presbyterian Church may be discussed with the Pastor and our subject to the approval of the Session.

All gifts received by First Presbyterian Church in the name of one who has died are acknowledged immediately to the donor and the family is notified of the gift.

### *How long is a normal grieving period?*

Grief recovery differs from person to person. It can often take years. Don't be hard on yourself by expecting too much too soon. Heal at your own pace. A good piece of advice for a surviving spouse is: *Never make any major decision within the first year.* People who make major decisions too soon (e.g., selling the house or moving away) may later regret that decision.



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## *Should I place my wishes in my will?*

Do **NOT** place your funeral plans in your will. Quite often the will is not read until well after the time of death. This could mean that your plans might not be honored because they were not known at the time arrangements were made.

Instead you are invited to fill out the form included in the booklet and keep this filed in the Church Office. You are also encouraged to provide copies of your wishes to your family or to a close friend. It is helpful if you discuss it with them as well.

Many people find it easier to pre-arrange their burial wishes with a local funeral home as an act of compassion towards surviving family members — when arrangements are made ahead of time the family is free to grieve without having to make quick decisions.

## *Additional information you will find helpful*

**A WILL** is crucial, especially if you have children. It is the one way to ensure that your financial resources are distributed in the way you wish. (Do consider remembering the church in your will.) See a lawyer or tax advisor; it may be possible for you to use a do-it-yourself form found in many book stores. Do not place funeral and burial arrangements in your will.

**HEALTH CARE DIRECTIVES, POWERS OF ATTORNEY FOR HEALTH CARE, and/or LIVING WILLS** enable you to record your wishes about the use of life support systems and end of life options. Copies of this should be given to your family, doctors, and pastor.

**A LIST OF BANK ACCOUNTS, SAFETY DEPOSIT BOXES AND INVESTMENTS** is an essential resource for your next of kin.

**THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA) FOUNDATION** has made available resources to assist you in getting your affairs in order; contact the pastor for information

**LOCAL FUNERAL HOMES** are prepared to assist you in preplanning. Please share your pre-planned arrangement with your church.

**CONSULTING WITH YOUR FAMILY** before making any permanent decisions is always wise.



## PRE-PLANNED FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS

Full Legal Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Contact Person(s) following my death:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. In addition to the Pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Manitowoc I would like the following clergy to be invited to co-officiate at my service:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Preferred Funeral Home:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**4. I prefer my body to be:**

buried in \_\_\_\_\_ Cemetery, located at \_\_\_\_\_

placed in a crypt at \_\_\_\_\_ Mausoleum, located at \_\_\_\_\_

cremated and ashes to be \_\_\_\_\_

**5. My religious service should be:**

a memorial service without my remains present at:  
 Church  Funeral Home  Other \_\_\_\_\_

a funeral service with my remains present at:  
 Church  Funeral Home  Other \_\_\_\_\_

a graveside committal service only

6. Preferred hymns of special music for my service:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

7. Preferred Scripture readings for my service:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

8. Preferred Organist, Soloist, or Musicians:

_____	_____
_____	_____

9. I prefer a luncheon/reception to help following the service:

- NO luncheon or reception
- in the church Fellowship Hall
- other location \_\_\_\_\_

10. I prefer memorial gifts to be made to:

- Gifts and Memorial Fund of First Presbyterian Church
- Endowment Fund of First Presbyterian Church
- Mission Fund of First Presbyterian Church
- Scholarship Loan Fund of First Presbyterian Church
- Designated need of First Presbyterian Church \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_