

Westminster Presbyterian Church Memorial and Funeral Policy

Those planning the service are asked to pay attention to the following information, instruction, and guidelines:

SCHEDULING THE CEREMONY

Responding to the needs of members and non-members alike in times of death is an important part of the ministry of Westminster Presbyterian Church. If you have suffered the death of a loved one, you are encouraged to call the church office at 330-836-2226 immediately in order to talk to a pastor and schedule a date for the memorial service or funeral. It is also always appropriate to confidentially discuss pre-arrangements for yourself or another with our pastor. Those wishing to do so may set up an appointment by calling the church office.

The date for a memorial or funeral service must be approved by the church office prior to scheduling it with the funeral home or announcing it to the public.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A MEMORIAL AND FUNERAL SERVICE?

A funeral service is held to memorialize a deceased person with his/her body present. A memorial service is held to memorialize a deceased person without his/her body present. Most commonly, funerals involve caskets. Services with cremated remains present or no remains at all are called memorials.

WHO CAN HAVE A MEMORIAL OR FUNERAL AT WESTMINSTER?

Memorial or funeral services are provided for all members of Westminster Presbyterian Church. If the deceased is not a Westminster member, Westminster's Session must approve the ceremony. Memorial or funeral services may be held in Westminster's sanctuary or chapel. Westminster's Memorial Garden is also available for the committal of ashes. Please inquire if interested in a committal in the church garden. Additionally, the pastor is available to provide memorial or funeral services at a funeral home, burial park, or another location, if requested.

THE CHRISTIAN MEMORIAL OR FUNERAL SERVICE

Memorials and funerals are services of worship and should have the reverence, dignity, and integrity of worship. The atmosphere surrounding the service should be sensitive to the religious nature and significance of the occasion. The provisions in this guide are intended to preserve the worshipful nature of the ceremony by avoiding the intrusion of elements that would detract from a devotional atmosphere.

Normally, the order of worship for the memorial or funeral service is as follows: Prelude (Optional), Sentences of Scripture, Petition of Comfort, Hymn (Optional), Confession and Pardon (Optional), Prayer for Illumination, Readings from Scripture, Homily, Hymn (Optional), Sharing of Memories (Optional), Affirmation of Faith (Optional), Prayer of Thanksgiving and the Lord's Prayer, Commendation, Hymn (Optional), Blessing, Postlude (Optional)

Suggested hymns may be found at the conclusion of this document.

WHAT ABOUT THE COST?

Westminster does not charge a facility fee for holding memorial or funeral services at the church.

Minister:

*An honorarium of \$200.00 is suggested.

Organist:

*Fee of \$200.00 is required.

Soloist(s) or Guest Musician(s):

*Fee of \$100.00 for each is required.

*To be paid directly to minister, organist, soloist, or guest musician.

All donations to the church in memory of your loved one will be directed to Westminster's Memorial Fund unless you specify and publicize an alternative account prior to the ceremony.

WHERE DO WE DIRECT QUESTIONS ABOUT OUR MEMORIAL OR FUNERAL CEREMONY PLANS?

After meeting with the Pastor and reaching a mutual agreement to move forward with the service, then the Pastor will handle the coordination of service details on behalf of the church. In the absence of our regularly installed pastor, Westminster's Director of Communications will serve as the official point person for all service communications. Should the regularly installed pastor be on leave at the time of your service, a suitable, ordained, ministerial colleague will also be available to assist you and to officiate at the service.

WHO WILL PERFORM THE CEREMONY?

Westminster's Pastor will perform the ceremony. Should there be a family member or a close friend who is an ordained Pastor, you may request that he/she be invited to participate in the memorial or funeral service. Likewise, if you wish to include a Pastor from another congregation in the ceremony, it is appropriate to have the presiding Pastor extend an invitation. The presiding

Pastor retains the general oversight of the service. The presiding Pastor reserves the right to bring in a ministerial colleague at his/her discretion in event of emergency.

WHEN DO WE COUNSEL WITH THE PASTOR?

When you contact Westminster, the Pastor will invite you and your family to counsel with him/her prior to the ceremony. During this meeting, you will discuss the details of the service and provide details regarding the life of your loved one. Do not hesitate to ask the Pastor questions. He/she will be happy to assist you and your ceremony will be especially meaningful to you when you know the Pastor as a friend and counselor.

HOW DO WE SELECT OUR MEMORIAL OR FUNERAL MUSIC?

The Westminster staff Organist/Music Director ordinarily plans and plays all keyboard music for memorials and funerals performed at Westminster. This means that if you plan to use the piano or pipe organ in your service, this position must be offered to the Westminster Organist/Music Director first. If the Westminster Organist/Music Director is not available to play on your date, he/she will assist you in finding a suitable replacement.

All music must be chosen in consultation with our Director of Music, or with a substitute Organist and the Pastor if the Director of Music is not available to serve. As you consider music for your service, remember that the ceremony is a service of Christian worship and the music is intended to bring attention and praise to God.

Secular songs, university rally songs, and music from movies and shows are best saved for the reception and/or gatherings after the ceremony. The Director of Music and the Pastor will offer guidance in music selection if such assistance is necessary, and can also suggest instrumentalists and vocalists if they are to be a part of the musical plan for the service. When there is to be any special vocal or instrumental music, the Director of Music reserves the right of final approval of the music and the soloists.

WHAT DECORATIONS AND OTHER ITEMS ARE PERMISSABLE IN THE WORSHIP SPACE?

In addition to elements already typically found in the worship space, flowers, an urn or casket, and one framed picture are permissible to be displayed in worship during the ceremony.

An open casket is permissible in the narthex/vestibule, fellowship hall, or chapel of the church prior to the service. During the service, the casket will be closed. There is an elevator at Westminster, but it is not large enough to accommodate a casket. For this reason, it is important that you make preparations with the funeral home regarding transportation of the casket on church grounds. Westminster has a number of double-doors which will make the transportation of the casket easier.

During the service, the church paraments will remain the color of the liturgical season. Seasonal flowers and decorations may also be present and will not be removed. Westminster does not permit the taping or clipping of flowers to pews or other parts of the sanctuary or church premises. If desired, our Deacons will take any flowers from your service to a shut-in, hospital patient, or to a nursing home, where they can be enjoyed and appreciated.

USHERS

Westminster ushers will be provided for Westminster members only. In the event of a funeral or memorial service for a non-member, either the funeral home or family are responsible for providing ushers. Even if Westminster ushers are provided, it is preferable to have ushers from the funeral home also serving in this capacity. It is important for the funeral home and Westminster ushers to be in contact with one another prior to the service.

BULLETIN

Westminster will provide a bulletin for all funerals or memorials held at the church. The number that we will print is based upon your estimate of the number of people who will attend the service.

GUEST BOOK

The family is responsible for providing a guest book for the service, if desired. A guest book can be purchased from Pat Catans, Michael's, JoAnn's, or the funeral home.

CUSTODIAN

When memorial or funeral services are held at Westminster, the church employs the services of a custodian. If a florist is participating, please have that individual contact our church office to schedule access to the facility on the day of the event. Entry will be provided by the custodian.

AUDIO/VISUAL EQUIPMENT

With the exception of the installed sanctuary sound system, audio/visual equipment is not permitted in the worship space. However, such equipment is allowed during the reception. The funeral home or family is responsible for providing, setting up, and operating any audio/visual equipment. The most common use of such equipment is for the display of pictures.

CHILDCARE

Children of all ages are welcome to remain in worship during the service or take part in the reception. However, children will remain either with their parents or in the nursery and will not be allowed to roam throughout the building. If childcare is requested, the Nursery must be staffed by at least two attendants. This is to protect all involved from increased liability that can come from having only one adult and is required by church insurance. At least one attendant must be from the Westminster pool of trained and screened nursery workers.

THE RECEPTION

If a reception is desired, it typically takes place immediately following the ceremony or committal, if held at Westminster's Memorial Garden. If food is requested, a call to the bereavement chairman is required to arrange this. Westminster's bereavement team/deacons typically serve sandwiches, fruit, and vegetable trays, in addition to cookies, brownies and drinks. The amount of food provided is based upon your estimate of the number of guests expected. The bereavement team keeps track of all receipts and requests that the family offer the church a contribution toward this expense. As the reception draws to a close, a member of the bereavement team will approach the family to discuss taking food items home with you. Any food items that remain at the church will be delivered to a local service ministry. If preferred, the family is also able to make arrangements for catering and pay all necessary costs. Receptions at Westminster are most commonly held in Wright-Herberich Hall. The maximum occupancy in Wright-Herberich Hall is 190 for standing room only and 150 for a seated luncheon.

PARKING

Parking is available in limited numbers immediately behind the church and in greater numbers across the street in the parking lot owned by the church (adjacent to Ohio Living-Rockynol). On the day of the ceremony, the custodian will put out signs directing guests to park in the lot across the street. In the event you would like to have a parking attendant to direct the traffic flow from the parking lot across from the church to the church sanctuary, please contact the Akron Police Department.

SMOKING AND ALCOHOL

Westminster is a no smoking and no alcohol facility. Those desiring to smoke are asked to go to the sidewalk on Mull Avenue.

ORDER OF WORSHIP

Musical Prelude (Optional), Sentences of Scripture, Petition of Comfort, Hymn (Optional), Confession and Pardon (Optional), Prayer for Illumination, Readings from Scripture, Homily,

Hymn (Optional), Sharing of Memories (Optional), Affirmation of Faith (Optional), Prayer of Thanksgiving and the Lord's Prayer, Commendation, Hymn (Optional), Blessing, Musical Postlude (Optional)

SUGGESTED HYMNS FOR A MEMORIAL OR FUNERAL SERVICE (FROM THE PRESBYTERIAN HYMNAL)

- #108 – “Christ Is Alive”
- #111 – “Good Christians All, Rejoice and Sing”
- #119 – “The Strife Is O'er”
- #122 – “Thine Is the Glory”
- #138 – “Holy, Holy, Holy”
- #151 – “Crown Him with Many Crowns”
- #210 – “Our God Our Help in Ages Past”
- #220 – “All People That on Earth Do Dwell”
- #260 – “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”
- #271 – “Many and Great, O God, Are Thy Things”
- #276 – “Great Is Thy Faithfulness”
- #280 – “Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound”
- #282 – “If Thou but Trust in God to Guide Thee”
- #306 – “Fairest Lord Jesus”
- #339 – “Be Thou My Vision”
- #350 – “O Day of Peace”
- #415 – “Come, Labor On”
- #442 – “The Church's One Foundation”
- #447 – “Lead On O King Eternal”
- #451 – “Ye Watchers and Ye Holy Ones”
- #464 – “Joyful, Joyful”
- #469 – “Morning Has Broken”
- #526 – “For All the Saints”
- #527 – “Near to the Heart of God”
- #528 – “Give Thanks for Life”
- #529 – “Lord of the Living”
- #530 – “O Lord of Life, Where'er They Be”
- #543 – “Abide with Me”

11/30/2017 Jon Hauerwas

Updated by Jon Hauerwas on 4/2/19 following Session Action