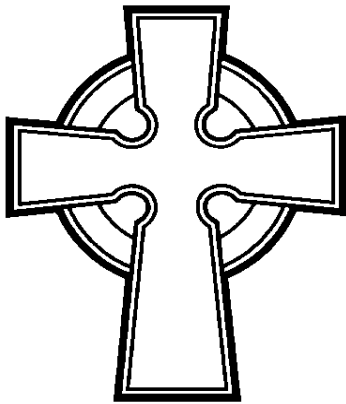


# THE SERVICE OF WITNESS TO THE RESURRECTION



INFORMATION, GUIDELINES, AND POLICIES  
TO ASSIST YOU IN PLANNING

*The name of the service on the occasion of death is  
"The Service of Witness to the Resurrection,"  
clearly stating our fundamental beliefs that in Christ,  
death has been conquered and the promise of eternal life is affirmed.*

## **The Chevy Chase Presbyterian Church**

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Washington, DC 20015  
202-363-2202  
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[www.chevyCHASEPC.org](http://www.chevyCHASEPC.org)

Dear Friends,

The purpose of this booklet is to assist members and friends of The Chevy Chase Presbyterian Church in their preparation for the eventuality of death, which all of us know we must confront. All too often families have been forced to face this time with only the barest understanding of the ways our church family may be of assistance. Ours is a Christian community. Our theology shapes not only our beliefs about death, but also how we celebrate the life of the one who has died. Consequently, we share this booklet with the hope that you will read it and discuss it with your family.

Frequently, we witness occasions in which a family faces the death of a loved one without any real knowledge of the deceased's wishes for their service. As with faith itself, the time to prepare is not at the time of death, but during the previous months and years. It is an act of both faith and love to make preparations and decisions in advance. Such action not only provides guidance to those making the final arrangements, but also alleviates additional anxiety for families and friends at what is naturally a very difficult time. Also available along with this booklet are forms which, when completed, will provide information and guidance concerning your final wishes.

We realize there is an almost universal reticence to think about these matters. Such is humanity's instinctive rebellion against our finite nature. However, we also realize that we would be remiss in our care as a Christian community if we did not seek to minister as effectively and compassionately as possible in times of crisis. We trust, therefore, that you will accept this booklet in the spirit it is offered—not morbidly, but with joyful gratitude born of the conviction that, “neither death nor life, . . . nor anything else in all creation, has the power to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8)

Faithfully,

*The Session of the Chevy Chase Presbyterian Church*

(This booklet and the policies were approved by the Session on September 15, 2009.)

## **SERVICES ON THE OCCASION OF DEATH**

The name of the service on the occasion of death is “The Service of Witness to the Resurrection,” clearly stating our fundamental beliefs that, in Christ, death has been conquered and the promise of eternal life is affirmed. Whether the casket is present or not, neither the name nor purpose of the service changes.

The uniqueness of the Christian faith is especially apparent when death comes. Our hope of eternal life is based not upon a person's worth, but upon the graciousness of God. Christians can commend to God's care those who die, trusting that by God's grace, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, all who believe in God are raised from death to life.

As we acknowledge the hope of the Gospel in the face of death, it is also important that we acknowledge our grief. This means that faith plays a major role in the grieving process. It does

not mean that persons of faith do not grieve or that expressing sorrow shows a lack of faith. We need to grieve in order to be open to the healing help God offers.

Christians grieve as those who have a unique hope in the risen Christ. Reflecting this outlook, Christians should make the occasion of death a time in which the hope of the Gospel is reaffirmed with joy and peace. It is a time to celebrate the wonderful gift of God that was given to us in our relationship with the deceased. The properly planned service can be a benediction and a comfort to us, as well as a witness to our faith

## **GUIDELINES**

As a Presbyterian congregation, we follow the guidelines for services on the occasion of death as outlined in the “Directory for Worship” found in our Presbyterian *Book of Order*:

The resurrection is a central doctrine of the Christian faith and shapes Christians’ attitudes and responses to the event of death. Death brings loss, sorrow, and grief to all. In the face of death Christians affirm with tears and joy the hope of the gospel. Christians do not bear bereavement in isolation but are sustained by the power of the Spirit in the community of faith. The church offers a ministry of love and hope to all who grieve.

Because it is difficult under emotional stress to plan wisely, the session encourages members to discuss and plan in advance the arrangements which will be necessary at the time of death, including decisions about the Christian options of burial, cremation, or donation for medical purposes. These plans should provide for arrangements that are simple, which bear witness to resurrection hope, and in which the Christian community is central. The session is responsible for establishing general policies concerning the observance of services on the occasion of death.

The service on the occasion of death ordinarily should be held in the usual place of worship in order to join this service to the community’s continuing life and witness to the resurrection. The service shall be under the direction of the officiating pastor. Others may be invited to participate as leaders in the service at the discretion of the pastor. (W-4.10000-4.10003)

## **PRACTICAL MATTERS**

### **The Officiating Pastor**

Ordinarily, the pastor/head of staff or one of the associate pastors of this congregation will officiate at all Services of Witness to the Resurrection performed in our facilities. When scheduling the service, you may request a particular minister of this congregation to officiate and, if s/he is available and willing, that person will officiate. Otherwise the pastor/head of staff will appoint the officiating pastor from the Chevy Chase Presbyterian Church staff.

We at the Chevy Chase Presbyterian Church welcome the participation of other Presbyterian ministers and clergy of other denominations and faiths in our services. If you desire that another member of the clergy assist in a Service of Witness to the Resurrection, please discuss your request with the officiating pastor. There are several factors that are considered before the pastor/head of staff will invite another clergy person to assist in a service. A primary factor is “mutual recognition

of ministry.” In other words, would the clergy being invited to assist be willing to invite a Presbyterian minister to assist at a funeral or memorial service which s/he was conducting? In all instances the pastor/head of staff of this church makes the final decision and issues the invitation if it is deemed to be appropriate.

In the case of inter-religious services, it must be understood that only Christian services are conducted in our facilities. Various practices and traditional activities of other faiths may be included as long as they are consistent with the Christian understanding of the Service of Witness to the Resurrection or the focus of the worship service.

Since we believe that death for the Christian is a triumphant experience in which the promises of God in Christ are manifest in the deceased, the occasion at once suggests dignity, reverence, and simplicity. All unnecessary expense and display are to be avoided as inconsistent with the Christian faith. The expenses for whatever arrangements are made should place no undue financial burden upon the family. The pastors can assist in suggesting various types of arrangements and service providers.

### **Time**

A pastor should be notified before you call the funeral director or others responsible for arrangements. Usually one of the pastors is available to come immediately. You are urged to call one of the pastors at any time of day or night so that immediate assistance may be offered. The pastor who is to conduct the Service of Witness to the Resurrection must be consulted before final decisions concerning the time and place of the service are made.

The Service of Witness to the Resurrection may be held on any day of the week, except that the sanctuary and the chapel are not available during Holy Week or on Easter Sunday, the Monday following Easter, Thanksgiving Day, the Friday following Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, the day following Christmas Day, or on any federal holiday. There may be other times and occasions when the sanctuary and chapel would not be available because of previously scheduled events. It is the practice of this congregation that Services of Witness to the Resurrection are not observed as a part of the regular Sunday morning worship service; exceptions to this would require the approval of the Session, as would the celebration of the Lord’s Supper (communion) as a part of the service. More than one service may be scheduled on the same day, but ordinarily there should be at least four hours allotted between services.

### **Place**

As the *Book of Order* indicates, the most appropriate place for the service to be held is at the church, either in the sanctuary or Johnson Chapel. It is in the church where we celebrate and mark all of life’s passages: births, baptisms, weddings, confirmations, and other significant events. At the time of death, that person’s life should also be celebrated in these familiar surroundings. If particular circumstances dictate, or if the family firmly directs, services may be held in other places. The officiating pastor makes the decision on the appropriateness of the setting.

## **Burial, Cremation, or Donation**

Burial is a dignified custom that many people may wish to observe. Advance consideration should be given to the location of the cemetery and the selection of the burial plot, including the need for future graves.

The practice of cremation is consistent with the Christian faith and is much less expensive than traditional burial. It is not new; it has been practiced by Christians throughout the centuries. The remains are usually placed in an urn and kept in an appropriate place. An urn may also be placed in a columbarium. Our church provides such a service on our grounds. Information about the costs and requirements of our church's columbarium is outlined in a separate booklet. A pastor can also share details with you. Another option is the scattering of the ashes by family and friends at a location that holds special significance.

A third choice is to donate one's body to a medical institution for study or a donation of parts of the body, e.g. eyes, kidneys, tissue, etc., for medical use and/or research. The donation of one's body or parts is considered an act of love and is an option which may be considered by all Christians.

## **Internment Services**

The final disposition of the remains is another matter requiring forethought. Depending on the choice made (ground burial or cremation), time may be of the essence. When speaking with the pastor, you may decide to have an interment service before or after the Service of Witness to the Resurrection. If ground burial or placement of an urn in a columbarium is the choice, additional arrangements must be made with the appropriate entities.

## **Flowers and Memorials**

Flowers are a traditional way of expressing sympathy. However, in keeping with the general worship practices of this congregation, only a limited number of arrangements will be permitted in the sanctuary. These are usually restricted to those provided by the immediate family. Other floral arrangements will be displayed in the room in which a reception is held.

The newspaper announcement may suggest that, in lieu of flowers, a memorial contribution may be given to a recognized charitable organization or to the Chevy Chase Presbyterian Church. In this way, the memorial becomes a "living gift" and the deceased, in very tangible ways, continues to contribute to and support the work and ministry of the Church or other benevolent causes in which s/he had an interest.

## **Guest Book**

If the family is providing a guest book, please notify the church and bring it to the ushers in advance of the arrival of any attendees.

## **The Service**

As noted previously, the Service of Witness to the Resurrection may take place on any day of the week, but a final decision concerning the time and place must be approved by the officiating pastor. This service is one which worships God, gives thanks for the life of the deceased, and affirms the

promises of eternal life we have in Jesus Christ. Thus, the service is one of affirmation and positive spirit.

The casket or urn may or may not be present in the sanctuary during the service. If the casket is present, it is closed before the service so that everyone's attention is directed toward God.

The typical order of the Service of Witness to the Resurrection includes:

### **THE SERVICE OF WITNESS TO THE RESURRECTION**

Prelude

*(Which may include some favorite hymns of the deceased or family, or other appropriate selections.)*

Call to Worship

Prayer of Invocation

Hymn *(optional)*

Welcome and Remembrances

*(If a family wishes, two or three individuals may be invited to speak briefly. If desired, the congregation at large may also be invited to share remembrances.)*

Scripture Readings

Meditation

Affirmation of Faith

Hymn or Special Music *(optional)*

Prayer

Hymn *(optional)*

Commendation

*(The deceased is commended to the eternal love and care of God.)*

Benediction

Postlude

We recommend that the congregation participate in the service through responsive prayers, affirmations, and by singing hymns. This enables all to respond in a positive, active way in giving thanks to God for the life of the deceased.

Variations on this order of worship are possible, but must be approved by the officiating pastor. In the event that rites of some fraternal order are desired, this ceremony should be conducted at a prior time and arrangements may be made for them to occur in another location. The Christian service is complete in itself and should be kept apart from other rituals.

### **Hymns and Music**

Hymns of praise and affirmation may be included in the service. If there is a hymn of significance for the deceased or the family, it, too, can be included in the service if it is appropriate for the setting. The Director of Music is available to discuss music selections with the family and assist in securing vocalists or additional instrumentalists, if desired. The Director of Music is the keyboard artist (organ and/or piano music) for all Services of Witness to the Resurrection at the church. Please see the list of hymns published separately.

## Scripture Readings

The reading of scripture should be included in the service. If there is a scripture passage of significance for the deceased or their family, it can also be included. A list of appropriate scripture readings for a Service of Witness to the Resurrection follows.

### Old Testament

Job 19:23-27	<i>I know that my redeemer lives.</i>
Isaiah 25:6-9	<i>God will swallow up death forever.</i>
Isaiah 26:1-4, 19	<i>God will keep them in peace.</i>
Isaiah 40:1-11, 28-31	<i>Comfort my people.</i>
Isaiah 40:28-31	<i>Those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength.</i>
Isaiah 43:1-3a, 18-19 25	<i>When you pass through the waters, I will be with you.</i>
Isaiah 44:6-8	<i>I am the first and the last.</i>
Isaiah 55:1-3, 6-13	<i>Ho, everyone who thirsts.</i>
Isaiah 61:1-4	<i>The spirit of the Lord is upon me.</i>
Isaiah 65:17-25	<i>I create new heavens and a new earth.</i>
Lamentations 3:19-26, 31b-32	<i>The Lord's steadfast love.</i>
Daniel 12:1-3	<i>Many of those who sleep in the dust shall awake.</i>
Joel 2 ( <i>sel.</i> )	<i>Return to the Lord with all your heart.</i>

### Psalms

Ps. 16:5-11	<i>The Lord is my chosen portion.</i>
Ps. 23	<i>The Lord is my shepherd.</i>
Ps. 27:1, 4-9a, 13-14	<i>The Lord is my light and my salvation.</i>
Ps. 39: 4-5, 12	<i>Lord, let me know my end.</i>
Ps. 42:1-6a	<i>As a deer longs for flowing streams.</i>
Ps. 43	<i>Give judgment for me, O God.</i>
Ps. 46:1-5, 10-11	<i>A very present help in trouble.</i>
Ps. 90:1-10, 12	<i>Teach us to number our days.</i>
Ps. 91	<i>The one who dwells in the shelter of the Most High.</i>
Ps. 103	<i>Bless the Lord, O my soul.</i>
Ps. 106:1-5	<i>O give thanks to the Lord.</i>
Ps. 116:1-9, 15	<i>The Lord has heard my voice.</i>
Ps. 118	<i>Open the gates of righteousness.</i>
Ps. 121	<i>I lift up my eyes to the hills.</i>
Ps. 130	<i>Out of the depths I cry to the Lord.</i>
Ps. 139:1-12	<i>Where shall I go from your spirit?</i>
Ps. 145	<i>I will extol you, O God my King.</i>
Ps. 146	<i>Hallelujah! Praise the Lord, O my soul.</i>

### Epistles

Romans 5:1-11	<i>Hope does not disappoint.</i>
Romans 6:3-9	<i>Baptized into Christ's death, raised to live with him.</i>
Romans 8:14-23, 31-39	<i>Nothing can separate us from the love of God.</i>
Romans 14:7-9, 10b-12	<i>Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.</i>
1 Corinthians 15 ( <i>sel.</i> )	<i>Christ raised from the dead.</i>

2 Corinthians 4:16-5:1	<i>Visible things are temporary, invisible things eternal.</i>
2 Corinthians 5:1-10	<i>From God we have a house not made with hands.</i>
Ephesians 1:11-2:1, 4-10	<i>Saved by grace through faith.</i>
Philippians 3:7-11	<i>Knowing him and the power of his resurrection.</i>
Philippians 3:20-21	<i>Our citizenship is in heaven.</i>
Colossians 3:1-17	<i>Set your minds on the things that are above.</i>
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18	<i>The comfort of Christ's coming.</i>
2 Timothy 2:8-13	<i>If we died with him, we shall also live with him.</i>
Hebrews 2:14-18	<i>Christ was tested in every way.</i>
Hebrews 11-12 ( <i>sel.</i> )	<i>Faith, the pilgrimage, the cloud of witnesses.</i>
1 Peter 1:3-9	<i>Without seeing Christ, you love him.</i>
1 Peter 3:18-22; 4:6	<i>Christ's ministry to the spirits in prison.</i>
1 John 3:1-3	<i>We are children of God.</i>
Revelation 7:2-3, 9-17	<i>These are they who have come out of the great tribulation.</i>
Rev. 14:1-3, 6-7, 12-13	<i>Rest for the saints.</i>
Rev. 21:1-4, 22-25; 22:3-5	<i>A new heaven and a new earth.</i>

### Gospels

Matthew 5:1-12a	<i>The Beatitudes.</i>
Matthew 11:25-30	<i>Hidden from the wise, revealed to infants.</i>
Matthew 25:1-13	<i>Wise and foolish bridesmaids.</i>
Matthew 25:31-46	<i>The Last Judgment.</i>
Luke 7:11-17	<i>Jesus raises the son of the widow of Nain.</i>
Luke 18:15-17	<i>We enter the kingdom only as children.</i>
Luke 23:33, 39-43	<i>Today you will be with me in Paradise.</i>
John 3:16-21	<i>God so loved the world.</i>
John 5:24-29	<i>Whoever hears and believes has eternal life.</i>
John 6:37-40	<i>Anyone who comes to me I will never drive away.</i>
John 6:47-58	<i>Whoever believes in me has eternal life.</i>
John 11:17-27	<i>I am the resurrection and the life.</i>
John 11:38-44	<i>Lazarus raised from the dead.</i>
John 14:1-6, 25-27	<i>Let not your hearts be troubled.</i>

### **Prior to the Service**

Ordinarily, the family and participants in the service will be invited to meet at the church 30 minutes before the service. The officiating pastor will meet them there, go over the final details of the service, and offer a prayer. The family then proceeds to the sanctuary where they will be seated in the first several pews. They will arrive in time to join the other worshippers in listening to the final portions of the prelude.

### **Following the Service**

After the benediction, the pastor will lead the family out of the sanctuary. If a reception is to be held at the church, the family is escorted to the appropriate reception room where they can greet others.



## **Reception**

If a reception following the service is desired, either Geneva Hall or Chadsey Hall is available. The family may want to share photographs and other items with friends. This is also a wonderful opportunity to share memories and stories.

For members of the Chevy Chase Presbyterian Church, our Memorial Gatherings Committee will provide light refreshments (light snacks, cookies, and beverages) upon request. A donation to the church is requested for this service. (Please see the separate Fee Schedule.) If a family desires more extensive food or a meal, it will be provided by an outside caterer and will be at an additional cost to the family. However, all arrangements should be coordinated with the Memorial Gatherings Committee.

Non-members may also choose to hold a reception at the church with food and beverages provided by an outside caterer at the family's expense. Additional fees for use of the church room will apply. (Please see the separate Fee Schedule.)

## **Fees**

There are no fees charged to Active Members and their families for the use of the church facilities or reception rooms. Also, there are no fees required for the services of the officiating pastor or the organist, although an honorarium is traditionally offered to each of them. For the purposes of a Service of Witness to the Resurrection, the deceased, their spouse, or an immediate family member must be an Active Member (as defined in the Presbyterian *Book of Order*) of the Chevy Chase Presbyterian Church at the time of death. Please see the separate schedule of fees for Non-members and other services.

## **ADVANCE PLANNING**

The Session encourages families to engage in advance planning for arrangements at the time of death. In addition to planning the Service of Witness to the Resurrection, there are several other actions and decisions which can be made in advance. These include making lists of important documents, providing a written personal history, executing a will, and completing advance medical directives. To assist in this planning process, the pastors of the church may provide you with several forms and resources which you may find helpful.

If you choose to complete a document indicating your wishes for the Service of Witness to the Resurrection, we urge you to share a copy (as appropriate) with family members, your attorney, your physician, and with the church. All documents delivered to the church will be considered strictly confidential. The church does not accept any legal liability for their custody nor may the church require others to follow directions and requests set down in them. However, they will be made available only to appropriate individuals to whom they may offer guidance. Of course, you may change any of the documents or have them returned to you at any time.

## A FINAL WORD

The Session trusts you will find this material to be helpful. Please know that our pastors stand ready to assist you at every stage of your life's journey, including making preparations for death. Please feel free to contact any one of them for information, assistance, or to clarify your desires.

*May the peace of Christ, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God Almighty, Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer, remain with you always. (Philippians 4:7, adapted )*

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## RESOURCES

### **William Wendt Center for Loss and Healing**

*A premier resource for addressing grief in adults and children.*

[www.wendtcenter.org](http://www.wendtcenter.org)

4201 Connecticut Ave NW, Suite 300

Washington, DC 20008

202-624-0010 (Office)

### **The Greater Washington Partnership for Palliative and End-of-Life Care**

*Information about hospice care and index to hospice programs in the Washington area.*

[http://www.gwpartnership.org/Local\\_Palliative\\_Care\\_and\\_Hospice\\_Services.html](http://www.gwpartnership.org/Local_Palliative_Care_and_Hospice_Services.html)

### **Compassionate Friends**

*A resource following the death of a child.*

[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

### **Other Websites**

*Other websites that contain information, books, chat groups, testimonials, and more.*

[www.griefnet.org](http://www.griefnet.org)

[www.groww.org](http://www.groww.org)

[www.aarp.org/griefandloss/](http://www.aarp.org/griefandloss/)

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