

**Funerals at Village Chapel**  
(Approved by the Session on 9/17/2014)

In light of our biblical and Reformed faith, we acknowledge certain beliefs concerning death:

**Death is real**

We live in a culture that encourages us to deny the reality of death, but in scripture we find a frank and healthy acceptance of this aspect of being human.

**Death is inevitable**

Death is for each one of us the inescapable conclusion of life as we know it, but scripture calls us to embrace and affirm life.

**Death causes grief**

The loss of a loved one leads to a tangle of emotions – tangible pain, sharp anxiety, guilt, anger, and a sense of helplessness – all are natural and normal to the human condition. Even with our hope as Christians we still affirm that tears are not out of place when confronted by the death of one we love. Since we are the body of Christ, it is through the church that we experience God’s comfort and compassion ministering to our grief.

**Death does not have the last word.**

With all Christians we believe Paul’s words:

*When we were baptized in Christ Jesus, we were baptized into his death.*

*We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death,*

*so that, as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father,*

*we too might live a new life.*

*For if we have been united with Christ in a death like his,*

*we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. - Romans 6:3–5*

This scripture speaks to the underlying understanding of death and resurrection for Christians. The funeral service is therefore an act of worship in which we come together to bear witness to the promises made about all those who die in the faith and to celebrate that death does not have the last word.

The *Book of Common Worship* offers several points of sage advice:

- When death occurs, the pastor and other officers of the congregation should be informed as soon as possible, in order that they might provide appropriate consolation and support to the family and friends, and assist them in making arrangements for the funeral.
- Except for compelling reasons, the service for a believing Christian is normally held in the church, at a time when the congregation can be present.
- The ceremonies and rites of fraternal, civic, or military organizations, if any, should [ordinarily] occur at some other time and place.
- Family members, friends, or members of the congregation may be invited by the minister to share in the service.
- The body or ashes of the deceased are usually present for the funeral service, but it may be adapted . . . as a memorial service. The committal may follow or precede this service, as preferred.
- When the body is present, the coffin should be closed before the service begins. It may be covered with a white funeral pall.

– from the *Book of Common Worship*, page 911

It is our desire to assist in making your funeral a beautiful, memorable and worshipful experience. To this end, we offer our services and facilities of this church to all members, and to others, in accordance with the policies and regulations as approved by our governing body, the Session.

Even the simplest funeral requires forethought and preparation.

### 1. PREPARATION

Experience has shown that death, especially sudden death, leaves family members unprepared to make decisions about key components of the funeral service. Because talking about arrangements can be a difficult discussion, people often put it off until it is too late. Even if these discussions have taken place, the details are often scattered. For all these reasons, we would suggest that all members use the questionnaire in Appendix A to make preparations. (The church would be glad to keep a confidential copy on file until it is needed.)

You may want to talk with the pastor about elements of the service and with the organist about the musical choices.

If a minister other than the minister of Village Chapel is to have a part in the funeral service, these plans should be discussed with the minister of Village Chapel and the invitation to the other minister extended through him/her. Ordinarily the minister of Village Chapel will have part in all funerals held in the church.

### 2. ARRANGEMENTS

It is important that the family contact the church as soon as possible after a death has occurred, so that the family and the church can begin making arrangements for a funeral service. You may speak to the pastor or the secretary to check on the availability of a particular date and time. (If you are working with a funeral home, you will need to consult both with them and with the church.) Be aware that, while every effort will be made to accommodate your wishes, there are certain times when the church or the staff may not be available.

Once we know the date and time for the funeral service, we will contact the organist and the facilities coordinator, so that they may fulfill their roles. The pastor will also want to meet with the family to discuss the details of the service.

### 3. MUSIC

Most families feel music adds to the beauty of the service. Our organist customarily plays for all funerals. If this is not possible, she/he will suggest other organists who have been approved by our Worship Committee.

A funeral is a service of worship. **All the music used should be appropriate for worship.** It should be an expression of the praise and prayers of the people and direct attention to God's place as we reflect on life and death.

Our organist is available to recommend the most appropriate music. It is entirely proper for hymns to be sung by the entire congregation, or by a soloist. If a soloist is desired, the name and contact information of the soloist must be given to the organist as early as possible in case a rehearsal is necessary. If recorded music is used, the organist must listen to it and approve its use.

Occasionally the church choir is asked to sing as part of the service. This may or may not be possible due to their availability at the time of the funeral.

#### 4. DECORATIONS

Considerable thought and planning have resulted in our lovely sanctuary. The furnishings and symbols bear witness to the God who is present in life and in death. No additional decorations are necessary, though simple decorations may be permitted at the discretion of the pastor. The following policies are to be observed:

1. Flowers and candles enhance the beauty of the sanctuary. If the family is working with a funeral home, they will often assist in the transportation and display of flower arrangements. Only candles of the non-drip variety may be used and adequate protective covering must be provided under all candles.
2. Photographs of the deceased are welcome and may be displayed in the narthex or the fellowship hall.
3. Nothing should be placed on the piano or organ.
4. When ashes or a coffin are included in the service, they are to be placed in front of the Communion Table. The Communion Table remains in place for all worship services, including funerals.
5. During some seasons such as Advent, Christmas, Easter, or Pentecost, and during certain events such as Vacation Bible School, the sanctuary and/or the fellowship hall may contain furnishings, symbols, and/or decorations associated with that season or event. While the church will attempt to accommodate reasonable temporary changes to such in order to make the space more suitable for the funeral, no changes should be made without the prior approval of the pastor.
6. Removal of all funeral related decorations should begin as soon after the ceremony as possible, and the sanctuary should be left clean.

#### 5. VISITATION

Families often choose to have a visitation period when they can speak with people apart from the actual funeral service. They can be held the evening before or immediately prior to the service. The church would be honored to host the visitation. The ashes or the body may or may not be present. The visitation should begin promptly at the hour scheduled and proceed in an orderly and reverent manner.

#### 6. RECEPTIONS

Because our church believes in the importance of providing hospitality, especially for those who are grieving, we offer several options in conjunction with funeral services for active members or participants of the congregation. The family may choose which of the following best suits their circumstances:

1. A meal for up to 25, either at the church or the deceased's home;

2. Finger food for up to 100 (things such as fruit or vegetables, cheese and crackers, and/or sweets);
3. Assistance selecting a caterer and making the arrangements. (This might be the best option for those families coming from out of town, or who want a particular type of food, or who would like something beyond what the church is able to provide.)

**Please understand that the church will be relying on volunteers to provide the food and serve it.** Therefore, decisions about which option will be selected need to be made as soon as possible. The reception coordinator will work with the family on any necessary details for the meals. It will be up to the family to decide who they would like to invite.

Donations to help support this ministry of the church are always accepted and appreciated.

## 7. OTHER POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

1. There is limited parking available at the church and much of that is reserved by the funeral home prior to a service, so guests will need to park on the streets surrounding the church. Depending on the timing of the service there may be additional parking available in some of the nearby businesses.
2. After a period of viewing at the visitation and/or prior to the service, the casket will be closed for the service so that attention may be directed to God. (Book of Order W-4.10005)
3. The Stewardship Ministry Team is available to consult with the family regarding the use to be made of memorials given to the church as well as to advise those who are planning to remember the church in their wills.
4. Smoking is not permitted on the property at any time, nor should food or beverage be brought into the Sanctuary.
5. No alcoholic beverages may be served on church property.
6. The church ordinarily provides a bulletin for each service held at Village Chapel. This includes the order of service, the names of participants, and information about the deceased.

## 8. FEES

A current schedule of fees adopted by the Session is included in Appendix B. These fees are designed to compensate staff members who are required to work outside their regular hours in connection with a funeral. They are designed also to cover the cost of utilities when the church is used by non-church member families. No charge for use of the building is made if the deceased or the immediate family are active members of Village Chapel. The facilities coordinator must be present for all funerals and/or receptions at the church. This relieves the families of the responsibility for opening and securing the building. It also means that someone familiar with the furnishings, lighting, heating/air-conditioning, and other equipment is present. **Checks for the minister, musician(s), facilities coordinator, and for the use of the building (when applicable) should be brought to the church office at least one day prior to the funeral.**

## **Planning for the time of death**

### **Village Chapel Presbyterian Church, Charleston, WV**

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

The Session of Village Chapel encourages individuals to complete this form and to discuss its contents with members of their family. This information should be updated any time your personal situation or feelings on any of these matters change. One copy should be retained by the family; the other will be kept in a confidential file at the church.

Do you prefer a service held:

- in the church     at the funeral home     at the graveside only     other (please specify)

Are there special rites (military, fraternal, or civic) that should be performed?

Have you willed your body or any organs to medical science? Y/N

If your body is to be buried, would you prefer:

- a committal service first, followed by a memorial service  
 a funeral service, followed by a committal service

Location of family burial plot (if any)

If your body is to be cremated, would you prefer:

- cremation first, followed by a memorial service  
 a service at the church with the body present prior to cremation

If cremation, what arrangements would you prefer for the disposition of your ashes?

- burial     entombment     scattering     placed in the grave of a family member  
 keeping in an urn (temporarily)

Would you desire any service in conjunction with the disposition of your ashes? Y/N

If yes, what type of service would you want?

Do you have any special requests as far as your service is concerned?

- Scriptures you would like used:
- Hymns you would like sung:
- Special music you would like played:
- Other:

Preference in funeral home (if any)?

If memorial gifts are given, how should they be designated?

- Village Chapel (please specify if you would like it directed to a particular use.)
- a specific charity (please specify)
- donors choice

Have you remembered Village Chapel in your will? Y/N

What assistance from the congregation would your family probably need and appreciate?

Where are the following items located?

- Vital statistics about your life for use in preparing your obituary
- List of relatives and friends to be contacted
- The deed to your cemetery plot
- Your will and other important papers

Other comments?

**ALL FEES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE****FUNERAL FEES FOR MEMBER FAMILIES**

<b>Sanctuary</b>	No fee
<b>Minister</b> (Suggested honorarium):	\$100.00
<b>Organist</b>	
Funeral service:	\$100.00
Rehearse with soloist or other instrumentalist	30.00 (each)
If a pianist is requested <u>in addition</u> to the organist (* depending on the number of pieces played)	50-100.00*
<b>Facilities Coordinator</b>	
Funeral only:	\$ 75.00
There will be an additional fee to remove decorations.	\$ 25.00
There will be an additional fee if the church needs to be open <u>more</u> than three hours before time for the service.	\$ 25.00
<b>Reception</b> at the church	no fee for options 1 and 2

**Separate checks for the minister, musician(s), and facilities coordinator should be brought to the church office at least one day prior to the funeral.**

I/we agree to these policies and fees. (name) \_\_\_\_\_ (date) \_\_\_\_\_

**FUNERAL FEES FOR NON-MEMBER FAMILIES**

<b>Sanctuary</b>	\$100.00
<b>Minister</b> (Honorarium):	\$200.00
<b>Organist</b>	
Funeral service :	\$150.00
Rehearse with vocalist or other instrumentalist	30.00 (each)
If a pianist is requested <u>in addition</u> to the organist (* depending on the number of pieces played)	75-125.00*
<b>Facilities Coordinator</b>	
Funeral only:	\$ 75.00
There will be an additional fee to remove decorations.	\$ 25.00
There will be an additional fee if the church needs to be open <u>more</u> than three hours before time for the service.	\$ 25.00
<b>Reception</b> at the church	\$100.00

**Separate checks for the minister, musician(s), facilities coordinator, and for the use of the building (when applicable) should be brought to the church office at least one day prior to the funeral.**

I/we agree to these policies and fees. (name) \_\_\_\_\_ (date) \_\_\_\_\_