

## Worship for Special purposes

Policy Number: 21.01

Effective Date: 10/19/14

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### 1. Title:

Funeral and Memorial Services

### 2. Purpose:

The Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. regards the funeral service as being a service of Worship. The Book of Order states: "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 and the community of faith. The church offers a ministry of love and hope to all who grieve" (Book of Order , W-4.10001) In light of this doctrine, the Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Conroe ("church") has adopted the following policies and procedures regarding funeral and memorial services. The session is responsible for establishing general policies concerning the observance of services on the occasion of death (W-1, 4004).

### 3. Policy:

#### 3.1 The form and order of the service

At FPCC, we believe that the purpose of a funeral or memorial service is to give thanks to God for life and salvation, and to bring word of God's comfort and hope to those who grieve. The focus of such services is upon the continuing love of God and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. In keeping with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA), the service is under the direction of the pastor. Required elements include beginning the service with the reading of scripture and the offering of prayers that give thanks to God and make intercession for those who grieve. Elements that are encouraged but not required include the singing of hymns, a sermon, an affirmation of faith, and the recalling of aspects of the life of the one who died. All details concerning a funeral/memorial service and related arrangements must conform to such practices as are consistent with Christian custom. Any fraternal, military, or civic rites are conducted separately from the church funeral or memorial service. The draping of the casket with an American flag is permissible for a veteran's service. At FPCC, a *funeral* is a service in which the body of the deceased is present. All funerals are "closed casket" services. Presbyterians understand that all appointments and accoutrements used in worship are to be appropriate to the place of worship and to reflect the integrity and simplicity of the Christian life. A *memorial service* is in all ways similar except that the body of the deceased is not present due to cremation or other circumstances. If an interment is desired at the cemetery, the

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pastor is prepared to have a brief ceremony at the grave side.

### 3.2 Scheduling and service alternatives

A funeral or memorial service must be scheduled in consultation with one of our pastors. No services may be scheduled for Sunday mornings or Wednesday evenings. Dates and times for funerals are to be based on availability and the preferences of the deceased's family. See OPS 06.03, *Reporting of Deaths and Record Keeping*. There can be alternative methods for the conducting of services at the time of death. These could include a private graveside service for family members as soon after death as possible and/or a public service of worship (memorial service) conducted at the church later. Church members may consider private graveside rites followed by a public service of worship including the use of hymns, scripture, sermon, prayer, affirmations of faith etc.

### 3.3 Clergy person

At the time of death, the Senior Pastor (if available) will work closely with family members to plan details of the funeral or memorial service and to extend the care and concern of our congregation to loved ones. The family may request that a particular member or members of our pastoral staff lead the funeral or memorial service. It is expected that one of the pastors of the church will officiate at these services, unless unavailable. All requests are to be directed through the Senior Pastor. If a family desires to ask another clergy person to participate in the service, such a desire must be made known to the pastor and he will extend the invitation to such other clergy person. The pastor should be contacted as soon as possible after there has been a death. If possible, it is best to inform the pastor when death seems imminent so that s/he may be of help in the hours preceding death.

### 3.4 Funeral Coordinator

The Worship Ministry is responsible for appointing one or more Funeral Service Coordinators for assisting with the planning and holding of funeral/memorial services. The Coordinator's duties are given in this OPS's Appendix.

### 3.5 Scripture and music

The bereaved family is encouraged to discuss with the pastor the choices of readings, poetry, prayers, hymns, content of meditation, as well as any other part of the service which will offer comfort to the bereaved, witness to the resurrection, and best honor the departed. The family may request favorite verses of Scripture, a favorite poem or literary quotation, music, hymns, and/or

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soloists. In consultation with the pastor, the church organist (or in the absence of the organist the Choir Director) is available to discuss appropriate hymns and service music for the order of worship. Normally, the organist at FPCC will play at all funerals in the church, as she is familiar with the instrument. If the organist is unavailable for the service, she will make a reasonable effort to provide a suitable replacement. In cases where an outside organist is desired, permission must be secured from the pastor or the Choir Director and organist. Additional musicians or soloists may be utilized. (see 3.8 below). Aesthetically speaking, the use of live musicians affords flexibility in tempo, nuance, time, pitch and all of the other living aspects of music. Music performed at a service of Christian burial is understood as an act of worship, offered to God in devotion, thanksgiving and praise.

### **3.6 Casket and Ashes**

The casket or ashes of the deceased shall normally be present for the service, and should arrive at the church at least 45 minutes prior to the announced service's start time. In order that worship may focus on God, and upon the gift of resurrection, rather than upon the earthly remains of the deceased, the casket will be closed during the service. At the family's request, the casket may be open before the service begins; however, the casket must be closed prior to the service and for the duration of the service. The Christian's funeral focuses on spiritual aspects of death rather than the physical remains. The Coordinator shall advise the funeral home's attendant of the church's policies regarding the casket's closing during the service and offer to answer any questions. See the Appendix for additional information.

### **3.7 Cremation**

Cremation is an appropriate alternative for Christians. Orders of worship and committal remain the same in cases of cremation, with the exception that the committal may take place on a different date from the service in the church.

### **3.8 Church Use and Fees**

Church members are encouraged to have funeral services at the Church. A Christian's funeral in the church is appropriate because it gives a balanced perspective of death. For example, mortuary chapels are associated only with death, but the church building is associated with many different life experiences. In the church we baptize, marry, worship and gather for fellowship. These

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experiences enable us to balance our view of death. FPCC's Sanctuary shall be used for funeral and memorial services. The church parlor may be used for receiving the family of the deceased. There shall be no charge for such use when the deceased is a church member or if the deceased is part of a church member's immediate family (spouse, child, grandchild or parent). Those who have been members of FPCC but now are considered inactive members will pay non-member fees. The church's funeral and memorial services fee schedule is given in the following table:

	<u>Member</u>	<u>Non-Member</u>
Pastor	Honorarium i	\$300
Facilities Use	\$0.00	\$300
Music Director	\$100	\$100
Organist	\$150	\$150
Soloist	\$100	\$100
Custodian Contractor	\$100	\$100
Funeral Coordinator	N/C	N/C
Sound Tech	\$100	\$100
Bulletins Per 100	\$40	\$60
Additional 100	\$20	\$30
Nursery Worker	\$45	\$45

Payments for Facilities Use, bulletins and Custodian shall be by cash or by check made payable to the FPCC on the day of the funeral and either mailed or given directly to the Church Administrator. The other costs shall be paid by payments made directly to each individual providing his/her service.

### **3.9 Flowers**

Flowers from outside the church are welcome at the service. Only fresh cut flowers and planters may be used in the sanctuary. Flowers may be left for use for Sunday worship services only if the flower calendar is vacant for that Sunday. In lieu of flowers, the family may request contributions be made to the church for the general fund, a building fund, or any other special purpose (see 3.12 below). All flowers shall be removed from the church when the service is concluded. The Coordinator shall advise the family about this policy and assure the removal is done.

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### 3.10 Decorations

Families may wish to display the deceased's urn, as well as certain mementos or photographs of the deceased and his/her family. The following guidelines would be applicable in these situations:

- Any displays or pictures must be appropriate to a worship setting.
- All decorations must be removed within 2 hours of the conclusion of the service.

### 3.11 Pictures & Photography

As the focus of Christian worship is God, it is not appropriate to display pictures of the deceased in the front of the sanctuary during the service. Displays of the deceased's pictures are encouraged, and more appropriately placed in the narthex. Non-flash photography is permitted during the service from a stationary position behind the worshipping congregation. The playing of a digital slideshow in the sanctuary depicting the life of the deceased prior to the service is acceptable.

### 3.12 Memorial Gifts

Many members choose to have donations made to the church in honor of their loved ones. FPCC is greatly honored by this, and will use the gift as the family desires. To do this, simply send the gift to the church along with the name of the person to be memorialized and designate the gift as a memorial gift. In response, the church shall send acknowledgements to both the donor and the loved ones family. Checks are made payable to the First Presbyterian Church of Conroe or FPCC.

### 3.13 Reception following service

The Presbyterian Women are responsible for providing funeral/memorial service receptions for church members. Such receptions will be planned and provided by the Presbyterian Women organization in consultation with the Senior Pastor.

### 3.14 Funerals for Non-members

Conducting funerals for people who have no connection with the church is a normal part of the ministerial obligation. The Pastor in consultation with the family shall adjust at his/her discretion the content and order of the funeral service.

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### **3.15 Nursery**

Under normal conditions, the church does not provide a nursery for funeral services. The church will provide nursery care if the bereaved family submits a request in a timely manner for making arrangements. The Coordinator shall assist with making such arrangements.

### **3.16 Bulletins**

If bulletins are to be given out during the service, they will be prepared by the church administrator.

### **3.17 Day of the Service**

The Coordinator is responsible for the opening and closing of the church facilities for the service. This includes adjusting lighting, adjusting thermostats and seeing that other needs are met. The Coordinator is responsible for coordinating with the Building and Grounds Ministry and other appropriate ministries for any needed preparations of the church facilities for the service and cleanup following the service. The Communion Table will need to be relocated for placement of the casket. See the Appendix for detailed duties.

### **3.18 Final Plans**

Members of FPCC are strongly encouraged to pre-plan their funeral/memorial service. They may do so by picking up a Final Plan form in the church office. Once completed and returned to the Church Administrator the forms will be kept in the church's confidential files where they will be available for revision. At the time of death, the information will be shared with family members, and the pastor with whom the service is being planned.

### **3.19 Services by Fraternal Orders, Lodges etc.**

Services by fraternal orders, lodges, veterans groups or other organizations are not appropriate at a Presbyterian funeral service. If they are held, they should be limited to the funeral home or graveside, and must be coordinated with the pastor prior to the service.

## **4. Definitions:**

See the Glossary of this Manual of Operations

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### 5. References:

- Book of Order, W-4.10000, 10. Services on the Occasion of Death
- Operations Policy Statement 06.03, *Reporting of Deaths and Record Keeping*

### 6. Applicability:

The policies and procedures in this OPS apply for all funerals and memorial services conducted at the FPCC. Presbyterian-specific requirements also apply for any service officiated by the church's pastor at a funeral home.

### 7. Procedures:

**7.1** The Pastor shall call upon the family of a known member's death. The Pastor will first check to determine if the deceased member has on file in the church office a Planned Funeral form. One purpose of his/her visit is to offer his/her assistance for planning the funeral or memorial service. This includes selecting of hymns and planning the service.

**7.2** The Pastor shall inform the church Funeral Coordinator and the Church Administrator of any details of the family's plans as they become known.

**7.3** The Pastor shall inform the congregation of the death by a means at his/her discretion (OPS 06.03, 7.5) and as quickly as possible.

**7.4** The Church Administrator shall schedule the funeral/memorial service on the church calendar as soon as a date and time have been decided.

**7.5** The Church Administrator shall notify the Choir Director, Worship Ministry Chair, church Funeral Coordinator and the Presbyterian Women's Moderator as soon as possible once a service date is scheduled.

**7.6** The Presbyterian Women's Moderator shall consult with the Senior Pastor for providing a reception.

**7.7** The Pastor shall provide the family's music selections and requests for musicians to the Organist **and/or Choir Director**.

**7.8** The Coordinator shall offer his/her assistance to the Funeral Home and inform the Funeral Home of the appropriate church's policies.

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**7.9** Pastor and Coordinator shall provide all the necessary information to the Church Administrator for preparing the bulletin.

**7.10** The Church Administrator shall prepare the bulletins and notify the Coordinator when they are available and where they are located.

### **8. Review Schedule:**

The Worship Ministry Chairperson is responsible for the review of this OPS on triennium of the effective date and making any needed revisions for the Session's approval.

### **9. Approval:**

Session approved this OPS on the above effective date.



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### Appendix

#### FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CONROE

#### POSITION DESCRIPTION

**Position Title:** Funeral Service Coordinator (“Coordinator”)

**Classification:** Volunteer

**Organization:** Worship Ministry

**Supervisor:** Chair, Worship Ministry

#### RESPONSIBILITIES:

Working under the direction of the Chair, Worship Ministry performs the following duties:

1. The Coordinator assists the Pastor, Church Administrator, deceased’s family and the Funeral Home as needs arise for the funeral.
2. On the day of the funeral the Coordinator will open the church, control the lighting, and adjust HVAC thermostats.
3. The Coordinator shall assure that a sound technician is present.
4. The Coordinator shall be available to advise and answer questions of the Funeral Home’s personnel and bereaved family.
5. The Coordinator shall advise the family and Funeral Home regarding placement of flower arrangements and other matters as they arise.
6. The Coordinator shall assist family members by directing them to the Parlor.
7. After all persons have departed the church, sees that the lights are turned off, thermostats are adjusted, sound is turned off, and that the church is secured (doors are locked).