

What is your only comfort in life and in death?

*That I am not my own,
but belong—body and soul, in life and in death—
to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ.*

(The Heidelberg Catechism, Question 1)

Funeral Planning Guide 2023-2024



**Westminster Presbyterian Church
119 Stadium Drive
Boardman, OH 44512
330-758-4513
wpcboardman.com**

Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die." (John 11:25-26). As Christians, we believe this promise to be true, and we proclaim this good news even in the face of death.

In the Presbyterian tradition, funerals and memorial services are described as services of witness to the Resurrection. After the death of a loved one, we gather to worship in order to remind each other of the power of God, trusting God's love and grace and seeking peace through Jesus Christ, who grieves alongside us.

One of the privileges of being servant leaders of the church is the opportunity to journey with families in times of pain and loss.

This guide is designed for individuals or families who are currently planning a funeral or memorial service for a loved one. We hope that the information in this booklet will help to provide answers to many of your questions about the decisions you are making during this time. Please know that you are not in this alone. We, along with our church family, are here to support you however we can spiritually, emotionally, and tangibly through physical presence and expressions of care.

This booklet can also serve as a planning booklet for those who wish to discuss their wishes with church leadership or their family in advance. When preparations are made and discussed with others, survivors are relieved of some of the difficult questions as to what is right and have the satisfaction of knowing that they are doing what their loved one would have wanted. When completed, please share a copy of your wishes and they will be kept in a confidential place in the church office.

A planning form is included here for your convenience. After completing the form, two copies should be kept: one for your personal files and one for the church's files. (Copies can be made free of charge at the church.) Additional forms are available through the church office.

Finally, our support of you and your family does not end with a memorial service. We are available to provide additional support for you and your family as you mourn your loss, through prayers, meals, and visitation. Grief is an ongoing process, and we will continue this journey with you in the days, weeks, months, and years to come.

May God hold you and your family in love during this time.

Rev. Adam Rodgers, pastor

Karen Kalcic, funeral hospitality coordinator

Anna Baker, deacon & bereavement team member

Judy Loftis, deacon & bereavement team member

Dani Yuhas, deacon, and bereavement team member

Peggy Yuhas, fellowship committee chairperson

IN LIFE AND IN DEATH

“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.”
(Directory for Worship)

This planning guide is offered to WPC members & friends as an affirmation of faith in the resurrection to eternal life and as an encouragement to individuals and families to plan carefully for their own deaths and the deaths of family members and loved ones.

When Death Occurs

The church office and/or pastor should be notified immediately of the death of a church member. Our pastor, staff, and deacons, through early involvement with loved ones, can offer prayer and comfort, as well as assisting with the practical realities of dealing with grief, and making arrangements for the funeral or memorial service. Funeral and memorial services are always under the direction of the church pastor.

Pastor Adam Rodgers	724-893-6244
Church Office	330-758-4513
Director of Music Ministries, Kathy Miller	330-921-9960
Funeral Luncheons, Peggy Yuhas	330-207-9961 or 330-793-3151

Where and When the Services Should Be Held

The church building itself is an appropriate place for a Christian Service of Witness to the Resurrection. In the Sanctuary or Chapel we are surrounded by symbols of the faith, which remind us of the promise of resurrection and of the “great cloud of witnesses” who have “kept the faith and finished the race” and now have inherited the “crown of glory.”

If a funeral home is chosen as the place for the service, such arrangements must be made with the funeral home director.

The pastor wishes to be sensitive to the needs and desires of family members. It may be necessary to take into consideration travel schedules for family members, availability of the pastor and church musicians, and previously scheduled events on the church calendar.

In most cases a service takes place within a few days of death, but a memorial service at a later date is also appropriate. The pastor will advise the family of the availability of the church and will arrange a time to meet with the family to plan the service.

Making Formal Service Arrangements

Please contact the pastor or church office before making formal arrangements. The minister will visit with the family to offer pastoral care and guidance, and to begin the process of planning the funeral service. The minister will work with the family and funeral home to ensure your loved one's funeral is handled with the utmost dignity and respect.

Funeral Home Involvement

It is very important that the church pastor and staff work with the funeral home directors as a team. If you have not yet contacted the church when you begin working with the funeral home, please ask the funeral director to call the church immediately. Please do not schedule a funeral without first contacting the church and speaking with the pastor.

Disposition of the Body

Burial, cremation, or donation of the body for medical purposes are all appropriate options within the Christian tradition. A casket or urn need not be present at the Service of Witness to the Resurrection. The body or ashes may be interred prior to the service or following the service. If the body has been donated for medical purposes, a service may be held at the time of death. Later, when the cremains are available, an inurnment can be scheduled.

The Service of Witness to the Resurrection

"The service, which should be conducted with dignity and with simplicity, is a witness to God's love given to all people, a love which strengthens and supports, even in the midst of grief. It is a witness to God's promises in Jesus Christ as attested by Christ's resurrection from the dead and to the sure and certain hope that Christ has gone to prepare a place for the children of God." (Directory for Worship)

The funeral/memorial service is called a Service of Witness to the Resurrection because it is a liturgical service of worship to glorify God and to console the living. Although thankfulness and honor are to be expressed to God for the life and witness of the deceased, the focus of worship is upon the God of Resurrection, who comforts us with the truth that death does not get the last word in our lives.

The pastor of Westminster Presbyterian Church will officiate at each funeral and/or committal held on church property. Additional ministers, family members, friends and members of the congregation may be invited by the minister to assist with the service.

The bulletin, or printed order of worship, will ordinarily be produced by the church office staff. Special requests should be made as early as possible.

Arrangements

The pastor will work with the family for all aspects relating to the funeral or memorial service. The pastor will also help coordinate conversations with any and all persons providing support for the family before, during, and after the funeral/memorial service. A deacon will accompany the family as well, providing care and assisting with plans surrounding the service.

Visitation

Some families choose to have a short visitation for friends and family at the church prior to the start of the service. Others forego a visitation or plan that ritual at the funeral home.

Committal Service

The main service may precede or follow a brief committal service at the burial site (the committal may also be included as part of the service if no burial is planned) or may occur at another date and time. Typically, the committal service is attended by members of the family and close friends.

Reception/Luncheon

The WPC Fellowship Committee is available to assist with coordinating, preparing, and serving refreshments in the Fellowship Hall after the service, if desired. The family may give a financial donation payable to Westminster Presbyterian Church to help reimburse the church for costs associated with the reception or luncheon.

Flowers

Flowers for the service or reception are welcome and can be delivered to the church during normal office hours, within one hour of the service, or as arranged with the church office/pastor. All flowers should be removed by the funeral home or family after the service unless other arrangements have been made.

Memorial Gifts

The church appreciates any memorial gifts that family or friends wish to make. Contributions to the general Operating Fund allow the church to use funds for the area of greatest needs. For specific gifts, the pastor can advise the family to the appropriate designated fund or provide suggestions for specific uses of memorial funds. On behalf of the family, the church office acknowledges memorial gifts received and then notifies the family of those donors.

Music

The Director of Music Ministries will coordinate music for funerals held at Westminster Presbyterian Church. Liturgically appropriate music includes hymns, psalms and spirituals. All music must be approved by the pastor and/or Director of Music. Any guest musicians, including soloists and guest organists, must be approved by the pastor and/or Director of Music.

Casket

When a casket is present in the sanctuary, it may be covered with a pall or casket spray of flowers as deemed appropriate by the pastor. Special attention must be given to ensure that the stage area is accessible to worship leaders.

Civil and Military Ceremonies

When requested by the family as they work with the pastor to plan the service, an American flag may be used as a pall. However, civil and military ceremonies ordinarily take place at the conclusion of the funeral or memorial service outside the sanctuary, or at a cemetery.

Livestreaming the Service

At the family's request, a livestreamed recording of the service held in the Sanctuary will be made. When making service arrangements with the pastor, please indicate your desire to livestream the service, so out-of-town family and friends can attend digitally.

Honorariums

Providing space and services for families is a ministry of compassion on behalf of our congregation. The church facilities are made available to you, whenever possible and free of charge, to host a funeral or memorial service.

The pastor and staff of Westminster Presbyterian Church believe that funerals are a part of the life and ministry of a congregation. They count it both as a great responsibility and great privilege to be with families in their moment of need, offering through their words, work and witness the life and love of Jesus Christ.

It is common practice to honor church leaders who make the funeral or memorial service possible with an honorarium. As many families are uncertain about an appropriate amount and often contact the church office to ask what is customary, the following are suggested as general guidelines for those wishing to provide honoraria.

Officiating Pastor	\$200
Director of Music	\$200

Please note: It is at the family's discretion as to whether or not they choose to provide an honorarium to the participating church clergy and staff. It is also at the family's discretion, should they choose to provide an honorarium, to follow the guidelines suggested above or to determine other amounts they deem appropriate.

If non-staff musicians are hired to provide special music, the following fees are customary.

Special Musician	\$100
------------------	-------

Planning the Funeral/Memorial Service

Option #1—A Simple Service for Use in Sanctuary, Chapel, or Funeral Home

Greeting

Opening Prayer

Bible Readings

Funeral Sermon

Words of Remembrance

Brief words from several family members or friends arranged in advance. It is recommended that those speaking write out what they are planning to say, and speak no longer than 3-5 minutes.

Memorial Prayer

Commendation

Blessing

Procession

Option #2—Expanded Service for Use in Sanctuary or Chapel

Prelude

Greeting & Gathering Hymn

Prayer of Blessing

Hymn

Bible Readings

[Special Music, if desired]

Funeral Sermon

Words of Remembrance

Brief words from several family members or friends arranged in advance. It is recommended that those speaking write out what they are planning to say, and speak no longer than 3-5 minutes.

Memorial Prayer & The Lord's Prayer

Hymn

Commendation & Blessing

Postlude & Procession

*This is simply a starting point for worship planning.
The pastor will guide you through selecting different elements
and making decisions about any omissions or additions you wish to make.*

Bible Readings

The following are offered as suggestions of passages that proclaim the hope of the resurrection and love of God through Jesus Christ. The family is also welcome to select other favorite passages. The pastor is also happy to select appropriate scripture readings for the day.

Job 19:23-27	<i>I know that my redeemer lives</i>
Isaiah 40:1-11	<i>Comfort my people</i>
Isaiah 40:28-31	<i>Those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength</i>
Isaiah 65:17-25	<i>I create new heavens and a new earth</i>
Ecclesiastes 3:1-15	<i>For everything there is a season</i>
Psalms 23	<i>The Lord is my shepherd</i>
Psalms 46:1-5, 10-11	<i>The Lord is a very present help in trouble</i>
Psalms 121	<i>I lift up my eyes to the hills</i>
Psalms 130	<i>Out of the depths I cry to the Lord</i>
Psalms 139:1-12	<i>Where shall I go from your spirit?</i>
Matthew 5:1-12a	<i>The Beatitudes</i>
Matthew 18:1-5, 10	<i>The greatest in the kingdom of heaven</i>
Matthew 25:31-46	<i>As you did it to one of the least of these</i>
Mark 10:13-16	<i>Let the children come to me</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 11:17-27	<i>I am the resurrection and the life</i>
John 14:1-6, 25-27	<i>Let not your hearts be troubled</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 15:20-26, 42-44, 50, 53-58	<i>Death is swallowed in victory</i>
2 Corinthians 4:16-5:1	<i>Visible things are temporary, invisible things eternal</i>
Philippians 3:20-21	<i>Our citizenship is in heaven</i>
Colossians 3:1-17	<i>Set your minds on things that are above</i>
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18	<i>The comfort of Christ's coming</i>
Hebrews 11:1-3, 12:1-2	<i>Faith and the cloud of witnesses</i>
Revelation 21:1-2, 22:3-5	<i>A new heaven and a new earth</i>

At the loss of a child:

Matt. 18:1-5, 10	<i>The greatest in the kingdom of heaven</i>
Mark 10:13-16	<i>Let the children come to me</i>

For those whose faith is unknown:

Eccl. 3:1-15	<i>For everything there is a season</i>
Lam. 3:1-9, 19-23	<i>The Lord's steadfast love</i>
Matt. 25:31-46	<i>As you did it to one of the least of these</i>

Commonly Used Hymns

The following hymns from the blue-colored hymnal found in our sanctuary and chapel pews titled *The Presbyterian Hymnal*. These hymns are particularly appropriate for funeral or memorial services. Families are welcome to select other hymns or spiritual songs to be included, or to choose not to include congregational singing.

<u>Hymnal #</u>	<u>Title</u>
473	For the Beauty of the Earth
455	All Creatures of Our God and King
276	Great Is Thy Faithfulness
281	Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah
446	Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken
260	A Mighty Fortress Is Our God
438	Blest Be the Tie That Binds
526	For All the Saints
376	Love Divine, All Loves Excelling
551	Come, Ye Thankful People, Come
339	Be Thou My Vision
464	Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee
467	How Great Thou Art
280	Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound
210	Our God, Our Help in Ages Past
399	We Walk by Faith and Not by Sight
527	Near to the Heart of God
384	O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go
404	Precious Lord, Take My Hand
543	Abide with Me

Planning Guide

The data on this form will be useful for those who plan the funeral or memorial service or who write an appropriate obituary. Although this is not a legal document, it is recommended that a copy of your completed form be given to a family member or a close friend and, if pre-arrangements have been made, to a funeral home.

By completing as much of the attached form as you are comfortable with, you will, as one Presbyterian said, "have dealt with some arrangements that are usually only done under immense pressure and by persons who may or may not know all of your wishes. You will thus have the assurance that your wishes are made known and that you have taken the burden of a lot of unnecessary decision making off of the ones you love."

Your completed form will be kept confidential in the church office to be used by the pastor at the appropriate time.

*The instructions contained on these sheets are not legally binding,
and may be altered at your request.
Please notify the church if you make any changes.*

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

BIRTHDATE _____

SIGNATURE OF PERSON PROVIDING INFORMATION _____

DATE THE FORM IS COMPLETED _____

1. Person or persons recommended as a trusted friend of the family who may be called on for objective input about funeral planning.

Name _____ Phone _____
Name _____ Phone _____

2. Disposition of the body (please check the appropriate box)

() Burial () Cremation () Body donated to a medical school

3. Wishes regarding the service

- A. Have you planned your own funeral or memorial service? () Yes () No
If yes, please attach a copy to this form, indicate where it might be found, and note the funeral home you have chosen. If you would like to include obituary information in the church file, please attach a copy also.

- B. Wishes regarding visitation with your family *(please check appropriate box)*
 Gathering Room or Atrium _____
 Funeral Home _____
 Private Home _____
 No Visitation Desired _____

- C. Type of service desired: *(please check appropriate box)*
 Funeral *(the body is present)* _____
 Memorial Service *(the body is not present)* _____
 Graveside Service Only _____

- D. Wishes regarding the place of the service *(please check appropriate box)*
 WPC Sanctuary _____
 WPC Chapel _____
 Funeral Home _____
 Home _____
 Other _____

- E. Special Music Requests *(optional, sung or instrumental)*
Prelude _____
Postlude _____
Special Music _____

- F. Hymns *(usually two or three)*
Hymn #1 _____
Hymn #2 _____
Hymn #3 _____

- G. Bible Readings *(usually two, but can include others)*

- H. Indicate any wishes regarding pallbearers

I. Wishes regarding flowers (please check appropriate box)

Give to shut-ins _____

Place on grave _____

Memorial contribution instead of flowers

If yes, designate for which of the following funds?

General memorial fund _____

Specific memorial funds (music, grounds, children, outreach, etc.)

Other (please specify) _____

J. Place of burial (please check appropriate box)

Private burial plot located at _____

WPC Columbarium _____

Cremains _____

4. Are there any stories of your life or faith that you would like to have shared at this service? (Please attached separate sheets of paper, if necessary.)

5. Is there anything that you would like people to know as they worship at this service? (Please attached separate sheets of paper, if necessary.)

6. Family Members or Friends to Speak (optional, include relationship to deceased)

7. Other Wishes (note if military honors or other special ceremony)

8. Family Information

Name(s) of preferred individual(s) to assist in arrangements (relative, friend, attorney)

Name: _____

Phone: _____ Address: _____

Name: _____

Phone: _____ Address: _____

Name: _____

Phone: _____ Address: _____

9. Funeral Home to be Called

Name: _____

Phone: _____ Address: _____

10. Pastor to be Called

Name: _____

Phone: _____ Address: _____

Death Certificate Information

The following information is required for the death certificate. By filling this form out now, you can spare your family an additional responsibility at the time of your death.

Name: _____
 First Middle Last

Social Security #: _____

Date of birth: ___/___/____

Sex: ___M ___ F

Race: _____

Citizen of what country: _____

Birthplace: _____

Armed Services: _____

___ Married ___ Never Married ___ Widowed ___ Divorced

Usual residence: _____
 City County State Country

Current street address:

(Street)

(City, State, Zip)

Type of work done during working life (even if currently retired):

Father's name _____

Mother's maiden name: _____

Obituary

Writing your own obituary can be part of your life and end-of-life planning. The way you would like to be remembered is part of a careful arranging for yourself should you not be in the best of health or life. This is your chance to say what you want others to know about you. It can be helpful to you, providing peace of mind that you have had your say; and it can be helpful to your family and friends, helping them during a difficult time.

Eight steps to writing your obituary include:

1. **Begin with the announcement.** It should include who the person is, the date they died, and where they died. The cause of death is optional. Be short and concise. All this can be typically included in one sentence.
2. **Write a short biographical piece about your life.** This should include where and when the person was born, where they lived throughout their life, notable awards and times in their life, important hobbies, where they went to school, and anything else of personal or familial importance.
3. **Include who you are survived by.** Include, in this order, immediate family members (spouse and children or parents and siblings step-children) and secondary family members (aunts, uncles, grandchildren, close cousins). You can include spouse names such as Mary (John), John (Anna), ...
4. **Use baptism names for Relatives.** Nicknames should be added in quotes, such as "Bud."
5. **Deceased relatives should be listed last with the phrase "the late..."**
6. **Note where and when important ceremonies will take place, such as memorial services, grave-side burials, etc.**
7. **Tell people where they can make donations in remembrance of the person who has died.** This is a very common practice in the United States and should always be noted so as to avoid an influx of calls to the bereaved family.
8. **Remember, this is the main research tool for the family tree so try to include everyone.** Include a photo, too!

Appendix

Here is a list of things that are good to arrange as part of life as well as end-of-life planning:

- life and disability insurance,
- critical illness / long-term care insurance,
- health care directive (“living will”),
- power of attorney,
- up-to-date will,
- executor,
- guardian for minor children,
- organ donations,
- ethical will,
- list of financial accounts,
- list of Internet account usernames and passwords,
- wishes for a funeral or other service (or not),
- bequests and requests for charitable donations,
- wishes for interment, and
- a start on your own obituary.

When any of the included forms are completed, copies should be filed at Westminster Presbyterian Church, the funeral home you wish to use, and a copy given to a family member.

Feel free to make an appointment to speak with Rev. Adam Rodgers (724-893-6244) if you’d like assistance completing this form. Your funeral home of choice will also be able to provide you with additional information to be used in making final arrangements.