

**Church Office  
(805) 543-5451**

**MEMORIAL SERVICES**  
AT  
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA

*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, Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.

**The Purpose of the Memorial Service**

A memorial service is a service of worship to God and of witness to the resurrection in Jesus Christ. It is a time for reflecting on God's gifts of life and love; for re-affirming the hope of eternal life; for receiving the strength and comfort of God's Spirit. It is a time to be surrounded with the love and support of the community of faith. In this healing context, we remember the life of the one who has died, and how God has enabled that person's life to touch us.

**The Mood of the Memorial Service**

"We grieve," declared the apostle Paul, "but not as those who have no hope." The memorial service is a time to recognize our grief — a time to give appropriate expression to our sorrow. In the Christian context, it is a celebration of hope. God's love has triumphed over death. Both these elements should be evident in the mood of the service: the recognition of our bereavement on the one hand and the celebration of God's victory over death on the other; the appropriate expression of sorrow on the one hand and of thankfulness to God on the other.

**The Structure of the Memorial Service**

The memorial service shall be under the direction of one of the church's current pastors. It shall include the reading of Scripture and prayer. It may include various offerings of music, including solos, instrumentals and congregational hymns. It may include a sermon or other exposition of God's word. It may include remembrances of the one who has died. An affirmation of faith may be made by the people. The Apostles' Creed is particularly appropriate.

**Planning the Memorial Service**

Contact with the pastoral staff of the church should be made as soon as possible after the event of death. In this initial contact, a date, time and place may be set for the memorial service. On occasion, pastors of First Presbyterian Church conduct funerals at funeral chapels. However, these services are most appropriate in the usual place of worship: the church sanctuary. Sometime after the initial contact, the officiating pastor will meet with the family again, a second time, to plan the details

of the service. If the deceased has left behind any wishes regarding the content of the service, these should be shared with the pastor.

Following the planning meeting, the officiating pastor will take care of the following arrangements:

1. Arrange for music and musicians;
2. Arrange for the printing of the order of worship for the service;
3. Arrange for ushers;
4. Arrange for a simple reception following the memorial service, if the family wishes to have a reception in the church.

If the family wishes to have a pastor present for a graveside committal, the committal may be conducted anytime before or after the memorial service. Remains of the deceased, caskets and urns, are typically not brought to the church or into the church sanctuary.

### **Music in the Memorial Service**

All music (instrumental and vocal) shall direct the worshipper's attention to God and provide for a celebration of God's power, providence, and care. The officiating pastor will work with the family in the selection of hymns, songs, musicians and vocalists. It is recommended that family members or friends not provide special music in the memorial service.

### **Sanctuary Furnishings and the use of Floral Decorations**

Elaborate floral displays are discouraged. Ordinarily, one or two arrangements are placed in the sanctuary on provided pedestals. Other flowers may be set in the reception area. Because of the sacramental nature of the Lord's Supper in our tradition, floral and other decorations should not be placed on the communion table. Liturgical colors, decorations and furnishings which have been set up for regular Sunday morning worship should not be moved or removed.

### **Flower delivery and disposal**

Since florists often call the church to ask where flowers should be delivered, the family should communicate to the officiating pastor at the planning meeting what their wishes are in this regard. The family should decide what they want to do with flowers remaining at the church when the memorial service is concluded. In most cases family members appoint one of their own number to remove the flowers from the church. Flowers left at the church will be distributed to nursing homes or homebound folk or disposed of as otherwise appropriate.

### **Photographs and other articles of remembrance**

Photographs and articles of remembrance may be placed in the reception area, wherever the reception is to be held, but not on the chancel or in the sanctuary.

### **Receptions**

Receptions may be arranged for Wilson Hall, which is adjacent to the sanctuary, or in the church courtyard.

The church can provide for a simple reception (coffee and cookies), or the family can provide a more elaborate reception at its own expense. If caterers handle the reception, the kitchen must be thoroughly cleared and cleaned by the caterers after the reception is concluded.

**Fees and Stipends**

Building Use

(includes custodian, sound tech & simple reception)

	<u>Members</u>	<u>Non-Members</u>
Sanctuary:	No charge	\$250
Reception area:	No charge	\$250

Personnel

	<u>Members</u>	<u>Non-Members</u>
Minister:	No charge	\$250
Organist:	\$150	\$150
Soloist (each)	\$100	\$100