

# AT THE TIME OF MY DEATH

## A Funeral Guide

### PALMETTO PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

It is the hope of the Session that this information might assist members and friends in looking at the crucial issue of death and the disposition of our bodies in the context of our Christian faith. This issue can be uncomfortable for us and those we love; therefore, we often delay discussing it. Consequently, when death does occur, members of our families are left with the task of making decisions for us in a time of sorrow and grief when thinking clearly is most difficult of all. Pre-planning can be immensely beneficial to those we love.

Included is a sheet entitled *At the Time of My Death*. You are encouraged to complete the form, place one copy with your important papers, and allow us to make one copy to be kept in a confidential file in the church office. If you have any questions or concerns about anything contained, please feel free to contact the pastor. He/she is available to assist you in thinking through these issues. When death occurs in your family, please notify the pastor and/or the church office immediately so that your church family may respond with love and support.

### Burial or Cremation

More and more people are considering the possibility of cremation as opposed to traditional earth burial. The choice is simply one of personal preference. Either is acceptable in our Christian faith. If cremation is chosen, the ashes may be interred or scattered. In South Carolina there is a 24 hour waiting period before a cremation may be conducted. Palmetto has a columbarium on our church property.

### The Funeral Service

The funeral service is a service of worship under the direction of the minister. The purpose of the service is to give thanks to God for the gift of the life of the one who has died and witness to our faith in God's continuing gift of life to us in Jesus Christ. Although the reality of death is acknowledged in the service, even more importantly the reality of our hope in Jesus Christ is affirmed.

The Christian funeral service should ordinarily be held in the sanctuary of the church where the people of God gather for worship each Lord's Day. Our sanctuary is available for members and there is no charge. Honorarium for the pastor is at the discretion of the family. The honorarium for the Music Director is \$150.

The service may be conducted either before or after the committal of the body or the disposition of the ashes. If the casket is to be present during the service, it will remain closed at all times while in the sanctuary. There is funeral pall available which may be used in lieu of a floral casket spray. The casket may be placed in the sanctuary prior to the beginning of the service or be brought into the sanctuary in procession at the beginning of the service. Our *Directory for Worship* provides that "the service shall be complete in itself, and any fraternal, civic, or military rites should be conducted separately." (Book of Order W-4.10005).

The funeral service may also be held at a funeral home, crematorium or at graveside.

The service begins with scriptural sentences that draw our attention to God's love and mercy to us in Jesus Christ and God's victory over the powers of sin and death through the resurrection of Christ from death to life. The service will ordinarily include readings from the Old and New Testaments, a brief sermon testifying to the hope and promises set forth in Scripture, prayers of thanksgiving and intercession, and the singing of hymns which bear witness to the love of God in Jesus Christ and the gift of life everlasting. "The service ends by commending the one who has died to the care of the eternal God and sending the people forth with a benediction."

(Book of Order W-4.10005).

### Suggested Hymns

Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound  
 For the Beauty of the Earth  
 I Greet Thee, Who My Sure Redeemer Art  
 The Lord's My Shepherd, I'll Not Want  
 The King of Love My Shepherd Is  
 Be Thou My Vision  
 The Church's One Foundation  
 Glorious Things of Thee are Spoken  
 How Firm a Foundation  
 Love Divine, All Loves Excelling  
 My Faith Looks Up to Thee  
 Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee  
 How Great Thou Art  
 O Worship the King, All Glorious Above!  
 Jesus, Thou Joy of Loving Hearts  
 For All the Saints  
 Near to the Heart of God  
 Lord of the Loving  
 O Lord of Life, Where'er They Be  
 Abide with Me  
 Great is Thy Faithfulness  
 O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go  
 God Is Our Refuge and Our Strength  
 Our God, Our Help in Ages Past  
 A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

### Suggested Scripture Lessons

#### Psalms

Psalm 16:5-11  
 Psalm 23  
 Psalm 27: 1,4-9a,13-14  
 Psalm 42:1-6a  
 Psalm 46:1-5, 10-11  
 Psalm 90:1-10, 12  
 Psalm 103  
 Psalm 121  
 Psalm 130  
 Psalm 139: 1-12

#### Old Testament

Job 19:23-27  
 Isaiah 25:6-9  
 Isaiah 26:1-4,19  
 Isaiah 40:1-11  
 Isaiah 40:28-31  
 Ecc. 3:1-15

#### Epistles

Romans 5:1-11  
 Romans 8:14-23,31-39  
 I Corinthians 15:2-26  
 I Corinthians 35-38,42-44  
 I Corinthians 50, 53-58  
 2 Corinthians 4:16-5: 1  
 2 Corinthians 5:1-10  
 Revelation 21:1-4, 22-25  
 Revelation 22:3-5

#### Gospels

Matthew 5:1-12a  
 Luke 23:33 and  
 23:39-43  
 John 6:37-40  
 John 6:47-58  
 John 11:17-27  
 John 14:1-6 and  
 25-27

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**AT THE TIME OF MY DEATH**

*This form was adopted by the Session in 2016 for the use of members of Palmetto Presbyterian Church. We invite you to indicate your desires and return the form to the church. We shall keep the information in our confidential files.*

To the Session of Palmetto Presbyterian Church:

My worshipping at Palmetto Presbyterian Church is a testimony that I believe in God as my Creator and the One who will one day receive me unto Himself. I believe in His Son who was raised from the dead and who promises eternal life. I would appreciate your keeping the following information on file to be used at the appropriate time. I intend that this paper be considered apart from and in no way related to any legal document I have had or shall have prepared.

I. I have given specific instructions regarding my burial to:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

II. I prefer the following firm to serve as funeral director:

\_\_\_\_\_

III. I prefer that my body (be viewed) (not be viewed) at times before the day of the funeral. Note: It is not appropriate for the casket to be open at the funeral service, particularly if that service is conducted in the Sanctuary.

IV. I prefer that my memorial gifts take the form of:

\_\_\_\_\_ Gifts to the Church  
\_\_\_\_\_ Gifts to this Charity \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Gifts of Flowers

V. I prefer that the worship service held in thanksgiving be conducted

\_\_\_\_\_ In the Sanctuary, \_\_\_\_\_ In the Funeral Chapel,  
\_\_\_\_\_ At the Graveside, \_\_\_\_\_ Other (please describe)

VI. I would like for the following people to serve as pallbearers:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

VII. With regards to the service:

\_\_\_ I prefer that the minister plan the service entirely after consulting with the family.

\_\_\_ I prefer that the service be according to my wishes (directions and order of service are written and enclosed with this form.)

My favorite passages of scripture are: \_\_\_\_\_

My favorite hymns are: \_\_\_\_\_

I make the following suggestions for the service to be noted by the appropriate persons:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

VIII. With regards to the disposition of my body:

\_\_\_ I prefer that my body be buried. I now own a lot in \_\_\_\_\_

Cemetery. I do not own a lot, but I prefer burial in \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ I prefer that my body be entombed. I now own a mausoleum in \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Cemetery.

\_\_\_ I prefer that my body be cremated.

\_\_\_ I own a niche in the Palmetto columbarium.

\_\_\_ I prefer that my body be given to medical science. (Please remember that on occasion, bodies are refused at the medical schools, so we suggest that you give alternate plans as well.)

\_\_\_ I prefer to donate organs. (Please designate)

IX. Other thoughts or concerns not already expressed: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

X. Please include on another sheet of paper any information wished to be used in an obituary.

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_