

Memorial and Funeral Services at Rye Presbyterian Church

882 Boston Post Road, Rye, NY 10580

Telephone (914) 967-0842

Fax (914) 967-0267

www.ryepc.com

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A Service of Witness to the Resurrection

Order of Service

Prelude

Opening Sentences and Call to Worship

Opening Prayer

Congregational Hymn (*optional*)

Readings from the Old Testament

Readings from the New Testament

Words of Remembrance

(From the family and/or friends)

Musical Meditation/Solo (*optional*)

Sermon

Prayers of Thanksgiving, Supplication and Intercession

The Lord's Prayer

Congregational Hymn (*optional*)

Commendation

Benediction

Postlude

The resurrection is the central reality of the Christian faith and shapes our attitude toward death, and our responses to it as well. Death brings loss, sorrow, and grief to all. Yet even in the face of death, we affirm the hope of the resurrection. We do not bear bereavement in isolation, but are sustained by the power of the Holy Spirit and the community of faith. The Church offers a ministry of hope and love to all who grieve.

Rye Presbyterian Church and its pastors are committed to offering support and encouragement to families and friends in time of loss. Notification of the death of a family member or friend to either a pastor or the church office will enable the church to respond helpfully.

The pastors are available to meet with the family at a convenient time and place to discuss suitable arrangements.

The Service

A Service of Witness to the Resurrection is a religious service to hear God's words of comfort and hope that come from our affirmation of the resurrection of our Lord. All other aspects of the service flow from this: remembrance and thankfulness for the life of the one who has died, reflection on the meaning of life, consolation for grief, and hope in the time of loss. It puts death into the ongoing story of God's redemption of the world. All aspects of the service are structured to these ends.

This service is called a funeral if the body or cremains is present, or a memorial service if disposition of the body has been previously arranged. The service is under the direction of the pastor. It includes prayer, readings from scripture which affirm God's power over death, and a sermon witnessing to the resurrection. Aspects of the life of the one who died may be recalled by a few family members and friends. Hymns and music which affirm God's power and our hope may be sung by those assembled.

Services may be held either in the Sanctuary (450 capacity) or in the Crawford Chapel (80 capacity)

From Monday through Friday, a service may be held at 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m., or 2:00 p.m. These hours are set to coincide with the nursery school hours in order to alleviate congestion in the parking lot. There are no restrictions on Saturdays or when school is not in session. Services may also be held on Sunday afternoon.

In order that attention during a funeral service be directed to God, if a casket is present the casket is closed and covered with a cloth drape (funeral pall) provided by the church. If there are cremains, it is appropriate that the urn be placed on a table at the chancel steps of the sanctuary. Floral arrangements within the church should be modest and limited to no more than a half

dozen. In lieu of flowers, offerings to a charity of the family's choice or to the Memorial Fund of the Rye Presbyterian Church may be made. The Memorial Fund is used in the education, worship, and outreach of the church. A family may also choose to designate its memorials to a specific need of the church.

Burial

Before or after a funeral, it is customary for the family, and sometimes friends, to accompany the body or cremains to its final resting place either at the graveside or in the Columbarium for a brief, simple service of committal. Interment in the RPC Columbarium is available by prior arrangement with the church office. Please inquire with the RPC Pastoral Assistant for details on the Columbarium.

When advisable, interment may also be done at another time.

Reception

Frequently, families wish to greet their friends and guests after the service. This may be done in several ways:

- First, a reception line may be formed in the narthex of the church, outside, or in the vestibule of the chapel following the service.
- Second, a reception may be held in the church Assembly Room for groups larger than 60 guests. Smaller groups can be accommodated in the Westminster Room or Library. The church can provide coffee, water, and hot and cold drink cups, if needed. The remaining details of the reception are to be arranged by the family or through a caterer. There is a sexton fee for set-up of tables and chairs and clean-up.
- Finally, the family may choose to arrange for a reception away from the church such as at a club, at home, or elsewhere.

Frequently Asked Questions

When is it appropriate to have the funeral?

If a casket is used and the body is to be buried, funerals are usually held within the next few days after death. If the body is to be cremated, it is possible to have the service at any time after death. Experience suggests, however, that the family benefits from not separating the time of the service unduly from the time of death.

Can we have eulogies?

It is fully appropriate for members of the family and/or friends to remember the deceased. Because this is a religious service, such remembrances should bring to light the best aspects of the life of the deceased – their goodness, faithfulness, and influence on others – as well our gratitude for their life.

Eulogies should work to these ends and should not be lengthy. Three speakers speaking for a total of fifteen minutes is optimal. Open microphone sessions are not permitted.

If the family would like to have a more extended time of remembrance where people might share their memories of the deceased, the pastors can work with the family to find an appropriate time and place where such sharing might take place, such as at a wake or reception.

Can we include other clergy?

Any service of worship at Rye Presbyterian Church must be presided over by one of the church's clergy. The pastors are happy to include other clergy as part of the service, and to issue an invitation for others to participate in an appropriate way.

What are the costs involved in having a service at the church?

For church members, there is no fee for the RPC minister doing the service. The family may choose to pay the pastor an honorarium, or make a contribution to the Pastor's Discretionary Fund, which the pastors use to help those in need in the community. In addition, there are fees for the music director and the church sexton. Fees for non-members are available from the church's Pastoral Assistant.

How are services by fraternal or military organizations included?

If the deceased was a member of a fraternal organization with funeral rites, or wishes any sort of military observance, that service takes place separately from the church service. Most organizations are very good at working with churches in this regard.

Can communion be served at a funeral or memorial service?

Yes. Any service of communion must be approved beforehand by the Session of the church, and it must be open to all baptized persons. Communion will be celebrated by the clergy of Rye Presbyterian Church.

What is a wake?

This event, which usually takes place the day before the service, is derived from a time when families and friends attended the deceased throughout the day and night until the time of the service. It became a time for visiting with grieving family members and friends. Today, families often make arrangements at a funeral home to receive friends, some of whom may be unable to attend the funeral or memorial service. At those times when a casket is present, it is called a “viewing.” A wake, visiting hours, or viewing is not mandatory and is held at the discretion of the family.

Do I need pall bearers?

Sometimes families wish to bestow a special honor on friends or family members by inviting them to escort the casket at a funeral service. This is permissible only within the church building. Once outside the church, state law mandates that the handling of the casket is the responsibility of the funeral director and staff. This should be confirmed with the funeral director.

What kind of music may I have?

According to the Presbyterian Church (USA) Book of Order, “Instrumental or vocal music may be used and worshippers may sing hymns, psalms, spirituals, or spiritual songs which affirm God’s power over death, a belief in the resurrection to life everlasting, and the assurance of the communion of saints.” Love songs, Broadway show tunes, martial music, college “alma mater,” rally, or fight-songs, etc., are not appropriate and requests for such cannot be honored. The music director is always available to offer suggestions and guidance, and will also arrange for soloists or instrumentalists if these are desired.

Parking

The church parking lot of 90 parking spaces is located off Milton Road behind the church building. An additional 25 parking spaces are available in the church driveway along Parsons Street. Parking is also sometimes available along Milton Road and in the High School parking lot across Parsons Street from the church. Entrance to the church parking lots can be gained only from Parsons Street or Milton Road.