

Great Bridge Presbyterian Church

Funeral/Memorial Service Policies, Procedures, and Fees

**** All of the policies and procedures herein apply to church members and non-church members.***

Introduction

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 good news of the gospel and the hope of resurrection. 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. [*The Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. W-4.0701*]

The Session of Great Bridge Presbyterian Church (GBPC) has set forth the following policies and procedures governing funeral/memorial services which occur at the church. The Session offers these policies and procedures as a faithful way to proceed at the time of death. In the name of our Risen Savior, we stand with those who grieve the loss of their loved ones and who celebrate the resurrection of Christ Jesus our Lord. By the great grace of God, may these guide us in honoring and respecting our loved one passing from this world to the next.

Funeral/Memorial Service Policies

All requests for exceptions to these policies must be considered and approved by the Pastor in conjunction with the Session, the Director of Worship and Music, and/or the Funeral Coordinator.

I. Planning a Funeral at GBPC

1. Because it is difficult under emotional stress to plan wisely, the GBPC Session strongly encourages members to discuss and plan in advance the arrangements which will be necessary at the time of death, including decisions about the Christian options of burial, cremation, or donation for medical purposes.
2. GBPC's minister welcomes opportunities to work with individuals and families to plan funerals before the time of death. The minister encourages individuals to communicate their wishes and desires with family and friends, and provide a copy to the church. Whenever possible, these wishes and desires should be put in writing. Consider using GBPC's "Funeral Planning Guide and Worksheet," which walks individuals through making their final wishes known.

II. Types of Services

1. All services conducted by the GBPC Pastor are services of worship for the community of faith. While the form of services may differ, each is a Service of Witness to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.
 - Memorial Service – a service where the body is not present. Interment of the remains in a service of committal has either preceded the Memorial Service or takes place at a later time.

- Funeral Service – a service where the body is present in either a casket or an urn. The Funeral Service may be concluded with a Service of Committal at the burial site.
- Committal Service — a brief committal service at the site (locally) where the casket/cremains are to be interred. This service typically includes scripture; prayers; words of committal; and a benediction.
- Graveside Service – a service that takes place at the burial site. The Service of Committal is a part of the graveside Service.

III. Services for Non-Members

1. Christian and non-Christian funerals and memorial services may be held at GBPC at the discretion of the Pastor in conjunction with the Session and the Director of Worship and Music (or her designee).
2. See the Officiant section below for the policy on outside pastors officiating a funeral service at GBPC.

IV. Focus, Location and Timing of the Service

1. **The funeral is a service of witness to the resurrection; this should be its primary focus.** The service on the occasion of death ordinarily should be held in the usual place of worship in order to join this service to the community's continuing life and witness to the resurrection [W-4.0703]. **The Session of GBPC recommends use of the sanctuary for memorial/funeral services.**
2. **Memorial/funeral and committal services are acts of worship** among the Christian community. The purpose of such services of worship is to glorify God, to affirm our belief in the resurrection to life everlasting, and to comfort the bereaved. The service is considered a celebration of life of the deceased, yet the focus of worship is upon God.
 - a. Eulogies and remembrances should be dignified and respectful.
 - b. Ordinarily, there should be no more than three (3) speakers and they should speak for no more than five (5) minutes each.
3. The memorial/funeral service may be observed before or after the committal of the body. The service may include other actions common to the community of faith and its cultures when these actions do not detract from or diminish the Christian understanding of death and resurrection.
 - Any fraternal, civic, or military rites should be conducted separately and outside of the sanctuary. [W-4.0704].

V. Officiant

1. The minister of GBPC will officiate at each funeral or memorial service held at the church.
2. A substitute minister may conduct a funeral or memorial service at the invitation/approval of the Pastor. Additional ministers, family members, friends, and members of the congregation may be invited by the minister to assist in the service (W-4.0704).
3. To obtain an invitation or approval, email the request to the GBPC Pastor.

VI. Bulletin

1. The church office staff will produce the bulletin (or printed order of worship) for funerals/memorial services at no charge to the family, including services held at the funeral home. Special requests should be made as early as possible.

VII. Music

1. The GBPC Director of Worship and Music, or her designee, will arrange music for funerals. Great Bridge Presbyterian Church enjoys both traditional and contemporary styles of worship.
2. Guest musicians, including soloists and guest organists, must be approved by the Director of Worship and Music, or her designee.
3. The Pastor, the Director of Worship and Music, or her designee, will guide the selection of appropriate hymns and songs. All music will be approved by the Pastor and the Director of Worship and Music, or her designee.
4. All music must be liturgically appropriate. Appropriate music includes hymns, psalms and spirituals. Congregational hymns (hymns which are sung by the congregation) are appropriate, but are ordinarily limited to two. Hymns and songs should be chosen which affirm the goodness and grace of God, and which give comfort and support to those who grieve.
5. Musical rehearsals must be scheduled with the approval of the Director of Worship and Music, or her designee.
6. The church's organist will provide suitable sacred music and is available for consultation with the family concerning these musical selections. The final decision on the appropriateness of musical selections will be determined by the church's Pastor and Director of Worship and Music or her designee.

7. Additional instrumentalists or vocalists may also be employed, but must be approved by the Director of Worship and Music. **The family is expected to cover the cost of additional musicians.**

VIII. Casket/Cremains

1. The **casket/cremains of the deceased** may be present for the service, and **must arrive at the church on the day of the service at least an hour prior to the announced start time.**
2. In order that worship may focus on God, and upon the gift of resurrection, rather than upon the earthly remains of the deceased, **a casket will be closed during the service** and the cremains shall be placed by the Funeral Coordinator.
3. When in the sanctuary, the casket may be covered by fresh flowers, the United States flag for those who served in the military, or our congregation's white pall, which represents our equality before God, and the joy of our inclusion in Christ's victory over death. Any adornments must be placed on the casket before it is brought down the aisle (either before the sanctuary is opened to all or before the procession).
4. **The casket, while in the sanctuary, may not be covered by other symbols – civic, national or fraternal – that emphasize an allegiance held in higher esteem than one's Christian faith.**
5. The closed casket is placed parallel to the communion table.
6. Overnight storage at GBPC of a casket or cremains is prohibited.

IX. Chancel Arrangement and Adornment

1. In keeping with the spirit of worship, the chancel furnishings will remain in place during funeral services.
2. The pulpit for preaching the Word will be on the left side (as viewed by the congregation) of the chancel and is ordinarily adorned with a parament in the applicable liturgical color (white) or with no decoration. The lectern for reading the Word will be on the right side (as viewed by the congregation) of the chancel and may be adorned with a parament in the applicable liturgical color (white) or with no decoration.
3. The communion table will be in the center front of the chancel, may be adorned with a parament in the applicable liturgical color (white), and will contain only the brass cross and candlesticks. Nothing shall be placed in the chancel which blocks view of the cross on the center back wall of the chancel.

4. The use of flowers and other forms of decoration are not required, and should be limited in order that they do not distract from the purpose of worship. One or two simple floral arrangements adequately symbolize God's gift of new life. Additional flower arrangements may be placed in the Narthex and/or fellowship hall.

X. Pictures & Photography

1. A 16x20 photo mounted on foam core board is appropriate to display in the sanctuary near the casket or cremains during the service.
2. Photo displays of the deceased are encouraged, and are placed in the narthex, fellowship hall, or reception area.
3. Non-flash photography is permitted during the service from a stationary position behind the worshipping congregation.
4. Livestreaming services are not provided by GBPC.
5. Livestreaming that is done by funeral home representative(s) is permitted during the service from a stationary position behind the worshipping congregation.
6. If a video "slide show" presentation is desired to be shown by the family, it is required to be delivered to the church no later than 90 minutes before the scheduled service. The day before the service is preferred.
 - a. Media must be in .mov or mp4 and provided on a flash drive.
 - b. The slide show will not be shown during the service.

XI. Visitation

1. If a funeral home cannot host a visitation, then visitation will be held one hour prior to the service or at the reception after the service.
2. Open casket visitation is prohibited.
3. Overnight storage of coffin or cremains is prohibited.

XII. Receptions

1. After a service, a reception can be held in the fellowship hall.
2. A catered reception can be held at the family's expense. The family is responsible for arranging this service. The church will provide coffee, lemonade, and water. Paper products should be provided by the caterer.

3. Outside catering companies will deliver and set the buffet table (occasionally the funeral home will handle catering, and this procedure applies). The Hospitality team will wrap up leftover food and offer it to the family. Any other food that would be appropriate for Sunday morning is saved, wrapped, and placed in church refrigerators.

Funeral/Memorial Service Procedures

All requests for exceptions to these procedures must be considered and approved by the Pastor in conjunction with the Session, the Director of Worship and Music, and/or the Funeral Coordinator.

I. Scheduling a Funeral

At the Time of Death ~

1. Notify the Pastor at GBPC at 757-547-4706 ext. 303. If possible, on this call convey the following information:
 - a. Name of funeral home and point of contact
 - b. Date and time you will be meeting with the funeral home
 - c. Desired date and time of service (NOTE: the date and time of the funeral cannot be confirmed by GBPC until we know what type of service you want (traditional or contemporary) and whether participants are available.)
 - d. Tentative choice of service type (traditional or contemporary)
2. The Pastor will schedule a meeting with you and any family members who desire to attend to discuss details of the service.
3. The Pastor will engage GBPC's Funeral Coordinator, who will reach out to you for further planning.
4. On occasion, a funeral home representative will reach out to the church and/or Pastor to notify them of a death. When this occurs, the Pastor will schedule a meeting with you, the Director of Worship and Music, and the Funeral Coordinator to discuss details of the service.

II. Order of the Service

The service begins with scriptural sentences. It is appropriate for worshipers to 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 the saints. Scripture shall be read; a sermon or other exposition of the Word may be proclaimed; an affirmation of faith may be made by the people. Aspects of the life of the one who has died may be recalled. Prayers shall be offered, giving thanks to God

- (1) for life in Jesus Christ and the promise of the gospel,
- (2) for the gift of the life of the one who has died,
- (3) for the comfort of the Holy Spirit,
- (4) for the community of faith; making intercessions

- (5) for family members and loved ones who grieve,
- (6) for those who minister to and support the bereaved,
- (7) for all who suffer loss; lifting supplications
- (8) for faith and grace for all who are present, concluding with the Lord's Prayer.

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 [W-4.0704].

III. Fees

The following fees apply to funerals held on-site at Great Bridge Presbyterian Church or services in which GBPC staff (including the Funeral Coordinator) participate. These fees may be waived at the discretion of the officiating Pastor in consultation with the Director of Worship and Music, the Funeral Coordinator, and/or the Clerk of Session.

Use of the sanctuary	\$400.00
Use of the sanctuary and the fellowship hall (reception)	\$500.00
Pastor—funeral in sanctuary or funeral home only	\$200.00
Pastor—funeral in sanctuary/funeral home + graveside service	\$250.00
Director of Worship & Music	\$175.00
Contemporary Worship Leader	\$175.00
GBPC Organist	\$175.00
Outside Organist	Stated fee
Funeral Coordinator	\$100.00 - \$200.00
Audio Tech—sound only	\$ 75.00
Audio Tech—sound and video	\$100.00
Sexton—sanctuary only	\$ 75.00
Sexton—sanctuary and fellowship hall	\$125.00

Payment of Fees:

1. Fees should ordinarily be made payable to the funeral home by the family. Funeral home representative(s) will then disburse the amount(s) accordingly. Normally, one check is written to the funeral home to cover all fees.

2. On the occasions when a funeral home is not involved in the proceedings, fees may be given directly to the GBPC Funeral Coordinator on the day of the funeral.

Funeral Coordinator Procedures

All requests for exceptions to these procedures must be considered and approved by the Pastor in conjunction with the Session, the Director of Worship and Music, and/or the Funeral Coordinator.

1. Ordinarily, the Funeral Coordinator will receive a call from the Pastor, Director of Worship and Music, or the church Office Manager. The FC will need the name of the deceased, the family contact name and their phone number. Often a date and time has already been coordinated with the church calendar, and there has been confirmation that the deceased and/or family member(s) are church members. The family may also have a date when they will meet with the Pastor.
2. The Funeral Coordinator should contact the family within 24 hours, introducing self and offering condolences. On this call, the FC may
 - a. confirm traditional or contemporary service style
 - b. determine if there is a funeral home involved, which one and contact name, and when the family will meet with them
 - c. ask if the family wants a reception and whether they have a caterer
 - d. set a time to discuss further details. This could be coordinated with the family's meeting with the Pastor or afterwards.
3. Confirm the appropriate music personnel is available. The Director of Worship and Music or the Contemporary Worship Leader will confirm that other musicians and audiovisual techs are available and inform the Funeral Coordinator who will be present and their fee.
4. Communicate by email the date and time and the following:
 - a. Church Facilities Manager - fellowship hall table set up, sanctuary set up and cleanup afterwards
 - b. Hospitality leader – details of the reception, if any
 - c. Lead usher – number of ushers needed
 - d. Confirm with the A/V tech about media
 - e. Notify preschool director if event is during school time
 - f. Notify Tidewater Pastoral counselling (Tuesdays & Thursdays).
 - g. Copy the Pastor, Director of Worship and Music, Organist, Office Manager, and any others involved. Once participants respond to the email, respond with appreciation or thanks to each.

5. Contact the funeral home once they have met with the family to determine what level of service they will provide:
 - a. Casket or cremains
 - b. Whether they will be present during the service
 - c. Will they provide checks for the fees
 - d. Whether they will provide a guestbook
 - e. GBPC will provide a guestbook if none is provided by the funeral home or if no funeral home is present.
6. After speaking with the family confirming the details, follow up with staff.
7. Arrive approximately two hours before the service, ensure doors are unlocked, lights are on and heat/air checked.
8. Place “funeral in progress” signs posted on narthex doors, if other activities are going on.
9. Place tissues and reserved markers on pews for family seating.
10. Place any flowers or plants that have arrived in the sanctuary.
11. Place pitchers of water with cups, napkins, tissues, and service bulletins in the family room. Additionally, bring in folding chairs if needed for larger families.
12. Clear off the welcome table in the narthex for the guest book, pen, and box of tissues.
13. Distribute fee checks provided by the funeral home or family.
14. Be present in the narthex to assist family, funeral home employees, and guests.
15. Within the first two hours and before guests begin to arrive, check in with the caterer and/or hospitality director to ensure the room is set up as requested.
16. Once the service begins, set up the memory table, ordinarily in the fellowship hall.
17. After the service, escort the family into the fellowship hall for a receiving line.
18. Move flowers from the sanctuary to the information desk area on a cart to assist family when taking to a car. Pick up any fallen flower petals.
19. When the reception is closing down, remove memory table items and place them on a cart to assist the family in getting to their car.
20. Call Facilities Manager or Sexton when reception is thinning out to do extra clean up.