

# Memorial and Funeral Services at Rye Presbyterian Church

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# A Service of Witness to the Resurrection

## Order of Service

Prelude

Opening Sentences

Congregational Hymn (*optional*)

Opening Prayer

Readings from the Psalms

Words of Remembrance  
(*From the family and/or friends*)

Readings from the New Testament

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 Christians' attitudes toward death, and their responses to it as well. Death brings loss, sorrow, and grief to all. In the face of death, Christians affirm the hope of the gospel with tears and joy. Christians 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. From this flow all other aspects of the service: thankfulness and remembrance for the life of the one who has died, reflection on the meaning of life, consolation for grief, hope in the time of loss. It puts death into the ongoing story of God's redemption of the world. Therefore 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, if disposition of the body has been previously arranged. The service is under the direction of the pastor. It includes prayer, readings from the scriptures 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 or by the soloists.

Services may be held either in the Sanctuary (450 capacity) or in the Crawford Chapel (100 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 extreme congestion in the parking lot. There are no restrictions on Saturdays or when school is not in session. There will be no services held on Sundays.

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). 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 reserve the right to designate its memorials to a specific need of the church with approval of the Session.

## Burial

After a funeral, it is customary for the family and sometimes friends to accompany the body or cremains from the church 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 only by prior arrangement with the church office. Please inquire with the 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 after the service. This may be done in several ways:

- First, a reception line may be formed in the narthex of the church or in the vestibule of the chapel following the service.
- Second, a reception may be held in the 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. Arranging for such a reception is the sole responsibility of the family.

# Frequently Asked Questions

*When is it appropriate to have the funeral?*

If the body has been 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. If a casket is used, and the body is to be buried, funerals are usually held within the next few days after death.

Funerals, memorials, and interments are not done on Sundays.

*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 influences in the life of the deceased, his or her goodness and faithfulness, and influences on others, and our thankfulness.

Eulogies should work to these ends and should not be lengthy nor should there be several of them. Three speakers speaking for a total of fifteen minutes is optimal. Open microphone sessions are not permitted. If for some reason it is envisioned that these limitations do not work, then the eulogies will take place first, and the service itself begins after they are done.

If the family would like to find a time of extended remembrance where several people might share their memories of the deceased, the pastors would be happy to work with it 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. They are usually happy to include other clergy as part of the service, and to issue an invitation for others to participate in an appropriate way.

*Is there an honorarium due to the minister?*

There is no honorarium due to a RPC minister for a service done for a church member in the church. The family may choose to make a contribution to the Pastor's Discretionary Fund which the pastors use to help those in need in the community. Fees for non-members and services off site 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 and before the church service. Most organizations are very good at working with churches in this regard.

*Can communion be served at a funeral?*

Yes. Any service of communion must be approved beforehand by the Session of the church, and it must be open to all baptized persons. The 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.” In Protestantism, 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.

# Directions and Parking

Your guests will appreciate directions and parking information if they are not familiar with Rye or the location of the church.

## DIRECTIONS

**From the North:** Take I-95 south (from Connecticut) toward New York City and take Exit 19 (Playland Parkway). \*Proceed east to first traffic light and turn left onto Milton Road. Pass the high school on left. Go past Parsons Street and then turn left into the church's rear parking lot (Nursery School sign on corner of the driveway).

**From the South:** Take I-95 north (from New York City). Take Exit 19 (Playland Parkway). Proceed as above\*

**From the West:** From New Jersey and Rockland County, take I-287 East across the Tappan Zee Bridge. Take Exit 11 (Rye and Port Chester). Turn right at the traffic light onto Boston Post Road. At the 3rd traffic light bear right (Lester's is on your right; Citibank is on your left). Stay on Boston Post Road and proceed 1/2 mile to Parsons Street. Turn left onto Parsons Street, turn left onto Milton Street, and take the next left into the church driveway.

## PARKING

The church parking lot of 62 parking spaces is located off Milton Road. An additional 48 parking spaces are marked along the church driveway off Parsons Street and circling the church to the Post Road (US #1). Parking is sometimes available along Milton Road and in the High School parking lot across Parsons Street from the church. Entrance to the church can be gained only from Parsons Street or Milton Road. *There is no entry from the Post Road.*