

*A Service of Witness to the Resurrection*



FUNERAL & BURIAL PLANNING  
AT  
IDLEWILD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

# IN LIFE AND IN DEATH

*“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.”* (Directory for Worship)

This booklet, prepared by the Worship and Music Committee, is offered to Idlewild members as an affirmation of faith in the resurrection to eternal life and as an encouragement to individuals and families to plan carefully for their own deaths and the deaths of family members and loved ones.

## *When Death Occurs*

The church office should be notified immediately of the death of a church member. Our pastors, through early involvement with loved ones, can offer help in difficult transition decisions regarding funeral home selection, disposition of the body and arrangements for the Service of Witness to the Resurrection.

## *Where and When the Services Should Be Held*

The church building itself is an appropriate place for a Christian Service of Witness to the Resurrection. In the Sanctuary or Chapel we are surrounded by symbols of the faith, which remind us of the promise of resurrection and of the “great cloud of witnesses” who have “kept the faith and finished the race” and now have inherited the “crown of glory.”

If a funeral home is chosen as the place for the service, such arrangements must be made with the funeral home director.

The pastors wish to be sensitive to the needs and desires of family members. It may be necessary to take into consideration travel schedules for family members, availability of the pastors and church musicians, and previously scheduled events on the church calendar.

## *Disposition of the Body*

Burial, cremation, or donation of the body for medical purposes are all appropriate options within the Christian tradition. A casket or urn need not be present at the Service of Witness to the Resurrection. The body or ashes may be interred prior to the service or following the service. If the body has been donated for medical purposes, a service may be held at the time of death. Later, when the remains are available, an inurnment can be scheduled.

Idlewild has a columbarium, located in the beautiful garth, which is available for the disposition of ashes. Information about the columbarium is available from the church office.

## *The Service of Witness to the Resurrection*

*“The service, which should be conducted with dignity and with simplicity, is a witness to God’s love given to all people, a love which strengthens and supports, even in the midst of grief. It is a witness to God’s promises in Jesus Christ as attested by Christ’s resurrection from the dead and to the sure and certain hope that Christ has gone to prepare a place for the children of God.”* (Directory for Worship)

The funeral/memorial service is called a Service of Witness to the Resurrection because it is a liturgical service of worship to glorify God and to console the living. Although thankfulness and honor are to be expressed to God for the life and witness of the deceased, the focus of worship is upon God; and as such, prolonged and undue attention upon the deceased is discouraged.

## *Planning the Funeral/Memorial Service*

**FLOWERS:** In an effort to encourage worshipfulness and simplicity so that all present may focus their attention on the promises of Scripture and the grace of God, flowers are limited to the urns used for worship services: there are two chancel urns in the Sanctuary and one urn in the Chapel. Typically, the family of the deceased will furnish the flowers.

**PALL:** *“Because the proper object of the service is the worship of God and the consolation of the living, it follows that the body of the deceased is not necessary to the service. The casket, if it is present during the service, shall be closed at all times.”* (Directory for Worship)

The family may choose to use the church’s white pall, which has multi-layered symbolism. White represents the color of the baptism robes of early Christians. Baptism is often spoken of in the New Testament as death in Christ and resurrection to new life. The pall also symbolizes the fact that in Christ we are “clothed” with grace. In Christ we put off the old self and put on a new creation. In covering the casket, the pall symbolically expresses the Christian conviction that all persons are equal in the eyes of God; also, attention is drawn away from consideration of the cost or appearance of the casket.

**ORDER OF WORSHIP:** *“Emphasis should be placed upon the readings of Scripture for the declaration of the Christian hope, and any further readings or music should be carefully scrutinized to assure that they are consistent with the biblical affirmations of God’s power over death. As an expression of their common faith, it is appropriate that those assembled join in the singing of hymns, which declare belief in the life everlasting. A sermon may be preached, which likewise bears testimony to the hope and promises set forth in Scripture. Thanks may be offered for the God-given life of the one who has died and intercession for family members and other loved ones who grieve.”* (Directory for Worship)

**THE SERVICE OF WITNESS TO THE RESURRECTION:** This is a standard service for the Lord’s Day (regular worship service). It is, therefore, appropriate that it include all or many of the following elements:

**Scripture Readings:** The scriptures are a rich resource for the funeral service. After consultation with the pastor, passages which have special meaning to the family or which were special to the deceased may be chosen.

**Hymns:** Hymns which affirm the goodness and grace of God and give comfort and support to the mourner should be chosen.

**Organ and Instrumental Music:** The church organist is available for the service. He will provide suitable sacred music and will be glad to consult with the family concerning their desires. Instrumentalists may also be employed and can be contacted by the church organist. The family is expected to cover the cost of any musicians.

**Creeds/Affirmation of Faith:** Creeds have served the church for generations as a powerful means of reaffirming the basic beliefs of the Christian faith. It is entirely appropriate to include the use of a traditional creed in the funeral service. The Apostles’ Creed originated in the baptism liturgy of the early church, and thus it has a natural and significant relationship to the Service of Witness to the Resurrection.

**Homily:** If the family so chooses, a brief homily praising God for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ and for the promise of a resurrection for all Christians can be included. The homily can also offer words of thanksgiving for the particular gifts of the deceased.

**Order of Worship:** Below is the suggested order of service. The church usually provides a service bulletin.

*Prelude*

*Scriptural Call to Worship*

*Hymn*

*Prayer for Illumination*

*Scripture Readings*

*Homily*

*Creed/Affirmation of Faith*

*Hymn (or Doxology)*

*Prayer of Thanksgiving*

*Hymn*

*Benediction*

## *Suggested Hymns*

These hymns are from the purple *Glory to God* Presbyterian hymnal.

<i>Hymn Number</i>	<i>Title</i>
275	"A Mighty Fortress is Our God"
836	"Abide with Me"
649	"Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound"
450	"Be Thou My Vision"
8	"Eternal Father, Strong to Save"
326	"For All the Saints"
65	"Guide me, O Thou Great Jehovah"
611	"Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee"
366	"Love Devine, All Loves Excelling"
829	"My Faith Looks Up to Thee"
803	"My Shepherd Will Supply My Need"
643	"Now Thank We All Our God"
687	"Our God, Our Help in Ages Past"
834	"Precious Lord, Take My Hand"
802	"The King of Love My Shepherd Is"
817	"We Walk by Faith and Not by Sight"

## *Suggested Scripture Readings*

These readings are particularly appropriate for the funeral service, and in ministry with the dying and bereaved.

### OLD TESTAMENT

Job 19:23-27	<i>I know that my redeemer lives</i>
Isaiah 25:6-9	<i>God will swallow up death forever</i>
Isaiah 26:1-4, 19	<i>God will keep them in peace</i>
Isaiah 40:1-11, 28-31	<i>Comfort my people</i>
Isaiah 40:28-31	<i>Those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength</i>
Isaiah 43:1-3a, 18-19, 25	<i>When you pass through the waters. I will be with you</i>
Isaiah 44:6-8	<i>I am the first and the last</i>
Isaiah 55:1-3, 6-13	<i>Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the water</i>
Isaiah 61:1-4, 10-11	<i>The spirit of the Lord is upon me</i>
Isaiah 65:17-25	<i>I create new heavens and a new earth</i>
Lamentations 3:19-26, 31b-32	<i>The Lord's steadfast love</i>
Daniel 12:1-3	<i>Many of those who sleep in the dust shall awake</i>
Joel 2:12-13, 23-24, 26-29	<i>Return to the Lord with all your heart</i>

### **At the loss of a child:**

Zechariah 8:1-8	<i>Children playing in the streets of the city</i>
Isaiah 65:17-25	<i>I create new heavens and a new earth</i>

### **For those whose faith is unknown:**

Ecclesiastes 3:1 -15	<i>For everything there is a season</i>
Lamentations 3:1-9, 19-23	<i>The Lord's steadfast love</i>

**PSALMS** (*appropriate for singing or reading*)

Psalm 16:5-11	<i>The Lord is my chosen portion</i>
Psalm 23	<i>The Lord is my shepherd</i>
Psalm 27:1, 4-9a, 13-14	<i>The Lord is my light and my salvation</i>
Psalm 39: 4-5, 12	<i>Lord, let me know my end</i>
Psalm 42:1-6a	<i>As a deer longs for flowing streams</i>
Psalm 43	<i>Give judgment for me, O God</i>
Psalm 46:1-5, 10-11	<i>A very present help in trouble</i>
Psalm 90:1-10,12	<i>Teach us to number our days</i>
Psalm 91	<i>The one who dwells in the shelter of the Most High</i>
Psalm 103	<i>Bless the Lord, O my soul</i>
Psalm 106:1-5	<i>O give thanks to the Lord</i>
Psalm 116:1-9,15	<i>The Lord has heard my voice</i>
Psalm 118	<i>Open the gates of righteousness</i>
Psalm 121	<i>I lift up my eyes to the hills</i>
Psalm 130	<i>Out of the depths I cry to the Lord</i>
Psalm 139:1-12	<i>Where shall I go from your spirit?</i>
Psalm 145	<i>I will extol you, O God my King</i>
Psalm 146	<i>Hallelujah! praise the Lord, O my soul</i>

**EPISTLES**

Romans 5:1-11	<i>Hope does not disappoint</i>
Romans 6:3-9	<i>Baptized into Christ's death, raised to live with him</i>
Romans 8:14-23, 31-39	<i>Nothing can separate us from the love of God</i>
Romans 14:7-9, 10b-12	<i>Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's</i>
1 Corinthians 15:3-8, 12-20a	<i>Christ raised from the dead</i>
1 Corinthians 15:20-24a	<i>In Christ shall all be made alive</i>
1 Corinthians 15:20-26, 35-38, 42-44, 50, 53-58	<i>Death is swallowed in victory</i>
1 Corinthians 15:35-44	<i>The natural body and the spiritual body</i>
1 Corinthians 15:50-57	<i>We shall all be changed</i>
2 Corinthians 4:16-5:1	<i>Visible things are temporary, invisible things eternal</i>
2 Corinthians 5:1-10	<i>From God we have a house not made with hands</i>
Ephesians 1:11-2:1, 4-10	<i>Saved by grace through faith</i>
Philippians 3:7-11	<i>Knowing him and the power of his resurrection</i>
Philippians 3:20-21	<i>Our citizenship is in heaven</i>
Colossians 3:1-17	<i>Set your minds on the things that are above</i>
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18	<i>The comfort of Christ's coming</i>
2 Timothy 2:8-13	<i>If we died with him, we shall also live with him</i>
Hebrews 2:14-18	<i>Christ was tested in every way</i>
Hebrews 11:1-3, 13-16; 12:1-2	<i>Faith, the pilgrimage, the cloud of witnesses</i>
1 Peter 1:3-9	<i>Without seeing Christ, you love him</i>
1 Peter 3:18-22; 4:6	<i>Christ's ministry to the spirits in prison</i>
1 John 3:1-3	<i>We are children of God</i>
Revelation 7:2-3, 9-17	<i>These are they who have come out of the great tribulation</i>
Revelation 14:1-3, 6-7, 12-13	<i>Rest for the saints</i>
Revelation 21:1-4, 22-25, 22:3-5	<i>A new heaven and a new earth</i>
Revelation 22:1-5	<i>The Lord God will be their light</i>

**For those whose faith is unknown:**

Romans 2:12-16	<i>The law written on the heart</i>
Romans 14:7-9, 10c-12	<i>None of us live to ourselves</i>

## GOSPELS

Matthew 5:1-12a	<i>The Beatitudes</i>
Matthew 11:25-30	<i>Hidden from the wise, revealed to infants</i>
Matthew 25:1-13	<i>Wise and foolish bridesmaids</i>
Matthew 25:31-46	<i>The Last Judgment</i>
Luke 7:11-17	<i>Jesus raises the son of the widow of Nain</i>
Luke 18:15-17	<i>We enter the kingdom only as children</i>
Luke 23:33, 39-43	<i>Today you will be with me in Paradise</i>
John 3:16-21	<i>God so loved the world</i>
John 5:24-29	<i>Whoever hears and believes has eternal life</i>
John 6:37-40	<i>Anyone who comes to me I will never drive away</i>
John 6:47-58	<i>Whoever believes in me has eternal life</i>
John 11:17-27	<i>I am the resurrection and the life</i>
John 11:38-44	<i>Lazarus raised from the dead</i>
John 14:1-6, 25-27	<i>Let not your hearts be troubled</i>

### **At the loss of a child:**

Matthew 18:1-5, 10	<i>The greatest in the kingdom of heaven</i>
Mark 10:13-16	<i>Let the children come to me</i>

### **For those whose faith is unknown:**

Matthew 25:31-46	<i>As you did it to one of the least of these</i>
------------------	---

---

## PLANNING AHEAD

We encourage each church member to participate in personal funeral planning as much as possible. Not only is this information likely to be of great help to the ministers and to families, but also it allows members the opportunity of making crucial decisions about funeral plans prior to the crisis of a death.

Such pre-planning can relieve the burden of family members at the time of the death of a loved one. And pre-planning can also afford members the option of leaving clear instructions for family members regarding one's own preferences of scriptures, hymns, organ music, disposition of the body, etc.

A planning form is included here for your convenience. After completing the form, two copies should be kept: one for your personal files and one for the church's permanent file. (Copies can be made free of charge at the church.) Additional forms are available through the church office.

# PRE-PLANNING A SERVICE OF WITNESS TO THE RESURRECTION

Please keep the original of this form in a safe place (but not in your safety-deposit box). Return a copy to the church to be stored in a fire-proofed safe. The instructions contained on these sheets are not legally binding, and may be altered at your request. Please notify the church if you make any changes.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

BIRTHDATE \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE OF PERSON PROVIDING INFORMATION \_\_\_\_\_

DATE THE FORM IS COMPLETED \_\_\_\_\_

## I. Person or persons recommended as a "trusted friend of the family" who may be called on for objective counseling

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

## II. Disposition of the body (please check the appropriate box)

Burial     Cremation     Body donated to a medical school

## III. Wishes regarding the service

A. Have you planned your own funeral or memorial service?     Yes     No

*If yes, please attach a copy to this form, indicate where it might be found, and note the funeral home you have chosen.  
If you would like to include obituary information in the church file, please attach a copy also.*

B. Wishes regarding visitation with your family (please check appropriate box)

Church Parlor or Fellowship Hall \_\_\_\_\_

Funeral Home \_\_\_\_\_

Private Home \_\_\_\_\_

No Visitation Desired \_\_\_\_\_

C. Type of service desired: (please check appropriate box)

Funeral (the body is present) \_\_\_\_\_

Memorial Service (the body is not present) \_\_\_\_\_

Graveside Service Only \_\_\_\_\_

D. Wishes regarding the place of the service (please check appropriate box)

Idlewild Sanctuary \_\_\_\_\_

Idlewild Chapel \_\_\_\_\_

Funeral Home \_\_\_\_\_

Home \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

**E. Music Requests**

- 1. Prelude \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Postlude \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Hymns \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Other \_\_\_\_\_

**F. Scripture Requests** *(see suggested readings)* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**G. Indicate any wishes regarding pallbearers** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**H. Wishes regarding flowers** *(please check appropriate box)*

- Give to shut-ins \_\_\_\_\_
- Place on grave \_\_\_\_\_
- Memorial contribution instead of flowers  
*If yes, designate for which of the following funds?*
  - General memorial fund \_\_\_\_\_
  - Specific memorial funds *(music, grounds, children, outreach, etc.)* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - Other *(please specify)* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**I. Place of burial** *(please check appropriate box)*

- Private burial plot located at \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Idlewild Columbarium \_\_\_\_\_

