

## COVID-19 Pandemic Funeral and Memorial Policy for First Presbyterian Church, Kasson, Minnesota

Recommended by the Coronavirus Subcommittee:

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Approved by the Session on November 9, 2020

Rev. Amanda Boss (Moderator), Randy Carlsen (Clerk), Thelma Givan, Robert Gransee, Tami Hanson, Gayle Kaufeld, Jennifer Mittelstadt, Mike Prenzlou, Paulette Riedel, Sheryl Scholer

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Rev. Amanda Boss (Moderator), Randy Carlsen (Clerk), Thelma Givan, Robert Gransee, Tami Hanson, Gayle Kaufeld, Jennifer Mittelstadt, Sheryl Scholer

Gathering to mourn for someone who has died, celebrating their life, and proclaiming the hope of Resurrection are essential practices of the Christian faith.

During the extraordinary circumstances of the COVID-19 outbreak, our usual grieving rituals have been interrupted. We are unable to bring our church community together as we would wish to honor, grieve, and celebrate the lives of our members and friends who lived faithfully. We cannot join our voices together to sing the hymns and songs that bring us comfort. We cannot gather in person as a group to find comfort in the presence of one another. We cannot hug and hold one another as we entrust our loved ones to God's eternal care. We are waiting to feel the hope of resurrection.

During the COVID-19 outbreak, Minnesota Governor Tim Walz declared a State of Peacetime Emergency in Executive Order 20-01. The COVID-19 Subcommittee and the Session of First Presbyterian Church have added this funeral and memorial policy to the COVID-19 Response Plan.

Under Phase 3 of the COVID-19 Response Plan, and while the State of Peacetime Emergency is in effect we will be limited in our funeral practices in the following ways:

### **Funerals, Memorial Services, and Graveside Services**

- a) A request may be made to hold a funeral or memorial service in the sanctuary. The service will be kept to thirty minutes. It is limited to 10 family members when church is holding worship services virtually. It is limited to 36 family members when the church is holding in-person worship. A 6-foot distance is to be maintained between those not living in the same household. One pastor, one sound technician, and one organist/pianist may be present. The service may be recorded on a DVD at no additional cost and shared with friends and family.

- b) Using the Zoom online meeting platform, we can host a funeral or memorial service online. The service can be recorded, and participants will be present from their homes via a computer.
- c) The service can be streamed live over the church's Facebook page or on the Facebook page of a family member if that is the family's preference. The live stream can be saved and uploaded so others can watch the service later.
- d) We can gather for a short service at a gravesite with social distancing. We will follow individual cemetery guidelines. Masks must be worn by those in attendance.

**Note:**

We recommend outdoor graveside memorial services where possible as a preferred venue to limit the possible surfaces and spaces as sources of contamination. Using phones and tablets, via FaceTime and other sources, others can be present in a virtual way. The service can be recorded and distributed electronically.

**Additional recommendations:**

If the memorial service or funeral will be delayed and scheduled in the future, we recommend that the service be planned with the pastor and the family as soon as possible after the loved one's death and that those who will give words of remembrance and the pastor's words of faith be put together in written form.

**Bulletins:**

A memorial service bulletin can be provided. It may contain the following: selected scripture readings, a homily or sermon by the officiating pastor, eulogies, tributes, and pictures. The family may discuss their ideas for bulletins, memorials, and the inclusion of photos with the pastor. Creative suggestions are welcome.

**Receptions:**

First Presbyterian Church is not able to host a meal or reception following any memorial, funeral, or graveside service at this time.

While we are presently limited in what we can host, we are able to plan for memorials after the pandemic has passed. We would welcome the opportunity to host a memorial service for your loved one at a later date when we can all safely gather and celebrate their life.