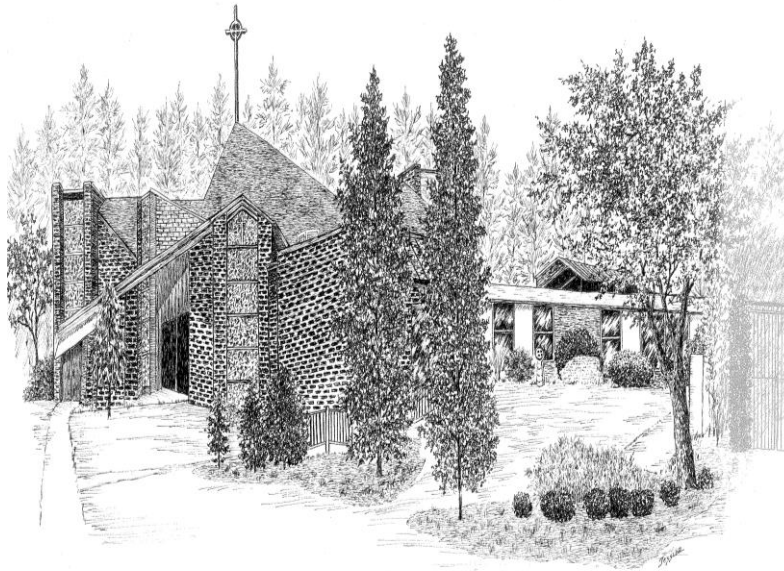


Covenant Presbyterian Church

Funeral Policy



3131 Walton Way, Augusta, GA 30909

706-733-0513

www.covenantaugusta.org

The purpose of this policy is to support families in a time of grief by assisting in planning a service that witnesses to the promises of the Resurrection and also celebrates the life of the deceased. The service, in expressing the faith of the church, will be an occasion of dignity, reverence, and remembrance. We follow the guidelines for the Service of Witness to the Resurrection which is found in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) *Book of Common Worship*.

In a Service of Witness to the Resurrection, “we give thanks and praise to God for the gift of life, seek God’s help in time of need, witness to the hope of the gospel anchored in the resurrection of Christ, remember the life of the deceased, and offer support and comfort to the grieving” (*Book of Common Worship*, p. 769).

Pastor

Upon notification of death, the pastor will work closely with family members to gather pertinent family information and plan details of the funeral/memorial service, including:

- Name of funeral home and director
- Day and time of service
- Name of cemetery
- Number of family members expected to attend including out-of-town family
- Special requests concerning memorial gifts
- Service details including Scripture readings, hymns, eulogist(s), and/or special music

The church encourages members to give consideration for their preferences for Scripture passages and hymns to be included in their service and to have a written copy of those preferences readily available at home and/or at the church office.

The pastor will share the appropriate information with the church office staff and will share the news of the passing with the congregation. The pastor will also be in touch with the church organist about the service and with the deacons.

The pastor’s approval is necessary should the family request another minister to preside or to assist.

Church Office

- Will prepare the bulletins for the service, if needed.
- Will inform the head of the ushers in order that ushers be available, if services are to be held at the church.

The Service

A *funeral* is a service in which the body of the deceased is present. In the PC(USA), all funerals are ‘closed casket’ services. A *memorial* is a service in which the body of the deceased is not present due to cremation or other circumstances. An urn with cremains may be present in the sanctuary during the service.

Covenant suggests the service be held in the sanctuary. A graveside service, a memorial service at the church, a worship service, or combination of services is possible.

Flowers/Pall

One flower arrangement or a plant may be placed on the reed ledge. The family is responsible for ordering and paying for the flower arrangement. The church office is happy to provide recommendations for local florists.

Any additional flowers or plants will be placed outside the sanctuary. The Bible may be placed on the reed ledge if there are no flowers or plant. The candles on the reed ledge will be lit.

For a funeral service, it is appropriate to place flowers or a pall on the casket. Covenant has a beautiful white pall woven by a member, which is available for use if desired.

Music

The organist will provide prelude and postlude music as well as hymn accompaniment. After speaking with the family, the pastor will relay hymn selections and other music preferences to the organist. If a special music request is made (such as a soloist or a choral anthem), arrangements should be made with the organist.

Costs and Fees

Facilities - There are no charges or fees for use of the church's facilities.

Pastor

Leading funeral/memorial services for congregation members is part of the pastor's call. However, the family may consider giving an honorarium to the pastor in appreciation of time spent in counseling and service planning. This transaction is typically arranged through the funeral director.

Organist/Pianist

An honorarium in the amount of \$150 is suggested and encouraged for the organist/pianist. The funeral director can also arrange to handle this payment for you.

A bench fee of \$50 is charged if someone other than the church organist plays for the service.

Other costs

Other costs to the family will be for the flowers the family provides at the service and possibly for additional musicians and vocalists based on the family's request(s).

Columbarium and Memorial Garden

Covenant has a Columbarium/Memorial Garden on campus, which is available to members of the church for the burial of ashes. There is an 'in-ground' area which is designed for burial in

biodegradable urns and a columbarium (above-ground wall) which holds permanent urns. Both areas are situated in a garden of trees, shrubs, and flowers on the Walton Way side of the Education Wing between the sanctuary and the Fellowship Hall.

The cost of each in-ground plot is \$1,000, and each columbarium niche is \$1,250. These funds are used for building, landscaping, and maintaining the area.

The specific rules regarding use of the Columbarium/Memorial Garden are available in the church office. Copies of the "Application for Use" form and the "Columbarium and Memorial Garden Agreement" are also available for anyone who is interested. Please contact the church office if you would like to receive a copy of these documents.

Worship Ministry Team and Diaconate Support

Members of the Worship Ministry Team and Covenant deacons offer support and comfort to church families upon the death of a loved one.

The Worship Ministry Team will ensure that someone is present on the day of the service to receive flower deliveries, change the paraments (if needed), help with the pall (if needed), and place guestbooks and pens at church entrances.

Deacons will contact the family to make arrangements for meals and/or food for the family, and they will also help with hosting a reception after the service if requested.