



## **Alpharetta Presbyterian Church Funeral and Memorial Service Guidelines**

---

***"I am the resurrection and the life", says the Lord.  
"Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live."  
–John 11:25-26***

### **I. Preparing for Death with a Resurrection Faith**

Alpharetta Presbyterian Church welcomes requests for a service of Christian worship at the time of death. "A Service of Witness to the Resurrection" provides comfort, hope, and faith for those who mourn.

The church encourages its members to discuss and plan their funeral or memorial service arrangements with family members and/or church pastors. The important decisions regarding burial or cremation, the location of interment, the choice of a funeral home/director and the location of their "last will and testament" should be shared with family or pastors. Doing so relieves survivors of a difficult burden. APC also encourages its members to remember the church in their wills as a final act of faithful stewardship and Christian witness. Planned gifts will greatly benefit future ministry through the APC Endowment. For more information about the APC Endowment, please contact the church office.

The church encourages every member to use our sanctuary for funeral and memorial services, and we welcome requests from non-members.

***"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted."  
–Matthew 5:4***

## **II. Planning the Funeral/Memorial Service**

### **A. Clergy**

The church offers love and hope to all who grieve. This includes pastoral care during illness, at the time of death, and afterwards. A member's death should be reported immediately to one of the pastors who will notify our session and diaconate. Church members will be notified electronically once a service time has been determined.

A request for a memorial/funeral service in the sanctuary should be made to one of the pastors. If unavailable, the pastor will suggest other clergy who may be contacted. Other clergy and family members may be invited to participate with the pastor's approval.

### **B. Organist and Music**

If a church organist is desired, the family should make a request to the officiating pastor. The family may also request favorite hymns and other sacred music.

APC's Chancel Choir may be requested for the service. The ability of the choir to sing will be the decision of the director of music. Other musicians and soloists may be invited to participate with the approval of the director of music or the officiating pastor.

The family is asked, if possible, to cover the honoraria for the organist or any musicians.

### **C. Service Coordinator**

The church will have a service coordinator to work with the family and pastor to assist with all details involved in planning and hosting services.

### **D. Flowers and Decorations**

Any condolence flowers in the sanctuary should be removed following the service. Families may leave two arrangements for the regular Sunday worship services. Photo displays and other memorabilia may be displayed in our fellowship hall or narthex. (Several tripods are available.)

The clergy will wear white stoles to celebrate the Resurrection of the Lord. In liturgical tradition, white symbolizes the victory of the saints.

***“Who are these robed in white?  
These are they who have washed their robes and made them white  
by the blood of the Lamb. God will wipe every tear from their eyes.”  
—Revelation 7:14***

#### **D. The Service of Committal**

APC has a Memorial Garden which is available for the interment of ashes. For more information about using the garden call the church office (770-751-0033) or contact the pastor. You may also view the APC Memorial Garden Policy at [www.alpharettapres.com/apc-document-library](http://www.alpharettapres.com/apc-document-library).

Mourners should gather at the graveside or place of interment for a brief service conducted by the officiating pastor. The committal may be public or private depending on the family's wishes. It may be scheduled either before or after the funeral or memorial service.

The committal service need not be on the same day as the memorial service.

***“For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed,  
we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the  
heavens.”  
–2 Corinthians 5:1***

#### **III. Visitation or Viewing**

Our fellowship hall or sanctuary may be used by the family for visitation or viewing on the evening prior to the service or immediately preceding the service. Such arrangements should be made with the officiating pastor and depend on building availability.

#### **IV. Receptions and Meals**

If the family requests it, our deacons will prepare and host a reception following a funeral or memorial service. These gatherings are held in our fellowship hall. The family should notify the officiating pastor promptly to make arrangements regarding menu, room set-up, and expected attendance. Normally, the family covers the expense for any food or beverages purchased by the Deacons for the reception. Several menu options are available.

***“They said, “The Lord is risen indeed,” and they told them  
how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.”  
–Luke 24:34-35***

#### **V. Memorial Gifts, Memorial Book and Fees**

Memorial donations may be made to APC. The church will acknowledge the gift to the donor and will provide the family of the deceased the donors' names and addresses. The church session will approve all memorial fund expenditures.

The church keeps a memorial book of the names and the date of death of all members or friends who have joined the church triumphant. On All Saints' Day, November 1st, we remember them in a special worship service.

APC offers our facility at no fee. However, donations are appreciated.

## **VI. Other**

During the worship service, we seek to focus attention on God. Therefore, the casket (if present) will remain closed, and no photographs are permitted. If the family requests it, the church will be happy to make an audio recording.

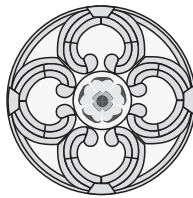
The officiating pastor(s) will escort the immediate family to and from the reserved front pews. The family should work with the service coordinator or pastor to arrange for any ushers or pall bearers.

The church will provide a worship bulletin detailing the order of service. If the family desires the celebration of the Lord's Supper, our session must approve that request.

Any military, fraternal or civic rites should be conducted separately from the funeral/memorial service.

***“If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord;  
so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord’s.”***

***–Romans 14:18***



## **Alpharetta Presbyterian Church**

180 Academy Street, Alpharetta, GA 30009  
770-751-0033 [www.alpharettapres.com](http://www.alpharettapres.com)

Dr. Oliver Wagner, Senior Pastor  
Dr. Jo Anderson, Associate Pastor  
Rev. Caitlin Phillips, Associate Pastor

*Revised March 2016*