

## Funeral Service

The funeral service is a community's celebration of remembrance for the loved one who has died. The community gathers with the family and friends of the deceased to take heart from Scripture, to give thanks and praise to God for Christ's victory over sin and death, and to be nourished by Presence of God as the community of faith gathers.

A funeral differs from a memorial service, in that the body of the loved one is present.

### Symbols and Symbolic Actions

- **The Procession of the body into the Church** – calls to mind the nobility of life and the connection to those others in which they shared life.
- **The candle** – sign of Christ's presence and his victory over sin and death.
- **The presence of the Christian community** – by their prayer and song they bring support and consolation and give witness to our hope in the resurrection.
- **The proclamation of the Word of God** – reveals God's loving presence; the Word gives strength, provides consolation and hope in the resurrection.
- **Words of Remembrance** – this is optional; it is a time for family or friends to give witness to the Christian life that the deceased had lived through a prepared word of remembrance.
- **The procession of the body through the Ceremonial Doors** – the opening and closing of the ceremonial doors symbolizes the sovereignty of God in our lives—both at its beginning and ending and the hope of eternal life.

## Ceremonial Doors

The use of the Ceremonial Doors is a traditional part of services marking significant places of transition for members of our faith community. The doors are opened for baptismal candidates at the Celebration of Baptism, welcoming them into the community of faith in celebration of their new life in Christ. Again the doors are opened in celebration of the union of a man and woman at their wedding, marking the beginning of their new life together. And then again they are opened at the time of death, marking the ultimate transition to new life in an eternal, heavenly home.

At the close of the funeral service, the pall (if used) is removed from the casket. The pastor then escorts the casket out of the Sanctuary, followed by the family. As soon as the family is gathered in the Gathering Place, the doors are opened for the casket and the pall bearers to walk through to the awaiting hearse. After they are outside, the doors are then closed with the image of the cross on the doors remaining in the family's view, reminding them of the real hope found in Christ.

The family may choose whether this is a private moment of saying goodbye or if they would like all the attenders of the funeral to be present.

The facility staff has the right to restrict the use of the Ceremonial Doors when weather prohibits.