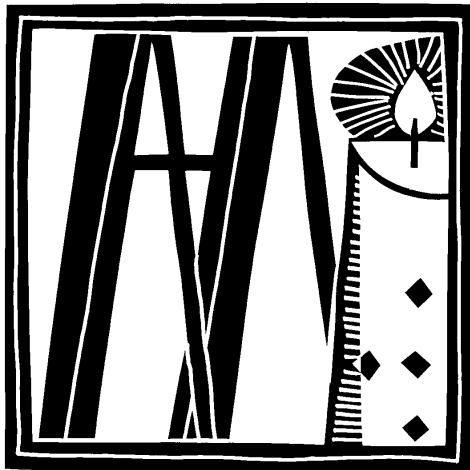


# Making Funeral Preparations

---

*Name*



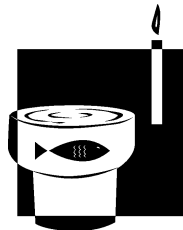
**A Guide for Preparing for Death  
And the Funeral Liturgy**

## THE FUNERAL LITURGY

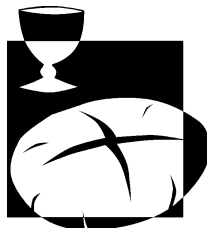
The funeral liturgy is in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, pages 279-285. The service can be adapted for a memorial service without a coffin.

The burial service is intended primarily for use in the church, the most appropriate place for the funeral of a Christian. Holy Baptism, which marked the beginning of Christian life and the promise of eternal life, took place in the church. Other significant passages, such as confirmation and marriage, also occurred in the church. So it is appropriate that the final celebration of a Christian's life and death take place in the church setting, where loved ones are surrounded by the primary symbols of the Christian faith: cross, font, altar, lectern, Paschal candle. The service can be adapted when it is held in a funeral home or in some other location.

**HOLY BAPTISM** is remembered and celebrated during the funeral liturgy, which brings out the connections between Holy Baptism, the resurrection of Christ, and our hope of eternal life. In Baptism we became God's children forever. We are never alone, even when we die. In Baptism we were marked with the sign of the cross as these words were spoken: *Child of God, you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever.* There are several symbols in the funeral liturgy that point to Baptism and our unity with the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. The coffin may be covered with a **pall**, recalling the white garment given in Baptism, the robe of Christ's righteousness that clothes us. The pall also reminds us that in death and before God all people are equal, regardless of whether the coffin is simple or elaborate. The white color of the pall is a reminder of Easter and Christ's victory over death. The **paschal candle**, placed at the head of the coffin, is also a symbol of Easter. The candle is lit at the Easter Vigil, during the Easter season, and at baptisms and funerals.



**THE HOLY COMMUNION** can be a great source of strength and peace at a funeral service. Sharing the bread of life and the cup of blessing can be especially comforting at the time of loss, for God is present not only in words, but through eating and drinking at the Lord's Table. Through this intimate meal we are given strength, hope and the promise of eternal life. For those who find Holy Communion to be central to their Sunday worship life, it will seem natural to celebrate the Eucharist at the occasion of a funeral.



**THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD IS AN EASTER LITURGY.** The feelings of grief and desolation are recognized and given expression at a funeral, but the service also moves beyond them to a confident hope. Both the sadness and joy must be seen together, tempered by the other. The liturgy makes the bold proclamation that each baptized member has been united into a death with Christ, and will thus share in his glorious resurrection.

**THE SERVICE OF COMMITAL** is used when the body is brought to its final resting place, usually a cemetery. Although not a common practice now, it is encouraged whenever possible to see the body lowered into the grave, rather than to remember it resting on top of the device by which it will later be lowered after mourners have left. This can give the family and other mourners a clearer memory of what happened to the body. Some earth is cast on the coffin as a reminder of the earth from which we came and into which now we rest.

**A MEAL** at the church or someone's home often follows the burial. This gathering allows persons to renew old friendships, to reconnect family ties, and to express emotions in various ways. The shared meal is an affirmation of life in the face of death.

### **PLANNING YOUR FUNERAL LITURGY**

It is appropriate that, when possible, each Christian plan his or her own funeral service. This can be done at any age and does not have to be seen as morbid, but rather as a way to allow family and friends to know requests for hymns, readings, and other details of the service. Often the family is left with many details and plans following a death. Planning ahead can help alleviate some of the stress at the time of grief and loss.

### **HYMNS FOR THE FUNERAL LITURGY**

Hymns for a funeral service are most appropriate when they express death seen in the context of our baptism into Jesus' death and resurrection. While favorites of the deceased are appropriate, it would be good to also consider the following from *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (ELW)

#### *Funeral Hymns for any time of the year*

Abide With Me	629	I Am the Bread of Life	485
Around You, O Lord Jesus	468	I Know That My Redeemer Lives!	619
At the Lamb's High Feast	362	I Was There to Hear Your Borne Cry	732
Behold the Host Arrayed in White	425	If You But Trust in God to Guide You	769
Blest Are They	728	In Heaven Above	630
Blest be the Tie That Binds	656	In Thee Is Gladness	867
Children of the Heavenly Father	781	Jerusalem, My Happy Home	628
Come, Ye Disconsolate	607	Just a Closer Walk with Thee	697
Crown Him with Many Crowns	855	Lift High the Cross	660
Day by Day	7	Lord of All Hopefulness	765
For All Your Saints, O Lord	427	Lord, Take My Hand and Lead me	767
For All the Saints	422	Lord, Thee I Love With All My Heart	750
For the Beauty of the Earth	879	Love Divine, All Loves Excelling	631
Give Me Jesus	770	My Hope is Built on Nothing Less	596, 597
Give Thanks for Saints	428	My Life Flows On in Endless Song	763
Go, My Children, with My Blessing	543	My Shepherd, You Supply My Need	782 Ps 23
God, Who Made the Earth and Heaven	564		
Holy God, Holy and Glorious	637		
Holy God, We Praise Your Name	414		
Holy, Holy, Holy	413		
How Small Our Span of Life	636		

Neither Death nor Life	622	The Church's One Foundation	654
Now Thank We All Our God	839, 840	The King of Love My Shepherd Is	502 Ps 23
Now We Remain	500	The Lord's My Shepherd	778 Ps 23
O Blessed Spring	447	The Trumpets Sound, the Angels Sing	531
O Christ the Same	760	Thine the Amen, Thine the Praise	826
O Day Full of Grace	627	There in God's Garden	342
O God Beyond All Praising	880	Through the Night of Doubt and Sorrow	327
O God, Our Help in Ages Past	632 Ps 90	Thy Holy Wings	613
O Living Bread from Heaven	542	We Are Baptized in Christ Jesus	451
O Lord, Now Let Your Servant	313	We Know That Christ Is Raised	449
Oh, Happy Day When We Shall Stand	441	What Feast of Love	487
Precious Lord, Take My Hand	773	What Wondrous Love Is This	666
Rejoice in God's Saints	418	When We Are Living	639
Shall We Gather at the River	423	You Are Mine	581
Sing with All the Saints in Glory	426	You Who Dwell in the Shelter of the Lord	787 Ps 91
Soli Deo Gloria	878		
Soul, Adorn Yourself with Gladness	488, 489		

### ***Funeral Hymns During Particular Liturgical Seasons***

*The Easter hymns listed below are especially appropriate for a funeral at any time during the year*

#### **Advent**

Wake, Awake, for Night is Flying	436
Oh, Come, Oh, Come Emmanuel	257
My Lord, What a Morning	438
Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers	244
Prepare the Royal Highway	264

#### **Christmas**

Let All Together Praise Our God	287
Your Little Ones, Dear Lord	286
Good Christian Friends, Rejoice	288
Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming	272
Away in a Manger	277, 278
Once in Royal David's City	269
All My Heart Again Rejoices	273

#### **Epiphany**

O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright	308
As with Gladness Men of Old	302

I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light	815
We are Marching in the Light of God	866

#### **Lent/Holy Week**

On My Heart Imprint Your Image	811
In the Cross of Christ I Glory	324
God Loved the World	323
My Song Is Love Unknown	343
O Sacred Head, Now Wounded	351, 352

#### **Easter**

Awake, My Heart with Gladness	378
The Strife is O'er the Battle Done	366
With High Delight Let us Unite	368
Now All the Vault of Heaven Resounds	367
Thine Is the Glory	376
Now the Green Blade Rises	379
Alleluia! Jesus Is Risen	377

## SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR THE FUNERAL

Normally there are three readings and a psalm, one from each section below. Friends or members of the family may read the first and second lesson.

### FIRST READING

Job 19:23-27a	<i>I know that my redeemer lives.</i>
Ecclesiastes 3:1-8	<i>For everything a season.</i>
Isaiah 25:6-9	<i>The Lord will swallow up death forever.</i>
Isaiah 40:1-11, 28-31	<i>Comfort my people, says your God</i>
Isaiah 43:1-3a, 5 – 7	<i>I have called you by name</i>
Isaiah 43:1-3a, 18-19	<i>I am about to do a new thing</i>
Isaiah 61:1-3	<i>God comforts all who mourn.</i>
Isaiah 65:17-20, 23-25	<i>A new heaven and a new earth</i>
Isaiah 66:10-14	<i>As a mother comforts her child</i>
Jeremiah 31:8-13	<i>I will turn their mourning into joy</i>
Lamentations 3:22-26, 31-33	<i>The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases.</i>

### PSALM

Psalm 23	<i>The Lord is my shepherd</i>
Psalm 25:1-10	<i>To you I lift up my soul</i>
Psalm 42:1-7	<i>As a deer longs for flowing streams</i>
Psalm 46:1-7	<i>God is our refuge and strength</i>
Psalm 63	<i>Eagerly I seek you</i>
Psalm 84	<i>How dear to me is your dwelling place</i>
Psalm 90	<i>You have been our refuge</i>
Psalm 116	<i>You have rescued my life from death</i>
Psalm 121	<i>I lift up my eyes to the hills</i>
Psalm 122	<i>Let us go to the house of the Lord</i>
Psalm 130	<i>Out of the depths I cry to you</i>
Psalm 139:7-12	<i>The gracious omnipresence of the Lord</i>
Psalm 142:1-6	<i>I cry to the Lord with my voice</i>
Psalm 143	<i>Lord, hear my prayer</i>

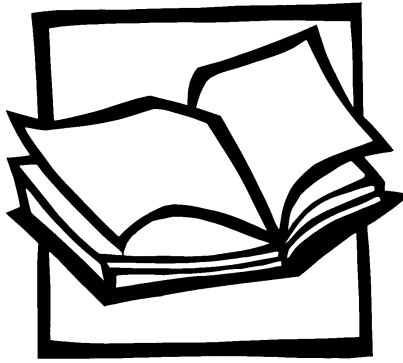
*See the hymn section for psalm paraphrases of psalms 23, 90 and 91*



## SECOND READING

Romans 5:1-11  
Romans 6:3-9  
Romans 8:14-23  
Romans 8:31-35, 37-39  
Romans 14:7-12  
I Corinthians 15:12-26  
I Corinthians 15:51-57  
II Corinthians 4:6-12, 16-18  
II Corinthians 4:14-5:1  
II Corinthians 5:1, 6-10  
Philippians 3:20-21  
I Thessalonians 4:13-4, 18  
II Timothy 2:8-13  
I John 3:1-2  
Revelation 7:9-17  
Revelation 21:2-7  
Revelation 22:1-25

*Justified by faith, we have peace with God.  
Baptized into Jesus death and resurrection.  
We groan while we wait for the redemption of our bodies.  
Nothing can separate us from the love of God.  
Whether alive or dead, we belong to the Lord.  
In Christ shall all be made alive.  
Death is swallowed up in victory.  
Treasure in clay jars  
What is seen is transitory; what is unseen is eternal.  
We have an everlasting home in heaven.  
Jesus will transfigure our bodies to be like his glorious body.  
We shall stay with the Lord forever.  
If we have died with him, we shall live with him.  
We shall see God as God really is.  
God will wipe away every tear.  
Behold, I make all things new.  
The Lord God will be their light.*



## HOLY GOSPEL

Matthew 5:1-10  
Matthew 11:25-30  
Matthew 25:1-13  
Mark 16:1-7  
Luke 2:25-32 (or 2:25-40)  
Luke 23:33, 39-43  
Luke 24:13-35  
John 1:1-5, 9-14  
John 6:37-40  
John 6:51-58  
John 10:11-16  
John 11:21-27 (or 11:32-45)  
John 12:23-28  
John 14:1-6  
John 14:25-27

*Blessed are those who mourn.  
Come to me and I will give you rest.  
The bridegroom is coming; come out to meet him.  
The resurrection of Christ  
Simeon is able to die in peace.  
Today you will be with me in paradise.  
The road to Emmaus.  
The light shines in the darkness.  
All that the Father gives me will come to me.  
All who eat this bread will live forever; I will raise them up on the last day.  
I am the good shepherd.  
I am the resurrection and the life.  
If a grain of wheat falls on the ground and dies, it yields a rich harvest.  
In my Father's house there are many rooms.  
Peace I leave with you.*

## **PREPARING FOR DEATH**

### **MAKE A WILL**

Part of Christian stewardship involves providing for the disposition of possessions by means of a will. It is best to do this with the assistance of a lawyer and to review it regularly.

### **MAKE FUNERAL PLANS**

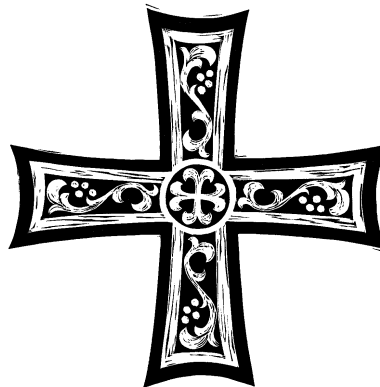
Funeral plans should not be included in the will, but given to the parish pastor and two to three friends or relatives so that your wishes are easily accessible at the time of death. A planning form is included in this booklet (pp.9-11)

### **DECIDE WHAT TO DO WITH THE BODY**

Christian theology gives honor to the human body by declaring that we are created in God's image. Even in death, we treat the body with a sense of reverence; it is not merely the shell of the person, but a sacramental sign of his or her presence on earth.

Following the death, the two options for disposing of the body include burial or cremation. It is wise to make the decisions and arrangements before the time of death in a time of less pressure and emotional turmoil. If the body is to be buried, you will need to select a funeral director and a burial place. In the case of cremation, a crematory and place for the disposition of the ashes needs to be selected. The funeral may still be held in the church, the commendation in the crematory chapel, and the ashes interred later using the committal from the burial liturgy.

Though memorial services are becoming more common, it is good to reflect on the symbolic and emotional benefits of having a tangible sign of the person's presence at the liturgy. It is possible to have the body present for a funeral and to follow that with cremation. Another option is to have the urn with the cremated remains present for the service.



# WHEN DEATH OCCURS

## NOTIFY THE PASTOR

When a Christian is near death, the pastor should be notified so that the Church's ministry may be extended to the dying and to the loved ones. The pastor should be notified at once at the time of death, because the pastor will want to extend ministry and confer with the family regarding funeral arrangements.

## ARRANGEMENTS

It is preferred that a Christian be buried from the church where the bereaved are surrounded with the symbols of Christ's resurrection and presence. For members of the parish, there is no charge for the services of the pastor or the use of the church building. There may be costs for the services of an organist or soloist.

A simple coffin is certainly appropriate for internment. There is beauty in simplicity and there is nothing disrespectful about an inexpensive coffin.

Embalming, replacing the blood in the body with embalming fluid, is necessary only if there is to be a viewing of the body or if local law requires it.

Cremation is an acceptable Christian means for the disposal of the body. It simply hastens the process of "ashes to ashes." If there will not be a viewing it may be beneficial for the family to spend some time with the body immediately following the death.

## VIEWING THE BODY

Viewings are not a necessary part of the Christian burial. Some persons prefer to remember their loved ones as they saw them alive. Yet, viewing may help to add finality to the grieving process and is a common way of the saying farewell to the deceased. Viewings are often held at a funeral home on the afternoon or evening on the day before the funeral service. There may also be a time of viewing at the church before the funeral liturgy.

## FLOWERS AND MEMORIALS

Flowers and plants are reminders of life in the face of death. Rather than an abundance of floral arrangements, it may be more useful for money to be given to a memorial fund, such as the church memorial fund. A newspaper or bulletin notice may indicate where the memorial gifts are to be sent.

## CLOSED CASKET

The casket is closed before the burial service and remains closed throughout the service. The family says its farewells to the body at the viewing or immediately before the service.

## MILITARY HONORS

The national flag may replace the pall as the coffin is moved from the church to the place of burial; the flag never covers the coffin in the church.

## MEDICAL RESEARCH/ORGAN DONATION

I would like my body donated to medical research \_\_\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_\_no

If possible, I would like to donate my organs/tissue \_\_\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_\_no

*Go to [www.giftofhope.org](http://www.giftofhope.org) to become a registered donor, which helps to ensure your wishes are followed through at the time of death.*



# FUNERAL PLANS

## CHURCH INFORMATION

Church Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Pastor(s) \_\_\_\_\_

## FUNERAL HOME INFORMATION

Name of Funeral Home \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Have pre-arrangements been made? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, when \_\_\_\_\_

## DISPOSITION OF THE BODY

Do you want your body to be a.) buried \_\_\_\_\_ or b.) cremated \_\_\_\_\_? (*check one*)

a.) If buried, then name/location of cemetery \_\_\_\_\_

Have you purchased a plot? \_\_\_\_\_

Are there family members you wish to be buried next to? \_\_\_\_\_

If so, who? \_\_\_\_\_

b.) If cremated, then what would you like done with your ashes? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## MEMORIALS

If you wish to have memorials given in your honor to a particular church or organization, please list them here.

\_\_\_\_\_

**SERVICE OF REMBRANCE/CELEBRATION**

Would you like your funeral service at a church, funeral home, or elsewhere? \_\_\_\_\_

Would you prefer that there be an opportunity for a viewing of the body? \_\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_no  
*Note: this is possible even with cremation. The body can be cremated after the funeral service.*

Would you like Holy Communion at the service? \_\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_no

**Scripture Preferences**

*Please choose 3 scripture texts (one from each section pp. 4 - 6) and a Psalm.*

Old Testament \_\_\_\_\_

Psalm \_\_\_\_\_

Epistle \_\_\_\_\_

Gospel \_\_\_\_\_

Please write a few sentences explaining why you like the scripture passages you chose.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Hymn Preferences**

*Please name at least one hymn for each area listed.*

Entrance Hymn \_\_\_\_\_

Hymn of the Day \_\_\_\_\_

Communion Hymns \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Closing Hymn \_\_\_\_\_

Please name other musical preferences here or write about your favorite hymn.

---

---

---

---

---

If the body will be present for the service, please name at least 6 pallbearers.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

*All of these plans should be reviewed and updated regularly. Give copies to family members and your pastor upon completion and each time a change is made.*

## OTHER HELPFUL INFORMATION

*It is helpful to have all this information in one place, so that your family will have easy access to it at the time of your death.*

### Power of Attorney for Health Care

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number \_\_\_\_\_ Where are papers located? \_\_\_\_\_

### Power of Attorney for Finances

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number \_\_\_\_\_ Where are papers located? \_\_\_\_\_

### Lawyer

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

### Bank(s)

Name/Address \_\_\_\_\_

Account Number \_\_\_\_\_

### Location of Important Items

Automobile Title(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Bank Books \_\_\_\_\_

Birth Certificate \_\_\_\_\_

Cemetery Deed \_\_\_\_\_

Insurance Policies \_\_\_\_\_

Marriage Certificate \_\_\_\_\_

Mortgage \_\_\_\_\_

Pension Records \_\_\_\_\_

Real Estate Deed \_\_\_\_\_

Safe Deposit Box Key \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security Card \_\_\_\_\_

Stocks and Bonds \_\_\_\_\_

Veteran's Documents \_\_\_\_\_

Will \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_