

# FUNERAL/ MEMORIAL SERVICE GUIDE



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# A NOTE FROM OUR PASTOR

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Dear Friends,

As Christians we know that we have nothing to fear in death. In fact, it is through dying that we are born to a new and eternal life.

Yet, we also know that when someone dies, we all suffer. It is very difficult to be separated from a loved one, through death. In the midst of your suffering, your church family at American Lutheran Church seeks to lift you up and offer you support.

To this end, we offer you this Funeral/Memorial Service Guide. We hope and pray that it will help you prepare for the service of your loved one, or as you make plans for your own service.

There are many decisions that must be made in the days surrounding the death of a loved one. This Guide is designed to help you with some of these decisions and to help you better understand the service that American Lutheran Church offers at this time.

Please take the time to read through this Guide before you make any final arrangements. Please call me if you have any questions or concerns about anything addressed in the Guide.

May the grace of God bring you comfort and keep you throughout this difficult time. Please also know that your American Lutheran Church family is praying for you.

In Christ's Name,

Pastor Luther Thoresen



## PLANNING NEEDS

Friends in Christ,

I wish to express my sympathy to you during this difficult time. We have prepared the following list to assist in the process of making arrangements for the funeral memorial service for your loved one. Each situation is different. Please allow 2-3 hours for funeral arrangements (total with me and with the funeral director). Whenever possible, I seek to meet 1- 1 1/2 hours with the family and director. This facilitates communication among us.

A funeral or memorial service is a worship service that allows the family and friends to express their feelings and to receive spiritual support. It provides an opportunity to acknowledge and respect the deceased person, and to surround survivors with love and care. The sharing of these feelings is a therapeutic way to gain strength by being surrounded by God's love.

There are two main purposes for a funeral or memorial service. The first is to honor the life and celebrate the memory of the person who has died. The second is to proclaim the Resurrection and celebrate the promise of life eternal in Christ. A service with the body present in a casket is referred to as a funeral service. A service where the body is not present is referred to as a memorial service.

Please bring the following when you come to make arrangements:

Information for the death certificate and obituary:

Full name of the deceased (first, middle, last)

Date of birth

Place of birth

Parent's names, including mother's maiden name

Background information:

-Marriage, place and date when applicable

-Schooling

-Employment

-Church, clubs and organizations

-Interests and hobbies

-Any other information to be included

Deceased's Social Security number

Military discharge, if applicable

Picture, if available.

A list of survivors, including but not limited to parents, spouse, children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, brothers and sisters. A list of loved ones that preceded your loved one in death.

## THINGS TO CONSIDER

-The place of the service

-Date and time for the service

-Visitation time(s)

-Casket bearers and their phone numbers

-Honorary casket bearers (optional) and their phone numbers

-Any songs or hymns you would like included in the service

-Poems, readings, reflections that might be shared by or on behalf of the family

-Clothing (normal undergarments, choice of outerwear, shoes are optional)

-Name of hairdresser

-Baptism date and location, if known

-Confirmation date and location if known

-Approximate number of immediate family and of extended family members that are likely to attend the funeral/memorial service

# SCRIPTURE READINGS

A list of possible Scripture readings is provided below for you to consider. You may also choose a Scripture reading which is not listed. Generally there are three Scripture readings in a service. Our pastor can help choose the readings if you wish after your conversation.

## Old Testament Lessons

- Job 19: 23-27a I know my Redeemer lives
- Ecclesiastes 3:1-15 For everything there is a season
- Isaiah 25:6-9 God will swallow up death forever
- Isaiah 40:1-11,28-31 Comfort, O comfort my people
- Isaiah 43:1-3, 18-19,25 I am about to do a new thing
- Isaiah 55:1-3, 6-13 Everyone who thirsts, come to the water
- Isaiah 61:1-3 The spirit of the Lord God is upon me
- Jeremiah 31:8-13 I will turn their mourning into joy
- Lamentations 3:22-26 The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases

## Psalms

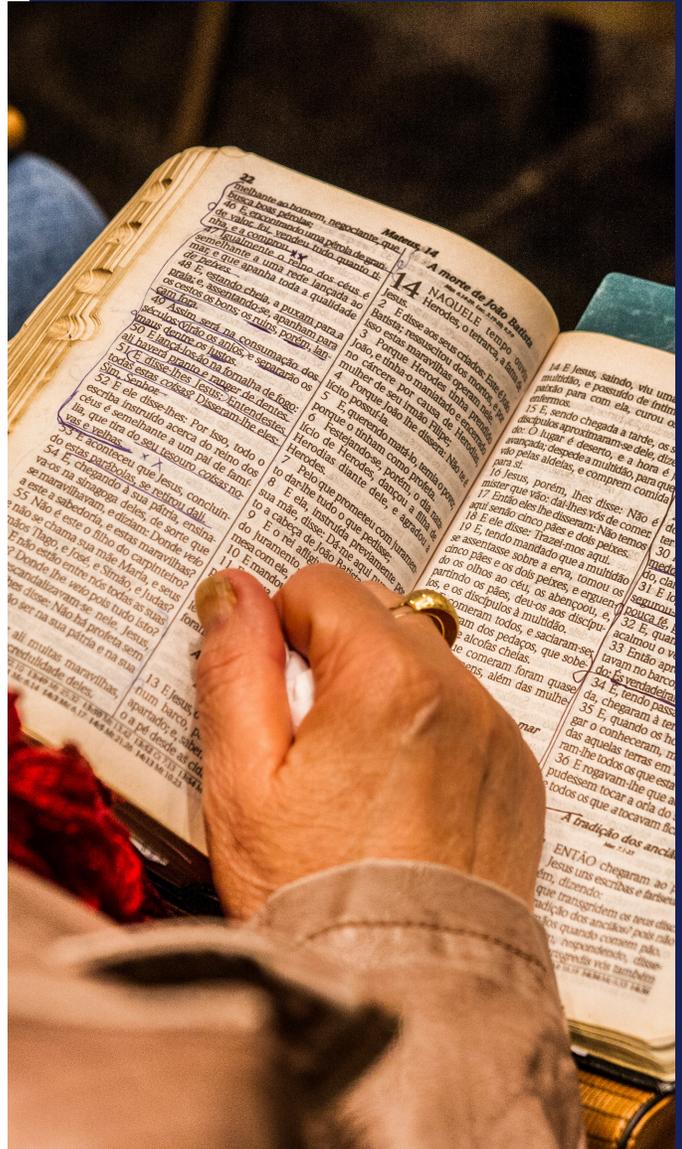
- Psalm 23 The Lord is my shepherd
- Psalm 42:1-7 As a deer longs for flowering streams
- Psalm 46:1-7 God is our refuge and strength
- Psalm 90 Lord you have been our dwelling place in all generations
- Psalm 91 He who dwells in the shelter of the most high
- Psalm 118 O give thanks to the Lord for He is good
- Psalm 121 I lift my eyes to the hills

## New Testament Lessons

- Romans 5:1-11 Peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ
- Romans 14:7-9 We do not live to ourselves and we do not die to ourselves
- 1 Corinthians 15:12-26 Christ, the first fruits, has been raised from the dead
- 2 Corinthians 4:7-18 We have this treasure in clay jars
- 2 Timothy: 4:6b-8 I have fought the good fight, finished the race
- Hebrews 12:1-2 We are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses
- 1 Peter 1:3-10 A living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead
- Revelation 7:9-17 God will wipe away every tear
- Revelation 21:2-7 I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem
- Revelation 22:1-5 The Lord God will be their light

## Gospel Lessons

- Matthew 5:1-1 Blessed are those who mourn
- Matthew 11:25-30 Come to me, all you who are weary
- John 1:1-5, 9-14 The light shines in the darkness
- John 6:37-40 I will raise them up on the last day
- John 10:11-16 Lay my life down for the sheep



## MUSIC

The organist/pianist will start playing music about 15 minutes before the service begins.

Congregational hymns or solos are often part of a service. Below are options you can choose from or may pick your own. You can also ask for additional suggestions.

Abide with Me	ELW 629
Amazing Grace	ELW 779
Beautiful Savior	ELW 838
Blessed Assurance	ELW 638
Borning Cry	ELW 732
Children of the Heavenly Father	ELW 781
For All the Saints	ELW 422
Great is Thy Faithfulness	ELW 733
Guide Me Every Great Redeemer	ELW 618
Healer of Our Every Ill	ELW 612
I Know My Redeemer Lives	ELW 619
In the Morning When I Rise 770	ELW
Lord, Take My Hand and Lead Me	ELW 767
My Faith Looks Up to Thee	ELW 759
Just a Closer Walk with Thee	ELW 679
Lift High the Cross	ELW 660
My Hope is Built on Nothing Less	ELW 596/597
Now Thank We All Our God	ELW 840
O Day Full of Grace	ELW 627
O God Our Help in Ages Past	ELW 632
O Lord Now Let Your Servant	ELW 313
Precious Lord, Take My Hand	ELW 773
Shall We Gather at the River	ELW 423
Softly and Tenderly Jesus is Calling	ELW 608
Soon and Very Soon	ELW 439
Thy Holy Wings	ELW 613
When Peace Like a River	ELW 785

## COSTS

At American Lutheran, we consider funeral and memorial services to be an important part of our ministry. There is no charge for providing a bulletin, building use or coordination details.

There is no charge for the preparation and servicing of a luncheon. Additional, luncheon information is available on the next page. An honorarium for the pastor is not necessary as we consider this to be part of our ministry.

Fees for funerals and memorial services at American Lutheran are only for personnel and include the following:

Custodian - Usually determined in conversation with the funeral director

Organist/Pianist \$75

Soloist \$75

Gift to Women of the ELCA for funeral lunch

Fees are to be paid by noon the day before the funeral if they are being paid personally.

# IF A FUNERAL HOME IS NOT COORDINATING THE SERVICE

If a family chooses not to have a funeral home assisting them, please understand the family needs to coordinate the following items:

- Burial (including the digging of the grave and the vault)
- Military Honors
- Procession to the cemetery
- Transporting or handling the body or cremains. The church will not handle or transport the cremains or the body nor will they be stored at the church. Additionally, the church is not liable if the cremains are lost or spilled.
- The family must arrange the display of flowers and pick them up after the service.  
Note: the church only has a few flower stands
- The church will provide bulletins at no charge but does not provide memorial booklets. Memorial booklets would be the family's responsibility.
- Easels to display photos or memorabilia
- Obituary or death notice (American Lutheran will announce the funeral arrangement in worship when possible)
- Guest book
- Card box
- Death certificate
- Social security administration notification
- Provide the church with ONE contact person who will work with the church to coordinate all services
- Pall Bearers

Fees if a funeral home is not coordinating (payable by noon the day before the service)

Pastor Honorarium At the discretion of family

Custodian - Discuss with pastor

Luncheon - \$150 plus the cost of the food

Visitation (night before) - Free for members, \$50 for non-members.

If you are unable to afford these expenses, please speak with the pastor.



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## MISCELLANEOUS

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### **Guest Pastor**

If you wish to have a guest pastor participate in the service, our pastor will still need to meet with the family and plan the service and will coordinate the details with the guest pastor. Our pastor will preside at the service. If you have a guest pastor, you are encouraged to provide them an honorarium and travel expenses. The role of the guest will be determined in consultation with the family, guest and our pastor.

### **Ushers provided**

American Lutheran provides ushers to assist with the worship service, hand out bulletins and welcome guests. This is usually coordinated by the funeral director.

### **Funeral Pall and Cremains Pall available**

A funeral pall and an urn pall (cremains pall) are available from the church upon request. A pall is simply an off white cloth that covers the casket or urn. The white color reminds us of the resurrection and further symbolizes that, in baptism, we put on the robe of Christ's righteousness. Additionally, the pall helps the congregation emphasize the worship of God and the hope of the resurrection rather than the value of the casket. Please ask the church office or pastor if you are interested.

### **Luncheon**

When a luncheon is provided, families are asked to pay for the groceries. There is no charge for the preparation and serving of the funeral luncheon, although many families choose to make a contribution to the Women of the ELCA at American Lutheran for these services. The funeral luncheon committee prepares a meal (not catered) and allows the family to help select the menu. Most lunches are served in Fellowship Hall and services are usually not scheduled after 1:30 p.m.

The meal typically consists of sandwiches, salads, bars/cake and a drink. Salads and bars are solicited from the congregation and the family receives a bill from the grocery store for the sandwiches. Serving a different meal can be discussed but would depend on the availability of volunteers and may be an additional cost to the family.

# TIPS TO HELP CHILDREN GRIEVE

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-When death happens, have a close relative, preferably a parent, tell the child about it immediately.

-Stay close to the child, giving them physical affection. Instead of pushing them farther away from the community during death, draw them closer into it.

-Children grieve in cycles. For example they may be more inclined to play and divert their focus from death when death is more recent and parents are grieving intensely. More than adults, children may need time to take a break from grief. It is important to know that it's okay to take a break. Having fun or laughing is not disrespectful to the person who has died. Rather, telling stories and laughing while remembering is a vital part of grieving too.

-Avoid euphemisms such as "passed on," "gone away" or "departed." The concept of death is difficult enough for a child to understand and using other terminology will only add to the confusion.

-Advise the child to attend the funeral but do not force the child to go. The funeral and viewing is the community expression of grief. As a part of the community, it is valuable for the child to take part. Part of the reason why many of us don't take children to viewings or funerals is because we are afraid of our children seeing us grieve. We are afraid of children seeing us in a state of weakness.

-Let your children see you grieve. It gives them permission to grieve on their own. If children only see everyone acting stoically, it will be confusing.

-Questions will arise and it's okay if you don't have all the answers. Sometimes the only answer will be, "I'm not sure, let's go and ask the funeral director or pastor."

-Gently help the child grasp the concept of death. Avoid vague explanations to the child's questions, but answer with as much honesty as possible.

-Keep other stressing situations, such as moving or changing schools, to a minimum. After the ceremonies, continue children's regular routines.

-Be honest with the child about the depth of the pain he or she will feel. You may say, "This is the most awful thing that can happen to you." Contrary to popular belief, minimizing grief does not help.

