

Dear Children of God and Heirs of Eternal Life,

This resource has been prepared to assist members in planning not only for death, but also for a celebration of the eternal life in which we already have begun to share through our mutual faith in Christ Jesus. When we have been called home to Jesus we enjoy being in His presence even as we await the resurrection on the Last Day. In the meantime, we leave behind family and friends who are given the responsibility of planning our funeral service. By leaving them some established funeral arrangements we can decrease their stress during their time of grief and testify to our faith and trust in Christ.

A Christian funeral service has as its purpose the comforting of friends and family with the promises of God for forgiveness and eternal life. Although the service is focused on what God has done for us in Christ Jesus, it is also appropriate to give thanks to God for the various gifts He has given through His people, especially where those gifts have been used in a way that gives honor to Christ.

The structure of a memorial service or a funeral service are basically the same. We will refer to both as a funeral. There are three parts to almost all services. The first part is often a devotional that concludes the visitation. The second part is the funeral service. The third part is the committal service which takes place at the cemetery or columbarium. If the service is held at a military cemetery, military honors generally follow the committal service. It is not within the Christian tradition to have other honors or services from fraternal organizations along with or after the Christian services, as these often obscure the Christian message of the gospel.

**Hymns:** Generally speaking, most services include three hymns. Easter hymns are always appropriate no matter what the time of the year. Our current hymnal, Lutheran Service Book, provides many fine hymns for services. Popular hymns include:

- 461 I know that my Redeemer Lives
- 748 I'm but a Stranger Here
- 739 Precious Lord, Take my Hand
- 763 When Peace, Like a River
- 725 Children of the Heavenly Father
- 878 Abide With Me

- 477 Alleluia, Alleluia! Hearts to Heaven.
- 761 Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me
- 744 Amazing Grace
- 677 For all the Saints
- 676 Behold a Host, Arrayed in White
- 762 There is a time for everything

**Scripture Lessons:** Most services include four Scripture lessons. These include Psalm, Old Testament, Epistle, and Gospel lessons. Readings from non-biblical sources are to be avoided.

#### **Psalms:**

23; 42, 65:1-8; 121; 118:1-21; 130; 25:1-5, 15-20

#### **Old Testament readings**:

Job 19:21 – 27 Isaiah 25:6 – 9

Isaiah 61:1-3 Lamentations 3:22-33

## **Epistle readings:**

Romans 8: 31 – 39 1Corinthians 15:51 – 57

1 Peter 1:3-9 1 John 3:1-2 Revelation 7:9-17 Revelation 21:1-7

1 Corinthians 15:20 – 26 1 Thessalonians 4:13 – 18

## Gospel readings:

John 5:24 – 27 John 6:37 – 40 John 10:11 – 16 John 11:21 – 27

John 14:1 – 6 Mark 10:13 – 16 (for a child's service)

Matthew 5:1-12 Luke 2:25-32

These are suggested readings. It is also appropriate to use readings that have had particular meaning for the deceased.

**Eulogy:** This is an optional part of the service and has not traditionally been a part of the funeral service. It has become more popular in recent times. If the family wishes to have some personal words spoken about the deceased, a small "memory" section may be added at the beginning of the service. At this point a brief sharing of some memories may be included. These memories should be placed in writing prior to the service and submitted to the pastor for approval.

The third part of the service is the committal. This brief service takes place when the body or the cremains are placed in the grave or niche.

#### Checklist

- 1. Whenever a loved one is approaching their death, call the church and pastor.
- 2. When scheduling a funeral or memorial service, contact the church office before agreeing to a date and time with the funeral director.
- 3. Schedule a time to plan the service with the pastor. If possible, have hymn and scripture reading suggestions ready for the meeting.
- 4. Decide if family members or friends will participate in the service. Possibilities include: readers, acolytes, pallbearers.
- 5. Complete a planning worksheet, giving a copy to the church office and leaving a copy where it will be found by family members when needed.

# FUNERAL PLANNING WORKSHEET

<b>Guide for the Christian Funeral o</b>	of	
	[full name: first middle (mai	den) last]
Date completed/ revised		
impending death; or to express one's p	nily in the midst of funeral planning; or by individual personal wishes for their own funeral. This workshee is worksheet with the church. It will be kept in fil	t may be revised a
you have written to be certain that it is your will; 3. your funeral home. Or sin	sider telling someone you trust about it. You may wish is clear. Consider providing copies for: 1. your family, mply give them a note that says, "As we have discuss ath and burial. I keep this information in the following	; 2. to file with ed, I have
At the time of my death, I ask that you date, and send the note.	u use this information to the extent possible. With gro	atitude," Then sign
church, my family, and my friend Although this information is being	on and instructions provided here are for the g ds in making arrangements necessary at the t ng left for safekeeping, it is not legally binding t does not make the church obligated or respo	ime of my deatl g or enforceable
	signature	date
Funeral with coffin/urn present	Type of Worship Service  Memorial service without remains Gravesid	e service only
<b>Location:</b> Church funeral hom other:	e cemetery chapel graveside service only	
Time: morning	afternoon evening	
Preferred company:	Funeral Home or Mortuary	
Have pre-arrangements been mad Visitation yes no Visitation time evening before fu Eligible for military honors yes	Visitation location funeral home day of funeral	church home
Cemetery:		

## **Service Preferences**

HYMNS:	
SCRIPTURE READINGS:	Psalm
	Old Testament
	New Testament
	Gospel
PARTICIPANTS:	
Scripture Readers (may be one lessons if readers are not provide	reader, or one reader per scripture lesson. The pastor will read the ed.)
Psalm	
Old Testament	
New Testament	
Gospel	
Other:	
Memorial gifts might be used to	Memorials o further support these ministries and organizations:
	Church NextGen Fund (a fund where memorial gifts are invested
a specific gift to the area of:	n Church Memorial Fund
(might include: capital improveme scholarships, worship resources, a	ents, education, fine arts, furniture, general equipment, music, and youth ministry)
Other:	