

Planning a Funeral or 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.
For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be
Lord of both the dead and the living.” —Romans 14:8–9



OUR SAVIOR'S
LUTHERAN CHURCH

Planting Faith - Nurturing Hope - Sharing God's Love

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Dear Friend in Christ,

It is never easy to lose a loved one. It's no wonder St. Paul called death the last enemy to be destroyed, because it takes from us that which is most precious to us, family and friends. So we mourn. But we mourn not as people without hope. Because Christ has been raised from the dead, we believe that we shall be raised also.

Thus, when Christian people gather for a funeral, we gather to thank God for the hope we have in Christ, to remember and give thanks for our loved one, and to offer our support to our brothers and sisters in Christ. The service is a celebration of life – the life we have in Christ and the life of the person who has died.

The following is offered to inform you of appropriate funeral and memorial service practices at Our Savior's and to offer you help in planning a funeral or memorial service.

Pastors of Our Savior's Lutheran Church

Notify the Church and Pastor

When a member of the congregation dies, notify the church as soon as possible. If it is your desire, a pastor will come to the home or hospital. When it is convenient, usually after you have met with the funeral director, a pastor will want to meet with you to help you plan the service at church.

Any of the pastors, schedules permitting, are available to help with the funeral or memorial service. You may feel free to ask for any of the pastors to preside or assist at the funeral or memorial service.

Planning the Service

The purpose of the service is to express together the resurrection hope we have in Christ, to give thanks to God for the person who has died, and to offer support and comfort to one another.

The appropriate place for the final service for a member of Our Savior's is the Sanctuary or Celebrate Center, where we gather to celebrate our resurrection hope

every week. This is where he or she has been in worship with the Christian community; this is where the life of faith is nurtured by Word and Sacrament; this is where we remember and celebrate our hope in life and in death. For a smaller gathering (less than 60), you may wish to use the Chapel. For services held in the Sanctuary and the Celebrate Center, a qualified OSL sound technician will be scheduled to operate the sound equipment during the funeral. The funeral home will add the fee for this service to your bill and pay the church directly.

The time of the service is set in consultation with the pastor. Factors to consider in setting the time are the availability of the church and pastor, the funeral director's schedule, and the distance people must drive in order to attend.

The Funeral Order from *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (the red hymnal) is used for funerals and memorial services at Our Savior's. It expresses the promise of resurrection and life eternal won through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and given to us in Holy Baptism. The order is as follows:

Placing of the pall on the casket* / Remembrance of Baptism

Procession* (A hymn may be sung as the family enters)

Greeting and prayer

(An appropriate place for a solo)

(Appropriate place for a family member and/or friend to say thanks and/or share brief remembrances)

Scripture readings (see suggestions)

A reading from one of the Gospels

Sermon

Hymn

Apostles' Creed

Prayers / Lord's Prayer

(Holy Communion may be celebrated, if desired)

Commendation

Table prayer

Recession (a hymn may be sung during the recession)

Committal

*In the case of a memorial service there is no casket. An urn holding ashes of the deceased may be carried to the front of the worship space as part of the procession. A pall may be placed on the urn.

The casket pall, a cloth with Christian symbols woven into it, is placed over the casket at the entrance to the Sanctuary as a reminder of the robe of righteousness with which we are covered in baptism; the pall is removed after the casket leaves the

Sanctuary and before the casket is placed in the funeral coach. When an urn is used, a small white pall may be used in a similar manner.

Burial usually takes place immediately following the service. Some families choose to have a private burial at the cemetery before the service at the church. If the burial is a considerable distance away, it may take place after a fellowship time at church or even on another day; in such a situation, Our Savior's pastors can assist you in locating a clergyperson to officiate at the graveside service. In the case of cremation, there may be no burial.

Refreshments for family and friends are served by the church in The Gathering Place, Friendship Room, or Fellowship Hall after the funeral. The funeral director will contact the OSL Food Coordinator and make arrangements on behalf of the family. It is helpful to provide an estimate of the number of persons to be served. The funeral home will usually add the food costs to your bill and pay the church directly.

Music

Music is an expression of our theology and our feelings, and is a significant part of our worship tradition. Music used at the funeral or memorial service should proclaim God's grace and promises and the hope of the Resurrection.

The organist or pianist will select appropriate prelude and postlude music for the service. If you have special requests, please inform the pastor.

Selections by a vocalist or an instrumentalist also are appropriate. The pastor or funeral director can help with arrangements and the placement of special music in the order of service.

Hymns sung by the congregation are an important part of the service. The hymns of the church are a rich resource for the grieving, expressing eloquently and powerfully the hope we have in Christ. Hymns are usually sung during the procession and the recession, and following the sermon. The pastor will assist you in selection and placement of hymns during the service. Following are suggested hymns from our worship book, *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*:

"The Strife Is O'er, the Battle Done" (366)

"Now All the Vault of Heaven Resound" (367)

"Jesus Christ Is Risen Today" (365)

"O Day Full of Grace" (627)

"For All the Saints" (422)

"A Mighty Fortress" (504)

"Who Is This Host Arrayed in White" (425)

“O God Our Help in Ages Past” (632)
 “Guide Me Ever, Great Redeemer” (618)
 “I Know that My Redeemer Lives” (619)
 “What Wondrous Love Is This” (666)
 “What a Friend We Have in Jesus” (742)
 “Amazing Grace” (779)
 “The King of Love My Shepherd Is” (502)
 “Lord of All Hopefulness” (765)
 “Children of the Heavenly Father” (781)
 “My Faith Looks Up to Thee” (759)
 “Beautiful Savior” (838)
 “Praise to the Lord, the Almighty” (858)
 “Lift High the Cross” (660)
 “It Is Well with My Soul” (When Peace like a River)” (785)
 “My Life Flows On in Endless Song” (763)
 “Thy Holy Wings” (613)
 “We Were Baptized in Christ Jesus” (451)
 “Precious Lord, Take My Hand” (773)
 “I Was There to Hear Your Borne Cry” (732)
 “I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light” (815)
 “Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling” (608)
 “We Walk by Faith and Not by Sight” (635)
 “I Am the Bread of Life” (485)
 “On Eagles’ Wings” (787)
 “Great Is Thy Faithfulness” (733)

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Scripture Readings

The hope we have in Christ is expressed clearly in the Scriptures. Generally, a psalm, a reading from one of the Gospels, and one or two other readings from the Old and/or New Testaments are included in the service. The psalm may be read responsively by pastor and congregation or sung. Here are some suggestions:

First Reading

Job 19:23–27a	<i>I know that my Redeemer lives</i>
Isaiah 25:6–9	<i>The LORD will remove death and tears</i>
Isaiah 40:28–31	<i>They who wait for the LORD renew their strength</i>
Isaiah 43:1–3a	<i>Fear not, God is with you in all trials</i>
Isaiah 61:1–3	<i>Good news from the LORD for those who mourn</i>
Jeremiah 31:10–13	<i>The LORD will comfort, turn mourning into joy</i>

Psalm

Psalm 23	<i>The LORD is my shepherd</i>
Psalm 46	<i>God is our refuge and strength, our help in trouble</i>
Psalm 90	<i>LORD, you are our dwelling place</i>
Psalm 91	<i>You who live in the shelter of the LORD</i>
Psalm 118	<i>The steadfast love of the LORD endures forever</i>
Psalm 121	<i>Lift up my eyes to the hills, strength from the LORD</i>
Psalm 130	<i>Out of the depths I cry to you, LORD</i>
Psalm 143	<i>Hear my prayer and answer me, O LORD</i>

Second Reading

Romans 5:1–11	<i>Christ died to give us life</i>
Romans 8:14–19	<i>Present suffering compared to future glory</i>
Romans 8:31–39	<i>Nothing can separate us from God's love in Christ</i>
Romans 10:8–13	<i>All who call on the Lord will be saved</i>
Romans 14:7–9	<i>Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's</i>
1 Corinthians 15:12–26	<i>Christ's resurrection raises us from death</i>
1 Corinthians 15:51–57	<i>Listen! I tell you a mystery</i>
2 Corinthians 4:16–5:1	<i>We do not lose heart: glory yet to come</i>
Philippians 3:7–11, 4:1	<i>All things loss compared to knowing Christ</i>
1 Thessalonians 4:13–18	<i>We grieve, but with hope</i>
2 Timothy 4:6–8	<i>Fought the good fight, finished the race</i>
1 Peter 1:3–9	<i>New birth into a living hope in resurrection</i>
1 John 3:1–3	<i>We are God's children; all will be revealed</i>
Revelation 7:9–17	<i>The saints in white before the throne of God</i>
Revelation 21:2–7	<i>Holy city, water of life, God wipes tears away</i>

Gospel

Matthew 11:25–30	<i>Come to me, all you weary, and I will give you rest</i>
Mark 10:13–16	<i>Let the children come to me – theirs is the kingdom</i>
Luke 8:40–42, 49–56	<i>Jesus raises Jairus' daughter: do not fear!</i>
John 3:12–17	<i>God sent the Son into the world to save it</i>
John 6:37–40	<i>I will raise them up on the last day</i>
John 10:11–16	<i>I am the Good Shepherd, I know my own</i>
John 11:21–27	<i>I am the resurrection and the life</i>
John 14:1–6	<i>In my Father's house there are many rooms</i>
John 14:25–29	<i>Peace I leave with you, not like the world gives</i>

Memorials

Friends often give a gift of money in memory of the person who has died; thus, it is helpful to suggest where memorials may be directed. Gifts to Our Savior's or to the

Our Savior's Foundation are welcome. Gifts to the church may be designated for a specific use; gifts to the Foundation build a permanent endowment, the earnings from which are turned back to the church each year and are used to support the church's ministry in ways the regular operating budget of the church does not. A list of suggested memorial gifts is available in the Church Office. A pastor will be happy to discuss these or other appropriate memorial gifts with you.

A Word about Grieving

Grieving the loss of a loved one is hard work and no two people grieve in exactly the same way. Some move through the stages of grief more quickly than others. Some take much longer.

Helping to plan the funeral or memorial service – and then experiencing the service – is an important beginning to working through grief. As you continue to grieve in the days and months after the service, you will experience ups and downs, good days and bad days. The pastors of Our Savior's are available to listen and talk with you, as are Stephen Ministers (lay people who are trained and commissioned to be confidential, caring Christian friends to those in particular need or crisis). Please call the church if you wish to talk with a pastor or Stephen Minister.

Our Savior's also conducts grief support groups at different times throughout the year. You may not be ready for a grief group next week, but you might be in six months. Please visit with a pastor about a grief group.

In the meantime, you are encouraged to continue to gather for worship with the congregation, where we hear again, through Word and Sacrament, of God's continuing presence and promises.

*O most loving Father,
you want us to give thanks for all things,
to fear nothing except losing you,
and to lay all our cares on you,
knowing that you care for us.
Grant that no clouds in this mortal life
may hide from us the light of your immortal love
shown to us in your Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

*Almighty God,
your love never fails,
and you can turn the shadow of death into daybreak.
Help us to receive your Word with believing hearts,
so that, confident in your promises, we may have hope
and be lifted out of darkness
into the light and peace of your presence;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

*(Prayers are from the *Lutheran Book of Worship* and
Occasional Services, a companion to *Lutheran Book of Worship*.)*



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