



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

1 Corinthians 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.

Service Preferences

HYMNS: _____

SCRIPTURE READINGS: **Psalm** _____
 Old Testament _____
 New Testament _____
 Gospel _____

PARTICIPANTS:

Scripture Readers *(may be one reader, or one reader per scripture lesson. The pastor will read the lessons if readers are not provided.)*

Psalm _____
Old Testament _____
New Testament _____
Gospel _____

Other: _____

Memorials

Memorial gifts might be used to further support these ministries and organizations:

_____ **Prince of Peace Lutheran Church NextGen Fund** *(a fund where memorial gifts are invested for the future of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church.)*

_____ **Prince of Peace Lutheran Church Memorial Fund**

a specific gift to the area of: _____
(might include: capital improvements, education, fine arts, furniture, general equipment, music, scholarships, worship resources, and youth ministry)

Other: _____