

# **Christ the King, Delafield**

## **Preparing for a Christian Funeral**

“Earth to Earth, Ashes to Ashes, Dust to Dust”

4/20/2021 (5/11/2021 council approved)

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**No one cares to plan a funeral, but the reality is that we have to, and sometimes when we least expect it or are least prepared to do so. No matter how much warning we may have, the event of death does come as a shock. This guide is intended to provide helpful information that will assist those who are charged with planning a funeral worship service.**

**The Christian Funeral has four key purposes. First of all, the worship offers the opportunity to remember and give thanks for the life of one of God’s family. Second, the worship gives the faith community and friends a vehicle to support and comfort those who are grieving. Thirdly, to have lifted up for all of us the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ and the promise of resurrection. And finally, to be encouraged to continue in our walk with Christ until that day when we too are reunited with the saints who have gone before us in God’s eternal kingdom.**

### **Things to consider:**

- 1) It is helpful to discuss funeral wishes ahead of time, making pre-arrangements with the funeral home, cemetery, and the church (including hymns and scriptures). At the time a loved one is placed on hospice, pastor can provide spiritual care as well as help plan the service.
- 2) When death is anticipated or has already occurred, call Christ the King pastor (or office), so that the ministry of the community of faith can begin to serve you in those earliest hours of death. The pastor can bring the prayers and presence of the community of faith to the hospital, nursing home, or home and can initiate the process of planning and arranging for the funeral.
- 3) The church facility should be considered for the funeral service whenever possible. The church is where life begins as the baptized people of God. The church is the sacred space where we are nourished with the Word of God and the Sacraments. The church is where the community of faith gathers weekly to worship the living God. The Funeral Service provides the faith community words of hope, comfort, and thanksgiving in the midst of sorrow and grief.
- 4) The date and time of the Funeral Service is arranged in consultation with the family members, funeral director(s), church, and pastor’s calendars. Pastor provides support throughout the grieving process and can be present at funeral arrangements. After arrangements are made, contact the Pastor/office to set a meeting with the pastor. Pastor will guide the planning for the Funeral service.

- 5) The pastor will provide the family with a list of Scripture and Hymn suggestions.
- 6) We will help arrange for the organists/pianists for the service. CTK's Director of Music is available for consultation during the planning meeting. All music used in the service should be appropriate for a worship setting. Congregational hymns are encouraged and normally come from the ELW Hymnal to facilitate maximum participation from those attending the funeral. Hymns, solos, and other music should reflect the hope that is ours in the resurrection of Jesus. Music will be planned in consultation with the Director of Music ahead of time. Pastor or Director of Music will inform family if music or copyright is not obtainable.
- 7) The casket will be closed prior to the beginning of the funeral service and the casket will precede the family into the Sanctuary for the funeral service. A funeral pall is used to cover the casket for the service. The pall is a reminder that we are clothed in Christ in Holy Baptism and that Christ's promise covers us even in death. The Pall is also a reminder that before God all persons are equal.
- 8) When the body has been cremated prior to the worship, the urn will be brought to the front of the church for the funeral service. It may be part of the procession or it may be placed in the front of the church prior to the service.
- 9) The Order for the Burial of the Dead will not be interrupted by the rites of secular organizations. Military Service is a part of the many baptismal vocations that the deceased has held. Thus, military honors and flag presentations are welcomed. Pastor will meet with representatives to determine the appropriate placement.
- 10) Funerals are not extended eulogies of the deceased but a vehicle of hope for the living. A family member may share their remembrances of the deceased, and those remembrances should be concise, written down, and seen as part of the worship. The family may opt to send in a pre-recorded video eulogy, to be included in the Service instead of following the same guidelines as above. See fee schedule page for technology requirements.
- 11) Pastor may limit the number of people speaking and time dedicated for eulogies to approximately 10 minutes. (The sharing of remembrances and stories can also be done in a very meaningful way at the visitation.)
- 12) Family members may also honor their loved one with pictures or slide shows before the service and during the visitation time. These may become part of the recording of the service. See fee schedule for technology requirements.

- 13) It is very appropriate for family members and friends to be involved and assist in the funeral service as pallbearers, lectors, communion assistants, vocal or instrumental musicians.
- 14) The family designates where memorial gifts will be given. Memorials are ways for the children of God to do those things Christ would want us to do,
- 15) Requests for pastoral leadership other than the current CTK pastor needs to be approved by the current pastor and council president.
- 16) The sanctuary is the space used to worship God, thus behavior and language ought to be appropriate for the setting. No food or drink (except for water) is allowed in the church sanctuary.
- 17) Honorariums are listed in a separate document. \*All Honorariums are to be paid prior to the service.

**On behalf of the pastor, staff, at Christ the King we extend our deepest sympathy to you on the death of your family member. Know that we will hold you in our prayers in these days of grief and loss. "Almighty God, source of all mercy and giver of comfort, deal graciously with those who mourn, that, casting all their sorrow on You, they may know the consolation of your love; through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen."**

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(Credit to Christ Lutheran Church, Glencoe)