



Guidelines for Funerals and Memorial Services

*Grace Lutheran Church
2225 Washington Street
Lincoln, Nebraska*

The grief and shock of a loved one's death may be overwhelming, a feeling compounded by all of the decisions that must be made. This booklet comes to you with the condolences and prayers of our congregation, and is intended to help make some of the planning and decisions of the days ahead a little easier. Please feel free to contact the pastor or the church office with any questions.

Policy exemption:

If you want to be exempted from any part of this policy, please contact the pastor and your request will be reviewed by the Church Council Executive Committee.

Introduction

Planning a funeral, either for oneself at some future date or for a loved one within the time span of a few hours, can be a difficult task. This booklet may be used to pre-arrange your own service, or as a guide for making arrangements for a loved one.

Pre-planning your own funeral, with clear written directions on file with family, the funeral director, and the church, is a loving gift to your family and friends. Through careful attention and communication beforehand, family and friends can be relieved from the task of having to "second guess" the wishes of the deceased.

Telling the Church

The date and time of the funeral should not be announced until it has been cleared through the church office. This will ensure the availability of our pastor and musician, as well as the facility itself. This is important even if the funeral is to be held elsewhere, as the pastor's schedule must be consulted.

Just as the family meets with the funeral director, they will also meet with the pastor. At this meeting, the pastor offers words of Christian hope and prayer and discusses all the details of the service with the family, including hymns, scriptures, and more.

The Rite

Funeral or memorial services for the faithful are worship services. The community of faith gathers to praise and pray to the Triune God, listens to God's Word proclaimed in Scripture, sermon and song, confirms its hope in the resurrection of the dead, remembers the departed, and expresses its longing for the fullness of God's redemption in Christ.

The liturgy for funerals at Grace is found in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*. Holy Communion is an optional part of the funeral service. The Lord's Table at Grace Lutheran is open to all baptized Christians, regardless of denomination. Communion is an appropriate celebration of the feast we hope to share at the end of time with those who have died, and a source of strength and comfort in our grief.

The Order of Worship will be printed in a bulletin created by the church office. Baptism and confirmation dates, places, and churches involved are good additions to an obituary as are dates/places of marriage, higher education degrees and dates, brief summaries of the person's career, including military and government service and other life interests. Also included is a listing of the family members who celebrate the life of the deceased.

Sometimes the family wishes to include a eulogy within the funeral liturgy. These should be relatively short (2-3 minutes). If the family wishes, the pastor can read the eulogy on behalf of the family.

Supplemental rituals for honoring the dead such as those used by fraternal groups, the military, or civic organization are administered at the funeral home prior to the service, or during the graveside ceremony.

Video remembrances, photos and other memorabilia may be set up in Leshner Hall to be viewed during the lunch hour/reception following the funeral. The church has a large screen television or a projector/screen that may be used.



Guidelines and Suggestions for Scripture Readings

Scripture offers Words of hope. Two or three scripture readings are normally used in the funeral service. One reading will be the basis for the sermon. All of the Psalms listed, as well as other psalms, may be used in musical form during the service.

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| Job 19: 23-29a | I know that my Redeemer lives |
| Psalms 23 | The Lord is my Shepherd |
| Psalms 42: 1-8 | My soul thirsts for God |
| Psalms 46: 1-7 | God is our refuge and strength |
| Psalms 90 | Lord, you are our dwelling place |
| Psalms 121 | I lift up my eyes to the hills |
| Psalms 143 | To you I lift up my soul |
| Isaiah 25:6-9 | God will wipe away tears |
| Isaiah 43:1-3a | I have called you by name |
| Isaiah 61:1-3 | Gladness instead of mourning |
| Matt. 11:25-30 | Come to me, all you that are weary |
| Matt. 25: 1-13 | Parable of the ten bridesmaids |
| Luke 12: 32 | Do not be afraid, little flock |
| John 5: 24-29 | Passed from death to life |
| John 6: 37-40 | Believers in Jesus shall have eternal life |
| John 10: 1-15 | Christ the shepherd |
| John 10: 22-30 | Jesus promises life to his sheep |
| John 11: 21-27 | I am the resurrection and the life |
| John 12: 23-26 | A grain ... if it dies, it bears much fruit |
| John 14: 1-6 | I go and prepare a place for you |
| Romans 5: 1-11 | Hope does not disappoint us |
| Romans 5: 17-21 | Justification and life for all |
| Romans 6: 3-9 | Baptized into Christ's death |
| Romans 8: 31-39 | Nothing can separate us from God's love |
| Romans 14:7-9 | We always belong to God |
| 1 Cor. 15: 12-26 | Death will not be destroyed |
| 1 Thes. 4: 13-18 | Do not grieve |
| 2 Timothy 4: 6-8 | I have fought the good fight |
| 1 John 3: 1-3 | We are God's children |
| Revelation 7: 9-17 | The multitudes of heaven worship the Lamb |
| Revelation 21: 1-7 | A new heaven and a new earth |

Guidelines and Suggestions for Music

The funeral service is a worship service, therefore all music sung or played within the service will be sacred in nature. Grace's Director of Music is happy to help you select music that will convey a sure and certain hope in the resurrection as well as be personally meaningful to the family. The Director of Music will also help find vocal soloists or instrumentalists, if desired.

Because worship is the act of human beings present in a particular place and time, pre-recorded music is not recommended. Pre-recorded music, and secular music, are welcome to be used at the lunch/reception following the service.

Hymns sung by the assembly are encouraged, and may be chosen out of either *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* or *Lutheran Book of Worship*. Grace may not reproduce music for which we do not have copyright permission. Normally three or four hymns will be sufficient; more can be used if the service includes Holy Communion.

Here is a partial listing of appropriate hymns from *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*. There are many others, and Grace's Director of Music and pastor are happy to help you find the right music for your loved one's service.

- 313 O Lord, Now Let Your Servant
- 332 I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say
- 377 Alleluia! Jesus is Risen! (related to Rev. 7: 9-17)
- 422 For All the Saints
- 425 Behold the Host Arrayed in White (Rev. 7: 9-17)
- 426 Sing With All the Saints in Glory
- 441 Oh Happy Day When We Shall Stand
- 447 O Blessed Spring
- 449 We Know that Christ is Raised
- 468 Around You, O Lord Jesus (especially for communion services)
- 502 The King of Love My Shepherd Is (Ps. 23)
- 504 A Mighty Fortress (Psalm 46)
- 596 My Hope is Built On Nothing Less
- 613 Thy Holy Wings
- 618 Guide Me Ever, Great Redeemer
- 619 I Know that My Redeemer Lives
- 622 Neither Death nor Life (requires a cantor to sing verses)
- 624 Jesus Still Lead On
- 627 O Day Full of Grace
- 628 Jerusalem, My Happy Home
- 629 Abide With Me
- 630 In Heaven Above
- 637 Holy God, Holy and Glorious
- 631 Love Divine, All Loves Excelling
- 645 Christ is Made the Sure Foundation (Entrance Hymn)
- 654 The Church's One Foundation
- 660 Lift High the Cross
- 732 I Was There to Hear Your Borne Cry
- 750 Lord, Thee I Love With All My Heart
- 767 Lord Take My Hand and Lead Me
- 778 The Lord's My Shepherd (Ps. 23)
- 779 Amazing Grace
- 781 Children of the Heavenly Father
- 815 I want to Walk as a Child of the Light

- 816 Come My Way, My Truth, My Life
- 823 Praise the Lord! O Heavens
- 826 Thine the Amen, Thine the Praise
- 880 O God Beyond All Praising

Flowers and the Funeral Pall

Flowers may be placed in the chancel area (usually done by the funeral director prior to the service). The practice at Grace Lutheran is to cover the coffin with a pall during the worship service, signifying that the deceased is clothed in the righteousness of Christ, a gift bestowed at baptism. Any flowers which had been placed on the coffin will be removed immediately before the service for the placement of the pall, and are usually replaced immediately following the service. National flags or other draperies are not placed over the coffin DURING the worship service. They may be placed there before and after the service, and used in the committal service at the cemetery.

Hospitality

If your family would like to hold a funeral luncheon at Grace, the following are items to consider:

1. Our women's group is available to help you. They will provide a lunch consisting of sandwiches, salads and assorted desserts for funerals held at Grace.
2. A gratuity of \$3 per person served covers the cost of the meal.
3. Lunch can be arranged through the church office.

Fees

Please inquire of the church office regarding current fees for the organist, pastor, guest musicians, etc.

Columbarium: Grace Lutheran provides a columbarium for the interment of cremains. Niches may be purchased in advance or at the time of death of a loved one. Each is large enough for two urns. If you are interested in purchasing a niche, please request a policy sheet from one of the pastors or the parish administrator.

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