

FUNERAL GUIDELINES



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Dear Friends,

As Christians, we believe we have nothing to fear in death. In fact, it is through dying that we are born to new life.

Yet, we know when one dies, we all suffer because our last enemy has not yet been stripped of its power. It is very difficult to let go of those we love. In the midst of our suffering, our church family seeks to lift us up and offer support.

To this end, we are happy to offer this Funeral Handbook. We pray that it will help you as you prepare for the funeral of your loved one or for your own funeral.

There are many decisions which must be made in the days surrounding the death of a loved one. This handbook is designed to assist you with those decisions and to help you better understand the services Friendship offers during this time.

Please take time to read through this handbook before making any funeral arrangements. We encourage you to contact one of the pastors if you have any questions or concerns not understood or addressed in this handbook.

May the grace of God comfort you and keep you during this difficult time. Your church family is praying for you.

In Christ's Name,

Congregational Council

Prior to the Time of Death

Pastoral Care Prior to Death

Please contact the church office whenever a church member is near death. The Lutheran church provides a service for the Commendation of the Dying which can be performed at the bedside just prior to death or immediately following death. This can be a very meaningful experience for family members.



*Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I shall fear no evil; for you are with me
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.*

Planning a Funeral

We have only one birth, one baptism and one death day. We could not plan our birth but we can plan our death day celebration - our funeral. By planning in advance, you can help your family - sparing them the difficult task of trying to decide what you may have wanted at a time when they are grieving.

This Handbook may be used in planning your own funeral or the funeral of a loved one.

Cremation

Cremation is becoming more prevalent in our society. Lutheran theology and tradition do not favor any particular form of burial. God's ability to give resurrected bodies to those who bear the name of Christ cannot be limited by any human action - including cremation. Friendship's concern is that baptized Christians be commended to God in hope of the resurrection - whether the body is buried in the traditional manner or cremated.

When a body is cremated, the remains will be treated in a similar manner as a body. Just as a white pall is placed over a casket as a reminder of our baptism, a smaller white pall will be placed over the urn or container which may be placed on a small stand near the paschal candle in the nave.

If you have questions regarding cremation, please see one of the pastors

Donation of Organs

Donating organs in order to sustain the precious gift of life in another human being is becoming more common. The decision to donate organs is personal, yet can be informed by faith. There is no church law or theological reason preventing Lutheran Christians from choosing to be organ donors. God's promise to resurrect the dead is not compromised by organ donation. Almighty God, who created our bodies, has the capacity to resurrect them with or without the presence of specific organs.

At the Time of Death

Contact the Pastor

The death of a member should be reported to the church office as soon as possible (if a pastor is not present at the time of death) so that one of the pastors can provide comfort to the family and assist in all arrangements for the funeral. Both the experience and the presence of the pastor can be beneficial to the bereaved.

During office hours (Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.), you may contact the church office (632-4482). At all other times, you may contact the Pastoral Care Emergency Line (632-2310).

Funeral Directors

While we in no way endorse any particular funeral home, below is a list of funeral homes in Alexander County to assist you during this difficult time.

Adams Funeral Home	632-2291
Alexander Funeral Services	635-8002
Chapman Funeral Home	704-585-2796

Prepare Obituary Form

In the back of this booklet, there is a form to assist with the preparation of the obituary. This form is a courtesy to help you collect the information the Funeral Director will request in order to prepare the obituary. Families have found it helpful to gather this information before meeting with the Funeral Director.

Conference with Funeral Director

Whichever funeral home you choose, they will schedule a conference to discuss the arrangements for your loved one. One of the pastors will attend this conference to assist with the planning. Please contact the church office or the Pastoral Care Emergency Line as soon as this conference is scheduled. No arrangements for burial should be made without first consulting one of the pastors.

Gravesite

Friendship's members may be buried in the cemetery on the church side of Church Road. If the deceased has already reserved a plot, he/she will be buried in that location. Otherwise, the deceased will be buried in the next available location. Friendship is no longer accepting reservations for burial plots. We will, of course, reserve a plot next to the deceased for his/her spouse or his/her parents (if he/she is a dependent child).

The "Old Cemetery" (cemetery on the opposite side of Church Road) is a public cemetery. Anyone may be buried there. However, whenever an individual is buried there, we ask that the Funeral Director or family contact the church office (632-4482) as a courtesy.

Alleluia!
HE IS ALIVE!

Memorials

The best way to honor the dead is by serving the living. You may honor your loved one by designating that all memorials go to Friendship or another charity of your choice. If you would like to designate memorials to Friendship, the pastor will assist you with particular needs present at that specific time.

Death Certificates

The Funeral Director will order death certificates for you. You will need to determine how many you will need. Death certificates will be needed to transfer bank accounts, car titles, property and to claim life insurance policies. It is possible to order more at a later date.

Pall Bearers

You will need to select and contact six pall bearers. Pall bearers should be physically able to lift heavy objects and should be at the church 20 minutes prior to the funeral.

Preparation of the Body

In order to prepare the body, the Funeral Director will need clothes, jewelry (if desired), glasses (if worn) and someone to fix his/her hair. The Funeral Director will fix his/her hair, if desired. If you ask the Funeral Director to fix the hair, it is helpful to supply a recent picture.

Casket

When you meet with the Funeral Director, you will have to select a casket for your loved one. This can be a very difficult time. Remember, the casket will only be seen at the visitation - even then, much will be covered by the "spray." During the funeral, the casket will be covered by the pall.

Friendship's Cemetery Guidelines require that a vault is used.

The Visitation

Visitation

The visitation provides a time for family and friends to offer their love and support to family members of the deceased.

There are currently many variations regarding time of the visitation. It may be done the night before, immediately prior to the funeral service or immediately following the graveside service.

Friendship welcomes our members to use our beautiful Fellowship Hall for the visitation. Of course, you may also have the visitation at the funeral home.



The Funeral

Funeral as Worship

We believe that Christ's resurrection is the main event in human history. It is the reason we gather on Sunday to worship rather than on Saturday (the Sabbath). Therefore, every Christian funeral ought to be a resurrection celebration as we gather to worship in the midst of our suffering.

A Christian funeral is first and foremost a worship service. As such, the focus of the service is not on any human being but on our Risen Lord whose death and resurrection offers us hope in the midst of death. We interrupt our grieving with celebration so that we might give glory to God and mock Satan.

Focus on Christ's Victory

Remembering that the focus of our worship is the Risen Christ and His victory over death, we can create a service that expresses the power of hope in a time of grief and sadness. Far from being a morbid time of personal sentimentality, the funeral service can be an uplifting witness to the resurrection.

We can accomplish this by following a few simple guidelines:

1. Keep Christ as the focus.

It is Christ's victory (nothing the deceased has or has not done) which makes our new life possible.

2. Avoid sentimentality.

We are about the holiest matters of life and death. We need not clutter the worship service with less.

3. Make worship joyful.

It is a celebration of God's gift of new life. Bon voyage is a better mood than farewell.

Place of Worship

The place of worship should be the same as it was for your baptism, confirmation, marriage and celebrations of Holy Communion. As we become members of the church through Holy Baptism, it is fitting that we transfer that membership to the church triumphant at the place recognized as God's house. Friendship has beautiful facilities designed for worship. Even if the deceased has not been active for many years, Friendship is the preferred place to gather for worship.

Who Officiates

Both pastors of Friendship Lutheran Church (if available) conduct the funeral service. If both pastors are available, the deceased's family may choose either the Senior Pastor or Associate Pastor to preach. If either pastor is unavailable, the presence of the other shall nevertheless convey the love, concern and presence of both.

The Order of the Funeral Service

The Service for the Burial of the Dead published in the Lutheran Book of Worship (pages 206-214) will be used. It is one of the greatest assets of the ELCA. It is a beautifully balanced service which balances the victory of the resurrection with the reality of the pain and loss which accompanies death.



Fraternal Societies' Rites

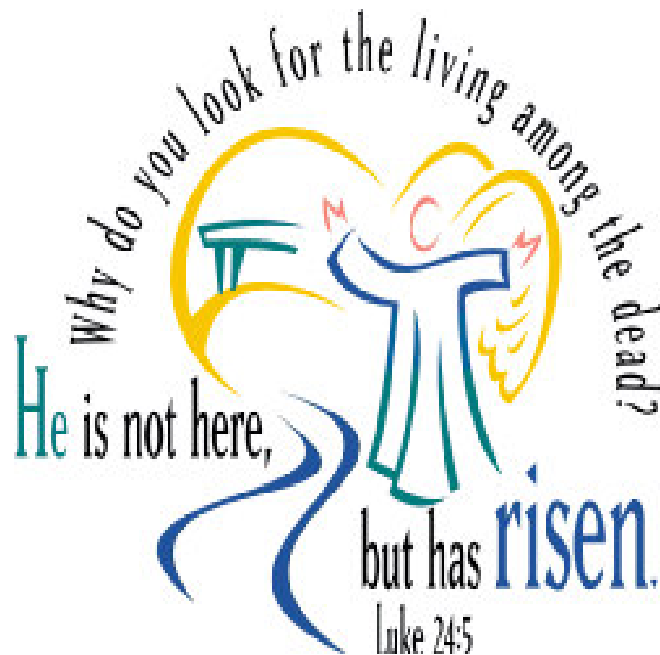
The funeral rites of fraternal societies or other secular organizations are not part of Christian worship and should not be included in planning the service. They may be carried out at some time before or after the church service.

Military Rites

Military rites are not part of Christian worship and should not be included in planning the service. They may be performed at the graveside after the Graveside Committal Service is concluded.

Bulletins

Because those attending a funeral are often unfamiliar with the Lutheran tradition, the entire service will be printed in the bulletin. We believe this will help all who attend to participate in the worship of our Lord.



Family Meets in Chapel

All family members planning to process in the opening procession of the funeral are asked to meet in the Chapel twenty (20) minutes prior to the funeral. One of the pastors will meet with the family before the service begins.

Closed Casket

The casket remains closed throughout the worship service because the service centers around Christ - not the deceased. It is placed lengthwise facing the altar which reflects the individual's accustomed role in the church - facing the altar.

Pall

The casket will be covered with a white pall - not with a flower "spray" (a recent invention of florists) - during the funeral service. The pall is much more appropriate since it is a symbol of the righteousness of Christ which covers all Christians in death. It is also a reminder that we are all equal in God's sight regardless of whether our casket is made of mahogany or cardboard. Friendship provides the pall.

Paschal Candle

The Paschal Candle (used at Easter, baptisms and funerals) reminds us of the sacrifice Jesus made on our behalf. The candle is placed at the head of the coffin - a symbol of Christ who is the light of the world.

Sermon

The most important actor at the funeral service is God - not the deceased. Therefore, the funeral sermon focuses on what God has done, is doing and continues to do in the lives of Christians. The pastor's sermon will ALWAYS be directed to the living and will proclaim the promise of the resurrection. It will not be a eulogy of the deceased.

Holy Communion

The Sacrament of Holy Communion is most appropriate at a funeral. In fact, the Service for the Burial of the Dead in the Lutheran Book of Worship is designed to be used within the context of the celebration of Holy Communion. The visual and active aspect of Holy Communion can be helpful when words fail. Silence, embrace and eating together are an important component in supporting one another during times of grief.

If it is included, it will be offered to all present.

Flowers

Since a funeral is a service of worship and not a show, only two bouquets or wreaths of live cut flowers or greenery may be placed in the chancel. Flowers in the church are not for decoration but are symbols of God the Creator and as such must be designed to adorn the altar - not compete with it.

No Other Decorations/Displays

No decorations (other than flowers) will be used in the chancel. Decorations displaying the handiwork or accomplishments of the deceased are not appropriate because the worship service centers around Christ - not the deceased. These displays are, however, appropriate during the visitation and can be shared during that time.



Scripture Readings

Generally, there are four separate scripture lessons at Lutheran services of worship: an Old Testament Lesson (frequently called the First Lesson), a Psalm, an Epistle Lesson (frequently called the Second Lesson) and the Holy Gospel. Since the Holy Gospel features the actual words of Jesus, the congregation rises in reverence.

You are invited to select a reading from one of each of the following categories:

Old Testament:

Job 19:23-27a
Isaiah 25:6-9
Isaiah 61:1-3
Lamentations 3:22-26, 31-33

Psalm:

23 118
42:1-7 121
46:1-7 130
90 143

Epistle Lesson:

Romans 5:1-11
Romans 5:17-21
Romans 8:31-35, 37-39
I Corinthians 15:12-26
I Peter 1:3-9
I John 3:1-2
Revelation 7:9-17
Revelation 21:2-7

Holy Gospel:

Matthew 11:25-30
Matthew 25:1-13
Luke 12:35-40
John 5:24-29
John 6:37-40
John 11:21-27
John 14:1-6

Other Scripture readings may be used. Once again, however, we encourage you to remember the theme of the service.

Selection of the Scripture readings should be done in consultation with the pastor. If you have no preference, the pastor will select the Scripture readings.

Music

Music is a beautiful part of any funeral service and should be planned with much care. Only sacred music is permitted at funerals due to the fact that the funeral service itself is a sacred worship service. By sacred, the Church means that the text and setting of the music should be that which expresses and witnesses to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Music which would not be used during congregational worship times is not appropriate during this service of the Burial of the Dead.

In order to encourage congregational participation in the worship experience, we will sing three songs as a congregation. These songs should be selected carefully and should reflect the theme of the occasion - the victory of Christ's resurrection. The songs should not be a reflection of the deceased's "favorite songs."

Below is a list of suggested hymns:

Christ Is Risen! Alleluia!	LBW 131
Come, You Faithful, Raise the Strain	LBW 132
The Strife is O'er, the Battle Done	LBW 135
Now All the Vault of Heaven Resounds	LBW 143
Thine is the Glory	LBW 145
Crown Him with Many Crowns	LBW 170
For All the Saints	LBW 174
A Mighty Fortress is Our God	LBW 229
Abide With Me	LBW 272
My Hope is Built on Nothing Less	LBW 293
Love Divine, All Loves Excelling	LBW 315
O God, Our Help in Ages Past	LBW 320
Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me	LBW 327
All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name	LBW 329
Guide Me Ever, Great Redeemer	LBW 343
I Know That My Redeemer Lives	LBW 352
Christ is Alive, Let Christians Sing	LBW 363
The Church's One Foundation	LBW 369
Blest Be the Tie That Binds	LBW 370

Lift High the Cross	LBW 377
What Wondrous Love is This	LBW 385
What a Friend We Have in Jesus	LBW 439
The Lord's My Shepherd	LBW 451
The King of Love My Shepherd Is	LBW 456
Children of the Heavenly Father	LBW 474
Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us	LBW 481
How Firm a Foundation	LBW 507
Beautiful Savior	LBW 518
Give to Our God Immortal Praise	LBW 520
Jesus Shall Reign	LBW 530
How Great Thou Art	LBW 532
When Morning Gilds the Skies	LBW 546
Praise, My Soul the King of Heaven	LBW 549
Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee	LBW 551
Oh, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing	LBW 559
Alleluia, Jesus Is Risen	WOV 674
Shall We Gather at the River	WOV 690
Here In This Place	WOV 718
Go, My Children, with My Blessing	WOV 721
Softly and Tenderly Jesus is Calling	WOV 734
Thy Holy Wings	WOV 741
Soon and Very Soon	WOV 744
Borning Cry	WOV 770
Because He Lives	TFF 93
Low in the Grave He Lay	TFF 94
Victory in Jesus	TFF 97
Wonderful Grace of Jesus	TFF 184
When Peace Like a River	TFF 194
Leaning on the Everlasting Arms	TFF 220
Oh, How I Love Jesus	TFF 250



Holy Communion

There is space in the funeral service for one selection of special music. This special music may be performed by a choir, a soloist or instrumentalist. Like congregational songs, special music should be sacred - the text and setting of the music should be that which expresses and witnesses to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Music which would not be used during congregational worship times is not appropriate during this service of the Burial of the Dead.

In keeping with the sacred nature of the worship service, we encourage the use of live musical accompaniment for all soloists rather than pre-recorded musical accompaniment. Whenever music is employed in the service and by whatever instruments or voices, it should be of high quality and not cloud the mood of the service with triteness or sentimentality. It should, moreover, be within the ability of the performers at hand to play or sing with assurance.

Keyboardist

Since the Church Keyboardist is familiar with our customs and our instrument here at Friendship, it is expected that he/she will play the organ/piano at all funerals. The deceased's family may choose either the piano or organ to accompany the congregational singing.

If the Church Keyboardist is unavailable, the church will be responsible for locating a suitable substitute.

Audio/Video Taping

The service may be audio or video taped using the church's audio-visual equipment. If you wish for the church to audio or video tape the service, it is your responsibility to inform the pastor. The church is not responsible for problems with the vidoetape.

Time After the Funeral

Meal After the Funeral

The women of Friendship will provide a meal for the family after the Funeral and Graveside Service. Generally, this meal will be served in the Fellowship Hall. However, if you wish for the meal to be served elsewhere, you must inform the pastor as soon as possible. The pastor will ask for an estimate of the number of people you believe will attend. This is only to assist the food group in preparing sufficient food for everyone.

Compensation

No fee is expected or necessary for the pastor(s) whose services are a gift from the congregation to the people served. Funerals are part of the ministry of the congregation.



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