

# Funeral Manual

## **Good Shepherd Lutheran Church**

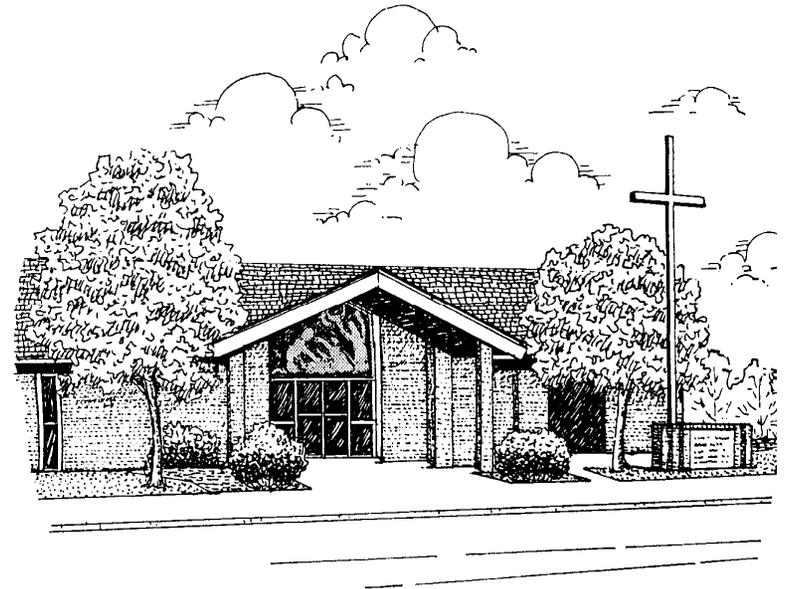
*Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod*

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# Introduction

Death, for the Christian, is a part of life. It is not something to fear. Anxious thoughts may be present, but we know that Heaven is our home! Jesus has promised to prepare a place for us which is better than the here and now.

Having a faith knowledge of our future, Christians approach the funeral with a sense of joy for the departed one who is now with the Lord. We who remain on earth suffer the loss. Grief is a natural and healthy response when a person experiences a loss. Tears are part of grief therapy. We need not try to shelter ourselves nor another from that process.

The local church is an appropriate place for a funeral service. It is good to allow people an opportunity to grieve and rejoice at the familiar place of worship. Just as one is brought into the Church in Baptism during a typical worship setting, so one can be committed to eternal life in the usual place of worship.

This booklet is designed to help you think about death and to help you think about the elements of what to do at the time of a death. A **Funeral Information Form** is available for you to complete and return to the office. We will keep the form on file. We will gladly make a copy for you, if requested. May God bless and comfort you.

**Pastor Ronald A. Youngdale**  
February 2010

## **Local Cemetery**

Turlock Memorial Park  
425 N. Soderquist Rd.  
Turlock, CA 95380  
(209) 632-9111  
[www.turlockmemorialpark.com](http://www.turlockmemorialpark.com)

## **Local Grave Markers**

Gateway Memorials  
126 N. Center Street  
Turlock, CA 95380  
(209) 656-9993  
[www.gatewaymemorials.com](http://www.gatewaymemorials.com)

## Local Funeral Homes

Allen Mortuary  
247 N. Broadway  
Turlock, Ca 95380  
(209) 634-5829  
[www.allenmortuary.com](http://www.allenmortuary.com)

Whitehurst-Norton  
286 W. Main  
Turlock, CA 95380  
(209) 634-4904  
[www.whitehurstnortondiasfunerals.com](http://www.whitehurstnortondiasfunerals.com)

Turlock Memorial Park & Funeral Home  
425 N. Soderquist Rd.  
Turlock, CA 95380  
(209) 632-9111  
[www.turlockmemorialpark.com](http://www.turlockmemorialpark.com)

# General Information

## Procedures at Time of a Death

- Notify the pastor, even before death, if death appears imminent.
- Contact the funeral home.
- Contact family and friends.
- Decide on a date and time for the service with the pastor and the funeral director.
- Discuss details with the pastor and the funeral director.

## Notify the Pastor

Pastors appreciate being informed of any serious illness. In cases where death seems imminent, a pastor desires being called to minister to the dying person and the family.

When a death has occurred, a pastor will coordinate details of the funeral service with a funeral director. The task of the funeral director is to care for the body of the one who has died and assist family and friends in that process. The task of the pastor is to

## Hymns

“I Know that My Redeemer Lives”  
“All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name”  
“Love Divine, All Love Excelling”  
“All Creatures of Our God and King”  
“Rejoice, O Pilgrim Throng”  
“Abide with Me”  
“Amazing Grace”  
“What a Friend We Have in Jesus”  
“How Great Thou Art”  
“For All the Saints”  
“Behold a Host Arrayed in White”  
“For All Your Saints, O Lord”  
“Savior, Again to Your Dear Name”  
“Jesus Christ, My Sure Defense”  
“For Me to Live Is Jesus”  
“Oh, How Blest Are You”  
“Jesus, Shepherd, in Your Arms”  
“Oh, for a Thousand Tongues”  
“Crown Him with Many Crowns”  
“He’s Risen, He’s Risen”  
“Our God, Our Help in Ages Past”

care for the souls and emotions and thoughts of those who grieve.

## **Scriptural Passages of Comfort**

Job 19:21-27

Psalms 16; 23; 39; 46; 71; 90; 121; 130; 139

Isaiah 25:6-9; 61:1-3

Lamentations 3:22-33

John 5:24-27; 6:37-40; 10:11-16; 10:27-29; 12:23-26; 14:1-6

Romans 6:3-5; 8:31-39

1 Corinthians 15

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

1 Peter 1:3-9

1 John 3:1-2

Revelation 7:9-17; 21:2-7

## **A Few Words to Ponder**

A family does not need to spend an exorbitant amount of money on a funeral. Showing respect for the body is important. However, it is not disrespectful to be concerned about the costs of a funeral, which can vary greatly. Most funeral directors adjust to your financial abilities. Do not be ashamed to forgo a few services or to choose a less expensive item.

Remember, the soul of the departed Christian has already entered into Heaven. The body will return to the ground, awaiting resurrection on the Last Day.

## Purpose of a Christian Funeral

Many elements make up a funeral service. It is appropriate to follow certain accepted procedures and customs. However, customs do change. When we consider the components of a funeral, it is necessary to keep in mind the **unchangeable** elements of a funeral, the purpose of a Christian funeral:

1. To hear the comfort of the Gospel of Jesus Christ;
2. To proclaim the power of God to save and redeem His people;
3. To remember Jesus Christ who died for us and rose from the dead in order to assure us that we, too, shall rise and live with Him;
4. To testify to the joy of our faith in God who has given us the victory over death;
5. To be comforted in the knowledge of our joyful reunion with our departed loved ones;
6. To give praise to Jesus for His victory over sin, death, and the Devil;

## Picture

If the family desires, a picture may be placed in the Narthex at the church.

## Pall Bearers

Pall bearers may be family or friends. Honorary pall bearers may be named for those who cannot be in attendance, or at a Memorial service.

## Honorariums

The pastor does not set a fee for his services to members. Often people wish to express their appreciation with a monetary gift.

## Reception

The congregation will offer food for member families after the service, if desired.

member who has a Funeral service in the church. A spray of flowers cannot be placed on a casket that has been draped with the pall.

7. To praise God for all our earthly and eternal blessings.

## **Miscarriages**

A miscarriage is the loss of a life and should be observed as such. It is appropriate to have a funeral service for the child. The grief is just as real for the parents in such a situation.

By law any miscarried fetus who has developed to the 20th week must be given a death certificate. Before the 20th week parents may request one. A name may be given. A funeral home will provide burial services. It is appropriate for the pastor to have a funeral service for the child.

The above applies to a stillborn child as well.

## **Funerals for Non-Members**

Due to the many different situations, the pastor will make the decision regarding a funeral for a non-member on an individual basis. It is important to remember that a

funeral is a service for those who know Jesus as their Savior and Lord.

## **Estate Planning: Wills and Trusts**

Estate planning is a process that assures a person that one's assets will be distributed according to one's wishes after death. Without these legal documents the state makes those decisions through the courts.

Each individual should have a will or trust in order to relay his or her desires after death. It is especially important for those who have minor children, so they can name a guardian.

Trusts, unlike wills, dispose of one's assets after death without probate, a lengthy and costly legal process that oversees the transfer of assets.

You will want to consider who will serve as the executor of your will or the successor trustee for your living trust. The person in either of these positions is responsible for ensuring that your wishes are carried out.

In the planning process, God's people are encouraged to pray and ask the Holy Spirit to lead them as they create a plan that provides for their family and also supports the ministries that they are passionate about,

building might be too small. There is no charge for use of the church by a member.

## **Viewing**

Many people have a public viewing during the day before the service. If the body is not embalmed, the viewing is usually limited to the family. Sometimes there is a viewing before the service begins. In our church, an open casket is placed in the Narthex. At the beginning of the service, the casket is sealed and brought into the Nave. After the service, the closed casket is removed by the pall bearers and taken to the cemetery for burial.

## **Funeral Pall**

Although many may not be familiar with a funeral pall, it is not new, nor is its use limited to one particular church body. The pall symbolizes the covering of Christ's righteousness we receive in Baptism. Also, it signifies the oneness we have in Christ. It allows the worshippers to take their eyes off of the type of casket. It is an option for a

Some people prefer a memorial gift be given in place of flowers. Flowers symbolize life, the eternal life we have in Jesus Christ.

i.e., their church, Christian education, missions and various other ministries.

A gift planning counselor of the LCMS Foundation can assist in the creation of both a pictorial plan and also with the verbiage that will be provided to the attorney as he/she creates the will/trust document.

## **Funeral Service Information Form**

The information you provide will give direction to the pastor and the family about the type of service you prefer.

### **Type of Service**

A Funeral service implies that the body and casket are present. Therefore, it is scheduled for daytime hours. A Memorial service implies that the body is not present. The body is committed to the ground in a Graveside service before the Memorial service. A memorial service can be held any time during the day. An evening hour might benefit more people. A Graveside service is scheduled for daytime hours at the cemetery. Typically it is a brief service.

### **Location of Service**

It is appropriate for the service to be at the local church. The number of people should not be a factor, unless the

## **Advanced Directives**

A Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care is an advanced directive legal document that allows a person to appoint someone to make health care decisions when he/she is not consciously able to make such decisions for himself/herself. This person will have access to one's medical records and will be able to make decisions at the time of one's death. The legal document can stipulate limitations to the appointed person. Hospitals have these documents available.

Doctors are required by law to honor this document. The social services department of a hospital or an attorney can advise about these documents.

# Funeral Information Form

## General Information Form

The information requested on the form will be needed by the Pastor and the funeral director at the time of death. Be as concise and accurate as possible.

## Burial Information Form

The information requested in this section will be very helpful for the family at the funeral home. The following material will be helpful in filling out the form.

### Caskets

Many types and price ranges are available. Keep in mind that a Pall may be used to cover the casket during the service at church.

benefit another person, we believe organ donations are good stewardship.

### Autopsy

It is very rare that the law will demand an autopsy. However, doctors may request an autopsy in order to determine cause of death or extent of disease. Again, the Bible does not give direction. It would appear that if such a procedure would benefit medical science, it should be done. Usually, the funeral service does not have to be postponed as a result.

### Memorial Gifts

The usual direction for memorial gifts is the local church. However, there are many other Christian and secular organizations which can benefit from your request. Many options are available. Our congregation has a general Memorial Fund. Memorial money is always used at the discretion of the organization.

### Flowers

## **Cremation**

The body is placed in a container and is heated to 1800 degrees. The body is reduced to bone. Nothing in Scripture prohibits the practice of cremation. Historically, the church rejected the use of cremation because it was often practiced as a denial of the resurrection. Many Christians today believe it is a way to preserve ground space and to return the elements to the ground quicker. The remains are placed in an urn which is usually buried in an urn garden, a small grave, at a cemetery.

## **Organ Donation**

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod encourages the donation of any and all organs. In California, one can easily make the request on a card attached to the driver's license. At the time of death, the funeral home will contact the proper organization so that the body can be delivered to the appropriate place. If one donates all organs, the body is usually not returned, unless requested. Since the use of a donated organ will greatly

## **Burial Preference**

Where one is buried is a personal choice. Being buried in the ground is less expensive than in a crypt or mausoleum.

## **Grave Liners**

The cemetery sets the rules about the use of grave liners. At Turlock Memorial park, a cement grave liner or a sealed vault must be used in order to keep the ground from sinking as the casket decays.

## **In-Ground Graves**

A couple can purchase a side-by-side plot or a double depth plot, allowing for one casket to be placed over the other.

## **Gravemarkers**

Gravemarkers are not required by law. The cemetery places a temporary one on the grave. Most cemeteries today permit only ground level markers. If the marker and epitaph have not been chosen by the

deceased, it is suggested to wait several months before choosing either one.

## **Epitaph**

Any epitaph should reflect the hope we have in Christ. It should serve as a witness to those who may read the words. Many different symbols can be used, for example:

Cross	=	redemption
Rose	=	love, hope
Violet	=	faithfulness
Lily	=	heaven
Lamb	=	Jesus

## **Embalming**

This is not required by law. However, it is encouraged for those who will have a viewing of the body or a service with the body present. If you do not want the body embalmed, the funeral director should be informed when first contacted. Even without embalming, a body can be cold stored, for a fee.