

Important Questions



Why have a service? When a loved one dies, we are forever separated from them. To ignore such separation postpones the grief. A worship service names the grief and separation and does not minimize the pain of loss. Rather, a Christian funeral service proclaims our hope in God's love for us, expressed particularly in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Can Christians be cremated? Scriptures point to a bodily resurrection on the last day, but this does not depend upon the earthly state of our created bodies. We trust God, who created and sustains, to recreate all of heaven and earth, including our physical aspects. Cremation does allow for time after one's death for family to gather. However, it is not recommended that a family wait for an extended period of time before having a service. The service is part of the grief process and helps people move forward in life. Families might also consider having a funeral service with the body and having the cremation performed later. This is another way to help people say goodbye and work through their grief.

What is the order of the day? There are several options for the order of events on the day of a funeral service.

- ❖ **Service > Lunch > Burial:** This gives guests of the service ample opportunity to visit with family immediately following the service. However, a time will need to be arranged for the funeral director to transport the coffin to the cemetery. Arrangements are simpler in the case of an urn.
- ❖ **Service > Burial > Lunch:** This is traditional for small communities but is more difficult in Lincoln. Many guests will choose not to stay for refreshments and leave immediately after the service.
- ❖ **Burial > Service > Lunch:** This often offers more convenience for family members but means that there is no body or real reminder of why we gather at the service. A Christian service does not deny the reality of death but expresses hope in the midst of it. The absence of a coffin or urn minimizes death and the need for hope and faith.

Guidelines for Funeral and Memorial Services

Our Saviour's Lutheran Church
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Lincoln, NE 68510
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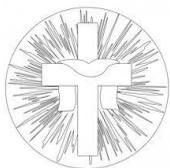
An Introductory Note

At a person's death, the church shares the grief of those who mourn and remembers the brevity of life on earth. At the funeral we give voice to sorrow, thank God for our loved one, and entrust this companion of ours into the hands of God. Trusting in God's promise in baptism that we are claimed by Christ forever, we rest in the sure hope of the resurrection. When the church gathers to mark the end of life, Christ crucified and risen is the witness of worship, the strength of mutual consolation, and the hope of healing.

~Evangelical Lutheran Worship notes on Funeral Services

Planning the Service

Meeting with the Pastor: Whenever possible, families are encouraged to notify the pastor(s) immediately after the death of a congregation member. This can be done by contacting the church at 402-483-4126 or the pastor's home number. It is helpful for the pastor(s) to join the family at the funeral home when making arrangements.



Scriptures: Scripture passages are an important part of the funeral service because the Bible reveals to us God's love for us. Both the Old Testament and New Testament have appropriate passages. Often, passages are chosen based on their message of hope, renewal and promise. Sometimes, passages also reflect a quality found in the life of the deceased. *Suggested passages found on the insert of this pamphlet.*

Other Readings: There are also poems, readings, and texts beyond the Bible that also reflect God's love and our hope in profound ways. While we strongly encourage at least one Scripture passage, other readings may also be appropriate. Discretion is left to the pastor(s).

Music: Music is a powerful and emotional way for people to express grief and hope, sorrow and joy. While soloists are appropriate and welcome, congregational hymns are also encouraged. We sing our faith together, believing for one another when faith is difficult to muster. Secular music is not appropriate within the content of the worship service but may be used before or after the service. Our Saviour's provides an accompanist for services. Additional music groups through the congregation are generally not available. Any special requests can be discussed with the pastor(s). *Suggested hymns found on the insert of this pamphlet.*

Slideshows: Often, funeral directors will help families prepare slideshows of pictures of the deceased. These may be shown before the service as people find their seats or at the reception. They will not be shown during the service.

Communion: Celebrating the Lord's Supper is another powerful way to remember God's devotion and love for us and for the deceased. However, communion may not always be appropriate for every occasion. Families are urged to consider whether those worshiping would feel excluded from the table based on their own religious backgrounds, and if so, communion may be discouraged for the sake of the whole group gathered.

Obituary: The obituary is typically read prior to the sermon. While families might keep newspaper obituaries brief due to costs, they can expand upon it for the service.

Message: The main focus of a funeral service is to proclaim the hope and comfort we have in Christ. The sermon will also honor the life of the deceased. Personal stories are helpful in this regard.

Family Involvement: There is opportunity for one family member to share thoughts on behalf of the whole family. If the family chooses this option, they are encouraged to read from a manuscript and e-mail a copy to the pastor prior to the service.

Honoraria: Honoraria from congregational members for the pastor(s) and/or musician(s) are at the discretion of the family and are often included in the costs collected by the funeral director. Any honoraria received by the pastor(s) are placed in a common fund to benefit all of the staff at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church.

Military Funerals: We highly respect those who have served the country in this way, however we remember that we are Christians before we are Americans. Therefore, a pall is placed over the coffin during the worship service as a reminder of God's grace which covers every one of us. A flag ceremony can take place at the gravesite. Funeral directors arrange for the appropriate military personnel.

Lunches/Receptions: Our Saviour's has members who volunteer to provide and serve luncheons or dessert receptions. When a lunch is provided, the family is requested (if able) to help cover the costs of the sandwich items. All other food items are donated. The family can also choose to cater a meal or refreshments at their own expense.

Non-members: When appropriate, funeral services for non-members will be considered at the discretion of the pastor(s).



Psalms

Psalm 23	<i>The LORD is my shepherd</i>
Psalm 42:1-5	<i>As the deer longs for the flowing streams</i>
Psalm 46:1-7	<i>God is our refuge and strength</i>
Psalm 90	<i>Our dwelling place in all generations</i>
Psalm 103:8-17	<i>The LORD is compassionate and gracious</i>
Psalm 118	<i>God's steadfast love endures forever</i>
Psalm 121	<i>I lift up my eyes to the hills</i>
Psalm 130	<i>Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD</i>
Psalm 139:1-16	<i>O LORD, you have searched me and know me</i>
Psalm 142:1-6	<i>I cry to the LORD with my voice</i>

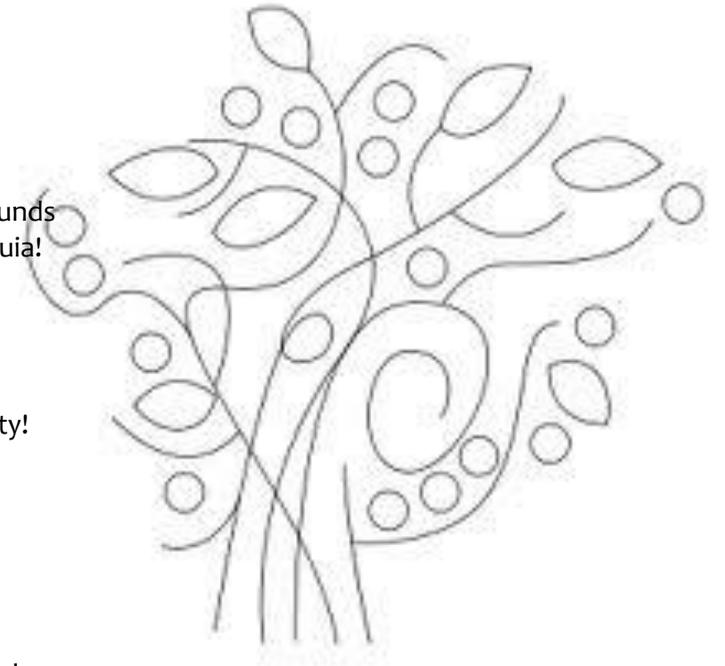
New Testament

Matthew 11:25-30	<i>Come to me all who are weary</i>
John 6:35-40	<i>I will raise them up on the last day</i>
John 10:27-29	<i>My sheep hear my voice</i>
John 11:21-27	<i>I am the resurrection and the life</i>
John 14:1-6	<i>I am the way and the truth and the life</i>
Romans 5:1-11	<i>Peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ</i>
Romans 6:3-10	<i>We will be united with him in a resurrection like his</i>
Romans 8:31-39	<i>Who will separate us from the love of Christ?</i>
Romans 14:7-9	<i>Whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's</i>
1 Corinthians 15:12-26	<i>Christ, the first fruits, has been raised</i>
1 Corinthians 15:51-58	<i>Where, O Death, is your victory?</i>
2 Cor. 4:6-12, 16-18	<i>Treasure in clay jars</i>
2 Cor. 1:3-7	<i>God consoles us in all our affliction</i>
Hebrews 12:1-2	<i>Surrounded by a cloud of witnesses</i>
1 Peter 1:3-9	<i>A living hope through Jesus' resurrection</i>
1 John 3:1-2	<i>See what love the Father has given us</i>
Revelation 1:17-18	<i>Do not be afraid, I am the first and the last</i>
Revelation 7:9-17	<i>God will wipe away every tear</i>
Revelation 21:2-7	<i>I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem</i>
Revelation 22:1-5	<i>The Lord God will be their light</i>

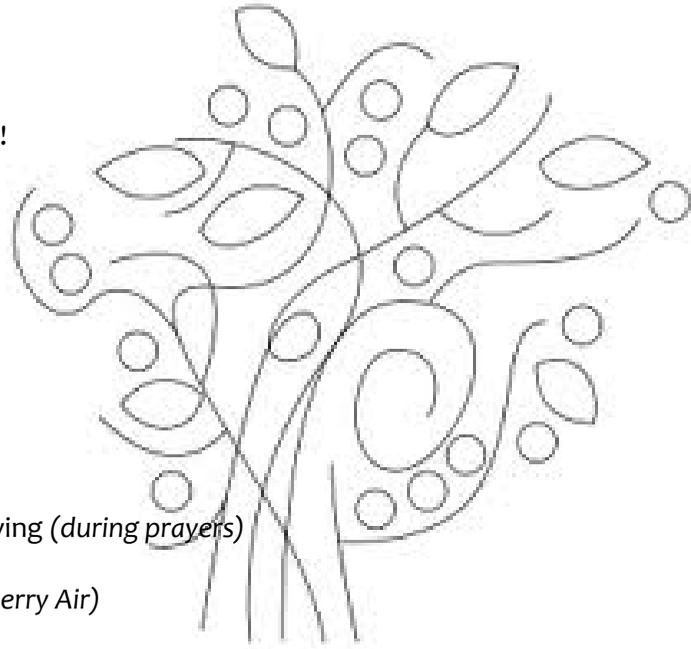
Hymn Suggestions (not exhaustive list) (Numbers from the Evangelical Lutheran Worship)

* Indicates OSLC staff favorites

270	Hark! The Herald Angels Sing (<i>Christmas</i>)
272	*Lo, How A Rose E'er Blooming (<i>Christmas</i>)
313	O Lord, Now Let Your Servant
318	Alleluia, Song of Gladness
324	In The Cross of Christ I Glory
325	I Want Jesus To Walk With Me
334	Tree of Life and Awesome Mystery
336	Lamb of God
338	Beneath the Cross of Jesus
342	There in God's Garden
365	*Jesus Christ Is Risen Today
366	The Strife is O'er, the Battle Done
367	*Now All the Vault of Heaven Resounds
369	Christ the Lord Is Risen Today; Alleluia!
376	*Thine Is the Glory
377	Alleluia! Jesus Is Risen!
389	Christ Is Alive! Let Christians Sing
392	Alleluia! Sing to Jesus
413	*Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty!
422	For All the Saints
423	Shall We Gather At the River
425	Behold the Host Arrayed in White
427	For All Your Saints, O Lord
430	Rejoice, for Christ Is King!
439	Soon and Very Soon
441	Oh, Happy Day When We Shall Stand
442	All Who Believe And Are Baptized
449	*We Know That Christ Is Raised
451	We Are Baptized In Christ Jesus
452	Awake, O Sleeper, Rise from Death
453	*Baptized and Set Free
454	Remember and Rejoice
469	*By Your Hand You Feed Your People
485	I Am the Bread of Life (<i>leader sings verses</i>)
502	The King of Love My Shepherd Is
504	*A Mighty Fortress Is Our God
511	*Thy Strong Word
536	God Be With You Till We Meet Again



581 You Are Mine
 595 *Jesus Loves Me!
 597 *My Hope Is Built On Nothing Less
 608 Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling
 613 Thy Holy Wings
 616 Jesus, Remember Me *(during prayers)*
 618 Guide Me Ever, Great Redeemer
 619 *I Know That My Redeemer Lives!
 623 Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me
 624 Jesus, Still Lead On
 627 O Day Full of Grace
 628 Jerusalem, My Happy Home
 629 Abide With Me
 630 In Heaven Above
 631 *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling
 632 O God, Our Help in Ages Past
 634 *All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name!
 636 How Small Our Span of Life
 638 Blessed Assurance
 639 *When We Are Living
 654 *The Church's One Foundation
 660 *Lift High the Cross
 666 What Wondrous Love Is This
 697 Just a Closer Walk with Thee
 721 Goodness Is Stronger Than Evil
 732 *Borning Cry
 733 Great is Thy Faithfulness
 752 *Lord, Listen To Your Children Praying *(during prayers)*
 759 My Faith Looks Up to Thee
 760 *O Christ the Same *(tune: Londonderry Air)*
 765 Lord of All Hopefulness
 769 If You But Trust In God to Guide You
 770 Give Me Jesus
 773 Precious Lord, Take My Hand
 778 The Lord's My shepherd
 779 *Amazing Grace
 781 *Children of the Heavenly Father
 785 When Peace Like a River
 It is Well With My Soul
 787 On Eagle's Wings
 792 When Memory Fades *(after a battle with Alzheimers)*
 793 *Be Thou My vision



796 How Firm a Foundation
 808 *Lord Jesus, You Shall Be My Song
 826 *Thine The Amen
 835 All Creatures, Worship God Most High!
 All Creatures of Our God and King
 840 Now Thank We All Our God
 842 Oh, Worship the King
 843 *Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness
 848 Give to Our God Immortal Praise!
 853 When Morning gilds the Skies
 855 *Crown Him With Many Crowns
 856 *How Great Thou Art
 857 *Lord, I Lift Your Name on High
 879 For the Beauty of the Earth
 886 Oh, For a Thousand Tongues to Sing

Scripture Passage Suggestions (not exhaustive list)

Old Testament

Job 19:23-27a	<i>I know that my Redeemer lives</i>
Ecclesiastes 3:1-8	<i>For everything there is a season</i>
Isaiah 25:6-9	<i>God will swallow up death forever</i>
Isaiah 40:1, 6-11	<i>God will gather the lambs</i>
Isaiah 40:1-11	<i>Comfort my people, says your God</i>
Isaiah 40:28-31	<i>They will mount up on wings like eagles</i>
Isaiah 41:9b-10	<i>Do not be afraid, for I am with you</i>
Isaiah 43:1-3a, 5-7	<i>I have called you by name</i>
Isaiah 43:1-3a, 18-19	<i>I am about to do a new thing</i>
Isaiah 55:1-3, 6-13	<i>Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters</i>
Isaiah 61:1-3	<i>The spirit of the LORD God is upon me</i>
Isaiah 65:17-20, 23-25	<i>A new heaven and a new earth</i>
Isaiah 66:10-14	<i>As a mother comforts her child</i>
Jeremiah 31:8-13	<i>I will turn their mourning into joy</i>
Lament. 3:22-26, 31-33	<i>The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases</i>