

Celebrating the Resurrection: A Guide for Preparing a Christian Funeral

Approved for Distribution by the Elders at
Christ the King Lutheran Church
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Introduction

In Psalm 80, Moses composed a song that tells us to number our days in order to use them wisely. It is wise to talk about your own funeral with your family — especially if you do it long before you expect to die.

When a believer dies, his soul immediately separates from his body and experiences the joy and peace of the Lord's presence as it awaits the Last Day when Jesus will raise that body, make it free of sin and perfect in every way, and reunite it with the soul. Meanwhile, the loved ones, friends, and relatives we leave behind after our death can be consoled greatly if we take the time now to establish some prior funeral arrangements in order to lessen their grief in a time when decision-making is often difficult and traumatic.

How to Use This Guide

This manual has been prepared by the pastors of Christ the King Lutheran Church of Largo, Florida, in order to assist members of the CTK family in planning not only for death, but also for a celebration of the eternal life in which we already have begun to share through our mutual faith in Christ Jesus. We, therefore, ask you to read this manual thoroughly as we commend it to your use, so that we may rejoice together in our eternal future in heaven.

- **If you are reading this for planning purposes in preparation for your own services**, please review the frequently asked questions and then complete the personal information and service information to the best of your ability. Submit one copy to the CTK office, share a copy with your family, and keep this booklet for your records.
- **If you are reading this after the death of a loved one**, please review the frequently asked questions and complete the personal and service information to the best of your ability. You will share it with one of the pastors when you meet together to plan the service.

A Christian Funeral & Burial – the Basics

Our Lutheran faith regards a funeral service as one of worship. We celebrate the promises given to us, and the faithfully departed, in our baptism- the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. Therefore, our funeral service expresses Christian confidence, trust, and hope in the resurrection of the body and life everlasting.

To ensure a proper funeral/memorial service:

- When possible, the funeral or memorial service of a baptized member should be conducted at the church.
- The death of a member needs to be reported to the pastor immediately.
- Please do not finalize any arrangements prior to consultation of the pastor, since proper time is needed to prepare for the service by the Pastor, Director of Music, and the church's secretary.

- A pastor will meet with you to plan the service and will ask you if there are any special requests (Bible passages, hymns and songs, and other intimate parts to the service). This is essential to ensure the scheduling and coordination of all parties and facilities. The pastor should be consulted whenever any changes may be contemplated in order to ensure that the Pastor, Director of Music, other personnel, and all facilities are available.
- For honoraria, fees, and bereavement meals, see attached information. These figures are provided because we are regularly asked for a suggested donation for those who assist with the funeral. Please note that these items are suggested amounts, and by no means are they required. The pastors at Christ the King consider this a part of their ministry to the members at Christ the King.
- If there are any questions about the service, this form, or anything else, please contact the church office

Frequently Asked Questions

"What can I do to prepare for the day of my own Christian funeral?"

Continue to trust in Jesus Christ as your only way to heaven. Share your faith with others. Have your attorney write a Christian will for you. Pre-plan funeral arrangements with a local funeral director and cemetery association. Maintain your life insurance. Complete and send to the church office a copy of the Personal Information and Service Information pages of this manual. Make sure that your next of kin or caregiver has access and is aware of any written directions or important. For further details, please see the "Additional Arrangements" section at the later in this document.

"How can a pastor assist the bereaved family?"

Contact the pastor as soon as possible. In addition to officiating at the funeral, he will first meet and counsel with the bereaved and is willing to accompany the family to the funeral home to help them in making the funeral arrangements. He is well experienced and an expert in this kind of service.

"Should the funeral be at the church or at the funeral home?"

Because a Christian funeral is also a worship service, God's House seems to be the most appropriate place for a funeral. Due to the convenience (and the extra charge for using the funeral chapel at some funeral homes), the "option" of having the service at the church may not even be presented to many families. Furthermore, funeral chapels are purposely devoid of an altar or Christian symbols that offend Jews, Buddhists, Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, and other non-Christians. Therefore, in place of such a generic environment, we strongly encourage you to utilize the church building as a closing statement of faith by those who have "fallen asleep in Jesus." We will convey this information and our position to any mortuary upon your request.

"What is a memorial service?"

A memorial service does not have the casket or remains present at the service. The interment takes place before the service or at another time. Memorial services have become very popular for Christians, and can simplify the arrangements.

"What about viewing? Should the casket be open or closed?"

If you wish to give family and friends the opportunity for viewing with the casket open, this can be done for a period of time before the funeral service begins. Viewing helps some people to accept the reality of death and that their loved one is at peace. However, before the service begins at a funeral service at CTK, the casket is always closed, so that our thoughts will not be centered on a temporal, lifeless corpse, but rather on the message of victory we share in an eternal, living Savior. This begins the healing process already during the funeral, allowing the comfort of God's Word to give peace to a grieving family.

"What is a funeral pall?"

A funeral pall is a large white shroud, usually on which is embroidered a symbol of the resurrection. In place of a floral spray, it is draped 'over the closed casket during the funeral service at church as a beautiful symbol of the triumph over death of our resurrected Savior and that the believer's sins have been covered through baptism into death. Just as our resurrected

Lord passed through His shroud, so also our resurrection is assured. The use of the pall is encouraged.

“Is cremation acceptable for Christians?”

The Scriptures do not command or recommend any particular funeral practice. Entombment simply was the general procedure. The aversion to cremation by some Christians comes from the fact that the Old Testament forbade the practice because of its use by pagan peoples; the Jewish Mishna also forbade it and the unbelieving Romans burned bodies of Christians in a futile attempt to prevent the resurrection! Some people believe that cremation is a way to deny publicly the resurrection. However, if God can resurrect the bodies of martyrs burned at the stake or eaten by lions or decomposed to dust after centuries in the grave, He should have no trouble at all with the cremains. Furthermore, direct cremation (no viewing or embalming) may be considered by some Christians to be good stewardship, in that it is far less expensive than other procedures.

“What should I do with the ashes?”

As with cremation, Scripture gives us little instruction about a specific practice regarding the burial of ashes. They may be disbursed in God’s creation, or placed in and buried in an urn. In either case, cremains can be placed with a short burial service that includes Holy Scripture and prayer.

"What about eulogies?"

The pastors at CTK take great care to get to learn much more about the family member who is deceased and personalize the service for your family as they sit down with you prior to the service. They do their absolute best to represent the deceased, typically during an extended description that begins the sermon.

Because the word eulogy comes from a Greek word which means “blessing, praise, or flattery of a person” we prefer the term “life reflection” to the word eulogy. Should your family have a need to represent the memory of a family member beyond the effort of the pastor, there is a spot available during the worship service. We ask that any life reflections be limited to two, last no longer than 2 to 3 minutes, and be focused in content on the presence of faith in the life of their family member. The text of each life reflection must be screened by the pastor prior to the service.

When set within the context of a funeral or memorial service a life reflection is a highly emotional moment, one that may be difficult for a speaker who is close to the deceased. We encourage families to choose to share a life reflection in a setting outside the worship service such as a luncheon or with families prior to the service.

“My family member was a member of the military. Can the pastors do a military funeral and burial?”

Absolutely. We are happy to work together with you and the funeral home to see that the ceremony honors the service of your loved one to our country. A flag presentation, the playing of taps and other options are available with the help of a local organization which facilitates the military arrangements for service men and women. In the case of a funeral, a funeral pall will be used in place of a flag, as our eternity identity in Christ supersedes our temporal, earthly vocations.

“What if my loved one is not being buried immediately after the memorial service?”

Sometimes, in the case of cremation, the ashes are not yet available by the time the memorial service has taken place. In other cases, a family will choose to have a memorial service in Florida and a burial service up north. In these instances, the service concludes with a short committal rite, an abbreviated version of the graveside committal service. This serves as means to bring closure for those who will be unable to attend the graveside service.

"What about memorial gifts as opposed to giving flowers?"

Many say that cut flowers are a "waste" or ostentatious, but when the disciples said much the same about Mary's anointing of Jesus with a bottle of precious nard, the Savior took issue with them. Others prefer to give potted plants, which will continue to grow and be enjoyed by the family. Still others prefer to remember their loved ones by donating a gift of money to a memorial fund. They believe this method to be best, because it benefits the most people and is an ongoing way of remembering their loved ones. One of the pastors can furnish you with a number of acceptable choices for a memorial, which would extend the work of God's Kingdom.

"What is a Christian will?"

Every Christian should have a will, but as a final witness to one's faith, the use of a Christian preamble to your will provides you with the opportunity to give a posthumous testimony of your faith in Jesus to your attorney, relatives, and friends. You may consider your congregation in your will, so that you vicariously can carry on the Lord's work even after He has called you home.

"Is the practice of donating one's organs acceptable for Christians?"

Again, the Scriptures do not speak to this issue because it was not possible at the time of the writing of the Scriptures. Therefore, it is your own decision. We assure you, however, that there is nothing ghoulish or unchristian in deciding to give the gift of life, sight, etc. to a fellow human being. Pray about such a decision before death and discuss it with your family. If you decide to be a donor, obtain a Uniform Donor Card from your -local hospital, and keep the card in your wallet or purse. If you decide not to be a donor, do not feel guilty. There is no obligation for Christians to do this.

"Are lodge ceremonies or rites of other organizations permitted at our funeral services?"

No. It is likely that the lodge's oath-bound guidelines insist that salvation is not through Christ and His Word alone, but rather by one's own good works and moral living is in obvious conflict with a Christian funeral.

“Should I donate my organs for research?”

This is entirely up to you. Scripture has little to say about organ donation. Practically speaking, this may be an opportunity to leave a living legacy and continue to serve someone well beyond your death with the gift of your eyes, tissue or organs. If it is your desire to be a donor, go to www.donatelifeflorida.com for more information.

Fees

	Members	Non-Members
Pastor –Mike Thureau or Nate Peregoy	No Charge ‡	\$150.00
Organist/pianist – Colleen Rabe	\$125.00	\$125.00
Service Coordinator – Mary Davis	\$75.00	\$75.00
Sanctuary Use	No Charge	\$150.00
Soloist †	\$100.00	\$100.00
DVD Recording ††	\$50.00	\$50.00
Fellowship Hall Use*	No Charge	\$150.00
Ministry Center Use	No Charge	Please ask

The fees above are listed because we are regularly asked for a suggested donation for those who assist with the funeral. Please note that these are suggested and not mandatory. If you choose to give a donation, please bring honoraria and fees to the service coordinator in marked envelopes prior to funeral service.

‡ The pastors at CTK consider this to be a part of their ministry to the congregation. See the church office for a suggested honorarium, if you would like to give one to the pastor.

† Soloist is optional. Amount reflects a suggested honorarium.

†† DVD Recording is optional and dependent upon availability. Amount reflects a suggested honorarium.

Luncheon

Christ the King offers space for bereavement luncheons to those who have lost a loved one would like to have time together with their family and friends after the funeral or memorial service. You are invited to supply the meal. The office has a list of local catering options.

We would be very happy to serve this luncheon for your family if you feel this would be something you would like. We are able to find volunteers to serve this meal. If you have any special needs or requests, we will certainly do everything we can to make this possible.

Sample Service of Worship¹

**Celebrating
the
Triumphal Homecoming
of
Full Name**

Date of Birth

Date of Home-going

Christ The King Lutheran Church
Largo, Florida
Date of Service
Time of Service

THE ORDER OF WORSHIP**THE PRESERVICE MUSIC****THE GREETING**

Pastor: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the source of all mercy and the God of all consolation. He comforts us in all our sorrows so that we can comfort others in their sorrows with the consolation we ourselves have received from God.

People: Thanks be to God!

THE BLESSING OF BAPTISM

Pastor: This day we gather to remember a life that has passed from our midst, and to give thanks to God for the gift He shared with us in **NAME's** presence. We do not gather, however, to mark an ending...a death. We gather instead, to rejoice in life. We come here to celebrate the victory over sin, death and the power of Satan, that is both **NAME's** and ours' through faith in Jesus...a victory that he now enjoys in its fullness. You see, long ago God placed His name on **NAME** in the waters of Holy Baptism, calling **him/her** His child. On that date, **DATE**, the date of **his/her** birth into this world, God gifted **NAME** with another birth – giving to **him/her** all the benefits that Christ secured for us on Calvary. And, **NAME** confirmed that God had, indeed, brought **him/her** to faith through his Baptism, when on **DATE**, **he/she** was welcomed into

¹ Please note that this service is intended to be planned with a family prior the date of the service. It is the desire of our pastors to make this experience one that is meaningful and personal.

communicant membership in the Lutheran church by the rite of Confirmation (**Congregation, City**).

That faith – God’s gift – sustained **NAME** throughout **his/her** life, and brought meaning to much of how **he/she** served and lived. It also brought comfort to **him/her** in **his/her** dying, as **he/she** continued to trust in and count on the saving relationship that **he/she** had with Jesus, the Resurrection and the Life. The apostle Paul understood that comfort, when he wrote to the saints in Rome to remind them (and us) that “all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death. We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.”

That’s the promise **NAME** trusted, and by which **he/she** found peace in uncertain days. It was God’s promise to **him/her** – and, it is for you, as well. It is, as **NAME** rejoiced, not dependent on our own strength or ability, but entirely on the power of God. And that promise continues: “If we have been united with Him in His death, we will certainly also be united with Him in His resurrection.” (*Romans 6:3-5*)

THE HYMN ~ LW#, “TITLE” ~

THE RESPONSIVE READING ~Psalm 23~ or another Psalm

Pastor: The Lord is my Shepherd,

People: I shall lack nothing.

Pastor: He makes me lie down in green pastures,

People: He leads me beside quiet waters,

Pastor: He restores my soul.

People: He guides me in paths of righteousness for His name’s sake.

Pastor: Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil,

People: for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

Pastor: You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.

People: You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

Pastor: Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life,

People: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

All: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

THE OPENING PRAYER

Pastor: God of grace and glory, we remember before You today, **NAME**, beloved spouse, father/mother, grandfather/grandmother, brother/sister, and friend -- a child who You have chosen. We thank You for allowing us to know and to love him/her as a friend and companion during his/her pilgrimage on earth. In Your boundless compassion, comfort us, as we mourn his/her absence amongst us. And, as You sent Your Son to give us life to the full, allow us to continue our days here in the confidence that comes by faith, until, by Your call, we are reunited with all those we love who have entered Your presence through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

People: Amen.

THE LESSONS

~Old Testament ~

~New Testament ~

~ Gospel ~

THE HYMN

~ LW#, "Title" ~

THE SERMON

~"Title"~

Text

THE PROFESSION OF FAITH – Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

THE PRAYERS

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE COMMITTAL

(Used if burial does not follow the service)

THE BENEDICTION

THE DISMISSAL

Pastor: Christ is risen!
People: He is risen indeed!
Pastor: And now we leave, as servants of the King!
Go in peace. Serve the Lord!
People: Thanks be to God!

THE CLOSING HYMN
~ "Title" ~

POSTLUDE

PARTICIPANTS

Honorary Pallbearers:
Ushers:
Funeral Coordinator:
Liturgist:
Officiant:
Organist:

THANK YOU for your presence this morning! Following the memorial service, ***NAME's*** family would like to invite you to join them for a light luncheon to be held in the Fellowship Hall where the celebration of his life will continue. They will greet you there.

MEMORIALS in ***NAME's*** memory can be made to

Memorial envelopes can be found in the back of the sanctuary.

Additional Arrangements

The information below serves as a starting point to consider additional arrangements above and beyond the funeral. This list is not exhaustive, nor does it represent an official position of Christ the King. We recommend that you seek professional legal counsel to verify that all your affairs are in order.

Pre-Funeral Planning

One gift that can be given after your death is the exercise of your wishes expressed in your living will or trust. Your executor (personal representative or trustee) should be informed of their duties and have access to certain vital data that includes, but is not limited to the items below. They can be stored together in one safe place.

- Original copy of will/living trust
- Car title
- Marriage certificate or divorce papers
- Military service record and discharge papers
- Deed of any property
- Mortgage papers/contracts/liens
- Life insurance policies
- Stocks, bonds, pension funds, IRA's credit cards, bank assets and corresponding contact information
- Brokerage address and phone
- Inventory of personal property
- Total wealth including insurance, cash, property and intangibles
- Current address of all heirs
- Federal income tax statements (last three years)
- List of monthly bills and corresponding contact information, including information about automatic payments

Key Responsibilities of the Executor

- Plan and execute the funeral arrangements
- Provide copies of the living will/trust to all heirs and legatees.
- See that the will is filed with the probate division of the circuit court.
- Petition court for a letter of authorization and exercise wishes expressed in the will.
- Establish an accounting system for recording sales/transfers and supply to all interested parties in a timely manner.
- Determine net worth of estate for probate classification rating and tax purposes.
- Publish legal notice of administration in local newspaper for a 90 day window for claims of liens and debts.
- Prepare all state and federal taxes.
- Petition for formal discharge of executor as attested by all beneficiaries when duties have been completed.
- For wills in estates valued over \$75,000, a full probate process is required and a lawyer will walk the personal representative through the entire setup for a fee of 5 to 10% of the value of estate (Florida).
- For living trusts, the same process must be done as in the probate system except the successor trustee has to initiate matters on his or her own. Herein, knowledge of the probate system is paramount and legal assistance should be sought as necessary.

Personal Information

Name: _____
(Last) (First) (Middle)

Date of Birth: ___ / ___ / ___ Place of Birth: _____
(Hospital) (City & State)

Date of Baptism: ___ / ___ / ___ Place of Baptism: _____
(Church) (City & State)

Date of Confirmation: ___ / ___ / ___ Place of Confirmation: _____
(Church) (City & State)

Confirmation Verse: _____

Favorite Bible Verses: _____

Favorite Hymns: _____

Special Words of Encouragement from the Deceased to the Family: _____

Family (Parents & Siblings): _____

Places Lived (with approximate dates): _____

Married: Yes No Spouse: _____ Anniversary: _____

Children: Yes No Names of Children: _____

Employment: _____

Hobbies/Interests: _____

Education: _____

Spiritual Life/Faith: _____

Names of All Surviving Family Members & Relationship (Circle those here for services):

Date of Death: ___ / ___ / ___ Place of Death: _____
(Location) (City & State)

Name of Family Contact: _____

Address of Contact: _____

Phone Number: _____

Service Information

Funeral Home: _____

Arrangements already made with funeral home: Yes No

Contact Person & Phone: _____

Date of Funeral: ___ / ___ / ___ Time: _____

Viewing Prior to the Service: Yes NoIf yes, Time: _____ Open Casket Closed CasketBurial/Internment: Yes No Place of Burial: _____
(Location) (City & State)Cremation: Yes NoFlowers: Yes No If yes, delivered on: ___ / ___ / ___ Time: _____Other Designation(s) for Memorial Gifts (envelopes available): _____
_____Organist Needed: Yes NoSoloist Needed: Yes NoDVD Recording: Yes NoLife Remembrance/Eulogy: Yes No By: _____

If yes, please refer to "What about Eulogies?" in the FAQ section above.

CTK Office Use

Family Time of Arrival for Service: _____

Pictures/Tables Needed: Yes NoOrganist Contacted: Yes NoDVD Recorder Confirmed: Yes No If yes, who? _____Ushers Contacted & Confirmed: Yes NoMemorial Envelopes Needed: Yes NoMeal Service Needed: Yes NoCaregiver Follow-up Needed: Yes No