

Funerals at Journey Lutheran Church

The Worship Committee has prepared the following statement of Funeral Practices. The statement is presented for your information, hopefully, at a time when the death of you or your loved ones is an event that will happen in the distant future. We would like you to read the statement so that you know what you can expect when a funeral becomes necessary.

Preface

“For you yourselves know well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ...But you are not in darkness, brethren, for that day to surprise you like a thief.”
I Thessalonians 5: 2 & 4.

In other words, be prepared. Many people hesitate to come to grips with the reality of life: the fact of one's own death. The making of a will is postponed and prearrangements for the disposition of one's own body at death are neglected.

Many of the burdens placed on the survivors are not necessary. Planning ahead can lessen the burden for loved ones during such a time. Worship preferences and vital statistics that are written down and kept in a safe place can help to alleviate the many decisions faced by loved ones.

The Christian funeral service attempts to minister to important needs. There is need for paying tribute to the deceased. This provides the opportunity for the devout to proclaim in death that which they proclaimed in life. At the same time, consolation and support is offered to those who grieve. There is unquestionable and painful parting in death. The Christian funeral service seeks to offer the hope and consolation that is ours in Christ's Resurrection. In that regard, the celebration of Holy Communion as a part of the funeral service is strongly encouraged.

Our congregation is concerned about these issues; so suggested guidelines and information are provided here for your consideration. It is hoped you will read them, study and question them, and act upon them.

Items That Need to be Considered

Who should be contacted in the event of your death? Such information should be very available, especially if you wish to have your body or organs donated.

How do you wish to have your body cared for? Cremated? Embalmed? Buried whole (make a casket selection)? Given to a medical facility? Organs made available for transplant? Parts of the body, or the entire body, may be donated to various organizations. Many organs of the body are needed and in short supply. Someone contemplating an anatomical gift should get the facts from the person and/or institution for which the gift is intended. It is very important to plan ahead, for in general, the gift will be useless unless it is fresh and reasonably healthy.

Which funeral director do you wish to employ?

Do you have a preference as to pallbearers?

Where do you wish to be buried? Do you have a cemetery plot? Do you wish to have the casket lowered as a part of the committal?

Do you wish memorial gifts to be made in your name to: an established fund of Journey Lutheran Church, Heart Fund, Cancer Fund, etc.? Have you provided for these in your will? Do you have a will?

You may wish to share your worship preferences for your funeral service with the pastor or family members. This might include special hymns, Psalms, lessons, prayers, and whether you would like to have Holy Communion celebrated. It may also be advisable to consider the preferences of those closest to you. After all, it is the survivors who grieve and will be seeking comfort and consolation at the funeral service. You have the choice in deciding how traditional or non-traditional the service may be. In any case, the pastor will be helpful in assisting you with such preferences.

At the Time of Death in the Family

Call the pastor! If it is possible, do this before death, so that he/she may be with you to support both you and the dying.

Find out from the pastor if the deceased person has made any prior funeral or burial arrangements. If not, this is the time to visit with the pastor and make plans for the time and day of the service and worship preferences.

The pastor is available to be with you as you work with the funeral director in making arrangements, **but please be sure to call if you want him/her to participate.** These arrangements need not be rushed.

Information You Should Know

What is the difference between a funeral and a memorial service?

Increasingly, the two terms are used interchangeably, especially with cremation growing in popularity making it easier to move the remains of the deceased. Traditionally, funerals take place with the body or the ashes of the deceased person present and before the burial occurs. Memorial services have been ceremonies without the presence of the body (although an urn containing the ashes may be present). Funerals are usually held immediately following death whereas memorial services may take place weeks or months away. In the past, memorial services also have been less formal than funerals with greater participation by family and friends. Memorial services do not necessarily take place in a funeral home or religious setting. They may be held in the home or other comfortable gathering place. Funerals are most often held in traditional settings (church, chapel, or cemetery) and are often followed by a graveside service. You should discuss any of your funeral or memorial arrangements with the pastor.

Military and other fraternal groups sometimes have their own special ceremonies to honor one of their members who has died. These special ceremonies are not part of the worship service, but they are filled with meaning and will take place before or after the service and/or the burial. Talk with the pastor regarding such arrangements.

For those funerals where a casket is present, family members, pallbearers or other assisting ministers may place a white cloth covering called a "pall" on the coffin. The pall symbolizes the righteousness of Christ with which we are "clothed" through our Baptism. The funeral pall reminds us that we enter the church through holy baptism and that we leave this world clothed in the "righteousness of Christ". Journey Lutheran has a pall, which you are encouraged to use.

Interment Services should be held at the gravesite unless inclement weather interferes or you have chosen not to have the cremated remains buried. If this is the case, the words of committal are read in the church or at the end of the service.

Video/Sound System Use If you want to make use of the video/sound system there will be a \$25 fee for someone who is trained on the system to set up and monitor the equipment. In

some circumstances this may be waived if by talking with pastor there is someone able to be trained on Journey's system.

Honoraria and Stipends

Should a luncheon be requested, catering expenses beyond donated brownies/bars/cookies and coffee will be the responsibility of the family. The Fellowship team will assist the family in coordinating these arrangements. Often the funeral director will pay the Fellowship team on behalf of the family and then include the bill on the final statement he/she issues from the funeral home. A \$75.00 honorarium to Journey Lutheran may be given for coordinating these services.

A stipend for the organist/pianist of \$75.00

A stipend of \$75.00 should be given for custodial services.

You can work with the funeral director if you would like him/her to employ a soloist or you may wish to have a close friend or relative provide this service.

Service Preparation Preferences

You may not wish to plan your entire service as the needs and preferences of those closest to you may also be important. The following listing comes from the Evangelical Lutheran Worship book (pg. 279-283) and is offered for your consideration. Please use it with freedom and not under any sense of compulsion.

Gathering Address, Pg. 279 (one or both paragraphs)_____

Thanksgiving for Baptism, pg. 280 (choice)_____

Acclamation, pg. 280 (option)_____

Procession, pg. 280 (choice of hymn, psalm, or anthem)_____

Greeting, pg. 280

Prayer of the Day, pg. 281 (three choices)_____

Readings, pg. 281 (two or three readings)_____

(a responsive Psalm can be used between readings)

Sermon

Hymn of the Day, pg. 281_____

Creed, pg. 282

Prayers of Intercession, pg.282

Service with or without Holy Communion_____

Communion Hymns_____

Commendation, pg. 283