

# Leaving a Faith-Filled Legacy

## Advance Funeral Planning

A Practical Guide for Christian  
Funeral and Burial Plans



**GETHSEMANE**  
LUTHERAN CHURCH

Engaged by God in a Living Faith:  
at Home, at Church, and in the World

## First Steps

The time to think about death and funeral arrangements is not when a death occurs but long before it happens. At the time of death one's emotions can cloud one's ability to make objective decisions.

At the time of death many people are unaware of what to do or how to act in the midst of crisis and grief. This booklet is designed to provide simple guidelines for decision-making. It is not definitive nor comprehensive but will help you get started in the right direction.

1. Make the decision for yourself if you are to be DNR (Do Not Resuscitate)/DNI (Do Not Intubate) in the case of an incapacitating or life-threatening illness such as stroke or heart failure. This will prevent unnecessary life-saving measures and will save your family from making a very difficult decision. Also let them know if you are an Organ Donor.
2. If you should have the unfortunate experience of discovering that a family member has died you must call 911. If no one was present at the time of death be prepared to answer many questions from the police and medical examiner.
3. Call the funeral home. It is wise to know in advance which funeral home should be called.
4. Call the church office or one of the pastors. Never hesitate to ask one of the pastors to be with you at the hospital or at home during times of crises. They are very experienced in terms of what to do during these situations.
5. Try to talk with one of the pastors before meeting with the funeral director. This may help you avoid some unnecessary expenses and can help focus your mind before making any major decisions. Your pastors have walked many families through this many times. For you, it may be your first.
6. Remember, you do not have to spend excessive amounts of money to show your love for the deceased. This is not a time to worry about what others may think.
7. Give serious thought to a private graveside service. This allows the family a more private moment at the graveside. It also eliminates the need for a funeral procession, which is an added expense. It is more convenient for everyone involved to move directly from the funeral service to the fellowship hour. This is especially true if the burial is at Fort Snelling.
8. The church office, in consultation with the pastors, will make all the necessary arrangements for music, including organist, soloist, and luncheon volunteers.
9. It is nearly impossible to prevent people from sending expensive floral arrangements, but a suggestion from the family for memorials in lieu of flowers is always in order.
10. Cremation is becoming more and more common as a way of burial and is fully sanctioned by the church. A word of caution, however. Since cremation is still a sensitive issue for many people, persons considering cremation for themselves should discuss this with family members since they will have to carry out your wishes.
11. Discuss your funeral plans with your family members long before the time arrives. It will help to alleviate a great deal of confusion, wondering, and guilt if plans are made apart from the trauma of death. Try to avoid making requests of family members that may be difficult to carry out or that are inappropriate.
12. Make a list of the people who ought to be notified in the event of a death. Ask for help from friends and other family members to do the difficult calling.
13. If the deceased was an active, professing Christian, then the funeral service is the time to sing some of the victorious, resurrection hymns of faith. It is also appropriate to have music that puts our grief into words and song. Music selected should reflect the spirit of Christian confidence, trust and hope in the resurrection. If your family likes to sing select more hymns. If not, it is fine to use one or two solo pieces. Secular music is often not appropriate for the funeral service.

## Suggested Funeral Hymns

Hymn numbers refer to the red Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW) book.

A Mighty Fortress Is Our God	504	Old Rugged Cross	
Abide with Me	629	On Eagles Wings	787
All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name	634	Praise to the Lord	844
Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound	779	Precious Lord, Take My Hand	773
Baptism Song (Gethsemane's)		Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me	623
Beautiful Savior	838	Savior, Again to Your Dear Name	534
Blessed Assurance	638	Shall We Gather at the River	423
Borning Cry	732	Softly and Tenderly	608
Children of the Heavenly Father	781	Soon Very Soon	439
Crown Him with Many Crowns	855	Sweet Hour of Prayer	
Day by Day	790	The King of Love My Shepherd Is	502
For All the Saints	422	Thine Is the Glory	376
How Great Thou Art	856	Thy Holy Wings	613
I know that My Redeemer Lives	619	What a Friend We Have in Jesus	742
I am the Bread of Life	485	When Peace, Like a River	785
Jesus Loves Me	598	Who is The Host Arrayed in White	
Jesus Shall Reign	434		
Jesus, Still Lead On	624	<b>Hymns that may also be sung as a solo</b>	
Just as I am, Without One Plea	592	Abide With Me	629
Lift High the Cross	660	Amazing Grace	779
Lord, Take My Hand and Lead Me	767	Great is Thy Faithfulness	733
Lord's Prayer		Jerusalem, My Happy Home	628
Love Divine, All Loves Excelling	631	Neither Death nor Life	622
My Faith Looks Up to Three	759	O Day Full of Grace st.1,3,5	627
My Hope is Built on Nothing Less	596	On Eagles Wings	787
O Day Full of Grace	627	There is a Balm in Gilead	614
O God, Our Help in Ages Past	632	There's a Wideness in God's Mercy	587
O Love That Will Not Let Me Go		When We Are Living	639
O Master, Let Me Walk with You	818	You Are Mine	581

# Suggested Funeral Texts

## Old Testament

### **Psalm 23:1-4**

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me.

### **Psalm 27:1-4**

The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? When evildoers assail me to devour my flesh—my adversaries and foes—they shall stumble and fall. Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war rise up against me, yet I will be confident. One thing I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: to live in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in his temple.

### **Psalm 46:1-5**

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam though the mountains tremble with its tumult. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved; God will help it when the morning dawns.

### **Psalm 73:25-26**

<sup>2</sup>Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire other than you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.

### **Psalm 90:1-4**

Lord, you have been our dwelling-place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God. You turn us back to dust, and say, 'Turn back, you mortals.' For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is past, or like a watch in the night.

### **Psalm 91:1-4**

You who live in the shelter of the Most High, who abide in the shadow of the Almighty, will say to the LORD, 'My refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust.' For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence; he will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness is a shield and buckler.

### **Psalm 116:5-10**

Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; our God is merciful. The LORD protects the simple; when I was brought low, he saved me. Return, O my soul, to your rest, for the LORD has dealt bountifully with you. For you have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling. I walk before the LORD in the land of the living. I kept my faith, even when I said, 'I am greatly afflicted'

### **Psalm 121:1-6**

I lift up my eyes to the hills—from where will my help come? My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth. He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber. He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The LORD is your keeper; the LORD is your shade at your right hand. The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. The LORD will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life. The LORD will keep your going out and your coming in from this time on and for evermore.

### **Psalm 130:1-8**

Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD. Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications! If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with you, so that you may be revered. I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I hope; my soul waits for the

Lord more than those who watch for the morning, more than those who watch for the morning. O Israel, hope in the LORD! For with the LORD there is steadfast love, and with him is great power to redeem. It is he who will redeem Israel from all its iniquities.

#### **Isaiah 40:28-31**

Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless. Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; but those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

#### **Isaiah 43:1-21**

But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. I give Egypt as your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba in exchange for you. Because you are precious in my sight, and honored, and I love you, I give people in return for you, nations in exchange for your life. Do not fear, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you; I will say to the north, "Give them up," and to the south, "Do not withhold; bring my sons from far away and my daughters from the end of the earth— everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."

Bring forth the people who are blind, yet have eyes, who are deaf, yet have ears! Let all the nations gather together, and let the peoples assemble. Who among them declared this, and foretold to us the former things? Let them bring their witnesses to justify them, and let them hear and say, "It is true." You are my witnesses, says the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me. I, I am the LORD, and besides me there is no savior. I declared and saved and proclaimed, when there was no strange god among you; and you are my witnesses, says the LORD. I am God, and also henceforth I am He; there is no one who can deliver from my hand; I work and who can hinder it?

Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: For your sake I will send to Babylon and break down all the bars, and the shouting of the Chaldeans will be turned to lamentation. I am the LORD, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King. Thus says the LORD, who makes a way in the sea, a path in the mighty waters, who brings out chariot and horse, army and warrior; they lie down, they cannot rise, they are extinguished, quenched like a wick: Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. The wild animals will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches; for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people, the people whom I formed for myself so that they might declare my praise.

## **New Testament**

#### **Luke 24:13-35**

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came

back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.” Then he said to them, “Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory? Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures. As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.” So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?” That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!”<sup>T</sup>hen they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

### **John 5:24-29**

Very truly, I tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life, and does not come under judgment, but has passed from death to life. ‘Very truly, I tell you, the hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For just as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself; and he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. Do not be astonished at this; for the hour is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and will come out—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

### **John 11:21-27**

Martha said to Jesus, ‘Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Your brother will rise again.’ Martha said to him, ‘I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.’ Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?’ She said to him, ‘Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.’

### **John 12:23-26**

Jesus answered them, ‘The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

### **John 14:1-6**

‘Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling-places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going.’ Thomas said to him, ‘Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

### **Romans 6:4-11**

Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For whoever has died is freed from sin. But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

**Romans 8:31-39**

What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, 'For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.' No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Romans 14:7-9**

We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

**I Corinthians 15:20-26**

But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died. For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after he has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

**I Corinthians 15:51-57**

Listen, I will tell you a mystery! We will not all die, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality. When this perishable body puts on imperishability, and this mortal body puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will be fulfilled: 'Death has been swallowed up in victory.' 'Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?' The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

**II Corinthians 4:16-5:10**

So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal.

For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this tent we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling—if indeed, when we have taken it off we will not be found naked. For while we are still in this tent, we groan under our burden, because we wish not to be unclothed but to be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. So we are always confident; even though we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord—for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yes, we do have confidence, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. For all of us must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense for what has been done in the body, whether good or evil.

**Philippians 1:21-23**

For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which I prefer. I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.

**Philippians 3:20-21**

But our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will transform the body of our humiliation so that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, by the power that also enables him to make all things subject to himself.

**Philippians 4:4-7**

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

**II Timothy 4:6b-8**

Have nothing to do with profane myths and old wives' tales. Train yourself in godliness, for, while physical training is of some value, godliness is valuable in every way, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.

**I Peter 1:3-9**

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith—being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

**Revelation 7:9-17**

After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. They cried out in a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!' And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshipped God, singing, 'Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God for ever and ever! Amen.' Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, 'Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?' I said to him, 'Sir, you are the one that knows.' Then he said to me, 'These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. For this reason they are before the throne of God, and worship him day and night within his temple, and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them. They will hunger no more, and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat; for the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.'

**Revelation 21:1-5**

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.' And the one who was seated on the throne said, 'See, I am making all things new.' Also he said, 'Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.'

## Plans for My Funeral/Memorial Service

It is often difficult for families to make decisions regarding funeral arrangements at the time of the death of a loved one. In the midst of grieving, the family must make many important decisions and frequently wish they knew the desires of the person who has passed away. This is an important opportunity for you to think about the legacy of your faith and what type of witness you would like your funeral/memorial service to be.

You may wish to complete this request sheet together with your family and friends, or you can complete it on your own. Feel free to fill in all or only those sections that you have opinions about. You can leave some things up to your family that may better suit their needs at the time of your death. This is not a binding document but meant to convey your wishes to your family. We would like to keep a copy of the completed form at church but the original should stay with your important documents and you should notify your family about its existence. Additional forms are always available for updating your wishes.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Family Contact \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Mortuary to be used for arrangements \_\_\_\_\_

Funeral/Memorial service to be held at \_\_\_\_\_

I prefer:   \_\_\_ Bodily burial       \_\_\_ Cremation       \_\_\_ Funeral with the casket/urn present  
              \_\_\_ Memorial Service without the casket/urn present

I prefer:   \_\_\_ Earthly burial at a cemetery       \_\_\_ Mausoleum entombment  
              \_\_\_ My ashes be placed in Gethsemane's Columbarium  
              \_\_\_ My ashes to be scattered \_\_\_\_\_

Cemetery name, location and lot numbers: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Visitation at the mortuary       \_\_\_ Visitation at the church (1 hour before the service)

**Funeral/Memorial Service Preferences:**

Preferred hymns/music: *(A typical service includes 2-4 music selections.)*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Scripture passages I would like used: *(A typical service includes 2-3 scriptures.)*

\_\_\_\_\_

Other preferences for the service:    \_\_\_\_\_ The Apostles Creed                    \_\_\_\_\_ Holy Communion

\_\_\_\_\_

I prefer memorial gifts be designated for organizations and institutions that are meaningful to me, such as:

\_\_\_\_\_ Gethsemane Lutheran Church                    \_\_\_\_\_ Gethsemane Memorial Fund

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Persons to be notified at the time of my death: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Location of my will \_\_\_\_\_

Lawyer's name \_\_\_\_\_

Other requests: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Witnesses \_\_\_\_\_