

# Christian Funeral Planning Guide



**LIGHT OF THE VALLEY**

—LUTHERAN CHURCH—

SHINING THE LIGHT OF JESUS

1074 N Fairfield Rd

Layton, UT 84041

801-444-1591

[www.lotvlayton.org](http://www.lotvlayton.org)

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	3
The Christian Prepares for End-of-Life Care.....	4-5
Funeral, Memorial, and Other Types of Services.....	5
Order of Worship: Christian Funeral.....	6-9
Suggested Scripture.....	10-11
Sermon.....	11
Memories and Eulogies.....	11
Music & Hymn Suggestions.....	12
Visitation.....	13
Flowers.....	13
Memorial Table.....	13
Military Honors.....	13
Gift Designations & Memorials.....	13
Social & Fraternal Societies.....	13
Video Recording & Photography.....	14
Guestbook.....	14
Receptions.....	14
Grief Resources.....	14
Final Arrangements.....	15
Key Documents & Advisors.....	16
Frequently Asked Questions.....	17-20
Funeral/Memorial Information Form.....	21-24

## PASTORAL STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

Rev. Jonathan Klein  
Office: 801-444-1591  
Mobile: 385-319-1026  
[pastorklein@lotvlayton.org](mailto:pastorklein@lotvlayton.org)

## Introduction

*"I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die."* (John 11:25) As Christians, we know that death is not the end. Through God's grace, Jesus has conquered sin and death forever. As we profess in the Apostles' Creed, we believe in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting.

Funerals are among the times that we as Christians perform the task of the Church the best. We comfort one another in our grief, we gather in community, and we proclaim Christ crucified and risen. A Christian funeral is not a tribute to how wonderful you were, but instead it publicly affirms the saving power of God, as demonstrated in your life. We tell how God's story interacts with your story. Baptismal imagery is important because it reminds us of God's saving deeds. As Paul writes in Romans 6:5, "For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his."

Planning now for your funeral is important. We make plans for many things in life. Some we are never able to do. Yet death is inevitable, and thus it is crucial that we plan for it. Planning does not hasten the event. Funeral pre-planning is necessary, first of all, as a means to let your wishes be known to all concerned. Secondly, pre-planning your funeral enables you to give expression to your faith through choosing what is to take place. Also, it eases the burden on your loved ones by eliminating the pressure of decision-making, particularly the need of trying to do things "the way you would have wished." Finally, pre-planning will give you a certain amount of peace, knowing that your affairs are in order.

If at all possible, discuss these plans with your loved ones. Allow them to participate in the planning and to express their thoughts. This brings the subject out into the open and provides loved ones with an opportunity to openly share their love and sorrow, which is best shared now rather than after a death occurs.

Please bear in mind that the more complex and complete your plans become, the more tentative they must be. The events surrounding your death, or events that may occur between now and the time of your death, may necessitate changes. Therefore, from time to time, every several years, the plans in this booklet may need to be updated.

This guide should answer many of your questions about the planning of a funeral or a memorial service and what ways we, as the Church, hope to serve you in this time. We are more than happy to keep a copy of your wishes (by using the form at the end of this booklet) on file and will share them with your family when necessary.

If you have questions or concerns, please call the church office at 801-444-1591.

God's Love and Ours,

Your Brothers and Sisters in Christ at Light of the Valley Lutheran Church

## **The Christian Prepares for End-of-Life Care**

There is so much to navigate when it comes to end-of-life situations. One of the biggest questions comes in deciding how much medical care a person should receive when it appears that their life is coming to an end.

The best way to make sure you receive medical treatment that is in keeping with your Christian faith and your wishes if you're unable to communicate is by informing your family and your physician about your wishes ahead of time.

You will do well to avoid these two extremes: 1) that I must always use all available medical procedures and technology in order to keep me (or my loved-one) alive. In other words, always prolong the dying process, even when it seems clear that God's will is to call me home. And 2) that I must always do whatever is allowable by the doctor and the law in order to end my (or my loved-one's) suffering. In other words, always shorten my life in order to avoid suffering.

The Christian understands that God is the Author of life; he alone has the right to end human life. But you need not fear death nor take extreme measures to avoid it. God sent his Son to redeem all of us for eternal death in hell and promises us eternal life with him.

In general, you will want to avoid using "quality of life" as a determining factor in making medical decisions. The Christian recognizes that all human life is precious, dignified, and a gift of God. You will also want to avoid refusing the use of medical care solely because it is "modern and unnatural." Medicine and technology are gifts of God that people make use of gratefully as well as carefully. You will want to allow your family some flexibility in making decisions (avoid the words "never" and "always") yet ensure that your Christian faith and values are being respected.

In order to help your family and loved ones make medical decisions for you, you may choose to have a Medical Directive Statement. This is not necessary but is often a good idea. One such statement is called "Durable Power of Attorney for Medical Care." The WELS-affiliated Christian Life Resources makes available a "Medical Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care Decisions - Christian Version" that is tailored to be legal in every state. They also make an explanatory supplement available which walks you through the legal document and explains everything in clear language. Go to <https://christianliferesources.com/resources/christian-medical-directives/> and fill out the form in order to receive your copies of these documents.

Some areas covered in these documents include: nursing home admission, feeding tubes, healthcare decisions for pregnant women, and anatomical gifts (organ donation).

This legal document allows you to designate a person you trust to make health care decisions for you if you are unable to do so. You may designate an alternate agent in case your agent is unable to function. According to Utah law this person must be at least 18 old.

Questions to consider when deciding on whom to designate as an agent:

- Is this person trustworthy?
- Do they share my faith and values?
- Can I reasonably assume that they will be available to make decisions if I'm unable to?

You will want to leave a copy of this signed with your agent and alternate agent, as well as your primary physician. You may also wish to leave a copy with your church and/or pastor.

## **Funeral and Memorial Services**

“The righteous perish, and no one ponders it in his heart; devout men are taken away, and no one understands that the righteous are taken away to be spared from evil. Those who walk uprightly enter into peace; they find rest as they lie in death.” (Isaiah 57:1-2) In either a funeral or memorial service, the event of death is a time to ponder why the Lord has taken your loved one to their heavenly home. With the Word of God, the Christian church comforts the bereaved family and friends of the departed and confesses its lasting hope in the resurrection of the dead in Christ.

Therefore, whatever type of service selected is worship to God who gives us life, forgiveness of sins, and the promise of eternal life lived with him in heaven.

### **Types of Services**

**Funeral Service:** A funeral service is when remains are going to be present in casket or as ashes in an urn. These services are generally held within a week or so of the death.

**Memorial Service:** A memorial service is conducted when no remains are present. This type of service is preferable when remains are unavailable or the service is celebrated a significant time after the death.

**Inurnment:** This is a brief service with readings and prayers that commit ashes to a final resting place. This can be done any time after the death.

**Graveside Committal:** This is a brief service with readings and prayers committing a body in casket or urn to the ground. Committals generally follow right after the funeral service.

**Visitation (Viewing):** A visitation or viewing is a not a worship service. It is a time when the body is available for viewing. Participants can pay final respects to the deceased and offer condolences to the family.



## Order of Worship: Christian Funeral

*This order of worship from Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal is intended for the funeral or memorial service of one who has departed from this life in the Christian faith. With the Word of God, the Christian Church comforts the bereaved family and friends and confesses its lasting hope in the resurrection of the dead in Christ. All are welcome to participate as indicated. The parts marked **M** are spoken or sung by the minister, and the parts marked **C** are spoken or sung by everyone in the congregation.*

### GREETING AND PRAYER

**M:** In the name of the Father and of the Son (†) and of the Holy Spirit.

**C:** **Amen.**

**M:** We have come together to seek God's comfort in our sorrow and to rejoice in the promise of the resurrection. Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who said, "Come to me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

Let us pray: Lord Jesus, you wept at the grave of your friend Lazarus, and you consoled Mary and Martha in their distress. Draw near to us who mourn for \_\_\_\_\_, and dry the tears of all who weep. Calm our troubled hearts, dispel our doubts and fears, and lead us to praise you for having brought *him* to faith. In your rising from the dead, you conquered death and opened the gates to eternal life. Strengthen us with your Word, and lead us through this earthly life until at last we are united with you and all the saints in glory everlasting.

**C:** **Amen.**

### PSALM 23

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures,  
he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul.

He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.  
Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil, for you are with me;

your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.  
You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life,  
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

**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.**

***A HYMN may be sung.***

*Any number of hymns can be sung in the service. For suggestions, see page 12 of this guide.*

**RESURRECTION COMFORT**

**M:** Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. The apostle Paul wrote to the Romans, "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Jesus gives us this comfort: "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die."

**M:** Death has been swallowed up in victory! Thanks be to God!

**C:** **He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

**M:** When Christ, who is our life, appears,

**C:** **Then we also will appear with him in glory.**

**M:** We will be before the throne of God

**C:** **And serve him day and night in his temple.**

**M:** Never again will we hunger;

**C:** **Never again will we thirst**

**M:** For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be our shepherd. He will lead us to springs of living water,

**C:** **And God will wipe away every tear from our eyes.**

**M:** Let us pray: God of all grace, you sent your Son, Jesus, to destroy the power of death and to open the kingdom of heaven to all believers. Make us certain that because he lives, we too shall live. Comfort us with your promise that neither death nor life nor things present nor things to come shall be able to separate us from your love which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**C:** **Amen.**

## **BIBLE READINGS**

*Any number of specific portions of the Bible can be added into the service and read here. For Bible passage suggestions, see pages 10-11 of this guide.*

## **A HYMN may be sung.**

*Any number of hymns can be sung in the service. For suggestions, see page 12 of this guide.*

## **SERMON**

*A message of comfort from God and his Word is given to the people by the pastor.*

## **OBITUARY**

*The deceased's obituary is read with a slight modification to note the number of days God gave this person so that they would know him and so be saved.*

## **THE APOSTLES' CREED**

*The Creed is a summary of the Christian faith and a confession of the whole Christian Church on earth concerning the teachings of Scripture and especially of the person of Jesus Christ. Believers join their voices with one another and the whole Christian Church on earth to confess God's truth.*

**M:** God has made us his people through Baptism into Christ. We confess our faith in the God of our salvation.

**C:** **I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.**

**I believe 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 is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there 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.**

## **PRAYER**

*The Lord invites our prayers and asks that Christians pray for many people in many circumstances. He promises to listen to our prayers and respond according to his will in a way that is best for us. With that in mind, we approach our God with confidence and faith in him and his promises.*

**M:** Almighty God, we praise you for the great company of saints who have finished their lives in faith and now rest from their labors. We remember especially our loved one, whom you have redeemed by the blood of your Son and received as your dear child through Holy Baptism. We thank you for giving him to us as a companion on our earthly pilgrimage. In your compassion, comfort all who are sad in this hour. Lord, in your mercy,

**C:** **Hear our prayer.**



**M:** We praise you for your love in Christ, which sustains us in life and death. In our earthly sorrows, help us find strength in the fellowship of the church, joy in the forgiveness of sins, and hope in the resurrection to eternal life. Lord, in your mercy,

**C:** **Hear our prayer.**

**M:** You do not leave us comfortless but strengthen and care for us through your Word and sacrament. You give us family, friends, and neighbors to help when there is loneliness now and in the days to come. Brighten our future with a firm trust in your promises and care. Lord, in your mercy,

**C:** **Hear our prayer.**

**M:** Remove our fears, and make us bold to pray with confidence as our Savior has taught us:

### **LORD'S PRAYER**

*The following prayer is what Jesus himself taught his disciples. (Matthew 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4)*

**C:** **Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread;**

**and forgive us our trespasses,**

**as we forgive those who trespass against us;**

**and lead us not into temptation,**

**but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

### **BLESSING**

*As we close our worship service, we leave with direct blessings from our Lord and God, using the words that God gave to Aaron the High Priest to bless the Israelites (Numbers 6:22-27).*

**M:** The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and (†) give you peace.

**C:** **Amen.**

### **A HYMN may be sung.**

*Any number of hymns can be sung in the service. For suggestions, see page 12 of this guide.*

## Scripture

There are usually 2-3 Bible readings during the service. Below are some suggested Scripture readings that are common to funeral/memorial services that you may request the pastor to use.

Joshua 1:9	The Lord will be with you wherever you go.
Job 1:21	Praise the Lord even when he takes someone away.
Job 19:25-27	I know that my Redeemer lives.
Psalms 4:8	In peace I will lie down and sleep.
Psalms 13:5-6	The Lord has been good to me.
Psalms 16:9	My body rests secure.
Psalms 23	The Lord is my Shepherd.
Psalms 31:1-5	Deliver me, my faithful God.
Psalms 31:14-15, 24	My times are in your hands.
Psalms 34:15-22	The Lord delivers the righteous from all their troubles.
Psalms 46:1-3, 10-11	Be still and know that I am God.
Psalms 71:5-9	You, Lord, have been my hope and confidence since youth.
Psalms 73:23-26	My body may fail, but God is my strength and portion forever.
Psalms 84:1-4	I yearn to dwell in your house, O Lord.
Psalms 90	Teach us to number our days aright.
Psalms 103:1-5, 8-18	Praise the Lord who redeems my life.
Psalms 116:15	Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.
Psalms 121	The Lord watches over you now and forevermore.
Psalms 143	Lord, come to my relief.
Ecclesiastes 3:1-8	There is a time for everything.
Isaiah 25:6-9	The Lord Almighty has prepared a banquet feast in heaven.
Isaiah 40:28-31	Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.
Isaiah 43:1-3	You are mine, says the Lord.
Isaiah 55:6-11	Seek the Lord while he may be found.
Isaiah 57:1-2	The righteous are taken away to be spared from evil.
Isaiah 61:1-3	The Lord has clothed me with comfort.
Jeremiah 17:7-8	The man who trusts in the Lord is like a tree that is always green.
Jeremiah 29:11	The Lord has plans to prosper you, give you hope and a future.
Lamentations 3:22-26; 31-33	Wait quietly for the Lord's salvation.
Daniel 12:13	You will rise to receive your inheritance.
Matthew 28:20	I am with you always.
Luke 2:25-32	Now dismiss your servant in peace.
Luke 7:13	Don't cry.
Luke 23:39-43	Today you will be with me in paradise.
John 3:16-18	God gave us Jesus so that we do not perish.
John 5:24-29	Crossed over from death to life.
John 10:27-30	No one can snatch my sheep out of my hand.
John 11:25-26	Jesus is the resurrection and the life.
John 14:1-6	Jesus is preparing a place for us in heaven.
Acts 4:12	Salvation is found in Jesus alone.

Romans 3:21-24	Righteousness comes through faith in Jesus to all who believe.
Romans 5:1-11	While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
Romans 5:17-21	Through the obedience of Jesus we are made righteous.
Romans 6:23	The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus.
Romans 8:28-30	God works all things for our good.
Romans 8:31-39	Not even death can separate us from the love of Christ.
Romans 14:7-9	We live to the Lord; we die to the Lord.
1 Corinthians 15:42-44	Our bodies are raised imperishable.
1 Corinthians 15:51-58	Death is swallowed up in victory.
2 Corinthians 4:16-18	We fix our eyes on what is unseen.
2 Corinthians 5:1-8	We long to be home with the Lord.
Ephesians 2:1-10	God made us alive and saved us by grace.
Philippians 3:20-21	Our citizenship is in heaven.
1 Thessalonians 5:9	God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation.
1 Timothy 1:15-17	Jesus came to save sinners, of whom I am the worst.
2 Timothy 1:10	Jesus destroyed death and brought life and immortality.
2 Timothy 4:7-8	I have fought the good fight and finished the race.
Hebrews 2:14-18	Jesus destroyed the devil and made atonement for me.
Hebrews 12:1-3	Fix our eyes on Jesus.
1 Peter 1:3-9	You have an unfading, living hope through Jesus' resurrection.
1 John 4:10	God loved us first.
Revelation 2:10	God will give you the crown of life.
Revelation 7:13-17	God will bring us out of the great tribulation.
Revelation 21:1-6	There will be no more death.

Provision for readings other than from the Bible are not normally included in the funeral or memorial service. Readings outside of the Bible are best shared in family gatherings or at the reception. Consult with the pastor if you have questions.

### **Sermon**

A message from God's Word will be offered at the worship service by the pastor. The sermon will proclaim boldly the good news of the gospel, that there is everlasting life in Jesus Christ even as we gather because of a death. A copy of the sermon is made available on the church website and given to the family after the service. If a guest preacher is desired, this must be approved and arranged with the Light of the Valley pastor. The guest preacher must belong to the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS), Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS), or another confessional Lutheran church body that we are currently in doctrinal fellowship with.

### **Memories and Eulogies**

Lutheran worship liturgies for the burial of the dead are complete without eulogies or memories being shared during worship. Due to the emotional difficulty of the day, we highly encourage families to make time to share memories and stories outside of the worship service. On the occasion when a eulogy is requested, the eulogist must work with the pastor regarding the nature and length of the message and present the eulogy after the conclusion of the service.

## Music

The Light of the Valley organist or an appointed substitute will play for the service. Any outside musicians or vocalists need to consult with the organist and pastor before participating in the service.

Secular music is generally not appropriate during the worship service. If you have a favorite secular song, the reception may be the best place to play it.

Typically, 2-3 hymns are selected for the service. However, more or less or even no hymns may be selected. Please feel free to suggest favorite hymns or worship songs to the pastor for use in the service. All of the following hymn suggestions are from *Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal*.

- 152 I Know that My Redeemer Lives
- 201 A Mighty Fortress Is Our God
- 208 I Know of a Sleep in Jesus' Name
- 213 Forever with the Lord
- 256 How Great Thou Art
- 304 Jesus Sinners Does Receive
- 332 Go, My Children, with My Blessing
- 334 Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow
- 355 Take the World but Give Me Jesus
- 379 Amazing Grace – How Sweet the Sound
- 382 My Hope is Built on Nothing Less
- 411 What a Friend We Have in Jesus
- 417 I'm But a Stranger Here
- 432 I Am Jesus' Little Lamb
- 440 On Eagles' Wings
- 441 O God, Our Help in Ages Past
- 451 Precious Lord, Take My Hand
- 537 Onward, Christian Soldiers
- 579 Lift High the Cross
- 588 Abide With Me

## **Visitation**

If the family chooses, Light of the Valley can facilitate a visitation for the family prior to the service. We suggest that the visitation be held either the day of or the day before the funeral or memorial service and last no more than two hours.

## **Flowers**

Flowers can be an important symbol of our hope in the promise of resurrection. Flowers are always on display near the altar in our sanctuary. You can have other floral arrangements made and brought to church for use during this time.

## **Memorial Table**

It is certainly appropriate to have a memorial table in the narthex (lobby) for people to view during the reception. Families are welcomed and encouraged to place family photos, artwork, display of hobbies and similar items in this area.

## **Military Honors**

If there is a graveside committal as part of the service, military honors are most appropriate at the graveside following the rite of committal. If a committal is not scheduled, provision may be made for military honors to be done at the conclusion of the worship service in the church or at the mortuary/funeral home.

## **Gift Designations & Memorials**

In response to the goodness of God and in gratitude for the life of the deceased, you may choose to designate financial contributions be made in honor of the deceased. This often happens in lieu of flowers.

Common choices for memorials at Light of the Valley are:

- Light of the Valley General Fund: This fund covers our day to day operating and ministry expenses.
- Light of the Valley Designated Fund: A fund that allows the church to use funds for a specific, designated purpose at the family's request.
- Other Community Organizations (ie. Wounded Warrior, Safe Harbor, Habitat for Humanity, a hospice care provider, etc.)

## **Social & Fraternal Societies**

The worship service is meant to give glory to God and comfort to the bereaved. The worship service is not an occasion to support, augment, or complement nonchurch organizations and rituals. Any ritual or rite apart from the proclamation of the Word and the administration of the sacraments is inappropriate within the liturgies of the Lutheran Church. Therefore, no social/fraternal society rituals will be included in the service in the sanctuary of the church or at the graveside committal. Once the worship services have concluded the family may observe social and fraternal society rites as they deem appropriate.

## **Video Recording & Photography**

The funeral or memorial service will be recorded discretely and posted on our Youtube channel: [youtube.com/lotvlayton](https://youtube.com/lotvlayton). We do not encourage photography during the funeral or memorial service.

## **Guestbook**

The Light of the Valley guestbook will always be out during one of these services. However, if the family would like their own guestbook, they will need to provide it.

## **Receptions**

We feel a time to gather with family and friends for comfort and support is particularly important when a loved one has died. Our congregation can provide a luncheon or meal in our fellowship hall after the service has concluded. If this is something that you desire, please let the pastor know as soon as possible so that arrangements can be made. There is no fee for the reception. Also, you can make arrangements for catering to be done at the church.

## **Grief Resources**

After a death, there is a variety of emotions ranging from anger to shock to deep sadness. All these emotions are common. You may feel some of them, all of them, or even none of them. The grief process is not one that can be moved through in a day. We are with you as you journey through your grief during the days after, the months later, and the years to come. We encourage you to contact the pastor for help, guidance, and resources in this area.

## **Fees & Honorarium**

The people of Light of the Valley Lutheran Church, called by Christ to comfort those who mourn, plan and implement the funeral or memorial service for your loved one. There is no fee for these services. You may, however, gift the pastor, organist/musician, or the congregation an honorarium if desired.

## **Final Arrangements**

In addition to your funeral service, it is helpful to make arrangements ahead of time regarding care of your body and your final resting place. Below are terms that will help you think through these decisions. Medical decisions (organ donation, autopsy, etc.) should be noted in your Living Will.

### **Organ Donation**

All individuals can indicate their intent to donate; people under the age of 18 must have the consent of a parent or a legal guardian. Medical suitability for donation is determined at the time of death. You may choose what can be donated and for what purpose. The common purposes are for transplants, education, and research. The following can be donated:

- Organs: heart, kidneys, pancreas, lungs, liver, and intestine
- Tissue: cornea, skin, heart valves, bone, blood vessels, and connective tissue
- Bone marrow/stem cells, umbilical cord blood, peripheral blood stem cells

If you would like to donate your whole body for research, this should be arranged prior to your death. Many organizations require registration on file prior to death for the body to be received as a donation. Once the donation has been made and research conducted, ashes from the body are returned to the family. Generally, this takes four to six weeks.

### **Autopsy**

Unless legally required, you have the option to choose whether or not to have an autopsy on your body. The two most common choices are:

- No Autopsy, unless legally required
- Yes, if it will benefit medical research

You can also name a person who will make this decision after your death. This can be important if there are questions surrounding the circumstance of your death.

### **Embalming**

Embalming is the art and science of temporarily preserving human remains to forestall decomposition and to make them suitable for display at a funeral. The goals of embalming are thus sanitization, preservation, and presentation. If you are being buried in a grave plot, most states require embalming. This process must be coordinated with a funeral home. Please know that the church and its pastor are happy to accompany you as you talk with the funeral home or mortuary. This can often be overwhelming, and many find it comforting to have pastoral presence and guidance.

### **Cremation**

Cremation is the incinerating of a body. The remains, known as cremains, are in the form of ashes. Cremation is growing in popularity and more than 60% of bodies are being cremated now. If you are being cremated, you will generally have fewer end-of-life expenses.

## Key Documents & Advisors

In addition to planning your funeral service or the service of a loved one, it is important to have other documents on file.

### Key Documents to Have Discussed and Have in Place:

**Will:** A will is simply a set of instructions on how to distribute your assets to loved ones and charities upon your death. Be aware, however, that a will is subordinate to any beneficiary designations you have made on investment and retirement accounts.

**Durable Power of Attorney:** You name another person to act on your behalf, with limited or broad powers as you see fit. A "durable power" lets someone act on your behalf if you are disabled, and it terminates upon your death.

**Health Care Power of Attorney:** This document authorizes someone to make medical decisions on your behalf if you are unable to.

**Living Will:** This document lays out your wishes regarding the use of life sustaining measures in the event of terminal illness. It's best used in tandem with a health care power of attorney since a living will alone doesn't give anyone authority to speak for you.

It is important that survivors be able to locate vital records and important documents. Before your death, you should have a current will/living trust and related health care directives which express your wishes on important personal, financial, medical, and charitable issues for your survivors. If you need information regarding estate planning, planned giving, and/or the inclusion of a Christian preamble for your will, please consult your legal or financial advisor.

Location and Date of Will/Living Trust: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of my Living Will: \_\_\_\_\_

Attorney/Will Preparer: \_\_\_\_\_

Power of Attorney/Financial: \_\_\_\_\_

Power of Attorney for Health Care: \_\_\_\_\_

Executor of Will/Estate: \_\_\_\_\_

Guardian (for Minor Children): \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: What should I do when a loved one has died?**

A: Please know that not only does the Lord of Life walk with you at this time, but also the Christians at Light of the Valley Lutheran Church also surround you with their love and prayers. Our pastor and members are here to serve you and your family in this time of need. Please call the church or the pastor to inform them of the death of your loved one. Your second call should be to the mortuary of your choice to set up an appointment with their designated staff person for making all decisions that they handle - the final preparations of the deceased body, news releases, choice of casket or cremation urn, date, time, and place of both the service and the final internment.

**Q: How soon after death does a funeral or memorial service take place?**

A: Funeral services are generally held within three to five days following death, thereby allowing appropriate time for family members and friends to gather for the service. Memorial services can be held at any time. However, waiting for weeks or even months after a death will have a bearing on finding a sense of closure, and this will impact the grief work that follows the death of a loved one. Therefore, it is recommended that a memorial service be held within a few weeks after death.

**Q: How do I schedule a funeral or memorial service at Light of the Valley?**

A: Please contact the pastor to both verify his schedule and the church calendar before finalizing dates and times with the mortuary or funeral home.

**Q: Do I have to be a member of Light of the Valley in order to have them do my funeral?**

A: Generally, the Church only buries its members because of their shared faith and certain hope in eternal life in heaven with God through the work of Jesus Christ. However, we understand that this is a time of grief unlike any other experienced in life. If you are not a member of Light of the Valley or a confessional Lutheran church body in fellowship with the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS), the pastor is willing to arrange a service that shares the message of why death is part of our existence and what God's solution to death is.

**Q: What is the difference between a funeral and memorial service?**

A: Simply put, at a funeral service the body of the deceased is present, whereas at a memorial service either the deceased's ashes or no remains are present. Both services provide an opportunity to proclaim God's death-defeating acts in Christ. Sometimes families prefer to have an internment with a casket or urn at the cemetery prior to a memorial service at the church.

**Q: How does the Church view cremation?**

A: Cremation is an acceptable way for Christians to deal with one's earthly remains. The Scriptures tell us that we are formed "of the dust of the ground" (Genesis 2:7) and, after death, we shall return "again to dust." (Job 34:15) At the resurrection of the dead on the Last Day, God will restore our bodies from our dust, no matter where our remains are.

**Q: If I choose cremation, do I need to secure the services of a mortuary?**

A: We highly recommend working with a mortuary. Their professional staff will ease the strain upon family members by coordinating all the details and thus ensuring that your wishes being carried out with dignity and honor. Even if cremation is your desire, a mortuary handles many details that are not taken care of by the church, the pastor, or family members. Attempting to save money by not using a mortuary is likely to cause confusion and frustration at a time when you most need guidance and support.

**Q: Should I make pre-arrangements with a mortuary?**

A: Making the decision to pre-arrange some aspects of your funeral/memorial and/or burial is helpful and recommended. An appointment with a mortuary in advance of death is a wise step to help you decide what you and your family need from the many services available. If you are a family member caring for a dying loved one, making an initial contact now with a mortuary can be very helpful and will lessen the decisions and demands you'll face upon their death. The pastor is available to talk with you about the selection of a mortuary or to refer you to a mortuary he knows well and holds in high regard.

**Q: Should I make pre-arrangements with a cemetery or memorial garden?**

A: Yes. Not only is this extremely helpful but can also save you money.

**Q: Should I have the funeral or memorial service at Light of the Valley or at a mortuary?**

A: This is entirely your choice. Most mortuaries have finely appointed chapels for funerals and memorial services.

**Q: What should I expect if I choose to have the funeral or memorial service at a mortuary?**

A: If the service is to be held at the mortuary, they will handle all arrangements including the news releases, the biographical brochure, the service bulletin, flowers, and setting for the service in their chapel. Music is to be arranged with the assigned mortuary staff person, in consultation with your presiding pastor. The mortuary will normally handle all financial arrangements, including the honorarium for the presiding pastor.

**Q: What should I expect if I choose to have the funeral or memorial service at Light of the Valley?**

A: The pastor will help you plan the details of the service including the order of service, music, and service bulletins. Light of the Valley will print and provide the service bulletins. Often the pastor works closely with the assigned mortuary staff person on other details such as flowers, guest books, and remembrance tables.

**Q: Can I have someone other than the pastor of Light of the Valley speak or preach at this service?**

A: If a guest preacher is desired, this must be approved and arranged with the Light of the Valley pastor. The guest preacher must belong to the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS), Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS), or another confessional Lutheran church body that we are currently in doctrinal fellowship with.

**Q: Can I have one of my family members sing a solo or perform another piece of music at the service?**

A: Typically, the Light of the Valley organist or an appointed substitute will play for the service. Any outside musicians or vocalists need to consult with the organist and pastor. Our practice is to have people who share a confession of faith with our congregation and our national church body – the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) – be the ones leading any worship service at our church.

**Q: What is a visitation?**

A: A visitation is an informal gathering for friends and family to express sympathy, view photographs or a video tribute, and say goodbye. Typically, the body of the deceased is present, usually in an open casket. This can be a very important time in the grieving process.

**Q: May we have a visitation at the church the evening before the service, or must that take place at a mortuary?**

A: While most visitations take place at the mortuary, it may take place at Light of the Valley either the day before or the day of the service as long as there are no other events already scheduled in the sanctuary.

**Q: Who plans the reception or luncheon following the funeral or memorial service?**

A: If your reception is held at Light of the Valley, someone from the church will plan out a donated meal or hors d'oeuvres to be made available after the service. You are also welcome to cater the reception. Please consult with the pastor about your options.

**Q: What if I desire to have memorial gifts directed to Light of the Valley or other organizations?**

A: This is an honorable thing to do. Light of the Valley and any other organizations you choose are blessed when memorials are directed to support their ministries and missions. The mortuary will be happy to include any memorial designation(s) in the notices about the funeral service. All memorial gifts received by Light of the Valley will be directed to its general fund to support future ministry, unless otherwise designated.

**Q: How should I handle flowers for the service?**

A: Flowers are an appropriate tribute in memory of a loved one. You should plan to remove flowers from the sanctuary or the mortuary following the service, unless you make known your desire to leave the flowers for use in our ministry. If flowers are not desired, you may wish to request that people make a contribution to Light of the Valley or a charity of your choosing in lieu of flowers.

**Q: What is a service bulletin or worship folder?**

A: The pastor and other church members will prepare a service bulletin (or worship folder) and have sufficient copies ready for the service. There is no fee for providing this. You may want a photograph of your loved one to be included. Please provide this digitally to the pastor at least 2 days prior to the service.

**Q: What types of remembrances can be included in a funeral or memorial service?**

A: Remembrances of your loved one can take many forms. This includes setting up a “table of memories” in the narthex (lobby) with photographs or a short tribute video on a television or computer. Please make your desires known to the pastor.

**Q: Can I have a eulogy as part of the service?**

A: Lutheran worship liturgies for the burial of the dead are complete without eulogies or memories being shared during worship. Due to the emotional difficulty of the day, we highly encourage families to make time to share memories and stories outside of the worship service. On the occasion when a eulogy is requested, the eulogist must work with the pastor regarding the nature and length of the message and present the eulogy after the conclusion of the service.

**Q: Can I have a social society or a fraternity be a part of the service?**

A: The worship service is meant to give glory to God and comfort to the bereaved. The worship service is not an occasion to support, augment, or complement nonchurch organizations and rituals. Any ritual or rite apart from the proclamation of the Word and the administration of the sacraments is inappropriate within the liturgies of the Lutheran Church. Therefore, no social/fraternal society rituals will be included in the service in the sanctuary of the church or at the graveside committal. Once the worship services have concluded the family may observe social and fraternal society rites as they deem appropriate.

**Q: What fees are associated with a funeral or memorial service at Light of the Valley?**

A: There are no fees for the people involved in providing the worship service as well as those who prepare and clean up following the service and reception. This is our gift to you during this difficult time.



# Light of the Valley Lutheran Church

## Funeral Service Information

*Please complete the following information and return to the church office or pastor.  
If you have any questions, please contact the pastor.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Completed: \_\_\_\_\_

Name & Contact # for person making arrangements: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Funeral Home or Mortuary:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Were funeral and/or cremation expenses pre-paid? \_\_\_\_\_

### Burial:

Cemetery: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

### Funeral / Memorial Service:

To be held at (check one): \_\_\_\_\_ Funeral home \_\_\_\_\_ Church  
\_\_\_\_\_ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Do you desire a visitation? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

If yes, where? \_\_\_\_\_ Funeral home \_\_\_\_\_ Church

Do you desire a luncheon at church? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

*At the time of needing the funeral/memorial service, the date and time will be selected for the visitation and luncheon in consultation with the pastor.*

Bible Passages: (Reasons for your chosen Bible passages would be helpful information to include.)

---

---

---

---

Hymns: (Reasons for your chosen hymns would be helpful information to include.)

---

---

---

---

Pall Bearers (if applicable; usually six):

---

---

---

---

Memorial Designation(s):

---

---

---

---

Obituary Information:

• Date & place of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

• Date & place of baptism: \_\_\_\_\_

• Date & place of confirmation: \_\_\_\_\_

• Marriage:

○ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

○ Spouse: \_\_\_\_\_

○ Place: \_\_\_\_\_

• Education:

---

---

---

---

• Military Service:

---

---

• Employment:

---

---

• Hobbies, Activities, & Passions:

---

---

- Survivor Information:

- Spouse: \_\_\_\_\_

- Children and their spouses:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- Grandchildren and their spouses (often in an obituary a simple number is given):  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- Great-grandchildren (often in an obituary a simple number is given):  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- Preceded in death by:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_