



*Peace is what I leave with you;
it is my own peace that I give you.
I do not give it as the world does.
Do not be worried and upset;
do not be afraid.*

John 14:27

FUNERAL GUIDE

Zion Lutheran Church

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Brothers and sisters, we want you to know the truth about those who have died, so that you will not be sad, as are those who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will take back with Jesus those who have died believing in him.

1 Thessalonians 4 : 13-14

Zion Lutheran Church is an assembly of baptized children of God. The most essential thing that we do is gather to worship our Lord Jesus Christ. In worship, Christians are reminded again and again that they are the baptized people of God and that their baptism is not just for this time and this world, but forever.

The death of a baptized Christian, one who has lived in the communion of the church, is an occasion for thanksgiving and the proclamation of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. When the church gathers to mark the end of life, Christ crucified and risen is the witness of worship, the strength of mutual consolation, and the hope of healing. Although a Christian funeral honestly confronts the harsh reality of life's ending, it witnesses to our hope in a new life beginning, both for the deceased and for those who grieve.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to you in this time of loss and grief. It is our desire to minister to you and your loved ones in your hour of need and to encourage you through the comfort of the Lord. Please let us know of any specific ways the church can be of assistance to you.

WHEN A LOVED ONE HAS PASSED

The death of a member of the church should be reported as soon as possible to the pastor or the church office. Along with personal consultation with the pastor, this Funeral Guide is provided to assist in dealing with your loss and give you an overview of the practical aspects of planning a meaningful funeral service.

If time allows before meeting with the pastor, please complete the last page of this document, "Funeral Preparation Form", to the best of your knowledge.

UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF THE FUNERAL HOME

Many Christians employ the services of the funeral business. Such businesses offer skills of organization, financial planning, publications and other matters at the time of death. They offer important services at a difficult time. Yet grieving families need to know how to balance the role of the funeral home with the role of the church. The funeral home can help organize many details, but the planning of the actual funeral service is best done with the pastor. The funeral is a liturgical event, and for that, the church's witness and message are the primary point.

It is important that the funeral director work closely with the pastor to deliver the most professional service to the grieving family. Zion Lutheran Church also provides a Funeral Coordinator (specifically trained church member) who will be present at all funeral-associated events taking place at the church.

If a funeral home's services are not utilized, please understand the additional responsibilities will lie with the family. The pastor will share a checklist of items typically coordinated by the funeral director.

VISITATION

In advance of the funeral, it is customary for families to have a time to visit with others in sharing their grief. This may take place at the church or the funeral home. Please work with the pastor and the funeral director for scheduling and location.

PLANNING THE FUNERAL SERVICE

When possible, it is a good idea to begin plans for a funeral liturgy well before death occurs, thus avoiding extensive planning during a time of grieving. Such advance planning offers an occasion for the pastor to talk seriously about the Christian hope of the resurrection of the dead through Jesus Christ. It is helpful to be mindful of the worship leaders and family members who will be present at the funeral. Plans made in advance, particularly plans made well in advance, can do this by offering flexibility for the planning process and the service itself.

Regardless of the timing, the pastor will be thoughtful and caring as you move through the funeral planning process. Following are some points to consider.

● THE FUNERAL LITURGY

The funeral service in Evangelical Lutheran Worship begins with an opening prayer and then may continue with a Thanksgiving for Baptism. Such a beginning orients the funeral as a remembrance and celebration of baptism that proclaims the baptismal promise of rising from death to new life as much for the lives of those who grieve as for the deceased.

● SCRIPTURE SELECTION

The pastor will assist you in selecting scripture for the funeral service. The WELCA bible study resource referenced at the end of this guide also provides an extensive list. If known, you may wish to include some of the deceased's favorite readings.

● USE OF THE PALL

The pall is a large white cloth, sometimes marked with a cross, that completely covers the casket and is reminiscent of the white garment given or worn in baptism. Moreover, the use of the pall treats every Christian exactly the same, whether buried in the costliest casket or a simple box. In cremation, a white cloth can cover the urn in the same way a larger cloth covers a casket. The casket or urn is placed near the font, visually making the connection to baptism. Zion does have a pall for a casket. For an urn, you may provide your own or discuss with the funeral director.

- **ASSEMBLY PARTICIPATION**

Since a funeral is a worship service, it is an event that can be enriched by assembly participation. You might consider selecting family and attendees to assist in the laying of the pall, carrying the cross and bible into the sanctuary, reading of the obituary or eulogy, reading scripture, singing or assisting with communion.

- **MUSIC**

Assembly singing is often one of the most common and beloved ways for a community to participate in the funeral. Music – especially singing by the whole assembly – binds the community together and brings comfort in the midst of grief. If known, you may wish to honor the deceased loved one with their favorite hymns. Additionally, there may be family members who are comfortable in sharing their talents as prelude music or during the funeral service.

It is becoming increasingly common for those gathered at a funeral to be unfamiliar with many of the hymns of the church, just as it is less common to sing together in community. Soloists and vocal ensembles may also be considered as the primary musical voice, singing on behalf of those gathered.

The pastor would like to make final approval on the music selections.

- **HOLY COMMUNION**

Including Holy Communion at a funeral is a way to understand the meal as a communion of the saints of every time and place. Sharing the meal is regarded as a foretaste of the feast to come. Serving the elements by intinction (dipping the bread into the wine) is encouraged.

- **PRINTED PROGRAM/BULLETIN**

Zion will prepare a printed program listing the order of service, obituary, and the committal and meal information. Since a funeral is typically planned within a short timeframe and media assistance is limited, an on-screen program will not be prepared for the service.

FLOWERS / DECORATIONS / DISPLAYS

Floral deliveries and placement of decorations and displays will be managed by the family and/or funeral director.

Families may wish to display the deceased's remains, as well as mementos or photos of the deceased and his/her family. Such displays must be appropriate for a worship setting and must be removed at the conclusion of the day's events.

- The church has several easels available to display photo boards.
- If you prefer to share your photo memories on-screen, you may use Zion's portable television for viewing. In this case, the family or funeral director is responsible for preparing the photo slideshow, providing the laptop or other device, and managing all connections to the church's equipment. This option is only available for the visitation time, not during the funeral service.
- The use of Zion's public WiFi is available upon request.

Zion's Funeral Coordinator will work with the funeral home staff or the family for appropriate placement of flowers and displays. Focus on the areas of the church selected for the visitation and service – Gathering Space, Narthex, Sanctuary, Family Center, etc. Also consider placement of the casket/urn, how attendees will flow through the spaces, and general public safety. (Note that the overhead fire doors in the Gathering Space must remain free of any obstacles.)

CHRISTIAN BURIAL

The funeral continues with the burial or committal. In more recent practices, this has happened with less participation from the assembly. The funeral home may do much of this preparation, with the pastor conducting the committal service.

Whether a body is to be buried in the ground, entombed above ground, commended to the sea, cremated, or donated for medical research or organ donation, the church regards all of these methods of disposition of the body as acceptable for the Christian.

MILITARY RITES

Any military rites will be coordinated with the pastor and funeral director and will be held immediately following the interment service at the cemetery.

FUNERAL MEAL

The deceased's family may choose to host a funeral meal in Zion's Family Center. This time of sharing food around the table provides support to the family through continued conversation.

A list of local catering services is available with this guide. It is up to the family whether the meal follows the committal or if it is scheduled immediately following the service. The pastor will help you decide the order for the day's events that best suits you and the attendees.

Zion's assigned Funeral Coordinator will be on hand to assist the selected caterer, allowing the family to remain engaged with extended family and friends. At the family's advance request, the Funeral Coordinator can gather dessert donations from Zion members. Please communicate with the caterers and establish a plan for leftover food (who provides containers, packaging, storage, etc.)

PARKING / TRAFFIC ASSISTANCE

Traffic assistance is generally provided by the funeral director. Considering the needs of those who will be attending, the church's handicapped parking signs may be placed on the west entrance sidewalks. Please discuss with the Funeral Coordinator how many parking stalls you would like designated.

FAMILY POSSESSIONS

Following the service and meal, please take a stroll through the areas of the church building used for the funeral events to ensure you have all of the family possessions brought to church. Prompt removal of possessions, including flowers, family memorial cards / gifts and displays, is appreciated.

MEMORIAL GIFTS TO THE CHURCH

Memorial gifts can be made to the church in honor of the deceased. Such gifts are managed through the Zion Lutheran Trust Fund with the Trust Committee being responsible for overseeing special gifts to the church. The Policy for Trust Fund Gifts and a current Memorial Gift List is included with this Guide.

FUNERAL FEES & HONORARIUMS

The family is responsible for the cost of the funeral meal. Normally, the church's fees and meal/caterer's invoice are coordinated through the funeral director.

The following fees are payable to Zion Lutheran Church.

	Member	Non-member
Building Use	waived	\$150
Pastor	\$250	\$350
Funeral Coordinator	\$100	\$100
Accompanist (organ/piano)	\$150	\$150
Other Musicians provided by church	\$150	\$150
Custodian	\$75	\$75

Please be aware Zion Lutheran Church facilities are alcohol free and smoke free.

RESOURCES:

“Worship Formation and Liturgical Resources: Frequently Asked Questions – What are the marks of a Christian Funeral?”

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

www.elca.org/worshipfaq

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OTHER HELPFUL ONLINE RESOURCES:

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America www.elca.org/worshipfaq

> How do Lutherans regard organ donation and cremation?

> How do the rites of social and fraternal societies relate to the Lutheran funeral practice? > What are columbaria and memorial gardens?

“Living Hope: Funeral Hymns and Scripture” A study guide by the Women of the ELCA www.womenoftheelca.org/filebin/pdf/resources/LivingHope.pdf

FUNERAL INFORMATION

Legal name of the deceased:	Nickname:
Date of birth:	Date of death:
Family contact info: Name:	Relationship to deceased:
Address:	
Phone:	Other contact phone:

Date of funeral:	Funeral home:
Visitation information:	
Service:	
Readings:	Reader:
Hymns: Processional – During service – Recessional – Other Music -	
Musicians: Organist:	Vocalist / Other:
Family sharing:	
Pall: YES / NO Pallbearers:	
Military rites:	
Meal info: Caterer –	Anticipated number –
Menu –	
Committal:	