

Guidance for Funeral Planning

What do we do when a doctor or nurse tells us our family member is near death?

When death draws near, contact one of our pastors that they may extend the ministry of the church. (612-870-4416) If it is after church office hours, call the on-call pastor number (612-870-4454 ext. 699) and leave a message, your name, and phone number.

What do we do when our family member dies?

When death comes, contact the church immediately. We are able to assist you in this difficult time. We prefer to be contacted before any arrangements are made with a funeral home. Call the church and ask to speak with staff in the Senior Pastor's Office. (612-870-4416). If it is after church office hours, you may email Carolyn Albert (calbert@centralmpls.org), leave a message at church for Carolyn Albert (ext. 620), or call the on-call pastor number (612-870-4454 ext. 699) and leave a message, your name, and phone number.

Who do we have to talk to in order to set a funeral date?

The church will schedule the funeral in consultation with the building and pastors' calendars. Speak with the church before confirming a time or date with a funeral director. Funerals are most often held anytime from Tuesday afternoon through Saturday morning.

What are our pastors' recommendations regarding funerals?

Location: Celebration of the funeral or memorial service within the church's sanctuary is desirable and is always encouraged. If the assembly will be small, the celebration may be held using the baptismal chapel as the chancel. Reputable funeral directors do not charge more for a church funeral.

Should the body or ashes be present at the funeral? The presence of the body or cremated remains is always encouraged. The church honors the body that was the temple of the Holy Spirit and insists that the body be treated with reverence. The church honors the flesh in which Christ came.

Visitation: Visitations held at the church are always encouraged. They may be held the evening before the funeral or immediately before the funeral. The visitation may be held in one of several comfortable locations within the church, Fireside Lounge or in the Chapel half of Fellowship Hall, for example. A national flag may be displayed during the visitation, either on a flagpole, across the foot of the coffin, or placed folded inside the coffin.

During the visitation, the coffin may be left open except in unusual circumstances. It remains open in the narthex or North Commons as guests arrive for the service. Shortly before the service begins the family makes their last visit to the coffin, and while they are preparing for the service with the pastor, funeral home staff members close the coffin and prepare it for the liturgy. The coffin remains closed for the service and is not opened again.

Holy Communion: Celebration of Holy Communion is always encouraged at funerals for members of the congregation, though infrequently celebrated. Communion is a way to gather with the deceased around the heavenly banquet table. Choose this option if it would be meaningful for you.

CENTRAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

*in the heart of the city, welcomes all people
to celebrate, discover and share the love of Christ*

333 South Twelfth Street • Minneapolis, MN 55404

Office – 612-870-4416 • Infoline – 612-872-2252 • www.centralmpls.org



What does a funeral do?

The movement of the funeral service begins with remembering the baptism of the deceased and encouraging the bereaved to persevere in faith. The liturgy moves to remembering the life of faith of the deceased and connecting their story to the story of our salvation through Jesus Christ. (Holy Communion further connects us to Jesus and to those who now live in him.) Finally we release our beloved to God and celebrate the promise of the resurrection all ready at work in them.

What is that white cloth that covers the coffin?

The use of a funeral pall to cover a coffin during the liturgy is always encouraged. It is a baptismal garment. We are clothed in the new white robe of Christ and all equal in the sight of God. A coffin flower spray is not used with the funeral pall. A national flag is not used to cover the coffin during the liturgy (with very rare exceptions).

How can family members participate in the service?

The use of family members or friends to serve as liturgy participants is encouraged. Who could read scripture, be crucifer? place the funeral pall on the coffin? help with communion? Would any family member or friend like to share a remembrance, tribute, or memorial? We recommend no more than three (3) remembrances and ask that thoughts be written down in advance. Each tribute should be kept to 3 minutes. Spontaneous comments are not recommended. An opportunity for spontaneous sharing may be provided during the reception following the service.

Gather your thoughts for a more personal biography for the service folder than the one prepared for newspaper publication. Consider including stories from the life of faith of the deceased.

Memorial service details

If a memorial service is planned (no body present), many times people think it is not necessary to have someone from the funeral home at the church to coordinate. But, it is very helpful to church staff members to have someone from the funeral home in attendance who can attend any cremated remains if they are present, arrange flowers, set up the guest book, worship bulletins, and memorial envelopes, serve as ushers and tend to any details of which the family may be unaware.

In the absence of a body, furniture is arranged near the chancel to hold an urn and/or a picture of the deceased, along with an arrangement of flowers. A symbol of the faith of the deceased may also be provided – their well-worn Bible, for example.

What about lunch?

A luncheon or a reception following the liturgy is encouraged. See the information sheet for planning a funeral meal. Christianity is a meal fellowship at its heart. By gathering around the table for mutual conversation and consolation we hold one another up in faith.

Military honors

Military honors occur outside the church, after the recession; or at the graveside after the benediction.

Memorials

In the planning process, some families choose to designate preferences for memorial gifts; including the family's desires regarding gifts of flowers.

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Funeral planning meeting

The church will schedule a funeral planning consultation with you, pastors, musicians, and church staff. This can occur before or after a death. One of Central's pastors will always participate in the funeral of a member or a funeral held in our building. A Central musician will always consult with you regarding musical choices. Central will review the service order in **Evangelical Lutheran Worship** with you and invite you to participate in shaping a worship service folder. Lists of suggested music and scripture readings are available for your consideration. A funeral planning worksheet is also available. Central staff will discuss incidental fees and suggested honoraria with you directly as we work together to shape the service. Please make these payments directly to the church.

What do we bring to the planning meeting?

Favorite hymns, Bible verses, poems, full baptismal name, baptismal date if known, calendar, brief biography, a symbol of faith – a well-worn Bible, for example, other things you wish to share with the pastors and musicians.

After the funeral

A pastor will make follow-up calls.

You will be invited to special services for the recently bereaved.

Your loved one will be included in the next All Saints Day celebrations and our book of remembrance.

Grief support groups are available for you to join.

Church and Foundation staff can assist you in selecting a fitting gift as you seek to memorialize your loved one. Wish lists for special giving can be provided by the staff as you seek ideas for disposition of memorial gifts.

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