



**Planning a
Funeral or Memorial Service
at
Zion Lutheran Church**

Introduction

This booklet has been designed for those who have lost a loved one and are planning a memorial or funeral service at Zion Lutheran Church. It provides practical information about a funeral or memorial service and addresses the questions of what we do and why.

Zion's pastors and music staff are available to help you through its completion or review. Scripture readings, psalms and hymns for the service are included in the booklet. Please choose those which will make this service the right one for the celebration of the life of the departed and a fitting memorial in the hearts and minds of those who mourn.

This booklet will prove to be most helpful for those families planning a service weeks or months after the death of the loved one without the assistance of a funeral home.

The Service

A Celebration and Thanksgiving

Remembering, Celebrating, and Giving Thanks for a Life

In the Lutheran Church, a memorial/funeral service is a celebration of the Resurrection. The service, therefore, is characterized by joy, in the certainty that, *“neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, 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 8:39)

This joy, however, does not diminish the very real grief that we feel. The same love we have for each other in Christ brings deep sorrow when we are parted by death. Jesus himself wept at the grave of his friend, Lazarus. So, while we rejoice that one we love has entered into the nearer presence of our Lord, we sorrow in sympathy with those who mourn.

Because the service is first and foremost an act of Christian worship, the service shares many things in common with the Sunday service. One of Zion’s pastors will be happy to assist the family with the planning of the memorial service.

The Lutheran Book of Worship

Zion uses the Lutheran Book of Worship for its funeral and memorial services. Some variation is available depending on the circumstances. The service takes approximately thirty to forty minutes. The length of the service is determined by the number of scriptures, hymns and whether a eulogy is given.

The color of the hangings in the sanctuary and on the altar, as well as the color of the clergy vestments is always reflective of the current church season.

Meeting with one of the pastors as soon as possible to prepare the service and share memories (to help build the sermon) is encouraged. In some cases one family member or close friend may choose to offer a brief remembrance about the life of the departed. The pastor will conclude this part of the service with a sermon placed in the context of celebration, resurrection to eternal life, and faith in God.

Service Leaflets

It is our policy that a worship folder will be produced for the gathered congregation to follow. This will be done by the staff at Zion. A traditional funeral folder is the responsibility of the family and can be purchased by the funeral home.

Guest Book

Zion does not provide a guest book for people to sign. In most cases, the guest book is provided by the funeral home or family.

Music

There is a wealth of beautiful and appropriate sacred music that is suitable for use in a memorial/funeral service.

Zion's director of music is the accompanist at all services. In the event she is unable to be present, she will suggest an appropriate substitute. Decisions regarding the music are made by the pastor and the family together. Music for the service should be appropriate for use in the church. Pre-recorded music is acceptable but the play list is the responsibility of the family. This should be made available to the sound technician on CD or MP3 device at least two days prior to the service. Should the family wish a soloist to sing, our director of music can provide a list of persons who perform this function in our community. Instrumental music other than piano/organ is also a possibility, and such decisions should be made in consultation with the pastor. For a list of suggested hymns please refer to pages 14-15.

Flowers

Flowers are the responsibility of the family. Aberdeen has several florists to choose from. Please have the flowers delivered the morning of the service to Zion Lutheran Church, 1732 S Main St., Aberdeen, SD 57401. The family is encouraged to take the flower arrangements after the service or they may leave the flowers and the Zion Altar Guild will store them in their flower cooler and display them for several Sundays.

Candles

Candles enrich the worship experience when used in a worship service. They are symbolic of light and warmth. But, they are also symbolic as signs of spiritual joy, as well as symbolic of the light of heaven.

In addition to the two candles on the altar, and the candelabra, the Paschal Candle used during the Easter Season is lit in all memorial/funeral services. It stands near the casket or urn of the deceased. The Paschal candle represents “the light of Christ” and is one of the great symbols of our Easter hope that “Christ has died, Christ is risen and Christ will come again.”

Receptions in the Fellowship Hall

The Zion Fellowship Hall may be used for a time of fellowship or reception following the memorial/funeral service.

If a reception is desired, please inform the pastor so the funeral coordinator can be notified. Zion will provide coffee, water and bars. If the family wishes to serve a larger lunch, they will need to contact a local caterer and order menu items from them. You will be asked to determine the number of servings you will need.

Please have them deliver the food to Zion Lutheran Church, 1732 S Main St, Aberdeen, SD. Please designate the NE door off the kitchen with delivery at least one hour prior to the service.

Alcoholic beverages will not be served. It is recommended that the reception following a memorial/funeral service be held before the graveside service (if there is to be one). Please schedule the time of burial with the cemetery ahead of time.

Purposes of a Christian Service

The Christian faith triumphantly proclaims the victorious passage from bitter death to eternal life in Jesus Christ. It also bears witness to the redemptive love of God which stands with us, and cries with us, when those who are left behind face the painful partings and tragedies of this earthly life.

Through scriptures, prayers, and hymns, a Christian memorial/funeral service helps grieving families and friends derive hope and comfort. The service should also help a family commend their loved one into God's keeping. It should help find a sense of peace, as they shift their focus from the earthly to the eternal spiritual identity of their loved one.

Service Order

On the next page is the basic order of worship used for memorial services. This order is open to some modification to suit personal preferences. With hymns, and without additional speakers, this service order lasts about 30-35 minutes. The Committal service at the cemetery lasts 5-7 minutes.

The Order of Service

PRELUDE

HYMN

PRAYER

A TIME OF REMEMBRANCE

HYMN / MUSIC SELECTION

SCRIPTURE

MESSAGE

HYMN / MUSIC SELECTION

APOSTLES' CREED

PRAYERS

LORD'S PRAYER

COMMENDATION

SENDING

HYMN

A Time of Remembrance

This portion of the service is a time to commemorate and give thanks for the life of the deceased. Here are several ways to add a more personal note to the service. A single approach can be used, or several approaches can be combined.

--A special poem(s) is read in honor of the deceased.

--Excerpts from family letters written by or to the deceased are read.

--Statements of remembrance are presented by family or friends--or read by the Pastor on their behalf.

--Excerpts from "sympathy" letters received following the death are read.

--An open invitation is given to the congregation for impromptu statements of remembrance.

--A moment of individual reflection takes place in silence or as the organist softly plays one or two stanzas of special music.

Memorial Service Expenses

Organist: \$100 (Paid directly to organist)

Soloist: TBA with soloist (Paid directly to soloist)

Zion Lutheran Church Women: a donation of \$100-\$150 for serving the reception. (Paid to Zion Lutheran Church Women or ZLCW)

Clergy: Honorarium of \$100-\$150

Church: Since there are extra responsibilities provided by the church that are usually handled by the Funeral Home, a \$200 church honorarium is requested. (Paid to Zion Lutheran Church)

Sound technician: \$50.00 (Paid to Zion Lutheran Church)

Custodian: \$100 fee for cleaning sanctuary, fellowship hall, narthex and rest rooms following the service. (Paid to Zion Lutheran Church)

Scripture Readings

Biblical scripture is that inspiring voice beyond ourselves and our personal grief which rings down through the centuries to remind us of the eternal God who has been--and remains--the blessed hope and "mighty fortress" of countless generations of humanity. Here are some scripture passages you might consider for the service:

Old Testament

Job 19:23-27a

Isaiah 25:6-9; 43:1-5

Psalms 23 "The Lord is my shepherd"

Psalms 25:1,2a,4-10 "To thee, O Lord, I lift up my soul"

Psalms 27:1,4-9,13,14 "The Lord is my light and my salvation"

Psalms 46:1-5,10 "God is our refuge and strength"

Psalms 84 "How lovely is thy dwelling place"

Psalms 95:1-7 "O come, let us sing unto the Lord"

Psalms 100 "Make a joyful noise to the Lord"

Psalms 139:1-12 "O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me!"

Psalms 147:1-12 "Praise the Lord! For it is good to sing"

Isaiah 40:1,2a,28-31 "Comfort, comfort my people"

Isaiah 43:1-5 "Do not fear, for I am with you;"

Additional Old Testament passages:

Psalms 130

Proverbs 31:10-31 (wife/mother)

Psalms 63:1-8

Isaiah 25:1,4,6-10;

Psalms 103

Psalms 118:5, 8-9, 13, 15-17, 19-20;

New Testament

Romans 8:14-18,28a

Romans 8:31-35, 37-39

Romans 14:7-8

I Corinthians 15: 12-26

I Corinthians 15:51-57

I Corinthians 15:50-58 "O death, where is thy victory?"

II Corinthians 4:16-5:5 "We never become discouraged"

I John 4:7-16 "Beloved, let us love one another"

I Thessalonians 4:13-18

II Timothy 4:7-8

I Corinthians 13

I Peter 1:3-9

Ephesians 3:14-21

Philippians 2:5-11

Philippians 3:20-21

Revelation 21:2-7

Gospel

Mark 10:13-16 (child)

Matthew 5:1-12 "Blessed are the poor in spirit"

Matthew 6:19-21,25-34 "Consider the lilies of the field"

Matthew 11:28-30 "Come to me all you that are weary..."

John 6:35-40 "I am the bread of life"

John 10:7-16 "I am the good shepherd"

John 11:17-26 "I am the resurrection and the life"

John 14:1-6a,23 "In my Father's house are many rooms"

Hymns and Spiritual Songs

During a service that lasts around 35 minutes, it is good to allow everyone present to participate in the singing. The hymns, psalms and spiritual songs that are chosen need to be familiar to a good number of the congregation so that the singing is strong. Our hymnal contains many fine selections from which you may wish to choose. There may be songs not included in our resources that you wish to use. In this case, we will need to arrange for the words to be printed in the worship folder. Please inform the pastor as soon as you select the music.

Abide With Me

Amazing Grace

Beautiful Savior

Blessed Assurance

Borning Cry

Children of the Heavenly Father

Day by Day

For All the Saints

Going Home

Heaven's Now My Home

How Great Thou Art

I Know My Redeemer Lives

I Want Jesus to Walk With Me

In the Garden

In the Sweet by and by

Hymns/Songs cont.

My Faith Looks Up to Thee

On Eagle's Wings

Precious Lord, Take My Hand

Softly and Tenderly

Soon and Very Soon

The King of Love My Shepherd Is

The Lord's My Shepherd

The Lord's Prayer

The Old Rugged Cross

There Is a Green Hill Far Away

Thine Be the Glory, Risen, Conquer'ing Son

Thy Holy Wings

What A Friend We Have In Jesus

There are also Christian contemporary songs that are appropriate for memorial/funeral services. Please contact the pastor should you wish to use contemporary songs.

Writing an Obituary or Eulogy

The following are items that will be helpful in composing a write-up or obituary to be read at the service or placed in the newspaper.

NAME

- **Full name of the deceased, including nickname, if any**
- **Age at death**
- **Residence (for example, the name of the city) at death**
- **Day and date of death (remember to include the year)**
- **Place of death**
- **Cause of death**

LIFE

- **Date of birth**
- **Place of birth**
- **Names of parents**
- **Childhood: siblings, stories, schools, friends**
- **Marriage(s): date, place, name of spouse**
- **Education: school, college, university and other**
- **Designations, awards, and other recognition**
- **Employment: jobs, activities, stories, colleagues, satisfactions, promotions, union activities, frustrations**
- **Military service**
- **Hobbies, sports, interests, activities, and other enjoyment**
- **Charitable, religious, fraternal, political, and other affiliations; positions held**
- **Achievements**

FAMILY

Survived by (and place of residence):

- **Spouse**
- **Children (in order of date of birth, and their spouses)**
- **Grandchildren**
- **Great-grandchildren**
- **Great-great-grandchildren**
- **Parents**
- **Grandparents**
- **Siblings (in order of date of birth)**
- **Others, such as nephews, nieces, cousins, in-laws**
- **Friends**
- **Pets (if appropriate)**

Predeceased by (and date of death):

- **Spouse**
- **Children (in order of date of birth)**
- **Grandchildren**
- **Siblings (in order of date of birth)**
- **Others, such as nephews, nieces, cousins, in-laws**
- **Pets (if appropriate)**

SERVICE

- **Day, date, time, place**
- **Name of officiant, pallbearers, honorary pallbearers, other information**
- **Visitation information if applicable: day, date, time, place**
- **Reception information if applicable: day, date, time, place**
- **Other memorial, vigil, or graveside services if applicable: day, date, time, place**
- **Place of interment**
- **Name of funeral home in charge of arrangements**
- **Where to call for more information (even if no service planned)**

END

- **Memorial funds established**
- **Memorial donation suggestions, including addresses**
- **Thank you to people, groups, or institutions**
- **Quotation or poem**

Three words that sum up the life.

Contact Information

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