

Ideas for Funeral Planning

As you begin to face your loss, you will make decisions that affect you, your family, and your wider circle of friends. The guidelines will help you to be better prepared and to make appropriate and meaningful choices.

When someone dies, there are many decisions to be made. Some of these decisions need to be made quickly. It may seem like everything is coming at you at the same time. Take things one at a time. Some things can wait. Your funeral director and our pastor will help you plan a meaningful service for you and your family.

PLEASE ALLOW OUR PASTOR TO BE AT YOUR SIDE WHEN YOUR LOVED ONE DIES. Death involves physical, emotional and spiritual issues. God promises to give us strength and to be with us in our time of need. One of the ways He strengthens is through His servant, our pastor. One of the greatest privileges of pastoral ministry is to be with a family as their loved one dies. Death offers the shepherd special opportunities to lead and comfort his flock.

At the present time, Faith members can also benefit from the experience of Tom Martin, a Faith member and retired funeral home director. Tom is available for advice to help you through some of the practical things that need to be done following a death.

THE FUNERAL OR MEMORIAL SERVICE IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO WORSHIP AND PRAISE THE TRIUNE GOD FOR HIS VICTORY OVER DEATH AND THE GRAVE AS WELL AS TO GIVE THANKS FOR THE LIFE OF YOUR LOVED ONE. The service is to be seen as a worship service of the congregation. For this reason, you should consult our pastor before making any plans for the service. He will lead you in choosing the hymns, Bible readings, and choir/solo selections, should you so chose. Since the funeral service is a worship service, the hymns and songs will reflect our Lutheran heritage and style of worship at Faith. Eulogies,ⁱ that is, readings or speeches that remember the deceased, can take place in the Fellowship Hall after the service.

TO MAKE THE FUNERAL EXPERIENCE MORE PERSONAL you may provide pictures, memorabilia, artwork, hobby items, or other personal articles to display in the fellowship hall or narthex. These articles provide positive memories and serve as conversation pieces for all who attend. Tables and easels may be used if they are available.

Funeral homes often offer the service of providing a DVD to show pictures from the life of your loved one. Some families find this service comforting, as family members review old photo albums for the DVD. Others find it to be a burden because they have so many other things to do. It's OK either way. At Faith, the DVD can be shown after the service in the Fellowship Hall.

OBITUARIES/DEATH NOTICES

It is part of the funeral home's services to provide obituaries in both local and out-of-town newspapers. The newspapers will usually only receive information from the funeral homes, not the family or the pastor. The funeral home will advise you about fees for these obituaries. The funeral home will also ask you to provide the information for the obituary and may ask you to proofread it for accuracy if possible. Death notices can also be provided to trade publications, alumni newspapers, professional journals as well as radio stations in some areas.

MONUMENT/MARKER

The funeral home will assist you in choosing a monument or marker.

CREMATION

If you chose cremation, this does not rule out the traditional visitation that normally precedes the traditional funeral. Visitations can be held at the funeral home. They can also take place in the church narthex. If you chose, the body of your loved one can be present for the visitation. Then the funeral home would take it for cremation. Then after that, the memorial service and interment of ashes would take place.

For someone who has been an active Christian, the church is the logical place to hold a funeral or memorial service since it is God's house. This is where your loved one celebrated his/her calling to Christ in Holy Baptism and where he/she heard God's Word and where he/she received the Body and Blood of Christ. Through these Means of Grace God sustained your loved one's faith "unto life everlasting."

The ashes of Faith members may be scattered or interred in the Faith Memorial Garden. This garden is managed by a special committee. In this folder you will find a special paper describing the services available and the costs for such services.

ⁱ Eulogy – from the Greek: *eulogeo*, to glorify, worship, praise. The funeral service is the opportunity to praise God for His grace and mercy in Jesus Christ who overcame sin and the grave and who promises to raise the bodies of those who believe in Him. Salvation is by grace through faith and not by works so that no one can boast (Eph. 2:8-9). That all the praise may be directed to God, and to avoid giving the impression that the deceased has entered heaven because of good works, eulogies are not included in the funeral or memorial service at Faith. A "time of family remembrance" may be appropriate in the Fellowship Hall, still emphasizing God's grace rather than works.