

Funeral/Memorial Services  
at  
Red Hill Lutheran Church



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

714.544.3131

## **Introduction**

The death of someone we know and love is a time of sadness, mourning, longing, and often, confusion. As people of faith, in the midst of our grief, we also have hope—hope in God through Jesus Christ. This is the hope described by Saint Paul:

*Don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been raised with Him like this in His death, we will certainly also be raised with Him in His resurrection. (Romans 6.3–5)*

One of the important ministries of the church is to personally surround those who are grieving, offering the precious promises of the Gospel, which are the source of our comfort and hope. Jesus came to ensure that we are never alone and that nothing shall separate us from God's presence and love—not even death (*Romans 8.28*). At Red Hill, one of the ways we offer this Gospel hope is through the Funeral or Memorial Service. Our desire is to assist families by offering support before, during, and after the planning process, as well as comfort to family and friends through God's promise of eternal life in heaven.

## **The Christian Funeral**

The Christian Funeral is a service of Worship in the Christian Church that publically confesses the divine promises and hope given through Jesus Christ. In the Funeral service, the Baptismal theme of death and resurrection with Christ is proclaimed and confessed; that through His life, death, and resurrection, Jesus has conquered sin, death, and the powers of hell, thus offering comfort and peace to the grieving heart (*John 14.1-6; 2 Corinthians 1.3-5; Galatians 3.27; 1 Peter 3.18-22*). As Lutherans, the Funeral rite proclaims that:

For the Christian, death is not the last word. Love incarnate is stronger than death (*John 11:25*). Christ's death and resurrection proclaim that victory belongs to life. Jesus calls His disciples to follow Him through death to life. That journey begins in the death and resurrection that happens in Holy Baptism. The burial rites take the Christian on the last steps of this journey to the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting.<sup>1</sup>

As a Christian Worship service, the focus is always on Jesus and His grace, love, and victory! For many who attend a Funeral service, they may possess little or no confidence or comfort, and consequently, no hope. This is precisely why the Funeral rite focuses on and lifts up Jesus and His salvific work “for us and our salvation.” While it is appropriate to honor the faith and life of the deceased in the Funeral rite, this is done in light of the Gospel promise and divine sovereignty over life and death (*1 Thessalonians 4.13-18*).

As you plan a Christian Funeral, it is very important to keep these understandings in mind. Here are some thoughts and considerations concerning Funerals in the church.

## **Someone I love is dying, how can my church help me?**

When death is imminent, our Pastors and Deacons stand ready to come and pray with you and your loved one facing death. If there is time, please call the church office at 714.544-3131 ext. 100 (Executive Assistant to the Senior Pastor) or ext. 110 (Senior Pastor). We will make every effort to have someone come to you.

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<sup>1</sup> *Lutheran Service Book: Agenda*. (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2006), 85.

### **What do I do after a death of a loved one?**

While at the hospital or home, you will need to contact an area mortuary to begin the necessary next steps for the care of your loved one. While we do not endorse one particular mortuary, the mortuaries that Red Hill works with the most are Saddleback Mortuary in Tustin, and Fairhaven Mortuary in Santa Ana. There are additional mortuaries in Orange County that provide excellent services. If possible, pre planning and interviewing of a preferred mortuary will help lessen an already stressful and confusing time, as well as ensure the best decisions for your family. The mortuary will assist you with needs such as:

- Care of the body (casket or urn)
- Securing necessary permits and death certificates
- Cemetery choice (plot or niche space)
- Obituary in the local newspaper
- Flowers
- Processional to cemetery (transportation)
- Visitation (if held at the mortuary)

Once you have spoken with your selected mortuary, please call the church at 714.544.3131 ext. 100/110 to notify the church/Pastor. It is important that you speak with the officiating Pastor before scheduling the Funeral, especially if you choose to have the Funeral Service here at the church.

### **Types of Services**

Generally, there are three Worship services associated with the Funeral rite. *Funeral* services, *Memorial* services, and *Committal* (Graveside) services. The primary difference between a Funeral and Memorial service is the presence of the casket at a *Funeral service*. At a *Memorial* service, an urn may or may not be present. Typically, *Committal* (graveside) services follow the Funeral and precede the Memorial service.

### **Planning and Location of the Funeral Service**

A Funeral service is conducted by the Pastor of the church. While the Pastor desires to work with the family in planning the service, the content and design of the service is under the Pastor's authority. The basic order of the service generally includes:

- Procession of the Casket (If present)
- Opening Invocation/Blessing/Prayer
- Opening Hymn
- Responsive Prayer
- Readings from the Holy Scriptures
- Personal Messages and Reflections (Eulogy)
- Pastor's Homily
- Hymn/Song of the Day/Special Music Solo
- Closing Prayers of the People
- Lord's Prayer
- Committal Prayer
- Closing Hymn/Song
- Benediction

We encourage the Funeral Services be conducted within the church sanctuary. Whether the funeral is held in the church or elsewhere (e.g., mortuary, chapel, or cemetery), the officiating Pastor represents the people of God and therefore carries out his public ministry on behalf of the congregation. Significantly,

the officiating Pastor speaks and acts as one called and ordained to the Office of Word and Sacrament. As such, the Pastor is Christ's ambassador, carrying out the Lord's ministry of grace and mercy.

### **Placement of the Casket/Urn**

When a casket is present in the service, typically the casket is positioned in the Narthex of the church prior to the beginning of the service. At this time, it is permissible to open the casket and draw back the Funeral Pall (if used). Once the service begins, the casket is closed and the Funeral Pall (if used) covers the casket for the procession into the sanctuary. The casket is then positioned in the nave/chancel area during the service.

When an urn is present, the urn is placed on a table in the nave/chancel area of the sanctuary.

### **Funeral Pall**

Red Hill Lutheran Church has a beautiful Funeral Pall, for both the casket and the urn, for use at Funerals. The Pall is a large piece of cloth that covers the entire casket and its carriage. The Urn Pall covers the top and sides of the urn. It is made out of white material, symbolizing the truth that in Holy Baptism, Christians are clothed in the righteousness (purity) of Christ. The Pall is usually placed on the casket in the narthex before processing into the nave, and then removed after returning to the hearse. The urn Pall is placed on the urn at the beginning of the service, and removed afterwards.

### **The Reading of the Holy Scriptures**

Typically, there are three Scripture passages to be read during a Funeral service: An Old Testament and/or Psalm text; a New Testament Epistle (Letter) text; and a Gospel text. The readings reflect the hope and promises found in the Christian life.

You might consider if your loved one had any special Bible verses. If your loved one was Confirmed in the Lutheran Church, his/her Confirmation verse would be most appropriate. You are encouraged to discuss your thoughts about the Bible passages with the Pastor. (See Appendix I for possible Biblical texts).

### **Music**

Music in the Lutheran Church generally, and in the Funeral service specifically, is central in the Worship service. Music is the language of the soul. Specifically, classical, Christian hymns/music, reflect the history and depth of Christian faith, expressing the Biblical and theological foundations of our faith. For congregational singing, you are welcome to select any appropriate hymn from the hymnal. (See Appendix II for hymn considerations)

Hymns and anthems not in our hymnal will need to be discussed with the Pastor, as well as any music sung by soloists. A copy of the music should be provided for review when plans are being made. Several items are of a concern for hymns/music not in our hymnal. First and foremost is doctrinal content. A second concern is copyright. Many popular songs and almost all hymns, recently composed, have a copyright.

### **Family Involvement**

Involvement of family and friends in the Funeral service is encouraged. Family involvement can include the reading of one of the Scripture passages, handing out Funeral bulletins, ushering, overseeing the signing of the guest book, and acting as Pall Bearers. In the Funeral service, one eulogy from a family member or trusted friend is acceptable (5 minutes). The speaker needs to be reminded of appropriate content and language when addressing the congregation. Again, because the Christian Funeral is a Worship service, many popular songs, poems and writings are not appropriate for the service itself.

Likewise, video presentations may be used prior to the beginning of the Funeral service (as guests are arriving and waiting for the service to begin).

The most appropriate time for relatives and/or friends to speak and share memories of their loved one (eulogizing), as well as the use of video presentations, is during the reception. The visitation at the funeral home is another place where special reminiscences by family and friends may be organized.

If there is a Lutheran or other Pastor (friend or family) whom you would like to involve (or officiate) in the Funeral service, please inform the Senior Pastor of Red Hill as soon as possible. Proper protocol requires that guest clergy receive an invitation from the host Pastor in order to participate.

### **Military Honors**

As Christian citizens of this Country, we gratefully honor and remember those who have served our Country and defended our liberty. While not a religious rite, Military Honors recognizes the deceased's service to our nation. Typically, Military Honors are offered at graveside. A flag presentation, the sounding of taps, and the traditional gun salute are proper and fitting at the time of burial and are provisions of federal law at no cost for our veterans. Arrangements for Military Honors are to be made with the Mortuary/Funeral director, and then communicated to the officiating Pastor. The Mortuary/funeral director will require a copy of military discharge papers to make the arrangements.

### **Flowers/Pictures/Memorabilia**

Flowers not only add beauty to the Sanctuary and graveside, they also remind us of new life, symbolizing the joy and hope of the Resurrection of Jesus. The placement of the flowers in the sanctuary is at the discretion of the Pastor. Please note that if the Funeral Pall is used on the casket, a floral spray cannot be placed on top of the Pall. Consideration should be given to how the flowers will be transported before, and especially after, the Funeral service itself.

Often, families request that, in lieu of flowers, donations be made to the deceased's church, charity, or favorite project.

Pictures and other memorabilia that reflects the life and loves of the deceased and their family, can be placed in the narthex of the church prior to the service. No pictures are to be placed in the nave/chancel/altar area of the church during the service.

### **Funeral Receptions/Luncheons**

The Christian Life Center (CLC) is available for receptions following the Funeral Service, based on availability and time/day of the service (Please note: Due to the presence of our school and for security reasons, use of the CLC is sometimes not possible). The family is responsible for food and or catering. The church provides the set up/take down of tables and chairs. Please speak with the church administrator for more details. If the deceased was a member of a small group and/or ministry team in the church, the members of that group often assist with serving and support. (Please Note: Alcoholic beverages and smoking are prohibited on the church property).

### **After the Funeral**

After the Funeral service is over, and all the guests and family have returned home, it is very common to experience intense feelings of loneliness and grief. This is the time when the family and community are most needed. You are not alone! Jesus has promised His presence and strength for the coming days. Additionally, the church stands ready to support the grieving heart, helping to provide peace, comfort, and hope on the journey toward spiritual and emotional healing. This includes:

- Conversations with the Pastor or a Deacon. You can meet with a Pastor or Deacon who will walk with you through the grieving journey.
- All Saints Day Remembrance Service. This annual service is designed to celebrate our hope in Jesus and to honor the life of the deceased. This is a great time to gather with family and/or friends to remember your loved one.
- “Grief Share” Groups. Red Hill regularly offers a series of “Grief Share” groups, consisting of people who have recently lost a loved one and those who are going through, and have gone through, the grieving journey toward healing. If the “Grief Share” groups are presently not in session, we often know of other churches in the community where you could join a group.
- Center for Individual and Family Therapy (CIFT). CIFT is a Christian counseling center located in Orange, California. CIFT offers a variety of Psychological services and special seminars on grief and loss.
- Referrals to area Therapists. In addition to CIFT, Red Hill has relationships with various area Psychologists, who work together with us to provide the support and care needed.
- Small Groups and Ministry Teams. Mutual care and prayer are central to our Biblical Community here at Red Hill. Of course, this is especially necessary when an individual has lost a loved one. The small groups and ministry teams provide conversation, prayer, meals, childcare, and other means of support for their members who are grieving.

### **Conclusion**

As has been said throughout this guide, the Funeral service conducted by a Pastor of the church is a public Worship service under the authority of the congregation. The Funeral service emphasizes the hope, peace, and promises that are given to the faithful in the resurrection from the dead and life eternal. Again, while honoring the life of the deceased is appropriate, the focus of the service is on Christ alone. *Consequently, some of your wishes may not be possible.* In order to avoid miscommunication, misunderstandings, and hurt feelings, please communicate these guidelines to family members and friends.

As in all things, clear communication is the key! Please feel free to discuss anything with the Pastor of Red Hill Lutheran Church. He will gladly help you in making the Funeral service a time of beautiful Worship and thankful remembrance.

Finally, the death of a loved one brings the often unwelcome reality of human mortality, along with the awareness that, as human beings, we cannot control life and death. Grief is the other side of love; deep grief reflects deep love. It is normal to cry and laugh; to experience sorrow and gratitude moment by moment. The source of our comfort comes from the promise of a new day that is coming. A new day that St. John describes in the book of Revelation:

*...(God)...will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”*  
(Revelation 21.4)

This is the hope of the Christian faith--God will give His faithful a new life—free from sin and sorrow, a new body—no longer sick or painful, and a new home in a new heaven and a new earth. May your tears turn to joyful tears as you think of His gracious love!

## Appendix 1

Below are some suggested Scripture Readings for Christian Funerals:

### **Psalms**

Psalm 16.5–11

Psalm 23

Psalm 27.1, 4–9, 13, 14

Psalm 31.1–3, 9, 10, 14–17a, 24

Psalm 32.1–7

Psalm 34.1–9, 17–19, 22

Psalm 36.7–10

Psalm 42.1–6a, 9–11

Psalm 46.1–5, 10, 11

Psalm 50.15

Psalm 71.1–3, 17–21

Psalm 90.1–12

Psalm 91

Psalm 103.1–17a

Psalm 118.5–9

Psalm 121

Psalm 130

Psalm 139.1–18

Psalm 145

Psalm 146

### **Old Testament**

Job 19.23–27

Isaiah 25.6–9

Isaiah 26.1–4, 19

Isaiah 40.1–11

Isaiah 40.28, 29

Isaiah 43.1–3a, 25

Isaiah 44.6–8

Isaiah 55.1–3, 6–13

Isaiah 57.1, 2

Isaiah 61.1–3, 10, 11

Isaiah 65.17–25

Lamentations 3.19–26, 31–33, 55–57

Daniel 12.1–3

### **New Testament Epistle**

Romans 5.1–11

Romans 6.3–10

Romans 8.14–24a

Romans 8.28–39

Romans 14.7–9

1 Corinthians 15.3–8, 12–20

1 Corinthians 15.20–24

1 Corinthians 15.35–44

1 Corinthians 15.50–58

2 Corinthians 1.3–5  
2 Corinthians 4.16–5.1  
2 Corinthians 5.1–10  
Ephesians 1.3–8  
Ephesians 2.3b–10  
Philippians 3.7–14  
Philippians 3.20, 21

Colossians 3.12–17  
1 Thessalonians 4.13–18  
2 Timothy 2.8–13  
Hebrews 2.14–18  
Hebrews 10.35–38  
Hebrews 11.1–3, 13–16  
Hebrews 12.1–3  
James 5.14–16  
1 Peter 1.3–9  
1 Peter 5.6–11  
1 John 3.1–3  
Revelation 7.9–17  
Revelation 14.6, 7, 12, 13  
Revelation 21.1–4, 22–25  
Revelation 22.1–5

### **Gospel**

Matthew 6.25–34  
Matthew 11.28–30  
Matthew 25.1–13  
Matthew 25.31–46  
Mark 16.1–8  
Luke 7.11–17  
Luke 23.33, 39–43  
John 3.16–21  
John 5.24–29  
John 6.35–40  
John 6.47–58  
John 10.11–16  
John 10.27–29  
John 11.3, 4  
John 11.17–27  
John 11.38–44  
John 14.1–6, 25–27  
John 20.1–18

### *Upon the death of a child*

Mark 18.1–5, 10  
Mark 5.35  
Mark 10.13–16

## Appendix II

Below are some suggested hymns for Christian Funerals (Hymn numbers are from the *Lutheran Book of Worship* (LBW) and the *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (ELW) service books respectively:

|   |      |      |
|---|------|------|
| A Mighty Fortress Is Our God                  | #229 | #504 |
| Abide With Me, Fast Falls the Eventide        | #272 | #629 |
| Amazing Grace                                 | #448 | #779 |
| Awake, My Heart, With Gladness                | #129 | #378 |
| Beautiful Savior                              | #518 | #838 |
| Behold a Host, Arrayed In White               | #314 | #425 |
| Borning Cry                                   |      | #732 |
| Christ the Lord Is Risen Today                | #130 | #369 |
| For All the Saints Who from Their Labors Rest | #174 | #422 |
| Give Me Jesus                                 |      | #770 |
| Great is Thy Faithfulness                     |      | #733 |
| I Am Trusting You, Lord Jesus                 | #460 |      |
| I Know of a Sleep in Jesus' Name              | #342 |      |
| I Know That My Redeemer Lives                 | #352 | #619 |
| Jerusalem, My Happy Home                      | #331 | #628 |
| Jerusalem the Golden                          | #347 |      |
| Jerusalem, O City Fair and High               | #348 |      |
| Jesus Christ Is Risen Today, Alleluia!        | #151 | #365 |
| Jesus Lives! The Victory's Won                | #133 |      |
| Jesus Lives, My Sure Defense                  |      | #621 |
| Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me                       | #334 | #755 |
| Just As I Am, Without One Plea                | #296 | #592 |
| My Faith Looks Up To Thee                     | #479 | #759 |
| My Hope Is Built On Nothing Less              | #294 | #597 |
| On Eagles Wings                               |      | #787 |
| O Savior, Precious Savior                     | #514 | #820 |
| Praise the Almighty, My Soul, Adore Him       | #539 |      |
| Praise the Almighty                           |      | #877 |
| Precious Lord, Take My Hand                   |      | #773 |
| Rejoice in God's Saints                       |      | #418 |
| Rejoice, the Lord is King                     | #171 | #430 |
| Rock of Ages, Cleft For Me                    | #327 | #623 |
| The Day of Resurrection                       | #141 | #361 |
| The King of Love My Shepherd Is               |      | #502 |

**Appendix III**

**Funeral/Memorial Service Planning Outline**

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Deceased: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Death: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Family Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Funeral/Memorial: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Officiating Pastor: \_\_\_\_\_

Mortuary: \_\_\_\_\_

Mortuary Contact Name/Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Florist: \_\_\_\_\_

**Music**

Organist: \_\_\_\_\_

Soloist: \_\_\_\_\_

Selected Hymns/Songs: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Memorial Donations**

**Suggestions for Memorials:**

- Area of ministry/service within and/or outside the church.
- Red Hill Lutheran Church and School Endowment Fund
- Designated Charity

In Lieu of Flowers: \_\_\_\_\_

**Family Members:**

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

Children: \_\_\_\_\_

Grandchildren \_\_\_\_\_

Great-Grandchildren: \_\_\_\_\_

Siblings: \_\_\_\_\_

**Reception**

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

**Funeral/Memorial Honoraria/Fees**

\*Sanctuary: Church Member: **No Fee**; Non-Member: **\$200.00**

\* Officiating Pastor Honoraria: **\$275.00**

\* Organist Honoraria: **\$200.00**

\* Soloist Honoraria: **\$175.00**

\* Sound Board Technician: **\$50.00**