



WEST UNION LUTHERAN CHURCH

Celebration of Life
&
Funeral Planning

Funeral Planning

At a person's death, the church shares the grief of those who mourn and remembers the brevity of life on earth. At the funeral we give voice to sorrow, thank God for our loved one, and entrust this companion of ours into the hands of God. Trusting in God's promise in baptism that we are claimed by Christ forever, we rest in the sure and certain hope of the resurrection. 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.

Evangelical Lutheran Worship, p. 279

Distinguishing Between a Celebration of Life and Funeral

At West Union Lutheran Church we entrust our beloved into the arms of God's grace and mercy. For we are convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, 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). This leads us into celebrating the life of the one who has died. To give thanks and praise that we had the honor of sharing this beautiful walk on earth with them. There is space for grief, sadness, anger, and all the emotions that come when someone dies.

Celebration of Life

The Celebration of Life service is a public or semi-public worship service. It entails a procession of those nearest to the deceased, hymns of comfort and praise, a message from our Pastor, scripture to hear the promises, and prayers to connect us with God our Creator and Redeemer.

Most Celebrations of Life are preceded by a visitation hour where people can come to pay their respects and connect with those close to the deceased. Following the Celebration of Life there is the option for a luncheon where we share a meal and opportunity for those who wish to speak publicly may do so.

Funeral

The Funeral is a time where we lay the body or ashes to rest. West Union Lutheran Church has a cemetery that is available or this may be done offsite at a location of the family's choosing. The Funeral entails a few prayers, scripture, and an opportunity to pay final respects for laying to rest. A funeral may be private or public as the family desires. Following the funeral there is typically no church supported events.

In the event that the body is cremated and no funeral home is involved the family has two options for burial. In both cases 12" of soil above the urn.

- (a) The family may dig the site themselves. West Union will make the location and provide a shovel.
- (b) West Union Lutheran can arrange for a contractor to come and dig the site.

Should we Choose One or Both?

Families are welcome to choose one or both a Celebration of Life or Funeral. The Celebration of Life allows for the community who loves you to gather with you and a space and place for them to grieve as well as you. Funerals tend to be more private.

As your pastor and the pastor for the community I would recommend both a Celebration of Life and Funeral. While you may feel it easier to just do a funeral and not involve others, others want to be there for you and your family. We want to walk beside you and hold this grief with you.

Frequently Asked Questions

Should the body or ashes be present at the Celebration of Life?

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 service may be used as a memorial service following interment or when the body or ashes are not able to be present. A visitation may be held in the sanctuary immediately before the Celebration of Life. During the visitation, the coffin may be left open. Shortly before the service begins the family makes their last visit to the coffin. While they are preparing for the service with the pastor, funeral home staff members close the coffin and prepare it for the service. The coffin remains closed for the service and is not opened again.

What about Holy Communion?

Holy Communion is a tremendous gift of grace that is a foretaste of the feast that we will one day enjoy together in the presence of God and of one another. The celebration of Holy Communion may be included during the Celebration of Life. West Union practices an open table. That means that all people of any age or creed are welcome to partake.

How can family members participate in the service?

Family members or friends are always encouraged to participate in the service as scripture readers, Communion assistants, musicians, pallbearers, etc. Family and friends may also wish to offer a remembrance or tribute. We recommend no more than two remembrances and ask that thoughts be written down in advance. Spontaneous comments are not recommended.

What about a video tribute?

Families may wish to create a video tribute to show prior to or during the service. West Union Lutheran Church has audiovisual technology that can facilitate this meaningful remembrance. Please inform us as soon as possible if you would like to use our audiovisual system for this purpose, and we will provide specific instructions as to the format of the video.

Celebration of Life with no body

If a Celebration of Life with no body, 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 and volunteers to have someone from the funeral home in attendance who can attend to any cremated remains (if they are present), arrange flowers; set up the guest book, worship bulletins, and memorial envelopes; serve as ushers; and attend 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 — a well-worn Bible, for example.

What about meal or a reception?

A luncheon or a reception following the service is encouraged. See “Funeral Meal Options” for planning a funeral meal. 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. These must be arranged by the family.

Memorials

Many families choose to designate preferences for memorial gifts. You may wish to designate memorials to either West Union Lutheran Church or another organization.

Bulletins

Bulletins outlining the service and containing information about the deceased will be made available at no cost.

Flowers

After the funeral, all flowers, potted plants, or floral displays may be taken to the gravesite or taken by family members with prior arrangement.

Fellowship Meal Options

A fellowship meal may be held in the Fellowship Hall following a Celebration of Life or Funeral service. You may choose from two basic types of meals:

Coffee and Dessert

- The room will be set with coffee, lemonade, and dessert.
- Paper products will be provided by West Union Lutheran

Full Luncheon

- Coffee and Lemonade will be provided.
- Dessert and Salad is available upon request.
- The family is responsible for the main meal to be catered or brought in.
 - ⇒ The family may also ask West Union to purchase food and if that occurs, the family will be required to reimburse the church for the additional expense.
- West Union can assist the caterer or family in setting up the food. The family is encouraged to take home what is left.

Fee Guidelines

Because there is a direct cost involved in providing our facility, the following fee guidelines/schedule have been adopted. Full payment made out to West Union Lutheran Church is due before any event is recorded on the Master calendar.

Celebration of Life or Funeral	Member***	Non-Member
Sanctuary use only	\$0	\$325
Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall	\$50	\$550
Pastoral Honorarium	\$150	\$150
Musician (Piano / Organ)	\$150*	\$150*
Soloist	\$150*	\$150*
Audio/Video Tech Support	\$0-50**	\$50-\$100**
Caterer	\$0	\$150

*These rates are subject to change depending on the rate of the musician or soloist. There is no cost if you bring in your own musician or soloist. However, our musician has first right of refusal. Just let us know your requests and we will work with you to make the best arrangements.

** The audio/video tech support can range based on needs. Turning on the system is the lowest cost. Running the system and a live-stream of the service is the higher cost.

*** The West Union Constitution defines membership as an individual who has contributed and received communion at least once in a 3 year time frame.

Planning the Celebration of Life Service

There are a few elements that the family can choose to help tailor the Celebration of Life service to the life of the deceased. Perhaps the deceased had a favorite song, hymn, or scripture passage. Maybe they had a bible with notes or highlights. Maybe they had nothing planned or indicated—that's okay. This section will help guide you in your preparation. Pastor Adam can also help to make recommendations or choices if you need.

Suggested Scripture Readings for Christian Funerals

Old Testament

Job 19:23-27a	For I know that my Redeemer lives
Isaiah 25:6-9	Then the Lord GOD will wipe away the tears from all faces
Isaiah 61:1-3	The Lord has anointed me ... to bind up the brokenhearted
Daniel 7:1-3, 15-18	The holy ones shall receive the kingdom forever
Psalms 23	The Lord is my shepherd
Psalms 34:1-10, 22	Happy are those who take refuge in Him
Psalms 42:1-7	O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me?
Psalms 46:1-7	God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble
Psalms 90	Turn, O LORD! How long? Have compassion on your servants!
Psalms 91:9-16	Under his wings you will find refuge
Psalms 118	His steadfast love endures forever
Psalms 121	I lift up my eyes to the hills — from where will my help come?
Psalms 130	My soul waits for the LORD
Psalms 139:1-12	O LORD, you have searched me and known me
Psalms 143	For in you I put my trust
Psalms 149	Sing to the LORD a new song
Ecclesiastes 3:1-8	For everything there is a season

New Testament

Romans 1:16	I am not ashamed of the Gospel
Romans 5:1-11	Reconciled to God by Christ's death
Romans 5:17-21	Through Adam came sin and through Christ comes justification
Romans 8	Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death
Romans 8:31-35, 37-39	Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus
Romans 9	It depends not on human will or exertion, but on God
Romans 14:7-9	Accepting diversity in the community of faith (14:1-12)
1 Corinthians 15:12-26	Christ has been raised, the first fruits of those who have died
1 Corinthians 15:51-57	Death has been swallowed up in victory.
2 Corinthians 4:16-18	Living by faith
Philippians 3:20-21	Christ will transform the body
Ephesians 1:11-23	God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18	God will bring with him those who have died
2 Timothy 4:6-7	I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race
Hebrews 13:6-8	Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever
Hebrews 13:14-16	We are looking for the city that is to come
1 Peter 1:3-9	New birth into a living hope through the resurrection
1 John 3:1-3	We are God's children

Revelation 7:9-17	The multitudes of heaven worship the Lamb
Revelation 14:13	Blessed are the dead who from now on die in the Lord
Revelation 21:1-7	A new heaven and a new earth

New Testament Gospels

Matthew 5:1-12	Blessed are the poor in spirit
Matthew 11:25-30	Come to me, all you that are weary
Matthew 24:1-13	The one who endures to the end will be saved
Luke 6:20-31	Jesus speaks blessings and woes
Luke 23:39-43	Today you will be with me in paradise
John 3:16	For God so loved the world
John 5:24-29	The dead will hear the voice of the Son of God
John 6:37-40	All who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life
John 10:1-5	Jesus the Good Shepherd
John 11:21-27	The raising of Lazarus: I am the resurrection and the life
John 11:32-44	The raising of Lazarus
John 12:23-36	But if it dies, it bears much fruit
John 14:1-6	In my Father's house there are many dwelling places.

The Resurrection of Jesus

Matthew 28
Mark 16
Luke 24
John 20

Music for the Service

“Next to the Word of God, music deserves the highest praise.

The gift of language combined with the gift of song was given to us that we should proclaim the Word of God through Music.”

— Martin Luther

Prelude Music

The prelude music helps to prepare mourners for the service to follow. Music with special meaning to the deceased or family members may be selected; consider preludes on favorite hymn tunes. We recommend live music to be played.

Hymns

Procession into the church

A hymn of comfort, baptismal remembrance, or resurrection hope is appropriate.

Hymn following the sermon

A hymn that carries forth the images of the readings and sermon or is reflective of the life of faith of the deceased is appropriate.

Recession out of the church

A final hymn may be sung as the deceased is carried from the church (if body or ashes are present), usually one of resurrection hope. It is appropriate for the recession to simply be accompanied by an instrumental musical selection.

Soloists

It is appropriate for special music to be provided by soloists or other instrumentalists. Fees will be determined by the musician and paid directly to the musician. The organist fee is \$150, paid directly to the organist. The sound and video fee is \$50, paid directly to the technician.

Lutheran Book of Worship (LBW)

With One Voice (WOV)

Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW)

All of Us Go Down to the Dust	ELW 223
Alleluia! Jesus is Risen!	WOV 674, ELW 377
Amazing Grace	LBW 448, ELW 779
Beautiful Savior	LBW 518, ELW 838
Behold This Host Arrayed in White	ELW 425
Blessed Assurance	WOV 699, ELW 638
Blessing, Honor, and Glory.....	ELW 433
Borning Cry.....	ELW 732
Children of the Heavenly Father.....	LBW 474, ELW 781
Come Away to the Skies	WOV 669
For All the Saints.....	LBW 174, ELW 422
Guide Me Ever, Great Redeemer	LBW 343, ELW 618
He Leadeth Me.....	LBW 501

How Great Thou Art	LBW 532, ELW 856
I Am the Bread of Life	WOV 702, ELW 485
I Know that My Redeemer Lives!.....	LBW 352, ELW 619
I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light.....	WOV 649, ELW 815
In Peace and Joy I Now Depart	ELW 440
In the Morning When I Rise.....	WOV 777
Into Paradise May the Angels Lead You.....	ELW 222
Jerusalem, My Happy Home	LBW 331, ELW 628
Jesus Christ, My Sure Defense	LBW 340, ELW 621
Jesus Shall Reign	LBW 530, ELW 434
Jesus, Remember Me	WOV 740, ELW 616
Jesus, Still Lead On	LBW 341, ELW 624
Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus.....	LBW 487, ELW 802
Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending.....	LBW 27, ELW 435
Lord of All Hopefulness	LBW 469, ELW 765
My Faith Looks Up to Thee.....	LBW 479, ELW 759
My Lord, What a Morning	WOV 627, ELW 438
O Blessed Spring	WOV 695, ELW 447
O Christ the Same	WOV 778, ELW 760
O God, Our Help in Ages Past	LBW 320, ELW 632
O God, Whose Will is Life and Good	LBW 435
O Holy Spirit, Enter In.....	LBW 459, ELW 786
O Lord, Now Let Your Servant.....	LBW 339, ELW 313
O Sacred Head, Now Wounded.....	LBW 116,117; ELW 351,352
Oh, Happy Day When We Shall Stand	LBW 351, ELW 441
On Eagle's Wings.....	WOV 779, ELW 787
On Jordan's Stormy Bank I Stand.....	ELW 437
Precious Lord, Take My Hand.....	ELW 773, WOV 731
Shall We Gather at the River	WOV 690, ELW 423
Sing With All the Saints in Glory	WOV 691, ELW 426
Soon and Very Soon.....	WOV 744, ELW 439
The King of Love My Shepherd Is (Ps 23).....	LBW 456, ELW 502
The Lord's My Shepherd (Ps 23).....	LBW 451, ELW 778
Thine is the Glory.....	LBW 145, ELW 376
Thine the Amen, Thine the Praise	WOV 801, ELW 826
Eastertide	WOV 676, ELW 391
Thy Holy Wings	WOV 741, ELW 613
Wake, Awake, for Night is Flying	LBW 31, ELW 436
We Walk by Faith and Not by Sight	WOV 675, ELW 635
We Were Baptized in Christ Jesus	WOV 698, ELW 451
What Wondrous Love is This	LBW 385, ELW 666
You Who Dwell in the Shelter of the Lord.....	WOV 779

Solo Favorites

Psalm settings, especially of Psalm 23, 121, 42:1-7; 46:1-7, 143

Shepherd Me, O God by Marty Haugen (Ps 23)

Day by Day

On Eagle's Wings by Michael Joncas

Lord, Now You Let Your Servant Depart in Peace

Lord's Prayer

Softly and Tenderly Jesus is Calling

Funeral Planning Worksheet

The following personal information should be gathered as soon as possible and will be helpful for the church, the funeral home, and any others who will be assisting with the funeral:

Deceased full legal name (include nicknames in parentheses):

Birth date (include city and state in which the person was born):

Death date:

Home address:

The names of the parents of the deceased:

If deceased was married, what was the date of the marriage and where did the marriage take place (city and state):

Spouse's name:

Names of all children (include names of spouses):

Names of grandchildren (including great-grandchildren, etc, if any):

Names of siblings:

Family names not yet included (always indicate if someone is deceased):

Church membership:

Name and location of the congregation:

Will the body be cremated: Yes_____ No_____

Name and location of funeral home:

Name of funeral director:

Phone number/email:

Type of worship service (check all that apply)

_____ Celebration of Life with casket/urn present

_____ Celebration of Life without remains

_____ Funeral service

Approximate number of attendees for

_____ Celebration of Life

_____ Funeral service

Time of visitation (if offered):

Time of the Celebration of Life or Funeral:

Date of Service:

Location of burial if not West Union Lutheran Church:

Bible Readings:

Hymns

Procession:

Hymn of the Day:

Recession:

Special Music

Song:

Vocalist/instrumentalist:

Printed Bulletin: _____ Obituary _____ Photograph

Holy Communion: _____ Yes _____ No

Video Tribute: _____ Yes _____ No

Reminder that this is made by the family or funeral home. Please inform West Union if one will be made and played at West Union in order that we can prepare our equipment to show the video.

Remembrances and tributes:

Name and relationship:

Name and relationship:

Name and relationship:

Names of pallbearers (normally there are six):

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

Memorials:

_____ West Union Lutheran Church Memorial Fund

_____ Other:

Luncheon/Reception:

_____ Coffee and dessert

_____ Deli sandwich buffet

_____ Other:

_____ Anticipated number of attendees for luncheon/reception

If the reception is to be held at West Union Lutheran the family will need to determine with the Work Team what is to be offered and the potential cost, if any.

Estimated number of attendees: _____



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