

What if the weather is bad?

A tent is usually set up at the cemetery to protect from some types of weather. Alternate options include holding the service at the place of the funeral or traveling to the cemetery with a small group.

What if I'm limited by mobility?

Mourners are welcome to remain at the church during a committal. Arrangements can also be made with the funeral director to have a car brought close to the graveside and the window opened.

THE FUNERAL MEAL



What is the purpose?

The funeral meal offers attendees who have traveled more than just a meal before they depart. It provides space for family, friends, and neighbors to connect, share stories, and focus on the joy of life shared with the deceased.

What is served?

Funeral meals often consist of sandwiches, salads, dessert. A hot meal can be made upon request. The food is served by the women of the congregation, and arrangements can be made with them.

What is the cost?

The women of the congregation provide the salads, dessert, and beverages. We purchase the rest of the groceries, and ask the family to pay for those following the meal. A donation to the Women of Zion Lutheran Church is also appreciated. The pastor can provide contact information for the ladies for special requests or questions.

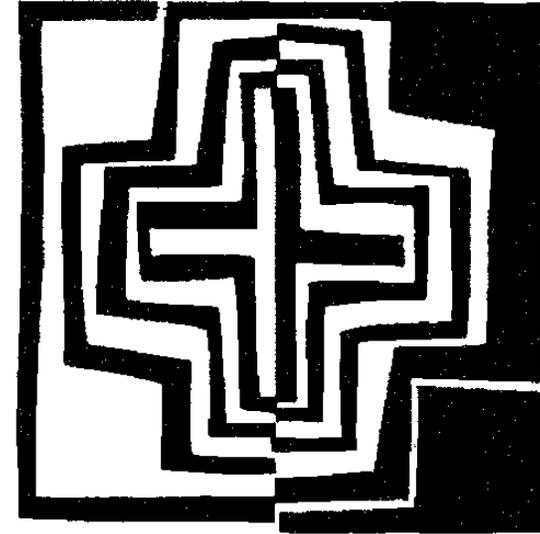
Can we still have a meal if the funeral is at the funeral home?

A meal can be served at the church for any funeral led by our pastors.

What if the burial is far away?

If the place of burial is located at a distance, a meal can be held immediately following the funeral service, prior to the committal.

When Death Occurs



Funerals with Zion Lutheran Church

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Although we trust in God's promise of resurrection and eternal life, death remains difficult for those still in this life who grieve their loss and attend to the final arrangements of their loved one.

We hope this resource and our time together will help make your journey through grief a little easier.

GREETINGS

This congregation seeks to support you not only at the time of the funeral, but also in preparation for it and as you return to daily life. Whether death has occurred or is still on the horizon, know that you have our deepest sympathies and our attentive care.

ABOUT FUNERALS

When should I call the pastor?



The pastor is available to be present when death approaches. Both the experience and the presence of the pastor can assist those in mourning. If not present at the time of death, please call the pastor as soon as possible after someone dies.

What happens at a funeral?

A Christian funeral often involves a family service, funeral service, cemetery committal, and lunch. Each of these elements are part of a continuous procession leading the bereaved to hear the voice of the Gospel with healing power and clarity. Although a funeral may focus on positive memories and emphasize God's grace and gift of resurrection, we also do not minimize or ignore the pain and loss of death, nor the honest pains of life truly lived.

When and where should the funeral be held?

Please consult with both the funeral director and pastor before setting your hearts on a particular date or time for the funeral. Previous commitments might limit when either is available.

The funerals of practicing Christians are generally held in the church they regularly attend. For those without an active relationship with the church, a funeral home might be a more suitable location. Either way, the church and its pastors share our hope in the love and mercy of God, and are committed to supporting you.

What pastor will lead the funeral?

Funerals at the church are typically led by the local pastor. Visiting pastors may be invited by Zion's pastor to share a role. Generally,

1 Peter 1:3-9 - *A living hope through the resurrection of Christ*

Revelation 7:9-17 - *God will wipe away every tear*

Revelation 21:2-7 - *I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem*

Revelation 22:1-5 - *The Lord God will be their light*

Who will read the scripture?

This is a good place to include family (especially children or grandchildren) or friends who would like to have a role in the service. Nonetheless, many choose to have the pastor read.

Will there be a recording of the funeral service?

We have the ability to record video from a fixed camera in the back. The camera is often unattended and produced with amateur equipment. We cannot guarantee the quality or even success of any recording. Please let us know if a recording is important to you.

THE COMMITTAL SERVICE



What is the committal?

The committal is a brief graveside prayer service at the cemetery. During this time, we bless the resting places of the dead, hear God's promise to raise the dead and reunite us with our beloved, and send the faithful to follow in the footsteps of Christ and the deceased.

What about a military, EMS, fraternal, or other send-off?

These rituals may or may not be appropriate for the committal depending on the local practice, theology of the organization, and character of the rite. Some rites are better held outside the context of a prayer service. Inclusion can be planned only in consultation with the pastor. It is our practice that God has the final word.

What if there will not be a burial?

If there will not be a burial, or it will take place at a later time, elements may be incorporated into the funeral service. Please inquire if you would like the pastor to be present for a private committal at a later time or distant location.

Scriptures commonly read at funerals (but not limited to):

Job 19:23-27a - *I know that my Redeemer lives*
Ecclesiastes 3:1-15 - *For everything there is a season*
Isaiah 25:6-9 - *God will swallow up death forever*
Isaiah 40:1-11, 28-31 - *Comfort, O comfort my people*
Isaiah 43:1-3a, 18-19, 25 - *I am about to do a new thing*
Isaiah 55:1-3, 6-13 - *Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters*
Isaiah 61:1-3 - *The spirit of the Lord God is upon me*
Jeremiah 31:8-13 - *I will turn their mourning into joy*
Lamentations 3:22-26, 31-33 - *Steadfast love of God never ceases*
Psalm 23 - *The Lord is my shepherd*
Psalm 42:1-7 - *As a deer longs for flowing streams*
Psalm 46:1-7 - *God is our refuge and strength*
Psalm 90 - *You have been our dwelling place in all generations*
Psalm 118 - *God's steadfast love endures forever*
Psalm 121 - *I lift up my eyes to the hills*
Psalm 130 - *Out of the depths I cry to you*
Psalm 139 - *Nothing can separate us, fearfully and wonderfully made*
Matthew 5:1-10 - *The Beatitudes... blessed are those who mourn*
Matthew 11:25-30 - *Come to me, all you who are weary*
Luke 24:1-9, 36-43 - *The resurrection of Christ*
John 1:1-5, 9-14 - *The light shines in the darkness*
John 6:37-40 - *I will raise them up on the last day*
John 10:11-27 - *I am the good shepherd*
John 11:21-27 - *I am the resurrection and the life*
John 13:12-20, 31-35 - *Service and discipleship through love*
John 14:1-7 - *In my Father's house are many rooms*
John 14:25-27 - *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you*
John 20:1, 11-20 - *Mary meets the resurrected Jesus*
Romans 5:1-11 - *Peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*
Romans 8:31-35, 37-39 - *Who will separate us from the love of Christ*
Romans 14:7-13 - *Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's*
1 Corinthians 13:1-14:1 - *The power of love*
1 Corinthians 15:12-26 - *Christ, the first-fruits, has been raised*
1 Corinthians 15:35-50 - *Raised with a new body*
2 Corinthians 4:7-18 - *We have this treasure in clay jars*
Colossians 3:12-17 - *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly*
1 Thess. 4:13-14, 18 - *Do not be uninformed about the dead*
Hebrews 12:1-2 - *Surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses*

only one of Zion's pastors will lead the funeral. If you would like a particular pastor to take the lead, or would like both of Zion's pastors involved in the worship, we will attempt to accommodate your requests. Know that whoever leads the worship, you and your loved one are deeply valued by both pastors.

THE FAMILY SERVICE



What is a family service?

Typically held an hour before the funeral service, loved ones have time and space to focus on one another and their own grief before others arrive. After the short prayer service, family may view the casket (if applicable) in privacy. Although a casket or urn contains the earthly body of our loved one and we believe we are held together in God's hands and thus never truly separated from our loved ones, this time to speak "goodbye" or "until we see you again" can be a helpful step on the journey of grief and closure.

Who is invited?

This service is not publicized, so you must notify anyone you believe should be invited. Local family members familiar with this tradition may come independent of their closeness or your invitation.

THE FUNERAL SERVICE



What happens during the funeral service?

The funeral service is primarily a worship service, during which we celebrate God's gift of life. We reflect on one's earthly life, and the promise of eternal life with God. We pray for all who mourn and commend our beloved to God's care.

How does this service get planned?

You will meet with the pastor to plan the service. While you may come to this meeting with some ideas from your own experience or this booklet, rest assured you don't need to have everything figured out beforehand. It is likely choices will fall into place when meeting with the pastor, who may also have ideas unique to your beloved.

What kind of music should we have?

There are three places in the service when music is often included: the procession, after the reflection, and as the casket is taken out. Additional places may be made in consultation with the pastor.

Funerals in a church typically involve congregational singing. Vocal or instrumental solos can be used to supplement this voice of the community. Although recordings may be appropriate on occasion, they often do not have the same personal touch of live music.

Funerals held at a funeral home typically do not involve hymn singing due to the setting and make-up of attendees. Instead, music is often played on the organ or sung by a soloist. It is also more common to hear recorded music at a funeral home.

Whatever form of music is selected, it should reflect the spirit of Christian confidence, trust, and hope in God. Hymns commonly selected for funerals include, but are not limited to:

- Abide with Me
- Alleluia! Jesus Is Risen!
- Amazing Grace
- Be Thou My Vision
- Blessed Assurance
- Borning Cry
- For All the Saints
- Give Me Jesus
- Have No Fear, Little Flock
- Healer of Our Every Ill
- How Great Thou Art
- How Small Our Span of Life
- Jesus Loves Me!
- Jesus, Still Lead On
- O Christ the Same
- On Eagle's Wings
- Soon and Very Soon
- Thine the Amen
- Till We Meet Again
- This Is My Father's World
- Thy Holy Wings
- Children of the Heavenly Father
- Come, We That Love the Lord
- Doxology (Praise God from whom...)
- Guide Me Ever, Great Redeemer
- I Know That My Redeemer Lives!
- I Want Jesus to Walk with Me
- I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light
- Just a Closer Walk with Thee
- Just As I Am, without One Plea
- Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus
- Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory
- My Faith Looks Up to Thee
- O, Happy Day When We Shall Stand
- O Lord, Now Let Your Servant
- O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright!
- Precious Lord, Take My Hand
- Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me
- Shall We Gather at the River
- Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling
- The Trumpets Sound, the Angels Sing
- When Peace Like a River (It is Well)

Will the obituary be read during the funeral?

Although customary in some locations, this is optional. Often the facts are well-known to those in attendance. Some experience the obituary as impersonal and prefer to offer a eulogy. Others leave it to the pastor's reflection to touch on the character of the individual.

Does someone need to offer a eulogy?

A eulogy is optional. You may choose not to offer a eulogy if it would be difficult to speak in front of a crowd, if you prefer to leave the reflection to the pastor, or if you would rather share your memories with others in private or during the funeral lunch. You do not dishonor your loved one if you choose not to speak. We generally limit eulogies to no more than two family members or friends who can speak for all who are gathered.

A eulogy is intended to share memories that speak to the faith and character of the deceased. Written or outlined reflections tend to go better than speaking "off the cuff" during this emotional time. Eulogies over a few minutes tend to feel awkward for attendees. One or two specific and well-described stories speak better to the character of your loved and are more universally appreciated than many stories that can not be appreciated by all present. The pastor is willing to help you determine what is appropriate to say. If emotions make it impossible to deliver the eulogy in the moment, you may ask the pastor to read what you wrote.

What scriptures will be read?

Depending on the individual and the setting, anywhere from two to four scriptures are read during the funeral service. Scripture will also be read at the family service and the cemetery committal. We generally try include scriptures from both Old and New Testaments.

Although certain verses (such as confirmation verses) may be meaningful, when read in their context, they may or may not fit the funeral service. While we wish to honor the written wishes of the deceased, it is also important that the scripture be meaningful to the gathered mourners and that it speak the whole Gospel. Scriptures are selected in consultation with the pastor.