

ALIVE IN CHRIST



A Funeral Manual

Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
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Dear Saints and Heirs of Eternal Life,

Moses tells us to number our days, that is, to recognize our mortality and also the brevity of life, so that we might live before our Lord on the basis of His faithfulness (Psalm 90:12). Therefore, wisdom prompts us to consider how, at the time of our bodily death, we will testify to the Father's enduring mercy and hope manifested in Christ Jesus, the resurrection and the life (John 11:25).

This manual has been prepared by the Pastor and approved by the Board of Elders of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church of Palo Alto, California, in order to assist members in planning not only for death, but chiefly in order to witness to the eternal life in which we already have begun to share through baptism into Christ Jesus' death and resurrection (John 5:24; 1 Corinthians 3:21-23).

When a believer dies, the soul immediately separates from the body and experiences the joy and peace of our Father's presence as it awaits the Last Day, when the Lord Jesus will raise that body, recreate it free of sin and restore it whole in every way, and reunite it with the soul. Meanwhile, the loved ones, friends, and relatives who grieve and who yet walk in the pilgrimage of the faith can be consoled greatly if we take the time now to establish some prior funeral arrangements in order to lessen their grief in a time when decision-making is often difficult and traumatic.

Our hope is that we clearly speak to you and your family the Good News of Jesus Christ during a most difficult time. While a loved one will be remembered in this planning, foremost one is remembered as a child of God and most importantly we will remember what Jesus Christ did for the individual and for us. Therefore a funeral service is worship to God who gave us life, forgiveness, and the promise of eternal life in Christ Jesus.

We, therefore, ask you to read this manual thoroughly as we commend it to your use, so that we may rejoice together in our eternal future in the new creation.

In the Name of our Resurrected Savior, Jesus Christ,
The Pastor and the Board of Elders
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

This guide has been designed to assist family and loved ones at the time of one's death. This document does not substitute for, or take the place of a duly drawn, witnessed and notarized Last Will and Testament

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Questions

1. At whose funeral does Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church as guided by Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions allow her pastor to officiate?

We believe that Christian pastors should officiate only at the funerals of professed Christians, as evidenced by their practices and affiliation with the family of God. The very presence of a Christian pastor testifies to the faith of the deceased and implies that the individual has “fallen asleep in Jesus.”

We also believe that the pastor of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church congregation has been called to a specific responsibility to his own parishioners and to sister congregations in the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod and not to the Christian or secular community in general. Therefore, he is to officiate at the funeral or memorial service of members, thus being assured that the brother or sister who has died had made a public confession of faith in Christ Jesus. Exceptions are made for professed Christians who were active in the spiritual life of our congregation while contemplating membership, as well as to non-member believers with whom the pastor and elders of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church had a direct, personal ministry.

Members of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church who request that their pastor officiate at the funeral of their non-member friend or relative place the pastors and elders in a difficult position. Not knowing the individual or the spiritual condition of the deceased may turn many a funeral sermon into an impersonal eulogy. We believe that eulogies have no place in Christian funerals. Therefore, it is better to refer such funerals to a minister of the congregation or denomination to which the individual belonged or to a non-denominational minister suggested by the funeral home or to a friend who is willing to deliver a eulogy at a funeral service.

If you are planning a funeral for a living family member or a friend, share your faith in Jesus with him; ask our pastor to visit

him; and bring him to worship if possible. It is never too late to bring someone to Jesus Christ.

2. May non-LCMS pastors officiate at our funeral services?

No. A funeral service is a worship service, so the same Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod practices apply in order to assure that what is said and preached will be truly biblical and free of false doctrine.

3. Are family and friends allowed to say a few words at the funeral?

The memories of your loved one are precious and comforting at this time, but often very hard to deliver at the service by family and friends. If there are to be outside speakers, you must limit them to no more than two, and each is allowed no more than five minutes; what they intend to say will be reviewed by the pastor. We do not have an “open microphone time” during the service, but you could offer this at the reception following the service.

The use of video presentations is neither appropriate nor allowed during the service. This may be set up at a reception following the service. The service may be video taped discretely from the balcony.

4. How do I prepare for my own Christian funeral?

Continue to trust in Jesus Christ as your only way to heaven. Share your faith with others. Have your attorney write a Christian will for you. Pre-plan funeral arrangements with a local funeral director and cemetery association. Maintain your life insurance. Complete and send to the church office a copy of the Funeral Arrangement Form. Make sure that your next of kin or caregiver has access and is aware of any written directions or important. Read *Dying Well*, another pamphlet created by Trinity’s pastor and Board of Elders.

5. How can the pastor assist the bereaved family?

Contact the pastor as soon as possible. In addition to officiating at the funeral, he will first meet and counsel with the bereaved and is willing to accompany the family to the funeral home to help them in making the funeral arrangements. He is well-experienced in this kind of service.

6. What is a Christian will?

Every Christian should have a will, but as a final witness to one's faith, the use of a Christian preamble to your will provides you with the opportunity to give a posthumous testimony of your faith in Jesus to your attorney, relatives, and friends. Samples of Christian preambles are found on pages 25-26 of this manual. We also encourage you to remember God's Church in your will, so that you vicariously can carry on the Lord's work even after He has called you home.

7. What is a memorial service?

A memorial service does not have the casket or remains present at the service. The interment takes place before the service or at another time. Memorial services have become very popular for Christians, and can simplify the arrangements.

8. What about memorial gifts as opposed to giving flowers?

Many say that cut flowers are a "waste" or ostentatious, but when the disciples said much the same about Mary's anointing of Jesus with a bottle of precious nard, the Savior took issue with them. Others prefer to give potted plants, which will continue to grow and be enjoyed by the family. Still others prefer to remember their loved ones by donating a gift of money to a memorial fund. They believe this method to be best, because it benefits the most people and is an ongoing way of remembering their loved ones. The Trinity Board of Stewardship can furnish you with a number of acceptable choices for a memorial, which would extend the work of God's Kingdom.

9. Is cremation acceptable for Christians?

The Scriptures do not command or recommend any particular funeral practice. Entombment simply was the general procedure. The aversion to cremation by some Christians comes from the fact that the Old Testament forbade the practice because of its use by pagan peoples; the Jewish *Mishna* also forbade it and the unbelieving Romans burned bodies of Christians in a futile attempt to prevent the resurrection. Some people believe that cremation is a way to deny publicly the resurrection. However, if God can resurrect the bodies of martyrs burned at the stake or eaten by lions or decomposed to dust after centuries in the grave, He should have no trouble at all with the cremains. Furthermore, direct cremation (no viewing or embalming) may be considered by some Christians to be good stewardship, in that it is far less expensive than other procedures.

10. Isn't viewing a body rather morbid?

Perhaps, and if you prefer a closed casket, that is fine. On the other hand, a viewing helps some people to accept the reality of death. However, if the casket is brought into the church at a traditional funeral service, the casket is always closed, so that our thoughts will not be centered on a temporal, lifeless corpse, but rather on the message of victory we share in an eternal, living Savior.

11. What is a funeral pall?

A funeral pall is a large white shroud, usually on which is embroidered a symbol of the resurrection. In place of a floral spray, it is draped over the closed casket during the funeral service at church as a beautiful symbol of the triumph over death of our resurrected Savior and that the believer's sins have been covered through baptism into death. Just as our resurrected Lord passed through His shroud, so also our resurrection is assured. The use of the pall is encouraged.

12. Is the practice of donating one's organs acceptable for Christians?

Again, the Scriptures do not speak to this issue because it was not possible at the time of the writing of the Scriptures. Therefore, it is your own decision. We assure you, however, that there is nothing ghoulish or unchristian in deciding to give the gift of life, sight, etc. to a fellow human being. Pray about such a decision before death and discuss it with your family. If you decide to be a donor, obtain a Uniform Donor Card from your local hospital, and keep the card in your wallet or purse. If you decide not to be a donor, do not feel guilty. There is no obligation for Christians to do this.

13. Should the funeral be at the church or at the funeral home?

Because a Christian funeral is also a worship service, the regular place of assembly for God's people, where the Word of God is preached and the Sacraments administered, seems to be the most appropriate place for a funeral. Due to the convenience (and the extra charge for using the funeral chapel at some funeral homes), the "option" of having the service at the church may not even be presented to many families. Furthermore, funeral chapels are purposely devoid of an altar or Christian symbols that offend Jews, Buddhists, Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, and other non-Christians. Therefore, in place of such a generic environment, we strongly encourage you to utilize the church building as a closing statement of faith by those who have "fallen asleep in Jesus." We will convey this information and our position to any mortuary upon your request.

14. Are lodge ceremonies or rites or other organizations permitted at our funeral services?

No. It is likely that the lodge's oath states that salvation is not through Christ and His Word alone, but rather by one's own good works and moral living. This is in obvious conflict with the teachings of the Scriptures and any rite that suggests otherwise has no place at a Christian funeral. The ministry of the Church, which includes the burial of the dead, proclaims the gospel of

Jesus Christ to members and to the world. They are not occasions to support, augment, or complement non-church rituals. Any ritual apart from the proclamation of the Word and the administration of sacraments is inappropriate within the liturgies of the Church. Members of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church are required to give up membership in the Masonic or animal lodges and their auxiliaries before they become members of our congregation and take their oath to Jesus as the only way to heaven. Therefore not only is the participation of the lodge and its symbols forbidden during funeral service, but any lodge rite in addition to and separately from the Christian funeral is also forbidden.

Funeral Service

A hymn or psalm may be sung.

Stand

Invocation

The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

P In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Remembrance of Baptism

The casket may be covered with a pall.

P In Holy Baptism name was clothed with the robe of Christ's righteousness that covered all his/her sin. St. Paul says: "Do you not know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?"

C **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 united with Him in His death, we will certainly also be united with Him in His resurrection.**

Introit, Psalm, or Entrance Hymn

Kyrie

P Lord, have mercy upon us.

C **Christ, have mercy upon us.**
Lord, have mercy upon us.

Salutation and Collect of the Day

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

P Let us pray.

O God of grace and mercy, we give thanks for Your loving-kindness to name and to all Your servants who, having finished their course in faith, now rest from their labors. Grant that we also may be faithful unto death and receive the crown of eternal life; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Sit

Old Testament Reading

P The Old Testament Reading is from the _____ chapter of _____.

After the reading:

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Gradual or Psalm

Epistle

P The Epistle is from the _____ chapter of _____.

After the reading:

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Stand

Verse

P Alleluia, alleluia.

C Jesus Christ is the firstborn of the dead; to Him be glory and power forever. Alleluia.

Or during Lent:

P If we have died with Christ,

C **We shall also live with Him; if we are faithful to the end, we shall reign with Him.**

Holy Gospel

P The Holy Gospel according to St. _____, the _____ chapter.

C **Glory, to You, O Lord.**

After the reading:

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise to You, O Christ.**

Apostles' Creed

P God has made us His people through our Baptism into Christ. Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

C **I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.**

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church,* the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen

Sit

Hymn of the Day

Sermon

Stand/Kneel

Prayer of the Church

P Let us pray to the Lord our God and Father who raised Jesus from the dead.

Almighty God, You have knit Your chosen people together into one communion in the mystical body of Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Give to Your whole church in heaven and on earth Your light and Your peace. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Grant that all who have been baptized into Christ's death and resurrection may die to sin and rise to newness of life and so pass with him through the gate of death and the grave to our joyful resurrection. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Grant that all who have been nourished by the holy body and blood of Your Son may be raised to immortality and incorruption and seated with Him at Your heavenly banquet. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Give to the family of name and all who mourn comfort in their grief and a sure confidence in Your loving care, that casting all their sorrow on You, they may know the consolation of Your love. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Give courage and faith to the bereaved that within the communion of Your Church they may have strength to meet the days ahead in the assurance of a holy and certain hope and in the joyful expectation of eternal life with those whom they love who have departed in the faith. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Help us, we pray, in the midst of things we cannot understand, to believe and find comfort in the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P We give thanks for name and for all the blessings You bestowed on him/her in this earthly life. Bring us at last to our heavenly home that with him/her we may see You face to face in the joys of paradise. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P O God of all grace, You sent Your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, to bring life and immortality to light. We give You thanks that by His death He destroyed the power of death and by His resurrection He opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers. Strengthen us in the confidence that because He lives we shall live also, and that neither death nor life nor things present nor things to come will be able to separate us from Your love which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

When there is Holy Communion, the service continues with the Offertory. When there is no communion, the service continues with the Lord's Prayer.

P Lord, remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

C **Our Father who art in heaven: hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

Following the Lord's Prayer (or the Distribution when there is Holy Communion), the pastor takes his place at the casket.

Nunc Dimittis

P "I am the resurrection and the life," says the Lord. "He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies, and whoever lives and believes in Me will never die."

C **Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace according to Your Word, for my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared before the face of all people, a Light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Your people Israel.**

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen

P "I am the resurrection and the life," says the Lord. "He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies, and whoever lives and believes in Me will never die."

Concluding Collect

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

P Let us pray.

Lord God, our Shepherd, You gather the lambs of Your flock into the arms of Your mercy and bring them home. Comfort us with the certain hope of a reunion with those who die in the faith and at the last a joyful resurrection to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

When the Committal is not conducted at the place of burial, it occurs here. The pastor may place his hand on the head of the casket as he says:

P May God the Father, who created this body, may God the + Son, who by His blood redeemed this body; may God the Holy Spirit, who by Holy Baptism sanctified

this body to be His temple, keep these remains to the day of the resurrection of all flesh.

C Amen.

P Let us pray. Almighty God, by the death of Your Son Jesus Christ You destroyed death, by His rest in the tomb You sanctified the graves of Your saints, and by His bodily resurrection You brought life and immortality to light so that all who die in Him abide in peace and hope. Receive our thanks for the victory over death and the grave, which He won for us. Keep us in everlasting communion with all that wait for Him on earth and with all in heaven who are with Him, for He is the resurrection and the life, even Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C Amen.

Benedicamus and Benediction

P Let us bless the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

P The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you.

The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and X give you peace.

C Amen.

P Let us go forth in peace (to take our brother/sister to his/her place of rest).

C In the name of the Lord. Amen.

Processional Hymn or Psalm

Service Notes¹

- The Funeral Service is a public service of the Church. It is a public confession of the faith concerning death, burial, resurrection, and the life hereafter. In the funeral service the baptismal theme of death and resurrection with Christ is most prominent (Romans 6:1-11). The service begins with the name of God spoken over the body of the baptized. The casket may be covered with a pall as a remembrance of being clothed with Christ in Holy Baptism (Galatians 3:27; Romans 13:14). The baptism creed (Apostles' Creed) is confessed and the prayers confidently speak of the resurrection and new life given in Baptism. In the sermon the pastor has a unique opportunity to preach God's Word of Law and Gospel to many hearers who may not know the source of Christian comfort when a heart is troubled by the grief and sorrow of death. Here he can explain the connection between Christ's work of salvation in Baptism and the death of the Christian. The focus of the funeral service is the public proclamation of Christ crucified to this specific situation, as well as the comfort Christians find in Christ's resurrection.
- The death of a member of the Church should be reported to the pastor; no service arrangements should be made without consultation with him.
- The Funeral Service is intended for the burial of those who departed this life in the Christian faith.
- Whenever possible, the Funeral Service of baptized members is conducted at the church.
- Hymns and music selected should reflect the spirit of Christian confidence, trust, and hope in the resurrection of the body and life everlasting.
- The liturgical color for the Funeral Service is the color of the season or day.

¹ These service notes are from *Lutheran Service Book Agenda*, pp. 84, 117.

- Floral arrangements express the Christian hope in the resurrection of the body. They should not be placed on the casket or altar during the Funeral Service.
- The Funeral Service may be used as a memorial service by omitting the placing of the pall and the rubric before the *Nunc Dimittis*.
- A eulogy is not in the best Christian tradition. An obituary may be read which focuses on the Gospel promise of salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ our Lord, and not by good deeds of the deceased.
- Appropriate messages of Christian condolence may be given after the Lord's Prayer.
- The ceremonies or tributes of social or other societies have no place within the service of the Church. Civic and military ceremonies or tributes should be held after the service of the Church, normally following the committal.

Committal

The pastor and assisting minister(s) go before the casket to the place of committal. The cross may lead the procession. During the procession an appropriate hymn or psalm (16, 118, 121, 130) may be sung.

The pastor stands at the head of the casket or next to the urn. When all have arrived at the place of interment, a prayer is said.

One or more of the following are read.

Jesus said, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me; and

where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me. (*John 12:23–26*)

We read in Holy Scripture: So it will be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. So it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven. As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven. (*1 Corinthians 15:42–49*)

St. Paul says: Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.” “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?” The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (*1 Corinthians 15:51–57*)

St. Paul says: Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who

have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

(1 Thessalonians 4:13–17)

The Creed may be confessed.

- P** God has made us His people through our Baptism into Christ. Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.
- C** **I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the ☩ life everlasting. Amen.**

Sand or earth may be poured on the casket in the sign of the cross while the pastor says:

- P** We now commit the body of our *brother/sister, name, to the ground / its resting place / the deep*; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, in the sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our lowly bodies so that they will be like His glorious body, by the power that enables Him to subdue all things to Himself.

The pastor may place his hand on the head of the casket as he says:

P May God the Father, who created this body, may God the ☩ Son, who by His blood redeemed this body, may God the Holy Spirit, who by Holy Baptism sanctified this body to be His temple, keep these remains to the day of the resurrection of all flesh.

C Amen.

P Lord, remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

C **Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

P Almighty God, by the death of Your Son Jesus Christ You destroyed death, by His rest in the tomb You sanctified the graves of Your saints, and by His bodily resurrection You brought life and immortality to light so that all who die in Him abide in peace and hope. Receive our thanks for the victory over death and the grave which He won for us. Keep us in everlasting communion with all that wait for Him on earth and with all in heaven who are with Him, for He is the resurrection and the life, even Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C Amen.

An appropriate hymn, may be sung.

P Alleluia! Christ is risen.

C He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

P Let us go forth in peace in the name of the Lord.

C Amen.

P The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you.

The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and ☩ give you peace.

C Amen.

Service Notes²

- Acknowledging God as the Creator of the body and trusting in the bodily resurrection, Old Testament believers such as Abraham (Genesis 22:1-8; Hebrews 11:17-19), Jacob (Genesis 35:19-20, 29), and his sons (Genesis 50:4-14) reverently buried their dead. Christians, too, believe that the body is significant and, therefore, is to be treated with respect. It is God's creation. God Himself became flesh in Christ and redeemed the world in His body. The Holy Spirit sanctifies the Christian's body in Baptism, in the hearing of God's Word, and in the communion of Christ's life-giving body and blood. For this reason, Christians bury their dead in the sure and certain hope of the resurrection of the body. This is the purpose of the rite of Committal. Words of sorrow in the face of death and anticipation of the resurrection are prominent themes in this rite. When circumstances prevent the committal from occurring immediately after the funeral service, the committal takes place at a later date. In that situation, the pastor may speak words of comfort on the basis of the Scriptures, and the Creed may be confessed. Christ is the first-fruits of those who rise from the dead. The body that is buried is a seed that will arise to see Christ with a glorious body (1 Corinthians 15:20, 35-44).
- The Committal is appropriate for interment in a place previously set apart for burial. When burial is in a public cemetery, the collect for the blessing of a grave is used (rubric

² These service notes are from *Lutheran Service Book Agenda*, pp. 84, 124.

2). The Committal is also appropriate for the disposition of a body at sea.

- In the case of cremation, the Committal is appropriate at a cemetery plot, a mausoleum, a crypt, or a columbarium. The practice of scattering the ashes of the deceased to the elements is discouraged among Christians.
- When circumstances require that the burial occur at a later date, the Committal may include a sermon following the Scripture reading(s). The Apostles' Creed may also be confessed.
- When the body has been willed for medical research, the Committal takes place in the Funeral Service.
- The pastor may remain with the casket at the graveside until all the bereaved have left the cemetery as a sign of the eternal presence of Christ with the departed.
- When the deceased was a member of the armed forces, a representative of the government speaks words of appreciation to the family following the Committal.

A Christian Preamble to a Will

When planning your will, you can grow so preoccupied with how to distribute your material blessings that you may fail to share your true wealth: the Good News of forgiveness and eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ. A Christian Preamble to your will provides a fine opportunity to share this belief with your family and friends. Through the Holy Spirit, this personal statement of your faith will comfort your loved ones in their time of loss and encourage them, too, to place their trust in Jesus Christ. Prayerfully consider adding one of these sample Christian Preambles to your will or use them as a guide in writing your own.

Preamble 1

I, _____, Of the City of _____ County of _____, and State of _____, being of sound and disposing mind and memory and being under no restraint, do make, declare and publish this my last Will and Testament, hereby revoking all Wills and codicils hereto made by me.

First, realizing the uncertainty of this life I place full confidence and trust in my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who promised: "I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live; and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die." (John 11:25-26).

Second, knowing that the wages of sin is death, I believe that Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, suffered and died to gain me forgiveness, which I neither deserve nor merit, but receive as a free gift of God, who is rich in grace and mercy.

Third, I urge my heirs not to set their hopes on uncertain riches, but to take hold of the life, which is life indeed through faith in Jesus Christ.

Preamble 2

I, _____, Of the City of _____, County of _____, and State of _____, being of sound and disposing mind and memory and being under no restraint, do make, declare and publish this my last Will and Testament, hereby revoking all Wills and codicils heretofore made by me.

First, I commit myself to God's care, secure in His love for me and trusting in the salvation purchased for me through Christ's suffering and death. I leave those who survive me the comfort of knowing that I have died in this faith and have now joined my Lord in eternal glory.

Second, I commend my loved ones to the protecting hands of God, knowing that He will continue to provide for them despite my absence; and I encourage them to place their faith and trust in Him alone.

(Then follows the body of the Will.)

Funeral Arrangement Form

Make copies of your completed form, and then give them to the individuals who will be involved with arranging your funeral. This will include pastor, family member(s) or close friend, funeral director, etc. Be sure to discuss any directions that might need clarifying.

Name

Home address

Telephone number

Date of preparation

Date of birth

Place of birth

Date of baptism

Place of baptism (church, hospital)

Date of confirmation

Place of confirmation

Date of marriage

Location

Describe life in local congregation(s)

Full name of your father & city & state of his birth

Full name of your mother (including maiden name) & city & state of her birth

Education

Places and types of employment

To what organizations do you belong?

Social Security Number

Military ID Number

Family:

Spouse

Children

Siblings

Relatives/Friends to notify:

Name

Address

Phone

Relationship

Name

Address

Phone

Relationship

These directions express how I would like my funeral handled. If possible, I request the following:

A. I request the following service:

Church

Address

Telephone number

Clergy to participate, if possible

Address

Telephone number

Biblical texts

Hymns and musical selections (choir, solos, etc.)

Flowers desired? Yes No

Personal comments: A statement of faith and /or other thoughts to share with your family and friends. Attach the sheets. (You may also wish to write confidential messages for individual family members. These could be sealed and stored with your will.)

Body to be viewed? Yes No

B. I would like my body, or parts of it, to be used for medical purposes. Explain:

Provisions have been made by proper documentation in accordance with the state laws governing this procedure. The documents are located:

C. Burial
I prefer a burial in a casket.

Location

Has a plot been purchased? _____

Casket desired:

I want to be cremated, with ashes to be buried.

Location

D. I want memorial gifts designated to the following organization(s), persons, etc.

Name

Address

Purpose:

Name

Address

Purpose:

Name

Address

Purpose:

E. Financial and Legal Information

I have a will: Y N

The will is located:

insurance policies (company, policy number, phone number)

My legal counsel and /or estate planner:

Name:

Address

I have prepared a living trust

name of executor(s) and /or person having power of attorney over
matters concerning death and funeral

This information is located:

F. I request these additional instructions to be followed:

G. I have shared these plans with the following people:

Name

Address

Relationship

Name

Address

Relationship

Name

Address

Relationship

Put this form in your safety deposit box or another safe place, readily accessible to your family or executor. This is information your family will need immediately at the time of your death.

This document does not substitute for, or take the place of a duly drawn, witnessed, and notarized Last Will and Testament.

Signature & Date
