

*Planning Ahead . . .  
When Death Comes*



**ST. MARK'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**

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This booklet is prepared for:

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*Used with permission and adapted from St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Durham,  
North Carolina*

## *Planning Ahead . . . When Death Comes*

What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am 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 8:31-35, 37-39*

## *Planning Ahead . . . When Death Comes*

Many people may think it morbid or unpleasant to think about death. Given our culture's saturation with TV shows and movies that depict gruesome, violent, and suffering laden deaths, it is no wonder why thinking about death is an unpopular exercise.

However, as Christians we rest in the security that nothing, not even death, "will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:37-39)." As Christians we understand death to be a period of rest, until such a time when God raises us from the dead to live a new life in the fullness of Jesus' resurrection (I Cor. 15). Preparing for this time of rest is entirely appropriate, because it shows that we care for the bodies which God has given us, as well as the family and friends God has blessed us with in this life.

When a death occurs in the family, the bereaved will be faced with making a number of immediate decisions. It is helpful to the family if the deceased has frankly discussed these matters well in advance of their implementation. Such discussion alleviates some of the anxiety related to making decisions in light of what the deceased would have wanted.

This booklet has been prepared to assist you

(A) in thinking through your own funeral plans, and

(B) in helping you plan the funeral of a relative upon his or her death.

Making some plans now will be of great help to your relative at the time of their own death. This ought not be a grim or depressing thing to do; in fact, it should relieve you of needless anxiety over how things will be handled.

Fill in the pages in this booklet for yourself or a relative. This information is extremely helpful and is not contained in a will. A copy of this document should be filed with your important papers at home.

When death occurs, these immediate steps should be taken:

- Call the Pastor.
- Call your physician. The hospital/care facility will contact the primary physician. His/her signature on the death certificate most often is necessary before the funeral director may move the body. Please ask the attending nurses/paramedics if you are required to contact any specialists your loved one was seeing. Also, if the deceased is an organ donor, arrangements need to be made immediately upon death.
- Make sure the hospital/care facility plans to contact the funeral director or crematorium, or if you should make that call.
- Notify relatives and friends.
- Check all life and casualty insurance benefits, including Social Security, credit unions, trade unions, fraternal and military organizations.
- Notify all insurance companies.
- Notify the attorney holding the will and the executor/executrix.
- Check all debts and installment payments. Some may carry insurance clauses which will cancel debts. If there will be a delay in meeting payments, consult with creditors, and seek an extension.
- Locate a copy of marriage license for estate settlement.

*Planning Ahead . . . When Death Comes*

*Personal Information*

Full Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Length of Residence \_\_\_\_\_

Birth date \_\_\_\_\_ Birthplace \_\_\_\_\_

U.S. Citizen? \_\_\_\_\_

Military Service? \_\_\_\_\_ Service Branch \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of Armed Forces Service \_\_\_\_\_

Tours of Duty/Military Station Appointments \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Education Level and Institution \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

Employer \_\_\_\_\_

Employer Address \_\_\_\_\_

Employer Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Retired? \_\_\_\_\_

## *Planning Ahead . . . When Death Comes*

*If you wish, attach a listing of biographical information, family relationships, church, fraternal, vocational, professional, club, or union affiliation, etc.*

Spouse (Full Name) \_\_\_\_\_ Birthplace \_\_\_\_\_

Father (Full Name) \_\_\_\_\_ Birthplace \_\_\_\_\_

Mother (Full Maiden Name) \_\_\_\_\_ Birthplace \_\_\_\_\_

Children \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Siblings \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Family and Friends:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Relationship</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Phone</u>
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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Organizations to be contacted \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Business associates or others \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Planning Ahead . . . When Death Comes

## *Funeral/Memorial Service*

A funeral is a worship service. It is a time to give thanks and praise to God for the hope that is ours in the Resurrection, for the life which has been given, and to seek God's comfort and strength for those who mourn. The focus of a Christian funeral is not the casket or the deceased, but God's redeeming love and victory over death. Please see the "Commonly Asked Questions" on p.9-11.

Person(s) to have charge of the arrangements:

Name

Address

Phone

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Preferred funeral home/director \_\_\_\_\_

Alternate, if necessary \_\_\_\_\_

I have already made arrangements with the funeral home listed above.

Please check preferences for Viewing and Funeral

Traditional visitation and funeral

Coffin Open (during visitation)

Coffin Closed (during visitation)

Immediate (coffin) burial without viewing, followed by a later memorial service

Cremation, but with visitation (coffin) and memorial service (*ceremonial coffins are available from the funeral home for visitation/viewing*)

Immediate cremation without embalming for viewing

Preference for disposition of the ashes: \_\_\_\_\_

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Other arrangements, as outlined below: \_\_\_\_\_

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Coffin/Urn:

I already have a coffin/urn.

Moderate

Least expensive

Most expensive

Arrangements have been made through \_\_\_\_\_

## *Planning Ahead . . . When Death Comes*

Preference for site of funeral or memorial service (name of church or funeral home) \_\_\_\_\_

Preference for a burial site (Cemetery and plot number) \_\_\_\_\_

Pastor desired \_\_\_\_\_  
*Name, or simply "St. Mark's Pastor"*

Alternate, if necessary \_\_\_\_\_

Other clergy present/participating in services: \_\_\_\_\_

Holy Communion?      Yes \_\_\_\_\_      No \_\_\_\_\_

Scripture Readings *(some helpful suggestions may be found on p. 15)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Hymns *(some helpful suggestions may be found on p. 16)* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Special Music \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Prelude or postlude requests \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Suggested pallbearers \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Military Recognition?      Yes \_\_\_\_\_      No \_\_\_\_\_

In lieu of flowers, I request that memorial gifts be given to:

- St. Mark's Lutheran Church Memorial Fund
- St. Mark's Lutheran Church Endowment Fund
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Other \_\_\_\_\_





# *Planning Ahead . . . When Death Comes*

## *Commonly Asked Questions*

- ❖ *What is the difference between a funeral service and a memorial service?*
  - A funeral service, at which the body is present, is held as soon as possible. A memorial service, at which a body is not present, is held at the earliest appropriate time.
  
- ❖ *Is a memorial service appropriate?*
  - Yes, when the funeral is not held locally and/or when the body is not present, or when the location of the body is not known.
  
- ❖ *What about a “Celebration of Life?” Service?*
  - Because any service conducted by the church is a service of worship, it is appropriate to call either a funeral or a memorial service a “Celebration of Life.” However, the primary focus of these worship services is to celebrate the new life we all receive in God through Jesus Christ, and not the earthly accomplishments of the deceased. The resurrection message of the gospel is the central point of all Christian worship, and is most poignantly appropriate at Easter, and at Christian burial services. While a short reflection (eulogy) may be offered during the service, it should ultimately reflect how the deceased’s life mirrored the love of God in Christ Jesus, and not be used to reminisce or detail a life story.
  
- ❖ *What if I would like another pastor to officiate the funeral?*
  - The currently called pastor(s) of St. Mark’s Evangelical Lutheran Church will be involved in all funeral and memorial services held at St. Mark’s. S/he will be responsible for the welcoming, the Gospel reading, the sermon, and the final commendation in the sanctuary, as well as the committal at the graveside, if appropriate. Guest clergy are encouraged to participate in prayers, scripture readings, or to offer a reflection on their relationship with those being buried. It is ultimately up to the discretion of the current pastor(s) of St. Mark’s if this division of liturgical duties is appropriate on a case-by-case basis.
  - For the purpose of common courtesy and proper service planning, the current pastor(s) of St. Mark’s must be notified of these desires early in the funeral planning process so that proper arrangements can be made. Please understand that the current pastor(s) of St. Mark’s hold final authority of all service related inquiries where they are the primary clergy member involved.

## *Planning Ahead . . . When Death Comes*

- ❖ *Who selects the Scripture readings for the funeral service?*
  - The Scripture readings shall be selected in consultation with the pastor. There is no set number of passages that can or should be read during the service, however one reading should come from one of the four gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John).
  - A list of scripture passages recommended for selection may be found on p. 15.
  
- ❖ *Who selects the music used for the funeral service?*
  - The music shall be selected in consultation with the director of music, the pastor, and the family. The hymns used should be from the worship material of the ELCA, approved and authorized by the director of music and the pastor. Music selected should embody high standards of quality and, in general, reflect the spirit of Christian confidence, trust, and hope in the Resurrection, which is characteristic of the spoken parts of the service.
  - Any requests for special music should be approved by the pastor(s) and the director of music. Secular music is inappropriate for a Burial of the Dead worship service. The Lord's Prayer, as found in the service for Burial of the Dead, is a congregational petition and is not appropriate as a solo for funeral services.
  - A list of hymns recommended for selection may be found on p. 16.
  
- ❖ *What is a funeral pall?*
  - The pall, or "funeral pall," is a white liturgical cloth symbolizing the hope of resurrection, faith, and Christ's righteousness received in baptism. It is provided by the church and designed to cover the coffin or urn of the deceased. It is a visible witness to all in attendance, denoting the equal status of all in the sight of God. Because of this, inside of the church sanctuary or funeral home chapel, a funeral pall replaces the American Flag or any other covering once the casket/urn enters the worship space. Once the casket/urn leaves the worship space, a flag or other covering may be returned to use.
  
- ❖ *If a person in the church has no relatives, who is responsible for Burial of the Dead?*
  - The pastor cooperates with the funeral home in making contacts with knowledgeable persons if possible. Funeral arrangements may be made using prearranged funeral plans, by a family lawyer, by neighbors, by a business acquaintance, or others.

## *Planning Ahead . . . When Death Comes*

- ❖ *Are social or fraternal societies recognized at the service for Burial of the Dead?*
  - The ceremonies or tributes of social or fraternal societies have no place within the service of the church. Following the committal service, in agreement with the pastors and the family, such a service may be held, often at the grave site following the regular service.
  
- ❖ *What about an open coffin?*
  - Having an open coffin at the church is not encouraged. The family can choose to have an open coffin or a closed coffin at the funeral home between the time of death and removal of the coffin to the church at the time of the service. Please speak with the pastor for any questions about an open coffin.
  
- ❖ *Where is the coffin placed?*
  - The casket is brought to the front of the nave and placed perpendicular to the chancel steps in front of the Paschal Candle for the funeral service.
  
- ❖ *Where are flowers used?*
  - Normally flowers are only used in the vases at the altar. A few other arrangements may be placed near the casket/urn during the service, but an excess of items is not desired. The family is encouraged to use the pall on the coffin during the service.
  
- ❖ *Resources for Support in Grief*
  - Please consult with the pastor for information about grief support groups and grief counseling. Our library has a good selection of books about death and grief. You are certainly invited to check out any of these.

# *Planning Ahead . . . When Death Comes*

## *Estate*

- ❖ If you are considering donating tissue or organs from your body for medical research, you should first discuss this thoroughly with your family and your doctor. Ordinarily, such wishes cannot be fulfilled unless preparations are made in advance.
- ❖ Do you have a living will? \_\_\_\_\_
- ❖ A medical power of attorney? \_\_\_\_\_
- ❖ Please discuss the above with your attorney and make sure copies of these documents are filed with your attorney, your physician, and with your estate papers.
- ❖ **One of the most important steps in estate planning is to prepare a will.** No person of legal age should be without a will. It causes a tremendous hardship, expense, and disservice to your loved ones if you die without a will. This must be done in consultation with a qualified lawyer. If you don't presently have a will, do it without delay!
- ❖ In a readily accessible place, leave what is called a “**Letter of Intent**” which will greatly assist loved ones to make plans. The purpose of this letter is to tell the location of all important papers, and to express certain personal desires. **This letter is not a substitute for a will.**
- ❖ As you make your will, please consider how you can help perpetuate the ministry of St. Mark's Lutheran Church through a gift to the Endowment Foundation or the Memorial Fund of St. Mark's. Please call the church office for information.
- ❖ **To be valid, both the Will and the Letter of Intent should be notarized.**

*Planning Ahead . . . When Death Comes*

*Location of Important Papers*

*This page will not be kept on file with the church.*

Birth Certificate \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security Number \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security Card Location \_\_\_\_\_

Marriage License \_\_\_\_\_

Armed Forces Service Serial Number \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Veteran Discharge Papers \_\_\_\_\_

Will \_\_\_\_\_

Living Will \_\_\_\_\_

Letter of Intent \_\_\_\_\_

Cemetery Deed \_\_\_\_\_

House Safe Key Location/Combination \_\_\_\_\_

Safe Deposit Box Number and Location \_\_\_\_\_

Safe Deposit Box Key is \_\_\_\_\_

Insurance Policies \_\_\_\_\_

Title to Automobile(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Deed to Property \_\_\_\_\_

web accounts and passwords \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Attorney \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Physician \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Physician \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Physician \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Physician \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

*This page will not be kept on file with the church.*

# *Planning Ahead . . . When Death Comes*

*This page will not be kept on file with the church.*

## ***Financial Accounts***

*Bank*

*Account Number*

*Account Type*

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Stocks/Bonds/Certificates are held with \_\_\_\_\_

Other important documentation and their locations

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*This page will not be kept on file with the church.*

# *Planning Ahead . . . When Death Comes*

## Recommended Scripture Passages

*Because all of Scripture points to the resurrection of Jesus as the fulfillment of God's love for us, any passage of scripture is appropriate for use at the Burial of the Dead. The following passages are offered as suggestions to aid in the selection of texts. Please feel free to choose any passage you wish and communicate it in this form and with the pastor.*

### Old Testament

Job 19:23-29  
Psalm 23  
Psalm 27  
Psalm 43  
Psalm 91  
Psalm 93  
Psalm 100  
Psalm 118  
Psalm 121  
Ecclesiastes 3  
Song of Solomon 2:8-14  
Jeremiah 31:31-34  
Lamentations 3:17-26  
Isaiah 25:6-9  
Isaiah 40:1-11  
Ezekiel 37:1-14  
Daniel 12:1-3

### New Testament

Acts 10:34-43  
Romans 5:1-21  
Romans 6:1-11  
Romans 8:14-23  
Romans 8:31-39  
Romans 14:7-12  
I Corinthians 2:6-10  
I Corinthians 15:20-28  
I Corinthians 15:51-57  
II Corinthians 4:14-5:1  
II Corinthians 5:1-10  
Philippians 2:1-11  
Philippians 3:7-14  
Philippians 3:20-21  
I Thessalonians 4:13-18  
I Thessalonians 5:1-11  
II Timothy 2:8-13  
I John 3:1-2

I John 3:14-16  
I John 4  
Revelation 7:9-17  
Revelation 20:11-21:7

### Gospels

Matthew 5:1-12  
Matthew 6:5-15  
Matthew 11:25-30  
Matthew 13:44-52  
Matthew 22:1-14  
Matthew 25:1-13  
Matthew 27:45-61, 28:1-10  
Mark 4:1-9  
Mark 4:30-34  
Mark 6:30-44  
Mark 8:27-9:1  
Mark 12:18-27  
Mark 12:28-34  
Mark 15:33-39;16:1-8  
Luke 1:39-55  
Luke 7:11-17  
Luke 10:25-37  
Luke 12:35-40  
Luke 15  
Luke 23:32-43  
Luke 23:44- 24:12  
Luke 24:13-35  
John 3  
John 5:24-29  
John 6:37-40  
John 6:51-58  
John 11:17-27  
John 11:32-45  
John 12:23-38  
John 14:1-6  
John 17:24-26  
John 19:17-18, 25-30

# *Planning Ahead . . . When Death Comes*

## *Recommended Hymn Selections (Evangelical Lutheran Worship)*

250	Blessed Be the God of Israel	608	Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling
264	Prepare the Royal Highway	611	I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say
267	Joy to the World	612	Healer of Our Every Ill
292	Love Has Come	618	Guide Me Ever, Great Redeemer
304	Christ, When for Us You Were Baptized	619	I Know That My Redeemer Lives!
314	Arise, Your Light Has Come	622	Neither Death nor Life
324	In the Cross of Christ I Glory	623	Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me
332	I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say	631	Love Divine, All Love Excelling
335	Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross	632	O God, Our Help in Ages Past
336	Lamb of God	635	We Walk by Faith
338	Beneath the Cross of Jesus	638	Blessed Assurance
342	There in God's Garden	645	Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation
343	My Song is Love Unknown	654	The Church's One Foundation
344	All Glory, Laud, and Honor	656	Blest Be the Tie That Binds
361	The Day of Resurrection!	660	Lift High the Cross
365	Jesus Christ is Risen Today	666	What Wondrous Love Is This?
366	The Strife is O'er, the Battle Done	697	Just a Closer Walk with Thee
367	Now All the Vault of Heaven Resounds	705	God of Grace and God of Glory
369	Christ the Lord is Risen Today; Alleluia!	728	Blest Are They
373	Christ the Lord is Risen Today!	729	The Church of Christ, In Every Age
376	Thine is the Glory	733	Great Is Thy Faithfulness
382	Christ is Risen! Alleluia!	742	What a Friend We Have in Jesus
396	Spirit of Gentleness	770	Give Me Jesus
408	Come, Thou Almighty King	773	Precious Lord, Take My Hand
413	Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty!	774	What a Fellowship, What a Joy Divine
422	For All the Saints	779	Amazing Grace
423	Shall We Gather at the River	785	When Peace like a River
438	My Lord, What a Morning	789	Savior, like a Shepherd Lead Us
449	We Know that Christ is Raised	793	Be Thou My Vision
453	Baptized and Set Free	803	When I Survey the Wondrous Cross
456	Baptized in Water	805	Lead On, O King Eternal!
502	The King of Love My Shepherd Is	807	Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing
504	A Mighty Fortress Is Our God	812	Faith of Our Fathers
514	O Word of God Incarnate	815	I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light
533	Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty	817	You Have Come Down to the Lakeshore
552	Blessed Be the God of Israel	836	Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee
581	You Are Mine	836	Beautiful Savior
583	Take My Life, That I May Be	840	Now Thank We All Our God
588	There's a Wideness in God's Mercy	855	Crown Him with Many Crowns
592	Just As I Am, without One Plea	856	How Great Thou Art
596/7	My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less	858	Praise to the Lord, the Almighty
		881	Let All Things Now Living



## *Planning Ahead . . . When Death Comes*

I understand that the information and instructions provided in this form are for the guidance of my family and friends in making the arrangements necessary at the time of my death and are not legally binding or enforceable. I also understand that this information should be left with my important papers.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Printed Name*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

Copies of this document should be given to persons who will be available and able to act at any time. Relatives, close friends, or your clergy might be considered. This document should be readily available to those mentioned previously and **NOT** kept in your safe deposit box to which these people have no access. The church will be happy to make copies of your completed form for you.

*A copy of this file has been:*

- Kept on file at the church office [Biographical information & Funeral/Burial preferences only, Pages 13-14 (SS# and estate information) will not be kept at the church.]
- Kept in this location of my home: \_\_\_\_\_
- Given to: \_\_\_\_\_
- Given to: \_\_\_\_\_
- Given to: \_\_\_\_\_
- Given to: \_\_\_\_\_
- Given to: \_\_\_\_\_