

# + DEATH AND RESURRECTION IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST +

*Ministry at the Time of Death*

*and*

*The Christian Funeral Service: Some Guidelines*

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*Walking with a loved one as they near death is not easy, but it is part of our calling as Christians. This booklet provides some guidelines when someone you love is near death.*

## WHEN THE TIME OF DEATH IS NEAR

1. Please let the pastor know as soon as possible if a loved one is dying, so that the ministry of the church may be extended.
2. Some suggestions for the family ministering at the time of death include:
  - + praying through the book of Psalms (aloud)
  - + reading through one (or all four) of the Gospels
  - + singing familiar hymns.

*Some have also found it meaningful to read through an entire Gospel over the body after death.*

3. When it comes time to prepare for the funeral, the information below may be helpful.

## PREPARING FOR THE FUNERAL

### 1. HOLY COMMUNION

It is very appropriate to celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Communion at a Christian funeral. Holy Communion will be offered to all baptized Christians in attendance.

### 2. HOLY SCRIPTURE

Below are some suggested Scripture readings for the funeral service. *Choose one processional reading and one or two other readings.* The pastor will usually select another reading. One set of suggested readings that dates back to the ancient Christian Church (indicated with an \*) is: Psalm 23 (processional Psalm), I Thessalonians 4:13-18 and John 5:24-30.

## PROCESSIONAL READINGS

\*Psalm 23: *The Lord is my shepherd*

Psalm 90: *You have been our dwelling place in all generations*

Psalm 118: *God's steadfast love endures forever*

Psalm 121: *My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth*

Psalm 130: *Out of the depths I cry to you*

Isaiah 41:10: *Do not be afraid, for I am with you*

Romans 14: 7-9: *Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's*

Revelation 1: 17-18: *Do not be afraid, I am the first and the last*

Revelation 14: 13: *Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord*

Matthew 11: 28-29: *Come to me, all you who are weary*

John 11: 25-26: *I am the resurrection and the life*

John 14: 27: *Peace I leave with you*

## OLD TESTAMENT and PSALMS

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: *The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases*

Psalm 42: 1-7: *As a deer longs for flowing streams*

Psalm 46: 1-7: *God is our refuge and strength*

Psalm 121: *I lift up my eyes to the hills*

Psalm 139: *O Lord, you have searched me and known me*

Psalm 143: *Hear my prayer, O Lord; give ear to my supplications*

## NEW TESTAMENT and GOSPELS

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 14:6-9: *Whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's*

1 Corinthians 15: 12-26: *Christ, the first-fruits, has been raised from the dead*

2 Corinthians 4: 7-18: *We have this treasure in clay jars*

\*1 Thessalonians 4: 13-18: *We do not want you to be uninformed about those who have died*

Colossians 2 :12-15: *Buried with Jesus in baptism . . . God made you alive together with him*

Colossians 3: 1-4: *For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God*

Hebrews 12: 1-2: *We are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses*

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

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*

Matthew 5: 1-10: *Blessed are those who mourn*

Matthew 11: 25-30: *Come to me, all you who are weary*

Mark 16: 1-7: *The resurrection of Christ*

Luke 7: 11-17: *Raising of the son of the widow of Nain*

Luke 24: 1-9, 36-43: *The resurrection of Christ*

John 1: 1-5, 9-14: *The light shines in the darkness*

John 5:17-24: *All judgment has been given over to the Son*

\*John 5:24-30: *The Resurrection of the Dead*

John 6:35-39: *Everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life*

John 6:48-54: *I am the living bread which came down from heaven*

John 6: 37-40: *I will raise them up on the last day*

John 10: 11-16: *I am the good shepherd*

John 11: 21-27: *I am the resurrection and the life*

John 14: 1-6: *In my Father's house are many dwelling places*

John 14: 25-27: *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you*

John 20:1-18: *The Resurrection of Jesus (Easter Sunday Gospel)*

### 3. HYMNS

Appropriate Christian hymns that are not found in the present red hymnal may be used if copyright permission is secured from the copyright holder in time for their use in the funeral service. In addition to the *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (red) hymnal, we also have a license through CCLI which covers many (but not all) hymns and songs.

In his book on Christian funerals (*Accompany Them Singing*), Thomas Long reminds us that one of the points of a Christian funeral is to journey with the baptized child of God on this last stage of their journey home to God. *We accompany them singing!*

Some suggested hymns for the funeral service (choose 2 or 3):

<i>A Lamb goes Uncomplaining Forth</i> (340)	<i>Lift High the Cross</i> (660)
<i>All Creatures, Worship God Most High</i> (835)	<i>Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service</i> (712)
<i>Alleluia! Jesus is Risen!</i> (377)	<i>My Faith Looks Up to Thee</i> (759)
<i>Amazing Grace</i> (779)	<i>My Hope is Built on Nothing Less</i> (597)
<i>At the Lamb's High Feast We Sing</i> (362)	<i>My Life Flows on in Endless Song</i> (763)
<i>Baptized in Water</i> (456)	<i>O Christ the Same</i> (760)
<i>Beautiful Savior</i> (838)	<i>O Lord, Now Let Your Servant</i> (313)
<i>Be Thou My Vision</i> (793)	<i>On Eagle's Wings</i> (787)
<i>Blessed Assurance</i> (638)	<i>O Sacred Head, Now Wounded</i> (351-352)
<i>Borning Cry</i> (732)	<i>Precious Lord, Take My Hand</i> (773)
<i>Give Me Jesus</i> (770)	<i>Shall We Gather at the River</i> (423)
<i>God Loved the World so That He Gave</i> (323)	<i>Sing With All the Saints in Glory</i> (426)
<i>Guide Me Ever, Great Redeemer</i> (618)	<i>Soon and Very Soon</i> (439)
<i>Healer of Our Every Ill</i> (612)	<i>Spirit of Gentleness</i> (396)
<i>How Great Thou Art</i> (856)	<i>The Lord's My Shepherd</i> (778)
<i>I Am the Bread of Life</i> (485)	<i>There is a Balm in Gilead</i> (614)
<i>I Know That My Redeemer Lives!</i> (619)	<i>Thine the Amen, Thine the Praise</i> (826)
<i>I Want Jesus to Walk with Me</i> (325)	<i>This is My Father's World</i> (824)
<i>Jesus Loves Me</i> (595)	<i>Thy Holy Wings</i> (613)
<i>Jesus, Remember Me</i> (616)	<i>Wash, O God, Our Sons and Daughters</i> (445)
<i>Jesus, Still Lead On</i> (624)	<i>We are Baptized in Christ Jesus</i> (451)
<i>Just As I Am</i> (592)	

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### 4. CHRISTIAN SYMBOLS AT THE TIME OF DEATH

The **Paschal Candle**, which represents the life and presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, is lit at funerals. This large candle is also used during the Season of Easter (the Great 50 Days) and for the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. It is symbolic of the hope of resurrection we have through Jesus Christ. In the Gospel of John (1:5) we read of Jesus: *The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.*

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The **Funeral Pall** is a large cloth used to cover the entire coffin for the funeral in the church building. The pall recalls that we were *clothed with Christ* in Holy Baptism and is a visible reminder that even at death we “wear” our Redeemer. As we read in St. Paul's letter to the Galatians (3:27): *As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.*

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The **Cross** has a central place for the funeral worship service, recalling the heart of the Christian faith. Again, as St. Paul writes to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 2:2): *For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified.*

# Worksheet

Use this page to write down special memories, funeral wishes and anything else that comes to mind.

SPECIAL MEMORIES

HYMNS

SCRIPTURE READINGS

ANYTHING ELSE