

Re: Funeral planning worksheet

To whom it may concern:

It is often difficult for us to contemplate death. We do not like to consider our own mortality and finality. Yet, death is a gate through which each one of us must walk.

St Paul does not want us to be uninformed about death. Christians do not grieve like others who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, God will bring with him those who have died (*1 Thessalonians 4:13–14*).

To help be informed about death and to prepare for this journey, please find attached a funeral planning worksheet. This worksheet may be used by a bereaved family planning a funeral for a recently departed loved one; by individuals anticipating an impending death; to express one's personal wishes for your own funeral; or simply as a catalyst for an open discussion about death.

Either myself, or a pastoral assistant, is available to help as you consider this worksheet. May you remember God's word to you: "Blessed are those who die in the Lord."
(*Revelation 14:13*).

May you have deep peace in Christ, Pastor Dan

Dan Mueller



Rev Dr Dan Mueller

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Funeral planning worksheet

Please supply only as much information as you wish to share or know at this time.

Guide for the Christian funeral of

First

Middle

Last

(Maiden name if applicable)

This worksheet may be used by a bereaved family in the midst of funeral planning; by individuals anticipating an impending death; to express one's personal wishes for your own funeral; or simply as a catalyst for an open discussion about death.

You may choose to file this worksheet with the church. If so, this information will be kept in a confidential file available to the pastor/s or relevant lay assistants. This worksheet may be revised at any time. Funeral charges may vary depending on your choices.

After you complete the worksheet, consider telling someone you trust about it. You may wish to discuss what you have written to be certain it is clear. Consider providing copies for: (1) your family; (2) your church or pastor; (3) to file with your will; (4) your funeral home. Or simply give them a note that says, "As we have discussed, I have recorded my desires regarding my death and burial. I keep this information in the following place: _____ (for example: on file at the church; in my filing cabinet under 'Funeral'). At the time of my death, I ask that you use this information to the extent possible. With gratitude," then sign, date, and send the note.

I understand the information and instructions provided here are for the guidance of my family, friends, and/or church to make arrangements necessary at the time of my death. This document is not legally binding or enforceable. This information is being left for safekeeping. I understand this worksheet does not make anyone obligated or responsible for the execution of these instructions.

Signature _____ Date ____ / ____ / ____
Day Month Year

FUNERAL TO BE ARRANGED BY (check all that apply)

☐ Spouse _____
Name

Phone, email, contact details

☐ Parents _____
Name

Phone, email, contact details

☐ Children _____
Name

Phone, email, contact details

☐ Siblings _____
Name

Phone, email, contact details

☐ Other _____
Name

Phone, email, contact details

Funeral planning worksheet

CARE OF THE BODY

- ☐ Wash body
- ☐ Anoint body
- ☐ Apply make-up
- ☐ Embalm body
- ☐ Autopsy
- ☐ None, unless legally required
- ☐ Yes, for medical research
- ☐ Donate organs *(please complete other required documents)*
- ☐ Donate body for research, with remains returned *(please complete other required documents)*
- ☐ Bury body
- ☐ Cremate body
- ☐ Before visitation or service
- ☐ After visitation or service
- ☐ Other instructions: _____

EXPRESSIONS OF SYMPATHY

- ☐ Flowers
- ☐ Live plants
- ☐ Memorial gift
- ☐ Church fund: _____
Name of congregation/fund
- ☐ Lutheran Church of Australia agency or ministry
- ☐ Australian Lutheran World Service (ALWS)
- ☐ Lutheran Laypersons League (LLL)
- ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ Other organisation or ministry
- ☐ _____

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Announce death in news service? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Announce funeral in news service? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Notes: _____
For example: name of newspaper/s, etc.

Funeral planning worksheet

FUNERAL COMPANY

Preferred company _____
Funeral company name, phone, contact details

Have pre-arrangements been made? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Type of coffin or urn _____
For example: shape, budget range, construction material, shroud, etc.

Attire for deceased body _____

Jewellery or glasses _____

- ☐ Remove and return to family
- ☐ Remove and donate
- ☐ Leave with body (i.e. to be buried/cremated)

Items to include in coffin or urn _____

(Specific arrangements in advance at the funeral home of your choice are encouraged)

VISITATION (VIEWING OF THE BODY)

Provide for visitation (viewing of the body)

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

Viewing location

- ☐ Funeral home
- ☐ Church
- ☐ Home

Viewing time

- ☐ Afternoon before the funeral service
- ☐ Day of the funeral service

Viewing at funeral service

- ☐ Open casket
- ☐ Closed casket

Funeral planning worksheet

FUNERAL SERVICE

A Christian funeral service typically has the following elements (following LCA Church Rites):

1. Opening sentences and reminder of baptism
2. [Optional hymn/song]
3. Reflections on life of deceased (called a eulogy or obituary)
4. [Optional photo tribute]
5. Prayer
6. Bible readings (usually 2 or 3)
7. [Optional hymn/song]
8. Word of comfort/sermon (by pastor)
9. Apostle's Creed
10. [Optional hymn/song]
11. Prayers, including Lord's Prayer
12. [Optional committal] (if not proceeding to graveside)
13. Blessing
14. Recession
15. [Optional graveside committal]

Public/private

- ☐ Public (anyone can attend) ☐ Private (family or by invitation only)

Location

- ☐ Church: _____
- ☐ Funeral home: _____
- ☐ Cemetery (chapel): _____
- ☐ Cemetery (graveside): _____
- ☐ Other: _____

Preferred time

- ☐ Morning ☐ Afternoon ☐ Evening

Remains present

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

On/near the coffin or urn

- ☐ Coffin spray (flowers)
- ☐ Funeral pall (cloth)
- ☐ Photograph
- ☐ Bible
- ☐ Cross
- ☐ Other: _____

Flower preferences

Funeral lead by

- ☐ Pastor ☐ Celebrant ☐ Other: _____

Funeral planning worksheet

Suggested congregational hymns/songs

1. _____ 3. _____
2. _____ 4. _____

Common hymn or song choices for funerals

<i>How sweet the name of Jesus sounds</i> (LH 161)	<i>Praise, my soul, the King of heaven</i> (LH 465)
<i>Lord, take my hand and lead me</i> (LH 301)	<i>Abide with me</i> (LH 543)
<i>I heard the voice of Jesus</i> (LH 306)	<i>Comfort, comfort all my people</i> (LHS 732)
<i>Just as I am</i> (LH 335)	<i>To God be the glory</i> (LHS 793)
<i>The Lord is my Shepherd – Psalm 23</i> (LH 387)	<i>Amazing grace</i> (LHS 851)
<i>What a friend we have in Jesus</i> (LH 426)	<i>How great Thou art</i> (LHS 881)
<i>Now thank we all our God</i> (LH 437)	<i>May the feet of God</i> (LHS 888)

Your favourite Bible passage or Bible story

Suggested Bible readings (*consider baptism, confirmation, and/or wedding texts*)

Psalms

New Testament readings

Old Testament readings

Gospel readings

Suggested Bible reading for the pastor to preach on

Common Bible readings for funerals

<i>Psalm 18:1–6, 16–19</i>	<i>Job 19:21–27</i>	<i>Romans 8:18–25, 31–39</i>	<i>Matthew 5:1–12</i>
<i>Psalm 23</i>	<i>Isaiah 25:6–9</i>	<i>1 Corinthians 15:12–22</i>	<i>Matthew 11:28–30</i>
<i>Psalm 25:1–7</i>	<i>Isaiah 40:6–11</i>	<i>2 Corinthians 5:1–10</i>	<i>Mark 13:32–37</i>
<i>Psalm 42:1–6</i>	<i>Jeremiah 31:15–17</i>	<i>Colossians 3:1–4</i>	<i>Luke 2:25–32</i>
<i>Psalm 71:1–9</i>	<i>Lamentations 3:19–33</i>	<i>1 Thessalonians 4:13–18</i>	<i>Luke 7:11–17</i>
<i>Psalm 73:1–2, 23–28</i>		<i>1 Peter 1:3–9</i>	<i>John 3:16–21</i>
<i>Psalm 84:1–4, 10–12</i>		<i>Revelation 7:9–17</i>	<i>John 5:24–30</i>
<i>Psalm 90:1–12</i>		<i>Revelation 21:1–5</i>	<i>John 6:27–40</i>
<i>Psalm 103:1–5, 10–18</i>			<i>John 10:11–16</i>
			<i>John 14:1–6</i>

Other music and non-Biblical readings (*poems, etc*)

Funeral planning worksheet

Suggested pallbearers

1. _____ 4. _____

2. _____ 5. _____

3. _____ 6. _____

Guard of honour

For example: sporting club, society or interest group, choir members, etc.

Service order front cover

☐ Photograph

☐ Biblical or seasonal image: _____

For example: cross butterfly baptism symbol etc

☐ Line drawing of church building

☐ Other: _____

Photo tribute (*audiovisual presentation*)

☐ No☐ Before service

☐ After eulogy

If an audiovisual photo tribute is desired, please determine if display is possible at the funeral location. Use clear pictures of key events from the life of the deceased. It is appropriate that some images provoke affectionate laughter, but any images that are in bad taste, or that may cause offence, should be avoided. Suggested length is 3–5 minutes (i.e. 20–30 images display for 10 seconds each). It is recommended presentations do not exceed 10 minutes in length.

Other notes

Funeral planning worksheet

CEMETERY

☐ I have already made arrangements for my burial/entombment

Cemetery

Name, location

Contact details

Phone number, email, contact details

Name of lot or crypt niche

Easement or deed number

Other information

☐ I have not made prior arrangements for my burial/entombment, but I suggest the following

MEMORIAL MARKERS

☐ I have made arrangements for a memorial marker

Location & details

Contact details

Phone number, email, contact details

☐ I have not made prior arrangements for a memorial marker, but I suggest the following

Headstone

☐ Monument

☐ Bronze plaque

☐ Granite plaque

Suggested inscription

☐ Memorial plaque (e.g. memorial wall, park seat, etc)

Location

Inscription

MEAL FOLLOWING FUNERAL SERVICE

Meal following funeral service for mutual conversation and consolation

☐ No

☐ Yes

Meal location

☐ Church hall

☐ Funeral home

☐ Other: _____

Meal invitation

☐ Public

☐ By invitation only

☐ Other: _____

Funeral planning worksheet

OBITUARY/EULOGY DATA

The following data may be helpful when preparing an obituary/eulogy.

Full name _____
First Middle Last Maiden name (if applicable)

Date of birth ____/____/____ Date of death ____/____/____
Day Month Year Day Month Year

Place of birth _____ Place of death _____
City, state, country City, state, country

Father _____ Mother _____
First Middle Last First Middle Maiden

Brothers and sisters (*oldest to youngest, including deceased*)

1. _____ 5. _____
First Middle Last First Middle Last

2. _____ 6. _____
First Middle Last First Middle Last

3. _____ 7. _____
First Middle Last First Middle Last

4. _____ 8. _____
First Middle Last First Middle Last

Baptism: ____/____/____ Place _____ By _____
Day Month Year Church name, city Name of pastor

Confirmation: ____/____/____ Place _____ By _____
Day Month Year Church name, city Name of pastor

Wedding: ____/____/____ Place _____ By _____
Day Month Year Church name, city Name of pastor

Spouse _____ Date of death ____/____/____
First Middle Last/Maiden If applicable Day Month Year

Children of marriage (*oldest to youngest, including deceased*)

1. _____ 5. _____
First Middle Last First Middle Last

2. _____ 6. _____
First Middle Last First Middle Last

3. _____ 7. _____
First Middle Last First Middle Last

4. _____ 8. _____
First Middle Last First Middle Last

Funeral planning worksheet

If subsequently married:

Spouse _____ Date of death _____ / _____ / _____
First Middle Last/Maiden If applicable Day Month Year

Children of subsequent marriage (*oldest to youngest, including deceased*)

1. _____ 4. _____
First Middle Last First Middle Last

2. _____ 5. _____
First Middle Last First Middle Last

3. _____ 6. _____
First Middle Last First Middle Last

Places of residence

1. _____ From _____ To _____
City, state, country Year Year

2. _____ From _____ To _____
City, state, country Year Year

3. _____ From _____ To _____
City, state, country Year Year

4. _____ From _____ To _____
City, state, country Year Year

5. _____ From _____ To _____
City, state, country Year Year

Occupation/s _____

Hobbies and pastimes _____

Church involvement _____

Community involvement _____

Notes

Funeral planning worksheet

GUIDELINES FOR WRITING AN OBITUARY

Ideal length: 1 to 1½ typed pages, or 600 to 1200 words (about 5–10 minutes reading time)

Consider the following points when writing the obituary:

1. Biography (a summary of their life)

- When and where were they born?
- Who were their parents? What did they do?
- What was life like for them, when they were growing up?
- When were they baptised, confirmed or married (where applicable)?
- What profession/job(s) did they have?
- Were there any significant moves or changes in their life?

2. Family

- Who was their husband/wife? When and where did they marry?
- Where did they first live? What changes did they make together?
- How many children did they have?
- How will they be remembered as a spouse/parent, etc?

3. Personality

- What were they like as a person? What made them tick?
- What hobbies and pastimes did they have?
- What did they love doing the most? (For example: what are they doing when you picture them now? What is in their hand?)

4. Community involvement (what contribution did they make to the wider community)

- Community activities/events
- Sporting clubs
- Other involvement in the community
- How will they be remembered by people in the wider community?

5. Faith

- Church involvement
- What importance did their faith have in their life?
- How did God give them strength to face challenges along the way?
- How did God help them through the last months/years of their life?

6. How did their story end?

- What are your last memories of your loved one?
- What significant events led up to their death?
- When did they die? Mention if they were with family or friends, at peace, quietly sleeping, etc.
- What were their/your parting words?
- Give respect to their family and friends by mentioning loved ones who have been left behind, and other people who will be grieving them.

Based on a statement prepared by the Lutheran Church of Australia – Commission on Worship, February 2012

Funeral planning worksheet

GUIDELINES FOR PHOTO TRIBUTE

Ideal length: 3–5 minutes, or 20–30 images displayed for 10 seconds each.

Please consider the following when planning a photo tribute:

- Firstly, please determine if display is possible at the funeral location.
 - Display is possible at Immanuel Lutheran Church Buderim — widescreen format is preferred (e.g. 16:9 aspect ratio).
- Use clear pictures of key events from the life of the deceased. It is appropriate that some images provoke affectionate laughter, but any images that are in bad taste, or that may cause offence, should be avoided.
- Suggested length is 3–5 minutes (i.e. 20–30 images displayed for 10 seconds each). If the presentation is longer, it is strongly recommend not to exceed 10 minutes in length.
- It is common to choose appropriate backing music for the tribute e.g. favourite songs of the deceased. Please consider copyright laws when choosing music. A good source of free to use church instrumental music can be found at: <https://www.smallchurchmusic.com>
- The funeral director or pastor can assist with putting together the photo tribute. (The funeral director will charge a reasonable fee for this service).
- Photos should be provided on USB stick or file-sharing service (e.g. Dropbox, Google Drive). Photos should be arranged in the desired order using filename e.g. 001.jpg, 002.jpg, 003.jpg, etc. If you desire captions, filenames should contain the caption e.g. 001 – Dan's first day.jpg, 002 – Dan's baptism in 1981.jpg, 003 – The wedding party.jpg.

Funeral planning worksheet

WILL

☐ I have a will

Location of will _____

Executor of will _____

Will prepared by _____

☐ I do not have a will

Your Will is a written statement explaining how you would like your property and money distributed after you die. Christians who prepare a Will may like to share their true wealth: the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins and eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ. A Christian preamble to your Will gives you an ideal opportunity to share this belief with your family and friends. Prayerfully consider using the following Christian preamble in your Will, or as a guide to writing your own.

Christian preamble: As a baptised child of God, I am in His care. I am secure in His love for me and trust in the salvation purchased for me through Jesus' suffering and death. Be comforted that I have died in this Christian faith and have now joined my Lord in eternal life. I encourage you, my loved ones, to place your faith and trust in Jesus alone. I urge you not to set your hopes on worldly riches, but to take hold of real life through faith in Jesus Christ.

OTHER LEGAL ARRANGEMENTS

Attorney/solicitor _____

Next of kin _____

Consider discussing and/or recording the following information with a person you trust:

- *Driver's licence number*
- *Medicare number*
- *Tax file number*
- *Bank accounts*
- *Pension/superannuation accounts*
- *Insurance companies/agents*
- *Property/real estate*
- *Power of attorney*

Funeral planning worksheet

OTHER HELPFUL INFORMATION

Lutheran Laypeople's League (LLL) has a helpful document about leaving a legacy and providing a Christian preamble in your will. Search the internet for 'LLL legacy' or see link in reference list.

In 1519, Martin Luther published a sermon titled '*On preparing to die.*' Here is a very short summary:

1. Properly order your temporal goods and property to avoid squabbles, quarrels, and other misunderstandings among surviving family and friends.
2. Cheerfully and sincerely forgive those who have offended you, and earnestly seek forgiveness from those you have offended.
3. Turn your eyes to God, to whom the path of death leads and directs us.
4. Prepare for this journey by confession of sins, with the sacrament of the holy and true body and blood of Christ, and with prayer.
5. Do not remember your sins and failings, but remember the benefits of the sacraments: they effect forgiveness of sins, deliver from death and the devil, and grant eternal salvation to all who believe, as the Word and promise of God declares.
6. Look at your death, not through your own eyes, but through the eyes of God's grace, who has overcome death through Jesus. "Blessed are those who die in the Lord." (Revelation 14:13).
7. Be certain that in the hour of death, no Christian is alone. As the sacraments point out, the eyes of God and Christ himself are upon you. "I will fix my loving eye upon you." (Psalm 32:8).
8. God performs great, right, and divine works for you. Though God imposes something big upon you (such as dying), he will give to you great benefits, help, and strength. Therefore, thank him with a joyful heart for showing us such wonderful, rich, and immeasurable grace and mercy against death, hell, and sin. May God help us. Amen.

REFERENCES

This document was prepared using the following resources:

Lutheran Layperson's League, 'Lasting Legacies'
<https://www.lll.org.au/giving/legacies>

Lutheran Church of Australia, Commission on Worship Resources
<https://www.lca.org.au/departments/commissions/commission-worship/special-occasion-resources/>

Kent Bureson and Beth Hoeltke, 'Your Final Journey: A Burial Planning Guide'
<https://concordiatheology.org/2019/12/natural-burial-the-final-journey>

Central Lutheran Church Minneapolis, 'Funeral Planning Worksheet'
<https://www.centralmpls.org/formation/life-passages/>

Pastor Dan Mueller
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