

Funeral/Memorial Service Planning Guide First English Lutheran Church

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As Christians we know that we have nothing to fear in death. In fact, it is through dying that we are born to a new and eternal life.

No one cares to plan a funeral, but the reality is that we must, and sometimes when we least expect it or are least prepared to do so. No matter how much warning we may have, the event of death does come as a shock.

There are many decisions that must be made in the days surrounding the death of a loved one. This Planning Guide is designed to help you with some of these decisions and to help you better understand the service that First English Lutheran Church offers during this time.

Please take the time to read through this Planning Guide before you make any final arrangements. Please call the First English Lutheran Church (FELC) pastor if you have any questions or concerns about anything addressed in this Planning Guide.

May the grace of God bring you comfort and keep you throughout this difficult time. Please also know that your First English Lutheran church family is praying for you.

The Purpose of a Funeral/Memorial Service

The resurrection is a central doctrine of the Christian faith and shapes Christian's attitudes and responses to the event of death. Death brings loss, sorrow, and grief to all. In the face of death, Christians do not bear bereavement in isolation but are sustained by the power of the Holy Spirit and the community of faith. The church offers a ministry of love and hope to all who grieve.

There are two main purposes for a funeral or memorial service. The first is to honor the life and celebrate the memory of the person who has died. The second purpose is to proclaim the Resurrection and celebrate the promise of life eternal in heaven.

Funerals and memorial services are provided for members and non-members alike.

Service at Church

Church members are encouraged to use the church for funeral/memorial services. Just as we are baptized by God in church and have been nourished by God through the church, so it is wholly appropriate that thanksgiving to God for our lives should be offered in church.

Funeral Arrangements

When death is anticipated or has already occurred, call the pastor so that the ministry of the community of faith can begin to serve you in those earliest hours of death. The pastor can bring prayers and the presence of the community of faith to the hospital, nursing home, or home.

Primary arrangements for the funeral service will be made with the First English Lutheran Church pastor. At the time of death, either the family or the funeral home will contact the pastor to start the planning process.

The time of the funeral/memorial service is arranged in consultation with the pastor, the family members, funeral director, and church calendar.

Pastor

The FELC pastor will conduct all funeral services held at First English Lutheran Church.

Requests for the participation of a guest pastor to assist in the service must be made to the FELC pastor, who, if it is appropriate, will extend an invitation. The FELC pastor will still meet with the family and plan the service and will coordinate the details with the guest pastor. The FELC pastor will preside at the service. A guest pastor should be provided an honorarium and reimbursement for travel expenses.

If the FELC pastor is unavailable, an area ELCA Lutheran pastor, or a full-communion partner with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) will be contacted to conduct the funeral service. If the family chooses to have another pastor conduct the service, that pastor must be approved by the FELC pastor. The FELC pastor will contact and make arrangements with the pastor conducting the service.

A Time of Worship

In the Lutheran tradition, a funeral/memorial service is considered a service of worship and will be approached with the dignity and joyful celebration accorded worship.

The funeral liturgy from the Evangelical Lutheran Worship Hymnal (ELW) will be used for the service.

A typical order of worship will include: prelude and postlude of sacred music; hymns and songs of praise and faith; scripture lessons from the Old and New Testaments; a message – which expresses thanksgiving to God for the life of the deceased, and reminds all of Christ's resurrection and promise of eternal life; prayers of intercession and thanksgiving; a commendation; a benediction.

In consultation with the pastor, other elements, such as remarks from family members and friends, may be included in the service. The First English Lutheran Church pastor will make the final determination on the elements of worship.

It is very appropriate for family members and friends to be involved and assist in the service as pallbearers, lectors, or musicians.

Scripture Readings

Generally, there are three Scripture readings, including one from one of the four gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John). A list of suggestions will be provided. The pastor may choose the readings if you wish, based on a conversation with you.

Music

All music used in the service should be appropriate for a worship setting. Congregational hymns are encouraged and normally come from the ELW Hymnal to facilitate maximum participation from those attending the funeral. Hymns, solos, and other music should reflect the hope that is ours in the resurrection of Jesus.

Normally one of the FELC organist will serve as the accompanist for the service, as they are familiar with our instruments. The family may choose to have another pianist or organist. HOWEVER, the guest organist must coordinate a time with the FELC organist to receive instruction.

There is a minimum of three hymns/solos during a funeral service.

Please note that the use of recorded music is discouraged.

The organist/pianist will start playing music about 15 minutes before the service begins, unless other arrangements have been made.

Media

FELC has a computer/sound system in the sanctuary which can be used before or during the service only if the sound technician is available to run it. A gratuity for the sound technician is expected. The family must prepare the media presentation.

Laptops, jump drives, CD players and other devices ARE NOT to be hooked into the FELC system without the approval of our sound technician.

Arrangements for media must be discussed with the parish assistant at least two days before the funeral service.

Funeral Pall and Cremains Pall Available

A funeral pall or urn pall is available from the church upon request. A pall is simply an off-white cloth that covers the casket or urn. The white color reminds us of the resurrection and further symbolizes that, in baptism, we put on the robe of Christ's righteousness. Additionally, the pall helps the congregation emphasize the worship of God and the hope of the resurrection rather than the value of the casket. Please notify the pastor if you are interested in using the pall.

Committal Service

The pastor is available to lead a brief committal service at the cemetery (locally) where the casket/cremains are to be interred. This service typically includes prayers, words of committal, and a benediction.

Visitation

There may be occasions when it is desirable for visitation with the family to take place at the church rather than the funeral home the day prior to the funeral/memorial service. This visitation time must be coordinated with the pastor and the church.

Prayer Service

The pastor is available to lead a brief prayer service before or after the visitation the day prior to the funeral/memorial service. This service typically includes prayers, scripture readings, blessing, and sharing of memories by friends and family of the deceased. The time of the service must be coordinated with the pastor at the time funeral arrangements are made.

Memorials

Gifts given in memory of a loved one are appropriate and welcomed. First English Lutheran Church, or a charitable organization of the donor's choice, are potential recipients of such gifts.

Costs/Fees

There is no charge for funerals. These guidelines are listed for those who would like to give a gratuity/honorarium. Generally, when using a funeral home, these fees are included. Please verify with the funeral director.

Costs/Fees for Members of First English Lutheran Church

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|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Custodian: | \$50 |
| Organist/pianist: | \$75-150 |
| Soloist/musician | \$75-150 |
| Sound Technician | \$50-75 |
| Pastor: | \$100-250 |
| Gift for Funeral Lunch | minimum \$100 (depends on size) |

Costs/Fees for Non-Members

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|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Custodian: | \$50 |
| Organist/pianist: | \$75-150 |
| Soloist/musician | \$75-150 |
| Sound Technician | \$50-75 |
| Pastor: | \$100-250 |
| Gift for Funeral Lunch | minimum \$100 (depends on size) |
| Facility Use | \$150 |

First English Lutheran Church Funeral Serving Policy

Serving for members or non-members:

- The service groups will set tables and serve a water and/or lemonade and coffee. They will also do clean-up.
- All funeral luncheons will be catered. If the family chooses to have a catered meal served by the caterers, the family would be expected to cover that cost.
- The family will be asked to provide the church with an estimated number of guests for the service and lunch.
- Lunch will be served immediately following the funeral service unless otherwise requested.

If a Funeral Home is NOT Coordinating the Funeral/Memorial Service

If a family chooses not to have a Funeral Home assisting them, please understand the family will be responsible for the following items:

- Meet with the FELC pastor to plan the funeral/memorial service. The meeting will address details regarding the following: music, scripture lessons, family or friend involvement in the service, luncheon planning, and other related items.
- Burial - including securing and paying for the plot, the digging of the grave and the vault, coordination of the service at the cemetery and providing chairs for family members during the committal service.
- Transporting or handling the body or the cremains. The church will not handle or transport the cremains or the body nor will they be stored at the church.
- Additionally, the church is not liable if the cremains are lost or spilled.
- Coordinating military honors.
- Procession to the cemetery. PLEASE NOTE: First English Lutheran Church is not legally responsible for the procession to the cemetery.
- Provide the church with ONE contact person who will work with the church to coordinate all services.
- Provide the church with an estimated number of guests for the service and lunch. If the family wishes to have a lunch, it must be prepared and served by the caterer.
- Provide ushers to assist with visitation and the service, hand out bulletins and welcome guests.
- Provide pall bearers.
- Write obituary.
- Provide obituary or death notice to newspapers and radio stations. FELC will announce the funeral arrangements in worship announcements when possible.
- Flowers. The family must arrange the display of flowers and pick them up after the memorial service.
 - Note: the church does have a limited supply of flower stands available.
- Set up picture board displays and memorabilia if desired. FELC does have a limited supply of easels available if needed.
- Provide memorial folders if desired.
- Provide guest book if desired.
- Provide card box.
- Removal of all items related to the funeral service from the church after the service.
- Be responsible for all honorariums.
- Arrange for death certificate.

- Notify Social Security Administration.
- If visitation is held at the church the day before the funeral service, the family must provide coordination and maintain order.
 - In addition, a member of FELC will supervise the visitation time. The family will be responsible for payment to the FELC member of \$20/hour for the time of visitation plus 30 minutes before and 30 minutes after the visitation for set up and clean up.

Fees if a Funeral Home is NOT Coordinating the Service

Payable by noon the day BEFORE the service at the church office

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|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Pastor | \$200-250 |
| Organist/pianist | \$75-150 |
| Soloist/musician | \$75-150 |
| Custodian | \$50 |
| Media operator (if used) | \$50-75 |
| Visitation the day before | ---- |
| Use of the church | \$ 150 |
| Supervision as noted above | \$ 20/hour |
| Gift for Funeral Lunch | minimum \$100 (depends on size) |

Please note: if you are unable to afford these expenses, please speak with the pastor