



Funeral and Memorial Handbook

St. John's Lutheran Church

200 West Innes Street, Salisbury, NC 28144 • 704.636.3431 • stjohns-salisbury.org

Dear friends,

We make plans for many things in life. In this booklet we invite you to plan for your funeral, as well.

Why? There are many reasons. First and foremost, funeral pre-planning provides a means of letting your wishes be known to all concerned. Second, pre-planning your funeral enables you to give expression to your faith through choosing and ordering what is to take place. It becomes a witness to your loved ones and to all those who participate in and attend your funeral.

And there's more. Planning *now* for your funeral eases the burden on your loved ones by eliminating the pressure of decision-making, particularly the need of trying to do things "the way you would have wished." Finally, pre-planning will give you a certain amount of peace, knowing that your affairs are in order.

If at all possible, discuss these plans with your loved ones. Allow them to participate in the planning and express their thoughts. At first the conversation might seem awkward; but most will find that the conversation leads to a beautiful way of sharing mutual love for one another — a conversation best shared now, *before* death occurs.

Once you have completed the pre-planning forms, please keep a copy for your files and share copies with your loved ones and the church office.

As you know, some plans change and/or need to be tweaked. The events surrounding your death, or events that may occur between now and the time of your death, may necessitate a change in your funeral plans. If that's the case, we will be happy to help you review and update your forms.

We hope this handbook will answer many of your questions about the planning of a funeral/memorial service and outline the many ways the church will journey with you through the process. If you have questions, please feel free to contact one of the pastors.

Blessings to you in your journey.

The St. John's Pastoral Care Team

"I am the resurrection and the life."

John 11:25

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Purpose of Funeral and Memorial Services

In death, grief and loss are real and not to be minimized. As a Christian community, we are privileged to walk with our brothers and sisters in times of sorrow, pointing to the hope that comes in Jesus and the promise of life everlasting with him.

While loved ones will be remembered in this service, they will be remembered as children of God. Most importantly we will remember and celebrate what Jesus Christ did for them and for us. With that in mind, a funeral or memorial service is *worship* — our worship of the God who gives us life, binds us in relationship, extends his goodness and grace, and welcomes us into eternal life.

Types of Services

Funeral Service: When remains are present in a casket or as ashes in an urn.

Memorial Service: A memorial service is conducted when no remains are present. This type of service is preferable when remains are unavailable or the service is celebrated a significant time after the death.

Inurnment: This is a brief service with readings and prayers that commits one's ashes to a final resting place. This can be done any time after the death.

Graveside Committal: The Committal is a brief service with readings and prayers committing a body in casket or urn to the ground. Committal generally precedes or follows the funeral service. When the committal involves a casket, it is called an "interment." When it involves ashes, it is called an inurnment.

When Can a Funeral Be Held?

Funerals are held at the convenience of the family, normally within a few days following death. Please note that funerals will not be celebrated on Sundays or High Holy Days such as Christmas, Easter or Good Friday. Saturday funerals are discouraged, unless family needs require a Saturday funeral to be scheduled.

Funeral Liturgy

The liturgy used for all services is from the ELW (Evangelical Lutheran Worship) worship book. The service features hymns, scripture readings, prayers, homily, and a commendation.

Bulletins

The St. John's office and worship staff will produce your bulletins.

Scripture

There are usually 2-3 readings during the service. The readings selected can be a powerful reminder of God's grace, ever-present support, and promise of new life. The reading of scripture is an appropriate time to have friends/family involved in the service. Below are some suggested texts that are common to funeral/memorial services. Please don't be limited by the following list. It serves only as a starting point.

Old Testament

Job 19:23-27	<i>I know my redeemer lives</i>
Ecclesiastes 3:1-8	<i>For everything there is a season</i>
Isaiah 25:6-9	<i>God will swallow up death forever</i>
Isaiah 43:1-3a, 5-7	<i>I have called you by name</i>
Isaiah 55:1-3, 6-13	<i>Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters</i>
Jeremiah 31:8-13	<i>I will turn their mourning into joy</i>

Psalms

Psalms 23	<i>The Lord is my Shepherd</i>
Psalms 46	<i>God is our refuge and strength</i>
Psalms 118	<i>God's steadfast love endures forever</i>
Psalms 121	<i>I lift up my eyes to the hills</i>
Psalms 130	<i>Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord</i>

Gospels

Matthew 5:1-10	<i>Blessed are those who mourn</i>
Matthew 11:25-30	<i>I will give you rest</i>
John 1:1-5, 9-14	<i>The light shines in the darkness</i>
John 10:11-16	<i>I am the good shepherd</i>
John 11:21-27	<i>I am the resurrection and the life</i>
John 14:1-6	<i>I prepare a place for you</i>

New Testament Writings

Romans 8:31-35, 37-39	<i>Who will separate us from the love of God?</i>
2 Corinthians 15:12-26	<i>Treasure in clay jars</i>
Hebrews 12:1-12	<i>Surrounded by a cloud of witnesses</i>
1 Peter 1:3-9	<i>A living hope through Jesus' resurrection</i>
Revelation 7:9-17	<i>God will wipe away every tear</i>
Revelation 21:2-7	<i>I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem</i>

Readings other than from the Scriptures are not normally included in the funeral service. Consult with a member of the St. John's Pastoral Staff if you have questions.

Homilies

A homily will be offered at the worship service by one of the St. John's Pastoral Staff. If a guest preacher is desired, please make arrangements first with one of our pastors. The homily will be a time to remember our loved one and to boldly proclaim the Good News of the gospel.

Memories and Eulogies

Occasionally a family member or friend will want to share a few remembrances (eulogy) about the one who has died. Although the service is complete without a eulogy, it can sometimes provide helpful context. The eulogy is normally limited to one person and is expected not to exceed five minutes.

Music

The Minister of Music or an appointed substitute will play for the service. Any outside musicians or vocalists need to consult with the Minister of Music to discuss appropriate music selections and the worshipful nature of the service. In general, secular music is not appropriate during the service. A funeral choir will help with worship leadership.

Suggested Funeral Hymns:

Abide with Me	O Blessed Spring
Amazing Grace	O Christ the Same
A Mighty Fortress	O God Our Help in Ages Past
Blessed Assurance	On Eagle's Wings
Come Thou Fount	Precious Lord, Take My Hand
For All the Saints	Shall We Gather At the River
Immortal, Invisible	The King of Love My Shepherd
I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light	You are Mine
My Faith Looks Up to These	Shepherd Me, O God



Holy Communion

Holy Communion is not a requirement of the funeral service, but can be meaningful for those still on their earthly journey. The sacrament of Holy Communion was given by Christ for the sake of creating and sustaining faith. We believe that in the sacrament Christ is fully present with us, meeting us in our grief, sorrow, sin, and suffering. Further, Holy Communion gives us a foretaste of the feast to come in the kingdom of God.



Please arrange with the pastor if you would like Holy Communion to be part of this funeral/memorial service. The Altar Guild will make sure that the table is set and prepared for the service.

Visitation

In conjunction with the funeral home, St. John's is fully prepared to host visitations. These allow guests to spend time with the family sharing remembrances and saying goodbye. Most church visitations occur the day of the funeral service and last no more than two hours. There are several locations in which the visitation can be held, although Peeler Hall is most commonly preferred. The pastoral staff will talk through options with you. Please note that the body is not present for viewing when the visitation is at St. John's.

Memorial Table

It is absolutely appropriate to have a memorial table(s) at the visitation, filled with memories and photographs of the loved one. The funeral home will be happy to help set this up.

Flowers

Flowers can be an important image and symbol of the hoped-for promise of resurrection. Flowers can be ordered by St. John's or directly by the family. Two arrangements should be ordered for the altar area. Additional flowers may be arranged in the narthex and the visitation area.

Pall

A pall is used to cover the casket or the urn. This white drape recalls the white robe that is the garment of the baptized, and serves as a reminder that, through baptism, we have "put on Christ" (Galatians 3:27). Flower sprays or national flags are not to be used in the worship service. A flag may be used at the graveside if desired.

Social & Fraternal Societies

The worship service is meant to give glory to God and comfort to the bereaved. The worship service is not an occasion to support, augment or complement non-church organizations and rituals. Any ritual or rite apart from the proclamation of the Word and the administration of the sacraments is inappropriate within the liturgies of the Lutheran Church. Therefore, no social/fraternal society rituals will be included in the service in the sanctuary or at the graveside committal. Once the committal has been concluded, the family may observe social and fraternal society rites as they deem appropriate.

Military Honors

If there is a graveside committal as part of the service, military honors are most appropriate at the graveside preceding or following the rite of committal.

Gift Designations & Memorials

In response to the goodness of God and in gratitude for the life of the deceased, you may choose to designate financial contributions/memorials be made in honor of the deceased. This often happens in lieu of flowers. Common choices are:

- **St. John's General Fund:** *This fund covers our day-to-day operating and ministry expenses.*
- **St. John's Designated Fund:** *A fund that allows the church to use funds for a specific, designated purpose at the family's request. Please consult with the pastor before choosing a designated fund.*
- **St. John's Benevolent Fund:** *An endowed fund where memorial gifts are invested and the interest is given annually to ministries within and beyond St. John's.*
- **Other Community Organizations** (Lutheran Services for the Aging, Rowan Helping Ministries, Community Care Clinic, etc.)

Recording/Photography

The service may be videotaped discreetly from the balcony; however, no flash photography is permitted during the funeral/memorial service. The service will be recorded for audio and will be made available to the family.

Funeral Meal

Gathering with family for comfort and support can be particularly helpful. Our Funeral Meal Team provides a meal for the immediate family of members who have died. The meal is normally held in the Fellowship Hall, and generally takes place before the service. There is no fee.

Fees and Honoraria

The staff and community of St. John's, called by Christ to comfort those who mourn, plan and implement funeral/memorial services. There is no fee for these services, although honoraria are sometimes offered as grateful acknowledgements.

Final Arrangements

In addition to your funeral service, it is helpful to make arrangements ahead of time regarding care of your body and your final resting place. Below are terms that will help you think through these decisions. Medical decisions (organ donation, autopsy, etc.) should be noted in your Living Will.

Organ Donation: All individuals can indicate their intent to donate organs, although people under the age of 18 must have the consent of a parent or legal guardian. Medical suitability for donation is determined at the time of death. You may choose what can be donated and for what purpose. The common purposes are for transplants, education and research.

The following can be donated:

- Organs: heart, kidneys, pancreas, lungs, liver, and intestine
- Tissue: cornea, skin, heart valves, bone, blood vessels, and connective tissue
- Bone marrow/stem cells, umbilical cord blood, peripheral blood stem cells

Donation of Body for Research: If you would like to donate your whole body for research, this should be arranged prior to your death. Many organizations require registration on file prior to death for the body to be received as a donation. Once the donation has been made and research conducted, ashes from the body are returned to the family. Generally, this takes four to six weeks.

Autopsy: Unless legally required, you have the option to choose whether or not to have an autopsy on your body. The two most common choices are:

- *No Autopsy*, unless legally required
- *Yes*, if it will benefit medical research

You can also name a person who will make this decision after your death. This can be important if there are questions surrounding the circumstance of your death.

Embalming: Embalming is the art and science of temporarily preserving human remains to forestall decomposition and to make them suitable for display at a funeral. The three goals of embalming are thus presentation, sanitization and presentation of dead body to achieve this effect. If you are being buried in a grave plot, most states require embalming. This process must be coordinated with a funeral home. Please know that the church is happy to accompany you as you talk with the funeral home. This can often be overwhelming and many find it comforting to have pastoral presence.

Cremation: Cremation is the incinerating of a body. The remains, known as cremains, are in the form of ashes. If you are being cremated, you will generally have fewer end-of-life expenses.

Columbarium Niche: A columbarium is a place where people's cremated remains are kept. A niche is the individual spot where your cremains are kept within the columbarium.

St. John's Columbarium and Memorial Garden

The St. John's Columbarium and Memorial Garden is located near the front of the sanctuary. It provides a sacred, dignified, quiet, and reflective place for loved ones to visit and remember.

Frequently Asked Questions about St. John's Columbarium

Whose cremains could be placed in our columbarium? Persons eligible for interment in the St. John's Memorial Garden/Columbarium are any baptized members of St. John's and their spouses, and dependent children. Others may be eligible upon the approval of the Senior Pastor and Memorial Garden committee.

If I purchase a niche, what do I get for my money? The fee that is paid assures you a niche and perpetual care of the columbarium. The purchaser does not "own" the space; the property is still owned by the congregation.

What is the cost? Please contact the church office for costs.

Can I pick out a particular niche? You may choose from among those which have not already been reserved.

What type of container is used for the ashes? St. John's has available a beautiful, hand-crafted urn for use as the container for ashes during the funeral/committal. The niche has a container to serve as the final repository of ashes. It will not be necessary to purchase an individual container or urn for the funeral service, interment or scattering.

What can be on a site marker? Inscriptions are placed on uniform site markers. They include the full name of the deceased and the dates of his/her birth and death. Due to space limitations and desire for uniformity, epitaphs will not be permitted on the markers, but can be included on the container itself at the discretion of the family.

Can my spouse and I share a niche? Multiple interments are not permitted. Only one container may be placed in a single niche, and the ashes of only one individual may be placed in the container.

How do I reserve a space? Fill out and sign the contract in the back of this booklet. Turn in the paperwork and full payment to the church office to reserve your space. The contract is then signed by the chairman of the Columbarium Committee. Once all signatures are obtained, you will receive a copy of the contract. The original is kept on record at St. John's.

Additional Planning

In addition to planning your funeral service or the service of a loved one, it is important to have other legal documents on file. Helpful resources such as *Notes for My Friends and Family* and *My Will & Trust Guide* are available in the office or on-line through the ELCA at: elca.org/resources. Key documents include:

Will — A will is simply a set of instructions on how to distribute your assets to loved ones and charities upon your death. Be aware, however, that a will is subordinate to any beneficiary designations you have made on investment and retirement accounts.

Durable Power of Attorney — You name another person to act on your behalf, with limited or broad powers as you see fit. A "durable power" lets someone act on your behalf if you are disabled and terminates upon your death.

Health Care Power of Attorney — This document authorizes someone to make medical decisions on your behalf if you are unable to do so.

Living Will — This document lays out your wishes regarding the use of life-sustaining measures in the event of terminal illness. It's best used in tandem with a health care power of attorney since a living will alone doesn't give anyone authority to speak for you.

Grief Resources

After death there are a variety of emotions ranging from anger, to shock, to deep sadness. All these emotions are normal. The grief process is not one that can be moved through in a day. Please know that your church family is with you as you journey through grief during the days, months, and years to come. We encourage you to take advantage of the following care ministries offered:

Library Resources: The St. John's Library has a wide variety of books and video resources available for those experiencing grief. You may visit the Library during normal business hours or view the Library's collection by visiting our website, stjohns-salisbury.org.

Prayer Shawls: These handmade shawls are knit with love and serve as a tangible reminder that God is with us, even in the midst of difficult times.

Pastoral Care: Our Pastoral Care Team will make regular contact with loved ones preceding and following death. If there is particular concern, or when grief feels especially difficult, please contact one of our pastors directly.

St. John's Lutheran Church

Funeral Planning Worksheet

Guide for the Christian Funeral of _____
First, Middle (maiden) Last

Date completed/ revised: _____

This worksheet may be used by a bereaved family in the midst of funeral planning, by individuals anticipating an impending death, or by those who wish to pre-plan their own funeral. The worksheet may be revised at any time.

To plan the funeral of a loved one

In the event of a death, call the church before making any arrangements: 704-636-3431. If the office is closed, please contact the pastor on call.

To pre-plan your funeral

You may choose to file this worksheet with the church. This information will be kept in a confidential file available to the pastors of St. John's Lutheran Church.

After you complete the worksheet consider telling someone you trust about it. You may wish to discuss what you have written to be certain that it is clear. Consider providing copies for your family and to file with your will. It may be helpful to leave loved ones a note that reads: "As we have discussed, I have recorded my desires regarding my death and burial. I keep this information in the following place: _____ (e.g., on file at the church, with my will). 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 that the information and instructions provided here are for the guidance of my church, my family, and my friends in making arrangements necessary at the time of my death. Although this information is being left for safekeeping, it is not legally binding or enforceable. I understand that this worksheet does not make the church obligated or responsible for the execution of these instructions.

The Worship Service

_____ Graveside Only

_____ Funeral service with casket/urn present

_____ Sanctuary _____ Chapel _____ Funeral Home

_____ Memorial service without remains present

_____ Sanctuary _____ Chapel _____ Funeral Home

_____ Columbarium Only

Time

_____ morning _____ afternoon _____ evening

Holy Communion Celebrated

_____ Yes _____ No

Favorite Biblical theme or image: _____

Bible readings (*see page 6 for suggestions*):

Congregational hymns

Other requested music:

Memorials

Memorial gifts might be used to further support these ministries and organizations:

_____ St. John's General Fund

_____ St. John's Benevolent Foundation

_____ St. John's Designated Fund

_____ Specific Area of Gift: _____

_____ Other: _____

Final Arrangements

Preferred Funeral Home: _____

_____ I am being cremated and have purchased a St. John's Columbarium niche.

_____ I am being cremated and made arrangements in a non-St. John's Columbarium.

_____ I have made arrangements for my burial.

Name of cemetery _____

Location of cemetery _____

Contact person, phone _____

Name of lot or crypt holder _____

Easement or deed number _____

Legal description of graves or crypts as shown on easement or deed

_____ I am a lot holder and have made arrangements with the cemetery to assign graves to specific individuals. These arrangements are:

Grave number	Assigned to	Relationship
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

_____ I do not have arrangements for my burial.

I suggest the following: _____

_____ I have arrangements for a memorial marker with the following company:

Name of company: _____

The arrangements are: _____

_____ I do not have arrangements for a memorial marker.

I suggest the following symbol and/or text: _____

Please fill out as much of this worksheet as possible. Check the options that you desire.
If changes are being made, please initial the changes.

Family Contacts

Please note the name and phone number for contacts.

Spouse: _____

Children: _____

Parents: _____

Siblings: _____

Care of the Body

Please make sure to complete other legal documents regarding these decisions

_____ Organ donation
 _____ as transplants
 _____ for research
 _____ for education
 Specific Areas to Be Donated: _____
_____ Donate body for research/teaching
 _____ with ashes returned
_____ Autopsy
 _____ none unless legally required
 _____ if it will benefit medical research
 _____ decision to be made by: _____
_____ Embalm body
_____ Cremate body
 _____ after visitation or service
 _____ before visitation or service
_____ Bury body
_____ Other: _____
 (might include: burial at sea, ashes spread, above ground interment, etc.)

Additional Planning (Check all that Apply and attach copy)

_____ I have a Living Will
_____ I have a Medical Power of Attorney
_____ I have a Legal Power of Attorney

St. John's Lutheran Church Memorial Garden and Columbarium

Contract for the Sale of Burial Niches or Scatter Privileges

This agreement made between St. John's Lutheran Church, Salisbury, North Carolina, [St. John's], and _____, purchaser (s), in consideration of \$ _____ paid to St. John's, the parties covenant and agree as follows:

1. St. John's agrees to provide:

_____ Columbarium niche, identified as number (s) _____

_____ Scattering privileges

And to provide perpetual care for said Memorial Garden and niches, which are to be used solely for the interment of the ashes of:

2. This agreement is subject to the policies governing the Memorial Garden/Columbarium as established by the Congregation Council, or as such policies may hereafter be amended.
3. It is understood that this agreement does not constitute a sale of property rights, but is merely the provision of a space for interment in accordance with the policies existing at the time of interment.
4. The rights of the purchaser under this agreement are not transferrable.
5. The purchaser hereby grants to St. John's the right in perpetuity to relocate the cremated remains covered by this agreement to another location if, in the sole discretion of the Congregation Council of St. John's, such relocation is necessary.

In witness whereof, this agreement has been executed by:

St. John's Lutheran Church

By: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

Purchaser

Additional Notes for My Friends and Family

When we were baptized in Christ Jesus, we were baptized into his death. We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live a new life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

Entrance rite to the funeral liturgy
from Romans 6:1-4