

Guide for Planning a Funeral/Memorial Service



Trusting in God's grace, an accepting,
joyful community, serving God & neighbor.

Updated June 26, 2025

Dear Friends in Christ,

On behalf of the whole congregation of Elk River Lutheran Church, we share our deepest sympathies to you during this time. This booklet has been created to assist you in the process of planning a funeral or memorial service. When we gather for a service like this we gather not only to grieve together and mourn death, but also to celebrate life. We celebrate the life your loved one lived and the gift of eternal life in heaven with God.

Planning a funeral or memorial service can seem like a scary and overwhelming task, but please trust that we are here to help you with this process. In Matthew 28:28, Jesus says, "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest." God provides the true comfort and peace we need, and we as the church hope that we can help carry some of the burden during this difficult time.

Peace,

Pastor Nathan Mugaas
Church Office # 763-595-1216
Cell # 763-242-8347
Email pastornathan@elkriverlutheran.org

Pastor Anne Schaefer
Church Office # 763-595-1216
Cell # 952-250-6974
Email pastoranne@elkriverlutheran.org

Planning the Service

You will work with a pastor to plan the service. This service is meant to be a celebration of your loved one's life and a celebration of God's gift of eternal life in heaven. This is also a worship service and we want people to not only attend, but participate in the service.

Following is a template/example of our typical service. You will need to meet with the pastor to plan the details, but this order of service can give you an idea of what the service will look like. The portions in red are pieces that you'll need to make decisions on. After this order of service you will find guides for choosing music and scripture readings.

Memorial Service for, Funeral Service for, or Celebration of Life for

Martin Luther

February 22, 1546

Officiants: Rev. Nathan Mugaas & Rev. Anne Schaefer

PROCESSIONAL HYMN

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

ELW xxxx

GATHERING

Pastor: Welcome in the name of Jesus, the Savior of the world. We are gathered to worship, to proclaim Christ crucified and risen, to remember before God our brother Martin, to give thanks for his life, to commend him to our merciful redeemer, and to comfort one another in our grief.

ACCLAMATION

Pastor: Eternal God, maker of heaven and earth, who formed us from the dust of the earth, who by your breath gave us life, we glorify you.

All: We glorify you.

Pastor: Jesus Christ, the resurrection and the life, who suffered death for all humanity, who rose from the grave to open the way to eternal life, we praise you.

All: We praise you.

Pastor: Holy Spirit, author and giver of life, the comforter of all who sorrow, our sure confidence and everlasting hope, we worship you.

All: We worship you.

Pastor: To you, O blessed Trinity, be glory and honor, forever and ever.

All: Amen.

GREETING

Pastor: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

All: And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: Let us pray. Almighty God, source of all mercy and giver of comfort, graciously tend those who mourn, that, casting all their sorrow on you, they may know the consolation of your love; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

WELCOME

REMEMBRANCES (Optional)

Hans

Luther, son

MUSIC (Additional option of placement for Hymn or Special Music)

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Romans 8:37-39

Read by

Philipp Melancthon

Psalm 23

John 14:1-6

SERMON

Pastor

Nathan Mugaas

MUSIC

HYMN ELW #??? or

SPECIAL MUSIC

APOSTLES' CREED

Pastor: With whole church, let us confess our faith.

**All: I believe in God the Father Almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary, suffered Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting.**

Amen.

PRAYER'S OF INTERCESSION

Pastor: ...God of mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed by thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven**

**Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.**

MUSIC *(Additional option of placement for Hymn or Special Music)*

COMMENDATION

Pastor: Into your hands, O merciful Savior, we commend your servant Martin. Acknowledge, we humbly beseech you, a sheep of your own fold, a lamb of your own flock, a sinner of your own redeeming. Receive him into the arms of your mercy, into the blessed rest of everlasting peace, and into the glorious company of the saints in light.

All: Amen.

BENEDICTION

Pastor: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favor and grant you peace. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,

All: Amen.

RECESSIONAL HYMN

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

ELW xxx

Lunch will be served downstairs immediately following the service.

Music Selection

Please select 3-4 pieces of music for the service.

- Below is a list of hymns. At least 2 pieces of music should be hymns (processional and recessional).
- Special music pieces (soloist or recorded music) can also be very nice and should fit into the 3-4 pieces of music guide.
- Our regular musicians at Elk River Lutheran, Lisa Griffin (accompanist) and Taylor Quinn (Director of Music Ministry), normally lead hymns and perform special music at funerals, but if you have family members or close friends who you would like to participate musically in the service, please let the pastor know.

Hymns from our red ELW (Evangelical Lutheran Worship) Hymnal

Hymn number and name

779 Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound
856 How Great Thou Art
732 Borning Cry
838 Beautiful Savior
781 Children of the Heavenly Father
773 Precious Lord, Take My Hand
787 On Eagle's Wings
--- The Old Rugged Cross
824 This Is My Father's World
742 What a Friend We Have in Jesus
595: Jesus Loves Me!
787 On Eagle's Wings
623 Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me
597 My Hope is Built on Nothing Less
660 Lift High the Cross
422 For All the Saints
661 I Love To Tell the Story
592 Just As I Am, Without One Plea
629 Abide with Me
765 Lord of All Hopefulness
789 Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us
890 Battle Hymn of the Republic

Scripture Readings Selection

Please choose 3-4 scripture readings for the service. It is nice to have one of those be a Psalm and one to be a gospel reading (Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John).

Below you'll find a list of scripture readings broken into these three categories (Gospel Readings, Psalms, and Other Scripture Readings). Each reading lists the Book of the Bible, chapter and verses, then a brief summary, and finally, the whole reading.

This list has been created to be helpful guide in choosing scripture readings, please feel free to explore other readings not on this list.

Also consider if there are family members or close friends you would like to ask to read.

Scripture Readings:

Gospel Readings

John 14:1-6 (*Jesus prepares a place for us*)

1 [Jesus said,] Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. 4 And you know the way to the place where I am going." 5 Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" 6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

John 3:16-17 (*God so loves the world*)

16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

17 "Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

Matthew 11:28-30 (*Jesus says, come to me*)

28 "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.

29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

John 6:35-40 (*Jesus says, "I am the bread of life"*)

35 Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

36 But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe.

37 Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and anyone who comes to me I will never drive away;

38 for I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me.

39 And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.

40 This is indeed the will of my Father, that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life; and I will raise them up on the last day."

John 12:23-26 (*Farming image: Only when a grain of wheat dies does it bear fruit*)

23 Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. 24 Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. 25 Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in

this world will keep it for eternal life. 26 Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

Mark 10:14-16 (Jesus says, "Let the children come.")

"But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, 'Let The little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.' And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them."

Psalms

Psalm 23 (The Lord is my shepherd)

1 The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
2 He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;
3 he restores my soul.
He leads me in right paths
for his name's sake.
4 Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I fear no evil;
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff—
they comfort me.
5 You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord
my whole life long.

Psalm 121 (The Lord watches over us)

1 I lift up my eyes to the hills—
from where will my help come?
2 My help comes from the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.
3 He will not let your foot be moved;
he who keeps you will not slumber.
4 He who keeps Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.
5 The Lord is your keeper;
the Lord is your shade at your right hand.
6 The sun shall not strike you by day,
nor the moon by night.
7 The Lord will keep you from all evil;
he will keep your life.
8 The Lord will keep
your going out and your coming in
from this time on and forevermore.

Psalm 27:1-9 (*The Lord is my light and my salvation*)

1 The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

2 When evildoers assail me to devour my flesh— my adversaries and foes— they shall stumble and fall.

3 Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war rise up against me, yet I will be confident.

4 One thing I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.

5 For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble; he will conceal me under the cover of his tent; he will set me high on a rock.

6 Now my head is lifted up above my enemies all around me, and I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing and make melody to the Lord.

7 Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud, be gracious to me and answer me!

8 "Come," my heart says, "seek his face!" Your face, Lord, do I seek.

9 Do not hide your face from me. Do not turn your servant away in anger, you who have been my help. Do not cast me off, do not forsake me, O God of my salvation!

Other Scripture Readings

Romans 3:3-11 (*Dead and alive in Christ*)

3 Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

4 Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

6 We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin.

7 For whoever has died is freed from sin.

8 But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

9 We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him.

10 The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

11 So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Revelation 21:1-6 (*New heaven and new earth*)

1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 2 And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

"See, the home of God is among mortals.

He will dwell with them;

they will be his peoples,

and God himself will be with them;

4 he will wipe every tear from their eyes.

Death will be no more;

mourning and crying and pain will be no more,

for the first things have passed away."

5 And the one who was seated on the throne said, "See, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true." 6 Then he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life.

II Timothy 4:6-8 (*I have fought the good fight, finished the race, kept the faith*)

6 As for me, I am already being poured out as a libation, and the time of my departure has come. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

Romans 8:31-35,37-39 (*Nothing can separate us from the love of God*)

31 What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us?
32 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?
33 Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.
34 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.
35 Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?
37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.
38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,
39 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 14:7-9 (*Whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's*)

7 We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. 8 If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. 9 For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

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

1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us,
2 looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.

I Corinthians 15:55-57 (*The sting of death, but victory in Christ*)

"Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-14 (*For everything there is a season...*)

1 For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:
2 a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;
3 a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;
4 a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

5 a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
6 a time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to throw away;
7 a time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
8 a time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace.
9 What gain have the workers from their toil?
10 I have seen the business that God has given to everyone to be busy with.
11 He has made everything suitable for its time; moreover he has put a sense of past and future into their minds, yet they cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.
12 I know that there is nothing better for them than to be happy and enjoy themselves as long as they live;
13 moreover, it is God's gift that all should eat and drink and take pleasure in all their toil.
14 I know that whatever God does endures forever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it; God has done this, so that all should stand in awe before him.

Isaiah 43:1-5 (*Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.*)

1 But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.
2 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.
3 For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. I give Egypt as your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba in exchange for you.
4 Because you are precious in my sight, and honored, and I love you, I give people in return for you, nations in exchange for your life.
5 Do not fear, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you;

Ephesians 2:4-10 (*By grace we have been saved through faith*)

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us
5 even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ —by grace you have been saved—
6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,
7 so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.
8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—
9 not the result of works, so that no one may boast.
10 For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

Philippians 3:20-21 (*Our citizenship is in heaven*)

“But our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will transform the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, by the power that also enables him to make all things subject to himself.”

Livestreaming Services Online

There are a variety of reasons someone may not be able to attend the service in-person, and so providing an option to attend virtually can be very helpful. Elk River Lutheran continues to work to improve our online broadcasting ability and we currently offer livestreaming of memorial and funeral services to our Facebook and/or YouTube pages. Both allow for watching LIVE or rewatching later, and can be viewed on a smartphone, tablet, computer, or smart TV. Each platform has advantages and disadvantages:

Facebook

- You need a Facebook account to access
- Easy to access and share for anyone familiar with Facebook as an “event”, via a custom link, or by visiting our Facebook page www.facebook.com/elkriverlutheran
- It’s natural for viewers to comment and interact to share sympathies

YouTube

- You do NOT need a special account so anyone can easily access the service
- You can find the video via a direct link or by visiting our YouTube page: www.youtube.com/c/elkriverlutheranchurch

The memorial service or funeral will be scheduled as an upcoming live “event” on Facebook and/or YouTube and can be shared with family and loved ones who are not able to attend in-person. Following the livestream, the video of the service remains available for later viewing on both Facebook and YouTube.

Whenever possible Elk River Lutheran will provide a paid Audio/Visual Technician to run the online broadcast to monitor sound and allow for multiple camera angles. If such a person is not available for the date and time of the service, we can provide a simple one camera shot of the service. Technology does sometimes fail, but we will do our best to provide a good online worship experience.

When a Funeral Home is Not Used

Funeral homes provide a great service in helping deal with the logistics of planning a funeral or memorial service. If you have chosen to NOT work with a funeral home, then the duties usually provided by a funeral home will need to be shared between the pastor, church staff, and family.

Responsibilities of the family include:

- Writing and publishing an obituary (if desired).
- Printing memorial/obituary card for the service.
- Providing guestbook for attendees to sign (Church custodian will set up a table for a guestbook and card box. The church has a non-locking card box.)
- You are welcome to display pictures or personal memorabilia, but you will need to set those up prior to the service and take them down after the service.
- Order flowers and help set them up at the church.
- Plan details and order food for funeral luncheon in coordination with the Elk River Lutheran Church Hospitality Team (see page 14).
- Ushers can be picked, by the family, and coordinated with pastor.
- Provide honorariums for those participating in the service and pay building use fee (see page 15).
- When a luncheon will follow a service, provide the following information to the church office:
 - Will the family be bringing memorabilia for visitation
 - Number of people ordering for lunch?
 - Is there a cemetery service?
 - Where?
 - If so, can they feed other guests before family arrives?
 - What will be served?
 - Who is providing the food?
 - What time will the food be dropped off?
 - Contact person should any questions arise with food?

Funeral Hospitality

After a funeral or memorial service it is customary to have a funeral lunch with time for fellowship for those attending. This is a great opportunity for loved ones to gather and support one another, while joyfully remembering their loved one who has died.

Our Hospitality Team at Elk River Lutheran Church is committed to making your family feel welcome and well cared for. Elk River Lutheran Church provides coffee, water, and lemonade. Our servers will set up food, serve, and clean up the luncheon, so that you can enjoy this important time with family and friends.

- If you are using a funeral home, the funeral home will coordinate the details of the lunch and work out payment with you.
- If you are not using a funeral home the family will be responsible for choosing your lunch choice, ordering the food, and paying the caterer directly.
 - **The family is also welcome to provide a dessert, such as bars, cookies, or cake, to be served at the luncheon.**
 - ***Please note that all food needs to arrive at the church one hour before the luncheon begins.*** (Consult with the pastor to estimate the length of the service)

For the meal, we primarily work with **Center Cut Meats** in Rogers, MN **763-428-9797**
They offer the following three meal choices:

Choice #1

Meat tray—ham and turkey
Cheese tray—3 cheeses
Potato salad OR Coleslaw
Buns
\$4.00 per plate

Choice #3

Dinner Sliced Ham
Scalloped Potatoes
Corn
Buns
\$6.25 per plate

Choice #2

Meat tray—ham and turkey
Cheese tray—3 cheeses
Green Beans or Mixed or Corn
Goulash OR Chicken Casserole
Buns
\$5.50 per plate; \$6 per if raw veggies not hot

Center Cut also charges a \$30 delivery charge

*See fee sheet for calculating payment to Center Cut Meats

Desserts - *Families who would like to cake, cookies, or other sweets served at the luncheon are invited to make those arrangements and bring desserts to the church prior to the service so our hospitality team can prepare to serve them.*

Elk River Lutheran Funeral/Memorial Service Fees

The following honorariums and fees should be paid directly to those providing the service. The names of ERLC's regular staff are listed, but please confirm with the pastor who all will be participating in the service.*

	Members	Non-Members
Building Use (Elk River Lutheran Church)	none	\$200
Pastor (Nathan Mugaas and/or Anne Schaefer)	\$150	\$250
Pianist (Taylor Quinn or Lisa Griffin)	\$125	\$125
Soloist (Taylor Quinn)	\$100	\$100
Audio/Visual Tech & Online Livestream (Nick Campbell)	\$75	\$75
Custodian (Michelle Hagberg)	\$100	\$100

Luncheon (See details on page 12)

Option # _____ @ \$_____ per plate x _____ number of people = _____
 + \$25 delivery fee

Total Paid to Center Cut Meats _____

NOTE: Payment is due the day of the service

*Please talk to the Pastor if there are financial concerns

