

**Reformation Lutheran Church, Media, PA**  
**Funeral Service Information and Guidelines**

Dear Friends,

In life and in death we belong to God. God cares for us before we are brought into this world, sustains us through all our earthly days, and holds us with everlasting arms when this life is over. For a Christian, we find hope in Christ's resurrection that death does not get the last word.

At Reformation, funerals and memorial services are services that witness to the resurrection hope we have in Jesus Christ, an opportunity to give thanks to God for life, and to look ahead to that time when God's reign will be fully realized and we will be with God.

If you are using this information for pre-planning purposes, we hope you will share your decisions with your family. Additionally, provide a copy to the church office for our records - they will be kept in a confidential place.

If you are using this information for planning a service for a loved one who has recently died, please be in touch with one of us as soon as possible to schedule the service. Additional details are in the pages to follow, but we are always available for conversation and assistance with planning.

It is our desire at Reformation to care for and assist you and your family with this process.

In the promise of the resurrection,

Pastor Alina Gayeuski

Pastor Eileen Ruppel-Doan

**Please note:** *This information has been prepared for on-site funerals held at Reformation. For funerals held at other locations, please be in conversation with the pastors about which of these items still apply.*

### **Scheduling a Funeral/Memorial at Reformation**

The pastors welcome opportunities to work with individuals and families to plan funerals before the time of death. The pastors encourage individuals to communicate their wishes and desires with family and friends. Whenever possible, these wishes and desires should be put in writing – Reformation can provide this form– and filed with the responsible parties as well as the church office.

### **When Death Occurs**

A pastor should be notified as soon as possible when a death occurs. Our pastors are available to offer prayer and comfort, as well as assist with the practical realities of dealing with grief and loss. Funeral and memorial services are always under the direction of the pastors.

### **Making Formal Arrangements**

Please contact a pastor before making formal arrangements. A pastor will work with the family and funeral home to ensure your loved one's funeral is handled with the utmost dignity and respect.

### **Funeral Home Involvement**

We strongly encourage the use of a funeral home as their staff provide invaluable assistance for direction and onsite management of the service. It is very important that a pastor work with the funeral home directors as a team. If you have not yet contacted the church when you begin working with the funeral home, please ask the funeral director to call the church immediately. *Please do not schedule a funeral without first contacting the church and speaking with a pastor.*

### **Visitation**

On occasion, families request that a visitation be held at the church. That is customary and can happen the evening prior to the service or on the same day preceding the service.

### **Planning the Service**

Reformation encourages all to fill out the funeral planning form provided. By doing so, individuals will have the opportunity to share their wishes with the church and with their loved ones prior to the time of their death.

A pastor of Reformation will officiate at each funeral/memorial service held at the church. With pastoral approval, other clergy (ELCA, other Christian traditions, interfaith religious leaders) may participate in the service. Pastoral ethics preclude the participation of former pastors of Reformation in the service. The family is responsible for paying visiting clergy fees. Family members, friends and members of the congregation are always welcome to participate in the service.

### **Order of Service**

At Reformation, the funeral liturgy follows the pattern found in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*. Many options are available within this resource to personalize the service. However, the order for worship will follow the pattern found below:

- Gathering (including entrance, introduction, prayer, and remembrances)
- Word (including scripture readings and a brief sermon)
- Meal (*optional* – please see details below about including communion in the funeral service)
- Sending (including blessing and dismissal)

### **Music**

Musicians from the church are available to play during the service. Outside musicians can be invited, any rehearsal necessary should be organized through the church office. Music used in the service should be appropriate for the sacred setting. A list of suggested songs is provided in this document. Because of copyright, some music may not be able to be used for the service. The pastors will help make that determination.

### **Scripture**

A funeral at Reformation is a worship service, and worship always includes the reading of scripture. Suggested readings are provided in this document.

### **Remembrances**

Often the inclusion of remembrances is a meaningful addition to the worship service. It is highly recommended that this not be an open invitation to any attendees and that the person(s) speaking be identified ahead of the service. A pastor is always happy to read a written remembrance on the family's behalf.

### **Holy Communion**

Because the funeral liturgy is part of the “foretaste of the feast to come,” many choose to include the sacrament of holy communion in the service. Funeral eucharists will be celebrated by the whole community in accordance with the policies of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in

America (ELCA). All are welcome at the table of our Lord Jesus Christ where God nourishes faith, forgives sin, and calls us to be witnesses to the Gospel. We believe Christ is present in the bread and wine.

### **Bulletins**

A pastor will work with you to create the bulletin for the service. A photo can be printed on the cover as well as any obituary information inside the bulletin.

### **Flowers**

Flowers are an appropriate memorial tribute. Flowers may be delivered during office hours on weekdays prior to the service and someone will be at the church on the day of the service to accept flower deliveries. The funeral home or family should make arrangements to have the flowers removed after the service - we are unable to keep them at Reformation. Flowers are able to be placed in the lobby or the sanctuary. Flowers are not permitted on the altar.

### **Live Stream**

Reformation has the capability to live stream services in the sanctuary, as well as record. If you would like this for the funeral service, please request a tech by speaking with a pastor. This service will be provided if a tech is available for the service. The tech will be paid directly by the family.

### **Donations**

Please inform the church of any specific donation requests for people to contribute as a memorial. If Reformation is the recipient, please indicate any particular ministry areas or projects the money should be designated to if there are preferences. Undesignated funds are used at the discretion of the Council.

### **Military and Civil Ceremonies**

Military honors and other civil ceremonies can be a meaningful part of the funeral/memorial. When those presiding at these ceremonies arrive at the church for the service, the pastor will greet them, go over their part of the service and help them with anything they might need. Civil Ceremonies - such as fraternal orders - will be done prior to the service, during the visitation time.

### **Cemetery**

A pastor will be available to accompany the funeral procession to the cemetery for burial and provide a graveside service. Any other honors, such as military honors, will be done before the

graveside prayers. Please inform the pastor at the time of planning the location, and date if different from the service, for the graveside portion of the service.

### **Reception**

The fellowship hall at Reformation is not available on weekdays during the school year. The availability of the space at other times is dependent on the church schedule. If a family wishes to use the fellowship hall for a reception following the service, the family will be responsible for all setup and clean up. Please speak with a pastor about scheduling use of the space.

Additionally, the pastors are able to provide suggestions on local restaurants that have space for gatherings like these.

### **Fees**

There is no fee to use the sanctuary for a funeral service. Honorarias to the officiating pastor, musician, and live stream tech are customary. It is best for the funeral home to provide those checks directly to the staff members leading the service. If a funeral home is not used, the family will make payments directly to the staff members.

The appropriate honorarias are as follows:

Pastor	\$200
Musician	\$175
Live Stream Tech	\$150

## Commonly Used Scriptures

### Old Testament

Job 19:23-27a: *I know that my Redeemer lives*

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8: *For everything there is a season*

Isaiah 25:6-9: *God will swallow up death forever*

Isaiah 40:1-11, 28-31: *Comfort my people, says your God*

Isaiah 41:9b-10: *Do not be afraid, for I am with you*

Isaiah 43:1-3a, 5-7: *I have called you by name*

Isaiah 43:1-3a, 18-19: *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*

### Psalm

Psalm 23: *The LORD is my shepherd*

Psalm 42:1-5: *As a deer longs for flowing streams*

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

Psalm 90: *Our dwelling place in all generations*

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

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

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

### New Testament

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

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

2 Corinthians 4:6-12, 16-18: *Treasure in clay jars*

1 Thessalonians 4:13-14, 18: *Teaching about those who have died*

Hebrews 12:1-2: *Surrounded by a cloud of witnesses*

1 Peter 1:3-9: *A living hope through Jesus' resurrection*

1 John 3:1-2: *See what love the Father has given us*

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

Revelation 7:9-17: *God will wipe away every tear*

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

Revelation 21:2-7: *I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem*

Revelation 22:1-5: *The Lord God will be their light*

## **Gospel**

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

Matthew 11:25-30 *I will give you rest*

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

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

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

John 14:1-6 *I prepare a place for you*

John 14:25-27 *Peace I leave with you*

**Hymns (All hymn numbers are from the Evangelical Lutheran Worship Book)**

308: O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright!

313: O Lord, Now Let Your Servant

422: For All the Saints

423: Shall We Gather at the River

429: In Our Day of Thanksgiving

447: O Blessed Spring

502: The King of Love My Shepherd Is

531: The Trumpets Sound, the Angels Sing

597: My Hope is Built on Nothing Less

613: Thy Holy Wings

619: I Know That My Redeemer Lives!

621: Jesus Lives, My Sure Defense

622: Neither Death nor Life

627: O Day Full of Grace

629: Abide with Me

631: Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

632: O God, Our Help in Ages Past

656: Blest Be the Tie That Binds

730: Lord Our God, with Praise We Come

750: Lord, Thee I Love with All My Heart

759: My Faith Looks Up to Thee

760: O Christ the Same

765: Lord of All Hopefulness

770: Give Me Jesus

773: Precious Lord, Take My Hand

778: The Lord's My Shepherd

779: Amazing Grace

781: Children of the Heavenly Father

815: I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light

838: Beautiful Savior

856: How Great Thou Art