



# **CREATING YOUR OWN MEMORIAL SERVICE**

**Fox Point Lutheran Church**



# LEGAL CHECKLIST

## 1. Personal and Legal Identification

- Full legal name, date of birth, and Social Security number
- Copy of will or trust (if applicable)
- Designation of executor or personal representative
- Durable power of attorney and healthcare proxy documents
- Advance directives or living will (including end-of-life medical preferences)

## 2. Disposition of Remains

- Clear written instructions for burial, cremation, donation, or alternative disposition
- Selection of funeral home or cremation provider
- Prepaid or prearranged funeral contracts (verify state compliance for prepaid plans)
- Burial plot, mausoleum, or columbarium documentation (include location + contact info)
- Organ/tissue donation registration confirmation (check state registry)

## 3. Financial and Contractual Matters

- Review of pre-need funeral or cremation contracts
- Documentation of any insurance policies covering funeral costs
- Confirmation of beneficiary designations on life insurance or annuities
- Budget breakdown for funeral expenses (burial, cremation, transport, etc.)
- Payment arrangements and contact info for vendors

## LEGAL CHECKLIST (*Continued*)

### 4. Notification and Communication

- Contact list for immediate family, friends, church members, and key organizations
- Draft obituary or life summary (include publication preferences)
- Social media or online memorial instructions (account management or closure)
- Instructions for notifying employer, church, and community organizations

### 5. Estate and Property Considerations

- Location of will/trust documents
- Executor's access to bank accounts, digital assets, and safe deposit boxes
- List of property, debts, and key accounts
- Instructions for charitable donations or memorial funds
- Designation of who receives sentimental items or personal effects

### 6. Document Storage and Access

- All forms and instructions stored together in a labeled "Memorial & Legal File"
- Copies shared with executor, next of kin, and pastor or church administrator
- Digital backup (securely encrypted)
- Review and update annually or after major life changes

# WRITING YOUR OBITUARY

## 1. Start with the Basics

Include the essential facts, just like a newspaper obituary would:

- Full name (and any nicknames people know you by)
- Date and place of birth
- Key family members (spouse, children, parents, siblings, grandchildren, etc.)
- Date and place of death (leave blank or phrase it as “passed away peacefully on [date]” for later editing)

These are the “bones” of the obituary; everything else gives it personality and meaning.

## 2. Highlight Life’s Major Chapters

Break your life into sections to make it easier to write:

- Education & Early Years: Schools, degrees, or formative experiences
- Career & Achievements: Jobs, leadership roles, special accomplishments
- Community & Faith: Churches, volunteer work, organizations
- Hobbies & Passions: Music, travel, sports, gardening, reading, etc.

Keep it factual but warm — mention what you’re proud of and what shaped you.

## 3. Show Your Personality

This is where it becomes uniquely “you.” Consider adding:

- Anecdotes or humor that reflects your character
- Favorite sayings, scriptures, or mottos
- Unique quirks or habits people remember fondly

Think of it as a tribute from you to your loved ones.

## 4. Express Your Values and Legacy

Use a paragraph to capture what you stood for. For example:

“He was known for his generosity, his commitment to his faith, and his ability to make everyone feel welcome at his table.”

This section tells readers not just *what* you did, but *who* you were.

## 5. Include Messages for Loved Ones

Many people add a thank-you or farewell note:

- Gratitude to friends, family, or caregivers
- A request for donations instead of flowers
- A favorite verse, prayer, or blessing

This can make it deeply personal and comforting.

## 6. Keep the Tone in Mind

Obituaries can be solemn, celebratory, humorous, or a mix. Decide how you'd like to be remembered. (Some people even write playful, self-deprecating ones that make people smile.)

## 7. Make It Flexible

Write a “living obituary” — a draft you can update over time as life unfolds. This not only ensures accuracy but also gives you an ongoing sense of your story.

## 8. Practical Tips

- Aim for 300–600 words; most newspapers charge by length.
- Use third-person (“Name” was born...) if you want it to sound traditional, or first-person (“I was born...”) for a more direct tone.
- Save it somewhere your loved ones can easily access it later.

# OBITUARY TEMPLATES

## *Creative Obituary Template*

[Your Name]

Born [Month Day, Year] – (Date of Passing TBD)

If you're reading this, I've already slipped quietly (or maybe loudly — who knows?) into eternity. I lived my life in [hometown/region], where I managed to collect a lifetime of stories, laughter, and probably a few embarrassing moments that my family will never let me forget.

I was born on [date], the beloved child of [parents' names]. Along the way, I picked up roles I never expected: [student, spouse, parent, grandparent, pastor, teacher, friend, etc.]. Each title came with its own joys, challenges, and a whole lot of grace.

I spent [X years] doing work I loved — whether that was [describe career/calling] or simply being the kind of person who tried to leave people a little better than I found them. If you knew me, you know I [insert a defining trait: “told too many dad jokes,” “never met a stranger,” “believed pie was proof of God’s goodness”].

I leave behind [list loved ones], who I hope will carry forward not just my memory, but my love of [something personal: “singing off-key hymns,” “Sunday family dinners,” “bad puns at inappropriate times”].

For those wondering, no — I never quite figured out how to [something humorous: “fix the leaky faucet,” “work the TV remote,” “understand TikTok”]. But I did figure out that faith, family, and kindness matter more than almost anything else.

If you want to honor me, don't send flowers. Instead:

- Tell someone you love them today.
- Forgive somebody, even if they don't deserve it.
- Eat dessert first.

And if you must, you can gather together, laugh, cry, and swap stories at [funeral/memorial service details if desired].

Until we meet again, may the peace of Christ that carried me through life be the same peace that comforts you now.

With love,  
[Your Name]

## *Traditional Obituary Template*

[Full Name]

[Month Day, Year of Birth] – [Month Day, Year of Death]

[Full Name], age [age at passing], of [city, state], passed away peacefully on [day of week, date] at [place of passing, e.g., home, hospital, care facility].

He was born on [month day, year] in [birthplace] to [parents' names]. He grew up in [city or area] and graduated from [high school or college name].

On [wedding date], he married [spouse's name], and together they shared [number] years of marriage filled with love and faith. They were blessed with [number] children: [names].

He dedicated his life to [career, ministry, service, or family]. He worked as a [occupation] for [organization or company], where he was known for [personal trait or professional strength]. Beyond work, he was active in [church, volunteer service, community groups, etc.], demonstrating a life of purpose and compassion.

He will be remembered for [a few personal qualities — e.g., “his steadfast faith, gentle humor, and love for his family”]. Those who knew him will always cherish his [smile, laugh, generosity, storytelling, etc.].

He is survived by [list surviving family members — spouse, children, grandchildren, siblings, etc.]. He was preceded in death by [list relatives, e.g., parents, spouse, or children].

A [funeral/memorial] service will be held on [day, date, and time] at [church or funeral home name], with [Pastor/Reverend Name] officiating. Visitation will be held from [time] to [time]. Burial will follow at [cemetery name].

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to [charity, church, or cause meaningful to the deceased].

The family wishes to express their heartfelt gratitude to [caregivers, medical staff, church family, etc.] for their compassion and support.

“Well done, good and faithful servant.” – Matthew 25:23”

# FILL-IN-THE-BLANK OBITUARY FORM

This form is designed to help you or your loved ones write a clear and complete obituary.

Simply fill in the blanks with the appropriate information. You can use this as a guide for newspaper submissions, church bulletins, or funeral programs.

**Full Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Age at Passing:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City and State of Residence:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Birth:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Place of Birth:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Death:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Place of Death (home, hospital, etc.):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parents' Names:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Education (schools, degrees):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Marriage Details (spouse's name, wedding date):** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Children (names):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Grandchildren (names):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Occupation/Career:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Community Involvement/Church/Organizations:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Hobbies or Interests:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Personal Qualities or Legacy (faith, humor, kindness, etc.):** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Preceded in Death By:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Survived By:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Funeral or Memorial Service Details (date, time, location):** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Officiant (Pastor, Reverend, etc.):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Burial or Cremation Location:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Memorial Contributions (if applicable):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Favorite Scripture, Quote, or Saying:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# HOW TO CHOOSE A EULOGIST

A eulogist is someone chosen to speak words of remembrance and love at a funeral or memorial service. Their role is sacred — to share stories, express gratitude, and reflect the heart of the person who has passed.

Choosing the right person helps honor a life well lived and brings comfort to everyone gathered.

## 1. The Purpose of a Eulogy

A eulogy isn't meant to summarize an entire life, but to capture its *essence*: the love given, the faith lived, and the joy shared.

The best eulogies tell the truth with tenderness and help listeners both grieve and give thanks

.

## 2. Who Can Give a Eulogy

Anyone who knew and loved the person may serve as a eulogist. Often this is:

- A spouse, child, or other family member
- A close friend or longtime companion
- A pastor, mentor, or coworker

Some families choose two short eulogies — one from family and one from a friend — to provide a fuller picture of the person's life.

## 3. Qualities to Consider

When deciding who should speak, look for someone who:

- Had a meaningful relationship with your loved one
- Can remain composed enough to speak clearly
- Communicates with warmth, honesty, and heart
- Reflects the faith and values important to your loved one and family

Remember, perfection is not the goal — sincerity is.

## 4. Preparing the Eulogy

Encourage your eulogist to:

- Write it out — emotions can make it hard to speak without notes
- Keep it brief (about 5–7 minutes)
- Include a mix of stories, memories, and gratitude
- Speak from the heart, not from a script of accomplishments

If the speaker feels too emotional, they can ask someone else — including the pastor — to read their words on their behalf.

## 5. If No One Feels Able to Speak

It's okay if no one feels up to giving a eulogy. In that case, you can share your thoughts and memories with the pastor, who can include them within the service message. Your loved one will still be beautifully remembered.

## A Final Thought

The right eulogist doesn't have to be the most eloquent — just the most *authentic*. Their words, spoken in love, will help everyone remember, grieve, and give thanks together.

# Choosing Scripture

*A collection of comforting, hopeful, and lesser-known passage  
for remembrance and reflection.*

## Comfort and Hope

- Psalm 23:1-6 — “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want...”
- Isaiah 40:31 — “Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength; they will soar on wings like eagles.”
- John 14:1-3 — “Do not let your hearts be troubled... I go to prepare a place for you.”
- Revelation 21:3-4 — “He will wipe every tear from their eyes...”
- Psalm 34:18 — “The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.”
- Lamentations 3:22-23 — “Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail.”

## Eternal Life and Resurrection

- 1 Corinthians 15:50-57 — “Death has been swallowed up in victory.”
- 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 — “Encourage one another with these words.”
- John 11:25-26 — “I am the resurrection and the life...”
- Romans 6:4-5 — “Just as Christ was raised from the dead... we too may live a new life.”
- Philippians 3:20-21 — “Our citizenship is in heaven, and we eagerly await a Savior from there.”
- Job 19:25-27 — “I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand on the earth.”

## God’s Presence and Peace

- Psalm 46:1-2 — “God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.”
- Isaiah 41:10 — “Do not fear, for I am with you...”
- Philippians 4:6-7 — “The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts.”
- Joshua 1:9 — “Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”
- 2 Timothy 4:6-8 — “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”
- Matthew 25:21 — “Well done, good and faithful servant.”
- Proverbs 31:25-31 — “Her children arise and call her blessed...”
- Micah 6:8 — “What does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”
- Ecclesiastes 3:1-2 — “There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens.”
- Hebrews 6:10 — “God is not unjust; He will not forget your work and the love you have shown Him.”

## **Assurance of God's Love**

- Romans 8:38-39 — “Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
- Psalm 121:1-2 — “I lift up my eyes to the hills—from where will my help come?”
- Deuteronomy 33:27 — “The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.”
- John 10:27-29 — “My sheep listen to my voice... no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand.”
- 1 John 3:1-2 — “See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God.”
- Nahum 1:7 — “The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in Him.”

# Hymn Planning Guide

## *With Theological Notes*

This guide provides a comprehensive list of traditional hymns suitable for funerals and memorial services. Each section includes brief theological notes and practical suggestions for use in worship planning.

### **Resurrection & Eternal Life**

These hymns proclaim the resurrection hope central to Lutheran theology — that Christ's victory over death is our assurance of eternal life.

- I Know That My Redeemer Lives (ELW 619)
- Jesus Lives! The Victory's Won (ELW 621)
- For All the Saints (ELW 422)
- Thine the Amen, Thine the Praise (ELW 826)
- Christ the Lord Is Risen Today; Alleluia (ELW 369)
- Now All the Vault of Heaven Resounds (ELW 367)
- At the Lamb's High Feast We Sing (ELW 362)
- The Strife Is O'er, the Battle Done (ELW 366)
- Jesus Christ, My Sure Defense (ELW 621 alt.)
- Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers (ELW 244)

*\*Practical note:\** Use one of these as an opening or closing hymn to set a tone of confident resurrection faith.

### **Comfort, Peace & Trust in God**

These hymns remind mourners that God's mercy and steadfast love endure even in grief, echoing the psalmist's assurance that 'the Lord is my shepherd.'

- Abide with Me (ELW 629)
- Be Still, My Soul (ELW 751)
- Day by Day (ELW 790)
- Great Is Thy Faithfulness (ELW 733)
- Precious Lord, Take My Hand (ELW 773)
- What a Friend We Have in Jesus (ELW 742)
- Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me (ELW 755)
- When Peace, Like a River (It Is Well with My Soul) (ELW 785)
- If Thou But Trust in God to Guide Thee (ELW 769)
- The Lord's My Shepherd (Psalm 23) (ELW 778)

*\*Practical note:\** These are ideal for the middle of the service, reflection moments, or communion, reinforcing God's abiding care.

## **Baptismal Identity & God's Care**

Lutheran funerals celebrate baptismal identity — that in baptism we were buried with Christ and raised to new life. These hymns emphasize that belonging.

- Children of the Heavenly Father (ELW 781)
- Morning Cry (ELW 732)
- We Know That Christ Is Raised (ELW 449)
- Father, We Praise Thee, Now the Night Is Over (ELW 561)
- I Am Jesus' Little Lamb (ELW 740)

*\*Practical note:\** Excellent for services that include a baptismal remembrance or thanksgiving for baptism.

## **Faith, Surrender & Evening Hymns**

These hymns express a life of trust and surrender to God's will — themes especially poignant at life's end. They are often sung as prayers of rest and peace.

- Now Rest Beneath Night's Shadow (ELW 568)
- Lord, Thee I Love with All My Heart (ELW 750)
- Jesus, Thy Boundless Love to Me (ELW 622)
- Go, My Children, with My Blessing (ELW 543)
- Evening and Morning (ELW 560)
- O Savior, Precious Savior (ELW 820)
- All Praise to Thee, My God, This Night (ELW 565)

*\*Practical note:\** Ideal for reflection or closing hymn — invites rest in Christ's peace and the assurance of eternal rest.

## **Praise & Thanksgiving to God**

These hymns celebrate God's faithfulness and give thanks for His mercy, often chosen when the tone of the service leans toward joyful remembrance.

- Beautiful Savior (ELW 838)
- Now Thank We All Our God (ELW 840)
- Praise to the Lord, the Almighty (ELW 858)
- Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee (ELW 836)
- Lift High the Cross (ELW 660)

*\*Practical note:\** These make uplifting recessional or postlude options, rejoicing in God's eternal goodness.

## **Strength, Faith & God's Power**

These hymns proclaim the power of God's Word and the victory of faith, offering courage and assurance for all who trust in Christ.

- A Mighty Fortress Is Our God (ELW 504)
- Built on the Rock (ELW 652)
- My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less (ELW 596)
- The Church's One Foundation (ELW 654)
- Crown Him with Many Crowns (ELW 855)

\*Practical note:\* Suitable as a strong sending hymn, emphasizing victory, faith, and the Church's eternal foundation in Christ.

## **Final Pastoral Encouragement**

In all hymn selections, remember that the Lutheran funeral service is fundamentally a service of worship — a proclamation of Christ crucified and risen. Choose hymns that center on God's action rather than human memory, and allow the music to preach the Gospel as clearly as the spoken Word.

# Contemporary Funeral & Celebration of Life

## *Songs for Lutherans*

This guide offers a selection of contemporary Christian songs suitable for a Lutheran funeral or celebration of life services. Each song aligns with Lutheran theology, focusing on resurrection hope, God's grace, and comfort in Christ.

### **Songs of Resurrection & Eternal Hope**

- In Christ Alone – Keith & Kristyn Getty  
Modern hymn rooted in Lutheran theology, celebrating Christ's resurrection and victory over death.
- Living Hope – Phil Wickham  
A worshipful proclamation that Jesus' resurrection secures eternal life.
- Because He Lives (Amen) – Matt Maher  
Echoes the Gaither classic; affirms faith in life beyond death.
- I Will Rise – Chris Tomlin  
Gentle song of resurrection and peace in Christ.
- There Will Be a Day – Jeremy Camp  
Points to the promise of heaven and the end of sorrow.
- Home – Chris Tomlin  
A joyful image of heaven as our true home with God.

### **Songs of Comfort, Trust & God's Presence**

- You Never Let Go – Matt Redman  
A declaration of God's steadfast presence through life's darkest valleys.
- Even If – MercyMe  
A heartfelt lament and confession of faith amidst loss.
- Blessings – Laura Story  
Reflects on how God's grace often works through hardship.
- Held – Natalie Grant  
Offers deep comfort in God's embrace for those who grieve.
- Just Be Held – Casting Crowns  
Encourages rest and surrender in God's care during pain.
- Thy Will – Hillary Scott & The Scott Family  
A contemporary prayer of surrender, echoing 'Abide with Me.'

## **Songs Reflecting Baptismal Identity & New Life**

- Who You Say I Am – Hillsong Worship  
Affirms the believer's identity as a child of God, echoing baptismal themes.
- No Longer Slaves – Bethel Music  
Celebrates freedom and belonging as children of God.
- Gracefully Broken – Matt Redman  
Surrendering to God's transformative grace.
- The Father's House – Cory Asbury  
Depicts coming home to God's love and welcome.
- Oceans (Where Feet May Fail) – Hillsong UNITED  
Expresses deep trust in God through life's uncertain waters.

## **Songs of Celebration, Joy & Reunion**

- Scars in Heaven – Casting Crowns  
Beautiful reflection on healing and reunion in heaven.
- Well Done – The Afters  
Celebrates finishing the race of faith and entering eternal rest.
- Save a Place for Me – Matthew West  
Tender song of longing for loved ones in heaven.
- When I Get Where I'm Going – Brad Paisley & Dolly Parton  
Joyful country-gospel song envisioning heaven's peace.
- Heaven Song – Phil Wickham  
Gentle worship about anticipating eternity with Christ.

## **Songs Blending Traditional Faith with Modern Sound**

- Cornerstone – Hillsong Worship  
Modern version of 'The Solid Rock,' widely used in Lutheran worship.
- 10,000 Reasons (Bless the Lord) – Matt Redman  
Simple, heartfelt worship anthem fitting for all life moments.
- How Deep the Father's Love for Us – Stuart Townend  
A contemporary hymn reflecting on Christ's sacrifice and grace.
- Jesus, Only Jesus – Matt Redman / Passion  
Centers worship fully on Christ's saving work.

## **Practical Notes for Lutheran Services**

- Choose songs that proclaim the Gospel rather than merely sentiment.
- Avoid lyrics implying we 'earn' heaven or become angels.
- Many songs fit well as prelude, reflection, or recessional pieces.
- Incorporate familiar hymns or ELW liturgical responses to maintain Lutheran worship flow.

# Funeral Information Form

## 1. Basic Information

Full Name of Deceased: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Death: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State of Residence: \_\_\_\_\_

Place of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Funeral / Memorial Service Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Service Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Service Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Officiant/Pastor: \_\_\_\_\_

Funeral Home / Coordinator: \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Order of Service

Prelude / Gathering Music: \_\_\_\_\_

Welcome & Opening Remarks by: \_\_\_\_\_

Opening Prayer by: \_\_\_\_\_

Scripture Reading(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Reader(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Musical Selection #1: \_\_\_\_\_

Performed by: \_\_\_\_\_

Obituary Reading by: \_\_\_\_\_

Eulogist(s):: \_\_\_\_\_







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LUTHERAN CHURCH