

FUNERALS

The Christian Funeral does not eulogize the deceased. That he died is clearly testified that he was a sinful human being (*Romans 6:23*). But as one who died with Christ and with Christ was raised to a new life through Holy Baptism (*Romans 6:3-4*), the Church buries the person who physically died in Christ in the hope of a physical resurrection to eternal life. Thus the Christian Funeral is intimately connected with the Christian's baptism.

It is the custom of Good Shepherd Evangelical Lutheran Church to grant a Christian burial to any of her members, unless it becomes clear that he fell away from his baptismal grace during his lifetime. Conversely, if a non-member had given the pastor a confession of faith in his Savior before his death, and especially if he had been baptized, he too will be given a Christian burial out of the church. In either case, it is finally the pastor who must make this determination.

The following principles regarding a Christian funeral are to be noted:

- Under normal circumstances, it is proper and preferred to conduct the Christian funeral in the church, not the funeral home.
- The pastor is the final authority in choosing all hymns and readings. If there is a particular hymn or reading you want, you are certainly free to bring your request to the pastor, and he will give it his consideration.
- The Christian funeral does not celebrate the individual who has died. The Christian funeral celebrates the promises of Jesus Christ who conquered death by his death and grants eternal life by his resurrection. Therefore, the Church will proclaim the words and promises of God for the comfort and confidence of the grieving. The focus of the Christian funeral is not the deceased, but on Christ.
- While we would hope and expect family and friends to have fond memories of the deceased, it is not proper to have readings, poems, or anecdotes about the deceased as part of the funeral or the committal. These are best reserved for a private gathering of family and friends, either before or after the Christian funeral, which is a much more appropriate setting for personal remarks and reminiscing.