

Planning a Christian (Lutheran) Funeral Service



The Third Article of the Apostles' Creed:

- *Of Sanctification.*
- I believe in the Holy Ghost; one holy Christian Church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.
- *What does this mean?--Answer.*
- I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Ghost has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith; even as He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith; in which Christian Church He forgives daily and richly all sins to me and all believers, and at the last day will raise up me and all the dead, and will give to me and to all believers in Christ everlasting life. This is most certainly true.
- 1 Cor. 6:19-20
- The Resurrection of the Body and the Life Everlasting
- Small Catechism (SC187-192)

The Third Article of the Apostles' Creed:

- Small Catechism (SC187-192)
- SC187 What do the Scriptures say about the resurrection of the body?
- “They teach that on the Last Day, Christ will “raise me and all the dead.” The same bodies that have died shall be made alive.
- Job 19:25-27
- John 5:28-29
- 1 Thess. 4:16

The Third Article of the Apostles' Creed:

SC188 Are people reborn in bodies or forms?

Reincarnation, the belief that when people die they are reborn in other bodies or in a series of other bodies, is contrary to Scripture.

- Heb. 9:27-28; 1 Cor. 15

SC 189 What difference is there between believers and unbelievers in the resurrection?

The believers will rise with glorified bodies and enter everlasting life in heaven with God.

- Daniel 12:2; John 5:28-29; 1 Cor. 15:42-43; Phil. 3:21

The unbelievers will rise to eternal death, that is, to shame and torment in hell forever.

- Isaiah 66:24; Matt. 10:28; Matt. 25:41; Rev. 1:7

The Third Article of the Apostles' Creed:

SC190 To whom does God give eternal life?

God gives eternal life to me and all believers in Christ.

Eternal life is a present possession.

- John 17:3; John 3:16; Rom. 10:9; John 3:36

At the time of death, the soul of a believer is immediately with Christ in heaven.

- Eccl. 12:7; Luke 23:43; John 17:24; Phil. 1:23-24; Rev. 4:13

At the Last Day the believers, in both body and soul will begin the full enjoyment of being with Christ forever.

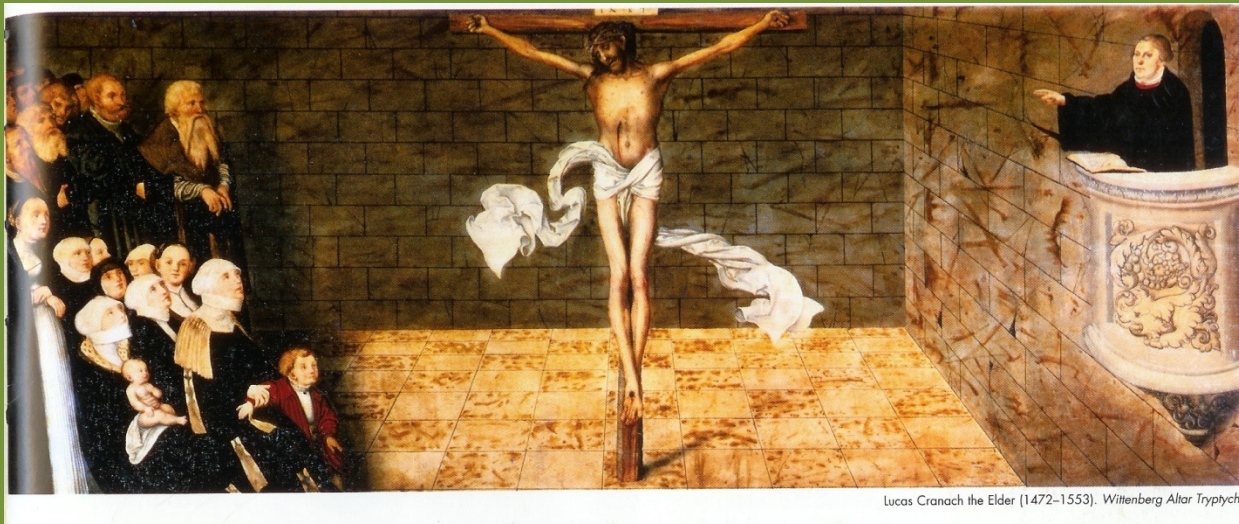
- 1 Cor. 15:51-52; Matt. 25:34; Ps. 16:11

Before the Funeral:

- Commendation of the Dying – Witness before death.
- Comforting the Dying and the Remaining Family:
- The Promises of the Cross and the Gospel:
(Genesis 3:15, Romans 5:1-11, John 3:16, Corinthians 1:18-20)
- Baptism (Romans 6:1-5, 1 Peter 3:16-22)
- Absolution (Luke 23:32-43, John 20:19-23),
- Holy Communion (Matt.26:26-29, John 6:54-58)
- Easter (John , Luke 24:)
- Heaven and The Resurrection of the Dead
(Job 19:23-27, John 14:1-7, 1 Thess.4:13-18, Rev 7:13-17)

Before the Funeral:

- With the Family at the Viewing of the Body
- Visitation
- Location (preferably in the church)
- Date
- Time
- Refreshments?



The Funeral Service

Cremation is not preferred. DEFINITELY DO NOT SCATTER!!!

*“Then I took the sinful thing, the calf that you had made, and **burned** it with fire and crushed it, grinding it very small, until it was as fine as dust. And I threw the dust of it into the brook that ran down from the mountain.” Deut. 9:21*

The funeral is not ultimately about YOU (You’ll be in heaven).

1 Peter 3:13-17, Romans 10:10-17, Romans 10:9

The focus is the Word. And especially the Gospel.

Funeral Service:
Rite of Christian Burial
LSB 278-81

Hymn or Psalm

Invocation

Remembrance of Baptism

Introit, Psalm, or Entrance Hymn

Kyrie

Salutation and Collect of the Day

Funeral Service: Rite of Christian Burial LSB 278-81

Old Testament or First Reading

Psalm of Gradual

Epistle or Second Reading

Verse General / Lent

Alleluia, allulia

Jesus is the firstborn of the dead;
To Him be the glory and power forever.
Alleluia.

If we have died with Christ,
We shall also live with Him;
If we are faithful to the end,
We shall reign with Him.

Funeral Service:
Rite of Christian Burial
LSB 278-281

Holy Gospel

Apostles' Creed

Hymn of the Day

Prayer of the Church

Lord's Prayer

Nunc Dimittis

Concluding Collect

Benedicamus and

Some Old Testament Texts to Consider for the Funeral

- Confirmation verse: (mine: Psalm 95:1)
- Favorite Bible verses/stories:
 - Old Testament: Gen 3:8-15
 - Job 19:23-27
 - Ecc. 3:1-8
 - Isaiah 25:6-9
 - Isa. 41:8-10, 43:1-5, 44:6-8;
 - Jeremiah 31:8-13
 - Isaiah 55:1-3, 6-13
 - Psalm 1, 18, 23, 27, 28, 33, 46, 51, 91, 98, 118, 119:105, 121, 130, 149
- Favorite hymns (Great hymns make great texts for Sermons – Especially our Lutheran Hymns!):

New Testament Readings

- Rom. 1:16-7; 3:21-26; 5:1-11; 6:1-5; 8:31-39; 2 Corinthians 15:12-26, 50-58
- Eph. 1:3-14; 2:1-10
- Phil. 2:1-11
- 1 Thess. 4:13-18
- 1 Peter 1:3-9
- 1 Ptr. 3:18-22
- Hebrews 12:1-12
- 1 John 2:28-3:3
- Rev. 7:9-12, 13-17; 21:1-4

Gospel Readings

Matthew 5:1-10; 8:5-13; 10:26-33

Matthew 11:25-30; 16:13-17; 18:10-14

Matthew 24:29-31

Mark 5:35-43; 16:16

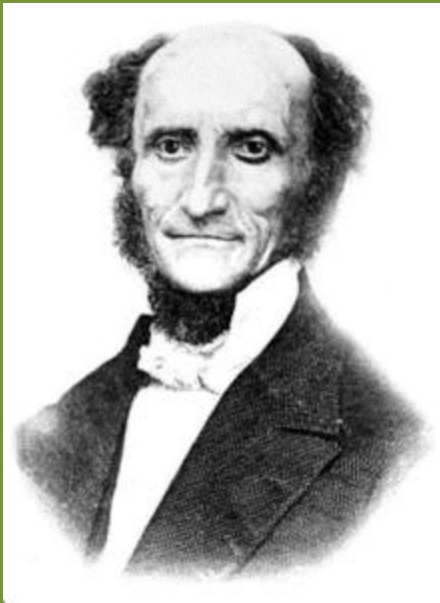
Luke 7:11-17

John 1:1-5, 29-34; 3:1-8, 16-21; 6:35-40, 47-51,
53-58;

John 10:1-11, 14-27

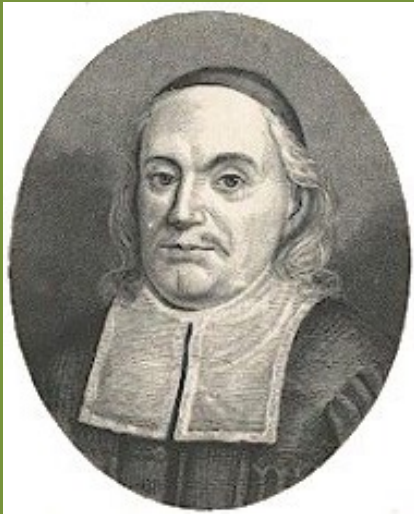
John 11:21-27; 14:1-6; 20:1-10

C.F.W. Walther's thoughts on Hymnody



- Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther was first president and highly influential pastor of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod.
- From an essay from 1883, shortly before he died: “A preacher of our church also has the holy duty to give souls entrusted to his care pure spiritual food, indeed the very best that he can possibly obtain. In Methodist (Baptist, Evangelical, Charismatic, Pentecostal, etc.) songs, there is much that is false and contains spiritual poison for the soul...if the preacher claims that he allows only “correct “ hymns to be sung, this does not excuse him.”

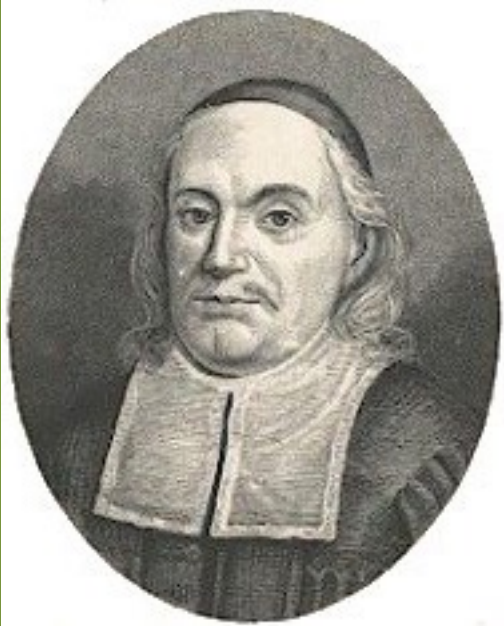
A suggestion of Lutheran Hymns for our funerals:



Picking the hymns:

- Rule number 1: Content
(Is pure doctrine clearly taught?)
- Rule number 2: Authorship
(Is it an orthodox author and composer?)
- Rule number 3: Zeitgeist
(When was it written? The century or decade will often reflect the “Spirit of the Age,” in content and style.)

Paul Gerhardt



Paul Gerhardt (12 March 1607 – 27 May 1676) was a German theologian, Lutheran minister and hymnodist. He experienced persecution during the Thirty Years War, by both the Papacy and Reformed churches. His wife and several of his children during his lifetime and he also experienced much sickness. Gerhardt is considered Germany's greatest hymn writer. Many of his best-known hymns were originally published in Brandenburg in 1658. Pastor Gerhardt has 17 hymns in the Lutheran Service Book alone.

Why Should Cross and Trial Grieve Me

LSB 756

1 Why should cross and trial grieve me?
Christ is near With His che er;
Never will He leave me. Who can rob me of
the heaven That God's Son For me won
When His life was given?

2 When life's troubles rise to meet me,
Though their weight May be great,
They will not defeat me. God, my loving
Savior, sends them; He who knows
All my woes Knows how best to end them.

3 God gives me my days of gladness,
And I will Trust Him still When He send me
sadness. God is good; His love attends me
Day by day, Come what may,
Guides me and defends me.

4 Lord, my Shepherd, take me to
thee. Thou art mine; I was thine,
even ere I knew thee. I am thine,
for thou hast bought me; lost I
stood, but thy blood free salvation
brought me.

5 Thou art mine; I love and own
thee. Light of joy, ne'er shall I from
my heart dethrone thee. Savior, let
me soon behold thee face to face;
may thy grace evermore enfold me.

By Grace I'm Saved

LSB 566

See Also: LSB 745 In God, My Faithful God

1 By grace I'm saved, grace free and boundless; My soul, believe and doubt it not. Why stagger at this word of promise? Has Scripture ever falsehood taught? No! Then this word must true remain; By grace you too will life obtain.

2 By grace! None dare lay claim to merit; Our works and conduct have no worth. God in His love sent our Redeemer, Christ Jesus, to this sinful earth; His death did for our sins atone, And we are saved by grace alone.

3 By grace God's Son, our only Savior, Came down to earth to bear our sin. Was it because of your own merit That Jesus died your soul to win? No, it was grace, and grace alone, That brought Him from His heav'nly throne.

4 By grace! This ground of faith is certain; So long as God is true, it stands. What saints have penned by inspiration, What in His Word our God commands, Our faith in what our God has done Depends on grace--grace through His Son.

5 By grace. to timid hearts that tremble, In tribulation's furnace tried, By grace, in spite of fear and trouble, The Father's heart is open wide. Where could I help and strength secure If grace were not my anchor sure?

6 By grace! On this I'll rest when dying; In Jesus' promise I rejoice; For though I know my heart's condition, I also know my Savior's voice. My heart is glad, all grief has flown Since I am saved by grace alone.

A Non-Comprehensive List:

- LSB 352, 420, 423, 454, 461, 464*, 467, 468, 480*, 490
- LSB 508, 516*, 533, 544*, 555*,
- LSB 609, 656, 676, 677, 679, 683, 696, 708, 710, 713, 724*, 730, 732, 741, 745*, 746, 755*, 756, 759, et. al.

Final Thoughts:



Wake Awake

LSB 516

1 "Wake, awake, for night is flying," The
watchmen on the heights are crying;
"Awake, Jerusalem, arise!" Midnight
hears the welcome voices And at the
thrilling cry rejoices; "Oh, where are ye,
ye virgins wise? The Bridegroom comes,
awake! Your lamps with gladness take!
Allelujah! With bridal care Yourselves
prepare To meet the Bridegroom, who is
near."

2 Zion hears the watchmen singing,
And all her heart with joy is springing;
She wakes, she rises from her gloom. For
her Lord comes down all-glorious, The
strong in grace, in truth victorious; Her
star is ris'n, her light is come. Now come,
Thou Blessed One, Lord Jesus, God's own
Son, Hail! Hosanna! We enter all The
wedding hall to eat the Supper at Thy
call.

3 Now let all the heav'ns adore
Thee, Let saints and angels sing
before Thee with harp and cymbals'
clearest tone. Of one pearl each
shining portal, Where, joining with
the choir immortal, We gather
round Thy radiant throne. No eye
has seen the light, No ear has heard
the might Of Thy glory; therefore
will we Eternally Sing hymns of
praise and joy to Thee!

Philipp Nicolai



- He was the author of two famous hymns: *Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme* and *Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern*, sometimes referred to as the King and Queen of Chorales, respectively. These two chorales have inspired many composers, including Johann Sebastian Bach, whose chorale cantatas *Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern*, BWV 1, and *Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme*, BWV 140, are based on them.^[6] Bach's organ transcription of the latter, as published in the *Schübler Chorales*, has become world famous.

How Great Thou Art

LSB 801

Verse 1:

O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder,
Consider all the works Thy hands have made; I see
the stars, I hear the rolling thunder, Thy power
throughout the universe displayed.

Chorus:

Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to Thee, How
great Thou art! How great Thou art! Then sings my
soul, My Savior God, to Thee, How great Thou art!
How great Thou art!

Verse 2:

When through the woods, and forest glades I
wander, And hear the birds sing sweetly in the
trees. When I look down, from lofty mountain
grandeur And hear the brook, and feel the gentle
breeze.

Chorus

Verse 3:

And when I think, that God, His Son not sparing;
Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in; That on the
cross, my burden gladly bearing,
He bled and died to take away my sin.

Chorus

Verse 4:

When Christ shall come, with shout of
acclamation, And take me home, what joy shall fill
my heart. Then shall I bow, in humble adoration,
And then proclaim, "My God, how great Thou
art!"

Chorus

From God Can Nothing Move Me

LSB 713



1 From God can nothing move me, He will not step aside, but gently will reprove me and be my constant guide, He stretched forth His hand in evening and in morning, my life with grace adorning wherever I may stand.

2 When those whom I regarded as trustworthy and sure have long from me departed, God's grace shall long endure. He rescues me from sin and breaks the chains that bind me. I leave death's fear behind me; His peace I have within.

3 The Lord my life arranges; who can His work destroy? In His good time He changes all my sorrows into joy. So let me then be still: my body, soul and spirit, His tender care inherit according to His will.

Ludwig Helmbold

- **Ludwig Helmbold**, also spelled **Ludwig Heimbold**, (21 January 1532 – 8 April 1598) was a poet of Lutheran hymns. He is probably best known for his hymn "Nun laßt uns Gott dem Herren", of which J. S. Bach used the fifth stanza for his cantata *O heiliges Geist- und Wasserbad*, Helmbold was born in Mühlhausen. He became a professor of Philosophy an der Erfurt University in 1554. In 1571 he was appointed a minister at the Marienkirche in Mühlhausen, later as Superintendent.^[2]
- iii. **Von Gott will ich nicht lassen**. *Trust in God*. Lauxmann in *Koch*, viii. 365-370, thus relates the origin of this the best known hymn by Helmbold:—
- In 1563, while Helmbold was conrector of the Gymnasium at Erfurt, a pestilence broke out, during which about 4000 of the inhabitants died. As all who could fled from the place, Dr. Pancratius Helbich, Rector of the University (with whom Helmbold had formed a special friendship, and whose wife was godmother of his eldest daughter), was about to do so, leaving behind him Helmbold and his family. Gloomy forebodings filled the hearts of the parting mothers. To console them and nerve them for parting Helmbold composed this hymn on Psalm lxxiii. v. 23.

Verse 1

I Love to tell the Story (on the left)
By Grace, I'm Saved (LSB 566 on the Right)

I love to tell the story
Of unseen things above,
Of Jesus and his glory,
Of Jesus and his love.

I love to tell the story,
'twill be my theme in glory,
To tell the old, old story
Of Jesus and his love.

By grace I'm saved, grace free
and boundless;
My soul, believe and doubt it
not;

Why stagger at this word of
promise?
Hath Scripture ever falsehood
taught?

Nay; then this word must true
remain:

By grace thou, too, shalt
Heav'n obtain.

Verse 2

I love to tell the story,
Because I know 'tis true;
It satisfies my longings
As nothing else can do.

I love to tell the story,
'twill be my theme in glory,
To tell the old, old story
Of Jesus and his love.

By grace! None dare lay claim
to merit;
Our works and conduct have
no worth,
God in His love sent our
Redeemer,
Christ Jesus, to this sinful
earth;
His death did for our sins
atone,
And we are saved by grace
alone.

Verse 3

I love to tell the story,
For those who know it best
Seem hungering and
thirsting to hear it like the
rest.

I love to tell the story,
'twill be my theme in glory,
To tell the old, old story
Of Jesus and his love.

By grace! O, mark this word of
promise
When thou art by thy sins
oppressed,
When Satan plagues thy
troubled conscience,
And when thy heart is seeking
rest.
What reason cannot
comprehend
God by His grace to thee doth
send.

Verse 4

And when, in scenes of glory,
I sing the new, new song,
'twill be the old, old story
That I have loved so long.

I love to tell the story,
'twill be my theme in glory,
To tell the old, old story
Of Jesus and his love.

By grace! This ground of faith
is certain;
So long as God is true, it
stands.

What saints have penned by
inspiration,
What in His Word our God
commands,
What our whole faith must
rest upon,
Is grace alone, grace in His
Son.