

Dear Brothers in Christ,

In the midst of all the challenges and changes that are taking place due to the Coronavirus, one thing that has not changed is that our Lord still calls His children to life everlasting.

Some of you have asked if there are any guidelines regarding funerals during this pandemic. While things are fluid, especially regarding the recommended gathering size of groups, please consider the following when dealing with a family needing funeral services:

1. Make sure your local funeral homes know how to be in touch with you if the church office has been closed.
2. Make the funeral an “immediate family only” event.
3. Still communicate with the congregation regarding the passing of a church member, and request rather than attend the funeral or wake in person, that members phone, mail, email, or text prayers and comfort to the bereaved.
4. Ask the bereaved if there are family members that will not be able to come to the funeral due to their own health risks, travel restrictions or other circumstances, and make plans to reach out to them to bring them the comfort of Christ’s victory over death.
5. Be sure that the sanctuary has been well-cleaned before and after the service.
6. If the family is comfortable with it, live stream the funeral service where possible.
7. Plan that once the “social distancing” phase of the pandemic has been lifted, that a larger memorial service for the community be held.

Thank you for faithfully serving those who grieve, reminding them that even in the toughest of circumstances, ours is the joy of salvation through faith in Christ.

Your Servant in Christ,

Rev. Dr. Allan Buss  
President, Northern Illinois District LCMS