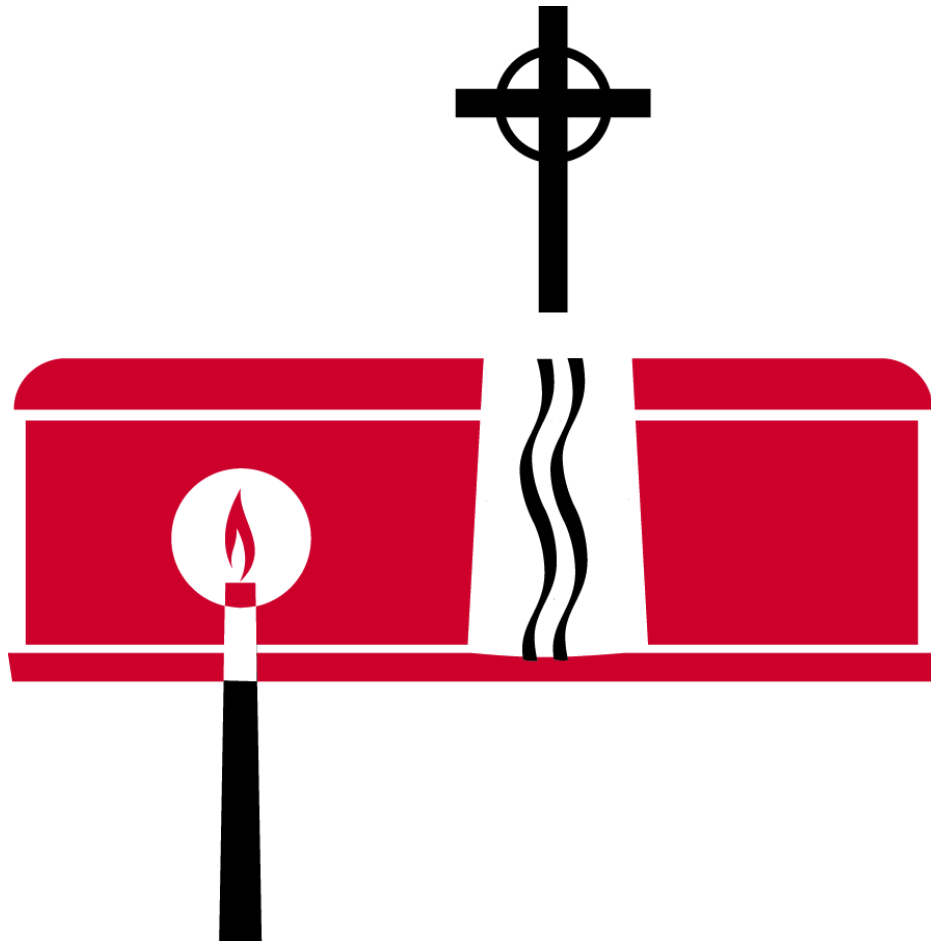


# Funeral Planning Guide



A Guide for Preparing for the Christian Funeral of

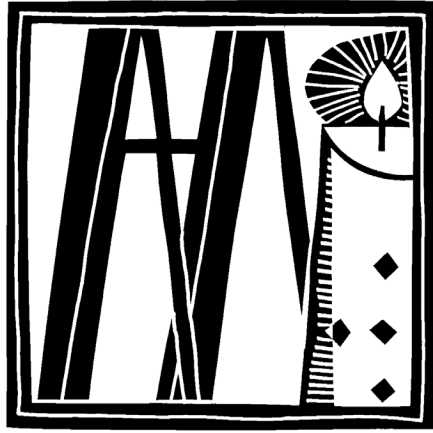
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NAME



Resurrection Lutheran Church  
1270 N. Broadway | Lebanon, OH 45036  
513-932.1551 | [www.RLC-Lebanon.org](http://www.RLC-Lebanon.org)





Thank you for exploring this Funeral Planning Guide. Our hope is that God will bless you and give you peace as you consider and record your funeral wishes. We trust that intentional conversations with family and friends will be a source of hope as the presence of the Holy Spirit provides holy moments of dialogue.

At a person's death, the church shares the grief of those who mourn and remembers the brevity of life on earth. At the funeral we give voice to sorrow, thank God for our loved one, and entrust this companion of ours into the hands of God. Trusting in God's promise in baptism that we are claimed by Christ forever, we rest in the sure hope of the resurrection. When the church gathers to mark the end of life, Christ crucified and risen is the witness of worship, the strength of mutual consolation, and the hope of healing.

From the Funeral introduction in Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW)

Thank you for taking time now to reflect and prepare. We pray that this resource will be a gift to you and to your loved ones.

I praise God for your life of faith!

**Pastor Corey Wagonfield**

Resurrection Lutheran Church

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[www.rlc-lebanon.org](http://www.rlc-lebanon.org)

[www.facebook.com/ResurrectionLuthern](https://www.facebook.com/ResurrectionLuthern)

"Reaching out to others, Living in faith, Celebrating Christ's love"



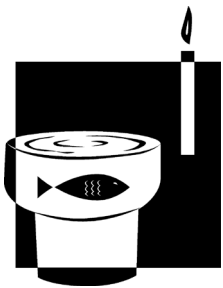
# THE FUNERAL LITURGY

## PLANNING YOUR FUNERAL LITURGY

It is appropriate that, when possible, each Christian plan his or her own funeral service. This can be done at any age and does not have to be seen as morbid, but rather as a way to allow family and friends to know your requests for hymns, readings, and other details of the service. Planning ahead can help inform your family of your desires, as well as alleviating some of the stress of funeral details at the time of grief and loss.

The funeral liturgy is in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, pages 279-285. The service can be adapted for a memorial service without a coffin.

The burial service is intended primarily for use in the church, the most appropriate place for the funeral of a Christian. Holy Baptism, which marks the beginning of Christian life and the promise of eternal life, takes place in the church. Other significant passages, such as confirmation and marriage also occur in the church. It is appropriate that the final celebration of a Christian's life and death take place in the church setting, where loved ones are surrounded by the primary symbols of the Christian faith: cross, font, altar, lectern, and Paschal candle. The service can be adapted when it is held in a funeral home or in some other location.



**HOLY BAPTISM** is remembered and celebrated during the funeral liturgy, as the Church accentuates the connections between Holy Baptism, the resurrection of Christ, and our hope of eternal life. In Baptism we become God's children forever. We are never alone, even when we die. In Baptism we are marked with the sign of the cross as these words are spoken: *Child of God, you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever.* There are several symbols in the funeral liturgy that point to Baptism and our unity with the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. The coffin may be covered with a white funeral pall, a large cloth recalling the white garment given in Baptism, the robe of Christ's righteousness that clothes us. The pall also reminds us that in death and before God all people are equal, regardless of whether the coffin is simple or elaborate. The white color of the pall is a reminder of Easter and Christ's victory over death. The paschal candle, placed at the head of the coffin, is also a symbol of Easter. The candle is lit at the Easter Vigil, during the Easter season, and at baptisms and funerals.



**HOLY COMMUNION** can be a great source of strength and peace at a funeral service. Sharing the bread of life and the cup of blessing can be especially comforting at the time of loss, for God is present not only in words, but through eating and drinking at the Lord's Table. Through this intimate meal we are given strength, hope and the promise of eternal life. For those who find Holy Communion to be central to their Sunday worship life, it will seem natural to celebrate the Eucharist at the occasion of a funeral. There are occasions when, for the purposes of extending hospitality to family and friends, Holy Communion may be omitted from the funeral service.

**THE LITURGY** used for Christian funerals is an Easter liturgy. The feelings of grief and desolation are recognized and given expression at a funeral, but the service moves beyond to a confident hope. Both the sadness and joy must be seen together, tempered by each other. The liturgy makes the bold proclamation that each baptized member has been united into a death with Christ, and will thus share in his glorious resurrection.

**THE SERVICE OF COMMITTAL** is used when the body is brought to its final resting place, usually a cemetery. Even though special arrangements may need to be requested, the Church encourages those gathered to see the body lowered into the grave, whenever possible. Rather than remembering it resting atop of the device by which it will later be lowered after mourners have left, this can give the family and others a clearer memory of what happened to the body. Some earth is cast on the coffin as a reminder of the earth from which we came and into which now we rest.

**A MEAL** at the church or someone's home often follows the burial. This gathering allows persons to renew old friendships, to reconnect family ties, and to express emotions in various ways. The shared meal is an affirmation of life in the face of death.

**HYMNS** for a funeral service are most appropriate when they express death seen in the context of our baptism into Jesus' death and resurrection. While favorites of the deceased are appropriate, it would be good to also consider hymns from other resources, additional hymns like these from *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (ELW).

#### **FUNERAL HYMNS FOR ANY TIME OF THE YEAR**

Abide With Me	629	I Am the Bread of Life	485
Around You, O Lord Jesus	468	I Know That My Redeemer Lives!	619
At the Lamb's High Feast	362	I Was There to Hear Your Borne Cry	732
Behold the Host Arrayed in White	425	If You But Trust in God to Guide You	769
Blest Are They	728	In Heaven Above	630
Blest be the Tie That Binds	656	In Thee Is Gladness	867
Children of the Heavenly Father	781	Jerusalem, My Happy Home	628
Come, Ye Disconsolate	607	Just a Closer Walk with Thee	697
Crown Him with Many Crowns	855	Lift High the Cross	660
Day by Day	790	Lord of All Hopefulness	765
For All Your Saints, O Lord	427	Lord, Take My Hand and Lead me	767
For All the Saints	422	Lord, Thee I Love With All My Heart	750
For the Beauty of the Earth	879	Love Divine, All Loves Excelling	631
Give Me Jesus	770	My Hope is Built on Nothing Less	596, 597
Give Thanks for Saints	428	My Life Flows On in Endless Song	763
Go, My Children, with My Blessing	543	My Shepherd, You Supply My Need	782 Ps 23
God, Who Made the Earth and Heaven	564	Neither Death nor Life	622
Holy God, Holy and Glorious	637	Now Thank We All Our God	839, 840
Holy God, We Praise Your Name	414	Now We Remain	500
Holy, Holy, Holy	413	O Blessed Spring	447
How Small Our Span of Life	636	O Christ the Same	760

O Day Full of Grace	627	The King of Love My Shepherd Is	502 Ps 23
O God Beyond All Praising	880	The Lord's My Shepherd	778 Ps 23
O God, Our Help in Ages Past	632 Ps 90	The Trumpets Sound, the Angels Sing	531
O Living Bread from Heaven	542	Thine the Amen, Thine the Praise	826
O Lord, Now Let Your Servant	313	There in God's Garden	342
Oh, Happy Day When We Shall Stand	441	Through the Night of Doubt and Sorrow	327
Precious Lord, Take My Hand	773	Thy Holy Wings	613
Rejoice in God's Saints	418	We Are Baptized in Christ Jesus	451
Shall We Gather at the River	423	We Know That Christ Is Raised	449
Sing with All the Saints in Glory	426	What Feast of Love	487
Soli Deo Gloria	878	What Wondrous Love Is This	666
Soul, Adorn Yourself with Gladness	488, 489	When We Are Living	639
The Church's One Foundation	654	You Are Mine	581
		You Who Dwell in the Shelter of the Lord	787 Ps 91

## FUNERAL HYMNS DURING PARTICULAR LITURGICAL SEASONS

*The Easter hymns listed below are especially appropriate for a funeral at any time during the year.*

### Advent

Wake, Awake, for Night is Flying	436
Oh, Come, Oh, Come Emmanuel	257
My Lord, What a Morning	438
Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers	244
Prepare the Royal Highway	264

### Christmas

Let All Together Praise Our God	287
Your Little Ones, Dear Lord	286
Good Christian Friends, Rejoice	288
Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming	272
Away in a Manger	277, 278
Once in Royal David's City	269
All My Heart Again Rejoices	273

### Epiphany

O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright	308
As with Gladness Men of Old	302

I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light	815
We are Marching in the Light of God	866

### Lent/Holy Week

On My Heart Imprint Your Image	811
In the Cross of Christ I Glory	324
God Loved the World	323
My Song Is Love Unknown	343
O Sacred Head, Now Wounded	351, 352

### Easter

Awake, My Heart with Gladness	378
The Strife is O'er the Battle Done	366
With High Delight Let us Unite	368
Now All the Vault of Heaven Resounds	367
Thine Is the Glory	376
Now the Green Blade Rises	379
Alleluia! Jesus Is Risen	377

## SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR THE FUNERAL

Normally, funerals include three readings and a psalm, one from each section below. Other readings from the Bible are also welcome. Friends or members of the family may assist in reading Scripture.

### FIRST READING (Old Testament)

Job 19:23-27a	<i>I know that my redeemer lives</i>
Ecclesiastes 3:1-8	<i>For everything a season</i>
Isaiah 25:6-9	<i>The Lord will swallow up death forever</i>
Isaiah 40:1-11, 28-31	<i>Comfort my people, says your God</i>
Isaiah 43:1-3a, 5 - 7	<i>I have called you by name</i>
Isaiah 43:1-3a, 18-19	<i>I am about to do a new thing</i>
Isaiah 61:1-3	<i>God comforts all who mourn</i>
Isaiah 65:17-20, 23-25	<i>A new heaven and a new earth</i>
Isaiah 66:10-14	<i>As a mother comforts her child</i>
Jeremiah 31:8-13	<i>I will turn their mourning into joy</i>
Lamentations 3:22-26, 31-33	<i>The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases</i>

### PSALM

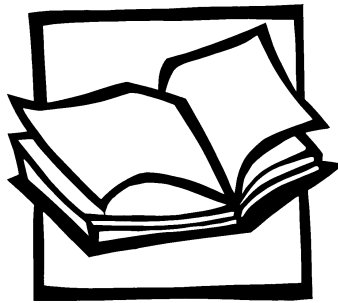
Psalm 23	<i>The Lord is my shepherd</i>
Psalm 25:1-10	<i>To you I lift up my soul</i>
Psalm 42:1-7	<i>As a deer longs for flowing streams</i>
Psalm 46:1-7	<i>God is our refuge and strength</i>
Psalm 63	<i>Eagerly I seek you</i>
Psalm 84	<i>How dear to me is your dwelling place</i>
Psalm 90	<i>You have been our refuge</i>
Psalm 116	<i>You have rescued my life from death</i>
Psalm 121	<i>I lift up my eyes to the hills</i>
Psalm 122	<i>Let us go to the house of the Lord</i>
Psalm 130	<i>Out of the depths I cry to you</i>
Psalm 139:7-12	<i>The gracious omnipresence of the Lord</i>
Psalm 142:1-6	<i>I cry to the Lord with my voice</i>
Psalm 143	<i>Lord, hear my prayer</i>

You may also consider a hymn to be sung as a psalm paraphrase.

Psalm 23	Hymn 502	The King of Love My Shepherd Is
	Hymn 782	My Shepherd, You Supply My Need
	Hymn 778	The Lord's My Shepherd
Psalm 90	Hymn 632	O God, Our Help in Ages Past
Psalm 91	Hymn 787	You Who Dwell in the Shelter of the Lord

## SECOND READING (New Testament Epistle)

Romans 5:1-11	<i>Justified by faith, we have peace with God</i>
Romans 6:3-9	<i>Baptized into Jesus death and resurrection</i>
Romans 8:14-23	<i>We groan while we wait for the redemption of our bodies</i>
Romans 8:31-35, 37-39	<i>Nothing can separate us from the love of God</i>
Romans 14:7-12	<i>Whether alive or dead, we belong to the Lord</i>
I Corinthians 15:12-26	<i>In Christ shall all be made alive</i>
I Corinthians 15:51-57	<i>Death is swallowed up in victory</i>
II Corinthians 4:6-12, 16-18	<i>Treasure in clay jars</i>
II Corinthians 4:14-5:1	<i>What is seen is transitory; what is unseen is eternal</i>
II Corinthians 5:1, 6-10	<i>We have an everlasting home in heaven</i>
Philippians 3:20-21	<i>Jesus will transfigure our bodies to be like his glorious body</i>
I Thessalonians 4:13-4, 18	<i>We shall stay with the Lord forever</i>
II Timothy 2:8-13	<i>If we have died with him, we shall live with him</i>
I John 3:1-2	<i>We shall see God as God really is</i>
Revelation 7:9-17	<i>God will wipe away every tear</i>
Revelation 21:2-7	<i>Behold, I make all things new</i>
Revelation 22:1-15	<i>The Lord God will be their light</i>



## HOLY GOSPEL

Matthew 5:1-10	<i>Blessed are those who mourn</i>
Matthew 11:25-30	<i>Come to me and I will give you rest</i>
Matthew 25:1-13	<i>The bridegroom is coming; come out to meet him</i>
Mark 16:1-7	<i>The resurrection of Christ</i>
Luke 2:25-32 (or 2:25-40)	<i>Simeon is able to die in peace</i>
Luke 23:33, 39-43	<i>Today you will be with me in paradise</i>
Luke 24:13-35	<i>The road to Emmaus</i>
John 1:1-5, 9-14	<i>The light shines in the darkness</i>
John 6:37-40	<i>All that the Father gives me will come to me</i>
John 6:51-58	<i>All who eat this bread will live forever; I will raise them up on the last day</i>
John 10:11-16	<i>I am the good shepherd</i>
John 11:21-27 (or 11:32-45)	<i>I am the resurrection and the life</i>
John 12:23-28	<i>If a grain of wheat falls on the ground and dies, it yields a rich harvest</i>
John 14:1-6	<i>In my Father's house there are many rooms</i>
John 14:25-27	<i>Peace I leave with you</i>



## **PREPARING FOR DEATH**

### **MAKE A WILL**

Part of Christian stewardship involves providing for the disposition of possessions by means of a will. It is best to do this with the assistance of a lawyer and to review it regularly.

### **MAKE FUNERAL PLANS**

Funeral plans should not be included in the will, but given to the parish pastor and two to three friends or relatives so that your wishes are easily accessible at the time of death. A planning form is included in this packet.

### **DECIDE WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR BODY**

Christian theology gives honor to the human body by declaring that we are created in God's image. Even in death, we treat the body with a sense of reverence; it is not merely the shell of the person, but a sacramental sign of his or her presence on earth.

Following the death, there are three options for disposing of the body: burial, cremation, or donation. It is wise to make the decisions and arrangements before the time of death in a time of less pressure and emotional turmoil. If the body is to be buried, you will need to select a funeral director and a burial place. In the case of cremation, a crematory and place for the burial or spreading of the ashes needs to be selected. The funeral may still be held in the church, the commendation in the crematory chapel, and the ashes interred later using the Committal from the burial liturgy. If the body is to be donated, please complete the necessary documentation in advance.

Though memorial services are becoming more common, it is good to reflect on the symbolic and emotional benefits of having a tangible sign of the person's presence at the liturgy. A memorial service is a worship moment that happens without any physical presence of the deceased. Even with cremation, it is possible to have the body present for a funeral and to follow with cremation. Another option is to have the urn with the cremated remains present for the service.

# **WHEN DEATH OCCURS**

## **NOTIFY THE PASTOR**

When a Christian is near death, the pastor should be notified so that the Church's ministry may be extended to the dying and to the loved ones. The pastor should be notified at once at the time of death, because the pastor will want to extend ministry and confer with the family regarding funeral arrangements.

## **ARRANGEMENTS**

It is preferred that a Christian be buried following a church service where the bereaved are surrounded with the symbols of Christ's resurrection and presence. For members of the parish, there is no charge for the use of the church building. There may be costs for the services of an organist or soloist.

A simple coffin is certainly appropriate for internment. There is beauty in simplicity and there is nothing disrespectful about an inexpensive coffin.

Embalming, replacing the blood in the body with embalming fluid, is necessary only if there is to be a viewing of the body or if local law requires it.

Cremation is an acceptable Christian means for the disposal of the body. It simply hastens the process of "ashes to ashes." If there will not be a viewing it may be beneficial for the family to spend some time with the body immediately following the death.

## **VIEWING THE BODY**

Viewings are not a necessary part of the Christian burial. Some persons prefer to remember their loved ones as they saw them alive. Yet, viewing the body may help to add finality to the grieving process and is a common way of saying farewell to the deceased. Viewings are often held at a funeral home on the afternoon or evening on the day before the funeral service. There may also be a time of viewing at the church before the funeral liturgy.

## **MEDICAL RESEARCH/ORGAN DONATION**

If you would like to donate your body to medical research, or would like to donate your organs and/or tissues, please visit [www.giftofhope.org](http://www.giftofhope.org) to become a registered donor. This helps to ensure your wishes are followed at the time of death.

## **FLOWERS AND MEMORIALS**

Flowers and plants are reminders of life in the face of death. Rather than an abundance of floral arrangements, it may be more useful for money to be given to a memorial fund, such as the church memorial fund. A newspaper or bulletin notice may indicate where the memorial gifts are to be sent.

## **CLOSED CASKET**

The casket is closed before the burial service and remains closed throughout the service. The family says its farewells to the body at the viewing or immediately before the service.

## **MILITARY HONORS**

The national flag may replace the pall as the coffin is moved from the church to the place of burial; the flag never covers the coffin in the church.

# A GUIDE FOR MY CHRISTIAN FUNERAL

## INTENT

To my family and friends,

I record these wishes to guide your planning and ease your struggle during these painful days. Use them as they were intended, as a guide. Do not feel strictly bound to them, if in your wisdom and love, you would make other decisions that are more helpful in your grieving and in your celebration of the resurrection.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## CHURCH INFORMATION

Church Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Pastor(s) \_\_\_\_\_

## FUNERAL HOME INFORMATION

Name of Funeral Home \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Have pre-arrangements been made? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No If yes, when? \_\_\_\_\_

## MY BODY

\_\_\_ I wish to donate my organs/tissue (complete other documents).

\_\_\_ as transplants \_\_\_ for research

\_\_\_ I wish my body to be donated for research (complete other documents)

\_\_\_ I have completed and attached transplant and/or donor documents.

\_\_\_ I wish to be embalmed.

\_\_\_ I wish to be cremated.

What would you like done with your ashes? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ I wish to be buried.

Name/location of cemetery \_\_\_\_\_

Have you purchased a plot? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

If yes, plot number \_\_\_\_\_

Are there family members you wish to be buried next to? \_\_\_\_\_

If so, who? \_\_\_\_\_



**PALLBEARERS**

If the body will be present for the service, please name at least six (6) pallbearers:

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. \_\_\_\_\_

**OBITUARY**

Please be sure to include the following events, accomplishments, and people that are important to me (list full names for siblings, parents; date of marriage; etc.):

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**MEMORIALS**

I wish memorial gifts to be used to further support the following ministries and organizations:

- \_\_\_ Resurrection Lutheran Church Building Endowment Fund
- \_\_\_ Resurrection Lutheran Church Mission Endowment Fund
- \_\_\_ Resurrection Lutheran Church Memorial Fund
- \_\_\_ Other organizations (please specify)

NAME	CONTACT INFORMATION
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NAME	CONTACT INFORMATION
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NAME	CONTACT INFORMATION
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**All of these plans should be reviewed and updated regularly. Please give copies to family members and your pastor upon completion and each time a change is made.**

## OTHER HELPFUL INFORMATION

*It is helpful to have all this information in one place, so that your family will have easy access to it at the time of your death.*

### POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR HEALTH CARE

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

Where are papers located? \_\_\_\_\_

### POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR FINANCES

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

Where are papers located? \_\_\_\_\_

### LAWYER

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

### BANK(S)

NAME/ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ ACCOUNT NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

NAME/ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ ACCOUNT NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

### LOCATION OF IMPORTANT ITEMS

Automobile Title(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Bank Books \_\_\_\_\_

Birth Certificate \_\_\_\_\_

Cemetery Deed \_\_\_\_\_

Insurance Policies \_\_\_\_\_

Marriage Certificate \_\_\_\_\_

Mortgage \_\_\_\_\_

Pension Records \_\_\_\_\_

Real Estate Deed \_\_\_\_\_

Safe Deposit Box Key \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security Card \_\_\_\_\_

Stocks and Bonds \_\_\_\_\_

Veteran's Documents \_\_\_\_\_

Will \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_