



The **Luther Rose**, designed by Martin Luther, is a recognised symbol for Lutheranism.

LUTHERAN CHURCH

Lutheranism is a branch of Western Christianity that identifies with the teachings of the 16th century German reformer Martin Luther.

The *Christian Bible* is the key holy book of the Church, which shares the principal beliefs of other traditions of Christianity (described on page 16).

Lutheranism is the largest religion in areas of Northern Europe and has a significant presence in North America and some African countries.

Clergy are called pastors.

Summary of Essential Practice Points:

Please refer to the full text of the highlighted points related to the following summary points.

1 Profile of the Lutheran church in Ireland:

There are more than 5,200 Lutherans in Ireland, mainly of German origin, while there are also some members from Latvia, other northerly European countries and the USA.

2 Religious contacts and religious practices:

Lutheranism contains a number of religious ceremonies, called *sacraments*, each of which has a specific purpose including aiding healing during illness, preparation for death and initiation of infants into the religion. Lutheran clergy who have indicated willingness and availability to lead ceremonies in English, German or Latvian are provided at the end of the section. Alternatively, the Church of Ireland chaplain can act as a resource for Lutherans from Nordic and Baltic countries, by agreement with the person.

3 Death-related religious rituals:

A dying person may wish to receive services or spiritual support. Contact a Lutheran pastor, a Church of Ireland chaplain or, if necessary, any other chaplain by agreement with the person/family.

4 Cleaning and touching the body:

The normal washing and preparation procedure can be carried out on a deceased person.

5 Initiation ritual/infant baptism:

The *Sacrament of Baptism*, initiation into the religion, normally takes place in infancy. A newborn child should be baptised if in danger of death. In an emergency a Christian lay person may follow the instructions under the theme *Initiation ritual/infant baptism*.

Profile of the Lutheran Church in Ireland

There has been a Lutheran Church in Ireland since the 1700s.

Essential Practice Point

1

Lutheranism in Ireland increased its membership by just over 72% between 2002 and 2006 and in Census 2006 registered 5,279 members in Census 2006.

Present day members are mainly of German origin while there are also some members from other more northerly European countries and from the USA. The Lutheran Church holds regular services in St. Finian's Church in Dublin, as well as at premises of other Christian traditions in Cork, Galway, Killarney, Limerick, Mullingar, Sligo and Wexford. More recently, a Latvian pastor has been holding services in his native language at the Dublin venue and elsewhere.

The Church of Ireland can act as a representative of Lutheran Church members from Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Norway and Sweden. Ceremonies are similar in both churches.

Care of the ill

Religious contacts and religious practices

Essential Practice Point

2

- The person may prefer to see a Lutheran pastor and have a ceremony performed in a mother tongue such as German or Latvian; contact details for current Lutheran clergy who are available to lead ceremonies in English, German and Latvian are provided at the end of the section.
- Alternatively, the Church of Ireland chaplain can act as a resource for Lutherans from the above named countries, as requested or required. Where possible, the person should be informed if the Church of Ireland chaplain is being called to provide religious services.
- Lutheranism contains a number of religious ceremonies, called *sacraments*, each of which has a specific purpose including aiding healing during illness, preparation for death and initiation of infants into the religion. Two commonly administered sacraments are *Holy Communion* and *Baptism* (described below).

Blood Transfusion and Organ Transplantation

There is no religious objection to these matters.

Care of the Dying

Death-related religious rituals

Essential Practice Point

3

- A dying person may wish to receive the *Sacrament of Holy Communion*, may need spiritual support, may want prayers at their bedside and possibly may wish to be anointed. Contact a Lutheran pastor, a Church of Ireland chaplain or, if necessary, any other chaplain by agreement with the person/family.
- A short service may take place in the mortuary chapel prior to the deceased leaving.

Cleaning and touching the body

Essential Practice Point

4

The normal washing and preparation procedure can be carried out.

Postmortem requirements

There is no religious objection to postmortem.

Interment ritual

Both burial and cremation are acceptable generally. Arrangements are usually made with the person's pastor or, if necessary, the Church of Ireland will facilitate arrangements.

Religious Icons and Symbols

Personal and religious items

Some Lutherans may wear a cross or carry a copy of the *Christian Bible*. These should be treated with respect.

Use of religious symbols

A plain cross and candles are appropriate in the mortuary area.

Additional Notes on Maternity and Paediatric Care

Initiation ritual/infant baptism

Essential Practice Point

5

- In the Lutheran Church the *Sacrament of Baptism*, initiation into the religion, takes place in infancy where the child's parents and Godparents pledge vows on behalf of the child. Receiving baptism before death is often considered important. As a result it can be important that a newborn child born to Lutheran parents is baptised if in danger of death.
- A midwife or other healthcare practitioner may be asked to baptise a baby if no religious representative is available. This ritual can be performed by any Christian, and it is done by making the sign of the Cross on the child's forehead, pouring a little water on the forehead and saying the words "(child's name), I baptise you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen". Many parents will derive great comfort from knowing that their child has been baptised.

Foetal, infant and child death

- There are no specific religious requirements governing many areas of foetal, infant and child death. The Lutheran pastor or Church of Ireland chaplain can offer particular ceremonies based on the needs and wishes of the parents, which are of paramount importance in these sensitive situations.
- In the case of a stillbirth a Blessing can be offered. These ceremonies can also be performed in the case of miscarriage, based on a request from parents.
- A funeral service will be offered for all cases of foetal, infant and child death. The nature of the service is based upon the wishes and needs of the bereaved. A religious representative will be a contact person and a resource in these matters.
- Parents will value the knowledge that the remains are treated with respect.

Memento of a deceased child

There is no objection to offering a memento of a deceased child to the parents, be it a footprint, handprint, lock of hair, etc.

Developing a Lutheran Church Contact

German and English language services:

Pastors Corinna and Joachim Diestelkamp are Dublin based and lead services in a number of places nationwide. They have indicated their interest in and willingness to be available to healthcare settings to offer religious services in German or English and to give guidance to chaplaincy staff. They can be contacted at Luther House, 24 Adelaide Road, Dublin 2.

Tel: (01) 6766548

Website: www.lutheran-ireland.org

Latvian language services:

A Latvian Pastor who can offer religious services in Latvian can be contacted at:

Pastor Uģis Brūklene, c/o Luther House, 24 Adelaide Road, Dublin 2.

Tel: 087 6399490

Email: bruklene@lutheran.lv

Contributor

Pastor Corinna Diestelkamp provided information for this section and approved the finalised section.