

# How Christians Ritualize Death *(and what it says about life)*

## **Session One:** *The Body of Christ: honoring the body in death*



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Martin Luther

“The Holy and Blessed Sacrament of Baptism” (1519)

# signing with the cross

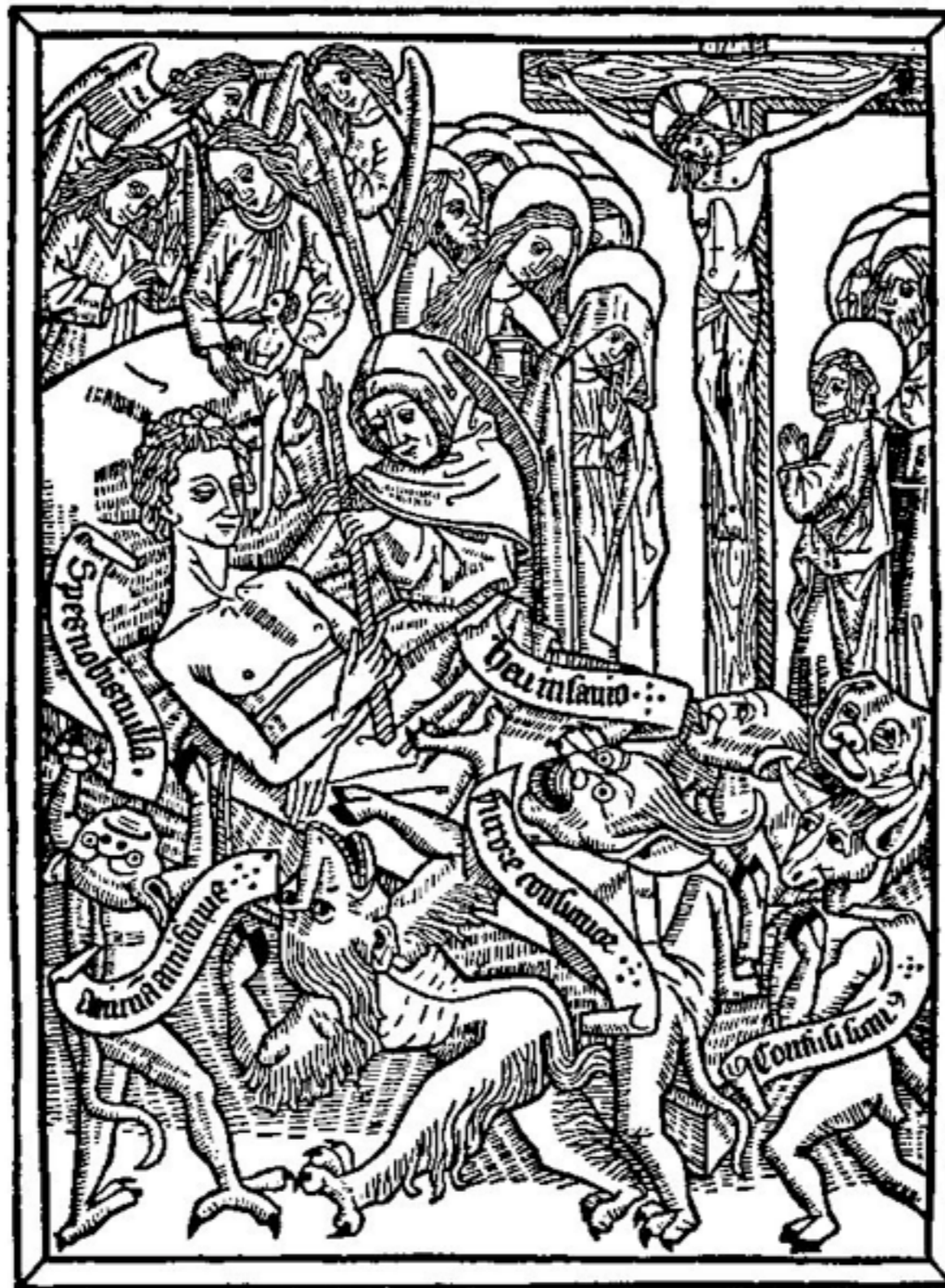
from “Welcome to Baptism”  
*Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, p. 233

# Stational Liturgy









## *Ars Moriendi* (“The Art of Dying”)









In-to your hands, O Lord, I com - mend my spir - it.

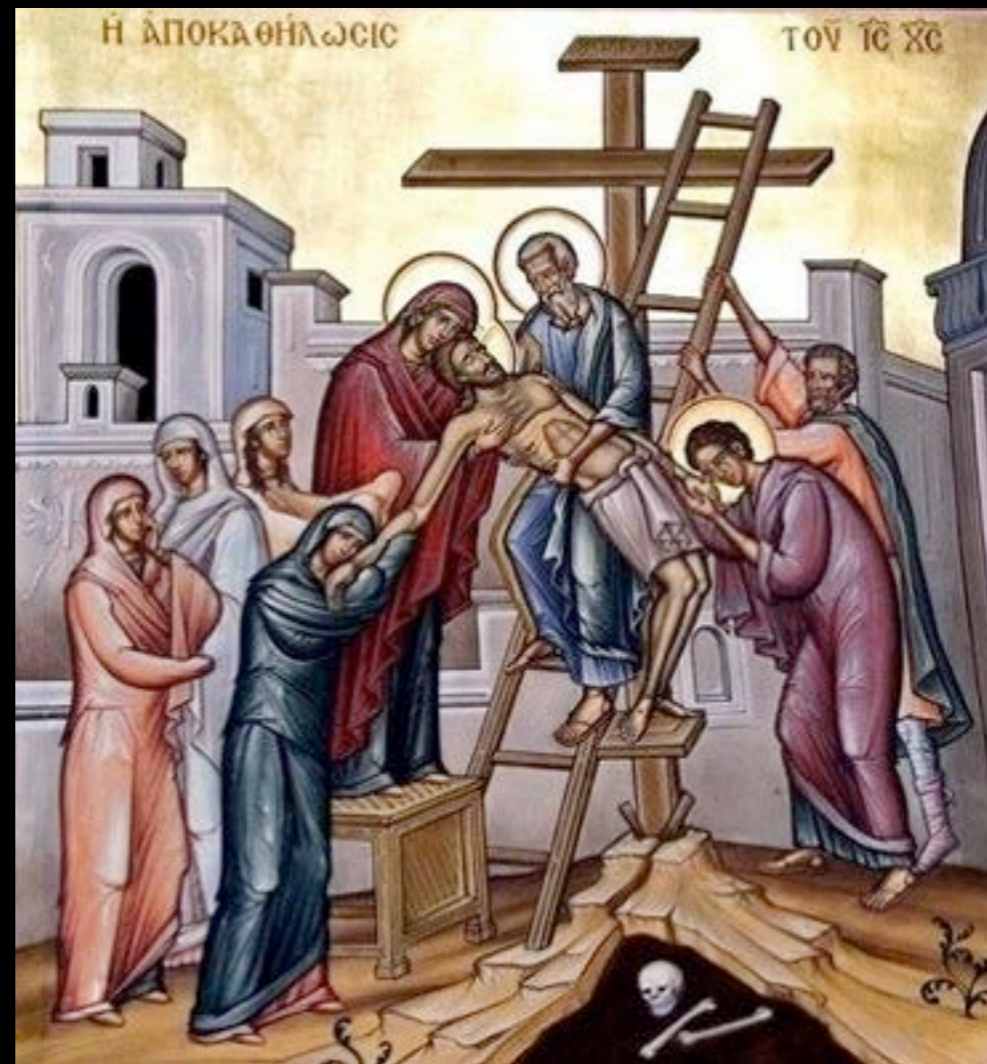
In - to your hands I com - mend my spir - it.

You have re - deemed me, O Lord, God of truth.

In - to your hands I com - mend my spir - it.

Glory to the Fa - ther, and to the Son, and to the Ho - ly Spir - it.

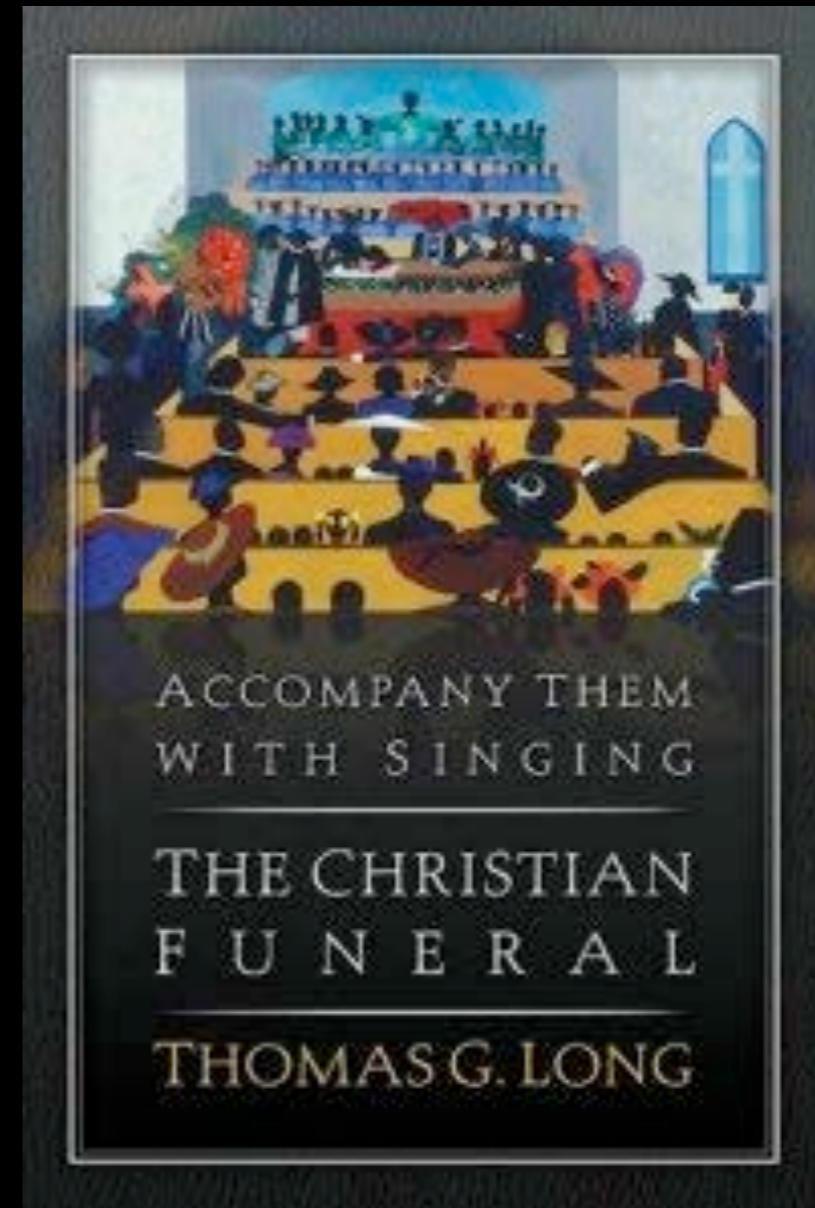
In - to your hands I com - mend my spir - it.





## *the body at death and in the funeral*

- tells truth about embodied loss
- sacramental action is bodily
- resurrection and Spirit's manifestations are bodily
- honors body with accompaniment
- body is primary means by which a life is known



*Accompany Them With Singing:  
The Christian Funeral, Thomas Long*

- completion of baptism
- commendation to God
- *ars moriendi*
- exodus/journey/pilgrimage
- accompanying a saint
- fragility of incarnation honored

# Interfaith Connections

- **Islamic Care for the Dead** includes washing and shrouding the body for burial by a small group of selected family and friends. Some mosques provide facilities for washing bodies.
- **Chevra Kadisha** is a Jewish burial society which prepares bodies for burial and keeps vigil with the body. Many synagogues have such a group.



Michelle V. Agins/The New York Times



Michelle V. Agins/The New York Times

*natural burial practice:*  
Care for the Body





Photo of workshop by Donna Belk and Sandy Booth





- Natural Transitions
- Crossings
- Thresholds
- Final Passages





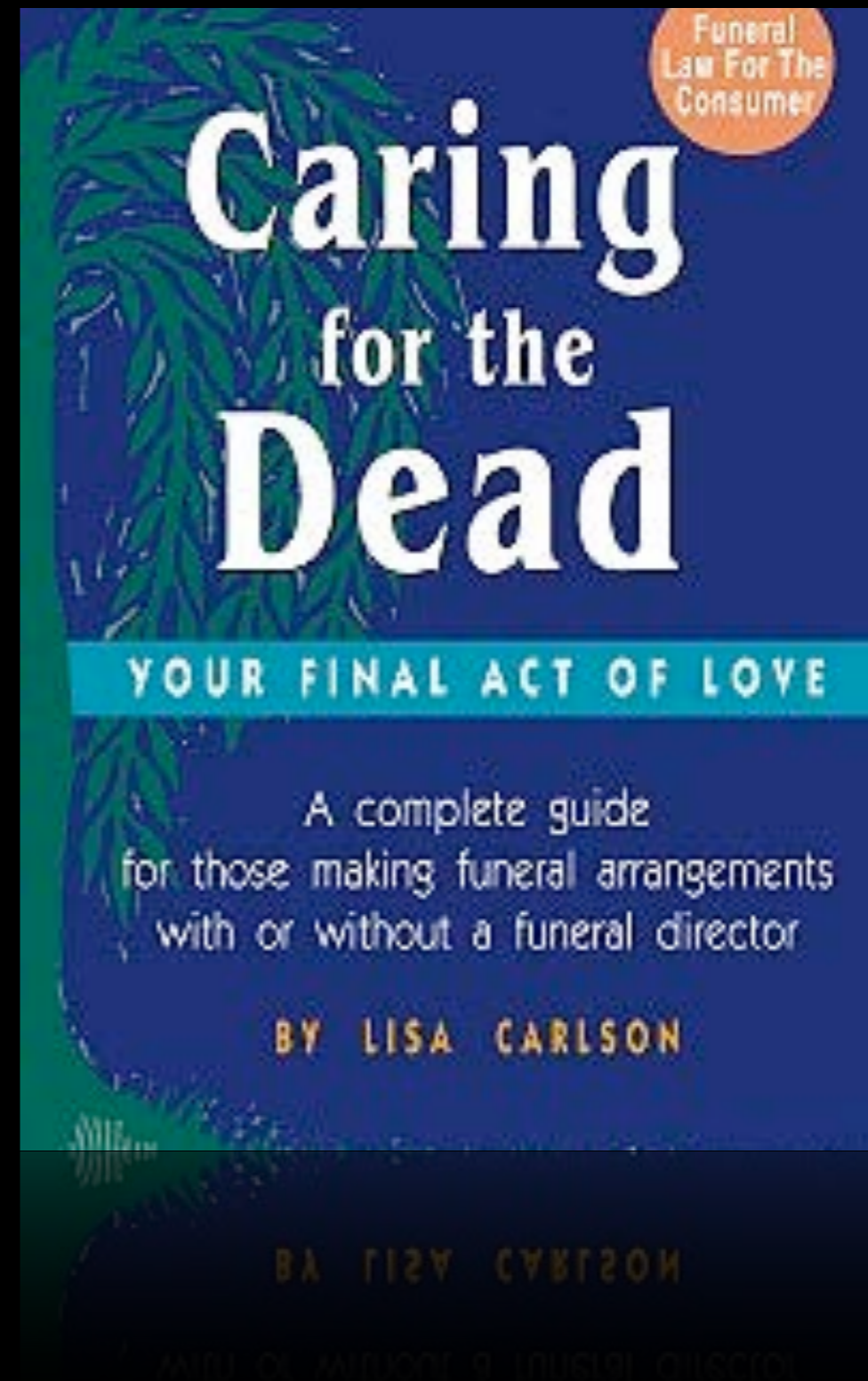


# *Caring for the Dead: Your Final Act of Love*

by Lisa Carlson  
Upper Access, 1998

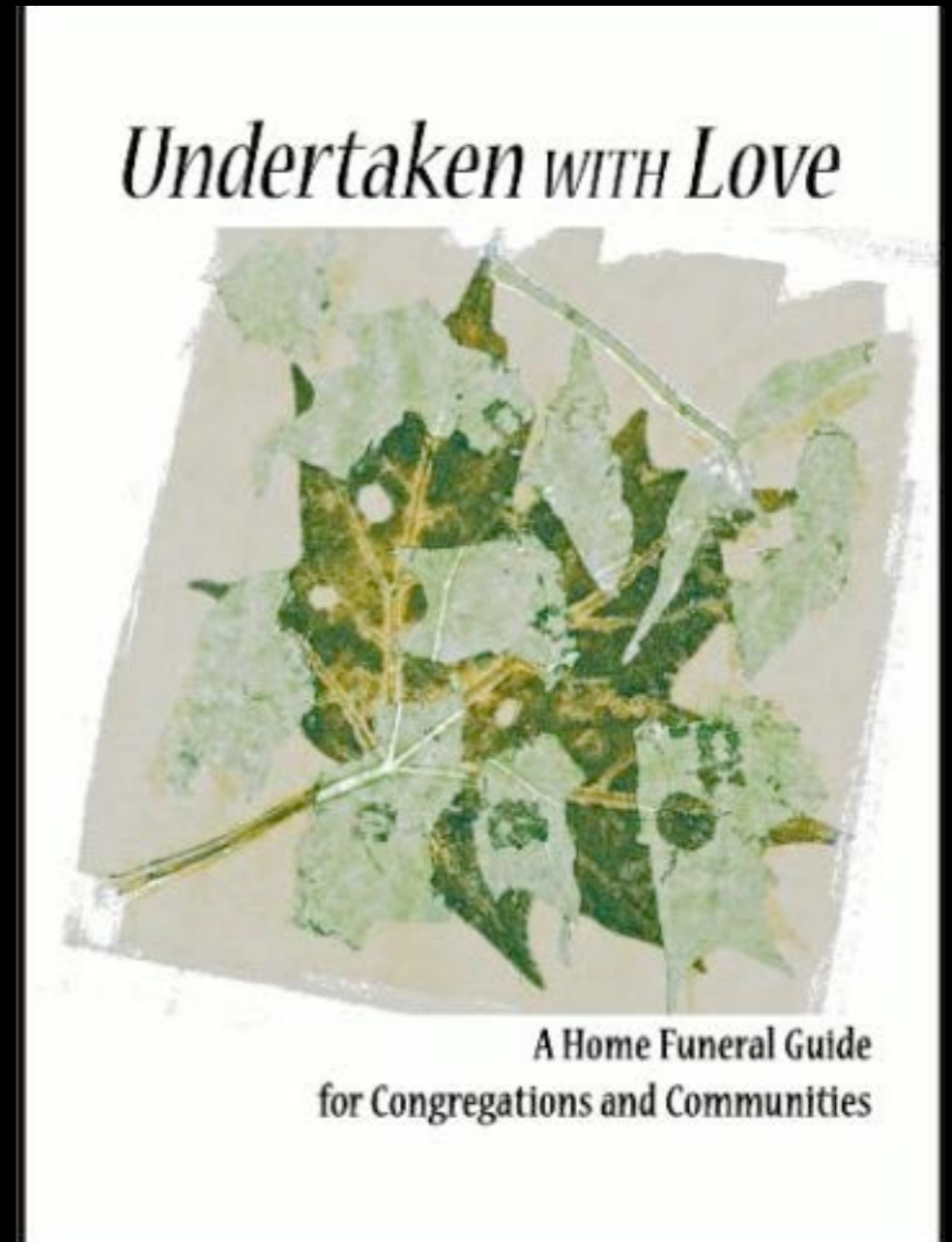
## **Practical advice**

caring for bodies at the time of death  
interacting with funeral service providers  
overview of laws & regulations by state



*Undertaken with Love:  
A Home Funeral Guide for  
Congregations and  
Communities  
(2009)*

download at  
[undertakenwithlove.org](http://undertakenwithlove.org)



for congregations and communities  
A Home Funeral Guide



# Children of the Heavenly Father

## *Truggare kan ingen vara*



*Tryg - ga - re kan ing - en va - ra än Guds lil - la bar - na - ska - ra,*  
1 Chil - dren of the heav'n-ly Fa - ther safe - ly in his bo - som gath - er;  
2 God his own doth tend and nour-ish, in his ho - ly courts they flour - ish.  
3 Nei - ther life nor death shall ev - er from the Lord his chil - dren sev - er;  
4 Though he giv - eth or he tak - eth, God his chil - dren ne'er for - sak - eth;



*stjär - nan ej på him - la - fäs - tet, få - geln ej i kän - da näs - tet.*  
nest - ling bird nor star in heav - en such a ref - uge e'er was giv - en.  
From all e - vil things he spares them, in his might - y arms he bears them.  
un - to them his grace he show - eth, and their sor - rows all he know - eth.  
his the lov - ing pur - pose sole - ly to pre - serve them pure and ho - ly.

Text: Carolina Sandell Berg, 1832–1903; tr. Ernst W. Olson, 1870–1958

Music: TRYGGARE KAN INGEN VARA, Swedish folk tune

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[conversation]