

# **COLUMBARIUM OF ST. STEPHEN UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

## **Policy and Operating Rules**

### **PREFACE**

In 2001, the Administrative Board of St. Stephen United Methodist Church commissioned a committee to study the possible construction of a Columbarium on church grounds. After intensive study and consultation with many members, the committee recommended to the Administrative board of the Church that a Columbarium be constructed.

The Columbarium stands as a reminder to us that those who went before us are not forgotten and have found peace and rest with God. It is the hope of the Administrative Board that this valued addition to our Church grounds will inspire reverence for this life and hope for the life to come. The Columbarium of St. Stephen United Methodist Church is created on the premises of the church for the inurnment of the cremated remains of eligible deceased persons. It will include Memorial Plaques dedicated to the memory of eligible persons whose remains are buried or scattered elsewhere.

This Policy and Operating Rules are established to assure that the procedures for inurnment and memorializing are carried out in an orderly and reverent manner, and to describe and explain the services provided by the church in connection with these activities.

**DESCRIPTION:** The Columbarium shall consist of niches, uniform in size and style, for the inurnment of the ashes of cremated human beings. Each niche shall be covered with a granite plate, uniform in size, which shall be engraved with the name(s) and dates of birth and death of the deceased. The Wall of the Columbarium Garden will also contain bronze plaques of uniform size to memorialize other deceased persons. There will be a scattering garden for those who may have loved ones cremated but do not want to purchase a niche. A bronze plaque will be included in the scattering garden fees.

**ELIGIBILITY:** The Columbarium shall be restricted to the inurnment or scattering of member(s) of St. Stephen United Methodist Church, at the time of purchase, and the (B) spouses of members, (c) children or step-children of members, (d) parents or step-parents of members, (e) current or past ministers and lay employees of St. Stephen, and (f) other persons upon written request and approved by the committee. Niches and plaques shall also be restricted to those persons listed above.

**PURCHASE OF NICHES AND PLAQUES:** Only members of this church at the time of purchase may purchase niches or scatter ashes within the Columbarium and/or their immediate families as outlined above. The Certificate of Purchase allows a purchaser to select a niche assigned on a first come-first served basis. Once assigned the location will not be changed so long as the columbarium agreement has not been terminated. The right to use a niche may only

be sold or transferred upon written request from the purchaser to the committee. Eligibility shall remain constant as stated above. Designation of the person to be inured may be changed by a request in writing from the purchaser at any time prior to death. A niche may be surrendered by the purchaser, upon written notification, back to the church for a full refund of the original purchase price, less an administrative fee of \$200.00. The legal title to all niches and plaques shall at all times remain with the church. The purchaser involves no ownership in the Columbarium and its property.

Each Columbarium niche will be assigned a specific number. Specific niches for the inurnment of cremated remains may be purchased by eligible persons upon payment of designated fees and execution of required documents. A schedule of current required fees is attached as Exhibit A to these rules. The fees may change in the future as recommended by the Columbarium Committee and upon approval by the Administrative Board.

**CANCELLATION:** The rights granted under the Certificate of Purchase shall lapse upon the happening of one or more of the following events:

A. Cessation of operation of the Columbarium (in which event the purchase price shall be refunded by the Church, exclusive of interest, costs or other penalty) to the owner of the Certificate. Cessation may occur should the congregation ever relocate its campus or cease to exist as a congregation.

B. Inurnment or interment of the owner of the Certificate elsewhere.

**MANAGEMENT:** The Church Administrator shall be the custodian of all books and records of the Columbarium, including all Certificates of Purchase of Columbarium niches. Such records shall include, but shall not be limited to, the name(s) of the deceased in each inurnment, the deceased's dates of birth and death, and the deceased's next of kin or legal representative shall be included therein. The church shall also maintain a list of the persons who have reserved niches, together with the names of the next of kin or legal representatives of such persons as chart or diagram designating by number each niche. The Church Administrator shall keep a record of all income and expenses associated with the construction and maintenance of the Columbarium, which books and records shall be open and available for inspection by members of St. Stephen and eligible persons upon reasonable notice.

The church will receive all payments and disburse all expenditures in a separate account to be known as "The Columbarium Fund" apart from and entirely separate from the general church budget. Appropriate annual audits and reviews will be performed in accordance with the church's regular accounting procedures. Any surpluses generated after all expenditures have been satisfied will remain in the fund.

The church will maintain a record of each inurnment in the Columbarium and placement of memorial plaques with inscription of names.

Users of the Columbarium Garden agree that St. Stephen UMC shall not be held legally responsible for any damage caused to the Columbarium Garden or its contents by vandalism, weather, or acts of God.

**ADDRESSES:** It shall be the responsibility of the purchaser to keep the church advised at all times of the current mailing addresses of themselves, the person for whom the niche is purchased, and of the next of kin of the designee. The purchaser will normally be the individual that the church would contact for any reason.

## **INURNMENT:**

**Memorial Services** for the inurnment of cremated remains will be designated by the senior pastor in consultation with the family of the deceased. Only an ordained minister of St. Stephen United Methodist Church may conduct the inurnment ceremony unless permission is granted by the Senior Pastor for another ordained minister to conduct the service.

**Urns:** The urns containing the cremated remains of the persons to be inured in the Columbarium shall be provided by the deceased's family or legal representative, and the provided shall be responsible for the cost of each urn. A niche may contain one or two urns of deceased persons. The interior dimensions of each niche shall be approximately (11" high x 11" wide x 18" long).

**Scattering of Ashes:** Ashes of cremated remains may be only placed in the designated areas for scattering. A memorial plaque must be purchased. All other policies and rules shall apply.

**Costs:** Any fee paid to the church pursuant to these operating rules does not cover the cost of cremation. The church will not offer cremation services. No expenses other than those prescribed herein are covered by the prescribed fees.

**Niche Covers:** Engraving of Niche Covers will be of predetermined uniform size and style. The church will provide for such engraving as a part of the fee prescribed in Exhibit A. Each Niche Cover will be inscribed only with the name(s) and dates of birth and death of the deceased. Niches containing the remains of two persons will be inscribed with such information for both persons. No other inscriptions will be permitted. No flowers, flags, decorations or other memorabilia will be permitted inside the Columbarium.

A niche may be opened and the contents removed only for good cause as determined by Columbarium committee. Any expenses will be borne by those requesting such action. All openings and removals shall be fully documented with the church being released from any and all further responsibility. Removal terminates the right to further or future use.

**SUPERVISION:** A permanent committee of the church shall supervise the use, management and maintenance of the Columbarium. Membership shall consist of 6 members elected by the Charge Conference, each serving a staggered three-year term plus the chairman of the Trustees. The senior pastor and the church administrator shall serve as ex-officio members without vote. The chairman of the Columbarium Committee shall be elected by members of the committee. The committee will function under the general supervision of the Trustees and will report to them annually or more often as deemed necessary by the Trustees.

The current Columbarium Committee shall serve until the completion of the initial construction. Upon satisfactory completion of initial construction, the permanent committee shall be selected and take office.

The Columbarium Committee will have the authority to amend, change or modify these operating rules, which shall govern all activities and services relating to the Columbarium, subject to the approval of the Trustees and the Administrative Board.

#### **DEFINITIONS:**

**Cremation:** The process of reducing the body to ashes through the application of intense heat.

**Cremains:** The human ashes that remain after cremation, and is a shortened term for cremated remains.

**Columbarium:** A construction made for storage of the cremains of a deceased person. It is located on the church grounds and includes niches in a brick wall and a garden area.

**Niche:** The hollow opening in the Columbarium wall designed to hold human cremains, which is covered by a removable square of granite or stone.

**Inurnment:** The process of opening a Columbarium niche, placing the cremains of the purchaser in the niche, and resealing it.

**Urn:** The container purchased from the Cremation Service Company that holds the human cremains. The niches are designed to contain at least two standard issue urns.

**Scattering Garden:** A garden in the Columbarium designed for the scattering of ashes of a deceased person, rather than being inurned in the niche. A brass plaque on the wall will memorialize the person, rather than having the niche granite cover engraved.

ST. STEPHEN UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
COLUMBARIUM GARDEN

#### FEE SCHEDULE

##### Description

Right to exclusive use of Niches for the cremains of Two persons	\$2,000
One person	\$1,700
Memorial Plaques	\$ 750
Changing single niche to double	\$ 300
Scattering of Ashes (Plaque included)	\$ 750

**ST. STEPHEN UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
COLUMBARIUM  
APPLICATION FOR PURCHASE OF NICHE**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

FULL NAME: (Last) \_\_\_\_\_ (First) \_\_\_\_\_ (Middle) \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF BIRTH: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to purchase:

\_\_\_\_\_ Single niche  
(Number)

\_\_\_\_\_ Double niche  
(Number)

(If applicable): I wish to be inurned in a single/double (circle one) Niche with:  
\_\_\_\_\_, whose date of birth is \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_.

The undersigned applicant acknowledges receipt of a copy of the rules and Regulations established by the Administrative board of St. Stephen United Methodist Church, and agrees that acceptance of this application and issuance of a certificate of Purchase shall be subject to those Rules and Regulations and any subsequent amendments thereto.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Applicant (Seal)

Payment Received: \$\_\_\_\_\_ by Check  
No. \_\_\_\_\_ on  
\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_

Approval by:  
Church Administrator: \_\_\_\_\_ (date) \_\_\_\_\_

Chair of Columbarium Committee: \_\_\_\_\_ (date) \_\_\_\_\_

Niche Number(s) Assigned: \_\_\_\_\_

Certificate of Purchase Issued: \_\_\_\_\_ (date)

### Living Family

Please list several people who are living relatives of the one(s) who intend to use the niche or memorialization plaque.

Name	Relationship*
_____	_____
_____	_____

Address

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Telephone Number

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Name

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Relationship\*

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Address

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Telephone Number

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Name

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Relationship\*

Address

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Telephone Number

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Name

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Relationship\*

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Address

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Telephone Number

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*\*Father, Mother, Husband, Wife, and Children*