



Larchmont United Methodist Church

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Columbarium Policy and Procedures

Approved by the Worship Committee, October 24, 2016

Approved by the Administrative Council November 28, 2016

Overview:

The columbarium was conceived in the tradition of an old-fashioned churchyard as an extension of Larchmont United Methodist Church's (Larchmont UMC) end-of-life ministry. The columbarium is intended to provide opportunities for our members to remember their loved ones in the Christian tradition, near their church home. The columbarium is available for visits at any time, but visitors are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with customary good decorum as normally observed in a church.

A columbarium holds ashes (the cremated remains of a human body) referred to as cremains. The columbarium is comprised of individual compartments - niches - in which urns are placed. Each niche can hold one or two urns and has an interior closure panel to ensure security. The niche is then capped by a stone front containing the names, birth and death dates of the cremains of the persons interred within. A maximum of two people or urns may be interred in a niche.

The columbarium niches are available for current or former Larchmont UMC members and their immediate families. Current or former pastors of Larchmont UMC and their immediate families may also purchase niches. Immediate family includes spouses, partners, parents, step-parents, children, step-children and their spouses, grandchildren, and step-grandchildren. Other persons may be interred in the columbarium if authorized by Larchmont UMC Board of Trustees through its Columbarium Committee.

The columbarium is owned by Larchmont UMC, and is administered by the Columbarium Committee subject to policies and procedures adopted by the Larchmont UMC Administrative Council (Administrative Council). Policies/procedures may be amended if deemed necessary by the church. The Columbarium Committee keeps all files and records for the columbarium, including the identity and the location of cremains interred or removed. The purchaser has an obligation to update the church regarding current contact information. Following an interment, the church requests that the next of kin provide an obituary about an interred person for the onsite records.

Larchmont UMC requires a written and signed agreement between the niche purchaser and the church at the time of purchase (see attached Columbarium Agreement). This agreement gives the purchaser the right to use a niche in the columbarium for the interment of ashes. It's important to note that the interment agreement is only a license to use the niche. No real property right or interest is created.

Interment:

Interment refers to placing of ashes, in an urn, into a niche, with a short service conducted by a Methodist pastor. This may occur at the time of a memorial service in the church, or at a different time, as determined by the pastor and family. The family will independently arrange for cremation with the funeral home.

If cremation has been selected and a columbarium purchased, the funeral home will deliver the cremains in an urn to the family or to the church, as the family directs. If delivered to the church, the urn will be retained in a safe place until the time of interment.

The choice of an urn is a decision between the family and the funeral home, except that wooden urns are not recommended in this exterior setting because of the risk of deterioration. Bear in mind that the selected urn must fit within the niche opening. The interior dimensions are just slightly under 12 inches by 12 inches by 12 inches, so an urn at 11 inches or smaller will fit. If the plan is for two interments in a niche, then of the sizes of both urns must be considered. If in doubt, consult the funeral home about urn options.

For security reasons, no valuables shall be placed in the urn or niche. The niche may be used only for the interment of ashes in an urn.

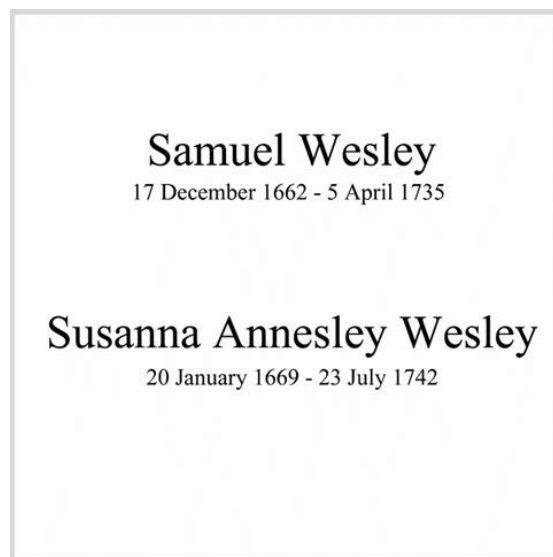
Cremains previously in the possession of the niche purchaser may be interred in the columbarium after 1) completion of an interment agreement and 2) arrangements are finalized for a memorial service. The cremains from two people may be co-mingled in a single urn; however this is coordinated through the funeral home. Additionally, a pet's ashes may be mixed with human cremains if arranged through a funeral home. Larchmont UMC does not permit a separate inscription for the pet.

If the next of kin or other legally-appointed individual wishes to remove the cremains from the niche permanently, they may do so. This will release the niche back to the church; however, there will not be any reimbursement for purchase costs in this case.

Niches:

The front of the niche that holds the engraving is 12 inches by 12 inches. Flowers may be placed at the base of the columbarium at any time, but will be removed as they fade, usually about three days.

For inscriptions on the niches, the stone front is removed and sent to a special engraver, which may take several weeks. In the meantime, a temporary front is placed on the niche. The engraving on all faceplates will be done in a standard font and size style specified by the Columbarium Committee (see example below). The inscription will record the name and life dates of the person or persons interred in a niche. No other inscriptions — such as fraternal associations — are permitted. If desired, niches may be inscribed prior to death and upon interment, the faceplate will be removed to add date inscriptions.



The church has placed the columbarium in as secure a location as possible on the exterior church grounds. In the event of damage, the church will implement repairs, but no liability is assumed for the preservation of ashes in the event of losses not under control of the church.

In the event that the footprint of the church is changed, the columbarium may be relocated at the church's expense. Niche-holders will be notified of the impending move. If Larchmont UMC ceases to operate, relocation will be subject to the rules of the United Methodist Church. In that event, the church will make reasonable efforts to notify surviving heirs to determine their wishes.

Purchasing a niche:

The purchase price, set by the Administrative Council and subject to periodic change, can be found on the price list available in the church office. The cost is per niche, not persons interred. Pricing for the columbarium includes niche, engravings, choice of niche location, an interment ceremony by a church pastor, opening and closing of the interment space, record-keeping, and maintenance in perpetuity. It does not include the cost of cremation or other funeral arrangements. A separate memorial service, honoraria for minister, musicians, etc. are not part of the interment and subject to the church's policies and fees.

Remains can be interred after all fees have been paid in full. Payment can be made in full at the time of purchase or in up to three equal annual installments.

There is no limit to the number of niches purchased. For example families may opt to purchase a group of adjacent niches, with two urns per niche. At the time of purchase, a map of the columbarium will be provided for the purpose of selecting a niche location based on availability. If no preference is expressed, the Columbarium Committee will choose the niche location.

As mentioned earlier in this document, Larchmont UMC requires a written and signed agreement between the niche purchaser and the church as part of the purchase policy. The agreement stipulates who will be interred in a particular niche. The list of designated persons in a niche may be changed by a written and signed amendment to the interment agreement. The newly-designated persons are subject to the same eligibility rules for columbarium interment.

If the niche is not used (there has been no interment) and the niche owner decides the niche is no longer needed, the Columbarium Committee may, at its sole discretion, repurchase the niche. If so, the church will pay 70 percent of the sum paid at the time of purchase. The remaining 30 percent of the original payment shall be retained by the church for its administrative cost. The church will not pay accrued interest.

If a purchased niche is unused within twenty-four (24) months after the death of the person for whom the niche is reserved, the church may, at its sole discretion, after attempting to contact the next of kin, release the niche to other purchasers.

The sale, transfer or assignment of the niche without the prior written consent of the Columbarium Committee is not permitted. The new individual purchasing the interest is subject to the same eligibility rules for columbarium interment.

Additional information:

Church members are encouraged to make arrangements as a part of end-of-life planning in conjunction with pastoral consultation. To arrange for purchase of a niche, contact the church office at (757) 489-8168.

Additionally, a columbarium folder available in the church office includes detailed information on columbarium procedures, pricing, etc.

**Agreement for Reservation of Niche Use
in the Columbarium of Larchmont United Methodist Church
(Agreement Revision November 2016)
Worship Committee**

I acknowledge that I have received and reviewed the Policies and Procedures for the columbarium at Larchmont UMC ("the Church") and I agree to abide by its guidelines. I have also received and reviewed the costs in place as of the date of this Agreement.

I understand that the charge includes the use of the niche, the engraving of the faceplate with one or two names, and the opening and closing of the niche. I also understand that purchase does not include cremation expenses, urns, or other funeral home costs, and does not include Church expenses such as ministerial or musician honoraria.

I accept that use of the niche will not occur prior to completion of payment in full. Purchase in advance of need may be completed over a three-year schedule, with 1/3 payment due on signing of this Agreement, and at least equal payments due on each anniversary of the Agreement. If purchased at time of need, inurnment will not be permitted until payment is completed.

I agree that in purchasing the use of a columbarium niche, I do not acquire any title or right of ownership, and any substitution of the person(s) designated on this document is subject to the Policies and Procedures rules. Any substitution must be annexed in writing to this document and acknowledged and approved by the Church Trustees.

I accept that any refunds for return of an unused niche or for partial payment to the Church by the purchaser(s) or the heirs is solely at the discretion of the Church Trustees. If so, the Church will rebate 70% of the sum paid, retaining 30% for administrative costs. The Church will not pay accrued interest.

I also accept that if the purchasers or heirs do not use the niche within 24 months of the death of the person(s) designated in the agreement, then the Church may, at its sole discretion, after attempting to contact the next of kin on file, release the niche without refund. If the heirs wish to remove all ashes from a niche, the niche is released to the Church and under no circumstances will fees be refunded for a niche that has been utilized.

I agree to keep the Church office updated with valid contact information for the person(s) designated in this Agreement as well as next of kin (or other appropriate parties).

I understand that the Church is not liable and does not assume liability for destruction of or damage to the columbarium and its contents. The Church will endeavor to exercise reasonable care in maintaining the columbarium for as long as the Church exists as a place of worship in the United Methodist denomination or its successors. Such care may include relocation of the columbarium if deemed necessary by the Church.

I acknowledge that faceplate engraving is done in a standard fashion as noted in the Policies and Procedures and that not more than two names may be engraved on a faceplate. I understand that inurnment of pet ashes or other items along with the ashes of the purchaser(s) can be arranged with the selected funeral home but pet names will not be engraved on faceplates.

I understand that urns are not included in this purchase and I understand that urns must be selected that will fit within the niche space, which is slightly under 12" x 12" x 12", and if two urns will be placed that both must fit in this space. I also agree that wooden urns will not be used because of the risk of deterioration.

I will select an available niche at the time of signing this Agreement. If no decision is made, the Church Trustees will select an available niche at the time of need.

I understand that the Policies and Procedures for the columbarium may be changed by the Church but that costs for purchase will be defined by this agreement. This Agreement, along with the Policies and Procedures, constitutes the entire agreement between the parties involved and will be governed by the laws and regulations of the Commonwealth of Virginia. In the event of a conflict between provisions of the Policies and Procedures and this Agreement, this Agreement shall govern. All parties to the Agreement submit to the jurisdiction of the courts located in Norfolk, Virginia.

Charge in effect as of this Agreement date:	Initial payment received (minimum 1/3):
	Second due date (if any):
Selected niche:	Third due date (if any):
Name #1 (first, middle, last):	
Birth date:	Death date:
Name #2 (first, middle, last):	
Birth date:	Death date:
Current address/phone/email (alternate if any):	Next of kin contact info:
	Alternative contact info:
Purchasers:	On behalf of Larchmont UMC:
Signed this date:	Signed this date:
Notations on Completion of Payment:	