

UNITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH CEMETERY POLICY
Implemented by the Stewardship Ministry Team under the supervision of the
Session

Cemetery plots and Columbarium niches are considered a benefit of church members and if requested, are provided to all persons on the active church roll.

Active Members

1. Active members are those members who regularly attend and/or contribute.
2. **There is no fee.** However, the opening and closing of any grave or niche, the urns, the headstones and markers, and inscriptions will be the responsibility and expense of the family.

Non-Members

1. The fee is **\$2,000 per person** (maintenance fee).
2. Non-members may request a plot or niche when available at the discretion of the Session.
3. The opening and closing of any grave or niche, the urns, the headstones and markers, and inscriptions will be the responsibility and expense of the family.
4. All monies for plots and niches will be deposited in the Cemetery Fund to be used for the maintenance of the cemetery.

Reserving and Selecting a Space

1. A person interested in reserving a niche or plot shall fill out a Cemetery Reservation Application and return it to the Clerk of Session.
2. After approval by the Session to be inurned in the Columbarium or buried, a person will meet with a member of the Stewardship Ministry Team to be assigned a space.
3. For a non-member, the space is not reserved until the fee has been paid and the space has been assigned by the Stewardship Ministry Team.
4. Persons who have a space in the Cemetery must notify Unity Presbyterian Church of changes of address and phone number.

Committal Service

Only the Pastor of Unity Presbyterian Church or an ordained minister invited by the Pastor of Unity Presbyterian Church may officiate at a committal service in the Cemetery.

Cancellation of a Space

- 1. A person who has reserved a space may cancel the reservation by providing written notice of cancellation to Unity Presbyterian Church, with no compensation due to the designated person's estate or family.**
- 2. If a member with a reserved space moves their church membership or becomes inactive, the Stewardship Ministry Team shall send a letter to them for response whether to forfeit their cemetery space or desire to retain for a fee. The response shall be received in writing within 30 days of receipt of the letter. If no response, the cemetery space will be returned for future use.**
- 3. If the remains of the person designated on the Cemetery Reservation Application have not been inurned or buried within five years after the person's death, the reservation will be cancelled unless Unity Presbyterian Church is notified of the reason, with no compensation due to the designated person's estate or family.**

CEMETERY PROCEDURES

Guidelines for Burial

- 1. A member of the Stewardship Ministry Team shall be consulted and will mark the plot before it is opened.**
- 2. Vaults will be required in accordance with North Carolina law.**
- 3. Mistakes made by the funeral home will be corrected at their expense.**
- 4. Any unusual monuments or inscriptions shall be approved by the Session.**
- 5. Every headstone or family marker placed in the cemetery shall have a concrete border of 6 inches around it set flush with the ground and a minimum of 4 inches concrete footing beneath it. All footstones, plot markers and other stationary objects, with the exception of headstones, are to be placed flush with the ground. No curbing is to be installed. All graves are to be level with the ground for ease of mowing.**
- 6. A permanent marker (tombstone, marble or granite) whose base does not exceed 16 inches in width, with the length determined by the size of the burial plot, must be erected on a grave within a period of 6 months after burial. It must contain, but not be limited to, the following information:
 Full name of deceased
 Date of birth
 Date of death**
- 7. If a central family name headstone is used bearing only the last name, footstones must be placed at the foot of the grave containing the above information. If all of the above information appears on the headstone, footstones may also be used.**
- 8. Deteriorated flowers shall be removed by the family in a timely manner.**
- 9. The family of the deceased shall keep markers repaired and up to date.**
- 10. To assist in grounds keeping, no shrubs, trees, etc. may be planted in the cemetery.**
- 11. It is understood when reserving a plot that it does not constitute a sale of property rights, but is merely the provision of a space for burial in accordance with the policies existing at the time of burial. This plot is not transferrable without Session approval.**
- 12. Unity Presbyterian Church will provide reasonable ongoing care for the cemetery burial grounds. However, Unity and all persons acting on Unity's behalf will not be liable for any loss or damage to the headstones and family markers.**

COLUMBARIUM PROCEDURES

Guidelines for Niches

- 1. The urn or container used for inurnment in the Columbarium has to be provided by the family. Two urns can be placed in each niche. The combined size of the urns can't exceed 11 ³/₄ x 11 ³/₄ inches.**
- 2. The inscription on the stone, which seals the niche, shall be limited to the name of the deceased and the date of birth and date of death. All arrangements and costs for the engraving will be the family's responsibility.**
- 3. The inscription needs to be engraved within a period of 3 months.**
- 4. Optional: If the deceased is a U.S. Military Veteran, a small Medallion (2"W x 1 ¹/₂ "H x 1/3"D) – provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs – will be allowed on the stone which seals the niche. It will be the responsibility of the family to request, acquire, and affix the medallion to the stone.**
- 5. The Columbarium Memorial Garden will be landscaped and maintained by Unity Presbyterian Church. No flowers, flags, signs, or other decorations will be permitted at or near the Columbarium after the inurnment ceremony.**
- 6. Cremated remains may be temporarily removed by Unity Presbyterian Church while making repairs or improvements to the Columbarium. Otherwise, remains may only be removed with the written consent of both Unity Presbyterian Church and an authorized member of the deceased's family or when required by law.**
- 7. If the remains of the person designated on the Cemetery Reservation Application are inurned in the niche and subsequently removed by a member of the deceased's family or to comply with the law, the niche reservation will be cancelled, with no compensation due to the designated person's estate or family.**
- 8. Unity Presbyterian Church owns the Columbarium and all niches. Niche reservation owners acquire no property rights in the Columbarium, any of its niches, or any of Unity Presbyterian Church's property. The reservation confers only the right to inurn the cremated remains of the designated person in the identified niche pursuant to Unity Presbyterian Church's applicable policies and procedures, as amended by the church from time to time. This niche is not transferrable without Session approval.**

- 9. Unity Presbyterian Church will provide reasonable ongoing care for the Columbarium. However, Unity Presbyterian Church and all persons acting on Unity's behalf will not be liable for any loss or damage to the Columbarium, niches, urns, or cremated remains inurned in the Columbarium. Unity may purchase insurance for its own benefit, but the church is not obligated to purchase insurance for the benefit of niche reservation owners, designated persons to be inurned, or their estates or families. If there is a discrepancy between a reservation form and the church's records, Unity Presbyterian Church's records control.**

Amendment or Waive of Columbarium Policies and Procedures

Unity Presbyterian Church's Session may, at any time, amend or waive any of its Cemetery policies and procedures. Waiver of any policy or procedure does not constitute a continuing waiver of that policy or procedure with respect to any situation arising thereafter.

Approved November 1, 2015 by Unity Presbyterian Church Session

Updated March 8, 2020, by Unity Presbyterian Church Session