



Columbarium FAQ

Basic Information

Q. Why is The Lutheran Church of The Good Shepherd building a Columbarium Garden and Memorial Wall?

A. As people of faith, the promise of the Resurrection brings comfort at the time of death. Just as each individual constructs their life in a unique way; our attitudes towards death are also unique. If cremation is a consideration for you, Good Shepherd hopes the Columbarium Garden and Memorial Wall will also provide comfort as a final resting place for people of faith.

Q. What are the Columbarium Garden and the Memorial Wall?

A. The Columbarium consists of a Columbarium and Meditation Garden. The Garden provides a quiet courtyard for prayer, reflection, and meditation. The Columbarium is a dedicated structure within the garden area with niches for the interment of cremated human remains. The front of each niche will be a granite tile with an inscription plaque. The Memorial Wall contains plaques to memorialize those who are interred elsewhere.

Q. How large will the Columbarium be?

A. The Columbarium will initially have 50 niches and the garden area will have room for future expansion.

Q. Who is eligible for interment in the Columbarium?

A. Current and former members of The Lutheran Church of The Good Shepherd and their families may be interred in the Columbarium, or memorialized on the Memorial Wall. Others may be interred upon request and approval by the Columbarium Committee and the Presiding Pastor.

Q. May niches/urns and Memorial plaques be purchased in advance of need?

A. Yes, but advanced purchase is not required. Having conversations with your loved ones (at any age) about your wishes spares them from making difficult decisions under trying circumstances and purchasing niches/urns and Memorial plaques in advance reserves space at the Columbarium while spaces are available.

Q. May we memorialize someone who is interred elsewhere?

A. Yes, the Memorial Wall can be used to memorialize someone interred/buried elsewhere.

Getting Started

Q. How do I get started?

A. If you would like to consult with a member of the Columbarium Committee regarding the reservation process or interment process, please contact the Church office to make an appointment.

Q. Where can I find more information about the Columbarium?

A. Contact the Church office for a copy of The Lutheran Church of The Good Shepherd Columbarium and Memorial Wall *Policies and Regulations*. You can also find information on Good Shepherd's website at <http://gsolympia.org/columbarium>

Q. How do I purchase a niche or plaque?

A. Submit a completed reservation form for a Columbarium niche and/or Memorial Wall plaque to the Church office. Forms are available in the church office or on the website.

Q. How much does a Columbarium niche/urn and Memorial Wall plaque cost?

A. The fee schedule is available from the Church office or on the church website.

Q. How are fees used?

A. Fees will be used for the construction, care, maintenance and any future costs associated with the Columbarium. The Church will establish a fund dedicated to the construction of the Columbarium and Memorial Wall, supplies, inscriptions, maintenance, and any further development of the Columbarium. All fees received will be directed to this fund.

Q. What is provided with a purchase of a niche?

A. A Columbarium niche system consists of: A uniform single or double Urn that will be used for permanently storing cremated remains, and a secure, weatherproof, granite tile (Niche Front) to seal the niche and an inscription on the Niche Front consisting of the decedent's name, date of birth, and date of death.

The Interment Process

Q. What is the necessary preparation for cremated remains to be interred in the Columbarium?

A. Typically, an authorized funeral director will handle the cremation and any permits for interment that Federal, State, or Local laws require. The Columbarium Committee will provide an urn in which the authorized funeral director may place the cremated remains.

Q. Can the remains of more than one person be combined in an urn?

A. A companion double urn can be provided at additional cost initially, or at a later date.

Q. How are arrangements made to inter cremated remains?

A. The Church will arrange for the opening and closing of the Niche at the time of interment.

Q. How will funeral, memorial, or interment services be handled by the church? Who may officiate?

A. If a columbarium niche has been purchased in advance, the family will make arrangements for the service through the Good Shepherd Pastor and the church office who will work directly with the Columbarium Committee. If a niche has not been purchased in advance the family will need to work with the Columbarium Committee to obtain a niche and separately with the Pastor with regard to funeral, memorial, or interment services. Other clergy may perform a service of committal upon approval by the aforementioned individuals.

Q. How will names appear on the Memorial wall?

A. The inscription on all niche fronts and other granite plaques will be a uniform size and style.

Q. Can I customize what is written on the Memorial wall plaque or niche nameplate?

A. No. The inscription shall consist only of the name of the Decedent, date of birth and date of death.

Q. If I am an organ donor, how is the interment handled?

A. Typically an authorized funeral director will arrange for cremation after the donation of organs. Consult a licensed funeral director for more information.

Making Changes

Q. What if I purchase a niche/urn or plaque but later change my mind?

A. Upon written application to the Columbarium Committee, one may request to transfer or assign the interment rights to an eligible transferee. If approved by the Columbarium Committee, the transferee will receive updated documentation reflecting the transfer.

Q. May cremated remains be removed once interred in the Columbarium?

A. Cremated remains and the associated niche front may be removed upon written consent of the Columbarium Committee. There will be a set fee for opening and closing the niche.

Visiting The Lutheran Church of The Good Shepherd Columbarium

Q. Are there any restrictions regarding visiting the Columbarium?

A. There are no restricted hours for visitation. The Columbarium is part of the Church and all visitors should conduct themselves in accordance with customary respectful decorum.

Q. What kind of decorations or memorials are allowed?

A. In order to maintain consistency, decorations, flowers, wreaths, vases, and other ornaments are not allowed, with the exception of temporary placement during an interment/committal service.

Other Information

Q. Do state laws regulate interment of cremated remains in the Columbarium?

A. Yes. Interment, disinterment, and removal will comply with all Federal, State, and Local laws, and Regulations.

Q. Who oversees the Columbarium?

A. The Columbarium Committee is composed of at least 3 voting members of the congregation. The Congregation Council is responsible for oversight of the Columbarium Committee, with one Congregation Council member assigned to oversee the Columbarium Committee.

Q. Who is responsible to maintain the Columbarium?

A. Good Shepherd, through the Columbarium Committee, will provide for continuing care and maintenance of the Columbarium. With permanent records of each *Columbarium Niche Reservation and Record Form; Memorial Wall Plaque Reservation and Record Form; Certificate of Columbarium Interment Rights; Certificate of Memorial Wall Rights; Agreement Regarding Interment Rights in The Columbarium; and Agreement Regarding Memorial Wall Rights*, along with any other document or record deemed relevant by the Columbarium Committee or Congregation Council maintained by the Columbarium Committee and kept on file in the church office.

Getting Help

Q. Where can I find more information about the Columbarium?

A. Refer to Good Shepherd's website or contact the Church office for a copy of The Lutheran Church of The Good Shepherd Columbarium *Policies and Regulations* document. You can also request a meeting with a member of the Columbarium Committee.

Q. Where can I find more information about cremation in general?

A. The Cremation Society of Washington website at <http://www.cremation-society.com>; or US Funerals.com at <http://www.us-funerals.com/funeral-articles/funerals-and-cremations>.