

FAQs: Columbarium: Staying connected with loved ones

What is a Columbarium?

Columbaria is the plural for Columbarium. A Columbarium is a vault with niches for urns containing cremated remains, or cremains. It is derived from the Latin word columba (dove), the symbol of God's Spirit and the Christian symbol of peace. It means "dovecote," a resting place for the dove. The dove, of course, is a symbol of God's spirit and peace.

What is the view of the United Methodist Church on cremation?

The process of cremation is not in conflict with the beliefs or doctrines of the Church and is supported when it is the choice of the deceased or family.

As theological understandings, the nature of our communities, and environmental concerns have evolved, cremation has found increasing acceptance as a manner of treating the body at death with appropriate reverence for the life that it contained.

Why is having a Columbaria a good thing?

Historically, the church has traditionally been the final resting place of the deceased members of the Christian community. It is considered a blessing for a Christian to dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Many churches, especially rural ones are surrounded by graveyards and headstones. Today, as cremation is used more frequently, columbaria are more and more present in churches, especially larger, urban churches.

What are the benefits for St. Andrew and the surrounding community?

A niche in a columbarium is modest in cost while creating a consoling link between life and death, and is ecologically sound. The quiet setting of the Memorial Walkway invites contemplation. It is a peaceful place for families and friends to gather in prayer, love, and remembrance.

To whom are the columbaria available?

The columbaria is available for human cremains only. It is available to the people of St. Andrew and to the community-at-large.

Can niches be purchased on a pre-need as well as on an as needed basis?

Arrangements for the purchase of a Columbaria niche can be made by an individual before death, or by the family of the deceased following the death.

How do I make arrangements?

Niches will be sold as soon as possible. We do not yet have a beginning date. Those purchasing a niche will have the opportunity to select their niche from those remaining at the

time of purchase.

What about identification? Who takes care of the engraving?

All niches have a plate on the front. Engraving on the plaques will use a uniform font and will include the name of the deceased, date of birth, and date of death. The cost of the engraving, as well as the opening and closing of the niche, will be included in the contract for purchase of interment rights.

Will there be a method to record the life of the deceased?

Yes. There will be a Memorial Book in which the family may record significant aspects of the life of the deceased.

What about maintenance?

SAUMC will pay for the cost of maintenance of the Columbaria from the reserve fund. Perpetual care of the Columbaria is assured.

What are visitation times?

The Memorial Walkway will be available at all times unless a worship service is in progress at the site.

May I place flowers or another remembrance at the Columbaria?

Yes. Floral arrangements may be placed along the Memorial Walkway. Be aware that such arrangements and other items will be cleared from the site weekly.

I've already made burial plans, but like the columbarium idea. Is there anything I can do?

We are informed that those who hold burial plots, etc. elsewhere may be able to sell them by advertising them. Those who have pre-paid for funeral services should check their contracts, as you may be able to recover most of what you have paid.

If my plans change, can I re-sell my niche?

If your plans change, you may sell your niche back to SAUMC for the original purchase price, providing the plaque has not been engraved. (If it has, there will be only the cost for an unengraved plaque.)