

# CENTRAL LUTHERAN CHURCH COLUMBARIUM

## III. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### I. OVERVIEW

#### A. *What is the Columbarium?*

The Columbarium was conceived as an extension of Central's end of life ministry program, in the tradition of a church cemetery. It consists of the constructed area of four walls comprised of individual Niches in which Urns of cremated remains are placed. A Memorial Wall is also included. The Columbarium is owned by the Church, and is operated and maintained subject to the Central Lutheran Church Columbarium Rules and Procedures, adopted by the Congregation Council of Central Lutheran Church.

#### B. *What is its purpose?*

The Columbarium is intended to provide opportunities for Central members to inter or remember their loved ones in the Christian tradition, within their church home. The Columbarium is a reminder of preceding generations, and a sacred place for contemplation on the meaning of faith and eternal life.

#### C. *Who maintains records and operates the Columbarium?*

The congregation maintains all files and records for the Columbarium, including the identity and the location of ashes interred in or removed from the Columbarium. The congregation maintains the Columbarium, and supervises all service providers.

The Parish/Business Administrator is responsible for overall administration of the Columbarium facility.

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CENTRAL LUTHERAN CHURCH  
COLUMBARIUM

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II. TERMS

A. *What are ashes?*

The cremated remains of a human body.

B. *What is the Columbarium?*

The constructed facility within the Church, comprised of individual niches or compartments in which urns are placed. Each columbarium niche can contain two urns. Each niche is enclosed by a stone front containing the names and birth and death dates of the ashes of the persons interred within.

C. *What is the Memorial Wall?*

A wall in the Columbarium designed for the purpose of memorializing loved ones. The people listed on the Memorial Wall may be either living or interred elsewhere.

D. *Who may be interred in the Columbarium?*

Members or former members, pastors and staff of the congregation, their current or prior spouses or partners, their children (natural, adopted) and step-children, their parents, and ordained Lutheran pastors and rostered leaders and their current or prior spouses or partners. Other persons may be interred in the Columbarium only if authorized by the congregation.

E. *What is an inscription?*

An inscription is the engraving in stone of a person's name.

F. *What is the inscription process?*

For the niches, the front panel is removed and sent to a special engraver, which takes three to four days. In the meantime, a temporary front is placed on the niches. Each niche also has an interior closure panel to ensure security. Process for the Memorial Wall will be determined at time of construction.

G. *What is interment?*

This term refers to placing of ashes, in an urn, into a niche, with a short service conducted by a Central pastor.

H. *What is interment agreement?*

The agreement between yourself and the congregation by which you acquire right to use a niche in the Columbarium for the interment of ashes of you or another person.

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I. *How big is a niche?*

The front of the niche that holds the engraving is 8" by 8". Each niche is about 7" wide by 6 3/4 " high by 11" deep.

J. *What is an urn?*

Urns are the receptacles into which ashes are placed. The urns are then placed in the niche. The urns provided with the purchase of a niche are made of sheet bronze with a satin finish. Each urn is 5" high, 5" wide, and 7" long.

K. *May I use my own urn?*

Central recommends using the sheet bronze urn included in the price of the niche. However, another urn that may have special meaning may be used if it fits within the standard urn dimensions (5" high, 5" wide, and 7" long) at the discretion of the Columbarium administrator.

### III. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A. *How are the rules set up?*

The Central Congregation Council has adopted a set of rules as a statement of its intent and policy. The rules are designed to protect the current interests of both you and the congregation, and to preserve the decorum and appearance of the Columbarium over time. From time to time, the rules may be amended as the congregation and its Council and Columbarium Association deem necessary. Exemptions to the Rules must be approved by the Columbarium Association or by any two regularly called pastors, who shall be considered Authorized Representatives of the church.

B. *What are the policies about conducting a service at the time of interment?*

Central will provide a brief prayer service at the time of each interment. A member of the Central's clergy shall conduct the service and be present at the Interment.

C. *When is the interment usually done?*

Interments or other services will be made when reasonably feasible after the congregation has received adequate notice from you or your heirs or personal representative. Often, interment will take place immediately before or after a memorial service/funeral.

D. *May other items be interred with the ashes?*

No valuables shall be placed in the urn or niche. The niche may be used only for the interment of ashes in an urn.

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E. *When may family members visit the Columbarium?*

The Columbarium is available for visits on Sunday mornings or during regular church business hours (ask at the welcome desk). If out of town relatives would like to visit during off-hours, please call the Church during normal business hours to make arrangements.

F. *May I place decorations?*

Yes, flowers may be placed next to a niche at the time of interment and for up to three days thereafter. The Church will remove those flowers after three days. You are welcome to place flowers at any time, but - again - they will be removed after three days.

IV. APPLICATION PROCESS AND OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY

A. *How do I apply?*

Please submit a written application (the Interment Agreement) to the Church. This is available from the church office.

B. *Do I actually own the niche?*

No. The Interment Agreement is only a license to use the niche. No real property right or interest is created.

C. *May I change the list of people who may be interred in my niche in the columbarium?*

Yes. During your lifetime, you may change the list of designated persons by a written amendment to the Interment Agreement signed by an authorized Congregation Representative and yourself.

D. *What if I decide later not to use the niche?*

If there has been no interment and you decide that the niche is no longer needed, the congregation may, at its discretion, repurchase the niche. If so, the Church will pay eighty percent (80%) of the sum paid at the time of purchase. The remaining twenty percent (20%) of the original payment shall be retained by the congregation for its administrative cost. The congregation will not pay accrued interest.

E. *May I sell the niche to another person?*

Yes, but only if you obtain prior permission from an authorized Congregation Representative. The sale, transfer or assignment of the niche without the prior written consent of an authorized Columbarium Administrator is not allowed.

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F. *May I remove ashes from the Columbarium for any reason?*

Yes. In the event there has been an Interment in a niche and the personal representative or immediate family of the person whose ashes have been interred wish to permanently remove the ashes from the niche, they may do so. However, there will not be any reimbursement in this case.

V. COLUMBARIUM NICHES

A. *Price*

The purchase price can be found in the price list, which is updated from time to time. A price list may be obtained from the Church office. Please request a Columbarium folder for full information.

B. *What is included in the price?*

The purchase price for a niche includes, for each person interred, the cost of initial interment of the ashes, two sheet bronze urns provided by the congregation, and engraving of the face plate with the name(s) and life dates of the person(s) whose ashes are interred. It also includes urn label, opening and closing of the niche officiated by a Central pastor, choice of niche location, maintenance of the interment site and the Columbarium in general, and the cost of maintaining records of use and administration of the Columbarium in perpetuity.

C. *How many niches may I buy?*

You may buy as many as needed. For example, families may opt to purchase a group of adjacent niches, with two urns per niche. .

D. *May I choose the location of the niche?*

Yes. A map of the columbarium will be provided at the time of purchase and you may choose the location based on availability and price.

E. *May I use my own urn?*

Central recommends using the sheet bronze urns included in the price of the niche. However, another urn that may have special meaning may be used if it fits within the standard urn, at the discretion of the Columbarium Administrator.

F. *Will Central's clergy perform a service at the time of interment?*

Yes.

G. *How will the Church and funeral home/cremation society interact?*

At the time of death, the family, funeral home, or cremation society and the Church are in communication with each other. The Church will make provision

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for delivery of the standard empty urn to the funeral home or cremation society. The funeral home or cremation society will arrange for cremation and deliver the ashes to the family or the Church, as directed.

H. *What will be on the front of the niche?*

Central will record the name and life dates of the person interred in a niche on the faceplate of the niche. The cost of the inscription is included in the purchase price. No other inscriptions - such as fraternal associations - are permitted.

I. *May valuables or trinkets be buried with the urn?*

No. Valuables, trinkets, or medals of any kind are not allowed.

VI. **MEMORIAL WALL**

A. *How do I obtain a name on the Memorial Wall?*

Complete an Inscription Agreement application.

B. *Who may purchase a name for the Memorial Wall?*

Members or former members, pastors and staff of the congregation, their current or prior spouses or partners, their children (natural or adopted) and step-children, their parents, and ordained Central pastors and their current or prior spouses or partners. The person being listed does not need to be a member.

C. *What is the price of one name and what is included?*

The purchase price can be found in the price list, which is updated from time to time. The purchase price includes maintenance of the Columbarium and the cost of maintaining records of use and administration of the Columbarium in perpetuity.

D. *Where will the name appear on the Memorial Wall?*

Inscriptions are placed on the Memorial Wall in the order received and according to pricing structure.

E. *May I remove the name or get a refund for any reason?*

No. Inscriptions are permanent and for the life of the Columbarium. After a name has been inscribed, there is no refund of the purchase price.

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VII. MISCELLANEOUS

A. *Is scattering of ashes possible?*

No; not at this time. A common burial niche and an outdoor addition may be considered in future development.

B. *May I inter my pet?*

A pet's ashes may be mixed with human ashes. The Church does not allow a separate inscription for the pet.

C. *May I have my niche inscribed before I die?*

Yes. There will be a separate inscription fee for dates at the time of interment, as the faceplate must be removed for this choice.

D. *What about ashes I already have?*

You may have them interred in the Columbarium after completion of an Interment Agreement and arrangement of a Committal Service. Contact your pastor to arrange for a service and to obtain the information to purchase a niche.

F. *May ashes of two people be co-mingled in a single urn?*

Yes. Please discuss this with the funeral home or cremation society or make arrangements separately. However, only two individuals may be interred behind a single plaque.

VIII. PRICE AND PAYMENT OPTIONS

A. *Are there any payment options?*

Yes, see below. Ashes cannot be interred until all fees have been paid in full.

1. Memorial Wall: Pay in full at the time of purchase.
2. Columbarium:
  3. Option 1 Pay in full
  4. Option 2: Pay in up to three equal annual installments

B. *Must I pay for an entire niche if I am single?*

No. You may make your own arrangements with another individual to purchase a niche together and split the cost. The engraving will indicate this with a small line. Please make such arrangements separately while jointly completing an Interment Agreement Application.

C. *What other costs are involved in being interred at Central?*

The final service, honoraria for pastor, musicians, etc. are separate and subject to the congregation's policies and suggested fees.

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**D. *Does the price include cremation?***

No, the price does not include cremation. Arrangements for cremation should be made directly with a funeral home or cremation society.

**E. *What if affordability is an issue?***

Please speak with one of the pastors.

**F. *How does the price of a columbarium niche compare to being buried in a traditional cemetery or another Columbarium?***

There may be significant savings, depending on a variety of factors. The cost of a niche in Central's columbarium is less than half of the estimated average costs to be buried in a traditional cemetery. This estimate compares average costs of two gravesites, two openings, two burial vaults, and two markers, to that of buying a niche, which includes two openings, two urns, and two engravings. A niche at Central costs approximately one-third of estimated costs of a comparable niche at Lakewood Cemetery in Minneapolis.

**G. *Are there other advantages of interment at a Columbarium?***

Some may feel that a columbarium interment is more environmentally responsible than burial in a cemetery.

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