

LCP-6: Memorial Garden Policy

Change history:

Date:	Change:	Made by:
10/1/2014	Revised to update governance language	Terri Schulz
1/12/2015	Fee schedule removed delegated to trustees to recommend and leadership council approve	LC (TS)
11/14/2016	Approved changes recommended by Tom Nesler, Trustees, and committee	LC (NR)
11/13/2017	Approved changes recommended by ministry team regarding Fee Schedule	LC (NR)

Purpose and Ancient Heritage

Plymouth's Memorial Garden is a place to honor deceased loved ones. There is an understandable comfort in the ancient practice of burial within the church confines. Throughout history, the church has provided places of burial within its grounds. As Plymouth's Memorial Garden is located next to the church, it provides the spiritual space in which God's healing power is bestowed through remembrance. At Plymouth Congregational UCC all of the rich associations with those who have been part of this beloved community continue to be shared in the hearts of its members and friends.

The Memorial Garden is a consecrated site for meditation, reflection and the distribution of cremated remains of members of Plymouth Congregational UCC and friends of the church who have supported Plymouth through pledges. With approval of the senior minister, the cremated remains of immediate family members of the above may also be scattered or interred in the Memorial Garden.

Place and Manner of Interment

All ashes will be scattered or interred only with a rite of Christian burial conducted by a minister of the church or by a minister designated by the Senior Minister. For members there will be no fee for the service, and an honorarium is at the discretion

of the family. For non-members a set fee will be approved each year by the Board of Deacons and included in fee scheduled developed for the Memorial Garden annually.

There are three options for the placement of the cremated remains of the deceased:

- 1. Ash Beds:** There are three raised ash beds defined by dry stack rock walls where cremated ashes can be scattered. In consultations with the senior minister the family will determine which ash bed will be used. The ashes will be mingled with the earth in the ash beds which has mulch covering the earth and a ground cover growing over each bed.
- 2. Burial Urns:** In front of the Celtic Cross there are sandstone pavers under which the cremated remains can be interred in a burial urn that is provided by the church. The urn is placed in a waterproof sleeve in the ground over which a paver is placed with the name of the deceased. A family can request that two urns for a family be paced under one paver. The Board of Trustees of the church makes the determination under which paver the urn or urns will be placed in consultation with the family.
- 3. Stone paver memorials (without containment):** There are thirteen sandstone pavers near the base of the Celtic Cross under which it is too shallow to place a burial urn as designated in option 2. A family may bury cremated remains in the soil beneath one of these 13 pavers engraved with the name of the deceased. The ashes will remain discrete beneath the memorial paver. The Service Coordinator will assist the family in making the decision which paver will be selected.

The Memorial Garden is intended for human remains only, but if the family or an individual prior to the rites of burial wishes to have the ashes of a pet commingled with their own cremated remains; that is permissible.

Memorial Inscriptions

For every individual interred in the Memorial Garden a brass plaque with name of the person, dates of birth and death will be inscribed on a plaque to be placed on the Memorial Remembrance Board displayed in the church. For those who have ashes placed in an urn, or under a paver without containment, the name or names only of the interred will be inscribed on pavers to identify the location of the urn/remains.

Members and pledging friends of the church may also choose to have a plaque placed on the Remembrance Board with name, dates of birth and death of family members who may have been interred elsewhere. They may do so for the cost of the plaque listed on the fee schedule. There is a special section of the Remembrance Board designated for such plaques.

Decorations

Decorations, including flowers, are welcome during and immediately following the service of burial and must be removed within 24 hours or sooner if another service is planned.

Records

A Memorial Book, containing the names, birth and death dates of those whose remains are interred in the Memorial Garden will be kept by the office manager. This record will also indicate the location of ashes (i.e. which ash bed), when service was performed and name of a contact person for the family.

Fee Schedule

The basic fee for interment, Option 1, 2 or 3, will be charged to the family or estate of the deceased. The fee schedule will be reviewed annually by the Memorial Garden Ministry Team. If changes are recommended in the fee schedule by the ministry team, the new schedule will be submitted to the Board of Trustees and the Church Council for approval. No approvals will be required if the annual review results in no changes. The fee will cover commemoration (brass plaque and inscription on pavers), urn, interment, service, and maintenance of Memorial Garden. In circumstances of economic hardship within a family, the fee may be reduced in consultation with the senior minister.

The cost for option 2 will generally run over twice the cost for option 1 because of the urn, inscribing the paver, waterproof sleeve and creating the containment space under the paver. The cost of option 3 will be the same as option 1 plus the cost of inscribing the paver. The family may choose and provide a different urn than the design offered by the church, but this personal urn must fit within the inside dimensions of the PVC pipe and cap assembly used by the Team for interment of urns. The cost of the urn will be subtracted from that described in the fee schedule in those circumstances.

Maintenance of the Memorial Garden

The maintenance of the Memorial Garden will fall under the purview of the Board of Trustees. A separate line item for a reserve fund for the Memorial Garden will be established and maintained by the Plymouth treasurer. A prudent reserve will be maintained by the church in order to ensure proper upkeep to the Memorial Garden. A file will be kept by the Trustees with names and contact information for sourcing

all the material needed for interment such as urns, plaques and waterproof sleeves. They will also be responsible for developing the guidelines to be used for interment and making sure Memorial Garden is prepared for the services.

Procedure for Reservation of Selected Pavers for Future Interment

A directory has been established identifying each unused sandstone paver with a unique alpha-numeric code. Members and friends of the church eligible as described above for interment in the Memorial Garden may reserve an available paver for future interment. Reservations may be made through the Service Coordinator or members of the Memorial Garden Ministry Team. Selection of the desired paver and payment of the applicable fee will secure the reservation. The desired paver will be identified in the directory under the name of the church member or friend. Additional cost may be incurred at the time of interment if the fee schedule has been modified over time to reflect increased cost of materials or services. The church member or friend may cancel the reservation with cause at a later date and receive a refund of the original payment at the time of reservation.