

## Southern Heights Presbyterian Church Columbarium Policies & Procedures

### 1) **COLUMBARIUM MANAGEMENT**

The management of the Columbarium and promotion of its ministry shall be the responsibility of the Memorial Committee, a sub-committee of (and reports to) the Financial Stewardship and Property Management Committee. The Memorial Committee shall:

- a) Provide a set of policies and procedures for the operation of the Columbarium, and recommend any changes that may be required from time to time in such policies and procedures. The original policies and procedures and subsequent changes recommended by the Memorial Committee shall become effective when approved by the Session.
- b) Create, interpret and administer all practices and policies regarding the Columbarium.
- c) Provide for the maintenance/security of the Columbarium out of the funds collected from the purchase of Niches and applicable dedicated funds held by Southern Heights Presbyterian Church.
- d) Conduct a yearly financial review of the Columbarium funds and provide this information for inclusion in the Annual Congregational Report.

### 2) **ELIGIBILITY**

Niches in the Columbarium are for the purpose of interment of human remains only. They are available to the following:

- a) Members of the Church, their families, or anyone

- associated or affiliated with the Church;
- b) Members of Homestead Presbytery;
- c) Members of the general public, as approved by Pastor in consultation with the Clerk of Session.

### 3) **PROCEDURE FOR OBTAINING A NICHE**

- a) All forms for obtaining a Niche are provided through the Church office.
- b) Anyone desiring to purchase a Niche must submit to the Church office:
  - **A completed "Application for Reservation of Columbarium Niche" form.** (Each Niche holds up to two urns. If more than one Niche is desired, a separate application form must be completed for each Niche purchased.)
  - **Payment for each Niche purchased.** (If, for some reason, an application is denied; the payment shall be returned to the applicant.)
- c) Once an application is approved, the applicant must submit to the Church office:
  - **A completed "Columbarium Face Plate Information" form.**
  - **A signed "Columbarium Agreement" form.**
- d) Niches will be numbered and the purchaser will select their preference based upon availability.
- e) When an application is approved, the applicant will receive a certificate for the Niche purchased.

### 4) **COST, PAYMENT, AND USE OF FUNDS**

- a) The price of a Niche is \$2,000. (\$250 represents the purchase price of the Niche; the balance of \$1,750 is a tax deductible donation to the Church.)
- b) The purchase price may, from time to time, be changed by the Memorial Committee to reflect changes in economic conditions.

- c) Not included in the purchase price is the cost of opening and closing the Niche, engraving the granite face plate, or the cost of the urns.
- d) The Columbarium will always be cared for and tended by Southern Heights Presbyterian Church or its successor organization. There shall be no future or further maintenance cost to the buyer for the Niche or its upkeep.
- e) The Church staff shall administer the necessary paperwork and process the funds received from the purchase of Niches. These funds shall be deposited in a Columbarium/Memorial Garden account for use in perpetual care and expansion.

#### **5) TITLE AND RIGHTS REMAIN WITH THE CHURCH**

Legal title to the Niche and to the land on which the Niche is placed will remain with the Church or its successor organization. The exclusive right to place the cremated remains of eligible persons in Columbarium Niches and keep them there is granted to the purchaser based on the following conditions:

- a) Each eligible person who has paid for and been provided a Niche shall receive a certificate granting use of the Niche.
- b) The exclusive right to use such a reserved Niche may not be sold, gifted, transferred or otherwise assigned to any other party without the written consent of the Church. The Church shall, upon written request from the Donor, buy back the Niche(s) from the Donor for the purchase price of \$250 per Niche.
- c) The Church reserves the right to relocate the Columbarium to a new location within the Church property, or to a new site. If either of these events

occurs and affects a purchased Niche, the Church will provide a comparable Niche.

#### **6) RULES AND REGULATIONS**

##### **Niche**

- a) The interior dimensions of each Niche are 12 inches high, 12 inches deep, and 12 inches wide. A Niche will accommodate up to two urns each: 7 ½ inches by 4 inches by 8 inches.
- b) If two people will be using one Niche, two urns must be purchased – one urn per person.
- c) The cost for opening and closing the Niche, as well as engraving the stone which seals the Niche, shall be borne by the family of the deceased or his or her estate.

NOTE: If the Niche will be used for two urns, there will be an additional charge for the re-opening and closing of the Niche, and for the engraver to make a subsequent trip to fill in the date of death for the second person.

- d) 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 for this engraving will be handled by the staff of Southern Heights Presbyterian Church or its successor.
- e) Optional: If the deceased is a U.S. Military Veteran, a small Medallion—provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs (2"W x 1 1/2"H x 1/3"D)—will be allowed on the stone which seals the Niche. It will be the responsibility of the purchaser/family to request and acquire the medallion from the military department. Arrangements to affix the medallion to

the stone will be handled by the staff of Southern Heights Presbyterian Church or its successor.

### **Urns**

- a) Urns used for the ashes shall be constructed of a permanent material.
- b) Permanent identification (i.e. the full name of the deceased with the dates of birth and death), shall be engraved on the face of the urn. The engraved urn will be delivered to Southern Heights Presbyterian Church (or its successor) for placement in the Niche.
- c) Cost of the urn and its permanent identification shall be borne by the family of the deceased or his or her estate.**

### **Flowers**

- a) Fresh cut or silk flowers (no potted plants or other objects) can be placed in the Columbarium area and in a size appropriate to the area (not to exceed 12 inches high by 12 inches deep by 12 inches wide). Flowers and containers will be periodically removed as necessary for appearance and safety reasons.
- b) No flags, signs, flowers, wreaths, or other decorations may be placed on the Columbarium wall.
- c) Flower containers (no glass allowed) may be placed on the ground within 1 foot of the face of the Columbarium.
- d) Prohibited items may be removed and disposed of by the Church without notice or liability to the owner of the item or any Niche owner.

### **Operations**

- a) The Columbarium shall be open to visitors from dawn until dusk (weather permitting), except for times when the church is holding an event.
- b) Southern Heights is not responsible for stolen or damaged items left in the Memorial Garden/Columbarium area.
- c) The Memorial Garden may be used for funeral services.
- d) No remains will be interred in the Columbarium without a committal service performed by a Southern Heights Presbyterian Church pastor or its designee. Others may be invited to participate as leaders in the service at the discretion of the pastor.
- e) The Memorial Garden, which surrounds the Columbarium, may be used by the Church as deemed appropriate.
- f) In addition to the policies and procedures, all inurnments, disinurnments, and removals shall comply with all federal, state, and local laws, rules and regulations to the extent they are applicable to the Church. Nothing herein shall be construed as a waiver of any exception of the Church as provided pursuant to such laws, rules and regulations.

### **7) AMENDMENT OR WAIVER OF COLUMBARIUM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Southern Heights Presbyterian Church may, at any time, amend or waive any of its Columbarium 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.