



# St. Andrew United Methodist Church Columbarium

## Frequently Asked Questions

A Columbarium by definition is an area designated for the burial of cremated remains (cremains). The cremains are stored (inurned) in niches. Cremation is a simple, dignified and inexpensive form of burial. For those persons who are Christian, it seems appropriate to provide a burial place for their ashes in a beautiful area near the church they have attended. To have access to a loved one's burial place at any time is a great comfort to family and friends of the deceased. The name "columbarium" is derived from the Latin word Columba, which means dove, the symbol of God's Spirit and peace.

### **Why a Columbarium at the Church?**

During our lifetime, the church has been our spiritual home and is therefore an appropriate place to remain. The Columbarium is a modern version of the earlier burial in a church courtyard. Churchyard cemeteries were a tradition in Europe and America and can still be found near historic places as well as small country churches. There is something very comforting about being laid to rest near the church in which you worshiped. Interment on church grounds is a statement of our belief in the resurrection, life everlasting and the church triumphant.

### **Where is the St. Andrew Columbarium located?**

The Columbarium is located in the Good Shepherd Meditation Garden on the north end of the campus, just west of the pond. Each niche in the Columbarium will hold two 8-inch by 8-inch urns.

### **Who can use The Columbarium?**

Subscriptions are open to present or past St. Andrew members and members of their immediate families, including spouses, parents and children. It is also open to our friends in the community.

### **Can I choose where my niche will be located?**

The choice of the niche or niches is up to you, offered on a first come, first served basis. Final niche assignment will be made upon the execution of a Columbarium Interment Rights Agreement and payment of the then-current fee. Your niche will receive perpetual care under the supervision of the Trustees of the Church.

### **How much does a niche in The Columbarium cost?**

The current cost is \$4,500 for a niche, whether for the remains of one or two persons. The niche fee includes the urn, opening and closing for inurnment, engraving and perpetual care. You must pay the full amount in advance. The fee is subject to revision by the Trustees of the Church.

### **Can I buy a name plaque only and not a niche?**

No, we only have niches available for sale.

**Who handles the cremation?**

You will need a funeral home or cremation service to pick up the remains, cremate them, and deliver the cremains to the Church prior to the date of inurnment in an approved urn or the urn provided by St. Andrew. Additionally, the Church must be provided appropriate documentation certifying that the cremated remains are correctly identified.

**Can a memorial service be held in the columbarium area?**

Yes. Inurnment services may be at the Columbarium, just as they are held at a graveside, or a memorial service can be held in one of our worship spaces. We are never closer to our deceased loved ones than when we gather for worship - it is the place where God's heavenly kingdom and his earthly kingdom meet. Contact Kay Richardson at [krichardson@standrewumc.org](mailto:krichardson@standrewumc.org) to begin the process of scheduling a memorial service.

**When can a niche be decorated?**

In order to keep the Columbarium sacred and beautiful for all guests and the interred, and to protect the natural beauty of the stone, there are no decorations allowed. The only exceptions to this policy are, as stated in the contract, for *Special Services* - Easter week and Christmas week.

**What kind of identifying marker is on each niche?**

When cremains have been interred into the Columbarium niche, the name, birth date and death date will be engraved on the exterior of the limestone cover plate. Once engraved, the niche inscription cannot be changed.

**What is the availability of visitation after the service?**

The Columbarium is accessible from exterior walkways and can be visited at any time between daylight and dusk.

**Why is each niche sold to just one spouse?**

The Texas Health and Safety Code, Section 711.039, requires that niches be sold to an individual and owned as separate property, not as community property. The spouse of a niche owner has a vested right to be interred in a niche that accommodates more than one set of remains. However, this right terminates upon a divorce or the spouse's burial or interment elsewhere.

**How do I reserve a niche?**

Contact Defae Weaver, Congregational Care Director, via email at [dweaver@standrewumc.org](mailto:dweaver@standrewumc.org) or phone at 214.291.8084. You will be asked to complete a Worksheet providing the necessary information and identifying a Designated Contact. You will also be asked to review and sign a Columbarium Interment Rights Agreement, which along with a set of Rules and Regulations, sets forth the terms and conditions for the niche.