

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR CHRISTIAN BURIAL AT THE CHURCH

Throughout history it has been the function of the Church to baptize its members when born and to bury them when they die. In early days when land was readily available and less costly, each church had its own private cemetery. The practice of providing a place for burial at the church was abandoned, however, when space and expense became a problem. Commercial cemeteries began to fill this need, such that even the service of burial was often moved from the church and conducted in the funeral parlor. Gradually the whole process became more commercial, expensive, and in danger of losing its deep religious significance and ties to the community of faith.

Now another opportunity for a Christian burial at the church is being made available in more and more churches. It is called a Columbarium. A Columbarium is a structure with recesses in the walls, called niches, to receive the ashes of the dead. Providing a structure to receive the ashes of our deceased loved ones is an affirmation of our faith in the resurrection and of the church's role in declaring our hope in Christ. The practice of cremation is totally consistent with our understanding of our Christian faith and our Reformed theology. The presence of a Columbarium in a church facility is, like a church cemetery, a celebration of the Saints of God who have through the ages loved and served the Lord within that particular congregation.

THE COLUMBARIUM AT OUR OWN CHURCH

Our Columbarium was installed at the church in 1991. It is located in the area between the sanctuary and the education building. This is an ideal spot—quiet, secluded, surrounded by the walls of the church buildings, and offering a garden-like setting.

The Columbarium is meant to be attractive, yet simple, dignified, and economical. Set on a concrete case, it is all bronze with a design of dark and light bronze face plates forming a cross in the center. It projects only eleven inches from the wall to which it is attached. Currently our Columbarium has two sections installed and each section provides space for 70 niches. As need arises, there is ample room for an additional section to be installed.

Ashes are interred in conjunction with a Christian service of worship that declares our victory over death and new life in Christ Jesus. The Columbarium thus continues to serve as a constant reminder of the glory of God, the fulfillment of faith, and the promise that we shall one day be with our loved ones again in heaven.



POLICIES FOR COLUMBARIUM USAGE

The use of the Columbarium is subject to the control of the session and available to the members of First Presbyterian Church and their immediate families (mother, father, sister, brother, child, grandchild). Others desiring a niche may be referred to and considered by the session.

The cost of each niche in the Columbarium is \$375.00, including a uniform bronze nameplate placed on the door of the niche following interment. The cost is payable at the time of reservation in lump sum or can be paid with an initial deposit of \$75.00 and \$100.00 per month over the next three months.

Columbarium niches remain the property of First Presbyterian Church. The cost of reserving a niche entitles one to privilege of use, not to a right of ownership. If a decision is made to transfer the interred ashes to another location, the use privilege could be returned to the church. The church will refund \$275.00 of the original reservation cost at any point when the niche is used for less than five years, or at any time if unused.

Any niche containing ashes under an agreement for their permanent disposition would be appropriately sealed.

Applications and further information are available at the church office.

COLUMBARIUM and MEMORIAL GARDEN



**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Morehead City, North Carolina**