

Interment at Christ Church Episcopal, Whitefish Bay

Interment refers to the disposition of a person's cremated ashes into a consecrated space. Christ Church offers two options for interment: the Columbarium and the Memorial Garden.

The Columbarium, created in 1956, is located in the lower level of the church building, under the nave. The Columbarium provides niches, each sealed with a stone, on which the name of each deceased person is engraved at the time the committal. Each niche can hold the ashes of two people. A niche may be purchased and used by just one person, but the fee is for two people. The niche is unsealed and resealed for the second committal. Although it is not done often, at a family's request, ashes interred in the Columbarium may be removed and returned to the family for relocation.

The Memorial Garden, created in 2024, is located outdoors in the landscaped space west of the red office door and north of the northern corner of the Good Shepherd Room. Ashes are interred directly and permanently into the ground. The assignee and family understand that, once interred, the exact location of the ashes will not be marked at the site and the ashes cannot be relocated. Interment in the Memorial Garden is a permanent disposition.

A space in either the Memorial Garden or the Columbarium must be purchased in the name of a specific individual person, not in the aggregate for one or more unnamed family members. If a family wants to purchase multiple spots and does not know names of planned users, (such as a future spouse of a not yet married child), the space must be purchased in the name of the individual who will control the use of the space. Either way, that person is referred to as the "assignee."

An "interment space" is the term used to describe the exclusive right of use of a spot in the Memorial Garden by the assignee. A "niche" is the term used to describe the exclusive right of use of a spot in the Columbarium by the assignee. "Ashes" is the term used for the cremated remains of one person.

Interment in either location is offered to Christ Church members, former members and their immediate families. Neither option is intended as a public burial space. Decisions regarding eligibility will be decided by the Rector or other clergy as designated by the Rector.

Administrative Procedures

Interment policies and opportunities are managed by the Christ Church Remembrance Committee. Discussions with families regarding options for interment are handled by clergy or by clergy designated staff or volunteers.

Pre-planning of an interment option is encouraged. Pre-purchase is important because niche and plaque locations are chosen at the time of purchase and families may want a number of contiguous Columbarium niches or outdoor plaque locations. Pre-purchase is also important if the assignee wishes to pay for the niche or space prior to death.

Fees

Purchase is made for the interment of ashes, indoors or outdoors. The purchaser does not own the space, but has the right to use it for the interment of ashes.

The fee for either interment option is \$1,000 per person. However, since the purchase of a niche in the Columbarium is for two interments, the payment is \$2,000.

For purchases made after January 1, 2024, the fee includes the name plaque, the engraving/casting and its installation. The Rector may adjust the fee in the case of financial hardship.

Payment for interment must be made prior to interment.

Fees for the Columbarium and the Memorial Garden are non-refundable. See below for the one option which may allow for a credit toward a revised purchase.

Refer to the Fee Summary chart on page 6.

Name Plaques

Name plaques include the full name of the deceased and the years of birth and death. The style of the plaque is standard and not to be changed for special requests. In the Columbarium, the name is engraved onto the stone. Memorial Garden name plaques are mounted on the sculpture on the exterior wall near the garden.

General Rules and Expectations

The Columbarium and the Memorial garden are sacred spaces. Visitors are asked to act accordingly.

One simple bouquet of fresh flowers may be placed near the niche or in the Memorial Garden at the time of interment and will be removed by church staff within a few days

Only the ashes of the named person may be interred. Additional ashes, including the ashes of a pet, may not be interred with the ashes of the named individual.

Interment is done by Christ Church clergy or their designee only. Interments will not be done without clergy present.

Christ Church Memorial Garden Rules

The Memorial Garden is a peaceful, sacred space, available for the outdoor interment of cremated ashes, directly into the ground, evocative of the liturgy from the Book of Common Prayer, stating, “earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust; in sure and certain hope of the Resurrection to eternal life.” In that vein, the locations of ashes within the garden area are not marked or identified.

In the belief that the living can honor the dead through acts of service, hospitality, discernment and prayer, the Memorial Garden space is a place where activity is embraced, as long as it is respectful and peaceful.

Assignment of Interment Spaces in the Ground

Christ Church, under the direction of the Rector, assigns the spot for each interment. Particular locations may not be saved, pre-assigned or expected.

Assignment of interment spaces is made at the time of funeral and interment planning.

Location is based primarily on the goal of maximizing the available garden space over time, as well as maintaining healthy plant material.

It should not be expected that family members will be assigned contiguous or nearby interment spaces, unless the interments take place at the same time.

Wall Plaques

A large piece of cast bronze art, mounted on the exterior wall of the Good Shepherd Room, holds the name plaques for each person interred in the Memorial Garden.

The placement of the name plaque is chosen by the family at the time of purchase. If a family wishes to purchase a number of interment spaces at once, and to reserve contiguous spots on the bronze background art, they may do so. Spaces must be purchased for specifically named individuals or their assignees.

Ashes

Ashes are interred directly into the ground, with no urns, boxes, bags or other containers allowed.

Every effort will be made to inter ashes at the time of a family's preference. However, if the ground is frozen to the extent a sufficient hole cannot be created, the interment cannot take place until the ground thaws sufficiently.

The Memorial Garden is designed to accommodate the full volume of an individual's ashes. If a family wishes to inter only a portion of the ashes, that can be done. The family is then responsible for the remaining ashes.

Once interred, ashes remain in the earth. They may not be dug up for relocation. If future relocation is even slightly possible in the minds of a family, the Christ Church Memorial Garden is not a good choice for their loved one.

Plaques and Identification of Interred Individuals

Additional markers, art or other items are not to be placed in the Memorial Garden space.

Plaques are created only for those whose ashes are interred in the Memorial Garden. They are not available as a general memorial for church members who are buried or interred elsewhere. A plaque may be available for members whose ashes were spread in the Christ Church garden before January 2024.

Other

Ashes may not be spread on the surface of any of the garden spaces of Christ Church.

All plantings in the Memorial Garden are done by the church. A family may not plant anything in the Memorial Garden, including bulbs or plants to mark the spot of their loved one's interment.

No markers, such as signs, statuary, or any other form of homage or identification are to be placed in the Memorial Garden.

Christ Church Columbarium Rules

Items of remembrance, such as plants, flowers, stuffed animals or other such objects are not to be placed in the Columbarium.

If both assignees have died and their niche is not used for interment within one year of the second death, the use of the niche reverts to Christ Church and the fee is non-refundable.

Although Columbarium fees will include the cost of the engraved stone, for purchases made on or after February 1, 2024, Columbarium purchases made prior to that date will adhere to the existing contract and the plaque fee will be charged as outlined in the contract.

If 2 people purchased a Columbarium niche prior to January 1, 2024 and they both wish to relinquish the unused niche and purchase an interment space in the Memorial Garden, the actual fee paid to the church for the niche will be applied to the cost of the Memorial Garden purchase.

Rules and Fees Regarding Changes in Paid Reservations

Occasionally, a living person or the family of a deceased person may wish to change their interment plans. Any such changes are the financial responsibility of the assignee or the family. All changes must be approved by the Rector.

To relinquish a Columbarium niche and purchase a Memorial Garden space:

- The assignees must be currently living or, if deceased, their ashes must be not yet interred.
- Both niche assignees must release their Columbarium reservation.
- Refer to the Fee Summary chart the next page

To relinquish a Memorial Garden reservation and purchase a Columbarium niche:

- The assignees must be currently living or, if deceased, their ashes must be not yet interred.
- Both assignees must release their Memorial Garden purchase
- Refer to the Fee Summary chart on the next page

To remove ashes from the Columbarium and to relocate them in the Memorial Garden:

- The person making the request must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Rector that such person has the authority to make the request and that the family is in agreement with this plan.
- There will be no credit or refund for any previously paid fees.
- Refer to the Fee Summary chart on the next page

To remove ashes from the Columbarium without relocation in the Memorial Garden:

- The person making the request must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Rector that such person has the authority to make the request and that the family is in agreement with this plan.
- There will be no refund for any previously paid fees.
- Refer to the Fee Summary chart on the next page

Interment Options

Fee Summary (Effective February 15, 2024)

Location	Cost	Inclusion	Notes
Memorial Garden- 1 person	\$1,000	Plaque, casting, installation	
Columbarium Niche- 2 people	\$2,000	Plaque, casting, installation	
Columbarium Niche- 1 person	\$2,000	Plaque, casting, installation	Each niche is designed for two interments; there is no discount on the purchase of a niche for just one person
Vacating unused niche with relocation to Memorial Garden	\$1,000** per person	Plaque, interment	**Fee paid for Columbarium Niche will be applied to the cost of Memorial Garden; both assignees must give written consent; Rector approval required.
Vacating used niche with relocation to Memorial Garden	\$1,000 per person; \$300 for unsealing plus cost of replacement stone	Plaque, interment, relocation expenses	No credit toward Memorial Garden purchase.
Removal of ashes from Memorial Garden	Not an option		

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On behalf of the Remembrance Committee

15 Feb 2024