

First Presbyterian Church of Highlands Memorial Garden Use & Procedures Policy

Purpose

The Memorial Garden of First Presbyterian Church of Highlands (FPCH) is a hallowed place for the interment of ashes of our faithful departed. While providing a quiet sanctuary for all those who wish to visit, the garden is also an area for celebrating the joys of life and our relationships with God and one another. In that sense the garden is sacred to the memory of the departed even as it is a place to encounter the living God.

Committal of Cremains Eligibility & the Service of Committal

Committal of cremains to the Memorial Garden and nameplates on the Memorial Plaque are limited to:

- First Presbyterian Church members and former members and their immediate families (defined as spouses, parents, children, step children and step parents);
- Former Ordained Ministers who have served First Presbyterian Church and their immediate families.

“Friends” of First Presbyterian Church of Highlands and other requests will be considered and honored at the discretion of the Session.

The family of the deceased should request interment of ashes by submitting a completed *Request for the Interment of Ash Remains* form completed and returning it to the church office. Only human remains can be interred.

Cremains will be interred in the garden in a service overseen by a pastor of FPCH. Details of the *Service of Committal* and the interment of the ash remains will be determined by the decedent’s family and the attending pastor. The actual disposition of the cremains can be part of the memorial service, or can be done privately at the request of the family.

Placement of Cremains & Record of Ashes Interred

Placing the cremains in a special area of the Memorial Garden is a demonstration of a person’s great love of the church and wanting to be always home by choosing to have his or her cremains part of the grounds. It is also a ministry of the church to provide

support for the family in the days, weeks and months following a death by giving the family a place to visit and meditate in the arms of the church. The following provides information on the rules for placement of the cremains and the recording of ashes interred:

- The opening and closing of the interment space will be prepared by a member of the church staff;
- No one may acquire any right to the physical location of interred ashes;
- Families who wish to have ashes placed adjacent to one another are responsible for preservation of the first deceased ashes until such time that cremains can be interred together.
- There will be no markers, additional plantings or additional decorations permitted;
- Names of those interred will be kept on a Memorial Plaque located inside the church detailing the full name of the deceased as well as dates of birth and death. No titles or other designations will be used;
- After placement of the ashes, an engraved nameplate will be added to the memorial plaque;
- Only one name may be engraved on each nameplate;
- Nameplates are usually placed in chronological order of death. A permanent record listing the names of the persons whose ashes are buried in the garden is maintained in a *Memorial Garden Memory Book*.

The memorial garden is not a cemetery. No rights or special privileges of any nature are deemed or granted to families of those interred. All plantings in the garden area are determined solely by the Memorial Garden Committee (MGC).

Administration and Maintenance

A Memorial Garden Committee (MGC), a subcommittee of the Property Ministry Team, shall manage the garden. The MGC will manage the garden with regard to:

- Implementing the policies and procedures established;
- Informing church membership about the option of using the Memorial Garden as a final resting place;
- The interment of ashes;
- Perpetual care and maintenance of the garden. This may include routine

- maintenance, enhancement, insurance, future additions or modifications to the garden and any other matters determined by the MGC and/or Session;
- Plantings and landscape maintenance;
 - Securing and placement of the engraved nameplate of the deceased on the Memorial Plaque;
 - Maintaining and archiving information in the *Memorial Garden Memory Book*;
 - Other issues associated with the Memorial Garden, including recommendations to the Worship Committee regarding future suggested changes to this policy.

Members of the MGC, a subcommittee of property:

The chair of the MGC should be a member of the Property Ministry Team, with a committee member from each of the Worship and Congregational Care Ministry Teams, for the purpose of working with the family and the pastor during the planning process and the service itself. The pastors and property manager shall assist the work of the MGC as ex-officio.

Cost for maintenance of the memorial garden should be budgeted yearly under the Property Ministry Team budget and presented to Session yearly as part of annual budget requests. All rights are reserved by the First Presbyterian Church of Highlands, its officers and the Memorial Garden Committee to make changes, now or in the future, including changes in the design of the garden. All records will be kept at the church office, with the Clerk of Session also keeping records of all who are interred in the garden.

Fees and Nameplates

The cremation fee and bio-degradable container fees are the responsibility of the funeral director and are not set by First Presbyterian Church of Highlands. Please contact your local funeral home for these fees.

A fee is charged for the engraved nameplate located inside the church on the hall wall and is subject to change. There is no additional fee for the committal of cremains to the ground. An honorarium for the pastor performing the service is at the discretion of the family.

Financial contributions for the care of the memorial garden are always welcome. Funds will be used to maintain the Memorial Garden as a place for quiet meditation and as an appropriate resting place for loved ones.

Designations for specific gifts – plantings, benches or other landscape items – will be reviewed by the MGC with recommendations forwarded to Session. All contributions will be reserved solely for the permanent maintenance of the Memorial Garden area.

Checks may be made payable to First Presbyterian Church of Highlands. Please write Memorial Garden on the memo line.

First Presbyterian Church of Highlands
Memorial Garden
Request for the Interment of Ash Remains

PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN TO THE CHURCH OFFICE

I/We hereby request interment of ashes in the FPCH Memorial Garden for the following:

Name of person to be memorialized (please print): _____
(first name, middle name, last name, suffix)

Relationship of the deceased to First Presbyterian Church of Highlands:

Date of Birth: _____

Date of Death: _____

The Service of Committal must be planned through one of First Presbyterian Church's pastors.

Do you wish to have the Service of Committal conducted by a pastor of FPCH? _____

If "no", list name of the officiating clergy/church affiliation (*)

(*Requires FPCH Session approval)

What is the proposed date and time for the service of Committal?

How many persons do you anticipate attending the Service for committal? _____

I/we understand and acknowledge that the FPCH Memorial Garden is not a cemetery. No rights or special privileges of any nature are deemed or granted to the undersigned or our families regarding ashes interred in the garden. All rights are reserved by First Presbyterian Church of Highlands, its officers and the Memorial Garden Committee to make necessary changes, now or in the future including changes in the design

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

**TO BE COMPLETED BY OFFICIATING PASTOR AND SHARED WITH
MEMORIAL GARDEN COMMITTEE**

Approval of Pastor: _____ Date: _____