

If you would like more information or would like to purchase a niche, please call the church office at 383-4777. A minister or a member of the Columbarium Committee will be able to help you.

First United Methodist Church has been part of the Baton Rouge community since 1836. The church has had only two locations in its long history. Today its physical plant stands next to a busy interstate highway as a symbol of Christian presence in a hurried and often hurting world. The Columbarium makes First United Methodist Church a more sacred site. Hallowed ground, which memorializes loved one, creates a living sanctuary of memory and story. If the Columbarium seems to fit your needs, please contact the church office at (225) 383-4777.



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The Columbarium



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The Purpose

The Columbarium is provided as an appropriate, consecrated and well-maintained place for the inurnment of cremated remains of First United Methodist Church members and their families. It is located in the courtyard on the west side of the sanctuary and is maintained as a place for rest, prayer and meditation. The Columbarium will deepen the sacredness of the grounds of First United Methodist Church and will strengthen ties to this property as more and more persons come to associate this church as the final resting place of the remains of loved ones.

The Tradition

For centuries Christians have brought loved ones to the church to be buried. In early Rome, a Columbarium meant a nesting place for doves. The word comes from the Latin word *columba*, meaning "dovecote" (dove house). The word also came to be used to describe places where Christians gathered for prayer, and lies behind our English word for chapel. When Christians, relegated to Rome's catacombs, began using cliff-side niches to seal away ashes of the faithful who had died, Columbarium took on its present meaning: compartments for storage of cremated remains. Churches in urban

settings, such as First United Methodist, must deal with the reality of the high cost of land and its limited availability. Also, the increasing costs associated with burial in commercial cemeteries is an ongoing reality. Today many Christians have begun to embrace the ancient practice of cremation, placing their loved one's remains in a church columbarium.

The Space and Cost

Initially the Columbarium will contain 208 niches. There is room to expand should demand require it.

A niche costs \$ 1,000 . This money will pay for the construction of the Columbarium and for its on-going maintenance. A niche may contain only one set of cremated remains. Funeral home and cremation costs are separate from the cost of a niche and must be negotiated with the funeral home of choice.

When a niche is purchased, the church will provide a certificate of ownership to the purchaser and a statement of policies regarding use of the Columbarium. At the time of utilization of the niche, a name plate which includes dates of birth and of death is placed on the seal of the niche. The choice of niche location is by order of purchase. The right to a specific location cannot be secured, nor the niche used, until the purchase fee has been paid in full.

The Service

Inurnment in the Columbarium must be presided over by one of the ministers of First United Methodist Church. The service shall follow that of The United Methodist *Book of Worship* for committal of remains of the deceased. Arrangements for inurnment may be made at the time of death or later in consultation with the officiating minister. In many instances inurnment will directly follow the funeral service in the sanctuary or chapel in lieu of traveling to a cemetery.

Conclusion

It is the desire of the Church Council and the Board of Trustees of First United Methodist Church that the Columbarium enhance the spiritual life and practice of the congregation. We, who know God to be Lord of both life and death, trust in Jesus Christ and the power of his resurrection. When we commit our members to their earthly finality with the words, "ashes to ashes and dust to dust," we do so in sure and certain hope of God's power to raise them to new and everlasting life.

"I am the resurrection and the life," says the Lord. "Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die." (John 11:25-26)