

Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church Hickory, NC

Governing Policies - Cemetery / Columbarium / Memorial Garden



Adopted by Congregation: December 3, 2023

A. Supervision and Processes

- 1) The use of all areas of Interment shall be supervised by the Cemetery Ministry Team.
- 2) The Committee shall annually elect a chairperson who shall call such meetings of the Committee as needed and who shall preside over such meetings. Minutes shall be kept of all such meetings. The chairperson and any other person authorized by the Council shall have authority to execute agreements for reservation of plots.
- 3) The cost of spaces will be reviewed annually in January of each year by the Cemetery Ministry Team, with any proposed change in the current fee being proposed to the Church Council for approval. New rates will be published as they become effective.
- 4) A member of the Cemetery Ministry team shall mark off and record Cemetery plots, niches, and other locations of interment within the memorial garden prior to any site of interment being opened or disturbed. Only members of the Cemetery Ministry team are to open and close Columbarium Niches prior to and following funeral services. Such requests are directed to the Chairperson who will either perform these tasks or delegate the task to a member of the team.
- 5) Governing policies concerning internment will be reviewed every "ODD" calendar year by the end of February of said year, or more frequently if deemed necessary by the Cemetery Ministry Team. A written notification will be sent to the Council Chairperson regarding the results of the review including any recommendation(s) for adjustments for council consideration and approval.
- 6) Modifications to these Governing Policies must be approved by the Congregational Council and by subsequent vote of the congregation at a duly call congregational meeting.

B. Eligibility for Interment

- 1) Active members are eligible for interment. Active members for the purposes of these governing policies shall be defined as outlined in the Bylaw of the adopted and ratified Constitution of this congregation for "Active Membership."
- 2) "Non-member Spouses", "Non-Member Minor Children" and "Non-Member Mentally Disabled Children" of currently Active members are eligible for interment. See the section entitled "Interment Fees."
- 3) Adult children that are mentally disabled, who developed the disability before the death of their parents, which are either inactive or non-members who have Parents interred at Bethlehem are eligible for interment. See the section entitled "Interment Fees."
- 4) Inactive members and non-members who have immediate family (immediate family defined as: children and spouses) members interred at Bethlehem are eligible for Interment. See section entitled "interment Fees."
- 5) Should questions or inquiries arise regarding "Eligibility" or "Clarification of these Bylaws"; those are to be directed to the Pastor, who will forward such questions in writing to the Chairperson of the Cemetery Ministry Team. The Chairperson will engage the Cemetery Ministry Team. Using these bylaws as basis, the team will render a consensus-based response/answer. The Chairperson will notify the Pastor in writing of the response who will then communicate the response to the person or persons who raised the question. If the Cemetery team is unable to come to a consensus, the Chairperson of the Cemetery Team will engage the Council Executive Committee to render an answer.

Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church Hickory, NC

Governing Policies - Cemetery / Columbarium / Memorial Garden - Continued



Adopted by Congregation: December 3, 2023

C. Method of Interment

- 1) The Columbarium is only to be used for the inurnment of cremains in an urn or receptacle to be provided at the expense of the decedent's legal representative or family. Only one decedent will be permitted to be inurned per niche. The scattering of ashes within or surrounding the Columbarium is not permitted.
- 2) The Memorial Garden is only to be used for the interment of cremains in a bio-degradable urn or receptacle as specified by the Cemetery Ministry Team and provided by the decedent's family or legal representative at their expense prior to interment. The scattering of ashes in the Memorial Garden is not permitted.
- 3) The Cemetery is used for interment using a casket and a requires a Vault, or cremains in an urn or receptacle and provided by the decedent's family or legal representative at their expense prior to interment. The scattering of ashes in the Cemetery is not permitted. Interment of a body not contained in a casket and vault is not permitted.
- 4) Any Cemetery plot may contain two interments providing they comply to paragraphs 4.C and either paragraph 4.A or 4.B as defined directly below:
 - 4.A) Two Urns containing cremated remains providing one is interred at the head-end of the plot and one at the foot-end of the plot and the exact location of the first interment is known.
 - 4.B) A single Urn containing cremated remains on top of an existing Coffin/Vault. The depth on the interred Urn must be at a depth of at least twelve inches (12") and may not encounter/contact the existing vault.
 - 4.C) Permission for the second interment must be granted by the Family or Legal Representative of the descendent currently interred. No additional plot fees are collected for the second interment.

D. Reservation of Interment Spaces

- 1) Only persons defined in the section entitled "Eligibility for Interment" Paragraph #1 may reserve an interment space and then only with the approval of the Cemetery Ministry Team. Once approved, the requestor will be notified in writing and records will be updated to show the reservation as defined in the section entitled "Records and Accounting". However, any space reserved by said person will lose their reservation in the event they no longer are eligible as defined in the section entitled "Eligibility for Interment" Paragraph #1, regardless of if they are still eligible for interment based on any other paragraph in the same section.
- 2) Cemetery Plots which have been approved for reservation must be marked at the foot by a four-inch x four-inch (4" x 4") granite marker bearing the initials of the person for whom they are reserved, or by a monument that complies to the section entitled "Monuments, Scrolls, Inscriptions and Landscaping / Cemetery Interment" within this document within thirty (30) days of the reservation. If such marker is not placed within the 30 Days, the reservation is revoked, and the person or persons will be notified in writing. If a marker has been placed and the Active Member loses Eligibility for Interment as defined in the section "Eligibility for Interment" Paragraph #1; regardless of if they are still eligible for interment based on any other paragraph in the same section, that person(s) will be notified in writing at the last known mailing address that the marker must be removed within 60 days. If the Marker is not removed within 60 days, then ownership of the marker reverts to Bethlehem Lutheran Church and may be disposed of as deemed appropriate.
- 3) Spaces for other persons that are eligible for interment as defined in the section entitled "Eligibility for Interment" Paragraph #2, #3, or #4 may be requested by persons defined in the section entitled "Eligibility for Interment" Paragraph #1 when such death occurs and only at time of death.

Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church Hickory, NC

Governing Policies - Cemetery / Columbarium / Memorial Garden - Continued



Adopted by Congregation: December 3, 2023

E. Interment Fees

- 1) ALL eligible interments as defined in the section entitled "Eligibility for Interment" using the columbarium or memorial garden will be paid at the current published price at the time of death and paid prior to interment. Prepayment (prior to death) of interment fees are not allowed.
- 2) All eligible interments as defined in the section entitled "Eligibility for Interment" Paragraphs #2, #3, or #4 will be paid at the current published price at the time of death and paid prior to interment. Prepayment (prior to death) of interment fees are not allowed.
- 3) All other eligible interments not covered under previous paragraphs in this same subsection entitled "Interment Fees" carries NO Fees for Interments.
- 4) Cost of opening and closing of graves, leveling/backfilling of graves, sodding of graves, cemetery markers, cremation, urn, vault and casket, and other related funeral expenses is the responsibility of the decedent's family or legal representative.
- 5) Inscription costs for the Columbarium and Memorial Garden are included in the fees. Only the Cemetery Ministry Team will arrange such inscriptions to ensure compliance as defined in the section entitled "Scrolls, Inscriptions and Landscaping."

F. Monuments, Scrolls, Inscriptions and Landscaping

- 1) The following are not permitted at any time within or surrounding any location of interment: Interment location landscaping – e.g., trees, shrubs, lawns, statues, and features. Decorative fencing around gravesites or trenching of grass or copings of any composition to outline boundaries or the use of flowers, garland, or other items to outline the boundaries of the gravesites, crypts, or niches (or) Music boxes and other battery or electrically operated items (or) Glass, or other fragile ornaments (or) Standing decorations – e.g. Santa Claus, Snowmen, Candy Canes, Nut Crackers, Easter Bunnies, Easter Eggs, Easter Baskets, artificial grass or tree, etc. No metal, wire, spikes, or rigid plastic devices may be used to secure flowers, plants, memorials, flags, etc., to a gravesite or monument.
- 2) Cemetery Interment
 - 2.A) All monuments, standing or ground level (flat), shall bear the deceased full name, date of Birth and date of death professionally engraved .
 - 2.B) A granite, marble or bronze monument shall be erected at all burial sites within twelve months of the date of burial.
 - 2.C) All monuments, standing or ground level (flat), shall use a poured cement foundation of at least twelve inches (12") thick and that extends at least three inches (3") from the base.
 - 2.D) Any monument, standing or ground level (flat), that extends to cover the grave are not allowed.
 - 2.E) Any monument; standing or ground level (flat); may not extend to cover any adjacent grave (unless it is marking adjacent family gave sites) (or) walkway.
 - 2.F) A standing monument that exceeds four-feet (4') in height is not permitted.
 - 2.G) Any ground level monument (flat) shall be the same dimensions as Veterans' Administration military markers.

Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church Hickory, NC

Governing Policies - Cemetery / Columbarium / Memorial Garden - Continued



Adopted by Congregation: December 3, 2023

-
- 2.H) If a ground level (flat) monument (Foot and/or Head) is used, they must be installed flush to the ground.
 - 2.I) If a ground level (flat) monument (Head) is used, Store-away type flower vases are required and must be flushed with the ground when stored.
 - 2.J) If a standing monument is used, Flower vases must be set in either granite or marble bases. Saddle-type flower arrangements are to be used on monuments without built-in flower vases.
 - 2.K) Inscriptions / medallions / symbols / placards on any foot or head marker must be a) rooted in faith and God as recognized by Bethlehem Lutheran Church and its constitution or b) based on branches of the Armed Services of the United States of America as recognized by the Veteran's Administration. On monuments that have only Placards installed the placard must bear the deceased full name, date of Birth and date of death thus satisfying paragraph 2.A above.
 - 2.L) Above ground vaults or crypts are not allowed.
- 3) Columbarium Interment
- 3.A) Urns must be of a size to fit within the niche without removing the urn cover, crushing, or deforming the Urn and are supplied at the expense of the Family or legal representative of the decedent.
 - 3.B) Each urn niche cover will be inscribed only with the decedent's name, date of birth, and date of death. No other inscription will be permitted. All inscriptions are arranged by the Cemetery Ministry team at the expense of the Church.
 - 3.C) Niche placards or medallions are conditionally permitted provided they are preapproved by the Cemetery Ministry team on a case-by-case basis. All such placards or medallions must be based a) on and provided by organizations that are rooted in faith and God as recognized by Bethlehem Lutheran Church and its constitution or b) based of branches of the Armed Services of the United States of America as recognized and provided by the Veteran's Administration. All such placards must be made from bronze and sized to fit the existing niche cover and may not exceed nine-inch x nine-inch (9" x 9"). Placards must carry the decedent's name, date of birth, and date of death. Medallions must be made of bronze and sized to not interfere with the inscription as defined in paragraph 3.B The expense of installing and acquiring these are paid for by the family.
- 4) Memorial Garden Interment
- 4.A) Scrolls affixed to the Memorial Tablet will be of uniform size, type, and composition and will be supplied by Bethlehem Lutheran Church. Inscriptions on the Memorial Garden Tablet will be arranged from top to bottom and then left to right. All inscriptions are arranged by the Cemetery Ministry team at the expense of the Church.
 - 4.B) Each scroll may be inscribed only with the decedent's name, date of birth, and date of death. No other inscription will be permitted.
 - 4.C) Scrolls will be placed on the Memorial Tablet in order beginning with the upper left-hand corner and proceeding from top to bottom and from left to right.
 - 4.D) No burial spaces will be established on any walkway in the Memorial Garden.

Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church Hickory, NC

Governing Policies - Cemetery / Columbarium / Memorial Garden - Continued



Adopted by Congregation: December 3, 2023

G. Maintenance and other uses of Sites of Interment.

- 1) Bethlehem Lutheran Church shall maintain the Memorial Garden and Columbarium to preserve it as a place of reverence and meditation.
- 2) All interment locations are sacred sites and shall be treated with all due respect. Any person or group seeking to use these properties for anything other than approved burial services, visitations to burial plots, and/or memorial services must first secure the approval of the Cemetery Ministry Team and the Pastor of the Congregation.
- 3) Flowers used during any service (Funeral or otherwise) may be placed at any area of interment but must be removed by the family or legal representative within seven (7) days following the service.
- 4) All Areas of interment are to be kept clean of all dead flowers and plants, faded, or worn artificial flowers, flags and/or other memorials by the family of the deceased. Holiday flowers and plants must be removed from gravesites within (30) thirty days following the holiday.
- 5) The Cemetery Committee and/or Property Committee reserves the right to remove any dead, faded or unsightly flowers, plants, flags, and/or other memorials as they deem necessary to maintain the overall appearance of the cemetery. All materials removed from gravesites shall be disposed of by the person removing them and shall not be thrown on adjacent property.

H. Exhume Rights of Remains

- 1) A Family Member or Legal Presentative prior to interment of a decedent within the Memorial Garden or Columbarium Niche shall grant Bethlehem Lutheran Church the right to remove the cremated remains of the decedent interred therein and to cause the interment of such remains in any other appropriate location upon the occasion of the relocation of the Memorial Garden/Columbarium for any reason. This consent to removal shall be binding on the decedent, their heirs, legal representatives, and assigns.
- 2) The remains of a decedent interred by any means may be removed by such persons authorized by law to do so and upon compliance by such persons with all requirements of state, municipal, and other pertinent laws. No fees for the vacated space shall be refunded to any person. The Space may be repurposed by Bethlehem Lutheran Church if permitted under law. Any scrolls and inscriptions involved after such removal are the property of Bethlehem Lutheran Church and may be removed, modified, or disposed of as deemed appropriate at the sole discretion of the same. Any Cemetery monument/marker involved after such a removal may be relocated at the expense of the decedent's Family or Legal Representative. If the decedent's Family or Legal Representative chooses not to relocate such a monument/marker within 90 days following removal of the decedent's remains the monument reverts to property of Bethlehem Lutheran Church and may be removed, modified, or disposed of as deemed appropriate at the sole discretion of the same.

I. Services

- 1) Any service held at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in connection with interment (Funeral, Memorial Service, Graveside Service, Service of Burial, etc.) shall be planned in consultation with the Pastor of Bethlehem Lutheran Church and the decedent's family.
- 2) The Pastor of Bethlehem Lutheran Church shall approve the minister(s) leading the service(s) if not him/herself.

Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church Hickory, NC

Governing Policies - Cemetery / Columbarium / Memorial Garden - Continued



Adopted by Congregation: December 3, 2023

- 3) Flowers used during any funeral of memorial service conducted at Bethlehem Lutheran Church must be removed immediately from the sanctuary. Flowers may be placed at the location of interment in accordance with the section entitled "Maintenance and other uses of Sites of Interment."

J. Records and Accounting

- 1) The Cemetery Ministry Team will be the custodian of and maintain cemetery maps, layouts of the columbarium and memorial garden, indicating interment sites used and by whom, reserved, and plots available for use.
- 2) The Cemetery Ministry Team will ensure that records are maintained and shall maintain a record of each interment in the Cemetery, Columbarium and Memorial Garden which shall include the decedent's name, date of birth, date of death, and the name of the decedent's next of kin, and location of interment to the extent possible.
- 3) This Cemetery Ministry Team shall also maintain a list of all eligible persons reserving spaces containing the same information to the extent applicable. (new)
- 4) All fees, donations, and bequests received by Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Hickory, NC in connection with the Memorial Garden shall be maintained by Bethlehem Lutheran Church in a designated account, currently known as the Columbarium/Cemetery Fund.
- 5) The uses for which these funds may be utilized shall include, but not be limited to, tombstone cleaning and maintenance, grounds maintenance, filling sunken graves, mulching in the Memorial Garden, the placement of appropriate plants and flowers in the Memorial Garden, purchasing the Memorial Tablet for the Memorial Garden, paying for scrolls and engraving and installation of the same, paying for inscribed information on niche covers, contributing to the cost of mowing the cemetery, establishing a fund for future Columbarium expansion, renovation, and expansion or relocation of the Columbarium and Memorial Garden.
- 6) All disbursements from said account must be approved by the Cemetery Ministry Team and reported to Congregation Council.