

Columbarium – Frequently Asked Questions

Background

The St. Andrew's columbarium is being constructed as part of the 2022 Capital Campaign, and will be located in an updated and enhanced Memorial Garden, located between the Church and St. Andrew's House. It is expected to be completed and ready to be commissioned by Fall of 2025. The columbarium will be constructed to hold 96 niches, which is comprised of 4 banks of 4 x 6 niches, for a total of 96 niches. Each niche is capable of holding 2 industry standard urns (2 remains). We will have the ability to double the size of the columbarium fairly easily with minimal amount of additional construction, if that need arises.

- 1) Q. How do I reserve a columbarium niche? A. A columbarium niche can be purchased by a single payment of \$5200. This can be made through personal check or through Realm. Please ensure your check is noted for Columbarium, or in Realm with the drop-down menu. If paying through Realm, please ensure to include the Realm fees so that Church receives the full \$5200.
- 2) Q. Are there any other costs associated with interment? A. Yes, at the time of interment, or really just before, there is the cost for the Completer Package. The Completer Package consists of the engraved Facing Stone, Urn, and Engraved Urn Plate. The cost of the Completer Package as of this writing (May 2025) is \$195 plus shipping and handling. The reason this is not charged with the reservation fee is that the cost of the Completer Package will increase over time due to inflation. If there are two interments, 2 Completer Packages will be needed, one each at the time of each interment.
- 3) Q. How many cremated remains will each niche hold? A. Each niche will hold 1 or 2 cremated remains.
- 4) Q. Can the \$5200 for reserving a niche be paid out over time? A. Ideally, we would like 30 reservations to be made up front to help fund the construction of the Columbarium and Memorial Garden; that said, it is understood that everyone's financial situation is different. Please contact the Church office at 713-861-5596 to schedule an alternate payment plan.
- 5) Q. Who is eligible to be interred in the columbarium? A. Interment in the Columbarium is available to any present or past member of St. Andrew's, any immediate family member consisting of parents, siblings, spouse, domestic partner, and children (provided the reservation fee has been paid). Members of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the USA and their immediate families are also eligible for interment provided the request is approved by the Property Committee. Finally, other persons may apply to the Property Committee with prior Rector approval.

- 6) Q. Can two people's remains share the same urn? A. No. Mixing of remains in the same urn is not permissible.
- 7) Q. Can two otherwise un-related persons share a niche that holds two urns (remains) or is it possible to buy half a niche for one remains? A. If two otherwise un-related people both agree in advance and at the signing of their reservation form to share a niche, and all other conditions for interment eligibility, this will be allowed, each in their own urn. In this case, each person is responsible for paying for half a niche, or \$2600, plus the Completer Package at the time of interment. An example of what the Facing Stone might look like is below:



- 8) Q. Can a person buy a niche with the intention of using only 1 urn for their interment, and donate the other half niche to the Church. A. Yes
- 9) Q. What happens if a niche is reserved but never used? A. Upon expiration of 75 years after reservation, if interment has not occurred, and the interment rights owner or their heirs have not renewed the interment rights with the Church office, the interment rights will be forfeited to the Church, including all monies paid. Notice of Forfeiture will be sent to the owner at least 30 days in advance.
- 10) Q. What happens if a reservation is made and reservation fees paid, an interment rights owner changes their mind and no longer wants to be interred in the St. Andrew's Columbarium? A. Upon the request of the interment rights owner, the Church may (but is not obligated to) cancel the interment rights and refund the fees originally paid.
- 11) Q. Who does the actual interment? A. The Rector of St. Andrew's will have complete responsibility for all religious services of committal. To schedule a committal, please contact the Church office at 713-861-5596.
- 12) Q. How is the use of the columbarium governed? A. The Columbarium is governed by laws and regulations of the City of Houston, Harris County, and the State of Texas. Further governance rules have been written and approved by the St. Andrew's Vestry. The Property Committee has Vestry delegated maintenance authority for the Columbarium and Memorial Garden. Day to day operations will be managed by the St. Andrew's Office Manager.
- 13) Q. What is the Facing Stone (name plate with personal information) made of? A. The Facing Stone is made of granite.
- 14) A. Do you have a picture of the Facing Stone? A. The exact facing stone type of granite has not yet been selected. A reasonable representation is below:



15) Q. How many lines can you have just names and dates? A. The exact format is not yet selected, but the above is a reasonable representation.

16) Q. Do you have a picture of the container / urn? A.



17) Q. Is the urn suitable for a service in the church? A. See picture above to make your own judgement, but it is designed to be suitable for a committal service. Additionally, as in all committal / funeral services at St. Andrew's, during the service the urn will be covered by a white funeral pall.

18) Q. If the church is dissolved (doors closed) what happens to the ashes? A. The Church office will maintain a list of those interred with a contact list of next of kin. If St. Andrew's is closed, an attempt will be made to contact next of kin. In any event, the Episcopal Diocese of Texas officially owns the Church property and contents. The Church and Diocese will use reasonable efforts to work with next of kin to re-inter the remains in a respectful manner.

19) Q. Is the interment permanent or can a family member have remains moved? A. Yes. If surviving relative wants to move remains that have been interred, please contact the Church Office at 713-861-5596.

20) Q. Will any kind of flowers be allowed? A. Flowers can be placed at the Columbarium, with prior approval from the Rector or the Office Manager.

21) Q. What will I receive to confirm the niche reservation when the \$5200 fee is paid? A. In addition to the payment, the reservation process will include several documents to be completed and signed that will acknowledge the payment and provide specific inscription information.

22) Q. Is it possible to reserve a specific niche as long it is not already reserved? A. It is possible to request a specific niche if it has not already been reserved / purchased. Contact the Church office at 713-861-5596.

23) Q. How is the columbarium and memorial garden construction being funded? A. The columbarium and memorial garden are being funded in part from the Estate of Elaine

Massey, and also through the purchase of the columbarium niches. We need at least 30 purchases to fully fund the construction.

- 24) Q. What happens to funds for future columbarium niche purchases after the construction is funded? A. The funds for future columbarium niche purchases after construction completion will be held in a sequestered Columbarium Holding Account to specifically fund major maintenance of the Memorial Garden and Columbarium, construction of additional niches, or future improvements to the Memorial Garden and Columbarium.
- 25) Q. Who is responsible for the religious services for interment? A. The Rector of St. Andrew's is responsible for all religious services, including committal or interment services.
- 26) Q. How will interment be scheduled? A. Interment can be scheduled with the Church office, at 713-861-5596.
- 27) Q. Can cremated remains be moved from its original niche to a different niche? A. With approval of the Property Committee, cremated remains may be moved to a different niche.
- 28) Q. Can any other things or ornaments be affixed to the Columbarium or niche? A. Only items approved by the Rector / Church office can be placed on the Columbarium. No boxes, cans, shells, toys, wreaths, metal designs, ornaments, signs, cards, furniture, vases, pictures, artificial flowers, flags, or any other article will be permitted to be placed on the Columbarium.
- 29) Q. Who completes the engraving of the niche Facing Stone? A. Upon request for interment to the Church office, and payment of the Completer Package fee, Homecoming Memorial, Inc will complete the engraving of the Facing Stone.
- 30) Q. What will the Facing Stone engraving consist of? A. The exact format is not yet decided as we are still in construction, but will consist of name of the deceased, years of life, and perhaps dates. Since each niche will hold two remains, we are limited in the space that is available. Here is one likely option.

