



CEMETERY POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Approval Date: April 2024



INTRO

St. Matthew's Reformed Church Cemetery is the sole property of St. Matthew's Reformed Church in Maiden, North Carolina for the interment and inurnment of deceased Church members and their immediate family members according to the definition of membership in the Church constitution.

Please share this information with family members to prevent any future confusion or misunderstanding. In order to be fair to all members, these uniform rules will be strictly enforced. Copies may be obtained from the Church office during regular hours.

CEMETERY COMMITTEE

The cemetery property is managed by the Church Cemetery Committee under the supervision of the St. Matthew's Reformed Church Consistory, which has final authority over all policy issues.

Mission: Provide a dignified resting place where family members can place loved ones' remains until the final judgment day. The Cemetery shall reflect the attention and care that is an expression of Christian love and service.

Goals

- Provide to Church members a burial site befitting a Christian
- Help provide an interment that reflects love and care
- Maintain the cemetery and keep its neat appearance and beautiful landscape
- Abide by and apply St. Matthew's Cemetery policies fairly to all

The Cemetery Committee is composed of 5 to 8 members including at least one member of the Property Committee. The pastor is an ex-officio member of the Committee. Members generally serve a three-year term, which is renewable. The committee elects or selects a chairperson or two co-chairpersons whose duties are detailed in the Personnel Committee job descriptions. Generally the chairperson/co-chairpersons are responsible for assigning grave sites to members, supervising burials, attending the opening of graves, upholding the cemetery policies and rules, conducting several committee meetings annually for the purpose of updating policies, conducting other such business as might relate to the Cemetery, resolving pertinent issues relating to the Cemetery property, and making regular reports to the Church Consistory.

For your safety and understanding, we ask you to read and follow this summary of policies & procedures.

IMPORTANT TERMS IN THIS DOCUMENT

The word *Church* refers specifically to St. Matthew's Reformed Church, Maiden, NC.

The word *Cemetery* refers to St. Mathew's Reformed Church Cemetery, including the columbarium.

The word *Member* or *Members* refers specifically to a member or members of St. Matthew's Reformed Church, Maiden, NC.





The words *bury*, *burial*, *burial plot*, and *buried* include both burial in the ground (interment) and placement of cremains in a columbarium niche (inurnment).

The *Cemetery Committee* and the *Consistory* named in these policies and procedures refer to the governing and policymaking bodies within the membership of St. Matthew's Reformed Church, Maiden, NC.

GENERAL RULES

1. Burial sites shall be assigned to St. Matthew's Reformed Church members upon request and completion of a Certificate of Assignment. Effort shall be made to accommodate specific site requests as much as possible. Church Member, spouse, and children under the age of 18 are eligible to be buried in the assigned sites.
2. Church Members may not give or exchange, transfer, or sell burial sites to any other person without the specific approval of the Cemetery Committee and the Consistory.
3. A non-member spouse may be buried in the plot of the member spouse.
4. Failure to maintain Church membership as defined by the Church constitution revokes all rights to use the assigned cemetery plot.
5. Annually, the Cemetery Committee shall review membership records and determine which burial plots are no longer needed or are revoked so that grave sites can be made available for reassignment.
6. St. Matthew's Reformed Church, the Cemetery Committee, or any Member separately shall not be held responsible for any order authorizing a burial given by telephone. Neither will they be responsible for any mistake occurring because of inaccurate instructions.
7. No pet or service animal may be separately interred anywhere in the Cemetery.

RULES FOR DEEDED PLOTS

1. In the past, a few plots were sold and deeded to non-members of St. Matthew's. Cemetery plots are no longer available for sale to non-Church members. A member and spouse may, after two years of continuous church membership, purchase their assigned plots for a price set by the Consistory. Since March, 2015, the price for a single or double-depth site is \$800. The price for two sites is \$1500.
2. Owners of unused deeded plots are encouraged to donate the plots back to the Church.
3. The Church may repurchase plots sold before 1999 in the amount of the original purchase price.
4. Owners of deeded plots are subject to the Cemetery Committee rules and policies.

SPECIFIC GRAVESITE/BURIAL PLOT AND COLUMBARIUM RULES

1. An approved rigid, lidded outer burial container such as a cement liner, burial vault or the equivalent is required for all casket burials. The overall purpose of such is to prevent ground sinkage as the casket naturally deteriorates over time. The outer burial container helps to prevent the grave from sinking but neither grave liners nor burial vaults are designed to prevent the eventual decomposition of human remains, or entirely prevent water, soil or other debris from penetrating into a casket.
2. A plot shall not be fully enclosed by any fence, railing, wall, hedge, embankment or ditch. However, the limits of each lot may be marked by granite, cement or other permanent markers, with prior approval by the Cemetery Committee. The top surfaces of such markers shall be level with the surface area of the ground so as not to impede the movement of people, cemetery vehicles, or mowing devices.
3. The next of kin of the deceased or the estate representative is responsible for seeing that the burial site is marked with an appropriate memorial marker no later than six months after the burial.





4. In the case of a member's family or the estate unable to purchase an appropriate memorial marker, the Cemetery Committee will solicit sufficient funds to prepare and place an approved permanent marker.

5. At the minimum, an appropriate stone or metal memorial marker shall have the deceased's name and the dates of birth and death.

6. Niche granite faces shall be of uniform appearance and include name(s) and dates of birth and death. No additional ornamentation, temporary or permanent may be attached to the niche face.

7. The funeral service responsible for the burial is required to return the soil to the grave site, tamped to prevent excessive settling, and remove any excess soil to a designated area.

8. No vehicle is permitted inside the burial area other than the equipment required to open the grave, place the vault, and transport loose soil to and from the grave site.

9. No vehicle is permitted in the Cemetery at any time other than approved maintenance equipment such as tractor-type mowing devices and other equipment necessary for maintenance activities, except occasions where visitors who are unable to walk may be transported by vehicle along the paved driveway of the Cemetery.

10. A representative of the Cemetery Committee must be present when a gravesite is opened and when any permanent marker (headstone and/or footstone) is set.

11. Upon notification of an impending grave site opening, the chairman, co-chairman or a designee shall mark the site with temporary markers such as landscaping flags.

12. Headstones (monuments) must be set on a formed concrete pad which extends twelve (12) inches beyond the marker itself and be at least 6 inches deep.

13. Footstones must be set on a formed concrete pad extending six (6) inches beyond the marker itself and be at least six inches deep. Footstones and the concrete pads of all markers must be level with the surrounding soil.

14. When installing a permanent marker, special attention should be paid to any surface slope such that the finished marker does not interfere with a tractor-type mowing device to pass over the footstone without causing damage by blade contact.

15. Any damage to improperly placed markers is the responsibility of the owner(s) and not the responsibility of St. Matthew's Reformed Church. Any other markers, urns, or other memorial devices must be placed on the headstone in such a way as to not interfere with routine cemetery maintenance, such as mowing.

RULES FOR URNS, SEASONAL AND INCIDENTAL DECORATIONS

1. Floral arrangements shall be removed by the family or responsible party no later than fifteen (15) days after a burial. Seasonal arrangements must be refreshed or removed after 60 days. Holiday-specific arrangements must be removed 60 days after the holiday.

2. Urns and receptacles for cut flowers shall be inverted when not in use and, if determined to be unsightly, are subject to removal.

3. No ornamental decorations or plantings (annual or perennial) will be permitted within the cemetery.

4. Flowers, wreaths, and other temporary grave decorations left on plots will be removed when they become unsightly.

5. The Church is not responsible for any damage or theft of urns, receptacles, or floral displays placed in the Cemetery.

RULES FOR CREMAINS

1. Cremated remains (cremains) may not be interred, inurned, or otherwise buried anywhere in the Cemetery without prior approval and authorization by the Cemetery Committee or the Consistory.

2. Cremains for interment or inurnment must be in a sturdy, unbreakable, corrosion resistant urn. The Cemetery Committee recommends a bronze urn. Cremains within a concrete containment vessel or a metal vault are allowed. Wood, paperboard, glass and ceramic may not be used. Columbarium urns must fit appropriately in the 12x12x12 inch niche space.





3. Cremains may be interred in an existing grave (an occupied grave of a family member) but each interment must be adequately marked with an appropriate grave marker.

4. Cremains may be buried in a family plot next to a family member or in the same gravesite with a casketed family member.

5. Cremains may not be scattered on the ground anywhere in the cemetery. In cases where cremains have been scattered in another place, an appropriate memorial marker may be placed in a family plot as a remembrance.

6. Up to four sets of cremains may be buried in a single grave plot so long as each set of cremains has an appropriate memorial marker.

7. For columbarium inurnment, each set of cremains must be in an unbreakable, corrosion-resistant, container and be permanently sealed in the columbarium vault. Bronze is the preferred material for urns inurned in columbarium niches.

8. Each set of cremains must have an appropriate memorial marker of uniform configuration determined by the Cemetery Committee.

9. Placement of two bodies or cremated remains in the same casket/niche is permitted with written permission from the nearest relative of both deceased persons or by either person by prior arrangement. Niche face plates in cases of double inurnments shall be engraved with each name, birth and death date (four lines for each decedent).

10. For columbarium inurnment or niche assignment an engraving fee of \$180 per decedent shall be paid to St. Matthew's Reformed Church. The fee is required upon inurnment or assignment to assure the face plate is engraved without delay.

11. A columbarium niche may not be opened for any reason except by an authorized person, specifically an officer of the Cemetery Committee, the chairperson of the Consistory, or the pastor.

12. Removal of inurned cremains is forbidden except upon written request by next of kin for justifiable reason, payment of a niche plate replacement fee, and upon permission of the Consistory. The Church will in no way bear any responsibility whatsoever for the cremains once they are removed.

RULES FOR DOUBLE DEPTH BURIAL

1. Two persons may be interred or inurned in any one grave space, provided both inscriptions appear on the permanent marker(s).

2. Double depth interments are permitted provided that:

- a. The Cemetery Committee approves the vaults to be used
- b. The double depth interment is requested and approved before the time of the first interment to allow appropriate depth for the first interment.
- c. Each set of remains must be placed in an approved rigid supportive container as described above for inurnments and casket interments.

3. St. Matthew's Reformed Church and/or the Cemetery Committee shall reserve the right to refuse double-depth interment where soil conditions prohibit an additional grave depth.

MODIFYING AND AMENDING CEMETERY RULES AND POLICIES

It shall be the right and duty of the Cemetery Committee with approval by the Consistory to amend these policies from time to time as deemed necessary for the care of the Cemetery and the safety and security of Church members.

The most recent Cemetery Policy supersedes all previous rules and policies.

The above rules and regulations may not constitute all the rules and regulations of the Cemetery, but those most pertinent to Church members and visitors.

Please contact our Church should you have questions concerning our policies.

