**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**ABOUT THE ST. JOHN CHRYSTOM COLUMBARIUM**

**What is a columbarium?**

 A columbarium is a wall with a group of compartments known as “niches” designed to hold cremation urns. Each niche usually can accommodate one or two urns. Traditionally, each niche has an individual plaque mounted on the face of niche with names and dates. The columbarium is constructed of building materials complementary to the existing church architecture.

**Why consider a columbarium rather than an earth burial?**

 Increasingly, cremation is becoming a popular choice for church members as they are faced with providing appropriate disposition of their own and loved ones remains. In the future, it is expected that a large percentage of church members will choose cremation over traditional burial. Because of increasing costs of traditional funerals, those who cremation and subsequent inurnment in a church columbarium can expect to save money over the cost of a traditional earth burial.

**Who can be inurned in the St. John Chrysostom columbarium?**

 The church’s churchyard, including the columbarium, is a private cemetery, held by the church for the use and benefit of church members, and subject to the Canons and Regulations of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, and also to the Canons and Regulations of the Protestant Episcopal Church Diocese of Milwaukee. Before proceeding to inurn cremains in a niche, arrangements must be made with the church Rector.

**What are the benefits of a church columbarium?**

 Families who chose cremation for their departed loved ones rather than conventional burial will find the church’s columbarium a wonderful option—dignified, convenient, and affordable. In addition, the columbarium is very convenient for funerals and memorial services. Participants can walk from the church to gather in the columbarium and take part in the inurnment service.

A columbarium ministry allows the church to fulfill the centuries old obligation of the church to serve its members from baptism to death. As the rite of baptism welcomes members into the church community, the rite of Christian burial offers parishioners a final homecoming and provides comfort to the living with the knowledge their oved ones are near their spiritual gathering place. This ministry allows the church to satisfy the need for Christian burial, while bringing past and present together—in body and spirit. Those who have come before us remain part of the church community.

 Christians can be assured that cremation has a long history and can be justified Biblically. Cremation is not inherently irreverent. Fire is often a Biblical image of cleansing and purity.

**How will the church’s columbarium be cared for in the future?**

 In accordance with Wisconsin Statutes § 157.123 (columbaria maintained by a religious association), the church places 25% of the niche cost into a perpetual care fund that will cover care of the columbarium and its area in the future.

**Can I donate to the church’s columbarium fund?**

 Yes, you can make tax deductible donations to the fund. Buying a niche, however, is not tax deductible.

**Where is the church’s columbarium located?**

 The columbarium is located on the southeast corner of the churchyard. It overlooks St. John’s Park and Nagawicka Lake.

**How many urns fit in a columbarium niche?**

Niches measure approximately 12” x 12” x 13”. Two to three urns may fit in a niche, depending on urn size.

**Does using a columbarium niche eliminate the need for a funeral home?**

 No. You would still need the services of a funeral home to make arrangement and cremation services.

**Are there guidelines governing the columbarium?**

 Yes, these can be obtained by requesting them from sjc@stchrysostom.com.

**How do I reserve a niche in the church’s columbarium?**

 First, email the church at sjc@stchrysostom.com or call the parish office (262) 646-2727 and request a Columbarium Niche Agreement. Next, review the church’s columbarium guidelines. Then, complete the required information in the agreement and select the location of the niche. Submit the completed Columbarium Niche Agreement and submit it to the parish office or through the mail.

 Once you have submitted the required information the Columbarium Committee will review the agreement and present it to the rector for execution. The executed agreement should be stored in a safe, secure place with your other important papers.