

**ADMINISTRATION OF CEMETERY OPERATIONS  
AT ST. LUKE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SIMEON**

**1. Purpose:** To set forth the policies for all burials and related issues at the cemetery located on the grounds of St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Simeon.

**2. Definitions:**

- a. Member is defined as a communicant in good standing. A communicant in good standing is defined in Title I, Canon 17, Constitution and Canons of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America as a person who for the previous year has been faithful in corporate worship, unless for good cause prevented, and has been faithful in working, praying, and giving for the spread of the Kingdom of God.
- b. Burial space plan is the cemetery site survey originally created in October 1992 and periodically updated by the Cemetery Committee. This survey locates burial lots, casket burial spaces and cremains burial spaces.
- c. Casket burial space is defined as the amount of land necessary for the purpose of one casket burial or the cremated remains of one or more (maximum of three) human bodies.
- d. Cremains burial space is defined as a 3' by 3' space. A Casket burial space may be used for up to three human cremains.

**3. Policy:**

- a. It is the policy of St. Luke's to offer burial space, if available, to members of the congregation who desire burial in the church cemetery.
- b. Under special circumstances involving pastoral consideration, the vicar may authorize burial of non-communicant with the advice and consent of the Cemetery Committee.
- c. Burial rights at St. Luke's cemetery do not include the sale or deeding of property.
- d. Burial rights may be sold by the owner thereof only to the Vestry Committee of St. Luke's for the amount of the original cost. Sale of burial rights by one person to another is not permitted, and in the event such sale is attempted, no transfer of burial rights shall be recognized by the Vestry Committee.
- e. A Cemetery Committee authorized by the Vestry Committee will oversee the administration of the cemetery including the approval of burial rights and operation of the cemetery.
- f. All burials are subject to the conditions set forth in below.

#### 4. Responsibilities:

##### a. Vestry Committee

- 1) The Vestry Committee of St. Luke's shall be responsible for the administration of this policy and for recommending future amendments as may be warranted. The Vestry Committee is the final authority in all issues related to burials at St. Luke's.
- 2) The Vestry Committee will also select the chairperson of the Cemetery Committee.
- 3) The vicar, or in the vicar's absence the senior warden or junior warden, is the final authority regarding questions of membership at St. Luke's.

##### b. Cemetery Committee

- 1) The Cemetery Committee chair will select additional committee members and serve as the contact person with funeral directors and the public. The chair may periodically alter the membership of the committee as deemed necessary.
- 2) The Cemetery Committee shall oversee the operation and maintenance of the cemetery, manage the purchase of burial rights and arrange for locating grave sites for burials.
- 3) In addition to the chairperson, the Cemetery Committee shall be composed of no less than three and no more than five church members. At least one member of the Vestry Committee shall serve on the Cemetery Committee at all times. The vicar shall be an *ex officio* member.
- 4) A quorum for all regular business meetings is the chair and a majority of the members of the Cemetery Committee.
- 5) Emergency decisions regarding burials may be made by the vicar or Cemetery Committee chair.

##### c. Funeral Directors

- 1) No interment will be initiated in the cemetery without the approval of the chair or appointed Cemetery Committee representative.
- 2) Funeral directors will ensure that a member of the Cemetery Committee is present at the time of grave opening and interment.
- 3) Prior to excavation all burial spaces shall be probed to insure there is no previous interment. If so, another space must be chosen for interment with the approval of the vicar/or cemetery committee chair.

- 4) Funeral directors must advise their clients of the existence of these policies and be governed by them.

## **5. Burial Rights in St. Luke's Cemetery**

### a. Members of St. Luke's, Simeon

- 1) Entitlement of burial in the cemetery to members of St. Luke's is subject to availability of suitable space and payment of the appropriate fees (see section 6e).
- 2) Members of St. Luke's desiring burial in the cemetery are encouraged to make advance purchase of burial rights.
- 3) Gifting, inheritance, assignment or any other method of conveyance of burial rights is not permitted. As noted above, the sale of burial rights can only be made to the church at the original purchase price.
- 4) All persons who have purchased burial rights shall be provided both a statement confirming the purchase and a copy of this policy.
- 5) An exact and permanent record of these purchases shall be maintained by the Cemetery Committee.

### b. Non-members of St. Luke's

- 1) There is no entitlement to burial of non-members in the St. Luke's cemetery.
- 2) The Cemetery Committee may approve burial rights for non-members under special circumstances which shall be evaluated by the Cemetery Committee before a decision is rendered.
- 3) All provisions of the burial rights section above also apply to non-members.

## **6. Lots, Spaces and Fees**

- a. A copy of the official burial space plan is posted in Berberich Hall at St. Luke's Church. The location of new casket burial spaces and cremains burial spaces shall comply with the burial space plan, unless an exception is granted by a majority of the Cemetery Committee during a regular business meeting.
- b. Older regulations and space plans included names in order to provide documentation of existing burials, but do not signify ownership.
- c. Casket burial space is nominally 4' by 9' for lots 1-10 and 4' by 10 for lots 11-20.
- d. A maximum of three cremains can be buried in a casket burial space.
- e. A schedule of current fees and deposits will be maintained at St. Luke's church.

- 1) The date of the latest schedule is controlling and supersedes any previous list of fees for burial services at St. Luke's.
- 2) A document from St. Luke's confirming the "pre-purchase" of burial rights at a rate lower than the current rate will be accepted as payment in full.

## **7. Grave Openings, Interments, and Services**

- a. No grave openings, interments or funeral services may be undertaken at St. Luke's without the presence of the vicar and/or a member of the Cemetery Committee.
- b. When graves are excavated, care must be exercised to protect the integrity of existing grounds, plantings, monuments or other physical features. Cost of labor and material to repair damage is to be paid by the responsible entity. The sod at the site is to be removed, saved and replaced with care.
- c. All casket interments will be made in industry-approved vaults. Cremains require no vault.
- d. Excess soil is to be disposed of on site as directed by the Cemetery Committee representative.

## **8. Markers, Headstones, and Work in the Cemetery**

- a. All graves must be identified with a permanent marker within one year of the burial. If no marker is installed, the monument deposit is forfeited and the Cemetery Committee will take action to install an appropriate grave marker.
- b. Markers or monuments shall be consistent in design with those in the cemetery. No monuments of a bizarre or unconventional design shall be permitted. The right is reserved to prohibit the erection of any monument or memorial that, in the judgment of the Cemetery Committee, may be deemed inappropriate.
- c. No installation work of any kind will be permitted in the cemetery without prior approval of location by the vicar or cemetery chair.
- d. All monuments shall be installed on a concrete footing at least 4" larger in each dimension than the base of the monument and at least 8" deep.
- e. No construction debris shall be left on the site. Cost of labor and material required to remove the debris or repair damage is to be paid by the responsible entity.
- f. All monuments, headstones, or other types of markers are the full responsibility of the heirs of the deceased for care and maintenance. If any such marker becomes unsafe, the Cemetery Committee will notify the heirs of the deceased of the need to remove or repair, and the Cemetery Committee reserves the right to repair or remove such marker at the heir's expense.

- g. Markers for cremains burial space shall be flat and installed at turf level.
- h. No more than one headstone shall be allowed per casket burial space.

**9. Disinterment**

- a. Permission for any disinterment must be initiated by a written application to St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Simeon, P. O. Box 694, Charlottesville, VA 22902.
- b. The request must include a complete explanation justifying the need for disinterment and/or evidence of judicial approval of the action if required.

**10. Flowers and Decorations**

- a. No trees, shrubs, vines, or plants of any kind shall be planted by the holders of burial rights, their family or friends in the cemetery.
- b. It is preferred that decorations be natural and placed in approved in-ground unbreakable vases, or integral to the headstone.
- c. No illuminated decorations or illuminated objects will be allowed.
- d. Flowers and decorations in the Cemetery can quickly become unsightly. Donors shall monitor the condition of all decorations placed on graves and remove items before they become a discredit to their loved ones.
- e. The Cemetery Committee reserves the right to remove unsightly, dangerous, inappropriate or outdated, seasonal decorations.

*Approved by the Vestry Committee of St Luke's Episcopal Church on January 17, 2007.*