

UNION BOARD OF TRUSTEES COLUMBARIUM FEASIBILITY STUDY

To respond to congregational interest, the Union Board of Trustees has created an exploratory or feasibility committee to determine interest level in a Columbarium at Union. This committee is in the midst of research and wants to share some educational materials that may generate some discussion and awareness. Our plan is to send a formal interest survey to all church members in January 2018. We have no action plans at this time; we are only in the very early stages of exploring the level of interest in our congregation.

We invite comments or questions to be directed to committee chair, Joe Wildt through the Trustee box near the church office or by email: jwmontani@icloud.com. Thank you.

WHAT IS A COLUMBARIUM?

A columbarium is a structure with drawers or shelves called “niches” where urns of cremated remains can be placed to memorialize deceased loved ones. A columbarium is often a free standing wall with columns of niches covered by individually engraved stones or plaques. It can be small or large, simple or ornate, built at one time or in stages, and designs are endless.

WHAT IS THE HISTORY BEHIND A COLUMBARIUM?

Churches have traditionally provided burial space because of the desire of many to have a final resting place near a place where they served and felt the loving presence of God. Providing a Columbarium extends this option for placement of cremated remains. Since cremation is an accepted practice of the United Methodist Church and other major denominations, a Columbarium option is increasingly requested as a practice of good stewardship of land and resources; and can be a cost savings to families.

IS UNION THINKING ABOUT A COLUMBARIUM?

Yes. For years, Union church members have informally discussed the desire to add a Columbarium. Union’s Board of Trustees decided it was time to formally explore whether this is something that Union wants to do.

HOW WOULD THIS BE FUNDED?

We do not have a funding plan yet. However, many churches develop a plan that includes some initial modest church funding with continued funding from individuals who purchase or reserve a niche. Some churches budget to fund the entire structure; some fund it through advance reservations and some opt for a joint funding plan. There are many options.

HOW MUCH WOULD A NICHE COST?

We are too early in the process and exact costs have not been determined. However, our research shows many churches charge \$1000 - \$2500 for church members and \$2000- \$3500 for those not affiliated with the church. Their fees also vary for single or double niches. Our costs would depend on our overall plan and design.

WHERE WOULD IT BE LOCATED?

A site has not been identified, but Union is fortunate to have many possible locations.

WHO WOULD BE ELIGIBLE FOR INURNMENT IF UNION HAD A COLUMBARIUM?

We have not explored this yet, but many churches allow inurnment of any current and former church members, clergy, family and those affiliated with the church. Some churches have no limitations. Most churches establish a committee to set up the guidelines for this.

WHERE CAN I SEE SOME EXAMPLES OF A COLUMBARIUM?

In our area, you can see a Columbarium at McGregor Presbyterian, Shandon UMC, St Joseph's Catholic, Eastminster Presbyterian, Incarnation Lutheran and other locations. An internet search will also display many examples of a Columbarium.

HOW CAN I TELL YOU I AM INTERESTED NOW?

We certainly would like to know if you would be interested in a niche now. We also would like to know if you would be willing to make a future financial commitment toward this endeavor. Send Joe an email at the address below and tell him about your desires.

HOW CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

We invite comments or questions to be directed to committee chair, Joe Wildt through the Trustee box near the church office or by email: jwmontani@icloud.com. Thank you.

A few local Columbarium photos:

St Johns UMC, Aiken



Central UMC, Florence



Incarnation Lutheran, Columbia

