



## St. Mark's Cemetery

*Cemetery by-laws governing regulations & policies*

**St. Mark's Episcopal Church**

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## Introduction

Saint Mark's cemetery and columbarium (hereafter the Cemetery), adjacent to the church and parish house of Saint Mark's Parish located on the Mt. Holly-Huntersville Road, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, are maintained as a service to member parishioners and their immediate families. In keeping with the teaching of the Christian Church, the privilege of Christian burial in consecrated ground is extended to the "faithful departed in Christ". It is fitting and proper that the mortal remains of persons who have grown up in Christ and who have served Him during their earthly lives, as members of Saint Mark's parish family should be buried in the parish cemetery.

In order that Saint Mark's cemetery may truly serve the needs of the parish, i.e., be managed in accordance with the Episcopal Church's teaching regarding Christian burial and maintained in a manner that will suitably memorialize those buried therein, the following policy has been adopted by the Vestry of Saint Mark's parish as a guide for member parishioners, and any others, who are extended the privilege of burial.

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### I. Cemetery Committee

- A. The Vestry of Saint Mark's shall establish & cause to remain active a Cemetery Committee. The Junior Warden shall be an active member of the committee during his/her term and shall serve as the chair unless the committee selects or has already selected another chair.
- B. The cemetery committee shall be responsible for the following:

1. Assigning and recording cemetery plots in accordance with Article II below.
  2. Assisting with the physical location and staking of plots at the time of burial.
  3. Periodic review and updating of these cemetery Regulations and Policies.
  4. Periodic inspection of the cemetery grounds to verify compliance with these Regulations and Policies and to identify maintenance needs.
  5. Monitoring utilization of the available Cemetery plots and Columbarium spaces and planning for expansion as needed.
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## II. Assignment

### A. Cemetery Plots

1. In the newer sections of the Cemetery, plots are approximately 4'-0" x 8'-0" and are generally grouped in modules of eight plots. (Cemetery Plot Assignment Plan, Saint Mark's Episcopal Church, Huntersville, NC, dated January 1, 2009, redrawn from Cemetery Plat and Assignment plan for Saint Mark's Episcopal Church, Long Creek, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, April 1, 1959, as traced from Plan dated March 1948, Revised rows 7, 8, 9 added.)
2. Plot assignments will be made in a manner that facilitates the orderly development of the Cemetery over time, as determined by the Cemetery Committee. An exception may be made when an applicant requests the assignment of a plot(s) in proximity to the existing plot of an immediate family member.

### B. Columbarium

1. Columbarium niches are approximately 8 1/2" high x 8" wide x 8" deep.
2. Niche assignments will be made in a manner that facilitates the orderly development of the Columbarium over time, as determined by the Cemetery Committee. An exception may be made when an applicant requests the assignment of a niche(s) in proximity to the existing niche of an immediate family member.
3. Within 60 days of assignment, each space so reserved must be properly identified with a standard marker approved by the Cemetery Committee. The expense of such markers shall be borne by the person or family making the request.

### C. Eligibility

1. Members

- a. Any person, carried on the parish register of Saint Mark's Parish as an active member in good standing (Canon 16 and others), may apply to the Cemetery Committee for assignment of a Cemetery plot(s) or Columbarium niche(s), for themselves and for their spouse and children.
  - b. Plots are subject to the fee schedule in Article I below.
2. Non-Members
- a. In recognition that Saint Mark's cemetery serves as a family cemetery, the cemetery committee will consider applications for plots made by active members in good standing on behalf of immediate family members (for the purposes of these regulations and policies the term immediate family member shall mean a spouse or a child) even though they are not members of the parish themselves. If the cemetery committee determines that such assignment will not in the foreseeable future deny active members of the parish burial, it may assign a plot(s) to the applicant, subject to approval of the Vestry.
  - b. Plots for non-members so assigned are subject to the fee schedule in Article I below.

#### D. Assignment Requests

1. To make an assignment request, a letter of explanation should be addressed to the Junior Warden of the Vestry. This letter must be accompanied by a completed "Burial Site Assignment Request" application.
2. The Cemetery Committee will review the application and render a letter of recommendation regarding the assignment to the Vestry.

#### E. Assignment Records

1. Assignments recommendations made by the Cemetery Committee will be presented to the Vestry by the Junior Warden. Approved assignments are to be entered in the minutes of the Vestry and designated on the master Cemetery Plot Assignment Plan or Columbarium Map, as appropriate. Such assignments shall also be recorded in the church membership record of the assignee and in the assignment records maintained by the Cemetery Committee.

#### F. Reassignment

1. In the event that an individual or family desires to make alternative arrangements for burial, assigned plots or niches shall be relinquished and will become eligible for reassignment by the Cemetery Committee.
2. No family or individual assigned space in the cemetery or columbarium may trade, transfer, or assign his/her space to other families or individuals without the permission of the Cemetery Committee.
3. Any reassignments permitted by the Cemetery Committee shall be presented to the Vestry by the Junior Warden and entered in the minutes of the Vestry and properly recorded as noted above.

#### G. Special Assignment

1. The Cemetery Committee shall reserve to itself four plots and four columbarium spaces, to be used and assigned at its discretion. Such space is reserved for emergencies in order to provide space for the burial of members and their immediate families that do not have reserved plots, to provide space for temporary burial if necessary, and to meet other special situations that might arise.
2. **NOTE:** *In the event of an emergency, the rector or any officer of the vestry is authorized to assign any unassigned plot.*

#### H. Right of Internment

1. Assignment of Cemetery Plots or Columbarium Spaces made by the Cemetery Committee and approved by the Vestry grant only the right of internment. Such assignment of internment rights does not convey to the assignee ownership of any real property.

#### I. Fees

1. Effective April 15th, 2009 the following fee schedule is applicable to all persons desiring the assignment of burial plots or niches.
  - a. Cemetery Plot: \$500.00
  - b. Columbarium Niche: \$250.00
2. Fifty percent (50%) of the above fees are refundable in the event that an assigned plot is no longer desired and/or alternative burial arrangements are made elsewhere. In such a case, the assignment will be removed from the records and the plot will become eligible for reassignment by the Cemetery Committee.

3. Fees paid shall be utilized for the general care and upkeep of the cemetery grounds. Payment of such fees does not constitute a rental or lease agreement with the vestry and/or the cemetery committee and in no way obligates the vestry or the cemetery committee to maintain a particular plot in a manner that differs from the normal, general maintenance of the cemetery grounds.
  4. There are no fees applicable to assignments made prior to April 15th, 2009.
  5. The Rector, for pastoral concerns, may waive or make adjustments to these fees.
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### **III. Monuments & Markers**

#### **A. Intent & Applicability**

1. It is the desire of the vestry to see that Saint Mark's cemetery is kept and maintained in as neat and orderly a fashion as possible at all times. To facilitate adequate care of the cemetery and lots in general by church employees, the vestry has adopted the following policy governing the placement of corner markers, boundary walls, monuments, urns, vases, and related markers or memorials.
2. In all cases, monuments, markers, and similar memorials shall be in keeping with the general character of the cemetery. The Christian Church teaches that undue emphasis should not be put on the remains of the dead. It is suggested that ostentatious markers and memorials such as towering obelisks, and many forms of "cemetery" statuary – as well as monuments made from exotic types of material – can hardly be justified from Christian teaching. The Rector, or a member of the cemetery committee, will be glad to consult with any family about the appropriateness of a proposed memorial marker.
3. This policy shall apply to all new lots assigned and to lots already assigned in which there are no graves or which have not been furnished with memorials or other markers as of January 1, 1963.

#### **B. Regulations**

1. All monuments, markers, and similar memorials, urns, vases, shall be set flush with the level of the ground Exception: Monuments, markers, and similar memorials may be extend above the level of the ground when all off the following conditions are met:

- a. Any monument, marker, or similar memorial that extends above the level of the ground must rest on a concrete or stone base set flush with the ground and extending at least four (4) inches on all sides of any raised portion.
  - b. A minimum of twenty-four (24) inches must be maintained between any monuments, markers, or similar memorials that extend above the level of the ground (for example, there must be a minimum of twenty-four (24) inches between headstones or between headstones and boundary walls and markers).
  - c. In order to comply with the above, families with multiple adjacent plots may wish to consider the use of a single, larger headstone inscribed with the family name, with individual stones approximately eighteen (18) inches by twenty-four (24) inches in size set flush with the ground to designate individual graves.
2. Guidelines for the location of monuments, markers, and similar memorials can be found in Appendix "A" to the Regulations & Policies Governing the use of Saint Mark's Cemetery.
  3. The orientation of markers shall match the established pattern of existing markers.
  4. At the Columbarium, new markers must match the existing markers in size, materials, type font, etc.
  5. The use of continuous walls, fences, or boundary markers surrounding a plot or group of plots are not permitted.
  6. The use of footstones or other markers at the foot of a grave are not permitted.
  7. Permanent, above ground urns, vases, and similar items are not permitted.
  8. Graves shall be level with the surrounding ground. Grave mounds are not permitted.
  9. No mausoleums or aboveground vaults will be permitted
  10. No trees, shrubbery, or flowers may be planted in or around plots.
  11. A marker compliant with these regulations must be erected within 12 months of a burial or interment.
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## IV. Burial

### A. Procedures & Regulations in the Event of a Death:

1. The Rector or a member of the Cemetery Committee should be notified immediately of any pending burial within the Saint Mark's Cemetery.
2. All burials are to be coordinated and performed by an entity that is properly licensed with the NC Board of Funeral Service and that is approved by the Vestry.
3. The family of the deceased is responsible for making funeral arrangements with the funeral home of their choice and also for all costs associated with the burial.
4. The family or the funeral home shall notify the church office of the need to locate a grave site or columbarium niche and to schedule the burial date. The church office will contact a member of the cemetery committee to request the staking of the grave site.
5. Upon notification, a member of the Cemetery Committee or their designee will determine the correct location of the burial plot and stake the corners of the excavation.
6. The use of a permanent vault is required for all burials in the cemetery.
7. No more than one body may be buried in a single cemetery plot, except as follows:
  - a. Two infants in vaults no longer than 24 inches.
  - b. Six separate remains from a cremation.
  - c. One full size vault and one remains from a cremation.
8. For interment in the Columbarium:
  - a. The family of the deceased or the funeral home is responsible for contacting Winecoff Memorials to arrange to have the blank marker removed from the wall prior to interment and for engraving.
  - b. All columbarium markers are required to use the St. Mark's standard for marker content, font and character/line spacing.

## **V. Gravesite Maintenance & Repair**

- A. Maintenance and repair of gravesites, grave markers, monuments and foundations thereof, regardless of the nature or cause, shall be the responsibility of the surviving family members of the deceased. The Cemetery Committee reserves the right, but is not obligated, to make any repairs it deems necessary for reasons of safety, public health, or any other causes affecting the use and enjoyment of the Cemetery.
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**Please telephone with additional queries:**

Church Office: (704) 399-5193

Wincoff Memorials: 1 (888) 457-8663

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