

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What are the benefits of a Columbarium to Coker and to you?

It fulfills the Church's mission to oversee the spiritual life of our congregation and the community from baptism through life to death. The Columbarium setting is a modern version of historical church cemeteries. It will be a serene spot for reflection, meditation and prayer, allowing for visitation by family and loved ones. Practically speaking, cemetery plots have become increasingly remote and difficult to reach. Economically, the comparison of the costs of a traditional cemetery burial and a columbarium inurnment reveals the substantial financial advantage of a columbarium. Also, a significant portion of the cost to purchase a Chamber or Memorial Plaque is a tax deductible donation for the purchaser.

2. What will be the final location of the Columbarium?

An extended search and evaluation by the committee combined with discussions with Trustees and the Building Committee of possible locations on the church campus is ongoing. A serene, peaceful location tied to the history of Coker United Methodist Church will be chosen for the final location of Coker Columbarium.

3. What are the details on the Chambers and Vaults? How many Chambers will there be?

Coker Columbarium is planned as an open air structure, an updated version of a traditional church cemetery. It will have Vaults within the Columbarium structure, each containing Chambers; a projection of more than 500 Chambers, initially. One (1) Chamber can accommodate up to two polished, lacquered bronze box urns (provided with purchase). Each Chamber will have a granite faceplate which can be engraved with names, dates of birth and death. A Memorial Wall will compose one interior wall of the outdoor Columbarium, holding Memorial Plaques available for remembering a loved one.

4. Who can use the Coker Columbarium or be memorialized with a plaque on the Memorial Wall?

The Coker Columbarium is open to all people.

5. Will there be a place to sit and reflect or pray?

Yes, benches are part of the Columbarium design, to be used for services, reflection, meditation and prayer.

6. What is included in the price for a Chamber? For a Memorial Plaque?

Chamber cost includes: Use of Chamber space for urn(s) in perpetuity; polished, lacquered bronze box urn(s); all hardware for the Chamber; engraved granite faceplate; opening and closing of the Chamber at time of inurnment; document record maintenance by Coker United Methodist Church; perpetual care and Columbarium maintenance.

Memorial Wall Plaque cost includes: Engraved granite plaque and hardware in designated space on the Memorial Wall. Document record maintenance by Coker United Methodist Church; perpetual care of the Memorial wall and Columbarium maintenance.

7. How do I purchase a Chamber? What are the payment options? Is there a pre-planning purchase option?

Payment is accepted by cash, check or credit card. Checks should be made to: Coker United Methodist Church, with “Columbarium” in the memo line. Purchase of a Chamber now, as an advance planning option, relieves your loved ones of those plans at a later time.

8. Are there any extra costs at inurnment?

No, the costs of opening and closing at the time of inurnment are covered in the cost of a Chamber.

9. Is any of this purchase price tax deductible?

Yes, a significant portion of the purchase price is a donation to Coker UMC for building the Columbarium. Please refer to the prevailing fee schedule for the amount of tax deduction.

10. Is my Columbarium Purchase counted as part of my annual pledge to Coker?

No, it is separate and apart from your annual pledge to Coker United Methodist Church.

11. Are there any property rights with the purchase of a Chamber?

The purchase of use of a Chamber space or placement of remains in a Chamber does not confer any property rights in the purchaser.

12. May I select the exact Chamber location that I would like?

Yes, selection of your Chamber location, from currently available Chambers, is part of the Columbarium Agreement and payment process, when purchasing an exclusive-use Chamber. Location of non-exclusive-use Chambers will be assigned upon inurnment.

13. How do I obtain my Columbarium Urn to take to the funeral home?

Contact Gail Hatcher, Columbarium Coordinator, at Coker United Methodist Church, 210-494-3455, ext. 1236.

14. What is the United Methodist Church stance on cremation?

The United Methodist Church accepts cremation as a viable option, when it is the choice of the deceased or family. Cremation is in accordance with the Church’s beliefs and doctrines.

15. What other churches in San Antonio have a columbarium?

Many churches in San Antonio have a columbarium. A few examples include: Laurel Heights Methodist Church, Alamo Heights Methodist Church, Woodland Baptist Church, St. John’s Lutheran, Christ Episcopal, St. Mark’s Episcopal, and St. George Episcopal.

16. Who handles the cremation? What is the cost?

San Antonio has numerous crematoriums and funeral homes providing cremation. Costs vary by the total services you obtain from these facilities. You may work directly with a crematorium for direct cremation, if desired.

17. Is the Columbarium part of the Coker Master Plan? ...the Coker Building Campaign?

Yes, the Columbarium is included in the Coker Master Plan and in the design and construction phases of the Building Campaign Phase 1.

18. May I donate to the Columbarium as part of my Building Campaign donation?

No, purchases of Chambers or Memorial Plaques or donations to the Coker Columbarium are separate and apart from the future Coker Building Campaign.

19. What is the timeline for constructing the permanent Columbarium and Memorial Plaque Wall? When will it open and be available?

The permanent Coker Columbarium will be built during Phase 1 of the Coker Building Campaign, which does not, yet, have a start date assigned.

Currently, locked Columbarium Cabinets are available, housed in the Coker Chapel. These Columbarium Cabinets serve as a bridge for storage of cremains until the final Columbarium is completed. The polished, lacquered bronze boxes, called urns and included with the purchase of a Chamber, are available for use now in the Columbarium Cabinets. Granite Memorial Plaques, to be displayed in this location, are also available now. Both Urns and Memorial Plaques in the Chapel location will be relocated to the permanent Coker Columbarium as soon as it is available.

20. What are the guidelines for purchasing a Chamber?

The Coker Columbarium is open to all people. Please see the Agreement Regarding Inurnment Rights for full detail.

21. Who is responsible for engraving the face plate of the Chambers or the Memorial Plaques?

The Church handles the engraving of the granite faceplate for the Columbarium Chambers and the granite Memorial Plaques.

22. What can be engraved on the Granite Faceplate for the Chambers or Memorial Plaques?

Engraved information on the granite faceplate of each Chamber and each Memorial Plaque includes only the name of the decedent, date of birth, and date of death. Titles, awards, degrees, or other information are not included in the inscription.

23. What are the visitation hours for the current Coker Columbarium in Coker Chapel? How do I make arrangements to visit?

The Columbarium is open during normal church administrative and worship hours. All persons entering the area of the Columbarium are expected to register at the Coker Office and conduct themselves in accordance with customary, respectful decorum, as normally observed in a church.

24. Can I get a refund if my plans change, or I change my mind at a later date?

Upon request and surrender of the purchaser's Certificate of Rights of an unused Chamber, a purchaser shall have the right to a refund from the Church of the non-tax deductible portion of the fee paid for such purchaser's Certificate of Inurnment Rights, with no interest thereon, less an administrative fee as defined in the Schedule of Fees. Refund of the non-tax deductible portion of the fee paid for Memorial Plaques that have not been inscribed, less an administrative fee, is available upon surrender of the purchaser's Certificate.

25. May I purchase both a Chamber for Inurnment and a Memorial Plaque?

Yes, both are available for you to purchase.

26. Who administers the Coker Columbarium? Who maintains the Columbarium facility and grounds? Who maintains the records associated with the Columbarium?

The Church agrees to provide reasonable care and maintenance of the Columbarium and to administer and maintain all Columbarium records. The Columbarium Committee is a sub-committee of the Coker Board of Trustees.

27. Can small memorial services be held in the Columbarium area?

Yes, please contact the Coker Pastoral Staff to discuss and arrange for memorial or inurnment services in the Columbarium.

28. Can flowers be placed in the Columbarium with a memorial service?

Yes, flowers can be used during a memorial or inurnment service in the Columbarium. They will be removed promptly by the Church at the close of the service.

29. Can my pet be inurned with me in a Chamber at Coker Columbarium?

No, the Coker Columbarium is only for inurnment of human remains.

30. Can ashes be inurned at the Columbarium if they were previously housed somewhere else?

Yes, upon purchase of a Chamber.

31. I am single, and I've purchased a Chamber for a single inurnment. If my personal circumstances change, what can I do to allow my niche to accommodate an additional urn?

Upgrade to a full Chamber by purchasing the additional one-half of your Chamber, provided the other half of your Chamber is available. If the other half is unavailable, apply for a refund of the non-tax deductible portion of the fee paid for this non-exclusive Chamber, surrender the Certificate for Inurnment Rights for that Chamber, and purchase an exclusive Chamber to accommodate 2 urns. Administrative fees may apply.

32. We originally purchased a Chamber to hold 2 urns, and my personal circumstances have changed. I now wish to provide for inurnment of only one urn, rather than two. How is this accommodated?

An exclusive use Chamber may be used for one instead of two urns if you choose. If you wish to purchase a non-exclusive Chamber for only one urn, apply for a refund of the non-tax deductible fees paid for an exclusive Chamber, surrender the Certificate for Inurnment Rights, and purchase a non-exclusive Chamber. Administrative fees may apply.

33. Is it possible to bury one's ashes or scatter one's ashes in the Columbarium?

There is currently no area available for burial or scattering of cremains in the Coker Columbarium design.