I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, shall live. John 11:25
What is a columbarium?
A columbarium is a fixture, either free-standing or wall-mounted, comprised of a lattice of small (8” x 8” x 12”) niches for the permanent interment of cremated human ashes. Each niche is covered with a matching plate, on which the name and years of birth and death of the deceased are engraved.

Why is Our Saviour’s building a columbarium?
There are several reasons, including:

- Cremation is growing in popularity as an affordable and respectful option for planning funerals. (Cremation costs less than one-third the cost of traditional burial.)

- Providing a place for cremains is environmentally sound. A niche in a columbarium takes up much less green space than a plot in a cemetery.

- People of faith commonly turn to the church when a loved one dies. Many find comfort in burial options that express the deceased’s affiliation with Christ’s church and desire an expression of that affiliation to continue beyond death.

- Offering an on-site burial option is an additional way for the church to minister to the bereaved.

- The columbarium garden will add a peaceful, beautiful setting for meditation and contemplation for the entire congregation.

- Additionally, it is a great way to witness to our children and youth; providing an opportunity to increase their understanding of the link between life and death; and to manifest the communion of saints that spans the generations.

Are cremation & interment in a columbarium consistent with Lutheran teachings?
The Lutheran understanding of death and resurrection do not prohibit cremation. The ELCA, the denomination to which Our Saviour’s belongs, approves of columbaria as well. Cremation is growing increasingly common among Christians in recent years, for environmental and economic reasons. A committal service, led by a pastor, is held as a part of the interment.

How is the funeral home involved?
There are many options for families to arrange for cremation of the deceased. The funeral director (or crematorium) of the family’s choice will be responsible for the cremation. Our Saviour’s staff will be happy to work with families with whatever choice they make. The ashes, in a suitable container, may be brought to the church for the funeral or memorial service if the family so desires.

Who would be eligible for interment in the columbarium?
Members of Our Saviour’s, their immediate families, and others who have had a significant relationship to the congregation would be eligible. The Columbarium Memorialization Board will meet periodically to review columbarium policies and decide on special cases.

How does a member purchase a niche?
Members may purchase one or more niche at any time. At the time of purchase, a member pays for the niche(s) and signs an agreement that clearly outlines the conditions of the purchase and the obligations of the church to maintain the columbarium. Niches are available on a first come, first served basis.

How much does a niche cost?
Niches vary in price based on whether they will be used by an individual or a couple. While a couple may choose to buy two separate contiguous niches, each niche is big enough to contain two urns. If the cremains of one person will reside in a niche, the cost is $2000/niche. If the cremains of two persons will reside in one niche then the cost is $2300/niche. These costs include the niche and a basic cremains receptacle, opening and closing costs, engraving costs, and perpetual care of the Columbarium by the church.

Are there any other expenses incurred?
You will need to pay a funeral home or a crematorium to perform the cremation itself. And if you want to purchase a special urn or box for the cremains – other than the basic receptacle Our Saviour’s provides – that will be your expense as well. Our pastors are happy to provide a committal service for your loved one at the time of opening the niche for no charge, but an honorarium or gift to the church is always appropriate.

What if a family changes its mind about the use of the columbarium, either before or after the interment occurs?
If a person or family were to decide not to use its reserved columbarium niche, or relocate the ashes of a loved one following interment, the niche would be sold back solely to Our Saviour’s for the original purchase price, minus a $250 administrative cost to restore the niche to pre-used condition.

For additional information
Please feel free to contact any member of the Memorialization Board:
Barbara and Ed Henricks
Arnie and Carolyn Lack
Hans and Marilyn Stucki
Grace and Will Wagner
Jim Valentine