

Saint John Orthodox Cathedral Cemetery Guidelines

Approved by the Saint John Orthodox Cathedral Parish Council

Updated November 3, 2008

1) Purpose of the Cemetery

Saint John the Evangelist Orthodox Cathedral Cemetery is intended for the burial of Orthodox Christians who are members of the Cathedral and who depart this life in communion with the Church. Exceptions to this rule can be made by the pastor who will also consult the bishop in any cases where this is appropriate. All burials in the cemetery can take place only with the blessing of the pastor of the Cathedral.

2) Purpose of these Guidelines

These guidelines are designed to establish and preserve a serene, dignified setting appropriate to an Orthodox Christian cemetery, conducive to quiet reflection, prayer, and healthy grieving by bereaved family members and friends of the deceased, where the bodies of our beloved departed may rest in peace until the Second Coming of our Lord. These guidelines will also establish parameters for the appearance of the cemetery and for conduct on the cemetery grounds and help build for our parish a tradition of burial and memorial.

3) Administration and Appeal

- a) The pastor and parish council of Saint John Orthodox Cathedral, through the Funeral and Cemetery Committee, shall administer these guidelines. Special cases may arise in which it may not be practical to follow the guidelines for good reason. Exceptions to these guidelines may be made by appeal to the pastor and the parish council. All appeals should be in written form and submitted to the pastor for review.
- b) The parish reserves the rights to adopt new guidelines as it sees fit, and amend, alter, or change existing guidelines when it becomes necessary.
- c) The parish reserves the right to enlarge, reduce, re-plat, change, expand, pave, alter, install lines, install walkways, and plant or remove trees or shrubs for its own purposes. The parish reserves unto itself and those lawfully entitled, a perpetual right of ingress and egress over the lots for the purpose of passage to and from other lots, walks and streets.

4) Interment and Disinterment Procedures

- a) Lots in the cemetery shall be used for no other purpose than the burial of the human dead.
- b) In accordance with local laws it is prohibited to permit the final disposition of a dead human body unless it is accompanied by a duly executed burial transit permit which will be retained in the permanent records of this cemetery. (Cremated remains are exempt from this rule as final disposition is at the crematory).
- c) The interment of remains in the cemetery is the responsibility of the family with procedures approved by the pastor through the Funeral and Cemetery Committee.

- d) It is the responsibility of the Chairman of the Funeral and Cemetery Committee to see that a record of all human remains within the cemetery is kept permanently in the parish files.
- e) No more than one body of adult size, two infants, or two cremations shall be interred in a single plot.
- f) In accordance with local laws no disinterment shall occur without prior receipt by the cemetery administration of a duly executed court order for such disinterment, issued in the District Court of the State of Alaska.
- g) Any disinterment is the sole responsibility of the family and must be supervised by personnel as required by law. In addition, the parish shall not be responsible for any casket damage.

5) Fees

Those on the F/C Committee are often asked what it costs for burial in our cemetery. This varies according to the circumstances, but some typical expenses may include:

- a) Casket \$800-900 (if a locally made one is available) or more (up to several thousand for a commercially made model). Please see Gale Armstrong.
- b) Grave Preparation and closing may be done by friends and family, but could cost about \$700 if a machine is necessary.
- c) Cemetery Fund donation \$300 or more, as the family and friends are able. This assures care of the cemetery in the future.
- d) Monument \$1000 (small rectangular) to \$5000 (larger crosses). This may be purchased locally within a year of the burial. See Barbara Parker or Anna Haley.
- e) Mortuary fees may be incurred for transportation, embalming, restoration or storage and vary according to circumstances.
- f) Prayer services and mercy meal are provided by the church community out of love and free of charge.
- g) There are no fees for burial plots in the cemetery, but contributions to the general upkeep of the cemetery may be made to the Cemetery Fund held by the Cathedral. (5c above)

6) Graveside Decorations

- a) Temporary boxes, fences, or other decorations are allowed on the burial site until the site is seeded for grass. Permanent raised obstructions (including mounds and fences) shall not be allowed.
- b) New trees, plants, or shrubs may be planted at the burial site only with the permission of the Funeral and Cemetery Committee.
- c) Placing potted fresh plants and flowers, wreaths, or baskets on graves is permitted at any time. The same may also be removed in 14 days unless cared for by relatives.
- d) The cemetery reserves the rights to remove any flowers and other decorations when they become unsightly and no longer serve the purpose of decorating.
- e) In order to promote the natural beauty of the cemetery setting, artificial flowers are not to be used for decorating burial sites or markers from spring through fall, that is, from May 8 (Commemoration of the Miracle at the Graveside of St. John the Evangelist) to September 26 (St. Johns' Day).

7) Memorialization and Markers

- a) A wood cross is an acceptable temporary marker and will be allowed to remain until a permanent marker is installed.
- b) All graves shall have a permanent marker installed within one year after the burial, but no later than the following summer. This marker shall be paid for and installed by the family of the departed according to the guidelines established by the Funeral and Cemetery Committee.
- c) The permanent marker shall be a Cross fashioned from stone, metal or wood and shall be of a style appropriate to an Orthodox Christian cemetery. The cross shall be placed securely in the ground or it may sit on an appropriate and secure base no taller than 12". The total height of the marker shall be a minimum of two feet and a maximum of five feet.
- d) Any Cross constructed of wood will also require the additional placement of a permanent stone marker, approximately 12" x 12", in front of the Cross, flush with the ground, and bearing the first and last name of the deceased, along with year of birth and year of death.
- e) All markers shall have a minimum inscription of first name, last name, year of birth and year of death.
- f) Additional inscriptions and artwork are optional, but must be in good taste and not conflict with Orthodox Christian tradition. Any questions about appropriateness should be addressed to the pastor and the Funeral and Cemetery Committee.
- g) It will be the responsibility of the family to repair or replace any markers that are damaged or have become unsightly. Such repairs may be requested by the Funeral and Cemetery Committee and must be made as soon as practical and no later than a year after the request is made.
- h) St. John's Cathedral Cemetery will not be liable for damaged markers or memorials. Lawn care and maintenance will be done with due care to protect the grounds, but occasional damage to graves may be unavoidable.
- i) No marker shall be installed that is not of the type approved by the parish.

8) General Instructions

- 1) No person shall alter a cemetery lot without first checking with a member of the Funeral and Cemetery Committee.
- 2) Due to the hazard of broken glass, containers made of glass are discouraged in the cemetery and may be removed.
- 3) No kind of conveyance motorized or otherwise shall be driven in the cemetery in a disrespectful manner.
- 4) Dogs and other pets shall be allowed to travel through the cemetery, but should not be allowed to stop and do anything that could be considered disrespectful to a grave.
- 5) All visitors to the cemetery must conduct themselves in a respectful and appropriate manner.