

## **BRIDGEWATER CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN MEMORIAL GARDEN POLICIES AND GUIDELINES**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Bridgewater Church of the Brethren provides member families the opportunity to inter the remains of loved ones in the Church Garden located just to the west of the church sanctuary in the lower area of the garden. An information packet is made available which contains (1) a brochure regarding the garden, (2) a statement of policies and guidelines governing use of the lower garden, (3) a request form for engaging the use of the garden for interment or cremains, and (4) an information form for providing the church with biographical and other data pertinent to church record keeping in the Garden Record Book. The packet may be requested from the church administrative secretary or a member of the Garden Committee.

### **POLICIES AND GUIDELINES**

#### ***Eligibility***

The Lower Garden is intended to provide a welcoming place where the remains of deceased members of church families may be gathered in the church grounds. "Members of church families" is not intended to be narrowly exclusive, but to identify those who have been participants within the ongoing life of the church. Former members are also eligible. Only human remains are eligible. Requests for interment will be considered by the Garden Committee and determination of eligibility will be made by them, as well as an assignment of the location for the interment.

#### ***Record Keeping***

After determining eligibility for interment, the Garden Committee shall inform the administrative secretary &/or senior pastor. The request and information forms completed by the family will be filed in the church office; the information will be compiled in the Garden Record Book; and the location of interment will be entered on the garden interment grid, also kept in the church office. Copies of the information in the Garden Record Book may be requested by the family from the church office.

Two records will be kept by the church relative to Memorial Garden interments. The Garden Record Book will be maintained in the church office. In addition, a plaque will be mounted on the interior wall inside the west portico entrance of the church. A small engraved brass plate containing name and dates of birth & death of the person in the garden may be placed on the plaque.

#### ***Scheduling***

The family will engage the senior pastor (or another minister requested by the family with the senior pastor's consent) to preside at the interment and to determine, in consultation with the church office, a date for the interment. Interments may take place on any day except major holidays and Sunday mornings. The church calendar will be checked for conflicts. The head custodian will be advised of the date and time of the interment.

#### ***Interment***

Cremains may be scattered or they may be buried in a biodegradable container at the assigned location on the garden grid. If buried, the custodian will be engaged to prepare an appropriate opening prior to the service of interment. Openings shall be made with a 9" posthole digger to minimize the disturbance of the garden. The church will provide a trowel for filling the site following interment.

Any plants or floral arrangements placed in the garden for the service will be removed at the direction of the family following the service of interment. Landscaping has been designed to be a unified memorial for all whose remains are interred in the garden.

Cremains may not be retrieved once they have been interred.

***Maintenance***

General maintenance of the garden shall be the responsibility of the Garden Committee. Because the garden is an extension of the ministry of the congregation, no fee is charged for its use. However, contributions may be directed to the Garden Committee of Bridgewater Church of the Brethren toward the maintenance of the garden.

***Other***

The Garden Committee, working with the senior pastor, shall take the responsibility for settling any concerns with the family about interment in the garden.

The church office will have on file copies of applicable state and local regulations that have a bearing on interment in the garden.

Any request for exceptions to these guidelines shall be made to the Garden Committee.

These guidelines may be amended by the church council as the need arises.