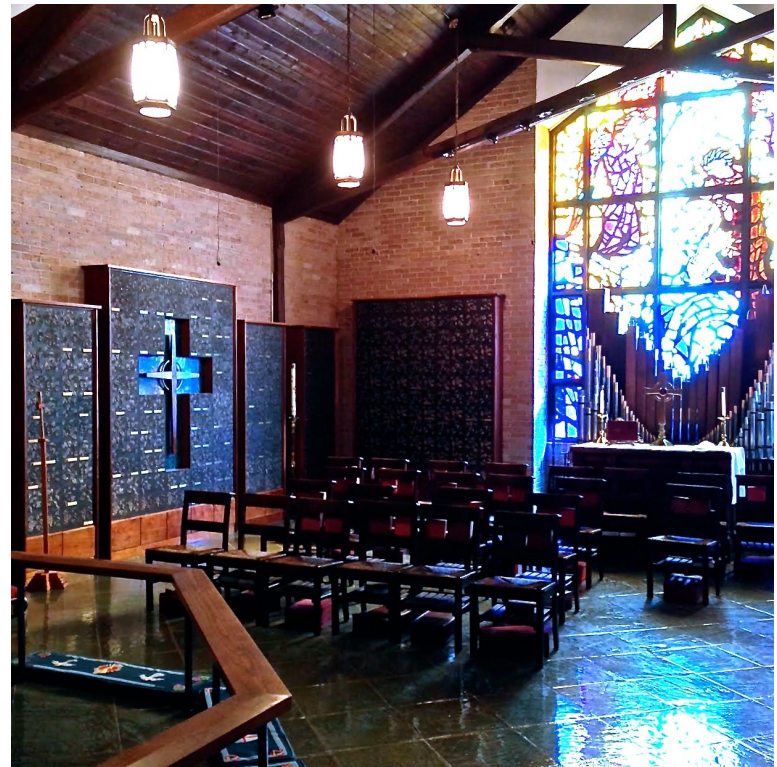




ST. LUKE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
8833 Goodwood Blvd.
Baton Rouge, LA 70806
www.stlukebr.org
225-926-5343



ST. LUKE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
COLUMBARIUM

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Death is never an easy subject. Many people find any conversation about funeral planning, end-of-life decisions related to medical care, finance, insurance, or estate planning to be so stressful that it just doesn't happen. Avoiding the issues can leave survivors of a departed family member or friend with decisions they are unprepared to make. There is a better way.

Christians believe that “whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord’s” and our planning for the end of life in this world is as important as our planning for the life of the world to come. One of the best and most loving ways to relieve this stress for your survivors is to give your own end-of-life plans your own attention. In an orderly and easy to understand way, you can explain your wishes and plans to those who will see to your affairs during times of serious illness or after death. You can do the work in advance for your family, and they will be glad you did!

This pamphlet describes some of the ways that Saint Luke’s can help you with this most important part of your personal planning. The contact information give should make it easy for you to get the information you need. If you are more comfortable speaking to one of the clergy, just call the Church office at any time.

Is it OK for Christians to be Cremated?

When it comes to dealing with the body of the deceased loved one, the most important thing is that the body is shown respect and honor. Christians have always affirmed that the human body is sacred. The Apostle Paul calls it “the temple of the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor. 6.9). God Himself took on human flesh and was born to the Virgin Mary with a physical body like ours. In so doing, God validated and reaffirmed humanity and all creation as “*very good*” (Gen 1.31).

While burial has been the traditional practice for Christians, the Bible nowhere condemns cremation. Treating the body of the faithful departed with dignity is the key issue. In the past, some Christian traditions have avoided cremation because it was thought to be more proper to bury a body in the ground. However, today almost all traditions are reinterpreting cremation as an acceptable alternative to burial. This is because the cost of caskets and burial have skyrocketed in the past few decades, and also because of the lack of space for burial in some urban contexts. As a result, most Christian traditions have changed their positions about cremation and consider it a legitimate and financially responsible alternative to burial.

At St. Luke’s, we have made it possible, to those members who wish to be cremated, for their remains to be place forever in the house of God. There is no more appropriate place for us to remember our deceased loved ones than in the very place where we experience “with Angels and Archangels and all the company of heaven,” the very *Kingdom of God*. In the Kingdom of God, dead and living alike worship God *together* in spirit and in truth. So let us remember that whatever we do with the remains of our loved ones, we ought to give them the respect and dignity they deserve as sacred temples of the Holy Spirit, created by God, and reflecting His very image.

What is the St. Luke’s Columbarium?

St. Luke’s Episcopal Church houses a columbarium within its Chapel. For those unfamiliar with the term, a columbarium is an area for the inurnment of the ashes of the deceased. It is an appropriate and dignified place in a consecrated Chapel and is in accord with the tenets of the Episcopal Church.

The St. Luke’s Columbarium is maintained in accordance with Louisiana law related to cemeteries. It answers the need of those who desire a place for the permanent committal of ashes on church grounds. Present and former members of St. Luke’s Episcopal Church and their extended families are eligible to purchase niches. Each niche includes a provided urn and nameplate. The price for a niche is \$500.

No cremated remains may be interred in a Columbarium niche without a committal service as included in the Prayer Book of the Episcopal Church.

Customs of the Episcopal Church

- Baptized Christians are buried from the Church rather than a funeral home chapel.
- The coffin is covered with a pall or flag while in the Church and thus it is closed throughout the service.
- Funeral arrangements should be made in consultation with the parish clergy.
- The Holy Eucharist is the normal context for a Christian funeral.
- Flowers are usually placed only on the Altar in the sanctuary.
- All are reminded to leave bequests to the parish Church in their wills.

The Clergy encourage parishioners to fill out the Advanced Funeral Arrangement forms, which can be obtained in the Church office. You may make an appointment with a member of our clergy to assist you in completing the form.

Contact Information:

If you have any questions, please contact the office, 225- 926-5343 to speak to a member of the Clergy or Becky Williams, or by email:

Fr. Bryan Owen—frbryanowen@stlukesbr.org
Dcn. Reese Wiggins—reese@stlukesbr.org
Becky Williams, RN—bwilliams@stlukesbr.org

In case of a Pastoral Emergency after office hours, a member of the Clergy can be reached at 225-773-2466.