

TOPSAIL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Perpetual Care Cemetery Organization

Cemetery Policy

1. Persons eligible to be buried in the cemetery:
 - A. All church members.
 - B. Both husband and wife if either is a church member.
 - C. Single dependent children (under 21 years) of a church member.
 - D. Mentally or physically handicapped children of a parent who is a member or of a parent who is buried in the cemetery.
 - E. Non-members with a spouse buried in the cemetery may be buried next to their spouse if space is available.
2. If any questions arise regarding whether a person is eligible to be buried in the cemetery, the final decision will be made by the Session. If the request is approved, it is approved for compelling humanitarian reasons in support of the mission of the church, and no financial considerations are required, expected, or accepted as a result.

(Added 4/08/2005)

3. The cemetery is divided into four sections. A map of the cemetery is kept in the church office, along with an index that identifies by lot number all previous burials, all lots assigned but not yet used, and all unassigned vacant lots.
4. Available grave sites are assigned to individuals by their choice on a seniority basis. Seniority is determined by the date a member joins the church. Grave sites will be reserved for the assignee(s) so long as they remain a member of Topsail Presbyterian Church (TPC). If a member moves his/her membership or no longer qualifies as a member, he/she forfeits all rights to the grave site and privilege of burial in Topsail Presbyterian Church Cemetery, unless he/she qualifies under Article 1.B.D.E.
5. Additional trees, or shrubbery, or permanent walls around lots, or lot corner markers ... will be permitted in the cemetery only with the approval of the Perpetual Care Cemetery Organization (PCCO). No above ground vaults will be permitted.
6. Gravestones must be installed within six months after burial. All footstones must be installed level with the ground. If a church member has been assigned a future gravesite and that member wishes to install a permanent grave marker on that site, prior to their death, the following conditions must first exist. The member must first meet with the TPC Cemetery Committee and state their wish to place such marker in the cemetery at their assigned location while they are still living. They must state the reason or reasons they feel this installation should take place and be willing to contribute to the perpetual cemetery fund a reasonable amount of money to cover the removal of such marker in the event the member, in the future, decides to be buried elsewhere or if a

representative of the now deceased member decides they will not be buried at Topsail Presbyterian Cemetery. The TPC Cemetery Committee acknowledges that in certain cases, installation of permanent markers prior to death are for legitimate reasons, but would prefer that such cases have validity; in the absence of such validity, the Committee will deny the request. (Amended 11/17/2025)

7.
 - A. Cremated remains may be buried in designated spaces in the cemetery. Such spaces may be reserved. In addition, cremation remains are permitted in other regular reserved grave sites, if preferred. It is recommended, but not required, that a cremation burial occupy only half of a regular grave site, so that two cremation remains (for example: husband and wife or any other qualified two people may occupy the same grave site). Mausoleums for cremation remains will be permitted only if architectural plans are submitted to and approved by the Session. (Added 05/14/2007).
 - B. Non-member Burials: If a qualifying husband and wife reserve two grave sites and one passes, no one other than the spouse can be buried in the other reserved site. If the second spouse chooses or family chooses, on his or her death, to be cremated and buried with the spouse in the same site, the second grave site is automatically available to any other person eligible under the current cemetery policy. If only one spouse is deceased, and a non-eligible family member wishes to be cremated and buried in the cemetery and if approved by the Session, can only be buried within the same site as the deceased family member. (Added 04/07/2022)
8. FLOWERS AND PLANTS ON GRAVE SITES
 - A. Flowers used in Burial Ceremonies: Flowers should be removed from the gravesite before they deteriorate and become unsightly. Usually, especially in hot weather, this occurs within one week. If the family of the deceased has provided for the timely removal of the flowers (through the mortuary, the florist, or personal action) they should inform the Perpetual Care Cemetery Organization. Otherwise, the PCCO will arrange to remove the flowers after one week.
 - B. Artificial Flowers Placed on Burial Sites: It is the responsibility of the person who places the artificial flowers on the burial site to remove them before they deteriorate and become unsightly.
 - C. Living Flowering Plants: Approval of the Perpetual Care Cemetery Organization is required prior to planting living plants in the soil of the burial site, and if approved, the care for the flowering plant is the responsibility of the person making the request.
 - D. Living Plants in Pots: The care of living plants in pots (both flowering and non-flowering) is the responsibility of the person who places them on the burial site.

9. Tents placed over a grave area for the burial ceremony shall be removed within one week.
10. In areas of the cemetery where walkways have been designated, headstones and footstones shall be placed so that inscriptions can be read from the walkway, and in each plot, the footstone shall be next to the walkway with the headstone at the opposite end of the plot. Footstones shall be placed at ground level.
11. Burials within the Topsail Presbyterian Church Cemetery are to be only for human remains. (Added 01/15/2001)

Updated with revisions 09/14/2021

Updated with revisions 11/17/2025

Addendum: Anyone wishing to secure a burial plot, contact David Howard at 941-315-1010.