

# Wilhelmina Evangelical Lutheran Church

## Cemetery Policy & Information Guide

Effective Feb 25, 2018

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## Preamble

Wilhelmina Evangelical Lutheran Church is a member of the worldwide body of Christian believers. Our call is to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ and to serve our community which includes the care we offer to families in mourning and the orderly maintenance of our cemetery. This Cemetery Policy is intended to provide a set of guidelines for use by Wilhelmina church members, the church council, and cemetery committee as well as any outside agency or individual interested in information about the Wilhelmina Evangelical Lutheran Church Cemetery.

## Definitions

**Church** – Refers specifically to Wilhelmina Evangelical Lutheran Church

**Cemetery Plot, Plot or Grave** – a pre-defined area within a cemetery designated for the burial of individual human remains and/or cremated remains.

Plots are defined by two sizes:

- a) **Full Size Plot** – 4' x 8' (or 1.219m x 2.438m) plot
- b) **Half Size Plot** – 4' x 4' (or 1.219m x 1.219m) plot

**Reserved or Pre-Paid Plot** – a cemetery plot that has been purchased in advance for the burial of the purchaser upon his/her death

**Plot Owner** – the individual or legal representative of the individual who has purchased a plot in the Cemetery either for immediate use or for future use.

**Cemetery Marker (aka Memorial)** - A monument or marker placed upon a cemetery plot for the purpose of identification or in memory of a deceased person or persons.

**Flat (Grass) Marker\*** - A cemetery marker that lies in the ground, flush with the ground level. Dimensions: Length (horizontal) x Width x Height (thickness). These markers will be encased in a concrete foundation.

\* Note: A flat marker may be considered an upright marker if it is placed on a base on top of a foundation.

**Temporary Marker** - A marker generally supplied by funeral homes, made of either plastic or metal and staked into the ground for an allowable period of six months.

**Bench** - A Commemorative style monument that can be made of granite with engraving or iron/oak with a bronze plaque dedicated to an individual(s). Due to perpetual care, wooden benches are no longer approved to be placed in the Cemetery unless special permission has been obtained from Church Council.

**A Concrete Liner** - A liner installed for the purpose of cemetery maintenance and safety. Use of a liner ensures burial sections are level; allowing cemetery visitors, workers and equipment to pass over existing graves safely and to facilitate grounds care functions. A concrete liner does not seal and will not prevent the entrance of water and other gravesite elements into the space occupied by the interred decedent.

**A Vault** - While a protective vault serves the same functional purpose as the concrete liner it also provides added protection for the interred decedent. The heavier, reinforced construction of a protective vault provides added protection against the weight of the earth above and surrounding the vault. In addition to improved structural strength the protective vault has a sealing lid and high impact ABS lining that combine to seal the vault and protect the interred casket and decedent from the entrance of water and other gravesite elements.

**Cremated Remains or Cremains** – human remains that have undergone the cremation process and the body has been reduced to small pieces of ash and bone.

**Scattering** - respectfully dispersing the cremated remains of an individual in a designated scattering area within a cemetery.

## **CEMETERY PAPERWORK**

**Burial Permit** - A burial permit is a document required to bury or cremate the remains of the deceased. It is required by law that cemeteries not perform a burial without a burial permit. If the deceased has been cremated a Cremation Certificate can be accepted in its place.

**Cremation Certificate** - A certificate produced by a crematorium after a cremation is completed. A cemetery can accept the Cremation Certificate in place of the Burial Permit for cremated remains.

**Death Certificate** - A Death Certificate is issued by the Province of Alberta – and it is not required for cemetery services.

**Disinterment Permit** - A required permit issued by the Province of Alberta permitting the removal and relocation of human remains in cemeteries.

**Grant of Administration** - A court document which identifies and appoints an individual to act as the representative for a deceased person who did not have a Last Will and Testament.

**Letter of Probate** - A court document which validates the Last Will and Testament of the deceased.

## **General Cemetery Internment Information, Fees and Guidelines**

### ***Wilhelmina Evangelical Lutheran Church Cemetery***

- Wilhelmina Evangelical Lutheran Church has one active cemetery which is located directly north of the church building on the church grounds.
- Only the burial of human remains and cremated remains are permitted in the Wilhelmina Evangelical Lutheran Church cemetery.

### ***Interment Notification***

- All applications for burial or the scattering of ashes are to be made to the Church Cemetery Committee and Church Council.
- Any changes to the interment schedule or arrangements must also be reported to the Church Cemetery Committee and Church Council.
- At least two days advance notice of the time of interment is required.

### ***Funeral Services***

- Only Christian funerals for deceased persons performed by a clergyman are permitted in the Wilhelmina Evangelical Lutheran Church Building and Cemetery.
- If the Wilhelmina Evangelical Lutheran Church minister does not conduct the ceremony permission must be obtained from the Church pastor and Church Council beforehand.

### ***Cemetery Plot Fees***

- The same fee applies to all cemetery plots sold. Members of the church are charged the same fee as non-members.

Cemetery Full Size Burial Plot = \$500.00 + GST

Cemetery Half Size Burial Plot = \$250.00 + GST

\* Please note that Cemetery Plots are subject to GST at the time of purchase

- Not more than four reserve plots in the cemetery may be purchased by any person or estate, except in special circumstances that must be approved by the Church Cemetery Committee and Church Council.
- Cemetery Plot fees are subject to review and may change. The church should be contacted to confirm the correct fees.

## **Cemetery Visitors**

- A Christian cemetery is a sacred place. All visitors are expected to be respectful of the holy nature of the cemetery grounds and display a quiet and reverent attitude.
- In addition, visitor conduct and activities are subject to provincial legislation which is intended to promote the safe, enjoyable and reasonable use of the cemetery and to protect and preserve natural ecosystems for the benefit of all. The following is a list of the legislation (but not limited to) that governs cemeteries in Alberta.

*Alberta Cemeteries Act*

*Freedom of Information and Privacy Act*

*Wills and Inheritance Legislation*

*Veterans Affairs Act*

*Municipal Government Act*

*Alberta Water Act*

*Burial of the Dead Act*

*Occupational Health & Safety Act*

*Environmental Protection Act*

## **Interment Rights**

- A sale of a “cemetery plot or interment location” can be viewed as a long term lease. The land ownership is retained by the Church and the rights of interment are purchased in a sale.
- The Church has the only authority over interments and cemetery markers being requested for the interment location.

## **Cancellation**

- Cancellation of a cemetery plot purchase agreement can be requested at any time for any reason. You may cancel without charge or penalty at any time during the period from the day you enter into the plot purchase agreement until 30 days after you receive a copy of the agreement. If you cancel after 30 days you may still have to pay for interment space and for any cemetery supplies and cemetery services that have already been supplied, performed or delivered, as the case may be.
- To cancel, you must give written notice of cancellation to the Church. Notice of cancellation should allow you to prove that you gave notice.

## **Refunds for Cemetery Plots**

- The Church does not allow the resale of interment space on the open market.
- Therefore it is legislated that the Church must buy back the unused interment space and unused services. If the cancellation is requested during the 30 day cancellation period, then a full refund will be issued. Once this period is over, a refund of at least 85% of the market value of the interment space at the date of resale will be issued. Additional fees may apply dependent upon the circumstances of the original sale and products already provided.

## ***Sharing of Burial & Plot Information***

- Burial information will be provided upon request to memorial dealers or owners/families. It is the responsibility of the memorial provider to meet with plot owners/families on-site at the cemetery to verify the accuracy of burial location particulars (including plot ownership, left/right memorial placement).
- The Church only provides details about the most recent grave or plot ownership located in its files for the purposes of finding a grave or plot for interment, monuments or marker placement.

## ***Ownership Transfers***

- **Plot owner to spouse/family member**  
In order to transfer ownership of a reserved or pre-paid plot that is held in one spouses name to the other spouse a Transfer request must be completed, the owner must provide proof of identity either in person with government issued identification and/or by swearing a statutory declaration of intent with a Commissioner for Oaths. The administration fee in effect at the time may be applicable for each plot being transferred.
- **Multiple plot ownership- separation of ownership**  
When a reserve or pre-paid plot has multiple owners identified and one owner wishes to transfer full rights to the other owner, the person transferring the ownership will complete the Transfer request (see form in Appendix) and provide proof of identity either in person with government issued identification or by swearing a statutory declaration of intent with a Commissioner for Oaths. The administration fee in effect at the time may be applicable.
- **Plot owner to interested purchaser**  
As the Church does not allow the private sale of cemetery plots on the open market, a cancellation of the existing contract and a refund to the reserve plot owner would be processed and a new contract with the interested purchaser would be required.
- **By Executor upon death of Plot owner**  
At the request of the executor/executrix the ownership of the unused reserve plot may be transferred to the designated beneficiary for no charge when the interment arrangements are being finalized. A transfer form and a copy of the will and proof of identity are required from the executor/executrix before the transfer can be completed.
- **Plot owner deceased, estate settled**  
If the owner on record is deceased and the plot has not been used it is necessary to confirm that the appropriate beneficiary is identified before any ownership transfers, interments or monuments can be completed. As this type of determination is beyond the scope of the authority of any cemetery and is determined by Wills and Inheritance Laws the following legal documentation is required to confirm the appropriate beneficiary.

- The *Letter of Probate* for the estate of the plot owner on record. This will identify the Executor. This person will be required to provide proof of identity.
- **OR** A *Grant of Administration* for the estate of the plot owner on record. This will detail the personal representative for the deceased in the absence of a Will. This person will be required to provide proof of identity.
- **OR** A *Court Order* directing that a certain individual has been declared the beneficial owner of the deceased assets. This person will be required to provide proof of identity.

Once the proper documentation is obtained a transfer of the plots to the new owners name can be completed by the Church Cemetery Committee, Council and Treasurer. There may be a transfer fee for each plot location.

### ***Disinterment Policy and Procedures***

**Disinterment of Casket Burials:** The Church will follow the regulations outlined by the Government of Alberta regarding disinterment of casket burials. Application for disinterment must be made to the province of Alberta and the Church will not permit disinterment without the required provincial permits. Current government policies may be obtained through their web-site: [www.servicealberta.gov.ab.ca](http://www.servicealberta.gov.ab.ca)

**Disinterment of Cremated Remains:** Although a disinterment permit is not required from the Provincial Government in relation to cremated remains, the Church does not generally permit the disinterment of cremated remains. Special application may be made to the Church Council and will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

**Disinterment Fees:** Additional fees may be required and will be assessed at the time a disinterment request is made.

The removal of any remains from the cemetery without the proper authority can result in legal action.

### ***Earth Burials Options***

The Church has criteria for the interment of human remains, including standards for depth of burial and size of casket or grave liner per each 4 x 8' plot (or 1.219m x 2.438m). The following are minimum standards. The Church should be contacted for additional details concerning grave and cremation burials. For permission for a reserve or burial in an existing plot, Schedule "B" to this policy "Permission for a Reserve or Burial in an Existing Plot" is to be completed and submitted to the church council for approval.

At the time of purchase the following information must be recorded by the cemetery committee and the church treasurer:

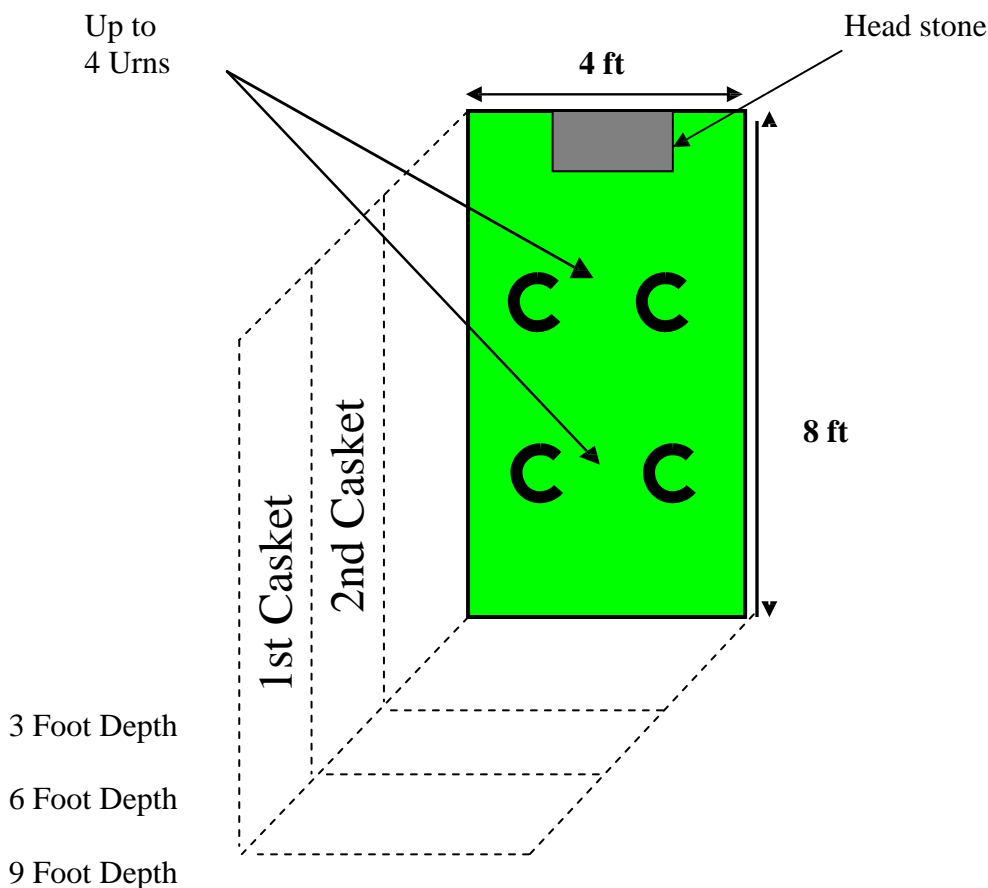
1. Plot Identifier (ie: NW 1 Plot 1)
2. Desired Depth of Plot
3. Desired number of casket/urns per plot
4. The names of the intended users of the plot
5. Location of the Urn within a plot.

**Full-Sized Plots**

For interment of human remains in a 4 x 8' (or 1.219m x. 2.438m) full size plot:

- The depth of the grave must be sufficient to allow for a minimum of 3' (or 0.914m) of earth between the upper surface of the grave liner and the level of the ground.
- The casket and grave liner or vault must be no greater than 42" (or 1.067m) in width and 8' (or 2.438m) in length.
- A maximum of four flat markers may be used within a plot

Possible Arrangements in a Combination Full Casket Plot

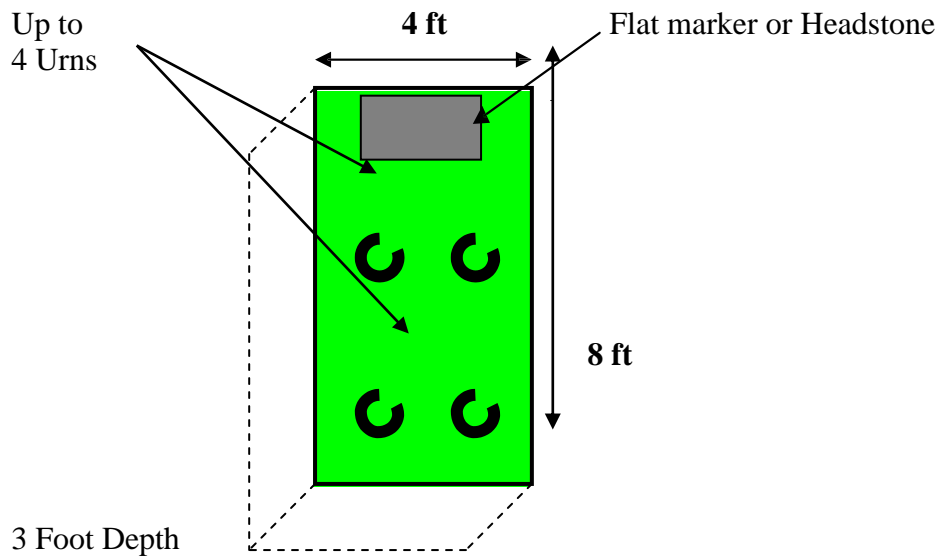




### Cremation Plots

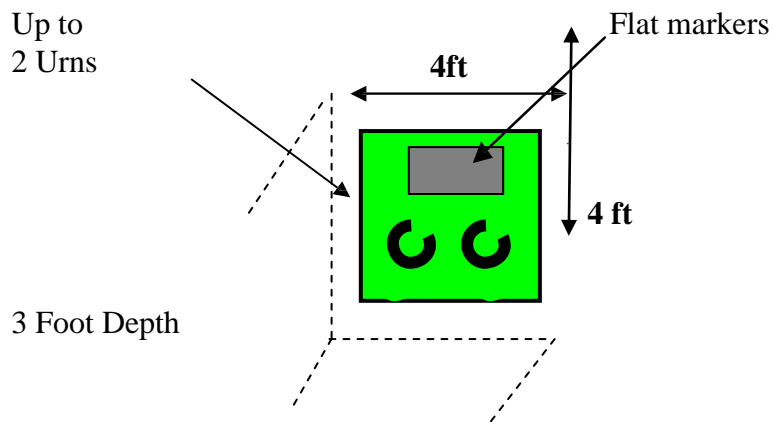
For interment of cremated remains in a 4' x 8' (or 1.219m x 2.438m) full size cremation plot:

- A maximum of four urns per plot.
- When the full size plot is located within the full casket burial section of the cemetery a headstone marker is permitted
- A maximum of four flat markers may be used within a plot



For interment of cremated remains in a 4' x 4' (or 1.219m x 1.219m) cremation plot:

- A maximum of two urns is per plot.
- When a cremation plot is selected in the “cremation only” section of the cemetery only one headstone or flat marker may be used at the head of the plot. A second marker must be flat.



Exceptions and alternate arrangements may be possible, or required, for any cremation of full size plot combination depending upon the existing burial conditions. Locations need to be confirmed by the cemetery committee.

***Scattering of cremated remains:***

- Permission must be obtained from the Church before the scattering of cremated remains occurs. Because of the permanency of scattering, the Church strongly recommends that the decision to have remains scattered be thoroughly discussed and thought through in advance.

***Concrete Liners or Vaults***

- It is recommended for all full casket burials that either a concrete liner or vault (supplied through the funeral home) are used to house the casket when placed in a grave. This assists in the operational needs of the cemetery now and into the future by reducing any safety concerns caused by collapsing ground areas and reduces the amount of long term care required in the cemetery overall.
- A concrete liner or vault is required for the lower interment in all double-depth interments.

## **CEMETERY MARKER AND CEMETERY DECORATION INFORMATION**

The following information provides guidelines for above ground cemetery markers and plot decoration. Please contact the Church for further specifications and exceptions.

### ***Purchase and Installation of Cemetery Markers***

- Cemetery Markers are generally purchased through and installed by the funeral home. It is the responsibility of the cemetery marker provider and family to ensure that marker size, material and the content on the marker is acceptable to the church.
- The Church assumes no responsibility for claims or damages resulting from errors in memorial content, layout, formatting or design, including but not limited to errors in wording or name placement, spelling, date or other inaccuracies relating to inscribed information.
- If there is any question or doubt about the acceptability of a marker, the Church should be contacted prior to purchase and installation.

### ***Cemetery Marker Fees***

- Cemetery Marker Deposit Fee = \$475.00
- This fee will be refunded if a cemetery marker has been installed by the family within two years of the date of interment.

### ***Refunds for Cemetery Marker Deposits***

- A cemetery marker deposit is collected at the time of interment. Once a cemetery marker has been placed by the family, the deposit will be fully refunded.
- If the family does not install a cemetery marker within two years of interment, the church council will attempt to contact the family. If the family makes no arrangements for a marker within sixty days, the church council will use the cemetery marker deposit to install a simple marker listing name, date of birth and date of death on the plot site and no refund will be made.

### ***General Cemetery Marker Size and Installation Guidelines***

- Cemetery Markers will be installed so that they are in alignment with all other markers in that particular row.
- The Maximum Height of a Cemetery Marker placed at the head of a grave including base, die height and accessories that are situated at the top of the die may not exceed 48” (or 1.219m).
- The Maximum width of a Cemetery Marker will be no more than 40” (or 1.016m) including base and foundation.

- A cemetery marker may not span more than two cemetery plots. The maximum width allowed for a double marker is 80" (or 2.032m) including base and foundation.
- Cemetery Markers over cremation plots on pre-existing earth burials must be flat markers.
- Only collapsible vases are permitted on cremation plots or at the foot of a grave.
- Markers at the head of the grave may include a vase at the time of production. Vases that are added after the production of the monument will require investigation of the site to determine if a vase may be added.
- If a newly installed cemetery marker is not compliant with this Cemetery Policy, a notice identifying the non-compliance will be sent to the family and marker installer by the Church Council. If the problem is not rectified within a reasonable amount of time, the Church has the authority to remove the cemetery marker in question.

### ***Maintenance, Removal and Replacement of Cemetery Markers***

- The Church shall be notified prior to the removal of any cemetery marker for any reason.
- The plot owner and their family are responsible for the proper condition and replacement of a cemetery marker and the Church assumes no liability or responsibility for loss or damage to any cemetery marker through acts of vandalism or natural erosion.
- The plot owner will be consulted to arrange for repairs or replacement of existing cemetery markers if necessary due to maintenance and safety concerns as determined by the Church.
- The Church may remove a damaged memorial.
- Existing monuments that do not meet current specifications will be grandfathered, however, in the event the monument needs replacement, the new monument (s) are required to meet the existing regulations in place at the time of purchase.

### ***Cemetery Marker Materials***

- All memorial materials, including marker bases, must be made of granite\* or bronze.
- A temporary plastic or metal marker may be approved and left on a grave for a period of six months.
- Marble may only be used for repairs to existing marble memorials, not replacement.

**\*Note:** Granite is an accepted industry term which refers to a range of rocks that are hard, can take a polish but are not technically granite in geological terms.  
Contact the Funeral Home for additional information on acceptable materials.

### ***Photographic Reproductions on Cemetery Markers***

- Memorial photographic reproductions are conditionally permitted, depending upon the type of photographic reproduction and style of memorial. Please contact the Church for further clarification on what types of photographic reproductions are permitted and on which monument or marker styles.
- All photographic reproductions must be recessed on flat markers and not extend higher than the marker profile.

**Note:** Photographic reproductions and their replacement are the responsibility of the memorial provider and owner. The Church will redirect the memorial owner to the memorial provider to resolve any concerns over broken, vandalized or stolen reproductions.

### ***Cemetery Marker Accessories***

- Granite balls or any other type of non-standard accessory must be approved by the Church Cemetery Committee and/or Church Council before installation.
- Non-collapsible vases are not permitted in front of a flat marker or at the foot of a plot.
- Grave covers are not permitted in the Church Cemetery

### ***Cemetery Marker Inscriptions/Casting***

- Can include Names, DOB, DOD and Epitaph.
- Must be appropriate for a Christian Cemetery.
- The Church reserves the right to remove any memorial that can be construed to mean or represent something offensive either in written or pictorial form.
- Trade names, logos and any form of advertising are prohibited on all memorials.
- Commemorative/“In Memory” inscriptions when no burial on location exists must state that interment has taken place elsewhere.
- Plot descriptions are permitted on the lower right-hand corner of all memorials at the expense of the memorial owner.

### ***Pre-Need Cemetery Markers and Added Inscriptions***

- All pre-need cemetery markers can be pre-approved and installed. The additional inscription or additional tabs costs will be determined at the time of need. It is the responsibility of the memorial provider to complete the additional inscription work at the time it is required.

## ***Cemetery Plot Decoration***

- Decoration is limited to approved cemetery markers, vases and floral tributes.
- Lawn ornaments, solar lights or any items made of glass or china placed on any part of the plot or adjacent to the cemetery marker are not permitted
- It is **highly recommended** that items of a personal nature not be left at gravesites as the cemetery is a public place with unrestricted public access.
- Disposition of items collected by the Church will be handled in the following manner:
  1. Items that are subject to decomposition will be disposed of immediately. This includes food items, stuffed animals, wilted flowers, etc.
  2. Items that do not decompose will be removed without notice and held for a minimum of one month. After a month has passed the items will be disposed of.
  3. To find an item that may have been removed by the Church please contact the Cemetery Committee or Church Council.

## ***Vase Guidelines***

The Church must be consulted before the installation of permanent vases on an already used plot to ensure it will not interfere with grounds maintenance.

Vases permanently affixed to or beside the marker at the head of a Grave may be constructed from:

- Granite (regular or inverted)
- Bronze (regular or inverted)
- Metal Craft with Coating (regular or inverted)

Temporary Vases with stands or ground spikes may be constructed from:

- Plastic
- Metal Style

Non-Collapsible Vases are not permitted:

- In front of a flat marker
- At the foot of a plot (as part of a marker or on it's own)

### ***Floral Tributes***

- Flowers are subject to environmental factors and inadvertent maintenance damage. The Church assumes no responsibility for loss or damage to floral tributes placed on graves and assumes no responsibility for their care.
- Flowers placed on a grave at the time of interment will be left for a minimum of one week.
- Fresh floral and artificial tributes in approved vases will be removed during regular grounds maintenance as needed.
- Fresh floral and artificial tributes placed on the ground or in an inappropriate vase will be removed (including the vase) during regular ground maintenance without notice. Environmental and site conditions may alter the placement or location of any such arrangements. On or about October 1<sup>st</sup>, all tributes will be removed.

### ***Flowerbeds, Trees and Shrubs***

- The planting of flowerbeds, trees and shrubs is not permitted.

### ***Revisions to this Cemetery Policy***

- Revisions to the present Church Cemetery policy will be made with the consent of the congregation.

SCHEDULE "A"

**WILHELMINA EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**Box 148 Hay Lakes, AB T0B 1W0**  
**Email: [contact@wilhelminachurch.ca](mailto:contact@wilhelminachurch.ca)**  
**CEMETERY PLOT TRANSFER REQUEST FORM**

**Current Owner Information:**

Current Owner Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Owner Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Owner Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Purchase Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Plot(s) to be Transferred: \_\_\_\_\_

*Original Receipt:* yes / no    *Verified with Church Treasurer:* yes / no

**New Owner Information:**

Transfer to Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Transfer to Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Transfer to Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Transfer Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I/We, the original plot owner(s), authorize Wilhelmina Evangelical Lutheran Church to transfer the above listed cemetery plot(s) to the new owner and hereby relinquish all rights to the plot(s).

\_\_\_\_\_  
Owner's printed name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Owner's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
New Owner's printed name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
New Owner's signature

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_



SCHEDULE "B"

WILHELMINA EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
Box 148 Hay Lakes, AB T0B 1W0 - email: contact@wilhelminachurch.ca

PERMISSION FOR A RESERVE OR BURIAL IN AN EXISTING PLOT

(Please fill in a separate form for each request)

I, \_\_\_\_\_, request the plot owned and registered by me, described as \_\_\_\_\_ in which the following person (Plot Descriptions/Location)

has been previously interred: \_\_\_\_\_ be made available to bury the remains/cremains of: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship (this burial/reserve to the previously interred): \_\_\_\_\_

Where remains remains/cremains will be placed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Plot/Location & Details of placement)

The Applicant and I are aware that the regular fee for plot sales apply to this burial/reserve and will be payable upon approval of this request.

This request is for a (please circle one): Burial Reserve

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Applicant (PLEASE PRINT): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Numbers(s): \_\_\_\_\_

I acknowledge that if there are any disputes regarding the above information or my authority as Applicant the information contained in this form may be disclosed.

Signature of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Witness: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

When the registered plot owner is deceased this form may be used by the executor of the estate to authorize additional burials on the site. The information contained on this form is collected under the authority of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and shall only be used for the purposes for which it was collected.