

Book	Poplar Springs Baptist Church Policy Manual
Section	1000 Organization and Structure
Title	Cemetery Policies and Cemetery Committee
Number	1418
Authority	Article IX of the Church By-Laws Cemetery Committee, January 1, 2008
Adopted	November 8, 2015. Amended September 8, 2024
Purpose:	The Cemetery Committee is responsible for the cemetery and burial plots.

Section I: DEFINITIONS

- A. **OWNERSHIP:** Ownership is defined as rights to burial in a plot. A cemetery plot owner's rights are contractual and subject to the ordinary rules of this contract. One who has selected a plot in the Poplar Springs Baptist Church cemetery does not acquire ownership of the soil. He/she acquires only a right of burial therein which has been designated as an easement or as a license or privilege. When a plot is selected, the rights of the Grantee are expressed or deemed to be subject to the rules and regulations, bylaws, and policies of Poplar Springs Baptist Church.
- B. **CEMETERY PLOT:** The term "plot" is an area of sufficient size to accommodate one adult interment; generally four feet by eight feet.
- C. **INTERMENT:** The term "interment" shall mean the permanent disposition of the remains of a deceased person by cremation and inurnment, entombment, or burial.
- D. **PLOT MARKER:** The term "plot marker" refers to any means used by the cemetery to locate corners of the plot.
- E. **MARKER / HEADSTONE:** A marker/headstone is a granite stone or flat bronze plaque either flush or above ground that is inscribed with the name, date of birth, and date of death of the person that is buried in said plot. (minimum size is 8" x 16")
- F. **MONUMENT:** A monument is a stone extending above ground, usually inscribed with the family name only.
- G. **MAUSOLEUM:** A mausoleum is an external free-standing structure constructed as a monument enclosing the interment space or burial chamber of a deceased person or persons.

- H. COPING: Low stone borders, generally constructed with granite or marble, that are used to enclose a cemetery plot
- I. ACTIVE CHURCH MEMBER: An active church member is a bona fide member of Poplar Springs Baptist Church as set forth in Article VI of the Church By-Laws. For purposes of this policy, an active church member is a member who meets at least one of the following criteria.
 - (1) Attends Poplar Springs Baptist Church at least once every six months and whose predominant attendance is not at another church.
 - (2) A church member is active who has previously participated in the life of the church but is temporarily away in academic study, military service, or Christian ministry service.
 - (3) A church member recognized as part of the church's homebound ministry is considered an active member.
 - (4) The spouse of a church member who has been previously interred in the Poplar Springs Baptist Church Cemetery shall always be treated as an active member under this policy.
- J. IMMEDIATE FAMILY: The immediate family is described as follows: spouse, parent, grandparent, children, sibling, and grandchildren of the original plot owner(s). The term is also to include "step" to the above where applicable.

Section II: CEMETERY POLICY

- A. Although there are many plots within the Poplar Springs Baptist Church cemetery that were issued before the writing and adoption of this policy, no plot, no party and no Grantee shall be exempt from adhering to the rules and regulations, bylaws, or policies of Poplar Springs Baptist Church cemetery.
- B. There will be no charge for active church members of Poplar Springs Baptist Church who obtain plots for their own use. (See section 1 for definition of active church member) However, church members will be responsible for the marker deposit fee. (See paragraph J in this section.)
- C. Cemetery plots will only be assigned to former members of the church with immediate family connections. (See section 1 for definition of immediate family) The cost for the use of a cemetery plot for former church members with immediate family connections is \$750. **Interment shall not take place until the cost of use of the plot has been paid in full. Also, an additional \$500 marker deposit fee must be paid in full prior to interment. (See paragraph J in this section.)**
- D. Church members who reserve a plot and who either move their memberships to another church or who become inactive for reasons other than health concerns, will

be responsible for the \$750 fee. The unique exception to this regulation is identified in Section 1, Paragraph I (4).

- E. Proceeds from the cemetery plot assignments will be deposited into the Cemetery Fund.
- F. All plots remain the property of Poplar Springs Baptist Church. No one has the right to sell, gift, transfer or otherwise assign a plot to someone else. **If the owner of a burial plot is not buried in the assigned plot, the plot will revert back to the church.**
- G. The Cemetery Committee shall assist families in selecting available burial plots. A family member and two Cemetery Committee members must be present when a plot is selected.
- H. The Cemetery Committee shall direct funeral homes to the location of burial plots. A member of the deceased family should be present as well.
- I. The Cemetery Committee shall direct funeral homes to insure that graves that have been opened on the day prior to interment are covered overnight for safety.
- J. A permanent marker shall be installed within twelve months following interment. **Internment shall not take place until a marker deposit fee of \$500 has been paid in full.** This fee applies to every interment, including church members. The full \$500 marker fee will be refunded when a permanent marker is installed within twelve months following interment. No portion of the marker deposit fee will be refunded if a permanent marker is not installed within twelve months following interment. The Cemetery Committee shall purchase a permanent marker with the \$500 fee if, after twelve months, a permanent marker has not been installed by the family of the deceased.
- K. No monument may be installed in such a fashion that it extends beyond the boundaries of the designated plot, or that will interfere with future grave openings or the movement of the Cemetery maintenance equipment.
- L. Grave monuments are prohibited from having any personalization or images that are unbecoming a Christian cemetery. The Cemetery Committee reserves the right to approve or reject any personalization on grave monuments. Poplar Springs Baptist Church reserves the right to limit the size and design of grave monuments. The Cemetery Committee shall have the right, and it shall be their duty, to enter upon such plot and remove the offensive or improper object. If the removal of such objects incurs any costs, the burial right owner's estate or immediate family shall be liable for any and all costs.
- M. Mausoleums are permitted provided that plans and specifications are submitted to and approved by the Cemetery Committee. Mausoleums shall be no taller than

enough to entomb one body so as no more than one body is entombed per plot. The mausoleum shall be no closer than six inches to the edge of the plot on which it sits.

- N. Only head and foot markers will be erected. No curbing shall be installed around the plots. Coping is not permitted. Rocks, stones, and gravel are not permitted as mulch covering for graves.
- O. Flagpoles shall not be installed in the cemetery.
- P. Small temporary flags (not exceeding four inches by six inches) may be placed on graves. Only the following flags may be displayed:
 - (1) The Christian flag.
 - (2) The flag of the United States of America.
 - (3) The flag of North Carolina or one of the other states in the Union.
 - (4) The flag of a branch of the United States military.
- Q. No independent interments of a body other than that of a human being will be permitted. However, at the request of the family, the cremated remains of a pet may be interred within the casket of the pet's owner.
- R. Cremated remains must be interred and may not be distributed into the atmosphere.
- S. Each plot is limited to a maximum of three (3) cremated remains each.
- T. All caskets with remains that have not been cremated shall be enclosed in a non-metallic decay proof vault, poly-vault, or concrete grave liner.
- U. A vault is not required for cremated remains.
- V. New grave sites shall be cleaned of dead flowers, wreaths, and other items within fourteen days of the burial.

Section III: MAINTENANCE PRACTICES, RESPONSIBILITY & LIABILITY

- A. The Cemetery Committee shall maintain an updated map of the burial plots.
- B. Poplar Springs Baptist Church reserves the right to maintain the cemetery, including but not limited to, leveling all graves, maintaining the grass, and removing any flowers and other adornments or objects.
- C. Maintenance contracts and schedules shall be set forth by Poplar Springs Baptist Church.
- D. Poplar Springs Baptist Church assumes the responsibility for the maintenance of the cemetery grounds.

- E. Cemetery clean up days will take place during the third week of March and the first week of December each year. Items not allowed by this policy will be removed. Any items on the ground will be removed. This will provide a clean area for the Easter season as well as the Christmas season for those who place flowers or other items for the holiday.
- F. The church is not responsible for the repair or maintenance of markers or monuments.
- G. Poplar Springs Baptist Church assumes no responsibility for damages to grave sites, monuments, markers, etc. that may occur while preparing for a burial in another plot or while work is being done to any plot or from any act of God that may occur.
- H. It shall be the responsibility and liability of the funeral home, grave digger, monument company, or any other such company or person who is working in the Poplar Springs Baptist Church cemetery, to repair, replace, or make good any damages to any plot that may occur as a result of a mistake or oversight on said person's part.
- I. Bottles, toys, figurines, and other objects that might create a mowing hazard will not be permitted during the mowing season and, when used, will be removed and disposed of by the Cemetery Committee without notice.
- J. Fences or barriers of any type construction may not be erected in the cemetery. Fences and barriers in existence at the time of the adoption of this policy are exempt.
- K. Flowers are welcomed at any time of the year in the cemetery. It is the responsibility of the family member or whomever placed the flowers to remove them before they become unpleasant or offensive to view.
- L. Glass containers or glass vases are not acceptable as flower holders.
- M. Shrubbery, trees, flowers, and other ornamental plants may not be planted in the ground of the cemetery.
- N. Cemetery visiting hours shall be from dawn until dark.
- O. Poplar Springs Baptist Church expressly reserves the right at any time, with or without prior notice, to adopt new rules and regulations, or to amend, alter or repeal any rule, regulation section, or paragraph of this policy.
- P. The Cemetery Committee shall bring all recommendations before the church during a business conference.