

Some Things to Know...

About the Holy Nativity Columbarium & Memorial Garden

(Written by Kim Boursier in conversation with Dan Weatherman & Retired Pastor John Lingen)

The completion of the 'Columbarium & Memorial Garden' can be appreciated even more when we learn of the creative process that went into the design by Dan Weatherman, architect and Holy Nativity member, and the workings of the 'Columbarium Task Force'.

Dan and the Task Force wished for a practical location to start with, a site that would allow the most hospitable access from both the parking lot and the church building. When looking at the south side of the church property they found the southwest area close to Winnetka Ave. to be too loud. It was determined that the hillside to the southeast would be a more quiet, serene and meditative area. The location was chosen and the hillside was carved out to make a flat area for people to congregate. The stone wall was designed to be a gentle curve that embraces the circular patio and garden area. The stones of the wall were intentionally chosen for their natural tone, irregular sizes and informal appearance. The circular shape of the patio and garden fit nicely into the hillside and offer comfort and intimacy to the space. If you stand in the very middle of the circle and speak, the design creates an amphitheater effect. This is in part due to the two columns currently in place as well as the graceful stone wall and the cobblestone design of the patio. Future expansion is envisioned, as the groundwork has been laid for the addition of four more columns to complete the circle.

With respect to the flora chosen for the columbarium, Dan recommended plants and flowers that would provide color for all seasons of the year since burials can happen year round at the Columbarium. On the hill behind the stone wall are tiger lilies. Between the wall and patio are pink spirea and white hydrangea whose big and beautiful heads stay in bloom into winter. By the columns are annual purple cleomes and off to the side of the patio are summer sweet plants and juniper plants. As you approach the columbarium from the parking lot there is a small plant area with a Peegee hydrangea tree surrounded by many perennials, namely gold coast junipers, purple cone flowers, moonbeam coreopsis, sedum, salvia, rudbeckia otherwise known as black eyed susans, and heuchera also know as white coral bells.

The symbolism of the pavers as designed by Dan was shared by Pastor John Lingen when he spoke at the dedication ceremony on June 28th. One will notice that the cross in the brick patio doesn't line up with the cardinal directions and this is done for a reason. The bottom of the cross points to our church sanctuary where we gather to worship and celebrate our faith journey. As you enter the sanctuary you notice the baptismal font as well as the many crosses found at the front of the sanctuary. These are symbols for us of our faith journey from birth until death. At the other end of the cross of the Columbarium you will find a simple yet beautiful earth-green fountain that again reminds us of our connection through baptism to the water of life mentioned in the funeral service for "we are buried out of the church." Pastor Lingen gave praise to the members of the Task Force who were acknowledged at the dedication. But it is important to note that much of the Columbarium initiative and construction was managed and completed by the Task Force themselves and members of our congregation. What an amazing community of believers!