

Writing a Memory Book page

*For all the Saints who from their labors rest,
All who by faith before the world confessed,
Your name O Jesus, be forever blessed.
Alleluia! Alleluia! ~ “For All the Saints” (ELW #422)*

This is a guide for loved ones to help them write a page in the Memory Books of the Columbarium of Luther Memorial Church, Madison, Wisconsin. And it is a guide for those who have purchased a niche to enable them to begin writing their own page(s) in advance.



The Memory Books are displayed in a prominent position inside the stone enclosures of the Columbarium, where they can be read by Church members, the family and friends of the inurned, visiting worshipers and the general public.

The Columbarium is a quiet place, welcoming meditation and the warmth of human touch on the beautiful stone niches. At the time of inurnment and in commemoration of those who rest here, on All Saints Sunday water from the small Baptismal font inside the gates is placed on the niches in the sign of the cross. Votive candles are often lighted in memory of the inurned.

The ritual associated with this ceremony is one of memory – a hopeful and precious one.

After the service of inurnment, the family is asked to write words of praise for the loved one, and to be both factual and celebratory in their admiration.

This guide is designed to give a template for the sections of a page in the Memory Books. There are usually four parts to it.



Part I: A Brief Biography From Birth to Death

This section includes the dates of birth and death as well as the date of inurnment. Also found here are the date and place of Holy Baptism and Confirmation. Appropriate life events such as marriage are also mentioned, and the date and place noted in addition to the name of the spouse. Often the children and grandchildren are mentioned, and sometimes the sons- and daughters-in-law. Some elements from an obituary may be helpful. Significant losses may also be included.



Part II: The Secular Life of the Inurned

This section often includes such information as education, vocations, service in the armed forces and life highlights, etc. It may also include mention of troubled times of special importance, if desired.



Part III: The Church Life of the Inurned

Because many of the inurned members have a special, long-lasting love for Luther Memorial, their personal ministries are described here. This section may include meaningful involvement, and how the person expressed it, e.g., committee service, singing in a choir, liturgical ministry, etc.

If the inurned was not a member of Luther Memorial Church, it is appropriate to mention why they are or will be inurned in the Columbarium, e.g., a family member, close friend or spouse of a member, etc.



Part IV: Holy Scripture or Stanzas from a Favorite Hymn

Many of those inurned here have favorite verses of Scripture they have found especially helpful and meaningful throughout their lives. Perhaps it's the verse they recited at their Confirmation. More recently families have suggested lines from a favorite hymn or even Biblically-based lines from the liturgy.



Additional Help

One of the pastors or a member of the Columbarium Board stands ready to assist the family with anything having to do with writing appropriate language for the pages in the Memory Book. You have only to ask.

The text of each page is special and personal. It is not merely a numbered listing of facts; rather a statement of loving and caring prose.

May God's blessings be with you as you honor your loved one in this way, especially in time of grief.

May God's blessings be with you as you contemplate the lives you have led in Christ.