April 27, 2020

Dear Town of Matthews Planning Board,

Thank you for your valuable time in allowing me to present our dream ministry of a Memorial Garden/ Columbarium for Matthews United Methodist Church. Please let me introduce myself. I am Mary Ayers and a member of Matthews United Methodist Church. I am longingly waiting to place my deceased husband in his final resting place in the proposed memorial garden.

As you may know, there are many churches in the Matthews/Charlotte area who already have memorial gardens/ columbariums on their campuses for several years. Also, as stated by the National Funeral Directors Association, cremation accounts for 50% of services in 2016 and they estimate that in the year 2020 the figure will be 55%, and increase to 70% by 2030. Because of these reasons, we hope to have this ministry for our church members.

Our dream began about three years ago when David Bigham and I went to the Trustees of our church with our idea and dream. They were very excited and wishful for this to happen. A committee was formed and we have diligently worked and researched the very best location, the correct size, the most beautiful landscaping, the correct lighting and water source for this project. Thankfully we have had knowledgeable people willing to help and advise us along the way. All plans have been presented to, discussed with, and reviewed many times and unanimously voted on by the Matthews United Methodist Church's Board of Trustees, the Administrative Council, and our Senior Pastor Charles Wilson. We have 51 families in the church who have signed letters of intent expressing a desire for niches and/or memorials as well as financial support. At this time, we have enough commitments from these families to underwrite this ministry.

I have included several pictures and diagrams to share our plan and visions. I will, along with David Bigham, gladly answer any questions you may have.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration to our ministry,

Mary E Ayers

c. 704-661-3860
The initial construction will have one double niche unit (shown on the left in the picture above) and one single niche unit in the middle of the brick wall. A second double niche will be added on the right side as soon as funds permit.
Future Expansion Space
Future Expansion Space
Brick Wall (64 ft. long; 7 ft. high in middle; 5 ft. high on ends)

Fence (54" tall brick columns with 48" metal fence panels)

For the reduced layout, the fence along the east side of the garden will not have brick columns. When the garden is expanded, the new fence will have the brick columns and metal fence panels.
Double Niche  100-1/4"L x 64-3/4"H x 39"D