

REPORT OF THE DIOCESAN CEMETARY CONSULTANT

The duties are just as the title implies. To consult, help and guide the cemeteries throughout the Diocese in their day to day operations.

The day to day responsibilities of any cemetery in Ontario (and certainly the Diocese) can be quite extensive.

The responsibilities would include correct mapping, price list, rights to interment certificates and up to date by-laws all approved by the Cemeteries Regulation Unit in Toronto.

The annual responsibilities include the Annual Report for the Cemetery which shall identify the yearly sales, cost of grounds care, number of burials and financial commitment to the Care and Maintenance Fund. There is a very stiff penalty for not completing this report.

The Anglican Diocese of Niagara has 52 cemeteries according to the last complete census of 2008. Like anything else there is a large variance. For example, one cemetery has not performed an interment since 1888, while at the other end of the scale, one has 2000 available lots with columbarium and scattering gardens. All are of equal importance to the Diocese. All must be licensed if there are sale of lots and burials. This license includes any interment of human remains including Scattering Gardens, Memorial Gardens and Columbaria. This means that even if the Church is offering interment for free (ie Scattering Garden) there still must be a license and a commitment to the Care and Maintenance Fund.

Hopefully, most Cemeteries in the Diocese have updated the Cemetery records, maps and by-laws since last Synod.

I will do my best to secure a sample by-law from the Ontario Association of Cemeteries and Funeral Professionals (OACFP) for everyone to use as a template.

There is only one constant in life and that is change. This constant change certainly applies to cemeteries.

When we think of traditional cemeteries, the Anglican tradition is to visualize headstones row on row. There has been a massive shift in the methods concerning the disposition of human remains in Ontario and indeed throughout North America.

Cremation is now the leading method of disposition!

I try my very best to steer all Anglican cemeteries towards columbaria and scattering gardens. These placements are very easy to maintain and equally important, provide the greatest income per footprint.

We are currently working on securing new or replacement licenses for Cemeteries in the Diocese.

All cemetery legislation is predicated on consumer protection, and this means the cemetery books should always be in good order and completely transparent.

All changes in Diocesan cemeteries concerning the establishment, expansion, alteration and additions such as scattering gardens and columbaria must have permission from The Bishop and the Cemetery Regulation Unit in Toronto.

If any Parish requires assistance I would be more than happy to help.

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