

# LANCASTER EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

## WITNESS PARK

### OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

#### **PURPOSE:**

*“Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord...their deeds will follow them.” Revelation 14:13*

Believing that one of the deeds that can follow every believer is to leave behind a written testimony or witness to the living, Witness Park has been established as a ministry of Lancaster Evangelical Free Church (hereafter “LEFC”) as a means to that end. Through the written messages found upon the gravestones, generations to follow will be challenged to consider the grace of God that is found in Christ Jesus alone.

#### **STRUCTURE:**

Witness Park is a ministry of LEFC. After the creation of Witness Park, LEFC established a Witness Park Board to support the operations of the ministry.

#### **LOCATION:**

Witness Park (hereafter “the cemetery”) is located on the tract of land across Pierson Road from the LEFC campus.

#### **USE:**

The cemetery is restricted in its use to individuals who will proclaim a Christian witness on their epitaph. In the event that there is some question over this issue, the Board of Elders of the Lancaster Evangelical Free Church shall be the deciding body.

#### **CARE AND MAINTENANCE:**

The cemetery has been established as a perpetual care cemetery. Twenty percent (20%) of the funds from the purchase of burial rights for each plot is placed in a separate fund. This permanent lot care fund is maintained and governed by the Witness Park Board. As necessary, the Board Treasurer pays the net income of the fund to the cemetery to be used for the perpetual care, maintenance, and preservation of the lots and grounds, and repair of any buildings or property that is part of the cemetery operations. An insurance policy will continue to be maintained to cover desecration of cemetery property or headstones.

## HEADSTONES:

1. Headstones are required for all interred bodies and must be placed within 12 months from the time of interment. At the end of 12 months, temporary markers will be removed.
2. Footers shall be poured concrete installed by a contractor selected by the Witness Park Board. All footers shall be thirty inches deep. The footer's length and width shall exceed the monument's base dimensions, on all four sides, by a three inch margin. Payment for memorial stone footers will be made by the family to a funeral director when funeral arrangements are made or to the monument vendor when the memorial stone is purchased.
3. All monument bases must be between six and eight inches high and exceed the four-sided perimeters of the monument by three inches.
4. Single stone monuments shall be a maximum of thirty inches wide and have a height between twenty and thirty-six inches. The thickness standard shall be a maximum of eight inches.
5. Slant stone height must be a minimum of eighteen inches. Base height and perimeters shall have the same standards as required for the standing upright monuments and base stones. Slant stone depth [front to back] shall not exceed a sixteen-inch maximum.
6. Husband and wife double monuments shall not exceed a maximum width of sixty inches. All other double stone dimension requirements will be the same as the slanted and /or single stone standards.
7. Headstones shall stand upright. There shall be no foot-stones.
8. All headstones must contain a witness to the living, be it a quotation from the Bible, or some message meant to challenge people to turn to God. While there is no minimum or maximum length to these written expressions of Christian witness, it is hoped that they would be sufficient in length so as to make a clear challenge. All quotes or messages must have been found acceptable to the Board. Accordingly, at the time of purchasing a Right to Burial, a written witness for the headstone shall be submitted to the Board. A change to the written witness may be submitted by the family after the time of the individual's death, *but before* the headstone has been ordered. *All* written witnesses must be approved by the Board under advisement of the Elder Board. The witness may be on either the front or the back of the memorial stone or on the base. Identifying information for the deceased would be on the front. The front is the side facing LEFC, with the back, the side nearest the retaining wall and the head of the cross.
9. The Witness Park Board must approve the entire stone, including but not limited to wording, dimensions, design, etc., prior to the stone being ordered.

### Exceptions:

- (1) Headstones furnished or approved by the United States government or by any county of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for the graves of those who have served in the armed forces of the United States or of the Commonwealth may be erected in the Cemetery.
- (2) Headstone length may exceed 30" if a married couple wishes to share a headstone for adjacent burial plots.

### **CREMAINS**

1. Cremaings of two individuals may be buried in one plot with a single headstone. Cremaings will be buried in the center of each of two 4' x 4' areas within the 10' x 4' grave plot if there are two cremaings being buried in one plot. These two areas are to be located at the end of the plot away from the monument so that the remaining 2' x 4' portion of the grave plot would contain the monument. The first cremaings interment would be closest to the monument with the second being away from the monument.
2. Cremaings and a casket can be placed in the same plot. The cremaings must be on top of the casket. If cremaings are buried first, they shall be removed for the casket burial and then placed on top of the casket for burial.
3. Each cremaings interment will be deep enough so that the cremaings are covered by 6 inches of soil with a 4 to 6 inch PVC pipe cap over that and an additional 18 to 24 inches of soil on top of that. Thus the entire depth of the hole would be about 36 inches in totality.

### **TREES, SHRUBS, BENCHES:**

1. The purchase and placement of memorial plaques honoring the dead (such as at the base of a tree or mounted on a bench or a gazebo, etc.) shall be permitted subject to the approval of the Witness Park Board.
2. LEFC desires that the cemetery have a serene park atmosphere.

### **PURCHASES and PRICING:**

1. Plots: Plans and drawings are available indicating numbers and locations of available grave plots. *Rights for Burial* in numbered plots shall be offered for sale. Offering selection of available plots or blocks of plots shall be at the discretion of the Witness Park Board.
2. The only thing being purchased from Witness Park is the *Rights for Burial*. All costs connected with excavation, vault, the burying of the casket, the headstone, and the placement of the headstone shall be at the sole cost of the family of the deceased. Vaults are required for casket burials at Witness Park.
3. Pricing of *Rights for Burial* for each plot shall be determined by the Witness Park Board. Prices may change over time. Purchasers will receive a "*Cemetery Right to Burial*" document endorsed by a member of the Witness Park Board and the LEFC Executive Pastor as evidence to support their purchase of the right to bury in a numbered plot space.
4. Burials of infants and stillborn babies up to one year old will be free for LEFC members. For non-members, the current rate for perpetual care costs will be charged. All other requirements will still be in effect.

### **PROCEDURE FOR PURCHASING A RIGHT TO BURIAL:**

Individuals interested in purchasing a *Right for Burial* shall contact the LEFC Office. The LEFC Office will provide location plans, pricing schedules, and *Cemetery Right to Burial* document. Purchasers shall make their selection and submit payment by personal check to the LEFC Office along with a completed *Cemetery Right to Burial* document, which shall include a witness message. As confirmation of the purchase, the document shall be endorsed by the Witness Park Board Chairman or designee and the Executive Pastor or designee. The original document shall be returned by mail to the Purchaser for safekeeping. LEFC shall retain 2 photocopies; one for the Witness Park Board, and one for the legal documents archives in the church office.

**PROCEDURE FOR SELLING A RIGHT TO BURIAL:**

Individuals interested in selling their *Cemetery Right to Burial* may not sell it to another party, but must request to sell the Right back to LEFC along with the amount of refund requested. Refunds are at the discretion of the Witness Park Board and will not exceed the original purchase price. Individuals shall submit a written request to sell their *Right to Burial* back to LEFC. This request shall be submitted to the LEFC office to the attention of the Witness Park Board Chairman and shall have the original *Cemetery Right to Burial* document. Should the individual's request be accepted, the Witness Park Board will ensure a check is sent, and will update the cemetery plans to indicate the plot/space is now available for sale. Should the request not be accepted, the refund request and *Rights to Bury* document will be returned.

**AMENDMENTS:**

These Operational Guidelines and Procedures may be amended from time to time by the Witness Park Board with final approval made by the Elder Board. Amendments shall be enforceable upon written agreement by both parties.

Signatures of Understanding and Agreement to these Operational Guidelines and Procedures:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Purchaser

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness

Date:\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Purchaser

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness

Date:\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
LEFC Executive Pastor or Designee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness Park Board Chairman or Designee

Date:\_\_\_\_\_

Date:\_\_\_\_\_

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