

# Marketing Plan



*Walker Chapel Historic Cemetery*

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Walker Chapel UMC  
4102 N. Glebe Road  
Arlington, VA 22207  
703-538-5200  
[www.walkerchapel.org](http://www.walkerchapel.org)  
[www.chapelcemetery.org](http://www.chapelcemetery.org)

## Chapter 3: Market Strategy

### Product

The truth is our product is not fun, pleasant, conversational, or adjacent to anything that is. If Social Media is a place to “party” and content providers are the one’s “throwing the party,” then we are in a black hole with no hope of escaping irrelevancy.

But there are some “fun” things happening in the cemetery. Think about themes...what are the themes for the cemetery other than death? One strong theme is gardening. We have beautiful trees, shrubs, flowers, and grounds...Eastern Red Cedars that grow 100+ feet tall and live beyond 400 years; Japanese Snow Bells and how to prune to shape them; getting rid of bamboo; and caring for our drift roses. Each instance could be a blog or a video that could be shared on social media that would gain organic (non-paid) references. Even “How do I get rid of invasive ivy” could be a popular theme from our real-life experts in controlling English Ivy. Organic links in Facebook have gone the way of the dodo bird as “Meta” focuses no paid advertising. Even there popular themes can grab attention.

Preservation and restoration of gravestones is really popular among tombstone tourists. We have granite, soap stone, sandstone, marble, and who knows what stones. All need routine cleaning...how do you do that without destroying the stone? We have stones that are leaning, sinking, or broken...how do you repair or restore them?

Thirty years ago, I had a new client that was a Golf Course Superintendent’s Association. When I went onsite to install our computer system and train the folks, I had lunch with the Executive Director. I confessed to Chuck that I didn’t play golf or even knew anything about golf. Chuck laughed and said, “neither do I, we are all about growing grass.” The cemetery has a lot of grass, and the grass is mixed with a lot of weeds and non-grass plants. A lot of people care about having a nice lawn. It should be one of our themes.

Theme oriented content that is well written, helpful, and interesting will build confidence in our being able to do what we say we do... confidence is a critical element of branding.

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Along the way we have informative content and videos on the journey from passing to inurnment with helpful pointers and advice with a soft “contact us” call to action at the end.

### Brand Statement

A Brand is the personality of the business. Tribalism is the psychological footprint of the dance between consumer and brand, and nurturing a brand tribe is a key goal of social media marketing. In Chapter 1 we spent a lot of time on branding. The full page on brand identity is good for the cemetery guides but is way too long for a brand.

### Brand Identity

The Brand statement is the warm and fuzzy halo that surrounds the consumer and prepositions them to buy the products making it easier for us to sell the products and make more money. In marketing, the Brand Identity is a tag line that is more like a soundbite!

To gain traction and guide our marketing, we need a concise, simple, understandable statement of why we are here. It must be quickly recognizable and link to our brand. All of these are well known.

Disneyland: The Happiest Place on Earth

Nike: Just Do It

De Beers: A diamond is forever

BMW: The ultimate driving machine

Allstate: You're in good hands

Capital One: What's in your wallet?

Rice Krispies: Snap! Crackle! Pop!

KY Fried Chicken: Finger lickin' good

Wheaties: Breakfast of champions

Lay's: Betcha can't eat just one

It is time for you to jump in! Your homework assignment is to think of a tag line that captures attention and links to the columbarium's brand.

In 2017 MaryBeth gave us “Come for the History, Stay for the Love.”

Send your creations to [cemetery@walkerchapel.org](mailto:cemetery@walkerchapel.org) and make some history yourself!

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## Skills & Attributes

Skills are the technical things we can do. Here we look for the idiosyncratic (unusual) aspects of the personality of our business.

The unusual attributes of our cemetery are it is an Arlington County Historic District lending to feelings of steadfastness, consistency, experience. It is a Methodist Christian cemetery lending to feelings of compassion, kindness, humility, and reverence. The cemetery is in an affluent neighborhood with zip code 22207 lending to feelings of luxury, “the best”, and financial stability. The Chapel is architecturally a classical white church set up on a rise and positioned at an angle to a very busy road lending to its curb appeal, purity, sanctity.

This is okay for the website, but for social media we will be more successful by starting with themes of popular interest. We are full-time gardeners; we lift, we clean and pour new concrete bases for gravestones; we grow grass and try to inhibit the weeds. We will lead with those themes on our selected social platforms and be in the background with the cemetery elements.

## Iconography

The product, content, look should be the same across all platforms to promote the recognizability of the brand. This means the logo(s), colors, fonts, style, theme, and “warm & fuzzy” feeling should be the same as possible on the website as it is on Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and the others. We are talking about the short stuff, the attention getters and not so much about the textual content where one platform may be like the great American novel and another social platform likes soundbites.

## Videos

The best social videos do not look professional. An amateur video can be more believable and work better. Videos should be placed on many social platforms with cross links to reinforce the message. Facebook and Instagram have short videos called reels. X has video cuts. YouTube has full-length videos. We must adapt our videos to the personality of the social media platform.

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## Price

One objective of the competitive analysis in this chapter is to visit our selected competitor cemeteries. All non-church cemeteries are required to have a “General Price List” or GPL to give to those requesting information on pricing. The goal is a price list that applies to everyone equally, but in reality, the GPL often contains price ranges that at times are not equally applied.

Our current pricing is significantly higher than pricing in prior years but reasonable given today’s property values. In the past the entire cemetery was for members only and low prices were a benefit of membership and contribution.

To date, pricing has not been an issue with Licensees in the cemetery, memorial garden, or columbarium.

## Promotion

So far, all the promotions we have addresses have been organic...free. There are two other ways of promoting the columbarium. The first is to provide a professional and informative guide on a popular theme that the visitor could download in return for their contact information. The second is to use paid advertising. Facebook has drifted in the direction of almost all paid advertising and less organic results from searches. TikTok uses the reverse approach to look at what you are doing and your preferences and then automatically pushes that class of contact to you. TikTok takes no effort and little thinking. That is why it has become so popular and other social platforms, even Facebook, have noticed and they are starting to emulate that approach.

## People

We addressed Licensee Personas in Chapter 2. Here we are talking about the people doing the marketing, sales, support, and operations as part of the Cemetery Ministry Team. Historically, these responsibilities have fallen to a single, volunteer cemetery manager or committee chair and there have been gaps when there was no manager.

There were times when the cemetery cut its own grass, pulled its own weeds, trimmed its own trees, and spread its own mulch. Contractors now do this work. If the volunteer approach reaches a breaking point and is unable to keep up with all the tasks, the cemetery may elect to hire staff and/or contractors to fill the gap. There is no going back to a weed-infested, run-down, unattended cemetery. The

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cemetery is well-funded and if this marketing plan is successful, there will be sufficient funds to maintain a quality, full-service cemetery for a thousand years.

### Our Target

If all of the above is our strategy, then what is our target? Our target is the people who use social media, not social media itself. Social media is the vehicle to reach the target.

There is a wave, a tsunami coming. New platforms and reinvented older platforms that are embracing a brave new world in computer science. Different from the one Bill Gates, Gary Kildall, and Grace Hopper created, but one they all would love.

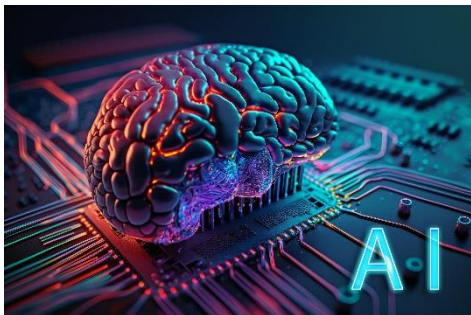
So, we will start with our websites...yes, plural because websites are like shoes. You have shoes for formal events, running, exercising, lounging, and sometime no shoes at all. Websites are like that.

We will weave our way into Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube to start and bypass the platforms like TikTok where it isn't our party or people.

### In Summary

There is an incredibly large number of moving parts. Quality is important and we will only go where we can perform well. We may have to resort to contractor assistance to buy the expertise we need.

We have said before that we have done this before, and we can do it again...



Well, spoiler alert...we have never done this before! We may go down blind alleys. We will make mistakes. But that's the fun of being an adventurer going where no Chapelyte has ever gone before!

RUReady?