

FUNERAL CONSUMERS ALLIANCE OF WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA

PO Box 81011, Pittsburgh, PA 15217-9998 412.241.0705

Email: info@funeralconsumerswpa.org

Fall 2025

Annual Meeting Mark your Calendar

Saturday Oct 25, 10 – 1pm
Calvary Church

315 Shady Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15206

Guest Speaker: Laura Faessel, Penn Forest
Natural Burial Park. She will talk about
Green Burials.

FCAWP's New Web Page

We are pleased to announce that after several years without a web page, we have built a new and improved website. We have expanded the Resources section, added Alkaline Hydrolysis or water-based cremation, and body composting to the funeral options. We added a new section including hyperlinks to Social Security, Veterans Administration, Pa Department of Human Services and County Assistance Offices for funeral/burial benefits. Please pay us a visit at:

Funeralconsumerswpa.org

Charitable Donations Needed

Our expenses are rapidly exceeding our income. As compared to last year, through July we raised \$1,435. This year, we have only raised \$250 or 17% of what we raised last year. An example of our expenses is this mailing which cost \$1,000. Please consider making a donation and help us balance our budget. To keep our funds local, please designate your contribution to one of our expense categories: Communications, Office Supplies, or Postal Permits. For that reason, we are enclosing an envelope for your

Board Members and Volunteers Needed

We have two openings on our board. Please call Stephen Christian-Michaels if you are interested – 412.965.3016. You can also nominate yourself during the Annual meeting.

We Need Helpers!

We are also looking for persons willing to assist with the following tasks:

- Sending letters, emails and calling funeral homes for the biennial price list update
- Calling members
- Assisting with clean-up of paper files
- Giving presentations to groups about the pre-planning for funerals

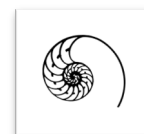
The time commitment is flexible. Please call Stephen Christian-Michaels if you are interested: 412.965.3016 or email him at: info@funeralconsumerswpa.org

Do We Have Your Email Address?

We sent emails to the members for which we had email addresses in December and again in April (Spring Newsletter). If you did NOT receive one or both of these emails, please send us your email address. We currently have 400 email addresses out of the 1,060 members. Sending newsletters via email helps us reduce our mailing costs.

If you do not want to receive newsletters by email, you can email us and tell us to remove you from the email list. Send your email to us at:

info@funeralconsumerswpa.org





Board Members

President, Stephen Christian-Michaels

Vice-President, Susan Jones

Secretary, Andrea Christian-Michaels

Treasurer, Tom Stackrow

Members at large

Beverly Bronder, Larry Comden, Terra Treasure

FCAWP Goes to National Conference

Board members, Stephen Christian-Michaels and Tom Stackrow, and their spouses, attended the Funeral Consumers Alliance National Conference on June 27-29, in Raleigh, NC. They learned about Alkaline Hydrolysis or water-based cremation during an onsite visit, body composting, funeral poverty/ indigent burials, conducting home funerals, and innovative ways to pay for funerals. There were plenty of opportunities to exchange ideas with peers from other affiliates around the country. It was a worthwhile experience and information will be shared in future newsletters.

Water-Based Cremation is being considered in the PA Legislature

Senate Bill 551 was introduced by Senator Cris Dush, with Senator Judy Ward as co-sponsor, on 12/31/24. Judy Ward is also the Senate Majority Speaker. A memo requesting co-sponsors has been sent to all Senators. The bill would redefine cremation as both the current fire-based cremation as well as water-based cremation, otherwise known as Alkaline Hydrolysis. The bill has been referred to the Environmental Resources and Energy Committee.

The House passed HB 1172 on May 2, 2025. "Cremation is typically seen as a more environmentally friendly alternative to burial, but that is not necessarily the case," Rep. Chris Rabb said. "In order to cremate a human body by flame, as is the current method, heat in excess of 1,600 degrees Fahrenheit is necessary. Creating that amount of heat takes immense energy and emits as much carbon dioxide as a 1,000-mile trip by car."

Alkaline hydrolysis is a method of cremation that uses an alkaline solution and a pressurized steel chamber to break the body down to its bare minimum. The combination of the alkaline solution, pressure, and heat creates ash, similar to flame cremation.

"When people think that cremation offers a greener end of life than a full burial does, it's important to remember that the temperatures required in traditional cremations create large energy bills and excess pollution. This legislation aims to provide Pennsylvanians with interment choices that are not only kinder but also environmentally sustainable compared to existing options," Rep. Mary-Jo Daley said. "Complex problems require complex solutions, and it is important to keep up with these advancements in end-of-life care."

Please contact your State Senators and ask them to co-sponsor SB 551. To find out who your legislator is go to <https://www.palegis.us/find-my-legislator>.

Give Big 2025 Pittsburgh Fundraising in December

Last year many of you gave during the Give Big Pittsburgh Fundraising Campaign, part of Pittsburgh Gives.org. Pittsburgh Give Big campaign will be back on December 2, 2025. Make a note of that date in your calendar. For those for whom we have emails, we will send you a reminder. This is an easy way to support our organization. Thank you in advance.