

Our Legacy

Vermont Lutheran Church

Mid-Summer 2023

Progress Begins- Rosenbaum Memorial Garden!

By Jon Urness



A welcomed rain soaks in where the Betty Underwood Rosenbaum Memorial Garden will soon take shape. A few loads of fill dirt will insure an even and smooth surface.

Over 400 perennial flowers are thriving in Stuart and Sherry Petsel's greenhouse, the perimeters are marked, fill has been added, and soon, interior walkways will be poured and an outside curb will be laid. In the meantime, a group of about a dozen Vermont members have indicated they are willing to be on call for planting day. Target date for planting is around September 1st but is totally weather dependent. There's no point in subjecting the beautiful flower varieties that Stuart has picked

out to the hot, dry weather we have experienced this summer. At the same time, we'd like to see planting take place in order to take advantage of a nice, long fall season. Stuart will be monitoring weather and especially moisture to pick the best date for planting at which time, we'll gather the volunteers and work in the dirt!

Recall that Betty Rosenbaum experienced a fall in her own garden last June and succumbed to her injuries. Her husband Max decided a fitting memorial would be a garden at Vermont where she attended Sunday School, Confirmation and was a big part of everything that went on here for many years. Max made a very generous donation to the Vermont Cemetery Association to establish the garden and perhaps further beautify our property for years to come. Max is 98 years-old, practically blind and has a very difficult time getting around but on the anniversary of Betty's death in early June, he paid a visit to the cemetery and Betty's gravesite. It is his hope that others may be inspired to contribute to the Cemetery Association in order to continue beautification and maintenance.



Legacy Prairie & Woodland Update

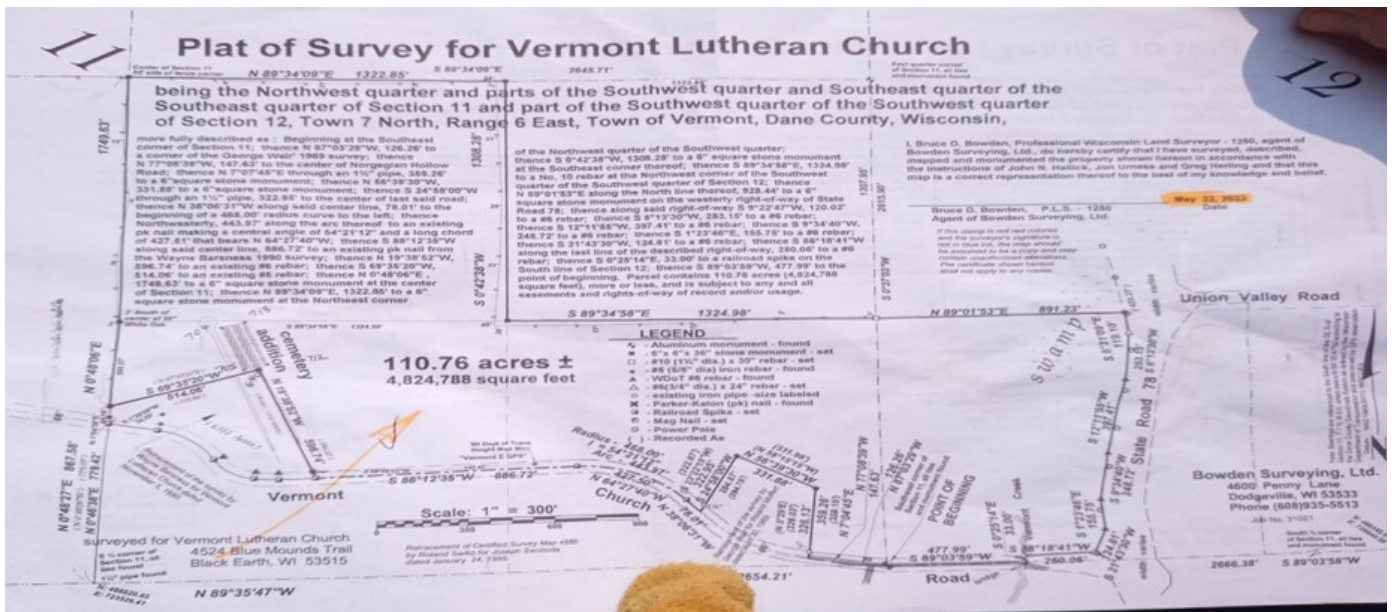
By Peter Antonie

The Legacy Fund Committee and other interested parties have continued their work throughout to further develop the Legacy Prairie and Woodland and explore options to enhance what has already been accomplished.

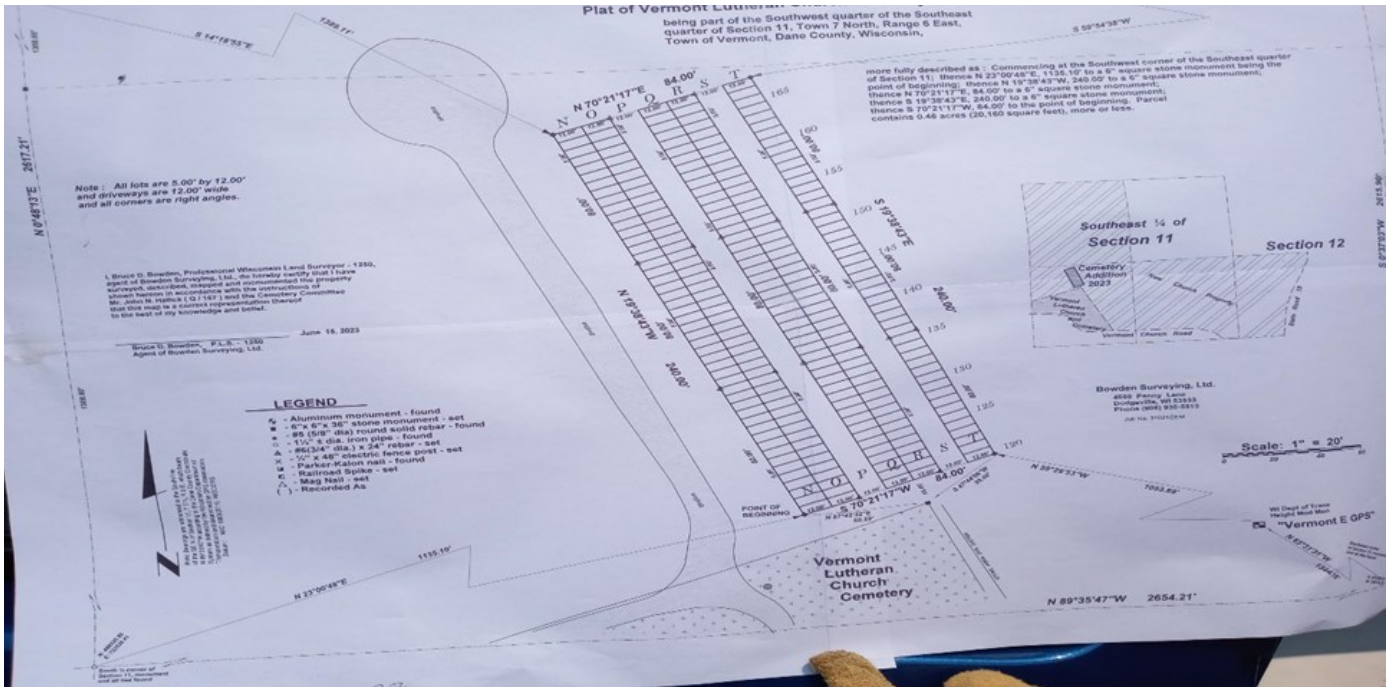
Survey & Boundary Markers:



We hired Bruce Bowden to survey the boundaries of the new property including the Cemetery extension, plotting for the new grave sites, and markers for all the corners. On the map above, the triangle area inside the red lines labeled Vermont Lutheran Church and the road is the property the church owned prior to purchasing the former adjacent farm.



Here's the completed survey of the entire new property - a total of 110.76 acres. The small area we originally owned is 4.511 acres. So the church now owns just over 115 acres, 10 of which are tax free.



Here's the plotting for the new grave sites. To the left of the grave sites is the new Cemetery road extension. This plotting provides for an additional 141 gravesites



This is a picture of the various types of markers used to mark the boundary of the new property. The limestone markers, with the cross, are each 6" x 6" x 36" in size and buried flush with the ground.



Here, Karsten Haugen, Luke Herrling and Jon Urness are finishing the hole for the first of the stone markers that was placed at the northeast corner of the cemetery extension.



Here's the finished product.

This is the view from the marker looking across the valley. The darker green grass in the foreground is the mowed grass trail separating the prairie from the cemetery.



The view from the patio overlooking the reflection pond. Note how well the prairie is coming up with almost no rain!

Finally, the view looking back to the church. The rocks in the foreground are the edge of the plunge pool that catches water draining from the field across the road. Just beyond you can see the trail going up to the church. Since the prairie flowers and grasses take a while to get established, we planted annual rye grass along with them to provide cover and minimize erosion while they get started. The darker green grass in the foreground is some of that annual rye grass.



So, we are in a waiting game – waiting for the prairie to take over and waiting for rain to help!

There are three events coming up where you and the whole community are invited to come and witness how the Legacy Prairie & Woodland has evolved since last fall:

Church Picnic – Saturday, August 19th

Vermont Township Annual Picnic – Sunday, September 10th

Fall Festival – Saturday, October 21st

Come on out anytime to take a hike, have a quiet moment on the patio, use the play structure, or drive up the Cemetery extension road to take in the view.

QR and Cemetery Map Project Moving Along

QR Project

A major project of assigning QR codes for every burial in the cemetery is moving ahead nicely. In a short while, more than half of the east side of the cemetery will be complete. A special stake and QR image has been developed by the Mark-Serve Company with input from the Cemetery Association with the goal of providing subtle markings for every burial. In most cases, each QR covers a small group of burials, most often members of the same family. This drastically reduces the number of stakes and codes needed to cover the cemetery. If there were one code and stake for each burial we would need over one thousand stakes installed. By grouping as families, we hope to cut that number by less than half.

Recall that Jeff and Cathy Dickinson are owners of the Mark-Serve Company and have shared the company's resources and technology to bring this project to Vermont. To date, all the graves in the northeast area of the cemetery have QR codes installed. Take a walk in that area, capture the QR code with your phone camera and see what information is available. Currently we're relying on information gathered by Find-A-Grave but it's hoped that more data will be available in the future.

Updated Map and Directory

After endless emails, fact checking and record updates, Jon Urness and Terry DeWitt will soon have our third version of the Cemetery Map and Directory installed on the Gathering Place. While minor updates have occurred, the last major update happened in 2017. Because of the effort and expense involved, these revision only happen every few years. This one will be up-to-date as of July 1, 2023. This time around, Terry is renewing the entire map and accompanying directory for a fresh look. Watch for it, hopefully by August 1!

Why So Many Yews In the Cemetery?

By Jon Urness



Not long ago I was driving through northern Wisconsin with Judy and daughter Britta. The question came up- why are there so many yew trees in cemeteries?

Well, Dad's are supposed to know everything and I come from a long line of cemetery administrators, at least at Vermont, so I thought I better think of something believable and quick! As a practical sort of guy I said it's because they grow straight and tall and don't provide too much shade. And, their roots grow straight down instead of spreading out so as not to interfere with digging.

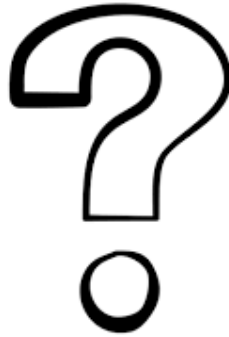
Britta didn't seem too convinced and being the academic type that she is, she "Googled" it. Her sources didn't say a thing about shade or straight roots, but rather that yew trees were originally associated with British cemeteries and thrive in infertile soil. Yews are also linked to pagan beliefs that the trees are associated with death and the journey of the soul from this life to the next. Here's one I like- the Brits planted yews close to churches as a source of wood for English Longbows. And, if you split open a yew log, the heartwood is red colored and the sapwood white, signifying the blood and body of Christ.

The strangest anecdote is that yew trees and their foliage contain toxins that are poisonous to cattle. Therefore they will keep cows from grazing in the cemetery! Not too sure about that one. However, you'll notice that all the fences around Vermont Lutheran Cemetery have been removed.....so maybe?

In any case, that's your cemetery trivia for this issue of *Cemetery View!*

Choosing a Gravesite Marker

By Jon Urness



Questions often come up about how to choose and where to buy a gravesite marker. I'll just make a few comments that might make it a little easier or at least get you started.

First, will the marker apply to a single lot such as a single full burial or a pair of lots like those often used for couples? Single lots are nominally four feet in width so the marker base should be somewhat less than that. We don't want bases extending in to adjacent grave sites. That means the marker itself will need to be well under 48-inches wide. If the marker will be placed on a pair of lots it can be wider and is usually centered at the head of the two lots. These could have a base width of 60 to 72-inches with the marker itself somewhat less. When it comes to choosing a marker for cremation burials it's a little trickier because many single lots will have two cremation urns placed in a lot only 48" wide. Deciding how to place names on such lots requires greater care. The best advice I can give is to take a walk around the cemetery and see what has been done as it relates to your needs and then visit one of the monument companies in the area. They deal with these questions regularly and seem to offer good suggestions. And you sure can contact one of us on the Cemetery Association.

As you hike around the older part of the cemetery you'll notice quite a few large "family" monuments running length ways in a lot. We are really trying to stay away from those because they block the mowing pathways. Most decisions related to placing markers and decorations are based on accommodating efficient mowing operations.

Once you've decided on a marker design, the monument company will call me and I will stake out the location for installation. It's really about that simple but also be thinking about which side of the marker names should appear. We have no preference or guideline regarding which side (left or right) spouse names appear.

Finally, you are free to use any monument company you choose. They all work well with our Cemetery Association. For reference, the two most often used are Spellman Monuments (608-643-8241) in Sauk City and Pechmann Memorials (608-249-8178) in Madison. Both do beautiful work and are a pleasure to work with.

Vermont Lutheran Church

9886 Vermont Church Road
Black Earth, WI 53515

How Can I Contribute?

legacy

We try to keep this simple.

Gifts are the easiest approach and allow for immediate use of funds. Drop a check in the weekly offering plate if you're at Vermont. Otherwise, just send a check to Vermont Lutheran Church, 9886 Vermont Church Rd, Black Earth, WI 53515. Please designate it for the Legacy Fund (which includes the cemetery and property) or the Cemetery Fund (cemetery only). You will receive a receipt for tax purposes, be recognized and sincerely thanked.
