

# The Cemetery View

Vermont Lutheran Church

Sept 2020

## Monument Treatment

About fifteen years ago the Cemetery Association got together and pressure washed all the grave markers and monuments at the cemetery. While the results were beautiful and made many of the old monuments look like new again, we've been concerned that the high pressure treatment, if done repeatedly, will prematurely cause deterioration, especially the older, soft stone examples.



Last winter I was contacted by Bob Niendorf, formally of Mazomanie, who has ancestors buried in the old Pioneer Cemetery. Bob and his family visit the place frequently and noted how the large marker is blackening with lichen and mold. Some of the inscriptions are unreadable. In 2006, the marker had been restored just as we cleaned the markers in the church cemetery. At that time the sandstone marker was a glowing, almost white color that looked like new. However, time has taken its toll again. In any case, Bob told me about a product he has used successfully that is not harmful to the markers but gently re-

moves lichen and other growth. I expressed my concern about doing further damage and agreed to give it a try on the old Pioneer Cemetery marker. Fast forward to June of this summer and Bob paid another visit and applied a coat of Wet and Forget. As the name implies, just mix it up in a spray container, apply it to the stone and leave it alone. Rain, sun and wind will help remove mold, moss and lichen. A couple weeks after Bob applied the stuff, there was great improvement though I wouldn't say it was miraculous. Perhaps another application would help. The main thing is, we saw improvement



## Legacy Contributions Continue to Roll In

Significant additions to the Legacy Fund have come in this past summer from donors far and wide as well as those closer to home.



in honor-Ruth Page

A very sizeable contribution was made from the families of Randy and Shawn Page in honor of their Grandmother, Ruth Page. Joan Skalet added generous memorials to Paul Skalet. Lucille Erickson and Craig Steensrud sent nice Legacy donations. The David Hoeft family donated a nice sum as a memorial to Sage Hoeft, Muriel Beske, Larry Olson and Paul Skalet. And Mark Dybdahl of Port Washington, Wisconsin, son of Art and Florence Dybdahl, sent a great donation honoring the memory of his parents.

Please don't forget about the challenge match offered by Avis Fisher of Fort Collins, CO. Avis will match any donation that comes in during 2020, in effect, doubling the amount given. This is a continuation of the same offer Avis made in 2019.

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### It is our time to build a legacy

*Become a member of the Legacy Fund. Members of the Legacy Fund come from all walks of life and are united by a desire to preserve our beautiful Church and Cemetery.*

Vermont Lutheran Church owns and maintains a cemetery, historic church building and Gathering Place with a hilltop viewscape. Christian stewardship involves the faithful management of all the gifts God has given us, including accumulated, inherited and appreciated resources. Therefore, we created the Legacy Fund to encourage, receive and administer these gifts. Our goal is to generate a Legacy Fund of \$1 Million dollars, or more.

Through receipt of bequests, grants and/or gifts, contributions to the Legacy Fund and investment growth will serve two very important purposes now and into the future:

- To purchase neighboring land for expansion of the cemetery; and/or
- Provide funds for future maintenance of the cemetery and/or building and grounds needs of the Church.

Any legacy member whose contribution totals \$1,000 or more will be recognized with a brass plate on a prominently displayed plaque. Annual meeting reports will include all the names of those individuals who made a contribution of any amount that year.

## Generous Anonymous Donor

If you've ever taken a walk in the oldest part of the cemetery, nearest the Gathering Place, you might have noticed some grave markers that perhaps seem a little out of place. Most of the markers and burials after all, in that area, are among the earliest. As near as we can tell the first graves date back to 1874 and prior to that burials occurred at the Pioneer Cemetery on the Urness Farm.



So what's a little odd about three of those markers? Well, in among the old markers there are three very new markers. In one case, cemetery records show the burial of three Olson children that it seems never had a marker, maybe the marker was wooden and long gone. In the second case, nothing is known about Gilbert Albertson other than the existing marker was severely damaged and unreadable. And as for the marker of the Westrom baby brothers, we know only that the original marker was damaged during construction of the Gathering Place.

Now enter an anonymous, generous, concerned and caring area resident, not even a member of Vermont congregation. This person loves Vermont cemetery and what goes on there. Every once in a while I'll get a call from this caring person suggesting that maybe these long-forgotten graves should have a proper marker. So typically, we'll visit the cemetery together and agree on a design and I'll order the markers. Our anonymous donor foots the bill and then helps Dave Haugen and I install the new markers. I wish I could tell you who this wonderful person is but I can't and won't. Please just take it from me that there are some fine human beings in the world!





## Cemetery Notables

Rev. John N. Fjeld, Vermont pastor 1860 -1883

Ingebor Fjeld, Rev. Fjeld's second wife

Rev. Fjeld's rather ornate and columnar white stone monument and grave is located in the near southeast corner of the cemetery known as grave Q-10. His is one of the rather early burials at the current cemetery about fifteen years after burials were discontinued at the Pioneer Cemetery to the west. Ingebor's marker is just to the north of Rev. Fjeld's ( Q-13) and is a much newer and low to the ground monument.



Rev. Fjeld was born in Valdres, Norway, October 18, 1818 and died in Black Earth, March 12, 1888. Before coming to America Rev. Fjeld was very much influenced by the Haugian Movement which was a more liberal version of the very staunch and orthodox Norwegian church. It seems he was rather reluctantly accepted here at Vermont because of his rather "popular" leanings. This was evidenced when he first came to Vermont in 1860 when 63 farmers and members of the congregation here contributed to the building of a new church building. However, only 28 of those same farmers chose to contribute to Rev. Fjeld's salary. This was mainly because of his Haugian, liberal beliefs. As it turned out though, during his 23-year tenure at Vermont's pulpit, the congregation more than doubled in size and he retired a well-loved and respected Pastor in 1883.

Some new information recently came to me from Ann Wick of Black Earth regarding Rev. Fjeld and I thought it might be interesting to share.

With a little stretching of the imagination, I'd like to think Rev. Fjeld was the original donor to the "Legacy Fund."

How can this be? Well, according to Ann, after Rev. Fjeld's retirement as Pastor at Vermont in 1883, he moved to the house her parents (Roy and Helen Sarbacker) lived in for many years at 1426 Mills Street in Black Earth. Apparently, Rev. Fjeld and his second wife Ingebor, lived there until his death in 1888. Ingebor continued to live in the house until her death in 1933. At that time, Iver Simley was appointed executor of the estate and son Irvin was assigned to settle the estate. This is where the Fjeld's "contribution" to the Legacy Fund comes in. The couple's will stated "to pay to the Vermont Lutheran Congregation of the Town of Vermont, Dane County, Wis. \$25.00 to be added to their permanent cemetery fund and the income from same to be used for the care and up-keep of the cemetery."



While this interpretation is a bit of a stretch, it is true that the Fjeld's bequethment represents precisely what a number of current members have done regarding future gifts to Vermont Lutheran Congregation. Early on, most of these gifts and bequethments went to the Cemetery Association for cemetery up-keep but more recently with the establishment of the Legacy Fund, the goal and purpose has broadened. The Legacy Fund may still be used for upkeep and expansion of our cemetery, but may also be used to sustain the financial needs of the entire congregation and facility well into the future. The goal is to maintain \$1 million in the fund and draw from the fund's earnings for future needs. (See sidebar to learn how to contribute or designate a portion of your estate to the Legacy Fund)

As a note of interest, Ann added this comment about her discovery of her family's connection to the Fjelds- "I can remember my mom telling me, our house was once the Lutheran Parsonage, but I believe it was the home the Fjeld's moved to upon his retirement as pastor of the Vermont Lutheran Church! "

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**Vermont Lutheran  
Church**

9886 Vermont Church Road  
Black Earth, WI 53515

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## How Can I Contribute?

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 and designate it for the Legacy Fund if you're at Vermont. Otherwise, just send a check to Vermont Lutheran Church, 9886 Vermont Church Rd, Black Earth, WI 53515 and designate it for the Legacy Fund. You will receive a receipt for tax purposes, be recognized and sincerely thanked.

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