

Greetings:

The Bethel Cemetery in Keokuk County, Iowa has a long and rich history where loved ones have been laid to rest and honored in generations past and will be honored for generations to come.

Many are under the impression that funding for the Bethel Cemetery in Keokuk County, Iowa comes from the church and/or county taxation funds. In this instance neither is totally accurate. While we do receive a small financial stipend through the county township (\$600 per year), those funds are not adequate to cover mowing and upkeep. The cemetery grounds are owned by Bethel United Methodist Church but provide public burials with no discrimination. Bethel United Methodist church has never used parishioner tithing to provide monetarily to the cemetery, except in emergencies when the board has approved minimal assistance to cover unforeseen costs that could not be covered by the cemetery fund.

Originally, the sale of lots was designed to cover the costs of upkeep and annual mowing. However, many of our plots are now well over 100 years old and in need of stone repairs. The moneys from those lot sales have long been extinguished. Likewise, mowing costs have escalated over the years, leaving us in a situation of financial deficit.

Allow me to share a brief budget overview so you can have a better idea of our concerns:

- Estimated cost to reset and repair stones: **\$15,000-\$20,000** (approximately 55 stones are in need)
- Annual mowing fees: \$135 per mowing. 16-20 mowings per year; **\$2500-\$2700/year.**
- Cost of full lot (which includes 4 burial spots): \$700
- Cost of half lot (2 burial spots): \$400
- Cost for single burial spot: \$250  
(In any given year, lot sales account for only \$250-\$1000 of income)

At this time, we have approximately \$1500 in our cemetery account. As you can see, that will not even cover the costs of mowing for the coming year. It has always been our goal to be good stewards of your loved ones' final resting place. We will continue to be responsible in budgeting, but it is obviously becoming harder and harder for us to give due diligence to maintaining this burial ground.

So, we are asking for your help. Could you partner with us in maintaining the grounds and doing some much needed maintenance? Perhaps you could sponsor a mowing at \$135. Maybe you could sponsor part of our budget for repairs to stones that belong to your ancestors. The average cost of one stone repair is about \$150-\$300 depending on the size of the marker. Maintenance and lawn care will continue to be budget concerns each year. Any assistance would be much appreciated. Bethel Cemetery is a 501C3 Non-Profit organization and your gift is tax deductible.

Your donation can be sent to:            **Bethel Cemetery**  
                                                          **C/O Kevin Luers**  
                                                          **31727 180<sup>th</sup> St.**  
                                                          **Keota, IA 52248.**

We want to be totally transparent in our use of funds, so if you have further question, please feel free to contact Bob Klett at 641-660-0756 or Kevin Luers at 319-330-0148. We thank you for your partnership in meeting our budget goals for the years to come and maintaining attractive and well-kept burial sites for your loved ones.

The Bethel Cemetery Board of Directors