

The Cemeteries of St. Mary's and the Missions
2025 Spring Newsletter

Our parish cemeteries have seen great improvements in the past year. A major project was the purchase of a 64 niches columbarium to complete the installation at St. Mary's in Georgian Bluffs. Adam Helmers assumed the role of Cemeteries Manager and added unique strengths to the administration and operation of the cemeteries. Many parishioners arranged for the purchase of burial rights and placed monuments and markers on the graves of loved ones. It has been a year of great growth.

There are no major projects planned for the coming year but rather there will be a sharp focus on improving the condition of the grounds. This will involve turf restoration, top dressing sunken graves and restoring monuments which have fallen into disrepair. The roadway at St. Stanislaus' Cemetery in Chatsworth will be graded. The wrought iron fence at St. Mary's in Georgian Bluffs will be repainted. Work will continue to gather stones abandoned in the pioneer cemetery at St. Michael's cemetery in Meaford with the intention of creating a congregate grave. A bench has been donated by a rights holder at St. Mary's Cemetery in South Bruce Peninsula and it will be installed this year. Maintenance is a task that fulfils our commitment to provide perpetual care for the resting place of our departed loved ones.

Spring cemetery clean-up is in progress. We remind you that all decorations, plants, and shrubs must be removed from gravesites in accordance with cemetery bylaws and posted signage. All flower beds will be removed and replaced with sod. We appreciate your assistance in keeping our cemeteries beautiful for all to enjoy. You are encouraged to place a decorative saddle on upright markers or a single well drained cone in front of flat markers. Spring bulbs such as tulips or daffodils planted close to your marker are a great option for floral decoration.

Costs for grass cutting and other maintenance activities have risen sharply this year. The price of fuel and labour as well as other inflationary pressures combine to strain our budget. What can you do to assure that our cemeteries continue to be beautiful resting places for our loved ones? Support the Spring and Fall Cemetery Collections or purchase a lot, plot, niche, marker, or memory wall plaque. At the columbarium, a marble bench is available for a family to sponsor and inscribe in memory of deceased family members. Contact Adam at 519 379 5537 for more information.

Your support of this Spring collection will allow us to maintain the cemetery this year. Bishop Crosby will place an amount equal to your donation into our Care and Maintenance Fund. We need to double the principal in the C&M fund to generate enough interest to meet our annual maintenance costs. The bishop's matching dollars assure that funds will be available in perpetuity. This is the nature of our commitment to those resting in our cemeteries. A fully funded C&M is our aim, and we are making steady progress. You may direct your donation to any one of our 4 cemeteries by placing a note on the memo line of your cheque.

The Spring Cemetery Collection will take place Mother's Day weekend, May 10/11 at all the masses. We thank you for your past support and look forward to your generous response. Parishioners who use the weekly envelope box can make their donation by using the beige colored "Cemeteries Collection" envelope provided. Others may do so by using a plain envelope or one of the purple envelopes marked "All Souls Day" that can be found at the back of the church. Please return your contribution next week or any time during the month of May.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Cemeteries' Board.

Michael Donovan, Current Chairperson.