

# BETHANY CEMETERY ASSOCIATION

# ANNUAL NEWSLETTER



March 2026

## Board Members

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Tracy Brookshier, Secretary  
Lesli Fox, President  
Patty Dortch, Treasurer  
Cheryl Jennings, Member  
Marcia Burnett, Member  
Elizabeth Haidecuk, Member

## Contact

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[www.bethanycemeterymo.com](http://www.bethanycemeterymo.com)  
[facebook@BethanyCemeteryPikeMO](mailto:facebook@BethanyCemeteryPikeMO)  
[bethanycemetery1894@gmail.com](mailto:bethanycemetery1894@gmail.com)  
Mailing Address:  
16545 Pike 9294  
Bowling Green, MO 63334  
314-971-5886

## Donations

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Checks payable/send to:  
Bethany Cemetery Association, c/o  
Tracy Brookshier to the address listed  
above.

Donations are also available online at  
any time!

## Plot Purchases

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Options for plot purchases are  
available on our website as well as the  
agreement. It can easily be printed off  
and are hoping to get an online form in  
the future as well!



## YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT IS GENEROUSLY APPRECIATED

Dear Bethany Family,

Our annual Donation Drive is underway, and we kindly ask for your continued support of our small, local cemetery. Like many of you, we value our family history and want to ensure that our loved ones' final resting place is respected, maintained, and cherished for generations to come. Every donation—no matter the amount—truly makes a difference.

We also invite you to encourage other family members to join in supporting this effort. We are sincerely grateful to everyone who donates year after year; your generosity makes all of this possible.

Sincerely,

Tracy Brookshier, Secretary



# Exciting Updates!

## Our Plat Book is Back!

After YEARS of searching, it is finally home! Pike County News made contact with us and did a front page story on it too! With this information we were able to locate NEARLY ALL of our "missing people"!

We are still working on updating our records as time allows, as you know we are a team of volunteers and it takes much time to finish such a large project with not much spare time.

## Non-Profit Progress

This year, the Bethany Cemetery Association is excited to share that we are actively working toward securing our 501(c)(13) nonprofit cemetery designation, and we hope to receive confirmation by the end of April.

Achieving this status will be an important milestone for our historic cemetery, strengthening our ability to receive tax-deductible donations and opening the door to new funding opportunities that support long-term care, restoration, and preservation.

With this designation, we can better ensure that Bethany Cemetery—founded in 1894 and sustained by volunteers—remains beautifully maintained and available for future generations seeking traditional or green burial options.

## PIKE COUNTY NEWS • MAY 30, 2025

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From page 1



Cheryl Jennings, left, and Tracy Brookshier stand in front of the Shannon mausoleum at Bethany Cemetery holding the recently returned plat book. The Shannons are one of the founding families interred in the cemetery. Photo by Stan Schwartz

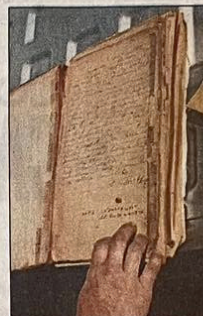
## Plat book for Bethany Cemetery is located

By Stan Schwartz

To say Tracy Brookshier, secretary for the Bethany Cemetery Board, was ecstatic about the finding of the cemetery's plat book, would be understating her emotional state by a factor of 10.

When she first found out that she had relatives on her father's side buried in this cemetery, (Burnett) she immediately became involved with the group that oversees the upkeep of the place. The first Bethany Cemetery board was formed in August of 1894. \$200 had been paid for the land that would be the final resting place for many of those who lived in the area. The small cemetery is located off of UU just a few hundred yards from Bus. Hwy. 54 outside of Louisiana.

The years had taken its toll on the old grave markers and headstones when Brookshier



Hand-written minutes from the first cemetery board outlines the land's purchase. Photo by Stan Schwartz

first visited the graves. So, she and the cemetery board were determined to set things right and get Bethany back to its former glory. But there was one thing lacking, however—the cemetery's plat book.

The plat book was vital for the board. It showed who was buried where, and where there were spaces for more graves. No one wanted

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to take the chance of attempting to dig a grave only to find someone already buried in that plot.

Brookshier knew there had been plat book, but no one knew where it was.

The cemetery board put out the call, asking if anyone knew where it was to contact them. There was no response. They put up a \$500 reward for the book's safe return. Still nothing. Years later they upped the reward to \$2,000. It was like shouting into the vast dark of night.

Then recently, a Pike County resident had been cleaning out some old boxes

that were stored away and came across the book. Realizing its importance, this person contacted Brookshier to offer the book's return.

She was beside herself with excitement. Not only did this person not want credit for finding and returning the plat book, they did not want the reward either.

Trying to determine where graves were in the cemetery was problematic, said Cheryl Jennings, who is on the Bethany Cemetery board. Some of the families of those interred there had moved away, so there was no one to contact. Others, she noted, had bought plots but had not used them.

With the plat book they could determine how many burial sites were still

available, and the board could offer them for sale.

Jennings said she was in contact with some cousins who own a plot for their father in the cemetery.

"If they don't want it," she added, "I'm going to see about planting a tree there."

She said she found a grave as recent as 2011.

Jennings said she was impressed with Brookshier's energy when she started with the board.

After getting the book, Brookshier said she immediately took it to be scanned. With the digital version safely stored in a few places, she was eager to go through the plat book and see what historical marvels it held.

At the front of the book, there were

minutes from the first Bethany Cemetery Committee's meeting. All the names of the committee members are now buried in the cemetery. The book said the plots were sold for \$5.

"We don't charge much more than that now," Brookshier added. She believes the current price is \$40, but the board is considering raising the price now that they know which plots are still available.

They recently put in a gravel road to open the cemetery back up, so visitors don't have to park out by the road.

"Magruder Limestone donated the rock for the road. And Ed Kerns donated his time and equipment to spread it out," Brookshier said.

At some point, she will make the digital version of the plat book available online.

## LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE

### Cemetery Surveying

Cemetery markers and surveys are important for identifying graves, preserving history, and laying out new gravesites.

Four Points Land Surveying should have our final survey map after their completion this spring.

This will make our work for marking graves much easier but most importantly, more accurate.

As a reminder, this was a discounted service that was offered to us last year. It has taken quite some time to complete but we are excited non the less!



*Family comes together together to remember their loved ones.*

## FIRST PIKE COUNTY, MO CEMETERY TO OFFER GREEN BURIALS

Green (or natural) burial is one of the most environmentally friendly and energy-efficient forms of interment. Unlike traditional burials, which often include embalming, metal caskets, and burial vaults, green burial focuses on simplicity and sustainability. It typically involves a biodegradable cloth shroud or a simple casket made from renewable materials such as pine, bamboo, or wicker—allowing the body to return naturally to the earth.

Many people considering green burial are surprised by how meaningful and engaging the process can be for family and loved ones. This approach offers families the opportunity to participate in various aspects of the burial, such as lowering the body into the grave or filling in the gravesite. While participation is always optional, many families value the intimacy and connection that this level of involvement provides.

To learn more, we have added additional information and resources about natural burials on our website, which you are welcome to explore at any time.

Earlier this year, the family of Charles Moore experienced this deeply personal process firsthand, laying him to rest in a casket crafted with care by family members.



## Our Roads Need Help

We are still seeking assistance with getting the roads finished, as the East/West ends do not reach the fencing completely. It was also suggested to see if we could add an entrance on the West side.

Previously we contracted out the labor and the rock was donated by Magruder Limestone. We did not receive enough of the rock to do the entire cemetery.

If you know of anyone that would be willing to assist with helping us complete this project please let us know.

## Fencing

Volunteers assisted with securing the fence posts so that the wind can no longer let them fall out of place.

We are in need of fence post caps to deter water from rotting away the support posts within the vinyl fencing uprights.

We are also hoping that we can get help with finding a cost-efficient way to create a large fence around the back and sides of the cemetery. A large fence would cover the site of the surrounding businesses, which is not an appealing to those seeking a final resting place.

If we can get memorial trees sold, this could play a role as a natural fence as well.



## MEMORIAL TREES

Plant a tree in memory of your loved one that comes with a customizable tree bracelet plaque for only \$350! This is open to the public, learn more by visiting our website.



Autumn Blaze Maple



Northern Red Oak



Eastern White Pine

## 2025 RECAPS

### Memorial Day Salute

Flags were placed again this year on memorial day to honor the veterans laid to rest here at Bethany Cemetery.



### Annual Scavenger Hunt

We hosted our 4th Annual Cemetery Scavenger Hunt again on October 24<sup>th</sup> and had a good turn out! KJFM Radio was our sponsor and the cash prizes were donated back yet again this year! New this time, we designed some t-shirts to sell as well which went over well, bringing our total amount raised over \$300!



We will be seeking another sponsor this year so please help us spread the word and entice people to join in on the fun!

**5<sup>th</sup> Annual Scavenger Hunt is scheduled for Friday, October 23<sup>rd</sup> at dusk!**



### Spring Clean-Up Day!

Each year we plan a volunteer day for those that are willing and able to help with maintenance and clean-up. This effort provides us the opportunity to save funds

**Our Annual Spring Cleanup Day is scheduled for Saturday May 16th, 2026 from 9:00 am to Noon!**



## Bethany Interments

Now resting in peace at Bethany Cemetery.

Loretta K. Brown

- Nov. 2, 1944 - Aug. 24, 2024

Ernest WM. Brown

- Nov. 23, 1942 - Mar. 11, 2025

Charles R. Moore

- May 28, 1936 - Jan. 5, 2026

## TREASURERS REPORT

Category	1/1/2024- 12/31/2024	1/1/2025- 12/31/2025
<b>INCOME</b>		
Donation	2,290.00	3,095.00
Fund Raiser	565.00	380.00
<b>TOTAL Donation</b>	<b>2,855.00</b>	<b>3,475.00</b>
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>2,855.00</b>	<b>3,475.00</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Bus. Expenses	0.00	112.20
Supplies	31.63	0.00
<b>TOTAL Bus. Expenses</b>	<b>31.63</b>	<b>112.20</b>
Exp-Fund Raiser	529.94	133.60
Maintenance	1,877.00	100.00
Mowing	1,840.00	2,330.00
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>4,278.57</b>	<b>2,675.80</b>
<b>OVERALL TOTAL</b>	<b>-1,423.57</b>	<b>799.20</b>

*thank you*

## Donors of 2025

Our efforts would be impossible without the generous support of our donors every year. So a big THANK YOU goes out to all who have donated and supported our efforts this year!

- Maurice Craig
- James Ottwell
- John & Audrey Roberts
- Joyce & Christopher Sweet
- Kenneth Conner – *In Memory of Mary & Arthur Conner*
- Charles Stewart – *In Memory of the Stewart Family*
- Rebecca Wood – *In Memory of the Muff Family*
- Kenneth Turpin – *In Memory of Lola Moore*
- Ronald & Ann Kookan – *In Memory of John & Ruth Shannon*
- Sharon Love – *In Memory of John Christopher Muff & Family*
- Carolyn Conner Puskas – *In Memory of Mary & Bill Conner*
- Sandy Buchanan & Kathy Orf – *In Memory of the Schuster & Corum Families*
- KJFM Radio - *Scavenger Hunt Sponsor*

## Bethany Cemetery Association Annual Donation Drive

**Donation Amount \$** \_\_\_\_\_ **In Memory of:** \_\_\_\_\_

Checks Payable/Send to:

Bethany Cemetery Association, 16545 Pike 9294, Bowling Green, MO 63334

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to you: \_\_\_\_\_

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Names of Family laid to rest at Bethany Cemetery:

\_\_\_\_\_

Do you own any vacant plots? \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Yes

If Yes, please provide Section, Lot, Plot information:

\_\_\_\_\_

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*Please provide Name and Contact Information of any next of kin that we can send future information to:*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to you: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to you: \_\_\_\_\_

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Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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# BETHANY CEMETERY ASSOCIATION

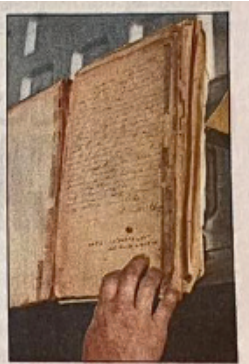
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## Plat book for Bethany Cemetery is located



Hand-written minutes from the first cemetery board outlines the land's purchase. Photo by Stan Schwartz

Bethany Cemetery Association's 5<sup>th</sup> Annual

# CEMETERY SCAVENGER HUNT

OCTOBER

Friday **23** 7 PM

19947 Hwy UU  
Louisiana, MO

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16545 Pike 9294  
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