

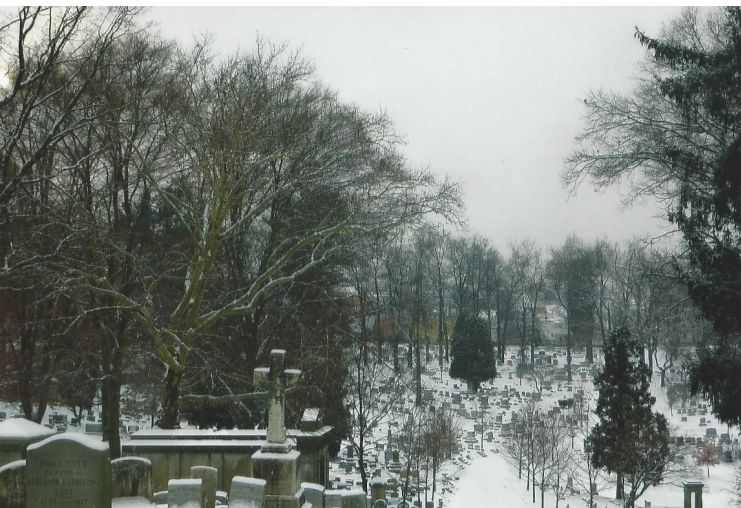
‘ A CHRISTMAS BLESSING ’

In the middle of all of the frantic Christmas shopping and preparation, maybe with growing impatience with the long lines and the traffic, the Advent season gently nudges us calmly and thoughtfully towards our Christian day of celebration. But sometimes, the feelings that Advent bestows upon us gets lost as our thoughts are focused on juggling many duties. It is at this time that we have the greatest need to quiet our mind and refocus. And nothing does it better than a visit to the Charles Baber Cemetery. Somehow the time spent walking the grounds brings our cluttered mind back to what is important in life.

The walk may start quickly with our mind racing on work, what to make for supper, what gifts remain to be purchased, problems our children or grandchildren may be having, how to stretch the budget, is our job secure, will there be a year end pay raise, and should we increase our church tithing. But ever so gently, our steps slow down as we marvel at the gothic design of the chapel as the fading sun casts shadows over it. We may even be thinking of how refreshing the Sunday summer services were with the gentle breeze carrying the sound of the litany or the music out into the trees. Once past the chapel, we may take a grassy path that circles back toward Market St. or descends to the lower level where the laborers cleared the underbrush on the old dirt roads. All of a sudden, we begin noticing the different types of trees with their many striations and shades of barks and the shaping of their limbs that have become displayed more prominently now that they have lost their leaves. With the trees barren, we can see the variety of the tall and stately evergreens, and the graceful curving limbs of the Japanese maples and Siberian elm, and the skyward reaching limbs of the oaks, sugar maples, littleleaf linden, and hornbeams, and the patchy trunks of the London planetree, and the elephant looking foot of the American beech. Also very prevalent now, are the birds’ nests fixed high up in the bare limbs of many of the trees.



While walking among the trees, our eyes casually drop down to look at a memorial marker, and we are amazed at how old or how ornate the carving is or the size or shape of it or perhaps how it is placed within a family plot. Our eyes continue to roam as we see the crossed swords on a marker, or an angel, or an urn covered with a drape or with ivy or with an orb atop a pedestal. After looking at a particular marker or a family plot, we wonder what the person was like buried there. How hard was their life or what was the community like in the time span that they lived? Suddenly we realize how busy we have become and how we have forgotten to enjoy the simply things of life that God has given us so freely. We see the incredible beauty of the garden cemetery. We see the glory of nature about us. We are living the life that God has breathed into us. We have much to be thankful for.



Please remember the cemetery in your prayers. Prayers of gratitude for its workers, its board members, and the friends that give of their time and treasure. In this joyous holiday season, may you find peace and serenity in your life. God has blessed us with so many things and in so many ways. May you find the time to enjoy your blessings. God bless and Merry Christmas!