

CHARLES BABER (CEMETERY) PRESERVATION TRUST

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2026 Gatehouse Views Annual Newsletter

Memorable Memories

All of us through the many years of our lives store lots of memories. Some memories are forgotten until an event, smell, or place reactivates that memory. Other memories are so memorable that we only need to close our eyes and think of the event, time, or place. The Charles Baber Cemetery holds a chest full of memories just waiting to happen. This chest full of memories yet to occur encompasses the trees, structures, critters that roam the property, and the memorial markers. All one has to do is open one's heart and one's mind when walking or sitting on the property. One such memory touched my soul in such a profound way, that I have only to think of the gothic chapel to bring the memory back as if it happened only minutes before. It happened at a 6AM, 2023 Easter service outside of the chapel. Whether Easter comes in March or in April, the outside temperature is very cold at 6AM. The sun rises between 6:10 to 6:20 depending on the month in which Easter falls. I usually arrive a little early to help the Rev. Dr. Kurt Kovalovich set up in front of the front doors of the chapel. This year Father Kurt was training a deacon, Brue Rowe, who was there to assist with the service. It was still dark outside at 5:45AM and if you stepped away from the outside light in front of the chapel, you could still see the stars. We bring our own folding chairs and sit bundled up facing the west looking at the front doors of the chapel. The sun slowly rose behind us over our left shoulders. As we sang and prayed and listened to the Easter morning sermon by Fr. Kurt, the sun which was rising low on the eastern horizon, sent it golden rays across the grass and through the trees to softly turn the front of the chapel into gold. It was subtle and gradual at first as the golden rays slowly crept up the front of the chapel. Sitting there outdoors on Easter morning, celebrating our risen Lord with the sun's golden brilliance reflecting off the façade of the chapel was so deeply moving and spiritual, it was as if Jesus, in all his glorious radiance, love, and warmth, had just risen before us in the early morning hour. It is a feeling and a memory that will last forever.

So many of the trees are also waiting to create joyful memories. For instance, the London planetrees that line the inside west wall of the cemetery readily participate in happy memories. One cold wintery morning, a rain had fallen to coat the trees. Because of the frigid temperature, the rain froze in a glaze on the bare limbs and trunks of the deciduous trees. The London planetree is a unique species in that its outer bark peels off to reveal an multicolored smooth inner bark. By midmorning the freezing rain had stopped and the sun came out. As I drove east on Market Street, the sun came out and its beams hit the frozen trees. The limbs and trunks of these large planetrees literally glistened and sparkled in the sun's shining rays. I had to park the car in order to sit in utter amazement and delight, watching this sparkling performance. As I sat there watching the dazzling show, I wished all the other drivers could slow down to notice this glittery ice show.

Also inside the chest of memories yet to happen, are our birds and animals that cross or live on the property. One winter day, I was walking in relatively deep snow on the dirt path that runs from the chapel down hill to the lower level. As I reached the lower level, I looked across the open ground to the middle school hillside and there, coming down the hill and crossing the cemetery property, was a lone red fox. It loped across the lower level and up the hillside down from the chapel and seemed to vanish somewhere along the stone wall. On another occasion in summer, many years ago, I was patrolling the property at dusk. As I drove down the hill from the chapel and looked toward the pond area, there to the east of the pond was one large and three small piles of crumpled white paper. I was so annoyed that someone would throw crumpled paper on the ground. I stopped the car and started toward the crumpled paper to pick it up, only to be surprised that the paper was slowly moving. It was one adult and three skunk babies of almost pure white coloring digging up grubs in the grass. I quickly retreated. They stayed all summer, but have never been seen again.

Lastly in the chest of memories are the memorial markers. Walk the property slowly and stop to read the prayers, verses, and wording written on the markers. Look at the scenes stenciled on the markers. The newer granite markers in the lower level portray not only the person buried there, but their occupation or their hobby. The markers are such a personal and endearing insight into someone's life. They are a treasure to be valued and remembered.

Come and walk the property if you are able and make your own memorable memories.

Arbor Day Tree Planting—Fri. April 24th

Arbor Day, celebrated the last Friday in April, is a keen reminder of the importance of trees and our need to prune, feed, maintain, protect, and preserve them. Sadly, many of our pin oaks at the 16th street entrance, the eastern white pine along the Market St. wall and lining the dirt path going from the chapel to the lower level, and three Japanese larch inside the Market Street wall have reached the end of their useful life. They have become a safety hazard and must be removed. And one dead Norway maple by the barn has to be removed, Their replacement is very important in preserving the Victorian garden setting which is why Arbor Day is so joyfully celebrated. It allows us to replace cut trees.

Arbor Day is celebrated each year at the Baber Cemetery with the purchase, planting, sponsorship, and blessing of six to ten trees. Each tree is offered for sponsorship at \$400 per tree. While the tree may cost \$120 per tree to purchase, the remainder of the money x the 10 trees may be enough to cut and remove only one-two of the trees mentioned above.



The 2025 Arbor Day tree sponsors were: 2 Arborvitae: (1) In Loving Memory of Ann Marie Koch given by Frank and Annie Murphy; (2) In Loving Memory of Joseph Mirabella given by Sandy Mirabella; **2 Japanese Maple:**

(1) In Loving Memory of Andrew F, Matta given by Andy and Erica Matta; (2) In Loving Memory of Sandy & Pat Moore and Jane Myro given by Debra Zyk & Family; **2 Weeping Cherry:**

(1) In Loving Memory of Dona Marie Brown given by Fred Brown; (2) In Loving Memory of Albert & Mary Marchetti given by Peggy Moser;

2 Red Bud: (1) In Loving Memory of

Harry and Jean Ebling given by Joseph and Leigh Ann Siminitus; (2) In Loving Memory of Michael J. Chylack given by Hermine & Danny Murphy;

1 Red Oak— In Loving Memory of Catherine Tarone & Helen Mariscano given by Elizabeth & Arthur Marsicano.



The Arbor Day service is a beautiful ceremony and is open and free to the public. The service is at **2:00 PM on Arbor Day, Friday, April 24th** with the Rev. Dr. Kurt Kovalovich blessing the trees.

Normally there are ten trees up for sponsorship each year. Last year we had four extra sponsors that paid for their tree but we did not have enough tree so they were carried over until 2026. Additionally, we have already received money for four trees this year. This only leaves two available for sponsorship this year. In order to be fair, the first two sponsorship checks received will be for 2026. Any other checks received after that, the sponsors will be called for a 2027 planting.



Anyone can sponsor a memorial tree or give a tree of thanksgiving. You can sponsor a tree by completing and returning the form below to the office (200 S. Second St., Pottsville, PA 17901) along with your \$400 check made payable to Charles Baber Cemetery.

2026 (only 2 left) or 2027 Arbor Day Trees Sponsorship - \$400

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address _____

Given in memory of: _____

Given in thanksgiving for : _____

Amount enclosed: _____

Chapel Repairs Badly Needed

The Chapel of the Resurrection as seen in the winter and spring pictures looks great from a distance.



Take a closer look. Both the exterior and interior of the chapel need major restoration work. This past summer, we were unable to hold Sunday church services in the chapel because the plaster in the ceiling is crumbling, flaking, and falling on everything and everyone seated below. It is our hope in 2026, that we can raise funds from charitable trusts, fund raisers, and the good will of plot owners and visitors to complete three vital exterior projects. **Project #1**—pressure wash and point the stone - **\$24,000**. **Project #2**—replace the 1978 oil burner with a split system of heat pump and air conditioning - **\$28,000**. **Project #3**—replace the leaning wall on the north side of the chapel entrance which houses the north columbarium - **\$15,000**. (The costs are based on 2025 bids.)



These three exterior projects totaling \$67,000 are vital to the structural integrity of the chapel and must be done first before we can address the interior. While we need your charitable donations to help cover our normal yearly ground maintenance costs, we need additional financial help to accomplish these three projects this year. This is a 160 year old chapel that was built between 1863-1865.





Baber Day
Saturday, Sept. 12, 2026

Walking Tours 2:30 –4:00 PM

Bake Sale - All Afternoon

Band Concert 4:00 –6:00 PM

Picnic 4:30 - 6:00 PM

Evensong Service 6:00 PM

Rain Date:

Sunday, Sept. 13, 2026

Maintenance Donation Letters

The cemetery operates on an annual budget of \$160,000 with \$90,000 for ground maintenance of lawn mowing, weed whacking and leaf blowing. The balance is for one part time employee, equipment maintenance, utilities, insurance, supplies, and heating oil. In February, the Preservation Trust Board sent out a donation request letter asking all friends, plot\niche holders, parishioners of Trinity Episcopal Church, anyone requesting research work, and anyone using the property for walking, jogging, bicycling, etc. to please make a charitable contribution to help offset the labor cost for ground maintenance and for building and equipment upkeep. If you walk the property at any time, have a plot\niche, know someone who is buried here, attend summer church services, or just appreciate a touch of nature, please help us out by making a charitable contribution to the cemetery.

Office: 200 S. 2nd St., Pottsville, PA 17901

A Living Legacy

No one lives forever. The normal annual U.S. death toll is over three million. Many of these deaths are sudden and unexpected from heart attacks, car accidents, shootings, etc. An additional 1.1 million in the U.S. have died from the Coronavirus and its many evolving variants since December 2019. How sad when someone's life passes quietly and is forgotten over time. Have you given any thought of carrying on your memory and your name 100 years from now? This is possible by leaving a contribution or bequest to an endowment. The Charles Baber Cemetery, as a Preservation Trust, was set up with this in mind. It allows contributors to donate to an endowment account managed by the Schuylkill Area Community Foundation for the sole purpose of providing an annual income without invading the principal. This insures that this garden park cemetery will be preserved for many future generations to use and enjoy as a park, as a cemetery to bury and visit deceased loved ones, and as a way to carry on your name and legacy.

The Charles Baber Preservation Trust, which consists of 25 acres of "green" park land situated in the heart of the city of Pottsville, serves the dual purpose of being both a park and a burial ground. The Preservation Trust's original endowment was created in 2006 through a bequest from Kathryn Speacht of \$161,000. It has grown from donations from friends of the cemetery, from bequests, from the proceeds of Andrew Matta's *Book of Remembrance*, from Baber Day basket raffles proceeds, and now from depositing a percentage of all plot sales. Several small trusts benefitting the cemetery, formerly managed by Wells Fargo Bank, were rolled over in 2013 and 2014, into this endowment account. And a second endowment account of \$100,000 was created a few years ago from a plot owner who sadly passed away. The combined endowments generate \$35,000 per year in much needed income to the cemetery.

You can leave a legacy of remembrance by donating or bequeathing money to sustain this garden cemetery. It is one way for your memory to live on and to perpetuate something beautiful and natural for future generations. Charitable contributions can be mailed directly to the Schuylkill Area Community Foundation marking it for the Charles Baber Cemetery, 216 S. Centre St., Pottsville, PA 17901 (570-624-7223). Or you can mail the form below along with your check to the office at 200 S. Second St., Pottsville, PA 17901. It will be forwarded to the Sch. Area Comm. Found.

Contribution for the Endowment Account –Charles Baber Cemetery

Name: _____ **Amount:** _____ **Phone:** _____

Address: _____

Burial Options-Ground Plots, Columbarium Niches, Scatter Garden

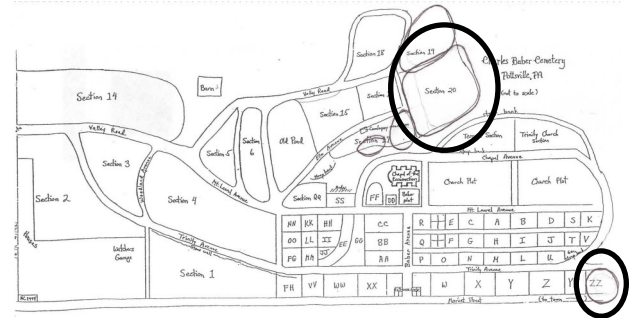
The Charles Baber Cemetery has several burial options to meet the needs and preferences of a changing society.

TRADITIONAL IN-GROUND BURIAL

There are many burial plots available in the lower level and there are some plots available in the historic (lettered) section in the upper level. The plots in the lower section are surrounded by dawn redwood trees, sweet gum, hybrid elm, sugar and red maples, black cherry and walnut, sassafras, oaks, arborvitae, and box elder. With a plot burial, there are no restrictions on the size, shape, or design of the memorial marker as long as it stays within the confines of the plot



size. Because of this, the customized memorial marker can be designed and engraved specifically to the loved one which makes the gravesite more personal and comforting. And it can be easily found in the snows of winter.



COLUMBARIUM NICHES – CREMAINS BURIALS

The cemetery has cremation niches in the in-ground bronze columbarium built on both sides of the entrance to the stately Gothic chapel. In 2022, four new sections were added to the existing columbarium. The Gothic chapel, called the Chapel of the Resurrection, is available for burial services.



MEMORIAL SCATTER GARDEN

The Scatter Garden, located in the lower level of the property and a short distance from a meditation area and a pond, was built by Tim Bortner for his Eagle Scout Award. It offers the option of scattering our loved one's cremains (ashes) over a variety of colorful flowers. Also available are memorial bricks to commemorate the cremains' scattering. The memorial bricks can be purchased without any scattering.



OTHER SERVICES

Sometimes when a loved one living out-of-state passes away or the deceased may not have any immediate family members, the interment of that person is presided over by a lay eucharistic person through prayers and their commemoration into God's loving care. This service is currently being provided free of charge.

PET CEMETERY – Still Pending

The Pet Cemetery will be in the lower level and near the adjoining soccer field. We are looking for a Boy/Girl Scout project to help layout the plots. One plot will accommodate an average size pet body or two cremains. Memorial bricks can be purchased to place on the grave site.

For more information call (570-622-8720) or visit our office at the back of Trinity Episcopal Church, 200 S. 2nd Street, Pottsville, PA 17901.



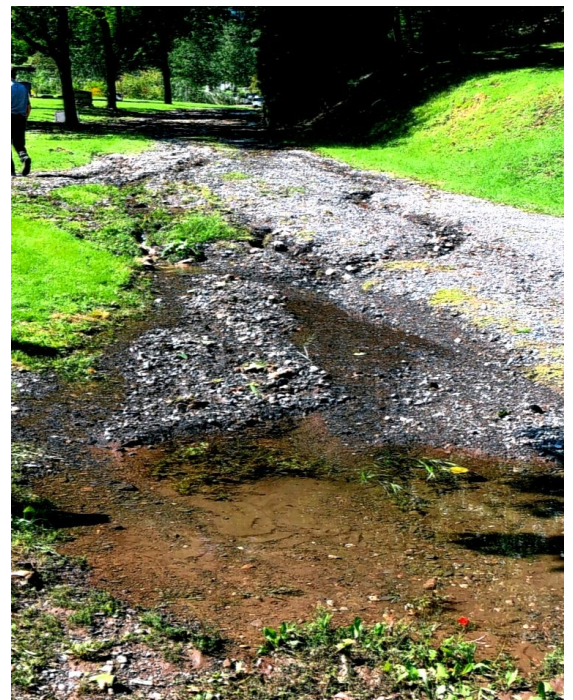
Carriage House and Road Reconstruction to be Done in 2026

The Carriage House: Behind our storage building an underground stream/spring comes from 16th St and Elk Ave. and opens up to run in a dirt ditch behind the building. In addition to the year around running spring, we have water run off from the hillside by the middle school. The spring and hillside water have eroded the corner of the building and water is now lying in large puddles on the crushed stone floor in the lower level of the building. The foundation



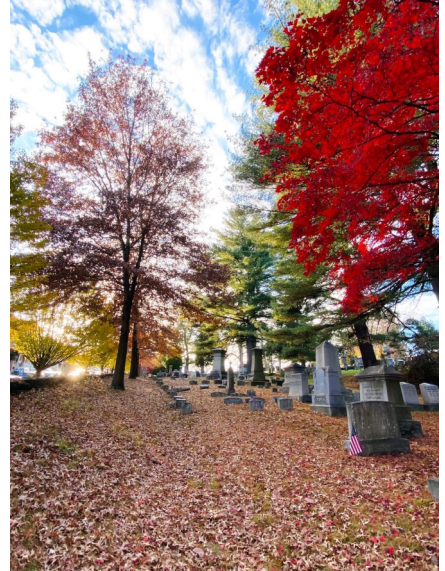
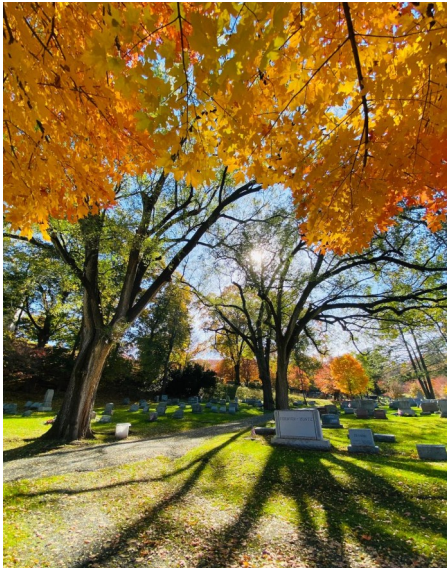
has to be sealed, the corner crack has to be filled in, new crushed stone has to be poured, and the ditch has to be graded away from the building to form a trough to run east along the hillside toward the pond area. This cost is \$6,400 and the funds have been raised primarily from one board member to cover this project.

The Road & Hillside: The middle school hillside water runs in a dirt trough down past the breast of the pond and then gouges the gravel road into deep gullies. These gullies have to be hand raked especially when a funeral is occurring in the lower level. Every two-three years, more crushed stone has to be brought in. We have a bid to install a trench along the hillside into a catch basin by Section 18, then pipe that water into a shallow retention pond filled with rocks. In addition, the gravel road will be paved down to where section 20 begins, which is by the soccer field. We are hoping to also pave that dirt road which runs between section 16 and section 20, if we can raise more money. The cost of the initial project is \$24,500 and we do have most of the funds raised to cover this project minus the extra paving.

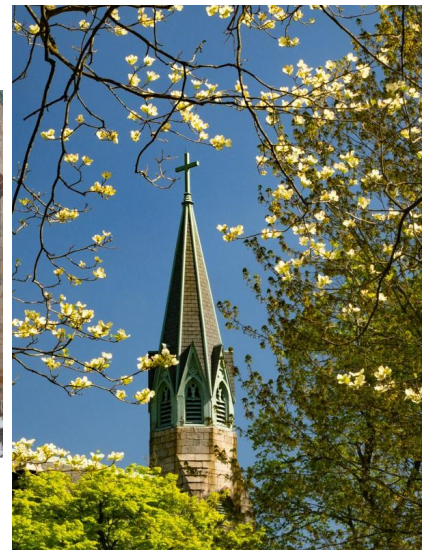
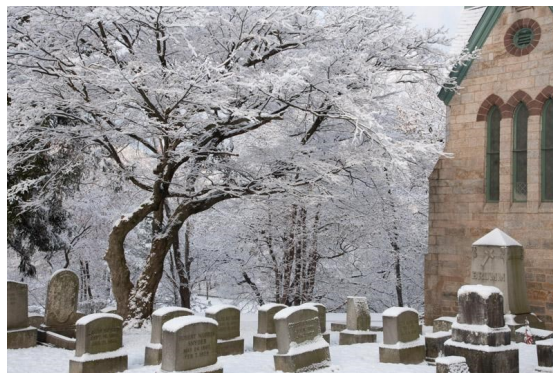


Pictures Taken by Outside Photographers

Top row by Jess Marcolla



Bottom Row by Tom Noonan



Trinity Episcopal Church to Celebrate its 200th Anniversary in 2027

Trinity Episcopal Church, located at the corner of Centre Street and Howard Ave., Pottsville, PA had purchased land in 1845 for a cemetery. The land was forested wood-land located between 12th and 13th Street at the south eastern side of what is today called the Charles Baber Cemetery. This was 20 years before Baber ever built his cemetery in 1865.



Trinity Episcopal Church is the trustee of the Charles Baber Preservation Trust. On September 3, 2027, Trinity Episcopal Church will be 200 years old. Its birthday will be celebrated the entire 2027 year. Watch for more information in the 2027 newsletter.

GATEHOUSE VIEWS

Charles Baber Preservation Trust of Pottsville, Pennsylvania
200 S. Second Street
Pottsville, PA 17901

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2026 Calendar of Events Open and Free to the Public

- (1) **Tree Pruning** - Late February - Weather Dependent
- (2) **Ash Wednesday** - Ash Imposition @ entrance , Feb. 18th, 9:00-11:30 AM
- (3) **Easter Sunrise Service** - at the Chapel, Sunday, April 5th at 6:30 AM
- (4) **Arbor Day Tree Planting & Blessing** - Friday, April 24th - 2:00 PM
- (5) **Memorial Day Sunset Service** – Monday, May 25, 2026 - 5:00 PM
- (6) **Annual Baber Day Picnic**-Sat., Sept. 12th – 2:30 PM (Rain date Sept 13th)
Music, food, bake sale, nature and historic walking tour, & Evensong service.
- (7) **St. Francis Pet Blessing** - Oct. 4th (8) **All Saints Mass** –Nov. 1st –5PM
- (9) **Veterans' Day Service** –Nov.11th 4:30PM



Author\Editor
Carol S. Field

Memorial Day flag
replacement
volunteers.
And
Veterans' Day
Service

With The Rev. Dr.
Kurt Kovalovich, Tom Shay, and Vincent Prestilio

