

St. Stephen Cemetery
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Port Carbon, PA 17965
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2 September 2017

Dear St. Stephen Parishioners:

As you might be aware our parish of St. Stephen's is in some rather serious financial difficulty which jeopardizes the future of our parish. However, even if the parish would be forced to close, there still remains the obligation to continue to take care of our parish cemetery as best we can for as long as we can.

This fiscal year, the cemetery has gone into debt by almost \$6,000.00 for grass cutting fees alone. The cemetery averages 2 cuts per month (sometimes 3 dependent upon the how the grass grows) at \$900 per cut. The separate monthly cemetery collection to help raise funds to cut the grass only brings into the parish approximately \$300.00 per month. We run short \$1,500.00 monthly to properly pay our bills. The August grass cutting bills which we received on Tuesday amount to \$2,690.00. The cemetery checking account only has \$700.00 remaining in the account.

Our Endowed Care Fund for the cemetery has \$6,740.28 which generates meager interest to assist with grass cutting as it was established to do. In fact, many cemetery plots within our cemetery do not have Endowed Care. Remember the purpose of Endowed Care is to cover the cost of operation the cemetery without touching the parish's finances. I regret that this money which has restricted spending will need to be tapped into to pay the August grass cutting bill. I am concerned about the September bill totally depleting this Endowed Care Fund so there is no money in reserve for the future care of our cemetery.

While it is probably already too late, we need to take immediate corrective action no matter how small.

- 1.) Two second collections a month will be designated for Cemetery Upkeep. Please note above we only average \$300 for one collection; \$600 still falls short of what we need.
- 2.) In the past, our parish office has billed over 70 lot owners for \$35.00 per year who have not opted for Endowed Care (\$500.00) to cover the grass cutting costs for their loved ones graves. If one does the math this is ludicrous! Where can someone have their grass cut 10-12 times Spring and Summer for \$2.92 per cut?
- 3.) We will be raising the fees of some cemetery services and for the sale of graves -- \$500 for one and \$900 for two. Please also note the parish sells very few graves.

To do our best to maintain our parish cemetery we strongly suggest purchasing Endowed Care for your family plot(s). For those who still refuse to do so, the parish is raising our annual fee to \$125.00 per year to help with these costs. Even if you already have purchased Endowed Care for your family plot, please consider increasing your contribution to the monthly cemetery collection. The condition of our cemetery depends upon us all!

The people buried in St. Stephen's Cemetery are your family and loved ones. Our cemetery is maintained on the funds our parishioners provide to make our cemetery a respectable resting place for our loved ones. We need to find proper means to maintain the cemetery as best we can.

Sincerely,

(Rev. Msgr.) William F. Glosser V.F., M.A., M.Div.