



November, 2021

## Eugene Masonic Cemetery Association eNewsletter



### Last Sunday Open House

We will be hosting our regular Last Sunday Open House of 2021, on November 28th. It's an opportunity to visit inside the beautifully restored 1914 Hope Abbey Mausoleum. The doors will be open from 1 to 4 PM, Sunday, November 28th.

There will be two cemetery board members on hand to answer questions you might have about the historic building, as well as the cemetery itself. Masking WILL be required in the building. Park on city streets because there is no parking on the cemetery grounds.

**Please note there will NOT be an open house in December.**

## Cemetery vs Graveyard



Many people think **graveyard** and **cemetery** mean the same thing. In a way, a graveyard is a type of cemetery, but a cemetery is usually not a graveyard. To understand the difference, let's look at some history.

From about the 7th century, the process of burial was firmly in the hands of the church (the Christian organization). Some wealthy and influential people were buried in crypts in the church building, but most were only allowed to be buried on the lands near a church, the so-called churchyard. The part of the churchyard used for burial was called the **graveyard**.

As the population of Europe grew, the capacity of church graveyards was no longer sufficient. By the end of the 18th century, the unsustainability of church yard burials became apparent, and completely new places for burying people, independent of graveyards, appeared. These were called **cemeteries**.

Cemeteries are typically not affiliated with a specific church, so you don't have to be a congregant to be buried there. They're also often located away from a town or city center to allow for more space. This describes the Masonic Cemetery perfectly, since in 1859 (the year of incorporation of the Eugene Masonic Cemetery), it was about 2 miles from downtown, and burial rights were, and continue to be, open to anyone regardless of beliefs.

So if linguistic precision is your thing, then you'll want to say "graveyard" when referring to a resting place on church grounds, and "cemetery" in reference to more modern, separate burial grounds. Some cemeteries have religious or other affiliations, but they're generally not tied to a specific place of worship.

Looking beyond the religious aspect, there are visual differences. Indeed, graveyards tend to evoke images of old churchyards in the English countryside. They typically have older tombstones placed around the area in a somewhat disorderly manner. Cemeteries are often laid out in a more organized fashion, and tend to be larger than graveyards.

Photo by K. Mitch Hodge

## Birds Appreciate the Cemetery Landscape



Once an uncared-for space avoided by neighbors, the Eugene Masonic Cemetery now attracts a variety of people including daily walkers, naturalists, history buffs, and visiting school groups. Years ago we learned that the cemetery's landscape has become attractive to yet another population. Biologist and former cemetery neighbor Dan Gleason led a walk in the cemetery, and talked about the many birds that can be seen on the site. Later, he created Birds of Eugene Masonic Cemetery,

a list identifying nearly seventy different bird species that are permanent or seasonal residents of the cemetery.

The presence of these different bird species indicates that the cemetery's landscape is ecologically diverse. The Cooper's Hawk, a permanent resident and top predator (meaning it is at the top of the food chain), also indicates the landscape is approaching ecological balance. Simply put, there are enough different plant and insect species living in the landscape to support enough small birds, mammals and reptiles to provide ample prey for the hawks and other raptors that frequent the cemetery. They include a resident owl species, the Western Screech-Owl.

The landscape also provides a variety of nesting habitats. New cavities are excavated annually by the Downy Woodpecker in Douglas-fir and other trees. Birds, such as the permanent residents, Red-breasted Nuthatch and Bewick's Wren, later build their nests in the abandoned holes. Another woodpecker, the Northern Flicker, typically excavates a cavity in decayed wood like that found in Douglas-fir snags, many of which exist in the 10 acre grounds. Bushtits, on the other hand, utilize the cemetery's mixed woodland forest's shrubbery under-story to build their hanging oblong nests on supporting twigs or branches. The American Goldfinch builds its nest in the twigs of woody shrubbery during mid to late July. And in the cemetery's meadows, the Dark-eyed Junco builds ground nests obscured by tall grasses during late spring and early summer.

When visiting the cemetery, look and listen for these and other birds that depend on the cemetery's landscape for food and shelter. Protect them and their habitat by following the cemetery's visitor policies. Please stay on the designated paths and keep any accompanying dogs on a short leash.

This is a reprint of an article which originally appeared in the Fall 2011 issue of the Monumental News, the cemetery's biannual paper newsletter. The article was written by Barbara Cowan, at that time an EMCA Board Member.

### REMEMBER THAT THE MASONIC CEMETERY

- Is privately owned, but opens its grounds to the public, subject to COVID-19 safeguards.
- Is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and is not subsidized by the city of Eugene.
- Is eligible for the Oregon Cultural Trust match.
- Has a website, [eugenemasoniccemetery.org](http://eugenemasoniccemetery.org), with lots of information about the cemetery.
- Has free informational brochures available at the Garden Cottage, including a walking tour.
- Has burial rights and cremains space for sale. Contact Sally Dietrich at (541) 684-0949 or [by email](#).
- Uses PayPal for on-line donations. Please [click here](#) to donate.
- Archives issues of both newsletters.

Find past copies of this eNewsletter [here](#).

Find past copies of the paper Monumental News [here](#).

John Bredesen, eNewsletter Editor  
Eugene Masonic Cemetery Association

Please Donate

### Mission Statement

To restore, rehabilitate, maintain, interpret and operate the historic Eugene Masonic Cemetery and Hope Abbey Mausoleum as a cultural and natural resource for the community.

The cemetery is operated for the public benefit,  
but it is private property.  
(A 501(c)(3) non-profit organization)



Eugene Masonic Cemetery  
ASSOCIATION

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