

MARCH 2022

THEME: SYMBOLISM IN THE CEMETERY



MORATTICO BAPTIST CHURCH

THE HILL

PASTOR'S CORNER

Cemeteries rarely conjure images of happiness and joy. Usually, when cemeteries are on television or in a movie, there is something sad or evil happening. The American psyche has been programmed to make cemeteries a scary and ominous place to be. In all honesty, when I am at church late in the evening and leave to go home, the nighttime view of our cemetery can make my neck hairs stand on end!

Yet, cemeteries can be windows into the history of a community. Our Morattico Baptist cemetery is just such a place. Within the hallowed ground of the MBC cemetery you will find several former pastors of the church, many of our parishioners and a "Who's Who" of local leaders and businessmen who shaped the Northern Neck. The very first pastor of Morattico, Lewis Lunsford has a marker in our cemetery. Though his remains aren't believed to reside with us, a marble slab marker was placed there in his honor. There are giants of Baptist history in our cemetery, among them Addison Hall, Thomas and Wayland Fuller Dunaway, Fred Claybrook and others.

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SYMBOLISM IN THE CEMETERY

We often view cemeteries with reservation, however there are a host of reasons to visit a graveyard. Where else can you find a stunning array of artwork, intricate carvings, sculpture, architecture and more while enjoying fresh air, exercise and culture all for free?

Our everyday life is full of symbols. Some examples are "golden arches" where you can find a Big Mac for lunch, an apple when you need technology, roadway signs that help us navigate, just to name a few. But nowhere are symbols more apparent than in cemeteries. The deceased can tell no stories however their tombstones can. Some stones only tell us the deceased's name and dates of birth and death but some provide a glimpse into that person's religion, occupation, ethnicity and more.

In today's time, with more powerful power tools and precise technology in cutting devices, tombstones now can symbolize the deceased favorite tractor, sport or other interests limited only by one's imagination.



William Ashburn
 Page and Charles Carlson
 Gail Dawson
 Eleanor Delano
 Dan Ficklin
 Bill Fletcher
 Terri Groh
 Marbary and Virginia Harcum
 Amy James
 Holly Whaley King
 James Newton
 Richard and Rosie Pruett
 Dennis Saunders
 Sandra Scripture
 William Scott Smith
 Fran Stout
 End of COVID

Please note when you add someone to our prayer list, please provide their address so we may send them a card.

*Prayer list contact
 Mae Shelton at 804-366-3817*

PASTOR'S CORNER

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Even though our church has been on the same site since 1778, the oldest grave stone dates back to the mid-eighteen hundreds. It is also believed that there is a Potter's Field on the southern edge of the cemetery that may date back to the 1790's. So yes, much history resides in the final resting place at Morattico Baptist.

The Association of Gravestone Studies in Greenfield Massachusetts offers a tremendous amount of information about gravestones. Among this information is that American gravestones are typically made of granite, marble, limestone, sandstone, slate, or quartzite. Most gravestones face east because early Americans wanted their feet pointing east and head pointing west, so they were ready to rise and face the sun on the day of rebirth. In the 1830's this practice was generally abandoned, however the MBC cemetery faces east!

This month, The Hill explores the symbolism on the gravestones. This is a fascinating area to study because the transition of what was used changes from generation to generation. As a result, you can easily recognize an early American cemetery from a modern cemetery. Symbolism is present throughout every early cemetery of the 1700's through the mid 1900's.

So now that the weather is getting better, take your March newsletter and stroll through our historic cemetery. You may be surprised at some of the artistry that resides above the final resting place of Morattico Church's family.

Blessings!



1 Lewis Shelton
 5 Gavin Simpson
 6 Peggy Nolting
 9 William Taylor
 13 Terri Groh
 16 Logan Nonnemacker
 17 Rick Simpson
 26 Esther Glover
 28 Wayson Christopher
 31 Holly Saunders

March 2 Richard and Jan Abbott

March 11 Page and Charles Carlson

SYMBOLISM IN THE CEMETERY

Take a walk with me through our own Morattico Baptist Church Cemetery.
Let's see what symbolism we can find in our backyard.



Besides tombstones, angels are the image most often associated with cemeteries. Angels in American cemeteries are rooted in Christian lore however angels can be found in most religions. The Greek word *angelos*, which means messenger, is the root of the word *angel*.

Angels you spot in cemeteries are usually of a generic variety, however often you can find an example of Gabriel, as he is portrayed with a horn, just as the angel Michael carries a sword or shield. You may spot a Cherub, the angel sent to guard the way of the tree of life, on the grave of a child.

Angels give us comfort, hope and often inspiration.

*Now cracks a noble heart. Good night sweet prince.
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!*
From Hamlet by Wm. Shakespeare



Plants can be a symbol of beauty and the brevity of life. Flowers were first used by the Egyptians in funerary rites. It is often thought that the scent from flowers contained a key to divine powers. Trees generally symbolize strength, longevity and immortality.

The weeping willow may suggest sorrow or grief to some but in many religions it suggests immortality. Christianity associates the weeping willow with the gospel of Christ because the tree will live no matter how many branches are cut off.

The weeping willow was one of the most popular gravestone decorations in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It is often paired on tombstones with crosses or lambs.



Ivy is a symbol of attachment, friendship and undying affection since it clings to support itself. As a hardy evergreen even in harsh conditions, ivy also represents immortality and fidelity.

The three pointed leaf also is a symbol of the Trinity.

“attachment” – have you ever tried to dig it up?



A chalice depicts the human hearts' yearning to be filled with the spirit of the Lord. It is one of the strongest symbols of the Christian faith.

And he took a cup of wine and gave thanks to God for it. He gave it to them, and they all drank from it. And he said to them, “This is my blood, which confirms the covenant between God and his people. It is poured out as a sacrifice for many.

~Mark 14:23-24



The obvious symbolism of the book is its representation of the Bible or the “book of life”, however there are other meanings as well. Sometimes you will find a book on the tombstone of a scholar, writer or publisher.

The open book in its purest form is compared to the human heart - opening to God and to the world, its feelings and thoughts.

With life complete, a closed book may be used to represent someones last chapter. There are several other meanings of the closed book, such as secrecy or virginity.



Meet the members:

(pictured above)

Rick and Kendra Simpson were married on June 4, 2000. They met while working for Fairfax County. Kendra was handling emergency communications. Rick was a fire investigator. While working the night shift Rick would often stop in the communication center, usually with fresh hot Krispy Kreme donuts figuring it's good to take care of the people who are watching over him.

When they began dating, Kendra would drive Rick down to White Stone to go boating. For the longest time, Rick didn't know there was anything beyond Route 3 to White Stone and back again.

Rick retired from Fairfax and started a new career as an intelligence specialist with the federal government. Kendra left Fairfax County in 2005 when they were expecting their son, Gavin. Soon to be 16 years old, he is a member of the Northumberland HS's Wrestling team, plays piano and guitar, and has a great interest in foreign languages, history and philosophy.

After 19 years with Federal service, Rick retired. Rick was thinking they would purchase a 10 to 15 acre home near the mountains, but Kendra had a different idea.

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ABC's of Tombstone Symbols

How many can you find in MBC cemetery?

Anchor	hope, steadfastness
Bee	hard working parishioner
Calla Lily	majestic beauty
Dove	purity and peace
Elephant	strength
Foot	humility and service
Gate	passage; entrance to heaven
Hourglass	cyclic nature of life and death
Jonah	transformation
Key	spiritual knowledge
Lamp	wisdom
Money	charity
Nails	passion; Christ's suffering
Owl	wisdom and watchfulness
Palm frond	victory
Quatrefoil	four apostles
Rock	permanence and stability
Scallop	journey or pilgrimage
Thorns	grief
Urn	body returning to dust
Venus	life energy
Wheat	long and fruitful life
Yew Tree	immortality



Forms for ordering Easter lilies that will grace our sanctuary on Easter Sunday will be available beginning March 6th.

As always, a dedication page for each lily purchased will be included in the Easter Sunday bulletin. Completed forms with specified dedication, cash, or check made out to Morattico Baptist Church will be due by March 27th. More information about cost will be forthcoming.

Thank you for supporting the Easter lily campaign for 2022.



THE HILL, Morattico Baptist Church newsletter is owned and operated by YOU. We want your input. If you have ideas, suggestions, family news, articles or photos, submit them to newsletter@moratticobaptistchurch.org or call Kathy Pittman at (804) 761-2441.

Each month the newsletter has a theme. The theme for the following month will be noted in each newsletter to give you time to prepare a submission if you wish.

Deadline:
10th of each month
Theme for April:
Pysanky
The Ukranian Easter Egg

The Simpsons

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In 2017 they purchased a home on the water in Reedville, which turned out to be the better idea. It wasn't until retiring, that Rick learned there was more here than just White Stone!

In 2017 they found Morattico Baptist Church and started attending. Like most of the people living in the area, they found the church to be welcoming and friendly and have been attending ever since.



Weekly events:

Sunday: 10 am Sunday Service

Thursday: 7 pm Facebook Bible Study

March Calendar events:

2nd Ash Wednesday

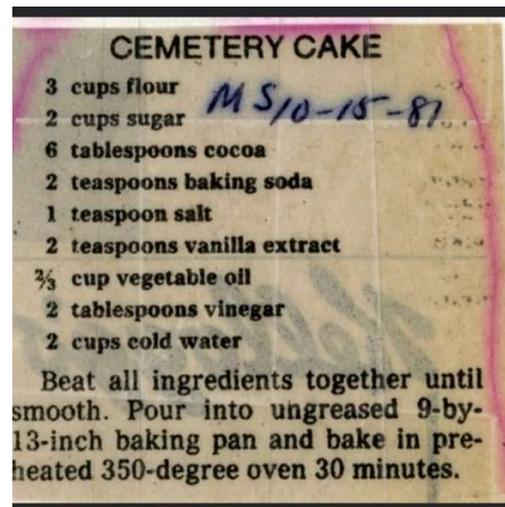
4th World Day of Prayer

13th Daylight Saving Time begins

17th Business Meeting @7pm

17th St. Patrick's Day

20th First day of Spring



Many years ago, when someone died, a Cemetery Cake was immediately made and taken to the grieving family. The cake was meant not only to provide refreshment for mourners, but also to be a token of remembrance.

Morattico Baptist Church

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