



Camano Lutheran Cemetery

What is happening at Camano Lutheran Cemetery?

Many are noticing the changes occurring at Camano Lutheran Cemetery and many more have asked, "What is going on there?" The answer is, "A lot!". But first a few important facts about this cemetery. Camano Lutheran Cemetery is owned by Camano Lutheran Church and is managed by the Camano Lutheran Cemetery Board. Members serve in a volunteer capacity. Over the years, the Board has established a cemetery endowment fund and because of careful fiscal management no fees for perpetual care are charged. You do not need to be a member of the Camano Lutheran Church nor do you need to be Lutheran to be interred at the cemetery. The cemetery interment is open to all persons, no exceptions.

The Camano Lutheran Cemetery is a historic site and was in need of serious restoration. So, in June of 2018, the Camano Lutheran Cemetery Board applied to the Washington State "Historic Cemetery Preservation Capital Grant Program" to acquire funds for three restoration projects. The first request was to repave the road. The last time the road was black topped was in 1980 and was deteriorating. The second request was to add power, lights and cameras for security. Metal plaques have been stolen from some graves by vandals and the Board decided to implement security measures to deter such action. The third request was to replace the wood sign which was rotting. The grant application was approved as written. In December, the Board was advised by an arborist that the existing spruce trees near the frontage road were diseased and needed to be removed. It was decided by the Board that the existing bushes around these trees would also be removed and a new bed designed and planted.

Camano Lutheran Cemetery is a reflection of the community it serves as evidenced by early pioneers buried there. The historical/cultural significance of Camano Lutheran Cemetery is tightly tied to the establishment and evolution of Camano Lutheran Church (State Register of Historical Site, 1979). The earliest record of the church services occurred in 1876, formalizing of a congregation in 1890. From then until 1920, logging thrived on Camano Island, with 10 to 20 active camps competing for the rising demand of timber. Many Scandinavian immigrants sought employment, opportunity and a place to settle. Life was modest and remote with rough logging roads and supplies transported by horse-drawn wagons, scows, steamers, launches and/or cable ferries. Camano Lutheran Church was formed by these early pioneers to celebrate the rites of marriage, birth, baptism and ultimately death. Lutheran churches had a long tradition of

establishing their own cemeteries. Having a cemetery was also a matter of practicality. Families often arranged to bury their dead together in a family plot of land which later grew into a true cemetery. This was the case of Camano Lutheran Cemetery. Records of burials appear as early as 1909 yet it was in 1921 that 2 1/2 acres was purchased. In 1961 one more acre of land was deeded to the church for the cemetery.

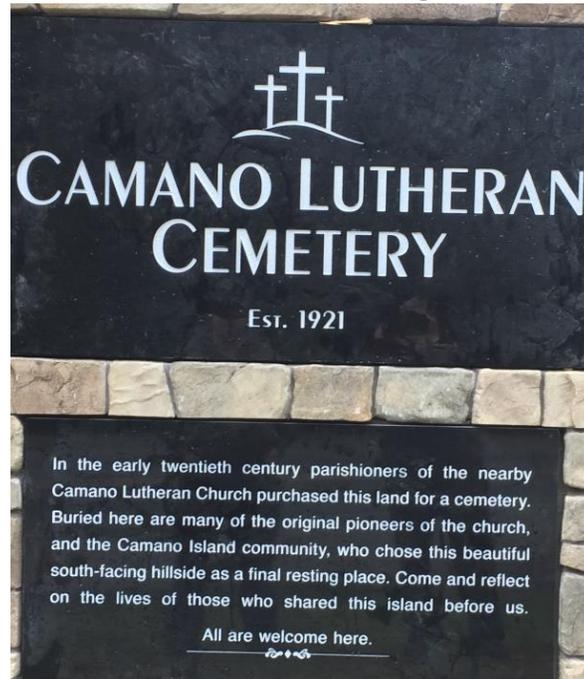
In this cemetery rests many early pioneers for example, Knute P. Frostad (1858-1942) who with his wife Bergitta (1856-1942) immigrated from Norway to Utsalady to obtained employment at the sawmill. He then purchased 41 acres near Livingston Bay to operate a successful dairy farm with a partner. He was elected to the State Legislature, and served as Board Commissioner for Island County. Similarly, Margaret Kincaid (1875-1960) and her husband Robert (1867-1957) were known to welcome all, especially native Americans, as she is seen in a picture with Mrs. Jake (Kk-ial-lus) and Mrs. Kate Jake O'Brien. Almost every Camano Island pioneer family (Einarsen, Mellum, Barnum, Konnerup, Eide, Olson, Davis, Hall, Magelssen, Garrison, et.al) is similarly represented at Camano Lutheran Cemetery.

Today, the heritage of Camano Lutheran Cemetery is celebrated during Memorial Day honoring over 200 military veterans. Camano Lutheran Cemetery is included in the Camano Island Historic Sites Tour which provides an opportunity for cemetery board members to disseminate significant historic information of Camano Lutheran Cemetery to the public at large each year.

No project such as this is completed without help. There are many people we wish to thank for their generous contributions to the success of this project. Specifically we would like to thank the following people: Karen Prasse, historian at the *Stanwood Camano Area Historical Society*, who offered the historical guidance critical to establishing this cemetery as a relevant restoration project, Carolyn Tobiason who financed the removal of the diseased spruce trees, Kathy Jeppsen owner of *Wetland & Woodland, Inc.* who donated 26 plants/trees for the bed around the new sign, Gene Hitt, (Gene's Well Drilling) who moved the three large rocks from the Handstad Farm to the new bed, John Naig, Paul Hoffman and Jason Otto who have and continue to offer advice on maintenance of grounds and lawn.

Not all businesses will work on a grant-funded project so we would especially like to thank the following businesses who agreed to work with us. All worked with patience, perseverance and humor, despite a number of bumps along the way. Thank you to *Island Masonry* (Bruce Aalmo, Camano Island), who helped design and build our sign, *Pacific Coast Memorial* (Everett) for the two granite inserts, *Alpine Communications Systems* (Stan LaBore, Camano Island) for security system, *MADS Electric* (Chuck Suffern, Camano Island) for power connections and lights, *Granite Construction* (Yakima) for resurfacing the road, the Snohomish County PUD for power/pole, and to Island County and Janet St Clair for helping us to complete our project successfully. We would also like to thank Julianne Patterson, director of the Washington State, *Historic Cemetery Preservation Capital Grant Program*, for her guidance, help and belief in this project. Implementing a grant is often challenging and Julianne smoothed the way and offered continuous support. Thank you to Julianne and all.

Finally, managing a cemetery that does not charge for perpetual care does present some challenges for the Board especially over time and into the future. For this reason, we encourage donations to this perpetual fund in honor of those resting here and for those yet to come.



Camano Lutheran Cemetery Board members

Allen Gilbertson, President, Alan Hall, Secretary, Connie Hall & Jeff Camp
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