



# Reimagining a Cemetery in Modern Life

Presented to LAI

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LAKWOOD

CEMETERY • CREMATION • COMMEMORATION



# Lakewood – a Garden Cemetery

- 1871 – Lakewood founded
- Adopted the American Lawn Plan design – born of the Garden Cemetery movement
- Characterized by natural beauty – rolling hills, trees, ponds, views and vistas
- Designed more for the living than the dead
- Père Lachaise Cemetery in Paris – first of its kind (1804)
- Mount Auburn Cemetery near Boston – first in US (1830s)





# Historic Milestones

1. Founded 1871 – "garden" cemetery / American Lawn Plan
2. Greenhouses acquired - 1888
3. First crematory in Minnesota west of Mississippi River – 1908  
*(cremation rate less than 1%)*
4. Memorial Chapel opened 1910
5. Jo Pond developed - 1913
6. Administration building in 1929
7. Memorial Park sections added - 1950s & 1960s
8. Community Memorial Mausoleum - 1967
9. Cremation Gardens - 1980s
10. Garden Mausoleum / Tribute Walls - 2012
11. Began expanding community events – 2015
12. Lakewood Heritage Foundation established - 2017
13. 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2021
14. Welcome Center construction – begun in 2022

## A PLACE FOR ALL

Lakewood celebrates 150 years!

**1871**  
A small group of influential city leaders begin envisioning a grand, garden cemetery in Minneapolis that is non-profit and open to all.

**1888**  
Lakewood acquires nearby greenhouses and begins growing flowers for the cemetery. One of the oldest operating in Minnesota.

**1908**  
Lakewood embraces cremation early on and builds one of the state's first crematories. Today, more than 55% of Minnesotans choose cremation.

**1929**  
Lakewood's elegant new Administration Building opens with room for more staff to serve a growing city.

**1978**  
Former Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey is buried at Lakewood.

**1992**  
Lakewood's history book "Haven in the Heart of the City" is published.

**1996**  
Lakewood welcomes the public to an expanded Memorial Day Celebration – a beloved tradition that continues today.

**2015**  
Lakewood holds its first annual Lantern Lighting Celebration, a moving community event for families and the public to remember loved ones.

**2019**  
The first ribbon is added to the Living Memory Tree, which offers anyone the opportunity to honor a loved one at Lakewood in a simple communal way.

**2020**  
During Covid-19 quarantine, Lakewood expands programming to offer much-needed support with art therapy, virtual grief meditations, and incorporated social-distancing into events such as our lantern lighting ceremony.

1870
1900
1950
2000
TODAY

**1872**  
A woman named Maggie Menzel becomes the first person buried at Lakewood.

**1895**  
A streetcar connects Lakewood to downtown and a "Public Comfort" building is constructed for visitors to "freshen up" after the dusty trip.

**1910**  
The first funeral service is held in Lakewood's new spectacular Memorial Chapel – which rivals the great Byzantine churches in Europe with its mosaic artistry and craftsmanship – had the largest mosaic interior in the U.S. at the time it opened.

**1951**  
Lakewood creates its first Memorial Park, a trend in cemetery landscape design that feels more "park like" with all markers flush with the ground.

**1980s**  
Lakewood's first cremation "gardens" are established, dedicated solely to the burial of cremated remains, signifying the growing popularity of cremation in the U.S.

**2012**  
The striking Garden Mausoleum is completed and honored with national and international awards for its extraordinary modern architecture.

**2018**  
Lakewood debuts its Music in the Chapel concert series which features a wide mix of diverse music genres.

**2019**  
The first Midsummer Memory Mandalas experience takes place with a large public art installation and individual hands-on workshops to transform grief into beauty.

**2021**  
Lakewood celebrates its 150th anniversary by opening our doors and inviting people from all walks of life to share their stories and get inspired about new ways to bring more meaning and creativity to memorialization.

# What Does it Mean to “Reimagine a Cemetery in Modern Life?”

- Bringing more meaning and creativity to remembrance and memorialization
- Greater level of community engagement
- Convening conversations about end-of-life
- Building sustainability into everything we do
- Creating a welcoming environment – not a lonely place, but a place to go whenever you need comfort and support





# Community Programming

- Memorial Day Celebration
- Midsummer Memory Mandalas – nature-based art installation and workshops
- Lantern Lighting Celebration
- Living Memory Tree – community memorial
- Tea ceremonies, community singing events, sound meditations
- Sundays at Lakewood – themed community events; first was in honor of Arbor Day
- Bird-watching
- Death education – Death Cafes, Lakewood Book Club
- Music in the Chapel – monthly concert series



# New “Welcome Center”

- 25,000-square-foot, environmentally conscious – net zero building
- A more welcoming front entry with contemplative gardens and walking paths – all open to the public
- Warm, accessible and inviting design for all generations, faiths and cultures
- Dedicated space for community education and engagement
- Expanded office space for our growing team





# Arboretum – Level 2 Accreditation from ArbNet

- Achieved Level 2 accreditation as an Arboretum – the only Level 2 in Minnesota. (Only the U of MN Arb is a higher level.)
- Accreditation validates the priority we place on our landscape
- Will affect new educational opportunities and offerings.
- Will influence how we design and integrate new spaces and plant collections into our landscape



# Some of Our Challenges...

- Balancing tradition with innovation
- Meeting the expectations of multiple generations at the same time
- Educating on cemetery etiquette and rules:
  - Funerals take place here every day
  - Lakewood is *like* a park but is not a park – it's sacred ground and there are parameters around what's appropriate here
- Wayfinding – cemeteries can be hard to navigate!





# What's Our Current Focus?

## Careful stewardship of our 250 acres

- Thoughtful and proactive planning
- Sustainable practices – water use, organic alternatives to chemicals
- Sustainable plantings – trees, perennials, ‘no mow’
- Arboretum accreditation – and all that comes with it

## New types of memorialization and sites

- Incorporating more natural elements and infusing the arboretum as a design concept – balancing tradition with innovation

## Ongoing engagement with our families and community

- Programming centered on remembrance and grief support, death education and sharing Lakewood's art/landscape treasures with the community
- Inviting families to spend time here and be part of our Lakewood community



**Thank You!**

