



On Monday November 2 at 10:00, the local faith community will meet to remember and say goodbye to the invisible members of our local community. The Lazarus Field Memorial Service Project is an ecumenical ceremony to bury individuals in our community who have died without means to provide for their own burial. The ceremony provides a dignified manner to memorialize the remains of those who otherwise would not have funeral services. It is our community's outpouring of respect and community spirit to provide the unclaimed deceased a dignified resting place.

The ceremony has become a much-celebrated event in the life of our county as a dignified way to memorialize those we have lost, many of whom are senior citizens who have outlived their relatives, and infants and children whose parents and families are without financial means, and those members of our community who have become estranged from their families due to mental illness.

Each set of cremains is held in a box bearing the individual's name. Those attending the outdoor ceremony can pay their final respects before the ceremony begins.

The Okaloosa County Lazarus Field Memorial Service Project has benefited the County and the Public by providing a solution regarding a final disposition of the extensive number of unclaimed and indigent decedents in Okaloosa County, which includes infants as well as centenarians.

Florida Statute 497.005(43) requires that each county ensure the proper final disposition of indigent and unclaimed deceased persons in the respective counties. Each year Okaloosa County receives an average of 30 individuals who die without family support or financial means to cover the cost of interment. Over the past 17 years, Okaloosa County has contracted with various private funeral homes to provide cremation services for these indigent and unclaimed persons. During that time approximately 450 sets of cremains had collected in storage at the various vendor funeral homes. It is important to note that the cost for paperwork preparation, cremation and burial of these individuals is \$1,795.00.

In 2016 a coordinated effort was developed to purchase seven burial plots at Beal Memorial Cemetery in the heart of Okaloosa County. The County initially agreed to pay \$7,530.00. Area churches took up a collection to defray the cost, which resulted in a contribution of \$5,000.00 to the cost of the plots. Further, the clergy were able to contribute \$1,481.00 to purchase and place two benches, one at either end of the field.

Want to attend?

When: Monday November 2, 2020

Time: 10:00 AM

Place: Beal Cemetery, 316 Beal Pkwy NW, Fort Walton Beach, FL 32548

Bring: a lawn chair to sit