

Red Oak Grove Reporter

Issue No. 38

Red Oak Grove Church and Cemetery

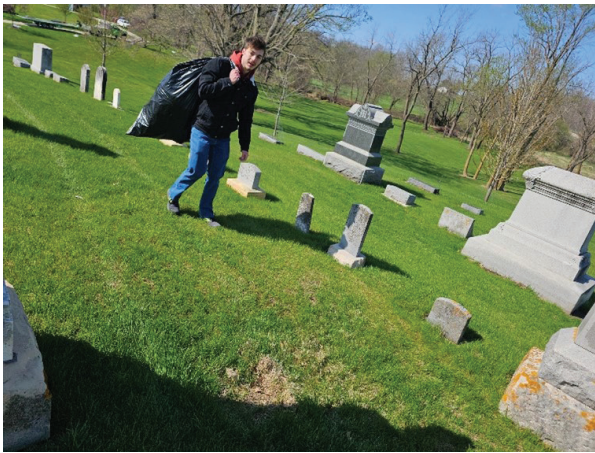
Spring 2026

Spring Brings the Red Oak Grove Annual Celebration/Reunion

On Sunday, May 17th the Annual Celebration/Reunion and Potluck will begin at 11:00 am in the church sanctuary. A keynote speaker and special music in the historic Red Oak Grove Church offers a unique religious opportunity to all. The delicious potluck and social gathering following the service is a custom not to be missed! You'll immediately notice beautiful new carpet in the church sanctuary and tile in the entryway (see next page)! Yes, it is a rich, bright red and the vivid color choice was proposed by one of the male Red Oak Grove Board Members! On April 18th, volunteers cleaned like crazy indoors and outdoors prior to the Annual Celebration. A heartfelt thank you goes out to all of them.



Volunteers fenced the Crabapple trees to protect them from deer and mulched the trees.



New flooring was laid in March upstairs. Senior, Aron Keller (bottom left), a Tipton high school student, has helped many springs on clean-up day. Craig Smith and Dwight Hughes (bottom right) helped mulch trees. Thank you to Dwight Hughes for donating mulch year after year too.

Wreaths Across America (WAA) Canceled in 2025



Due to a blustery winter snowstorm on December 13, the WAA service to remember the 86 Veterans laid to rest at Red Oak Grove Cemetery, was canceled. However, organizer Daisy Wingert, gathered 28 hardy community members to place fresh balsam fir wreaths on graves in bitter cold weather the next day. They trudged through deep snow to find small American flags placed the week before that identified veterans' graves. Denny Snow, Daisy Wingert, Lyle Fitch, Todd Schroeder, and Sherry Hall had braved the cold to place the flags. All the above patrons deserve a huge thank you! These actions by dedicated and cheerful volunteers exemplify our commitment, to never forget our service men and women. WAA certainly prevailed in December 2025, ugly weather and all!

Fond Memories of Red Oak Church Before 1954

The following memoir was written by Virginia (Kimberling) Osborn of Midland, Ohio. Her recollections will surely bring a smile or two, as you learn about her experiences as a member of the Red Oak Presbyterian Church for many years. When sending this note, she wrote, “I may be the eldest left that attended regularly every Sunday until 1954. There was a pretty good attendance Sunday mornings, and at activities. I am including what I remember. They are not in order when each happened.”

Christmas programs put on by Sunday School attendees. The mothers of some of the youth, were there to help put these programs on. The church was filled and Santa arrived. The parents had gifts for their children delivered by Santa. Eventually, Santa was eliminated due to a family not wanting Santa. We had hayrides and singing carols at Christmas.

Halloween was celebrated by a party in the basement. I remember my father dropped my mother and another lady off before arriving at the church. Then my sister and I entered the church. It was very quiet, so no one wanted to be found out. We played games – each sitting in a circle and each holding onto a string that had a button attached. A person standing in the middle tried to find the person holding the button. This was one of the games played. Refreshments were served.

A summer picnic held in the Red Oak Park. Games were played by the old and young. Bible School was a full day for a week. Parents had drinks for the attendees to go with their sack lunches.

Chicken suppers were popular in many churches, including Red Oak. The ladies spent all day getting ready and at Red Oak, you could get tickets for early seating or later seating. One Sunday a month after church was spent for those attending a carry in dinner. Family night was scheduled once a month. In the fall a chili and oyster supper was held.

A box supper was held with the ladies fixing a meal in a decorated box. They were auctioned off to the highest bidder. The youth had their own boxes.

Youth fellowship on Sunday evenings was held in the basement and attended by many youth.

Youth attended camp with other country churches: Rochester, South Bethel, Sugar Creek to name a couple. Also, the churches met together on a Sunday and had bible quizzes. Refreshments were provided. The pastor at that time was Marvin Janssen.

Weddings were held as well as showers.

An auction to earn money was held. Articles were donated by various merchants. The ladies served sandwiches, etc. at auctions; also at the Stanwood Horse Show in September. This may be by the Kings Daughters, but most attended the Red Oak Church.

The ladies had a choir group that sang during some church services. I have a choir book they used.

To help get new attendees, the men visited various homes in the area, and they would receive a donation. I was the Sunday School Treasurer after Dorothy Henderson retired. Maybe it was for a couple of years.

Virginia, sister Joyce (Kuhnle), and brother Victor were children of Vernon and Verna Kimberling, who lived and farmed on Jackson Avenue for many years. Victor lives and farms at the home place on Jackson Ave. Vernon and Verna are buried in Red Oak Grove Cemetery as are many other relatives of theirs.

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A Kimberling family photo: Virginia is seated on the left beside her parents and to the right of them is her sister Joyce. In the center of the back row is Virginia's husband, Howard, her brother Victor, and Joyce's husband Robert. Their children are in front and standing next to Howard and Robert. A shuffleboard game was painted on the old basement floor that probably provided hours of entertainment! This was discovered during the basement renovation in 2022.

If you have memories, or photos of early Red Oak Grove Church and Cemetery people, events, or activities that you would be willing to share for future issues of *The Reporter*, please send them to Brenda Emick-Herring, 748 175th St., Mechanicsville, IA 52306.

In Memoriam: Red Oak Grove Cemetery

Dennis Arthur Dykstra, died February 22, 2026. He was born February 14, 1946 to Jacobus and Mary (Peterson) Dykstra. He served in the US Navy from 1965 to 1971 and married Linda Shaull in 1971. Visitation on February 27, and his funeral services were at Fry Funeral Home in Tipton, IA; burial followed the service on February 28, 2026. Dennis is survived by his children Jeff (Cindy) of Stanwood and Denise Dykstra of Moscow, IA; his nieces Kelly Garvin, Shannon (Jorge) Varela, and Heather Miller and nephews BJ (Erin) Dykstra, Chad Shaull, and all their children.

Judith M. (Vahle) Smith, 84, passed away on March 13, 2026 in Cedar Rapids. She was born on March 22, 1941, in NE. Her Celebration of Life was on March 22, 2026 at the Mathews Building at the Cedar County Fairgrounds, and interment followed at Red Oak Grove Cemetery. Survivors include son Craig of Stanwood, daughter Carmen Smith of Ankeny, and her brother Bob (Jeanette) Vahle.

Ron Martin, 82, died on March 5, 2026. He was born on November 23, 1943 to Albert and Lillian Martin. Ron joined the Marines and served in Vietnam. He had a private interment at Red Oak on May 1, 2026. Ron is survived by his wife Dixie (Gade), and sons Shane (Becky) and Dustin Martin; his grandchildren Melissa (Seth) Anderson, and Michelle, Megan, and Deucalion Martin and great-grand-daughters Ashlynn and Bailey Anderson.

In Memoriam continued...

Bruce Allen Flory, 63, passed away on November 30, 2025 in Marion, IA. He was the son of Elmer and Cuba Flory and was born on July 5, 1962 in Cedar Rapids and grew up in Tipton. Visitation for Bruce was at Fry Funeral Home on December 6, 2025. It was followed by a Celebration of Life. His burial service was at Red Oak Cemetery on April 18, 2026. Bruce's survivors include his mother Cuba and three Flory brothers and their wives; Hobert (Terry), David (Carol Foster) and Wayne (Jill).

Sherri Lee Casterline, 73, died on March 15, 2026. She was the daughter of James and Meriwyn (Polly) Casterline, born June 2, 1952 in Cedar Rapids, IA. Sherri is survived by husband Larry Mathias, and step-sons Matthew, Andrew (Amy) and step-grandchildren Kallista Mathias, Amelia Mathias and Adrian Mariano, and step-great-grandchildren Armani, Elliara and Eliza Mariano. Her Celebration of Life Service was in Geneva, IL on April 18, 2026. Her funeral and luncheon will be at Red Oak Church on May 9, 2026 and burial will be at the Masonic Cemetery in Tipton, IA.

Red Oak Grove is a Lovely Wedding Venue

The pretty grounds, photo op sites, vintage sanctuary and bridesmaid/groomsmen changing rooms create a unique country site for a special wedding day! It's air conditioned, has an elevator, and is very reasonably priced. There is a spacious kitchen for snacks as the bridal party is getting ready for the big event. To book a wedding, please contact board member Mike Herring at 563-357-2668 or email him: woodland@netins.net.



Wendy Vincent, Carolyn Herring and John Barnum helped clean on April 18th. The church balcony provides a perfect view during weddings. Nancy Stewart and Brenda Emick-Herring also helped clean the church.

Mark Your Calendars for These Upcoming Events

- **Annual Celebration/Reunion/Potluck – Sunday, May 17, 2026, at 11 am**
(Bring a dish to share please)
- **Pie and Ice Cream Social – Sunday, October 4, 2026, at 1 pm**
- **Wreaths Across America – Saturday, December 12, 2026, at 11:30 am**
(Cookies, coffee & cocoa afterwards)
- **Spring Clean-Up Saturday, April 17, 2027, at 9 am**
(email Bob's address below to help; all hands welcome so bring a friend if you wish)

For information about purchase of plots, church rental, the wedding venue, or other matters pertaining to the church or cemetery, contact Bob Rickard, Red Oak Grove Cemetery Association President

Phone: (563) 886-6018

E-mail: bbrickiowa@gmail.com

Mail: P.O. Box 452, Tipton, IA 52772

Our web site is: www.redoakgrovecc.com • Find us on Facebook: [redoakgrovechurchandcemetery](https://www.facebook.com/redoakgrovechurchandcemetery)

Please consider making a lasting legacy to Red Oak Grove Cemetery Association, Inc. by asking your attorney to include, in your will, a final gift to the Red Oak Grove Association.