Toms River High School South Students Clean Methodist Cemetery

By: C & H Staff



Dr. Veit leads students.
Photo credit: Ocean County Parks Department

After having taken their AP science exam on May 2, students from Toms River South High School under the direction of their AP science teacher, James Luyster, have been cleaning head stones in the First United Methodist Church of Toms River graveyard at the intersection of Washington Street and Hooper Avenue in downtown Toms River. Mr. Luyster has been informally having his students pick up debris in the cemetery for the past seven years.



Students apply D-2 to headstones.
Photo credit: Ocean County Parks Department

The Ocean County Cultural & Heritage Commission arranged to have Dr. Richard Veit give the students a power point presentation and on New Jersey graveyards and hands on demonstration of preservation techniques. Dr. Veit is the head of the History and Anthropology Department of Monmouth University in Long Branch, Monmouth County.

After the lecture, the students walked to the site and took turns actually cleaning the historic head stones with a non-destructive agent and plenty of elbow grease. The first four gallons of the product were supplied by the Commission and subsequent supplies by the school and the Methodist Church. The Church also supplied snacks for the students. Water was supplied by the Toms River public works department.



Teacher James Luyster.
Photo credit: Ocean County Parks Dept.

The graveyard is located where the original church was built in 1828. A new church was built in 1854 across the street and in 1875 later relocated to a third corner of the intersection. The current church on Old Freehold Road and Chestnut was opened in 1974.