



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Wartburg Hosts Day of Remembrance and Dedicates

Rev. Dr. John S. Damm Serenity Garden

Mount Vernon, N.Y. (September 14, 2024) – Wartburg staff, residents and families gathered for the Day of Remembrance to memorialize those who died in the past year. This annual tradition also includes a blessing of memorial and legacy gifts like bricks, benches and trees. This year was especially significant because it included the dedication of the Rev. Dr. John S. Damm Serenity Garden at the newly opened Berkemeier Living Center.

Rev. Dr. John S. Damm (Father John Damm) was a former Wartburg Board member, Pastor, Professor, Seminary President, beloved mentor, and friend. The Serenity Garden was dedicated in his honor.

Wartburg Chair Emeritus, Rev. Amandus J. Derr stated, "John Damm was a mentor to me and to many others, retired or still serving, as Pastors in the Lutheran Church. He was a strong ecumenical pastoral leader, an innovative educator, and was thoroughly committed to an inclusive church and society. He was also committed to Wartburg and happily spent his final years of life as a resident of Meadowview."

Saturday's memorial service in Wartburg's historic chapel was presided by Pastor Kimberli Lile and included music directed by James Pfister, with hymns and instrumental pieces by Jorge Lopez. Readings by Father Paul R. Fagan, C.P. of the Passionists, Bridget Zimmermann, VP of Operations at Wartburg, and Sr. Margaret Anderson of the Dominican Sisters of Hope enhanced the celebration. Wartburg President and CEO Dr. David J. Gentner read the memorial names as part of the service. As each name was read, a family member was presented with a rose.

"Wartburg has served the community for over 158 years," said Gentner, "Our Day of remembrance is a very important tradition. Simply being able to say our loved ones' names out loud, to talk about them so that their memory lives on, is a crucial part of honoring the lives they lived and how much they meant (and still mean) to us."

"As this year's preacher for the Wartburg Memorial Service of Prayer and Remembrance, I wanted our residents' loved ones to know God's Peace as it might be felt in the arms of a mother, father or beloved friend. Challenges do not dissipate instantly in an embrace, but their power over our souls can be changed, perhaps dispelled, by knowing we are not alone. At Wartburg, we hope those who attend the annual Memorial Service have a



moment in which to feel the community draw close and enfold them with compassion.," said Rev. Lile.

About Wartburg

Nestled in Mount Vernon, NY, Wartburg stands apart with its holistic approach to senior living and healthcare. Unlike other adult communities, Wartburg offers a vibrant 34-acre campus where residents enjoy integrated services that extend well beyond typical care. Whether it's independent living, assisted living, rehabilitation or adult day care, Wartburg's continuum of care is designed to meet diverse needs with excellence. Their dedication to families extends beyond medical care, providing robust caregiver support at every stage. Recognized as one of the "Best Nursing Homes in New York State" by U.S. News & World Report for a remarkable twelve years running, Wartburg continues to set the standard in senior care, fostering a community where well-being thrives.

About Berkemeier Living Center

The Berkemeier Living Center, Wartburg's new Memory Care Center, features 64 state-of-the-art residences, including 32 private and 32 companion suites, focused on Alzheimer's and dementia care. Residences at The Living Center are designed like small households, creating an intimate and comfortable feel. Key features like short walking distances and oversized windows enhance the healing environment, with each household having its living, dining, and kitchen spaces.

Website: www.wartburg.org

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YouTube: youtube.com/wartburgny

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Rev. Amandus J. Derr, Rev. Jared Stahler and representatives from St. Peter's Church in NYC in the Father John Damm Serenity Garden at Berkemeier Living Center

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