



Yucca Breeze

THE UNITED CHURCHES OF HOT SPRINGS, SOUTH DAKOTA

Pastor's Pulpit:

I actually really like the month of November. The winter is settling in, golf is pretty much out of the picture for a few months, Thanksgiving is right around the corner, and of course ... the Christmas Holidays begin. It's sort of fitting that we end our year in our great country with holidays that celebrate the birth of our nation (Thanksgiving) ... in the specific sense of "public celebration acknowledging divine favors." Thanksgiving dates from the 1630's (the first one in America was held October 1621 by Plymouth Colony Pilgrims in appreciation of assistance from members of the Massasoit tribe and celebration of the first harvest.

And then of course, Christmas, as we as Americans still take time to consider the grace of God and His invitation to be born again through His Son and our Savior, Jesus Christ. Before we actually start a new year in January, we first take time to reflect and ponder, and try to get some new perspective about life and living, family, friends, and so on.

I love the HOLIDAYS! And I want us to consider 8 Christian assurances that each one of us who bear His name and image can indeed be thankful for.

Honor we are given in just being His. *1 John 5 states: ¹¹"And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹²Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life."* Of course, this eternal life is all about a secure and abundant life in the here and now. Do we have problems and ups and downs? Sure, but as a Believer, there is always the ongoing and heartfelt assurance that God has claimed me ... and changed me ... and I am heaven bound.

Second, we can be thankful for an . . .

Ongoing opportunity to approach our Heavenly Father at any time in every situation. John 16:23-24 states: *²³Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, He will give it to you. ²⁴Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full."* With our heavenly Father, there is always one of three answers: yes, no or wait. James reminds us in chapter 4: *"You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask."* The simple fact is, we just forget to pray about things. I honestly believe that our God wants more of an ongoing conversation than just a constant barrage of I need this or I want that. The main point is we can have an ongoing dialog with God! He loves you, and it may surprise you, He actually likes you as well. He didn't make a mistake when He drew you to Himself and claimed you as His own.

Third, we can be thankful for a . . .

Life marked by Love. Paul understood this concept when he wrote in Ephesians 5: *"Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. ² And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."* The world does not understand our lives as Christians. But think about it. The Father loves you so much that He put in place a Divine plan to reconcile you to Himself through the act and action of His Son. The Son loved you enough to take upon Himself all of your sin and in return robe you with His righteousness. And the Holy Spirit loves you enough to take up residence in your heart and life as God's down payment and personal guarantee that you do belong to Him. Then of course He places us in a church family with like-minded, like-hearted, like-loved folks. Living a life marked by love is not a determined action as much as it is a natural response of being a person who truly is loved.

Next we can be thankful for the . . .

Indwelling of the Holy Spirit. I know we've touched on this in our last item to be thankful for, but listen again to a couple of more verses that talk about this great privilege:

Romans 8: *"⁹ You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. ¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹ If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus^[d] from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you."* **Ephesians 1:14-16:** *"¹¹ In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, ¹² so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. ¹³ In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee^[d] of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it,^[e] to the praise of his glory. So what really is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit? Think of it as God's continuous insider heavenly hug where He holds tightly to our hearts and whispers "I love you."*

Then of course there is the ability to be thankful for . . .

Daily assurance of His guidance. Proverbs 3 says: *"My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments, ² for length of days and years of life and peace they will add to you. ³ Let not steadfast love and faithfulness forsake you; bind them around your neck; write them on the tablet of your heart. ⁴ So you will find favor and good success^[a] in the sight of God and man. ⁵ Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. ⁶ In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths."*

This season we can be thankful for ...

A real hope of being in Heaven someday. Jesus said in John 14: *"Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God,^[a] believe also in me. ² In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?^[b] ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. ⁴ And you know the way to where I am going."^[c] ⁵ Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" ⁶ Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."*

The caveat there is we do know Jesus. What a great reality! We have found Him to be Our Way for us to find God, Our Truth provided for us to know God, and Our Life and Lifestyle marked out for us to be like God.

As well, we can be thankful for the reality that . . .

Yesterday's mistakes can stay in the yesterdays of our lives. Consider 1 John 1: *"This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. ⁶ If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. ⁷ But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. ⁸ If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."* Yes we are Simul Justus et Peccador ... simultaneously justified and sinner, but the past is forgiven. The consequences? Well sometimes the consequences do have a lasting effect. But the guilt and the shame, and the regret, and the need to be self-condemning all of the time? Nah, the past is the past. Our mistakes as well as our sinful deeds were hung on the Cross ... let them stay there!

And finally, as we begin to consider the upcoming Christmas season remember that our ...

Salvation is Preserved in Heaven for us. John 10 states, *²⁷ "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸ I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹ My Father, who has given them to me,^[a] is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. ³⁰ I and the Father are one."*

So there you have it, 8 Assurances given to us as Believers. Things worth remembering during the upcoming **HOLIDAYS**.

Blessings, Pastor David

NOVEMBER MISSION EMPHASIS

CORNERSTONE WOMEN'S & CHILDREN'S SHELTER

RAPID CITY

"The Women and Children's Home opened in March of 2005. The home provides a safe place for homeless women and children. Families are the fastest growing segment of homelessness. The shortage of affordable housing and an increase in poverty are two reasons we are seeing such a demand for rooms in the home.

Many of these single mothers have three (3) or four (4) children under the age of 5. The Mission provides shelter and assistance to an average of 350-400 women and children annually. The home allows these women and children a chance for stability and healing while becoming self-sufficient and independent."

Our "Loose Change" Offering for November will be gathered on Sunday, November 12th. If using our giving envelopes, please write **CORNERSTONE** on the line designated for this mission. **Thank you for your faithfulness to our missions!**



November Anniversaries

- 25 Tom & Judy Hofer
- 25 Bob & Mary Puffer
- 25 Adam & Anna Swift



- 2 Todd Wynia
- 2 Cathy Olstad
- 10 Owen Meadows
- 11 Florence Jost
- 12 Bob Puffer
- 13 Mystic Brave Hawk
- 14 Barb Berry
- 15 Gerardo Cantu
- 16 Jayden White Face
- 16 Jennifer Campbell
- 19 Paul Pickerill
- 23 Myrna Halls
- 25 Alexis Cape

If your name is not included on the Birthdays and Anniversaries list and you would like it to be added, please contact the church office: by email: ucassist@gwtc.net or call 745-5640.

THIS AND THAT

THANK YOU!:

We appreciate all the prayers, meals, cards, phone calls, and messages of well wishes and offers of help following Pat's neck surgery on September 15th and during our recent bout with COVID-19. We are thankful for improving health and feel blessed to have such a loving church family. Thank you! **Garry & Pat Strauser**

FOOD PANTRY COUNTS:

Number of Active Clients: 376; Single: 173; Family: 203; Veterans (Included in sgl/fam count): 91; New Sign-Ups (since Jan 1, 2023): 112; Average Days Open Each Month: 16.

WORSHIP SERVICES AT SEVEN SISTERS:

The United Churches will be hosting the **Sunday afternoon Worship Services at Seven Sisters on November 5th, 12th, 19th and 26th, from 2:00-3:00 pm.** Pastor David will be leading the services, which are always a blessing, so join us if you can!

PASTOR'S SERMON SERIES:

November 5	"The Cleansing of the Temple"	John 2:12-25
November 12	"Rebirth"	John 3:1-13
November 19	"The Lifting Up of the Son of Man"	John 3:14-21
November 26	"Jesus and JTB"	John 3:22-36

UNITED WOMEN:

The United Women will not be meeting in November and December. We will resume meeting on **Tuesday, January 16, 2024.** At that time we will begin a new study: ***The Great Disappearance, by David Jeremiah.*** Stay tuned for more details!!

ANNUAL REPORTS:

Don't forget!! Annual reports are due in the church office by January 1, 2024!!!

CONCERT AT CUSTER COMMUNITY CHURCH:



United Churches members **Tracy Bastian, Garry Strauser and Sharon Hansen,** will join musicians from the Custer Community Church on **Sunday, November 12th at 3:00 pm** for a concert at that church. A free-will offering will be taken to support refugees of the Russian Invasion in the Ukraine. This is a third concert at the Custer Community Church, featuring Tracy Bastian, playing an 1882 pump organ. The Community Church's hand bells, worship choir, Metro Gnomes, and soloists will also participate. Please plan to be a part of the audience for this performance. *Lois Wells*

NEW BIBLE STUDY

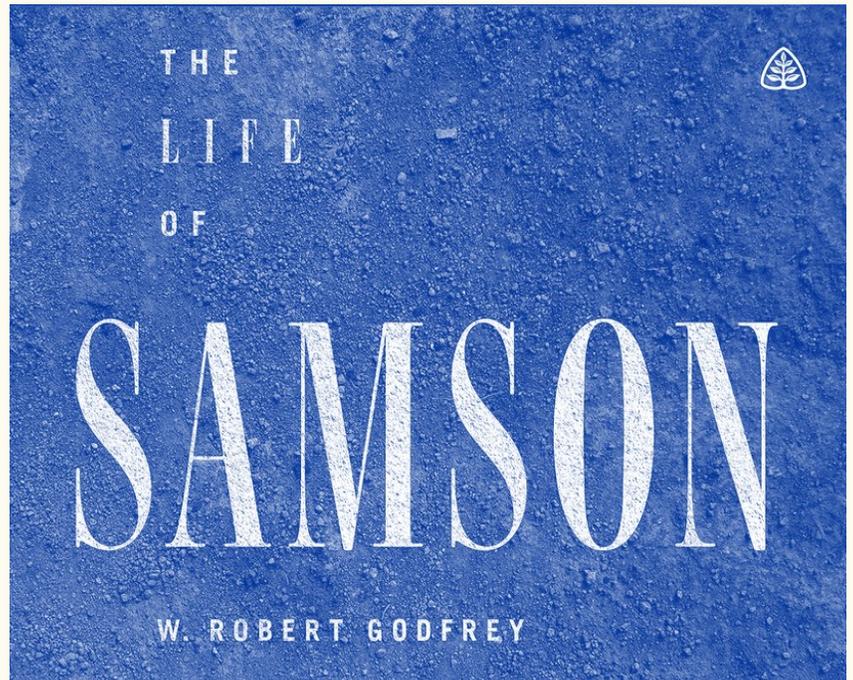
Beginning Sunday, November 5th

"The Life of Samson"

8:30 am — In the Fireside Room

Facilitated by Sharon Kalvels

A man of incredible physical strength and debilitating moral weakness, Samson was nevertheless God's instrument to rescue Israel from the Philistines during the era of the judges. In light of these contrasts, we are faced with this key question: What, exactly, are we to make of Samson and his place in the Lord's purposes? In this series, Dr. W. Robert Godfrey considers the life of Samson, highlighting vital theological lessons and exploring what this judge tells us about Christian living.



The Fellowship Team is in need of new members. We have lost several over the past two years and we need help. If you are interested in joining us, please let me know.

Our duties consist of providing cookies for Sunday after church, serving and cleaning up after the 5th Sunday potlucks, helping plan luncheons for celebrations, funerals or other occasions. Our committee helps keep the kitchen clean and up to date. I try to plan a general clean up once a year. With new countertops coming, there will be some cleanup after they are installed.

Thank you all so much for helping!
Jeanne Wyatt



Operation Christmas Child Shoeboxes 2023

There are empty boxes waiting to be filled located on the Mission Table in the Bethany Room and in the Fireside Room. Grab a box ... or two!

The Operation Christmas Child collection week is November 13th-20th. **ALL shoeboxes must be at the church no later than November 19th.**

If you would like to make a donation toward building a shoebox, use one of our giving envelopes and write **Shoeboxes** on the line designated for missions.

The United Churches Shoebox Page

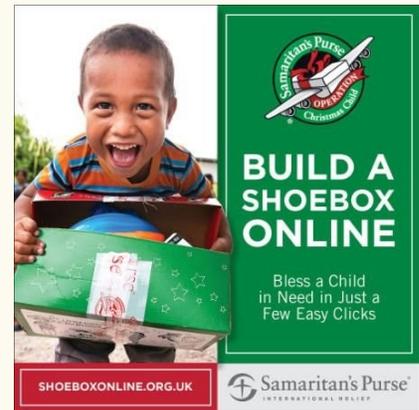
How many children can we bless with the Good News of Jesus Christ by building shoebox gifts online? If you're worried about shopping build your shoeboxes with "Build a Shoebox" here:

<https://build-a-shoebox.samaritanspurserelief.org/view/fe6fe32a-5cda-4d88-b7af-2a227d66c74a>

The United Churches hopes to fill 20 boxes online.

This goal page will help us track our progress.

(You can also access the above link by going to the United Churches Website and click the newsletter tab on the bottom left of the homepage. On the newsletter list, choose November 2023.)



The United Churches Prayer Chain

- ♦ Our church is blessed with a wonderful and faithful prayer chain ... and they love praying for folk! If you have a prayer concern or need (or know of someone who does), please share it with them!
- ♦ Anyone can start the prayer chain.
- ♦ Just call Lydia Emery at 605-890-1204, and she will get it started for you.
- ♦ **OR ... you can call the church office at 605-745-5640 to get the prayer chain started.**

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Philippians 4:6-7



DON'T FORGET! Set you clocks back one hour Saturday evening November 4th!

News from the Spicers

Complete Harmony

Thank you for praying for us! We had a busy but wonderful summer. Cheryl had a wonderful time in the US visiting her parents and our adult children, plus she loved every minute that she was able to hold Chrystella, our newest granddaughter, born June 21. Walter had a busy summer overseeing the departments under him and preparing our campus for this school year. Plus, he had fun doing some fun activities with the Butterfly girls. We are also rejoicing in the addition of our newest grandson, Emmet, born September 8.

Our school theme for this school year is Complete Harmony with our theme verse: Romans 15:5-6, "May God, who gives this patience and encouragement, help you live in complete harmony with each other, as is fitting for followers of Christ Jesus. Then all of you can join together with one voice, giving praise and glory to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." (NLT) FA is an international Christian school; its members come from many different nations, cultures, backgrounds, and personalities, yet our prayer is that we live in "Complete Harmony" as we focus on Christ.

The school year started and continues well with its flurry of activities. Please pray for Cheryl as the Head Nurse and Walter as the Deputy Head of School. Our administrative roles can be overwhelming and discouraging at times, but we do find our personnel and community encouraging. We are thankful for how God continues to strengthen us in our roles.

Please continue to pray for some important positions to be filled at FA, and pray for all the new staff as they transition to life in the Philippines and at FA.

Lastly, pray that we will be an encouragement to the girls at the Butterfly Project. Many of them find school difficult, and some are one to four years behind which makes it even more discouraging. Pray that our presence, treats, and activities will encourage them to persevere.

Thank you for your continued support; it is such an encouragement to us!

Blessings, Walt and Cheryl

AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF THE DAKOTAS

CHURCH OF HOPE'S QUILT RAFFLE 2023 MADE BY: IMMANUAL BAPTIST CHURCH WOMEN MINOT NORTH DAKOTA

The Church of Hope's quilt raffle helps to cover the Pastor's salary, Bible studies, Bibles, prisoner exit bags and other expenses. Raffle tickets are \$5.00 each or 5 for \$20.00. If you would like to help with this vital ministry, **see Jeanne Wyatt or Bernice Cook** for tickets. The winner will be drawn in December. (Please make checks payable to **Church of Hope**.)



CHURCH OF HOPE—SD WOMEN'S PRISON—PIERRE, SD

The Church of Hope is an **American Baptist Church** gathering within the South Dakota Women's Prison in Pierre, South Dakota. Financial support is provided by member churches of ABC Dakotas, American Baptist Home Mission Societies, and many other churches and individuals.