



Yucca Breeze

THE UNITED CHURCHES, HOT SPRINGS, SOUTH DAKOTA

Pastor's Pulpit:

February is the month for all of us to take time to consider the greatest of all emotions: love. It's kind of a jump start in spring when love is in the air! Bernice asked if she could share her story of love in the February Pastor's Pulpit. Now mind you, it's not just about me or the boys. Bernice has found that her love of Christ is actually what has enabled her to love us, her earthly family, in a way that has been lasting and deep. For those of you who don't know, Bernice was born in Fall River, Massachusetts. ***Her's is a story that begins on a snowy winter night . . .***

Bernice ... My Story:

I truly wasn't sure where I was going to begin this. It is one thing to write a letter that you put in an envelope and mail to someone ... only you and that person read it. It is totally different to write a piece of your heart ... that will be sent out on an email. I well remember that snowy night David referred to. It is one of my most precious memories. I understand now, as I am older, that God often blesses me with *in small ways* ... so I will totally get how BIG He is.

It was Christmas Eve in 1969. My family and I were attending Midnight Mass at an old stone church in Fall River. During Midnight Mass I had prayed what I thought was a silly prayer. "Please, Lord, let this be a white Christmas." This would be my last Christmas in New England with my family, as I was moving to California the following year. We weren't predicted to have snow. But as we left the church after Mass ... there were big, fat, beautiful flakes falling from the sky. Silly? My heart still praises God after all these years for such a precious gift.

I did move to California, and over the next several years there were things in my life that got really hard. Finally, on a Friday evening, as I was on my way home from work, I was in a multi-car accident, struck by a car behind me as I merged onto the highway. I sat there in that wrecked car ... numb. I knew in that moment that I had strayed far, that I was lost, and that I needed God.

And then ... not very long after that day ... a young man at work asked me out on a date. We went to the beach and then a baseball game. That young man was David, and we have been together ever since.

One Saturday, this young man said that he would like me to meet his grandparents. And so off we go. We went on a small Honda motorcycle we were riding around on those days. I had my "cool" motor-cycle hat on and my favorite jeans. Yep ... I was "cool."

We arrive at the home of Gram & Grandad Edwards... we stop ... David turns off the bike ... and he says ... *By the way, my grandparents are kinda religious.* No problem, I think to myself! I simply slipped on one of the many masks I was wearing back then. This one: *"Nicely-brought-up-Catholic-young-lady."* I was ready! Until we got to the front door.

And there stood Gram & Grandad Edwards. I only saw Gram. I took *one* look at her, and something in me shifted, I did not know what she had, but I knew I wanted it. And she? ... she looked at me through the eyes of Jesus and saw through all the masks I was wearing to the bleeding, hurting, crying person I was underneath. Gram and I went out to their screened in lanai, and she began pulling things out of a cabinet, and we sat there at the picnic table as she helped me put together a little promise box of scripture cards for me to take home.

And from that day, Gram spent the next year **loving** me into God's Kingdom. Her witness was solid. Her witness was truth. Her witness was Jesus. She prayed for me and she shared Scripture with me. She got her "Tuesday Ladies Prayer Group" praying for me. She and Grandad invited us to church when there were musical specials like their *Living Christmas Tree*. They knew how much we loved music, and we always went.

Then ... one year later. Easter Sunday night, April 8th. I was watching the last part of "Jesus of Nazareth" which had been airing on TV for a couple of nights. Then there is the crucifixion scene, and the thief on the Cross saying: "Remember me when you come unto your Kingdom" ... and Jesus saying: "Today you will be with me in Paradise." In that moment, I prayed and surrendered my heart to Christ. And in that moment I felt a Love the likes of which I had never felt before.

I have a friend in Mississippi who once told me: "You see God in everything." I think that is true. If God wants to touch my life in a way that I will know He is there ... He will bless me with a *little* thing ... a thing no one else will understand.

For me, this picture says it all. My desire is to live my life with my ear on His heart. I, who did not have the love of an earthly father ... know how deeply I am loved by my Abba Father.

Soli Deo Gloria,

Bernice Margaret Cook



February

Mission Of The Month

“Pray for us, too, that God will give us many opportunities to speak about His mysterious plans concerning Christ...Pray that we will proclaim this message as clearly as we should.”

Colossians 4:3-4 (NLTSE)



WHO WE ARE

Oyate Hope Academy is a nonprofit, private, Christian school providing a comprehensive education for children in grades Kindergarten through 8. Headed by Wendell Gehman, its roots are well over twenty years old, serving the children, families, and communities in and around Oglala, South Dakota on the Pine Ridge Reservation.

Wendell has now seen as many as three generations of students move through his teaching and leadership positions after nearly thirty years of working on the Reservation.

Our staff is passionate in their caring for the welfare, education, well-being, and trajectory of students' lives.

We will always strive to demand of ourselves the finest processes and utmost efforts for helping our students advance themselves intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually.

Our Loose Change Offering for Missions will be gathered on Sunday, February 9th, during the Time With our Young Disciples. If using one of our offering envelopes, please write OYATE on the line designated for missions.

Thank you for your continued commitment to our missions!



This, our wholehearted commitment, speaks to three levels for our continuing existence:

Level One: We ourselves have confidence in our competence to positively impact children no matter what their individual capabilities, capacities, or challenges may be.

Level Two: We know that our students who come through our school will elevate their own confidence through the competence they gain resulting from the positive interaction with our teachers, our staff, other students, and the curriculum and materials we have to offer.

Level Three: We know that our students will be better equipped to help their families and their communities through the enhanced skills and abilities they inherently possess, that have been further developed through their time spent with us, as they mature through the years to come.

Oyate Hope Academy's Purpose is to cultivate hope by developing the educational and social-emotional needs of Lakota students through a rigorous academic program that unites the mind, heart, and spirit.

Oyate Hope Academy's Passion is to see students awakening to their God-given potential and embracing their capabilities to positively impact themselves, their families, and their communities.

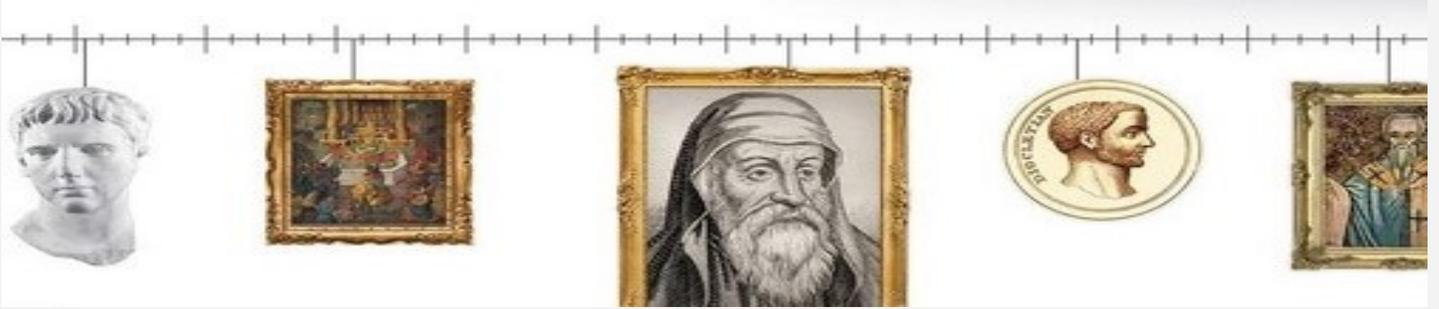


“Pray for us, too, that God will give us many opportunities to speak about His mysterious plans concerning Christ...Pray that we will proclaim this message as clearly as we should.”

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UPDATE ON THE:
ADULT BIBLE STUDY
SUNDAY MORNINGS — 8:30 AM
IN THE FIRESIDE ROOM
A SURVEY OF CHURCH HISTORY
PART 3, AD 1500-1620

WILL BEGIN ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 23RD.
If you missed Part 2 of this study, you can still take Part 3!



ABOUT THIS SERIES

Many Christians know little about the history of the church. As a result, they're missing a testament of God's steadfastness over the centuries. In this monumental study series, Dr. W. Robert Godfrey sheds crucial light on church history, demonstrating God's promise to build and preserve His church so that "the gates of hell will not prevail against it" [Matt. 16:18].



Dr. W. Robert Godfrey is a Ligonier Ministries teaching fellow and chairman of Ligonier Ministries. He is president emeritus and professor emeritus of church history at Westminster Seminary California. He is the featured teacher for many Ligonier teaching series, including the six-part series *A Survey of Church History*.



SPOTLIGHT ON DENOMINATIONS

BAPTIST

METHODIST

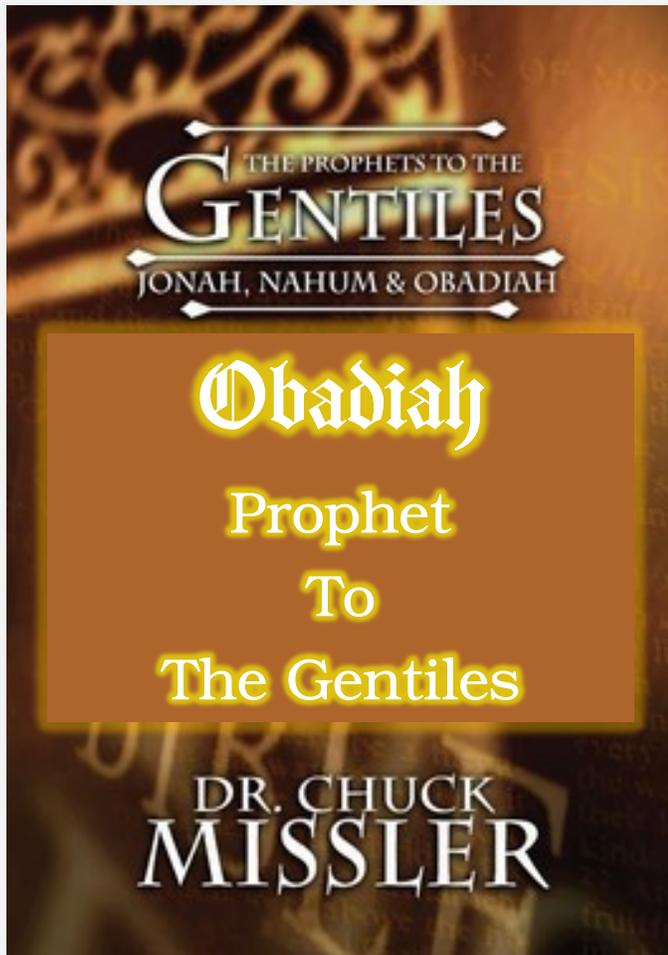
PRESBYTERIAN

Who We Are ... What We Believe

What We Do ... How To Join

During the next three months, we will be spotlighting each of our TUC denominations: **February**/Baptist; **March**/Methodist; **April**/Presbyterian.

If you are not already a member of our church, we would like you to become one, but we want you to make an informed decision. In the upcoming weeks, information on each denomination will be available as handouts in the Sunday bulletins. There will also be information booklets located on the table in the Bethany Room and also in the Fireside Room.



Mary/Martha Bible Study Group

Our Mary/Martha group has recently studied the prophet Joel and is currently in the book of Amos.

Their next study
*Chuck Missler's
"Obediah"*

will begin on Thursday,
February 27th.

They meet:

Thursday Mornings
10:00 am

Fireside Room

(Snacks followed by the Bible
study)



SUNDAY FELLOWSHIP COOKIE BRIGADE 2025!!!

WE NEED COOKIES!
YUM!! YUM!! YUM!!
WE LOVES COOKIES!!

Every Sunday we have a "sweet" time of fellowship (in the fellowship hall) after our worship service. We enjoy . . .
Coffee . . . and Lemonade . . . and Water . . . and . . .

. . . **COOKIES** . . .

(or similar sweet goodies). We have lots of folk who stay each week and enjoy this time.

BUT . . . we have several Sundays coming up where we need volunteers to bring cookies (or some similar sweet).

Editor's Note: Cookies don't need to be home baked. I bring cookies from Sam's Club.

We need someone to bring the sweets for the following blank dates:

- February 2: Bernice Cook
- February 9: Jeanne Wyatt
- February 16: Nancy Cape
- February 23: Cathy Nelson
- March 2: Jeanne Wyatt
- March 9: Bernice Cook
- March 16: Nancy Cape
- March 23: _____
- March 30: 5th Sunday Potluck
- April 6: _____
- April 13: Kathy Meyers
- April 20: Easter Sunday (TBA)
- April 27: Nancy Cape

- May 4: _____
- May 11: _____
- May 18: _____
- May 25: Kathy Meyers
- June 1: _____
- June 8: _____
- June 15: Nancy Cape
- June 22: _____
- June 29: 5th Sunday Potluck



There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board in the kitchen. Or email ucassist@gwtc.net to put your name on the list. There are also open dates for later in the year.



FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

22 Claude & Karen Bent

- 5 Carla Richmond
- 14 Karen Bent
- 26 Lynn Mason
- 26 Jon Schuchardt
- 27 Sheryl Brost

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: uc@gwtc.net or call 745-5640.

THIS AND THAT

Pastor Sermon Series:

February	2	"Crucifixion"	John 19:17-37
February	9	"Burial"	John 129:38-42
February	16	"Resurrection"	John 20:1-18
February	23	"Doubting Thomas"	John 20:19-31

Food Pantry Counts:

Number of Active Clients (visited the pantry in 2024): **416**; **Single: 205**; **Family: 211**; **Veterans** (included in sgl/fam count): **78** (active this year); **New Sign Ups** (since Jan 1, 2024): **140**; **Average Days Open Each Month: 16.**

United Women:

The United Women will meet on Tuesday, February 18 at 1:30 pm. They are continuing in their study of The Great Disappearance by David Jeremiah.

"We cannot choose how many years we will live, but we can choose how much life those years will have. We cannot control the beauty of our face, but we can control the expression on it. We cannot control life's difficult moments but we can choose to make life less difficult. We cannot control the negative atmosphere of the world, but we can control the atmosphere of our minds. Too often we try to choose and control things we cannot. Too seldom we choose to control what we can ... our attitude."

John Maxwell

