



THE UNITED CHURCHES, HOT SPRINGS, SOUTH DAKOTA

Pastor's Pulpit:

*The apple tree that grew for you and me
I watched the apples falling one by one
And I recall the moment of them all
The day I kissed your cheek and you were gone
(Song by Bee Gee's)*

Spring time, and especially the month of May, always brings back memories of times gone by and, of course, the years in between youth and old age. Such is the song above. Every Spring introduces once again resurrection from the dead winter to the new life springing forth in the Spring ... and I love the Spring. The beauty and wonder of creation once again shout of the existence of God, as well as the goodness of a Creator God. It also speaks of God's eternal plan in providing new life for all those, who though dead in their sins, having come to put their trust in God's Son, Jesus Christ, are brought from death to life. They are born again from above. For God really does love the world, including you and me, and because of His gracious character He gave to us His only begotten Son. When we truly believe and trust in Him, at the end of our earthly pilgrimage, we will take our last breath here, and simultaneously take our first breath in that place where Christ taught He has gone to prepare for us. (John 3:16, 14:1-4)

Perhaps every Spring is a reminder of life after death and hope out of despair. More, it should remind us that God, our God, is truly a God whose greatest attributes are not only life-changing love ... but extraordinary GRACE. Think about God's grace to us in providing a way to be reconciled to Him. You know He didn't have to, right? I mean, it's not the fact that Jesus was narrow-minded and exclusionary when He said, "*I am the Way and the Truth and the Life, and no one comes to the Father but through Me*" (John 14:6). NO ... the real wonder of Jesus' words is that there IS a way to God at all! He has said it! He and He alone has provided a way, a path for us to come to Him, learn about Him, to be reconciled with Him, and then be adopted by Him. How incredible is that!

G.R.A.C.E.

Think about the **GRACE** involved in all this . . .

First, remember that the gospel itself was ...

G.OD'S IDEA

R. C. Sproul in His little pamphlet, *“What is the Gospel”* states: “God is the author and owner of the gospel. In his letter to the Romans, Paul writes, “Paul a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures” (Romans 1:1-2). Paul uses the phrase “the gospel of God.” Now when he speaks of the gospel OF God, he shows us that the message of the gospel is not merely a message ABOUT God, though it certainly is that. But the word “of” here in the Greek means that the gospel belongs TO God. It is His announcement. It is His message. He is the origin or the author of the gospel. Sproul goes on to point out: “We might say that the first great apostle of the gospel is Christ Himself, but even when Christ proclaimed the gospel, He was fulfilling the will of the Father. It was the Father who sent the Son to make this announcement. It was the Father who authorized the Son to speak it to His contemporaries (John 5:19, 30).” Our salvation is not plan B with God. No, there has always and only been one plan, plan A: the Father sends, the Son goes, the Spirit remains. Or better put, the Father decrees, the Son accomplishes, and the Spirit convinces. And YOU fellow brothers or sisters, if you truly know Christ today are living proof of God’s GRACE. Why? Because you have, and were and still are the object of that GRACE revealed in the Gospel of God.

Second, consider the grace of God when it comes to the extraordinary ...

R.ICHNESS REVEALED

So, here we are. Objects of God’s incredible GRACE. But, oh my, the riches that are ours. True riches can only be understood in the backdrop of just how we were once impoverished. Consider the GRACE that brought us to this point. Read slowly Paul’s words from Ephesians 2. “As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. ³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh^[a] and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. ⁴ But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶ And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, ⁷ in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— ⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰ For we are God’s Handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” Our true richness lies in our new position in Christ, and our new purpose for life. And what have we done to deserve this? Nothing! According to Paul, we can’t even claim credit for our own faith. Our entire lives have been steeped in and surrounded by, you guessed it ... GRACE.

Third, GRACE is indeed ...

A.LL ENCOMPASING

Consider Paul's words in Romans 12:1-2, as an invitation not a demand: "Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. ² Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will." God loves us so much that He first conquers our hearts, but then works on our minds! He is in the transforming business! I remember talking to my grandmother about this very issue. And she said: "Remember David, little by little every day, little by little in every way...we are becoming a little bit more like Jesus." God is not just concerned about the sweet bye and bye. He also is deeply interested in our here and now. I mean, the Holy Spirit is interested in making us, well, Holy. Paul understood God's Grace and God's intentions concerning those who belong to Him? Consider Romans 8: 28-30: "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who^a have been called according to His purpose. ²⁹ For those God foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. ³⁰ And those He predestined, He also called; those He called, He also justified; those He justified, He also glorified." Yes, the GRACE of God is all encompassing!

GRACE, once we've tasted it and began to understand it, is truly and ...

C.LEARLY CONTAGIOUS

In other words, to be the recipient of GRACE allows us to become dispensers of the same. Remember the words in the Lord's Prayer, "...forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who have trespassed against us." Jesus understood the reciprocal nature of a GRACE-filled life. We are forgiven; thus, we forgive. We have been shown grace; thus, we should be willing to be gracious and grace-filled towards other people. But with a slight caveat. First, draw a circle on the ground. Then get inside that circle. Next tell yourself, first and foremost, I need to be gracious to and toward the person who is standing inside this circle. Then and only then will you have the true liberty to let GRACE be a part of your maturing Christ-like character. Then and only then will you see the GRACE was always meant to be clearly contagious!

Finally, the GRACE of God really is ...

E.TERNAL IN SCOPE

In reality, the ultimate reason why Jesus came to reveal to us His Father's great GRACE is simply the fact that this life really isn't an end in itself. Those whom the Father claims He also keeps. Those whom have come to know Him in this life will get to know Him better in heaven. It is so true; GRACE is the answer to living a full and happy life. Bottom line however, GRACE is also the answer to the mystery of death. The scriptures teach us time and again, that God's plans for those whom He sheds His GRACE upon stretch from earthy life to life eternal. From the here and now to the then and there.

May this spring bring with it an ever increasing realization of the absolute truth that God whispers every spring: To love somebody, To love somebody, The way I love you.

G.R.A.C.E.

Blessings,
Pastor David

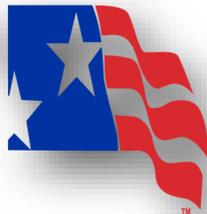
The Chosen Season 4

Will be shown
At The United Churches



**Beginning Friday Evening — May 10th
6:00 pm in the Fireside Room**

**NATIONAL
DAY OF
PRAYER**



**Come Join Us
Thursday, May 2
Centennial Park — 12:00 noon**

**Bring a chair and share in the fellowship
Soup and Bread will be provided following the service
Conducted by the Hot Springs Ministerial Association**

The National Day of Prayer is an annual observance, inviting people of all faiths to pray for the nation. It was created in 1952 by a joint resolution of the U. S. Congress, and signed into law by President Harry S. Truman.

*In the event of inclement weather, we will move to the
United Churches Fellowship Hall.*

www.hsministerial.org

Need any help with Spring
Cleaning?
Donate your unwanted stuff
to our youth program!



Saturday, June 29 / 9:00 am—3:00 pm
THE UNITED CHURCHES BASEMENT

**Donations will benefit
The United Churches of Hot Springs Youth Programs**

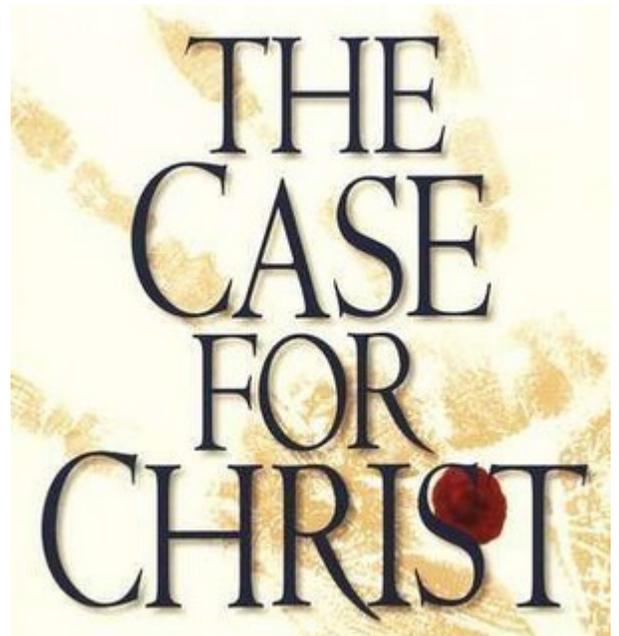
***For donation pick-up:
Contact Maris Smith (605) 431-5480**



MAY MISSION EMPHASIS SUMMER BIBLE/CHURCH CAMP SCHOLARSHIPS

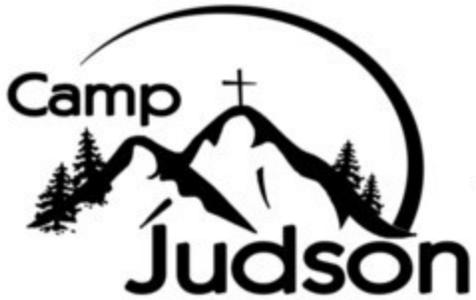
Our Mission Emphasis for the Month of May will be for our Summer Bible/Church Camp Scholarships Fund. Scholarships for Bible/Church camps are available through the Christian Education Team (at The United Churches). The mission of Camp Scholarships supports the Gospel message to our youth and adults! Our loose change offering will be gathered on Sunday, May 12th and will go toward this mission. If you wish to give toward this fund, please write "Camp Scholarships" on the line designated for missions. Be sure to check out the Camp poster located on the Mission table in the Bethany Room!

Mary/Martha Bible Group
New Study
The Case for Christ
Investigating the evidence
for Jesus.
May 2nd—June 6
10:00 am
In the Fireside Room



SESSION TITLES:

The Investigation of a Lifetime
Eyewitness Evidence
Evidence Outside the Bible
Analyzing Jesus
Evidence for the Resurrection
Reaching Your Verdict



**AMERICAN BAPTIST WOMEN'S
ANNUAL RETREAT
AT CAMP JUDSON
MAY 31-JUNE 2, 2024**

AMERICAN BAPTIST WOMEN'S ANNUAL RETREAT AT CAMP JUDSON

MAY 31-JUNE 2, 2024

Our retreat this year will start May 31, Friday afternoon through Sunday June 2. Registration starts at 3:00 p.m. Friday at Outreach Lodge.

The speaker is Marla Reynolds from Baltic. She is a former nurse and business owner. She is married to her husband Colin and they have two grown married children. Her favorite pastime is helping care for a new grandson! Her passion is to share the love of Jesus and help in the restoration of those whose lives have been broken by abuse.

Each church is asked to bring a basket of goodies for the silent auction. Monies from the auction fund our scholarships for college bound Baptist women.

You can also bring individual items as we have had in the past.

Things to bring to camp:

Bible, bed roll, pillow, linens, towel, wash cloth, toiletries, personal items as necessary, money for auction and store.

We look forward to seeing each of you for a time of renewing friendships and making new friends.

Cost is \$125. Rate for one day will be available at Camp.

Please register by the deadline.

Please see Jeanne Wyatt for more information and registration forms.

MAY

MAY ANNIVERSARIES



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14 Mark & Carol Posthumus
23 Ryan & Sandra Nichols

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 3 Dean Cape | 19 Jeanne Wyatt |
| 4 Kolbylee Kutz | 20 Sharon Mower |
| 6 Katelin Wynia | 20 Taylor Sun Bear |
| 8 Pat Strauser | 22 Peg Sperlich |
| 9 Jaime Cantu | 22 Jill Evangelista |
| 10 Nancy Nilsen | 24 Summer Humbracht |
| 14 Sally Park-Hageman | 26 Randy Schur |
| 14 Calla Hanson | 28 Leon Melstad |
| 15 Julianna White Face | 28 Tom Hofer |
| 15 Myrna Wilson | 30 Alicia Evangelista (Anderson) |
| 16 Ginny Coates | |

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

UNITED WOMEN:

The United Women will meet on **Tuesday, May 21st** at 1:30 pm in the Fireside Room. We are continuing our study of The Great Disappearance by David Jeremiah.

BASIC NEEDS & BEARLY USED BOUTIQUES — SUMMER SCHEDULE:

The Basic Needs and Bearly Used boutiques will be open during the summer on the **second Saturday if the month from 10:00 am—12:00 noon. Saturdays open: May 11th; June 8th; July 13th; August 10th; September 14th.**

THANK YOU:

We were so blessed by the tour of your church's Stained Glass. You did a great job of explaining your church's history. We feel so welcome in your church. The group had a great time. Thank you so much, Cal Larive.



**Thanks to all who bring us
their Lynn's Dakotamart
Receipts
(Store, Pharmacy, Gas)
PLEASE KEEP THEM
COMING!!**