



Yucca Breeze

THE UNITED CHURCHES OF HOT SPRINGS, SD

Pastor's Pulpit:

Ahh ... Christmas. The grand event of not only winter ... but of all time. I LOVE Christmas -- and the contemplative spirit that literally overwhelms my heart and mind during this grand season. In my reading, I came across this article entitled, "Three Theologians Who Love Christmas," and thought these are some good insights to think upon as we dwell on the true meaning of the Season.

Three Theologians Who Love Christmas

The first of three theologians we consider is Dietrich Bonhoeffer. He loved Christmas and gave many Christmas sermons. One of them was actually on Mary and the Advent. Here is what he says: "Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed!" sings Mary joyfully. What does it mean to call her blessed, Mary, this lowly maidservant? It can only mean that we worship in amazement the miracle that has been performed in her, that we see in her how God regards and raises up the lowly. . . . To call Mary blessed does not mean to build altars to her, but rather it means to worship with her the God who regards and chooses the lowly, who 'has done great things for me,' as Mary says." And remember, it was Mary who said, "Holy is His name." Bonhoeffer concludes, "To call Mary blessed means to know with her that God's mercy is for those who fear Him from generation to generation."

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In that same sermon, Bonhoeffer goes on to ask a question. "What story is being enacted . . . when God comes into the world in a lowly manger?" Another way to put it is, "What is really happening here, at Christmas?" Bonhoeffer says, "The judgment and redemption of the world—this is what is happening here. For it is the Christ Child in the manger himself who will bring that judgment and redemption." And that's why Bonhoeffer loved Christmas, because it's the story of redemption.

Another theologian who loved Christmas was the founder of Ligonier Ministries: R.C. Sproul. He loved Christmas! And one time he wrote this, "What we celebrate at Christmas is not so much the birth of a baby, as important as that is, but what's so significant about the birth of that particular baby is that in this birth we have the incarnation of God Himself." Dr. Sproul goes on to say that, "An incarnation means a coming in the flesh." We know this from the prologue of John. And Dr. Sproul goes on to quote the prologue, and he reminds us that at the end of that prologue, John says this, "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us."

(Continued on next page)

R.C. continues, "Now in this 'infleshment,' if you will, of Christ appearing on the planet, it's not that God suddenly changes through a metamorphosis into a man, so that divine nature sort of passes out of existence or comes into a new form of fleshiness. No, but the eternal second person of the Trinity takes upon Himself a human nature and joins His divine nature to that human nature for the purpose of redemption."

Ultimately, R.C. loved Christmas because Christmas is the incarnation. Christ, the God-man, coming into this world for the purpose of redemption.

Well, another theologian or pastor who loved Christmas was Charles Haddon

Spurgeon. *And here is one of the many things that he had to say about Christmas. He says: "We have nearly arrived at the great merry-making season of the year. On Christmas-day, we shall find all the world in England enjoying themselves with all the good cheer which they can afford. Servants of God, you who have the largest share in the person of him who was born at Bethlehem, I invite you to the best of all Christmas fare – to nobler food than makes the table groan—bread from heaven, food for your spirit. Behold, how rich and how abundant are the provisions which God has made for the high festival which he would have his servants keep, not now and then, but all the days of their lives!"*

We love Christmas because this is the gift of Christ to us and the gift of our redemption. And we celebrate it on Christmas Day, we celebrate it the day after, and we celebrate it all the days of our lives."

Redemption, Incarnation, Celebration. Three theologians. Three grand thoughts to really, really keep in mind during the hustle and bustle of our lives at Christmas. Can I encourage you to take some time to come and take part in our Wednesday Advent Services that we have on December 1, 8, and 15. These are deliberately short but poignant times for us as God's people, you know the ones who know best the reality of Redemption, Incarnation and true Celebration, to come together for just a while ... to think, to feel, to keep and perhaps get our right perspective back. It is also a way of keeping Christ first in our lives at this glorious time when the whole world seemingly is celebrating. And so in good Old Testament tradition I leave you with the words of encouragement and hope which the Jewish people could only dream of, but we can know and pass along to our fellow believers:

The text to be used for the blessing is specified in Numbers 6:24–26:

[May] YHWH bless you, and guard you –

יְבָרֶכְךָ יְהוָה, וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ!

(Yevhārēkh-khā YHWH veyishmerēkhā ...)

[May] YHWH make His face shine unto you, and be gracious to you –

יָאֵר יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ, וְיִחַנֶּךָ!

("Yā'ēr YHWH pānāw ēlekhā viḥunnēkkā ...)

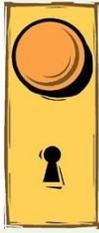
[May] YHWH lift up His face unto you, and give to you peace –

יִשָּׂא יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ, וְיַשֵּׂם לְךָ שָׁלוֹם!

("Yissā YHWH pānāw ēlekhā veyāsēm lekhā shālōm.")

Blessings and Joy, Pastor David and Bernice

VISITATION TEAM



A SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

As Pastor David referenced in the November “Breeze”, he and the Board of Trustees are working to increase visitation among our members. We want to include all our church folks not just as people who are visited, but also to include as many of our congregation as would like to participate in *being* visitors. We feel fellowship is more than just potlucks.

In this thought to connect with others and encourage them, we are forming a team to coordinate and spearhead visitation. For this to be effective, we need a person, or 2-3 persons, to lead a team. The "job description" is pretty open as we have never done this before, but with prayerful input we are excited about the growth that will come.

The Board of Trustees has met 3 times so far to work exclusively on this and we have some ideas, but are very open to input from all of you; especially from those who would be interested in helping on this fun effort.

Please touch base with Pastor David or any of the Board of Trustees members (Jerry Wyatt; Dean Cape; Gerald Collogan; Cora Reid; Claude Bent; Carla Richmond), if you would like to know more about what we are doing.

We would like to have this in operation by January.



**D2D ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING
SUNDAY, JANUARY 9TH — 11:15 AM
IN THE FIRESIDE ROOM**

Course Outline

The three books are designed to be completed in sequence. Book 2 builds on the work done in book 1. Book 3 builds on what your group has accomplished in the first two books. You will enjoy each book's biblical and practical approach to discipleship. As many others have, those of you who participate in a 2:7 group can expect to experience positive life changes as you study and apply this time-proven material. Following is the main content of the three courses:

Book 1: Growing Strong in God's Family — In the first book in The 2:7 Series, you complete exercises that strengthen your spiritual foundation through enriching Bible study, Scripture memory and group interaction.

Book 2: Deepening Your Roots in God's Family — The discipleship training in this second book builds on the work done in the first book. You will learn ways to deepen your own Christian life, approaches for sharing your faith, and how to experience an extended time alone with God.

Book 3: Bearing Fruit in God's Family — You will continue to develop and strengthen your walk with Christ during this third book in the series. You discuss priorities and life management, learn a versatile tool for explaining the gospel, and sharpen your own salvation testimony.

Complete information about the course may be viewed on our Website at:

unitedchurcheshotspings.org.



DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

19 Jerry & Jeanne Wyatt
28 Wayne & Sally Hageman

4 Adam Swift	17 Jean Meadows
8 Gordon Brooks	18 Michael Buchholz
10 Nancy Cuckler	20 Mark Posthumus
13 Pat Collogan	22 Stefanie Nelson
15 John Johnson	24 Don De Vries
16 Lynn Buchholz	26 Claude Bent

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

THANK YOU!

We would like to say a heartfelt thank you to the Board of Trustees and everyone who blessed us with cards and gifts for Pastor Appreciation Day/Month. With God's blessings and our love, Pastor David & Bernice

UPCOMING SUNDAY SERMON SERIES:

December 5: *"The Lord Had Need of It"* (Mark 11:1-11)
December 12: *"Fig Tree Trauma"* (Mark 11:12-21)
December 19: *"By What Authority?"* (Mark 11:22-33)
December 26: *"Lessons from the Vine"* (Mark 12:1-12)

NOVEMBER MISSION EMPHASIS — HAITI BUILDING PROJECT:

Our mission emphasis for the month of December will be the **HAITI BUILDING PROJECT**. The **Loose Change Offering will be taken on Sunday, December 12th**. We are continuing to raise funds to build an apartment above the "Annie Zwetzig Clinic" for Dr. William, his wife, Dr. Natalie and son Nathan.

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD SHOEBOXES:

Total reality Boxes, 121; total virtual boxes online 8. Grand total 129.

AMERICAN BAPTIST WOMEN: Tuesday, December 14th at 2:00 PM in the Fireside Room.

FOOD PANTRY CLIENT PROFILE: Number of Active Clients (visited the pantry in 2021): 367; Single: 191; Family: 176; New sign ups (since January 1, 2021): 99.

WEDNESDAY ADVENT SERIES

"WAIT UPON THE LORD"

December 1—6:30 PM-7:15 PM

"Wait Upon the Lord with Faith"

December 8—6:30 PM-7:15 PM

"Wait Upon the Lord with Hope"

December 15—6:30 PM-7:15 PM

"Wait Upon the Lord with Rejoicing"





**SOUP AND BREAD SUPPER*
HOSTED BY THE UNITED CHURCHES
IN THE FELLOWSHIP HALL
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 3RD
IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING
THE CHRISTMAS IN THE HILLS
JOURNEY OF LIGHTS PARADE**

****THE SUPPER WILL BE A FUNDRAISER FOR THE HAITI BUILDING PROJECT***

**CALLING ALL BAKERS!!
CAN YOU BAKE US SOME COOKIES?**

We are asking for volunteers
to bake 3 dozen of the same kind of cookie.
Cookie donations will then be put together in assortments
on special plates and sold at the Soup and Bread Supper.



This will be part of our fundraiser for the Haiti Building Project.
Please drop cookies off at the church no later than Thursday, December 2nd.

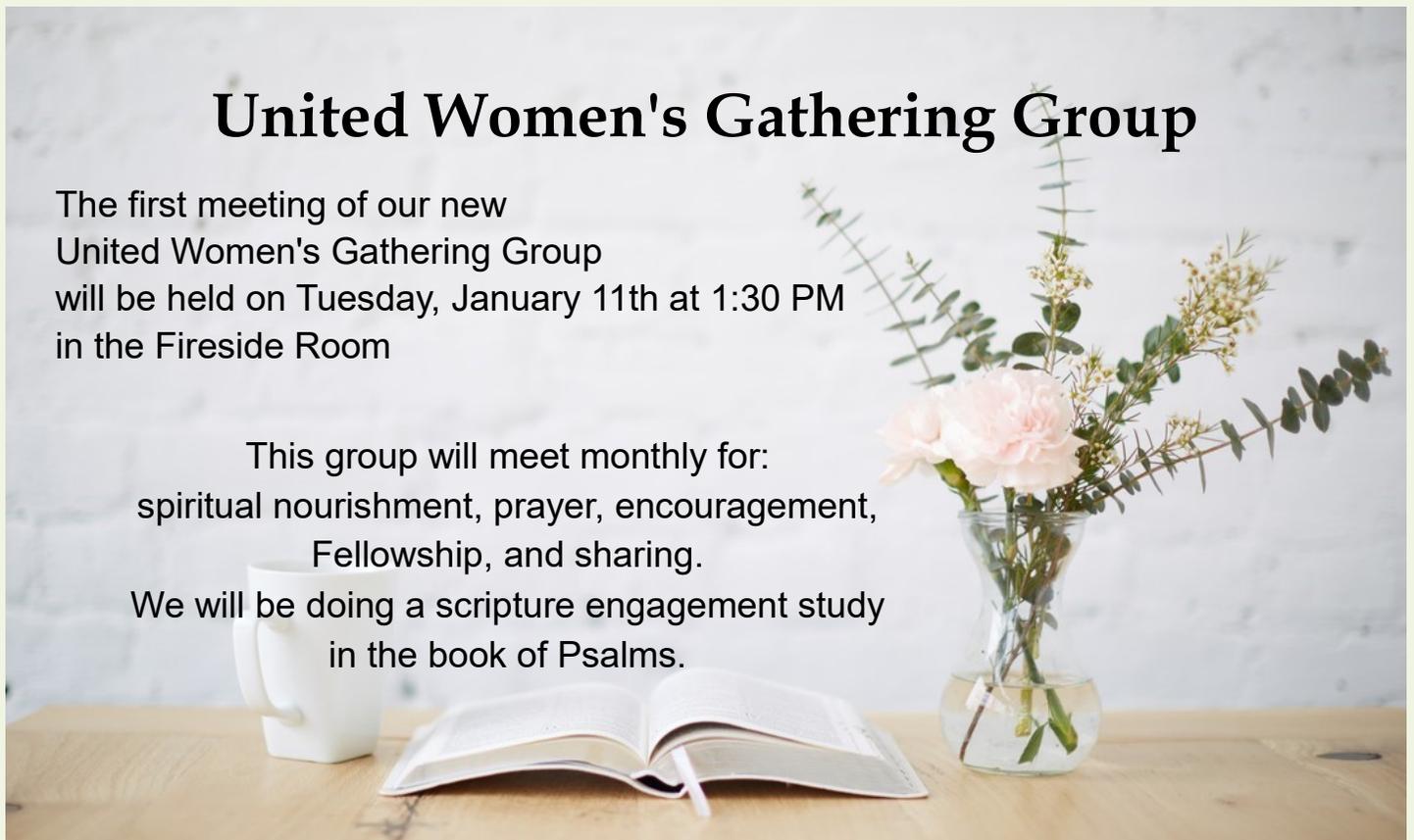
Thank you to everyone who can help us with this project!
Your Mission Team

United Women's Gathering Group

The first meeting of our new
United Women's Gathering Group
will be held on Tuesday, January 11th at 1:30 PM
in the Fireside Room

This group will meet monthly for:
spiritual nourishment, prayer, encouragement,
Fellowship, and sharing.

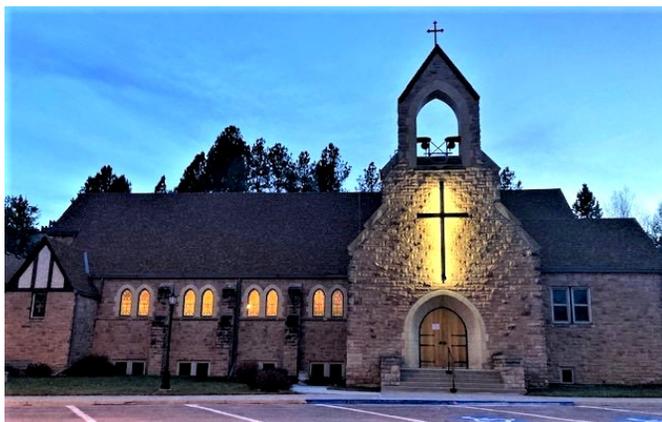
We will be doing a scripture engagement study
in the book of Psalms.



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