

# CONGREGATIONAL CHRONICLES

Declaring the Good News to all.



## Notes from the Undershepherd's Heart

By Pastor Ben Spera

It's exciting to be starting back up a regular newsletter here at Baxter Congregational. Christians are news people. That is what gospel means, good news. And "The Gospel" is what we call the core message of Christianity.; that G-d sent His son, Jesus, to die on a cross as a sacrifice for our sins, and he rose again conquering the powers of sin and death. This is news, Good News. And so, as Christians, we are a people who are gathered around good news; and over time this good news infuses every part of our lives.

And so, I hope the church newsletter becomes an opportunity to see the gospel at work in the life of our church. The news and updates from our council and committees show G-d is not done here. The Sunday School notes, and event details are a glimpse at the hope we have for the future of our church. The prayer reminders, devotional notes, and sermon texts are reminders of how Christ is building His church right here in Baxter. And the stories of our members and the things that have happened show the Spirit of G-d at work in us today. Ultimately this newsletter is a reminder of the gospel, that our risen savior is still working in and through our church. May each month bring us closer together and may we continue to unite around the cross of Christ and the resurrection to come.

### Sunday Service

Every Sunday  
10:00-11:00 am

### Ministries for Children

Every Sunday during service,  
from September - May.  
For children PreK - 6th grade.

### Ministries for Youth

Every Sunday during service  
from September - May or  
scheduled with the Pastor as  
part of our New Member  
Classes.  
For teens 7th - 12th grade.

### Women's Fellowship

A gathering of women to  
share in service to God.  
Meetings are held monthly  
on the third Tuesday,  
at 10:15 am.

### Upcoming Scripture Readings

- **March 2nd:**  
Mark 12:35-37 - Isaiah 43:14-24
- **March 9th:**  
Mark 12:38-44 - Isaiah 43:25-44:8
- **March 16th:**  
Mark 13:1-13 - Isaiah 44:9-20
- **March 23rd:**  
Mark 13:14-27 - Isaiah 44:21-28
- **March 30th:**  
Mark 13:28-37 - Isaiah 45:1-13

## Hymn Of The Month

How Great Thou Art

by Carl Boberg

(#2 in our Hymnal)

In 1885 a young Swedish pastor, named Carl Boberg, was walking home from an afternoon prayer service when a sudden Thunderstorm came out of nowhere and he was forced to take shelter. The roaring thunder shook the ground, and he feared for his life. When the storm passed a rainbow appeared as he made his way home, so he cast open the windows and wrote a poem called "O Store Gud" (O Great God), which when translated into English became "How Great Thou Art".

Boberg's great-nephew said that his father (Carl's nephew) had said the original 9 Stanza poem was a reflection on Psalm 8. Later published in a Christian Magazine in Sweden, it became quite popular in the free-church movement. Eventually translated into English, the poem was set to traditional music we know today.

Over time the Hymn became a standard, often sung at Billy Graham Crusades, it has been covered by everyone from Elvis Presley to Carrie Underwood and is regularly sung by Christians worldwide.

It serves as a reminder of the greatness and power of our G-d, His control over all creation, and the love He shows in His son. May we remember this every time we sing it together. (Verse 3)

"And when I think that God, His Son not sparing  
Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in  
That on the cross, my burden gladly bearing  
He bled and died to take away my sin

Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee  
How great Thou art, how great Thou art  
Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee  
How great Thou art, how great Thou art"

## A Word From Women's Fellowship

By Marlys Colyn

Women's Fellowship last met on January 28th. Our devotion topic was "The Chill of Winter", by Marlys Colyn, with scripture from Isaiah 55:10-11.

"For just as rain and snow fall from heaven  
and do not return there  
without saturating the earth  
and making it germinate and sprout,  
and providing seed to sow and food to eat,  
so my word that comes from my mouth  
will not return to me empty,  
but it will accomplish what I please  
and will prosper in what I send it to do."

We also discussed repairing vs. replacing one of the stoves in the kitchen and decided to replace it. The new stove was purchased, delivered and has been installed. Arriving just in time for our Biscuits & Gravy Supper held on February 24th from 5-6:30pm. Diane E. & Julia S. are also working on a children's library. Stay tuned for more updates to come. Our February meeting was cancelled due to the frigid winter weather, but we are excited to see what March brings for us.

## Fellowship Hall Recipe

Slow Cooker Honey Garlic Meatballs

Submitted By: Lindey Butler

- Ingredients:
  - 3 Cloves Garlic
  - 1/3 Cup of Honey
  - 1/2 Cup Ketchup
  - 2 Tbsp Soy Sauce
  - 3 Tbsp Brown Sugar
  - 28 Oz Meatballs (Fully Cooked & Frozen)
- Directions:
  - Mix all ingredients together (excluding the meatballs) to make the sauce. Dump meatballs into crockpot and pour sauce over the top. Cook on high in crockpot for 3 hours, stirring occasionally to coat all the meatballs, then serve.



## What is Lent?

Paraphrased from "What is Lent?", by Alexa Hess at The Daily Grace Co.

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With Lent beginning on March 5th this year, you may be beginning to wonder, ***What exactly is Lent?***

Lent is celebrated from Ash Wednesday to Maundy Thursday, while some extend their observance to either Good Friday or Holy Saturday. The purpose of Lent is to prepare our hearts for Easter Sunday, traditionally by fasting and prayer.

Historically, fasting involved abstaining from eating food for a certain period of time. During a fast, we learn to depend on God for strength and spend time in focused prayer. Fasting during Lent is meant to reflect when Jesus fasted in the wilderness. For forty days, Jesus was in the wilderness without food. Because He was at a weak point, the devil came to tempt Him. Even though Satan tempted Jesus with many desirable things, such as bread or a vast kingdom, Jesus did not give in to Satan's temptations. Instead, He used God's Word to combat every single one of Satan's temptations. The forty days that Jesus was in the wilderness are reflected during Lent as the time from Ash Wednesday to Good Friday (minus Sundays)—a total of forty days. Because of Jesus's actions, we are encouraged to cling to God's Word during Lent and recognize God as all we truly need.

While people today still fast from food during Lent, others fast from something different, such as watching TV or drinking coffee. The principle remains the same no matter how someone chooses to fast. As the person finds themselves craving what they are fasting from, they are encouraged to rely on God and trust in Him. And they are reminded that no earthly means of satisfaction compares to the satisfaction we receive from God.

The sacrifices we make during Lent point us to Christ's sacrifice on the cross. When we give up something for God during Lent, we are reminded of all that Jesus gave up for us. The gospel—the good news that Jesus came, died for us, and rose again—boasts that it's not about what we do but what Christ has done that matters most. Therefore, we fast and draw close to God during Lent in response to the gospel.

As we spend focused time with God during Lent, our hearts ready themselves for Easter. We are reminded of the price Jesus paid for our salvation. We are encouraged to confess our sins to God and rest in His forgiveness through Christ. We are led to worship and adore the One who gave His life for us and cleansed us of our sins. During Lent, our hearts grow more joyous each day until they burst with overwhelming delight on Easter Sunday.

## A Letter From Our Leaders

By Greg Christianson

2025 marks a very special year for Baxter Congregational Church. This year, on Saturday November 1st, our church will celebrate its 140th Anniversary. Celebration plans are underway, so stay tuned to our monthly newsletter for more information! This will be a time of reunion, stories, reminiscing, and reflection of what this church has meant to this community over the years, as well as what it means to us now and in the days to come.

Please pass the word along to all who would love to come be a part of this great celebration!

We'd love to feature some of your reflections, stories, & photographs in our newsletter as well. If you have a memory to share, please send it to us by email or mail. You can find our contact information under the "Talk To Us" section of this newsletter.

We can't wait to celebrate with you all!

## Sunday School Lessons

### Children's Ministry

#### • March 2nd:

"The Young Hero & The Horrible Giant"  
1 Samuel 17

#### • March 9th:

"The Good Shepherd"  
Psalm 51; 2 Samuel 7; Psalm 23

#### • March 16th:

"A Little Servant & The Proud General"  
2 Kings 5

#### • March 23rd:

"Operation No More Tears"  
Isaiah 9, 11, 40, 50, 53, 55, 60

#### • March 30th:

"Daniel & The Scary Sleepover"  
Daniel 6

### Youth Ministry

A focus on dealing with peer pressure, the importance of prayer, how to share the gospel with friends and how our church polity has worked for us the last 140 years.

## Prayer Emphasis

Let us focus on praying for our Lenten Series & Holy Week Services.

## Upcoming Meetings

- **Women's Group:** 3/18/25 at 10:15 am
- **Council:** 3/25/25 at 6:30 pm
- **Women's Group:** 4/15/25 at 10:15 am
- **Diaconate:** 4/27/25 at 9:15 am
- **Council:** 4/29/25 at 6:30 pm

## Talk To Us

### Main Office

(641) 227-3382

[office@baxtercongregational.com](mailto:office@baxtercongregational.com)

218 S Main St

Baxter, IA 50208

[www.baxtercongregational.com](http://www.baxtercongregational.com)

[www.facebook.com/BaxterCongregational](https://www.facebook.com/BaxterCongregational)

### Contact Pastor Ben

(641) 840-1102

[bspera@baxtercongregational.com](mailto:bspera@baxtercongregational.com)

## Upcoming Events

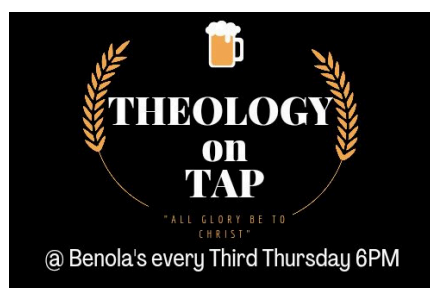
**Lenten Wednesday Dinners & Study** - "Doctrines that Changed the World"



### Lenten Series Dinner & Study

With Pastor Ben

Each Wednesday, 5:30 - 6:30 pm,  
March 5th - April 9th at the Church



### Theology on Tap

With Pastor Ben

Every Third Thursday at Benola's  
6:00 - 7:00 pm



### Prayer Meeting

With Pastor Ben

Every Friday at the Church  
10:30 am - 11:30 am