

# CONGREGATIONAL CHRONICLES

Declaring the Good News to all.



## Notes from the Undershepherd's Heart

By Pastor Ben Spera

“We preach Christ crucified”

(1 Corinthians 1:23)

“Whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes”

(1 Corinthians 11:26)

I remember this pastor who was really into the Church Seasons, in the Church Calendar everything from Easter to Pentecost is ‘Easter Season’, so they treated it as such. Every Sunday from Easter to Pentecost the pastor would greet everyone with “Happy Easter” and when they got up to start service they would say “HE IS RISEN” and everyone responded, “He is risen indeed”. When I first heard this it caught me off guard, I remember saying “but Easter was a couple weeks ago”. I always thought this was a little weird, but there was something kind of nice about it. It meant Easter wasn't just over. We kept singing songs about the cross and reading passages about the resurrection. We kept remembering what Christ did. Easter stayed with us.

I'm not suggesting we start this. Easter is an important part of the life of the church, some say the most important Sunday of the year. We gather together and remember Jesus' death and resurrection which lie at the very heart of our faith. But in some capacity, every Sunday is supposed to be Easter Sunday.

Every Sunday we gather to remember Christ's resurrection. Every word of the Bible is about the Christ who would suffer, die, and rise again... Our sermons preach Christ and Christ crucified. In many of our hymns, we sing the truth of the cross. We pray for resurrection life in our church and our world. And when we take communion, we remember the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. “Easter Season” isn't just one day or one week, or the seven weeks from Easter to Pentecost. We remember Jesus' death and resurrection, every Sunday.

### Sunday Service

Every Sunday  
10:00-11:00 am

### Ministries for Youth

Every Sunday during service,  
from September - May.  
For children PreK - 5th grade.

### Ministries for Teens

Every Sunday during service,  
from September - May  
For teens 6th - 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

- **April 6th:**  
Romans 6:1-5 - Isaiah 45:14-25
- **April 13th:**  
Romans 6:5-7 - Matthew 21:1-11
- **April 20th:**  
Romans 6:8-11 - Matthew 28:1-10
- **April 27th:**  
Jude Vs 1-4 - Isaiah 46:1-13

### Prayer Emphasis

Let us pray together that we see one  
person converted & baptized this year.

## A Letter From Our Leaders

By Greg Christianson

We would like to reiterate last month's message about the upcoming 140th Anniversary this November. The planning committee has formed and will meet April 27th to continue putting together all the details. We also wanted to let you know the council is meeting monthly to work on our Church's 10-year plan. Our first item on the plan is to come up with a Statement of Faith. We will present the proposed Statement of Faith to the congregation once finalized. We look forward to sharing this with you all and are excited for our future!

*"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!"*



### Test Your Knowledge!

- How many pieces of silver did Judas trade the life of Jesus for?
- At the empty tomb, where did the angel of the Lord tell the women to go to see the risen Savior?
- When Jesus saw the disciples after His resurrection, what did He ask them to bring at the Sea of Tiberias?

*Pssst! You can find answers at the bottom of the last page, or your Bible!*

## A Word From Women's Fellowship

By Marlys Colyn



Eight women met on March 18<sup>th</sup>. Devotions were given by Rosie. She stressed that God has a plan for all of us as women. We discussed the prominent roles & importance of women in the Bible.

Diane E. reported that the children's library is up & ready for use! A few children have already checked out some of the books.

The biscuits & gravy supper was a success. We served 54 people & all agreed that we would likely do this again. All of the Lenten supper dates have been signed up for as well.

We served a funeral lunch for 47 family members and friends after the service for Linda Mullihan Fernandez.

We would like to thank Bryan DeJong, once again, for installing a light at the south door & changing the light on the north parking lot. They are much appreciated!

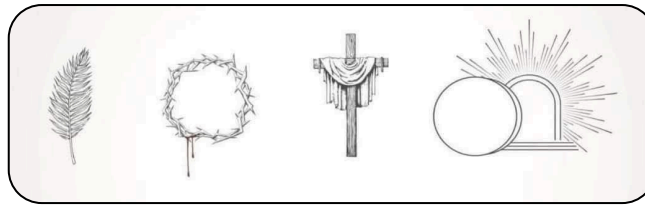
## Hymn of the Month The Old Rugged Cross #157

This month's Hymn is a favorite to many "Old Rugged Cross" was written by an Evangelist named George Bennard (fun fact: Bennard grew up here in Iowa). In an interview with George Sanville, who made sure the lyrics and music of this hymn were published, George Bennard said this about writing it. "I was praying for a full understanding of the cross, and its plan in Christianity. I read and studied and prayed. I saw Christ and the Cross inseparably. The Christ of the Cross became more than a symbol. The scene pictured a method, outlined a process, and revealed the consummation of a spiritual experience. It was like seeing John 3:16 leave the printed page, take form, and act out the meaning of redemption. While watching this scene with my mind's eye, the theme of the song came to me, and with it the melody; but only words of the theme, "The Old Rugged Cross," came..."

Bennard carried this refrain with him to evangelistic meetings in Michigan, New York, and Wisconsin where he put together the pieces of this beloved song.

On a hill far away  
Stood an old rugged Cross  
The emblem of suffering and shame  
And I love that old Cross  
Where the dearest and best  
For a world of lost sinners was slain

So I'll cherish the old rugged Cross  
Till my trophies at last I lay down  
I will cling to the old rugged Cross  
And exchange it some day for a crown



## A Lot Can Happen In Seven Days ~ A Holy Week Timeline

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### Palm Sunday

**(Read: Matthew 21:8–11, Mark 11:8–11, Luke 19:36–44, John 12:16–19)**

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On this day, we remember Jesus’s entrance to Jerusalem—often called “the triumphal entry.” Here, He was received by the people and worshiped as their King. Though they expected a king who would take the throne by force and power, Christ’s plan was one of sacrifice and suffering. As we later see, these same people rejected Him and sent Him to the cross.

### Monday-Wednesday

**(Read: Mark 11:12-13:37, Matthew 21:12-25:46, Luke 19:41-21:38)**

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Jesus taught in the temple during the day, clearing out the corrupted money changers, and at the Mt. of Olives at night.

### Maundy Thursday

**(Read: Matthew 26:26–30, Mark 14:22–25, Luke 22:17–20, 1 Corinthians 11:25)**

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Maundy comes from the Latin word for covenant. So, Maundy Thursday is the day when the church celebrates the New Covenant that was instituted at the Last Supper of Christ, where He shared the Passover meal with His disciples. Many churches today still hold a Maundy Thursday service where they celebrate the Lord’s supper and share in bread and wine. Other churches might celebrate this Passover meal on Good Friday instead.

### Good Friday

**(Read: Matthew 26–28, Mark 14–15, Luke 22–23, John 18–19)**

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Good Friday is the day Christians remember the death of Christ. It is typically celebrated as an incredibly somber day. Many people will wear black, fast all day, and reflect on the excruciating details of Christ’s death. Yet, we call it Good Friday to remind us of the beautiful and good gift His death was for humanity.

### Holy Saturday

**(Read: Matthew 28:1, Mark 16:1, Luke 22:56)**

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The Saturday between Good Friday and Easter is called Holy Saturday (also called Silent Saturday). The day before Jesus’s resurrection was the Jewish Sabbath day. The body of Jesus was laid to rest in the tomb, and while He rested there, the people of Jerusalem—including His disciples—rested as well. Today, Christians acknowledge this day as a day of silent rest and reflection where we have one final day to prepare for the great celebration of Easter Sunday.

### Easter Sunday

**(Read: Matthew 28:1–10, Luke 24:1–12, Mark 16:1–8, John 20:1–18)**

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Unlike the rest of Holy Week, Easter Sunday is one of the most well-known days of the year. Christians (and even non-Christians) celebrate this day with church services, family gatherings, picnics and egg hunts. But the fun of this widely celebrated spring holiday does not even begin to compare with the joy of the reason behind these celebrations. Easter Sunday is a commemoration to the most important day for Christians, because the resurrection of Christ changes everything.

### Why Does This Matter?

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1 Corinthians 15:17 tells us that “if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.” The resurrection is everything for us as Christians. Through Christ’s resurrection, we have assurance that He defeated sin and death once and for all, that we have been pronounced righteous in the eyes of God, and that our own lives will not end in death, but in resurrected life where we will dwell with Christ for eternity.

## Sunday School Sessions

### Youth Ministry

We are getting to the end of the Old Testament & we have learned that every story in the Bible tells us something about Jesus. God gave us the Bible so that we can know & love Him. Every story in the Bible whispers Jesus' name, from the very beginning in Genesis all the way through Revelation.

With that being said, we only have a few weeks left before summer break! We also have an important celebration coming in May! Here is our upcoming schedule;

- **April 6:** From Daniel we will learn the time was coming when God would send another brave Hero, like Daniel, who would love God & do what God said— whatever it cost, even if it meant he would die. That Jesus is the brave Hero who, like Daniel, would love God & do whatever God said— whatever it cost, even if it meant he would die.
- **April 13:** From Jonah we will learn, just as Jonah was in the belly of a huge fish three days, so Jesus was in the tomb for three days before he rose from the dead. But unlike Jonah, who did not love the people of Nineveh & did not want God to forgive them, Jesus loves people & wants to forgive them.
- **April 20:** **No Sunday School.** We will celebrate Easter in worship service.
- **April 27:** From Ezra, Nehemiah, & Malachi we will learn that when the people heard God's rules, they realized they could not keep them; that is why they were so sad & afraid. But then they remembered that it is not the rules that save them, but God that saves them. That the law leads us toward recognition of our need for salvation by grace & they remembered that God had told them that the Rescuer is coming.
- **May 4:** **No Sunday School.** We will celebrate the confirmation of Holden & Brylyn during worship service.
- **May 11:** The Giving Tree lesson.
- **May 18:** **Last class until September 7th.** We will learn about the Lord's Prayer.

### Teen Ministry

We are focusing on scripture, how to deal with peer pressure, the importance of prayer, how to share the gospel with friends & how our church polity has worked for us the last 140 years.

- **May 4:** Confirmation for Holden Dee & Brylyn Finch.
- **May 18:** **Last class until September 7th.**

Have a great summer break!

Keep reading your Bibles and learning about Jesus with your family every day.  
We will be studying the New Testament when we meet again on September 7th.

## Upcoming Meetings

- **Women's Group:** 4/15/25 at 10:15 am
- **Diaconate:** 4/13/25 at 9:15 am  
- Revised Date & Time
- **140th Planning:** 4/27/25 at 9:00 am
- **Council:** 4/29/25 at 6:30 pm
- **Women's Group:** 5/20/25 at 10:15 am
- **Council:** 5/27/25 at 6:30 pm

## Talk To Us

### Main Office

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### Contact Pastor Ben

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## Upcoming Events

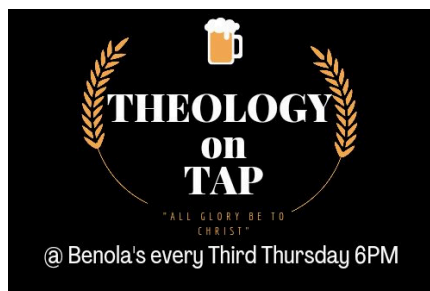
Lenten Wednesday Dinners & Study - "Doctrines that Changed the World"



### Lenten Series Dinner & Study

With Pastor Ben

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



### Theology on Tap~April Cancelled

With Pastor Ben

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



### Good Friday Service

With Pastor Ben

Friday, April 18th from 6:00 - 7:00 pm