

CONGREGATIONAL CHRONICLES

Declaring the Good News to all.



Notes from the Undershepherd's Heart

By Pastor Ben Spera

Everyone loves birthday parties, or at least we did when we were kids. But as you get older, you transition from celebrating your birthday every year to celebrating the major milestones. On November 1, Baxter Congregational Church celebrates a major milestone. 140 years of covenanting together as a church. In other words, it's our birthday.

In the little blue book on 'the background and history of the Community Congregational Christian Church', Mrs. Jean Gleaves Poage (Stepmother of Mr. Wayne) wrote, "On November 1, 1885, a small group of men and women under the leadership of the Reverend Thomas Merrill met and voted to organize the Baxter Congregational Church."

From that day, Christ has blessed our little church and worked in us and through us in many different ways. Over the years, hundreds of people have heard the good news of Jesus from our pulpit, and our people have carried the Gospel all around the world. Our church has been used to grow people in faith and in faithfulness to Jesus, and continues to serve the needs of our people and our community in Jesus' name. And that is worth celebrating.

So we will be celebrating the 140th anniversary of Baxter Congregational Church on Sunday, November 2. Join us for a special worship service with a potluck and time of sharing following church. Scripture says, "There is nothing better for a person than that he should eat and drink and find enjoyment in his toil. This also, I saw, is from the hand of God" (Ecclesiastes 2:24). So let us eat, drink, and find enjoyment in the work of Baxter Congregational Church because all of it comes from God.

Sunday Service

Every Sunday
10:00-11:00 am

Ministries for Youth

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

- **October 5th:**
 - Mark 15:1-15 - Isaiah 56:9-57:2
- **October 12th:**
 - Mark 15:16-32 - Isaiah 57:3-13
- **October 19th:**
 - Mark 15:33-39 - Isaiah 57:14-21
- **October 26th:**
 - Mark 15:40-47
 - *All Saints Service*

Prayer Emphasis

This month, let us join together in
praying for our Spiritual Growth.
Pray that our church would grow
(not just in numbers but) in love
for one another, in faithfulness to
Christ, and in gospel witness to
our community.

All Saints' Day

Sunday, October 26th 2025, at 10 am



Our All Saints' Day service will be held on Sunday, October 26th beginning at 10 am. This is a day of remembrance and reflection of those who have passed away, in the last year, and left an indelible mark on our hearts, our church, and our community.

There's a hymn that's traditionally sung during services on this day, written by William W. How, called "For All the Saints." It encourages believers to look back through the years of Christian history and think of the millions now enjoying rest and salvation in the presence of God. It's also meant to encourage believers here and now to press on, looking forward to the glorious day.

*... " O blest communion, fellowship divine!
We feebly struggle, they in glory shine;
All are one in Thee, for all are Thine.
Alleluia, Alleluia!*

*O may Thy soldiers, faithful, true and bold,
Fight as the saints who nobly fought of old,
And win with them the victor's crown of gold.
Alleluia, Alleluia!*

*And when the strife is fierce, the warfare long,
Steals on the ear the distant triumph song,
And hearts are brave, again, and arms are strong.
Alleluia, Alleluia!*

*The golden evening brightens in the west;
Soon, soon to faithful warriors comes their rest;
Sweet is the calm of paradise the blessed.
Alleluia, Alleluia!*

*But lo! there breaks a yet more glorious day;
The saints triumphant rise in bright array;
The King of glory passes on His way.
Alleluia, Alleluia!*

*From earth's wide bounds, from ocean's farthest coast,
Through gates of pearl streams in the countless host,
Singing to Father, Son and Holy Ghost:
Alleluia, Alleluia! "*

Please join us in commemorating this special day.

Refreshments will be served in our Fellowship Hall following the service.



Test Your Knowledge! The Last Supper

1. The Feast of _____ was about to begin.
2. Jesus sent Peter and _____ to prepare the meal in the upper room.
3. In which city did Jesus and His disciples eat the meal?
4. How many disciples came to the supper?
5. Which disciple did not want Jesus to wash his feet?
6. Jesus and His disciples ate a meal of _____ and wine.
7. Jesus said _____ represented His blood.
8. Jesus said _____ represented His body.
9. There was an argument among the disciples, as to which of them should be considered the _____.
10. Which disciple left the room to betray Jesus?

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

A Word From Women's Fellowship

By Marlys Colyn

Devotions for the September 16th Women's Fellowship meeting were given by Rosie B. Among other scriptures, she used John 17:9-10 stressing "All who are mine belong to you, and you have given them to me, so they bring glory to me."

It was reported during the meeting that, with Church Council's approval, the Sunday School bank account has now been closed, and the remaining amount was transferred into the Fellowship account. The Fellowship will now pay for needed supplies for the Sunday School.

A thank you note from the Schmidt family was read.

A question was raised regarding the services of Outdoor Images. Diane H. will check into this.

Since it has been over 3 years from when the carpeting in the parsonage was last professionally cleaned, it was decided to have that service done again. Pastor Ben & Julia will help to decide on an appropriate date.

The next women's fellowship meeting will be October 21st.

Finding Your Place to Serve in the Local Church by Aubrey Coleman

As we find ourselves invested in a local church, we will likely question where we should serve. We may be tempted to choose only what is most appealing, appreciated, or enjoyable. So, it's important to think through how we will contribute our time and giftings to the building up of the local church.

Biblically, we are instructed to serve the body of Christ. Paul begins Romans 12 by encouraging us to serve sacrificially, out of the grace offered us in Christ Jesus. He continues by emphasizing that we need each other to represent the full body of Christ. We are each representatives of a whole, with different gifts and abilities to contribute. In Ephesians 4, we again see instruction to serve as one body, with one Lord, one hope, and one faith. Throughout the chapter, we are reminded of the role of the church to equip the saints for the building up of the body of Christ. This is enacted through sound biblical teaching, fellowship with one another, and doing life together. This is an essential role of a Christian, committed to serving one another and building one another up. We see this even more practically through studying the Bible together, showing hospitality, sharing the gospel, confessing to one another, praying for one another, bearing one another's burden, and speaking truth in love. These are essential ways we are called to serve the local church, which should be initially considered.

With a foundational understanding of our biblical role in serving the church, we can ask the question, "Where am I needed?" This type of service could meet a temporary need or a longer-term need. Thinking this way challenges us to understand our church in a more intentional way. Where is service lacking? Is it lacking childcare volunteers? Is it lacking sound booth volunteers? Is it lacking a meal train for families in need? Is it lacking in event planning? Is it lacking help with the food pantry? A great mantra to hold is "see a need, meet a need." If you notice something in your church that is lacking or that could use some extra volunteers, initiate yourself! Talk to your pastors and staff members, asking to serve in some capacity that could meet a need in the area that is lacking. There is no perfect church, and there will always be some area that needs extra hands or extra effort. Even if it is not the most desirable or the most admirable place to serve, we fill the need because it contributes to the building up of the local church.

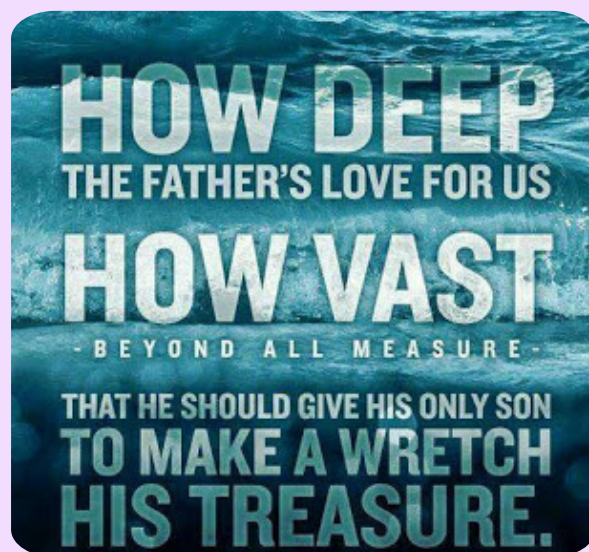
The last way you can think about where to serve is where you can best use your gifting. This way is intentionally listed after serving as we are biblically instructed to serve and serving where we are needed. The reason for this is that we are naturally inclined to showcase and express our gifting. God created each of us uniquely as an expression of His nature! There is a need for each of us to contribute to the body in a specific way. However, there can be a temptation to only do that. Though our gifts, talents, and abilities are a wonderful service to the church, we must not neglect the necessary and needed areas of service. We can serve in our area of expertise while still being available to contribute in ways that most honor the Lord and serve others. Ultimately, our greatest concern as we seek to serve is how we can best contribute to the building up of the local church.

Hymn of the Month How Deep the Father's Love for Us

This month our hymn of the month is a newer hymn (we've sung a few times, but it's not in our hymnals), but it actually has a very old feel to it. I have talked to people who swore that they sang it in church as a kid, years before it was even written.

"How Deep the Father's Love for Us"
was written by Stuart Townsend in 1995.

In a video (I'll share on our Facebook Page), Townsend describes the process of writing the hymn, saying, "This melody just kind of popped out of my head one day....So I started kind of thinking about words for it, and because it had a kind of classic, hymn-like element to it, I thought, well, maybe I should actually just tell the story of Christ on the cross, but tell it perhaps from the point of view—and this is what I was thinking about at the time—was what it cost the Father to give the Son. You know, we have to think about Christ suffering, and there's a lot of talk about the wrath of God, you know, and is that right to think that the Father's wrath was poured out on Christ? And I think that is right to say that, but that's not to say that God is a vengeful God, that actually it cost him to give up his Son. So that's why the first line says, "How deep the Father's love," you know, that he should give his only Son. So that really was the starting place. And then in a sense, the second verse kind of develops my complicity in it, if you like, that actually it was my sin that actually held him there. He went to the cross because of what I'd done. So although it tells the story, it is telling the story from a personal viewpoint. And then the final verse goes into, you know, I won't boast in anything except what he has done for me. So really that's the thinking of the words."



Sunday School Sessions

Monthly Memory Verse:

Ephesians 2:8-9

*"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--
and this is not from yourselves; it is the gift of God--
not by works, so that no one can boast."*



- **October 5th :**
 - How to Pray (Matthew 6)
 - Jesus teaches people about prayer; paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer.

- **October 12th :**
 - The Captain of the Storm (Mark 4 and Matthew 8)
 - The storm on the lake.



- **October 19th :**
 - Filled Full! (Matthew 14; Mark 6; Luke 9)
 - The feeding of the 5,000.

- **October 26th :**
 - The Friend of Little Children (Matthew 18, 19; Mark 10; Luke 18)
 - Jesus and the children.



Upcoming Meetings

- **Women's Group:**
10/21/25 at 10:15 am
- **Diaconate / Pastor Parish:**
10/27/25 at 5:15 pm
- **Council:**
10/28/25 at 6:30 pm

Talk To Us

Main Office

(641) 227-3382

office@baxtercongregational.com

218 S Main St

Baxter, IA 50208

www.baxtercongregational.com

www.facebook.com/BaxterCongregational

Contact Pastor Ben

(641) 840-1102

bspera@baxtercongregational.com

Upcoming Events

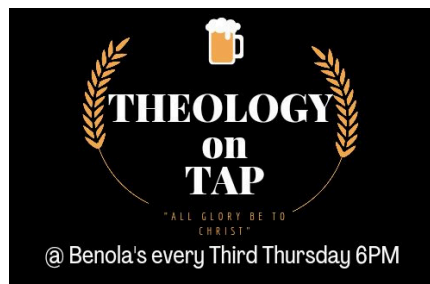


Midweek Bible Study

With Pastor Ben

Every Wednesday at the Church

6:00 - 7:00 pm



Theology on Tap

With Pastor Ben

Every Third Thursday at Benola's

6:00 - 7:00 pm



Friday Prayer Meetings

With Pastor Ben

Every Friday at the Church

10:30 - 11:30 am