

CONGREGATIONAL CHRONICLES

Declaring the Good News to all.



Notes from the Undershepherd's Heart

By Pastor Ben Spera

1700 years ago this month, a group of Christian leaders gathered together in the town of Nicaea, Greece, to affirm the Christian faith together. At the time, there was a bit of controversy over core Christian teachings, a few false voices got really loud, and people were concerned. So leaders from churches throughout the known world convened to agree on what Christians have always believed. They didn't come up with new beliefs; rather, they discussed and debated to get as close as possible to what the whole church has always believed the Bible teaches. And they wrote down the things they agreed upon in a statement, which we now call THE NICENE CREED.

Aside from the Bible, the Nicene Creed might be the single most significant piece of Christian writing. Defining the core Christian beliefs of millions upon millions of Christians throughout history. The Nicene Creed unites us all, Catholics, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Methodists, Congregationalists, and more. It is often read and recited in different churches and serves as a standard for the historic Christian faith.

In honor of the 1700 year anniversary of the Nicene Council, I encourage you to take some time this month to read and study the Nicene Creed. At Theology on Tap, we will discuss the Nicene Creed, its history, its importance, & its teaching (6pm, Thursday, May 15). Here are four questions to consider when reading the Nicene Creed on your own (maybe try to read it once a week during May and ask one of these questions each time you read it). 1) What does the Nicene Creed claim about Jesus? 2) What does the Nicene Creed claim about God? 3) Who is the Nicene Creed written for (who is the We)? 4) Is there anything in the Nicene Creed that surprises you & you want to learn more about?

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

- **May 4th:**
 - Jude vs 5-10
 - No Scripture

(Confirmation/Membership Ceremony)

- **May 11th:**
 - Jude vs 11-16
 - Isaiah 47:1-15

- **May 18th:**
 - Jude vs 17-23
 - Isaiah 48:1-11

- **May 25th:**
 - Jude vs 24-25
 - Isaiah 48:12-22

Prayer Emphasis

This month, let us join together
in praying for our missions' partner,
"Discover Hope 517"

Hymn of the Month

The Bible Stands #107

Isaiah 40:8

“The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.”

We live in a world where everything seems to be changing. Friends pass away, and new people move in; morality is shifting, technology is changing, church doesn't always look like it once did; nothing feels normal. But one thing never changes, the truth of G-d's word. This month's Hymn, The Bible Stands, might be unfamiliar to many people, but it serves as a reminder of the Bible's unchanging message.

The hymn writer Haldor Lillenas knew what it was like to live in a changing world. One day, he was studying Psalm 119, and he began to think of the unchanging truths of scripture. Psalm 119:89 says, “Forever, O Lord, your word is firmly fixed in the heavens.” Lilenas began to think about how the Bible stands strong and unchanging, “mid the raging storms of time”. He penned this song, a reminder that when everything else seems to be shifting and changing, the Bible Stands for all time.



Test Your Knowledge!

Mother's Day Edition

1. An angel of the Lord told me that I would have a baby who would be the Son of God. Who am I?
2. I put my baby in a basket and sent it down the Nile to save him. Who am I?
3. I laughed when God promised me a child in my old age. Who am I?
4. I used goat skins and a tasty meal to help my favorite son trick his Father into receiving his blessing. Who am I?
5. I was barren, but God answered my prayers, blessing me with a son. I vowed to give my son back to the Lord, which is why he grew up in the house of the Lord. Who am I?
6. I was called the mother of all living. Who am I?

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

A Word From Women's Fellowship

By Marlys Colyn

Our monthly meeting was held on April 15th. We had five ladies present.

Devotions were given by Nancy Foreman. She read a story of a man who had held a grudge for many years and finally asked God to forgive the sinner. She used scripture from Matthew 6:14-15 which says,

¹⁴For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, ¹⁵but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

We have been asked once again to serve desert bars and beverages for the Partner Communications Annual Meeting on May 22nd. Please watch for the signup sheet to prepare bars for this event.



Happy Mother's Day!

From: "How God Uses Motherhood" by The Daily Grace Co.

Christ extends to us a love that we could not earn, forgiveness that we do not deserve. And it is out of this love that we can love and serve our families. We join Christ in His humility and humbly lay ourselves down to lift our babies, our husbands, and our communities up. Christ's love transforms us through the power of the Holy Spirit. This is our sanctification. Day by day, conviction by conviction, prayer by prayer, our hearts are being softened and molded to look more like our Savior. This is a lifetime journey—a daily surrender. It means apologizing to our children when we raise our voices. Washing the dishes again without recognition. Praying and snuggling sick kids. And keeping our eyes focused on our true victory, the victory earned by Christ on the cross. In our lack of perfection, we see our desperate need for Jesus.

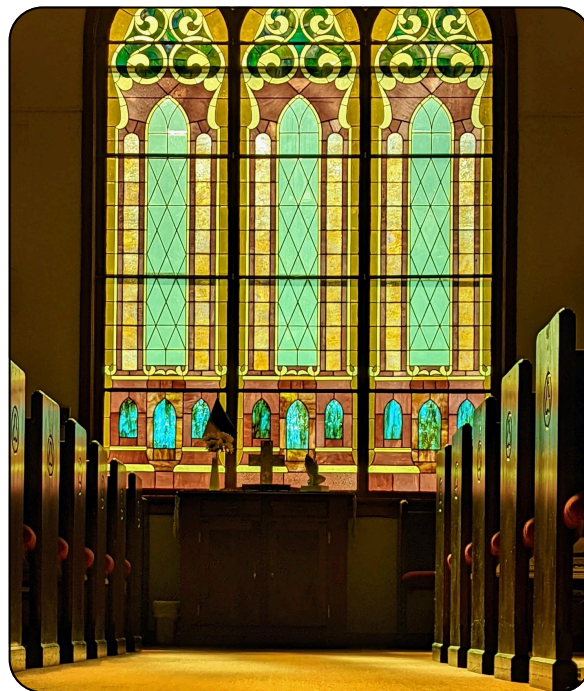
On this Mother's Day, may the faithfulness of God bring us to worship Him. May our mouths be filled with gratitude and our hearts be filled with cheer. Because we have a promise in Scripture, a promise that we can count on. God will be sure to finish what He started (Philippians 1:6). Perhaps the greatest blessing we offer our kids is to allow them to see the real transformation of our hearts—real conviction, real repentance, real hope, and real joy. May this be our legacy that carries throughout the generations.

May God be glorified in all seasons of motherhood.

140th Anniversary Story - From the Archives

On November 1st, 1885, a group of twenty-six men and women organized the Baxter Congregational Church. Services were held in Smith Hall on North Main St. Charter Members were:

- E.S. & Addie Allen
- J.B. & Anna Allen
- Mrs. Clemie Burnett
- William H. & Deliah Bair
- J.M. & Sarah Alsbaugh
- Waldo & Isobel Poage
- Edwin T. & Mary Preston
- Abi L. Preston
- Junius Preston
- George A. Preston
- F.M. & Catherine Richmond, & daughter Alta
- Isabell J. Scott
- Mary Russel
- R.A. & Eliza Scott
- D.W. & Amy Scott
- H.G. Wells



Early in the spring of '86 the little group began building a church across the tracks on the site of the Hilpipe Barber Shop. The church, a rectangular wooden building, had a square entry room on the west end, with a door to the north & one to the south. Above was a bell tower that called the people to worship each Sunday. Around the church to the north, east, & south were hitching racks, for these were horse & buggy days! Buildings on Main Street were almost always wooden structures crowded against each other without any kind of a fire wall. There was also a wide use of lanterns and candles then, as electricity had not yet arrived in small towns, as well as a lack of central heating systems.

On October 10th 1897, a fire ravaged through Baxter's business district. The fire had started at Fred Graef's Livery Stable, but despite the heroic efforts of the citizens the fire raged out of control & burned through a block & a half of the west side of the street. Twenty-two buildings & sixteen businesses were destroyed, which included the Baxter Congregational Church. The church, as well as many of the other buildings, was then rebuilt using brick in place of wood. Then again, on April 28th 1899, a second fire having started in Hager Brothers Implement House just south of the church became unmanageable & a strong wind blew the fire over to the roof of the church. In a few moments the church was aglow & shortly after was reduced to ashes. This fire had wiped out the east side of Main Street. So, the congregation & many other businesses were back to developing plans for new buildings. When rebuilt the block housed People's State Bank, C.C. Cammack & Company, Floyd Dodd, John Boyd, C.C. Cafe, and C.S. Weston. The church which stood on the site of the People's State Bank was moved to its present site.

The church was then remodeled & enlarged extensively in 1950. During the winter of 1953, the Men's Club began looking for something they could do to earn money toward a parsonage fund. Otto Schumann, a retired farmer, proposed the club take over 190 acres of his land to farm on a 50-50 grain share basis for two years. The project actually continued on for a longer period of time. The cost of the parsonage that was to be erected across from the church was estimated to be around \$23,500. However, the cost would have been much greater if not for the many hours of labor donated by over 75 loyal members & friends. Raymond Holtsclaw, a member of the congregation, supervised the construction & gave generously of his time and skill. Once completed, dedication services for the parsonage were held on December 2nd, 1956. After the new brick parsonage was complete, the old parsonage was torn down, & the grounds were landscaped to include a parking lot.

The church farm project cultivated a finer community spirit & fellowship with one another. Many of the workers were neither a member of the club or church, but they & their equipment stood ready to help when the call came for plows, discs, harrows, or just "back & knuckle" work. The farmers felt a closeness to God in this project. They were earning something needed in the life of the church, & they were caring for this God-given soil.

Sunday School Sessions

Youth Ministry

- **May 4: No Sunday School.**
We will celebrate the confirmation of Holden Dee 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

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

Summer can be filled with extremes. On the one hand, there is the extreme joy & anticipation of all the fun yet to be had coupled with the low moments of boredom & possible annoyance after all that time together. As believers, how can we make summer a time that is beneficial to our walk with Christ and our family life? How can we make the summer great with Jesus at the heart of it all?

In order to answer these questions, we should start with prayer. We often think we need to begin with some elaborate plan, but what our hearts need to focus on most is Christ through time spent in prayer.

Summer Tips to Help Your Family Grow in Jesus:

- Pick a Scripture passage to memorize together over the summer.
- Choose a book or books of the Bible to study together.
- Utilize a gratitude chart to help you and your kids keep a thankful spirit over the whole summer.
- Create a family summer playlist of worship songs for trips in the car or to enjoy at home.
- Have an end-of-summer celebration to thank God for all He did while you were on break.

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:** 5/20/25 at 10:15 am
- **Council:** 5/27/25 at 6:30 pm
- **Women's Group:** 6/17/25 at 10:15 am
- **Council:** 6/24/25 at 6:30 pm

Talk To Us

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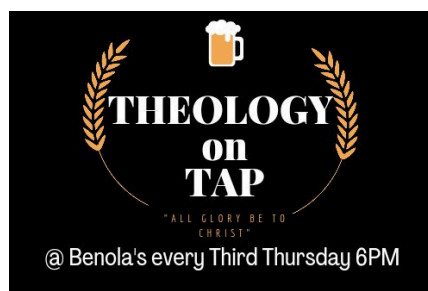
bspera@baxtercongregational.com

Upcoming Events



Midweek Bible Study

With Pastor Ben
Every Wednesday at the Church
16:00 - 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