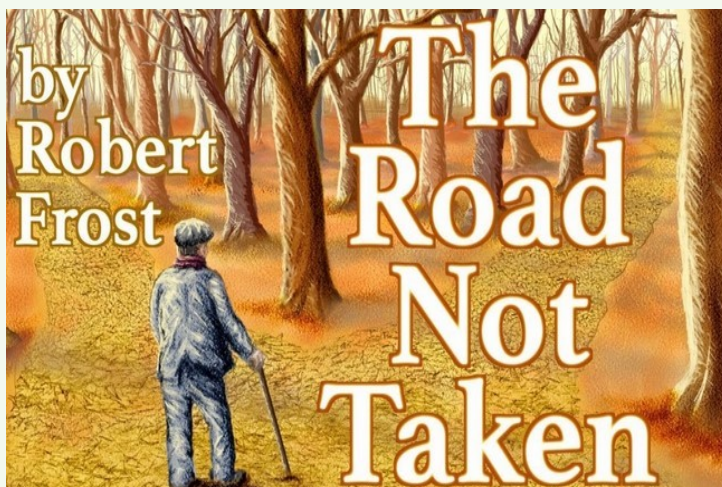




# Yucca Breeze

THE UNITED CHURCHES, HOT SPRINGS, SOUTH DAKOTA

## **Pastor's Pulpit:**



Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveler, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth;  
Then took the other, as just as fair,  
And having perhaps the better claim,  
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;  
Though as for that the passing there  
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay  
In leaves no step had trodden black.  
Oh, I kept the first for another day!  
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,  
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.

As we enter June, we once again enter that time when we can look back and see that half of the year is already behind us, and that half of the year is still before us. And because my birthday is in June, I have always taken this precious “half way thru—half way to go” month to: reevaluate and remember; take stock of how far I’ve come and yet how far I have to go; remind myself that God has been there to guide and lead me in the past and I can rest assured that He will guide and lead me in the future.

This year is no different. I turn 68, and of course there are lots of considerations to ponder and weigh. Like every other Christian, I want to make my “to go” years to count and make a difference. There are 4 questions that I continually ask myself that have to do with my LIFE — and hopefully will help you in yours.

## The First Is Am I . . .

### **L**.earning to love God with all my heart.

Jesus did say in Matthew 22:37-39, "And he said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'<sup>38</sup> This is the great and first commandment.<sup>39</sup> And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

The real question is am I still willing to learn what it means to love God simply for who He is and whose I am in Him. And more, to be willing to keep loving and believing in others like God loves and believes in them. The first part just seems to grow stronger year after year. The last part is a bit more challenging. As we get older we tend to be a little less patient, a little more "me" focused that "other" focused. We, of course, tend to spend a little more time feeling tired and depleted rather than reinvigorated and excited to be out and about. Ahh yes ... the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak!! The real question then becomes, how can I really be at my best in dealing with God and others? How can I be a person who attracts people to God and not just a come across as a legalistic old sourpuss. Is there anything that I am doing that I need to consider changing? Is it time for me to plow forward or is it time for me to step back? All of these "to go" questions have merit and should be thought and prayed through.

## The Second Is Am I Truly . . .

### **I**nfluencing others in the right way for God.

This I feel, is the most misunderstood role that most people assume about their lives. To begin with, in our "to go" years, we need to know that we can and do make a difference for Christ in ways that we never experienced when we were younger. Our grandchildren only see us through the eyes of the present. Everything we say and are in front of them they remember and take to heart. We are the most solid visual of God and Christ they have and in many instances will ever see. When our speech is sprinkled with references to the Lord, it's as natural to them as the wrinkles on our faces—it's what they expect! After all, God is ancient and as far as they can see, so are we! And as such, we must be friends with each other! The issue worth pondering is have I realized this in my life? Do I consider the fact that this is my privilege, and more my duty, to speak and to be a follower of Christ? I guess the real question here is not a matter of influence—we have that, but is it the right influence? Am I taking care of myself? Am I still desirous to grow in my knowledge and insight into the things of God? Is there anything in my control which I need to do or approach differently? How about the people that I'm hanging around with? Are they my balcony people lifting me up or basement people constantly dragging me down? So, am I learning to love God and others? Am I influencing others for Christ?

## Third, Am I . . .

### **F**.eeling God's presence and pleasure in my life?

This is more of a personal thing for me. Sometimes the only thing that keeps me in the pastorate is the overwhelming sense that God is somehow pleased with me speaking out and being an example of Him for Him.

I love serving the Lord. It is the grandest of all callings. It is the greatest of all privileges. But, there have been those days in the 25 years that I have been a pastor, where I have looked around and wondered if I should keep doing what I am doing. But that's not the overwhelming majority of the time. I'm an ex-boxer, but as a pastor the only person who I have continually beaten up ... is myself. I desire to serve God in His church among His people. The real question isn't are there people who aren't listening, the real question is am I reaching people for Christ and is God pleased. All of us should ask these questions about our lives at some point: God ... where and how can I serve You and please You best? What big or little changes should I be making now, or at least considering? After all, Your Word states in Jeremiah 29:11, **"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope."** And then again in Proverbs 3:5 & 6, **"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. <sup>6</sup> In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths."** Loving God, Influencing others, pleasing God — and the last question is simply **am I truly . . .**

**E**njoying Him now and glorifying Him forever.

Consider the following verse from Psalm 145 that is at the center of the Bible: ***"Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever"***. The Westminster Shorter Catechism states that this means that faithful believers need both the glory of God and the enjoyment of God. The Bible states that humans were created to bring glory to God, so the chief end of Christians and the church is also to bring glory to God.

Enjoying God includes: joy in salvation, joy in revelation, joy in communion;

Intellectual: knowing God; Aesthetic: admiring God's beauty;

Emotional: delighting in God and His ways;

With Wills: Dedicating ourselves to obeying His commands.

Some examples of enjoying God include: forgiveness of sin, the presence of the Holy Spirit, hope of eternal life, personal meaning, empowerment for daily living, how God answers prayers and meeting personal needs.

I know what some of you are thinking. You would tell me that all this stuff about God is only a part of life and maybe I shouldn't take it so seriously. That yes, there are the times to really think about the "half way thru—half way to go." But really...that seems kind of odd... kind of not for everybody. As a Christian, I could not disagree with you more...but then again that is between the Lord and you. All I know is long ago ....

I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.

***Blessings,***

**Pastor David**



## ENDOWMENT FUND

### **SOME GOOD NEWS**

An anonymous donor has set up an endowment fund to benefit The United Churches. The endowment is held by the Black Hills Area Community Foundation in Rapid City. The purpose of the endowment is to provide a reliable income for church operations now and on into the future. (Church operations include things like utilities, equipment repair, lawn maintenance, and insurance.) Although the income will be small to begin with, as interest is earned and reinvested, and as more contributions are made, the income will grow as well.

Anyone can contribute any amount to the endowment at any time. Since the Black Hills Area Community Foundation is itself a tax-free organization, all contributions are tax-deductible. If you have appreciated assets, transferring those assets to the Foundation designated for The United Churches, gives our endowment full current value with no tax consequences to you. If you have any questions, please contact Dean Cape (President of the Board of Trustees) or Mary Sue Waxler (Financial Secretary).

### **Dr. William Hyppolite News!**

Dr. William will be in our area and visiting The United Churches on **Sunday, June 23rd**. Dr. William will be sharing a bit about his ministry in Haiti during the morning Worship Service and will also be available in the Fellowship Hall after worship for anyone who have questions or would like more information.

### **ATTENTION LADIES OF THE CHURCH!!!**

Join us in the Fellowship Hall on **Saturday, June 22nd at 2:00 pm** for a time with Dr. Natalie Hyppolite (Dr. William's wife), who will be sharing about their work in Haiti.

# June Mission Emphasis



**WHY GOOD NEWS CLUB?**

**TODAY'S YOUTH ARE  
TOMORROW'S LEADERS!**

The Good News Club (GNC) is a core ministry of the Child Evangelism Fellowship organization, a Bible-centered worldwide organization started in 1937. Globally, it's impact spans 4,403,483 children worldwide with the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. The United Churches of Hot Springs GNC was launched in 2022 with the purpose to evangelize boys and girls with the Gospel, disciple them in the Word of God and establish them for Christian living (Mt. 19:14).

The GNC is our Sunday School program held every Sunday from 9:30-11:30 am packed with Bible lesson, songs, Scripture memorization, mission stories and review games. Children have earned certificates of completion for memorizing the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and various Scriptures verses. The club integrates strong discipleship training to build character and strengthen moral and spiritual growth. The kids shared the Gospel with our congregation through bell music, interpretive songs and drama presentations. They learned the Salvation Message using the Wordless Book, bracelets and facepainting which they applied during evangelistic outreach events in Hot Springs, Edgemont and Rapid City fairs. They developed social skills by participating in games, field trips and outdoor events.

We have sent 12 kids to different Christian camps sponsored by the Good News Club, Presbyterian, Baptist and United Methodist churches. Last year, 22 kids performed at the Live Nativity during the Hot Springs Christmas celebration and were treated to a fun activity at the Watiki Water Resort Park in Rapid City. For 2 years, the kids also graced the community with beautifully decorated floats during Christmas in the Hills Parade and handed out Gospel tracts and candies along the way. In 2023, we extended the youth program to the community by starting a Christian-based Afterschool Youth Program and the summer Vacation Bible School (VBS).

For the last 2 years, the youth program leaders have observed significant changes in kids who once used to be withdrawn and have now developed social skills, became outspoken about their faith, and have encouraged support from their parents. This is our testimony that God's Word will not return void (Isaiah 55:11)! Barna research report showed that children have a profound effect on the spiritual development of their parent and dynamically impact the church's environment.

The GNC and the Afterschool Youth programs are self-funded. We depend on our church fundraising events such as the Rummage Sale and Lynn's Dakotamart receipts. We would like to continue offering various activities for kids to help them to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ, as well as teach them life skills that they can use to survive these troubling and challenging times (Prov.22:6). Please consider supporting the Good News Club and the Afterschool Youth Programs with your donations. Other ways you can give support are by helping:

- During youth programs with transportation
- With Rummage Sale pick up/set-up (June 29)
- Summer Vacation Bible School food, crafts, games (July 26-August 2)
- Teaching bible lessons & life skills (Sundays & Wednesdays)

We may not see the fruits of our labor in our lifetime, but we trust that the Holy Spirit is working in each child to bring them to the future God has for them (Jer.29:11). We all can make a difference!!

Thank you and God Bless! Your Good News Club Leaders



## JUNE ANNIVERSARIES

- |                     |                    |                        |
|---------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| 2 Pastor David Cook | 15 Cora Reid       | 8 Paul & Sandy Swenson |
| 4 Donna Jenniges    | 20 Jean Schuchardt | 10 Dean & Nancy Cape   |
| 11 Richard Nelson   | 27 Nancy Cape      | Sean & Molly Cape      |
| 13 Ed Cerney        | 28 Mark Tupper     | 17 Bill & Pat Coffield |
| 14 Cheryl Keller    |                    | 21 Linda & Adam Heath  |
|                     |                    | 23 Frank & Lynn Mason  |

## THIS AND THAT

### RUMMAGE SALE:

Don't forget our **Rummage Sale, Saturday, June 29th from 9:00 am-3:pm.** Funds raised will benefit The United Churches of Hot Springs Youth Programs. We appreciate the rummage sale items we have received so far. Keep them coming! For donation pick-up, please contact Maris Smith, 605-431-548.

### UNITED WOMEN:

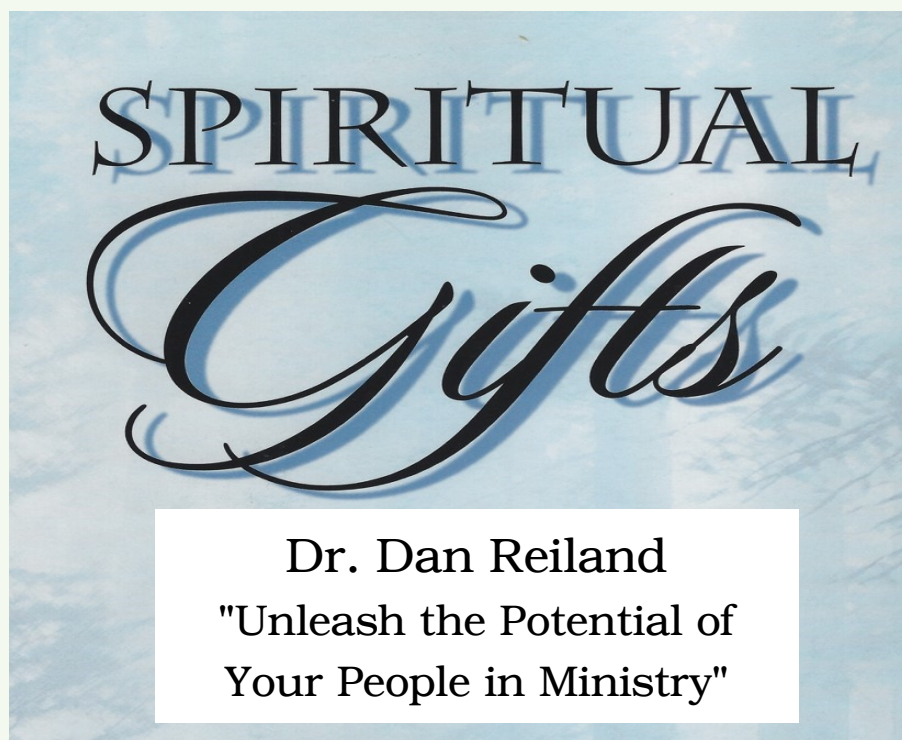
The United Women will meet on **Tuesday, June 20th at 1:30 pm** in the Fireside Room. We are continuing our study in the book of Psalms.

### THE BASIC NEEDS BOUTIQUE THANKS YOU!

Thanks to all who participated in the Basic Needs Boutique Silent Auction and Candle Sale. Your contributions will help us carry forth our ministry of helping others with basic need/personal care items. **THE BNB TEAM**

# **New Sunday Morning Bible Study Class**

**Beginning Sunday, June 9th  
8:30 am in the Fireside Room**



**We are gifted for service: "And His gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the equipment of the saints, for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ." (Ephesians 4:11-12)**

**This 12-week series addresses the following topics: Questions and Answers About Spiritual Gifts, Unwrapping the Gifts-Part I, Unwrapping the Gifts-Part II, Discover Your Gifts, Expressing Your Gifts Through a Fulfilling Ministry, and Spiritual Gifts Discovery.**

**Have you unwrapped your spiritual gifts?**

**Thank you, Sharon Kalvels**



UPCOMING EVENT  
SUNDAY, JUNE 30th  
FIFTH SUNDAY CELEBRATION  
followed by:  
**THE FAVORITE POTLUCK**

**YOU ARE INVITED!!!!**

TO OUR ... "THE FAVORITE POTLUCK"

- Bring your all-time favorite potluck dish to share . . .
- **OR** ... Be brave and ask someone to bring **your** favorite potluck dish **that they make!!**
- Invite a friend for some delish food and great fellowship!



# GET YOUR T-SHIRTS!!!



**THESE AWESOME T-SHIRTS WERE DESIGNED BY THE WEDNESDAY NIGHT YOUTH GROUP AS A FUNDRAISER!**

**WE ARE TAKING ORDERS NOW!  
T-SHIRTS ARE MADE OF PRE-WASHED COTTON  
ORDER ONE SIZE UP IF YOU ARE CONCERNED  
ABOUT T-SHIRT SHRINKAGE.**

**SIZES SMALL TO LARGE: \$16.95 EACH  
SIZE X-LARGE: \$18.95 EACH**

**CONTACT CAL LARIVE TO PLACE YOUR ORDER!!!  
605-891-3144**



# **SUMMER COMMUNITY SUPPER**

**Every Thursday**

**June 6 – August 22**

*(no meal on July 4)*

**St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church  
538 University Avenue**

**4:30pm – 6:00pm**

**All Are Welcome**

*Free Will Offering*