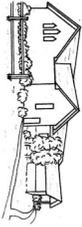


**NORTHWOODS  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH**



**4723 GRIFFITH AVENUE  
CHEYENNE, WY 82009**

**WORSHIP IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH. JOHN 4:24**



**HE IS NOT HERE. HE IS RISEN!**

# THE NORTHWOODS NEWS

## THE GOSPEL

By

Rich Cesal

I was raised in a Christian home. All my life I knew that Jesus was the Son of God and that He died for the sins of mankind. That He was the Messiah. The Savior. I never once doubted that fact. However, I was ignorant of the particulars of the Gospel. I no doubt had the common notion that was prevalent then and continues today of society's idea that if you are a good person you will go to heaven. Of course exactly what was meant by being good enough is never articulated.

The Gospel literally means the Good News. What is the Good News? The Good News cannot be summed up in a phrase or even a sentence. It consists of many elements, all of which are always present.

- ⇒ We are all sinners destined for Hell.
- ⇒ We are hopelessly lost.
- ⇒ We must repent of our sins.
- ⇒ God's justice must be served.
- ⇒ God sent His only Begotten Son to reconcile us to Him.
- ⇒ This Son must be totally man and totally God.
- ⇒ The man-nature of Christ must be perfectly sinless.

THE FAMILY CIRCUS



"It depends on what you mean by 'good.'"

- ⇒ The Son had to die as the perfect, unblemished sacrifice.
- ⇒ Christ alone satisfies God's judgment.
- ⇒ His shed blood is sufficient to pardon our sins.
- ⇒ We add nothing to the process.
- ⇒ We must learn what the Bible says.

That is Good News indeed. The gospel is all about grace. "The Christian motivation for ethics is not merely to obey some abstract law or a list of rules; rather, our response is provoked by gratitude," quote from R.C. Sproul.

Jesus died so those who God had chosen would go to heaven when they die. If you read the obituaries in the paper, you will get a pretty good idea of what the common notion of being good is all about.

Obituaries are not usually written by the person to whom it applies although I'm sure there must be someone who has written their own obituary. Generally, there is a long list of accomplishments along with the organizations the person belonged to and supported. My unscientific observation is that only about 15% here in Cheyenne contain any mention of church affiliation. This no doubt reveals volumes of what people mean by being worthy of heaven.

Seventy five years ago, almost every obituary would have included an entry naming the church the diseased attended and belonged. Of course, that mention did not necessarily have anything behind it. Society was such that almost all people went to church. How many of those were actually Christians is unknown. The poor attendance of today does not mean there are any less genuine Christians. Was the Gospel more known back then? I don't think so. But it surely was more on peoples minds.

I'm sure I sat in on countless sermons about the meaning of the Gospel which reinforced the idea that if you are a good person then Jesus died for you. I don't remember much teaching giving the correct meaning to that notion. I believe there was some warning about what you might consider good.

When I was forty years old, we decided to change Presbyterian churches. The new church visit took place on Easter Sunday. The sermon topic was the Empty Tomb. No doubt before this Easter morning I had heard sermons mentioning the fact that the tomb was empty. But, my recollection of these sermons produced the idea that Jesus rose out of the tomb as some sort of a spirit. Visible but not necessarily human.

But this Easter morning, the pastor dwelt on the fact that the tomb was empty. The body was gone. Jesus had experienced a true bodily resurrection. He was now alive in the body that had been placed in the tomb. His disciples were seeing Him in that body although it was

glorified. That was the beginning of my finally understanding the Good News. Jesus had defeated the grave and death. He was the second Adam and was the first of those who will on the Last Day also have their bodies resurrected. Real bodies but glorified in the sense that there will be no more corruption of those bodies by age, illness, death or sin. The Gospel became real to me when I understood that He died for me and not for the whole world. That if I were the only person ever alive, He would have gone to the cross for me.

It should be told on every Easter morning that Christ died for those whom God has chosen. That if a person believes that and accepts the covering of his sins by the act of Christ on the cross and repents of his sins, he will be saved.

In true, genuine Christian churches on Easter morning, the message that Jesus bodily rose from the dead is told. That His resurrection is a confirmation of the promise that we too will be given glorified bodies on the Last Day. We are told that His death, resurrection, and ascension is all that is needed to be reconciled to God. It is also told that the Christ needs no help on our part. He saves totally by the grace of God without input from us. (*sola Christo*).

Here is a quote from J. D. Greear, "I read Martin Luther's commentary on Romans. Luther points out that salvation comes by resting on the facts God revealed about the death of Christ. Just as Abraham was counted righteous when he believed that God would keep His promise, we are saved by believing that He has done so in Christ. The Gospel is the declaration that Jesus is Lord and has made an end to our sins. We are saved by submitting to those two truths. Conversion is a posture we take toward the declarations that Scripture makes about Jesus. The point is not how we felt or what we said at the moment of conversion; the point is the posture we are in now." This quote is taken from *Stop Asking Jesus Into Your Life*.

Repentance is vital to responding to the Gospel. We have the story of David and Bathsheba to tell us of what repentance is all about. After David's escapade with Bathsheba, he knew what he had done was wrong but he did not know exactly who was wronged or how serious his actions were to his holy God. He tries every way that he could of hiding the sin from Uriah. But Uriah wouldn't play David's game and David ended up having Uriah killed.

In Num 23:32 we are told a frightening thing, "*your sin will find you out*." I'm sure we have all experienced the full meaning of that verse as we tried to avoid having our sins out in the open.

David was probably resting easy in his knowledge of what he had done but then Nathan told him a story of two men, one rich the other poor. (2 Sam 12). The rich man had huge flocks and the poor man had a single lamb. When a traveler came to the home of the rich man, the rich

man did not take of his own flock but took the poor man's one and only lamb to serve the traveler.

David was furious at the hearing of this and pronounced the rich man should "*surely die*." Nathan says to David, "*You are the man*." David was brought to his knees as he recognized that he had sinned against his Lord. The Lord pronounced judgment on David and declared the child from that illicit union was to die. David felt deep remorse and penned Psalm 51 asking God to "*Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me*." God washed David of his iniquities and cleansed his soul and David became the man that God declared was "a man after My own heart." (Acts 13:22).

After the coming of Christ, the cleansing of one's soul is accomplished by being covered by the blood of Christ. The Bible tells us if we repent of our sins, they will be cast into the deepest part of the ocean and not held against us. That is the message of the Gospel. Repent and be saved.

Since the Gospel is the basis for Christian beliefs, it is vital that the Gospel be preached often and biblically correct. If the people don't know the Gospel, how can they consider themselves to be saved.? As Paul exclaims in Rom 10:17, "*So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*."

April 5 is Easter Sunday. When the Gospel is preached on that day, let us be sure to not treat the elements of the Gospel in a light manner. How can you profess to believe the Gospel if you do not know and understand it?

We who are fully justified since our coming to know Christ and His Gospel, should review the full meaning of that Gospel. It is easy to become complacent in time. We get caught up in the task of daily living and our concentration on the basics probably slips somewhat. Let all who know the Christ of the Bible renew their beliefs on at least this Easter morning. The faith which was given at our new birth should be brought to the forefront of our meditations.

All of those things mentioned at the beginning of this article which make up the elements of the Gospel should be reviewed in our minds whenever we are thinking of the Gospel. The Gospel surely will be preached on Easter Sunday in most churches calling themselves Christian. The idea of the true meaning of the Gospel should be primarily taught on that morning. On at least that morning, all Christian minds ought to be attuned to the same wavelength.

Sadly though, it is not. The Gospel, as well as other biblical teachings, is distorted and twisted to fit into the pastor's mold. Many pastors who did not receive a seminary education or had attended a seminary taken over by Satan, do not know and certainly do not believe the true Gospel.

The primary meaning is that we are sinners and cannot do for ourselves. Nothing we can do will erase the condemnation of the sins we have committed. We need help. It is important to know that we cannot save ourselves even if we declare belief in Jesus. We need a true Redeemer. In no way can we add anything to our coming to salvation including our own choosing. The act is *Sola Christo*, by Christ alone.

The Bible teaches that help has come with the birth of Jesus. God had sent Jesus as His Christ, His Messiah. Both the words Christ and Messiah mean the same thing. They mean God's Anointed One. *Christ* being the Greek and *Messiah* being the Hebrew.

In the Old Testament, the kings and some prophets were anointed with oil as a means of consecrating them to do the Lord's bidding. And so the promised Son of God would be known as the Anointed One although the Bible does not indicate that Jesus had the ceremonial oil poured on His head. The Bible in Acts 10:38 does say, "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him." Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit to do God's will.

God's justice must prevail. All those who disobey Him will surely die. This means life after death for all whose sins are unforgiven will go to Hell and not enjoy the peace of which the believers partake.

But the Gospel says that all who repent of their sins will be forgiven by the act of the shedding of blood by the perfect man, the perfect sacrifice, the Christ. The perfect unblemished sacrifice of the Christ would be payment for the sins of those who believe and have faith in the completed work of Jesus. Those who have this faith are granted a complete and absolute pardon.

As Jesus said the night He was betrayed as He offered the bread and wine representing His broken body to His disciples. This is the Good News. This is the Gospel. This, He said do in remembrance of me. He also said to do this every time you eat and drink of the blood of the new covenant. (1 Cor 11:24-25).

One of the elements of the Gospel is that God's son had to die. Jesus had been given a certain work to perform. He spoke of this many times while He was teaching. But the completion of that work was proclaimed at the crucifixion. When Jesus uttered His last breathe on the cross, He said, "It is finished." This was a declaration that all the Father had given Him to do had been accomplished. His work was done.

I believe that all believers and especially pastors should ask themselves this question as often as the need arises, "Do I believe the Gospel in its most beautiful and authoritative fullness or have I distorted the message at all?" For who can believe the Gospel if it is not preached true to God's Word? Ω

My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness.  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,  
But wholly trust in Jesus' Name.

*Refrain: On Christ the solid Rock I stand,  
All other ground is sinking sand;  
All other ground is sinking sand.*

When darkness seems to hide His face,  
I rest on His unchanging grace.  
In every high and stormy gale,  
My anchor holds within the veil.

*Refrain*

His oath, His covenant, His blood,  
Support me in the whelming flood.  
When all around my soul gives way,  
He then is all my Hope and Stay.

*Refrain*

When He shall come with trumpet sound,  
Oh may I then in Him be found.  
Dressed in His righteousness alone,  
Faultless to stand before the throne.

*Refrain*

# Important Things

**April 5th—Easter Sunday.** Come and join our church body to celebrate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and the culmination of the giving of our eternal life. **Notice:** There will be no carry-in dinner and no Evening Worship Service.

**Women’s Bible Study—** April 15 & 29 at the church, 7:00 PM. Jean Holroyd is presenting the book "Contagious Christian Living" by Dr. Beeke.

**Men’s Bible Study—** April 13 & 27, 7:00 PM. Meet at the Norgauer home.

**Men’s Breakfast—** At the church, Saturday Morning, April 18, 8:00 AM. What is God’s providence for you on this day? I’m sure it is to be at the church to study God’s Providence and to go over Chapter 2 of the book *The Mystery of Providence* by John Flavel.

**Northwoods Men -** We are now into our second lesson on "Family Worship Discussion" event set for April 27, 2015, 7:00-8:30 PM, at the Ramig home. We will hear Biblical wisdom from pastor Milan, consider key lessons from Joel Beeke's "Family Worship" booklet, learn from each other and sing a few hymns. See Alex Ramig for more information.

## Nursery Schedule for April

5th - LYDIA BRUNGARDT  
 12th - YVONNE NEWSOM  
 19th - JENNY ROPER  
 26th - KELLEIGH ANDERSON

Please trade with someone if you are unable to do nursery duty on the assigned day.

## Happy Birthday to you

Autumn Duncan	2nd
Benjamin Anderson	12th
Kaya Pillivant	15th
Jonathan Anderson	18th
Edie Vosler	19th
Sharon Auzqui	20th
Barbara Williams	21th
Mike Anderson	24th
Chet Hornung	29th

## Happy Anniversary To you

Tom & Laura Twitchell	4th
Alex & Janet Ramig	6th
Rich & Charmayne Cesal	12th

# What is the Gospel?

by W. Robert Godfrey—Professor of church history at Westminster Seminary California and our speaker at this year’s Reformed Theology Conference in October.

Many Christians, churches, and organizations regularly use the word *gospel* to describe their convictions. Theological controversies have occurred and do occur over the meaning of the gospel and who preaches it faithfully. What does that familiar word *gospel* mean? The best way to answer that question is to turn to the Bible.

In the Greek New Testament, the noun *euangelion* ("gospel") appears just over seventy times. Since, in one sense, the whole New Testament is about the gospel, we might have expected the word to have been used more frequently. Even more surprisingly, its use varies greatly among the authors of the New Testament books. Paul uses the word more than three times as often as all the other authors combined. Most of the other uses are found in Matthew and Mark, with very few, if any, in Luke, John, Peter, and James.

The word *gospel* most simply means "good news." The word is not unique to the Christian message, but it was also used in the pagan world to refer to a good announcement. In the New Testament, it refers to the good news of Jesus the Savior. Often, it is used with the assumption that the reader knows what the word means.

As we look more closely at the ways in which *gospel* is used in the New Testament, several points come through strongly. First, we often find the phrase "the gospel of God." This phrase stresses the source of the gospel as a gift from God. The gospel is of divine, not human, origin. Second, the character of the gospel is specified in several ways: the gospel is true (Gal. 2:5, 14; Col. 1:5), gracious (Acts 20:24), and glorious (2 Cor. 4:4; 1 Tim. 1:11). Third, we see two responses to the gospel. The primary response is faith (Acts 15:7; Eph. 1:13). But obedience is also a response (1 Peter 4:7; Rom. 1:5; 10:16; 16:26; 2 Thess. 1:8).

(Paul's use of the idea of the obedience of faith in Romans has an element of irony as he responds to those who have accused him of antinomianism, being against the law.) Fourth, we see several results of the gospel. The gospel, of course, brings salvation (Rom. 1:16; Eph. 1:13). It also brings the kingdom (Matt. 4:23; 9:35, 24:14). It evokes hope in the people of God (Col. 1:23). The gospel is also a motivation to sanctification (Mark 8:35; 10:29; 2 Cor. 9:13; Eph. 6:15; Phil. 1:27).

All of these ways in which the word *gospel* is used point to its content, but there are also passages in the New Testament that are explicit as to its content. In examining these texts, we discover that sometimes the word *gospel* refers broadly to all aspects of the salvation and new life that Jesus gives His people, and sometimes it is used

narrowly to refer to what Jesus does for us outside of us. In other words, sometimes the term *gospel* refers broadly to Jesus' work of justification and sanctification for and in His people, and sometimes it refers narrowly to Jesus' work of justification. Another way of putting this distinction is that sometimes the word *gospel* refers broadly to all the New Testament fulfillment of what was promised in the Old Testament, and sometimes the term *gospel* is used narrowly of Jesus' doing in contrast to our doing of the Law.

An example of the broader sense of the word *gospel* can be seen in Mark 1:1, "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." This use of the word *gospel* seems to refer to everything that Mark tells us about the teaching and work of Jesus. We see another broad use in Revelation 14:6-7:

*Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people. And he said with a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come, and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water."*

Here the gospel is the call to repent and worship God.

More often, the term *gospel* is used narrowly and its content is specified. We see this in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4:

*Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you — unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.*

Here, the gospel is the message of the saving death and resurrection of Jesus.

In another place, Paul writes of "the glorious gospel of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted," and he specifies what that gospel is:

*The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life. (1 Tim. 1:11, 15-16)*

Here, the gospel is the saving work of Christ for sinners.

Paul writes similarly in 2 Timothy:

*Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel... . Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel. (2 Tim. 1:8-10; 2:8)*

This narrow use of the word *gospel* was very common in the writings of the sixteenth-century Reformers. We can see this in the thought of John Calvin:

*The word of faith is put by metonymy [using the name of one concept for another concept to which it is related] for the word of promise, i.e. for the Gospel itself, since it is related to faith. The contrast between law and Gospel is to be understood, and from this distinction we deduce that, just as the law demands work, the Gospel requires only that men should bring faith in order to receive the grace of God.*

It is also clear in Zacharias Ursinus. Near the beginning of his commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism, Ursinus divides all of doctrine into law and gospel:

*The doctrine of the church consists of two parts: the Law, and the Gospel; in which we have comprehended the sum and substance of the sacred Scriptures. The law is called the Decalogue, and the gospel is the doctrine concerning Christ the mediator, and the free remission of sins, through faith.*

Such reflections on the gospel have remained common in Reformed theology, as we see from this long, fascinating quotation from the great Dutch theologian Herman Bavinck:

*But the word of God, both as law and gospel, is the revelation of the will of God, the promulgation of the covenant of works and the covenant of grace... . Although in a broad sense the terms "law" and "gospel" can indeed be used to denote the old and the new dispensation of the covenant of grace, in their actual significance they definitely describe two essentially different revelations of divine will [Bavinck here cites many New Testament proof texts]... . In these texts law and gospel are contrasted as demand and gift, as command and promise, as sin and grace, as sickness and healing, as death and life ... . The law proceeds from God's holiness, the gospel from God's grace; the law is known from nature, the gospel only from special revelation; the law demands perfect righteousness, but the gospel grants it; the law leads people to eternal life by works, and the gospel produces good works from the riches of the eternal life granted in faith; the law presently condemns people, and the gospel acquits them; the law addresses itself to all people, and the gospel only to those who live within its hearing.*

How clear, distinct, biblical, and precious is this presentation of the gospel.

The church needs to preach the gospel in both its broad and narrow senses. The Greek word for gospel has given the English-speaking world the word *evangelism*. True evangelism, according to the Great Commission given by Jesus in Matthew 28:18-20, is a matter of making disciples: first, in the narrow sense of calling men and women to believe in Jesus and, second, in the broad sense of teaching them to observe all things that Jesus has taught His people. For the sake of the gospel, let's all promote true evangelism. Ω

# Session Report

## April 2015 Session Report

This month we celebrate the resurrection. The gift of salvation given to us by God through His Son. The wonderful grace of our loving Lord.

This month we would like to encourage each of you to reach out to one another. There is hurt and sickness and difficulties all around in our church. We are given the privilege and mandate to be the arms of God to one another. Pray for one another. Care for one another.

In light of the recent events in our country and in the PCUSA, we feel that it is important to re-emphasize where we stand on the issue of homosexuality. On our web site you will find this statement (<http://northwoodspca.org/faq>): God's word teaches that homosexuality is a sin; and marriage, instituted by God, is between a man and woman. Whenever the Bible mentions marriage, it is between a male and a female. The PCA, our denomination, has also released a similar statement (you will find a link to it from our website). We have also tried to get similar statements in the local paper, but all our attempts have been denied. Please be in prayer about this issue.

# The Power of the Resurrection

Job is presumed by many to be the oldest book in the Bible. And the oldest of books has to do with the oldest of problems:

"Why do the righteous suffer?"

Up to this verse in the story of Job, he is asking questions. Tough ones. "Man dies, and is laid low; man breathes his last and where is he?" (14:10). "If a man die, shall he live again?" (14:14).

They were unanswerable questions that rose from a perplexed and anguished heart. But with his cry of faith, "I know that my Redeemer lives," he is on solid ground. (19:5)

He is led of the Spirit to make the statement that has conveyed assurance to believers down through the centuries. He says, "I know." He points with certainty to the fact that the solution to all problems, the ultimate answer to all questions, whether they be old and persistent or new and passing, lies in knowing that the Lord, our Redeemer lives.

God in Christ is on top of it all.

He lives.

He has conquered the last great enemy which is death.

He is "declared to be the Son of God with power . . . by the resurrection from the dead" (Romans 1:4).

## **How Does This Apply To Us?**

With Job in spite of every argument to the contrary (and he was deluged with them), we, too, may know that the Redeemer lives. Furthermore, to live successful Christian lives we must know that.

God's plan for the believer is that by the testimony of the Holy Spirit and by opening one's eyes to see the innumerable evidences of God's power and authority in the world of nature and history, we may come to a place where we can say we know.

God's agenda is that we come to know. That is why the Bible was given. "I write this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life" (1 John 5:13) - know, not guess, not suppose, not wish, not wonder but know.

## **Pray With Me**

Lord, to meditate upon this magnificent truth brings glory to my soul and a peace that remains unshaken amidst the shattered dreams of a Christ-rejecting world. I know that my Redeemer lives. The bond between us is personal and close.

- I am not a number on a long list of data that has been fed into a celestial computer.
- I have a name and You know it.
- I need a living Redeemer that I can call my own and You are that Redeemer.

I know that my Redeemer lives. God be praised for the ability to know, with knowledge as clear and as sure as Your own Word. There is no vagueness in Your promises, no wondering if You really mean it, no wandering about in the wastelands of philosophical speculation.

I know that my Redeemer lives. I am delivered from the bondage of the fear of death. I am free because I am possessed by One who has power to lift me up and hold me above the entangling alliances of sin and the bitter harvest of eternal, spiritual death.

- He is real to me. I know Him.
- He is my great eternal Redeemer because He lives.
- His voice is rich and warm, not a dead echo of superstition or the faint whispering of wishful thinking.
- His hand is strong and His eyes are kind.
- He lives, and to eternity I shall praise Him that "because He lives, I too shall live."

In the name of Him who ever lives to make intercession for me. Amen.

#### **Moving On In the Life of Prayer**

"You ask me how I know he lives, He lives within my heart."

That is the great finale to a familiar and cherished hymn. It is also the experience of the steadfast Christian.

In his or her heart the Christian knows that Jesus is alive and in control and that He will come again, as He promised, to receive us unto Himself.

The secret of joyous living lies in knowing that whatever happens, Jesus Christ is real - He is really ours and we are really His.

Do you know that your Redeemer lives?

Then, by your life show that your Redeemer lives!

**Dr. William S. Stoddard**

#### **Have a Need? Contact one of the officers.**

Office Telephone	307-637-4817
Web Site	northwoodspca.org
Email	church@northwoodspca.org

Milan Norgauer, <i>Pastor</i>	635-1865 mnorgauer@gmail.com
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Tim Anderson, <i>Elder</i>	286-6625 tim@northwoodspca.org
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Brian Church, <i>Elder</i>	221-9966 b.church@outlook.com
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Alex Davison, <i>Elder</i>	245-9348 alex@pattondavison.com
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Alex Ramig, <i>Elder</i>	638-8927 Alex4tek@aol.com
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Rich Cesal, <i>Deacon/Treasurer</i>	637-6195 cheyoming6195@gmail.com
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Dale Vosler, <i>Deacon</i>	632-0133 tuliphill2@gmail.com
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**If you have a request for the prayer chain contact Branda Church 221-9206 and if not available, Kelleigh Anderson 635-2578.**

***Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be glory forever and ever. Hallelujah, Amen***