

# REFLECTIONS

Grace OPC

## THINKING HEAVENWARD

*By Pastor Brian De Jong*

Do you ever have the sense that God is trying to get your attention? I've had that feeling recently, and it regards heaven.

One way God has prodded me is through Calvin's Golden Booklet. Calvin arrested my attention when he said that "nobody has made any progress in the school of Christ unless he cheerfully looks forward to the day of his death and to the day of the final resurrection."

Ecclesiastes has also been bringing these thoughts to my mind. Solomon argues that "And day of one's death is better than the day of one's birth" Likewise, our study of Hebrews 11 has yielded statements like this: "But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them."

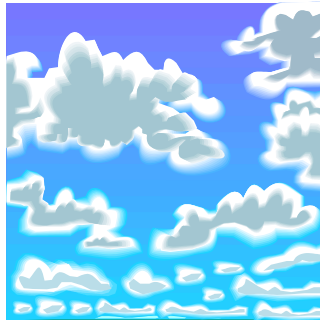
Experience has also raised these issues. Just six months ago we said goodbye to Jimmy Drier, and now Jeanne is gone home as well. I've wondered what are Jimmy and Jeanne are experiencing now?

In the time between death and the final resurrection, the souls of believers are made perfect in holiness, and are at home with the Lord. It truly is "better by far" than even the most supremely excellent days on earth.

Then, when Christ comes a second time, He will judge the living and dead. He will separate the nations as a shepherd

separates sheep from goats. The righteous will be together with the Lord, forever and ever.

The wicked will also be collected, condemned and consigned to eternal death. They will be cast with the devil into the lake of fire which burns eternally.



Hell will be a place of conscious and never-ending torments – where the fire doesn't go out and the worm never dies.

Then we will be with our God and King in the new heavens and the new earth – the restored creation. God will make all things new, the old order will be forgotten and the new order will be fully established. All that is wicked and defiled will be excluded.

What will life be like in the new heavens and new earth? There are several things we know by way of negation. There will be no more pain or sorrow. No sickness and no suffering. Neither doctors nor hospitals. No funerals or funeral homes. Cemeteries will be forgotten relic of the old order of things.

Positively, we will be together. All our beloved siblings in Christ will be there. Christians we have known and Christians we have never known will fill the new creation. Famous saints and ordinary believers – they will all be there together. There will be no more "good-byes" in heaven, for we will live in fellowship with one another.

But the crowning glory of heaven will be the presence of our Savior – Him...

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May 2013

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### Mnemonics...

- *Ladies' Banquet, 11th*
- *Evening Fellowship Meal, 19th*

# The Science of Christ Crucified

by C. H. Spurgeon

An idea has long possessed the public mind, that a religious man can scarcely be a wise man. It has been the custom to talk of infidels, atheists, and deists, as men of deep thought and comprehensive intellect; and to tremble for the Christian controversialist as if he must surely fall by the hand of his enemy. But this is purely a mistake; for the gospel is the sum of wisdom, an epitome of knowledge, a treasure-house of truth, and a revelation of mysterious secrets. In it we see how justice and mercy may be married; here we behold inexorable law entirely satisfied, and sovereign love bearing away the sinner in triumph. Our meditation upon it enlarges the mind; and as it opens to our soul in successive flashes of glory, we stand astonished at the profound wisdom manifest in it. I have often said that, before I knew the gospel, I had gathered up a heterogeneous mass of all kinds of knowledge from here, there, and everywhere, — a bit of chemistry, a bit of botany, a bit of astronomy, and a bit of this, that, and the other. I put them all together, in one great confused chaos; but when I learned the gospel, I got a shelf in my head to put everything upon just where it should be. It seemed to me as if, when I had discovered Christ and Him crucified, I had found the center of the system, so that I could see every other

science revolving in due order. From the earth, the planets appear to move in a very irregular manner, — they are progressive, retrograde, or stationary; but if you could get upon the sun, you would see them marching round in their constant, uniform, circular motion. So is it with knowledge. Begin with any other science you like, and truth will seem to be all awry. Begin with the science of Christ crucified, and you will begin with the sun, you will see every other science moving round it in complete harmony. The greatest mind in the world will be evolved by beginning at the right end. The old saying is, “Go from nature up to nature’s God;” but it is hard work going up-hill. the best thing is to go from nature’s God down to nature; and if you once get to nature’s God, and believe Him, and love Him, it is surprising how easy it is to hear music in the waves, and songs in the wild whisperings of the winds, to see God everywhere, in the stones, in the rocks, in the rippling brooks, and to hear Him everywhere, in the lowing of cattle, in the rolling of thunders, and in the fury of tempests. Christ is to me the wisdom of God. I can learn everything now that I know the science of Christ crucified. (excerpted from Spurgeon’s Autobiography, Volume 1, Ch.15)

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## Front Page Concluded

...who loved us and gave His life for our sins. We will enjoy Him as we have enjoyed no other person ever before. He will rejoice over us with singing, and quiet us with His love.

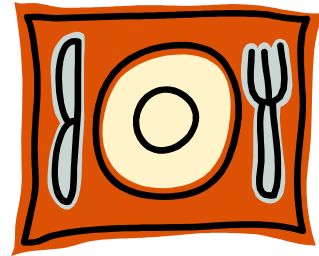
There is a hymn based on the writings of Samuel Rutherford. The final



verse reads as follows: “*The bride eyes not her garment, but her dear bridegroom’s face; I will not gaze at glory, but on my King of grace; not at the crown he gifteth, but on his pierced hand; the Lamb is all the glory of Emmanuel’s land.*”

# *Evening Fellowship Meal*

Everyone is invited to stay after the evening worship service on Sunday, May 19th for a fellowship meal at the church. A sign up sheet is posted on the bulletin board in the hallway at church.



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# *Ladies' Brunch*

All ladies & girls are invited to the Ladies' Brunch, which will be held starting at 9:30 a.m. on Saturday, May 11th at the church. The speaker this year will be Mrs. Shannon (Baugh) Onnink. There will be yummy brunch items and good coffee & juice. You are encouraged to invite friends and relatives and sign up on the bulletin board today!



# May Birthdays



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New E-mail Address

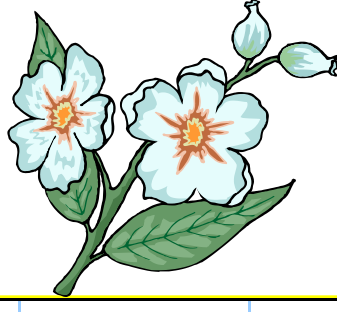




Grace OPC

# May 2013

*Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ*



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Prayer Meeting, 7 p.m.	2	3	4 Work Day, 8:30 a.m.
5	6 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.	7	8 Prayer Meeting, 7 p.m.	9	10	11 Ladies' Brunch, 9:30 a.m.
12 Missions Sunday	13 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. <i>Theology</i> , 3:30 p.m. Pine Haven Study, 1:30 p.m.	14 Session Meeting, 6:30 p.m.	15 Prayer Meeting, 7 p.m.	16	17	18
19 Evening Fellowship Meal	20 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.	21	22 Prayer Meeting, 7 p.m.	23	24	25
26 Lord's Supper, (a.m.)	27 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. <i>Theology</i> , 3:30 p.m. Pine Haven Study, 1:30 p.m.	28	29 Prayer Meeting, 7 p.m.	30	31	

Church Office:  
4930 Green Valley Ln  
Sheboygan, WI 53083

Phone: 920-565-2160  
Website:  
graceopcsheboygan.com  
Email:  
graceopc@tds.net  
briandejong@earthlink.net



# *Notes*

*submitted by Carla De Master*

## Notes Concluded...

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# Book Review of One Thousand Gifts

by Carla De Master

*A book review of One Thousand Gifts by Ann Voskamp.*

Recommended by my FL sister-in-law, I waited for the 6 people to read this book before I could get it from the Mead Library. When I opened it I found it to be not what I expected and returned it. (There were more on the waiting list.) I didn't realize it was written in a poetic style, to be meditatively digested. While in FL, I discussed this book with Ruth Ann and she gave me another chance to read her copy. Now I am reading it for the second time, writing out the quotes I missed the first time.

The theme is eucharisteo, thanksgiving. In our communion service this is the dominant emotion that should stir us. Seeing Christ and his sacrifice is the beginning of our thanksgiving. What a fitting part of the worship service! From this beginning, all of life is thanksgiving. As a result of Ann's life experiences, including her name "Ann": full of grace, she found listing God's gifts to her as a way of turning resentment to gratitude, gnawing anger to spilling joy. "To fully live--to live full of grace and joy and all that is beauty eternal. It is possible, wildly."

Ann, a wife of a pig farmer in Canada, a homeschooling mom of six, a member of a little

Brethren church, seems to be experiencing the same things that women all over experience. Yet, some were unique. At 6, Ann saw her three year old sister killed by a delivery truck. She lays out the impact that had on her and her family. Other negative thoughts crept in: "discontentment, and self-condemnation, the critical eye and the never satisfied." She learned to "enter His gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise." Prayer begins with these. "The list" transformed her and is transforming her. People around her, including her husband and children, noticed the change. They find joy in her joy.

I began my list of 1000 gifts from God on our trip to Florida. I thought I would have the list finished then but not quite. That is good! I still have things to add. Please savor this book. And make your LIST!



# *What If?*

*by Nancy Harmelink*

The year is 1937 when it all started. I was born into a God-fearing family with a sister Cathy waiting for me. My dad was a minister and my mom was a 'stay-at-home-mom'. When I was a baby we moved to Berkeley, California. Since we didn't have our own church building, we met in a rented converted store in which we came early to church to set up chairs and the pulpit my dad made. My dad had his office in our home and mom was the secretary as well as pianist and vocalist. We also ran off the bulletins on an old mimeograph machine which had it's place in the kitchen. Mom used the typewriter to type the bulletin on a stencil. That stencil was then secured onto the machine and away we went! One person cranked out each sheet while another put newspaper between each bulletin so the paper wouldn't smear.

While in this church, a young man named Harvey Conn started to visit and ended up coming faithfully to church after that. He was quite a humorist and we all did a lot of laughing when he was around. He happened to have a false front tooth that he would push out with his tongue and it would plop on his plate while we were eating. Since my mom was so into etiquette, I'm pretty sure she never knew what was going on or she would have said something to him. He was at our house for so many meals after church that he became the brother we never had. Across the street from our house there was a girl my age who contacted polio. The only way we could see her was to climb a ladder to her bedroom window and yell through the pane. Also, a block from our house was a catholic church. My younger sister Mary and I would calmly walk to the front door and just inside sat the holy water. We would sprinkle some on us and laugh all the way home. During the time in Calif., my sisters and I all contacted measles at the same time and my aunt from Tacoma flew down to help mom. Once a year we would take the trip to Tacoma to visit all our relatives. The only 'passable' church was a Presbyterian USA my aunt and uncle went to. I will

never forget that a man on a bike came riding down the middle church aisle yelling "rummage sale immediately following the service". Well, we never went there again! (why do I remember all these things??) While we were in Tacoma we all stayed at my grandparent's house. We three slept in the attic. The trees played strange shadows on the wall which we thought was Hitler.

When I was eleven years old we moved to Cedar Grove where we stayed in the old manse for two years and then moved to the new one right next to church. My sister Mary and I took the school bus to Oostburg Christian.

It was a common event to have extra people around our dining room table. They were either people new to the church, lonely people without family or families with circumstances that just made you want to have them over! Miss Sarah VerDow was a lonely spinster who often graced our table. She was an older woman, stooped over with a crackly voice and a very solemn demeanor, who kind of became a stand-in grandma. She often helped mom with various church duties. Then there were the Voskuils (Howard). Mrs. Voskuil had health problems and I remember her being a very kind and positive person. Mr. Voskuil had a deep voice and talked with a smile on his face. The eldest son Willard was in my H. S. class and also one of my best friends (NOT boyfriend). It was always our habit to sing around the table. Since none of the Voskuils could carry a tune, I wonder what they thought? The only exciting thing to do in Cedar Grove was go to Lloyd's Drive-In or roller skating at the Town Holland Hall. Since Lloyd Ten Pas owned the drive-in and ran the roller skating he was very popular. Lloyd was (is) very handsome and all the older teenage girls were smitten by him (maybe because he drove a beautiful Buick convertible) But, Marge is the one who caught him!

So, why am I writing this? Today is my birthday and I got to thinking what my life would



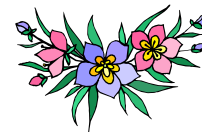
## “What If” Concluded...

have been like 75 years ago today, if I hadn't been born into this awesome family. I lived in an atmosphere where my parents never argued; where trials and tribulations in our family or congregation came and went but the name of God was honored and all situations were prayed about. I learned what it meant to "glorify God and enjoy Him forever". Here are ten things I learned from my mom:

1. Respect, respect, respect
2. Practice, practice, practice
3. Have a sense of humor
4. Kids don't care if there is dust under the bed
5. Being a mom is the best career in the world
6. Celebrate occasions of joy; life in general
7. Read the Bible
8. Eat, pray and sing together
9. Love and live life as if it were the last day
10. Have good table manners

My parents taught me the importance of tradition: Sunday dinner the best meal of the week, with china and tablecloth, daily Bible reading and prayer, singing hymns around the dining table, reciting memorized Bible verses at the dining table. Mom and Dad took time to teach fundamental values

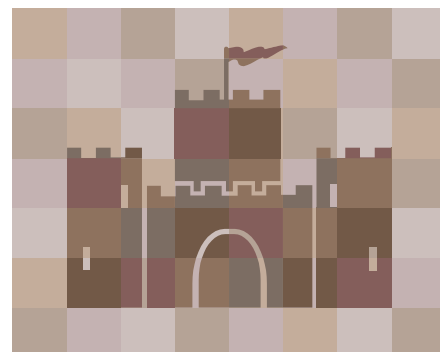
and life lessons that were critical to me to make my way in the world. I lived in a strict household where obedience was required. I did not like having to abide by the rules and regulations! I did not like living in a fish bowl with people expecting me to be better than I really was. But, having just said that, it was still a loving home where God showed His faithfulness to us all! My parents had integrity and empowered me with the value of hard work and keeping promises. They exhibited faith and love and therefore I knew what it meant to trust, be trusted and trust life and know who I am. I learned that God is sovereign; He does what He pleases and it is always for my own good. Do Not Question Him. So, in my 27,375 days on earth I can't imagine wanting any other family than the one God gave me. Thank you, mom and dad for teaching me the importance of having spiritual health by insuring that I attended church, reading the Bible to me and who my Savior is. You still remain the most influential in my life.



*Nancy*

# Vacation Bible School

If you're thinking of inviting a neighbor or relative to this year's VBS why not start now? Postcards with all the info for this year's Bible School are available in the narthex at the church. Remember to keep VBS in your prayers as well— for all that happens during the week, for the teachers, helpers & for the students too!



# Comments on Finances

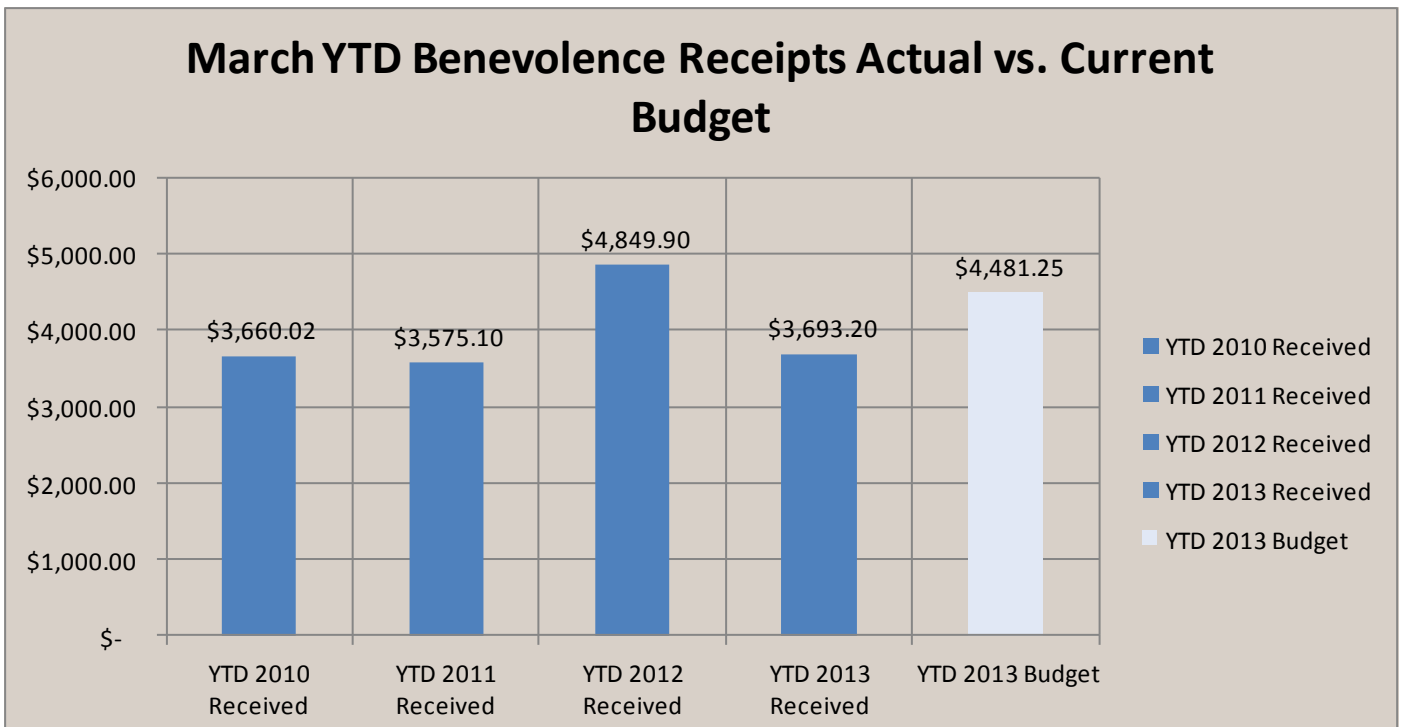
by Joel Moody

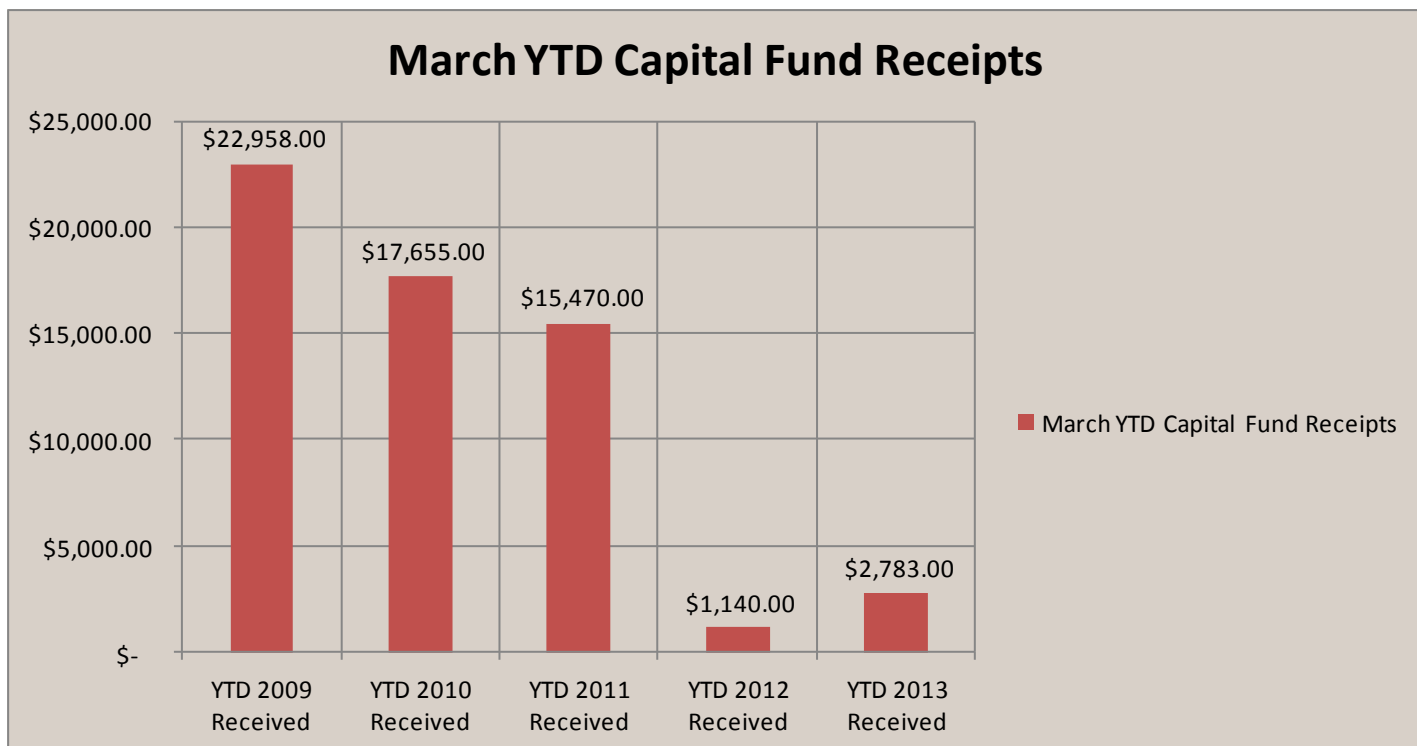
**General Fund** receipts for March totaled \$17,121.11 as compared to the budget of \$16,312.05, while General Fund disbursements for March totaled \$13,258.41. March year to date General Fund receipts totaled \$41,217.41 as compared to the budget of \$42,411.25 (a shortfall of \$1,193.84), while March year to date disbursements of \$41,748.26 were \$662.99 below budget. Through the end of March, the General Fund has decreased by \$508.12. The decrease in the General Fund was primarily due to lower than budgeted receipts. Year to date General Fund receipts for March were 2.0% above last year's total on an average Sunday while disbursements were 5.4% above the prior year.

**Benevolence Fund** Receipts for March totaled \$1,368.00 as compared to the budget of \$1,493.75 (a shortfall of \$125.75). Year to date Benevolence Fund Receipts through March totaled \$3,693.20 and were below budget by \$788.05. Please refer to the graph for a historical trend of benevolence receipts as well as the current benevolence budget. During February,

\$475.00 was sent to Worldwide Outreach for the General Missions outreach of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. In addition, \$200.00 was sent to the Midwest Presbytery's Church Extension Committee. ..

March Year to Date giving for the **Capital Fund** was \$2,783.00. Please refer to the Capital Fund Graph that shows the historical giving for the years indicated in the graph. You may contribute to the Capital Fund by marking your gift as "Capital Fund" and placing it in the offering plate. Please note that the Capital Fund is used to pay for current and future needs that may exist to purchase additional equipment (such as the sound system, tables and chairs, etc.) or building-type items (such as a parking lot, driveway, furnace boiler, etc.).





# Camp Calvin

This year's Camp Calvin, "Be the Influence" will be held June 17-22 at Camp Whitcomb-Mason in Hartland, Wisconsin. It's for youth entering grades 4-9 in fall of 2013. Registration, directions, and other more detailed information can be found in a brochure in the church hallway or online at [campcalvin.com](http://campcalvin.com) Register soon! The deadline is May 20.



# My Life and Me

*by Eyob Kaeiser*

My name is Eyob. I was born in Dessa, Ethiopia in Africa. It was a small town that has a lot of farms and farmers. It had a lot of rivers, trees, and animals too. It was always very hot; in the 80's and 90's for temperatures. Sometimes we had very hard and strong rainstorms that would last a whole day.

When I was very young, I lived with my uncle, aunt and four cousins. He was a farmer with many cows. He raised them and sold them for money. The money he got bought things for his family and me.

I lived with my uncle for three months before I got called to an orphanage several hours away. I had to leave because my uncle couldn't afford five kids at once. I was very confused to be there because I didn't know anyone. After a few days I made friends with three boys that were different ages. We hung around and they taught me a fun tag game. I lived at this orphanage for six years. My life there was pretty good.

Sometimes white visitors came and brought us shoes, clothes, soccer balls, books, food, and candies. I liked those gifts!

When I lived at this orphanage we all had to work to be able to eat. My job was to be a shepherd. Here in the United States kids can just come and eat without working. Here in America you have shoes, snacks and a lot of other stuff which you don't have in Ethiopia. From a young age I thought I would like to be a doctor and help sick people I remember a doctor coming to the orphanage and giving a very sick boy some medicine. After some days went by, the kid started playing again. So that made me wish to

become a doctor or nurse someday.

When I was about 12 years old, I found out that someone was going to adopt me. I was happy because I was getting adopted! Someone from the Guest House told me that someone was going to adopt me from America. I was so happy to go to another country to live in a good place. The family that was going to adopt me sent me their pictures. I was sad because I had to leave my friends, but the good thing was that I am going to a different country. I am not happy about the cold winter there. They do not even know how to say my name. Most people started saying Eoyb or Ebob, and I said it was EYOB! I was so excited because I heard about this country before so I am really excited to see what it looks like. I still don't like the cold weather!

Some people are not rich in my country, but a lot of people are rich in this country. For example, one person's house here could fit three families in it in Ethiopia! In my country you just can't make movies and there are no video games. Not even board games! All we had were card games and soccer balls. It's very sad because a lot of people don't even have that. Some people don't even have a house, they live in the street. But someday that might change! We never know what God will do!

Someday I might be a doctor so then I will go back to my country to help the sick people. I have to study hard and learn a lot before I can become a doctor.

# Best Cookie Bars

## Crust:

- ★ 1 cup flour
- ★ 1/2 cup margarine (Imperial)
- ★ 1/4 cup sugar

Mix together. Bake in a 9x13 pan at 375° for 8-10 minutes.

## Filling:

- ★ 13 graham crackers (or 1 1/2 cups) crushed
- ★ 1/4 tsp. salt
- ★ 1 tsp. baking powder
- ★ 1 can sweetened condensed milk
- ★ 1—1 1/2 cups chocolate chips
- ★ 1/2 cup chopped nuts

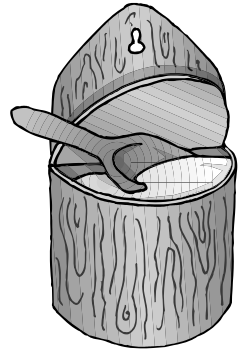
Mix and pour over crust. Bake at 300° for 20-25 minutes. Cool completely before putting frosting on.

## Frosting

- ★ 1/2 cup margarine or butter
- ★ 1 tsp. vanilla
- ★ 1 cup powdered sugar (or a little more)

Beat for 10 minutes. Spread over cooled bars.

*Phyllis Nyhof*



“The eyes  
of all look  
to You,  
And You give  
them their food  
in due time.  
You open  
Your hand  
And satisfy  
the desire of  
every living  
thing.”



Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ

Grace OPC

Church Office:  
4930 Green Valley Ln

Phone: 920-565-2160  
Website: [graceopcsheboygan.com](http://graceopcsheboygan.com)  
Email:  
[graceopc@tds.net](mailto:graceopc@tds.net)  
[briandejong@earthlink.net](mailto:briandejong@earthlink.net)

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## Spurgeon Corner

*“We dwell in Him.”  
(1 John 4:13)*

Do you want a **house** for your soul? Do you ask, “What is the purchase?” It is something less than proud human nature will like to give. It is without money and without price. Ah! you would like to pay a respectable rent!

You would love to do something to win Christ? Then you cannot have the **house**, for it is “without price.” Will you take my Master’s **house** on a lease for all eternity, with nothing to pay for it, nothing but the ground-rent of loving and serving him forever? Will you take Jesus and “dwell in him?” See, this **house** is furnished with all you want, it is filled with riches more than you will spend as long as you live. Here you can have intimate communion with Christ and feast on his love; here are tables well-stored with food for you to live on forever; in it, when weary, you can find rest with Jesus; and from it you can look out and see heaven itself. Will you have the **house**? Ah! if you are houseless, you will say, “I should like to have the **house**; but may I have it?” Yes; there is the key—the key is, “Come to Jesus.” “But,” you say, “I am too shabby for such a **house**.” Never mind; there are garments inside. If you feel guilty and condemned, come; and though the **house** is too good for you, Christ will make you good enough for the **house** by-and-by. He will wash you and cleanse you, and you will yet be able to sing, “We dwell in him.” Believer: thrice happy art thou to have such a dwelling-place! Greatly privileged thou art, for thou hast a “strong habitation” in which thou art ever safe. And “dwelling in him,” thou hast not only a perfect and secure **house**, but an *everlasting* one. When this world shall have melted like a dream, our **house** shall live, and stand more imperishable than marble, more solid than granite, self-existent as God, for it is God himself—“We dwell in him.”



*Morning, May 6, Morning & Evening, by C. H. Spurgeon*

## Pine Haven at Pizza Ranch

The Pine Haven Women’s Auxiliary will be serving at the Pizza Ranch, in Oostburg on Monday, May 20th from 4:30 p.m.-8:00 p.m. Please come and let us serve you. The funds raised will be used for various projects to benefit the residents of the Pine Haven Christian Communities.

