

# REFLECTIONS

Grace OPC

## THE ROAD AHEAD

*By Pastor Brian De Jong*

In almost every issue of Reflections I focus on some issue or aspect of the Christian faith – either expounding a doctrine or applying the Bible to the world around us. This month I’m going to do something different – I’m going to give you a series of previews.

The first preview has to do with a change being contemplated by your Session. You may recall an adult Sunday School lesson earlier in the year on the Lord’s Supper. During that lesson I made a statement to the effect that the Bible and our Westminster Confession are both quite clear that the proper elements for the Lord’s Supper are bread and wine. I stand by that statement and believe its truthfulness is beyond reasonable debate. That comment led one of our elders to ask a question at the next Session meeting: Shouldn’t we change from grape juice to wine in our administration of the Lord’s Supper?

You’ll be glad to know that the Session took the matter seriously and spent some months reading, studying and investigating the matter. We discussed the topic on several occasions and came to a conclusion that such a shift would be appropriate. The elders and I thought it best for the congregation to be introduced to the idea and taught from the Scriptures before we made the actual change. To that end, I will be focusing three sermons during the month of September on this topic and connected concerns. As always, the Session welcomes feedback from the congregation.

A second preview relates to adult Sunday School. We are almost finished

with Dr. Godfrey’s excellent series on the history of the Reformation. When that concludes, I will be teaching a class on the Attributes of God. As I’ve been working on those lessons, I am finding that it is taking me far deeper into the person of



God than I’ve ever gone before. I think this will be a stretching experience for all of us. That should commence on September 20 and go through the end of the year.

Another upcoming development will be upon us sooner than you might expect. By mid September I’m expecting that I will finish the book of Zechariah on Sunday evenings. What’s next? I’ve determined to preach through 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Thesalonians. These are valuable books, but less known than some of the other epistles.

There are two annual events that some might be curious about. The first is our Reformation Conference. That will be held on the weekend of October 31–November 1. Our speaker will be Dr. Robert Godfrey, and he will be speaking on the Dutch Reformation.

The other event follows several weeks later – our Harvest Home dinner. We’ve asked a friend of mine from seminary to come. He is Dr. Bassam Chedid and his area of specialty is Islam. He is originally from Damascus, Syria, where his father was a pastor. Bassam will be with us for the weekend of November 14–15. He’ll speak at the Harvest Home dinner, then preach Sunday morning and do Sunday School. It will be like a mini-missions

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### Mnemonics...

- *Church Campout, 10-12th*
- *Hospitality Sunday, 27th*

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# Reading and Hearing the Word

by Thomas Watson

We must provoke ourselves to reading of the word. What an infinite mercy it is that God hath honoured us with the Scriptures! The barbarous Indians have not the oracles of God made known to them; they have the golden mines, but not the Scriptures which are more to be desired “than much fine gold,” Psalm 19:10. Our Savior bids us “search the Scriptures”, John 5:39. We must not read these holy lines carelessly, as if they did not concern us, or run over them hastily, as Israel ate the passover in haste; but peruse them with reverence and seriousness. The noble Bereans did “search the Scriptures daily,” Acts 17:11. The Scripture is the pandect of divine knowledge; it is the rule and touchstone of truth; out of this well we draw the water of life. To provoke to a diligent reading of the word, labor to have a right notion of Scripture.

Read the word as a book made by God Himself. It is given “by divine inspiration” 2 Tim. 3:16. It is the library of the Holy Ghost. The prophets and apostles were but God’s amanuenses or notaries to write the law at his mouth. The word is of divine original, and reveals the deep things of God to us. There is a numen, or sense of deity engraven in man’s heart and is to be read in the book of the creatures; ... but who this God is, and the Trinity of persons in the Godhead, is infinitely, above the light of reason; only God Himself could make this known. So for the incarnation of Christ; God and man hypostatically united in one person; the mystery of imputed righteousness; the doctrine of faith: what angel in heaven, who but God himself, could reveal these things to us? How this may provoke to diligence and seriousness in reading the word which is divinely inspired. Other books may be written by holy men, but this book is indited by the Holy Ghost.

Read the word as a perfect rule of faith; it contains all things essential to salvation. “I adore the fullness of Scripture,” saith Tertullian. The word teaches us how to please God; how to order our con-

versation in the world. It instructs us in all things that belong either to prudence or piety. How we should read the word with care and reverence, when it contains a perfect model and platform of religion and is “able to make us wise unto salvation” (2 Tim. 3:15)!

When you read the word, look on it as a soul-enriching treasury. Search here as for a “vein of silver” Prov. 2:4. In this word are scattered many divine aphorisms; gather them up as so many jewels. This blessed book helps to enrich you; it fills your head with knowledge, and your heart with grace; it stores you with promises: a man may be rich in bonds. In this field the pearl of price is hid: What are all the world’s riches compared to these? Islands of spices, coasts of pearl, rocks of diamonds? These are but the riches that reprobates may have, but the word gives us those riches which angels have.

“The Scripture is the pandect of divine knowledge; it is the touchstone of truth...”

Read the word as a book of evidences. -- How carefully doth one read over his evidences! Would you know whether God is your God? Search the records of Scripture, 1 John 3:24. “Hereby we know that he abides in us.” Would you know whether you are heirs of the promise? you must find it in these sacred writings. 2 Thes. 2:13. “He hath chosen us to salvation through sanctification.” They who are vessels of grace, shall be vessels of glory.

Look upon the word as a spiritual magazine, out of which you fetch all your weapons to fight against sin and satan. 1. Here are weapons to fight against sin. The word of God is a consecrated sword that cuts asunder the lusts of the heart. When pride begins to lift up itself, the sword of the Spirit destroys this sin, 1 Peter 4:5 “God resists the proud.” When passion vents itself, the word of God, like Hercules’s club, beats down this angry fury: Eccles. 5:9. “Anger rests in the bosom of fools.” When lust boils, the word of God cools that intemperate heat, Ephes. 5:5. “No unclean person hath any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ.” 2. Here are weapons to fight against Satan. The word fenceth off temptation. When the devil

## Reading and Hearing the Word Continued...

tempted Christ, he three times wounded the old serpent with the sword of the Spirit. 'Tis written, Matt. 4:7. Satan never sooner foils a Christian than when he is unarmed, and without Scripture weapons.

Look upon the word as a spiritual glass to dress yourselves by: It is a looking-glass for the blind, Psalm 19:8. In other glasses you may see your faces; in this glass you may see your hearts, Psalm 119:104. "Through Thy precepts I get understanding." This looking-glass of the word clearly represents Christ; it sets him forth in his person, nature, offices, as most precious and eligible, Song of Solomon 6:16. "He is altogether lovely;" he is a wonder of beauty, a paradise of delight. Christ who was veiled over in types, is clearly revealed in the mirror of the Scriptures.

Look upon the word as a book of spiritual receipts. Basil compares the word to an apothecary's shop, which has all kinds of medicines and antidotes. If you find yourselves dead in duty, here is a receipt, Psalm 119:50. "Thy word hath quickened me." If you find your hearts hard, the word doth liquify and melt them; therefore it is compared to fire for its mollifying power, Jer. 23:29. If you are poisoned with sin, here is an herb to expel it.

Look upon the word as a sovereign elixer to comfort you in distress. It comforts you against all your sins, temptations, and afflictions. What are the promises but divine cordials to revive fainting souls. A gracious heart goes feeding on a promise as Samson on the honeycomb, Judges 14:9. The word comforts against sickness and death, 1 Cor 15:55. "O death, where is thy sting?" A Christian dies embracing the promise, as Simeon did Christ, Heb. 11:13.

Read the word as the last Will and Testament of Christ. Here are many legacies given to them that love him; pardon of sin, adoption, consolation. This will is in force, being sealed in Christ's blood. With what seriousness doth a child read over the will and testament of his father, that he may see what is left him.

Read it as a book by which you must be judged: John 12:48. "The word that I have spoken shall judge him at the last day." They who live according to the rules of this book, shall be acquitted;

they who live contrary to them, shall be condemned. There are two books God will go by, the book of Conscience, and the book of Scripture: the one shall be the witness, and the other the judge. How should every Christian then provoke himself to read this book of God with care and devotion! This is that book which God will judge by at the last. -- They who fly from the word as a guide, shall be forced to submit to it as a judge.

“Look up-  
on the  
Word as a  
spiritual  
glass to  
dress  
yourselves  
by.”

2. The second duty of religion wherein we must provoke ourselves, is, in hearing of the word. We may bring our bodies to the word with ease, but not our hearts without offering violence to ourselves. When we come to the word preached, we come to a business of the highest importance, therefore should stir up ourselves and hear with the greatest devotion. Constantine the emperor was noted for his reverent attention to the word: Luke 19:48. "All the people were very attentive to hear him." In the Greek it is "they hung upon his lip."-- When the word is dispensed, we are to lift up the everlasting doors of our hearts that the King of glory may enter in.

1. How far are they from offering violence to themselves in hearing, who scarce mind what is said, as if they were not at all concerned in the business: they come to church more for custom than conscience: Ezekiel 33:31. "They come to thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them." If we could tell them of a rich purchase, or of some place of preferment, they would diligently attend; but when the word of life is preached, they disregard it.

2. How far are they from offering violence to themselves in hearing, who come to the word in a dull, drowsy manner, as if they came to church to take a receipt to make them sleep. The word is to feed; it is strange to sleep at meat. The word judgeth men: it is strange for a prisoner to fall asleep at the bar. To such sleepy hearers God may say, *sleep on*. He may suffer them to be so stupefied, that no ordinance shall them: Matt. 3:25. "While men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares." The Devil is never

## Reading and Hearing the Word Concluded...

asleep, but sows the tares of sin in a drowsy hearer.

That we may, when we come to the word, offer violence to ourselves, and stir up ourselves to hear with devotion, consider, 1. It is God that speaks to us. If a judge gives a charge upon the bench, all listen.-- If a king speaks, all pay attention. When we come to the word, we should think thus with ourselves, we are to hear God in this preacher. Therefore Christ is said, now to speak to us from Heaven, Heb. 7:25. -- Christ speaks in his ministers, as a king speaketh in the person of his ambassador. When Samuel knew it was the Lord that spake to him, he lent an ear, 2. Sam. 3:5. "Speak Lord, thy servant heareth." They who slight God speaking in His word shall hear him speaking in his wrath, Psalm 2:5. "Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath."

2. Let us consider the weightiness of the matters delivered to us. As Moses said to Israel, Deut. 3:19. "I call Heaven and Earth to record this day, that I have set before you life and death." We preach to men of Christ and of eternal recompenses; here are the *magnalia legis*, the *weighty matters of the law*; and doth not all this call for serious attention? There is a great deal of difference between a letter of news read to us, and a letter of special business, wherein our whole land and estate is concerned. In the word preached our salvation is concerned; here we are instructed to the kingdom of God, and if ever we will be serious, it should be now: Deut. 37:47. "It is not a vain thing for you, because it is your life."

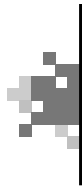
3. If the word be not regarded, it will not be remembered. Many complain they cannot remember; here is the reason, God punisheth their carelessness in hearing with forgetfulness. He suffers Satan to take away the word from them, Matt. 13:4. "The fowls of the air came and devoured the seed." The Devil is no recusant; he comes to church, but it is not with any good intent; he takes away the word from men. How many have been robbed of the sermon and their souls both at once.

4. It may be the last time that God will ever speak to us in His word; it may be the last sermon that ever we shall hear; and we may go from the place of hearing, to the place of judging. Did people think thus when they come into the house of God; perhaps this will be the last time that God will counsel us about our souls, the last time that ever we

shall see our minister's face, with what devotion would they come! how would their affections be all on fire in hearing? We give great attention to the last speeches of friends. A parent's dying words are received as oracles. Oh let all this provoke us to diligence in hearing; let us think this may be the last time that *Aaron's bell* shall sound in our ears and before another day, we shall be in another world.

*Taken from Heaven Taken by Storm, by Thomas Watson (c. 1620-1686), "Reading & Hearing the Word."*





# September Birthdays



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*Wedding Anniversaries*





Grace OPC

# September 2015

*Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ*



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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8 Session Meeting, 6:30 PM	9 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 PM	10 Church Campout	11 Church Campout Dinner 6:30 PM	12 Church Campout
13	14	15	16 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 PM	17	18 Presbytery in St. Paul, MN	19 Presbytery in St. Paul, MN
20	21	22	23 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 PM	24	25	26 Men's Breakfast 7:00 AM
27 Fall Hospitality Sunday	28	29	30 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 PM			



# Church Camp-Out

The annual church camp-out is Sept 10-12 at Kohler Andrea. There will be a pitch-in supper at the DeJong's site - #215 at 6:30 pm on Friday, the 11th. All are invited to come. Bring camp chairs and food you'd like to share with others. Plates, silverware, drinks, etc. will be provided. See Pastor Brian for more details.



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## Front Page Concluded

conference!

Several other activities will be starting up again soon. We'll resume Prayer Meeting on September 9<sup>th</sup> and pick up our study of the book of Esther. The Men's Leadership Training Breakfasts will also resume in September, and Pastor De Jong's Theology Class for Young People is going to be restarted too. Lots of good ahead! May God bless our congregation during this fall!



# Comments on Finance

by Joel Moody

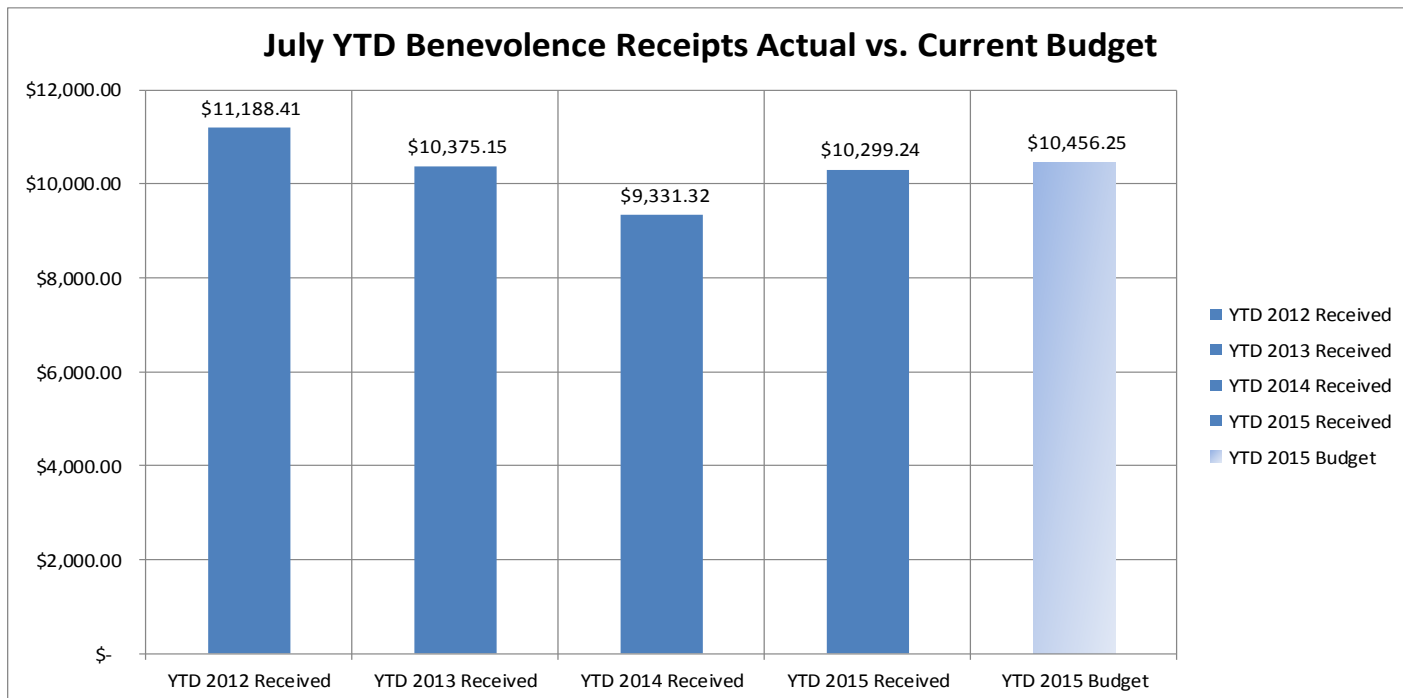
**General Fund** receipts for July totaled \$13,664.39 as compared to the budget of \$12,927.38, while General Fund disbursements for July totaled \$11,745.69. July year to date General Fund receipts totaled \$88,778.70 as compared to the budget of \$96,955.38 (a shortfall of \$8,176.68), while July year to date disbursements of \$92,666.70 were \$4,288.68 below budget. Through the end of July, the General Fund has decreased by \$3,830.06. Year to date General Fund receipts for July were 0.9% below last year's total on an average Sunday while disbursements were 3.3% above the prior year.

**Benevolence Fund** Receipts for July totaled \$1,393.00 as compared to the budget of \$1,493.75 (a shortfall of \$100.75). Year to date Benevolence Fund Receipts through July totaled \$10,299.24 and were below budget by \$157.01. Please refer to the graph for a historical trend of benevolence receipts as well as the current benevolence budget. During July, \$500.00 was sent to Worldwide Outreach (WVO) for the General Missions outreach of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and \$200.00 was sent to the Midwest Presbytery's Church Extension Committee

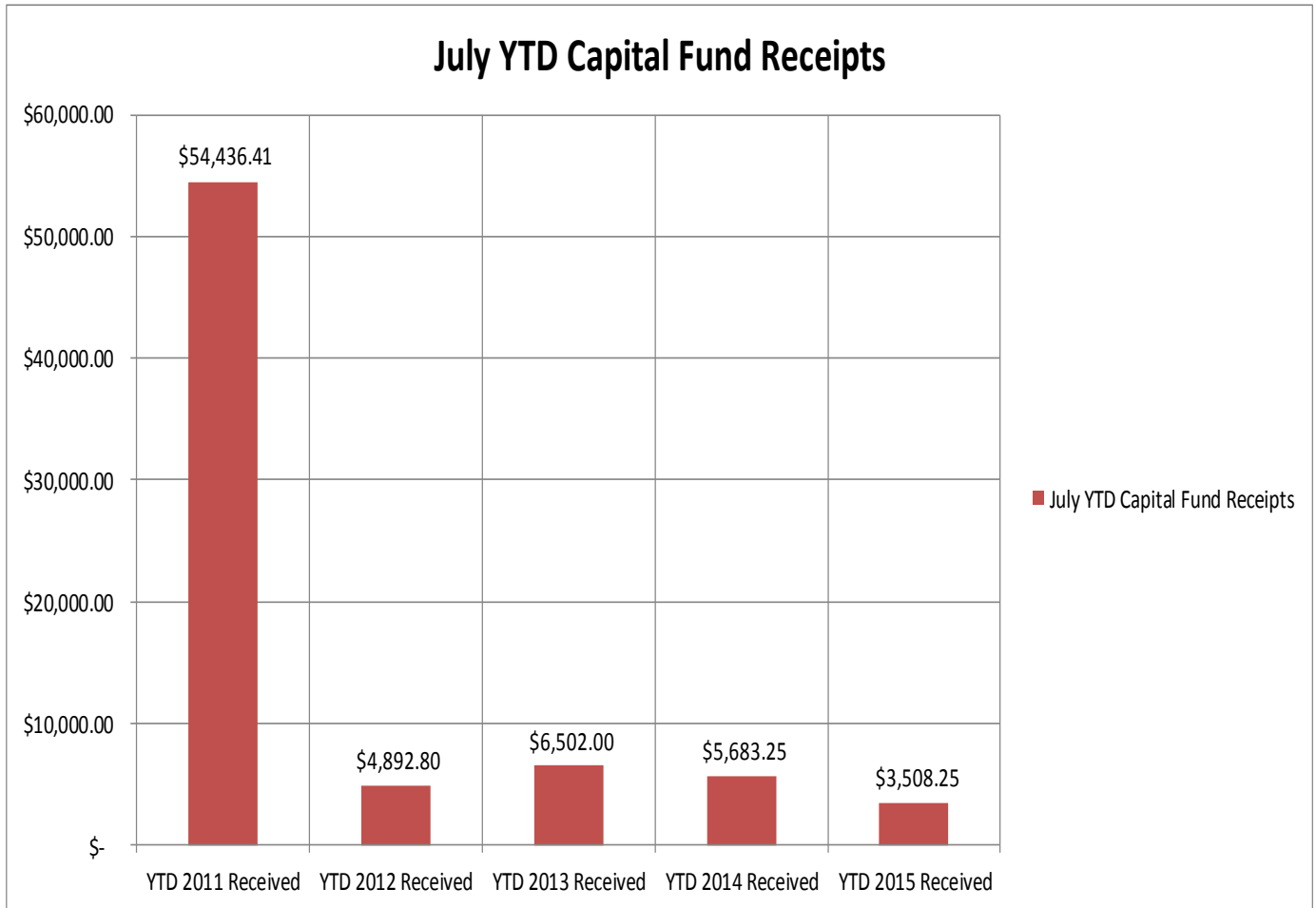
(CHEX). In addition, \$600.00 in total was divided amongst three seminaries and \$600.00 was sent in support of Reformed University Fellowship at UW Milwaukee.

July Year to Date giving for the **Capital Fund** was \$3,508.25. 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 computers, the sound system, tables and chairs, etc.) or building-type items (such as a parking lot, driveway, furnace boiler, etc.). Since some capital needs are quite substantial in nature, resources to finance and pay for these projects can take years to pay for them. Even though capital needs may not be large in the current year, we should wisely allocate our giving not only to current needs, but also to these future needs as well.

**July YTD Benevolence Receipts Actual vs. Current Budget**







## *Hospitality Sunday*

On Sunday, September 27th we will have our Fall Hospitality Sunday. A sign-up sheet will be posted on the bulletin board prior to the date to either host or be hosted. Groups will be assigned and notified the week prior. This is a good way to get to know other folks in the church, and to practice and enjoy Christian hospitality.



# Women's Presbyterial, 2015

Ladies, we have an exciting opportunity coming up in October! The Womens' Presbyterial of the OPC (Midwest Presbytery) will be holding their annual meeting here at Grace! On Saturday, October 3rd, the church will be buzzing with activity. We will be serving a continental breakfast and lunch to the ladies, as well as participating ourselves. There are 5 states in our presbytery, so some of the ladies have a few miles to travel. If you have an extra bedroom or two that you wouldn't mind filling for a night or two, there are ladies who would love to save the cost of a hotel.

Please sign up on the sheet on the bulletin board for housing and we will keep you informed regarding how many ladies may need housing. In the near future, you will find sign up sheets for serving and food donations, as well. We appreciate your participation and help with this large undertaking! Please save the date so you don't miss out!



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## *Pine Haven Autumn Festival*

The Pine Haven Autumn Festival and Dedication of the new Pine Haven will be held on Sept. 12th. They are wanting 4 pies from every church and if we can provide musical talent for about 20 to 30 minutes during the day it would be greatly appreciated. This year it will be held at the NEW Pine Haven in Sheboygan Falls. We are also looking for baked goods & crafts. If you have any questions please see Ellen McNeese.



## Cheesy Corn Chowder

- ★ 6 bacon strips, chopped
- ★ 3/4 cup chopped onion

Cook in a large pot over medium heat, until onion is tender.

- ★ 2 1/2 cup water
- ★ 2 1/2 cup cubed, peeled, potatoes
- ★ 2 cups sliced carrots
- ★ 2 teaspoons chicken bouillon granules

Add to onions & bacon, bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover & simmer until veggies are tender– 15-20 minutes.

- ★ 3 cans (11 oz.) each gold & white corn, drained
- ★ 1/2 teaspoon pepper

Stir in corn & pepper.

- ★ 7 Tablespoons all-purpose flour
- ★ 5 cups milk or 1/2 & 1/2 cream

Whisk together in large bowl. Stir into soup. Cook & stir until soup thickens. Reduce heat.

- ★ 3 cups shredded cheddar cheese
- ★ 1 cup Velveeta, cubed

Add to soup; cook & stir until cheese melts.

“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

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*Spurgeon*

*Corner*

*“How long will it be ere they  
believe me?”  
(Numbers 14:11)*

*Strive with all diligence to keep out that monster unbelief. It so dishonours Christ, that he will withdraw his visible presence if we insult him by indulging it. It is true it is a weed, the seeds of which we can never entirely extract from the soil, but we must aim at its root with zeal and perseverance. Among hateful things it is the most to be abhorred. Its injurious nature is so venomous that he that exerciseth it and he upon whom it is exercised are both hurt thereby. In thy case, O believer! it is most wicked, for the mercies of thy Lord in the past, increase thy guilt in doubting him now. When thou dost distrust the Lord Jesus, he may well cry out, “Behold I am pressed under you, as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves.” This is crowning his head with thorns of the sharpest kind. It is very cruel for a well-beloved wife to mistrust a kind and faithful husband. The sin is needless, foolish, and unwarranted. Jesus has never given the slightest ground for suspicion, and it is hard to be doubted by those to whom our conduct is uniformly affectionate and true. Jesus is the Son of the Highest, and has unbounded wealth; it is shameful to doubt Omnipotence and distrust all-sufficiency. The cattle on a thousand hills will suffice for our most hungry feeding, and the granaries of heaven are not likely to be emptied by our eating. If Christ were only a cistern, we might soon exhaust his fulness, but who can drain a fountain? Myriads of spirits have drawn their supplies from him, and not one of them has murmured at the scantiness of his resources. Away, then, with this lying traitor unbelief, for his only errand is to cut the bonds of communion and make us mourn an absent Saviour. Bunyan tells us that unbelief has “as many lives as a cat:” if so, let us kill one life now, and continue the work till the whole nine are gone. Down with thee, thou traitor, my heart abhors thee.*

*Morning, August 27th, by C. H. Spurgeon*

## *Pine Haven Annual Dinner*

You are invited to Pine Haven’s Annual Dinner which will be held at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, September 21, 2015 at the Haven Drive Campus – 220 Haven Drive in Sheboygan Falls. Though there is no cost for the meal a donation box will be available. Complimentary tickets will be needed to attend. You may obtain the tickets by contacting Jean Loepfe or Janice Ten Haken by Monday, September 14, 2015. Last year they had a waiting list for tickets so please respond as soon as possible.

