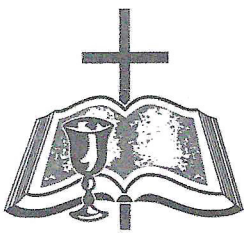


OCKER BRETHREN CHURCH

Serving Christ, Serving Our Community

BOARD OF ELDERS MEETING

**Wednesday,
September 10.
6:30 pm**



From the Pastor:

A Grief Journey

As you can probably imagine, the Herridge family has been dealing with an overwhelming amount of grief since Grant's tragic passing. For most of my bereavement leave, I was too emotional and heartbroken to understand and study my grief. But, since it seems as if Grief is going to taking up long-term residence in my heart, I figure I better get to know this deep dark ocean.

Before Grant, I thought I understood grief...I thought my occupation had exposed me to the pain of grief and I thought I had experienced enough deep grief to understand its power (the death of both my parents, with my dad dying on hospice in our home, was really hard). All that to say — I was wrong.

Until Grant, I had not experienced severe grief...and I was not prepared to handle it...but, then again, who is? Nobody is prepared to handle the loss of a person who you know you physically cannot live without...

After Grant, I realized that a lot of my Grief was love with no place left to go. And I knew that I was going to have to dive deep into Grief's darkness in order to find God and happiness again. So that is what I have been doing, recently, in my personal spiritual life. I have been trying to find God in the Grief. Don't worry, though, I am not going to take you with me through that very personal and private journey.

But, I do want to say a word to all of you who have swam in Grief's deep waters...I am swimming there now too. And I hear that Jesus goes there a lot, so that gives me some hope.

While I was swimming in Grief's waters the other day, I came across a "grief truth" that I wanted to share:

Joni Erickson Tada recently wrote a forward in a book about grief and her story struck me:

When a broken neck ambushed my life and left me a quadriplegic, I felt as though God had smashed me underfoot like a cigarette. At night I would thrash my head on the pillow, hoping to break my neck at a higher lever and thereby end my misery.

After I left the hospital, I refused to get out of bed; I told my sister, 'Just close the drapes and turn out the lights.' I had all but died physically, and inside, I wanted to die too.

You don't have to be in a wheelchair to identify. You already know that sad situations sometimes don't get better. Problems don't always get solved. Conflicts don't get fixed. Children die. Couples divorce. Spouses get sick. An untimely death rocks our world and shakes our faith.

We try to manage like jugglers spinning plates on long sticks. When we feel utterly overwhelmed, we try soaking in the tub, sweating on the treadmill, splurging on a new dress or we head to the mountains. We smile and say we are trusting God, but deep down we know that is a lie. We are only trusting that he doesn't load us up with more heartbreak and grief.

That is how I felt. But after weeks in bed, I got tired of being depressed and I finally cried out, 'God if I can't die, please show me how to live.' It was just the prayer God was waiting for.

I have prayed a similar version of that prayer, since Grant...But my prayer was a bit different, it was more like — *"God how do I live with this ocean of grief in my life?"*

Obviously, I am still working that out...but I am happy to announce that God is revealing himself to me as I swim through this ocean. I am finding him more and more in the deep waters of my grief...which I did not expect.

I am not sure why I didn't expect God to show up in my grief. I think because the grief seems so dark...it isn't something I associate with God. But, thankfully, scripture re-set my view on Grief....especially, the Old Testament.

Did you know that God tells us to lay out our grief on him? In fact, he commands us to wail and mourn with him...in his presence. There is even an entire book focused on lament and grief — **Lamentations**.

So...that is the truth that I will begin my spiritual study/journey through grief. God wants me to cry out in my grief, to him. So...that is what I am going to do.

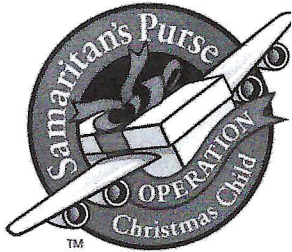
If you are swimming in grief's waters, like me, and searching for the divine to meet you in your grief...then, I wish you Godspeed. I will keep you posted, from time to time, on my journey.

And while I will spare you the personal specifics of my journey, I will tell you about the road that I am taking...I am starting with scripture (Lamentations, specifically)...but I am also reading the following: *A Lament for a Son*, *Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy*, *A Grief Observed*. And, *Can You Drink the Cup* by Henri Nouwen.

If you are dealing with deep grief, feel free to journey with me....I can't promise laughter and light-heartedness, but I can promise you will find God.

I hope each of you have a great September....I will see you at Church...It is shaping up to be a great month....See you soon!

Brad



OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

Did you know?
Ocker will now be a
Drop-Off Hub during
National Collection
Week?

**November 17 to
November 24.**

Our focus this year is less about the number of boxes we fill and more about learning to be a drop-off location for our community and surrounding areas. Our doors will be open for 2 to 4 hours each day during drop off week to accept boxes. Volunteers will be needed to work those shifts. Sign ups will be open soon to volunteer.

Details will be in next month's Newsletter.

CHRISTIAN SISTERS NEWS

The Christian Sisters met on August 19 with 8 members and Bro. Brad present for lunch. Wynona Williams gave the devotional on incarnation.

Kathy Jordan demonstrated some great little bags that some members are working on. These bags will be placed in the Operation Christmas Child boxes. We hope to have many more made by packing time.

Upcoming church events were discussed as well as the October crafting retreat, which we will sponsor and provide meals for. Our next meeting will be Tuesday, September 16 at 11:30 am. Please join us for lunch and the meeting afterward.

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

Christian Education Committee is excited to announce a new Sunday School class will be offered to the adult Sunday School! Maggie Imhoff has graciously volunteered to teach: *Synoptic Gospels – comparing the accounts of the Gospels – what's similar, what's different?*

Classes will meet in the first classroom on the left as you enter the Sunday School hallway. Classes will probably start between mid-September and First Sunday in October. Listen during announcements for more information.

If you aren't coming to Sunday School, you are missing a blessing! We invite you to attend. Sunday School starts at 9 am and there is a class for EVERYONE!

FIRST SUNDAY FELLOWSHIP continues each First Sunday at 8:30 am.

Here's who's providing breakfast for the next few months:

September – Standard Curriculum Class

October – Life Application Class

November – Books of the Bible Class

Back to School FUNDRAISER

New Day School

Record Enrollment!

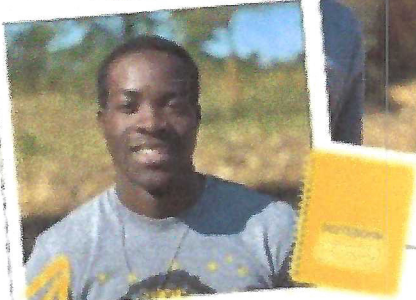
The New Day School has experienced record enrollment this school year, with 50 children attending school on our property. From grades PreK to Grade 11, our students are receiving a quality education while still learning in an environment with small student to teacher ratios. In addition, we have 4 students attending a gap year program and 3 students in University in Lusaka.

Giving to New Day has been down this year, and we do not want to see our New Day School suffer. Please consider a donation today as you pray for this very important ministry that has been in operation for 15 years in Zambia.

Maggie
Grade 2



Mweene, Grade 11



How to Give

To give a one-time gift, or to set up a recurring donation, click the link below.

<https://give.lifesong.org/lifesong/new-day>

Margaret Anne, Grade 3



PRAY

Please pray for our students and teachers as they return for the last term of the school year in Zambia. Pray for strength, patience, and wisdom to finish out what has been a great year!



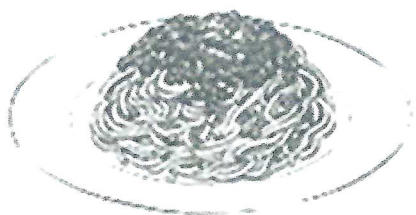
Blesten, Grade 3

YOUTH SPAGHETTI MEAL FUNDRAISER

Sunday, September 14, after worship.

A signup will be posted on group me for youth members.

A free-will offering will be collected to benefit the Ocker Brethren Youth Fellowship. To go plates will be available.



YOUTH BIBLE STUDIES

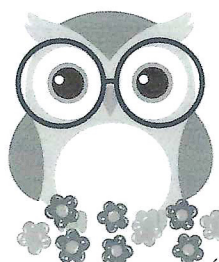
Wednesday, September 3, 10, 17: 6-8pm.

Dinner provided. This is for 6th grade and up.

FAMILY GAME NIGHT

Wednesday, September 24; 6pm

Dinner provided. Fellowship for all ages.



Thank you to everyone who helped with VBS!

FALL YOUTH RETREAT AT HUS CAMP

Saturday, September 6-Sunday, September 7

Bus will leave at 7:45am on Saturday and return at 2pm on Sunday. Last day to let Jenn know you're going is Sunday, August 17. Registration forms at www.unityofthebrethrenyouth.org.

FALL KID'S RALLY AT HUS CAMP

Saturday, September 20 9:00am-4:00pm

This is for kiddos ages 3&up. All attendees and volunteers must register and pay fees by August 31. Registration forms in foyer and at www.unityofthebrethrenyouth.org.

COLLEGE FELLOWSHIP AT HUS CAMP

Saturday, Sept. 20; 5pm-Sunday, Sept. 21; 11am

College students are invited to come relax, take a break, and fellowship with one another. Saturday dinner and Sunday breakfast provided. Contact Jenn Chervenka for more information.

PRIMETIMER'S FELLOWSHIP AT HUS CAMP

Saturday, October 11; 8:30am

Ages 50+ invited to a fun day of fellowship at the Hus Encampment in Caldwell. Bus will leave at 7:30am and return at 5:30pm. Continental breakfast and lunch provided. A free will offering is collected to offset expenses. Let Jenn know you're going no later than Sunday, September 28.

Need more information?

Jenn Chervenka

jennchervenka@gmail.com

(254) 913-1244

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Pastor:

Dr. Brad Herridge

Phone:
254..716.2578

Email:
bradherridge@gmail.com

Board of Elders

President:

~~John Paul Chervenka~~

Phone: ~~254.766.5641~~

Email:
~~jchervenka@gmail.com~~

Youth Director:

Jennifer Chervenka

Phone: 254.913.1244

Email:
jennchervenka@gmail.com

Sunday School Supt.

Tracie Malovets

Phone:
254.760.8696

Email:
tmalovets@gmail.com

Church Secretary:

Stacie Sebek

Phone:
254.718.5608

Email:
ockerbrethrenchurch@
gmail.com

Christian Sisters

Hospitality Coordinator:

Deanna Naivar

Phone: 254.931.5720

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 1 – Dianne Psencik
- Ashlyn Zdroik
- Micah Wilfert
- 6 – Foster Koslovsky
- Hagen Tucker
- 7 – Larry Pechal
- 13 – Sandra McAdams
- 14 – Julia Paddenburg
- 15 – Asher Weathersbee
- 16 – Cash Hoelscher
- 18 – Gene Sosa
- Kayla Fojtasek
- 19 – Taylor Brinkley
- 20 – Leland Jungmann
- Connor Sebek
- 21 – Ely Stork
- 22 – Lucy Herridge
- 24 – Creed Pierce
- Jason Bedrich
- Ctisti Jungmann
- 26 – Deanna Naivar
- 27 – Brody Malovets
- Kathy Harrison
- Jennifer Chervenka
- 28 – Tammy Pierce
- Blayne Hoelscher

September Anniversaries

- 4 – Donald & Wynona
Williams
- 7 – Robert & Kelly
Stephens
- 10 – Wayne & Celestia
Hoelscher
- 22 – Ralph & Marcia
Snyder
- 26 – Stan & Shelly
Stanolis
- 27 – Michael & Frances
Harper



CHOIR NEWS

After enjoying a nice summer break
and all of the special music this
summer that

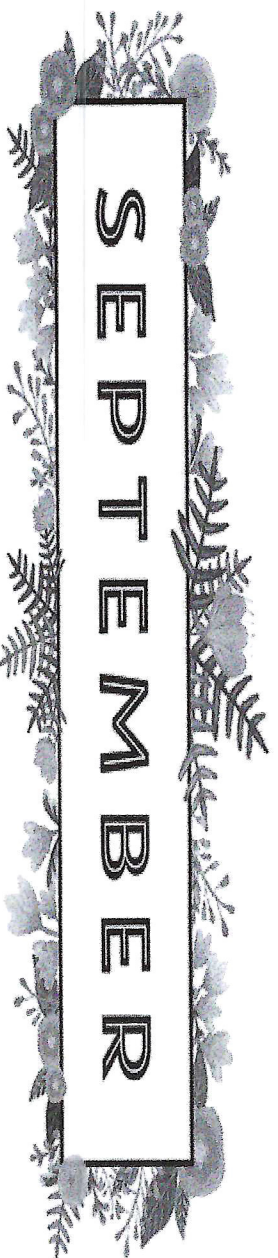
Kathy Harrison arranged for
us, the Sanctuary Choir will sing on
the 4th Sunday in September,
October and November. We will
practice at 10 am in the Fellowship
Hall September 28, October 26 and
November 23.

If you enjoy singing, please join us!
Questions may be addressed to
Kim Dillard, Director.

RURAL SCHOOLS OF EAST BELL COUNTY TEXAS A Pictorial History 1885-1975

Ocker has been gifted a copy of this
history book for use by it's members.
It is on the table near the Entry.
Please feel free to take it, read it and
return it for others to enjoy. It is a
great history of the small schools that
were here before consolidation.

You may purchase your own copy for
\$30 by contacting Jane Lesikar
Williams - or Richard Lesikar at
eastbellruralschools@gmail.com



SEPTEMBER

2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3 Youth Bible Study 6 – 8 pm Adult Bible Study 6:30 pm	4 Senior Adult Fellowship 9 am – 1 pm	5	6
7 First Sunday Fellowship 8:30 am Worship 10:15 am	8	9	10 Youth Bible Study 6 – 8 pm Adult Bible Study 6:30 pm Board of Elders Meeting 6:30 pm	11	12	13
14 Sunday School 9 am Worship 10:15 am YOUTH SPAGHETTI FUNDRAISER MEAL	15	16 Christian Sisters 11:30 am	17 Youth Bible Study 6 – 8 pm Adult Bible Study 6:30 pm	18 Senior Adult Fellowship 9 am – 1 pm	19	20
21 Sunday School 9 am Worship 10:15 am	22	23	24 Family Game Night 6 pm Adult Bible Study 6:30 pm	25	26	27
28 Sunday School 9 am Choir Rehearsal 10 am Worship 10:15 am	29	30	LOOKING AHEAD: HARVEST SUPPER – WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 8 QUARTERLY CRAFT RETREAT – FRI. OCTOBER 17 & SAT. OCTOBER 18 ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING – SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26			