



New Hope Newsletter

A Publication of Winter Garden Primitive Baptist Church

"Stay at the Altar, Blessings Will Come"

– from "The Daily Record: The First Year in Retrospect," by Elder Neil M. Phelan, Jr.

"But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John" – Luke 1:13

It had been about four-hundred years since the ink had dried from Malachi's pen. It had been that long since the voice of a true prophet had been heard in the streets. There was no open vision; no verbal instruction from Jehovah; the heavens were brass. The priests had corrupted themselves, their traditions had paralyzed God's people. There was a spiritual famine, and to make matters worse, it was during the ministration of a wicked king: "in the days of Herod." If there had ever been

a time in which God's people should be discouraged and name their children "Ichabod," this was the time. But even in the midst of discouraging circumstances there remained a faithful few who had not deserted the altar. Among those were a faithful husband and wife named Zacharias and Elisabeth.

Zacharias means "Jehovah has remembered" and Elisabeth means "God is my oath." They were both of priestly lineage, but at this point in their ministry, they seemed to be forgotten of God:

they had no child. How many times Zacharias and Elisabeth had petitioned Jehovah for a child God only knows. But even though the times were dark, their seasons were dull, and their prayers were seemingly unanswered, we find a testimony that has thwarted the designs of Satan time and time again; they had not deserted the altar of God.

According to the inspired record of their lives, "they were both righteous before God, walking in all the

(Continued on page 3)



The lovely ladies with their Easter bonnets, joined again this year with Elder Glenn Blanchard and his choice of headwear.

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Sunday 10:30 a.m.
Bible Study
Wednesday 7:30 p.m.

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Pastor's Letter - Elder Glenn Blanchard

We were thrilled to receive our first new members of 2016: Sister Barbara Oliveira and her daughter, Gyovanna. New members are a great blessing in that it seems to revive the body of Christ, the church of the living God. We have also been blessed with a number of visitors from the community. We hope and pray that we can represent the Gospel of Jesus Christ to them in a God-honoring way.

Our Annual Meeting will be the last weekend of May and we invite all who can to come celebrate our 98th year. The invited guest minister is Elder Buddy Abernathy. We will meet on Friday evening at 7:30 PM, Saturday morning at 10:30 AM, afternoon at 1:30 PM, and 7:30 for Communion Services. Lunch will be served Saturday noon and supper at 6PM.



What a blessing it is to watch someone make a public profession of faith through baptism. Sister Barbara and her daughter Gyovanna Cavalcante were recently baptized.





The Andersons were blessed to have long-time friends visit recently. Randy, Julie Proskocil with their children Elijah, Preston, Hayden, and Kinsley, and Julie's dad, Jerry Cochran, all from Missouri. (left) Bruce and Debbie Hatcher, also from Missouri. (right)



"Stay at the Altar, Blessings Will Come"

(Continued from page 1)

commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless" – Luke 1:6. Here is a special blessing couched within two words: "BOTH RIGHTEOUS!" The husband and wife were both believers. This is a great blessing. Zacharias and Elisabeth agreed upon the oracles of God and lived accordingly. In their house there was one God and one altar. If this is your case, rejoice, and use it to its fullest benefit. It is at the altar of God that your children will receive their greatest and most lasting blessings. If you have the opportunity to worship with your spouse and your family and you are not taking advantage of this opportunity, blessings are flying over your head.

Elisabeth and Zacharias were busy in God's temple; they were "walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord." This reflects an active posture in God's house which is always the

safest and the most blessed. Even though our best efforts are in vain without God's blessings, we must agree with Spurgeon who said, "the order of Cromwell is appropriate for service at the altar of God: Trust God, and keep your powder dry."

Would we not all agree that God's altar deserves as much devotion and attention as any secular activity?! How meticulous we can be in our secular pursuits while we set a lower standard in God's house. Soloman wrote, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is not work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest" – Ecclesiastes 9:10. Surely, Solomon's eye was upon the temple as he penned these words. Pastor, deacon, song leader, member, be diligent in God's house. You serve a noble King who deserves our best efforts. Slothfulness does not become "kings and priests."

The altar has always been a place of blessing. Faithful Abraham was always building an altar for worship and sacrifice. Abraham built altars. Where you find the patriarchs, you find them erecting altars to worship the Lord.

Our story concludes with triumphant joy surrounding the altar of God. Zacharias fades from our view with prophetic blessing pouring forth from his lips as he beholds his newborn son: John the Baptist. The last scene we have of Elisabeth is one that every expectant mother anticipates: the naming of her child: "He shall be called John." God reserves his best blessings for the faithful. He has ordained that they shall unfold around the altar of God. In prosperity, in famine, in darkness, in adversity, whatever the circumstances may be, do not desert the altar of God. Lord, help us to be faithful in the midst of a dark world!

Nebraska Fellowship Meeting

The Nebraska Fellowship Meeting will be held June 9, 10, 11, and 12th, 2016. We are located at 319 West 11th Street, Cozad, NE 69130 (On the corner of 11th & K). Schedule of services are as follows:

Thursday, June 9th, at 7:30 PM – Singing & Prayer

Friday, June 10th, at 10 AM, 1:30 PM & 7:30 PM

Saturday, June 11th, at 10 AM, 1:30 PM & 7:30 PM

Sunday, June 12th, at 10 AM

Lunch will be served Friday, Saturday and Sunday following morning services. Supper will be served Thursday, Friday and Saturday at 6:00 PM, prior to evening services. Please contact Elder Thomas Bond, P.O. Box 303, Cozad, NE 69130: Phone 308-784-5518 (Home) or 308-325-3957 (Cell) or Deacon Howard Halbgewachs, 75851 Road 419, Cozad, NE 69130: Phone 308-784-4320 (Home) or 308-325-3302 (Cell).



Special thanks to those who send contributions to help underwrite the cost of this newsletter.



We enjoyed wonderful fellowship with old and new friends:

Phil and Julianne Erwin from Elder Steven Bloyd's church in Maryland (above)

Ken and Rosanna Johnson from Little Union PBC and Zilpha and Frank Cornett from Alabama (left)

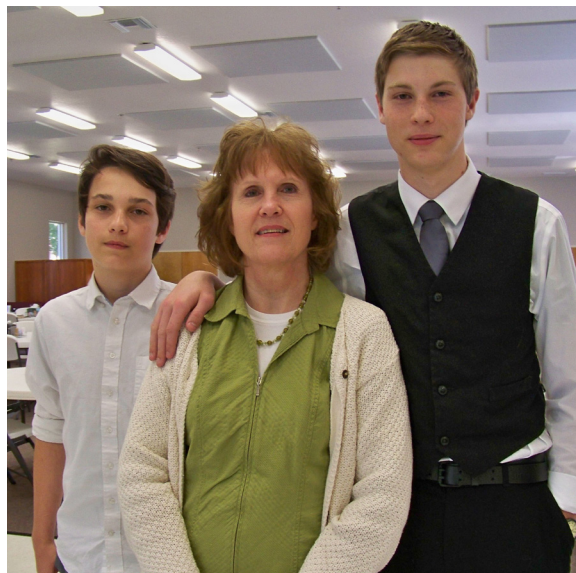
Thomas Hart from Canton, GA. (below)





Elder Paul and
Patsy Trautner
and Donna and
Mike Combs.
(left)

Kim Meyers and
sons, MacKinnan
and Collin, from
Nashville. (right)



The Marriage Mirror – by Elder Dolph Painter

For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the church – Ephesians 5:30-31

God likens the relationship between Jesus and His church to the relationship between a husband and a wife, but often times we do right the opposite. We use marriage to conceptualize God. Modern marriage is so perverted that a person using this paradigm cannot help but have a distorted view of God. Consider, the:

- **pervasiveness of adultery** (broken vows, roving eyes, diverted attention, not to mention infidelity). Jesus has never broken a vow, nor fancied another.
- **popularity of cohabitation** (lack of commitment, trial periods). God's commitment is full and forever.
- **promotion of equalitarianism** (authority stalemates, responsibility/accountability ducking). Jesus has never ducked or delegated His authority.
- **probability of divorce** (irreconcilable differences, falling out of love). God's love is forever, and I'm sorry is a wonderful reconciler.
- **permission of same sex marriage** (role distortion, inability to reproduce). God's fatherhood has never been redefined.
- **prevalence of fornication** (fatherless children, lust replacing love). Every one of God's children was created with forethought and never unclaimed.

When our children and neighbors look at our marriages to conceptualize the relationship Jesus has with His church, our lives portray our God. But we reflect something other than our God when our marriages conform to worldly standards.

Matthew 5:14-16 & Philippians 2:15 tell us to be lights in our communities. Whether we like it or not, our marriages are part of our light. Lord, help our marriages glorify Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

*We have enjoyed
getting to worship
with Brother Scott
and Sister Marci
Spaay. They are
such a sweet
couple.*



Biography- Elder Gene Thomas

I was born on January 3, 1929, in Scottsboro, Alabama. My parents were Joe and Minnie Thomas.

On the 4th weekend in September 1940, the Mud Creek Association convened with Union Church [in Woodville, AL]. On Friday I was in a quiet, meditative mood. That afternoon my mother decided that we would go home with Brother and Sister Jim Wilborn. Some others went on to Brother Wilborn's, by car, but mother and I and a few others rode in Brother Wilborn's wagon. As we bounced along, tears were formed in my eyes as I became resolved to offer myself for membership in the church the following day. My mother discerned that something was bothering me. She finally asked if it was about the church. I nodded in the affirmative. Not knowing what to say, she could only pat my shoulder.

After the preaching services on Saturday morning an opportunity to unite with the church was given. The services were held in a grove of trees and a stand had been erected for the ministers. As the invitation song began, I walked forward to the stand. I was only eleven years of age and very small for my age. The stand was too high for me to climb into and Elder H.P. Houk, the Moderator, did not notice my coming and standing at the edge of the stand. I then reached up and caught the cuff of his pants and began jerking it to gain his attention. He looked down, picked me up, and put me in the stand. Six others, including my older sister Kathryn, also came forward. My sister and I were baptized by Elder H.P. Copeland.

My first effort in a public way took place on the 3rd Sunday in June of 1948 at Bethlehem Church near Limrock, Alabama. The deacons of my home church approached me on the churchyard a few minutes before the time of the preaching service. Brother W.H. Butler spoke to me and asked if I would take part in the services that day. Feeling that it would be right to be obedient to the desires of my brethren, I replied that I would do so. When the time came, dear old Elder J.W. Page led me into the pulpit. I opened the Bible to Ezekiel 16:1-6 and read those verses. I spoke for about ten minutes on the subject of original sin and depravity. Amid tears, I took my seat with a mixed sense of relief and a realization that a heavy weight of responsibility was being assumed. From this time forth there has been no place to turn back.

In November of 1948 Union Church, while in regular conference, expressed their desire that I should be set apart as a gospel minister. According to the

arrangements, we met at Union Church, Woodville, Alabama, in the Mud Creek Association, on Sunday morning, December 5, 1948, at ten o'clock, for that purpose. The presbytery was composed of the following: Elders H.P. Houk, John Page, H.P. Copeland, K.W. Yeager, Henry Autry, B.A. Stephens, M. M. Morton, and sixteen deacons. Elder Houk was chosen as moderator and Brother W. M. Butler, clerk. The Moderator appointed Elder Yeager to offer prayer, Elder Autry to question the candidate, and Elder H.P. Copeland to deliver the charge.

I have served as a pastor of Union Church continuously from my ordination to the present (February 1998). Through the years I have been called at various other churches as pastor or to fill regular appointments. Among these are Bethel, Mud Creek, Pilgrim's Rest, Bethlehem, Sweeten's Cove, Hurricane, New Home, Mount Pisgah, and Macedonia. At the present time I am serving Union Church and Macedonia Church.

In conclusion, it has been my sincere desire to uphold sound, scriptural principles of doctrine as well as clean, godly principles of practices in all our churches. I believe in facing the problems of our day with the answers as provided in the Bible. It is my humble desire to be numbered among those who "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." (As I type this, I fondly remember Elder Thomas from when I was a child. He participated in the service of my father's funeral. I recognize all the places mentioned in Elder Thomas's Biography and even remember some of the children and grandchildren of the Elders mentioned!) – Sister Pat Blanchard-



Sister Rachel Blanchard with her friend Shelby Kovack, from Chicago



We always enjoy worshipping with friends, both local and our of town guests. Debra and Ron Box from Radner PBC (left), Art and Donna Carignan from Winter Garden (middle) and Sarah Whitehead and Steven Clinton from Macclenney PBC (right).

Plans to Constitute Las Vegas Primitive Baptist Church

- Elder Buddy Abernathy, Gordo, AL

About six years ago, I was contacted by Sister Valerie Flock of Las Vegas. She, along with her husband, and a group of about 12, had been listening to some of my sermons [that] came across on the internet. She contacted me and asked if I would be willing to come preach to them. They had been converted to the doctrines of grace in 1984 and formed a church based on the truth they had come to understand. However, they were not affiliated with the Primitive Baptists and had never attended a Primitive Baptist Church. Furthermore, they had an incorrect understanding about our churches in general. I have made a number of trips to preach to them and have also involved a number of other elders. I have been hesitant to constitute a church as there is not a local minister to serve them. However, my convictions have recently changed as they have faithfully met for six years to sing, pray, and listen to sermons by different elders over the internet. Elder Chris McCool who has recently partnered with me in this labor shares my convictions. Therefore, Elder Sam Bryant, who has also worked with me, Elder Chris McCool, and possibly a couple of other elders plan to join with me on July 13th for the purpose of baptizing them and constituting them into a Primitive Baptist Church. If you are ever in the Las Vegas area, please make plans to worship with them. They currently meet each Sunday morning at 10:30 in a nice conference room at the Bill & Lillie Heinrich YMCA, located at 4141 Meadows Lane in Las Vegas. You may contact me at (863) 797-6685 if you need more information. Please pray that the Lord will send them a pastor that they may grow and prosper as a church.



Kyle and
Lauren
Johnson,
Winter Garden
(left)



Victor and
Dominick
Youdeo (right)



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*Help us keep costs low! Let us know before
you move. Thanks!*

Please come visit us!

New Hope Newsletter



Being in sunny Florida has its benefits; we love the privilege of worshipping with snowbirds.

Keith, Don, and Jackie Watkins and Kim and Steve Engmann. (above) Kim and Steve recently went back to Wisconsin.

Eddie and his wife Alta and their son Darrell from Kentucky. (left) Eddie has been worshipping with us this winter and his family came to drive with him home to Kentucky.