
Murray Presbyterian Messenger



October 2024



Murray Presbyterian Church

P.O. Box 196, Main Street Murray, NE 68409

www.murraypresbyterian.org Tel: (402)235-2754

Featured This Month: Soup and Bingo Night

MURRAY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
INVITES YOU TO

SOUP & BINGO *Night*

SUNDAY, NOV. 3

4:00-5:00 Soup Dinner
5:00-6:30 Bingo for
Books, Games, & Puzzles

Come for Soup & Stay for
Bingo!

**FREE FOR THE
ENTIRE FAMILY**

Bring a can of soup
for the
SENCA Food Bank

Upcoming Events

Sundays

10:00 am: Morning Worship

Thank you for your ongoing financial support of Murray Presbyterian! Contributions may be deposited in the offering plates during worship services, mailed to the church at P. O. Box 196, Murray NE 68409 or made online at www.murraypresbyterian.org. Click on the "Give Now" button at the bottom of the homepage.

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It all began in the early decades of the twentieth century with a dream in the mind of one man. **Lewis Sperry Chafer**, an ordained Presbyterian minister, had a variegated career that included stints as a singer, traveling evangelist, music teacher, and pastor. He also was a fixture on the Bible Conference circuit. During a time when Protestant Christianity in America was being torn apart by the so-called "Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy," laypeople seeking to understand the Bible in a deeper, more comprehensive way

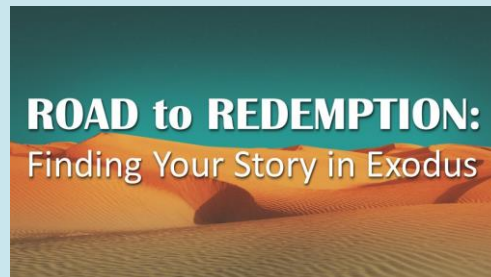
were being drawn in large numbers to Bible Conferences—gatherings where itinerant Bible teachers would expound on biblical and theological themes.

Based on his experiences at these conferences and interactions with pastors who felt ill-equipped to meet the need for this kind of biblical instruction, Chafer began envisioning a new sort of theological seminary that would embrace a different model for ministerial education. He believed existing seminaries tended to teach theories *about* the Bible, but not the content of the Bible itself. Likewise, he thought theology courses tended to emphasize creedal affirmations and the historical development of dogma rather than the biblical foundations of Christian belief. *What was needed, he believed, was a seminary that would institutionalize the distinctives of the Bible Conference movement and emphasize "expository preaching."*

That vision became a reality a hundred years ago this month—in October 1924—when the Evangelical Theological College opened its doors in Dallas, Texas, with twelve students and five faculty members. From these humble beginnings, the institution, now known as **Dallas Theological Seminary**, has grown to become one of the largest seminaries in the world with close to 20,000 alumni. Some of those graduates are household names, at least in conservative Christian circles: the late J. Vernon McGee (with his radio 'Bible bus'), Chuck Swindoll, and my old classmate, Andy Stanley.

I count it a privilege to be numbered in the ranks of this alumni body. But that's not to say my experience with Dallas Seminary has been a uniformly positive one! As a student, I chafed under what I perceived to be a stifling atmosphere of theological conformity. One consequence of the seminary's origins in the Bible conference movement is its strict adherence to a quirky brand of theology known as "dispensational premillennialism" (with its concomitant end-times scenario that's been popularized in the "Left Behind" series). Unfortunately, that facet of the seminary's culture limits its appeal and negatively impacts its ability to attract a first-rate faculty.

Upcoming
 Worship Opportunities
 Fall Sermon Series



What does it mean to be a Christian? Look over the following list of themes from the book of Exodus—stages in the Exodus journey. They should all be features of our lives! As Christians, we're on the same spiritual pilgrimage. Join us this fall as we trace these steps together and find ourselves along the Exodus "road to redemption."

- Sept. 8:** "Starting Out in Bondage" (Exodus 1:6-22)
- Sept. 15:** "Encountering the Holy" (Exodus 3:1-14)
- Sept. 22:** "The Reality of Judgment" (Exodus 7:1-5, 9:13-21)
- Sept. 29:** "Sacrifice of a Substitute" (Exodus 12:1-13)
- Oct. 6:** "Evil's Decisive Defeat" (Exodus 14:5-9, 13-14, 21-31)
- Oct. 13:** "Guidance Through the Wilderness" (Exodus 13:17-14:4)
- Oct. 20:** "Experiencing Provision" (Exodus 16:1-15)
- Oct. 27: Rev. Dr. Michael Elliott**
- Nov. 3:** "Claiming a New Identity in Community" (Exodus 19:1-6)
- Nov. 10:** "Obeying a Set of Standards" (Exodus 20:1-17)
- Nov. 17:** "Worship at the Center" (Exodus 25:1-8)
- Nov. 24:** "Having an Intercessor" (Exodus 32:7-14)

Another factor that put me outside the mainstream at Dallas Seminary was my affinity for traditional denominational forms of Christianity. Having started out as a predominantly Presbyterian institution, the seminary now caters almost exclusively to a network of non-liturgical, independent churches.

— So much of my subsequent spiritual and educational journey has essentially been a reaction *against* Dallas Seminary and the style of Christianity it represents. Part of that rebellion took the form of pursuing doctoral studies in social ethics at an exceedingly liberal institution and then seeking ordination in the Presbyterian Church (USA)

But sometimes it's only in retrospect that we can see how an experience has benefited us. Just like rebellious teenagers generally come around to appreciating their parents as they get older, 40 years of hindsight have enabled me to come to terms with my time in Dallas. I may not have toed the line on every issue or fit in with the church culture Dallas Seminary fosters. But in terms of ministry style, ***I am unapologetically a "Dallas Man."***



The course of study there (at least during my student days) didn't necessarily involve a lot of originality and critical thinking, but in its own way, it was pretty rigorous. So far as I know, Dallas is the only seminary in the country where the standard degree program involves a four-year course of study leading to a ThM, rather than the customary 3-year MDiv. The extra year is needed to accommodate a stringent set of requirements: 3 years of Greek, 2 years of Hebrew, 3 years of systematic theology, and 3 semesters of historical theology. All 66 books of the Bible are covered thoroughly, either in a Greek or Hebrew exegesis course or in one of the 6 required "Bible Exposition" classes. Four preaching classes formed the centerpiece of the practical ministry requirements. ***Clearly, nobody comes out of Dallas Seminary without a solid grasp of the Bible and the Christian faith (in its classical expression) and without being equipped to communicate those truths effectively!***

That course of study laid the foundation for my ministry. Lord willing, Stacey and I will be in Dallas later this month to take part in the centennial celebration. For me, it will represent a small token of appreciation for what that Dallas Seminary education has meant to me. You might call it the prodigal coming home.

And I think it's important for all of you to know this background as well. To whatever extent my ministry of preaching and teaching has been spiritually beneficial to you, much of the credit belongs to Dallas Seminary. You are seeing the fruits of that century-old vision God planted in the heart of Lewis Sperry Chafer!

Leadership

Session

Moderator

Rev. William McConnell

Clerk of Session

Debra South

Class of 2024

Kenny Drake

Denise Ayers

Class of 2025

Sharlyn Deterding

Debra South

Class of 2026

Tanner Miner

Kyle Nickels

Deacons

Class of 2024

Kathy Friedli

Sherrill Konfrst

Julie Nickels

Class of 2025

Ryleigh Hill

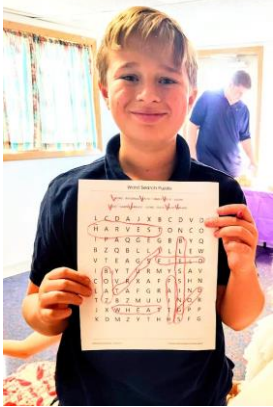
Stacey McConnell

Karla Remmers

Vacation Leave

The pastor will be on vacation from October 21 through October 27. Any pastoral care needs during this time should be referred to elder-on-call Kenny Drake.

Sunday School



Rally Day activities in September kicked off another year of learning and discipleship for younger members of our church family.

Sunday school continues meeting on alternating weeks during the 10 am worship hour. Students are dismissed prior to the sermon.

"Teach children how they should live, and they will remember it all their life."

(Proverbs 22:6, Good News translation)

Worship & Family Life Sharlyn Deterding, Team Lead

Guest Preacher



We're honored to have the **Rev. Dr. Mike Elliott**, recently retired pastor of First Presbyterian, Bellevue, coming to lead worship and minister the Word on October 27 (Reformation Sunday). With a doctorate in chemistry, Mike started out working as a research chemist in Pittsburgh, PA. After sensing a call to vocational ministry, he completed night classes at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary

and was ordained in 1998. Before coming to Bellevue in 2015, he served congregations in Western Pennsylvania and Albuquerque, New Mexico. His family includes wife, Sharon (an Omaha school teacher), an adult daughter, and feline companion, Mo. Be sure to join us in worship day to extend a customary warm welcome to Mike and be blessed by what he has to share.

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Leadership Teams

Worship and Family Life

- Sharlyn Deterding, *Team Leader*
- Deb South, *Session Rep.*
- Christina Dolvin
- Linnea Hill
- Julie Nickels
- Sherrill Konfrst
- Laraine Young

Mission and Outreach

- Kyle Nickels, *Team Leader*
- George Collins
- Melanie Honaker
- John McConnell
- Stacey McConnell
- Dana Stahl
- Ann Wieringa

Christian Education

- Denise Ayers, *Team Leader*
- Sharlyn Deterding
- Kathy Friedli
- Julie Nickels
- Linnea Hill

Properties and Finance

- Kenny Drake, *Team Leader*
- Sharlyn Deterding, *Session Rep.*
- Dave Friedli
- Linnea Hill
- Norm Koester
- Gary Reike
- Michael Stahl

School Supply Drive



Here are some of the items we collected for the Cougar Convenience Corner. We had a successful supply drive! In addition, the Deacons contributed a box of hygiene products.

Litter Clean-Up



The next litter clean-up along our church's stretch of Hwy 1 will take place on **Sunday, October 20**. Volunteers will meet at the high school at 11:30 am.

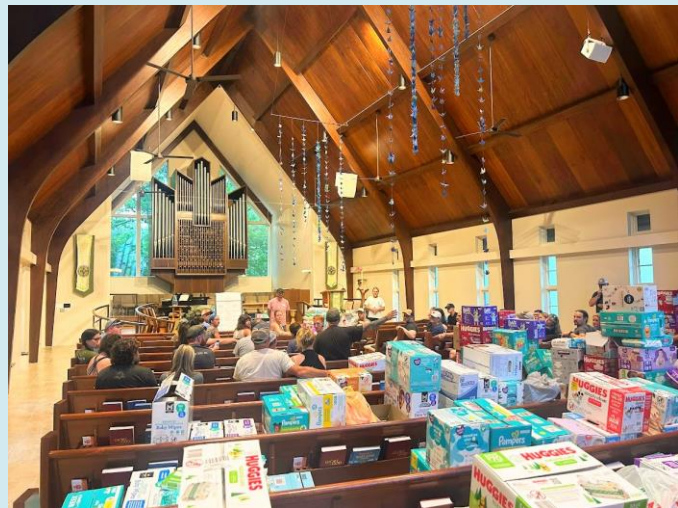
Soup and Bingo Night



Come on out for a night of soup and bingo on **Sunday, Nov. 3, 4-6:30 pm** (See p. 1 for details.)

Remember this is a community outreach event, so invite friends and neighbors!

Presbyterians Respond to N. C. Disaster



When Hurricane Helene caused massive flooding and devastation in Western North Carolina, the congregation of **Black Mountain Presbyterian** (15 miles east of Asheville) swung into action. The church building quickly became a refuge for neighbors seeking food and comfort. The congregation immediately began serving hot meals three times a day and dispensing supplies. The fellowship hall (and even the sanctuary at one point) became a warehouse with the narthex serving as a distribution point. Just as importantly, the church became a source of spiritual support and comfort. Amazingly, the congregation includes no less than 53 retired pastors and missionaries, so they are well equipped to provide spiritual ministry. Pastor Mary Katherine Robinson said some people "just need a hug. . . They need a shoulder to cry on. . . There are some that lost everything that they have." She went on to say: "It's the poor places in town, the places near the creeks and the rivers that flooded, and so I feel like we're really caring for the least of these and the people in our community that cannot get out of town,"