
TWIN BUTTES CONGREGATIONAL UCC

History written by Hazel Stone – February, 1997

History of the Name by Edwin Benson – March, 1997

*Our Light is Brightly Shining

By “the Board of Twin Buttes Congregational Church” – February, 2007

The Twin Buttes Congregational UCC is the Nueta Church after it was moved from its location near the Missouri River when the Garrison Dam was constructed, to land in the area that would become known as the Twin Buttes Community.

To write the history of the Twin Buttes Congregational Church it is necessary to go back in time, to the beginning of the Nueta Church. To do this, I have used as my only resource, the book written by the Rev. and Mrs. Harold W. Case entitled “100 Years at Fort Berthold 1876-1976”.

There was a young man by the name of LeRoy Holding Eagle who had received his education at the Fort Berthold Mission School. From the very first, LeRoy had shown much interest in Bible stories; he asked many questions of the missionary's son, Robert Hall, who was about his age. This resulted in a friendship that led Robert to take up missionary work. It was also the real beginning of Christian work among the Mandan Indians. It soon became Leroy's dream to see a house of Worship built for his people. Despite the opposition of his grandfather and his parents, Leroy persisted in holding religious services in his own home. He also began collecting money in view of building a Chapel someday.

About the same time, LeRoy began to look for a site on which the Chapel would be built. He finally decided on some vacant land near the Missouri river where a Mandan Medicine lodge had stood. The Lodge had been torn down; the land had been reserved by the Tribe, for the use of the American Missionary Association, sponsors of the Fort Berthold Mission.

As soon as the site had been secured, LeRoy appealed to the various Societies, and Churches in the area, for gifts. In this action, he felt that anything given by anybody, to further God's work, was consecrated. Money began to flow in slowly, but surely. The Congregational Church at Independence and several Indian ranchers gave generous gifts.

Then came a period of depression for LeRoy died of tuberculosis. The people were left without native leadership. This wasn't for long however because LeRoy's dedication to God's work had touched the lives of several of the older men. Little Owl and Sitting Crow took up the work of collecting money so that the Church could be built. While they felt the lack of education and had many difficulties to overcome, they persisted. Both men became known as Christian leaders among the Mandans. Then the Bank in which the money had been deposited as it was received, failed. This didn't cause Little Owl and Sitting Crow to give up; they just started all over again. (Eventually all of the money plus interest was returned).

Finally the people decided to begin with the construction of their long awaited Chapel with the money on hand, plus what could be raised with Basket Socials, making and selling quilts, selling items that were donated, and having dinners. During August of 1925 carpenters came; the Indian people camped around the site to haul water, sand, and gravel, cement, and lumber; they dug the basement. The Indian people did everything possible to save expense, and the building was erected.

One of the great problems that concerned everyone was the lack of a Native leader, one who knew the Mandan language, and had sufficient education to interpret the Bible, and lead in Worship.

At this time, Robert Lincoln, better known among his people as White Bull, who had enjoyed their confidence for many years, came forward telling of his early experience in studying the New Testament, of his touch with the missionary during his boyhood years, how he had for a long time been interested in doing God's work. If the people were willing he would be happy to give his services such as they were, with no thought of being paid. So Robert Lincoln with the help of the Missionary became the minister; he remained as such, until the Nueta Church was forced to relocate because the Garrison Dam was built.

The first Sunday that the Church was used, people came bringing their lunches prepared to spend the day. They also planned to dedicate the basement to the worship of God; much work remained unfinished in the Chapel. Despite every economy, they found that they still owed about \$250.00. They had received generous help (about 1/4 of the total cost from the Church Building Society) and help from local Church Associations, Woman Societies, Christian Endeavors especially of the Dickinson Association, who brought gifts amounting to \$200.00. The people decided to begin at home; everyone present gave something. After the sale was held, the debt was reduced to about \$90.00.

The Nueta Church was dedicated on October 9, 1925. Everyone who had helped was invited to come to join in Worship, inspect the building and have a big feast. Hundreds came; it was a time of great rejoicing. As Deacon Little Owl said, "We know that God is happy with us; He has given us such a beautiful day."

The Nueta Church was relocated in 1953: it was moved out of the bottomlands onto land given for that purpose by John Stone, Sr. This site was adjacent to the area that would become the headquarter of Government Services (the school, homes for employees, roads department, etc.) and would become known as the Twin Buttes Community. The Cemetery was relocated on land gifted to the Church by Rev. Robert Lincoln the first and only native pastor of the Nueta Church.

The relocated Church was enlarged; the Nueta Church that began its journey starting in 1922 became the Twin Buttes Congregational Church in 1953.

The Reverend Robert Fox, an Indian of Ankara descent, became the first pastor; he served the Church from 1953-1955. During this period in time, the Halliday Congregational Church and the Twin Buttes Church were yoked, one Pastor serving two parishes. This continued until about 1965 at which time the Halliday Church became inactive.

The Pastors who have served are as follows:

Rev. Robert Fox	1953 - '55
Rev. Alice Watson	1955 - '58
Mrs. Deborah Hertz	1958 - '60
Rev. John Degenhart	1960 - '61
Rev. Walter Stark	1961 - '65
Mrs. Deborah Hertz	1965 - `72
Rev. Ed Hempel	1972 - `76
Rev. Gerald Geske	1976 - `79
Rev. Sara Brown	1980 - `84
Rev. Vivian Bradwisch	1944 - 2005
Now serving: Reverend Barry Zietz	2005 — Present

About Our Name by Edwin Benson:

The early 1900's Dr. Robert Hall transferred to the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation from Eagle Buttes, South Dakota. Dr. Hall brought along the name given by the Sioux Tribe, of "Ho' Wasta (Good voice)." Later on Reverend Harold W. Case changed the name to "Nu'eta Church".

Before 1953, Reverend Case ministered to all of the Churches on Fort Berthold. Robert Lincoln served as the first Pastor of the Nu'eta Church before it was relocated at Twin Buttes. He served from 1925 —1953.

During 1954 — 1961,. we had a "Special Worker" serving all our churches here namely, Reverend Austin Engel. He was Pastor of the New Town Church from 1954 —1961. He continued serving part—time with Reverend Case throughout the Churches on Fort Berthold Indian Reservation until 1965. He was then commissioned to be the Executive.

Following the building of the Garrison Dam in the 1950's, the Nu` eta church was renamed "The Twin Buttes Congregational Church" and in 1955 the title "United Church of Christ was added.

The Twin Buttes Congregational Church ministry and purpose is; to bring the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ forward bringing to those who enter into Worship with us hope, comfort, peace, new strength as we bind together in the love of the Lord our God. To enlarge our vision in telling others account the freedom that we have through Jesus Christ; *“with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” (Ephesians 4:2-4)*

Sunday Worship: 11am Central time Sunday School: 11 am Central Time

Youth Class: 2:30 pm Central Time Wednesday Prayer: 7 pm Central. Time

In purpose we stand sure knowing that our youth are the most valuable asset in every Church that names the name of Jesus Christ. We have Sunday school hour teaching our young people to love the Lord and follow Jesus as the Scriptures tell about the life of our Savior. They learn to

pray and grow in their faith. God's presence shines brightly as they learn through the teaching of the stories that give them encouragement to be a Christian of truth and to be faithful with a commitment to be honest, to show kindness, to be gentle, learning also wisdom with knowledge to be an able servant of God our creator as Pastor Barry meets with them every Tuesday.

These are stories from the Scriptures about Moses, Daniel, Noah, Isaiah, the Disciples of Christ, Paul and others who are examples of faithfulness and obedience to God learning also His great love for all people. Each child is encouraged to participate in skits, music, memorizing, and more.

Through the teachings in the Scripture, our young people learn to make 'right choices' and have purpose to set goals for the growth of good things in life: health, integrity, to be useful citizens and to better their country and culture; enlarge their mind, soul, and learn the true value of life and death. It is imperative for them to be educated in right morals and knowing right from wrong.

The Twin Buttes Congregational Church desire to be examples of what true Christian faith is about. We have the "hour of prayer vigil" on Wednesday evenings. Whatever God calls us to do he will also be faithful to equip us. *Gospel work in our day must be more than just little stories, doctrinal presentations, and polite lectures.* It must carry a sense of God's living power. We have an urgent call to return to prayer meetings, (not a social), in the church. Here is a place to hold one another up so we do not quit the race. Trials can pull us down if we are alone without the fellowship and prayers with and for one another.

We have different "special events" with groups coming to Twin Buttes to minister in song and bring messages of the Love of God and also dramas that involve the adults as well as our youth.

We are a Church that teaches values in making right choices and getting a solid education. To mainly lead a forthright life with high integrity while learning the truth of God's plan and purpose for us to be true Christian believers. We truly have a desire to be examples of what truth and Christian faith is all about.

We support the missions of the UCC, Samaritan's purse [filling and sending shoeboxes to the Children in other countries as well as our own]. We help where we can with those who need gifts, support, and food where it is needed.

We are adding onto our main Church building. It is taking a little longer than we had planned. Help is limited to whenever our Men, Women, and other volunteers are available to help. Jobs and other obligations take time and certainly the weather does not always cooperate when our workers are available. It is our #1 project, nevertheless.

"Our light is shining brighter and brighter as we go on. God is our help and our pathway is brightly lit by the dear Saviors' love every day."