

President's Report to the Ruggles B.O.D.
January 22nd, 2026 (*1st Quarterly B.O.D. meeting of 2026*)
Joshua's Stones, 1st Peter's Stones, & David Livingstone

The book of Joshua has much to say about new beginnings. We sang "*Joshua Fought the Battle of Jericho*" often at Camp last summer—it was great!

But there are numerous other stories in the book of Joshua. One of the greatest is the "*new beginning*" of the children of Israel in Joshua 4. The "encampment" (*a term for our Camp Meeting over the years*) was on the banks of the river Jordan. 40 years of wilderness wanderings, the past, were behind them and after the parting of the Jordan they walked across on dry land.

God had an interesting word to Joshua. "*Take for yourselves 12 stones from here, out of the midst of the Jordan...these stones shall be a memorial to the children of Israel forever.*" (Joshua 4:3-7) These stones beg the question for the Ruggles family, "What memorial stones are we building for God's glory?"

In our society, we tend to think that the word "*Memorial*" is synonymous to Death. "*Somebody died there.*" It tends to be *passive*. However, this is not the mind of the word in the Bible. It is often quite the opposite—it's about the LIFE of God's action poured out. This is why Holy Communion isn't a passive understanding of "a dead Jesus", but rather a glorious remembrance of His life among us.

1st Peter 2:4,5 picks up the *active* reality. "*Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones...*". Peter calls Jesus a *living* stone and we also are *living* stones. "Wait! stones are not living---they are just rocks—something you sit on or throw." What is living about a stone!? According to Bible, everything! *Every* camper, young and old, for 150+ years are coming to Christ, the ultimate Rock, as we are all smaller but "living stones"—being built up into a spiritual house for God's glory!

This leads to the incredible story of a famous Scottish missionary by the name of David Livingstone. He grew up with little but felt a missionary call early in his life. He headed to Africa as a medical doctor, a missionary, and a preacher. He fought against the horrors he witnessed in the slave trade. "Why do you go?" he was asked. "*I was compelled by the love Christ.*" May we go likewise!

This love meant he faced many lions, both literal and figurative. One major story is of his encounter with an actual lion who, "*....caught me by the shoulder as he sprang, and we both came to the ground together. Growling horribly close to my ear, he shook me as a terrier does a rat.*" David Livingstone died in 1873 and his remains had to be transferred to his home --- "*...they were easily identified by the old lion wound on the shoulder.*" There is a statue to the lion attack to this day.

Ruggles family, it is a new year in 2026. May we be "*stone-like*" for Christ!