

# OAHE CHAPEL NEWS

Fall 2017

Newsletter of the Oahe Chapel Preservation Society

Pierre, SD

## **Oahe Chapel Preservation Society 2017-2018 Board of Directors**

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The Oahe Chapel Preservation Society was founded in 1984 to preserve and maintain the historic Oahe Chapel near Pierre, South Dakota. Funding for maintenance is provided through annual memberships in the Oahe Chapel Preservation Society, rental fees, donations, and fundraisers.

## **OAHE CHAPEL CELEBRATES 140<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

The 140th anniversary of the Oahe Chapel was celebrated on September 24. The celebration included an ecumenical worship service led by Reverend Emily Munger of Pierre's First Congregational United Church of Christ, music by Jack Horner, and a luncheon held in the Oahe Dam Visitor Center next to the chapel. Freewill donations collected during the event totaled \$704 and are earmarked for the continued maintenance of this historic building.

The Oahe Mission was established in 1872 by Rev. Thomas Riggs and his younger brother Henry to serve the Sioux Indians of central South Dakota. Thomas and his first wife, Nina, operated the mission. A small log house was the center of activities. When the home became too small, money was raised for the construction of the chapel. Funding started with 14 cents sent by Nina's six-year-old nephew. Other donations came from Nina's home church in Bangor, Maine, the American Board of Foreign Missions and the Dakota tribes. The cost for the new chapel came to \$1,400, and the first service was held there in September of 1877. Rev. Riggs stayed active in this church until his death in 1940, and his second wife, Louisa, continued to teach Sunday school classes there until her death in 1951.

Fast forward to 2017: we were thrilled to have three former students of Rev. and Mrs. Riggs in attendance at the 140th anniversary celebration. Mrs. Josephine Robinson Venner, Mrs. Helen Robinson Tuveson, and Mr. Harvey Robinson were baptized at the Oahe Chapel as children by Rev. Riggs and had Louisa as a Sunday school teacher. It was an honor to meet them and a joy to hear their stories about this special place.



*Mrs. Josephine Robinson Venner shares her childhood memories of the Oahe Chapel; Rev. Emily Munger leads the 140th anniversary service.*



## Eat Pizza & Support the Chapel!

Are you looking for an easy—and delicious!—way to support the Oahe Chapel? Then mark your calendar for **February 13, 2018**, and come to the Fort Pierre (SD) Pizza Ranch for supper! The Board of Trustees will be busing tables from 5:00-8:00 pm that evening, and Pizza Ranch will donate 15% of the carry-out and dine-in sales to the Oahe Chapel Preservation Society. The funds raised will go towards our mission of preserving and maintaining the chapel for future generations. We were fortunate to participate in the same fundraiser this fall and raised \$476.48 through Pizza Ranch's 15% donation and additional tips. This is an easy way to raise money, a good excuse to go out for supper, and a great opportunity to raise awareness for the Oahe Chapel—it's a WIN-WIN-WIN! Tell your family, call your friends, and invite your neighbors. We want to see everyone at the Pizza Ranch on February 13!



**Mrs. Josephine Robinson Venner** attended the Oahe Chapel as a child. We were fortunate to meet her at the 140th anniversary celebration in September, and she generously shared her original photos with us. We are reprinting them here to share with our members and friends.

On the left, Louisa and Thomas Riggs sit on the steps outside their home.

In the middle, the chapel is shown in its original location in the Peoria Bottom.

On the right is the stone house built after the original log home burned down. The stone house was left in place when the Oahe Dam was constructed, and it now sits at the bottom of Lake Oahe.

### RENT THE OAHE CHAPEL

Call now to reserve the Oahe Chapel for your wedding, church service, family reunion, or other special event! The Chapel is available for rent year-round at the cost of \$50. Members of the Oahe Chapel Preservation Society are eligible to rent the facility for a reduced rate of \$35. The historic Oahe Chapel provides a unique setting and a beautiful view to make your event truly memorable. Events for 2018 and beyond are being booked now. To learn more, call (605) 773-3458.