

# Sacred Spaces

Exploring Houses of Worship in the Ozarks



One of the tasks I enjoy as “distribution manager” of *Senior Moments Newspaper* is going to or through the small towns of the Ozarks. Besides checking out great flea markets and cafes along the way, I get to see the many houses of worship. Pictured below are a couple that I’ve seen.



St Luke United Methodist Church, Bois D’Arc.

(Photos by Bruce Menzies)



Trinity Lutheran Church, Freistat.

# Driving to Wyoming in a Blizzard

BY C. J. GREER

It was April 11, 1991, when Carrie Ann, my oldest daughter and I were driving towards Gillette, Wyoming, to attend my brother, Jack’s funeral. We left early that morning, planning on driving straight through, the distance of 1,100 miles. No small task, but I had done it before several times.

We arrived in Douglas, which is 114 miles south of Gillette, at 3:00 p.m. We decided to get a motel room, get up early, dress for the funeral, and then drive on up. We hadn’t listened to any weather forecasts. We didn’t know a major blizzard was moving in.

I got up early, and looked outside, and everything was covered with snow. The wind was already blowing it around in little whirls, and I knew we were in trouble. I got Carrie Ann up, and we prepared to go. When we went outside to get in the little van, it was turning into a ground blizzard.

We didn’t take time to eat breakfast and we drove to a hardware store, but had to wait for it to open. When it did, I bought a shovel.

They asked where we were going, and I told them Gillette. “Well, haven’t you heard the broadcast? They’ve already closed the highway into Gillette, and they are closing the roads out of Douglas, even as we speak. This is going to turn into a major blizzard!”

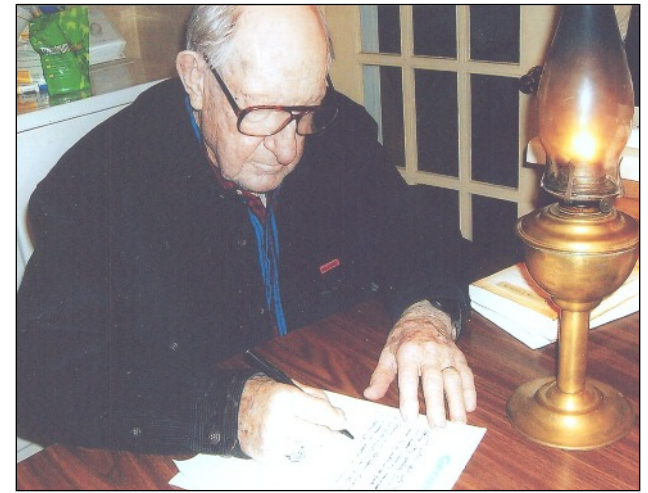
We thanked them and hit the road. I told Carrie Ann we would pray our way there. I wanted to get to Jack’s funeral at any cost. Jack was the most successful of all six kids in our family.

We drove around the gate that closed the highway at Douglas, and got to Bill, Wyoming. Bill is just a wide spot with one store and a post office. They were all closed. We pulled up close to the post office and didn’t know what to do. We finally decided to go on. We were half way there.

It was almost a complete whiteout. Carrie Ann had her head out the window watching the snow depth posts they have along all highways in Wyoming. I had my head out the driver’s side, watching also.

The highway was completely non-visible. Only the posts were visible, when you were almost on them. Carrie Ann would yell, “Get over, Dad.” I would swing over until I saw one on my side, and then swing back. So back and forth, back and forth, until the snow became too deep, and the drifts became so high, we knew we couldn’t go much further.

I knew we were in dire danger, but I didn’t want to tell Carrie Ann how much danger we were really in. I knew that if this snow didn’t abate, and lasted for two or three days, we probably wouldn’t survive in the little van.



C. J. Greer, (1921-2013) recalled this story as well as many others while writing his memoirs by an oil lamp. Rev. Greer, my father-in-law, was a real cowboy from Gillette, Wyoming, and founding pastor of Highway Assembly of God church in Brighton, Missouri.

About that time, a huge highway truck came out of nowhere, and parked momentarily beside us before taking off. Carrie Ann says, “Go dad, he wants us to follow him.” He led us about a mile to Reno’s Junction, another landmark along the long, long road. It’s a bar, a dancehall, and a restaurant. A din of iniquity, if you ever saw one!

The parking lot was full of cars. The place was packed out with people. Everyone was trying to get on the phones. I overheard an oil well worker talking to his boss in Gillette. I heard him say, “I’m coming on in. I’ve got chains on the company truck, and I’ll by-pass the highway gate.”

I walked up to him and told him of our dilemma. I asked if my daughter and I could catch a ride with him. He had to call his boss back to get permission, and I heard him say, “He’s a Greer trying to get to his brother’s funeral.” The boss said, “I know the Greers, bring them on in.” We were about thirty-five miles from Gillette. Praise the Lord for answered prayer!

We directed him to the church, and when he let us out, the funeral service would begin in less than five minutes! We didn’t even get to set with the family, but I was so thankful just to be there.

The next day the highways were cleared and the gates opened, so people could travel. Herma and Ted Czaplak took us down to Reno, where we picked up our van and headed back to Missouri. Carrie Ann said, “Well Dad, you got your wish.” On our way up, I casually said, “I kind of wish we would get in on a good old-fashioned Wyoming blizzard!” I’ll not make THAT mistake again!