

# Reflection: Hamstrung Horses

By Sarah Dixon Young

I recently visited the Hi-Line Railroad Bridge in Valley City, ND.

In operation since 1908, the bridge is 3,860 feet long and 162 feet above the Sheyenne river. It was amazing to watch a train cross it as I stood watching from far below.

"Because the bridge was of vital importance in moving supplies and men," the state tourism site reads, "it was closely guarded during both World Wars to prevent sabotage." American Legion volunteers kept the bridge safe until the National Guard could be assembled shortly after



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the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

You protect your assets during times of war. The bridge had been constructed from 14,000,000 pounds of steel. Not only was it a valuable thoroughfare but it also

would be valuable just as a pile of material.

When Joshua led the people of Israel into the Promised Land, he knew that Moses had given the command to devote the Caananites to destruction.

Just as God made a distinction between darkness and light, He asked His people to make a distinction between those who followed Him and those who did not.

So, when Israel defeated a whole cohort of Caananite nations, why did God command Joshua to hamstring the horses and burn the chariots with fire? It doesn't make sense.

Surely, horses and chariots would have been helpful for the rest of Israel's campaign. They could have learned to use them in war. There were plenty of battles left to fight. Why destroy useful resources?

The Lord didn't give Joshua a reason, but Joshua obeyed. Who needed better or more resources when the Lord was fighting for them? He was the only resource they needed.

The Psalmist later wrote, "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God."

Looking up at the

railroad bridge in Valley City, I wondered what resources I trust instead of the Lord for victory in my spiritual battles.

All Christians fight temptation. We stand against evil. We make a distinction between good and evil based on God's judgments, and we are opposed when we do.

The Apostle Paul wrote, "For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds."

The Lord knew that the Israelites would not need those horses or those chariots. He did not want them to be lured into the idolatry of attributing vic-

tory to these weapons of the flesh.

Instead, He equipped them with the same weapons that He gives to us: His presence, His power, and His presence.

He knows that we don't need anything that helps us cope with spiritual opposition other than Himself. Medicine, music, chocolate, alcohol, drugs, relationships, or any other resources that we are tempted to turn to in the heat of spiritual battle need to be hamstrung and burnt with fire.

When the Lord fights for us, He is the only resource we need.

## 'Don't be afraid, for I am your God'

"Don't fear, because I am with you; don't be afraid, for I am your God." - Isaiah 41:10, CEB

At 16-years-old I was unlike in my peers in one significant way: I had no desire to get my driver's license. In truth, I was scared to get it. I had my reasons. My driver's ed instructor barked at me every time I drove. I had

plenty of older friends who happily drive me around. And, at the end of my freshman year, two older schoolmates had died in a tragic vehicular accident. What was an anticipated milestone for my peers only induced dread in me.

And so, I sat shaking in the dreary DMV on the day of my driver's test, praying for a merci-

ful examiner and Isaiah 41:10 on repeat in my head.

It was the first time of many these words calmed me.

There is much in the world to be afraid of: creepy crawly things, the dark, public speaking. We may also fear failure, difference, or losing something or someone precious to us.

Whatever it is, we don't choose fear; it just happens. But, we can choose how we respond to our fear.

In the case of fearing people who are different from us, we can let our fear fuel hatred, violence, and isolation. Or, we can be aware of our fear and keep forging relationships rooted in love, kindness, and con-

nection.

God's presence - in and with us - leads us to do the second.

Unless you've got the genes of a daredevil, it's pretty hard to not be afraid. But, God gives us the courage to do what we are called to do, even as we are afraid. Yes, God gives the courage to pass a dreaded driver's test; God also gives us the

courage to generously give of ourselves and our resources, to boldly proclaim God's message of love in word and in deed, and to passionately work for justice and peace.

Do not be afraid. God is with you.

*Submitted by Pastor JoHanna Buchholz Our Savior's Lutheran Church, ELCA Devils Lake, ND*

# CHURCH DIRECTORY

## Your Guide To Local Houses of Worship

<p><b>ASSEMBLY OF GOD</b> River of Life 1903 Hwy 20 Devils Lake 701-662-4582 www.riverlife.us Sunday: 10 a.m. worship</p>	<p><b>CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS</b> 20th St. &amp; Lincoln Ave. Devils Lake Sunday: 10 a.m. Sacrament at 11 a.m.</p>	<p><b>LIGHTHOUSE ASSEMBLY OF GOD</b> Fort Totten, N.D. 701-766-4826 Sunday 10:30 a.m.</p>	<p><b>ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC CHURCH</b> 515 Fourth St. Devils Lake 662-7558 Monday -Friday at 12:00pm Tuesday at 10:00am at Odd Fellows Wednesday at 10:00am at Eventide Friday at 9:30am at St. Joseph School Saturday at 8:30am &amp; 5:00pm Sunday at 7:30am, 9:00am &amp; 11:00am</p>	<p><b>ST. WILLIAMS CATHOLIC CHURCH</b> Maddock, N.D. 438-2668 Wednesday: 7 p.m. Mass. Sunday: 10:30 a.m. Mass. Mass at 5 p.m. on the first Friday of the month.</p>
<p><b>ASSUMPTION OF MARY CATHOLIC CHURCH</b> Starkweather, N.D. 292-4301 Sunday: Mass: Rotating 8:30 &amp; 10:30 a.m. with St. Mary's, Munich Call 682-5178 (Munich).</p>	<p><b>DAKOTA BAPTIST CHURCH</b> West Highway 57 Fort Totten Church - 766-4516 Sunday: 11 a.m. worship.</p>	<p><b>MORNING STAR PARISH</b> 701-262-4714 www.morningstarparish.com Worship services at 8 a.m., 9:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. rotating: American, Pekin, Warwick, Sigdal and Sheyenne Lutheran</p>	<p><b>ST. MICHAEL CATHOLIC CHURCH</b> St. Michael, ND 58370 766-4151 Sunday Mass: 8 a.m. and 9:30 a.m.</p>	<p><b>SEVEN DOLORS CATHOLIC CHURCH</b> Fort Totten 766-4314 Sunday: 11 a.m. Mass. Daily Mass: 7 a.m.</p>
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<p><b>BETHEL EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH</b> 1312 East Walnut St. Devils Lake 662-3758 www.bethelfree.com Sunday worship: 9:30 a.m.</p>	<p><b>EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE ADVENT</b> Sixth Street and Fifth Avenue Devils Lake 11 a.m. Morning prayer 1st, 2nd, 3rd Sundays Holy Eucharist- 4th Sunday</p>	<p><b>OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN CHURCH, ELCA</b> 612 14th Ave. NE Devils Lake, N.D. 662-5112 Sunday: 10 a.m. Service Wednesday: 6 p.m. Service</p>	<p><b>ST. PETER'S LUTHERAN CHURCH</b> 7th St. &amp; 7th Ave. 662-2245 Devils Lake Missouri Synod Worship: 11 a.m. Dial-a-Devotion: 662-3158.</p>	<p><b>WEBSTER CHAPEL</b> Webster, N.D. Worship is at 9 a.m. the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Sundays.</p>
<p><b>CHRIST THE KING CATHOLIC CHURCH</b> Tokio Saturday: 7 p.m. Mass all year round.</p>	<p><b>GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH</b> 311 5th Ave. NE Devils Lake 701-230-1332 Sunday: 10:30am and 6 p.m.</p>	<p><b>ST. BONIFACE CATHOLIC CHURCH</b> Esmond, N.D. 249-8360 Tuesday-Saturday: Weekday Mass at 9 a.m. Saturday: 5 p.m. Mass. Sunday: 8:30 a.m. Mass.</p>	<p><b>ST. THOMAS EPISCOPAL CHURCH</b> Fort Totten, N.D. 11 a.m. Holy Eucharist 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 5th Sundays, 4th Sunday - Morning Prayer</p>	<p><b>WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH</b> 501 Fifth St. NE Devils Lake, 662-3584 Sunday worship 11:00 a.m.</p>
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