

South Apalachin Baptist Church, November 2016, CONGRATULATIONS!

I am sorry that I am unable to be with you on this exciting and blessed year. I am so happy and pleased with all God has accomplished in and through each one of you, all these many years.

To update those of you whom I haven't had the pleasure of meeting personally, I was born while my father pastored here. From here he was led by the Lord to take another pastorate near Corning, NY, but was later asked to return to South Apalachin. I spent my teen-aged years here.

I learned to love the little white church where my father, Pastor Ralph Chaffee preached. Mother taught Sunday School and developed a youth choir with all of the young people who came to be a part of it. Many of them were led to Christ during this period and experience of their lives.

A large addition was built on the church at that time giving us lots of room to carry on the needs of the many programs of a growing church. My Dad was called home to be with the Lord while pastoring here. On Wednesday evening, his breathing had become so threatening, that an ambulance was called to take him to a hospital. Before the arrival of the ambulance, a young man knocked at the parsonage door and was asked in by my mother. He was longing to be saved and needed help. Mother could not seem to meet that need, but Dad, having heard the conversation spoke out: "Send . . . him . . . in . . . here." There in his room, fighting for breath, Dad led him to Jesus as Lord and Savior, just as the ambulance arrived. After this, Dad lapsed into unconsciousness from which he never recovered, dying on Friday. What a joy it must have been to have his last act on earth to be one of leading someone to know Christ, before he stood in the presence of Christ. What a challenge this was to us.

The church continued to grow under some other fine pastors as you know. They never lost their care of mother who was suddenly widowed. How we praise the Lord for all those who came to the work of the Lord here. So very much, spiritually and physically, has been done for His glory. We are grateful to you.

When God led Bob and Helen Monell and us to start the youth ranch, El Rancho de Paz (The Ranch of Peace), now called Mapleridge Ranch in South Owego, it was the men and women of South Apalachin Baptist Church who pitched in, enabling the ministry to get started, and God blessed their labors of love with hundreds of young people coming to Christ. He laid the burden on the hearts of those of that period and they had and have a great reward in heaven laid up for them. The work continues.

In this past summer, Dale and I were involved in starting a Cowboy Church in Keokuk, Iowa. The last night we were there, having the church established, a woman came to our meetings from Hornell, NY, having flown in just to see us. She told us how thankful she was that as a child of eleven, she was saved at El Rancho de Paz. For fifty years she now has been teaching the gospel, reaching out to others, even having a church fellowship which meets in her house. She wanted to hear Dale preach one more time.

You are prayed for and remembered with deep love. May God bless you growing in His grace, knowledge and service. May His blessing rest on you until He comes and we all rejoice together with Him around His throne.

My congratulations for all you have done through Christ in South Apalachin.

With my love,
Opal Chaffee Linebaugh