

--- River's Edge Echo ---

Published by **FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SARATOGA, WYO.** Extra-March 2020

Schedule of Events:

Sunday:

Adult Bible Study—8:10 a.m.

Worship Service—9:30 a.m.

Fellowship time—10:30 a.m.

Wednesday:

Prayer Shawl Ministry—9:30 a.m.

Choir Practice—6:30 p.m.

Second Thursday of Month

Presbyterian Women—1:30 p.m.

Session meeting 2nd Thurs. 4:30

First Presbyterian Church

of Saratoga, Wyoming

The Rev. Steven Niccolls, pastor

Corner Third & Bridge Sts.

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Session—Ken Collamer, Richard Rakness, Vickie Stolns, John Wickstrom, Herman Strickland, 1 vacancy.

Treasurer—Sonja Collamer

Financial Sect.—Anne Wickstrom

Clerk of Session—John Wickstrom

Deacons—Carlene Sjoden, Sandy Willford, Laurie Johnston, Susan Collamer, Anne Wickstrom, Becky Strickland.

Session Committees:

Building /Grounds—Herm Strickland

Christian Education—Richard Rakness

Congregational Care—all Session members & Deacons

Endowment—Ken Collamer

Evangelism/Membership—Ken Collamer

Memorial—Vickie Stolns

Mission—Vickie Stolns

Worship & Music—John Wickstrom.

Leaders:

Adult Bible Study—Sonja Collamer

Choir Director—Laurie Johnston

Music—Laurie Johnston, Carol Clemetson, Peggy Hiser, Cindy Kessler, Teense Willford, David Weir

Memorial Committee—Marty Perue,

Carol Jo Jones, Vickie Stolns

Prayer Shawl Ministry—Barb Johnson, founder; Peggy Hiser

Presby. Women—Emily Niccolls

Prayer Chain—**Sherry Parlow: 326-3369**

Corporate Officers—Dick Perue, Joe Jones, Sonja Collamer, John Wickstrom

"River's Edge Echo"—Dick Perue



**CHECK YOUR EMAIL OR FACEBOOK
FOR CODE NUMBER TO ACCESS
ONLINE WORSHIP SERVICES
SUNDAY, MARCH 29, 2020**

Driven by fear of spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19), for only the second time in the 130 year history of the First Presbyterian Church of Saratoga, Wyo., no morning worship was held last Sunday, March 22, 2020, in the sanctuary. The first was a major construction project in 1994-95 that moved services across the street to St. Anne Catholic Church. As near as can be discovered in church records, this is the first time the church has been closed due to illness, flood, fire, disaster or war, according to local historian Dick Perue. The forced closure may have vacated the building, but it has not shut down the ministry with Pastor Steve Niccolls still available and worship services being conducted on line. (See accompanying stories).—*Photo by Emily Niccolls*

COVID-19 closes church; worship services now online

(Editor's note: In an attempt to prevent the spread of the deadly coronavirus (COVID-19) public gatherings in churches has been banned. This special edition of "River's Edge Echo" is being published and sent to you via both mail and electronically. We hope it will help you get online to enjoy the worship services. The following story was released last week, with new news articles appearing in this "Extra" issue of the Echo. We will keep you updated.)

Dear Church Members:

When I got home from a church Session meeting Thursday night, I knew I was going to write a letter. I was expecting it to be one with good news. Our Session had decided that we would continue to hold worship services until something changed that would require us to not open the church up for regular Sunday morning services. Imagine my surprise when I came home and saw on social media that Wyoming Governor Mark Gordon decided to ban public gatherings until April 3.

(See back page for ways worship services will continue to be held).

This period of time will serve to remind us that we are the church, and the building is just a resource the church can use. During this time, let us make sure that we reach out to one another. A simple phone call, text message, email can do a lot to keep the sense of church and community. I also ask you to remember to continue giving your tithes and offerings. The safest way of doing this would be using the postal service and mailing your check in as the church does not have a way to give on-line.

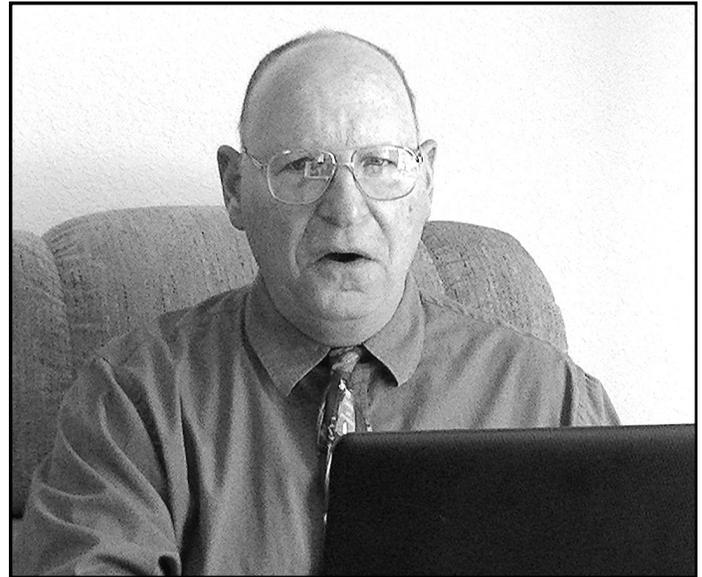
While all of us will miss our regular Sunday morning routine of gathering as the body of Christ, we can look at the bright side. The governor's order ends on April 3. That means that the order will end prior to the beginning of Holy Week. As long as the ban is not expanded, we will be able to hold our Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday and Easter Services.

During this season of having to find an alternative way to worship, I will be available to serve your spiritual needs. Please feel free to call, text, or email me if there is any way I can help us get through this time.—*Blessings, Pastor Steve*

Pastor outlines how to access Sunday Worship Services online

We are living in a time of turmoil. As many of you know, we tried to have church service using Zoom this past Sunday. It came with some problems. I know of three couples who tried to sign on using the link provided and were unable to get on. I know one couple who were able to get into the “room” but could not see any video nor hear the audio. One couple did not have audio but no video. I know dealing with technology can be frustrating (Emily could tell many stories of a seminary student who is glad there is no video of his frustration dealing with technology.) The suddenness of Governor Gordon’s order to shut down even groups of 10 came so quickly I went with the technology I knew. We will continue to explore other technology and see if it is user friendly. The church will let the congregation know if there are changes coming. I feel like I am white water rafting. While we might have a plan of attack, the current might have different ideas.

As I debriefed with people (both within FPCS and from outside), one idea came up that I want to try. I will be holding a practice Zoom meeting this Thursday, March 26, afternoon at 2:00. If you want to participate at a few minutes before 2:00 enter <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/596761034> into the place where you type in the web page address. You should get a screen welcoming you and saying if nothing prompts click here. When you click there, it will load a platform that should get you into the room. You will then see a screen asking if you want to join the room with computer video. If your computer has a camera in it click yes. If not, that is not a problem we will see your name, but not a picture. Then you will be asked if you want to join with computer audio. You will want to click yes to that. If you arrive to Zoom before the starting time, you will be told that you are waiting for the host (me) to join. That is OK. When I join, I will see who is waiting, and I will be able to transfer you from waiting into joining the room. We can trouble shoot any problems then. I will have my lap top hosting the meeting and I will have the church desk top open to the church email. If you have problems during this practice either call me at the church 326-



Sunday, March 22, 2020, Pastor Steve Niccolls conducted a modified worship services using a video conferencing program after the church buildings were closed because of the fear of the spread of the coronavirus.—Photo by Emily Niccolls.

5337 or email the church at 1pcsaratoga@union-tel.com.

On to Sunday’s service, I will be preaching from Ezekiel 37:1-14 (the valley of dry bones). What an amazing time to be preaching on that passage! As always, we will have the sermon on our church web page and Facebook page by Sunday evening. One thing Covid-19 and our fight to limit its damage has taught us is that the building is not the church. We, the worshippers, are. We need to continue to trust God. He is in control and always will be. While we may need to “do church differently for a while, we know that we serve the risen savior and that nothing will be able to separate us from the wonder love of God that is in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:39). Please also know that I am available to meet with you anytime. Please feel free to call, email, text, or drop into the church office. Together we will make it through this crisis. This church has had worse times and made it through. We too will overcome this challenge.—*Blessings Pastor Steve*



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