

--- River's Edge Echo ---

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July 2022

Christian Education strong; membership growth, retention needs help

We are reaching the half way point of the year. This might be a good time for each of us individually to look at what went well and what challenges did we face. Just like coaches in sports such as football and basketball take advantage of a halftime break to make an evaluation of what needs to be improved on, Each one of us might want to see what adjustments we might need to make for the second half of this year.

One area where we have done well as a church is in the area of Christian Education. We have a good adult



Photo by
Susan
Sherwood

Pastor Steve Niccolls with grand-daughter Margaret Sherwood.

Sunday morning Bible study that meets prior to worship most Sundays. We also had a great mid-week study on church history this winter. On this past Tuesday we started a summer study on some of the lesser known women in the Bible. Of course, the messages during the

Sunday worship also is filled with good instruction.

One area we are struggling is attracting new attendees and hopefully bring them into the membership of the church. Fortunately, there is a group of people in our church who are working under the oversight of the Evangelism committee to address that issue. They are starting up a monthly gathering called "Gather at the Table", with the goals of helping meet the needs of those who are experiencing food shortage by providing a monthly dinner. They hope by the church showing their concern, it will draw the attendees into worshiping with us and becoming active participants.

For the month of July I will spend the first two Sundays finishing the sermon series on the new heaven and new earth that I started in June. Then the last two Sundays we will begin looking at Paul's letter to the Colossians. That will take me through the month of August. I do not have any current plans for sermons starting with the month of September. If you have a suggestion for sermon topics, I would enjoy hearing them.—*Blessings, Pastor Steve*

Sermon passages for the month of July

July 3—Rev. 21:1-7 July 10—II Peter 3:10-14

July 17—Colossians 1:1-14

July 24—Col. 1:15-23 July 31—Col. 1:24-2:7

DEACONS' DOINGS

The Deacons do not meet during the summer months. They will resume on Sept. 11, 2022 for monthly meeting. If anyone is in need of the Deacons they may contact Becky Strickland or Susan Collamer, co-moderators, or Pastor Steve.—*submitted by Susan Collamer*

Adult Bible Study

The Sunday Morning Adult Bible Study group are continuing to work our way through the Paul's Book of letters to the Romans. We are nearing the end of Paul's wise advice. Last Sunday in Romans 13:8 we read, "Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law".

We will take a break after this study and begin afresh in the Fall. Same time (8:15 AM Sunday Mornings), same place (Fellowship Hall), same topic (the Holy Bible). You are welcome to Join us!!—*submitted by Sonja Collamer.*



Presbyterian Women

Attention all Ladies

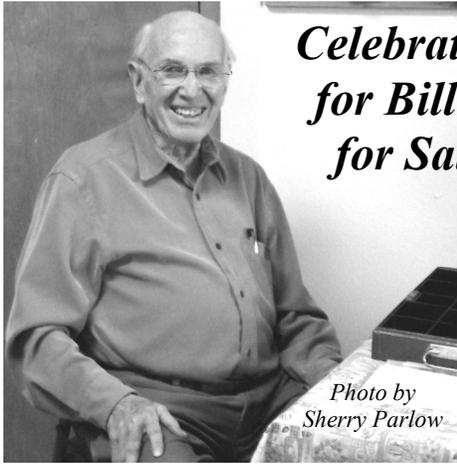
You are cordially invited to join Presbyterian Women for a time of fellowship on July 14th (the second Thursday) at 12 noon. Check with Emily Niccolls for the location in Encampment. We are asked to bring a bag lunch.

PW meets normally at 1:30 p.m. on the second Thursday of the month for a Bible study and business meeting plus a time of fellowship. Most meetings are held in Encampment, we try to carpool each month.—*submitted by Emily Niccolls*



Richard & Gloria Rakness celebrate their 68th wedding anniversary

Photo by Jodi Rakness



Celebration of life for Bill Baker set for Sat. July 9th

A celebration of life for Air Force Veteran and Saratoga Presbyterian Church member Bill Baker, 92, is scheduled for

Photo by Sherry Parlow

Saturday, July 9, 2022, from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. in the Saratoga Museum Pavilion.

He passed away in Saratoga June 23. He was born July 29, 1930, in Dickson, Tenn.

An article in the 2014 fall edition of the "AG-NEWS", a publication of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Wyoming, best portrays Bill's journey. The article was to announce the Ag. College recipient of its legacy award. It noted, "This year's (2014) Legacy Award recipient, Baker and his wife, Jeannette, who died in August last year, established the Bill and Jeannette Baker Agriculture Scholarship at UW."

Following are excerpts from that 2014 article:

Bill Baker, 84, sat in his rocking chair in his Saratoga living room after completing the story interview.

"Now I have a question for you," this year's Legacy Award recipient said. Baker, along with the other college award recipients, were to be honored at the dean's dinner and on the football field of the UW-Florida Atlantic football game September 20.

"The Department of Defense asked two or three years ago for veterans or retired veterans to begin to wear their medals or their ribbons on Memorial Day, the Fourth July, Veterans Day, and special occasions," the 20-year Air Force veteran said. "This is going to be a very special occasion for me, but I don't want to look like I'm showboating. Do you think it would be all right if I wore them?"

The question from the survivor of 739 combat missions in Korea and Vietnam was sincere. The boy from small town Clarksville, Tennessee, brimmed with pride when he was finally able to harness a mule team on his uncle's farm, plow a straight line, milk a cow, and toss a 100-pound feed sack over his shoulder. He had joined the Air Force in 1951 and went to Korea in 1952. He would later go to Vietnam after completing an assignment at the Air Force Academy.

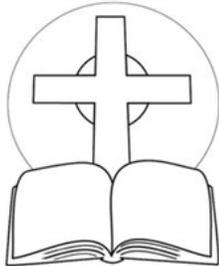
Pointing his F-94 up into the Korean skies, sometimes joined by another F-94, to check out the weather on top was absolutely delightful. And if joined by two F-80s they'd race, and that was just plain fun.

—continued on back page

Blessed Are Those Who Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness...

There is no need to re-invent the wheel. It is as round as it is going to get, and as functional. Likewise, when I come across a clear and concise commentary on a Bible passage, rather than re-writing it in my own words, I simply quote it, giving proper credit. This month, we were slated to learn about the fourth beatitude, found in Matthew 5:6: "***Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.***" In beginning my re-

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness



for they shall be satisfied.

search, I found the following article by Ron Allen, a 2021 graduate of Emmaus Bible College, who is currently pursuing a ThM. degree at Dallas Theological Seminary. I quote from Ron's commentary:

"Everyone knows that things are not the way they ought to be. No matter who you ask, there is a common dissatisfaction with the state of the world and a desire for things to be made right. Unfortunately, the common diagnoses for what is ailing society and the recommended treatments are often inaccurate. Most believe that if their preferred political ideology won the day, the world's problems would be fixed. Others claim that ideologies themselves are the source of our problems and that peace could be found if everybody would just love each other. Unfortunately, both solutions seek their answers in humanity and fail to acknowledge humanity's innate corruption. The real problem is that humanity has rejected God's rule over the earth, and the real solution is for God's rule to be re-established."

"While most seek after man-made solutions in vain, the beatitudes describe those who seek the solution which God has promised to provide. These verses depict those whose experiences would leave them with a gnawing hunger and thirst for the righteousness that God's coming kingdom would bring and are filled with hope for the time [when] Jesus will reign as king."

"When Christ's kingdom is established, what is wrong with the world will be made right, and the repentant will be the beneficiaries. Those who recognize that they are completely destitute and dependent on God [the poor in spirit], who mourn over all that is wrong with the world [those who mourn], and who are humbled before God [the meek, or humble] will one day enter Christ's kingdom and be comforted [satisfied] by the righteousness that it will bring."

--submitted by Virginia Senne

Fred Kent (Freddie) Williams

Recent news of the unexpected death of Freddie Williams, one of the valley's most loveable characters, spread like wildfire throughout the community.

Spreading just as fast were the many stories of his life and times here, especially from friend to friend and over the internet.

Among those were: "My heart hurts to hear of Freddy's passing. Once in a while we are blessed to have someone come along who makes us sit up and take notice. Freddy was just part of Saratoga. He made his mark, stopped to visit or help out, and say hello. He was part of the town charm. God rest his soul."

Saturday morning, June 25, 2022, friends and family of Fred Kent (Freddie) Williams are invited to continue telling their stories and sharing memories at a celebration of life at 10:00 a.m. in the Saratoga Presbyterian Church, followed by military and Odd Fellow serviced at the graveside in the family plot at the Saratoga Cemetery where his cremains will be interred.

Freddie, 66, passed away at his home in Saratoga June 9th, 2022.

A friend wrote, "Fred was a very special person—a sweet soul. He was always ready with a wave when you saw him walking down the street. I saw that big wave for the last time on Wednesday morning. I shall miss him. May God give you comfort & strength in this time of loss . . ."

He was born March 29, 1956, in Laramie, Wyo., to Martha G. Brown and Oliver Kent Jones, and as a child he was later adopted by Dale Williams. Freddie grew up and attended school in Laramie and Cheyenne before moving to Saratoga in 1973 where he attended high school and was a member of the 1974 state champion wrestling team. He graduated from Kelly Walsh high school in Casper in 1974 and then entered the Navy.

Following his discharge from the Navy in August of 1977, he returned to Saratoga and was working in the woods when he suffered severe brain and bodily injury in a pickup wreck which killed his best friend and injured his cousin. After more than a year of medical treatment at the Veterans hospitals in Denver, Colo., and Sheridan, Wyo., and more rehabilitation at the Wyoming State Hospital in Evanston, Freddie returned to Saratoga where he lived for the next 45 years.

Upon hearing of his death a fellow co-worker and friend writes: "I am so sorry to read this news. From the first time I knew him (before his accident) he was really always the same -- a smile for you and ready to help, plus he ALWAYS asked how my family was doing. Saratoga Streets just won't be the same without him walking up and down them. . . .Will sure miss Fred, always so polite and friendly."

Despite his injuries, Freddie, did odd jobs, volunteer work and remained independent with the help of his family, especially grandmother, mother, step-father and younger brother and sister, plus scores of friends and caregivers.

Freddie was a member of the Saratoga Presbyterian Church where he sang in the choir, Independent Order of

Odd Fellows, American Legion Angus England Post 54, plus a volunteer for many community project including the Saratoga Cemetery cleanup and distributing flyers for many events. He also was a regular at the "Old Geezers Coffee Clutch" as well as "acted" in many melodramas over the years. For many years he also sang in the Community Choir.

Following his death family and friends honored Freddie with such accolades as: "He was such a special guy. . . .Freddie always reminded me of the fun we had doing melodramas! He would say 'We sure had fun, didn't we!' And he was so right! We had a great time. . . .I loved getting to know Fred! He was always so kind! . . .Freddie will be fondly remembered...Always greeted by his smile and kindness! . . .Very friendly guy and was always asking how my family was doing. . . .He was a comforting presence in our town. . . .We always thought of Freddie as the Town Mascot. . . .Fred was a fixture to all who knew him in Saratoga. He will be missed. Fred was a true friend to the whole town!"

He was preceded in death by his mother Martha G. (Marty) Perue; maternal grandparents Celia and Fred Bomar; father Dale Williams, paternal grandparents, aunts and uncles, and other relatives.

Survivors include his sisters Lanette Clark of Tennessee and Kathy Williams of Saratoga, a brother Alan Williams of Saratoga, step-father Dick Perue of Saratoga, nieces and nephews Michelle Zimmerman of Indiana, Mike Clark of Tennessee; David Williams of South Dakota, Nicholas Williams of Cheyenne; Darian Williams of Denver and Tyler Williams of Montana, plus numerous cousins and friends.

A nephew recalls, "Uncle Freddy was a staple in Saratoga. He always helped, usually for a soda or coffee. Like grandma he was always in the stands cheering for me in any sport I played, he really loved that I wrestled though. Gonna miss you Uncle Fred but I know you're 'not 3 bad!'"

Condolences may be sent to Alan Williams, Box 885, Saratoga, Wyo., 82331 or Dick Perue, Box 447, Saratoga, Wyo., or Kathy Williams, Box 1433, Saratoga or made online.

For those wishing to further honor Freddie's memory a memorial fund has been established at the First Presbyterian Church of Saratoga, P.O. Box 116, Saratoga, WY 82331.

Cremation has taken place under the direction of Jacoby Funeral Home of Rawlins.

A fitting tribute to Freddie appeared in last week's "Saratoga Sun", over the waves at Big Foot radio, along with many more kind words in conversations throughout town and online.

In conclusion: "Farewell dear friend. . . .We will miss you dearly. . . .Such a kind, gentle and loving man. . . .We were all blessed to know you. . . .May the Good Lord give you your final ride. . . .Rest now Freddie in the arms of Our Lord!"—written and submitted by Dick Perue



BILL BAKER . . . —continued from page 2

Years later, flying became more dangerous. He'd flown fighters before, but in Vietnam he was a navigator (his eyesight was not as strong as when younger) and sometimes pilot of C-130s. That's where he got most of his combat missions. "The dangerous part of flying there was take-off and landing," he recalls. Because there was always a Charlie at one end of the runway or the other to catch you belly up going in or out."

Later, Baker would rise out of his rocking chair and point out a photograph of a twisted mass of metal carried on a flatbed truck. That was the F-94 he crashed—and walked away from without a scratch.

One more service-related story, and this one describes the roots of his giving to education.

"I guess I've tried since I was a young lieutenant to be generous," he says. "I was sitting at my desk in Alaska in 1956 and in came a letter from a lady in Germany. It had been translated for her, and she said some money I had given to the Marshall Plan after World War II had been given to her. Her husband had been killed during the war, she had two children, and the German Mark was worth nothing. It was amazing somehow or other she got a gift from Lt. Bill Baker. It practically saved her life. That caused me to always try to be generous."

Decide for yourself whether or not he should wear those medals on view to thousands on the Memorial Stadium Video Board.

Showing promise as a writer, he was approached as a senior in high school by the *Clarksville Leaf Chronicle*, the oldest paper in the state of Tennessee and published continually since 1808, to cover sports in the county. The paper then asked him about writing to fill an agricultural page

every week that published not just in that newspaper but others in the county.

(Bill was a faithful contributor to the "River's Edge Echo", with inspirational stories in most Veteran's Day and Memorial Day editions over the years.)

He melded his Air Force service with education—he'd take classes at night while teaching at the ROTC program at Michigan State to earn a foundations in education degree. After he retired in 1972, he had made contacts that landed him as assistant dean of admissions at Texas Tech University. And like in Michigan, he took classes at night and earned his agricultural economics degree. That led him to later be recruited by Halliburton.

The oil services group wanted him to recruit college graduates to work as engineers.

He visited land-grant universities, including UW, "because a lot of those had first-time college grads. I could usually hire an agricultural engineer,"

But the boom fell out in the mid-1980s, and he accepted early retirement. That led him to the Vee Bar Guest Ranch west of Laramie to see if he could live and retire in Wyoming.

After a year, he knew. "My brother was a member of the Old Baldy Club here in Saratoga," Baker says. "He said, "Bill, you're country, and Saratoga is country. You would be a good fit in Saratoga."

So, after a 16-horse trailer was loaded with his belongings at the Vee Bar, he crossed the Snowies and has been in Saratoga since.

Baker then met and married his wife, Jeannette, who already had a heavy-duty relationship with UW.

Wed the UW relationships and his agricultural interest, and they created the scholarship.

Explains Baker, "I have tried to support others who were in education and particularly in agricultural education because I think we are going to have a time when there is going to be too many people and too little land to feed them and too few educated farmers and ranchers, and if I can help ward that off, I'd like that to be my legacy."

In Saratoga Bill continued that generosity both to the community and his church.—written by Dick Perue

Ways to contact Pastor Steve

**Normal drop-in office hours at Church are
Monday-Thursday 8:00 - 12:00**

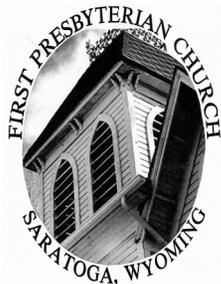
Meetings and Appointments at Any Time

**Office phone is 326-5337, Home phone 326-3163,
Cell phone (510) 825-3721**

srnicolls@att.net or 1pcsaratoga@union-tel.com

Or leave note on white board on office door or on desk

Prayer Chain No. is 326-3369



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