

--- River's Edge Echo ---

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Time to be thankful for blessings, but also concern for attendance, giving

This is not going to be a traditional November/ Thanksgiving article. Yes, we have plenty to be thankful for and we should remember to give thanks to God, from whom all blessings flow. However, this month's article is going to focus on a small leak the church is facing. This leak is small enough that if we fix it now, it will not cause any problems. However, like all leaks if we ignore it, it will become eventually problematic.

In 2016 (the first full year I was pastor) and 2017 our average weekly attendance was 39 and 42 people respectively. In 2018 and 2019 our average attendance hovered between 35 and 36 people. With the COVID-19 virus rearing its ugly head in 2020, it was understandable that our attendance would decrease. Excluding the seven weeks we were prohibited from meeting in the sanctuary for worship, our average attendance dropped to 27 people per week. If our attendance averages were rebounding from last year's average, I would not be writing this article. However, the average weekly attendance has remained level with last year's average.

Along with a decrease in attendance, we have also been seeing a decrease of giving. Since 2019 our annual expenses have been greater than our income. So far, our bank account has had sufficient funds to cover this deficit spending. Looking at the financial records through August (the most recent records as of the writing of this article), our expenditures for 2021 is about \$2,000 more than our revenues. As I stated in the opening paragraph, so far this leak is not problematic. There is enough in reserves to cover our deficit. If we do not change the trends, sooner or later it will be a major issue.

New Presbyter to visit Nov. 6 & 7

On November 6 and 7 we will have an opportunity to meet the interim General Presbyter for the Presbytery of Wyoming, the Rev. Monica Hall.

November 6 we will have a pot luck in the Fellowship Hall starting at 6:00 p.m.. Please sign up to help with the pot luck either by joining the set-up or clean-up crew or by bringing some food to share. There is a sign-up sheet in the Fellowship Hall or you can contact Emily Niccolls (326-3163).

Monica will then be worshipping with us the next morning and will be leading us in the Communion part of our worship service. She is going around to the different churches in the Presbytery in order to get acquainted with our congregations. Please try to make both of these events on November 6 and 7.—*submitted by Pastor Steve Niccolls*

In light of the numbers I have just presented, I am issuing two challenges. The first challenge is to become recruiters for the church. The theological word is evangelist, but many of you find that word scary. Since this newsletter is coming out on Halloween, I don't want to scare anyone and will use recruiter instead. All of you have friends who are not active in any church. Invite them to come and join you for worship one Sunday. If we can get people to attend, that will help our financial numbers as well.

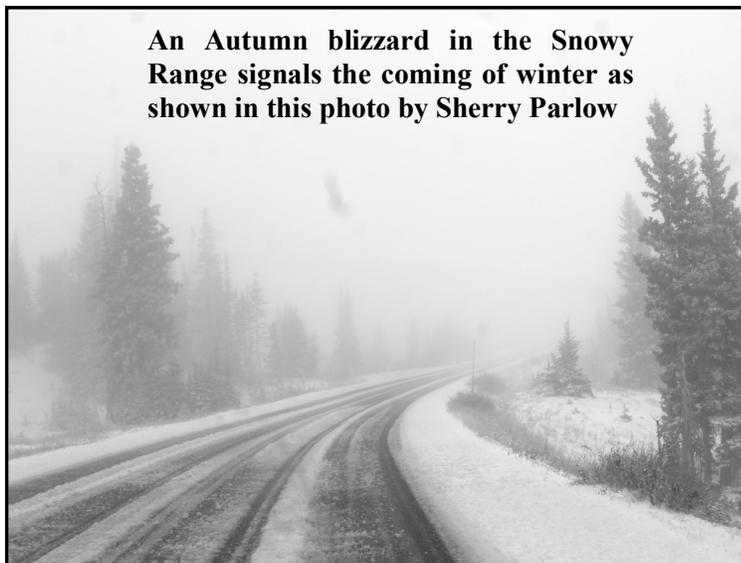
The second challenge is to look at your financial resources and see if you can give more. I know many of you are giving as much as you can. If that is the case, please do not feel pressured to give more. However, considering there are 52 weeks in a year, if each person add just one dollar per week more into the offering plate, that would increase our income by just over \$1,400 dollars.

I will close with the same sentiment I started this article with. We have plenty to be thankful for. For our many blessings, we should give praise to God. That said, let us also do our part to fix this small leak we are experiencing before it becomes a big leak that we might not be able to recover from. —*Blessings, Pastor Steve*

Sermon passages for the month of November

- November 7—Ephesians 2:14-21 *Interim General Presbyter Monica Hall will join us for worship*
November 14—1 Samuel 2:1-10
November 21—Revelation 1:4-8 *Ecumenical Thanksgiving service in sanctuary at 5:00 p.m.*
November 28—Guest preacher

An Autumn blizzard in the Snowy Range signals the coming of winter as shown in this photo by Sherry Parlow



Session outlines new programs

The Session held its monthly meeting on October 21. Among the reports received by the Session was a report from the Deacons. They reported that they will be selling 2022 wall calendars as a fund raiser. The Deacons will also be resuming 5th Sunday Donut Sunday on October 31.

The nominating committee also mentioned that they will be working to fill vacancies caused by the death of Van Skilling and the decision by Laurie Johnston to start attending another church.

Sonja Collamer and Pastor Steve updated the Session on events taking place under the Christian Education committee. The Sunday morning Bible Study will move from 8:15 to after worship.

Pastor Steve also mentioned that in January he will start a study of *Church History: Those who shaped the Christian Faith*, written by Gary Neal Hansen. This study is part of the denomination's *Being Reformed: Faith Seeking Understanding* series.

Other actions taken by the Session included approving a

From Armistice Day Nov. 11, 1919, proclaimed by President Woodrow Wilson honoring WWI veterans to Veterans Day proclaimed on Nov. 11, 1954, to honor all veterans:

**WE SALUTE
ALL VETERANS!**

Photo & info submitted by
Carlene Sjoden



request from the Mission Committee to sponsor participating in the Shoe Box program that is a nation-wide project providing children in need boxes of small toys and hygiene products. More information about this project will be forthcoming. They also decided to declare that the November 18th meeting will be a joint meeting of both the Deacons and Session. The denomination mandates that there be one joint meeting annually. This meeting will fulfill this mandate.—submitted by Pastor Steve Niccolls

“For Thine Is the ... Glory, Forever and Ever, Amen!”

What IS God's glory? Steve Lawson, in *Show Me Your Glory*, said that “[God's] glory...reflects the sum and substance of His holy character. It encompasses His divine perfections, attributes, and essence. It includes His holiness, sovereignty, righteousness, omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, truth, grace, mercy, goodness, love, and wrath. ... In short, the glory of God is the display of His infinite grandeur and vast greatness.” And John Piper, pastor and Bible teacher, includes in the list of God's wonderful qualities “might, beauty, goodness, justice and honor” and says that God has these characteristics in “superabundance”, Dr. Piper says. “Thus, when we think of God's glory, we remember that God has all good things in greater quantity and quality than we can ever imagine.”

But “glory” is more than a description of God. The first question of the Westminster Shorter Catechism, with which most Presbyterians are familiar is: “What is the chief end of man?” The answer: “Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.” Scriptural evidence for these statements is found in “proof texts” prepared by a special committee of the General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in 1978, including: **Psalm 86:9** – “All the nations you have made will come and worship before you, LORD; they will bring glory to Your name.” **Romans 11:36** – “For from Him and through Him and for Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever! Amen.” **Revelation 4:11** – “Thou art worthy, O LORD, to receive glory and honor and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure [or: “for Thy will”] they are and were created.”

“Forever and ever”... God's kingdom, power and glory had no beginning and will have no end. We said last month that for now, God's kingdom is His *spiritual* rule over the hearts and lives of those who have repented and willingly submitted to His authority. While it is true that when Jesus lived on earth, He established God's *spiritual* reign in the form of the church, from the creation of mankind there were those who recognized God and his sovereignty and willingly obeyed Him – or at least tried to! And the Bible also tells us that one day He will set up His *physical* kingdom on the earth.

We know there is nothing greater than God's power; He is still creating and still sustaining the entire universe. As for His glory, I refer you to the “Gloria Patri” that we Presbyterians sing in our Sunday worship: “**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost** [the triune God]. *As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be...*” [Emphasis added...]

“Amen”! “It is so” or “So be it” or “Let it be so”. Derived from a Hebrew word meaning “certainty,” or “truth”, it expresses “solemn ... agreement” with whatever preceded it, in this case, the entire model prayer of Jesus.

—Virginia Senne



Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the
beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
World without end.
Amen, Amen.

Schedule of Events:

Sunday:

Adult Bible Study—9:45 a.m.

Worship Service—9:30 a.m.

Fellowship—10:30 a.m.

Wednesday:

Prayer Shawl Ministry—9:30 a.m.

Second Thursday of Month

Presbyterian Women—1:30 p.m.

Session meeting 2nd Thurs. 4:30

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Officers & Committees

Session—Ken Collamer, Vickie Stolns, John Wickstrom, Herman Strickland & Teense Willford.

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—Teense Willford

Congregational Care—all Session members & Deacons

Endowment—Ken Collamer

Evangelism/Membership—Ken Collamer

Memorial—Vickie Stolns

Mission—Vickie Stolns

Nominating—Ken Collamer & Vickie Stolns

Worship—John Wickstrom

Leaders:

Adult Bible Study—Sonja Collamer
Choir Director—

Music—Carol Clemetson, Peggy Hiser, Cindy Kessler, Teense Willford

Memorial Committee—Carol Jo Jones, Frances Kirby, Vickie Stolns

Prayer Shawl Ministry—Barb Johnson, founder; Christine Wickstrom

Presbyterian Women—Emily Niccolls

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

Corporate Officers—Dick Perue, Ken Collamer, Sonja Collamer, John Wickstrom

"River's Edge Echo"—Dick Perue

Sharing a bit of Thanksgiving trivia & history

What day is Thanksgiving this year?

It's a question that matters when you're in the midst of organizing a Thanksgiving meal for those you love. While you jot down a grocery list for your famous turkey recipe, prep your pies, and get your Thanksgiving menu together, you might also wonder what the exact date of the holiday is this year. After all, 2020 was certainly a different holiday for all of us, and you may not be traveling or hosting as big a family feast as you would like, so it's understandable if the exact date has slipped your notice. So we're here to answer the important questions and provide a little clarity.

This year, the fourth Thursday of the month falls on Nov. 25, 2021. As it turns out, there's a reason why Thanksgiving falls when it does each month, and it's based in the history of Thanksgiving. The story dates to 1939, when Franklin Roosevelt decided to shake up the tradition a bit in the name of capitalism.

Thanksgiving had been celebrated on the last Thursday of the month since the time of Abraham Lincoln. But during 1939, the calendar had been unusual, as the month started on a Wednesday, so there were five Thursdays as opposed to four.

To restore some order, President Roosevelt moved the national holiday to the second-to-last Thursday of the month (a change that many were unhappy with). Instead of focusing on the negative, Roosevelt attempted to justify his decision with a pro-shopping response: merchants would now have a holiday further from Christmas to allow for more shopping time. In a way, this birthed the consumer craze known as Black Friday nearly 80 years ago.

The following year (1940), the change stuck as the second-to-last Thursday (Nov. 21) was declared the official Thanksgiving Day. In 1941, he reportedly admitted that the switch was a mistake, but because the calendars were already printed with the third Thursday as Thanksgiving Day it was too late to go back.

As 1941 ended, Roosevelt made the final permanent change, as he signed a bill making Thanksgiving Day fall on the fourth Thursday of November, regardless of if it is the last Thursday of the month or not.

So, regardless if Turkey Day snuck up on you or if you're been counting down the days till you get a taste of your grandma's famous Thanksgiving dessert again, at least now you have a tidbit of trivia to bust out at your holiday party. Cheers to chowing down on turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, all your favorite side dishes and dessert with a little more wisdom.—*submitted by Dick Perue from internet*

Brother (or sister); looking for a tax break?

As mentioned in Pastor Steve's article, there is a leak taking place in our church finances. Perhaps you are beginning to look at your 2021 financial records trying to find tax deductions. There are at least two possible ways you can keep tax dollars out of the Treasury Department's hand and help the church at the same time. (Who says you can't kill two birds with one stone?)

If you are facing a mandatory minimum withdrawal from an IRA and that will put you into a higher tax bracket, consider having your brokerage firm withdraw the money and give it to the church instead. We will get the advantage the income and you get the tax advantage. The other possibility is perhaps you have a stock that has appreciated in value. Instead of selling the stock and taking a capital gains tax hit, ask your broker to set up a donor advised fund and send the capital gains to the church.

With both of these possibilities it is VERY IMPORTANT YOU TALK TO YOUR FINANCIAL ADVISOR FIRST. There are very strict regulations that must be followed for you to take advantage of the tax break. If you have any questions, feel free to talk with Pastor Steve.—*contributed*

Adult Bible Study

The Sunday morning Bible Study has changed its meeting time to after Worship Services on Sunday morning. We will meet in the Sunday School Room at 10:45 a.m. and finish up at 11:45 a.m. We are working on the Book of Psalms and will start Sunday's lesson with Ps 11. Please join us! Bring your own Bible or borrow one from the Church. Hope to see you there.—submitted by Sonja Colamer

DEACONS' DOINGS

The Deacons met on Sunday October 10, 2021 after worship service. If you know of anyone dealing with COVID, please let one of the Deacons know as we still have a few "activity" bags to help them while away their quarantine time.

As a fundraiser, the Deacons will be selling 2022 Christian calendars for \$10.00 each. They make great gifts, so be sure to get yours while they last!

The Deacons will be hosting doughnut Sunday on October 31st. Be sure to stay and visit for fellowship and there may just be a "bonus" for someone.

As always if you have any suggestions for the Deacons, just let us know your ideas and/or thoughts. Thanks to everyone who donates to the Deacons' work and also to everyone for their continued support! May everyone have a safe, healthy and blessed Thanksgiving!—submitted by Anne Wickstrom

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**

sronicolls@att.net* or *1pcsaratoga@union-tel.com

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



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Thanksgiving Blessings

***"And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."* —Colossians 3:17**

—photo & Bible verse submitted by Carlene Sjoden

Annual Thanksgiving ecumenical service set for Sunday, Nov. 21st

The Platte Valley Ministerial Association will be sponsoring our annual ecumenical Thanksgiving service Sunday, Nov. 21 in the First Presbyterian Church of Saratoga sanctuary at 5:00 p.m.

Pastor Gregg Snell of the First Baptist Church will be delivering the message. After the service there will be a pot luck dinner at St. Anne Catholic Church's Parish Hall. More details concerning the pot luck will be forthcoming.—submitted by Pastor Steve Niccolls

Prayer Chain No. is 326-3369