

# --- River's Edge Echo ---

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March 2023

## Session, Pastor explain cancellation of Ash Wednesday services

On February 22, Ash Wednesday, the Session and I had to make a tough decision. We had to cancel the Ash Wednesday service. I know that this congregation has a history of holding worship services regardless of what the weather throws at us. The decision was made at approximately 10:00 am, and the Session was not unanimous in that decision. (One member wanted to wait until noon to make the call.) I want to take this opportunity to review what went into this decision.

Just prior to 8:00 that morning, I tried to make it from the manse down to the church. (As most of you know, I have an SUV with all-wheel drive.) At that time, Saratoga Ave was plowed. I was able to make it down to Saratoga and West Sixth. At each cross street, I looked for a north/south road that I could turn on to get to Bridge Street and down to the church. At each cross street there was a deep windrow of snow left by the snow plow blocking the cross street. As most of you know, Saratoga Ave dead ends at West Sixth. I turned around and headed back to the manse rather than risk getting stuck on an unplowed street.

When I returned to the manse, I sent an email to all the members of Session asking if they wanted to continue with the Ash Wednesday service or cancel it. The majority of the Session either replied by email or via a phone conversation with their agreement to cancel the service. Some of the Session members even conveyed to me that they would not be attending due to the roads and their inability

to get their cars out of the garage. When the majority of the Session voted to cancel, I sent out an email to all members for whom the church has an email address and posted an announcement on Facebook, informing people of the decision. It is worth remembering that the entire CCSD 2 district canceled classes that day.

I am sure there are some who think we might have canceled the service too quickly. I understand that opinion. However, I am supportive of the decision to cancel. The streets were hard to pass even mid-afternoon and many of the north/south streets were still unplowed. (I ventured out in the afternoon because I needed to get some gasoline for my snow thrower.) Canceling a worship service is not something I want to do. But I felt that asking people to try to make it to a night service when there was a no unnecessary travel advisory issued by the county, was a risk that far outweighed the advantage of having a service. If you want to talk with me about the decision further, please feel free to let me know. I welcome having the conversation—*blessings, Pastor Steve*

## Sermon Passages for the Month of March

March 5 1 Corinthians 15:12-23

March 12 1 Corinthians 15:24-34

March 17 1 Corinthians 15: 35-49

March 26 1 Corinthians 15:50-58

## Church Choir plans to sing again

Since several church goers have expressed an interest, plans are being made for the choir to resume.

The choir will sing the first Sunday of each month during worship services, beginning April 2 at 9:30 a.m.

First practice is scheduled for Wednesday, March 29. in the Fellowship Hall at 6 p.m. Anyone who enjoys singing or playing an instrument is invited to join. Contact Carlene Sjoden, (307) 326-5531 for more information.

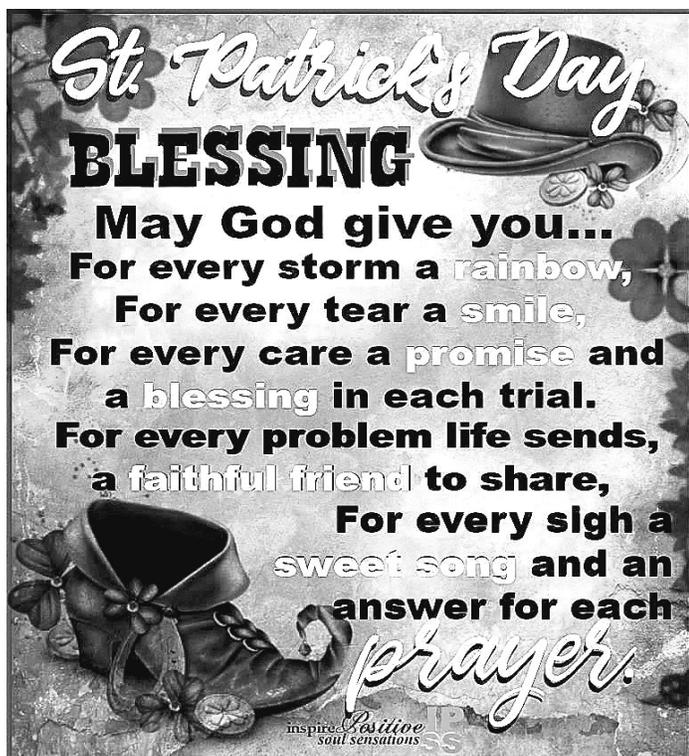
*Come sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done many marvelous things...Psalm 98:1.—submitted by Carlene Sjoden*

## 'Soups of Easter' coming in April

"Soups of Easter" will be served each Thursday in April—6th, 13th, 20th and 27th—by members of the Gather at the Table committee and volunteers, according to announcement made this week.

Five or six different soups will be available in the Saratoga Presbyterian Church Fellowship hall between 11:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.

The "all you can eat" menu will consist of soup, bread, dessert and drink, all for \$8 per person.—*submitted by Becky Strickland*



## *Session approves dedication service, holds joint meeting with Deacons*

The Session held two meetings in February. The first one was the stated (regular) meeting on Thursday, February 16. That meeting was routine. The Session approved the minutes of both the stated January Session meeting and the Annual Congregational and Corporation Meeting. The governing body also approved a dedication service for Margaret and William Sherwood to take place sometime in March. After reviewing the statistical report required to be sent to General Assembly in Louisville, they approved it with minor corrections. The Session also received reports from the various committees

The other meeting was a joint meeting with the Board of Deacons. This meeting fulfilled a *Book of Order* requirement that the two boards meet jointly annually. There was a review of the responsibilities each board has under the *Book of Order*. There was a discussion of goals. There

were also discussions on the need for better communication and to involve more people in worship.

One of the key discussion points was a change in how we will do communion. We will still come forward to receive the elements. One change will be that there will be one elder and one deacon holding the trays of the bread and the grape juice. The other change will take place behind the scenes. For many years, Jean Bush was responsible for making sure the elements for Communion were prepared. Vickie Stolns would often help when Jean was not available. Starting March 5, the elder and deacon who are assisting in the Communion service, will also be responsible to make sure the elements are prepared prior to the worship service.

The next Session meeting will be on March 16 at 4:30.  
—submitted by Pastor Steve Niccolls

### *Peacemaker's Prayer*

Before we begin our final beatitude, I want to share with you this beautiful prayer from DavidJeremiah.org as a fitting finale to our "peacemakers" articles:

*"Father, may I be a peacemaker amidst strife. Comfort those who are hurting. Show mercy when falsely accused. Reflect the character and righteousness of Christ, always. Recognize that I am called to represent Jesus to my world. Commit to thinking, speaking, and living by His ideals every day. And may I humbly do this in the strength of Christ. AMEN!"*

As you will see, this prayer also serves as an introduction to the eighth and last beatitude.

### *Blessed Are Those Who Are Persecuted...*

Wait! What? Wouldn't those who are NOT persecuted consider themselves blessed? Probably, but this was JESUS talking. He said [Matthew 5:10ff] that those who *are* persecuted are blessed. *That* is going to take a bit of explanation!

Unlike the previous seven beatitudes, Jesus expanded on this one: "*Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*"

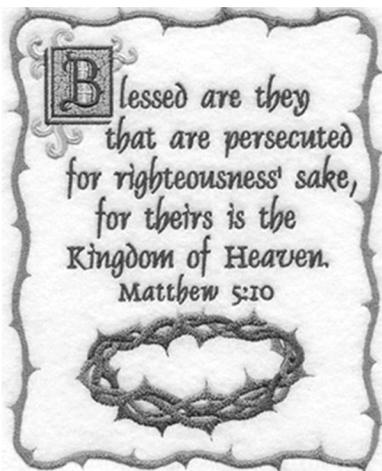
"True believers in Christ are righteous in God's eyes", according to GotQuestions.org. "*Righteousness' means more than just 'being a good person.' It refers to a complete orientation of life toward God and His will.*" The problem arises in part because this kind of righteousness is highly visible: "*You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.*" (Mathew 5:14-16.)

In his excellent book "What Jesus Meant" (from which I have quoted before), Erik Kolbell points out: "*Righteousness...does not come easy. To be good with God can often mean to be at odds with society, friends, even family, and that's something that comes easily to no one. It means being true to the very core of who you are as a child of God...*"

The unbelieving, unsaved world wants us to confirm to their standards, their morals – or lack thereof – their 'liberated' lifestyle. To do otherwise, to live a 'holy' or 'righteous' life, shows them up by contrast. If you are doing 'right', obviously differing from them, then they must be doing 'wrong'. They don't like feeling embarrassed by the difference between your speech and actions and theirs. So they mock you, "revile" you, insult you – weapons of retaliation for pricking their consciences. It is hard to be on the receiving end of such treatment, and as Kolbell observes: "*The righteous life is not the coward's life, but a life requiring enormous reserves of courage.*"

Continued next month...

—Virginia Senne



## Schedule of Events:

### Sunday:

Adult Bible Study—8:15 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 Thursday  
of month at 4:30 p.m.

First Presbyterian Church  
of Saratoga, Wyoming  
The Rev. Steven Niccolls, pastor  
Corner Third & Bridge Sts.  
PO Box 116, Saratoga, WY 82331  
Phone: 307-326-5337  
e-mail: 1pcsaratoga@union-tel.com  
www.saratoga-presbyterian.com

## Officers & Committees

**Session**—Jean Bush, Ken Collamer,  
Herman Strickland, Alice Swanson,  
John Wickstrom, Teense Willford.

**Treasurer**—Cindy Kessler

**Financial Sect.**—Anne Wickstrom

**Clerk of Session**—John Wickstrom

**Deacons**—Susan Collamer, Carol Jo  
Jones, Dani Ellis, Lori Erhart, Vickie  
Stolns, Anne Wickstrom.

## Session Committees:

**Building /Grounds**—Ken Collamer

**Christian Education**—Teense Will-  
ford

**Congregational Care**—all church  
members

**Endowment**—Ken Collamer

**Evangelism/Membership**—Herman  
Strickland

**Memorial**—Alice Swanson

**Nominating**—Teense Willford

**Worship & Music**—John Wickstrom

## Leaders:

**Adult Bible Study**—Sonja Collamer

**Memorial Committee**—Carol Jo  
Jones, Frances Kirby, Vickie Stolns,  
Alice Swanson

**Prayer Shawl Ministry**—Barb John-  
son, founder; Christine Wickstrom

**Presbyterian Women**—Emily Nic-  
colls, Frances Kirby

**Gather at the Table**—Becky Strick-  
land, Lori Erhart, Cindy Kessler,  
Dick Perue, Herman Strickland

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

**Corporate Officers**—Dick Perue, Ken  
Collamer, Cindy Kessler, John Wick-  
strom

**"River's Edge Echo"**—Dick Perue  
editor

## Word received of death of Linn MacIntosh

Word was received here recently of the death of Linn MacIntosh on Sept. 22, 2022. While in Saratoga she was an active participant and leader of the First Presbyterian Church of Saratoga for 3 1/2 years from 1993 to 1997 and wife of former interim minister Dr. John MacIntosh.

Her obituary as presented online, in part, reads:

Linnette D. (Swanson) MacIntosh was born on July 3, 1939. was graduated from Greeley High School in 1957 and then attended Colorado University School of Nursing. She later graduated from Mercy Hospital in Denver and served as a nurse in multiple offices for many years.

Linn was blessed with three pre-  
cious children; Terrie, Gregory and  
Kurtis. A few years later, she adopted  
and helped raise 5 Houp children.

After the children were grown and  
had families of their own, she married  
Dr. John N Macintosh and enjoyed  
having a very active part in his minis-  
try including the local church. Together they served as interim ministers in Sa-  
ratoga and many other churches. After his death in 2001, for the next 19 years  
she enjoyed being with and caring for her precious mother in Greeley.

Surviving are daughter, Terrie Lyn (Jeff) Petersen, sons Gregory (Hope)  
Stingerie and Kurtis (Stingerie) Houp, Brother Eugene (Sylvia) Swanson and  
sister Pam Holmgren and extended family Ron and Debbie Houp. She had nine  
precious grandchildren and six great grandchildren.

Private services have been held.

Folks wishing to send condolences may do so to Kurt Houp, P. O. Box  
336081, Greeley, CO. 80633.



## Gather at Table committee cancels March meal

*(Editor's note: With cabin fever setting in, compounded by a harsh winter and a couple of personal losses, I had to have some relief so I penned the following for use on the radio and in the "River's Edge Echo". Please take it for what's it worth and enjoy. Here's praying for an early spring.—Dick Perue)*

Thanks for your support of the Gather at the Table project and placing the information on the Community Calendar!

Unfortunately, we again have to cancel this month's free meal because of adverse weather and folks being out of town.

Our gourmet chefs are still snowed-in at the ranch, the substitute cooks, who did the chili and stuffed baked potatoes, are all out of town, leaving only me to do the cooking.

I offered to do my famous "hunting camp road-kill beer stew", but they turned me down after hearing the ingredients.

Folks at hunting camp love my road-kill stew consisting of elk, deer or antelope heart, liver, shank and rib flank steak meat, with lots of garlic and onions, leftovers, a few potatoes and a couple of carrots; all flavored with beer. This recipe calls for a six pack of beer—two for cooking and four for the cook.

When the cook has consumed his portion of the brew he knows that the stew is ready to serve. Throw in some stale bread and butter, and presto, you've got a hardy meal for any hungry person.

I'm still pondering why they wouldn't let me cook.

*Dick Perue, Gather at the Table committee member for advertising and publicity, but not for cooking.*

## DEACONS' DOINGS

After worship on Sunday February 12, 2023, the Deacons distributed "Valentine's Day" goodie bags to our church members. Then the Deacons met for their regular board meeting. When Vickie returned to Saratoga following knee surgery in Casper, the Deacons took turns providing meals for a week. Susan also delivered cheesecake to Tom at the nursing home.

Before our next Deacons' Donut Sunday in April, Carol Jo will research purchasing donuts from the Country Store to see what the cost and availability would be. At the last Donut Sunday in January, \$58.00 was donated to the Deacons for our treasury. We'd like to thank everyone who donated that money. We are looking for ideas for fund raisers to do this Spring—if anyone has any ideas, please let us know.

We added two bylaws for Deacons. First, the term for members of the Deacon board will begin in January and end in December. (If the Session is unable to establish an installation date for the newly elected before the January Deacons meeting, then the Deacons' board will be given the option to ask the outgoing board members to extend their term to the January board meeting in order to make a quorum and conduct business).

The second bylaw addresses the number of Deacons to make a quorum. The Quorum for the Deacons' board is "half plus one based on filled positions at the time." For a full six member board, a quorum would be four. If the Deacons' board has two vacant positions, then the quorum would be three= half plus one).

The Deacons met with the Session for the Yearly Joint Meeting after worship on Sunday, February 19th. We discussed some ideas to grow our participation in the Church and also to grow our membership.—submitted by Anne Wickstrom

## *Adult Bible Study*

Our group of students of God's word finished our study of the "Pastoral Letters" to Timothy and Titus from Paul in Rome. We even added the 23 verses of Paul's letter to Philemon, a good example of how to ask tactfully for a favor (instead of demanding it).

We agreed that our next study will be the Old Testament Book of Esther, According to my commentary, we are in for a wild ride. This book was probably written about 460 B.C. by a Persian Jew. It centers around the time of the end of the Exodus. They were then attacked by the Amalekites led by Haman (viewed as the epitome of all the powers of the world arrayed against them). This is the last effort in the OT to destroy God's People. With the defeat of Haman comes God's promised rest from their enemies. This is at the center of the institution of the Festival of Purim.

You are invited to join us in our study of Esther every Sunday morning at 8:15 in the Fellowship Hall. Coffee's on! —submitted by Sonja Collamer

**Prayer Chain No. is 326-3369**

### *Ways to contact Pastor Steve*

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

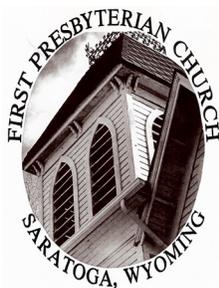
**Meetings and Appointments at Any Time**

**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**



**First Presbyterian Church  
of Saratoga**

**P.O. Box 116—3rd & Bridge Sts.**

**Saratoga, Wyo. 82331**

**Ph. No. 307 326-5337**

**e-mail: 1pcsaratoga@union-tel.com**