

--- River's Edge Echo ---

Published by **FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SARATOGA, WYO.**

June 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
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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

Worship resumes amid new flag configuration

It is fantastic to be able gather together in the sanctuary to worship our Lord on Sunday mornings again. While we gather, let us remember that there are still some regulations the State of Wyoming and Carbon County have in force. While they do change some of how we worship, none of the regulations are overly onerous and I believe many of them make good sense -- even when the Covid-19 pandemic is over. Please remember to stay vigilant with your social distancing. Also, while not mandated, face coverings/masks are encouraged. Please be aware that there will be hand sanitizer on the tables in the Narthex. Finally remember offering plates will be located on the front pew and on the table to your left (as you enter the sanctuary) in the Narthex. We will not be passing the offering plates among the pews. Please drop off your offerings on the way in or on your way out.

On June 14th the nation celebrates "Flag Day." While many of us take pride in our country, I must remind all of us that the United States is not our first loyalty. Our highest loyalty belongs to Christ! Most of you have noticed the Christian flag that is in the chancel area, along with the Presbyterian Church (USA), the United States and State of Wyoming flags. The rest of this article will review the history of the Christian flag.



Christian Flag

The concept of the Christian flag started on September 26, 1897 in Coney Island. Charles C. Overton, a Sunday school superintendent, was forced to do an impromptu class when the scheduled speaker was a no show. Looking at the U.S. flag he asked the

students what they thought a Christian flag should look like. That idea lingered in Overton's head for another 10 years when Ralph Diffendorfer and Overton finally designed the flag in 1907.

On January 23, 1942 the Federal Council of Churches, now the National Council of Churches, adopted the flag. The cross obviously represents Christ's crucifixion and the red represent the blood of Christ. The blue represents the sky as a symbol of heaven and the white field represents purity.

It probably does not come as a surprise that there is a pledge to the flag. Actually, there are two different pledges used. The original pledge was written

by a Methodist pastor, Lynn Harold Hough, who penned, "I pledge allegiance to the Christian flag and the Savior for whose kingdom it stands; one brotherhood uniting all mankind in service and love." Some conservative churches, wanting a more robust pledge wrote the following, "I pledge allegiance to the Christian flag, and to the Savior for whose kingdom it

stands; one Savior, crucified, risen, and coming again with life and liberty to all who believe." (I personally prefer this one to Rev. Hough's pledge.)

While it is appropriate to honor the United States flag, let us remember, as the famous gospel song declares, "This world is not my home. I'm just a passing through./My treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue/The angels beckon me from heaven's open door/And I can't feel at home in this world anymore/Oh lord you know I have no friend like you/If heaven's not my home then lord what will I do/The angels beckon me from heaven's open door And I can't feel at home in this world anymore." (*This World is not My Own* by Jim Reeves).—Blessings, Pastor Steve

—see back page for Scripture Passages for June



Session Highlights:

Treasurer's Report Shows Fund Drop

On May 21, the Session held their regular monthly meeting. Most of the meeting was routine, with approving the minutes from the April's meeting and receiving the treasurer's report. The treasurer's report showed that giving through April was only 24.3% of the budget. The good news was that May giving has increase, and First Presbyterian Church of Cheyenne sent our congregation a \$5,000.00 gift.

The discussion items included a decision not to have children's Sunday school through the Summer, discussion on how to do Communion while staying within the requirements of the county regulations, and a request from Camp Story to help the program financially since there will be no camps or rentals this summer.

Upcoming Events

June 14 New members class after worship.

July: Pastor Steve will start a class on some of the major heresies that still pervade Christianity today. Exact times and dates will be announced later.



Osprey, on log in center of photo, fishing in Upper North Platte River as the stream flows through downtown Saratoga. Once rare in the valley, Osprey are now spotted frequently.—Photo by Sherry Parlow

Our Father IN HEAVEN...

We not only address God as our Father, but our Father *in Heaven*. Have you ever wondered why Jesus added “in Heaven” after “Our Father”? I believe Jesus wanted us to realize that “our Father” to whom we pray is not some super-hero on earth, with great powers and abilities, but that “Our Father” is *God Himself*, not a mortal being.

Psalm 20:6... ***“Now this I know: the Lord gives victory to his anointed. He answers him from his heavenly sanctuary with the victorious power of his right hand.”*** [Emphasis mine]



When we were children, we might have looked up to our dads as wonderful, able to do almost anything – but when we became adults, we realized that our dads were people just like us. The fact that God is able to hear us and to help us is because He IS in Heaven, and not constrained by earthly limitations.

Heaven is not merely a location – where God happens to be – but an *elevation* – high above earth and the things of earth. Jesus was God, but when He took on a human body, He was, for the most part, limited to human abilities. Not so with God the Father, *in Heaven!*

One of the Hebrew names of God is: “*Ram wenissa*”, or “high and exalted One”, a name for God that declares His supremacy. **Isaiah 57:15...** *“For this is what the high and exalted One [Ram wenissa] says—he who lives forever, whose name is holy: ‘I live in a high and holy place,’* [emphasis mine] *‘but also with the one who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.’* Isn’t that a beautiful picture of the Father’s heart, the Father’s love, and the Father’s disposition that we thought about last month?

Romans 8:15... *“For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as [children] by which we cry out, ‘Abba! Father!’”* The High Calling Christian website says: “...[t]he word **abba** richly expresses our relationship with God. We are dependent upon Him like little children. We are free to run to Him as children run to their daddies. Yet we also offer God the highest respect and adult love.”

Yes, we should think of and talk to God as “Daddy” – while not losing sight of the fact that He is not simply God *our Father*, but God *in Heaven*, with a heavenly perspective. We can talk to Him about all our troubles and struggles – He is not too ‘big’ or too ‘important’ to hear us and to desire to respond to us – but He is so great, so wise, so powerful that our earthly troubles and questions fall into their proper place. If we think of our lives as jigsaw puzzles, we can see how some pieces of the puzzle fit together -- but God, from His heavenly sanctuary, sees the whole picture.—*Virginia Senne*

Celebrating Flag Day June 14th

Flag Day is a celebration of the American flag that occurs each year on the anniversary of the flag's official adoption, June 14.

What we know fondly as the "Stars and Stripes" was adopted by the Continental Congress as the official American flag on June 14, 1777, in the midst of the Revolutionary War. Colonial troops fought under many different flags with various symbols and slogans: rattlesnakes, pine trees, and eagles; "Don't Tread on Me," "Liberty or Death," and "Conquer or Die," to name a few.

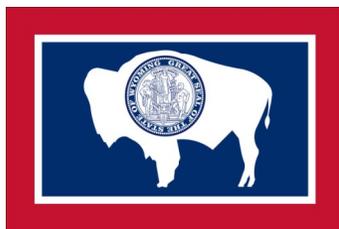
The first official national flag had 13 white stars on a blue field and 13 alternating red and white stripes—both representing the 13 original colonies. Today, there are 50 stars, one for each state in the Union, but the 13 stripes remain.

Flag Day was first celebrated in 1877—on the flag's 100th birthday—and persists today. On Flag Day, many towns and cities hold parades and events to celebrate the flag, and the colors are to be flown at all government buildings. Flag Day is not an official federal holiday, but its observance is traditionally proclaimed each year by the President of the United States.

Wyoming State Flag features Buffalo

The flag of the state of Wyoming consists of the silhouette of an American bison. The red symbolizes the Native Americans and the blood of pioneers who gave their lives. The white is a symbol of purity and uprightness. The blue is the color of the skies and distant mountains. It is also a symbol of fidelity, justice and virility. The bison represents the local fauna, while the seal on it symbolizes the custom of branding livestock.

In 1916 an open competition was held by Wyoming's DAR (Daughters of the American Revolution) for the design of an official Wyoming flag. Between 37 entries, Verna Keays won the \$20 first-place prize with her design of a bison (Wyoming's official state mammal) with the state seal branded at its center. Her design was made official by legislature in 1917.



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

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

Father's Day a time for fishing

Like Mother's Day the modern American version of Father's Day has a history that goes well beyond greeting cards.

The first known Father's Day service occurred at the Williams Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church South in Fairmont, West Virginia, on July 5, 1908, thanks to the efforts of Grace Golden Clayton. Mrs. Clayton had asked her pastor, Dr. R. Thomas Webb, if a Sunday service could be held to honor fathers.

While missing her own dad, who had died in 1896, Mrs. Clayton especially wanted to have a service in remembrance of the over 200 fathers who had died in a mining explosion.

Although the Fairmont service was the first known to honor fathers, it did not turn into an annual event, nor was the idea promoted.

Several other people across the nation had similar ideas throughout the years, but Mrs. Sonora Smart Dodd is credited for being the one to popularize it, starting events that led to Father's Day becoming a U.S. national holiday.

Her story began as she sat listening to a Mother's Day sermon in 1909.

Mrs. Dodd thought that it might be nice to honor fathers as well. Her father, William Smart, had raised his six children alone on his farm in Washington after his wife died giving birth to their sixth child.

Mrs. Dodd proposed to the Spokane, Wash., Ministerial Association and the YMCA that they celebrate a "father's day." She chose the 5th of June because it was her father's birthday.

The idea received strong support, but the good ministers of Spokane asked that the day be changed to give them extra time to prepare sermons on the unexplored subject of fathers.

The first Father's Day in Spokane was observed on June 19, 1910 (the third Sunday in June), and became an annual event there. Soon, other towns had their own celebrations.

In spite of widespread support, Father's Day did not become a permanent national holiday for many years. The first bill was introduced in Congress in 1913, but in spite of encouragement by President Woodrow Wilson, it did not pass. In 1966, Lyndon Johnson issued a proclamation designating the third Sunday in June to honor fathers.

Finally, in 1972, President Richard Nixon signed a law declaring that Father's Day be celebrated annually on the third Sunday in June. It has been an official, permanent national holiday ever since.



A proud father helps display his son's first trout. Maybe you want to go fishing for Father's Day? Coincidentally, this year's Father's Day has been listed as the "Best Day for Fishing" by the Farmer's Almanac.

— DEACON'S DOINGS —

The Deacons are spear-heading an all-congregation project to assemble two baskets filled with “goodies”. One basket will be presented as a thank you to Susan Foley and the staff at the Medical Clinic for so ably taking care of all of Saratoga's Medical needs. The other basket would be presented to the new doctor upon his arrival in Saratoga at the beginning of August as a welcome gift.

The “goodies” for the basket could include snack items like crackers, energy bars, nuts, gatorade, etc. Non-perishable items and/or monetary donations could be brought to church by July 15th. Perishable items like baked goods or fruit should be brought to church by August 2nd. Watch for the circulating sign-up sheets in church so we are sure to have a variety of treats.

When the Deacons deliver the two baskets that first week in August, we would like to have a sizeable group representing the First Presbyterian Church of Saratoga in attendance for the presentation. More on that date and time to meet later.—*Submitted by Anne Wickstrom*

Children's Bible Story Study, Adult Bible Study take recess

The Christian Education Committee has announced that both Children's Sunday School and the Sunday morning Adult Bible Study will be taking a summer recess.

Sonja Collamer said "We have finished our very interesting exploration of Proverbs and decided that since we didn't take a break last year now would be a good time to relax and recharge so that we could start fresh in the Fall." Start up dates for the Fall sessions will be announced later.

Prayer Chain No. is 326-3369

Scripture Passages for June

June 7 Nehemiah 8:1-12

June 14 John 14:1-14 (per request from February's survey)

June 21 John 8:31-40

June 28 Ecclesiastes 3 (exact verses TBD)

Church adapts to COVID-19 edict

(Editor's note: in order to comply with rules necessitated by the coronavirus pandemic shutdown, Pastor Steve has issued the following order of service for communion.):

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

This Sunday is Communion Sunday. On the liturgical calendar it is also Trinity Sunday, so the church will have the white paraments out. To comply with the county variances, we will do Communion slightly differently. We will invite people to come forward to receive the bread and the cup. The juice, as usual, will be in the individual cups. The bread likewise will be in individual cups. Each parishioner will take one cup of juice and a piece of bread. We will ask that you return to your seat. Take the bread individually as a token of your relationship to Christ. Please wait until all are served and then we will partake of the cup together as symbol of our unity in the body of Christ.

This week I am trying something else out that is new. At the bottom of the bulletins, after the closing hymn, I am listing other verses that will be referred to in this week's sermon. I am thinking it may be a way that some can look at other verses that will relate to the sermon either prior to or after worship. I know that there is at least one parishioner who studies the passage I am preaching on during the week prior to the sermon. There may be others and I am trying this idea to see if it is helpful. Please feel free to let me know what you think. I would like feedback regardless of if you like it, don't like it, or even if you have no opinion one way or another. (By the way, the other verses for this week are: Leviticus 11:44 and 23:23,24; Numbers 29:1-6; Romans 1:17 and 7:7,8; Philippians 4:4 and 1 Peter 1:15,16.)

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