
Murray Presbyterian Messenger

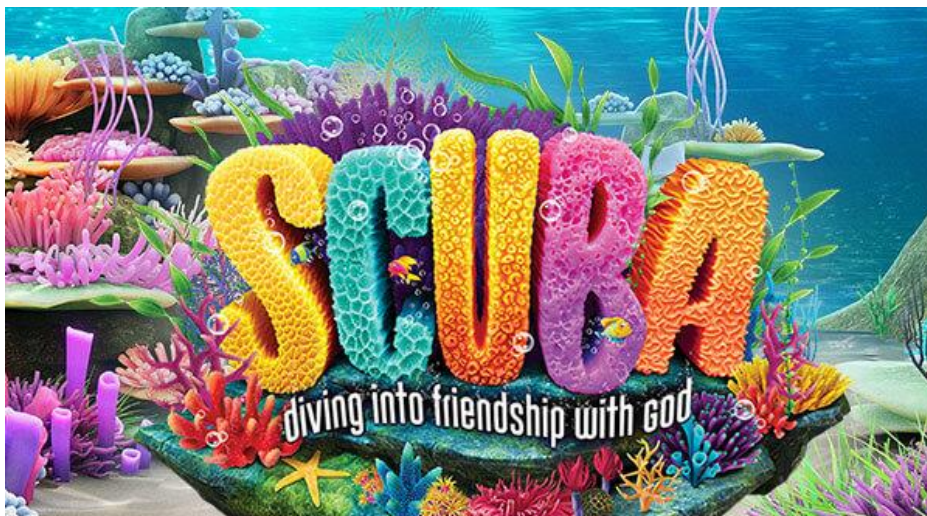
July 2024 

Murray Presbyterian Church

P.O. Box 196, Main Street Murray, NE 68409

www.murraypresbyterian.org Tel: (402)235-2754

Featured This Month: Vacation Bible School



Monday, July 15 – Thursday, July 18

at Murray Christian Church

5:45: Light Supper for all VBS Families

6:15 – 8:00 pm: Vacation Bible School Program

See page 4 for More Information

or go online to

www.myvbs.org/Murray2024VBS

Murray Presbyterian Church, Murray, NE
(402)235-2754
www.murraypresbyterian.org



Upcoming Events

Sundays

10:00 am: Morning Worship

Thank you for your ongoing financial support of Murray Presbyterian! Contributions may be deposited in the offering plates during worship services, mailed to the church at P. O. Box 196, Murray NE 68409 or made online at www.murraypresbyterian.org. Click on the "Give Now" button at the bottom of the homepage.

In this Issue

Featured This Month, p.1

Pastor's POV, pp. 2-3

Worship Opportunities, p. 2

Worship & Family Life, p. 4

Christian Education, p. 4

Mission & Outreach, p. 5



The Fourth of July is a time for lots of things: pancakes at the firehouse, mud volleyball, backyard bar-b-ques, and fireworks. For those of us who are Christians, it's also a good time to reflect a bit on our nation's heritage of faith. It's a controversial topic nowadays. At least in some quarters what is called "**Christian**

nationalism" is widely seen as a threat. The problem is, it's hard to pin down exactly what the term means. Check out the Wikipedia article on the subject, and you find the "Christian nationalism" label being applied to everything from observing Christmas as a legal holiday to opposing Covid vaccines. It's basically an umbrella term to cover a whole grab bag of positions that are deemed objectionable (in some instances with good reason).

To be sure, there are (and perhaps always have been) Christians who promote wholly inappropriate positions on the role of faith in American public life. Sometimes, it is based on bogus versions of American history using cherry-picked (or made up) quotes to show that the American founders were predominantly orthodox Christians seeking to create an avowedly Christian nation. Credible historians—even those of impeccable Christian faith—have debunked such notions. (See, for example, Mark Noll, Nathan Hatch, George Marsden, *The Search for a Christian America*.)

As a matter of constitutional principle, there can be no religious test for public office in America, nor can any particular faith community be given a privileged place as a matter of law. For people of biblical faith, it is idolatrous to conflate our allegiance to God and his kingdom with devotion to any nation-state. Also, as Christians we believe that the primary vehicle through which God is accomplishing his purposes in the world today is the Body of Christ, which transcends any race or nation. No modern nation-state (whether it's the United States, Israel, or any other country) can lay claim to some unique or special role in God's plan.

Having said all of that, it is simply a statistical fact that throughout our history, the vast overwhelming majority of people in American have been professing Christians—whether truly devout or merely nominal. That reality has profoundly shaped the culture in which we live. And in my (admittedly biased) opinion, we have all been the beneficiaries. To whatever extent those Christian cultural influences are diminished, we will all be worse off.

Upcoming
 Worship Opportunities
 Summer Sermon Series

A LIFE THAT MATTERS:



AND PATHS TO FULFILLMENT

During the first part of July, our summertime mini-series from the Book of Ecclesiastes continues.

Also take note of the special guest preachers coming up in August and make plans to be here if you will be in the area!

- June 2:** The Endless Quest (Ecclesiastes 1:1-14)
- June 9:** The Dead-End Road of Pleasure (Eccles. 2:1-11)
- June 16:** The Dead-End Road of Success (Eccles. 2:12-23)
- June 23:** The Dead-End Road of Leading a Good Life (Eccles. 9:1-12)
- June 30:** The Path of Grateful Satisfaction (Eccles. 5:18-20)
- July 7:** The Path of Accepting Life's Rhythms (Eccles. 3:1-14)
- July 14:** The Path of Risky Service to Others (Eccles. 11:1-10)
- July 21-August 11:** TBA
- August 18:** Rev. Dr. Jeff McDonald
- August 25:** Elder Linda Reffert
- September 7:** Rev. Deena Candler

It's no coincidence that democratic forms of government and a free market economy (with the prosperity it generates) have flourished almost exclusively in countries with a Christian cultural heritage. Maybe it's a bit of stretch to say (as members of our denomination often have) that the U. S. Constitution is based on Presbyterianism, but there's definitely a parallel. And democracy is predicated on a view of human nature that comes out of a Christian worldview (encapsulated in Reinhold Niebuhr's famous aphorism that "Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible, but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary.")

In our country, specifically, Christian faith has repeatedly been a positive force for social change. People of faith were on the forefront of virtually every constructive social movement in our history—from the abolition of slavery, through the battle for workers' rights, and the cause of racial equality. Perhaps Walter Rauschenbusch would be considered a "Christian nationalist" by some, but under the banner of "Christianizing the social order" he and his fellow social gospel proponents advocated for a more just economic order, and helped lay the groundwork for a lot of sweeping reforms.

Think, too, of how Americans have traditionally turned to Christian faith to provide a healing balm in times of tragedy and devastation. Who among us that lived through the horrors of the 9/11 attacks can ever forget the powerful and emotional service of remembrance in the National Cathedral just three days later—with the stirring cadences of "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God," the moving rendition of Malotte's "Lord's Prayer," and the comforting words of Rev. Billy Graham. Was that "Christian nationalism"? If so, what can our ardent secularist friends offer as an alternative in moments like that?

People cheering on our society's drift away from its Christian moorings would be well-advised to carefully consider the alternatives. Richard Dawkins is someone who has done that. He rose to fame at the beginning of this century as one of the "Four Horsemen" of the New Atheism (so-called because of their militantly anti-religious posture). But when he woke up and found himself living in a country (the U.K.) where twice as many people are going to mosques as to Anglican houses of worship, he suddenly had a change of heart. He told an interviewer this past April that he now considers himself to be "a cultural Christian," someone who "feels at home in the Christian ethos." "We [in the U.K.]," he averred "are a 'Christian country' in that sense."

None of this should cause us those of us who are Christians to adopt a triumphalistic spirit or to harbor any animosity toward people of other faiths. But we should be grateful for whatever Christian influences played a positive role in our history. We should pray for spiritual renewal in our land. And we should keep on doing what we are doing—upholding a gospel witness in our community, reaching out to unchurched neighbors, and seeking to equip one another for a life of discipleship. People's spiritual well-being requires that, but so does the good of our society.

Leadership

Session

Moderator

Rev. William McConnell

Clerk of Session

Debra South

Class of 2024

Kenny Drake

Denise Ayers

Class of 2025

Sharlyn Deterding

Debra South

Class of 2026

Tanner Miner

Kyle Nickels

Deacons

Class of 2024

Kathy Friedli

Sherrill Konfrst

Julie Nickels

Class of 2025

Ryleigh Hill

Stacey McConnell

Karla Remmers

Worship & Family Life Sharlyn Deterding, Team Lead

Thank You!



Thank you so much for welcoming me in the church community. Thank you for all the wishes and blessing.

See you soon

Amandine



Leadership Teams

Worship and Family Life

Sharlyn Deterding, *Team Leader*
Deb South, *Session Rep.*
Christina Dolvin
Linnea Hill
Julie Nickels
Sherrill Konfrst
Laraine Young

Mission and Outreach

Kyle Nickels, *Team Leader*
George Collins
Melanie Honaker
John McConnell
Stacey McConnell
Dana Stahl
Ann Wieringa

Christian Education

Denise Ayers, *Team Leader.*
Sharlyn Deterding
Kathy Friedli
Julie Nickels
Linnea Hill

Properties and Finance

Kenny Drake, *Team Leader*
Sharlyn Deterding, *Session Rep.*
Dave Friedli
Linnea Hill
Norm Koester
Gary Reike
Michael Stahl



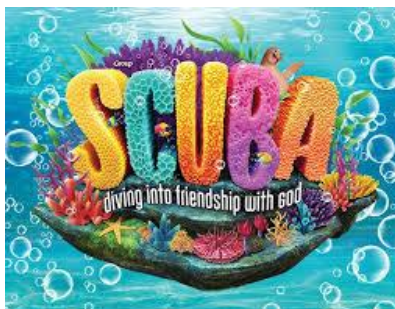
In December, 2016 (our first year in Nebraska) an anonymous donor gifted us round trip air fare for our daughter (and John's sister), Abriana, to come here for Christmas. Abriana knew about the gift, but it never worked out for her to be here. For the past eight years, we had kept the money tucked away (in the original envelope) until she could come. When she indicated a desire

to attend John's graduation party, it was the exact amount we needed to cover her travel expenses! Our family is grateful to whomever felt led to make that generous gift so long ago. Bill, Stacey, Abriana, John

Christian Education

Denise Ayers, Team Lead

Vacation Bible School



Registration is still open for this year's Daily Vacation Bible School. The theme is **SCUBA** and children from pre-school through 6th grade will be going on an underseas adventure and diving into a friendship with God! It all takes place at the **Murray Christian Church July 15-18** (Sunday

through Thursday). Families are invited to eat supper with their children starting at 5:45 pm. The program begins at 6:15 and continues until 8 pm. Children can be registered at <https://www.myvbs.org/Murray2024VBS>. Volunteers are needed and you can sign up to help on this same website.

Community Picnic in the Park (June 9)



We had picture-perfect weather and a good combination of church members and neighbors from the community as we gathered for a Picnic in the Park on June 9. Thank you to everyone who provided food, participated, and made an intentional effort to make a connection with neighbors.

Keep Filling the SENCA Cart



With children out of school, the SENCA theme for the summer continues to be "Kids Cook." As you make donations to the SENCA cart in the back of the sanctuary, you are especially encouraged to consider non-perishable items that kids can easily prepare for themselves, such as ramen noodles, canned soup and PB&J.