

Our Saviour's Lutheran Church

A congregation of the ELCA on the Rocky Boy's Reservation

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Non-Profit Org

US Postage

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Box Elder, MT

Permit No. 1

Return service requested

American Indian-Alaska Native Lutheran Association Meeting

Between July 19-22 we are hosting the biennial meeting of the AI-AN Lutheran Association. More information about the upcoming gathering will be on the Association's webpage and FaceBook page.



The Ambassador 1000 Program



The Ambassador 1000 program is one way we look to create a stable donor base. Information about the program can be found on our website. Or, write, call, or e-mail, and we will send the information to you.

If you would like to participate, please indicate your pledge of support on your first donation. On your subsequent donations write "Ambassador." Thank you.

Donate On-line on Our Website

Donations may be made securely through PayPal on our website. It is as easy as clicking on the donate button and following the directions.

[Donate](#)

Thrivent Choice and Dividend Giving



Thrivent Choice giving is important to us. If you are a Thrivent member, please consider designating Our Saviour's for your Thrivent Choice gift. Through your generous designations, Our Saviour's has received \$813 in Thrivent Choice dollars in 2017.

Amazon Smile

Donating to Our Saviour's through the Amazon Smile Foundation is very easy. Every time you want to purchase something at Amazon.com, go to **Smile.Amazon.com** instead! Designate Our Saviour's as your charity of choice. A percentage of each purchase price will be donated to us every quarter.



Campbell Labels

Campbell's is discontinuing the Labels for Education program at the end of the 2016-17 school year. We can still send in labels that specifically have the Labels for Education logo on them. Please send any labels you might have as soon as possible so that we can send them in and get them processed through the system. Thank you for your support in this program over the years.



A Few Reminders

What's in a Name?

Please make donations out to "Our Saviour's Lutheran Church." Our mailing address is 499 Mission Taylor Road, Box Elder, MT 59521. If you have not updated your address book or your mailing list, please do so.

Please make sure to include your name and return address inside a box or package when you send it. Often things are sent from a mail store and do not include this information. Sadly, we have no idea who sent those donations and, therefore, no one to thank.

Thank you for your kind attention to these details!



From the Pastor

In this issue of the TeePee Smoke, stories are being presented from within and from outside the congregation. Sharing stories is foundational to our faith and encourages each of us as we travel along "the Way" together.

From the Congregation

Loni Whitford-Taylor is involved in the Lutheran church locally and nationally.

Greetings!

My name is Loni Whitford-Taylor. I am currently the Church Council president at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, here in Rocky Boy, MT, home to the Chippewa Cree Tribe. I am also the secretary for the American Indian-Alaska Native Lutheran Association.

I was born and raised here in Rocky Boy. I was brought up attending, participating, and learning our traditional ceremonies and culture. I was also baptized Lutheran and grew up attending Our Saviour's Bible school, Sunday school, and communion. At one point I did not attend church for several years, but "something" led me back. I am happy and thankful I was "led" back. Soon after I became a mother and had my daughter baptized. Some years later, our pastor, Linda Webster, performed the wedding ceremony for me and Jeremy, my husband.

I have been on our Church Council for the past 5 years. I attended the 2015 AI-AN Biennial meeting in Oaks, Oklahoma. There I met some wonderful people and I was elected to be secretary for the Association.

My daughter, Aynjel'Lya "Gigi" Many Bears, fell sick in November 2015. She had caught a virus, which in rare cases affects the kidneys. Gigi was one of the rare cases and this virus caused inflammation in her kidneys. This led to her being sick to her stomach and not being able to walk because of painful and swollen joints. We made several trips to Spokane, WA to see a pediatric kidney specialist. Through faith and prayer, we got through it and Gigi is well and healthy today.

There were times when my daughter would ask "why me?" At first I didn't know how to respond or what to say to her. I taught her the Lord's Prayer since she was just a baby, we relied on that prayer daily. Also, with a lot of family support and prayers from friends and relatives near and far, we got through it. With a lot of faith, we made it through.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to you to visit Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, whether it is during as an individual or group or if you attend the 2017 biennial meeting for AI-AN Lutheran Association which we are hosting in July.

I am very proud of where I come from and we have a lot of sights to see, people to meet, and food to eat!

Ki-tah-tah-mi-h-in (Thank you), Loni Whitford-Taylor

From a Former Pastor's Wife

The Rev. Robert and Jean Rains served on at Our Saviour's from July 1, 1972 to June 15, 1983.

Dear Friends in Christ:

After spending time with Pastor Linda and reflecting on my late husband, Rev. Robert L. Rains' years of service at Our Saviour's Lutheran, Rocky Boy, I decided to write a short article for the current issue of Teepee Smoke. It was so good to hear that some people might recall the 11 years that we experienced serving at Our Saviour's. Bob and I continued to offer up prayers for continued ministry of Our Saviour's and all

of the wonderful people of Rocky Boy's Reservation after moving to Minnesota. When Bob died in Dec. 2008, I have continued to pray for God's blessing upon Our Saviour's and community.

The years that we spent living, learning, caring and sharing with the wide ministry of Our Saviour's became a high point of Bob's ministerial career and now continue to be my prayer opportunity for our family and especially for me.

Our daughter, Cynthia Rains Non and I met with Lilly Corcoran, Lori Corcoran Osborn, and Pastor Linda in Big Sandy at the end of May in 2015. We had the opportunity to reacquaint ourselves with the past and listening to the hopes and dreams not only for ourselves but the continuing ministry of Our Saviour's.

Pastor Linda has graciously offered for me to return to spend some time visiting with people who might remember our years living and sharing in the ministry of Our Saviour's Lutheran Church. I have asked for permission to share the thoughts of Bob's ministry, articles he wrote about ministry with Native American people along with his personal history that I am writing for our family and for the historical archives of Our Saviour's.

To all readers of Teepee Smoke, I personally thank you for your continuing financial support of the various ministries of Our Saviour's and especially your prayer support of the entire ministry, community and especially the Pastor, Council and wonderful members of Our Saviour's as they all serve on our behalf. As we all serve in God's ministry in our own way lead by Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit to answer the question each day of our lives, what are we called today to do in service of God's ministry here on earth?

May the peace of God be with each of you, Jeanne Rains

From the Congregation

Susie Sutherland is a long-time member of Our Saviour's and a member of the Church Council.

Hi, my name is Susan Sutherland. Some of you may recognize my name from the thank-you notes that are sent out to our donors. I am one of a few church members who write the notes, thanking those very generous individuals who choose to support our ministry.

I am a retired teacher and a proud member of the Chippewa Cree tribe. I taught here on the Rocky Boy Reservation for all of my 30 years as a first, fourth, and fifth grade teacher. I absolutely loved my job but one of my children became a father and asked if I would be willing to retire and take care of my granddaughter. Of course, I jumped at the chance to spend time with my sweet Alyssa so her and grandma stayed home together for a year and have since become best friends.

When I did decide it was time to go back to work, I accepted a position at the Stone Child College here in Rocky Boy. I am the Indian Education Professional Development Coordinator. The purpose of this program is to support Native American students who would like to become teachers and work in the local schools where there is a significant number of Native American students. I love my job and am doing things that I had never done before so it's exciting to come to work every day.

The grant that I coordinate provides a brief history of the local college in its narrative and reads as follows... "Stone Child College (SCC) was chartered by the Chippewa Cree

Business Committee (Tribal Council) on May 17, 1984 and was granted accreditation by the Northwest Association of Secondary Schools and Colleges in 1993. The elected tribal officials felt the establishment of a tribal community college was necessary for the preservation and maintenance of the Chippewa Cree culture, history, and Cree language. Furthermore, off reservation vocational training institutions and colleges were not adequately addressing the unique educational needs of the Chippewa Cree people. The tribe determined that the only way our tribal members would receive the training and/or education necessary to thrive both on and off the reservation, was to create an institution of higher education specific to the needs of, and essential for, the survival of our people, culture, and language."

SCC is currently a two-year institution but progress is being made towards offering a Bachelor's Degree in Education. Hopefully, this will become a reality by the Fall of 2017. Our current enrollment is approximately 340 students, the majority of which are Native American. Over 90% of our students are considered low income, around 77% are first generation college students, and about 10% are of Limited English Proficiency. What makes my job so rewarding is that many of the students who are enrolled here at Stone Child were former students of mine at the elementary school. It's great to see how far these young men and women have come and how they are using education to try to make better lives for themselves.

From a Former FLBC Counselor

Savannah Sullivan was a FLBC counselor that helped lead one week of VBS Day Camp through Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp in Summer 2013.

"Tell us about the joys and challenges of an impactful cross-cultural experience you've had." She asked. I imagined other applicants telling stories of travelling to Kenya and Costa Rica, of dusty streets and foreign foods, of passports and border crossings, but I knew the story I had to tell. So, I said, "Let me tell you about my week at Rocky Boy."

This conversation was nestled among others in my interview to be a Young Adult in Global Mission (YAGM) with the ELCA. That interview eventually led to an acceptance to the YAGM program, an acceptance that sent me around the world to live in a small town in Rwanda for a year. That year was one of the most transformative experiences of my life, and I like to say that I owe it in part to Rocky Boy.

The first time I stepped on Montana soil, I had never been north of Virginia. Born and raised in South Carolina, I found Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp in Montana online by accident. My fourth week on staff, I was assigned to be a part of a traveling day camp program that spends a week on the Rocky Boy Reservation leading activities and devotions at Our Savior's Lutheran for any children in the community that care to come. Loading into the van in Lakeside, I was totally unprepared for what I would find at Rocky Boy.

Our first day on the reservation, the small group of staff that I had travelled with and I met with Pastor Linda and then went on a hike just behind the church where we found the tree. I had never seen a Prayer Tree before, and I was moved as a community member explained that the pieces of fabric I saw tied to the tree were prayers. People write their prayers on the strips of cloth and tie them to the tree, where they stay, moved daily by the wind of the Spirit, their messages carried to God. I had never experienced a cultural practice that tied faith with the

earth so closely and it broke something open in my heart. I started to realize that there were more faces of God that I had ever imagined, that my faith was so much bigger and encompassed so many more people than I had ever dreamed.

Over the course of my week at Rocky Boy, I was bombarded by firsts like this. There were beautiful firsts - the first time I saw a native depiction of Christ - his eagle wings outstretched as if to take off in flight or the first time I heard a Christian liturgy integrated with spiritual prayers of the many different Native tribes of eastern Montana. There were also painful firsts - like the first time I witnessed, first hand, the marginalization of native communities. The children I met at Rocky Boy were so full of joy and life, but before I stepped onto their land as a guest, I never realized that such deep poverty existed in the United States. My week at Rocky Boy led me to confront my own privilege and ignorance, and led me to a deeper understanding of the vastness and grace of God. It led me to Rwanda, and has now led me again to work for God's people as the ELCA's Program Associate for the Strategy on HIV/AIDS. Now, every day, I get to interact with people across cultures in the US and abroad to welcome HIV+ folks to God's family and to end HIV for good.

Just before I left Rocky Boy that summer of 2013, I hiked back up to the prayer tree. I took off the pink bandana I had worn every day that summer, I wrote a prayer, and I tied it to the tree. Watching it flutter in the summer breeze, I knew that a part of myself and my God was tied to that land, too.

Almost exactly three years later, I tied another piece of cloth to a tree - this one halfway around the world in Rwamagana, Rwanda. I had just spent a year living among people who, like the community I met at Rocky Boy, had introduced me to a God I would never have met on my own. In Rwanda, I again met a community that caused me to confront my own privilege - and I was more prepared. I was prepared because I had learned at Rocky Boy, because I had met a patient community on the reservation that challenged everything I believed and helped me discern a call into the world to learn more.

As I tied my prayer to the guava tree in Rwanda, I thought of that first prayer flag in Montana. I hoped it was still there, that these communities were somehow connected. I prayed a prayer of thanks - thanks for the ground, for the tree, and for Rocky Boy. And I hoped that my prayer, the prayers from others both in Rocky Boy and in Rwanda, and the prayers from communities all around the world would all be caught on the wind of the Spirit and would meet somewhere in the sky.

2017 Servant Events

We still have two weeks open in summer 2017 for servant groups and/or individual volunteers. These are the two weeks of VBS Day Camp under the leadership of counselors from Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp. If you are interested in working with Rocky Boy youth, this is a great time to come.

Because we are looking for volunteers just for VBS, we will be doing the charges for these weeks differently. Please contact the office for more information.

Immersion Events

On June 5 to 9, 2017, we are offering an Intensive Cross-Cultural Immersion. A flyer with more information about the experience can be found on our website.

Kogodus Renewal Retreats at Rocky Boy

There will be a Kogodus Renewal Retreat on August 27 to 29, 2017. This will be the "Contrast Community" based on the Beatitudes. The retreat is open to everyone. If you would like to come, you will find a flyer on our website.

Personal and Group Retreats

Personal retreat time is available year round. We have space set aside for individuals, couples, or a group that would like to have a time of quiet and contemplation.

Seminary Cross-Cultural Experience

Twice each year we offer a unique experience for seminary students. If you know a seminarian or your congregation sponsors one, encourage them to check into this program. Information concerning the May and August Seminary Cross-Cultural Experiences can be found on our website.

Vacation Bible School Day Camp

For several years we have had two weeks of VBS Day Camp with counselors from Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp (FLBC). This year one of our servant groups will also be running their own week of VBS Day Camp. These camps are open to all kids on the reservation and there is no fee to participate. We provide transportation.

Beside the Christian education the kids are receiving, this experience introduces them to "safe" non-Native young adults. It, also, brings a new cross-cultural experience to future leaders of the Church. What happens here is very much a two-way experience.

The kids start and end their time with us at the Rocky Boy School cafeteria eating breakfast and lunch which is available to them through the Federal school meal program.

We appreciate designated gifts that help support our Youth programs. Thank you for your gifts for our kids!

Rocky Boy Kids go to Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp

Our plan for going to FLBC this year is to take one of our 15-passenger vans and our truck. Along with the 3 adults volunteers that will be going, we can take up to 15 youth ranging from "going into 4th grade" to "leaving High School". Another adult volunteer will be bringing a few youth who are "going into 3rd grade" for a half-week that will start mid-week.

We are going the week of July 23rd. Registration is still open. If you would like to help sponsor Rocky Boy kids to go to camp, we invite you to send designated donations to us which we will pass along to FLBC.

The Kitchen Garden

We are ready for our summer garden. New soaker hoses have been purchased and a plan for implementing a new watering system has been made. Seeds are started. Our goal is to provide fresh produce for our servant groups and our elderly neighbors who live near us. Planting will begin very soon.

Layette Ministry

This ministry is well used! Layettes help new mothers on the reservation. You can find a list of what we include in our layettes on our website. We estimate the cost of a layette is between \$100 and \$150 dollars. We appreciate every donation we receive for this special ministry. Thank you.

Our Thrift Store

With all the changes and constant care our Thrift Store gets these days, it is no wonder it is becoming more successful. Every dollar that comes in goes into our Youth Ministry programs, which include VBS Day Camp, FLBC camp scholarships, and our renewed Sunday School program.

Our 2016-2017 Scholarship Recipients

There have been five scholarship recipients for the current school year. They are: Quinton Big Knife, Shana Henry, Mia Lane Bull, Kristie Russette, and Reyan Sutherland.

Meeting Our On-going Van Needs

Thank you for helping us meet the funding raising goal in order to have our 1997 Ford van repaired. It is now in the shop and if everything stays on schedule we will have it back before our servant groups start arriving in June.

We Still Need a New Copier

Seven years ago one of our Ministry Partner congregations saw our "Wish List" included a new copier. At the time we had a very simple desk-top copier. Our goal was to have a copier on which we could produce all of our mailing. They helped by giving us donation that paid for a new copier.

It is now time to replace that copier with a newer model as replacement parts and supplies are going to be phased out and completely discontinued in the near future. The model we are looking at that will meet our needs will cost about \$11,500. We would like to raise funds to make a substantial down-payment before we enter into a lease-to-own agreement. This would reduce the yearly commitment to lease payments. Your help with this project would be greatly appreciated.



Our Permanent Endowment Fund

We are raising money to start our Permanent Endowment Fund. Along with designated donations and 5% of our non-designated donations, we now have about \$4,200 in our Endowment Savings. We need to raise \$25,000 to start our Permanent Endowment Fund.

Our goal is to raise \$1M in twenty years or less. Along with your help and the help of many others, we can make this happen.

USPS versus E-mail

We would like to send more newsletters out by e-mail. If you are able to receive it by e-mail, please contact Our Saviour's Lutheran Church at office@oslcrb.org. We keep current mailing addresses on file just in case the e-mail address fails and we have to send it out to you. We do not share or sell our database information.

Closing Prayer

Dear Lord, spring fills us with hope and new life. Thank you for all the good gifts you have given us and continue to give us every day. Thank you for Ministry Partners who share in our work among the people of Rocky Boy. Thank you for all the companions we have along the Way. May we be a blessing to each other. May we always rest in You. Amen

