

CHURCH FAMILY

"I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfill all my will."



On April 4th, Ela, Mattie and I welcomed the newest Sutton into this world, Jonathan Glyn. Everyone is healthy, happy and tired. Mattie can't stay out of her baby brother's face and often remarks how he is "the cutest in the world." I love being a dad. It is truly my favorite thing. And for me, the best part, especially when your kids are little, is how much time they want to spend with you. Mattie—being the ultimate daddy's girl—always wants to hang out with me; whether it's taking care of the chickens, doing a puzzle, or going to prayer meeting, she wants to be with me. She just loves being with her Daddy and I love being with her. Of course as I'm writing this the song, "Cat's in the Cradle" is playing in my head and I know that it won't always be like that. So I better enjoy it while I can!

When I think of this dynamic between Mattie and I, I can't help but think of the above verse and the relationship King David had with His God. In the past, when I would hear the phrase "a man after God's Own Heart," I always related it to obedience and servitude, as if God had found a man that would do His bidding, a man who knew his place. There is certainly that element to it, just not in the mechanical, religious sense that I had understood it as. I see it differently now. I see it through the eyes of a father, a father who longs to be with his child and a child who shares that same desire.

David was "a man after God's Own Heart." Not that he was especially obedient or did all the right things; in fact we know that his life story says otherwise. No, he was "a man after God's Own Heart" because he was just that, a man after God's Heart! Since he was a young boy tending sheep in the wilderness, David knew that to be in the Presence of God was right where he belonged. To walk with God was everything. We can hear it in his divine boast as he shouted out Goliath's death sentence. We can hear it in the poetry and songs he wrote (Psalm 15, 132). But there are two instances in David's life that make this point especially clear to me: The bringing of the Ark into Jerusalem, and the desire to build the Temple.

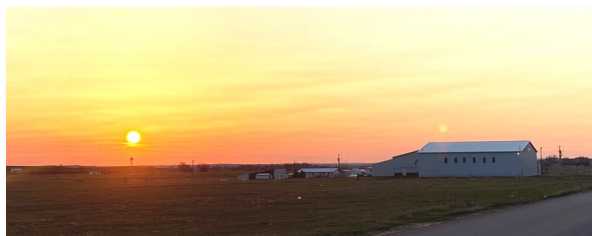
The Ark of the Covenant, in short, represented the very Presence of God to the ancient people of Israel (see Exodus 25:22). After David solidified his kingdom by uniting the nation and establishing Jerusalem as its capitol, the first thing he does is go and retrieve this Ark because in the heart of David, he must be where God is, and if God's Presence rests above that Ark, then that Ark must come home to him. So with much awe, fanfare and exuberance, he brings the Ark home and places it in a tent. The Dwelling place of God must be his dwelling place! But that wasn't good enough. A tent was transitory, and in David's view not fitting to house the Great Presence of God. So he determines to build Him a House, a Temple, a place where His Presence would dwell forever, never to leave, always to be with David as long as he lived. And it was this desire of David's that so blessed the Heart of God that He made David a promise like no other, that his kingdom would endure forever and that through his bloodline the Messiah, The King, Jesus, would come to save the world.

To David, it was simple, he understood that God's grand design for man was intimacy with Him, and that man's great purpose was "to Glorify God and enjoy Him forever". And for God, this was enough. David understood that God is our Father who wants to be with His children, and David was a son who just wanted to be with His Father. This is what made him "a man after God's Own Heart"!

As His Family here in Oglala, we want the same. We simply want to be with Him, to be His Dwelling Place, the very Temple He created us to be. Our ambition is to abide in Him, to be yoked together with Him as we walk through this life into the next. We desire to be a people "after His Heart." This desire is infused into everything we are doing and more importantly, how we are doing it, whether it's being Church, the prayer meeting, or just our day to day interactions. We want to be with Him and we hope, as we are filled with His Presence and Light as He dwells within us, that the Lakota people would see that they too have a Father who longs to be with them and is calling them to Himself.

Thank you for your faithful love and prayer. We appreciate and love you all.

Pastor Eric & Ela Sutton



YOUTH MINISTRY

Although Covid has greatly impacted the Rec schedule and kept us from opening the gym for a long time now, I stayed busy with teaching Bible class as well as archery at Oyate Christian School. Teaching in a classroom definitely has a different dynamic than teaching at a church, but I am content to do both. Coaching archery has been a blast. The students didn't get too much practice this year, but some of them were still able to score pretty high at the SD State Archery Tournament in Spearfish in April. I am hoping to coach again next school year and train a whole quiver full of winners!



As summer is approaching, I am praying for wisdom and direction about opening up the Rec gym again. It has been two years since we were able to keep it open, and nobody at the Rec got any younger. Covid may have slowed down life, but not our aging process. Anyway, please pray for us in this regard, that the Lord would provide helpers for open gym. We would love to have a (younger) individual or family come and minister alongside us in Oglala. Kids and teens here are asking almost daily for opportunities to play ball or hang out. The harvest is ready—where are the workers?

Leon & Mary Schwartz

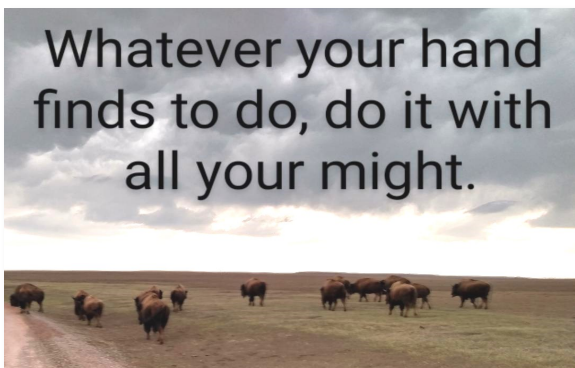
OUTREACH

We are thankful that in spite of Covid restrictions, we have been able to re-open the jail ministry. During our weekly visits to the jail south of Pine Ridge, we meet with two groups of men, those who have been sentenced as well as those awaiting sentencing. For the past few months we've been allowed to go in and preach the gospel, hold bible studies, and show Christian movies to these men. As a result, quite a few of them have expressed a desire to change their lives and to follow Jesus, and they have asked us to pray with them. Recently we've also had some awesome people of God from Germany, Sebastian and Sabine Koehler as well as our intern Elli, come in with me. Sabine, Elli, and I met with two groups of ladies, over 20 in each group, for two weeks; 16 of them asked for prayer to follow Jesus and for Bibles. Please pray these seeds planted will become lasting fruit for the Kingdom of God. Thank you.

Elliot & Crystal Morales, Outreach

HEIDI'S NOTES

In the 15 (and counting) years of serving in Oglala, I have had a vision of what ministry would look like, how I could practically carry out what God had called me to at the Rec Center and beyond. My vision has gotten a little foggy lately, and as I have been inquiring of the Lord what He wants from me, I was given this verse, Ecclesiastes 9:10a, which has been a favorite throughout my life:



What does that look like? Chatting with kids when they come to my house, helping friends from church setting up for a giveaway, giving somebody a ride to the grocery store, praying with someone at the playground that has lost a family member, spending time in the prayer room, giving food to those that have none, listening when someone just needs to talk, sharing the hope I have in Jesus in situations where there is none... Or, as Isaiah 30:21 says,

"Whether you turn to the right or to the left,
your ears will hear a voice behind you saying,
"This is the way; walk in it.""

*In Christ, I always
have clear vision!*
Heidi Martin



BULLETIN BOARD



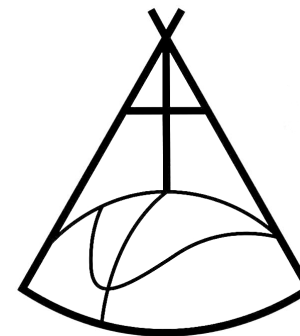
CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

Jonathan Sutton is here! He was born on April 4. Eric and Ela are very thankful for a fast and easy delivery, and big sister Mattie is super excited to have such a cute baby brother. God is good!

Our Church Family has also been growing lately. Since Covid restrictions have been eased (and hopefully also because of a spiritual hunger for Jesus!) we have had a few new people show up on Sunday mornings. However, the overall situation in the Oglala community is growing more desperate. Many of our Lakota brothers and sisters feel that their burden is heavy, and still too many people are dying without Hope in Christ. May our Church Family be His Light!

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ♥ Thank you, Father God, for desiring to just be with your children—may we become the people who are after Your Heart!
- ♥ Thank God for opportunities to pray, teach, and worship freely, and for the many times when we could sense His Presence with us
- ♥ Thank God for providing for us through these last two years... and for keeping us going despite lockdowns and other Covid issues
- ♥ Continue to pray for wisdom and direction and provision for our ministry, especially for when and how to re-open the Rec gym
- ♥ Pray for new staff for our Rec team—there is much need and potential in the Oglala community, and Jesus Himself asked us to pray for workers in the kingdom!
- ♥ Pray for favor with the tribe and for protection of His Church on Pine Ridge Reservation
- ♥ Pray for the Oglala community that addictions would break, hopeless hearts find truth and strength in Christ, and lives be restored
- ♥ Pray for our Church Family to find Strength and Joy in Him, and to persevere faithfully



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