

Family

What is God’s problem?

Two weeks ago I read the following in the “Notifications” section of the *Free Press* Classifieds: “God, what is your problem? Are you asleep, deaf, on vacation or dead? Are you incapable, indifferent or just plain cruel?”

The first thing I did was pray for whoever wrote that, and for the circumstances that must have led them to this point. Then I wondered what I might say to this person were they to come by the church and ask me what God’s problem might be.

And that might be an important question for all of us to ponder. Some of us, as people of faith, might have to face that same kind of question some day. Others might be the ones who would feel the absence, death or cruelty of God.

Of course, I could never presume to know what the writer might be going through, but I’ve had my own bouts of fist-raising and contending with God, so I understood, at least in a small way, the feelings that might be churning in this person’s soul. And certainly the psalmist shared similar feelings when he wrote “My God, my God why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?” (Psalm 22:1)

Or there’s Job, when he demands an audience with God: “But I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to argue my case with God.” (Job 13:3)

When life takes a hard, chaotic, tragic turn, we want answers, even remedies, and who better to give us what we want than God? With fists raised and angry voices pummeling the universe, or heads bowed and tears bitterly flowing into emptiness, we seek God and divine answers to our human whys, holy solutions to our earthly woes. We want, we demand that God give a logical explanation to what is illogical in our life and that God fix things to our satisfaction.

Don’t we all, in some way or another think God should jump when we say jump and even ask “How high?” in the process? Isn’t it easy to want God to be our servant, our slave, always at the ready to make



Carol Rahn

• From the Pulpit

everything right? So our prayers become demands – demands for answers, for change, for things to go MY way.

Yet I have learned, more from experience than from reading deep theological tomes, that God does not work by responding to my demands when and how I want. God simply does not play by my rules. Prayers are less about my changing God, and more about God changing me. God is not so much about changing circumstances to fit my needs, but changing me so I can live with my circumstances. God’s business is to open me up to the grace, strength, peace and healing that can only come from His love and compassion.

When we are willing to let go of our own agenda, we can then understand more what God’s agendas are for us, agendas that offer, even during time of great suffering, a sustaining presence that gives us, not necessarily what we want, but what we need to move to a place of wholeness and peace. And the real grace is that God understands our anger, our feelings of abandonment and even His perceived cruelty while God waits for us to turn once again to the true source of hope and salvation.

Often God’s answers come, not a a divine revelation or a cessation of suffering, but as a caring friend, words of compassion, someone with whom we can share our weakness, our fear, our longing, our pain. As one of our church members said, “I wish I could go

to this person and just tell them that I really care.”

Hard, demanding questions to God are often answered by simple acts of human care and compassion. God’s presence may come, not in a mighty whirlwind of change but in a quiet voice of love. God may feel absent, not because God has abandoned us, but because we fail to see God in everyday moments of kindness and caring.

I do not believe that God causes or allows suffering to happen. What I do believe is that God stands with us in the midst of our hard times and bears the hurt with us. It was God in the man Jesus who suffered on the cross, and even cried out in his own agony of abandonment. It was God who died. It was and is God who knows with the greatest intimacy all our pain, our sorrow, our suffering, so that when we suffer, God can join us there.

Perhaps the answer to the question that I read that evening is, “I am here with you. Hurting as you hurt, suffering as you suffer. And I am with you, giving you what you need to move beyond the pain, and to discover new life in me. I am with you on the cross so you may know the resurrection. The world can be cruel. Sinfulness can have cruel consequences, but I am love. I am peace. I am life.”

Just perhaps, that might be the answer.

Carol Rahn is pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Colby.

Deaths

David Ferguson

David Ferguson, 88, Denver, a retired banker, died Wednesday, March 3, 2010, at his home.

He was born March 14, 1921, in Colby, the son of William David and Clara (Daniels) Ferguson.

He had lived in Denver since 1960. On Nov. 27, 1963, he married Lois (Sears) Ferguson.

He was preceded in death by his parents; a son, William Ferguson;

and two sisters, Julia Siebel and Janet Page.

Survivors include his wife, of the home; a son, Andrew Ferguson, Denver; two daughters, Catherine Marsters, Savannah, Ga.; and Denise Ferguson, Albuquerque, N.M.; seven grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

Graveside services will be at 11 a.m. Tuesday, March 9, 2010, at

Beulah Cemetery in Colby, with Pastor Carol Rahn officiating.

Visitation will be from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday at Harrison Chapel.

The family suggests memorials to the donor’s choice, in care of the funeral chapel, Box 634, Colby, Kan., 67701.

Michael Stegeman

Michael Stegeman, 67, Burlington, Colo., brother of Annie Fyfe of Levant, died unexpectedly on Thursday, Feb. 25, 2010, at the Kit Carson County Memorial Hospital in Burlington.

He was born Sept. 25, 1942, to Xavier L. And Lela P. (Dancer) Stegeman in Selden.

Preceding him in death were his parents; a daughter, Heidi Davis; a sister, Alice Ruthe; and two brothers, Ernie Stegeman and Kenny Stegeman.

Survivors also include a son, Jeff Stegeman, Bur-

lington; a brother, Richard Stegeman, Virginia; and three other sisters, Mary Jane (Tom) Sponsel, Edson; Helen (Wiley) Perry, Quitman, Texas; and Agnes (Bob) Reignor, Westminster, Colo.

Private family memorial services are planned. Love Funeral Home in Burlington is in charge of arrangements.

Condolences may be left at [www.lovefuneral-homes.com](http://www.lovefuneral-homes.com).

Francis Lee Rodenbeck

Francis Lee Rodenbeck, 89, Salida, Colo., formerly of Colby, died Tuesday, March 2, 2010.

He was born Dec. 28, 1920, to Richard and Bertha Rodenbeck of Halford, and grew up in Colby.

After graduating from Colby High School, he enlisted in the army and served in Guam and Curacao, protecting oil supplies during World War II. He married Bonnie Jean Wilson.

After the war, he worked for the Ohio Rubber Co., farmed with his brother Floyd in the San Luis Valley of Colorado, and later worked for the National Farmers Organization and raised citrus in his backyard in Mesa, Ariz., for more than 20 years.

In the 1970s, they owned the Salida Western Auto, and later managed the Bottle Shop.

He enjoyed music and family and had a deep faith in Jesus that carried him through many health challenges.

He was preceded in death by is parents and a grandson, Paul Self.

Survivors include his wife; three daughters, Bonnie Lee (Chuck) McDonald, Salida; Karyle Rodenbeck, North Miami Beach, Fla.; and JoAnn (Clinton) Self, Monte Vista, Colo.; a brother, Floyd (Ann) Rodenbeck, Cañon City, Colo.; three grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren.

Graveside services will be at 2 p.m. Monday, March 8, 2010, at

Beulah Cemetery, with the Rev. James Mardock officiating.

Visitation will be from noon to 1:30 p.m. Monday at the Kersenbrock Funeral Chapel in Colby.

The family suggests memorials to Angel of Shavano Hospice, New Caring and Sharing, or Valley to Valley Senior Day Care in Salida, in care of the funeral home, 745 S. Country Club Dr., Colby, Kan., 67701.

Corrections

The Colby Free Press wants to maintain an accurate record of our town. Please report any error or lack of clarity in a news story to us at 462-3963.

SERVICES DIRECTORY

Worship in the church of your choice this weekend.



LEVANT COMMUNITY CHURCH, 205 1st St., Pastor Jerry Vincent, 785-586-2376, Sunday School (classes for 3 years & up and 3 adult classes) 9:30 a.m., Morning worship 10:30 a.m.

Schedule of church services

**GATEWAY FELLOWSHIP**, 2nd and Sunrise, Oakley. Pastor James Bloom, Sunday Morning Worship and Children’s Church 10:15 a.m., Wednesday evening Bible Study and Intercessory Prayer 6:30 p.m. 785-671-4020.

**COLBY INDEPENDENT BAPTIST CHURCH**, 730 E. 3rd (former Jaycee’s building), Pastor Bernard Heinz, 785-460-0313, Sunday School 9:30 a.m.; Sunday Morning Worship 10:30 a.m.; Sunday Evening 6:00 p.m.; Wednesday Evening 7:00 p.m.

**ASCENSION-ON-THE-PAIRIE EPISCOPAL**, Rev. Don Martin, College Drive & Wheatridge Rd., 785-462-3041, Holy Eucharist, 9:00 a.m. every Sunday. Evening Prayer, 5:15 p.m. Wednesday, September through May. Christian Education for Youth, 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, September through May.

**COLLEGE DRIVE ASSEMBLY OF GOD**, 245 W. College Dr., Colby. Pastor Steve Todd. Worship Service 10:15 a.m. Sunday School 9 a.m. for all ages. Wednesday Youth at The Rock 3:30 and 7 p.m. Sunday evening services at 6:30 p.m. on all Sundays except the 5th Sunday of every month. 785-462-8234. [cdag@st-tel.net](mailto:cdag@st-tel.net).

**BEREAN CHURCH**, 1000 S. Franklin, 785-460-2763, [www.colbyborean.com](http://www.colbyborean.com); Sunday School 9:30 a.m., Sunday Worship 10:45 a.m. Pastor Mark Carlton, Senior Pastor and Pastor Jason Purdy, Youth Pastor. Middle School Group Wednesday 7 p.m. at the Attic and High School Youth Group Sunday 6 p.m. at the Attic. AWANA Wednesday at 7 p.m. at the church.

**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH**, (Affiliated with American Baptist Churches USA) Dr. Joan Harrington, Interim Pastor, 615 W. Webster, 785-462-2867. Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.; Family Worship: 10:30 a.m.; Bible Study: Sundays at 7 p.m. RC Club 2nd and 4th Sundays at 2 p.m.

**COLLEGE VIEW BAPTIST CHURCH** (Affiliated with Southern Baptist), 1185 Wheatridge Rd. at College Drive, 785-460-7144, Sunday Bible Study 9:30 a.m., Sunday Worship services, 10:45 a.m. Prayer Service at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday’s.

**PLEASANT HOME CHURCH**, Pastor, Perry Baird, 785-890-3375, 3190 Road 70, Edson, Worship, 9:00 a.m., Sunday School 10:00 a.m.

**WINONA METHODIST CHURCH**, 501 Bellview Ave. Rev. Sheryl Johnson, Sunday School, 10:30 a.m., Morning Worship 9:15 a.m. (CDT)

**MINGO BIBLE CHURCH**, 420 Main Mingo, 785-462-2992: An independent community church served by Village Missions Intern Pastor Tom Peyton. Sunday School: 9:30AM - all ages. Sunday Services: 10:45AM. Sunday Nights: 1st Sunday of the month: potluck following morning service - no evening service; 2nd Sunday: services at 6:30 PM; 3rd Sunday: informal fellowship - bring a snack to share!; 4th and 5th Sunday: services at 6:30 p.m.

**SACRED HEART CATHOLIC**, 785-462-2179, Father Dana Clark, Pastor, Saturday Eve. Mass 5:30 p.m., Sunday Masses 8:00 & 10:00 a.m., Confessions will be heard Saturday 4:30-5:05 p.m. and from 7:30-7:45 a.m. and 9:25-9:40 a.m. on Sunday.

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**. Rev. Carol Rahn, 515 W. 4th, 785-462-6342, Sunday Worship 9:00 a.m. Podcasts of the worship services are available at the church website [colbypress.org](http://colbypress.org).

**WESLEYAN CHURCH**, 320 W. Pine - 785-462-8391, Sunday School 9:30 a.m., Sunday Worship 10:40 a.m., Sunday Evening Cell groups at 6:00 p.m., Wednesday Youth Ministries, Kids Clubhouse 7 p.m.

**CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS**, 1145 S. Franklin - 785-460-6605, President Gary Slavens, 785-460-2656; Erwin Mitchell, 1st counselor, 785-460-1952; Tim Wilson, 2nd counselor, 785-846-7796. Sacrament meeting 10 a.m., Sunday School and Primary 11:20 a.m., Priesthood, Relief Society, YM/YW, 12:10 p.m.; Family History Center open to public, 7-9 p.m. Thursdays or by appointment. Call 785-462-3571.

**REDEEMING LOVE MINISTRIES, INC.**, 345N. Franklin, Dr. W.G. and Rev. Orvella Romine, Equipping Class, Sunday, 9 a.m., Sunday worship, 10 a.m., Wednesday, R.L.M Training Centers (Bible School), 6p.m. Shop online at: [www.rlmregionalchurch.com](http://www.rlmregionalchurch.com).

**COLBY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**. Rev. James Mardock, pastor, 950 S. Franklin, 785-460-6521, Sunday Worship Services at 8:30 and 11:00 a.m., Fellowship coffee 9:30 a.m., Sunday School, 9:45 a.m., KXXX broadcasts 11:00 worship. [www.colbyumc.org](http://www.colbyumc.org)

**CHURCH OF CHRIST**, Minister, Jarrod Spencer. 510 E. 4th, Sunday Bible Study 9:30 a.m., Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m., Wednesday, Bible Study 7:00 p.m. [www.colbychurch.com](http://www.colbychurch.com)

To become a sponsor, call Andrea, Heather or Shaly today at 462-3963.

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