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Chris Perkins, left, Reid Petty, Joe Denoyer, Rex Petty and Dee Estes pray along with others during the 2012 National Day of Prayer observance at the Seward County Courthouse.

## **Community announces programs for National Day of Prayer**

By ROBERT PIERCE

• Leader & Times

In 1952, President Harry Truman signed a congressional resolution establishing an annual day of prayer in the nation.

Truman encouraged citizens to “beseech God to grant us wisdom to know the course which we should follow, and strength and patience to pursue that course steadfastly.”

National Day of Prayer is traditionally set for the first Thursday in May, and that custom continues this year.



The theme for this year's observance is "One Voice United in Prayer," based on Romans 15:6, and local coordinator Pastor Rex Petty said the theme is meant to serve as unity for the need for prayer both corporate and individually.

In the past, one or two events have taken place locally to observe National Day of Prayer, but in recent years, more events have gone on throughout the day. That is the case this year, with Liberal's First National Bank hosting an event at 7:45 a.m. Thursday.

Good Samaritan Center will then have an event at 10 a.m. That event will feature several prayer opportunities regarding national, local and state issues presented by prayer leaders, congregational patriotic hymns, Bell Choir presentations by the residents of Good Sam and a featured speaker.

Anyone interested in attending this event is invited to participate. For more information, call 620-621-1873.

Petty explained the evolution of the local NDP event.

“Back from '88 to '95, there really wasn't anything public going on,” he said. “We just opened our church from 6 in the morning to 6 in the evening for people to come and go and pray. In '96 and '97, we did two special services at our church. In '98, that's when we started doing our community services together. We met at the Landmark at the fountain from '98 to 2000. We had music. A pastor spoke, and different ones led in prayer.”

From 2001 to 2007, the Rock Island Depot was home to the local NDP observance, with 2008's event taking place in the Showcase Theater at Seward County Community College.

“In 2009 was when we started doing it at the courthouse,” Petty said. “In 2010, there was a guy from Cambodia. We decided to combine our National Day of Prayer with him being here, and he spoke that night at the high school auditorium.”

Petty said starting in 2011, Liberal's NDP has taken place at the Seward County Courthouse, with other events taking place at Good Sam, an event started by Judy Barnes.

More recently, Ozzie Ridings has started events to join in the day's activities. Petty said that activity was taking place at Tobias Park during the noon hour. It has since been moved to the evening and had taken place inside Petty's church, Faith Tabernacle.

“He decided this year, he'd move his to the evening,” Petty said.

Petty said Ridings' event will take place this year in the Seward County Ag Building starting at 5:30 p.m.

“We have early morning, mid-morning, noon hour and evening, providing a lot of different options of people,” he said.

Chili from Wendy's will be provided at the Ag Building, and Petty said 10 to 12 ministers have been lined up to pray there.

“They’ve kind of got an A to Z list, where you cover your community, your government leaders, your school, your law enforcement,” he said. “I think they even have prayer for the military and for the state, for the governor.”

Liberal’s Church For All Nations will likewise be open for “come as you can” prayer from noon to 2 p.m. Thursday. Pastor Darren Metcalf said there will be directed prayer for business, education, media, government, community, family, arts and entertainment and other areas.

Petty said the need for prayer has existed as long as NDP itself, but the need is more urgent than ever.

“If you read a quote from a spiritual leader or pastor from 50 years ago, they’ll say we’re in terrible need of prayer and at a crucial moment in the history of our nation,” he said. “That’d been 50 years ago. You find out what was going on 50 years ago, and things sure looked a lot better than they do now. Throughout time, whoever’s leading prayer, I think everybody just senses that we need it. It’s essential to see change take place. Politics is important, but politics alone isn’t going to change the hearts of people. It can change laws and policies and do good things, but the prayer changes the hearts and lives of people.”

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