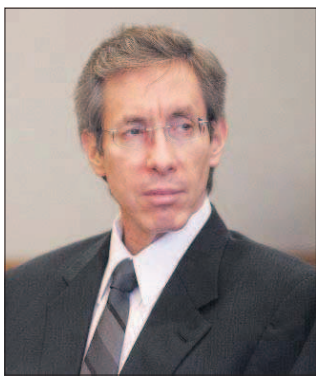


Federal arrests reveal polygamist sect details

By JAMES NORD and DIRK LAMMERS
Associated Press



Warren Jeffs sits in the Third District Court in Salt Lake City.

PIERRE, S.D. — A federal crackdown on an alleged food stamp fraud scheme by a polygamist sect on the Arizona-Utah border is offering details about a secretive compound in far southwestern South Dakota that has served as one of the church's "lands of refuge."

Top leaders from Warren Jeffs' Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, including his brothers Lyle Jeffs of Utah and Seth Jeffs of South Dakota, were arrested Tuesday. Prosecutors accuse church leaders of orchestrating a fraud scheme instructing members how to use food-stamp benefits illegally and avoid getting caught, according to an indictment from the U.S. Attorney's Office in Utah.

But court documents say sect members living in the South Dakota compound were prohibited from using food stamps while living there, potentially part of the church leadership's efforts to keep secret their property near Pringle, population 111. Known to the faithful as "R23," the group started work on the compound there over a decade ago.

Warren Jeffs is serving a life sentence in Texas for assaulting two of his child brides. Authorities say his brother Seth is the bishop of the church's South Dakota congregation. Seth Jeffs, who previously downplayed his church role in dealings with South Dakota water

tion attributed to him in the court documents.

"You can't see a whole lot anymore," Custer County Sheriff Rick Wheeler said of the South Dakota compound.

After a 2008 federal raid of the sect's Texas ranch that led to Warren Jeffs' conviction, the South Dakota property's population swelled to 100-150, Steed said, according to court documents. Some girls and young women were also moved to the South Dakota compound from the Arizona-Utah border to receive "special training," he said.

"There was a selection process for these girls chosen to go to R23," Steed said. "Lyle (Jeffs) was instrumental in the selection process and told the girls that you had to 'qualify' to go."

Only a dozen people were approved to work on Warren Jeffs' house on the South Dakota property. Construction started in 2008, and it was built with one-foot thick walls, sound barriers and double padded flooring, according to the documents.

Warren Jeffs' son Roy was sent to live in the South Dakota compound for nearly a year in 2007-2008, where he spent long days building houses with log exteriors. Other men helped raise livestock or stood guard in the tower, Roy Jeffs told The Associated Press. He left the sect in February 2014.

Roy Jeffs said only a few dozen people were there at a time. He saw women, but didn't know what they were there for. People weren't supposed to leave without approval from leaders.

regulators, is behind bars in South Dakota pending a Monday hearing in the food stamp case. An attorney for Seth Jeffs didn't immediately return telephone messages requesting comment.

Only about 30 miles from the popular tourist attraction of Mount Rushmore, the church's 140-acre South Dakota property sits along a gravel road secluded by tall pine trees and a recently completed privacy fence. A roving security force of two was bolstered by two or three guards stationed inside the compound's watch tower, a steel-enforced octagonal structure manned 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, according to an FBI report on a 2014 interview with Sam Steed. He was a compound resident from 2006-2007.

Cell phone batteries had to be removed while on the property. The presiding bishop carried a phone but had to leave to use it, Steed told the FBI.

Steed didn't immediately respond to telephone and email messages requesting comment about the informa-

BRIEFLY

Coptic teens found guilty of contempt of Islam

CAIRO (AP) — An Egyptian court has convicted four Coptic Christian teenagers for contempt of Islam on Thursday, after they appeared in a video mocking Muslim prayers, sentencing three to five years in prison and referring a fourth, who is under 18, to a juvenile detention facility.

The harsh ruling — which has followed a surge of blasphemy cases in Egyptian courts — underscores a culture of intolerance within the country's judicial system at a time when the Egyptian president is seeking to position himself as an advocate for religious reform.

Their teenagers' lawyer, Maher Naguib, said his clients, who are high school students in the southern province of Minya, haven't been detained and didn't appear in court for the trial.

He described the ruling as "unbelievable" and said the judge should have just punished the teenagers with a fine.

The video was filmed by the students' teacher, who is also a Christian, and who was sentenced to three years in prison for insulting Islam in a separate trial.

The 30-second video showed the students pretending to pray, with one kneeling on the floor while reciting Qur'anic verses and two others standing behind him and laughing. One waved his hand under a second's neck in a sign of beheading.

Bill allowing companies to deny services to gays advances in Kentucky

FRANKFORT, Ky. (AP) — Kentucky businesses could refuse services to gay, lesbian or transgender clients in the name of protecting religious beliefs under a bill advancing in the state Senate.

The bill comes after the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Human Rights Commission ordered a Christian T-shirt company to get diversity training for refusing to print shirts for a gay pride festival. A state judge overturned the order, but an appeals court is reviewing the case.

"All of these business owners want to treat everyone with full dignity and

respect. But their conscience and religious beliefs prevent them from using their skills to promote a celebration that runs counter to what the Bible teaches about marriage," said Republican Sen. Albert Robinson of London, the bill's primary sponsor.

The bill is the latest effort of lawmakers in some states to react to the U.S. Supreme Court ruling last summer that effectively legalized same-sex marriage nationwide.

The Georgia legislature is considering similar legislation, and the Missouri legislature is considering amending its state constitution to protect businesses that decline to provide goods or services for same-sex marriage ceremonies or celebrations.

The bill, written in part by the Family Foundation of Kentucky, would also ban courts from jailing someone or holding them in contempt of court for refusing to provide services. Last year, a federal judge found Rowan County Clerk Kim Davis in contempt of court and jailed her for five days for refusing to obey his order that she issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples. This bill would not apply in that situation, since Davis is an elected official and her case was handled in federal court.

IS gets millions for abducted Christians

BEIRUT (AP) — The Islamic State group has collected millions of dollars in ransom for a group of Assyrian Christians it kidnapped in Syria a year ago.

That's according to Christian officials and an opposition group. The last of the 230 hostages are just being freed. The release ended a yearlong saga for the Christians — many of them women and children — during which families had no news from their loved ones.

Younan Talia, of the Assyrian Democratic Organization, told The Associated Press that about 40 remaining captives were released early Monday and arrived in the northeastern town of Tal Tamr. He said the release came after mediation led by a top Assyrian priest in northern Syria.

The extremists captured the Assyrians, members of an ancient Christian sect, last February after overrunning several communities.

BRIEFLY

World Day of Prayer coming next week

PENDLETON — The World Day of Prayer is celebrated in 170 countries. In recognition of the event, a gathering is planned Friday, March 4 at 1 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church, 201 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton.

The World Day of Prayer was founded on the idea that prayer and action are inseparable in the service of God's realm. Services begin at sunrise in the Pacific and follow the sun across the globe on the day of celebration. Each year a different country's committee serves as writers of the World Day of Prayer worship service.

The 2016 event is called into worship by the committee from Cuba, who highlight verses in the gospel of Mark, "Let the little children come to me ..."

An offering will be taken to support World Day of Prayer USA and help meet the needs of families in Cuba and around the world who are victims of poverty, violence and injustice.

For more information about the local gathering, call 541-276-7681. For more about World Day of Prayer USA, visit www.wdp-usa.org.

Church Women United set prayer event

MILTON-FREEWATER — The World Day of Prayer will be observed during the upcoming Milton-Freewater Church Women United gathering.

Men and women are invited to attend Friday, March 4 at 1:30 p.m. at Grace Presbyterian Church, 703 S. Main St., Milton-Freewater. The event includes a prayer service and refreshments.

For more information, contact Helen Richartz at helen_jack@columbiainet.com or 541-558-3969.

Diaper Dash helps families in need

HERMISTON — A 5K and 10K run/walk will collect diapers to be given to mothers for their babies in need.

Sponsored by the Hermiston Church of the Nazarene, the Diaper Dash is Saturday, March 5 beginning at 8:30 a.m. with a 1-mile dash for kids 5 and under. The event begins and ends at the church, 1520 W. Orchard Ave., Hermiston. The 5K/10K starts at 9 a.m.

The entry fee is a bag of diapers. Anyone interested in helping others in need are invited to participate. For more information, call 541-567-3677.

CHURCH DIRECTORY

Worship with us!

BAHA'I FAITH

"The Unity of All Mankind"

Pendleton Baha'i Center at 1015 SE Court Place
Devotions Sundays @ 11:00am; Everyone invited!
(541) 276-9360 visit us at www.pendletonbahais.org

Redeemer Episcopal Church

241 SE Second St. Pendleton (541)276-3809 www.pendletonepiscopal.org

Sunday Morning Worship 9:00 a.m.
Wednesday Worship Noon

All Are Welcome

Peace Lutheran Church

210 NW 9th, Pendleton ELCA
Join us Sundays

9:30 am Sunday Worship
10:30 am Fellowship
11:00 am Sunday School & Adult Class

~Come and be at Peace~
on 1290 KUMA noon each Sunday

Faith Center Church

Worshiping God Loving People
108 S. Main • 276-9569

Sunday Worship 10:30 am
Sr. Pastor, Ray O'Grady
pendletonfaithcenter.org

NEW HOPE COMMUNITY CHURCH

1350 S. Highway 395, Hermiston
Sunday Worship Services
English- Pastor Dave Andrus 9:00 & 10:45 am
Spanish- Pastor Genaro Loreda 9:00 & 10:15 am
Classes for kids during all services
For more information call 541-567-8441

Seventh-Day Adventist Church

Saturday Services
Pendleton
1401 SW Goodwin Place 276-0882
Sabbath School 9:20 am
Worship Service 10:45 am

Community Presbyterian Church

14 Martin Drive, Umatilla, OR 922-3250

Worship: 10 AM Sunday
School at 11:30

PILOT ROCK BAPTIST CHURCH

585 SW Birch, Pilot Rock, OR 97868 (541) 443-2500
prbconline.blogspot.com

Sunday School: 9:30 am
Worship Service: 10:45 am
Wednesday Services: Kids' Club: 6:00 pm
Youth Group: 7:00 pm

GRACE AND MERCY LUTHERAN CHURCH, ELCA

OPEN HEARTS - OPEN DOOR
www.graceandmercychurch.org

Sunday Worship 9:00 a.m.
Sunday School 10:00 a.m. (Nursery Provided)
Fellowship, Refreshments & Sunday School
Check out our Facebook Page or Website for More Information

541-289-4535
Tom Inch, Pastor
Grace and Mercy Lutheran Church, ELCA
164 E. Main St. / P.O. Box 1108
Hermiston, Oregon 97838

Grace Baptist Church

555 SW 11th, Hermiston 567-9497

Nursery provided for all services
Sunday School - 9:30 AM
Worship - 10:45 AM 6:00 pm
Wed Prayer & Worship - 7:00 PM
"Proclaiming God's word, growing in God's grace"

St. Johns Episcopal Church

All People Are Welcome
Scripture, Tradition and Reason

Family service 9am Sunday
Gladys Ave & 7th Hermiston
Fr. Dan Lediard, Priest, PH: 567-6672

FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH

in Mission for Christ LCMC
Bible Study.....9:00 AM
Sunday Worship.....10:30 AM

Red Lion Hotel (Oregon Trail Room)
www.faithpendleton.org

First United Methodist Church

352 SE 2nd Street Pendleton, OR 541-276-2616

Sunday Worship 9am
Open Hearts, Open Hands, Open Doors
Facebook: www.facebook.com/FUMCPendleton
Services are broadcast every Sunday on KUMA-1290 AM @ 11am
Rev. Dr. Jim Pierce, pastor

Come meet Jesus at PENDLETON BAPTIST CHURCH

3202 SW Nye Ave Pendleton, OR 541-276-7590

Sunday Morning Worship 11:00 AM
Sunday Bible Classes 9:45 AM
Sunday Youth Group 6:00 PM
Mon. Community Women's Study 9:30 AM & 6 PM
Awana Kids Club (K-6th grade)
Wed Men's Study 6 PM
MOPS meeting the 1st Thur of the Month 6 PM

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

-Presbyterian Church (USA)-
201 SW Dorion Ave.
Pendleton

Service of Worship - 10:00 am
Children's Sunday School - 10:20 am
Fellowship - 11:00 am
www.pendletonpresbyterian.com
Open Hearted...Open Minded

PENDLETON FIRST CHURCH OF GOD

FIRST SERVICE 8:30 AM
SECOND SERVICE 10:30 AM
712 SW 27th ST.
541-276-1894
www.fcogpendleton.com

THE COUNTRY CHURCH

Pastor James Becker
32742 Diagonal RD
Hermiston OR 97838
Sunday School 10 am
Worship 7 am
Evening Service 7 pm
Bible Study Wednesdays 7 pm
Firestarter Youth Ministry (Ages 12-17)
Monday @ 6 pm

Living Word Christian Center

Sunday Worship 10:00am
Wednesday Bible Study 7:00pm

Youth Classes - Nursery-6th grade Sun & Wed
YOUTH GROUPS: Jr. Hi, Wed 7pm
Sr. Hi, Sun after the service
Sharon Miller, Pastor
401 Northgate, Pendleton
541-278-8082
www.livingwordcc.com

Tim & Annette Terraberry's Dinner & Auction

Sunday, March 13th 4:00pm
Hermiston High School Commons

Tim is battling Cancer, so please help support this wonderful couple.

Doors open 4pm • Tri Tip dinner buffet 5pm
Silent Auction • Tickets \$35

Tickets may be purchased at the Hermiston Chamber, American West Properties and Oasis Vineyard Church. A table for 8 can be purchased for \$280.

If you have any questions or would like to volunteer, please call or text Nancy Walchli at 541-571-1723.

a place to belong Pendleton First

INVITING ENRICHING INVOLVING EMPOWERING

SUNDAY SERVICES
AM Celebration-10:00am
AM Kids Place -10:00am
The Connection--6:00pm
Groups for all ages:
Adults, Children, Youth, & College

Thursdays
Celebrate Recovery-6:00pm
Celebration Place-6:00pm
Other Groups Available Weekly

For more info visit
WWW.PENDLETONFIRST.COM
1911 SE Court Ave
541-276-6417
Assembly of God Church

The Salvation Army

Center for Worship & Service

Sunday Worship Service
9:30 - Sunday School
10:30 - Worship Service

Wednesday Bible Study
5:30 Family Fellowship Meal 6:00 Bible Study

COME AS YOU ARE
150 SE EMIGRANT (541)276-3369

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)

215 N Main • Pendleton

Sunday Worship: 10:40a
Bible Class: 9:30a
Office 276-5358 M-F, 8:30-12:30

WWW.FCCPENDLETON.ORG

St. Paul Anglican Church, APA

Currently Located at 119 SW Quinney Pl.,
Home Church in Pendleton @ Sunridge Estates
541-303-1261

Holy Communion - 1st & 3rd Sunday
Morning Prayer - 2nd, 4th & 5th Sunday
All Services - 10:00am Sundays
The Rev. Fr. Vincent Varnas
facebook.com/stpaulanglicanchurchapa

Pendleton FREE METHODIST CHURCH

Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m.
Mid-Week Children & Youth - Weekly Adult Life Groups
1711 SW 44th St. • 541-276-6015 • www.pendfmc.org