

Father's Day

June 18th is Father's Day. The history of Father's Day goes back to 1908, when a church in West Virginia held a service with a sermon to honor 362 men--all of them fathers--who had been killed the previous year in a coal mining explosion. This was the country's first-ever event to specifically honor fathers. A year later, Sonora Smart Dodd of Spokane, Washington, was inspired by Anna Jarvis and the idea of Mother's Day. Her father, William Jackson Smart, a farmer and Civil War veteran, was also a single parent who raised Sonora and her five brothers by himself, after his wife Ellen died giving birth to their youngest child in 1898. While attending a Mother's Day church service in 1909, Sonora, then 27 years old, came up with the idea. Sonora convinced the Spokane Ministerial Association and the YMCA to set aside a Sunday in June to celebrate fathers. On June 19, 1910, the first Father's Day events commenced: Sonora delivered presents to handicapped fathers, boys from the YMCA decorated their lapels with fresh-cut roses (red for living fathers, white for the deceased), and the city's ministers devoted their homilies to fatherhood. It took more than 60 years from the birth of the idea to Father's Day actually being recognized as a federal holiday. It was first introduced in Congress in 1913, but in spite of encouragement from President Woodrow Wilson, it did not pass. In 1921 President Calvin Coolidge signed a resolution in favor of Father's Day and in 1966, President Lyndon Johnson signed an executive order that the holiday be celebrated on the third Sunday in June. It was not until 1972 that an act of Congress officially made Father's Day a national holiday. (Sonora Dodd lived to see her idea and quest to have a special day dedicated to fathers fulfilled; she died in 1978 at age 96.)

This Sunday, June 18th we will continue the tradition of a rose to honor all fathers and to remember those fathers who are no longer with us on this earth. **Come join us for worship, receive a red or white rose and say a prayer of thanks for the fathers in our lives, past and present. Happy Father's Day!**