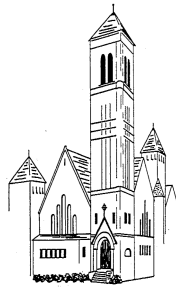


Tower Notes (USPS 634720) is published Weekly, except week of Christmas, by First Presbyterian Church, 204 W. Prairie Ave., Decatur, IL 62523. Periodical postage paid at Decatur, IL. Postmaster: Send address changes to Tower Notes, 204 W. Prairie Ave., Decatur IL 62523 (217)429-4195; (217)429-4712 FAX www.firstpresdecatur.org or email: fpdec@comcast.net



Tower Notes

VOLUME 46

December 17, 2014

NUMBER 51

December 21, 2014 FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT	9:00 a.m. 9:30 a.m. 10:30 a.m.	NO Christian Education Hour NewSong Planning Party for 2015 – Chapel Music Service – Sanctuary; Children’s Church School – LL
December 24 December 25 & 26 December 28 1ST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS	8:00 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 9:15 a.m. 10:15 a.m. 10:30 a.m.	Office Closed at Noon Office Closed Worship Service – Chapel Christian Education Hour NewSong Worship Service – Chapel Chapel Class Worship Service – Sanctuary; Children’s Church School – LL
January 1 & 2		Office Closed

First Presbyterian Vision and Mission Statements

VISION: As faithful followers of Jesus Christ, we seek to be an open, caring, compassionate congregation, and to bring about positive changes in our community and world.

MISSION: We celebrate, explore, and demonstrate our Christian faith in loving service.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES: 1) Continue to be an active community-oriented congregation; 2) Develop a passion for discipleship and advocacy; 3) Celebrate unity of purpose with diversity in action.



Christmas Music Service

“Love Has Come”

1st Presbyterian Church

December 21, 10:30 AM

Doug Nicholson, Choir Director, Sanctuary Choir
Barbara Keagle, Organist and Bell Choir Director,
Bells on Wheels and Tower Ringers
Rose Marie Thompson and Chung-Ha Kim,
piano, drums and synthesizer
Stu Ellis, Narrator

John Miley Christl Ann
Jim Cathy Phyllis
Doug Barbara Brenda Brad
Andy Angela Tamica Corey



Treasurer’s Report for End of 2014

We had a \$5,000 deficit at the end of November....expenses over income. We need to have a good month of offerings for December. If you are running behind in your pledge, now is the time to make it up. Hopefully, we can finish out 2014 in the black.

Rene Corcoran, Treasurer



Christmas Joy Offering
December 21, 2014

NO TOWER NOTES NEXT WEEK

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

PRAYER CONCERNS:

John Meyer is in hospice care in Florida.
Charlie Davidson returned to Fairhavens Christian Home.
Liz Jones

E-mail concerns to:
 amcelder@comcast.net

NEW APARTMENT NUMBER

Connie French
 3601 6th Avenue #1113, Moline, IL 61265

THANK YOU

I want to express my deep appreciation for the support First Pres gave my mother (Judy Grieve) and me during her cancer diagnosis and treatment this year. Mom has finished her chemotherapy, and she received the good news that she responded well to the treatment and doesn't need to do anything further at this time. All your prayers, cards and kindnesses kept us uplifted and surrounded by love through this unexpected journey - thank you so very much! --Cindy Wene

...
 Claud Thompson's memory and legacy continues after his death [2-16-14] through recent scholarships established by the Thompson family. His scholarships will help students at both Millikin University seeking a career in business through the Tabor School of Business, and at Richland Community College to help students interested in pursuing engineering technology. He had a passion for business, working in his office through age 92.

...
Thanks to the staff and those in the congregation who supported and prayed for me when I had my surgery and stroke. The prayer shawl was a nice surprise and I already have put it to "good use". I am blessed to be a part of this caring congregation. Thanks again, Pierce Bruckner

...
 Thank you to **Pat Thom** for answering our request to help with the newsletter for the month of January!

CHURCH STREET CHURCH TOUR 2014

COME INSIDE, OUR DOORS ARE OPEN

Thanks so very much to everyone who made the Church Street Christmas Church Tour a success! Over twenty First Pres members hosted the 160+ visitors who toured six exceptional downtown churches Sunday. Whether riding the trolley, sitting in the Sanctuary, enjoying a snack in the Gathering Room, or taking note of our Taizé chapel setting, people had the opportunity to experience First Pres. Plans are already being made to schedule another Church Street tour next Christmas. Special thanks to Jim Lycan, Barbara Keagle and the bell choirs for all their extra time & effort sharing the history and music of our church. Deacons, Evangelism & Adult Ministry teams

If you didn't go on the tour, please take one of the extra brochures in the Gathering Room to learn a little history of the 6 participating churches.

HATS, SCARVES AND MITTENS



Finished projects will be given to children at DOVE and Muffley School on December 17th. Additional items will go to DOVE after that date.



We will be taking down the greens on Sunday, January 4, following the 10:30 am worship service. All are invited to share in this activity. A light lunch will be served in the dining room when we're finished. Come join us for this time of fellowship. Please sign up in the Gathering Room or call the church office by January 2nd. You may also e-mail Susan Moore at susanmoor@gmail.com.



VERY GOOD

December 21 SUNDAY GREETERS

Before Service

#1 Volunteer	#4 Jerry Redford
#2 Naomi Davis	#5 Pat Smallwood
#3 Volunteer	

Computer Tech

Jackie Evans

Web Team

Theresa Boes
 Andy Rauff

December Church School Teacher

Kathy Beube

Coffee & Fellowship

2nd YOUTH BAKE SALE

Media Tech

Jackie Evans

December 28 SUNDAY GREETERS

Before Service

#1 Volunteer	#4 Cindy Wene
#2 Volunteer	#5 Bob Bullock
#3 Volunteer	

Computer Tech

Fred Spannaus

Web Team

Theresa Boes
 Andy Rauff

December Church School Teacher

Kathy Beube

Coffee & Fellowship

Pam Neeley

Media Tech

Jackie Evans

CHURCH SCHOOL HOUR

December 21, 2014

9:00 Everyday Issues during Advent – No class; enjoy the Christmas Music Program.

9:00 Present Word Bible Study: No class

9:00 Youth Class: No class

10:30 a.m. Children's Church School will meet.

CHURCH SCHOOL HOUR

December 28, 2014

9:00 Everyday Issues during Advent – We will have a "holiday".....no class.

9:00 Present Word Bible Study: No Class.

9:00 Youth Class: LL Youth Room- Junior- and Senior-high class is led by Chris Lawton.

10:15 a.m. Chapel Conversation Class - This is a discussion group about the day's scriptures and sermon in the chapel. Cindy Wene is discussion leader.

10:30 a.m. Children's Church School: Lower Level

LAST SATURDAY OF THE MONTH FEED THE HUNGRY – December 27

First United Methodist, 201 W. North St., needs donations of desserts to feed the hungry for lunch at noon this Saturday. You can deliver pies (no cream, please), cakes or cookies from 9:30-11:30 to 201 W. North St. They would also like to have serving assistance for *Dinner Downtown* if you are free from 11:30 to 1:00.



WORSHIP SERVICES

December 21, 2014

4th SUNDAY OF ADVENT

CHRISTMAS MUSIC SERVICE

Stu Ellis, 10:30 a.m. lay leader

Doug Nicholson, Choir Director

Barbara Keagle, Organist and Bell Director

December 28, 2014

1st SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS DAY

Rev. John Kay, preaching

Dianne DeVore, 8:00 a.m. lay leader

Eric Mason, 10:30 a.m. lay leader

Sermon

"The Story"

Scripture

Matthew 2:13-23

Flowers

The poinsettias in December are given by members of First Pres in loving memory and in honor of loved ones.

December Ushers

Jon Scharfenberg and Bob Dunn,

Co-captains

Pierce Bruckner

Joli Cirks-sub

Diane and Bob Dunn

Bruce Mason

Carol and Jon Scharfenberg

Peter and Pattie Smith-Phillips

Worship Aids

Children's bulletins, large-print Bibles, and hearing amplifiers are available for use during worship. Ask any usher.



**AVAILABLE
FLOWER
DATE:**

Jan. 4

Purchase

Sunday flowers in memory of your loved ones- 429-4195 or fpdec@comcast.net.



**POINSETTIA
PICK UP
You may take
your poinsettia
home following**

**the 10:00, Dec. 28 service, or
they will be given to a
nursing home.**

Only 2 Bags left

For Gifts, Snacks,
Baking

\$8.50 – 12 oz

chocolate

Call 429-4195 for
your last minute gift.



Christmas Joy offering collected Sunday

A cherished Presbyterian tradition since the 1930s, the Christmas Joy Offering is one of the four Special Offerings designated by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Because Advent and Christmas are a time for celebrating the arrival of "the true light" (John 1:9), the PC(USA) provides this opportunity for congregations to support those in need of help and hope. Alongside this message of promise and fulfillment, we also hear the encouraging words, "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it" (John 1:4). When we give out of the abundance of God's blessings in our lives, the light of Christ shines through us and illuminates those in need of help and hope.

Gifts to the Christmas Joy Offering will be distributed equally to the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions and to support education at Presbyterian-related racial ethnic schools and colleges. Through the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions, the Christmas Joy Offering honors the faithfulness of current and retired church workers in their hour of greatest need by providing funds to help them through life's challenging circumstances.

And today's racial ethnic Presbyterian students receive much needed scholarship assistance while their schools get help with basic operating costs. With the burden of their educational debt reduced, today's Presbyterian students and future church leaders are more freely able to discover and pursue their professional goals. All PC(USA)-related schools and colleges are open to any qualified student regardless of race.

In order to continue providing such needed assistance, the Christmas Joy Offering depends on continued support from congregations like ours. Please prayerfully consider a gift to the Christmas Joy offering this Sunday.

INVITE OTHERS to hear the story of Jesus' birth

December 21, Sunday at 10:30 a.m.

Christmas Music Service (one service)

December 24, Wednesday Services

5:00 p.m. Family Christmas Eve Service

11:00 p.m. Communion & Candlelight Service



WHY ADVENT IS GOOD FOR YOU— PART II

Last week I wrote about the first two candles of Advent and how hope and peace is a benefit to you. This week I will focus on the third and fourth candles – *joy and love*.

We all have heard how laughter boosts our immune system and releases endorphins, the feel-good chemicals in our body. This, however, tends to be temporary. Being joyful relates to how one approaches life. Joy and optimism are closely connected. A sense of joy is a tremendous resource for surmounting problems, enhancing relationships and supporting both physical and emotional health. According to the book of Proverbs, a joyful heart is good medicine.

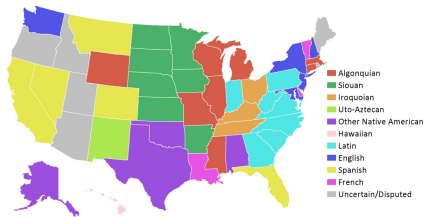
Loving others increases our sense of well-being. The Institute for the Advancement of Health conducted 2 surveys on 1,746 community volunteers. The results showed relief of pain related to stress-sensitive conditions (such as headaches) occurred more frequently for the volunteers. This was attributed to the relaxation and endorphin release. Love saves us from preoccupation of self and our problems and helps us become more engaged in life, develop deeper friendships, and find more hope and joy.

Hope, peace, joy and love are the gifts of Advent. They are there for us to open and use to enrich our lives and the lives of those we touch. And let's not forget to say "thank you".

Wishing you joy and love at Christmas, Phyllis, Parish Nurse

LUNCH BUNCH

HISTORY OF OUR STATES (AGAIN)



Maybe the weatherman (or lady) will be kinder to us this Thursday. On December 18, I have again invited Teena Zindel-McWilliams from Richland to review two historical novels, "How the States Got Their Shapes" and "Lost States." We'll gather at 10:30 and **start our meeting with Teena at 10:45** in the chapel; then we'll have some announcements and readings. Don't be late.

Our caterer, Roni Beasley, will bring us a typical tasty lunch, always with dessert. Caroline Williams will present a devotional reading and Phyllis McPherron will bring us some winter health tips. Persons of all ages are always welcome to join in the fun, starting with conversation at 10:30 a.m. If you aren't on our regular calling list, please call the church office before Tuesday noon, December 16, to reserve a \$6 lunch.

Paul Rosenberger



APCE Annual Event February 4-7, 2015 Baltimore, MD

Pastors, elders, teachers, and educators are encouraged to attend the Association of Presbyterian Church Educators (APCE) Annual Event in Baltimore on February 4-7, 2015. The theme this year, "Fear Not", will address the paralyzing fear of church leadership to address the changes that are all around us. Workshop leaders will offer ideas and practical methodologies for churches of every size and shape. Learn how you can teach and preach an ancient story for a new generation of believers. For further event information, check out www.apcenet.org/2015-annual-event.html. You may apply for the Pastoral Support and Enrichment grant available through the Presbytery. We have an application in the church office, but questions would be directed to the Presbytery - 423.1396.



Please remember our members, friends, and relatives in retirement communities and assisted living facilities:

- Breeze Park Senior Care Center in St. Charles, Missouri:** Ray Reschetz
- Fair Havens Christian Home:** Charles Davidson
- The Glenwood:** Mary Elizabeth Platt
- Heartland:** John Winick
- Hickory Point Christian Village:** Louise Bear, Esther Grissom
- Imboden Creek Living Center:** Norma Stephens and Jean Peak
- Primrose Retirement Community:** Julia Bright, Festus Paul
- Tanglewood Village:** Ruth Smith
- The Willows of Hamburg in Lexington, Kentucky:** Joanne Sly
- Wesley Willows in Rockford, Illinois:** Maxine Mussulman

Connie's Upcoming Nicaragua Trip

Connie Requarth will be going on a medical mission trip to Nicaragua January 1-11, 2015. She would appreciate donations of children's Tylenol tablets- liquids are too heavy- and children's vitamins. She is travelling with the International Assist Medical Mission group from Springfield (IAMM). A basket for donations will be available in the Library until Christmas. Thank You!

Alternative Christmas Gift Ideas



Are you looking for the right gift for that special someone? Would you like that gift to help someone in need? How about an alternative gift? Give to a charitable organization in honor of that special someone.

On December 14 and 21, look for the Alternative Gift Giving table in the Gathering Room. The table will display a variety of catalogs with an abundance of alternative gift ideas. Browse the catalogs and take one that appeals to you.

Merry Christmas from your Peacemaking Committee!

March To The Manger
The Christmas Story
re-told through
beautiful music, the reading
of scripture and
simple drama

with special guest soloist
Christine Brewer

December 21 @ 4 pm First United Methodist 201 W. North Street

**** Free Event ****
No reservations are needed.

Childcare available for your little ones.

Please call for more information: 423-9711
or email: office@decaturfirstumc.org