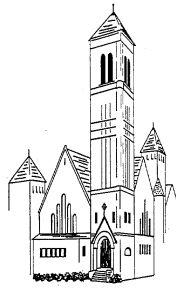


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Tower Notes

VOLUME 47

July 15, 2015

NUMBER 27

July 19, 2015

8th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

8:00 a.m.	Worship Service – Chapel
9:00 a.m.	Christian Education Hour
9:15 a.m.	NewSong Worship Service – Chapel
10:15 a.m.	Chapel Class – Chapel
10:30 a.m.	Worship Service – Sanctuary

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.*

**DECATUR
 CELEBRATION
 PARKING
 THE YOUTH'S
 BIGGEST FUND
 RAISER**

The Youth are renting parking spaces for the **Decatur Celebration held on August 7, 8 & 9**. One-time visit passes are \$5, or for \$20, you may rent a space for the entire weekend. The **weekend pass** allows you to come and go as often as you wish with the guarantee of a parking space during the times when the parking lot is monitored. You may also transfer the parking pass to a family or friends when you are not using it. The lot will be monitored on Friday, August 7, from 5 p.m. until 8 p.m., on Saturday, August 8, from 8 a.m. until 8 p.m., and on Sunday, August 9, from 12 noon until 8 p.m.



In addition, the Youth need volunteers to help monitor the parking lot. Two-hour shifts are available. Please call Christl in the church office or Pam Neeley at

413-8087 to volunteer. Thank you for your support in this fundraising effort.

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY
Monday, July 20, 1:30 p.m.
Meet in the Gathering Room.



SUNDAY, JULY 19, 4:00 – 6:00pm TRAVEL TO INDIA

You won't need a ticket or a passport. Just arrive at First Presbyterian Church in the Gathering Room at 4:00. Cathy and Chuck Force will share pictures of their brief trip to the "Golden Triangle" of New Delhi, Agra and Jaipur (the Pink City) after their daughter's Hindu wedding. Debbie VanZant will have fun with school-age children in the Church School classroom downstairs. At 5:00, the children will join the adults for supper. Donations will be accepted for food.

You may still contact the church office by phone or email. Let the church office know if you will need child care for preschoolers and younger.

MONTREAT JULY 18-25

Our youth will be leaving for Montreat this Saturday for a week of fellowship, prayer and study. The mission of the conference is to provide a safe environment where youth are challenged and empowered to hear their own voice, share their perspective, and to ask questions. Going this year are Olivia Bachtold, Kendall Eisenhauer and Clara Ash. Kay Mason is their mentor. Miley will send them off with prayers at his house on Saturday. Our prayers will also be with you for a safe journey.

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

PRAYER CONCERNS

Sandy Peterson's sister Lisa received the results of her latest PET scan and is in REMISSION! God is good!!

Our sympathy is extended to the family of Marge Wollrab. Her son Ross who resided with Marge died Saturday, July 11, 2015.

MEMBER NEWS

A note from Betty's daughter:

Betty Monroe will turn 94 next month! *Mom is in great spirits but getting more frail. She uses a walker, but can still walk short distances. I visit with her every morning for breakfast and we spend our time together sharing memories. I take her out for a walk in a wheelchair whenever the weather is nice. She loves receiving mail from people although she has given up writing herself. She is pretty healthy for her age, although she does have some arthritis in her back that causes occasional pain. We try to control this with medication. My brother, Greg, has retired to Florida, so she enjoys talking with him on the phone. She is quite hard of hearing, so sometimes I have to translate for her, but if you saw her, you would find the kind, sweet lady you always knew. Please share with those who are interested. Karen*

Betty Monroe
6100 Sharon Circle
Urbandale, IA 50322

THANK YOU

*Once again I say a huge "Thank you" to my wonderful, caring friends at First Pres. Thanks for the cards, phone calls, flowers and visits following my hip surgery.
Lori Jensen*

For First Presbyterian Church:

We are equally grateful for the First Presbyterian Church's hospitality and thoughtfulness. It truly was a momentous and inspiring service

What we hoped to accomplish during the joint service in your church and the following mosque tour and Q&A session has seemingly been met with success. It was our intention to show people just how much our two religions have in common, instead of what sensational media uses to pull us apart.

It was heartwarming to see just how welcoming and accepting all of you were, and we are very grateful that we had this chance to come together to foster peace and tolerance.

Greater Decatur Islamic Center Board

(In the next column of this page is a recipe to share with all of you that was served on Interfaith Sunday in May.)

1 more VOLUNTEER wanted FOR AUGUST NEWSLETTER – Thank you, Betty Zeaman, for volunteering.

E-mail concerns to:
amcelder@comcast.net

Turkish Bulgur Salad

1 cup bulgur-you find in Middle East food stores
1 cup boiled water
½ onion cut into cubes
1 clove of minced garlic
2 cucumbers, cubed cut
2 tomatoes, cubed cut
1 fresh cut of Italian parsley
1/4 cup olive oil
1 squeezed lemon
Salt
2 tbs. vegetable oil

Put the bulgur inside bowl and add 1 cup boiled water; cover immediately and leave it for 10 minutes. Fry some onion and a little salt until translucent. Add the garlic, then add 1 tbsp. of tomato; mix into a paste a little bit and add this mixture to the bulgur and mix well. Add the rest of the ingredients and mix.



VERY GOOD

July 19 SUNDAY GREETERS

Before Service

#1 Cheryl Thompson	#4 Walt and Denise Lohmann
#2 Kathy Thornton	#5 Pat Smallwood
#3 Ruth Warfield	

Computer Tech

Fred Spannaus

Web Team

Theresa Boes
Andy Rauff

Media Tech

Jackie Evans



WOMEN'S NIGHT OUT

*Thurs., July 23, 2015, 5:30pm
St. Nicholas Grille
101 S. Main Street
Be sure to RSVP!*

National Night Out

Decatur Parks Caravan Event

Tuesday, August 4

5:00-9:00 p.m.

Choose one park visit (Nelson, Johns Hill, Monroe and Kiwanis Parks) or attend all of the activities, just like the caravan does. The caravan includes representatives of law enforcement, fire department, city officials and other community leaders. Neighbors will have the opportunity to meet and speak with these leaders.

At each park there will be a variety of activities, including entertainment by the Decatur Power Tumblers, giveaways, drawings, games for the youth, balloons, a chance to meet some city officials, and good food to delight all participants.

The theme for the evening is Crime Prevention of all kinds and stopping crime from saturating our city neighborhoods – all with the help of the public. This event is to remind all residents in our city to work with the Police and the City Government to decrease the crime in Decatur.



WORSHIP SERVICES

July 19, 2015

8TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Rev. Bill Keagle, preaching
Linda May, 8:00 a.m. lay leader
Jackie Lawton, 9:15 a.m. service leader
Betty Q. Smith, 10:30 a.m. lay leader

Scripture

Mark 6:30- 44; John 6:1-15

Sermon

“That Would Take a Miracle!”

Flowers

The flowers this Sunday
are given by Carolyn Meyer
in honor of all her friends at First Pres.

July Ushers

Myung Kim, captain
Joli Cirks
Debbie and Ralph Czerwinski
Eric Nevitt-sub
Nancy and Tom Force
Charlie Platt-sub
Trish Spinner
David Williams

Worship Aids

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

AVAILABLE FLOWER

DATE:

July 26

Purchase
Sunday flowers
in memory of
your loved

ones- 429-4195 or
fpdec@comcast.net.



1ST PRES STRING

BAND PRACTICE

Every Wednesday at
5:00PM in the Choir Room until
the AC is fixed – All levels
welcome. Call Doug at 521-1314.

MEN’S BIBLE STUDY – NEW MEMBERS WELCOMED

We are using a study guide,
“The Present Word” and
applying it to our modern lives.
We meet from 7 to 8 each
Thursday morning at church.
Come, try us on for size!
Questions? Contact Jerry
Atkins, Dick Fiala, Paul
Rosenberger, George Batson or
Ray Landon

July 12 PRAYER SHAW BLESSING

210 prayer shawls were created since 2010!



HANDBELLS

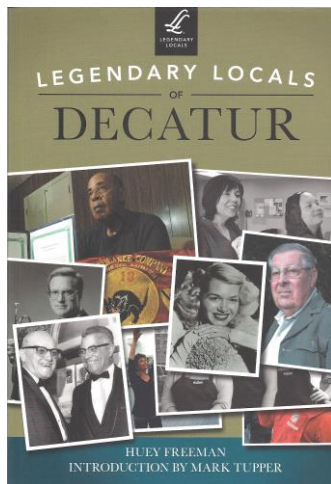


NEXT ONE IS ON July 19 in the Gathering Room!

Contact Barbara Keagle for more information about this caring,
creative ministry.

SOME OF DECATUR LOCALS

Miley Palmer scooped up a copy of *Legendary Locals of Decatur*
by Huey Freeman for our library. It’s a more recent pictorial of our
contemporaries who have influenced Decatur. There are many



more people not listed, but the author
could not include everyone we may
think of. One unforgettable person in
Decatur history from our church is
Festus Paul of Paul’s Putt’n Place
(unfortunately, not included), but there
are several other members pictured in
this new book, including our former
pastor Jim Montgomery. It will be in
the Gathering Room this Sunday for
you to peruse, and will then be moved
to the library. Thanks, Miley, for
sharing this book.

CHURCH SCHOOL HOUR

July 19, 2015

9:00 Everyday Issues: Downstairs Youth area – The Gospel of Thomas – For the next three Sunday mornings, July 19 through August 2, Tom Griffith will speak on the Gospel of Thomas by Ron Miller. He will have Chapter 12 reprinted to hand out for study materials.

This unique guidebook leads you through the Gospel of Thomas, offering practices that help you translate Jesus's wisdom into a more fulfilling, enriching daily life. The goal of such daily practice is to become Jesus's twin.

10:15 a.m. Chapel Class – Chapel

God Isn't Losing Ground

Two major publications this week (Religious Landscape Study and *A Star in the East: The Rise of Christianity in China*) revealed the changing fortunes of the Christian faith – one in America, where it appears to be slipping slowly, and the other in China, where it's catching on in a significant way. But the real story is that in the midst of the opposing changes is a profound and constant truism.

According to the Pew Research Center's newest Religious Landscape Study, Christians in America have declined – from about 178 million and 78 percent in 2007 to 173 million and 71 percent in 2014. In absolute numbers, the drop is mostly attributed to mainline Protestants. Catholics have decreased only slightly, and evangelical Protestants have actually increased. (As a percentage of the population, however, all three groups have experienced a decline.)

At the same time, Christianity is surging in China. In 2007 there were about 60 million Christians in Communist China. Now, more than 40 new Christian churches (not including underground churches) are starting up every week. If this trend were to hold for even another decade, there would be more Christians in China than any other nation in the world.

These contrasting portraits of two powerful nations on opposite sides of the planet raise big questions, even as they beg for intelligent answers, concerning the reasons for these historic shifts. For starters, the studies clearly reflect changes happening to us and our disparate social and political situations. Worldwide, the number of Christians has quadrupled in the past century and is still growing robustly – it is predicted to increase from the current 2.17 billion to 2.92 billion in 2050.

Christianity is also not just the largest but the most widespread religion on the planet. "So far-flung, in fact," said a 2011 Pew Research Center report on Global Christianity, "that no single continent or region can indisputably claim to be the center of global Christianity." Even in China, as well as Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan and Japan, increasing numbers of people are choosing Christianity over Buddhism and definitely over Taoism. The best data available suggest that there are virtually no Taoists in China.

In America, much of the slip in Christianity's numbers is being driven by the millennial "me" generation, well known for tending to avoid commitment and institutions of every kind, not just religious. Fifty percent of Americans 18 to 33 years of age are political independents. And only 26 percent of them are married – compared to 65 percent of the members of World War II's Silent Generation when they were that age.

In China much of the change is political. With increasing religious freedom, Chinese of all ages feel emboldened to do what clearly comes naturally to human beings – to believe in more than just communism's rational materialism, in more than what can be observed with just our five senses or proved with only logic and science. And that, I believe, is the real story of this new research: We are wired to believe in God. We are designed to be religious, and nothing and no one can change that.

That helps explain why, despite aggressive proselytizing during the past several decades by high-profile atheists such as Richard Dawkins and Daniel Dennett, only 17 million or 7 percent of Americans are atheists or agnostics.

And it's not only a national phenomenon. According to a major 2013 study by the Center for the Study of Global Christianity, atheism worldwide is on the decline: from 4.5 percent of the total population in 1970 to 2 percent in 2010.

Even among Americans who've stopped self-identifying as Christian, there's evidence of our indomitable pious nature. According to this week's Pew study, of those who say they believe in "nothing in particular," 30 percent say that religion is nevertheless "very important" or "somewhat important" to them.

Nowhere is the seemingly irrepressible importance of religion to our species more evident than in China. In 1949, when the Communist Party came to power, all Western missionaries were kicked out of the country. Harvard's renowned Chinese historian John K. Fairbank declared that few Chinese people were likely to become Christians and therefore the missionaries' work had failed. Columbia University anthropologist Morton Fried agreed. He noted: "All information considered, China seems unlikely ever to see Christianity accepted by a significant segment of the population."

In 1966, China's Cultural Revolution outlawed all belief systems entirely, except for atheism. Houses of worship were destroyed or turned into secular institutions. But today, after several decades of severe repression, religion has been springing up everywhere in China.

Remarkably, that includes China's universities, which discredits the claim made frequently by atheists that religion is for dummies. There is growing numbers of urban, well-educated, white-collar Chinese Christians. Moreover, in a 2011 survey of students at Beijing's Renmin University, a whopping 61.5 percent of the students said they were "interested" in Christianity.

What's most remarkable of all is that more than 90 percent of the human population – people of every continent, color and culture – continue stubbornly to believe in a higher power. It's a singular belief for such modern times—a persistent belief that makes us different than any other living creature—a defining trait without which we would not be human.



By Michael Guillen, the host of the History Channel series "Where Did It Come From?" and producer of the award-winning family movie "Little Red Wagon." For eight years he was an award-winning physics instructor at Harvard University. For 14 years he was the Emmy Award-winning science correspondent for ABC News. His new book on science and the Bible is being published by Harper Collins.