



Tower Notes (USPS 634720) is published Semimonthly, 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; [www.firstpresdecatur.org](http://www.firstpresdecatur.org); email: [fpdec@comcast.net](mailto:fpdec@comcast.net); or follow us on Facebook

December 12, 2018

Volume 50 Number 23

Christl Smalley, Compilation; Rick Koetje, Editor

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from the  **of Pastor Bob**

When I was in 1<sup>st</sup> grade, my parents said they would buy me a real “adult” bicycle...two wheels and everything. But I had to earn it. Every week, a successful completion of my list of chores got me a little closer to my goal. I dreamed of riding that bike. I watched other kids ride theirs. I imagined what it would be like when I got mine.

Eventually the day came when my bike arrived. My dad showed me what to do – how to get my balance, steer and all the rest. But none of the dreaming or instruction fully prepared me for riding the thing. My first few attempts made me wonder if there was some special bike riding secret that no one bothered to tell me. But eventually I made it up and was peddling around the neighborhood. However, when I was ready to get off the bike, I realized that I had no idea how to stop. Apparently, running into the back bumper of the car wasn’t an acceptable way of doing it.

In time, of course, I figured it all out. But only after sitting in the bike seat and working it out for myself. No amount of theory could replace the hard knocks of practice.

John 1:19 tells us that Jesus “...makes God known.” At its heart, Christianity isn’t about abstract ideas, but is about concrete lives lived out in the real world, and Jesus demonstrates this for us. Christmas reminds us that our faith is more practice than theory.

Reading the Gospels give us some insight into how Jesus lived out his life. The letters of the New Testament help us see how some of his earliest followers practiced their faith. Most of the Old Testament is rooted in the lived-out reality of God’s people as they try to put into practice the vision that God has for our world.

Starting January 14<sup>th</sup>, I hope that all of you consider taking up the challenge of reading through the entire Bible in one year. We’ll spend time talking about it, asking questions and wrestling with it. But the reason we do it is to help each one of us figure out how to put into practice the faith that nourishes and inspires us.

And can’t say that discipleship is as easy as riding a bike. But it is an adventure and we need all the help we can get! Let’s spend the new year encouraging and supporting one another as we learn again and again how it is that we might be God’s hands and feet in this place.

**NEW Tower Notes article due dates:** Tower Notes are compiled on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of every month and mailed out on the following Wednesday. Please submit any articles by noon on Monday prior to the mailing date. Articles for the January 16 issue are due **by Noon on January 14.**

# Calendar

## Wednesday, December 12

- 8:30 – Tower Notes Folders
- 10:30 – Backpack Assembly
- 5:00 – Evangelism & Membership Meeting
- 5:15 – Choir Practice

## Thursday, December 13

**Office Closed**

- 9:30 – Parish Visitors

## Sunday, December 16

**3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent**

- 8:45 – NewSong Worship Service
- 9:45 – Christian Education
- 11:00 – Sanctuary Worship Service

## Monday, December 17

- 1:30 – Women's Bible Study
- 7:00 – Session Meeting

## Tuesday, December 18

- 1:30 – History of Israel Class
- 5:00 – Tower Ringers Practice

## Wednesday, December 19

- 10:30 – Backpack Assembly
- 6:30 – Music Dept. Christmas Party

## Thursday, December 20

**Office Closed**

## Sunday, December 23

**4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent**

**Christmas Joy Offering**

- 8:45 – NewSong Worship Service
- 9:45 – Christian Education
- 11:00 – Sanctuary Worship Service

## Monday, December 24

**Christmas Eve**

- 12:00 – Office Closes

**7:00 – Christmas Eve Service**

## Tuesday, December 25

**Christmas Day**

*Merry Christmas*

**Office Closed**

## Wednesday, December 26

**Office Closed**

## Thursday, December 27

**Office Closed**

## Sunday, December 30

- 8:45 – NewSong Worship Service
- 9:45 – Christian Education
- 11:00 – Sanctuary Worship Service

## Tuesday, January 1

**New Year's Day**

**Office Closed**

## Wednesday, January 2

- 10:30 – Backpack Assembly

## Thursday, January 3

**Office Closed**

- 9:00 – Volunteers at Good Sam

## In Our Thoughts and Prayers

**Health Issues:** Susan Hayes; Lori Shimizu's cousin Brian MacKay; Peggy Madden's husband Richard Phillips; sister-in-laws of the Ward's son Matthew: Lisa Carpenter and Katy Boreson; Naomi Davis; Christ's friends Brenda & Debbie; Walt Lohmann's brother Larry Lohmann; Alice Nicholson's sister Esther; Earl Carpunky; Pixie Fennessey; Lori Shimizu; Angela McIntire

**On-going Care:** Chris Foster's brother Bill Wolfe

**Elder Care Facilities:** Louise Bear; Brenda Aymer's father Larry Boyer; Julia Bright; Linda May's mother Nellie Brookhouzen; Pauline Carter; Verlyn Rosenberger's brother Elvon Fulton; Bill Grieve; Marty Grohne; Gib & Gini Maines; Judy Steele's mother Jean Peak; Richard Phillips; Norma Stephens; Betty Zeaman

**General:** All of our loved ones be going through difficult times in their lives

**Thank you** so much for the use of your beautiful grand piano for the concert fundraiser for the Salvation Army. It makes such a difference for the musical quality. It was also a joy to have Doug Nicholson share his wonderful talent on the grand piano. Your kindness is appreciated.

Blessings,  
Julie McClarey

**Biblical Prophecies concerning the Messiah:** On December 16 and 23 Bill Keagle will be continue his class on the Biblical Prophecies concerning the Messiah at 9:45 a.m. in the Dining Room. Bill and Miley Palmer will hold the last Wednesday class on December 18 at 1:30 p.m. in the Dining Room.

**Christmas Eve Readers Needed:** Four volunteers are needed to read a lesson during our 7 p.m. Christmas Eve Worship Service. Reader scripts will be sent out to the volunteers via e-mail prior to the service. If you would like to volunteer, please sign up on the sheet in the Gathering Room, or contact Cathy (521-7131 or cathyforce@comcast.net



**Christmas Poinsettias:** Gold-foiled red poinsettias are available to order for \$12 each, in honor or in memory of your loved ones. Sign-up in the Gathering Room or call the office (217-429-4195).

**Tapas Night:** George and Judy Batson are hosting a Tapas Night on Saturday 6 p.m. They will provide beverages and all you need to bring is an appetizer type dish to share, a warm, friendly persona, and your appetite. Plenty of seats are still available. Please contact Judy to add your name (217-454-8310).

**Monthly/Weekly Pledge Envelope Boxes:** For those who prefer the boxed sets of weekly or monthly giving envelopes, boxes are available in the Gathering Room.

**Hiding of the Greens:** We will be Hiding the Greens immediately following the One Table Service on January 6. All are welcome to stay and help. We'll also share cookies and hot chocolate.

**Help us fill the Giving Tree!** The tree in the Gathering Room has now become the Giving Tree. The Prayer Shawl Ministry encourages everyone to knit, crochet, or purchase **hats, scarves, and mittens** to fill the tree. These items will then be given to children at DOVE and Muffley School.



## Calendar, continued

### Sunday, January 6

#### Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

- 9:45 – Christian Education
- 11:00 – One Table Worship Service
- 12:00 – Hiding of the Greens
- 12:15 – Deacons' Meeting

### Monday, January 7

- 6:00 – Peacemaking Meeting
- 7:00 – Worship & Music Meeting

### Tuesday, January 8

- 5:00 – Tower Ringers Practice

### Wednesday, January 9

- 10:30 – Backpack Assembly
- 5:00 – Evangelism & Membership
- 5:00 – Finance Meeting
- 6:45 – Taizé Worship Service

### Thursday, January 10

#### Office Closed

- 9:30 – Parish Visitors
- 5:30 – Soul Friendship Class
- 6:30 – Elmwood I Meeting

### Saturday, January 12

- 9:00 – Officers' Retreat

### Sunday, January 13

- 8:45 – NewSong Worship Service
- 9:45 – Christian Education
- 11:00 – Sanctuary Worship Service
- 6:00 – Just Flicks "13<sup>th</sup>" at CCC

### Monday, January 14

- 10:00 – Prayer Shawl Group
- 3:30 – Administration Meeting
- 5:00 – Adult Ministry Meeting
- 6:30 – Facilities Meeting

### Tuesday, January 15

- 4:00 – Health Ministry Meeting
- 5:00 – Tower Ringers Practice

### Wednesday, January 16

- 8:30 – Tower Notes Folders
- 10:30 – Backpack Assembly
- 5:15 – Choir Practice

### Thursday, January 17

#### Office Closed

### Friday, January 18

- 7:00 – Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Banquet at the Decatur Conference Center

**Got cookies? Tired of all those holiday goodies?** On Sunday, January 6, we will be Hiding the Greens following the 11 am service. Any holiday cookies you are willing to share may be put in the Gathering Room kitchen that morning. There will also be hot chocolate!

**Supplies for the children at By Grace Orphanage, Kenya:** While Pixie will not be able to make her Christmas trip to Kenya this year, she is still collecting the following supplies to send for the children: NEW Pens, Pencils, Toothbrushes, and Band-aids. Please bring in your items by Sunday, December 16. Thank you for your generosity!

**Oasis Needs:** The Oasis Day Center is asking for donations of adult hats, gloves, and socks. Scarves are not needed at this time.

**First Pres Good Neighbor Box:** Don't forget to donate items such as books, warm gloves, scarves, hats, socks, bottled water, food items, hand warmers, and more to the Good Neighbor Mission Box located on the Prairie St. side of the church to help our neighbors.

### Christmas Joy Offering Sunday, December 23:



Each year during the Advent and Christmas season, we turn our eyes to Bethlehem and celebrate the wondrous gift of Jesus Christ, our Savior. By giving to the Christmas Joy Offering, you will aid current and retired church workers in their time of need and support our future leaders at Presbyterian-related racial ethnic schools and colleges.

Please give generously to the last of our four special denomination offerings, which has been in existence for almost 70 years.

### Christmas Eve Service of Lessons and Carols:

First Pres will once again have a Christmas Eve Service of Lessons and Carols on Monday, December 24 at 7:00 p.m.



**Lifetouch Mobile Church Directory:** Our new Lifetouch Mobile Directory is ready! Soon after these *Tower Notes* are e-mailed, the church family will be e-mailed a confidential access code and instructions on how to access the Mobile Directory. Once you are logged in you will be able to search by name of family or friends to find photos/email/phone/address and map. An onscreen Guided Tour walks you through each area.

Hopefully, this will help us keep in touch more easily. Check it out!

Evangelism Committee

**DECEMBER AND JANUARY PLEDGE PAYMENTS:** Please be very diligent this month and next in designating what PLEDGE (Capital Campaign, Per Capita Assessment, General Fund) and what Pledge YEAR (2018 or 2019) your payment covers. Things get very perplexing for the money counters and the people posting the pledges to your accounts during this time. **Please also note** that donations received through January 6 for 2018 pledges will be posted in the 2018 Tax Year, whereas any pledges received for 2019 pledges will be posted to the 2019 Tax Year unless otherwise instructed. Once the books are closed for 2018, changes cannot be made to what has been posted.

**First Thursday at Good Sam:** January 3 is the Thursday in January that volunteers from First Pres prepare (9-10:30 a.m.) and Serve (11-1 p.m.) at the Good Samaritan Inn. Thank you to our faithful, dependable volunteers!

**First Sunday:** January 6 is First Sunday when we share communion and bring in non-perishable food donations for our neighbors who depend on the Northeast Community Fund.

**January Taizé Worship Date:** Due to the hustle and bustle of the holidays, the Taizé Worship Service will be held on Wednesday, January 9, 2019, at 6:45 p.m. in the Chapel.

**Officer's Retreat:** This year's Officer Retreat will be held on Saturday, January 12 from 9-2. January session issues will be addressed at this meeting. Deacon & Elder classes of 2019-21 should plan to attend.

**Martin Luther King Jr. Banquet:** On Friday, January 18, 2019, the Decatur Human Relations Commission is hosting the 33<sup>rd</sup> **Annual Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Banquet** at the Decatur Conference Center and Hotel at 7:00 p.m. The Peacemaking Committee is purchasing a table for 10. Please contact a member of Peacemaking to purchase a seat at this table for \$40. Once our table is full, members may purchase additional seats at the Decatur Civic Center.

The Decatur Human Relations Center is also hosting the annual **Freedom March** that is scheduled for Monday, January 21, at noon. The march will commence from a location at the Civic Center and proceed north to Church of the Living God Temple #1 at 1915 N. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive.

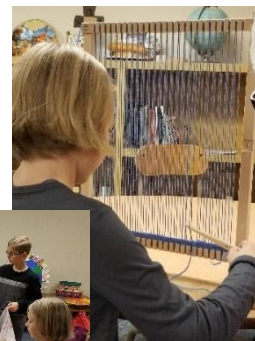
**Parent's Day Out:** On December 8, the Children's Ministry Team held a Children's Pizza & Christmas Movie party to give some parents a much-needed reprieve. Games were played and there were music and snacks. A good time was had by all and new friendships were made as children from the Elmwood Apartments were also invited.



**Intergenerational Time is Special!** If you have a talent you would be willing to share with the children ages kindergarten thru 6<sup>th</sup> grade at the Sunday 9:45 a.m. class time such as cooking, building, nature, drawing, poetry, painting, singing, we would love to learn from you!

Just contact Kathy Beube @ 620-7563 or email [april558@comcast.net](mailto:april558@comcast.net), subject: intergenerational share

Below are some snapshots of Jan Mandernach teaching the children about weaving, and their finished project. Thank you Jan!



**First Pres String Band:**

The First Presbyterian Church String Band wrapped up its 8<sup>th</sup> season on November 14<sup>th</sup> at Maranatha Church under the direction of Doug Nicholson. Twenty-four concerts were held this year at twelve venues. Eagle Ridge heard the most with five shows and Primrose was next with four. The Band played three times at 1<sup>st</sup> Presbyterian Church. All told, 140 concert hours have been played in eight years.

Five original members still play but one has died and two have moved. Eight men and women play at this time, but the Band is open to any string players that wish to join the fun.

Season number nine will begin in March. Please call Doug Nicholson at 521-1314 for more information or to schedule a concert.



**Pecans:** We still have pecans available for purchase. They make great last-minute gifts!



**Unsung Heroes at First Pres:** We here at First Pres would like to take this opportunity to thank some of our unsung heroes that work behind the scene to help keep the church running smoothly.

Every week we have a team of two volunteers come in to count the donations received throughout the previous week and on Sunday mornings. Each team does a month at a time for a total of four months a year. The team volunteers are **Jean Gift and Carol Sudduth, Yvonne Lewis and Susie Marshall, and Lori Jensen and Verlyn Rosenberger.**

Twice a month we have one to two volunteers come in to collate, tape, label, and bundle the Tower Notes. Tower Notes Folders that have volunteered in the past year include **Jean Aberle, Kathi Bondurant, Carolyn Butler, Merrill Dees, Becky Gauble, Susan Grieve, Jeanne Helm, Anne Hostetler, Anne Hostetler, Barbara Hostetler, Ray Landon, Yvonne Lewis, Susie Marshall, Carol Sudduth Pat and Dean Thom, Betsy Tietz, and Earline Wisher.**

Each Tuesday morning one of the following volunteers has answered the phone during our Staff meetings: **Carolyn Butler, Merrill Dees, Susan Moore, Susan Grieve, Jody Hantel, and Betty Q. Smith.**

(Apologies to anyone whose name was omitted from this list!)

**Tornado Damage in Taylorville:** Two members of the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) National Response team and Bill McLean, Presbytery for Congregational Care met with the congregation of First Presbyterian Church in Taylorville, IL to continue the work of responding to the three tornadoes that touched down in Christian County on December 1st, including an EF3 tornado that touched down in Taylorville.

Congregations and members of the presbytery who wish to assist with the ongoing recovery in Taylorville should know that during the initial response and early stages of the long-term recovery, monetary donations allow the recovery effort to acquire quickly any materials needed. In the coming weeks and months, there will also be numerous opportunities for work teams and individuals to volunteer with the recovery work.

If you would like to contribute to the overall recovery effort, please designate it for tornado recovery and send it to "Missions for Taylorville" which is the official monetary donations site. It's maintained through US Bank. The address for donations is:

Missions for Taylorville  
c/o City Hall  
115 North Main Street  
Taylorville, IL 62568

Alternatively, you can go online to the Missions for Taylorville Facebook page and donate electronically through the blue Donate Button on that page.



A section of Taylorville after the Dec. 1 tornados.

Please join us in continuing to keep all those impacted by the tornadoes in our prayers. As more information about potential volunteer opportunities become known, the presbytery will share that information.

**The Staff at  
First Pres  
would like to  
wish our  
church family a  
Joyous  
Christmas  
and a  
Happy New  
Year!**



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<h1>January 2019</h1>		1 7:00a AA Meeting – DR <b>New Year's Day Office Closed</b> 	2 7:00a AA Meeting – DR 10:30a Backpack Assembly-ME 6:00p AA Managers Mtg. – JH	3 7:00a AA Meeting – DR <b>Office Closed</b> 9:00a Volunteers -Good Sam	4 7:00a AA Meeting – DR 	5 7:00a AA Meeting – DR
6 Sacrament of the Lord's Supper 9:45a Christian Education <b>11:00a One Table Worship-S</b> 12:00p Hiding of the Greens 12:15p Deacons' Meeting-YA	7 7:00a AA Meeting – DR 6:00p Peacemaking – YA 7:00p Worship & Music -L	8 7:00a AA Meeting – DR 10:30a Staff Meeting – L 1:00p Worship Planning – L 5:00p Tower Ringers Practice	9 7:00a AA Meeting – DR 10:30a Backpack Assembly-ME 5:00p Finance Meeting – GR 5:00p Evang. & Member – L 5:15p Choir Practice – CR <b>6:45p Taizé Service - Chapel</b>	10 7:00a AA Meeting – DR <b>Office Closed</b> 9:30a Parish Visitors – YA 5:00p Soul Friendship – AC 6:00p Persistent Sisters-DR 6:30p Elmwood I Mtg - L	11 7:00a AA Meeting – DR	12 7:00a AA Meeting – DR 9a – 2p Officers' Retreat
13 <b>8:45a NewSong – Chapel</b> 9:45a Christian Education <b>11:00a Worship Service – S</b> 6:00p Just Flicks "13th" - CCC	14 7:00a AA Meeting – DR 10:00a Prayer Shawl – AC 11:00a BC PEO Mtg – DR 12:00p Catholic Chair. Mtg-YA 1:00p Pink Smoke – Chapel 3:30p Administration - PO 5:00p Adult Ministry Mtg.– L 6:30p Facilities Mtg.- Library	15 7:00a AA Meeting – DR 10:30a Staff Meeting – L 4:00p Health Ministry Mtg. - L 5:00p Tower Ringers Practice	16 7:00a AA Meeting – DR 8:30a Tower Notes Folders - L 10:30a Backpack Assembly-ME 5:15p Choir Practice - CR	17 7:00a AA Meeting – DR <b>Office Closed</b> 	18 7:00a AA Meeting – DR 7:00p Martin Luther King Jr. Banquet at Decatur Conference Center and Hotel.	19 7:00a AA Meeting – DR
20 <b>8:45a NewSong – Chapel</b> 9:45a Christian Education <b>11:00a Worship Service – S</b> 	21 7:00a AA Meeting – DR <b>MLK Jr Birthday Observed Office Closed</b>	22 7:00a AA Meeting – DR 10:30a Staff Meeting – L 1:00p Worship Planning – L 5:00p Tower Ringers Practice	23 7:00a AA Meeting – DR 10:30a Backpack Assembly-ME 5:15p Choir Practice - CR	24 7:00a AA Meeting – DR <b>Office Closed</b> 10:30a First Friends - FUM 5:30p Women's Night Out – Tuscany's	25 7:00a AA Meeting – DR	26 7:00a AA Meeting – DR 
27 <b>8:45a NewSong – Chapel</b> 9:45a Christian Education <b>11:00a Worship Service – S</b> 6:00p Just Flicks "Mully" – DR	28 7:00a AA Meeting – DR 10:00a Prayer Shawl – AC 1:00p Pink Smoke – Chapel	29 7:00a AA Meeting – DR 10:30a Staff Meeting – L 5:00p Tower Ringers Practice	30 7:00a AA Meeting – DR 8:30a Tower Notes Folders - L 10:30a Backpack Assembly-ME 5:15p Choir Practice - CR	31 7:00a AA Meeting – DR <b>Office Closed</b> 	AC – Adult Classroom BR – Bell Room C – Chapel CC – Children's Classroom CCC – Central Christian Ch. CR – Choir Room DR – Dining Room FUM – First United Meth.	GR – Gathering Room JH – Junior High Room L – Library ME – Medical Equip. Rm PO – Pastor's Office S – Sanctuary SH – Senior High Room TR – Toddler's Room YA – Youth Area

## JANUARY BIRTHDAYS



Lonnie Blankenship – 3  
Chuck Boes – 4  
Dalton Guadagno – 4  
Jurg Padrutt – 7  
Brian Blackburn – 8  
Virginia "Gini" Maines – 9

Tim Montgomery – 9  
Robert Bullock – 11  
Jody Hantel – 12  
John Washburn – 14  
Jeanne Helm – 16  
Andy Rauff – 16

Alex Bales – 17  
Denise Lohmann – 17  
Kathy Thornton – 17  
Lindsey Castleman-Zia – 18  
Kyle Nicholson – 19  
Simon Nicholson – 19

Barbara Redford – 19  
Katie Lohmann White – 19  
Patrick Smallwood – 20  
Margie Bennett – 21  
Grace Smith-Phillips – 21  
Dick Fiala – 22

Peggy Madden – 24  
Margo White – 25  
Addysyn Hale – 26