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T O W E R N O T E S

June 2018

In the latest issue of “Presbyterians Today,” our denominational magazine, the pastor of a small congregation in Pennsylvania reflects on the first couple years of her ministry. She writes about the initial shock of serving a church so different from the one she grew up with in the 70’s. During her first year, she “educated” the leadership about all the things they might do to turn around the membership decline of the church, “...new communication strategies, adaptive change, appealing to millennials, mission and vision statements...” She had gone into this church with the assumption that they needed to grow or die.

But after a couple of years of working with the people, she was surprised to discover a slightly different reality. Even though the church wasn’t growing, they were still exhibiting a vital ministry. She writes:

“Small churches can thrive. Thriving small churches don’t get written up as success stories. Their pastors aren’t invited to speak at church conferences. Yet these small congregations continue to meet with Jesus and welcome others to join them. They remain grateful, as God remains faithful.” (*Presbyterians Today* June/July 2018 “Small Churches Can thrive”)

First Presbyterian certainly isn’t “small” compared to the majority of churches in our Presbytery. However, we are certainly smaller than we were 50 years ago and are rattling around inside a building equipped for a congregation three times our size. But it would be a mistake to say that the only possible futures are GROW or DIE. There are indeed many challenges ahead in the years to come, but I believe that God has a purpose for us here in Decatur and I pray that we remain faithful to it as God sees fit for us to see it.

We must neither look nostalgically at the past, nor covet the ministry of some other congregation that seems to have all the trappings of success. There are unique gifts for ministry in this place that are needed in God’s world. May God bless us as we continue to meet with Jesus and welcome others to join us.

May the Peace of Christ dwell deeply with us all,

Bob

Tower Notes article due dates: Articles submission dates are the 2nd & 4th Monday by noon for the edition that is mailed out the following Wednesday. Thank you!

Calendar

Thursday, June 14

9:00 – Parish Visitors
12:00 – Children & Youth Ministry Meeting

Sunday, June 17

8:45 – NewSong Worship
9:45 – Adult Education Class
11:00 – Sanctuary Worship

Monday, June 18

1:30 – Women’s Bible Study Mtg.

Tuesday, June 19

1:00 – Worship Planning

Wednesday, June 20

2:00 – 1st Pres String Band playing at Eagle Ridge

Sunday, June 24

8:45 – NewSong Worship
9:00 – Good Sam Sunday
9:45 – Adult Education Class
11:00 – Sanctuary Worship

Monday, June 25

12:00 – Tower Note Articles are due

Tuesday, June 26

10:30 – Staff Meeting

Wednesday, June 27

8:30 – Tower Notes Folders
4:00 – String Band Practice

Thursday, June 28

10:30 – First Friends
5:30 – Women’s Night Out at the Beach House

FIRST FRIENDS WILL MEET AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN’S GATHERING ROOM AT 10:30 ON THURSDAY, JUNE 28.

We will learn from Laura Ledford, Dean of the College of Fine Arts, Millikin University, about what’s coming soon to Millikin to replace the historical Richards Treat Center that has recently been demolished. Come for that program, friendly conversation, timely announcements, (very light) snacks, and something cool to drink. We welcome all ages! Convener - Paul Rosenberger

Oasis Day Center Collection Box: Items requested for **June** are ramen noodles and laundry detergent. The Deacons and Oasis Day Center thank you!

In Our Thoughts and Prayers

Rehab: Marty Grohne

Health Issues: Susan Hayes, Lori Shimizu’s cousin Brian MacKay, Peggy Madden’s husband Richard Phillips, in-laws of the Ward’s son Matthew: Lisa Carpenter and Katy Boreson, Naomi Davis, Earl Carpunky

On-going Care: Oaster’s friend Lucas Farmer, Chris Foster’s brother Bill Wolfe, Brenda Aymer’s father Larry Boyer, Christl’s friend Debbie

Elder Care Facilities: Louise Bear, Julia Bright, Linda May’s mother Nellie Brookhouzen, Pauline Carter, Bill Grieve, Gib & Gini Maines, Judy Steele’s mother Jean Peak, Norma Stephens, Verlyn Rosenberger’s brother Elvon Fulton, Doris Fiala

General: All of our loved ones who may be going through difficult times in their lives.

Miss Taizé in the summer? Join a few of us on Wednesday, June 13 from 8:00-8:45 a.m. We’ll meet outside on the deck, at 2255 S. Franzy Dr. for a brief reading, scripture and 20 minutes of silence. All are welcome. Call Jane Spires with questions (428-7300). Park in front, come around the east side of the house and up the steps.

Congratulations! In addition to Kathy Beube, George Batson, Paul & Verlyn Rosenberger, Bob & Jean Wollenberg, and First Presbyterian Church were also awarded a “103 Game Changers in Decatur” award at the NAACP’s 78th Annual Freedom Fund Awards Celebration last Sunday. An NAACP celebration book and a program from the awards ceremony listing all of the “103 Game Changers” award recipients are available on the Library coffee table.



Stopping Traffic: The Movement to End Sex Trafficking Decatur Public Library

Thursday, Jun. 21, 5:00 - 8:00 pm

Please join us for a screening of the film, “Stopping Traffic: The Movement to End Sex Trafficking.” The film is a call to action, intending to inspire the viewer to join in the movement to seek an end to human trafficking, helping to break the isolation of millions of voiceless victims.

The Website: <http://stoppingtrafficfilm.com/>

The Trailer: <https://youtu.be/xxhVIXAiDU4>

Take Action: Set Free of Macon County is collecting items for care packages for survivors. Donations will be accepted at the screening. Items needed: small clear makeup zipper bags, journals, stuffed animals, gift cards (\$5/\$10 to Walmart, McDonald’s, etc.).

After the film, there will be a panel discussion featuring members of the Set Free Movement of Macon County for Q&A.

Presented by Set Free (SetFreeMC@gmail.com) and Decatur Public Library.

Adult Education Classes:

For the remainder of the summer, both adult education classes join and will meet in the Dining Room at of 9:45 a.m.

Our guest speaker for Sunday, June 17 will be Jeff Mueller, Project Director at Oasis Day Center.

On June 24, Linda Castleman will lead the class in a Wired Word topic, and on July 1, Dick Virgin will lead the class again on a Wired Word topic.

Sweet Treats for Good Sam: Our volunteers will prepare and serve the meal at Good Samaritan Inn on SUNDAY, June 24. Treats for 300 will be needed for that meal. We welcome donations of pre-wrapped treats such as Little Debbie Nutty Bars, Oatmeal Pies, Rice Krispie Treats, etc. Please put any donations in the kitchen or kitchen freezer by NO LATER THAN MONDAY, JUNE 18. Your help is always appreciated.



First Presbyterian Mission Group
Ferncliff, Arkansas June 3-8, 2018



Working hard to make a difference!

LIBRARY CLEAN-UP QUESTIONNAIRE

An item on the "to do list" for a while has been to organize the library. To help us do that, please fill out the survey below and let us know how it can best serve you.

In the past year, have you used books or information from the library? (circle one) Yes No How many times _____

What areas are important to have in our materials. If you have accessed any of the areas below, please indicate how many times in the last year.

- Alternative Bibles _____
- Bible Resource materials _____
- Special studies of the Bible _____
- Specific books of the Bible _____
- Spiritual Journeys _____
- Other Religions _____
- Faith journeys other Religions _____
- Former Teaching material _____
- Peacemaking source material _____

- Peacemaking stories _____
- End of Life Decisions _____
- Specific Disease information _____
- Health Care Notes _____
- Local health care resources _____
- Hymnals _____
- Other musical resources _____
- Other _____

Please return the completed questionnaire to the basket on the sign-up table in the Gathering Room, or mail it to the office.