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January 16, 2018

Volume 51 Number 1

Christl Smalley, Compilation; Rick Koetje, Editor

A YEAR THROUGH THE BIBLE

The Bible says some wonderful things:

- “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God.” 1 John 4:7
- “Love your neighbor as yourself.” Mark 12:31
- “Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything.” Philippians 4:6

But on the other hand, it says some pretty horrible things:

- It supports the institution of slavery.
- Women are often treated as little more than property.
- God commands that the entire populations of cities be wiped out.

The Bible is a very long book and, let’s face it, often gets tedious or even boring (who wants to read through all the detailed rules of Leviticus?). It doesn’t have an easy-to-follow plot and the story often circles around itself or gives several versions of the same event. The language is often obscure, and the original context is often difficult to figure out. So, we might ask ourselves, “Why bother?”

Our Presbyterian tradition is rooted in a thorough understanding of Scripture. In fact, Presbyterians have traditionally been strong supporters of public education because in order to be Bible readers, we need to be literate. Becoming more familiar with the Bible is an important part of listening to what God is doing amongst us. John Calvin once compared the Bible to a pair of glasses. He said that looking through the “lens” of Scripture helps us to see God better.

Starting this January, our congregation is going to try to read through the entire Bible in one year, starting in Genesis and ending in Revelation in January of 2020. It’s really not that hard. You only have to read 2-3 pages of the Bible every day in order to make it all the way through. To help you, there is a schedule that lists the daily readings.

We not only want you to read the Bible. We also want to spend time talking and asking questions about what we’re reading. On every Sunday morning, worship will focus on the portion of the Bible that we’ve been reading. Beginning on January 20, the downstairs Adult Education class will have a discussion on the readings every Sunday morning and there will be another Bible discussion on Wednesday afternoons at 1:00 pm. The purpose of the year isn’t to do an in-depth study of one small part of the Bible, but to get a more overall picture of what’s in the Bible and how it all ties together. More importantly, we might discover how everything in the Bible might be helpful to us...even the parts that seem difficult, obscure or offensive.

Are you up for the challenge? Sure you are! We started reading on Monday January 14 with the first three chapters of Genesis. Make a resolution this new year to spend a little time every day reading through the entire Bible. Let’s see where it takes us!

T O W E R N O T E S

NEW Tower Notes article due dates: Tower Notes are mailed on the 4th Wednesday of the month and are compiled on the previous Monday. Please submit any articles by noon on Monday prior to the mailing date. Articles for the January 30th issue are due **by Noon on January 28th**.

Calendar

Sunday, January 13

- 8:45 – NewSong Worship Service
- 9:45 – Christian Education
- 11:00 – Sanctuary Worship Service
- 6:00 – Just Flicks “13th” 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

Sunday, January 20

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

Monday, January 21

MLK Jr. Birthday

Office Closed

- 7:00 – Session Meeting

Tuesday, January 22

- 5:00 – Tower Ringers Practice

Wednesday, January 23

- 10:30 – Backpack Assembly
- 1:00 – Year thru the Bible Class
- 5:15 – Choir Practice

Thursday, January 24

Office Closed

- 10:30 – First Friends at FUM
- 5:00 – Women’s Night Out – Tuscany

Sunday, January 27

- 8:45 – NewSong Worship Service
- 9:45 – Christian Education
- 11:00 – Sanctuary Worship Service
- 6:00 – Just Flicks *Mully*

Monday, January 28

- 10:00 – Prayer Shawl Group
- 1:00 – Pink Smoke Group

Tuesday, January 29

- 5:00 – Tower Ringers

Wednesday, January 30

- 8:30 – Tower Notes Folders
- 10:30 – Backpack Assembly
- 1:00 – Year thru the Bible Class
- 5:15 – Choir Practice

In Our Thoughts and Prayers

Health Issues: Susan Hayes; Lori Shimizu’s cousin Brian MacKay; Peggy Madden’s husband Richard Phillips; Naomi Davis; Christl’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

Condolences to the family of Norma Stephens who died on Sunday, January 6, 2019.

Condolences to the family of Rick Locke who died on Thursday, January 10, 2019.



In Memoriam

Norma J. Stephens

December 5, 1925 – January 6, 2019

Uphold us now, O Lord, as we entrust him to your boundless love and eternal care.

Updated Directory Information:

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Thank You’s

Dear First Pres Friends,

I appreciate reading about congregants, friends, and activities (in the *Tower Notes*). I was fortunate to have the opportunity to join my First Pres of Colorado Springs on a mission trip to Cairo to our partner church, Heliopolis Evangelical, and take part in their outreach programs we support – an amazing journey. God’s blessing in the New Year.

Dee Simon

Dear Prayer Shawl Group,

Thank you for the beautiful Prayer Shawl, it was so kind of you. I like it very much. Wishing you all a blessed Christmas and Happy New Year.

Valerie Smalley

Martin Luther King Jr. Banquet:

On Friday, January 18, 2019, the Decatur Human Relations Commission is hosting the 33rd Annual Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Banquet at the Decatur Conference Center and Hotel at 7:00 p.m. Tickets are available 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.

First Pres Giving Tree



Members and friends of First Pres made and/or donated 118 items to our Giving Tree in

December. The Prayer Shawl Group organized the items and gave some to Muffley Elementary School for disbursement to their children, and some to DOVE for their Christmas Baskets. The Prayer Shawl Group would like to thank everyone for their generous donations, especially the hand-made items.



Woven Cross Wall Display



Sandy Peterson took this photo of (l-r) Ruth Holler, Miles and Maddox Anderson, and Kathy Beube standing by the framed woven rug that Jan Mandernach and the Children's Sunday School class created. The rug is hanging in the Library for everyone to enjoy.

Men's Coffee Time



This informal group of men meet at Panera, Thursday mornings at 9 a.m. and are open to new faces. One of the main goals of the group is providing a platform to discuss and share perspectives on subjects important to the group. Participants have been sharing articles or topics that interest them. For more information call, text, or email Doug Nicholson (doug Nicholson2@gmail.com or 521-1314).

Time with the Children: Pastor Jean with the children on December 9, 2018.



Presbyterian Disaster Assistance sends help to Illinois after tornadoes

(PNS) On Dec. 3, the Presbytery of Southeastern Illinois requested and was granted an initial assistance grant of \$7,500 to address the impact of three tornadoes in Taylorville and surrounding areas. The grant request estimates a recovery period of 18 to 24 months.

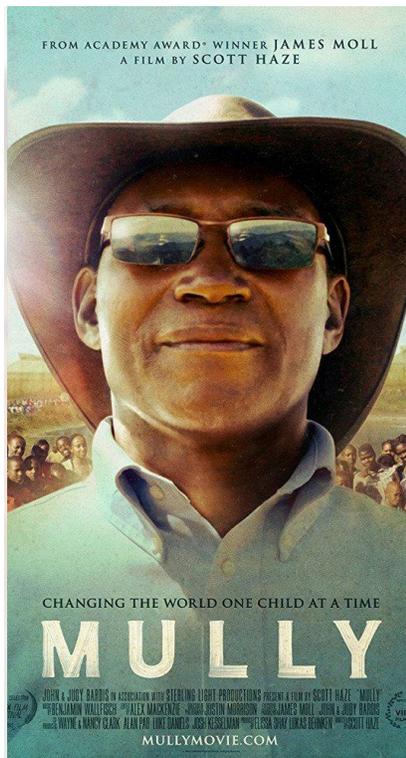
Unimpacted by the tornado was First Presbyterian Church of Taylorville, under the leadership of Rev. Michael Evanchak. The church has been active since the tornado in feeding people and assisting with recovery, including church members who lost homes or suffered serious damage. Smith and Montgomery noted an active member of the church had lost his home to a tornado for the second time in 10 years.

“What’s making a difference in this community ... is the community is working together,” Smith said. “They are off to a very fast start in terms of putting together a group that can be the nucleus of a long-term recovery committee. And what I am very proud to see is that the ministerial association, which has been together for years — of whom the Presbyterian pastor (Evanchak) is the chair — they are taking essential lead in terms of the reconstruction of the community.

“They’re aware they have a long-term process in front of them.”

Condensed from an article by Rich Copely, Presbyterian News Service

Just Flicks presents *Mully*



Our next film is *Mully*. It will be screened on Sunday, January 27 at First Presbyterian.

Mully is the incredible story of Kenyan Charles Mully. He was abandoned at age 6 and turned to thievery and begging on the streets of Nairobi. He somehow survived intact and thrived in the world of business, winding up owning transportation and energy companies. Then, from his pinnacle of wealth and achievement, he suddenly gave it all up, transformed his house into a children’s shelter, and devoted his life to helping the poor. The documentary depicts how faith turned his life around – and the lives of hundreds of Kenyan people.

One Amazon reviewer summed it up perfectly: “You’d better get a whole box of Kleenex if you’re going to watch this movie

because I still can’t stop crying. This is by far one of the most inspirational movies I have ever seen. It’s amazing to see that one man was able to come so far, with hard work and faith alone from his stark beginnings. And on top of that, he was able to save thousands of lives and change the face of Kenya.”

David Smith will lead the discussion. David is a step brother-in-law of Pixie Fennessey of Decatur. Pixie and David are both long-time volunteers for the By Grace orphanage in Nairobi. He has visited Mully’s home and will bring first-hand knowledge to our conversation.

The show is at First Presbyterian Church, with refreshments served at 6:00 pm.

Note: Our February 10 film is “Won’t You Be My Neighbor?” It is the wonderful story of the magical life of Fred Rogers.

Decatur Horn Club: Our guest musicians for December 9, 2018

