The celebration of one of our country’s most honored events occurs in July as we recognize and remember our independence from British rule with commemorative activities and a holiday on July 4. While we call that particular day Independence Day, there were actually a number of days, months, and even years, both preceding and following July 4, 1776, of dedication, sacrifice, and perseverance by untold numbers of people to ensure that the American Colonies would in fact be free. While representatives of 12 of the 13 colonies which made up the Continental Congress voted to approve the drafted Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776 (New York approved it on July 19), the document was not signed until August of that year. Five years of fighting with Britain followed and formal recognition of the United States of America as a free and independent nation by Britain did not occur until 1783.

Freedom came with a price. Some paid for this freedom with life itself, while others with money, hardship, land, authority, privilege, and the list goes on. Some were happy before and others only after independence. Certainly life became different, not only in the new nation, but around the world. This continues to be the case as our nation stands as a case for hope to countless peoples who face tyranny and injustice.

While not focusing on the theological or faith understandings of our American ancestors, the notion of freedom and liberty did not begin with them. Scripturally speaking, Adam and Eve would be the first humans to experience freedom as God gave them the freedom to choose. In powerful words, the Apostle Paul in his letter to the Galatians (Ch. 5) reminds us that Christ has set us free.

We have been granted freedom from our sin and its accompanying brokenness and failures. By God’s grace, we are set free from the bondage to sin that results in death, to a great freedom in God with a life that is rich and abundant with God’s sanctifying grace. When we realize this and confess our sin and allow Christ Jesus to be the lord of our lives, we are given the greatest of freedoms or liberties imaginable. We are free from sin and death and free to then give our lives to the Lord. That is where true freedom and real life begins. It comes at a cost but there is so much love, peace, and hope to experience in the new life that Christ offers.

Paul writes: “For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters, only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another. For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’” (Gal 5: 13-14, NRSV)

While Independence Day is certainly worthy of observance, I hope we can reflect a few moments that day about real liberty and freedom our God so lovingly offers. Find time to remember your Baptism and give thanks to the Lord who is the author of real freedom, and the grantor of true life.

See you in worship!

Brian

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One Worship Service at 10 am on July 30

We have had a great time worshipping together on 5th Sundays as a “Unity Service.”

This month there are 5 Sundays so July 30 we will only have 1 worship service at 10 am.

The morning schedule for July 30th is 8:30 am fellowship, 9:00 am Sunday School, and 10 am worship.

Remember to put the change on your calendar and remind your friends.
Vespers
Sunday, July 2
6:00 p.m., FUMC Decatur

Church Office Closed / Independence Day
Tuesday, July 4th

Golf Ministry
Thursday, July 6
5:30 p.m., Decatur Golf Course

Vespers
Sunday, July 9
6:00 p.m., FUMC Alvord

Golf Ministry
Thursday, July 13
5:30 p.m., Decatur Golf Course

Vespers
Sunday, July 16
6:00 p.m., Morris Memorial UMC, Chico

Finance Committee Meeting
Monday, July 17
6:00 p.m., Room 209 (Character Builders)

Committee on Lay Leadership & Nominations
Wednesday, July 19
6:00 p.m., Room 209 (Character Builders)

Trustees Meeting
Tuesday, July 18
6:30 p.m., Room 209 (Character Builders)

Staff Meeting
Thursday, July 20
12:00 p.m., Room 209 (Character Builders)

Golf Ministry
Thursday, July 20
5:30 p.m., Decatur Golf Course

United Methodist Men’s Breakfast
Saturday, July 22
7:00 a.m., Room 100 (Fellowship Hall)

Youth Sunday
Sunday, July 23
8:30 a.m. & 10:50 a.m., Sanctuary

Vespers
Sunday, July 23
6:00 p.m., FUMC Bridgeport

Golf Ministry
Thursday, July 27
5:30 p.m., Decatur Golf Course

Vespers
Sunday, July 30
6:00 p.m., Oak Grove UMC

CHURCH FRIENDS AND FAMILY

Allen Cocanougher, Tom Rhea, Travis Roberts, David Sisk, Family of John Fostel, Noah Smith, Family of Bob Priebe, Grammy, Mary Jo Helm, Terry Chester, Family of Cara Grippa, Rita Gandry, Raymona Kirkpatrick, Neita Gaugh, Cliff Dudley, Family of Bettye Rhine

In the Military: Charlie Fortenberry, Michael Jordan, Jake Logue, Garrett Muelstein, Josh Murphy, Chris Hammond, Matthew Roberson, Kolin Rottner, Joshua VanNoy, Keygun Beaver and Bryce Dudley

July Birthdays

1 - Helen Porter
2 - Hilda Jordan, Jim Mobley, Johnnie Pettigrew
4 - Liz Dudley, Jim Henderson, Montana Stempke
5 - Joe Lambert, Stephanie Micinski
6 - Amberly Johnson, Matthew Leaton, Cameron Potts, Stacey Sandford
7 - Lillian Hunt, Brent Williams
8 - Laura Highlander
9 - Mason Edwards, Hannah Milliman
10 - Tobi Cullop, Melrose Short
11 - Charlotte Boland, Bobby Terrell
12 - Susan Anderson, Anna Hooe, Wanda Stone
13 - Lindsay Bond, Michelle Buckley, Evie Kemp, Tori Shrull
15 - Holt Garner, David Lunday, Daniel Smyers, Michael Smyers
18 - Fred Jones
19 - Kristi Lunday, Mary Elsie Watson
20 - Hailey Dorsett, Mark Goss, Normal Miller
21 - Pam Shrull
23 - Russell Edwards
24 - Jim Hodges, Stevie Martin, Jamie Williams
25 - Sara Swanson, Zoe Woodruff
27 - Carolyn Bastian, Buster Chandler, Alex Pierce, Michael Pierce, Terry Velten
28 - Kalyb Beaver, Kenneth Hunt, Kety Kemp, Dan Stack
29 - Penny Holt, Sally Rieger
31 - Noah Holt
Donations for WARM
Peanut Butter & Jelly

Sunday Refreshments
Seekers

Guest Follow-Up
Mardell Schaible

Care Corp
Wanda Stone, Notifier
Shirley Peterson, Virginia Renfro, Murvelle Chandler
and Jennifer Garrett

The Prison Ministry is in need of volunteers to lead devotions / bible studies. No previous training required. You can pick up an application in the church office and return it to Debbie at the Wise County Jail closest to 287 and the civic center or contact Rita Tucker if you have questions. (940)389-0073

We celebrated a wonderful year at FUMP during our program on May 22nd. Our preschoolers performed nursery rhymes, songs and scripture for 75 friends and family members at the MAC. Praise the Lord for His blessings! July will be a busy month as we turn the old youth facility in the Wesley Center into a preschool classroom. We are excited to create a space that fosters learning opportunities and invite volunteers who are talented/willing painters to contact us!

As we look forward to the 2017-2018 school year, we are in need of more names on our substitute list. If you are Ministry Safe trained or willing to become trained, we could really use your help.

Thank you for your continued support of the preschool program. I will have an Open House in August and invite you to come and see all that God has done in this ministry!

In Christ, Bonnie Hubbard
preschool@decaturmethodist.org

July 2nd
8:30 a.m. Worship Service
Scripture Reader: Barbara Haley
Communion Servers: Virginia Caraway & Marguarette Roberts
Acolyte: Eleanor & Ben Bond
10:50 a.m. Worship Service
Scripture Reader: Sally Rieger
Communion: Don & Annette Stephens
Acolyte: Kathryn Highlander & Kennedy Hafer
Counters: Clay Patterson & Kennedy Hafer

July 9th
8:30 a.m. Worship Service
Scripture Reader: Penny Holt
Communion Servers: Sharon Meyer and Thomas Laird
Acolyte: Noah Holt
10:50 a.m. Worship Service
Scripture Reader: Valleri Sewell
Acolyte: Nolan & Shelby Sewell
Counters: Barbara Swan & Brian Knox

July 16th
8:30 Worship Service
Scripture Reader: Youth
Communion Servers: Youth
Acolyte: Audree Knox
10:50 a.m. Worship Service
Scripture Reader: Valleri Sewell
Acolyte: Wiley Stone & Emma McAlister
Counters: Tobi Cullop & Cheryl Renfro

July 23rd
YOUTH SUNDAY
8:30 Worship Service
Scripture Reader: Youth
Communion Servers: Youth
Acolyte: Ellie & Lexie Miller
10:50 a.m. Worship Service
Scripture Reader: Youth
Acolyte: Julie Stone & Parker Deaton
Counters: Clay Patterson & Jana Rosenbaum

July 30th
10:00 a.m. Combined Worship Service
Scripture Reader: Valleri Sewell
Communion Servers: Jack & Sharon Smith
Acolyte: Julie Stone & Parker Deaton
Counters: Foster Walker & Clay Patterson

July Communion Set Up: Life Builders

Worship Assistant
Introducing FUMC’s new secretary, Rebecca (Becca) Broker. Rebecca joined the staff on June 1st. She graduated from Bowie High School in 2010 and attended Dallas Baptist University. She married her high school sweetheart, Matthew, in 2013 and moved to San Diego where he was stationed with the Marine Corps. After Matt got out of the military in 2017, they decided to move back home to Texas to raise their family. They have two sons, Theodore (2 yrs.) and Arthur (4 mos.), and two dogs, Archie and Cloud. Rebecca enjoys playing tennis, making music, and spending time with her family. She is very excited to be home and to get to know this church family. Stop by the church office between 8:30 and 12:30 Monday thru Friday and say hello to Rebecca.

“We Gather Together to Ask the Lord’s Blessing”

You have seen them nearly every Sunday – by the donuts in the Fellowship Hall, on the elevator, across the aisle in church. You may have even done the “help me with your name” thing. But you don’t REALLY know them. You may have asked a friend about them, and (especially in Decatur) gotten a relationship flowchart of “oh, her mother is Harold’s sister’s next door neighbor.” You know them well enough to nod and smile – and that’s about it.

But being part of a church family has the potential for so much more!

This past spring, we enjoyed our first “Dinner for 4” groups who each gathered once a month as directed by different members each time.

Here are some of their reactions:

- Our lives seem so crazy busy these days, so the added bonus was a relaxing time eating, visiting and getting to know each other. Now when I see my fellow Dinner for 4 members, I feel a connection and fellowship as a result of the meetings.
- [We] enjoyed the dinner groups, it is a great way of getting to know our church family on a more individual basis. It was especially helpful for us since we are not from the area as it allowed us to make new friends. We will certainly sign up again.
- We became friends on a deeper level than before and I looked forward to each gathering. I hope we do this again and I would recommend it to everyone.
- Even though we knew some in our SS class, we didn't really know their life stories. It was fun to get to know the younger families, too, since we really have no relation with them outside of Bible studies and Reconnect, etc. It was a great idea. (Annette Stephens)
- [We] have only been at the church for 3 years and dinner group was a great opportunity to get to know other members of our church. Our dinners were very casual and it was a special treat to have two teenagers in our group. They were a joy and shared new things with us. (Just ask Virginia Renfro what new show she is watching.) Our group has mentioned continuing to meet after the four months is up. We look forward to the next round so that we get to know and share with other members of our church family.
- We all have to eat, why not eat with our Methodist friends and become better acquainted?


We’ll be signing up again soon for August – November groups.

We hope you’ll join Dinner for 4 and gather together in fellowship and faith.

Dear Chancel Choir and Chancel Bells;
Thank you for another great year of learning, growing, giving and serving together. I hope you have a wonderful July filled with a lot of R & R so you come back in August refreshed and ready to raise a joyful noise unto the Lord.

Lynda Trow

The Chancel Choir is looking forward to having our Sunday School classes fill in for them during the month of July. This not only gives the choir a well deserved break, but it gives others a chance to experience participating in leading the worship service through music.

It is also a chance to see if you would want to become a member of the Chancel Choir.

July Choir Schedule

July 9 - Life Builders & Unnamed
July 16 - Open Doors & Upper Room
July 23 - Cross & Flame
July 30 - Men’s Class & Character Builders

Dress Comfortably for Summer!

While we do not have a dress code, we know some are reluctant to dress more comfortably during the hottest part of the year without permission. So here is an invitation for anyone who may be a little reluctant to do so on their own: DRESS COMFORTABLY in July and August! It is ok to leave your dress clothes in the closet. Come and be comfortable as we “dress down” for the rest of the summer!
Good folks of Decatur Methodist Church - I am so honored and OVERLY BLESSED to be sharing my faith with our kids yet again this month! It has been a busy month, but a great one!

Well it finally got hot here in Texas! Just in time for the Youth to enjoy some time at the pool. As of this writing we have enjoyed the Shrull’s pool and the Bennett’s pool and this week we will hang out with the Steil’s at their home and pool in Chico!

The youth are so busy this month! So many have been enjoying all kinds of camps (outside of church) and I am excited to see that they are active young people!

We have had a few that have been to Bridgeport Camp and I hope that next year we can go there as a Youth Group! Such a wonderful way to connect with our God right in our own back yard.

VBS also happened in June and I know I saw at least 5-10 youth and some that will be coming in to youth helping with VBS! What a great time and ministry to "let the children come to me!"

We also had a Friday night "hang out" at the MAC that was great - we played volleyball, basketball and some fun relay races where we got wet! All great fun and the kids want to do it again. We are having lots of laughs and building relationships in the midst of "playing hard."

I can see the relationships building - I can't wait for this month's mission trip - that is where some SIGNIFICANT "team building" will happen as well as HUGE spiritual growth in our kids.

I look forward to everything God has in store for our kids and our church!

Patrick Steil, Youth Director
Decatur Kids are popping into July

Sunday School FOCUS....
Elijah and the Ravens
Elijah and the Prophets
Jonah and the Fish
Elisha and the Widow’s Jars
Elisha and the Servant Girl

Let those who love your saving help say again and again “God is Great!”
Psalm 70:4b

Join us each Sunday for a fun filled hour of Sunday School
Kiddos ages 4 years - 5th grade
9:40 am - 10:40 am
Location: Main church bldg. on the 3rd floor.
Questions?: Email me anytime at children@decaturmethodist.org

Fill the BUCKETS with loose change!
Noisy Offering - Sunday July 16

July
Sunday School Volunteers
1st Sunday - Megan Hammons, Lindsay Bond, Sharon Walker
2nd Sunday - Casey Edwards, Penny Holt, Stacey Sandford
3rd Sunday - Jamie Milliman, Debra Walker
4th Sunday - Barbara Haley, Regina Stone
5th Sunday - Jamie Milliman

August

6th - Promotion Sunday
Jumping back to school children’s event at Urban Air Trampoline Park

13th - Blessings of the Backpacks
Facility Locks Have Been Changed!

As announced, the locks on all doors at the church have been changed. The Trustees have faced increasing challenges to secure all the building and facilities. It seems that there are lots of old facility keys in the hands of people across the community, and maybe even beyond. With the MAC operational and doors being frequently left unlocked round the church campus, the timing is right.

A new “Key Policy” has been adopted and approved by the Administrative Board at its March 26th meeting. Keys will mainly be issued to persons based upon their position they serve in the church. Others who feel they need a key will be able to submit a request for consideration.

Virginia Caraway
Lay Member of Annual Conference

A NEW CREATION

This was the theme of your 2017 North Texas Annual Conference held at 1UMC Richardson June 4-6th. Our conference of 300 churches and 160,000 members is comprised of 4 districts of which we are in the Northwest District with Marvin Guier III as our District Superintendent.

Each year clergy and lay members come together to do the business of the church, learn what other churches are experiencing, spiritually renew, hear conference updates & reports and celebrate retirees & ordinands. This year was particularly exciting because we were able to celebrate with our new associate pastor, Richard Harrison (Ricky) as he was commissioned as a provisional member for ordained ministry. Our responsibility as members of the North Texas Conference is to uphold Ricky with our prayers and support. I urge each of you to find the time to welcome Ricky to our church home as he begins his position on July 2nd.

Bishop McKee and the keynote speakers encouraged those attending our conference to embrace newness and innovation and keep open minds less tied to models and more tied to missions and transformations. One speaker used the phrase “dusting for God’s fingerprints”. It is suggested we look deep into our own community to discover ways to serve and help lead people to salvation. Ask yourselves the question “what can I do to make Decatur and Wise County a better place for the future”? We have abundant people resources in our church, are we utilizing them to the fullest?

I am proud to be part of this district and conference and assure you big things are happening amongst us. For example, a newly developed program called “Go Camp” was launched last year in the metroplex area and due to extreme success, was broadened this year to serve more children that previously were unable to attend a camp. Well, now the camp comes to them!! The first full Spanish church was opened last year and continues to grow. The church was remodeled using members and their talents and teaching skills to those underserved, it is a beautiful thing.

Thank you for the privilege of attending the conference as your lay conference member. The Sunday evening opening worship service and Monday evening service for Ordination and Commissioning are two events I hope each of you place on your bucket list. The music, messages, reflections and love are an experience for which words are not adequate. You will be blessed beyond measure.

Cheryl Renfro, Lay Member of Annual Conference

Welcome Reception for New Ministry Staff

Welcome Reception for New Ministry Staff
Sunday, July 9
9:40-10:30 in the Fellowship Hall

There will be a come-and-go reception to honor our newest members of the Ministry Staff to the Church.
Please plan to stop by and welcome our new Associate Pastor, Ricky Harrison, and our new Youth Director, Patrick Steil and his family (Patrick started his ministry with the youth in May, but we have been waiting for Ricky’s arrival to have a more organized welcome).
There will be coffee and refreshments available.

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Cheryl Renfro, Lay Member of Annual Conference
THIS NEWSLETTER CREATED ESPECIALLY FOR

YOU!

FUMC Mission Statement

“Making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.”

online

www.decaturmethodist.org

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Follow us on Twitter

@fumcdecaturtx

Follow us on Instagram

fumcdecaturtx

Newsletter

DEADLINE!

Monday, July 24 at 1:00 p.m.

Folding Team

Thursday, July 27

8:30 a.m.—Character Builders Classroom

For any submissions you would like put in The Voice either call the church office at 627-3362 or email administrator@decaturmethodist.org.

If you want to see your church event pictures in The Voice, send them to us! We would love to include those for all the church members to enjoy.