



Lighthouse of Iowa

Keeping in touch with Iowa's Churches of Christ

July 2023

A look outside of the Church's walls

We have been told by the Apostle Peter to “. . . *be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.*” Our Savior tells us to “*Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel*”.

But what is out there in the world? What is the current ‘climate’ towards Christianity in this radically changing world?

Below is an article providing the facts and figures of the trends and current state of Christianity in America in our day—the trends are not good.

This Independence Day we are reminded that the blessing of a self-governed nation with liberty and freedom can only be upheld by a “*moral and religious people*”. Our reverence and obedience to the truth in God’s word has a far greater impact on this nation than we may realize.

Decline in Religion Doesn't Bode Well for the Republic

Jun 30, 2023

Over the last several decades, a growing number of Americans have abandoned their faith—usually Christianity—to join the ranks of the nonreligious. These “Nones” describe themselves as atheists, agnostics or “nothing in particular.” Some may shrug at this, but you don’t have to be religious to know that this shift doesn’t bode well for a nation founded on the principles of self-government.

For most of the 20th century, 70% of Americans belonged to a house of worship. As recently as the early 1990s, nearly 90% of Americans said they were Christian. But by 2020, Gallup found a mere 47% of Americans said they belonged to a church, mosque or synagogue.

By 2021, Pew Research found nearly one-third of U.S. adults were not affiliated with any religion. This share of Nones was 10 percentage points higher than a

decade earlier. The share of Christians fell from 75% to 63% over the period. In 2007, there were about five Christians for every one None. Now that ratio is about 2-to-1.

This might not seem like a crisis, but the American Founders would have disagreed. These men saw that self-government depended on morality and virtue, which, in turn, depended on religion. As George Washington stated in his Farewell Address, “*Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indisputable supports.*”

Realism, Religion, and the Republic

But don’t atheists also know murder is wrong? Yes, the Founders believed in a natural moral law that could be understood by reason. Yet, they insisted that such knowledge was not enough for most people. Washington warned of this: “*Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.*”

John Adams, a Unitarian, stated soon before America declared independence that “*religion and morality alone ... can establish the principles upon which freedom can securely stand.*” James Madison, in Federalist 55, makes explicit that without virtue, republican government will fail.

What happens when this source of public morality starts to erode?

Alexis de Tocqueville observed in “*Democracy in America*” that religion gives us confidence in an unchanging moral order. Without this moral source, men are “*soon frightened at the aspect of this limitless independence.*”

The loss of religion often leads to the belief that all are subject to our will and judgment. We become the

authors of our own reality. But this is a daunting task for many. So, *“they give themselves a master,”* writes Tocqueville.

Ironically, this “limitless independence” often leads to a radical dependence on temporal authority. We turn to “experts” who claim to know what’s best for us. The state becomes a substitute for self-government.

It’s no surprise that with the growing number of Nones, younger generations report more confidence in the government to solve problems.

Why We Need More Babies AND More Religion

According to a 2020 Pew survey, seven out of 10 members of Gen Z (the cohort born around 1996 onward) said the government should do more to solve problems. Only 29% of Gen Zers thought “the government is doing too many things better left to businesses and individuals.”

Even among Republican-leaning Gen Zers, more than half (52%) report that the government should do more to solve problems. Compare that with just 38% of Millennial Republicans and 29% of Republican Gen Xers.

These findings seem to confirm the Founders’ insight that religion is the bulwark of public morality. Without this moral grounding, our ability to govern ourselves erodes, and with that, the foundation for the republic.

In their own day, the Founders saw the empty promises of hedonism and materialism in the French Revolution. They knew the chaos we can descend into without religion and virtue.

The authors of the Declaration of Independence recognized a Creator who made us equal and endowed us with certain unalienable rights. These truths were not assertions of mere human will but expressions of the one Source upon whom we depend.

We would do well to return to this wisdom today.

Gillian Richards

Research Associate, Simon Center for American Studies
Gillian is a Research Associate in The Heritage Foundation’s B. Kenneth Simon Center for American Studies.

<https://www.heritage.org/civil-society/commentary/decline-religion-doesnt-bode-well-the-republic>



Chariton

Meeting times: Sundays: 10:00 a.m. (no evening services)

Location: Call for information.

For information call: Albert Schreck (641) 535-2381 or Brian Schreck (641) 203-2137

- Quiet month at Chariton.



July Birthdays

- None

July Anniversaries

- None

Dean Avenue

Meeting times: Sundays: 9:30 a.m. ♦ Wednesdays: 6:30 p.m.

Location: 2907 Dean Ave., Des Moines, Iowa / P.O. Box 57398, Pleasant Hill, IA 50327

For information call: John McNeece (515) 263-9428

- We gave Candy Meek a sunshine box to cheer her up. She is going through chemo for lung cancer.

- Doctors found a medication that is helping Tammy Fitzgerald to heal her leg. Hopefully, she will be able to get her prosthetic leg by the end of the summer.

- Sara and Wayne Patterson from Table Rock, MO, visited her parents, Johnie and Donna McNeece. Sara is feeling good now from two back surgeries.
- Aiden Boozell, grandson of Bill and Shirley McNeece, graduated from SE Polk High School.
- Travis Head and family were vacationing in Turks and Caicos.

- Ron and Karma Sharp took a trip to Estes Park, CO, to celebrate their anniversary. This is where they honeymooned 50 years ago.

July Birthdays

- ☆ 13 Charlie Kelsey
- ☆ 22 Cathy James

July Anniversaries

- ☆ 29 Jim & Candy Meek.

Fairview

Meeting times: Sundays: 10:00 a.m. ♦ Wednesdays: 7:00 p.m.

Location: 1001 S. 22nd St, Clarinda, Iowa 51632

For information call: Richard Negley (712)542-3728 or Marvin Negley (712)542-2792

Heartfelt Love & Prayers:

- Neil McCoy is doing remarkable well following his back surgery.
- Also keeping Katina McCoy Steeve in our prayers as she begins her chemo treatments.
- **Visitors:** Enjoyed having Darrell Russel & daughter Ashlyn from Brookfield, MO worship with us as they were on their way to South Dakota to a cattle show.

July Birthdays

- ☆ 17 Justin Head
- ☆ 13 Nathan Head

July Anniversary

- None

Martensdale

Meeting Times: Sundays: 10:00 a.m. & Wednesdays: 7:00 p.m.

Location: 10985 44th Lane, Prole, Iowa (1.5 miles east of Martensdale, IA on Hwy. 92)

Website: martensdalechurchofchrist.com

For information call: Duane Proudfit (515) 961-4470 or Mike Penick (515) 681-0279

- **Kirk and Bethany Ford welcomed son Killian Cylos Ford on May 30th.** He weighed 6 lbs, 13 oz and 19.75 inches long. Grandparents are Dave and Christy Henderson. Great grandparents are Duane and Mary Proudfit.
- Mary Proudfit has been moved to the Good Samaritan Society in Indianola. The address is:

**Good Samaritan Society
Room 420
708 S. Jefferson Way
Indianola, IA 50125**

- Trent, Leah, Eva and Josie Fiorentin from the Vandalia Church of Christ met with us on Sunday, June 25th. Trent gave a good sermon on 'Death'.
- Several members of our congregation attended the Pleasant Hill Church of Christ Vacation Bible School the week of June 26th.

July Birthdays

- ☆ Alena Ingle - July 3
- ☆ Rodney Ingle - July 5
- ☆ Millie Teghtmeyer - July 24

July Anniversaries

- ☆ None

Pleasant Hill

Meeting Times: Sundays: 9:30 a.m. ♦ Wednesdays: 6:30 p.m.
Location: 5091 E. University, Pleasant Hill, Iowa
Website: pleasanthillchurchofchrist.org
Contacts: Mike Warner 515-967-4529 / Marty Williamson 515-556-2394 / Marc Hermon 515- 554-3567

Announcements + Heartfelt Love & Prayers:

- Lots of love and many earnest prayers to Ava Brady and her family. She suffered a pool accident and was seriously injured resulting in her c5 being broken along with bruising on her spinal cord.
- Ava had surgery at Blank Children’s Hospital to remove bone fragments. This injury will be a life-changing event with a long and difficult recovery but thanks to Christ Ava can look to Him for comfort and healing. Let’s surround Ava with much love and encouragement!
- Gabriel Hermon fractured a finger on his right hand this month.
- Joyce Ingle suffered a fall and is dealing with other medical concerns. Prayers are appreciated.
- Steven Thompson had outpatient surgery this month. Continued prayers for his medical issues.
- Hallelujah! Kelly George received his prosthetic leg at the end of June. We give glory to God for healing Kelly and giving him strength!
- Allison George, Lord willing, will have foot surgery on July 11. Doctors will remove a bone and repair a torn tendon.
- Suzanne Harvey had a nuclear medical appointment at the end of June. In the near future, doctors will provide a treatment plan for Grave’s Disease.

3rd-4th grade class taught by Chamille Laymon & Ginger Hermon.



Preschool-Kindergarten Class taught by Jamie & Joyce Ingle.



Toddler Class, taught by Madison Twaddell.



1st -2nd grade class taught by Michele Zinnel & Lisa Williamson.



5th-6th grade class taught by Pat Thompson & Amy Pritchard.



Vandalia

Meeting Times: Sunday: 9:30 a.m. and Wednesday: 7:00 p.m.
Location: 2.5 miles east of Runnells, Iowa on F70, then 1 mile north on 131st St.
For information call: Greg Ingle (515) 994-2824 or Charles Ingle (515) 238-3316
Website: <https://vandaliacoc.com>

- *On Tuesday, May 30, Bob Cummings passed from this earthly life and his funeral was held Saturday, June 3. His family would like to extend their heartfelt thanks to all of you for your thoughts and prayers.*
—Sharon Cummings, Michael Cummings and family and Sarah Clark and family
- Thanks to all who attended our June meeting on the 10th and 11th. It was a blessing to host our brothers and sisters in Christ. We all were richly blessed with wonderful lessons and good fellowship.
- Greg and Margaret Ingle celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary with an Open House June 4 held at Coffee and Carnations in Prairie City. Many memories and laughs were shared with their guests.
- Ethan Clark attended the Prince Road weekend meeting on June 4th.
- Doug Fiorentin spent a few days in the hospital with an infection. Lincoln Fiorentin was in the hospital having his tonsils removed. Josie Fiorentin is feeling

better after spending several days in the hospital with breathing concerns.

- Mason and Morgan Burkman have purchased and moved into a home outside of Prairie City. Gavin Burkman has purchased a home in Newton.
- A group of women enjoyed brunch together at Village Inn on June 20---fun eating out together.
- Visitors this month were: All of our wonderful brothers and sisters who attended our June Meeting!



July Birthdays

- ☆ 1 Sarah Clark
- ☆ 1 Tonya Guthrie
- ☆ 16 Corin Heartsill
- ☆ 24 Drew Cummings
- ☆ 25 Tyrell Klein

July Anniversaries

- ☆ 10 Matt & Sarah Clark
- ☆ 14 Bruce & Kelsey Fiorentin

Declaration of Independence

The Declaration of Independence was designed for multiple audiences: the King, the colonists, and the world. Its goals were to rally the troops, win foreign allies, and to announce the creation of a new and self-governing country.

<https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript>

In Congress, July 4, 1776

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America, When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.

That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, --That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed.

But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.-- Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. **To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.**

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public

Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.

He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary powers.

He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harrass our people, and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures.

He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:

For Quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:

For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States:

For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world:

For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent:

For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury:

For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences:

For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies:

For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments:

For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.

He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.

In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

Georgia

Bullett Guinnett

Syman Hall

George Walton

North Carolina

William Hooper

Joseph Hewes

John Penn

South Carolina

Edward Rutledge

Thomas Heyward, Jr.

Thomas Lynch, Jr.

Arthur Middleton

Massachusetts

John Hancock

Maryland

Samuel Chase

William Paca

Thomas Stone

Charles Carroll of Carrollton

Virginia

George Wythe

Richard Henry Lee

Thomas Jefferson

Benjamin Harrison

Thomas Nelson, Jr.

Francis Lightfoot Lee

Carter Braxton

Pennsylvania

Robert Morris

Benjamin Rush

Benjamin Franklin

John Morton

George Clymer

James Smith

George Taylor

James Wilson

George Ross

Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, *appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world* for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, *with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence*, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

Delaware

Caesar Rodney

George Read

Thomas McKean

New York

William Floyd

Philip Livingston

Francis Lewis

Lewis Morris

New Jersey

Richard Stockton

John Witherspoon

Francis Hopkinson

John Hart

Abraham Clark

New Hampshire

Jesiah Bartlett

Matthew Thornton

William Whipple

Massachusetts

Samuel Adams

John Adams

Robert Treat Paine

Elbridge Gerry

Rhode Island

Stephen Hopkins

William Ellery

Connecticut

Roger Sherman

Samuel Huntington

William Williams

Oliver Wolcott