

Pastor Sung finds unique tie to area

Written by Chris Lee



First United Methodist Church Pastor Paul Sung found it a little ironic he landed in Holyoke nearly 100 years after a Methodist pastor from Brandon, Neb. and Venango, Neb., traveled to Korea as a missionary.

Sung grew up in Korea and began serving as the minister at First United Methodist Church in Holyoke in July after moving from Colorado Springs where he had spent the last six years.

Someone he knows from Washington, D.C. called him after he moved to Holyoke and told him about the missionary, who he believes was Steven Beck, from nearly 100 years ago. He noticed Sung had moved to Holyoke and that Venango wasn't too far from there on the map.

Although he has been unable to find out any more information on the pastor, he is still searching. It is something he finds very interesting.

Pastor shares his vision

Sung has been to many different countries and cities within the last 10 years, spreading God's word. Korea, Japan, Malaysia, Indonesia and Taiwan are just a few.

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He has been very involved and believes in transformation, economic and social development.

Human factors, human development and human motivations are all part of this view Sung has.

In those different countries, Sung lived and worked in the lower income, and areas of poverty.

Sung said he traveled through an Indian reservation of Sioux Indians in 1980 where he worked with human development.

He then went to Mississippi. He explained how there were two churches on the same street right across from each other. One was predominantly African American while the other was Caucasian. He found it interesting how two very different groups of people could worship so close to one another.

The Elk River Story in Minnesota is something Sung is very passionate about. The story is about how the entire town of Elk River near St. Paul, Minn. came together. Pastors and marketplace leaders all came together to pray for the town and everything in it. It is Sung's view to see something similar in Holyoke.

Sung said he holds noon prayer meetings to help pray for all the businesses, schools and everyone in Holyoke. He, along with pastors of other denominations, come together for these prayer meetings.

Billy Graham is another name that comes to Sung's mind. "He preaches the gospel to all of the citizens of the state and world," Sung said. Sung translated Graham's message into the Korean language so he could share it with people of his home country.

Sung came to the United States in 1976 to study. Before spending six years in Colorado

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Springs, he was on the East Coast in New Jersey.