Middle East Primer, Part 2 with Jeff Heim

Thursdays at 7:30 p.m. in the Church House

January 26th, February 2nd, February 9th, and February 16th

The intent of the series will be to create a greater understanding of the historical and cultural background that has led to current Middle East turmoil and attitudes. The objective will be to appreciate the reasons that there is very little unified action in the region, which has encouraged a lack of hope and direction within the population. The result is authoritarian governments and the reactionary behavior of ISIS and others like them.

To come to this understanding the series will present topics like the Islamic Golden Age which was the zenith of, Persian based, Arab cultural development centered on Baghdad between the 9th and 13th centuries. The ensuing decline was the result of invasions, disease and the eventual rise of European technological superiority. The Middle East that evolved was the product of diminished Arab influence, Western colonial interests (including the establishment of Israel) the rise of powerful local elites and competition for limited resources. Today's Middle East environment is the reaction to those events.