There’s a dead oak tree right in the middle of my neighbor’s backyard. The top of the tree is completely gone; only the trunk remains and it still stands about twenty feet tall, the noble remains of a once great tree. I don’t know what caused it to die. It may have been killed by a lightning strike, but there’s no sign of that. All that matters is that it is without life anymore.

Even though the tree is dead, many wonderful things happen every day around the tree. It is surrounded by at least twenty healthy oak trees. As oak trees are known for doing, last fall all of them held on to their leaves for as long as they could against the onslaught of what would become a horrible winter. They fought and fought against that wind. The dead tree simply stood there. It had long ago given up on engaging in such struggles. In the spring, all of those other trees will come roaring back with color and vitality and lots of acorns, but the dead tree in the middle of that yard will just continue to stand there.

All of those trees exist within a very large fenced in yard that happens to be a horse farm. Every day, my neighbor opens the barn and several horses of various sizes and dispositions spend the day there eating and playing. One of my greatest joys is to simply sit with a cup of coffee and watch them. I honestly believe that out of everything that God has created, there’s nothing more beautiful than a horse. To see them unsaddled and unbridled and free is a true blessing. Even though those horses spend most of their time running around that old dead tree, they are blissfully unaware and unconcerned with their own mortality.

The whole scene is filled in with several squirrels and a stray fox that stops by every once in a while. Eventually some green grass will grow, and a couple of nights a week, several deer emerge from the woods and effortlessly leap over the fence to join the show. It’s an Easter scene; a wonderful visual symphony of life; beautiful and innocent and pure.

Yet, even still, that dead tree stands right there in the middle of it all. Day after day, it casts its shadow. What am I to make of it? It doesn’t seem to fit with everything else that I see. I want to know what happened to that tree. I want to know its story. I want to know why that one tree died while everything else did not, but a big part of me also wants to march out there and remove it so that I don’t have to think about it anymore.

As I look at the calendar for April, there’s one day that stands out from all the rest. Easter Sunday, April 20 will be a wonderful, joyful celebration as it always has been, but Good Friday, April 18, is the one that is truly unique. Because it is a day of suffering and death, it doesn’t seem to fit with everything else that we do; it’s something that we might avoid or remove if we could, and yet we simply must remember that without it, there would be no Easter Sunday at all. We may want to skip right on through to the beauty of Easter, but Good Friday comes first with its story of what happened on the remains of a tree in our yard not that long ago.

Like everything in that yard outside my window, Christians live within God’s amazing grace, but every once in a while, it’s good for Christians to step back and take a good, honest look at the whole landscape. When we do, we will inevitably notice that which stands in the middle of it all. Perhaps then we will begin to see and never forget that the life that we enjoy is not just life, but resurrection life. There was a price that was paid from which we benefit. The tree that stands in the middle of God’s yard seems odd and perhaps even ugly at first. In truth, it is the most beautiful tree of them all.

See you in Church,
Rev. J.D.
~ Holy Week Services ~

Palm Sunday, April 13 ~ Regular Services at 8:30 am & 11:00 am

Maundy Thursday, April 17, at First Pres ~
7:00 pm* Communion Service in the Sanctuary

Good Friday Service, April 18 (at First Baptist Church) ~ noon

Easter Celebration, April 20, at First Pres ~
7:00 am* Easter Sunrise Service in the Chapel
(no 8:30 am service)
10:00 am* Continental Breakfast in Fellowship Hall (provided by Ministry Guild)
11:00 am Traditional Worship supported by the Chancel Choir, the Hallelujah Choir, organ, and the School of Music Brass Quartet. He is risen indeed!

*Note new times

What is One Great Hour of Sharing?
(special offering to be collected on Easter Sunday)

Immediately following World War II, Protestant churches in the United States made appeals for the relief and reconstruction of devastated areas, primarily in Europe and Asia. In 1949 the leaders of several denominations formed a committee to organize an appeal to support their churches’ separate campaigns.

A radio program called "One Great Hour" was broadcast on March 26, 1949, over major networks and many independent stations. The broadcast closed with a request that listeners attend church the following morning and make a sacrificial contribution. No exact measure of receipts was possible, but it was estimated that more than 75,000 churches participated.

The next year, the offering was repeated, for the first time using the name "One Great Hour of Sharing." At times, One Great Hour of Sharing was coordinated with both the Roman Catholic Bishops' Fund Appeal for Overseas Aid and the Jewish Passover Appeal. Free time and space were donated to this joint appeal through the Advertising Council.

From the beginning, the offering has been an ecumenical effort. As denominations changed and merged, One Great Hour of Sharing has varied from 8 to 29 participating communions. While each denomination allocates its gifts differently, all use their funds for ministries of disaster relief, refugee assistance, and development aid. Today, projects supported by One Great Hour of Sharing are underway in more than 100 countries, including the United States and Canada. In recent years Presbyterians have given about $7 million annually.

When you give to One Great Hour of Sharing, you are assisting in the empowerment of others as they move past emotional, physical, and spiritual misfortune through the Presbyterian Hunger Program, Self-Development of People, and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance.

“The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.”


And he said to all, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.”
FPC FAMILY FUN NIGHT
-sponsored by
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN PRE-K!
DINNER & SHOW FUNDRAISER
Friday, April 25, 2014, 5:30 pm
$5.00 per person

Everyone is invited to fellowship with our Pre-K families and support the preschool! Minnetrista Theatre Preserves will present The Tortoise, the Hare and Other Aesop’s Fables through a colorful puppetry performance utilizing bright costumes, quirky characters, singing and dancing! The Lion & the Mouse, The Country Mouse & the City Mouse, The Fox & the Crane, The Ant & the Grasshopper, and The Tortoise & the Hare will enchant children and adults alike with live puppetry theatre (shadow puppets, body puppets and rod puppets)!

This is a fundraiser for the preschool with proceeds benefiting the Pat K. Moore Memorial Fund for scholarships and the purchase of equipment.

PLAN TO JOIN US...
BRING THE WHOLE FAMILY, FRIENDS & NEIGHBORS!

5:30 p.m. Dinner (pizza, salad, dessert, beverage)
6:30 - 7:30 p.m. Show: The Tortoise, the Hare and Other Aesop’s Fables

Reservations are needed. Please call the church office to make your reservation on or before Tuesday, April 22, 2014.

Unable to attend but have a desire to support the preschool? Donations will be accepted: Make checks payable to THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION, indicate “the Pat K. Moore Fund” in the memo, and mail to the church office, attention Tracy Clinger.

This is a wonderful opportunity to support our own preschool, participate in outreach and fellowship, and have some FUN!
**Branches’ Upcoming Events**

To glorify God, *Branches’* activities provide education, fellowship, mission, stewardship, and worship experiences for all junior high and senior high students. All gatherings are from 5:00 to 7:00 pm at the church unless otherwise noted and will usually include dinner. Always check your email for more details and last minute changes. If I don’t have your email address, please send it to cathy@firstpresmuncie.org.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 2 (Wed.)</td>
<td>KOINONIA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 6</td>
<td>NOAH—Let’s go see the movie!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unless the reviews are awful, let’s go see the movie together. Watch for an email about what time to meet at the theater. If the reviews are awful, watch for an email about Plan B!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 9 (Wed.)</td>
<td>KOINONIA (last meeting until late summer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 13</td>
<td>NOAH—Let’s talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>After seeing the movie, let’s review the details in the Bible and discuss.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 17</td>
<td>MAUNDY THURSDAY COMMUNION SERVICE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7:00 pm in the Sanctuary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 20</td>
<td>EASTER - No meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 27</td>
<td>Youth Sunday rehearsal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 4</td>
<td>Youth Sunday rehearsal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 11</td>
<td>MOTHER’S DAY - No meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 18</td>
<td>YOUTH SUNDAY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 25</td>
<td>MEMORIAL DAY - No meeting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Save the Dates!**

- May 18: Youth Sunday / Recognition Sunday
- June 16 - 20: VBS
- June 22 - 27: Mission Trip

---

“I am the vine, you are the branches. *Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit,* because apart from me you can do nothing.”

*John 15:5*
Mark your calendars for our next youth mission trip: June 22 through 27, 2014. We will travel to Camp Westminster on Higgins Lake, Roscommon Michigan. **Deadline for the trip is May 15.** Look back at the March *Columns* for more details (available at firstpresmuncie.org)...and look forward to more information in the coming weeks!

Eleven missionaries from our church traveled to the village of Mella in the Dominican Republic, March 22-29. Look for a recap of the trip in the next edition of *The Columns*!

**New Process for College Scholarship Applications**

High School seniors interested in applying for First Presbyterian, Muncie college scholarships should plan to **attend a meeting in the Conference Room on Sunday, April 6**, immediately following the 11:00 worship service. An explanation of changes in process and the application form will be brief at this meeting. However, it is necessary to attend this. If you cannot attend, contact Pastor JD at church or Christy Wauzzinski by email: cbwauzzinski@bsu.edu or phone: 765-282-0384.

**Dominican Republic Mission Trip News**

Eleven missionaries from our church traveled to the village of Mella in the Dominican Republic, March 22-29. Look for a recap of the trip in the next edition of *The Columns*!

**Adult Sunday School beginning Sunday, April 6:**

*Counterfeit Gods: The Empty Promises of Money, Sex, and Power, and the Only Hope that Matters.* We will work our way through Tim Keller’s book in a tutorial format blending in the assigned readings with discussions of our own experiences. Book cost: $9.00. Class leader: Jim Williams. Class time and location: 9:45 am in Fellowship Hall.

**Grounds Clean-Up Party**

**Saturday, April 12 @ 8:30 am**

First Presbyterian Grounds Committee will once again sponsor the **ALL CHURCH GROUNDS CLEAN-UP PARTY!** All FPC churchgoers are encouraged to come and join in the fun. We will work together to prepare our landscaped beds for spring and summer. We always have a great time working together and the result is incredible. Bring any yard/gardening tools you have, and don’t forget your gardening gloves! Call Jonathan Schmidt (759-5616) if you have questions.
2014 VBS: PreSchool!

Who: Ages 3-4
What: A week-long program packed with Bible lessons, fun, games, and even some silly songs
When: June 16-20, 9:00 - 11:30 am OR 12:30 - 3:00 pm
Where: First Presbyterian Church

Register at www.firstpresmuncie.org/vbs

2014 VBS: Elementary Age with PYOCA Traveling Day Camp!

Who: Grades K-5
What: A week-long program packed with Bible lessons, fun, games, and even some silly songs
When: June 16-20, 9:00 am - 3:00 pm
Where: First Presbyterian Church

Register at www.firstpresmuncie.org/vbs

FPC VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED TO HELP WITH VBS!
Look for more info in the coming weeks!

Morning Schedule
9:00-Check in
9:20-Bible Story Time
9:45-Crafts and Small Group Play
10:30-Games
11:00-Snack
11:15-Closing
11:30-Pickup

Afternoon Schedule
12:30-Check in
12:50-Bible Story Time
1:15-Crafts and Small Group Play
2:00-Games
2:30-Snack
2:45-Closing
3:00-Pickup

Sample Schedule
9:00-Check in/energizers silly songs
9:20-Introduction to daily theme
9:30-Games (Small group)
10:30-Craft (Small group)
11:30-Story time/Group lesson
12:00-Lunch
12:45-Small group study
1:30-Large Group Game & Nature Activity
2:15-Snack
2:30-Closing
3:00-Pickup

Pyoca
Camp, Conference & Retreat Center
CHURCH LIBRARY NOTES...from Maxine and Chuck Leslie

Trusting God

The road ahead may seem bleak and dark, but God provides an unfailing light to see you through the tough times. That’s the message Stormie Omartian presents in Just Enough Light for the Step I’m On (242 OMAR).

In this book she recognizes that disappointment is inevitable in life because life can never consistently live up to our expectations. Faced with devastating disappointment, one might turn to booze or bitterness, might seek revenge, or might get mired in depression. But through prayer, there is a path toward the light. The key is to trust in God.

Mrs. Omartian is the author of numerous books with worldwide sales of more than 11 million copies. This book includes a guide for prayer and study.

Unexpected Discovery

Kelle Hampton seemed to lead a nearly perfect life. She had a loving husband, a lovely 2-year-old daughter, and a thriving career as a photographer. She and her husband were ecstatic when they learned a second child was on the way. But as soon as she saw her new daughter, she knew something was wrong.

Baby Nella looked different than her sister had at birth. Kelle was terrified when the pediatrician confirmed that Nella had Down syndrome. But gradually Kelle embraced the idea that she had been chosen to experience a special gift.

In her book Bloom: Finding Beauty in the Unexpected (HAMP 305.9) she takes readers through Nella’s first year. With prose and pictures she tells the touching and often hilarious story of a mother’s discovery that perfection comes in all different shapes.

When a Friend Needs Help

In How Do I Help a Hurting Friend (253 WILS), Rod J.K. Wilson offers a Biblical perspective on how to comfort a person experiencing tough times. Drawing on more than 30 years of church and counseling experience, the author offers guidance for those who want to help but don’t know how.

Friends often give advice, but what the hurting person needs first and foremost is to be understood, according to the author.

Dr. Wilson is professor of counseling psychology at Regent College in Vancouver, B.C.

Muncie Author’s Mystery

Among Muncie author and educator Delonda Hartmann’s many publications is the short mystery novel Home Sweet Funeral Home (FIC HART). Figuring in the story (besides a funeral home) are a dog, a missing parrot, and a curious 16-year-old girl.

Mrs. Hartmann taught at Blue River Valley High School and Ball State University. She is presently teaching at the Ivy Tech campus in New Castle. John D. Hewitt, professor of criminology at Grand Valley State University, wrote concerning Home Sweet Funeral Home “It would be a crime if you failed to read Dee’s newest novel.”

Please Let Us Know!

Because of laws designed to protect patient privacy, hospitals will not give out any information to the church if you or someone from your family is in the hospital. So that we are aware of your ministry needs, we encourage you to call the church office or have someone call us on your behalf if you are hospitalized.

SALVATION ARMY PANTRY:

April donation item: PASTA & SAUCES

Please place your donation(s) in the cart in Fellowship Hall.
As in previous years you have the opportunity to order lilies for Easter Sunday, April 20, in honor or in memory of someone dear to you. The flowers may be taken home with you after the Easter service.

Cost is $12 each.

Make checks payable to First Presbyterian Church; memo: Easter lilies

Orders must be received by the church office on or before Thursday, April 10, 2014!

To order, please place a completed form and payment in the offering plate or send it to the church office, OR order online at www.firstpresmuncie.org

EASTER LILY ORDER FORM
(please print CLEARLY)

Quantity ordered: _____ X $12 each = Total due $______

Date pd: ________  Amt pd: ________Check # ________

In loving memory of: ________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

In honor or celebration of: ________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

Given by: ______________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________