I am the New Year. I am 2014. I am made up of 12 separate months and 52 separate weeks. I will live for precisely 365 days and 6 hours. I am one glorious journey around the sun. It’s a journey that’s been traveled millions of times before, but never like the one that’s immediately ahead of you. I am a measure of time. I am the New Year.

I begin in the cold and bleak days of winter and I end in the very same way. In between, I will lead you through all of the greatest experiences and expressions of God’s creation. In me, you will find the rebirth of spring, the joy of a seemingly endless summer, and the unrivaled beauty of autumn.

In me, you are sure to find everything from icicles, to fantastic booms of thunder; thick fog and the smell of fresh cut grass; black clouds full of rain and skies so bright with sun that you’ll think you’re already in Heaven; shooting stars, falling leaves, cool evening breezes and dark, sacred nights. All of them and much more will be presented to you free of charge. They all stand on their own, equally able to elicit your praise of God or to be ignored and quickly forgotten.

Even though most people only notice my birth on January 1st, the truth of the matter is that I begin with every new breath and with every new day. I begin with every tick of a clock and with every sunrise. At every point in life, I begin. I stretch out to a point that’s easy to imagine and yet impossible to clearly see. I am the New Year.

I am an unspoiled page waiting to be written in your book of time, however long or short that book may be. At my beginning, I long to be filled and illustrated. My greatest joy would be to come to life in ways that are wonderful and distinct from all of the other pages and all of the other chapters that you have already created and compiled.

I am a doorway that opens unto new fields. All that you have dreamed and yet haven’t dared to do; all that you have hoped but did not dare to pursue; all the faith that you claimed but did not truly have—all of them wait to come to life within me. All of the best things that you know that you can still become wait here for what you will choose to do within the millions of moments that I provide.

I am your opportunity to practice what you have learned about life during all of the other years that you have already lived. I am an arena in which you are called to perform all of your wonders and conquer all of your shortcomings and fears. All that you have sought and haven’t yet found is hidden somewhere inside of me, waiting for you to search for it with just a little more determination. All that you need to discover is here wishing that you will look for it, but in new and better ways. It is very possible that I am the most important year that you will ever live. I am the New Year.

I am a New Year that will be filled with good news of great joy and also troubles and challenges of great pain. Within my time, babies will be born and old friends will die. Within all of my mysteries, one thing is sure. The very best and most important prayer that you can say will be the one that you offer on the first day of the year and it is one that takes into account the possibilities of the power and grace of God that you are sure to experience by the time the last day finally arrives. I am the New Year. I am what you and God will do together for a very significant period of time and I begin right now.

See you in Church,

Rev. J.D.
Iglesia Evangelica Dominicana and the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.,
November 2013

General Overview of the IED

The Iglesia Evangelica Dominicana (Dominican Evangelical Church) celebrated its 90th anniversary as a denomination in 2012. Its roots are in the Presbyterian, Methodist and Moravian churches, which came together in 1922 to establish one Protestant church, rather than competing denominations. The IED, nationally, has 45 organized churches, numerous “missions” and “preaching points,” which is their method of planting new congregations. There are currently 29 male pastors and 13 female pastors.

They are engaged in ministries of evangelism, Christian education and “social action”—outreach to the local communities. Many churches have schools for children (preschool - high school), there are some medical clinics, at least one vocational school, and a seminary for theological education of candidates for pastoral ministry and lay leadership development. There are MANY youth and children involved in the church activities and often involved in the music of the church, so activities with youth from both churches are very real opportunities—for music, sports, Bible School, English classes.

The women of the church (Asociacion de Mujeres) is very strong and active. They initiated a pilot “peace project” with church women in Santo Domingo and the region just southwest of the capital toward understanding and responding to domestic violence. They also initiated an outreach ministry to new Haitian mothers by visiting in the maternity hospitals and they hope to expand their ministry to a family outreach.

A number of IED congregations are providing services in the bateys around the country, but especially in the south. The bateys began as migrant communities adjacent to sugar plantations. Over time, more and more Haitians have remained in the DR, rather than returning to Haiti, so the bateys have become more permanent residential communities. Little by little, the Dominican government has extended some services, such as primary schools, to some of the bateys.

The IED has been working on education and medical services in a number of these areas as well as beginning new fellowships of Haitians. This outreach and solidarity with the Haitian community in the Dominican Republic is an important witness in a country that widely discriminates against Haitians and, increasingly, reacts violently towards them. The work of reconciliation is sorely needed to combat the racism, absence of legal protection, and basic human rights. There are many potential avenues for strengthening the church’s witness with Haitians and working together toward the root causes of their poverty and exile, both in the Dominican Republic and in Haiti.

The situation with Dominicans of Haitian descent hit a critical point in October of this year, when a new law was passed that denies citizenship to anyone of Haitian descent, going back to 1929. This has, in effect, rendered some 250,000 persons “stateless,” since they are also not citizens of Haiti. Previously, persons born in the DR had the right of citizenship, though some had problems obtaining the necessary documents. The international community and churches from various countries have responded quickly and loudly to the government and the President of the DR concerning this new law. Churches within the DR are divided. Among the Roman Catholics, reportedly the Jesuits have decried the new law but the current Bishop of the country and some other Catholic orders have come out in favor of the law. The Protestant churches have begun under the radar work with organizing groups of Haitians and Dominicans along the border for prayer meetings and discussions. It is a volatile situation with some Dominican groups advocating building a wall along the border to separate the countries.

--by Rev. Jo Ella Holman
Annual Congregational Meeting

Sunday, January 12th
12:15 pm in the sanctuary

Agenda items will include the proposed budget for 2014 and the election of Elders and Deacons.

All members are encouraged to attend!

Adult Ministry Luncheon

Join us for lunch on

Wednesday, January 15 • 12 noon
Fellowship Hall

PROGRAM TBA

If you’re an adult, male or female, young, old or in-between and can join us for lunch ($3.00 per person), please call the church office (289-4431) to make reservations by Monday, January 13.

2014 Per Capita

Please help offset First Pres’ $20,949.50 Per Capita expense to Presbytery for 2013 by reimbursing the church for the per capita ($35.75) of each FPC member in your family. Checks should be made payable to First Presbyterian, memo: “Per Capita”. Thank you!
### 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@firstprespuncie.org.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 5</td>
<td>Mystery Meeting-Happy 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 8 (Wed.)</td>
<td>KOINONIA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 12</td>
<td>Job Jar Sunday</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We will take down the Nativity in the north lobby and do a few other things around the church.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 15 (Wed.)</td>
<td>KOINONIA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 19</td>
<td>Movie Night</td>
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<td>If you have a movie suggestion, let me know!</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 20 (Mon.)</td>
<td>Very Mini Mission!</td>
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<td>Let’s meet at the church at 10:00 am to pack sack lunches for the Harvest Soup Kitchen. Bring money for lunch.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 22 (Wed.)</td>
<td>KOINONIA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 26</td>
<td>Mystery Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 29 (Wed.)</td>
<td>KOINONIA</td>
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<td>Feb. 2</td>
<td>Super Bowl Sunday</td>
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<td>Super Bowl subs in the morning and Super Bowl party in the evening! We’ll be assembling subs during the first service. Please arrive at 8:00 am. This is a fundraiser for youth trip(s), so please make every effort to participate if you plan to go on a trip(s). Would anyone like to host a Super Bowl party in the evening?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 5 (Wed.)</td>
<td>KOINONIA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. 8 (Sat.)</td>
<td>Walk a Mile</td>
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<td></td>
<td>We’ll meet at the church at 8:30 am for the Walk A Mile fundraiser for the Muncie Mission. Start collecting your pledges now! Bring money for breakfast afterward.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. 9</td>
<td>No Meeting</td>
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Save the Dates! **YOUTH MISSION TRIP JUNE 22-27** to Camp Westminster on Higgins Lake, Roscommon, Michigan - Check it out at campwestminster.com!

**Mark Your Calendar!**

**2014 VBS: PYOCA DAY CAMP!**
(Right here at First Pres!)

**June 16-20, 2014**

If you have great memories of summer church camp, you won’t want your children to miss VBS this year! Working with lots of FPC volunteers, staff from Camp Pyoca, in Brownstown, Indiana will be here for a week-long VBS packed with study, fun, games and even some campfire songs! Mark your calendars for June 16-20. VBS will run from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. We will need lots of kids and lots of volunteers!

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We Welcome Children and Families on Sunday Mornings to First Presbyterian!

Infants through 3 year olds receive child care and Christian nurturing in Room 101 with Marie Burkey and Nancy Conn throughout Sunday morning from 8:15 am to noon.

**During Worship Services:** Children’s Worship Center

Children 4 years old through 2nd grade join their parents in the sanctuary for the beginning of worship and are dismissed with a leader for Children’s Worship Center. Held in Youth Hall, Children’s Worship Center is a way to be in worship with young children. Storytelling is used as a primary means for encountering God, so God is experienced, not just learned about. Children in the 3rd grade and older remain in worship with their parents.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

**9:45-10:30 am Sunday School for Children and Youth:**

- Room 104: 4-year-olds through 5th graders with Jeff & Tracy Clinger*
- Room 23 (on the stage): 6th-12th graders with Aaron & Jacqueline Burton

*We combine our elementary classes into a single class, using the "One Room Sunday School" curriculum. This curriculum provides comprehensive Bible study, application of Bible lessons and a variety of age-appropriate activities.
A night of food, fellowship and learning for all ages at First Presbyterian

Koinonia (Koy-nuh-nee'-ah)—noun—Fellowship, Participation, Close Relationship [with God], Gift

Wednesdays ~ Dinner together at 6 pm; Bible Study* & Children's Programming at 6:45 pm

* January 8 - February 26
    (7 weeks - No class on January 29)
    Developing a Heart for God—a study of the life of King David

March 5 (Ash Wednesday)
A very special Koinonia including an Ash Wednesday communion service

March 12 - April 9 (5 weeks)
The Sermon on the Mount

May 7 - 21 (3 weeks)
The Essential Elements of Christian Worship

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**Koinonia for Kids!**

**What will children, K-5th, do during Koinonia Bible study?**

Holy Moly, we’re glad you asked! Holy Moly is children’s curriculum from Spark House, a division of Augsburg Press.

**What happens during a Holy Moly lesson?**

Each lesson has four components. During Discover, kids watch an animated Bible story video. In Relate, they talk about the story they just watched. Then, in Connect, kids engage with the story again in the NRSV Bible to understand the story. Finally, they complete the Create activity with their leaflets.

Holy Moly, your kids won’t want to miss it!

For more information, check out [http://wearesparkhouse.org/kids/holymoly](http://wearesparkhouse.org/kids/holymoly)

(Childcare will be provided for children under age 5.)

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**Adult Sunday School**

**9:45 - 10:30 am in Fellowship Hall**

**Jan. 5 through Feb. 2** Religious Art, taught by Cathy Bretz

**Feb. 9** I am Second, taught by Bill Rogers

**Feb. 16 through Mar. 23** Praying the Psalms, taught by Roger Sherwood

**Mar. 30** I am Second, taught by Bill Rogers
Please Bring Them Back

Now that the demands of Christmas have been met and we’re into the new year, wouldn’t this be a good time to take a look around the house and see if you can find any library books that have been absent from the library shelves for some time? Many are long overdue. Bringing them back will be a big help to us and a courtesy to other readers who may be waiting for them. Thank you.

Holy War and Uproar?

*Love Wins* (234.23 BELL) is a book that has stirred controversy among many pastors and church members. The author Rob Bell believes that various individuals and groups have “hijacked” the story of Jesus and substituted various stories of their own. It is not a book that will comfort everyone.

“I’ve written this book because the kind of faith Jesus invites us into doesn’t skirt the big questions about topics like God and Jesus and salvation and judgment and heaven and hell,” he says.

“*Love Wins* has ignited a new holy war in Christian circles,” according to *Time* magazine. The *New York Times* reported that the book “has created an uproar among evangelical leaders.”

President Wilson

Woodrow Wilson, 28th President of the United States, followed an odd path to the White House. He overcame dyslexia and finally learned to read at age 10. As a youth, he practiced oratory on the empty benches of his father’s Presbyterian churches. He became an academic who taught and wrote extensively about the Constitution and Congress, which he considered to be the most important branch of the federal government. He became president of Princeton University.

On the eve of his inauguration in Washington, he remarked, “It would be the irony of fate if my administration had to deal chiefly with foreign affairs.” But he was the President who guided the nation through World War I and its aftermath. He is credited with developing and popularizing the concept of the United States as uniquely suited for moral leadership because of its democratic traditions. When the United States promotes democracy abroad, it follows a vision first articulated by President Wilson.

His biography *Woodrow Wilson* (920 WILS) by the historian H. W. Brands is part of the American Presidents series published by Henry Holt & Co.

Nourishing Fare

In *Eat This Book* (220.071 PETE), Eugene H. Peterson argues that the way we read the Bible is as important as that we read it. Do we read it to learn about God and to discover information that we can use to make our lives better? Or do we read it to listen to God and respond in prayer and obedience?

The author challenges us to read the Bible as God’s revelation and to live those ideals as we read them. He is also the author of a contemporary translation of the Bible titled *The Message* and other theological works.
Sunday, February 2, 2014

8” sub for a freewill donation!

BRANCHES is raising money to help fund this summer’s mission trips. Please help support the youth by ordering subs for Super Bowl Sunday!

It’s just this easy …

1. **Order subs by Tuesday, January 28, 2014.**
   Only pre-ordered subs will be made. Complete one order form per sub. Use/copy the form to the right or pick up forms at the information desk and turn in or mail to the church office by January 28!

2. **Donations may be made when you pick up your subs in Fellowship Hall after church on Sunday, February 2.**

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**Order Form**

**Complete one form per sub**

(Please Print)

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<tr>
<th>NAME: __________________________________________________________________________________________</th>
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<tr>
<td>PHONE: ________________________________________________________________________________________</td>
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Check preferred pick-up time:

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<th>9:45 am</th>
<th>12:00 pm</th>
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Circle your choices below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Select up to 4:</th>
<th>Select toppings:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ham</td>
<td>Lettuce</td>
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<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>Tomatoes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roast Beef</td>
<td>Onions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Swiss Cheese</td>
<td>Dill Pickles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hot Pepper Cheese</td>
<td>Black Olives</td>
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<td>American Cheese</td>
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