In space, it’s hard to know if you’re moving. I’m just now completing my first year here at First Presbyterian. In other words, I’ve just finished one complete orbit around the sun while in Muncie, Indiana; one of 47 that I’ve completed thus far in my life, but I’ve got to confess that there was never one moment in any of those years in which I was really aware that I was moving through space at all. Each day all of us exist on a giant ball that’s spinning so fast that its entire 25,000 mile circumference turns one lap every day, once again, all happening without any of us giving it much of a thought…amazing.

The same can be true of church. Movement, change, growth, evolution, reinvention are happening under the guidance and authority of the Holy Spirit. It’s crazy to think that any church carrying the name of Jesus Christ should or would even want to occupy the exact same space that it always has, and yet I couldn’t help thinking that perhaps some of you are unaware of all the exciting movement around here even as it happens right before our very eyes. It’s a lot of stuff, so I am going to list off everything that I can remember as fast as I can. Because of that, I recommend that you read it really fast to increase the dramatic effect! Here we go! We are…

Going to send nine representatives for a week in September to our sister church in South Korea…working with the Presbytery to develop our shared and individual ministry in the Dominican Republic…inventing new and exciting fellowship events at 3 different points in the year…improving the accuracy of our membership rolls…working on hiring a new Associate Pastor who will be in charge of Youth and Family Ministries...auditing all of our financial procedures...putting on a brand new VBS program...trying to figure out how to make more four-foot putts...whoops! That’s what I’m trying to do, not the church…sorry about that!

We are...going to offer an Adult domestic mission trip in October of this year...examining multiple ways that we can become more welcoming to visitors and help them to quickly become engaged in ministry...exploring ways to expand our college ministry... improving our security without altering the aesthetics of the building...trying to figure out how to make Koinonia even bigger and better than it already is...constantly improving what is already a fantastic church web page...thinking about joining the circus (just kidding—I wanted to make sure that you were still paying attention).

We are...re-envisioning our building usage...making sure that all of our volunteers fully comply with our newly revised conduct policy...dreaming of how to maximize the usage of our kitchen for mission and outreach ministry...identifying all of our homebound and elder care members so that we may improve the delivery of ministry to them...organizing a tour of the Holy Land for more than 40 people next year...transitioning Cathy toward directing our Mission and Small Group ministry...organizing and prioritizing building improvement projects for the next 3-5 years...about to interview and hire a new Director of the Pre-K and Children’s Ministry...looking to install technology that will improve Wi-Fi capability and provide live internet-accessible streaming video of worship activities...asking how we might improve Fellowship Hall so that it may become an even more dynamic location for multiple ministry programs...oh yeah, and, as always, we will continue First Presbyterian’s tradition of wonderful worship services at 8:30 and 11, while always looking to improve them as well.

As you can see, First Presbyterian Church in Muncie Indiana moves pretty fast! If you don’t take a look every once in a while, you could miss it!

See you in Church,
Rev. J.D.
**Reflections on our 2nd Mission Trip to the Dominican Republic!**

Some thoughts about the people and church in Mella: Now that we are back in Muncie, the question that people often ask us is “How was your trip” and the answer is “It was great, the people were wonderful.”

I want to say some things about the people of Mella. I do not know the population of the town but it has 5 small churches of about 100 active members each. It is clear that the church which we visit, the Evangelical Dominican Church, is the upper-middle class church. The people do not appear wealthy, but they may have a professional job, such as a teacher. They also tell of their plans to send their children to college in the capital city to study engineering or medicine.

During a discussion group, several people and the pastor told of their faith. They were proud to be Christians since the day that they were born. They regularly attend worship, and due to lack of hymnals many songs are memorized. These songs are sung loudly accompanied by tambourines, and there is much energy in the worship service.

The purpose of their church is to do mission for the less fortunate. They provide food for lower-income neighbors. They asked us to bring over-the-counter medicine so that it could be distributed. They also volunteered a great deal of time cooking our 3 meals a day. In a kitchen that was probably 8 feet by 10 feet they prepared local food that was delicious but also sanitary enough for Americans not to get ill.

The last morning that we were in the village our group went for a walk. Several people greeted us along the way. I understand some Spanish and a lady wanted me to stop and listen to her troubles. She was rather thin and appeared about 70 years old, but was probably younger than that. She told of her medical problems. She finished by saying that she did not even have bread. She gave me the directions to her house. I told her that even though I was leaving soon I would tell the pastor about her situation.

I think that there are many other people like this lady. We visited a pastor in another town. His church and the house where his family had lived would best be described as a 2-room garden shed in poor shape. He recently had to move his family because of his child’s illness. But his job in that community was to be a pastor, to be a leader and care for his congregation. There are 11 churches in this part of the country. They certainly could use other Christians working alongside of them. Our Whitewater Valley Presbytery is working with the national Dominican church on a plan to do just that.

The church in Mella prays for us, for our health, for the health of our families. They worried that we would have safe travel back home. We should pray for them, also. —Michelle Kaitchuck

Joyful Worship: Interaction with the Dominican Christians was certainly spirit-filled in many ways. Several worship occasions provided an opportunity for us to sense the joy with which our brothers and sisters in Christ praise God. Parishioners readily shared personal testimonies, prayers, or special songs. The vocal part of their music was a heartfelt offering. Dynamic accompaniment was provided by an artful and exuberant percussion section with rhythmic and pulsating maracas, tambourines, and a guayo.* Needless to say, it was a moving experience!

*The guayo is a cylindrical grater that emits a ratchet-like sound when a metal tine scrapes across it.

—Marty Kendrick

Language can be something of a barrier to international mission; however, our joyful reunion with our church family in Mella—smiles, laughter, hugs and kisses—communicated our love for each other. We also had two wonderful Dominican men with us as translators; they were a great part of our team last year and we were grateful they could join us again. In addition to that, we had our First Pres translator, Michelle. Others of us could speak some Spanish in varying degrees. But all of us could join in with the universal language of music—at our worship services, VBS and other gatherings. Our hosts sang often and with joyful gusto, along with tambourines and drums and other music makers. We would usually clap along with them and sometimes sing with a familiar tune (How Great Thou Art). And we usually sang a couple songs for them accompanied by one of our guitarists John Foster or Pastor Lee. One time
in particular stands out in my mind. It was at Sunday evening worship service. We sang “Jesus Loves Me” first in English, then Pastor Lee in his beautiful, rich voice sang it in Korean, and then we sang it in Spanish—and they, as we had hoped, sang with us, smiling joyfully. Tears welled up in my eyes, joyful tears of solidarity with our Dominican brothers and sisters in Christ. —Carrie Jo Miller

It is always interesting for me to contemplate how God’s hand is at work in our secular society. There are so many distractions it sometimes feels like God is absent (or at least not front of mind) for most Americans. We are such a land of plenty and a land of opportunity that life is just busy. One of the main reasons I have prioritized active participation (beyond a direct link to the person coordinating our mission efforts) is to be reminded of what really matters in this world. The interaction with our friends in Mella reminds me that God is everywhere. Their passion for worship, for music, for relationships is a wonderful reinforcement of what should matter most, that we are all (world-wide) a community of faith. Thank you for the ongoing opportunity to be a part of this valuable mission partnership.

—Dan Alexander

The mission trip to the Dominican Republic has been a wonderful experience. The people there were very welcoming and friendly. I made a few friends there as well. This adventure was awesome and the Lord helped me make it through without any serious illness.

—Wesley Potter

One of the highlights for me in this year’s mission trip to the Dominican Republic was resurrecting friendships that we had made from last year’s trip. Everyone seemed more at ease and connected than when we last visited.

Was our trip a success? I do feel like we have built stronger relationships with the people of Mella. This is essential in helping to partner with this community. I think we have discovered a couple of areas that we can help with building projects: new roof for Pastor Jhonson’s church and possibly a new church building for Pastor Radney in Neyba. I hope we can see these become a reality. As for the youth of these communities, there are many obstacles to overcome, and education might be an area that could offer some solutions to their problems.

At any rate, it is exciting to have Presbytery committed to long-term mission work in that part of the world.

—John Foster

This trip was a wonderful experience for the both of us to share together. It was a new experience and had numerous challenges along the way. The people were always warm and welcoming, and we could see God at work in Mella.

—Marie & Jessica Burkey

(continued on p. 4)
The mission trip was great! We added something new this year—I taught Taekwondo classes which drew lots of teenage boys to the church. Some girls joined in, too. Most of the young people took it very seriously and carefully tried to follow my instructions. They did a good job and learned some exercises and some moves. I think they had fun, too. Taekwondo is more than just a means of self-protection. It is a way to a healthy body and self-discipline. I also help our team to a healthy body and self-discipline through stretching and strengthening exercises (this included our bus driver Bolivar, his assistant Willy, and our translators Abner and Ely. After our moving devotions, we made a big circle and everyone followed me as best they could. I think I could actually get them in shape if I had them long enough!—Pastor Lee

As we prepared before our trip for the Dominican Republic we were asked the question. “While on this trip, I will be looking for Jesus (in) ________?” My answer at the time was, in the people of Mella as they are so passionate about God. I witnessed this the previous year on our mission trip to the D.R. This trip I was able to see Jesus in a very unusual place. On Thursday evening our God squad was going to lead the devotion. The title of the devotion for that evening was “Jesus Appears”, and part of the devotion reads “when Jesus appears in our life it still takes us by surprise, it could happen any moment, whether we are ready or not.”

On Thursday afternoon I went into the attic of the IED Church in Mella to inspect the roof structure for water damage from a leaky roof. As I was moving thru the very hot attic, removing cob webs along the way as I inspected the wood trusses for damage, I noticed a bright light. I looked up to see what it was; there I saw this very bright cross beaming at me. This sent chills thru my body as I looked at the brightly lit cross. The light was coming thru the gable end where pieces of the block wall were left out to form the shape of a cross.

This was not the place that I thought I would have seen Jesus. But as the devotion had said, “it could happen any moment, whether we are ready or not”.—Alan Simmons

Have Shovel, Will Travel: Woodland Plants Needed

Do you have some shade-loving plants that you are willing to donate for the sunken garden that is used for the garden service? I am looking for woodland plants such as ferns, hellebores, Solomon’s seal, Virginia bluebells, colorful hostas, etc. Spring bulbs would also be appreciated. Call me at 717-4291 (cell) to arrange a time for me to pick up the plants or dig them out if you wish.

—Jan McCune, Grounds Committee/Weekly Weeders

Weekly Weeders

every Wednesday morning beginning May 7

We meet once a week from 8:30-10:30 am on Wednesdays to work on the grounds. Everyone welcome, even if you can come only sporadically. For more information, contact Nanette Rushton at 288-0386.
May 4  Youth Sunday rehearsal
May 11  MOTHER’S DAY - No meeting
May 15  Deadline to sign up for the mission trip
May 18  YOUTH SUNDAY
Youth will participate in both services. In between services, there will be a brunch at which graduating seniors will be recognized and scholarships awarded. In the evening, we will celebrate our seniors at the movies! Watch for an e-mail with the show time for *Heaven Is For Real*!
May 25  MEMORIAL DAY - No meeting
June 1  Mystery meeting
June 8  VBS Prep
June 15  FATHER’S DAY - No meeting
June 16-20  VBS
Register on the church website to help anytime between 9:00 am and 3:00 pm.
June 22-27  Mission Trip
Camp Westminster on Higgins Lake, Roscommon, Michigan

**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.

“**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

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**Sunday School**

**Last Day of Youth/Children’s Sunday School**

May 11 is the last day of Sunday School for children & youth. On May 18, please join us during the Sunday School hour for the Recognition Brunch. Sunday School will resume in the fall on September 7.
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
Book Fair Coming Sunday May 18

See information on the back panel of this newsletter!

A Survivor’s Story

In Journey Toward Wholeness (615.8 STEG), author R. Carroll Stegall shares his experience of coping with prostate cancer. He brings his gifts as a storyteller and his perspective as a person of faith to this work. His story informs and enables cancer sufferers and their families to better articulate their fears, anxieties, and hopes as they struggle through the ordeal.

While the author offers the perspective of a male cancer patient, his insights may benefit anyone suffering from a life-threatening disease. Mr. Stegall is a husband, father, grandfather, classical and church musician, teacher, and storyteller living in Indianapolis.

Where Did Your Lunch Come From?

Most people know (or could guess) that the beans used to produce coffee are imported from foreign countries – most notably from Columbia in South America. But how many would guess that much of our apple juice comes from China?

America imports much food from abroad. Today the U.S.A. imports twice as much food as it did just 10 years ago. And, as author Kelsey Timmerman reports, while the local food movement is growing, the global food movement is growing much faster. Mr. Timmerman’s new book is Where Am I Eating (338.1 TIMM).

To find out more about the globalization of food and what it means to producers and consumers, he traveled to Latin America, Africa, and Asia to talk with fishermen, farmers and farm laborers, often working side by side with the latter. He also visited the Downtown Farm Stand in Muncie where he discovered that many people are passionate about producing, marketing and consuming locally grown food.

Spending Eternity with God?

According to author and lecturer Andy Stanley, many adherents of the world’s various religions share a common belief – that in order to be admitted to heaven (or paradise) after death, a person must lead a virtuous life. In his book How Good Is Good Enough? (234 STAN), he argues that this belief is questionable.

How many good deeds are required to offset any lapses that may have occurred? How many total good deeds are required? Mr. Stanley believes that none of the holy scriptures of the world’s religions offers a definitive answer to such questions. Actually, he feels that these questions are not the right questions. For him, the path to heaven is a clear and shining road. Drawing on the Bible, especially the letters of St. Paul, he illuminates the path in a convincing manner.

To my sisters and brothers at First—

Please accept this humble expression of gratitude for the receipt of your per capita offering. A wide range of missions & ministries are made possible at every level of our connectional Church through these funds. On behalf of all of them, therefore, please allow me to thank you for your continued generosity.

Blessings,

Alan Thames, Executive Presbyter, Whitewater Valley

Salvation Army Pantry:

May donation item:
PEANUT BUTTER & JELLY

Please place your donation(s) in the cart in Fellowship Hall.
Sunday, May 18, is Recognition Sunday. Graduating high school seniors will be recognized at each worship service and during an all-church brunch at 9:45 am in Fellowship Hall. The Gishler and Mannies scholarships will be awarded during the brunch.

Second graders will also be recognized during the brunch for “graduating” to full time worship in the sanctuary as a 3rd grader next year.

Please join us!

**Calling All High School Seniors & 2nd graders!**

**All-Church Carry-In Brunch**

9:45 am (between services) • Fellowship Hall • Bring your favorite brunch dish to share (to serve 10-12)...and your own tableware!

**Book Fair**

8:00 am - 12:30 pm • North Lobby • Purchase books to donate to the church library! Dozens of new books will be on display.

The Book Fair provides an opportunity to buy and donate new books to the church library. Please stop by and look over the new arrivals. The Book Fair is an important source of new books for the library. When you buy a book and donate it, you get to share a book of inspiration with fellow members of our congregation. And you don't have to find a place in your own bookcase to store it.