“Mirror, mirror on the wall, who in the land
is fairest of all?” That’s the question that the queen
would ask her magic mirror and every day the
mirror would always reply “You, my queen, are
fairest of all.” But when a little girl named Snow
White reached the age of seven, she became “as
beautiful as the day” and when the queen asked her
mirror, it said, “Queen, you are full fair, ’tis true,
but now Snow White is fairer than you.”

Of course, the queen didn’t like hearing that
answer at all. She was still one of the most
beautiful women in the world, but that wasn’t good
enough for her. She wanted to hear only one thing
from that mirror and she was willing to do
anything to get it. She wanted to live in one kind of
world, and in one kind of condition and she wanted
it to stay that way forever. Unfortunately, it doesn’t
work that way with the mirrors that we use.

The first mirror that we will use sees a very
young face that’s probably so fascinated by the
image that it sees that it doesn’t stop to care what
that face looks like. A couple years later, that
mirror will still reflect a child’s face of seven or
eight years old, but once again, he or she won’t be
too vain. Kids of that age only use a mirror because
mom or dad has ordered them to get cleaned up
for dinner or school or church. They’d much rather
be out running around, climbing trees, playing with
friends and avoiding eating their vegetables or
doing their homework.

All of that changes rather quickly and rather
profundely, doesn’t it? In what seems like a blink
of an eye, that child transforms into a teenager and
suddenly that mirror becomes the center of their
entire world. Every reflection is measured and
analyzed. Every flaw and every blemish is treated
with obsessive attention. Teenagers look deeply
into that mirror with great anxiety, trying to look
beyond what they currently see; trying to get some
clues as to what kind of man or woman they will
soon be.

The years continue to go by and that mirror
continues to try to answer unspoken questions. A
mirror certainly isn’t just for getting ready in the
morning. If we keep a mirror for long enough, it’ll
see just about everything about us. A young
woman looks in the mirror, wondering if she really
is ready to raise a child of her own. A middle-aged
man looks in the mirror, remembering the scars
that he’s picked up along the way. An older man
chuckles at the fact that he doesn’t need a comb
nearly as much as he used to and a very old woman
looks in that mirror, sad for what she has lost in
this life, but thankful for all that she has also
received.

Unlike the queen’s mirror, our little, old
bathroom version doesn’t have much of an opinion
about what it sees. It just sits there and reflects
back whatever comes its way. Yet, even though our
mirror doesn’t have much love or affection for any
of the faces that we wear over the years, God
certainly does. As hard as it is to understand, God
sees and knows far more about us than any mirror
ever will. God sees things that we’ve successfully
hidden from ourselves and God loves us even still.
Mirrors are great tools as we travel life’s way. They
help us to see what the world sees. Yet, as essential
as they are, and as much as they do see, they’ll
never see what God feels and what God feels about
us matters more than anything than a mirror can
possibly reveal.

See you in Church,
Rev. J.D.

“And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” Matthew 28:20
Fellowship Sunday

The first Sunday of every month is “Fellowship Sunday”. The next Fellowship Sunday on December 6 will be hosted by the Worship and Religious Arts Committee.

Our regular “coffee/fellowship” time between services will take place in Fellowship Hall (refreshments will be served in Fellowship Hall). From 9:45 to 10:30 there will be a group activity which fosters relationship building, gathering people together around tables (in circles!) or interacting with each other.

Fellowship Sunday is a great time to invite people to visit our church.

If you are willing to be a table host please email Cathy (cathy@firstpresmuncie.org)

At this most wonderful time of the year, please remember to pray for our dear friends in the Dominican Republic: Pastor Luis, Abner, Eli, Bolivar, Wily, Navidad, Niurika, Bienvenida, Denise, Margo, Marie Mercedes, Oscar, Joedy, Carmen, Minerva, Olga, Jochy, Juan, Cuchi, Paola, Kristal, Magdy, Michell, Keni, Kismedidis, Pastor Pedro Radney, Pastora Alfreda, Pastora Elias, Pastora Elsa, Pastor Matos, Reverend Cancu, Jo Ella, the residents of Batey 7, and many others.

What a wonderful group we have traveling to the DR March 4-12, 2016: Dan and Cathy Alexander, Jessica Burkey, Tracy Clinger, Autumn Duncan, Michelle Kaltchuck, Pastor Lee, Carrie Jo Miller, Lauren Simmons, Brad Southwick! Seven of us have already been to the DR, but we have new faces, too. We welcome Tracy Clinger, Autumn Duncan and Brad Southwick to the DR family!

*Team meetings will be held on Mondays, December 28, January 25, and February 22 at 7 pm in the church lounge.*

While in the DR, we will be leading a Bible school for the children of our Mella church and partnering with the community preschool which serves the town of Mella. Pastor Lee will preach on Sunday, March 6, and teach taekwondo.

Start praying for this trip now! Each one of us has been called by God to participate in this trip. “We go nowhere by accident.” Why is God calling us? What does He want us to learn?

Our church is supporting the missionary efforts of Joshua Park, a member of our International Congregation. Joshua, a graduate of Grace Theological Seminary in Winona Lake, Indiana, has served in East Africa and Nepal since 2012. Joshua is part of an organization called Biblical Education by Extension (BEE). Joshua is focused on making disciples by providing theological teaching and Bible study to local pastors and church leaders in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Nepal.

Joshua Park will be our Sunday school speaker on December 13. Please come and meet him and pray for his ministry.

Thank you to Kids Hope mentors, subs, and prayer partners who teamed up to provide Christmas for two Southview Elementary families.

If you are looking for a one-on-one ministry, consider starting as a Kids Hope mentor in January. There are two boys on the waiting list at Southview. For more information and encouragement, talk to any of the Southview mentors: Cathy Alexander, Lee Ann Brown, Joyce Carmichael, Barb Dennis, Muggs Gooden, Sheila Lachat, and Carrie Jo Miller.
All the preschool classes came together to celebrate Thanksgiving! The children dressed as Pilgrims and Indians and gave thanks together before enjoying pumpkin bread, popcorn, and apple juice.

- Darpan was thankful for watching the stars.
- Lauren was thankful for her mom and dad.
- Lane was thankful for French fries.
- Myla was thankful for her house.
- Marshall was thankful he has his own bed.
- William was thankful for Jesus.

The children are enjoying the Scripture Tree that was painted on the wall by our very own Jean McCauley and Susie Burns. The tree allows for interactive conversation and an opportunity for the children to locate and explore scripture. The children add prayers for all to pray for during the upcoming week. Take a moment to read some of the prayer requests and share this experience with the children of the church.

**Adult Ministry Luncheon**

**Thursday, December 17:**

Mystery Trip hosted by Julia Wadsworth

Julia will lead us on a fun holiday excursion. Look forward to beautiful surroundings, learning, music, and shopping! We will leave the church at 10 a.m. and return at 4 p.m. You will need to bring $5.50 cash. This is a trip both men and women will enjoy!

Deadline to register is **Monday, December 14.**

**Fellowship Sunday & Adult Sunday School:**

December 6—Fellowship Sunday
December 13—Forum Discussion
December 20—Advent Brunch
January 3—Fellowship Sunday
January 10-31
- Group #1—The 4 Great Loves
- Group #2—Worship
February 7—Fellowship Sunday
Our Mission Team is looking for **20** individuals/families who would like to spread holiday cheer at Thanksgiving and Christmas.

**Food baskets will be assembled at the church, and volunteers are needed to deliver them as follows:**

**Christmas Baskets**  December 20

Please call Janie Miller (289-3652) or email janiem13@att.net for more information, or to sign up for this wonderful holiday project--especially fun for families or for 2 or 3 friends together.

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The Giving Tree will be up in the Lounge hallway on Sunday, November 29, and you can help decorate it with ornaments which are displayed on the table beside the tree. Please select an ornament or several, remove the tag from the ornament and place the ornament on the tree. Then purchase the gift, wrap it, PUT YOUR TAG ON THE GIFT IDENTIFYING THE RECIPIENT, MAKING SURE THE FAMILY NUMBER IS ON IT. And put it under the tree.

Many ornaments represent a very special need of a family of children or of persons identified by the Salvation Army, A Better Way or the YWCA. Other ornaments represent gifts for agencies with whom we partner - some specific gifts and some monetary gifts.

It’s such a joy to buy for a child knowing how excited he or she will be. Each child will have two ornaments: one with toy or game suggestions and one with clothing suggestions and sizes. We ask that you choose only one of the suggestions per ornament because all the families have more than one child represented by ornaments. It wouldn't be fair for one child in the family to receive 12 gifts while the others each receive two. If you want to buy many gifts, you could take ornaments for all the children in the family.

Agencies represented by some of the ornaments include Christian Ministries, Muncie Habitat for Humanity, Second Harvest Food Bank, Motivate Our Minds (MOMS), and Muncie Mission.

**The Most Important Gift Catalog in the World**

Choose a meaningful gift to give a loved one and help children and families around the world receive training and animal gifts that help them become self-reliant.

Honor your loved ones with a free card from Heifer with every donation.

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**Christmas Eve Services**

**Thursday, December 24**

**12 noon ~ Communion Service in the chapel**

**7:30 pm ~ Candlelight Service in the sanctuary**

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Regular 8:30 & 11:00 am Sunday morning services will be held throughout the season on Dec. 6, 13, 20, and 27.

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Place your gift(s) under our Giving Tree by Friday, December 18, for delivery on December 20.
Be a Bell Ringer

for Salvation Army

at the Muncie Mall
(just inside the entrance by MCL Cafeteria).

First Pres members will be ringing the bells on December 7-11 and December 14-18 from 4:00-8:00 p.m.

Choose a one-hour time slot and sign up later this month in the Lounge Hallway.

This is a great holiday activity for the whole family!

Oh, Come All Ye Faithful…and Sing!

Time for the all-church caroling party, Sunday, December 13, from 5:30 to 7:30! Bring the whole family! We will caravan to church members’ homes to spread holiday cheer (which means we need some good singers!) and return to the church for refreshments. Cider and hot chocolate provided… bring a plate of goodies to share.

You won’t want to miss the Advent Brunch performance staring church members of all ages! Come hear the Christmas Story like you’ve never heard—as told through the eyes of the innkeeper. We hope you’ll join us for this special event!

Bring a brunch dish to serve 10 - 12!

All-Church Carry-In Advent Brunch!

Sunday, December 20th
9:30 am
in Fellowship Hall

Cost: A new pair of children’s mittens or gloves (‘tis the season to give to A Better Way)

On behalf of the church, Pre-K staff, and the Pre-K Board we are excited to host the first ever Breakfast with Santa. Church and Pre-K families will enjoy breakfast at 8:00 a.m. followed by visits with Santa & Mrs. Claus as well as the opportunity for children to make a craft! Reservations are required and must be received by December 6th as we plan for the breakfast. To make reservations please contact Tracy Clinger: 751-7960; tracy@firstpresmuncie.org or Keena Bentley: 289-4431; keena@firstpresmuncie.org
**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 Elinor@firstpresmuncie.org

It never ceases to amaze me how fast a year goes by and how quickly December sneaks up on us. Before we know it, Advent is starting and a new church year is upon us. For the youth, Advent marks half way through the school year and mid-course exams. While we have a lot to do, the youth are also busy with tests, papers, and exams! Keep them in your prayers throughout the month!

On Sunday evenings in November, together we had some really fantastic evenings thinking about creative prayer, talking about personalities, playing Thanksgiving games, and making over 60 care packages for college students in our own congregation and the international congregation! We’ve had a great time as a group and will continue to have a fun together!

A night of food, fellowship, and learning for all ages! Koinonia (Koy-nuh-nee’-ah)—noun—Fellowship, Participation, Close Relationship [with God], Gift

**Wednesday Evenings**
- Dinner together at 5:45 pm; Bible Study at 6:30 pm. Bible Study Topic December 2 – December 23: Christmas Characters

***RSVP’S ARE NOW REQUIRED FOR CHILD CARE!***

Please contact Tracy Clinger (751-7960; tracy@firstpresmuncie.org) by NOON the Tuesday before Koinonia if you plan to attend and need childcare.

**Families:**
Join us on Sunday, December 13 for the All Church Caroling Party! We will travel together in big groups to church members homes and sing carols. Afterwards, we will all meet back at church for hot chocolate and time together. It’s a fun evening and great way to spend time with our larger church family!

**Exciting news: The renovations in Youth Hall are complete! Take a look at the newly designed and decorated space the next time you’re at church!**

**December 2 - December 23**
- Christmas Characters

**January 6 - January 27**
- The Holy Spirit

**February 10 — Ash Wednesday**

**February 17 — March 6**
- The Seven Deadly Sins

**April 6 — May 4**
- Angels

**January 23 — March 14**
- Christmas Party in Youth Hall

**December 6**
- All About Advent

**December 9**
- Koinonia

**December 13**
- All Church Caroling Party

**December 16**
- Koinonia

**December 20**
- Christmas Party in Youth Hall

**December 23**
- Koinonia

**December 27**
- No Branches, Merry Christmas!
The Role of Doubt in Faith

Doubt is not the enemy of faith. It is a part of the process of learning which leads to a deeper understanding and belief. This is the thesis of Barnabas Piper in his recent book, *Help My Unbelief* (248.4 PIPE).

Mr. Piper argues that God is infinite and beyond our understanding. He chooses to reveal himself in ways that spark questions without settling them all. God invites us to a larger faith — one that his room for questions, victories, failures, and mysteries. Building faith is an act of exploration, a process of learning and embracing what we cannot understand but what we can trust.

The author is a blogger and frequent contributor to online publications.

The Ortberg Touch

One of the most popular and prolific of current Christian authors is a Presbyterian minister, John Ortberg. His books are frequently borrowed from the church library. Here are brief comments on three of his books:

*God Is Closer than You Think.* Among the complexities of life, it may be difficult to discern the Heavenly Father. But He is not just present, He is reaching out to you. This book illustrates ways in which the individual can reach out toward God to form an intimate connection.

*When the Game Is Over, It All Goes Back in the Box.* No matter how well you have played the game of life and regardless of how many tokens you have accumulated, when the game is over, it all goes back in the box. All the wealth, all the promotions, all the honors – none of it counts any more. To win the game of life, it is essential to begin with the right objective – being rich toward God.

*Everybody’s Normal Till You Get to Know Them.* Paradoxically, everyone exhibits quirks, eccentricities, and jagged edges. Abnormality is normal. But we must learn to live together in harmony. We must overcome our differences and form life-changing relationships. God leads us to form communities and accept the transforming power of being loved.

Pastor Ortberg’s books are shelved under the call number 248.4 ORT.

Overcoming Inflammation

To fight infection and repair damaged tissues, the human body responds with a process called inflammation. While necessary to the healing process, inflammation can become systemic. When inflammation goes unchecked for months or years, it can lead to weight gain. It also has the power to trigger serious illnesses.

In a new book, physician Don Colbert offers advice on diet and other aspects of lifestyle that can help overcome chronic inflammation. Dr. Colbert is a family physician specializing in anti-aging medicine.

Maxine and Chuck Leslie

**Future Sermons:**

The Coming of the Lord—What the Prophets Saw When they looked forward to Christmas
November 29—Jeremiah 33:14-16—Out of the Rubble
December 6—Malachi 3:14—Following Repentance
December 13—Zephaniah 3:14-20—With a Song of Joy
December 20—Micah 5:2-5a—So That There Would be Peace
December 24—Christmas Eve Services
December 27—Luke 2:41-52
As in previous years, you have the opportunity to order poinsettias to decorate the church in honor or in memory of someone dear to you. The flowers may be taken home with you after the 7:30 pm Christmas Eve service.

Cost is $15 each.

Make checks payable to First Presbyterian Church; memo: Poinsettias

Orders must be received by the church office on or before Sunday, December 13, 2015!

To order, please place a completed form and payment in the offering plate or send it to the church office at 1400 West Riverside Avenue, Muncie, IN 47303.

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIA ORDER FORM
(PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY)

Quantity ordered: _____ X $15 each = Total due $_______
Date pd: _________ Amt pd: _________Check #__________
In loving memory of: ______________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
In honor or celebration of: _________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
Given by: ___________________________________________________