Way back in the good old days, there were certain folks of very questionable character that used to sell what was called “snake oil.” They’d mix up a potion in a bucket in their kitchen that would smell and taste awful and they’d start selling it. They knew that it didn’t matter if the product worked; it only mattered what the customer was willing to believe.

A wagon would roll into town stocked full of hundreds of bottles of snake oil. They’d open up the cart and start calling out and gathering a crowd. “Have you got joint pain? This stuff will fix it!” That would gain the interest of a few folks. “Have you got someone sick at home? Give ‘em a few spoonfuls of this and they’ll be as strong as a horse!” The crowd would get bigger. “Are you bald? Have trouble sleeping? Can’t stand your wife’s cooking? Can’t get your chickens to lay any more eggs?” Snake oil was the answer to everything.

Yet, before making a sale, someone in the crowd would inevitably raise an objection. They’d claim that it had to be too good to be true. That’s when the salesman would help an old man to hobble up onto the stage and give him a free taste and then everyone would watch as the old man would suddenly break into a song and start to tap dance as if he was 20 years younger.

Then the salesman would give a 98 pound weakling a drink and have him arm wrestle the strongest guy in the crowd. When the weakling won, the bottles flew off the shelves. Later in the day, the old man, the salesman, the arm wrestlers would divide up the loot, having sold everyone not much more than a bottle of cheap mineral oil.

We may laugh and call those people fools for falling so easily for that scam until we look honestly at ourselves in the mirror. We may not buy snake oil from a stranger who just rolled into town, but we do need to be healed and as God watches, we waste a whole bunch of time and energy chasing after all sorts of false cures.

Because of that, I’ve been thinking about Isaiah 53 quite a bit lately. Isaiah says, “By His bruises, we are healed.” It sounds too good to be true, doesn’t it? It sounds like Isaiah is nothing more than just another snake oil salesman. We know who and what Isaiah is talking about here and the claim is that this is the only way, not one of many ways, for us to be healed. Isaiah is saying that because Jesus came into our world and because He suffered and died on a cross, we are forgiven; we have new life; we have a new and blessed relationship with God.

The next time someone asks you why in the world you go to church or read the Bible and pray, why don’t you say something like, “That’s where I go to be reminded that I am healed. The rest of the world keeps reminding me of my failures and my pain and all of the ways that I’ve been broken. The world fills my mind with worries and fears about the future, but Church...that’s where I go to hear and to think and to feel something completely different. That’s where I go to be reminded of the truth. That’s where I go to be reminded that no matter what I might be feeling and experiencing, I am a beloved child of God.”

Now that would be a great answer. That would be a great testimonial, but in order for it to be sincere, we have to believe in those bruises. We have to believe in the ability of Christ. We have to know that Jesus really is the way and the truth and the life, because that’s the kind of answer that can only come from someone who has come to understand that the Bible and prayer and church and what Jesus did are far more valuable than just another bottle of snake oil.

See you in Church,

Rev. J.D.
Dominican Republic Trip News

The following eleven missionaries from our church will travel to Mella in the Dominican Republic, February 27-March 6:

Scott Brown  Amanda Brown
Megan Brown    Wesley Potter
Lauren Simmons Michelle Kaitchuck
Jessica Burkey Lucas Clay
Jessica Bryzek  Dan Alexander
Thea

Nine of these missionaries were part of our first or second trip to the Dominican Republic. While all of these people are young-at-heart, six of these missionaries are young people, one high school student and five college students!

During the 2015 trip, we *plan* to participate in children’s Bible school, with an emphasis on dance and song. We also hope young people in Mella will join us for a cultural exchange (and a chance to practice their English). We will share Bible study with IED church members.

(*We go with a “plan”, but also with the understanding that God’s *plan* for this trip might be different than ours! *Flexibility* is a key word on any mission trip!)

If you would like to be a prayer partner for any of these missionaries, please contact Cathy (cathy@firstpresmuncie.org).

---

2015 Per Capita

Please help offset First Pres’ $21,640.98 Per Capita expense to Presbytery for 2014 by reimbursing the church for the per capita ($36.93) of each FPC member in your family. Checks should be made payable to First Presbyterian, memo: “Per Capita”.

Thank you!
Preschool registration for 2015-2016 will begin February 1, 2015 for church members and current preschool families! Please check the website: www.firstpresmuncie.org under Education (preschool) or call Tracy Clinger, Director of Children’s Ministry for more information 751-7960.

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 activities from 8:15 am to noon.

During Worship Services: Children’s Worship
In both the 8:30 and 11:00 worship service, children age 4 through 2nd grade will be dismissed after the children’s sermon to go with a leader to experience a Children’s Worship where they will learn more about God. Children will be returned to their parents in the sanctuary during the final hymn.

Children in the 3rd grade and older remain in worship with their parents.

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

- Age 4-3rd grade
  Rm 103 with Laura and Kayla Georlett
- 4th-6th grade
  Jr. High Rm with Susan Clay
- 7th-12th grade
  Room 23 (on the stage): with Aaron & Jacqueline Burton

Adult Sunday Forums
9:15 - 10:30 am in Fellowship Hall

January 4th - Dan House
“The Christian Approach to Health Care”

January 11th - Dan House
“The Christian Approach to Health Care”

January 18th - Bill Rogers
“I am Second”

January 25th - Lenny Kaminsky
“Mind/Body/Spirit”

SUNDAY SERVICE TIMES:
8:30 a.m.—Contemporary Worship (Sanctuary)
11:00 a.m.—International Service (Chapel)
11:00 a.m.—Traditional Service (Sanctuary)

First Presbyterian Church
1400 W. Riverside Ave.
Muncie IN 47303
Phone: 765-289-4431
Fax: 765-289-4486
www.firstpresmuncie.org

The Rev. J. D. Georlett, Senior Pastor/Head of Staff
revjd@firstpresmuncie.org

The Rev. Dr. Myungku Lee, Associate Pastor
ninebrights@hotmail.com

Elinor Dale, Associate Pastor
elinor@firstpresmuncie.org

Cathy Alexander, Director of Mission & Small Group Activities
cathy@firstpresmuncie.org

Tracy Clinger, Director of Children’s Ministry
tracy@firstpresmuncie.org

Lisa Ulrich, Business Administrator
lisa@firstpresmuncie.org

Keena Bentley, Administrative Assistant
keena@firstpresmuncie.org
Save the date! Join us for a night of fun and trivia while we raise money for the preschool!

More details coming soon!

Bethlehem Bound!

This past Sunday, children, youth, and college students participated in Bethlehem Bound, this year’s Christmas Pageant. Not only were there angels, there were shepherds, sheep, wise men, a caravan of rockers, and JD and Elinor guided by the one and only Clara Rice. Thank you all for sharing in the fun and the telling of the Christmas story!

And a HUGE thank you to Jacqueline Burton for coordinating and organizing the production!
Christmas Fun at First Pres

The preschool enjoyed a day of Festive Fun before Christmas Break. The story of Christmas was shared with the children by Pastors JD and Elinor in the North lobby using the figures in our wonderful nativity! The children then experienced four stations of fun: making reindeer food, singing Christmas carols in the Chapel with Marty Kendrick, playing Christmas bingo and other games in Fellowship Hall and visiting with Santa and Mrs. Claus! The day was enjoyed by children, parents and teachers!!
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 7 - February 11
(5 weeks - No class on January 28)
The Ten Commandments

February 18 - Ash Wednesday Worship

February 25 - April 1
(6 weeks - Lent)
The Passion of the Christ - (Movie)

April 2 - Maunday Thursday Worship

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

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

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.

Jan. 4: Get to know Elinor night
Jan. 11: Un-Deck the Halls
Jan. 18: What do you have? Let’s talk about privilege
Jan. 19: No school! Keep your afternoon open—(Monday) details coming
Jan. 25: Service Project with Confirmation
Feb. 1: Super Bowl party

“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
Primers for Presbyterians

Church members young and old may sometimes wonder about the early days of the religion they profess. They may be curious about how some Christians came to call themselves Presbyterians and how some of these worshipers found their way to the new world.

Answers to these questions and much more information about reformed churches and our denomination are to be found in the church library. Some excellent sources of information are described in the following paragraphs.

The Story of the Faith

In *Church History 101* (285.1 RAMS) author William M. Ramsay, a retired Presbyterian minister and college professor, describes the development of Christianity from New Testament times to the present. Subtitled *An Introduction for Presbyterians*, this book places particular emphasis on the development of reformed Christianity.

Eight Basic Beliefs

*This We Believe* (285.1 PLUN) analyzes in some detail eight truths that Presbyterians affirm. The author is Stephen W. Plunkett, a Presbyterian minister from Texas. He writes clearly about theological matters and issues a call for a church that grounds its life on Christ as revealed through Holy Scripture.

Q and A for Presbyterians

Donald K. McKim, an editor with Westminster John Knox Press, is the author of several books on church matters including *Presbyterian Questions, Presbyterian Answers* (285.1 McKI). This book uses a question-and-answer format to explore the Christian faith with emphasis on Presbyterian beliefs and practices. Answers are provided in highly readable articles of a few paragraphs. The book poses so many fascinating questions it is almost impossible to open it without taking the time to read one or more items.

What It Means to Be Presbyterian

The late James W. Angell, a Presbyterian minister from California, published a revised edition of a book that has been deemed a classic for Presbyterians. It is titled *How to Spell Presbyterian* (285.137 ANGE). The book is divided into six parts – key ideas, commitment, witness, order, discipline, and covenant. It includes a glossary to commonly used Presbyterian terms.

The Frozen Chosen

As you may know, Presbyterians are sometimes referred to as “the frozen chosen.” In a rather whimsical book, two Presbyterian ministers explore this and other attributes of their co-religionists. The book is titled *Being Presbyterian in the Bible Belt* (285.1 FOOT). It is billed as “a theological survival guide for youth, parents, and other confused Presbyterians.” The authors are Ted V. Foote Jr., and P. Alex Thornburg, both pastors of churches in Oklahoma.

Chuck and Maxine Leslie

**SALVATION ARMY PANTRY NEEDS FOR JANUARY:**

**SOUPS & CRACKERS**

Please place your donation(s) in the cart in Fellowship Hall.

**Adult Ministry Luncheon**

Join us for lunch on

**Wednesday, January 21 • 12 noon**

**Fellowship Hall**

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 12.
Super Bowl Subs

Sunday, February 1, 2015
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 Monday, January 26, 2015. 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 26!

2. Donations may be made when you pick up your subs in Fellowship Hall after church on Sunday, February 1.

Order Form

**Complete one form per sub**

(Please Print)

NAME: _________________________________________________________

PHONE: ________________________________________________________

Check preferred pick-up time:

_____ 9:45 am  ____ 12:00 pm

Circle your choices below:

Select Bread:
White or Wheat

Select up to 4:
Ham
Turkey
Roast Beef
Swiss Cheese
Hot Pepper Cheese
American Cheese

Select toppings:
Lettuce
Tomatoes
Onions
Dill Pickles
Black Olives