Dear friends,

The road is dusty leading into the community. It is dry here a lot and the dust swirls up around the truck as we enter the clinic yard. People walk slowly in the heat of the day, even the children don’t move too quickly. There are not many places to go anyway. A sense of hopelessness and quiet despair permeates the air. You can feel it in the way people move, in the way they look down at the ground as they walk, in the way their shoulders stoop as though the weight of the world rested upon them.

This could be any of many impoverished communities in the Dominican Republic, but this particular one is a batey, a traditional sugarcane-cutting community that began as migrant housing and gradually became a permanent settlement. The majority of the residents are Haitian or of Haitian descent. Some of the 350 families who live here are new, since the 2010 earthquake that shook the Haitian capital. But most go back many years, some a generation or two of forbearers who crossed the border in search of work and a better life. Like migrant laborers and immigrants everywhere, they endured the hardships of learning a new language, living in an unfamiliar culture, and suffering daily indignities and, all too often, low wages and mistreatment.

But, that was before...before our partner church, the Iglesia Evangélica Dominicana (IED), approved a pilot program in this community using the Community Health Evangelism (CHE) approach. The IED had already been present in this batey for many years, through a chapel and a health clinic. PC(USA) mission co-worker Jenny Bent arrived in 2012 to work in community health in the clinic. Jenny and husband Mark Hare proceeded to get to know the people of this community and to develop relationships. Mark used his agricultural skills to work with some young men to develop a community vegetable garden, incorporating techniques he had perfected in his work in Haiti. Jenny worked with the clinic staff on new health initiatives. Both Mark and Jenny speak Haitian Creole as well as Spanish. After some time there were some in the community interested in trying a different approach to problems in the community. That's when the CHE training began.

Through the training, various groups within the community learned the Community Health Evangelism approach, which addresses “health” in its broadest terms—physical, emotional, mental, spiritual. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of communities around the world have used this model of developing community leaders who work within their own communities to address problems the community identifies and also grow disciples of Jesus Christ who reach out to their neighbors.

In this batey most of 2013 was spent in training various community groups, and in 2014 local leaders began to set objectives and implement activities throughout the year. By last December the local leaders could show an area of the community cleaned of hazardous material; 13 graduates of a sewing class; funds raised through community movie nights and a talent show; and new mothers educated about the legal documents needed for their babies to be legally registered. And, after a series of activities with adolescent girls and boys, not one adolescent pregnancy during 2014 in contrast to the usual high rate.

Transformation—a person at a time, a community at a time. Work continues in this community. Our partner church has begun expansion of the CHE approach to two of the most impoverished regions of the country, the southwest and the east. And, at the national level a committee of dedicated church leaders continues to plan, to support and to empower local church members in their outreach to their local communities.

Jesus walked with people where they were. He treated each as a whole person, addressing their physical as well as their spiritual needs. He summarized the law and prophets as loving God with our whole being and loving our neighbor as ourselves. In communities across the Dominican Republic this love is shared through this new initiative and in myriad ways through the local congregations and individual acts of discipleship.

And may the joy and peace of Christ be with you now and always.

Yours in this journey of faith,

Jo Ella Holman
Mission co-worker based in the Dominican Republic
Serving as World Mission’s regional liaison for the Caribbean Region
The phrase “throwing your cap over the wall” has come to mean an expression of self-challenge and commitment. The Irish writer Frank O’Connor first told the story in an account of his own boyhood. He and his friends, when they were out exploring and came to an orchard wall that seemed too high to climb, would toss their hats over the wall, so that they had no choice but to go over the wall.

Ten FPC members “threw their caps over the wall” when they signed up for the fourth FPC trip to the town of Mella in the Dominican Republic. The team did a great job of “getting their caps!”

The team left on Saturday, March 5, and returned on March 12. Our first goal of the trip, as always, is to build relationships! We have been so successful at building relationships, that we agreed to call these trips “family reunions” rather than “mission trips” from now on! During the week, we covered a lot of territory; we divided our team and were in three different places at the same time! We spent time with the children of Mella (80-100 each day), teaching the story of Joseph. Pastor Lee taught Taekwondo to older youth in the elementary/middle school and the high school. We also spent time in the Mella preschool which is directed by a pastor from another Mella church.

“I sincerely give thanks to all of our church members who prayed for our mission team. Personally, I gave a sermon for the Traditional Service and taught Tae Kwon Do at the local elementary and high school. At times I wonder if we can make a big impact within the short amount of time. But on this mission trip, God gave me this message. Matthew 13: 31 – 32, “Jesus told them another parable: The Kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all your seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and perch in its branches.” Our FPC mission team went on a short, week long trip. However, I believe that this small seed will grow to be the largest tree that expands the kingdom of God.”

Pastor Lee

“Often on mission trips to Spanish speaking countries we have seen Bible references in public. On one occasion I saw “Juan 3:16” written on a truck with spray paint. So on the recent trip to the Dominican Republic I was delighted to find a car parked next to our bus which had vinyl letters in the back window which said in Spanish “Follow me, You (should be) preaching, teaching and healing. Matthew 4: 12-13: 58” What a concise summary of the work of Jesus in the Book of Matthew from chapters 4 to 13. Even more amazing to me was that someone had taken a lot of time and care to put this message on their car. The next day I found that this car had followed us. It belonged to the Iglesia Evangélica Dominicana. Since churches are categorized as either Catholic or evangelical, this translates as the Dominican Protestant Church. The driver was an employee of the national church who joined us for a few days. The Dominican Protestant Church was founded by missionaries from the Presbyterian, Methodist and Bretherm churches. The Good News is still being shared in the Dominican Republic today.”

Michelle Kaitchuck

“This was my first mission trip. I had felt God calling me to do this but now while on the trip I was not so sure.

Autumn Duncan

“Many of you may not know that this was my first international mission trip and I prepared myself as much as I could for this trip emotionally and spiritually, but nothing really truly prepares you for the immersion into another culture. This was not just a mission trip but a “family reunion” as I met Pastor Luis, the children and other leaders and people of the community. The warmth and love I received from all the moment I arrived to the day we departed was amazing. I met Denise, who is about 11 years old, and we connected
immediately. I will never forget the moment I was able to communicate, with no Spanish, that my middle name was Denise and I could see her face light up and she gave me the biggest hug! We were buddies from that day forward. The stories and experiences are many but the preschool touched my heart. The needs are vast but the children are joyous and curious. Cathy, Michelle and I met with the pastor and teachers at the preschool and learned the children bring their own snack to school but many go without, the resources are few – one tote with toys for all the children and 4 books for the teachers to read. I saw only one book the 3 days I was there observing, interacting and teaching and it was Sponge Bob in English. I continue to pray and ask God, “What is the next step? And where can I/we make a difference?” Leaving the DR was difficult, but I can honestly say the DR will never leave me.”

Feeling so very blessed, Tracy Clinger

“I worked hard on my Spanish language skills before the trip, but struggled mightily when trying to make conversation. Happily, music is an international language and I knew a much-beloved and easy hymn in Spanish as well as several children’s songs. I had two occasions to use them. After visiting with a friend in the village, I walked back to Pastor Luis’s home and found Michelle and the pastor’s sister trying to keep a group of restless young children out of the street. I launched into the hymn *Alabare* (I Will Praise the Lord)—same word over and over with loud voices and lots of clapping. They all joined in—such fun. From there we went to *I Have the Joy, Joy, Joy, Joy Down in my Heart* and then *Jesus Loves Me*. My whole repertoire! By then the rest of our group who had been guided around Mella by a large group of older children had arrived and we went inside to supper. Thursday morning back at the Pastor’s home, we had breakfast before starting our long trip home. Tracy and I, choosing to remain in the shade while Cathy and the others took care of some last minute business, were quickly surrounded by young girls (probably 8-12 year olds). They smiled at us and said, “Hello.” We smiled at them and said, “Hola.” Tracy lamented the fact that we had all these kids and no translators. I, of course, launched into *Alabare* and had the same exuberant response as with the younger children. So I trotted out the rest of my Spanish repertoire and then fell back on *Itsy, Bitsy Spider* in English with motions, of course. The girls got really excited and when we finished, they sang it for us in Spanish. This prompted one of the girls to organize 3 or 4 others to do a song and dance for us and before we knew it Tracy and I were pulled into the dance, also. Yes, we were whirling around with the others clapping and laughing. Who needs Spanish language skills—but, yes, I’m still working on it!”

Carrie Jo Miller

“Third time’s a charm. I may not be well versed in Spanish, but after three trips to the Dominican Republic I know enough Spanish to show my love and make people laugh. Going into the trip, I struggled with how I was going to take the relationships that I had formed over the past two trips to the next level. Like I said, my Spanish skills were enough to show my love and make people laugh, but nowhere near good enough for conversation. On Sunday afternoon we took a rather large group of kids down to the park to play, and much to my surprise a group of girls between the ages of 10 and 13 started talking to me in very simple English. Not only was this an opportunity for me to connect with these girls that knew simple English, it started other children’s desire to connect through their friends that knew simple English. I no longer felt worried about stagnant relationships, I knew that progress was already being made. We spent the afternoon laughing, and they ATTEMPTED to teach me some Spanish.

Another moment of connection for me was on Thursday night after our feast/celebration. On Sunday evening during church, several little girls performed dances for us. While several adults gathered around talking after the feast, several little girls started dancing the dance that they had done on Sunday evening in church. Those that know me well know that I will not turn down an opportunity to dance, so I jumped right in. These little girls were shocked and so excited! They taught me their dance, showed me all of their dance moves, and with a little help from a translator I taught them some basic ballet. They took in every moment and loved it all. Both boys and girls were so excited for me to watch them practice their new ballet moves. Why I ever worried about stagnant relationships is beyond me, but I know that I left with a full heart and a new dance to add to my repertoire! God is so good and I am eternally grateful that not only has he provided the opportunity for me to take three trips to the Dominican Republic, but also the forever friendships created through Him.”

Lauren Simmons
Palm Sunday Breakfast and Activities...

Many gathered in Fellowship Hall between worship services for breakfast and fellowship. The children enjoyed a craft in the North Lobby led by one of our youth, JD Shrock, and young families received a Holy Week packet of activities to help kids draw nearer to God during Holy Week and carry the new strength of that relationship forward. Sammy, the donkey, returned and enjoyed the nice green grass outside and pictures with adults and children.

Many thanks to Ian and Eric Bretz and Jeff Clinger for the supervision of Sammy, the Ministry Guild for the continental breakfast, and JD Shrock for helping the children with the Easter craft.
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.

Spring is here! For many of the youth and college students, that means the end of school is looming closer and closer, a final push for tests, quizzes, and papers is coming, and exam time is on the horizon. As the end of the semester draws closer and closer, please keep all those who are in school in your prayers as they face a hectic 6 week stretch.

Be on the lookout for news about a Summer Mission opportunity from July 11-14!

Family Movie Night for Chocolate Lovers!

All families, including grandparents, with children ages 4 years old to 5th grade are invited to join us on Friday, April 29 from 6-9 pm for the movie Charlie and the Chocolate Factory! Pizza at 6 pm in Fellowship Hall and bring a chocolate dessert to share! The movie will be shown in room 104 in our new “Tweens” Space”. Come join us for fun, fellowship, and chocolate!

Please RSVP to Tracy Clinger, Director of Children’s Ministry, at 751-7960 or tracy@firstpresmuncie.org by Thursday April 28.

Announcing Music Positions at First Presbyterian

Pursuant to Kirby Koriath’s pending retirement as Music Coordinator/Organist, the Search Committee, with approval of the Session, announces that two positions will be available starting Sept. 1, 2016—Director of Music/Choir Director and Organist/Accompanist. Applications with supportive materials should be received by April 15. Position descriptions and application procedures may be downloaded from the church’s website at: http://www.firstpresmuncie.org/open-staff-positions.html

Adult Sunday School:

The CE committee is looking for individuals with input for the Adult Sunday School curriculum for 2016-2017. We are not asking for teachers or facilitators. Rather, we are seeking input as to the format and content of the Adult Sunday School curriculum. Please contact Jason Arnold or join the CE committee at our monthly meeting on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 5:30 in the conference room.
April 21st, 2016 our Third Thursday will be a tour of Cincinnati, Ohio! We will visit the Cincinnati Art Museum and Krohn Conservatory. Itineraries and registration forms are available on the information desk.

Registration is due by April 11, 2016

I want to thank all our volunteers for making this our most successful clean up day ever. An answer to prayer....we had at least 56 volunteers, 27 of whom came from Ball State. With all of that help, we were able to do what I secretly considered impossible. In front of the chapel, volunteers removed groundcover, spread topsoil, planted 15 shrubs and finished the whole area with mulch. They also planted a huge hemlock, cut back grasses, pruned and fertilized roses, planted pansies, reseeded bare spots, spread mulch, picked up sticks and cleaned the parking lots. And, fortified with Concannon's pastries, laughter, and fellowship, we also had a good time!

Thank you from the bottom of my heart,
Jan McCune, Moderator of Grounds Committee

2016 SALVATION ARMY
FOOD PANTRY VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE FOR FIRST PRES

Volunteers will be needed from 1:00 p.m. until approximately 2:30-4:30 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Three volunteers are needed each day.
The Food Pantry begins at 1 p.m. Please arrive no later than 12:45 p.m.
If you would like to volunteer or for more information please check the bulletin board behind the information desk.

April 5-7  May 10-12  June 14-16  July 19-21  August 23-25  September 27-29

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Muncie IN 47303
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Fax: 765-289-4486
www.firstpresmuncie.org
info@firstpresmuncie.org

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

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

The Rev. Elinor Dale, Associate Pastor
elinor@firstpresmuncie.org

Cathy Alexander, Director of Mission & Circle Ministry
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

Salvation Army Pantry Item For April:
Pasta & Sauces

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

The most famous and influential short stories the world has ever known were told by Jesus. A new and detailed analysis of these stories is provided by John MacArthur, a prominent Christian minister, teacher, and author.

In his book Parables (226.8 MACA) he shows how Jesus used simple stories to reveal the mysteries of God’s kingdom. A minister for more than 40 years, Rev. MacArthur is known as a sure guide through Scripture and a faithful expositor of God’s word. He has written more than 200 books and study guides.

The Value of Saying Thanks

Is it possible that saying grace before a meal is just as nourishing, in a sense, as the food we are thankful for? In a relatively new field of study, psychologists are exploring how expressions of gratitude contribute to mental health. One of the leading researchers in the field, Dr. Robert Emmons, has written a book about the benefits of expressing thankfulness.

His book is titled Thanks! (179.9 EMMO). In it he draws on the first major study of the subject of gratitude, of “wanting what we have,” and shows that a systematic cultivation of this under-examined emotion can change people’s lives for the better.

The author is a professor of psychology at the University of California at Davis.

Living Like a Queen

One of the noted royals in the Bible is the Queen of Sheba. In her new book, It’s Good to Be Queen (222.53 HIGG), Liz Curtis Higgs prompts readers to become as bold, gracious, and wise as the Queen of Sheba.

She crossed the desert with a caravan of riches in her quest for wisdom. In Jerusalem, she found the greatest treasure of all. Her story shows how to live boldly, seek after truth, encourage others and honor the Lord above all.

The author has written more than 30 books. Her goal is to help women embrace the grace of God with joy and abandon.

A Different View of Autism

In Uniquely Human (618.92 PRIZ), Dr. Barry M. Prizant offers a different way of seeing autism. Drawing on his extensive experience in working with children with autism and their families, he offers a compassionate and insightful perspective on autism that readers will find inspiring and hopeful.

Instead of classifying “autistic” behaviors as signs of pathology, the author sees them as strategies to cope with a world that feels chaotic and overwhelming. Rather than curb these behaviors, he feels it is better to enhance abilities, build on strengths, and offer support that will lead to more desirable behavior and a better quality of life.

Maxine and Chuck Leslie

Music for Violin and Organ

With
Nataliya Nizhalova, violin & Aleksandr Novoselov, organ

At
First Presbyterian Church   Muncie, Indiana
Sunday, April 10
4:00 p.m.

This concert is sponsored by the American Guild of Organists, Muncie Chapter, and First Presbyterian Church. Having met as graduate students at Nizhny Novgorod State Conservatory in Russia, both musicians currently are pursuing advanced degrees in music in Indiana—Nataliya at Ball State University and Aleksandr at Notre Dame. Their program includes music by Bach, Corelli, Handel, Elgar, Stamm, and Boëllmann. The concert is free and open to the public.
Youth/Recognition Sunday ••••• May 1
Calling All High School Seniors & 2nd graders!

Graduating high school seniors, Theresa Bitterman, Ian Bretz, Weston Clinger, Katie Rogers, & Owen Shrock, will be recognized, scholarships will be awarded (scholarship deadline April 18th), and second graders, Will Daniels, Joseph Kim, & Collin Wilson, will receive their bibles and be recognized for “graduating” to full time worship in the sanctuary as a 3rd grader next year.

★ All-Church Carry-In Brunch ★

May 1 at 9:45 a.m. in Fellowship Hall

Bring your favorite brunch dish to serve 12!