Spring rains are a good thing. We all likely know the adage, "April showers bring May flowers." It's basically a memorable line that affirms that water's life-giving qualities are needed to bring newness, growth and a promise of beauty.

Perhaps that's a good way to summarize what our April will be like related to what God is doing among us now that helps provide flowering, fruitful developments in the months (and years) to follow. Here are some of our April "showers" of blessing:

I'll mention two of our on-going ministries that provide on-going spiritual nutrition in April. The Dominican Republic Family Team has returned and begun sharing with us. Let's pray for and work for good, deep, lasting impact both in the DR and here. What I'll refer to as a "one room schoolhouse" approach for our children and youth who are here on Sunday mornings began a few months ago. This wonderful ministry is making a difference in so many ways. April will allow us to see more from our young people as they lead and serve among us.

I am very pleased to announce that Cathy Alexander will step into our newly established position of Coordinator of Ministry and Mission. This role is a dynamic, strategic shift that will allow us to have someone watch over and encourage a full investment in fulfilling our calling as a church. Cathy will operate at a "ten thousand foot level" so that each of us fulfills our role in ministry, each of us grows in our faith, spiritual leadership development is deeply rooted and all ministries are coordinated and flourishing here and around the world. This is about who we are now and who God is shaping us to be. Cathy stepped into this role April 1st.

On April 18th, three representatives of our presbytery will be with us to reflect on the last several years of our congregational life. You should have received a letter from me two weeks ago explaining this in more detail. If you have not seen that letter, contact Gabby in the office, and she will get one to you. Please pray that this conversation will help us learn what we can so that healing will continue at even deeper levels leading us to full health and vitality as the people of God. I am grateful for healing that is already evident. My hope, Session's hope, is that this meeting feeds that even more.

A unique confirmation class experience begins Sunday morning, April 23rd. It is a multi-generational, all-church "it takes a village" adventure. Geared to our young people who are considering church membership, it is going to be fully interactive among all participants. Each Sunday of this five week journey will take us from the big picture of God's work to our own lives and our ministries right here in the greater Muncie area.

The end of the month will see us celebrating something a long time coming. Rev. Dr. Ron Naylor served this church for twenty-eight years and retired in 2013. In January of 2016, the congregation voted to honor Ron and his service by giving him the title Pastor Emeritus. The time to celebrate this has now come! Ron will preach at both services on April 30th, and there will be a reception following our 11:00 service.

April is packed with special moments for sure! May these elements and all that we do as a church help us know an abundance of "flowering beauty" on its way. Thank you for your part in this season of newness and life.

The Rev. Dr. Pat Smith
Sunwoo Lee

This was our fifth year serving with our dear Pastor Jhonson. Pastor Jhonson was head pastor of the Dominican Evangelical Church in Mella and had a key role in the establishment of our relationship in the DR. He lovingly cared for the church and its congregation, and after five years, God called him to a new mission of ministry in another city called San Juan de la Maguana. Our team thought that it would be nice to go with Pastor Jhonson and visit the new church that he would later settle into. In a way, this was a housewarming. We put on our best semi-formal outfits and made our way to San Juan de la Maguana. Upon arrival, one of the church leaders was there to welcome us, and when we went inside, we saw something familiar wooden pews and blue hymnals. They were similar to what we had in our sanctuary. I was happy to see that the church had a well-maintained keyboard and drum set. I was also pleased to see, somewhat to a lesser extent, a cheese grater. I have to say, it seemed as if they had one in every church.

After a brief discussion, we gathered at the front of the chapel. Pastor Jhonson had picked up a hymnal and was singing a familiar tune. He was singing “How Great Thou Art”. Soon each one of us had our own hymnal and was singing “How Great Thou Art” in Spanish with him. That moment demonstrated to me what it meant for us to be one in Christ. We were a family, no matter our race, culture, or language.

I wish the best for Pastor Jhonson in his new ministry, and I pray that we all remember we are one in Christ.

Jessica Bryzek

Language is one of the most powerful tools God gave us. Language allows us to express our thoughts, fears, desires, and it enables us to communicate with others. Whether written or spoken, language constructs bridges for relationship building. My ability to speak Spanish allowed me to form close relationships with the individuals we encountered on our trip: children, teenagers, a school security officer, church members, etc. No matter how perfect or imperfect my sentence structure or vocabulary may have been, the willingness to speak in another language shows vulnerability.

Everyone that I spoke with was very understanding and patient with my speaking. Being vulnerable and open to new experiences is another aspect of relationship building.

One of my favorite parts of the trip was teaching English in the High School. The students were apprehensive and nervous about using their English, but eventually opened up once we broke up into small groups. Their English was not perfect, and my Spanish is not perfect, which led us to talk in sort of a “Spanglish”. They asked me many questions about American culture, how I liked the Dominican Republic, and about my family. Even though we had different backgrounds, we were able to use language to communicate, learn about each other, and form a connection. The beauty of language to express your thoughts and emotions with others is truly a gift from God that should be used to connect individuals from all backgrounds.
Lucas Clay

This is our fifth year of going to the Dominican Republic. Over these last five years, we have had the opportunity to work alongside the leaders of the church and get to know many people in the community. We have had the opportunity to visit people’s homes, visit different churches around the region, meet with the pastors of these churches, and hear presentations from the women of the church. We have lead Bible School for the children of the community and began this year to foster relationships in the high school. We even had the chance to go to a town hall meeting about the history of the Dominican Republic. We feel like the members of this community are our family, and they feel the same way towards us. This type of relationship has taken our mission between the churches to a new level, one that takes on the qualities of a family reunion.

I thoroughly enjoyed visiting Mella again, seeing that while some things have changed, much has stayed the same. Our work there is important to both the Dominicans and to our church, and I am excited for the next chapter of this relationship. These relationships are not based upon our differences such as our language, our schooling, or economy, but based upon our similarities. As we reflect on the importance of our relationships in the DR, we know we are tied together by a focus on Jesus Christ and the work he is doing through us and through them.

Cassie Alexander

After four years of hearing stories from my family about their wonderful experiences in Mella, it was my absolute pleasure to join the DR team this year. There’s a reason my mom dubs these excursions “Family Reunions” instead of “Mission Trips”, for although this was my first time in Mella, I never felt like a stranger. The unbelievably kind, exceedingly generous people of that community receive us with open arms. It also helps that I bear a passable resemblance to my mother, who kept trying to surprise someone in the village by saying “this is my daughter” in Spanish, only to have her friends nod in recognition and express that they’d known all along!

God’s timing truly is everything. Before we left, I imagined that the most rewarding aspect of the trip would be playing with the little ones in the village. But, it is no accident that my first time in Mella coincided with our first opportunity to teach English in the high school. Meeting the bright, curious, determined young people in that class was the highlight of my week. They were so full of questions and eager to learn, not only about the English language but also about our lives. It is my sincerest hope that we may continue to cultivate this ministry as it provides a real opportunity to help these young people improve their lives.

Many, many thanks to the FPC family for acknowledging the value in this long-term partnership, to the rest of the DR team for making every moment a pleasure, to our hosts for nourishing us, and to my mom for your extraordinary leadership and vision. I am humbled to serve alongside you all!

Much love from Philadelphia,
Allison Simmons - Personal reflection

Going on this trip was such a wonderful opportunity. It was a beautiful city with such wonderful and loving people. Finding loving people isn’t a rare commodity but these people seem like long lost friends who you just pick right back up with. Having been my first trip I did not know any of the people I met yet, even on the very first day I was treated like an old friend. All of the children were so glad to see us even if it was your first time in the DR. They all had a smile on their face when they saw us and were sure to hang around during any spare moment they had. These kids were only with us for four days but those four days changed us from friends to family. Every single child that I met in the DR whether just in passing or spending hours with has a placed in my heart. Each and every person made me feel like I was at home even when I was 1,721 miles away from my real home. They were all so kind even with the language barrier. They were all very welcoming and by the end of the week you were sure to feel like part of one big happy family. God truly opened my eyes to the beauty of his creation and his glory through others. This trip was one of the best experiences I have had and I hope God leads me on other adventures similar to this one in the future.

Dipi

During our time in the DR we had the opportunity to go and work at the preschool which was called the Dipi. Our goal for our time at the Dipi was to really work alongside the teachers and be able to see how they do things as well as offer new materials and guidance. We did this by taking with us picture books in Spanish and small activities like floor puzzles, legos, and pattern blocks. Having these items gave us a chance to work with small groups of kids ranging from ages three to five and really begin to build a relationship with them. Having these materials was a big help to the teachers due to having a lack of material for them to work with which can hinder teaching. Working at the preschool was a very rewarding experience and the best part was seeing their improvement, especially in such a little amount of time. At the beginning of the week we attempted to sit the kids down to read a story but most kids were back up within seconds and were running around the room, by day two a few kids stayed seated but by day three most of the kids were seated and engaged in the story. What a difference three days can make with young children!
CHURCH GROUNDS CLEAN UP DAY!

April 8 from 9:00 am to Noon
Help us to keep our landscape areas clean and beautiful!

Confirmation in a

1st Century Village Context-An Intergenerational Experience.

A Jesus way of life, anywhere in the world, in any time frame, is firmly rooted in a Jewish 1st century village life context.

Our 2017 Confirmation Experience is going to be a whole church, intergenerational adventure focused on, and built around, our confirmands as the key players for the whole "village."

Over a seven week period, with five Sunday morning village learning experiences, participants will be part of a learning experience that begins with the broadest of strokes of God's work in the world, through all of human history, and ends with how we are called to live by faith in 2017 in the greater Muncie area and the rest of the world. Please join us, beginning April 23, for this intergenerational experience that is sure to have a lasting impact on the whole "village."

On April 23, don’t miss

Five Mystical Songs

The 11:00 worship service on April 23 will be a mostly-musical liturgy featuring Ralph Vaughan Williams' Five Mystical Songs, performed by the Chancel Choir, organist Sunwoo Lee, and guest baritone soloist John Glann. These settings of spiritual poetry by seventeenth-century cleric Robert Herrick help us continue our celebration of the Easter season. The five movements – “Easter,” “I Got Me Flowers,” “Love Bade Me Welcome,” “The Call,” and “Antiphon” (Let All the World in Every Corner Sing) – trace a developing relationship with the risen Christ and will be positioned throughout the service as a framework for our worship.

Baritone John Glann is a New York-based singer who has appeared in numerous operatic and musical theatre roles. He studied at Bowling Green State University, Oklahoma City University, and Indiana University Jacobs School of Music. And, yes, he is Kerry Glann's brother.
ATTENTION HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS!

Lewis Gishler Scholarship

Applications for the Lewis Gishler Scholarship are available at the information desk or at the church office. The deadline for submission is May 1st, 2017.

2017 Flower Calendar

If you would like to provide flowers for a Sunday worship service during 2017, please sign up on the Flower Calendar posted behind the information desk. You will be contacted in advance of the date you request.

Next available dates: April 9, June 4, 11

Liturgists

Liturgists for 8:30 am & 11:00 am services are needed.

If you are willing to serve as a scripture reader for a Sunday service, please sign up on the bulletin board behind the information desk, or contact the church office office@firstpresmuncie.org (765) 289-4431

Blood Drive

April 13, 2017
1:00 pm to 7:00 pm
Fellowship Hall

To schedule your blood donation appointment, call 1800-REDCROSS or go to redcrossblood.org sponsor code “Firstpres”

2017 Salvation Army

Food Pantry Volunteer Schedule for First Pres Volunteers will be needed from 3:00pm until approximately 6:30 pm on Tuesdays.

Please arrive no later than 2:45pm
The Food Pantry begins at 1pm on Wednesdays and Thursdays.

Please arrive no later than 12:45pm
Two volunteers are needed each day.

Volunteers needed for April 6, May 10 and 11
To volunteer there is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board behind the information desk, or email Cathy Alexander at Cathy@firstpresmuncie.org.

Easter Lilies

We hope to see the sanctuary filled with beautiful Easter lilies on Sunday, April 16. As in previous years you have the opportunity to order lilies in honor or in memory of someone dear to you. The flowers may then be taken home with you after the Easter service.

To order, please look for the form insert in the Sunday service bulletin or by the information desk.

Order forms must be received by the church office by Thursday, April 6, 2017.

Dee Dah Day

Women's Book Study & Prayer

Join us for the Dee Dah Day women’s fellowship.

All are welcome!

April 14 & 28 at 9 a.m. in the lounge
If you have any questions, please contact Barb Ottinger (lkbaott59@comcast.net)

First Presbyterian Church

1400 W Riverside Ave
Muncie IN

Blood Drive

April 13, 2017
1:00 pm to 7:00 pm
Fellowship Hall

To schedule your blood donation appointment, call 1800-REDCROSS or go to redcrossblood.org sponsor code “Firstpres”

2017 Flower Calendar

If you would like to provide flowers for a Sunday worship service during 2017, please sign up on the Flower Calendar posted behind the information desk. You will be contacted in advance of the date you request.

Next available dates: April 9, June 4, 11

Liturgists

Liturgists for 8:30 am & 11:00 am services are needed.

If you are willing to serve as a scripture reader for a Sunday service, please sign up on the bulletin board behind the information desk, or contact the church office office@firstpresmuncie.org (765) 289-4431

Blood Drive

April 13, 2017
1:00 pm to 7:00 pm
Fellowship Hall

To schedule your blood donation appointment, call 1800-REDCROSS or go to redcrossblood.org sponsor code “Firstpres”
Support Our South View

Because First Pres is already a presence at South View through Kids Hope mentoring, Second Harvest is asking our church to provide volunteers for the monthly South View Food Pantry. Below are the upcoming dates:

- April 27, 2017
- May 25, 2017
- June 22, 2017
- July 27, 2017

To volunteer, please email Cathy Alexander: cathy@firstpresmuncie.org

Volunteer duties may include:

- Help distribute food at the school site on a monthly basis and potentially bi-weekly or weekly basis (approximately 2 hours per distribution)
- Check-in families prior
- Help individuals take food to their cars if needed
- Help set up tables and food for food distribution (approximately 1-1.5 hours)
- Help take down tables after food distribution (approximately 30 minutes)
- Must be able to pass a background check

*Note: Tasks can be broken up to accommodate an individual’s capabilities.*

Third Thursday

Everyone is welcome for lunch and fellowship in Fellowship Hall at 12:00 noon. The cost is $3.00.

April 20

The Harry Truman 1948 Whistle Stop Campaign

The greatest Political Campaign of All Times

Speaker: Rich Harris

To register Call the church office (765-289-4431) or email office@firstpresmuncie.org by Monday, April 17th

Salvation Army Pantry Item For April:

Pasta and Sauces

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

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

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

The Rev. Dr. Pat Smith, Interim Pastor
rpatsmith@firstpresmuncie.org

The Rev. Dr. Myungku Lee, Associate Pastor
9brights@firstpresmuncie.org

Cathy Alexander, Coordinator of Ministry and Mission - cathy@firstpresmuncie.org

Tracy Clinger, Director of Pre-Kindergarten
tracy@firstpresmuncie.org

Lisa Ulrich, Business Administrator
lisa@firstpresmuncie.org

Gabriela Burciaga, Administrative Assistant
office@firstpresmuncie.org

Lucas Clay, Building Superintendent
lhclay96@gmail.com
April 9th, 2017, Palm Sunday
Brunch between services

Thursday April 13th, Maundy Thursday
Communion Service at 7:00 pm

Friday April 14th, Good Friday
Christian Ministries Community Service, 12:00 pm,
First Baptist Church 309 E Adams St, Muncie, IN

April 16th, Easter Sunday
Sunrise Service at 7:00 am; one combined service 11:00 am