What’s Next?

We’re coming up on the first anniversary of Laura’s and my arrival here in Muncie to be the Interim Pastor of First Presbyterian Church. My first Sunday in the pulpit was September 4th. As you know, I tend to preach series of messages. Occasionally, there will be a stand alone Sunday. That Sunday a year ago was one of those Sundays.

My title for that Labor Day Weekend message was, “We Work for the Cause of Christ,” and my text was Ephesians 4:11-16. I keyed in on the holiday and on the work we have in front of us as pastor and congregation. The apostle Paul’s words at the end of that text capture our purpose well as he affirms each person’s investment in God’s life and work “so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.” That was the aim of the Church in Paul’s day. It’s our aim as well.

This past year has given us reason to believe we are primed and ready and already on the move toward fresh understandings and vital steps toward health and growth and love. Of course, all this is based on all the elements of our church’s life that have fed these same qualities for many decades. What God desires to do is always build on what has been. What lies ahead is always predicated by our current realities. We haven’t come to this point in a vacuum, and can only move forward from where we stand right now.

Where we stand is a good and faithful place. Every person who calls First Pres home is part of something special because you are special in God’s eyes. We generously give ourselves increasingly to live in the ways of Jesus individually, and that enables us to live in these same ways as a congregation. That pleases the heart of God and gives us joy. We can’t rest, however, on just who we are and what we have. There is more, much more.

A little over a month ago, most of us participated in a weekend long conversation guided by denominational staffer Dr. Ray Jones. Leading up to that weekend, our current officers read a book recommended by Ray titled Shift. The premise of this book is that the world is different than it was twenty, fifty and a hundred years ago. These differences provide a springboard for what God wants us to understand about God, ourselves and our church. As we explore these matters, God might indeed need us to change how we go about the ministry given to us.

Steps are already being taken to help us move forward from our Bearing Fruit Weekend into open conversations with God and each other about the future God will show us. You can read about these steps on page two of this Columns. These conversations that include staff, officers, our entire international and American congregations offer the opportunity to joyfully and exuberantly say, “Yes” to what God most desires in and through us. This means we can courageously follow Christ Jesus for the sake of our church, our communities and our world.

The months that lie ahead this fall and through the spring will provide all of us the privilege of discerning fruitful ways forward. These steps will then pave the way for a search to begin for your next pastor. Invest yourselves with me in this wondrous Bearing Fruit time of discovery one step at a time, all to God’s glory, “so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.”

The Rev. Dr. Pat Smith
The wonderful Bearing Fruit weekend with Ray Jones was a great success! We enjoyed great conversation and great fellowship. And what a great turnout!:

- 64 attended the Friday evening opportunity to meet Ray and to prepare our hearts for the weekend
- 33 Elders and Deacons attended a 3-hour session with Ray Saturday morning
- 99 church members gathered on Saturday evening for fellowship, dinner, and a presentation from Ray
- 61 church members asked questions and shared observations on Sunday morning between services

So, the next logical question is “What’s next?”

In Presbyterian fashion, a team is being formed! A group of passionate, creative thinkers, dubbed the Bearing Fruit Harvesters, is examining that question, considering answers and expanding the possibilities....

As Ray Jones pointed out, and there is unanimous agreement, we need to be intentional about praying for our church. We will do this together on Sundays, August 20 and 27, and September 3 between worship services. Pat will lead us as we pray for God’s mission in the world and our role in God’s mission.

Here’s an additional “high tech” way to pray together...Please set the calendar on your phone for Wednesdays at 3:08 pm (which in military time is 15:08...our scripture is John 15:8) and put this in as the reminder...

My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.

John 15:8

Prayer: Please open our hearts to your mission in the world.

Wherever you happen to be on Wednesdays at 3:08 pm, we will all join together in prayer for our church! (Elders, Deacons and staff are doing this!)

The Garden Conversations will continue on Wednesdays in September (6, 13, 20, and 27). The conversations will center on the book, Shift, written by Mark Tidsworth and recommended to us by Ray Jones. Elders and Deacons have read this book and encourage all church members to pick up a copy (or borrow one from the church library) and join the conversation! Bring your own dinner at 5:30 or come at 6:15 to join the conversation.

Watch for more opportunities to be a part of this Bearing Fruit journey.
Godspeed, Sunwoo!

Sunwoo’s last day at the organ will be August 13th.

Join us as we say farewell to our dear organist and member of our church family, Sunwoo Lee. He will be leaving us this fall to attend St. George’s University of London Medical School in Cyprus.

A reception will be held in his honor between services in Fellowship Hall on Sunday, August 13th, 2017.

Our prayers go with Sunwoo as he embarks on this new chapter.

Bonhoeffer's Call to Community

In a time when our nation and the world seems to be in such an uproar, divided and confused, it might challenge and encourage us to explore what it means to live in community, especially a community of faith in Christ, in distressing times.

The Rev. Dr. Stan Johnson, who preached for us a few months ago, will lead a day-retreat on this theme as he draws from the writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer who pastored and taught in Germany in the 1920s and 30s. His book, Life Together, is considered one of the classics of the Christian faith.

The format for the day (Friday, August 25th, 9AM-3PM) will be interactive dialogue with moments of thoughtful reflection. On arrival, participants will receive the materials needed for the day. No previous preparation will be necessary. Cost is $35.00.

Stan, a PCUSA pastor, has degrees from UC Berkeley, Princeton Theological Seminary, the University of Notre Dame and Louisville Theological Seminary. He has pastored in California, Indiana and Massachusetts. He currently resides in Noblesville while writing, mentoring and training in spiritual direction.

For more information go to gloriadeigroup.org. Pat and Laura Smith know some of the founders and sustainers of this retreat center that helps people step more fully into a life of deep spiritual devotion and encourage us to consider all of their offerings.
Dee Dah Day’s group will gather for a summer carry-in on Friday August 25th, at 11:00 am, at the home of Nanette Rushton. 2401 W Norwood Drive, Muncie IN

Please RSVP with Nanette at 765-822-0386 and let her know what you might bring to share.

JOIN US THIS SUMMER FOR OUR NEW MIDWEEK EVENTS WITH REV. PAT.

Each Wednesday through September 27th, Rev. Pat is hosting a series of “Summer Light Garden Conversations,” outdoors in the front church garden.

The gathering has two parts, starting with a self-provided picnic meal at 5:30 pm, then, at 6:15, all friends present join in a conversation that Rev. Pat facilitates. Each week, the topics for discussion is a continued focus from Rev. Pat’s Sunday’s Sermon on the Mount series.

Those of all ages are welcome. Come as early as you wish, bringing your own supper and comfortable chairs, or anything to enjoy an informal picnic in the garden. The conversations that follow are based on the Scripture from the Sunday before. Everyone is encouraged to enter the conversation, as questions and reflections are offered.

Plan to make this a regular part of your summer evenings for a delightful weekly fellowship and meaningful spiritual enlightenment.
Welcome to our new church organist, Ben Weaver! Ben is currently a graduate student at Ball State, a piano and organ performance double major. He is originally from Dallas, Texas and began taking piano lessons when he was seven years old. Ben graduated with a bachelor’s degree in piano performance from Texas A&M University-Commerce and began taking organ lessons there. He came to Ball State to study piano and decided to pursue organ studies as well. He is studying with Dr. James Helton and Prof. Raúl Ramirez.

Grounds Committee and Weekly Weeders deeply appreciate all your gracious compliments on our beautiful grounds.

However, even more, we would appreciate your help. We are short handed this summer, especially as our regulars take vacation. If you can volunteer one Wednesday morning between the hours of 8:30 and 10:30, you could help us get the garden ready for the Wednesday evening Bible Study and Sunday services.

We welcome you for all or part of the time. Just show up in front of the church any Wednesday morning with your favorite tools and we will put you to work.

Thanks!
The Weekly Weeders and Grounds Committee

Let’s welcome Grace Village at First Presbyterian Church!

By now, you may have heard that there are some new residents in the building. Grace Village Campus Ministry now happily calls First Pres home. Grace Village has been serving Ball State as a campus ministry for over 50 years now! And, they are glad to be serving alongside First Presbyterian Church in this new chapter of their ministry.

Formerly known as the Lutheran Center, Grace Village is a campus ministry that is supported by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and their partner The Episcopal Church (TEC). Conversations for combined ministry between Grace Village and First Pres began five years ago when Pastor Kirk Johnston approached Pastor Robert Abner about the possibility of the two ministries working together. A wonderful proposal was written and presented to the Session at First Pres, where it was warmly received. After Kirk left, Robert consistently kept in touch with Myron Earhart and the two took advantage of a few opportunities to work together over the years.

When Ball State asked Grace Village to sell them their property on Martin Street, Robert wondered if there would be space for the ministry at First Pres and if they could solidify their partnership more formally. The answer was yes, so Grace Village worked with First Pres to draft an agreement to work together as a Lutheran-Episcopal-Presbyterian campus ministry serving all of the students at Ball State University. Two autonomous church bodies, working together to make Christ known on the BSU campus.

You can expect hear more about Grace Village in the upcoming months. They will host weekly Bible Study on Monday evenings, weekly worship services on Thursday evenings, and various other programming. If you see Pastor Robert, Administrative Assistant Loretta, or Peer Minister Jefferson around, don’t hesitate to say hello and introduce yourself!
2020 Vision Team: In search of a vision for the PC(USA)

by Eva Stimson / Excerpt from Presbyterian News Service / July 10, 2017

ST. LOUIS – A church-sponsored coffee shop where the baristas are trained in pastoral care. A new congregation worshiping in a shopping mall. Churches using their resources creatively — transforming unused buildings into affordable housing or incubators for faith development and spiritual practices.

These were among a potpourri of images that emerged as people with ideas to share about the future of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) took advantage of lunchtime conversations and listening sessions hosted by the 2020 Vision Team at Big Tent 2017 (see note below).

The 15-member 2020 Vision Team was mandated by the 222nd General Assembly and charged with developing a guiding statement for the denomination as it moves into the future.

In one of the Big Tent listening sessions, participants sat around tables with team members for conversation about such questions as: What breaks God’s heart in your local community? What might God be calling us as Christians to do about this? How is the PC(USA) engaging you, and also not engaging you? How could our denomination do things more effectively?

Participants shared inspiring stories about mission, dreams about new ministries, and their assessment of strengths and weaknesses of the denomination. They cited a number of challenges facing the PC(USA): an increasingly inward focus on survival in congregations and presbyteries with declining membership; emphasis on mission at the expense of evangelism; environmental threats calling us to view all of the church’s work in the context of God’s creation; the need for better ways of measuring effectiveness and for more collaboration/less duplication of work done by other groups.

The 2020 Vision Team and the Way Forward Commission are sharing findings with each other, but some Presbyterians are impatient with the information-gathering process, said 2020 Vision co-moderator Bernadette Coffee. “People are tired of taking surveys. They want to get on with the work of the church.”

“What if God’s vision for the PC(USA) is that it no longer exist?” asked committee-member Chris McCain, a ruling elder from the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta. “Are we willing to ask that question?”

“We have to,” several other committee members responded.

“Our vision should not be to preserve the denomination,” said Joshua Andrzejewski, a teaching elder from the Presbytery of the James. “Our vision should be to follow Christ. We must be willing to face the possibility of death with the assurance of resurrection.”

Others commented that there are many areas of growth and vitality in the PC(USA). Anxiety about change does not necessarily mean the PC(USA) is dying.

A final report, with a plan for implementing the new vision, is expected at the 224th Assembly in 2020.

Note: Big Tent 2017 is a gathering of Presbyterians from around the country Washington University in St. Louis, MO, July 6 -8th. The theme, "Race, Reconciliation, Reformation," emphasized the hope of the Gospel and its power to transform society in our current cultural context, marked by anxiety, racial division, political animosity, and economic inequality. Through dialogue, workshops, exhibits, and engagement with one another, participants engaged the Church in its mission of justice-making and peace. For more information, visit: https://www.pcusa.org/news/
FINANCIAL UPDATE
Halfway through the calendar and fiscal year, our income, primarily from giving, is running 3% ahead and expenses are running 2.4% below budget.

While this is encouraging on the surface, we are noticing the slowdown in giving that we predicted from the first quarter’s results. Looking under the hood, we note that 58% of pledges have been collected in the first half of the year, which means we can expect only 42% to be collected in the second half. Non-pledgers have given about half of what they gave last year, so hopefully they will at least continue that rate of giving for the second half of the year.

We also note that 21 individuals who gave nearly $33,000 last year have not pledged or given anything this year.

Our contributions budget for the year is $650,000. So far in six months we have collected $343,421. The remaining pledge balances outstanding equal $205,877. Non-pledgers, if they continue to give at the same rate as the first six months, could contribute approximately $55,000. This means we could reasonably expect to receive approximately $261,000 in the remaining six months. Added to receipts to date, our total would be approximately $604,000. If the missing $33,000 materializes one way or another, we would have $637,000, still $13,000 short of our budget.

Nine pledgers who have already given 100% of their pledge have also given an additional $4,371. If everyone who is able can give a little extra, as these nine did, we may be able to report better news in the future.

We will continue to monitor this closely.

We need 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 at office@firstpesmuncie.org

School is back in session and we need cooks and drivers!
Kitchen volunteers needed at 12:30 to 3:00 pm
Delivery drivers needed at 2:30 pm
A sign up sheet is located on the bulletin board, behind the information desk. Sign, sign, sign!

August Donation Item
SOUPS AND CRACKERS
As always, please place your donation(s) in the cart in Fellowship Hall.

First Presbyterian 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

Carrie Jo Miller, Commissioned Ruling Elder
carriejo1stpres@sbcglobal.net

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
Stand Down for Homeless Veterans” will be held at the Muncie Mission on Friday, September 22, 2017. In addition to donations (see list below), the “Stand Down” provides the following services: a doctor, dentist, barber, and VA rep from Ft. Wayne. Last year, 100 veterans attend the Stand Down.

A tub will be in the north lobby for donations until September 1:

Gently used or new men’s clothing items to be collected donations include: flannel shirts, sweatshirts, fleece shirts, fleece jackets, coats, jackets, jeans, rain ponchos, boxer shorts, lounge pajama bottoms.

Also needed are gently used or new fleece throws/blankets, blankets, quilts, comforters, small tarps to protect items from weather or use outdoors, washcloths and hand towels.

Personal care items include: toothbrush, toothpaste, plastic toothbrush holder, soap, plastic soap holder, disposable razors, emery board, shaving cream/gel, comb, plastic pill container (7 or 28 days).
Pre-Kindergarten News

Summer programming was a HUGE success! Wacky Wednesdays were enjoyed by 20 children each Wednesday with a different theme each week. Parents’ Day Out was offered three days a week for six weeks and was full each day. The children enjoyed their time with us and parents were appreciative of the summer options we are now offering! (insert picture)

Registration remains open as we approach the start of school on August 23. This school year we have added a third three year old class and a second Toddler Time class; making a maximum enrollment of 132 students. Currently we have approximately 20 openings! If you know anyone looking for a quality preschool you may refer them to Tracy Clinger, Director of FPC Pre-Kindergarten at 751-7960 or the website www.firstprespuncie.org to register.

Preschool Parent Orientation is Sunday, August 20 at 5:00 pm in Fellowship Hall.

Meet the Teacher Days are Monday, August 21 and Tuesday, August 22.

Registration for Parents’ Day Out will open on a first come first serve basis beginning Sunday, August 20 during the parent orientation and continue during the meet the teacher days.

First day of school is Wednesday, August 23!

Check out our new teeter totter on the playground in honor of Kathy Pretzsch and her many years of teaching at First Pres! We wish Kathy well as she and Scott embark on a new adventure in DeKalb, Illinois.

We welcome Binnette Maddox and Nikki Stanley to our team of teachers! Binnette will be teaching one of our three year old classes and comes to us with 8 years of experience. Binnette graduated from Ball State University and during her time as a student she was employed as a helper in our preschool program! Nikki will be teaching one of our 4-5 year old classes and comes to us with 20 years of experience including special education and autism. Her expertise and heart for service make her a great fit for our program.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services Provided in 2016</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meals Provided</td>
<td>68,457</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Referrals</td>
<td>372</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rent &amp; Energy Assistance Orders Provided</td>
<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Items of clothing &amp; Household Goods Provided</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nursing Home &amp; Senior Citizen Visits (Duplicated)</td>
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<td>Gifts Provided to Nursing Home Residents</td>
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<tr>
<td>Persons Provided Basic Social Services (duplicated)</td>
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<td>Holiday Food Baskets Provided</td>
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<tr>
<td>Holiday Toys &amp; Gifts for kids Distributed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Persons Provided Seasonal Assistance (unduplicated)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emergency Disaster Response Volunteer Hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>Days of Summer Camp Provided</td>
<td>115</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children and Adults sent to camp</td>
<td>37</td>
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<tr>
<td>Youth and Adults Served Through Weekly Programs (duplicated)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weekly Program Experiences for Children and Adults (Character building, athletics, music, After school, seniors)</td>
<td>3,754</td>
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<tr>
<td>Persons Provided Weekly Worship Experience (duplicated)</td>
<td>2,745</td>
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Food Pantry Church Volunteer Schedule

August 24, September 28
These, among some others organizations, we, the congregation of First Presbyterian Church are proud to be a part. Take a look, browse their mission statement, the work they do in our community, be informed and choose the one(s) that whisper to your heart and join their efforts! Get involved! Participate! Support!
The world as we know it is not the way it was meant to be. Way back in the beginning, God brought things into existence and ordered them for a common good. The Bible tells us that the first people, Adam and Eve, had it great, perfect really. They had nutrition. They had communion with God. They had each other. Life was Edenic for a reason.

Things turned upside down when a mutiny occurred. Adam and Eve desired to be more than they were. They wanted to be fully like God. Their decision and action twisted things up in a big way, a way that broke apart what was intended to be whole. Humankind has existed in this twisted state ever since.

Even the people of God, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, when called to know God and walk with God once again, got it wrong much of the time. They settled for the mutiny-tainted life. So have many people in all places and times, in all religions and even in Christianity.

Jesus’ teaching shed light on what God really wants from us. Jesus referred to this life as the "kingdom of God." It is a way of living that is counter-culture to everything we’ve been taught. With each word of his teaching, Jesus alerts us to the ways we are to get things right-side-up once again.

This summer, we’ll explore what Jesus said to a large group of people on a Galilean hill top one day as recorded in the Gospel of Matthew, one of the guys who was there. As we interact with this "sermon on the mount," we’ll be as challenged in similar ways as Matthew and the rest of the people when they heard what Jesus had to say. Just like them, we’ll get a glimpse at life as God intends.

**Sermon Series: Summer Light**

**June 11th - Sep. 3rd**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Scripture</th>
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<tr>
<td>August 6</td>
<td>A perfect Point of View</td>
<td>Matthew 7:1-6</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 13</td>
<td>The Essence of Life</td>
<td>Matthew 7:7-12</td>
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<td>August 20</td>
<td>A Particular Way</td>
<td>Matthew 7:13-14</td>
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<td>August 27</td>
<td>A Productive Life</td>
<td>Matthew 7:15-23</td>
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<td>September 3</td>
<td>A Foundation That Lasts</td>
<td>Matthew 7:24-29</td>
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