Grow

There's a booklet on one of the end tables in my office titled, "Growing Up." It's a guide to self-reflection with an expectation that conversation takes place among others who are working through the same material. The material itself touches on biblical texts, quotes from modern writers and invites honest personal appraisal. It all looks pretty simple at first glance.

Church can appear to be simple, too. We go to worship, attend a special event now and again. At least some will find places of service and be called on to lead in specific areas. The church is where we are baptized and confirmed, where some of us marry and where our lives are memorialized in some way when we die. These are meaningful touch points for many church people.

In a way, that's the world into which Jesus appeared among his fellow Jews. The temple in Jerusalem was the center of all Jewish life, even for those living in villages and countries far away. The temple symbolized all that held the Jews together as a group. It defined their central identity. The rites and ceremonies and feasts were ritualized and embedded like granite. Taken collectively, visible worship life governed the people. It all worked for them.

Then Jesus showed up and norms were shaken. What Jesus said and did thrilled some people. Others were stirred but disconcerted and more than a little doubtful of what it all meant. There were people who took what Jesus seemed to be about with a grain of salt without putting much thought into this Nazarene. Still others were diametrically opposed to him just like they were to anyone who seemed to be challenging the system. To these, it seemed that Jesus was challenging not just societal or religious norms. He was threatening to their norms and even perceived as challenging God.

I was with some fellow pastors in Muncie a couple of weeks ago. This group meets to share with and pray for each other. We get through greetings and settle in pretty quickly, because this group really wants to invest in the purpose at hand. At our last gathering, someone mentioned that churches can sometimes be like a stagnant pond and other times like flowing water.

I'm glad for the ways we are like flowing water as First Pres. Young peoples' lives show this as seven confirmands joined the church during worship on June 4th. Boards and ministry groups are talking about new ideas and ministry needs they believe they can answer. The "Bearing Fruit" emphasis, centered this month in the weekend with Ray Jones regarding how we step onto the Jesus way increasingly in the ways of Jesus, is an important conversation that will be a catalyst for conversations throughout our congregation for many months and perhaps years to come.

From oldest to youngest, we are seeing signs that God is at work growing us up. We need growth. That's what spring rains and sunlight produce. That's what will help us be like flowing, living water. That's what Jesus puts before us. That's what will help us be increasingly mature in our relationship with God, with each other and with everyone around us. I look forward to what God will show us in June 2017.

The Rev. Dr. Pat Smith
Our culture has radically changed. One of the effects of this change is that people outside the church are no longer waking up on Sunday mornings thinking that if the church down the street just had its act together, they’d get up and go. We are not on the radar of people in our culture. We can no longer wait for people to show up. Even though we must be ready, there is a rising urgency for the church to be more intentional about being the church in the neighborhood. It is when we are on mission in our community that people begin to see that we are a peculiar people who care about the community and live with a joy and peace that is contagious.

To be sent out as a peculiar people requires a sending body. Therefore, we can no longer be content with our people simply engaging religious activity. Sporadic religious activity has not led to deeply transformed lives. We are called to be much more intentional with our Christian formation. To be an effective witness in our community, the church is called to equip growing disciples of Christ to share faith and serve others.

Join us June 23-25 for conversation about how First Pres Muncie can equip growing disciples to share God’s Mission on our block, on this campus, in our neighborhoods, throughout Muncie.
**Schedule:**

**Friday night, June 23, 7:00 to 8:00:** Fellowship and Worship Gathering for Everyone  
All church members are invited to gather in the garden at 7:00 for a chance to meet our guest, Ray Jones. Light refreshments will be served.

At 7:30, we will move to the Chapel for a time of preparation, prayer and Communion.

**Saturday, June 24, 9:00 am to Noon:** Gathering of Elders and Deacons  
Purpose: Through prayer, presentations and conversation encounter our God-given purpose in Muncie and beyond.

  - The Changing Landscape: Bringing Back the Wolves
  - Shift from Membership to Discipleship: Following Jesus
  - Shift from Consumers to Missionaries

**Saturday, June 24, 5:30 to 8:00 pm:** Dinner and Gathering for Everyone  
All church members are invited for a catered dinner (5:30 to 6:30). Reservations are due on June 19. Call the church office (765) 289-4431, or email (office@firstpresmuncie.org).

After dinner, Ray will lead us in conversation... what are we called to do and be when church ministry has become tedious and insufficient, yet we remain intrigued with the way of Jesus in a broken and hurting world?

**Sunday, June 25, 8:30 and 11:00:** Ray will preach at both services!  
Between services, from 9:45 to 10:30, Pat will lead us in conversation as we share insights and observations from the weekend.

**Our Speaker:**  
Ray Jones is the Associate Director of Evangelism for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). He has served the church as a pastor for thirty years in congregations in Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia. For the past seven years he has served the denomination through the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

Ray has a heart for helping people come to know and grow in their love of God in Jesus Christ. Through Ray’s guidance, The Presbyterian Mission Agency is producing curriculum to encourage and equip churches to help people live into their stories of faith, grow as followers of Christ, and see themselves as missionaries to their communities. Ray believes that renewal in the church begins with God’s radical, unconditional love revealed in Jesus.

Ray is married and has two grown daughters. He has experienced training and education at Furman University, Columbia Theological Seminary, the church, and through living in the world.
Join us this summer for our new Midweek Events with Rev. Pat.

Beginning Wednesday, June 7th, Rev. Pat will be hosting a series of “Summer Light Garden Conversations,” held outdoors in the front church garden. The gathering has two parts, starting with a self-provided picnic meal at 5:30. Then, at 6:15, all friends present will join in a conversation that Rev. Pat will facilitate. Each week, the topics for discussion will be a continued focus from Rev. Pat’s Sunday’s Sermon on the Mount series.

Held each Wednesday through August 30th, 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.

Looking Forward to July 14 Concert on the Prairie.

Join your First Pres friends for the popular Indianapolis Symphony summer event at the Symphony on the Prairie. They will feature an array of John Williams movie music, including the popular Star Wars scores.

We have two tables reserved (20 people) and are offering transportation via the church bus.

The cost is $30, or $10 if you have pre-purchased your ticket. The bus is scheduled to leave at 5:30 pm. First come, first served to this spectacular concert.

Make your reservation at the church office before July 6th.
**STAND DOWN FOR HOMELESS VETERANS**

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 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 day).

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**DENOMINATIONAL CORNER**

The Presbyterian Mission Agency

For over 200 years, Presbyterians have been responding to the call of Jesus Christ, taking the gospel into all the world and bearing witness to Christ’s saving love to the ends of the earth. Today the Holy Spirit is still on the move, calling us to share in what God is doing in the world. As our partner in Christ’s service, the Presbyterian Mission Agency is faithfully working to inspire, equip, and connect the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in its many expressions to serve Christ in the world through new and existing communities of faith, hope, love and witness.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency serves as the mission and ministry arm of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). This agency coordinates and leads the total mission program of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), working in partnership with synods, presbyteries, and sessions. It also advises and responds to the General Assembly on priorities, programs, and strategies for addressing matters of concern for PC(USA) ministries.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency has four ministry areas:

- Compassion, Peace and Justice
- Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries
- Theology, Formation and Evangelism
- World Mission

This month, we welcome Ray Jones, Associate Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency located in Louisville, to our church.

**In Love With Someone Other Than Myself:**

A Three Soprano Recital

Featuring selections from Musical Theatre and Classical repertoires

Join sopranos

**Anna Buck, Kelci Kosin, and Mindy Wesley**

for an evening of solos, duets and trios

Friday, June 16th 2017 at 7:00 pm

First Presbyterian Church
May Memories!
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
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Lucas Clay, Building Superintendent
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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

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@firstpresmuncie.org

SALVATION ARMY PANTRY
June Donations Item: Cereals

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

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<tr>
<td>June 25</td>
<td>&quot;We Are Reconcilers&quot;</td>
<td>Matthew 5:21-26</td>
<td>July 23</td>
<td>&quot;Spiritual Integrity&quot;</td>
<td>Matthew 6:5-18</td>
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Sermon Series: Summer Light  
June 11th – Sep. 3rd