How often is two-thirds of the way enough? A final game-winning drive for the touchdown that will win the Super Bowl stalls out without a first down on the thirty-three yard line as time expires, and the game is lost. We apply the brakes two-thirds of the way and don’t stop in time, hitting what we so wish to avoid. A test score of 66.6% may lead to a semester grade that changes all our plans for the future. Two-thirds of something is still something; it’s just not all, just not the whole. I had the privilege of visiting Peru’s Machu Picchu years ago with my wife, Laura, and some friends. I still marvel that I had that opportunity. It filled me with wonder and awe to walk the site, to learn, to consider all I knew and didn’t know about those who built there and lived there.

Toward the end of the day, a few of us decided there was enough time left before our departure to climb Huayna Picchu, a rock prominence rising another hundred yards above the main plaza. We began our hike up the ancient trail to the top. About two-thirds of the way, we realized time was getting short and we needed to turn back with a hundred feet still to go. This is one of the more memorable bits of unfinished business in my life. A lot can be gained in the final third of any endeavor.

We’ve been together for almost two-and-a-half years. What a rich privilege it has been, and is, to walk alongside you and among you in our quest to be more like Jesus as his disciples (lifelong apprentices) and do the work of Jesus as his ambassadors! For all that God has allowed us to experience and learn and do so far, I am immensely thankful.

As we near the point in the next few months when the full search will be underway for the next installed pastor of First Pres, we recognize the likelihood that we have crossed over into the final third of this intentional transitional time often called “the interim.” For some congregations this might mean sitting back and waiting for the whole call process to be completed.

I have a different view, one on which I commented briefly during our recent Annual Congregational Meeting. My inherent bent, as you likely know by now, is that God is always up to something good. Our role, as Jesus way people, is to remain constantly attentive to clues about God’s movement and to remain ready to step into whatever God might show us.

This means the many months (maybe nine to eighteen as outside parameters) we yet have together are important, vitally important. We don’t want to just rest, just hang out, just tread water at a time when we should continue to be on the move, to invest in new ways with each other and all others and to take strides forward toward God’s best and highest right in front of us. At least I don’t want to do life this way. I hope you agree.

A passage from Philippians comes to mind. Paul writes, “I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me,” and, “Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.” Let’s press on, together!

The Rev. Pastor Pat Smith
ADULT/YOUTH SPIRITUAL GROWTH CLASS IN FELLOWSHIP HALL
from 8:45 to 9:45 am every Sunday
8:45 a.m. – refreshments—starting promptly at 9:00 a.m.
Coffee and donuts served!

Adult Sunday Classes February
“Walking with Nehemiah”
By Bill Rogers

15th Annual Building HOPE with each step.

What:
Walk a Mile in my Shoes is a fundraising event to benefit the Muncie Mission.

Why:
The purpose of the walk is to take a step into the struggles facing the homeless. It also serves to extend the purpose of the Muncie Mission, which is to provide compassionate rescue services on an immediate and/or long-term basis to the poor and needy in East Central Indiana.

Where:
The walk will start at the Muncie Central High School Practice Gym and go to the Mission building at 1725 S Liberty Street. (Transportation will be provided by MITS back to the Muncie Central High School Gym)

When:
Saturday, February 9, 2019
*Inclement weather date: February 16
CHECK-IN: 8:00 AM
OPENING CEREMONY: 9:00 AM

We Hope You Can Join Our First Pres. Team!

Go to https://walkformunciemission.com/ and click “Register Here”. Then click “Join a team” and select “Team First Presbyterian Muncie”

If you cannot join us yet would like to support this cause, go to https://walkformunciemission.com/ and click “Donate to a Walker”, then search for “Team First Presbyterian Muncie” or drop off your donation at the church office.

Contact Bill Rogers (brogers@bsu.edu) with questions or additional information.

“He who is generous will be blessed.”
Proverbs 22:9

Please look for the First Pres Pledge Cards on the church information desk, or call the church office and they will send you one!

Everyone In!
The Generosity Committee was very busy during 2018 thanks to the incredible generosity of the members and friends of First Presbyterian Church. The Rebuild the Walls campaign launched in July due to unexpected news regarding the condition of the brick on our church home. The repair costs were significant. We pulled together as a congregation to not only raise the funds necessary to cover the repairs and in the end exceeded the $200,000 goal by over $19,500! Immediately following the official end of the Rebuild the Walls campaign, the annual Generosity campaign started. The generosity campaign is still in process and to date pledges for 2019 total over $411,000.

The Generosity Committee wishes to say Thank You to everyone who adopted the “Everyone In!” spirit at First Pres and made a gift or pledge to the Rebuild the Walls campaign, the annual Generosity campaign, or both! Your generosity provides for the future of First Pres and enables our church to continue as a strong and vibrant church home for us all.

The Generosity Committee thanks each and every person who supported the Rebuild the Walls campaign and the 2019 Generosity campaign. The Committee wishes to gratefully acknowledge the following donors to the Rebuild the Walls campaign.

A.J. Alexander
Dan and Cathy Alexander
Hazel Amos
Nancy Barefoot
Norm and Joyce Beck
Waldo Beebe
Steve and Joyce Bell
Don and Jane Black
Chris Bowles
Erick and Cathy Bretz
Joe and Marcia Brown
Jack Buckles
Patrick Burkey
Craig and Linda Buskirk
Olga Butler
Walt and Mary Campbell
Pat and Marilyn Cleary
Jeff and Tracy Clinger
Barbara Cossaart
Sharon Cox
Priscilla Davis
Sue Desmond
Myron and Carla Earhart
Dick and Peg Edwards
Don and Jeanne Fields
John and Debbie Foster
Nancy Galliher
Kerry Glann
Dave and Marcia Gobble
Jim and Muggs Gooden
Jane Gortner
Jayne Grandison
Merrill and Linda Greene
Ned and Gloria Griner
Randy and Karen Hayden
Beth Hayes
Marge and Duane Hobley
Donna Hofmann
John and Chris Hostetler
Dan and Mary House
Aileen Howard
Ed and Connie Humphrey
Betty Kendall
Marty Kendrick
Martha Kersey
Nancee Kinghorn
Philip and Janet Loy
Mike and Jean McCauley
Bill and Jan McCune
Nancy Millard
Carrie Jo Miller
Jon and Barbara Moll
Bruce and Sandy Moore
Joan Nelson
Larry and Barb Ottinger
John and Marilyn Phillips
John and Shirley Reno
Clara Rice
David and Polly Richman
Tom and Pam Riegle
Bill and Heather Rogers
Judy Routh
Jerry and Nanette Rushton
Jonathan and Lynn Schmidt
Lance and Sue Scholtes
Don Scott
Sandra Sexton
Joel and Kelly Shrock
Alan and Julie Simmons
Alan and Mona Simmons
Neil and Joan Smith
Pat and Laura Smith
Rich and Sheila Spisak
Len and Shauna Sterrett
Bob and Jan Stratton
Charlie and Claudia Sursa
Nancy Swickard
Allan and Carolyn Thomas
Warren and Joy Vander Hill
Wade and Cissy von Kleeck
Pete and Franky Voss
Bob and Julia Wadsworth
Carol Watkins
David and Ann Westerlund
Don and Sue Whitaker
Jim and Jennifer Williams
Alan and Bev Wilson
Bob and Kathy Wilson
Lani Wilson
Jerry and Carol Wire
Sandra Worthen
Marissa Zacharias
This month, I’d like to share several stories about our volunteers and how they are making a difference at South View.

Over the summer, 11 teachers/staff were hired at South View to replace those who left. Mrs. Mary Kult is one of those new hires. She is a recent Ball State graduate who was hired after school began to alleviate the overcrowding in the other 3 kindergarten classes. Both Joyce Carmichael and Carrie Jo Miller work in Mary’s kindergarten class on Tuesdays, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. She is thrilled to have their help. “My students have loved having them around and in our class. They come in ready to help with anything and everything, which makes my heart so happy and thankful for their willingness to serve our kindergarten students. I am so thankful for both women and what they are doing to help our students.”

Marty Kendrick volunteers for Neenah Spiker, a veteran kindergarten teacher who also helps mentor the new teachers. She writes, “Miss Marty has been a blessing in my classroom. She is willing to do anything I ask, from washing down tables to reading to the class, which they loved! She works with my lowest students in a small group setting. I know how difficult this is, but often they learn from a different teaching style than mine. I appreciate her dedication and the positive attitude that she always exudes. South View is so blessed beyond measure to have First Pres. as a partner!”

From Nurse, Cheryl Reynolds: “Some of the church people (Carla & Myron Earhart and Nanette Rushton) have organized my clothes closet...We try to have some clothes available so kids can go back to class and not miss out when things happen...Linda Gray and Bev Wilson have come to help in my clinic. That has been wonderful...The church people have brought such a happy spirit to the school. They bring joy and happiness. I believe having the extra hands has given the kids another adult who cares. I have heard some of the kids say, "they seem so nice." I think it has been big to have the love and caring from all of you. I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for your time and energy.”

A group of 12 volunteers worked at the January 24 food pantry at the school (Laura Smith, Debbie Foster, Alan and Mona Simmons, Nancy Swickard, Norm Beck, Mary House, Charlie and Claudia Sursa, Bill and Jan McCune and Marty Kendrick). Sunni Matters, who oversees the school food pantries for Second Harvest and lives in the South View district, expressed her thankfulness. “There are not words to express my gratitude to you and the other volunteers that made last night a success. The sense of community and support to the families is exactly what we are hoping to achieve with this program. With your group and the staff at SVE, I know we can build the relationships and change the trajectory of the lives of the students at South View.”

**THIS MONTH’S NEEDS:**

**PRAYER PARTNERS AND PRAYER CO-ORDINATOR:** Laura Smith, our volunteer co-ordinator, shares her request: We are now blessed with almost 50 individuals investing in South View Elementary in some way. We need people to commit to pray for all of our efforts there, including all school personnel, children, families, and our own volunteers. A monthly prayer chart is available at the South View bulletin board. Please stop by and take one home with you. If you are interested in receiving more personalized prayer updates by email, contact Laura Smith at knappkin76@gmail.com. We also need a Prayer Coordinator, someone to email out special prayer requests as they come up. The hours are flexible and can be done from the comfort of your own home!

**FOR NURSE CHERYL:** Like most teachers, the nurse buys items she needs out of her own pocket once she has exhausted her supply. Bev Wilson made a list of needed supplies: band aids, hand sanitizer, large or extra-large disposable gloves, disposable wipes, Clorox wipes, cotton balls, Bactine spray, thin feminine pads, and Post-it notes or small notepads. Please put anything you’d like to donate in the South View box in the North Lobby.

Blessings, Jan McCune for the Community Ministry Grant team
Dominican Republic trip - November, 2018

I visited the Dominican Republic in November, 2018, and bring back greetings from Rev Cancu, Pastor Freddy, and all our Mella friends!

The first part of my trip was a “Presbytery trip” with traveling companion, Lisa Crismore of John Knox Presbyterian Church, Indianapolis. On the second part of my trip, Dan, Cassie and Jack joined me to make plans for 2019 and to celebrate Thanksgiving with “our family” in Mella.

Here are some highlights of the trip...

Part 1: Tamayo and Ubilla - Lisa and I spent a few days in Tamayo and Ubilla, located in the same region as Mella (southwest). It was a blessing to see Pastora Elsa and Jairol again and to meet their beautiful new baby, Eliseo. On Sunday afternoon, accompanied by Jairol and our local team of translators, Abner and Eli, we visited the Tamayo “farmer’s market”. Fresh food was plentiful at the market, but I was astounded at the amount of clothing for sale! I learned that Haiti has such an overabundance of clothing donations that Haitians are crossing the border into the DR to sell clothing to Dominicans.

With Pastora Elsa and Jairol, we explored God’s purpose for side-by-side ministry in Tamayo and Ubilla. Music is an important part of worship in the DR and we discussed the need for musical instruments and microphones for worship services at the church and the chapel. Pastora Elsa suggested a concert with local musicians to raise money for the equipment. When Lisa heard these plans, she knew God had a role for her husband, Jim, a music teacher in the Zionville School District! Lisa and Jim are planning an April trip to participate in a concert.

Part 2: Curriculum Writing Workshop - Lisa and I were in the DR at the invitation of Rev Cancu and Methodist mission co-worker, Ardell Graner, to participate in a Bible school curriculum-writing workshop for IED pastors and lay people at the church camp in Bani. The goal was to create lessons in the Dominican context with the added benefit of face-to-face collaboration and creative brainstorming!

Lisa and I were assigned to separate groups each of which were given Bible lessons to write for the year 2020. There were around 25 people in attendance. In addition to the adults, two wonderfully gifted teenaged artists. The teenagers were charged with illustrating the lessons to reflect Dominican culture and its people. It was very apparent that the group wants to produce valuable educational tools for their church. They care about the people they serve and they cared about each other. We experienced amazing amounts of dedication, energy and joy throughout our time together in Bani.

Part 3: Mella - Lisa left on Saturday, and Dan, Cassie and Jack (each flying to Atlanta from a different US airport), arrived together as planned! Jack was part of the first trip in 2013 and Cassie was part of the last trip, but we have not been there together. What a joy to be in the DR as a family and to celebrate Thanksgiving on the island! Our familiar journey to Mella was long (!) but smooth (the roads have improved). Pastor Freddy was very welcoming to the Alexanders and Abner. He accompanied us everywhere, so he participated in all the conversations and tentative plans!

We were pleased to see Pastor Wilquín and visit the Mella preschool. The preschool now has a dedicated space and all new teachers. We presented two suitcases full of preschool supplies and books (thanks, Tracy and our preschool families) and a computer (thanks, John Foster). We also visited the high school teacher, along with Navidad (our good friend and school administrator) to find out how we can help teach English. Based on these discussions, we now have clarity about the needs and we will be collecting supplies for the high school!

On Sunday after our morning time in Bible school with the children, we visited the brand new Boys and Girls Club of Mella! The club opened the day before we arrived and is financed by Dominicans that live in the US. We met one of the founders, Hilda, whom I have emailed to find out more about the club’s goals. We visited the new water purification plant constructed by non-profit agency. The plant employees 5 people and is managed by the church. The church sells water for 20 pesos (10 pesos less than other suppliers) and can use the income for the work of the church. Thank you, FPC members and the mission committee, for a monetary gift to the water plant for the purchase of 5-gallon water jugs!

We were delighted to meet Peace Corps volunteer, Samantha, who just began her two-year stint in Mella. Among other things, she will be working in the high school trying to organize sports teams. What a joy to hear (in English!) from Samantha that she had heard all about us from our friends in Mella! Samantha said they were so pleased to have us come.

Part 4: What’s next in 2019? - Dorcas Baskets: I continue to hear from every pastor and many lay people in the southwest region how much they value the Dorcas baskets (full of supplies for a summer VBS) which reaches 12 different communities. Lisa Crismore and I are currently preparing the list of supplies to present to Presbytery in February. We are looking for 12 Indiana churches to prepare a Dorcas basket. We are hoping to have baskets ready to go in April. Be on the lookout for a list of supplies you can donate!

Send-A-Kid-to-Camp: The IED Church has a church camp in Bani with programming for adults and youth. Unfortunately, the adults and youth in “our” region are not able to participate because of cost and transportation. After learning about a successful teen camp on violence that Ardell did last year, I am working with Ardell and others to outline a plan to repeat the camp for teens from the southwest region. Violence, especially against women, is a huge issue in the Dominican Republic. Pastor Freddy, Navidad and Niruka are excited about this opportunity for the youth of the region. Watch for more information as plans develop!

FPC Trip: Plans for a “family reunion” trip to Mella in 2019 are just beginning! The focus of the trip will be based (somewhat!) on the gifts of the people who go! If you would like to be part of the family, please contact me (calexander85@aol.com).

What began as a vision to build partnership with a single church has successfully expanded beyond the church walls into the Mella community! And now we find ourselves involved in relationship building and programming that targets not only the entire southwest region but the entire country! Just like in Muncie, God is at work in Mella and the Dominican Republic! Exciting things are happening! God is good…all the time!

Counting it all as joy, Cathy Alexander
2015 Per Capita

Please help offset First Pres’ Per Capita expense to Presbytery for 2019 by reimbursing the church for the per capita ($40.72) of each FPC member in your family.

Checks should be made payable to First Presbyterian, memo: “Per Capita”. Thank you!

Dee Dah Day

Women’s Book Study & Prayer Group

We continue to study “The Gift of Years--Growing Older Gracefully” by Joan Chittister.

We will meet on Friday, February 8, and February 22 at 9:00 in the Church Lounge.
If you have any questions, please contact Barbara Ottinger at 289-4080 or lkbaott59@comcast.net.

* “These are the capstone years, the time in which a whole new life is in the making again. But the gift of these years is not merely being alive—it is the gift of becoming more fully alive than ever."

The Genesis Bible Study will not meet on Wednesday, Feb. 6.
We will resume our study on Feb. 13 at 9:00 am in the Bride’s Parlor. Join us!

Third Thursday

Everyone is welcome for lunch and fellowship at our Third Thursday Luncheon in Fellowship Hall.

February 21, 2019 at 12:00 p.m.

Information on Proper Heart Care for Senior Citizens

by Dr. Bruce Graham

Dr. Graham received his M.D. from the IU School of Medicine, in Indianapolis, IN; he did his residency at University of Texas, in Galveston, Texas; has fellowship at Loma Linda University School of Medicine, Loma Linda, CA; and is a specialist in cardiology.

Cost is $5.00 Please RSVP by Monday, February 18, 2019 by calling the church office (765) 289-4431 or email office@firstpresmuncie.org
THE COLUMNS

PRE-K NEWS!
Preschool registration will begin on February 11, 2019 for church members and current preschool families.
You may register at www.firstpresmuncie.org under Pre-K/PDO or call Tracy Clinger for more information (765-751-7960).

The 2019 Flower Calendar is up on the Information Board!
If you wish to dedicate flowers to a loved one or for a special occasion on a Sunday worship service, please sign up on the Flower Calendar posted behind the information desk. You will be contacted by the church office in advance of the date you request, to gather information for the Sunday bulletin.

THE BEARING FRUIT HARVESTERS GROUP
Is collecting donations of 4-pack toilet paper rolls for the Cardinal Kitchen. Cardinal Kitchen is a year-round food pantry on Ball State campus that is operated by students for student’s benefit.
Please place your donations in the plastic tote located in the North Lobby. Thank you!

We Need Liturgists
Liturgists for the 10:00 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 Gabby in the office (office@firstpresmuncie.org; 765-289-4431).
Readings for the week will be emailed to you or a copy can be picked up in the office. Thank you!

Salvation Army Pantry
Needs for February: Personal Hygiene Items
Please place your donation in the cart in the coat closet in Fellowship Hall.

First Presbyterian Church
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Muncie IN 47303
Phone: 765-289-4431
Fax: 765-289-4486
www.firstpresmuncie.org
office@firstpresmuncie.org

SUNDAY SERVICE TIMES:
10:00 am One Unified Service
11:30 am International Congregation Service
4:00 pm University/Young Adult Worship

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
cjmiller3501@comcast.net

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

Lisa Ulrich, Business Administrator
lisa@firstpresmuncie.org

Gabriela Burciaga, Administrative Assistant
office@firstpresmuncie.org

Travis Graves, Building Superintendent
tog0311@gmail.com
It’s pretty obvious that Christmas is all about Jesus. That means that the weeks leading up to Christmas, a time called Advent (“coming”), would likely be a time to look forward to celebrating the arrival of Jesus. It might also make sense that Jesus’ birth as one of us humans at Christmas sets into motion a wide array of implications. With this in mind, Christmas is not a standalone event.

Christmas is the most important pivot point in all human history. The Bible makes clear that all of time, before Jesus’ birth leads up to this most unique moment. Jesus is identified as Mary’s boy and by virtue of her marriage to whom she is engaged, Joseph’s son. These relationships are fully secondary to the critical reality that Jesus is the Son of God.

God comes to earth in uniqueness and fullness. This is no accident. It is no myth. It is not just some tradition of the Christian religion. This is part of a plan, a design, to honor God and provide life for the human race. What is anticipated, what happens as Jesus is born and what results makes up a story that just cannot be missed.

So, let’s not miss it! Let’s invest ourselves in the telling of this most remarkable of all stories. The Son of God arises! May we welcome his coming and all it means to us and to all people.

February 3  Luke 4:21-30  In and out of Favor in a Heartbeat
February 17 Luke 6:17-26  Our Blessings
March 3  Luke 9:28-36  The Son As He Really Is