Yes, even the great bard himself gave the month of February a hard time. I can’t say that I blame him. The novelty of winter has completely worn off. February’s sister December brings us the excitement and lights of Christmas. January gets some of us outside appreciating the snow; if you’re a skier and travel north or west, that’s part of the excitement of the season. But February is just one day of winter after another, with no sign of spring to be found. And on top of it all, we find ourselves entering into the liturgical season of Lent, a time of repentance.

Lent is the 40-day period of preparation as we anticipate Good Friday and Easter. Many Christians engage in this preparation by giving up something for Lent. The idea is that depriving oneself of something enjoyable, like chocolate, will help provide focus on the sacrifices that Jesus made. It can be an effective Lenten discipline. It can also have us spend the season not so much focused upon Jesus but on how long we can go without a Snickers bar.

I’ve found that Lent can be a wonderful time to exercise spiritual disciplines. I know that many of you have a workout routine that is part of your physical discipline, keeping your body in shape. I walk every morning, and that is one of the ways that physically I try to maintain some discipline. But spiritually it is just as important to have disciplines in our everyday life.

Prayer is at the heart of my spiritual discipline. I begin every morning with prayer, and I encourage you to do the same. And throughout the day I find myself in prayer. Throughout the week I pray for members of our congregation, often just going through the membership directory praying for each and every one of you.

Fasting can be another spiritual discipline as we become mindful that it is not just food that we need but the daily presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives which nurtures us and feeds our soul. Regular worship is a discipline that we practice all year long, for without it our spiritual lives can go cold. We need the warmth of fellowship and worship that gives meaning and purpose and direction to our daily living. Bible study – devotional study – is another discipline that enriches our faith.

Lent begins February 13 on Ash Wednesday. Lent is not only about deprivation and sacrifice but about joyfully remembering the gift of all that we have been given by God, who loves us enough to take human form and walk beside us. And as we slog our way through the gray days of this month, let us remember that Lent does not need to be a liturgical season requiring us to wear our February faces. The word “Lent” comes from the same root word as “lengthening”, as in the lengthening of days and the arrival of spring. We cannot quite say that the frosty days of February lead to spring flowers, but we can unequivocally say that these days of Lent will lead us to the joys of Easter resurrection.

With much love as your pastor,

Ron Naylor
Dear Members and Friends,

The New Year has gotten off to a great start. The Short Series adult Sunday school focus has been How We Got the Bible and has been filled with wonderful discussions, insights and information that are constantly challenging us to examine what we believe about Holy Scripture and The Word of God. We have a good number of folks signed up to go see the Dead Sea Scrolls exhibit at the Cincinnati Museum Center which will be organized for one or two dates in February. After this 6-week series, we will bring a Small Group program to our Sunday school hour. We will invite everyone to commit to 6 weeks of small group time at the Sunday school hour and to the common text: Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations. Each group will select an additional focus (on one of the 5 practices) as a part of that text depending on where their greatest passion lies. This will give us a way to begin to focus on how we as a whole church are preparing for this transition year, how we will move forward into God’s future for us including moving into a new era of leadership later in the year. More details will be announced as we get closer to the first small group Sunday, February 17th.

Other new initiatives for this year are a Children’s Time Team and Visitor Outreach and Welcome plan. I am working with the Christian Education Committee to develop a core group of members to lead the children’s message in worship, exchange ideas and talk more broadly about children’s experience and participation in worship. In cooperation with the Fellowship and Spiritual Growth Committee (formerly Fellowship and Church Growth) we will be developing a comprehensive plan for how we welcome our guests in worship, both on their first Sunday and in the weeks that follow. Anyone who is hospitality-oriented, please contact me with your ideas and possible interest in helping to develop this effort.

We have so much ahead of us in this new year and I am excited about getting ready, along with all of you, for what God has in store.

Love in Christ,
Pastor Laura, Your *Interim Associate Pastor

FROM YOUR IAP*

Would you care to share a week of your daily prayer time in support of prayer for our Pulpit Nominating Committee (PNC) in their search for our new Senior Pastor at First Pres?

The privilege of learning to pray is one gift that Jesus gave to the disciples when they requested that Jesus teach them once they saw the effectiveness of His interaction with His heavenly Father. Praying to God through Jesus is like talking to a friend. Friends share their concerns and their joys; God wants that same interaction with our lives in this generation. He invites us to share with Him all that concerns us. It really isn’t hard, but it does take a little time.

Since May of 2012, the PNC team has been meeting weekly to organize, search, review, read applicant’s letters, etc., to accomplish their task. At the same time, Steve Cooper’s leadership for the Church Growth Committee made a request for individuals within the church to support such activities. Allan and I took on the challenge of organizing a prayer support program for the PNC. In May, starting with the Silent Prayer group that meets weekly on Sunday afternoon in our Church, the project had its beginning. In June individual people were requested to commit one week to pray in their own home, at their own choosing of time, and to select their own pattern of devotional time. At this writing, thirty six weeks have been covered with as many as six people requesting that God would extend His will and direction to this Committee in their various activities. Response has been pleasing. The Committee has accepted this direction and guidance in various ways. Prayer partners have found the experience satisfying. There is a feeling of participation without attending weekly meetings; there is a feeling of involvement without actual conversation.

We are in need of additional prayer partners to continue this support until the completion of the work of the PNC. If you would care to participate, please contact Allan or Carolyn Thomas for a specific week - phone (765) 282-3035; e-mail alcj_thomas@compuserve.com; or personally talk with either of them. Thank you!
A Sampling of “Thank You’s”

Dear Church members,
Thank you so much for the wonderful baskets of food you brought at Thanksgiving and Christmas and especially the thoughtful gifts to my two little girls. They were so surprised and excited. What a wonderful Christmas we had because of your kindness.

God bless you  (from one of our Giving Tree families)

To all at First Presbyterian Church,
We can’t tell you how much we appreciate your generosity for all of the gifts from your Giving Tree. Your thoughtfulness enables us to do Bingo more often and all of our clients love to play Bingo. We thank you also for the gift certificates which really are helpful for all of the added things we are always needing. Your gifts bring joy to a lot of hearts. Thank you for sharing the true spirit of Christmas.

—The Staff at Alpha Center Adult Care Services

Dear First Presbyterian carolers,
Thanks to all of you who serenaded us with your beautiful Christmas carols. It was such a lovely surprise, and it gave us the feeling of having the Christmas Spirit for which we are grateful.

And another thank you to carolers,
I can’t express to you and the group enough as to how much it meant to us. You all sounded great. We felt honored that you shared the event with us.

A “thank you” to the Holy Stitchers for the 9 beautifully hand-crafted afghans and to the Giving Tree donors:
On behalf of A Better Way Services, we want to thank you for your recent Christmas donations to our agency. We were very pleased to receive the gifts you so graciously donated. A Better Way provides services to women and children victims of domestic violence. Many victims flee domestic violence in crisis leaving their homes and other necessary items behind. Your support helps us to continue serving abused women and their children. We appreciate the special interest you have taken in our Agency. Thank you for caring and sharing with us.

Dear KidsHope Mentoring and all First Presbyterian Church members,
We would like to express our appreciation for the wonderful work you do with our students. Our students love to spend time with their Kids Hope Mentor every week. We would also like to extend our thanks for your generous support of our Christmas Gift Tree Program. We feel very lucky to have been given the opportunity to partner with you so we could make a happier Christmas for many of our students. With your support, we were able to provide gifts for one of our neediest families at South View. We look forward to working with you in the future.

—Karen Elliott, School Counselor at South View Elementary School

And I add my “thank you” to a very dedicated Mission Committee and for all of you and your continued devotion to reaching out in loving support to each other and to many, many more in the Muncie community and far beyond. What a blessing it is to be a part of this loving body of Christ.

Pastor Carrie Jo
**Branches’ Upcoming Events**

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 cathy@firstprespuncie.org.

“I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.” -John 15:5

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 3</td>
<td>Super Bowl Sunday</td>
<td>Super Bowl subs in the morning and Super Bowl party in the evening: We’ll be assembling subs during the first service. Please arrive at 8:00 am. Super Bowl party will be at the Burton’s (4311 W. Beechwood) at 6:00 pm.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. 7</td>
<td>AP Bible Study (Thurs.)</td>
<td>Email Thea for the time and location.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. 9</td>
<td>Walk A Mile (Sat.)</td>
<td>We’ll meet at the church at 8:30 am for the Walk A Mile fundraiser for the Muncie Mission. Start collecting your pledges now! Bring money for breakfast afterward.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. 10</td>
<td>Mystery Meeting</td>
<td>Watch for more details.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. 14</td>
<td>AP Bible Study (Thurs.)</td>
<td>Email Thea for the time and location.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 17</td>
<td>Dead Sea Scrolls</td>
<td>Pastor Laura will join us to teach us about the Dead Sea Scrolls before our field trip to Cincinnati to see them!</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. 19</td>
<td>Taizé Service (Tues.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. 21</td>
<td>AP Bible Study (Thurs.)</td>
<td>Email Thea for the time and location.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. 24</td>
<td>No Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. 26</td>
<td>Taizé Service (Tues.)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. 28</td>
<td>AP Bible Study (Thurs.)</td>
<td>Email Thea for the time and location.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 3</td>
<td>No Meeting</td>
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**Save the Dates in 2013:**
- May 19: Youth Sunday; Recognition Sunday
- June 17-22: Mission trip
- July 16-20: Triennium
- July 28-Aug. 1: VBS

**AP BIBLE STUDY**

Who: High School and middle school students
What: Light supper and Bible study
Why: Because Sunday School isn’t enough!
When: Thursday evenings, time varies*
Where: Locations vary (junior high room, Starbucks, etc.*)

*Email Thea for time and location...we’re mixing it up! ☝

**BRANCHES: IF YOU WILL BE IN MUNCIE FOR SPRING BREAK AND WOULD LIKE TO SPEND A COUPLE OF DAYS TOGETHER DOING LOCAL MISSION, LET THEA KNOW!**

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**PRESBYTERIAN YOUTH TRIENNIAL**

July 16-20, 2013 • Purdue University

www.presbyterianyouthtriennium.org
Youth Club News

Calling all preschoolers and elementary students:

Wednesdays, February 6, 13, 20 and 27, 2013

Here’s our new format:

5:30-6:15 Bible movie time: a video and age appropriate worksheet
6:15-6:45 Learning a corresponding song from the Singing bible
6:45-7:00 Game that ties in to story of the week

February 6: Samuel
Samuel is called as a youth to be a prophet of God. Experience a mother’s faith.

Bible Verse: Draw near and hear the words of the LORD your God. - Joshua 3:9

Thought for the week: I show my love for God by listening to His Word, the Bible

February 13: Solomon
Through the power of prayer, Solomon is blessed with immense wisdom.

Bible Verse: People came from all the nations to hear the wisdom of Solomon - 1 Kings 4:34

Thought for the week: “Be Wise”

February 20: Elijah
A godly prophet overcomes evil as he refuses to worship an idol.

Bible Verse: God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. - Psalm 46:1

Thought for the week: God Protects Us!

February 27: Esther
The Bible’s greatest heroine saves the Jewish people with her courage.

Bible Verse: When I am afraid, I will trust in You. - Psalm 56:3

Thought for the week: Have Courage!

Call (289-4431) or email (cathy@firstprespumcile.org) to register!

Branches Summer Mission Trip News!

Mark your calendars now for June 17-22, 2013. We will travel to Slippery Rock, Pennsylvania, to work at Crestfield Camp and Conference Center. Crestfield is a year round Christian ministry facility of the Pittsburgh Presbytery that offers retreat facilities, programs, and special events to nurture others in their experience with God, through Jesus Christ, and in the power of the Holy Spirit. Mound Ridge Camp director Christy Foster recommended Crestfield to us. Watch for more information and check it out: www.crestfield.net.
**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC TRIP NEWS**

The following fifteen missionaries from our church will travel to the village of Mella in the Dominican Republic, March 2-9:

- Cathy Alexander
- Amanda Brown
- Mackenzie Clinger
- Michelle Kaitchuck
- Carrie Jo Miller
- Dan Alexander
- Scott Brown
- John Foster
- Hyejung Lee Cho
- Alan Simmons
- Jack Alexander
- Lucas Clay
- Dan House
- Myungku Lee
- Lauren Simmons

There are 3 high school students and 2 college students among the missionaries. Eight missionaries have international mission experience, but all are new to the Dominican Republic.

If you would like to be a prayer partner for any of these missionaries, please contact Cathy Alexander (cathy@firstpresmuncie.org).

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**REMEMBERS FOR OUR DR MISSIONARIES:**

**INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS** will be held on **Wednesday, February 6 and 20, at 7 pm in Fellowship Hall.** The balance for the trip will be due on **February 9.** Check with Lisa Ulrich, lisa@firstpresmuncie.org, or 289-4431, to determine your balance.

**OTHER DATE TO NOTE:** we will be commissioned on **Sunday, February 17,** during both worship services.

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**NEW FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS**

- **BRUNCH**—following the 8:30 Contemporary Worship service. **9:30am in the bride’s room.** Sign up to host at the information desk.
  
  *(We are still offering EAT ‘n’ RUN lunch following the 11:00 worship service in Fellowship Hall)*

- **WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY**—7:30pm Pastor Laura’s Office—first study focus: Ecclesiastes

  **In the planning stages:**

- **SPRING BREAK LOCAL OR NATIONAL MISSION TRIP** for recovery work

- **SATURDAY SERVICE DAY with PANCAKE BREAKFAST**—in April

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**TAIZE TUESDAYS IN LENT**

**7:30PM † SANCTUARY**

This is a music-led prayer service based on the tradition of the Taize community in France. The songs are written in simple, lilting melodies and are meant to be sung repeatedly until they literally become a prayer within you as you sing. The music leads us into times of prayer-filled silence.

**Come for a peaceful evening service with beautiful simple music, casual atmosphere and quiet prayer.**

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**ADULT MINISTRY LUNCHEON**

Join us for lunch on **Wednesday, February 20 • 12 noon**

**Fellowship Hall • Program:** Allan Thomas: **History & Virtual Tour of First Presbyterian Church**

If you’re an adult, male or female, young, old or in-between and can join us for lunch ($3.00 per person), please call the church office (289-4431) to make reservations by **Monday, February 18.**

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**SALVATION ARMY FOOD PANTRY**

**DONATION ITEM FOR FEBRUARY:**

**CANNED FRUIT**

Please place your donation(s) in the cart in Fellowship Hall.
Life Without Fear

The popular Christian writer Max Lucado has written a book to help readers cast off fear and live life with confidence. The book is titled Fearless (248.86 LUCA). He writes, “Fear herds us into a prison and slams the doors. Wouldn’t it be great to walk out?”

The agents that induce fear abound. Terrorism, disease, failure at work, global warming, and financial failure are a few. The author declares that the overriding message of Jesus is simple and obvious. He bids us “Do not be afraid.” In this book, Rev. Lucado examines various sources of fear and cites scripture to show how Jesus has addressed them.

The book includes a discussion guide for each chapter that can be used for group study or by individual readers as a guide to better understanding.

Keeping Time

Mitch Albom is the author of Tuesdays with Morrie, a memoir that became a best-seller. He has now written a fantasy called The Time Keeper (FIC ALBO), a fable about the first man on earth to count the hours.

This man invents the clock and is punished for trying to measure God’s greatest gift. He is banished to a cave where his must listen to the voices of all who come after him seeking more days, more years.

Eventually, he is granted freedom and a mission – he must redeem himself by teaching two earthly people the true meaning of time. This original tale will inspire readers to reconsider their own notions of time, how they spend it, and how precious this gift of God really is.

God and Science

Using the results of interviews with dozens of researchers and their subjects, journalist Barbara Bradley Hagerty has written a fascinating book on what science is learning about the brain and spiritual experience.

In Fingerprints of God (215 HAGE), she explores such questions as: Is spiritual experience real? What happens when we pray? What do near-death experiences reveal about the afterlife?

The book is both scientific and spiritual as the author relates her findings to her own journey of faith.

Ms. Hagerty is the religion correspondent for National Public Radio. She was previously a reporter for The Christian Science Monitor.

When Young Readers Become Writers

Children are welcome in the library, and some are among the most frequent patrons. But here is a plea to parents: If you let a young child fill out the library card, please be sure that he/she writes both first and last names and that the name is legible. It will be a big help to us.

Pre-Kindergarten 2013-2014 Enrollment

Enrollment for the 2013-2014 school year will begin soon. Classes are available for children ages 15 months - age 5.

If you would like information or an enrollment form please contact Tammy Varner, Director, at 751-7960.

2013 Per Capita

Please help offset First Pres’ $20,861.60 Per Capita expense to Presbytery for 2013 by reimbursing the church for the per capita ($35.60) of each FPC member in your family. Checks payable to First Presbyterian, memo: “Per Capita”. Thanks!

Mark Your Calendar!

Progressive Dinner • Friday, Feb. 22!

Look for details in FYI e-mails and on Sundays in February

Host homes needed • contact Lisa Taylor (744-8140 or lisawawa89@gmail.com) to volunteer to host
2013 at First Presbyterian

The Annual Meeting took place on Sunday, January 20th, following the second service. At the meeting, the proposed budget for 2013 was approved and new officers were elected. The Session met on Saturday, January 26th, and selected moderators for the various committees that carry out the business of the congregation. Leaders for the coming year include those listed to the right.

Many thanks to those officers whose terms just ended, to all those who are currently serving in leadership roles, and to the many who work behind the scenes to keep the church and its ministry programs running smoothly.