

First Presbyterian Church
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First Press

Celebrating Christ and Serving Community

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Inside this Issue

Christ and Culture	2-3
Session Meeting notes	4
Report of the Treassurer	5
Adult Education	6-7
Boys & Girls Clubs of Bloomington	8
Racial Justice Tasf Force	9
Outreach Committee	10
Announcements	11
Smiles	12
Earth Stewards	13
May Birthdays	14
Calendar	15



Christ and Culture - Rev. Dr. Scott M. Kenefake

A recent survey of a broad cross-section of Americans asked the following question:

Do you think Christian values should be reflected in the policies of the United States government?

About two-thirds of respondents answered, “yes.”

But how did people define Christian values? Unsurprisingly, it depended on a variety of factors, like which Christian group people identified with (White Protestant Evangelical, White Mainline Protestant, White Roman Catholic, or Black Protestant), whether people identified as non-religious or secular, and whether they belonged to religious minority groups (Jews, Sikhs, Muslims, Hindu’s, etc.). [A persons race, education and income levels were also important factors].

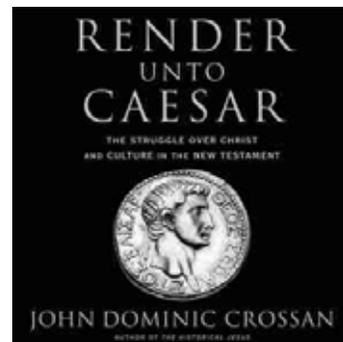
For example, a majority of White Protestant Evangelicals (along with a minority of White Mainline Protestants and White Roman Catholics) defined “Christian values” as being against abortion, same-sex activity, support for prayer in public schools, and upholding “traditional” patriarchal “family values.” Conversely, a majority of White Mainline Protestants, White Roman Catholics, Black Protestants, (and a minority of White Protestant Evangelicals) defined “Christian values” as liberation from oppression, equality, inclusion, seeking justice for the marginalized, love of neighbor, and speaking truth to power; i.e. upholding the “prophetic” tradition of the Bible. Unsurprisingly, big majorities of secular respondents and those representing religious minority groups did not think it was a good idea for the policies of the United States government to reflect “Christian values.” [They are the strongest supporters of the “separation of church and state”].

We used to call these ideas American Civil Religion, which described the complex interplay between religious values [historically White Christian values in the United States] and patriotism—how people feel about their country, usually represented by the flag. The disturbing thing about this is that most people are not particularly good at distinguishing between the two (faith and flag) and things get muddled quickly.

Thankfully, two new books offer great insight and guidance on these thorny issues.

The first is, *Render Unto Caesar: The Struggle Over Christ and Culture in the New Testament*, by John Dominic Crossan.

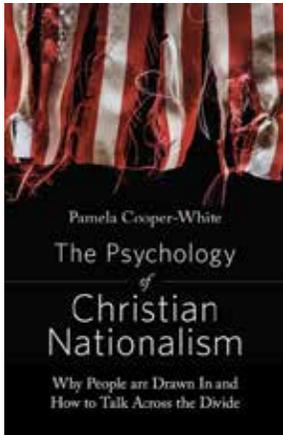
Ever since Jesus counseled “Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s,” Christians have wrestled with how to balance church and culture—including the New Testament itself. For instance, Crossan reveals how two New Testament writers gave contrary advice: the author of Luke/Acts sees Rome as a potential ally, whereas the author of Revelation only sees Rome as fully evil. Moreover, Crossan delves into the foundational legacy of Christian culture wars—the debates over church and state—from a biblical perspective, exploring the earliest tensions evident in the New Testament and how we can use the historical investigations of Jesus and Paul to cut through the acrimony and polarization roiling through our society and dividing us, ultimately finding a way forward for Christians today. This is, indeed, a book of *good news!*



Here is an audio interview between John Dominic Crossan and Tripp Fuller about the book:

<https://trippfuller.com/2022/04/04/john-dominic-crossan-render-unto-caesar/>

The second book is, *The Psychology of Christian Nationalism: Why People are Drawn In and How to Talk Across the Divide*, by Pamela Cooper-White. She asks, how do we overcome polarization in American society? How do we advocate for justice when one side won't listen to the other and cycles of outrage escalate?



These questions have been pressing for years, but the emergence of a vocal, virulent Christian nationalism have made it even more urgent that we find a way forward.

In three brief, incisive chapters Pamela Cooper-White uncovers the troubling extent of Christian nationalism, explores its deep psychological roots, and discusses ways in which advocates for justice can safely and effectively attempt to talk across the deep divides in our society.

Here is video link to a discussion that recently took place at Union Theological Seminary in New York City about the book:

<https://utsnyc.edu/event/save-the-date-the-psychology-of-christian-nationalism/>

It is vitally important that contemporary Christian people (of all persuasions) understand the roots of our divisions and how we can heal them [hint: both authors place the teachings of Jesus front and center as the way forward]. I hope these resources provide food for thought and spur helpful discussions and questions.

Blessings,

Scott Kenefake
Transitional/Interim Senior Minister, FPC Bloomington

SESSION MEETING NOTES - *April 10, 2022*

Session Actions:

- Approved depositing initial payment from the Larry Crowe timber sale into the general fund. Session will determine best use of the funds at a later date. Balance of the timber sale revenue to be received later this year.

Informational Items:

- Session met with Rev. Brian Ellison to learn about the current status of the Presbyterian Covenant Network that FPC joined in 2006. The purpose of the Covenant Network is to work toward the inclusion of LGBTQIA+ people in the life of the Presbyterian church.
- Session discussed the Matthew 25 retreat to be held April 22 and 23 at PYOCA. The retreat will be done in collaboration with First Presbyterian and Fairview Presbyterian both of Columbus, Indiana.
- Sherry Knighton-Schwandt reported that she had attended Bethel AME Church for Palm Sunday services. She discussed with the pastor there possible ways to for our congregation to interact with Bethel.
- The Outreach Committee is receiving requests for volunteers from service organizations as activities of these organizations begin to gear up again now that the Covid situation has eased. If you are interested in getting involved contact Don Hanna.
- The Property Committee discussed its plans for sealing and striping the parking lots. However, this project will have to be put on hold because the HVAC system needs repairs that take precedence over the parking lots.
- Spring Clean Up day will be Saturday, May 14. Volunteers are needed for various cleaning tasks.
- Volunteers are needed to cut the church lawn. Equipment is available at the church.
- Youth Sunday will occur on May 1. FPC has five seniors graduating this year. They are Sophie Giedroc, Sydne Goodlett, Addie Schmucker, Isabel Schneider and Andrew Swank.

Report of the Treasurer

March 31, 2022

General Fund

Balance on Hand January 1, 2022

\$0.00

Income

Prepaid pledges for 2023

Current pledges and contributions of record

122,883.39

Future pledges and contributions of record

-

Prior pledges

-

Plate Offering

196.00

Building Use Income

490.00

Miscellaneous, Reimbursements, Transfers

54,239.49

Bank Interest

3.31

Ledger entries

Total Receipts

177,812.19

Disbursements

Payroll

(97,862.98)

Non-payroll GF

(43,563.58)

Other GF Checks/Disb (includes fund transfers, non budgeted items)

(21,439.30)

Total Disbursements

(162,865.86)

Balance on Hand March 31, 2022

\$14,946.33

Special Funds, Balance on Hand March 31, 2022

\$97,094.58

Endowment (New Covenant Funds): Balance on Hand March 31, 2022

\$ 91,361.68

Reserve Fund March 31, 2022

\$ 140,483.19

Parking Lot Fund March 31, 2022

\$ 58,302.22

Parking Lot Mortgage (monthly payments: 2,413.99)

\$ (185,996.88)

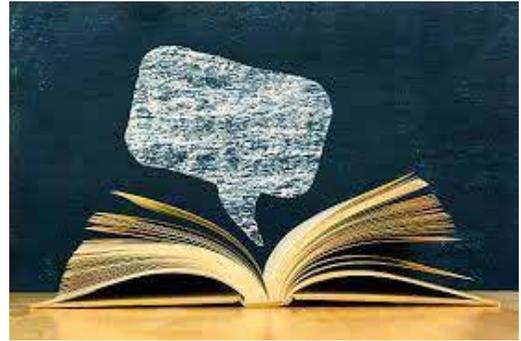
2.75

Mary C. McClellan

Treasurer

C.S. Lewis, "Mere Christianity," Part 2

"Mere Christianity" is among the 20th century classics of Christian literature. During this past winter, a small group, led by Laura Gardner, enjoyed reading and discussing the first half of this short book. After a hiatus for Lent, it is time to dive into part 2. All are welcome to join-in! It would not be difficult to pick-up in the middle.



"Mere Christianity" is a compilation of radio addresses that C.S. Lewis made during the World War 2 period. We left off in the section on "Christian Behavior," a beginners guide to the cardinal virtues. Forgiveness, charity, hope, and faith are coming up. The book ends with "Beyond Personality," a practical road map to Christian belief.

The discussion series will take place on Tuesdays during May, 1 p.m. on Zoom. Contact Paul Rothrock (prothrocks73@gmail.com) if you are interested in being on the contact list or Laura Gardner (mrstlg1973@yahoo.com) if you have questions about the study.



ADULT EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR MAY

Adult Education at FPC is back in person—as well as through Zoom and recordings. Take advantage of some great opportunities through Bible study as well as through classes on practicing your faith regarding contemporary issues.

Lectionary Bible Study

The Lectionary Bible Study invites you to go “higher up and farther in,” to engage with other adults seeking a deeper understanding of Scripture. The passages discussed are taken from the weekly Revised Common Lectionary and are usually the focus of the ministers in their sermons. The class uses a PC(USA) guide, *Feasting on the Word* to enrich the study. Volunteers take turns leading the spirited discussion. All are welcome.

Beginning March 27, the in-person study will be held at 10:00am in Room 5. Jim Ernest and Cathy Hahn coordinate this group.

Faith Forum

How does your Christian faith relate to contemporary issues? How do you put Faith into action? The Faith Forum discussions are led by people who are active in the mission field coming from FPC, the local community, and/or PC(USA) denomination. Faith Forum is provided in three formats:

1. In person on Sunday mornings at 10:00am in Room 7.
2. Through zoom connections with Room 7 at 10:00am on Sundays. The Zoom link will appear in the Friday announcements before the Sunday class.
3. Recordings after Sunday on FPC’s vimeo site: vimeo.com/showcase/fpcchristianed

Questions? Laura Gardner @ mrstlg1973@yahoo.com

Upcoming Faith Forums: Watch Friday announcements for details.

May 1 “This Is the Word of the Lord”: How the Bible Became Text and Why It Matters.

The book’s author, Bill Thomason, presenting an overview of the evolution of the contents of the Bible from its earliest oral traditions to the final priestly compilation in the 5th century BCE. Why is it important to know this history? Because the evolution of these texts and the way historical circumstances shaped their contents affect how we understand the Bible today. With such historical knowledge, people of faith can respond to those who insist the Bible is inerrant and those who insist the Bible is irrelevant.

Bill Thomason received a B. A. in English from Oklahoma Baptist University (1965) and a B. D. (1969) and Ph. D. (1972) from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He has taught philosophy and religion (the University of Louisville, Stetson University, and Indiana University Southeast), managed bookstores, and sold books as a publishers’ representative. Thomason is the author of two other books, and, now retired, he is concentrating on writing about biblical, theological, and cinematic subjects.

Homelessness in Bloomington: FPC's Current and Future Contributions. FPC has worked to support those experiencing homelessness for several years through our work with different shelter programs. This Faith Forum series will focus on three of these programs: Wheeler Mission; Habitat for Humanity; and Robin and Trisha's House. Representatives from each program will present a Faith Forum that examines how they address homelessness and how FPC can support their efforts.

May 8 Wheeler Mission Wheeler is a non-denominational, Christian, social services organization, which provides critically needed goods and services to individuals experiencing homelessness, poverty, and need in Central and South Central Indiana without regard to race, color, sexual orientation, creed, national origin, or religion. Founded in 1893, Wheeler is the oldest, largest, and most diverse continuously operating ministry of its kind in Indiana.

Chris-Michael Morrison is the Director of Advancement – Bloomington Area at Wheeler Mission where he has worked since 2018. Formerly Vice-President of Development at Evansville Rescue Mission. He studied Nonprofit Management at IU and lives in Bloomington, Indiana with his wife, Amanda and their two daughters.

May 15 Habitat for Humanity of Monroe County is a non-profit organization and Social Service Agency promoting home ownership by building houses in partnership with families in need of adequate housing. "Our mission is to eliminate poverty housing by building decent, affordable homes in partnership with qualifying families. Our vision is a world where everyone has a decent place to live." NOTE: There is also a community housing conversation planned from 1 – 5 PM at Switchyard Park on May 15. All are invited.

Wendi Creech Goodlett is President and Chief Executive Officer of Habitat for Humanity of Monroe County. She has worked at Habitat since July of 2018. Before that she was Director of Development for Major Gifts in the Indiana University Kelley School of Business. Goodlett has a Bachelor of Arts in communication from Hanover College. Much of her professional experience has been in the field of development and advancement, which is vital to Habitat for Humanity's mission and success. Wendi and her family are long-time members of FPC.

May 22 Robin & Trisha's House is a new non-profit organization providing transitional housing and assistance to men experiencing homelessness. It is named in honor of the moms of the two founders, Katherine Norris, and Lindsey Dominguez. "When somebody comes in, instead of saying here is a cot and, you know, a granola bar, we say welcome home," Norris said. 'We have, so now we give.'

Katherine Norris is Executive Director of Robin & Trisha's House as well as the Executive Director at Hotels for Homeless. She is from Bloomington, attended Bloomington High School South and Ivy Tech Community College. She is the granddaughter of our own Norma Miller, and "grew up" here at First Presbyterian Church. Welcome Home, Katie!



Many church members support the mission of the Boys & Girls Clubs. If you would like to see what is happening inside the clubs and hear how the kids describe their experiences, you are invited to take a “Kid-led” club tour. The times for the tours are either 4:30 -5:00pm or 5:30-6:00pm Monday through Friday at the Lincoln St club.

Joy Main (mainfamily227@gmail.com) can set up tours for 2-4 people at a time. Email her directly with desired dates/times and she will contact the club staff regarding tour availability. Groups larger than 4 people need to be coordinated with Leslie Abshier @ labshier@bgcbloomington.org.

The club is looking for volunteers for its “Club Riders” summer bike program and Reading Buddies for late spring/summer. Those interested in volunteering for “Reading Buddies”, or “Club Riders” programs should inquire at the Boys & Girls Club Website @ bgcbloomington.org.

The Strawberry Shortcake festival, a Boys & Girls Club event will be held on **June 9th at Switchyard Park**. More information for volunteers will be available about this event in May.



A Perspective from the Racial Justice Taskforce

By Paul Rothrock

In the April issue of First Press, David Giedroc reported on activities of the Racial Justice Taskforce and the establishment of FPC as a Matthew 25 congregation. A Matthew 25 church commits to build congregation vitality and seeks to understand and combat structural racism or structural poverty. Our intention at FPC is to focus on structural racism within educational systems.

We as a Task Force have sought to educate ourselves on these issues and have begun to compile online resources that we find helpful. I would like to highlight one that I found thought provoking that is part of a series by MAP, the Midwest and Plains Equity Assistance Program.

The episode, entitled “Hope, Healing, and Harmony for Antiracism” (see MAP talk), discusses fundamental questions encountered by marginalized individuals or communities including “what is the cost of unity?” ... and “what can you, as one marginalized, hope for in light of unspoken norms and defensiveness?”

In listening and re-listening to this video I am struck by the importance of reviewing my own narrative. What experiences have I had that inform what it is like to be marginalized? Conversely, to what degree has my life-path been lubricated by being a white male? To answer the first about marginalization, my early youth was as a Protestant family of very modest means living in a Catholic neighborhood with neighbors of differing ethnicities. While most were lovely people, there were elements that you knew to avoid. They made sure you felt unwelcome at every opportunity. Later I lived in 1960s Newark where race relations were strained, to say the least. These experiences gave me insight into what feeling marginalized is all about, a reservoir for empathy. At the same time, opportunities were available to me, if you seized them. One could push your way to a better school system, and a state university was highly affordable in those days, especially if you commuted to campus. Plus, there was always a feeling of being respected when you sought to better yourself and to apply for opportunities such as summer employment.

I suspect that each of us carry some combination of experiences of being marginalization coupled with a sense that we too have had privilege as white Americans. Hopefully, as suggested in the MAP video, the former provide a consciousness we need in order to call out subtle racism when we see it and, based upon personal experiences with “suffering” (see II Cor. 1:3-7), act on those convictions to dismantle flaws in the systems we live within.

One of the participants in the MAP video, Dr. Courtney Reed Jenkins, provided valuable and concrete ways that she does this in her professional life. She noted that once you ask the question “am I reinforcing racism?”, you begin to see places where growth is needed. Jenkins seeks to develop what she termed “disruptions” that intercept and reframe how the educational system around her functions. First, she begins with seeking to decent from systemic bias in real time rather than allowing it to be part of “meetings after the meeting.” Second, she mentors the marginalized-other. Specifically, when invited to make important presentations she attempts to avoid power hoarding by inviting a co-presenter, and does so without needing to garner permission. And finally, she has learned the power of stories. For her, written communications that relate to areas where growth is needed begin with parental quotes or humanizing pictures.

During our April 3rd FPC worship service, I found the Prayer of Confession especially meaningful and related to promoting racial justice.

“... we admit that often we tuck our faith into our pockets, hiding in a place of comfort rather than proudly declaring: yes we are Christian, yes we believe, yes this faith has changed me. We are so afraid of offending others or embarrassing ourselves that we have established rules.... Forgive us for staying quiet when we could be part of rewriting the narrative.”

In our places of work and influence, ask God to help you-me-us to be brave. Look for ways to rewrite the narrative. You will find them.

A thank you *from the Outreach Committee*



Thanks to the FPC members who helped with the “Stuff- and Unstuff-a-Bus” event for Area 10 Agency on Aging on Saturday, April 16. One team worked at Kroger East, collecting donated food from shoppers, and others worked at un-stuffing the two buses that delivered the donations to the food pantry site.

Our 8 FPC youth and 8 adults, along with other volunteers from Bell Trace, Meadowood, and beyond helped collect and organize non-perishable foods to restock the shelves for homebound seniors in Bloomington – nearly 3,000 pounds of food!

Thank you!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL FOR THOSE WHO SEW

Please join in making a quilt for our newly arrived refugee family.

Many hands make for lighter work!
Contact Carol Barrett if you might be interested at
cjbarrett44@gmail.com.



Spring Work Day

The Property Management Committee has established Saturday, **May 14 from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM** as the annual spring work day at the church.

Volunteers are needed to help with landscaping, window cleaning, and clearing storage areas of clutter and items that are no longer useful.

It is a great way to get to know other church members as we work to make the FPC facilities better for everyone. Your help is greatly appreciated!

Smiles *By Pat Stackhouse*

Now that we are in Spring, we certainly have a reason to be happy and to show it by a song in our hearts and a smile on our faces, spreading joy to everyone.

Just how important is a smile? Sometimes we don't realize how important a smile is. We may pass someone on the street and smile at them. We may be disappointed when they don't respond. However, they might be just the person who needs a smile.



A smile may be all it takes to make someone's day. How many times a day does a smile make our days? Why not make someone else's day with a smile.

We were attending my husband's college class reunion with his former roommate and his wife. I was a little apprehensive as I didn't know if I would recognize anyone in my husband's class after so many years. How will I recognize them?

My husband's roommate's wife was very friendly and very wise. I asked her, "How will I know all those people." She smiled and said, "You will know them by their smiles."

What a significant role our smiles play in our lives. Show your smiles.



Earth Stewards *By Allan Edmonds and Norm Holy*

Coal in Indiana

What are the major sources of CO₂ in Indiana?

Data from a recent EPA report shows more than half of Indiana's greenhouse gas emissions come from power plants and a quarter from steel plants.

Duke Energy's Gibson coal plant in southwestern Indiana emitted the most greenhouse gases — more than 11 million metric tons. That's equal to the carbon dioxide emissions of about 2.4 million cars in one year. The next three highest emitting facilities involve the steel industry in northwestern Indiana: U.S. Steel's Gary Works plant and Cleveland-Cliffs locations at Indiana Harbor and Burns Harbor.

Emissions from power plants in Indiana have gone down 42 percent since 2011, mainly due to coal plant closures. Another seven coal plants in Indiana are expected to retire by 2028. But Gibson won't be fully retired until 2035.

Some of this carbon going into the atmosphere is offset by natural carbon sinks— landscapes that absorb more CO₂ than they release, like forests. But, the EPA study also shows Indiana's carbon sinks have gone down about 36 percent since 2011. This reflects the high level of logging on both private and state lands. It will be increasingly important to preserve and increase trees in both rural areas and urban areas.

Cut Your Carbon: In May, upgrade your laundry practices. Wash in cold water (it works!) and air dry. Touch up with dryer if needed. Water heaters and clothes dryers are the main energy users in doing laundry. You can save both energy and money.



5/5 - Judy Schroeder
5/8 - Nancy Swank
5/9 - Tim Baldwin
5/13 - Jim Rusie
5/14 - Tom Dukeman
5/15 - Lidetta Matthen
5/16 - Calvin Prenkert
5/18 - Jon Chickedantz
5/19 - Yvonne Reinier, Sylvia Garrison
5/20 - Mihai Ciucu

5/22 - Baileigh Goodlett, Laura Klein
5/23 - Martin Burkhead
5/25 - Eva Harriss, Mason Riggle
5/26 - Bob Rout
5/28 - James Mitchell III
5/31 - Phyllis Little

MAY 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
10 am 1 Sunday School 11 am Worship Service (Communion) 12 pm PNC Meeting	11:30 am 2 Emmaus Group	7:30 pm 3 Deacons Meeting	5 pm 4 Stewardship Cmtte 5:45 pm Outreach Cmtte 6:30 pm Christian Ed	12 pm 5 Prayer Gathering 1pm Circle Mary 5 pm Property 7pm Choir Practice Cinco De Mayo	6	7
10 am 8 Sunday School 11 am Worship Service 12 pm PNC Meeting 6 pm FPC Session	5:30 pm 9 Racial Justice Task Force 6:00 pm By laws Task Force	7pm 10 Koinonia Circle	6 pm 11 Worship Committee	7pm 12 Choir Practice	13	14
10 am 15 Sunday School 11 am Worship Service 12 pm PNC Meeting	11:30 am 16 Emmaus Group 6 pm Theology in Tap	6pm 17 Membership Cmtte	18	12 pm 19 Prayer Gathering 7pm Choir Practice	20	21
10 am 22 Sunday School 11 am Worship Service 12 pm PNC Meeting	23	24	Are 10 Grocery Bagging & Delivery		27	28
10 am 29 Sunday School 11 am Worship Service 12 pm PNC Meeting	11:30 am 30 Emmaus Group 5:30 pm Racial Justice Task Force	31		7pm Choir Practice		