

First Presbyterian Church  
221 East Sixth Street at Lincoln  
Bloomington, IN 47408  
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# First Press

*Celebrating Christ and Serving Community*

April 2022 Volume 64, No.4

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## *Easter Musings - Rev. Dr. Scott M. Kenefake*

Easter is fast approaching (April 17th)—it is the most important Christian festival. It is also the most ancient, significantly older than Christmas. But what does it mean to say that Jesus was raised from the dead?

In the Gospels—and the rest of the New Testament—the resurrection of Jesus has two primary meanings: 1) “Jesus lives” and 2) “*Jesus is Lord.*”

The first meaning of Easter is that Jesus was/is not simply a figure of the past, but one who continues to be experienced as an abiding presence in the present. The second meaning is that he was/is experienced as a *divine reality*, as “Lord,” as “one with God.” This means that the “lords” of this world (including the ruler of the empire that executed him) are not supreme.

So, according to Marcus Borg, the story of the empty tomb means that death could not hold Jesus, could not stop what he had begun. The powers killed him, sealed him in a tomb. But that was not the end—he continued to be known and known as *Lord*.<sup>1</sup>

Last Easter, in my sermon, (we were still on video only!), I told the story of James Ossuary. You may recall the media attention focused about 10 years ago on the discovery in a first-century tomb in Jerusalem of a clay bone box (an ossuary) inscribed “*James the brother of Jesus.*”

The exciting and titillating reason this story got so much media attention was the possibility (suggested by those involved in the discovery) that *perhaps the bones of Jesus had also been interred in an ossuary in the same cave*. If that were true, what would that mean? If Jesus’s bones were discovered, would that mean that the resurrection never happened? And should that mean the end of Christianity?

In other words, is Easter intrinsically about an empty tomb—about something extraordinary happening to the corpse of Jesus?

Recall, that while some Easter stories in the New Testament speak of Jesus in quite physical terms (see John 20:27, and Luke 24:42-43), many others report that he appeared in ways that *transcended* the physical (see John 20:19, Luke 24:13-35, John 20:14 and Acts 9). These latter stories and reports suggest that when we speak of Easter, of the resurrection of Jesus, we are talking about *something more than* a singular spectacular event in the past. Which means that *the resurrection of Jesus is about more than the corpse of Jesus*.

Most contemporary New Testament scholars see the Easter stories as parables—parables about Jesus. That is, they understand these stories metaphorically. Parable and metaphor are about meaning.

Ask yourself: *would the parabolic meanings of these stories be invalidated if the tomb had not been empty? If we discovered the bones of Jesus, would that mean that Easter is not true? Is Easter about much more than something happening to the corpse of Jesus?*

According to the New Testament, it is! The powers killed Jesus. But that was not the end. Jesus lives and is Lord.

Blessings ... and Happy Easter!

<sup>1</sup>See Marcus J. Borg, *Speaking Christian: Why Christian Words Have Lost Their Meaning and Power—and How They Can be Restored*, Harper One, New York, 2011, pp. 107-113, for a more detailed discussion.

## Re-Opening Task Force Recommendations

With continued falling Covid infection rates in Bloomington and Monroe County, the Task Force recommends the following:

- The expectation is that if you are eligible to be vaccinated, you will be vaccinated when attending.
- Leave the roped sanctuary section in place for the time being— [this area is provided for families with unvaccinated children and those who want/need more social distancing].
- Approved the Deacons proposed plan to resume Coffee Hour the first Sunday of April.
- Agreed to resume ushers collecting the offering immediately.
- After prepackaged communion supplies are exhausted, communion bread will be served, at the communion table, by a gloved individual. Juice will be selected, from the communion table, by each attendee (likely sometime in April).
- Occupancy limits of meeting rooms will be removed immediately.



## SESSION MEETING NOTES - *March 13, 2022*

### Session Actions:

No actions were taken by Session at this meeting.

### Informational Items:

- The West Virginia mission trip will happen this year during the week of June 11-17.
- Rev. Jepsen participated in the Open Table Collective that provided ashes to students and faculty of IU on Ash Wednesday. Between 40 and 50 people received the ashes.
- FPC will receive about \$31,000 for sale of timber on the Larry Crowe property.
- Two services 9 am and 11 am are planned for Easter this year.  
A brunch between the services is under consideration. An Easter egg hunt is being planned.
- There will be a “Spring into Action” food drive for Monroe County United Ministries in early April.

## Racial Equity Book-Read Capstone Event Housing Discrimination and School Segregation in Bloomington

All are invited to a special event sponsored by [Bloomington Multifaith Alliance Faith for Racial Equity \(BMA F4RE\)](#), with guest speakers and discussions of housing discrimination and school segregation, issues covered in Heather McGhee's book *The Sum of Us*:

*What Racism Costs Everyone and How We can Prosper Together.*



### **Sunday, April 3rd, 2 - 4 PM**

In person at First United Church, 2420 E 3rd St,  
Bloomington, IN 47401

(Masks required)

Or online at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82836810281>

### **Guest Speakers**

- Ashley Pirani (Monroe County Black Democratic Caucus)  
Housing Discrimination in Bloomington
- April Hennessey (MCCSC School Board Trustee)  
School Segregation in Bloomington

*You are invited to join regardless of whether or not you have read "The Sum of Us" or participated in the book discussion groups. We will discuss these critically important issues of racial justice, their history and impact locally in Bloomington, IN.*



## Report of the Treasurer

February 28, 2022

### General Fund

**Balance on Hand January 1, 2022**

\$0.00

### Income

Prepaid pledges for 2023

Current pledges and contributions of record

65,164.98

Future pledges and contributions of record

-

Prior pledges

-

Plate Offering

140.00

Building Use Income

250.00

Miscellaneous, Reimbursements, Transfers

47,572.33

Bank Interest

2.00

Ledger entries

### Total Receipts

113,129.31

### Disbursements

Payroll

(65,026.65)

Non-payroll GF

(21,583.98)

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

(11,149.36)

### Total Disbursements

(97,759.99)

**Balance on Hand February 28, 2022**

**\$15,369.32**

**Special Funds, Balance on Hand February 28, 2022**

**\$101,781.69**

**Endowment (New Covenant Funds): Balance on Hand February 28, 2022**

\$ 90,561.56

**Reserve Fund February 28, 2022**

\$ 140,478.42

**Parking Lot Fund February 28, 2022**

\$ 52,063.15

**Parking Lot Mortgage (monthly payments: 2,413.99)**

\$ (185,996.88)

2.75

*Mary C. McClellan*

Treasurer

## ADULT EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR APRIL

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

Like everyone else, adults need regular Bible study for their personal faith development. The Lectionary Bible Study provides an opportunity for you to engage with other adults seeking a deeper understanding of Scripture. The passages studied are taken from the weekly Revised Common Lectionary, primarily used by the ministers in their sermons. The class uses a PC(USA) curriculum, *Feasting on the Word* to enrich the study. Volunteers take turns leading the spirited discussion. There are no prerequisites. Just come. 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 class.

### 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 experts in the mission field coming from FPC, the local community, and/or PC(USA) denomination. Join us for the following Faith Forums in April:

Faith Forum is provided in three formats:

1. In person on Sunday mornings at 10:00am in Room 7.
2. Virtually 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](https://vimeo.com/showcase/fpcchristianed)

Questions? Laura Gardner @ [mrstlg1973@yahoo.com](mailto:mrstlg1973@yahoo.com)

### **Upcoming Faith Forums:**

Several exciting Faith Forum sessions are planned. Watch Friday announcements for details.

**April 3 Implicit Bias: Workshop with “Brother William.”** William Morris will lead us in a mini workshop on Implicit Bias. Our presenter is a Bloomington attorney, whose private practice includes civil rights, housing, and employment law. “Brother William” is known throughout the community as the DJ host of the Soul Kitchen on Fridays and Saturdays on WFIU. He is an ordained deacon serving at St. David’s Episcopal Church in Bean Blossom.

### **April 10 How Welcoming Are We?**

This class will feature honest talk and practical help building a congregation that is truly inclusive, deepening its welcome of LGBTQIA+ and all people. We'll discuss the history of the Presbyterian church's journey on these issues, the current state of the church, and the theological foundation for welcome and affirmation. Seizing on First Presbyterian Church's existing commitments and spirit, we'll explore where God is calling each of us to action.

The Faith Forum will be led by the Rev. Brian Ellison who has served since 2012 as executive director of the Covenant Network of Presbyterians, a national education and advocacy organization. (FPC Bloomington joined the Covenant Network in 2006, committing to its mission of seeking full inclusion of LGBTQIA+ people in every aspect of the church's life and leadership.) Brian previously served for 13 years as pastor of a church in the Kansas City area, and he is currently also the stated clerk of the Synod of Mid-America and of Heartland Presbytery. In his spare time, he is a host/contributor at KCUR, the NPR affiliate in Kansas City, where he lives with his partner Troy and their lovable but recalcitrant dog daughter, Willoughby.

### **April 17 – Easter Sunday (no Faith Forum)**

### **April 24 What is a Columbarium and Why FPC Might Consider Such a Memorial Space?**

Join JoAnn Main, Michael Williams, and Don Hollinger in a discussion/presentation of plans and to answer your questions during this Faith Forum.

### **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.

### **Coming in May**

**Homelessness in Bloomington: FPC's Current and Future Contributions.** FPC has been involved in addressing homelessness for several years through our work with three different shelter programs. This Faith Forum series will focus on each of these three programs: Wheeler Mission; Shalom Center; and Robin and Trisha's House. Representatives from each of the three programs will separately present a Faith Forum that examines how they address homelessness and how FPC can be involved.



**Matthew 25 Retreat**

Friday & Saturday, April 22-23

Pyoca Retreat Center, Brownstown, IN

*Sponsored by the Myrtle Collaboration*

What does it mean to firmly live out our calling to be a Matthew 25 congregation? What will it look like, and where will we begin? As we continue to down this journey, the Myrtle Cohort (Fairlawn Presbyterian, First Presbyterian Colobus, and First Presbyterian Bloomington) are gathering together at Pyoca for some dedicated time of learning, dreaming, planning, and worship.

**Friday April 22** – the evening will offer an optional video series and discussion around Community Organizing Training, starting at 7:00 p.m. Lodging is available for all, whether you would like to attend the training or not. We know that sometimes it is nice to just get away for an evening, especially at the beautiful Pyoca.

**Saturday April 23** - 8 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. a full day starting with breakfast and worship. We will then learn together from various speakers and organizations. Our Myrtle Coach, Peggy Hinds, will lead us in a visioning process and we will take time in each congregational group to do goal setting and planning for next steps. Throughout the day there will also be time for community building, exploring the grounds of Pyoca, and listening for God's calling on our ministries.

We hope you will consider joining us for this intentional time together. For more information or to register, please contact Pastor Kelley [kelley@fpcbloomington.org](mailto:kelley@fpcbloomington.org)

PS – Our Myrtle Collaboration was featured in a recent article by the Presbyterian Mission Agency! Check it out: <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/story/we-have-co-laborers-to-carry-out-the-work/>

## A focus on educational disparities in our community

David Giedroc

Racial Justice Talk Force

March 2022

The Racial Justice Task Force continues its work to identify a singular aspect of structural racism we as a congregation can begin to tackle under our Matthew 25 umbrella.

We've decided to focus our energies on educational disparities in outcomes and opportunities that continue to plague our community. Many of us on the Task Force participated in a webinar hosted by the Monroe County Black Democratic Caucus, which has issued its 5th annual State of the Black Community Address. This annual address serves as a forum to present its findings on one topic of interest to the local Black community, which in years past included policing practices and incarceration, for example.

The focus this year was on the subject of reparations, with goal to eventually answer this question: Is there evidence to support reparations for African-Americans in Monroe County? The caucus hopes that these efforts will stimulate a conversation locally, in our city and county, that will result in decisive action on this question.

The bottom line is that discriminatory housing practices, or redlining, existed in our community even after the Supreme Court in *Shelby v. Kraemer* in 1948 rendered exclusionary housing clauses unconstitutional. These practices, and indeed the foundational notion that "housing in a neighborhood derives its value from a lack of African-Americans nearby" have directly saddled those outside of these "preferred" neighborhoods in our city from an inability to build wealth over multiple generations. In fact, although Bloomington is 3.7% Black, less than 1% of those individuals own their home, which exacerbates the problem. This is shocking.

How does this impact educational disparities in our community? A review of the O'Neill Capstone Report reminds us that school district lines tend to be drawn as shared boundaries in an effort to minimize transportation times and create schools that are "balanced" in population.

However, of our 13 elementary schools in the county, four enroll 82% of the Black, Hispanic and Latinx students. These schools tend to serve poorer populations and trend toward lower test scores; this then leads to reduced school funding, made worse by the state's propensity to pull educational resources out of public schools to support private schools, often "cherry-picking" these neighborhoods in the process. As a result, schools in neighborhoods with multi-generational underinvestment in real estate, goods and services tend to remain low-achieving schools. The report proposes an equity model to alleviate the impact of these trends.

I was also surprised to hear of the practice of graduation waivers, where graduation requirements are simply waived by MCSSC if a student does not satisfy those requirements. Remarkably, one in four Black students were given waivers in 2021, and 29% of these students who went on to try college-level work were stuck in remedial classes, a rate six times that of white kids in the same population. This is also shocking.

Members of the Task Force plan to continue a process to engage educational leaders in our congregation while also reaching out to teachers whom we know personally at selected elementary schools with large minority populations. We hope to learn of the educational challenges students face at these schools, and how members of our FPC community might assist in helping students overcome these challenges.

If you need another take on this and fiction is your thing, I suggest *The Vanishing Half* by Brit Bennett. It's a remarkable story of two sisters from the rural south in the 1960s who chose to inhabit distinct worlds on opposite sides of the structural racism divide, and how they face the consequences of those choices throughout their adult lives.

Stay tuned!

**Come share an Easter Brunch with the congregation on Sunday, April 17th between the 9:00 and 11:00 services.**

Not only is this a way for us to feed our hard-working musicians,  
but a great Easter social event.

**Bring a brunch-type item to share, ready to serve, by 9:45.**

*Examples?*

*Food that can be eaten with fingers or forks.*

Cut up fruit  
Little cupcakes or muffins  
Cheese/cracker tray  
Deviled eggs  
Breakfast casseroles  
French toast sticks  
Quick Breads  
Cookies

## One Great Hour of Sharing from the Outreach Committee



Received during the season of Lent, each gift to One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) helps to improve the lives of people in challenging situations. **In fact, One Great Hour of Sharing is the single, largest way Presbyterians come together every year to work toward a better world.**

Around the world, millions of people lack access to sustainable food sources, clean water, sanitation, education, and opportunity. The three programs supported by One Great Hour of Sharing - Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Presbyterian Hunger Program, and Self-Development of People - all work in different ways to serve individuals and communities in need.

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance works alongside communities as they recover and find hope after the devastation of natural or human-caused disasters, and support for refugees.

**This is the way Presbyterians have been helping send funds to Ukrainians.**

(Receives 32% of funds raised)

Presbyterian Hunger Program takes action to alleviate hunger, care for creation, and the systemic causes of poverty so all may be fed. (Receives 36% of funds raised)

Self-development of People invests in communities responding to their experiences of oppression, poverty and injustice and educates Presbyterians about the impact of these issues.

(Receives 32% of funds raised)

Here at First Presbyterian Church, Bloomington, we receive offerings throughout the season of Lent and send them in together as one special gift after Easter. Last year, your generous donations totaled \$2,843. Thank you! We hope that you will again consider giving generously to One Great Hour of Sharing.

Checks may be made out to First Presbyterian Church, with OGHS on the memo line, and placed in the offering plates or mailed to First Presbyterian Church 221 E. Sixth Street, Bloomington, IN 47408.

Or go to <https://www.fpcbloomington.org/> and click Give Now, listing OGHS in the Notes.

## SPRING INTO ACTION for MCUM

“Lord, when did we see you hungry and gave you food?”



Need is up; supplies are down. So far this year, MCUM's pantry has served 466 hungry families. If you have not had a chance to bring food or hygiene supplies to the MCUM box recently, please consider making a generous in-kind donation during the next two weeks. Stocking the MCUM pantry is a great way to live into our commitment to be a Matt 25 congregation.

## Help Wanted



The Property Committee is looking for a few good men or women to volunteer to cut the grass at the church this summer. A group of us will cut the grass on a monthly rotating schedule. We are trying to get enough people to sign up so that a volunteer only has to cut the lawn for one month during the summer.

There is a sign-up sheet for each month starting in April and ending in October.

The sign-up sheet is posted on the bulletin board behind the welcome center.

The church has a push power lawn mower that you can use or you may use your own mower. It takes about 90 minutes to cut the grass with the church's mower.

If you would like join the rotation, please contact Tom Dillon at H - 812-824-1692 or C – 812-345-6886 or [judytomdillon@aol.com](mailto:judytomdillon@aol.com)

## Therein Lies the Source *By Pat Stackhouse*

April is the month when Easter awaits us. Flowers are starting to blossom, and our hearts are light. The following story centers about something we all tend to long for, but if we search further, we find something more important in store for us.

The last time we visited St Augustine, Florida it was a great opportunity to tour the city. We even decided to drink from the Fountain of Youth while we were there.



My husband and I located the Fountain of Youth, wherein we visited a lovely garden there, sprinkled with flowers. We stood in line for some time, as many people were lined up waiting their turn for a drink. We were all handed small cups to be served from the Fountain. We could hardly wait for our turn. I don't know if we really believed drinking from the Fountain would have a positive effect on our youth, but we were anxious to see.

When it came our turn, we drank the water. It tasted terrible, but we wondered if we would instantly look younger. As we anticipated it didn't happen.

In fact, the person who handed out the cups of water explained that the real Fountain of Youth had dried up a long time ago and this was only tap water we were drinking from the city of St. Augustine. Our hearts fell. You could see the looks of disappointment on the faces of those around us.

Although the Fountain of Youth was a myth, the important fountain- the fountain of life is not a myth and dwells within our hearts. It doesn't dry up but is ever present to keep refreshing our souls.

Therein, within our hearts, lies Christ, the Eternal Fountain of Life. Because of Christ we live forever and celebrate Easter. Praise Christ and let us rejoice.

## Earth Stewards *By Allan Edmonds and Norm Holy*

### How will you observe Earth Day this year?

**Celebrate:** Earth Day has been observed each Spring on April 22 since 1971. Let us all give thanks for our world. In the words of a favorite hymn:

*1 For the beauty of the earth,  
for the glory of the skies,  
for the love which from our birth  
over and around us lies.*

*2 For the wonder of each hour  
of the day and of the night,  
hill and vale and tree and flower,  
sun and moon and stars of light,*

*Christ, our Lord, to you we raise  
this, our hymn of grateful praise.*

**Renew:** It's a good time to get out in the fresh air and to renew our connection to the natural world.

- Take a walk in the woods
- Plant a tree or bush or flower or vegetable
- Walk or bike somewhere in town instead of driving
- Pick up and dispose of any trash you spot

Let us all renew our commitment to care for all of creation, so necessary for all to flourish.

**Cut Your Carbon** (some more): Some of you will remember our year-long cycle of Tasks of the Month from about 12 years ago. Over the next year, let's informally work together through some of the same steps and look for more ways we can ease our carbon footprint. Each month we'll include an idea of something to work on. **April's Task:** Nudge your (programmable!) thermostat one or two degrees lower in the heating season and, then, one or two degrees higher in the cooling season.



4/1 - Philip Blackwell

4/2 - Mary Lou Novy

4/5 - Zoe Rauh

4/9 - Bob Wingard, Mary Williams

4/10 - Norma Miller

4/16 - Vivian Harriss

4/17 - Sharon Ackerman, Kathy Hollinger,

Kevin Potter, Stephanie Kingsley Riggle

4/19 - Penelope Bobo

4/21 - Richard Nazzari

4/22 - Beth Burcham

4/24 - Karon Wingard, David Ciucu

4/26 - Anne Honeycutt

4/28 - John VanderZee

4/30 - Virginia Baude

# APRIL 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
					April Fool's Day	
3 10 am Sunday School 11 am Worship Service (Communion)	4 11:30 am Emmaus Group	5 6:30 pm Lenten Bible Study  7:30 pm Deacons Meeting	6 5:00 pm Stewardship Cmtte 5:45 pm Outreach Cmtte 6:30 pm Christian Ed	7 12 pm Prayer Gathering 1:00 pm Circle Mary 5:00 pm Property 5:45 pm Bell Choir 7pm Choir Practice	8	9
10 10 am Sunday School 11 am Worship Service 6 pm FPC Session	11 5:30 pm Racial Justice Task Force	12 7pm Koinonia Circle	13 5:00 pm PNC Meeting	14 7 pm Maundy Thursday Service	15	16
17 10 am Sunday School 11 am Worship Service 12 pm PNC Meeting	18 11:30 am Emmaus Group	19 6pm Membership Cmtte	20	21 12 pm Prayer Gathering 5:45 pm Bell Choir Practice 7pm Choir Practice	22 1:30 pm PW Meeting	23
24 10 am Sunday School 11 am Worship Service 12 pm PNC Meeting	25 5:30 pm Racial Justice Task Force	26	27	28 5:45 pm Bell Choir Practice 7pm Choir Practice	29	30