

**Memories of First Presbyterian Church**  
**Rev. Ben Dorr**  
**Pastor & Head of Staff**  
**2003-2009**

FPC was a marvelous church to serve for six years between 2003-2009! We feel very blessed to have called Bloomington our home.

Soon after my arrival, I was introduced to the building project that was started under Gavin Meek's ministry and was already underway. In the fall of 2003, the steeple was removed from the church—it was quite a sight to see the crane take it off the top of the church and place it on the FPC front lawn! Then, in the spring of 2004, there was a picture on the front page of the Bloomington newspaper of FPC receiving “a new bonnet” for Easter, as another crane put a reconstructed steeple on top of the church.

Between November, 2004-May, 2005, the congregation worshipped in Lyman Hall as the sanctuary itself was gutted and remodeled. I recall the discovery of the gorgeous wood floors underneath the old sanctuary carpet, the uncovering of the stained glass windows above the chancel area, the repairing of the water leaks, and the wonderful feeling of returning to a beautifully refurbished sanctuary to worship on Pentecost, 2005.

Even more exciting than the sanctuary's renovation was the growth that FPC experienced. Many new members were added to the rolls, including a number of families with young children. I have a vivid memory of telling the Pastor Nominating Committee, during one of my interviews, that I wasn't comfortable with “children's time” in worship. But how quickly the children of FPC turned me around! It was a great delight to see all the young kids come forward Sunday after Sunday, and to let them instruct me as much as I tried to teach them!

We went through transitions in our staff leadership during my six years in Bloomington, thanking both Mary Jensen and Lidetta Matthen for their wonderful years of service to FPC. We welcomed Chris Young as our organist, Katy Strand as our music director, and Rachel Pedersen as our associate pastor during those years, and were very excited at the marvelous gifts that each of them brought to their ministries.

One of the great characteristics of FPC has always been its lay leadership. I am more grateful than I can say for the countless ways that church members taught me what it meant to “do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly” with God. Shortly before my time at FPC ended, there was talk about starting a new Saturday morning breakfast for the homeless in Bloomington. It was a great delight to read about the congregation starting this ministry shortly after we left, without a permanently installed senior pastor in place.

FPC had many wonderful ways of demonstrating the love and compassion of God. Our family went through a difficult few months while we lived in Bloomington, when Heather's mother died shortly after our first son, Sam, was born. We will never forget the stack of cards, the emails, the phone calls, and the food that came our way in response. It was as strong a witness to the risen Christ at work as we will ever know.

Of course, it was also a great delight to start our family in Bloomington. Sam, who is now 9, and Cooper, who is now 7, were both born in Bloomington and were immediately welcomed into the FPC family of faith. Sam still considers IU his favorite basketball team, and roots for them every year at tournament time.

On a personal level, I am more grateful than I can adequately express for receiving my first call in the role of pastor/head of staff at FPC. With much patience and gentleness, the members of FPC taught me how to serve a church as its senior pastor, and gave me a confidence in my ministry for which I will always be grateful. While we enjoy calling Texas our home these days, we certainly miss all the marvelous saints of FPC, and hold a special place in our hearts for all of you.

In Christ,  
Ben Dorr