

First Presbyterian Church
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First Press

Celebrating Christ and Serving Community

April 2024 Volume 63, No.3

Inside this Issue

Pastoral Letter	2
What's Happening at FPC	3-9
Calendar	10



“Letting God Love Us” by Pastor Tommy

One of the Christian communities that I admire is Church of the Saviour in Washington DC. Founded in the 1940s, this community has grown into a network of small worshipping fellowships and has launched an incredible array of social justice and community service initiatives: a medical center, transitional housing, community gardens, education centers, substance abuse and healing programs, and so much more.

How do they do it? What’s their secret?

We might expect that this fountain of outreach and service flows from a constant emphasis on serving others, a curriculum of recognizing needs and best practices for solving them. But that’s not quite the truth.



Marchers from The Church of the Savior, on the day of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom

What animates their vibrant witness is this: the church and their members let God love them.

Listen to founding pastor Gordon Cosby:

God initiates love, and we simply respond in love. When we love God, it is only because we are reflecting God’s love already given. We are able to take the active step of loving God, and God in one another, only as we are able to let God love us. Then, and only then, can God produce in us that kind of life which makes us for the first time wholly alive as responsible human beings.

Until we love this way, we are not truly human. We are not fully alive until we know the freedom which comes from love.

Letting God love us, rather than trying harder, always harder, to love God, frees us for the highest form of activity, which is love. Letting God love me, allows me to love you. Allowing God to love us turns us toward serving sacrificially, forgiving, sharing and sympathizing, lifting up the fallen and restoring the bonds of community.

I don’t know why it takes us so long to get hold of this. The gospel very plainly says we will never love more by trying to love more. We will love because we have basked in God’s gift of love, because we have relaxed into the sheer joy of letting God love us.

What if it really is this simple? What would happen in our city if at 6th and Lincoln, there could be found a people who have quit “trying harder, always harder,” to love God and love others? A people who instead are learning to bask in God’s kindness and relax in the sheer joy of God’s love? I wonder what would happen? Let’s come and see.

Upcoming Faith Forum

April 21 – No Faith Forum. Meeting in Lyman Hall - “First Impressions” Session

April 28 – Rich Van Doren to speak about environmental disasters in the Bible and what lessons we might learn from them.

May 5 – Ed McClellan and Mike Williams to speak about our relationships and service to the people of West Virginia.

May 12 – Mother’s Day - No Faith Forum

May 19 – All-Church Pentecost Party

May 26 – Memorial Weekend - No Faith Forum

Faith & Film Special Event

Faith, Film, & Simple Supper. April 14th | 3pm | Lyman Hall
 “The Magician’s Elephant” is an animated tale featuring Peter, an orphaned boy, who is told by a fortune teller that an elephant will help him find his lost sister. He must find the mysterious elephant and the magician who will conjure it, setting him off on a journey to complete three seemingly impossible tasks. Following the movie and discussion, the Membership Committee will provide a simple meal for everyone.



FPC Equal Exchange Coffee



Last June, during our Posoltega Mission Trip, these young boys had been playing marbles in the dirt street. When asked if a photo was OK, they immediately responded with this pose, demonstrating their friendship with each other. The FPC Equal Exchange Coffee Cart will be in Lyman Hall after worship on May 5th. Fairly-traded coffee, tea, and dark chocolate bars will be available. Your purchases will be helping support Equal Exchange small scale farmers around the world, and our church’s ongoing work in Posoltega, Nicaragua. Thank you!

Presbyterians Outdoors



Thursday April 25, 9am at TC Steele Sate Historic, 4220 TC Steele Rd. A walk of the gardens and perhaps a short hike (both free) will leave time for a guided tour of the house and studio at 10:15am, if you wish. There is an admission fee for the tour and you would probably want to purchase tickets in advance. Please RSVP Maggie Knust knustma@yahoo.com

Senior Singles

Second Sunday Senior Singles will meet 11:30am at Sakura Japanese restaurant, 895 S. College Mall Rd. On Sunday, April 14. Since Maggie will be out of town, please RSVP to Ruth Holman, htur.holman@gmail.com. Any single person 55+ is invited to join in for good food and fellowship.



Christian Men's Retiree Group



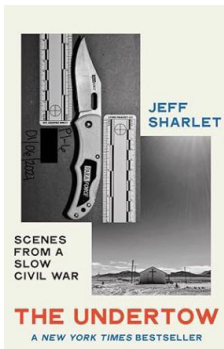
Christian Men's Retiree Group April 16 (4:30pm - 6:00pm)
This month's conversation starters: if you died tonight, what would you regret not doing and what has been clearer to you as you age? Leader, Rev. John VanderZee. For more information, contact Gary Crow at gcrow@iu.edu or (812) 361-6603

Men's Breakfast

The Men's Breakfast will once again be scheduled for the third Friday of each month. Mark your calendar for the next gathering on April 19, 2024 at The Bedrök Café. Contact Don Hollinger for more information, drhollinger1@comcast.net



FPC Book Group - April 28th



FPC Book Group - April 28th (7:00 p.m.) - Meetings are held on the 4th Sunday of every month, either at Bell Trace or on Zoom in the winter. This month's book is Jeff Sharlet's *The Undertow* with discussion leader Kathryn Brown. Please contact Allan Edmonds at allan.edmonds@gmail.com

American Red Cross

Give blood. Help save lives.



First Presbyterian Church BLOOD DRIVE

4-24-24

2:00 PM – 7:00 PM



Lyman Hall
221 E. 6th Street
Bloomington

Come give from 4/8 to 4/28 for a \$10 virtual gift card!
Plus earn an entry for a chance to win \$7,000!

1-800-RED CROSS | 1-800-733-2767 | redcrossblood.org | Download the Blood Donor App

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Become a Penpal

Break a Barrier with Pen and Paper

Be a Penpal | 1 - 2 letters per month |

Residents in the local jail a few block from the church are asking for penpals. Letters can be sent to and from the church to protect your privacy. More information and training will be given by a leader from the local UU church, either in-person or over zoom. With just a letter or two a month, you can step out of your comfort zone, offer hope, and meet Christ in the stranger. Email Tommy if interested (tommy@fpcbloomington.org)

“Bread for the World” Update



The Outreach Committee would like to thank everyone who participated in the Bread for the World 2024 Offering of Letters. Our tally of letters written and delivered to our elected representatives on March 26, 2024, was:

Fifty-three letters to Congressperson Erin Houchin
Fifty-five letters to Senator Todd Young
Fifty-four letters to Senator Mike Braun

Two members of the congregation told us they were writing and mailing their own letters. Several emails were sent by members of the Korean Presbyterian Church as messages of support. And our Sunday School drew nine pictures encouraging passage of the Farm Bill and were delivered to Senator Todd Young’s office for a grand total of 168 letters. Our congregational response was fantastic, and we are appreciative of the interest and support shown in putting life into our mission of Celebrating Christ and Serving Community, at 6th and Lincoln and Throughout the World.

Our advocacy WILL make a difference. To date, nearly 4,000 letters have been delivered in Indiana, alone and along with the thousands of other letters across the US our voices will be heard by the people with the power and resources to pass the 2024 Farm Bill (before the extension expires on September 30, 2024). Please continue to include passage of the Farm Bill and ending hunger in your prayers.

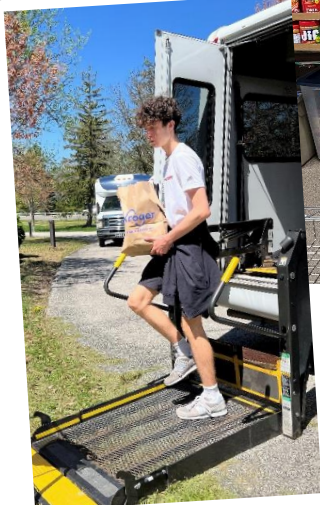
Unstuff-a-bus was a huge success!



Thanks to all of the wonderful FPC volunteers who came to help, working hard to unload the buses and sort the large number of food items donated by local shoppers at area Kroger stores.

The mobile food pantry of Area 10 Agency on Aging needed our help! It was a beautiful day and a great team effort!

Thanks from the Outreach Committee



Become a part of Presbyterian Women (PW)

Our invitation is for you to be active participants here at FPC Bloomington. A current directory for this group is available in the narthexes. We currently have two “circles” available for your participation. Many participants “contribute/pledge” to our PW which this year supports a budget that includes support of the Mission of the Church Worldwide through our Presbytery of the Ohio Valley, Monroe County United Ministries (MCUM) and Camp Pyoca. Contributions to the budget are accepted throughout the year. (PW should be noted in the memo.)

- Circle Mary meets for bible study and fellowship on the 1st Thursdays @ 1:00pm.
- Koinonia Circle meets to identify service/support projects and fellowship on the 2nd Tuesdays @7:00pm.

The PW Coordinating Team occasionally offers joint social events which find circle participants and other women in our congregation as well as some that have formed a group called “Women of God”, which includes members of 2nd Baptist and Bethel AME churches.

A group of us attended a performance held at the Monroe County History Center near the end of March titled: “Pauli Murray - I’ve come full circle.”

- Another upcoming event is a Dutch treat brunch at Hive restaurant at 10th & the 46 bypass on Saturday, April 27 @ 11:00am.

Please consider participation in a circle on a regular basis or joining the group at pop-up events announced during the year to get to know each other on a more social basis.

Session Meeting Notes - March 17, 2024

Session Actions:

- Approved confirmation curriculum for person with special needs.
- Approved Stewardship proposal for clearing up old accounts.
- Approved a task force to update the current emergency procedure guidance and then have an usher training session.
- Approved accounting policy to report cost of guest preachers



Photo credit: Debbie Conkle

Only a few months ago, following a special worship service (pictured above), we celebrated our successful 2024 Generosity Campaign followed by a wonderful lunch. Now 3 months into 2024, we are still celebrating your generosity. There are so many exciting things happening in the life of FPC this year! Below are the financial results for the 1st quarter 2024 compared to the 1st quarter budget and the year-to-date variance.

	1st Qtr 2024 Actual	1st Qtr 2024 Budget	Year-to-Date Variance
Total received *	\$178,631	\$159,238	\$19,393
Total expensed	\$154,149	159,238	\$5,089
Gain/(Loss)	\$24,482	\$0	\$24,482

*Includes pledge and non-pledge giving, plate offering, building income, and miscellaneous amounts received.

You may make financial contributions in support of FPC’s mission in our Sunday offering or give online through the church website.

If you have any questions about items related to the church’s finances, feel free to discuss with our Treasurer, Mary McClellan, or any member of the stewardship committee.

Cathy Walker, Chair
 Bill McGregor
 Lynn Schenck

APRIL 2024						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 11:30 am Emmaus Group ■ Philip Blackwell <i>April Fool's Day</i>	2 6:30 pm Deacon's Meeting	3 4:30 pm Committee Night 4:30 pm Bereavement Group	4 1:00 pm Circle Mary Bell Choir Rehearsal 5:45 pm Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	5 ■ Steve Berry ■ Zoe Rauh	6 10 am Presbyterians Outdoors 5:00 pm Beth Compton Recital
7 10:00 am Worship Service 11:00 am Coffee Cart 11:15 am Education Hour	8 5:30 pm Racial Justice Ministry Team	9 7:00 pm Koinonia ■ Bob Wingard ■ Mary Williams	10 4:30 pm Bereavement Group ■ Norma Miller	11 5:45 pm Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	12	13 2:00 pm Area 10 Stuff-a-Bus - First United Church
14 10:00 am Worship Service 11:15 am Education Hour 11:30 am Senior Singles 3:00 pm Faith & Film Family	15 First Press Deadline 11:30 am Emmaus Group	16 4:30 pm Men's Retiree Faith Group ■ Naomi Grimm ■ Vivian Harris	17 4:30 pm Bereavement Group ■ Kevin Porter ■ Kathy Hollinger ■ Stephanie Kingsly Riggle	18 5:45 pm Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	19 8:00 am Men's Breakfast ■ Penelope Bobo	20
21 10:00 am Worship Service 11:15 am Education Hour 11:15 am First Impression Session 6:00 pm FPC Session ■ Richard Nazzari	22 ■ Beth Burcham	23	24 Area 10 Grocery Bagging & Delivery 9:00 am Presbyterians Outdoors 2:00 pm FPC Blood Drive 4:30 pm Bereavement Group ■ Karon Wingard ■ David Ciucu	25 Area 10 Grocery Bagging & Delivery 9:00 am Presbyterians Outdoors 5:45 pm Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal ■ Meagan Williams	26 ■ Douglas McClellan	27 11:00 am PW Brunch (Hive)
28 10:00 am Worship Service 11:15 am Education Hour 7:00 pm FPC Book Group ■ John VanderZee	29	30 ■ Virginia Baude				