



OPEN DOOR

Volume XLV, No. 4, April 11, 2018

From the Pastor

The writer Ralph Ellison put it this way in *The Invisible Man*: “If you don’t know where you are, you probably don’t know who you are.” This insight provides the theme for this year’s Earth Sunday celebration, “Sense of Place.”



My father served in the military for the first 17 years of my life, which means we relocated frequently as the Navy reassigned him from one station to another. We lived in California, Florida, Virginia, Oklahoma (he recruited there), and South Carolina. One might guess that I found it hard to develop a sense of place since the longest we ever stayed in one place was four years. That might have been true were it not for twice yearly visits to our home town of Spartanburg, South Carolina, summers and Thanksgiving or Christmas, and were it not for my maternal grandfather. Even though we were back home only two or three weeks each year, my grandfather made sure we spent most of that time outside.

Spending time outdoors grounds and inspires our sense of place. So although I loved certain aspects of all of the places where I lived while growing up, home for me always smelled like kudzu, and my grandfather’s chickens and hogs. It sounded like the long, plaintive barking of his blood hounds as they found and then chased a fox. Home looked like the rolling, red clay hills on which he lived, and felt like the briars and the sticky sweetness of a blackberry patch.



Aldo Leopold wrote that if we don’t know a place, we won’t miss it when it is gone. Thus, his purchase of 120 worn out acres in Sauk County, Wisconsin. In part, he wanted to help the land recover and regenerate, but he also wanted to know the place. No other writing captures the passion to know a place better than the almanac portion of his *A Sand County Almanac*.

There are at least two realities undermining this sense of place. To the extent that it is still true, that the average American household relocates about every three years would certainly undermine a sense of place, especially if there is no one, consistent place to visit every year such as I had growing up. Another reality is greed. Wendell Berry captures it most clearly in his essay, “Out of Your Car, Off of Your Horse.” He wrote:

Our present “leaders”—the people of wealth and power—do not know what it means to take a place seriously: to think it worthy, for its own sake, of love and study and careful work. They cannot take any place seriously because they must be ready at any moment, by the terms of power and wealth in the modern world, to destroy any place.

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Plan now to join us in worship on Sunday, April 22, as we celebrate Earth Day, and our own beguiling nook in God's beautiful creation. As a moment for mission, we will feature a montage of Peter Mortensen's gorgeous photography of our landscape. We will be invited to embrace the insight of theologian Munther Isaac, who wrote, "A church in a particular land exists for the sake of that land and takes her mission agenda from it. The church, in other words, derives much of its purpose from its locale." Finally, we will be invited to appreciate and fully embody what Flannery O'Connor wrote: "Somewhere is better than anywhere."

—*Pastor David*



"Blessing of the Animals" Service Sunday, April 22 at 4:00 p.m. front courtyard.

The Wellness Committee invites you to a brief outdoor worship opportunity to celebrate God's gift of animals and especially our furry (or not furry!) pets. Well-behaved and on-leash/contained pets are welcome. If your pet doesn't fit this category, you are welcome to bring a picture. If your pet has died, you are invited to bring an item of remembrance. All pets must be accompanied by an owner. Owners are responsible for cleaning up after their pet and ensuring the safety of those offering the blessing. We hope you can join us!

A special opportunity to celebrate Spring (and Tax Day)!

The Deacons invite you to a soup luncheon On Tuesday, April 17 at 11:00 a.m. in Fellowship Hall

Our "Food & More" food pantry partners will be our special guests, so this will be a wonderful opportunity to extend the hand of Christian hospitality to these friends of our church family. Sign up on the form in the Friendship Pads or call the church office if you plan to attend. Last minute attendees are welcome as well.



News from the Worship Committee



In September of 2017, we moved our font to be front and center so that the space of our sanctuary would express visibly what we say we believe: that we gather around the things that present Christ to us, the Font, the Table, the Word. Every Sunday now, we are reminded of God's extravagant, cleansing grace, and the call of Jesus to pattern our lives after His. Recognizing that our font is large and cumbersome, we determined another font would suit this purpose better. We contacted Carolyn Baxley of Cinema Galleries in Urbana who recommended John Miller, a glassblower at ISU, Normal, Illinois, to design a new font. On February 28, 2018, Session approved the use of \$2,200 from the DU/BD General Reserve Fund for the purpose of commissioning a new baptismal font for our Sanctuary. We are keeping the existing base for the new font and wish to repurpose the existing aluminum font. Please contact Shari Hall if you have any ideas, 355-1854 or shari.hall@comcast.net. We hope to have the new font in place soon.

Challenges to Sustainability in Central Illinois

Sundays, April 8, 15 & 22 at 11:00 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall



From the time European immigrants first settled the rich prairies of Central Illinois, the area has offered its inhabitants a livable environment with diverse flora and fauna, highly productive farmland, space for development, and abundant clean water. But the ecosystem that has sustained both the human and natural community is increasingly threatened. This seminar series will explore some of the threats and consider how citizens can engage to reduce them.

(Sunday, April 8 – Threatened and Endangered Amphibians and Reptiles in Illinois: Who are they, what habitat changes imperil them, and why does their status matter?

Chris A. Phillips, Herpetologist, Illinois Natural History Survey, Prairie Research Institute, University of Illinois; former member of the Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board.)



Opportunity to Contribute to the Health of our Vital Waterways

THE OPPORTUNITY: The Tenth Annual Illinois Marathon will take place in Urbana-Champaign on April 27 - 29, 2018. For the sixth year our Earth Care Team has organized a First Presbyterian Church of Urbana (FPCU) team to raise money for Prairie Rivers Network by participating in their *Run/Walk for Clean Water* fundraiser. Team members Elizabeth Greeley, Don Greeley, Dixie Jackson, Gary Jackson, Dave Sherwood, Case Sprenkle and Don Wendel will participate in one of the Illinois Marathon events (5K, 10K or half marathon).

THE GOAL: The FPCU team's financial goal is to raise \$500 or more within our congregation. If the goal of \$500 or more is attained, the FPCU *Run/Walk for Clean Water* team will contribute an additional \$500.

HOW TO CONTRIBUTE: A table will be available following worship service on **Sunday, April 22**, and **Sunday, April 29**, where contributions can be made. A second option is to send a check made out to Prairie Rivers Network to the First Presbyterian Church of Urbana, 602 West Green Street, Urbana, IL 61801. A third option is to contribute online at the First Presbyterian Church of Urbana's *Run/Walk for Clean Water* web site below.

<https://www.crowdrise.com/prairierivernetworkrunforcleanwater2018/fundraiser/firstpresurbana>

Your contribution to the Prairie Rivers Network *Run/Walk for Clean Water* fundraiser is helpful and a tangible response to the Presbyterian Church USA's call to engage in tasks that restore creation.



Sunday, April 15 – The Mahomet Aquifer, Our Source of Abundant Fresh Water: Does a growing human population, increasing agricultural and industrial use, and contamination threaten sustainability of the aquifer?

Allen Wehrmann, former head of the Groundwater Section of the Illinois State Water Survey and currently a Senior Groundwater Engineer with INTERA Incorporated.

Sunday, April 22 – Development in Champaign County: Does the county's Land Resource Management Plan protect the long-term viability of agriculture and the land resource base, ensure urban development that is compact and contiguous to already-developed areas, and guarantee social and economically desirable use of these resources?

Frank DiNovo, retired Director of Planning and Community Development with the Champaign Regional Planning Commission and currently a member of the Champaign County Zoning Board of Appeals.

In the Church Family



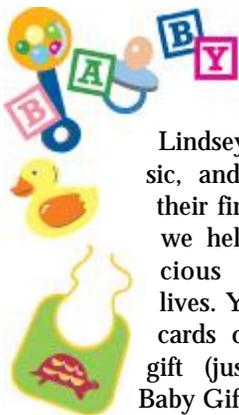
Let us remember in our prayers:

- Betty Belanger (fall, Bickford)
- Wanda Giddings (home)
- Jane Green (home)
- Dot Hunt (home)
- Marjorie Feitshans (home)

With sadness we share the news that Michèle Miller passed away on Monday, March 19. A memorial service will be held on Thursday, April 19 at 4:00 p.m. at our church. Please remember her family in your prayers.

Thank you to so many for your support and prayers this past winter and spring as I struggle with health issues. Your notes and calls, your visits; the beautiful plants and flowers; and the wonderful, wonderful food—all are greatly appreciated. Urbana Presby friends are absolutely the BEST!!

—Dot Hunt



Mail-In Baby Shower

Lindsey Bruner Woodcock, our Director of Music, and her husband, are expecting their first baby this April! Join us as we help them welcome this precious blessing into their lives. You are invited to send cards or make a financial gift (just put “Lindsey’s Baby Gift” in the memo on your check).



Coming Soon: New Church Directories

We will be preparing new directories to be published late April. Please contact the church office if your address, phone, or email address has changed. Of course, we would like to also be kept updated throughout the year, as well.



Are You Willing to “Talk Faith”?



Would you be willing to take a little time once a month to informally “talk faith” with walk-in people from our community? Do you want other people to feel the same joy that you do as a result of your relationship with God?

The Session has approved the report of the ReVision Committee, which includes areas of emphasis as First Pres moves forward. One of the recommendations was to proceed with development of the “A Shred of Faith” proposal.

The core concept for “A Shred of Faith” is that there are very likely to be persons in our community (geographic or university) who have some feelings toward faith in God but who have not been churched. They may want to explore further how faith fits into their lives, but they may think that stepping into an unfamiliar formal Sunday morning church environment would make them very uncomfortable. They may, however, be willing to “drop in” for an informal discussion with no “gotchas”.

The main idea with “A Shred of Faith” is to have the church narthex open for a half hour once a week, inviting people to drop in for informal discussion. 5:30-6:00 on a weekday might be a good time to catch people. There would be two First Pres members present. The discussions would be low key and would offer resources to the participants.

The facilitators would not be expected to know everything about faith, but they would need to be willing to talk candidly about faith in their lives. There would be training sessions for the facilitators. The commitment would be for a year with an option to extend.

Think seriously/pray some about whether you wish to be a part of this ministry. There is a potential for making a major difference in some people’s lives.

Please contact Don Greeley for more information:

donaldgreeley@prairienotes.com

(217) 384-4304



Seminar Topic Suggestions



The Adult Ministries is planning seminars for the 2018-19 year and we would love to hear from you. What topics would you be interested in hearing more about during Adult Seminars? Please leave suggestions in the Adult Ministries mailbox.

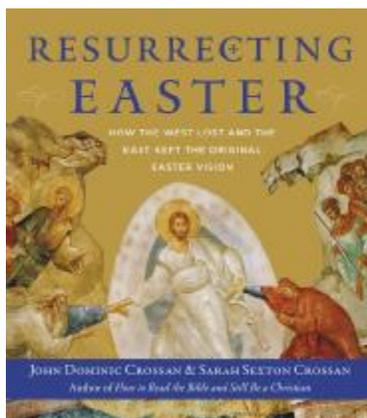
Upcoming Sunday Seminars 11:00 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall



The Welcoming Team is pleased to invite everyone to share in two upcoming Adult Seminars. On Sunday, **April 29**, Rev. Leah Robberts-Mosser, who is Lead Pastor of

Community UCC on campus, Rachel Muir, who is the Children, Youth and Family Outreach Coordinator of the UP Center of Champaign County, and Pastor David will make a panel presentation on the positive and negative aspects of LGBTQ experiences of church. Ample time will follow for questions and discussion. Then, on **May 13**, Jasmine Rouston, who is the acting President of the Up Center of Champaign County, will offer a presentation on sexual orientation and gender identities. Time for questions and discussion will follow.”

On Sunday, **May 6**, Pastor David will offer a presentation on the variety of ways Easter is celebrated among our Orthodox sisters and brothers. Insights from John Dominic Crossan’s and Sarah Sexton Crossan’s new book, *Resurrecting Easter*, will be featured. How did Eastern (Orthodox) and Western (Roman Catholic and Protestant) manifestations of Christianity come to celebrate Easter in such different ways? What can we learn from Orthodox Christians that might deepen our spirituality, and enrich our celebration of Easter?”



Summary of the Session Meeting of March 20, 2018

David’s installation service, sponsored by our Presbytery, was held in our sanctuary on March 11, 2018. Don Greeley was a member of the Installation Commission.

Following the routine financial reports (which are reviewed in detail every month) and committee reports, quite a bit of time was spent considering the Chapel Renovation Project. Since the February meeting of the Session, a mailing has been sent to the congregation including the complete information on the Chapel renovation proposal. An information session was held after worship on March 11 where David gave a presentation on Christian Church worship spaces through the ages. Opinions were expressed by those in attendance. Many were supportive of the plan. Some were concerned by the expense of the project (note that only the first phase of the project is up for approval at this time). Others were concerned that removal of the pews might diminish the reverent feeling of those in attendance and could be environmentally irresponsible. It was noted that there have already been inquiries about private use of some of the pews. Eight written comments have been received. They were read to the Session in their entirety. These comments echoed those made at the informational meeting. The members of the Session were sympathetic to the concerns raised but felt that the potential benefit of the project significantly outweighed the concerns. The Session gave unanimous approval to proceed with this project.



—Don Greeley, Clerk of the Session

Adult Bible Study



Sundays at **8:15 a.m.** in Meeting Room B which is next to the church office on the main floor. We are currently studying the book of Galatians

Food Pantry Update



What a day we had for our March food pantry. It was an election day so voting was going on in Fellowship Hall. Fortunately, we had experienced this two years ago as well so had some procedures in place. One difference this year was that we had just implemented a new distribution system in February and were still working out the kinks in that system. But our wonderful volunteers just rolled with the punches and we made it through. Many thanks for everyone's help this month (all our shoppers, Susan Silver, Beez Gordon, Candace McMaster, Abigail and Cornelius van der Velde, Cindy Burton, Louise Dunn and Ryan Larsen).

We changed our system because people were coming earlier and earlier. In January, I was especially worried because it was only a few degrees above zero. Fortunately, God got me up early that day. When I arrived about 5:40 a.m., I found one of our older partners huddled in the entryway to the office.

He had been waiting there since 5:15 a.m.! We got him in and warmed up before any permanent damage occurred. But clearly, changes were needed. People come early to ensure they get the



\$10 grocery certificate for fresh foods and to get the best selection of food. In the new system, we assigned 60 people who had attended the food pantry at least three times in 2017 to groups of 10-12 people, with each group assigned to a different time. These individuals are guaranteed a certificate on the months they come. The budget provides funds for only 50 certificates each month but this works out since our partners only come on months they need food, not every month. We also added more of the popular items on the baking (canola and vegetable oil, sugar), beverage (fruit and vegetable juice, instant coffee) and miscellaneous tables (large containers of chicken and beef broth, canned fruit, Ritz crackers) so more people can get the items they need. Those who came less than three times in 2017, or who are new this year, receive food but not the \$10 grocery store certificate. I do feel badly that not everyone can get certificates. But we have now served over 300 households in the community and we don't have funds to provide certificates to everyone who comes.



We served 48 households in March (167 people, 77 children and 27 seniors), including three new households. Six of those who came received food only. Seven people requested food from our special diet table. As our numbers have increased, I've been worried we may not have enough food for everyone. But once again we did, thanks to our faithful shoppers, the donations by the congregations, and the food grant provided by the LDS church. How blessed we are. This month I learned the value of relationships. Not all our partners are happy with the new system. Some who used to come very early are not happy about being assigned to a later group. Those who no longer get grocery store certificates are also understandably concerned. Because we have a relationship with each other we have been able to talk about their concerns and in some cases I have been able to make a few small changes that made things better for the person (e.g., assigning them to an earlier group). What has surprised me is how accepting most of our partners are of the changes, especially those who no longer get the certificate. \$10 may not sound like much to those of us who have enough to live on. But to someone trying to live on \$300 or \$600 or \$800 a month, that is a lot of money. Yes, that's right. We have one gentleman who has multiple health conditions trying to live on \$300 a month in public assistance while he waits for Social Security to decide on his disability case. He is 61 and worked in good jobs until his health failed. Hopefully, he also is getting some additional funding such as food, energy and medical assistance. But I know he struggles paying his rent each month. There is so little affordable housing in this community. The waiting lists are so long and many who would qualify for public housing wait years to get in. Fortunately, he is still getting a grocery certificate. But there may be some in similar situations who no longer are.



This month please pray for all those who are trying to live on so little. And offer a prayer of thanksgiving for the many people who continue to support the food pantry so generously. Many, many thanks for all you do.

—Chris Todd



**Food & More Program
Donation Request
for April 2018: Canned Pasta Sauce
(Hunts, Delmonte's etc.) – NO GLASS
PLEASE**

Thank You, Volunteers!

Thank you Camille Caldwell and volunteers from the Windsor Road Bible Study Group for thinning merchandise at Twice Is Nice thrift shop in preparation for the shop's seasonal clothing shift. And also to volunteers Nadja Altstetter, MaryE Yoemans, Dixie Jackson, Camille Caldwell and shop employee Melissa Records for organizing, thinning, and general tasks on the April 4 Sorting Day; and to Gary Jackson for hauling a mountain of overstocks to Salt & Light.

A big thanks to our adult and youth volunteers Alison, Brett, Eliza and James Champion, Jean Oliver-Holder, Karen and Andrew Mortensen, Cindy Strehlow, Liz Greeley, Robert Folske, Camille and Carl Caldwell, Autumn and Isaac Ellis and shop employee Melissa Records for helping with the seasonal shift of clothing at Twice Is Nice on Sunday, April 8. We got it done quickly and efficiently thanks to all of you. A special shout-out to Camille for bringing the brownies.



Come on by to browse the spring/summer clothing; and get involved at our next Sorting Day on **Saturday, April 21 from 9:00 a.m. to noon.**

Shopping for a Guitar?



Twice is Nice may have just the instrument you want – a Yamaha G 65 A acoustic guitar in very fine condition, newly professionally restrung with D'Addario Pro-Arte nylon core strings for Classical Guitar, and a black carrying case. Price is \$250. Stop by the shop to test this instrument – or tell your friends about it. Sale of the guitar will, as with all *Twice is Nice* sales, support Champaign-Urbana social service agencies.

The CHORALE Presents Young Artist Scholarship Concert

Join the singers and guest as they present John Rutter's *Feel the Spirit* on May 5th at Faith United Methodist Church, 1719 S. Prospect in Champaign. Rutter's arrangements of seven well-loved spirituals also will feature mezzo-soprano soloist, Sadie Elizabeth Cheslak, a music grad student at the University of Illinois. This concert will also feature a performance by the Young Artist Scholarship winner. These scholarships are awarded to outstanding musicians who are planning to continue their music education this fall at the university level

Also featured will be several arrangements by Craig Hella Johnson, a current American composer and arranger who was a former University of Illinois graduate and now conducts the well known choral ensemble, Conspirare. Titles such as *Unclouded Day*, *Light of a Clear Blue Morning*, *The Water is Wide*, *Gabriel's Oboe* and *Let Me Fly* will entertain the audience with invigorating, rhythms and beautiful harmonies.

An admission fee of \$15 helps support The CHORALE's Young Artist Scholarship Program.

Church Staff

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Youth Coordinator – Robert Foelske

Children's Choir & Junior Handbell Choir Director –
Jennifer Immke, jenykate14@hotmail.com

AV Technician Coordinator – Cedar King

Tenor Section Leader – Andrew Turner

Soprano Section Leader – Molly Abrams

Nursery Caregivers – Skylar Matteson, Autumn Ellis

OUR KEY MESSAGES

Welcome to our church family!

God is doing *exciting* things here!

Choose a path: **Have an impact & feed your soul!**

Thanks to Nancy Hatch and Marianne Mangian for preparing this Open Door for mailing.

Open Door Deadline: For inclusion in the next Open Door, items should be submitted by **Thursday, May 3, 2018** to office@firstpresurbana.org. The Open Door will be mailed on **Wednesday, May 9, 2018**.

First Presbyterian Church of Urbana

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(217) 367-8357

www.FirstPresUrbana.org

Find Us on Facebook

Church Office Hours

Monday – Friday

9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.



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