Dear First Presbyterian Members & Friends,

Hopefully, all of us are aware that two highly valued, long-tenured members of our church staff will be retiring at the end of this May. Jane Meppiel, Financial Coordinator, has served the church in a variety of roles for thirty-one (31) years. Karen Blanchard, Associate Pastor, has served the church for twenty-one (21) years. We have been truly blessed by their long years of service. And though we will miss each of these remarkable women a great deal, we are glad that they can begin a new chapter in life.

At its April meeting, the First Presbyterian Session approved the gathering of a ‘purse’ for both Jane and Karen from the friends and members of the congregation. These financial gifts will serve as our collective thanks for their dedicated service. We asked Jane and Karen what they would like to do early in their retirement and they shared with us the following:

For Jane…a concert package (travel, lodging, tickets, a concert t-shirt!)

For Karen…a rail excursion through the Canadian Rockies

Your financial gifts will help make these wishes a reality. Gifts can be given in cash or check (made out to the specific individual) and placed in the card basket at the reception (see dates below) or sent to the church office ahead of time. The reception dates/times are:

**Jane – Sunday, May 16** – following the 11 a.m. worship service in the church parking lot.

**Karen – Sunday, May 23** – following the 11 a.m. worship service in the church parking lot.

The receptions will be socially distanced, and masks are required.

If you have questions, please contact Jennifer Pitcher [jpitcherstl@gmail.com](mailto:jpitcherstl@gmail.com) or Lisa Ward [lward@kirkwoodpres.org](mailto:lward@kirkwoodpres.org) or 314-393-6225.

*Blessings,*

*Lisa K. Ward*
We are on the threshold of May 1st and continue to navigate this season of change at the church. It has been wonderful to have congregants in the pews the past two Sundays! I am grateful to all who worked (and continue to work) hard to make this a reality – the Reopening Task Force, our staff, custodians, ushers...thank you for your ministry! We will continually reevaluate our situation as time moves forward. I also thank you for your patience and understanding as we return to in-person worship with restrictions in place. Your care for each other and the community is evident.

We prepare this month to say farewell to Jane Meppiel and Karen Blanchard, both retiring after many years of faithful service to this congregation. These events are bittersweet for me. I have developed deep friendships with these amazing women and will miss working with them dearly, but at the same time celebrate retirements that are well-deserved. We pray God’s richest blessings on Jane and Karen as they begin this new chapter. Please continue to pray for the congregation and staff in these days of change and adjustment. God is with us and will continue to guide our steps into a bright and promising future!

Faithfully yours,
Bill

Please Give to The Pentecost Offering
As one of the Special Offerings of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A., the Pentecost Offering unites us in an effort to support young people in Christ and inspire them to share their faith, ideas, and unique gifts with the church and the world.

The Pentecost offering helps our youth begin life with a strong start—a solid foundation of faith formed from childhood through young adulthood. This special offering nurtures the faith of those who are the church to come—children, youth, and young adults. Psalm 71 reminds us that a foundation of faith established during childhood helps ensure lifelong faith and service. By giving to the Pentecost Offering, we help our children, youth, and young adults grow up to proclaim with the Psalmist, “O God, from my youth you have taught me, and I still proclaim your wondrous deeds.”

A gift to the Pentecost Offering helps the church encourage, develop, and support its young people, and also address the needs of at-risk children. Forty percent of the Pentecost offering can be retained by our congregation to make an impact in the lives of young people within our own community. The remaining 60% is used to support children-at-risk, youth, and young adults through ministries of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. Please give generously. Thank you for your support.
A Month of Sundays  
May 2021

May 2 – The Fifth Sunday of Easter  
Rev. Dr. Bill Smutz, preaching  
Rev. Dr. Karen Blanchard, liturgist  
Scriptures: Deuteronomy 17: 14-20; Matthew 6: 1, 5-8  
Sermon: “Without Fanfare”  
Music: The Chancel Octet; Bill Stein, organist/director; Travis Evans, accompanist

May 9 – The Sixth Sunday of Easter  
Rev. Dr. Bill Smutz, preaching  
Rev. Dr. Karen Blanchard, liturgist  
Scriptures: Ecclesiastes 5: 10-17; Matthew 6: 19-29  
Sermon: “Accumulated Treasure”  
Music: The Chancel Octet; Bill Stein, director; Travis Evans, organist

May 16 – The Seventh Sunday of Easter  
Rev. Dr. Bill Smutz, preaching  
Rev. Dr. Karen Blanchard, liturgist  
Scriptures: Psalm 93: 1-5; Matthew 7: 24-29  
Sermon: “A Stolen Car”  
Recognition of Jane Meppiel upon her retirement  
Music: The Bell Choir; Louisa Wimmer, hymn leader; Travis Evans, director; Bill Stein, organist

May 23 – Pentecost Sunday  
Rev. Dr. Karen Blanchard, preaching  
Rev. Dr. Bill Smutz, liturgist  
Scriptures: Psalm 104; Acts 2: 1-21  
Sermon: “Change Is In the Air”  
Recognition of Dr. Blanchard upon her retirement  
Music: Members of the Chancel Choir; Bill Stein, director/organist; Travis Evans, accompanist

May 30 – Trinity Sunday  
Summer Schedule Begins - Worship begins at 10AM  
Congregation Hymn Sing Service – watch your email in the coming weeks for more information!
Another Work Camp Fundraising Opportunity!

Now for another opportunity to support our Work Camp trip to Colorado Springs this summer - Savers FUNDrive! We are collecting clothing, shoes, textiles and jewelry from now until June 6th. We will then take everything that is donated to our local Savers Thrift Shop and they will donate 50 cents per pound for our trip! See below for more info.

Questions can be directed at Rob Monroe - rmonroe@kirkwoodpres.org.
KirkCare continues to receive many donations from our church and others in the area. An updated list of desired items, both food, personal and home care items, is listed below. In addition, the suggested foods for KirkCare’s Meal-A-Month is:

APRIL:
Canned Ham, Scalloped Potatoes  
Canned Mixed Vegetables,  
Canned Fruit Cocktail

MAY:
Treet or Spam, Flavored Noodles  
Canned peas, Canned fruit, Soap  
Optional: cereal, toothbrushes

KIRK CARE PREFERRED ITEMS-NON-PERISHABLE UNEXPIRED FOODS

• MEATS (Spam/Vienna Sausages)  
• STEW  
• CHICKEN & DUMPLINGS/CHICKEN ALA KING  
• CHILI  
• CANNED FRUITS  
• APPLE SAUCE  
• PUDDING & FRUIT CUPS (Non-refrigerated)  
• PEANUT BUTTER  
• JELLY/JAM  
• PASTA/NOODLES  
• PASTA SAUCES (Canned)  
• CANNED PASTA  
• SLOPPY JOE SAUCE  
• LOW SUGAR CEREALS  
• PANCAKE/MUFFIN MIX/SYRUP  
• INSTANT OATMEAL  
• COMPLETE MEALS & MEAL KITS  
• DINNER MIXES (Hamburger/Tuna/Chicken Helper…)  
• PASTA/POTATO/COUSCOUS MIXES  
• DESSERT MIXES & FROSTING  
• BAKING STAPLES  
• COOKING OIL  
• WHITE & BROWN RICE  
• PROTEIN/GRANOLA BARS  
• SNACK NUTS & CHIPS  
• SALTINE/GRAHAM CRACKERS

OTHER ITEMS:

• PAPER PRODUCTS (Kleenex, Toilet Paper, Paper Towels)  
• BAR SOAP  
• SHAMPOO, CONDITIONER, LOTION (With Avocado Oil, Shea Butter, or Cocoa Butter)  
• CLEANERS (Dish Soap/Detergent, Laundry Soap, Multipurpose Cleaners)
In May, Dean and Jinny Danzer's son, Dr. Steve Danzer, is going to speak on topics about the universe and the earth and the human beings who live here.

Dr. Steve Danzer is a Professor of Anesthesia at Cincinnati Children’s Hospital and the University of Cincinnati. He is also the Director for the Center for Pediatric Neuroscience and holds the C. Nelson Melampy Endowed Chair in Anesthesia Basic Science Research. He received his undergraduate degree in Biology at the University of Missouri in Columbia, his PhD in Neuroscience at the University of Arizona in Tucson, and conducted postdoctoral research in epilepsy at Duke University. At Cincinnati Children’s, he directs a preclinical research program aimed at understanding and developing better treatments for people with epilepsy.

The topics Steve plans to cover are:

**May 2, 2021: The Big Bang/Origin of the Universe:** How did the universe begin and why does it have the properties it does? Physics tells us that the universe we have is spectacularly unlikely, so how did it come to be?

**May 9, 2021: Geology:** The geology of our planet causes volcanoes and tsunamis, but these destructive forces are also necessary for life. In this session we will discuss the basic geology of our planet and how it impacts life on Earth.

**May 16, 2021: Evolution:** The theory of evolution tells us about our origins, how we are related to every living thing, and how to understand and treat diseases that afflict humanity.

**May 23, 2021: Human Sexuality and the brain:** What does science tell us?

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**BOOK GROUPS**

**Tuesday, Book Group, 10:00am on Zoom**

The Tuesday morning book group will discuss the book “Destiny of the Republic” by Candice Millard. To be added to the Zoom list please contact Karen Blanchard at kblanchard@kirkwoodpres.org.

**Fourth Wednesday Book Group, 1:30pm on Zoom**

**May 19th:** WHERE THE FOREST MEETS THE STARS, by Glendy Vanderah, a book about the mysterious arrival of a young girl and the secrets she helps to unravel that helps two adults reclaim their lives along with hers.

If you would like to be on the invite list, please let Karen know at kblanchard@kirkwoodpres.org.
“Faith in Action”
Mission Trip to Omaha, NE
October 17-23, 2021

One year ago we were planning an adult mission trip to Omaha to assist homeowners affected by record-breaking flooding. COVID lockdowns brought an extended halt to mission trips everywhere. We are now able to resume our work, and the need remains urgent. Millions of people in the midwest have been affected by flooding, which the New York Times has called “The Great Flood of 2019”, and the worst disaster in Nebraska history. The tiny community of King Lake, on the Elkhorn River, was inundated in 2019. Many properties have been vacated, but other residents are trying to rebuild their homes and lives with very limited resources.

Kirkwood Pres volunteers have worked in many disaster areas and are eager to resume their work. Members of our team will be staying at the NE Presbyterian Church of the Cross (a PDA host site), and will work with “Omaha Rapid Response” to rebuild homes in King Lake. We’re looking for volunteers to join us. Omaha is 7 hours from Kirkwood, an easy day's drive, and volunteers can come for all or part of the week. All participants will be required to be fully vaccinated against COVID, and we will follow all local and CDC guidelines.

Mission trip leaders, Linda Jarrett, Liz McCane and Georgina Sikorski, will hold an informational meeting in late summer. If you have questions about the trip in the meantime, please contact Liz (lizmccane@gmail.com) at 314-960-3677.

OTHER MISSION OPPORTUNITIES

Alleviating Hunger

* Breakfast Casseroles for St. Patrick’s Center: St. Patrick’s Center provides opportunities for self-sufficiency and dignity to people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Individuals and families build permanent, positive change in their lives through safe and affordable housing, sound mental and physical health, and employment and financial stability. Please join us by preparing a delicious breakfast casserole for St. Patrick’s Center. Check out our web site for the recipe. For more information, please contact Julie Nesvig at j.nesvig83@gmail.com.

* Bridge Bread: Bridge Bread Bakery is a non-profit social enterprise in St. Louis that provides supportive employment to people without safe and stable housing. Through meaningful work they become valued, contributing members of our community. Bridge Bread bakers create delicious breakfast rolls, breads, brownies, and other bakery items. While we are not selling Bridge Bread in the gathering space at this time, we still ask for your support of this organization. Please visit their retail store at 2639 Cherokee Street, or consider making a financial donation. For more information, visit www.bridgebread.org/. Thank you.

* First Pres Vegetable Garden: Calling all gardeners! We need your help in planting our vegetable garden this spring. Our garden is located on the church grounds. This summer it will be filled with yummy vegetables, which we donate to local food banks. If you are interested in getting your hands dirty while helping others, please contact Julie Nesvig, at j.nesvig83@gmail.com
Many interesting educational opportunities are available through the Shepherd’s Center, on Zoom. (Please note: You should register for these events through the Shepherd Center website which is https://shepherdscenter-wk.org/) These are great opportunities to explore art & culture without leaving your favorite chair. Among the topics:

* Traveling through Sweden, Norway and St. Petersburg—Friday May 7, 1-2pm: Presented by Susan Eaton, World Traveler
* Laumeier Sculpture Park: A Monumental Experience Tuesday, May 18, 12:00-12:45 CT: Presented by Betsy Solomon, MA, Art Historian and Executive Director, Shepherd’s Center Webster-Kirkwood-Affton Region. This park is home to 60 outdoor sculptures, many up to 70 feet tall. Join us for a virtual walking tour of this St. Louis gem.
* Campbell House Museum Friday, May 28, 1:00-2:00 CT: Presented by Michael Stoecklin, Assistant Director: Built in 1851, the first house in the elegant Lucas Place neighborhood, the Campbell House was the home of renowned fur trader and entrepreneur Robert Campbell and his family from 1854 until 1938.
* Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art Tuesday, May 25, 12:00-12:45 CT: Presented by museum guides, Kim Ratcliff and Dana Hayden. The museum and grounds take its name from a nearby natural spring and the bridge construction incorporated in the building, designed by world-renowned architect Moshe Safdie, is a series of pavilions nestled around two spring-fed ponds, house galleries, meeting and classroom spaces, and a large, glass-enclosed gathering hall.

In addition there are opportunities for exercising, book studies and opportunities via Zoom.

*Marcia Werremeyer and family following the death of her mother, Gloria Hunsinger, on April 2.

The Grief Support Group meets on the 4th Monday of each month from 3:30pm-5:00p.m. The next meeting is Monday, May 24, in Fellowship Hall. For more information, contact Ellen Hitschler at ln4cats@yahoo.com or Mary Ann Shaw at mashaw5@sbcglobal.net.
THE NEXT TWO WEEKS

Sunday, May 2
9:30am  Baptism - Chapel
9:30am  Christian Concerns Class - Zoom
11:00am  Worship Service - Sanctuary
1:00pm  Chancel Choir Rehearsal - Courtyard
7:00pm  Sr. High Fellowship

Monday, May 3
8:00am  Preschool
11:30pm  Staff Meeting - 030

Tuesday, May 4
10:00am  Book Group - Zoom
7:00pm  Children & Family Committee - 029
7:00pm  Worship, Music & Arts - Zoom

Wednesday, May 5
8:00am  Preschool
7:00pm  Bell Choir Rehearsal - Choir Room

Thursday, May 6
10:00am  Prayer Time - Sanctuary (sign-up required)
7:00pm  Section Leaders Rehearsal - Sanctuary

Friday, May 7
8:00am  Preschool

Saturday, May 8
10:00am  Prayer Time - Sanctuary (sign-up required)

Sunday, May 9
9:30am  Christian Concerns Class - Zoom
9:30am  Spiritual Formation - Zoom
11:00am  Worship Service - Live Streamed
7:00pm  Sr. High Fellowship

Monday, May 10
8:00am  Preschool
11:30am  Staff Meeting - 030

Tuesday, May 11
10:00am  Book Group - Zoom
3:00pm  Sally Kilpatrick Memorial Service - Sanctuary
7:00pm  Mission Committee - Zoom

Wednesday, May 12
8:00am  Preschool
7:00pm  Bell Choir Rehearsal - Choir Room

Thursday, May 13
10:00am  Prayer Time - Sanctuary (sign-up required)
5:30pm  Carlson Wedding Rehearsal - Sanctuary
7:00pm  Section Leaders Rehearsal - Sanctuary

Friday, May 14
8:00am  Preschool

Saturday, May 15
11:00am  Men’s Bible Study - Zoom
2:00pm  Carlson Wedding - Sanctuary