Christian’s Mindfulness

Many of you know that for the last six weeks I have been participating in an intensive treatment program for my back pain in Chicago. One of the things that drew me to this particular program was the opportunity to do concentrated work in mindfulness. Of course, there were other disciplines as well: biofeedback, physical therapy, occupational therapy, and time with my doctor. As I have shared about this program with people in the church and in the community, I have occasionally been asked “Is it appropriate for Christians to learn mindfulness practices?”

So, my answer... a resounding yes!

Let me stress, I am writing about this from the perspective of the mindfulness practices that are taught in psychology, medical, business and educational settings. This method is taught by thousands of people.

First a definition: “mindfulness is a state of active, open attention on the present. When you’re mindful, you observe your thoughts and feelings from a distance, without judging them good or bad. Instead of letting your life pass you by, mindfulness brings living in the moment and awakening to experience.”

Second, I would like to address two of the concerns I hear most often:

Concern #1 — “Mindfulness is a Buddhist practice, and therefore is not appropriate practice for Christians.”

It is true that mindfulness is a key practice in Buddhism. However, almost every religion and culture has mindfulness practices. Our Christian heritage has a rich contemplative tradition. We feature several contemplative practices in our Spirituality Center. Psychology and the medical and business communities promote mindfulness practices that are purposefully devoid of spiritual or religious connotations and focuses simply on the act of awareness. And if you want to take it to a level that we can all relate to and understand, mindfulness, at its core, is stress reduction.

(continued on page 2)
Stress damages our emotional, mental and physical bodies, costs billions of dollars to American businesses each year and has a tremendous negative impact on our children, as they are influenced by it both indirectly and directly. Mindfulness is an incredibly inexpensive, powerful and easy tool in dealing with this challenging, overwhelming issue.

Also, let me add much of the mindfulness practiced in school systems is highly geared toward learning brain anatomy and understanding the science behind how the brain works. Children learn the different parts of the brain, how they interact together, how brain activity influences emotions/choices, etc. They are taught to be bigger than their brains, more than their emotions or thoughts.

**Concern #2 —“As a Christian, mindfulness is about ‘clearing the mind.’ This action opens a gateway to evil forces, thoughts or actions.”**

Mindfulness is not about clearing the mind. In fact, it is pretty much the opposite of that.

Mindfulness, on every level, regardless of which exercise you are doing (mindful breathing, walking, hearing, etc.), is about bringing awareness to thought. What is “cleared” is the overwhelming majority of thoughts — mindfulness teaches how to quiet the incessant dialogue that truly ravages our brains to then bring forth clarity and calm.

Therefore, it is a focusing, not an emptying.

Furthermore, when our brains are clearer, so are our decisions, our choices, our priorities. We are also more able to follow our hearts with empathy, compassion and openness as our very analytical minds have been given the opportunity to take a back seat.

Now, let me highlight just a couple of the areas where I believe mindfulness and Christianity blend so wonderfully:

**1. Mindfulness embodies the Christian tokens of love and acceptance.**

Mindfulness allows everyone to bask in his or her own faith, belief and wishes — it opens the door to acceptance. It sees beyond the boundaries of doctrine, race, sex, age. It allows us to see our humanity and the bigger picture—things that connect us beyond our titles, beyond our outward appearance, beyond our philosophies and dogmas.

It is a true coming together, a boundless exercise in caring and in the openness of the heart. It allows us to maintain our disagreements; however, in mindfulness we agree to disagree and to somehow find the balance and peace in that.

**2. Mindfulness allows Christians to blossom in their faith.**

Mindfulness is organic and fluid. It moves and flows with each person who practices it. For example, if you believe that holding a scripture in your mind is the right thing to do instead of focusing on your breath when doing mindful breathing, have at it. If someone focuses on scripture, they are indeed bringing the mind to a singular, focused awareness. Excellent.
Another direction... mindfulness allows you to connect more deeply to God. For example, when you are in worship you are more “in worship.” As a practitioner of mindfulness, you minimize thinking about what you have to do after the service, who is sitting behind you, what you are wearing—you are more focused on your faith and the importance of it.

3. Mindfulness allows you to connect to your body “as a temple to honor God.”

Our bodies are wonderful gifts. They talk to us all the time and tell us when they are out of balance or when certain parts need attention. When we allow space to connect with our breathing and our physicality, we allow ourselves to truly see and hear what our bodies are trying to tell us. This allows Christians more clarity and power and strength to help nurture the container of the soul.

What I am learning is to observe my pain without judging or reacting to it. This allows the experience of pain to be far less intense and disabling.

In conclusion, I know that what is written here is only scratching the surface. I simply hope that these words have broadened you or have led you to more contemplation and possible questions. Whatever it brings you, I wish you peace and peace of mind.

Grace and Peace,
Alan

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Our Mission

At First Presbyterian Church we live our commitment to God and one another by:

**Reaching UP** > to worship God
**Reaching IN** > to seek abundant life through Jesus Christ
**Reaching OUT** > to share God’s love with all people

Our Values

*We Value the Application of Scripture*
*We Value Prayer*
*We Value Worship*
*We Value Service*
*We Value Excellence*
*We Value People’s Giftedness*
*We Value People’s Differences*
*We Value People’s Time*
*We Value Continual Learning*
*We Value Growth*
*We Value Commitment*
The Session has decided to hold monthly church workdays. These will be held on the third Saturday of each month (May 19) from 9:00 am to 12:00 noon. Each month there will be opportunities for both inside and outside tasks. There will be some tasks each month that can mostly be done while sitting. We invite you to come help the ministry of our congregation by participating in these workdays whenever your schedule allows. The fellowship is always good. In addition, we plan to post a list of tasks that could be adopted and completed at other times during the month for those unable to attend the Saturday morning workdays.

**Security Updates**

The Session has been exploring ways to improve security at First Presbyterian Church for the last several months. This review began after the church shooting in Texas. The first two steps include the updating of our alarm system and the installation of a security camera system that will record movement in the building. The third step will be locking the entry doors a few minutes after the service begins. The interior glass doors have buzzers so that latecomers can be admitted. The front wooden door off Lincoln into the sanctuary will also be locked. If you are late, please plan on entering the building through the glass doors. The Session continues to study the issue and learn from other congregations.

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**May 4 First Fridays**

5:30 pm — 9:00 pm

Model Elementary Orff Ensemble at 7:00 pm

**June 1 First Fridays**

GHS Men’s Choir
2018 Summer Camp at Geneva Center Inc.
Camp is based on grade completed this school year.

High School (Grades 9-12)
3 options $300.00
June 18-23 – M.A.D. – Music, Art & Drama
July 9-14 – Traditional Camp

Middle School (Grades 6-8)
3 options $300.00
June 18-23 – M.A.D. – Music, Art & Drama
July 9-14 – Traditional Camp

Explorer Camp-Grades 4-5 $300.00
June 11-16

You and Me (ages 5 and up with an adult) $195.00 per person
#1 - June 18-20
#2 - June 25-27

New Beginnings Camp (Grades 1-3) $195.00
June 25-27

Sign up and pay in full by May 15th
After May 15th the fees will go up by $25.00 for those not paid.
Sign ups will begin soon at genevacenter.org

Please call Cathy at 574-223-6915 or email: cathy@genevacenter.org

Summer Camp Brochure and Registration form are on a table outside of the office.
Brief Congregational Meeting on Sunday, May 20 (after worship) for the election of one Elder (Class of 2019), two Deacons (Class of 2020), one Foundation member (Class of 2020) and one Nominating (Class of 2018).

To the First Presbyterian Foundation: “Thank you so much for helping me with my phone bill. Your generosity really restored my faith in God and man. May God bless you now and always. Phyllis”

Bible Study at Juniper Place Dining Room
“The Afterlife in the Bible”, led by Dick Craig, 3:00 pm in May:

- May 3 What the Bible Says and Does Not Say
- May 10 Rising and Resurrection in the Old Testament
- May 17 Resurrection in the Gospel Accounts
- May 24 Resurrection in the NT Letters and the rest of the NT including the Book of Revelation

Mother’s Day is a celebration honoring the mother of the family, as well as motherhood, maternal bonds, and the influence of mothers in society. It is celebrated on various days in many parts of the world, most commonly in the months of March or May. It complements similar celebrations honoring family members, such as Father's Day, Siblings Day, and Grandparents Day. In the United States, celebration of Mother's Day began in the early 20th century.

If you have a family member or know of someone who is graduating from high school, college, etc., please let the office know so we can celebrate with you on Rose Sunday in June.
Mission Outreach Dinner
Free Community Spaghetti Dinner
Sunday, May 6, Serving from 6:00-7:00 pm

The next Mission Dinner will be Sunday, May 6, from 6-7 pm. Thanks for your donations to our supply of spaghetti and sauce. Monetary donations are appreciated to help offset the cost of the garlic bread, lettuce, dressing, and other supplies. We will also need desserts the day of the meal. A big thanks to all who have helped make this monthly endeavor a growing success. We continue to see new faces at the dinners, and we are hearing and seeing the positive effect this outreach program is creating. We hope to see you and a friend on May 6.

Thursday Small Group: This group meets once a month on the 2nd Thursday, usually at 6:00 or 6:15 pm. Meeting sites may be homes, coffee shops, or restaurants, at the option of the group members. The next gathering will take place on Thursday, May 10, 6:00 pm. Contact is Julia Stauffer.

Cancer Support Group: Our cancer support group usually meets each month on the second and fourth Thursday evenings from 7:00 to 8:30 pm in the church library. Rhonda Griffin is a certified oncology nurse and is able to provide some general information about cancer treatment, and Alan leads in the discussion of the spiritual dimensions of cancer care. The group is always open for new participants. Please share this ministry with any of your family, friends and neighbors whose lives have been touched by cancer. For more information on December’s meetings, please contact Alan or Rhonda Griffin.

   Alan can be reached at agriffin46528@comcast.net
   Rhonda can be reached at grirh@comcast.net

Calling Stitchers for our Bible Study: We meet at Evergreen (Greencroft) at 2:00 pm the second Wednesday of the month (May 9; possible lunch in June, then dismissal for the summer months). Our study this year is named, “Cloud of Witnesses,” based on Hebrews, Chapter 12, but also using other Old and New Testament books.

   Donna Palacios (533-3529)

Meet - Greet - Eat - Talk

For all women at FPC, come join a group for a time of greeting and conversation — a time to get to know one another in a casual setting. We will meet on Thursday, May 24, 11:30 am, at Angel’s House of Pancakes. Looking forward to seeing you. Judi Sorg, Jackie Kramer or Donna Palacios
May Birthdays

5/6 Pi Wellington
5/10 Dave C. Wallace
5/12 Ledia (Olivera) Cortes
5/15 Benjamin Ganger
5/15 Martha Kazmierczak
5/16 Neil Holbrook
5/17 Kallom Rhamey
5/18 Hudson Hooley
5/20 Tiffany Neff
5/21 Kevin Neff
5/27 Marie Palacios

May Anniversaries

5/7 Gary and Martha Kazmierczak
5/9 Michael and Lindsey Rangel
5/19 Neil and Jenny Holbrook

Please keep in your prayers: Our armed forces and their families; Those affected by flood waters; Tom Kintigh; Toddy Bowser; Mike Kastro, Melissa Martinez (friend of Cathie Cripe); Marcia Griffin (Alan’s sister); Phil Albert (Jenny’s son); Don Griffin in Oklahoma (Alan’s father); Bob Schlobohm; Ernie Jenkins and son Grant (Jenny Jenkins’ son and grandson in OH); Chris Hole; Cathie Cripe; Al Hoogenboom; Mary Hoogenboom; Evelyn Johnson (mother of Sandy Kurtz); Martha Hepler; Tomi Griesenauer (Jenny Paetsch’s mother); Florence Verhulst (Gretchen Wise’s sister in Griffin IN); Don Myers (Helen’s husband); Dennis Huff; Cathy Wray; Sarah Miller (David Pepple’s sister); Bob Main; Brad Gilmore (Jenny Albert’s brother); Julie McCally; Tina Cork (David Pepple’s niece)

Memorial Day: It’s easy to forget what Memorial Day actually means while you’re sitting by the pool and looking ahead at summer vacation—but the day signifies much more than just a three-day weekend. Memorial Day is a solemn day of remembrance for everyone who has died serving in the American Armed Forces.

The holiday, originally known as Decoration Day, started after the Civil War to honor the Union and Confederate dead. It’s unclear exactly where the holiday originated—Charleston, S.C., Waterloo, N.Y., Columbus, Ga. and other towns all claim to be the birthplace of the holiday. The event in Charleston that may have precipitated the holiday offers poignant evidence of a country struggling to rebuild itself after a bloody war: 257 Union soldiers died in prison in Charleston during the Civil War and were buried in unmarked graves, and the town’s African American residents organized a May Day ceremony in which they landscaped a burial ground to properly honor the soldiers.

In the years following the Civil War, Memorial Day celebrations were scattered and, perhaps unsurprisingly, took root differently in the North and South. It wasn’t until after World War II that the holiday gained a strong following and national identity, and it wasn’t officially named Memorial Day until 1967.

The final event that cemented the modern culture of Memorial Day in America was in 1968 when Congress passed the Uniform Holiday Act, designating Memorial Day as the last Monday in May rather than May 30, as it had previously been observed. This ensured a three-day weekend and gave the day its current status as the unofficial beginning of summer, mixing serious reflection with more lighthearted fun.

PC(USA) - Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA)

website: http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/pda/
# May 2018 Calendar

**First Presbyterian Church**

*www.discoverfirstchurch.org*  
*(574) 533-7845*

## Sunday

1. **Mother's Day**  
   - 9:00 am: Nursery-Preschool  
   - 10:15 am: K-8 Worship & SS  
   - 10:20 am: Worship  
     - Fellowship before & after First Worship

2. **Ascension of the Lord**  
   - 9:00 am: Elkhart Co. Retired Teachers Assn Meeting (M. Palacios)  

3. **6 Communion**  
   - 9:00 am: Nursery-Preschool  
   - 10:15 am: Communion @ Greencroft  
   - 6:00-7:00 pm: Free Community Spaghetti Dinner  
   - 7:00 pm: Notable Women's Choir (M. Yost)

4. **7 Pastor's Day Off**

5. **8 Pastor's Day Off**

6. **9 Pastor's Day Off**

7. **10 Pastor's Day Off**

8. **11 Pastor's Day Off**

9. **12 Pastor's Day Off**

10. **13 Mother's Day**

11. **14 Pastor's Day Off**

12. **15 Presbytery Assembly**

13. **16 Pastor's Day Off**

14. **17 Pastor's Day Off**

15. **18 Pastor's Day Off**

16. **19 Pastor's Day Off**

17. **20 Pentecost**

18. **21 Pastor's Day Off**

19. **22 Pastor's Day Off**

20. **23 Pastor's Day Off**

21. **24 Pastor's Day Off**

22. **25 Pastor's Day Off**

23. **26 Pastor's Day Off**

24. **27 Trinity Sunday**

25. **28 Pastor's Day Off**

26. **29 Pastor's Day Off**

27. **30 Pastor's Day Off**

28. **31 Pastor's Day Off**

## Monday

1. **1 National Day of Prayer**  
   - 6:30 pm: Chancel Choir  
   - 7:30 pm: Worship Planning Team

2. **2 National Day of Prayer**  
   - 6:30 pm: Chancel Choir  
   - 7:30 pm: Worship Planning Team

3. **3 National Day of Prayer**  
   - 6:30 pm: Chancel Choir  
   - 7:30 pm: Worship Planning Team

4. **4 National Day of Prayer**  
   - 5:30 pm: First Fridays

5. **5 National Day of Prayer**  
   - 6:00 pm: Thursday Group  
   - 7:00 pm: Cancer Support Group

6. **6 National Day of Prayer**  
   - 9:00 am: Nursery-Preschool  
   - 10:15 am: Worship & SS  
     - Fellowship before & after First Worship

7. **7 National Day of Prayer**  
   - 10:15 am: K-8 Worship & SS  
   - 10:20 am: Worship  
     - Fellowship before & after First Worship

8. **8 National Day of Prayer**  
   - 9:00 am: Nursery-Preschool  
   - 10:15 am: Worship & SS  
     - Fellowship before & after First Worship

9. **9 National Day of Prayer**  
   - 10:15 am: K-8 Worship & SS  
   - 10:20 am: Worship  
     - Fellowship before & after First Worship

10. **10 National Day of Prayer**  
    - 9:00 am: Elkhart Co. Retired Teachers Assn Meeting (M. Palacios)

11. **11 National Day of Prayer**  
    - 11:30 am: Goshen Positive Connections Lunch and Meeting

12. **12 National Day of Prayer**  
    - 11:30 am: FPC Ladies at Angel's House of Pancakes

13. **13 National Day of Prayer**  
    - 11:30 am: Montessori School Graduation

14. **14 National Day of Prayer**  
    - 11:30 am: Student Recital in Sanctuary (M. Yost)

15. **15 National Day of Prayer**  
    - 11:30 am: FPC Ladies at Angel's House of Pancakes

16. **16 National Day of Prayer**  
    - 11:30 am: Montessori School Graduation

17. **17 National Day of Prayer**  
    - 11:30 am: Student Recital in Sanctuary (M. Yost)

18. **18 National Day of Prayer**  
    - 11:30 am: FPC Ladies at Angel's House of Pancakes

19. **19 National Day of Prayer**  
    - 11:30 am: Montessori School Graduation

20. **20 National Day of Prayer**  
    - 11:30 am: Student Recital in Sanctuary (M. Yost)

21. **21 National Day of Prayer**  
    - 11:30 am: FPC Ladies at Angel's House of Pancakes

22. **22 National Day of Prayer**  
    - 11:30 am: Montessori School Graduation

23. **23 National Day of Prayer**  
    - 11:30 am: Student Recital in Sanctuary (M. Yost)

24. **24 National Day of Prayer**  
    - 11:30 am: FPC Ladies at Angel's House of Pancakes

25. **25 National Day of Prayer**  
    - 11:30 am: Montessori School Graduation

26. **26 National Day of Prayer**  
    - 11:30 am: Student Recital in Sanctuary (M. Yost)

27. **27 National Day of Prayer**  
    - 11:30 am: FPC Ladies at Angel's House of Pancakes

28. **28 National Day of Prayer**  
    - 11:30 am: Montessori School Graduation

29. **29 National Day of Prayer**  
    - 11:30 am: Student Recital in Sanctuary (M. Yost)

30. **30 National Day of Prayer**  
    - 11:30 am: FPC Ladies at Angel's House of Pancakes

31. **31 National Day of Prayer**  
    - 11:30 am: Montessori School Graduation

## Tuesday

1. **3 National Day of Prayer**

2. **4 National Day of Prayer**

3. **5 National Day of Prayer**

4. **6 National Day of Prayer**

5. **7 National Day of Prayer**

6. **8 National Day of Prayer**

7. **9 National Day of Prayer**

8. **10 National Day of Prayer**

9. **11 National Day of Prayer**

10. **12 National Day of Prayer**

## Wednesday

1. **1 National Day of Prayer**

2. **2 National Day of Prayer**

3. **3 National Day of Prayer**

4. **4 National Day of Prayer**

5. **5 National Day of Prayer**

6. **6 National Day of Prayer**

7. **7 National Day of Prayer**

8. **8 National Day of Prayer**

9. **9 National Day of Prayer**

10. **10 National Day of Prayer**

## Thursday

1. **1 National Day of Prayer**

2. **2 National Day of Prayer**

3. **3 National Day of Prayer**

4. **4 National Day of Prayer**

5. **5 National Day of Prayer**

## Friday

1. **1 National Day of Prayer**

2. **2 National Day of Prayer**

3. **3 National Day of Prayer**

4. **4 National Day of Prayer**

## Saturday

1. **1 National Day of Prayer**

2. **2 National Day of Prayer**

3. **3 National Day of Prayer**

4. **4 National Day of Prayer**

## Office Hours

- **Monday-Thursday:** 9:00 am - 12:00 noon  
  1:00 pm - 4:00 pm
- **Closed Friday**

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*Additional Information*:

- **Newsletter Deadline:** 24th
- **Office Hours:**
  - Monday-Thursday: 9:00 am - 12:00 noon
  - 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm
  - Closed Friday

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First Word (May 2018)
First Presbyterian Church
215 East Lincoln Avenue
Goshen, IN 46528

First Word
A publication of
First Presbyterian Church
215 East Lincoln Avenue, Goshen, IN 46528-3347

SUNDAY WORSHIP
Nursery-Preschool; 9:00 am
Children’s Worship & K-8 SS 10:15 am
Discover First Worship: 10:20 am
Fellowship before and after Discover First Worship
Free Community Spaghetti Dinner (1st Sunday after 1st Fridays); 6:00-7:00 pm
TUESDAY
Foundation (2nd); 6:00 pm
WEDNESDAY
Stitchers Bible Study (2nd); 2:00 pm
Chancel Choir; 6:30 pm
Worship Planning Team; 7:30 pm
THURSDAY
Thursday Group (2nd) 6:00 pm
Cancer Support Group (2nd & 4th); 7:00 pm; Library Session (3rd); 7:00 pm
FPC Ladies of the Church (4th); 11:30 am
FRIDAY
First Fridays (1st); 5:30-9:00 pm
SATURDAY
Monthly Work Day (3rd); 9:00 am-12:00 noon

Church Website:  www.discoverfirstchurch.org
www.facebook.com/discoverfirst
Pastor: agriffin46528@comcast.net
Secretary: jhickman46528@comcast.net
Treasurer: wkramer46528@comcast.net
Phone: (574) 533-7845; fax (574) 533-4864

Office Hours:
Monday-Thursday: 9:00 am-12:00 noon
Monday & Wednesday afternoon: By appointment
Tuesday & Thursday afternoon: 1:00-4:00 pm
Closed Friday

Church Staff:
Pastor: Alan Griffin
Secretary: Jeannie Hickman
Director of Music: Marcia Yost
Organist Emeritus: Dennis Huff
Treasurer: Wayne Kramer
Custodian: Betty Barber