

# December 2017



## FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN

### We Welcome Matt Matthews as Our Senior Pastor/Head of Staff

Matt will join the church staff sometime after the first of the year. Visit [www.firstpres.church/pastormatt](http://www.firstpres.church/pastormatt) to learn more. Here is a letter to the congregation from Matt...

Grace and Peace to members and friends of First Presbyterian Church, Champaign!

One sunny Saturday morning late this summer, the ministry of First Presbyterian Church barged into my consciousness when your thoughtful Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) phoned in for our first 'Skype' interview. Though they asked

tough questions, we laughed a lot.

They told me about their church, about you, about your past and the compelling challenges and hopes of your future. I remember thinking, This is exactly the sort of church of which I want to be a part. And these people are the sort of saints with whom I want to serve. Our 90-minute conversation was over in a second, and I

remembered hoping to learn more from what I've come to call the best PNC in the denomination.

Since that first Saturday morning, it's been a whirlwind of conversations with your PNC and references, visits, phone calls, cancelled flights (that's a long story), late-night conversations with my wife about how I was falling in love with this vital church in a town full of trees on the prairie, lonely prayers and spiritual hand-wringing, good natured arm-twisting, shared Bible study, intimate worship, and huddles with my sons who have offered wise counsel about vocation, passion, and ministry. This call began as a few sparks, a vague possibility. Now—verily—it is an ample fire.

I can't wait to get to know you. I'm eager to join the work of your Session, staff, and ministry teams. While I speak no French, this will change: I want to get to know the Central Africans who have found welcome here. I want to finger paint with children, push the boundaries of faith with teens, learn with and from both newcomers to and old-timers in the faith. I have much to learn, and, I believe,

### *Christmas Eve*

**9 AM Worship**

**4 PM Family Service**

**8 PM Candlelight Service**

### *New Year's Eve*

**9 AM Worship**

**Services will be in the Sanctuary.  
There will be no Sunday School on  
Christmas Eve nor New Year's Eve  
morning.**



God has much for us to do and be together. The church of Jesus Christ as an institution has shape-shifted. Certainly, it has gotten smaller. Time-honored ways of doing things have changed under our feet. Old paradigms have shifted and the new ways haven't all clearly emerged. The future of the church is as dubious for us as it was for our ancestors but for different reasons. What is not uncertain is that God remains near, curious, and active by the power of the Spirit in the person of Jesus, whose name is Emmanuel—God with us. And God's promises are as true now as ever. While the so-called "Nones" and "Dones" have little interest in spinning plates in a tired institution from which they feel distant, I believe their bones ache like mine for the welcome fires of the Gospel. So, with the Apostle Paul, I want to say, badly paraphrasing *Philippians 4*, Rejoice in the LORD. Don't fret. Don't be overcome by apathy. Keep pouring your hearts out loving the world through the ministries of your church. Show up. Contribute. Pray. We have compelling and transformative work to do.

Naturally, when your PNC called, I said yes. Yes, I want to hear more of your story. Yes, I want to join Christ's compelling ministry at First Presbyterian. Yes, I trust God to help, heal, lead, reform, redeem. Yes, Rachel and I may possibly survive a cold Champaign winter; and, yes, we both are eager to walk with you into a New Spring, even into a New Heaven and a New Earth.

PEACE

Matt Matthews



Congregation hears remarks of Pastor Matt after election. The congregation's first pastor, Robert Dean, was installed in 1850.



William Parramore Matthews, Jr. (Pastor Matt) accepts call.



John Mark, Rachel, Faith (family friend), Benjamin and Joseph Matthews watch as new pastor addresses congregation following his election.

**We Need Your Photo!** To help our new Senior Pastor (and others!), we would love to have a photo of each member/active participant in the church database. If you have a photo that you would like to use, please email it to [photos@firstpres.church](mailto:photos@firstpres.church) (or you can add it yourself through the church management software at [www.firstpres.info](http://www.firstpres.info)). If you do not send us one, we will take a quick photo of you between services. Look for more information soon.

## A Glimpse Into Our Past

A fire in 1909 damaged carpeting, the organ, choir loft and windows. These were repaired and replaced and the southwest wing with the Parlor was added. The cellar was finished off for classroom space in 1931, and the basement area was modernized in the early 1950's, resulting in Centennial Hall. The Christian Education Building was built in 1958-1960, giving much needed additional space for church activities.

## Angel Tree An Annual Tradition

BY KRISTI CORBIN, MISSIONS COORDINATOR  
(kristi@firstpres.church)

FPCC will continue the annual Christmas tradition of having an Angel Tree. The Angel Tree will again focus on items from the wish lists of local agencies that Community Mission Deacons supports. The Angel Tree will be a tangible way to help our local community even with our reduced Missions budget.

Most of these agencies offer support to children and families; the original spirit of the Angel Tree to serve the youngest in our community remains alive. Also on the tree are items for the Relocation Ministry of our church, which helps some of our church's immigrant families move into homes. Children in those families will benefit daily from your donations of needed household items.

Each ornament on the tree represents an item on the wish list of a local agency. You may take as many ornaments as you wish! After you have purchased the item, please bring it to the church. Leave it unwrapped with the ornament taped to it and place it near the agency's name on the tables next to the Angel Tree. Items will be accepted until Sunday, December 17 and will be delivered the following week.

Cash or check donations are also a great choice. Monetary donations can be placed in offering plate during worship or sent to the office. Make check to the church with the agency's name in the memo line.

The Angel Tree is up now, so you can get started with the joy of giving.

Thank you, as always, for your generosity!

## Reach Out!

BY GARY & LINDA PETERSON, OUTREACH  
(amer\_swede@yahoo.com)

"Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God which he obtained with his own blood." *Acts 20:28*

If you haven't listened to the local Christmas radio station, you are in for a treat. From Thanksgiving evening through Christmas at midnight 97.9FM radio plays nothing but Christmas music. Tune in and you will hear Pastor Eric with an invitation to First Pres. You might also hear that the Program is sponsored in part by First Presbyterian Church of Champaign. Many thanks to The Gathering for sponsoring the ads.

Radio ads are only one way to reach the community and make them aware of our church. Community service is another form of outreach. First Pres is not a stranger to missional service. We are caring and friendly and do so many things right. But do we take care of the flock? Have you missed seeing someone in one of our services? Did you reach out to them? Do you have a neighbor or co-worker who doesn't attend church? Have you offered to pick them up and bring them with you? Are there special events or educational hours that a friend might like to attend? The best form of outreach is the personal invitation.

During the month of December, we will have exciting news to share about opportunities to reach out in the community. Start planning ahead, who do you want to tell about Pastor Matt coming in February? Who do you want to learn about God's love? Are you willing to step out of your comfort zone and bring more people to know Jesus Christ? How will you use your time and talents?

Your Outreach Committee wishes you a blessed Christmas season.



## God's Love on Display

For anyone who has not visited The Gathering lately, you're in for a treat. The Contemporary Worship Team commissioned a piece of textile art to hang in Centennial Hall. **Judy Gamble** designed and quilted the banner. It was dedicated on November 12.

Please come see this beautiful piece and let it remind you of the glories, grace and God's gift of his Son. Walk up to it, look at it close and then as you backup feel God's love.

We welcome donation of your extra **2018 Calendars** to support needs of our ESL Program and Logan Correctional Facility in Lincoln, IL. A box is available in the mission area of Westminster Hall for your donations.



## Prayer Corner



### Glory to God

At Christmas we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, our Savior, which was announced to shepherds by angels praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men/women on whom his favor rests." (Luke 2:14) The angels recognized God's gift of redemption for people as bringing glory in the highest to God and bringing peace to men and women on earth. This peace with God gives peace of both mind and soul.

After hearing the angels' message, the shepherds hurried to see the baby and then told others. Pray that we will tell others about our Savior's birth.

## Blues/Jazz Service at First Pres of Urbana

This season of the year, with short sunlight days, can be a time not of joy, but depression. Perhaps it is also the first time to celebrate without a loved one. Perhaps it is simply a time of loneliness. Maybe you just like jazz.

On Sunday, December 17 at 4 PM the Wellness Committee (of First Presbyterian Church of Urbana) will present our third annual "Blues" Jazz Worship service in the sanctuary. The 40 minute service will include live jazz music, scripture, anointing, candle lighting, prayer, and a time of sharing. There will be a reception with light refreshments following the service.

## Su Voz Daily Devotion

Su Voz (His Voice) is a daily devotion written by the people of the Presbyterian Reformed Church of Cuba. It is translated to English by members of the Presbyterian Cuba Partners Network and then distributed daily by email. To subscribe email Marcia at [marcia@firstpres.church](mailto:marcia@firstpres.church).

**Poinsettias will decorate our Sanctuary this holiday season. Poinsettias are \$13 per plant and can be given in honor or memory of someone.**

**Include "poinsettia" on your check along with a note of who it is given for.**

## Jays & Concerns

*We extend our sympathy to...*

- the family of **Michel Abangambole** on the death of his father;
- the family of **Gabriel and Solange (Goelle) Mboyo** on the death of his mother;
- the family and friends of **Evelyn Harness** who died November 11;
- the family and friends of **Chuck Keeling** who died November 22;
- the family and friends of **Paul Mortensen** who died November 25;
- the family and friends of **Helen Parro** who died November 14;
- the family and friends of **Carol Trulock** who died November 12.

*Congratulations to...*

- **Gladyle and Hyppe Mbungu** on the birth of son, **Espoir Mbungu** born November 6. His is the brother of Alex and Richi Mbungu.

## Our Church

### Children, Youth & Family Update

BY MINDY WATTS-ELLIS, DIRECTOR OF CYF  
(mindy@firstpres.church)

#### Sunday School Notes

In November, elementary and Middle School students studied the story of Jonah. The preschool explored the concept that 'I Obey my Parents.' The High School class continued to explore developing a relationship with God through love, faithfulness, and communication through prayer and scripture.

We will turn our attention to the Christmas story for Advent as the preschool learns "Jesus is God's Son" and the elementary learns about the Good News of Jesus' birth.

The confirmation class had their first retreat. We studied the sovereignty of God, had a pizza lunch, and explored some "hidden" areas of the church. Special thanks to **Chris Penny** for the exclusive tour. The students learned about recycling at our church and helped gather the recycling items for the environmental committee. They played a scavenger hunt to get more familiar with items and places in the building that are significant in some way, and we finished by making over 30 lunches for the homeless that were delivered directly to the Canteen Run for distribution that afternoon.

I hope you will consider being part of a teaching team for the Sunday School for the academic year. We need more teachers and helpers in order to have strong teams of leaders for the kids. Please prayerfully consider if you would be able to give two Sundays a month or more toward ministering to an age group of our children.

#### Youth Group

Our next youth connections gathering with youth from McKinley and First Presbyterian Church Urbana is December 10 at Market Place Mall in the afternoon from 12:30-2:30pm. We will have lunch in the food court and then divide into groups to shop for items requested by local families in need. The church will be providing funds for the shopping list. The shopping experience will be made more enjoyable by turning it into a game called Mall tag. Try to get all the items on our list before the time is up, but don't get tagged or you have to start back at the food court!

#### Children's Mission

The children made tags for the angel tree for the Advent season. Be sure to stop by the tree in Westminster Hall and take a few tags to help others in need this season.

#### Go and Serve Fundraiser

The annual Christmas cookie bake sale is set for December 17! Be sure to buy lots of cookies to share with neighbors and friends! The youth will be set up in Westminster Hall to sell the cookies by weight (don't worry, not your weight). We will be accepting, cash, check, and credit card. All proceeds go to fund the Go and Serve Mission trip in the summer.



It pays to volunteer with our Adopt-A-Highway clean-up crew. Volunteer **Mark Schoeffmann** recently found \$10 when helping on a Saturday morning.

**There will not be any Sunday School on December 24 or December 31. Sunday School will resume on January 7, 2018.**

## Making a Difference Stewardship Drive

BY MARK SCHOEFFMANN, FINANCE CHAIR  
(mschoeffmann@mchsi.com)

In order to continue our programs and ministry next year at the same level as this year, financial contributions need to increase by 7.5% to avoid deficit spending. As of the end of November we have reached 80% of this goal. This leaves us about \$140,000 below what is necessary for a balanced budget next year.

If you have not yet made a commitment for next year, please prayerfully consider your role in the financial future and activities of our church to ensure that we can continue to make a difference.

You may mail or drop off your pledge card in the church office or contact Marcia in the office by phone or email. Visit [www.firstpres.church/stewardship2018](http://www.firstpres.church/stewardship2018) for more information.

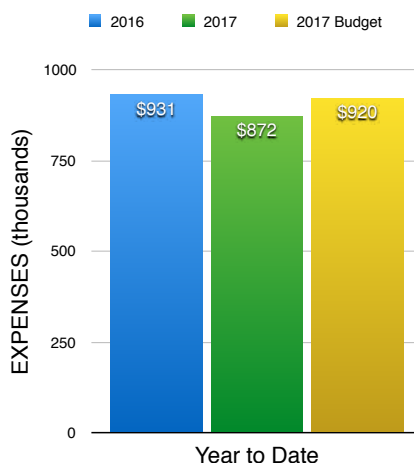
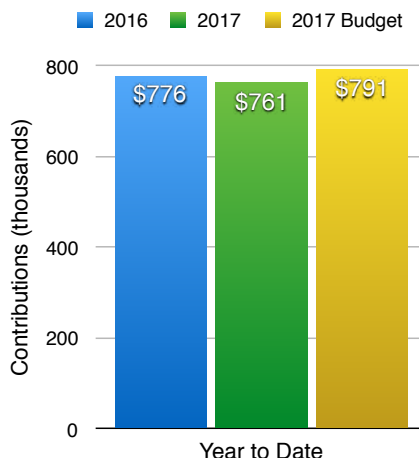
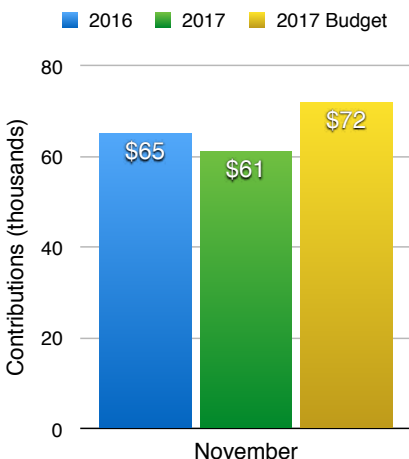
## Financial Update

### Contributions

Contributions in November were \$4K less than 2016 and \$12K below the budget at \$61K. The Year to Date total is below last year by \$15K and is below the budgeted amount by \$30K. These figures include prepaid pledges (those paid in the year prior to the pledge year) that are prorated over the year with 1/12 added to each month's contributions.

### Expenses

Year to Date expenses are \$48K below budget at \$872K and \$59K below 2016. Considering all sources, revenue exceeds expenses by \$4K which is \$69K better than at this time in 2016. This figure includes a \$29K transfer from other funds that was not made last year.



## A Good Neighbor New Americans Relocation Ministry

BY BOB KIRBY  
(rwk3213@gmail.com)

“Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.” *Hebrews 13:2*

The New Americans Relocation Ministry helps refugees and recent immigrants move to their first American homes. We provide basic household items to provide the means to sleep, cook and eat. While most donations come from First Pres, we also receive tax deductible gifts from individuals throughout Champaign County. We maintain two storage units to organize donations. Volunteers then donate their trucks or their time and strength to help recipients move items to their first homes. We pick up donations on most Saturday mornings.

We collaborate with Salt and Light, East Central Illinois Refugee Mutual Assistance Center, CU-FAIR and Twice is Nice Thrift Shop.

Currently the most needed items are mattresses (full or queen), dining sets and small lamp tables. We have continuing need for rice cookers, microwaves and large stew pots. Your cash donations will help defer costs of storage.

We welcome volunteers and always your prayers.

More information contact our church office at 217-356-7238 or [info@firstpres.church](mailto:info@firstpres.church)



**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN**

302 West Church Street  
Champaign, IL 61820

Change Service Requested

## Christmas Tea

Thursday, December 7 12 NOON

Westminster Hall

Light lunch served



**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN**

### Pastors:

Eric Corbin..... Covenant Associate Pastor, Ext. 214

302 West Church Street  
Champaign, IL 61820

**P:** 217.356.7238

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[www.firstpres.church](http://www.firstpres.church)

### Sunday:

8 AM Contemplative Service

9 AM Traditional Service

9:15 AM Children's Sunday School

10:10 AM Adult Education & High School Class

11 AM Contemporary Service

### Saturday:

6 PM Praise & Prayer Gathering

(French-English Service) Centennial Hall

### Staff:

Kristi Corbin ..... Missions Coordinator, Ext. 219

Ritchie Drennen ..... Facility Maintenance

Patty Farthing..... Receptionist, Ext. 211

Robert Ferrer..... Audio-visual Technician

Marcia Franks ..... Administrative Assistant, Ext. 210

Joe Grant ..... Director of Music

Blaise Pascal ... Asst Director Children, Youth & Family, Ext 216

Chris Penny ..... Facilities Manager, Ext. 237

Ann Petry ..... Accounting, Ext. 224

Jeanette Pyne..... ESL Coordinator, Ext 235

Richard Rossi ..... Church Musician

Mindy Watts-Ellis .. Director Children, Youth & Family, Ext. 212

**The newsletter is published monthly. Deadline is the last Monday of the month for the following month's publication. Send submissions to [marcia@firstpres.church](mailto:marcia@firstpres.church).**