

February 2019



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN

*You are invited
to a "Service for Wholeness"
in First Presbyterian Church Sanctuary
at 6 PM Sunday evening, February 10*

A "Service for Wholeness" is a quiet worship service where we share words of scripture, song, and prayer focused on spiritual and physical wholeness.

The service is designed for people who are grieving, hurting, or in prayer for others who grieve and are hurting. Some come to these services to pray for a friend and to be in prayer for the world. Some come because the world worries them. Others come with burdens and personal pain.

People are welcome to sit quietly through the service and participate in the singing and praying as they wish. Some will come forward for brief one-on-one prayer with one of the pastors or elders, an anointing of oil, and a prayer.

Scripture strongly affirms ministries of spiritual healing. The root of the word healing in New Testament Greek, *sozo*, is the same as that of salvation and whole-ness. Christian healing is about whole-ness---what the Hebrews knew as *shalom*. Sickness is not limited to physical illness. Our past experiences of hurt, our sometimes tangled emotions, and our inability to forgive or be forgiven, all make us less than whole and in need of healing. Spiritual healing is God's work of offering persons balance, harmony, and whole-ness of body, mind, spirit, and relationships through confession, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

Calendar Notes

Sunday, February 10

Youth Group Fundraiser

12:30 PM New Member Lunch

6:00 PM Service for Wholeness

Sunday, February 17

10:00 AM Annual Meeting

12:15 PM Congregational Lunch

Sunday, February 24

4:00 PM SAFE House Benefit

Monday, February 25

Cuba Trip Departs

Wednesday, March 6 Ash Wednesday

6:30 PM Ash Wednesday Service

Sunday, March 10

10:00 AM Youth Pancake Breakfast

Sunday, March 24

New Officers Ordained/
Installed

4:00 PM Mission Possible Potluck

Mission Updates

Cuba Calling

Our annual congregational trip to Cuba will be February 25 to March 4. We will tell you all about it at our Annual Cuba Forum on Saturday, May 4, at 9 AM and celebrate again with our Cuba Two Step –salsa lessons and an authentic Cuba dinner- on Cuba Sunday, May 5.

For eight years we have traveled for a week of fellowship and religious activities with our brothers and sisters in Havana. We have also visited for vacation bible school and milestone events of the Cuban Church. We have reciprocated in hosting Cubans in our church and homes. Travelers this year will be **Robert Ferrer, Judi Geistlinger, Claudia and Bob Kirby and Rachel and Matt Matthews.**

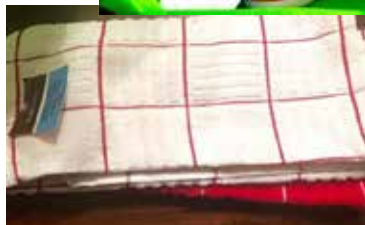
The Presbyterian Reformed Church in Cuba began in the synod of the Presbytery of New Jersey in 1890 until it became autonomous in 1967. The congregation of our sister church at Luyanó has similarities to our own. Many congregants are highly educated and travel far from their neighborhoods to the church. A church van transports people to and from church each Sunday and to special events during the week.

They have a strong mission program and a dedicated Presbyterian women's group. A large number of children attend without their parents. Worship is a joyful one following a worship order very similar to that at First Champaign. We truly feel at home at Luyanó.

We thank all the congregation for supporting this sisterhood. A special thanks for special gifts this year given by our Nifty Knitters, Presbyterian Women and Champaign First Cuba Partners.

Abundance Overflowing

Presbyterians are generous with their prayers, time and treasures. Thanks for your gifts for our brothers and sisters at Luyanó.



Over the counter drugs are unavailable so those we take are divided into used medicine bottles and distributed frugally to congregants as needed. Kitchen towels are needed in the church kitchen and are not affordable even when available. Thanks to DREaAM families for giving. The women's intercessory knitting mission prepares layettes for newborns in the neighborhood hospital. Soap is generally not available so a gift of soap and a hand knitted washcloth will be given from our Nifty Knitters along with yarn. The children's ministry continues to grow. The Luyanó session requested children's shoes. Thanks to our Presbyterian Women for donating 22 pairs of new sneakers.

Cuba Hit by Recent Tornado...Give to Disaster Relief-Cuba

This designated account supplements the One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) offering to enable a significant response for humanitarian relief and disaster response efforts in Cuba. Your faithful giving is deeply appreciated. (DR000150)

Your check can be made to First Presbyterian Church memo Cuba Storm DR000150 or you can call 800-872-3213 or mail to Presbyterian Church USA, PO Box 643700, Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3700 memo: DR000150

Parkland College Collaboration

Project Read, a free adult literacy program, is funded by the Illinois State Library. Our local provider is Parkland College.

Volunteer tutors are the foundation of the program. They work with people seeking their GED and those learning English as a foreign language. Tutors receive 14 hours of training. Schedules for tutors are flexible with opportunities to teach intermittently.

Our Easy English Fellowship at 10 on Sunday morning is a collaboration between Project Read and First Presbyterian. There are opportunities to get to know fellow worshipers from other countries by teaching English as a conversation partner, in a classroom or in a drop in conversation group.

For more information about becoming a Project Read tutor see:
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60b0c49a5a728a6ff2-tutor>

Help Needed For Food Deliveries

Help is needed throughout the year for *empty tomb* food deliveries. First Pres has long partnered with *empty tomb* in providing groceries to those in need. You determine when you are available. *empty tomb* will contact you with a name and address of a family. You then shop for groceries at County Market, charge to the church's account and deliver the groceries to the family. Stop by the Welcome Center Sunday mornings to volunteer and learn more.

Mission Money Helps Supports Girls School at Sangla Hill in Pakistan

December 2018

To the Session and Congregation of First
Presbyterian Church in Champaign, Illinois,

Your recent gift to Friends of PEB is very much appreciated! To renew scholarships is so important and then to provide new scholarships for girls is wonderful!

I have been to Pakistan twice and hope to return again in 2019. I had the privilege of staying on the Sangla Hill campus in the boarding house for a couple of nights. Visiting the staff, the schools, meeting the students and seeing them at their class work and benefiting from their smiles is hard to adequately describe.

Your gift to Friends of PEB makes a difference. You are providing the students, their families, and the schools with encouragement, opportunity and hope! Thank you for joining hands with all of us in helping make great things happen for the young women of Sangla Hill.

Blessings for this holiday season,



Debra Hough
FOPEB Board Member

First Pres ESL Updates

BY JEANETTE PYNE, ESL COORDINATOR

JEANETTE@FIRSTPRES.CHURCH

The Morning Class

We started our morning classes again on January 8, 2019 with our students eager to begin again. We started learning about how to describe our daily routines, our likes and dislikes, and hobbies. This thematic unit allows students to practice important grammar points like the past tense and to get to know each other better at the start of the new year.

A fair number of students leave the program in December to go back to their home countries, so we have been registering new students into our classes this month. So far, we have had 7 students register for the morning classes. They come from Cuba, Afghanistan, South Korea, Brazil, and Belarus.



One of our students, Sarah from DRC, is talking while everyone listens attentively.

The Wednesday Evening Class

We started our night class on January 16th, 2019. We have 7 students who come from Brazil, China, and Mexico attending classes. They are all beginners who are fun, engaging, and very eager to learn English. There are two volunteer tutors who come to teach the Wednesday night group. Christie teaches the low beginner group, and Eugenia teaches the high beginner group. It is very exciting that we can have two separate classes to accommodate the students' differing needs.



Prayer Requests

- Pray that the Lord will grow the Wednesday night class, and we would be able to serve more people in providing quality English instruction.
- Pray for the health of tutors and students during this cold and flu season.



Mary (left) and Aida (right) are two of our students from the Wednesday evening class.

The program continues to remain very diverse. We have students from 20 countries in our classes. They come from Afghanistan, Albania, Belarus, Brazil, China, Cuba, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ecuador, Guatemala, Iran, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, Peru, Russia, South Korea, Taiwan, Vietnam, Yemen. This gives us the opportunity to learn so much from each other about different countries, languages, cultures, and customs.

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation
will be held Sunday, February 17,
immediately following the 9 AM service
in the Sanctuary.

Congregational Life

Nurturing

Membership, Fellowship, Hospitality

BY GARY PETERSON, CHAIR
AMER_SWEDE@YAHOO.COM

We will be offering a conversation for those interested in either finding out more about First Church or in joining our family of faith. The discussion will be held in Westminster Hall on Sunday, February 10, 2019 from 12:30 – 2 PM. Lunch will be served. If you wish to join, you may join after lunch.

Sign-ups for the 7, 8 or 9 dinners are still being accepted until February 17. You can sign up on line at firstpres.church/dinners789; The Welcome Center or email lindakpete@gmail.com.

The Fellowship Committee along with The Gathering are hosting a lunch on February 17 directly after the 11:15 service in Centennial Hall. The theme is *God Is Love*. Special music is being planned for The Gathering service so come join us at 11:15 for worship and a brunch type meal afterward.

Please let us know if you would like to attend or to help in anyway. Contact **Linda Peterson** at lindakpete@gmail.com.

Spiritual Formation

BY BETTY HOLLISTER
B.HOLL@MEDIACOMBB.NET

Back by Popular Demand: Faith in the Real World. Please join us in the Sanctuary right after 9 AM worship for guest lectures arranged by **Peter Yau**. We will be exploring a wide range of topics all related to walking our faith through our professions and/or passions into the real world.

So, grab a quick cup of coffee and then join us at 10:15 for the next several Sundays.

As a special “treat” to help us focus on the real meaning of Valentine’s Day, the **Rev. Dr. Rachel Matthews** will lead us in an exploration of the Languages of Love on February 10. The agenda for speakers, topics and dates follows. Be sure to mark your calendars, so you don’t miss a single one.

February 3
Government and Law – **Tom Ulen**
February 10
Words of Love – **Rachel Matthews**
February 17
Immigration and Justice – **Bob Kirby**
February 24
Music and Worship – **Joe Grant**
March 3
Scenes from America – society, justice—**Christopher Cappiolata**

Participants in the *One Blood: Parting Words to the Church on Race and Love* have decided to continue their focus via a digital prayer chain for 30 days. Volunteers will choose a day to write a prayer asking God for continued guidance in our efforts to discern our roles in biblical reconciliation in our church, our community and our nation. Anyone who wishes to participate will receive the emails to hopefully motivate and inspire continued personal discernment and action through prayer.

Even if you were not part of the study, we welcome your participation. Email **Rittchell Yau** (ryconnectsend@gmail.com) or **Betty Hollister** (b.holl@mediacombb.net) if you would like to be included on this prayer chain.

Worship News

BY JUDI GEISTLINGER
JUDIGEISTLINGER@OUTLOOK.COM

In January we started offering a live French translation of the 9 AM worship service. Likely, you won’t see the transla-

tor work her linguistic magic, but you might see a few of our congregants wearing headphones. Help us get the word to those who might need the service. We can purchase more headsets if needed. We are striving to be a welcoming congregation for all who enter our doors.

Challenge to you this month...how far can you stray from your pew during the passing of the peace to meet new people and share God’s love all over the sanctuary?

Ash Wednesday Service

Lent is only a month away! This year we are starting the season with a different kind of service than we have done for the last few years. Join us in the Sanctuary on Wednesday, March 6, at 6:30 PM for a brief Lenten service of contemplation and the imposition of ashes.

Sign Up to Assist in Worship

Worship is the work God’s people.

- If you feel called to assist in leading worship once every few months, please sign up online at: firstpres.church/liturgists or contact **Judi Geistlinger** at: judi.geistlinger@outlook.com
- Interested in being a greeter and being part of the warm welcome at First Champaign? Contact **Ginny Waaler**.
- Willing to serve as an usher? Contact **Nancy Martin**.
- Not terrified of technology and willing to serve from the back of the sanctuary? Contact **Robert Ferrer**.
- Remember what it is like to sit with squirming children in worship? Contact **Mindy Watts-Ellis** or ask an usher where the worship boxes are to help keep children occupied during the sermon.

For any of the above, contact the church office if you prefer, let them know of your willingness to serve and they will put you in touch with the coordinators.



Pray Before Speaking

We all have times when we blurt out words that we later regret saying. We have forgotten God's warning in James 1:19. "My dear brothers/sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry." As people created in God's image, we have the ability to speak: the ability to use words that hurt as well as those that heal.

Sometimes we need to stop and give a quick prayer asking God to help us listen to all sides of a discussion and then either speak calmly or remain silent.

The Gathering Service to Celebrate the History of Jazz on Sunday, February 17

In 1965, Duke Ellington wrote the first of his three Sacred Concerts. Ellington called these concerts "the most important thing I have ever done". "Religious officials had been lobbying Ellington for years to do such a concert, and he finally overcame his ambivalence and agreed to it. Ellington later said that he prayed about his inner conflict; he was the most private of public figures and felt strongly that such a concert would have to be a complete act of worship, without any of the gamesmanship of show business." (Johnson, 2011)

These pieces are moving and haunting in their ability to express faith and the journey that we take in following God. Sunday, February 17, the Gathering service will join that journey with the music of Ellington, Miles Davis, John Coltrane and a few others.

The sermon that day will bring several of Duke's compositions to life in a smaller, more intimate setting than first performed 50 years ago. Join in celebrating the beauty of jazz and the journey in faith we can travel together.

Jays & Concerns

We express our sympathy...

- To **Marilyn Hunter Shimkus** on the death of her husband, Robert, on January 28, 2019.
- To the Moanda-Maye family on the death in the Congo of **Nicole Moanda**, brother of Carine Moanda.

Children, Youth & Family

Children, Youth & Family Update

BY MINDY WATTS-ELLIS, DIRECTOR OF CYF

mindy@firstpres.church

LIZZ PIPPEN, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

LIZZ@FIRSTPRES.CHURCH

Sunday School Notes

In January, the preschool studied the concept 'I Learn About God.' The elementary classes studied Jesus' Big Words of witness, peacemaking, and trust from the Sermon on the Mount. The Middle School class studied the story of the Centurion in the New Testament, worked on improving their Bible skills, and studied the 12 disciples. The High School class continued to study the lectionary using *Feasting on the Word for Youth*.

In February our preschool class will focus on "I say thank you." The elementary classes are learning the story of Jesus healing the ten lepers, but only one returning to thank him. They will also begin to learn about Jesus feeding the 5,000. The Middle school class will continue to work on their Bible skills, learn about Simon Peter and the Syrophonecian woman.

Mindy will be out of the office February 5-9 to attend the Association of Presbyterian Church Educators Conference.

Youth Group

January:

Mark your calendars! Youth Group has two upcoming fundraisers for Triennial. Sunday, February 10 we will have a cookie mix sale for \$6. A perfect gift for a special person in your life for Valentine's day later that week.

Sunday, March 10, we will be hosting a pancake breakfast during the education hour. Stop in before heading to class or

come near the end and stay for worship at 11:15 in Centennial Hall.

In January, the youth group kicked back off with a winter retreat over MLK weekend. 17 students attended and stayed overnight at the church followed by joining others at the University of Illinois Day of Service. We put together birthday surprise bags for Cunningham Children's Home.

Teens mark your calendar for Sunday, February 24 for our trip to Elevate. This event is for middle and high school students. High School Youth group meets Sundays 5:30-7, if you are interested in being involved contact **Lizz Pippin** at lizz@firstpres.church or by phone at 314-620-5901.

In Sunday School, the Middle School class has been working on their bible skills as well as studying New Testament ancestors. The High School class has been continuing with *Feasting on the Word*, which follows the lectionary. Most recently, we had a vigorous discussion on worship and what it looks like at different times and how it is similar across communities.

High Schoolers and parents if you are interested in helping with hurricane relief in Florida over spring break contact **Rev. Keith Harris** with McKinley Church, on campus, to find out more about getting involved in their trip. k-harris@mckinley-church.org.

Chocolate chip cookie mix for sale in Westminster Hall this Sunday, February 10, for \$6 a bag. Makes a great Valentine's gift for someone special. All proceeds will benefit our youth program.



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CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN**

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Change Service Requested



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Sunday:

8 AM Contemplative Service

9 AM Traditional Service

10:15 AM Sunday School and Adult Education

10:10 AM Adult Education & High School Class

11:15 AM Contemporary Service

Saturday:

6 PM Praise & Prayer Gathering
(French-English Service) Centennial Hall

Pastors:

Matt Matthews Senior Pastor/Head of Staff, Ext 213
Eric Corbin Associate Pastor, Ext. 214

Staff:

George Almasi Facility Assistant
Ritchie Drennen Facility Manager, Ext. 237
Patty Farthing Receptionist, Ext. 211
Robert Ferrer Audio-visual Technician
Marcia Franks Administrative Assistant, Ext. 210
Joe Grant Director of Music
Blaise Pascal CYF Connections Assistant, Ext. 216
Ann Petry Accounting, Ext. 224
Lizz Pippin CYF Associate Director, Ext. 216
Jeanette Pyne ESL Coordinator, Ext. 235
Pierre Tang Church Musician/Children's Choir Director
Mindy Watts-Ellis .. Director Children, Youth & Family, Ext. 212

All staff email addresses are the person's first name followed by
@firstpres.church. For example, eric@firstpres.church.

**The newsletter is published monthly. Deadline is the last
Monday of the month for the following month's edition.
Send submissions to marcia@firstpres.church.**