

June 2020



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN

Snippets from your Pastor/ Matt Matthews

BY MATT MATTHEWS
MATT@FIRSTPRES.CHURCH

Friends,

I sit on the leadership team of the Illinois Conference of Churches (ICC), . . . In lament and through prayer and tears we drafted the following statement about racism.

Do you know how difficult it is to write a statement about anything? Try writing wedding vows. Try writing a special letter to your grandchild. Or your friend. That's easier said than done.

So, the ICC talked about this statement and then set about writing it. When we tried to put words down on paper we found the first draft failed to capture what we wanted to say. This tenth draft is not perfect, but we felt like it contributed helpfully to the conversation not only about race but about living into our call of being disciples of Jesus and children of God.

A statement on racism and the death of George Floyd May 30, 2020

The Illinois Conference of Churches decided, many years ago, to be an intentionally anti-racist organization. This concern of ours springs from our understanding of the Christian faith which we together profess. Jesus, the Son of God become human, bonded himself to all human beings, without exception. We are to recognize his image in every human being.

We know well that racism has a threatening grip upon all in American society, including Christians. We enjoy no immunity from "America's original sin." Our anti-racism is an ongoing struggle with the ways in which our own perceptions of human beings have been formed and deformed. We repent of our racism even as we shine a light on the manifestations of this sin, which can easily be found throughout our history and right up to the present day.

continued on the next page

2020-2021 Presbyterian Women Officers

Moderator	Brandi Lowe
Moderator – elect	Clemmie Ackerman
Secretary	Linda Peterson
Treasurer	Carol Penka
Missions	Kathy Schoeffmann
Programs	Kathy Kinser
Yearbook	Carol Miles
Historian	Carol Penka
Circle Study Coordinators	Judi Geistlinger and Rachel Matthews
Circle Study Coordinator-elect	Pat Phillips
Cribs	Joanne Walther
Layettes	Julie Shult
Church Women United (CWU)	Sandy Carr
Flowers	Sandy Carr
House	Kathy Kinser and Ginny Waaler
Membership	-
Prayer Chain	Jane Seiler
Publicity	Pat Phillips
News and Notes	Virginia Erickson
Search 1 yr	Martha Henderson and Sallie Hutton
2 yr	Carol Penka and -
3 yr	Mary Lou Bauer and -
PW of SEI Presbytery	Mary Lou Bauer, Mary Gritten
Helping Hands (4 members)	Lola Ruthsmandorfer, Clemmie Ackerman, Marty Edwards, Claudia Kirby
Meals on Wheels	Becky Muirhead
Memorial Receptions	Mary Gritten, Nancy Brombaugh, Barb Fuller-Curry, Joanne Walther, Ann Webbink
Knifty Knitters	Brandi Lowe

The death of a black man, Mr. George Floyd, handcuffed and apparently cooperative, at the hands of four police officers who held Mr. Floyd on the ground with a knee to his neck for over eight minutes while Mr. Floyd can be heard saying, "I can't breathe," has sparked a conversation on race our churches and culture often prefer to avoid. We await and work for the day—with what we believe is holy impatience—when all human beings are afforded equal justice under the law of this nation and the law written on the human heart by our God.

We do not condone all the ways in which the outrage of citizens in cities around the nation has been expressed. We do, however, recognize that feelings of outrage and lament are fitting and Biblical witnesses to injustice.

We, the Leadership Team of the Illinois Conference of Churches, speak out against all racism and racist actions. We ask all persons of faith to join us in prayer and self-examination, asking God to help us see God's image in the faces of our neighbor and to love our neighbor as we love ourselves.

The Leadership Team of the Illinois Conference of Churches

E. Garnet Fay
Gregory Krohm
The Reverend Kevin Laughery
The Reverend Matt Matthews
The Reverend Catiana McCay
The Reverend Gary McCants
The Reverend Galda McCants
The Reverend Walter Carlson

A Sunday Sermon

Friends,

Allen Huff and I have been part of the same study group for 24-years. He is pastor of the Jonesborough Presbyterian Church in Jonesborough, Tennessee. I read

his Sunday sermons on Sunday afternoons and sometimes feel very small; I wish I wrote sermons like that. In my mind he maintains the proper balance of challenge and push with comfort and hope. Allen is such a thoughtful, biblical preacher. This is his Pentecost sermon; I share it with you with his permission.

PEACE,
Matt Matthews

"Claim the Voice, Share Your Gift"
Numbers 11:24-30 and Acts 2:1-13
Allen Huff

The stories we just read from Numbers and Acts are stories of God's people in crisis. They show us the Hebrews wandering in the Sinai wilderness and the very first Christians in Jerusalem hiding from Roman guards who take delight in unrestricted brutality. Both groups find themselves at critical cross roads. They're displaced and struggling to discern their identity and purpose. The particular leaders involved—Moses in the wilderness and the Apostles in Jerusalem—come to God confessing their emptiness and vulnerability. As faithful, diligent, and creative as they may be, they know that, on their own, they cannot overcome their predicaments. They need help.

Leadership in any human community can be an intensely demanding responsibility. It requires gifts of discernment, courage, and decisiveness. And because leadership is fundamentally an act of service, it also requires mature sensibilities of empathy, humility, and justice. Perhaps most challenging for individualistic and competitive cultures like ours, effective leadership requires a commitment to the well-being of others before one's own well-being. Without these attributes, leaders may become like Pharaoh, for whom neither slavery nor genocide is too high a price to guard power and wealth; or like the sons of Eli who are spoiled, selfish, and deaf

to wisdom and holiness; or like King Saul who, lacking any gift for leadership, goes insane before everyone's eyes.

All of these so-called leaders face crises, and all of them, ignoring higher virtues, seek the guidance of flatterers and the illusion of security-through-violence. Their stories live on in scripture, and we read them and heed them as cautionary tales.

Moses and the Apostles face their crises differently.

In Numbers, the Israelites are newly-freed slaves. They're on their own, on the run, and complaining about how tired and hungry they are. Their escape from Egypt has become a desert pilgrimage that seems crueler and more terrifying than Pharaoh's slave drivers. Israel's story illustrates that when something gets the best of us, only the worst remains. And when it all becomes too much, the Hebrews project all their fear and anxiety onto Moses. Did you bring us out here to kill us?! We were better off in Egypt! That same despair and craving for control would lead them to try to replace Yahweh with a golden calf.

In Acts, the disciples feel all alone in the world. They had expected Jesus to do to Rome what Rome had been doing to Israel, and the rest of the known world. After the crucifixion, though, the disciples had to have wondered if Jesus had been the kind of person Hosea warned about: "They shall be like the morning mist, or the dew that goes away early." (Hosea 13:3a) Was Jesus just that? Humidity? Even after the resurrection, the disciples find themselves mired in a kind of static wandering. "What do we do now?" they ask.

While Moses and the Apostles often prove flawed and fumbling, they're still servants of God. During their crises, for all their frustration and helplessness, they begin to find themselves opened by and opening to something mysterious and

moving—a pulsating Holiness, a Spirit who comes not to resolve every crisis, but to help shoulder the burden of leading God's people through the uncertainties and complexities of crisis. Having said that, the Spirit reveals itself as a gift being offered not simply to people like Moses and the Apostles. The Spirit proves to be a gift made available to all people through the likes of Moses, Joshua, Peter, and Paul. True leaders, in the household of faith and elsewhere, are those who embrace their own giftedness and who seek to recognize, nurture, and give voice to the giftedness of others.

Remember Moses' story: Some of Moses' spirit leaks out beyond the designated seventy to a couple of nobodies named Eldad and Medad. When they prophesy, Joshua says, Moses, stop them!

And Moses, who is learning more by the moment, scolds his reactionary assistant, saying, "Are you jealous for my sake?" I wish God's Spirit would fall on every one of you! The Spirit makes prophets of all of us!

Remember what happens in Jerusalem, too. "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?" Luke goes on to name sixteen different nationalities and ethnicities who hear the gospel being proclaimed in their own languages.

Those who watch all of this happen are bewildered. And who wouldn't be? To see it demonstrated that God dwells inherently and intentionally in all people (Genesis 1:26a), that God's Word really is written on human hearts (Jeremiah 31:33), and that no one and no thing lies beyond the loving desire and redeeming reach of God (Acts 9:1-19a)—such revelations challenge the comfortable but mistaken notions of redemptive violence and any kind of cultural supremacy.

In both Sinai and Jerusalem, God's Spirit is present through the outpouring of prophetic speech, through gracious words uttered by folks who are ordinary, fallible, hesitant human beings.

Many voices in our world claim holy authority. And many of those voices are diametrically opposed to each other. And some seem diametrically opposed to Jesus. While we're not called to judge, we are called, as individuals and as communities, to discern.

When I hear a voice claiming prophetic status, I listen for accents of love, peace-making, forgiveness, compassion, and grateful openness to all of God's Creation. To me, such things declare the presence of the Holy Spirit. By contrast, when a voice claiming prophetic authority provokes fear, division, and vengeance, when it creates barriers to relationship and healing, I don't trust that voice.

It seems to me that many of the voices screaming at the extremes right now are, effectively, one voice. At the poles, the voices of groups like white supremacists, who are on record as wanting to incite a race war¹, and Antifa, who is on record advocating eye-for-an-eye violence against the increasingly visible far right², tear equally at the wounded, fragile body of Creation. And here's the hard part: When we hear voices spread ignorance and fear, when we hear them confuse insults and judgment with analysis and critique, when we hear the Church declare that the God of Abraham and Jesus can be bought and satisfied with blood, within and around all of that, the Holy Spirit is calling us into the fray to bear prophetic witness to something entirely new and different, yet entirely ancient and archetypal. We're being called to proclaim the God of Spirit and Truth, the God of deliverance and restorative justice.

Brothers and sisters, today many people feel like wanderers in deserts of pandemic, racism, unleashed fury, and burning cities. Let's remember, though, we are disciples. We follow a resurrected Christ whose Spirit is with us and calling us to claim our prophetic voice. As the Church, we are gathered in the power of the Holy Spirit who fills us and sends out to speak so confidently of God's redeeming love and reunifying Shalom that we sound drunk to those who live in fear and loathing of their neighbors and the future.

This is our Pentecostal gift—to live as ones who lead the way through death-shadowed valleys and storm-tossed seas toward the wholeness and hope of God's resurrecting grace.

¹<https://www.adl.org/blog/white-supremacists-embrace-race-war>

²<https://thehill.com/policy/national-security/350524-antifa-activists-say-violence-is-necessary>

Employee Highlights

BY ANN STOUT, HUMAN RESOURCES
mrsas2003@gmail.com

The Human Resource Team periodically likes to keep you informed about our wonderful staff who keeps our church and its programs functioning smoothly. In spite of being “sheltered in place” and “socially distant” our staff continues to work diligently to keep our ministries running as smoothly as possible. There is a mountain of work being done behind the scenes to produce the Sunday morning services and the Wednesday night get-togethers in addition to the routine tasks of administering the ministries and maintaining the buildings and grounds. We are so fortunate that we have this excellent staff! This month we are featuring **Eric Corbin** and **Blaise Pascal**.

Eric Corbin

Eric is no stranger to those of us at FPCC. He has been with us for about five years now, serving as associate pastor and, for a short while, as interim pastor. We are familiar with his great preaching, his first class technology skills and his sense of humor. In addition, HR has discovered a few things that you may not know about him.

Eric participated in marching band from junior high school through college. On two separate trips he visited nearly 20 national parks in 18 states.

He went to the top of Crazy Horse monument in South Dakota.

He has done computer programming work for the Sara Lee Corporation.

He drove a Prius before driving a Prius was cool.

Eric and his wife, Kristi, and their three children, Faith, Anna, and Christopher, like to vacation at Holiday World in Santa Claus, IN.

Lastly, Eric has the refined good taste to love chocolate.

Blaise Pascal

Blaise is the man behind the big smile welcoming the children to Sunday School on Sunday mornings. He has been working for FPCC part time for the last two

years and he has several responsibilities. In addition to greeting and keeping track of attendance, he coordinates the Sunday School transportation, he assists in the teaching duties, he is the English-French translator and, very importantly, he is the liaison to the French speaking families. In addition, he works in the public schools as an assistant teacher in math, physics, ESL, algebra, and geometry.

Blaise and his family arrived in the US in February of 2016, immigrating from the Democratic Republic of Congo. Blaise and his wife, Thethe, have three children, one son, Rayan, and two daughters, Audrey and Blessing. In his spare time, he likes to read books, watch political TV, and chat with others. He also likes vanilla ice cream, frozen yogurt, Congolese gospel music, and Congolese rumba.

Blaise is a man who puts God at the center of his life. As a result, he has a polite and cooperative nature and he cares about his students and puts their interest above his own.

Please keep our staff in your prayers as we all deal with this pandemic that has significantly altered our lives.

Good News Yet Sad News

Good news for **Richard Rossi**, our church musician, is sad news for us. Read his resignation letter below.

May 2020

Dear Pastor Matt and the Congregation of First Presbyterian Church,

This letter is my official notification to you and to the church community of First Presbyterian Church that my last day of employment will be on July 1, 2020. On that day I plan to resign from First Presbyterian Church and also retire from Eastern Illinois University.

I have decided to take a position of Liturgical Music Director/Organist at St. Peter Cathedral in Erie, PA where I will be working for a former student/seminarian that I taught while I worked at the Abbey in the 1990's in both the seminary and college at St. Vincent. Additionally, the bishop of the cathedral is also a good friend of mine with whom I also worked with when he was the Master of Ceremonies for several large liturgies that I played organ for at the abbey around the same time. I am also excited because there is so much opportunity for me in the area with five universities, two of which are Catholic and a minor seminary, along with five parochial elementary schools which I will be able to tap into as well as time progresses.

This job literally fell in my lap unexpectedly and I do believe it is part of the journey I started a couple years ago when I had returned to the monastery. I believe this is the balance that will bring peace and happiness in my life at this time. (also volleyball league locally and I won't need to drive an hour as I have been doing here) I am excited about this new venture and my impending departure from First Presbyterian Church having been with them since 1998.

I also wanted to take this opportunity to thank you and everyone at the church for all of the opportunities that I have experienced working at FPC and I will truly miss many people, especially working with Joe Grant and the choir. I have genuinely enjoyed my employment at FPC, but I believe God is directing me to move on to this new venture.

Please let me know what I can do to help you with the transition and again, thank you for everything and all of the support you and many have provided me over the past couple of years as my discernment process continued to unfold. I wish you nothing but the best for the future. Sincerely in Christ,

Dr. Richard Robert Rossi, organist

Worship

JUDI GEISTLINGER, CHAIR WORSHIP TEAM
JUDGEISTLINGER@OUTLOOK.COM

Your worship committee has been very busy over the last several months. We record worship in the Sanctuary mid-week, and our master editor/technologist/associate pastor works his magic to bring all the pieces together for broadcast of the service on Sunday mornings, premiering at 9. There are a lot of folks behind the scenes who help to bring, what we hope, is thoughtful, meaningful, Spirit-led worship each week.

We have launched a weekly Wednesday Vespers service, so we can all recharge and connect in a bit less formal manner. With the Spiritual Formation and Mission teams, we have "spread the love" so we can, hopefully, meet more of your spiritual and connectional needs.

We do hope you are joining us for these worship and connection opportunities.

What comes next is the biggest question with which we have been wrestling. We do know a couple of things.

1. Until we can gather safely, we are not going to gather. It takes about 10 of us to produce worship in the sanctuary, so until we can gather safely up to 50, corporate, in-person worship in the sanctuary will have to wait.

2. We would love to gather in person, really. Mainly what we have been discussing are the questions to which we need answers:

- How to space worshippers in sanctuary?
- How do we clean/disinfect between services?
- What do we do about things we share in worship (bibles, hymnbooks, pens)?
- How will we graciously keep those at risk connected, who need to stay home, especially those age 60 and over?
- Will all worshippers wear masks, what about the worship leaders? When will we sing together safely?
- How will we share communion elements?

- How will we manage entry/exits to reduce congestion?
- When are we going to be able to have coffee and donuts again?

I know some of the questions seem kind of trivial and others may change the course of how worship works for a while. But we do none of these things lightly and we pray changes will be only temporary. Prayers for your committee and worship leaders are most appreciated.

Thoughts? Please share with us:

Judi Geistlinger, Worship Chair
judgeistlinger@outlook.com
217-493-5462

Seeking Creative Types

The Worship Committee has been striving to make our online worship visually interesting. **Mindy Watts-Ellis** made the beautiful banners you have enjoyed during worship throughout Lent, Easter and now Pentecost on frames that **Dave and Suzanne McNattin** created for us.

Ordinary Time (or regular time, numbered Sundays) returns in June. The color for the season and our banners is a lovely green. We are seeking some creative types to help decorate these banners, or even create a new banner or two that could be used during worship.

Are you interested? Contact **Judi Geistlinger**: judgeistlinger@outlook.com or 217-493-5462 to volunteer.

Coming Soon!

The new and improved FPCC Web Site is coming soon. Please keep checking the web site periodically to see the updated look (firstpres.church). It will contain much of the same information as the current site but it will have a greater focus on reaching potential visitors with a welcoming message and key information about the church. In addition, it will feature more photos and a cleaner, more inviting look.



Many thanks to **Bill Gamble** and **Itch Jones** for the installation of a handrail on the back staircase leading to the choir room. And thanks to **Dave and Suzanne McNattin** for the great paint job on the handrail!

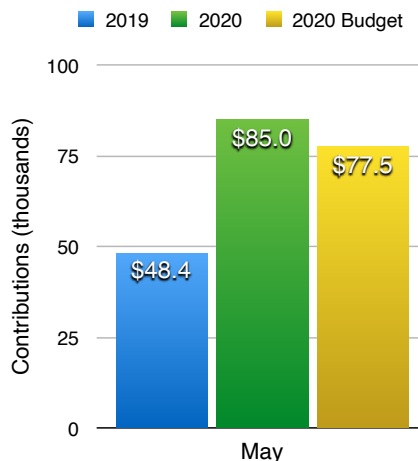
Finance

Financial Update

BY MARK SCHOEFFMANN, CHAIR FINANCE
MSCHOEFFMANN@MCHSI.COM

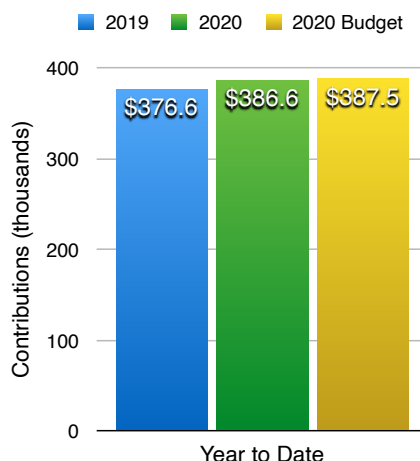
Contributions

Contributions in May to the Operating Fund were \$36.6K more than in 2019 and \$7.5K above the budget at \$85.0K. The Year to Date total is above last year by \$10.0K but below the budgeted amount by \$0.9K. These figures include prepaid pledges (those paid in the year prior to the budget year) that are prorated over the year with 1/12 added to each month's contributions. Including all revenue sources, at 41.6% through the year, we have received 63.0% of the expected 2020 revenue.



Expenses

Year to Date expenses are \$5.1K below the budget at \$441.7K but more than in 2019 by \$6.2K. At 41.6% through the year we have experienced 41.2% of the expected 2020 expenses.



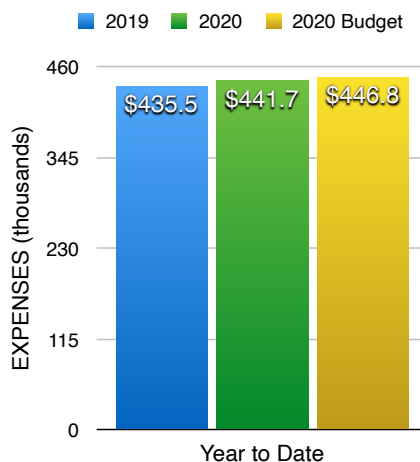
Balance

Considering all sources, revenue exceeds expenses by \$209.1K which is \$166.4K better than at the end of May in 2019. This figure includes \$61.9K more in prepaid pledges than in 2019 and \$134.2K from the Federal Paycheck Protection Program established by the Federal CARES Act.

Restricted Donations

In addition to the support of our Operating Fund, members of our congregation have made additional donations to funds restricted to specific purposes in May as follows:

Local Missions	\$850
One Great Hour of Sharing	\$335
Pentecost Offering	\$3,310
General Memorial	\$2,950
Discretionary Funds	\$950
Other Funds	\$1,575



What are you most grateful for at First Pres?

Here are some of the responses...

Pastoral Care

- Also, caring outreach in a time of need
- Pastoral care- our pastors and the comfort they provide to the sick and grieving
- History of personal support
- Believe it not I'm grateful (later) for tough times/situations, experiencing something each time
- I'm happy to health. Here they take very well care of people.
- For the kindness and care of our members during times of trouble
- Prayers for our family
- Strong community outreach and Pastor's visits to Windsor of Savoy

Staff

- Grateful for a dedicated staff – Richard Rossi*
- Enthusiasm of staff and ministers
- We are all grateful for our pastors, music, staff, leadership, others in the congregation
- Our staff is wonderful – always helpful and kind
- Wonderful and dedicated staff
- In addition to 2 great pastors, we have a wonderful, dedicated hard working support staff
- The friendly helpful office staff
- Our incredible staff, including office, B&G, and CYF. All the volunteers who make it work

Children, Youth & Family

Children, Youth & Family Update

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

Vacation Bible School this summer will be very different than usual. Our plan is to have a delivery of a package to your address once a week for four weeks in a row with materials and information to have some fun adventures from home. Email Mindy at mindy@firstpres.church to add your family to the list of those wanting to participate. There will be links to videos and songs as well as suggested games and activities the whole family can do together. Instructions and materials will be included for a craft each time.

The name is Destination Disciples, and Ms. Mindy is writing it to focus on different missions that our First Presbyterian Church is partnered with to effect change throughout the world. Each week will take us on a virtual trip to a new country! We will notify you when the adventure is about to begin! Our projected start is mid-June. The online portion is now live at firstpres.church/vbs. The delivery will include all materials needed to do the suggested crafts and a special snack to try.

Coming Up: Are you a high school student ready for a deeper involvement in the environmental issues of our time? Consider the summer Eco-ambassador program offered by Faith in Place in Central Illinois. The program is 4 weeks long and offers a stipend to participants. To learn more and to find an application for the program go to...<https://www.faithinplace.org/our-programs/eco-ambassador-youth-host>.

Applications for our region are due by June 10.

Youth Update

BY LIZZ PIPPIN, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF CYF

While May was a time of graduations and celebrations we want to take the time to acknowledge those of our congregation that are graduating. May 24 we honored the graduates connected to our congregation. However, I wanted to take a moment and recognize our high school graduates. I have had the honor of knowing these young people for since most of them were in 8th or 9th grade. I have enjoyed going on Go and Serve trips with them and local community service activities and winter retreats. They have worked hard and faced many challenges in their high school careers. I am so proud of them and excited to see what God has in store for their futures!

I want to also highlight again all of our graduates. Congratulations, **Ben Jones** (grandson of **Annilee Shaul**), **Amy Edwards Noble** (daughter of **Marty and Harold Edwards**), **Emma and Mitchell Noble** and **Caitlyn Edwards** (grandchildren of **Marty and Harold Edwards**), **Tyler Waaler** (grandson of **Jack and Ginny Waaler**), **Rachel Stickles** and **Beth Geistlinger**.

Congratulations: **Carter Lowe, Sephora Nfingu, Audrey Mfulama, and Jack Stickles**. All four students will be attending Parkland this fall.

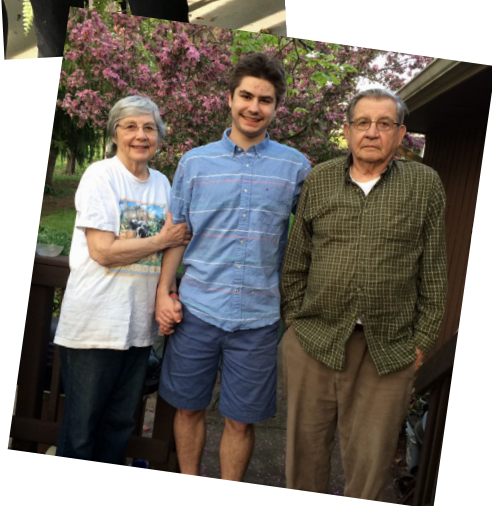


Congratulations!

Class of

2020

Some of our 2020 Graduates!



**2 Samuel 2:31**

As for God, His way is perfect; the word of the Lord is flawless. He is a shield for all who take refuge in Him

Zephaniah 3:15

The Lord your God is with you, He is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing.

Psalms 56:3, 4

When I am afraid, I will trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can mortal man do to me?

Session Motions Passed At May Meeting

- Formation of a Covid-19 Response Team. Members include Matt Matthews, Eric Corbin, Peter Yau, Judi Geistlinger, Ruth Craddock, Mark Schoeffmann, Ron Deering, Ken Chapman, Tim Young.
- Approval of Covid-19 Team to utilize funds from the Covid-19 Restricted Fund for matters related to the Covid-19 Pandemic.
- Approval of ZOOM gatherings weekly on Wednesdays at 7 pm for worship/prayer/Bible study/mission/social gatherings.
- Accepted Sabrina Hwu's letter of resignation from the Session.

Come Zoom With Us

The men of the church pray together on Fridays at 8:30 AM and gather for bible study Tuesdays at 8 AM. Contact Bob Kirby at rwk3213@gmail.com to get your Zoom link.

Joys & Concerns

Congratulations to...

- ALL of the 2020 graduates...see previous page for some of those we know about;

We extend our sympathy to...

- the family and friends of **Betty Eisner** who died May 21, 2020;
- the family and friends of **Chuck Milazzo** who died May 15, 2020;
- the family and friends of **Jeannie Murray** who died May 22, 2020.

Mission Updates

From the Heart of Missions

BY RACHEL MATTHEWS,
TEMPORARY MISSION COORDINATOR
RACHEL@FIRSTPRES.CHURCH

In God hope holds us. Yet, this past week culminating in violence has been a terrible and chaotic time. As if the pandemic was not enough, violence descended upon our cities as protests erupted. Some of us are hearing the voices of people long silenced as if for the first time. Others of us are crying, "How long, O Lord?"

You might wonder why in a word about mission I bring this to light. The heart of mission is the sacrificial love of Jesus Christ. And, love compels us to be prepared to follow God's call to care for the least of these and then act when there is need. We are a Matthew 25 congregation. Our mission is not just to give a handout, it is to build congregation vitality, dismantle structural racism and eradicate systemic poverty. The violent protests show us that we have a long way to go in dismantling structural racism and eradicating systemic poverty. Prayer is all some of us can do but it is not enough. Those of us that can act must.

I think some of you might like to know that in choosing the mission agencies First Presbyterian Champaign has chosen to support, we have been making a statement about dismantling structural racism and dismantling systemic poverty. We seek to support agencies that help allow the individual to have dignity, balance racial power imbalances, care for the immigrant as well as give to the vulnerable – locally and globally. Get to know these agencies. Look for the ways this happens. Open yourself up to being called to choose an agency to adopt and make it your own. We have

several people at First Presbyterian, not just our mission deacons, who have done this. They give financially and volunteer at one or more of these agencies even during this shelter in place time. We are all looking forward to when we can be back serving face to face.

Before I close, I want to thank you for your generosity in last Sunday's Pentecost Offering. 40% went to DREAM. Thank you for your generosity all during the time of this pandemic. We have helped countless people with groceries and rent who have lost jobs and income. We will continue to do so as we are able. We have several offerings during the year that go to help the least of these. The next one you will be hearing about is the Raindrop Project in July.

Peace,
Rachel Matthews, Temporary Mission Coordinator

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Courage Connection: Donations needed! Courage Connection has been very active the last few months and has been a safe shelter for families who have suffered from domestic violence. They are currently in need of full size shampoo and

toiletries (full size), gift cards. They are still providing housing through June for their families. Bring toiletries to the mission deacon's house, Michael Hogue, 1104 W Clark St. He will be delivering to Courage Connection.

Salt and Light has grocery gift cards now so Community Mission Deacons encourages us to utilize this means of giving groceries to people. They continue to take clothing and houseware donations.

Community Mission Deacons will be sending the University Y and CU Fair a one time gift of \$1000 each to meet food and rent concerns among the immigrant communities, the demand for which has risen in the last month.

Cuba Partners Network: Here is what Rev. Liudmila Hernandez, leader in the Cuban Presbyterian Church (IPRC) recently told the national Cuba Partner Network Steering Committee last week in the latest issue of "The Heart of Missions." "The pandemic has worsened the baseline situation of shortages. There are long lines to buy food, personal items and cleaning supplies. The government's food ration books have become more important, but still, there is not enough food for the people. The Church continues social projects like Living Waters for the World, but it's hard to get groceries for those we

The Heart of Missions Newsletter has been revived during this COVID-19 crisis. Our local and global mission agencies are having to make rapid changes due to shelter in place orders, as well as food and medical supply shortages. The newsletter helps summarize some of what has been in the mission news for our mission workers and agencies during the past week in case you missed it.

You can access The Heart of Missions on the church website under the SERVE tab at firstpres.church/heartofmissions

serve. Yet we see miracles every day. We see how people share what they have."

In light of this, the national Steering Committee is proposing a Network-wide challenge to raise \$25,000 to send to the Synod to sustain the congregations in all three presbyteries as they face difficult economic times complicated by the hobbling impact of the pandemic, and the embargo. To date \$4,000 has been generously committed, and they believe that the remaining \$21,000 can be quickly subscribed if we work together as a network of over 90 partnerships. Our FPCC Cuba Steering Committee will be discussing our response in the next few weeks. Stay tuned.

Frontera de Cristo – We have finished the fifth video coffee and conversation with our mission coworkers at Frontera de Cristo. with FDC Board Member Rosie Mendoza and Author Aaron Bobrow-Strain discussing *The Death and Life of Aida Hernandez: A Border Story*. What a powerful story of the life of a person on the border.

June 4: 4th Anniversary Celebration of Cafe Justo y Mas

June 11: Our PCUSA Mission Co-workers Miriam Maldonado and Mark Adams will be talking on *Borders as Places of Encounter*

Our mission coworker in Indonesia, Farsijana, in a recent letter to Matt sends Pentecost greetings. She has been fasting as a spiritual discipline during this time of suffering. We keep her in our prayers. She said, I would like to greet you in my language, Bahasa Indonesia in the present of Pentecost. I am sending you my song titled "You are my refuge" taken from Psalm 71: 3, 17-18, 6-7. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=05Hf515Fxlo>)

I have used the reading from Psalm 71 as my reading from Bible every morning to begin my journey of fasting. Everyday I remember each year of God has given me my life since I was born to know. I thought a day of human is a year of God. I share the day with my families and people whom I have encountered. Then I will read other passages from Bible to close the days of fasting.

Today is the end of my long fasting since the Ramadhan to this Pentecost. During the Ramadhan I woke up at 3.30 am to have my breakfast then will have the opening meal at 5.45 pm. The continued fasting was total of 37 days. Before the Ramadhan arrived I have started my fasting on the Wednesday ash in February 26, then every Wednesday I had my fasting to arrive in Ramadhan.

On the day of Idul Fitri I did not fast, but the next morning I continued my fasting from 6 am to 6 pm. I feel like the freedom given my Christ has allowed me to fast in the regular time as the sunlight arrives to the sunset swollen into the earth. After this Pentecost, I will continue 5 more fasting on the Wednesday ash to make up for 55 days.

Compassion Peace and Justice recently received this word on respectful conversations of which you, too, might be interested. Some of you will remember Matt Soerens co-author of *Welcoming the Stranger* which led to our small groups on immigration and then eventually to engaging the immigrant community. <http://evangelicalimmigrationtable.com/may-29-2020-prayer-partner-respectful-conversations-in-a-time-when-tensions-are-high/>

Let us keep all our mission partners in our prayers, those who are waiting to go back to their place of ministry and those who are able to work where they are. Listen for God's call to you in their ministry.

Our PC(USA) Mission CoWorkers:

Mark Adams and Miriam Maidonado Escobar (Mexico)
Farsijana Adeney-Risakotta (Indonesia)
Jeff and Christi Boyd (Central Africa)
Jo Ella Holman (Caribbean and Cuba)
Bob and Kristi Rice (South Sudan)

Our regional and global mission partners:

Kemmerer Village (and Camp Carew)
Lifeline Pilots
Marion Medical Mission
Mission Aviation Fellowship
Opportunity International
Friends of Presbyterian Education Board in Pakistan
Presbyterian Cuba Partnership
Special Offerings of the PC(USA)
Theological Education Fund
Young Adult Volunteers

Here in Champaign – Urbana:

CU Better Together
CU at Home
CANAN S.A.F.E. HOUSE
CANTEEN RUN
COURAGE CONNECTION
DREAM
eEMPTY TOMB, INC
FAITH IN ACTION
JESUS IS THE WAY PRISON MINISTRY
THE REFUGEE CENTER
RESTORATION URBAN MINISTRY
SALT & LIGHT

Here at First Presbyterian Church:

FPCC Amateur Preachers
FPCC Environmental Committee working with Faith in Place
FPCC Presbyterian Women
FPCC ESL
FPCC Children, Youth and Families
FPCC Mission Possible/Go and Serve



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Sunday:

9 AM Worship

10:15 AM Sunday School and Adult Education

11:15 AM Worship

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
Rachel Matthews..... Temporary Mission Coordinator, Ext. 219
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
Richard Rossi Church Musician
Mindy Watts-Ellis..... Director Children, Youth & Family, Ext. 212

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