

January 2017



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN

Pastor's Pen

BY CHUCK CARLSON, INTERIM HEAD PASTOR
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We enter a New Year reflecting on the past. How did we do? Were we faithful to what God was calling us to be and do? Did we pay attention to where God was working and respond in obedience to what God was asking us to do? I can't answer that for you, only myself. Paul draws me and each of us to examine ourselves in relation to what God is doing in our lives. He tells the Philippians to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling". What is he saying? Probably this is a reference to our willingness to be open and pay attention to God's Spirit working in and among us. The only way we may appropriately respond to God is through humility and obedience. Why? Because, "it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (*Philippians 2:12-13*). Our response is always one in faith to what we know God is doing in our lives. God is always speaking to each one of us individually and in relationship to the faith community of which we are a part. As we each respond obediently to what God asks of us the whole community is blessed. God isn't going to ask me to do something against what God is seeking to do through all of us.

This is why God values unity, reconciliation, and justice. The Holy Spirit always moves us toward inclusion and a focus upon what is the right thing to do on behalf of another human being, individually or collectively. How will we act differently in faith and obedience as we follow our Lord's Spirit into the New Year?

One way that we can be open to God's Spirit in the New Year is to avail ourselves of opportunities to learn. I invite you to join a class I will be leading on the Belhar Confession in January and February. You will receive a 30 day devotional, "30 Days with the Belhar Confession", and gather with me Sundays at 10:30 in Centennial for reflection and conversation. This confession was written in the context of Apartheid in South Africa and gave the church strength to stand against racism and other forms of injustice. It centers upon how Jesus' love, call to peace, and justice may be lived out in the racial divide our country reflects in the events of Ferguson, Missouri and what happened in the shooting of nine people, members of the African American Church in Charleston, South Carolina.

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Providing Warmth to Homeless Men

If you have been watching the news or reading the local paper, you know that we have an emergency men's shelter operating in Centennial Hall! This development has brought much joy at our church! Our church is now doing one more thing to serve those in need and to be Christ's hands and feet in the world. It has also brought up several important questions. Hopefully, this FAQ will inform and inspire.

1. Why is there a need for an emergency men's shelter? The TIMES Center shut down Level 1 of their program this summer due to lack of funding. Level 1 provided emergency overnight shelter for men. No other alternative existed in our community to shelter men, especially men who might be under the influence of some substance (see #7 for more explanation).

2. When did the organization on this start? This seems sudden! This summer, a coalition of community members, both secular and faith-based, met to discuss the problem, with special concern for the winter months. What were these men going to do? Nobody wanted men to die on our streets. Some of our individual church members attended these meetings, but with so much transition and high workloads on staff, church staff members did not attend. In November, we were approached as a possible location for the shelter, with the understanding that there would be paid staff running it. At that point we were a backup plan, as there were other locations on board as possible sites. Session heard a presentation of the plan from the United Way, and approved the concept in November's meeting. In December, less

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Pastor's Pen continued

Here is the schedule: on January 15 our guest preacher, the **Reverend Alonzo Johnson**, will meet with us in Centennial at 10:30 AM and offer an orientation and overview of the Belhar. The following Sunday, January 22, **Harry Bremer** at 10:30 AM in Centennial will present his Fall mission trip to Malawi with Marion Medical Mission and the Shallow Well Program. Harry will focus on communal life in the villages.

Beginning Sunday, January 29, at 10:30 AM in Centennial, I will begin leading a discussion on Belhar for four weeks, ending February 19. I would love to see as many as possible participate with me on this 30 day journey through Belhar.

Just as FPC is seeking to be open to the leading of God's Spirit in 2017, so Betty and I are clear that God is leading us to transition into a new chapter in our lives. This is the year that Betty and I officially retire. Betty will conclude her teaching career at Westview Elementary at the end of May. The plan is to go to Montana and begin settling into our home there in August.

Betty will remain in Montana and I will return and continue actively serving as your pastor during September and October. In November I will leave for Montana permanently.

So 2017 will be a year of transition for us and FPC. In the meantime your PNC will be hard at work seeking for that pastor God has prepared for FPC.

Let us remember and embrace through what happens in 2017 that "it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure".

Blessings, Chuck

Men's Shelter continued

than a week before Christmas, circumstances arose making it impossible for the other locations to serve in this capacity. At December's Session meeting, Session approved of FPCC being the actual site for the emergency shelter. Folks worked over the break to get the program up and running. Our first evening open was Sunday, January 8.

3. In a budget year with significant shortfalls, how are the costs being covered? Church staff have calculated the estimated costs of the program in utilities, supplies, etc. These costs are being offset by a small portion of the donations that have been sent to United Way for this program.

4. Is this going to happen every year? What is the long term plan? The hope is that with the data gathered during this winter, a long term, seven day a week solution will develop before next winter. We expect to serve in the current capacity this winter only.

5. Is the church being protected? Yes. Through donations, extra insurance has been taken out to better protect FPCC, extra security measures have been put in place in and surrounding Centennial Hall, and the program is being staffed by people with experience working with homeless populations.

6. Who is in charge? Faith United Methodist Church's administration, led by **Rev. Sheryl Palmer**, is supervising the program. FUMC recently discerned that they are called to serve the homeless through their ministry. Thus, they have available administration and volunteers for the program. FUMC hosts the shelter at their location on Friday and Saturday nights, the nights that we are unable to host. They were unable to host the shelter on the five days that we host it. The Holy

Spirit worked it out that working together, the shelter could still occur within the constraints of our current ministries. Funds from donations from the United Way are being used to pay shelter staff salaries, administered through FUMC. Three of the paid staff are supervised by **Joshua Fourman**, Director of the shelter. All staff have some level of experience working with this population. On our church's end of the equation, **Kristi Corbin** has helped facilitate the process administratively, under **Pastor Carlson's** supervision. **Chris Penny**, who is Facilities Manager, is expertly supervising the facilities-related portion of the program.

7. I heard this was a "damp" shelter? What does this mean? The word "wet" shelter means that people can stay even if under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Leadership has termed this shelter "damp," meaning that someone can be under the influence, but not significantly and no alcohol or drugs can be ingested on the property. Individuals are screened at the door by staff at the center. Staff members also work closely with law enforcement, helping to ensure that each guest is placed at the appropriate location for their needs, whether that is at our location, the emergency room, or jail.

8. How can I volunteer? Contact **Joshua Fourman** at jkfourman4@gmail.com to inquire about volunteering.

9. How can I contribute funds? Those who wish to donate towards the shelter can give to United Way of Champaign County's Men's Emergency Winter Shelter fund. Please note the gift is for Men's Emergency Winter Shelter. By mail: 404 W. Church St, Champaign IL 61820 or online: www.uwayhelps.org/give

If you have any more questions, please feel free to contact **Kristi Corbin**.

2017 Stewardship

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

We have good news and bad news to report about this year's campaign.

First the bad news. We kicked off our campaign this year with an ambitious goal of increasing our pledged contributions by 10%. The initial response to this campaign resulted in a significant shortfall that was described in a December letter to the congregation from **Pastor Chuck Carlson**. Additional commitments have been received but still leave us far short of our goal for 2017. Total pledged contributions for 2017 are \$730,283 from 189 pledging units compared to \$802,021 from 202 units for 2016. The average pledge for 2017 of \$3,864 is about 2.7% lower than the average for 2016 and the total pledged amount is about 8.9% less.

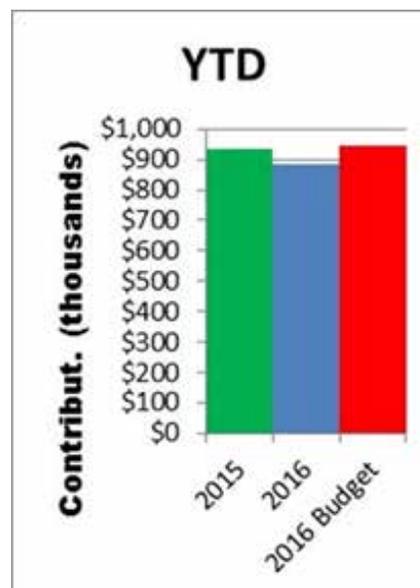
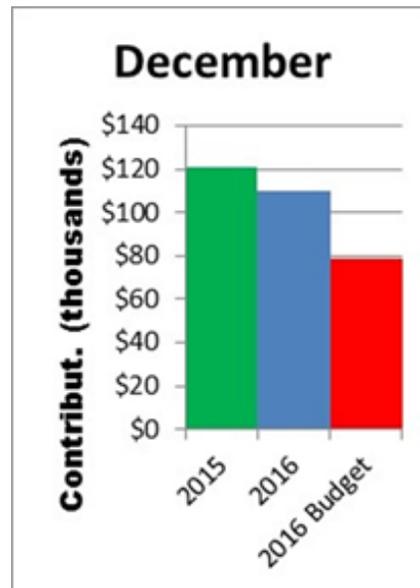
As a result of this continued shortfall most of the freezes and reductions described in Pastor Carlson's December letter cannot be addressed at this time.

However, the good news is that we have received a significant amount of additional pledges in response to the December letter. This will allow Session to consider filling one or two of the vacant staff positions at their next meeting.

Thank you to all who responded to our campaign this year and continue to support our Church's programs and missions.

In addition, we all owe a big thank you to **Byron Kemper** for his years chairing the Finance Committee. His steady and faithful leadership has been a great benefit to the committee and the congregation.

Monthly Contributions: Contributions in December trailed those in December 2015 by about \$11K but as is usual for December exceeded the budgeted amount by \$31K. For the year, contributions in 2016 were about \$48K less than in 2016 and were short of the budgeted amount by about \$60K. While 2016 expenses (not shown) were about \$35K below budget, we ended up with a deficit of \$53K.



Conversations

Conversations with Scripture will resume again Friday, January 13, in Mae Chapin from 12-1 PM. We will begin our study with the *Book of Revelation*, one of the most engaging and disputed books in the bible. Join us as we explore its controversies and meaning. We will take a look at some historical perspectives and the biblical texts over a 6 week study. Bring your interpretive skills.

Adult Study

Pastor Chuck will lead a study of our newest confession, the *Belhar Confession*, written in the context of the struggle with apartheid in South Africa. Belhar addresses the themes of unity, reconciliation, and justice. Join us for a 30 day journey through the confession. We will meet four Sundays starting January 29 at 10:30 in Centennial.

On Sunday January 15, we are hoping to have a special orientation by the Rev. Alonzo Johnson in Centennial at our Adult Education hour at 10:30 AM.

Stephen Ministry

Stephen Ministry is a Christian based philosophy as well as discipline. Ministers are trained to listen effectively, be non-judgmental, and walk with another in a positive way constructive way. A Stephen Minister will not solve your dilemma, but may have a valuable contribution in providing another perspective, or confirming yours. Need a Stephen Minister? Call **Chuck Carlson** or **Linda Sandquist** at the church office.

Also, there is an opportunity for you to become a Stephen Minister. I would like to train one last class of Stephen Ministers before I retire late next Fall. If you are interested please contact me or Linda Sandquist so that you may receive an application.

Prayer Corner



A Passion for Christ

The beginning of a new year is a good time to remember the love, joy and peace we had when we first accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. We thought about him often and started spending time in prayer. God warns us that as time goes by our passion for Christ can grow cold. In Revelation 2:4 God says, "You have forsaken your first love."

Let us commit to again show our love for Christ by spending time communing with him through reading the Bible and prayer.

Before Printed Sermons and Digital Copies

Thomas J. Dolan, dolantj@illinois.edu is looking for writings and sermons by **Dr. A. Ray Cartlidge**. Dr. Cartlidge served as pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Champaign from 1939 – 1953, then went on to Erie, PA. When Mr. Dolan was a boy he heard Dr. Cartlidge's sermon about anger, and was strongly impressed. Mr. Dolan decided that he would try to avoid anger. This practice has helped him stay calm in many stressful situations.

Mr. Dolan would like to share Dr. Cartlidge's wisdom with his family. He discovered on the internet "Living Today: Devotions" (1955), by A. Ray Cartlidge, but it was unavailable on Amazon. Mr. Dolan is wondering if any current members have writings by Dr. Cartlidge.

Your Generosity Will Help a New Family to the Community

On behalf of our New Americans Team, thank you for your generous support of our Relocation Ministry through our Christmas Angel Tree. Your gifts will help new Americans create their first independent home in our community. We try to provide the basics to prepare and eat a meal, a place to sleep and a place to sit. Blessings.

Jays & Concerns

Congratulations to...

- **Joyce Nkama and Guelord Matomisa Malanda** who were married December 30, 2016.

We extend our sympathy to...

- the family and friends of **the Rev. Bill Rice** who died January 4, 2017 in Ohio. Condolences may be sent to Tom Rice, 45 Martin Lane, Springbro, OH 45066

Help mark a special birthday...

- **Carol Trulock** will celebrate her 99th birthday on January 25. Let's help her celebrate and remember her friends in the church by sending cards
Carol Trulock
504 B Sunflower
Savoy, IL 61874

Children, Youth and Family Ministry

Thank You!

The youth would like to thank all of you who supported them by purchasing holiday cookies on December 11. They raised \$600. Special thank you to **Judi and Jay Geistlinger** and **Lizz Phippen** for organizing and volunteering for the bake sale. So as not to waste extra ingredients, we will be selling chocolate chip cookie mixes in the new year. Stay tuned for details.

Small but Mighty!

A small but mighty group of 9 carolers braved the ice and cold on December 18 to bring Christmas hymns to many at Clark-Lindsey and the Windsor at Savoy. We received many smiles among those listening and additional voices lifted up in praise to accompany us. Special thanks to **Joe Grant** for digging up the caroler booklets, **Jean René** for playing guitar, and **Patty Farthing** for contacting the destinations on our behalf.

Christmas Eve

A special thank you to all of the children and adults who volunteered to make the 4 PM Christmas Eve worship service meaningful. It was truly special to celebrate Christmas Around the World with you! We couldn't have done it without you! **Ginny Waaler, Kim File, Lizz Pippin, Betty Carlson, Kristi Carlson, Noni Ledford, Joyce Wittler, John Muirhead, Kristi Corbin, Beth Born, Atley and Lyndley Carlson, Ana, Faith, and Christopher Corbin, Henry, Sam, and Ellie Laufenberg, Mervedi, Shilo, and Benadja Limbaya, Grace Ledford, Plamedi Lembelembe, Samantha and Mike**

Musasa, Vasele, Fortunel, and Vainquer Nana, Lily Nicolette, Michelangelo and Prunella Tembo, and Cecilia Vermilion.

Sunday School Update

Sunday School resumed January 8 at 9 AM. For the first unit of Sunday School for the new year the preschool will be learning that "God made all kinds of friends." They will be learning about Jesus' special friends called disciples and ways they can be a good friend. The elementary children will be studying "Calling the Disciples" from January 8-22, 2017. We are continuing the theme of God's word from last semester. The word has been made flesh among us in the birth of Jesus and now Jesus is calling us to study and proclaim God's word to others. Who were the first disciples? What does it mean to be called as a disciple? Are you a disciple? Come and explore the answers with us.

Children's Choir

Children's choir resumed January 8 at 10 AM in the chapel. You sounded wonderful at the Christmas Eve service! Let's keep up the good work and prepare a song to offer in worship again soon.

Youth Making a Difference

The mission option for the beginning of the year is to make a quilt square for our blessing blanket in the café at 10 AM. Add your written blessing to the blanket that will be given to someone in need this winter. Check out the bulletin board in the first floor hallway of the education building

to see how you have made a difference in our community! We have many thank you notes from the agencies and recipients of your kindness. So far our total is two polar fleece baby blankets for *empty tomb*, cards for the Pakistani students at the missionary school, 53 peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for the Canteen Run, 20 chocolate chip cookie mixes for families at Courage Connection, 15 catnip toys for cats at the Champaign County Humane Society, and 40 nativity sun catchers for our homebound church members.

High School

The high school class resumed January 8 at 10:30 AM. Be sure to join us for an in-depth discussion and a light brunch.

Join our Team!

If you are interested in joining our volunteer teacher team, please contact **Mindy Watts-Ellis** at mindy.wattsellis@first-churchchampaign.org. We will be offering another teacher training in January. We are still trying to reach our goal of four volunteer teachers/helpers for each grade group. This allows for worship and away time for all volunteers, yet provides a familiar set of faces for the children to get to know and trust.

Please prayerfully consider joining us in this meaningful ministry!



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Change Service Requested



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Sunday:

- 8 and 9 AM Traditional Worship
- 9 AM Children and Youth Education
- 9 AM The Gathering (Contemporary Worship)
- 10:30 AM High School Youth Education

Saturday:

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

Pastors:

- Chuck Carlson..... Interim Head Pastor
- Eric Corbin.....Covenant Associate Pastor

Staff:

- Kristi CorbinMission Coordinator
- Ritchie DrennenFacility Maintenance
- Patty Farthing.....Receptionist
- Marcia Franks Administrative Assistant
- Joe Grant Choir Director
- Allegra Martin..... Director of Children’s Music
- Chris Penny.....Facilities Manager
- Ann Petry Accounting
- Andrea Pope..... Contemporary Worship Director
- Richard Rossi..... Church Musician
- Mindy Watts-EllisDirector Children, Youth & Family

The newsletter is published monthly. Deadline is the last Monday of the month for the following month’s publication. Send submissions to marcia.franks@firstchurchchampaign.org.