

# February 2017



## FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN

### F150 Update

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

Two and a half years ago we embarked on a journey together on a major capital drive. The Forward 150 initiative included major upgrades to our buildings, technology and organ along with funding for mission. We are now beginning the third year of implementing these items. The following is a report from the Forward 150 Faithful detailing the progress made to date and work scheduled to take place this year.

1. A Clerk of the Works was employed by the church to assist in the administration of the construction Projects for Phase I.
2. An entirely new Information Technology System has been designed and installed throughout the Church and the Christian Education Building, including Audio and Visual technology in both buildings. The monitors can be seen in numerous locations and our service is broadcast throughout.
3. New digital organ/console with restored pipes for a completely new combination sound.
4. The Church joins the Christian Education Building as a fully sprinkled building. This is a project that the Church has been planning for 20 years and now both of our structures are protected. Both buildings have fire alarm systems that act as early detection and warning systems to alert the congregation to fire and the sprinkler system is intended to extinguish fire.
5. The infiltration of rainwater and back flowing of storm water into the lower level has been stopped with the installation of backflow prevention and sump pumps.
6. The Café renovation on the second floor of the Christian Education Building has been completed.
7. The Church purchased a new two door refrigerator.
8. A hearing loop was installed in the Sanctuary to assist

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### When I Was a Stranger, You Took Me In...

BY DEBRA MILLER, ESL COORDINATOR  
(debra@firstpres.church)

These words of Jesus were on my mind Monday morning as I prepared to teach a classroom full of sad, scared and confused students personally affected by the Executive Order to halt the refugee program and ban (at least temporarily) people with visas from entering the US. All of the ESL students are visitor visa or green card holders. Just last week, we enrolled students from Iran and Yemen—two countries placed on the seven nations banned list. One student and her husband, who is a researcher at the U of I, traveled back to Iran for the holiday break. Her husband returned to C-U to begin teaching two weeks ago; she was scheduled to return this week. Now she doesn't know when or if she will be allowed to return to live with him. We all share in her sorrow. And the heartbreaking situations of others in our program.

In the midst of the uncertainty, I began receiving calls and emails from people in the community who had heard about our program and just wanted to help. Many wanted to do something so that our immigrants would know they are welcome here. A young woman, who has never visited the ESL program or our church wrote on Facebook that she was "feeling helpless and wanted to do something," so she set up a gofundme.com campaign and called it "ESL is my Valentine"! When I shared this news with the students, many of them cried. These stories and the small acts of generosity are symbols to them that they are welcome and loved here. The outpouring of love from strangers to strangers demonstrates what it looks like to take in Jesus as a stranger. The resources given will allow the ESL program to continue to be a "city of refuge" for our immigrants, refugees, and visitors.

I am so thankful for the opportunity to serve as the new ESL coordinator.

**F150 Update continued**

the hearing impaired with high quality access to the service.

9. A new digital outdoor lighted sign has been designed and is currently in the bidding process.

10. The Air Conditioning system in the Christian Education Building has failed and is being replaced before the cooling season begins.

11. A Consultant Architect, specializing in the restoration of stained glass has been commissioned, has prepared bidding documents and the restoration of the Sanctuary stained glass has been bid. The Committee is in the process of negotiating a contract with the lowest responsible bidder to begin restoration as soon as the weather will accommodate.

12. The Committee prepared a Program Statement for Congregational needs for the future and commissioned an Architectural Firm to begin design work on Phase II. Phase II is intended to help us move forward to develop ourselves as a Downtown Church and to serve the needs of a growing younger population.

**Projects Planned for 2017 are:**

1. Completion of the AC system in the Christian Ed Building
2. Start of the restoration of the Sanctuary Stained Glass windows.
3. Installation of new outdoor lighted sign at the corner of Church and State Streets.

The F150F Committee intends to then go on hold until given direction from the Session on how to proceed with further projects or Phase II.

**Pastor's Pen**

BY CHUCK CARLSON, INTERIM HEAD OF STAFF  
(chuck@firstpres.church)

As the first month of the year passes I am grateful to God for the response of this congregation to the ministry needs of this church. Because many of you have given sacrificially, we are able to welcome **Debra Miller** to our staff as our new ESL director. Debra and her husband **Sean** and their daughter **Miriam** are newer members of our church. We are also now able to pursue a part-time CYF staff person to assist **Mindy** in that ministry as well as hire a part-time technology assistant to work with **Pastor Eric**.

We continue to live into what it means to follow the call of Christ to be salt and light in this world. Reading *Deuteronomy 15* in light of recent political events I was drawn in by the compassion of God as God speaks to the people through Moses. These verses express God's heart for us as leaders and a community of faith:

"Every seventh year you shall grant a remission of debts... There will, however, be no one in need among you, because the Lord is sure to bless... If there is among you anyone in need, a member of your community in any of your towns within the land that the Lord your God is giving you, do not be hard-hearted or tight-fisted toward your needy neighbor. You should rather open your hand, willingly lending enough to meet the need, whatever it shall be. Be careful that you do not entertain a mean thought... your neighbor might cry to the Lord against you, and you would incur guilt. Give liberally and be ungrudging when you do so, for on this account the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in all you undertake. Since there will never cease to be someone in need on the earth, I therefore command you, 'Open your hand to the poor and needy neighbor'".

The command Jesus gave to "Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" is grounded in the compassion of God. Prior to that command Jesus says, "For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have?" (*Matthew 5:46-48*).

We witness God's compassion for the Alien, the Immigrant, dwelling within Israel. Listen to this verse from *Leviticus 19:33-4*; "When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God".

Are not most of our families once immigrants, grateful that this nation took them in? The words of poet and refugee advocate Emma Lazarus imagined the Statue of Liberty saying, "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free."

The compassion of God, which has influenced the values of this country, is grounded in the Great Commandment directing us to loving God and our neighbor as ourselves. That core commandment which Jesus lifts up lies in the center of God's heart and soul. Centuries before we hear God say, "but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord" (*Leviticus 19:18*).

Thomas Merton captures this truth when he observes that, "The whole of compassion is based on a keen awareness of the interdependence of all these living beings, which are all part of one another and all involved in one another." Created in the image of God, we all share a common humanity. To serve my neighbor's need is to serve my own. Self-interest as the controlling force for living has no place around Christ's Table. Neither does self-interest as a guiding light serve a nation well either.

Paul articulates what the controlling center and interest in our lives is to be: "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus..." (*Philippians 2:3-5*).

This is a time for us as Christ's people to live into and reflect the compassion of God. I thank the staff and all of you, the people of FPCC, who continue to demonstrate the compassion of Christ through all you do, day in and day out. Let us all continue to be the salt and light and compassion of Christ.

Appreciatively,  
Chuck

## Cuba Café Salsa and Dessert

Bring your friends and neighbors for a salsa lesson and dessert on Sunday, March 12 at 2 PM in Westminster Hall. We will celebrate our relationship with our sister congregation in Cuba with the kind of dance and drink fellowship which Cuban Presbyterians often enjoy.

While **Yuri Sohn** teaches us some dance steps we will relax with a taste of flan, a mojito or café Cubano.

Please consider a donation of \$20.00 or more in return for which you will receive a ticket to the Cuba Café. Donations above \$20.00 will be tax deductible. Please add to the memo of your check: "Cuba Partnership" and leave it at the office or in the basket in Westminster Hall.

Proceeds for this event will go to our friends in Cuba so they can finish construction of a tourist guest house. The guest house will generate revenue needed by the church which is serving a community where family income is only \$30.00 per month.

## New Website [www.firstpres.church](http://www.firstpres.church)

BY ERIC CORBIN, ASSOCIATE PASTOR  
(eric@firstpres.church)

Our church website has had a make-over! While the website now has newer look to it, most of the information found on the old site is now available on the new site, with a few updates and a little re-organization.

The calendar has also had an overhaul, and we hope that it is now easier to use. (As a reminder, please contact **Marcia** with any additions or changes to the calendar. If your event is not on the calendar on the website, then church staff do not know about it and cannot prepare for it.)

You will also find this website at a new address, which is shorter and more appropriate for our identity: [www.firstpres.church](http://www.firstpres.church). Don't worry, the old address will get you to the website, but we will be promoting the new address, going forward.

Included in this are new, shorter email addresses for all staff. You can now reach any staff member by email at [firstname@firstpres.church](mailto:firstname@firstpres.church). For example, to reach me, simply email [eric@firstpres.church](mailto:eric@firstpres.church). Again, the old addresses will still work just fine, but we will use the new addresses going forward in publications.

If you notice anything amiss on the new site or just have any questions, feel free to contact me at the church office or by email at [eric@firstpres.church](mailto:eric@firstpres.church).

Thanks, and we hope you enjoy the new site!

## Adult Education Opportunities

BY CLAUDIA KIRBY, SPIRITUAL FORMATION CHAIR  
(claudia.a.kirby@gmail.com)

We extend an invitation to you to join one of our adult education classes as we learn and grow in Christ together. The Spiritual Formation Team has been hard at work providing a wonderful year of learning available to all of us. If you have any questions please call (356-5915) or e-mail me at [claudia.a.kirby@gmail.com](mailto:claudia.a.kirby@gmail.com).

♦**Continuing Revelation:** Fridays-noon-Parlor; **Pastor Chuck Carlson**, teacher

♦**Book of Genesis:** Sundays-10:30- Parlor; **Dieudonne Limbaya**, teacher (French speaking class)

♦**Belhar Confession:** Sundays-10:30-Centennial Hall; **Pastor Chuck Carlson** and **Pat Metcalf**, teachers

♦**Computer Class:** Wednesdays-noon-Centennial Hall; **Pastor Eric Corbin**, teacher. We will begin with social networking (mostly Facebook, but briefly some others). Other topics we will likely cover in the remaining weeks include computer security, email procedures, using our church website, Google Apps, and CCB (our church database). Participants need to have some basic level of familiarity with computers, Internet access, etc.

♦**God's Abundant Table** by Cynthia Campbell starting February 26- April 9 Sunday-10:30-Parlor (Lenten Study); **Pastor Chuck Carlson** and **Judy Geistlinger**, teachers

♦**Online Lent Study:** from Redeemer Presbyterian Church; March 1- April 16

**Please note there is no childcare nor Sunday School at 10:30 AM on Sundays.**

# Prayer Corner



## Pray For Rulers

Our election has left us with many new government officials plus a divided nation. This is a time for Christians to both act and pray.

In The Message, 1 Timothy 2:1-2 reads, "The first thing I want you to do is pray. Pray every way you know how, for every one you know. Pray especially for rulers and their governments to rule well so we can be quietly about our business of living simply, in humble contemplation."

Let us pray first for the welfare of all people. Then for all in government to have wise counselors and to make wise decisions.

## 2017 Church Officers

The following list shows the 2017 church officers along with their year of retirement.

2019	2018	2017
<b>Session Elders</b> Moderator: Chuck Carlson		
Celeste Kim	John Muirhead	Kristi Carlson
Bill Marble	Mark Schoeffmann	Betty Hollister
Pat Metcalf	Eric Stickels	Claudia Kirby
Cesar Mnyampara	Jeannie Snoeyink	Marc Miller
Gary Peterson		Rob Vermillion
Ann Stout		
<b>Community Mission Deacons</b> Moderator: Mary Gritten		
Nancy Brombaugh	Judy Gamble	Cliff Dykstra
Barbara Fuller-Curry	Kathy Havey	Dana Dykstra
	Mike Havey	Don Fischer
	Jeanette Moline	Mary Gritten
	Alan Moore	Steve Gritten
		Linda Olson
<b>Congregational Care Deacons</b> Moderator: Beth Hutchens		
Kathy Kinser	Jane Alsberg	Miriam Chenault
Linda McKay	Amy Born	Mamily Masweke
Jeannie Murray	Beth Hutchens	Linda Tichenor
Cathy Stickel	Nancy MacGregor	
	Kurt Ruthmansdorfer	
	Lola Ruthmansdorfer	
	Joanne Walther	
	Larry Walther	

## Jays & Concerns

*We extend our sympathy to...*

- the family and friends of **Don Swanstrom** who died December 22, 2016;
- the family and friends of **Bill Widener** who died January 15, 2017. Memorial Service Sunday, April 2, at 2 PM in Sanctuary.
- the family of **Richard Rossi** on the death of his sister;
- the family of **Mary Twardock** on the death of her brother.

*Congratulations to...*

- **Nissi and Josephine Lembelembe** on the birth of Anaelle Lembelembe on February 3, 2017. Other children **Destin, Plamedi and Kerene.**

Our **relocation ministry** welcomes donation of used mattresses sizes twin, full or queen. We will move them from your home to a grateful family sleeping on the floor. Call **Bob** at 217-621-5915.

# Children, Youth and Family Ministry

## Sunday School Mission Work

Thank you so much for the many donations of travel size toiletries for the Faith in Action Valentine gift bags! The children completed darling pop-up heart greeting cards. We have shiny red gift bags, and donations of travel size lotions, toothpaste, shampoo, conditioner, and soaps have been pouring in to fill them.

I also have mini stuffed prayer bears for the bags. The kids are going to write little prayers on paper to stuff in the pouch of each prayer bear for the recipients.

The bags will be delivered to Faith in Action on February 6. Faith in Action will be adding a helium balloon to each bag handle and their volunteers will be distributing the gifts to their care receivers. As **Joshua Garnett**, the Faith in Action correspondent, said, "This sounds great! I can't wait to get them to the care receivers! They will enjoy/appreciate this so much!!!"

The blessing blanket started in December is nearing completion. **Charlene Bremer** has been hard at work sewing the panels together, and the result is stunning! We are so thankful for her time and talent to make this project a success. The children will be helping to finish tacking the front to the back to complete the blanket and gift it to someone in need. We will share an image of the finished project soon.

## Sunday School News

We are continuing the theme of God's word to build upon what the children learned last semester. The word has become flesh and is dwelling among us now is our story line. We will be listening closely to the words Jesus had to share with us. We will especially be spending time with the words of Christ that we hear repeated in worship, *The Lord's Prayer* and the Lord's Supper.

2017 began with a study of Jesus calling the disciples. The children explored what it means to be disciples of Jesus and ways in which we follow him every day. Some of the activities used to explore the unit were telling the story with puppets in a puppet theater, games of following a leader and listening to directions carefully, making fish and talking about how Jesus compared gaining followers to fishing. The Middle School class recorded their thoughts about what it means to follow Jesus on video. We hope to share the video with the congregation soon.

The unit of the Good Samaritan has just begun. Children have acted out the story, prayed for their neighbors near and far, and explored ways in which they can use their hands to help others in need.

Later in February we will be studying *The Lord's Prayer*. I would like to connect each child to a prayer partner for this unit. Prayer partners can hold the name of a child in prayer for at least three Sundays February 19-March 5. An occasional note or letter can be sent to the child encouraging them in their faith and showing that you care. If you would be willing to act as a prayer partner, please contact **Mindy** at [mindy@firstpres.church](mailto:mindy@firstpres.church) or 356-7238.

The high school class is studying the book of Proverbs and will be continuing their study of the many facets of Jesus as teacher, healer, shepherd, servant, miracle worker, and savior afterward.

The high school youth are exploring the idea of organizing a pancake brunch for the congregation on February 26 to raise funds for their summer mission trip. Keep your eyes out for updates and details!

Teacher training was held again on February 1, 2017, but it is never too late to get involved! We have a healthy population of children eager to hear the word of God. We need loving, caring adults to share their love of God with them.

If you would like to get involved in this ministry, please contact **Mindy** or a member of the CYF team; **Kristi Carlson, Lizz Pippin, Patty Farthing, Mel Leichter, Sabrina Hwu, Simao Nhoca, or Joyce Wittler**. Perhaps you would like to help one of our current teachers in the classroom; **Claudia Kirby, Marjorie Wixson, Judy Hendrickson, Beryl Forewah, Mel Leichter, Joyce Wittler, Lizz Pippin, and Sabrina Hwu**.

If classroom teaching is not for you, you could help in other ways. Be a door greeter, help prepare snack, be an adult helper for the choir rehearsal, be an adult presence at the church van loading after Sunday School, or help drive some kids to and from church. Your time commitment can be tailored to your needs.

Can only do it once or twice a month? We can still find a role for you in the ministry!

# Your Church



## International Women's Day March 8

We will celebrate women the entire month of March as the Saturday Praise and Prayer Gathering hosts women whose lives are models of inclusion and gender equity.

Here is a preview of speakers.

### March 4

**Shandra Summerville** is from Canaan Baptist Church. She is a Cultural and Linguistic Competence Specialist who leads workshops and consults to groups looking to implement the principles of cultural competence. Ms. Summerville is a minister and is active in many community organizations.



*African Diaspora* has been widely acclaimed.

**Melany Jackson**, M Div is Executive Director of CU at Home which works to provide shelter for the homeless in Champaign-Urbana. She received her Master of Divinity in 2008 after which she led Midwestern Evangelism Teams.



### March 25

Evangelist **Lynnea Redmon-Williams**, Indianapolis, has “a mission to empower women, to share the gospel of Jesus Christ and to see women delivered and set free. She stands on the notion that the Word should be shared in a real and practical way that applies to people’s everyday lives.”



### March 11

**Karen C. Flynn, PhD** is Associate Professor in the University of Illinois Department of Gender and Women’s Studies and African American Studies. Her research interests include migration and travel, popular culture and feminism. Her recent book, *Moving Beyond Borders: Black Canada and Caribbean Women in the*



### March 18

**Valena Claiborne** is from Windsor Road Christian Church where she serves as Outreach Minister. Her passion is “to empower and encourage women through service and teaching that through His word it will be revealed that we are His treasured possession.”



Representative **Carol Ammons** represents the 193<sup>rd</sup> District in the Illinois General Assembly. She previously served on the Urbana City Council and the County Board. Her work has taken her to Courage Connection, The Boys and Girls Club, Salvation Army and University YMCA. Carol is a full time legislator, wife and mother of three.



# Financial Review of 2016

**Operating Budget:** As presented in Table 1, lower than anticipated revenue in 2016 was mostly, but not entirely, offset by lower expenses. The result is a 2016 deficit of over \$10,000 more than what was budgeted. The shortfall in revenue was primarily due to lower pledged contributions than anticipated.

**Table 1 – 2016 Operating Budget**

	Actual	Budgeted
Contributions	\$886,100	\$945,701.
Total Revenue	\$983,428.	\$1,029,581.
Expenses	\$1,036,903.	\$1,072,207.
Balance	(\$53,475.)	(\$42,626.)

**Church Assets:** Church assets as of the end of 2016 compared to 2015 are shown in Table 2. The various components contributing to these amounts are described below.

**Table 2 – Church Assets - End Of Year**

	2015	2016
Cash	\$925,075.	\$867,782.
Investments	\$1,875,565.	\$1,945,212.
Property	\$300,000.	\$300,000.
Total	\$3,100,640.	\$3,112,994.
<b>Cash</b>		
F-150 Contributions	\$585,591.	\$663,440.
Prepaid Pledges	\$136,983.	\$92,039.
Operating Carryover	(\$16,633.)	(\$69,710.)
Restricted Endow.	\$25,208.	\$20,268.
Restricted Designated	\$79,263.	\$71,564.
Restricted Mission	\$115,623.	\$89,053.
Payroll/Medical Plan	(\$968.)	\$1,130.
<b>Investments</b>		
Reserve Funds	\$1,210,335.	\$1,269,236.
Permanent Endow.	\$543,205.	\$543,205.
Endowment earnings	\$44,667.	\$52,242.
F-150 Funds	\$77,359.	\$80,528.

**Investment Portfolio Busey Wealth Management (BWM):** The market moved upward in 2016 and this was reflected in a \$76,738 (4.1% after fees) gain in our BWM investment pool. During 2016, contributions of \$916 were received, endowment distributions of \$8,007 were made, and fees of \$14,133 were paid, resulting in a final balance of \$1,945,212 compared to \$1,875,565 at the end of 2015.

**Forward 150 (F-150):** At the end of 2016, the conclusion of the second year of this campaign, contributions of approximately \$1,815,700 had been received, which is nearly 88% of the total amount expected for 3 years. Expenses in 2016 were \$344,500 and total \$1,109,700 to date. Payments were made for the sprinkler installation, organ upgrades and \$35,700 to missions.

**Restricted Contributions:** These special contributions and contributions for specified uses are outside the operating budget. Approximately \$69,000 of these contributions were made in 2016. This included \$61,000 for a variety of specific and general missions and \$8,000 in memory of members who passed away.

**Property:** The amount of \$300,000 is the estimated value of the southwest Champaign property that is presently rented for farming. The value is listed at \$10,000 per acre, but expected to be 3 to 4 times that value for development in the future.

**January Contributions:** Contributions for 2017 that were prepaid in 2016 were \$92,039 compared to \$136,983 in 2016. Prepaid contributions are pro-rated over 12 months for these reports. Contributions for January in 2017 were about \$30,000 more than in 2016, both years having 5 Sundays. This is well above the amount projected in the 2017 budget and an excellent start to the year.





**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN**

302 West Church Street  
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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 Corbin .....Mission Coordinator
- Ritchie Drennen ..... Facility Maintenance
- Patty Farthing.....Receptionist
- Marcia Franks ..... Administrative Assistant
- Joe Grant ..... Choir Director
- Allegra Martin..... Director of Children’s Music
- Debra Miller.....ESL Coordinator
- Chris Penny.....Facilities Manager
- Ann Petry ..... Accounting
- Andrea Pope..... Contemporary Worship Director
- Richard Rossi..... Church Musician
- Mindy Watts-Ellis .....Director 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@firstpres.church](mailto:marcia.franks@firstpres.church).**