

# April 2016



## FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN

### Pastor's Pen

BY CHUCK CARLSON, INTERIM HEAD PASTOR

(chuck.carlson@firstchurchchampaign.org)

Ministry is most successful and satisfying when we lead out of our strengths. This is true of us as a church community and as individuals. Paul expresses it this way; "But when God, who had set me apart before I was born and called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, so that I might proclaim him among the Gentiles."

The first thing that we need to get straight is who we are. We belong to God by God's grace given through Christ. He sets us apart, gifts us, and calls us. We learn what we are gifted for through prayer, petition, self-inquiry, and feedback from others. All individuals and churches have a gift mix that God grants so that we know what we are equipped to do. We have to seek it out.

How do we do that? We look at options. A healthy person or congregation knows the value of engagement, the exchange of ideas, and the vitality of interaction. It is important to share ideas, dialogue with one another, and ask questions.

We are a changing congregation. Our Church-Youth-and Family ministry (CYF) is now predominately Congolese. We see fewer Caucasian participants. What is God saying to us? Do we choose to self-select and go where people are more like us or stay and ask how God is challenging us to grow and be a part of what God is doing here? No one can tell another what to do or not to do, but each of us is being asked to prayerfully consider what gifts God would have us focus on and use for the common good. This ministry is messy.

People are expressing to me that this isn't the church I used to know. It is not. Certainly it is not the same church I was called to ten years ago. Like many of you, I find myself grieving the loss but am in the throes of reorienting myself to what and where it is that God is asking us to use our individual and corporate gifts. As what used to give us meaning, attachment, and comfort seems to elude us, it is natural to experience a loss of energy and focus. We have to reinvent ourselves.

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### Welcome to our Guests from Cuba...April 12-19

**Daniel Izquierdo, Raquel Fernandez and Yamilet Sanchez** will be our guests April 12-19. Daniel, Raquel and Yamilet are from our sister church, the Presbyterian Reformed Church at Luyano in Havana, Cuba where Daniel is the pastor.

Our guests will be visiting many of our church groups throughout their week stay while also enjoying some sightseeing of Central Illinois.

We will honor our guests at an **All Church All American Fried Chicken Picnic** in Centennial Hall on Sunday, April 17, at 11:45 AM. Bring a side, salad or dessert to share. Hear a brief conversation: *Changing Cuba-Changing Church*.

Let's give a warm First Church welcome to our Cuban guests, Pastor Daniel, Raquel and Yamilet.

**(Read more about Cuba in the Mission section of this newsletter.)**

**Pastor's Pen continued**

During times of loss, people tend to deal with one another and the circumstances in different ways. We need to mourn. I feel that way about the PCUSA and the changes we are experiencing through so many churches leaving the denomination. The danger is to not express our feelings, to become locked in time. If we refuse to let go of yesterday's memories we won't find the present satisfying. We will look for someone, like a new pastor perhaps, to fix it and restore us to what we think we once were. Our feelings may go underground only to reappear at a later time in not so helpful ways. During times of change our relationships may be tested. Patience, love and listening go a long way. We need to stay in the relationship. Regardless of how things might seem and how we may feel, God is present extending grace and guidance.

A mark of a healthy organism is the ability to adapt to changing conditions. To grieve appropriately is to empower. Mourning helps us to adapt to loss and change. It acknowledges the present reality and feelings, dialogues about them, grieves the loss, and begins to move forward into God's new reality.

And the most nourishing attitude that we can embrace is gratitude. Christ's steadfast love and sovereign grace must be front and center in our life together. We need to be generous to one another, supportive and encouraging. Paul sets us in the right direction; "Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony" (Colossians 3:14). So here we go. God is nudging us to look at our present options he is putting before us. Let us take stock of the material and human resources God has given us. Let us seek support, ask questions, affirm the ability God is giving us to move forward and make clear, thoughtful and prayerful decisions. It is Christ's church after all.

**Zula H. Rose Fund**

BY BYRON KEMPER, FINANCE CHAIR  
(byronkem@life.illinois.edu)

In previous newsletter articles, I have written in general about our 11 endowment funds, and this month will highlight the **Zula H. Rose Fund**, chosen more or less at random. The fund was established from the estate of **William Cummings Rose**, better known as **Will Rose**, in 1986 as a memorial to his wife. The will stated that *the proceeds (from the fund) be used for the landscaping or other beautification of the Church grounds, which may include a part-time yard man or other professional services*. It went on to say that *It is my hope that the Church yard may become one of the beauty spots of Champaign*.

Will Rose grew up in South Carolina and his father was a Presbyterian minister. He came to Champaign in 1922 as a Professor of Physiological Chemistry at the U of I, a title which was later changed to Professor of Biochemistry, and he founded the present Department of Biochemistry at the U of I.

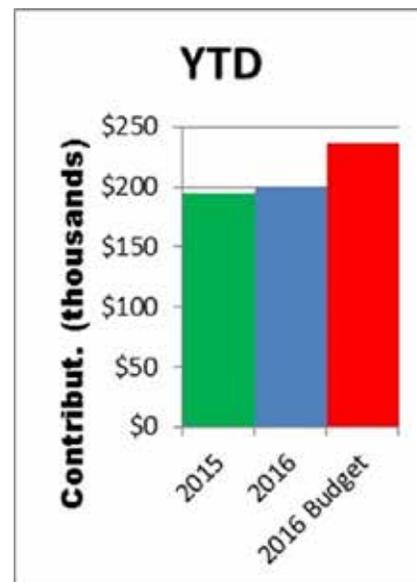
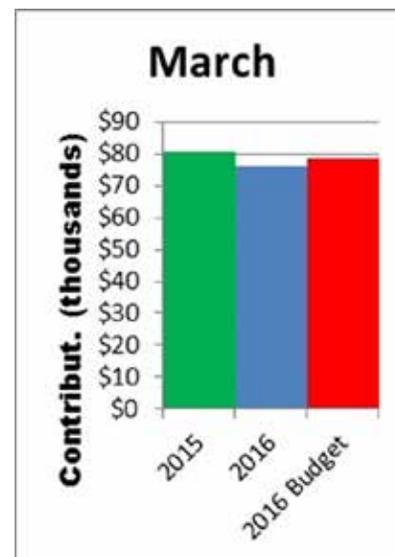
Dr. Rose was a distinguished biochemist who received many awards for his studies on amino acids in nutrition. He discovered the last amino acid, threonine, of the 20 amino acids known to be present in proteins in our bodies. He also determined which amino acids were essential to be in the diet and which were not.

**Dick Arnould** served on the budget committee for our church that was chaired by Will and notes that he had a great mind and was a quiet, but very active member of our church.

Today, due to his generous bequest, the Zula Rose Fund has an endowed principal of \$82,772 + accumulated earnings of about \$10,000, and payouts of about \$5,000 each year are used for landscaping purposes as requested in his will.

**March Contributions:** Contributions for March were about \$5,500 less than in March 2015, but YTD contributions

remain slightly higher than in 2015. YTD contributions are about \$35,000 behind the projected contributions in the 2016 budget.



## Prayer Corner



### Easter Outfit From God

Do you realize that God is in the clothing business? He wants Christians to reflect the character of Christ. In Colossians 3:12, God says, "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience." Our unseen wardrobe consists of compassion towards the hurting, kindness towards all, humility or a lack of pride, gentleness that uses love instead of force and patience with inconveniences.

We must ask God to clothe us in this wardrobe; we can't do it alone.

### Looking for all Graduates

If you know of a graduate who is connected to the church who is graduating this spring, please let Presbyterian Women know. We are hoping to **honor all graduates** - high school, college, trade school, and higher education - on May 15.

Please contact **Pat Phillips** p.phillips42@sbcglobal.net or 359.8179.

### Daily Devotion

*Su Voz, His voice*, is a daily devotion written by the people of the Presbyterian Reformed Church of Cuba. These brief messages are witness to our solidarity with the people of Cuba as we share God's message in our lives. To receive this daily email message, send us an email at <http://www.firstchurchchampaign.org/contact-us> or contact Bob at [rwk3213@gmail.com](mailto:rwk3213@gmail.com) or 217-621-5915.

### Pastor Nominating Committee

Your pastor nominating committee continues to meet once or twice a week in a process of discernment. We continue to receive applications but are now focusing on the most promising applicants by engaging in more comprehensive conversations.

Please continue your prayers for our current staff, our future staff, our committee and the people of our church. Please think about what you can do to contribute to the work of our congregation as we seek new pastoral leadership.

**Musafiri Amani, Emily Beach, Harry Bremer, Tracy Dace, Beth Hutchens, Sabrina Hwu, Wen-mei Hwu, Robert Kirby, Pam Knox, Bill Metcalf, Carol Miles, Levi Morgan, Eric Stickels, Tom Ulen, Karin Vermillion.**

### *Jays & Concerns*

We extend our sympathy to the friends and families of...

- **Fran Johnson**, who died March 13, 2016.
- **Robert Sprague**, who died March 23, 2016.

Congratulations to..

- **Arlette Sindula Mbombo** and **Michel Abangambole** on the birth of daughter, Harvest Abangambole on March 22, 2016.

**Thank you!**

- to **Nancy Brombaugh** for her hard work each year to see that our church obtains the PCUSA Earth Care Certification.
- for helping donate \$5800 during the recent SAFE House benefit. This means more contributions are needed for the program to carry on.

The **internment for Steve Corten**, who died earlier this year, will be held on Friday, April 8, at 10 AM in the Memorial Garden at the church.

# Your Church At Work



**Music for Kemmerer Village...**Accompanied by a party of six, **Jean René Balekita** and his music ensemble traveled to Assumption, Illinois, and performed for the youth residing at Kemmerer Village on February 28, 2016. The young people responded with enthusiasm, several times joining the group on stage with singing and dancing.

Afterward, the visitors enjoyed Kemmerer Village hospitality, touring the grounds and being treated to a meal. It was a memorable afternoon and evening, enjoyed by all.

The musical event was sponsored by Presbyterian Women of this church.



Left to right. Nadeige, Alain, Judy, Ferdinand, Dieudonne, Simon and Parfait.

**ESL Bible Study...**We study the Gospel of John while perfecting our English language skills. We watch clips from movies, read and discuss verses from the Good News Translation and share our stories. We learn Christian hymns, play games and we pray together. Everyone is welcome.

## Come to Dinner!

The Ninth Annual Fundraising Banquet to benefit the work of the **East Central Illinois Refugee Mutual Assistance Center** will be held on Saturday Evening, April 16, 2016, at the Round Barn Banquet Centre. Tickets, at \$65 each, are available at the ECIRMAC offices at 302 South Birch, Urbana. Tables of eight may be purchased for \$500. Call ECIRMAC at 344-8455 or Board President **John Muirhead** at 398-1048 for more information.

## Action Needed!

Faith in Action is an interfaith volunteer caregiver program sponsored by Presence Covenant Medical Center. The program serves Champaign County residents ages 55 and older who are in need of a particular service. Volunteer opportunities include transportation to medical appointments, pharmacy and grocery shopping, friendly home visits, making telephone reassurance calls, providing respite for caregivers, light housekeeping, minor home repairs, yard clean-up/chores, office assistance, conducting home assessments, and leading volunteer orientations. The flexibility of the program makes it ideal for working professionals, seasonal workers, students, stay-at-home parents, or retired individuals. Volunteer orientations are held every 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays of the month, 2-3:30 PM. For more information, call 217.337.2778. Our **Community Mission Deacons** are sponsoring Faith in Action this year.



**Presbyterian Women...**

**Don't they knit baby blankets and roll bandages?**

Of course many Presbyterian Women are skilled in the textile arts. We sew dresses out of pillowcases for children in Africa, knit prayer shawls to comfort people who are hurting and crochet soft caps to keep infants' heads warm.

For many years, hospitals around the world requested rolled bandages. So we rolled up our sleeves and, well, rolled thousands of bandages to provide relief to thousands around the world.

But Presbyterian Women's mission work isn't always done from a comfy chair. Sometimes we grab shovels and work boots, using not just our hands, but our arms, legs, backs and of course prayers. For example, our PW Knifty Knitters have formed a partnership with the Luyano Presbyterian Women and they knit together, sharing ideas. This year, they made scarves and gloves for the children at Kemmerer Village. Regardless of the tools and muscles used, Presbyterian Women embody *1 Corinthians 12:4-7's* "varieties of gifts . . . varieties of services," directing those to co-creating God's vision of wholeness.

**Spring Cleaning and Moving**

Sonia and Daniel and their two toddlers have been sharing space with a cousin's family. That makes four adults and five children in a two bedroom, one bath apartment. Having worked hard for a rent payment and deposits they are more than ready to move to the first American home of their own. But, they welcome a little help.

Our relocation ministry welcomes new Americans affiliated with our church or referred by the Immigration Center. We try to give them a start with a place to sleep, a place to eat, and things with which to prepare and eat a meal. These are the few things they need. The rest they will buy later as they are able and these will include the things they want.

Cleaning out some drawers, closets, the basement or an attic? Downsizing? Replacing? Does your small group want a project?

We are happy to receive your tax deductible donations. We can pick up at your home and recycle to a grateful family or you can bring things to our mission closets at the church. Contact us at [rwk3213@gmail.com](mailto:rwk3213@gmail.com) or 217-621-5915.

Here are some things we always need:

Bible in English (Good News Bible or New International Readers Version)

**Kitchen**

- Small dining table and chairs
- Table cloth
- Set of dishes per person (plate, salad, soup and mug/water glass)

- Set of silverware
- Drinking glasses
- Mixing Bowls
- Pots and Pans
- Cooking Utensils
- Measuring spoons/cups
- Sharp Knives
- Can Opener
- Cutting Board
- Kitchen Towels
- Dishwashing Soap
- Sponges w/ scrubby side
- Tall Kitchen Trash can
- Small box trash bags
- Rice Cooker
- Tea Kettle

**Living Room**

- Sofa
- Chairs
- Small side or coffee table
- Lamps

**Bedroom**

- Mattresses (full, queen or twin)
- Comforter
- Set of sheets
- Pillowcases
- Pillows
- Hangers
- Plastic closet drawers
- Extra Blankets

**Cleaning Items**

- All-Purpose Cleaner spray
- Can Scouring Powder
- Toilet Brush
- Box Laundry Soap
- Broom & Dust Pan
- Mop & Bucket
- Vacuum cleaner

**Bath**

- Bath towels
- Washcloths
- Small trash can

**Miscellaneous**

- Laundry Basket
- Pad Paper & Envelopes
- Pens/Pencils
- Book Stamps
- Fan
- Small Tool Kit
- Light Bulbs
- First Aid Kit
- Collapsible Shopping Cart

# Getting to Know our Neighbors in Cuba

## Champaign First Cuba Partners

The Cuba Partnership is a covenant relationship between our congregation and that of the Presbyterian Reformed Church at Luyanó in Havana, Cuba. Our purpose is to embody our unity in Christ, to be faithful witnesses to Christ in our families, communities, countries and the world, to sensitize our respective church families to critical situations in our societies and to cooperate in those in which the church can make a difference and to explore various areas of joint mission.

Cuba Partners are all the people who have completed a Cuba Study. That's fifty people since the first study was led by **Bill and Pat Metcalf** in 2009. Since that time our congregation has hosted five guests from Cuba as we now prepare to host three more this month.

In the same period we have enjoyed multiple trips to build friendships with our sister church. These have included congregational trips, a youth trip, visits to help with vacation bible school, visits to celebrate important events in the Cuban church and visits to participate in a variety of workshops and conferences.

Our congregation supports **Jo Ella Holman**, mission co-worker for Cuba and the Caribbean and the National Center Of The Presbyterian Church (meeting and retreat center) near Santa Clara. Recently through our Raindrop Project we helped update the toilet facilities in our sister church. We are also in partnership through our national Presbyterian Cuba Partners Network and the national Cuba Connection.

For decades the Presbyterian Church – USA has been reaching across the straits of Florida to stand in solidarity with Cuban Presbyterians.

## Cuba Study Scheduled

The next eight week Cuba Study will be offered Tuesday evenings, October 25 to December 13 from 6:30-8 PM. The study is open to everyone interested in Cuba. The next trip is expected in the spring of 2017. To visit Cuba with our church you must be a member of our church, a regular guest or staff and must have completed the Cuba Study.



**Daniel Izquierdo** is pastor at the Luyanó Presbyterian Church in Havana, the General Secretary of the Presbyterian Reformed Church in Cuba, a faculty member and the chair of the Board of Trustees of the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Matanzas, Cuba. He was selected by Cuban Presbyterians to represent them at the PC-USA meeting of the General Assembly in Portland this June.



**Nancy Raquel Cardona Fernandez** grew up in the Baptist Church and has been a

member of the church at Luyanó since 1980 where she plays the piano, teaches Sunday School and serves as Moderator of Presbyterian Women. In 1999 Raquel completed studies at the Institute of Theological Studies with a specialty in liturgy. She has been a governing elder since 2000.

Raquel has two sons who live in Spain with their families and two daughters who live in Cuba. The eldest, Karen, has a fifteen year old daughter and a twenty-eight year old son who lives in Washington DC. Raquel lives with her younger daughter who has three sons, one of whom is autistic.

Raquel retired from a career as an accountant with the Ministry of Public Health.



**Yamilet Sánchez Camacho** is a governing elder having served on session since 2004. She also serves the congregation as Director of Christian Education and teaches Sunday School. Yamilet works as a ceramic artista. She is married and has a thirteen year old daughter. Yamilet enjoys reading, cooking and crocheting.

Cuba continued



Cuba Youth with Emily Beach on Palm Sunday 2015. Front row Vladimir, Norka, Misael, Jose, Aeani, Mavio. Back row Hairam, Emily, Yamila, Kaxelia, Danniell. Norka is an elder in the congregation.

# Children, Youth and Family Ministry

## Transportation Team

Are you looking for a way to support our Children, Youth and Families but haven't quite found the best place to volunteer? Have you considered becoming one of the drivers or ride along adults who serve on the transportation team? These dedicated individuals help get families to church on Sundays, get students to youth group on Sunday nights, and help kids get to various midweek events. If you are interested in serving Families in this way, please email **John Muirhead** at [j.muirhead@comcast.net](mailto:j.muirhead@comcast.net) for more information.

## Confirmation Sunday

On April 10 our confirmation students who have worked so hard all year long will be confirmed! They will each participate in leading worship and some will read a segment of their statement of faith to the congregation before being confirmed during the 9 AM service.

At noon following the services, confirmation students and their parents are invited to a special lunch to celebrate this new chapter in their faith journeys.



Yamilet Sanchez and daughter share stories with Sallie Hutton in Old Havana.

## Children's Choir

We have some exciting news! As some of you probably know already, our children's choir director **Julia Hartman** had her second baby on March 24. She will return in 6 weeks. While Ms. Julia is getting some rest and snuggles with her newest little one, **Jean René** and **Betty Carlson** will be leading Children's Choir for those 6 Sundays. Thank you parents and teachers for your support and flexibility during this few weeks of change! And most importantly, Congratulations to Ms. Julia!

## Session Notes

- Motion to approve request from Worship Committee for a Sunday in the Park in June;
- Motion to approve request from Family Ministries for 6 scholarships for upcoming youth Triennium;
- Motion to approve an additional offering during Pentecost.



Peter Yau examines construction at the National Presbyterian Center near Santa Clara.

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Bibles

On April 3, 10, and 17 our 3<sup>rd</sup> graders will be participating in a special class that will help them learn to navigate their very own brand new bibles! The 3<sup>rd</sup> graders will be presented with their bibles during the 9 AM service on April 24 for a special blessing. Following the special blessing, kids and parents will have a class together in Mae Chapin Parlor.



Gisele and Miriam Chenault knitting at Luyano.



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Change Service Requested



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**Sunday:**

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

**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
- Julia Hartman ..... Children/Youth Music Coordinator
- Daudet Ilunga..... Associate Director CYF
- Chris Penny ..... Facilities Manager
- Ann Petry ..... Accounting
- Kristen Plemons.. Interim Director Children, Youth & Family
- Andrea Pope..... Contemporary Worship Director
- Richard Rossi..... Church Musician
- Linda Sims .....ESL Coordinator

**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](mailto:marcia.franks@firstchurchchampaign.org).**