

# March 2016



## FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN

### Pastor's Pen

BY CHUCK CARLSON, INTERIM HEAD PASTOR  
(chuck.carlson@firstchurchchampaign.org)

Living requires resiliency. None of us can predict what will happen today or tomorrow. James chides us a bit. "Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a town and spend a year there, doing business and making money.' Yet you do not even know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, 'If the Lord wishes, we will live and do this or that.'" (*James 4:13-15*)

Life has its way of humbling us when we become arrogant and self-assured enough to think we are in control. As we find ourselves three weeks into Lent what assurance we have is grounded in following Christ through repentance and entering into the promise of God's resurrection hope. It is God who sustains, carries, and guides us through the unknown tomorrows. The reformer Martin Luther observes that "A person never flies so high as when he or she knows not whether he or she is going". But God does. So, all through Lent Jesus says, "Follow me."

Our context of ministry is dynamic and unstable. A new culture is overwhelming us with change. Our identity as a church is in flux. There is a sense of loss and grief. We know who we were but who are we

**continued on next page**

### Pastor Nominating Committee

BOB KIRBY (rwk3213@gmail.com),  
PAM KNOX (poknox@aol.com), AND  
TOM ULEN (thomas.ulen@gmail.com)

Your pastor nominating committee is now meeting once or twice a week as we continue a process of discernment. We continue to receive applications and have now begun preliminary interviews with promising pastors.

We carefully study sermon videos, read blogs, websites, Facebook posts, tweets and essays which reflect the work of prospective pastors. When possible we are also observing candidates as they lead worship in their churches.

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 or our congregation and what you can do to support and encourage our staff.

**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 Vermilion.**

*This Easter celebrate with us!*  
First Presbyterian Church of Champaign

**Sunday, March 27**

8 & 9:30 AM Worship with brass & Sanctuary Choir  
11 AM Contemporary Worship

Childcare available (birth - Pre-K) at all services

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217.356.7238

**Pastor's Pen continued**

becoming? What will we look like ten years from now? James Kouzes and Barry Posner describe how best we can negotiate these waters being navigated: "No one can accurately predict what will happen next. Those who are the most agile and flexible, those supple enough to adapt to shifting conditions, will succeed." (*Healthy Congregations*, p.36)

The only manual we have is that of trust and faith in the Christ who calls us to follow him. He tells us that change need not be a baffling event. We aren't victims. Finding blame or attacking others will undermine faith and be destructive to the community. Understand that the inability to break away from established ways of seeing things will limit our ability to see what new thing God is doing.

The Spirit of Christ calls us to view change as a manageable process with his wisdom and guidance. Our energy and ability to respond to the disruptions around us come through prayer, scripture reading, faith, and discernment by listening to the Holy Spirit together. God will grant us the capacity to go with the flow of uncertainty with a sense of humor, a willingness to learn with a belief that God working through us will impact outcomes. This is all very hopeful to me, not because of who I am or who you are, but because of who God is.

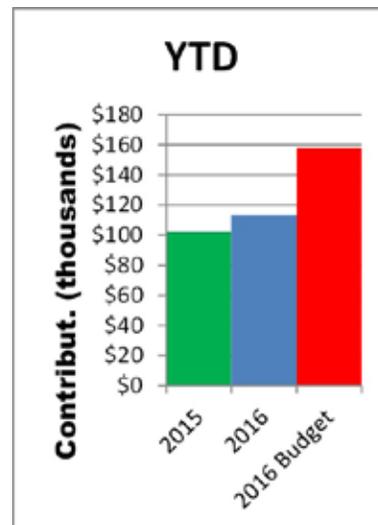
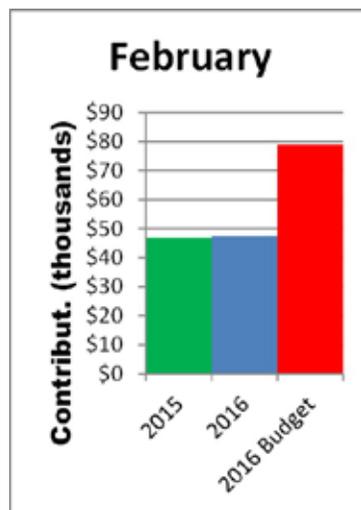
Certainly James is right. We move forward trusting that "If the Lord wishes, we will live and do this or that." We are in God's hands. Let's enjoy the ride, the ride of faith, hope, and most of all, love.

**Tax Season**

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

April 15 is rapidly approaching and while getting your 2015 returns in order, it is not too early to start thinking about 2016 tax planning and in particular deductions for charitable donations. Some policies, such as the ability to directly transfer Minimum Required Deductions from IRA accounts to charitable organizations, were recently made permanent (rather than being renewed at the last minute each year). Good planning can save you money! There is a lot information on the Web about charitable giving. A couple from the government are at: <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0074-giving-charity> and <https://www.irs.gov/taxtopics/tc506.html>.

February Contributions: Contributions for February were slightly higher than in February 2015. February is one of our weakest months for contributions and this year was no exception. Contributions were \$32,000 below the average budgeted monthly expenses and are now about \$44,000 below the YTD budgeted expenses.



**F150 Update**

BY JENNETTE MOLINE  
(jamoline@comcast.net)

Progress on Phase 1:

- Hatter's Organ Repair continues to make final adjustments, including valve-by-valve adjustments and finding and fixing air leaks.
- Rodgers Organ voicing expert Gerry Oehring has been contacted to put our church in his schedule and he is aware that we're near completion.
- MATCO continues fire sprinkler piping installation. The first floor piping, including Westminster Hall and Mae Chapin Parlor, is due to start around February 24, 2016.
- The carpenter, Wingle Construction, is beginning wood trim work at the sanctuary piping troughs and painting piping throughout both buildings.
- Regarding stained glass windows and frames restoration work, the committee believes competitive bids for the stained glass and wood frame repair should be solicited on the east and north sides of the church. Brush Architects will be asked to prepare this bid package.

## Prayer Corner



### Listen and Receive

There are times when we want to pray, but are at a loss for words. We need to listen and receive the advice of Psalm 46:10, "Be still and know that I am God." As we quiet ourselves before God, we can focus on God's love, wisdom and power to care for us. We can let this awareness of God's presence become a prayer that connects us with God in a special way.

Let us pray that we are able to be still and wait for God to lead us in prayer.



### Kukosama Graduates

**Audry Kukosama** will graduate from basic training on April 17. He is in the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion 48<sup>th</sup> infantry Regiment Fort Leonard Wood, MO. He will then begin specialty training.

To send him a note use email at [dgooden2004@yahoo.com](mailto:dgooden2004@yahoo.com) or leave a card at the Welcome Center. Let's let him know how much we appreciate the sacrifice for his new country.

### Daily Devotion

*Su Voz, His Voice*, is a daily devotion written by the people of the Presbyterian Reformed Church of Cuba and distributed by email daily. To subscribe please email or phone the church office.

## Jays & Concerns

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

- **Tom Phillips**, son of **Pat and Tom Phillips**, who died unexpectedly February 10, 2016.
- **Gordon Babbs**, son of **Marian Babbs**, who was killed in a tragic car accident. Memorial service to be held later this Spring.

### Thank You!

The Presbyterian Women's House Committee wishes to thank everyone for your assistance in re-purposing unused items from our kitchens. The committee has created an inventory of essential kitchenware for the Mae Chapin, Deacons and Centennial kitchens. In each kitchen, you will find an inventory list for that kitchen posted inside an upper cabinet door. To keep inventory consistent in all kitchens, the Committee asks that kitchen items borrowed for use elsewhere in the church, be returned to the kitchen from which they were borrowed.

# Your Church At Work

## Relocation Ministry Team

Don and Valerie are new Americans. After living three months with her cousin they have worked and saved for a rent deposit, first month rent, electric deposit and they are more than ready to move with their three young children to a place of their own.

But the apartment is empty. Even at 800 square feet it is completely empty. No place but the floor on which to sleep, no place to sit and nothing with which to cook or serve food, no blanket or sheet, no towel and savings have been exhausted.

We request your prayers for this ministry. Our team of volunteers will move your things from your home and then deliver them to a most grateful family in your neighborhood. We accompany deliveries with a bible and information about our church. We accept tax deductible donations of household items to give to families beginning a new life in Champaign – Urbana and we accept financial donations to our restricted account.



Team joined by John Muirhead (right) rests after a three flight trip with a wonderful donated sofa bed.



A winter move. Dominique Essafa, Joe Grant, Bill Marble and Olivier Mpanda with Ha Ho from ECIR-MAC (The Refugee Center).

We invite you to join others both young and old in the joy of this work. We need the support of folks with trucks and trailers, lifters and pushers. We need folks who can help with minor furniture repairs including scratch touch up and those who can shop garage and estate sales for useful things.

## Compassion, Peace and Justice

The Presbyterian Church’s commitment to justice is core to its identity and understanding as followers of Jesus Christ. Beginning with the ancient texts of the faith, God’s people have given both voice and witness to the prophet Micah’s calling to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with God.

Your Relocation Team responds with mattresses, a dining table and chairs, some pots and pans, some plates and glasses, some sheets and blankets. This will be most welcome and appreciated until the family can buy the things they want. We serve people from our own congregation and those referred by the Refugee Center. Thanks to a generous donor we have an ample storage unit to support this work.

The Confessions of the church, especially the *Confession of 1967* and *A Brief Statement of Faith*, challenge the church to follow Christ into a broken and fearful world to:

- pray without ceasing,
- to witness among all peoples
- to Christ as Lord and Savior,
- to unmask idolatries in church and culture,
- to hear the voices of peoples long silenced,
- and to work with others for justice, freedom and peace.

— *A Brief Statement of Faith* 10.4

The *Book of Order* also makes it clear that the whole church gathers in worship and its corporate life for the purpose of being sent out into the world to engage in the reconciling, healing work of God through Jesus Christ. God sends the church in the power of the Holy Spirit to share with Christ in establishing God’s just, peaceable and loving rule in the world. (W-7.4000)<sup>1</sup>

The Compassion, Peace and Justice Ministry Team meets the second Monday of each month at 4 PM, **Tracy Dace** moderating. The committee has recently focused on racial reconciliation in our community. You are warmly invited to join this ministry team.

## World Missions Ministry

BY ANN STOUT, WORLD MISSION CHAIR  
(mrsas2003@gmail.com)

More on the Opportunity International/  
FPCC Dominican Republic Education  
Project

- Schools for poor children in the DR are being supported by FPCC from the mission portion of the Forward 150 funds in a three year project.
- FPCC is partnering with Opportunity International, the oldest and largest Christian microfinance organization in the world, to provide loans to the owners of private schools dedicated to the quality education of poor children.
- In addition, Opportunity International provides school fee loans to parents who could not otherwise afford to send their children to school.
- Loans are used by school proprietors (teacher-owners) for a variety of reasons including: constructing and improving infrastructure including new classrooms, computer labs, libraries and toilet and sanitation facilities. They are also using loans to purchase books teaching materials, computers, etc.
- Since 2012, 194 developing schools in the DR have received loans (cumulative average being \$3,579.00 per school). Loans are typically repaid within 18-24 months.

The Big Picture View of World Poverty and Education. According to Opportunity International, Currently, at least 100 million children worldwide (over 70% girls!) are not enrolled in schools, mostly because quality education is not available and/or families cannot afford the cost. **and**, education (or the lack thereof!) is the SINGLE LARGEST DETERMINANT for future economic status.

The World Mission Team will continue to keep you informed about this exciting ministry.

If you are interested in accompanying a small group of members to the Dominican Republic to see this ministry “up close and personal” please contact **Ann Stout** at 359-7487 or mrsas2003@gmail.com.

## Session Notes

- Motion to approve \$5,000 from General Memorial Fund for new executive and clerical chairs;
- Motion to approve policies for the expenditure of General Memorial Funds;
- Motion to approve formation of an ESL Advisory Committee which would report to Mission;
- Motion to create a Ministry of Inclusion and Coordination as a standing committee of Session;
- Formed an office assessment team comprised of **Peter Yau** and **Sarah Laufenberg** to look at job descriptions.

## Coming in March..

### Saturday, March 12

6 PM Praise & Prayer  
Celebration of Women

### Sunday, March 13

Daylight Saving Time begins  
(Spring ahead one hour)

### Saturday, March 19

6 PM Praise & Prayer  
Celebration of Women

### Palm Sunday, March 20

8 AM Worship  
9 AM Worship  
10:30 AM Contemporary Worship

### Maundy Thursday, March 24

7 PM Communion Service

### Good Friday, March 25

12:15 PM Worship at 1<sup>st</sup> Methodist

### Saturday, March 26

6 PM Praise & Prayer  
Celebration of Women  
Congolese Buffet

### Easter Sunday, March 27

8 AM Worship  
9:30 AM Worship  
11 AM Contemporary Worship

The 8 and 9:30 AM Easter services will feature the Sanctuary Choir, organ and brass quartet with an antiphonal introit to open the service and Hallelujah chorus to close. Anthems by Bankson and Helvey will also be performed.

**March Celebration of Women Features Local Women  
Congolese Food Buffet March 26**



**Avery**



**Niblock**



**Yousef**



**Williams**



**Lewis**

**International Women’s Day is March 8. We celebrate women during the month of March as a part of our Saturday evening worship. All events begin at 6 PM in Centennial Hall. Everyone is warmly invited to all three worship events with a special invitation to the last celebration on Saturday, March 26. A Congolese food buffet will be followed by a sermon given by Michelle Lewis.**

**March 12**

**Patricia Avery** is the executive director of the CU Area Project, a not-for-profit organization that seeks to reduce and prevent juvenile delinquency, and the president/CEO of the Champaign County branch of the NAACP.

She was the first woman, the first African-American and the first Democrat to chair the Champaign County Board. “I try not to become consumed with the situation. I pray, consult my pastor, then let go and let God direct my steps.”

**Rebekah Niblock** completed her undergraduate studies in Spanish Literature, and International Relations with a concentration in Latin American Studies, at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She taught English as a second language to recently arriving immigrants in the community to help integrate them into society. She then began law school at George Washington University to become an immigration lawyer graduating in 2013. She joined the Immigration Project in December 2013. In her work she serves low income new Americans needing legal help with the immigration system.

**March 19**

**Stephanie Yousef** serves as a specialist in immigration and international affairs on the staff of **Congressman Rodney Davis**. A wife and a mother of a son and twin daughters, she graduated from the University of Illinois with a BA in Global Studies with specialization in The Middle East. Stephanie has been a kind and generous friend to many new Americans helping them navigate the complex procedures of Homeland Security.

**Lynnea Williams** is a native of Indianapolis, who accepted her call to ministry in 2001. She was ordained as an Evangelist in 2013. With a mission to empower women, Evangelist Williams has a passion to share the gospel of Jesus Christ and see women delivered and set free.

**March 26**

**Michelle Lewis** is a native of Central Illinois and an alumnus of the University of Illinois. works in the University’s College of Business as the Program Manager for the Master of Science in Business Administration. Michelle is a writer, singer and photographer. Although she grew up in the church, Michelle did not come to faith until age 26. Her journey led her to seminary at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in 2004, where she studied religion. She has a soft spot for women finding their voice, dignity and worth in the love of Christ.

# Children, Youth and Family Ministry

## Easter

This year Easter seems to be coming up especially early! So here is an early reminder that on March 27, Easter Sunday there will be no Sunday School. We want to give kids a special opportunity to experience worship with their families on this important holiday.

This also allows our amazing Sunday School Teachers to worship with their families as well. The nursery will be open on Easter Sunday.



## 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.

## Children's Choir

We have some exciting news! As some of you probably know already, our children's choir director **Julia Hartman** is expecting her second baby in March! Ms. Julia's last day with us will be March 16 as she takes her maternity leave. She will return in 6 weeks.

While Ms. Julia is getting some rest and snuggles with her newest little one, **Andrea Pope** will be leading Children's Choir for those 6 Sundays. During that time, choir will meet at the beginning of our Sunday school time to allow for her to prepare for The Gathering service at 10:30 AM.

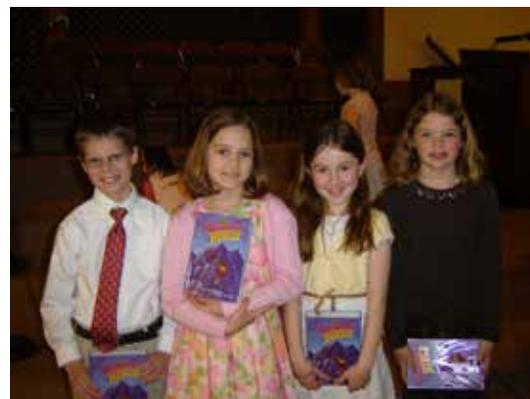
Thank you parents and teachers for your support and flexibility during this few weeks of change! And most importantly, congratulations to Ms. Julia!

## Third Grade Bibles

Beginning April 3, 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!

Parents should keep an eye out for their child's letter coming in the mail with the details for the class and what to expect.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> graders will be presented with their bibles during the 9 and 10:30 service on April 17 for a special blessing.





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302 West Church Street  
Champaign, IL 61820

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) in Chapel

**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).**