

September 2016



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN

Exciting Changes to Promote Growth

BY ANDREA POPE, CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP DIRECTOR
(andrea.pope@firstchurchchampaign.org)

Change...it isn't easy. Everyone likes progress, but no one likes change! However, in order to grow, we must change. Thankfully, with the support of the Session and Worship committee and many other people, we have embarked upon some exciting changes that will promote growth for our church!

If you haven't been in Centennial Hall lately, you're in for a huge surprise! Renovations on the space began last month and are almost complete. These changes are providing much needed updates, creating a comfortable and inviting setting for worship, church and community activities. The transformation from an old basement to a warm and relaxed multipurpose room took much work and it will continue to be a work in progress as we tweak things. A new coat of paint with some color is probably the most obvious change. Many other modifications have been made as well, including new chairs, a new stage (in the corner so that the screen and projector can be more easily utilized), a Welcome Center desk, coffee bar and bistro seating. It certainly does NOT look like a basement anymore!!!

The necessity to move forward with renovations was spurred by the hope (and now reality) of moving The Gathering (our contemporary service) to Centennial Hall for Sunday Worship. This provides a more appropriate, informal setting for the style of worship. While our sanctuary is absolutely beautiful, its traditional design is not conducive for The Gathering's main purpose of reaching un-churched and de-churched people. Studies have shown that a more informal, casual atmosphere is more comfortable for many inquiring and seeking a contemporary service.

Along with moving The Gathering to Centennial Hall, the biggest change of all is the change to The Gathering worship time. Beginning September 11, we will offer concurrent worship at 9. This is a wonderful way to reach new visitors, which will hopefully become new members, for several reasons. First of all, it offers our visitors (and members) the choice of worship style, traditional or contemporary, at the same time. It also creates time for combined fellowship before and after 9 worship, which will hopefully bridge more members

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MOVIE NIGHT

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2016

6:30P CHAPEL

The Phoenix: Hope is Rising

{A documentary showing an up-close look into a startup homeless ministry in Champaign}



THURSDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2016

6:30P CHAPEL

Girl Rising

{Girls from developing countries overcome obstacles to obtain an education and change their lives}



THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2016

6:30P CHAPEL

The House I Live In

{A look inside the criminal justice system and America's failing war on drugs}

KIDS MOVIES WILL BE SHOWN
BY CYF MINISTRY

together. More importantly, it offers the option of Sunday School for both services.

With all of these changes, we will experience some growing pains. There will be many adjustments, some inconveniences, a few hiccups, and lots of learning. If we are wise, we will be patient with these changes and “pains”. If we can see the vision of growth for FPC, we will be kind in our constructive criticisms and suggestions. Please stop by Centennial sometime this month, join us for The Gathering, and most importantly embrace these changes that will lead to new growth and life in our church!

Pastor’s Pen

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

This fall takes us through the labyrinth of change. As we deal with the changing dynamic of our congregation we have to adapt and be flexible. So we prayerfully rethink worship and Sunday morning education schedules. CYF did not have the resources to run another Sunday School hour at 10:30. It was not family friendly. We wanted a space for adult education that would not compete with a worship hour. We had to ask how we might work together to create the best possible means of serving the needs of our children’s education, transportation schedules, and allow for potential growth?

Everything is related and must work together for a community to be healthy. I like what theologian Larry Rasmussen writes; “Life is about relationships. Nothing is itself without everything else... We are bound up with one another...”

Quantum physics teaches us that the idea of fragments and separated, isolated entities (Newton’s atomistic model) was an illusion. Rather, the world is interactive. The parts are defined through their overall

relationship with the other parts. No part of the body of Christ exists apart from any other. The various parts of the body come into being through relationships. Life is understood as one of systems, relationships, and connections.

Paul understands this. Employing the practical theology of interrelationships, Paul writes to the Ephesians; “But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body’s growth in building itself up in love” (*Eph. 4:15-16*).

How do we as a community enable each part to work properly and promote our church’s growth? What things do we need to do to assure that we accomplish these ends and build the community up in love? We take time to reflect on how each part of our ministry affects the other and how each may do so more effectively.

What is our response? Fix up Centennial Hall. That benefits everybody. Continue the 8 AM worship as it is and provide two concurrent worship services at the 9 AM hour, The Gathering in Centennial and Traditional in the sanctuary, so all can attend Sunday School at the same time. This simplifies the Transportation Ministries’ schedule. Utilize the 10:30 hour for adult education opportunities. Is it perfect? No, but it moves us in the right direction so that relationally our life together can interact, influence, and interrelate more effectively. Of course, the truth and love part is up to us as we chose to have integrity in our relationship with Christ and with one another. And, of course, nothing is permanent.

Other needs emerge and stay the same as we go forward in this time of transition. We need people to assist each Sunday with

the liturgy at the Traditional worship. And, of course, CYF is hard at work recruiting and praying for volunteers to teach and participate in leading our children during the Sunday School hour. I know there is some reluctance due to some of last year’s challenges. Mindy, our new CYF Director, is a gift to us and you will see substantial efforts made to create a positive environment for all students and teachers this year. Prayerfully consider how God may be calling you to serve. We can make this year in CYF the best ever. I am hopeful and excited for what God has in store for us as we are obedient to our Lord’s leading.

May you find God’s blessings and peace filling your hearts.



Building on Faith

BY ERIC CORBIN, ASSOCIATE PASTOR
(eric.corbin@firstchurchchampaign.org)

This fall and next spring, our church will be participating in Champaign County Habitat for Humanity’s Interfaith Build. Habitat is celebrating the impact of faith community partnerships with Habitat over the past 25 years in Champaign County. We will be participating with over 20 faith groups of various religious traditions in building two homes.

In the Habitat model, each family must put in 250 hours of sweat equity, so we will be building alongside the future homeowners. The ceremonial kickoff is scheduled for 3 PM on September 11 at 1212 West Hill Street in Urbana, and we hope to have

many people representing our church there (not just those who will participate in the builds).

At the kickoff, each participating faith group will bring a small container of soil from their place of worship to be mixed into the soil of the build sites. There will also be prayers from multiple faith traditions, an interfaith proclamation, introduction of the families, music, and an opportunity to write messages on 2x4s to be used in the houses.

Our church is scheduled to participate in the first home Blitz Build October 21 from 8-3 PM. We will also participate in the second home Blitz Build on October 28 from 8-3 PM. Habitat will be scheduling five different faith groups to work each day (5 people from each group). This will allow people from different faiths to work together and get to know one another. In addition to the financial commitment Session has made to the project, we will need 5 people to help with the builds on one date from each week. You could help on one or both dates.

Beginning the weekend of March 18-19, 2017, we will need volunteers to return to complete the homes. Depending on weather, working both Saturdays and Sundays, the homes will be completed in 4-6 weeks. The dedication ceremonies will likely be held in early May.

Remember no experience or special skills are needed. Volunteers just need to come dressed for the weather, wear closed toed shoes and a have a smile on their face. The Habitat construction staff will provide all the tools and instruction for the day! While youth cannot participate in the build itself, CYF is looking at ways for the youth to participate in activities supporting the builds.

You can view an inspiring video about Habitat for Humanity of Champaign

County at <https://youtu.be/IHVLRwQ-giOc>.

Please contact Pastor Eric for more information and to volunteer to assist. Please let him know which dates will or will not work for you in the date ranges above. We look forward to a great time of building together with our neighbors.

Budget & Stewardship 2017

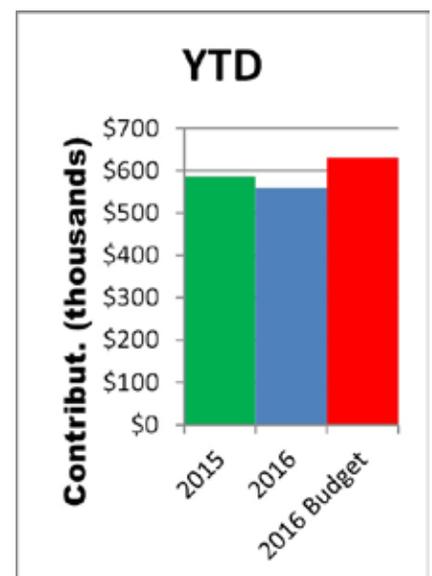
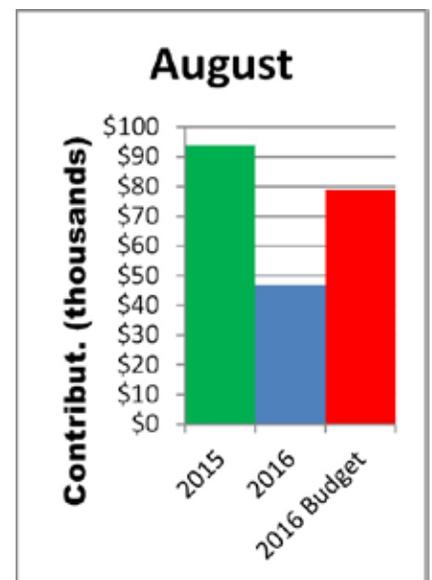
BY BYRON KEMPER, FINANCE CHAIR
(byronkem@life.illinois.edu)

Hard to believe but budget and stewardship time is nearly here again. Planning for both for 2017 are underway.

For the budget, the challenge for Finance this year is to propose a balanced budget. In 2015, we had a deficit of about \$60K and the budget for this year included a \$30K deficit as the first step of two toward a balanced budget in 2017. “Balanced” in this case means estimated contributions that are 92% of estimated expenses – the other 8% comes from other income, mainly our payments from the Cannon trust. It will be difficult to achieve a balanced budget and maintain our present programs and services much less initiate new ones, of which there are many meritorious requests. We are meeting with staff to discuss their needs and wishes.

The stewardship campaign will kick off on October 9 and continue through the month of October. Members of the Stewardship Subcommittee this year are **Dick Arnould, John Braden, Beth Hutchens, Phil Knox, Mamiley Masweka, and Nancy Whitford**. The Subcommittee and staff are hard at work to develop ways to inform the congregation of the amazing variety of good things our Church does to further the work of Christ. If you have thoughts or suggestions about Stewardship, send them along to one of the members of the Subcommittee.

Monthly Contributions: Well, after a strong July 2016 compared to 2015, Aug was essentially a mirror image with very weak contributions in 2015 compared to 2016. As a result, the YTD contributions for 2016 is now \$26K behind 2015 and \$71K behind the budgeted amount. The month to month variability is presumably due to the timing of large contributions.



Prayer Corner



Silent Prayer

Have you considered the value of silent prayer? Psalm 46:10 reads, "Be still and know that I am God." When we silently focus on God, we become aware of his wisdom, power and love for us.

Feeling God's presence helps us put our daily lives in God's care. This can bring a peace even in the midst of trouble or confusion.

Let us pray for times of silence when we simply rest in God's presence.

MOVIE NIGHT

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2016

6:30P CHAPEL

The Phoenix:
Hope is Rising

A documentary showing an up-close look into a startup homeless ministry in Champaign

This award-winning documentary shines the spotlight on several critical issues related to homelessness that face our community today:

- Mental illness
- Substance abuse
- Criminal justice
- Emergency services
- Local government
- Shelters

Plan to bring your co-workers, family, and friends for this learning experience about all of these issues.

C-U at Home staff will host a powerful time of discussion following the film, offering you the opportunity to learn more.

Jays & Concerns

Congratulations to...

- **Nadiege Lumbu and Parfait Lukau** on the birth of daughter Kermelis Baka Lukau on August 8, 2016.

Our sympathy goes to...

- the family of **Les Etheridge and Jan Holmes** on the death of Les's grandson.
- the family and friends of former member **Joyce Curtis** who died September 2, 2016.

Your Church

Cuba Myths

Myth #1. Our relationship with Cuba is a Mission Project.

While we do send some monies to Cuba that assist with outreach efforts, our main relationship with Cuba is one of relationship. Our relationship is borne out of our Session's approval of a covenant relationship from church to church. Our trips to Cuba are not mission trips, but rather trips to deepen our church members' relationships.

Myth #2. Cubans are poorly educated compared to US citizens.

It is estimated that 268,000 Cubans worked to eliminate illiteracy during the Year of Education, and around 707,000 Cubans became literate by December 22, 1961. By 1962, the country's literacy rate was 96%, one of the highest in the world. In 2015 The CIA World Facts book reports the literacy rate as 99.9% for Cuban males and 99.8% for females.

Myth #3. All religious institutions were closed at the "triumph of the revolution".

Although the new constitution declared Cuba to be an atheist state, it also declared freedom of religion for its citizens. Schools and hospitals were expropriated by the government and priests and pastors were proscribed from preaching outside the walls of the church, but the churches did not die. The protestant evangelical seminary in Matanzas (a joint venture of the Episcopal, Presbyterian and Methodists) never closed its doors. It is celebrating its 70th anniversary this fall.

Myth #4. Cubans must smoke a lot of cigars.

Americans seem to care more about Cuban cigars than most Cubans.

Myth #5. Cubans are all from Spanish or African descent.

Cuba is very ethnically diverse; 1% of the population is of Chinese descent, for example.

Myth #6. Cubans are accepting of being in poverty.

There is an entrepreneurial spirit that is still alive in the country, not everywhere, but in some notable places. For example, people are taking those ancient automobiles left from the 50's and placing new engines in them which they obtain from Canada or Korea. In the absence of garages or body shops, they work on them in their front yards. Then when the car is in working order, it still has the look of a vintage auto, and is pressed into service as a taxi for the newly awakening tourist industry in Havana. Another example is the family owned restaurants that are popping up. People are converting their living rooms into dining rooms, and serving meals to tourists. This is a brand new type of microbusiness that the government is allowing.

You can learn more about Cuba in the September edition of *The Heart of Missions*.

Annual Cuba Forum

Saturday morning, October 22 is the date chosen for the 5th **Annual Cuba Forum Meeting**. The Forum is the annual meeting of the Cuba Partners. It includes those who have been to Cuba and/or participated in the Cuba study group as well as those in the congregation who have interest in support of our sister congregation of Luyanó in Havana. Typically it is a time of education about important Cuba happenings, music and fun, as well as election of new steering committee members.

This year, we are asking that Forum participants look at 7 recommendations

growing out of a US Church/Cuba Church consultation on the rapid and ongoing changes taking place in Cuba (see an article describing these recommendations in the September edition of *The Heart of Missions*). These recommendations were passed in June PCUSA General Assembly and affect mutual mission relationships, as well as advocacy positions on such things as the Embargo, Guantanamo, Cuban immigration policies, etc. for our denomination.

If you believe God might be calling you to participate more fully in our relationship with Cuba, please plan to attend.

Coming this Fall

Surprised by Joy Sundays, October 9-30 10:30-11:30 AM in Parlor...

Peter Yau will lead a 4-week study that combines lecture and discussion in exploring *Surprised by Joy* by C.S. Lewis. Books are available for \$10 each or bring your own copy.

Presbyterian 101 Sundays, November 6-20 10:30-11:30 AM in Parlor...

Curious about Presbyterianism? **Judi Geistlinger** will provide a 3-week overview of the history, theology and practices of the Presbyterian Church. The *Presbyterian Handbook* published by Geneva Press is recommended reading but not required to participate.

Your Church

Picnic in the Park...A hot day made for a "cool" time in West Side Park on August 28.

General Mills Box Top coupons are being collected for Kemmerer Village. You may leave yours in the church office (PW mailbox). Your help is appreciated as useful items may be purchased for the youth when these are redeemed.

Campbell's soup coupons are no longer accepted as Campbell ended the program. Many thanks for your faithful participation in this program in the past.



Spiritual Formation Committee will be having **Fall Adult Sign-Ups** for Book Studies, Small Groups, and informative New Classes before and after Sunday services September 11. Please consider joining at least one of our groups for education, fellowship and spiritual growth.

This year **Presbyterian Women** will be studying *Who Is Jesus?* The publication is \$10 and will be available in Westminter Hall during coffee time beginning September 4. Also available will be the PW Directory for 2016-17.



Electronics Recycling Event - Saturday, October 15, 8 AM to Noon at Parkland College. Cars can only enter at the Duncan Road entrance to Parkland. For further information or questions, please call: City of Champaign 403-4780, City of Urbana 384-2302 and Champaign County 328-3313. You **MUST** register on-line at <http://recycle.simplybook.me> to recycle your electronics.

Children, Youth and Family Ministry

Noisy Offering Summer Mission Project

This summer our children's ministry participated in collecting a Noisy Offering. The kids collected spare change in coffee cans to make it extra loud! The money that was collected will go toward restoring a bedroom with Restoration Urban Ministries. Our summer goal was to collect \$250, which would complete one bedroom. Thanks to your faithful generosity we were able to complete TWO bedrooms with the \$503 that was collected over the summer.

Fall Sunday School Kickoff

On September 11, our Sunday school classes will be resuming. Children will be dropped off directly to the education building in the chapel before the 9 AM service begins. Kids will gather for a children's church time which will help them learn about being part of a worship environment. Following this time, the kids will be dismissed to their classes. At 10 AM the kids will be able to participate in either children's choir (pending filling this staff position), a mission activity in The Café or picked-up at this time by parents. All families with children birth-12th grade received a letter detailing the full schedule and curriculum plans for the 2016-2017 school year.

WE NEED YOU! CYF has had to revise our Sunday School plan as sent out in the parent letter due to a lack of volunteers. Twelve adults are needed each Sunday in order to structure our classes into groups of closer to ten students per class. We have a revised plan this Sunday in order

to continue to offer our program, but it creates a group of 27 children. Please consider volunteering to help lead activities during our program hour. Contact **Joyce Wittler** at cjwittler@gmail.com to volunteer.

Youth Programming 2016-2017

Beginning on September 11, our middle school students will return to their regularly scheduled Sunday School class time 9-10 AM. During the school year, the middle school students will have various opportunities to participate in special events just for them.

We are also thrilled to announce that we will be launching a new high school program that will be meeting from 10:30-11:30 AM every Sunday after worship. This will allow our high schoolers to experience worship with their families at 9 AM, as well as connect in fellowship with their peers. And of course there will be food!

Lovie's First Game

Thanks to a generous donation of 30 tickets to the U of I season opening football game, our CYF department was able to conduct a fundraiser that supported our annual youth events budget. CYF also was able to host an open tail gate for those attending the game in addition to any families who wanted to stop by and have a little Saturday fun.

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 for more information.

Parents Night Out!

On September 16 we will be hosting a parents night out during the mission movie viewing taking place in the chapel from 6:30-8:30 PM. Kids can come upstairs to the comfy couches in room 206. We will be watching a movie and having some snacks together.

Parents can watch the mission movie scheduled, go out on a date or simply get some grocery shopping done! Please let us know if your child will be participating by September 14 so we can plan.

Recycle so Youth Can Reuse

Children, Youth, and Family Ministries would like to set up five computer stations for Sunday School use. If you are retiring an older computer that has a Windows 98 or XP operating system, and all components are in good working order, please consider donating it to the church. Contact **Mindy Watts-Ellis** at mindy.wattsellis@firstchurchchampaign.org for more information.



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CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN**

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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
- Chris Penny.....Facilities Manager
- Ann Petry Accounting
- Kristen PlemonsAssistant Children, Youth & Family
- Andrea Pope..... Contemporary Worship Director
- Richard Rossi..... Church Musician
- Linda SimsESL Coordinator
- 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.