

May 2017



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN

COURAGEOUS CONVERSATION

GUEST SPEAKER: M. DANIEL CARROLL R., PhD.

PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY AT WHEATON COLLEGE AND AUTHOR OF
CHRISTIANS AT THE BORDER-IMMIGRATION, THE CHURCH AND THE BIBLE.
HE IS AN OLD TESTAMENT SCHOLAR AND MUCH SOUGHT SPEAKER.

TUESDAY MAY 30

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
302 W. CHURCH, CHAMPAIGN

WORKSHOP

"DISCOVERING GOD'S HEART FOR MIGRANTS IN THE BIBLE"

WESTMINSTER HALL

NOON TO 2 PM

LIGHT LUNCH SERVED (RESERVE YOUR LUNCH WITH CLAUDIA KIRBY)

LECTURE AND DISCUSSION

"CAN THE BIBLE HELP US WITH IMMIGRATION?"

SANCTUARY

6:30 PM TO 8 PM

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

CLAUDIA KIRBY | CLAUDIA.A.KIRBY@GMAIL.COM | 217.356.5915

Pastor's Pen

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

The evening of the 27th of April I attended the STAR Awards event at the Hilton Garden Inn. STAR stands for Service Together Achieves Results. It is presented by the City of Champaign, the Neighborhood Advisory Board, and Anthony Antoine, News Anchor, WCIA 3.

I was present to receive an award on behalf of our church community, First Presbyterian of Champaign. Our award fell under the category of Community Partner. In addition to our community stood Faith United Methodist and the United Way for agreeing to serve as the host locations for the 2017 Men's Emergency Shelter. We served the homeless men's population from Sunday through Thursday evenings while Faith United Methodists opened their facility Friday and Saturday evenings. It worked well for both of our schedules.

This came about when, in 2016, the community lost all emergency beds for homeless men. The Counsel of Service Providers to the Homeless (CSPH) began seeking options for shelter in the summer of 2016 with a goal of having shelter available by winter. Our Session was approached and requested to consider being a partner in this effort and after discussion voted to do so.

As I stood in front of so many others doing their part to respond to human need and raise the quality of life in our community, I felt proud on behalf of all of you who honored

continued on next page

Looking for ALL Graduates

If you know of a graduate connected to the church who is graduating this Spring, please let the Presbyterian Women know. We are hoping to honor all graduates—high school, college, trade school, and graduate degrees.

Please contact Karin Vermillion.

Pastor's Pen Continued

God in this effort. The Psalmist, wrestling with the injustice and suffering in this life writes, "The needy shall not always be forgotten, nor the hope of the poor perish forever" (*Psalm 9:18*).

Caring for and redeeming people is God's business. We are all familiar with Jesus' words from *Matthew 25:37-40*. In Jesus' parable of 'The Great Judgment', the king responds to the question, "When was it we that we saw you hungry and a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing?" by saying, "Truly I tell you just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me".

I was impressed by the many people, churches, individuals, and organizations responding to the needs of the community. One sees the Holy Spirit moving peoples' hearts to care that "The needy shall not always be forgotten, nor the hope of the poor perish forever".

Paul reminds us that our hospitality and compassion encompasses not just people 'out there', but those among us as well. Responding to human need takes persistence and hard work. Listen to what he tells the Galatians; "So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up. So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and

especially for those of the family of faith" (*Galatians 6:9-10*).

We are given an opportunity in our family of faith to receive many immigrants from Africa. They make up the majority of our Sunday School and celebrate worship each Saturday evening in Centennial. As we are all one in Christ, we show hospitality and do "what is right", looking for opportunities as God brings them to us and directs us to meet needs and give people hope.

Along that line I would encourage you all to join Courageous Conversation on Tuesday, May 30, to meet and listen to **Dr. Daniel Carroll**, a professor at Wheaton College. There will be a workshop from 12-2 in Westminster entitled "Discovering God's Heart for Migrants in the Bible". There will be a light lunch served.

That evening from 6:30-8 PM Dr. Carroll will speak on the question, "Can the Bible Help Us with Immigration?" The evening event will be held in our sanctuary. This is an important and timely topic today.

We do "what is right" for people through ESL and the many ministries that give support and life to those in our midst. I think of **Kristi Corbin** teaching SAFE House psychology classes, giving hope to that population, as well as those of us who just returned from a visit to our partner church, Luyano Presbyterian, in Havana,

Cuba. Their hope is renewed by knowing that other Christians care and are there to meet needs when requested. That relationship is reciprocal as well. We have become a family united in Christ. I felt that bond particularly as I was asked to baptize two Cuban men that I knew from previous trips.

And, of course, Mission Possible ventures out for their 26th trip to Camp Carew. Their presence and work encourages the camp and provides improved grounds and facilities to the campers soon to arrive for summer camping weeks.

The ministry is alive and the days are full. Enjoy the blessings God is giving you and let us all remember to discover God in the needy, bring hope, and never grow weary in well doing.

Chuck

A Glimpse Into Our Past

In September 1850, when our Presbyterian Church was founded, the population of Champaign County was around 2,500, and only one or two houses stood within the corporate limits of Champaign, then called West Urbana. There were only 20 houses in Urbana proper.

Prayer Corner



Christ's Love Compels

What difference does Christ's love make in our choice of things to do and in the way in which we do them? In II Corinthians 5:14-15 we read, "For Christ's love compels us — that those who live should no longer live for themselves." We live because Christ died and then rose from the grave to give us forgiveness for sin and eternal life. His presence is always with us to show blessings in good times and give comfort in difficult ones. In response to Christ's love for us, we serve others.

Pray that as we serve others, we will be ruled by the love of Christ.

Spring Music Sunday May 7

Songs of Prayer and Praise

8 and 9:30 AM services

Note the time for the services!

Both will feature a selection of sacred music from a wide variety of periods and styles. Included will be works by Handel, Fauré, and two movements from Mozart's *Missa Brevis in D*. Choir, soloists, orchestra and organ will perform as part of our worship services.

Celebrating 150 Years of Caring

On Sunday, April 30, we celebrated the world in which we live. We want to keep our outdoors the natural beauty that God made and not the man-made trashy one. One way that will help is to stop using plastic bags! Our Environmental Stewardship Committee is helping to do this by providing reusable canvas bags to use and reuse.

Not only are they functional, but they share information about our church including the fact that we are a designated Earth Care Congregation celebrating 150 years of caring! The bags will be available in Westminster Hall or in the church office. Suggested donation is \$3 or 2 for \$5.

Jays & Concerns

Congratulations to...

- **Miriam Lutete and Douglass Ndubula** who were recently married.

We extend our sympathy to...

- the family and friends of **Mary McDonald** who died April 22, 2017. A memorial service is planned for June 24, 2017 at 2 PM at the church.
- the family and friends of **Elizabeth Mussey** who died April 11, 2017.
- the family and friends of **Anna Prorok** who died April 12, 2017. A Memorial Service will be held Tuesday, May 30, 2017 at 3 PM in the Chapel at the church.
- the family and friends of **Geraldine Thompson** who died April 20, 2017.
- the family and friends of **Don Trulock** who died April 26, 2017. Arrangements are pending;
- the family of **Lori Raetzmann** on the death of her father.

Children, Youth and Family Ministry

Sunday School Mission Work



The children made two tablecloths (one pictured above), one for the Cuban church to use, and one for our own church to use during communion. Each tablecloth consists of long purple and yellow panels. The purple panels are painted with dark purple images of grapes and the yellow panels are painted with golden images of wheat.

The tablecloth for our sister church was presented to our friends at Luyano during the Cuba trip, and was received with enthusiasm! Look for our tablecloth in the sanctuary when we serve communion and remember our link to brothers and sisters in Christ in Cuba and around the world.

Our next project is to create thank you gift bags for the staff of Restoration Urban Ministries for the work they do in ministry for our community. R.U.M. has done a lot with few resources and would like to acknowledge the people who work tirelessly every day for the most vulnerable in our community. If you would like to donate a \$10 gift card to Starbucks, Subway, or Dairy Queen we will gladly add it to a thank you bag. Donations can be brought to the church office. There are 26 people on staff in their organization.

Sunday School News

We are continuing the theme of God's word to build upon what the children learned last semester. Jesus has left us to return to heaven in our timeline of study. We will now turn our focus to the words of the apostle Paul.

In April we studied the Lord's Supper. A special celebration of the Lord's Supper was held to conclude our unit of study on April 23. All of the Sunday School children in attendance on April 30 were in worship to share the experience of communion with the greater congregation.

Our last unit for the academic year will be a study of the letters of Paul to the early churches. We will see how God's word made a transformation in Paul and is still at work today. Our academic year of Sunday school will conclude on May 21.

The high school class is beginning a study called *Together We Triumph: Youth Response to Disaster* in preparation for helping in a natural disaster recovery effort. This is important spiritual training to help us encounter Christ at work in the lives of victims and the people who are trying to help them. Participants are invited to

wrestle with the big questions that follow every disaster. Was this punishment for some sin? Why didn't God prevent this from happening? I want to help, but what should I say that will be truly comforting and not make things worse? We have a great group of young people meeting regularly for brunch and discussion at 10:30-11:30 AM Sundays on the second floor of the education building.

We need summer teachers for the month of June! Can't commit during the academic year, but might have some time in summer? The children need you! The plan is to attend children's church in the chapel and then enjoy some activities in the park afterward on nice days. Ever played Jail tag? We will teach you! Paul and Silas may get thrown in jail, but we have earthquakes to set them free. It is a fun way to reinforce Bible stories and God's message for us.

Go & Serve

The youth will be heading to Hammond, LA June 4-10 to volunteer in flood recovery efforts in conjunction with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. Our team will be commissioned on May 28 during worship. We appreciate your prayers for the group for safe travels and a meaningful positive impact.

VBS

SonSpark Labs is coming to First Presbyterian Church for the five Sundays in July! We will encounter Christ and scripture through fun experiments, crafts, games, and special snacks. We need YOU to make it happen. Are you willing to help volunteer to make this experience a special time for our kids? Contact **Mindy** at mindy@firstpres.church to sign up or look for the sign up table in Westminster Hall coming soon.

Your Church

A Change Is Coming... Again

The Gathering, our Contemporary Service, is moving to 10:30 AM on Sunday mornings; we will continue to meet in Centennial Hall. This may seem odd. If you recall, we used to have the service at 10:30, there are many reasons why we are moving back to 10:30. We love the newly remodeled Centennial Hall and want to continue experiencing relaxed worship there. However, the 9 o'clock time is not working.

One of the main reasons is that our pastors are stressed by the demands of concurrent services. Each week, they're running (sometimes literally) up and down the stairs to make it in time and both services suffer. Another important consideration has been the regular attendees to The Gathering that could no longer attend at 9; our average weekly attendance has dropped in half.

Offering different worship styles is important for the growth and future of FPC. Offering an informal worship service where un-churched (and de-churched) can feel comfortable is important for the growth and future of FPC. Offering families an opportunity to worship together in a nontraditional setting is important for the growth and future of FPC.

Beginning June 4, The Gathering will move back to 10:30 AM in Centennial Hall. We are also incorporating Family Friendly Worship into our contemporary service. We will have more involvement in the actual worship service by young people (reading, ushering, etc.) as we grow and have interested participants. Beginning immediately, we will have a "Prayground," an area in the worship space, with quiet kid-friendly activities.

This encourages children to be in worship as they are comfortable, while not disturbing other worshippers. This is the future of our church!

Financial Update

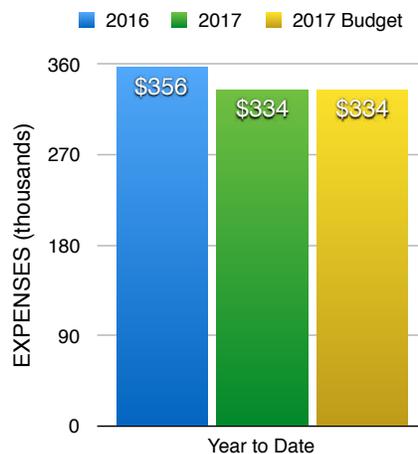
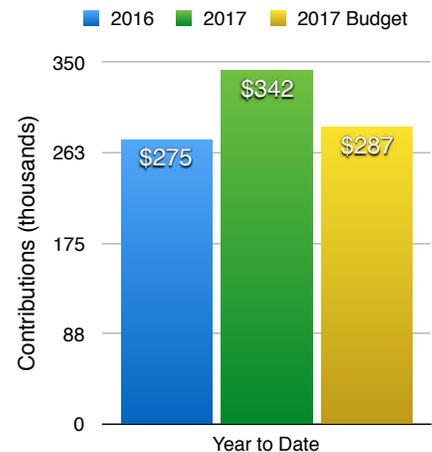
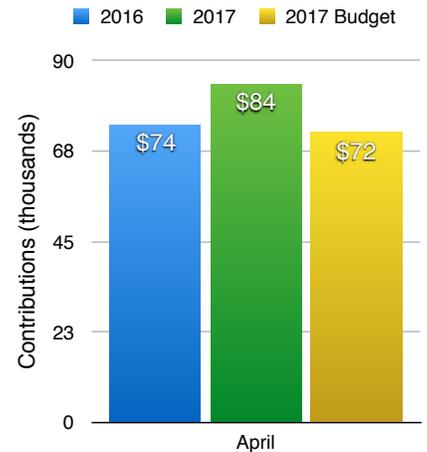
BY MARK SCHOEFFMANN, FINANCE CHAIR
(mschoeffmann@mchsi.com)

Contributions

Contributions in April were \$10K more than 2016 and \$12K over the budget at \$84K. The Year to Date total continues strong in 2017. This exceeded last year by \$67K and the budgeted amount by \$55K. The increase in this year's contributions continue to offset the decrease in prepaid pledges (those paid in the year prior to the pledge year) for 2017 compared to 2016. These prepaid pledges are prorated over the year with 1/12 added to each month's contributions.

Expenses

Year-to-date expenses are right at budget at \$334K and \$22K below 2016. Considering all sources, revenue exceeds expenses by \$79K more than at this time in 2016. This figure includes a \$29K transfer from other funds that was not made last year.



Your Church

ESL An Amazing Experience

I am so grateful for being given this opportunity to say 'Thank you very much' to every volunteer tutor of the ESL classes. It is beyond my words to express my heartfelt gratitude, and I appreciate your selfless devotion and all your time and your hard work.

All the tutors who support the ESL classes set good examples for us and we should learn from all of you.

I am deeply moved by the seniors who taught the classes with great spirit, you are excellent examples for us all and you tremendously encourage me to begin to pursue further education in the United States someday, as Linda is now doing. (Vern, I especially appreciate your help, correcting my letters, giving me some essential knowledge and so much of other information about English writing that I ignored or I did not know at all before.)

I was interested in learning English and I was lucky enough to find out about this ESL class when I visited Champaign the first time. After taking the courses taught here, my English has become much better than before.

The certificate that ESL has given to me confirms that I spent a very meaningful time here in ESL. I will cherish it and let it encourage me to continue the study of English and ultimately to pass the TOEFL exam to give me an opportunity to pursue a further education degree.

This ESL class is a truly amazing international class; people are peaceful and

friendly, there is no hatred, no discrimination, and every student enjoys learning English from you teachers who were patient with us and thus encourage us to never give up.

Once more, I really appreciate all your hard work for us international students.

And I especially want to thank the First Presbyterian Church for organizing the ESL classes.

Thank you very much!

Wen Ying

How Did You Get Here? The Diversity Immigrant Lottery

About 160 people from Central Africa actively participate in worship and ministries of First Presbyterian Church. Most are immigrants with Permanent Legal Resident status obtained through "the lottery."

Section 203(c) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) provides for a class of immigrants known as "diversity immigrants," from countries with historically low rates of immigration to the United States. This program administered by the State Department is often called the green card lottery or the D-Visa.

Fifty thousand visas are available each fiscal year, distributed among six geographic regions. Africa is one of the six eligible regions. To be eligible an adult must have at least a high school education or have worked for two years in an occupation that requires at least two years of training. Candidates must satisfy health, criminal

background requirements and prove they have a means of support in the United States. In 2015 there were 9,388,986 applicants and 0.88% were selected. There were 4,943 selected from The Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Winners of the lottery must pay their own transportation costs to the United States and arrange for a host family pledged to support them financially. They are not eligible for any US government cash support but are eligible for Permanent Legal Resident (green card) status. Children attend public schools and both children and pregnant women receive health care benefits through Medicaid. After five years of residency a Permanent Legal Resident can apply for US citizenship giving them the rights and obligation of every other US citizen.

Most of the Western African members of our congregation are D-Visa lottery winners. Others are political asylum seekers or refugees.

Your Church

Overwhelmed by Generosity and Disorganized

Christine Newsome, Urbana, shops garage and estate sales seeking items to help immigrants and refugees move more comfortably to their first American home. She packages bath towels and bed linens, adds a toothbrush and toothpaste or a bar of soap, labels her gift and drops it at our church. **Mary and Don Clegg** call after they manage an estate sale so we can sort through and select the residuals that go unsold.

Betty Mills phones whenever she is ready to part with another useful item as she works slowly to empty her family home before finding a smaller living space. "Can you use a table?" and the next week, "I need a good home for my china." About half of donors are not affiliated with our congregation. They are people who feel called "to do something."

Bill Downs repairs broken furniture, restores gifted lamps and paints a dresser or a side table when needed. **Joe Grant** offers his truck to move things to or from storage.

We treasure the gifts that make an empty home more comfortable. We particularly welcome mattresses, dining sets, table ware and kitchen utensils and both bed and bath linens. We are happy for the opportunity to pray for each new home that it will be filled with the love, peace and joy of Christ.



Storage Re-Organization Saturday, May 6 9 AM until Noon

We need workers who can identify, package, label and display items in our storage unit.

Please contact Bob at rwk3213@gmail.com if you would like to help.

Outreach Fair Sunday May 21 Westminster Hall

The Outreach Committee will be hosting an Outreach Fair surrounding the worship services on Sunday, May 21. Please take time to look at the many displays that will be featured.

The purpose of the fair is to highlight each of the committees that now fall under the direction of Outreach. Display tables will include Hospitality, Fellowship, Membership and Community Outreach.

If you would like to be a part of the Fair by assisting at one of the tables or be a part of one of the above committees please contact **Gary Peterson** at amer_swede@yahoo.com or 398-8504.

Help Kemmerer Village Win a Horse!

The voting is now!!! Help Kemmerer Village win an amazing Gypsy Vanner Therapy horse! Please Vote and share! Gypsy Gift Voting has begun!

Visit <https://a.pgtb.me/JJXXDp> or <https://a.pgtb.me/FV29M7> to vote daily (once every 24 hours) through June 15, 2017 for your favorite Equine Therapy Center.



**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN**

302 West Church Street
Champaign, IL 61820

Change Service Requested



**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN**

Pastors:

Chuck Carlson..... Interim Head Pastor, Ext. 213
Eric Corbin..... Covenant Associate Pastor, Ext. 214

302 West Church Street
Champaign, IL 61820

P: 217.356.7238

F: 217.356.7242

E: info@firstpres.church

www.firstpres.church

Staff:

Kristi Corbin Mission Coordinator, Ext. 219
Ritchie Drennen Facility Maintenance
Patty Farthing..... Receptionist, Ext. 211
Robert Ferrer Audio-visual Technician
Marcia Franks Administrative Assistant, Ext. 210
Joe Grant Choir Director
Allegra Martin..... Director of Children’s Music
Debra Miller..... ESL Coordinator, Ext. 235
Chris Penny Facilities Manager, Ext. 237
Ann Petry Accounting, Ext. 224
Andrea Pope..... Contemporary Worship Director, Ext. 215
Richard Rossi Church Musician
Mindy Watts-Ellis .. Director Children, Youth & Family, Ext. 212

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

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