

The Heart of Missions: First Presbyterian Church of Champaign's Missions Magazine

December Missions Events and Meetings

Mondays-Thursdays: *English as a Second Language Classes*
9-11am on Second Floor of Education Building
Last day of class in December is December 15

December 6: *Community Mission Deacons*
6:30pm in Westminster Hall

December 12: *Compassion Peace and Justice*
4pm in Westminster Hall

December 13: *Mission Team*
Noon in Westminster Hall

December 19: *Environmental Stewardship Committee*
3:30pm in the Parlor

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In-depth Information about Advent Offering

The Advent Offering this year will be used to fund improvements on the **Café Justo y mas** in Agua Prieta, Mexico, one of the ministries supported by Frontera de Cristo, where our mission co-workers **Mark Adams and Miriam Maldonado Escobar** serve.

The **Café Justo y mas** is a coffee shop/meeting facility used to facilitate the following ministries:

- A safe space for adolescents to hang out as part of FDC's new **drug prevention and intervention ministry**. This is a key reason for the development of the café as teenagers are especially at risk as both users and sellers.
- **Job training** and **social skills** for clients of CRREDA – a drug intervention program under FDC.
- Meeting space for **Alcoholics Anonymous** and **Narcotics Anonymous**.
- Miscellaneous **community events**.

The improvements on the café include the installation of **solar panels** (to save on the very high electric bills) and to expand and complete meeting areas. This will allow FDC to expand the outreach efforts so that more people can be helped by these ministries.

The goal for this project is \$4,000. We have **already raised \$2,076.88** and we will be collecting donations **through Sunday, December 18th**. Please write “Advent Offering” on the memo line of your check or use the special envelopes marked “Advent Offering” located in the back of the sanctuary.

Thank you and Merry Christmas from the World Missions Ministry Team!

2016 Angel Tree

Christmas is quickly approaching, and FPCC will continue the annual tradition of having an Angel Tree in Westminster Hall. The Angel Tree this year is focusing intensively on items from the wish lists of the local agencies that Community Mission Deacons supports. As a result of the recent state budget cuts many of the agencies are facing, the fulfillment of these wishes will offer much needed relief. *Most of these agencies offer support to children and families, and in this way the original spirit of the Angel Tree to serve the youngest in our community remains alive.* Also on the tree are items for the Relocation Ministry. The Relocation Ministry of our church helps some of our church's immigrant families move into homes. Children in those families will benefit daily from your donations of needed household items such as rice cookers or pots and pans.

Each ornament on the tree represents an item on the wish list of a local agency. You may take as many ornaments as you wish! After you have purchased the item, please bring it to the church. Please leave it unwrapped and with the ornament taped to it to serve as a label, place it under the Angel Tree. Because each ornament provides the approximate price of the item named on it, cash or check donations are also a great choice. Cash donations can be placed in the box provided on the table next to the tree. Please note that there are some duplicated items on the Tree, as some agencies have asked for multiples of the same thing.

Thank you, as always, for your generosity!

S. Carr

Moderator of Community Mission Deacons





Special Giving Opportunities During Advent and Christmas

Ways You Can Reach a Hurting World

Presbyterian Giving Catalog: Small gifts to feed the hungry, comfort the broken-hearted, and share your faith.

**Drop off donations in Westminster via the gift box provided, or send directly to PC(USA) with envelope in the Giving Catalogs.*

Angel Tree: This year's tree provides a way for you to reach children and families through specific gifts to our partner agencies and ministries of the church.

**Take an ornament, purchase item or write check, and drop off with ornament on the table provided in Westminster.*

Advent Offering: The recipient this year is Café Justo, a ministry founded with help from Mark Adams, PC(USA) Mission Co-Worker at the Presbyterian Border Ministry.

**This offering will be received in the Sanctuary any Sunday during Advent, with the final day being December 18th. Please mark "Advent Offering" in the memo line of your check.*

Joy Offering: Provides assistance to current or retired church workers in times of need and develops our future leaders at Presbyterian-related racial ethnic schools and colleges.

**This offering will be received in the Sanctuary on Christmas Eve.*

News about DREAAM House

Exciting news! As most of you know, our church has supported with financial donations and volunteer time a program called the DREAAM House. DREAAM House is led by our own member and former Mission Coordinator, Tracy Dace. Tracy's program is praised and described in the current *Educate a Child, Save the World Edition* of The Magazine for Presbyterian Women. The article is entitled, *Dreaming and Acting on Behalf of At-risk Children*. A copy of the magazine is available in the Church Library.

Dear Friends,

I recently made the very difficult decision to step down from my role as Coordinator of ESL Programs at the end of December (although I certainly plan to stay involved as a volunteer tutor!) Recent changes in family responsibilities and my demanding grad school schedule have simply made it impossible for me to continue to devote the necessary time to this incredible ministry.

My time as ESL Coordinator has truly been one of the most joy-filled experiences of my life. I have been proud to put my heart and soul into developing this program, and I have gained more than I can express – enduring friendships with wonderful people from all around the world, the opportunity to work with the incredible, supportive staff at FPCC and the many amazing ESL volunteers (both members and non-members of FPCC), knowledge of languages and cultures that has enriched my understanding of the world (and offered many opportunities to tell great stories at dinnertime!), and, most importantly, a first-hand glimpse of God's love in action.

Thank you for this opportunity to serve the church in this most meaningful way. ESL at FPCC has forever changed my life – and I know it will continue to change the lives of many others.

Linda

An ESL Coordinator Search Committee has already been formed, the position has been advertised, and interviews are being scheduled for the coming weeks. We thank Linda for her extraordinary leadership.

—Kristi



Baby, It's Cold Outside!

Come on in to



TEN THOUSAND
VILLAGES.



105 N. Walnut in Champaign

Friday, December 9 4-8 pm only

Your purchases will help keep someone warm!

10,000 Villages, a retailer of beautiful and handcrafted fair trade items,
has partnered with **Austin's Place**, the only winter
emergency shelter for homeless women in Champaign-Urbana.

A percentage of sales made during this special time will benefit women in need by
providing a respectful and restful sleeping space during the coldest months of the year.

Join the fun! And thank you for buying gifts that will keep on giving!



Austin's Place

An Emergency Shelter for Homeless Women



Dear Sunday School Kids,

Thank you so very much for the warm, pretty blankets you made for the layettes we give to the families of newborn babies. Often these families cannot purchase anything new for their babies and never have anything hand-made. The families who receive these blankets will be delighted.

This was a very kind, loving thing for you to do to show God's love to others.

Thank you,
Miriam Chenault
empty tomb staff

FPCC children have been doing missions projects every Sunday. Mindy received these lovely thank-you notes from Courage Connection and Empty Tomb for the cookie mixes and blankets the children made.

Our children are making a difference!

To:

First Presbyterian
Church of Champaign

Thank you so much for the cookie mix. It is truly appreciated. It reminds me of a lil piece of home and grandma. God bless you all.

Thank you so much for sharing the cookie mixes with. We all appreciate it so much. It really was a great idea and it turned out awesome.

Thanks so much for the cookie mix my children loved them.

I wanted to tell you thank you for the cookie mix my kids will enjoy them very much.

Thanks so much for the cookie mix, my kids and I really appreciate it.



A Story from the PC(USA) About the Christmas Joy Offering

Time does not erase family's gratitude for Board of Pensions assistance program

Jim Irwin was looking forward to college graduation and medical school when he received news of his father's death on a cold February day in 1962. Jim's father, Rev. James Walter Irwin, had a fatal heart attack at the age of 58.

Jim's parents had raised five sons on the modest salary Rev. Irwin earned serving small rural parishes in Illinois, Pennsylvania, California, Missouri, and Kansas. When their father died, three of Jim's brothers were pursuing either undergraduate or advanced degrees, while another had just begun his pastoral career. Their mother, Nell, was left with limited financial resources and would soon need a place to live. Mrs. Irwin suffered from Parkinson's disease, which made the situation even more challenging.

The congregation Rev. Irwin had served paid her his salary for a year and allowed her to live in the manse for several months. She and her youngest son, then a college junior, moved into a rental house where she lived until he graduated, when Mrs. Irwin again found herself in need of housing. Her anxiety about being able to afford a decent dwelling was relieved thanks to assistance from the PC(USA)'s Board of Pensions. The Board provided a monthly housing grant that enabled her to live at Sterling Presbyterian Manor in Sterling, Kansas, until her death in 1979.

Had it not been for the assistance, Jim says he and his brothers "would have figured something out." Yet at the time of their father's death, none was in a position to offer much help.

The Board of Pensions, using gifts from the Christmas Joy Offering, continues to assist current and retired church servants and their families who find themselves in challenging financial circumstances. The Board receives

half of the Offering to provide this assistance, while the other half goes to Presbyterian-related racial ethnic schools.

Jim finished medical school and chose surgery as his specialty. His brothers completed their educations and entered successful careers as well. Their gratitude for the assistance the Board of Pensions provided their mother continues.

Jim and his wife, Francie, faithfully support the Christmas Joy Offering through their congregation, First Presbyterian Church in Othello, Washington. When Jim gives, he remembers the help his mother received.

"The help my mom received was invaluable," Jim says. "We've always supported the Christmas Joy Offering because it contributes to the well-being of those who have made a life decision to serve the church. It helps them not to have to choose between housing and food."

Because of gifts to the Christmas Joy Offering, fewer people have to make such difficult choices. Gifts to the Offering help current and retired church workers and their families navigate difficult financial circumstances. Your gift will make a difference.

LET US PRAY:

Gracious God, we give thanks for people who faithfully serve your church. Sustain them in times of celebration and in times of struggle. Help us support those whom you have called into your service. Amen.