

October 2017



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN

Pastor's Pen

BY CHUCK CARLSON

(chuck@firstpres.church)

As I write this last article before my departure, I cannot think of a benediction better than the one Paul pens in his first letter to the Thessalonians. He writes simply, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you." (*1 Thessalonians 5:28*)

All life and ministry is sustained by God's grace. Life can be messy. It may take many unexpected turns. We don't control outcomes, no matter how hard we try. People disappoint us. Often we even disappoint ourselves. The church fails to meet our expectations. Do we stay with it or abandon it? Are greener pastures around the corner?

A fourteenth century Christian spiritual guide tells us the most basic and profound way to live. He said, "Love God, love people, do your duty, and trust the outcome to God". Running through the subtext of all life and ministry is God's grace. We need to receive and extend that grace to others throughout life. The foundation of it all is the unmerited love of God's grace manifested in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Paul understood that; "By the grace of God I am what I am." (*1 Corinthians 1:10*)

Betty and I wish to express our gratitude for the grace that you have shown us through the years we have been together.

It has been an honor and blessing to have shared this part of our lives with you over the past eleven and a half years. We leave as better people for our partnership in ministry together. Our faith has been strengthened, challenged and stretched. I believe that yours has been as well. By God's grace, we are still standing and moving forward, even with a bit of a limp. Jacob is our mentor on this journey as he too wrestled with God on the road of life and faith.

To all the congregation and staff, only deep gratitude lives in our hearts. Words fall short of expressing how we feel. So thank you. Personally, I can't imagine going through the past years without each of you. Each one, past and present, has been an important part of sustaining me through prayer and support on this ministry path. We will remain bonded through the Spirit of Christ and our prayers, praying that you transcend the realities and challenges of the moment, continuing to lean into God's vision of what yet might be. A new pastor will come. Extend the same grace to that person as you have extended to us as you will move into a new future together. Extend that same grace to Eric and Kristi and their family as he now takes on a larger pastoral role. He is God's person at this time for you as the church moves forward.

Believe that change is a manageable process. Know that Christ is present with you and feel energized by that reality. Face

the challenges together, giving space to explore new possibilities and the time it takes for innovation. I admit that it is not always easy to "go with the flow" when faced with little certainty. Be willing to learn and believe that through God's guidance you can impact outcomes no matter the appearance of things. There will be adversity, but don't forget to unite in prayer together, asking for guidance not only from God, but also from those people and resources God will put in your path. God's grace allows us to relax knowing that the outcome lies in God's hands. Let go of trying to control everything and exercise a sense of humor. Don't take yourselves too seriously, as some have admonished me along the way.

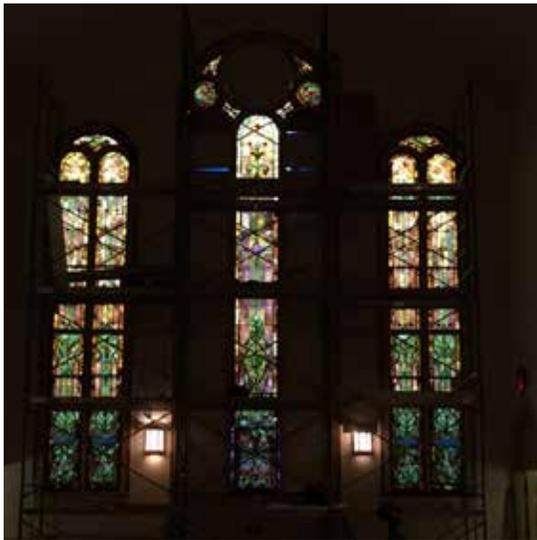
Again, thank you for allowing Betty and me to be a part of your lives.

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you,"

Chuck and Betty

ONE Service
Sunday, October 15
10 AM

Celebration of
Chuck & Betty Carlson



home of **Bob and Claudia Kirby**.

The study will be facilitated by the Kirbys, **Pat Metcalf** and **Lizz Pippin**. It is designed for anyone interested in learning about Cuban culture, the Presbyterian Reformed Church of Cuba and our sister relationship there.

Our trips to Cuba are limited to those who have completed the study and are members of a Presbyterian Church. To enroll in the study contact Bob or Claudia at rwk3213@gmail.com or phone 217-356-5915.

They're Back!

In case you have missed it, the east windows are back in place after having spent the summer in Chicago being restored and cleaned. Work is progressing as planned. The north Sanctuary windows are next up for removal and restoration. Renovations of the all windows in the Sanctuary should be completed by Easter 2018.

Cuba Study

BY BOB KIRBY
(rwk3213@gmail.com)

Learn about our Cuban neighbors and our sister congregation in Havana.

The Cuba Study will be offered for eight consecutive weeks from 6:30 to 8 PM beginning Wednesday, October 18 at the

Fall PW Gathering

Thursday, October 19
11:30 AM – 1:30 PM
Presentation 12 noon
Light lunch provided

Come and join your girl friends to have a heartfelt conversation on
In a divisive world, can our racial awareness make a difference?

Facilitated by **Judi Geistlinger** and **Betty Hollister**

Enjoy an Evening of Music

An evening of music will be held Friday, November 3 at 7 PM in the Sanctuary of First Presbyterian Church of Champaign. Organist **Richard Rossi** and the **Downstate Strings** will present a concert showcasing our new organ.

The program will include solo organ works by Bach and Pachelbel, the Handel *Organ Concerto Opus 4, No. 4*, two pieces for violin and organ by Joseph Rheinberger, *Rhosymedre* by Ralph Vaughan Williams, and *Mvt. II* from the *Haydn String Quartet Opus 76, No. 3* (the "Kaiser").

The concert is free and open to the public. A reception will follow.

Please invite your friends and family to this upcoming concert in our church.

Share Your Joy of Music

Sanctuary Choir is back in session and needs singers. Rehearsals are Wednesday evenings from 7-8 PM. Fresh voices and faces are always welcome! If you have questions, speak with **Joe Grant** or email him at joegrant@illinois.edu.

Copies of the Fall Small Group & Adult Education Opportunities are now available in the kiosks around the church.

A Glimpse Into Our Past

By 1865, the congregation had outgrown the frame building. Under the leadership of Reverend George McKinley, and with a membership of 137, plans were drawn up for a new, brick church building that would seat 400. In the spring of 1867, construction began. The first floor was completed before the arrival of winter weather, and a shortage of money forced a temporary end of work at the end of the year.

Prayer Corner



Help Lord!

Sometimes we feel like David, whose cry to God in Psalm 12 began with the words, "Help, Lord." This is a quick way of asking God for help.

David was mourning the lack of godly people who do not use deceptive speech. Today we have times when things seem to be falling apart or there is an immediate need and no human help is available. Then we can cry out to our Lord and Savior for aid.

Let us use this 2 word prayer, "Help, Lord," any time human help is not sufficient.

Brain Health

A new aerobics exercise class targeting brain health has been launched at First Presbyterian Church. It is open to the public and all ages welcome! New students can start October 9. Classes meet MWF from 3:40-4:40 PM. The cost is \$40 a semester. They will be held in the Chapel in the Education Building.

Celeste Kim is a certified instructor of the HHIM Brain Institute in South Korea. She has been certified to teach the HHIM brain aerobics exercise and, most recently, taught a zero-hour aerobics class to students at Jefferson Middle School throughout the academic year of 2012-2013.

Please contact: **Melinda Watts-Ellis** (Director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministry) at (217) 356-7238, or **Celeste Kim** (Program Instructor) at (217) 494-5994 for further information.

Got Photos?

As we prepare for the retirement of **Pastor Chuck Carlson**, we are looking for photos of Chuck and Betty. If you have some good photos of one or both, we'd love to get a copy. If in digital form, please email them to photos@firstpres.church, or bring them on USB drive or CD. If you have printed photos, we can scan them. To make sure we get the photos back to you, please enclose them in an envelope with your name on the outside.

As we prepare for the 150th anniversary of the main church building, we'd also love to have copies of other great photos you have of the church buildings, people, or activities. Thanks!

Jays & Concerns

Congratulations to...

- **Hannah Craddock and Kyle Mossman** who were married September 16, 2017;
- **Laurie Jefferson and Blake Croegaert** who were married September 16, 2017;
- **Hanna Ahn and Johnny Mei** who were married October 7, 2017.

Our Church

Children, Youth & Family Update

BY MINDY WATTS-ELLIS, DIRECTOR OF CYF
(mindy@firstpres.church)

Sunday School Notes

Sunday School is in full swing. In September, our elementary students studied a unit on Jesus Blessing the Children. We welcomed a baby to the church through the sacrament of baptism, talked about what it means to be welcoming, and learned more about the children of our sister church in Cuba. We spent time getting to know each other within classes to build our sense of Christian community. The preschool class explored what it means to praise God and the many ways in which it can be done. The Middle School students studied the story of Adam and Eve and compared and contrasted the two accounts of the creation of humans within Genesis. They also had a lively discussion about whether or not animals are included in God's covenant and judgment. The high school class is delving into discussion about developing a relationship with God through trust.

October will bring a focus on the story of Jacob for the Elementary and Middle School students. The preschool will explore the concept that 'God Made my Family.' The High School class will continue to explore developing a relationship with God through love, faithfulness, and communication through prayer and scripture.

The confirmation class began in October with at least 7 students who have registered so far. They are meeting regularly on Sundays from 10:10-11 AM.

I hope you will consider being part of a teaching team for the Sunday School for

the academic year. We need more teachers and helpers in order to have strong teams of leaders for the kids. Please prayerfully consider if you would be able to give two Sundays a month or more toward ministering to an age group of our children.

Be a Mentor to a Confirmation Student!

What is a mentor? A loving Christian adult and member of this church who takes special time to get to know a specific student going through the confirmation class. What does a mentor do? A mentor builds a relationship with the confirmand through informal meetings and chats, prays with and for their confirmand, and serves as an example of a normal human struggling to live a Christian life among the world's pressures. Mentors will also have a conversation with their student about their statement of faith as that process begins later in the academic year, and are requested to be present during the worship service in which the student is confirmed as a member of the church to participate in the laying on of hands. How often do we have to connect? That will be up to you and your student to decide. Find what works for your schedules. How do I sign up? Contact Mindy Watts-Ellis at mindy@firstpres.church to be paired with a student.

Youth Group

We had 14 of our youth and 9 other youth from First Presbyterian Church of Urbana and McKinley Presbyterian Church gather together on September 24 in The Café for dinner and some fun get-to-know-you games. The highlight of the evening was

a live version of Hungry, Hungry Hippo played in our gym on scooters, buckets, and a large quantity of whiffle balls. Ice cream and cake were enjoyed by all to finish out the evening. We look forward to more fellowship together November 5 for a cookout and mission project.



Hungry, Hungry Hippos...the human kind!

Children's Mission

The children have made two polar fleece blankets to donate to Empty Tomb and are putting together 24 hygiene kits to send to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance for distribution to the many victims of natural disasters that have been too frequent recently.

Trunk-or-Treat

Mark your calendars for this year's Trunk-or-Treat community event October 29! Our event will begin with the decorated cars and candy open from 5-6 PM in the east side of our parking lot and a soup supper offered from 6-7 PM in Centennial Hall. **Jean Rene and Boyomi** have graciously agreed to offer some musical entertainment for the event. This is a great opportunity to show Christian hospitality to our neighborhood families.

Look for the sign-up sheets for bringing a decorated car to the event and/or donating candy to the cause soon. Not the creative type? Our youth can decorate your trunk for you with some materials the church owns. Volunteers will be needed to man the game stations, cook soup, serve guests, set up, and clean up. You can always contact **Mindy Watts-Ellis** directly to volunteer for any portion of the event at mindy@firstpres.church. The First United Methodist Church has partnered with us to have our events coincide to draw a larger part of the community.

Young Lives will also be hosting a Trunk –or–Treat event for their participating young single moms and children on October 26 (Thursday) in our parking lot in the evening if you would like to get two uses out of your decorating efforts!

Book Bin Brings Smiles

BY BOB KIRBY
(rwk3213@gmail.com)

You can donate used children’s books to our book bin in Centennial Hall. Children are encouraged to take home a book from the bin each week then donate back books when they are able. We welcome children’s books for all ages. Books may be left in either of our mission closets.

Financial Update

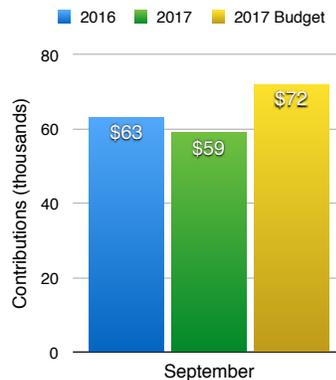
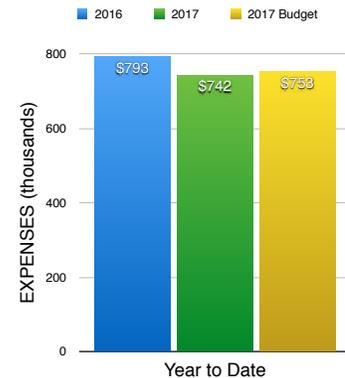
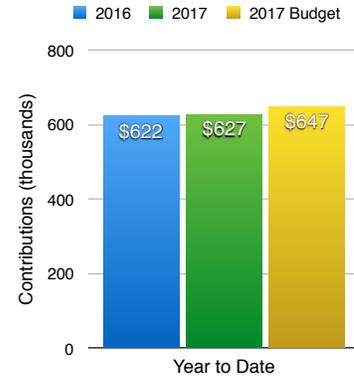
BY MARK SCHOEFFMANN, FINANCE CHAIR
(mschoeffmann@mchsi.com)

Contributions

Contributions in September were \$4K less than 2016 and \$13K below the budget at \$59K. The Year to Date total exceeded last year by \$5K but is below the budgeted amount by \$20K. The increase in this year’s contributions continues to offset the decrease in prepaid pledges (those paid in the year prior to the pledge year) for 2017 compared to 2016 but the contributions have dropped below the amount budgeted for the year. These prepaid pledges are prorated over the year with 1/12 added to each month’s contributions.

Expenses

Year-to-Date expenses are \$11K below budget at \$742K and \$51K below 2016. Considering all sources, expenses exceed revenue by \$14K which is \$63K better than at this time in 2016. This figure includes a \$29K transfer from other funds that was not made last year.



Thanks to your generosity \$5,600 was raised by our church for recovery efforts through Presbyterian Disaster Assistance with the recent hurricanes.



**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
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P: 217.356.7238

F: 217.356.7242

E: info@firstpres.church

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Sunday:

- 8 AM Contemplative Service
- 9 AM Traditional Service
- 9:15 AM Children’s Sunday School
- 10:10 AM Adult Education & High School Class
- 11 AM Contemporary Service

Staff:

Kristi Corbin Missions 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 Director of Music
 Blaise Pascal ... Asst Director Children, Youth & Family, Ext 216
 Chris Penny Facilities Manager, Ext. 237
 Ann Petry Accounting, Ext. 224
 Richard Rossi Church Musician
 Mindy Watts-Ellis .. Director Children, Youth & Family, Ext. 212

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.