

September 2018



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN



Join us for the **BIG Event**
Hearts, Hands & Voices
Sunday, September 16
immediately following 9 AM worship

*We will worship, eat, laugh and work together to
provide much needed supplies to local missions.*

A Radical Invitation

BY MATT MATTHEWS (MATT@FIRSTPRES.CHURCH)

Dear Friends,

“Hearts, Hands, and Voices: A Community Together” is our **BIG EVENT** on Sunday, September 16. I really hope you will make every effort to be there.

Why? In a nutshell, I believe our flock will grow the more we can make hands-on connection with each other and with the world. I believe that the more “mission” and “worship” we do, the more in-line we are with Jesus’ radical invitation of discipleship. I believe laughing together brings life. Praying together brings richer life. Eating together nourishes both body and soul.

The **BIG EVENT** attempts to pull all of that together. God will be glad to see us on campus together spending a few celebratory precious hours together.

Matt Matthews

**See page 7 for the
NEW service times
beginning this Sunday,
September 9.**

Your Congregation's Immune System

REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION

BY GEORGE WILKES WRITTEN IN 2017

In the past an unexpected shortage of flu shots led to widespread concern and discussion about who should receive the immunizations and who shouldn't. Media images of people standing in lines to get what flu shots may be available add to the anxiety about the upcoming flu season. Politicians argue about who is to blame and physicians urge calm in the face of increasing concerns about the shortage. Some additional doses of the flu vaccine have been located, but far from enough to make up for the shortfall. The result of these recent events will be increased vulnerability in the general population to infection, especially among those whose immune systems are in some way compromised. So, those whose immune systems may be most at risk will be targeted to receive the immunizations which are available.

The recent flu shot ruckus recalls some helpful reflection on congregational life by the Lutheran pastor Peter Steinke. In his Healthy Congregations materials he describes how the human immune system keeps the body's biological integrity intact. "It learns to distinguish self (cells and proteins native to the body) from non-self (organisms from outside the body). It recognizes the shapes of cells that are nonself, and then attacks or destroys any "nonself" that it encounters. Through its memory, the immune system remains alert to fend off any enemy it encounters before damage is done to the body."

Steinke points out that churches are vulnerable to illness, too, and that congregational leaders serve an important function as the congregation's system of immunity. Leaders, he says, "must have the immune system's ability to recognize materials that do not belong in the host and those that do belong. This means that leaders need to determine whether or not certain behaviors are damaging to the welfare of the whole. They ask, 'Do these behaviors help or

hinder the congregation's mission?' Leaders, serving as an immune system keep the mission and vision of the congregation before the eyes of all members. This is who we say we are. This is where we stand. This or that does not help our mission and ministry."¹

In order to function as the immune system of a congregation, congregational leaders must exhibit health themselves. When confronted with anxiety from within the congregation, they don't react with their own anxiety. In the midst of group pressure and chaos, they remain independent and clearly define themselves and their own roles. Steinke quotes Murray Bowen, who wrote:

*(Ideal change) begins when one can find a leader with the courage to define self, who is as invested in the welfare of the family (or organization) as in self, who is neither angry nor dogmatic, whose energy goes to changing self rather than telling others what they should do, who can know and respect the multiple opinions of others, who can modify self in response to the strengths of the group and who is not influenced by the irresponsible opinions of others.*²

It seems to me that the greatest leaders in the church have been those who were able to stay above the chaos and conflict and with courage and conviction seek to articulate a coherent vision for the church. These leaders are able to say in a calm and clear way, "this is where I (we) stand." Such leaders are able to listen and understand, and to remain in relationship with those with whom they may disagree. They are able to identify destructive behavior and address such behavior appropriately. They respond instead of reacting and are able to admit when they are wrong and to forgive others when they have been wronged.

In an uncertain, troubled and angry time, our churches and communities need immunity from the rampant dis-ease in our culture. We need less dogmatism and more decency, less anger and more grace, less reaction and more response, less criticism and more civility. The good news

is that there are leaders in our congregations who exhibit qualities like wisdom, patience, courage and forgiveness. They are pastors, educators, elders and deacons and other lay leaders. They chair committees, moderate Presbyterian Women circles, advise youth groups and coach our children.

There is no "flu shot" that will keep congregational systems free from disease or disorder. But good leaders can provide an immune system for the church. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, may their tribe increase.

¹Steinke, Peter, in Healthy Congregations, Workshop 3, Session 5, "Provide Immune Capacities," pp. 33-35

² Ibid.

Staff Transitions

BY YOUR HR TEAM

Fall is a time when we often think of change. Kids go back to school, the leaves turn colors, we dig our sweaters out of the back of the closet. As it happens, we are also experiencing changes in regard to our church staff and here is a summary of our "transitions":

Pastoral Staff - Pastor Eric will be changing his title from Covenant Associate Pastor to Associate Pastor. As a Covenant Associate Pastor, he was hired by the Session (not called by the congregation) and had a contract with a time limit. He has subsequently "jumped through the hoops" to have his ordination transferred to our denomination, PC-USA, and we have gone through the appropriate procedure to have him called by the congregation. He will be officially installed as our Associate Pastor in the near future.

Music Staff - We, sadly, accepted the resignation of **Andrea Pope**, the worship leader of the Gathering, our contemporary worship service. On the bright side, her husband, **Jason Pope**, has agreed to continue on as the bandleader during the 11:15 service. Andrea will be missed and Jason's talents will continue to be much appreciated. **2**

In addition, we welcome **Pierre Tang** as our new organist for the 8 AM and the 9 AM services. Pierre has also agreed to work with the Children Youth and Family ministry as the Children’s Director of Music. So we extend a double welcome to Pierre!

Children Youth and Family Staff – Blaise Pascal has agreed to accept a new position in the CYF ministry. He will begin as the CYF Connections Assistant this month and will be working closely with the families of the children in the program. Also, **Lizz Pippin** begins her responsibilities as the Associate Director of CYF this month. She will be Mindy’s partner in providing leadership in the CYF ministry. It is a blessing to have Lizz and Blaise “on board”.

Maintenance Staff – Ritchie Drennen has accepted the position of Facilities Manager replacing **Chris Penny** who moved on to a new position earlier this summer. Ritchie has been working and ministering here for several years and already knows his way around the facility so he slid into the position quickly.

We subsequently filled Ritchie’s former position of Head Custodian with **George Almasi**. George will be in church some Sunday mornings so you will have opportunities to greet him and welcome him very soon.

Last but not least, we have sadly accepted the resignation of our Outreach Coordinator, **Beth Chandler**. We are sad to see her go and we wish her God’s richest blessings in her future endeavors.

Financial Update

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

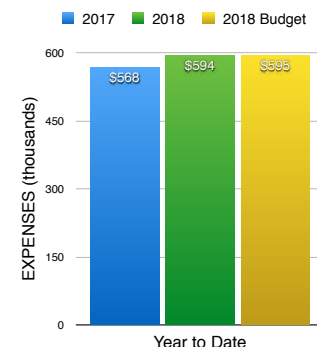
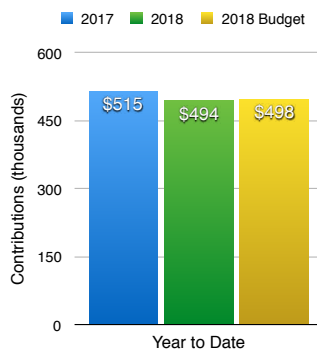
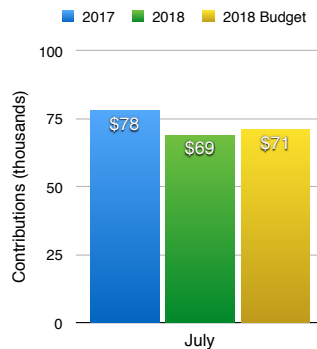
Contributions

Contributions in July were \$9K less than in 2017 and \$2K below the budget at \$69K. The Year to Date total is below last

year by \$21K and is below the budgeted amount by \$4K. These figures include prepaid pledges (those paid in the year prior to the budget year) that are prorated over the year with 1/12 added to each month’s contributions. Including all prepaid pledges, at 58.3% through the year we have received 63.7% of the expected 2018 revenue.

Expenses

Year to Date expenses are \$1K below budget at \$594K but above 2017 by \$26K. Considering all sources, revenue exceeds expenses by \$31K which is \$29K less than at the end of July in 2017. At 58.3% through the year we have experienced 58.2% of the expected 2018 expenses.



Congregational Care Deacons

BY PAM KNOX, POKNOX@GMAIL.COM

The Congregational Care Deacons are a diverse group of people who are dedicated to reaching out to congregational members who are no longer able to attend regular church services. Unlike our counterparts the Stephen Ministers who receive 50 hours of training to minister in times of crisis, the Congregational Care Deacons are all lay people and amateurs who feel called to serve.

Last month our group went through the church’s “active membership” roll to identify members who have been unable to regularly attend services. We found a growing number of members who may fall into this category, but we need your help to reach out to them.

So how can you help? If you know of someone who would like to be visited on a regular basis by a Care Deacon, please contact the church office and let us know. But more importantly, we need your help ministering to these members. If you have a few extra hours each month that you could spend visiting someone, please contact the church office, the Nominating Committee, or fill out one of the Nomination Forms found on our website or in kiosks around the church.

Although I’ve only been doing this ministry for a short while, I’ve learned that I receive more than I ever give. Please consider joining me by serving our congregation in this ministry. Even though we no longer see their faces each week they are still members of our church and we need to let them know we care.



Chosen to Praise God

We all have a need to be chosen and to belong. God recognizes this need when he tells Christians, "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." (1 Peter 2:9) As members of a royal priesthood we have the priestly work of telling others about Jesus Christ plus the priestly work of lifting others up to God in prayer.

May both our lives and our voices bring praise to God.

A Party With a Purpose

At the inception of Pakistan, the Presbyterian schools started by our missionaries were taken over by the Pakistani government. Twenty years ago, those schools were returned to the Presbyterian Church - badly in need of repair and run-down. Those schools have grown, prospered, and produced many educated young ladies.

Let's celebrate the progress which has been made. Veda Gill, Executive Director, will be here on **Thursday, October 4, at 12 noon for the Presbyterian Women Gathering** to have tea with us and talk with us about educating girls in Pakistan, the importance, and what Presbyterian Education Board - Pakistan has accomplished in the last 20 years.

Some facts about Veda:

- Veda's mother attended a PEB school
- Veda was promised in marriage at 3 months
- Veda's husband died winter 2018 and was cared for by two nurses who graduated from PEB

Please join us **Thursday, October 4**, to learn more of Veda's story.



Under Veda's directorship, quality Christian Education is provided to thousands of young Pakistani girls. The October 4 celebration in Veda's honor, will truly be a Party with a Purpose in which our church has played a significant role.

Jays & Concern

We extend our sympathies to...

- The family and friends of **Warren Wessels** who died August 16, 2018.
- The family and friends of **Bob Nutt** who died recently. Arrangements are incomplete at this writing.

Would you like to join the 100 participants of our weekly **Prayer Chain**? Just send your e-mail address to either **Jane Seiler** at seilerjh@aol.com or **Marcia Franks** at marcia@firstpres.church.

The Importance of a Tutor

BY JEANETTE PYNE, ESL COORDINATOR
JEANETTE@FIRSTPRES.CHURCH

Volunteer tutors are the backbone of the First Pres ESL Program. Without them, we could not be able to serve the many students who attend our classes every week. Because they are so integral to the program, we had a surprise Teacher's Day party on May 8 to honor all of the volunteer tutors. The students wrote thank you cards in English and their native languages and brought food from their culture to share. Needless to say, the tutors were totally touched by the party and the cards from the students.

This is one of my favorite memories of the First Pres ESL Program because the students got to honor the volunteer tutors and show their gratitude for their service. The students understand that the volunteer tutors' sacrifice and service is free, and they greatly appreciate it.

We began our classes again in August. We are always looking for more open-minded and servant-hearted volunteer tutors. If you are interested in learning more about how to volunteer tutor and positively impact a student's life, contact **Jeanette Pyne**, the ESL Coordinator, jeanette@firstpres.church.

Relocation Ministry Expands Services

In May, 2012 **Madame Ha Ho** at the "Refugee Center" (ECIRMAC) identified two families in need of help. One was a family of six leaving a host family to an unfurnished apartment and the second was a mother with two toddlers living in an empty space.

You responded with typical First Pres generosity with every sort of furnishing from sofas and beds to can openers and pizza cutters. Both of our first families became active members of our congregation.

During the subsequent six years we served dozens of families. We received your gifts and those of many others throughout Champaign County and moved them to first homes. We acquired two storage units and were blessed by our congregants who donated trucks and drivers and muscle and time. Some of you shopped estate sales



Kirby garage in May 2012 when First Pres first furnished two apartments with the "Refugee Center". The resulting Relocation Ministry is now merging with additional agencies to expand services to our community.

and garage sales and donated found treasures. Some painted and repaired and re-glued those treasures. Others gave money to support this work. Several outside our church community became regular volunteers. We now have opportunity to expand this ministry through collaboration with others. Moving forward we will continue to work with ECIRMAC and also partner with CU-FAIR (Champaign-Urbana Friends and Allies of Immigrants and Refugees), Three Spinners, Habitat Restore, *empty tomb* and Salt and Light and University YMCA. The Champaign Public Health Department has donated a large space to meet our storage needs.

Please continue to share with all these organizations collaborating to meet the needs of our newest Americans and our other low income families.

Su Voz

Su Voz, His Voice in Spanish, is a devotion written by the people of the Presbyterian Reformed Church of Cuba. It is translated to English and distributed by email in English and Spanish each day. To subscribe email marcia@firstpres.church.

Benevolence Fund

Our congregation is both financially blessed and financially diverse; some brothers and sisters face short term financial emergencies beyond their capacity. We are called to be wise stewards of the Lord's money. This includes, as was true of the early church community as described in Acts, sharing among ourselves as emergency needs arise.

Our Benevolence Fund is supported solely by individual gifts from members of the congregation. It is an emergency fund to help with rent, utilities, food and medicine when other assistance is not available. Applications are reviewed by a committee of three members, the mission coordinator, and head pastor. Committee members are appointed by the head pastor. In general, a family must have a significant relationship with our congregation and can receive help only once a year for no more than \$500. Vendors are paid directly on behalf of recipients.

You can help maintain the fund with a donation to our Church with a memo: "benevolence fund". The fund is currently depleted. Applications are available at www.firstpres.church under "resources/forms". All requests are confidential.

Content adapted from Benevolence Fund Policy which is available in its entirety from the office.

Face to Face



Gary and Linda Peterson

Since my confirmation I have carried this verse with me: *I will be with you, I will not fail or forsake you. Be strong and of good courage. Joshua 1:5-6*

Gary

What brought you to First Presbyterian? A friend invited us.

What has been the highlight of your church experience? Spiritual growth from one on one interaction with people and small groups. We love our Friday small group. Also, our work with the Wednesday night youth group was a highlight. We were often responsible for the Wednesday evening meals. We also had wonderful experiences in Bible studies and in our relationships with all our pastors.

Tell us about your work. Linda: When the children were small I did administrative work where my job was to revitalize struggling credit unions. This allowed me to work part time. I am retired from credit union accounting and training of people. Gary: I had a fascinating journey from a U of I Agriculture student to work related food service. From my part time night job in a restaurant as a student, Linda and I ultimately became owners and operators of the Red Wheel Restaurant at Springfield

and Prospect (1981). When the restaurant burned I began in food service at Carle and then moved to food service manager at The Windsor of Savoy. Now I am retired.

What do you do in your free time? Linda: I love Scrabble, jigsaw puzzles, word games, solitaire and old movies. I love to listen to WBGL and currently one of my favorite songs is “You Love Me Anyway” by the Sidewalk Prophets. Gary: I continue to cook and I like to work outside. I have recently taken up pickleball. We both volunteer and love to travel and entertain.

What are your favorite Bible characters? Linda: My favorite character is Esther. She was afraid but had to act and thus saved her people. Gary: Influenced as a child by the movie, *The Ten Commandments*, I have always admired Moses.

What advice can you give on how to do church? Be involved. It all started by being asked to serve on the membership committee.

The Petersons chair the Outreach Committee which includes membership, hospitality, fellowship and outreach. They also serve on the Gathering Worship Team. Gary is a ruling elder. Gary and Linda commonly provide leadership for food events.

Outreach

BY GARY & LINDA PETERSON,
CHAIR OUTREACH
AMER_SWEDE@YAHOO.COM

Taste of CU

A big “THANK YOU” to everyone who helped with the First Pres booth

at the Taste of CU! We handed out church info, bubbles, and taffy, and made slime with kids who visited our booth. We also invited attendees to rest at our turquoise table, and even had someone ask for the plans to make their own (Bill Gamble made ours). Later we were serenaded by an attendee who stopped by our booth and sang *Amazing Grace* for everyone to hear. Overall, the Taste was a great way for us to spread the word about First Pres



First Pres Booth at the Taste of CU

at one of our community’s largest summer events.

Sholem Fest

Approximately 150 friends and family members attended Sholem Fest, our church picnic and pool party, on August 19. The party started with a picnic in Centennial Park, where we grilled hamburgers



Sholem Fest Picnic in Centennial Park

and hot dogs and shared lots of great food dishes. Then we had the Sholem Aquatic Center pool to ourselves for an evening swim and fellowship. This fun event was a great way for our youth to interact with each other and for all of us to make new friends. Another big “thank you” to everyone who helped make this event happen. We look forward to this summer tradition in the years to come.

Game Night

More than 20 people attended the August game night and played Euchre, a popular card game. We started holding monthly game nights over the summer and they’ve been a fun way to get to know each other in a small, casual setting. **Brandi and Jason Lowe** have done a fantastic job hosting game nights and we look forward to more in the future. Be on the lookout for details about upcoming game nights.

Calling All Young at Heart Learners

Time to sign-up and start attending our various education opportunities for this Fall. The Spiritual Formation/Adult Education committee has developed an array of time commitments, interests and down right fun classes for each Sunday morning. We also have available groups and classes throughout the week.

Take a peek in our colorful brochure and see where you feel comfortable or maybe not so comfortable and grow a little in the coming months.

We welcome all long time students and those ready to just get started. The following are just a few of the opportunities available this fall.

For more information call the office or contact **Betty Hollister** 217-419-2717 or b.holl@mediacombb.net.

Presbyterian 101

As a joint venture the Membership and Spiritual Formation Committees are presenting *Presbyterian 101*.

Whether you are new, have been around for a while or just plain curious, this class is for you! Come learn and have some fun in this two-session class.

Classes will be held September 9 and 23 during the Sunday School/Adult Education Hour. Classes will be repeated October 21 and 28 with French translation.

The Presbyterian Handbook is highly recommended but not required.

Cuba Study

The *Cuba Study* is offered Tuesday evenings from 6:30 to 8 PM at the home of **Rachel and Matt Matthews**. The study began on September 4 but will accept new members until September 11. The study ends on October 30.

The study is for everyone wanting to learn about Cuba. The study is required for those who wish to travel. Our next trip is planned for spring break 2019.

For more information or to enroll, please contact **Bob Kirby** rwk3213@gmail.com or 217.621.5915.



New Worship Schedule begins September 9

The Sunday morning schedule will be adjusted to allow a dedicated block of time for the Sunday School and Adult Education from 10:15 to 11:05 AM, the Contemporary (The Gathering) worship service time will move to 11:15 AM.

8:00-8:45	Contemplative Worship
9:00-10:00	Traditional Worship
10:00-10:10	Fellowship
10:15-11:05	Sunday School/Adult Education
11:15-12:15	Contemporary Worship

Coming September 23

Easy English Fellowship

- Make friends
- Practice English
- Learn about the bible
- Meet Americans

Sundays 10:10–11:00a • Room 204
 First Presbyterian Church
 302 W. Church St., Champaign
(for English learners at an intermediate or higher level)

Children, Youth & Family

Children, Youth & Family Update

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

Welcome Children to Worship

With the new Sunday morning schedule beginning on September 9, the children ages five and older are encouraged to remain for a full worship service. All ages are welcome for a full service, and child care is an option in the education building for children under age five. Families are invited to worship together. Worship boxes will still be provided to help occupy restless fingers and minds in the 9 AM service. The 11:15 service will still have a children's area to the right of the main seating.

There are some children who would benefit from a pew partner or pew family. These are children who attend our church with their siblings, but often without their parents. A pew partner will invite children to sit next to them in worship, help answer whispered questions about what is happening in worship, help guide them through worship (when to stand, sit, pray, sing), and build a relationship with the children. If you would be interested in serving as a pew partner, please contact Mindy at mindy@firstpres.church. Pew partners will receive training and some resources to help guide children through worship.

We will all be enriched by the energy and presence of our youngest congregants while they learn the rhythms and flow of worship from those around them. Many of our young people will be asked to help lead parts of the service and serve the church as ushers, greeters, and on the tech team. Let us all do our best to make our little ones feel welcome and loved.

Sunday School

Sunday School will resume September 9 in the 10:15-11:05 AM hour. The first Sunday will be dedicated to getting to know each other and forming our class communities as welcoming spaces for all. On September 16, the classes will attend the Hearts, Hands, and Voices: A Community Together.

Class instruction will resume September 23 with preschool focusing on 'God Made my Family', elementary grades will study the concept of respect through the golden rule taught by Jesus, middle school will study the question 'Does God Still Create Stuff Today?,' and our high school will study the lectionary text through *Feasting on the Word* curriculum for youth. If you are interested in joining our teaching team to minister to children and youth contact **Mindy Watts-Ellis** at mindy@firstpres.church.

Children's Choir

Children's choir will resume on September 23 at 11-11:30 AM. Our new organist Pierre will be leading the children's choir. Sign up sheets to participate in the children's choir will be available before worship and during Sunday School.

Youth Group

High School youth will be invited to take part in a youth group each Sunday beginning September 23 from 5:30-7 PM. Once a month we will have a larger group and incorporate the Middle School youth for an event. **Lizz Pippin** will be spearheading this new program. We hope you will plan to participate. September 23 will feature a scavenger hunt in downtown Champaign! September 30 will be a trip to Hardy's Reindeer Ranch in Rantoul.

Family Event

Mark your calendars for September 16 to participate in 'Hearts, Hands, and Voices: A Community Together.' An event to fill your heart, put your hands to work, and lift your voice for the sake of God's love in our midst. It will take place following the 9 AM service in Centennial Hall.

Food trucks will be in the alley for a great lunch break! Come make emergency kits for local shelters, polar fleece hats and scarves for Salt & Light, Christmas bags for Faith in Action, a hope chest for DREAM, and cards to encourage and comfort the lonely. The event will conclude at 12:45 PM.

Special Notice for Teens & their Families

Children, Youth, and Families Ministry is starting a weekly High School youth group on Sunday evenings from 5:30-7 PM. This is a time for fun, fellowship, and service opportunities for our teens.

Our first youth group meeting will be Sunday, September 23. Meet us in the Education Building where we will gather together for dinner before breaking into two teams for a scavenger hunt downtown. Once a month we will have our middle schoolers join us for an event.

Keep your eye out for more information to come. We look forward to your family being involved with this activity!



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CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN**

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Change Service Requested



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Sunday:

8 AM Contemplative Service

9 AM Traditional Service

10:15 AM Sunday School and Adult Education

10:10 AM Adult Education & High School Class

11:15 AM Contemporary Service

Saturday:

6 PM Praise & Prayer Gathering
(French-English Service) Centennial Hall

Pastors:

Matt Matthews Senior Pastor/Head of Staff, Ext 213

Eric Corbin.....Associate Pastor, Ext. 214

Staff:

George Almasi.....Facility Maintenance

Kristi Corbin Missions Coordinator, Ext. 219

Ritchie DrennenFacility Manager, Ext. 237

Patty Farthing..... Receptionist, Ext. 211

Robert Ferrer..... Audio-visual Technician

Marcia FranksAdministrative Assistant, Ext. 210

Joe GrantDirector of Music

Blaise PascalCYF Connections Assistant, Ext. 216

Ann Petry Accounting, Ext. 224

Lizz Pippin.....CYF Associate Director, Ext. 216

Jeanette Pyne.....ESL Coordinator, Ext. 235

Pierre TangChurch Musician/Children’s Choir Director

Mindy Watts-Ellis .. Director Children, Youth & Family, Ext. 212

All staff email addresses are the person’s first name followed by
[@firstpres.church](mailto:info@firstpres.church). For example, eric@firstpres.church.

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