

January 2019



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN

Snippets from the Pastor/A New Year

BY MATT MATTHEWS

MATT@FIRSTPRES.CHURCH

I love maps.

I told you that in my report to you in last year's Annual Report of the Session & Staff. I'm thinking about maps again as I ponder this new year.

When I hold a map in my hands, I get a sense that I'm holding the big picture, the east of it and the west, the mountains and the bottom land. When you're holding a map, you can see where you've been. You can plot your destination. You can eyeball visits you'd like to take one day, day trips, strolls, thru-hikes, Sunday drives.

Imagine the steps we'll take together in this New Year. Where do you want to go? Be inspired. Rachel and I are blessed beyond measure that you have invited us to share the journey with you. In a few short weeks—on February 1st—we mark our first anniversary of serving with you. The day we moved into 708 Hamilton Drive was bitter cold. Our hands ached with cold and papercuts from boxes and packing paper. We wondered what strange land we had ended up in.

Now, we've weathered all of the seasons. Snows and heatwaves have gripped and released us. I've been on a Go and Serve Trip with eight youth to Little Rock. Wow! Was that fun. Rachel has served Mission Possible at Kemmerer Village and she's gotten to know PEB partners in Pakistan. We've celebrated a "Service for Wholeness." We all enjoyed an exciting BIG EVENT, melding hearts, hands, and voices in service. We've eaten African meatballs and Monical's pizza and stale movie popcorn. We've weathered leaks in our church basement and flying bats in our sanctuary and Westminster Hall. Game nights, funerals, prayer circles, lunch conversations, belly laughs, tears, UI events in the nosebleed section, births: What a holy, joyful journey it has been.

What I said last year applies all the more now. Help me on the journey, please, by being active in areas that you feel called. Please feel free to explore areas of ministry you've always been curious about. Work hard. Laugh. Pray for me, God's church, and our ministry in the world. Be generous with your time, talent, and treasure. The biggest thing the church can do, I think, is to show up at worship; that's where the mission fires are stoked. Our true north is there. God recalibrates us in centering worship.

Looking Ahead

Thursday, January 17

7:00 PM Session Meeting

Sunday, January 20

9:00 AM Guest Musician

Arturo O'Farrill in worship

5:30 PM Youth Retreat

Monday, January 21

Office Closed

Sunday, February 10

6:00 PM Service of Wholeness

Thursday, February 21

7:00 PM Session Meeting

Monday, February 25

Cuba Trip Departs

Arturo O'Farrill will be a guest musician on Sunday, January 20, at our 9 AM service. Mr. O'Farrill is a jazz musician, the son of Latin jazz musician, arranger and bandleader Chico O'Farrill, and current pianist, composer, and director for the Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra.

Finally this: let's enjoy the journey. The first question and answer of the Westminster Shorter Catechism (that's a road map, too) is this: Q/What is the chief end of man? A/Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy God forever. Let's enjoy the journey, and in so doing, by God's grace, bring God delight and honor.

The best thing about a map when it comes to discipleship is that Jesus is always inviting us to step off the charted page into a great adventure. So, be brave. And let's stay focused on Jesus. He's the only map we really need.

Hallelujah!

Matt Matthews

Door System Upgraded

A new door system is being installed for the church and education buildings. Our previous system locked and unlocked doors at odd times, thus the immediate need for a new door system. All of our OLD keys and fobs will be useless. During office hours, please ring the intercom on the CE Building for access.

The Building and Grounds Committee has been asked to develop a "key policy." Once the new key policy is adopted, entry key fobs and key codes will be assigned to those approved for after hours access. The Session will review the policy as needed. Hopefully we will have everything figured out (both the technology and the key policy) by March 1.

In the meanwhile, it is important that you notify the church office in advance if you need access to the buildings for meetings. With a new year, regular monthly committee meeting times should also be reviewed with the church office. Many times committee structure changes and meetings are either moved or cancelled and we are unaware of it.

Please be in touch with Matt, Eric, Marcia Franks, or Patty Farthing in the church office with any questions or problems.

Financial Update

BY MARK SCHOEFFMANN, CHAIR
MSCHOEFFMANN@MCHSI.COM

Contributions

Contributions in December were \$5K less than in 2017 but \$26K above the budget at \$97K. The Year to Date total is below last year by \$20K and below the budgeted amount by \$10K. 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 revenue sources we have received \$962K which is \$20K below budget and 98% of the expected 2018 revenue.

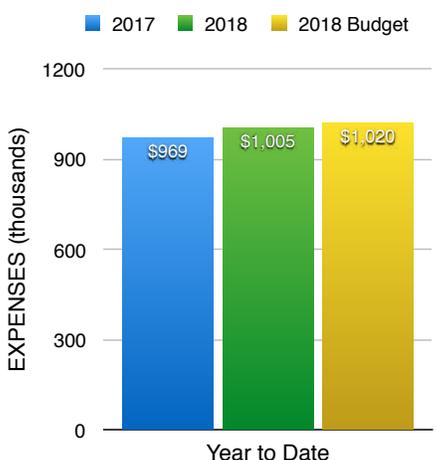
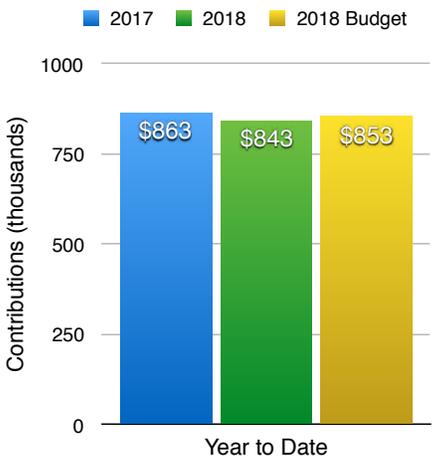
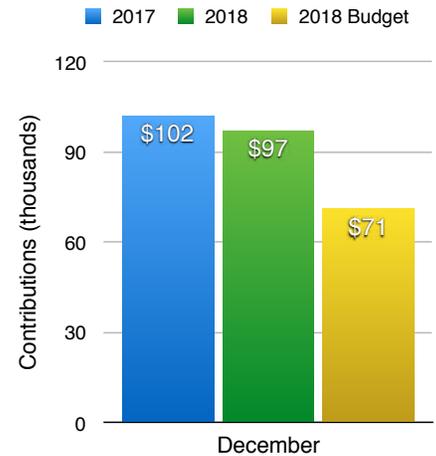
Expenses

Year to Date expenses are \$15K below the budget at \$1,005K but more than in 2017 by \$36K. Considering all sources, expenses exceed revenue by \$43K which is \$66K more than at the end of 2017 and \$5K more than budgeted. At the conclusion of the year we have experienced 98.5% of the expected 2018 expenses.

Stewardship

Our congregation's response to the stewardship drive this year has been overwhelming. A total of 186 pledges have been received for the 2019 operating budget totaling \$793,686. This compares with a total of \$699,427 from 161 pledges last year. More than one-half of all respondents increased their pledge this year over last, including 44 who made commitments this year who did not last year.

Thank you to all who have made the choice to participate in the financial stability of our church. This allows us to continue our programs furthering God's work in our community and beyond.



Nurture

BY GARY PETERSON, CHAIR
AMER_SWEDE@YAHOO.COM

Nurture formerly known as Outreach is beginning a new year and wants your ideas. If you would be interested in giving your input to our group, we meet the 2nd Thursday of each month at 11:30 AM in the Mae Chapin Parlor dining room.

Nurture talks about hospitality and fellowship for our church. We have a new fellowship activity. Every Wednesday a bunch of fun loving people play Pickleball at the Savoy Recreation Center. From 1-3 balls and paddles are swung, bounced, volleyed and missed to cheers and playful jeers.

Games are co-ed with no experience necessary. We supply the paddles. The cost is nominal for the afternoon. We would love to see you there. Come join in the fun. If interested or have questions please contact **Gary Peterson** 398-8504 for details.

Spiritual Formation

BY BETTY HOLLISTER
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Your Spiritual Formation Team is excited to start the new year with more exciting classes. January 6, 13, and 27 will be discussion sessions to complete the book *One Blood: Parting Words to the Church on Race and Love*. We welcome everyone whether or not you completed the fall session or even if you have not read the book. Come to Mae Chapin at 10:15 for lively conversation about walking our faith together in this divided world.

January 20 **Tracy Dace** will offer a special class to commemorate Martin Luther King, Jr.

In February we look forward to **Rachel Matthews** leading us in an exploration of the Love Languages and **Peter Yau's** series of *Faith in the Real World*.

Check the bulletin for further updates, but count on attending the adult education hour weekly at 10:15 AM to find support and challenge in your faith journeys.

Music Opportunities

Now is the time to make your resolution come true! Join one of the musical groups at First Pres: adult choir, children's choir or bells. We need you to jump in and be part of these groups that help enhance worship through music. You don't have to be a pro, just interested and persistent. Sanctuary Choir meets Wednesday evenings 7-8 PM and we warm-up for the 9 AM worship at 8:15. Children meet after Sunday School at 11 AM with **Pierre Tang** and bells meet just before choir on Wednesdays at 6 PM.

For more information or questions, contact **Joe Grant** at joe@firstpres.church.



Rosalie, Mamie, Nadeige, Judy, Sylvie, Jacqueline, Solange and Gabriel

Easy English Fellowship: Worship and English

English learners from our congregation meet at 10:10 Sundays in room 204 to practice English and learn elements of Presbyterian worship. Learners and volunteer native speakers are welcome.

ESL Christmas Potluck Party

BY JEANETTE PYNE, ESL COORDINATOR
 JEANETTE@FIRSTPRES.CHURCH



From left to right: Bonnie (tutor), Maryna, Jeanette (ESL Coordinator), and Selma

What better way to celebrate the Christmas season than with a Christmas Potluck Party with our ESL students? Everyone contributed by bringing a dish to share and taking pictures in our Christmas Photo Booth. We played a Christmas Trivia Game, which was difficult even for the tutors! Did you know that Franklin Pierce was the first US president to decorate the White House Christmas Tree?

Because many Christians celebrate Christmas as the day that Jesus Christ was born, I felt that it was only appropriate to talk about the religious significance of the holiday with the ESL students. We watched a video called, "A Social Media Christmas" which told the nativity story via social media posts as if it was really happening today. Needless to say, the students and tutors found this version of the nativity story clever and amusing.

To conclude the party, we ended with one of our traditions of singing Christmas carols together. **Gloria Read** lead the students in singing *Jingle Bells*, *Silent Night*, and *We Wish You a Merry Christmas*. Oh, what fun it was!

What's on the horizon for the First Pres ESL Program?

The First Pres ESL Program will be piloting a new night class this semester to meet the needs of English language learners in the community. Because we have a long waitlist and a desire to serve different groups of people, the ESL Advisory Committee decided to offer a Wednesday night class for beginners from 6-8 PM starting January 16.

I have distributed flyers to various community resource centers and organizations. Anyone who is interested in taking the Wednesday night class will need to register before the first class on January 16. For more information or questions about the Wednesday night class call (217) 356-7238 or email jeanette@firstpres.church. Please join me in praying for God's blessing on this and that more people would be helped by this Wednesday night class.



From left to right: Mindy, Pamela, Maria, Silvana, Paul, Gabriela, Kathy, and Selma



Answered Prayer

Have you noticed it is children who assume their prayers will be answered, while adults have doubts? Our common sense tells us God doesn't change things because we pray. However, Jesus corrects our doubts when he says, "And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it." (John 14:13-14) We are to bring to Jesus in prayer whatever is on our minds, while letting the Holy Spirit guide our requests, according to God's will. When Jesus answers our prayers, it brings glory to our heavenly Father.

May we take our prayers to God expecting answers with the faith of a child.

Teen Suicide

About 575,00 teenagers attempt suicide each year. One in five college students contemplates suicide. Twelve high school students die each day.

Rattle the Stars will host the "The S Word", a documentary which shares the stories of young people who have attempted suicide. The film is appropriate for people ages ten and older. Rattle the Stars is a local organization dedicated to prevention of suicide in teenagers and young adults. (RattleTheStars.org). Discussion following showings will include information about identifying risk and appropriate intervention.

Free showings will be held at the Champaign Public Library at 9:30 AM on Saturday, January 12, and at 6:30 PM on Monday, January 21, at Parkland College Room C-118. Other showings will be in Rantoul and Mahomet.

Contact **Kim** at kimbryan@rattlethestars.org or 217-372-4479 for more information.

Jays & Concerns

We express our sympathy...

- To the family and friends of **Judy Cotter** who died December 24, 2018;
- To the family and friends of **Jo Radcliffe** who died December 27, 2018.

Looking for ways to deepen your spiritual life in the new year? Check out the new *Winter-Spring Small Group & Adult Education Opportunities* brochure. These can be found in the kiosks at the back of the sanctuary and around the church.

Children, Youth & Family

Children, Youth & Family Update

BY MINDY WATTS-ELLIS, DIRECTOR OF CYF
 mindy@firstpres.church
 LIZZ PIPPEN, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR
 LIZZ@FIRSTPRES.CHURCH

Sunday School Notes

December brought a focus on the story of Jesus' birth for the Sunday school students. The preschool explored the concept that 'Jesus is God's Son.'

In January, the preschool will be studying the concept 'I Learn About God.' The

elementary classes will study Jesus' Big Words from the Sermon on the Mount.

The Middle School class will study the story of the Centurion in the New Testament that requested healing for his servant, work on improving their Bible skills, and study the 12 disciples. The High School class will continue to study the lectionary using Feasting on the Word for Youth.

Youth Group

There will not be any youth group meetings on January 6 and 13.

The middle school and high school youth are invited to come to the winter retreat/lock-in on January 20-21. This is our second annual MLK weekend retreat. We will gather at 5:30 (our usual youth group time) at the church and be ready to be picked up around 2:30/3 on Monday, January 21. Bring your overnight gear and be prepared for fun!

The high school youth will meet again January 27 in the café from 5:30-7 PM. Thank you to the royal icing makers, parent helpers, and volunteers who made the candy house decorating event on December 23 a success!



Youth enjoyed decorating candy houses on December 23.





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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 Assistant

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.