

June 2016



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN

Pastor's Pen

BY CHUCK CARLSON, INTERIM HEAD PASTOR
(chuck.carlson@firstchurchchampaign.org)

We are in the season of Pentecost. What does this season of the church's life have to teach us? For one, all of the nations were in Jerusalem gathered in one place. Secondly, when the Holy Spirit came upon the people each heard their language spoken by another. Babel reversed, we might call it. People are being drawn together, not separated.

Throughout the prophets and into Revelation we hear prophesied how all the nations are drawn to worship the Sovereign God of Israel. Isaiah writes "Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn" (*Isaiah 60:3*). Revelation proclaims similarly, "All nations will come and worship before you, for your judgments have been revealed" (*Revelation 15:4*).

Even if the disciples cannot speak all of the languages, God can. God made the nations. God calls us to be the light of God's presence. Through Jesus, God is calling all God's people together. Should we not be a reflection of God's plan?

Actually, we simply need to join in on what God is doing. Our active attendance in our ESL ministry reflects that we live in a culturally diverse community. Our Session has stated in Our Mission that "We will be a multi-generational, multi-cultural, mission-centered church, serving Jesus Christ at the heart of the city and wherever God calls us."

What does multi-cultural mean? For decades we have been a mono-cultural church. But if you have been attending for the past few years, you know that is changing. Some of us are questioning whether or not we want to embrace this change. "This is not my church anymore." Have you heard or felt that? All over America the cultural plate is shifting. This election is in part a reaction to that reality because by 2040 the once dominant white European transplanted culture in the USA will become the minority.

Pastor Nominating Committee

We thank God for leading us in the search for our Head of Staff. We know He has chosen a perfect match for us and we are praying and listening and praying some more that we will know His will.

The PNC has met for eleven months. After an initial period of prayer, learning and team-building we worked with session to write our ministry statement, our sense of the journey on which the Spirit is leading. You can see this in the ministry information form on the church website. We then selected thirteen leadership competencies we thought most important for a Head of Staff who would accompany us into the future.

We have focused on character and spiritual maturity that have been tested by life experience, including experience as Head of Staff. We feel led to someone who can communicate effectively, challenging and teaching from the pulpit and beyond; someone who has excellent interpersonal skills and is compassionate. In addition, we are seeking someone who has a record of collaboration, flexibility, decision making ability and vision.

After reviewing 84 applications we are immersed in the interview process. We will not know who God has called until the Head of Staff is actually installed. But we are encouraged by an excellent pool of interested candidates and confident that God is with us in the discernment process.

Ultimately the health of our congregation will be the responsibility of each member in enthusiastically supporting our new pastor and our continuing staff by our presence and with sacrificial sharing of the gifts God has given us.

We appreciate the opportunity you have given us to serve. Each one of us is eager to receive your input. We continue to need your prayer.

Musafiri Amani, Emily Beach, Harry Bremer, Tracy Dace, Beth Hutchens, Sabrina Hwu, Wen-mei Hwu, Robert Kirby, Pam Knox, Bill Metcalf, Carol Miles, Eric Stickels, Tom Ulen and Rev Heidi Weatherford.

continued on next page

Pastor's Pen continued

Our feelings may certainly lead us to the negatives. However, let's talk about the positives. The Session and staff have committed to becoming a culturally diverse community. We believe that multiculturalism is 'a social ideal or value that accepts cultural pluralism as a positive and distinctive feature of society' (article entitled 'The Multicultural Church: Tips for Making it Work', The Rev. Heather J. Vais).

How can we learn how to be who we are and accept and respect the new cultures among us for their differences while seeking ways to share our lives together? Do we actually want to do this and if we do, how do we make it work?

Of course, all begins in our common unity in Jesus Christ. God obviously loves diversity. After all, God created us similar but different. Yet we are all created in God's image. Are we willing to create spaces where those among us who are different can feel as comfortable in this church as we might be? I commend PW for making efforts to include Congolese women in their Circles. They also shifted the time of their luncheon from 12 to 4 PM so that they might accommodate the work schedules of some of the women this past Thursday.

Rev. Vais references a recently done survey of seven multicultural churches in Canada who asked: What three things do you do well that contribute to the health of your multicultural congregation and what three cautions do you have? Allow me to pass on their answers, hoping they may be instructive to our situation.

One, become multicultural before you are 'multicultural'. We are experiencing diversity through immigration which is obvious. Diversity is everywhere and we are compelled by God to embrace it. We

have prayed for growth and this is what God is sending us. What will we do? What does Christ call us to do? Build a wall or embrace the stranger in our midst?

Second, in time we will have to consider diversifying our leadership. If the church and community is culturally diverse, then we need to reflect that diversity within our staff. We have made small beginnings by participation of our immigrants as liturgists, ushers, tech team and church school teachers.

Third, we will have to be intentional. A suggestion already implemented for the staff is cultural diversity training. We all need it. I believe we also need to create a place where we can talk together about the joys of cultural diversity instead of complain about it.

Fourth, there are things that we can do and some we have already been doing. We offer ESL. We might arrange for a soccer camp for those whose countries where it is a national sport. June 26th we are holding an International Dinner and listening to shared stories. We have held cross cultural bible studies. Amani Musifari recently presented his trip to Eastern DRC sponsored by our denomination. We have held classes on the history and culture of DRC. You have experienced Jean Rene and others every third Sunday share their musical gifts. We have established a new ministry of Session called the Inclusion Ministry Team, embracing an equal number of Congolese and Anglo members. So we are moving forward.

What are the cautions? We can't force it. At the moment it is realistic to say that we have two cultures existing side by side. Patience and prayer will go a long way. One person put it this way, "The church is an organic community that will naturally flourish and attract all kinds of people if

they experience the love of God in worship, ministry, social events, etc. In this way the church is shaped by the Spirit becoming a true reflection of the Kingdom of God...the congregation will take ownership of who they are and what they can be... and then who knows where it will go" (I. McWhinnie, article).

So let us be hospitable and accept and communicate that we are a multicultural congregation. God is doing a new thing! It is Pentecost season!

Need a good book to read for the summer? Come to our book study "Tattoos on the Heart" by Father Gregory Boyle. Join **Pastor Eric Corbin** and **Lizz Pippin** at noon on Wednesdays through the month of July in Mae Chapin Parlor.

Bring a sack lunch and discuss the people and programs of Homeboy Industries. This is a study of unconditional love, street gangs of Los Angeles and keeping the faith. Sign-ups in Westminster Hall at the Welcome Center.

Ideas, Ideas, Ideas

BY BYRON KEMPER, FINANCE CHAIR
(byronkem@life.illinois.edu)

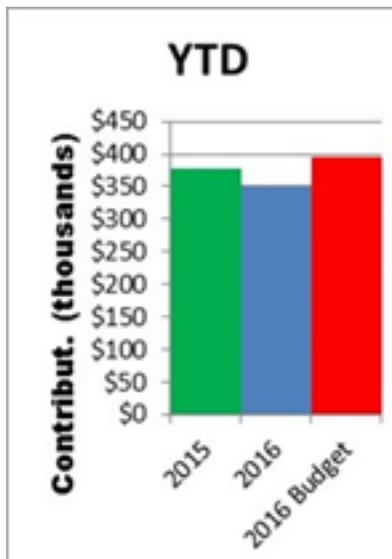
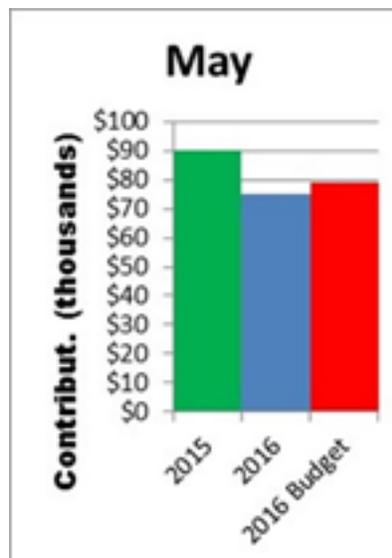
Great new ideas abound in our church. They shape our character as a dynamic, activist church and allow us to adapt to changing challenges in our community and abroad. Often the initial impetus for a new program derives from the passion of one or a few members. Examples that come to mind are SAFE House, ESL, New Americans, Contemporary Service, Saturday night services, etc. Of course in many cases, there is a financial requirement for new programs and a source of funds needs to be found.

Ideally, new programs are considered at the time the budget for the next year is being prepared in the fall. Within finite resources, consideration of all requests at the same time allows Session to establish priorities and fund the programs that are most timely and in keeping with our Christian mission. But sometimes meritorious programs are missed at budget time or an unanticipated opportunity comes along after we are into the new budget year. So what to do in that case?

In good Presbyterian tradition, we have a procedure to consider requests for new programs off budget via a simple form that can be obtained from the church office or on the church website and submitted to the Finance Committee. For one-time requests that do not have recurring annual costs, what, why and how much need to be addressed. For programs that involve recurring costs in the annual budget, additional information about long-term costs and impact on the church are needed. The Finance Committee then identifies a source of funds and makes a recommendation to Session, who approves or disapproves the request. We hope this mechanism provides sufficient flexibility to bring great new ideas to fruition midyear.

In the past there have been occasions where congregation members have approached the pastors with a great new idea expecting them to be able to approve funding for it. While the pastors are a part of the Finance Committee and moderate the Session, please understand that they are unable to approve funding on their own authority.

May Contributions: Contributions in May were \$75,300, about \$15,000 less than in 2015 similar to results in April. 2016 YTD now trails 2015 by \$27,000 and is about \$44,000 less than the YTD budgeted amount.



Session Notes April/May

April

- Motion to remove country flags from the Sanctuary to be used in ESL classes;
- Motion to hold a blended service on Sunday, August 28, at 10 AM;
- Motion to investigate feasibility and practicality to have concurrent services at 9 AM on Sundays with the traditional service in the Sanctuary and the contemporary service in Centennial Hall;
- Approved hiring of **Melinda Watts-Ellis** as CYF Director with starting date of August 1, 2016;
- Approved job description for the Praise & Prayer leader;
- Approved suspending youth meetings for the summer.

May

- Motion to approve **Kristi Corbin** teaching at the SAFE House in coordination with her regular duties;
- Motion...if the hiring of a new senior pastor results in three pastors for a period of time, extra expense shall be paid from reserves;
- Motion to earmark \$15,000 from Creamer Trust for PNC expenses.

Prayer Corner



Remember Memorial Day

What did our recent Memorial Day weekend mean to you? Was it more than family, food and fun? In Philippians 1:3 Paul says, "I thank my God every time I remember you." Those fallen in war gave their lives to protect our country's freedom. Today we also remember family and friends who are no longer living.

Let us pray that we will continue to honor these people by deeds and words that bring the love and peace of Jesus Christ to others.

Campbell's Soup Labels Program to End



ALL Campbell's soup labels to be redeemed must be received by Kemmerer Village before June 30 as Campbell's is discontinuing the program and will no longer honor them after that date.

Please bring any labels you have accumulated well in advance so we will have time to send them.

Kemmerer Village is grateful for our participation.

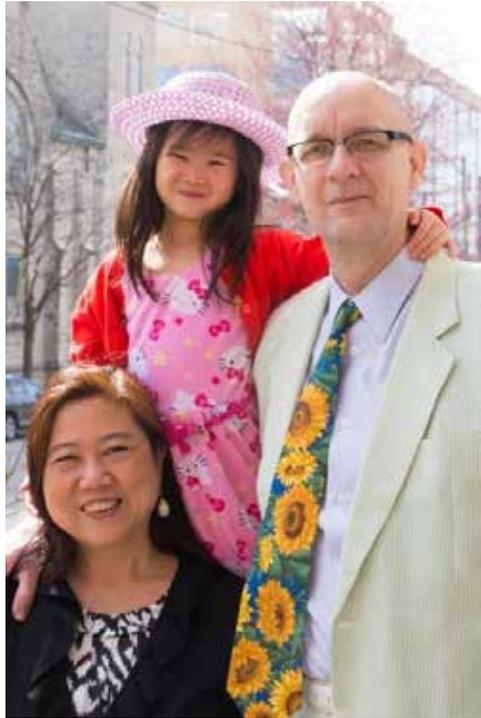
Jays & Concerns

We extend our sympathy to...

- the family of **Nancy Castro** on the death of her mother in New Jersey;
- the family of **Bruce and Patty Farthing** on the death of Bruce's mother in Indiana.

Accolades to...

- our **Kristen Plemons!** She received an award at the Church Women United meeting Friday, May 6, 2016 for her outstanding activities in the Christian life of a young woman. Kristen, we are so proud of you. Note: Kristen was nominated by Presbyterian Women.
- **Patricia Lelo Pukuta** who will be awarded U.S. Citizenship at a ceremony at the US District Court, 201 S. Vine on Friday, June 10 at 10 AM. The public is invited. Patricia is the wife of **Chris Nkunu** who is already a citizen. They have two children, Christella, age 3 and Blessing, 20 months.



Noni, Grace and Stretch Ledford

Tell me about your family and your work.

Stretch is from Asheville, NC, Noni is from Jakarta, Indonesia, and Grace was born in China. We believe in community and community building and we regularly have guests in our home from a great variety of cultures, religious backgrounds and ethnicities. We love the diversity and the global sensibility of Champaign-Urbana, and we have at least one international student live with us full time each semester - young women from China, Japan, Korea and Saudi Arabia. Each one has been wonderful.

Stretch is an Assistant Professor of Journalism at the university and teaches multimedia. Before joining the Illinois faculty, he was a freelance photojournalist and advertising photographer, a job that took him around the world - 52 countries in all. Noni is Project Manager for the university's Administrative Information Technology Services.

In addition to Indonesia and the United States, she has lived in Kenya and Croatia.

What do you do in your free time?

One word: Grace. We met her on Christmas Eve and received her as our own daughter on Christmas Day 2012 in Wuhan, China. We love to play with her and spend time with her in as many different activities as we can find. ChambanaMoms.com is Noni's second bible.

What are your favorite bible characters?

Noni loves the story of the prodigal son. Henri Nouwen's The Return of the Prodigal Son is her favorite book. Stretch likes Peter. Peter had a hard time getting it. He kept messing up. But Jesus stuck with him regardless. Grace says her favorite character in the Bible is God.

How can the church best be the church?

We must go beyond the safe walls of the church and walk the talk, showing hospitality to people who are different than us, particularly to those of different faiths or those with no faith. Noni says she learned this important life lesson from her mom while growing up in Indonesia. "Our home was always open to everyone."

Face to Face

FACE TO FACE INTRODUCES YOU TO YOUR FRIENDS IN THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH COMMUNITY.

What brought you to First Presbyterian Church?

We had been in town for almost five years and frankly had been church shopping. We wanted a strong children's program for Grace, a diverse congregation committed to a progressive theology - to social justice - and we wanted traditional worship. We had found some of each of these in various measures at other churches, but not quite everything in one place. We are friends with **Rich and Margaret Martin**, and they invited us to First Presbyterian. We discovered that First Pres had everything we were looking for in a church family.



ESL students ask what is a motorcycle?...Chris Penny demonstrates!

Your Church At Work

Summer Fest

Rejoice in warmth of summer with your family and Presbyterian friends. Summer Fest opportunities for worship and fellowship are offered so we can better know each other. Come, worship, relax and learn. Please mark your calendars and watch for event details. RSVP by contacting the church office.

June

Sunday, June 12, *Hello Summer*, Potluck, games and fellowship 11:45 AM in Westminter Hall

Sunday, June 26, International Potluck Dinner and Musical. Please bring a covered dish representing your cultural heritage. 4 PM Centennial Hall

July

Saturday-Monday, July 2-4, Conference-*Rebuilding on the Ruins* featuring guest preachers from Central Africa, Canada and the U.S. 5 PM.

Sunday, July 3, Mission Co-worker Bob Rice preaching.

Tattoos on the Heart. A weekly, four session book discussion led by **Pastor Eric Corbin** and **Lizz Pippin** Wednesdays in July at noon.

Sunday, July 17, Mission Co-worker Bernie Adeney-Risakotta preaching with a lunch at 11:45 AM.

Raindrop Project to support microfinance projects in Indonesia in July.

Tuesday, July 26, Courageous Conversation: School to Prison Pipeline. An afternoon workshop and evening presentation by **Rev. Alzonzo Johnson**, PCUSA Educate a Child Initiative.

August

Sunday August 7, 3 PM. Concert with **Jean René Balekita** and **Bomoyi** with guest artist, **Carlyto Lassa** in sanctuary.

Sunday, August 14, 6:30 PM. Centennial Park. All Church Potluck Dinner and Pool Party.

Saturday, August 27, Cuba Partners Forum

Sunday, August 28, ONE Sunday Worship Service at 10 AM followed by a picnic in West Side Park at 11:30.

Rebuilding on the Ruins

Conference will Feature Pastors from Five Countries



First Presbyterian will host a conference with leaders from five countries on July 2, 3 and 4. Special guests will represent the two Congos. The **Rev Freddy Shembo**, from Charlotte, North Carolina and originally from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Congo-Kinshasa) and **Mathieu Onya Famonya** from The Republic of Congo (Congo-Brazzaville) along with the **Rev. Bob Rice** will join clergy from Angola, Cameroon and Canada.

The conference theme is *Rebuilding on the Ruins*. Worship will be offered in Centennial Hall beginning at 5 PM each day. There will be additional time for prayer and consultation.

Rev. Freddy Shembo, Mont Carmel Church in Charlotte, NC. holds a Law degree from the University of Lubumbashi.

He worked as a lawyer until he immigrated to the USA in 1993. Shembo is currently completing his Doctor of Ministry at Trinity Theological Seminary.

He has preached the gospel in the US, France, Belgium, Canada, The Netherlands, Angola, The Democratic Republic of Congo and The Republic of Congo.

Concert Will Provide Bibles for the Congo

Bibles are unavailable to many in the Congo. The cost of about \$11.00 is well beyond the budget of many Christians. Working with our mission co-workers in Congo, **Jeff and Christi Boyd**, and with the Presbyterian Community of Congo we can now do something to help. Their bible subsidy program allows sale of bibles for \$4.50. This puts them in the hands of many more people. The receipts from sale of Bibles are used to buy more bibles until the money is gone.

“Jean Lukusa is a young man from the region of Muena Ditu in East Kasai. He moved to Kananga with his wife and children so that his wife could study law at

UPRECO. When his wife completes her degree, Jean hopes to study theology and become a pastor. Right now he supports his family by raising chickens and rabbits and cultivating a garden. His parents both



died several years ago, and he has never owned his own Bible. When he heard that Bibles were available at the subsidized rate, he sold a couple of his chickens and came to buy one. We happened to be out of Bibles on that day, but told him there would be more the following Monday. He lamented that if he kept the money until then he would spend it on other urgent needs for his kids, so insisted that we keep the money for him. When he received his own Bible, he celebrated that now in his house they could read the Bible for themselves.” - Jeff Boyd, PC-USA Mission Co-Worker.

Hold the date- Sunday August 7 at 3 PM in the sanctuary. You will enjoy **Jean René Balekita and Bomoyi** joined in concert by popular Christian recording artist, **Carlyto Lassa**. You can sponsor the concert with a gift to First Presbyterian Church (memo-“concert”). A gift of \$100 is suggested. We will need fourteen sponsors at this level to fund this event. Ten percent of gross proceeds will be donated through our PC-USA mission co-workers to make bibles available in the Congo. A love offering will be accepted for the musicians.

Welcome Baskets

The Relocation Ministry welcomes families to their first American home by moving some basic living needs to what is usually an empty space. We serve people referred by the Refugee Center and those who are affiliated with our church. Is your family or small group interested in contributing one of the four Welcome Baskets? Thank you for your continued contributions of other basic household needs.

Kitchen Basket

Measuring spoons and cups
Can opener (manual)
Cutting board
Dishwashing soap



Elect of God Band...the next generation.

2 Sponges with scrubby
3 Sets of kitchen towels
Tall kitchen trashcan
One small container of trashcan bags
Aluminum foil
Plastic wrap
2 rolls of paper towels

Cleaning Basket

All purpose cleaning spray
Can of scouring powder
Toilet brush
Box of laundry soap
Broom and Dust pan
Mop and bucket

Bathroom Basket

2 bottles of shampoo
4 tooth brushes
2 tubes of toothpaste
15 disposable razors
4 rolls of toilet tissue
Bottle of hand lotion
2 boxes Kleenex
1 small trash can
Laundry basket

Miscellaneous Basket

Pad of paper and envelopes
Pens/pencils
Book of stamps

Small box fan (one or two)
Small tool kit
First aid kit
1 light bulbs
25 hangers

Basic Household Needs

Donations (used or new) are always needed as follows.

Kitchen

Dining room table and chairs (4-6 people)
Set of dishes per person
Drinking glasses per person
Set of mixing bowls
Set of pots and pans
Set of cooking utensils
Set of sharp knives
Rice Cooker
Tea pot

Bedroom

Mattresses single, full or queen
Comforter/blankets
Set of sheets
Pillow and pillowcases

Bathroom

Bath towel per person
Wash cloth per person

Living Room

Sofa/chairs
Side table
Coffee table
Lamps

We welcome everyone to this ministry who wants to drive their truck, van or SUV or help to lift and push; those who can make minor repairs to donated furniture; those who will help pack up left overs from estate sales and certainly tell their friends about our needs. We pick up items at the donor’s home and recycle to grateful families.

Children, Youth and Family Ministry

Children's Choir Update

Parents and teachers, it saddens me to share with you that our amazing children's choir director **Julia Hartman** has resigned her position at First Presbyterian Church. With two small children and a full-time job, she felt it was time to take a step back. She has cherished her time here and will certainly miss all the kiddos she saw and worked with every week at church. We will continue praying for Julia and her family as they move on to this next season in life.

Scheduling implication of this change, we will continue to meet for Sunday School until 10 AM as usual. Kids can be picked up from the chapel at anytime after 10 AM.

Transportation Team

Are you looking for a way to support our Children, Youth and Families but haven't quite found the best place to volunteer? Have you considered becoming one of the drivers or ride along adults who serve on the transportation team? These dedicated individuals help get families to church on Sundays, get students to youth group on Sunday nights, and help kids get to various midweek events. If you are interested in serving families in this way, please email **John Muirhead** at j.muirhead@comcast.net for more information

Middle School Youth

Our 6th-8th graders have had a great year together every Sunday night. As the school year winds down, so will our program. We will be taking a summer break from youth group beginning May 22. Youth Group will resume again in

the fall on September 4 on Sunday nights from 5-6:30 PM. There will still be middle school events during the summer so keep an eye out for our weekly emails for those details!

Noisy Offering

This summer on June 12, July 10, and August 14 our kids (Kindergarden-5th grade) will be collecting a separate offering on Sundays for support of Restoration Urban Ministries. The kids will be collecting this offering in coffee tins they have decorated, which is what makes it noisy.

Their summer goal of \$250 will help with the renovation of a room at the Restoration Urban Ministries facility. How can YOU help? Bring your loose change on the listed Sundays and drop them in the containers the kids will be coming around with. Your extra change will help the kids make a joyful noise for the Lord in the form of an offering.

We Want You!

We are still looking for new volunteers to train with us this summer in preparation for the 2016-2017 school year. Have you been looking for a way to get involved with Children and Youth ministry but don't feel like you have the experience to teach a class? Well, summer is the PERFECT time to train with one of our seasoned teachers in their class. If you would like to know more please email **Kristen Plemons** (kristen.plemons@firstchurchchampaign.org) or **Daudet Illunga** (daudet.illunga@firstchurchchampaign.org)

Middle School and High School Summer Sunday School

This summer we will not be having regular high school or middle school Sunday School due to low volunteer numbers. However, we will be offering various social and teaching opportunities throughout the summer.

In June, keep an eye out for the weekly email from CYF which will contain all the details for all gatherings of students. In July, we will be offering a "summer series" on the Parables on July 3, 10, 17, 31st. We are looking forward to a great summer as a church and a youth group.

Search is Over

BY SABRINA HWU,

CHAIR CYF DIRECTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE

We are truly fortunate to announce **Melinda Watts-Ellis** will join us at First Presbyterian Champaign and lead our CYF Ministry. She comes with a great amount of experience in CYF ministry and teaching in different schools as an art teacher.

Melinda is a creative, organized and caring person. She is very knowledgeable in Presbyterian Sunday School curriculums. She has been working at First Presbyterian Urbana as their part-time Family Program Coordinator since 2009. She has great techniques in recruiting, training and supporting volunteers. I can go on with all her qualifications and talents, but all in all, after our first interview with her, we knew she was the person that we have been praying for and God has finally brought her to us.

Melinda will begin her new position on August 1.



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CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN**

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Champaign, IL 61820

Change Service Requested



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Sunday:

- 8 and 9 AM Traditional Worship
- 9 AM Children and Youth Education
- 10:30 AM The Gathering
(Contemporary Worship)

Saturday:

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

Pastors:

- Chuck Carlson..... Interim Head Pastor
- Eric Corbin.....Covenant Associate Pastor

Staff:

- Kristi CorbinMission Coordinator
- Ritchie Drennen Facility Maintenance
- Patty Farthing..... Receptionist
- Marcia Franks Administrative Assistant
- Joe Grant Choir Director
- Daudet Ilunga..... Associate Director CYF
- Chris Penny..... Facilities Manager
- Ann Petry Accounting
- Kristen Plemons.. Interim Director Children, Youth & Family
- Andrea Pope..... Contemporary Worship Director
- Richard Rossi..... Church Musician
- Linda SimsESL Coordinator

The newsletter is published monthly. Deadline is the last Monday of the month for the following month's publication. Send submissions to marcia.franks@firstchurchchampaign.org.