

# May 2016



## FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN

### Pastor's Pen

BY CHUCK CARLSON, INTERIM HEAD PASTOR

(chuck.carlson@firstchurchchampaign.org)

One of the tasks of leadership is to promote health within the community. Believe it or not, this is not accomplished primarily by skill and technique. It is done by being present with others and functioning in a positive, healthy manner. Health is a matter of maturity, self-awareness, and faithfulness to others.

Peter understands the criteria of leadership. In his first letter, he reflects on what it means for him to be an elder, a specifically Christian leader. "I exhort the elders among you to tend the flock of God that is in your charge, exercising the oversight, not under compulsion but willingly, as God would have you do it, not for sordid gain, but eagerly. Do not lord it over those in your charge, but be examples to the flock....All of you must clothe yourselves with humility in your dealings with one another, for God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (1 Peter 5:1-5).

What does this look like for a church and its leaders? The first thing is to understand ourselves, who we are and what we believe. When working through decisions we stay aware of our own thoughts and feelings. We differentiate them from others. When in conversations and discussions we feel pressured by others or begin to feel anxiety intensify in our interaction, we advocate for what we feel and believe. We don't try to change the other or change ourselves to please another. Staying true to our beliefs and values allows us to maintain our sense of self in the relationship. It allows us to have the courage of our convictions. We don't need to change people, manipulate or control others and outcomes. That is the work of the Holy Spirit who alone can change us and the other person or persons.

Accepting and facing challenges as leaders and a church is critical to the ability to move forward. Having resolve, persevering and maintaining emotional stamina keeps us going. When things get tough it is important to be calm and reflective. Again, we do our best when we focus on our own ability to function rather than worrying about how or what

### Pastor Nominating Committee

Your Pastor Nominating Committee has continued its work through the Spring and is zeroing in on a handful of candidates for the position of pastor/head of staff.

We have read over 80 personal information forms (PIFs), listened to or viewed countless sermons by extraordinary pastors from all parts of the U.S., interviewed six candidates by Skype (some twice), traveled to visit at least one pastor in his or her native habitat, read many Facebook postings, read blog posts galore, and read essays, at least one book, and one dissertation. Sure, this has been work, but it has been marvelously enriching work – labors of great love. The Presbyterian pastorate is filled with remarkable individuals, many of whom have found the position at First Presbyterian Church Champaign to be extremely attractive.

Our process of discernment has deepened in the last month and a half as we have narrowed the list of candidates. We truly feel God's presence in bringing those candidates and our committee together. We continue to pray and listen for His guidance.

We are happy to talk with any of you about the process, although we must maintain confidentiality about the candidates whom we are considering.

We also ask for your continued patience and prayers for our discernment and judgment in this wonderful, daunting search.

**Musafiri Amani, Emily Beach, Harry Bremer, Tracy Dace, Beth Hutchens, Sabrina Hwu, Wen-mei Hwu, Robert Kirby, Pam Knox, Bill Metcalf, Carol Miles, Levi Morgan, Eric Stickels, Tom Ulen, Karin Vermillion.**

continued on next page

**Pastor's Pen continued**

other people are doing and then blaming or criticizing or attacking when feeling threatened or outcomes do not appear to be going our way. It is a matter of trusting God to work through the exchange of ideas and issues among us all. We lead and follow, all the while acknowledging that it is Christ's church, not ours.

Most of all, God calls us to stay connected to others around us, not walk away. This is the humility challenge, something we choose to do when we would rather quit or move on or feel superior to others ("They don't get it"). This is a challenge when the trajectory of the conversation is not complementary to our way of seeing matters.

Jesus reminds us of the new commandment he gave on Maundy Thursday, to love one another as he has loved us. He models it, staying connected to us even through our rebellion and disillusionment, challenging us to do the same for each other. It is never about us and what we want. Rather, we stay aware of the other person and those around us. We remain invested in the relationships God gives us and pay attention to the welfare of others.

Is this easy? No. But it is the stuff of Christian maturity and growth. It is what it means to grow up in Christ.

I will let Paul say it in his words; "But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love" (*Ephesians 4:15-16*).

**Forward 150 Financial Update**

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

Elsewhere in the newsletter you will find a discussion of the progress on the various projects of the Forward-150 (F-150) capital-program campaign. At the end of March, we had reached the 15th month of this 3-year fundraiser and I thought it would be useful to summarize the F-150 financials.

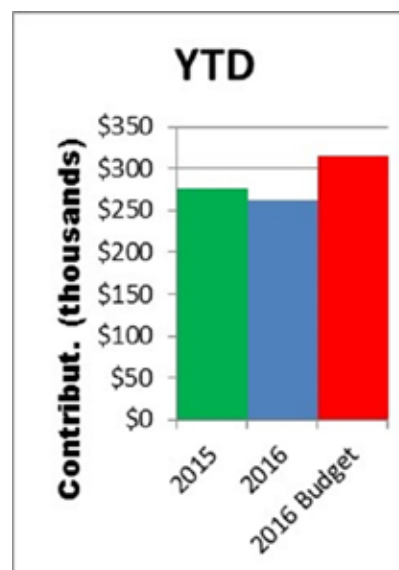
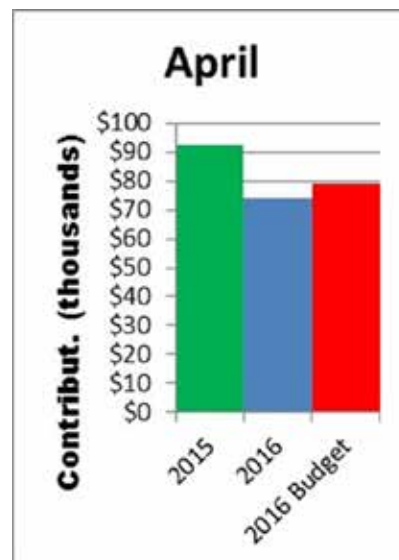
Our total pledges for F-150 were \$1,906,691.89 from 184 pledging units. At the end of March, contributions totaled \$1,554,113 which is 81.5% of the total pledged amount while we are only 42% of the way through the 3-year period of fund raising. Sixty-six (28%) pledging units have already paid their pledges in full.

On the expenditure side, at the end of March, total payments were \$888,251.91. Included in this figure is \$126,708 that was transferred to Missions. Major expenditures greater than \$50,000 included: church fire sprinkler system, \$113,482; Technology and necessary electrical upgrades, \$289,554; and the organ, \$202,160. Major remaining expenditures greater than \$50,000 include: completion of the sprinkler system, \$136,000, outdoor signage, \$50,000; Architectural services for F-150 Phase II planning, \$80,000, and restoration of the stained glass windows, \$550,000. There are a large number of smaller projects and costs (30 in all) for which space does not allow discussion here. A detailed summary of expenses in a spreadsheet is available for anyone who is interested.

Overall, F-150 progress has been excellent. The pace of receipt of contributions has exceeded expectations. With the

exception of the stained glass windows and outside signage (which has unexpected complexities) essentially all the other projects are complete or are in progress and well along.

April Contributions: Contributions in April were \$62,600, about \$18,000 less than in 2015, and 2016 YTD trails 2015 by \$12,000. Contributions are about \$50,000 less than the budgeted amount YTD.



## Prayer Corner



### National Day of Prayer

Do you realize that national Day of Prayer is held each May on the first Thursday? Prayer breakfasts and luncheons are held in answer to God's words in Psalm 33:12, "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord." We are blessed and enjoy God's favor when we have reverence for God and trust him.

Let us pray that the citizens of our country will recognize the blessings of a foundation built on Christian values. May we learn to share Jesus Christ with others in word and in deed.

### Looking for all Graduates

If you know of a graduate who is connected to the church who is graduating this spring, please let Presbyterian Women know. We are hoping to **honor all graduates** - high school, college, trade school, and higher education - on May 15.

Please contact **Pat Phillips** [p.phillips42@sbcglobal.net](mailto:p.phillips42@sbcglobal.net) or 359.8179.

### Confirmation

Congratulations to our 2016 confirmations students! After months of studying, discussing, and exploring the bible with their class and with their sponsors **Jack Born, Destin Lembelembe, Rick Loma, Carter Lowe, Grace Rispoli, Jack Stickels, Kam Wilson**, and were confirmed on April 10. Thanks for **Pastors Chuck and Eric** for leading them through this class for all these months. We are all excited for this group and what adventures are ahead of them!

### *Jays & Concerns*

Congratulations to..

- **Dan and Julia Hartman** on the birth of son, Ezra Lee Hartman on March 23, 2016. Big brother is Amos.
- **Harvest Abangambole**, daughter of **Arlette Sindula Mbombo** and **Michel Abangambole** who will be baptized on Sunday, May 8.

# Your Church At Work

## Greetings from ESL

BY LINDA SIMS, DIRECTOR  
(linda.sims@firstchurchchampaign.org)

**Important update:** Schedule change! Beginning Monday, June 6, the current afternoon ESL classes will move to mornings, combining with the existing morning classes. Classes for all levels of English will meet on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 9 – 11 AM. We are making this change to better accommodate students' and tutors' schedules.

### Request:

Food donations for ESL refreshment time. Our ESL classes include a short break time where we serve tea, coffee, juice, and light snacks such as chips, pretzels, fruit, cheese, crackers, and cookies. If you'd like to donate items, we will happily accept your donation!

You can put non-perishable snack donations in the ESL SNACK DONATION box in Westminster Hall. For items that require refrigeration, our ESL fridge is located in the kitchenette of the café on the second floor of the Education Building. (Please clearly label anything you leave for us in the fridge so we know it's fair game to eat!) Thank you!

### Interested in visiting or finding out about volunteering?

Contact **Linda Sims** at linda.sims@firstchurchchampaign.org

## Presbyterian Women... Bible Study, Tea and Cookies...Right?

BY SALLIE HUTTON, MODERATOR  
(dshutton@sbcglocal.net)

Yes, Presbyterian Women's groups often study the Bible together. They also live their faith through ministries by working on establishing relationships with others

such as Luyano Presbyterian Church. This banner was made by the women in Knifty Knitters, First Presbyterian Church, Champaign for the members of the Luyano Presbyterian church in Cuba to show them our caring.

Presbyterian women work creativity, joyfully, prayerfully - and sometimes with homemade baked cookies.



**Carol Miles, Claudia Kirby and Charlene Bremer with the banner presented to our recent Cuban guests.**

**The background was designed by Carol Miles and Judy Gamble, and quilted by Judy. It represents our countries divided by water, but joined by the cross of Christ.**

**The design on the upper part was designed and quilted by Claudia Kirby and is a likeness to the stained glass window in our sister church in Cuba.**

**The design on the lower panel was designed and quilted by Charlene Bremer, representing the stained glass windows in our church.**



## The First Third of Life, Your First Impression of the World

We all know the importance of a first impression. As kids, we all learned about strong handshakes and heard, "First impressions are the most lasting," and "You don't get a second chance at a first impression."

Think of all the firsts in your life: your first best friend, your first day of school, your first car, your first job. And on a deeper level, your first understanding of family and your parents' love, your first experience of God's grace, your first connections with neighbors and your community.

Now, think of how all of those firsts played a part in who you are today—how you think and act, how you experience joy and hardship, and how you seek and understand God.

The vast majority of these experiences occur during "the first third of life"—the time from childhood through young adulthood when we all develop our first impressions of how the world works and how we fit into God's plans for it.

The Pentecost Offering Is Your Chance to Help Make the Best Impression Possible  
The ministries supported by the Pentecost



Offering provide positive, faith-filled mentorship, experiences, and service—to support children, youth, and young adults as they grow and encourage them to consider what God has in store for their lives.

**Building the Foundations of Their Faith**

Helping youth to grow closer to God and build a faith that lasts a lifetime is what the Pentecost Offering is all about.

- Research has shown that youth who grow up in churches with active mentorship and community service opportunities are 3 to 4 times more likely to remain faithful as adults.

**Shaping Who They Will Become**

What happens to our children early in their lives shapes how they view the world, how they experience joy and hardship, and how they build relationships with other people.

- The "Educate a Child, Transform the World" national initiative seeks to strengthen early education, provide safe haven, and reduce the dropout rate of at-risk children and adolescents.

**Determining Their Life Goals**

Ministries supported by the Pentecost Offering help guide our young people as they prayerfully ask, "What do I want to be when I grow up?" and, "Who is God calling me to be?"

- Of those who've served as Young Adult Volunteers, 32% go on to become ordained church leaders, and 66% go into a service-related field such as teaching, social work, or community development.

**Help Raise Up Kids in Our Church and Around the World**

If your heart is with the youth in your own church, you should know that 40% of your gift to the Pentecost Offering will stay with our congregation to support the ministries most important to our youth and community. Of that 40%, one fourth will provide scholarships for Children, Youth and Family ministries and three fourths

will be given to the DREAM House. Know that every gift helps children, youth, and young adults here at home and around the world—providing them a better first impression of our world, our future, and God's love and grace.

The remaining 60% will be remitted to the Presbyterian Mission Agency to support the Young Adult Volunteers program, Ministries with Youth program, and education and advocacy for children at risk through the "Educate a Child: Transform the World" national initiative.

**Progress since last month on Phase I Forward 150 Expenditures items:**

BY JENNETTE MOLINE  
(jamoline@comcast.net)

- Hatter's Organ Repair recommends waiting until May to finish tuning due to fluctuation in outside temperatures. Rodger's Organ has discussed this with Richard Rossi.
- MATCO is nearing completion of the fire sprinkler piping installation. The backflow preventer in the basement and the main riser at the first floor mechanical room remain to be built out. Once those are complete, the inspection, testing and commissioning will begin. Adding fire alarm devices to the system will follow commissioning.
- The carpenter, Wingle Construction, has finished wood trim work at the sanctuary piping troughs and is 95% complete painting piping and wood trim throughout both buildings. The major item remaining for the carpenter is adding panic hardware to the active door leaf at Centennial Hall's west exit doors.

# Children, Youth and Family Ministry

## We Are So Excited!

BY SABRINA HWU, CHAIR CYF SEARCH COMMITTEE  
(sabrinhwu@yahoo.com)

On behalf of the Search Committee for the Director of our Children, Youth and Family Ministry, I am very pleased to report that we have hired a new director after four months of intensive searching, interviewing many qualified candidates, and innumerable prayers.

**Melinda Watts-Ellis** received her Bachelor of Fine Art degree from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1996. She has been certified to teach art in elementary and secondary education since then. She answered the call to enter Christian education ministry in 2006 and has been working at the First Presbyterian Church of Urbana as their Family Program/Children's Christian Education Coordinator. She has also been teaching part-time at the Urbana Middle School. Having two part-time jobs never equals a full-time one; Melinda decided to seek a full-time position in children, youth and family ministry. Subsequently, God brought her to us!

Melinda is a life-long Christian and has grown up in the Presbyterian Church. She has years of experience in Christian education ministry putting a children's Sunday School programs in place, implementing VBS, and leading many youth mission trips. She is also very knowledgeable in reformed children and youth Sunday School curriculum. She is passionate in seeing and helping young people grow in faith by engaging in hands-on mission work. She also has years of professional experience teaching art in schools that serve students with diverse cultural backgrounds.

Through the interviewing process, the Search Committee found Melinda to be a creative, caring, loving, thoughtful, orga-

nized and dedicated Christian educator. We believe that she will bring great leadership and new energy to our Children, Youth and Family Ministry.

We are excited that she will be able to officially start on August 1. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact anyone on the Search Committee.

Committee Members include:

**Kristi Carlson**  
**Kristi Corbin**  
**Betty Hollister**  
**Melissa Leichter**  
**Bill Marble**  
**Bienvenu Nzinga**  
**Lori Schaap**  
**Joyce Wittler**  
**Pastor Chuck Carlson**

## 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](mailto:j.muirhead@comcast.net) for more information.

## Children's Choir

As Ms. Julia is coming to the end of her maternity leave, we are excitedly anticipating her return to our Sunday morning programming. She will be back with us in the beginning of May, ready to jump back into the excitement of kid's choir here at FPCC. I know she has missed all the kids here and is looking forward to being back with you.

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Bibles

Congratulations to our 3rd graders who were presented with their bibles during the 9 and 10:30 AM services on April 24 for a special blessing. Thank you to **Betty Hollister** and **Joyce Wittler** for leading 4 third graders through a very special Ten Commandments class where the kids learned to navigate their very own bibles. Thanks to the parents and family members who supported them on their journey! 3<sup>rd</sup> graders receiving Bibles included: **Tango Okwen, Michaelangel Tembo, Cecilia Vermillion, Sam Nichollete.**

## Middle School Youth Group

Our 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> 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 29. Youth Group will resume again in the fall on September 4 on Sunday Nights at 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!

## High School Graduation

We have four graduating seniors this May. **Beth Gesitlinger, Cole Prescott, Ellen Rispoli,** and **Rachel Stickels** will be celebrated on Sunday, May 15, so be sure to congratulate them and wish them well!



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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 Corbin .....Mission Coordinator
- Ritchie Drennen ..... Facility Maintenance
- Patty Farthing..... Receptionist
- Marcia Franks ..... Administrative Assistant
- Joe Grant ..... Choir Director
- Julia Hartman ..... Children/Youth Music Coordinator
- 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 Sims .....ESL 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](mailto:marcia.franks@firstchurchchampaign.org).**