

October 2016



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN

Pastor's Pen

BY CHUCK CARLSON, INTERIM HEAD PASTOR

(chuck.carlson@firstchurchchampaign.org)

I have been impressed with the metaphor of Israel wandering in the wilderness. As we go deeper into this interim time, we continue to seek ways that God is moving us more deeply to trust the work of the Holy Spirit among us.

Speaking to Israel's personal experience, the Psalmist writes, "Some wandered in desert wastes...hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted within them". Though our journeys are not the same, an interim period has the potential to feel like a desert wasteland and when extended may exhaust the soul as no apparent progress is being made. As I mentioned Sunday, it is easy to become discouraged, draw back, and put our giving and engagement on hold (*Psalm 106:4-9*).

Actually, God's people did what is the most necessary thing that they could do. "Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble". Prayer is most needed and powerful during those times when we are most in touch with our struggling humanity. Our energy and self-effort alone fail us. It is the paradox Paul shares with us when he is at the end of himself. God says to him in the face of unanswered prayer, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weaknesses...whenever I am weak then I am strong" (*2 Corinthians 12:9-10*).

So what happened to God's people when, exhausted, they cried to him? "He delivered them from their distress; ...he led them by a straight way, until they reached an inhabited town". God tunes in to us when we tune in to God.

God is asking you and me to pray and look for God's sustaining guidance during this time. It is easier to succumb to our discouragement than look to God through the eyes of faith. It is helpful to look around and identify those places where we see God's Spirit afoot.

Reality is the present, what we as a congregation are in the moment, what our environment and mood is at this time. Regardless, we always assume that God is up to something. We can't easily identify it, but we suspend judgement, lifting our eyes to God in trust.

The result of such prayer is gratitude and praise. As the writer of Hebrews tells us, "And without faith it is impossible to please God, for whoever would

MOVIE NIGHT

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2016

6:30P CHAPEL

Girl Rising

{Girls from developing countries overcome obstacles to obtain an education and change their lives}

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THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2016

6:30P CHAPEL

The House I Live In

{A look inside the criminal justice system and America's failing war on drugs}

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KIDS MOVIES WILL BE SHOWN

BY CYF MINISTRY RSVP TO

**MINDY.WATSELLIS@FIRSTCHURCHCHAMPAIGN.ORG
BY WEDNESDAY THE WEEK OF THE SHOWING**

continued on next page

approach him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him” (verse 6).

And so the Psalmist proclaims, “And let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love, for his wonderful works humankind. For he satisfies the thirsty, and the hungry he fills with good things” (verses 8-9). We have faith that God will give us what we need.

Our stewardship slogan this year is, *Faith in the Future*. We have that faith because of who God is, what God is doing, and what God is promising to do. Such faith and prayer have been tested and proven throughout generations, for “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” (*Hebrews 13:8*).

Nurture gratitude. Look around and see where God is at work. Pray. Ask God what you could do that would honor and bring blessing to him and the church during this interim time.

Budget & Stewardship 2017

“We can’t know what the future will bring to the world. We still have to choose what we will bring to the future.” Former Senior Pastor Mal Nygren, *Shades of Life*

Faith in the Future is what Stewardship 2017 is all about. Mal Nygren also often spoke of the “Saints that came before us, the Saints among us and the Saints that will follow us”. The Saints long before us had extraordinary faith in the future when they built this beautiful building and filled it with programs and activities. Now it is time for the Saints among us to continue that faith in the future and prepare the way for the Saints to follow us. Let us look to 2017 as a time when we bring to the future

our gifts of time, talents and resources to further the kingdom of God both here in Champaign-Urbana and through mission activities throughout the world. As people of faith, we are called to respond to the needs of those less fortunate as well as to deepen the faith of our members through worship, pastoral care and education. By pledging our time, talent and resources to the church for the coming year, we can ensure that our mission activities, programs for children, youth and families, outreach and pastoral care services, plus our weekly worship will continue to be part of our faithful activities next year and for years to come.

As faithful stewards of the congregation’s generosity, we are committed to being financially responsible and to a balanced budget in 2017. For the past three years, we have incurred deficits in order to enhance our programs and level of operations as we transitioned to a commitment to be a church in the “heart of the city”. But this cannot continue if the future of our church is to be secure. Please prayerfully consider what your contributions will be for 2017 to keep our church on a firm financial foundation that will help ensure a future in which our faith, and that of our community, can grow well into the future.

The Stewardship campaign will kick off on Sunday, Oct 9 with a Minute for Stewardship at our services and the following three Sundays will feature Minutes for Stewardship highlighting Missions; Children, Youth, and Families; and Worship. There will be a budget information session on October 16 immediately after the 9:00 services. The pledge cards with budget and program information will be mailed the week of October 10. The deadline for pledges will be Tuesday, November 1.

Stewardship Is More Than Dollars

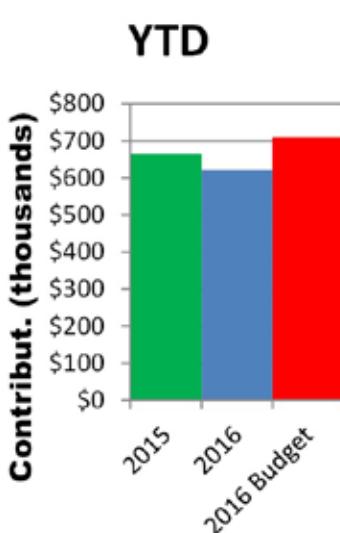
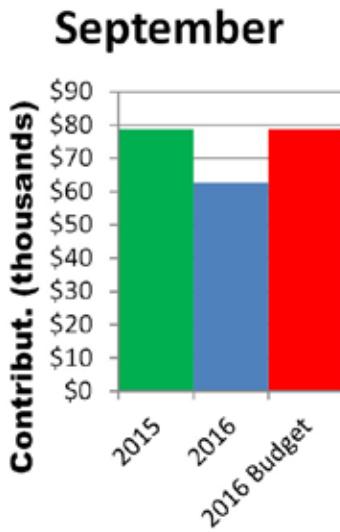
BY BYRON KEMPER, FINANCE CHAIR

(byronkem@life.illinois.edu)

Our stewardship campaign will be running through October and I would guess most of us think about the campaign in terms of what our financial gifts to the church will be for the next year. It is, however, also a good time to think about our equally, if not more, important contributions of time and talents – volunteering. I heard an estimate recently that as many as 200 of our members have volunteered in some way for the Church this year. This level of donation of time and talent is certainly impressive and demonstrates the commitment of our congregation to the Church. In addition, volunteers can save money.

In spite of our substantial volunteer effort, we need more volunteers. We need more Sunday school teachers, ushers, greeters, and many others. Volunteering is not only beneficial to the Church, but can be a personally rewarding experience. So at this time when we focus on stewardship and our financial gifts to the Church, please think of ways you could contribute your time and talents to further the work of Christ through our Church.

Monthly Contributions: September contributions trailed September 2015 by about \$16K bringing the YTD for 2016 to \$42K behind 2015. This is a bit surprising since pledges for 2016 were 5% more than in 2015, so hopefully there will be some catch-up in the last quarter of 2016. YTD contributions for 2016 are \$87K behind the budgeted amount.



Sunday, October 30, 5:30-8 PM

Church Parking Lot

Soup Supper in Centennial Hall

Youth dress up and go trunk-to-trunk collecting candy from decorated trunks in the parking lot.

If you would like to decorate a trunk for the event or bring some soup for dinner, please contact Mindy at mindy.wattsellis@firstchurchchampaign.org

On Sunday, October 16, the Contemporary Service will combine with the Traditional Service at 9 AM in the Sanctuary. The 8 AM service will be held as usual. You are invited to join us at 10:30 AM that morning for a brunch in Centennial Hall at which **Veda Gill** will speak on her continuing work with young girls in Pakistan.

Prayer Corner



Need More Faith?

All of us have been in the position of the father in Mark 9:24 who cried out, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief." We have a degree of faith but still have some doubts. Our faith needs to grow enough for us to act on faith.

Like this father, we must tell Jesus about our lack of faith. We pray to our Lord to receive the needed faith and then trust that he will give it in his way and timing.

MOVIE NIGHT

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2016
6:30P CHAPEL
[Girl Rising](#)

- A discussion on the importance of education for girls...
- **Workshop: Noon to 2 PM**
 - 25 person limit; call to reserve seats at 217.356.7238 or email patty.farthing@firstchurchchampaign.org. Light lunch provided.
- Guest speakers:
 - **Veda Gill** – Director of Sangla Hill Girls School, Lahore, Pakistan
 - **Angela Smith** – Unit 4 Asst Superintendent for Achievement and Equity
 - **Karen Simms** – Licensed Mental Health Therapist
- Plan to bring your co-workers, family, and friends for this learning experience about all of these issues.
- Movie presentation that evening at 6:30 PM in the Chapel.

Joys & Concerns

Congratulations to...

- Morris Huck & Doreen Halberstam on their recent marriage on September 24, 2016.

Our sympathy goes to...

- Linda Sims, ESL Coordinator, on the recent death of her mother;
- Ritchie Drennen, Building Maintenance, on the recent death of his father.

Your Church

Easy Money

If you saw a dime in your kitchen cupboard, would you pick it up? What if there were several? The coupon on the box top of each General Mills product is worth ten cents to educational organizations to purchase electronic equipment and other useful and needed items. These coupons are collected by members of our church to be sent to Kemmerer Village, a residential facility in Assumption, Illinois for troubled youth. Kemmerer Village is a mission of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Coupons may be left in the PW mailbox in the church office or given to Circle chairpersons. It is amazing how quickly these accumulate by efforts of alert and caring people with scissors! Ongoing encouragement and thanks are extended to all!

Please note: A similar program previously sponsored by Campbell's (collecting soup labels) has been discontinued by that corporation.



J.O.Y. Just Older Youth Pastoral Care Ministries

Juanita Rector (pictured above) has discovered that God is not through with her yet. She has found a new purpose in life through her encouragement and support of new residents at Autumn Fields in Savoy. She has continued to work with her family and our God to help others during times of change and loss.

We are grateful to her Congregational Care Deacon, **Jane Alsberg**, for bringing Juanita to the September Stephen Ministers meeting.

Thank you, Juanita, for sharing your joyful and caring spirit. You inspire us all.

Coming this Fall

Fear of the Other: No Fear in Love Wednesdays, October 19- November 16 5:30-7 PM in Parlor...

Judi Geistlinger and Chuck Carlson will lead a discussion on Rev. William Willimon's book. Questions can be directed to co-leaders: Chuck Carlson and Judi Geistlinger (judgeistlinger@outlook.com or 217-493-5462).

Surprised by Joy Sundays, October 9-30 10:30-11:30 AM in Parlor...

Peter Yau will lead a 4-week study that combines lecture and discussion in exploring *Surprised by Joy* by C.S. Lewis. Books are available for \$10 each or bring your own copy.

Presbyterian 101 Sundays, November 6-20 10:30-11:30 AM in Parlor...

Curious about Presbyterianism? **Judi Geistlinger** will provide a 3-week overview of the history, theology and practices of the Presbyterian Church. The *Presbyterian Handbook* published by Geneva Press is recommended reading but not required to participate.

Your Church

September Leaves

September is one of those months that automatically triggers visual memories whenever someone mentions its name. September...sharpened pencils, crisp lined paper, endless books and the sound of laughter as children fill the school yards eager to learn and make new friends. This is how many of us remember September.

Unfortunately, for many children in Pakistan, they may not be able to build such memories. Resources are limited and options are few. We thank you for your support in changing the lives of the children of Presbyterian Education Board so that they may learn, prosper and form their own positive memories in relation to their educational experiences.

Cuba Calling

What do you know of this Island of eleven million people living in an area the size of Pennsylvania that is the same distance from our shores as Peoria is from Champaign?

- o Cuba is the only communist country outside of Asia.
- o It snowed once in Cuba in 1857.
- o It is mandatory for government workers to pick up hitch hikers.
- o Ballerinas are more esteemed than doctors, baseball players and boxers.
- o There are Presbyterians in Cuba.

Join us each Tuesday evening from 6:30 to 8 PM between October 25 and December 12 to learn the rest of the story. The Cuba study is open to anyone with an interest in Cuba and is required for those who travel with the church to Cuba. US government requires that those traveling on a religious license be either a member

or staff of the our congregation.

We hope to take our next congregational trip in the spring of 2017. Please sign up for the study in Centennial Hall or email Bob at rwk3213@gmail.com for more information.



Registration is currently full for the October 15 Electronic Recycling Collection Event. We anticipate having another collection event in the spring.

Any questions can be directed to Nichole Millage at 217.403.4780."

Children, Youth and Family Ministry

Children's Mission Opportunities

As part of the new children's education hour opportunities, the Children, Youth, and Family Ministry team is offering the children an option to contribute to the greater mission of the church. Each Sunday from 10-10:30 AM, children are invited to the cafe within the Education Building to participate in a project to support local and/or national partner organizations.

The first project has been the creation of polar fleece tie baby blankets for donation to *empty tomb*. The children have also contributed to the Salvation Army Canteen Run by making 25 peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for delivery. This Sunday the children will be making cards to send to a Pakistani school to greet children who attend a school this church supports.

We are looking for more ideas for projects the kids can be involved in. We also need caring adults to be present and help guide the children through making the projects. If you would like to help with this unique mission opportunity, contact **Mindy Watts-Ellis**, the Director of Children, Family, and Youth Ministry, at mindy.wattsellis@firstchurchchampaign.org.

Fall Kick-Off

Our CYF team is excited to have our first few Sundays under our belt with the new Sunday School format. Many of you may have noticed that the kids no longer begin their morning in Westminster Hall. In order to ensure the maximum amount of time for the kids to participate fully in their Sunday School classes, they now begin their morning directly in the Educa-

tion Building in the chapel for a children's church time. This is the time they get familiar with what a worship experience is like. The kids participate in music time, a story and even collect an offering. After children's church, kids are divided into their classes with their teachers. At 10 AM parents may pick up kids in classrooms or they may go on to either the Café to participate in a mission project or back to the chapel for choir time until 10:30 AM.

An extremely small volunteer pool entering the fall season precipitated these schedule and format changes. We are thrilled that we have a few new teachers involved in the program. However, we always need more teachers to help make our program run smoothly. If you are interested in getting involved, please contact Mindy at mindy.wattsellis@firstchurchchampaign.org

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

Parent's Night Out

On October 13th we will be hosting a parents night out during the mission movie viewing taking place in the chapel from

6:30-8:30 PM. Kids can come upstairs to the comfy couches in room 206. We will be watching a movie and having some snacks together. Parents can watch the mission movie scheduled, go out on a date or simply get some grocery shopping done! Please let us know if your child will be participating by October 11th so we can plan appropriately.

Hardy's Reindeer Ranch

On October 9 from 5-8 PM CYF is hosting a church wide family event at Hardy's Reindeer Ranch! We will be departing from FPCC parking lot at 4:15 PM and will return approximately 8:45 PM. The cost of the event will be \$8 per person with a family maximum of \$35 (family: parent and children), which will include a hay rack ride, dinner (hot dogs to roast, chips, a drink and s'mores), a trip through the corn maze, use of pedal cart and a chance to see the reindeer. A parent must accompany children who are younger than 6th grade. Please RSVP to Mindy at mindy.wattsellis@firstchurchchampaign.org by October 7th.

Exciting New Opportunities

As our fall program has gotten up and running, we have discovered that some families arrive a little earlier than when our programs begin for our education hour at 9 AM. We are looking for volunteers to serve between 8-8:45 AM to help our kids safely play before their Sunday school time begins.

Additionally, we have an opportunity after our education hour concludes at 10 AM to work on a mission project in the Café.



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN

CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN

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Champaign, IL 61820

Change Service Requested



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CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN

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Sunday:

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

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
Allegra Martin	Director of Children's Music
Chris Penny	Facilities Manager
Ann Petry	Accounting
Kristen Plemons	Assistant Children, Youth & Family
Andrea Pope	Contemporary Worship Director
Richard Rossi	Church Musician
Linda Sims	ESL Coordinator
Mindy Watts-Ellis	Director Children, Youth & Family

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.