

# The Heart of Missions: First Presbyterian Church of Champaign's Missions Magazine

## March Missions Events and Meetings

*Sundays: ESL Bible Study*

10:30am in Room 204

*Mondays and Wednesdays: Beginning English ESL*

9:00am to 11:00am in Room 204

*Mondays-Thursdays: ESL*

1-3pm on Second Floor of Education Building

*Wednesdays in March: Pakistan Study*

10:30am in the Parlor

*March 6: Peace and Joy Concert*

3pm in the Sanctuary

*March 8: Mission Team*

Noon in Westminster Hall

*March 14 and 28: Knifty Knitters*

1pm to 3pm in the Parlor

*March 21: Environmental Stewardship Committee*

3:30pm in the Parlor

*March 21: World Mission Ministry*

5:30pm in the Parlor

*March 22: Community Mission Deacons*

6:30pm in Westminster Hall

*March 24: Cuba Steering Committee*

5:30pm to 7:00pm in the Parlor

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Dear Reader,

This month marks the one year anniversary of the first publication of *The Heart of Missions!* Initiated in March of 2015, the intent of this periodical has always been to inform our congregation, and anyone interested in First Presbyterian Church of Champaign, of Missions activities, with the hope to attract continued connection with and participation in these worthy Christian activities. Begun as a periodical available to anyone who requested it, this month marks the first in which everyone receiving electronic copies of the Newsletter will also receive *The Heart of Missions* Magazine. This change has been approved by Mission Team and Session. (**Paper copies are available in Westminster Hall, outside of Marcia's office, and in the back of the sanctuary**).

Much has changed since I came on board as Missions Coordinator just fourteen months ago, and much continues to change. We have seen staff move on to other ministries or retire and have added new staff. We are in the process of searching for a new Head Pastor and a new Director of Children Youth and Families. What hasn't changed is this congregation's unwavering commitment to Missions. What an honor it is to work alongside so many dedicated to mission work! This church has a long history of impact on the local, national, and international levels. I hope that you are even more convinced of this as you read this month's edition.

If Missions has been important to you at some point in your time at First Presbyterian, **would you be willing to talk with me?** In the coming months, I will be conducting **video interviews** in order to put together short educational and inspirational videos to further educate our congregation and the community about the missions work we support. I hope to get representatives from all generations and backgrounds to represent the diverse history and current activities of our church. The videos will also be used online to help those not affiliated with our church know more about the work we do. The videos will also be used at times in worship. It is the hope of Mission Team that educating others know about this important work may encourage this mission work to continue and, perhaps, attract new members to our church. Please send me an email if you are interested in participating in this meaningful project at [kristi.corbin@firstchurchchampaign.org](mailto:kristi.corbin@firstchurchchampaign.org).

May God continue to bless the work of this church.

In Christ's Service,

*Kristi Corbin*

Missions Coordinator; Editor, *The Heart of Missions*



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# MEET MARIA

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Submitted by Ann Stout

*Story printed with permission from Opportunity International*

Since she was a young girl, Maria has felt a passion for education. She easily worked her way from teacher to school principal – it was then that she felt the tug on her heart to open her own school to provide local children with a higher quality education and to provide parents an affordable and accessible option for their children. She also recognized by opening a school, she could positively impact the economy of her entire community.



Access to capital stood in the way of Maria and her dreams to open a school.

She never lost hope and when a friend introduced her to Opportunity International in Dominican Republic, she quickly did her homework to determine if a partnership with ASPIRE\* was right for her. Her conclusion was a resounding YES! Since taking out her first ASPIRE loan in 2010, Maria has grown her student body by 52% and has also increased the capacity from grades 3-5 to include local students in grades 1-7. Maria has also used loans to construct bathrooms and install toilets, hire three additional teachers to maintain small class sizes and launch a year-round nursery to fill a childcare gap that she identified in the community. In the future, Maria dreams of growing her school by building a second floor to welcome more students.

*First Presbyterian Church is using a portion of the Forward 150 Mission Fund to partner with Opportunity International in the Dominican Republic. Our donations are helping people like Maria grow and improve schools for poor children in the DR.*

*(\*The ASPIRE that is mentioned in the article is the NGO that partners with Opportunity International in the DR).*



Thank you for the support of the Presbyterian Women's fundraiser for the DREAAM House. So far, the effort has raised over \$1,000! If you missed the chance to donate in Westminster Hall and would still like to send in your donation, feel free to mail to or drop off a check in the church office. Please make your check payable to Presbyterian Women and put "DREAAM House" in the memo.

*DREAAM House is a program aimed at helping at-risk boys in our area succeed.*



# "Peace and Joy"

## A concert by Jean Rene Balekita

with a Christian music ensemble featuring Congolese rumba with a flavor of gospel, jazz and African rhythm. Well known in the Congo, they have performed in Africa and Europe, and are gaining recognition in the U.S. They sing in English and five other languages.

Musicians will receive a free-will offering. Ten percent of donations will go to *Build Congo Schools* ([buildcongoschools.org](http://buildcongoschools.org)), an initiative of the Presbyterian Congo Network and our Missionary Co-Workers in Congo.

**March 6, 2016**  
**3:00pm in the Sanctuary of**  
**First Presbyterian Church of Champaign**

(Downtown Champaign,  
at the corner of Church St. and State St.)  
302 West Church Street  
Champaign, IL 61820



**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN**  
**CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN**

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# MAKE NEW FRIENDS & KEEP THE OLD

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Submitted by: Harry Bremer

Join Mission Possible for its 25<sup>th</sup> worktrip. This year, we are going to Camp Wyoming, Wyoming, Iowa, May 22-28. The trip will include fun, fellowship, & some work. The cost is \$100.00 for room and board, and \$5.00 for food snacks. Transportation will be provided for those who don't drive.

How do I sign up? Contact Harry Bremer at [hlbremer@yahoo.com](mailto:hlbremer@yahoo.com) for a medical/liability form. Complete it as per instructions, and return to Harry Bremer by April 15, 2016.

Sleeping arrangements: We will all be in 1 building with real beds, each room having 2 beds, sink, and toilet.

Schedule: devotions are at 7 am, followed by breakfast. We work until lunch (around noon), and then finish the day's work before dinner. After dinner activities can include fellowship, a possible trip to the local ice cream store, or just rest and relaxation.

Work may include: sewing costumes, replacing/repairing benches, or cabin work (painting, building shelving & partitions, installing window air conditioners, replacing windows, drywall work).

A preview trip will take place in the next month; more information will then be available.

Please join us for prayer and fellowship among friends/new friends. If any questions, contact any of the committee members: Charlene or Harry Bremer, Gene Morgan, Bill Gamble, Jim Andrews, Dale Tutje, Dave McNattin, or John Braden.





## Community Mission Deacons

2015 Annual Report

Submitted by: Sandra Carr

Simply stated, the CMD tries to strengthen our church ties to local selected relief agencies through each member identifying with a particular agency. We are able to get a clearer picture of how each agency operates and their particular strengths and needs.

We are consciously trying to avoid toxic charity pitfalls and support the agencies who work to help their clients become independent and self-supporting.

Members volunteer to provide a devotional time at each meeting. We are also very fortunate this year to have one of our members, Linda Tauber-Olson, present the findings from a social needs assessment of Champaign County. The results of this survey helped us plan for the next year.

Despite our church members stretching their finances to support pledges and the Forward 150 fund, we were able to fund two special projects. The Raindrop Project provided funds to replace a food storage shed for Jesus is the Way in Rantoul. (We also appreciate the volunteer hours from Mission Possible members and friends there). Once again, we were able to help ECIRMAC with funds for coats and diapers. We selected the TIMES Center for the church Advent offering in the month of December to help them purchase mattresses for the Level I program.

Over twenty of our church members volunteered time and energy at the Savoy Methodist Church garage sale. Our half of the process netted \$4,000, which has been sent to the Canteen Run of the Salvation Army to help replace their current vehicle.

<b>Recipient</b>	<b>2015 Funding Percentage Allocation</b>	<b>2015 Funding Dollar Amount</b>
Emergency Fund	5%	\$ 1,976.85
Canaan SAFE House	25%	\$ 9,390.04
Canteen Run	1%	\$ 375.60
Courage Connection	10%	\$ 3,756.02
Crisis Nursery	0%	\$ -
Eastern Illinois Food Bank	5%	\$ 1,878.01
ECIRMAC	10%	\$ 3,756.02
Empty Tomb	15%	\$ 5,634.02
Jesus is the Way Prison Ministry	7%	\$ 2,629.21
Restoration Urban Ministry	10%	\$ 3,756.02
Salt and Light	10%	\$ 3,756.02
TIMES Center	7%	\$ 2,629.21
<b>Total 2015 CMD Budget Amount</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$ 39,537.00</b>

We are constantly reminded how reduced state funding hampers our agencies, causing them to reduce staff and services. Our response is limited by church budget constraints. We realize \$39,000 shared with 10 agencies does not look very impressive, but also know that many individual church members support these same agencies with time and money.

Ours is a strong, committed group who will miss our dedicated members who have left us: Kathy and Mark Schoeffman, Joanne and John Murray and Jean Seibold. We are also very welcoming and look forward to working with our new members.




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## CORRECTION

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The Community Mission Deacons 2015 Report was inadvertently left out of the initial version of the Annual Report. The electronic version available on our website has been corrected to include it. The report is included in this month's Heart of Missions to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to read it. My apologies for the error. —Kristi

# Q & A: THE ESL PROGRAM OF FPCC

Submitted by: Linda Sims, ESL Coordinator

How should I respond if someone asks me how things are going in the English as a Second Language (ESL) Program?

*Option 1:* Dazzle them with cleverness and recite this little poem:

Here is the church  
Here is the steeple  
Open the doors  
And see all the people  
  
People from Turkey,  
Brazil and Japan,  
Congo, Korea,  
Iran, Kazakhstan

The language of love  
Says welcome to all  
Come see the whole world  
In our ESL hall!



Tutor (Vern) and group of students in the café during break time (representing Iran, Vietnam, Colombia, Belarus, Kazakhstan)

*Option 2:* Tell them that we are blessed with a thriving, joyful ESL ministry, and we are so grateful for the continued support of this church!

And then point out these amazing statistics: Thus far in our current academic year (beginning September 2015), we've registered over 130 students from over 25 different countries. Currently, about 20 volunteers serve in the program. On any given day, we serve an average of 40 people.

## When do ESL classes meet?

Morning classes meet Monday and Wednesday from 9:00 – 11:00 am. Morning classes focus only on beginning English. Afternoon classes meet Monday through Thursday from 1:00 – 3:00 pm. Afternoon classes offer 4 levels of English instruction. (We currently have a waiting list for our afternoon classes.)

## I think I'd like to help, but...I don't have any teaching experience. Can I still be a tutor?

Yes! Everyone starts off by observing and learning from experienced tutors. You can take time to figure out a role that suits you.

## If I volunteer as a tutor, do I have to prepare my own lessons and materials?

No. Materials and lesson ideas are always provided. There are many options to choose from each day!

## Do I need to know another language?

No. Just English – although if you volunteer regularly, we dare you not to pick up some French, Portuguese, Turkish, Spanish....

## Are there volunteer opportunities that do not involve tutoring?

Yes. We often need people who can help with registration and other administrative tasks. We also have students who would simply like a “conversation partner” to meet with outside of class time. Talk to Linda about possibilities.

## Do I have to commit to helping year-round? What if I head south for the winter, or take frequent vacations?

We're really flexible! We understand that people have busy lives. Don't let fears about your schedule stop you from finding out more. Talk to Linda.

## Do volunteers have to attend First Presbyterian Church?

No. We are a diverse group. Some volunteers are members of First Pres, but many are not.

## Can I visit and see firsthand if the program is something I'd like to get involved with?

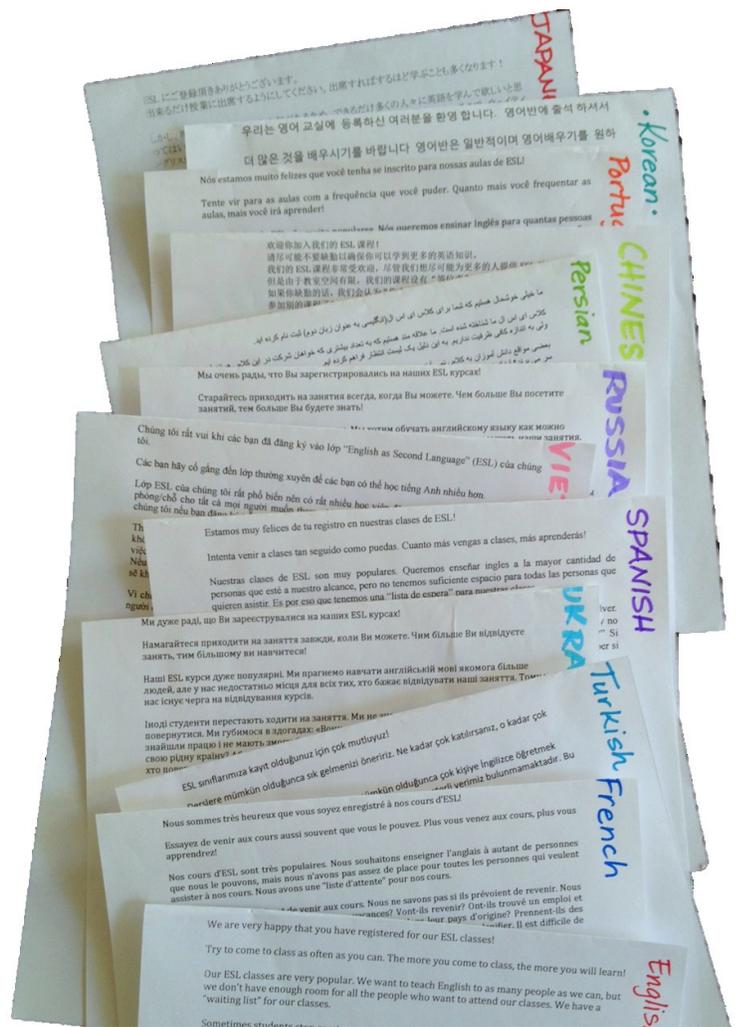
Yes! We love visitors.

## I can't volunteer. Are there other ways to help?

Yes: Pray. Tell others about the program. Consider donating financially or providing food items for the students' daily break time.

## Whom should I contact to set up a time to visit or to ask more questions?

Contact Linda Sims, the program coordinator. You can call the church (217-356-7238) and leave a voicemail for Linda, but the best way is to email her at [linda.sims@firstchurchchampaign.org](mailto:linda.sims@firstchurchchampaign.org)



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# OUR COMMUNITY

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Presbyterian Women are collecting layette items for Empty Tomb for ages newborn to six months. Donations may be left (at any time year-round) in the church Missions Closet where there is a basket labeled "Layette Items."

Items collected include:

Receiving blankets  
Sleepers  
Undershirts  
Onesies  
Socks/booties  
Bibs



## Would you like to help improve the life of a senior?

*Faith in Action* of Champaign County is an interfaith volunteer caregiver program sponsored locally by Presence Covenant Medical Center, and an agency supported through Community Mission Deacons at First Presbyterian Church. *Faith in Action* serves Champaign County residents ages 55 and older who are in need of a particular service. Volunteer opportunities include transportation to medical appointments, pharmacy, and grocery shopping, making home visits, providing respite for caregivers, making telephone reassurance calls, light housekeeping/light meal preparation, minor household repairs, yard clean-up/chores and office assistance. There is no minimum amount of time to become a volunteer, and the flexibility of the program makes it ideal for working professionals, students, stay-at-home parents or retired individuals. We offer volunteer orientations every 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday, 2:00 – 3:30 p.m. To register, or for more information, please call [\(217\) 337-2778](tel:2173372778). Volunteer opportunities can be ongoing or one special project. One special project coming up is our **Spring Chore Day on April 2nd!** You can form a group of 4-5 people and provide yard clean-up and Spring cleaning for seniors! Call to sign up.

See flyer on the next page for more information.



**Faith in Action**

**HELP SENIORS THIS SPRING!**

**Spring Chore Day!**

**Tentative Date: April 2, 2016 | 9.a.m. - 1 p.m.**

Form a group of at least 4 people, and come out to help seniors in our community! We will be providing leaf raking, planting, window washing, and helping move outdoor furniture back outside. Call for details.

**If you are interested, please contact us by March 23**

Call :Faith in Action (217) 337-2778

e-mail: [fia@presencehealth.org](mailto:fia@presencehealth.org).

**Faith in Action**

1400 W. Park St.

Urbana, IL 61801



**Presence**

Covenant Medical Center

**Today counts.**

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# WORLD MISSION MINISTRY

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## Learn More About Mission Coworkers FPCC Supports

Mark Adams and Miriam Maldonado Escobar are mission co-workers with the Presbyterian Border Ministry in Mexico. As U.S. coordinator of the binational ministry, Frontera de Cristo, Mark is responsible, in partnership with the National Presbyterian Church of Mexico, for the coordination of six ministry areas: church development, health, family counseling, the New Hope Community Center, mission education, and the Just Trade Center. Miriam connects people and organizations across borders and serves as a liaison of Frontera de Cristo with the Center for Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation and Recuperation (CRREDA in Spanish), Douglaprieta Trabaja and the Lirio de los Valles Presbyterian Church. She works to help the church, community and schools to grow their own food, increasing their nutrition possibilities and connection to God's creation and one another.

### Country context

Mexico has been described as a land of contrasts. Natural beauty and urban blight and poverty and affluence exist very close to each other. Yet most Mexicans have little chance of attaining an economically prosperous lifestyle. Many impoverished Mexicans come to the United States in search of better incomes. Death from thirst and heat exhaustion are not uncommon as migrants make their northbound trek. More than 1 million are arrested each year for working in the United States without proper documentation.

### About Mark Adams and Miriam Maldonado Escobar

Mark and Miriam met when Mark came to Agua Prieta to serve with Frontera de Cristo. After working for several years alongside her husband, Miriam was invited to serve as a mission co-worker under PC(USA) appointment in 2011.

Mark brings together people from both sides of the border, building relationships and understanding between them. "I help them reflect biblically and theologically about what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ," he writes, "in light of our spiritual, social, political, and economic connectedness." Together, Mark and Miriam continue a ministry of reconciliation, bringing people together around issues of migration and faith. Mark and Miriam's commitment to reconciliation is evident both in their work and their everyday lives. One night when four families they invited for a dinner party didn't show up, they took seriously Jesus' teaching in the parable of the banquet. They carried the food to the highways of Agua Prieta and fed 100 adults and children who had just been returned to there on a cold winter night by U.S. authorities. That experience was the genesis of a new ministry. "Now we are no longer on the streets but rather in a building and serve over 18,000 men women and children each year with 40 local volunteers as well as volunteers coming from different parts of Mexico, the United States, and the world."



Mark, Miriam and family

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—this is a shortened version of the full article available on [www.presbyterianmission.org](http://www.presbyterianmission.org)