

November 2017



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN

Pastor's Pen

BY ERIC CORBIN, ASSOCIATE PASTOR
(eric@firstpres.church)

November is upon us! Leaves are changing to magnificent shades of red, orange, and yellow, and the air has turned chilly. As we enjoy the beautiful scenery outside, we are also celebrating the beautiful building entrusted to us by those who began its construction 150 years ago. We are indeed grateful for our forebears in this congregation who sacrificed much so that we might have a wonderful place to come and worship, learn, plan, mourn, and celebrate together.

Our Forward 150 Campaign's projects are nearing completion, and we celebrated through a wonderful Organ and Strings concert on Friday, November 3. If you missed it, you can watch it online at <http://www.firstpres.church/organ-and-strings>.

On Sunday morning, our worship focused on how God used those who went before us and continues to use us today to accomplish God's purposes. **Jo Foley's** thoughtful reflections from worship are included in this newsletter. I hope you will be inspired by them, as I was. Through the years, the task of being good stewards has been passed down to us. As we remember with gratitude those who have gone before, we seek to rise to the task placed before us: to continue the ministries of God in this church and far beyond.

If you have not yet submitted your pledge of time, talent, and treasure for 2018, I invite you to prayerfully consider how this church makes a difference in your life, and how you can make a difference through this church. The stewardship packet is available at <http://www.firstpres.church/Stewardship2018>. Also included there are the stewardship videos from worship the past three Sundays, with the introductions given those days.

As we continue to serve God together in this time of transition, I pray that God's peace may be with you all!

Pastor Eric

Second Annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Celebration
Sunday, November 19, 2017 3 PM
I-Hotel, 1900 South First Street, C.

All are invited to celebrate our relationships with one another and the world in which we live.

Attendees are encouraged to bring non-perishable foods to donate to the Eastern Illinois Foodbank, and strips of fabric, string or other weavable material to be used in our community art project.

More information:
fb.com/events/741761232685392

Sponsored by the Interfaith Alliance of Champaign County

We Are Blessed

AS PRESENTED BY JO FOLEY DURING WORSHIP

11.5.2017

Good morning. We are celebrating the birth of this church and the laying of the corner stone in 1867. But it wasn't the beginning of this church; it was chartered in 1850, and they were meeting in a train station. The train station was getting a little bit small. The University of Illinois was founded in 1867 and they could see growth coming so they decided to build a church.

What a fantastic, unique building they did build. It's amazing...the number of the members were so few to build a magnificent place like this. As near as I could find out by asking Siri, we are the only church where you go upstairs to worship. I was wondering how many times we have all climbed the 25 steps closer to heaven. We don't need Stairmaster here.

In this city we say we go "downtown" to church and we do. This church was built on the side of a hill...on Hill Street. Interestingly if you go in the door by the parking lot you walk in at ground level. But if you walk around to the front door, you have to go up ten steps to get to the first floor. They had this whole flat prairie to choose from and why they chose this narrow lot on the side of a hill to build a huge, heavy church is amazing to me. They positioned it and then they had to hollow out to get back in. If you go to the

side of the church, you can see how they hallowed out there.

Every significant event in my life has taken place here. My father from Mattoon and my mother from Peoria met at the University of Illinois. They married, they joined this church. They built a small house. They started a business. They had their first child, me.

Here I was baptized 89 years ago. Here I recited the Ten Commandments in 3rd Grade and got my first Bible with my name in gold on it. Here I was married and fifty years later we celebrated by re-creating our vows and my son walked me down the aisle the second time. Here we had our five children baptized and three daughters married here.

Then there were the sad times too...saying goodbyes until we meet again to my parents, my husband and so many beloved friends. All of my foundational, spiritual teachings and beliefs began and are still being nourished here. Think about how many times The Lord's Prayer has been said here; the Apostles' Creed, the taking of Communion. I multiplied 52 Sundays a year by the number of years I have been attending and it came up with over 3,600 times. No wonder it has made such an impact on me.

I love the morning sun shining through the stained glass windows on the east and the south. I love the music of the organ,

the choir. I love the church bells, the fellowship and friendship of believers, the teaching and preaching of the Word and the prayers of all the saints, so I am thankful for the heritage of this incredible church....its mission; its people and its building. This is truly a holy and sacred place. We are blessed. Amen.

A New Chapter...

As the snow accumulates here in Montana, so do the memories. How can we express our gratitude for all that you did in preparation for the joint Anglo-African worship and retirement party of October 15, 2017 and for attending the deeply meaningful luncheon?

I remember the phone call in late September of 2005. From the moment **Jean Smith**, chair of the Associate Pastor Nominating Committee called, our journey with you has been one of gift and blessing. That was the beginning, and the recent celebration was the wonderful ending of a love-filled relationship.

A big thank you to **Joe Grant, Richard Rossi, the Sanctuary Choir and the African Praise and Prayer Worship Band** for their inspiring music. It was truly heavenly. Betty was so pleased that **Jean René Balekita** honored her request for the Bomoyi rendition of *Nearer My God to Thee*. The combination of groups in Yesu Azali Awa lifted us all to praise.

A Glimpse Into Our Past

More funds were raised by the spring of 1868, allowing construction to continue. Financial difficulties plagued the project, but the building was finally able to be used by the spring of 1869, at a final cost of approximately \$30,000. In 1883, the towers were completed with a bell added to the north tower. Stained glass windows were installed in the 1880's and are priceless today.

My thanks to **Bill Stout, Betty Hollister, and Joys Ditu** for their opening remarks, to **Nicole Miller** for translating the liturgy from English into French, and to **Marc Miller** for being a liturgist and interpreter.

Thank you also to those that spoke at the luncheon...**Rob Vermillion, Harry Bremer and Pat Metcalf.**

Your generous monetary gift was overwhelming. We humbly thank you. The special messages that were written around the tables at the luncheon are a treasure. Just today we put them together in a notebook. We love the variety of expression. Some even drew pictures. Way to go!

To the **Petersons, Betty Hollister and her friend Janet, Beth Hutchens**, and all others who planned and worked tirelessly for months to create an unforgettable retirement party, our deepest gratitude. Teacher Betty gives it an A+.

A personal thank you to the **Bremers** and **Farthings** who loaned me their cars to use during my last month and a half. And, of course, to the **Ackermanns** for their generosity of allowing us to live in their home after we sold ours and while they were in Texas taking care of their daughter Meg.

Thanks to **Pastor Eric** for being a great emcee at the luncheon, and for being a wonderful colleague. To all the **FPCC staff** – we have been a team, and I am grateful for all of you.

As we begin a new chapter in our lives, we thank God for the Champaign Chapter. It was good, it was rich, it was challenging, and, most of all, it was full of love.

God's blessing on all of you.

Chuck and Betty

Update from HR

BY ANN STOUT, CO-CHAIR
(mrsas2003@gmail.com)

In order to navigate this period of transition, Session has appointed a small team of elders to serve as a support system for **Pastor Eric**. We have worked with him (with assistance from the Presbytery's Committee on Ministry) to develop a reasonable and doable job description. In order that we all know what we can and cannot expect from him, we are summarizing his duties here.

- Eric will perform the "routine" pastoral duties, such as weddings, funerals, baptisms, etc. He will also be responsible for worship, including the preaching. However, our Amateur Preachers will be asked to preach at least once a month in order to give Eric an occasional break.
- Eric will coordinate congregational care and will make crisis hospital calls. Routine hospital calls will be made by volunteers.
- He will oversee all of the wonderful ministries of this church but he will not be expected to attend all of the committee meetings. It will be the responsibility of all of the committee chairpersons to keep Eric informed about what the committee is doing.
- He will oversee the staff and be a resource to them. This includes performing annual staff reviews.
- He will oversee the education ministries of the church. He will not teach the Friday Bible studies or teach the confirmation classes.
- He will continue to oversee the technology.

The support team will continue to meet with Eric to check in and make sure things are running smoothly. He is comfortable with this new arrangement and, if anything changes, we will inform the congregation. We can all pitch in and do a little more to make sure that the ministries of the church are being carried out seamlessly.

Angel Tree An Annual Tradition

BY KRISTI CORBIN, MISSIONS COORDINATOR
(kristi@firstpres.church)

FPCC will continue the annual Christmas tradition of having an Angel Tree. The Angel Tree will again focus on items from the wish lists of local agencies that Community Mission Deacons supports. The Angel Tree will be a tangible way to help our local community even with our reduced Missions budget.

Most of these agencies offer support to children and families; the original spirit of the Angel Tree to serve the youngest in our community remains alive. Also on the tree are items for the Relocation Ministry of our church, which helps some of our church's immigrant families move into homes. Children in those families will benefit daily from your donations of needed household items.

Each ornament on the tree represents an item on the wish list of a local agency. You may take as many ornaments as you wish! After you have purchased the item, please bring it to the church. Leave it unwrapped with the ornament taped to it and place it near the agency's name on the tables next to the Angel Tree. Items will be accepted until Sunday, December 17 and will be delivered the following week.

Cash or check donations are also a great choice. Monetary donations can be placed in offering plate during worship or sent to the office. Make check to the church with the agency's name in the memo line.

The Angel Tree will be up the week after Thanksgiving, so you can get started with the joy of giving before December.

Thank you, as always, for your generosity!

Prayer Corner



A Firm Foundation

If buildings need a firm foundation, what about our lives? The book of Jude ends, "To him (Jesus) who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy." (Jude 24) When we face temptations or make important decisions, we can ask Jesus for guidance and strength to do the right thing. He knows what is best for each individual person to have victory over stumbling in this life and to be presented faultless before God in the future.

Let us listen and obey Jesus as he speaks to us through prayer and the Bible.

A Busy Month

BY GARY & LINDA PETERSON, OUTREACH CHAIRS
(mschoeffmann@mchsi.com)

Your Outreach Team has had a busy month starting with a community trick or treat and movie afternoon at the Virginia Theater on October 7. We passed out over 200 bags full of candy, Pumpkin "Jesus Loves You" stickers and information about the church. The church was mentioned as a sponsor of the event on the radio. We contracted for commercials on Rewind 92.5 to promote our church and the amazing Organ and String Concert Friday evening November 3 which over 200 attended. Several members of the Outreach Team were also involved with **Chuck Carlson's** retirement luncheon. The 7,8, or 9 Dinners started this month and the reports of a good time are getting back to us. We want to thank everyone who had a part in our successful month.



Gary and Linda Peterson pass out info on our church during the Trick or Treat fest at Virginia Theater.

Joys & Concerns

We extend our sympathy to...

- the family of **Clemmie and Bill Ackermann** whose daughter, Meg, recently died in Texas.
- the family and friends of **Jerry Dobrovolny** who died October 27, 2017.
- the family and friends of **Jacqueline Peden** who died October 14, 2017.
- the family and friends of **Phyllis Van Buskirk** who died October 19, 2017.

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- **Poinsettias will decorate our Sanctuary this coming holiday season. Poinsettias are \$13 per plant and can be given in honor or memory of someone.**
- **Include "poinsettia" on your check along with a note of who it is given for.**
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Our Church

Children, Youth & Family Update

BY MINDY WATTS-ELLIS, DIRECTOR OF CYF
(mindy@firstpres.church)

Sunday School Notes

In the month of October our elementary kids studied the story of Joseph and his brothers. The preschool class explored what it means to give to others and the many ways in which it can be done. The Middle School students studied the story of Joseph as well, diving into deeper discussion of what it means to forgive someone who has wronged you. The high school class is delving into discussion about developing a relationship with God through scripture, prayer, and patience.

November will bring a focus on the story of Jonah for the Elementary and Middle School students. The preschool will explore the concept that 'I Obey my Parents.' The High School class will continue to explore developing a relationship with God through love, faithfulness, and communication through prayer and scripture.

The confirmation class will be meeting regularly on Sundays from 10:10-11 AM. The first retreat will be November 19 from 10:10 AM- 3 PM. We will have some fun games, food, and explore the sovereignty of God.

I hope you will consider being part of a teaching team for the Sunday School for the academic year. We need more teachers and helpers in order to have strong teams of leaders for the kids. Please prayerfully consider if you would be able to give two Sundays a month or more toward ministering to an age group of our children.

Youth Group

Our youth connections gathering with youth from McKinley and First Presbyterian Church Urbana was November 5 from 4:30-6 PM at McKinley Presbyterian Church. We had dinner, put together lunches for the homeless, played games, and shared a candlelight devotional to pray for the victims of the Texas church shooting. Our next event will be December 10 at Market Place Mall for Mall tag.

Children's Mission

The children have decorated six small trash cans with positive messages for Jesus is the Way Prison Ministries residents. They are also busy making tags for the angel tree for the Advent season.

Trunk-or-Treat

This was a great opportunity to show Christian hospitality to our neighborhood families. We had over one hundred children visit our parking lot to enjoy treats and friendly greetings! Our soup supper was also well attended. **Jean Rene and Bomoyi** graciously agreed to offer fine musical entertainment for the supper as people dined and visited. Thank you!

Many thanks to the volunteers who made this event possible!

For bringing cars and decorating: **The Corbins, The Kirbys, The Laufenburgs, Chris Penny and friends, Sabrina and Wen-mei Hwu, Autumn and Isaac Ellis, The Millers, Community blood services, the Lowes, Elizabeth Pippen with Destin Lembelemb, Emilio Kabakele, Naomi Rempe, Michelle Hutchens, and the Carlsons.**

For making soup: **Joyce Wittler, Patty and Bruce Farthing, Betty Hollister, Leland and Jim Andrews, Sue Fischer, Nicole and Marc Miller, Sarah Laufenburg, Claudia and Bob Kirby, Laura Walston, and Mary Lou Bauer.**

For setting up: **Ginny Waaler, Brigid Smith, Destin Lembelemb, Emilio Kabakele, Lizz Pippin, Joyce Wittler, Nancy Brombaugh, Sue Fischer, Leland and Jim Andrews.**

For serving the many who came to feast: **Leland Andrews, Joyce Wittler, Nancy Brombaugh, Sue Fischer, and Mary Lou Bauer.**

For cleaning up: **Peter Yau** (our star at the dishwasher), **Jim Berger, David Bauer, Karin and Cecilia Vermillion**, and the stalwart servers who stayed until the end.

Special mention to **Chris Penny and Damen Rowell** for going above and beyond the call of duty to make sure everything went smoothly!

And for all the donations of candy!!!

Special thanks to **Jim Berger** for taking photos of the event!

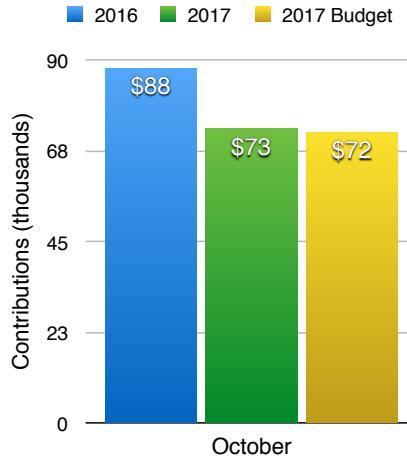


Financial Update

BY MARK SCHOEFFMANN, FINANCE CHAIR
(mschoeffmann@mchsi.com)

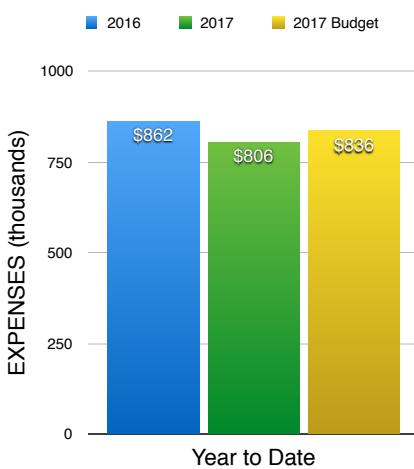
Contributions

Contributions in October were \$15K less than 2016 but \$1K above the budget at \$73K. The Year to Date total is below last year by \$11K and is below the budgeted amount by \$19K. These figures include prepaid pledges (those paid in the year prior to the pledge year) that are prorated over the year with 1/12 added to each month's contributions.



Expenses

Year to Date expenses are \$30K below budget at \$806K and \$56K below 2016. Considering all sources, revenue exceeds expenses by \$7K which is \$57K better than at this time in 2016. This figure includes a \$29K transfer from other funds that was not made last year.



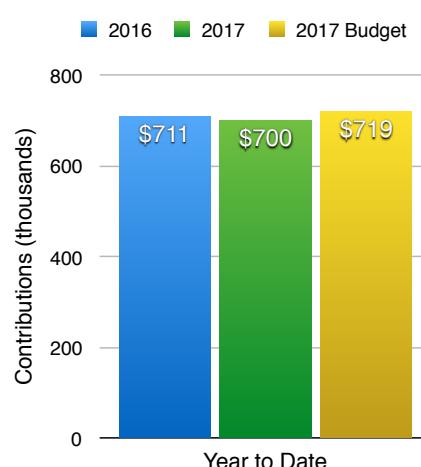
Making a Difference

BY MARK SCHOEFFMANN, FINANCE CHAIR
(mschoeffmann@mchsi.com)

The last three Sundays we have been reminding ourselves about how our church makes a difference in our community, the world and for our members. At this time of year we are also looking at how we can continue to act out our faith next year. Our stewardship mailing asks us to identify how we will share our gifts of time, talent and treasure in 2018. A list of opportunities for service has been provided along with a request for a financial commitment.

In order to continue our programs and ministry next year at the same level as this

year, financial contributions need to increase by 7.5% to avoid deficit spending. In addition to increased financial support, our activities need your support of time and talent. Please prayerfully consider your role in both the financial future and activities of our church to ensure that we can continue to make a difference.



We have asked that your financial commitment card be returned to the church by November 6 or as soon as possible thereafter. You may mail it or drop it off in the church office. Returning the Time and Talent opportunities list this month will be appreciated.

Visit www.firstpres.church/stewardship 2018 to see the Stewardship Packet as well as the stewardship videos from worship.

Christmas Gathering

The Presbyterian Women's Christmas Gathering will be held on Thursday, December 7, from 1-3 PM in Westminster Hall. The program *The Stories of Christmas Carols* will be presented by Sandy Carr and Leland Andrews. The PW Thank Offering is dedicated at the Christmas Gathering. Women collect coins during the year when they are thankful.

Employment Opportunities

Contemporary Worship Leader, Outreach Coordinator, and Director of Children's Music.

Details are all at www.firstpres.church/employment-opportunities



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Change Service Requested



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Sunday:

8 AM Contemplative Service

9 AM Traditional Service

9:15 AM Children's Sunday School

10:10 AM Adult Education & High School Class

11 AM Contemporary Service

Saturday:

6 PM Praise & Prayer Gathering

(French-English Service) Centennial Hall

Pastors:

Eric Corbin..... Covenant Associate Pastor, Ext. 214

Staff:

Kristi Corbin Missions Coordinator, Ext. 219

Ritchie Drennen Facility Maintenance

Patty Farthing Receptionist, Ext. 211

Robert Ferrer Audio-visual Technician

Marcia Franks Administrative Assistant, Ext. 210

Joe Grant Director of Music

Blaise Pascal ... Asst Director Children, Youth & Family, Ext 216

Chris Penny Facilities Manager, Ext. 237

Ann Petry Accounting, Ext. 224

Jeanette Pyne ESL Director, Ext 235

Richard Rossi Church Musician

Mindy Watts-Ellis .. Director Children, Youth & Family, Ext. 212

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