

December 2018



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN



MAY THE GIFT OF

His Presence

BE WITH YOU THIS CHRISTMAS
AND EVERY DAY OF THE NEW YEAR!

Joe G.
 Marcia
 GEORGE
 Ritchie
 Matt
 Damer
 Mindy
 LIZZ
 Robert
 Ann
 Jeannette
 Sue
 Kristi
 Kerbin
 Betsy

December Worship

Sunday, December 9
Regular Worship Schedule

Sunday, December 16
NO 8 AM service
9 AM Music Sunday
11:15 AM The Gathering

Sunday, December 23
Regular Worship Schedule

Monday, December 24
10 AM Worship/Chapel
4 PM Family Worship
8 PM Candlelight Service

Sunday, December 30
9 AM Worship...only 1 service



Stewardship Results

BY MARK SCHOEFFMANN, CHAIR
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We are pleased to report that the church has received 180 pledge responses for 2019 totaling \$781,516. This is over 11% more than for 2018! Thank you to everyone who has pledged and responded to the question in *Micah 6:8*...

*And what does the Lord require of you?
To act justly and to love kindness
and to walk humbly with your God.*

A big thank you to **Sarah Laufenberg** and her team for leading our stewardship drive this year!

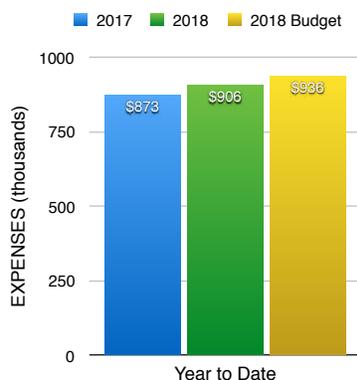
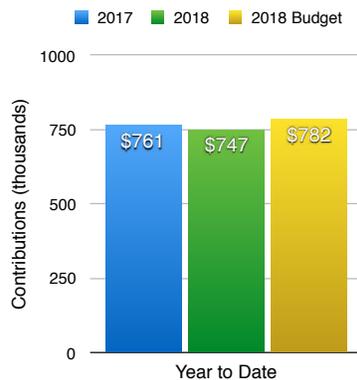
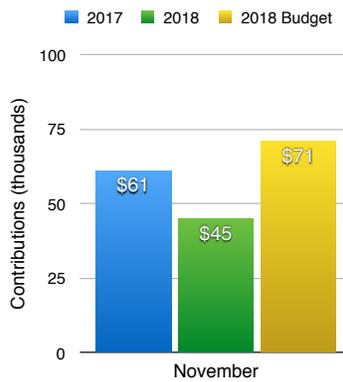
Financial Update

Contributions

Contributions in November were \$16K less than in 2017 and \$26K below the budget at \$45K. The Year to Date total is below last year by \$14K and below the budgeted amount by \$35K. These figures include prepaid pledges (those paid in the year prior to the budget year) that are prorated over the year with 1/12 added to each month's contributions. Including all prepaid pledges, at 91.7% through the year we have received 88.9% of the expected 2018 revenue.

Expenses

Year to Date expenses are \$30K below the budget at \$906K but more than in 2017 by \$33K. Considering all sources, expenses exceed revenue by \$48K which is \$51K more than at the end of November in 2017. At 91.7% through the year we have experienced 88.7% of the expected 2018 expenses.



Advent Offering Out of Chaos, Hope

This the motto of Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA). Over the past two years, we have seen natural disasters such as hurricanes and devastating wildfires. Across the globe we have seen landslides, typhoons ravage countries and refugees fleeing their homes. Amid the chaos, there is hope that is brought by PDA.

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance comes in when the disaster hits and stays long into the recovery process. When most other organizations have packed their bags and gone home, PDA is still there assisting residents in recovery.

This year the Advent Offering will go towards Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. During the Sundays in Advent at the offering time, you can give to this organization by putting "Advent Offering" in the memo line of your check to the church.

For more information about the work of Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, take a look at their website <http://pda.pcusa.org/>

Christmas Joy Offering

The Christmas Joy Offering of the Presbyterian Church (USA) assist leaders and their families – past, present and future. The offering supports church workers and their families who have retired, those who continue their ministry, and those who will be our future leaders. Each of us gives thanks to someone who points us to God and the gift of Jesus Christ in our lives.

This year's Christmas Joy Offering will be received at the Christmas Eve services.

Face-To-Face With...

Tracy Dace

“To me, the church is mission.”



Tracy leads DREAAM House and is active in our Cuba Steering and Compassion, Peace and Justice groups.

What brought you to First Presbyterian Church?

I was looking for different work in 2013 and became the mission coordinator here. It was an interesting learning opportunity, and I met a lot of wonderful people. I was moved by the church's involvement with the community. So, I became a member in 2014 to join the team.

What has been the highlight of your church experience?

I love my trips to Cuba and Mission Possible. But perhaps the top highlight was my trips to Big Tent in Louisville and St. Louis. I was inspired by the depth of commitment, faith and joy of people during worship there. I was amazed at the variety of worship and the diversity of people who are Presbyterians. Also, I saw how the contemporary Presbyterian church is built on its great historical legacy.

Tell me about your family and your work.

I grew up in a Mississippi small town where my mom, who is a civil rights activist, still lives at age 80. I have two sisters and two brothers. I am single, but I have over 100 boys (DREAAM boys) running around every day. They are also my family. They keep me alive and very busy. Serving as Chief Visionary Officer of DREAAM House is a culmination of all my dreams and past experiences. Now my work with boys and young men ages 5-24 is giving hope and opportunity where there was almost none before.

What do you do in your free time?

Well, most important is couch time. I like most to get a good sleep. After that I enjoy the outdoors, local festivals, travel and theater.

Who is your favorite Bible character?

David. His courage and faith overcame great odds.

How can the church best be the church?

Mission. To me, the church is mission. We should focus on who we are, so we know where to go and what to do. I would love to see us partner with downtown churches and focus together on something that is meaningful to our downtown. This might be homelessness or beautification—something that we do together to impact our geographic neighbors.

DREAAM (Driven to Reach Excellence and Academic Achievement for Males) House. It is community impact organization with a justice-informed mission to reduce the achievement and opportunity gaps among boys and young men. Both the office of DREAAM House and the Day Reporting Center for youth are housed on our campus. See more at www.dream.org.

Outreach

BY GARY PETERSON, CHAIR

AMER_SWEDE@YAHOO.COM

The photo sessions with Life Touch had a great first week. They photographed almost 200 people and have more to do this week. Those times are filled so we have added two more days. Times will be Friday, December 7 (1-8 PM) and Saturday, December 8 (9 AM-4 PM). Please sign up for a picture as the pastors would like as many from our congregation as possible included in the church photo directory. Thanks to all who have completed this task so far. To sign up, visit <http://first-pres.chchurch/director> or call the church office.

It's been a great year and we will be meeting next week to begin the planning for 2019. We want to thank all who were involved in our many activities this year. We began the year by having homes host a welcome for **Matt and Rachel** as they arrived in February.

Other activities were an International Potluck, a Day in West Side Park to introduce our new Turquoise Table (thanks to **Bill Gamble**), several game nights (thanks to **Jason and Brandi Lowe**), Taste of C-U in West Side Park and Sholem Fest picnic and swim at Centennial Park.

We were also involved in the Big Event (Hands, Heart and Voice) providing food trucks and helping in other areas. The many 7, 8 or 9 dinners were enjoyed by all and will begin again in the new year. We were also involved in two pastoral installations and a Presbytery November meeting by lining up food and decorating (**Betty Hollister**) for those events.

Membership continues its work of tracking attendance and sending out thank you notes to our visitors and providing them with water bottles and pens. This fall they coordinated with Spiritual Formation and had a class, “What it means to be a Presbyterian”. We continue to coordinate greeters and coffee makers in showing our hospitality and being a “welcoming” church.

Please forward any thoughts or ideas to us. We are always looking for new ideas. You can reach me at amer_swede@yahoo.com. We also have an Outreach box in the church office.

Spiritual Formation

BY BETTY HOLLISTER

B.HOLL@MEDIACOMBB.NET

During his November visit to First Presbyterian, **Rev. Dr. J. Herbert Nelson**, Stated Clerk of PCUSA urged all of us to be the hands and feet of God to stand up for and speak up for all of God's children. There is no better time to find the inspiration to do this than during this Advent Season.

But how do we tune out the distractions of shopping, holiday parties, overextended credit lines and meaningless expectations of Hallmark Moments? How do we keep our priorities squarely on the hope of the Christ child? Your Spiritual Formation Team would like to suggest you fine-tune your focus this sacred season by participating in an Advent Study.

G. K. Chesterton says, "To love means loving the unlovable. To forgive means pardoning the unpardonable. Faith means believing the unbelievable. Hope means hoping when everything seems hopeless." Doesn't that tie in perfectly with Dr. Nelson's call to be the hands and feet of God to all? But how do we do it?

Learn more by participating in our study of *Advent and Christmas Wisdom* from G. K. Chesterton led by **Peter Yau** each Sunday this month in Mae Chapin Parlor at 10:15. You can get a book and read at your own pace OR just drop in when you can and participate in the discussions.

Sometimes being the hands and feet to all God's children requires acknowledging that this season of joy and hope can be difficult for many. Those who are grieving or overwhelmed by a loss may struggle to see the light of joy or feel the peace of antici-

ation. Reverend Todd Outcalt addresses these dark feelings of loneliness, hurt, fear, anxiety, or disappointment in his Advent devotional book called *Blue Christmas*. Your Spiritual Formation Team encourages you to find comfort doing these daily readings. Another option is to participate in *Moving Through Grief Chair Yoga* led by Rachel Bass-Guennewig on Fridays, November 30 - December 21, from 11:45-12:45 in the Chapel.

Visiting the PCUSA website <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/story/pt-2018-advent> provides many other suggestions to keep our hearts and minds tuned to the long awaited birth of the Christ and God's call to love all His children this sacred season and always.

Worship Notes

BY JUDI GEISTLINGER, CHAIR

JUDIGEISTLINGER@OUTLOOK.COM

Mark your calendar: Christmas Cantata will be Sunday, December 16, at the 9 AM service only (no 8 AM service that day.) Our Sanctuary Choir will combine forces with a chamber orchestra and the choir from First Presbyterian Urbana to feature *In Terra Pax* (On Earth, Peace) by Gerald Finzi.

The same music will be presented at Urbana the previous week, December 9.

Come celebrate Christmas with us!

Christmas Eve services:

- 10 AM Chapel
- 4 PM Family service
- 8 PM Traditional candlelight service

Sunday, December 30, we will have one service at 9 AM. We will celebrate Christmas by having a hymn sing of our favorite carols and congregation member and Amateur Preacher **Dave Whitford** will bring us news of great joy for this season. Please be sure to attend and don your festive Christmas wear.

Liturgists, tech team and ushers all could use volunteers, especially during the holidays. If you are willing, contact **Judi Geistlinger** (judgeistlinger@outlook.com)

Christmas 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.



A Shepherd Becomes a Sheep

At Christmas we celebrate God's becoming human when Mary gave birth to Jesus, our Good Shepherd. In Isaiah 53:6 we read, "We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all." Sheep without a shepherd not only wander off and get lost, but also are defenseless when attacked. We have times of doing our own thing, instead of what God wants, and have suffered. We needed our amazing Triune God to take on human flesh and die for our sins that we might have his righteousness and his Spirit to guide us.

Let us pray that our words and actions will lead others to the Lamb of God, the Good Shepherd.

Christmas Eve

- 10 AM** Worship/Chapel
- 4 PM** Family Service/Sanctuary
- 8 PM** Candlelight Service/Sanctuary

Joys & Concerns

We celebrate...

- **Kingston Offranel-Mbungu Muanda** born November 18, 2018. Parents are **Eric Mayele and Carine Moanda**.

We express our sympathy...

- To the family and friends of **Dorothy "Dottie" Miller** who died November 24, 2018.
- To the family and friends of **Juanita Rector** who died November 30, 2018.
- To the family and friends of **Barbara Swain** who died November 24, 2018.
- To the **McKay family** on the death of Don's father.

Making a Difference - Presbyterian Education Board (PEB) Pakistan

BY SALLIE HUTTON

dshutton@sbcglobal.net



Don Eberly, Sallie Hutton, Sabrina Hwu and Rachel Matthews recently traveled to Pakistan to the Presbyterian Education Board (PEB) to determine how the education program is working and what has been happening in the last 20 years since the schools were returned to PCUSA from the government. On our trip, we found the tables turned as a young teenager in one of the classes we were visiting asked us, "What is your purpose in life?" Not only were we amazed but bewildered at the great open mind she was showing. How would you have answered that question?

The education PEB is providing is amazing as we look at the scores from the government exams given to all students in Pakistan. The majority of these students are scoring in the top 10% with a few getting scores that are considered A+. The support we (First Presbyterian Church, Champaign) are giving results in great productivity in a country that has little opportunity to learn. We should be very proud of how our dollars are being spent.

If you want to know how we answered the question, ask Sabrina, Rachel, Sallie or Don.

Updates on ESL

BY JEANETTE PYNE, ESL COORDINATOR

JEANETTE@FIRSTPRES.CHURCH

One of our tutors, **Linda Sims**, created a pronunciation handbook specifically designed for our program. Due to her wonderful pronunciation handbook, we were also able to make a much-needed change to the schedule. We have made the first 30 minutes our café and conversation time and extended the students' class time, so now students are in their small group classes for an hour and 20 minutes.



In the orange class, the students are going through a lesson in Linda's pronunciation handbook.

This allows tutors to include Linda's pronunciation lessons in the class. There has been a very positive reception of Linda's pronunciation handbook and this change in the schedule from both tutors and students.

Fellowship is a big part of the First Pres ESL Program because it allows us to get to know each other better and grow deeper relationships. The Thanksgiving Potluck Party was a huge success. We had three long rectangular tables full of food!

One of the activities we did was particularly fun. This activity was a difficult trivia quiz about Thanksgiving. Did you know that the first Thanksgiving feast actually lasted three days? After the trivia quiz and prizes, we discussed what the tutors and students were thankful for. One

student, Maria, said that when she is not at the program, she feels sad and lonely. However, when she comes to the program, the front door is like a "magic door" because these negative feelings are replaced with feelings of happiness. This program positively affects the students who come and changes their lives. They love coming and feel safe to learn here. Thank you for supporting this program and its students.



(Left to Right) Roma, Jorge, Ron, and Sam are getting food at the potluck party.

Children, Youth & Family

Children, Youth & Family Update

BY MINDY WATTS-ELLIS, DIRECTOR OF CYF

mindy@firstpres.church

LIZZ PIPPEN, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

LIZZ@FIRSTPRES.CHURCH

Sunday School Notes

November brought a focus on the story of the prophet Elijah for the Elementary students. The preschool explored the concept that 'I trust God at Night.'

In December all ages will be studying the Christmas story and what the season of Advent is all about.

Family Events

Thank you to all the families who have volunteered to help light the Advent wreath candles in worship: **Debra, Sean and Miriam Miller; Lisa Ainsworth, Andrew, Fiona, and Hazel Leakey; Sarah, Mark, Sam, Henry, and Ellie**

Laufenberg; Eric, Cathy, Jack and Hannah Stickels, and Eric, Kristi, Faith, Ana, and Christopher Corbin.

Join us December 9 for a caroling outing! Our church family will gather at 4 PM in Westminster Hall and car pool to sing at local assisted living facilities. We will reconvene at the church for hot cocoa and cookies afterward.

Bring your family and friends and make a gingerbread house! CYF will be sponsoring candy house making in the café December 23 during the education hour from 10:15-11:05 AM. Please email Mindy at mindy@firstpres.church to let me know you plan to attend. That way we can make sure to have enough supplies.

Be sure to join us for the family worship service on Christmas Eve, December 24, at 4 PM in the Sanctuary. The children's choir will be singing. We will need six readers for the service. Contact Mindy at mindy@

firstpres.church if you would like to volunteer to be a reader for the program.

Youth Group

November was a quiet month for the youth. We spent our time together in bible study and deepening our community through games. On November 11th the high schoolers hosted the middle schoolers for a combined game night.

In December the youth will be going caroling on December 9. They will also have their annual cookie baking on December 15th 11 AM-3 PM and cookie sale on December 16.

In Sunday School the high school continued with Feasting on the Word which focuses on the lectionary readings for the week. Middle School studied our old testament ancestors Samson and David.

Join us for
Christmas Caroling
 Sunday, December 9
 4 PM

Gather in Westminster Hall and car pool to sing at local assisted living facilities. Return to church for hot cocoa and cook-



**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN**

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Change Service Requested



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Sunday:

8 AM Contemplative Service

9 AM Traditional Service

10:15 AM Sunday School and Adult Education

10:10 AM Adult Education & High School Class

11:15 AM Contemporary Service

Saturday:

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

Pastors:

Matt Matthews Senior Pastor/Head of Staff, Ext 213

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

Staff:

George Almasi.....Facility Assistant

Kristi Corbin Missions Coordinator, Ext. 219

Ritchie DrennenFacility Manager, Ext. 237

Patty Farthing..... Receptionist, Ext. 211

Robert Ferrer..... Audio-visual Technician

Marcia FranksAdministrative Assistant, Ext. 210

Joe GrantDirector of Music

Blaise PascalCYF Connections Assistant, Ext. 216

Ann Petry Accounting, Ext. 224

Lizz Pippin.....CYF Associate Director, Ext. 216

Jeanette Pyne.....ESL Coordinator, Ext. 235

Pierre TangChurch Musician/Children’s Choir Director

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

All staff email addresses are the person’s first name followed by
[@firstpres.church](mailto:info@firstpres.church). For example, eric@firstpres.church.

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