

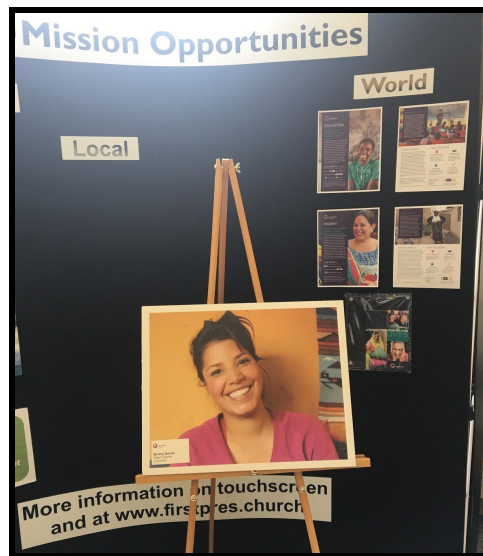
The Heart of



Missions

LOVE WINS!

Mission continues despite our distancing.



Even as **First Presbyterian Church Champaign** closed its physical doors this week, people here and all over the world continued their works of justice, loving kindness and humble walks with our God (Micah 6:8). Our **Mission Kiosk** has been beautifully decorated with the smiling faces of our friends from **Opportunity International** and you cannot be there to see it! So, I took a not so good photo of it to show you. I am sorry I am not a photographer or a journalist! I asked myself, as I felt the love, how can I get news of our mission partners to you in this time of physical distancing? I decided to resurrect **The Heart of Missions** and send it out with the other news you are receiving from First Presbyterian Church Champaign. Some of us are inundated with emails while others of us are restless and yearn for connection. Our **mission partners** are sending me all kinds of news, some of it rapidly changing. I intend to pass on information from our mission partners globally and locally so you will be informed. I am going to send things out as soon as I fill up a couple of pages. It occurs to me that some of you may be needing services from these friends and others of you will find you can still serve the world from your home. Your **mission team, world mission committee and community mission deacons** will all be putting their ears to the ground to help us continue to reach out to our friends in need during this time of exile.

Peace to you all,

Rachel Matthews, Temporary Mission Coordinator

First Presbyterian Church Champaign

Opportunity International

I mentioned Opportunity International above. You can find out more about Opportunity International on their website opportunity.org. You will discover a mission that changes lives. You will discover that they are “driven by a belief that everyone has the right to live their lives with dignity. We all deserve to hold our heads high, to send our children to school, to have a say in our households. But, without access to financial services a better life may be just out of reach.” I can only imagine what might be happening these days all around the world with our most vulnerable friends.

Ann Stout shared with some of us on World Mission these words from a recent email she received from them. *“While we sequester ourselves with our families and adjust our lifestyle to this new reality, let us be reminded of our brothers and sisters around the globe who:*

- *do not have the option to have “social distance”;*
- *do not have financial margin to provide care for the sick;*
- *do not have a backup plan for caring for their children or the elderly;*
- *do not know the reality of clean water and soap to wash hands;*
- *do not have the benefit of regular updates and proper actions to take;*
- *do not have the emotional or physical capacity to handle one more crisis...*

My heart is especially heavy today knowing that this illness will claim the lives of vulnerable people everywhere.”

Here in Champaign - CU at Home

Some of you may not have heard that Rob Dalhaus’s wife had their third child in February, Isaac Robert. Rob had a short break and jumped right into making daily adjustments to the work he does with our friends on the street. We want to keep their family in our prayers.

Rob is sending out weekly emails about the expanding work due to all the closings of what are services we take for granted but are vital for our friends on the street. In a recent mailing he noted that they have expanded their Phoenix Daytime Drop-In Center hours beginning Wednesday March 18 until further notice. The new Phoenix drop-in center hours will be Monday - Friday: 9:00am-5:00pm, and Saturday and Sunday 1:00pm-4:00pm. He noted that during these expanded hours, they will be promoting general cleanliness with our friends on the street as well as expansion of their shower and laundry services.

He noted several ways we can help:

- 1) *If praying is your thing, as it is ours, please be praying for health and safety for our friends on the street as well as our staff who are engaging with those men and women each day.*

2) Please consider supporting the ministry through the donation of items including: pre-packaged snacks (muffins, bags of chips, snack crackers, etc), laundry detergent pods, disinfectant spray, sanitizing wipes, hand sanitizer, face masks, Kleenex, and gift cards to places like Wal-Mart, Sam's, Target, Meijer, and Amazon.

3) If you feel led to do so, you can always make a financial contribution to our ministry through www.cuathome.us.

CU at Home is joining together in prayer on Thursdays. Here are some of their prayer and praise requests for this week from their newsletter:

- Would you join us in prayer for our **friends on the street who are extremely vulnerable during this time of COVID-19?** Pray for God's hand of protection around each of our friends without an address and our staff!
- Please pray for a **friend whose mental health struggles leave him combative and argumentative at times and a total gentlemen other times.** We pray for peace for his soul and that he would follow doctor recommendations on his medication.
- Would you also **pray that we would all remember that we serve a MIGHTY God who has not given us the spirit of fear and will help us overcome all that has been thrown at us over the past few weeks?**
- Thank you God for a **friend who will be moving into his own apartment on April 1st!!!**
- Praise the Lord for **the opportunity to be available for our friends and offer them hope, encouragement, and compassion during this time of uncertainty and seemingly moment by moment changes.**
- Praise to Jesus for a **friend without an address who has been a HUGE spiritual "uplifter" to our staff and those we serve!**

Our Friends at PEB in Pakistan



The Friends of PEB (Presbyterian Education Board) in Pakistan have had a change in staff this Spring.



Executive Director **Margy Trimble** left her position in Philadelphia to work in Pakistan with her husband who received a position at Foreman College in Lahore.

The new Executive Director **Chelsea Francek** has begun her work with energy. We will need her enthusiasm now that COVID 19 has entered Pakistan and shut down the schools there:

Last Friday, March 13th, the Punjab Government gave orders to close the schools and hostels for three weeks. PEB staff has quickly responded by forming a flexible work schedule for the teachers, instruction on sanitization and supplying the necessary cleaning tools and appliances, creating a more efficient online environment for connecting the various offices remotely, in addition to updating parents and formulating at-home assignments for the students, all in the diligent effort to avoid any delay in the academic calendar.



We are doing all we can at FOPEB to support PEB through this troubling time. It is now more important than ever for us to act as a community here in the US, to remind our friends and family over in Pakistan that we are here for them and the mission they serve so faithfully.

Pray for the Sangla Hill Schools where the girls and boys that First Presbyterian Church supports have gone from an emotional high of a great academic year to the anxiety of closed schools like many of our own families in this country. For more information see their website at friendsofpeb.org

Other News Around Town

COURAGE CONNECTION was in the news this morning! They are advising us that in this time when children are home from school and parents are home from work, distance but closeness, and no one has any breaks from each other, tensions can get high and things can be dangerous for some of our friends. Please contact Courage Connection if you need a safe, non-violent space. Reach out for help. courageconnection.org

CANTEEN RUN is looking for coordination help because of restructuring their runs due to COVID 19. Their current needs are

Long sleeved sweatshirts or sweaters
Med. -3 x-1 men's underwear

Size 10 and size 6 women's underwear

Socks

Gloves

You can take these to the Salvation Army on Market Street drop off and tell them it is for Canteen Run. See their website at www.cucanteenrun.org.

EMPTY TOMB, INC is also looking for coordinating help. First Presbyterian does not have a deacon coordinating our volunteers right now to make food deliveries with them. Some of you have been drivers before and might get a call from them. HOWEVER, First Presbyterian has not arranged drivers with Empty Tomb since the end of February and you should not be getting calls from them unless you yourself have given them permission to call you. We are not recommending that our congregation deliver food for them right now as much as this might be needed simply because we have not fully prepared our drivers for the new challenges ahead of us. Keep them in your prayers as they search for new staff.

Even the sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, at your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God. Happy are those who live in your house, ever singing your praise. - Psalm 84:3,4 (NRSV)



**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH** OF CHAMPAIGN

302 W. Church Street
Champaign, IL 61820
217-356-7238
info@firstpres.church