

April 2020



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN

Solemn Reproaches of the Cross

FROM THE BOOK OF COMMON WORSHIP

O my people, O my church,
what have I done to you,
or in what have I offended you?
Answer me.

Holy God . . . have mercy.

I led you forth from the land of Egypt
and delivered you by the waters of baptism,
but you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

Holy God . . . have mercy.

I led you through the desert forty years,
and fed you with manna.
I brought you through tribulation and penitence,
and gave you my body, the bread of heaven,
but you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

Holy God . . . have mercy.

What more could I have done for you
that I have not done?

I planted you, my chosen and fairest vineyard,
I made you the branches of my vine;
but when I was thirsty, you gave me vinegar to drink
and pierced with a spear the side of your Savior, and
you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

Holy God . . . have mercy.

I went before you in a pillar of cloud,
and you have led me to the judgment hall of Pilate.
I scourged your enemies and brought you to a land
of freedom, but you have scourged, mocked, and
beaten me. I gave you the water of salvation from

continued on the next page

Holy Week - Online Version

Join us for our online worship services this week. Check firstpres.live (or the facebook page) for links to the services

Mundy Thursday

7 PM we will have a traditional service of the Last Supper, remembering how Jesus served his disciples by washing their feet and breaking bread with them. We will be celebrating communion, so plan to have a little bit of bread (or cracker) and juice ready for this service.

Good Friday

7 PM is our service remembering the sacrifice Jesus made for us. Join us, along with our Methodist neighbors online, for this prayerful service.

Easter

9 AM. While we usually gather together in a crowded sanctuary, wearing our Easter finery, listening to the full choir accompanied by a brass quartet, along with the joyful news that Christ has Risen...He is Risen Indeed.. I have often said that it just doesn't feel like Easter without trumpets. But this year, will be more like the very first Easter, where a couple of women quietly approached the tomb, discovering it empty and sharing the joyful news of Christ's Resurrection. We will do our best to share the Easter joy while separated from one another physically.

Following the Public Health District's recommendation, we will be worshipping at a physical distance for the time being, but joining our hearts together. Do reach out to each other. You never know if someone might be struggling, carrying enormous burdens. We would love to be praying for those concerns. But there is also joyful news that we cannot celebrate together, but would love to hear about.

Share the joys you are experiencing. The spring flowers are gorgeous this year, the scent of the hyacinths breaking free of the ground and the way the sunshine boosts spirits. What about you?

the rock, but you have given me gall and left me to thirst, and you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

Holy God . . . have mercy.

I gave you a royal scepter, and bestowed the keys of the kingdom, but you have given me a crown of thorns. I raised you on high with great power, but you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

Holy God . . . have mercy.

My peace I gave, which the world cannot give, and washed your feet as a sign of my love, but you draw the sword to strike in my name and seek high places in my kingdom. I offered you my body and blood, but you scatter and deny and abandon me, and you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

Holy God . . . have mercy.

I sent the Spirit of truth to guide you, and you close your hearts to the Counselor.

I pray that all may be one in the Father and me, but you continue to quarrel and divide. I call you to go and bring forth fruit, but you cast lots for my clothing, and you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

Holy God . . . have mercy.

I grafted you into the tree of my chosen Israel, and you turned on them with persecution and mass murder. I made you joint heirs with them of my covenants, but you made them scapegoats for your own guilt, and you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

Holy God . . . have mercy.

I came to you as the least of your brothers and sisters; I was hungry and you gave me no food,

I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me, and you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

Holy God . . . have mercy.

LORD, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
LORD, have mercy.

* * *

Many of us prefer to skip Holy Week and jump from the Palm Sunday parade (Hosanna!) to Easter's Alleluia. But there six days between the festive days. The Solemn Reproaches of the Cross help us remember the weight of this Holy Week.

PEACE, Matt Matthews

Employee Highlights

BY NANCY WHITFORD, HUMAN RESOURCES
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The Human Resource team strives to keep the congregation informed about our wonderful staff, who keep our church and its programs functioning smoothly. This month we are featuring **Matt and Rachel Matthews**.

What, if anything, has surprised you about living in Champaign?

Matt gives Champaign an apt description, calling it “a giant small town.” He loves the music and theater scene and misses The Art Theater.

Moving here in February 2018 Rachel quickly discovered the gray days of winter and missed the lack of color that she enjoyed in the South. But she now appreciates the subtle colors of the Midwest that exist in every season. She loves our bright sunny days and realizes that Champaign has more water and wind than she anticipated. Like Matt, she enjoys the

wide range of musical experiences available in our community.

What are your favorite places to explore or visit?

Both Matt and Rachel love all of our parks, with a special fondness for Hessel Park, located so near to their home. They enjoy visiting Allerton, especially the peony garden, and cycling to the Urbana Farmers Market and taking the rail trail to St. Joseph. Another favorite place to visit is the Art Institute in Chicago.

What remains on your bucket list to do or explore?

The Matthews have been busy the past two years, but new experiences remain. Matt wants season symphony tickets to Krannert and to make more visits to the Art Institute. He also wants to meet – and thank – **Lovie Smith**. Rachel looks forward to visiting Camp Carew and to continue attending musical performances. An avid gardener, Rachel plans to spend plenty of time tending her garden this summer.

What are you currently reading and what are your recommendations from the books you've read during the past year?

Matt has been reading *The New York Times Book of the Dead, Obituaries of Extraordinary People*. A favorite from the past year is Joshua Slocum's *Sailing Around the World Alone*.

Rachel loves mysteries and enjoyed Erik Larson's *Devil in the White City*, and found time to enjoy two of Louise Penny's Inspector Armand Gamache mysteries, despite all the reading she did to obtain her Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor accreditation. She is also reading *Peter Simon* by Adam Alexander for her Thursday Bible study.

To Matt and Rachel, thank you for sharing a little of your personal life with us. We are so happy that you are a part of our lives and our community.

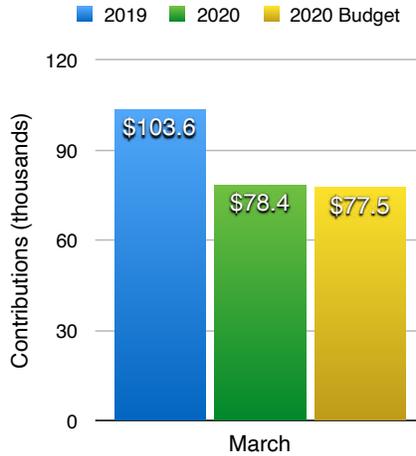
Finance

Financial Update

BY MARK SCHOEFFMANN, CHAIR FINANCE
MSCHOEFFMANN@MCHSI.COM

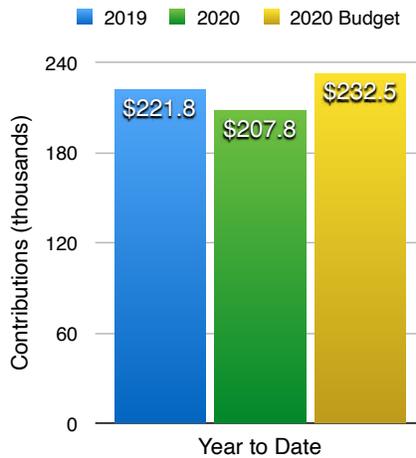
Contributions

Contributions in March were \$25.2K less than in 2019 but \$0.9K above the budget at \$78.4K. The Year to Date total is below last year by \$14.0K and below the budgeted amount by \$24.7K. 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 revenue sources, at 25% through the year, we have received 35% of the expected 2020 revenue.



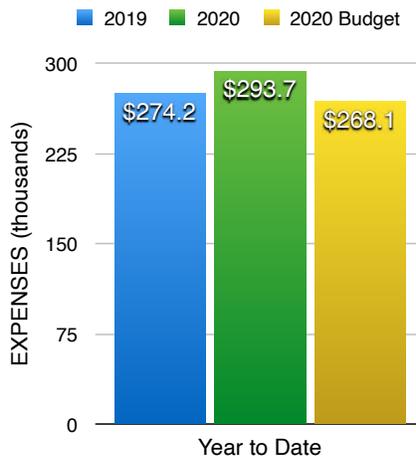
Expenses

Year to Date expenses are \$25.6K above the budget at \$293.7K and more than in 2019 by \$19.5K. At 25% through the year we have experienced 27.4% of the expected 2020 expenses.



Balance

Considering all sources, revenue exceeds expenses by \$67.8K which is \$34.9K better than at the end of March in 2019. This figure includes \$61.9K more in prepaid pledges than in 2019.



Continue Your Contributions

Even though our buildings are closed and our gatherings shifted online, our staff, facilities, programs and support of local/world missions continue to need your financial contributions. Please continue your support of First Presbyterian. Your contributions may be made at our website or mailed to the church office. Thank you for your continuing support.

What are you most grateful for at First Pres? Here are some of the responses...

Small groups

- Small groups
- Bible study: getting deeper into God's Word and joy in learning what other Christians get from the studies
- All the groups, educational opportunities...
- Classic Christian Book Study Fellowship and Monday Night Bible Study
- My Circle of Joy. I treasure this group of friends and the great fellowship and our lively discussions of the lessons
- Wonderful variety of small groups
- Bible study
- Small Group Bible Study
- Small Groups
- Bible Studies
- Small groups – friends

Children, Youth & Family

Children, Youth & Family Update

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

There will be no Sunday School or other in-person group programming until social distancing restriction recommendations are lifted by the center for disease control. Visit our Facebook group page for "family features" for suggested activities to view and do at home together. First Presbyterian Church Facebook page

High School youth group will meet virtually each Friday afternoon at 3:30 PM by way of Zoom. Please join us for our Lenten discussion on your phone or laptop from the comfort of your home! Youth Group Zoom meeting If you use your phone, you have to download the Zoom app first. Make sure you enable video and audio so we can all see and hear each other.

Mr. Connor is preparing some virtual sing-along songs! We will periodically be posting sing-along segments with Mr. Connor on the church group Facebook page at First Presbyterian Church Facebook page. There are already two songs posted! Keep checking the page for new things.

The Confirmation Retreat at Camp Carew is canceled.

The filled fish banks will be collected on Easter Sunday. Since the church will not be able to hold Easter services at the church building, the fish banks can be dropped off at the church office. Please put the contents into a ziplock bag taped shut for extra assurance and clearly labeled as OGHS with the name of the family it is from and pushed through the mail slot on the church education building door that faces State street. One Great Hour of Sharing supports the Presbyterian Hunger

program, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, and the Self-Development of People program. Click on this link for more information. OGHS offering

The Confirmation Class may soon be resuming online. Stay tuned for more details. The class leaders will be contacting the families.



Something to brighten your day and a reminder things will get better.



Those who know the Lord trust Him, because He will not leave those who trust in Him.

Psalm 9:10

We can know a lot About God. But, as we spend more time with Him, in prayer, we find peace and trust in a personal relationship with Him.

Jays & Concerns

Session Updates...

- Our church will be refraining from face-to-face worship on our campus until further notice. Motion seconded, and carried unanimously.
- We will refrain from church-sponsored face-to-face meetings, both on and off-campus, until further notice. Motion seconded, and carried unanimously.
- Our communion schedule will not be interrupted. As the body of Christ, we will celebrate the sacrament of holy communion via livestream, during the constraints of this coronavirus pandemic.

Congratulations to...

- **Daniel Izquierdo** and his wife, **Anatiza Sanchez**, on the birth of their son, Isaac, on February 24. Daniel is the pastor of our sister church in Cuba.
- To all those that were recognized in the recent edition of the News Gazette's *Seventy over 70* including church members: **Barb Barker**, **Tom Ulen** and **Nancy Whitford**.

Mission Updates

ESL Program Update

BY JEANETTE PYNE, ESL COORDINATOR
JEANETTE@FIRSTPRES.CHURCH

Teaching ESL and Social Distancing
Before Governor J. B. Pritzker made his shelter-in-place announcement, the ESL Advisory Committee had already agreed to suspend classes. Many of our tutors and students fall under the at-risk category for COVID-19. At first, I did not know what I was going to do. We were still on spring break, so I had time to decide. How can we still help the students while still maintaining social distancing?

The ESL Advisory Committee and I decided that it would be best to move the classes online. **Vern Snoeyink, Mike Havey, and Linda Sims** are all pretty adept at using technology, but I didn't know if any of the other tutors and students would feel comfortable doing this. Therefore, I surveyed both the tutors and students. About half of the tutors have agreed to do some sort of online teaching. Some tutors have asked the students to email them regularly and the tutors are providing feedback on their submissions. Most of the tutors are using Zoom, a video conferencing platform, to hold 40-minute tutoring sessions with a small group of students.

Our class sizes are smaller: we have about 5 people in each group. However, I'm so grateful that the Lord has provided such wonderful and flexible tutors that they are willing to try something new like this to help our students. We're excited to see our students and to teach them, even though we're unsure and nervous about how this will go. I have asked both tutors and students to be patient because this is all so sudden and new for everyone.

Please pray that this goes well and that the students and tutors would be blessed by this experience.

Green Team Update

BY CLEMMIE ACKERMANN, MEMBER
ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE
COLETTA.ACKERMANN@GMAIL.COM



New Ways to Celebrate Earth Day

This won't come as a surprise, but the Environmental Stewardship Committee wants to be certain you know about changes to our previously scheduled activities.

Adopt A Highway and Styrofoam Collection Events

Both events will be postponed until further notice. Keep cleaning and saving that Styrofoam with the #6 and chasing arrows. When things get back to normal, we'll reschedule.

Earth Day Church Celebration

Our church celebration is still scheduled for Sunday, April 26th. We'll keep you posted!

While Social Distancing

- On Earth Day, April 22, at 7 PM, PBS will premiere a documentary titled *Climate Change: The Facts*. The documentary will look at the facts and evidence of global warming, highlight possible solutions and

describe actions individuals might take to prevent further damage.

- Go to earthday.org to find ideas for at-home activities
- Send letters to state and federal representatives and senators supporting earth care issues.
- Take the opportunity to read about the environment
- Research local, state, national and international environmental organizations and send financial support
- Consider picking up trash as you take your daily walks in your neighborhood.

Prospect Bank is offering free and secure paper shredding for your sensitive documents.

SHRED DAY
MONDAY, APRIL 20
9 AM-3 PM
PROSPECT BANK
2 box or garbage bag limit

Be Well Stay Safe God Bless

Drivers Needed

Volunteer drivers under age 60 and in good health are needed to deliver groceries on Thursdays at noon from the Public Health Department to immigrant families without transportation.

Food will be boxed for you. You then drop off at the front doors of families. The viral epidemic and the economic shutdown superimposed on continued national policy pressures on young immigrant families is severe.

Can you help for one to two hours any Thursday? Contact **Bob Kirby** rwk3213@gmail.com or **David Dorman** ddorman@marlboro.edu.

Shop at Salt & Light

Salt & Light has about 80% of what you may need for groceries at a good price and in an uncrowded environment. Shopping there helps to feed and employ those who lack food security.

Location is 1819 S. Philo Rd., Urbana. Hours are Monday to Saturday from 8 AM -6 PM. Elderly and other high risk shoppers have reserved time from 9-10 AM. Sunday hours are 11 AM to 5 PM.

Church of Matthew 25

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) approved Item 11-03: "On Choosing to Be a Church Committed to the Gospel of Matthew 25". Its first recommendation was that the PC(USA) "recommit ourselves to locate ourselves with the poor, to advocate with all of our voice for the poor and to seek opportunities to take risks for and with the poor." This would later serve as the impetus for the Presbyterian Mission Agency's Matthew 25 invitation, which calls the church to the work of building congregational vitality, dismantling structural racism and eradicating systemic poverty.

We are a Matthew 25 congregation.

In this time of social isolation the poor are highly impacted. How do we seek opportunities to take risks for and with the poor?

Bones, Fossils and Dinosaurs

Archeology sparked enthusiasm in DREAAMers. Recently boys completed an archeological dig and later used small shovels and brushes to explore their own

terrariums filled with sand, soil and prehistoric goodies.



Anita Purves Nature Center is a popular learning site where boys experience active learning in earth and life sciences. The Urbana Park District is an important DREAAM partner. Its staff provides programs each Thursday when schools are open.

Learn more about DREAAM Opportunity Center at dreaam.org.

Nurture Committee

BY SABRINA HWU, CHAIR
SABRINAHWU88@GMAIL.COM

Sub-committees: Membership, Hospitality & Fellowship

Nurture Committee wants to sincerely thank more than 30 volunteers that offered to reach out to "the flock." Over 350 family units will be contacted. We want each family to know that together, we are the body of Christ, becoming stronger together.

We hope that all of you will enjoy a call from an old friend or a chance to chat with someone new.

If you know of a family that we missed or has special needs, please let me know. Thank you for all your prayers.

The Heart of Missions Newsletter has been revived during this COVID-19 crisis. Our local and global mission agencies are having to make rapid changes due to shelter in place orders, as well as food and medical supply shortages. The newsletter helps summarize some of what has been in the mission news for our mission workers and agencies during the past week in case you missed it.

You can access The Heart of Missions on the church website under the SERVE tab at <https://www.firstpres.church/the-heart-of-missions/>



**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN**

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Change Service Requested



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E: info@firstpres.church

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Sunday:

- 9 AM Worship
- 10:15 AM Sunday School and Adult Education
- 11:15 AM Worship

Pastors:

- Matt Matthews..... Senior Pastor/Head of Staff, Ext 213
- Eric Corbin..... Associate Pastor, Ext. 214

Staff:

- George Almasi Facility Assistant
- Ritchie DrennenFacility Manager, Ext. 237
- Patty Farthing.....Receptionist, Ext. 211
- Robert FerrerAudio-visual Technician
- Marcia Franks Administrative Assistant, Ext. 210
- Joe Grant..... Director of Music
- Rachel Matthews Temporary Missions Coordinator, Ext. 219
- Blaise Pascal..... CYF Connections Assistant, Ext. 216
- Ann Petry.....Accounting, Ext. 224
- Lizz Pippin CYF Associate Director, Ext. 216
- Jeanette Pyne..... ESL Coordinator, Ext. 235
- Richard Rossi Church Musician
- Mindy Watts-Ellis.....Director Children, Youth & Family, Ext. 212

All staff email addresses are the person's first name followed by @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.