

January 2018



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN

A New Thing

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

Happy New Year! With the changing of the calendar comes new things – perhaps new gifts from Christmas, new resolutions, getting used to writing “2018.” What about new things in the church? For starters, we are very excited that we’ll welcome our new Senior Pastor, **Matt Matthews**, on February 1. If you haven’t already, please visit www.firstpres.church/pastormatt to learn more about Matt and his wife, Rachel. Stay tuned for information about opportunities to meet Matt and Rachel and get to know them.

New on our staff is our first Outreach Coordinator, **Beth Chandler**. Beth began this week and her task will be to help us to promote the wonderful ministries of First Pres in the community, as we encourage others to join in the work of God here. Welcome, Beth!

New in my life is that my transfer of ordination from the Cumberland Presbyterian Church to the Presbyterian Church (USA) was finalized in November. Many thanks to those who walked this path with me and to those who came to the meeting of presbytery where my ordination transfer was recognized (see photo).

What is God calling you to in this new year? Where is God leading our church? *Isaiah 43:8-9* says “Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?” In this new year, may we be attuned to the new things God is doing in our midst.

What’s new in your life? I’d love to hear about it. Drop me a line sometime at eric@firstpres.church



Updates...

Stewardship 2018

Our stewardship pledge total for 2018 is still short of the need for the ministries of the church this year. If you have not submitted your pledge, please visit www.firstpres.church/stewardship2018 or give the office a call. Thank you for “Making a Difference!”

Photos

To help our new Senior Pastor (and others!), we would love to have a photo of each member/active participant in the church database. If you have a photo that you would like to use, please email it to photos@firstpres.church (or you can add it yourself through the church management software at www.firstpres.info).

We will be taking photos between services Sunday, January 14, for those who do not have a photo available.

Souper Bowl of Caring

We will participate in the Souper Bowl of Caring collection this year on February 4. Our confirmation class will be standing at the doors after the 9 AM and before the 11 AM worship to receive your donations. Souper Bowl of Caring utilizes the energy around our nation’s biggest sport day to mobilize and inspire youth to fight hunger and poverty in their community. 100% of donations will go to a local charity that the confirmation class will choose after learning of our church’s local mission efforts and partner organizations. Please be generous!

Making a Difference Stewardship Drive

94% to our goal

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

As we begin the new year we have serious concerns regarding our operating budget. Session has approved a budget for 2018 that estimates a total of \$740,000 in pledge commitments. This estimate is slightly less than the total pledge contributions received in 2017 and is the amount necessary to fund our existing programs and services through 2018.

Currently only \$692,427 in commitments have been received.

The Session's goal is to maintain all our programs and services as we begin a new chapter of the long history in our community with a new head of staff. We feel this new chapter will bring growth and allow our continued progress in making a difference in our community. We do not want to reduce our programs or services due to lack of funding.

Please prayerfully consider your pledge commitment for 2018. You may show your support by providing a pledge, if you have not yet made a commitment, or increasing your pledge for 2018. Call or email Marcia in the church office to do so.

We feel it is important to show our support for our new head of staff, **Matt Mathews**, by not cutting back on programs or services in his first year. Let us demonstrate to him our commitment to God's work. Thank you for considering this request.

Financial Update

Contributions

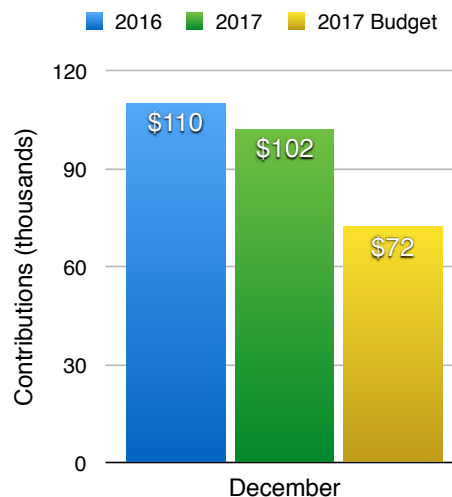
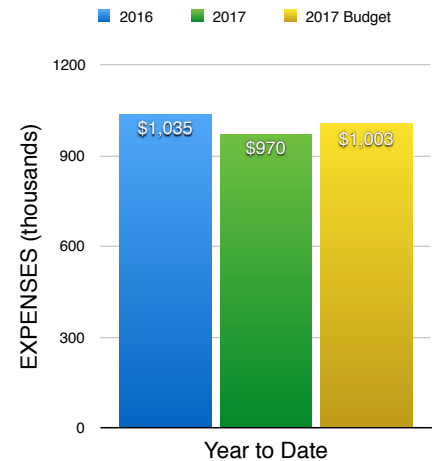
Contributions in December were \$8K less than 2016 but \$30K above the budget at \$102K. The Year to Date total is below last year by \$23K but is above the budgeted amount by \$1K. These figures

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.

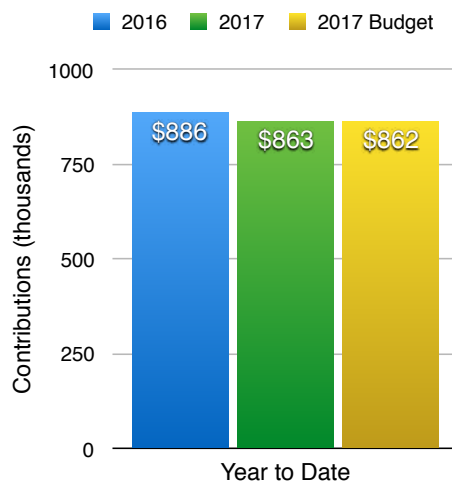
Expenses

Year to Date expenses are \$33K below budget at \$970K and \$65K below 2016. Considering all sources, revenue exceeds expenses by \$21K which is \$73K better than at the end of 2016.

Although this figure includes a \$29K transfer from other funds that was not made in 2016 this is the first year since 2013 that we have completed a budget year in the black!



We welcome donation of your extra **2018 Calendars** to support needs of our ESL Program and Logan Correctional Facility in Lincoln, IL. A box is available in the mission area of Westminster Hall for your donations.



Beat the January Blahs and Join a Small Group

New Year Resolution including a deeper understanding of our church past, present and future? Join us on Sunday mornings at 10:10 starting January 7 for a six-week study of the Protestant Reformation. **Pat Metcalf** will be our teacher as we come together in Mae Chapin Parlor for fellowship and study together.

Copies of the *Small Group and Adult Education Opportunities* for Winter 2018 are now available in the kiosks and at the Welcome Center. Check out all the classes being offered and join a small group!

January Blahs

BY GARY & LINDA PETERSON, OUTREACH CHAIR
(amer_swede@yahoo.com)

The decorating has turned into dusting and decluttering, the baking into guilt-driven exercise, and even the Hallmark movies are winding down. But, all is not lost.

You still have time to lift your spirits by performing or reporting your Random Act of Kindness. The Outreach Committee is so grateful that many of you have been busy spreading God's love by slipping a \$5 bill into an egg carton or rewarding a hard working Salvation Army bell ringer with a gift or even helping pay someone's rent. We know that the pleasure of the recipient was topped only by the joy of the giver. Thank you so much to all who have participated.

The committee wants to remind everyone that we are responsible for reporting back to Presbytery with results of how we used their "seed money." So please turn in a Response Card at the Welcome Center or **Betty Hollister**, b.holl@mediacombb.net. Let's keep the true spirit of the season going until the spring thaw and beyond. Stay warm and fuzzy by spreading the kindness and love.

We are happy to report that Outreach has hired a Coordinator. **Beth Chandler** will begin working 10 hours per week beginning January 8. This position became available when our Contemporary Worship Leader, **Andrea Pope**, cut her hours back. Beth has experience in writing, media relations, event planning, news releases, web design and marketing. This position will benefit the entire church by reaching out into the community to expand the circle of God's love. Please welcome Beth when you get the opportunity to meet her.

Cuba Study Completed Travel Planned

BY BOB KIRBY
(rwk3213@gmail.com)

Twelve people completed the annual Cuba study in December all of whom plan to visit our sister church this May. The study examined the culture of Cuba particularly the historical relationships between our two countries and also focused on the history and traditions of the Presbyterian Reformed Church of Cuba. We prayed together, laughed together and learned some Spanish phrases and sang some Cuban hymns.

Planning to visit Cuba in May are **Eric Corbin, Beth, Jay and Judy Geistlinger, Bob and Claudia Kirby, Pat Metcalf and Jean Murray** all of Champaign; **Barbara Mann and Mindy Watts-Ellis** of Urbana and **Sue Tomlin and Betty Stelmazewski** of Mount Vernon.

Our covenant defines the relationship between our two congregations agreed upon by our sessions in 2012 and renewed in 2015. Our purpose is to create a partnership between our two churches embodying our Unity in Christ; to strive to be faithful witnesses to Jesus Christ in our families, our communities, our countries and our world; to sensitize both church families to critical situations in our societies, and cooperate in the projects to which the Church as a part of the Body of Christ can make a substantial contribution. We share our lives in Christ with our Cuban brothers and sisters, learn from each other and pray for each other.



Pastor Daniel Izquierdo signs covenant renewal in 2015.



Presbyterian Reformed Church of Cuba at Luyanó

Prayer Corner



Start the Year Rejoicing

For many the beginning of a new calendar year is the time to make a fresh start. Psalm 118:24 says, "This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." Although this is about the Sabbath day, Christians can rejoice every day because we have a Savior who is continually working in our lives to guide, encourage and instruct us. He wants to give us the biblical wisdom and strength to make wise choices.

This year let us spend time daily with our Lord in biblical meditation, prayer and rejoicing.

Benevolence Fund

BY BOB KIRBY
(rwk3213@gmail.com)

Our congregation is both financially blessed and financially diverse where many brothers and sisters face short term financial emergencies beyond their capacity to meet. We are called to be wise stewards of the Lord's money. This includes, as was true of the early church community as described in Acts, sharing among ourselves as emergency needs arise.

Our Benevolence Fund is supported by individual gifts from members of the congregation. It is an emergency fund to help with rent, utilities, food and medicine when other assistance is not available. Applications are reviewed by a committee of three members appointed by our pastors. In general, a family must have a significant relationship with our congregation and can receive help only once a year for no more that \$500. Vendors are paid directly on behalf of recipients.

You can help maintain the fund with a donation to our Church with a memo: "benevolence fund". Should you have emergency needs you may talk to a pastor. Applications are available at www.firstpres.church under "resources/forms". All requests are kept confidential.

Content adapted from Benevolence Fund Policy which is available in its entirety from the office.

Jays & Concerns

We extend our sympathy to...

- the family and friends of **Donna Kuhlman** who died December 19, 2017. A memorial service will be held on Saturday, February 17, at 11 AM in our Sanctuary.
- the family and friends of **Rosanne Koehler** who died December 27, 2017. A memorial service was held on Tuesday, January 9.

Congratulations to...

- **Patrice Malumbi and Cynthia Mpeмба** on the birth of son, Winner Malumbi born December 5, 2017.

Our Church

Children, Youth & Family Update

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

Sunday School Notes

In December the Sunday School children put their focus on the Christmas story. The preschool class studied that Jesus is God's son. Our elementary classes studied 'Good News!' which focused on the messages from the angels about the birth of Jesus.

The Middle School class studied Mary, the mother of Jesus.

The High School class studied the characters from the Christmas story from a modern perspective and considered what each person might have posted if they had social media.

This month the preschool class will study 'God is with me Everywhere.' The elementary children will study Jesus' baptism and the significance of baptism as a sacrament in the church. The Middle School students will be studying Deborah and John the Baptist.

Youth Fellowship

On December 10, our youth joined McKinley Church at Market Place Mall for a luncheon in the food court and a round of Mall Tag. Mall tag was a game in which teams of youth went shopping for Christmas wish items for families that are patrons of the Garden Hills food pantry.

There was a time limit for purchasing items and teams had to avoid being tagged and sent back to the food court. It was a lot of fun for a good cause.

This month we are planning to have a lock-in on January 14 and join in on the

community day of service on Monday, January 15 for the Martin Luther King Jr. celebration.

Mission

The youth would like to thank the congregation for their support of the mission trip fundraiser. They made over \$400 from the Christmas Cookie Sale towards the summer Go and Serve trip.

Transportation Ministry

BY BOB KIRBY
(rwwk3213@gmail.com)

Sixty people benefit regularly from our Transportation Ministry and twenty volunteers and staff make it work. Our fifteen passenger van was purchased in 2013 through a special congregational collection. A team of twenty car drivers, adult assistants and staff also support the transportation ministry dedicated to the premise that those who want to worship with us will be able to do so. Driving others is environmentally responsible and a great way get to

know people who are often the newest in our congregation.

We provide transportation not only for weekly worship but for youth fellowship events and mission trips. The van also transports boys and staff in the DREAM House. You can see us at dawn, dusk and midday in Savoy, southeast and north Urbana in central, north and northwest Champaign and occasionally in Rantoul. Watch for us in your neighborhood and give us a honk.

As the new year begins we pause to thank our Transportation Team and invite you to join us. Thanks to **Judy Gamble, Katharine Jones, Christian Ilunga, Bob and Claudia Kirby, Parfait Lukau, Pat Metcalf, César Mnyampara, John Muirhead, Audry Kukosama Muntu, Clarisse Mushengezi, Chris Penny, Linda and Gary Peterson, Naomi Rempe, Kurt Ruthsmandorfer, Linda Tichener, Mark and Kathy Schoeffmann, Peter Yau, Rittchell Yau and Vern Snoeyink.**



Our church van travels throughout our community a sign of service and hospitality.



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN

302 West Church Street
Champaign, IL 61820

Change Service Requested



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN

Pastors:

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

Staff:

Beth ChandlerOutreach Coordinator
Kristi Corbin Missions Coordinator, Ext. 219
Ritchie DrennenFacility Maintenance
Patty Farthing..... Receptionist, Ext. 211
Robert Ferrer..... Audio-visual Technician
Marcia FranksAdministrative Assistant, Ext. 210
Joe GrantDirector of Music
Blaise Pascal ...Asst Director Children, Youth & Family, Ext 216
Chris Penny Facilities Manager, Ext. 237
Ann Petry Accounting, Ext. 224
Andrea Pope.....Contemporary Worship Director
Jeanette Pyne.....ESL Coordinator, Ext 235
Richard Rossi Church Musician
Mindy Watts-Ellis ..Director Children, Youth & Family, Ext. 212

All staff email address 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 publication. Send submissions to marcia@firstpres.church.

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Champaign, IL 61820

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E: info@firstpres.church

www.firstpres.church

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