

# November 2018



## FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN

### Snippets from Your Pastor

#### A Murder in the Neighborhood

BY MATT MATTHEWS, PASTOR

MATT@FIRSTPRES.CHURCH

In the 1930's Martin Niemollor was a Lutheran pastor of a wealthy Berlin suburb. He supported the Nazis until the early 1930's when the government, more and more, meddled in the affairs of the church. At the end of the war after his release from seven years in concentration camps, he wrote this poem:

*When the Nazis came for the communists,  
I remained silent;  
I was not a communist.*

*When they locked up the social democrats,  
I remained silent;  
I was not a social democrat.*

*When they came for the trade unionists,  
I did not speak out;  
I was not a trade unionist.*

*When they came for the Jews,  
I did not speak out;  
I was not a Jew.*

*When they came for me,  
there was no one left to speak out.*

Who in our culture has no one to speak up for them? Who are we—First Presbyterian Church—not speaking up for? How are we being a good neighbor with all our neighbors?

I've been thinking about that a lot this week.

On Tuesday evening, October 30, our church's Cuba study group sat together lamenting the terrible assassinations of Jewish brothers and sisters as they worship in Pittsburgh. We sat around our breakfast table and said the sorts of things you've said at times like that. We were truly sorry. We felt helpless. All of our solutions—to me, anyway—felt inadequate to stem the tide of random acts of vicious violence.

We agreed language matters, and hate language at all levels of society needs immediately to be challenged for what it is. We agreed our increasing lack of

**continued on next page**



## Friday, November 16

### 9 AM-1 PM

**The Reverend Dr. J. Herbert Nelson II**  
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly,  
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

- 9:00 AM Registration
- 9:30 AM Presentation and Q&A
- 10:30 AM Break
- 10:45 AM Panel discussion on transformation efforts in our community
  - Tracy Dace, DREAM House
  - Dr. Rebecca Ginsberg, Education Justice roject
  - Rev. Robert Freeman, Pastor of First Methodist in Urbana
- 12:00 PM Working lunch and Action Planning

*Please contact the church office (217.356.7238) to reserve a space for a light lunch.*

*Offerings will be accepted for those who can help defray the cost of lunch.*

civility in this country (and perhaps around the world) contribute directly to emboldening people to wreak havoc not only with their words, but, with increasingly frequent deadliness. We could have talked about race, about power differentials, about gun control and gun culture, about fear mongers, about better help for the mentally ill. We could have talked all night.

Coulda, shoulda, woulda.

We were impotent armchair quarterbacks whimpering from the sidelines for world peace, justice for all, and brotherly and sisterly love. Wringing our hands. Feeling outraged. Feeling defeated. Looking at our feet. Ain't it awful. Can't we just get along?

Lord, have mercy.

Somebody mentioned the murders in our own community. What do we do about them? The ones in our own back yard? Somebody said, next time there's a murder in our town, we should gather to pray. We should gather to pray at the site of where the murder occurred, someone else said. This, at the time, seemed another weak, incomplete response to murder, but it seemed better than doing nothing. It seemed a legitimate and constructive way to channel our collective outrage. Christians gathering to pray is never a bad idea.

Our conversation shifted from Pittsburgh and Champaign County to Cuba, our reason for gathering that night. We've been gathering each week to learn about Cuba because we plan on traveling there in February. We're trying to help build relations with that culture through our long-time partnership with the Luyano Presbyterian Church in Havana. We had our usual good meeting.

By the time we were driving home, Dondre Moore had been shot on the 400 block of West Vine. By the time we turned on the evening news, Dondre Moore was dead.

How is First Presbyterian Church being a good neighbor?

Pastor Niemoller may have been a perfectly "polite" neighbor in his comfortable Berlin suburb, but by his own admission he wasn't a very good neighbor to the whole neighborhood. And when he needed a good neighbor, a really good neighbor, a neighbor willing to speak up for him, it's no surprise he didn't have one. None were left.

As a newcomer to our church, I look around and think we are doing a pretty good job of being a good neighbor. Examples abound.

Our World Mission Team attempts to keep us connected with neighbors around the world. First Presbyterian Church is deepening relationships with mission co-workers and ministry partners in Indonesia, Central Africa, Cuba, and Pakistan. Our Pakistan travel group leaves November 8th to visit the girls' school in Sangla Hill; that country has only recently been awash in unrest thanks to a recent court decision. Our Cuba travel group leaves in February to stay with friends in our partner church in Havana.

Locally, our Community Mission Deacons keep us helpfully connected with local mission partners—to S.A.F.E. House, Salt & Light, and feeding, immigration, and sheltering ministries all over town.

Our campus houses important mission initiatives. DREAAAM House offices are here. The nurturing ministry of Young Lives happens here. AA meets here. We run an ESL program here.

And that's not a full list. We are attempting to be good stewards of both our natural environment and our human relationships, paying particular attention to the least of these.

Being a good neighbor, of course, is an essential calling of the church. For Martin Niemoller that meant being in authentic relationship with the communists, the social democrats, the trade unionists, and the Jews. Each of these groups of people were precisely the people who were outside of his comfort zone. These were people he either disagreed with, didn't like, or didn't

care to notice.

But notice we must. We are called to stand with international and community mission partners, with local merchants, teachers, police, non-profits, sister houses of worship, and with those who live right next door.

On the afternoon of Halloween, five of us from our church walked door-to-door handing out white roses to our neighbors in the 400 block of West Vine. We wanted them to know that we noticed the news that went down the night before on their street. We noticed, and we were outraged, and broken, and prayerful, and reaching out.

I believe these neighbors need us. And as importantly, if not more so, we need them.

The "answer" to the problems in the world is Jesus. Any Christian would agree. To broaden that, the answer is love. To make it more concrete, the answer is being a good neighbor. Know your neighbor. Talk to your neighbor. Eat with your neighbor. Pray for your neighbor. And however you do it, be a good neighbor.

Mother Teresa's voice comes to my mind. Never be satisfied with your circle of good friends, but widen the circle. It's not just your next door neighbor that matters, but it is the neighbor down the street and the neighbor across the ocean.

Be a good neighbor.

And for the record let me announce what I hope to do next time there's a murder in our area. I'll gather with you the next day before nightfall around our church van. Well pray. I'll call the police, as I did last week, and tell them where we are going. We'll drive to the site of the crime. There, we'll pray. Then we'll play it by ear. We'll be open to the Spirit's nudging. Perhaps we'll walk around the block, up and down the street. We'll knock on doors and pass out white roses. We'll introduce ourselves. We won't talk politics. We won't pass around petitions. We won't stir the pot or crank up the heat. We'll just listen. We'll tell them that First Presbyterian Church

isn't that far away. We'll tell them we stand ready to welcome and serve. We'll thank them for being our neighbor.

Before the sun goes down the next day, we'll bear to them Christ's promise. None of us is alone. And nothing can separate us from God's love. Nothing.

This seems a small, ineffectual thing to do in the face of such life-ending violence. But small things matter. And two voices are better than one.

LORD, have mercy.  
Matt Matthews

### Matt Matthew's Charge to Associate Pastor Eric Corbin

Eric, I charge you with these words . . .

**\*Focus:** Keep your eyes on Jesus. The story of Peter walking on water serves as an example (Matthew 14:22ff): The disciples are on a boat battered by waves. Jesus appears to them, standing on the water. Peter says, 'Wow, I'd like to try walking on water, too.' Jesus invites him to try, and while he's coming toward Jesus he succeeds at walking on water. As soon as he loses focus, he sinks. Keep your eyes (and heart) on Jesus and you won't sink.

**\*Pray:** From an easy-to-miss verse in the first chapter of Mark (1:35). "In the morning, while it was still very dark, (Jesus) got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed." Prior to these words, Jesus is busy. And during this time of prayer, Simon and his companions 'hunted' for Jesus because there was much to do. There will always be something else to do and you will never 'finish' your work. Turn off the busyness, however, and find time for prayer.

**\*Rejoice!** For heaven's sake, don't forget to have fun, to enjoy your ministry. Paul stresses this to the church at Philippi twice (4:4): "Rejoice in the Lord always, again I will say, rejoice."

**\*Finally**, these words from my minister when he charged me as a candidate on the floor of the old Norfolk Presbytery (Rev. Dr. Louie V. Andrews, Jr., April 28, 1987):

- Do not be afraid of or overcome by what some will call failure.
- Do not be awed or over-elated by what some will call success.
- Do not feel that you have fully succeeded or fully accomplished a task, for then you will stop seeking to be taught and to learn.
- Do not be ashamed to stand against the majority if you feel your cause is right ...but do not condemn those who disagree with you. Be willing to listen, to learn, to seek out the knowledge and the wisdom of others, but to always return to your personal relationship with God for the decision upon which you act and the cause for which you strive.
- Do not avoid the attribute of patience when dealing with others, but also do not shun the attribute of anger when the cause is just.
- Walk close to God, and what the world calls failures just might be glorious moments of fulfillment.

### Financial Update

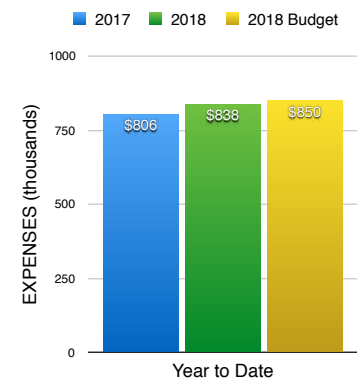
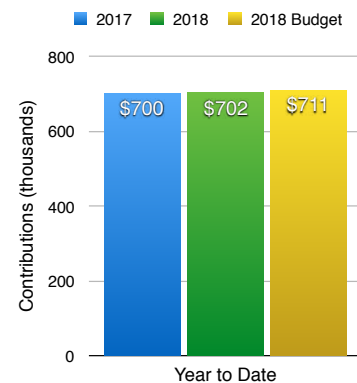
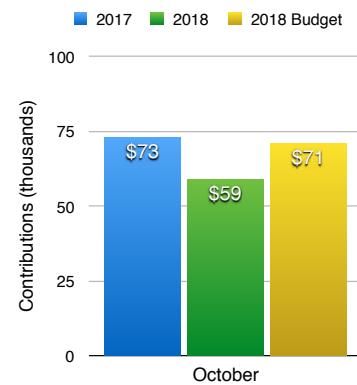
BY MARK SCHOEFFMANN, CHAIR  
MSCHOEFFMANN@MCHSI.COM

#### Contributions

Contributions in October were \$14K less than in 2017 and \$12K below the budget at \$59K. The Year to Date total is above last year by \$2K but below the budgeted amount by \$9K. 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 83.3% through the year we have received 83.6% of the expected 2018 revenue.

#### Expenses

Year to Date expenses are \$12K below the budget at \$838K and more than in 2017 by \$32K. Considering all sources, expenses exceed revenue by \$17K which is \$24K more than at the end of October in 2017. At 83.3% through the year we have experienced 82.1% of the expected 2018 expenses.



## Worship Committee Notes

BY JUDI GEISTLINGER, CHAIR  
 JUDIGEISTLINGER@OUTLOOK.COM

The Stated Clerk of our denomination, **J Herbert Nelson II**, will be visiting our congregation on November 15 and 16. November 15 is the Presbytery meeting (volunteers still needed, contact **Judi Geistlinger** to help). A worship service for the meeting will be at 11 AM on Thursday, November 15, which you are invited to attend. Our choir will be singing!

Friday, November 16, is a workshop focusing on Transformational Change. We hope you will take the opportunity to attend. (See promo on page 1.)

*Christmas Cantata* will be Sunday, December 9, at the 9 AM service only (no 8 AM service that day.)

Liturgists, Tech Team and Ushers all could use volunteers, especially during the holidays. If you are willing, contact **Judi Geistlinger**. (Christmas Eve services, 10 AM, 4 PM, and 8 PM.)

## Pictorial Directory Appointments

It's time for a **new** pictorial directory for our church. There is no cost to you or the church to have your photographs taken professionally. You will receive a complimentary 8x10 color portrait. **Everyone** photographed will receive a copy of the printed directory. You will be able to view your images immediately after you are photographed. At that time, you will have the opportunity to purchase additional portraits to share with family and friends.

### Our photography dates are:

Monday-Friday  
 November 26-30 1-8 PM  
 Tuesday-Wednesday  
 December 4-5 1-8 PM(if needed)

## October Fun

BY JEANETTE PYNE, ESL COORDINATOR  
 JEANETTE@FIRSTPRES.CHURCH

What better way to celebrate fall than to go apple picking? On October 24<sup>th</sup>, we took a field trip to Curtis Apple Orchard. Students were able to go apple picking and shop at the Curtis Orchard store. Many students purchased Curtis Orchard's famous apple donuts and apple cider. Students learned about honey bees, different varieties of apples and how to pick them.



On October 31<sup>st</sup>, the First Pres ESL Program hosted a Halloween Party, which the students enjoyed thoroughly. We played Halloween Bingo, which is a favorite of the students. After the game, we watched a video about the history of Halloween. We had a costume contest in which two of our tutors, Mike and Lois, and two of our students, Erika and Pamella, won prizes.



### Easy ways to Schedule Your Appointment!

An e-mail request will be sent to you to setup your appointment. If we do not have an email for you, expect a telephone call. Instructions will be provided.

You may also sign up at the Welcome Center on Sundays. Forms will be available.

If you are out of town during the photography sessions, Life Touch can let you know of places in your area to be photographed to be included in the directory.

Lifetouch is giving back to your community. If your family will bring non-perishable food items to your photography

appointment to be donated to a local food pantry, you will receive a \$5 off coupon toward purchase of portraits.

Also, we encourage you to invite your family and friends to schedule an appointment for family portraits. They are welcome to participate in our photography event. They do not have to be pictured in our directory, but will receive a free portrait. This is a great way to reach out to family and friends and offer them a free professional portrait session as a gift.

If you are not able to schedule your appointment at your church during these dates, Please call 866-756-0281 (Life-touch) to schedule an appointment at another location.



## Love One Another

What does it mean when Jesus gives his disciples the command to “love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.” (John 13:34) It was a new command given to show the relationship they should have after he left them. Their love for each other should be patterned after Christ’s love for them; a love focused on others, not self.

This love would show that they were disciples of Jesus who had love for every person including his enemies. (v 35)

Let us pray to have Christ’s love for everyone, including those beyond our comfort zone.



## 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Champaign County Interfaith Alliance Thanksgiving Celebration

**Sunday, November 18, 2018      3:00 PM**  
**The Krannert Center of Performing Arts**  
 Foellinger Great Hall, 500 S. Goodwin Avenue, Urbana, IL

Please come and join in our fellowship of people living in harmony and celebrating a season of thanks.

Here you’ll find good friends, good will, and good music provided by an Interfaith Children’s and Adult Choir.

Attendees are encouraged to bring non-perishable foods to donate to the Eastern Illinois Foodbank.

## *Joys & Concern*

*We celebrate...*

- **Vivian Terrill.** Vivian joined the church in 1962 and will be 100 years old on November 22, 2018.

*We express our sympathy...*

- To the family and friends of **Lois “Toddie” McCulley** who died October 21, 2018.
- To the family and friends of **Gary Lietz** who died November 6, 2018. Memorial service will be held at the church on Friday, November 9, at 1 PM.

*Presbyterian Women’s Christmas Tea*  
 December 6, 11:30 am      Westminster Hall

Hear **Reg Ankrom** tell the story of **Augustus John Tolton**; the United States first black Catholic priest, who today is on the path to sainthood in the universal Catholic Church. Plan to join us!

## Tracy Dace Elected to National Committee



Newly Elected Members of SDOP Committee. Tracy is on the right.

**Tracy Dace** was elected by the 223<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly to the PC-USA Committee on the Self Development of People (SDOP), a part of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. SDOP promotes justice, builds stronger communities and seeks economic equity. Dace joined seven others recently elected Presbyterians from throughout the United States who completed orientation in August.

Tracy, a member of our congregation, is the founder and chief visionary officer for the DREAAM House Project in Champaign County, moderator of our Compassion, Peace and Justice Committee, and a Champaign First Cuba Partner.

## Cuba 2019

The next congregational trip to Cuba will occur in the spring 2019. Anyone wanting to travel who has completed a Cuba Study should notify **Bob Kirby** (621-5915). The deadline to join the travel group is November 19, 2018.

## Seek Justice

The Compassion, Peace and Justice Ministry Team welcomes you. Our purpose is to seek social justice through prayer, bible study and action. Current focus is on racial justice and comprehensive immigration reform.

*But he's already made it plain how to live, what to do, what God is looking for in men and women.*

*It's quite simple: Do what is fair and just to your neighbor,*

*be compassionate and loyal in your love,*

*And don't take yourself too seriously—take God seriously.*

Micah 6:8

## Easy English Fellowship

Please join us in room 204 each Sunday from 10 - 11 AM for Easy English Fellowship. We have ten enthusiastic adult beginning English learners from our own congregation. We are learning to understand our traditional worship elements such as the Doxology. We pray together and we pass the peace of Christ. We share our lives with each other.

Additional native speakers will be helpful so we can work in smaller groups and keep up with registration and record keeping. You can join with the whole fellowship in bringing ideas for worship and service that we can do together.

For information, contact **Judy Gamble** or **Bob Kirby**.

*Light In a Season of Darkness*  
Celebration, Support and Healing  
During Advent

### Advent & Christmas Wisdom from G.K. Chesterton; led by Peter Yau

Sunday mornings 10:15-11:05 AM, November 26-December 23, 2018, Mae Chapin Parlor. G.K. Chesterton was an English writer, poet, philosopher and lay theologian most famous for his fictional detective Father Brown. His book *The Everlasting Man* was a crucial turning point for C.S. Lewis to become a Christian. This Advent and Christmas study promises to be a refreshing, prayerful preparation for the coming of Christ.

### Blue Christmas

**Service of Wholeness:**  
Sunday, December 2, 6 PM

**Moving Thru Grief With Chair Yoga:** Fridays, November 30-December 21 from 11:45-12:45 in the chapel. Cost is \$10 per session. Call **Betty Hollister** (217.419.2717) or **Claudia Kirby** (217.493.5816).

**Individual Support:**  
A confidential Stephen Minister is available to you for listening and prayer support. Call **Linda Sandquist** (217.398.4609.)

**Daily Advent Devotions and Prayers. Blue Christmas:**  
*Devotions of Light in a Season of Darkness* by Tod Outcalt will be sold for \$10 on Sunday, November 11.

# 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

In October, our elementary students studied a unit on Freedom; The Exodus story and a unit on David as a boy (his anointing, writing of music, and facing Goliath). The preschool class explored the concepts that God is with them everywhere and at all times.

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

### Pew Partners Needed

I hope you will consider being a pew partner for the academic year. We need more caring adults who are willing to have unaccompanied children sit with them in worship and guide the children through the worship hour. Pew partners meet the children in the children's corner of Westminster Hall and invite the children to sit with them in the sanctuary. During worship, the pew partners encourage the children to participate in worship and help them understand what is occurring. At the end of worship, pew partners make sure that the children go forward to meet their teachers at the baptismal font.

Please prayerfully consider if you would be able to give of your time ministering to our children in this way. Contact **Mindy Watts-Ellis** at mindy@firstpres.church to volunteer or for more information.

### Youth Group

This past month Sunday School has been full of some meaningful conversations for both our middle school and high school classes. The high school class has been studying the weekly lectionary texts and talking about what it means to trust in God and being disciples of Christ out in our everyday lives. Meanwhile, the middle schoolers have been learning about our Bible Ancestors Abraham and Sarah, Moses, and Rahab and what their stories and faith can teach us still today. They have also been thinking and asking some questions about Heaven and Hell.

This past month the youth group has done several service projects for our church and eaten some pretty great meals too! We made bookmarks for the travelers to Pakistan to take and give to the students they meet, attended and helped out with Eric's installation and had a discussion on installation and why we do it. We also had a blast at Trunk or Treat decorating cars and passing out candy.

This next month we look forward to doing some bible study together and having a game night together. We will also be helping with the Thanksgiving meal on November 18.

Looking ahead we would love for you to join us on December 9 for some caroling. More details will follow in next month's newsletter. Thank you to everyone who has helped us this past month with meals, being adult chaperones during Sunday night, and helping with transportation!

If you would like to get involved in the youth group, we would love your help! Contact **Lizz Pippin** by email at lizz@firstpres.church or by phone at 314-620-5901.

### Trunk-or-Treat

Thank you to all who donated candy, made soup, and brought their trunks around with imaginative themes for the children to enjoy. We had a steady stream of kids from the community attend, although not as many as last year. The cold, fierce wind had a lot to do with the reduced numbers. Even so, we had at least 150-200 people.

We had many stay and enjoy our hospitality with hot soup and hot cocoa in Centennial Hall. It warmed my heart to see so many new faces welcomed into our church by friendly familiar ones. I was especially moved to see our young kids making sure a man in a wheelchair felt welcomed and included by getting soup and a drink for him, even though we did not have a way to bring him inside to join us. God is good.

Here are the many people who helped make this event possible: **Michelle and Matthew Hutchens, Gary and Linda Peterson, Judi Geistlinger, Rachel and Matt Matthews, Nancy Pippin, Lizz Pippin, Chris Penny and club, Julie and Tim Young, Naomi Rempe, The Corbin family, Jason and Heather Lowe, Marc and Nicole Miller, Trena Thomas, Megan Ludwinski and Nathan Fry, Jim Berger, Al and Norma Strange, Betty Hollister, Laura Walston, Sue Fischer, Peter Yau, Karin Vermilion, Noni Ledford, Dionne Gooden, Mary Lou and Dave Bauer, Leland Andrews, Joyce Wittler, Kathy Havey, Amy Born, Nancy Brombaugh, Beth Hutchens, Patty and Bruce Farthing, and Sabrina Hwu. THANK YOU!!!!**



**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN**

302 West Church Street  
Champaign, IL 61820

Change Service Requested



**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN**

**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 Drennen .....Facility Manager, Ext. 237  
Patty Farthing..... Receptionist, Ext. 211  
Robert Ferrer..... Audio-visual Technician  
Marcia Franks .....Administrative Assistant, Ext. 210  
Joe Grant .....Director of Music  
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  
Pierre Tang .....Church 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. 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.**

302 West Church Street  
Champaign, IL 61820

**P:** 217.356.7238

**F:** 217.356.7242

**E:** info@firstpres.church

www.firstpres.church

**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