

May 2020



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN

Snippets from your Pastor/ Matt Matthews

BY MATT MATTHEWS

MATT@FIRSTPRES.CHURCH

When my grandfather (Deda) died, my grandmother (Baba) slowly adjusted to life without him. She eventually emptied his closets and his drawers and gave my parents his car, a brand-new 1971 Chevy Impala. She didn't drive, so she didn't need a car. She also didn't do woodworking, so she gave my father most of Deda's power tools.

The garage was where Deda's woodshop was. There was a chest-high wooden box into which Deda threw his wood scraps. He fed these scraps into the fire of the potbellied stove, which took the chill off Tidewater Virginia's winters.

Baba was big into cleaning. Everything in her house always sparkled. And, after Deda died, everything in the garage sparkled, too.

While she gave a lot away, including his big pieces of lumber, she kept the wood box. And piece by piece she'd dig through it, and one by one she'd sand down Deda's scraps. She'd glue them together into wood-block sculpture. She'd stain or paint her creations. One of my favorites is called "Extravaganza." She did it in 1973 and even signed it.

I loved what she did with Deda's leftovers. He took these pieces of wood for granted. But she handled each scrap of wood gently, in a holy way, looking at each piece with imagination. My dad did this with the blocks of wood from which he carved his shore birds. Baba thought, "What can I do with this piece?" And, "What piece would go nicely with this piece?" With sandpaper, glue, patience, and love my grandmother made something extraordinary from simple scraps of wood.

When you look at these 'sculptures,' some just see scraps of wood. I see Baba and Deda, and their love for each other, and their love for their eight-year-old grandson named Matt.

continued on the next page

Worship

JUDI GEISTLINGER, CHAIR WORSHIP TEAM

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Online worship continues for the time being. While it is certainly not ideal, we are doing our best to make the most of this odd situation. A group of 10 or fewer gathers each week to record worship. Eric Corbin has been working his behind the scenes technical magic to produce the service. Please let us know how this is going for you.

Because our church family gatherings are limited, we are adding a good old-fashioned Wednesday evening gathering at 7 PM, at least while the choir cannot gather. Check out the daily emails for the ways to connect, be they a zoom meeting invite or a Facebook live video.

The best place to find out information about the worship services is: Firstpres.live

The last week of April, we gathered for dessert and checking in, and a little bit of celebrating a birthday or two.

May 6, we had Jean Rene offering his music	
May 13	Zoom Prayer Service
May 20	The Gathering Band
May 27	Bible Study

We want to hear from you about your worship experience online. We have created a brief survey about your online worship experience. We want to know about technical difficulties you are having and your overall experience worshipping online. The link: <https://forms.gle/GpNUjTsALRpVx5US7> will take you to a brief survey about the online worshipping experience. It will also be available on the firstpres.live website as well as sent out directly in an email. We appreciate you taking the time to complete the survey.

Jesus took bread and wine.

Jesus took bread and wine and did something extraordinary with it. This bread and wine were already sacred, symbolizing the mighty acts of God in the Passover. In this Passover Feast, the bread was unleavened, a sign of bread that is made quickly, by a people fleeing captivity. (We just read about the Passover from Exodus.) This was a bread made and eaten on the go. The bread reminded the Jews that they had once been a people on the run—chased by an army across the Red Sea into a wilderness.

The wine reminded them of happier times—and of the future, when God would make all things new. The fruit of the vine is a symbol of joy. Wine brings happiness. It is not drunk on the run, but at a feast in celebration. This wine reminded the once enslaved Hebrews that they had been delivered and were free. And that God could be trusted in the future, even under Roman occupation. Hallelujah.

Jesus took these ordinary gifts that already symbolized God’s saving grace and made something even more extraordinary.

“This is my body,” he said, amazingly, “broken/given for you.”

And, “This cup is the new covenant, sealed in my blood, shed for the forgiveness of your sin.”

“Do this in remembrance of me.”

It’s just ordinary bread and ordinary juice. There’s nothing particularly gourmet about it. But the bread forever reminds us of Jesus’ body, which he gave for us—in friendship, in love, for all time. And the juice reminds us of Jesus’s blood, which he shed for us. Do this in remembrance. And we do.

Music

BY JOE GRANT, DIRECTOR OF MUSIC
JOEGRANT@ILLINOIS.EDU

In these strange, restrictive times we are reminded in an acute way of some things that we have taken for granted. For me, the most important is contact with the choir in rehearsal and worship. I’ve missed the joy of making music with these talented, intelligent and caring people. I’ve also missed the ability of leading you, the congregation, in song each week.

With God’s help and guidance I am sure that we’ll see each other soon, in person, and resume singing and worshipping together. In the mean time, when you join us for online worship don’t be embarrassed to sing along alone or with your family when the hymns come up.

Nobody’s listening except God and he wants us to make a joyful noise!

Nurture Committee

BY LINDA PETERSON
LINDAKPETE@GMAIL.COM

The Nurture Committee is now in its third week of the Photo Challenge. We have had some excellent representations of the Bible verses we asked you to read. We could always use more! Get your creative juices flowing. Enjoy using the creativity within you and think outside the box.

Following are the photos your fellow members have submitted. You can also watch for new ones on Facebook or Instagram.

We continue to make calls to check on the flock. Thanks to the 31 volunteers who offered to help. If you haven’t received a call, please let the church office know.

Thanks to Pastor Matt for organizing a fellowship dessert Zoom meeting. It was fun to see faces again!!

Challenge 1 Jesus Birth

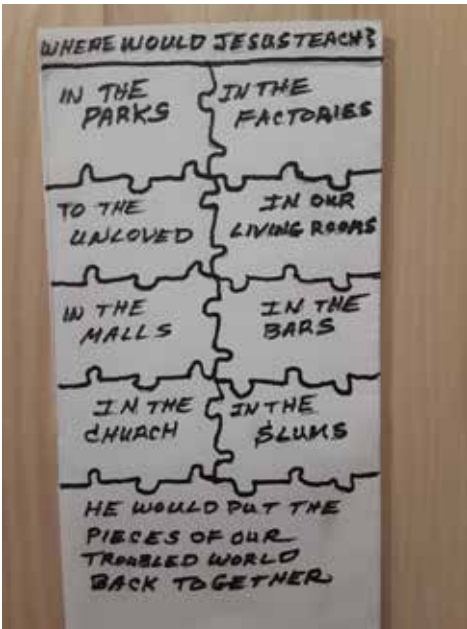




Challenge 2 Baptism



Challenge 3 Where Will Jesus Teach



Challenge 4 Miracles

You choose! The Petersons chose John 2:1-11
Many people came to Jesus in need. Some sick and some lame, and some broken indeed. And often Jesus would heal, touch or feed. News of Him spread around Israel with speed. There are many stories of Jesus' miracles in the Bible

With your family, pick your favorite miracle story and read it together. Take a photo that represents the miracle or write the verse and take a photo with it. Post your photo to: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/firstpreschampaign/> or live@firstpres.church For Instagram @fpcchampaign

Example



Finance

Financial Update

BY MARK SCHOEFFMANN, CHAIR FINANCE
 MSCHOEFFMANN@MCHSI.COM

Contributions

Contributions in April to the Operating Fund were \$12.7K less than in 2019 but \$16.2K above the budget at \$93.7K. The Year to Date total is below last year by \$26.7K and below the budgeted amount by \$8.5K. 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 33.3% through the year, we have received 55.9% of the expected 2020 revenue.

Expenses

Year to Date expenses are \$18.5K above the budget at \$376.0K and more than in 2019 by \$27.2K. At 33.3% through the year we have experienced 35.1% of the expected 2020 expenses.

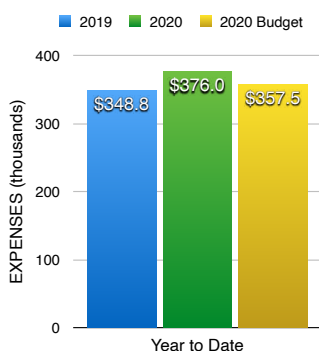
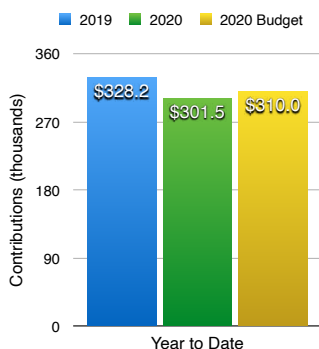
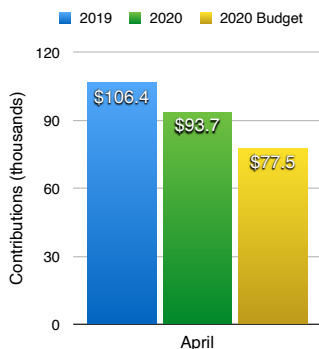
Balance

Considering all sources, revenue exceeds expenses by \$201.7K which is \$114.2K better than at the end of April in 2019. This figure includes \$61.9K more in pre-paid pledges than in 2019. Our positive balance is substantially due to the receipt of \$134.2K from the Federal Paycheck Protection Program established by the CARES Act. This provides funding to continue to pay all salaries and some other expenses during the current economic crises.

Restricted Donations

In addition to the support of our Operating Fund, members of our congregation have made significant donations to funds restricted to specific purposes in April as follows:

Local Missions	\$5,050
One Great Hour of Sharing	\$4,716
Missions General	\$1,350
Covid 19	\$21,060
Discretionary Funds	\$1,600
Other Funds	\$574



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

Pastors

- Great active ministers
- Pastors
- Grateful for Matt and Rachel
- Pastor Matt and his work to make every one feel welcome
- Matt Mathews and Rachel
- Innovative approach to worship service by Rev. Matthews
- Matt and Rachel Matthews
- Pastors
- Pastor Eric – he preaches good
- Matt and Eric – they are re-vitalizing our church!
- Thankful that Matt and Rachel have come to us and for Eric and his kindness and helpfulness
- Welcoming pastors filled with warmth and inspiring homilies
- Matt and Rachel
- Most of the ministers we have had – Mal, Phil Reed and the youth ministers.
- Matt and Eric
- The always meaningful homilies of Pastor Matt
- Pastor Matt's warm, creative, and welcoming leadership
- We have a pastor who nurtures our congregation in so many important ways
- Pastor Matt and Rachel
- The Pastors
- Minister
- Excellent sermons
- Ministers who inspire us every Sunday
- Pastors
- Preaching
- The weekly message (sermon)
- Sermons – Worship
- Pastors being in touch with church members
- Matt and Eric
- Our Pastor and his wife, Rachel
- Long term nurturing/leadership of Matt and Eric
- Pastors - sermons

Children, Youth & Family

Children, Youth & Family Update

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

It is the month of graduations, and although we won't be celebrating in the usual ways, we want all of our hard working students to know we congratulate them on their accomplishments!

We wish to acknowledge all of our graduates within the church family in the coming month. Please send the name of the graduate, a photo if they are willing, the school from which they are graduating, and a short biography about their studies and/or next steps to **Lizz Pippin** at Lizz@firstpres.church or **Diane Mortensen** at cmimort@aol.com. Please indicate if the student is willing to have their information shared through our social media or if they would prefer to only be listed on internal communications of the church. Thank you for helping us celebrate.

Youth Zoom meetings will continue weekly. Check the CYF weekly e-newsletter for the link to join in!

Have you enjoyed our new friend JIP in worship? Maybe you have a question for JIP or something you would like to tell JIP and would like to share it. Take a little video of yourself addressing JIP and share a link to it with Ms. Mindy at mindy@firstpres.church. Ms. Mindy will have JIP respond in a video for you too!

Vacation Bible School this summer will be very different than usual. Our plan is to have a delivery of a package to your address once a week for four weeks in a row with materials and information to have some fun adventures from home.

There will be links to videos and songs as well as suggested games and activities the whole family can do together. Instructions and materials will be included for a craft each time. The name is *Destination Disciples*, and Ms. Mindy is writing it to focus on different missions our First Presbyterian Church is partnered with to effect change throughout the world. Each week will take us on a virtual trip to a new country! We will notify you when the adventure is about to begin!

Vacation Bible School will be a little different this year...more of a family at home event...but a great adventure in a changed world.





I sought the Lord, and He answered me; He delivered me from all my fears. The angel of the Lord encamp around those who fear Him, and He delivers them. Psalm 34:4, 7

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go. Joshua 1:9

Jays & Concerns

Session Motions Passed At April Meeting

- That First Presbyterian Church submit an application and enter into a Paycheck Protection Program loan, provided by the CARES Act, and the Session authorize the Finance Chairman, Mark Schoeffmann, to sign all necessary documents for this loan on behalf of the Church.
- That First Presbyterian Church enter into a \$500,000 line of credit agreement with Hickory Point Bank and Trust, shall grant Hickory Point Bank and Trust a collateral assignment against the funds of the Church that are invested with Cozad Asset Management, Inc. account number JFD-029531 to secure said loan and authorize the Finance Chair, Mark Schoeffmann, to sign all necessary documents for this line of credit agreement on behalf of the church.
- Approval for an additional \$5,000.00, above the original \$20,715.00 contingency which was approved in January Session. This will pay for the \$1,146.06 overage in addition to any unexpected cost moving forward, including kitchen equipment.
- Approval of needed changes for kitchen renovation.
- That Session approve Debra Miller's wishes to be removed from Session, and that the Clerk of Session, compose a letter of gratitude for her service, and to express that she would continue to be in our thoughts and prayers.

We extend our sympathy to...

- the family and friends of **Marian Babbs** who died April 25, 2020.
- the family and friends of **Don Dixon** who died April 22, 2020.
- the family and friends of former interim minister **Dave Fillpot**.
- the family and friends of **Barbara Hoover** who died May 1, 2020.
- the family and friends of **Roy Van Buskirk** who died April 21, 2020.

Members in the News...

- We should not have missed that **Leland Andrews** recently turned 87. The *News Gazette* featured her in a recent "Top of the Morning" piece.
- **Vern Snoeyink** made the paper with his impact on Rice University Professor **Qilin Li** in the "UI at 150 & Beyond."

Mission Updates

ESL Program Update

BY JEANETTE PYNE, ESL COORDINATOR
 JEANETTE@FIRSTPRES.CHURCH

Teaching Via Zoom

After teaching via Zoom for about one month, the students and tutors have gotten more used to the new arrangement. We have 11 tutors doing online teaching either via Zoom or reading students' email compositions and providing feedback. We have a little over 40 students currently attending our online Zoom classes. There has been a learning curve for all of us. I've had to purchase more Zoom accounts for the program because we have so many people meeting at the same time. Right now, we are talking about different types of occupations and how to gain employment in the US. Though we know that the job market is doing very poorly right now, we also know that this COVID season will end and many of our students want jobs. Therefore, we want to prepare them for when that happens. Continue to keep us in your prayers; this is a difficult season for the program. The tutors and students long to see each other in person and resume class as we once had it.

Green Team Update

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

Spring has sprung!

The very first thing to do is to acknowledge and thank **Cindy Shepherd** for helping us celebrate Earth Day on April 26. Her role with Faith in Place and her

energy and passion for the work is inspiring and contagious. Thanks Cindy!

Earth Day has come and gone but the need for environmental work is more critical than ever. So many activities were planned and then put on hold or changed but we hope you got to join in on some earth day activities of your own. Future plans for the Environmental Stewardship Committee will be announced soon.

Right now, maybe it's time to take a deep breath and go outside and enjoy the world around us. Things are opening up again (with some restrictions). Allerton is open. Local and state parks are opening and it's a perfect time of the year to enjoy the spring green colors and the glory of god's world. Check out <https://champaignparks.com> and <https://www.urbanaparks.org/news> or <https://www.ccpd.org> for more information.

Also, Faith In Place is presently accepting applications for their Eco-Ambassador Youth Program. Young people from ages 14-18 are encouraged to fill out applications by June 10. The program will be go on even if it needs to be an online experience. Please go to <https://www.faithin-place.org> for more information.

Hope to see you soon – at a safe distance of course!

DREAAAM Serves

With the after-school program on a COVID hiatus, the DREAAAM Team has been active in getting food to DREAAAM families and seniors. As they ramp up to more virtual learning, staff will continue to look for ways to serve our community.



Please place DREAAAM families on your prayer list.

Come Zoom With Us

The men of the church pray together on Fridays at 8:30 AM and gather for bible study Tuesdays at 8 AM. Contact Bob Kirby at rwk3213@gmail.com to get your Zoom link.

From the Heart of Missions

BY RACHEL MATTHEWS,
 TEMPORARY MISSION COORDINATOR
 RACHEL@FIRSTPRES.CHURCH

Marigolds remind me that we have more in common with our neighbors than not. Farmers all over the world know that marigolds benefit tomatoes and other plants when grown together. The cover photo in this week's "Heart of Missions" and pictured to the right is of my raised bed garden. Yet, look at the marigold pots also pictured from Kinnaird College in Pakistan that I took when I visited Pakistan with the Friends of Presbyterian Education Board in Pakistan in 2019. The gardeners were planting marigolds in all of the gardens and fields. They made flower necklaces with the marigolds and gave them to us to wear.

I believe that we share more positives than negatives with our neighbors globally and locally. Sharing scientific ideas, resources, and creativity is one way God calls us to love one another. Virus, sickness and strife will be minimized when we remember this and love into it. This week's newsletter will actually be focusing on local mission. Yet, our recent pandemic has shown us that what we do here at home affects all humanity.

Peace to you all,
 Rachel Matthews
 Temporary Mission Coordinator



Canteen Run

The Canteen Run program has recently changed, yet the mission to serve their street friends remains the same!

Scheduled stops and inclusion of awesome volunteers in the truck has been replaced with one driver going out Monday thru Thursday, sometimes Friday, delivering the same essential items (sack lunch, t-shirts, underwear, socks, and hygiene to name a few) to street friends.

The only scheduled stops now are at Austins Place , serving about 14 woman, and C-U at Home , serving about 50 men. All 64 of these men and women have no other shelter options, and are Champaign Urbana's chronic homeless.

In addition to the drops at the shelters, the drivers are driving around looking for individuals on the street at night, building

a phone number list for street friends that refuse to shelter. Text messages connect the drivers each night with friends so we can locate them and make sure they have what they need.

The Canteen Run is still counting on all of their supporters for the needed donations to support the Canteen Run efforts. If you are able to donate t-shirts, underwear, or other items, please message them, and they will arrange to pick up those items from you.

CU at Home

CU at Home is looking for a coordinator for the Phoenix Drop in Center. Pass the word and pray for a response. Send resumes and cover letter to Aleta Keith at aleta@cuathome by May 15, 2020.

Also, they have a Wish List that includes toilet paper, laundry detergent, lysol disinfectant spray, hand sanitizer, face masks, kleenex, spray bottles for cleaning solutions, and gift cards (Walmart, Sams, Target, Meijer, Amazon)

They can be dropped off directly at 70 E Washington St, Champaign, IL 61820.

For a full report on local missions, go to firstpres.church/heartofmissions

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 firstpres.church/heartofmissions



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CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN**

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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 Mission 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.

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