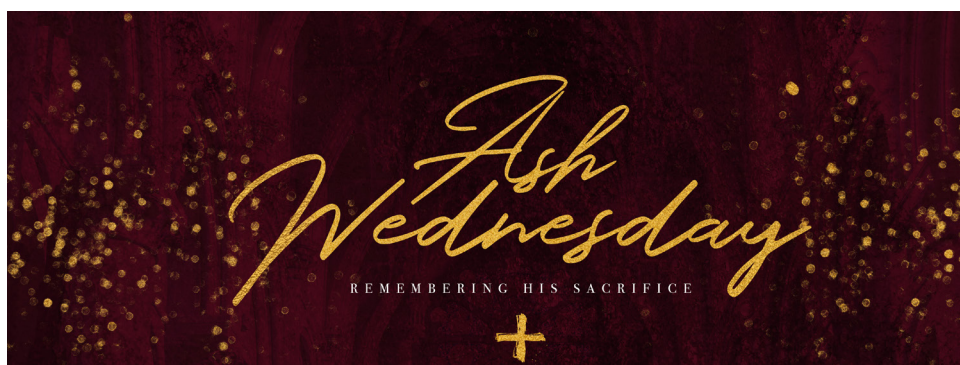


February 2023



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN



Ash Wednesday February 22

Lent is that season of the liturgical year leads us to the cross and the glory of Easter morning. The season begins with Ash Wednesday on February 22. Your worship committee has planned a brief Ash Wednesday worship service at 7 PM on Wednesday February 22 in the Sanctuary.

During the Lenten season we will be focusing on our journey with Jesus to the Cross. Holy Week details will be in the March newsletter.

Pick up your Lenten devotional the first Sunday of Lent at the office or the welcome center.

2nd SUNDAY BRUNCH
February 12th
10:10 AM

Come and enjoy brunch
Centennial Hall

2nd Sunday of each month

We will have an array of brunch items each month prepared in our new kitchen by volunteers led by trained cooks. Select from different hot dishes, meats, fruits, pastries and beverages each month. Enjoy the fellowship right after the 9 AM service.

Donations are appreciated to help cover the costs.

Volunteers are needed to help with the brunches for the remainder of the year. If interested, please contact Jan Wittler, Gary Peterson or the church office.



We Need Your Help

The Free Little Pantry is a small but important way you can help our neighbors without an address (and others on financial hard times).

We are currently low on supplies for our Little Pantry and are asking for food bars, snack bars, nut bars, dried goods, canned soups and meats with pull top lids, and other pantry items. Also socks, gloves and hats. Cold weather is a critical time for these items.

Thank you for your generosity. Drop off at church office or there is a basket in Westminster Hall.

Flowers For Sunday Worship Service

●You can sign up on the flower chart in Westminster Hall near the Welcome Center to bring flowers in memory of a loved one, for a celebration, or just because.

●Consider buying plants for Sundays instead of flower arrangements.
Remember no lilies!

●Let the flower committee know if you would be willing to have your garden flowers, greens or fall harvest used in worship bouquets.

●You can donate money for the flowers too, make checks out to First Pres, specify that it is for flowers.

The flower committee is **Lola Ruthmansdorfer**, **Grace Ashenfelter**, **Nancy Dankle**, **Judy Nicolette**, and **Carol Arnould**.

Francophone Worship

People gather Saturdays between 6 and 8 PM in Centennial Hall for worship in French and Lingala.

Gabriel Mboyo and Solange Enana lead this traditional worship service.

**The Annual Meeting
of the Congregation
will be held
Sunday, February 26,
immediately following
the 9 AM service.**

A Warm Welcome to Sabbatical Pastors Connie Bandy and Jean Oliver-Holder



Connie Bandy

Hello!

I am looking forward to serving as one of your Sabbatical Pastors for the next month. My role will be as acting head of staff to help with communication and response as various needs arise, working closely with your wonderful (and very able) team. I will also be preaching for you a couple of times, as well as once for The Windsor, and presenting a Faith in Real Life session.

I was born and raised in Lubbock, Texas. I met my late husband John there while we were both in college and grad school. We moved to Champaign in 1978 when he took a job with the Corps of Engineers lab here. Our son Matt and his wife, Theresa, live in Issaquah, WA, with their nine-year-old twins, Caroline and Elena. Our daughter Mara and her husband Jason live a few blocks away from me in Champaign, with their four-year-old Beatrice.

Although I was raised in what was then a moderate Southern Baptist church, our family began attending Westminster Presbyterian Church in Champaign in 1988. I was

ordained as a Ruling Elder there, with responsibilities for Christian Education and worship. McKinley Memorial Presbyterian Church hired me in 1998 as their Director of Christian Education. In 2003, I answered a long-felt call to go to seminary, attending Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis, splitting my weeks between Indy and home. As part of my seminary education, I served as Student Pastor for two years at First Presbyterian, Urbana.

2007 was a big year! I graduated in May and then was called to serve Trinity United Church of Christ in Westville later that year, following my ordination at McKinley. I was with Trinity for almost eight years. After leaving there, Community United Church of Christ asked me to be their Designated Minister for Faith Formation and Care on a three-year contract. I continue to serve there as a semi-retired parish associate, assisting with worship planning, occasional preaching, and a little pastoral care. Part of my responsibilities include being the Director of the John Bandy Center for Spirituality and Faith, named in memory of my husband who was a member of CUCC for more than twenty years. The Center serves as a resource library and a "home" for ongoing groups, classes and seasonal retreats.

I am excited to have the opportunity to get to know more about First Pres, Champaign, and all of you. There are so many wonderful things going on! May God bless us in our time together!

--Connie Tapp Bandy



Jean Oliver-Holder

I have lived in Urbana for almost 6 years with my husband David, 2 dogs and 2 hives full of bees!

We have three children, Susan who lives and works in Milwaukee, WI, Clara who currently lives, works and adventures in Mazama, WA, and Nathan, enrolled at the U of I, but currently on exchange with Kodan University in Kobe, Japan.

David serves as the Pastor of First Presbyterian Church Urbana. Over the past years, I have served as a Chaplain in Wisconsin and presently as the Bereavement Coordinator/Chaplain at Carle Hospice.

I am looking forward to getting to know you!

Face to Face with Diane Mortensen



Diane is a ruling elder and serves on our worship committee and with Presbyterian Women. Mitty Kitty serves all those who welcome him to their lap.



Tell me about your family? Your work?

I have two married sons, five grandchildren and Mitty Kitty or "MK". We are a living commercial for the University of Illinois Alumni Association with many graduates and a garage loaded with tail gate necessities. Mitty Kitty is eleven

years old now and a joy to me now that I live alone. I taught at both Bottenfield and Robeson elementary schools. Kindergarten classes were my favorites.

What brought you to First Presbyterian Church?

I was born to my family with a Methodist father and a Presbyterian mother and was raised in the Methodist Church. My roommate in College at University of Wisconsin Stevens Point was Presbyterian. We became good friends attending fellowship events together. Then when I moved to Champaign and married my husband, Paul we joined the Presbyterian Church. We were drawn to First Pres because of the choir in which he wanted to sing and to the children and youth programs we wanted for our sons.

What has been the highlight of your church experience?

Worship and Presbyterian Women activities are the best. I also enjoyed what we called Friendship Club years ago. We brought elderly people to the church for refreshment, entertainment, and fellowship. That lead me to becoming a Care Deacon and meeting many delightful church members who were homebound.

What do you do in your free time?

I am blessed with many good friends to laugh and play with. I'm a member of the Carle Auxiliary and a PEO chapter. I like reading, exercising and of course all my church groups.

What are your favorite Bible characters?

John because he was a faithful friend to Jesus and Paul because of the beauty and messages of his letters.

What advice can give on how to be the church?

Approach people with friendliness and kindness. Invite people to participate in the work of the church.

**The Winter/Spring
Small Group brochure
is now available.
Check out the many
opportunities to join
a small group this
winter/spring.**

[https://firstpres.church/
adult-education/](https://firstpres.church/adult-education/)

Do You Enjoy Fellowship and Working With Others?

The Nurture Committee would like help with clean-up of the coffee area after the coffee time is over following the 9 AM service. Please sign-up at the Welcome Center.

Also, if you would like to help with the 2nd Sunday Brunch, contact **Gary Peterson** amer_swede@yahoo.com. With Pastor Matt heading up the dish crew each month and his being gone in February, we will need additional help especially in that area. We are willing to train in any of the jobs.

If anyone would be interested in joining the Nurture/Outreach Committee, we have some important events coming up and would love to get you involved. Contact **Jan Wittler** janm@gmail.com.

The Heart of Mission

One Winter Night

One Winter Night is an annual event that provides a powerful opportunity for our community to learn about homelessness, build empathy for the people we serve, and discover ways to partner with us in our mission.

On Friday, February 3, 2023, churches and organizations across Champaign-Urbana will be hosting empathy-building activities designed to shed light on the challenges involved in moving out of homelessness, as well as some of the community resources available to help with that process.

Leading up to the One Winter Night event, there will also be multiple ways to contribute financially to C-U at Home, culminating in a donation drive hosted by WCIA on February 3 where people will be able to drive through their backlot to drop off cash or checks, or give online through our website. The majority of our operating budget is funded by individuals, churches, and businesses in the community. We couldn't do this without your donations!

Finally, on Saturday, February 4th, C-U at Home will host a celebratory concert at the Venue C-U to recognize the effort and generosity of the people involved in addressing the issues surrounding homelessness.

You can get involved with One Winter Night in lots of different ways this year. Go to <http://www.cuathome.us/one-winter-night-2023/> to learn more!

Used Mattresses and Bedding Needed

Household furnishings are needed to resettle local immigrants now exists. Particularly needed are mattresses (twin, full, queen) with or without box springs or frames, bedding, small dining tables and chairs and end tables. Donations will be picked up at your home and of course you will get a receipt for tax purposes.

To donate used items, go online to isc-u.org and then to donate-household and leave a written message. Or contact **Bob Kirby** at 217-621-5915 who will help you connect.

Here's Where the Rubber Meets the Road

BY PAT PHILLIPS

P.PHILLIPS42@SBCGLOBAL.NET

Are electric vehicles worth it?

We are called to be stewards of God's earth, and EVs do have fewer emissions. But what about battery production?

This Sunday, January 29, after worship, come to Westminster Hall to hear from a panel of EV owners who will share their views and experiences.



Our Nifty Knitters sent handmade scarves and hats to Kemmerer Village this holiday season. If anyone would like to donate a knitted/crocheted hat or scarf, we will see that they get to Kemmerer.

English Language Learners News

BY VAL SMITH, DIRECTOR
VAL@FIRSTPRES.CHURCH

"It only takes a spark to get a fire going; And soon all those around can warm up to its glowing; That's how it is with God's love, once you've experienced it; you spread His love to everyone, you want to pass it on!"

what other people are saying in the community."

"I am looking for a church."
The students also want to give back and show their gratitude and love to us. Before returning to her country a student entertained three of the tutors for dinner in her home. Another student is excited to work with the children in the PEACH program while the parents are learning English. One

student sent participation certificates to all of our zoom students.

I have been reading the book "From Borsch to Burgers" by Ruslana A. Westerlund.

Ruslana grew up in Ukraine and came to

the United States in college. Her book is a cross-cultural memoir that highlights both language and cultural understandings that challenge ELLs.

For example, some cultures (or people within a culture) may demonstrate direct communication while others prefer indirect communication. One group places a high value on politeness and communicates indirectly while others emphasize honesty that may sometimes appear rude. Neither is wrong but different approaches can create misunderstanding.

A newcomer may translate the words only to discover the other person's message is different from the literal translation. "I wish I could go" are the words spoken but in some cases, it is a polite way of saying "I'm not interested." A new English speaker may pretend to understand someone's words but have no idea what the person meant.

The only way for English Language Learners to figure out cultural norms is to spend time with native speakers. Why not consider inviting ELLs into your home for a Valentine meal?

February is the month in which we celebrate Valentine's Day and just like the song says, we open our hearts to others. As I've listened to the stories new students coming into our program have shared, I'm encouraged that this ministry is spreading God's love and warming hearts.

Here are just a few comments that will give you a glimpse into the lives of the newcomers here.

"I want to get out and meet people so I won't feel alone with my problems."

"Everyone around me speaks my language so I have no one to help me with speaking English."

"I need to learn English, so I can get a job."

"I know academic language, but I need to know the words for daily conversation."

"It is difficult for me to understand





“Prayer is our approach to God and we’re to come with confidence and bold assurance because He is our Friend and Counselor.”

Hebrews 4:14-16, NRSV Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Ephesians 1:7,8 NRSV In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace that He lavished on us, with all wisdom and insight.

Men’s Prayer Team

The men of the church pray together Friday mornings at 8:15 on Zoom. They pray in turn in the language of their choice, in a way comfortable for each and conclude with *The Lord’s Prayer*. They pray for the world, our nation, our community, and our congregations. They pray for those who are mourning and those whose lives are otherwise uncomfortably disrupted. Send prayer requests to Marcia Franks at marcia@firstpres.church.

Jays & Concerns

Remember in your prayers all the families and friends who have lost loved ones throughout the year and especially this past holiday season.

Su Voz Means His Voice

Su Voz is a daily devotion written by both ordained and lay people from the Presbyterian Reformed Church of Cuba. Devotions are short and reflect the heart and culture of the Cuban author. You can read Su Voz daily or subscribe to a daily email at <https://www.cubapartnersnetwork.org/church>

If you or a loved one is in the hospital or in need of a pastoral visit, please let the church office know.

**Our pastor, staff, and hospital visitors keep this information confidential.
Your church wants to be in touch.**

Bless be the tie that binds.

Finance

Financial Update

BY ANN WEBBINK, FINANCE TEAM
ANWEB2@YAHOO.COM

Contributions

Total December contributions: \$76.8K from plate and pledge plus \$10.2K from prepaid= \$87K

This is \$39.2K less than last year and \$14.7K over budget

Total contributions YTD: \$900.4K which is \$21.9K more than last year and \$32.4K over budget.

At 100% of the year, we have 103.7% of the budgeted contributions.

Expenses

December expenses were \$105.4 K which is \$7.1 K less than last year and \$20.2K over budget.

Expenses YTD were \$986.7K which is \$93.1K less than last year and \$35.2K under budget.

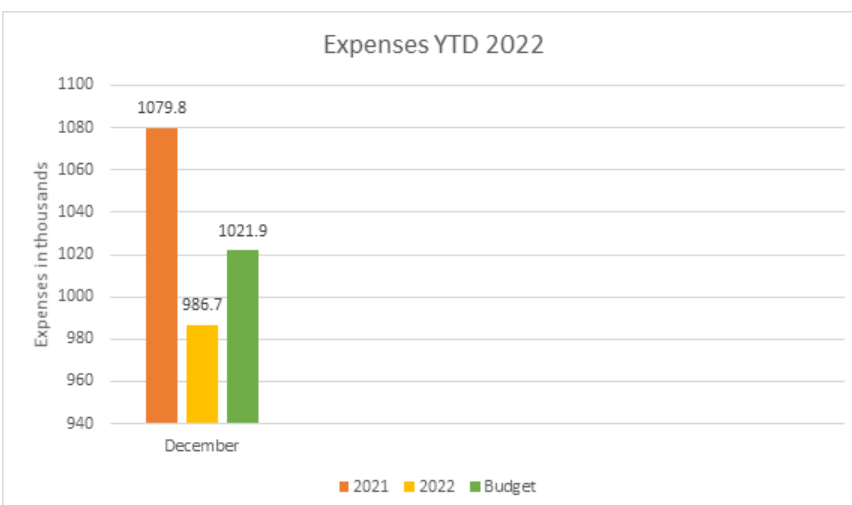
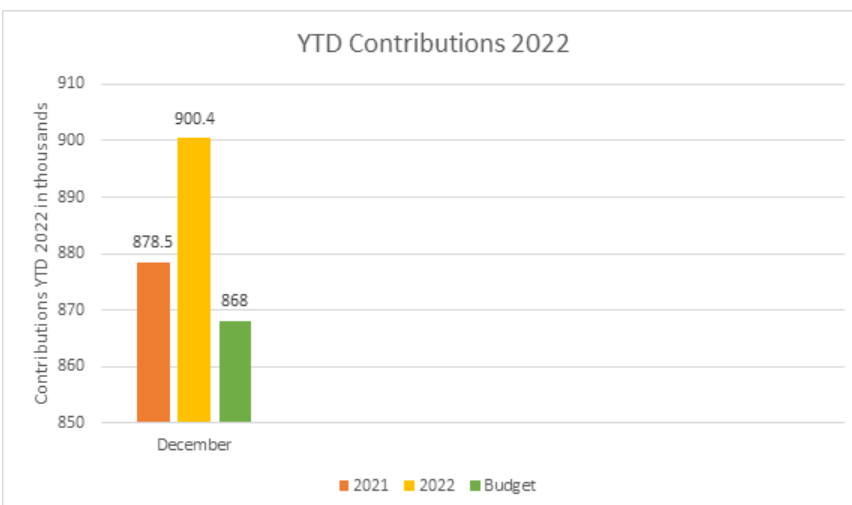
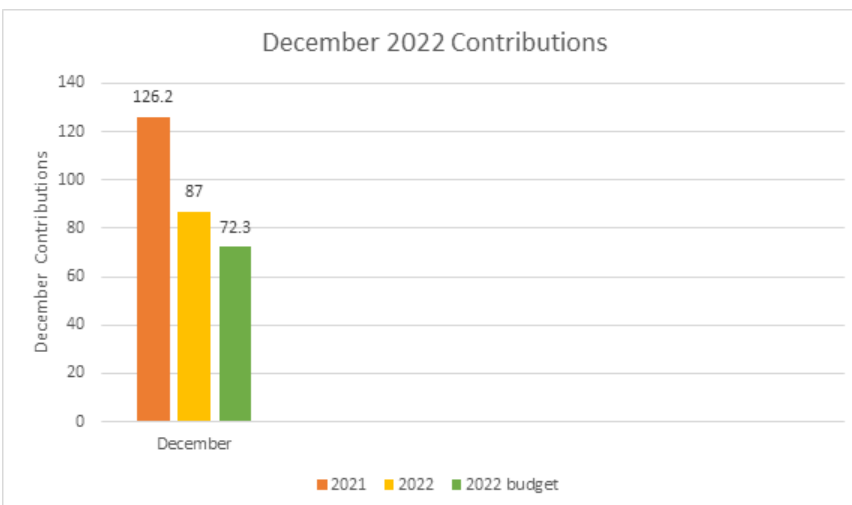
At 100% of the year, we have spent 96.55% of the budget.

Balance YTD

Revenue from all sources exceeds expenses by \$38.7K which is \$27.3K less than last year.

Summary of Restricted Accounts

\$6951.74 was donated to various funds in December. This includes \$4515 in Christmas and Advent offerings.





**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH** OF CHAMPAIGN

302 West Church Street
Champaign, IL 61820

Change Service Requested



**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH** OF CHAMPAIGN

302 West Church Street
Champaign, IL 61820

P: 217.356.7238

F: 217.356.7242

E: info@firstpres.church

www.firstpres.church

Sunday:

9 AM Worship/Sanctuary

10 AM Sunday School for Children & Youth

10:15 AM Adult Sunday School

Online Worship is also available at 9 AM on Sunday mornings thru
YouTube, Facebook, and our church website. Go to FirstPres.Live.

Contact the church office for more information.

Pastor:

Matt Matthews..... Senior Pastor/Head of Staff, Ext 213

Connie Bandy..... Sabbatical Pastor/Head of Staff

Jean Oliver-Holder..... Sabbatical Pastor

Staff:

Martice Chapple..... Facility Assistant

Ritchie Drennen..... Facility Manager, Ext. 237

Patty Farthing..... Office Assistant, Ext. 211

Robert Ferrer..... Audio-visual Technician

Fred Foster..... Evening Custodian

Marcia Franks..... Office Administrator, Ext. 210

Judi Geistlinger..... Commissioned Lay Pastor

Joe Grant..... Director of Music

Rachel Matthews Mission Coordinator/Parish Associate, Ext. 219

Ann Petry..... Accounting, Ext. 224

Sora Shepard..... Organist/Pianist

Val Smith..... English Language Learner Director, Ext. 235

Libby Sternhagen..... Bell Choir Director

Staff email addresses are the person's first name followed by @
[firstpres.church](mailto:info@firstpres.church). For example, matt@firstpres.church.

The newsletter is published monthly.

Deadline is the third Monday of the month for the following month's edition.

Send submissions to marcia@firstpres.church.