



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN

The Heart of Mission

June 16, 2020



This season in the church year is sometimes called the season of Pentecost and sometimes Ordinary Time. Reading through the lectionary texts of Scripture we look at the work of God's Spirit as it works in the lives of God's people. Don't the new banners in worship show the refining power of God's Spirit which will bring us to peace?

At our Wednesday night zoom prayer service last week, I shared a prayer. For those of you who missed our service, I wanted to share it with you. Here is some background:

Tracy Dace, Director of DREAM, was invited, as a member of the PC(USA) Educate a Child Committee, to contribute to 180 days of Prayer leading up to the 224th General Assembly. How the prayer came to be written was that I asked John Mark things he wanted God to give the DREAM boys:

Stable family with enough resources

Big enough house

Personal space

Chance

Reliable technology

Food every day

Every meal

Good job with parents

Time with parents

Ability to meet basic need society

Safety to be a kid without worrying for safety

Verbally or physically

Stability

To have the same chance as other kids do – institutional racism

To have a safe place to fail and be themselves. They are under intense pressure to fit in.

With his list and a reading of Isaiah 40 and Psalm 71, this prayer emerged and I shared it with Tracy:

Come near, O God. Bring us into your heart. Fill us with hope. Do not disappoint us.

We are young. Our life should have no bounds. We want to live long in the world you have created. Much is at stake as we step into life's tangled web of decisions, past and present, not of our own making, warp and woof that limit your vision for us. Clear the way for us to flourish and grow and have our being in you. To be, O God, is what we seek. Give us safe space, time with parents who love, food to nourish, a chance to fail and be forgiven, and opportunities to grow tall as your children. Bring us into your heart, a place to call home.

We are exuberant. Joy bubbles deep from within connecting heart to heart. Unbridled it bears the pain of living in a world both unpredictable and fantastic. It is so hard to sit still and know that you are God when every new wonder leads us to another place. Ground us in values that will make us solid. Give us mentors to guide us. Keep our reckless spirits from eroding our health. Put before us choices that will benefit not just a few. Hear us sing our loud chorus from the highest mountain to the deepest valley. Bring us into your heart, a place of life.

We are curious. We seek to understand and to solve. Basic math and story blocks build solutions for future pandemics. Grid and compound, biology and microcomputer are our toys for this day and time. Give us resources to discover our gifts. Give us freedom to contribute. Play with us that all might enjoy you and your awesome world. Bring us into your heart, a future with your people (and DREAMERS). In Christ's name, Amen.

As we begin to venture out while still social distancing, remember to love your neighbor in all you say and do.

Peace,
Rachel Matthews,
Temporary Mission Coordinator

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Matthew 25 congregations (First Presbyterian Church Champaign is one) were commissioned recently in a zoom service. We were introduced to the PC(USA) Mission Engagement and Support team who is ready to assist us as we deepen our engagement in mission. They can provide mission resources, answer questions, or visit our congregation as determine where we want to make the greatest impact. Our Mission Engagement Advisor from Synod of Lincoln Trails is Chris Roseland.



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Canteen Run has been doing a lot of food preparing and delivery at the Douglas Center recently. They are asking for clothing donations now: What we need is shirts, it doesn't make a difference if it is a sweater or a sweatshirt or a short sleeve polo or a t-shirt and medium boxer briefs. We can be reached at: cucanteenrun@gmail.com, or a Facebook page, (please like us), or Twitter at Barb Davies@ [cucanteenrun](https://twitter.com/cucanteenrun).

CU at Home has some fantastic news. I am sharing the entirety of a recent letter:

**Men's and Women's Emergency Shelter Update!!!
On Behalf of the C-U at Home
Board of Directors and Staff:**

Wow, the past two months have brought us chaos beyond belief, and if you're anything like me, you could use some encouragement. Well, you're about to get it!

*Recently, we have had some major service expansions as we continue to fill gaps for those in need. **To support our friends without an address during this COVID-19 pandemic, we have expanded our hours at the Phoenix Daytime Drop-in Center on three separate occasions! We are currently operating that resource at 54 hours/week — an increase from our normal 20 hours/week.***

We had also planned to close the men's winter emergency shelter (and the women's winter emergency shelter run by Austin's Place) on April 15th. We would then re-open in the fall as we committed to year-round shelter being open by November 1, 2020. Due to COVID-19, we had already extended those seasons until April 30th, and then May 15th, and then May 30th, and then June 14th.

***Drumroll please...after much prayer and consideration of the current resource climate, we at C-U at Home (in partnership with our friends at Austin's Place), have decided to go "ALL-IN" and keep the shelter open through the summer, fall, and beyond! AHHHHHHHHH!!!** During this uncertain time, our friends need us more than ever, so we are committing to continue to provide these vital services.*

*I've said it many times before: **We can have a plan, and God has a better one. Our plan was to have the year-round shelter open by November 1st, 2020 at the latest. We are honored to be able to make that dream a reality much sooner than we originally planned!***

As you can imagine, there are a lot of moving pieces with this endeavor, and we are working hard to have our finalized plan in place over the next several days. For now, I will leave you with a few takeaways.

***First**, it can seem that our world is out of control, but I promise you that we have a BIG God who still has everything under control. We just have to trust and be obedient when He lays a calling on our hearts. Through this shelter initiative and our other vital services, we are doing just that.*

***Second**, to our prayer warriors out there, "THANK YOU!" and please continue to pray! Pray for your family, your community, those in need, and our staff: pray for our President, our Governor, and our local leaders as well. And please prayerfully consider how you can get more involved! Whether it's with your time, talents, or treasures, you can help support this year-round shelter initiative!*

*Stepping "all-in" to this year-round endeavor is also a huge step of faith, but we have been blessed with wonderful community support! To make this resource sustainable, now and in the future, **we are still looking for 600 churches, individuals, families, or businesses to join our "Hope Givers" monthly giving team and get involved at \$40/month. That amount of support from that many people would FULLY fund both emergency shelters...year-round!***

For \$40/month, you can ensure John will have a warm (or cool), dry, safe place to stay at night. For \$40/month, you can provide April a glimmer of hope, something she hasn't had for years. For just \$40/month, you can be a part of that moment when Rich comes to us and says, "Thank you for being there for me. I don't know where I would be without you!"

If you are interested in supporting this shelter initiative, please don't hesitate to contact me via email at "rob@cuathome.us" or you can visit our website "www.cuathome.us" and click the big red "DONATE" button on our homepage!.

From the bottom of my heart, "Thank YOU!" for your prayers and support! We know we couldn't stand in the trenches and continue to fill gaps in our community without your generosity and love.

Be blessed, stay safe, and above all, thank you for putting your trust in us to serve our friends without an address!

*In His service,
Rob Dalhaus III
Executive Director, C-U at Home*

Also, we join in with **CU at Home's** weekly prayer and praise list:

Prayer

*Would you join us in prayer for a friend who recently lost her newborn daughter? Pray that God would bring comfort through this incomprehensibly emotional time.
Please pray for two our female friends without an address who continue to struggle with mental health and substance abuse issues. Both women have seen success and failure and we pray they would find more successes soon!
Would you also pray for the C-U at Work program and all those involved in that resource? That program has expanded to four days a week and is now also working at Prosperity Gardens here in Champaign!*

Praises

*Thank you God for the family in our family house who will be moving into permanent housing in the next three weeks!
Praise the Lord for our amazing Housing and Outreach Assistant, Bruno, whose last day was Monday. As he takes the next step in his professional journey, we thank God for his passion, his spirit, and his desire to serve with the love and compassion of Jesus!
Praise to Jesus for the men's and women's emergency shelters who have welcomed over 430 men and women through their doors during this shelter season!*

Presbyterian Education Board in Pakistan has some news. Cases of COVID 19 are rising rapidly. This is partly because of the mindsets of people, packed market places and partly because of large crowds gathering from the recent Eid. PEB has been cooking and delivering food to students and families to their doorsteps. This has been a scary situation for PEB who is actively involved in their student's lives. Hospitals in Pakistan are not prepared. Here is a video link for PEB students singing Psalm 136:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WielRhtywlA&feature=share&fbclid=IwAR04sVhpCq51QJIRAbVejRCwcFhkxx-4mUM7MBMW5vztKCAx5VEB10Irlj44>

Presbytery news: At the recent Presbytery meeting of the Presbytery of Southeastern Illinois, **Camp Carew** was formally transferred to **Kemmerer Village**. Summer Church camp will

continue to happen; this summer online. And, Kemmerer Village will be able to use this beautiful space as part of their ministry to young people!

Frontera de Cristo's "Coffee, Conversation and Compassion" -

Email "conversation" to office@fronteradecristo.org to get the Zoom info

June 11: PCUSA Mission Co-workers Miriam Maldonado and Mark Adams: Borders as Places of Encounter

June 18: Visit with the Women's Co-operative at DouglaPrieta Trabaja

June 25: CAME Anniversary (Centro de Atención al Migrante "Exodus" / "Exodus" Migrant Assistance Center)

Mission around the town with friends of FPCC:

CU FAIR has changed its name. **CU FAIR** is now **Immigration Services of Champaign-Urbana** or **ISERV CU**. Bob and Claudia Kirby attended CU FAIR's general assembly zoom meeting last week where new board and officers were elected, budget approved, the past year was reviewed and a new organizational name adopted. First Pres was prominently listed among church partners. Dr. Amanda Harris Gray is a talented president and she has a talented board.

International Friends: University of Illinois International Hospitality Committee has said there will be several thousand International students here in Champaign in August rather than the 13,000 here last August. Nevertheless, IHC is gearing up for small groups and welcoming students at the August registration table. Let us keep international students in our prayers as they prepare to come in the Fall. If you are interested in being an International Friend, you can contact Bill Erickson from International Friendships, Inc. UIUC (217) 621-3846

Let us keep all our mission partners in our prayers, those who are waiting to go back to their place of ministry and those who are able to work where they are. Listen for God's call to you in their ministry.

Our PC(USA) Mission CoWorkers:

Mark Adams and Miriam Maidonado Escobar (Mexico)
Farsijanna Adeney-Risakotta (Indonesia)
Jeff and Christi Boyd (Central Africa)
Jo Ella Holman (Caribbean and Cuba)
Bob and Kristi Rice (South Sudan)

Our regional and global mission partners:

Kemmerer Village (and Camp Carew)
Lifeline Pilots
Marion Medical Mission
Mission Aviation Fellowship
Opportunity International

Friends of Presbyterian Education Board in Pakistan Presbyterian Cuba Partnership
Special Offerings of the PC(USA)
Theological Education Fund
Young Adult Volunteers

Here in Champaign – Urbana:

CU Better Together
CU at Home
CANAAN S.A.F.E. HOUSE
CANTEEN RUN
COURAGE CONNECTION
DREAAM
eEMPTY TOMB, INC
FAITH IN ACTION
JESUS IS THE WAY PRISON MINISTRY
THE REFUGEE CENTER
RESTORATION URBAN MINISTRY
SALT & LIGHT

Here at First Presbyterian Church

FPCC Amateur Preachers
FPCC Environmental Committee working with Faith in Place
FPCC Presbyterian Women
FPCC ESL
FPCC Children, Youth and Families
FPCC Mission Possible/Go and Serve



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