

July 2023



# FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN

## Our Church Home

BY JUDI GEISTLINGER

JUDIGEISTLINGER@HOTMAIL.COM



Judi Geistlinger with  
Amber and Christopher  
Lahorgue and their son  
Henry.

This past weekend, we had the privilege to welcome back home a woman who had been raised here years ago. Amber Dworak Lahorgue remembered her youth club days fondly, loving wood shop and bell choir. When it came time for her own son, Henry, to be baptized, Amber and husband Christopher Lahorgue could think of no better place than the church that had loved Amber so well during childhood.

It is a wonderful thing to be home at church. I know I have felt that way ever since coming to town and First Pres in 1990. This is the place where my faith grew deeper. I acted like a kid with the youth club and went on almost more Go and Serves than I can count. My husband and I were blessed to have our babies baptized here, nurtured their own faiths here, and, in time, took them on Go and Serve trips too. We all went to Cuba as a family and came back to share our stories. As with all journeys, it was wonderful to go out into the world and share God's love, but then, afterwards, to return home.

Home.

It is a wonderful word, conjuring up images of warmth and welcome and love.

Welcome home...it is so good to see you!



2<sup>nd</sup> SUNDAY BRUNCH  
July 9<sup>th</sup> 10:10 AM

Come, enjoy brunch  
Location TBD

We will have an array of brunch items. Enjoy the fellowship right after the 9 AM service.

Donations appreciated!

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

## Wrestling With Scripture

BY JUDI GEISTLINGER

JUDIGEISTLINGER@HOTMAIL.COM

I'm grateful for the little break I took this spring from my church duties, so I could concentrate on my full-time work duties at the University. I am back!

When Matt asked me to preach at the end of June and first week of July, I was thinking my big project at the university would be behind me. Alas, the dates have slipped, and I am still knee-deep in training, so, like Paul, I am trying to be all things to all people this summer.

I had hoped God would let me off the hook and let me preach on some easy texts.

Yeah.

God has a sense of humor. Last week the scripture that kept calling to me was the story of Hagar and her banishment with Ishmael. It is a messy family story.

This Sunday I'll be preaching on another of the hard texts in the bible from Genesis 22, and the binding of Isaac. I encourage you to wrestle with those texts, too, and look for the Good News. It's in there. God has good news for us, all the time.

I find wrestling with God's word the fun part of preparing a sermon, because I always learn something new. Let's wrestle with the Word together.

I hope to see you Sunday.

By the way, if you want to grapple with God's word even more deeply, join the Covenant study too!

## What Can I Do?



As a Matthew 25 congregation we strive to do what we can to dismantle structural racism. We learn about our history, understand who we are and we pray for change. But then we ask, "But, what can I do?" Your Compassion, Peace, and Justice Ministry Team (CPJMT) has suggestions. One to consider is supporting local businesses owned by people of color.

Previously we recommended La Mixteca. Now we suggest a second food business owned by Mauricio Contreras also located at 510 N. Cunningham Ave hidden behind Walgreens. El Patio is a Mexican ice cream parlor serving many flavors of both milk and water based frozen desserts. Products are blended on site with most ingredients purchased in Chicago. Popular are water-based flavors mango, guava and watermelon.

Some milk-based favorites are strawberries and cream and gansito.

Children often choose bubble gum and Oreo flavors.

There are a few seats both indoors and out. Service is extraordinarily friendly. Trip Advisor gives El Patio a five-star rating.

## Welcome Bonnie Ward as new Director of English Language Learners

Bonnie is a Champaign resident, originally from Connecticut. She and her husband have been in ministry since 1990. Most recently, Bonnie was on staff with Intervarsity Christian Fellowship for 13 years, working with international students. She currently works part-time with the New American Welcome Center, teaching English to non-native English speaking staff. She has also been a volunteer at First Presbyterian's ELL program for 8 years. Bonnie and her husband have 4 adult children and 5 grandchildren.

**Sunday School  
does not meet during  
June, July, August.**

**Children are  
encouraged to  
attend church  
with their parents.  
Childcare is provided  
for youth  
4 years and younger  
each Sunday morning.**

## If I...

BY MATT MATTHEWS

MATT@FIRSTPRES.CHURCH

Caring for others requires self-awareness. I saw this floating around and thought it worth sharing:

- If I get dementia, I want my friends and family to embrace my reality. If I think my spouse is still alive, or if I think we're visiting my parents for dinner, let me believe those things. I'll be much happier for it.
- If I get dementia, don't argue with me about what is true for me versus what is true for you.
- If I get dementia, and I am not sure who you are, do not take it personally. My timeline is confusing to me.
- If I get dementia, and can no longer use utensils, do not start feeding me. Instead, switch me to a finger-food diet, and see if I can still feed myself.
- If I get dementia, and I am sad or anxious, hold my hand and listen. Do not tell me that my feelings are unfounded.
- If I get dementia, I don't want to be treated like a child. Talk to me like the adult that I am.
- If I get dementia, I still want to enjoy the things that I've always enjoyed. Help me find a way to exercise, read, and visit with friends.
- If I get dementia, ask me to tell you a story from my past.
- If I get dementia, and I become agitated, take the time to figure out what is bothering me.
- If I get dementia, treat me the way that you would want to be treated.
- If I get dementia, make sure that there are plenty of snacks for me in the house. Even know if I don't eat I get angry, and if I have dementia, I may have trouble explaining what I need.
- If I get dementia, don't talk about me as if I'm not in the room.
- If I get dementia, don't feel guilty if you cannot care for me 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It's not your fault, and you've done your best. Find someone who can help you, or choose a great new place for me to live.
- If I get dementia, and I live in a dementia care community, please visit me often.
- If I get dementia, don't act frustrated if I mix up names, events, or places. Take a deep breath. It's not my fault.
- If I get dementia, make sure I always have my favorite music playing within earshot.
- If I get dementia, and I like to pick up items and carry them around, help me return those items to their original place.
- If I get dementia, don't exclude me from parties and family gatherings.
- If I get dementia, know that I still like receiving hugs or handshakes.
- If I get dementia, remember that I am still the person you know and love.

What would you add to this list?



## DREAAM Celebration

8 years of change-making and  
hope-generating work

Come celebrate this anniversary with  
us on Sunday, July 16, during the 9  
AM service followed by cake, coffee,  
and community.





Merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart and mind and strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. Our faith often doesn't express itself in glad actions, only in dead, mumbled words.

In your mercy forgive what we have been, help us amend what we are, and direct what we shall be, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name.

## Hospitality

Coffee anyone? Or tea, lemonade, or donut holes? Greet friends around the table in Westminster Hall after worship to share a sip of coffee and to share stories.

Join others to serve as Sunday hosts setting up the table or taking it down or both. A friendly smile is all that is required. Directions are posted in the deacon's kitchen next to the table and plenty of folks will be happy to cheer you on. This is a great way to serve if you are looking for short time commitments and flexible scheduling.

To select your times to help, find the schedule [here](#). Or contact **Bob Kirby** at [rwk3213@gmail.com](mailto:rwk3213@gmail.com) or 217-621-5915, or **Gary Peterson** at [amer\\_swede@yahoo.com](mailto:amer_swede@yahoo.com) or 217-398-8504.

Your nurture (hospitality) team is led by **Tom Gilmore, Mary Jane Kelley, Bob Kirby, Gary and Linda Peterson and Jan Wittler**. Many serve on the team to keep First Pres a most welcoming community.

**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.**

## *Jays & Concerns*

### We celebrate

- the baptism of **Henry Jason Lahorgue**, son of Amber and Christopher Lahorgue. Henry was baptized Sunday, June 25, by Commissioned Lay Pastor, **Judi Geistlinger**.
- the 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary of **Sherry and Bill Marble** on July 11.

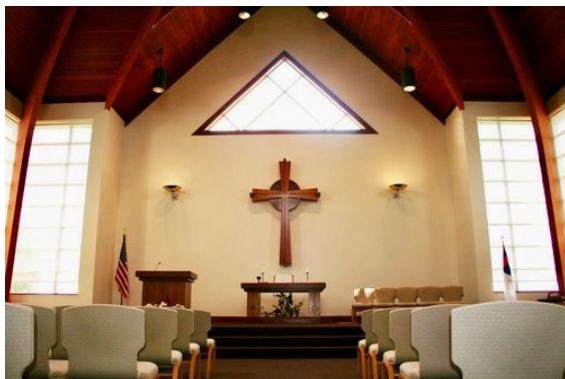
### We extend our sympathy

- to the family of **Patty and Bruce Farthing** on the death of their daughter-in-law **Beth Farthing**. Please keep her husband Allen and daughters Shelby and Sami in your prayers.
- to the **Don Whitsitt** family on the death of **Wanda Whitsitt** on June 4, 2023. Don and Wanda became members of the church in October 1978.

# The Heart of Mission

## Kemmerer Village Serves Children and Youth

Hidden in the cornfields of the Illinois prairie twenty-eight miles south of Decatur is a remarkable Presbyterian ministry called Kemmerer Village.



Since 1914 this Christian campus has served children who are unable to thrive in their biological families and traditional schools. Children and youth ages 12-18 receive residential care with a full range of educational and therapeutic services including equine therapy, athletics, and outdoor recreation at summer camp. The village chapel offers regular worship. Foster care is also provided to hundreds of additional young people.

Kemmerer partners with the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and local public schools as well as Camp Carew in Makanda, Illinois.

On June 7, nine from our congregation visited Kemmerer Village. **Jean René Balekita** offered an interactive concert inviting residents to come to the front of the chapel and try out his drums. Staff provided lunch and a guided tour of the campus. Kemmerer Village is a ministry of the Synod of Lincoln Trails of which our congregation is a member.

We support this ministry with our tithes and offerings. **Steve Gritten** and **Katharine Jones** served on the board of directors. Would you be interested in serving on the board? To learn more, visit the Kemmerer Village and Camp Carew websites.  
<https://www.kemmerervillage.org/kvwelcome>

<https://www.campcarew.org/>

## Environmental

BY PAT PHILLIPS

P.PHILLIPS42@SBCGLOBAL.NET



**Adopt-A-Highway** Saturday, July 29, at 8:30, so we can beat the heat. Please look for sign up opportunities at a table in Westminster Hall on July 16 and 23. Exercise, fellowship, and making a difference in the community are wonderful ways to spend an hour or so.

Have you noticed the beautiful flowers in planters around the church? Thanks to **Nancy Dankle** and **Michael Hogue** for using the Rose Fund so effectively.



Dr. William C. Rose was a famous biochemist and nutritionist, known for his work on amino acids. He was also a long-time member of

FPCC who died in 1985 at the age of 98, leaving money for landscape and grounds around the church he loved.

If you've a half hour or so, here's an inspirational little illustrated book, *Heart to Heart*, a conversation on love and hope and how to heal our relationship with the planet and each other. It's by the Dalai Lama, whimsically illustrated by Patrick McDonnell.



Visiting Kemmerer Village on June 7 were left to right Jean René Balekita, Nancy Whitford, Matt Matthews, Gary and Linda Peterson, Claudia and Bob Kirby, Katharine Jones and Barbara Fuller-Curry.

## Back-to-School Shoe Drive

DREAAM's 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Shoe Giveaway will be happening on Saturday, August 12! We will be collecting donations to bless our DREAAM families with new footwear to start their school year. Visit [www.dreaam.org](http://www.dreaam.org) and help youth walk into their academic adventures in comfort.



The poster is designed to look like a spiral-bound notebook with a blue cover and white lined pages. It features various illustrations: a yellow sun, a blue star, a black star, a black and white sneaker on the left, a blue and orange sneaker on the right, a red sneaker at the bottom right, and a white sneaker at the bottom left. The main title "Back-to-School SHOE DRIVE" is written in large, colorful, playful letters. Below the title, the text "Help DREAAM reach our goal of blessing 500 children with new shoes to Kick off their school year!" is written. To the right of this text is a red speech bubble that says "Accepting donations from July 1st - August 5th". Below the main text, there is a green call to action "Sign up to donate at www.dreaam.org!" and a QR code. To the right of the QR code is a green arrow pointing left and the text "Or to donate shoes, scan here." Below these elements are three small photographs: the first shows several pairs of colorful sneakers; the second shows a young man in a blue t-shirt with the DREAAM logo working with shoe boxes; the third shows a large stack of shoe boxes. At the bottom, the text "For more info, please contact us : info@dreaam.org" is written in red.



# Back-to-School SHOE DRIVE

Help DREAAM reach our goal of blessing 500 children with new shoes to Kick off their school year!

Accepting donations from July 1st - August 5th

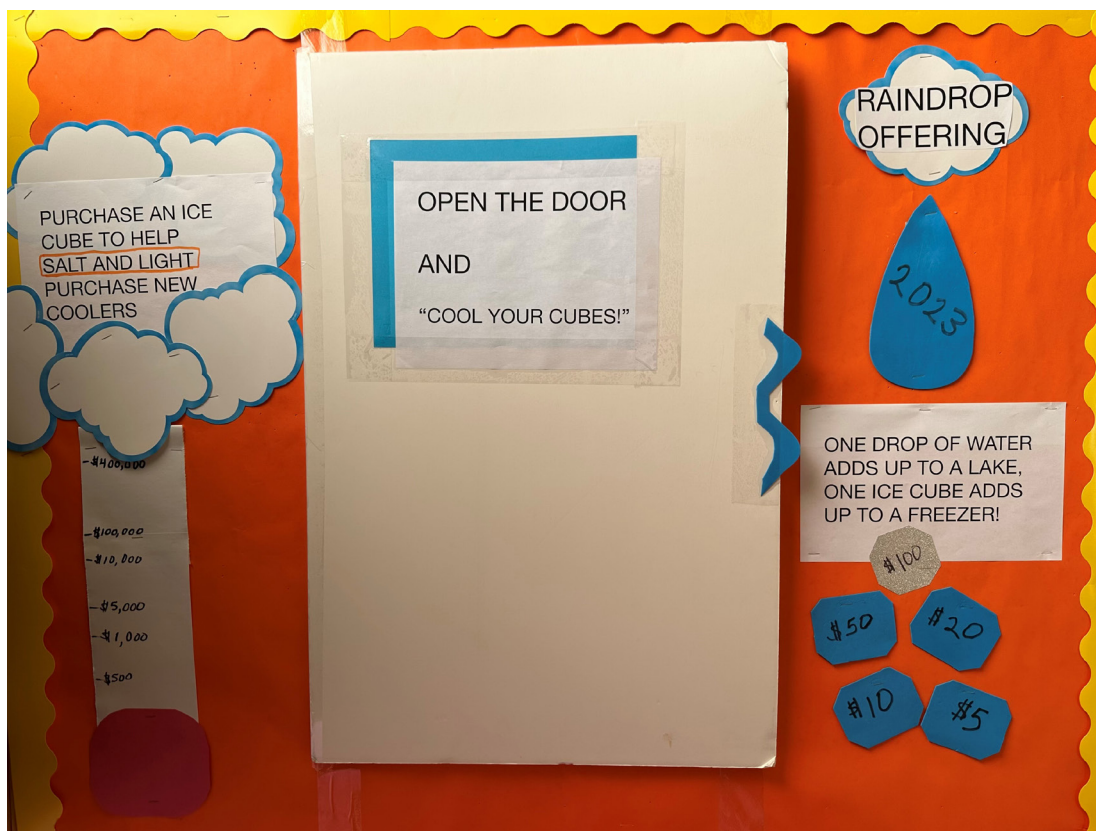
Sign up to donate at [www.dreaam.org](http://www.dreaam.org)!

Or to donate shoes, scan here.



For more info, please contact us : [info@dreaam.org](mailto:info@dreaam.org)





## Cool Your Cubes...Raindrop Offering this July

We are focusing on our local mission partner, Salt and Light, whose coolers are aging out. These coolers were used when Salt and Light moved into the Urbana location over 8 years ago. In order for them to do the ministry they do so well, these coolers in the Urbana grocery store will need replacing.

Community Mission Deacons is inviting First Presbyterian Church to participate in their campaign to replace the coolers.

As you may remember Salt and Light is a ministry of relationship helping people gain access to food, clothing and household goods through community, dignity and respect. It collects used items for resale. It operates a grocery store through volunteer hours allowing people to gain credits to purchase food and gain work experience. And, it is a regular grocery store we can all shop at allowing the store to support those who need to gain credits. It is a ministry that helps people with other resources as well from assisting with tax preparation to developing computer skills.

The coolers needing replacement will cost Salt and Light \$416,356. The cost of the refrigeration portion is \$359,221. The electrical work to install the needed components is \$51,035. And, the monitoring, training and support will cost \$6,100.

New coolers will

- continue low cost food, clothing and housewares for the community
- continue to provide jobs and job training for the community
- help the environment through upgrades

On July 9-23, see the bulletin board in Westminster Hall to purchase a frozen raindrop; yes, an ice cube!

Different amounts will help fill the freezer full. We will show the amount raised on the thermometer on the outside of the freezer.

Let's try to raise \$5000 or even \$10,000 or more for this very important mission partner's need.

## Face to Face with Dave and Mary Lou Bauer



### Tell me about your family? Your work?

We have a daughter, two sons, and four grandsons. Susan works for the State Department in foreign service in Brasilia, Brazil. Son John was a navy judge advocate general officer now living in Maryland and Charles, a former marine officer lives in St. Louis.

Mary Lou began her career as a speech and hearing teacher in public

schools and later worked in a public library and served on the city council in Winterset, Iowa. Dave taught ninth grade algebra and a business class in Leadville, Colorado. After graduating from McCormick Theological Seminary Dave pastored Presbyterian churches in Ohio, Illinois, and Iowa.

### What do you do in your free time?

Mary Lou is a voracious reader who spends time in all our local libraries. "I become anxious if I do not have several books to read. Mysteries are like a box of chocolates, but I also love history, biography and children's books." Dave is an avid photographer, and, in the past, a tent camper and cyclist. Now he focuses on reading theology. Both of us enjoy traveling and visiting our families.

### Who are your favorite Bible characters?

Mary Lou: "Moses had many excuses for disobeying God's plans for him; but he became a great leader, though he still had moments of willfulness. Dave: "I like Elijah...an extraordinary, powerful, dedicated human being in service to God. Later in life he

became fearful and uncertain. Then he heard God say. "Elijah! what are you doing here! get up and go!! You still have work to do."

### How can the church best be the church?

Dave: "Be understanding, loving and not judgmental." Mary Lou: "Realize that we are far from perfect. Try to be in the world but not of the world."



### What brought you to First Presbyterian Church?

First a story. Dave's parents met at a First Presbyterian church summer picnic. They married the following summer, August 13, 1913, and gave the church pastor a \$13 honorarium! Both sets of our parents were members here and so were we. After we married, we lived in three different Midwest states. Near retirement we stopped in Champaign on our way to Florida. We worshiped at First Pres with Mary's brother **Stan Bush** and recognized a number of people from our childhood years. After moving to Champaign in October 2002, we again worshipped here in Champaign. After that first Sunday service **Dick Foley** invited us to the church potluck dinner that very evening...and so began our recent time at First Church.

### What has been the highlight of your church experience?

Mary Lou: "I think our "mission possible" ministry experience. Dave: "It is the inquiry, reflection, learning and fellowship of small study groups. "

## Free Book Exchange

Check out the book cart in Westminster Hall. Donate a book for others to enjoy and take some for yourself.



# Finance

## Financial Update

BY ANN WEBBINK, FINANCE TEAM  
ANWEB2@YAHOO.COM

### Contributions

Total May contributions: \$53.3K from plate and pledge plus \$9.3K from prepaid= \$62.6 This is \$18.4K more than last year and \$7.2 K under budget. Total contributions YTD, including prepaid pledges: \$376.4k which is \$18.5K less than last year and \$.6K over budget. At 41.7% of the year, we have 52.7% of the budgeted contributions.

### Expenses

May expenses were \$82.7 K which is \$7.4 K greater than last year and equal to the budget. Expenses YTD were \$414.1K which is \$45.9K less than last year and \$.6K over budget. At 41.7% of the year, we have spent 41.7% of the budget.

### Balance YTD

Revenue from all sources exceeds expenses by \$58K which is \$13.3K more than last year.

### Summary of Restricted Accounts

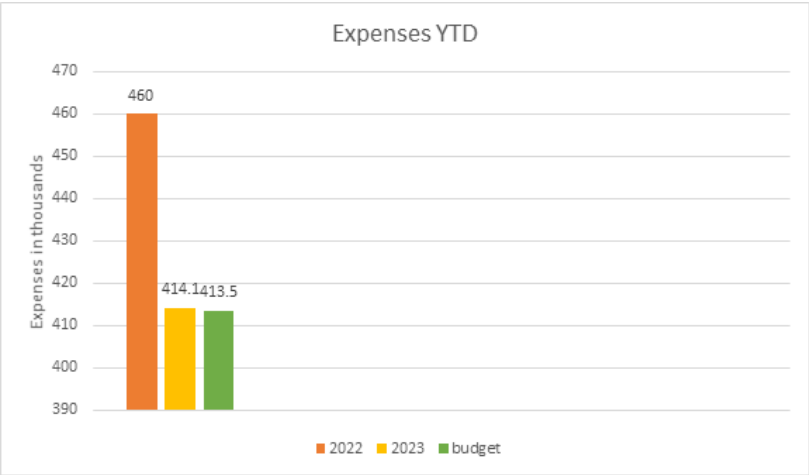
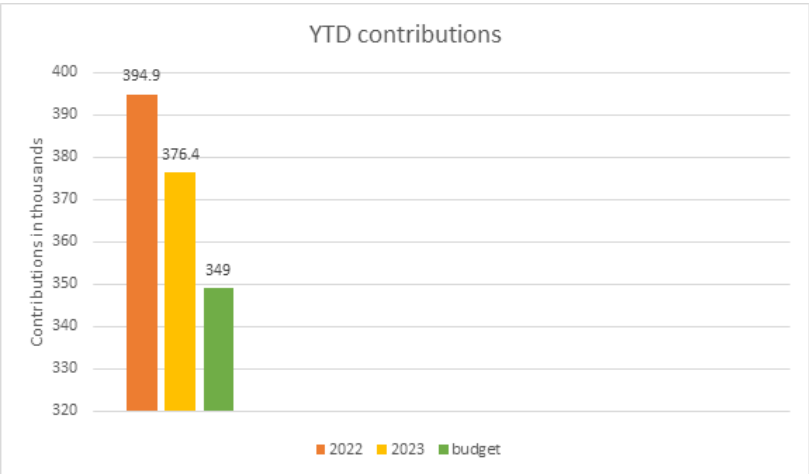
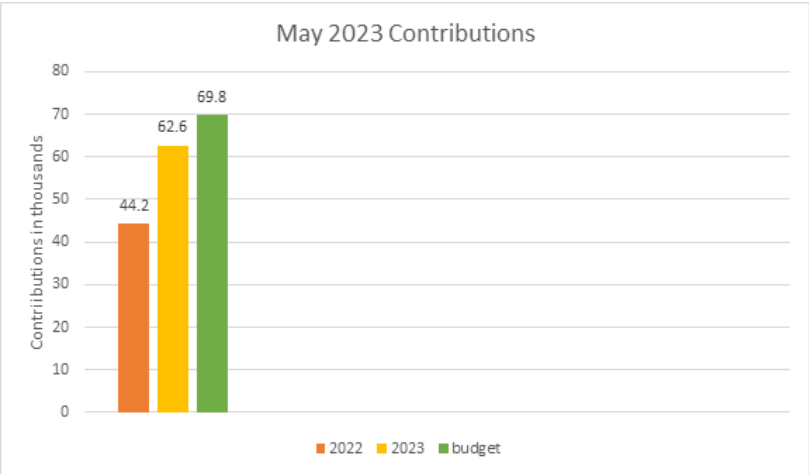
\$24,490 was donated or allocated to various funds in May. This includes \$16,200 to the memorial fund and \$5000 to the elevator fund.

### South Campus Reserves

\$96.7K which is \$1.7 less than last month.

### Session Designated Funds

\$1,801,032 which is \$35,450 less than last month.





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CHURCH** OF CHAMPAIGN

302 West Church Street  
Champaign, IL 61820

Change Service Requested



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**F:** 217.356.7242

**E:** [info@firstpres.church](mailto:info@firstpres.church)

[www.firstpres.church](http://www.firstpres.church)

**Sunday:**

9 AM Worship/Sanctuary

10 AM Coffee and Fellowship

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

**Staff:**

Martice Chapple..... Facility Assistant  
Ritchie Drennen .....Facility Manager,  
Patty Farthing..... Office Assistant  
Robert Ferrer .....Audio-visual Technician  
Fred Foster ..... Evening Custodian  
Marcia Franks ..... Office Administrator  
Judi Geistlinger..... Commissioned Lay Pastor  
Joe Grant..... Director of Music  
Rachel Matthews .....Mission Coordinator/Parish Associate  
Ann Petry..... Accounting  
Sora Shepard ..... Organist/Pianist  
Libby Sternhagen..... Bell Choir Director  
Bonnie Ward..... English Language Learner Director

Staff email addresses are the person's first name followed by  
@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](mailto:marcia@firstpres.church).