

July 2024



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN

The Work of a Transitional Pastor

BY BETH WAGNER

BETH@FIRSTPRES.CHURCH

As I settle into 1st Pres. and Champaign, I am aware of how short my time with you will be, so if it feels like I am moving fast, I am. As one of my seminary professors said of our one-quarter All Church History class, "We will spend very little time smelling the rose as we gallop through history". Transitional work is much the same way. We will be very selective as to which roses we choose to smell, and the rest of our time will feel like a gallop.

So what roses will I smell in the next couple of weeks and what will we be galloping through? I will be spending time with each of the church ministry committees; indeed I have already had the privilege of sitting in on several. I will be breathing deeply as I sit and probably listen more than speak at this time. I am watching, observing, and trying to quickly get a feel for how 1st does "church". Rest assured I will not be this quiet for the rest of my tenure with you. You may look back and wish for these first few weeks in a couple of months. We will gallop through those activities already planned and policies already adopted.

The other task that will take some time will be our first transitional task, to explore your history/ heritage. Edwin Friedman, a family therapist and a rabbi, suggested at a transitional ministry conference that transitions or rites of passage were the original form of therapy. He said that a well-thought-out, deliberate approach to the transitional time can help a congregation deal with the healing of hurts, unfinished business, and missed opportunities from previous days. So, we will talk about past experiences both good and bad in the upcoming weeks in both formal and informal ways (that is dance step 1 if you heard me preach on June 30th). Join us as we work on this first transitional step.

I am settling into a comfortable routine; normally I will be in Champaign from Saturday evening through Thursday afternoon or evening. I will then head back to Indianapolis for my day off on Friday and a bit on Saturday if the schedule allows. Please do not hesitate to drop by the office to say hi when I am in town. For pastoral needs, I would suggest setting up an appointment by calling me at the office. When I am away from Champaign, Pastor Joe and others will help

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2nd Sunday Brunch
July 14th

Come, enjoy brunch
Centennial Hall

**We will have a variety of
brunch items along with some
special sweet treats. Enjoy
food and fellowship right
after the 9 AM service.**

Donations appreciated!

**Volunteers are needed to help with
the brunches. If interested, please
contact Carol Ann Green, Gary
Peterson or the church office.**



with pastoral care. We will be in regular conversation with our Session Elders and Deacons who will continue to serve as another contact with the church, please do not hesitate to contact any of us as the needs arise.

Blessings,
Pastor Beth

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. Blest be the tie that binds.

Your Church Officers

2026	2025	2024
Session Elders Carol Ann Green Mary Gritten Carol Miles Tom Ulen	Moderator: Beth Wagner Ken Chapman Diane Mortensen Trenna Thomas Ann Webbink	 Mary Jane Kelley John Muirhead Mary Nicholas
Community Mission Deacons Sallie Hutton Kathy Schoeffmann	Moderator: Leslie Thomas Holly Nordheden Lola Ruthmansdorfer Leslie Thomas	 Jane Alsberg Grace Ashenfelter
Congregational Care Deacons Pam Knox Marge Olson Skip Pickering Annilee Shaul	Moderator: Linda Sandquist Gary Bowen Mary Jane Kelley Linda Sandquist Eric & Cathy Stickels	 Amy Born Nancy MacGregor Bill & Sherry Marble Tom & Julia Ulen



It's Game Time!

First Church will sponsor International Family Game Time on September 17 from 4:30-6 PM in Centennial Hall and the alley. First, please mark your calendar, attend and greet our guests. Before that, we need your help in locating games. We are looking for games that let people laugh and enjoy each other, games easily learned and not too long. We want people to rotate from game to game. Do you have a game to suggest or to loan?

Contact your Outreach Committee at rwk3213@gmail.com or 217-621-5915.

Ngoma African Arts Festival

"He said to them, "Go into the whole world and proclaim the good news to every creature." *Mark 16:15*

Our church first welcomed Africans to our worship in 2012. We continue to have a respected position among young African families and many others in the community who work and pray with them. A big thanks to all of you who supported this community event with your gifts and your presence.

First Pres had a major presence.

Pastor Lundy opened the awards ceremony with prayer and later accepted a major sponsor award on behalf of our congregation. We were able to meet a diverse group of people. Among them were university professors, musicians, students and food vendors.

Your Outreach Committee believes it critical to the church that we be in the world making disciples. We encourage you to join us.

Compassion, Peace, Justice Ministry Team

This small group meets twice a month on Zoom. We pray together, learn together and then act to help build the kingdom God wants for us. We focus on the Matthew 25 pillars of dismantling structural racism and eliminating systemic poverty.

Our recent activities have involved book studies, advocacy and helping our congregation grow its commitment to its brief mission statement which in part reads, "We believe in "radical welcome" where everyone is not only invited to the party but also asked to be a growing multi-generational, multi-cultural, servant-missional church serving the heart of the city and wherever Christ calls us."

We would love to have you with us. For more information contact **Bob Kirby** at rwk3213@gmail.com

Sunday Hospitality Table



We all enjoy the fellowship of our Sunday Hospitality Table. We have a generous group of ten who regularly volunteer helping to set the table at 8:15 and cleaning up at 10:30. The only requirement is a smile. We have easy to follow directions. Would you like to join in rotation. It's fun, it's easy, it's good and we need you.

Sign up here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70a0c4eafad29a0f94-sunday/75632732#/>



Put it on your calendar!!!

ALL Church Picnic
Sunday, August 18
4 PM Hessel Park

Panderia San Miguel

Our community is richly blessed by flavors from around the world. Your Compassion, Peace and Justice Team highlights local businesses owned by minority people.

Previously we highlighted La Mixteca serving a full menu of Mexican food and we pointed you to El Oasis a unique shop serving homemade ice cream in many flavors. To these businesses entrepreneur **Mauricio Contreras** and wife **Berenice Valle** have more recently added a third. All three are located behind Walgreens at the corner of Cunningham and University Avenues in Urbana.

Mauricio and Berenice are from Oaxaca, Mexico. Oaxaca, is located in Southern Mexico and is known as the culinary capital of the country. The new addition to their culinary offerings is Panderia San Miguel which opened in December of 2023.

Panderia means “bakery.” In this intimate space at 510 N. Cunningham avenue, Urbana, we found a warm welcome from Mauricio.

Display cases contain rows of beautiful cakes and adjacent to them a variety of interesting creations from conchas and churros to pan dulce and much more. A round metal tray the size of a pizza pan is located next to tongs. Pick up your items with the tongs, place them on the tray and take them to the counter where they will be packaged for you.



Berenice and Mauricio will bake to order for events as large as wedding receptions and as small as a birthday party.



Face to Face with Kevin Kim and Soo Choi



Kyekeyoon (Kevin) Kim and Hyungsoo (Soo) Choi

What brought you to First Presbyterian Church?

We came to First Church when our daughter was young because of the amazing youth program. A highlight of that was the Wednesday Night Youth Club. At that time, we also had an outreach program called, "Mother's Morning Out", which served as a channel to attract young families. We love to worship in this church.

What has been the highlight of your church experience?

We both agree. It's the people who help us grow spiritually. Kevin's service on session and the associate pastor nominating committee twice were also transforming experiences.

Tell us about your family? Your work?

We are both faculty in the Electrical and Computer Engineering department at UIUC. We are blessed in being able to collaborate in our

work. We met in Seoul and have three adult children and two grandsons. It was a blessing that our youngest daughter Celeste served as an elder and Clerk of Session.

What do you do in your free time?

We like relaxing with our standard poodle, Louis. Soo has recently joined the choir. Before this, she helped with the tech team. Kevin serves on the Outreach Committee.

Who are your favorite Bible characters?

It's difficult to pick just one. To Kevin it is Joseph, son of Jacob and Rachel. He is a model for us in the ability to forgive. To Soo it is Joshua. Joshua was faithful and a great leader.

What advice can you give on how to be the church? How can the church best be the church?

The church is the house of God. Glorify God. Feed the people with God's word. Continue to reach out and, especially, welcome young families.



Free Book Exchange

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



Church Office Hours

Office hours have been adjusted.

The church office is now open:

Mon-Thurs 8:30 AM - 2 PM

Friday 8:30 AM - noon



Holy God. It is easy for us to get disheartened. We are often dissuaded from your call upon our lives, believing it to be above our abilities. It is easy for us to forget who it is that we serve. Forgive us God, forgive our lack of faith. Forgive us when we underestimate ourselves. Help us to follow your word and your will. It's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Summer Adult Education Wednesday Evenings

There will be no Adult Sunday School after Worship Services in June, July or August. Many of our small groups take Summer breaks as well so check with your leader about summer plans for your small group.

During the Summer, we will be having Adult Bible Lessons and Christian Discussions on Wednesday evenings.

Joe Lundy is our primary leader with help from other volunteers.

The time for our gatherings is Wednesdays at 7 - 8 PM in the Mae Chapin Parlor and by Zoom on July 10, 17, 24, 31 and August 7, 14, 21 & maybe the 28, but the details are not yet firm regarding the content of those lessons. (No discussion on July 3.)

Men's Prayer Group

The men the congregation gather each Friday at 8:15 AM on Zoom for prayer. We pray in turn, each in our own way and in our language of choice. We praise God and ask forgiveness. We pray for the world, our nation our communities and our congregation.

All men are welcome.

Jays & Concerns

We express sympathy...

- to the family of **Mary and Steve Gritten** on the death of Mary's brother Bob on the east coast;
- to the family of **Janet Emmons (Julie Shult's sister)**. Janet's husband died Monday, June 24, in Williamsburg, VA.

We said farewell...

- to **Rachel and Matt Matthews** on Sunday, June 23, as they depart to begin their new roles as co-pastors at the Waldensian Presbyterian Church in Valdese, North Carolina.

Matt & Rachel's Farewell Celebration



The Heart of Mission

July Raindrop Offering to Support Mission Aviation Fellowship

BY JEANNIE SNOEYINK, WORLD MISISON
JEANNIE.SNOEYINK@GMAIL.COM

After several of Matt's Friday emailers, many of you may realize that our church's Raindrop Offering is coming up in July and that this year's Raindrop offering will be going to Mission Aviation Fellowship- United States. Historically, this offering is called a raindrop offering because we have raindrops with different prices on them and you can choose a raindrop of your choice at a certain price. This is hard to do with services located downstairs this year. However, listed at the end of this article, you will note various prices for some of the services provided by MAF.

Mission Aviation Fellowship is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year. If you recall our own Presbyterian Disaster Assistance program which was part of our One Great Hour of Sharing also is celebrating its 75th anniversary. This is not a coincidence. Both programs are an outgrowth of a desire for peace, an understanding that we are all connected in our world, and a desire to help others in need, wherever they may be found.

In 1947, World War II pilots in the U.S. and the U.K. initiated the development of Mission Aviation Fellowship. (The very first pilot to fly on a mission was a WWII woman pilot, **Betty Greene**, flying two missionaries to a jungle area of Mexico.) These pilots were able to purchase a few small planes and began flying to small, isolated, hard to

reach communities in Africa and South America to share the word of God with others.

MAF has evolved over the years and has various components. It is a family of organizations led by people in countries around the world who have a similar vision of taking Christ's love into the most remote places on earth. MAF-US collaborates with sister organizations to meet spiritual and physical needs in 37 different countries. Collectively, the fleet of 135 airplanes serves some 1,500 non-profits, churches, and humanitarian organizations. Every 5.6 minutes a MAF aircraft takes off or lands somewhere in the world, transporting people who live in remote communities, and assisting aid and development agencies, missions, and churches to share the love of God.

MAF-U.S. has service locations in 12 countries, sharing God's love through aviation. They overcome geographic, political and religious barriers, aiding in medical care, educational opportunities, clean water, community development, and the gospel of Christ. MAF-U.S. also serves 4 restricted access countries. Each year, MAF-US serves more than 400 non-profit, local, and mission organizations all over the world with aviation, communications, and learning technology services.

MAF-US headquarters in Nampa, Idaho is where our mission co-workers, **Kent and Nancy Contrucci** have been working for 9 years after serving 8 years in Papua, Indonesia where Kent was a MAF pilot. At MAF headquarters, Kent has just completed his calling as a safety specialist in the aviation safety department, teaching

pilots from around the world how to service and fix their own planes on location. During COVID, Kent was able to complete a manual that is able to be used for zoom presentations.

Over the years, MAF has learned from those they meet and has seen lives transformed by the service ministry of MAF.

Prices for various items in the MAF program:
\$25: Transports 120 Bibles OR
\$50: Delivers 420 pounds of school supplies OR
\$100: Transports 2 Christian workers OR
\$150: Delivers 1,200 pounds of food or medicine

Here's how your Flight Crew gifts could be used:
\$30 to provide fuel for a life-saving flight
\$60 to buy tools to help keep our planes safely in the air

Cuba Calling

Your Cuba Partners Leadership Team will again offer an eight -week Cuba Study beginning September 9. A study is mandatory for those who might travel to Cuba in March but valuable to all who are curious about our sister church and the Republic of Cuba.

Mark your calendars for Saturday and Sunday October 5 and 6. Our mission co-workers from Cuba and the Caribbean will be our guests. We plan a time for you to be with them on Saturday morning. Then, on Sunday, they will preach and teach us again during our following Spiritual Formation time.

If you would like to host them in some way while they are visiting give a shout out to Bob at rwk3213@gmail.com.

Finance

Financial Update

BY ANN WEBBINK, FINANCE TEAM
ANWEB2@YAHOO.COM

Contributions

Total May contributions: \$37.9K from plate and pledge plus \$10.3K from prepaid= \$48.2K This is \$14.4K less than last year and \$17.2K under budget.

Total contributions YTD, including prorated prepaid pledges: \$ 363.4 K which is \$13K less than last year and \$36.4 K over budget.

At 41.7% of the year, we have 55.5% of the budgeted contributions, including all prepaid contributions.

Expenses

May expenses were \$115.5 K, which is \$32.8 K more than last year and \$35.5K over budget. Expenses YTD are \$436.4K which is \$22.3K more than last year and \$36.4K over budget. At 41.7% of the year, we have spent 45.5% of the budget.

Balance YTD

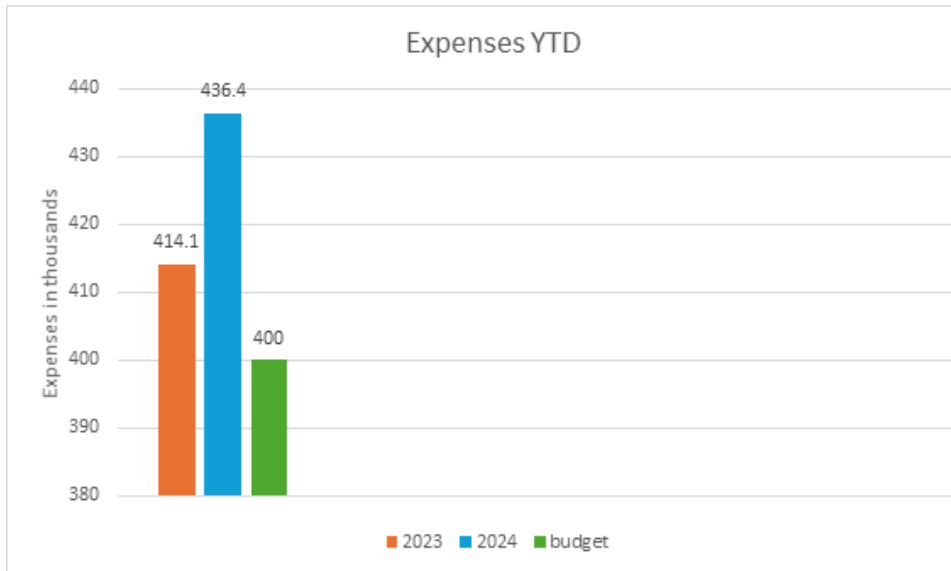
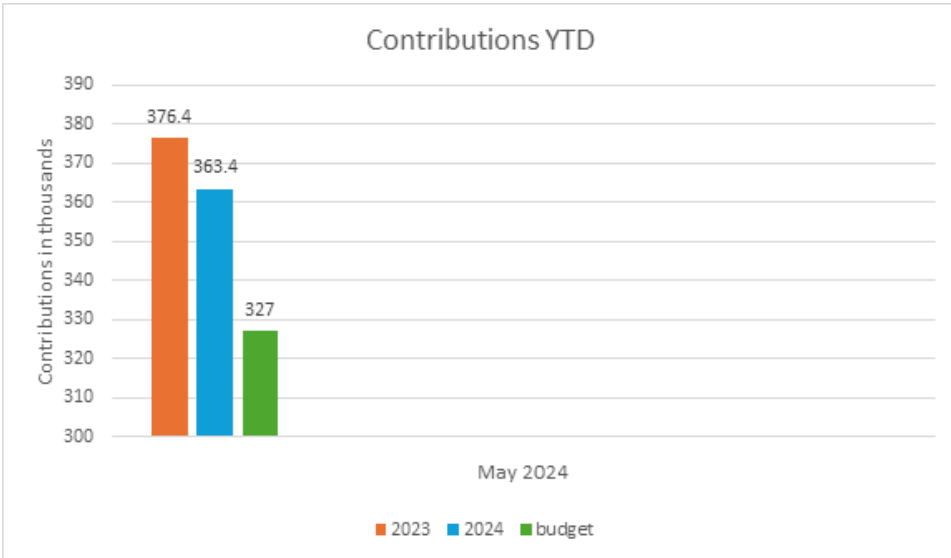
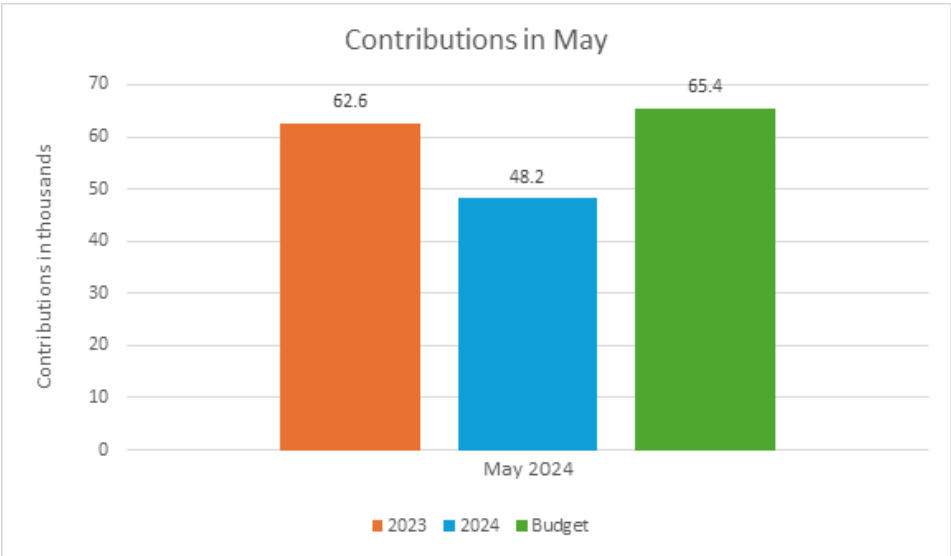
Revenue, including prepaid, exceeded expenses by \$31.4K, which is \$26.7K less than last year at the same time.

Session Designated Funds

\$1,671,590 which is \$57,184 more than last month.

Summary of Restricted Accounts

\$5246 was given to various funds, including \$2700 to the elevator fund, \$500 to OGHS and \$1700 to missions.





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CHURCH** OF CHAMPAIGN

302 West Church Street
Champaign, IL 61820

Change Service Requested



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302 West Church Street
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P: 217.356.7238

E: info@firstpres.church

www.firstpres.church

Sunday:

9 AM Worship

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.

Pastors:

Beth Wagner..... Interim Pastor/Head of Staff
Joseph Lundy..... Associate Pastor for Discipleship

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
Joe Grant..... Director of Music
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

Church Office hours:

Mon-Thurs 8:30 AM - 2 PM

Friday 8:30 AM - noon

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.