

March 2023



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN

Who? Singer-songwriter David LaMotte
What? In Concert
When? Sunday, April 16, 3 PM, reception afterwards to meet David
Where? First Presbyterian Church, Church & State streets, Champaign
Why? To enjoy an afternoon of stories and music together.
Cost? Free. Donations encouraged.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

David LaMotte in Concert
Sunday, April 16 • 3:00pm • FREE (donations encouraged)
First Presbyterian Church, Church & State streets, Champaign, IL

Across more than three thousand concerts, thirteen albums, three books, fifty states, and five continents, **David LaMotte** has gathered a large and loyal community of enthusiastic listeners. The Boston Globe writes that his music “pushes the envelope with challenging lyrics and unusual tunings, but he also pays homage to folk tradition,” while BBC Radio Belfast lauds his “charm, stories,

continued on the next page

CUBA SUNDAY MARCH 12

Join us after worship for
2nd Sunday Brunch
Cuban Style



Cuban style scrambled eggs
Thin cut cold ham
Cuban bread pudding
Fried plantains
Corn and rice
Coffee and tea
Mango, guava juices
and other Cuban flavors

humour, insightful songs, sweet voice and dazzling guitar ability.” His most recent release, *Still*, spent five months in the Top 20 on the FAI Folk Charts in 2022, and his song *September Me*, from that album, was the #1 song in September of that year.

LaMotte’s music has been honored with numerous awards and has been featured on dozens of artist compilations. Notably, his song *Dark and Deep* was included on *Songs Inspired By Literature, Chapter One*, a benefit CD to raise money for adult literacy. Other artists on that CD include Suzanne Vega, Grace Slick, Aimee Mann, and Bruce Springsteen. Several independent films feature David’s music, and it has been heard on the *Today Show* and the *Showtime* television series *This American Life*. In 2023, his music will be featured in an episode of the Emmy Award-winning docuseries *Medical Stories*.

In 2023, LaMotte will also be featured with national champion hammered dulcimer player Benjamin Barker on an album produced by Blue Ridge Music Trails. This cross-genre and intergenerational album features six pairs of Western North Carolina musicians who were invited to create music together in an effort to mentor the younger artists and amplify the broad variety of roots music in the area, from Cherokee musical traditions to Bluegrass to Sacred Steel.

LaMotte lives with his wife and son in Black Mountain, North Carolina, where he is currently working on a new podcast, set to debut in the summer of 2023, while writing, performing, touring, hosting his online Patreon community, and preparing for the release of his book, *You Are Changing the World Whether You Like It Or Not*, due out on Chalice Press in July of 2023.

LaMotte is also a Rotary Peace Fellow, with a master’s degree in International Studies, Peace, and Conflict Resolution, which informs his songs and stories. He studied in Australia at the University of Queensland in Brisbane, and he did his field work in rural India, working with an Indian sustainable development organization. Through academic training, practice, and global networking opportunities, the Rotary Peace Centers program develops the capacity of peace and development professionals to become effective catalysts for peace and justice. Since the program began in 2002, the Rotary Peace Centers have trained more than 1,500 fellows who now work in over 115 countries.

“...pushes the envelope with challenging lyrics and unusual tunings, but he also pays homage to folk tradition.” -
The Boston Globe

“charm, stories, humour, insightful songs, sweet voice and dazzling guitar ability.” -
BBC Radio Belfast

“contemplative and intimate ...melodious folk pop imbued with a subtle joyous spirit.” -
Performing Songwriter Magazine

“a global citizen... touched hearts across the globe.” -
The Hindu (India)



Cuba Sunday March 12

Twins

BY BOB KIRBY
RWK3213@GMAIL.COM

First Presbyterian Church of Champaign and the Presbyterian Reformed Church of Cuba at Luyanó are in relationship as an hermanamiento. Hermanamiento means twinning. We have a relationship not only as friends and partners, but we are twins. This is a family relationship of deep respect, love and enduring commitment.

Celebrate our twinship on **Sunday, March 12**, in worship and then gather in Centennial Hall for brunch featuring Cuban food.

A delegation of **Sarah Laufenberg, Brandi Lowe, Matt and Rachel Matthews** and **Linda Sandquist** will travel to Havana in late April to build on our thirteen years in relationship.

Consider bringing gifts of over-the-counter medicines, feminine hygiene products, hand soap, toothbrushes and paste, empty medicine containers, crochet thread to the mission table in Westminster. Mark them “Cuba”. Or make a financial contribution to First Presbyterian Church for our sister congregation.

“Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters. ² Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.” *Hebrews 13:1-2*

Snippets from Your Pastor

BY MATT MATTHEWS
MATT@FIRSTPRES.CHURCH



Matt with son Benjamin hiking the Meatpacking District, NYC.

I'm back.

Thank you for allowing me to take a mini-sabbatical for the last four Sundays. As you know, my contract with the church allows for a three-month sabbatical. I was glad our mutual schedules allowed me to take a third of this break now. Thank you.

Everybody in every job should get such a break, but few out of the academic world do. I'm immensely grateful your generosity allowed one for me. Thank you.

Now that I'm back, let's touch base. I'm eager to reconnect. Lent is upon us, and spring is coming. God is good.

Human Relations

BY MARY NICHOLAS, CHAIR
NICHOLASMARYM@GMAIL.COM

Human Relations wants to express our appreciation to the wonderful Sabbatical Pastors, **Rev. Connie Bandy** and **Rev. Jean Oliver-Holder**

for helping First Presbyterian Church navigate Pastor Matt's Sabbatical this past month. Of course, in expressing appreciation, we must also recognize **Rev. Rachel Matthews** and **Judi Geistlinger, CLP**, who helped

keep everything running smoothly.

In addition, we must also applaud **Marcia Franks, Ann Petry, Patti Farthing, Ritchie Drennen, Martice Chappel, and Fred Foster**, and **Robert Ferrer** and **Bryan Cline**, who provided support during this busy time. We could not have done it without you.

The music was especially lovely, so we must also recognize **Sora Shepard, Joe Grant**, and our **Chancel Choir** for providing us meaningful worship music. The church staff is amazing and with everyone working together, Matt's absence was what we had hoped for.

One other thing I want to note is the exciting news about the ELL program. The parking lot is full of cars and lots of laughter and fun is happening, thanks to the dedication of Val Smith.

We want to remind everyone to join the congregation in our different Lenten services, whether you worship in person or online. It is a very special time of year and will be a high point of our worship during the next few weeks.

Thank you to everyone who serves on the Human Relations Committee. They do an amazing job and are always available for church staff as well as any congregational needs. They include: **Ann Stout, Jeannie Snoeyink**, and **Dave Whitford**.

We pray for all during this meaningful Lenten season.

Lent Is Upon Us

This season, we are making our way to the cross (and the empty tomb!). The cross gets in the way, as Paul's letter to the church in Corinth tells, and is a stumbling block and foolishness and yet is central to our faith. Each Sunday during Lent we will hear a cross testimony at the beginning of worship. You see, we have a giant wooden cross that is making its way around the sanctuary until Good Friday. It is not a beautiful thing; it will be in your way and that is exactly the point.

Let's make our way to the cross, together.

Mark your calendars for the **Maundy Thursday** (April 6 at 6 PM) Soup Supper with communion around tables, and **Good Friday** (April 7 at 7 PM) in the sanctuary with our Methodist neighbors.

Lenten Discussion Series

Tired of just making chocolate taboo for Lent? Feel like you are called to do something to be closer to God this sacred season?

Join us Sunday mornings during Lent in the Parlor at 10:15 for a video/discussion series based on Adam Hamilton's *The Walk, Five Essential Practices of the Christian Life*.

Come explore how focusing on faith practices you probably already do can help you walk more closely with God during Lent and every day.

There will not be a discussion on Sunday, March 12. Join us that morning for our 2nd Sunday Brunch Cuban style!

The Heart of Mission

Habitat/Salt & Light Collection

On June 3, our Community Mission Deacons are hosting a Collection Event to help you Spring clean and to help others. You will be hearing more about it in the coming months. As you go through items in your closets and home that you are ready to get rid of, we will be working on getting people with trucks and trailers ready to help you get your items to Habitat ReStore and Salt & Light.

Here are a couple of lists to keep in mind of what they will take.

Habitat ReStore

Things in working order, clean and in good shape.

Appliances, furniture, windows and doors, garden supplies, kitchen and bath cabinets and sinks, electronic equipment, exercise equipment, lighting, hardware and tools, household goods, usable plumbing, new carpet and flooring, and building materials.

They will not accept broken items, used textiles, mattresses, clothes, sleeper sofas, tube televisions, pianos, or large entertainment centers.

For a more complete list of what they will and will not accept please look at <https://cuhabitat.org/items-to-donate/>

Salt & Light

Things in working order, clean and in good shape.

Clothing and shoes, jewelry, books, purses, household goods, kitchenware, dvds and cds, linens, small electronics, collectibles, health, bath and beauty aids, computers and accessories, furniture, tools, and area rugs.

They will not accept broken items, mattresses, baby cribs, car seats, household items that need to be installed, pianos, entertainment centers, or dining tables with no chairs

For a more complete list of what they will and will not accept please look at <https://saltandlightministry.org/2021/01/19/donating-goods-what-to-bring-and-why-it-matters/>

If you have large items to give on June 3 and need help transporting or if you have transportation (trucks, trailers) to share in this endeavor, please contact **Jane Alsberg** at jane.alsberg@gmail.com, **Grace Ashenfelter** at grace-elyn@comcast.net and/or **Rachel Matthews** at rachel@firstpres.church

Environmental Stewardship Rocks in Champaign County!

BY PAT PHILLIPS

P.PHILLIPS42@SBCGLOBAL.NET

Some examples to check out:

***Farmers' Markets**—Saturday mornings in Urbana, Tuesday afternoons in Champaign, during growing season.

***Sola Gratia**, Community Supported Agriculture, in Urbana, donating 1/3 of their produce to areas without access.

***U of I Recycling Program**—Grind2Energy—food waste from Dorms ground to slurry which is processed by the Sanitary District to provide energy.

***Idea Store at Lincoln Square**; Creative Re-use: you can donate and shop.

***U of I Pollinatorium**, 696 W. Windsor, Urbana. Visit Saturday afternoons from 1:30 to 4:30.

***MTD hybrid and hydrogen-fueled buses**.

***Landscape Recycling Center**, 1210 E. University, Urbana.

***Hazardous Waste Collection at State Farm Center**: Register March 6 for a time slot on April 15.

***Greener Goods**, eco-friendly necessities, 601 E. Main, Mahomet

***U of I Sustainable Student Farm** on South Lincoln, Urbana

***DART**, in Urbana, where the Styrofoam you all collect is recycled!

***Anita Purves Center**, Urbana, which takes our taped batteries.

And there's so much more here for which to be thankful!

English Language Learners News

BY VAL SMITH, DIRECTOR
VAL@FIRSTPRES.CHURCH

"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." (*1 Thessalonians 5:16-17*)

Our Valentine celebrations for both Tuesday and Wednesday classes were times of rejoicing. **Linda Peterson** prepared materials for making Valentine cards during café time and a special cookie-making kit for the PEACH (Parents/English And CHildren) students and children. Joining Linda were the Presbyterian Women, **Sallie Hutton** and **Brandi Lowe**. On the spot, Brandi sang a fun song for the group. The students were thankful for Linda, Sallie, and Brandi who added to their conversational opportunities in the classrooms following our special events in the café.



Two of our tutors, (both retired from University teaching), **Linda Sims** and **Laura Kanis** provided short mini-lessons related to the Valentine

holiday. The students enjoyed the candy hearts from **Rachel Matthews**. One heart said: "puppy love." Laura explained the meaning to the group.



For those of you who have had children, do you remember some of the lonely times as a young mom of preschoolers when you longed for adult conversation? I remember the groups I attended with my young children that fulfilled my need for fellowship. This memory is why the PEACH class for the young moms

is dear to my heart. I appreciate our tutors, Bonnie, Olivia, Kate, and the substitute, Cheryl, who teach this class. Also, one of our students, **Aeraena Yang**, assists this class on Tuesday mornings by attending to the children in the room so their moms can focus on improving their English. I rejoice knowing these moms are not alone.

Several students asked for prayer this month including a former student from Turkey. Her husband is receiving cancer treatments and they live in a city near where the earthquake hit. Her children were scared and she asked for continued prayer for her family.

In addition, several students have faced health issues and they also would appreciate your prayers. Others are finishing dissertations which can be very stressful. It is not always easy to give thanks in these kinds of circumstances, but when we do, we find strength to carry on.





“Lent brings us new hope, a new trust, a new love.” “Prayer is listening to the voice that calls us ‘My Beloved’”. Henri Nouwen

Mark 1:11 (NRSV) And a voice came from the heavens, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”

2 Timothy 1:7 (NRSV) For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice (fear) but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self discipline.

Lamentations 3:22,23 (NRSV) The steadfast love of our Lord never ceases, His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness.

“Someone who dwells in the center of our beings wants to listen with love to all that occupies and preoccupies our minds. God is personal”. Henri Nowen

Jays & Concerns

The family of Jo Foley is asking that we help celebrate her **95th birthday** on April 2. Let's shower her with cards! Cards can be sent to Jo at 32 Willow Court, Champaign, IL 61822

A Celebration from The Refugee Center...

Two brothers from Afghanistan, **Amanullah and Azizullah Mayer**, who have been part of our ELL and The Refugee Center in the past, are opening a new restaurant called Afghan Cuisine. It will be located in the Strawberry Fields Cafe which is housed in the World Harvest Foods, 306 W. Springfield Ave., Urbana. Congratulations!



Flowers for Easter

Spring flowers will decorate the Sanctuary Easter Sunday, April 9.

If you would like to give a monetary donation in honor or memory of someone for the Spring flowers, please note so on your check in the memo line. Please include a note who the flowers are in honor or memory of.

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.

Face to Face with Becky & John Muirhead



John is a ruling elder with responsibility for mission. Becky served in children and youth ministries and meals on wheels.

What brought you to First Presbyterian Church?

We came here in 1978 when we moved from Danville. We had been Presbyterians all our adult lives and we knew the interim associate pastor here.

What has been the highlight of your church experience?

The people here including the pastors and the fellowship. We raised our daughters here through Sunday school and youth club. We continue to serve as we can.

Tell me about your family? Your work?

Retired now, John worked as director of adult education in Urbana schools and Becky taught first grade at Dr. Howard Elementary School. We have two married daughters who live close to us, a nine-year-old grandson, and a grand dog all of whom we love dearly.

What do you do in your free time?

We spend time with our families.

I (Becky) like walking, reading, baseball and Illinois sports. We both have followed the volleyball team for many years at times attending away games and spending a few days of vacation in those sites. We are thrilled that women's basketball is finally having success. I loved helping with meals on wheels. John keeps busy with his work with the Refugee Center board and serving the church through our mission programs, ushering, amateur preachers and transportation ministry.

What are your favorite Bible characters?

It's hard to pick just one. We'll say David, Ruth, Naomi, Paul and Joseph of Genesis.

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

Bring people together and build community. Be strong and stay faithful. Make children a priority.



Library News

Free Book Exchange

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

Ethical Values Abound in This Year's Oscar-Nominated Films

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/story/ethical-values-abound>

Lost and Found

We have a set of Buick car keys and a Schnuck's card that were found in Centennial Hall following a Sunday brunch. Contact the church office if they are yours and identify the key ring.

Nurture/Outreach

BY GARY PETERSON,
AMER_SWEDE@YAHOO.COM

The Nurture Committee is requesting help for coffee making and cleanup. Our committee is small and we have several that are doing these tasks very often.

If you enjoy coffee before and after the worship service please consider signing up. We would like to continue serving coffee and doughnuts. We also want to thank **Tom Gilmore** for his dedication to the coffee service. You may sign up at the Welcome Center or email Gary Peterson amer_swede@yahoo.com.

We are thankful for the help that we have received for our 2nd Sunday Brunch. If you would like to be part of the fun you may let Gary know that also. March will be fun with a Cuba theme with the help of the Cuban committee!!

**2022 Annual Report
is available on the
church website or at**

[2022 Annual Report](#)

University YMCA Spring 2023 Friday Forums

Noon-1:00 PM
1001 S. Wright Street, Champaign

*Our Community in Action:
Advancing Social Justice in Champaign Urbana and Beyond*

Hear from community leaders tackling our most pressing public concerns through an unwavering pursuit of social justice. The University YMCA begins its 150th year and the 96th season of Friday Forum!

March 3
Risograph, Zines, and "Cheap" Art- Will Arnold
School of Art + Design. Also see Art @ the Y exhibition on view January 26 – March 10

March 24
Building Anti Racist Immigrant Communities: reflections on arts mediated dialogue projects- Ken Salo, Department of Urban & Regional Planning

March 31
In Pursuit of Intersectional Equity Beyond the Walls of Academia: Learning from the Marginalized Sunni-Baluch Women Needleworkers in Peri-Urban Iran- Aytey Ashtari, Urban Planning Doctoral Candidate

April 14
Community Violence and Anti-Violence Efforts, School of Social Work and the City of Champaign- Rachel Garthe and Jorge Elvir moderated by Sam Smith, Krannert Center for the Performing Arts

April 21
Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in our Communities,
Diversity & Social Justice Education Interns

All forums are broadcast at 6 PM on WEFT 9.1 the Wednesday following the live program. Urbana Public Television provides recordings on their YouTube channel.

Finance

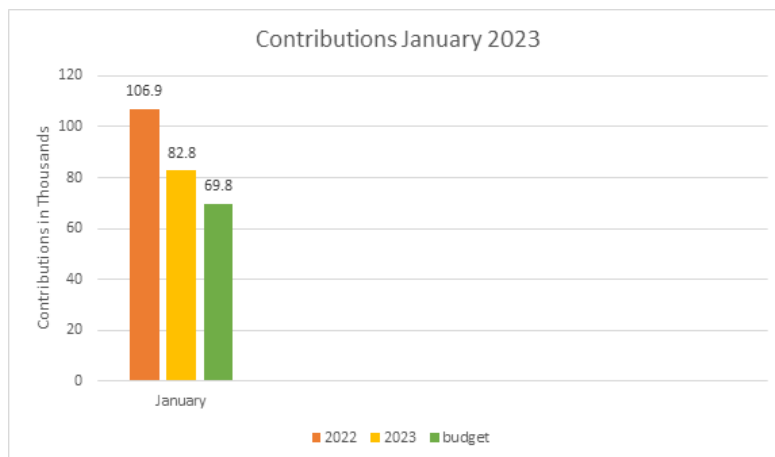
Financial Update

BY ANN WEBBINK, FINANCE TEAM

ANWEB2@YAHOO.COM

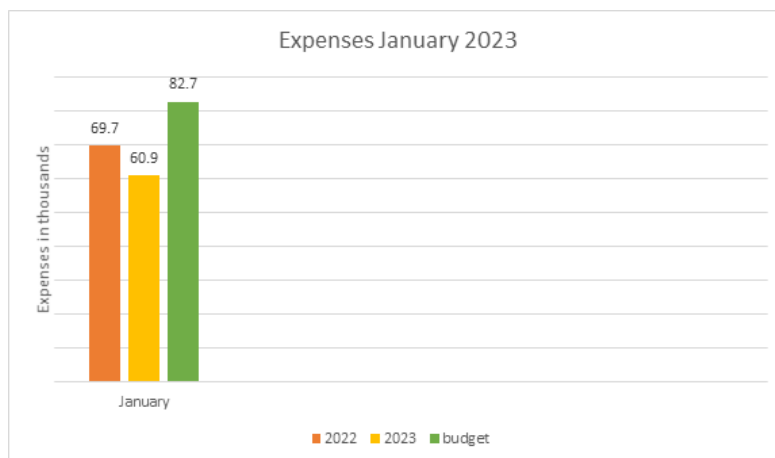
Contributions

Total January contributions: \$73.5K from plate and pledge plus \$9.3K from prepaid= \$82.2K. This is \$24.1K less than last year and \$13K over budget
Total contributions YTD: Same as the monthly information. At 8.3% of the year, we have 22.9% of the budgeted contributions.



Expenses

January expenses were \$60.9 K which is \$8.6 K less than last year and \$21.8 under budget. Expenses YTD were the same. At 8.3% of the year, we have spent 6.1% of the budget.



Balance YTD

Revenue from all sources exceeds expenses by \$133.9K which is \$17.4K less than last year.

Summary of Restricted Accounts

\$4310 was donated to various funds in January.

South Campus Reserves

\$264.8K which is \$10.4K more than last month.

Session Designated Funds

\$1,833,518 which is \$79,700 more than last month.

Your Legacy Matters!

BY DAVE WHITFORD, ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE

DAVE@WHITFORDCONSULTANTS.COM

How can you make a difference?

How can you honor those who came before us ...

who prepared a place for us ...
who sacrificed to build our home for worship ...
our home for fellowship ...
and our home for ministry?

We have been truly blessed by their gifts.

It's our turn ...

let's join those who came before us by planting seeds of gratitude to secure the future for First Church.

Please consider a Legacy Gift to our Endowment from your estate.

To learn more, please visit and explore the Legacy Giving section at to bottom of First Church's Giving webpage.

<https://firstpres.church/giving>

If you have questions email:

Legacy@FirstPres.Church.

Thank you, and thanks be to God!



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CHURCH** OF CHAMPAIGN

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Change Service Requested



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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

Staff:

Martice Chapple..... Facility Assistant
Ritchie DrennenFacility Manager, Ext. 237
Patty Farthing..... Office Assistant, Ext. 211
Robert FerrerAudio-visual Technician
Fred Foster Evening Custodian
Marcia FranksOffice 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. 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.