

March 2024



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN

Continue the journey of Lent...
Join us for Holy Week & Easter

Holy Week Services

Palm Sunday, March 24

9 AM Worship

Maundy Thursday, March 28

5:30 PM Worship and light supper in Centennial Hall

Good Friday, March 29

7 PM Worship with 1st Methodist Church at Methodist Church

Easter Sunday, March 31

9 AM Worship

10:30 AM Worship

2nd SUNDAY BRUNCH **March 10th**

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 Jan Wittler, Gary Peterson
or the church office

SPRING FORWARD

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME

BEGINS SUNDAY MARCH 10



**Christie Clinic's Illinois Race
Weekend Is Back!
April 25-27**

2024 Race Weekend

**Volunteer NOW with
the church or DREAM!**

We will be "ReUnited" as a Community, with the return of the full marathon route!

This year, the Education Building of the church (corner of State & Church) is on the race route AND DREAM is one of several Charity Partners participating. YOU can help out in different ways...

- 1) If you are a runner/walker, you can register for one of the Race Weekend events and join the official DREAM team as a participant! Those who want to "go the extra mile," can also set up a personal page and select DREAM as a recipient for funds raised.
- 2) Donate directly to The DREAM team's efforts and amplify their local outreach, throughout the year.
- 3) Take on a volunteer shift with the church, either to help man a water/snack station at the Education Building on Saturday, April 27, from 8 - 11 AM or volunteer under the DREAM name April 25-27! DREAM is specifically seeking more "Course Team" volunteers (must be 18+ years). For each Course Team volunteer shift covered under DREAM, they receive a small donation. Choose DREAM from the drop-down menu of Charity Partners on the volunteer registration page!

For the Church... We have 7 slots only for the marathon, these slots can be accessed if you are signing up directly with the marathon on their site using the password church. Anyone can participate with us at our booth, which is not an official part of the marathon, we will have our own paper sign up for that starting this Sunday till the marathon. Anyone using our slots should be able to sign up using DREAM as their organization so that DREAM will receive a contribution.

For DREAM... go to <https://illinoismarathon.com/get-involved/volunteer/volunteer-sign-up/>

**DREAM is excited to be a Charity Running
Partner of the
Christie Clinic Illinois Race Weekend!**

April 25-27 | #CCIRW2024



Pastor Joe leads the story of Daniel in the lions' den to a circle of DREAMers and volunteers.

DREAM Youth Bible Club

Wednesdays from 3:30-5 PM
Centennial Hall

Join us for ninety minutes of food and fellowship. The youth and staff are awesome and would love to join you around the table.

You can volunteer in the kitchen or in the front room as a table partner. You can sign up [here](#) to be a table partner or call the church office 217-356-7238 or contact **Bob Kirby** at 217-621-5915 or rwk3213@gmail.com.

To volunteer with the kitchen team contact **Gary Peterson** at 217-398-8504 or amer_swede@yahoo.com or phone the church office.

We Are Matthew 25

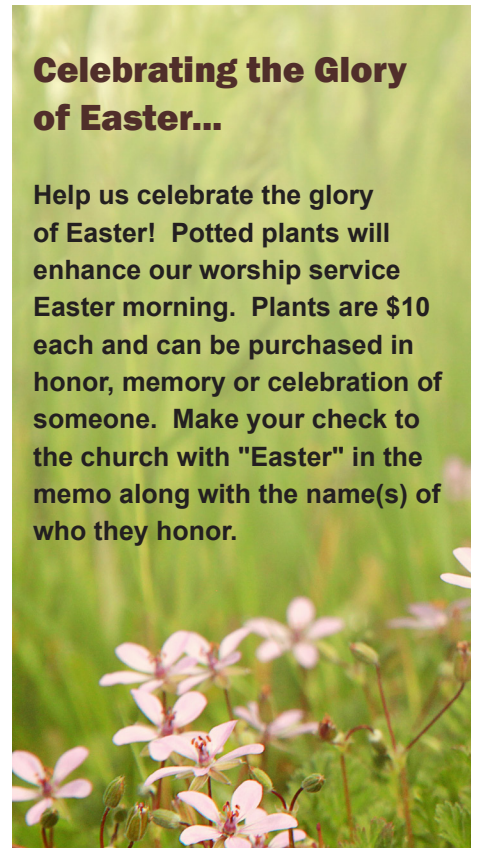


and to eliminate systemic poverty. Our intersectional priorities are climate change, gender justice and heteropatriarchy and militarism.

We are a [Matthew 25 congregation](#) committed to the words of *Matthew 25:31-46*. Our three pillars are to build congregational vitality, to dismantle structural racism

Celebrating the Glory of Easter...

Help us celebrate the glory of Easter! Potted plants will enhance our worship service Easter morning. Plants are \$10 each and can be purchased in honor, memory or celebration of someone. Make your check to the church with "Easter" in the memo along with the name(s) of who they honor.



The Heart of Mission

English Language Learners

BY BONNIE WARD, DIRECTOR
BONNIE@FIRSTPRES.CHURCH

Things are humming along on the second floor of the education building. Our five classes are mostly full, though attendance fluctuates. One couple in their 70's, from Azerbaijan, comes every day, by bus. When classes first started, they were using Uber rides to get here and home every day, at almost \$12 each way. Now they confidently use the transit app on their phones, taking two buses each way. They love the bus, they love coming to class, and are making great progress on their English. Their story illustrates how important our program is, and how important it is to be a welcoming community to all newcomers in our city.

In recent weeks, we have had several people leave our program to attend classes at Parkland, or because they have gotten jobs in the area. We are always sad to see them go, but grateful to play a small part in helping them become vital members of our community. Their places will be filled by people on our waiting list.

Thank you for helping to make this program a success. I am grateful for our dedicated teachers and for the chance to work at what I love!

Green Team

BY PAT PHILLIPS
P.PHILLIPS42@SBCGLOBAL.NET



Adopt a Highway

Did the warm days of late make you want to go outdoors? Mark your calendars for days to do so while making an environmental difference. Dates for 2024 are April 20, June 22, September 21 and November 2.

Earth Day Sunday, April 21

Check out jubileefarmsclinton.com, **Rev. Cyndy Ash**, a UCC minister, owns an alpaca/sheep/garden farm near Clinton, called the Jubilee Farms, tending the earth and the community. She will preach and lead a discussion after worship (the day after we've tended the streets).

Being a Matthew 25 Church

Visit the PCUSA mission website, presbyterianmission.org Click on Intersectional Priority: Climate Change. There are resources listed which should inspire us with new ideas/approaches.

Have you added something you love about the Earth, Our Home on the NW bulletin board?

Refugee Center Gala

BY JOHN MUIRHEAD
J.MUIRHEAD@COMCAST.NET

The Refugee Center will hold its first Fundraiser Gala since COVID on Saturday April 6, 2024 at the I-Hotel in Champaign featuring our headline performance by **Ricardo Herrera** of the U of I School of Music. Registration is \$90 per person/\$700 for a table of eight. Doors open at 5:30 and program begins at 6:00.

For updates on how to register for this event please go to the website: therefugeecenter-cu.org

The Refugee Center (formerly known as the East Central Illinois Refugee Mutual Assistance Center) is a not-for-profit 501c3 serving the C-U area since 1980.

It was founded by Vietnamese refugees to provide commonly needed services to other newly arrived refugees, and to help them acclimatize to American culture. In its 44 years of service to our community, it has expanded its scope to assist all immigrants, political asylees, and refugees, regardless of country of origin. Offices are located at 201 West Kenyon Road Suite 4D in Champaign. Phone: 217.344-8455.

Please direct any questions to **Lisa Wilson**, Executive Director at lisawilson@trc-cu.org or **John Muirhead**, Board President at j.muirhead@comcast.net

March Delegation Will Form Bell Choir with Cuban Musicians

At the invitation of our congregation in Havana, a delegation of five will visit Cuba for six days in March. They will join musicians at our sister church to prepare for a bells choir for Sunday worship. **Brandi Lowe, Matt Matthews, Libby Sternhagen, Andrew Schwenk and John Warren** will represent us. Please keep them in your prayers for safe travel and a transforming experience.

Can You Help?

Many of us are blessed by abundance. Our Cuban Presbyterians on the other hand continue to live in poverty, oppressed by political economic restrictions resulting in shortages of basic human needs such as medicine, food, and personal hygiene items. The church too, has needs such as ink for its printer, an amplifier for music and even paper and crayons for children's programs.

Please prayerfully consider a donation to support our relationship by helping us purchase some basic items we can carry to Cuba this month. Our Cuba Partners fund allows us to purchase items to carry to Cuba to do the work of the church. You can donate by check (memo 106729) sent to 302 W. Church Street, Champaign, 61820 or online at firstpres.church/giving, select "other giving" and memo 106729.

Knowing Cuba Presbyterian Church Symbols



Presbyterian Church USA

The cross

A descending dove -The Holy Spirit

In the center of the dove is a fish -the feeding of the 5,000

Burning flames of Pentecost, Moses, and the burning bush

The open bible below the dove

The Bible rests on a pulpit on which rests the baptismal font

Triangular shape from dove to flames- the trinity



Presbyterian Reformed Church of Cuba (Iglesia Presbiteriana Reformada de Cuba)

The red cup of salvation atop cross

White dove and wing a machete for those who fought for independence

Green plow and silhouette of island

Purple pulpit- the trinity

Orange flame of the spirit

Gold over brown open Bible

Light yellow grains of wheat bread

One Great Hour of Sharing Offering

One Great Hour of Sharing is the single largest way that Presbyterians join together to share God's love with our neighbors-in-need around the world. Each gift helps to improve the lives of people in challenging situations through three impactful programs:

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance...

32% of the offering works alongside communities as they recover and find hope after the devastation of natural or human-caused disasters.

Presbyterian Hunger Program...

36% of the offering takes action to alleviate hunger and the systemic causes of poverty so all may be fed.

Self-Development of People...

32% of the offering invests in communities responding to their experiences of racism, oppression, poverty, and injustice and educates Presbyterians about the impact of these societal ills.

While gifts may be made at any time throughout Lent, the One Great Hour of Sharing will be received on Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday.

Face to Face with the Kamenga Family



Juliana and Paty with children Olivia and Victoria

What brought you to First Presbyterian Church?

I came to First Pres to volunteer in Easy English Fellowship and that led me to worship here. My family recently joined me from London.

What has been the highlight of your church experience?

Being warmly welcomed and included.

Tell me about your family? Your work?

I met Juliana when she was in medical school. I was a teaching assistant in computer programming. We now have Victoria in first grade and baby Olivia. Juliana is a physician now caring for our children and our home. I am at Research Park working for the University of Illinois in information technology.

What do you do in your free time?

Juliana likes to write. Paty follows British soccer. Victoria loves school and reading. She has played piano since age two. All of Olivia's time is free.

Who are your favorite Bible characters?

Victoria says, "Mary, because of the head cover she wears." For Juliana it's Moses. "He was a good man, strong but also humble and faithful. We are expecting a baby boy in June. We will name him Moses."

How can the church best be the church?

Preach the Word. Be a diverse family of people who care for one another and for their neighbors.

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.

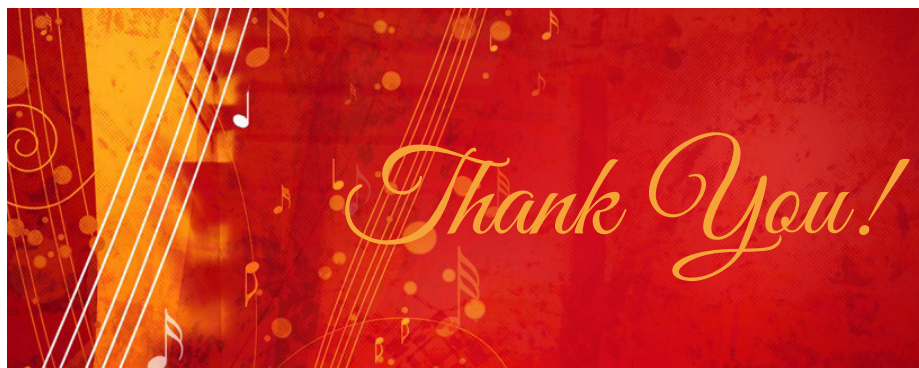


Holy God, we admit that being your Son's disciples can be inconvenient. As we seek clarity in our call, forgive us when we seek ease. And as we ponder the 'inconveniences' of discipleship, may we ponder such matters as the inconvenience of your crucifixion. Forgive us, O Lord, and help us serve with glad hearts. AMEN

Jays & Concerns

Prayers for...

- Brandi Lowe, Matt Matthews, Libby Sternhagen, Andrew Schwenk and John Warren as they travel to our sister church in Cuba.



A quick note from the music program to thank you all for your support of our efforts to enrich worship through music.

Also, a deep thank you to all the volunteers who sing in choir, play the bells, and to Sora Shepard and Libby Sternhagen for providing their expertise in leading worship. You make our services richer and deeper experiences!

*Joe Grant
Director of Music*

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.

Chili/Dessert Cook Off Tempted the Best Appetites

BY JOE LUNDY, ASSOCIATE PASTOR FOR DISCIPLESHIP
JOSEPH@FIRSTPRES.CHURCH

During our chili cook off we got to spend a portion of our afternoon in our Centennial Hall surrounded by wonderful food and people! In total, we had about 20 chilis and about 10 desserts. This was of course more than I had mentioned in the morning, in fact multiple members pointed out that our dessert situation reminded them of the story of the loaves and fishes.

All in all we had a wonderful time with good food and even better fellowship. I already look forward to next year's cook off.

We also have the two winning recipes from this year's cook off. **Kathryn Cole's** recipe for *A Twist on Aunt Connie's Chicken Chili*, and **Sherry Marble's** *Chocolate Mousse*.

A Twist on Aunt Connie's Chicken Chili (adjusted to feed a crowd) Serves 10-12; Approx. 5-8 hours in crockpot on low

Ingredients

- 1.5-2 lb chicken breast cooked and cubed
- 8 oz jar mild-medium salsa
- 8 oz cubed pepper jack cheese
- 32 oz box chicken broth
- 1 TBS chili powder (or to taste)
- Salt and black pepper to taste (additional salt likely only needed if using reduced sodium chicken broth)
- (2) 48 oz cans Great Northern beans
- 12 oz can Rotel green chilis and tomatoes
- ½ block cream cheese, cubed
- 1 TBS cumin
- ½ TBS dried oregano

Preparation

Combine all ingredients in a crockpot and heat on low until the cheese is melted and all ingredients are combined, approximately 5-8 hours.

Tips

If too thick, add more chicken broth. Serve with your favorite chili toppings. To scale down the recipe, omit the cream cheese and can of Rotel and halve all other ingredients. Freezes well!

Sherry's Chocolate Mousse* A mousse with a rich, sophisticated texture and a flavor that hovers near heaven.

Ingredients

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| 18 oz semisweet chocolate (I use Ghirardelli) | 2 cups heavy cream, well chilled |
| 6 large or extra-large eggs | 2 tablespoons confectioners' sugar |
| 2 tablespoons crème de cacao | 1 tablespoon vanilla extract (I use Mediterranean vanilla) |

Preparation

1. Melt the chocolate over hot water.
2. While the chocolate is melting, whip the cream until it forms medium stiff peaks. Do not overbeat or the mousse will lose some of its smooth, light texture.
3. Separate 4 of the eggs and set the whites aside. Combine yolks with the 2 remaining whole eggs in the bowl of an electric mixer. Beat until eggs are thick and lemon colored, about 5-10 minutes. While the yolks are beating place the 4 egg whites in a clean copper or stainless-steel bowl and whisk, preferably by hand, until the whites start to stiffen. Sprinkle on the confectioners' sugar and beat until you have firm peaks.
4. Remove melted chocolate from water and cool just till warm. Working quickly, add the cooled melted chocolate and a scoop of the whipped cream to the egg yolks. Stir until smooth, then add the remaining cream. When it is fully incorporated, add the liqueur and vanilla, then fold in the whites until just blended.
5. This mousse can be poured into individual serving dishes or into 1 larger dessert dish. Chill at least 4 hours before serving (chilling it overnight intensifies the flavor). The mousse can be frozen for up to two weeks. Remove from the freezer and let it sit in the refrigerator overnight before serving.

*From *The Joy of Chocolate*, Judith Olney, Barrons, Woodbury New York, London, Toronto, Sydney, 1982.

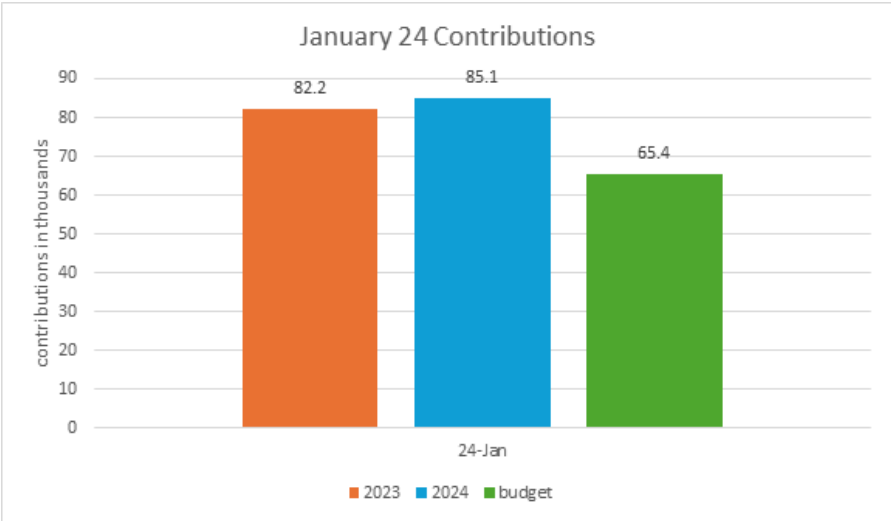
Finance

Financial Update

BY ANN WEBBINK, FINANCE TEAM
ANWEB2@YAHOO.COM

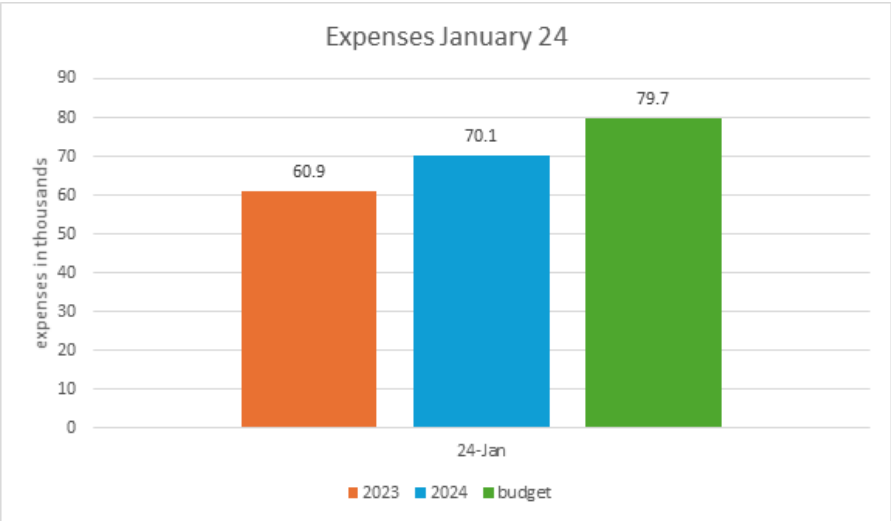
Contributions

Total January contributions: \$74.8K from plate and pledge plus \$10.3K from prepaid= \$85.1K. This is \$2.3 K more than last year and \$19.7K over budget. Total contributions YTD, including prorated prepaid pledges: This is the same as the amounts for January. At 8.3% of the year, we have 25.3% of the budgeted contributions, including all prepaid contributions.



Expenses

January expenses were \$70.1 K, which is \$9.2 K more than last year and \$9.6K under budget. Expenses YTD were the same as January's. At 8.3% of the year, we have spent 7.3% of the budget.



Balance YTD

Revenue, including prepaid, exceeded expenses by \$131.6K which is 2.3K less than last year at the same time.

Session Designated Funds

\$1,613,224 which is \$31,221 less than last month.

Summary of Restricted Accounts

The elevator fund received \$2250 this month.



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CHURCH** OF CHAMPAIGN

302 West Church Street
Champaign, IL 61820

Change Service Requested



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Champaign, IL 61820

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E: info@firstpres.church

www.firstpres.church

Sunday:

- 9 AM Worship
- 10 AM Coffee and Fellowship
- 10 AM Sunday School for Youth & Adults

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
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
Rachel Matthews..... Covenant Pastor for Mission
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.