

November 2020



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN

Snippets From Your Pastor

BY MATT MATTHEWS

MATT@FIRSTPRES.CHURCH

I've always loved this poem by Julia Kasdorf. Her mother was like a lot of mothers I know and knew. She is describing my mother. She is describing many of the women at the church I grew up in, many of the women I know, women like you. And not just women. I know plenty of nurturing men who also know the wisdom that "whatever we say means nothing". It's showing up. It's listening, hard.

Who has reached out to you in your hour of need? When is the last time you reached out to somebody else? We are people who espouse a mustard seed theology. Small things matter. There's no telling what God will grow from the tiny seeds we plant, or the seeds that fall out of our pockets. The small things matter, the caring touches—even in a season of pandemic. It's cooking a meal. It's sending a two-sentence note. It's sharing a gift card, making a phone call, sharing a wave. It's showing up with a flower. It's showing up with a chocolate cake.

Especially a chocolate cake.

Bless you all.

What I Learned from My Mother
by Julia Kasdorf

I learned from my mother how to love
the living, to have plenty of vases on hand
in case you have to rush to the hospital
with peonies cut from the lawn, black ants
still stuck to the buds. I learned to save jars
large enough to hold fruit salad for a whole
grieving household, to cube home-canned pears
and peaches, to slice through maroon grape skins
and flick out the sexual seeds with a knife point.
I learned to attend viewings even if I didn't know
the deceased, to press the moist hands
of the living, to look in their eyes and offer

continued on the next page

Sunday in the Park

The Nurture Committee invites you to

Hessel Park

11 AM November 8

Bring your lawn chairs and
let's gather for an hour
near the Pavilion
at the north end of the park.

The committee will be available to guide
you to our spot and provide a safe location
following social distancing, sanitation and
guidelines such as wearing masks.



sympathy, as though I understood loss even then.

I learned that whatever we say means nothing,
what anyone will remember is that we came.

I learned to believe I had the power to ease
awful pains materially like an angel.

Like a doctor, I learned to create
from another's suffering my own usefulness, and once
you know how to do this, you can never refuse.

To every house you enter, you must offer
healing; a chocolate cake you baked yourself,
the blessing of your voice, your chaste touch.

— from *Sleeping Preacher* (U. Pitt Press, 1992)
and used by permission of the author.



The Nurture Team would
like to invite you to join them
for a "Virtual Dessert"
Tuesday, November 10,
7 PM

*Grab some coffee and your
favorite dessert and join
them via zoom.*

*Contact the church office
if you would like the link
emailed to you!*

Zoom Meetings

Thanks, again, for learning about using Zoom these past several months. A reminder to email zoom@firstpres.church if you need a meeting set up. Also, please make sure you click on the correct link for the meeting. Meeting links will look very similar, but clicking on the wrong link can interfere with other meetings. The meeting name will be displayed when you connect, so if the meeting name isn't correct, check to make sure you have the correct link. If you have any questions about the link, email zoom@firstpres.church.

Children, Youth & Family

Children, Youth & Family Update

BY MINDY WATTS-ELLIS, DIRECTOR OF CYF

MINDY@FIRSTPRES.CHURCH

Online Sunday School continues at 10:15-11:15 AM for our elementary kids and 1-2 PM for our middle school and high school youth. Mr. Connor leads virtual children's choir every other Sunday at 10:45-11:15 AM. November 15th will be the next virtual choir rehearsal.

Our elementary kids are studying the stories of brave men and women of the Old Testament and the youth are finishing a unit on stewardship and will begin a unit on justice. If you would like to volunteer to read the story for the elementary kids or be a part of the discussion with the youth, I would welcome your presence. Contact Mindy at mindy@firstpres.church to volunteer.

Our Christmas pageant is going virtual! This month Ms. Mindy will be contacting your family to set up a recording session to create videos or still photos that will tell the familiar story of Christ's birth in a fun new way.

We also need families to volunteer to light an advent candle from home and record the readings and lighting of the candle for use in our online worship. Please contact Ms. Mindy at mindy@firstpres.church to volunteer.

The search for a Sunday School Coordinator continues. Visit the church website at firstpres.church for a full job description or contact Claudia Kirby for more information.

Finance

Stewardship 2021

BY MARK SCHOEFFMANN, CHAIR FINANCE

MSCHOEFFMANN@MCHSI.COM

During the month of October we heard from several of our fellow church members about what the church meant to them and the importance of stewardship. This year brought additional challenges to First Presbyterian to continue our connections to one another and the community during the COVID-19 Pandemic. We met this challenge with online services and a variety of meetings and events via Zoom. We scheduled outdoor meetings, prayer sessions and are attempting a modified in-person Sunday morning service. We assembled programs for our children and youth. We continued our financial support of our Mission agencies.

To meet the goal of continuing these programs requires the renewed financial support of our membership.

Our pledge commitments were requested by November 1st. The church budget is based on anticipated revenue indicated in these pledge commitments. The Finance Committee will be drafting a budget for Session review and approval during November. As of the first week of November we are still waiting for responses from approximately one third of those who pledged in the past.

If you already submitted your pledge commitment for 2021, thank you. If you have not, please mail your card, call the church office or respond at our website at the following address: <https://www.firstpres.church/pledgecard/>

God brought us together as a church to continue his work in this place. Please consider how you can participate in the continuation of his work.

Financial Update

BY MARK SCHOEFFMANN, CHAIR FINANCE

MSCHOEFFMANN@MCHSI.COM

Contributions

Contributions in October to the Operating Fund were \$50.3K more than in 2019 and \$36.4K above the budget at \$113.9K. The Year to Date total is below last year by \$32.9K and below the budgeted amount by \$71.8K. These figures include prepaid pledges (those paid in the year prior to the budget year) that are prorated over the year with 1/12 added to each month's contributions. Including all revenue sources, at 83.3% through the year, we have received 93.9% of the expected 2020 revenue.

Expenses

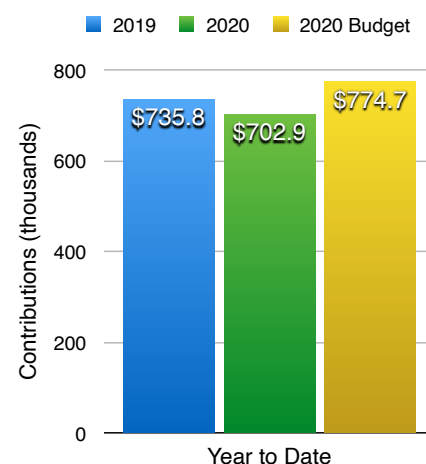
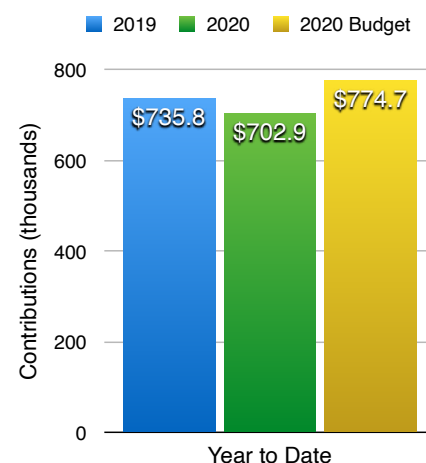
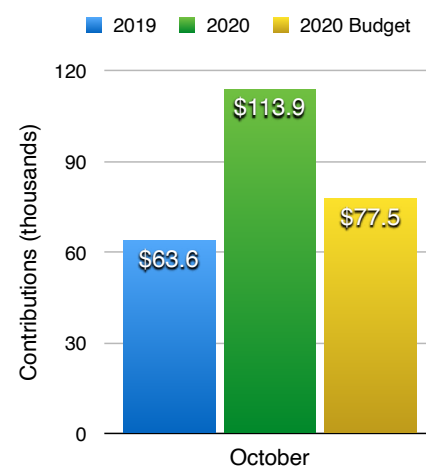
Year to Date expenses are \$65.2K below the budget at \$828.1K and less than in 2019 by \$10.0K. At 83.3% through the year we have experienced 77.2% of the expected 2020 expenses.

Balance

Considering all sources, revenue exceeds expenses by \$142.5K which is \$142.8K better than at the end of October in 2019. This figure includes \$61.9K more in prepaid pledges than in 2019 and \$134.2K from the Federal Paycheck Protection Program established by the Federal CARES Act.

Restricted Funds

In addition to contributions to the operating fund there was \$1,460 donated in October to funds restricted to specific purposes such as missions supported by our church.



*God is faithful,
even in a pandemic.*



Colossians 2:2,3

My goal is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ. In whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

James 1:5

If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.

Session Motions Passed at October Meetings

- Approved three motions from the Covid 19 Team.

1.) Worship remains essential. To that end, our flagship worship service will remain as is. We will record our full service and have it available for viewing at 9 AM on Sunday mornings on YouTube, Facebook, and our church website. The recorded service will be placed on our website for future views. Go to FirstPres.Live

2.) Worship remains essential. To that end, the Worship Team will propose an alternate face-to-face service that will begin in late October/early November. The service will be limited to fifty-people and will be offered at a time other than 9 AM on Sundays. The time of this service and other details will be announced, but will include preregistration, check-in, sign-in with temperature check, physical distancing, the wearing of masks, no spoken liturgy, no congregational singing, etc. This face-to-face service will last no more than 40-minutes. There will be no indoor fellowship, and no coffee or food service.

3.) We will not be having indoor, in-person Christmas Eve Services.

It was agreed that the time for the face to face worship service will be 10:15 AM.

- Approved a meeting of the Congregation for the purpose of hearing and acting upon a report of the Congregation Nominating Committee on Sunday 10:15 AM on October 25, and that the congregation be appropriately notified of the meeting. Due to Covid-19, the meeting will be online via Zoom.

The Classic Book group completed the book, *Jesus and the Disinherited* by Howard Thurman on November 3.

We will be starting *The Remarkable Ordinary* by Frederick Buechner on November 10.

Please contact **Jeannie Snoeyink** or **Ginny Waaler** if you would like to join us at noon on Tuesdays on zoom. We would love to have you join us.

Mission Updates

Dream Big! Learning Center

First Presbyterian Church is the site of a Dream Big! Learning Center which provides in-person remote learning to twenty-six boys fifth through eighth grade weekdays from 7:45 AM to 4 PM. DREAAM staff provide supervision. The program is a collaboration between DREAAM and the Unit 4 School District which provides two meals per day and a snack.

The DREAAM staff and the church's COVID response team established safety protocols using the Champaign County Health District guidelines to do our best to keep the students and staff healthy. **Mindy Watts-Ellis** is serving as the liaison for the church in this partnership with **Tracy Dace**. First Pres congregants can help with prayer and/or an encouraging note to Tracy at tracy@dreameam.org and the DREAAM staff or a donation of enrichment supplies.

DREAAM needs supplies for individual enrichment, such as educational activity workbooks for grades K-4th, small puzzles, Rubik's Cubes, math and reading flash cards, word search books, and anything educational that an individual child can use. Sharing of supplies during COVID-19 is not safe. Each DREAAMer will have an enrichment tub to use when he has completed independent work. We are being asked to mail or ship donations to UniPlace/DREAAM, 403 S. Wright Street, Champaign, IL 61820. We will have a drop off point at First Presbyterian for small items and someone will take them over to UniPlace if you cannot mail or ship them. A similar program for younger boys is housed at University Place Christian Church on Wright Street.

DREAAM empowers boys and young men with opportunities, skills, and experiences to transform their lives and society. See more at www.dreameam.org.

ESL News

BY JEANETTE PYNE, ESL COORDINATOR
JEANETTE@FIRSTPRES.CHURCH

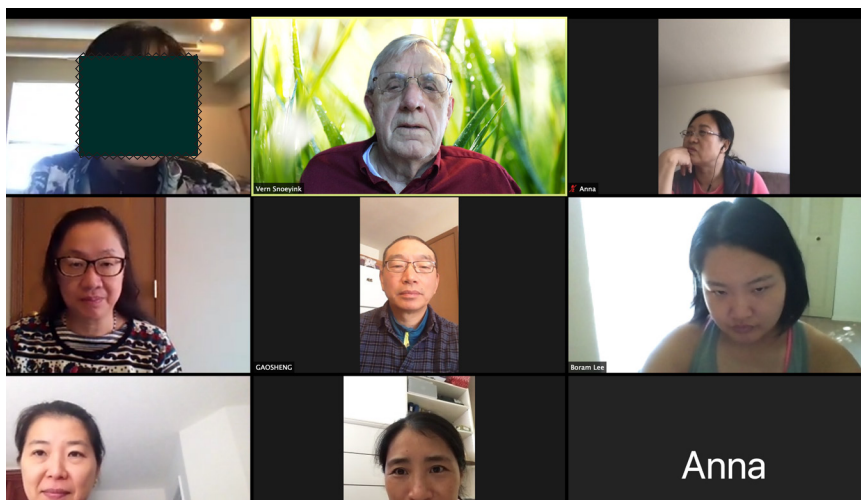
Vern's ESL Class

As the pandemic drags on, the ESL students and tutors have appreciated the social connections made in the ESL classes. This month, I want to highlight **Vern Snoeyink's** Orange class. The students are at a high-beginner and low-intermediate level of English. The units that we are currently going through are Clothing, Autumn, and Halloween Units. So, they are learning about the different names of articles of clothing, the changing of the colors of leaves, and Halloween traditions. In November, we will begin talking about Thanksgiving and topics related to Body and Health.

The students love Vern, enjoy his class and feel very cared for by him. Vern always makes an effort to keep in touch with his students even long after they have graduated from the program. He regularly messages or sends them emails to check up on them. Right now, most of his students are from South Korea and China.

Vern's class meets on Zoom on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 10-11 AM. Having finished his training, **Harry Bremer** will be joining Vern's class on Wednesdays to help co-teach.

If you are interested in learning how to tutor from the comfort of your own home or just want to observe an ESL class, we would be glad to have you. Contact ESL Director, **Jeanette Pyne**, at jeanette@firstpres.church for more information.



From top left to bottom right: Yufeng (China), Vern (tutor), Anna (China), Weiwen (China), Goasheng (China), Boram (Korea), Jooyen (Korea), Young Eun (Korea).

Cuba Partnership Update

BY NANCY PIPPIN, SECRETARY
CUBA PARTNERSHIP STEERING COMMITTEE
NANCYPIPPIN@YAHOO.COM

We have much to be thankful for as we celebrate three anniversaries this year with our sisters and brothers in Cuba.

- 130 years of the continuous presence of the Presbyterian Church in Cuba
- 20 years of the PCUSA Cuba Partners Network building relationships between the Presbyterians in the USA and in Cuba
- 10 years since the first congregational trip of First Pres Champaign to Cuba to explore the possibility of beginning a sister church relationship

The monthly meeting of the First Pres Cuba Partnership Steering Committee met Thursday, October 24. The educational focus for our meeting was the review of our current *Hermanamiento* (partnership) agreement with the Luyanó Presbyterian Church in Havana, Cuba. The current agreement between our Sessions was signed in June 2018. The *Hermanamiento* is a three-year renewable agreement with our sister church that outlines our purposes, our stated shared dreams and our commitments. Our purposes include our mutual desires

- 1) to create a relationship that embodies our unity in Christ;
 - 2) to strive to be faithful witnesses where we are;
 - 3) to inform our church families of critical situations in our societies and cooperate in projects where we can make a substantive contribution, and
 - 4) to explore areas for joint mission.
- First Pres commitments include offering continuing prayer and material support when possible for the urgent priorities of the Luyanó church as determined by their Session.

This was the first of several discussions regarding our hope to build on our part-

The Heart of Missions Newsletter has been revived during this COVID-19 crisis. Our local and global mission agencies are having to make rapid changes due to shelter in place orders, as well as food and medical supply shortages. The newsletter helps summarize some of what has been in the mission news for our mission workers and agencies during the past week in case you missed it.

You can access The Heart of Missions on the church website under the SERVE tab at firstpres.church/heartofmissions

nership going forward. Please keep praying for our sisters and brothers in Cuba for their needs. Also pray with thanksgiving for God's guidance and provision as we celebrate these significant anniversaries and the relationships those dates represent.

Also discussed in the meeting was the appreciation of partners locally and across the nation for supporting the Cuba Partners Network in the recent fundraiser for the churches and missions in Cuba.

Thankful for God giving us this time to love our neighbors,
Nancy Pippin
Secretary

Green Team Styrofoam Drop-Off October 31

BY CLEMMIE ACKERMANN
COLETTA.ACKERMANN@GMAIL.COM

We had fun! We wore costumes! We were multi-tasking!

Mother Nature was giving out treats on Halloween! No rain, no snow, no sleet. Just a little wind and lots of sunshine. The weather was perfect for working in the garden and for sorting and collecting Styrofoam.

The "peace garden" that housed our pollinator pocket of sunflowers and zinnias and weeds from a bed on the north side of the education building was cleaned out.





It was too wet to work in the other pollinator and perennial beds so that will wait for another day.

Six large bags of Styrofoam were sorted and delivered to DART in Urbana for their recycling program. DART actually transports the Styrofoam to a facility in another state for processing into other

products so we're grateful to them for helping us keep what we collect out of the landfill.

Someone from the law office was curious about what we were doing and the office might be willing to participate in our next event. We just need to decide where and when so stay tuned for future announcements and save your Styrofoam!

Last but not least, thanks to all who saved Styrofoam and the green team members that came out to help. It was good to be together.

The Hidden Life of Trees: What they feel, how they communicate by Peter Wohlleben.

Do you have any recommendations on a good read related to the environment? Just Let me know at coletta.ackermann@gmail.com



Faith In Place - Future events

For the full scope of Faith In Place activities, go to www.faithinplace.org. Click on events and you'll find a calendar filled with opportunities to learn and get involved. Coming up is clean energy Advocacy day. It's scheduled for November 12. The link to this event is <https://www.faithinplace.org/events/clean-energy-advocacy-day>

Green Team Reading Recommendations

The Journeys of Trees: A Story about Forests, People and the Future by Zach St. George.

We have removed the coats from the hangers in Westminster Hall and bagged them up.

If you think you may have left a coat, please contact the church office by November 15.

After that date, we will take the coats to Safehouse or CU at Home.





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CHURCH** OF CHAMPAIGN

302 West Church Street
Champaign, IL 61820

Change Service Requested



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E: info@firstpres.church

www.firstpres.church

Sunday:

9 AM Worship*

10:15 AM Sunday School and Adult Education**

11:15 AM Worship*

*Due to COVID, online Worship only is available for viewing at 9 AM on Sunday mornings on YouTube, Facebook, and our church website. Go to FirstPres. Live.

**All Sunday School and Adult Education opportunities are through Zoom.

Contact the church office for more information.

Pastors:

Matt Matthews..... Senior Pastor/Head of Staff, Ext. 213
Eric Corbin..... Associate Pastor, Ext. 214

Staff:

George Almasi Facility Assistant
Brendan Barker..... Organist
Ritchie Drennen Facility Manager, Ext. 237
Patty Farthing..... Receptionist, Ext. 211
Robert Ferrer Audio-visual Technician
Marcia Franks Administrative Assistant, Ext. 210
Joe Grant..... Director of Music
Rachel Matthews..... Temporary Mission Coordinator, Ext. 219
Blaise Pascal..... CYF Connections Assistant, Ext. 216
Ann Petry..... Accounting, Ext. 224
Jeanette Pyne..... ESL Coordinator, Ext. 235
Mindy Watts-Ellis..... Director Children, Youth & Family, Ext. 212

All staff email addresses are the person's first name followed by @firstpres.church. For example, eric@firstpres.church.

The newsletter is published monthly. Deadline is the last Monday of the month for the following month's edition. Send submissions to marcia@firstpres.church.