

October 2023



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN



YOU ARE INVITED! JOIN US THIS FALL.

Sunday, October 1 9 AM

World Communion Sunday

Sunday, October 1 4 PM

Churchwide Picnic at Hessel Park pavilion

Thursday, October 5 12 noon

Fall Gathering in Westminster Hall

Sunday, October 8 immediately after worship

2nd Sunday Brunch

Sunday, October 29 4 PM

Trunk or Treat in church parking lot

Sunday, November 5 9 AM

All Saint's Day celebrated during worship

Monday, November 6 7:30 PM

Choral Concert in the Sanctuary

Sunday, November 12 immediately after worship

2nd Sunday Brunch

Sunday, November 12 3 PM

Gary Winder, clarinet, will present a concert in the Sanctuary

See inside this issue for more information.

Churchwide Potluck Picnic



It's fall y'all. The weather looks perfect for our church picnic. We'll gather at the Hessel Park pavilion on the north side of the park at 4 PM on Sunday, October 1.

It's a potluck, so whip up your favorite dish and bring it along. The church will provide fried chicken, hotdogs, lemonade and tableware. Kona Ice will be there with free snow cones.

We will enjoy, food, games and the warmth of togetherness. There are plenty of picnic tables with benches. If able bring a lawn chair to share.

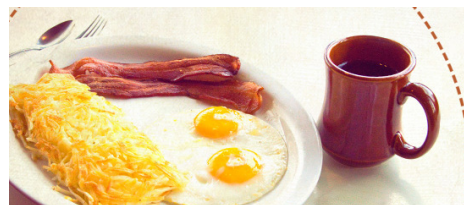
Fall Gathering



All are invited to the Fall Gathering on Thursday, October 5, at 12 noon in Westminster Hall hosted by Presbyterian Women. **Melissa Courtwright**, Executive Director of C-U at Home will speak on *A Mission, a Calling: Helping the Homeless*. Lunch will be served following the program. RSVP to the church office.

2nd Sunday Brunch

Come, enjoy brunch immediately following worship every 2nd Sunday in Centennial Hall. We will offer a variety of brunch items. Enjoy the fellowship right after the 9 AM service. No charge but donations appreciated! Volunteers are needed to help with the brunches. If interested, please contact **Jan Wittler**, **Gary Peterson** or the church office.



Sunday, October 29, from 4-5:30 PM for children ages 2-12 accompanied by parents or guardians. Treats and books will be handed out; there will be music, games and lots of fun! Watch for a sign-up sheet to donate treats, with specific suggestions, at church in October. We are looking for fun-loving volunteers to provide decorated trunks. Questions? Contact **Nicole Miller** reservationsforfive@gmail.com or 217.355.8512.

All Saints Day

We will recognize those who have died this past year on Sunday, November 5, during the 9 AM worship service. Any saints who are not members of the church which should be celebrated can be added to the list. Please contact the church office with names.



Choral Concert



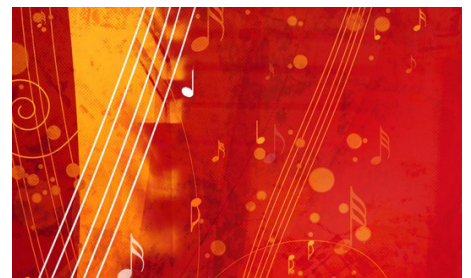
Please mark your calendars for two outstanding musical presentations that are coming up! On Monday, November 6, at 7:30, Western Illinois University's top mixed choir will be presenting a concert in the sanctuary. This group is conducted by the Director of Choral Activities, **Dr. Brian Winnie**.

They will be joined by the Madrigal Singers of University High School, directed by **Rick Murphy**.

If you are willing to host a couple of the WIU students overnight following this concert, please let **Joe Grant** know!

Instrumental Concert

Gary Winder, clarinet, will present the second concert on Sunday, November 12, at 3 PM in the Sanctuary. Gary played solos for us on a couple of occasions this past summer and he is an excellent performer. A reception will follow.



**We would love to have you join us
for any or all of these special events this fall.**

All events are free and open to the public.

For questions or more information, contact the church office.

The Heart of Mission

Mission Co-Workers

Bob & Kristi Rice
Here **THIS Sunday,**
October 1st



Bob and Kristi Rice, our mission co-workers serving in South Sudan, will be with us at First Presbyterian Church on October 1, 2023 for World Communion Sunday. Check out some excerpts from their most recent newsletter on www.pcusa.org/missionconnections:

Environmental Update

BY PAT PHILLIPS
P.PHILLIPS42@SBCGLOBAL.NET

The response to Styrofoam collection at church has been over the top; so much has been saved from landfills—Hurrah! All donations have been taken to DART in Urbana to be compressed and recycled into other products. However, DART closed at the end of September, and other such receivers are not near C-U.

Another approach is to encourage restaurants to use cardboard instead of Styrofoam for takeout; do you

know of any, such as Harvest Market or Blues that do this? Each of us can carry a reusable container for leftovers. Make your wishes known to managements, so that the use of Styrofoam decreases. And contact legislators—**Paul Faraci** and **Carol Ammons**—to support a state-wide ban on Styrofoam containers. Grass roots movements make a difference.

Faith in Place's Green Team Summit will be a chance to listen to some outstanding leaders on a variety of fascinating topics. There will be workshops on *Bridging the Divide*, *Creating an Inclusive and Healthy Environmental Movement*, *Federal Funding Opportunities for Houses of Worship*, *Transforming Eco-Anxiety* and MORE! Register at www.greenteamsummit.org for free access to all sessions.

Join people of faith from across the area at the in-person Watch Party at Copper Creek on Sunday, October 8 at 5. Refreshments, awards and door prizes will be part of a great Green gathering.

Marion Medical Mission

One of our mission partners that is located here in Illinois and helps people in Africa is Marion Medical Mission. Our Presbytery is proud to support their work as well. You can read about its beginnings, its founder and what it is doing today in Africa on its website www.mmmwater.org/our-story. Its founder **Tom Logan**, the son of a Presbyterian minister, is from Marion, Illinois. Marion Medical Mission began in 1985 to support medical missionaries in the Democratic Republic of Congo and moved over to work in Malawi in 1990. Its goal is to provide safe drinking water by building wells. Many medical problems that were occurring were solved with safe drinking water. MMM builds more than 3000 wells every year. During the pandemic, the African leadership carried on that work without the volunteer support that it had received from the United States. MMM has operated over 35 years "in obedience to God's call to love your neighbor as yourself."

See our mission kiosk in Westminster Fellowship Hall for their most recent newsletter and an update on their 2023 mission team.

Oppenheimer

Presbyterian pastor and film critic: **Oppenheimer** draws cautionary lessons from the Bible and other ancient texts. Dr. Edmund McNulty explains what makes [this film](#) a must-see.

Marion Medical Mission continued

Harry Bremer (pictured below) who was a member here before he moved to Texas wrote this about MMM.



●Pray that God will provide workers with all the physical resources they need to accomplish their mission and work mightily to remove any obstacles that may arise.

●Pray for the villages that will receive the wells and that God will prosper them through their clean, safe water. Ask God to bless their labors making bricks and collecting stones. Pray God will guide the village leadership and the well committee.

●Pray for safety in travels, both for safe flight to and from Africa and for traveling mercies while in Africa. May God watch over all MMM workers as they travel year round.

●Pray that God will open the hearts of many to provide the financial resources necessary for this mission. May the satisfaction of having made a difference and the joy of generosity bless them.

Where did I see God?

Once again, I was in Zambia, staying in the towns of Lundazi & Chipata. There would be days of driving over 2 hours before getting to the first well. My partner and I drove nearly 1,800 miles, and completed 96 wells. As a result, over 2,400 households now have clean water, serving over 24,000 people!

Where was God?

- Outside of Chipata, the villages were set in open plains with the mountains in the background. How beautiful.
- Villages' gardens, so green, often next to the new wells
- Women singing with wonderful harmony at the wells
- Villages excitement (especially children) when the truck would arrive
- Willingness of the villagers to help carry the hand pump parts to the well
- Children shouting muzungu (white person)

Children wanting to hold hands with muzungu walking to/from the wells - The excitement of all the people trying to get a taste of the clean water from the new well

- Words cannot describe the feeling one has when you see clean water coming from a new well after walking by open contaminated water holes.

Where was God?

God was everywhere!

MMM has asked for the following prayers:

- Please pray for all the African leaders and workers.
- Pray for the mission team volunteers that go to work side by side with them.
- Pray God protects all MMM staff and volunteers from any physical harm or injury. May God keep them from all sickness and disease.

Men's Prayer Group

The men of the church gather for prayer on Zoom Fridays at 8:15 AM. We pray for our world, our nation, our local communities and our congregation. We pray for those on our prayer list and for others who we know who are facing life's challenges and life's joys. We pray in turn in our own way and in the language of our choice and conclude with the Lord's Prayer. This is an open small group. Contact church office or Bob Kirby for Zoom link.

Knowing Cuba



Two favorite pastimes in Cuba are baseball and dominoes. Chess and storytelling are popular as are soccer, basketball, volleyball, sailing and amateur boxing.

Please enjoy meeting Associate Pastor Joe Lundy at the home of one of the Cottage Gathering host below. Space is limited so RSVP to the church office.

Wednesday, October 4 @ 4:30
FULL Nancy & Dave Whitford
Tuesday, October 17 @ 4
Sallie Hutton
Monday, November 6 @ 11:30
Sabrina & Wen-Mei Hwu
Saturday, November 18 @ 10
Linda & Gary Peterson

Dismantling Structural Racism

Matthew 25

Save the Date

[Robin Sue Simmons](#) will be the guest speaker for the Champaign-Urbana Reparations Coalition on Thursday, November 16, at 7 PM at New Covenant Fellowship, 124 W. White Street, Champaign.

The coalition is an interfaith group of people including folks from our congregation looking at the possibility for Champaign-Urbana to make reparations.

Check the November newsletter for more details.

Presbyterians at UN General Assembly

Among other [issues](#) the PC (USA) addressed were Cuba, South Sudan and climate change.

Worldwide Game Night Laughs & Some Screams



Games and more games, laughs and screams, popcorn, lemonade and hot tea made for a great 90 minutes of hospitality and fun together with our international community.



The September 11 event was a part of the larger Champaign County celebration of national Welcoming America Week. See more photos of the evening [here](#).

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.

Sunday School

Youth Sunday School resumes this Sunday, October 1, at 10 AM for children K thru 5th grade! Walk across the alley on Sunday, go upstairs, and see what's happening! (10:15 - 11:00) Transportation is not being provided at this time.

Adult Sunday

Meets in Mae Chapin Parlor at 10:15 after Sunday morning worship

October 1

Bob & Kristi Rice

mission co-workers in South Sudan

October 15

Vickie Garrett

past member of our church, assistant professor of music and artist in residence at Bethel College in Mishawaka IN

October 22

Cynthia Herren

daughter of **Virginia Erickson**, on how faith supports her in home-schooling and producing materials for teaching neurological divergent children.

October 29

Dixie Jackson

from the "Twice is Nice" thrift store, a ministry of First Presbyterian church in Urbana, voted best thrift store in community.

November 5

Joe Lundy

our new Associate Pastor, speaking about discipleship

Face to Face with Libby Sternhagen and Andrew Schwenk



What brought you to First Presbyterian Church?

We live in the neighborhood. Libby checked out several congregations and felt most welcome at First Pres. We loved the music program and were very happy to find worship in two languages. Libby is fluent in Spanish and Andrew in German.

What has been the highlight of your church experience?

The music is great, and we both often have it stuck in our heads the rest of the week. Participating in bell choir is really rewarding as well. We also love the joy of baptisms. It is so fun to see the beginning of someone's Christian journey.

Tell me about your work?

Andrew is a PhD candidate in German at the U of I where he studies the culture of the Protestant Reformation. Libby is an ecologist and works in a greenhouse on campus. Libby's graduate degree is in environmental

conservation. Her current research is on carbon sequestration. That means moving carbon from the atmosphere to plants to fungi then back to the soil. Libby is from Moorhead, MN and Andrew is from Morton, IL.

What do you do in your free time?

Andrew enjoys playing musical instrument (bass, accordion) but currently is working with guitar doing classic country. He plays in most of the local venues. Libby has her work and they have two dogs to walk.

Who are your favorite Bible characters?

Libby: "Jonah speaks to me. He was reluctant to follow God's directive but in the end he figured it out. I think many of us are that way." Andrew: "I'll say the Canaanite woman. She not only had deep love for her daughter but showed great faith and courage. I am not sure I would have such faith. I also love how her story demonstrates God's love for all."

How can the church best be the church?

We are one on this. "Be welcoming to everyone."

Looking for Some Singers & Ringers...

It's not too late to join the Chancel Choir or our Upper Room Bell Choir. Both rehearse weekly on Thursday evenings.

If interested, contact Joe Grant.

Snippets from Your Pastor

BY MATT MATTHEWS
MATT@FIRSTPRES.CHURCH

How did October arrive so quickly? Rachel and I went to a ministry conference in late August and learned about transitional ministry. During worship here we celebrated Immigrant Welcome Week and Cuba Sunday. Then we attended our son's wedding in Charlotte a few weeks ago. And now World Communion Sunday (October 1st) is upon us.

"All things on earth point home in old October," wrote Thomas Wolfe. "Sailors to sea, travelers to walls and fences, hunters to field and hollow and the long voice of the hounds, the lover to the love he has forsaken." October is home coming month.

October is a time I always associate with stewardship as this is the season we often hear from friends in the church about why they give of their time, talent, and treasure to the church. This "stewardship season" reminds us that we are called to be year-long Christian philanthropists, harnessing everything entrusted to our care to the glory of God and to the service of neighbor. I like this season because it asks of me where does the rubber of my life hit the theological road?

October is also a time I associate with thinking more widely about the world. The short essay below, which you've probably read before, illustrates how our church's relationship with the Luyano congregation in Havana has changed my idea of the word "world."

As I write this, I am eager to host our mission partners Bob and Kristi Rice from South Sudan. The world is a big place, and we're called to be in relationship with brothers and sisters everywhere.

October points to home.

During this season, I pull out my sweaters. I put away short pants and my brand-new seersucker suit. Some of the outdoor plants will come into the den. We start finalizing plans for Thanksgiving and Christmas gatherings of our faraway sons, significant others, and, now, a new daughter-in-law. We hope our football team wins. We put together Christmas lists. The quiet of night falls sooner and sooner. The sun is reluctant to arise, and, increasingly, so am I.

I like this season and look forward to the gifts it will bring to our congregation. A clarinet concert, the Western Illinois University choir is coming, special offerings for adult Sunday school, are all on our horizon. This is a new chapter for everybody. We're on this journey together.

God is good.

Peace, Matt Matthews
864.386.9138

A Cuba memory for our church trip in 2019:

We piled onto the bus—our rickety, old friend—for a 30-minute drive to Santa Maria del Mar. Our Cuban hosts were taking us to the beach! Robert was the first soul into the ocean. I was the last. We bobbed around as white as

fish bellies in bright swim trunks. The deeper water was blue. At the beach, turquoise waves broke into pearl foam. Midway between the beach and the horizon the blues blended into a color I cannot describe, and in midwinter could hardly believe.

Katerine and Norka were our hosts. At the Restaurante Costareñas a hundred yards from the beach, we sat outdoors beneath a high tarp. Katerine, Robert, and I ordered cervezas nacionales. Norka ordered a coke. Judi and Rachel ordered rum and cokes; when the drinks appeared with ice in them, they became immediately alarmed and asked the waiter to take the ice out; nothing poses as egregious a threat to intestinal health as a cube of local ice. Amiably, he returned the drinks sans ice but with more rum. Soon, Judi and Rachel were laughing loudly and talking with their hands like native Cubans.

I used Judi's Spanish-English dictionary to shape nonsense sentences, which amused Norka and Katerine. I liked hearing them laugh and watching their faces twist up with delighted smiles. "I stamp (sellar) a jungle (selva) with a traffic light (semaforo)." They didn't know what I was talking about and nobody cared. The laughter seemed meaningful enough.

Towards the end of lunch two men approached with congas and a nylon stringed guitar. They regaled us with an impromptu concert. Nothing quickens one's pulse like music, especially music well-played, as this was. Spanish speakers in the small

crowd of diners—there were maybe ten of them—laughed at the same times. Those of us who didn't speak Spanish missed the joke, and I told Katrina when we walked to the van later that I wondered if the singers had been making fun of us gringos. On the contrary, she said. They were singing about America. I blushed with shame.

On the way back to the church, jostling in the van, I pondered how I'll never be able to utter the word "world" from the pulpit ever again without thinking differently.

Thank you, Cuba.

Hello First Pres!

I am so happy to finally be here with you all! Y'all have already made me feel so welcome in this first month of being here, and I cannot wait to get to know all of you better through cottage meetings, bible studies, mission opportunities, and of course knitting group! You all have a wonderful congregation here and I feel like you have so many wonderful opportunities for discipleship, and I look forward to discovering and going through them all together with you.

This month I have been attending meetings and learning about how you are already engaged in your community, in the coming months I look forward to digging a bit deeper into your current work, with a hopeful look toward what new things we might try in the coming year.

Blessings,
Joe Lundy (joseph@firstpres.church)

DREAM PRESENTS
FOOD | FAMILY | MUSIC | FUN

SOUL FOOD

FAMILY FESTIVAL

SEP 30 | 11am-4pm

VINEYARD CHURCH 1500 N. Lincoln Avenue, Urbana

FREE Admission MORE INFO AT: dream.org

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& ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT FOR MALES



Nurturing God, like a hen gathers her brood under her wings, you desire to gather your children. But division and disagreement plague us. We cling to rigid certainties, approach each other in arrogance, and fail to listen. We walk away from conflict, rather than working through it. Forgive us, Holy God. Help us grow in faith, mature in relationship, and be transformed through your steadfast love. Amen.

Jays & Concerns

Writing for Well-being

Writing for Well-being is a small group of folks at Westminster Presbyterian Church that has met weekly for many years. It was one of the outcomes of a sabbatical Pastor Laura Aull-Johnston had 12 years ago! She looked at small groups that are healing in some way. As this group has evolved it's become a source of ongoing support with a broader scope.

Writing for Well-being meets every Friday, 1:30 – 3:00 at Westminster Presbyterian Church. We begin a new session on October 6th.

Before you say, I can't write, let me tell you what this group is all about. We are not trying to become writers. We are about sharing thoughts that are inspired by a poem, an image or an idea, that plants a seed, evokes a memory, or stirs an opinion, you name it. Then we all write and share (or not share) what we wrote. It is amazing what comes out on paper for all of us. We write our thoughts and go to places we had forgotten about or possibly find new thoughts we may not have realized were there, hidden inside of us. Give it a try! We think you will like writing and learning about yourself and others.

from Charlotte, a participant for 12 years!

We extend our sympathy to...

- **Pat Mitchell** on the death of her husband, Bill, on September 3;
- **George & Liz Miley** on the death of their son, Hunter, on September 7 in Walnut Creek, CA. A Memorial Service will be held here on Saturday, October 14, at 11 AM;
- **Mark & Kathy Schoeffmann** on the death of Mark's mother, Violet, on September 19 in Arlington Heights.

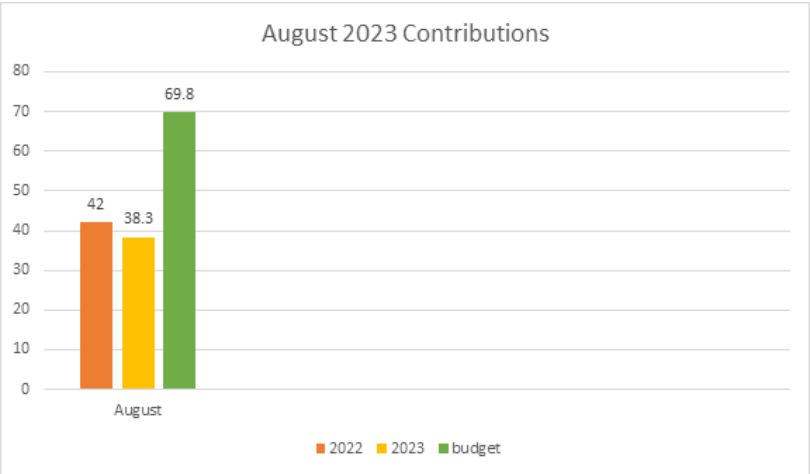
Finance

Financial Update

BY ANN WEBBINK, FINANCE TEAM
ANWEB2@YAHOO.COM

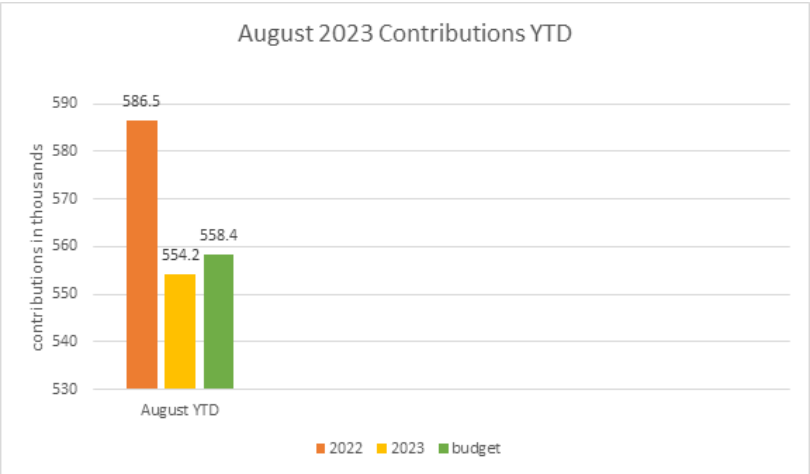
Contributions

Total August contributions: \$29K from plate and pledge plus \$9.3K from prepaid= \$38.3K This is \$3.7 K less than last year and \$31.5K under budget. Total contributions YTD, including prorated prepaid pledges: \$554.2K which is \$32.3K less than last year and \$4.2K under budget. At 66.7% of the year, we have 70.6% of the budgeted contributions, including all prepaid contributions.



Expenses

August expenses were \$59.6 K, which is \$11.4 K less than last year and \$23.1K under budget. Expenses YTD were \$636.7K, which is \$56K less than last year and \$24.9K under budget. At 66.7% of the year, we have spent 64.1% of the budget.



Balance YTD

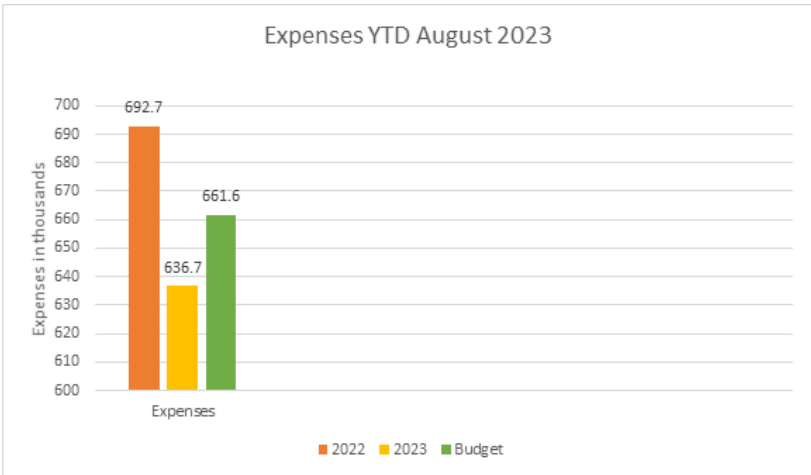
Revenue from all sources exceeds expenses by \$12K, which is \$8.4K more than last year.

Session Designated Funds

\$1,750.079 which is \$93,989 less than last month.

Summary of Restricted Accounts

Missions received \$1625 for the Raindrop Project, \$3025 for DREAM, and \$1200 for PDA. \$35K was added to the elevator fund from memorial funds.





**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH** OF CHAMPAIGN

302 West Church Street
Champaign, IL 61820

Change Service Requested



**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
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P: 217.356.7238

F: 217.356.7242

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.