

October 2024



# FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN

## Trunk or Treat

Our annual Trunk or Treat Event is Sunday, October 27 from 4-5:30 PM. You can help us continue this tradition. Bring bags of candy or other treats to the church office. Decorate a trunk. Help us prepare and then stay to greet guests at our delicious hot soup supper in Centennial Hall. Invite family and friends to participate and join the fun.

This program is for children ages 0-12 accompanied by an adult. Each child will receive a free book. Contact Nicole Miller at [reservationfor5@gmail.com](mailto:reservationfor5@gmail.com) to tell her you will offer a decorated trunk.

This activity is a joint effort of your nurture and outreach committees. We will collaborate again with our neighbors at First United Methodist Church.



First Presbyterian Church Champaign  
corner of State & Hill Streets, Champaign

# 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Cuba Forum

## October 5 and 6

We welcome Elder Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri and the Rev. José Manuel Capella-Pratts who serve with Presbyterian World Mission as Regional Liaisons for the Caribbean Region.



A CHURCH THAT REAFFIRMS HOPE  
JEREMIAH 29:11-13

### Saturday, October 5

11 AM A presentation by our guests  
11:30 AM A light lunch

### Sunday, October 6

9 AM A message by Rev. José Manuel  
10:10 AM Elder Vilmarie leads Adult Ed

Elder Cintrón-Olivieri and the Rev. Capella-Pratts work alongside partners in the Republic of Cuba, Dominican Republic, the Republic of Haiti, and the Caribbean and North American Council for Mission (CANACOM), among other partners in the region. They have served the PC(USA) at the local congregation, presbytery, synod, General Assembly, and related entities and church committees. Married for 27 years, Vilmarie and José Manuel bask in their life together enjoying music, reading, technology, all things “Star Wars” and “Star Trek”, sketching and watercolors, often relaxing over a good cup of Puerto Rican coffee.



**2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday Brunch  
October 13<sup>th</sup>**

**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,  
(cadgreen@comcast.net), Gary  
Peterson (amer\_swede@yahoo.  
com) or the church office.**

## Keeping You Updated

BY BETH WAGNER  
BETH@FIRSTPRES.CHURCH

Since my arrival at First Presbyterian three months ago, I've unexpectedly become proficient in roofing, bats, and elevator construction. I've also delved into the intricacies of First Pres' finances and learned the importance of a memorandum of understanding. It's been a whirlwind of learning and growth. As we settle into fall, I believe it's the perfect time to update everyone on our transitional process.

I aim to establish a transitional committee by the end of October. This group of 6-9 individuals will play a crucial role in selecting a vendor for our Mission Study and then leading it, ensuring we are well-prepared for the future.

I expect the mission study to occur in January and February next year. Then, the data is compiled, and the transitional team will present the report and help us dream about our future story. We do a mission study partly to identify the skills and gifts that First Presbyterian might need in their next pastor. Once we feel like the Mission Study is complete, we ask the Committee on Ministry at the Presbytery level to approve a request to form a Pastor Nominating Committee, and the search will begin for your next pastor.

Your role is crucial as we navigate through this process. Your prayers for the future pastor, the Session, and the transition team are not just a formality but a powerful act of faith. Your participation in this journey is what makes our community strong and united. We are all in this together, and our unity is our strength.

I will continue to update you as we progress through the different checkpoints and move toward the future God has already dreamed of and planned for.

Blessings,  
Beth

## Youth Bible Club with DREAAAM To Start October 30

It's back! Our Wednesday Bible Club with DREAAAMers will start on October 30. The DREAAAM middle school youth and staff will join us on our campus downstairs in Centennial Hall from 3:30 to 5 p.m. Between opening and closing rituals, we will have a fun activity related to a Bible story and eat a meal together. We will share stories, open our lives to each other and be glad. Will you join a list of people interested in serving? Can you help out on our kitchen team or serve as a table partner? Table partners greet our guests and facilitate conversation with prepared questions while eating with DREAAAM tweens and staff.

We have three dates currently scheduled: October 30th, November 13th and December 11th. For more information, contact **Peter Yau** [pmyau@illinois.edu](mailto:pmyau@illinois.edu) (217-621-0448) with questions or to sign up to help in the kitchen, or **Holly Ewan Nordheden** [hnordheden@gmail.com](mailto:hnordheden@gmail.com) (217-621-3450) with questions or to sign up to serve as a table partner. Sign-ups will start soon, so put the dates on your calendar NOW!



## We Are Welcoming!



Staff and friends from The New Americans Welcome Center at their table at First Pres on September 17.

We Choose  
Welcome

pcusa.org/WeChooseWelcome

#WeChooseWelcome

### Our House Was Full

Through welcoming week, organizations and communities bring together neighbors of all backgrounds to build strong connections and affirm the importance of welcoming and inclusive places in achieving our collective prosperity. As a part of this celebration of welcome our Outreach and Nurture Committees offered International Family Game Time.

Calls to our committees come from two scriptures. Luke 14:23 “Then the master told his servants, “Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come so that my house will be full.” And from Hebrews 13:1-3 “Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.” We fulfilled both on September 17. More than seventy guests filled our space with ninety minutes of focused concentration, screams of joy, laughter, and tasty snacks. Clearly our house was full, and we showed hospitality to strangers.

Collaborators were DREAM, Hessel Park Church, Immigration Services of Champaign-Urbana, Michael Hogue Associates Re/Max Realty, New American Welcome Center, Parkland College, and Regional Planning Commission Early Childhood Program.

Pictures speak louder than words. [Enjoy these photos.](#)

## Friday Forum at the Y and Conversation Café

Our outreach committee is new this year. Our charge is to reach out beyond the four walls of the church. Our call is from *Luke 14:23*. Then the master told his servants, “Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in so that my house will be full.”

While we are still young, our outreach has already had presence at Ngoma African Arts Festival, C-U Days, International Family Game Time and Pride Fest. In all these spaces we have met new people and shared our love of Christ and First Presbyterian Church of Champaign.

We now sponsor the [Friday Forum at the Y](#) which provides thought provoking lectures and discussion of issues important to people of faith. We are major sponsors for both semesters this academic year. What we hear just might change the world. And, a free Thai lunch is provided with each session.

Think about a carpool to the “Y” to feed your body and soul at noon.

## Wake Up to Su Voz

“Su Voz” translates to “His Voice.” Begin each day with this brief devotion and prayer. It is written by both clergy and lay people in the Presbyterian Reformed Church of Cuba. It is their gift to us. It goes well with coffee and is better than sugar and cream. You can subscribe at <https://www.cubapartnersnetwork.org/home> and scroll down.

## Face to Face with Holly Nordheden



Holly is our church librarian who also serves on the worship committee, as a community mission deacon and plays in the bell choir.

### What brought you to First Presbyterian Church?

I grew up in the Philadelphia suburbs. After I got my master’s in library and information science from Drexel University in 1985, I worked at Air University Library on Maxwell Air Force Base in Huntsville, Alabama. I moved to Champaign in 1988 after meeting my husband at Space Camp in Huntsville, Alabama. At that time, I transferred my membership to FirsPres, but have been on again/off again until I started attending the online services during Covid.

### What has been the highlight of your church experience?

I love playing in the Bell Choir and collaborating with DREAM.

### Tell me about your family? Your work?

I am a widow. My husband’s family has four generations of University of Illinois Graduates. My work has always been in Library Science, most recently at Danville Area Community College where I retired in 2023. It is wonderful not to have that daily commute and to settle in a bit.

### What do you do in your free time?

As a librarian, lots of reading of course! I also love Philadelphia Phillies baseball and Illini sports. My husband’s family has had season tickets for both football and men’s basketball for many years, but my first exposure to Illinois basketball was the Flying Illini team during the 1988/89 season! After retiring last year, I started attending the women’s basketball games too and look forward to another year of improvement under Coach Green’s leadership. I also do some container gardening.

### What are your favorite Bible characters?

As an only child I have always been comforted by the story of the prodigal son and his father’s unconditional love.

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

Be increasingly inclusive and welcoming.



Loving God, you call us to your merciful, gracious love freely given without expectation or strings attached. While we are eager to experience your mercy and grace in our own lives, we are quick to make our extension of your mercy and grace conditional for others. We would rather show mercy to those we judge worthy. We would rather extend grace to those who will show us grace in return. We would rather love those who are easiest to love.

Forgive us, Redeeming God. So transform our hearts with your amazing grace and unconditional love that our relationships are transformed as we extend your mercy and grace as an expression of our gratitude for your saving love we know in Jesus Christ. Amen.

### 1001 New Worshipping Communities

Gabriel Mboyo and Nissi Lembelembe, two of the leaders of our Saturday evening African worship, attended a PC-USA [regional meeting](#) in Cincinnati and returned inspired. Immigrant congregations are one of the fastest growing groups in the PC-USA and are a part of a decade old initiative to establish [1001 New Worshipping Communities](#).



Gabriel and Nissi are inspired by 1001 New Worshipping Communities at PC-USA Conference.

### Jays & Concerns

#### We express sympathy to...

- to the family and friends of **Stuart Jenkins** who died September 27, 2024. A Memorial Service will be held Saturday, November 2, at 2 PM at the church.

#### Congratulations to...

- **Elizabeth Sternhagen** and **Andrew Schwenk** who were married the weekend of September 7.

**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.**



# The Heart of Mission

## English Language Learners (ELL)

BY BONNIE WARD, DIRECTOR  
BONNIE@FIRSTPRES.CHURCH

The ELL program is going well. We have 86 students registered and about 15 on the waiting list.

We had a great time at the Family Game Time Tuesday, September 17<sup>th</sup>. Attendance was good. We had several community partners present, and plenty of good food and fun games. **Bob Kirby** did a great job of organizing and many ELL students participated with their children and partners.

We are planning a fall/Halloween party at the end of October. **Gary Peterson** and I have begun conversation about a Thanksgiving Potluck with church members and ELL students. I hope you can join us.

We have had three new teachers join our staff recently, and we have one more potential interest. After struggling to find teachers, I am excited to welcome these new volunteers. Whenever people visit our program, they always have such a good time and enjoy great conversations with our students.

Please come by some Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday morning from 9:15-9:45 for some coffee or tea and a chat with our students. You won't be disappointed!





THE HOUSE THAT GEORGE BUILT

The carpenter stretches a line; he marks it out with a pencil. He shapes it with planes and marks it with a compass. He shapes it into the figure of a man, with the beauty of a man, to dwell in a house." -Isaiah 44:13



**We invite you to celebrate the life and legacy of George Kieffer by making a matching tribute gift in his memory**

**Thanks to generous donors, every contribution will be matched up to \$20,000**

George Kieffer was one of Habitat's biggest advocates. George was many things, but to us at Habitat, George was a carpenter. For the past 25 years, George has been involved with Habitat as a board member, a committee member, a master furniture fixer at the ReStore, and a volunteer on multiple builds. You could find him on a Saturday morning at the Farmer's Market advocating for Habitat with his wife Bev or collecting money for parking at U of I home football games.

Our most prestigious volunteer award has been named The George Kieffer Volunteer of the Year - Living the Spirit of Habitat for Humanity. This award recognizes a volunteer that exemplifies the spirit of volunteering and represents George's passion for giving back.

George's legacy will live on through his wife Bev, his children, the hundreds of volunteers he mentored and taught, and in the families who live in the many homes he helped build.

We will continue to celebrate George and his passion for Habitat, his enlightened mind, his academic brilliance, his sense of humor, and the legacy of volunteering that was at the core of who he was.

George will be deeply missed and while we are filled with grief at his passing, we are also filled with gratitude to have known such a remarkable man. We are honored to build a home in his name.

Mail checks to: HFHCC - 1914 Glenn Park Dr. Champaign IL 61821  
 For additional information email **Kim Gollings** at [kgollings@cuhabitat.org](mailto:kgollings@cuhabitat.org) or call 217-819-5110



**October Coffeeshop Office Hours**  
**Tuesdays 1:30 -3:30 PM**

*Beth is headed to downtown Champaign on Tuesdays during October. Join her at Mad Goat Coffee (57 East Main) Tuesday afternoons throughout October.*



**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**



# Finance

## Financial Update

BY ANN WEBBINK, FINANCE TEAM  
ANWEB2@YAHOO.COM

### Contributions

Total August contributions: \$22.8K from plate and pledge plus \$10.3K from prepaid= \$33.1K This is \$5.2K less than last year and \$32.3K under budget. Total contributions YTD, including prorated prepaid pledges: \$ 517.3 K which is \$36.9K less than last year and \$5.9K under budget. At 66.7% of the year, we have 71.5% of the budgeted contributions, including all prepaid contributions.

### Expenses

August expenses were \$70.3 K, which is \$10.7K more than last year and \$9.7K under budget. Expenses YTD are \$652.3K, which is \$15.6K more than last year and \$12.3K over budget. At 66.7% of the year, we have spent 67.8% of the budget.

### Balance YTD

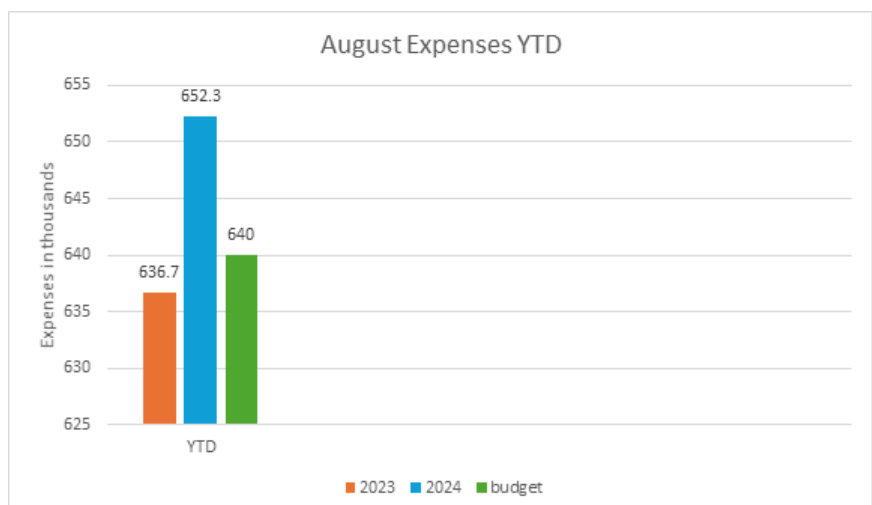
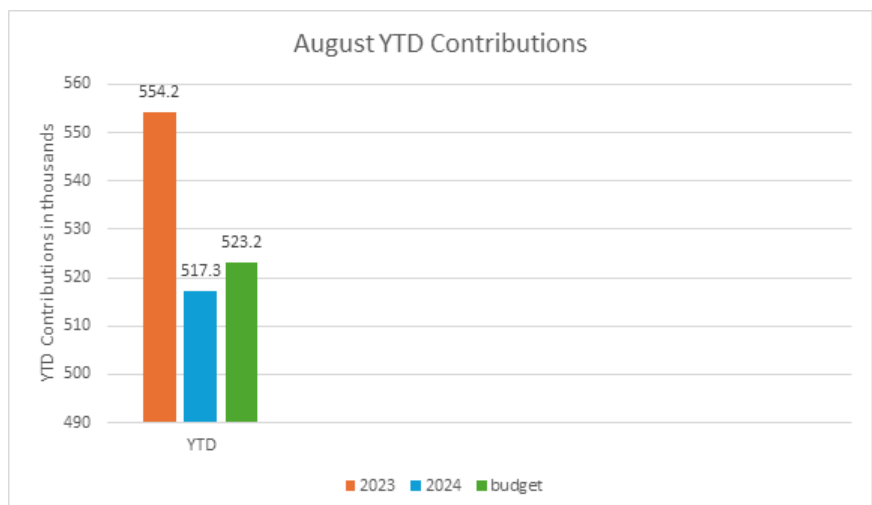
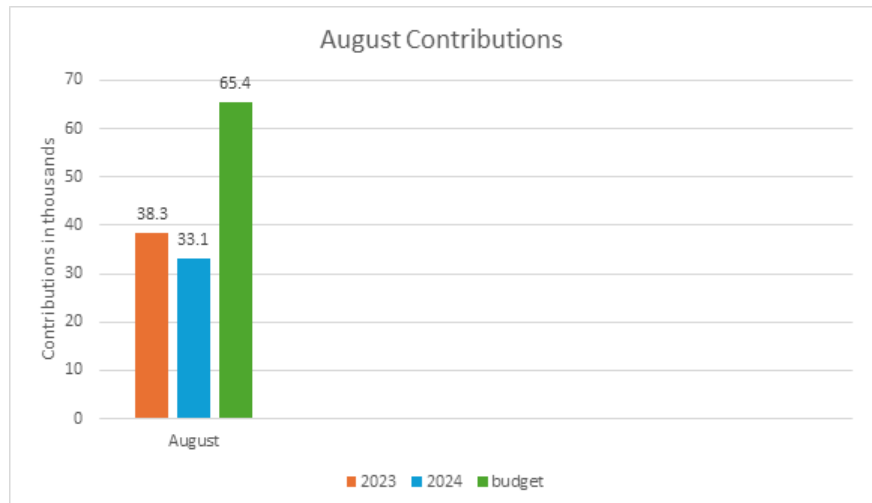
Expenses exceeded revenue from all sources by \$36K, which is \$48.2K more than last year at the same time.

### Session Designated Funds

\$1,751,339 which is \$30,043 more than last month.

### Summary of Restricted Accounts

\$5596 was given to various funds this month, including \$300 to the elevator fund, \$1890 to the Benevolence Fund and \$350 to the Raindrop project.





**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH** OF CHAMPAIGN

302 West Church Street  
Champaign, IL 61820

Change Service Requested



**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH** OF CHAMPAIGN

302 West Church Street  
Champaign, IL 61820

**P:** 217.356.7238

**E:** [info@firstpres.church](mailto:info@firstpres.church)

[www.firstpres.church](http://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  
Ann Petry..... Accounting  
Matthew Shepard ..... Director of Music  
Sora Shepard..... Organist/Pianist  
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](mailto:marcia@firstpres.church).