

September 2025



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN

175th Anniversary 1850-2025

Join us as we celebrate 175 years of worship and service with gatherings five Sundays. Regular Sunday service is held at 9 AM each week.

Sunday, September 14 - Coincides with West Side Arts organized by 40 North and the Champaign Park District. We along with First United Methodist and Emmanuel Memorial Episcopal will offer open house and tours from 12-3 Sunday afternoon. When the County History Museum was advised of our plan, **Director Will Best** and **Historian Rick Williams** arranged their own Historic Church Tour from 1-2:30 to include our buildings.

Sunday, September 21 - Photo and Memorabilia Display with historic souvenirs (free will offering)

Sunday, September 28 - Afternoon tours from 2-4 open to all but emphasizing our relationship with other local Presbyterian churches.

Sunday, October 5 - World Communion Sunday with music from other cultures during our regular 9 AM service.

Sunday, October 12 - Welcome former pastors and guests with bagpipes, mini tours, and refreshments after worship.

CELEBRATE
175 YEARS
OF
WORSHIP AND SERVICE



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN

ESTABLISHED 1850

Celebrate 175 yard signs are being placed in high traffic driving and walking areas. Check Westminster Hall for availability. Plan to place your sign at least through October...preferably until the end of the year.

Honoring the Past -- Discerning the Future 2010

Outreach and Growth



Fiston Niambi and Nicolette Mvundi Ngoma

Fiston Niambi was among the first African citizens to join us. He soon invited others who then invited others. Fiston learned English, worked through Parkland College as a nursing assistant and then became a hospital sonography technician. He, his wife, **Nicolette** and three sons reside in Champaign. Here is the Face to Face feature from our 2010 newsletter.

We joined First Presbyterian because the love for God and the love for others is here.

What brought you to First Presbyterian Church? I prayed to find the right church when I moved from Africa. I wanted a place that shared the same spirit that I knew at home. I was invited here by a friend. I observed everything for a while and found the worship service much like mine in Congo. When **Nicolette** came she joined the church.

What has been the highlight of your church experience? The love of God and the love of people is here as it is commanded in the Bible.

Tell me about your family. **Nicolette** and I were just married. She is one of five children and I am the fourth of eight from my father and the second of six for my mother. My brother, Patrick and my sister, Benedict will join us here in June. You will meet them soon.

What about your work? I graduated from University of Kongo with a degree in economics and entrepreneurship. Here I started at Silgan White Cap and then obtained my certificate and license as a nursing assistant. Now I work at Champaign County Nursing Home. **Nicolette** attended college in business. Her degree is in accounting. In Congo she had a business selling the clothes that her mother makes. You can see an example in the picture.

What are your favorite Bible characters? **Nicolette** likes Nehemiah. I don't know why. For me it's Daniel. Daniel was the model immigrant. He adjusted to a new culture and succeeded but did not give up his native culture and he never weakened in his faith in God.

How can the church best be the church? Love God. Love each other. Love your neighbor and your enemy. That's what I hear on Sundays and that is what God wants for us.



Cuba Partnership Launched

Pat and Dr. Bill Metcalf brought previous connections with the Presbyterian Reformed Church of Cuba to First and helped us launch our own ministry with Cuba.

Twelve traveled in a 2010 inaugural visit to select a congregational partner.

Standing left to right are Rittchell Yau, Betty Carlson, Dave Bauer, Pat Metcalf, Claudia and Bob Kirby, Bill Metcalf, Chuck Carlson and Peter Yau. Kneeling are Mark Schoeffmann, Mary Lou Bauer and Kathy Schoeffmann.

Pastor Chuck Carlson preaches the Sunday sermon at the La Fernanda congregation in Havana.



Pat Metcalf and Kathy Schoeffmann entertain Ethan Kirby at a Cuba display in Westminster Hall.

A Tropical Toast to fellow travelers and to Cuba.



2nd Sunday Brunch September 14th

**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.

Where Have All Our Young Families Gone?

They are knocking on the door. Shall we invite them in?

Thirty-one nations are represented in our congregation and our English Language Learners ministry. The young families in our English Language Learners ministry are eager to meet us. Our young immigrant families are too.

International Family Game Time on Tuesday, September 16 from 4:30-6 PM in Centennial Hall will bring young families to our door. We will play fun games together, laugh together and make friends. In addition, we will open our doors to eleven community organizations serving our community.

Show up. Have fun. Relax. Help where you can. Let's open the door.

WELCOMING WEEK STORIES WE SHARE

INTERNATIONAL FAMILY Game time

Play Across Cultures, Laugh Across Borders

Come play, connect, and celebrate the stories we share through the universal language of games.

- Fun for all ages • Meet new people • Celebrate cultures

Free & open to everyone!

SEPT. 16 | 4:30-6 PM

First Presbyterian Church of Champaign
302 W Church St, Champaign, IL

Logos at the bottom include: CU USD, LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS, RE/MAX, ISCU, FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN, HESSEL PARK CHURCH, the refugee, NEW AMERICAN WELCOME CENTER UNIVERSITY YMCA, DREAM, rpc CHAMPAIGN COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION, and UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA CHAMPAIGN.



Cathy serves on our Human Resource and Nominating Committees and on our Sunday Hospitality Team.

Face to Face with Cathy Emanuel

What brought you to First Presbyterian Church?

My parents became members when they moved to Champaign in 1969 and I joined with them.

What has been the highlight of your church experience?

I will say teaching Sunday School with my husband when our children were young.

Tell me about your family? Your work?

I have four children and ten grandchildren in Chicago and Seattle. I attended Purdue University for my bachelor of arts degree in English. Then at the U of I, I received my masters degree in journalism and later in business administration. I worked in health care administration thirty years at Carle where I began as an editor of the Carle newsletter. Then I worked ten years at what is now OSF.

What do you do in your free time?

I care for my grandchildren in Chicago two days a week. My second passion is collaborating with a wonderful and diverse group of people intent on developing a high quality, not for profit nursing home in Champaign County. We are making good progress and are optimistic that we will succeed in opening an innovative and affordable place that will serve our people well. I also volunteer as an advocate at the wonderful organization, Casa (Court Appointed Special Advocates) and am active in League of Women Voters.

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

An important thing for me is that we be the church in the community. I was moved when we sheltered the homeless in Centennial Hall overnight. Our relationship with DREAM is important. I guess I am most inspired by our community mission work.

Youth Sunday School Resumes Sunday, September 7

We are happy to announce that (barring an inability to get volunteers) we have children/youth programming during the Sunday School hour for the next semester! This is in addition to our previous K-5 class, which has been running throughout the summer. We now also have a 6-12th grade class.

This is a great time to get those older children/grandchildren involved and learning the stories that inform our faith, and the way that God has called all of us to live. While the kids are at their classes, please join our adult Spiritual Formation, which has long been a great feature of this congregation.

We hope to see you all taking advantage of these new offerings!

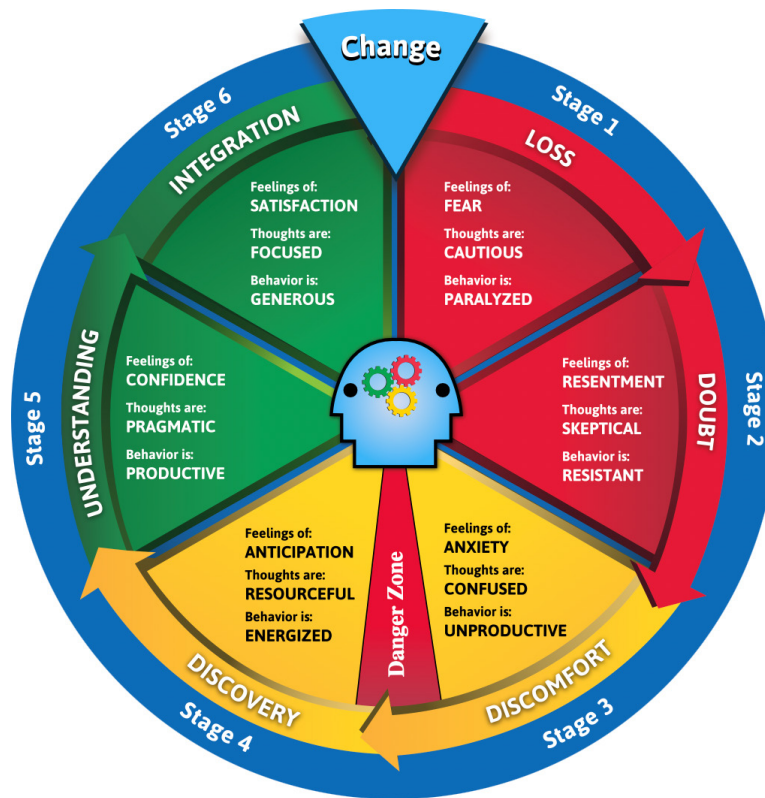


Change

BY BETH WAGNERK, IBNTERM PASTOR/HEAD OF STAFF
 BETH@FIRSTPRES.CHYRGC

Fall season us upon us, very soon the season will begin to change, because change is inevitable and actually necessary for animating our spirits as we find renewed purpose throughout life. Here is an excerpt from the scripture:

I went to the potter's house, and sure enough, the potter was there, working away at his wheel. Whenever the pot the potter was working on turned out badly, as sometimes happens when you are working with clay, the potter would simply start over and use the same clay to make another pot. Then God's Message came to me: "Can't I do just as this potter does, people of Israel?" God's Decree! "Watch this potter. In the same way that this potter works his clay, I work on you, people of Israel. — Jeremiah 18: 1-6 (The Message)



The truth of the matter is that most of us don't like change. And yet we are "made for" and capable of change. The Change Cycle™ (see graph above) is a powerful tool used by all kinds of organizations and individuals to learn to navigate change with more ease. When you look at the model above, it's a circle, and it represents the true cyclical nature of each change we experience. In the outside ring are the six sequential and predictable stages of change. The names of the stages: Loss, Doubt, Discomfort, Discovery, Understanding, and Integration, indicate the primary experience of that stage. The inside pie pieces list the thoughts, feelings and behaviors most associated with the stage. The Change Cycle™ uses the colors of a traffic light to signal that the stages mirror the actions we take at traffic lights. The Change Cycle™ model is a map that depicts our human experience of each stage of change — in all changes, big or small, good or bad.

We are in the midst of change, here at the church, in your lives and in the world, change is happening. So instead of resisting change, because change is happening just like the change of season, let's talk about where we are in the change cycle and how we can support, experience and even celebrate the change that is happening.

The Heart of Mission

Reaching Out -- Across the Street -- Across the Ocean

CU Days at Douglass Park

First Church was there on Saturday, August 9, on the steaming asphalt of a glorious hot, and sunny day. Having collected school supplies for the Champaign Park District we celebrated.

We had wonderful fellowship together, met old friends, learned from some sixty other participating community groups and laughed while helping children play games. This was a great day that the Lord had made. Thanks be to God!



Pictured are Pastor Joe Lundy, Kayode Oke, Pat Tarr, Claudia Kirby, Solange Mboyo and Betty Hollister. Also participating were Dennis Arthur, Michael Hogue, Bob Kirby, Noni Ledford and Bruce Rainey

Welcoming the Community

Come out to Centennial Hall, Tuesday, September 16, from 4:30-6:00 PM to greet people representing community organizations in Champaign-Urbana. Learn about the wonderful services they offer. While you mingle you can play a game or two if you wish. There will be space to sit and chat.

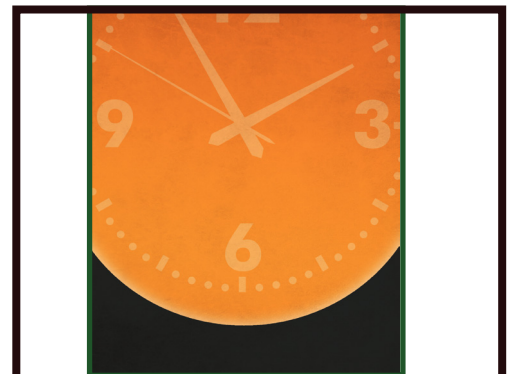
Here are guests we can befriend and from whom we can learn.

- Campus-Community Compact, Office of Public Engagement, University of Illinois UC
- Champaign County League of Women Voters
- Champaign County Regional Planning Commission – Head Start
- DREAM
- Hessel Park Church

- Immigration Services of Champaign-Urbana
- Michael Hogue Team, ReMax Realty
- New American Welcome Center
- Refugee Center
- UC Early- USD 116
- Val Smith ESL

National Voter Registration Day 9.16

Please welcome the Champaign County League of women voters to our space on Tuesday, September 16 between 4:30 and 6 PM. They will provide voter registration information for the 2026 election, register eligible voters and check registration status for those who have registered. They will also engage children in a fun voting experience as they vote for their favorite animal. **Karen Kane** of the Voter Registration Team will be joined by **Beth Parrott** and **Ann Prisland**.



Church Office Hours

The church office is open:

Mon-Thurs 8:30 AM - 2 PM

Friday 8:30 AM - noon

Contact the church office during these hours at 217.356.7238.

You can also send an email to info@firstpres.church.

Lunch & Learn

Every first Monday of the month, join us in Centennial Hall for Lunch & Learn. Topics vary. This month we will meet on Monday, September 8, due to the Labor Day holiday on the first Monday.

Bring a sack lunch and learn more about Windows 11.



Coffee with Beth
Wednesdays, 10 - 12 noon
Espresso Royale
Robeson at the Crossing

Come enjoy conversation
coffee and bagels.

Your Input Is IMPORTANT; We Want To Hear From You!

The Transition Team (**Rev. Beth Wagner, Rev. Joe Lundy, Claudia Kirby, Brandi Lowe, Pat Phillips, Bruce Rainey, Linda Sandquist, Mark Schoeffmann and Peter Yau**) have some important dates and events coming up relating to developing the Mission Study required for a new pastor search.

You are requested to attend an all-church event on October 3 at 7 PM. The meeting will be held in the Sanctuary and available on Zoom. We will meet with our Transition coach from New Beginning's about the preliminary findings from the earlier meeting in July.

You are also requested to sign-up for small group discussions. Your participation in the meetings is crucial for the vision and future of First Pres.

Sunday, 10:30 AM
 October 5, 19, 26 and November 2

Monday, 12 PM
 October 6, 20, 27 and November 3

Tuesday, 2 PM
 October 7, 21, 28 and November 4

Tuesday, 7 PM
 October 7, 21, 28 and November 4

Group meeting for residents at the Windsor of Savoy, dates and time will be arranged with Pat Phillips.

Contact the church office (217.356.7238 or info@firstpres.church) to let us know what date/time works best for you. Please sign-up to share your views.

Sales Tax Exemption Reminder..

Please remember that the church is a non-profit tax exempt organization when purchasing for a church program or event. The church office can provide you with a copy of the Illinois Sales Tax Exempt Certificate which is acceptable by most vendors. When purchasing from Sam's Club for an event at the church, you can borrow one of the staff's cards for Sam's which notes the tax exemption. If purchasing from Amazon, send the link(s) to Patty Farthing (patty@firstpres.church). She can purchase using the church's account that has both tax exemption and Prime (free shipping).



Verse of the day

Two are better than one because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up the other, but woe to one who is alone and falls and does not have another to help. - Ecclesiastes 4:9–10

Voice of the day

My humanity is bound up in yours, for we can only be human together. - Desmond Tutu

Prayer of the day

God, remind us that our lives are bound together, and teach us to lift one another up in love, for it is only together that we become fully human.

Sharing Our Lives Together

We have wonderful fellowship at First Pres. Sharing important life events we lift each other in voice and prayer.

Keep us informed by contacting us at info@firstpres.church.

Congratulations to...

- **Dr. C. William and Pat Metcalf** on their 70th wedding anniversary celebrated August 25;
- **Bruce and Patty Farthing** who celebrated their 63rd wedding anniversary on September 1;
- **Dr. John and Gwen Pollard** who celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary on September 3.

We extend sympathy to...

- Facility Manager **Ritchie Drennen** on the death of his wife, **Mamie**, on August 15;
- The family and friends of **Dottie Garrett** who died August 31. A Memorial Service will be held Friday, September 5, at 1 PM at Morgan Memorial.
- The family and friends of **Joanne Kelly** who died August 11. A Memorial Service will be held at the church on Saturday, September 20, at 1 PM.
- **Noni, Stretch and Grace Ledford** on the death of Noni's mother;
- Family and friends of **Jack Waaler** who died August 5.

Grab a cup of coffee and join us this Sunday, September 7, at 10 AM in the Mae Chapin Parlor.

Matthew Fletcher from Courage Connection will kick off our fall Adult Discussion which comes immediately after the 9 AM service.

Check out other Small Group opportunities in the Fall/Winter Small Group brochure available in the kiosks.

Finance

Financial Update

BY ANN WEBBINK, FINANCE TEAM
ANWEB2@YAHOO.COM

Contributions

Total July contributions: \$27.1K from plate and pledge plus \$7.9K from prepaid= \$35K. This is \$5.6K less than last year and \$30.1K under budget. Total contributions YTD, including prorated prepaid pledges: \$ 452.3 K which is \$31.9K less than last year and \$3.4K under budget. At 58.3% of the year, we have 63% of the budgeted contributions, including all prepaid contributions.

Expenses

July expenses were \$77.2 K, which is \$6.9K more than last year and \$1.8K under budget. Expenses YTD are \$581K, which is \$1K less than last year and \$28K over budget. At 58.3% of the year, we have spent 61.3% of the budget.

Balance YTD

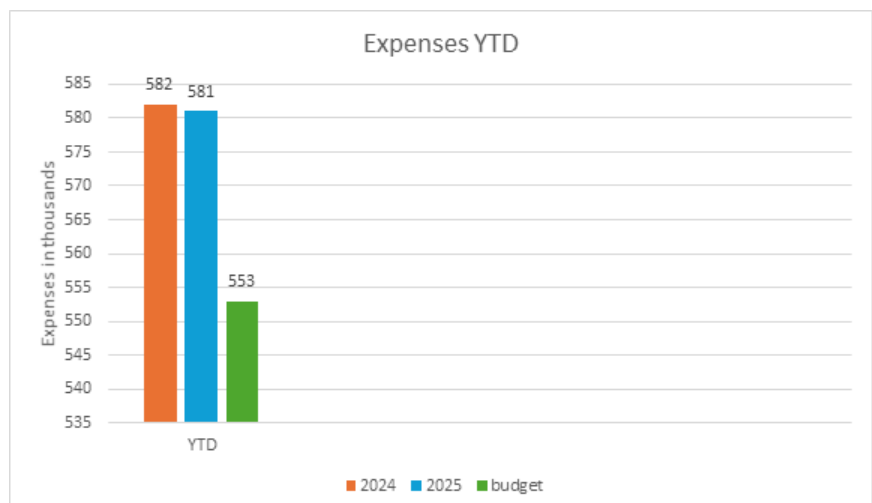
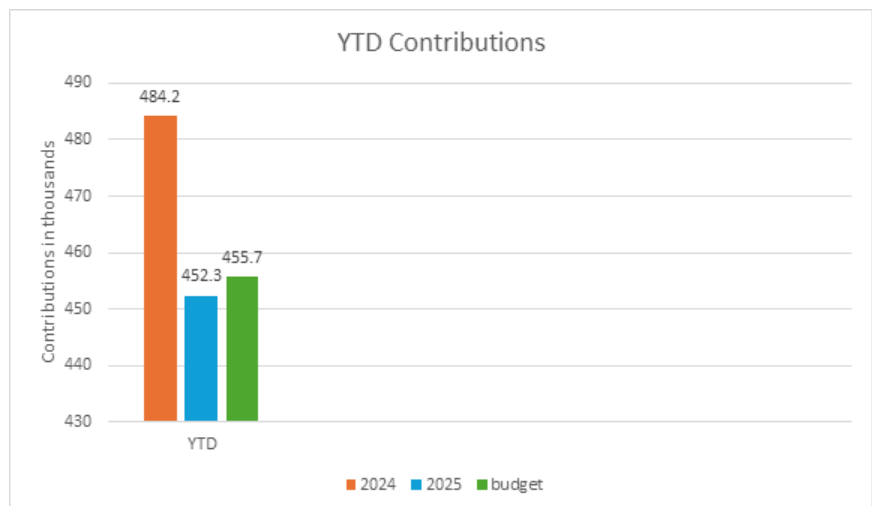
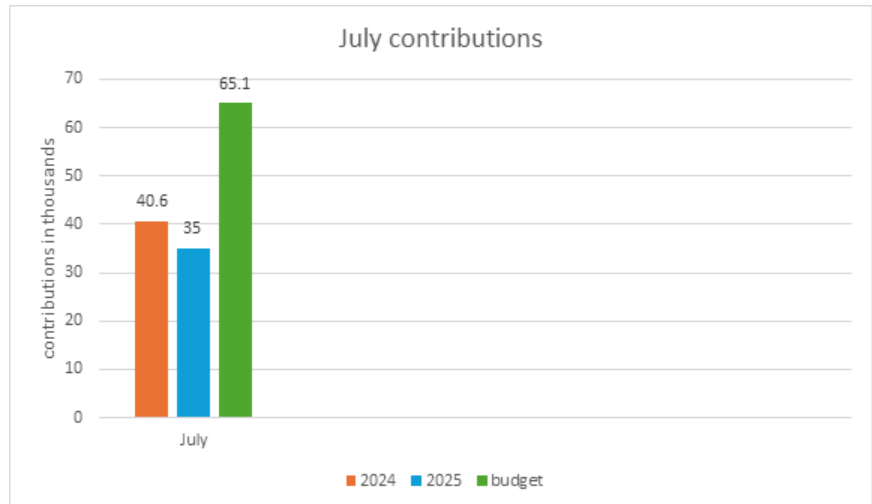
Expenses exceeded revenue by \$29.5K in July. Last year at this time revenue exceeded expenses by \$9.5K

Session Designated Funds

\$1,043,522 which is \$52.3K less than last month.

Summary of Restricted Accounts

\$1250 was given to the general memorial fund, \$3425 to the Raindrop project and \$390 to various mission funds.





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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

www.firstpres.church

Sunday:

9 AM Worship

10 AM Coffee and Fellowship

10:10 AM Sunday School/Adult Discussions

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:

Yuxi Chen..... Organist/Pianist
Ritchie Drennen Facility Manager
Patty Farthing..... Office Assistant
Robert Ferrer Audio-visual Technician
Fred Foster Evening Custodian
Marcia Franks Office Administrator
Samuel Stephenson..... Director of Music
Jill Stewart..... Accounting
Bonnie Ward..... English Language Learner Director

Staff email addresses are the person's first name followed by @firstpres.church For example, beth@firstpres.church

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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.