



**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN**

The Heart of Mission

December 15, 2020

Friends, If you have followed our mission partners throughout the year on Facebook or their websites, you will see that 2020 has been a rough year. Your Mission Team, Community Mission Deacons and World Mission Committee have identified three very worthwhile mission offerings this month that will make a significant impact on lives throughout our community and world for years to come. I have included all three in this issue of The Heart of Mission: 1) The Advent Offering (which will support the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance and our sister church in Luyano), 2) the Christmas Joy Offering coming up on Christmas Eve, and 3) the Angel Tree/Food Insecurity Drive. Also included is a very special thank you video from CU at Home, one of our mission partner in Champaign that was a recipient of a Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Grant. Can you see how all our gifts together makes a big difference? Make sure to click the links to read related articles and videos.

Peace,

Rev. Dr. Rachel Matthews, Mission Coordinator



**The FPCC Community Mission Deacons Champaign County Food Insecurity Drive
aka The 2020 Angel Tree**

Food insecurity is the dry technical term for American households going hungry at least some of the time. It is at crisis levels all over America and very much so in Champaign County.

According to Census Bureau data, currently, over 1 in 10 American adults did not have enough to eat last week. And, worse, for families with children, approximately 1 in 4 such families did not have enough food for their children last week! In Champaign County, rates are similar, and Food Stamps, Eastern Illinois Food Bank, and others are unable to meet the increasing need. For people of color the statistics are considerably worse.

With widespread vaccinations months away from distribution. Help is desperately needed now. The FPCC Mission perspective emphasizes supporting programs that actually help people lift themselves out of poverty. But, critically, FPCC also firmly believes that crises demand immediate responding. Therefore, CMD invites you to join in responding to this crisis. Our fund provides an immediate opportunity for FPCC to reach out to struggling Champaign County brothers and sisters who, through no fault of their own, are caught up in this crisis. The Eastern Illinois Food Bank has more information at this web site: [Click here for link](#)

So, if you are able to contribute to this fund, that would be wonderful. The amount collected will be contributed to Eastern Illinois Food Bank and hence put to good use via an organization expert in food distribution! As an encouragement, CMD has contributed \$4000 and a member family has contributed an additional \$1000. Because the need is so overwhelming and many of us have resources that can make a difference, we are optimistic that our church can contribute a substantial amount that will help relieve the hunger issue in Champaign County.

Thank you for your consideration and your generosity.

Thank you,

The First Presbyterian Community Mission Deacons (CMD)



THE 2020 ADVENT OFFERING will be taken for the whole month of December.

Christmas is the season of Advent. What love, joy and redemption we have in the birth of our Savior! And so, it is with thankfulness that each year at this time we have our annual Advent Offering. This year-2020- the year that is like none other we have experienced, your World Missions Committee is asking that our Advent giving go to 2 organizations that will help many people. The first organization is our own Presbyterian Disaster Assistance that is comprised of 2 components: National Relief and International Relief.

Several months ago, as fires were raging across the west and Pacific coast areas, your World Missions Committee was able to send \$1500 to PDA and earmark it for U.S. fire relief aid. If you Google “ Presbyterian Disaster Assistance”, you will see how aid is distributed to United States and to international countries that are in crisis situations. Each entity has vital needs that are being addressed by PDA. We are very thankful that our denomination is able to help alleviate pain and suffering in so many places and in so many lives through your generous donations. 2/3 of your Advent giving this year will go to PDA.

The 2nd component of our giving will go to our own sister church, Luyano in Cuba. This is a year of isolation between our 2 churches due, among other things, to COVID19. None of us is allowed to travel between our countries this year. We are not able to carry supplies to them nor can we send money directly to them. The Luyano church is in dire need of help. We are able to aid them through PCUSA and our own church’s Cuba Committee is requesting this help. It is in gratitude to our relationship with our sister church that 1/3 of our Advent offering will be earmarked for our Luyano brothers and sisters.

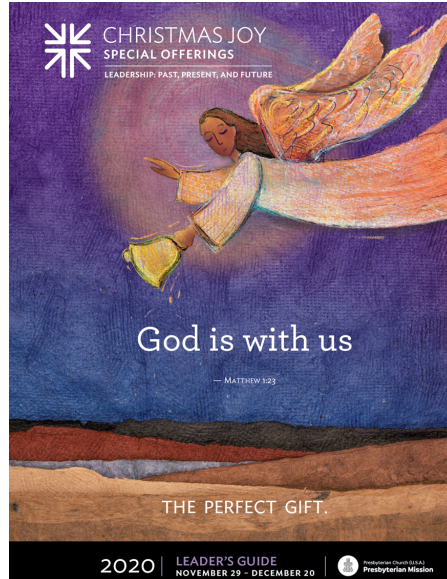
We know this has been a tough year for each of us. However, we also acknowledge that God has continued to be our source of strength in these times. May we also be a source of strength to those who need to rely on us.

In Hope, Peace, Joy and Love,

The First Presbyterian Church World Mission Committee

PDA and CU at Home: [Thank you to First Pres from Rob Dalhaus at CU at Home](#)

Back in the Spring, the Champaign-Urbana community was the recipient of a PC(USA) PDA grant, which a portion of our Advent Offering is going toward. Remember the PC(USA) PDA grant back in the Spring that we received for CU at Home and The Refugee Center due to Covid 19? Those dollars made a difference. The link above thanking you for your support from the director of CU at Home shows the impact of those dollars. The Refugee Center has been able to continue to help refugee families throughout these past months as well and has thanked us for that support.



The Christmas Joy Offering for Christmas Eve

Every year on Christmas Eve, First Presbyterian Church Champaign takes up the Joy Gift Offering, a special offering of the PC(U.S.A.). The Christmas Joy Offering reflects that God is with us, through the generous gifts that support church leaders among us, retired, present and future, who have pointed us to God. Even as we support our current and former church leaders through the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions, God is calling new leaders for our Church and world, through the ministry of Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color -- offering students the means for a brighter future and enhanced opportunities to use their talents and skills to serve God, the Church and the world for years to come. Because God is with us, we see the potential of students of color who will become our leaders and we seek to come alongside them, to encourage them, to be with them. 50% of your gifts make it possible for students to learn and grow in faith at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. Because God is with us, we see church workers who have critical financial needs and we come alongside them, to assist them — we are with them. 50% of your gifts provide assistance for current and retired church workers and their families with critical financial needs. Thank you for your gift to the Christmas Joy Offering — for when we all do a little, it adds up to a lot.

Friends of PEB — In case you missed it last week, Friends of PEB sends thanks with a special online Advent Calendar. All you do is click the link and begin. <https://calendar.myadvent.net/?id=b594e0aaf5cb14378b197c821b14b287>

Let us keep all our mission partners in our prayers, those who are waiting to go back to their place of ministry and those who are able to work where they are. Listen for God's call to you in their ministry.

Our PC(USA) Mission CoWorkers:

Mark Adams and Miriam Maidonado Escobar (Mexico)
Farsijanna Adeney-Risakotta (Indonesia)
Jeff and Christi Boyd (Central Africa)
Jo Ella Holman (Caribbean and Cuba) – And, for the mission coworker you are preparing to take her place.
Bob and Kristi Rice (South Sudan)

Our regional and global mission partners:

Kemmerer Village (and Camp Carew)
Lifeline Pilots
Marion Medical Mission
Mission Aviation Fellowship
Opportunity International
Friends of Presbyterian Education Board in Pakistan Presbyterian Cuba Partnership
Special Offerings of the PC(USA)
Theological Education Fund
Young Adult Volunteers

Here in Champaign – Urbana:

CU at Home
CANAAAN S.A.F.E. HOUSE
CANTEEN RUN
COURAGE CONNECTION
DREAAM
eEMPTY TOMB, INC
FAITH IN ACTION
JESUS IS THE WAY PRISON MINISTRY
THE REFUGEE CENTER
RESTORATION URBAN MINISTRY
SALT & LIGHT

Here at First Presbyterian Church

FPCC Amateur Preachers
FPCC Environmental Committee working with Faith in Place
FPCC Presbyterian Women
FPCC ESL
FPCC Children, Youth and Families
FPCC Mission Possible/Go and Serve



**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH** OF CHAMPAIGN

302 W. Church Street

Champaign, IL 61820

217-356-7238

info@firstpres.church