



**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN**



**The Heart of Mission
December 21, 2021**



In the story of God, as we tell it, there is a barrier that exists between the Created world and its Creator. A wall. Sin, we say, separates us from God, and separation from God is unbearable.

And our story goes on to say that God, seeing that we had no hope in ourselves of getting over, or through or around what separates us, offered us a gift in Jesus Christ who opens a door — a door we could not open ourselves.

What a gift!

At the Christmas Eve services we will collect for the Christmas Joy Offering. By giving to the Christmas Joy Offering, you honor God's gift of Jesus Christ by providing assistance to current and retired church workers in their time of need and developing our future leaders at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.



Angel Tree – On December 13 Lola Ruthsmansdorfer and Rachel Matthews took all the Angel Tree presents to Kemmerer Village for the 10 children who were not able to go home for the holidays. Autumn Warren from the Development Office told us that some of these children had never written a wish list before this year and some will have never opened a present before this Christmas. Thank you for your generosity and love. Here are a few pictures:



Advent Offering 2021 -

We have finished the collection for the Advent Offering. It was taken up each of the four Sundays in Advent. If you still wish to give you may do for the next week. We ask that you write "Advent Offering" in the memo of your check or on the front of a regular offering envelope, along with their name if donating cash. You can also give online and put in the memo "For Advent Offering." The Community Mission deacons chose the destination of the offering this year. The offering will go to The Refugee Center to assist the Afghan families that have been evacuated to our area. We want to welcome them to their new home. At the end of December, we will send the full amount collected to The Refugee Center and will report the full amount at that time.

Advent Worship Events –

TONIGHT - Tuesday, 6pm, **December 21** - The Longest Night Worship – music / poetry / candles

Friday, 4pm, **December 24** - Family Christmas Eve

Friday, 8pm, **December 24** - Traditional Christmas Eve

Sunday, 9am, **December 26** - 9am Worship and Carol Sing

CU at Home Women's Shelter –

First Presbyterian Church has been given a special opportunity to help women who are without a home for these long winter months get through the night safely and warmly beginning next week until mid-April. We are excited we can help. Please keep CU at Home, the City of Champaign, New Covenant Fellowship and First Presbyterian Church Champaign in your prayers as we work together to provide safe and warm housing to men and women of our community who are without an address. Please talk to Rachel Matthews about it if you have any questions or concerns.

We have had a variety of email Christmas wishes from our mission partners – Marion Medical Mission, Friends of PEB, Faith in Place, Kemmerer Village, Opportunity International, Frontera de Cristo, Mission Aviation Fellowship, our Mission CoWorkers Bob and Kristi Rice and we will probably have more before the end of the year.

Go online and prayerfully read letters from these ministries.

Merry Christmas,

Rachel Matthews

AND

Please consider the following words **from Sara P. Lisherness, the interim director of World Mission, Presbyterian Mission Agency, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):**

Dear partners in God's mission,

I don't know about you, but daily my heart grows heavier. News about the pandemic, wars, wildfires, gun violence, racism, earthquakes and hurricanes cloud my vision. It's hard to see hope; our world is in a fog. Yet we trust that God's light and love transcend the brokenness of this time.

God is at work transforming the world, and you, through your prayers, partnership and encouragement, are helping us share this good news. Thank you for your faithful and gracious support of our mission personnel.

How can we see through the fog? What will the church be after the pandemic? Could it be that God is doing "a new thing" and is inviting us to perceive it? Through all the uncertainty we know that God's steadfast love and care for all creation will prevail and that God's Spirit is at work in each of us.

We all have an integral part to play in fulfilling God's mission. As we seek to grow together in faithfulness there are three important steps I invite you to take in supporting our shared commitments to God's mission:

Give – *Consider making a year-end financial contribution for the sending and support of our mission personnel. Your support helps mission personnel accompany global partners as together they share the light of God's love and justice around the world. Invite your session to include support for mission personnel in its annual budget planning.*

Act – Visit *The Mission Yearbook for Prayer and Study* to delve deeper into the work God is doing through the PC(USA) and its partners in ministry around the globe: pcusa.org/missionyearbook.

Pray – Include our mission personnel, our global partners, and our common commitments to share God's grace, love, mercy and justice in your daily prayers.

Thank you for your faithfulness to God's mission through the Presbyterian Church. It is my prayer that you will continue to support this work with your prayers, partnership, and financial gifts in the coming year. We hope you will join us and our partners in shining a beacon of hope throughout the world.

We want to 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)

Bob and Kristi Rice (South Sudan)

The new Caribbean Mission CoWorker who God is calling (Caribbean and Cuba)

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

CANAAN 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

FPCC Mission Team, World Mission and Community Mission Deacons



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