



Don't just picture yourself in Vail ...
Captive ... St. Lucia ... Seattle ...
make it a reality and bid on one or all
of these vacation destinations at the

Touch a Life

All-Church Auction

Saturday, April 9

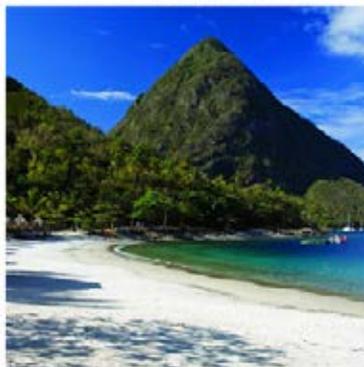
6 p.m. Fellowship & Silent Auction

8 p.m. Dinner & Live Auction

Exmoor Country Club

700 Vine Avenue in Highland Park

It will be an evening of community building,
fun, fellowship and fundraising for our
Mission partners. Reserve your seat at
firstchurchlf.org/auction.



Say 'bye-bye' to paper bid sheets and 'hi' to your friends and neighbors!

With this year's new mobile bidding, the time you spend hovering over bid sheets and checking on your bids can be spent socializing instead. Using your smartphone, you can place silent auction bids **WHEREVER** and **WHENEVER**! Best of all, you'll be texted if someone bids higher so you can counterbid before time runs out.

There is no software to download and once registered, you'll receive a text with a link to your personal bidding web page where you can place all your bids and check out at the end of the evening.

No smart phone? No problem! Personal shoppers will be at the Auction to do your (literal) bidding. And at the end of the evening, you can conveniently pay with your phone and credit card (no waiting at check-out!) or with one of the personal shoppers.

Can't wait to get started? Be on the look-out for info about registering before the event and getting your link. There you'll see all the silent auction items that you can bid on BEFORE the Auction begins or if you're NOT at the Auction at all; you'll be notified via text when you win. The bid page will also have all the great live auction prizes, but you need to be at the event to bid and win those items. Happy bidding!



Dear Friends,

With Easter just passed, April feels like a fresh season, a new beginning. In “Eastertide” (this season before Pentecost), we try on the meaning of Christ’s resurrection in our lives.

We “practice” the resurrection in many ways: welcoming new members into our midst—including our amazing Confirmation class ... celebrating God’s new creation with the Blessing of the Animals ... feasting on God’s Word in small-group Bible study.

But above all, we “practice” resurrection through our mission efforts—and this season is filled with opportunities! I encourage you to be part of Christ’s transformative, life-giving work in the world.

- April 9, participate in the All-Church Auction, where we can invite our non-church friends, enjoy great fellowship, and celebrate that every dollar raised goes to Mission.
- April 10, counteract political “spin” by hearing Dr. Fatima Rahman from Lake Forest College speak on “The Threat of ISIS and the Muslim Response.”
- April 24-26, join in the effort to set up for our Rummage Sale, which takes place Saturday, April 30 this year. Again, every dollar goes to mission!

Young or old, new to faith or a life-long follower of Jesus, we can ALL make a difference in the world God loves!

Blessings,

Christine Chakoian

Reverend Dr. Christine Chakoian

Celebrate God’s Creation and Lend a Hand for Mission, April 24

What better time to celebrate all of creation than when we gather—people and animals alike—under one roof. We invite you, your family and your furry, scaly, feathery babies (and stuffed animals, too) to worship with us on Sunday, April 24 at 9 a.m., at our special Blessing of the Animals service. We will be worshipping outside, under the Sheridan Road tents. We love seeing all of our dogs, cats, birds, lizards, snakes and others, but for their safety, please make sure they are on a leash or in appropriate carriers.

(Also, please note that there will not be a concurrent service in the Sanctuary at 9 a.m. and the 10 a.m. Fellowship Hour will be held outside as well.)

If you prefer to celebrate in the Sanctuary, we will have our traditional morning service at 11 a.m. Along with Blessing of the Animals, April 24 also marks the beginning of Rummage set-up week! If you are able to help, we invite you to attend the 11 a.m. worship in casual attire and bring a sack lunch for the 12 p.m. Fellowship Hour in the Parlor. In addition to the usual coffee and pastries, we’ll be offering healthy snacks to get you energized for set-up that starts at 1 p.m.



WE WORSHIP

SUNDAY, APRIL 10

9 & 11am Worship
Rev. Amy Pagliarella Leading

first@five

5pm Worship
Rev. Dr. Corey Nelson, Leading

SUNDAY, APRIL 17

Confirmation & Ordination
9am Worship
Rev. Nick Redmond, Leading

11am Worship

Rev. Dr. Corey Nelson, Leading

first@five

5pm Worship
Rev. Dr. Corey Nelson, Leading

SUNDAY, APRIL 24

9am Blessing of the Animals,
Sheridan Lot
11am Traditional Worship,
Sanctuary
Rev. Dr. Christine Chakoian, Leading

first@five

5pm Worship
Rev. Dr. Corey Nelson, Leading

SUNDAY, MAY 1

9 & 11am Worship
Rev. Dr. Christine Chakoian, Leading

first@five

5pm Worship
Rev. Dr. Corey Nelson, Leading

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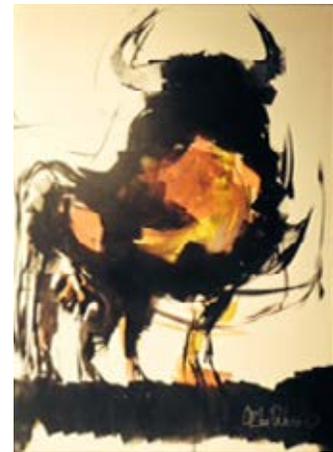
Let's Get Ready to Rummage!

Saturday, April 30 from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Do your walls feel bland? Are you looking for ways to brighten your space? Then look no further than the Spring Rummage Sale! To be held on Saturday, April 30 from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m., it will feature many great works of art including paintings by R. C. Gorman—a Navajo Nation artist referred to by the New York Times as the “Picasso of American Indian art.” His paintings are primarily of Native American women and characterized by fluid forms and vibrant colors.



As always, there will be floors and floors of trinkets and treasures—from Legos® to fine China; sweaters to sporting goods; antiques, furniture, books and more. And best of all, the proceeds will go to support Mission. With the recent cuts to its budget this year, every purchase you make will bring in much needed funds for our Mission partners.



Want to shop before the crowds? Volunteer during set-up and you can shop the pre-sale on Wednesday, April 27 from 1 to 4 p.m.! We need hundreds of hands to make light work of organizing all the rooms and transporting goods from storage to display. Sign up at firstchurchlf.org/rummagevolunteer.



BAKERS NEEDED!



Earn a worker's card to shop at the pre-sale by donating **home-baked goods!** For our bakers to earn a worker's card, we ask that you donate:

- 6-8 dozen of your favorite home-baked cookies,
- 6-8 dozen home-baked brownies or bars
- 4 full sized loaves of home-baked tea breads.



Our rummage workers and shoppers always look forward to your delicious treats! If you wish to contribute by baking, please sign up by contacting Lee Gantz at (847) 295-9684 or lgglf@aol.com; or Patti Tucker at (847) 615-2643 or murph912000@yahoo.com.

Please note that while we are grateful for each and every thoughtful donation, we are only able to grant worker's cards for home-baked goodies. (Baking for Rummage is in lieu of working a 4 hour shift unloading trucks or setting up rooms.)

One final note: Please deliver your baked items to the Parish House at the designated drop-off times to insure there will be someone available to give your worker's card to you. Drop-off times are:

- Sunday, April 24, between 12 and 3 p.m.
- Monday, April 25, between 8:30 and 11 a.m.
- Tuesday, April 26, between 8:30 and 11 a.m.

We thank all of you for your willingness to contribute to our Rummage Sale in this very special and much appreciated way!

First Presbyterian Church Welcomes New Members

On March 13 we welcomed to our church family Philippe and Molly Melin, and their children Charlie and Maizy; Kendall and Ryan Severson, and their daughter Caroline; and Linda and her husband, Rev. Peter Smith, on March 13. We look forward to getting to know our new members and growing together in faith.



The Melin Family



The Severson Family



Linda and Peter Smith

Do you want to be part of a community that trusts God and cares for each other? The first gathering for those who would like to learn more about our church and/or being a member will be held on April 10 or May 1, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. in the Parlor. Attend the Sunday that best fits your schedule. Please let us know which Sunday you prefer by emailing Pastor Dave Bianchin at dbianchin@firstchurchlf.org. If you need to reserve a spot for age-appropriate childcare and/or more details, please let Dave know.

The second and third gatherings will be held May 15 and June 5, respectively.

Meet our soon-to-be newest members and officers on April 24. Hear the Confirmation Class as they give their statements of faith during Confirmation at the 9 a.m. worship service. Then, at the 11 a.m. service, we will be ordaining and installing our newest deacons and elders. Join us as we celebrate our growing church family.

The Threat of ISIS and the Muslim Response



Dr. Fatima Rahman

The heinous terrorist attacks in Brussels, Paris and San Bernardino have brought the public's attention to the most significant security threat to the world: Islamist terrorism. Dr. Fatima Rahman, assistant professor, Dept. of Politics chair, Islamic World Studies at Lake Forest College, will discuss the threat of ISIS to both non-Muslims and Muslims alike, and explain the role of Muslims in defeating the threat.

Rahman has previously called on Muslims to reject ISIS, which was covered by the Daily North Shore. Read the article and get more info at firstchurchlf.org/rahman.

Be part of this discussion on Sunday, April 10 at 7 p.m. in the Sanctuary.

Questions? Contact Dave Bianchin at dbianchin@firstchurchlf.org.

**SAVE
THE
DATE!**

Sanctuary Choir and North Park University Women's Chorale
"Orphan Music"
Thursday, May 5 at 7 p.m.

Antonio Vivaldi *Magnificat*, RV 610
Baldassare Galuppi *Laudate Pueri a Tre Concertato* (Modern Premiere)
George Frideric Handel *Foundling Hospital Anthem* (1753 version)

Reversing a Hopeless Situation for Syrians

How Presbyterians Are Helping

Last month, the Syrian conflict stretched into its sixth year, leaving behind death, displacement and desolation. It's an anniversary where there is seemingly nothing to celebrate. Yet, the church's witness shines in the midst of the darkness.

What started in March 2011 as peaceful demonstrations calling for reforms, quickly turned into a fierce conflict between armed rebel groups and Syrian government



forces. Militant jihadists linked with Al-Qaeda were joined by thousands of foreign fighters from about 80 different countries. The war that ensued has been less of a civil war and more of a proxy war as various countries supported different factions to advance their own geopolitical interests.

According to the Syrian Center for Policy research, an estimated 400,000 people have died in the violence and another 70,000 perished as an indirect result of the war—failing healthcare system, infrastructure, etc. In addition, the United Nations has found that approximately 11.4 million (about half the pre-war population) have been forced from their homes, with 6.6 million internally displaced and 4.8 million having fled the country. The resulting refugee crisis is the largest in modern history. The surrounding countries of Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey have struggled to cope with influx of refugees, as well as many countries in Europe and beyond.

“In spite of the existential threat posed to indigenous Christians by the militant groups, new life was breathed into many churches in Syria as they responded to the crises in their own country,” said Amgad Beblawi, PC(USA)'s World Mission coordinator for the Middle East. “Although hundreds of church properties have been destroyed throughout Syria and hundreds of thousands of Christians have been expelled by the militant groups, the churches in Syria provide relief and hospitality to their neighbors.”



In 2013, our church hosted Dr. Mary Mikhael from the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon (NESSL), part of the Presbyterian Church USA office, and responded to her and NESSL's appeal. Individuals in our congregation donated

and Mission made a special contribution to this synod partner. First Pres continued supporting relief work and now prayerfully supports witness of the churches in Syria.

On May 19, at 7 p.m. we will welcome our mission co-worker and PC(USA) liaison Rev. Elmarie Parker, based in Lebanon, who will update us on how our church is working to provide refuge and relief to Syrians displaced within their country and in Lebanon.

Despite no electricity, lack of food and clean drinking water, and little access to healthcare, Rev. Parker sees small signs of hope. “Though tangible answers may be elusive, hope lives through the actions of Arab Presbyterians of NESSL who have chosen to stay and serve in Syria. Through reliant faith in Christ, these faithful stay—trusting our Lord for their future and actively serving their communities with the tangible love of God in the present,” she said. “Fifteen of the original 18 Presbyterian congregations of NESSL continue to gather for worship and ministry in very, very difficult contexts.”



Our church has a small prayer and study group, The Syria-Middle East Workshop, which has collected prayers for these pastors and their congregations in

time for the PC(USA) Consultation with NESSL in April. To learn more about the workshop, please contact Nina Strnad at strnad@comcast.net.

Next month: How we help from Lake Forest

(Source: “Syrian War Stretches into Its Sixth Year of Violence,” Presbyterian News Service article, March 16, 2016.)

FAMILY FUN NIGHT

Wednesday, April 13

5 - 7PM

Fellowship Hall

Spend an evening with friends—sharing a meal, playing games and ending with a faith takeaway.

RSVP: firstchurchlf.org/family-fun-night

Questions: Sarah Seccombe at sseccombe@firstchurchlf.org

(Suggested donation of \$10/family to help cover dinner costs.)



Save the Date!

Vacation Bible School

June 7 -10 • 9:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.

For the past few years we have partnered with Church of the Holy Spirit and hosted Vacation Bible School for both our members and friends. This year, Church of the Holy Spirit will be hosting, and we are so excited to be welcomed into their space for this wonderful event.

Register online at www.chslf.org/vbs or you can download a registration form at firstchurchlf.org/vbsform and bring it to either church's office.

Last Chance for PADS this Season

We are so grateful to everyone who served at PADS, Soup Kitchen, Neal Math and Science Academy, and at any of our other service opportunities throughout the year. While some will continue on into the summer, PADS and Neal School baking are winding down for this program year.



The last opportunity to serve at PADS (Providing Advocacy, Dignity and Shelter) is on Tuesday, April 12. Volunteers are needed to donate food, serve dinner and make bag lunches on Tuesday, as well as for two people to provide an overnight presence at the Waukegan shelter that serves approximately 50 men. PADS also needs an early morning crew on Wednesday, April 13 to make and serve breakfast.

And at Neal Math and Science Academy, there is only one teacher and staff lunch left. The Neal School bakers ministry provides baked goods for the lunches and is in need of bakers. Visit firstchurchlf.org/nealbaker to find info about the types of goodies needed and to sign up. Bring the baked items to the church by 9:30 a.m. on Tuesday, April 19.



Soup Kitchen serves nearly 200 people monthly at the Holy Family Church soup kitchen in Waukegan. The next service date is April 15 and any food or time you can donate to this ministry will be greatly appreciated. For further details and to sign up, go to firstchurchlf.org/soupkitchen.

Chicagoland Presbyterian Pilgrimage, May 19 – 22

Imagine a weekend away, surrounded by God's grace and love. Join with Presbyterians and other Christians in a three-day journey of spiritual renewal, May 19 -22 at the DeKoven Retreat Center in Racine, WI. For the past 15 years, many Presbyterians in the Chicagoland area have attended Presbyterian Pilgrimage weekends. For many, it has been a life-altering experience of spiritual growth and renewal in their individual faith journey, as well as in their local church and community.

The Pilgrimage is based on Cursillo, a "short course" in living the Christian faith, developed in the Roman Catholic Church in Spain in the mid-20th century. During the weekend, participants worship and study together. The laity-led time is centered on talks and after each one, participants and staff meet in small groups to discuss the ideas presented. No advance study or preparation is required to participate!

This year, Rev. Dr. Dave Bianchin, our associate pastor for Adult Faith Formation, will be one of the Pilgrimage leaders.

The cost for the weekend is \$265 and includes lodging, nine meals and the use of the facility. (Scholarships are available.) For more information, visit www.chpilgrimage.org. To download the registration form, go to www.chpilgrimage.org/downloads. Questions? Contact Pastor Dave at dbianchin@firstchurchlf.org.

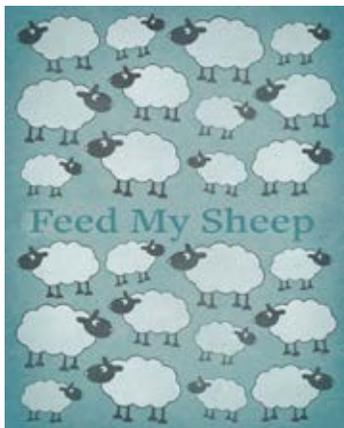


Join Us for Triennium this Summer

Every three years, more than 5,000 Presbyterian high schoolers gather in Indiana for a week of fun, worship, meeting new people and more! Those who have gone often describe it as one of the best experiences of their high school years.

We'll be taking a group again this year, July 19-23, and encourage you to put the dates on your calendar now! For details and to indicate your interest, visit firstchurchlf.org/seniorhigh/triennium.

New Study Guide Out Now



The latest study guide covering the sermons on April 10, 17 and 24 is now available online at firstchurchlf.org/study-guides or you can pick one up at the church. Use them on your own or in community with one of our many study groups:

- Tuesdays at 9:15 a.m. in the Parish House (women only), led by Rev. Amy Pagliarella, apagliarella@firstchurchlf.org,
- Tuesdays at 1:30 p.m. in the Parish House, led by Rev. Dr. Dave Bianchin, dbianchin@firstchurchlf.org,
- Wednesdays at 9:45 a.m. in the Parlor (Women's Wednesday Worship), led by Rev. Dr. Christine Chakoian, cchakoian@firstchurchlf.org,
- Wednesdays at 11:15 a.m. in the Parish House (April 13, 2nd and 4th Wednesdays), led by Rita Fossell, ritafossell@sbcglobal.net,
- Thursdays at 5:30 p.m. in the Parish House, led by David Barkhausen, dnbarkhausen@gmail.com, and Doug Valassis, dtv852@msn.com.
- Fridays at 7 a.m. in the Parlor (men only), led by Peter Keller, pjkeller@concentric.net, and
- Sunday at 7:45 a.m. in the Parish House (men only), contact David Cain, dcain@milburncain.biz.

Please note that some groups may use other study materials. Contact the group leaders for specific details about their group. Also keep a look-out for features on each group in future Faith Connection issues.

If you are in need, First Pres offers various resources that may be of help to you.

Cancerwith Grace

If you or a loved one has ever been touched by cancer, come lay your burdens down with others on that path. The group meets on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month at 1:30 p.m., offering spiritual and emotional support in a confidential setting. Email Beverly Raudabaugh at beverlyraudabaugh@gmail.com for information.

Stephen Ministers offer a one-to-one, confidential Christian caregiving ministry for adults experiencing grief, loss or crisis of any kind in their life. To reach a Stephen Minister, contact Pastor Christine Chakoian at cchakoian@firstchurchlf.org.

Do you think you have a problem with alcohol? Two AA meetings are available weekly on Wednesday evenings at 7 p.m. and Friday evenings at 5:30 p.m., both in the Parish House. Come to either meeting at any time.



Mission partner A Safe Place offers a **Women's Support Group** for those who feel isolated, bullied, disregarded

and not in control. The group meets Thursdays from 6:30 to 8 p.m. in the Chapel. Listen to, share with and support other women each week in a safe environment. For questions or concerns, please contact Joi McGowan at jmcgowan@asafeplaceforhelp.org or at 847-731-7165 ext 212. *If you are in immediate need of help, please call A Safe Place's 24-hour Help Line at (847) 249-4450.*



DINNER & FELLOWSHIP
FOLLOWED BY
5 PM
WORSHIP
first@five

FOLLOWED BY FELLOWSHIP
9 AM AND 11 AM
SUNDAY WORSHIP
JOIN US FOR

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www.firstchurchlf.org

First Presbyterian Church
OF LAKE FOREST

