



## Letter from Our Prayer Partner in Syria

*The following email was sent by our Syrian prayer partner, The Reverend Yacoub Sabbagh. We have been praying weekly for Rev. Sabbagh and the congregation he leads in Fairouzeh. We also shared the prayers that members of our congregation have posted on the bulletin board by the hospitality area. As you will see in Rev. Yacoub's note we sent a couple of pictures of our congregation, per his request. Please continue to keep Rev. Yacoub, his wife Grace, and the Fairouzeh congregation in your prayers.*

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,

I pray wholeheartedly that may our God bless you and keep you. We are in the Advent Season, the season of hope, peace, joy and love. I would like to forward my greetings as well as my constant prayers to your families and congregation at Lake Forest. I will forward your greetings and dedicated prayers to my congregation tomorrow morning, during the Sunday service.

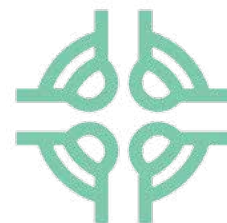
We are truly blessed that it has been a quiet summer for Fairouzeh and the family meetings as well as the kids are preparing for the Christmas week. We are going to have many activities. I will send you pictures of these events as soon as we have them. I have been reading a lot in the book of Acts in the last few days and I can feel how inspirational is the Word of God; whenever one is in distress, the community was praying for God's mercy and peace.

This is what you are doing for us and more. We experience that we are not alone. I hear many good news from our Presbyterian churches in Aleppo and also in Hassakeh (where I was born and grew up) and I have been following their news daily, simply because those are critical areas where we have churches there. People here live with fear and anticipation all the time...they watch nothing but the news looking forward for good break. A lot of ideas, concepts and ideals are rethought of during this crisis. Badly, and maybe this is the experience of all humankind, that we do not learn unless we pass in a crisis...then we have a time of pondering, meditation, and self-evaluation. We put our country as well as yours in God's hand.

I just have one wish. I hope that you send me a couple of pictures of your congregation during the prayer hour so that I can show them to my congregation here.

Love and Peace

Rev. Yacoub Sabbagh





Dear friends,

I have a good colleague who begins the New Year by asking himself some hard questions about life and faith. He wants to set goals and look to the future based not on whim but on a realistic look at who he is and who God has called him to be. Some questions include:

- How well have I loved the Lord with all my heart, soul, mind and strength this year?
- How well have I loved the neighbors around me?
- What have I done this year to further the cause of Christ?
- Have I grown in my love for my family?
- What has brought me joy this year? What was sad?
- What new things have I learned this year?

These are good questions because the backward look provides the soil for future growth. I am not really big on “resolutions” for the New Year, but I am a proponent of planning for growth and mission, in Christ. However you approach this matter of looking forward into the New Year, I hope that your goal list, or mission statement, for the coming year has within it some aspect of mission for Christ. And I hope 2017 will be, for us all, a year of great growth and joy in Jesus Christ, individually, and together.

Alleluia!

*Dave Bianchin*

Dave Bianchin

## Annual Meeting January 29

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation will be held on Sunday, January 29 immediately following the 9:00 service in the sanctuary. The congregation will be discussing election of officers, presentation of 2017 Budget, approval of Pastor terms of call and hear a report from the Society of the First Presbyterian Church.



## Renewal of Baptismal Vows

As we enter 2017, the service of the renewal of our baptismal vows offers us the opportunity to evaluate our spiritual well-being, and to set goals for our growth in faith. On January 8 (Baptism of the Lord Sunday), worship will focus on the meaning of our baptismal promises, and ways in which we can more purposefully seek to fulfill them. We will be asked to reaffirm our vows, and everyone will have the opportunity to come forward for a blessing, if they wish. We will also distribute water-drop shaped glass pebbles to carry throughout the year as a reminder of the waters of baptism, through which we have been claimed by God forever. The Renewal of Baptismal Vows begins our personal spiritual assessment and recommitment.

## WE WORSHIP

### SUNDAY, JAN. 1

10 a.m. One Service Only  
*Matthew 2:1-12*  
The visit of the wise men.

### SUNDAY, JAN. 8

Renewal of Baptismal Vows  
9 & 11 a.m. and  
5 p.m. *first@five*  
*Matthew 3:13-17*  
Jesus approaches John,  
asking to be baptized

### SUNDAY, JAN. 15

9 & 11 a.m. and  
5 p.m. *first@five*  
*John 1:35-42*  
The call of the first disciples

### SUNDAY, JAN. 22

9 & 11 a.m. and  
5 p.m. *first@five*  
*1 Corinthians 1:10-17*  
Our baptism in Christ  
leads us to unity

### SUNDAY, JAN. 29

Annual Meeting  
9 & 11 a.m. and  
5 p.m. *first@five*  
*1 Corinthians 1:18-31*  
Jesus Christ is the wisdom  
and power of God



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**First Presbyterian Church**

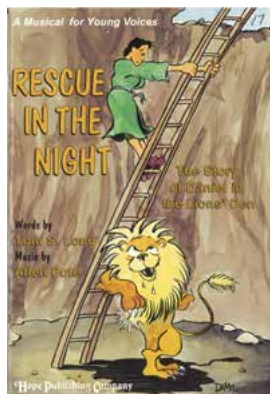
of Lake Forest  
700 North Sheridan Road  
Lake Forest, Illinois 60045

*Submission due date is the  
15<sup>th</sup> of every month.*

CHURCH OFFICE (847) 234-6250  
HOURS: Monday-Friday 9AM-5PM

# Honor Our Scouts, Feb. 5

Scout Sunday will be observed on February 5, 2017 at the 9 a.m. service as we celebrate the 90th anniversary of our church's 1926 charter with Boy Scout Troop 46. This is a day for all scouts, both past and present to wear their uniforms and be recognized for their involvement in Scouting by the congregation. Scouts will be participating in the service starting and ending with a Color Guard procession. Any Cub Scouts or Girl Scouts who would like to participate that morning, please contact Liz Gescheidle at [lizlf@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lizlf@sbcglobal.net).



## Calling All Singers & Actors!

Join the Children's Choirs and be a part of our annual play. This year, children age 4 through 8th grade will present "Rescue in the Night: The Story of Daniel in the Lion's Den" during worship on Feb. 26, 2017.

Rehearsal for children age 4 through 5th grade will be on Tuesdays starting Jan. 3:

Cherub Choir (age 4 - kindergarten) meets from 3:45 - 4:15 p.m.

Carol Choir (grades 1 - 5) meets from 4:15 - 5:00 p.m.

Rehearsal is on Sundays for Middle School Choir (grades 5-8) and meets from 10:20-10:50 a.m. in Room 011. We will begin on January 8.

We will have a mandatory practice on Saturday, February 25 from 9:00 - 11:30 a.m.

Help us sing about Daniel and King Darius and all those lions. The children will bring this story to life in a new way for the church family. For more information, contact Susan Noble, Director of Children's Choirs at [snoble@firstchurchlf.org](mailto:snoble@firstchurchlf.org).



## Christian Perspectives: January 22

Our Adult Faith Formation Ministry welcomes back the Rev. Younan Shiba, who will be with us between services January 22, 2017, as part of our Christian Perspectives program. Pastor Shiba has a wonderful ministry with refugees in the Middle East, and has traveled much since he last spoke to us. He will share news of his recent trip to Gaziantep, the refugees he met there and the new church he advised. We will hear about his trip to Europe during the wave of refugee migration a year ago as well.

## Exploring Grief Group

### SAMARITAN COUNSELING CENTER

We are pleased to share we have two more 6-week sessions of the Exploring Grief Group. The **winter session** will begin on **January 11th**. This series provides a confidential, supportive and educational environment to cope with grief. Three area congregations have come together to underwrite this service for our community, enabling us to offer it at no charge.

Meetings are led by **Erin Sharp, MDiv, MS** who has extensive experience with grief and loss through her work with clients and as a Pastor. Erin will design a unique presentation for each meeting tailored to the needs of the group.

For more information or to register for the upcoming winter session, please contact **Erin at 847-446-6955 ext. 22** or [esharp@northshoresamaritan.org](mailto:esharp@northshoresamaritan.org). Please register to ensure these groups can provide enough support for those who are grieving. Space is limited.



Meets Every Other  
Wednesday  
4:30 PM

Winter Session: Church of the Holy Spirit  
January 11 - March 22

Spring Session: St. James Lutheran Church  
April 12 - June 21

Sponsored by **First Presbyterian Church of Lake Forest,**  
**Church of the Holy Spirit, St. James Lutheran Church**



## Bowl-a-Thon

The Senior High Youth will begin collecting pledges for the 2017 Bowl-a-Thon to raise needed funds for this year's work trip to Miller County, Missouri. On Feb. 12 the Youth are

headed to the Brunswick Zone in Vernon Hills to show off their skills, have some fun and raise money. Pledges are based on the average score (estimated at about 100) for all the bowlers participating. You can pledge a penny per pin or \$100 per pin. It's up to you. The better they bowl the more money they raise. Pledge cards will be in the Sunday bulletins the weeks leading up to the event and available on the table outside the front office; please return pledges to Sarah Seccombe. Thank you for your support of this youth mission opportunity!

# Upcoming Service Opportunities



PADS (Providing Advocacy, Dignity, and Shelter) needs volunteers to donate food, serve dinner and breakfast, and prepare bag lunches on Tuesday, Jan. 10 and Wednesday morning, Jan. 11 as well as Tuesday, Jan. 31 and Wednesday, Feb. 1 at the overnight shelter in Waukegan that serves approximately 50 homeless men. Learn more and sign up at [firstchurchlf.org/serve-at-pads](http://firstchurchlf.org/serve-at-pads) or contact deacon Martha Zeeman.



On the third Friday of the month, our Soup Kitchen mission serves up to 200 people at the Holy Family Church in Waukegan. Any food or time you can donate to this ministry would be greatly appreciated. No food goes to waste as any leftovers are delivered to other locations in need. The next service date is Jan. 15. Get more information and sign up at [firstchurchlf.org/soupkitchen](http://firstchurchlf.org/soupkitchen) or contact deacon Shawn Ward.

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## Meal-a-Month

Meal-a-Month for January will focus on the Food Pantry at our neighbor Church of the Holy Spirit (CHS) for individuals in need of emergency food who are referred by clergy, Catholic Charities, or Shields Township. The list of items needed is very specific by size and expiration date. Bags will be distributed on January 8 after worship services. We ask that the items are returned by Monday, January 23. Thank you for sharing so generously.

The church will be closed  
Jan. 2 in observation of the New Year  
and Jan. 16 in observation of  
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

JAN. 1 WORSHIP AT 10AM  
ALL FOLLOWED BY FELLOWSHIP  
AND 5PM WORSHIP  
9AM & 11AM,  
SUNDAY WORSHIP

JOIN US FOR

700 N. Sheridan Road, Lake Forest, IL 60045  
[www.firstchurchlf.org](http://www.firstchurchlf.org)

First Presbyterian Church  
OF LAKE FOREST

