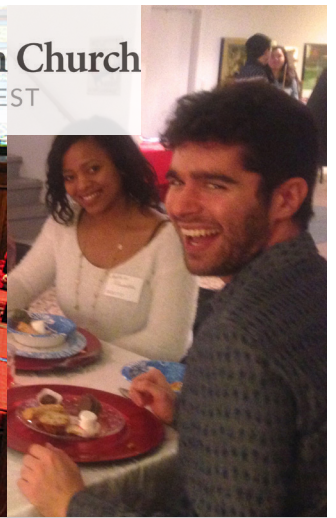




# First Presbyterian Church OF LAKE FOREST



# 2014 Annual Report





**Annual Meeting of the Congregation  
and  
The Society of the First Presbyterian Church of Lake Forest**

**FEBRUARY 1, 2015 • 10AM**  
(Rescheduled Feb. 15, 2015)

Rev. Dr. Christine Chakoian, Moderator of  
the Congregation and  
Annual Meeting

Elder Jim Kellock, President of the Society

## Annual Meeting Agenda

Call to Order	Christine Chakoian
Opening Prayer	
State of the Congregation Report	
Long Range Plan	Nancy Thomson
Finance Report	Roger Burgis
Personnel Report & Terms of Call	Leah Fietsam
Election of Church Officers	Ted Notz
Other Business	Christine Chakoian
Business Society of FPCLF	Stewart Kerr
Adjournment	Christine Chakoian



# Long Range Plan

## The Mission of Our Church

Our mission is to send well-equipped disciples of Jesus into the world—compassionate, generous, resilient and wise.

God equips us through the ancient Christian practices; so we commit to Worship, Learn, Connect, Serve and Invite.

This is a commitment we share with the earliest believers:

*“Awe came upon everyone [WORSHIP] as they devoted themselves to learning [LEARN], sharing fellowship, meals and prayer [CONNECT], and selling their possessions, extending selfless generosity toward everyone in need [SERVE]. Day by day, they met together in the temple and in their homes, breaking bread with deep joy and humble hearts, praising God and demonstrating God’s goodness to everyone. And day by day, the Lord brought more who were being saved [INVITE].”*

– Acts 2:42-47

# Our Vitality

*“The gifts Christ gave ... all serve to equip the saints for the work of ministry.”*

—Eph. 4:11-12

In January 2014, our church embarked on a rigorous—and risky—endeavor: we undertook the Spiritual Life Survey. The response was overwhelming. Nearly 300 members participated, representing 79% of our average Sunday attendance. Most large congregations expect only 20-30% average attendance rate response.

The Spiritual Life Survey, coordinated by Engage International, compiles data from more than 1,500 congregations (representing some half million congregants). It strives to illuminate the ways that different elements of spiritual life allow us to grow as disciples, and foster a deep, vibrant relationship with each other and with the Lord.

After tallying the responses, several insights emerged:

## Our General Health

Of the four general stages of spiritual development postulated by the Survey—Exploring Christ; Growing in Christ; Close to Christ; Christ-Centered—the majority of respondents (58%) fall into the “Growing” category.

Research has identified particular activities (including weekly worship, small group Bible study and serving) as critical catalysts for those in the “Growing” segment. The main reason people “stall” in growth is a lack of discipline in spiritual practices.

The most influential practice—the only one that propels people in every movement across the faith journey—is reflection on Scripture.

## Our Greatest Strength

We are brilliant at mission. Compared to the 1,500 congregations who have taken the survey, we are off the charts in serving.

This should not surprise anyone. We are passionate about mission, and it shows.

Every year we give more than \$600,000 to partner organizations in the fields of education, relief and development, and/or evangelism. We pour many hours into volunteering at Soup Kitchen, PADS, Neal School, the Boys & Girls Club and more. Rummage alone raises \$130,000 annually and donates unsold goods to outside agencies.

We also support non-profits by serving on boards and incubating new projects. We currently provide space on campus for AA, the Samaritan Counseling Center and Boy Scouts. In 2014, we opened office space for the Alliance for Human Services and Reading Power.

The most indicative moment in the survey was the positive response to "I feel God calls me to serve those in need." *This is who we are.*

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### 2014 Mission Highlights

More than \$670,000 in mission **funds** were distributed in 2014 to nearly 50 partners to address the issues of poverty, education, homelessness, hunger, faith development, domestic abuse, sexual abuse, joblessness, healthcare and more.

The **64th annual Rummage Sale** held May 2, 2014 was the largest sale in church history. More than 400 volunteers lent a helping hand to ensure the sale was a success. The 2014 Rummage Sale brought in \$143,610—21 percent higher than in 2013.

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## Mission Highlights continued



Pastor Nick Redmond, 45 senior high students and 15 advisors travelled to Rocky Mount, Mo., this past June for **Work Trip**. There they helped rebuild homes and worked with campers at Wonderland Camp—a camp dedicated to providing a fun, educational camp experience for people with physical and mental disabilities. As one work tripper explains: “We attend work trip to not just volunteer, but to also open up to different views of the world.”

The 2014 **Harvest of Hope** weekend brought together more than 60 people of all ages to Fellowship Hall to build 18 bikes from scratch (*pictured below*) that will be given to children in the Boys & Girls Club of Lake County this Spring. “It’s a chance to transform other lives,” Mission co-chair Tracy Tolmie said. “It’s an opportunity to give back.”





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## **Greatest Weakness**

We are weak—very weak—in Biblical knowledge and maintaining regular spiritual practices. If we believe that God calls us to service in our daily lives, we should be worried that we are not fulfilling our mission to send “well-equipped disciples of Jesus into the world.”

Our Biblical knowledge score was 10% compared to 25% among all other churches. If this were a physical exam, our Great Physician would be concerned about our well-being.

One might ask what difference this makes as long as we are “acing” the mission part of the exam.

### **Mission is unsustainable without spiritual strength behind it.**

If we do not shore up learning and spiritual practices, we will begin to crumble at doing mission. Data behind the Spiritual Life Survey bears this out.

The two most crucial factors in fostering vitality in service to God and neighbor are:

- 1) knowledge of Scripture; and**
- 2) regular exercise of spiritual practices.**

Here’s the good news: a majority of Survey respondents indicated a hunger for both increasing Scriptural knowledge and clarity of spiritual practices.

# Planning for Growth

The position of our congregation in our faith journey—our passion for mission, our manifest desire for engagement with the Bible, and the underdeveloped state of regular spiritual practices—combine to indicate a clear direction ahead. If we wish to thrive as disciples of Jesus Christ, this is our crucial work of the next 3-5 years:

**Priority 1:** To be engaged in and transformed by Scripture.

**Priority 2:** To learn of and engage in other spiritual disciplines.

**Priority 3:** To connect what we do in Mission with our spiritual practices, to the end that both are strengthened.

## Increasing Biblical Knowledge

Growing out of the results of the Spiritual Life Survey, the Adult Faith Formation Committee challenged everyone at the start of the program year to join a **small group**. Along with small groups that had been meeting, The Race of a Lifetime small group and Covenant Bible Study were added this past Fall.



For 2015, we are challenging everyone to join one of the new small groups for Lent.



To learn more about small groups, contact Pastor Dave at [dbianchin@firstchurchlf.org](mailto:dbianchin@firstchurchlf.org).

# Action Plan

*The plan that follows is intended to be a living document. The main priorities will provide the signposts, but tactical initiatives will change over time.*

## I. RAISING AWARENESS AND COMMITMENT

Begin raising your awareness.

Please take a look at the **2014 Spiritual Life Survey Results ... Revealed** booklet available at the church office.

*Engage the congregation to invest in being well-equipped disciples of Jesus: compassionate, generous, resilient and wise.*

Resilient faith requires commitment. Like physical well-being, we cannot grow strong in faith if we are passive. The first need is to increase our investment in our personal growth, and equip the whole congregation.

## II. WORSHIP

*Engage members in regularly and whole-heartedly attending worship as a key component of spiritual growth.*

Worship engages Scripture with daily life—bringing our study of the Bible into the real world. Without worship, we forget who we are and why we're here, and we are prone to chase after idols. Increasing growth in worship—both in frequency of attendance, and whole-hearted participation—is the first step toward deeper faith. Moreover, even when our own faith feels solid, others' may not be. Sometimes we need to show up not just for our own sake, but to encourage others.

### 2014 Sermon Series

Laying Down Our Burdens  
Fruits of Our Generosity  
Race of a Lifetime  
Simple Gifts

To get copies of sermons, devotions and study guides from the 2014 series, contact Donna Birney at [dbirney@firstchurchlf.org](mailto:dbirney@firstchurchlf.org) or download them from [www.firstchurchlf.org](http://www.firstchurchlf.org).

### III. LEARN

*Ignite a desire for and commitment to life-long faith formation across all ages.*

***The Spiritual Life Survey results indicate that learning is the single most crucial investment we can make.*** If our church is going to move forward, it is urgent to put our resources and energy into this area. The Faith Formation committees will start to flesh this out.

#### Learning and Growing in Our Faith



Between **Sunday School, Vacation Bible School and Confirmation Class**, our young members also had the benefit of learning about and growing in their faith.

Our Faith Formation committees continue to find new ways to engage our youth.

The middle schoolers learned a new way to reflect with prayer stations during Sunday chapel; our preschoolers to 4th-graders were introduced to a new multimedia experience during advent; and our senior high students are now helping craft their ministry through elected youth leaders.

Our College Ministry Team also launched a **Speaker Series** in 2014, to foster discussions aimed at helping us understand how broader social, political and economic realities impact the spiritual life of students.



## IV. CONNECT

*Create intentional and systemic opportunities to connect individuals and families in their spiritual growth.*

Whenever there is a pastoral concern—worry of illness, the grief of death or the joy of a new baby—the need for Christian community becomes obvious. Our family of faith has grown closer, but there is still work to be done to help those in need.



### Building Fellowship

2014 gave us many opportunities to connect, from the multi-generational gatherings at All Saints & Spirits, the Fall Men's Retreat to the Women's Christmas Tea. We introduced **new fellowship opportunities** in the form of Pumpkin Fest where children of all ages and kids at heart decorated pumpkins, strolled through the pumpkin patch to pick their favorite gourd and shared in a delightful pumpkin-themed meal.

## V. SERVE

*Connect mission with Biblical/spiritual growth.*

Serving through mission is a core component of the Christian life. We share a passion for mission. The next step is two-fold:

- 1) connect our mission with Biblical and spiritual growth; and**
- 2) connect our financial charity with deeper relationship with those we serve.**

We will grow more faithful and effective through hands-on service, and deeper awareness of root causes of the problems we seek to address.

## VI. INVITE

*Encourage congregation to invite others into this family of faith, not for the sake of “growing our numbers,” but to share the transforming love of God in Jesus Christ.*

If we value becoming inspired, well-equipped followers of Jesus; if we feel engaged in worship; if we are being transformed through spiritual practices; if we find a depth of connection in our times of joy and sorrow; and if we are growing in our calling to serve others in the world God loves, then we will joyfully invite others to share in this community of faith.

### First Pres Welcomed Many New Members in 2014

Mike Adams

Moses and Theresa Awe

Ben and Joan Bailar

Matt and Monica Brown (children Liam, Evan and Koen)

Meg Corliss (daughter Catharine)

Jeff and Julie Folker (children Lindsay, Jason and Jeremy)

Kimberlee Frost (children Quintin and Eliza)

Christine Giertych

John, Sean, Stefany Guigli

Dave and Joi Hunt (children Allegra and Jack)

Blair and Katie Hutton (children Graham, Griffin and Lily)

Lynn Jensen (daughters Jessica and Taylor)

Linda Liang

Trish and Bob Lindquist

Lyn Mathews

Ann Nash

Randy and Jen Richards

Rebecca Tanaka

Mary Thacker

## 2014 Confirmands

Cami Bloom

Emma Burlew

Clara Butler

Kelan Duff

Will Gescheidle

Christina Gregg

Mary Gregg

Bridger Gunderson

Annie Hennessy

Kailey Hetler

Tucker Hinch

Emma Hoshino

Sam King

Kyle Levin

Jono Luce

Caroline Martino

Parker Messner

Kat Munns

Kylie Murray

Kari Myers

John Norkus

Natalie Notz

Ella Rolander

Hadley Seymour

Griffin Strang

Megan Szostak

Blake Ulmer

Wren Volkert





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