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Fall Rummage Sale
Saturday, September 30
8:00 AM – 3:00 PM
Clothing, Shoes, Accessories, Home Decor, Holiday, Toys, Furniture and many more!

We have two new departments this fall! Denim on Deerpath and the New Department

Interested in volunteering for set-up or the day of sale? See the schedule and sign up at firstchurchlf.org/rummagevolunteer

Volunteers who work 4+ hours can shop at the workers pre-sale on Friday, September 29

SEPTEMBER 10, 10:00 AM
Festival Sunday
FALL KICK-OFF

CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER AND OUR MINISTRIES
WORSHIP AT 10:00 AM FOLLOWED BY A PANCAKE BREAKFAST FOR FELLOWSHIP

SHUTTLE AND VALET SERVICES AVAILABLE
WE WILL RETURN TO TWO WORSHIP SERVICES, 9:00 AND 11:00 AM, ON SUNDAY, SEPT. 17.
Dear Friends,

We kick off our program year at First Pres on September 10th with the first of four “Festival Sundays”. The idea for Festival Sundays was born out of our congregation’s deep appreciation for gathering as one body in one worship service, and the practical challenges (namely space) of doing that every Sunday. The willingness to periodically give up some conveniences of two services for the overwhelming benefits of nourishing our faith and relationships in one, prompted the imagining of four Sundays beyond summer in which we would celebrate our unity in Christ with one service followed by an all-congregation event.

Gathering in this way for worship and celebration takes us back to the roots of our faith. The people of God have gathered in festivals since ancient times, marking their common identity and pointing to the one true God. Indeed, the Book of Exodus commands these gatherings. “Three times in the year you shall hold a festival for me” (Ex. 23:14). During these ancient festivals, now celebrated as the Jewish holy days of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles; all the males made pilgrimage to the Temple in Jerusalem where they were to “appear before the Lord God” (23:17). Not only did these festivals involve pilgrimage, they also included offerings to God and Sabbath time of rest from work.

These ancient festival practices of pilgrimage, Sabbath, shared identity, and offering prefigure our own Festival Sundays. As we gather on the 10th we won’t be riding camels and walking in sandals filled with sand, and we won’t be taking weeks and months to travel in severe elements (making “travel” for some of us from remote parking seem pretty cushy!). But we will be gathering around our shared identity in Christ and taking rest from the work of our week to offer whole selves to the worship and service of God. What a faithful way to begin and mark our year of CONNECT as we connect to each other, God, self, and neighbor.

Our Christian faith is counter-cultural in many ways. Now, in a world so fractured by difference, our gathering each week provides a vital reminder of our unity in Christ. May the practices of our faith renew our hearts and minds to love God and neighbor, and transform us further into the people God created us to be.

See you at the Festival!

In Christ,

Nancy
Exploring Grief Group September 20 – November 29
every other Wednesday 4:00 – 5:30 PM

We are pleased to announce this fall’s new 6-week sessions of The Exploring Grief Group that will be held in First Pres. 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 Denise Kitanovski, JD, MA, LCPC who has extensive experience with grief and loss. Denise will design a unique presentation for each meeting tailored to the needs of the group.

For more information or to register for the upcoming fall session, please contact Denise at 847-446-6955 ext. 22 or dkitanovski@northshoresamaritan.org. Please register to ensure these groups can provide enough support for those who are grieving. Space is limited.

Veterans Day Football November 11

The Military Caring Ministry is sponsoring a fellowship opportunity through a Special Veterans Day Celebration Football Game planned by Northwestern University on Veterans Day, Saturday, November 11. Come see Northwestern vs. Purdue, join a pregame tailgate party and take advantage of transportation being provided from the Church for the game. Tickets are only $25 each.

If interested, please send an email to veterans@firstchurchlf.org. We encourage all veterans, their families and those who support our military to join us at this special event.

Church Family Retreat October 27 – 29

Wesley Woods Conference Center on Lake Geneva in William’s Bay, WI

Registration coming soon.

Fall Theologian in Residence October 8, 15 and 22

Theme: “Answering the Call of God”

Our 2017 Theologian in Residence is Rev. Dr. Nicholas Pearce, assistant pastor of Chicago’s Apostolic Church of God and an award-winning professor at Northwestern University’s Kellogg School of Management. He will serve as our morning preacher on October 8 and 15 and will share with us during our Fellowship Hour on October 22 in Fellowship Hall. His preaching and lecturing will focus on hearing and courageously answering God’s call upon each of our lives — both individually and collectively.

To learn more about Dr. Pearce, connect with him on social media @napphd or visit www.nicholaspearce.org.
Calling all families with children age 4 thru 8th grade! Its time to put Choir and Chime Choir on your calendars. We can’t wait to see you! We begin on Tuesday, September 12th—

**Cherub Choir**
Children age 4 by Sept. 1st thru Kindergarten
**Tuesdays 3:45 – 4:15** in the Choir Room

**Carol Choir**
1st – 5th grades
**Tuesdays 4:15 – 5:00** in the Choir Room

**Chime Choir**
Children 3rd – 8th grades
**Tuesdays 5:00 – 5:30** in the Choir Room

**Middle School Choir**
Sundays 10:20 – 10:50 in Room 011, starting Sept. 17th

For any questions, email Susan Noble, Director of Children’s Choirs at snoble@firstchurchlf.org, or Barry Wenger, Director of Handbell Choirs at bwenger@firstchurchlf.org.

The choirs will lead worship on Sundays once a month and sing on Christmas Eve at the 5:00 PM service. Plus, we can’t wait to put on a play in February. See you there!

**Hospitality Ministry**
We need you! Hospitality Ministry is looking for new volunteers to help cover the church phone/reception desk weekdays Monday through Friday from 9:00 AM until 5:00 PM. Shifts are either two-hours or four-hours long starting at 9:00 AM, and ending at 5:00 PM when the church office closes for the day. We are also looking for Hospitality Ministry volunteers to cover the phone/reception desk on Sundays for two hours per service after September 10th. Volunteering is a great way to interact and get to know church members, as well as meet and work with the staff during the week! Contact Alisa at 847.234.6250 or asteady@firstchurchlf.org if you would like to volunteer.

**Consider a Stock Gift to First Church**
Many people give stock to the church since the IRS allows full gift value for the charitable donation with no tax due on the capital gains. The Church EIN # is 36-2167927. Please contact Yehuda Jacobi in the Business Office for further information.

**Connect with Fellow Child Caregivers**
Calling all caregivers - parents, grandparents, nannies, anyone who is here with children during the Children’s Choir & Chime rehearsals. Join us in the South Parlor to explore the opportunity to connect with each other around child development, faith, and your own spiritual needs. We are interested in discovering what you are looking for in this journey of nurturing children. Our first gathering will be during rehearsals Tuesday, September 12.

Questions? Contact Sarah Seccombe at ssecombe@firstchurchlf.org or Pastor Kristie at lfinley@firstchurchlf.org.

Child care for young ones will be provided. Space for older children to do homework will be available.
Featured Mission Partner:

**Reading Power**

Every month we are featuring a partner agency that our Mission program supports. We are sharing the fruits of our efforts and resources as well as providing the congregation various opportunities to get more involved! Our featured Mission Partner this month is Reading Power.

First Pres has been involved with Reading Power since its inception. The organization was founded in 2003 by two members of our church, Dr. Mary Jane Hender and Reverend Dr. Gordon Butcher. Reading Power trains volunteers to provide one-to-one individualized literacy tutoring for prekindergarten through second grade students in North Chicago and first and second grades in Zion. Both of these are underserved districts which have welcomed the intervention and benefited greatly from Reading Power’s presence. Several members of our congregation are on its Board of Directors, and many more are among the 200 volunteer tutors Reading Power deploys.

Reading Power has tutored 2,517 students to date using their professionally-developed, research-based curricula. Our trained volunteers work under the guidance of educational professionals. Students in the program show significant fluency gains compared to their non-tutored peers. These students’ self-confidence soars as their abilities to become risk-taking learners take hold. They also benefit greatly from developing relationships with the caring adults who tutor them.

**Reading Power is looking for new tutors!**

Please consider becoming a volunteer tutor. New Tutor Training for 1st and 2nd graders will be held on September 12 & 13 from 9:30 AM – 12:30 PM, location: First Pres. Refresher Training for 1st and 2nd grade tutors will be held on September 18, 19, 20, 21 (returning tutors need attend only one day) from 9:30 AM - 12:30 PM, location: First Pres. Prekindergarten Training will be held on September 14 from 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM at Green Bay Early Childhood Center in North Chicago, or on September 19 from 1:00 pm – 3:00 PM at First Pres. If you would like to become a tutor but cannot attend a training session, Reading Power will provide materials, online resources, possible make-up sessions, and on-site training. All of this information is available on their website [www.readingpowerinc.org](http://www.readingpowerinc.org). In-school tutoring the new students begins the week of September 25.

**If you have questions...**

Please visit their website or email or call Rebecca Mullen, MSEd (readingpowerinc@gmail.com, 815.867.7476). You can also reach out to these Reading Power current board members at First Pres: Kathy McFarland, Beverly Raudabaugh, Mindy Mooney, Mary Jane Hender, Todd Litzsinger, and Frank Sibley. It will transform your life as well as your students!
News From Our Partner Church in Fairouzeh, Syria

BIT OF BACKGROUND
Christians in Syria make up about 11% of the population. While the majority of these Christians belong to Orthodox and Catholic denominations, a smaller percentage are Presbyterians. There are 19 Presbyterian churches in Syria, but only 8 congregations currently have pastors. A minority religion in the Muslim world, Syrian Christians are, and have been, friends and neighbors with Muslims for 1400 years. In recent years, Christians, along with millions of other Syrians, have been displaced internally or fled to other countries as refugees.

Our prayer partner church in Fairouzeh is a Presbyterian church in the suburb of Homs in northern Syria. When war broke out, the Christians fled Homs and their Muslim neighbors maintained cellphone contact, reporting on the safety or damage to their Christian neighbors regarding their homes (to which Christians always hoped they could return). Christians and Muslims participate in each other’s weddings, and some Muslims attend church as “followers of the Prophet Jesus.”

The pastor of the Fairouzeh Church, Rev. Yacoub Sabbagh, is from the northeast of Syria, which has enormous cultural and dialect differences from Homs. He went to seminary in Beirut, Lebanon and served short term in a number of congregations on the way to his eventual appointment to head the church in Idlib. As Yacoub explains: “Idlib no longer exists, it’s not even on the map anymore.” (The city north of Aleppo was occupied by ISIS and became a total casualty of the war.) So Yacoub now heads the Fairouzeh church, the same congregation served by Salam Hanna (who visited our church last October), and by Salam Hanna’s father for forty years before that.

Fairouzeh is a Christian village. The historical population of 3000 doubled as the Syrian Orthodox arrived to be closer to big city jobs and the university. After the war started, about 5000 refugees moved to the safety of Fairouzeh. “About 3000 people recently moved back to Homs to repair and reclaim their homes. Now there are more immigrants than original residents in Fairouzeh,” says Yacoub, wondering if this is like California or Jacksonville, two places he’s heard described the same way. “We are an immigrant church,” he explains, 1/3 full with Presbyterian members each Sunday, and 2/3 are visitors from other denominations and displaced from their home towns.

JOYS
Yacoub and Grace are expecting their first child, a girl, around the end of August. They are discussing names having to do with Christmas. Names like Carol, like Celine. They are being careful to consider names that would be easy to say in more than one language. For example, Gloria is not easy to say in Arabic.

A new social/community center for the elderly just opened in Fairouzeh. It consists of a garden and a cafeteria to serve as a meeting place for seniors.

The church at Fairouzeh just received a printing of the Bible with all the same page numbers! Previously their Arabic translation Bibles were a motley assortment and they had to have the scripture readings projected on the wall because of the different page numbers in the pew Bibles. Yacoub said, “They are really cool! Two columns of text! With ribbon markers in two colors; we can use red thread for Old Testament and gold thread for New Testament!”

CONCERNS
Fairouzeh struggles to serve the internal diaspora from the war. “These people are so poor,” explains Yacoub when describing the refugees that are chosen to receive one of the 100 relief baskets they distribute each month. Sifting through the pages of family interviews to determine those most in need, “that’s the most important thing for our Session. Sometimes there are 10 baskets left but 50 more families in great need.” It takes $300 a month for a family of five to get by: rent, electricity, fuel, food, school, medical bills, and medicines. The relief baskets (of food, medicine, fuel vouchers) given by the Presbyterian churches really help. Yet costs are escalating.

PRAYER PARTNERSHIP
What Yacoub asked us to pray for had nothing to do with immediate relief or the cessation of hostilities, both of which we expected. Rather, he asked that we pray for religious freedom in the Middle East, particularly Syria.

Yacoub continues to pray with his congregation for patience and discernment as we go through our transition at First Pres.
Bucks-for-Vets

The Military Caring Ministry is pleased to announce that a new “Bucks-for-Vets” program has been approved and will be rolled-out this fall. This program is a simple way to provide beds for Veterans and their families who are exiting homelessness. When a Veteran exits homelessness, they often do not have all the move-in essentials needed to set up their new residence. One of the most needed of those essential items is a bed to sleep on. Once a month, members of the Military Caring Ministry will be accepting donations of at least $1 per month so that at the end of each month, there will be enough funds collected to cover the cost of at least one bed. These collections will typically take place at the back of the church during Sunday Services on the last Sunday of each month. The Bucks-for-Vets is the first of many new programs and initiatives that will be initiated at First Pres in the future to support Veterans and their families. We would encourage all Veterans, as well as those who support the military and members of their families who are interested, to participate in the Military Caring Ministry either as members of the Steering Committee or as individuals who we can call on to volunteer from time to time.

To become a part of the Military Caring Ministry, let us know of your interest by contacting veterans@firstchurchlf.org or Joe Gross at joegross@militaryoutreachusa.org or 847.710.9557.

Meal-a-Month

Meal-a-Month in September focuses on the Northern Illinois Food Depository, an organization where Deacon Paige Speed was an intern last spring. The food bank services 13 counties, except Cook which is a part of the Greater Chicago Food Depository. The food is repackaged and sent to food pantries around the area. They also have a mobile food pantry which goes out to help those in need about 400 times a year. Every $1 that is donated to them can be turned into $8 worth of food with companies supporting the food bank. Bags will be available with lists attached on Sundays, September 3 and 10. Thank you for your generous support of this ministry over the years which touches the lives of many of our neighbors.
Session Update

Highlights from Session Meeting on Monday, August 21

• As we began our August meeting of session, we were asked to respond to the question, “In what aspects of the life and ministry of this church have you experienced the presence of God?” Session members paired up and shared with each other, then chose one word to summarize responses and share with the rest. (What would be your response?)

• After Docket approval etc., we heard from Elder Brian Tischendorf (Libertyville), our representative from the Committee on Ministry for Chicago Presbytery. He shared the whole process of calling a new pastor. We are several steps along; please see Pastor Search below and FAQ’s on page 9 for details.

• For our Military Caring Ministry, Joe Gross described their purpose and requested and received approval to seek individual monthly contributions for “Bucks for Vets” which will help fund a complete bed for a veteran.

• Session committees continue to work on Bridgebuilder recommendations. See Bridgebuilder Update on page 10 for details on the process.

• The Interim Search Committee is hard at work seeking an appropriate third interim pastor.

• Finance reported that we are “in pretty good shape” though still slightly behind in giving.

• Plans for Fall Kick Off, September 10, are exciting – one Festival Service at 10:00 followed by a pancake breakfast in Fellowship Hall. Shuttles and valet parking will be provided.

Attend Session Meetings

Members of the congregation are welcome to attend and observe regular Session meetings. The next Session meeting is on Monday, September 18 at 7:00 PM. If you would like to come, please let Nancy Dolan (Moderator) or Rita Fossell (Clerk) know by Thursday, September 14. If you wish to speak on a matter, please inform them to allow time at the end of the agenda. You can email Nancy Dolan at ndolan@firstchurchlf.org and Rita Fossell at ritafossell@sbcglobal.net. You can also call the church office at 847.234.6250.

Pastor Search

With great anticipation, we continue to move forward in the call process for our head pastor.

Our next step is to develop a profile of the pastoral leadership we need for our future. To do that, Session is forming a Pre-PNC (Pastor Nominating Committee) Study Team to explore the future needs of the church and community, and discern God’s calling to us in this time. This Study Team, which will form in September, will need your voice as we together prayerfully imagine the future of our beloved First Presbyterian Church. Please watch for opportunities to participate in the fall. The learnings from this important phase will jump-start the work of the PNC, which will then be able to quickly begin the search using the pastor profile developed by the Study Team.

We encourage all to be engaged and to ask questions as you have them. You may find your question listed below among the “Frequently Asked Questions”. For more information about the steps in the call process, packets titled “Searchopoly” can be found via the link below, at the nametag table, and in the front office. Also, please continue to find updates in Faith Connections, in the Bulletin and Friday email, and by talking with an Elder; we wear blue name tags on Sundays.

This is a time of great promise and excitement as we continue to experience God’s grace among us and place our trust in God’s steadfast love and provision. We will continue to keep you updated. Thank you!

Searchopoly packet can be found on https://goo.gl/0u35dE
Pastor Search (continued)

Frequently Asked Questions and Responses:

Q: Can we look for our new associate pastors at the same time we look for our head pastor?
R: We plan to call our head pastor first, which will allow that person to provide guidance and input into the process of selecting the new associate pastors. We want our new head pastor to be part of the rebuilding of the new clergy team. After that pastor is in place we could decide to conduct the associate pastor searches simultaneously, if that makes sense at that time.

Q: Can Kristie and Nancy be considered for the positions?
R: Interim pastors are not ordinarily called to serve as the next pastor or associate pastor; exceptions may be made with a three-fourths vote of the presbytery.

Q: How long will pastors Kristie, Nancy and our third interim pastor stay?
R: Temporary pastors, such as interims, are invited for a specific period, not to exceed twelve months, which is renewable with approval of the presbytery. An interim pastor may stay as long as necessary to ensure a healthy transition to the new pastor.

Q: Are we still looking for a replacement for Rev. Dave Bianchin?
R: Yes. The Transitional Task Force continues to seek a third interim pastor who will coordinate pastoral care, Deacons and Stephen Ministry; lead worship planning; and preach. Rev. Kristie Finley has assumed Dave's former responsibilities for coordinating Faith Formation.

Q: When will the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) be formed?
R: The timing of the PNC will depend on when the pre-PNC study team completes its work. We expect the study team to form in September, with their work of study and congregation focus groups continuing through the end of the year. This timeline would anticipate the PNC getting started early next year.

Q: Why do we need a study team?
R: The PNC needs to have an informed understanding of the characteristics we seek in a new pastor. Study of the changing demographics and needs of the congregation and the community, as well as discernment of God’s call to this church in this time is essential in determining what kind of pastor we need to lead us into the future.

Q: When can we expect to have our new head pastor in place?
R: The search for a pastor typically takes 18-24 months, from the beginning of the search until the installation. In the meantime, we will continue to grow the ministries of the church as we strive to be faithful to our mission of sending well-equipped disciples of Jesus into the world – compassionate, generous, resilient and wise.
BRIDGEBUILDER CONNECTion

As you know, Session has been working on the 30 recommendations of the congregation that came out of the Bridgebuilder focus groups. These recommendations were assigned to the relevant committees and work is already bearing fruit!

Have you noticed the Elders at Fellowship Hour with their blue name tags? Please feel free to talk to them regarding any concerns you may have. Did you read the minutes of Session meetings that are available upon request at the front desk? These are all recommendations identified by Bridgebuilder.

Other Bridgebuilder recommendations that are being implemented include:

- Publication of all Session meeting dates with an invitation to all congregants to attend our monthly Session meetings.
- Worship & Music thoroughly examined whether we should have one or two services on Sunday, and reported their findings in the June/July Faith Connections. They also decided to have four Festival Sundays comprised of only one service followed by an activity allowing us to CONNECT to each other and to God.
- Long Range Planning & Governance Committee is making great progress on an audit of our communication channels, ensuring timely and comprehensive dissemination of church news, activities and opportunities.
- Examination of our relationship to the preschool including having church representation with the school board and staff as well as school representation at the church.

As you can see, our hard-working committees are putting forth considerable energy to ensure that First Church remains a special place where together we Worship, Learn, Connect, Serve and Invite. You too can participate in this process by contacting the respective Elder responsible for these tasks. All First Churchers are welcome.

Stay tuned... there is a lot more to come!

Nancy Thomson,
Moderator, Long Range Planning & Governance Committee

Buildings & Grounds Update

During these early fall months many projects around the church are being completed:

- Exterior Painting of North Side (see picture) and Steeple Windows
- Window lites installed in office wing doors
- Roof repairs above the west entrance gable
- Security System Camera Upgrades with additional locations in September
- Upgrade of central 2nd Floor Fire Door for Fire Alarm and Security System
- Manse East Entrance replacement due to structural requirements
- Replacement of Office Wing HVAC Roof Top system installed in 1987
- Memorial Garden Refresh Project -Phase 1: Trees and Access Ramp
Deacons

Martha Zeeman, Moderator

John Gescheidle
Peg Gronau
Hildo Hoogcarspel
Tom John
Beth Jones
Cecelia Keith
Marcy Kerr
Betty Klingenberg
Michelle Newman

Mike Borkowski
Kim Clair
Scott Crawford
Susan Daly
Wendy Darling
Stephanie Elliott
Pat Ensing
Dan Fietsam
Lindsay Folker

John Noble
Kemper Ryan
Paige Speed
Patti Tucker
Shawn Ward
Bobby Winebrenner
Tina Young

Elders

Rita Fossell, Clerk of Session

Ed Hamming
Buildings & Grounds,
Worship & Music

Bruce Keith
Personnel

Jim Kingsley
Youth & Young Adult FF

Kirsten Larson
Mission

Jerry Ligon
Finance

Geoffrey Luce
Mission

Bridget McGreevy
Worship & Music

Roberta Miller
LRPG, PCC

Geoff Murray
Membership

Mike Adams
Communications,
Finance: Endowment

Jim Bertram
Adult FF

Renee Borkowski
LRPG

Matt Brown
Finance: Budget, Stewardship

Missy Burger
Mission: Rummage

Roger Burgis
Finance, Endowment, Budget

Eli Fietsam
Youth & Young Adult FF

Jan Gibson
Buildings & Grounds

Phil Haltom
ACNC, Youth & Young Adult FF

Barbara Schulz
Personnel, Mission: Evangelism

Jim Seymour
Personnel

Frank Sibley
Personnel, Finance

Nancy Thomson
LRPG

Marty Vander Velde
Children Faith Formation

Mary Watanabe
Worship & Music

Amy Wells
Children FF, Stewardship

Dewey Winebrenner
Youth & Young Adult FF

ACNC - All Church Nominating Committee
FF - Faith Formation
LRPG - Long Range Planning & Governance
PCC - Presbytery of Chicago Commissioner
Interested in becoming a First Pres Member?

New member gatherings this fall will be held on Sundays, from 10:00 AM to no later than noon for anyone interested in meeting new people and learning more about First Pres. At the first gathering, we get to know each other. It is held twice (September 24 and October 8) in recognition of complex family schedules. On the second gathering, on October 15, we get to know the church. The third gathering, on October 22, includes an introduction to the Session (ruling body of First Pres) and presentation to the congregation, at the 11:00 AM service, those who have chosen membership. Child care is offered each Sunday.

If you are curious, have questions, want more information or would like to sign up, please contact Pastor Kristie Finley at kfinley@firstchurchlf.org or 847.234.6250

The Preschool has a few limited openings for Fall 2017–18. Please contact the Preschool at 847.295.1214 for further information.

Check out the new Preschool website!

preschool.firstchurchlf.org