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Sunday, February 23
5:00 PM
firstchurchlf.org/dinnerandtrivia

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Pastor’s Message

Dear Members & Friends,

In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul writes, “Consider your own call, brothers and sisters... Few of you were wise in the world’s eyes or powerful or wealthy when God called you... He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption” (1 Cor. 1:26–30 NRSV). During these still days of winter, I’ve been thinking a lot about these exceptional words as I think about some exceptional people: Peter Keller, Kristie Finley and Donna Birney.

Many years ago, Peter said “yes” to God’s call to be a servant-leader among his brothers: the “Men of Corinth” to be exact. He worked to forge and sustain this weekly Men’s Bible Study at First Presbyterian that has proved to be spiritually transformative for many. How do I know this? Because after he suffered a stroke last month, a large number of these men traveled to Wisconsin to visit Peter and put into their own words the impact he has made on their lives. This humble servant, like his namesake, has become a rock of counsel, encouragement and wisdom to his brothers—who are praying now for his full recovery.

I met Kristie Finley last summer, when she spoke of her love for this congregation and her desire to continue serving here in ministry if I deemed it wise. After observing her love in action, it is I who deem it a blessing of Christ’s wisdom in having Pastor Kristie as a colleague. On February 9, you will have the opportunity to make this official by electing the Rev. Kristie Finley as your called Associate Pastor for Congregational Life and Community Engagement.

The third person who has been very much in my heart this winter is Donna Birney, Administrative Assistant, who has served here longer than anyone else on staff. Donna is exceptional in what she does. Her level of commitment is truly extraordinary. She is driven by her faith in Christ and by her love for each of you. She has served this congregation for over 25 years, and now she is preparing to retire on March 1. What a beautiful example she is of what Jesus Christ can do through just one person who says, “yes” when he calls! I hope you can be in worship on March 1 when we celebrate Donna’s ministry among us.

Peter, Kristie and Donna are uniquely different people, yet they all share a deep love for God, adorned by personal humility and a lifelong devotion to serve. They are shining examples of the good that can happen when we respond ourselves to Paul’s timeless entreaty, “Consider your own call, brothers and sisters...”

With joy,

Clinton
Senior Pastor, Head of Staff
Lent 2020: Uncertainty

The spiritual season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 26 and concludes on Easter Sunday, April 12. With all the uncertainty in the world today, First Pres will be addressing this uncertainty through the ministry of Jesus and through his own relationship to the Father. Using Magrey R. deVega’s *Embracing the Uncertain* as a study guide, the pastors will lead discussion groups each Sunday morning and each Wednesday night throughout Lent. A sermon series will accompany the small group studies and both will be available to all who wish to follow along. As Magrey says, “It is only by embracing the uncertain that we can fully acknowledge the power and the proof of the Resurrection on Easter Sunday. It is at the empty tomb that we discover that the ground has settled, our footing is sure, and that there is only one source for a firm foundation upon which to build our lives.”

**Sermon & Study Series:**

**March 1, Week 1:** “The Uncertainty of Faith”  
The Desperate Father, Mark 9:14–29

**March 8, Week 2:** “The Uncertainty of Forgiveness”  
Peter, Matthew 18:21–22

**March 15, Week 3:** “The Uncertainty of Worry”  
The Voice from the Crowd, Luke 12:13–34

**March 22, Week 4:** “The Uncertainty of Mortality”  
Mary & Martha, “John 11:1-44

**March 27, Week 5:** “The Uncertainty of Surrender”  
Zacchaeus, Luke 19:1–10

**April 5, Holy Week:** “The Uncertainty of Obedience”  
Jesus, Matthew 26:36–46

**April 12, Easter Sunday:** “The Empty Tomb and the Proof of the Resurrection”  
You, Matthew 28:1–10

On the morning of Ash Wednesday, February 26 we gather at **7:00 AM** for our early morning lay-led worship service in the Chapel, followed by breakfast.

In the evening, join us for an all-ages and multi-sensory Ash Wednesday worship of self-guided prayer stations in the Sanctuary, including the imposition of ashes at **5:00 PM**. That evening’s **Wednesday Night Supper (5:30 to 7:00 PM)** will be a simple soup, salad and bread. Following dinner, at **7:00 PM**, we will have a prayerful worship service with communion and ashes. Come to one, two, or all—everyone is invited!

Watch our communications for our Lent and Holy Week schedules!
Faith Formation

Wednesday Night Supper  Wednesdays, 5:30 – 7:00 PM, The Great Room

Join us around the table as we share in a weekly catered buffet supper. Gluten free options and stuff kids like to eat will also be available. Bring your family and friends, and come and go as you please between 5:30 and 7:00 PM. No charge, freewill donations.

No RSVP required, but it is helpful in our planning: firstchurchlf.org/wednesdaynightsupper
For any questions, please contact Pastor Kristie Finley at kfinley@firstchurchlf.org.

Here are some photos from our first few suppers!

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WOMEN’S RETREAT
FEBRUARY 28 – 29

SIGN UP AT FIRSTCHURCHLF.ORG/WOMENSRETREAT.

Join us Friday, February 28 at 6:00 PM for dinner at the Gallery Restaurant in Lake Forest, and on Saturday, February 29, at First Pres with Lesley Picchietti. We meet at the Parish House for a program from 9:30 AM to mid-afternoon. Lunch is included.

Lesley Picchietti is a life coach and is passionate about supporting women moving from doing to being. Lesley was in music leadership at First Pres in the early 2000s. Lesley and Pastor Kristie will lead us in exploring our lives through the lens of our Lenten theme of Uncertainty.

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Fun for ALL AGES!
Sunday, February 23, 5:00 PM
$10/adult, $5/children 10 & under
Mulligans* are $5 each.

firstchurchlf.org/dinnerandtrivia

*Tip your servers! Senior High Youth will be your dinner servers, working to earn tips! All proceeds from the tips, mulligans and dinner will benefit Work Trip 2020.
Hands-on learning is the process of learning by actually doing and experiencing something, rather than just being told about it. The term “hands-on” is used because these activities usually involve the physical use of the hands – for example children might use manipulatives such as counting cubes and sorting objects to understand mathematical concepts, rather than just being taught the theory via books or pencil and paper exercises.

Hands-on learning is particularly important for young children, as this is how they are programmed to learn. Children learn from observing, copying, and experimenting with their hands and body as soon as they are born, and play continues to be the most important way of learning new skills until they reach school age and beyond.

Using actual experiences to learn concepts and skills is much more effective than simply being told about them, as in the proverb: “Tell me, I’ll forget; show me, I’ll remember; involve me, I’ll understand.” If you ever doubt this principle, just think about how many people learn to drive from reading a book!

This month, the children in Preschool had a visit from the Cosley Zoo in Wheaton, IL. They have an outreach program that brings programming into schools to offer children these hands-on learning experiences. This in-school program involves introducing the children to three different animals that are indigenous to the state of Illinois and that might live in their neighborhood or somewhere close to where they live. Activities like this visit that combine involving children in talking, listening, and using their hands activates more areas of the brain than just a single activity.

This is one of the beautiful things about the Preschool programming here at FPP. If you come to visit us, you will see children actively engaged in hands-on learning everyday. “Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.” - Proverbs 22:6

Blessings,

Suzie Brunner
Director of Preschool
Staff Update

Donna Birney to Retire on March 1, 2020

Donna Birney, our Administrative Assistant, will be retiring on Sunday, March 1 after serving First Presbyterian Church of Lake Forest for more than 25 years. Donna has served many pastors over that period of time, but her first love has been—and continues to be—the people of this congregation. Donna always made time for you, and sought to be of help and service to you in every way possible. She always kept the Big Picture in mind when conducting her duties: that First Presbyterian was here for Christ’s sake to love God and to love God’s people, which she has done with intelligence, imagination, energy and grace.

Please join us on Sunday, March 1, during worship and the reception between services in the Great Room, when we honor Donna for her service.

“Well done, good and faithful servant!”

Rev. Kristie Finley, Candidate for Associate Pastor for Congregational Life and Community Engagement

At its stated meeting on January 27, the Session acted unanimously upon the motion by the Staff Support Team to present the Rev. Kristie Finley to the Congregation at its Annual Stated Meeting on February 9 as a Candidate for Associate Pastor for Congregational Life and Community Engagement. Kristie has served faithfully and well over the past two-and-a-half years in an Interim capacity. Now, with the arrival of our new Head-of-Staff, the Rev. Clinton Roberts joins the Session in enthusiastically supporting Kristie’s candidacy. Clint appreciates Kristie deeply as a colleague in ministry and values her spiritual commitment to pastoral care and congregational renewal. He looks forward to serving this congregation with Pastor Kristie in all the years ahead.

Kristie Finley was an interior designer for 20 years before God’s call to ministry began in 2000. She came to First Pres Lake Forest as an administrative assistant, later becoming the Director of Youth Faith Formation. During this time she earned an undergraduate degree from National Louis University and Master of Parenting Education and Support from DePaul University. Her next call began when she entered Princeton Theological Seminary in 2010 where she earned a Master of Divinity and a Master in Christian Education in 2014. The Presbytery of New Brunswick ordained Kristie in 2015 as an Evangelist to Abundant Grace Dinner Church. She also provided pastoral care to Hamilton Square Presbyterian Church. Kristie returned to First Pres in 2017 as an Interim Associate Pastor. She and her husband Paul have four children and four grandchildren.

If Kristie is elected by the Congregation on February 9, the Presbytery of Chicago’s Commission on Ministry will present her to the Presbytery Assembly on February 22 for the three-fourths majority vote necessary under the Constitution of the PCUSA to change her status from an Interim to an Installed Associate Pastor called by the Congregation.

Please plan on attending this exciting Annual Meeting at 10:00 am on Sunday, February 9 in the Sanctuary immediately following 9:00 am Worship.
Confirmation Class

The Confirmation class is collecting toilet paper for A Safe Place, one of our mission partners. Please drop off a few rolls at Pastor Kristie’s office!

Senior High Youth Group Schedule

**February 2**, Collecting for Souper Bowl of Caring after worship, no evening meeting

**February 9**, Meeting at 7:00 PM

**February 16**, No meeting, President’s Day Weekend

**February 23**, All Church Dinner & Trivia

Meal a Month

Meal of the month for February supports Beacon Place, one of our mission partners who offers 130+ students tutoring and enrichment education in Waukegan. Healthy snacks and drinks are provided six days a week, and our collection will fill their Spring Break backpack with food during the school holiday. Please return donations by **Sunday, February 16**.

- Bags of Beans
- Bags of Rice
- Boxes of Mac & Cheese
- Canned Soups
- Canned Vegetables
- Canned Fruit
- Small boxes of cereal
- Oatmeal (packets)

PADS

*(Providing Advocacy, Dignity & Shelter)*

**Wednesday, February 12**

Join us on February 12 for this month’s PADS night! First Pres provides food and volunteers on the 2nd and 5th Wednesday of the month, and we are in need of volunteers and food.

Sign up to serve: [firstchurchlf.org/serve-at-pads](http://firstchurchlf.org/serve-at-pads)

Sign up to donate food: [firstchurchlf.org/donate-food-for-pads](http://firstchurchlf.org/donate-food-for-pads)

We are grateful to all of you for living out your faith through generous donations of time and food, which are so desperately needed. If you have any questions, please email Shawn Ward at shawn66@comcast.net.

Opportunities to Serve, Connect and Learn

Please join us in our Bible Studies!

**Brown Bag Bible Study**: Tuesdays at 11:45 AM, Parish House Conference Room
Gretchen Seymour, gretchenseymour@me.com

**Adult Bible Study**: Tuesdays at 1:30 PM
Deerpath Room
Cynthia Hessemer, chessemer@gmail.com

**Wednesday Women’s Bible Study**: Wednesdays at 9:45 AM, South Parlor
Rita Fossell, ritafoselel@sbeglbal.net

**Exploring Revelation Group**: through February 19
Wednesdays at 7:00 PM, Stuart Room
Chip Hardwick, chardwick@firstchurchlf.org

**Men’s Bible Study & Prayer Group**: Fridays at 7:00 AM, South Parlor
Peter Keller, pkeller@concentric.net

**Men’s Discussion Group**: Every other Sunday at 8:30 AM, Parish House Library
David Cain, mdavidcain@gmail.com
Update From Our Syrian Prayer Partner in Fairouzeh, Syria

Happy New Year greetings from Pastor Jacoub Sabbagh to everyone at First Pres! Jacoub sent this message to everyone via messenger on Sunday, January 5, as he was about to depart for a three week visit to his home in Al Hasakah (NE Syria) to visit his mother and sister. His sister Mathilde just had twin girls, Michelle and Gretel, a couple of months ago. Pastor Jacoub is grateful that an interim pastor was found to minister while he is visiting his family. (Please lift Pastor Jacoub in prayer as he travels 14 hours by bus each way to an area where there are still skirmishes, much uncertainty, and hardships.)

Pastor Jacoub was happy to report that around 30 church fathers in Fairouzeh, (Evangelical, Greek and Roman Orthodox, as well as Syriac) met to wish one another happy new year and, importantly, to discuss how they could work together to address people’s needs in their village. This new cooperation is just one sign that, according to Pastor Jacoub, “things are getting better.” He noted that the country feels more secure; there are less checkpoints. Pastor Jacoub pointed out, however, that economically Syria is still in dire straits, facing high inflation. Wages have not kept pace with inflation and people are struggling to pay for basic necessities. (Please note that Syria’s financial misfortunes are largely due to crippling USA sanctions against Assad; this also is the subject of a PCUSA assembly overture.)

Pastor Jacoub asked us to continue to pray for peace in Syria, as well as for economic renewal.

Over Christmas, 130 children sang in church and enjoyed a gift exchange. On December 28, the local teenagers used Gospel readings and hymns to portray the Christmas story, while they silently acted it out. They also acted out a story on what Christmas is not about,
Update from our Syrian Prayer Partner in Fairouzeh, Syria (cont’d)

namely competition regarding who gets the most, spends the most, gets the best, etc. Instead, it is sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ. Pastor Jacoub was happy to report both events went very well.

Pastor Jacoub ended his greetings with the Epiphany message he had shared with his congregation. Just as the shepherds and Magi saw a sign, the star, we too have seen signs. Just as they experienced the Lord as they visited him with Mary and Joseph, we too experience Christ as we celebrate his birth every year. Just as the Magi and shepherds shared their experience with others, so can we share the good news. Amen!

Stewardship

The Stewardship Committee wishes to thank the congregation for their strong support thus far of the 2020 Stewardship Campaign! Through mid-January, 253 members have pledged a total of $1.6MM, which is a significant increase from total 2019 pledges of $1.5MM. The 2020 total to date includes many increased pledges from 2019, and 10% new pledges.

As we announced this past November, our Campaign goal for 2020 is $1.7MM. We note that there are a number of members who pledged in 2019 but who have not yet pledged for 2020. This is not unusual, but we would encourage those who haven’t yet pledged, but intend to do so, to let us know. You can do so by advising the church office when convenient. This would be very helpful as it aids materially in budget planning for the year.”

For any questions, please contact your Stewardship co-moderators Bob Karlblom and Chris Edwards.

Notice

Suspicious Emails from Pastor Clint

Please be aware of emails pretending to be from Pastor Clint asking for a favor or an urgent request. These emails are not from Clint. There is currently an email scam using church pastors’ names as bait.

Some of these scam emails might be asking for a contribution to the church by sending gift cards, clicking a link, or wiring money. Please note that church staff will never make urgent requests similar to these scams, especially through email. This is an issue we cannot fix or control in our system because any individual with an email address can receive emails from any user. The only way we can avoid falling prey to these scams is to be educated about the subject and skeptical about communications, especially with financial requests. If you can, please check the email address of the sender. Scammers create bogus email accounts that look very similar to Clint’s or any staff member’s email address, with the person’s name displayed. Clint’s email is croberts@firstchurchlf.org; anything different is not a legitimate email from Clint. Please be cautious of these emails, and if you are unsure, please call the church office to verify.
Session Highlights from the January 27, 2020 meeting by Mary Watanabe, Clerk of Session

At its January 27, 2020, Stated Meeting, session:

• Reflected on a fable based on Isaiah 40 about how birds got their wings; and opened the meeting with prayer, led by Roberta Miller;

• Heard Moderator Roberts’ enthusiastic report including his delight in the growing attendance at the Christmas pageant and Christmas Eve services; the polarization and reconciliation worship service and workshops by Rev. Dr. Allen Hilton on January 25-26; the enthusiastic start of Wednesday Night Suppers; and the size of Chip’s Revelation class;

• Acknowledged with regret the retirement of Donna Birney, who will be celebrated for her decades of service to FPCLF by the congregation at a reception on March 1;

• Was encouraged by Clerk Watanabe to sign up to serve communion on March 1, 2020; serve at Wednesday Night Supper; and volunteer to make a Wednesday morning Lenten breakfast;

• Was reminded of the topics to be voted on at the annual Congregational meeting on February 9, 2020, at 10:00 a.m.:
  • Vote on ACNC slate of new elders, deacons, and ACNC members-at-large;
  • Vote on Candidate Kristie Finley’s election as Associate Pastor for Congregational Life and Community Engagement; and
  • Vote on Pastor Roberts’ terms of call for 2020;

• Carefully reviewed and unanimously approved the 2020 balanced budget, guided by treasurer Frank Grossman; this budget, now approved, will be presented to the congregation at its Annual Meeting on February 9, 2020;

• Enthusiastically approved an increase in Mission support of 11.6% in 2020;

• Joyously acted on a Staff Support Team’s motion to present the Rev. Kristie Finley to the congregation as a Called Associate Pastor for Congregational Life and Community Engagement; this position includes primary responsibility for Pastoral Care;

• Reviewed proposed Membership Roll Policy and Procedures, presented by Pastor Clint; the document will be reviewed by Membership and voted on at the next session meeting;

• Enjoyed positive reports regarding Wednesday Night Suppers;

• Deliberated on a proposal from Long Range Planning and Governance about when, why, and how to have a session retreat to vision plans for our church over the next 20 years; the retreat was tabled as we try to find a convenient time commitment for all the elders;

• Shared our joys and concerns, including concern for Elder Roger Burgis’ fall, hospital stay, and subsequent surgery; and concern for Peter Keller, who suffered a stroke; and

• Joined Pastor Roberts as he closed the meeting in prayer.
Deacons

John McNicholas, Moderator

Bill Allen
Paul Bergmann
Dorothy Chantler
Meredith Clawson
Scott Crawford
Susan Crawford
Wendy Darling
Dan Fietsam
Davis Gramza
Peg Gronau
Sharon Haltom
Nancy Hamming
Hildi Hoogcarspel
Dick Johnson
Beth Jones
Marcy Kerr
Susan McDowell
John McNicholas
Susan Milanak
John Noble
Coco Stevenson

Elders

Mary Watanabe, Clerk of Session
Rita Fossell, Assistant Clerk of Session

Mike Adams
Membership, Finance: Endowment
Jim Bertram
Adult FF
Renee Borkowski
ACNC, LRPG
Missy Burger
Mission: Rummage
Roger Burgis
Finance, Budget, Endowment
Peter Elliott
Worship & Music
Ed Hamming
Buildings & Grounds, Worship & Music
Bruce Keith
SST
Jim Kingsley
Youth & Young Adult FF
Geoffrey Luce
Mission
Robert Miller
LRPG
Geoff Murray
Stewardship
Barbara Schulz
SST, Mission: Evangelism
Jim Seymour
SST
Marty Vander Velde
Children FF

Staff

Donna Birney
Administrative Assistant
Suzie Brunner
Director of Preschool
Jim Cochrane
Seminary Intern
Rev. Kristie W. Finley
Interim Associate Pastor
Patrick Goymerac
Accountant
Rev. Dr. Charles B. Hardwick
Interim Associate Pastor
Stewart Kerr
Director of Mission
Rev. Kent Kinney
Parish Associate Emeritus
Jan McNicholas
Director of Business Operations
Guillermo Montufar
Custodian
Susan Noble
Director of Children’s Music
Kane Quiros
Director of Communications
Rev. Clinton G. Roberts
Senior Pastor, Head of Staff
Catarino Rodriguez
Custodian
Sarah Secombe
Director of Children’s Faith Formation
Alisa Steady
Administrative Coordinator
Dr. Thomas Tropp
Director Of Music and Arts
Dr. Barry Wenger
Organist, Director of Handbells
Cymbre Westburg
Financial Associate
SATURDAY, MARCH 7
All-Church Auction & Dinner 2020
New concept in 2020! TICKET DETAILS COMING SOON!

Opening Hearts and Homes for Mission

Followed by Fellowship
9:30–11 am

Sunday Worship

Join Us For