



# First Presbyterian Church

OF LAKE FOREST



# ANNUAL REPORT

2017

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

## STAFF

**Donna Birney**

Administrative Assistant

**Rev. Nancy Dolan**

Interim Pastor, Head of Staff

**Rev. Kristie Finley**

Interim Associate Pastor

**Yehuda Jacobi**

Accountant

**John Johnson**

Business Operations Manager

**Sean Kelly**

Associate Pastor,

Director of Youth and Young

Adult Faith Formation

**Rev. Kent Kinney**

Parish Associate Emeritus

**Susan Noble**

Director of Children’s Choirs

**Kane Quilos**

Director of Communications

**Julia Rigoni**

Music Associate

**Elmer Rosales**

Building Supervisor

**Sarah Seccombe**

Director of Children’s

Faith Formation

**Alisa Steady**

Administrative Assistant

**Dr. Thomas Tropp**

Director of Music and Arts

**Dr. Barry Wenger**

Organist, Director of Handbells

**Cymbre Westburg**

Financial Assistant

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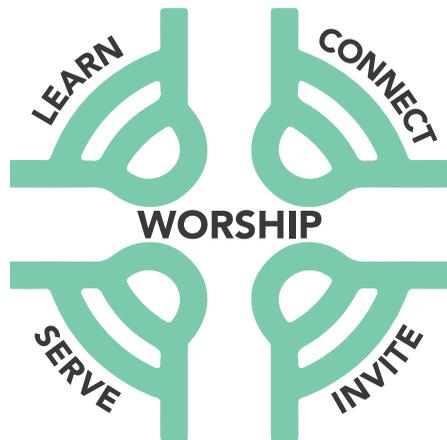


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\*Photos have been removed from the online version of the Annual Report due to privacy reasons. If you would like the full version, please stop by the church office to request a copy.

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

*January 28, 2018, 10:00 AM*



# Agenda

*Call to Order*.....Rev. Nancy Dolan,  
Moderator of the Annual Meeting

*Opening Prayer* ..... Rita Fossell, Clerk of Session

*Bylaws Revision* ..... Rita Fossell for  
Nancy Thomson, LRPG Moderator

*Election of Church Officers* .....Phil Haltom, ACNC Moderator

*Personnel Report* ..... Jim Seymour, Personnel Moderator

*Finance Report* ..... Roger Burgis, Finance Moderator

*PNC Study Group Report*..... Jerry Ligon, PNC Study Group

*The Society of FPCLF* .....Stewart Kerr, Society Treasurer

*Adjournment and Closing Prayer*.....Rev. Nancy Dolan

## SLATE OF NOMINEES

### *Deacons*

Bill Allen  
Dorothy Chantler  
Nancy Hamming  
John McNicholas  
Susan Milanak  
Gale Strenger Wayne

### *All Church Nominating Committee*

Teri Albus  
Kimberly Carris  
Christopher McNicholas  
Lisa Murray  
Michelle Newman

Dear friends,

In Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, he writes about his experience appealing to God for help and God replying, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor 12:9). When we joined you last June as your interim pastors, First Pres had been through a rough period, and feeling weakened as a result. Now, eight months later, we can all say that we have certainly been witnessing the sufficiency of God's grace! God has been mightily at work in us, and we are strengthened as a result. The power of Christ in us is as evident as ever.

For many years, the interim period of churches was a kind of "holding place" until the new pastor arrives. That is no longer the case. In fact, churches today don't have the luxury of a dormant interim like they once did. The world has changed and we're trying to catch up! At First Pres, we're using our interim period to re-engage, re-imagine, and listen for God's movement. God continues to be about creating and re-creating, doing a new thing and breathing new life into the world for transformation. We intend to be a part of that new creation.

Within these pages you will notice not only our healing, but also signs of our transformation and new life. Our core practices — worship, learn, connect, serve, invite — have kept us grounded in our mission in Jesus Christ. We continue to equip disciples to be sent into the world. In this time of study and discernment we are also beginning to get glimpses of our call in this time, a call that includes preserving the traditions that are part of our identity, and a call to adapt our ministries to the new and changing needs of our members and community. Our youth today need us to be inviting, relevant and accessible to their complex lives. Our young families need us to be a place of support and nurture that understands their needs and makes it easy for them to participate. Those who have been part of First Pres for most of their adult lives value the deep connections and relationships they have forged over the years and want us to continue to be a vibrant place that fosters the connections that sustain us through personal joys and hardships. And we all want to grow in faith and serve God by bringing the transforming love of Christ to our neighbor. Our neighbors need us, and we need them.

God has much kingdom-building work for us to do! 2018 will be a year to turn our attention outward and discover the places in which our gifts match the needs around us. God has equipped us for this next chapter of our shared ministry. By God's grace, may we know the power of Christ in us.

In Christ's service together with you,



Rev. Nancy Dolan



Rev. Kristie Finley



## 2017–2018 DEACONS

Martha Zeeman, Moderator

Mike Borkowski	Dan Fietsam	Cecelia Keith	Patti Tucker
Kim Clair	Lindsay Folker	Marcy Kerr	Shawn Ward
Scott Crawford	John Gescheidle	Betty Klingenberg	Bobby Winebrenner
Susan Daly	Peg Gronau	Michelle Newman	Tina Young
Wendy Darling	Hildo Hoogcarspel	John Noble	
Stephanie Elliott	Tom John	Kemper Ryan	
Pat Ensing	Beth Jones	Paige Speed	

## 2017–2018 ELDERS

Rita Fossell, Clerk of Session

Mike Adams Communications, Finance: Endowment	Ed Hamming Buildings & Grounds, Worship & Music	Barbara Schulz Personnel, Mission: Evangelism
Jim Bertram Adult FF	Bruce Keith Personnel	Jim Seymour Personnel
Renee Borkowski LRPG	Jim Kingsley Youth & Young Adult FF	Frank Sibley Personnel, Finance
Matt Brown Finance: Budget, Stewardship	Kirsten Larson Mission	Nancy Thomson LRPG
Missy Burger Mission: Rummage, ACNC	Jerry Ligon Finance	Marty Vander Velde Children Faith Formation
Roger Burgis Finance: Endowment, Budget	Geoffrey Luce Mission	Mary Watanabe Worship & Music
Eli Fietsam Youth & Young Adult FF	Bridget McGreevy Worship & Music	Amy Wells Children FF, Stewardship
Jan Gibson Buildings & Grounds	Roberta Miller LRPG, PCC	Dewey Winebrenner Youth & Young Adult FF
Phil Haltom Youth & Young Adult FF, ACNC	Geoff Murray Membership	

ACNC - All Church Nominating Committee  
FF - Faith Formation

LRPG - Long Range Planning & Governance  
PCC - Presbytery of Chicago Commissioner

## FESTIVAL SUNDAYS

In 2017, the idea of a “Festival Sundays” experiment emerged from an increasing desire to maintain the sense of community of one Sunday worship service, which we experience during the summer, while acknowledging the many practical reasons we need to continue to offer two services for now. On each of the four Festival Sundays planned for this program year, we gather as one in a single service at 10:00 AM followed by breakfast. The Festivals have been timed to highlight each of the four foci of the year’s theme of CONNECT: to each other, God, self, and neighbor. The decision to highlight this core practice reflected the congregation’s desire to re-CONNECT with one another.

In September we held the first of our four Festival Sundays, followed by the second on the first Sunday of Advent. These multi-generational Festivals have been filled with much energy and have CONNECTed the congregation in more ways than we had initially imagined. As opposed to our usual round tables in fellowship, we have long tables with the meals served family-style, initiating enthusiastic conversation over pancakes or egg casseroles. Both Festival Sundays have been organized and led mostly by the congregation, with representatives across generations and committees stepping up to set up, cook, serve or clean up.

A huge part of the success of these Festival Sundays is how people feel after every Festival. We CONNECT from the first days of planning, to setting up, to celebrating that Sunday. Worship has been a particularly festive experience, filled with music, the Word proclaimed, and people of all ages who then enthusiastically gather in fellowship hall to share a meal. The planning and execution of these Festival Sundays has brought people back to the fold, and given us reminders of the joy of Christian fellowship. Our Festival Sunday experiment extends into 2018, as we continue to experience God’s grace among us, and turn our core practice of CONNECT from self to our neighbor. See you at the Festival!

## BRIDGEBUILDER

In early spring 2017, Session engaged the services of the Rev. Dr. Peter Steinke, a Pastor and national consultant from Austin, Texas to engage the church in his program called “Bridgebuilder.” The objective of the Bridgebuilder process is to help congregations make necessary decisions for healthy functioning. It was recommended by the Transitional Executive Presbyter of the Presbytery of Chicago as a way to begin healing after a period of disruption First Church had experienced.

The congregation shared its thoughts and feelings with Dr. Steinke who then provided his feedback in a formal report to the congregation on May 7. The report was read to the congregation and mailed to all members of First Pres. Dr. Steinke continued to direct an action planning team through facilitating 10 focus groups involving 95 members. Action recommendations were presented to Session on June 4 by the Action Planning Team and Dr Steinke. Long Range Planning and Governance ensured the recommendations were assigned to standing Committees and monitored progress. Committees reviewed, and implemented or reshaped these recommendations throughout the rest of 2017. A small number of recommendations remain under consideration in 2018.

## PNC STUDY GROUP

The PNC Study Group, the first step in the search for our next pastor, is made up of Donna Coffin, Nancy Dolan, T.S. Elliott, Jerry Ligon, Diane Quinn, Gretchen Seymour, David Strong, and Anne Wanke. The Study Group members were commissioned in worship on October 29, 2017.

Our task is to prepare the Congregation and the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) for the search for our next Pastor/Head of Staff. Ultimately, our group will deliver a completed Ministry Information Form (MIF) to the Pastor Nominating Committee. In order to do this, we are seeking to understand how the huge cultural shifts in North America and changes in our own community are affecting the church, and to discern God’s call for our congregation in this unique time. This will help us identify the leadership talents and gifts we need in our next pastor. We have used Anthony Robinson’s book “Changing the Conversation” as an initial tool to inform our study. We are observing, seeking, and listening to additional voices both inside and outside the congregation. The central question that continues to guide our work is, “who are we as a church, and who is God calling us to be?”

The group is meeting with over 20 committees and groups of First Pres in early 2018 to share what we have learned and invite others to join us in deeper study. During these conversations we will be taking stock of all that we hear and learn. These conversations will then expand to the broader congregation. We anticipate that these next steps will better equip us to call a pastoral leader who can best help us adapt to these changing times as we remain true to our purpose of “equipping disciples.” We believe that as our church becomes engaged in learning what direction God is calling us to take, our congregation will experience renewed vitality, a greater sense of purpose, and contagious signs of new life.

- Welcomed Rev. Dr. John Buchanan to be Pastor in Residence and Rev. Dr. Nicholas Pearce to be our Theologian-in-Residence.
- Said goodbye with special recognition to Revs. Amy Pagliarella, Christine Chakoian, Nick Redmond and Dave Bianchin; welcomed interim staff Revs. Nancy Dolan and Kristie Finley.
- Studied attendance issues carefully and voted to continue to have two worship services except during summer and on Festival Sundays; committed ourselves to further study of this issue.
- Assumed duties to find monthly communion servers and Lenten breakfast servers.
- Helped Mission Committee feature a mission partner in worship each month with a personal testimony by a volunteer to show how volunteering has transformed them.
- Closed first@five service; began Third Thursday Prayer Service based on contemplation and Taize music.
- Approved changes to the Wedding Manual; set dates for communion and baptism and approved baptisms.
- The Lakeminstor Ringers celebrated the fortieth anniversary of their founding in a concert on February 19.
- Welcomed the newly restored 1882 Steinway Model B Holt Piano to the Sanctuary. The piano was dedicated by Revs. Christine Chakoian and Rick Spalding (the Holts' great-great-grandson) in a service on April 3.
- The Sanctuary Choir and Orchestra celebrated the 500th anniversary of the Reformation with a special worship service built around J.S. Bach's Reformation Cantata "Gott, der Herr, ist Sonn und Schild."
- Organist and Bell Choir Director, Dr. Barry J. Wenger, played an organ recital in our sanctuary on May 24, 2017 featuring beautiful sounds of our fine Casavant Pipe Organ.

## YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT FAITH FORMATION

- Found innovative ways of getting Youth and Adult Advisors involved within all areas of the church
- Integrated Plansoen Scholars into a variety of ministries at First Presbyterian Church, as well as our continued involvement in programs offered by Lake Forest College
- Senior High Youth Program
  - Youth Leadership Team helped determine the direction of our Youth Group and the events we offer
  - Work Trip traveled to Missouri in June, and spent the week working hard and getting to know the people who we were helping. In 2018 we travel to Roscommon County, MI, June 10 – 16.
  - High School Fall Retreat was held at Stronghold with 15 attendees.
- Increased involvement from teens in worship and worship leadership
  - Kyle Levin shared his testimonial about Beacon Place as our Featured Mission Partner.
  - Bryan Kingsley performed a Dramatic Reading of scripture.
  - Confirmands offered a Liturgical Dance during Christmas Eve Worship Services.
- Confirmation
  - Welcomed 19 confirmands into membership in April. 20 confirmands began in September.

## CHILDREN'S FAITH FORMATION

*We sought to CONNECT and INVITE families to become a part of our faith community through:*

- Family Game Night
- Beach Day
- Welcome Back Coffee for the Preschool teachers and board
- Pumpkin Fest
- Advent Wreath-Making Dinner

*We promoted LEARNING by:*

- Providing Bibles to Kindergarten and 4<sup>th</sup> Graders
- Weekly Sunday School curriculum, *Feasting on the Word*, follows the Lectionary calendar and coordinates with worship themes

*We promoted SERVICE to others with:*

- 'Welcome Home' baskets for mission partner 'Facing Forward to End Homelessness' as a Sunday School project
- Leading WORSHIP at the Christmas Pageant; and the weekly Word for Children

## *First Presbyterian Preschool*

- Christian outreach for 54 blessed years licensed by the State of Illinois
- Five half-day classes for children 2 ½ to 5 years of age; 2017–18 enrollment of 62 children
- Faithbuilding introduces the Good News weekly
- Parent Board actively supports the teachers and administration
- Need-based financial aid, continuing staff education, and capital equipment needs are available through fundraising.
- Connecting the ministries of the Preschool and church
  - Preschool board will create a liason position which will attend both Children’s Faith Formation meetings, and Session meetings when appropriate
  - Church now leads weekly Faithbuilding
  - Continue to invite Preschool families to church events and activities

## ADULT FAITH FORMATION

### *2017 Accomplishments:*

- Continued to support small group Bible study throughout the year
- Offered Bible 101 classes in the spring
- Invited Dr. Pearce to act as our Theologian in Residence this fall
- Arranged speakers and programs – Steve Hall, congregational book review discussion on *Between Heaven and Mirth*, Max Smith and the Ken Bailey video series for Advent
- Supported the Military Caring Ministry

### *2018 Objectives:*

- Rethink the frequency and timing of our programs to increase attendance
- Improve the marketing of our programs to increase attendance
- Invite younger representation on our committee to get new perspectives

# Mission

- In 2017, we made grants to 36 Mission Partners. Most organizations have a relationship with First Pres members, either as Board member, part of staff, or a volunteer, and in some cases, the founding member.
- The largest grant (\$43,655) was to the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA is part of PCUSA), after a series of natural disasters in 2017.
- In 2017 we began featuring one Mission Partner each month, and included a testimonial during worship. These are first-hand, personal experiences from our congregation to inspire increased discipleship, outreach and foster common community in the church.
- Rummage, a mission ministry of First Pres since 1950, raised net proceeds of \$100,000 in 2017, all of which is donated to our mission partners. Over 4,000 volunteer hours were logged. During sale weeks over 200 volunteers are present and working.
- Recipients of Mission Committee grants have participated in the Rummage sale, resulting in a mutually beneficial cycle of giving and receiving.

## *Goals in 2018*

- Consider codifying our Mission partners by the groups of people they serve.
- Increase our relationship with our Mission partners, through volunteerism and sharing more about the mission with our congregation.
- Gather and disperse information about volunteer opportunities from our mission partners.

# Deacons

Deacons are the caring arms, and often the eyes and ears, of the church to provide for the needs of the congregation.

- Deacons added an educational component to meetings this year.
- PADS ministry has continued to thrive this year after moving to a new location at North Point Church in Winthrop Harbor.
- Deacons added a new Home Visits ministry and now regularly visit with members of our congregation who are homebound.
- Congregational Seminars were offered based on the needs of different groups in the congregation. We sponsored at least 3 seminars.
- Deacons sponsored the Annual Womens Christmas Tea for over 150 women and collected gifts for Beacon Place.
- Deacons provided food and volunteers for numerous memorial and funeral receptions at church.
- Deacons will sponsor weekly bridge play to church members and the broader community.
- **Deacons continue to support:**
  - Soup Kitchen in Waukegan
  - Cancer With Grace
  - Exploring Grief Group Ministry
  - Meal-a-month (organized by our youth Deacons)
  - Annual Staff Luncheon
  - Festival Sunday Planning and Preparation
  - Prayer Chain Ministry
  - Development of “Prayers For This Time”

## *2017 Accomplishments:*

- Received 11 new members, and 18 confirmands for a total of 29
- Began investigation into a new approach to member engagement
- Explored a new all-church survey of time and talents
- Linked new member faith exploration question to CONNECT theme – “How did you connect with church?”
- Increased meetings from one per year as we moved into a member engagement focus

## *2018 Objectives:*

- Renew interest in the CONNECT/INVITE taskforce that first met in fall 2016
- Create a “reunion” event for new member class participants to get back together
- Experiment with delivery of new member class content
- Further member engagement ministry while continuing our ministry to those interested in membership

## **2017 NEW MEMBERS**

### *Joined by Confirmation*

Kailey Albus	Jack Fitzgerald	Gage Messner	Sadie Specketer
Emily Bertram	Wyatt Gould	Erica O’Neil	Caroline Speed
Susanna Crawford	Davis Gramza	Jackson Pearre	Mac Uihlein
Peter Elliott	Charlie Haggerty	Avery Robb	Kerrigan Weston
Will Elliott	Stefan Marinic	Bridget Seymour	

### *Joined by Reaffirmation of Faith*

Eric and Meredith Clawson  
Alex and Adia Gundry  
Brian and Betsy Linhart  
Karey Walker

### *Joined by Certificate of Transfer*

David and Heather Strong  
Dave and Laura Valko

The Buildings and Grounds Committee's risk management-based mission is a three-part commitment to the church's well-being. Safety, Comfort and Preservation/Beauty are the key elements of what we do.

**Safety** is the physical safety on our campus, which include routine matters like snow shoveling, fire drills, and increasingly, as our world grows more complex, safety awareness.

**Comfort** covers more of the items we take for granted, like making sure the lights are on, and that the building is warm in winter and cool in summer.

**Preservation/Beauty** acknowledges that we have a 130-year-old building with beautiful stained glass windows and hand-carved wood work.

In 2017 the Buildings and Grounds Committee accomplished these tasks:

- Memorial Garden renovation of the hardscape and plantings allowing greater personal and handicapped access
- Seven new security cameras inside and outside the building.
- Reviewed Active Shooter/Threat Training
- Manse repairs to prevent flooding
- Insurance appraisal of our property and contents
- Driveway drainage repairs to eliminate basement flooding
- Annual external and internal painting of the Main Building
- Window repair and replacement for safety and HVAC control
- Roofing repair to main building
- New fire doors, security system and fire alarm upgrades in the children's wing
- Boiler safety work
- Installed new HVAC system
- Security windows installed in offices
- Planned sanitary kitchen upgrades

# Personnel

2017 was the most active year in staff transitions in the history of our church. Along with our difficult goodbyes, we were able to welcome wonderful new faithful leaders into our faith community, and celebrated the new positions of Sean Kelly and Sarah Seccombe, reminding us all along this journey, God is with Us!

The new pastoral team of Reverends Nancy Dolan and Kristie Finley, along with our strong remaining staff, quickly came together. As a committee we worked closely with the team to implement many new procedures we had promised the congregation. In short order the team was able to discern God's call for us in this time, to focus on our core practice of CONNECT.

As we head into 2018 there is a lot we plan to accomplish trying to take full advantage of this interim time. A few of those items are:

- Continue to further update, improve, document and implement policies and procedures in preparation of our new Pastor/Head of Staff's arrival.
- Focus on staff development
- Assist Session and Pastor Nominating Committee teams in their work as they look towards finding our new Pastor/Head of Staff

# Session

Your session has served you well this past year.

Along with seeing to worship, programs, care of our finances and beautiful building, its contents and property, they have dealt with unexpected, difficult issues with grace, love, and careful, prayerful consideration. I am humbly proud and grateful to have served with them through that challenging time.

As we moved on, God's Spirit was, and is, evident — members offering their help, inviting the Rev. Dr. John Buchanan to preach, considering and inviting Rev. Nancy Dolan and Rev. Kristie Finley to serve and lead us as interim pastors. We received new members, baptized babies and adults, welcomed back some who couldn't come for a while, started another Bible study group and more interest groups and started a Third Thursday Prayer service. These are signs of new life in our church while still maintaining programs, buildings and grounds, personnel, mission.

God still has opportunities and work — some hard work and some fun work — for this congregation to do. Your session is eager to hear your thoughts, ideas, offers of help. Please offer prayers for your session elders as they continue to do the work you have charged them to do, with God's help, guidance and care.

Thanks be to God for these servant leaders.

*Rita Fossell, Clerk of Session*

## *2017 Accomplishments by Long Range Planning & Governance Committee*

- Strategic Plan and Core Practices served as steadying influences during year of turmoil.
- Bridgebuilder Program implemented. Recommendations were reviewed and tasks were assigned to each committee with ongoing reporting of progress.
- Bylaws updated and presented to Session.
- Started studying functionality of Session; recommended modest reduction in size. All Session committee moderators were interviewed regarding committee functionality.
- Communication Procedure formalized. Procedure clarifies modes of communication, contact information, approvals needed, and lead time with options conveyed.
- Improved communication with congregation including articles in Faith Connection, the Sunday bulletin and an open invitation for church members to attend monthly Session meetings.
- Registered Sex Offender awareness training for Elders completed.

## *2018 Goals for Long Range Planning & Governance Committee*

- Improved functionality of Session and Committees with possible reduction in size
  - Committee will look at needs of the church in order to “right size”
  - Committee charters, roles and functions will be considered
- Congregational approval of updated bylaws at the Annual Meeting in January 2018
- Update of Organization Manual
- Communication Procedure completed and implemented; consider communication audit
- Continued elder training
- Complete Registered Sex Offender awareness training for Deacons



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