



The CHIMES

The Newsletter of First Presbyterian Church of Arlington Heights

May/June 2020

Choose love. Be the light. Change the world.

From the Pastor Time for a Change

by Rev. Alex Lang, Head of Staff

As you well know, coronavirus has turned the world upside down. Some people have lost their lives. Others have lost their livelihoods. Still others have lost their homes. Thankfully, my family has remained healthy and in-tact throughout this disaster. We have our lives. We have our jobs. We have our home. The only thing that the coronavirus has inflicted upon us is that our plans have been upended.

In February, the congregation voted to allow me to go on a three month Sabbatical this summer. Unfortunately, the kindness of the congregation will not come to fruition this year. Due to the virus, we are going to stay here in Arlington Heights. My family and I have been looking forward to this trip for some time. We've been talking about it for years. But like many people around the world, we are going to have to scrap those plans for now. Therefore, our hopes are to go on Sabbatical in the summer of 2021.

Given that I will be here this summer, I would like to introduce our summer sermon series that will kick-off Memorial Day weekend. This series is called *Sans Pareil: Without Equal*. The Sans Pareil was a steam locomotive built by Timothy Hackworth which took part in the 1829 Rainhill Trials on the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, held for only a few select builders of locomotives.

The Rainhill Trials were a competition to test George Stephenson's argument that locomotives would provide the best motive power for the then nearly-completed Liverpool and Manchester Railway. Five locomotives were

entered, running along a one-mile length of level track at Rainhill, in Lancashire. One of the locomotives participating in the race was the Sans Pareil.

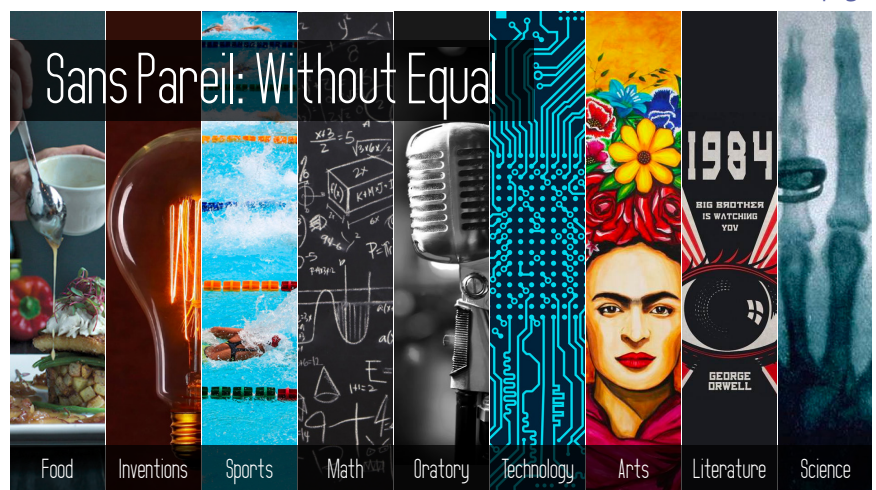
The name is French and means 'peerless' or 'without equal'. At the time, it was considered to be one of the best train engines ever conceived. The name has stuck as being emblematic of the best in a particular field. When something or someone is said to be sans pareil, it means they are literally the best in the world or that they are a class above the rest.

I have always been obsessed with studying people who are the best in a given field because of the Christian belief that God endows all people with gifts. Out of seven billion humans, how are these people the ones who are able to use their gifts better than all the rest? I'm interested in what they can teach us about the human condition.

Not only will we be studying their success, but more importantly, we will be studying the qualities they possess.

"When something or someone is said to be sans pareil, it means they are literally the best in the world or that they are a class above the rest."

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Pastoral Care in the Midst of a Pandemic

by Rev. Judy Hockenberry, Associate Pastor for Pastoral Care

I am now in my 34th year as a Minister of Word and Sacrament. It's very hard for me to grasp that number because in my own mind I'm only 45 years old!! While I served as a solo pastor in three different churches and a co-pastor with Ken in one church, my strength has always been pastoral care, whether I'm offering it from the pulpit, through Bible Study, or in a one-on-one visit.



Having been in ministry for 34 years means that I attended graduate school and began my ministry with a yellow legal pad for writing notes and papers and an electric typewriter. I know many of you can relate well to these "tools". It wasn't long before we got our first computer (roughly 1988) but I still used the legal pad to write out the sermon. It took me a while to learn to compose as I was typing.


Pastoral care was also different in the beginning. If someone was having surgery, the individual was hospitalized the night before so I would go then to pray with the person. The person was in the hospital about three days so I went on the second day to visit and pray with the person again. Now, I meet you in the surgery area about an hour before your surgery and I wait to get a text message from a loved one to let me know you came through the surgery and are on your way home! Visits in parishioners' homes were welcome in the early years of my ministry. I still offer to go to homes but more and more frequently, you prefer to come to my office.

Don't hesitate to let me or other pastors know what you need and like the songs says, "I'll be there."

This pandemic has drastically changed pastoral care once again! My pastoral care is offered through the devotion that I write on a weekly basis and it is offered through any sermons I preach through this time. However, it is most frequently offered by e-mail, text messaging, and phone calls. I have engaged the help of Stephen Ministers and Deacons in making these phone calls so we can touch base with as many of you as possible. I am also writing notes and dropping off masks at your homes. However, dropping off masks feels a little like playing the childhood game of "ding dong ditch".

I put the masks in the mailbox or between the front doors and I ring the bell and then I go back to my car! We have had the chance to wave and smile at each other a few times!!

I have also been on the receiving end of pastoral care during this pandemic. I have received e-mails and phone calls from some of you checking on me. I have gotten text messages and messages of thanks for the pastoral care that all of your pastors are trying to offer in these times.


The one constant in pastoral care is presence. In this pandemic, I've learned that it doesn't matter how the presence comes – whether by phone or by web streaming or by text and e-mail – it simply matters that those for whom we care know we are present to them and for them. This is probably the most challenging time I've known as a pastor in terms of making sure my presence is felt. However, I've never been one to shy away from a challenge. Don't hesitate to let me or the other pastors know what you need and like the songs says, "I'll be there." 

Time for a Change, continued from page 1

What can they teach us about being our best selves and about being our worst? Why were they the best at what they did? Natural skill? Hard work? Luck? Personality? Being born in the right time and right place? All of these questions paint a picture for us of what it takes to be the best.

Each week we will be looking at two people who are the best in their field and what makes them without equal. Often these two people will represent opposite approaches to the field. Their contrasting approaches will teach us a lot about what it takes to be at the top. Once we understand their

background, we will then extract the qualities that made them successful and look at them through a biblical lens.

Our goal is to explore how God wants us to use those qualities in our own lives. How can those qualities help us grow closer to God and create God's kingdom on earth? Whether we're talking about inventors, writers, scientists, chefs, athletes, or artists, I think you will be amazed at how those who excel can teach us a lot about ourselves and our relationship with God. Stay safe and, hopefully, I'll have the opportunity to preach some of these sermons in-person sooner rather than later. Until then, I'll see you online! 

Community Relief Fund

by Rev. Alex Lang, Head of Staff

COVID-19 has wreaked havoc on our health and the economy. The unemployment numbers have skyrocketed and our government has responded by issuing stimulus money. Some people really need these checks to survive. For others, this is extra money for a rainy day. Unfortunately, because we don't know how long the shelter-in-place orders will last and whether the economy will rebound once the orders have been lifted, this stimulus money will likely be a temporary band-aid for those who need it most.

As a church, we are often on the front lines of dealing with people who are struggling and in need of assistance. The pastors meet with members and non-members alike who come through our doors seeking money for food, rent, or overdue bills. The numbers of people who will require this kind of assistance is likely to increase and remain high in the near and long term.

Therefore, the pastors would like to make a request of the congregation: if you receive a stimulus check and you do not need the money, consider donating a portion or all of the

money to a special fund at the church. This fund is separate from the general fund and is designed specifically to help people who are struggling to purchase food, make rent, or pay overdue bills.

This fund will allow the pastors to help some of the most vulnerable people in our community who have been affected by the economic downturn caused by COVID-19. Thank you for considering our request and for thinking of your neighbors in need.

As we learn in the parable of the Good Samaritan, our Christian faith calls on us to always remember that our responsibility to love our neighbor extends well beyond our family, our friends, and our colleagues. True generosity is when we assume responsibility for caring for the strangers in our community we don't currently know, but who require our help. Your donations to this fund will certainly make a difference for many people who will be struggling to survive during this difficult time. 🙏

Helping the Homeless Journeys Partnership during the Covid-19 Crisis

by Michele Holifield

First Pres hosted a day center for the homeless March 18-27. We partnered with Journeys to offer a place for the homeless to spend days. This was necessary because all of the usual places that the homeless spend their days – the libraries, parks, train stations, fast food restaurants – closed. This left a vulnerable group of people with nowhere to go.

Through the dedication of amazing volunteers, First Pres was open each day from 8:30 am – 5:30 pm. We provided hot coffee, snacks, lunch, conversation, and a warm place to be.

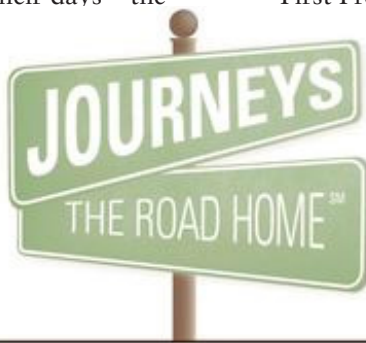
Because of the space we have in the Fellowship Hall, we were able to do this and still abide by the social distancing guidelines. During the second week, Journeys used our center as a central meeting place to begin the placement of Journeys clients into area hotels.

While the winter PADS program usually extends through the end of April, this year the PADS shelter system was no longer able to operate safely each night. By March 27, about 100 Journeys clients were given rooms at two Arlington

Heights hotels. This was made possible by donations from many area individuals, churches (including First Pres), and a significant donation from the Viatorians.

First Pres then changed focus to providing meals once per week to the guests relocated to hotels. Since March 31, we have provided over 200 meals each Tuesday. Volunteers meet at 6:30 am and 5:30 pm to deliver breakfast, lunch, and dinner to the hotels. Thank you to the volunteers, those who provided snacks, chips, and fruit, and for those who donated money to fund our dinner program. Each week, we choose an area restaurant to provide a hot meal to each client. We plan to continue providing meals until the stay home order is lifted.

First Pres continues to discuss with Journeys and other area churches how we will best be able to serve the homeless population over the next months. Watch Weekly Highlights for opportunities to volunteer or donate money and goods. Thank you to all who remember those who do not have a place to call home during this time. 🙏



Presbyterian Women News

Although we dearly miss the companionship of all our Presbyterian Women friends, our meetings, and gatherings, this is time to think first about keeping everyone safe and doing our part to STAY HOME! All meetings for Circles 1-3 and Circle 7, the spring luncheon, and remaining program have been canceled for the rest of the year. However, we ask you to stay in touch with one another! There is nothing like reaching out by a phone call, a card or note, a message by email, or even FaceTime or Zoom. Just spread the love ♥ it feels good to hear from a friend. Stay safe and well! Hopefully, we will be able to gather this summer.

Women's Day Retreat POSTPONED

Due to the uncertainty of the current health situation, the **Women's Day Retreat** is postponed until further notice. Refunds will be processed as soon as possible.

Thanks to Our Mask Makers!

Thank you to all who made masks for our healthcare workers! Although they may not be standard issue for hospitals, patients who are going home can use them, people who are sick at home can use them, and some hospitals are using them. The generosity of our congregation is much appreciated.



Easter Flowers

Presbyterian Women appreciates all your donations for Easter Flowers, but due to the closing of the church for the safety of us all, it was impossible to decorate with the signs of spring and Easter lilies. We hope you were able to join in the virtual celebration of Easter and enjoy the Easter message just the same. *Your donations will be held for the purchase of Easter flowers in 2021.*

Church Women United

Because of our need to stay home, stay safe, and use social distancing, the **Friendship Luncheon on May 1** has been canceled, as are all remaining events for this season. We will be sending news of our events for the fall.

Senior Luncheon: Save the Date

Members (aged 70+) of our congregation are invited to the annual **Senior Appreciation Luncheon**, tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, July 15. As our national and state guidelines develop due to the COVID-19 crisis, we may need to move to an alternate date. We are looking forward to being together to celebrate the continuing leadership and contributions of our senior members. More information will be coming as we move through this period together. *Be safe. Be healthy. Be grateful.*

Christopher House News

While so many families are hurting right now, Christopher House is doing everything to support scholars and families during this time. Because of the unique model, there are longstanding relationships and partnerships with donors to help with resources that are needed.



Christopher House has established an emergency assistance fund, **The Thrive Family Fund**, to specifically support these families in need. A video with information can be seen at <https://vimeo.com/403056230>.

The Christopher House Auxiliary is hoping to be able to assist the BACK TO SCHOOL effort by soliciting donations for the purpose of supplying backpacks and necessary school supplies for a child whose family is not able to do so. The suggested amount of a donation is \$20. Our date of collection will be as early in June as possible. Backpacks are being purchased for all children. Look for the tables in the Narthex, as soon as we are back in church. Your generosity in the past has been overwhelming!

Are You in Need? We Can Help!

If you are in the high-risk category for coronavirus, you may not want to go out to the grocery store or drugstore. We have some people at church, in lower risk categories, who are willing to pick up essential grocery items or medicine, if needed. This is a service for essential items only. Please call Michele Holifield at 847-243-7195, if you or someone you know has this need.

Join our Family Night Book Club

First Pres would like to start a **Book Club** during our Family Night gatherings. Plans are currently being finalized, but we want to share an overview and get a sense of who might be interested in participating. The current plan is to hold the book club gathering the second Wednesday of each month from September through May, with the exception of December. The gatherings will be from 7:00 to 8:00 pm. Each month we will be discussing a new book. All adults are welcome; in fact, book discussions are always best when we have a range of ages and genders. You do not need to attend each month's discussion.

We plan to read all types of books and collectively share our perspectives. Ideally, we would like to have the list of books for the year to be available by early August so we can share the book names with all who are interested in participating. To give you a sense of book ideas, some suggestions to date include; "*All The Light We Cannot See*" by Anthony Doerr, "*Unbroken*" by Laura Hillenbrand, "*Educated*" by Tara Westover. If you are interested, please reach out to Marilynn Graves at mwggardens@gmail.com with your name and suggested books.



A note from our friends in Gaspar Hernandez, Dominican Republic

by Roger Bertelson

We have received an update from our friends in the Dominican Republic. Fabianny answered Irene's email inquiring about how things were going in Gaspar Hernandez in regard to COVID-19. There have been three deaths and many people are sick with the virus. No doubt that it was picked up from people from Gaspar working in the resort hotels nearby and brought back and passed on to friends

and neighbors. The houses and living is very close in the Dominican Republic and it is possible it spread in the community before anyone knew it was there. It is incredible how this pandemic has spread throughout the world to unsuspecting people in both undeveloped and developing countries without any knowledge of it. Keep our Dominican friends in your prayers. Keep safe.

From the Conductor's Stand

by Adam Hendrickson, Director of Music and Worship

June 14 is **Music Appreciation Sunday**, and yours truly will be offering the message on that day. Although we are unsure, at this time, whether the ensembles at First Pres will be able to participate, we will still be lifting them up and highlighting all that they do for the music ministry at our church. In preparation for this Sunday, I have a favor to ask of you. I need you to rekindle, or possibly develop, your love for Julie Andrews. Part of the message will deal with the greatest movie of all time, "*The Sound of Music*". No, there is no argument, thank you very much. I appreciate your understanding :-). You might as well revisit "*Mary Poppins*", as well! It's a classic. As we continue our journey through this challenging time, I hope you are keeping music in your daily routines. 🎵



Concert Series

The recital by Chris Urban, organ and Chuck Beech, piano has been moved to May 6 at noon. Currently it is planned to be webcasted.

Any changes will be communicated.

Children's Ministries

by Katy Allen, Director of Children's Ministries

Vacation Bible School A Different Spring

The impact of the coronavirus on our church programming has been felt by everyone – from canceled programs to postponed events, from worshiping virtually to connecting with members and friends electronically rather than face-to-face.

Children's Ministries has tried to meet the changing needs of families by staying in touch in a variety of ways. The Children's Ministries Weekly News newsletter continues to be a source of information for families. It is a bit shorter these days, but it also includes personal touches that this time requires. We have also created a Weekly News Kids Edition, specifically for preschoolers – 5th graders. This weekly newsletter includes a personal note to the kids and an "interactive" activity that invites a virtual connection each week. In addition, Children's Ministries and Youth Ministries have paired up to offer a family Sunday school lesson each week. A game, scripture, and discussion questions provide families with the opportunity to grow in faith together.

We hope that these communication efforts during this time apart has provided you with a sense of connection. If you have suggestions on other ways Children's Ministries can support you, please do not hesitate to reach out to Katy Allen with your ideas and needs.

We look forward to the day when we are together as a church family again.

Summer Programming

Children's Ministries is cautiously optimistic that we will be able to hold our programs as scheduled this summer. We are hoping that Vacation Bible School and MissionFactory can still be held the week of July 6, and are moving ahead with planning for those activities. If you have not signed your child(ren) up yet, registration is still open. You may visit www.firstpresah.org/grow/children to register online.

Vacation Bible School is open to 4-year-olds – incoming 4th graders. **MissionFactory** is open to incoming 5th and 6th graders. VBS and MissionFactory is planned for July 6-10, from 8:45 – noon each day. There is a cost of \$25/child. 📍

Youth Ministries

by Rev. TC Anderson, Associate Pastor for Children, Youth, & Families

Upcoming Events Update

The spring and the summer are fairly busy times usually for Youth Ministries here at First Pres, but with all that's happening with quarantine and COVID-19 we've had to alter somethings. Here is a list of what we normally do and the updated plan for those events. Note: all postponements are subject to change based on what happens later in the summer.

Confirmation Retreat – Postponed TBD (ideally mid-summer)

Fly Up Sunday – Cancelled

Celebration Sunday – Postponed TBD (ideally mid-summer)

Baccalaureate Sunday – Postponed TBD (mid-to late summer)

Middle School Mission Trip – Postponed until late July

High School Mission Trip – Still on schedule in late July

HSYG and MSYG Zoom Meetings

Even though we aren't able to get together in person, both the Middle School Youth Group and the High School Youth Group have been meeting on Zoom once a week to talk about their highs and lows, do prayers, and even play a game or two. Thanks to technology, we can still see one another and chat even when we are all quarantined. 📍



SAVE THE DATE

ROCKY RAILWAY VBS July 6-10, 2020

8:45 am – 12:00 pm

Open to 4-year olds –
incoming 4th graders

\$25 per child



MISSIONFACTORY July 6-10, 2020

8:45 am – 12:00 pm

Open to incoming
5th and 6th graders

\$25 per child



How the Virus Stole Easter

By Kristi Bothur (with a nod to Dr. Seuss!)

Twas late in '19 when the virus began
Bringing chaos and fear to all people, each land.

People were sick, hospitals full,
Doctors overwhelmed, no one in school.

As winter gave way to the promise of spring,
The virus raged on, touching peasant and king.

People hid in their homes from the enemy unseen.
They YouTubed and Zoomed, social-distanced, and cleaned.

April approached and churches were closed.
"There won't be an Easter," the world supposed.

"There won't be church services, and egg hunts are out.
No reason for new dresses when we can't go about."

Holy Week started, as bleak as the rest.
The world was focused on masks and on tests.

"Easter can't happen this year," it proclaimed.
"Online and at home, it just won't be the same."

Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, the days came and went.
The virus pressed on; it just would not relent.

The world woke Sunday and nothing had changed.
The virus still menaced, the people, estranged.

"Pooh pooh to the saints," the world was grumbling.
They're finding out now that no Easter is coming.

"They're just waking up! We know just what they'll do!"
Their mouths will hang open a minute or two,
And then all the saints will all cry boo-hoo.

"That noise," said the world, "will be something to hear."
So it paused and the world put a hand to its ear.

And it did hear a sound coming through all the skies.
It started down low, then it started to rise.

But the sound wasn't depressed.
Why, this sound was triumphant!
It couldn't be so!
But it grew with abundance!

The world stared around, popping its eyes.
Then it shook! What it saw was a shocking surprise!

Every saint in every nation, the tall and the small,
Was celebrating Jesus in spite of it all!

It hadn't stopped Easter from coming! It came!
Somehow or other, it came just the same!

And the world with its life quite stuck in quarantine
Stood puzzling and puzzling.
"Just how can it be?"

"It came without bonnets, it came without bunnies,
It came without egg hunts, cantatas, or money."

Then the world thought of something it hadn't before.
"Maybe Easter," it thought, "doesn't come from a store.
Maybe Easter, perhaps, means a little bit more."

And what happened then?
Well....the story's not done.
What will YOU do?

Will you share with that one
Or two or more people needing hope in this night?
Will you share the source of your life in this fight?

The churches are empty - but so is the tomb,
And Jesus is victor over death, doom, and gloom.

So this year at Easter, let this be our prayer,
As the virus still rages all around, everywhere.

May the world see hope when it looks at God's people.
May the world see the church is not a building or steeple.
May the world find Faith in Jesus' death and resurrection,
May the world find Joy in a time of dejection.
May 2020 be known as the year of survival,
But not only that -
Let it start a revival.



The CHIMES

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**We are praying for these and many other members in our congregation.
We are also praying for all others that are doing essential jobs.**



SYMPATHIES

Please join in extending sympathy to:

The family of *Patsy Corts*

Curt and Beth Johnson, on the death of Curt's mother, Carolyn Johnson

Debbie Klein, on the death of her brother, Bruce Leonard

The family of *Jerry Parlee*

Betty Roach, on the death of her husband, *Donald Roach*

Kathy Sobeski, on the death of her niece, Lori

Mary Ford, on the death of her daughter, Paula Ford Martin

The Breeden Family, on the death of *Dick Breeden*

Jim and Ingrid Kaufman, on the death of Jim's brother, Ronald Kaufman

The *Ryerson* family, on the death of Marcia

CONGRATULATIONS

Ryan & Rebecca Zyks on the birth of their son, Hudson Eric Zyks, March 12, 2020

Kevin and Carol Kelley on the birth of their grandson, Cole Sullivan Kelley, Son of Scott and Ali Kelley, April 8, 2020



First Pres recently posted a banner outside the church to thank all of the first responders, teachers, medical staff, grocery store workers and all other essential workers that are helping us cope with this widespread pandemic.