



The CHIMES

The Newsletter of First Presbyterian Church of Arlington Heights

November 2021

♥ Choose love. 🏰 Be the light. 🌍 Change the world.

From the Pastor **The Bright Side**

by Rev. Alex Lang, Head of Staff

When I was growing up in Virginia, I had a friend whose father built him a very large metal slide. At the top of the slide was a bar you could grab to steady yourself before flying to the bottom. As we got used to the slide, we started using the bar as a means to launch ourselves down the slide at a very high velocity.

One day, we decided to see who could get down the slide the fastest. We were racing up and down the slide, faster and faster, until I had a bad launch. I fell over the edge of the slide and slammed into the wooden post at the bottom. The edge of the post punctured my chest. Obviously, it really hurt and I was bleeding like crazy. I have a very vivid memory of my mother going through the process of putting ointment on my wound and replacing the bandages every day.

I remember when my dad came home that evening, he asked me what happened. I told him the whole story of how we were racing and slinging ourselves down the slide. Then I remember him saying, “Well, on the bright side, you’ve learned an important lesson: you’ll never do that again.” He was right, I had learned an important lesson. The pain of that injury made me quite wary of slides and, from that point forward, I was always much more aware of the risks accompanied with being high up in the air.

What happened to me that day would become a pattern in my life. The bright side of challenging and painful events would help me to learn and grow. Indeed, this pattern is something that happens to all of us and is very true of the last year and a half. We have all been through something very painful and difficult because of the pandemic.

However, thanks to the vaccine, we are now inching closer to the prospect of normalcy.

Although we’re not out of the woods yet, we have been given a little bit of space to reflect on what has happened. I am starting to look for that silver lining. What can we take away from this challenging time as we forge ahead? For me, I have been incredibly impressed with the resilience of our congregation. In spite of everything, many of you have been financially supportive of our church, even when we were shut down.

You have made sure this church continued to serve the needy, pay the staff, and keep the lights on. Thanks to your

generosity, we continued to assist our community by helping them to pay late bills, rent, or buy groceries. We realized there was an opportunity for us to reach a wider audience by expanding our digital footprint and

Back to the *Bright Side*
RENEWING our COMMITMENT to GOD

putting more material online.

Moreover, we ran a capital campaign to upgrade our facilities to make it more accessible, an issue that we’ve been needing to address since I came in 2013. Thankfully, even though our giving was down this past year, we kept our expenses low, which allowed us to come out ahead in terms of our budget. All of these things are positives that came out of a really difficult situation.

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November Worship Theme



The ability to see the positive side of a negative experience is one of the greatest assets of the Christian faith. During November, we will explore the ways we found hope in the midst of the pandemic.



Worship Highlights

SHARE WHAT YOU ARE THANKFUL FOR

During our worship services in November, you'll find leaf shaped sticky notes in the pews. You're encouraged to write something that you're thankful for on a sticky note and post it on the tree in the Narthex. Let's create a forest of thanksgiving during the month of November!



Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. Psalm 100:4.

NOVEMBER 7

STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY

As we approach the season of Thanksgiving, we reflect with gratitude on the abundance God has provided us. We prayerfully consider our gifts of time and talent to the mission and ministry of First Pres in 2022.

NOVEMBER 14

COMMITMENT SUNDAY

Bring you commitment cards to worship as we celebrate and dedicate these gifts in worship.

NOVEMBER 21

THANKSGIVING WORSHIP

INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS AND NEW MEMBERS

Thanksgiving worship with installation of officers to the class of 2024 and reception of new members. You can read more about our new officers on page 17 of this edition of The Chimes.

November 7 | *Developing Good Habits*

Scriptures: Matthew 15:32-38; Matthew 25:14-29

Stewardship Sunday

9:00 am – Compass

10:30 am – Chancel Choir & First Pres Brass

November 14 | *Discovering What's Important*

Scriptures: John 21:15-18; Genesis 3:8-13, 17-19

Commitment Sunday

9:00 am – Compass

10:30 am – Chancel Choir

November 21 | *Thankfulness*

Scriptures: I Thessalonians 5: 12-24; Psalm 100

Installation of Officers and Reception of New Members

9:00 am – Compass

10:30 am – Chancel Choir and Chancel Handbell Choir

Concert Series

Howard Goodall's "Eternal Light: A Requiem"

Wednesday, November 3, 7:00 pm

A community-wide All Saints' Day Service of Remembrance, following Family Night dinner. Goodall's Requiem is a balm for the living. It provides a template with which to work through one's grief. Its delicate and sensitive music, scored for strings, harp, organ, piano, soloists, and choir, was originally premiered with dance.



Since its premiere, it is seldom offered in this manner, but First Pres will be honoring its origins, presenting the work with dance. We invite you to come experience the community-wide All Saints' Day Service of Remembrance and encourage you to invite a friend. We will search for the kindly light together and find the healing grace that "one step" forward has to offer. A free will offering during the service will go to support JourneyCare.


Wednesdays
@ Noon

Chris Urban, organ

Wednesday, November 3, 12:10 pm-12:45 pm

An organ recital featuring music of the Reformation.



Praise and Thanksgiving Concert

Sunday, November 21, 4:00 pm

On Sunday, November 21 at 4:00 pm join us for 'Praise and Thanksgiving'. Adam Hendrickson will lead our in-house brass ensemble, First Pres Brass, Chris Urban at the organ and Pam Orals at the piano in a concert of music of the Thanksgiving season. The highlight of the concert will be the third movement of Symphony No. 3 'Organ Symphony' by Camille Saint-Saëns. Of composing the work, Saint-Saëns said "I gave everything to it I was able to give. What I have here accomplished, I will never achieve again." The work contains virtuoso piano passages, brilliant orchestral writing characteristic of the Romantic period, and the sound of a mighty pipe organ. An afternoon you won't want to miss. After the concert, those 60+ are invited to stay for the Wise and Sage dinner hosted by our youth in Fellowship Hall. To register for the dinner, call the church office.



Child care is provided for evening concerts by calling the office for a reservation (no later than four days in advance).

All concerts can be attended in person or livestreamed at firstpresah.org

Bite-sized Music Opportunity

Starting this month, we are pleased to offer a short-term singing opportunity for those who can't make a long-term commitment. Rehearse four Wednesday evenings from 7:00 - 8:00 pm November 10, 17 and December 1, 8 and sing in the choir for the 4:00 pm Christmas Concert on Sunday, December 12.

Contact: Adam Hendrickson - adamhendrickson@firstpresah.org

The Bright Side, continued

by Rev. Alex Lang, Head of Staff

Continued from page 1

This is why our stewardship campaign is called **Back to the Bright Side: Renewing Our Commitment to God**. Although we are still not operating at full capacity, we're trying to make the best out of our circumstances. You may remember that, prior to our kick-off in September, we sent out a brochure outlining all the events and activities we had planned for the fall.

We did this because we wanted to inspire you to become recommitted to making church an active part of your life again. Now we need you to renew your commitment to our community through your financial giving and your volunteerism within our community. As we've been trying to do more, our expenses have risen and we need more volunteer help to run our programs.

*If we're going to become a thriving church once again, we need you to be **ALIN!***

Therefore, what we need from you is twofold. In terms of your financial commitment, if you can afford to give what you've been giving, please do so. We haven't asked you to increase your giving in several years because of the pandemic, but if you can afford to give a little more, even if



it's a few hundred dollars, that can make a huge difference. As you know, everything has gotten more expensive and there will be some people whose financial circumstances may change as the pandemic continues to unfold.

If you've never made a commitment before and need a benchmark of what to contribute to the church, a great starting point is \$40 a week. That comes out to \$2,080 for the year for an individual and \$4,160 for a couple. Of course, if you can give more, every dollar helps. Once you've made your financial commitment, we need you to dedicate your time to helping our programs. We need you to find a way that you can give your talents back to the congregation.

When your commitment card comes in the mail, we're asking you to write down your financial contribution for Commitment Sunday on November 14. On that card is also a check box indicating that you are part of the **ALIN!** initiative at the church, volunteering your time and talents. I ask that you prayerfully consider how your commitment of time, talent and treasure will make a tangible difference at First Pres as we renew our commitment to God's work in the world. 

Community Life

Restaurant Walk is Up and Running

In October, we had a great kick-off to our Restaurant Walk program. We had eight groups gather for food and fellowship throughout the month at local restaurant Armand's. The walk is designed to promote greater community in our congregation as well as support local

businesses that were affected during the pandemic. We plan to bring the Restaurant Walk back with sign-ups in January and meals taking place in February. Watch your Chimes and Church Life for opportunities to sign up. 



Pictured: Todd Hjermstad, Chuck Beech, Lee Nelson, Larry Olson, Laurie Ruhlin, & Chris Urban



Pictured: Lori & Curt Chandler, Kelly Dean, Kate Ingemunson, Mark Bishop, Matt Kogan, Carol Frieburg, & Tom Krigas

Family NIGHT

We have shared delicious meals and heartwarming fellowship “under the stars” as Family Night has gathered outdoors in the west parking lot this fall for dinner. It has been wonderful to come together again as a church family to participate in this delightful church program. Each week, a

group of dedicated volunteers prep, cook, and clean up while church members and friends enjoy each other’s company over dinner. Following dinner, adults, youth, and children alike participate in programs designed just for them. We look forward to what the rest of the year brings to Family Night and to our church family! If you haven’t already given Family Night a try, why not come out on a Wednesday night and see what’s it all about. Drop-in dinner is available from 6:00-7:00 pm followed by programming from 7:00-8:00 pm. *Contact: Katy Allen at katyallen@firstpresah.org*

Weekly Schedule

Dinner for all ages

6:00-7:00 pm

Fellowship Hall, enter through Door 4, 7, or 8.

Children’s Choir (K-5th grade)

6:30-7:00 pm | Sanctuary

Classes & Programs

7:00 - 8:00 pm

Special Concert at Family Night

Wednesday, November 3

- 7:00 pm Chancel Choir, soloist, dance and orchestra present Howard Goodall’s *Eternal Light: A Requiem*.

Adult Education

THE POWER OF POVERTY

Wednesdays, November 10th, 17th and December 1st, 8th
Read more about this class on page 19 of The Chimes.
Sanctuary / *Contact: Michele Holifield*

Career Planning Course

This five-week Career Planning Course from our Career Transition Resources Team covers the most important cornerstones of your job search or career journey, including self-assessment, budgeting, resume building, marketing, networking, interview preparation, and negotiations. Current course ends November 10. Winter session runs Wednesdays, February 2, 9, 16, 23, and March 9.
Room 102/104 *Contact: CTR@firstpresah.org*



Adult Music

In November & December, we are pleased to offer a short-term singing opportunity for those who can’t make a long-term commitment. Rehearse four Wednesday evenings from 7:00-8:00 pm November 10, 17 and December 1, 8 and sing in the choir for the 4:00 pm Christmas Concert on Sunday, December 12. Choir Rehearsal Room. *Contact: Adam Hendrickson adamhendrickson@firstpresah.org*

Children And Youth

Kids Connect (K-5) and MSYG (middle School)



What’s Happening at Kids Connect?

Our K-5th graders enjoy programming created specifically for them at Kids Connect. We can’t wait to get to the gym to run off some energy and play some fun games! Each week offers a new game so there’s always something to look forward to! Our classroom activities engage our creative side each week – we’ve made handprint flowers and yarn painting, with lots more fun stuff yet to come this year. All K-5th graders are welcome! *Contact: Katy Allen at katyallen@firstpresah.org*



First Concerts of the 2021-2022 Season

On Sunday, October 3 we welcomed **Crossing Borders Music** as our first concert of the 2021-2022 Concert Series season. The chamber orchestra and oud (like a lute) broadened our listening ears with *Reflections from the Arab World*, a program of music from Syria, Palestine, Lebanon, Jordan, and the USA. A fitting close to a day when we celebrated World Communion with our brothers and sisters around the globe.



Stephen B. Bright, Annual Speaker

On Sunday, October 10, we welcomed **Stephen B. Bright**, the Harvey L. Karp Visiting Lecturer in Law at Yale Law School to First Pres. Mr. Bright, a vivid storyteller and scholar of Civil Rights history led us on a discussion called *Finding Life on Death Row*. He illuminated us with stories of defendants he has represented and how many have gone on to become productive members of society. There was wide participation from the community with church members, members of the legal community and high school students, who are reading Bryan Stevenson's book *Just Mercy* where Mr. Bright is featured. 📍



Stephen B. Bright and Courtney Lang

On Wednesday, October 6, we enjoyed our first Wednesday @ Noon concert with **Chuck Beech** at the piano and **Chris Urban** at the organ playing favorite hymns. Selections included, Great Is Thy Faithfulness, All Creatures of Our God and King, Savior Like a Shepherd, Lead Us and Be Thou My Vision. 📍



Next Concerts

Mark your calendar for our next Day of Concerts on Wednesday, November 3

- 12:10 pm Chris Urban organ recital
- 7:00 pm Chancel Choir, soloist, dance and orchestra present Howard Goodall's *Eternal Light: A Requiem*.

Decorating for Christmas

Help transform our church for the Christmas Season on **Saturday, November 27th at 9:30am**. This is a huge undertaking and needs the help of everyone! Anyone over the age of 12-including husbands, boyfriends and friends are welcome for some fun getting ready for Christmas and dressing up the church for all to enjoy! Lots of hands make more fun and work easier! Don't miss getting into the holiday spirit! 📍



First Presbyterian Church of Arlington Heights – The Chimes



Saturday, October 30, 2:00 – 4:00 pm
Halloween Trunk or Treat

Join us in the West Parking Lot as we invite children in our community to trick or treat from the decorated trunks of our cars.

Wednesday, November 3, 12:10 pm
Wednesday @ Noon Recital

Chris Urban presents an organ recital of music of the reformation.

Wednesday, November 3, 7:00 pm
All Saints' Day Service of Remembrance

Chancel Choir, orchestra, and dancers present Howard Goodall's 'Eternal Light' in a community All Saints' Day service. Join us for dinner at 6:00 pm.

November 7 – November 21
Fill A Van for the Food Bank

Help us fill an entire van with non-perishable food items to donate to a local food bank. We will dedicate the gifts on Sunday, November 21.

Saturday, November 13, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm
Service Saturday

We will assemble Gifts of the Heart Hygiene Kits for Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, make lunch for our local firefighters to say thank you, and deliver cookies to church members who are homebound or living in a nursing home.

Sunday, November 21, 4:00 pm
Praise and Thanksgiving

First Pres Brass Ensemble joins Christopher Urban at the organ to present music of the Thanksgiving season. Those 60+ are encouraged to stay for the **Wise and Sage Dinner** at 5:30pm.

Sunday, November 21, 5:30 pm
Wise & Sage Dinner

High School youth host a Thanksgiving dinner for members who are 60+. Be sure to attend the 4:00pm **Praise and Thanksgiving Concert** just prior to dinner.

Saturday, November 27, 9:30 am
Decorate the Church for Christmas

Come out and enjoy a morning beautifying our building with all our Christmas decor! Make it a family event, there is fun work for all ages.



Next Service Saturday Event November 13, 10:00 am–12:00 pm

On Saturday, November 13 we will gather to make a difference in our local community and then spread our love wider. Our November service day is ambitious – we need many people to make this day a success. Invite a friend and join us.

THERE IS A TASK FOR EVERYONE:

- Prepare, pack and deliver lunches to the Arlington Heights Fire Department.
- Pack hygiene kits for Presbyterian Disaster Assistance – our goal is 200 kits; donate items from list below
- Pack and deliver cookies to homebound church members
- Create cards to go with our lunches and cookie packs

Donate items for hygiene kits beginning October 24

We are collecting supplies for the Hygiene Kits October 24 through November 11. Donations can be dropped off at the Service Saturday information table on Sunday mornings, or inside Door 9 at the church during regular office hours. Donated items needed for the Hygiene Kits are specific, please see list to the right.

Monetary donations to cover supplies, lunches, and shipping can be made as well. Go to firstpresab.org/contribute/give/ and click the Give Now button, and choose Service Saturday from the Select a Fund drop down.



Donate these specific items for kits

- Hand Towels (no fingertip or bath towels)
- Washcloths
- Wide Tooth comb
- Nail clippers
- Bars of soap
- 1 toothbrush (must be in individual original packaging)
- Band-aids

Our Second Service Saturday Was Held on October 16

We gathered on a chilly Saturday morning on Dunton to host a block party for our neighbors at Parkview Place and to start on our goal of 500 Bookmarks for Liberation Library. Watch for more opportunities on Sunday mornings and at Family Night to add your creative bookmark to help us reach our 500 Bookmark goal.



Mary and Martha's Lending Closet is Open

Reserve your holiday gathering items today at Mary and Martha's Lending Closet. We have everything you need for a casual or elegant gathering. Cost is by donation. Since June 2021, donations to the lending closet have exceeded \$1,000.00. Donations are distributed to area organizations seeking to address food insecurity in the Chicago area. Email maryandmartha@firstpresab.org today for an appointment to reserve your fall and holiday celebration items.

Mary AND Martha's LENDING CLOSET



Christopher House & Firman House Donations

CHRISTOPHER HOUSE CHRISTMAS GIFTS

Because of your generosity last year during the holiday season, 100 families were helped with major bills and gift cards for Christmas.

Instead of adopting a Christopher House family and buying, wrapping, and delivering Christmas gifts for them, we had an excellent alternative called the Thrive Fund. Because we are still unable to deliver gifts because the pandemic continues, we will be contributing again to the Christopher House Thrive Fund.

This fund exists to assist families who are struggling to pay major bills, such as rent or utilities. These families are still struggling and this fund will also allow them to have gift cards to provide gifts that are most useful to each family. For more information, contact Liz Thompson 847-537-9087 or lizht85@yahoo.com

**BETWEEN NOVEMBER 1 AND DECEMBER 2,
YOU MAY CONTRIBUTE TO THE THRIVE FUND or
FIRMAN HOUSE ONLINE OR BY CHECK**

FIRMAN HOUSE WINTER ITEMS

Last year your generous donations to Firman House made it possible for lots of children to have the warm winter items they needed. All the families are most grateful for your valued gifts. Please keep these young children in mind again this year! Instead of picking out hats, mittens, and scarfs, think of the amount you would pay, add a little, and donate that so these items may be purchased and given to the families of Firman House! Your donations mean so much to these children. Thank you!

Questions? Contact: Kathy Doering at 847-255-4364 or doering.kathy.m@gmail.com. 📧

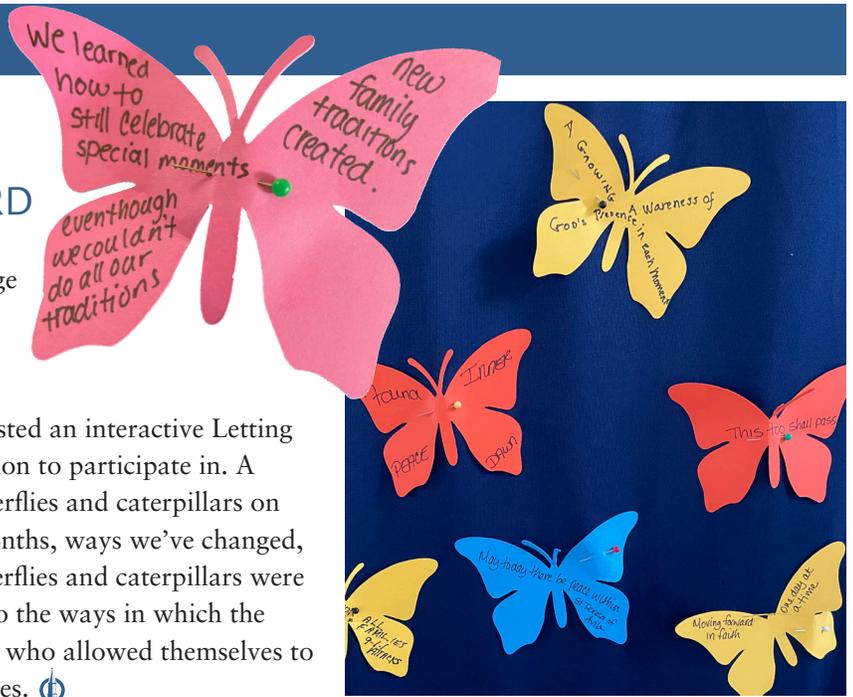
Be sure to choose "CH Thrive Fund" or "Firman Winter Items" from the *select a Fund* dropdown when giving online. Or write "CH Thrive Fund" or "Firman Winter Items" in the memo section of your check that may be sent to Debbie Walter in the church office. Your monetary gifts will make the holidays a lot brighter for these struggling families! Thank You!



Children's Ministries

LETTING GO & MOVING FORWARD

The beginning of the church's program year always gives us a chance to make new commitments, reengage after summer break, and take new steps in our faith journey. This program year offered yet another opportunity – this one unique to the pandemic times we continue to live through. Children's Ministries hosted an interactive Letting Go & Moving Forward experience for the congregation to participate in. A tree was set up in the Narthex along with paper butterflies and caterpillars on which to write things we learned over the past 18 months, ways we've changed, or insights into our own lives. Week after week, butterflies and caterpillars were added to the display and gave a beautiful glimpse into the ways in which the pandemic impacted our lives. Thank you to everyone who allowed themselves to be vulnerable in sharing their thoughts and experiences. 🙏



Sunday School Highlights



Creating a bulletin board display



Learning about Faithfulness



Finding examples of joy



Reading our Bibles

Youth Ministries

HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH TO HOST WISE & SAGE DINNER

We are planning on having the **Wise and Sage Thanksgiving Dinner on Sunday, November 21st at 5:30pm** following the **Praise and Thanksgiving Concert at 4:00 pm**. If you are 60 or older the High School Youth would love to invite you to be served a delicious dinner and enjoy wonderful company! We're excited to be able to put this event on again after a year off due to covid. Please join us!



CONFIRMATION FUN NIGHT

Back in October we had the **Confirmation Fun Night** for our 8th grade youth. We played a lot of games, got to know each other better, solved some team building conundrums, and grew together in fellowship. It was a wonderful night and helped to pave the way for the year of learning, challenging, and growing ahead.



First Pres PDO & Preschool Update

We have 148 students all settled into the school year. We have been busy getting to know our classmates, teachers and our school. Halloween festivities include parties in the classroom and attending the Trunk or Treat event with Children's and Youth Ministries.

In November we will be discussing how important it is to be thankful for our friends, family and for what we have during this time of Thanksgiving. 🙏



FIRST PRES
PDO & Preschool



Engage & ENCOUNTER

We have two new adult education classes for November and December that will be of interest to members of our community. Our **Sunday morning class will be taught by Dr. Donald Kaasch and is titled *Revisiting the New Testament***. As with other classes taught by Dr. Kaasch, the focus will be on the historical/critical approach to the materials within the New Testament. However, in this class there will be an additional emphasis upon the traditional language about the materials and how they have steered the perception of the NT writings in ways that are, in fact, nonbiblical.

We will be focusing on questions such as who wrote the New Testament? What gave these few writers the status of writing the very words of God? What were the conflicts within the 1st century church and who came out the winner? Do we even dare look with a critical and open mind at the only source in existence for the life and message of a Jew named Y'shua who came from a Galilean town called Nasreta? Join Dr. Kaasch as he walks the class through

Sunday Morning Adult Education Class

REVISITING THE NEW TESTAMENT

Sundays, November 7 – December 19
9:00am / Boardroom / Dr. Donald Kaasch

learning about the Christian Canon, a small collection of various writings, mostly letters, written by a handful of early followers of the Christ, the M'shiach, a man named Y'shua.

Our **Wednesday evening class is called *The Power of Poverty* and is being taught by Michele Holifield**. Poverty in suburban communities has recently accounted for nearly half the overall growth in poverty in the United States. Individuals and families express difficulty in meeting basic needs at an alarming rate. We often think of poverty as simply a lack of money, but the impacts of poverty are more far reaching and insidious. Poverty negatively impacts everything in a person's life, from personal choice to education to physical health to mental health to your sense of self-worth. There is no aspect of your life that is not impacted by poverty.

Moreover, as a community of faith, we are called to take care of those who struggle, but when there is so much working against them, what does that mean? How can we change the outcome of people who are stuck in poverty? Come and hear how poverty affects people in the suburbs and how, as a community of faith, we can answer the call to empower those who experience poverty. ☪

Wednesday Evening Adult Education Class

THE POWER OF POVERTY

Wednesdays, November 10, 17 and December 1, 8
7:00pm / Sanctuary / Michele Holifield

Coffee: Grounds For Discussion And Service

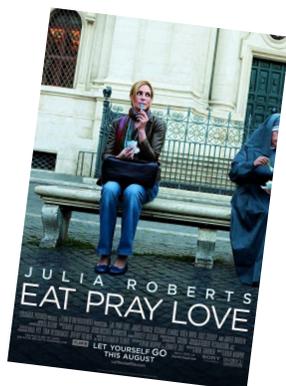
Sundays through May 15 / 10:30-11:30 am / Rm 110/112

October 31: We'll develop the plan for our Advent Service Projects

November 7 & 14: Watch the movie *Eat Pray Love* starring Julia Roberts

November 21: Complete a lesson from The Thoughtful Christian website on the movie *Eat Pray Love*

November 28 - December 19: Work on our Advent Service Projects Bring your own coffee and your mask. We are set up to social distance in our classroom. We would love to see you there!



Monday Morning Men's Bible Study

Join the **Monday Morning Men's Bible Study Group!** We meet every Monday at 8:00 am via Zoom and in person in the Parlor. If you are interested in joining the group or if you have questions, contact Bill Dillon at cdillon@sbcglobal.net or Dave Berkow at dwbarkow@att.net.

As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.

- Proverbs 27:17

October Session Notes



By Laura Carlson, Clerk of Session

Based on the Approved Minutes from the Meeting of Session on October 3, 2021 and Unapproved Minutes from the Administrative Meeting of Session on October 11, 2021.

ACTION ITEMS

Motion passed to change the date of the Administrative Meeting from Monday November 8 to Monday November 15, 2021.

Motion passed to approve the guidelines for indoor programming involving food as outlined by the COVID Task Force which took effect in October.

HIGHLIGHTS

Session decided the ALL-IN A Minute should include:

- Visual of ALL-IN brochure and webpage address
- Define what it means to be ALL-IN
- Reminder that everyone needs to sign up on webpage
- Give specific ways for participating pulling directly from ALL-IN brochure

Session decided everyone needs to sign up on the ALL-IN webpage so that we can accurately gauge participation and get everyone involved. The ALL-IN webpage was edited accordingly so those who are currently participating can check a box to indicate level of current participation and

where they are participating.

Session decided to send direct emails to First Pres community to remind everyone to make a commitment and sign up to be ALL-IN on the webpage.

Session reviewed the goals submitted by each member and formed committees for each category of goals (i.e., internal, external, cultural). Each group will meet prior to the next strategic planning meeting on Sunday November 7. Each group would present at the next meeting.

Administrative and Finance Committee reported that overall, the financials of First Pres look good. A reminder was also given to a few committees who have not yet turned in their budgets.

The next **Strategic Planning Meeting** will be held in the Parlor on Sunday November 7, 2021. At this meeting, Session will welcome new officers.

The next **Administrative Session Meeting** will be held on Monday November 15, 2021. The meeting will begin in the Sanctuary and move to the Boardroom. Session will interview and welcome new members at the beginning of the meeting.

Most Respectfully Submitted, Laura Carlson, Clerk of Session *A copy of the unapproved minutes is available upon request at lauracarlson2011@hotmail.com

Please sign up for We have all heard the children's rhyme often used to help describe the essence of a church. Clasp your hands together and repeat after me, "Here is the church, here is the steeple, open the doors and see all the people." It takes a community to be a church. Much like the intertwining of your fingers, First Pres needs each one of us, joined together with the love of Jesus Christ. We are the church and we need each other to thrive.



By now most everyone has heard about **ALLIN!** at First Pres, but only a few of you have taken the action Session needs to you take. We need everyone to be **ALLIN!** and be "all the people" that do God's work at First Pres. So much of what we do at First Pres is done by volunteers and we greatly appreciate everyone who gives their time and talents. Whether you already do a lot, or if you are new to giving, we want everyone to sign up and commit to volunteering your time and talent. If you have not signed up to make your 2022 commitment to be **ALLIN!** go to the web site firstpresah.org/allin/ and sign up now.

November 2021

Session reorganization

While **ALLIN!** is an important element of our future, another equally important initiative executed earlier this year was the restructuring of session.

During discussions about the future of First Pres, Session realized that we needed a comprehensive strategy to reverse the decline in membership and increase participation. Changes in structure and focus for session were a critical part of the plan to move the First Pres community faithfully forward and foster a culture that is warm, welcoming, and inviting. Ultimately, the changes have created a governing body that can make decisions more quickly, respond more proactively to the needs of the congregation and community, and spend time planning and developing church-wide goals and comprehensive strategies. In December, we look forward to sharing the church-wide goals we are working on now for 2022.

The take home point here is that Session realized that if we wanted to change the direction of First Pres we needed to change the governing structure. Again, these organizational changes are only one part of the necessary action to move

Session Highlights

Continued from page 13

First Pres forward and grow our church. We need your help too. The brochure on the following pages shows the changes that have been made: the size of Session has been reduced from 21 to 12; the primary focus of Session has shifted from committee centered to vision and strategy; and the communication process among Session, Committees, and the

Congregation has been streamlined to improve consistency, accuracy, and timing.

When everyone gives of their time and talents, we can be a thriving church that continues the legacy of First Pres.

♥ Choose love. 🏰 Be the light. 🌍 Change the world.

Session Reorganization Plan - 2021

What's HAPPENING to SESSION?

On February 21st, 2021, our congregation approved a motion to amend the By-Laws of the congregation regarding the size of Session. The motion approved provides the following:

The number of elders in active service shall not exceed seventeen (17) nor be less than eleven (11).

Definitions

Session: Governing Body of the Church, consisting of Ruling Elders.

Ruling Elder: Elected by the congregation. Responsible for making leadership decisions for the church. Three year term.

Committee Chair: Prior to 2021, each of our 13 committees had a Ruling Elder to be the Chair. Going forward, the only committees with Ruling Elders are Personnel, Finance and Nominating.

Previous Session



Previous Session Meeting Structure

1 monthly meeting (Monday 7pm), lasting two and half hours. Most time was spent discussing 13 committee reports, leaving limited time and energy for vision and strategy.

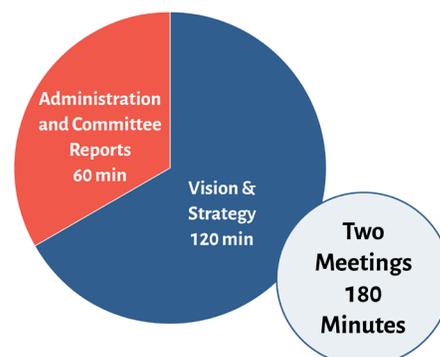


New Session



New Session Meeting Structure

Strategy and Goal Advancement meeting (Monthly, Sunday after services)
Administrative meeting: Committee requests, review of financials, etc. (Monthly, Monday at 7pm)

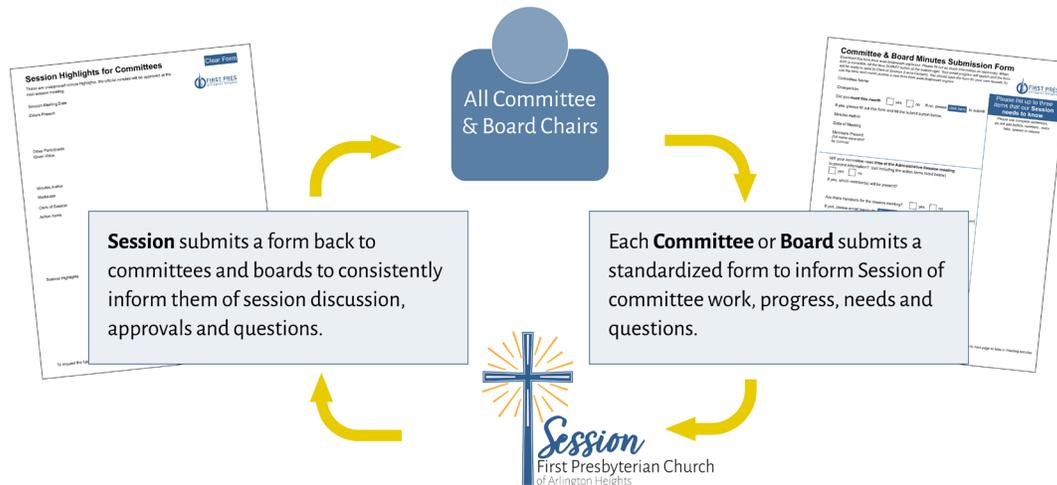


Vision and Strategic Goals

The Session is now focused on three strategic goals per year that will enable the congregation to have a culture that is **warm, welcoming, and inviting to those inside and outside of the church**. These three goals will be extracted from the CAT survey (which the congregation filled out in January 2020), and will be shared with the congregation in December 2021.



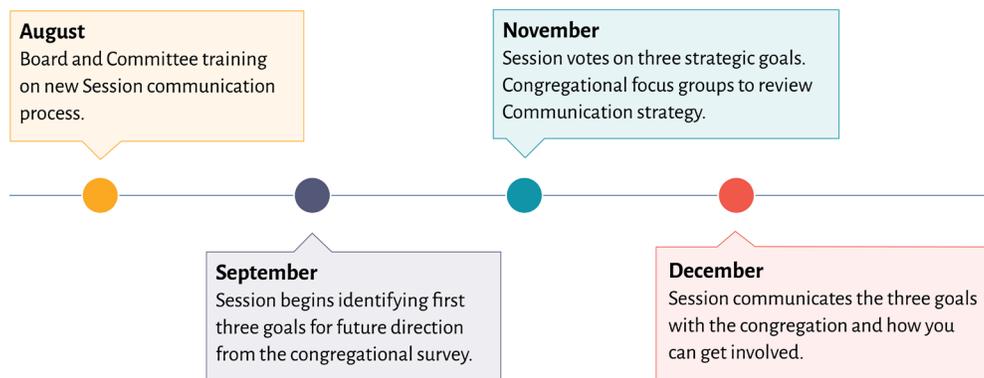
How Session will interact with committees moving forward



Benefits

Increased Agility of Session: quicker decision making, pivoting more easily, enabling others to take important roles, transparent and consistent communication to committees, boards and the congregation.

Session Planning Timeline



Your Session

Class of 2021

Tom Carroll
Robert Churchill
Carrie Costello
Marjorie Lock
Tom Pardo

Class of 2022

Laura Carlson
Gary Gehm
Cynthia Hiskes
Kristen Walter

Class of 2023

Marilynn Graves
Laura Grochocki
Marc Washco

Giving Opportunities Beyond the General Fund

Reaching out and extending our blessings beyond our own lives is an intrinsic part of Christian stewardship. If First Presbyterian Church has played a vital role in your life – in times of joy and difficulty – you can help to continue its vital mission.

Your gifts to the church, both now and after your lifetime, can make your church stronger and more responsive to the needs of generations to come. In 2021, we were fortunate to receive bequests from several members who passed away. These gifts have been used to make repairs to the CE wing plumbing and the fire alarm system that were unexpected and not budgeted for in the general fund.

As we enter a season of Stewardship and Thanksgiving, we hope that you, like so many before you, will consider making a financial commitment to First Pres that will sustain the church into the next generation.

Below are three ways you can give to the future of the church.

MEMORIAL GIFTS

When a loved one passes away, many families prefer that their friends donate to a charity in lieu of sending flowers. The First Presbyterian Church Memorial Fund receives gifts in memory of persons who are deceased and in honor of living persons. Gifts are acknowledged and a permanent record is kept. Depending on the amount received, the wishes of the family or honoree, and the concurrence of the Session, the funds may be used for a prioritized need or deposited to the Endowment Fund. You can even direct which programs you would like to see supported with your gifts if you so choose.

ENDOWMENT FUND



First Presbyterian Church uses endowment funds to carry out our mission. Our Endowment Fund has been built up by the gifts and bequests of faithful stewards to strengthen the ongoing work of the church. Donors recognize the opportunity to give a gift that keeps on giving, since investment returns magnify the impact of the original gift. Just as annual stewardship giving is a chance to return to God a portion of our annual income, contributions to the Endowment Fund provide a means to share the accumulated gifts God provides us, as a durable support for the ministry of First Pres.

PLANNED GIFTS

There are many ways to plan for a future gift to First Pres, such as securities, bequests, a charitable remainder trust, or by naming the church as the beneficiary of a retirement account, including an IRA, insurance policy, or other types of assets. Please consult your financial advisor. Gifts to First Pres are subject to acceptance by the church, based on its ability to use the gift as intended, and to administer the gift within the mission and guidelines of the church.

Why Give?

Giving is our opportunity to return to God a portion of what God gives to us. Giving is an important way to make a difference in this world for God’s kingdom. Through our ministry, fellowship, and outreach, we are a second home, a helping hand, a spiritual counselor, a family of friends, a welcoming community, and an extension of God’s love.

For more information contact *Debbie Walter* at debbiewalter@firstpresah.org. 

“But just as you excel in everything – in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us – see that you also excel in this grace of giving.” - II Corinthians 8:7

GIVING FOR SEPTEMBER 2021

Below is a summary of the church’s income for the month of September and Year-to-Date. We encourage everyone to give regularly and generously. Thank you for your good stewardship!

	MONTH OF SEPTEMBER	YEAR TO DATE
Receipts	\$ 89,864	\$902,540
Expenses	\$137,997	\$960,204
Balance	(\$48,133)	(\$57,664)

CLASS OF 2024 ELDERS

Don Lyon Member since 1974

What do you like most about First Pres?

It is a church dedicated to community service and outreach. It is a church that encourages the congregation to seek their individual faith without judgment. No one pretends to have all the answers but encourages questions. I also like that the church is two blocks from my house!!

What are you looking forward to in your role?

I look forward to being a part of the “evolution” process the church is embarking upon.

I was confirmed at First Pres in 1974 and have been a member for 46 years! My wife Lori and I have three daughters, all confirmed at First Pres, and three grandchildren. The church that fed me will no longer feed their spiritual needs. I look forward to finding ways to keep First Presbyterian Church relevant in our changing society.



Floyd Mays Member since 2021

What do you like most about First Pres?

In my time at the church what I enjoyed most so far is the Family Nights that are set up on Wednesday. It's a great opportunity to invite the community and nonmembers out for a hot meal and a chance to meet and learn more about what the church has to offer.

What are you looking forward to in your role?

As a leader of this church I am looking forward to bringing a different perspective and outlook on life. I pray that with the help of Pastor Alex and you, the congregation, we can bridge the gap and worship as one people and one body in Christ. Change is coming and am looking forward to being a part of the progress. Thank you for allowing me to serve your church.

I am a graduate of Augustana College located in Rock Island, Illinois with a Bachelor's in Psychology and Communication. Currently I work for Wells Fargo in the Equipment Finance side of the business. Most of my free time is dedicated to my sneaker reselling business that I hope to one day turn into my full-time job. When not working or studying for my Master's program, I enjoy taking walks, listening to music, and reading a good book.



Steve Olszewski Member since 2018

What do you like most about First Pres?

The various opportunities (e.g., sermons, adult education classes, etc.) to strengthen the understanding of my faith and how it applies in my daily life.

What are you looking forward to in your role?

To assist in broadening the role that our church community plays in our day-to-day lives.



I was baptized as a baby in the Presbyterian Church but have been a member of churches of various denominations as I have lived in Belgium, Hong Kong, New Jersey, Connecticut, Texas, Virginia, and North Carolina. (Presbyterians are most places, but not everywhere.) Lisa (my better half) and I have four teenage children (Justin, Tyler, Kaitlin, and Reagan). We live in Barrington where we moved from North Carolina fifteen years ago. Most Sundays, we can be found at the 10:30 service worshipping with my parents, John & Jerri Olszewski, if we aren't taking one or more of the kids to a volleyball tournament. (Volleyball is the family sport.)

Dick Reeves Member since 1973

What do you like most about First Pres?

The people and staff are friendly, helpful, and caring for others. I'm frequently in awe of the generosity people make with their time, and the effort they make to help others in need. Beyond that, the church is continually trying new ways to reach out and connect with others as a family.

What are you looking forward to in your role?

I'm open to learning how best I can serve others better, and to connect in a more meaningful way.

I've been married to Elise for 40 wonderful years, we have two adult children, Robyn and Nathan, and have been a member since...1973! After 38 years I will be retiring from my corporate career in December and have started up a sign-making business with my son, Nathan. Looking forward to traveling with Elise, growing the business, and being more involved in the church.



Liz Thompson Member since 1980

What do you like most about First Pres?

I like the friendliness of the members.

What are you looking forward to in your role?

I will like getting to know and meet new people in the church.

Liz has been a member for 41 years and met her husband Bill in the Young Adult group here in the early 80's. She has previously served as an Elder, Deacon and Trustee. Currently retired, she loves to bake and spend time with daughter Emily.



CLASS OF 2024 DEACONS

Denise Beihoffer Member since 2005

What do you like most about First Pres?

I love the people, the pastors, and, especially, the congregational focus on serving and giving back to our community.

What are you looking forward to in your role?

I am most excited to serve as a Deacon because it is a job specifically focused on service to our church community



and beyond. I have enjoyed supporting the various Deacon-sponsored programs over the years and look forward to contributing to the success of those programs going forward.

I have lived in Arlington Heights since 1994. I am married to Tom and we have three children, all of whom were confirmed here at First Pres. Our daughter, Kristina, is a 2nd year law student at Loyola in Chicago and our twins, Sean and Alex, are seniors in high school this year. Kristina, in particular, was very involved in the First Pres youth group and made many lifelong friends here. Tom and I love the fact that we live close enough to walk to downtown Arlington Heights and we very much enjoy seeing shows and concerts at Metropolis and supporting our local restaurants and businesses. I especially love "shopping local" at the shops on Campbell Street.

Ann Borst *Member since 2015*

What do you like most about First Pres?

The friends and relationships I've made which have become an integral part of my life and are among my richest blessings. It is such an inspiration to feel the encouragement and care of both staff and members and I am especially grateful to be back together for worship and other varied church activities. One of my greatest joys at First Pres is being part of the Chancel Choir — a real highlight and an uplifting experience for both Bill and me.

What are you looking forward to in your role?

I anticipate the opportunity to be a listening ear and a realistic voice in the ongoing compassion and service offered to all those within our church family and community. I trust in God's leading in this new opportunity to serve along with the other members of the Board of Deacons.

My husband Bill and I are residents of The Moorings and enjoy being involved in the many activities which are a happy part of our daily life here. We are also privileged to have three of our four sons and their families living in the area which afford us many family times together.

Bill Hellyer *Member since 2001*

What do you like most about First Pres?

When I was looking for a home church a little more than 20 years ago, my wife encouraged me to check out First Pres because of its location and beauty. An environment that felt much like my childhood First Pres in Lewistown, IL and a warm welcome at my first visit brought me and my family back. The positive energy that challenges me to grow personally and in service to others is what keeps me involved.

What are you looking forward to in your role?

I served a partial term as Deacon early in my membership. To be completely honest, I accepted nomination for this term because I was asked. I'm looking forward to taking more responsibility in the mission of the church.



I've been married to Diana for 27 years. She teaches 4th grade in District 21. My son Joshua is at Georgetown studying finance and my daughter Kaylin is at Mizzou studying Journalism. I'm an occupational therapist at Kenneth Young Center and I enjoy running.

Carol Kelley *Member since 1986*

What do you like most about First Pres?

It feels like home.

What are you looking forward to?

I look forward to working with and getting to know some new people.

My husband Kevin and I have been active members for 36 years. Our three children grew up going to the church and we now have six grandchildren. I am an administrative assistant at Avenues to Independence. My favorite sport to play is volleyball. I enjoy watching the birds in my backyard, going to the movies and flea markets.



Stephanie Levinsky *Member since 2007*

What do you like most about First Pres?

What I like most about First Pres is Alex's sermons; always so relevant and applicable to both what is going on in my life and the world. His leadership translates into a very mission based church community which I believe is paramount in a church.

What are you looking forward to in your role?

I am looking forward to helping the church move forward from the past 19 months.

My husband Ira and I have three children. Ben is a sophomore at Emory University in Atlanta, Paige is a freshman at West Virginia University, and Leigh is in 8th grade at St. Peter's School.



Andy Sturgeon *Member since 2018*

What do you like most about First Pres?

The two things about First Pres that drew my wife and I into attending and becoming members of the congregation are the music and the preaching. We have loved listening to a wide range of beautiful music and have also enjoyed being able to share in that music making as performers. (Andy and his wife Sam both play trombone in First Pres Brass.)

What are you looking forward to in your role?

I'm looking forward to getting to know more members within the congregation.

Sam and I had a little one during this time that we've been in a pandemic. Jay is now over one year old, and we are really looking forward to him getting to know other members of the church. Even though Sam and I only became members recently, I used to be a member of the Cub Scout Troop that met at First Pres when I was in Cub Scouts.



CLASS OF 2024 TRUSTEES

Lori Chandler Member since 2019

What do you like most about First Pres?

We were attracted to First Pres by the spirit of outreach and mission services. Even during the pandemic, members were asking how to connect and serve when it was a difficult task. We connect with the pastoral staff and are continuing to learn about our faith. We are enriched by the beautiful music.



What are you looking forward to in your role?

As a new Trustee, I have a lot to learn. I know my previous experience as the Instructional Director for a fairly large school district has taught me to question, reflect and then question again until I have enough information to make informed decisions. I hope to support the inclusionary mission of the church in all areas.

My husband is Curt. He sings with the choir and serves with the PADS program. We have three sons and five grandchildren. We moved here from Ohio to be closer to the two sons who settled in this area. (Go Browns!) I'm hoping to get back to the church golf league next spring and enjoy pickleball and playing Mah Jongg.

Dan Selke Member since 1989

What do you like most about First Pres?

It seems that most people at First Pres are there because they enjoy it, not because it is required or expected.



What are you looking forward to in your role?

I look forward to helping make best use of the available resources to the overall benefit of our church.

Married 37 years, two grown sons, members of the church for 32 years. Retired, an active tournament cribbage player, and follower of all the major sports. 🏈

CELEBRATIONS:

Kevin and Carol Kelley, on the birth of their granddaughter, Emerson Max June Kelley



Nithin Aaron Winston and Marina Jobaie who were married in our Sanctuary on October 16

SYMPATHY TO:

Mark and Mary Kieपुरa and family, on the death of Mary's brother, Joel Appler

Dottie Roth, on the death of her son, David Roth

Dan and Carolyn Selke and family, on the death of Carolyn's mother, Virginia Hardy

Thank You

From Firman And Christopher House

Your donations for food items made a huge difference to the families that have been struggling through rough economic times. The amount collected was split between Firman House and Christopher House and allowed families to have a very special holiday and much needed food and supplies during this difficult time. Your generosity has made a **Big Difference!** Thank You!



Presbyterian Women

November Circles 1, 2, 3

Circles 1-3 will be meeting on Nov. 17th for Fellowship and Bible Study. "Rahab" will be the subject of our discussion. Rahab was the wife of Solomon and her son was Boaz. Learn how a strong intelligent marginalized woman like Rahab could rise above the fear and judgment and have the presence of mind to allow God's plans to come to fruition. How do we judge women in questionable positions and who make questionable choices? Join our discussion at 9:00 am in the Parlor. Watch for our plans for December and join in the fun of holiday music and more to get in the spirit of Christmas. All are welcome!



November Circle 7

Circle 7 will be meeting on Tuesday, November 16th at 7:00 pm in the evening in the Parlor. We will continue with the book *Almost Everything-Notes of Hope* and move on to Chapter 12 which is titled "Famblies" and should be appropriate for this time of year with family gatherings! Watch for news of an event for December. Come and find out what the word "Famblies" means and join in a great discussion! Contact Liz Thompson at lizht85@yahoo.com

The CHIMES

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November 2021

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