



The CHIMES

The Newsletter of First Presbyterian Church of Arlington Heights

January 2023

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

From the Pastor Chapel Rededication



by Rev. Alex Lang, Head of Staff

It has been a long road, but we finally have a date! The Chapel will reopen for services on Sunday, February 26, 2023. This is the first Sunday in Lent and it's going to be a real celebration

because it will have been nearly three years since the Chapel service was shut down due to COVID. Please mark it on your calendars. We're going to have a rededication service that will christen the newly renovated space and officially inaugurate a new era of Chapel worship.

Firstly, it's important to emphasize that this Chapel renovation is not just a light refresh. This is a complete redesign of the space from top to bottom. However, before I get into the details of exactly what we did, I need to offer a word of thanks and gratitude to Michele Holifield, our Facilities Coordinator and Tony Scheurich our Facilities Director, who oversaw the day-to-day work of this project. The two of them worked in coordination with the Board of Trustees and, in particular, the 2022 Trustees' president, Lindsey Landwehr-Fasules. If you see any of these individuals, please thank them for their efforts. Without them, we would not be enjoying this beautiful new space.

You may remember that back in the spring/fall of 2020, we did a Capital Campaign to refurbish the Memorial Prayer Garden Hallway. The Trustees had committed funds to refurbish the Chapel and, in order to make this new space accessible, they decided we need to install a lift in the hallway. Both projects seemed pretty straightforward at the outset. What no one anticipated was that the worldwide supply chain would screech to a halt, substantially driving up material and labor costs. We had unknowingly begun building in one of the most challenging economic eras in recent memory.

In order to change the hallway to make it accessible, we had to open up walls, raise the roof, make new stairs and install a lift. As we broke into the walls, we discovered they were not properly reinforced. Therefore, we had to

add steel reinforcements, but the result is that now *anyone* able or disabled can physically access the first and second floors of the south wing of our church, something that until this point had been impossible. Today, the Memorial Prayer Garden Hallway looks beautiful! The lift is easy to use and there are electronic door openers for anyone who cannot open the doors on their own.

In the Chapel, we installed central air conditioning, tore out the west wall and expanded the room. Even more impressive, we built a new stage that is accessible through a brilliant backdoor system developed by Michele Holifield. We also installed a new A/V system, painted the room, refinished the pulpit, communion table and baptismal font. However, we also laid down new carpet, a fresh coat of paint and we got brand new, very comfortable chairs.

To be honest with you, every time I walk into the Chapel, I am blown away with how beautiful the space looks. It combines a modern aesthetic with the classic look of the stained glass. Moreover, the Trustees are taking steps to ensure that the stained glass remains protected. In all, this is an amazing project. All of us should be proud of what we accomplished.

Finally, I want to thank you, the members and friends of First Pres, for the donations you have dedicated to these spaces. Maintaining a church of this size and age requires a consistent stream of funds. I feel so blessed to be part of a community that values the needs of all people. By making our church accessible, we are sending a message to those who walk through our doors that everyone is truly welcome. I look forward to seeing you on February 26!

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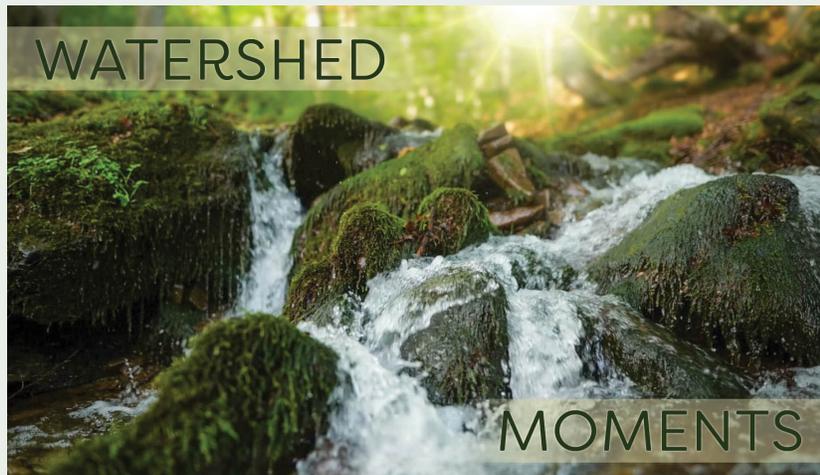
Watershed Moments

January is always a very interesting month. Early on, we're all recovering from Christmas and New Years, basking in the glow of the holidays. However, as that glow wears off, the realization slowly dawns on us that we now have to buckle down for the rest of the winter. We all know it's going to be really dark and really cold until the end of March.

Due to these circumstances, whenever I'm thinking of my January sermon series, my motive is to create something that will inspire us to be our best selves in the midst of what can be a depressing time of year. For this January,

I have envisioned a short sermon series called *Watershed Moments*. For those of you not familiar with that term, a watershed moment is an important moment that changes the direction of history.

For example, Gutenberg's creation of the printing press is a watershed moment. It not only changed the course of human history by making books more accessible, but the printing press is the technology that allowed for Martin Luther to begin the Protestant Reformation, which is why we are sitting here today in this church. Another example



is the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in 1914. This event caused Austria-Hungary to declare war on Serbia, which obliged their other allies in Europe to mobilize, and ultimately led to WWI.

However, watershed moments are not simply confined to history. A watershed moment can also be an important event that changes the direction of a person's life. These moments can be found in a variety of different experiences, but they represent a dividing line. A moment that defines everything that comes before and after.

Within this series, we are going to look at four different stories about remarkable watershed moments and how those moments transformed the people themselves and, in some instances, the world around them. Using their examples, we will come to understand how their watershed moment can inspire our own watershed moment that helps us move past the barriers preventing us from becoming the people who God intended for us to be.

January 8 | *The Magic Shop*

Scriptures: Mark 6:1-6; Mark 1:4-11

🎵 9:00 am – Compass 🎵 10:30 am – Chancel Choir
Holy Communion

January 15 | *The Grandmaster Experiment*

Scriptures: Matthew 9:9-13; Jeremiah 18:1-6

🎵 9:00 am – Compass 🎵 10:30 am – Chancel Choir

January 22 | *Fake It Till You Make It*

Scriptures: Galatians 1:11-24; Acts 1:15-17, 21-26

🎵 9:00 am – Compass 🎵 10:30 am – Chancel Choir

January 29 | *The Real Problem*

Scriptures: Proverbs 8:22-31; John 5:9b-18

🎵 9:00 am – Compass 🎵 10:30 am – Chancel Choir



Wednesdays
@ Noon

Wednesday, February 1, 12:10 pm

Christopher Urban, organ

Featuring organ music by contemporary organ composer, Paul Fey. Paul was born in 1998 in a small town outside of Leipzig, Germany. His music has energy and drive and is some of the best contemporary writing for the organ today.

All concerts livestreamed at firstpresab.org

2022-2023



Concert for International Holocaust Remembrance Day

Friday, January 27, 7:00 pm

Chamber orchestra and Megan Hendrickson, soprano, present Henryk Górecki's *Symphony No. 3, the Symphony of Sorrowful Souls*. The symphony has three movements and was composed by Górecki in Katowice, Poland, between October and December, 1976. The work is indicative of the transition between Górecki's earlier dissonant style and his later more tonal style and represented a stylistic breakthrough: austere, plaintive, emotionally direct and steeped in medieval modes. It was premiered on April 4, 1977, at the Royan International Festival.



A solo soprano sings Polish texts in each of the three movements. The first is a 15th-century Polish lament of Mary, mother of Jesus; the second a message written on the wall of a Gestapo cell during World War II; and the third a Silesian folk song of a mother searching for her son killed by the Germans in the Silesian uprisings. The first and third movements are written from the perspective of a parent who has lost a child, and the second movement from that of a child separated from a parent. The dominant themes of the symphony are motherhood, despair and suffering.

Until 1992, Górecki was known only to connoisseurs, primarily as one of several composers from the Polish School responsible for the postwar Polish music renaissance. That year, Elektra-Nonesuch released a recording of the 15-year-old symphony performed by the London Sinfonietta that topped the classical charts in Britain and the United States. It has sold more than a million copies, vastly exceeding the expected lifetime sales of a typical symphonic recording by a 20th-century composer.

Grove City College Touring Choir in Concert

Tuesday, March 7, 7:00 pm



We are fortunate to host **The Grove City College Touring Choir** for a concert on Tuesday, March 7 at 7:00 pm as part of their spring concert tour. The choir is comprised of 45 singers chosen at the beginning of each academic year and they seek to praise and glorify God and to minister to others through the medium of music, striving together to achieve choral excellence.

In addition to the annual spring tour, the choir performs for churches and schools in Western Pennsylvania and at various campus events. The choir has visited virtually every state east of the Mississippi River during previous tours and has performed in New York City, Philadelphia, Chicago, Washington, D.C., Boston, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Baltimore, and Detroit.

Grove City College is a private, Christian liberal arts college located in the Western Pennsylvania town of Grove City. Founded in 1876 as a normal school, the college emphasizes a humanities core curriculum and offers 60 majors and six pre-professional programs with undergraduate degrees in the liberal arts, sciences, business, education, engineering and music. While currently unaffiliated to a religious denomination, previously the college had strong ties to the Presbyterian Church.

We are being asked to host the choir members overnight on Tuesday, March 7. We need homes for 44 students. Hosts will need to provide a light breakfast on Wednesday, March 8, a ride back to the church and a bagged lunch.

Please contact Chris Urban at chrisurban@firstpresab.org if you are willing to host a student.

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



Jan's Jam Friday, January 6

All middle and high school youth are invited to a night of fun, as we bus from activity to activity all night. Along the way, we will get to do things like laser tag, mini golf and trampolining. It is truly the biggest new year kick-off youth ministries could ask for. Contact: Jeni Eklund



Undecorate the Church Saturday, January 7, 9:30 am

All are invited to join the effort to take down the wonderful decorations and put them away for next year. Gather in the Narthex.



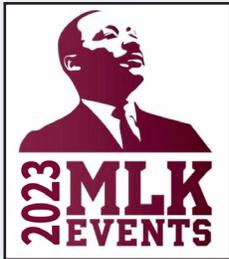
Family Night Returns Wednesday January 11, 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Family Night returns for our Winter/Spring session until May. This free program includes dinner, adult education, mentoring classes, programs for youth and children, and nursery care. Contact: Alex Lang



Restaurant Walk Sign-up throughout January

Our popular Restaurant Walk program returns. Sign-up throughout January with meals taking place in February at Carlos & Carlos in downtown Arlington Heights. Come to meet some new faces and support a local restaurant. Contact: Alex Lang



Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Food & Essentials Drive

Sunday, January 15 - Monday, January 16

Honor the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. by dropping off non-perishable food items and essential household items at the church. Drop-off on Sunday morning in the lobby or on Monday from 9:00 am – noon at the front steps on Dunton Ave. All donations will benefit local food banks. Contact: Michele Holifield



International Holocaust Remembrance Day Concert

Friday, January 27, 7:00 pm

Chamber orchestra and Megan Hendrickson, soprano, present Henryk Górecki's *Symphony No. 3, the Symphony of Sorrowful Souls*. This moving symphony is set in three movements and commemorates the Holocaust. Contact: Adam Hendrickson



Wednesdays @ Noon Wednesday, February 1, 12:10 pm

Christopher Urban, organ



Judy Hockenberry Retirement Celebration Sunday, February 5, 10:30 am

Celebrate the ministry of the Rev. Judy Hockenberry at one worship service at 10:30 am, followed by a luncheon in Fellowship Hall at 11:45 am. Please RSVP for the luncheon through the QR code on page 8 or call the church office.

Blanket Drive

On our cold nights in January and February, it is wonderful to have a warm house and a cozy blanket to wrap yourself in. Not everyone is lucky enough to have that warmth and comfort. During the months of January and February, PW will be collecting for the Blanket Drive. The goal of Church World Services



(CWS) is to build a world where there is enough for all. By providing a donation of \$10, CWS can provide a blanket as a vital and powerful resource for someone needing a little support, warmth, and encouragement. Please help those facing crisis by donating to the Blanket Drive. Envelopes can be found in the pew rack and checks may be made out to First Presbyterian Church of AH (indicate Blanket Drive in the memo). You may also donate online (select BLANKET DRIVE on the dropdown menu). Please be generous!

Questions? Contact Lois Meisterheim at mmeisterheim@wowway.com.

Thank You For Decorating!

As we all enjoy our festive looking church, many thanks goes to all the volunteers who came on Saturday, November 26, to help with decorating for the Christmas season. Just as important, we will need help again Saturday, January 7, at 9:30 am to take down and store all the beautiful decorations. We'll need lots of volunteers, so please mark your calendars now! Thank you.

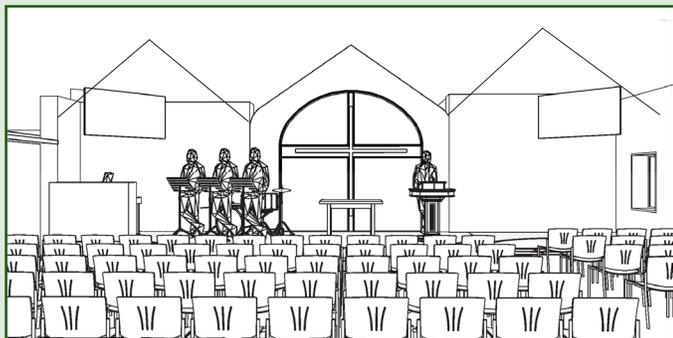
Thank You for Flower Donations

The beauty throughout our church each week and during the Christmas season is made possible by each of you who donated and made the magic happen! Thank you so much for your generosity and for supporting the Flower Fund! You make the difference in the beautiful surroundings of our church for all to enjoy!

save the date

Sunday, February 26, 9:00 am

Join us for a service rededication and celebration of our newly renovated Chapel worship space.



Please give to cover your Per Capita Apportionment

Each year every Presbyterian church is apportioned a share of the ecclesiastical expenses of the Presbytery, Synod, and General Assembly. These are the activities that make us Presbyterian. This apportionment is based on church membership. In 2023, this apportionment is \$36.50 per member. Any funds you designate for the apportionment will be used for this purpose and will free up our General Fund dollars to be used in supporting the vision, overall ministry and missions of our congregation. Please consider contributing your share of the Per Capita Apportionment. An Initial Offering Envelope for this purpose has been included with the 2023 weekly offering envelopes. If you do not receive envelopes, please use one of the Per Capita envelopes from the pew pockets in the Sanctuary or donate online by selecting 'Per Capita' in the dropdown menu.



Per Capita

Sign-up now for the All-Church Retreat

Saturday, April 29, 11:00 am – 3:00 pm

Friendship Park Conservatory, Des Plaines

Lead by Rev. Arianne Braithwaite Lehn

THEME: EXPLORATION AND AUTHENTICITY—TIME TO REKINDLE THE GIFT

Within each of us is the most profound gift—the presence and voice of God. In your heart are planted unique passions, desires, and wisdom only you can be and bring to the world.

But this treasure is easily buried. The light quietly dimmed. As we live our lives, we accumulate layer upon layer of expectations and responsibilities. In seeking to care for those we love, provide, and achieve (all important in their own way!) we keep our eyes and ears outward, focused on who we're told to be. When we do, we miss the voice with both the greatest vulnerability as well as the highest authority.

The voice of God within you.

Each of us wants to reach our life's end believing we were our true selves living out the purpose God gave us. And yet, when we are not in the daily practice of listening for the voice within us, we will spend most of our time not doing the things which actually matter the most to us.

In this retreat, we will accompany one another on one of the most important exploratory journeys we can make—the pilgrimage into our deepest hearts, which is, in turn, God's heart. We will reflect on what our inner voice is and how we connect with this deep wisdom. We will do some digging (however far we need to go!) to listen for what's at the bottom of our hearts. And we will take the next step in returning to and rekindling the gifts God has placed within us.

Our prayer and hope with this retreat is to provide space and empowerment for people to connect with the heart of who they are, find tangible ways to live by that compass, and by doing so, to use Paul's words to Timothy, to "rekindle the gift of God that is in you" (2 Timothy 1:6).

There are 100 spaces available for the retreat. Cost is \$20 for adults and \$10 for those 18 and under. Please go to firstpresab.org/retreat or use the QR code to register.



...Help me reclaim who I truly am—the person you've created me to be. May I live boldly, speak confidently, love unconditionally, forgive readily, and trust deeply.

Shape my life to match my soul...

~ From When I need to get back to the basics in Ash and Starlight: Prayers for the Chaos and Grace of Daily Life



Scan the QR code
sign up for the
All-Church Retreat

About Rev. Lehn

Arianne is a mother, one half of a clergy couple, writer, and ordained minister with the Presbyterian Church (USA). She's



originally from Sioux Falls, SD and graduated from Bethel University (St. Paul, MN) with degrees in English Literature and Biblical/Theological Studies. She originally planned on Law School until God called her to Taiwan where everything changed, and later

graduated from McCormick Theological Seminary.

Arianne and her husband, Jeff (the other clergy couple half) live in Wilmette, IL with their three children. In addition to working as a writer/editor for *Illustrated Ministry*, Arianne's book, *Ash and Starlight: Prayers for the Chaos and Grace of Daily Life* was published in October of 2019. She believes the world is a broken and beautiful place, and that a tender, strong God holds us in it.

Family NIGHT

Family Night returns from our holiday break for the holidays on Wednesday, January 11.

We look forward to seeing you there.

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

Adult Education

RATIFICATION OF THE CHRISTIAN CANON: OUR NEW TESTAMENT

Wednesdays, January 11 - February 15

7:00 pm / Sanctuary / Dr. Donald Kaasch / *Contact: Alex Lang*

Read more about this class on page 13.

Career Planning Course

Wednesdays, February 1, 8, 15, 22 and March 1, 8, 15

7:00 pm / Room 102-104 /

Contact: CTR@firstpresah.org

This six-week class covers the most important cornerstones of



your job search or career journey, including self-assessment, budgeting, resume building, marketing, networking, interview preparation, and negotiations. Whether you're on the hunt for a new job or seeking a change in your career path, you don't have to face these challenges alone. Sign up now! Register by January 31.

Children And Youth

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



Restaurant Walk for February

SIGN-UP SUNDAY MORNINGS OR ONLINE

Our Restaurant Walk fellowship program returns in February. Meals will take place at Carlos & Carlos in downtown Arlington Heights. This is a great way to connect with other members of the congregation.

MEALTIMES

Thursday, February 2, 6:00 pm

Sunday, February 5, 5:30 pm

Thursday, February 9, 6:00 pm

Thursday, February 16, 6:00 pm

Sunday, February 19, 5:30 pm

(attend the Organ Fest concert at 4:00 pm just prior to your dinner reservation)



Scan the QR code to sign up for the Restaurant Walk



RESTAURANT WALK

- Dine with a group of 8-10 people at a local restaurant
- Check Weekly Highlights for restaurant, dates, times & signup link
- Register online

Enjoy a dinner out and meet new friends!



CELEBRATE THE MINISTRY OF REV. JUDY HOCKENBERRY ON SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 5



The Rev. Judy Hockenberry will officially retire as a Minister of Word and Sacrament on February 15, 2023.

Sunday, February 5

10:30 am One Worship Service
No children's or youth Sunday school

11:45 am Luncheon in Fellowship Hall

A motion to dissolve Judy's call with First Presbyterian Church will be part of the business at our Annual Congregational Meeting on Sunday, February 12, 2023.

Matthew 25:23 Well done, good and faithful servant!



Scan the QR code or call the church
office to sign up for the Luncheon

Dear Friends,

It has been a privilege to serve as the Director of Children’s Ministries at First Pres for the past almost nine years, so it is bittersweet to share that my last day in the office will be Friday, December 30. My final Sunday will be January 8 so that I can say goodbye to the kids at Sunday school.



When I took this job in 2013, our oldest daughter, Emily was in 2nd grade, and our youngest daughter, May, was in kindergarten. Today, Emily is eagerly awaiting

college acceptance letters and May has found her niche as a formidable water polo player. As they move into new phases in their lives, it’s time for me to start a new chapter, too. I will be working as an Education Program Specialist at EAI, supporting the American College of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology’s continuing education and accreditation processes. In addition to looking forward to putting my skills towards new challenges, I’m also looking forward to a more regular weekday/weekend schedule.

I have had the honor of walking alongside so many children in our congregation on their faith journeys. We’ve shared the good news of wiggly teeth and new pets. We’ve

celebrated birthdays and sports achievements. We’ve also been there for each other through unimaginable heartbreaks. We’ve been silly and serious, mission minded and faithful. We’ve seen the power of kindness and grace and love in the world.

It has been a tremendous joy working with the greatest volunteers in the most amazing congregation. You have been there whenever Children’s Ministries has needed you. You’ve supported and encouraged me, you’ve provided for our children and families, and you’ve shown that the greatest gift is presence.

After a short break, I look forward to returning to First Pres as your friend, cheering on Children’s Ministries as a volunteer, and seeing what God has in store for us next. Thank you for everything.

Katy



SYMPATHY TO

The family of *Sally Crooker*

The family of *Marlene Hayman*

Jan & Sandy Richardson, on the death of Jan’s brother,
Jim Richardson

Ron Wetzel and family on the death of his mother,
Mary Elizabeth Wetzel

BAPTISMS

Lily Marie Sedey, daughter of *Jon* and *Kelly Sedey*

Presbyterian Women



Circle 7, Evening Circle

Meet January 17, 2023, at 7:00 pm in the Parlor. We will continue studying *What My Grandmothers Taught Me*, Chapter 7, “Mary”. Any questions, call Liz Thompson, 847-537-9087.

Children's Highlights

Advent is an exciting time in Children's Ministries! We started the season with the traditional Hanging of the Greens in the Sanctuary on the first Sunday of Advent. It was a parade of wreaths, garlands and candles, oh my!

We were also so excited to hang with the sheep that visited First Pres on the second Sunday of Advent. We couldn't believe there would be real live sheep in the Sanctuary! We had so much fun with our close-up look at the sheep.

In addition to learning about Jesus' birth and anticipating his coming into our hearts anew at Christmastime, we are reaching beyond ourselves to share joy with others. We assembled gift bags for Kenneth Young Center and made ornaments to share with church members. We love sharing our gifts with others!



We filled the food barrels!

First Pres PDO & Preschool



First Pres PDO & Preschool has had a great 2022! We ended our December by participating in the "Gift of Warmth" utilizing our Giving Tree to assist families that are a part of the FamilyForward community. Children learned about generosity and love, especially at this time of the year. We were able to collect 150 items to help keep family members a little warmer this winter.

We look forward to the start of our 45th registration season later this winter and the special events that we will be offering to the PDO, Preschool and First Pres Community to celebrate this exciting milestone. Happy New Year!



What fun to hang out with the Sheep!



Everyone is helping at Hanging of the Greens!

College Care Packages

The Youth Ministries Committee will be sending care packages to First Pres college students. If you'd like to donate treats or other items to include in the packages, please place the items in the box marked "College Care Packages" in the Narthex on January 22 and January 29, or deliver them to the church office by February 8. Suggested items: prepackaged snacks such as cookies, candy bars, crackers, granola bars, gum, packets of hot chocolate or soup, or other small items. Monetary donations to help cover shipping are also appreciated and can be given online. We also need to collect current mailing addresses for the college students. If you have college students in your family, please send us the addresses via email to Jeni Eklund at jenieklund@firstpresah.org or Darl Pochert at darl.pochert@icloud.com.



Sunday school class had an art and activity day, where we made new paper from recycled church materials like bulletins and lesson plans. We then made Christmas cards with them for caroling.

Jan's Jam

Jan's Jam is back this January 6, 2023, after our two-year COVID hiatus! Middle schoolers are invited to join us from 7:00 pm - 12:00 am, and high schoolers are invited to join from 7:00 pm - 7:00 am, for a few additional stops AND an overnighter at the church.

All youth will start at the church at 7:00 pm and travel, by bus, to several main attractions throughout the night! First up, we'll be stopping at Sky Zone in Elmhurst, where we'll have a glow in the dark trampoline party. We'll then make our way to the Enchanted Castle around 10:00 pm, for laser tag, mini golf, bumper cars, and so much more. High schoolers will continue the night at WickedBall, where we'll get to play bubble soccer, laser tag and even ride a mechanical bull! Finally, it wouldn't be Jan's Jam without a final stop at Spunky Dunkers and movie at the church to end our night.

Email jenieklund@firstpresah.org today to reserve a spot and start filling out permission slips!



High school youth group went on a Christmas adventure walk around Prospect Park.



Jeni and Caleb had fun playing Shepherds on sheep day :)

Sunday Morning Adult Education Class

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

**Sundays, January 8, 22 & 29 9:00 am
Boardroom / David Hogan**

Join us for an innovative education class called WHAT WOULD YOU DO? where we look at moral questions in popular film. Each of the three Sunday morning sessions will be preceded by the screening of a popular film on Friday evening at 7:00 pm at church.

The class will be taught by First Pres member David Hogan who worked in Los Angeles as an entertainment journalist before coming to Chicago, where he spent nearly thirty years as an executive editor and publisher in book publishing.

His ten books about various aspects of film have been published during 1980-2022 by Palgrave-Macmillan, A.S. Barnes, Applause, McFarland & Co. and others.

ALL THE KING'S MEN, 1949

Friday, January 6 screening; Sunday, January 8 discussion

Produced, written, and directed by Robert Rosson; screenplay adapted from Robert Penn Warren's same-named novel. Starring Broderick Crawford, John Ireland, Mercedes McCambridge, Joanne Dru. Made before the MPAA rating system, but suitable for mature middle schoolers and older.



The first, and best, adaptation of Robert Penn Warren's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel about Willie Stark, an ambitious Southern politician (based

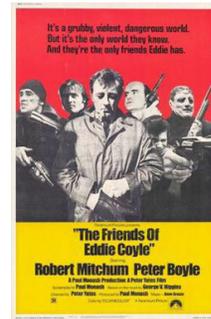
on Louisiana governor Huey Long) who desperately wants to help the neglected people of his state. But as Stark makes his ascent to high office, and gathers a core group of advisers, he begins to see the ends as more critical than the means. Almost inevitably, his good intentions are undercut by corruption and his own growing taste for power. Keen doubts develop among his core loyalists, who are forced to confront their own morality and ambition as Stark becomes a violent threat to democracy. Crawford's Oscar-winning performance is electrifying.

1949 Academy Awards: Best Picture, Broderick Crawford, Best Actor, Mercedes McCambridge, Best Supporting Actress
1949 Academy Award nomination: John Ireland, Best Supporting Actor

THE FRIENDS OF EDDIE COYLE, 1973

Friday, January 20 screening; Sunday, January 22 discussion

Directed by Peter Yates. Screenplay by Paul Monash, based on the same-named novel by George V. Higgins. Starring



Robert Mitchum, Peter Boyle, Richard Jordan, Steven Keats, Alex Rocco. **Rated R (language and violence).**

In probably the finest performance of his later career, screen legend Robert Mitchum is Eddie Coyle, an aging, low-level career hood who has lately been supplying "clean" guns to a local Boston bank robbery crew. Eddie has been a steady, reliable player for decades, but when he stares at hard time for his role in an old liquor-truck heist, he worries about how to provide for his family. Federal agents encourage Eddie to believe that he'll walk on the liquor job if he cooperates with them to bring down the bank robbers. Already torn between his obligations to his family, his peculiar sense of pride, and his perverted sense of loyalty to the amoral men he serves, Eddie realizes his situation may become impossible if the feds should push him harder. Forced to look honestly at himself, Eddie struggles to decide what he values most. And then there are the bloodless federal agents, who string Eddie along while fully aware that they're placing him in mortal danger. Excellent morality play shot on gritty Boston and Boston-area locations.

A SIMPLE PLAN, 1998

Friday, January 27 screening; Sunday, January 29 discussion

Directed by Sam Raimi. Screenplay by Scott B. Smith, based on Smith's same-named novel. Starring Bill Paxton, Billy Bob Thornton, Bridget Fonda, Gary Cole. **Rated R**



(language and violence).

In snowy, rural Minnesota, a struggling young couple discovers a small plane crashed in remote woods—with a long-dead pilot and \$4 million crammed into a duffel bag. They decide to keep and hide the money—spending it slowly before finally moving away from the area. But when the husband's slow-witted brother demands to be included in the scheme, the plan begins to unravel—not least because the presence of all those greenbacks slowly alters the character of the story's protagonists. Worse, very dangerous people want the money back; missteps of the amateur thieves encourage a criminal "enforcer" to put together clues to help him trace the money, and whomever has taken it. This is a sobering, low-key story with deep moral dilemmas related to family, material ambition, betrayal and greed.

Engage & ENCOUNTER

Wednesday Evening Adult Education Class

RATIFICATION OF THE CHRISTIAN CANON: OUR NEW TESTAMENT

Wednesdays, January 11 – February 15
9:00 am / Boardroom / Dr. Donald Kaasch

- How did the Christian Canon come into being?
- Did it fall out of the sky on Easter Monday?
- Who decided what was in it?
- Who wrote what was included?
- Where did they write it?
- Were there other writings to choose from?
- When was the Canon ratified into what we know?

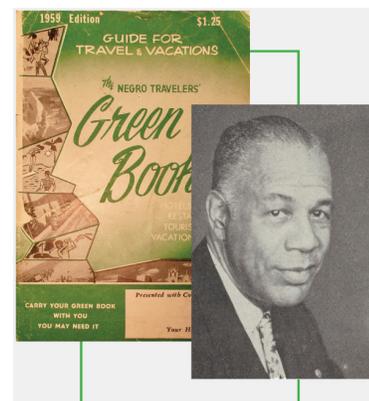
All of this and much more will be covered from a historical perspective. Join in on the discussion and learn things you just might want to know.

Save the Date! Sunday, February 26

FIELD TRIP - THE NEGRO MOTORIST GREEN BOOK AT THE ILLINOIS HOLOCAUST MUSEUM AND EDUCATION CENTER

Sunday, February 26, 11:45 am – 3:00 pm

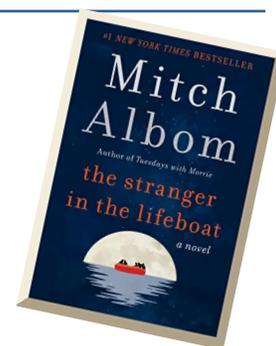
Travel to the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center to view the Smithsonian Institution traveling exhibition highlighting the history of *The Green Book*, the annual guide created by Harlem postman Victor Green, that provided African American travelers with information on restaurants, gas stations, department stores and other businesses that welcomed Black travelers during the Jim Crow era. We will gather for a light lunch at the church and then travel to the museum for a docent-guided tour of the exhibit. You will also have access to other museum exhibits. Sign ups will begin in January. Cost for lunch and museum is \$15. Contact: Michele Holifield



Coffee Grounds Book Study in January

For parents and singles, 40s & 50s plus. Sundays 10:30 – 11:30 am on the lower level of the Education Wing in Room 110/112. We'd love for you to join us! Bring your coffee with you or help yourself to a cup from our Keurig. Questions? Contact Kelly Dean at k_p_dean@hotmail.com

We will kick off the new year with a study on Mitch Albom's latest book, *The Stranger in the Lifeboat*. This book is a quick read. It's available for Kindle and audiobook. Join us on January 8 and 15 to discuss this interesting short novel.



Monday Morning Men's Bible Study

Join the Monday Morning Men's Bible Study Group! We meet every Monday at 8:00 am in person or via Zoom. If you are interested in joining the group or if you have questions, contact Bill Dillon at crdillon@sbcglobal.net or Dave Berkow at dwberkow@att.net. Proverbs 27:17 As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.

MLK Day of Service

On Sunday and Monday, January 15 and 16, Stone Catchers will host the **Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service Community Food and Household Essentials Drive**. The



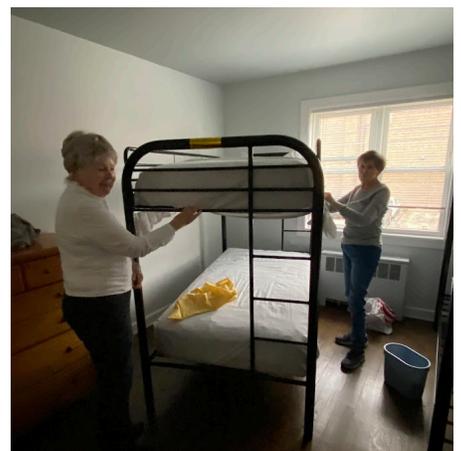
MLK Day of Service is an annual event held nationally to encourage communities to take action to build the beloved community of Dr. King’s dream. MLK Day is the only federal holiday also designated as a national day of service to encourage all to volunteer to improve their community.

You can get involved by participating in the Community Drive on Sunday, by dropping off your donations at the church. Or on Monday, January 16, drop off your non-perishable food and paper good donations at the front steps of the church. Volunteers will be on Dunton Ave. to unload your donations from your car. Walk-up donations are also welcome. In addition to collecting items on Monday, January 16, donations can be dropped off in the lobby on Sunday, January 15 during worship services. All donations will go to local pantries.

When deciding what to donate here are some helpful hints:

- Household items such as paper towels, toilet paper, dish detergent are not eligible for purchase with a Link card
- Consider pop-top lids – sometimes people do not have a can opener
- Olive oil, garlic, salt, pepper and other spices can transform a meal
- Remember items like Hamburger Helper are only good if you have ground beef
- Baking mixes that require only water are good
- Coffee is a luxury
- Sugar and flour are always needed
- Kraft Mac and Cheese requires milk and butter – consider Velveeta that comes with the sauce

Questions about MLK Day of Service contact Michele Holifield



Murakaza – Welcome

During 2022, the Mission Committee worked towards having the opportunity to co-sponsor a refugee family in partnership with RefugeeOne. Through generous donations and the prayerful support of First Pres members and friends we were ready to welcome a family beginning November 1. We received the call one Wednesday night in mid-December that a family would be arriving on December 15. The RefugeeOne team moved into high gear to prepare a home for a Congolese mom and her four children (age 13, 11, 8 and 4). First Pres members welcomed the family at O’Hare on Thursday afternoon, December 15.

We are excited to embark on this journey with the family. Our mentor team of Kim Hogan, Kelly Campbell, Katie Washco, Jen and Dan Berg, and Ken Weller will partner with the family for six months – helping them to become acclimated to Chicago by grocery shopping, riding the CTA, and many other activities. RefugeeOne will work to ensure that the family has all of the services needed for the transition to life in Chicago. We look forward to sharing more of this journey with you over the next months. Go to RefugeeOne.org for more info.

Thank you to all who donated items for the home, furniture, gift cards and time to helping First Pres provide a warm welcome.



Dear Members and Friends of First Pres,

As 2022 comes to a close, the Session wants to provide an update on the work we are doing. As you know, like all other churches, attendance and giving has been challenging not only this year, but over the past few years resulting in deficit spending. We attribute some of that to COVID, real and looming inflation and a general trend away from church life. In order to address some of these challenges, we have taken different steps as a Session.

In late October, Gary Gehm, the chair of Administration and Finance asked the congregation to help cover the deficit, which at the time was around \$200,000. Through mid-December, thanks to your generous response, the deficit has been reduced to \$156,000. We continue to receive your faithful gifts and know you have given more. We are fortunate to have such a dedicated congregation who cares deeply about God's work in our community. Thank you for keeping our church vibrant and healthy!

The reality is that we still have a gap and the Elders feel simply asking the congregation for more giving is only part of the equation in getting First Pres on the right track. We have prayerfully considered different options to balance our budget. We require a healthy financial foundation while also ensuring the most critical needs of our staff are maintained. With TC's departure earlier this year and Judy's planned retirement in February, the Elders see an opportunity to reduce costs in the area of Personnel, which currently represents the largest percentage of our total budget allocation.

With that as context, the Session wants to share two decisions we have made. First, after Judy retires in February, we will transition the Pastoral Care role to a 20 hour per week position. This amount of time will allow what we consider to be the non-negotiable functions of the role (visitation, funerals, Deacons and assistance with Sunday service) to continue to be supported. In January, Session will form a committee to find an Interim Associate Pastor to take over upon Judy's retirement.

Second, we will also make some changes to the leadership in both Youth and Children's Ministries to better align our resources with our needs. Based upon the success of other churches of our size and demographics, we feel we can have a vibrant and growing children and youth ministries program with two part-time (20 hours per week) directors, one leading each of those programs. We have already done this with Jeni Eklund who has been serving as the Interim Director of Youth Ministries since June of 2022 in a part-time capacity.

Katy Allen, our Director of Children's Ministries, recently accepted a new position outside of First Pres. The Personnel Committee, in conjunction with the Children's Ministry Committee, will be searching for an Interim Director of Children's Ministries to maintain the Children's Ministries program until we identify a permanent replacement.

As a result of these decisions, we will be dissolving the current Associate Pastor Nominating Committee at a congregational meeting on Sunday, January 15, following the 10:30 a.m. worship service. The members of that committee have agreed to continue forward as the hiring committee for the part-time Director of Youth Ministries.

We know this is a lot of information to digest, but in an effort to be transparent, the Session wanted you to know of our plans as it impacts our search committees. On January 15, following the dissolution of the APNC, we will provide a forum to discuss details of the transition and how you can engage to support the success of this structure.

Thank you for your continued support! We think these are the right next steps for our congregation and its future. As always, we will count on the congregation to provide time, talents and treasures so that we can fulfill our mission.

Peace and Blessings,

The Session of First Pres

Laura Carlson, Gary Gehm, Marilyn Graves, Laura Grochocki, Cynthia Hiskes, Don Lyon, Steve Olszewski, Dick Reeves, Liz Thompson, Kristen Walter, Mark Washco

Stewardship Update

The Stewardship Committee would like to thank all those who have made commitments to our 2023 Stewardship Campaign, **New Beginnings**. As of mid-December, we have received commitments totaling \$1,006,175 from 210 giving units. Thank you for your generosity. While this is a great start, we are still short of our goal of \$1,100,000.



If you have not returned a commitment card, we ask that you prayerfully consider what you might be able to give to sustain the vital ministries of First Pres. Commitment cards are available in the church office, pews and literature rack at the back of the Sanctuary. You can return a completed commitment card to the church office or place it in the offering plate on Sunday morning. Full financials for 2023 will be available at the Annual Meeting on Sunday, February 12 at 11:30 am.

The CHIMES

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January
2023

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