A Time of Excitement, a Time of New Beginnings

by Katy Allen, for the Pastor Nominating Committee

Amid a weekend full of celebrations, the Reverend Alexander Lang was elected to serve as pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Arlington Heights on Sunday, July 14.

Festive open houses were held for church leaders, staff, and the entire congregation to give everyone a chance to get to know one another. Alex was joined by his wife Courtney, their sons Eli (3 years old) and Lucas (3 months old), and Alex’s sister Eleanor. It was truly a family affair!

As a father with young children, Alex has an abundance of energy and vitality, traits that will serve him and our congregation well. He is eager to begin his walk alongside the members and friends of First Pres and share his strong biblical knowledge, his passion for teaching and preaching, and his desire to encourage a new focus on spiritual growth. In his letter to the congregation Alex says, “I believe that God’s Spirit will unleash the gifts in our community that are waiting to be utilized for God’s kingdom.”

As a 2007 graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary with a master’s of divinity, Alex has a very strong academic background that includes a bachelor’s degree in religious studies from Rice University, in Houston, Texas, and a year spent studying theology at Oxford University in Oxford, England.

Most recently, Alex served as associate pastor at Pine Street Presbyterian Church, located in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

Courtney, who most recently was an adjunct professor of law at Penn State Dickinson Law School, has an impressive resume that includes state appellate law clerk in New Jersey and assistant university counsel for Princeton University. She is now staying home to care for Eli and Lucas.

During his four years as associate pastor at Pine Street, Alex was instrumental in making many positive changes that have had a lasting impact on the congrega-

“Continued on page 3

“I deeply value the opportunity to provide pastoral care and counsel to those who are in crisis.” — Alex Lang

“My leadership style is best described as relational, visionary, and consensus-building.” — Alex Lang

Alex and Courtney Lang and the Pastor Nominating Committee celebrate our new ministry together after an exciting weekend of uplifting gatherings and worship.
From the Pastors
by Rev. Beth Freese Dammers and Rev. Barbara Gorsky

“Praise the LORD, all you nations! ... For great is his steadfast love ... and the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever. Praise the LORD!” Psalm 117

This Psalm speaks of God’s faithfulness; faithfulness we have experienced in the waiting for our new pastor to arrive! Now as we stand at the edge of the desert, looking toward the green, flourishing land ahead, we know that we are about to enter a new land with great promise and hope. Exciting times! But we must not forget the significance found in the desert journey we have taken together. For we have learned many things about ourselves and our Lord, who has been so ever present during these challenging times.

We have learned that the work and ministry of the church continue, even when pastors come and go. We have learned that we can step up and be leaders even when we didn’t realize we had the gift to lead. We have learned that we don’t have to have all the answers, but only be faithful in seeking the questions. As we anticipate the arrival of Alex Lang, our new pastor, let us pause and remember God’s faithfulness and the growth we have made during barren times. Let us be thankful to our Lord, who is always faithful!

Session Highlights
by Tom Pardo, Clerk of Session

From the July 8, 2013, meeting:

- Approved the disbursement of gifts received for the “One in Heart and Mind” Special Appeal — an additional $18,000 for funding mission and $43,000 for beautification and safety.
- Learned that Stephanie Levan, currently under the care of Session during her studies at McCormick Theological Seminary, received the highest graded award for a Higgins Scholarship for the coming school year. Stephanie was recently approved by the Presbytery of Chicago for advancement to candidacy.
- Received a final report from the Pastor Nominating Committee concerning Rev. Alex Lang.
- Learned that some of the hymnals that will be replaced by the new Presbyterian Church (USA) hymnal later this year will be donated to our sister church in South Dakota.
- Approved a call for a special congregational meeting for Sunday, July 28, at 10:30 am in the Sanctuary for the purpose of electing a ruling elder to fill an unexpired term.
- Learned that new digital signage units will be installed by the end of July or early August.

For additional Session information, please look for the “Session Meeting Highlights” report in the Narthex literature rack.

August Worship

August 4
9:00 am — Chapel (finding grace)  
10:30 am — Sanctuary (traditional)  
president: Barbara Gorsky — “Losing Focus”

August 11
9:00 am — Chapel (finding grace)  
10:30 am — Sanctuary (traditional)  
Acts 1:6-8; Luke 12:32-40 (focus);  
president: Beth Freese Dammers — “Ready for Action”

August 18
9:00 am — Chapel (finding grace)  
10:30 am — Sanctuary (traditional)  
Isaiah 61:1-4; Matthew 8:1-13  
guest preacher: Rev. Paul Palmer — “No Strangers at the Table”

August 25
9:00 am — Chapel (finding grace)  
10:30 am — Sanctuary (traditional)  
Jeremiah 1:4-10; Luke 13:10-17  
president: Barbara Gorsky — “Have Mercy on Us”

Turn to page 9 to learn about the fall worship and education schedule.
A Time of Excitement  (continued from page 1)

These changes included creatively enhancing education, programs, and mission for youth; revamping the membership class model; and developing an innovative church website featuring social and interactive media to serve the community both inside and outside the church walls.

Mission is extremely important to Alex; he devoted a significant amount of time and resources to the church’s affiliated soup kitchen that serves the Harrisburg community.

Members of the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) were impressed by Alex right from the start. The hour-long Skype interview was engaging, enlightening, honest, and fun. As Alex has said, “I came away from our first interview feeling as though it wasn’t an interview at all. It felt like I was reconnecting with old friends.” The PNC was eager to learn more about Alex, his ministry, his family, and his visions for church leadership in subsequent Skype interviews and personal visits. There was no doubt that God’s hand was guiding both the PNC’s decision-making process and Alex’s discernment of his call to First Pres.

Excitement is in the air. It is a time of new beginnings. A solid, unshakeable faith lies in our hearts, telling us that God has been, and always will be, with us. Welcome, Alex, Courtney, Eli, and Lucas!

Pastor Nominating Committee
Tom Carroll, Chair; Katy Allen, George Economos, Miranda Fanella, Ed Harding, Kate Ingemunson, Katie Marr, Joyce McComb, Mike Noble, Phyllis Orzechowski, Tom Pardo, Bob Sell

“May each of us be challenged ... to recommit ourselves to deepen our faith ... and grow into the church God intended us to be.”  — Nancy Anderson

“Alex impressed us with his amazing way of turning complexities into simplicities. He is a transformational thinker and will lead our church down a new and exciting path.”  — Katie Marr, PNC

“I think he will be a good fit for our church.”  — Kristina Beihoffer
Snapshots From Our Family Album

by Ann Knapp

Answering God’s Call
An important mission of First Presbyterian Church is to build up God’s church and call forward disciples of Christ. How exciting that our congregation has three members who are answering God’s call to serve the Presbyterian Church: Jana Blazek, Stephanie Levan, and Alicia Hanner.

Jana Blazek has been associated with First Pres since early childhood, and she has served as an elder, deacon, and Sunday school teacher. A graduate of Dubuque Theological Seminary with a master of divinity degree, Jana was ordained a teaching elder (minister of word and sacrament) in an uplifting ceremony at First Pres on July 7, 2013.

She believes she is among the first few people to be ordained to a communications role. Jana will expand her current role in communications for the Presbyterian Church, helping to foster greater communication throughout the national denomination. She will continue her work for the Presbyterian Outlook and other publications. “It’s a calling and it is nice to know the church at large is supporting me,” she says.

A four-year member of First Pres, Stephanie Levan is under the care of the Chicago Presbytery and our congregation. Recently completing her second year at McCormick Theological Seminary as an inquirer, she has just been approved by the presbytery to advance to the candidate stage of the ordination process. The final stage is certified ready to seek a call.

This summer Stephanie is working on a clinical pastoral education (CPE) unit in Chicago’s Rogers Park area. A special education teacher, she completed an internship this past year at Edgewater Presbyterian Church. Stephanie says, “I feel the call to work in a church with special needs persons and those with mental health issues.”

Alicia Hanner grew up in Arlington Heights and feels she has always been part of this church. Coincidentally, Jana was Alicia’s kindergarten Sunday school teacher. Alicia is grateful for the influence and support from her mother and Pastors Sean Miller (former First Pres pastor) and Beth Freese Dammers. She also feels “much supported by the Session and the church.”

She graduated from Illinois State University with a major in secondary English education and is a certified high school English teacher. In college her direction turned toward attending seminary. “Sean told me that someday I would go to seminary, and I laughed,” Alicia says. “He probably is now wearing the ‘I told you

Endowment Fund
Supporting the Mission and Ministry of First Pres
by Linda Byus, Chair, Endowment Investment Committee

As we begin a new era in the life of First Pres, we celebrate the generous gifts that provide ongoing financial support for the mission and ministry of our church through the Endowment Fund. Gifts to the First Presbyterian Church Endowment Fund are invested in perpetuity to provide a source of funds to supplement the annual operating budget of the church. Requests for the use of Endowment Distributable Funds in 2013 includes:

- Replacement of the heating and cooling system in the administrative building
- Installation of a digital signage system to enhance communications around the church building
- Funding of an Adult Education “Hot Topics” series in the 2013-2014 education year
- Refurbishment of the handbells
- Repairs and enhancements of the pipe organ.

The handbells were refurbished, with help from the Endowment Fund.

A gift to the Endowment Fund is an opportunity to support the long-term mission and ministry of First Presbyterian Church of Arlington Heights. We are grateful to the saints before us who have generously contributed to the future of our church.
What’s Coming Up

**Presbyterian Women Summer Get-Together**
**Wednesday, August 14 / 11:30 am in the Parlor**

All women are invited to share lunch and conversation about *Amish Grace*, a wonderful book about forgiveness by Donald Kraybill, Steven M. Nolt, and David L. Weaver-Zercher. Barbara Gorsky will join the discussion. Bring your own sandwich or salad. Drinks and desserts will be provided. Plan to read the book if possible. RSVP: Susan Carroll, tcarroll60@aol.com or 847-358-2352

**Kids Stay and Play**
**Select Tuesdays, 6:30-8:30 pm**

Parents, this summer why not sign up the kids for fun in a safe and caring environment while you enjoy some time away? Kids will enjoy free play, gym time, and a snack with friends. Kids Stay and Play is for kids ages 1-9, and costs $9 per child per evening. Visit www.fpcah.org for more info and to register for August 6 and/or 13. **Note:** Registration is due by midnight of the Sunday before each event.

**Back-to-School Gathering**
**Thursday, August 15 / 5:00 pm**

Join The Bridge (singles, couples, and parents of young families) at Duryt Nellie’s (180 N. Smith St., Palatine). Adults only. RSVP: Kelly Dean, k_p_dean@hotmail.com or 847-207-0267

**Monday Afternoon Commune Group**
**— August 19 / 1:30-3:00 pm in the Parlor**

The group will meet one more time this summer before resuming in the fall. A discussion of *Rich Church, Poor Church*, by J. Clif Christopher, will be led by Rob Lincoln. All are welcome to join this small group to learn and grow.

**PADS Ministry Is Gearing Up**
**Our Overnight Shelter Is Open**
**Tuesdays, October – April**

Our PADS (Public Action to Deliver Shelter) ministry needs volunteers, new and old, to be successful. Will you help by serving a shift or donating or preparing food? Sign-up will take place Sunday mornings of the Sunday before each event.

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**Get Involved in Presbyterian Women at First Pres**

Presbyterian Women (PW) offers women of all ages meaningful ways to live out their faith in the midst of a caring community of women. Wonderful and lasting friendships are formed by sharing fellowship and faith.

PW combines fellowship with Bible study and opportunities for service to the church and community. Three circles meet at the church on the third Wednesday morning of the month. Another circle meets in members’ homes on the third Tuesday evening of the month. In addition, special Wednesday morning Gatherings are held at the church four times a year to provide a time for enrichment and fellowship.

Plan to give Presbyterian Women a try! For more information, contact Ruth Burkholder at ruthbc@prodigy.net or 847-253-0595.

**Save Your Stuff!**
**Rummage Sale Is Coming Next Summer:**
**June 27-28, 2014**

All proceeds benefit youth missions.

Volunteers are needed; Contact Cathy Mataloni, at cathymataloni @comcast.net or 847-870-8045; or TC Anderson at tcanderson @fpcah.org or 847-255-5900.

**Register Now for Fall Parents’ Day Out**

Registration for the 2013-2014 school year is under way. Visit the PDO page at www.fpcah.org or contact Jane Kosel, PDO director, at janekosel@fpcah.org.

**COMING NEXT MONTH**

**Fall Kickoff: September 8!**

Exciting things will be happening in adult and children’s education this fall, beginning Sunday, September 8. Watch for more information.

**Join the New Members Class**

The next New Members Class will run Sundays September 22 and 29, and October 6 and 13. Mark your calendars and plan to come and learn more about the First Pres family of faith (current members are invited, too).

Questions? Contact Barbara Gorsky at barbaragorsky@fpcah.org or 847-255-5900.
**Music & Worship @ First Pres**

**Welcome, Royce Eckhardt**

Please extend a warm welcome to Royce Eckhardt, interim director of adult choirs. Royce will be with us from September 5 through December 24, 2013.

Royce has served as a director of music, organist, conductor, composer, arranger, hymnal editor, teacher, and hymnologist for more than forty years. He has served Evangelical Covenant churches as minister of music and organist in Seattle, Washington; in New Britain, Connecticut; and in Winnetka and Hinsdale, Illinois. In addition, he served at Winnetka Presbyterian Church as director of music, organist, and worship coordinator, as well as an ordained elder.

Royce earned a bachelor of music degree in organ performance in 1960 from North Park College, Chicago, where he served as student director of the college choir. He earned a master of music degree in liturgical music at Hartt College of Music, University of Hartford, in 1972.

Following college, Royce joined the music faculty at Seattle Pacific College, teaching organ, music theory and literature courses and directing small choral ensembles. For many years he served as adjunct professor of church music at North Park Theological Seminary in Chicago, specializing in hymnology, and also serving as chapel organist.

Royce has led many workshops and seminars throughout the country on worship and church music related topics, and he is a published composer of organ and choral works and a member of The American Guild of Organists and The Hymn Society.

Since his retirement in 2006, he has been in demand as a guest organist, choral director, hymn festival leader, and church music lecturer in the greater Chicago area. Welcome, Royce!

**There’s a Place for You in the Chancel Choir**

Royce Eckhardt, our interim choir director, is looking for new members in all sections of the choir. A great experience awaits you!

“Oh,” you say, “I haven’t sung for so long that I’m not sure I can contribute.” Join choir and we’ll get you into vocal shape in quick order.

“But I don’t read music very well,” you say. We will teach you—that’s what rehearsals are for.

“My voice is pretty average, not a strong voice,” you say. Remember that “the whole is greater than the sum of the parts”—and that is particularly true of a choir. It’s called synergy.

It all begins on Saturday, September 7, at 9:00 am in the Choir Auditorium. This will be a time of renewing fellowship and enjoying refreshments, welcoming new members, reading through new repertoire, and preparing music for the next day, Sunday, September 8, when we resume our regular Sunday singing. We will conclude by 12:30 pm.

Questions? Contact Royce at 847-251-5329 or royceechardt@sbcglobal.net.

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**Music in Worship**

**Summer Schedule**

**Sundays in the Chapel**

**Finding Grace, 9:00 am**

Music led by Compass

**Sundays in the Sanctuary**

Traditional Worship, 10:30 am

**August 4**

Vivian Palmer, soprano

**August 11**

JoAnn Thompson, soprano

**August 18**

Andrew Orals, violin

**August 25**

Emily Becker, soprano

**September 1**

Allison Locke, soprano

Beginning September 8, worship in the Sanctuary will take place at 11:00 am. Turn to page 9 to learn more.

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**Finding Grace**

Come, just as you are, to worship.

9:00 am in the Chapel through September 1.

8:30 am beginning September 8

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Turn to page 9 to learn about the new worship and education schedule for fall, beginning Sunday, September 8.
A New Life
Congratulations to:
Leon and Julie Halatek, on the birth of their daughter, Josephine Ann Halatek, on June 5. Proud grandparents: Jim and Jane Freyer.

Baptism
Jonathan Ryan Richard Slump, son of Lauren Bombick and John Slump, was welcomed into the family of faith on Sunday, June 16, 2013.

Celebrations
Jane Alberico and Ryan Keating were united in marriage on Saturday, June 22.
Betsy Pardo and Chris Osswald were united in marriage on Saturday, June 29.
Lynn and Carol Stolley are celebrating the engagement of their son, Colin Stolley, to Lindsey Vacek.

Sympathy
Please join in extending sympathy to:
Family and friends of Ruth Beisler
Claudia and Mario Alberico and family — on the death of Claudia’s mother, Marilyn Meyer
Rick Watson and family — on the death of his mother, Deborah Durbin Watson
David Hay — on the death of his wife, Charlotte Hay
Family of Mary Takla
The Kabel, Hierl, and Noble families — on the death of Christian

Letters & Thanks
Letters and thank-you notes from the congregation and community are posted on the bulletin board outside the church office area. A recent expression of gratitude was received from Mary Lou Mamoyac for a hospital visit and prayers.

August Special Offering — Congo’s Children and Schools Need You — The special offering on Sunday, August 4, will support our mission outreach in Congo, Africa. First Pres members were part of building the Zapo Zapo School, dedicated in April 2013, to great shouts of joy from the village and children. This year the team has its sights on Mwena Ditu in East Kasai, Congo. We are blessed in the effort because First Presbyterian Church of Evanston is matching our gifts up to $80,000.

Child Protection Training
Training is required every three years for those who work with children and youth. The next training session will be Tuesday, August 20, at 7:30 pm in the Boardroom. Child care will be provided. Please contact Cindy Koerner, at cindykoerner@fpcah.org or 847-255-5900 to sign up, and for child care. Contact Cindy if you are unsure whether you need training.

Special Thanks
From the Pastor Nominating Committee To...
- The Holy Spirit for leading us to this point
- Our entire congregation for prayers and support
- Pastors Beth and Barbara
- The church office staff for all of their hard work
- Rev. Paul Palmer
- Rev. Anne Fisher, moderator of the Commission on Ministry, Presbytery of Chicago
- Presbyterian Women, for hosting the open house for church leaders, July 12
- Deacons, for hosting the congregational open house, July 13
- Congregational and Community Life Committee, for hosting the celebration on Sunday, July 14
- Maggie Harding, for brochure layout
- Bill Ginnodo for his photography services during the celebration weekend
- John Welzenbach for his videography services

Celebrating Dick Breeden
Church member Dick Breeden was recently recognized by the Northwest Suburban Boy Scout Council for a lifetime of achievements that exemplify the spirit of the Eagle rank, the highest achievement in Boy Scouting. If you ever visited the former Wauconda Orchards to pick apples, then you know who he is.

At age 97, Dick has achieved many things: Eagle Scout (1929); World War II veteran; successful businessman; farmer; teacher of living history and nature; painter; and author, among other accomplishments. Be sure to congratulate Dick when you see him at church.

Important Usher Training
New and experienced ushers are invited to receive training and important safety information on Thursday, August 22, from 7:00 to 8:30 pm in Fellowship Hall. Please contact Barbara Gorsky, at barbaragorsky@fpcah.org or 847-255-5900.
Missions

Feed My Starving Children Packing Event Coming Soon
by Nancy Lincoln

After our successful Food Pack event on May 11, more than 100 members and friends of First Pres were celebrating the good feelings of making a difference. That Saturday we, along with other packers on two shifts, packed 250 boxes of food, shipped to Cambodia. The two shifts packed more than 54,000 meals. We prayed over the shipment, and we also presented two checks for $1,000 each from the mission component of our Special Appeal Fund.

First Pres has reserved two shifts for next month on Saturday, September 28. We have a morning shift from 9:00 to 11:00 am, and an evening shift from 7:00 to 9:00 pm. You may register on the Feed My Starving Children website, www.fmsc.org, where you can read more about the organization’s mission and register for the shifts. Our group is “FPCAH.”

If you have time available, sign up for a summer shift during the daytime. It is a great opportunity to serve both globally and locally for people aged 3 years and older. And if you have one, wear a red First Pres Service Day volunteer T-shirt to the Food Pack.

If you need help signing up, contact Nancy Lincoln at nancylincoln@att.net. Or, look for one of the following people in the Narthex after worship services to sign up on Sundays September 1 and 8. Slots are limited, so sign up early, to reserve your spot. Contacts: Tom Carroll, tcarroll60@aol.com; Candy Meier, cakemeier3@yahoo.com; Carrie Mikulsky, born2 stylize@yahoo.com

Habitat Volunteers Complete ‘A Brush With Kindness’ Day
by Nancy Ashe

A Brush With Kindness is a very special part of Habitat’s core mission to eliminate substandard housing. This program is an extension of that ministry, preserving affordable housing. The target population is homeowners who for financial or health reasons cannot maintain their homes.

A Brush With Kindness is carried out by volunteers who focus on the exterior of homes, making modest repairs, painting, and landscaping. The goal is to restore the pride of home ownership to the partner family, and second, to improve the neighborhood in which the home is located.

On Saturday, June 29, the Habitat for Humanity of Northern Fox Valley Affiliate planned a day for volunteers to work on five homes in the Old Oaks mobile home community of Elgin. Participants from First Pres included Tom Carroll, Mike Cooper, Joy Fick, Kevin Koerner, Hal Stern, Pete Wilberscheid, Cindy Wirth, and Nancy Ashe.

The home had been power washed and scraped by other volunteers during the week. We painted, made repairs to the deck and stairs, repaired the front door and replaced the skirting, and improved the landscaping. The home was owned by a family of six (father, mother, and four children).

Our day finished early due to stormy weather, yet we were all amazed at how much had been accomplished. Hal, a repeat volunteer, said the project was the most organized of any in which he had participated. Cindy equated the day as being similar to the First Pres annual Service Day, and stated that anyone who was part of a repair crew during last April’s Service Day would easily be able to volunteer for A Brush With Kindness event. Joy and Nancy agreed that they were able to find a task suitable to their skill level.

We were paired up to work with two Habitat homeowners and their friends and family members. Habitat homeowners are required to put in “sweat equity time.” The conversations we had with these homeowners were both informative and a highlight of the day. The people we aid when we volunteer are humbly grateful for our help.

Please consider volunteering for future dates. It will be a rewarding experience.
This fall, beginning on Kickoff Sunday, we will have a new worship and education schedule. Much thought, committee input, and discussion entered into the decision by Session to adopt these changes. The schedule reflects the goals to improve both worship and education experiences for church members and friends.

Major initiatives of the 2011 Mission Study included growing the spirituality of the congregation, fostering a greater learning community, and building community within the congregation and beyond. The decision to separate the worship and education hours works toward these goals. Having two services allows one pastor to preach at both services and deliver one consistent sermon message to all worshipers. This will help build unity in the vision and direction of the congregation and allow for the best use of pastoral resources. In addition, offering two services will encourage our worshiping congregation to create and experience the positive energy and feeling of community that come from greater numbers in worship.

Offering a dedicated education hour will allow our education ministries to reach all ages without a time conflict with a concurrent worship schedule. It allows choir members and musicians to engage more fully in educational offerings. It allows us to build on our core value that lifelong Christian education is essential to faith development. It affords parents the opportunity to show their children by example that faith learning is for all ages, not just children. This dedicated education hour will also allow pastoral staff to lead and participate in Christian education more effectively. In addition, this education hour may be used by members to minister to each other in caring outreach or fellowship, thus building community within the congregation.

Session and staff are excited about these new opportunities. Please join us in this exciting journey!

Financial Peace University at First Pres

Have you heard of Financial Peace University (FPU)? FPU is a class designed to show you God’s ways of handling money. This life-changing nine-week course, taught by Dave Ramsey and the FPU teaching team on video will help you achieve your financial goals by showing you how to eliminate debt, save for the future, and give like never before. You will be challenged and motivated to make a plan for your money and change your family tree forever. Dave Ramsey is a well-known author, personal finance expert, and talk show host.

Class Will Meet:

Wednesdays, 7:00-8:30 pm
September 11 – November 6
at First Presbyterian Church

The cost for the class is $93. One membership with materials can be used by a couple. Your Financial Peace University membership enables you to visit any FPU class again in the future.

To view a class preview, visit the First Pres class link at: www.daveramsey.com/fpu/locations/org/46127/class/235125.

Or, attend one of several free 15-minute preview classes, held Sundays August 18 and 25 (at 10:10 and 11:40 am), and September 8 (at 9:40 am and 12:10 pm).

To sign up or learn more, contact church member Britt Ganan, member of the Adult Education Committee, at britt@andersonlock.com or 847-812-4652.
I felt hesitant to quote Bob Dylan for a church article but, after much deliberation, I thought it was too appropriate to ignore. Our church has undergone enormous change over the last few years. I admire everyone who has persevered and who has maintained a positive disposition over this time.

It has not been easy, but this experience has made us stronger. It has allowed us to reflect on who we are and what God is calling us to be. I have personally grown spiritually like never before and am thankful for these challenges, as it’s pushed me to learn and grow.

Some of you might have heard me say: Not all change is improvement, but without change there can be no improvement. I also believe that when you’re through changing, you’re through. Max Depree said, “In the end, it is important to remember that we cannot become what we need to be by remaining what we are.”

Leo Tolstoy said, “Everyone thinks about changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself.” Changing thinking is not automatic—if you want to find a good idea, you must search for it. Changed thinking is difficult. Albert Einstein asserted, “Thinking is hard work; that’s why so few do it.” But, changed thinking is worth the investment.

Reaching new goals and moving to a higher level always requires change, and change feels awkward. But, if a change doesn’t feel uncomfortable, then it’s probably not really a change.

Change is Personal — I need to change.

Change is Possible — I’m able to change.

Change is Profitable — I’ll be rewarded by change.

In March 2012 at Fourth Presbyterian Church in Chicago, I heard a powerful anthem, “Call Us by Name,” composed by Aaron David Miller. These words inspired me: “Call us into the world, so that we care; call us to risk, so that we trust beyond ourselves; call us to love.”

Isn’t this speaking of leadership? Isn’t this what leadership is about? It’s caring, risking and changing, trusting, and loving. Our church has changed and continues to change. We must all work in unity to push forward and increase our influence in changing the world by serving God.

Editor’s note: Watch for Part II next month.
Children’s Ministries

Gearing Up, Staffing Up for Great Fall Programs

“One generation shall praise thy works to another.” (Psalm 145:4)
by Monica Sparreo

As fall Kickoff approaches, on Sunday, September 8, we’re gearing up for better-than-ever children’s programs. Thankfully, First Presbyterian’s outreach to children benefits from the dedicated service and diverse experiences of those who serve on the Children’s Ministries Committee, as well as the many shepherds and leaders who make Kingdom and preschool Sunday school possible each week.

Some of these individuals are exploring new ways to use their gifts throughout the church. This has created openings for others who like working with kids and are willing to use our prepared curriculum to structure and deliver important lessons to children ages preschool through grade 5.

For the upcoming school year, we are especially in need of instructors to assist with our computer rotation during Kingdom. (Wait… keep reading!) This does not require the expertise of a hardware engineer or software designer, just someone who has up-to-date computer skills and an interest in finding creative ways to help us use technology—desktop computers as well as our new iPads—to reinforce weekly Bible lessons. Leaders and assistants for other areas, such as crafts or Paradise Pictures (our Kingdom “theater”), are also needed.

Last year, the children of our church had the opportunity to take part in many meaningful programs that would not have been possible without adult leadership. If you’ve been considering ways to meet other members—especially those with small children—you will find that serving on the Children’s Ministries Committee or volunteering your time on Sunday mornings is a rewarding experience for both kids and leaders. Even if your schedule will only allow part-time support (for example, teaching a class every other Sunday), we’d love to have you join us. Contact Lynda Gaug at lyndagaug@fpcah.org for more information and to get involved.

The Amazing Impact Kids Can Have Serving in Mission

by Michele Holifield

Eleven youth and children from the First Pres congregation participated in the South Dakota Mission Trip. Each one of them contributed significantly to the mission. They were not just along with their parents or grandparents to watch what was going on. From 7:00 am until sunset each day (which in Sisseton is about 10:30 at night), they worked along with other children, youth, and adults from five other worshipping communities.

They made hundreds of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, canvassed neighborhoods to invite children to Vacation Bible School (VBS), helped lead groups at VBS, helped kids find the perfect swimsuit, cleared brush to clean up cemeteries, painted churches, built fences, made friends with many, and were excellent ambassadors for First Presbyterian Church of Arlington Heights.

The most amazing part of this mission for me is to watch how the children and youth from all the worshipping communities involved in the mission come together each day to work together and become friends. The hard work and dedication of these kids is exceptional. I encourage you to take time to learn about what these kids have accomplished and thank them for their efforts.

Here are the names of the children and youth who participated:

- Shelby Hiskes
- Grant Hiskes
- Logan Hiskes
- Douglas Poy
- Brandon Poy
- Mei Poy
- Kelly Holifield
- Charlie Holifield
- Susannah Holifield
- Eleanor Clemmer
- John Schuffler

Each year, their teamwork and presence in South Dakota with the team is inspiring.
Fall Schedule
Sunday Worship & Education

Mark your calendars for September 8 — It’s Kickoff Sunday!

8:30-9:30 am: finding grace Worship — Chapel (contemporary)

9:30-9:45 am: Transition / Fellowship

9:45-10:45 am: Education for All Ages

10:45-11:00 am: Transition / Fellowship

11:00 am – 12:00 pm: Worship — Sanctuary (traditional)

Turn to page 9 to learn about the expanded opportunities created by this new schedule.