



First Presbyterian  
Church of Lake Forest  
www.firstchurchlf.org

700 N. Sheridan Road  
Lake Forest, IL 60045

847.234.6250 fax 847.234.6283

February 11, 2007

Volume VIII, No. 3

# Faith CONNECTIONS

Due to an extraordinary response to worship on January 21 and the urging of several members, Reverend Chakoian has made her sermon available for publication.

We give grateful thanks for the generous response to this sermon in the commitment of time, talents and financial giving.

We offer this opportunity to read or re-read this sermon with the sincere hope that it will help you share in the exciting challenges ahead. Your pastors, staff, elders & deacons, with the entire leadership of this church, are preparing for a new & welcome chapter in our collective history as we meet God's call to put "Faith First."

## Healed to Serve

*This is the second in Rev. Chakoian's series on Jesus' mission. It is based on Luke 4:31-44*

Today I want to talk about healing. Not the physical mechanics of healing - I'll leave that to our able medical professionals - but the spiritual mechanics of healing - the healing Jesus did as a core of his mission. This is the healing we're still invited to receive from him ... the healing we're invited to share as his disciples. Three key points leap from the Scripture reading.

First, rebuke is part of healing. We tend to think of rebuke only negatively, and so we protect ourselves from it. But this passage reminds us that without rebuke, there is no healing. First Jesus rebukes the unclean spirit that is in the man; then he rebukes the fever infecting Simon's mother-in-law; then he rebukes numerous demons, indicating this will be an ongoing and essential part of Jesus' mission.

Notice that Jesus does not rebuke the people - he rebukes the demons and illnesses that possess people. That's a crucial distinction. But it's also crucial for us to admit that there are things worth rebuking: Addictions and dependencies that overwhelm people's lives. Toxic habits like disdain or adultery that destroy relationships. Winks and nods that condone corruption.

Environmental degradation that threatens our children's future. Poverty that robs some children of their lives. These are worth rebuking, along with other "demons" you yourself have encountered. Jesus wasn't afraid to confront our demons, nor did he pretend they would simply disappear on their own. Instead, he spoke the truth with authority over the sick behaviors; and he spoke the truth with love for the person affected. As Christians, we engage in Jesus' mission of healing when we allow our harmful behaviors to be rebuked, and when we are courageous to rebuke destructive habits in our society and - tenderly, gently -- in those we love.

Second, healing can hurt, but it doesn't cause us harm. Notice that when Jesus healed the man with a demon, the Scripture says "when the demon had thrown the man down, he came out of him without having done him any harm." I love the honesty of this: it doesn't say the man's healing was painless - the demon threw him to the ground - but it also says it didn't cause him harm. I wonder how often we've resisted real healing in our lives, simply because we're afraid of the pain we'll go through to get there. We cling to those things that are familiar to us like a worn-out security blanket, even when we know we do not need them ... even when we know they do us harm. It's most obvious in addictive illnesses: we know the alcohol or the shopping or the gaming or whatever drug of choice is self-destructive, but we are scared of facing life without it. But I've observed this clinging-to-the-harmful-but-familiar at work in many of us at some level. A friend of our family (who has given me permission to share this) - this man confesses to a deep-seated sense of inadequacy. Most of the time he's able to cover his fear of failure, or laugh it off; he even forgets it for seasons at a time. But whenever he's in a transition at work - especially when he's about to succeed - the demon rears its ugly head again to tell him that he's never going to be good enough. And he has believed that demon, and trusted that it's true, and he has clung to that demon for dear life just because it's so familiar.

Healing can hurt. But as my friend is discovering bit by bit, letting go of his demons is worth every flinch ... because, in Jesus' hands, any pain he's feeling is temporary pain; and any hurt he's going through is the kind of hurt that brings us wholeness. And

it is so much less painful than the kind of hurt that has enslaved him.

Third, healing is more than simply relief, more than freedom from crippling behaviors. Healing frees us for other things: for service, for sharing, for life. Notice what happens to Simon Peter's mother-in-law. Jesus is in her home with Simon and the other disciples, and when they ask, he heals her of her fever. Immediately she gets up and begins to serve them. I think of a teenager I know who went

through brutal, though essential, surgeries. Brooke is her name; she'd had a childhood infection in her bone that stopped the growth plate, and had to endure endless rounds of operations on her leg. It's wonderful that the surgeries, and endless physical therapy, got her back on her feet again. She even pushed herself to earn a black belt in Tae Kwon Doe.

But the truly spiritual mark of her healing is this: her extraordinary kindness, her innate sympathy for those who suffer, her capacity for compassion. Last I heard she's debating between being a special education teacher or physical therapist. She has been more than freed from her physical distress; she has been freed for her joyful mission in life. And it is beautiful.

It has dawned on me that these three truths about healing - that rebuke is an essential part; that healing can hurt temporarily but doesn't harm us; that healing is more than relief, it is freedom - it has dawned on me that this healing applies to us not just as individuals. It applies to us as a congregation too. This is what I've been thinking.

First, I can't be sure, because I wasn't here, but I sense that over the last five or ten

(continued on next page)



# PROCLAIM CHRIST'S MESSAGE

(continued from front page)

## Healed to Serve

years, our congregation has experienced what felt to some like a rebuke. From what I've heard, tempers were short, turf-wars were hot, and gracious forbearance was in short supply. Plenty of parishioners left, and more than a few staff members, and those who were left had to examine whether our well-burnished self-regard needed to be re-examined. Truth-telling is never easy, and hearing judgment is even less savory. But over the course of time, people had courage to speak the truth in love about our unloving habits and traits. That was the first step to our healing.

Second, I sense that the healing we went through was not without pain, but it certainly did us no harm in the long haul. The egos we tiptoed around were more resilient than we had feared; the habits of irritability and lashing out were more easily set aside than we had imagined; the core of our mission and worship was far less eroded, far more enduring and secure than many had even dared hope. We were able to let go of our demons without lasting harm.

And now, I wonder whether we're at the third point in our healing. I sense that in the last year there has been a great, collective sigh of relief: we are not in constant pain as a church anymore. It feels so good, so freed from the oppression of bracing ourselves for the next battle. There's almost a sense of holding our breath, because we're not entirely sure that it's safe to come out yet. I just want you to know, as far as I can tell, this is the real deal.

But ... but now we face the question, what are we freed and healed for? I ask this question not just in a theoretical way, but with a very practical problem in mind. This week, the Finance Committee presented the Moderators of Session Committees, Deacons, Chancel Guild and Presbyterian Women with some difficult news. Revenues fell short of the planned 2007 budget by \$175,000. On a budget of \$2.5 million, this is not catastrophic, by any means. But it is not insignificant.

I'm not sure how to read this "flat" giving. But since that meeting I've been wondering -- I've been wondering whether we've made the connection between our healing and our mission of serving. The Lord has healed us; it is not our own doing. But now that we're healed, what are we healed for?

How we answer this question will reflect in the way we answer our shortfall. The obvious answer is to cut back on expenses, which your leaders immediately offered to do. A significant sign of the health of our church is that, instead of protecting their turf, all the moderators chipped in what they could. But after the first \$20,000 in appropriate belt-tightening, none of these cuts is easy. For example, if our mission giving through Deacons and the Session stayed flat from this year, we could trim \$80,000 from the deficit - but our percentage of mission giving in relation to the whole budget would have decreased. Or, if we postponed calling a pastor for mission to fill Gordon's position, we could trim \$27,500 for that quarter of salary and benefits -- but we would delay crucial work that is so central to our purpose.

We could also answer by asking a handful of our most generous donors to chip in more. They underwrote the new landscaping, Narthex, and parking lot; surely they could pitch in extra dollars now. I confess that I was tempted to go this route; it is the easiest thing for a pastor to do, and I trust that these people would be generous indeed. But it wouldn't help to strengthen our church;

for this church is not a church of "patrons" but of disciples. All of us - richer or poorer - are members of Christ's family, and all of us have been healed by his hand; all of us have been freed to carry out his mission of compassion.

So what shall we do? I may be blind -- I may be in need of healing myself! - but I propose this. I propose that we respond to Christ's healing of our congregation by standing up and acting like healed people. I propose that we move beyond the sheer joy of relief - the worship wars and turf battles are close to done - we move beyond relief to the even greater joy of serving - first, by increasing our pledges, and then, by hurling ourselves into ministries of service. I love the way the Deacons made it so easy for us to participate: the letter they sent out earlier this month included a list of dozens of ministries for us to engage in.

One very wise woman, a member of our congregation, once said this about our lives as Christ's disciples: "Those who know they are saved can't help but share; those who know they are saved can't help but love." Love is, after all, what healing is for.

I have been speaking to you as people who have been healed, as sons and daughters of God who have felt the gracious presence of Christ's kindness in your lives. But now I must say also this. If you have not yet felt healing ... if you still long for a measure of God's grace ... if you are hungry for mercy, and longing to be freed from an addiction or fear, from selfishness or meanness, from any dis-ease that has robbed you of your freedom: I want to speak to you now. The Lord has laid down his own life for you, so that you might really live. The Lord has more than abundant love for you, and compassion beyond measure. Whatever you've done, God has already forgiven. Whatever has bound you, God is able to loosen. And whatever you're here on earth to do, whatever your mission for whatever days you have left, God is ready to free you to live for. Let go of the crutch that you cling to. Let go, and rise up and walk. Let go, and rise up, and serve him.

Let us pray ....

O Lord, you know us through and through. You know the illnesses we pretend do not overtake us; you know the demons that steal our wills and break our loved ones' hearts. Rebuke these captors, now, dear Lord, and release us from our tormentors. Help us to endure whatever small pain of our letting go, that we might grasp the great joy you would give to us. Free us, Lord, and those we love ... that we may go our way rejoicing ... that we may live to share the healing we have known. Amen.

*Christine Chakorian*

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### THE REVEREND DAVID MACPHERSON OF MOYOBAMBA, PERU WILL PREACH AT BOTH SERVICES ON SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11.

Rev. MacPherson arrived in Peru as a missionary in 1998, and is currently Pastor of the Moyobamba Presbyterian Church.

*A volunteer is needed to transport the MacPherson family from Detroit to Chicago on February 9, and also to spend time with the MacPherson family while they are here. Contact Jon Bayer at (847)735-0615*



# STEPHEN MINISTRY

"We all know what it means to be a church with highly effective mission programs, as well as a church that offers meaningful worship, thoughtful Christian Education, and heart-felt acts of service and pastoral care. But, the notion of being a missional church requires a radically new vision and calls us to new ways of thinking about our lives and our ministries." Rev. Dr. Vogel

Stephen Ministries and the Adult Education Committee jointly sponsor

## The Christine Vogel Annual Lecture Series

Third in a series established by First Church for her and given this year in person by

### Rev. Dr. Christine Vogel

former Associate Pastor at First Church,  
currently Mohr Professor of Ministry at McCormick Theological Seminary

## "(Almost) Everything You Wanted to Know about Being a Missional Church- but Were Afraid to Ask"

Saturday, February 10, 2007

9:00 am- noon  
in Fellowship Hall

- What does it mean to be a "missional" church?
- What does it mean to be disciples living as a community formed by the Holy Spirit and aware of God's presence in all we do?
- What impact does that have on all our church activities?

Open to the entire First Church family. ALL are encouraged to come. The time will consist of both presentation and active participation. Be prepared to think together, prayerfully engage with your fellow church members, friends and our beloved former Associate Pastor. Please bring Bibles, pen (or pencil) and some paper.

Please RSVP to Kerry Spera in the church office, 234-6250 x 233 (or email [kspera@firstchurchlf.org](mailto:kspera@firstchurchlf.org)). Free **childcare** provided by advance reservation. Reserve it when you call by giving Kerry the names and ages of your children.



**THINKING BIBLICALLY** is the theme of the Presbytery of Chicago's annual leadership conference being held Saturday, **March 3** from 8:00 AM to 2:30 PM at First Presbyterian Church of La Grange. Robert L. Brawley, McGaw Professor of New Testament at McCormick Theological Seminary is the featured speaker. A broad array of workshops, offered as a service to congregations, will be offered in the morning and afternoon and are open to the public. Registration by February 19 is requested; forms are available in the church office or register online at [www.mccormick.edu](http://www.mccormick.edu) and click on Continuing Ed. Questions? (773) 947-6283



Set forth below is summary financial information for December and the year 2006. The Year-to-date loss of \$54,388 was primarily due to incomplete annual pledges and lower than anticipated investment income. Expenses were held \$15,129 under budget, favorably reducing the loss.

	Current MONTH	Year To Date CURRENT	Year To Date BUDGET	ANNUAL BUDGET 2006	YTD DIFFERENCE FAVORABLE (UNFAVORABLE)
TOTAL INCOME	\$315,318	\$2,336,233	\$2,405,750	\$2,405,750	\$ (69,517)
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$236,047	\$2,390,621	\$2,405,750	\$2,405,750	\$ 15,129
NET INCOME	\$ 79,271	\$ (54,388)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (54,388)



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## SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 4

FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

9:00 & 11:00AM Worship

*The Reverend Christine Chakoian*  
*Souper Bowl of Care Offering Received*

**Lectionary:** Isaiah 6: 1-8 (9-13)

Psalm 138

1 Corinthians 15: 1-11

Luke 5: 1-11

## SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11

SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

9:00 & 11:00AM Worship

*Guest Preacher*  
*Reverend David MacPherson*

*Scout Sunday at 9:00*

*Work Trip Bake Sale*

**Lectionary:** Jeremiah 17: 5-10

Psalm 1

1 Corinthians 15: 12-20

Luke 6: 17-26

## IN MINISTRY TOGETHER

Pastor/Head of Staff

**Rev. Christine Chakoian**

[cchakoian@firstchurchlf.org](mailto:cchakoian@firstchurchlf.org)

Associate Executive Pastor

**Rev. Dr. Don Dempsey**

[ddempsey@firstchurchlf.org](mailto:ddempsey@firstchurchlf.org)

Associate Pastor **Rev. Patrick Day**

[pday@firstchurchlf.org](mailto:pday@firstchurchlf.org)

Parish Associate **Rev. Kent Kinney**

[kkinney@firstchurchlf.org](mailto:kkinney@firstchurchlf.org)

Children's Ministry **Donna Birney**

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Director of Youth Ministries **Kristie Finley**

[kfinley@firstchurchlf.org](mailto:kfinley@firstchurchlf.org)

Director of Music/Organist **Jill Hunt**

[jhunt@firstchurchlf.org](mailto:jhunt@firstchurchlf.org)

Director of Sanctuary Choir **Thomas Tropp Jr.**

[ttropp@firstchurchlf.org](mailto:ttropp@firstchurchlf.org)

Director of Children's Choirs **Elizabeth Weismehl**

[eweismehl@firstchurchlf.org](mailto:eweismehl@firstchurchlf.org)

Director of Youth Music Ministry **Lesley Byers**

[lbyers@firstchurchlf.org](mailto:lbyers@firstchurchlf.org)

Preschool Director **Ruth Luke**

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[hsmyers@firstchurchlf.org](mailto:hsmyers@firstchurchlf.org)

Church website [www.firstchurchlf.org](http://www.firstchurchlf.org)

**Faith Connections** is published bimonthly and mailed to 1300 members and friends of **First Presbyterian Church of Lake Forest** 700 North Sheridan Road, Lake Forest, IL 60045. Submission due dates are the 1st and the 15th of every month. Submissions may be emailed (preferred method) to [publish@firstchurchlf.org](mailto:publish@firstchurchlf.org)

# PROVIDE A COMMUNITY OF SPIRITUAL NURTURE

The **Associate Pastor Nominating Committee** has met to prepare for our search for a new **Associate Pastor for Mission**. The Presbytery has approved our Church Information Form and it has been put on our web site. The pastor we seek will help us manage and develop our church's Mission Program, Interpret Mission as integral to our spiritual core, and engage us in issues of social justice. All members of our congregation are encouraged to read our Church Information Form on the web site at [www.firstchurchlf.org](http://www.firstchurchlf.org), advise of any potential candidates they may know, and keep the nominating committee in their prayers.

Diane Conklin moderator, John Johnson, Leah Fietsam, Laura Johnson,  
Dave Grinnell, Stewart Kerr, Sarah Gunderson and Frank Sibley



[apnc@firstchurchlf.org](mailto:apnc@firstchurchlf.org)

The work of the **APNC** (Associate Pastor Nominating Committee) is being done in three stages, indicated below by the large boxes. Each stage has several tasks, which are listed below the stages.

STAGE ONE PRELIMINARY STAGE: Establish Requirements	STAGE TWO MAIN STAGE: Conduct Broad Search	STAGE THREE FINAL STAGE: Interview & Reach Consensus
👍 Establish plan, budget and scope	👍 Determine and contact sources	☑ Interview the final set of candidates
👍 Assemble basic information	👍 Develop screening process	☑ Evaluate; identify the candidate of choice
👍 Complete the PCUSA Church Information Form (CIF)	👍 Gather names 📁 Evaluate responses; make preliminary visits	☑ Obtain Presbytery, Session and Congregational approval
👍 Obtain approval of Session and Presbytery	☑ Screen to final set of limited size	☑ Congregation welcomes new associate pastor

THE SYMBOLS IN FRONT OF THE TASKS SHOW WHERE WE ARE IN THE PROCESS AS OF TODAY:

👍 = this step is done    📁 = we're working on this step    ☑ = Yet to be done

RECOGNIZING THE POWER OF CHRIST TO TRANSFORM LIVES  
THE CORE MISSION OF FIRST CHURCH  
PROCLAIM CHRIST'S MESSAGE  
PROVIDE A COMMUNITY OF SPIRITUAL NURTURE  
& PROMOTE GOD'S VISION OF JUSTICE



On Sunday **February 4**, our Sr. High Youth Group will be collecting donations after 9:00 & 11:00 worship.

The **Souper Bowl** is a simple effort to **"love the Lord our God... and love our neighbors"**

by encouraging people to give one dollar each as they leave worship on Super Bowl Sunday.

All funds collected are designated to an agency that our Senior High Youth Group selects.

The "Souper Bowl" began in a Senior High Fellowship in South Carolina and enables young people to see that by God's grace, they can make a difference in the world.

So that our young people might learn, they are involved in the collection of funds and in the decision as to where

the funds are sent. Our 2006 collection of \$864.<sup>00</sup> went to the Heifer Project.

On Souper Bowl Sunday, ask the young person at the door with the large pot,

*"Where are we sending our funds this year?"*

## WORK TRIP BAKE SALE

Join us on Sunday **February 11**

for the Senior High Work Trip Bake Sale.

This annual event is to raise funds for our summer mission trip. This summer we are

making plans to work at **Boggs Rural**

**Academy June 10 -16**. Don't forget that

Valentine's Day is just around the corner and we would love to help you. By

purchasing our delicious treats you can help us help others. Look for us in the lobby of

Fellowship Hall or just follow your nose.

THE CHILDREN'S CHOIRS ANNUAL PLAY is moving to

April 29, 2007

Don't miss

*By the Sea*

in worship at 9:00 & 11:00



### DATE TO REMEMBER

Saturday, May 19 **Women in Retreat**

*Praying the Gospel*

at ST. MARY'S OF THE LAKE with Barbara Peters  
8:30 - 3:00PM Breakfast & Lunch served

# PROMOTE GOD'S VISION OF JUSTICE

30

minutes

... good for the soul!

The Reverend Christine Chakoian may be seen and heard regularly on **30 Good Minutes**, a weekly ecumenical and interfaith program, at 5:00PM on Sunday afternoons, Channel 11 WTTW.

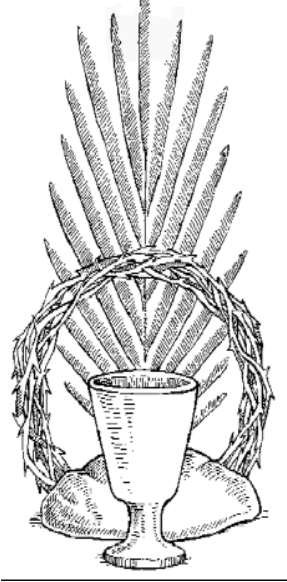


A speaker presents a spiritual topic with a question and answer period following. Another person reflects on the same topic.

Christine will be reflecting on **Faith on February 4,**

**Diversity on February 25** and **Justice on March 18.** You can see the full schedule at [www.30goodminutes.org](http://www.30goodminutes.org).

## FAITH JOURNEY & LENTEN SUPPER



### February 21, 2007

Begin your journey through Lent by joining fellow church members in Fellowship Hall at 6:00PM for a simple soup and salad supper as we hear the Reverend Patrick Day's faith journey at 6:30PM. The evening will continue with a short service at 7:00PM in the sanctuary with communion & imposition of ashes offered.

The cost of the supper is \$5.00 per person.

Please make reservations to the church office (847) 234-6250, no later than Sunday, February 21.

The supper is sponsored by the Family Life Committee.



### 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> Graders Unite

Youth group meetings provide a relaxed time for fellowship and reflection for many of our community's preteens. Maybe, to some, it's also a break from Sunday evening homework. No matter what the motivation, *a group of middle schoolers have found something fun to do with peers their own age* at the First Church's Youth Group for 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> graders. **New faces are always welcome.**

This year's meetings, which take place in the youth lounge on scheduled early Sunday evenings through May, typically start with a tasty dinner, during which kids share their joys and concerns, followed by an adult-led lesson and discussion, and then a game or other opportunity for fellowship. Parent volunteers also plan and facilitate occasional outings; a cookout bonfire took place this past fall, for instance. One meeting each month is dedicated to completing a service project, such as assembling casseroles for a local soup kitchen.

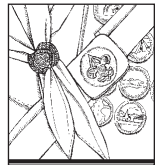
*"Hopefully, not only do the kids have fun, but also they take away a sense of belonging, of feeling accepted, and feel God's presence in their lives,"* says Cindy Johnson, co-leader of the group along with Eleanor Thorn and Cynthia Holck. *"We also want to impart core Christian values of Jesus...to empower our youth to make good decisions and stand firm in their convictions."*

If interested in learning more, or to receive a meeting schedule, please contact Donna Birney at [dbirney@firstchurchlf.org](mailto:dbirney@firstchurchlf.org), or (847)234-6250, ext. 255.

## PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

Mark your calendar for **February 7** at 11:30AM in South Parlor. We will be making valentines for our shut-in members and friends - and have a delicious lunch together.

All the materials will be provided to inspire your enjoyment in making Valentines that make many people happy. Call Michele Montgomery (847) 615-1690 or Rita Fossell (847) 234-4761.



## Scout Sunday

All Scouts and their families are invited to join us **February 11** for the 9:00AM service to celebrate

the many contributions of young people and adults to Scouting in our community. The service will begin with a Scout Processional. All Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts, Tiger Scouts, Venture Scouts, Girl Scouts, and Brownie Scouts are asked to meet (wearing your uniform) at 8:45AM in South Parlor. "Scout Sunday" patches will be given out by the Family Life Committee.



## LA TRATTORIA

A Winter's Eve Get-Together

SAVE THE DATE

March 10

at LAKE FOREST CLUB

Save the Date

**Bid For Better Lives**

Saturday, April 28 at Onwentsia



February 11, 2007  
Ethnic Connections  
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Worship Sundays  
at 9:00 & 11:00

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THE POWER  
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LIVES

THE CORE MISSION  
OF FIRST CHURCH

PROMOTE  
CHRIST'S  
MESSAGE

PROVIDE A  
COMMUNITY  
OF SPIRITUAL  
NURTURE

&  
PROMOTE  
GOD'S  
VISION OF  
JUSTICE

# Soup Kitchen

is the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday  
of Every Month

by 4:00 PM  
in Fellowship Hall kitchen

- February 16
- March 16
- April 20
- May 18
- June 15
- July 20
- August 17
- September 21

Soup Kitchen  
contact Bill Shriver  
(847) 295-5415

Calling all  
members and  
friends of First  
Church...

Thank you to those who have returned in your  
2007 Ministry Opportunities Form.

Your participation is greatly appreciated.

For those of you who still have it sitting on  
your desk at home, it's not too late to turn it in.

We encourage you to participate in the  
wonderful things that God is doing through  
our congregation this year.

Please return these forms to the church office  
(attention: Tracy Tomie) or the Sunday office, please  
as soon as possible so we may continue to do good by  
staffing many worthy ministries. Any questions can be  
directed to Deacon Tracy Tomie at (847) 214-7800 or  
[edmi@adl.com](mailto:edmi@adl.com)

