

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH *of Western Springs*

1106 Chestnut Street, Western Springs, Illinois 60558 † 708/246-1900



GATHERINGS

A PUBLICATION FOR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF THE CHURCH

FEBRUARY 8, 2016

A Lenten Poem
by *Ann Weems*

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Lent is a time to take time to
let the power of our faith story
take hold of us, a time to let
the events get up
and walk around in us,
a time to intensify our living
unto Christ,
a time to hover over the
thoughts of our hearts,
a time to place our feet in the
streets of Jerusalem or to walk
along the sea and
listen to his Word,
a time to touch his robe
and feel the healing surge
through us,
a time to ponder and a time to
wonder....

Lent is a time to allow
a fresh new taste of God!
Perhaps we're afraid to have
time to think, for thoughts
come unbidden.
Perhaps we're afraid to face
our future knowing our past.
Give us courage, O God,
to hear your Word
and to read our living into it.
Give us the trust to know
we're forgiven and give us the
faith to take up our lives
and walk.

COMING UP THIS SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 14 WEE WORSHIP & BIG QUESTIONS OF FAITH

Rich will lead our 9:00 and 10:30 services this Sunday, February 14 and will preach the first in a short Lenten sermon series on "Questions of our Faith." His first sermon examines the question: *Is Christianity Unique?* (The series will continue on February 21, *Who Gets to Heaven?* February 28, *Why Is There Suffering?* And March 13, *Do Good People Get Angry?*) Wee Worship will take place at both hours, so following First Steps our three-year-olds through first graders should go to the chapel.

Our children's choirs will rehearse at 10:00 and 11:35, and our Christian Ventures Committee will meet at 11:30 in the Kemper Library.

Confirmands will have class together at 5pm in the Youth Room, and PFers will have the night off after skiing together on Saturday.

LOOKING AHEAD TO SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 21 ACE, NEW MEMBER CLASS & LENTEN PROJECT

Rich will lead 9:00 and 10:30 worship and will preach the second sermon in his four-part sermon series "Questions of our Faith." This Sunday's sermon is entitled *Who Gets to Heaven?* During First Steps, Diana Johnson, a member of our Children's Ministry Committee will introduce this year's family Lenten project.

Speaking of heaven, Scott Paeth will be back at 10:15 to lead our Adult Christian Exploration class entitled *Perplexing Questions: Virgin Birth, Hell, Heaven & Miracles*. Scott has amassed a faithful following here at First Congo. Come to the Seim Room with a cup of coffee and learn why he is so beloved.

Friends and visitors of the church are invited to part one of a two-part New Member Orientation Class at 10am in the Parlor. (Part two will take place at 7pm on Feb 23, in preparation for joining the church on February 28. Contact Linda to learn more: linda@wscongo.org or ext. 216.)

Confirmation class will be held at 5pm and PF at 7pm.

CONNECTION IS KEY

Are you connected here at church? Serving, studying and socializing are great ways to form meaningful relationships with other members and deepen your faith in God. Does something below interest you?

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USHERS NEEDED. Ushering on Sunday mornings is an enjoyable way to meet new people at church and involves serving only one or two Sundays every two months. To learn more about serving in this capacity or to add your name to the rotation, please contact Dal Ingold at d.ingold@att.net.

LABYRINTH GUIDES. If you are interested in becoming a Labyrinth Guide, please contact Bob Kos at cynbobty@sbcglobal.net. Training will take place throughout February and takes about 90 minutes.

COMMITTEE INVOLVEMENT. Over the next few months, our Nominating Committee will be replacing outgoing committee members. If you're interested in serving on a committee, please contact Linda Conlin. This month's Ministry Team & Church Council meetings will take place on Monday, February 15, at 7:00 and 8:30pm.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

THE TIME IS NOW to RSVP to PF's Frozen Frenzy on Feb 19. The party at WS Village Club, is open to adults of all ages. If you'd like to support our high school youth group and have some fun while doing so, please see the event page on our website or check your inbox for an E-vite.

ARE YOU A SUCKER FOR DISTRACTION? If so, you may find this year's Women's Retreat especially beneficial. Guest speaker (and writer and pastor of LaSalle Street Church in Chicago) Laura Sumner Truax will present and lead the group in discussion and activities based on the theme, *Suckers for Distraction: Developing mindfulness as a practice of a rich life.*

The registration deadline for the retreat, which will be held on Mar 4-5 at Tower Hill in Sawyer, Michigan, is February 15. Women of all ages are welcome. The cost is \$120, which includes retreat sessions, lodging, snacks, breakfast and lunch. Learn more/sign up online or by contacting Katherine Willis Pershey at katherine@wscongo.org.

BIBLE STUDY RESUMES. A new nine-week DVD Bible study, "Great Figures of the New Testament" will begin on February 11, at 7pm in the Seim Room. All are welcome. To learn more/sign up, email katherine@wscongo.org.

RSVP SOON FOR PRIMETIME. Our PrimeTime group will celebrate President's Day with a get-together on February 20. All are welcome to join this group of 50-65 (ish) age adults for patriotic fun and fellowship at the Western Springs home of Ross and Becky Maclver. *Guests are asked to bring a beverage of their choice and a dish to share: Last name A-R: appetizer; S-Z: dessert. Please RSVP to Sally Thiessen by February 15: sally@madisongroupltd.com.*

JOIN US IN WALKING THE WAY OF THE CROSS. The Stiffler Labyrinth will be available in Plymouth Hall on Maundy Thursday evening March 24, following the 8pm service, and on Good Friday, March 25, from 6-8pm. As you Walk the Way of the Cross, a bell will toll and walkers will be asked to pause while the Passion Scriptures are read. Labyrinth Guides will be available to assist new walkers and answer any questions. If you're curious to know what the labyrinth is all about, you're welcome to simply come and sit and enjoy the beauty and serenity of the atmosphere.

Questions regarding the walks, which are open to families as well as adults of all ages, may be directed to Bob Kos at 708/485-4760. If you are not available to walk during the guided labyrinth walks, feel free to walk the labyrinth (during Lent or otherwise) as your schedule permits. (Please call the church ahead of time to ensure Plymouth Hall is available.)

GET SNAPPING AND PARTICIPATE IN OUR PHOTO-A-DAY LENTEN PROJECT. Beginning on Ash Wednesday, members and friends of the church are once again invited to participate in the spiritual practice of paying attention by contributing "visual theology" to #lovethyneighbor2016. To contribute, simply share your photos to your Instagram feed or Facebook page and include the hashtag #lovethyneighbor2016. It's up to you if you share your photos privately or publicly.

To see the photos that are contributed, click on the hashtag; you will only be able to see photos shared by your friends and those that were shared publicly.



SOCIAL JUSTICE CORNER: SERVING GOD'S PEOPLE

Mission & Outreach Committee member Kim Nichol, offers this update on the Taha Family: Our Syrian refugee family is doing well and continues to assimilate daily. Their English is progressing, and the kids all enjoy school. (In fact, they get disappointed when there is no school!) The mother and daughter have new eyeglasses, thanks to two church members. (Their eyeglasses were extremely old and prescriptions had changed dramatically, so they are thankful they can see much better now.) Another church member recently bought them snow pants, since the walk to the bus stop is about five blocks away.

The father has passed the written part of the driver's license test and will take the behind-the-wheel test shortly. His long-term goal is long-distance truck driving. The mother is hoping to find a housekeeping or kitchen job close to home, with 8-hour shifts (instead of 12-hour). In the meantime, the father would like to work as a delivery person for Amazon. He worked as a school bus driver and chauffeur in Syria and Lebanon, so this seems very reasonable for him.

The Outreach Committee is looking for a donation of a car for this hard-working family. Please contact Kim Nichol if you or someone you know can help: 708-306-1845 or kbnichol@sbcglobal.net.



Church member Steve Kruchko has long served as the House Captain for Rebuilding Together Metro Chicago and is ready to pass the baton. Rebuilding Together is a national non-profit organization committed to preserving homes and neighborhoods throughout the country. Once a year, teams of volunteers are mobilized to work in partnership with targeted communities to repair the homes and improve the neighborhoods of elderly, disabled and low-income residents so that they may continue to live in warmth, safety and independence. National Rebuilding Day 2016 is set for Saturday, April 30. To date, National Rebuilding Day sponsors and volunteers have helped repair and renovate over 1,500 homes in Chicagoland. This year's focus will be in the Austin and Blue Island neighborhoods.

Volunteer house captains plan and coordinate renovation projects completed in a sponsored home on National Rebuilding Day. House captains oversee all of the technical aspects of the renovation project, direct the volunteers in completing the work, and coordinate with assigned skilled trades' union member volunteers to ensure a successful project.

To learn more about or sign up for this position, contact Katherine Willis Pershey (Katherine@wscongo.org) or Steve Kruchko (steve@strombergallen.com). Our thanks to Steve for serving in this capacity and for leading numerous First Congo Rebuilding Day teams throughout the years.

YOUTH NEWS

Our **Preschool is collecting donations** to help support Teen Parent Connection, a local non-profit organization providing much-needed support to young moms and babies. If you would like to make a donation, please pull a tag from the bulletin board in the Light Court and drop off your item(s) in the Pack 'N Play by February 19. Our Preschool Committee appreciates your support!



Youth ages 13-18 are invited to mark their calendars and attend the **NATIONAL YOUTH EVENT**. From July 26-30, join 4,000 UCC and Disciples youth from across the globe at Walt Disney World's Coronado Springs Resort in Lake Buena Vista, Fla. Details and registration can be found at nye.uccpages.org.



For years, our 6th-9th graders have been heading off to UCC Sports **Camp** and coming back with stories of faith, fun, and fellowship. Camp opportunities for rising first through 11th graders are also available and would be fun to share with a friend. If you'd like to coordinate summer camp plans, email katherine@wscongo.org.

#LOVETHYNEIGHBOR2016

FEBRUARY	22: harmony	5: listen	18: compassion
10: support	23: kindness	6: sabbath	19: tend
11: gathering	24: care	7: receive	20: sabbath
12: welcome	25: share	8: inclusion	21: borrow
13: explore	26: visit	9: community	22: coffee
14: sabbath	27: smile	10: together	23: work
15: garden	28: sabbath	11: witness	24: concern
16: celebrations	29: warmth	12: fence	25: lift
17: play	MARCH	13: sabbath	26: depend
18: friends	1: give	14: food	27: Easter
19: tolerate	2: potluck	15: enveloped	
20: accept	3: love	16: mourn	
21: sabbath	4: comfort	17: home	

PHOTO-A-DAY :: FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF WESTERN SPRINGS

PASTORAL STAFF

Rich Kirchherr
Senior Minister

Katherine Willis Pershey
Associate Minister

Meredith Onion
Associate Minister

Deb Stankiewicz
Parish Nurse

Gatherings is a biweekly publication of the First Congregational Church of Western Springs. Articles for inclusion should be submitted to Meg Heinz at gatherings@wscongo.org.

Gatherings is emailed to members and posted on-line at www.wscongo.org.

BITS & PIECES

IN OUR PRAYERS. Please hold in your prayers this week: **Mike McNeily** (recovering from surgery) and **Ellen Chivas** (home). **Jo Means** and **Bob Rowen** have recently moved to the third floor Health Center at Plymouth Place and could also benefit from our prayers.

SUE BECKER gave thanks during Joys and Concerns on Sunday for the outpouring of support she received from the people of this church while she was home recovering (slowly) from surgery. She was "overwhelmed" by the many cards and emails.

IN SYMPATHY....Our condolences go out to **Zada and Brian Clarke and family** on the recent passing of Zada's mom, and to **Julie and Ken Jarabek** on the recent passing of Julie's mom.

SAVE THE DATE

Mar 12, 7:45am
Men's Faith & Fellowship Breakfast

Mar 16, 12:30pm
Woman's Society General Meeting

Mar 24, 8pm
Maundy Thursday Service & Labyrinth Walk

Mar 27, Easter Services at 8:00, 9:00 & 10:30am

April 8, 7-9pm
New Member Reception

April 15-16
Rummage Drop-Off; Sale on April 19-20

April 24, 8:30-Noon
PF Pancake Breakfast in Plymouth Hall

May 22, 10:30am
Jan's Retirement Celebration