

# 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

JUNE 1, 2015

**Semi-Annual Meeting**  
10:30am on June 14  
(immediately following our  
9:30 service)

Our moderator Al Pedersen will call to order the last meeting of his two-year term on Sunday, June 14.

On the agenda for our Semi-Annual Meeting is the presentation of our new slate of officers and the Strategic Vision Team's recommended revisions to our Mission Statement. In order to vote on the revised Mission Statement, which is part of our church constitution, we need a quorum (150 members) at the meeting, so please do your best to attend. (Confirmed teens are full voting members of the church and are encouraged to attend as well.)

Effective July 1, Nancy O'Brien will take over as moderator and Mark Miklosz as Assoc. Moderator.

Thank you to all our members who serve God by serving on a church ministry team. The work of this church is not possible without the time and talents of so many people. If you'd like to serve in some way but aren't sure how, please call the church office and we'll help you find a place to start.

### COMING UP THIS SUNDAY, JUNE 7 COMMUNION IS SHARED & KIDS' CHOIRS SING

At our 9:30 service this Sunday, Katherine will give the first in a two-part sermon on the history and polity of the UCC church. (Katherine reminds us to not judge a sermon by its title!) Plus the sacrament of communion will be shared and Natalie's music ministry will be celebrated. (Natalie is moving to Seattle in early August. We'll say more on this in the July issue of Gatherings.) Both our Alleluia and Spirit Choirs will sing during worship (and will have a party with Natalie on the third floor of the Ed Building following worship.)

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### LOOKING AHEAD TO SUNDAY, JUNE 14 SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING

Katherine will conclude her two-part sermon on the history and polity of the UCC, and Vince Cefali will serve as our soloist. Immediately following worship, a brief Semi-Annual Meeting of the congregation will be convened in the Sanctuary. (See more in the side bar.)

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### LOOKING AHEAD TO SUNDAY, JUNE 21 SPECIAL MUSIC FOR FATHER'S DAY

Rich will preach a sermon entitled *Faithful Travels*, and music will be provided by our Spirit Worship Band. In celebration of Father's Day, Vic Fraccaro will offer a personal reflection on faith and parenting.

## STRATEGIC VISION PRIORITY #2

Late last year, our Strategic Vision Team identified five key priorities, are being explored by five separate implementation teams over the next several months. The first priority, "Explore and develop our spirituality," was outlined in the last issue of Gatherings. In this issue, we'll look closer at Priority #2:

2. Live as a renewed community of faith

Influenced by our Congregational heritage, we believe in our individual and collective life journeys, and are enriched by loving, trusting, transparent relationships with one another. As we gather as an intentionally structured community, we seek ways to better organize and guide our congregational life.

- Explore new opportunities for helping members identify their gifts and call to ministry, at every age.
  - Adapt our leadership and governance structures and practices to become more efficient, transparent, collaborative and meaningful -- which will allow for more effective communication and discernment.
- (continued on pg 3.)

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

**FAMILY CAMP.** All young families of the church are invited to join Families in Faith for a weekend at Tower Hill in Sawyer, Michigan. The group will arrive on Sat., July 24 and head home on Sun., July 26. Highlights of the weekend include: a pack-your-own-picnic-lunch for Saturday at the Dunes, Saturday dinner and Sunday breakfast (included), campfire songs, stories, s'mores, and Sunday Sunrise Service on the hill. Deposits are due by June 9. See details and sign-up link online under Latest News.

**CAREGIVERS CONTINUE TO MEET** over the summer months on the second Monday of the month. All caregivers are welcome at 1:30 in the Chapel. Contact Deb or Meredith for more information.

**ANNUAL SCHOOL SUPPLY RECYCLING EVENT.** Helpers of all ages are needed to sort and pack this year's school supplies on Monday and Tuesday, June 15 & 16, from 9am-noon at Mary Lee and Jim Larsen's home, 4521 Harvey in Western Springs. Come for as little or as long as you can. A pizza lunch and a chance to swim will be available on both days for all volunteers after the work is done. If you know of any schools or organizations that might be in need of supplies this year or you have any gently-used school/art/office supplies that you would like to donate, please call Mary Lee and Jim at 246-3987. (Thanks to the help of many last year, 350 boxes of supplies were donated to numerous non-profit agencies in the area.)

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## BRIEFLY

**WELCOME TO ERIN CLEARY AND VINCE CEFALI.** Come August — with her Master's degree in hand — Natalie Ingrisano, our beloved Children's Choir Director, is leaving Chicago and starting a new chapter in her life. Our Music Committee is pleased to announce that Erin Cleary will serve as our new Alleluia Choir Director, and Vince Cefali will direct our Spirit Choir.

Erin has a Bachelor of Music Degree in Vocal Performance and Master of Science Degree in Elementary Education, both from Northwestern University. She served in the Peace Corps in Uganda, where she worked as a primary school teacher trainer and HIV/AIDS prevention educator. After returning to the US and spending four years teaching in the elementary classroom, she worked in educational publishing as a writer and editor of educational materials. Erin continues to do freelance writing

and editorial work while at home with her two daughters. Erin sings with the Tower Chorale, is a member of the board of directors of the Tower Chorale, and is a member of the Western Springs Music Club. She is excited to share her love of music with the children of First Congo.

Vince Cefali is excited to join the First Congo music team as the director of Spirit Choir. Vince has been singing with the Chancel Choir since 2008 and has been the Children's Choir accompanist for the past two years. A graduate of Illinois Wesleyan University with a Bachelor's in Music Education, Vince teaches general music and is the director of a vibrant choral program at Lincoln Middle School in Berwyn.

*Natalie is planning to host a farewell concert in our sanctuary in late July. Watch for details in the coming weeks.*

## SUMMER SUNDAY CONCERT SERIES JUNE 28, JULY 12 & AUGUST 2

We are delighted to offer another Summer Sunday Concert Series this summer to all members and friends of the church. The first of the three concerts is on June 28. All of the concerts will begin at 10:45 in our Sanctuary. So, after our 9:30 service, folks will have a chance to have a cup of coffee, retrieve their children, then come back to the Sanctuary for these 30-minute musical offerings. We hope you'll join us.

June 28th: Maud Powell String Quartet (Honors quartet from the Elgin Youth Symphony, featuring: *Paul Christian, violin; Michael Priller, violin; Claire Wright, viola; Jacob Song, cello.*)

July 12th: Favorite Welsh Hymns, Janet Mensen Reynolds

August 2nd: Summer Dreams, Music by American composer Amy Beach for Piano. Scenic summer images will be projected during this concert.

## GIVE TEACHING A TRY

God doesn't take a summer vacation – and neither does our Sunday school. How wonderful to continue to offer our children a chance to get to know God a bit better through the summer. How impossible that is to do without teachers. Please consider teaming up with a friend, spouse, sibling or older child for one or two Sundays this summer. There are three classes offered each summer Sunday: One for 4s, 5s & Fall '15 Kindergartners; Fall '15 1st & 2nd graders; and one for Fall '15 3rd – 5th graders. Simply, pick a class and a date or two. Then sign up either on our rolling bulletin board in the narthex or online under Latest News. Our curriculum is easy and fun (just like teaching).

Looking ahead to fall, we still have lots of holes to fill on our 6-person teaching teams. This ministry is truly rewarding for both the children and the adults who grow in their experience and love of God together. Teaching is done in pairs, with a personal commitment between September and May of 5 Sundays as lead teacher and 5 as the assistant. Curriculum and training are provided.

The remaining openings are as follows:

3s, 4s & Pre-Kdg	9:00 & 10:30
Kdg & 1st grade	9:00 & 10:30
2nd & 3rd grade	9:00; 10:30 team is full
4th & 5th grade	9:00 & 10:30
6th & 7th grade	10:30 (class not held at 9:00)

To learn more and/or sign up for either the summer or school year, contact Jan Fraccaro at [jan@wscongo.org](mailto:jan@wscongo.org) or 246-1900, ext. 215. Here too, you may sign up on Sundays via the rolling board in the narthex or online under Latest News.

## STRATEGIC VISION PRIORITY #2 (cont'd)

- Practice discernment in all forms and forums of decision-making.
- Develop means and actions to strengthen lay leadership development for all ages.
- Create a process for leadership succession planning, both lay and clergy.

The three other priorities identified from the initial Strategic Vision Team include:

3. Put our faith into action in the world.
4. Nurture our congregation's vibrancy.
5. Deepen our connections.

Many thanks to Mary Lee Gosz and Jean Larson, who, with the help of Meredith Onion, will continue to lead this initiative, which remains active over the summer months.

*Live as a  
renewed  
community  
of faith*

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](mailto:gatherings@wscongo.org).

*Gatherings* is emailed to members and posted on-line at [www.wscongo.org](http://www.wscongo.org).

**NEXT GATHERINGS  
DEADLINE  
5pm  
June 26, 2015**

# BITS & PIECES

**IN OUR PRAYERS...**Please hold the **Ruth Mundt** and **John Gilbert** in your prayers this week.

**OUR CONDOLENCES** go out to **Carole Cech and family** on the recent passing of Carole's brother (and Carleen Van Dahm's uncle).

Patty Sitkowski's father, **Emil Harley** died on March 14, and will be remembered at a Memorial Service in our Sanctuary on Saturday, June 13, at 1pm. The family is hosting a reception at the LaGrange Country Club after the service and is seeking RSVPs. If you plan to attend the reception, please contact Jean Stocks at [jean.stocks@gmail.com](mailto:jean.stocks@gmail.com) or Wilma Harley at 708/246-2902.

**KEEPING THINGS SIMPLE.** Because of the construction this summer, it's been decided that keeping things simple is best. So, bagel bites will continue during June and July coffee hours, until the Education Building is available (for use in case of rain). If it does rain on Sundays in June and July, coffee hour will not be held. A number of people have kindly volunteered to pick up our bagels at Great American Bagel on summer Saturdays; however volunteers are needed for: June 27, July 4 (yes, they are open), and July 11.

Please contact Linda Conlin if you can help: [linda@wscongo.org](mailto:linda@wscongo.org) or 708/579-1463. During August and September, our committees will host and furnish treats for coffee hour.

During the summer, while the Education Building is closed, please know you still can bring your clean plastic caps and lids to church on Sunday mornings. There will be a receptacle for them in the Narthex. Thanks for helping with our Caps to Benches collection.

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1106 CHESTNUT STREET  
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# MEET OUR NEW MEMBERS

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*We are grateful to have had the joy and privilege of welcoming the following people into our family of faith on Sunday, May 3.*

**Joel and Amy Simpson** have lived in Darien for 15 years and have been married 16 years this July. They both went to Elmhurst College where Joe's major was Music Business and Amy's was Psychology. They have three children: Benjamin (10), Grace (9), and Leah (7). Joel is a self-employed musician (audio engineer, private music teacher, performs multiple instruments). Amy has worked for 16 years with older adults in assisted living and is now going to school at Dominican University for a Masters of Social Work Degree. She also plays the flute. *Sponsors: Christen and Tom Shorrock*

**Mari-Jo Altobello and David Todorov** live in Worth and are planning their wedding here for August. They have two rescue dogs – Rocco and Stella. Mari-Jo works at the Western Springs Starbucks and graduated with a Bachelor of Business degree in April. Her greatest interest is spending time with family and she also enjoys crafting and repurposing old, unwanted items. David is a Marine Corps veteran and is currently a Program Planner. He enjoys playing guitar and painting miniatures. He is an active VFW member. *Sponsors: Joanne and Chuck Everett*

**John and Sami Flanagan** have three children, sons, Lucas and Hagan at Laidlaw and Tatum who will start preschool in the fall. The two boys also play Suzuki violin here at Western Springs School of Talent Education. John was born and raised in Garfield Ridge on the south side of the city. He graduated from Notre Dame in 1990 and worked in the sports training and development industry for over 20 years. He currently is a partner in Bo Jackson's Elite Sports Development Group and O'Danny Boy Builders and is a volunteer coach in the Western Springs Little League. Sami grew up in the Dayton, OH area and studied Music Education at Miami University. She is the owner of Sweet Potato Studio, where she teaches sewing and card making. *Sponsors: Kelly and Steve Shumaker*

**Linwood and Maryelizabeth Kennedy** are natives to Florida. Married for 58 years, they have five children and 15 grandchildren. Linwood is a retired UCC pastor after serving UCC churches in several states. (He also served with Reverend Bob Kemper on the Evangelical Health Systems Board.) While Linwood was the senior pastor at Peace Memorial UCC in Palos Park, Maryelizabeth worked as an assistant teacher at Creative World Montessori preschool in LaGrange. After 13 years in Palos Park, the Kennedy's retired to Waynesville, NC where they lived for 10 years. They moved back to the Chicago area in 2012 and are living in Flossmoor. Over his career, Linwood has gotten to know Marge Kemper, Rich Kirchherr, and Paul and Elsie Stiffler. Maryelizabeth enjoys singing in choirs. *Sponsor: Mary Jo Mulcahy*