

# 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

AUGUST 24, 2015

Sun, Aug 30  
10am

We'll worship at 10am in Grove 7 of Bemis Woods and then enjoy an old-fashioned potluck barbeque. Guests are asked to bring something to drink, something to sit on, non-disposable plates and utensils, and a dish to share. (Burgers, hot dogs, brats and water coolers will be provided.) Katherine Willis Pershey will preach and our Spirit Worship Band will play. Members of our high school youth group will be entertaining the youngin's with face paints, games and more.

### HOW YOU CAN HELP:

The more folks who show up at church at 3:30 on Saturday to load the U-haul, the lighter the work will be. A crew is also needed on Sunday at 8:15 at the picnic site to help unload and set up. And, of course, help will be needed after the festivities as well. So, please help where/when you can.

## LOOKING AHEAD TO SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 6 9:30 SERVICE & LUNCH & MORE W/MAZON

Join us on Sept 6 as we host 40 or more members from the Park Street Congregational Church in Mazon, IL — our Foods Resource Bank (FRB) Growing Project partners. Following worship, FRB will host refreshments during the coffee hour and provide a free-will offering lunch on the grassy area north of the Education Building.

After lunch, all are welcome to go to Brookfield Zoo for an afternoon of camaraderie. (If you are currently a zoo member and have extra guest passes, please contact George Rodgers at 708-623-9038 or Amy Baldwin at 708-246-6630. We will make arrangements so that those who wish to attend and are not members may do so for free or at a reduced cost.)

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## LOOKING AHEAD TO SEPTEMBER 13 9 & 10:30 WORSHIP, LIFE TOUCH & MORE

We kick-off our new program year with a new sermon series entitled Becoming Faithful Disciples, which mirrors the theme of our Strategic Vision Implementation initiative. Rich will preach at both our 9 and 10:30 worship service, our Chancel Choir will sing, and Sunday school will be back in session. At 10am and 11:35 our kids choirs will resume their weekly rehearsals with Erin Cleary and Vince Cefali.

From 11am-5pm, LifeTouch photographers will be in the Parlor and Chapel area taking photos of families who were not photographed in our 2012 directory. More information and a link to the appointment module can be found on our website under Latest News.

Plymouth Fellowship, our high school youth group, will have their kick-off picnic from 12-2pm at Sereda Park in Western Springs. (Have your high schooler email Mike Tilden at [tilden@wscongo.org](mailto:tilden@wscongo.org) to get on the PF Facebook page.)

From 3-5pm our Preschool teachers will host a back-to-school party on the south lawn for all incoming students and their families.

At 6pm, our 8th grade confirmands and their parents are invited to attend an introductory meeting in the Sanctuary. Sign-up for various outreach efforts, etc., will follow in the Parlor area.

## STRATEGIC VISION PRIORITY #4

### Nurture our congregation's vibrancy.

Late last year our Strategic Vision Team identified five key priorities, which are being explored by five separate implementation teams over the next several months. The fourth priority, Nurture our Congregation's Vibrancy explained further below:

The dynamics of 21<sup>st</sup>-century-living require us to continually focus on the experience of members of all ages, visitors, new members and those we do not yet know. Intentionality around what it means to be a member and disciple provides critical challenges.

- Define and communicate more clearly the meaning of membership and our goal of becoming faithful disciples – through ongoing faith formation, prayer, and worship for members and nonmembers alike.

continued on page 3

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

**THURSDAY MORNING WOMEN'S BOOK GROUP.** Have you always thought about joining a faith-based book group? Now's the time! The Thursday Morning Women's Book Group will resume meeting every Thursday, 9 – 11am in the Seim Room beginning September 10. The group will be reading and discussing *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction: Discipleship in an Instant Society* by Eugene Peterson. If you are interested and would like to order a copy of the book, please contact Meredith at [Meredith@wscongo.org](mailto:Meredith@wscongo.org) or ext. 222.

**UPCOMING NEW MEMBER CLASS.** Church friends and visitors interested in joining the church in September are invited to save the following dates: Sunday, September 20 – Orientation I, at 10 am in the Chapel and Tuesday, September 22 – Orientation II, at 7 pm in the Sanctuary. New members will join the church on Sunday, September 17, during the 10:30am service. Please contact Linda Conlin (ext. 216 or [linda@wscongo.org](mailto:linda@wscongo.org)) if you are interested in joining or have any questions.

**FRIDAY MORNING WOMEN'S SMALL GROUP.** This group counts on consistent weekly participation, DAILY reading and preparation, rotating leadership, and prayer support for one another. On September 11, the group will begin studying *An Invitation to the New Testament* by David DeSilva and Emerson Powery. The group meets in the parlor from 8:45-10:15. Please email [Jeannette@wscongo.org](mailto:Jeannette@wscongo.org) by September 1, if you are interested in joining or have any questions.

**KALEIDOSCOPE DINNER GROUPS FORMING.** If you'd like to be a part of a small, intergenerational dinner (or brunch) group, contact Linda Conlin at [linda@wscongo.org](mailto:linda@wscongo.org) or ext. 216.

**THE GROWING DISCIPLE.** Our Adult Christian Exploration (ACE) Committee is excited about a new Sunday morning format and program year. The program launches on September 20, when Katherine will present "The Whole Story in 50 Minutes". Join us in the Seim Room at 10:15 when your schedule permits. (See the full schedule online.)

**NAMI PRESENTATION.** The West Suburban Faith-Based Mental Health Cluster Group (of which First Congo is a member), in partnership with National Alliance on Mental Health DuPage, will be offering a free mental health presentation at 7pm on Tues, Sept 22. Guests will hear an overview of mental illness, including two personal stories of hope and encouragement, one from an Individual Peer Support Specialist in recovery from mental illness, and another from a Family Support Specialist who's walking alongside a loved one with mental illness. Resource handouts will be provided. To register for this presentation at LaGrange Memorial Hospital, please contact the Adventist Midwest Health Regional Call Center at 630-856-7525.

**DATES SET FOR PRIMETIME EVENTS.** Folks in the 45-65 (ish) age range are invited to this year's Oktoberfest at Hope and Elias Sabbagha's home on Saturday, October 3, beginning at 6:30pm. Guests need only bring a dish to share and a beverage of their choice. Brats, condiments, pop and water will be provided. (The group's Christmas Party is scheduled for Saturday night, December 12 at Brian and Zada Clarke's home.) RSVP to Sally Thiessen at [Sally@madisongroupltd.com](mailto:Sally@madisongroupltd.com). Watch for more information in your inbox.

**TAI CHI ON HOLD UNTIL AFTER LABOR DAY.** Our weekly Tai Chi class, which is free of charge and open to all members and friends of the church, will resume on Sept 8 at 9:30am in the Seim Room. ([Debbie@wscongo.org](mailto:Debbie@wscongo.org))

# MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE



**REFUGEE FAMILY SETTLEMENT.** Members of our Mission & Outreach Committee are busy planning for the September 21, arrival and settlement of a Syrian family. The Taha family consist of parents (ages 35 & 44), a daughter (age 16), and two sons (ages 11 & 15). We are committed to helping set up their apartment on the north side of Chicago on Saturday and Sunday, September 19-20. Additionally, we are collecting clothes as well as furniture items (full size bed, TV, digital converter box for the TV, CD player and CD's for teens, and a box window fan, and five kitchen chairs). A donation box for clothing will be in the Light Court through Wednesday, September 16. Call Kim Nichol at 708-306-1845 if you can help in any way.

*(First Congo is proud to support the work of Refugee One. To learn more about their services, visit their website at [refugeeone.org](http://refugeeone.org).)*

**PRAY FOR A CONFIRMAND.** We are looking for members of our church to be "Prayer Buddies" for this year's confirmation class (September – May). The specifics of this ministry are still being worked out, but the premise is to have members pray for our confirmands throughout the year. The hope is that this will deepen both the confirmands' connection to the congregation, as well as the member's connection to our young members. At the end of the program year it would also be our goal to have prayer buddies attend the confirmation worship and join in the laying on of hands if possible. Please contact Mike Tilden, Director of Youth Ministries, if you are interested in participating in this new ministry here at First Congo — [tilden@wscongo.org](mailto:tilden@wscongo.org) or ext. 232.

**75 POUNDS AND COUNTING.** Folks have been faithful in their cap collection and for that we are grateful. So far, we have collected about 75 pounds of plastic caps...With 325 more pounds of plastic, we will have Green Tree Plastics convert the caps to a park bench, which will be given to the UCC Tower Hill Camp in Sawyer, Michigan. For the specifics regarding what we can use for this collection, visit Latest News/Cap Collection on our website.

## BRIEFLY

**STILL TIME TO SIGN UP FOR GERMANY TRIP.** Forty or so people have expressed an interest in traveling to Germany in September of 2016 to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. If you'd like to learn more about the trip, contact Rich at [rich@wscongo.org](mailto:rich@wscongo.org) or ext. 213. Brochures are available upon request.

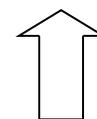
**TUESDAY MORNING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY.** Tower Chimes Bell Choir members are looking for a babysitter to care for their young children during their Tuesday morning rehearsal (9-11:15am). If you are interested and/or would like to learn more, please contact Carla Brassil at 708-764-0500 or [carla-john@sbcglobal.net](mailto:carla-john@sbcglobal.net). (New ringers are always welcome to join the choir. Carla is happy to show you the ropes, err bells.)

## STRATEGIC VISION PRIORITY #4 (cont'd)

- Enhance the faith experience of those seeking God by telling our faith stories and continually exploring new ways to deepen our faith.
- Continue to love, nurture, teach, and support our current members that they may deepen their faith.
- Increase financial transparency and talk openly about our resources, our needs and our aspirations.
- Ensure that all pledge campaigns effectively engage the generosity and support of all members.
- Actively invite and welcome new members into our congregation.

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

1. Explore and develop our spirituality.
2. Live as a renewed community of faith.
3. Put our faith into action in the world.
4. Deepen our connections.



**A sermon series on Becoming Faithful Disciples will be introduced on Sept 13.**

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  
Friday, September 11**

## BITS & PIECES

**IN OUR PRAYERS...** Please hold the following people in your prayers this week: **Donna Nichols** (being treated for ovarian cancer), **Peggy Taylor** (recovering at home),

**OUR CONDOLENCES** go out to **Lana Wordel and her family**, on the passing of her mother earlier this summer.

**STRAIGHT FROM HEAVEN.** Our best wishes and congratulations to Mike and Caitlyn McNeily on the Aug 20 birth of their son, **Thomas Charles**.

**WEDDING BELLS.** Congratulations and best wishes to three members who were married this month: **Emily Winders to Connor Stout** on August 15, **Mari-Jo Altobello and David Todorov** on August 8, and in Minneapolis on August 7, **Rachel Lezon married Kai Salmela**.

**HAPPY ANNIVERSARY** to **Paul and Elsie Stiffler** who celebrated 65 years of love and devotion on August 20.

**UNCLAIMED GIFT.** A check (not a stock transfer) from Raymond James Financial came in recently without a name. Please notify Lori O'Neil as soon as possible if this gift was from you — [lori@wscongo.org](mailto:lori@wscongo.org) or ext. 221.