

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 15, 2017

micah 6:8

...And what does the

LORD require of you but

to do justice, and to love

kindness, and to walk

humbly with your God?



Pastel drawing by Lori Harris

COMING UP THIS SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 19 BACH CANTATA & THE REFORMATION

In recognition of the 500th anniversary of the start of The Reformation, Ray will direct a powerful, 15-minute Bach Cantata during both morning services. Meredith will offer a reflection also related to the theme of the music.

At 10:15, DePaul professor Scott Paeth returns to the Seim Room to lead an Adult Christian Exploration class on the main themes of The Reformation. Scott's presentation will examine the issues that drove the early reformers, such as Luther and Calvin, to break from the Roman Catholic Church — issues such as corruption within the church, papal authority, and salvation by grace through faith.

Part one of a two-part new member class will be held at 10am in the Chapel. In the Kemper Library, our Library Committee will meet at 10am and our Christian Ventures Committee will meet at 11:30. Due to the long weekend, our kids' choirs will not rehearse on Sunday.

LOOKING AHEAD TO SUNDAY, FEB. 26 WELCOME NEW MEMBERS & BLESS MICAH PLEDGES

During our 9:00 and 10:30 services on Feb 26, Rich will preach on the subject of spiritual discipline. During the offertory, members are invited to submit their signed intention slips (from the recently-mailed Micah Challenge brochures). These commitments to "go deeper and grow closer" with God during Lent will be collected and blessed at the altar. At 10:30, we will receive a group of new members into our family of faith.

JUSTICE
micah 6:8
HUMILITY
lent 2017
KINDNESS

Our kids's choirs will rehearse at 10:00 and 11:35. Confirmation class will take place at 5pm and PF at 7pm.

MEET ERICA



Erica Alletto is our new Communications Manager! As such Erica will be responsible for *Gatherings*, weekly emails, the website, social media, and coordinating all the other communication materials and campaigns. Erica has lived in Western Springs for eleven years and is married to Frank Alletto (English teacher at Lyons Township and aka Frankie Ace). They have three children: Samuel, 8, is in 3rd grade Eleanor, 6, is in kindergarten (both at Field Park Elementary), and Lucy, 2, and a beloved dog, Daisy. The Allettos joined the church in fall 2016. Prior to becoming a full-time Mom, Erica was a Project Analyst at Blue Cross Blue Shield, specializing in corporate communications and project management. To her job here, she brings extensive knowledge about creating a cohesive communication strategy, coordinating and streamlining processes, and writing and editing.

Please stop by the shared office and say "hi" to Erica next time you're at church. Erica can be reached at Ext 211 & erica@wscongo.org.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

JOIN RICH TUESDAY FOR A 3-WEEK STUDY. Beginning February 28, Rich will lead a 3-week DVD series entitled *Embracing An Adult Faith*. The series, offered as a Lenten program, features conversations with Marcus Borg on "what it means to be Christian." The class will take place at 7pm in the Seim Room. Participants will watch a 15-minute video, after which Rich will provide some background and lead a discussion. Topics will include: Who is God? Who is Jesus? And what does it mean to be saved? Please join Rich for three lively nights of conversation and discussion about these essential themes of our faith. (Additional dates include March 7 and March 14.) To learn more, contact Rich at rich@wscongo.org.

COMBINED FELLOWSHIP GROUP PARTY TO CELEBRATE THE LUCK OF THE IRISH.



Calling all Midship, M&M, and Prime Time Groupers! Do you think you have the luck of the Irish? Come find out on March 18 at 6pm in party-ready Plymouth Hall. Entertainment will feature The Radio Players West, a traveling performance ensemble that will transport party-goers to the bygone days of radio.

Put on your green, bring a favorite appetizer or dessert, and \$8.00 per person for extras, entertainment, and a chance to win from the pot of gold!

Please RSVP by March 10 and indicate what you're bringing to Kathryn Price at valandkathryn@msn.com.

UCC SUMMER CAMPS are available for children and youth entering 1st through 12th grade. Camp is an invaluable experience for children, nurturing faith, independence, and a whole lot of fun. Choose between Tower Hill in Sawyer, MI or Pilgrim Park in Princeton, IL. See Latest News at wscongo.org or at <http://il-outdoorministries.org/sponsored-event-information.html>. Contact Katherine with questions.

MINISTRY AND CHURCH COUNCIL MEETINGS. Members of our governing committees will meet at 7pm on Monday, February 20. Church Council will convene at 8:30, and all members are welcome to attend.

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICES MARK FIRST DAY OF LENT. Our Ash Wednesday services will take place at 6:30am and 6:30pm in the Chapel. The morning service, led by Meredith Onion, will be followed by a light breakfast in the Seim Room hosted by our Diaconate. A highlight of the morning is when members of the church share a personal faith reflection. Last year it was Jan Fraccaro. Over breakfast this year, Linda Conlin will share meaningful moments of her faith journey. Please RSVP for breakfast to rsvp@wscongo.org or on the sign-up sheet outside the Light Court.

Katherine will lead a family-friendly evening chapel service also at 6:30.

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Also on Ash Wednesday a limited supply of bound Lenten Devotionals will be available for pick-up. If you'd like to receive emails containing the daily devotions (and you are not already on our email list), be sure to notify meg@wscongo.org. (Note: the devotions will automatically be sent to everyone who currently receives our weekly emails and Gatherings via email. If you don't receive these emails yet would like to receive the devotions, please notify us.)

save the date

- ◆ Our Spring Rummage Sale is coming up on April 25 & 26. Please start putting aside your time and your gently-used rummage.
- ◆ Plans are underway for an all-church Shrimp Boil in Plymouth Hall on Sunday evening, April 30. Mark your calendar and watch for details.

ANNUAL COLLECTION FOR TEEN/ PARENT CONNECTION



On March 3, First Congo Preschool will launch its annual collection for Teen Parent Connection, a local non-profit organization which provides 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 March 12.

Teen Parent Connection is a not-for-profit agency that works with adolescent parents and their babies to promote self-sufficiency. TPC's Parents' Pantry is an incentive-based program where young parents can purchase items with baby bucks they earn by participating in support programs and setting goals.

Thank you

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

SHARON STOCKER, daughter of Bob and Nancy, grew up in our church and now as a senior research associate at the University of Cincinnati is making headlines with her recent archaeological discovery. When University of Cincinnati researchers uncovered the 3,500-year-old tomb of a Bronze Age Warrior in southwest Greece in 2015, they unearthed far more than a trove of priceless gold and silver cups, precious jewelry, bronze weapons and armor and other riches.

Sharon and her colleague Jack Davis detail their archaeological discovery in the cover story of the January/February 2017 edition of *Smithsonian* magazine, a national publication with a circulation of more than 2 million!

Below is a list of needed items for the collection:

- Diapers (Sz.Nbn, 5,6,Pull-Ups Only) & Wipes
- Bottles
- Safety Items (outlet covers, gates)
- Formula (Enfamil Infant or Gentlease)
- Finger Foods (Puffs, Graduates)
- Laundry Detergent
- ALL Personal Hygiene Products For Mom, Dad & Baby
- Child & Adult Fever Reducer
- New Clothing 12 Months -5 Years
- Children's Books

If you'd like to learn more about TPC, visit teenparentconnection.org.

WITH THE HELP OF OUR HANDBELL CHOIR DIRECTOR KC CONGDON, Handbell Musicians of America joined forces with the Salvation Army and the Mall of America to pull off a chance to make the Guinness Book of World Records to be held by the United States as the largest handbell choir.

On Nov 19, 2016, 664 ringers gathered in Bloomington, Minnesota to kick off the Salvation Army's Red Kettle campaign. After meeting all the requirements, the USA now holds the Guinness record for the largest handbell ensemble. (Japan's record was 500 ringers.)

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY UPDATE

Our Christian Education Committee invites everyone between the ages of 16 to 96 to share their faith and 45 minutes on a Sunday morning with the children of First Congo. Hope Sabbagha adds, "Teaching Sunday school is fun and easy to do." Please sign up online under Latest News and commit to spending 10 days next year with the children of our church.

Free Bible giveaway! Yes, all our fourth graders will receive their own Bible during the 5-week Bible Study unit. In progress now, the unit will teach the kids how to use the Bible as a reference and how to locate passages to guide them on their faith journey.

Fifth graders are learning about the sacrament of Holy Communion and will be served communion during class on Feb 26 in the chapel. On March 5, the children will learn about the sacrament of baptism.

I want to be like Micah! On Feb 26, children will be invited to take home a Lenten Devotional compiled just for them by our Children's Ministry Committee and children of the church. Please see Hope if you'd like a copy for your family.

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: **Anne Shay, Sally Brandenburg, Mary Jenkins** and **Mary Jo Mulcahy**.

WEEPING WITH THOSE WHO WEEP. Our condolences go out **Stephanie Sisk and her children, Alison and Charlie**, on the recent passing their beloved husband and father, Chuck; and to the friends and family of **Ellen Chevas** who died on her 88th birthday on January 23. Our condolences also go out to **Carolyn and Tom Muth** on the recent passing of Carolyn's brother, and to the friends and family of long-time former member, **Nancy Lyon**, who passed away on February 4.

FIRST CONGO GREEN TEAM offers the following tips for reducing our use of plastics:

- ⇒ Take your own re-usable bags to the grocery store and use them for produce products and all of your grocery items.
- ⇒ Choose not to buy products packaged in styrofoam, such as eggs. The most eco friendly recyclable carton is the pressed cardboard.
- ⇒ Bring your own water bottle to meetings (and Rummage) and fill it as needed from available water fountains.

going deeper. growing closer. THE MICAH CHALLENGE