

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

JANUARY 4, 2016

Join us for our
ANNUAL MEETING
January 24 at 10am
(following 9am worship)



On Sunday, January 24 will will convene the 128th Annual Meeting of the First Congregational Church of Western Springs. Worship will be at 9 AM, immediately followed by the annual meeting (at approximately 9:50). The meeting is usually about 45 minutes in length and will be followed by and all-church reception in Plymouth Hall.

Childcare will be provided during the annual meeting; yet we hope children of all ages will enjoy treats with their parents at the coffee hour.

The annual meeting is an essential element of the Congregational Church experience, as it is the time at which we formally vote on our 2016 budget and; this year, we will receive a report from our Strategic Vision Team.

COMING UP THIS SUNDAY, JANUARY 10 BAPTISMS, STYROFOAM, CONFIRMATION & MORE

During our 9:00 and 10:30 services this Sunday, Katherine will preach a sermon that pays tribute to the Sacrament of Baptism. Our kids' choirs will rehearse at 10am and 11:30, and our Christian Ventures Committee will meet at 11:30.

Our Green Team is sponsoring a community-wide Styrofoam collection this Sunday. Styrofoam packaging and (clean!) take-out containers can be brought directly to the truck in the parking lot or to the Light Court by 12 noon. A member of our Green Team will take the material to Dart Container Corporation's recycling center in North Aurora.

At 1:30, a group of confirmands will prepare a meal for the clients of Chicago's Night Ministry; at 3:30 the meal will be taken to Humboldt Park. Also on Sunday, our confirmands will switch to weekly evening classes from 5-6:15pm.

At 7pm, PFers will have their annual Fireside Chat with Rich.

LOOKING AHEAD TO SUNDAY, JANUARY 17 JESUS' MIRACLES & SCOTT'S TOP 10 LIST

During our 9:00 and 10:30 services, Rich will offer a sermon on the sometimes perplexing topic of miracles. There are a number of different miracles in Scripture. Some are physical, others are natural and even others are social miracles. Rich will teach and reflect on the role that miracles played in the Christian faith.

Our kids choirs will rehearse at 10:00 and 11:35, and ACE will return at 10:15 with a presentation by a crowd favorite, Professor Scott Paeth of DePaul University. (See article on page two.)

Mary Linabury's life will be celebrated at a 1:00 Memorial Service in our Sanctuary, and a reception will follow in our Parlor. (If you can help with or provide treats for the reception, please contact Harriet VerGowe at HKV13@aol.com.)



BEAT THE WINTER DOLDRUMS WITH SOME UPBEAT A CAPPELLA SOUNDS: WED, JAN 13

The premier men's a cappella singing group at Colgate University, Colgate 13, will perform at First Congo on Wednesday, January 13, at 7:30pm. Comprised of 13 undergraduate students from Colgate University in Hamilton, NY, the Colgate "13" has delighted audiences for over 70 years with fun, surprises, and the best a cappella sound anywhere. They combine close harmonies and intricate rhythms with their vast repertoire of jazz and popular music.

Founded in 1942, the Colgate "13" performs across the country and beyond, averaging 100 concerts and 13,000 miles a year. Most notably, the group has performed at the Super Bowl, The Hollywood Bowl, Radio City Music Hall, on television, and for presidents and royalty. Check out their YouTube videos for a sampling of what's in store!

A free-will offering will be taken at the concert, which is open to the community. A Parlor reception will follow.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

JOIN US FOR TAIZE SERVICE AT GRACE LUTHERAN. This Friday, January 8, at 7:30 pm, several church members plan to attend a Taize service at Grace Lutheran Church on Ogden Avenue in LaGrange. If interested in joining the group (or carpooling) or have questions, contact Christian Ventures Committee member Mark Laubacher at 312/560-0837 or mark@laubacherco.com.

IS HAPPINESS THE POINT? All men are invited to this Saturday's Faith & Fellowship breakfast at 7:45am in the Seim Room. Guest speaker Dr. Kelly Flanagan, who was very well received when he came last year, will examine the question: Is happiness the point? Dr. Flanagan will reflect on his belief that there is more to spiritual health than simply seeking happiness. No need to RSVP, but simply come and enjoy food, fellowship and a thoughtful presentation.

UPCOMING PF FUNDRAISERS. Here's a win/win situation if ever there was one: For \$25, your children can have three hours of supervised fun here at church (from 4-7pm on January 30); you get some alone time; and PF raises money to help offset the cost of this year's work tours to Biloxi (in the spring) and Washington DC (in the summer). Members of the high school youth group (PF) will entertain the troops while you take some time for yourselves. Please send your children with a nut-free sack dinner. Drinks and dessert will be provided. Children must be potty-trained. To sign up, email Mike Tilden at tilden@wscongo.org or call him at ext. 232.

PF's Annual Fall Frenzy has moved to February. So, mark your calendars for this year's Frozen Frenzy on Friday night, February 19, at the WS Village Club. Invitations will be sent via Evite by the end of the month.

WOMEN'S RETREAT. Sign-up is underway for this year's Women's Retreat on Mar 4-5 at Tower Hill Retreat Center in Sawyer, Michigan. Laura Sumner Truax, a popular speaker, writer, and pastor of LaSalle Street Church in Chicago will be this year's guest speaker. The cost is \$120, which includes retreat sessions, lodging, snacks, breakfast and lunch. The retreat is sponsored and organized by Moms in Faith, but is open to all women. Learn more/sign up online or by contacting Katherine Willis Pershey at katherine@wscongo.org. (Registration deadline is January 30.)

TOP TEN MOMENTS IN CHRISTIAN HISTORY (for real this time!). A little calendar confusion led to a last-minute topic change for last month's Adult Christian Exploration (ACE) presentation. Instead of presenting the Top 10 Moments in Christian History on Dec 13, Professor Scott Paeth presented From Jesus to Christ: Man to Deity. As is always the case with Scott, the session was informative and entertaining, so the same is expected to be the case on Jan 17, as well. All are welcome at 10:15 in the Seim Room as Scott examines what happened? Why it happened and what it meant for the future of the church.

BIBLE STUDY RESUMES IN FEBRUARY WITH GUEST PROFESSOR. Our Thursday night Bible Study participants will be learning from "guest professor" Amy-Jill Levine for their next session, thanks to the Great Courses DVD series. Levine is a professor of New Testament at Vanderbilt University and "a truly fantastic teacher"; her interpretation of the texts is shaped by her Jewish identity. All are welcome to join the group, which will meet in the Seim Room at 7:00pm for nine sessions of "Great Figures of the New Testament." *The study begins on February 11.* (Additional dates include: Feb 18, 25, March 3, 10, 17, and April 7, 21, 28.)

MORE CALENDAR ITEMS

TWO PEOPLE ONE STORY. Prepare for Valentine's Day by nurturing your relationship! On February 12 & 13, clinical psychologists Kelly and Kelly Flanagan will present the ten keys to telling one beautiful story with your relationship. Many members are familiar with Kelly Flanagan through his previous speaking engagements at First Congo. He is a popular blogger, co-founder of Artisan Clinical Associates in Naperville and the author of *The Marriage Manifesto: Turning Your World Upside Down*. His wife is a former tenured professor of psychology at Wheaton College and is now a full-time clinician and the director of the Florissa Center in Dixon. The cost is \$60/couple. More information and registration can be found online under Latest News.

COMMITTEE & CHURCH COUNCIL MEETINGS will take place on Monday night, January 18, at 7:00 and 8:30pm, respectively. We are deeply grateful for the work and dedication of our committee members.

BRIEFLY

NEIGHBOR/COMMUNITY THEME FOR THIS YEAR'S LENTEN DEVOTIONAL. Ash Wednesday will be here in the blink of an eye. (It's on February 10 this year!) That means writers need inspiration STAT if they want to contribute to this year's devotional, for which the submission deadline is Wed., Jan 27.

Rev. Carol Thomas will host a writing workshop for the Lenten Devotional on Monday, January 11, at 3pm in the second floor multi-purpose room of Plymouth Place. Residents and non-resident members are welcome to attend. If you can't attend the workshop, but still wish to contribute to the devotional, you can find details and writing prompts online under Latest News/Lent-2016.

DINING FOR WOMEN. January's meeting will be held next Tuesday, January 12 at the Western Springs home of Terry Steiner at 7pm. The beneficiary of January's contributions is Puente Mexico, which works to empower rural women by improving their nutrition and family economy. To learn more about this monthly dinner group, contact Laurel Seidelman at lseidelman.comcast.net.

GROUND YOURSELF IN A NEW BOOK. The Thursday Morning Women's Book Group is always open to newcomers, but now is an especially good time to join the group. On January 14, the Thursday morning ladies will begin reading and discussing Diana Butler Bass' new book, *Grounded*. The group meets from 9-11am in the Seim Room and is led by Meredith Onion. Contact Meredith with questions or to indicate your interest in "...finding a revitalized expression of faith and changing the world."

PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR 2016 PLEDGES We received over 370 pledges from church households, and, according to Rich, they show a generous 4.5% net increase. Still, Rich says, we need to hear from all of the approximately 85 households that have not yet submitted pledges. We will be sending out a mailing very soon to all of those families, and proactive members can save the church a substantial amount of money and office time by submitting their pledge as soon as they're able.

Rich reminds everyone: "Your generosity and support of this home that we all share is deeply appreciated – and needed."

95 & going strong

The Western Springs Music Club is celebrating its 95th anniversary with a special concert in our sanctuary at 2pm on Sunday, January 24. All are invited to enjoy this free concert, featuring a wonderful gathering of some of the club's finest performing members. Guests will hear performances on piano, cello, clarinet, bassoon, flute, classical guitar, vocal ensemble and organ. According to organist Jim Winfield, this is also the 35th anniversary of our chancel organ, which he was instrumental in designing. The concert will be followed by a reception in the parlor.



The Western Springs Music Club was founded in January of 1921 by Mrs. William Hilton when she invited eleven music-minded women from Western Springs and LaGrange to a luncheon. Together, they founded the "Musical Club." The purpose was to promote the development of music in the vicinity. Informal at first, the women met in homes twice a month to enjoy live music presented by its members, followed by a tea. The club eventually formed ensembles and choral groups, and in doing so, developed long-lasting friendships. To maintain high standards, prospective performing members audition before a membership committee. Many members are professionals, well-trained private teachers, or active in groups such as the West Suburban Symphony, Salt Creek Sinfonietta, or various Chicago Area choral ensembles.

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: **Elsie Stiffler** (pelvic contusion), and **Ellen Chivas** (due to be discharged from LaGrange Hospital on Thurs).

STRAIGHT FROM HEAVEN. Married in our church three years ago, Tony VerGowe and his wife Tracy had a baby boy on December 8. Needless to say, grandparents Harriet and Wayne are over the moon on the birth of **Jackson Allen**.

IN SYMPATHY.... Our condolences go out to **The Thar Cuff Family** on the recent passing of Annie's father.

TRANSITIONS: Annie and Joel Collier have made their move to North Carolina. Their new address is: 9 Middlesborough Ct., Durham NC 27705.

RUNNING RUMMAGE....Is a growing concern. Several department co-chairs and chairs are needed for our April sale (April 19 & 20), and sale organizers are being sought for the October sale. While it may look daunting, most procedures and policies are already in place and documented, so things can proceed as they have been or things can be changed, if the chairpersons are so inclined. If you or someone you know has what it takes to help in one of these capacities or if you'd like to just learn more, please contact Erin Molek at emolek@sbcglobal.net. As with all volunteer positions, Rummage leadership is open to church members and non-members alike.