

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

MAY 4, 2015



*When you were small
and just a touch away, I
covered you with
blankets against the cold
night air. But now that
you are tall and out of
reach, I fold my hands
and cover you with
prayer.*

Dona Maddux Cooper

COMING UP THIS SUNDAY, MAY 10 1ST CONGO4CONGO & FRB ACREAGE SALE

Rich will lead worship and will offer a Mother's Day sermon entitled *Just A Few Things*. Kathryn Charlene Price (Bronson) will offer a reflection on her role as a mom during her days in seminary. The sacrament of baptism will be celebrated for two families at our 10:30 service. Our Children's Ministries team will lead First Steps and dedicate our children's 1st Congo4Congo offering. In between services, representatives from Foods Resource Bank will be on hand for their annual acreage sale. (The cost of an acre is \$400 this year, to cover the rising costs of inputs.) Donations may be made by check, with FRB noted on the memo line. As always, 1/2 and 1/4 acres are options, as are plots of multiple acres.

LOOKING AHEAD TO SUNDAY, MAY 17

Katherine will preach and our Chancel Choir will sing at both services. In the evening at 6pm, there will be a meal crew meeting for kids going on the Freshman Work Tour (to Washington DC). At 7pm, all of Plymouth Fellowship will convene in the Sanctuary to view their year-end video. (Parents and siblings are welcome.) Orders will be taken to purchase the highlight video, which is being sold for \$20 each.

LOOKING AHEAD TO SUNDAY, MAY 24 SUMMER WORSHIP BEGINS: 9:30 ONLY

Meredith will lead the first of our one-service-Summer-Sundays. Join us at 9:30 in the Sanctuary for Pentecost Sunday—the Christian festival celebrating the descent of the Holy Spirit on Jesus' disciples after Jesus' Ascension. Sunday school will be in session through the summer months for children up through fifth grade, provided teacher recruitment is sufficient. (Because of the construction, Sunday school will be held this summer on the third floor of the Education Building.)

STRATEGIC VISION PRIORITY #1

Our Strategic Vision Team identified five key priorities, which will each be explored by five separate implementation teams over the next several months. In the next five issues of Gatherings, we'll highlight each of the priorities, starting with the first:

1. Explore and develop our spirituality

We value our worship experience with inspired and intelligent sermons and rich music. Yet we seek additional opportunities to deepen our spiritual journeys and learn to continually integrate our faith into all aspects of our lives.

The Strategic Vision Implementation team tackling this priority will devise a plan to help us:

*Create ways to explore and deepen our spirituality together and enrich our theological perspectives.

*Enhance the faith experience of those seeking God by sharing our faith stories and journeys with one another and the world.

*Continually explore new ways to deepen our faith.

(continued on side bar on next page)

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

MEN'S FAITH & FELLOWSHIP BREAKFAST ON MAY 9.

All men are invited to our faith and fellowship breakfast at 7:45 AM in the Seim room. Jim Skogsbergh, president and CEO of Advocate Health Systems, will be our guest, and will reflect on the future of healthcare in our nation, and the future of faith related healthcare systems. The breakfast concludes by 9am, but if you are able to stay please come dressed to help move mulch around the church grounds. (Bring gloves, shovel and, if you have one, a wheelbarrow.) The morning will be wrapped up by 10am. ▼

MORE MULCH MADNESS.

A few dedicated and rummage-fatigued men showed up last Saturday to help John McMahan, our Facilities Manager, lay mulch around the church property. We're hoping for a better turnout this Saturday morning, May 9. If you can help out for even just 30-60 minutes, please come with a rake, shovel and gloves. (A few additional wheelbarrows would also be helpful.) All ages (and genders) welcome!

PF TEAMS UP WITH CORNER BAKERY.

From 7am to 9pm on Wednesday, May 20, members and friends of the church can eat at Corner Bakery and raise money for PF. Fliers will be available at church and upon request via email. Simply show the flier and our high school youth group will get 15% of the sales between 7am and 9pm. To request a flier (which can be shown to the cashier in hardcopy or on your phone screen), email Mike Tilden at tilden@wscongo.org or check out our Facebook page on May 19.



BRIEFLY

SERVE & SOCIALIZE. The Nominating Committee is looking for a few more people interested in serving on our Diaconate and Outreach Committees. Working on a committee is a great way to meet people while you support the work of the church.

For more information about the Diaconate, contact Ben Pershey at benpershey@gmail.com or 708.246.2634. For more information about our Outreach Committee, contact Stephanie Sisk at stephaniesisk@yahoo.com or 708/246.7571.

CONGRATULATIONS to the slate of new PF officers for 2015-2016:

Presidents:

Jen Grissim & Trace Mortimer

Vice Presidents:

To be voted on during the upcoming Freshman Work Tour

Devotional:

Bridget Kirby & Ryan Byrne

Outreach:

Andrea Branz & Maddie Green

Trips & Retreats:

Nick Economou & Garrett Ariana

Fundraisers:

Kate Grissim & Maddox Hill

Secretary: Fred Moody

Treasurer: Ellie Finnerty

Associates: Not yet identified.

SUMMER SUNDAY CONCERT SERIES

Summer is almost here and Kathy Christian is putting together another Summer Concert Series for us. 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 from Sunday school, etc., then come back to the Sanctuary for these 30-minute musical offerings. We hope you'll join us.

June 28: Maud Powell String Quartet
(Honors quartet from the Elgin Youth Symphony)



Paul Christian, violin; Michael Priller, violin; Claire Wright, viola; Jacob Song, cello

July 12: Favorite Welsh Hymns, Janet Mensen Reynolds

August 2: Summer Dreams, Music by American composer Amy Beach for Piano, Four Hands with poetry and photography

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHING MINISTRY

Jan Fraccaro reports that we're half way there....And, with your help, our teaching teams will be complete! Please consider joining a six-person Sunday school teaching team for our 2015-16 program year (Sept-May). This ministry is truly rewarding for both the children and the adults who grow together in their experience and love of God.

Teaching is done in pairs, with a personal commitment of five Sundays as lead teacher and 5 as the assistant. Curriculum and training are provided. The remaining openings are as follows:

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

Starting on May 31, children will be dismissed from First Steps to our third floor for Sunday school (and childcare). Teaching pairs are needed in each of three classrooms – 4s and entering Kindergartners; children entering 1st & 2nd grades; and children entering 3rd through 5th grades. Summer is a great chance to pair with friends, children or siblings – a fun and easy curriculum is provided.

Contact Jan Fraccaro (jan@wscongo.org or 246-1900x215) for more details or to sign up for either session. Other sign up options include the rolling board near the Light Court or through the links in our weekly emails.

STRATEGIC VISION PRIORITY #1 (cont'd)

*Experience, learn and integrate a variety of spiritual practices in our personal and congregational lives.

*Learn the practice of discernment and integrate God's Spirit in all we do as a faith community.

*Continually enrich our worship experience, experimenting with different types and styles of worship

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

2. Live as a renewed community of faith
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. Please hold the leaders, co-chairs and team members in your prayers.

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.

**NEXT GATHERINGS
DEADLINE
5pm
June 1, 2015**

BITS & PIECES

IN OUR PRAYERS...Please hold the following members in your prayers this week: **Alice Parker** (Health Center at Plymouth Place); and McKenzie Fauth (upcoming hip surgery).

OUR CONDOLENCES go out to **Terry and Andy Steiner** on the recent passing of Andy's father. Their sadness was tempered by the May 3, arrival of their granddaughter, Elliette Annalise, born to their daughter Erin and her husband Craig.

A WARM WELCOME. On Sunday, May 3, we welcomed the following people into our family of faith. **Mari-Jo Altobello and David Todorov, Sami and John Flanagan, MaryElizabeth and Linwood Kennedy, and Amy and Joel Simpson.** We'll include their bios in the next issue of *Gatherings*.

AN UNWELCOME GUEST....We hate to ask this of you, but must—please refrain from bringing Ol' Joe into the Sanctuary. Coffee drips and spills we prefer to do without.

PASTORAL LETTER. We hope you received Rich's letter last week, which details many of the events and building plans for this spring and summer. Please take five minutes and read it in its entirety.

A NOTE OF THANKS. The Green Team thanks all who brought their Styrofoam to church on April 19.

Please continue to be mindful of the packaging of products you regularly buy, and opt for the products not packaged in Styrofoam. If you have a lot of Styrofoam to recycle, take your products to Dart Container Corp, 310 Evergreen Dr. in North Aurora.

Green Tip for the week: Try to wean yourself from plastic disposable water bottles and instead buy an inexpensive, reusable water bottle.

