

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 26, 2016

Super Bowl Sunday Guided Labyrinth Walk



If you are preparing for lent—or the big game, Bob Kos, our Labyrinth Liaison, invites you to our guided labyrinth walks following both morning services on February 7.

Says Bob....

Make a legal procedure and prepare your **game plan** before the big **game** [lent]. Come walk the labyrinth if you are seeking **intentional grounding**, are overwhelmed by holiday **Bills**, are tired of people misleading you or **Lion** to you. You may also wish to reaffirm the **Cardinal** rules. Bye walking, listening, and being open, you might find life more **Bearable**. Join us and take a walk in **safety**. It can be a **Saintly** walk as the spirit guides the process. While you walk, follow the route without **interference**. You may also walk directly to the center or walk **offside**. Place this article in your **playbook** to remind you, or **block** it into your calendar. Guides will be available to **coach** new walkers.

COMING UP THIS SUNDAY, JANUARY 31

WORSHIP WITH A SIDE OF PANCAKES: 9:00, 10:30 & 5:00PM

We often ignore - or even avoid - scriptures such as Ephesians 5:21-33, in which Paul instructs wives to "be subject" to their husbands. How might we take a text like this seriously but not literally? Is there "good news" in a text that seems to set up antiquated hierarchies in Christian households? During our 9:00 and 10:30 worship services on Sunday, Katherine will share how she has considered these biblical teachings in the process of writing a book about marriage.

Also on Sunday, our Fourth Grade Bible Study begins (promptly at 9am and 10:30) and our Alleluia Choir members will rehearse at 10am. The Boy Scouts of Troop 12 will host their annual Pancake Breakfast in Plymouth Hall from 8am-Noon. Tickets are \$5 each (for diners ages four and older) and can be purchased at the door. A group of confirmands will be preparing (1:30) and serving (3:30) a meal to the clients of Chicago's Night Ministry.

At 5pm, our Spirit Worship Band will lead a contemporary service in Plymouth Hall on the subject of Friendship, Neighbor & Community. Rich will preach and music from Paul Simon, Elton John and James Taylor will be performed. Confirmands and their parents are invited to the service and Confirmation class will follow from 5:45-6:30pm. PF will not meet at 7:00, but will attend worship together at 5pm.

(From 3-7pm, BEDS Plus will hold their Fourth Annual Soup & Bread fundraising event at the William Tell Holiday Inn in Countryside. Visit beds-plus.org to learn more.)

LOOKING AHEAD TO SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 7

Meredith will preach and serve communion at 9:00 and 10:30. The Stiffler Labyrinth in Plymouth Hall will be available for walking (or observing) after both services (see side bar). Our Alleluia Choir will sing in worship, and our Spirit Choir will rehearse at 11:35. Our Welcome Team will meet at 11:30 in the Seim Room. Confirmands will meet at 5pm in the Youth Room, and having returned on Saturday from their overnight ski trip, PFers will have Sunday night off.

(Ash Wednesday is February 10. Please see more about our Ash Wednesday services and other Lenten offerings on page three.)

FELLOWSHIP EVENTS

Families in Faith invites moms and dads to stop by Western Springs' new Hillgrove Tap restaurant for drinks and appetizers and to catch up with old friends or meet some new friends this Saturday, January 30, from 4:15-6:45pm. (If childcare's an issue, consider supporting our high school youth group fundraiser by dropping your kids off at church from 4-7pm. Details/sign-up are online at <http://www.wscongo.org/pfs-babysitting-fundraiser-jan-30/>.) RSVP to the Hillgrove Tap outing by emailing Jeannette@wscongo.org.

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The Midshippers (or Midship Fellowship group) will gather to "Eat and Laugh Away the Winter Blues" at the home of Val and Kathryn Price on Saturday, February 13 at 6pm. The famous soup master, Wayne VerGowe, will conjure up some delicious soups, and the committee will provide the rest. The cost is \$10 per person. All you need to bring is a good joke to share. Please RSVP to Prices at 246-5022 or Valandkathryn@msn.com.

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Our PrimeTime group will celebrate President's Day with a get-together on February 20. All are welcome to join this group of 50-65 (ish) age adults for patriotic fun and fellowship at the Western Springs home of Ross and Becky MacIver. *Guests are asked to bring a beverage of their choice and a dish to share:* Last name A-R: appetizer; S-Z: dessert. *Please RSVP to Sally Thiessen by February 15:* sally@madisongroupltd.com.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

PF'S FROZEN FRENZY on February 19, is open to adults of all ages. If you'd like to support our high school youth group and have some fun while doing so, please see the event page on our website or check your inbox for an E-vite.

ALL-AGES WOMEN'S RETREAT. The registration deadline for this year's Women's Retreat on Mar 4-5 at Tower Hill in Sawyer, Michigan is coming up on January 30. Women of all ages are sure to enjoy the fun and fellowship and the words of guest speaker, Laura Sumner Truax, a popular speaker, writer, and pastor of LaSalle Street Church in Chicago. Laura will present and lead the group in discussion and activities based on the theme, *Suckers for Distraction: Developing mindfulness as a practice of a rich life.*

The cost is \$120, which includes retreat sessions, lodging, snacks, breakfast and lunch. The retreat is sponsored 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. (A quick Google search will lead you to a plethora of samples of Laura's work.)

BIBLE STUDY RESUMES IN FEBRUARY WITH GUEST PROFESSOR. Thanks to the Great Courses DVD series, Thursday night Bible Study participants will be privy to the wisdom of Amy Levine, professor of New Testament at Vanderbilt University. The nine-week course, "Great Figures of the New Testament" will begin on February 11 at 7pm in the Seim Room. All are welcome. To learn more/sign up, email katherine@wscongo.org.

MINISTRY AND CHURCH COUNCIL MEETINGS will take place on Monday evening, February 15, at 7:00 and 8:30pm.

CARING FOR THE CAREGIVER. Are you challenged by caring for an aging parent, spouse, or ill loved one? If so, please join us for our Caregivers' Group, which meets the second Monday of each month in the Seim Room from 1:30-3:00pm. Come and receive information on successful caregiving practices, get answers to your medical questions, find solutions to caregiving challenges, and learn the importance of self-care. Concerns are shared in a comfortable group setting where confidentiality is the rule. This group, co-facilitated by Deb Stankiewicz, Advocate Parish Nurse, and Meredith Onion, Associate Pastor, is ongoing and open to all church members and caregivers from the community. Questions? Call Deb at ext. 218 or Meredith at ext. 222.

TWO PEOPLE ONE STORY. Whether you've been together for 30 years or 10, relationships can always benefit from a little TLC. So far, approximately 20 couples (of all ages) have signed up for our Marriage/Partner Enrichment Retreat here at church on Friday night, February 12, and Saturday morning, February 13. Clinical psychologists Kelly and Kelly Flanagan will present the ten keys to telling one beautiful story with your relationship. Kelly Flanagan, a beloved guest speaker here at church, 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 on our website under Latest News.

Note: Because of this program, Men's Faith & Fellowship Breakfast will not be held on February 13. The group will meet next on Saturday morning, March 12.

THE LENTEN SEASON

"During these 40 days, let me put away all my pride. Let me change my heart and give up all that is not good within me. Let me love God with all that I am and all that I have."

Genesis Grain

ASH WEDNESDAY CHAPEL SERVICES.

The 6:30 morning service will celebrate Communion and be followed by a light breakfast and a faith reflection by Jan Fraccaro, our devoted Christian Ed Director, who will be retiring this spring. You may come for any or all of the morning, which should conclude by 7:30am. The 6:30 evening service is for all ages. Both services will be in the chapel.

LENTEN SERMON SERIES. On February 14, Rich will begin a Lenten Sermon Series on the "Questions of our Faith." The first sermon examines the question: Is Christianity Unique? The series will continue on the following dates: February 21, Who Gets to Heaven? February 28, Why Is There Suffering? March 13, Do Good People Get Angry?

JOIN US IN WALKING THE WAY OF THE CROSS. The Stiffler Labyrinth will be available in Plymouth Hall on Maundy Thursday evening March 24, following the 8pm service, and on Good Friday, March 25, from 6-8pm. As you Walk the Way of the Cross, a bell will toll and walkers will be asked to pause while the Passion Scriptures are read. Walkers are invited to meet with a Labyrinth Guide in the Seim Room prior to their walk. Labyrinth Guides will assist new walkers and be available to answer any questions. The Labyrinth is a place for a quiet, meditative walk. If you're curious, you're welcome to simply come and sit and enjoy the beauty and serenity of the atmosphere.

Questions regarding the walks, which are open to families as well as adults of all ages, may be directed to Bob Kos at 708/485-4760. If you are not available to walk during the guided labyrinth walks, feel free to walk the labyrinth (during Lent or otherwise) as your schedule permits. (Please call the church ahead of time to ensure Plymouth Hall is available.)

BRIEFLY

WOULD YOU LIKE TO MEET MORE PEOPLE AT CHURCH? Ushering on Sunday mornings is an enjoyable way to do that and involves serving only one or two Sundays every two months. To learn more about serving in this capacity or to add your name to the rotation, please contact Dal Ingold at d.ingold@att.net.

LABYRINTH GUIDE TRAINING. If you are interested in becoming a Labyrinth Guide, please contact Bob Kos at cynbobty@sbcglobal.net. Training will take place throughout February and takes about 90 minutes.

NEW MEMBERS WELCOME. Friends and visitors of the church are invited to join our family of faith during our 10:30 worship service on February 28. A two-part orientation class will be held; the first at 10am on Sunday, February 21, and the second at 7pm on Tuesday, February 23. To learn more or to sign up, contact Linda Conlin at ext. 216 or linda@wscongo.org.

YOUTH NEWS



Youth ages 13-18 are invited to mark their calendars and attend "the most *magical* NATIONAL YOUTH EVENT (NYE) of all"! From July 26-30, join 4,000 UCC and Disciples youth from across the globe at Walt Disney World's Coronado Springs Resort in Lake Buena Vista, Fla. Details and registration can be found at nye.uccpages.org.



For years, our 6th-9th graders have been heading off to UCC Sports Camp and coming back with stories of faith, fun, and fellowship. There are many more camp opportunities for children who have finished kindergarten through 11th grade. We would love to send more kids off to experience the presence of God in the great outdoors! If you'd like to coordinate summer camp plans, email katherine@wscongo.org. (We hope to post a link soon on our website to camp options.)

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: **Susan Becker** (home recovering from surgery) and **Marge Klindera** (3rd floor Plymouth Place recovering from surgery).

STRAIGHT FROM HEAVEN.

Congratulations and best wishes to **Will and Kathleen Curto** on the recent birth of their son, Henry James; to **Kim and Mark Rapacki** on the birth of their second daughter, Isabelle Rose, who arrived on Christmas day; and **Megan and Drew Roskos** on the recent birth of their second son, Lucas.

IN SYMPATHY.... Our condolences go out to **Susan Cummins and family** on the recent passing of her husband Jerry, and to **Pam and Tom Remijas and family** on the recent passing of Pam's mother.

TRANSITIONS: Blessings to **Peggy and Kent Taylor**, who will soon be moving from Western Springs to a fourth floor unit at Plymouth Place.

GIFTS OF HOPE. Many thanks to those who supported this year's Gifts of Hope, sponsored by our Mission & Outreach Committee. Profits from the December market totaled over \$10,400, all of which went to several of our valued mission partners.