

# 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 2018

### Sunday Mornings In February

Worship Services Held at 9 & 10:30am

#### FEBRUARY 4

February 4 marks Youth Sunday at First Congregational Church. The youth of the church will lead the congregation in worship. Communion will be served.

#### FEBRUARY 11

In preparation for Lent, Rev. Meredith Onion will lead the congregation in worship and the bells will play.

#### FEBRUARY 18

On this President's Day weekend and the first week of Lent, Rev. Katherine Willis Pershey will begin our Lenten Series, *Holy Ground, Sacred Space*, preaching on the story of Moses and the burning bush. Communion will be served.

#### FEBRUARY 25

This is the second week of Lent and Rev. Dr. Rich Kirchherr will discuss the important role of Lent in our daily lives. Also, new members will be welcomed into the congregation at the 10:30am service. Communion will be served.



### Ash Wednesday At First Congo

To begin the season of lent we will gather for worship on February 14 in the Chapel at 6:30am. This 25 minute service will be lead by Rev. Dr. Rich Kirchherr. Following worship, a continental breakfast is being hosted by the Diaconate. A reflection will be offered by our own Nancy Wintermute on the importance of teaching our young children. Nancy Wintermute is retiring after more than 20 years of teaching at First Congregational Church Preschool.

There will also be a 6:30pm family service in the Sanctuary lead by Rev. Katherine Willis Pershey. Communion will be served.

### Welcome - We Are Glad You Are Here!

Everyone can be part of our abundant and welcoming hospitality by passing the red pew pads during worship. This is wonderful way to meet visitors and members in your row. We also encourage you to wear your nametags every Sunday. Also, please introduce visitors to [Jeannette Lloyd](#), our New Member & Engagement Coordinator, or the Welcome Team member wearing a yellow ribbon.

### Speaking of welcoming...

If you know of someone interested in finding out about membership, our next New Member session starts Sunday, February 18. Part I is February 18 at 10am in the Chapel (1st floor of the Education Building). [Rev. Meredith Onion](#) will share information about our ministries and ways to become engaged here at church.

Part II is Tuesday, February 20 at 7pm, beginning in the Sanctuary with [Rev. Dr. Rich Kirchherr](#) and [Rev. Katherine Willis Pershey](#), who will talk about our church's history, our UCC denomination, and our theology. Prospective members will also get to know each other better and practice what they'll do when they join the church on Sunday, February 25 during the 10:30am service. Please contact [Jeannette@wscongo.org](mailto:Jeannette@wscongo.org) if you have any questions or are interested in joining the church.

# HAPPENINGS AROUND CHURCH

**JOURNEY THROUGH KY.** The Christian Ventures Committee and Rev. Rich Kirchherr invite you to join us for a 3 day, 2 night, Spiritual Journey to Kentucky, May 14-16. The cost is \$275 per person (double occupancy), which includes all travel, admissions, some meals, and 2 nights lodging. Some highlights include visits to The Abbey of Gethsemani, Shaker Village, and Berea College. Contact [Rich](#) at 708.246.1900 or [Bob Kos](#) at 708.217.8056 to make your reservation.

**LENTEN STUDY.** Rev. Katherine Willis Pershey will lead the Lenten Study. We will study *Surprised by Hope* by N. T. Wright. The Lenten Study will take place February 15, 22, March 1, 8, 15, and 22, from 7-8:15pm in the Seim Room. The cost is \$10 per person for the entire program. [Click here](#) to register or visit Upcoming Events on [wscongo.org](http://wscongo.org).

**ADULT CHRISTIAN EXPLORATION (ACE).** Join ACE at 10:15am on February 4 and March 18 in the Seim Room to continue the conversation on the Reformation. [Rev. Dr. Rich Kirchherr](#) will follow-up his teachings on the Reformation and its influence on the modern church, as well as how we as a congregation worship and function even today. During both sessions, sections of Rick Steve's travel special on the Reformation sites in Germany will be shown. [Click here](#) for additional information on the ACE program or visit [wscongo.org](http://wscongo.org).

**LABYRINTH.** In preparation for Lent, the next Labyrinth walk will take place February 11 at 10am and 11:30am in Plymouth Hall. For more information regarding the Labyrinth walk [click here](#) or contact Bob Kos at [bobkos@hotmail.com](mailto:bobkos@hotmail.com).

## MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID CLASS.

- Recognize if a family member, friend or colleague is struggling.
- Learn how to talk with someone who is in need.
- Make a positive change by helping someone onto the right road.
- Respond with the same empathy and respect to mental illness as you would with cancer.

Mental Health First Aid USA is an 8-hour training course to teach participants how to help someone who is developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis. The evidence behind the program demonstrates that it helps trainees identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders.

The Mental Health First Aid class will take place at First Congo on Saturday, February 24 from 8am to 5pm in the Seim room. Questions? Contact Meredith Onion, [meredith@wscongo.org](mailto:meredith@wscongo.org)

Register here: <http://namidupage.org/events/adult-mhfa-2-24-18-8am-to-5pm-first-congregational-church-of-western-springs/>

**SCHOLARSHIP BENEFIT CONCERT.** A Scholarship Benefit Concert, presented by the Oak Park & LaGrange Alumnae Chapters of Sigma Alpha Iota, will take place Sunday, Feb. 11 at 3:00pm at First Congregational Church. Call 630.642.0239 for more information or for tickets.

**A JOURNEY TO SEEING.** Educator and speaker Reesheda Graham-Washington will present monologues with facilitated discussions that touch on themes of discrimination, justice, and what it's like to be a historically unseen member of society. The event is co-sponsored by the Churches of Western Springs and hosted at the Thomas Ford Library on February 12 at 6:30pm. [Click here](#) for more information or to register.

## MEN'S FAITH & FELLOWSHIP BREAKFAST.

The next Men's Breakfast will be held February 10 at 7:45am in the Seim room. Rev. Katherine Willis Pershey will lead us in the "whole story," a wonderful and interesting approach to understanding the whole arc of the story of Scripture. Katherine has offered this to numerous groups and all have found it an enlightening and fascinating approach to understanding our faith. For more information on the Men's Breakfast series visit [wscongo.org](http://wscongo.org).

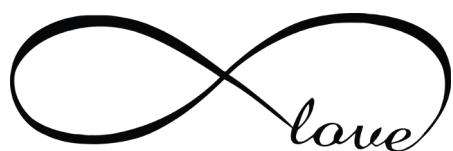


**REFLECTIVE CHAPEL GATHERING.** The next Reflective Chapel Gathering will take place February 18 at 8am in the chapel. We will focus on self-care and self-value & explore how our identities are created and influenced by the Divine. For more information regarding Reflective Chapel Gatherings visit [wscongo.org](http://wscongo.org) or contact Bob Kos at 708.485.4760 or [bobkos@hotmail.com](mailto:bobkos@hotmail.com).



**TAIZÉ SERVICES.** The next Taizé service will take place February 9 at 7:30pm at Grace Lutheran Church in Western Springs. For more information or if you need transportation, please contact Lori Harris at [harris4744@sbcglobal.net](mailto:harris4744@sbcglobal.net) or 708.246.7447.

On March 2, Christian Ventures is sponsoring a chili dinner followed by the Taizé service at Ascension Church in Oak Park. The dinner will take place at 5pm in the Seim room followed by the 7:30pm Taizé service in Oak Park. Please RSVP for dinner by February 28 to Bob Kos at 708.485.4760 or [bobkos@hotmail.com](mailto:bobkos@hotmail.com). For those unable to attend the dinner, feel free to meet directly at Ascension Church.



EVERYONE   
belongs, matters & is needed

# Youth Group News

## Plymouth Fellowship

- Feb. 3: Feed My Starving Children 8am-12:30pm
- Feb. 4: PFers will participate in the 9am and 10:30am services
- Feb. 11: Love Tanks & Labyrinth will take place at 7pm in the Youth Room
- Feb. 24: San Lucas Soup Kitchen 10am-2PM
- Feb. 25: Join us for the All-Church Chili Cook-Off hosted by the "Water" family from 5-7pm in Plymouth Hall.

## JRneys

- Feb. 4: JRneys will be participating in the 9am and 10:30am services.
- Feb. 7: JRneys will meet at 7pm in the Plymouth Hall.
- Feb. 14: An Ash Wednesday service and activity will take place from 6:30-8pm.
- Feb. 21: JRneys will meet at 7pm in the Youth Room for a fun game night.

## Confirmation Program

- Feb. 11: Class at 6pm will take place in the Seim Room. The topic is "Loss & Suffering" and is being taught by Rev. Meredith Onion.
- Feb. 25: Class at 6pm will take place in the Youth Room. The topic is "Holy Spirit" and is being taught by Rev. Katherine Willis Pershey.

# Sunday School Update

## **Create a prayer jar with your family on February 4.**

The Children's Ministry Committee would like to invite you to create a prayer jar for your family to use during the Lenten season. After each service on February 4, families may visit the Light Court and the Parlor to create a prayer jar. All materials will be provided. Once finished, the jars may be placed on your table at home and used during Lent.

## **What book in the Bible can you find the story of Jesus' birth?**

Beginning February 11, the fourth graders at First Congo will begin a five-week Bible study unit. They will learn about stories of the Bible and how to use the Bible for guidance and comfort. Many thanks go to Ben Pershey and Katie Pogue for teaching this important unit. For more information about other Sunday school classes please visit [wscongo.org](http://wscongo.org).

# Community Service Event

The Village Club of Western Springs & Buddy's Place presents a community service event. Make blankets for the children & teens in the Buddy's Place bereavement program.



**WHEN:** February 11 from 1-2:30pm  
**WHERE:** Village Club of Western Springs  
 4221 Lawn Ave., Western Springs

Please consider donating fleece. We need a minimum of 4 yards to make a blanket. Place donations in the drop-box in the lobby of Pillar's 1023 Burlington Ave.

# Buddy's Place

Buddy's Place is Pillars Community Health's bereavement and grief support program for children ages 4-18 and their families. Volunteers can participate in training to help grieving families who have experienced the death of a loved one.

Buddy's Place offers children and their caregiver(s) a safe and supportive group where they can express their grief and learn coping skills with others who have experienced similar losses.

Buddy's Place is accepting new volunteers to help support grieving children and their families in a variety of ways, including Greeters and Group Facilitators.

To register for the training please fill out the [Pillars Community Health volunteer application](#). The training is free with a one-year volunteer commitment. The training will be held in Western Springs.

## Training Dates & Times:

- Tues., Feb. 20, 5:00-9:00 pm
- Tues., Feb 27, 5:00-9:00 pm
- Tues., March 6, 5:00-9:00 pm
- Monday, March 12, 5:00-9:00 pm
- Tues., March 13, 5:00-9:00 pm

For more information on Buddy's Place, please visit [Buddy's Place website](#). If you are interested in the training please contact Michelle Halm at 708.995.3750 or email [buddysplace@pchcares.org](mailto:buddysplace@pchcares.org).

## WOMEN'S RETREAT

SIMPLY SACRED EVERYDAY  
GROWING AND FLOURISHING RIGHT WHERE YOU ARE

Do you find you are over-committed, overextended, and overtired? Do you ever want to hit the pause button and take a moment to catch your breath? If you answered "yes" then the March 2-3 Women's Retreat, hosted by Moms in Faith, is for you. Open to all women, join us as we press "pause" together and say, "yes" to the spiritual practice of going slow.

Author and speaker [Jerusalem Greer](#) will share her story of how everything she thought would make her happy came undone and how she found a way to make herself at home in her unbalanced life. Discover how you can begin to grow and flourish right where you are, living a simply sacred life everyday.

The retreat will take place at the Tower Hill Retreat Center in Sawyer, MI. The cost of the retreat is \$130/person; if participants wish to stay a second night the cost is \$170/person. For more retreat information or to register visit [Upcoming Events](#) on [wscongo.org](#).

## EMBRACE INCLUSION WITH MOMS IN FAITH

Join Moms in Faith (MIF) February 2 from 9-11am in the Seim Room for a presentation titled, "Why We All Benefit When We Embrace Inclusive Communities." Presented by Greg Ward, BS SPED, Education Specialist & Inclusion Advisor at Aspire, participants will better understand the philosophy of inclusion as it relates to individuals with disabilities.

Following the informational presentation participants will discuss ways to talk to children about inclusion. Takeaways will include a tip sheet for kids and ideas for related children's literature. Childcare will be available (\$5 drop-in fee for non-MIF members), however a RSVP to Rev. Katherine Willis Pershey at [katherine@wscongo.org](mailto:katherine@wscongo.org) is required.

## Living Lent Through Music

### Lenten Devotional LIVE

Our Sunday evening "Words and Music" series continues February 18 at 5:00pm in Plymouth Hall (rockin' pre-service music starts at about 4:45pm). In February we return to a storytelling format. Our speakers will share reflections on their writings for the Lenten Devotional theme Holy Ground, Sacred Spaces. The Spirit Worship Band will entertain the audience with selections from Rend Collective, Josh Garrels, Blind Faith, and Collective Soul (via Dolly Parton).

### Save The Date: "Eternal Light: A Requiem"

Partake in the splendors of our immensely talented congregation during the 9am and 10:30am services on March 11. Bring family, friends, and neighbors to listen to the "Eternal Light: A Requiem" by Howard Goodall. Singers, string orchestra, and keyboards will be featured in English and Latin. This Lenten worship services is not to be missed.

Here is a link to a recording of the requiem:

[Goodall: "Eternal light: A Requiem"](#) (you must play each section individually)

For more information regarding either program contact [Ray Klemchuk](#).

## Plymouth Rock Fragment Makes The History Books

By: Rev. Dr. Rich Kirchherr

Plymouth Rock is on the shores of Plymouth, MA. It marks the sight of the Pilgrims landing in 1620. However, it seems over the years many pieces from that rock have been distributed [perhaps particularly to churches] in America and even far beyond, as fitting symbols of the Pilgrims, their faith, and their coming to America in 1620.

As The Church of the Pilgrimage on the flanks of Burial Hill in Plymouth, MA now prepares to celebrate the 400th



anniversary of the Pilgrims' landing, they are compiling a list of as many of those Plymouth Rock

fragments as they can find.

We have a fragment of the rock embedded in the stone wall of our Light Court. Our "piece of the rock" came to Chicago in 1893 for the Columbian Exposition from the Congregational Archives in Massachusetts as part of a display of Congregational history. It was given to the Chicago Theological Seminary (CTS) after the Exposition closed. When CTS was moving five years ago, we asked if we could have the piece of rock for our congregation.

First Congregational Church in Western Springs will be listed, as part of the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the Pilgrims, in a book detailing all of the locations where parts of the rock are located. We are lucky and honored to hold a "piece of the rock!"

## Love Your Heart

Did you know February is National Heart Health Month? This is a great time to make sure your ticker is tickin' properly. Blood pressure screening will take place February 11 & 25 from 9:30-11:30am in our Parish Nurse, Deb Stankiewicz's office. No appointment or registration necessary, just stop by. Contact Deb at [deb@wscongo.org](mailto:deb@wscongo.org) if you have questions.

*It's Time Again*  
**BOY SCOUTS TROOP 12**

*ANNUAL*  
**PANCAKE BREAKFAST**

GREAT FOOD! GREAT FOOD!

**FUNDRAISER**

**SUNDAY FEBRUARY 4 8AM-12:30PM**  
**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**  
 1106 W. CHESTNUT ST WESTERN SPRINGS

-ALL YOU CAN EAT PANCAKES!  
 -WIDE ASSORTMENT OF TOPPINGSI  
 -INCLUDES BEVERAGES  
 -SERVED BY OUR BOY SCOUTS

A delicious event for the family!  
 COME SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL TROOP

TICKETS ONLY \$4

## Fellowship @ First Congo

### Two New Fellowship Groups Come To First Congo

First Congregational Church has a long history of fellowship as a way to invite members, visitors, and friends to connect to the congregation on a social level. We are please to announce the introduction of two new fellowship groups, Congo Connect and Pathfinders.

#### Congo Connect

Congo Connect is a fellowship group for those individuals 30 to 45 years of age, however **ANYONE** is welcome to join. Congo Connect will meet at least three times per year for social events, mission opportunities, or family fun. If you are interested in participating in Congo Connect or have questions, please contact Stacey Wixted at [stacey@wscongo.org](mailto:stacey@wscongo.org).

#### Pathfinders

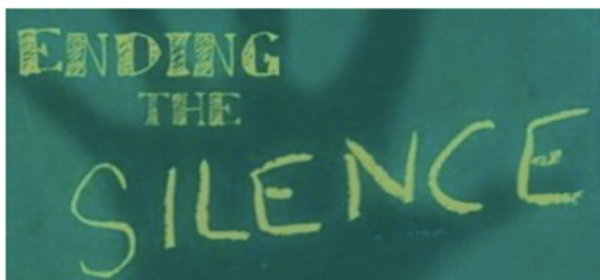
Pathfinders is a fellowship group for individuals 40 to 55 years of age. Pathfinders will meet for social, family, and mission events, as well as provide resources and support appealing to this age group and their families. If you are interested in participating in Pathfinders or have questions, please contact Jeannette Lloyd at [jeannette@wscongo.org](mailto:jeannette@wscongo.org).

Other fellowship groups at First Congo:

**Primetime** (~50 to 65), Meredith Onion, [meredith@wscongo.org](mailto:meredith@wscongo.org)

**M&Ms** (~60 to 75), Linda Conlin, [lkconlin@hotmail.com](mailto:lkconlin@hotmail.com)

**Midship** (~70+), Kathryn Price, [valandkathryn@msn.com](mailto:valandkathryn@msn.com)



## WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 7, 2018

7 – 8:30PM ~ PLYMOUTH HALL

Helping middle and high schoolers understand mental illness makes a big difference. We can teach them about the warning signs for themselves and their friends. **NAMI Ending the Silence** helps raise awareness and change perceptions around mental health conditions.

Angela Begres, MSW, Education Program Manager from **NAMI Metro Suburban** will present the program, along with a young adult living with mental illness who will tell their story about mental health challenges, including what hurt and what helped.

**Questions: Meredith Onion,**  
[meredith@wscongo.org](mailto:meredith@wscongo.org)



FIRST  
 CONGREGATIONAL  
 CHURCH  
*of Western Springs*

ALL PARENTS AND  
 JR. HIGH/HIGH  
 SCHOOL STUDENTS  
 ARE WELCOME

1 IN 5 KIDS  
 EXPERIENCES A  
 MENTAL HEALTH  
 CONDITION; ONLY 20%  
 OF THEM ACTUALLY  
 GET HELP

ABOUT 50% OF  
 STUDENTS AGES 14+  
 WITH A MENTAL  
 HEALTH CONDITION  
 WILL DROP OUT OF  
 SCHOOL

SUICIDE IS THE  
 SECOND-LEADING  
 CAUSE OF DEATH FOR  
 15-24 YEAR OLDS

1106 Chestnut  
 Western Springs, IL

708-246-1900

[wscongo.org](http://wscongo.org)

*All are welcome*



**REDUCE**

**REUSE**

**RECYCLE**

**REPEAT**

PASTORAL STAFF

Rich Kirchherr  
Senior Minister

Katherine Willis Pershey  
Associate Minister

Meredith Onion  
Associate Minister

Deb Stankiewicz  
Parish Nurse

*Gatherings* is a monthly publication. Articles for inclusion for March 2018 are should be submitted to [gatherings@wscongo.org](mailto:gatherings@wscongo.org) no

later than February 20.

*Gatherings* is emailed to members and posted on-line at [www.wscongo.org](http://www.wscongo.org).

# JOYS & CONCERNS

**WEeping WITH THOSE WHO WEEP.** Our heartfelt condolences go to the **Love** family on the loss of long-time member, Betty Love. Also, please hold the **Curtin** family in your prayers following the loss of Curt.

**WELCOME TO THE WORLD.** Blessings & congratulations to the **Mason** family on the birth of baby Eli Francis, as well as to the **Kepler** family on the birth of baby Harrison Ray.

**BAPTISMS.** Congratulations and welcome **Kiera Cummins, Hagan, Lucas,** and **Tatum Flanagan, Tyler Mora,** and **Ruth Julian** on your recent baptisms.

**IN OUR PRAYERS.** Please hold in your prayers **Betty Stephens** (hip surgery) and **Jean Kadow,** both recovering at Plymouth Place. **Mary Elizabeth Kennedy** (hip surgery) and **Jane Adair** (pneumonia) are both home

recovering. Also, please pray for **Paul Arndt.**

**CONSIDER A CAR DONATION.** Our refugees from Eritrea, **Adiam Tekia** and her 7<sup>th</sup> grade son **Pawlos,** are in need of a donated car. If you are able to donate an automobile to the Tekia's, please contact Kim Nichol [kbnichol@sbcglobal.net](mailto:kbnichol@sbcglobal.net).

**M&M TOUR CANCELLATION.** Due to a variety of scheduling conflicts the March Frank Lloyd Wright tour has been cancelled. M&Ms are looking to reschedule the tour on a later date.

**CONGRATULATIONS!** First Congo's own **Sally Brandenburg** won the January Theme Award at the La Grange Art League. Sally leads the Wednesday watercolor classes at First Congo. For more information regarding the watercolor classes offered at First Congo visit [wscongo.org](http://wscongo.org) or contact [Sally Brandenburg](mailto:Sally.Brandenburg@wscongo.org).