

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

APRIL 25, 2016



Praise to you,

our God and our Creator!

Your creativity is matched by

your compassion!

Today is a new day in the life

of creation.

Let us see and hear,

Taste, touch, and smell

the thrill of your grace

the pulse of the Spirit

in and through all creation.

Amen.

COMING UP THIS SUNDAY, MAY 1

Rich will preach on the lifelong journey of faith at our 9:00 and 10:30 services this Sunday. At our 9:00 service, we will celebrate communion and welcome new members into our family of faith. At 10:30, we will receive 32 eighth graders into our congregation through the Rite of Confirmation. (Thanks to our Diaconate, confirmands will have breakfast together in Plymouth Hall at 9:00am.) Our kids' choirs will rehearse at 10:00 and 11:35.

At 6pm, members of our high school youth group will have their annual Election Dinner in the Seim Room. In our Sanctuary at 7pm, Janet Mensen Reynolds and her friends will present their annual Evening at the Opera concert, which is free of charge and open to all. (See article on page three.)

LOOKING AHEAD TO MOTHER'S DAY :: SUNDAY, MAY 8

Rich will preach and church member Heidi Burtner will offer a Mother's Day reflection at both our 9:00 and 10:30 services. This Sunday is the last until September 11, on which we'll have two worship services. We move to a 9:30 service only on Sunday, May 15. Our children's choirs will rehearse at 10:00 and 11:35.

LOOKING AHEAD TO SUNDAY, MAY 15 ONE SERVICE ONLY AT 9:30AM

Rich will preach and our Spirit Worship Band will play at our one and only service at 9:30am. Both kids' choirs will rehearse at 10:30, and later in the day, PFers will have their year-end picnic. (Details will be announced as the date draws near.)

A Pastoral Prayer

by the late Jo Means
October 1983

Dear Heavenly Father,

Help us, each one, to make a difference in a world which so badly needs the efforts of Christian hands. Tell us again that each person is important in Your eyes, and that he or she can really matter.

Let what we learn here each Sunday prepare us to do Christ's work. Give each worshipper the confidence and strength to speak and act for what he and she knows is right.

Hold us as a congregation in Your arms. Make us sensitive to each other's needs and hurts. Help us to draw into our worship and programs those who have chosen membership, but not participation.

Bless our fellowship. Strengthened in it, give us the sense of community — shared blessings and shared risks. Make us effective disciples, each one active, not passive, Christians.

Give us time these days of exploding information to examine our priorities. Unashamedly, let us choose the church, this church and its influence, high on our list. Let us support this place of worship generously, that we may, with pride, pass it beautiful and whole to those who will follow us.

The Means family will hold two memorial services for Jo on May 7, the first at 9:30am at Plymouth Place and the second at 3pm in our Sanctuary. A reception will follow both services.

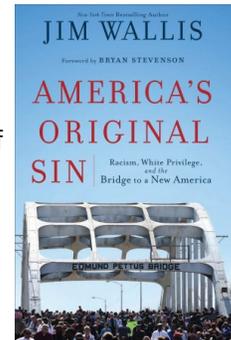
MARK YOUR CALENDAR

WRAP YOUR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE IN LOVE. The graduation season is almost upon us, and we are looking forward to celebrating our graduating high school seniors in worship on May 29 (at 9:30). Before then, however, our Diaconate invites all moms (and dads) of high school seniors to spend an evening together on Thursday, May 12, making a no-sew fleece blanket for their graduates. Instructions were mailed and emailed last week. If you didn't receive the mailing, please call the church office at ext. 210. The group will meet at 6:30 in Plymouth Hall.

MEN'S FAITH & FELLOWSHIP BREAKFAST. The Honey Bee Café in Western Springs will be the site of next month's Men's Faith & Fellowship Breakfast. This Dutch-treat breakfast on May 14, will bring the group's program year to a close. Rich says, "Even if you have not attended a single meeting, this get-together will be a great chance to come (at 7:45am) and have breakfast and conversation with other men of the church."

SUMMER BOOK GROUP.

This summer, Katherine Willis Pershey will facilitate a series of book discussions about justice, faith and racism. The series will begin on June 26 with *America's Original Sin** by Jim Wallis, continue on July 24, with *Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson, and conclude on August 28 (tentatively), with *Americanah* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. The hour-long discussions will take place following worship and will include free childcare. If you're interested in participating (as your schedule permits), simply start reading and watch for more info in June.



*Amazon says this about Wallace's book: *America's problem with race has deep roots, with the country's foundation tied to the near extermination of one race of people and the enslavement of another. Racism is truly our nation's original sin.*

"It's time we right this unacceptable wrong," says bestselling author and leading Christian activist Jim Wallis. Fifty years ago, Wallis was driven away from his faith by a white church that considered dealing with racism to be taboo. His participation in the civil rights movement brought him back when he discovered a faith that commands racial justice. Yet as recent tragedies confirm, we continue to suffer from the legacy of racism. The old patterns of white privilege are colliding with the changing demographics of a diverse nation. The church has been slow to respond, and Sunday morning is still the most segregated hour of the week.

If you are interested in helping Sue Schierholtz, Julie Harps and Joanne Everett (pictured below) sew "Little Dresses for Africa," contact Julie Harps at 708/246-0719 or jecharps@aol.com.



MAKE A JOYFUL NOISE

ANNUAL CHICAGO LYRIC OPERA PREVIEW CONCERT. Join us on Sunday, May 1, at 7 pm in our Sanctuary for An Evening at the Opera.

Janet Mensen Reynolds and her friends from the Lyric Opera Chorus return for their 20th annual An Evening at the Opera. They will preview operas from the Lyric's 2016-2017 season by singing famous arias, duets, and other pieces. Between songs, a narrator entertainingly recounts the lives of the operas' composers and describes opera characters, scenes, plots, and their inevitable twists.

An Evening at the Opera is a free concert generously presented as a gift to the community by the family of Pauline and Elmer Kennedy. The concert lasts approximately two hours and will have one intermission, and refreshments will be served after the concert.

MUSIC RECITAL INVITATION.

Musicians of all ages are invited to participate in a musical performance to share the joy of music with our congregation. Sponsored by our Music Committee, this recital will take place on June 5, at 10:45, just after the 9:30 service.

Musical pieces should be under three minutes and can be religious or secular, instrumental or vocal. If you are interested, please email Ineke Roessler at inekeroessler@gmail.com.

CONGO COFFEE HOUSE. Church and Spirit Worship Band member Steve Joyner invites one and all to the last Congo Coffee House of the season on Saturday night, May 7. From 7-9pm, musicians, singers, and songwriters are invited to showcase their talent. (Contact Steve at popensoap@aol.com.) If you're better at appreciating music than making it, come to the Youth Room and offer your support. Admission is free and refreshments will be served.

BRIEFLY

GIVE TEACHING A TRY. Summer Sundays offer a great opportunity for pairs of high schoolers, siblings, parent/child and friends to teach Sunday school. A fun and easy curriculum is provided. Classes are held after First Steps during the single 9:30 worship hour. Three classes are offered: 4s,5s & Kindergarten; rising 1st & 2nd graders, and 3rd -5th graders.

Sign up online under Latest News, on the rolling board in the Light Court, or by contacting Jan Fraccaro at jan@wscongo.org or 708-246-1900, ext. 215.

FIRST CONGO PRESCHOOL BIDS FAREWELL TO DEBBIE WILLIAMS.

After 21 years of teaching at our preschool, Debbie Williams will be retiring in May. Debbie and her husband Dave have four adult children and three grandsons, all of whom she looks forward to spending more time with during her retirement.



Thank You!

Once again the combined efforts of many individuals have yielded a wonderful outcome for RUMMAGE, raising approximately \$32,000. From young to old alike coming together in a great experience of fellowship. Every sale we hear wonderful stories of individual experiences that touch our hearts and keep us coming back for more.* While our feet and backs are all now a bit recovered, it is easy to miss the laughter and fun that can only be experienced during that week we call "RUMMAGE."

Bert Griffith's Ode to Rummage below sums it up well:

An "Ode" to Rummage

The "Mission": planning, chairs, volunteers, set-up, drop-off, Boy Scouts, donations, sorting, pricing, sell.

Organized direction, an orchestrated "dance", all goes well!

A place for everything and everything in its place, sometimes? Wonderful, beautiful Woman's Society ladies, helpful, smiling! Fab food in the kitchen, well fed "worker bees", 1st Congo, unique indeed! We are Easter people! The good Lord looks down upon us, And He smiles, saying, "Well done, my children, bless you."

*Please email your stories/recipes to Erin at emolek@sbcglobal.net.

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: **Jane Adair** (recovering from hip replacement surgery).

STRAIGHT FROM HEAVEN. Our best wishes go out to **Will and Colleen Keller** on the April 8 birth of their daughter, Molly McGraw, and **John and Susan Kienzle** on the recent birth of their son, Walter Paul.

WEDDING BELLS. Happily-ever-after wishes to recently-married couples, **Diane Stoub and Tom Keehan** and **Sandy Bressner and Steve Butt**.

IN SYMPATHY. Our condolences go out to **KC and Matt Congdon** on the recent passing of Matt's mom, to **Susan and Phil Larson** on the recent passing of Susan's father, and to **Karen Smith** on the recent passing of her sister, Shelley.

PF SERVES UP A STACK OF THANKS. PF would like to thank the congregation for its support of Sunday's Pancake Breakfast. PF was pleased by the turnout and very generous free-will offering of over \$400.

KUDOS TO DEB. Our Parish Nurse **Deb Stankiewicz** was recently approved to be a Board Certified Faith Community Nurse. She is among the first of the profession's BC Faith Community nurses.

As our Parish Nurse, Deb is here to discuss any questions or concerns you may have regarding your health or the health of a family member. She also serves as the liaison to our 16-member prayer team. If you have a prayer request, let Debbie know about it and the team will pray daily for you and hold your request in confidence. Debbie can be reached at Debbie@wscongo.org or ext. 218.