

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 23, 2016



Typically our homes drain our change, but here's a chance to fill a house with coins! Our Children's Lenten Offering has begun, benefitting BEDS Plus. Every family is invited to take a blue plastic house bank and brochure home. From now until March 13, the house banks can be filled with change while your family becomes aware of the issues of homelessness and the work of BEDS Plus serving those in our community who are challenged by it. Our change will be brought to worship in zippered plastic bags (keep your bank!) on March 13, blessed and then given to BEDS Plus to support their remarkable ministry.



Don't have a bank & brochure yet? Pick them up near the Light Court this Sunday!

COMING UP THIS SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 28 BELLS RING & NEW MEMBERS JOIN

At our 9:00 and 10:30 services, Rich will continue his Lenten sermon series with the question: *If God Is Good, Why is there Suffering?* The question of God's presence in sadness and suffering is an eternal one, and Rich will offer one Christian's perspective on this painful and difficult topic. Members of our adult and children's handbell choirs will ring for us and, at 10:30, we'll welcome a group of new members into our family of faith.

At 10:00 and 11:35, our kids' choirs will rehearse, and at 1:30, a group of confirmands will prepare a meal for the clients of Chicago's Night Ministry. (A second group will meet the Night Ministry van in Humboldt Park and serve the meal.) Confirmation class will meet at 5pm, and PFers will have their annual progressive dinner beginning at 6pm.

LOOKING AHEAD TO YOUTH SUNDAY, MAR 6 BIBLES, COMMUNION & COMMISSIONING

Everyone loves Youth Sunday — a rare and special intergenerational worship experience! At both services, youth will sing, read, greet, usher and even help serve communion (by intinction). Kids in second grade and older will remain in worship with their families, and "graduates" from our Fourth Grade Bible Study will receive their Bibles. In an anticipation of their upcoming spring break work tour, PFers (sophomores-seniors) will be commissioned before the congregation, and Fenwick High School junior Quinn Chudik will offer a reflection.

In the afternoon, a group of confirmands will prepare and serve another meal for The Night Ministry. (There will be no confirmation class at 5pm.) Freshmen who plan to go on summer work tour should come with their parents to an information meeting at 5:45 in the youth room. PF will meet at 7pm, also in the youth room.

Coming up on March 13, Katherine will team up with the Spirit Worship Band and lead a 5pm service in Plymouth Hall on the theme of WATER.

TEACHING TEAMS ARE FORMING!

The 2016-17 Sunday school teaching teams are accepting volunteers! Classes are held at both 9:00 and 10:30, with separate teams of 6 teaching at each. Curriculum and training are provided. The September through May commitment averages 5 Sundays as lead teacher and 5 as assistant (with no preparation involved). It is a wonderful way to grow your own faith alongside wonderfully inquisitive and thoughtful children. Getting to know more families in our congregation is a bonus.

Please sign up on the rolling board near the Light court or on our website under Latest News. Jan Fraccaro is happy to help with sign-ups or questions:

jan@wscongo.org or
246-1900 x 215.



Our childcare staff is in need of some additions. If you are interested in earning \$15 per hour, working 2 hours on Friday mornings September through May, please contact Jan Fraccaro at jan@wscongo.org or 246-1900 x 215.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

TAIZE SERVICE. The Christian Ventures committee invites members of our congregation to join them on March 4, at the 7:30 evening Taize service in Oak Park. (Taize is a ecumenical prayer service done in the spirit of the Taize community in France and fosters reconciliation and peace among all people.) The service, which incorporates song, scripture, candlelight, meditation and prayer, is at the Ascension Church of Oak Park, 808 South East Ave. Questions? Contact Bob Kos at cynbobty@sbcglobal.net.

DINING FOR WOMEN will hold their March dinner meeting on Tuesday, March 8, at 7:00pm in the Seim Room. The group will enjoy a shoreside picnic dinner for which guests are asked to bring only their favorite soft beverage. Please RSVP to Laurel Seidelman by March 4: lseidelman@comcast.net. Dinner donations will benefit New Mothers Education Project of Nicaragua.

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. Labyrinth Guides will be available to assist new walkers and answer any questions. If you're curious to know what the labyrinth is all about, 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 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.)

A SPIRITUAL PRACTICE IN PRAYERFUL AND SOULFUL COLLAGE. All are invited to a two-part introductory spiritual "practice" in the Seim Room from 1-3pm on March 8 & 15. The group will first gather for a scripture reading and then participants will choose "some pretty papers," book/magazine pages, pen, and glue from the supplies provided. The purpose of the exercise is to listen, pray, explore and respond to God through images and words. Group size is limited to ten. Sign up via phone or text through Mary Lee Gosz: maryleegosz@gmail.com or 630/550-1973. For questions about the program, email Lori Harris at harris4744@sbcglobal.net.

WOMAN'S SOCIETY LEARNS ABOUT PILATES. Woman's Society is excited to welcome a special guest speaker for the March 17 General Meeting — Martha Laubacher from Kinematics Corps Pilates Studio in LaGrange. Since 2004, Martha, her partner and their instructors work with clients to strengthen their posture and improve movement and muscle balance. Following lunch at 12:30, Martha will talk about the universal benefits of pilates and demonstrate simple movements. Guests will want to participate, so they should wear their yoga pants or comfortable clothes. Woman's Society members should RSVP to their chapter secretaries. Guests are welcome to attend the event (any combination of lunch/program) and should RSVP to WS President Cynthia Kos by March 11: cynbobty@sbcglobal.net.

COMMUNITY NURSE BAND AID BASH. Community Nurse Health Center is celebrating its 95th birthday with a Bash, and all are welcome! The party will be held on Friday, March 11 at the Willowbrook Ballroom from 7-11 pm. Tickets are \$75 each and include two drinks, great food and live music by Good Things. Purchase tickets online at www.communitynurse.org or by calling 708/579-2404. (Community Nurse is one of First Congo's mission partners.)

BRIEFLY

DIRECTOR OF FAITH FORMATION. In anticipation of Jan Fraccaro's June 1 retirement, the Executive Committee, on behalf of the congregation, is seeking a new Director of Faith Formation for Children to begin on May 1. This is a salaried, part-time staff position and requires a person with a dedicated commitment to the Christian faith, a bachelor's degree and some education experience. The detailed position description can be obtained online under Latest News or by contacting Meg Heinz in the office (ext. 210). Please contact Nancy O'Brien at 708/927-2357 or kjoneo@sbcglobal.net by March 11 for more information or to indicate your interest in this ministry.

(Jan's retirement party will take place after our 9:30 worship service on Sunday, May 22.)

REBUILDING TOGETHER HOUSE CAPTAIN SOUGHT. Church member Steve Kruchko has long served as the House Captain for Rebuilding Together Metro Chicago and is ready to pass the baton. ►

Rebuilding Together is a national non-profit organization committed to preserving homes and neighborhoods throughout the country. Once a year, teams of volunteers are mobilized to work in partnership with targeted communities to repair the homes and improve the neighborhoods of elderly, disabled and low-income residents so that they may continue to live in warmth, safety and independence. *National Rebuilding Day 2016 is set for Saturday, April 30.* This year's focus will be in the Austin and Blue Island neighborhoods.

Volunteer house captains plan and coordinate renovation projects completed in a sponsored home on National Rebuilding Day. House captains oversee all of the technical aspects of the renovation project, direct the volunteers in completing the work, and coordinate with assigned skilled trades' union member volunteers to ensure a successful project. To learn more about or sign up for this position, contact Katherine Willis Pershey (Katherine@wscongo.org) or Steve Kruchko (steve@strombergallen.com).

HOLY WEEK

Palm Sunday Services
9:00 & 10:30 Mar 20

Maundy Thursday Service
& Labyrinth Walk
8pm

Good Friday, March 25
Walking the Way of the
Cross Labyrinth Walk
6-8pm

Easter Sunday Services

Chapel Service 8am
+

Traditional Services with
Timpani and brass
9:00 and 10:30am



The Chancel Choir is now preparing music for these services. If you would like to be part of these meaningful offerings, join Ray "and company" at 7:30 on Wednesday nights in Rm 203.



EASTER FLOWER ORDER FORM

Due March 11, 2016

If you'd like to purchase potted Spring flowers (tulips, daffodils, lilies) used to decorate the altar for our Easter Sunday worship services, please complete this order form and return it, along with a check made payable to First Congregational Church, to the church office by **March 11**. Be sure to note "Easter Flowers" on the memo line of your check.

Name: _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

_____ No. of plants @ \$13 each = \$ _____ Total Amount Enclosed

If you would like your plant(s) displayed in memory, honor or celebration of someone, please indicate below:

Please check all that apply:

- I will pick up my plant(s) after the 10:30 service on Easter Sunday.
- I would like to donate my plant(s) to a church member in need of some Easter cheer.
Please contact Meredith Onion if you know of someone who would enjoy receiving a plant (246-1900, ext. 222).
- I would like to make 1 or 2 flower deliveries on Easter Sunday. *(It is not necessary to donate flowers in order to deliver them. More details will follow regarding flower deliveries.)*

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

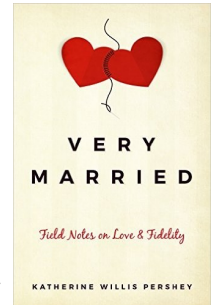
IN SYMPATHY....Our condolences go out to **Gary and Mary Doten and family** on the recent passing of Gary's brother.

FROZEN FRENZY WARM HEARTS. Mike Tilden extends his thanks to the 80+ guests who attended the recent PF fundraiser at the WS Village Club. He is also grateful to his team of helpers and the many supporters who solicited and donated raffle prizes. (New members Michelle and TC Halm won the week in St. Croix!) Approximately \$7,000 was raised and will go towards offsetting the cost of this year's spring and summer work tour trips.

DRIVERS NEEDED. HCS Family Services Food pantry in Hinsdale is looking for drivers to pick up food from area retailers on Saturday mornings from 9-11:30am. Must be 21 or older and able to lift 35 pounds. To learn more, email Scott Brechtel, Pantry Manager, at SBrechtel@hcsfamilyservices.org.

WE'RE VERY EXCITED ABOUT VERY MARRIED.

Katherine Willis Pershey's second book, *Very Married: Field Notes on Love & Fidelity*, is expected to hit stores on September 27, so we're planning a party (naturally!) and taking book orders! (See Latest News on our website.) Mark your calendar for Friday night, September 30. We'll have music from our Spirit Worship Band, treats and more. (Copies of Katherine's first book, *Any Day a Beautiful Change*, are available for sale in the church office.)



THE TAHA FAMILY is without a car (and can't afford to purchase one), so if you or anyone you know is willing to donate a car, please notify Kim Nichol, who continues to work closely with this lovely family who resettled to Chicago from Syria last fall: kbnichol@sbcglobal.net.