

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

JUNE 30, 2015



“...He [*Clem, pictured above*] embodied the idea that our Christian faith demands deeds and not just words, that the sweet hour of prayer actually lasts the whole week long, that to put our faith in action is more than just individual salvation, it’s about our collective salvation, that to feed the hungry, clothe the naked and house the homeless is not just a call for isolated charity but the imperative of a just society.”

“What a good man. Sometimes I think that’s the best thing to hope for when you’re eulogized, after all the words and recitations and resumes are read, to just say somebody was a good man. You don’t have to be of high distinction to be a good man...”

Excerpt from President Obama’s eulogy for Charleston pastor, the Rev. Clement Pinckney

COMING UP THIS SUNDAY, JULY 5

Meredith will lead our 9:30 worship service, which will include the Sacrament of Communion, and Kathryn Price Bronson will serve as our guest preacher. Vince Cefali will play the organ in Kathy’s absence, and guitarist Jeff Kust will also be on-hand to set the stage for worship.

(Kathryn’s Mother’s Day reflection as well as Vic Fraccaro’s Father’s Day reflection can be heard via our website at www.wscongo.org/messages/sermons.)

LOOKING AHEAD TO SUNDAY, JULY 12 JANET HEADLINES SECOND SUMMER CONCERT

Rich will preach, and Al Pedersen will sing during our 9:30 service. At 10:45, the second in our series of three summer concerts will begin in the Sanctuary. Church member and Chicago Lyric Opera member Janet Mensen Reynolds will sing a collection of favorite Welsh hymns. All are invited to enjoy this 30-minute performance, which is underwritten by our Music Fund.

The third and final concert will take place after worship on Aug. 2 and will feature music by American composer Amy Beach for piano.

LOOKING AHEAD TO JULY 19 & 26

On July 19, Meredith returns to the pulpit, and Joel Simpson will provide worshipful music for us.

July 26 is Ask the Pastor Sunday, which simply means your questions, jotted down at the start of worship, will be collected and answered by Rich, thereby composing his sermon. Music will be provided by our Spirit Worship Band.

STRATEGIC VISION PRIORITY #3

Put Our Faith Into Action
in the World

Late last year our Strategic Vision Team identified five key priorities, which are being explored by five separate implementation teams over the next several months. The second priority, "Live as a renewed community of faith," was outlined in the last issue of Gatherings. Priority #3, Put our faith into action in the world, is explained further below:

Inspired by our Christian tradition, our beliefs and our historical outreach to the community, and honoring the results of the Church Assessment Tool, we will work for justice and well-being in our neighborhood, greater community and the world. We will continue to honor our congregation's commitment to empowering poor and marginalized people.

- Take a deliberately strategic approach to assess the needs of our neighbors and world to determine/discern where our congregation's passion for justice can be called into action.
- Better equip our members for the works of peace and justice, in collaboration with partner organizations.

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

SIGN-UP CONTINUES FOR MEN'S CANOE TRIP.

There's still time to sign up for this year's canoe trip to the boundary waters, September 3-7. If you'd like to join the group of 16 men, contact Mike Tilden at tilden@wscongo.org. The cost is expected to be about \$300 per person.



RECYCLE YOUR E-WASTE. The Village of Westchester will recycle your e-waste (computers, monitors, laptops, TVs, DVDs, VCRs, stereos, printers, fax machines, scanners, video game consoles, cell phones, MP3s, iPods, peripherals, mice, keyboards and all other computer parts) on July 11. This event is intended for the recycling of household items; business related items may be refused. The event takes place at the Westchester Water Tower from 8:30am-12pm.

RUN, WALK OR VOLUNTEER at Community Nurse's Extreme10 Race (or 5K walk) at Waterfall Glen on July 11. Volunteers should be 12 and older and are needed to man water stations or registration tables and/or serve as course marshals. First Congo is proud to be a long-time supporter of CNA, which provides medical, dental, and behavioral care to low income families. To register for the race, go to www.communitynurse.org. To sign up or learn more about volunteering, contact the office at 708/579-2400.

WORSHIP & PICNIC IN THE WOODS. Be sure to mark your calendars for a special all-church event on Sunday, August 30. We'll worship at 10am in Grove 7 of Bemis Woods and then enjoy an old-fashioned potluck barbeque. Guests are asked to bring something to drink, something to sit on, plates and utensils, and a dish to share. (Burgers, hot dogs and water coolers will be provided.) Watch your Friday emails for a link to sign up.

BRIEFLY

BIDDING FAREWELL TO NATALIE. On August 1, our children's choir director Natalie Ingrisano will be moving to Seattle to sing and study voice with Nancy Zylstra, a soprano and specialist in early music. Natalie and her boyfriend Thomas were two of only three students accepted into Cornish College of the Arts' Artist Diploma Program in Early Music Performance in Seattle. Provided Natalie can raise enough money this summer, she plans to accept their offer. To that end, she and Thomas will be performing a concert in our Sanctuary at 4pm on Sunday, July 19.

A free-will offering will be taken in an effort to help raise the \$4,000 Natalie needs for tuition. Once in Seattle, Natalie hopes to continue to sing in churches and work with young singers both as a voice teacher and youth choir director. (Erin Cleary will be our new Alleluia Choir Director and Vince Cefali, our new Spirit Choir Director.)

STILL TIME TO SIGN UP FOR GERMANY TRIP. So far 26 people have expressed an interest in traveling to Germany in September of 2016 to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. If you'd like to learn more about the trip, contact Rich at rich@wscongo.org or ext. 213.

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER UPDATE

God doesn't take a summer vacation – and neither does our Sunday school. How wonderful to continue to offer our children a chance to get to know God a bit better through the summer. How impossible that is to do without teachers. Please consider teaming up with a friend, spouse, sibling or older child for one or two Sundays this summer. There are three classes offered each summer Sunday: One for 4s, 5s & Fall '15 Kindergartners; Fall '15 1st & 2nd graders; and one for Fall '15 3rd – 5th graders. Simply, pick a class and a date or two. Then sign up either on our rolling bulletin board in the narthex or online under Latest News. Our curriculum is easy and fun (just like teaching).

Looking ahead to fall, a dozen more volunteers and our teaching teams will be complete! Please consider joining a 6-person Sunday school teaching team for our '15-'16 program year. This ministry is truly rewarding for both the children and the adults who grow in their experience and love of God together. Teaching is in pairs with a personal commitment between September and May of 5 Sundays as lead teacher and 5 as the assistant. Curriculum and training are provided.

The remaining openings are in these hours' teams:

3s, 4s & Pre-Kdg – 9:00
Kdg & 1st grade – 9:00 & 10:30
2nd & 3rd grade – 9:00
4th & 5th grade – 9:00

To learn more and/or sign up for either the summer or school year, contact Jan Fraccaro at jan@wscongo.org or 246-1900, ext. 215. Here, too, you may sign up on Sundays via the rolling board in the narthex or online under Latest News.

THE ABCS OF OUR CAPS COLLECTION

The First Congo Green Team and Plymouth Fellowship invite you to avidly save all of your plastic lids and caps. With the help of Green Tree Plastics and their ABC (A Bench for Caps) program, our collection — amounting to hopefully 400 pounds — will be transformed into a 6 foot Denali bench, which we will donate to Tower Hill Camp in Sawyer, Michigan.

A collection box is in the narthex (the entry way of the Sanctuary), so please start collecting, cleaning and bringing in the following:

PLASTIC CAPS FROM: Medicine Bottles, Beverage Bottles, Milk Jugs, Flip-top Bottles (Example: Ketchup and Mustard tops), Detergent Bottles, Spout caps, Hair Spray Caps, Spray Paint Cans, Toothpaste Tubes, Ointment Tubes, Deodorant.

PLASTIC LIDS FROM: Cottage Cheese Containers, Cool Whip Tubs, Mayonnaise Jars, Coffee Cans, Yogurt, Cream Cheese Containers, Peanut Butter Jars, Butter Tubs, Ice Cream Buckets.

DON'T FORGET TO GIVE YOUR CAPS & LIDS A GOOD WASHING!

STRATEGIC VISION PRIORITY #3 (cont'd)

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

1. Explore and develop our spirituality.
2. Live as a renewed community of faith.
3. Nurture our congregation's vibrancy.
4. Deepen our connections.

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At our semi-annual meeting on June 14, the congregation approved the Strategic Vision Team's proposed additions to our Mission Statement, highlighted below:

To share our stories of faith with one another and our community;

To celebrate the liberation received through Christ's forgiveness, and to share that gift by forgiving others;

To be Christ's messengers and advocates for social justice;

To be generous and thoughtful stewards of all of God's gifts;

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
July 24, 2015**

BITS & PIECES

IN OUR PRAYERS...Please hold **Ruth Mundt** (LaGrange Hospital), **Katie Palermo** (continuing to recover at home), and **Betty Love** (recovering from a fractured ankle) in your prayers this week.

OUR CONDOLENCES go out to **Meb and Dal Ingold, Linda and Dick Benesch**, and Bill Benesch on the recent passing of long-time member **Marion Vipond**, who passed away on June 24. A memorial service is being planned for Marion for August 1. Watch for details in the coming weeks.

Our condolences also go out to **Patty and Ken Sitkowski and their family** on the recent passing of Patty's mom, **Wilma Harley**. Both Wilma and Emil Harley will be remembered at a memorial service at 1pm in our Sanctuary on Saturday, August 22. ►

The family is hosting a reception at the LaGrange Country Club after the service and is seeking RSVPs. If you plan to attend the reception, please contact Jean Stocks at jean.stocks@gmail.com.

Byron Shinn's life was celebrated on June 13, after he passed away on June 8, at the age of 81. Please hold Nanette and her family in your prayers.

Please also pray for **Mark and Kevin Keeley and their families**, on the passing of their father John L. Keeley Jr., on June 4.

THANK YOU to all who ate at the Corner Bakery on May 20. Through this share-the-profits fundraiser, PF earned \$180.

On the recent freshmen work tour, **Jeff Vitek** and **Luke Watts** were elected PF Vice Presidents for the 2015-2016 program year. Congrats to them both!

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