

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

MARCH 15, 2016



Holy Week

Maundy Thursday
8pm Service
(Optional labyrinth
walk to follow)

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

Easter Sunday *Services*

Chapel Service 8am
&
Traditional Services
with Timpani and
brass
9:00 and 10:30am

† † †

COMING UP PALM SUNDAY, MARCH 20

Palm Sunday is the day we celebrate the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, one week before His resurrection. As Jesus entered the holy city, He neared the culmination of a long journey. He had come to save the lost (Luke 19:10), and now was the time—this was the place—to secure that salvation. Palm Sunday marks the start of what is often called “Passion Week,” the final seven days of Jesus’ earthly ministry. Palm Sunday was the “beginning of the end” of Jesus’ work on earth. Join us this Sunday at 9:00 and 10:30 for our Palm Sunday service, led by Meredith Onion. (Sunday school will be in session on Palm Sunday.)

From 8:15-8:30am, the Christian Churches of Western Springs will hold a blessing of the palms on the Tower Green. All are welcome. (Rain location is Grand Ave Community Center.)

LOOKING AHEAD TO EASTER SUNDAY

SERVICES AT 8AM, 9:00 & 10:30

Come and celebrate the Risen Christ. At 8am in the Chapel, Meredith will lead a meditative communion service with simple music, prayers and a reflection. At 9:00 and 10:30 in the Sanctuary, Rich will lead a traditional service, complete with a full choir, timpani and brass. Revel in the glory of an altar brimming with Spring blooms and the knowledge that Christ triumphed over death.

LOOKING AHEAD TO SUNDAY, APRIL 3

On April 3, Katherine Willis Pershey will lead worship and our Spirit Worship Band will play at both our 9:00 and 10:30 services. Our Confirmands will attend the 10:30 service together and meet for class and lunch immediately following the service. Our kids’ choirs will rehearse at 10:00 and 11:35, and PF will meet at 7pm.

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.



If you are interested in earning \$15 per hour providing childcare for 2 hours on Friday mornings September-May, please contact Jan Fraccaro at jan@wscongo.org or 246-1900 x 215.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

APRIL MINISTRY TEAM AND CHURCH COUNCIL MEETINGS. Our ministry teams and Church Council will meet next on Monday, April 4, at 7:00 and 8:30pm. (Just a reminder: Our 8:30 Church Council meetings are held in the Seim Room and are open to all members.)

MOMS OF TEENS. At 7pm on Wednesday, April 6, Meredith Onion is bringing our Moms of Teens group together to catch up and share joys and concerns, as well as wisdom and laughter. Newcomers are always welcome and may simply show up or contact Meredith to learn more: meredith@wscongo.org or ext. 222. (The group will meet in the Parlor.)

GETTING READY FOR GRADUATION.

The graduation season is almost upon us, and we are looking forward to celebrating our graduating high school seniors in worship on May 29. Before then, however, our Diaconate invites all moms (and dads) of high school seniors to spend an evening together making a no-sew fleece blanket for their graduates. Specific instructions will be mailed in the coming weeks (via USPS and email), but until then, please mark your calendars for Thursday, May 12. The group will meet at 6:30 in Plymouth Hall. (Additionally, for the video tribute during the service, we will be collecting photos of our seniors, so please look for info in the mailing about that as well.)

KEEP CALM AND RUMMAGE ON.

Whether you're a savvy shopper or a worker-bee, this is a sale you won't want to miss! Nearly 300 folks of all ages from the church and community come together to accomplish incredible feats (and snag incredible deals). Seeing is believing. All profits from the sale are donated to local, national and international organizations around the globe. So, everyone's a winner.

The sale will kick-off with regular pricing from 5-8pm on Tues night, April 19, and will continue with regular ►

pricing on Wednesday, April 20, from 10-Noon. Our half-price bag sale will be held from 6-8 on Wednesday night, April 20.

Set-up for the sale begins on Thursday morning, April 14. Drop-off will be held via a drive-through service in the church parking lot from 9-1 on Saturday, April 16, and 1-3 on Sunday, April 17. Free childcare will be provided Saturday-Tuesday, and volunteers are entitled to presale shopping. If you can't work rummage, but would like to help in some way, please consider donating food/ beverage items. Additional information—including donation guidelines and volunteer sign-up—can be found under Latest News at wscongo.org.

COME TOGETHER TO REBUILD

TOGETHER ON APRIL 30. Most of us take for granted having a warm, safe and dry home. But many homeowners carry daily burdens about such issues. Rebuilding Together is a national non-profit organization committed to preserving homes and neighborhoods throughout the country. Once a year, teams of volunteers — approximately 3,500 in the Chicago area — 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. To date, National Rebuilding Day sponsors and volunteers have helped repair and renovate over 1,500 homes in and around Chicago.

National Rebuilding Day 2016 is set for Saturday, April 30. This year's focus will be in the Austin and Blue Island neighborhoods. Mike McNeily has worked for several years on National Rebuilding Day and is taking names for April 30. To learn more and/or sign up, contact Mike at mikesmcneily@gmail.com.

ONLINE DIRECTORY

As many of you know, our LifeTouch membership directory was recently updated. Only members who elected to be photographed were captured visually in the printed update. Contact information for our "official" and confirmed members was also included in the update. (That directory is available for pick-up on the table outside the Light Court. It is designed to be inserted into the back of the spiral bound 2012 Membership Directory, copies of which are available upon request.)

We are pleased to announce that our online LifeTouch "Member Directory" has also been updated and can be accessed online under Connect at www.wscongo.org. In the coming weeks, LifeTouch will send out an automated email with each member's username and password. If you don't want to wait for this email, please contact Meg Heinz



(meg@wscongo.org) or Jeannette Lloyd (Jeannette@wscongo.org) to get your LifeTouch-generated username and password, which will enable you to log into the online Member Directory. (This login information can be changed and reset if you so choose.)

There are several advantages to using this online resource, namely that membership information is available at your fingertips. If you're out and need someone's contact information or if you're on the computer upstairs and your directory is downstairs, simply go to our website, click connect, then Member Directory. What's more, members can enhance their profile information to include interests and/or church involvement. We hope you'll take advantage of this convenience.

BRIEFLY

CAP COLLECTION CONTINUES. We did it! We collected our targeted 400 pounds of plastic caps. Two kind members will take the caps to Green Tree Plastics in Indianapolis where they will make a park bench for our friends at Tower Hill Camp in Sawyer, MI. Members of our Green Team and Plymouth Fellowship youth group decided to keep the collection going, so that we can gift a park bench to Pilgrim Park in Princeton, IL.

The Green Team reminds us that plastic caps with metal inserts can't be included in the collection. See Cap Collection under Latest News at wscongo.org for details regarding the collection.

THE LOCAL DINING FOR WOMEN

Chapter, which is supported by First Congo is proud to share that DFW recently entered into a strategic partnership with a \$100,000 commitment to the Peace Corps' Let Girls Learn Fund. This commitment will fund community-driven projects that address barriers to girls' education and improve the quality of that education. One hundred percent of DFW's donated dollars will be used to help adolescent girls in developing countries receive an education.

This partnership is only possible due to the generosity and shared passion of DFW members for helping women and girls. Last year, DFW exceeded \$1 million in program donations for the first time ever in a single year. To learn more about DFW, contact Laurel Seidelman at lseidelman@comcast.net.

Help Change Lives Through Music



The ability to afford musical instruments and/or music lessons is not universal. With that in mind, The Band and Orchestra Association of Western Springs is collecting musical instruments for the children served by Chicago's Off the Street Club.

So, if—while you're going about your Spring cleaning—you come across a dusty violin or flute, we invite you to bring it to McClure Junior High between 8am and 1pm on Friday, April 8. (If you can't make the drop-off, contact Jeannette Lloyd at Jeannette@wscongo.org to coordinate a pick-up time.)

The association will tune the instruments before giving them to OTSC.

First Congo is proud to support the work of Off the Street Club and pleased to promote this collection, designed to help change lives through music.

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 the 58 high schoolers and 13 adult chaperones serving next week at Back Bay Mission in Biloxi, MS.

IN SYMPATHY....Our condolences go out to **the friends and family of Ingeborg Smith**. Ingeborg passed away on March 10 at the age of 94. Meredith and Karen are discussing plans for Ingeborg's memorial service, and we'll make them known once the plans are finalized. **Sam Sampson** passed away on February 24 and will be remembered during a memorial service in our sanctuary at 1pm on April 11. A reception will follow in the Parlor. Our condolences also go out to **Patti and Ken Sitkowski and family** on the recent passing of Ken's father. And lastly, many of you may know **Ross Freeland**, a beloved nephew/cousin to the Bachmann family and gifted counselor at Camp Highlands. After a short battle with late-stage gastric cancer, Ross died on March 14, at the age of 41.

STRAIGHT FROM HEAVEN. Our best wishes go out to **Andrew and Leigh Anne Larsen** who welcomed **Alison Laura** to their world on February 21. (Grandparents Mary Lee and Jim Larsen are, as expected, over the moon!) Congratulations are also in order for **Charlie and Jennifer Kierscht** on the recent birth of their daughter (and Chuck and Marion's granddaughter), **Leah Rose**.

IN GRATITUDE. Many thanks to the **Kopplin-Mitchell family** for donating their car to the Taha Family! And, speaking of grateful.....

The Preschool Committee extends a big thank you to the congregation and to the preschool families for their generous support in collecting baby necessities and hygiene items for Teen Parent Connection. Teen Parent Connection provides much-needed support for area teen moms and their infants and greatly appreciates our donation.

MEET OUR NEW MEMBERS

On February 28, we had the joy and privilege of welcoming the following people into our family of faith:

BOB BATTISTA moved from his home state of New Jersey to the Midwest in 1991. He met his wife in the Detroit area and settled in LaGrange in 1997. They have two children, Claire (16) and Brian (14). Bob works in a medical/surgical practice in Hinsdale with privileges at various local hospitals. Bob became friends with First Congo church members through a cyclists group that still rides together. Since then he has participated in one of Rich's book groups, men's breakfast, as well as travelled to Biloxi for a Back Bay Mission trip. Bob was raised catholic, attended catholic grade school and served as an altar boy. He joined First Congo for the warm fellowship, sense of community, and to reconnect with others who believe in Jesus' teachings. *Sponsors: Meg and Dave Heinz*

BRIAN AND MICHELLE BOYD live and work in Western Springs and are chiropractors and acupuncturists. They have three children: Keira (10), Brendan (8), and Evan (almost 2) and are expecting their fourth child in March. Brian Boyd grew up in St. Charles and attended University of Illinois, Champaign. Michelle grew up in Western Springs and went to Indiana University, Bloomington. They met at National University of Health Sciences in Lombard during their Chiropractic schooling. Michelle enjoys running and started the running club at Field Park School and their annual Field Park Fit Family 5K run/walk event. Brian enjoys soccer, running and music, including writing, singing and guitar. *Sponsors: Diana and Jack Newlin*

MARK RAPACKI grew up in LaGrange and attended St. Cletus grade school and Lyons Township High School. He and his wife, Kim (Gareiss) were married at First Congo six and a half years ago and live in Clarendon Hills. They have a daughter Olivia who is 18-months-old and a two-month-old daughter Isabelle. Mark works at Klein tools. *Sponsor: Kim Rapacki*

TC AND MICHELLE HALM have lived in LaGrange for the past six years. TC grew up in LaGrange and Michelle in Crystal Lake. They have two children, Ethan (5) and Brynn (21 months). TC is the President of Paver Care, Inc., a residential brick paver restoration company and likes to run, golf, and go to Saturday soccer games with Ethan (when they don't conflict with the Men's Breakfast group here). Michelle is the Director of Buddy's Place, a Pillars' program, and is a former CPS high school social studies teacher. She is currently involved in volunteering for Pillars, the LeaderShop, and is a member of the LaGrange Newcomers & Neighbors and Moms in Faith here at church. *Sponsors: Nancy and Tom Conforti & Dan and Amy Halm*

SCOTT AND JACLYN GUZEK live in Western Springs and met while working together at Crate and Barrel. They have two children Grayson (3) and Nora (2). Scott was born and raised in Michigan and went to Michigan State University. He works for US Bank as an Account Manager and enjoys golf, fishing, video games and board games. Jackie was raised in Western Springs and received a BFA in Interior Architecture from Columbia College. After working in her field for four years, she now spends time at home with their children and enjoys the outdoors and quality time with the family. *Sponsors: Jennifer and Mathieu Bourgeois*

JIM AND LESLIE GODLEY and their five-year-old twin boys, Timmy and Will, came from Virginia to Western Springs by way of a job transfer in 2013. They have no family ties in the Chicago area, but have been so thankful for the warm welcome they have received from strangers who have become dear friends. They enjoy everything about life in Chicago (and are even learning to love the winters). Leslie, Timmy and Will enjoy being members of the church hand bell choirs. *Sponsors: Katie and Jeff Pogue*