

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

JANUARY 24, 2017

The Lord's Prayer will be the focus of the 2nd and 3rd grade Sunday school class on Jan 29. Through games and songs, the children will learn the prayer so that they can lead the congregation in the prayer on Youth Sunday. Please contact Hope at ext. 215 if you have any questions.

*our father, who art in
heaven, hallowed be
thy name. thy kingdom
come, thy will be done
on earth as it is in
heaven. give us this
day our daily bread,
and forgive us our
debts as we forgive
our debtors. lead us
not into temptation
but deliver us from
evil. for thine is the
kingdom, and the
power, and the glory
forever. amen.*

COMING UP THIS SUNDAY, JANUARY 29

At 9:00 and 10:30, Rich will reflect on our call to discipleship and what discipleship might look like in 2017. During the 10:30 service, we will celebrate a baptism and commission our twelve Called to Care Companions.

Our kids' choirs will rehearse at 10:00 and 11:35. At 11:45 in the Seim Room, Katherine will lead a discussion on the book *Hillbilly Elegy*. All are welcome and are invited to bring a brown bag lunch.

From 3-7pm at the Holiday Inn William Tell Banquets mission partner BEDS Plus will have their annual Bread and Soup Event. Details and tickets can be found at beds-plus.org.

At 5pm, our confirmands will have class in the Youth Room. At 6pm, Mike will host an informational meeting about this year's Spring Break Work Tour for parents of high schoolers in grades 10-12. Students should also plan to attend this meeting, which will take place in the Youth Room. PF will have their regular weekly meeting at 7pm, also in the Youth Room.

LOOKING AHEAD TO YOUTH SUNDAY, FEB. 5

Join us for a youth-led worship service on Sunday, February 5. Youth of the church will offer readings and personal reflections as well as help serve communion by intinction. Our children's choirs will sing at both services.

Scouts from Troop 12 will host their annual pancake breakfast in Plymouth Hall from 7:30am-12:30pm. Tickets for all-you-can-eat pancakes, sausage, coffee and juice can be purchased at the door for \$5 per person. (Kids three and under are free.)

Male members of the Chancel Choir will have a special rehearsal at 10am in Room 203. Because of the Super Bowl, PF will not meet on February 5. (And, confirmands will be participating in/attending morning worship.)



*let love rule
6pm feb 12*

All are invited to—and are sure to be inspired by—this 45-minute service about Love and Romance.

† † †

Get in the groove for Valentine's Day by joining Katherine and the Spirit Worship Band for a special service in which we'll explore relationships in words and music. Some of the artists featured will include Mumford and Sons, Johnny Cash and Adele.

The service takes place in Plymouth Hall, right after Confirmation. Pre-service music starts at 5:45.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

WOMEN IN FAITH will gather next on February 22, at 7pm. This is an intergenerational discussion group to which all are welcome! Watch our weekly emails for information regarding the group's next book.

HELP US HEAR will present a free program on February 1, at 7pm at the Grand Avenue Community Center in Western Springs. The subject of the presentation is hearing exams — what they test, what they show and what follow-up steps are recommended. To learn more, contact Carol Johnson at CarolJnsn@aol.com.

ARE YOU A MOM OF A TEEN? If you're not already on the email distribution list for this group, please contact Meredith (meredith@wscongo.org) to receive emails with Teen Parenting Topics and dates for monthly meetings. The next gathering will be on Wednesday, February 15 at 7pm in the Parlor. The speaker will be Tom Shorrock, a guidance counselor at New Trier High School, and one of our very own church members. Tom will help us help our kids discern their college decisions.

FRIENDS OF THE CHURCH who are interested in becoming members are invited to attend our February orientation classes and New Member service. Here are the details:

Orientation I: Feb. 19, 10am, Chapel (childcare/Sunday School available)
Orientation II: Feb. 21, 7pm, Sanctuary

Each class covers different topics, and each lasts approximately 90 minutes.

Members will be received into membership during worship on Sunday, Feb. 26. Please contact Linda Conlin at ext. 216 or linda@wscongo.org if you are interested in joining or have any questions.

MINISTRY AND CHURCH COUNCIL MEETINGS. Members of our governing committees will meet at 7pm on Monday, February 13. Church Council will convene at 8:30, and all members are welcome to attend.

BACH CANTATA TO BE PRESENTED in worship on Feb 19. First Congo musicians will perform J.S. Bach's Cantata "Nimm was dein ist, und gehe hin" in celebration of the 500th anniversary of the start of the Reformation.



Propelled by radical changes in technology and commerce, the Revolution stands both as a cause of, and a catalyst for enormous changes in western civilization—changes that make our world function as it does today.

Bach, writing about 200 years after Luther, represents a high point in church music of any type, especially Lutheran. A man of incredible faith, intellect and productivity, Bach wrote hundreds of cantatas. (A cantata is the 17th and 18th century equivalent to a "concept album," which is vocal music on a single theme, accompanied by instruments, with several sections ("movements"). This cantata contains six sections: three solos, and three choral movements and is about 15 minutes in length. This cantata is drawn from the parable of the workers in the vineyard, Matthew 20:1-16.

Rev. Meredith Onion will offer a reflection related to the theme of the music. And at 10:15 in the Seim Room, Scott Paeth will present an Adult Christian Exploration class entitled "The main themes of the Reformation" Please make this a special day in your spiritual life by joining us!

LENTEN DEVOTIONAL

Our Annual Lenten Devotional has become a treasure to so many members, all grateful to hear a personal story of a fellow church member and for the opportunity those stories provide to deepen our connections to one another. The devotions are not always easy to write, but they are always a blessing to receive. Our Christian Ventures Committee is hoping you'll contribute to this year's devotional centered on theme of Micah 6:8: *And, what does the Lord require of you but*

to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

The submission deadline (sjspear@comcast.net) is February 10.

Here are some writing prompts to help get you started:

Doing justice:

Can you share an experience in your life about someone (you or another) acting justly, doing the right thing rather than something that would have been expedient or less difficult? Have you witnessed fairness or unfairness, and how did it affect you?

Share a story about your volunteer experiences that impact justice in the world, or a story of someone you know who has worked for justice.

Share a time when you had to step out of your comfort zone to do justice.

Loving kindness:

How has kindness (or mercy) been shown to you or by you? Have you been helped, or has another helped your family or someone in the community?

Jesus teaches us to pay particular attention to the 'least of these.' How have you done this or have you witnessed others reaching out to the most vulnerable? ►

Jesus teaches us to love our neighbor, even our enemies. How have you been able to do this and how has it transformed or surprised you?

Children are often our best teachers. How have you seen children demonstrating kindness? What have you learned from them?

Walking humbly with God:

Where have you seen a humble spirit, and how did it change your perspective? Are there other things you do or ways you have discovered to keep God in your heart?

Share a time when you were able to listen and respond to God's will, or to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Share a spiritual practice that you have that has deepened your walk with God.

Write a letter to God expressing your desire to walk more humbly with him/her and how that might look.

COMING SOON: THE MICAH CHALLENGE

Watch for details regarding this 40-day challenge, in which we hope you will "go deeper and grow closer" in your walk with God.

JUSTICE
micah 6:8
HUMILITY
lent 2017
KINDNESS

CHURCH COUNCIL WANTS TO KNOW WHAT YOU THINK

At the Congregation's Annual Meeting on January 22, Moderator Nancy O'Brien presented an opportunity to comment on a topic being considered by Church Council: permitting wine and beer at certain fellowship and church-sponsored gatherings in Plymouth Hall. This proposal is in response to an increasing number of requests to change our long-standing tradition of maintaining a "dry" church property. A small committee of Church Council members will review both the proposed guidelines and any comments by church members, and will formulate a recommendation to Church Council in February.

We encourage you to review the details of the alcohol proposal found online on the Annual Meeting page under Latest News and the church office. Your written comments are welcome on or before January 31 at churchcouncil@wscongo.org or in the Moderator's mailbox.

SEEKING APPLICANTS FOR PART-TIME OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR. The church is currently seeking applicants for Office Administrator, a key staff person who will not only manage the front office, assist congregants and greet visitors, but also provide administrative support to staff and committees. To learn more, see Latest News at wscongo.org or contact Nancy O'Brien at kjoneo@sbcglobal.net. (The Office Administrator position is expected to be 25-30 hours/week from August-May and 12-16 hours/week in June and July.)

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: **Marilyn Keil** (home), and **Maren Johnson** (ACL surgery).

STRAIGHT FROM HEAVEN.

Congratulations and best wishes to **Kevin and Katie Kalus**, who welcomed Charles "Charlie" Stone in to their world on January 12; and to **Annie (Conlin) and Joe Cummins** who welcomed Keira Elizabeth on Jan. 25.

WEEPING WITH THOSE WHO WEEP. Our condolences go out **Lois Smith** on the passing of her brother on Christmas Day; and to **Rich and Clare Kirchherr** and **Karen and Tom Teegarden** and their families on the recent passing of Martha Kirchherr. Martha's life will be celebrated during a Memorial Service in our Sanctuary at 2pm on February 4. A reception will follow in Plymouth Hall. (If you can help with the reception, please contact Harriet VerGowe at hkv13@aol.com.)

GREEN TEAM REACHES THE 5-YEAR

MARK. First Congo's Green Team had its inaugural meeting on Feb 7, 2012, and has accomplished many things in the past five years. Green Team member Karen Smith looks forward to continued improvements in this area and thanks all present and past members and the congregation for its effort to support our 'green movement.'

MISSING BLOOMS. It came to our attention that the following poinsettia dedications were omitted from the Christmas bulletins. We very much regret this error.

Phil & Sue Larson gave in celebration of their granddaughter, Madeline.

Chuck and Marion Kierscht gave in celebration of their "wonderful granddaughter Leah's first Christmas, from Grandpa and Grandma Kierscht."