

# 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

SEPTEMBER 14, 2015



This Sunday, the Children's Ministry committee will be launching its fall faith formation within the family project. Designed to help keep our congregation's theme of discipleship afloat in our homes, a fun kit will be distributed to families after each worship service. Once assembled (it's quite easy to get this ship together!), the boat of disciples and fish will surely support families' efforts to grow into the disciples Jesus urges us all to become. And make an interesting conversation piece on your kitchen table or counter!

### COMING UP THIS SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20 ACE, FLU SHOT CLINIC, NEW MEMBER CLASS

At our 9:00 and 10:30 services this Sunday, Rich's sermon will set the stage for our new, 7-week sermon series on Becoming Faithful Disciples. At 10:15 in the Seim Room, Katherine Willis Pershey will kick-off our new Adult Christian Exploration season with a presentation on The Whole Story. (If you've ever wondered how all the Bible stories are strung together to make One Great Story, you won't want to miss this.) Our kids' choirs will rehearse at 10:00 and 11:35, and our confirmands will meet at 10:15 in the Youth Room. Part I of a two-part new member orientation class will meet at 10:00 in the Chapel. Our high school youth group, Plymouth Fellowship, will meet at 7pm in the Youth Room.

*Flu shots will be available from 8:30-noon in Plymouth Hall. Read more on page 3.*

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### LOOKING AHEAD TO SEPTEMBER 27 DEDICATION OF THE STIFFLER LABYRINTH

At 9:00 and 10:30, Katherine will preach the first in our Becoming Faithful Disciples sermon series, and at 10:30 we will welcome new members into our family of faith. Confirmands will meet at 10:15 in the Youth Room, and our kids' choirs will rehearse at 10:00 and 11:35.

Our Christian Ventures Committee is excited about unveiling and dedicating the new Stiffler Labyrinth in Plymouth Hall. Immediately following the second service, all are welcome to see and bless the new inlaid labyrinth, established in Paul's honor and built in part with funds collected in celebration of Paul's retirement in June of 2013. (A portion of the funds also came from the recent capital campaign.) After the dedication, people will be invited to walk the labyrinth (with guides and a harpist on hand), learn more about labyrinth walks, and/or nibble on tasty refreshments, which will be served in the Parlor. Complimentary childcare will be provided from 11:30am-1pm.

Folks interested in traveling to Germany next September 2016, should plan to attend a no-obligation, informational meeting at 7pm in the Parlor. Rich and Meredith will be leading this trip, designed to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation.

Also at 7:00, PF will meet in the Youth Room.

## STRATEGIC VISION PRIORITY #5

### Deepening our Connections.

Late last year our Strategic Vision Team identified five key priorities, which are being explored by five separate implementation teams.

The final and fifth priority, Deepening our Connections, is explained further below:

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We enrich our sense of community by increasing and enhancing our communication with one another and with those who do not yet know us.

Communication takes on many forms and is what makes and keeps a community of disciples vital.

- Create ongoing and regular opportunities/forums for open conversation in at least two ways: among members; and, between members and those outside the congregation (partners, neighbors, those in need).

*Continued on page 3.*

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

### UPCOMING NEW MEMBER CLASS.

Church friends and visitors interested in joining the church are invited to save the following dates: Sunday, September 20 – Orientation I, at 10:00 am in the Chapel and Tuesday, September 22 – Orientation II, at 7 pm in the Sanctuary. New members will join the church on Sunday, September 27, during the 10:30am service. Please contact Linda Conlin (ext. 216 or linda@wscongo.org) if you are interested in joining or have any questions.

### MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID FOR YOUTH.

If you are an adult who works or interacts regularly with young people, then please consider attending this free, one-day workshop sponsored by Youth Mental Health First Aid. The program is designed to teach parents, family members, caregivers, teachers, school staff, peers, neighbors, health and human services workers, and other caring citizens how to help adolescents (age 12-18) who are experiencing a mental health or addictions challenge or are in crisis.

The course will introduce common mental health challenges for youth, review typical adolescent development, and teaches a five-step action plan for how to help youth in both crisis and non-crisis situations. The program will be led by a certified Mental Health First Aid facilitator. This workshop is presented by the West Suburban Faith-Based Mental Health Cluster and underwritten by the Community Memorial Foundation. Space is limited to 30. To sign up or learn more, contact Meredith Onion at ext. 222 or meredith@wscongo.org.

**MOM N' TOTS.** Beginning next Monday, September 21, moms and toddlers are welcome to drop in when their schedules permit to preschool classroom 115 for some quality play-time together.

### SEPTEMBER MINISTRY TEAM & COUNCIL MEETINGS.

The first of this year's monthly ministry team meetings will take place Monday night, September 21. Please come to the parlor at 7pm so we can start the night with prayer. Church Council will follow at 8:30 in the Seim Room. (These meetings are open to all church members.)

**DR. KELLY FLANAGAN RETURNS** this Friday, September 18, to talk with members of the Moms in Faith group (and guests) from 9-11am in the Seim Room. Psychologist, popular blogger, and Today Show contributor, Kelly Flanagan will talk about how 'The Mess Will Set You (and Your Kids) Free!' Come hear and discuss ten ways we can give ourselves and our children a little grace during this hectic season. Guest fee is \$5 per person.

**WEEKLY WATERCOLOR CLASS.** Peggy Taylor is eager to resume her weekly watercolor class. New and returning artists are welcome to join her in the music room (room 203) next Wednesday morning, September 23, at 9am. To learn more about this free offering to church members, contact Peggy at 708/246-5727.

**HELP SETTLE THE TAHAS.** This Saturday and Sunday, September 19 & 20, members of our Mission & Outreach Committee will be setting up the Chicago apartment of the Taha Family, arriving from Syria. If you can offer some time on either day, please contact Kim Nichol at kbnichol@sbcglobal.net or 708/784-1845.

**BRING YOUR OPINION.** If you enjoy the art of lively and engaging conversation, you may want to consider joining a small discussion group that meets on the second Friday night of the month. The groups will meet again this year starting on October 9. Contact Mary Lee Larsen (maryleelarsen@aol.com) or Mark Laubacher (mark@laubacherco.com) to learn more.

# MORE CALENDAR ITEMS

**WOMAN'S SOCIETY LINE UP.** Woman's Society is off and running. The group's first general meeting, which consists of lunch, a short business meeting and a 50-minute program, is Thursday, September 17 at 12:30 in the Seim Room. As always, newcomers are invited to attend the larger group meeting (on most third Thursdays of the month) and/or a home meeting on the first Thursday of the month. Cynthia Kos, this year's president, is happy to tell you more about the group and/or to make a no-obligation lunch reservation for you: 708/485-4760 or cynbobty@sbcglobal.net.

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|-----------|-------------------------------|
| OCT 20,21 | RUMMAGE SALE!*                |
| NOV 19    | Safety Village of WS          |
| DEC 17    | Christmas Music               |
| MAR 17    | Pilates with Martha Laubacher |
| MAY 19    | Container Gardening           |

*\*Though our rummage sales are sponsored by Woman's Society, they are all church-events. In fact, the sale reaches far beyond the walls of our church. Folks come from near and far both to volunteer and to shop. Please put aside some of your time as well as your gently-used rummage. Details can be found on our website, and volunteer sign-up will get underway in a few weeks.*

**M&M FELLOWSHIP EVENT.** M&Mers will kick off the year with a get-together on Friday, Oct. 2 at the Conlin's home, 215 Sunset Ave., La Grange. Guests should come at 6:30pm with a side dish or salad and a beverage. Brats and dessert will be furnished. The cost is \$5 per person. Guests will be invited to contribute to a collection to help support our refugee families. Please RSVP to Linda Conlin by Sept. 28: ext. 216 or linda@wscongo.org.

**MIDSHIP EVENT.** On Sunday, October 4, at 12pm, members of our MidShip fellowship group will meet at LaGrange Country Club for brunch and entertainment. The cost of the event, hosted by the Shays and Prices, is \$25 per person. ►

Please RSVP by way of payment by September 28. (Checks should be made payable to First Congregational Church with MidShip noted on the memo line.) The one-act play, which will be performed by members of the Theater of Western Springs, is called 'Muriel and Abby Find Irving' and comes highly recommended! (MidShip is a fellowship group for folks in the 70+ age range—or thereabouts.) [Shays: 708-246-6589; Prices:708-246-5022]

**DATES SET FOR PRIMETIME EVENTS.** Folks in the 45-65 (ish) age range are invited to this year's Oktoberfest at Hope and Elias Sabbagha's home on Saturday, October 3, beginning at 6:30pm. Guests need only bring a dish to share and a beverage of their choice. Brats, condiments, pop and water will be provided. RSVP to Sally Thiessen at Sally@madisongroupltd.com.

**FLU SHOT CLINIC & MORE.** From 8:30am-Noon on Sunday, September 20, flu shots will be administered in Plymouth Hall. No appointments are necessary. The shots are \$20 each (or free with a Medicare card) and are available to anyone aged 10 and older. (Check or cash will be accepted.)



On October 24, our Advocate Parish Nurse Deb Stankiewicz will be hosting our Annual Health Screening in Plymouth Hall. Appointments will be available from 7:30-10:30 for any/all of the following blood tests:

- Basic Blood Test (\$48)
- PSA (\$40)
- Thyroid Function (\$40)
- C-Reactive Protein (\$40)
- Take-Home ColoCare (\$6)
- Vitamin D Level (\$45)

Please contact Deb for an appointment at either ext. 218 or Debbie@wscongo.org.

# STRATEGIC VISION PRIORITY #5 (cont'd)

- Develop and introduce new standards for genuine, open, transparent communication.
- Promote increased strategic use of the latest technological methods of communication.

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. Put our faith into action in the world.
4. Nurture our congregation's vibrancy.



**A sermon series on Becoming Faithful Disciples will be introduced on Sept 20.**

- WORSHIP
- FOLLOW
- WITNESS
- NEIGHBOR
- FORGIVE
- ADVOCATE
- STEWARD

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](mailto:gatherings@wscongo.org).

*Gatherings* is emailed to members and posted on-line at [www.wscongo.org](http://www.wscongo.org).

**NEXT GATHERINGS  
DEADLINE  
5pm  
Friday, September 25**

## BITS & PIECES

**IN OUR PRAYERS...**Please hold the following people in your prayers this week: **Alice Parker** (Plymouth Place Health Center); **Annika Murrell** (fighting an infection); and **Mary Linabury** (moved to the health center at Oak Trace in Downers Grove). Please also hold in prayer our new refugee family, **The Tahas**, and members (43 of them!) of this year's **confirmation class**.

### STRAIGHT FROM HEAVEN.

Congratulations and best wishes to **Samantha and Brent Sordyl**, who on August 14, welcomed twin boys — Harrison Frederick and Lucas Henry. (The babies bring the Sordyl boy count up to FIVE!)

**WEDDING BELLS.** Our best wishes go out to Ruth Sherman's daughter, **Elly Sherman**, who was married on September 5, to Eric Hanek.

**REBUILD THE CHURCHES FUND.** Thanks to your generosity, we were able to contribute \$1,571 to the Rebuild the Churches Fund in South Carolina.

**THIS PAST SUNDAY**, we welcomed back our beloved **Kathy Gianone** as our childcare supervisor. Thanks to **Taryn MacLean** and **Annika Murrell**, our nursery was in good hands while Kathy recovered from illness these past two years. Stop by room 108 between services to catch up with Kathy and give thanks for her return!

**TIPS FROM OUR GREEN TEAM.** It is the 25th anniversary of the Pollution Prevention Act. Celebrate by making a few small changes:

- Buy unbleached coffee filters
- Clean your dryer lint trap after every use
- Buy items with less packaging
- Turn off all electronics when not in use
- Turn your thermostat up when you're gone for the day
- Compost fruit and veggie scraps

*(Thanks to your diligence, our plastic cap collection is weighing in at approximately 90 pounds, which means we have ONLY 310 more to go!)*