

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 14, 2017

COMING UP SUNDAY, JUNE 18

- * 9:30am worship, Rev. Dr. Rich Kirchherr will lead the service. We are also blessed to welcome Marty Kalas, who will be sharing his musical gifts on the saxophone.



LOOKING AHEAD TO SUNDAY, JUNE 25

- * 9:30am Worship service led by Rev. Meredith Onion.
- * The *semi-annual* meeting will take place directly following worship.
- * The first summer concert will begin after the semi-annual meeting has concluded.

www.wscongo.org

Divertimento

Summer Concert Series

Divertimenti are music entertainments meant to amuse, but the term can also be applied to serious music; really, though, the mood is informal. This summer Kathy Christian will host these entertaining and enriching concerts, and will offer a few words of explanation, and a few pieces of music to enlighten some of our Sunday mornings. Each concert will feature a renowned composer; all from different eras and cultures, and will be a collaboration between Kathy and some of our favorite and most talented singers. They will take place in the Sanctuary following Sunday worship, from 10:45-11:15am, and all are welcome.

June 25: Erin Cleary and Kathy will perform music by Beethoven. Erin is our Alleluia Choir director, and you will enjoy getting to know her as a vocal artist. For the children who will attend, she will also sing a beautiful setting of the children's book "Good Night Moon" by Eric Whitacre, with images.

July 9: Janet Mensen Reynolds and Kathy will perform music from Leonard Bernstein's "Mass", which was commissioned by Jacqueline Kennedy and opened the Kennedy Center in 1971. America's most cosmopolitan composer meets religion head on, and forges a unique piece, addressing faith and doubt, harmony and unrest, and disruption and triumph.

July 23: Vince Cefali takes the role as vocal artist, rather than Spirit Choir director, when he and Kathy perform songs from "The Pilgrims Progress". "The Pilgrim's Progress" is an opera by Ralph Vaughan Williams, based on John Bunyan's allegory The Pilgrim's Progress. You know Vaughan Williams partly from our hymnal: it includes 20 hymns with his tunes or arrangements. Vince will also sing music by Benjamin Britten, especially for the children.

HAPPENINGS AROUND CHURCH

The gospel of grace nullifies our adulation of televangelists, charismatic superstars, and local church heroes. It obliterates the two-class citizenship theory operative in many American churches. For grace proclaims the awesome truth that all is gift. All that is good is ours not by right but by the sheer bounty of a gracious God.

While there is much we may have earned--our degree and our salary, our home and garden, a Miller Lite and a good night's sleep--all this is possible only because we have been given so much: life itself, eyes to see and hands to touch, a mind to shape ideas, and a heart to beat with love.

We have been given God in our souls and Christ in our flesh. We have the power to believe where others deny, to hope where others despair, to love where others hurt. This and so much more is sheer gift; it is not reward for our faithfulness, our generous disposition, or our heroic life of prayer.

Even our fidelity is a gift, "If we but turn to God," said St. Augustine, "that itself is a gift of God."

My deepest awareness of myself is that I am deeply loved by Jesus Christ and I have done nothing to earn it or deserve it.

Brennan Manning, *The Ragamuffin Gospel: Good News for the Bedraggled, Beat-Up, and Burnt Out*

FAMILY MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

GROUP. This group meets from 7-8:30pm on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of every month. It is open to anyone in the community who is walking with a family member with a mental illness. Please contact Meredith Onion with any questions, Meredith@wscongo.org.

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY. GOING ON NOW—YOU CAN STILL SIGN UP!

THE New Pictorial Directory! LifeTouch will be taking photos on various dates and times from **June 7-24**. We hope everyone will participate! Please note, you **do not** need to purchase anything to have your picture in the directory. Additional information along with the link to the scheduling module is **available on our website** under latest news. Please contact Jeannette Lloyd with questions: Jeannette@wscongo.org.

MOMS IN FAITH. On **July 20** in the evening is the Summer Book Discussion & Favorite Things Party. More info will be posted closer to the date, but the book we'll be discussing is 'At Home in the World' by Tsh Oxenreider. If you are interested in attending or joining Moms in Faith, please contact Katherine Willis Pershey at Katherine@wscongo.org.



FAMILY-FRIENDLY LABYRINTH WALK.

Please join us on July 16 after Sunday worship for guided walks of The Stiffler Labyrinth. All are welcome.

GOD'S GARDEN/FELLOWSHIP CIRCLE

is still accepting donations! There are trees in need of sponsors! Bushes in need of adoption! Flowers in need of a home! The garden is open to everyone, and the hope is it will open eyes and ears to the spirit of God in ways that may not occur indoors. It is a place where youth groups will enjoy fellowship, preschoolers and Sunday school students will read stories, small groups will meet, individuals will pray, and all will grow and revel in the beauty of God's creation. Please **visit the website** or call the church office if you are interested in making a donation.

ALL-CHURCH PICNIC. Save the date! **August 27** is the **All-Church picnic** at 10am in Bemis Woods. Our Spirit Worship Band will lead the service with Rich, Meredith and Katherine. After worship, we'll fire up the grills, prepare the food, and celebrate the joy of outdoor worship. Games and activities will be offered for the children, and a good time will be had by all!

CHURCH OFFICE SUMMER HOURS

start after memorial day. The office will be staffed Monday—Thursday from 9am-12:30pm, and be closed on Fridays.



*"To welcome the stranger is to acknowledge him as a human being made in God's image; it is to treat her as one of equal worth with ourselves - indeed, as one who may teach us something out of the richness of experiences different from our own." — **Ana Maria Pineda***

BEDSPlus Care, one of our mission partners, will provide transitional summer shelter for select clients from mid-June to mid-August. **First Congo will host our neighbors the week of July 3rd, and is looking for volunteers to sign-up for shifts and other once-a-week services.**

There are many ways to participate: night shifts (we need a minimum of two volunteers per shift), weekly laundry, breakfast supplies, and simple dinner meals. You can sign up for one shift or multiple, depending on what your schedule allows; the sign up program will automatically send you reminders two days prior to your shift. Also, please do not feel limited to only sign up during the week at First Congo, if you so desire, you are welcome to help throughout the summer as well!

Questions? Please contact Erin Molek at volunteer@beds-plus.org or Meredith Onion at meredith@wscongo.org

[Sign up Link](#)

SUMMER SUNDAY SCHOOL

What are you enjoying most about summer? If you ask the children of First Congo that question, they will certainly tell you the summer Sunday school class is one of their favorite summer activities.

From June 11 to August 20 children age four to rising fifth grade will be celebrating God's wonderful creations together. After First Steps, the children will go to the Chapel to learn songs, and appreciate the many creatures God has made. There will be plenty of time for fun and fellowship as children learn to look for God around them, and make new friends.

Summer is also a great time to think about how you can become more involved in the life of our church. The Sunday school program is still in need of teachers for all grades. All the materials, plans, and support are provided for the 12 Sundays you teach/assistant teach throughout the school year.

If you are interested in helping, or have any questions, please contact Hope Sabbagha at hope@wscongo.org or 708-246-1900, x215.

All children are welcome at Sunday school; this includes members, non-members, visitors, family from out of town, etc...



Library Corner

The Kemper Library, located in the education building, has a nice selection of books and materials for children and adults. The library is open to our congregation during most church hours. This month we will focus on our children's section which is located on the right when you enter the room.

We have a large selection of DVDs, including "VeggieTales" and "Penguins". These animated productions entertain and teach life lessons at the same time. There is also a shelf of books containing Old Testament Stories and Children's Bibles.

In addition, we have a new book: 'One World, Many Religions, The Ways We Worship', that looks to be a great family read!

Please feel free to browse and see what catches your eye!

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 Erica Alletto at gatherings@wscongo.org. *Gatherings* is emailed to members and posted on-line at www.wscongo.org.

JOYS & CONCERNS

BAPTISMS. On June 11 we welcomed **Edward Larry Ricordati-Klusken** into the faith and family of Jesus Christ.

MANY THANKS. We wish to extend our heartfelt gratitude to Linda Conlin for her many years of service. We know we will never be able to fully express how grateful we are, but we will still try! Linda has been an invaluable force at First Congo; her kindness, sincerity, and hospitality are truly gifts from God. We are thrilled we aren't saying good-bye, and look forward to seeing her enjoy the Sunday worship services!

NEXT GATHERINGS DEADLINE.

Submissions are due on Tuesday, **July 11 by 5pm**. Please email the information to Erica Alletto at Erica@wscongo.org (the next issue will go out the week of July 17).

CURIOUS about what is happening at church? Check out the church **calendar on the website** (*Fyi—it is updated frequently, so check it often!*)

EVERYONE 
belongs, matters & is needed