

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

AUGUST 16, 2017

COMING UP SUNDAY, AUGUST 20

- * 8:30am Reflective worship service in the Chapel.
(Additional details are on page 2.)
- * 9:30am worship, Rev. Katherine Willis Pershey will lead the service.
- * Discipleship Sunday will commence immediately following worship. **Sunday school will go until 11am**, allowing any families that would like to learn about our ministries, fellowship, and programs, before they pick up their children.
- * 4pm, Our Favorite Things concert featuring Janet Mensen Reynolds & her daughter Lauren Reynolds.

LOOKING AHEAD TO SUNDAY, AUGUST 27

It's the ALL-Church Picnic!

We'll have worship at Bemis Woods (in Grove 7) and a picnic immediately following. Please see page 3 for additional details.



www.wscongo.org

MY LOVELY WIFE IN THE PSYCH WARD

BOOK REVIEW by REV. MEREDITH ONION

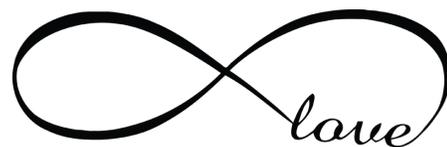
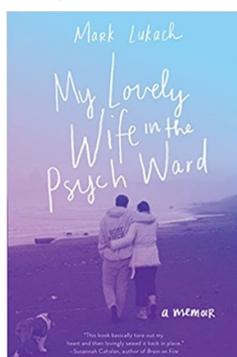
It wasn't exactly a light-hearted summer beach read, but I was deeply moved as I read *My Lovely Wife in the Psych Ward*, by Mark Lukach. This book is educational, but it is also a profound love story. "A compassionate yet searing memoir of the author, Mark Lukach, and his wife, Giulia. Their young marriage strained with episodes of mental illness, yet how they coped is a remarkable lesson in love."

Many of you know may know I am passionate about reducing the stigma associated with mental illness. I encourage everyone to reach out for help, resources, and support when they need it – whether it's a result of your own diagnosis, or that of a loved one.

I had the opportunity to meet the author's mother, Mary, this spring. She helped our local chapter of NAMI (National Alliance of Mental Illness) where I serve on the Board of Directors, co-host a book signing with Mark. The book signing will be on **September 3 at 2pm** at Andersen's Bookshop in LaGrange. The event is free and open to all, however, in order to join the signing line, you will have to purchase Mark's book from Anderson's.

To hear more about the experiences of Mark and Giulia Lukach you can listen to them being interviewed on the [Mental Illness Happy Hour podcast](#) or read the [book review here](#).

If you, or someone you know, are in need of help please know your pastoral team: Rich, Katherine, Deb, and myself are always available to help.



You may also find support at [Community Wellness Center](#); [The Living Room](#) or [Pillars](#).

To learn more about mental health, please consider taking the highly regarded [Mental Health First Aid class](#).

What I did this summer

Katherine Willis Pershey



I've been in and out of town more than usual this summer. At the end of June my family traveled to Chautauqua, New York where I served as the Chaplain of the Week at the UCC house. While I loved walking through the garden-lined streets of the town in the early mornings, the real highlight was daily worship lead by the Rev. Alan Jones. He began each morning with this quote: *"There are only two feelings, love and fear. There are only two languages, love and fear. There are only two activities, love and fear. There are only two motives, two procedures, two frameworks, two results, love and fear. Love and fear."*

Those powerful words will remain with me always.

Our next trip was to Indianapolis for the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), which is the tradition in which I was originally ordained. I was able to attend several wonderful workshops on creativity and worship, as well as cast my vote for our new General Minister and President, the first African American woman to lead a denomination.

Ben and I then spent a couple of days on Lake Michigan celebrating our 15th wedding anniversary. Our annual pilgrimage to Camp Highlands for Friends and Family Camp is always the highlight of our year.

I am grateful for these opportunities to learn, rest, and be renewed!



HAPPENINGS AROUND CHURCH

GREEN TEAM BREAD TAG COLLECTION.

We are collecting plastic bread tags to recycle in partnership with SCARCE and Danielle Cares for Chairs. Plastic bread tags are the square clips used to close bags of bread, bagels, produce, etc... If you're trying to reduce your plastic use, they can be hard to avoid. They also aren't recyclable in the Illinois curbside recycling program, so millions end up in landfills; adding to our disposable plastic problem!



So, why aren't they recycled? Two reasons: 1) they are tiny! Recycling equipment simply isn't able to sort them. 2) they are made of #6 plastic a.k.a. polystyrene, which is not recyclable in any form in Illinois, just like styrofoam and solo cups. We will have a collection bag in the Education Building, please help us fill it up!

Danielle Cares for Chairs is a non-profit in Indiana that collects and recycles plastic bread tags to purchase wheelchairs for those in need. For more information about it and Scarce, please visit www.scarce.org

REFLECTIVE SERVICES. August 20 at 8:30am in the Chapel. Mark Laubacher will lead the service, and we will consider the popular prayer that begins "Lord make me an instrument of thy peace...". This prayer found extraordinarily wide circulation during the 1920's, and continues to speak profoundly to us today. Everyone is welcome!

IF WE KNOW, WE GO! In days of old, hospitals use to call the churches to let us know of hospitalized members. Because of HIPPA, the health care information privacy law, hospitals are no longer able to do so. If you are in the hospital please have family or friends call the church office, ministers, or parish nurse to let us know. We would like to visit you while you are there, but cannot do so unless we know about it. Also, we will not share information without permission.

NAMI MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID. Why take Mental Health First Aid?

- ◆ Recognize if a family member, child or adolescent is struggling.
- ◆ Learn how to talk to a youth who is in need.
- ◆ Make a positive change by helping someone onto the right road.
- ◆ Respond with the same empathy and respect to mental illness as you would cancer.

Mental Health First Aid USA is an 8-hour training that teaches participants how to help someone who is developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis. In the Mental Health First Aid course, you will learn risk factors and warning signs for mental health, and addiction concerns, strategies for how to help someone in both crisis and non-crisis situations, and where to turn for help. Additional information is available on our [website under Latest News](#). You can also contact [Sara Hynes](#) at NAMI, 630/752-0066 x-216.

SUMMER SUNDAY SCHOOL. Summer may be ending BUT Sunday school is gearing up! The program year begins September 10. If you have children ages 3 to high school, please take 2 minutes and complete our [program registration which is posted on our website](#).

Reminder! Sunday school will go until 11am on Aug. 20, allowing any families attending Discipleship Sunday time to learn about our ministries, fellowship, and programs, before they pick up their children.



CHURCH OFFICE SUMMER HOURS. The office will be staffed Monday—Thursday from 9am-12:30pm, and closed on Fridays. Normal hours resume after Labor Day.

Discipleship Sunday

Everyone belongs, matters, & is needed. We mean that. On August 20 after worship we will have, what used to be known as "sign-up Sunday". Really though, it's so much more. It's a time to think about how you want to be involved in church life. Do you want to be more involved with fellowship (relationships within the church)? Volunteering? Sharing your interests, gifts, or talents? All of the above?

[Discipleship Sunday](#) is an opportunity to learn more about many of the committees, fellowship groups, and on-goings at church during the upcoming school year. If you're so inclined, you can sign up for any that tickle your fancy, either to get additional information or to be involved.

Some of the groups, committees, and programs at Discipleship Sunday:

Women's Society	Health Ministry
Music	Mission and Outreach
PF/Journeys	Lifetouch Pictures
Diaconate	Christian Ed/Christian Ministry
Welcome Team	Moms in Faith
Men's Breakfast	Adult Christian exploration/Bible Study
Christian Ventures	Thursday Morning Book group
Moms of Teens	

Children and Youth:

Sunday School: 3 year olds to 5th grade
 Alleluia Choir: 1st—5th grade; rehearses Sundays from 10-10:20am
 Harmony Singers: 6th grade and older; rehearses Sundays from 11:35am-12:15pm
 Lord of the Ringers Bell Choir: 1st—8th grade; rehearses Mondays from 3:55-4:55pm
 Steel Drum Band: 6th—12th grade; rehearses on Tuesdays at 5:30-6:30pm or 6:30-7:30pm
 JRNEYS Youth Group: 1st, 2nd, & 3rd Wednesday of the month at 7pm
 Plymouth Fellowship: 9th—12th grade meets Sundays at 7pm
 Congo Hoops basketball: 9th—12th grade, Monday night practices and weekend games

Please note the list is not exhaustive.

We want to stress, this is **not** the only time to sign up or get involved; all of our activities are open whenever you're ready. Think of this as a way to roll up your sleeves and be God's hands at work.



ALL CHURCH PICNIC

August 27 at 10am!

Please join us at Bemis Woods (Grove 7) for the All Church Picnic! Worship will be lead by Katherine, Rich, and Meredith and include the Spirit Worship Band. Afterward, we'll fire up the grills, prepare the food, and celebrate the joy of community and outdoor worship.

Games and activities will be offered for the children, and a good time will be had by all! Please [RSVP](#) by Sunday, August 20, either via the [website](#) or by calling the office. We will also have lots of people to help carry stuff—many hands make light work!

We hope to see you there!



A tender heart...

The Onion household is suddenly very quiet again – we just dropped off our 'baby' (AKA, Aaron), at Nebraska Wesleyan as he begins his sophomore year of college. Our son Connor graduated in May, and has spent the summer calling baseball in Iowa, but we'll be moving him to a new job in southern Illinois next weekend. We moved our oldest, Alex, to her new apartment in Wrigleyville a few months ago....

It has been a summer of many moves, and many transitions, and my heart has been tender, to say the least. My children are all pursuing their passions; they are spreading the wings like we've hoped they would. But, did I mention my heart is tender?

Perhaps some of you are feeling this tenderness as you see your own children entering new phases of their lives; maybe it's a new school, a new relationship, a new job, a new level of maturity. An article has helped me the past few weeks so [I wanted to share it:](#)

I've been putting "my basket in the water" a lot. My son actually sent me this lovely picture my as I was driving away after dropping him off at school...Did I mention my heart is tender?



Blessings to you all, as you walk with your children through their many phases of life; may we all know God's love surrounding us.

Please email Meredith if you are interested in being added to the Moms of Teens email list, which is where she originally shared this.
meredith@wscngo.org

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

STRAIGHT FROM HEAVEN. Our best wishes go out to Stephanie & Nick Myers on the birth of their son **Deagan Michael** on August 12.

BAPTISMS. On July 23 we welcomed **Henry Harpen McNaughton** into the faith and family of Jesus Christ.

WEEPING WITH THOSE WHO WEEP. Our heartfelt condolences go out to **the Murrell Family** on the passing of Annika; to **Carla Brassil** on the passing of her father; and **Carrie Soudan** on the passing of her father.

CONGRATULATIONS! We offer best wishes on the marriage of Lauren Grissim to Noah Bown on July 8.

IN OUR PRAYERS. Anne Shay is in stable condition at her new home in Brookdale Senior Living Center 6801 High Grove Blvd, Room 101 Burr Ridge, IL 60527

CURIOUS about what is happening at church? Check out the [Latest News](#) or [church calendar](#) on the website.

GATHERINGS DEADLINE. Articles are due by Tuesday, **August 29**, 5pm. Please email submissions to erica@wscongo.org (the next issue will go out on September 6).

EVERYONE 
belongs, matters & is needed