

# 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

OCTOBER 4, 2017

### MISSION FEST

SUNDAY, 10/22

#### ONE SERVICE ONLY AT 9AM

10am – noon! We are hosting the [Foods Resource Bank](#) (FRB) [Mission Fest](#). The event will include music by the Spirit Worship Band, a bake sale, haunted house, food, games, and of course, pumpkins!

Members of the Park Street Congregational Church in Mazon, IL, our partners in the FRB growing project, will be joining us. The pumpkins will be harvested the weekend prior by youth groups from both churches.

JRneys & PF (our middle school and high school youth groups) are also constructing the haunted house, and organizing the games. Chestnut Street will be blocked off to make sure we have plenty of space for fun and fellowship.

Please join us and help support efforts to provide aid for people in developing countries grow their own food.

[www.wscongo.org](http://www.wscongo.org)

### STEWARDSHIP

Will you join me in prayerfully considering to be aspirational in your support of the church next year? Yes, aspirational. I hope you are asking: "Kirch, what do you mean by that? It means to consider how most faithfully we can support our ministries to our congregation, communities, and the world. We asked our staff and lay leaders what they hoped to do in 2018. In effect, what are your dreams for faithful ministry? These are a sampling of our hopes for the next year:

- We aspire to an even more generous mission budget increasing it by almost 9%. To continue our strong support of numerous organizations and to increase our connection to new mission areas by expanding our support of environmental and mental health.
- We aspire to give our remarkable staff modest raises; our goal is a 3% increase.
- Our musicians, with our support, will perform the Goodall Requiem in worship String orchestra and two pianos, use more instrumentalists in worship and expand our growing children's music ministry.

Thus, before Promise Sunday on October 15—or before you pledge online via [Realm®](#) or mail in your 2018 commitment to this church's ministry—I hope that you will prayerfully consider excelling at generosity and supporting this church's dreams for an even more robust Christian witness to the world.

However, some of you are surely asking the question, WHY? Here's why: **Because it matters what we do here.** We strive to tell the good news of a God who is love and mercy. In light of that simple, but not simplistic, goal let me celebrate a little. This church is spiritually and numerically vital. Our summer attendance was wonderful, and we had over 20% more children in Sunday school. That means more children than ever have heard that they are loved by God, wherever they are and whatever the circumstances. That is worth celebrating and supporting. The building and grounds look wonderful, and I am a firm believer that beauty, art and architecture give glory to God.

Soon it will be Promise Sunday, I hope you will strive for a commitment to generosity that is faithful and aspirational. New this year, you will have the option to submit your pledge through our new church record keeping solution, Realm. It is always available and kept secure in an easy-to-use online environment. Please look for an email from me inviting you to Realm in mid October, and for more information about Realm, check out the article in the insert.

Rich

## FALL RUMMAGE

Fall Rummage sale is here!

We need volunteers! Rummage is an "All Hands On Deck" event! Please consider setting aside some time to help.

**VOLUNTEERING:** Sign-up is helpful, but if your schedule opens up & you aren't signed up, come anyway! There's always plenty to do and fun to be had! Set-up begins on Oct 12 at 8am. There are multiple days and times available, and there are opportunities for every type of activity level! Everyone is welcome to volunteer and shop!

Additional information is on the website, or you can call the church office, 708-246-1900.

### DONATION DROP-OFF:

(in the church parking lot)

Oct 14, 9am—1pm

Oct 15, 1pm—3pm

### SALE:

Oct 17, 6pm—8pm

Oct 18, 10am—Noon, 6pm—8pm

(everything is ½ off for the last 2 hours of the sale).

ALL proceeds from Rummage are given to charitable organizations; local, national, and global.



### UPCOMING WORSHIP SERVICES: SERIES ON COMFORT

**October 8:** Rev. Dr. Rich Kirchherr reflects on the foundations upon which we build our lives and homes. It grows from parable of the house that is built on rock and the house that is built on sand. Too often we build both our homes and our lives around small and insignificant details like doorknobs or an isolated mistake. We have other options: to build upon a foundation allows us to nurture a life around loving God, our neighbors and ourselves.

**October 15:** Rev. Meredith Onion will preach on the comfort found in God's presence, illustrated in Psalm 23; Erin Cleary and Vince Cephal will offer special accompanying music selections.

## HAPPENINGS AROUND CHURCH

**ORDINATION.** After a long, remarkable, and faithful journey, Kathryn Charlene Price will be ordained to the Christian Ministry on Sunday, October 8 at 3pm. Rich Kirchherr will preach and the Spirit Worship Band will be joined by Global Girls Dance and the Good News Gospel Choir in this joy-filled celebration of Kathryn's call to serve God and God's people. Following her ordination, Kathryn will continue her work as the Chaplain of King Bruwaert House in Burr Ridge. We invite everyone to join us and offer our sincere heartfelt congratulations to Kathryn.

**BIBLE STUDY.** Rev. Katherine Willis Pershey will be leading a Bible Study on 1st Corinthians on Thursday nights at 7pm in the Library in October (5, 12, 26) and November (2, 9, 16). All are welcome; there is a \$5 fee to cover cost of the participant book, which is a study guide published by the United Church of Christ. Email Katherine to sign up or for additional information: Katherine@wscongo.org.

**REFUGEE ONE.** It's official! We're co-sponsoring another family! We don't know much, like what country they're from or how many people to expect, but we have been told to expect them in mid to late October. Because we are a people of abundant welcome, we want to encourage all to be at the airport with signs and flowers. Please email Tara Bulger (tkbulger@me.com) or Kim Nichol (kbnichol@sbcglobal.net) If you would be interested in joining us to welcome our new family.

**BLESSING GOD'S GARDEN.** On October 29 rain or shine, following the second service, we will gather in God's Garden to bless this new sacred space on our church grounds. Many thanks to the hard work of the planning committee and the generosity of the many contributors who made the Garden and Fellowship Circle a beautiful reality.

**MONTHLY VILLAGE STYROFOAM COLLECTION.** Starting on October 7, the Village of Western Springs is starting a Styrofoam collection. It will take place on the first Saturday of each month from 9am—noon in the Grand Ave. parking lot.

**HURRICANE RELIEF HYGIENE KITS & CLEAN UP BUCKETS.** It's time to roll up your sleeves and assemble Hygiene Kits and Clean-up Buckets for people effected by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria. We are participating in the Church World Service program and encourage everyone to participate! If you are interested in donating items for the kits, or would prefer to make a monetary donation for supplies, please click here or call the church office. The kits will be assembled on Sunday, October 8 from 10am-noon. Please join us—many hands make light work!

**MEN'S BREAKFAST.** Fall Kick-off we be on Oct.14 at 7:45am at the Honey Bee Café in Western Springs. All men are invited! We are usually done by 9am so you can get back to regularly scheduled events; coach soccer, mow the lawn, shovel the snow, etc... Not only is there time for fellowship and conversation, but we also engage in our faith.

**M&M'S OKTOBERFEST!** October 21 at 6:30pm in Plymouth Hall. Appetizers & bratwurst are included, guests should bring a side or desert. FYI, you may bring beer or wine to this one time fellowship gathering. **OUTREACH.** We are collecting contributions for Puerto Rico & Virgin Islands Hurricane Relief. Checks should be made out to United Church of Christ with "Maria" in the memo. RSVP to Laurel by Oct. 9, and indicate what you'll be bringing. lseidelman@comcast.net, (708) 246-9119.

# Health Screening

Register now for our annual [Congregational Health Screening!](#) Saturday, October 28 from 7:30—10:30am in Plymouth Hall. This is a great opportunity to receive screening lab tests at a very low price. The Basic Blood Test\* includes complete blood count, lipid panel, blood sugar, and chemistry panel for \$52.

When you register for the Basic Blood Test, you may add any of the following:

- **Prostate Specific Antigen** (PSA) for males >45, \$40
- **Thyroid Function** (T3, T4, TSH), \$40
- **C-Reactive Protein (Cardio CRP)**, \$40
- **Vitamin D Level**, \$45
- **ColoCare** (take-home kit to test for blood in the stool), \$6

You don't need a doctor's order to participate, and height, weight, and blood pressure are included along with a follow-up appointment with Deb Stankiewicz, Parish nurse, to discuss results. The results are confidential and you will receive a written report you can share with your physician.

An appointment is required. Contact Deb Stankiewicz at 708-246-1900, x-218 or [debbie@wscongo.org](mailto:debbie@wscongo.org) with questions and to register.

\*All participants must have Basic Blood Test

## Children & Youth Groups

**JOSEPH AND THE AMAZING TECHNICOLOR DREAMCOAT.** Tickets are on sale for the musical *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* at Drury Lane (Oak Brook) on Sunday, February 25 at 2pm. This is a wonderful event for families especially since we teach Joseph story in the Sunday school classes. There are a limited number of tickets and need to be purchased by Oct 27. We are thrilled to have reduced the ticket price to \$49/adults and \$29/Children. Please [contact Hope](#) if you are interested or would like [additional information](#).

**WRAPPED IN LOVE.** The Children's Ministries committee partnered with Church World Service to offer a stewardship and faith formation opportunity; **Wrapped in Love** was introduced on October 1 when children were given a mini blanket and a list of activities to remind them of the blessings God has provided them, and how they can help others. We invite everyone to participate in this stewardship project; donations can be placed in the offering basket or in Hope's mailbox, labeled "blanket project".

### Upcoming Events For Youth Groups:

#### Plymouth Fellowship (High School Youth Group):

Oct. 8: 11am – 7pm, Corn Maze trip to Richardson's Corn Maze (the world's largest Corn Maze!)

Oct. 15: Crop Hunger Walk. [Sign up](#) to walk (join our team: FirstCongoWS) and make a donation today!

Oct. 22: Speed Dating

Oct. 29: 3:30—5pm, PF Halloween Party for church families.

Oct. 29: 7—8pm, Costume Bon-Fire.

#### JRneys (Middle School Youth Group):

Oct. 4: 7—8:15pm, Kick Off meeting, Parents invited for the first 15 min.

Games and ice cream for the kids. Planning for the FRB Mission Fest.

Oct. 11: Rummage Set-Up, 6:30pm—8pm, Planning for the FRB Mission.

Oct. 18: No JRneys – RUMMAGE!!!

## refugeeONE

We are thrilled to share updates on some families we've co-sponsored through [RefugeeOne](#).

**The Taha family (from Syria).** Batoul (18) is a HS senior. She has a passion (and talent!) for fashion design and plans to major in that at college—she's agreed to share some drawings (they are included on the insert and on our website). She's taken the SAT, completed drivers ed (that never would have happened in Syria), and has many friends; she is very happy here.

Mohammad (17) is also a HS senior. When he first arrived (Sept 2015), he rarely smiled, which was, of course, completely understandable. Now he smiles often and is more talkative. He's taken drivers ed, the SAT, plays on the soccer team, and is on swim team. Over the summer, he worked at Halal Guys (Middle eastern restaurant) six evenings a week; during the school year, he'll work on the weekends. He hopes to go to college, then dental school.

Ali (13) is a typical 7th grade boy who loves soccer, riding bikes, and hanging out with his friends. He's a sweet boy and enjoys school, but doesn't particularly like waking up early (he's not a morning person).

Outreya (the mother) works full time across the street at Misericordia. She cleans the residents rooms and works in the laundry room. She seems to have adjusted to the US, but (of course) misses her family in Homs terribly. She's quick to smile, her English is quite good, and she's also learning some Spanish at work. She also loves to cook and bake.

Abdullah (the father) works for Uber and likes it; he had a difficult time finding the right job. One of our generous church members donated their car to the Taha's, which they kept for a year until they traded it in for a newer car to comply with Uber rules.

Another one of the families is from Eritrea. They have lived here since March 2016, and live in the same building as the Taha's. The family includes Adiam (mother) her son Pawlos (13). Adiam is kind and a wonderful and generous cook; always offering food or homemade injera bread to guests. She works in the kitchen at a nursing home and even though it's not far from her apartment, it takes two buses and an hour to get there. Eventually she'd like to learn how to drive, and get a car. She would also like to get a job at the Misericordia laundry department since it is so close. She has an application in and is just waiting for an opening in that department. She hasn't seen her husband in eight years, when he escaped from Eritrea; Adiam and Pawlos also tried escaping, but they were caught and imprisoned for three months—Pawlos spent his fifth birthday in that jail. The father currently lives in Israel, and has weekly calls with Adiam and Pawlos. The family hopes to be reunited one day.

Pawlos is in 8th grade and loves music, bike riding, and taking apart and reassembling electronics. His English is excellent. We asked him if there is anything he wants from Fall Rummage. He would **LOVE** a keyboard, guitar, and a new BMX style bike (we gave him a used BMX bike, but it was stolen). If anyone has one of these items they'd be willing to donate directly to Pawlos, please contact **Kim Nichol**: 708-306-1845 or [kbnichol@sbcglobal.net](mailto:kbnichol@sbcglobal.net).

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](mailto:gatherings@wscongo.org).

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

# JOYS & CONCERNS

**WEEPING WITH THOSE WHO WEEP.** Our heartfelt condolences go out to the **Veldman family** on the passing of Michael Veldman and the **Orr-Depner family** on the death of Nancy's nephew.

**IN OUR PRAYERS.** Please hold in your prayers: Ruth Koch, in the healthcare center at Plymouth Place, as is Warren Whitesel; and Susan Cummins. We also continue to pray for those impacted by the recent Hurricanes, in addition to everyone involved in the Las Vegas shooting.

**CURIOUS about what is happening at church?** Look for our weekly email, sent on Wednesdays, and you can always go to our website—[Upcoming Events](#) or [church calendar](#).

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!** The Church Office needs your help! We are looking for a few people who may be able to help with monthly mailings. Most likely it will be one hour of time or less. Please email or call [Beth Tracy](mailto:Beth_Tracy) if you can help, 708.246.1900, x210.

**GATHERINGS** comes out monthly. Articles are due by the 20th of the prior month. Please email [articles/submissions](mailto:articles/submissions) to [erica@wscongo.org](mailto:erica@wscongo.org) (the next issue will go out on November 8).

EVERYONE 

*belongs, matters & is needed*

## Realm—Let's Connect!

Our church is moving to a new kind of church record keeping solution called Realm®. It supports the administrative needs of our staff and offers some exciting opportunities to members and friends of our church. Not only will this improve work life for our ministry staff, it will make it easier for our church family to connect with each other, keep up with what's going on, and grow as a connected community of believers.

Stay connected to our church wherever you go by downloading the free Connect - Our Church Community app for iPhone and Android devices. Use it to communicate with your groups, RSVP to events, manage your giving, update profile information, and more. It makes it easier for everyone to connect and know what's happening!

**News**—Keeps everyone up-to-date with the latest posts, photos, and events for your group and for your church as a whole.

**Photos**—Capture your moments together and share them with your group.

**Events**—See event details (date, time, location, etc), submit your RSVP, and sign up to bring something.

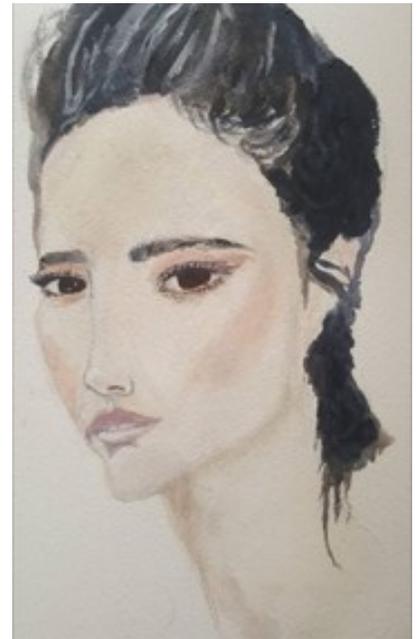
**Messages**—Send your entire group, or select individuals, a message that starts a conversation.

**Participants**—See names and basic profile details for the people in your church or group, based on their privacy preferences.

**Pledge and Give**—Review your giving history or make new donations online or on your mobile phone.

In about a week, you will have the option to submit your pledge through Realm. It's always available (and secure!) in an easy-to-use online environment. To [hear more about Realm](#) or set up your account today, email [Jeannette@wscongo.org](mailto:Jeannette@wscongo.org) and request your personal invitation and instructions.

## Batoul Taha's Drawings



# MEET OUR NEW MEMBERS!

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*On September 24, we had the joy and privilege of welcoming new members into our family of faith. Please look for them and extend a warm First Congo welcome!*

**Jeff & Becky Modrowski (Durkalski)** moved to the Ridgewood neighborhood of Western Springs from the city in April of 2016. Becky grew up in La Grange and attended LTHS. She went on to the University of Kansas to study elementary education. Jeff is from Crown Point, Indiana and attended Indiana University to study business & finance. Becky has been a teacher in Lombard for 13 years and currently teaches second grade. Jeff has been in the mortgage industry for six years and is currently an underwriter. They welcomed a baby girl, Molly Josephine, into the world on June 3. They enjoy traveling, trying new restaurants, going for walks with their dog, Joey, and entertaining...especially in the summer with grilling and bonfires. *Sponsors: Doug & Natalia Eichstaedt*

**Todd and Cari Melby** have lived in Western Spring for 13 years. Todd is originally from Ellsworth, Wisconsin where he grew up helping to run his family's bar, restaurant, and bowling alley. Cari is from Cincinnati, Ohio and grew up doing typical kid things, like soccer, swimming, and riding bikes. Other than two years in Florida, Todd has been in the Chicago area since college. Cari moved here after graduate school and has worked in higher education for 20+ years; she is currently a Program and Policy Analyst at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Todd has been in the telecommunications industry for 25+ years; currently he is doing business development for a start-up firm in the west suburbs. They have two children: Nathan, a freshman at LT, and Julianne in sixth grade at McClure. Participating in sports is a shared family passion: Todd is a triathlete, who is also giving paddle tennis a try. Cari plays tennis, paddle tennis, and is an avid walker. Nathan runs cross country, plays baseball, and loves to throw the football with his friends. Julianne runs cross country and plays soccer for the Celtics. They are excited to join our congregation and get involved in our thriving community. *Sponsors: Tracey & Michael Scodro*

**Will Mason** (of Chicago) **and Jackie Mason** (of North Riverside) have lived in Clarendon Hills for 9 years. During their first seven years, they were exclusively cat parents, and both worked in market research/business strategy for food industry companies. In 2015, they became parents to son Benny and are expecting another son this January. Will still works in corporate strategy in the food industry, and though he doesn't have much spare time to practice, he is a black belt in karate and plans to teach his sons someday. After working 10 years, Jackie became a stay at home mom. She enjoys gardening in her spare time and recently has added a home prairie to their yard. She has been teaching Benny about the garden and hopes to foster his appreciation for the outdoors. They are both excited about joining church; Jackie recently started meeting with the Moms in Faith group, and Benny loves the time he has spent with the other children in the Shooting Star room on Sundays. *Sponsors: Danielle & Rob Kos*

**Eamonn and Caitlin Brady** moved to this area from Chicago last March. They are originally from Philadelphia and New York, and lived in Pittsburgh for seven years where they both attended college, graduate school and worked. Eamonn works in finance and Caitlin is a part time pediatric speech-language pathologist. They have two children: Finn, who is 2 ½ years old, and Maeve who is 10 months. Eamonn's hobbies include golf, running, mens lacrosse, watching sports, cooking, and spending time with family. Caitlin enjoys running, yoga, lacrosse, reading, knitting, and spending time with family. They both love hiking and biking in Bemis woods, and exploring the western burbs. Their family has been attending services since April, Caitlin is part of Moms in Faith, and Finn attends Almost 3s at preschool. *Sponsors: Anne & Tony Nowak*

**Jeff and Brooke Dumakowski** moved to Western Springs three years ago from the Bucktown neighborhood in Chicago. They have been married for five years and have two beautiful daughters: Jenna who is 2.5 years old, and Sloane who is 6 months old. Jeff works at Google in Advertising Technology Sales and Brooke was previously a hair stylist/colorist in Chicago, and is now hard at work at home with their girls. Their weekends usually consist of going to one of the lovely parks in town, visiting Brookfield Zoo, and checking out local restaurants. They have been attending church as often as they can with a new baby, and had Jenna baptized here last year. They absolutely love being part of such an amazing town and church community! *Sponsors: Tom & Nancy Conforti*