

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

JULY 2018

Sunday Mornings In July

Summer Worship Service Held at 9:30am

JULY 8: REJECT RACISM

Rich will lead the congregation in worship. He will preach on how find joy in both our diversity and are common to humanity.

JULY 15: FIGHT FOR THE POWERLESS

Meredith will lead the congregation in worship. She will preach on how we as a congregation work together for liberation by standing side-by-side with those who are marginalized.

JULY 22: SHARE EARTHLY & SPIRITUAL RESOURCES

We will come together, lead in worship by Katherine. The next Reflective Chapel Gathering will take place Sunday, July 22 at 8:30am. Meet on the north side of the Education Building, near the playground (weather permitting), for a gentle yoga practice.

JULY 29: EMBRACE DIVERSITY

Meredith will lead the congregation in worship. The theme of this worship will be Embrace Diversity, where we will celebrate how special and different we all are.

SUMMER OFFICE HOURS

The Church office will be closed July 2 through July 5. Summer office hours will resume July 8. Summer office hours are Monday through Thursday from 9am to 12:30pm. This schedule will remain in place through Labor Day.

Be the Church

This summer our congregation has been called to explore what it means to *Be the Church*.

Each week, during worship, coffee hour, and Summer Sunday School, we have focused on a different practice.

In June we had the opportunity to discover more about protecting the environment and caring for the poor. In July we will examine forgiving often, rejecting racism, fighting for the powerless, sharing earthly and spiritual resources, and embracing diversity.

Whether you are able to be at church or not, we encourage you to read the weekly email containing the *Be the Church*-themed devotional. The devotionals will connect you to the call to *Be the Church*.

Be the Church yard signs are available for members and friends who wish to share the powerful message of *Be the Church* with their neighbors.

BE THE CHURCH

Protect the environment. Care for the poor. Forgive often. Reject racism. Fight for the powerless. Share earthly and spiritual resources. Embrace diversity. Love God. Enjoy this life.

Finding God In The Silence

"In a noise-polluted world, it is even difficult to hear ourselves think let alone try to be still and know God. Yet it seems essential



for our spiritual life to seek some silence, no matter how busy we may be. Silence is not to be shunned as empty space, but to be befriended as fertile ground for intimacy with God." (Susan Muto) If you are in need of some silent, sacred space, please remember our Sanctuary and Chapel are open to you for silent meditation, prayer, or simply being still and knowing God. If you need a little

inspiration for silence, you may wish to read this article: <https://bustedhalo.com/ministry-resources/gift-silence-morning>

HAPPENINGS AROUND CHURCH

REFLECTIVE CHAPEL GATHERING.

The next Reflective Chapel Gathering will take place Sunday, July 22 at 8:30 a.m. Titled, "Yoga in the Outdoors," participants will focus on gentle yoga movements and stretching. Weather permitting, we will meet on the north side of the Education Building, near the playground. Meeting outside for some peaceful movement, with our feet planted on the grass, will help us share earthly and spiritual resources. All are welcome! Bring yoga mat or towel. In the event of inclement weather we will meet in the Seim room. For more information



regarding Reflective Chapel Gatherings visit wscongo.org or contact Bob Kos at 708.485.4760 or bobkos@hotmail.com.

GUIDE TO A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS.

No one expects a mental health crisis to happen to someone in his or her life. The National Alliance on Mental Illness, NAMI.org, has created a [Guide To Navigating a Mental Health Crisis](#). Taking a few minutes out of your day to prepare for a potential mental health emergency can help save a life.

NEW SMALL GROUPS FORMING. Are you looking to be a part of a small book group focusing on faith exploration through book discussion and fellowship? If so, Seek. Pray. Love. is for you. Seek. Pray. Love. is a lay-led (with ministers available as resources) small book group gathering consisting of 10-12 people. Meetings will be held during the late afternoon or early evening (or when the group decides), usually in participants' homes. Group members will center in God and discuss the chosen book(s) while

enjoying light refreshments. For more information on joining a Seek. Pray. Love. group contact Mary Lee Gosz at maryleegosz@gmail.com.

BOOK DISCUSSION & FAVORITE THING EXCHANGE. On July 25 at 7pm, Moms in Faith will host a Book Discussion & Favorite Things Exchange Party. This event is open to all women and female friends of the congregation. Take time out of your busy summer to read (or listen to the audio book) *The Very Worst Missionary: A Memoir or Whatever* by Jamie Wright. Come ready to discuss the book and bring one of your favorite things (under \$15) to exchange. If you are interested in participating or have questions, contact Amanda Grigsby at agrigsby@gmail.com.

BEDS VOLUNTEERS NEEDED. In conjunction with BEDS Plus, First Congo will host a transitional summer shelter for select BEDS Plus clients the week of July 2. Volunteers are needed to sign-up for meal or laundry shifts, as well as donate supplies. [Click here](#) to volunteer or to find out more about this valuable volunteer opportunity.

PUPPET MINISTRY. A new ministry is forming at First Congregational Church and we want you to be a part of it. Children's Ministry is looking for individuals interested in learning more about First Congo's new Puppet Ministry. For more information contact Hope Sabbagha 708.246.1900, Ext. 215 or hope@wscongo.org.

TOUR DE FARM. Save the date for Tour de Farm, an all-ages bike ride in celebration of our partnership with Park Street Congregational Church and Foods Resource Bank will take place Sept. 2 in Mazon, IL. More information will be forthcoming in weekly emails and the August issue of *Gatherings*.

YOUTH MINISTRY UPDATE. The Plymouth Fellowship (PF) canoe trip will depart from the First Congo parking lot at 6:00am on Aug. 1. The group is headed to Sawbill Canoe Outfitters in the Boundary Waters of northern MN. The PFers will return Aug. 7. Please keep these young people and their chaperones in your prayers.

MOMS IN FAITH FALL/WINTER REGISTRATION

Registration for the Moms In Faith (MIF) fall/winter session has begun. We will kick-off the 2018-19 year Sept. 7 from 9-11am. Women and female friends of the Congregation are welcome to join this group, meeting every Friday (except 10/12 & 11/23) Sept. 7 through Dec. 7, 2018. MIF is centered in Christ and we will gather to share honestly about our lives, pray for one another, grow as women of faith, and nurture deep and abiding friendships. Childcare will be provided. Members of MIF are encouraged to pay a \$55 tuition each semester to cover program expenses. [Click here](#) to register. If you have questions contact Amanda Grigsby agrigsby@gmail.com or Katherine Willis Pershey at katherine@wscongo.org.

FINANCE CORNER

Welcome to Finance Corner! From time-to-time, the Finance and Stewardship Committee will feature information in *Gatherings* to update church members on finance-related topics or to share fun facts, adding transparency to our financial communications.

For example, did you know the church's balance sheet has more than 40 funds totaling over \$1.6 million? These funds support a wide range of ministries and activities, ranging from book groups to music, from Capital Campaign to God's Garden, from Plymouth Fellowship to Woman's Society, and much more.

As part of the Finance and Stewardship Committee's oversight of the church's financials, two members of the committee review the funds' debits and credits each month, enhancing our understanding of these important cash flows. To learn more about the Finance and Stewardship Committee [click here](#) or contact Bev Fleming at flemingthree@gmail.com.



Children's Ministry Update

Stay Cool This Summer

Summer Sunday School will keep you cool! Children ages 4 years old and up are invited to join us each Sunday as we all come together for songs, a story, and an activity. The children will follow the *Be the Church* themes, learning how to love and accept all of God's children. We hope you can gather with us in the Chapel each Sunday following First Steps. (Older children are most welcome to help out.)

Sunday School Superheroes

First Congo is blessed to have inspiring Sunday School teachers who often leave the class with a lesson themselves. Take a look at what the Sunday School teachers have to say about this important ministry of our church.

"Anytime the children walk into Sunday School they are submerged in the teachings of the church and the Bible. The lessons have definitely helped them grow in their religion."

"It was awesome to hear their creative ideas on their faith. This is a great program and I had wonderful discussions with kids."

"It meant so much to me getting to bond with all of students..."

"The children conveyed what was learned to their parents and also talked about something we did later in the year (in Sunday School and/or when I casually encountered them)."

"We had wonderful discussions and spoke many times about their Faith Journeys and their Faith Formation. They were very candid. We all grew and learned through our sharing."

Sunday School Help Needed

We are still in need of three kindergarten/first grade teachers for the 9am class and three teachers for the 10:30am junior high class. If you are able to assist this important ministry please contact Hope Sabbagha at hope@wscongo.org.

New Beginnings

By: Yvonne Jeanneret

GOODBYE BRIAN CASSIN

Brian Cassin, First Congo's wonderful Facilities Manager, has retired. He came to First Congregational Church in April 2016 after retiring from Loyola Medical Center where he worked for 34 years. Due to chronic back issues limiting Brian's mobility, Brian decided to retire from First Congo.

During Brian's retirement he plans to fish and spend more time with his daughter, who loves to ride horses, as well as his three grandchildren. He will also use the extra time to get back to into photography, hiking, and exploring his passion for writing.

Brian would like everyone to know what a special place First Congregation Church is. The loving, caring, and welcoming members and staff who are passionate about their mission and ministry inspire Brian. Brian has been in other church situations but has never experienced a special place like First Congregational Church. We will miss you Brian and wish you much happiness in your retirement.

HELLO SCOTT WILLIAMS

Scott Williams will officially become First Congo's Facilities Manager on July 1. Scott comes to First Congo after working the last six years as a Facilities Manager for Rollprint Packing Products. He has a B.S. in Public Administration from University of Illinois - Champaign, and an Associates Degree in Emergency Medicine.

In Scott's spare time he is a Boy Scout scoutmaster, a high school baseball umpire, and volunteers at a PADS shelter for the homeless. He has experience as a longtime City of Des Plaines firefighter and paramedic; church youth group leader, and Board of Education President. Scott has extensive carpentry, electrical, and plumbing experience working for a family home improvement company. Scott is a warm and friendly person who is very enthusiastic about joining the First Congo family. Scott can be reached at scott@wscongo.org. Please welcome Scott Williams when you see him around Church.

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CHURCH
OF
WESTERN SPRINGS

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JOYS & CONCERNS

IN OUR PRAYERS. Please keep in your prayers **Marj Stoub** (hospital) and **Katie Palermo** as she prepares for a stem cell transplant.

NEED A SITTER? If you are searching for a babysitter, we have you covered. A list of qualified babysitters can be picked up from the folder on the YOUTH bulletin board located in the Education Bldg. (Right outside Katherine's office.)

GATHERINGS. *Gatherings* is a monthly publication. Articles for inclusion in the August 2018 issue should be submitted to gatherings@wscongo.org no later than July 20. *Gatherings* is emailed to members and posted on-line at www.wscongo.org.

CONGRATS CHUCK! Congo's own **Chuck Everett**, a veteran of the Korean War and a Bronze Star recipient, was selected for the June 6 Honor Flight. Chuck was flown to Washington D.C. and honored for his service to our country.



EVERYONE

belongs, matters & is needed