

**Dec. 22: Live Nativity on the Lawn at 3PM  
and Carols & Cocoa at 4PM**

Please join us on the front lawn to celebrate the true spirit of Christmas — we'll have live stable animals (yes, you can pet them!), and we'll sing carols, accompanied by a volunteer brass ensemble (email [ray@wscongo.org](mailto:ray@wscongo.org), if you'd like to participate). The Holy Family, including Baby Jesus, will arrive at 5PM. Hot cocoa will keep us warm and toasty throughout! Please invite a friend or neighbor to this celebration!



**Dec. 24, 3:30 & 5PM\*: Christmas Eve  
Worship and Pageant**

The youth of our church serve as the worship leaders in our early Christmas Eve services. The All-In Band leads the congregation in singing our favorite carols, and a Christmas Pageant will whimsically retell the story of Christ's birth. If you are interested in helping with this ministry, please contact [jen@wscongo.org](mailto:jen@wscongo.org).

**Dec. 24, 8:30\* & 10PM: Traditional Christmas Eve Worship Service in the Sanctuary**

A traditional Christmas Eve service with the Chancel Choir and brass ensemble is a timeless and heartwarming experience, reminding us of the enduring message of hope, love, and salvation that Christmas represents. It encapsulates the essence of the holiday season in a way that resonates with the deep traditions of faith and the enduring significance of the birth of Christ.

## Dec. 25, 11AM: Christmas Poinsettia Ministry

The Poinsettia Ministry provides poinsettia plants to individuals who may need some extra Christmas Cheer. Volunteers personally deliver the poinsettia plants to the homes or care facilities of the recipients. If you're interested in volunteering, email [meredith@wscongo.org](mailto:meredith@wscongo.org).

**Dec. 29, 10AM\*: Worship in the Sanctuary**

Please note there will not be Sunday School but the nursery will be available.

## Jan. 12, 12-3:30PM: PF Goes to San Lucas

The tradition continues! Our high school ministry invites you to join us in serving a warm lunch to those facing homelessness and hunger in Humboldt Park.

*\*These services will be live-streamed on our YouTube channel @fccwesternsprings.*



*Our pastoral care team recognizes that the holiday season may be especially tender for some – those who are grieving, those who may feel alone or isolated, those with fractured relationships. Whatever you are feeling, we are here for you and welcome you to contact us. Please reach out to [rich@wscongo.org](mailto:rich@wscongo.org); [meredith@wscongo.org](mailto:meredith@wscongo.org) or [kathryn@wscongo.org](mailto:kathryn@wscongo.org).*

## CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

If you'd like to purchase a Christmas poinsettia used to decorate the altar for our Christmas Eve worship services, please scan the QR code or visit [wscongo.org/give](https://wscongo.org/give) to place your order. Each plant is \$17 and the orders are due by December 13.



# THANK YOU

*A heartfelt thank you for considering The First  
Congregational Church of Western Springs as  
a part of your Advent journey.*



@fccws



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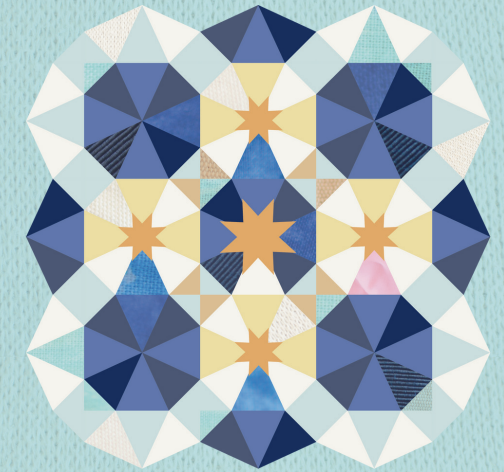


@fccwesternsprings

Scan below for more info  
on the season of Advent:



*The First Congregational Church of Western Springs*  
1106 Chestnut Street, Western Springs, IL  
708.246.1900 | [hello@wscongo.org](mailto:hello@wscongo.org) | [wscongo.org](http://wscongo.org)



WORDS  
FOR THE BEGINNING

## ADVENT REMINDERS FOR NEW SEASONS



FIRST  
Congregational  
Church

WESTERN SPRINGS



*Advent is a season of new beginnings, marked by Christ's birth, which brought hope and transformation to the world. Christ's arrival opened the door to new ways of living and loving for all, but His path, like ours, was not without challenges. As Christ faced difficulties on His journey, we too often encounter challenges when navigating new paths. When we navigate our own seasons of endings and beginnings, we need reminders—words that feel like steady ground, a path for our feet as we step into the unknown. This Advent, we invite you to reflect on those reminders through a variety of activities that will renew your spirit and connect you to the hope and new life Christ offers. Join us as we journey together, embracing the new beginnings and overcoming challenges with the hope that Christ's birth brings us all.*

**Dec. 1, 8:45 & 10AM\*: 1st Sunday of Advent**  
*You Are a Blessing: Luke 1:26-38, Isaiah 43:1-7*  
God speaks words of comfort and assurance, telling us, "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine." (Isaiah 43:1-7) These words encourage us as we face our own challenges and transitions, knowing that God is with us through it all.

This Sunday we will participate in the Sacrament of Communion, light the candle of Hope and ring in the season with song.

**Dec. 1, 9–12PM: Advent Wreath-Making in Plymouth Hall (\$25/wreath)**  
Start Advent by making a wreath to celebrate at home! Join us for wreath-making after both services, with treats provided. Be sure to register for this popular event at [www.tinyurl.com/CongoWreath](http://www.tinyurl.com/CongoWreath) or scan the QR code.



**Dec. 3, 7PM: The Sister Project in the Sanctuary with childcare (\$10 suggested donation)**  
Welcome Lauren Massarella and Michelle Anderson, hosts of the podcast *Cozy Conversations with The Sister Project*, for a fun, laid-back chat about slowing down, caring less, and mastering the art of doing absolutely nothing (it's a skill!) To sign up, scan the QR code or visit [tinyurl.com/CongoSisterProject](http://tinyurl.com/CongoSisterProject).



**Dec. 5, 12:30PM: Woman's Society General Meeting at Plymouth Place**

Join us at Plymouth Place, where Blue Lexi will fill the room with the joy of Christmas music, and we'll enjoy festive treats to celebrate the season.

**Dec. 7, 9–12PM: Bemis Woods Brushcutting**  
Remove invasive and non-native trees and shrubs, save rare and endangered species, and enjoy a cheery brush pile fire (weather permitting). To sign up, visit [www.tinyurl.com/BrushCut](http://www.tinyurl.com/BrushCut) or scan the QR code.



**Dec. 8, 8:45 & 10AM\*: 2nd Sunday of Advent**  
*We Can't Go Alone: Ruth 1, Ecclesiastes 4:9-12*  
The phrase: "Two are better than one" highlights the benefits of companionship in our journeys. Together, we are stronger, able to lift each other up and provide support in times of need.

During our worship, we not only light the candle of Peace, but also we gather to celebrate relationships, recognizing that God has called us to walk alongside one another in love and service.

**Dec. 8, 9AM–12PM: Gifts of Hope Alternative Market in Plymouth Hall**  
Shop from over 20 mission partners for supplies and services supporting their important causes. Purchases are matched up to \$10,000 by Mary Jo Mulcahy.



**Dec. 8: Last Day to Donate Gifts for Breakthrough Christmas Store**  
Choose an ornament from the Light Court tree, and bring the unwrapped gift to church by Dec. 8—or send items directly to Breakthrough by shopping online at [www.breakthrough.org/christmas-store-24](http://www.breakthrough.org/christmas-store-24).

**Dec. 11, 7PM: Taizé Service in the Chapel**  
Take a break from the frenetic pace of the season, and join us for a quiet service of scripture, song, candlelight, and prayer.

**Dec. 13, 9AM–2PM: Red Cross Blood Drive in Plymouth Hall**  
Save a life—give blood at The First Congo Red Cross Blood Drive! Schedule at 1-800-RED-CROSS or [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org). Questions? Email [jean@wscongo.org](mailto:jean@wscongo.org). Volunteers needed!



Scan to schedule an appointment.

**Dec. 13, 6:30–9:30PM: JRneys of Giving: Serving @ the Breakthrough Christmas Store**  
Everyone is invited to help with The Christmas Store setup at the Breakthrough FamilyPlex. Reach out to Jen Enriquez at [jen@wscongo.org](mailto:jen@wscongo.org) to see how your child can get involved.

**Dec. 15, 8:45 & 10AM\*: 3rd Sunday of Advent**  
*Special Musical Offering: Traditional Lessons & Carols*  
Join us for a heartfelt service featuring traditional lessons and carols, Scripture readings, and timeless songs that beautifully tell the story of Christ's birth.

**Dec. 15, 5–6PM: Words & Music Christmas in Plymouth Hall**  
The All In Band brings Christmastime to life with a mix of timeless holiday standards and fresh new favorites, creating a musical experience everyone can enjoy!

**Dec. 15, 7–8:30PM: Annual PF Christmas Party**  
Celebrate the season with your First Congo high school-age faith friends!



**Dec. 20, 9–11AM: Real Talk: Insights from Young Adults — A Moms in Faith event in the Seim Room (with childcare)**  
Join us to hear inspiring stories from local young adults about growing up in our community. Listen, connect, and gain fresh perspectives from this engaging group!

**Dec. 21, 6-8PM: Longest Night Labyrinth Walk with Harpist in Plymouth Hall**  
Experience a peaceful, contemplative journey on the longest night of the year. Walk the candlelit labyrinth to the soothing melodies of a harp, embracing the quiet beauty of the winter solstice.



**Dec. 22, 8:45 & 10AM\*: 4th Sunday of Advent**  
*Hope is Worth the Risk: Matthew 1:18-25, Luke 1:46-55*  
As we gather for worship and light the candle of Love, we are reminded that taking risks for hope can lead to profound change and blessings. Let us reflect on the hope that guides us, encourages us to take bold steps, and inspires us to trust in God's plan, even when the path is uncertain. Together, we celebrate the incredible promise of new beginnings that hope brings into our lives.