

April 2, Maundy Thursday: *the good news is... even Judas gets his feet washed*

- **8pm:** Maundy Thursday draws us into the quiet intimacy of Jesus' final meal with his friends. On this night, we remember the towel and the basin, the bread and the cup – the simple, sacred gestures of love shared around a table.

April 3, Good Friday: *the good news is... revealed through nonviolence*

- **10am, Bemis Woods — Walk With Jesus & Stations of the Cross:** A family-friendly outdoor walk through the Stations of the Cross, using nature to reflect on Jesus' journey on Good Friday. Each station includes a short scripture, prayer, reflection, and activity. Printed prompts available for families. Email Jen Enriquez at Jen@wscongo.org.
- **5pm, Plymouth Hall, Stations of the Cross & Labyrinth Walk:** Good Friday is a day of solemn reflection on Christ's crucifixion, as we accompany Jesus through the Stations of the Cross and reflect on his humility, endurance, and boundless mercy.

April 5, Easter Sunday: *the good news is... alive in the world*

Death cannot stop the good news. It is alive and unbound in the world. Like a mustard seed, it grows without limit. Like water turned into wine, it surprises us with joy. Like loaves of bread, it expands to feed every hungry soul.

- **7:30am:** Worship Service with Communion
- **9 & 10:30am*:** Worship Services with Chancel Choir & Brass
- Childcare available for ages 5 & under at 9 & 10:30am
- ALLELUIA! Easter Egg Hunt following the 10:30am service. Kids will search the church lawn for eggs spelling ALLELUIA!

**These services will be live-streamed on our YouTube channel [@fccwesternsprings](#).*

Lenten Pathways: Ongoing Gatherings & Special Events

Prayer Partners – A Lenten Journey:

Join a meaningful Lenten journey by signing up for a prayer partner where you will connect weekly to reflect on daily devotional cards.



Feb. 25, March 4, 11, 18 & 25, 5–6:30pm Lent Kids' Club: Learn, Love & Grow (for Families)

Families are invited to Plymouth Hall for a simple dinner and formation activities connected to the week's story. Short on time? Grab a to-go meal with conversation prompts to enjoy at home. Come to one or all. RSVP to Jen@wscongo.org (helpful but not required).

Feb 25, March 4, 11, 18 & 25, 7:30pm (Zoom) Vespers: Wednesday Evening Worship:

Join us for a brief evening devotional led by one of our clergy. This 15-minute service includes prayer, Scripture, silence, and a hymn – a meaningful way to pause, reflect, and center our hearts in God. Contact Ron@wscongo.org for the Zoom link.

Art Gallery Exhibit Throughout Lent:

Experience our Lenten Art Exhibit in the Education Building hallway, featuring scripture-inspired artwork from Sanctified Art, curated by our Arts Ministry Team.

March 23, April 6 & 13 at 7:30pm (Seim) Men's Ministry Bible Study: Resurrection Theology:

Join Justin Williamson in the Seim Room for thoughtful conversation on resurrection theology.

Sundays 6–7pm & Wednesdays 9:30–10:30am Faith & Flow Yoga in the Chapel:

Faith-centered movement, breath, and reflection.

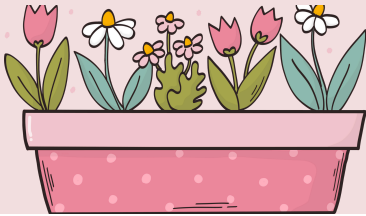
March 1, 4–5:30pm (Sanctuary)

Agape Ringers Concert: :

For over 30 years, the Agape Ringers have delighted audiences with classical, sacred, & original works.

EASTER PLANTS

You may purchase spring plants to decorate the church on Easter morning, and/or volunteer to deliver them to someone in need, by scanning the QR code or visiting tinyurl.com/EasterFlowers2026 to place your order. Each plant costs \$16 and the orders are due by March 13.



Scan below for more info on the season of Lent:



THANK YOU

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



@fccws



@fccwesternsprings



@fccwesternsprings

The First Congregational Church of Western Springs
1106 Chestnut Street, Western Springs, IL
708.246.1900 | hello@wscongo.org | wscongo.org



February 18 – April 5, 2026



FIRST
Congregational
Church WESTERN SPRINGS



An Introduction to our Lenten theme:

Lent was originally a season for new converts to learn and prepare for their baptism on Easter. During that time, they would study what was central to Christianity. During this season of Lent we'll consider: What are the core, foundational concepts of Jesus' life and ministry? What makes each of these good news? Can we trust that the good news is truly good, even when it challenges us?

If we're being honest, we can easily distort or sanitize Jesus' teachings. Following Jesus leads to a richer, more expansive life, but it's not necessarily comfortable. We often describe Jesus' ministry as "radical" which comes from the Latin word "radicalis," meaning "root" or "ground."

Therefore, the good news should bring us back to our roots, to what grounds us: loving our neighbor, caring for the vulnerable, pursuing justice and mercy, and resting in God's unending grace. The good news is extravagant, untamed, illogical, and persistent. It is joyful, like fine wine saved for celebration. It grows like a mustard seed into a tree that shelters the birds. It smells like expensive perfume poured from an alabaster jar and like bread broken and shared with a hungry crowd. It sounds like children laughing and stones dropped instead of violently thrown. It feels like feet washed with tender care. The good news is alive in the world.

We hope this series will provide fertile ground for conversation and worship, rooting our hearts and lives in the expansive goodness of God. This Lent, may the teachings of Jesus lead us forward. Let the good news ground us. And let that good news inspire us to take action in a world desperate to hear, see, and taste what is good.

Worship Services During Lent

February 17, 6–7:30pm: Mardi Gras Celebration & Prayer Service

Congo families! Join us for a Mardi Gras celebration with a shared meal, a parade with handmade shoebox floats, and Imposition of Ashes for all ages.



February 18: Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday marks the first day of Lent, inviting us to reflect on our spiritual journey. How will you commit to worship, serve others, or deepen your connection with God this season? Let us set our intentions and seek the courage to begin to walk closer with God.

6:30am in the Chapel: Worship service, followed by a continental breakfast in the Kirchherr Light Court and a faith reflection from one of our members.

6:30pm in the Chapel: Family-friendly worship. Everyone is welcome!

Labyrinth Walk in Plymouth Hall: The Labyrinth will be open and available for self-guided walks from 7:00am – 8:30pm. Be sure to bring your key card or door code for entry into the building.

February 22, 1st Sunday of Lent: *the good news is... so good it catches us by surprise*

Scripture: John 2: 1–11: John's Gospel doesn't begin with a temptation story, but instead opens Jesus' ministry with a wedding miracle. It may feel a bit lavish to start the season of Lent with a wedding banquet, but the good news begins with joy. This week we focus on the subversive and playful nature of the good news.

- **Consider Bringing a Friend this Sunday and throughout Lent:** First Congo loves to welcome all people, and we would be excited to meet your friend or neighbor during Lent. Grab an *Invite a Friend* postcard, available in the Kirchherr Light Court and Narthex, to personally invite a friend.

- **11:10 Connection:** Join Pastor Chrissy in the Seim Room for a presentation on Liberation Theology. Although not required, you may wish to purchase the book *Liberation Theology for Armchair Theologians* by Miguel A. De La Torre.

March 1, 2nd Sunday of Lent: *the good news is... great love for God & neighbor*

Scripture: Matthew 25: 35–40 When we care for the hungry, the naked, the imprisoned – each of whom are created in the image of God – we are showing love for God, too.

- **11:10 Connection:** Everyone deserves a birthday cake! Join us in the parlor to assemble Birthday Cake Bags, filled with everything needed to bake a cake, for our mission partner, Breakthrough Ministries.

March 8, 3rd Sunday of Lent: *the good news is... together, the impossible is possible*

Scripture: Mark 6: 32–44 As Jesus and his disciples head to a deserted place, perhaps seeking peace and quiet, many from the surrounding towns follow them. Instead of turning them away, Jesus expresses compassion and begins an impromptu teaching session.

- **11:10 Connection:** Pastor Meredith will lead a discussion in the Seim Room of the book *Theo of Golden* by Allen Levi.

March 15, 4th Sunday of Lent: *the good news is... protection & care for the vulnerable*

Scripture: Matthew 19: 13–15 In many modern contexts, Jesus welcoming children may seem sweet. In his time, however, spending time with children would have been seen as wasteful or unimportant. When Jesus blesses the children after the disciples try to send them away, he reorients socially constructed hierarchies to center the vulnerable.

- **11:10 Connection:** Join Pastor Chrissy for a post-sermon conversation in the Seim Room.

- **Words & Music, 4:30 – 6:30PM in Plymouth Hall:** *We Can Change The World, a PF Fundraiser:* An evening of storytelling and music celebrating how small acts spark meaningful change, featuring Plymouth Fellowship performers and storytellers, with proceeds supporting PF and the next generation of leaders.

March 22, 5th Sunday of Lent: *the good news is... rooted in justice, mercy & faithfulness*

Scripture: John 8: 2–11 As we move toward Holy Week, we acknowledge the ways Jesus' ministry increasingly came into conflict with religious leaders who prioritized strict adherence to the law and perceived his teachings as a threat.

- **4th Grade Bible Presentation:** Join us at 10am as we celebrate our 4th graders receiving their Bibles during First Steps!
- **11:10 Connection:** Our series, *Prayer Portals*, continues in the Seim Room with Pastor Meredith. Check our website or Wednesday emails for more information.

March 27 – April 5, Spring Work Tour:

Please hold our high school students and their adult leaders in prayer as they travel to Savannah, Georgia, for a week of mission work, faith, and fellowship.

March 29, Palm Sunday: *the good news is... inspiring us to act*

Scripture: Mark 11: 1–11 The Roman triumph typically took place during Passover week as a display of Rome's power, with the governor surrounded by the wealthiest and most influential citizens. In contrast, Jesus' march is for the people, all the people: the hungry, the poor, and the afraid.

- **11:10 Connection:** Join Pastor Chrissy for a post-sermon conversation in the Seim Room.

Sunday Worship: 8:45 AM & 10:00 AM during Lent. Sunday School and childcare at both services. 10:00 AM live-streamed on YouTube.