

Tidings

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March 2021 - Vol. 82 – No. 3

Following Christ, We Connect a Diversity of People with each other and with God!

March – The Month of Lent

This whole Church Year thing can sometimes seem strange to people. Take for example, Ash Wednesday. Ash Wednesday is the day when we are reminded that we are dust. Ashes mean repentance. Ashes mean mourning. Ashes mean something has been burned, and destroyed, and lost. Ashes mean death. Ash Wednesday pulls us into Lent, when we reflect on our own sins, on Jesus' forty days of loneliness and temptation in the wilderness, and on this world's darkness. We reflect on these things, and it prepares us for the joy of Easter.

But the trouble with the Church Year is that where we are in our own lives does not always quite connect with the dates on the calendar. Sometimes it's hard to get into the spirit of things at the right moment. Maybe, you see Lent coming around and you think, Oh I don't want to be sad right now! Things are going well! I love my life; I have wonderful friends; I want to praise God! And now I'm supposed to put on a serious face and deprive myself of something and think about death? Can I take a raincheck? Or maybe, you see Lent coming and you think: Ha. I know all about ashes and death. Maybe you live with a chronic illness and every day feels like a battle. Or you have watched people you love suffer and die. For you, Lent looks like more of the same. You've tasted the bread of affliction plenty, and what you'd really like instead is maybe some joy and gladness, for once.

But I wonder if we're thinking about Lent in the wrong spirit. Gardeners know that ashes can actually make excellent fertilizer. Ash created by burning plant matter is full of calcium, potassium, magnesium, and other elements. It can restore the Ph-balance of overly acidic soil. This is one reason why forest ecosystems need occasional fires in order to spring back to life and thrive again. But of course, even in your own garden, you have to use ash sparingly. Too much will make the soil too alkaline. And you have to add water.

So, what if we were to enter Lent thinking about ashes not as God's call to be miserable and morbid, but instead to focus on the kind of abundance God offers, in those places we go to enter God's presence: in prayer, in worship, in good friendships, in times of rich and beautiful silence. If you plan to give something up for lent or engage in some discipline, do it in such a way that they help you see God's abundance.

And remember that ashes must be used sparingly, and we need to add water. Fortunately, we enter this time of ashes already bringing water with us—the water of our baptism. Even Jesus needed this. He entered the wilderness of silence and meditation only after his own baptism. The waters of baptism are a sign and seal that, although we may be blackened with ash from our involvement in this wreck of a world, although we are dust, we are dust developing to new and abundant life with water. This year may the ashes of Lent mix with the waters of our baptism draw us into the abundance of God's presence.

With love,

Co DuToit

Worship Ministry

March 7	Communion/Third Sunday of Lent	
	Service of Worship	9:00a – www.fccdp.org
	Virtual Coffee Hour	9:50a – 11:00a www.fccdp.org
	Lay Reader	Dee Hardesty
	Scripture Reading	John 2:13-22
March 14	Fourth Sunday of Lent	
	Service of Worship	9:00a – www.fccdp.org
	Virtual Coffee Hour	9:50a – 11:00a www.fccdp.org
	Lay Reader	Cindie Hoch
	Scripture Reading	John 3:14-21
March 21	Fifth Sunday of Lent	
	Service of Worship	9:00a – www.fccdp.org
	Virtual Coffee Hour	9:50a – 11:00a www.fccdp.org
	Lay Reader	Corrine Bachar
	Scripture Reading	John 12:20-33
March 28	Palm Sunday	
	Service of Worship	9:00a - www.fccdp.org
	Virtual Coffee Hour	9:50a – 11:00a www.fccdp.org
	Lay Reader	Deb Alde
	Scripture Reading	John 12:12-16



We're back in church at 9am on Sunday so now you have two choices for attending worship! Pictured is Jim Foster, church property manager.

Membership & Communications Ministry

Staying Connected – Can You Help?

Our Membership and Communications Ministry is in the process of creating a group entitled “*Contact and Care.*” During the Covid-19 pandemic, the challenge to stay in constant contact and to care for one another as a congregation has grown exponentially. We also realize the need for such an instrument as part of our congregation’s plan in case of a disaster, whether it is natural, technological, chemical, civil unrest, etc.

Goal: We are looking for people that will act as a Contact Leader and who are willing to keep in contact with other people.

Responsibility: Gather four people to stay in regular “Contact and Care.”

Frequency: Make contact at least once a week.

Medium: This would be up to the leader and the people who are part of that group and could be in any form he/she chooses; for example, via phone, email, texting, satellite call, etc.

If this is something you are interested in helping with, please contact Michelle Herrera at: sales@apg2020.com.

Evening Circle Selling Pizza Coupons, Planning March Bake/Craft Sale

Evening Circle currently is selling pizza coupons, to be redeemed at any area Lou Malnati's location for one nine-inch frozen pizza (sausage, pepperoni, cheese, or spinach). No gluten free. Please invite your neighbors, children, parents and friends to buy pizza coupons! The cost is \$ 13 for all varieties, and our church will make a profit of \$ 5 on each pizza. This profit will go to Missions and our General Fund. Make your check out to Congregational Women's Fellowship.

Call, email, or send order and money to Nancy Brink. 847-508-5081, JFOSTERNBRINK@ATT.NET, or 907 W. Willow Lane, Mount Prospect, IL. 60056. The last date to order is March 14. Nancy will be at the West Entrance on March 1 from 10am to 11am and March 14 9am to 10am to pick up any orders and money. Thanks in advance for your support.

Evening Circle's next Zoom meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 9 at 7:00pm. All ladies of the church are invited to join us. The link will be in "Notes from Co" as well as emailed to all current Evening Circle members. We will be taking orders for our next "virtual" Bake and Craft Sale from March 11 – March 21. Pickup of the items will be on March 29 (at the same time as the drop off for DP Self-Help Closet and Exodus World Service), at FCCDP's West Entrance, or worked out between buyer and seller. A PDF Order Form will be in Notes from Co. Email your order to nwmeyer255@aol.com Proceeds from our sale benefit FCCDP's General Fund and several local charities.

Mission & Outreach Ministry

Outdoor Ministry of IL Conference/UCC Suspends Summer Camps

The Outdoor Ministry Committee of the Illinois Conference of the United Church of Christ announced recently that it has suspended sponsored summer camp programs at Tower Hill Camp and Pilgrim Park for Summer 2021. The announcement states that Covid-19 protocols impact the camp programs in several ways. The announcement also states, in part, "This decision is heartbreaking to each and every one of us. We know the important role that summer camp programming provided. We know that our children are suffering mentally, socially and spiritually from the isolation the Covid-19 pandemic is causing. We also know that our primary responsibility is to the physical well-being of our campers, counselors and staff." For further information, contact the Illinois Conference office at 708/344-4470.

Youth Ministry



Our Pilgrim Fellowship youth hosted a very successful Valentine's Day drive-through cookie fundraiser. Pictured (above) with her gourmet pretzel rods is Madeleine Larson.





The PF and their families baked chocolate chip cookies, oatmeal raisin bars and more in preparation for their Valentine's Day sale, which raised nearly \$1,500 toward their summer trip to the Boundary Waters. Pictured (left) is PF coordinator Matt Cameron.

Finance Committee

Payroll Protection Program Funding

In May 2020, our Church received a government PPP loan (which was forgiven) in the amount of \$38,895. In January 2021, we received a second payment of \$38,895 through the government program. This funding has allowed us to continue to pay our staff and church utilities, in spite of loss of income from outside groups using our church building and cancelled fundraising events, including the Second Time Around Sale and the Craft & Vendor Sale. Special thanks to Jana Haas, for all the work she did in applying, submitting documentation, and following up to obtain these funds.

Financial Report

For the month of January, we had income of \$17,440 and expenses of \$24,211. Although this is a one-month shortfall of \$6,770, with the PPP funding we received, we are still in a positive position of \$25,388 through the first seven months of the fiscal year. A special Thank You to all of our church members and friends for keeping up to date with their pledges and offerings during this difficult past year.

Talent & Gift Auction Results

This year's Talent & Gift Auction raised over \$3,100 for our church's general budget. Thanks to our auction coordinator Sharon Urry, and to everyone who donated items for bid: Gail Deadwyler, Dave & Georgia DeHart, Ellie & Co DuToit, Faith Engler, Jana Haas, Lowell Handy, Cindie Hoch, Flo Hoffman, Joanne Kimball, Anna Lodewyck, Bob McCullough, Paul Meincke, Nancy Meyer, Linda Opalka, Garrett & Mary Pittman, Larry Schimka, Jackie Schmitt, Marcia Urban, Wendy Wallace, and Cathy Wiesner. And most of all, thanks to all our shoppers! We couldn't have done it without you!



Several church members purchased a Summer Afternoon of Hobie Catamaran Sailing with Garrett Pittman in our Auction. Pictured is Midge Wolfram, who enjoyed this excursion several years ago.

Happy Birthday to You!!

Congratulations to the following church members/friends on their birthdays!!

Marcy Vedral	01-Mar	Nate Bryers	19-Mar
Matt Koulentes	04-Mar	Jimmy Larson	19-Mar
Clay Thompson	05-Mar	Ralph Engler	21-Mar
Evan Tomsic	05-Mar	Lindsay Skarbek	21-Mar
Zach Yost	07-Mar	Dave Warda	22-Mar
Midge Wolfram	08-Mar	William Hinderliter	26-Mar
Kallie Haas	11-Mar	Jim Larson	27-Mar
Madeleine Larson	11-Mar	Ann Schwiger	27-Mar
Barb McCullough	11-Mar	Wendy Wallace	27-Mar
Mia Thomas	11-Mar	Veronica Warda	27-Mar
John Lodewyck	12-Mar	Marissa Skarbek	28-Mar
AJ Cruz	14-Mar	Cindie Hoch	30-Mar
Rebecca Quam	14-Mar	Ryan Johnson	30-Mar
Betty McMillan	15-Mar	Colleen Skiba	31-Mar

Gifts & Memorials

In Loving Memory of Dick Wilson from Carl & Judy Mahr

From the Community

Boy Scout
Troop 6



2021
Drive-Thru
Spaghetti Dinner

SUNDAY March 7th, 2021

First CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,
766 GRACELAND AVENUE, DES PLAINES

4:30PM - 7:30PM

Dinner Includes:

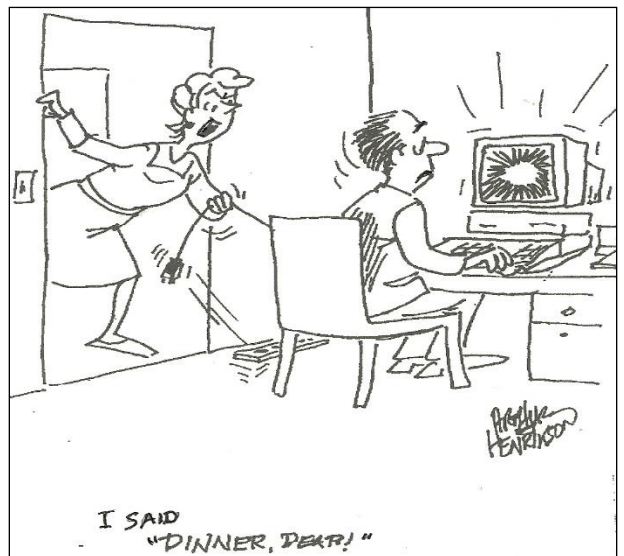
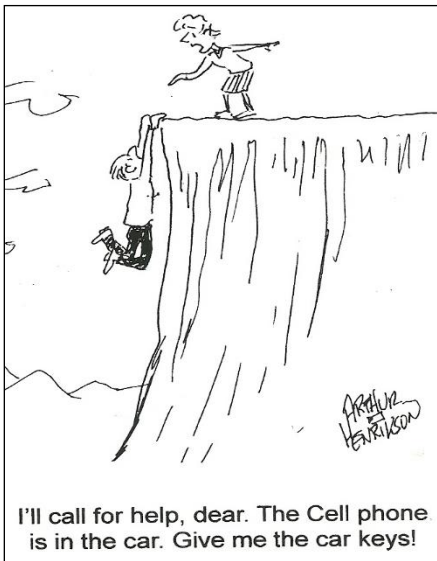
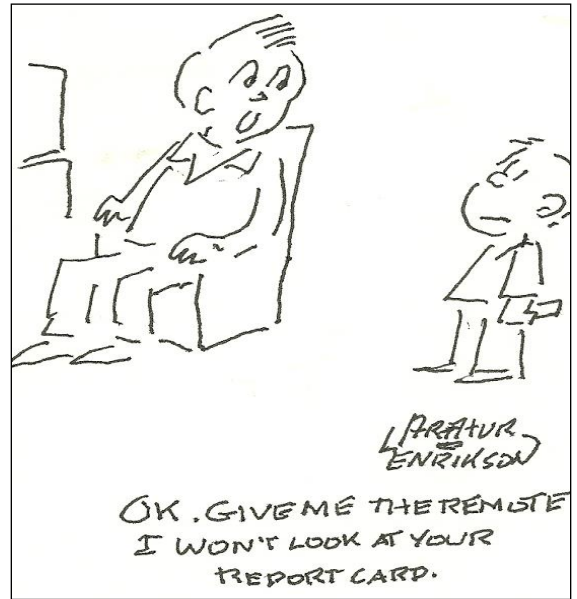
**SPAGHETTI in RED SAUCE with MEATBALLS,
GARLIC BREAD & SIDE SALAD**

Cost Per Dinner: \$6.00

\$100.00 Grand Prize Raffle - \$5.00 per chance

**From our
Historian,
Nancy Meyer**

*Time to smile
some more during
this long, crazy
winter.*



First Congregational United Church of Christ
766 Graceland Avenue, Des Plaines, Illinois

www.fccd.org

847/299-5561

March 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 10:00a Drop-Offs	2 Noon – Lunch Bunch	3 9:00a WWC 10:00a Bible Study	4	5 Noon – Lunch Bunch	6
7 Lent 3 9:00am Worship 10:00 am Fellowship 11:05a Confirmation	8 7:00p Finance	9 Noon: Staff Meeting 7:00p Evening Circle	10 6:30p Music & Drama	11 7:00p Membership & Communications	12 Noon – Lunch Bunch	13
14 Lent 4 9:00am Worship 10:00 am Fellowship 11:05a Ministry Staff	15 10:00a Drop-Offs 11:00a Creative Conversation 6:30p Property	16 Noon – Lunch Bunch	17 9:00a WWC 10:00a Bible Study	18 7:00p Worship Ministry	19 Noon – Lunch Bunch	20 Tidings Deadline
21 Lent 5 9:00am Worship 10:00 am Fellowship 11:05a Confirmation	22	23 Noon – Lunch Bunch 7:00p Council	24 9:00a WWC 10:00a Bible Study	25	26 Noon – Lunch Bunch	27
28 Palm Sunday 9:00am Worship 10:00 am Fellowship 11:05a Confirmation	29 10:00a Drop-Offs	30 Noon – Lunch Bunch	31 9:00a WWC 10:00a Bible Study			

