



# Tidings

766 Graceland Ave.

Des Plaines, IL 60016



## March 2023 - Vol. 84 – No. 3

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

### **The Perfect Time for Reflection**

The Church Year thing can sometimes seem strange to people. Take for starters, 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 shortcomings, 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 think about death? Or maybe, you see Lent coming and you think: I know all about ashes and death. I have been walking on this road for a long time already. 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, just more work among the burned-out wreck of the world. 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 will tell you 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.

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.

So, what if we were to enter Lent thinking about ashes not as God's call to be miserable 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. 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

<b>March 5</b>	<b>Communion/Second Sunday of Lent</b>	
	Service of Worship	9:00a – <a href="http://www.fccdp.org">www.fccdp.org</a>
	Fellowship	10:00a
	Lay Reader	Ralph Murdy
	Scripture Reading	Matthew 17:1-9
<b>March 12</b>	<b>Third Sunday of Lent</b>	
	Service of Worship	9:00a – <a href="http://www.fccdp.org">www.fccdp.org</a>
	Fellowship	10:00a
	Lay Reader	Rhonda Yost
	Scripture Reading	John 4:5-42
<b>March 19</b>	<b>Fourth Sunday of Lent</b>	
	Service of Worship	9:00a - <a href="http://www.fccdp.org">www.fccdp.org</a>
	Fellowship	10:00a
	Lay Reader	Ellen Alde
	Scripture Reading	John 9:1-41
<b>March 26</b>	<b>Fifth Sunday of Lent</b>	
	Service of Worship	9:00a - <a href="http://www.fccdp.org">www.fccdp.org</a>
	Fellowship	10:00a
	Lay Reader	Dave Horwitz
	Scripture Reading	John 11:1-45



Thank You to Rev. Jeffrey Phillips for joining us on two Sundays in February, when Rev. Co was attending a family wedding in South Africa. An ordained UCC pastor, Rev. Phillips is the acting senior pastor at Winnetka Congregational Church.

### Children's & Adult Ed Ministry



The glass cabinet in our church's main hallway featured news from our Sunday School during February. A sign-up sheet is posted on the side of the cabinet for other church ministries/committees/groups that want to reserve

a particular month in 2023.



## Membership & Communications Ministry

### Ladies' Night Out This Month!

All adult women of the church are invited to our next Ladies' Night Out, scheduled for Thursday, March 9 at Uncork, Unwind (1440 Miner St. in Des Plaines). Join us for an evening of wine tasting and conversation beginning at 6:00pm. A wide variety of appetizers plus beer and soda also are available for purchase. No sign-up required. Questions? Speak with Debbie Walusiak.

### Creative Conversation Underway – All are Welcome

Creative Conversation is FCCDP's book club. It meets once a month, on the second Monday of each month, at 10 a.m. for about an hour. All are welcome. Each member of the group has the option of reviewing a book of her/his choosing, which others can read from the library (ordered ahead), audio book or on a tablet. The choice is the reviewer's and every genre is open for discussion. Reviewers may choose their own patterns for the review, which will ultimately involve opening the discussion to the others present. There have been some really powerful discussions in the past. The **March 13** selection is *Lessons in Chemistry*, by Bonnie Garmus. Whether you've had a chance to read the book or not, we hope you'll join us for what we expect to be a lively discussion.



Let's Talk – Our February gathering was held at Beacon Tap in Des Plaines. All are welcome to join these informal monthly social opportunities. Watch Notes from Co for details on the March date/location.

## **Book Donations Sought**

Creative Conversation's annual Book Sale is underway in Webster Hall, and **your** donations are encouraged. *All types of book donations welcome except for textbooks, encyclopedias and dictionaries.* Nominal book fees are posted, with payment on the honor system. All unsold books will be added to our *Second Time Around* rummage sale offerings.

## **News from Evening Circle**

The next "daytime" gathering of Evening Circle is Tuesday, March 14 at 1:30 pm in the Barwick Room. All women of the church and guests are welcome to join us! After a meeting we will enjoy each other's company, have refreshments and possibly play a game. One topic of discussion is the possible renaming of our group, which recently switched from evening to daytime meetings to accommodate those who don't feel comfortable with night driving.

Also, please mark your calendar for our upcoming Bake & Craft Sale later month, with delivery on Palm Sunday, April 2. The sale is an important fundraiser for our church and for several local charities.

And, thanks to those who attended our February outing to Classic Cinemas in Elk Grove for a matinee showing of *80 for Brady*. There were 23 in the group, and a good time was had by all!

## **FCC's Got Talent – Last Call!**

If you are considering participating in our all-church talent show on Sunday, March 12, please sign up in the Church Office (847/299-5561) by Sunday morning, March 5. Questions? Speak with Marcia Urban.

## **Staying Connected**

Printed copies of our updated FCCDP church directory are available upon request by contacting the Church Office. A digital version of the directory is updated regularly, with additions/revisions to addresses and phone numbers. For details contact Paul Whittenhall from 9:00am – 1:00pm, Monday through Friday.

## **Coming in March...**

Planning for a Men's Night Out is underway...watch Notes from Co for details.

# Mission & Outreach Ministry

## **News from the Community Backpack Project**

The grants obtained by Jana Haas have supplied our shelves with jelly, peanut butter, canned pasta, soup, sausages, tuna, kidney beans, fruit cups, hot chocolate mix, pudding cups, and oatmeal packets. Items still needed by donation are currently fairly few: mostly individually wrapped snacks and (the ever continuously needed) boxed mac & cheese. Many thanks to all those who have signed up [and have already served] as volunteers for deliveries to North School. If there are questions, contact Lowell at [handytrees@att.net](mailto:handytrees@att.net)

## **Gearing Up for ACS Relay for Life...**

*(From Paul Schmitt, FCC Relay team captain)* Through the combined efforts of members and friends of First Congregational Church, our church team in the 2022 Relay for Life to benefit the American Cancer Society was able to reach a new level. Last year we raised more than \$6,000, placing us at the Gold Level and in fourth place among participating teams. Those who attended were able to witness a wonderful and meaningful event, particularly with the reading of names represented by each lighted luminaria. Organization for the 2023 Relay, to be held in Palatine, begins in April for our team. We must never forget the never-ending fight to eliminate all cancers. Once again, my sincere thanks to all who helped make 2022 our best year ever. I look forward to your continued support in 2023.

## **Save the Date...**

Celebration of Hope, a program of Exodus World Service, will be held on Thursday, April 13 at The Waterford in Elmhurst. The program, which benefits Exodus and the organization's work with refugees, begins with registration at 5:45pm, followed by dinner and a presentation. Watch Notes from Co and your Sunday Tidings for details.

## Music Ministry



Our Wholly Ringers intergenerational handbell choir, under the direction of Ellen Alde.

### **Potluck/Handbell Concert This Month**

All are invited to join our Wholly Ringers intergenerational handbell choir for a spring Lenten program on Sunday March 19, beginning at 6:00pm. Please join us for a potluck supper in Webster Hall preceding the concert, with serving starting at 5:00pm. We will have space for crock pots and other warming items that require electricity. Thank you in advance for your support!



## **Singers Sought**

Would you be interested in joining us for our Maundy Thursday Cantata, The Last Seven Words? Rehearsal is on Wednesdays from 7:00pm to 8:00pm. The Cantata will be presented during the Maundy Thursday worship service, at 7:00pm on April 6. Guest soloists are soprano Adrienne Grove and baritone Matt Grove. Please speak to Scott Emerick for more information.

## **Property Ministry**

### **What Happens in our Church Building When We're Not Here?**

(From Jim Foster, FCC Property Manager) Did you know that more than 14 outside groups use our church building? We have a NA (Narcotics Anonymous) group in Brehm Hall on Sunday night and two AA groups that meet during the day on Monday. Bells rehearse here Monday night, and a dance group meets in Webster Hall. Oakton Community College runs English as a Second Language (ESL) classes here on Tuesday and Thursday. We have three Victory for Men support groups that meet on various evenings. A men's AA group meets on Wednesday night, when our choir also rehearses. Boy Scouts and Narcotics Anonymous (NA) meet here on Thursday. The Seventh Day Adventist Church uses our building Friday night and most of the day on Saturday. The First Congregational Preschool, which includes 60 children plus staff, operates here five days a week from 8:00am to 3:00pm. And, of course, our church's ministries, committees and other groups meet here throughout the month.

Also, starting March 5, the Faith Alliance Bible Church will be using the sanctuary and Webster Hall for four hours weekly, meeting on Sunday beginning at 11:00am.

Between all the outside groups plus our new group, our church will bring in almost \$48,500 a year by renting space to others.

### **Boilers and More...**

Every year in the fall, the boiler company, Althoff Industries, comes out to get our church's two, 600-gallon steam boilers ready for the winter season. The company drains them and cleans the tubes and burners and checks all the seals. The boilers are refilled and when we start them up for the season, the company comes back after about a month to test the combustion. They run three tests with a low, medium, and high flame and then choose the appropriate settings for our heating season. Every three years, we can apply for a rebate from Nicor for combustion testing. Recently, after two months and many phone calls, FCC Property Manager Jim Foster was approved for a \$1,150 rebate from Nicor Gas. Thanks, Jim!

# Finance Committee

## Financial Report

For the month of January, we had income of \$31,632 and expenses of \$32,831 for a monthly shortfall of \$1,199. However, year-to-date, we are still in a positive position of \$38,788. Thank you for keeping up to date with your pledges and offerings, supporting church fundraisers, and making special contributions throughout the year. Your financial support of FCCDP is greatly appreciated!

## Star of Bethlehem Donations

Thanks to everyone who responded to December's Star of Bethlehem mailing and made special offerings this past Christmas season. Holiday contributions totaled \$2,310.

## Talent & Gift Auction Donations

Final numbers are in. Including items purchased in the auction, plus additional donations, our recent Talent & Gift Auction netted \$3,150 for the church's general operating budget. We couldn't have done it without you! Thanks to everyone who donated auction items, placed bids, and made contributions to this year's Auction.

## Zanies Night of Comedy

Watch for details coming soon, about a "Night of Comedy" at Zanies in Rosemont. If you participated in one of these church events in the past, you won't want to miss this spring's event. And, if you've never joined us before for a night at Zanies, make sure you don't miss this year's event!



Our 2022 church outing to Zanies in Rosemont.

**We're Getting Closer to THAT Time...**

(From *Second Time Around Sale* Co-Chair Ellen Alde) Thank you to everyone for your donations to date and for labeling them! Our storage room's actually are beginning to look like there is a sale approaching **but** we still have plenty of space for your special items.

**March drop-off dates:**

**Wednesday, March 8**

**Sunday, March 12 (after the worship service)**

**Wednesday, March 15 10:00am - 11:00am**

Sale Volunteer paper forms will be available on the credenza by the church office **or** if you use GOOGLE, we can send you the form via email. We are hoping to make the link available in Co's notes or you can contact Ellen at ealdefccdp@gmail.com. We are also looking for an individual to be our co-chair in Antiques. Don't forget - if you volunteer to work the sale then you get to shop the presale for new treasures on Thursday, April 27 from 6:00pm-7:00pm. And, of course, mark your calendar for the actual sale date of Saturday, April 29 from 9:00am-3:00pm.

## Pastoral Relations Committee

### **PRC Needs Your Help!**

Can you spare just a few hours a month to serve on our church's Pastoral Relations Committee? The PRC is a liaison between the congregation and the many ministries in the church. This is the committee you would contact if you have a compliment or a complaint that would be relevant to Rev. Co. This committee also serves by taking the lead on special projects, such as reviewing our church's safe conduct policy and updating our Church Constitution. If you have questions about the PRC, or if you can volunteer to serve on this important committee, contact Sharon Urry or Rev. Co.

## Happy Birthday to You!!

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

*If you would like to add a birthday, please contact the church secretary Paul Whittenhall at 847/299-5561.*

Marcy Vedral	01-Mar	Rebecca Quam	14-Mar
Clay Thompson	05-Mar	Betty McMillan	15-Mar
Evan Tomsic	05-Mar	Nate Bryers	19-Mar
Zensanna Yost	07-Mar	Jimmy Larson	19-Mar
Midge Wolfram	08-Mar	Ken Urry	19-Mar
Kallie Haas	11-Mar	Ralph Engler	21-Mar
Madeleine Larson	11-Mar	William Hinderliter	26-Mar
Barb McCullough	11-Mar	Jim Larson	27-Mar
Mia Thomas	11-Mar	Ann Schwiger	27-Mar
Colleen Alde	12-Mar	Cindie Hoch	30-Mar
John Lodewyck	12-Mar	Ryan Johnson	30-Mar
AJ Cruz	14-Mar		

### A New Address

Betty Brodie  
800 W. Oakton, #2213  
Arlington Heights, IL 60004  
847/463-3560

Flo Hoffman  
800 S. River Rd., #417  
Des Plaines, IL 60016  
708/284-6730



## Congratulations!



Best Wishes to Dee Hardesty (pictured) on the January 26 birth of her 11<sup>th</sup> great-grandchild. Declan Carlson is the son of Amanda & Dan Carlson and grandson of Holly Naselius.

### In Memoriam

Gerald "Jerry" Petersen  
January 25, 2023

### Gifts & Memorials

In Loving Memory of Zoltan Darko From Anna Darko  
In Loving Memory of Larry Daniels From Shannon & Paul Swanson  
In Loving Memory of Jerry Petersen From Evening Circle  
In Loving Memory of Lee Emerick From Carl & Judy Mahr  
In Loving Memory of Daisy Farley's Father From Carl & Judy Mahr

## **From our Historian, Nancy Meyer**

*As a follow up to my recent articles on Tower Hill, our pastor emeritus, Dr. William Grice, provided some wonderful current information as both Tower Hill and Pilgrim Park try to rebuild support after the pandemic. As you will read, THANK YOU to Dr. Grice for all his years of commitment to Tower Hill!*

1) I presently serve (again) on the Outdoor Ministry System (ODM). This is the committee that oversees both Pilgrim Park and Tower Hill. I first started serving on the ODM in 1984 and pretty much served continuously (other than taking a mandatory year-off) until 2006. Now I'm back on ODM. I am also serving on FAB - which is the Financial Advisory Board for the Illinois Conference. Very interesting stuff about how the Conference manages to stay afloat.

2) As you know, churches are declining and closing. No UCC congregation has as many adults or children as they did "back in the day" when we were kids or had kids of our own. Consequently, both Pilgrim Park & Tower Hill are now more focused on adults, something I encouraged by our Autumn Adult Retreats which started in 1984. The Autumn Adult Retreat eventually grew to become an ODM Sponsored Retreat that included more than FCCDP members; however, the primary corps group were those from FCCDP and those who had been involved in MADD Camp.

3) You mentioned MADD Camp (Music, Art, Drama and Dance). MADD Camp started 1982. There were different directors for the camps in 1982 and 1983. When they didn't have a director for MADD Camp 1984, I volunteered. I directed MADD Camp from 1984 to 1993. Ten Camps. After that I also served two years as Music Person for Tenderfoot Camp. These were camps led by adults for children or (in MADD Camp) Junior High and Senior High Youth.

4) Then, in 2004 (I think), Janet Thompson and I took over co-directing Grandparents & Me Camp. Janet retired in 2018. I retired in 2019. As you know, G & Me Camp was what they refer to as an "Intergenerational Camp." This type of a camp brings together people of all ages: adults & children. You may recall in the 1970s, Rev. Garry Scheuer had organized Family Camps at Tower Hill. These had two weekends and the 5 days between the weekends. Some working people (primarily men in those days) might commute from Tower Hill to Chicago by driving early in the morning to catch the South Shore RR. Others might stay the two weekends, but return home to work on the weekdays. Vivian Rivard & Rev. Ernie Grant told me some stories that I still remember. :) And I will add FCCDP was not alone in having Family Camps for a week or long weekends at both Pilgrim Park & Tower Hill.

5) In addition to the ODM sponsored events/camps and Family Camps sponsored by churches, High School or Confirmation Retreats were quite popular. Since FCCDP did not have a Youth Minister when I arrived in December 1979, I took over the responsibilities of leading the Senior High Youth Group. In the spring of 1980, we held a weekend Retreat at Tower Hill. Rev. David Laaser continued this long-established tradition of having Autumn and Spring Retreats. It varied between Pilgrim Park (usually in the Autumn) and Tower Hill (usually in the Spring). Prior to going to Pilgrim Park in the Fall, Retreats were held at Pleasant Valley Farm in McHenry. This property was owned and operated by the Community Renewal Society, which eventually closed it and sold the property for house lots where McMansions were built.....

*(More to come next month.....)*

**First Congregational United Church of Christ**

766 Graceland Avenue, Des Plaines, Illinois

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

847/299-5561





# March 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>WWW.FCCDP.ORG</b>						
<b>5 Communion</b> <b>Lent 2</b> 9:00am Worship 10:00am Fellowship 10:00a Confirmation 10:30a Sunday Brunch 4:00p PF Drop-In	<b>6</b> 11:00a Evelyn Wolfe Memorial Service Ridgewood Cemetery 7:00p Wholly Ringers	<b>7</b> 6:00p Membership & Communications 7:00p Worship Mfg.	<b>8</b> 9:00a WWC 10:00a Bible Study 10:00a STA-Drop-Off 6:15p PRC 7:00p Chancel Choir	<b>9</b> 7:00p Women's Night Out @Uncork/Unwind	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>12 Lent 3</b> <b>Daylight Savings</b> 9:00am Worship 10:00am Fellowship 10:00a Combined Staff Meeting 4:00p Talent Show	<b>13</b> 10:00a Creative Conversation 7:00p Wholly Ringers Finance	<b>14</b> 1:30p Evening Circle Men's Night Out	<b>15</b> 9:00a WWC 10:00a Bible Study 7:00p Chancel Choir	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>19 Lent 4</b> 9:00am Worship 10:00am Fellowship 5:00p Potluck 6:00p Bells Concert PF Hike	<b>20</b> <b>Tidings Deadline</b> 6:30p Property Ministry 7:00p Wholly Ringers	<b>21</b> 6:30p Chair Mfg.	<b>22</b> 9:00a WWC 10:00a Bible Study 10:00a STA-Drop-Off 7:00p Chancel Choir	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> Pre-School Grandparents Day	<b>25</b> Jerry Petersen Memorial Service
<b>26 Lent 5</b> 9:00am Worship 10:00am Fellowship STA-Sale Drop-Off	<b>27</b> <b>Preschool Break</b>	<b>28</b> 7:00p Council	<b>29</b> 9:00a WWC 10:00a Bible Study 7:00p Chancel Choir	<b>30</b> 7:00p Let's Talk (Tbc)	<b>31</b>	Evening Circle Bake-and-Craft Sale orders – to be placed by March 26 and delivery will be on Sunday, April 2.