



Tidings

766 Graceland Ave.

Des Plaines, IL 60016



February 2024 - Vol. 85 – No. 2

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

Our Lenten Journey Begins

"You turn us back to dust, and say, 'Turn back, you mortals.'" - Psalm 90

The familiar refrain, "earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust," resonates as we contemplate on Ash Wednesday the ashes from which we were formed. With humility and introspection, we acknowledge our weaknesses and frailties, grateful for the divine blend of dust and divinity created by God.

In the fleeting nature of life, the ashes force us not to lose sight of our temporal existence. The Psalmist likens human life to morning grass that flourishes briefly, only to wither by evening—a metaphorical day encompassing the brevity of our lives. As we embark on the Lenten journey Ash Wednesday, mindful of our imminent mortality, we apologize for negligence, and ingratitude towards the precious gift of life. Let this day mark a commitment to never take another moment of our lives for granted.

The ashes become a symbol, not only of literal death but of the pervasive power of death throughout our daily existence. Lent encourages us to scrutinize the dead spaces within our lives—the places where the "power of death" has taken hold. Uncomfortable though it may be, this examination prompts us to acknowledge and mourn what is dead in our relationships, in our communities, and within ourselves.

The recognition of death's impact can be a heart-wrenching experience, but Lent invites us to confront the denial of death within us and around us. As we open our eyes to the power of death, feeling sorrow and remorse, we position ourselves for the transformative work of God, preparing us for the promised new life.

In prayer, we acknowledge our weaknesses, rejoice in God's strength, and offer broken spirits and remorseful hearts as acceptable offerings. May God take away the power of death from our lives, leading us towards the promised new life, now and forever.

Warm regards,

Rev. Co

Worship Ministry

February 4	Communion/Church Brunch at Gail's Carriage Inn	
	Service of Worship	9:00a - www.fccdp.org
	Fellowship	10:00a
	Lay Reader	Lowell Handy
	Scripture Reading	1 Corinthians 9:16-23
February 11	Scout Sunday/"Souper Bowl" Sunday Food Drive	
	Service of Worship	9:00a - www.fccdp.org
	Fellowship	10:00a
	Lay Reader	Bob Crocker
	Scripture Reading	2 Corinthians 4:3-6
February 14	Ash Wednesday	
	Service of Worship	7:00p - www.fccdp.org
	Fellowship	
	Lay Reader	
	Scripture Reading	2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10
February 18	First Sunday of Lent	
	Service of Worship	9:00a - www.fccdp.org
	Church Potluck	10:00a
	Lay Reader	Corrine Bachar
	Scripture Reading	1 Peter 3:18-22
February 25	Second Sunday of Lent	
	Service of Worship	9:00a - www.fccdp.org
	Fellowship	10:00a
	Lay Reader	Marcia Urban
	Scripture Reading	Romans 4:13-25

Children's & Adult Education Ministry



Our Sunday School students will prepare and serve soup in Webster Hall on “Souper Bowl” Sunday, February 11.

Membership & Communications Ministry

Small Group 3x7 Social Dinners Underway

Previously called 4x8, the 2024 version of our FCC small group social dinners is underway. We currently have five groups of seven people that will meet monthly in February/March/April. Depending on feedback, another session could be scheduled for June/July/August. Thanks to those church members and friends that signed up this time around...enjoy!

Womens Fellowship Reschedules Game Day for February

Our January meeting was cancelled due to frigid weather. Our next Womens Fellowship gathering will be on Tuesday, February 13. We're looking forward to playing the fun games we didn't play in January. If you have one special to you, please bring it! All ladies (men, too) are welcome to join us in the Barwick Room at 1:3 pm on February 13. Questions? Speak with Nancy Meyer.

Creative Conversation Welcomes All for Lively Discussions...

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 **February 12** selection is *The Nightengale*, by Kristin Hannah. 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.

...and Prepares for Book Sale

The annual Creative Conversation book sale will begin in early February, in Webster Hall. Any donations can be placed on the stage, behind the curtain. Questions? Speak with Marcia Urban.

Dive Right In!

Join us for a Pool Party at Prairie Lakes Aquatic Center on Friday, March 8 from 7:30pm – 9:30pm. We will have use of the entire aquatic center--lap pool, warm water pool, splash pad, locker rooms and party room and a "Wibit" feature for the lap pool (kids love the challenge!). There is a firm deadline for signing up by February 29. A sign-up sheet is available on Sunday mornings or you can call the Church Office during the week. The best part is that this is free!

Mission & Outreach Ministry

Thanks from Backpack Ministry

Many thanks to everyone who has generously donated to the backpack ministry so far this year. At present First Congregational Church is supplying 16 children with weekend meals and snacks on a weekly basis. At the moment, our supplies are fairly well stocked. We do have need for ±15 oz. canned pasta with meat and ±5 oz. cans of chicken meat. Individually wrapped snack items are always welcome. For further information contact Lowell Handy at handytreesh@att.net.

Drivers Sought for Meals on Wheels

From February 26 through March 22, First Congregational Church is scheduled to deliver Meals on Wheels to area shut-ins. This means that we make a total of 40 deliveries (2 different routes each day for 4 weeks). At this time, we could use several more individuals/teams to assist us in this undertaking. Please contact Richard Schacht at 847-824-5883 or at ilcpa95@hotmail.com for further information or to advise of your availability.

01/23/2024

Dear Pastor Co, Nancy, and Mary,

The start of the new year provides a perfect season to reflect on this amazing partnership to welcome and befriend recently resettled refugees. While the opportunities to practice hospitality continue to expand, last year was a season of growth for our ministry together. None of these advancements are possible without faithful and generous church partners like First Congregational Church.

According to our records, the partnership between your church and Exodus started in 2005. During the 2023 calendar year, you all have made a significant impact on the lives of refugees:

- In April, representatives from your church attended the Celebration of Hope gala joining forces with over 700 refugee champions from all over Chicagoland.
- In June, your church recognized *World Refugee Sunday* and provided two *Welcome to America! Packs*: one for a Senegalese family of 2 who lives in Evanston and the other for an Iraqi refugee who lives in Chicago.
- In August, Pastor Co led the staff devotional at Exodus World Service offices in Park Ridge
- In October, your church provided two *Welcome to America! Packs*: one for a Sudanese refugee and another for a Venezuelan refugee, both live in Chicago.
- In November, your church provided a *Welcome to America! Pack* for a Ukrainian family of 3 who lives in Vernon Hills.
- In December, your church provided three *Welcome to America! Packs* for 3 Congolese refugees who live in Chicago.
- This year, one volunteer has begun the process of mobilizing people around Private Sponsorship of refugees through Exodus World Service
- Throughout the year, one member of your congregation served as a *New Neighbor for Youth* volunteer with two refugee students from Burma and a refugee student from Afghanistan and many members of your church joined weekly with our *Prayer Partner Team* to lift the concerns of volunteers and refugee friends to the Lord.
- In total, your congregation provided supplies for more than 8 *Welcome to America! Packs* for 12 refugees from the countries of Senegal, Iraq, Sudan, Venezuela, Ukraine, and the Congo.

As this new year begins and the global refugee crisis continues to deepen, we thank God for the partnership and support of First Congregational Church. We invite you to pause and stand amazed at the ways that God has provided for refugees and volunteers through your church. Thanks for the essential part that you play in our mission of ensuring that each refugee receives a robust welcome as they resettle into neighborhoods throughout Chicagoland.

Standing amazed,



Jason O. Mohn
Director of Church & School Engagement

"I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me... Truly I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of my brethren you did it to me.

- Matthew 25:35,40 NIV

Music Ministry

Save the Date!

Our Wholly Ringers Handbell Choir and Chancel Choir will present a spring concert and potluck supper at church on March 17. Yes, this falls on St. Patrick's Day! This year we are traveling from "C to C" around the circle of keys, hearing from Queens and Irishmen alike. Bring your favorite recipe, Irish or otherwise, to the potluck at 5:00pm and then join us in the sanctuary for the concert at 6:00pm. Watch for more info in your March Tidings and Notes from Co.



Youth Ministry

Hoping for Snow...

Our Junior and Senior Pilgrim Fellowship (PF) youth will head to The Rock Snowpark on Saturday, February 3. The park has 19 tubing lanes that are serviced by a Magic Carpet conveyor to bring you back to the top with your tube. We will meet at church at 5:45pm to head up to the Snowpark, our tubing session will be from 7-9pm and we will plan to return to church around 10:30pm. We will help offset ticket costs for PF members, so the cost will only be \$10 per person. For this outing we would like to also invite any 5th grade PF siblings to attend if interested! Head to our PF group in the BAND app to RSVP. Feel free to reach out to Matt or Marissa with any questions! For more info on the Snowpark go to: <https://www.rocksnowpark.com>

Finance Committee

Financial Report

Thank you for your support of FCCDP in 2023, by keeping up with your pledges and offerings, supporting our various fundraisers, and even making extra contributions when possible. Because of your generosity, we ended the first six months of our current fiscal year, \$19,524 in the black.

Star of Bethlehem Christmas Offering

We're pleased to report that our Star of Bethlehem collection and other special Christmas offerings brought in a total of \$3,916 for our general budget.

Talent & Gift Auction Ends

Thanks to all of our church members and friends who donated items to this year's Auction. Special thanks to these local businesses, who helped support our fundraising efforts with donations: Steppenwolf Theatre, Northlight Theatre, the Metropolis Performing Arts Center, and Cooper's Hawk Winery & Restaurant. And most of all, thanks to all our bidders! Through all of your efforts, we raised approximately \$3,000. We couldn't have done it without you!

ACH Electronic Giving an Option

Many people have started giving their offerings through the church website, via PayPal. But did you know that you can schedule your giving to happen automatically - weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly? That way, even if you're sick, on vacation, or just forget, you can still feel comfortable knowing that your contribution is available to further God's work in our church and the community. Just contact our Financial Administrator Eliud Alvarez, or the church secretary for more information.

“Second Time” Rummage Sale Updates

STA sale update from co-chair Ellen Alde: Hear Ye, Hear Ye STA news February drop-off dates: Sunday February 4th and Wednesday February 21.

Thank you to those who have donated treasures and memories for the April 27, 2024 sale. Our storage areas are starting to show that a sale is coming soon to a church near you. We greatly appreciate your labeling of your treasures and memories to help us stay organized. I know the workers in housewares really appreciate the effort you are making in labeling bed linens. If you are wondering how you can help with the sale, there will be volunteer forms available in March for the week of the sale, April, 20-27. If you have any questions, please contact either Ellen [ealdefccdp@gmail.com] or Chris [ctomsic@mac.com]. Thanks for your continuing support.

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 Office at 847/299-5561.

Doug Laws	01-Feb	Erik Lodeqyck	17-Feb
Christine Ashby	03-Feb	Carl Mahr	19-Feb
Barb Franzen	05-Feb	Frank Potempa	20-Feb
Mary Spiegler	07-Feb	Deb Fogarty	22-Feb
Laurel Douthwaite	09-Feb	Jayne Villa-Alvarez	22-Feb
Dave Kaplan	09-Feb	Erika Hahn	23-Feb
Elizabeth Liston	09-Feb	Joyce Masciopinto	23-Feb
Ben Whittenhall	10-Feb	Vito Pelletiere	23-Feb
Karen Potempa	14-Feb	Harrison Nutley	26-Feb
Emily Cruz	16-Feb	Paul Schmitt	27-Feb
John Foster	16-Feb	Bob Crocker	28-Feb

Gifts & Memorials

In Loving Memory of Flo Hoffman from Betty Brodie

In Loving Memory of Flo Hoffman from Cindie Hoch

In Loving Memory of Patty Lucas from Sandra Mueller

In Loving Memory of Connie Donoghue from Jim & Kathy Foster

FROM OUR HISTORIAN, NANCY MEYER

Recently someone asked me how long Lucy Ding was our Chancel Choir Director. Hmm...fortunately I'd created a document of ALL our directors and accompanists several years ago. How many of these wonderful people do you remember?

Choir Director		Organist/Accompanist	
Mr Stephen Jefferson	? - 1871	Miss Clara Jefferson	
		Mr Nicholas J Hill	
Mr Chester E Bennett	1871 - 1908	Mrs M Beaumont Gray	
		Miss Harriet Earle, assisted by Ms Mary Scott circa 1887 - ?	
		Miss Alice Bennett	
Mr Harry Bennett (Chester's son)	1908 - 1947	Mrs Genevieve Webster Wolfram, assisted by Mr Wilbur Held,	1894 - 1936 1928 - 1936
		Mr Wilbur Held	1936 - 1942
		Ms Jessie Mae Slusser	1942 - 1946
		Mr Max Elsberry	1946 - 1947
Mr Erwin Brunn	1947 - 1952	Mr Erwin Brunn	1947 - 1952
Miss Ann Gordon	1952 - 1975	Miss Ann Gordon	1952 - 1975
Charles Jenks	1975 - 1987	Charles Jenks	1975 - 1994
Lucy Ding	1987 - 1995	Charlotte Brown	1994 - 2001
			2001 -
Eric Sidoti	1995 - 2006	Charles Moore	12/25/16

Charles Moore	2006 - 2015		
	2016 -		1/1/17 -
Natasha Stojanovska	6/25/2017	Natasha Stojanovska	6/25/17
			7/2/17 -
Scott Emerick	9/2017 -	Nathan Canfield	8/31/18
			9/1/18 -
		Ilia Ulianitsky	9/15/19
		Anna Kovalevska	1/1/2020 -

February 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Fundraisers:						
				1	2	3
4 Communion 9:00am Worship 10:00am Fellowship 10:30a Sunday Brunch Confirmation STA – Drop-off	5	6	7	8	9	10
11 Souper Bowl 9:00am Worship 10:00am Fellowship 10:05am Ministry Staff	12 10:00a Creative Conversation	13 12:00 Administrative Staff 1:30p: Womens Fellowship	14 9:00a WWC 10:00a Bible Study	15	16	17
18 Lent 1 9:00a Family Worship 10:00am Fellowship Potluck	19 President's Day	20 Tidings Deadline	21 9:00a WWC 10:00a Bible Study 10:00a STA – Drop-off	22	23	24
25 Lent 2 9:00am Worship Wholly Ringers 10:00am Fellowship Confirmation	26 6:30p Property 7:00p Wholly Ringers	27	28 6:15p PRC 7:00p Chancel Choir 9:00a WWC 10:00a Bible Study	29		
7:00p Wholly Ringers	7:00p Wholly Ringers	7:00p Council	7:00p Chancel Choir			

First Congregational United Church of Christ

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