

Tidings

766 Graceland Ave.

Des Plaines, IL 60016



May 2025 - Vol. 86 – No. 5

Living Our Faith Through Service

Faithful Living

“Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.” —1 Peter 4:10

Most churches dread stewardship season. It often feels like we’re running a pledge drive that nobody wants to be part of. We pull out spreadsheets, talk about deficits, and speak in somber tones about what we need just to *“keep the lights on.”* And then we wonder why giving feels like a chore instead of a joy.

But what if we changed the story? What if stewardship wasn't about scarcity—but about opportunity? What if it wasn't just about meeting a budget—but about *living a vision*?

Here at First Congregational Church, we have a new vision: *“To be a welcoming community of faith where we serve God by serving others, embodying Christ’s love through compassionate outreach, meaningful relationships, and transformative acts of kindness that uplift our neighbors and inspire hope.”* This is who we are becoming.

And to help us we have a mission: *“Living Our Faith Through Service.”* We believe this is more than a catchy slogan—it’s a way of life. This is the work we’re called to do—not just on Sundays, but every day.

To live into this mission, we need more than programs and plans. We need *people*—people willing to be good stewards of the manifold grace of God. People willing to give not only out of duty, but out of joy. As Peter reminds us, our gifts—whatever they may be—are not our own. They are entrusted to us by God, and they’re meant to be used *in service to one another*.

One of the ways we prepare for Christ's return is through generosity. We give—especially of our money—not because the church needs “dues,” but because we need the *practice*. Giving reminds us that all we have—our power, our income, our talents—is a *loan*. We hold it all in open hands so we're less likely to cling to it... and more likely to share it.

This year, as you consider your pledge, I invite you to think not just about what the church needs, but about what the ***world needs through our church***. Your giving empowers ministry. It puts hands to our mission and breath into our vision. It allows us to be the kind of church that reflects Christ's love in meaningful, joyful ways.

Thank you for your faithful giving. Thank you for believing in what we're building together. And thank you for trusting that what we do here—together—matters.

With gratitude and hope,

Rev. Co

Worship Ministry

May 4	Communion/Confirmation Sunday/"First Sunday" Brunch	
	Service of Worship	9:00a – www.fccdp.org
	Fellowship	10:00a
	Lay Reader	Les Stein
	Scripture Reading	Acts 9:1-6
May 11	Mother's Day/Pledge Dedication	
	Service of Worship	9:00a - www.fccdp.org
	Fellowship	10:00a
	Lay Reader	Jackie Schmitt
	Scripture Reading	Acts 9:36-43
May 18		
	Service of Worship	9:00p - www.fccdp.org
	Fellowship/Potluck	10:00a
	Lay Reader	Marcia Urban
	Scripture Reading	Acts 11:1-18
May 25	Memorial Day Weekend	
	Service of Worship	9:00a - www.fccdp.org
	Fellowship	10:00a
	Lay Reader	Bob Crocker
	Scripture Reading	Acts 16:9-15

Children's & Adult Education Ministry

Annual FCC Easter Egg Hunt

The Easter Bunny was busy on Palm Sunday, when our Sunday School students and other local children and their families enjoyed an egg hunt on our preschool playground. (Additional photos under Youth Ministry)



Membership & Communications Ministry

Calling All Graduates...

The June Tidings will feature news of the 2025 graduates among our extended church family. If you have information to share, please forward to Debbie Walusiak at ecire58@sbcglobal.net by **May 20** or contact her at 847/337-1443. Details could include name/school/plans after graduation. Photos welcome!

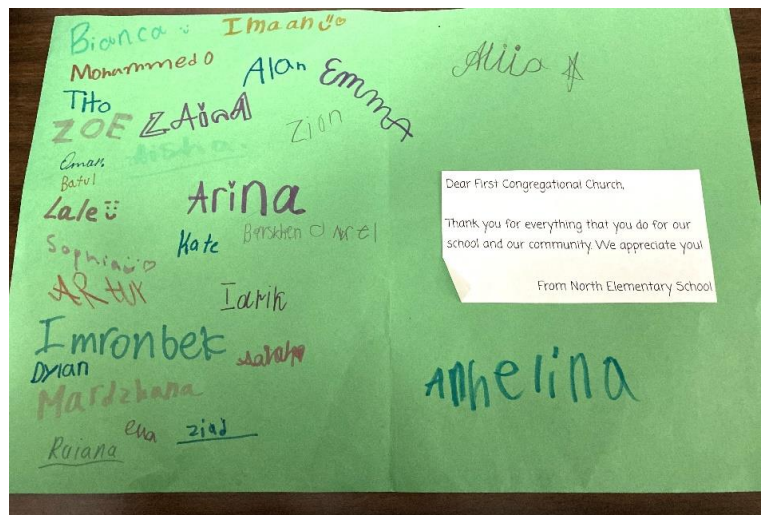
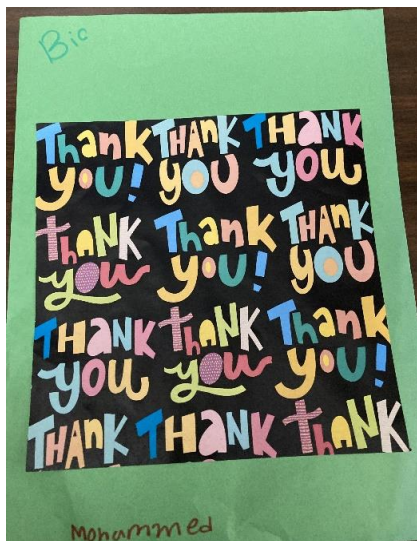
Mission & Outreach Ministry



Our church was well represented at the Exodus World Service (Project Survivor) dinner in April. Pictured (l to r) are Nancy Brink, Jackie & Paul Schmitt, Jim & Kathy Ruedisueli, Rick & Charlie Warren (standing), Sharon Urry and Mary & Garrett Pittman.

May Update from Our Backpack Ministry

With the end of May, the 2024-2025 school year's Backpack Mission comes to an end. First Congregational Church UCC has provided students at North Elementary with meals and snacks to cover the weekends and holiday weeks throughout the school year. While the providers of the food do not know to whom the bags of food are going, those who receive them know from whence they come. The church has received a gracious Thank You card signed by the students [first names only!]; since it is a card for the congregation, please stop by the bulletin board across from the Church Office to take a glance at it.



Meanwhile, we have just this month left to provide weekend sacks and at this point we have everything we need save for a few Mac & Cheese boxes and a small number of condensed soup cans. A huge thank you from me (and those who pack and deliver these mission items) for your continued support. And, yes, Virginia, I have offered us to continue with the project again next year. Expect the annual Christmas in July request for donations sometime this summer — maybe in July! God bless you all! Lowell at handytrees@att.net

Save the Date!

Our church, once again, will be represented in the annual *Relay for Life* to benefit the American Cancer Society. This year's local event will be held from 6:00pm to 10:00pm on June 13 in Palatine. "Through the combined efforts of all of you, our team last year was able to reach a new level by raising \$7,329 and placing second among participating teams for fundraising," said FCC team captain Paul Schmitt. Fundraising began in April for the 2025 relay. Watch future Tidings and Notes from Co for more information or speak with Paul Schmitt for details. A reminder that any check donations should be made out to the American Cancer Society.

Music Ministry

The annual FCC Spring Concert featured beautiful music from our Wholly Ringers handbell choir and Chancel Choir plus our talented accompanist, Anna Kovalevska, as well as a great group of musicians from Maine West High School.



Youth Ministry



Many thanks to our Junior and Senior PF for their help with the annual FCC Easter Egg hunt.



Finance Committee

Financial Report

For the month of March, our church had income of \$28,723 and expenses of \$32,356, a shortfall of \$3,632 for the month. Year-to-date, we are running \$14,470 in the red. Thank you for your ongoing support of FCCDP and a special thank you to all of you who have kept up with your pledges and offerings this year. If you've fallen behind with your regular offerings, we ask you to prayerfully consider whether you might be in a position to "catch up" at this time.

Easter Bake Sale a Success!

Thanks to everyone who participated in our Easter Holiday Bake Sale - either by baking or by purchasing some of the available treats. Because of you, we were able to raise \$750 for the church's general budget. Special thanks to Garrett Pittman for all his hard work planning, organizing and overseeing this fundraiser.

Financial Audit Completed in March

A group of dedicated volunteers completed the Annual Audit of our church's General Fund, as well as Restricted Accounts, during March. Electronic records were compared to paper records, paying special attention to deposits, withdrawals, checks, and balances. Their report uncovered "no evidence of significant errors or omissions." Special thanks to this year's Audit Team: Kevin Donoghue, André Deadwyler, Bob McCullough, Jim Ruedisueli, and Roger Alde.

Stewardship Drive Concludes May 11

During this year's Annual Stewardship Drive, you've heard and you've seen information about how at FCCDP, we are **Living Our Faith Through Service**. And, how your gifts of your time, talents, and financial resources help us make a difference in people's lives, in our church, within the community, and beyond. Please prayerfully consider how, if each of us could give just a little more, we could do even more to help others. Then make your "faith promise" to God of how you plan to **Live Your Faith Through Service** by supporting FCCDP

in the coming fiscal year. We hope you'll join us for worship on Stewardship Sunday, May 11, as we dedicate our pledges and offerings to further God's work.



“Second Time Around” Update

(From STA Chair Ellen Alde) May 3 is the BIG DAY! I hope everyone is able to come shop or help! We will have numbers following the sale – possibly on Sunday, May 4. No more drop-offs are being taken at this time. Thank you for your continued support.



Pastoral Relations Committee

PRC Seeks Members, Defines Role at FCC

The Church Council is looking for two additional members of our church family to serve on the PRC. So, what is the PRC? From our constitution:

Pastoral Relations Committee

- i. The Pastoral Relations Committee shall be composed of six (6) members of the Congregation for a term of three (3) years of which no more than two (2) normally be elected at the same time. The Committee shall elect one of its members to serve as chair.
- ii. The Pastoral Relations committee supports and maintains an open relationship between the ordained Minister and members of the congregation. It helps the pastor and members of the church share ideas, hopes, dreams and interpretations of mission. It lets the Minister know what people in the church are thinking. It gives a framework for dealing with conflict creatively.
- iii. It shall serve as a resource center for information on church structure and act as a facilitator for the resolution of questions and concerns of the congregation and the concerns of the Ministers.
- iv. It shall report its activities to the Congregation Council no less than monthly.

Okay, sounds pretty boring but quite the contrary is true. While the description sounds more like a venue to field complaints, that is typically a rare subject during meetings. The group focuses on sharing ideas, hopes, dreams and interpretations of mission. This work is promoted by the council. The most recent project was revisioning and reviewing our church mission and vision statements. This led to group development of our new vision and mission statement, Living Our Faith Through Service, along with the new church logo to go with it. The work was guided by demographic reports, The Mission Insite Group, a series of well attended church workshops, and New Year's brunches. Future work will include how to implement the new vision / mission statements and how our different ministries can work more efficiently together. The committee meets on the second Wednesday of the month at 6pm with a hard stop at 7 to accommodate choir members.

Happy Birthday to You!!

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

***If you would like to add/remove a birthday, please contact
the Church Office at 847/299-5561.***

Melanie Donoghue	01-May	Betty Nanstiel	17-May
Eric Jancsovics	01-May	Debbie Walusiak	17-May
Ellie DuToit	01-May	Anthony Almerigi	18-May
Nancy Quam	02-May	Paul Meyer	20-May
Ken Walusiak	02-May	André Deadwyler	22-May
Nina Masciopinto	07-May	Ben Cooper	22-May
Izaan DuToit	07-May	Keith Liston	23-May
Jennifer Muhr	10-May	Nancy Wilson	23-May
Sue Almerigi	13-May	Amy Quam	27-May
Kathy Foster	14-May	Chris Thomas	27-May
Corrine Bachar	15-May	Richard Weihsmantel	28-May

Congratulations!



Best Wishes to Nina Potempa and Jack Fitzgibbons, who were married in October 2024. The couple were living in Denver but recently relocated to the Midwest. Nina is the daughter of church members Frank & Karen Potempa of Wauconda, formerly of Des Plaines.

From our Historian, Nancy Meyer

Did you know that when our church was built in 1929 it had a fully functioning stage, balcony and projection room plus gymnasium complete with volleyball nets, basketball hoops, floor line markings, wire cages protecting the stained glass windows and men's and women's locker rooms with showers? Eighty years ago, Des Plaines didn't have all the facilities offered today so churches became the hub for many community activities in addition to daily use by the church's auxiliary organizations such as men's clubs, women's organizations, Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts. The Des Plaines Theater Guild had its start on the stage at FCC. 'Wonder what happened to the gymnasium? Now known as Webster Hall, under the layers of tiles, you will find the hardwood floors with all those line markings! Wonder what happened to the locker rooms and the tiled floor? Well, those are stories for another time!

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View of the "gymnasium" in 1941, with wire 'shutters' to protect windows...balcony & projection room

May 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Fundraisers:						
4 Communion Confirmation Sunday 9:00am Worship 10:00am Fellowship 10:30a Sunday Brunch	5	6	7	8	9	10
	7:00p Wholly Ringers		9:00a WWC 10:00a Bible Study 6:30p Music & Drama 7:00p Chancel Choir	6:00p Volunteer Sale	6:00p STA-Sale	Volunteer Party
11 Mother's Day 9:00am Worship 10:00am Fellowship Pledge Dedication	12	13	14	15	16	17
	7:00p Wholly Ringers	12:00p Administrative Staff 6:00p Membership & Communications 7:00p Worship Ministry	9:00a WWC 10:00a Bible Study Preschool Show 6:00p PRC 7:00p Chancel Choir	Preschool Show		
18 Keener baptism Teacher's Recognition 9:00a Worship Wholly Ringers 10:00am Ministry Staff 10:00am Fellowship Potluck	19	20	21	22	23	24
	Annual Reports Due 7:00p Finance 6:30p Property 7:00p Wholly Ringers	Tidings Deadline 6:00p Chair meeting	9:00a WWC 10:00a Bible Study 7:00p Chancel Choir			
25 9:00am Worship 10:00am Fellowship	26 Memorial Day Office Closed	27	28	29	30	31
		7:00p Council	9:00a WWC 10:00a Bible Study 7:00p Chancel Choir			Work Week at Pilgrim Park until June 5

First Congregational United Church of Christ

766 Graceland Avenue, Des Plaines, Illinois

www.fccd.org

847/299-5561