

Tree of Life Newsletter

First Congregational United Church of Christ
235 S. Kenilworth Avenue – Elmhurst, Illinois 60126



March 2019

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FROM OUR MINISTER

Rev. Mike Daly

The season of Lent will begin in early March. Lent is a humble journey. It is a time of self-sacrifice. A time to look with intention at our relationship with God and ask, "Can I do better?" A time to make amends and add more "life-giving" acts of behavior. Forty days to look within, reflect and meditate.

But, is it really intended to be a humble time? Was Jesus' journey humble? The scriptures tell of a pretty sensational time for Jesus. It starts with a baptism featuring a mysterious voice from above. Then there's the journey through the wilderness where he is besieged by Satan with multiple temptations. Then he emerges from the wilderness at full-speed, ready to transform the world!

Barbara Brown Taylor says, "This wisdom about the value of the wilderness is just about lost --lost to popular American culture for sure and lost even to the Christian tradition that is charged with preserving it. Those of you who still belong to churches that still observe Lent may get a dose of it every year around this time, even if it is reduced to cutting down on how much you drink or putting a dollar in a box for every dessert you skip. The kernel of the wisdom is still there: that anyone who wants to follow Jesus all the way to the cross needs the kind of clarity and grit that is found only in the wilderness."

Partners in Christ's Service

Minister

Rev. Dr. Michael Daly, Sr. Minister

Christian Education

Martha Mendoza, Minister of CE

Music

Jim Molina, Minister of Music

Church Office Staff

Heather Cross, Bookkeeper

Kim Brigman, Office Assistant

Emeritus Minister

Rev. Dr. Ernest H. Huntzinger

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www.youtube.com/elmhurstucc

[For general information about our Boards and Committees, click here.](#)

From Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday, we are invited to do without some things we are perfectly capable of having--such as sweet desserts or loud parties with rowdy friends--and to take on some things that we are just as capable of avoiding--such as volunteering or a reaching out to a neighbor we are mad at. All good but let us not lose sight of the "humble tension" meant to carry us beyond this season so that everything within us and around us better.

"Lent," is from an English word meaning "spring"--not just a reference to the flowers pushing their ways out of the ground in the season before Easter. It is a season to reject that which is life dimensioning in order to promote everything that propels the Kingdom of God. As Barbara Brown Taylor so gracefully puts it, "Lent is a time for the greening of the human soul--pruned with repentance, fertilized with fasting, spritzed with self-appraisal, mulched with prayer."

Faithfully,

Mike

FROM OUR MODERATOR

Mike Hennel

This past Sunday we combined a pancake fundraiser with our Annual Church Meeting, and it was successful on both counts! Many thanks to Christian Education who prepared the delectable meal and our youth for serving it expeditiously to everyone in attendance, allowing us to complete the meeting by 11:45.

As we enter into 2019 full steam ahead, I'd also like to thank those of you who have previously or are currently serving on the church's various boards and committees. My thanks, as well, to those members who have faithfully attended our council meetings (with a special thanks to Karen Pachyn for taking minutes). Please continue to get the word out and to invite family, friends and neighbors to come visit the church to enjoy the services and to see all that we are about!

THE TRUSTEES

Terry Hennen

Taking care of our buildings and grounds is a major responsibility of the Trustees, and it is a challenge. Our facility is quite sizable and, as you know, it is also quite old. If we had to hire someone from the outside for every little thing that needed attention, we would be broke in no time. So, thank goodness for volunteers!

These first two months of 2019 have brought us extreme temperature swings and frequent snows. That has resulted in a lot of calls for volunteers to keep the heat on, clean up seepage from melting snow, and shovel the walkways in between visits from our contractor. Unrelated to the weather, we also had some special cleaning projects inside. So, without getting into detail, let us take a moment to say thanks to the following people who helped to get these jobs done: **Dan Briggs, Brian Brigman, Rev. Daly, Gayle Dawson, Linda Donahue, Don Haraf, Lucais Hennen, Terry Hennen, Larry Meyer, Karen Pachyn and Carrie Stone.**

THE DIACONATE

Allen Sloma and Bob Kanzler



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL, BETHEL AND ST. PETER'S COMBINED ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

March 6, 2019 at 7:00 P.M.

Hosted by Bethel UCC - Elmhurst
315 E. St. Charles Rd.

ASHES AND COMMUNION
Everyone welcome

The Offering received will go to support
EWAN - the Elmhurst Walk-In Assistance Network

NEWS FROM CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Brian Brigman, Dorothy Hamby, Tammy Hicks, Martha Mendoza, Lynette Rosen, Jeff Sloma, Karen Sloma, Carrie Stone



Confirmation Sunday will soon be here on May 5 and as we prepare for this rite of passage, we want to remind confirmation families what is scheduled for the month of MARCH. This Sunday, March 3, we celebrate communion and confirmands are assisting in worship.

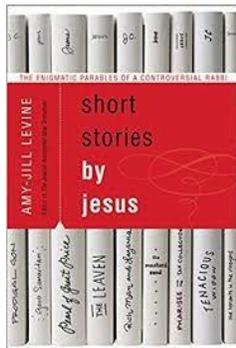
Parents please have your confirmands at the church by 9:40 am so they can go over their participation. On Sunday, March 17, confirmands will gather during Sunday School from 10:00 am to 11:00 am. Mentors are invited to join us on Sunday March 17.

LEGO SUNDAY - MARCH 10



Children from preschool to 5th grade are invited to Lego Sunday. Our entire Sunday School morning experience will be aimed at building faith brick by brick. From our opening prayer to group activities, children will be challenged to use their imagination with Legos. Through a select Bible story that has action and adventure, children will connect with each other and God by constructing a set scenario. We look forward to having your builders join us so mark your calendar.

PLEASE HAVE YOUR CHILDREN BRING THEIR LEGO BUILDING BLOCKS.



Lenten Study: Short Stories by Jesus
Wednesdays March 13, 20, 27; April 3, 10
Soup Supper and Conversation
6:30 to 8:00 p.m. in the church parlor

Explore a fresh and timely interpretation of Jesus' most popular teaching parables such as the Mustard Seed and the Good Samaritan. Jesus was a skilled storyteller and perceptive teacher who used parables from everyday life to effectively convey his message and meaning. In "Short Stories by Jesus," author Amy-Jill Levine analyzes the "problems with parables" taking readers back in time to understand how their original Jewish audience understood them.

Everyone is welcome!

Books can be purchased on your own or reserve a book on the sign-up in the church foyer.



ART PARTY

FOR PUERTO RICO

Paint a landscape. Sip wine.
Enjoy snacks. **HELP PEOPLE!**

THURSDAY, MARCH 14, 7-9pm \$30

@ Elmhurst Congregational Church
235 S Kenilworth, Elmhurst, IL 60126

Art party taught by local artist & high school
art teacher of 20+ years, Lynette Rosen.

Unbelievably, there is still a need for home repairs, support, and service
for the people of Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria.

Your participation will directly support a youth/adult work trip to Puerto Rico.

Reserve your spot @ bit.ly/paint4PR

(This is necessary so we have enough supplies.)

THE MISSION BOARD

Kim Brigman, Mary Moy-Gregg, Amy Reshamwala, Allen Sloma, Diane Wells

*Thank
You!*

The Mission Board would like to thank Dan Briggs, Pam McCann and Karen Sloma for serving on our board. We truly appreciate the time and commitment you gave toward the mission ministry of our church. We will miss you all!

Welcome to Amy Reshamwala and Allen Sloma, our newly appointed Mission Board members. We look forward to working with you!



THE MUSIC MINISTRY

Jim Molina, Director of Music



The Music Ministry's Chancel Choir celebrated a true collaboration with the wonderful singers of Bethel UCC in Elmhurst. A potluck dinner was shared at Bethel giving all our singers an opportunity to commune with all their singers and their director, Jeff Panko. The planning and the performing was a huge success as we sang for Bethel on Sunday, Feb 10 and their choir sang at our church on Sunday, Feb. 17. Already there are plans for a shared Ash Wednesday service and even a conversation about a Music Sunday event in the summer. We will continue to reach outside our own walls in an effort to be community-minded, sharing both our gift of music and hospitality. We look forward to a meaningful and spirit-centered Lenten season.

Each Sunday after church Jim Molina is making himself available to work with any of the youth that have an interest in singing. So far Payton Hicks and Aidan McGarry have been working with Jim but we welcome other youth to join us! You can reach Jim at 630-865-6681 or at jimmolinamusic@gmail.com

THE GREEN TEAM

Karen Pachyn, chair

GREEN TEAM TIP OF THE MONTH

Concerned about what you're hearing on the evening news about the Sterigenics plant in Willowbrook? As you know the company has been accused of emitting cancer causing chemicals threatening the health and safety of nearby residents. I thought some of you might be wondering if this has any impact on your community. Here's an excellent Q&A about the

issue: https://www.stopsterigenics.com/post/frequently-asked-questions?fbclid=IwAR0pIP2zywj2CKyM52ahjPoP3VCcsFge59ITVvT9_Kjb8DI0SmFa9pCLvSw

Per this article, it looks like the closest affected community to Elmhurst is Hinsdale. This information came from the Facebook page for "Non Toxic Elmhurst". It's supported by members of the Elmhurst Cool Cities Coalition and provides regular updates about items of interest regarding our health, wellness and sustainability. It's a public group that anyone can join and I highly recommend everyone sign up to get important information about what's happening in our community.



ORDER YOUR ORGANIC SEEDLINGS BY MARCH 31

Need a way to cope with our difficult winter? It might help to spend some time thinking ahead to your spring garden. Visit our on line store <https://elmhurstucc.org/store/> and select the organic seedlings you want to order from our plant sale. You can see photos of each of the varieties we have available, read about them and make your selections, using our new online ordering process. Pay for your order with a credit card and you won't even have to leave the house! If you prefer, you can still print out our order form from the above link or pick one up in the Tree of Life Foyer. Fill it out and send it to the church office with cash or check (made out to First Congregational UCC). Orders must be in the church office by March 31.



THEN PLAN TO BE AT THE GREEN GARDEN FAIR ON SATURDAY, MAY 11

Seedlings will be available for pick up on Saturday, May 11 from 9:00 AM to noon at our Green Garden Fair. We're still working to confirm we'll have compost, but that's the goal. Bob's Fresh and Local will be back again selling their fresh, organic eggs and Synapse House will be with us selling their delicious baked goods from their Flour to Empower Bakery. You'll also be able to buy a rain barrel and a beautiful stepping stone or bird bath for your garden. Get tips about living sustainably from the Citizens Climate Lobby and the Elmhurst Cool Cities Coalition. You'll also be able to get tips on gardening from experts, including Wild Ones members who will help you learn how to attract pollinators, using natives. As you can see, we have all sorts of fun things planned for the morning.

This is a fundraiser for the church and all proceeds benefit church ministries. Help us spread the word about our seedlings sale. Please share our link <https://elmhurstucc.org/store/> with all your friends and family, post it on your Facebook page, like us on the church's Facebook page and hand out hard copies of the order form - whatever you think is the best way to share news of our sale with your friends, family and other contacts. Then mark your calendar to volunteer at the Green Garden Fair on May 11. We'll need lots of volunteers to make the day a big success.

The Green Team thanks you for your support!

HERITAGE BUNCH

Re. Jan Davis

Heritage Bunch meets regularly on the second and fourth Wednesday of every month.

Drop-in guests and surprises occur every month. Males and females are welcome.
Just bring a "show and tell" or "rose or thorn" or just listening thoughtful ears.

10:00-12:00 in the parlor.
All are welcome!

POEM- March and Beyond

Jean Schildbach

March and Beyond



March, I would say, is like a month of transition
From February's snows to times for which we
are wishin',
for a day now and then when the air starts
to warmin'
to welcome birds from the south that soon will
be swarmin'.

Though 'tis now a time for wearin' the green,
We'll patiently wait for that color to
be seen
in the trees and the grass and to hear the
birds sing
when March moves aside to make way for
Spring.

Jean.

CELEBRATIONS AND CONCERNS



March

| | |
|----|----------------|
| 1 | Laurie Stevens |
| 9 | Jack Hamby |
| 15 | Katie McCann |
| 19 | Bridget Bixler |
| 22 | Suzy Daly |
| 23 | Ann Thoele |
| 27 | Erin Stone |



| | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Clare and Jean Jacobi | Ken Stratton | The Sanchez Family | Susan Graybill |
| Kim Rudakas | Mike Magana | Roy Price | Janet Russell |
| Basia Rudy | Amy Lynch | Betsy Schultz | |

If you would like someone added or removed from the prayer list, please contact the church office at elmhurstucc@sbcglobal.net or 630-832-2580. Thank you.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

| March | Event/Room | Time |
|-------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 3 | Communion Sunday Worship Service | 10:00 a.m. |
| 6 | Ash Wednesday Service at Bethel | 7:00 p.m. |
| 7 | Choir Rehearsal - Sanctuary | 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. |
| 9-10 | PADS | 6:30 p.m. - 7:30 a.m. |
| 10 | Sunday Worship Service | 10:00 a.m. |
| 12 | Mission Board Meeting | 7:00 p.m. |
| 13 | Heritage Bunch- Parlor | 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. |
| 13 | Lenten Study | 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. |
| 14 | Choir Rehearsal - Sanctuary | 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. |
| 14 | Art Party Fundraiser | 6:00 - 10:00 p.m. |
| 17 | Sunday Worship Service | 10:00 a.m. |
| 19 | Trustees Meeting | 6:00 p.m. |
| 20 | Lenten Study | 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. |
| 21 | Choir Rehearsal - Sanctuary | 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. |
| 24 | Sunday Worship Service | 10:00 a.m. |
| 26 | Council Meeting | 7:00 p.m. |
| 27 | Heritage Bunch- Parlor | 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. |
| 27 | Lenten Study | 6:30- 8:00 p.m. |
| 28 | Choir Rehearsal - Sanctuary | 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. |