

Tree of Life Newsletter

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



October 2020

FROM OUR PASTOR

Rev. Mike Daly

In usual times, the coming fall season brings thoughts of the harvest to mind, and the fun of festivals that celebrate the abundance God has provided to nourish life. 2020 has been anything but a "usual" year. But, we kept our heads up and our hearts strong. Like all of the personal ways we have had to deal with the pandemic, we, here at church, have made a lot of adjustments to keep being God's active church. Through the upheaval of an ongoing global pandemic, we live cautiously for health and passionately for God. As the Psalms proclaim, and we believe, "The earth is full of God's unfailing love." GOD IS GOOD!

Looking ahead, like always, October and November will still be a beautiful time. The orchards will be full of fruits, the pumpkin patches will have lots of potential jack-o-lanterns, and the leaves will change to vibrant colors. It is a transitional time. The warmth of the summer sun will soon make way for the first frost and brisk evening air.

In the church, during the fall, we take time to reflect upon the theme of stewardship and consider how our resources, gifts, and time can serve to empower ministry and advance mission. This year, Stewardship Commitment Sunday is in November. Thanks to getting a *hardy shove* into the world of technology, due to COVID-19, you will be invited to participate in interactive "town hall" style meetings using video presentations. You'll be hearing more about that soon. It is exciting to be going into the future of our ministry together utilizing some new technology platforms, but always with the same goal: to glorify God, and ask God, "How can we better take care of others and ourselves?"

One of the verses of the hymn, "Gather Us In" goes like this, "Not just in buildings, small and confining, not in some heaven, light years away; here in this place the new light is shining; now is God present, and now is the day. Gather us in and hold us forever gather us in and make us your own; gather us in, all people together, the fire of love in our flesh and our bone."

Our call to be gathered as *partners in Christ's service* is so evident in our congregation's spirited worship, engaging fellowship, caring mission and outreach, and daily living. Our hearts are wide-open, celebrating the good news of God's love that transforms people's

lives. Your participation, generosity, and love continue to be crucial to forwarding our vital gospel enterprise. THANK YOU!

Faithfully,
Mike

FROM OUR MODERATOR

Mike Hennel

With a break in the hot weather upon us, we will soon begin installation of landscaping around the parking lot. Please join us right after our church service on October 18th for the parking lot dedication and to check out all of the wonderful work that has been completed at First Congregational over the summer. At that time, we will also be launching a garden memorial in the Celebration Garden surrounding the new lot. A reception will follow immediately afterwards at which food and beverages will be served. We look forward to having you and other members join us!

In addition, we plan to host both virtual and in-person town hall meetings starting later in October. Our goal is to share the highlights of our accomplishments over the year and to discuss some of our plans for 2021. Since feedback is critical, we will keep the number of participants in each meeting to around 10 to foster more effective and interactive communication among attending members. Please look out for the town hall invitation and sign up form that will be sent to you next week.

May God bless you all and keep you and your families healthy and safe!

THE TRUSTEES

Margaret Chittaro, Tracy D'Alessandro, Bob Kanzler, Gail Ogdon, Carrie Stone, Bob Tracy

We are looking forward to gathering together in our church building this month! Tree Town is back in session and all in all it's beginning to feeling a bit like our pre-COVID days.

Our efforts continue to be focused on setting a plan for maintaining and updating the building for our own use as well as our current and future tenants. We are also continuing to pursue our technology future as there are so many virtual components to consider. DeColores and our video worship services have been a great start. Watch for some next steps forward with our Stewardship Campaign and upcoming holiday programs.

We plan to continue guiding and managing the church with a "stay the course" mindset to bring us together in our spiritual space.

THE DIACONATE

Fritz Baumgartner, Will Baumgartner, Don Haraf, Carolee Luppino, Claire Richter



We are preparing to move worship services indoors beginning on **October 11**. Naturally, things will look a little different. The current State of Illinois guidelines allow for a maximum of 50 people for an indoor service.

We will be asking people to wear masks, we will be doing light health screening as people come into the sanctuary, and we will be practicing social distancing by roping off every other pew and maintaining 6 foot distances between families. Ushers will be there to assist as we get used to a new style of worship service. We thank everyone for your understanding and cooperation as we adapt to the "new normal."

BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

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



Children's Sunday School Ministry

The suspension of inside church services and Sunday School due to the coronavirus outbreak has opened the door to a new way for children to experience Sunday School. As a result of the great turn out of children attending our Zoom Sunday School, we will continue to

offer it through Zoom's virtual platform.

While in-person Sunday activities are slowly returning with a limited number of persons participating, your children are invited to participate in virtual Sunday School. Keeping your whole family connected to First Congregational Church in Elmhurst, Illinois, from anywhere in the world through virtual Sunday School is our goal during this fall season. Our teaching team regularly prepares to help children stay connected and grow their faith.

Virtual Sunday School takes place at 10:30 AM central time on Sundays. Lessons are geared for children in kindergarten through 5th grade. If your children are not participating already, you can register them by going to our church website and clicking Children and Youth and you will find the Children Virtual Sunday School registration. elmhurstucc.org



Children and youth are invited to participate in our first annual autumn Pumpkin Carving Extravaganza.

1. Pick up your pumpkin at church on **Sunday, October 18**
2. Carve and decorate your pumpkin
3. Bring back to church on **Sunday, October 25** to display outside
4. All attending church members will vote for their favorite on their way out of church

**Get creative while carving and decorating your pumpkins.
Great prizes to be won!**

Magi Star Gift Giving Project

As we live and give during this pandemic, we find that our world is in more NEED than ever for our annual Magi Star Gift Giving Project for children in two Chicagoland communities. Although the method of signing up for stars will be somewhat different, we will use all the precautions necessary for you, the GIVERS, to be safe.



The program will kick off on **Sunday, October 18th**, with most stars accessible in a Sign-Up Genius that will be made available to all the members and friends of First Congregational. There will be a small number of stars available in the foyer for those who are attending the in-person worship service and would like to pick some up on their way out on Sundays. You can also call the church and let us know you would like some stars, and we will sign you up.

We recommend the gift prices not to exceed \$25.00 value. All the gifts should be left unwrapped and put in gift bags and should be brought to First Congregational no later than **December 13th**.

We will also have gift pick up at your front doors starting in November. Please don't let this pandemic stop you from giving to families that are so in need. Thank you!



Youth Group Gathering

Our October Youth Gathering will take place **on Sunday, October 25th, at 4:00 pm**. Both Middle and High School students are invited to attend. We will have a special guest join us plus talk to us about having a haunted heart. Scripture tells us to guard your heart above all else because from it flows the issues of life.

Please mark your family calendars and have your Youth and their friends join us.

THE MISSION BOARD

Mary Moy-Gregg, Amy Reshamwala, Jan Russell, Allen Sloma, Diane Wells



synapse
HOUSE

7th Annual Synapse House Gala!

Saturday, October 3, 2020

4:30 PM - 5:30 PM CST

Pick up dinner at Livia Elmhurst or Geneva, IL (optional)

7:00 PM - 8:00 PM CST

Live stream program including mobile silent auction, music, Members sharing their stories and Fund the Need.

This is a free virtual event. Register in advance and we will email you the link to join the Gala live stream broadcast.

More information on their website:

<https://synapsehouse.salsalabs.org/7thannualharvestmoongala/index.html>

MUSIC MINISTRY

Jim Molina, Minister of Music

Typically in the past, the choir was given a summer off and the fall season would bring the excitement of new music, plans of a potential Christmas Cantata, and the acquainting of long friendships with the possibility of welcoming new members. But God's plans are always greater than ours, infinitely more interesting and sometimes baffling, if not frustrating.

A worldwide pandemic has altered our ways of life, our routines, our plans, our goals. Add to that, a world on the brink of racial divide and cultural dynamics that are fueling internal unrest and fires that are consuming precious land and destroying people's lives. How can a music ministry compete with such headlines and how can we bring comfort to anyone in times such as this? These are the things I think of day in and day out as I prepare music each week. Whether the song is delivered by a single, soulful voice, or a quartet of resounding harmonies and counterpoint, I consider the words that may be heard and offer comfort. I think of the melody that can penetrate the subconscious in such a way that later in the week you may find yourself humming the tune or hearing it in an afterthought. I consider how you or anyone else visiting our site might hear a hymn that draws upon some old and inspiring memories, perhaps when you sang in the congregation or in the choir.

God continues to teach us to evolve and live in a world that is not ours, a world in which we must continuously adapt and find new ways to extend God's grace, love, and kindness. As the choir begins to rehearse through ZOOM sessions, we will learn how to adapt and raise our voices in joyous community once again! As music continues to be recorded we will strive to bring our congregation, which has now extended throughout the world, music that soothes the soul. These times are challenging, but as a pianist my greatest improvements came through the most challenging pieces.

I have faith that God will deliver us to a more promised land of enlightenment as a result of this period of growth. I have faith that the church will deliver on its promise to aid those who are suffering and in need no matter the cost. And in all this I have faith that the song will play on in the deepest part of our souls and bring us comfort in the night, knowing that it is all in God's hands. May God bless all the Music Ministries of the world that are striving to imagine new ways to lift their music. Peace.

GREEN TEAM

Karen Pachyn

Green Team Tip of the Month – October

A reminder to please don't throw your pumpkin in the regular trash. It's a great addition to your compost pile. If you don't have a compost pile, consider taking it to a "Pumpkin Smash". The events are sponsored by SCARCE and are held in a variety of sights throughout the state. Elmhurst's is Saturday, November 7th from 9 to Noon at the Elmhurst Public Works Garage at 985 S. Riverside Drive. For other locations, check the SCARCE website: <https://www.scarce.org/pumpkins/> This is an outdoor event with very minimal contact so it will go on again this year despite COVID.



Why is this important? Decomposing organic materials cause greenhouse gas emissions in landfills. Landfills are the third largest producer of methane gas in the U.S. so it's important to do what we can to reduce the output. Also, pumpkins are 90% water and putting them in a landfill will contribute to leaching pollutants into our

environment. Pumpkins can be very damaging in landfills but are very nutrient rich and can become a valuable soil amendment when allowed to compost.

So turn your pumpkin into a treat, not a trick. Happy Halloween from the Green Team!

A special note: SCARCE moved into a new location this year. If you're looking for them, you can now find them at 800 S. Rohlwing Road (Rte 53) Unit D, Addison.

ERRAND-RUNNING MINISTRY



During this difficult time of limited mobility for so many due to the Coronavirus, our church has put in place an Errand-Running Ministry. Effective immediately, any members needing to have errands run like grocery shopping, picking up dry cleaning, picking up prescriptions, walking your dog can call one of the below dispatchers and they will assign your errand(s) to one of our very own church members to be your runner. Everyone that is available to be an errand runner is a church member that you can trust. Drop-offs will be made at your door with no close contact needed.

Dispatchers to Call:

Tracy D'Alessandro 630-344-5861

Dorothy Hamby 630-779-6294

Carrie Stone 773-569-2444

Margaret Chittaro 312-961-8067

If you are able to help be an Errand Runner, please contact Martha Mendoza.

CELEBRATIONS AND CONCERNS



3 Abby Brigman

3 Tom McCann

6 Bob Tracy

6 Claire Ogdon

10 Jan Davis

10 Roger Kolvitz

16 Carina Kanzler

17 Carrie Stone

20 Jack Achen

24 Karen Pachyn

25 Julia Stone

30 Jennifer Hennen



Basia Rudy
 Amy Lynch
 Ken Stratton
 Michael Magana
 Fred "Rick" Leppien
 Ed & Cheryl Eckert

Susan Graybill
 Linda Donahue
 Jan Russell
 Louis Reed
 Phyllis Crosley
 Tom Myers

Calvin Jackson, Sr.
 Mary Loss
 Angela Burrell
 Joyce Stevens
 Gayle Dawson
 Jim Mowers

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

October	Event/Room	Time
4	At Home Worship - See website for bulletin and audio.	
4	Zoom Coffee Fellowship	9:00 - 9:30 a.m.
4	In-Person Worship Service	10:00 a.m.
4	Zoom Children's Sunday School	10:30 a.m.
11	At Home Worship - See website for bulletin and audio.	
11	Zoom Coffee Fellowship	9:00 - 9:30 a.m.
11	In-Person Worship Service	10:00 a.m.
18	At Home Worship - See website for bulletin and audio.	
18	Zoom Coffee Fellowship	9:00 - 9:30 a.m.
18	In-Person Worship Service	10:00 a.m.
18	Zoom Children's Sunday School	10:30 a.m.
18	Confirmation Class	4:00 p.m.
25	At Home Worship - See website for bulletin and audio.	
25	Zoom Coffee Fellowship	9:00 - 9:30 a.m.
25	In-Person Worship Service	10:00 a.m.
25	Zoom Children's Sunday School	10:30 a.m.
25	Youth Group Gathering	4:00 p.m.

TITHE.LY GIVING



Give with Tithe.ly from anywhere at any time. Download the Tithe.ly giving app to get started. You'll find First Congregational United Church of Christ, Elmhurst, IL. Your gift is safe and secure and goes directly to our church. More information is available online at <https://get.tithe.ly>.



Partners in Christ's Service

Church Leaders

Rev. Dr. Michael Daly, Sr. Minister
Martha Mendoza, Minister of Christian Education
Jim Molina, Minister of Music
Rev. Dr. Ernest H. Huntzinger, Emeritus Minister

Church Office Staff

Heather Cross, Bookkeeper
Kim Brigman, Office Assistant

Contact Us

Phone: 630-832-2580
Fax: 630-832-9142
Email: elmhurstucc@sbcglobal.net
Website: www.elmhurstucc.org
Facebook: [First Congregational UCC Elmhurst](#)
