

Tree of Life Newsletter

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



MAY 2021

FROM OUR PASTOR

Rev. Mike Daly

Pentecost is May 23rd this year. Pentecost is a celebration day with deep roots in our Judo-Christian heritage. In the Christian church, after the time of Jesus, we consider Pentecost to be a kind of “birthday” celebration for the church. The day the Holy Spirit descended and reconstituted a beleaguered band of Jesus’ followers into one “new” body, the church. The story comes to us from the New Testament in the second chapter of Acts.

You might recall, in the Jewish tradition, Pentecost always came 50 days after the celebration of Passover. *Passover* celebrates God’s miraculous deliverance of the Israelites out of bondage in Egypt. *Pentecost* originally was a “first fruits” of the harvest celebration. Later in the tradition, it was also a time to celebrate the gift of the Ten Commandments (God’s law) delivered to Moses.

In the time of Jesus, Pentecost brought Jewish people from all over to Jerusalem to celebrate. So it is interesting that on this particular day, at least at the start of the day, it is anything but a celebration for the earlier followers of Jesus. The Jewish festival instills certainty about the cyclical nature of the natural world and the reliable nature of God’s Word. It is a celebration of future hopes and dreams. The death of Jesus put that future in doubt for this tiny group of despondent souls.

Then, when you least expect it, God breaks in. God stirs. God restates promises. They remembered what God promised from the beginning. The harvest will always come, and God’s Word and the gospel will always be with them. This time feels like the first time these disciples really understood the meaning of Pentecost. Pentecost is a great reminder that a new age has come upon us. God is constantly doing a new thing with us. Happy Birthday, Church!

Faithfully,
Mike

FROM OUR MODERATOR

Todd Hicks

Moderator Minute - What's your Mission?

The Green Team was established in 2007 to make First Church facilities and Congregation more environmentally friendly and work with other Churches and Organizations to advocate for better use of environmental resources. Your Green Team received their DuPage County "Earth Flag" in 2012. First Congregational Elmhurst is know as the "Green" Church in the Elmhurst/DuPage County area.

The Green Team is coming off it's best Seedling Sale to date, now the plants have to be received, sorted and then brought to the curb for pick up. The Green Team needs your help to sort the plants into orders May 7th at 9AM and bring to the Parking lot to distribute May 8th from 8AM to 1 PM. Look for the sign-up genius the Church sent out 4/26. Please sign-up early so the Green Team can sleep.

As many of your have heard, De Colores is set for in person classes August 2nd through the 6th. This youth program has been a success for our church but it is an **All-Church** event. It has only been successful because of everyone efforts, Christian Ed cannot do this alone. Please review the sign-up genius and start filling their volunteer positions. If you cannot help during the week, please reach out to Margaret Bixler at margaret.bixler@gmail.com. Volunteers are needed for set up and take down before and after the event as well. Thank you for your help manning these great events!

Sincerely,

Todd Hicks

THE DIACONATE

Don Haraf, Calvin Jackson, Carolee Luppino, Claire Richter, Allen Sloma

The Deacons would like to encourage our congregation's participation in Sunday services by doing scripture readings. People can sign up for future Sundays by going to the church website under MEMBERS and they will see the box for Scripture Readers or by clicking the link below. Instructions are listed for readers who will do the readings in person or prerecord them, if readers will not be able to attend that particular Sunday.



<https://elmhurstucc.org/members/scripture-readings/>

A similar sign up schedule has been created for the Deacons to sign up several months in advance to make sure at least one Deacon is available for service.

BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

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



Confirmation is a lifelong process of maturing in the Christian faith. Families begin this journey when they make promises to God at a child's Baptism, and it continues throughout one's life.

For the last two years, the below-mentioned youth have participated in intentional studies discussing growing their faith and familiarizing themselves with Christian beliefs and practices.

*Nicholas Bresnahan
Keil Rosen
Sam Rosen*

Tomorrow, Sunday, May 2, these young men will be declaring their commitment to continue growing their faith during our 10:00 am in-person worship service. Please accept this invitation to join us in worship to carry out this rite of passage as a Congregation. Please plan on joining us on this special day where your participation is crucial to carrying out this Congregational effort. Thank you, Martha Mendoza

YOUTH SERVICE PROJECT Saturday, May 8, 2021

Our church's Green Team will be distributing the plants sold in this year's plant sale. Volunteers are needed to help get the plants to the different people picking up in their cars.



Parents, please talk to your youth about coming and helping out from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm. This is a great social distancing volunteer opportunity. Hope your youth can join us.



We will continue to carry out Children's Sunday School during May using a hybrid model. **Children can attend Sunday School in person at 10:00 AM or via Zoom at 10:15 AM. We will continue this throughout May.** We hope that parents and grandparents continue to encourage their children to join in on the learning and fun!

THE MISSION BOARD

Mary Moy-Gregg, Gail Ogdon, Amy Reshamwala, Jan Russell, Diane Wells



It is a tradition at the church to have a Teen-Parent Connection collection from Mother's Day to Father's Day. This year we are excited to have a parent come and speak again for Mother's Day.

Teen-Parent Connection Mission Statement:

To serve the community through education on the realities and responsibilities of teenage pregnancy, and through long-term assistance to parents for their development of self-esteem, parenting skills, and empowerment toward self-sufficiency.

Their programs benefit DuPage County. **There are three ways to offer your support:**

1. Tithely - Please specify Teen-Parent Connection
2. Teen-Parent Connection has a wishlist with Amazon. Here is the link: <http://a.co/fmWYUjn> They have items as low as \$4.00.
3. Mail a check to the church and someone from our mission board will drop off all money collected at the end of the collection period. Please specify Teen-Parent Connection in the memo line of your check.

Checks can be mailed to:

First Congregational Church
Attention: Heather Cross
235 S. Kenilworth Ave
Elmhurst, IL 60126

MUSIC MINISTRY

As we transition from spring to summer we see that some things have not changed...we are still a church! In spite of the restrictions we have been given to meet face to face and sing together, still our spirit prevails!



Choir ZOOM rehearsals on Thursday evenings bring together a group of people that I would like to call "family". Our mics are muted while we sing and "warm up" to pre-recorded music but when the work is done we unmute ourselves and open ourselves up to the spirit that God delivers. This spirit of "companionship" as Jim Mowers calls it, brings joy and deep and lasting connection to each of us. There is still laughter and stories, concerns and prayers, and spontaneous conversation that reminds us how nice it is to be in each other's company.

The universe has given us much to reflect on this past year but we are learning to grow, adapt, and change. But I am reminded that the one thing that never changes is the need to be together. May the music of the Music Ministry continue to bring you peace, joy, love, and hope!

GREEN TEAM
Karen Pachyn



IT'S ALMOST TIME FOR OUR ORGANIC SEEDLINGS SALE!!

Saturday, May 8
9:00 AM to Noon

If you preordered organic seedlings, you will be able to pick them up on Saturday, May 8 between 9:00 and noon. Seedlings, compost and growing mix will be available for a touchless pick up in our parking lot. In order to avoid lines, we are asking gardeners to make their pick ups in the following time slots based on the first initial of your last name:

9AM to 10AM	Last names beginning A thru H
10AM to 11AM	Last names beginning I thru O
11AM thru Noon	Last names beginning P thru Z

If you wished you had ordered more, or didn't get a chance to place an order before our March 31st deadline, additional organic vegetable and herb seedlings, as well as a limited number of pollinator plants, will be available for purchase. Bags of organic compost and growing mix will also be available. May 8th is the day before Mother's Day and plants make a great gift for Mom so come and pick up a few extras. And all proceeds benefit church missions so bring a friend as we'd love to sell so many plants that we run out early! Please wear a mask. Cash or checks only. Credit cards will not be accepted.

This doesn't happen without a lot of peoples' help so a big thanks to those who have already signed up to participate. **If you have not yet done so, please take a look at the Sign-Up Genius and volunteer.** <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e0c4facaf28a31-organic>. We especially need some early birds who are willing to work between 7:30 and 9:00 AM Saturday to help us move over 1,800 plants and 160 bags of compost and growing mix into the parking lot. I know we can do this, but it will take everyone's support. Thanks so much for getting us this far. Our preorders were a huge success which is why we have so much to move!

Refine Your Recycling Skills

I recently attended a Zoom presentation by Kay McKeen, Founder and Executive Director of SCARCE (School and Community Assistance for Recycling and Composting Education) on "Recycling in DuPage County". You may recognize SCARCE as the organization that awarded us our Earth Flag. Those of you who have heard Kay speak at our church know how extraordinarily knowledgeable she is about all things recycling. She shared with



us some ways that we can refine our recycling skills. Most of these guidelines are driven by the machinery at the recycling plants.

- Never put plastic bags or fabrics in recycling. They get caught in the machinery.
- If you have plastic bottles with small plastic lids like those that come on water bottles, put the lids on the bottles before disposing of them. Loose lids should not go in recycling as they just fall thru the conveyor belts at the recycling plants.
- Large plastic lids like those on peanut butter jars can go into recycling loose.
- On glass jars, leave the metal or aluminum lids off, but put them in recycling. A huge electro magnet will pick up the metal and an eddy current will separate out the aluminum. You don't need to take the labels off your jars or scrub them absolutely spotless. Spatula clean is adequate.
- Don't crush your cans. If you do the optical scanners can't find them.
- Strawberry baskets aren't recyclable as they get tangled in the equipment.
- The little tables found in pizza boxes don't get recycled either. They are too small. And don't put the greasy pizza box in with your paper recycling, but it can go in your compost pile.
- Despite being marked with a #1, black plastic like that used in take-out containers, is not recyclable. There is no market for it.
- Spray and pump nozzles are not recyclable.
- Bowling balls, CFL's, batteries, aerosol cans, motor oil or anything else that could potentially cause a fire or explode in the recycling process should be separated out.

Kay encouraged us to remember the motto "when in doubt, throw it out" or better yet "find out" as somewhere between 25 to 55% of recycling is contaminated. Don't be guilty of "wishcycling" by putting something in your recycling barrel and hoping its okay. And become familiar with the recycling rules in your community as each one has a slightly different agreement with their garbage haulers that could affect what you should throw in your cans.

Thanks for doing your part to help our environment!

Karen Pachyn

Green Team – Don Haraf, Jennifer Hennen, Carolee Luppino, Chris Murray, Shirley Myers, Gail Ogdon, Claire Richter, Bob Tracy

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. 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

HERITAGE BUNCH

Heritage Bunch is once again meeting from 10:00 to noon on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month. Everyone is welcome to join us!

CELEBRATION GARDEN

Spring has Sprung! Time to Celebrate and Remember!

A reminder, First Church launched our Celebration Garden in the parking lot area for members to celebrate and remember loved ones with a permanent dedication of a garden plot or tree.

It's a wonderful way to honor a loved one, remember a passed family member, celebrate a special occasion or demonstrate a personal contribution to our stunning new garden.

Click the link below for more information on the Celebration Garden.

<https://files.constantcontact.com/140929b4401/370e88b7-b64c-4817-91a5-85ff82e7cdd0.pdf>

ELMHURST UNIVERSITY 150TH ANNIVERSARY

150th Anniversary of Elmhurst University in 2022

For the next twelve months, Elmhurst University (formerly Elmhurst College) will celebrate in a variety of ways during the lead-up of its 150th anniversary in 2022. The university has a long history with the United Church of Christ and First Congregational Church. First Congregation joyfully welcomes all of the opportunities to assist and participate in the celebrations!

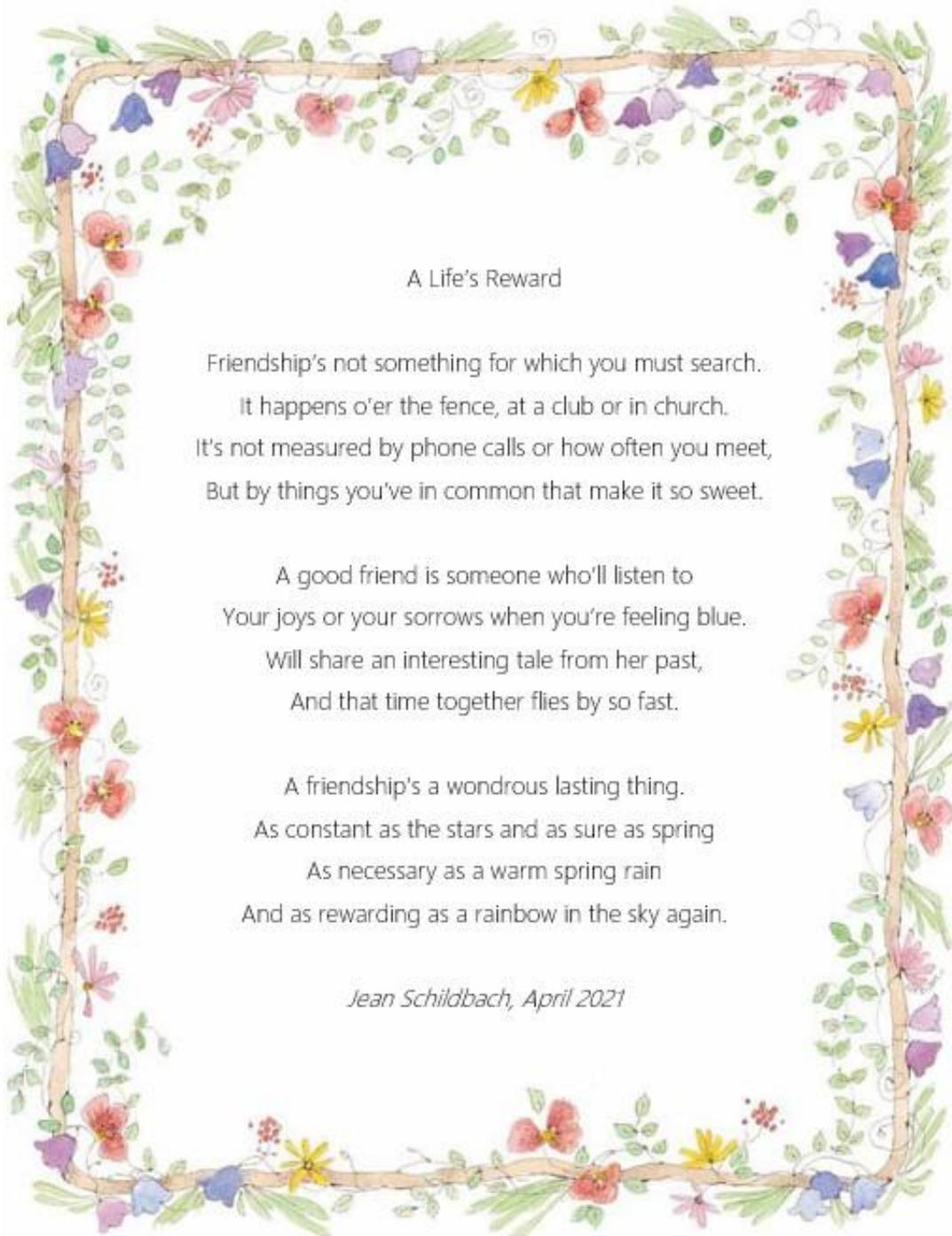


In covenant with the university, the United Church of Christ churches are asked to remember and share four things:

1. To lift up Higher Education in the local congregation and settings of faith- as we need critical minds, truth seekers, and thinking citizens in today's world.
2. Identify any alums of Elmhurst, including present students, faculty, staff, and friends of Elmhurst University.
3. Allow Elmhurst to add your faith community's name to the plaque that will be placed in Hammerschmidt Chapel at the end of the 150th year.
4. Prayer for our communities that intersect with Higher Education and faith.

First Congregational Church's name will be on the 150th Anniversary Plaque in Hammerschmidt Chapel. Look for more announcements about all the activities and events being sponsored by Elmhurst University. If you have a connection to Elmhurst University, please let us know and contact Rev. Scott Matheney in the chaplain's office. And, please pray for the university's mission of higher education. www.elmhurst.edu

A POEM FROM JEAN



A Life's Reward

Friendship's not something for which you must search.
It happens o'er the fence, at a club or in church.
It's not measured by phone calls or how often you meet,
But by things you've in common that make it so sweet.

A good friend is someone who'll listen to
Your joys or your sorrows when you're feeling blue.
Will share an interesting tale from her past,
And that time together flies by so fast.

A friendship's a wondrous lasting thing.
As constant as the stars and as sure as spring
As necessary as a warm spring rain
And as rewarding as a rainbow in the sky again.

Jean Schildbach, April 2021

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

May	Event/Room	Time
2	Worship At Home – See website for bulletin and video.	
2	Confirmation Sunday – In-Person Worship Service with Sunday School	10:00 a.m.
2	Zoom Children’s Sunday School	10:15 a.m.
8	Seedling Sale Pick-Up	9:00 a.m.- noon
8	Youth Service Project	9:00 a.m.- noon
9	Worship At Home – See website for bulletin and video.	
9	Sunday In-Person Worship Service with Sunday School	10:00 a.m.
9	Zoom Children’s Sunday School	10:15 a.m.
16	Worship At Home – See website for bulletin and video.	
16	Sunday In-Person Worship Service with Sunday School	10:00 a.m.
16	Zoom Children's Sunday School	10:15 a.m.
23	Worship At Home – See website for bulletin and video.	
23	In-Person Worship Service with Sunday School	10:00 a.m.
23	Zoom Children's Sunday School	10:15 a.m.
30	Worship At Home – See website for bulletin and video.	
30	In-Person Worship Service with Sunday School	10:00 a.m.
30	Zoom Children's Sunday School	10:15 a.m.

CELEBRATIONS AND CONCERNS



5 Diane Kafka
 10 Martha Mendoza
 12 Chloe Daly
 16 Janet Rowe

25 Ernie Huntzinger
 26 Nancy Huntzinger
 28 Phyllis Crosley
 29 Mike Hennel, Jr.



Basia Rudy
Amy Lynch
Ken Stratton
Michael Magana

Ed & Cheryl Eckert
Louis Reed
Angela Burrell
Susan Graybill

Mary Loss
Jan Russell
Shirley Myers

TITHE.LY GIVING



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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

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