

Tree of Life Newsletter

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



OCTOBER 2021

MODERATOR'S MINUTE

Todd Hicks

What's your Mission?

Membership: As I noted in the Invitation to Come to the Table, we are a Congregation of Member, not followers of a Pastor, which makes us strong and keeps us pushing forward. We are the #1 asset to our Church.

As Rev. Daly noted at his 7/11/21 sermon, our roots have shot out, we have created multiple small group programs: Choir Cantata's to the Community, De Colores, Spiritual Life Groups, Women's Quarterly Gathering. We used to have St. Johns, clothing sale and Thanksgiving Day dinner. PADS has changed in a way last year that reduced our physical participation but financially we participated as well as with EWIM. This is a small list of what we do.

Rev. John Gibbons 7/19/21 Sermon talked about Something New "Change". He talked about being water. Water can be calm; we can stay stagnant in our view of our Church and its programs. But water can also be wavey, so my question you, "How do we make ways?"

I am asking for input of what you would like to see from your Church. There is a stipulation that I also need your input of how to make it work; logistically, financially and if you would be willing to help direct it with the associated board. So what does our community (Church, Elmhurst, County) need that is not currently being fulfilled?

I look forward to your responses. Please provide ideas to elmhurstucc@sbcglobal.net.

Sincerely,

Todd Hicks

Moderator

OUR STAFF

As we navigate through these times, we want you to know your church staff is here. Our church office is closed to the general public but your staff is here ready to serve you. Below please find the contact information of each staff person. Each of us has a church email and that is the best way to reach us for church related matters.



Martha Mendoza, Director of Christian Education
Marta.elmhurstucc@sbcglobal.net
630-440-1187

Kim Brigman, Church Office Assistant
elmhursucc@sbcglobal.net

Jim Molina, Music Director
Camayal1@aol.com

Heather Cross, Bookkeeper
fcucccelmhurst@gmail.com

Voice Messages can be left on the church phone 630-832-2580 and are responded to in an expedite manner. Our Office Assistant, Kim Brigman, is at the church on Thursdays and Fridays and the entire team keeps office hours throughout the weekdays and can help address any questions and connect you to church ministries. Thank you.

PULPIT SEARCH COMMITTEE

[Fritz Baumgartner](#), [Margaret Bixler](#), [Margaret Chittaro](#), [Gayle Dawson](#), [Vanessa Jackson](#), [Bob Kanzler](#) and [Janet Russell](#)

The Pulpit Search Committee continues with the task of finding a new minister.

The landscape has changed significantly in the last five years, and there are fewer people today who are willing to take on the charge of ministry. The Illinois Conference minister assisting us with the search, Rev. Terrill Murff, reports that at least a half dozen ministers within the Illinois Conference have left the ministry. In an article from May of this year, the Religion News Service (RNS), an independent, non-denominational news organization, described the challenges ministers are facing in the times of Covid. It describes the frustration felt by several members of the clergy due to a number of factors, including a sense of isolation due to the necessity of remote worship, being unable to tend to in-person needs of congregations, and the subtle (and sometimes not so subtle) influence of the issues of the day that sometimes find their way from the street into the sanctuary. RNS also reported the startling statistic that in a survey of Protestant ministers, 29% had given "real, serious consideration to quitting being in full-time ministry within the last year." Leading a congregation has never been an easy vocational choice, but for some it is no longer what they feel they are called to do.

So while the search will not be easy, we are confident our next pastor is out there. We are recruiting with the assistance of the Illinois Conference and Rev. Murff and we are also beginning to network with those who we have worked with in the past.

Word of mouth can be a great way of generating interest. We welcome referrals from members of the congregation and remain open to suggestion.

THE TRUSTEES

Fritz Baumgartner, Margaret Chittaro, Jan Davis, Mike Hennel, Bob Kanzler, and Carrie Stone

The Trustees are preparing for the budget and planning season by asking each Board and Committee to submit 2022 budgets for discussion. As is true in our personal lives and with any organization, a budget illustrates what is most valued by the people. The final annual budget will be published in our Annual Report distributed in February 2022 and discussed at our Annual Meeting.

Our annual Stewardship Campaign is key to the church's ability to budget and plan each year. Stewardship Season kicks off on October 17th and concludes with the formal blessing of our pledges on Sunday, November 7th during a special All Saint's Worship Service. Annual giving from members and friends combined with a pledge from the Endowment Fund provides for 100% of our budgeted expenses. Many members before us have supported the church and we are blessed to carry forward their legacy of service.

Sometimes circumstances call for expenses that are out of budget! A current example are the expenses associated with edited recordings of our weekly worship available on our website. The pandemic forced us to learn how to worship virtually and we responded quite quickly with creativity and dedication. As many of us have returned to church, we are working with the Council to determine what our new normal looks like and set a budget for virtual worship in 2022. Jim Molina has shown great leadership in this area and we are very grateful. Also, we appreciate your feedback - please keep it coming.

Thank you in advance for your support of our church and our continuing mission to be Partners in Christ's Service.

THE DIACONATE

Don Haraf, Calvin Jackson, Carolee Luppino, and Claire Richter



If members would like to have fresh flowers on the altar, please contact the office to request your special occasion Sunday and to submit an announcement to be listed in the Sunday bulletin. The flowers will need to be purchased by the church member themselves. Please bring your flower arrangement to church by 9:45 a.m. to be placed on the altar for the service. We ask you take your flowers home with you when the service is over. Due to the ongoing uncertainty of COVID and to keep our members safe, coffee hour continues to be on hold. We also ask that members wear their masks during worship regardless of vaccination status.

BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

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

Children's Fall Fest

Sunday, October 17, 2021 10:00 a.m.

"In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. " Matthew 5:10



Our children's Sunday School ministry is carrying out a Fall Fest on Sunday, October 17 immediately after worship. All grandparents, parents and children are invited.

At the fest, there will be a mini pumpkin patch for the children to pick out a pumpkin, face painting and donuts. This Sunday morning Fall Fest is also a great time to bring new friends to our church so they can hear about Jesus and the things he taught the disciples.

Mark your calendars and plan on being a part of the morning fun!

Confirmation Program Kick-Off

Sunday, October 24



Our first in-person confirmation gathering is on Sunday, October 24 from 11:15 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. I would like confirmands to be present in worship also on this morning. Confirmands should come to this first class with a parent. Together we will go over the schedule, mentors, and topics that will be discussed throughout the school year.

Parents please save the date on your family calendars and plan to be present at this important gathering. Thank you, Martha Mendoza

Women's Spiritual Growth Gathering

Friday, November 5 at 6:30 p.m.

Mark your calendars for our next Women's Spiritual Growth Gathering. We will come together on Friday, November 5 at 6:30 p.m. Our guest speaker is Dr. Adrienne Colemon. More details coming soon.



MISSION BOARD

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

PADS (Public Action to Deliver Shelter) Update

The Mission Board has learned from Pam Fuesz of Elmhurst Presbyterian Church that PADS will not be operating satellite locations again this year due to COVID. And she also shared that if all goes as planned, PADS will not come back to Elmhurst at all. They currently have funding until March 2022 to keep the guests in the hotels which have been used as safe, temporary shelters during COVID. They are hoping the purchase of a hotel, to become a permanent Interim Housing Center (IHC) in Downers Grove, will be complete in the spring and allow the program to continue to operate as it has been during the pandemic.



The model of hotel-based shelter has demonstrated proven health, wellness, and security benefits. Providing a private room with washroom has proven to reduce the risk of infectious illnesses spreading to families, volunteers, caseworkers, and health care providers. Investing in the IHC provides an asset to help end homelessness in our community and improve the overall health and safety of all while supporting individuals on their journey to regain long-term housing stability.

They will still have plenty of opportunities to volunteer once the hotel is purchased but have nothing for us as a group for the 2021-22 season. We will share opportunities as they are presented to us in the future. Many thanks to Terry Hennen for continuing to be our contact person with Elmhurst Presbyterian and PADS.

MUSIC MINISTRY

Jim Molina

The Music Ministry is busy with upcoming plans for music and rehearsals. Starting in October, the Chancel Choir will return to ZOOM rehearsals on Thursday evening from 7:30 – 8:30 pm. In an effort to keep all singers safe, everyone will practice and rehearse from the comfort of their home!

On Sunday, November 7th, in keeping with our monthly music and food events, Jim Molina will be presenting a lecture/recital at 11 am in the sanctuary, performing piano solo music, and piano/organ duet music. Be sure to stay after church to enjoy refreshments and this intimate concert. In honor of “All Saints Day” there will be music that will reflect that spirit!

The Music Ministry is also putting together a unique Christmas Cantata that will feature bell players Mary Grittani and Jo Chiko, violinist, Daniel Ziesemer, organ and piano instrumentals as well as Dave Benziger on the electric guitar! Did we mention that there would also be songs sung by various ensembles and soloists?! Be sure to be there on Sunday, November 28th as we celebrate the first Sunday of Advent with this musical celebration.

Jim Molina is now the accompanist for the Tower Chorale in Western Springs. Under the direction of Patrick Godon, Jim will be accompanying all rehearsals and performing live in their concerts. For those of you who may not know...this choir was created by former music director, Jim Winfield.

As always we look forward to delivering music each and every Sunday.

GREEN TEAM

Karen Pachyn

Green Team Tip of The Month - October 2021



Litter. It's ugly. It's dirty. Nobody likes it but everyone sees it around their neighborhood, school, or workplace. A lot of us see it while walking or driving and think "Who threw that soda bottle/candy wrapper/chip bag there?". But hey! You can do something about that litter. That may sound like a big task – one you can't fix on your own. It's true, you can't pick up every last piece of litter you see. Your normal morning walk could be never-ending if you do. That's where SCARCE's #PickUp5 initiative comes in. Here's what SCARCE is asking you – as a citizen of DuPage County – and the world – to do: Just Pick Up 5 – Five pieces of litter. Every time you go on a walk, are at the park, or a soccer game (you get the idea). Doable, right? For more information, see this link: <https://www.scarce.org/pick-up-5/>

Note that SCARCE is asking people to take photos of themselves holding up five fingers and their five pieces of litter to share on Facebook, Instagram and/or Twitter. Let's do something similar ourselves. If you send me (Karen Pachyn) your photos, we'll put them on the Green Team Bulletin Board. It could be fun and the Bulletin Board could use some updating!

HERITAGE BUNCH

Greetings ...

We are called the Heritage Bunch
We meet 10 to Noon ...yes, just before lunch
Two Wednesdays a month and we really have fun
It's interesting talk ... from when we start till we're done!

We solve the world's problems, Of each other we care
We talk and we laugh and we end with a prayer.

If you're looking for a group, but you don't just know where
There's nothing we'd like better than to have you right there.

Come join us ...
2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month
10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

PASTORAL CARE

Rev. Jan Davis

Caring for One Another

Supporting our members during everyday occurrences, ailments, and even the passing away of a loved one is highest among our calling as a church. During this period of a pastoral search, Rev. Jan Davis, Rev.

Jorge Morales, and Martha Mendoza will be available for pastoral care. They will be reaching out to those of us that have enjoyed regular pastoral visits and for any emergency that may arise.



If you have any pastoral needs, please don't hesitate to contact the church office at 630-832-2580.

CELEBRATIONS AND CONCERNS



3 Abby Brigman

10 Jan Davis

20 Jack Achen

3 Tom McCann

10 Roger Kolvitz

24 Karen Pachyn

6 Bob Tracy

16 Carina Kanzler

25 Julia Stone

6 Claire Ogdon

17 Carrie Stone

30 Jennifer Hennen



Janet Brown

Dan Dallas

Louis Reed

Angela Burrell

Mary Loss

Basia Rudy

Phyllis Crosley

Janet Rowe

Bob Tracy

TITHE.LY GIVING and AMAZON SMILE



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.



Support First Congregational each time you make a purchase on Amazon. Sign up and shop at smile.amazon.com and a portion of your purchase will be donated back to First Congregational *at no cost to you*. This is an easy way for us to earn some extra money! Please make sure you sign up to participate. Thank you!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

| October | Event/Room | Time |
|---------|--|-------------------------|
| 3 | In-Person Communion Worship Service with Sunday School | 10:00 a.m. |
| 3 | Oktoberfest Celebration | 11:00 a.m. |
| 7 | Zoom Choir Rehearsal | 7:30 – 8:30 p.m. |
| 10 | In-Person Youth-Led Worship Service with Sunday School | 10:00 a.m. |
| 13 | Heritage Bunch – Parlor | 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. |
| 14 | Zoom Choir Rehearsal | 7:30 – 8:30 p.m. |
| 17 | In-Person Worship Service with Sunday School- Stewardship Kick-Off | 10:00 a.m. |
| 17 | Children’s Fall Fest | 11:00 a.m. |
| 21 | Zoom Choir Rehearsal | 7:30 – 8:30 p.m. |
| 24 | In-Person Worship Service with Sunday School | 10:00 a.m. |
| 24 | Confirmation Gathering | 11:15 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. |
| 27 | Heritage Bunch – Parlor | 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. |
| 28 | Zoom Choir Rehearsal | 7:30 – 8:30 p.m. |
| 31 | In-Person Worship Service with Sunday School | 10:00 a.m. |

First Congregational United Church of Christ
Partners in Christ's Service

Pastoral Care

Rev. Janet Davis
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Church Staff

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Jim Molina, Director of Music
Heather Cross, Bookkeeper
Kim Brigman, Office Assistant

Contact Us

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