MODERATOR’S MINUTE

Todd Hicks

Welcome to February, time is flying by already. As I noted in the January newsletter our church is moving and shaking. Boards and committees have worked hard to provide a budget for the 2022-23 year. The Nominating Committee is working on filling board positions and the Annual Report is being prepared.

Please mark your calendar for February 27 for the Annual Meeting, which follows the church service. It is important to have a strong in-person representation of our congregation to approve the annual budget. As a bonus, our Christian Ed board and youth will serve a delicious pancake breakfast again.

I want to share a bit of our church history with you for a moment. Our church was founded in 1889. It was the first English speaking church in a German community, and it was planned to be a home for many denominations. In 1914 the Community House was dedicated. Its purpose was to be a common meeting place, especially for young people of the community. It provided space for Sunday School, Missionary Society, Women’s Aid Society, Men’s Club and Women’s Club. But why a history lesson? Have you ever talked to our long-term members? Members who have fond memories of the Community House as it supported them through years of Sunday school, choir, and other youth services. I want to stress this church, our church, was established FOR the community. If you take the time to read the “About Us” section of the church website, you will have a good understanding of what’s coming next.

Reverend Daly noted in his farewell sermon on July 11, our community roots continue to shoot out, we have created multiple group programs: spiritual life groups, Green Team, women’s gatherings, adult studies, De Colores and choir cantatas, all promoted to the community. We have served St. Johns in Chicago with clothing drives and Thanksgiving day dinners. PADS, although unable to support physically at this time, we still support financially, and we still participate in EWIM.

Reverend John Gibbon’s sermon on July 18 was titled “Something New” and about change. He talked about being water. He noted that water can be calm; we can become comfortable, stay stagnant in our view of our church, ourselves, and our community. But water can also be wavy. My question to you is how do we make waves? In 1914 a community center was
dedicated, 1971 an addition was added, 1979 the creation of the Endowment fund. In 2007 the Green Team was an idea and passion. Now our Green Team is requested to participate in the Elmhurst Cool Cities Coalition and they have helped to reduce our utility bills while making our church “green”. In 2015, De Colores was one person’s passion that has involved our entire church and last year was host to 89 kids from preschool to 5th grade. We are home to a preschool, Alcoholics Anonymous, bridge groups, car groups, dance groups, football groups, STEM participants, piano lessons, cello lessons and most recently Elmhurst Children’s Theater (ECT). ECT started renting space from us last fall because one member took an opportunity to promote the church she loves.

So how can we make waves? With you, our members. What does our community need? What does society need? What do you need in your everyday life? It’s as simple as offering rental of the facility for the boy/girl scout troop or a family get-togethers. But if you have that passion like so many before us, we want to hear your ideas and will need your time to bring the passion to life. I look forward to hearing what you come up with.

I want to close with the way Reverend Gibbon did July 18 because it has stuck in my head for the last six months.

*Be water my friend!*

**ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING & PANCAKE BREAKFAST**

*Everyone is invited to our annual meeting and delicious pancake breakfast. Come join us to reflect on last year’s ministries and accomplishments. We will also be reviewing and acting on the 2022 budget. A quorum of members is necessary to conduct church business. Your free will offering for the pancake breakfast will benefit our 2022 work trip to Puerto Rico. Thank you!*

**WORSHIP MINISTRY**

Martha Mendoza, Jim Molina, Margaret Chittaro and Don Haraf
The Worship Team continues to meet every Wednesday to plan out worship service.

Winter in-person worship continues ... and we look forward to seeing you every Sunday! While the snow continues to fall, please be assured we are taking extra precautions to clear the parking lot and sidewalks of all snow.

The parlor continues to be open before and after worship for fellowship and coffee. It is important we continue fellowship with our church family ... our winters are long, but at least we have each other!

We continue to seek out guest ministers that inspire us. Our Director of Christian Education and Music Director are perfect examples of speakers that motivate and encourage our spiritual growth.

If you feel so moved to share your gifts with the congregation by preaching on Sunday, please reach out to a member of the Worship Team.

PULPIT SEARCH COMMITTEE
Fritz Baumgartner, Margaret Bixler, Margaret Chittaro, Gayle Dawson, Vanessa Jackson, Bob Kanzler, and Janet Russell

After receiving profiles from several candidates before the holidays, Zoom interviewing most of them, and having a second interview with one, the search committee agreed that none of the candidates we reviewed were a good fit for our congregation. While we are quite anxious to introduce our recommended candidate to the congregation, we want to take the time to get it right.

We are pleased to report, however, that there continues to be interest in our position. By the time you are reading this, we will have had four interviews in January, and at least two of those candidates have been invited back for second interviews. We look forward to more in depth conversations with those candidates.

TRUSTEES
Fritz Baumgartner, Bob Kanzler, Carrie Stone, Chair

The 2022 budget is balanced and was approved at the Church Council meeting in December. We have set aside funds from our 2021 budget surplus in a restricted fund designated for ministerial salary. This amount will be combined with funds from the Endowment to provide for a full time minister for a 3-year period. This surplus was substantially due to reduced ministerial expenses and a surplus in non-member giving.

The church is in a strong financial position in 2022 to fund our annual baseline expenses thanks to generous stewardship from members, friends, and our Endowment Fund. Nearly all of our $330,000 annual operating budget provides for our staff and building. For the coming year, we have also set aside $2500 to fund outreach (increased from $0 last year) and $3,600 for technology expenses, such as worship recordings (an 80% increase over the budget for 2021). We continue to use funds from the sale of our parking lot to complete long deferred maintenance projects.

The Trustees are planning for strategic upgrades to our facility - including our physical building and our virtual spaces - to support the programming needs of our ministries. We seek input from our members, with a particular interest in financially supporting priorities and projects.
that are oriented toward outreach. We know that taking our church into the future will take creativity, passion, and investment. We have lots of experience to show us that the passion and energy of individuals in our congregation can create amazing programs for our community, such as De Colores and The Green Garden Fair. Please talk to us about funding your ideas for building a future full of life and faith, connection and love at church!

BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
Brian Brigman, Dorothy Hamby, Chair; Tammy Hicks, Vanessa Jackson, Martha Mendoza, Lynette Rosen, Jeff Sloma, Karen Sloma

**God’s Love Never Fails**
During this month of February, our children’s Sunday classes will be focusing on the promises of God that never fail them. In Sunday School we will be learning from scriptures and biblical stories that speak of love.

As part of our experiential learning during this month, we will be baking cookies, making hot chocolate and preparing a fruit salad.

Parents and grandparents, please mark your family calendars and bring your children to Sunday School and let us support you in the faith formation for your children. Martha Mendoza

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**Did you know that praying together as a family during meal times role models for your children a lifetime faith practice?**

*It’s never too late to start a mealtime prayer tradition.*

**Confirmed in Christ**
During the month of February, confirmands are encouraged to participate in our youth-led Chili Cook-Off on Sunday, February 6 reporting to the Fellowship Hall kitchen at 8:45 a.m.

As part of confirmation requirements, confirmands are asked to attend our annual meeting to learn how our church functions. They will be given Confirmation Annual Meeting form to fill our after the meeting. The annual meeting is on Sunday, February 27, 2022 in Fellowship Hall from 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

**Please join us for our annual Chili Cook-Off fundraiser!**

**Sunday, February 6, 2022 (New Date)**
10:00 a.m. Worship
11:00 a.m. Chili Cook-Off

Come and sample the competition chili and vote for your favorite. A chili lunch will be included with your donation. A chili-to-go option will also be available.

Our chili cook-off is a perfect occasion to invite family and friends to church. Beat the winter blues and join us for this fun-filled event!
Thank you in advance for helping our youth raise funds for their 2022 work trip to Puerto Rico.

There are still a few spots remaining to enter your chili in our friendly competition. Please click the box below for an entry form.

Click HERE for Chili Cook-Off Entry Form

THE DIACONATE
Don Haraf, Calvin Jackson, Carolee Luppino, Claire Richter

Taking Down the Greens
The Deacons want to thank everyone who helped with taking down the greens. We appreciate your help!

Scripture Readers Needed
Sign up sheets are posted on the foyer bulletin board. We hope you will consider being a scripture reader as we move into 2022.

MISSION BOARD
Mary Moy Gregg, Gail Ogdon, Amy Reshamwala, Janet Russell and Diane Wells

Souper Bowl Sunday - This year Sunday, February 13 is the NFL's Super Bowl celebration and for our congregation that means our Annual Food Drive. This is the date we traditionally gather canned goods to help stock two food pantries, St Johns in the Humboldt Park neighborhood of Chicago and Elmhurst Yorkfield right here in Elmhurst. Please consider making a purchase of food items to contribute to our drive. Cash goes a long way too as the food pantries can buy goods through the Northern Illinois Food Bank at deep discounts. Though we won’t be running the Squares Game this year, you may participate in the drive by making a donation by check made out to the church with “Souper Bowl Sunday” in the memo line or online at Tithe.ly. Thanks for your part in helping to stock the shelves of these two local food pantries that make a difference to people in their respective communities. Please drop off your canned food donations in the church foyer anytime between Jan 16 and Feb 13. Questions can be directed to Jan Russell at russelljanet637@gmail.com

Veterans of the Cross Christmas Fund – A very big thank you to this extremely generous congregation who contributed over $1,300 to this wonderful cause. The collection is taken up at UCC churches across the country and together we truly make a difference! Millions of dollars were distributed to assist those needing help to make ends meet, especially during the last two pandemic years. What a wonderful way to support retired clergy and staff during the giving season!

The Mission Ride Program – And another thank you to all who support the Mission Ride Program. Although officially suspended during COVID, private rides among trusted church members continued during the year. Our own little ride-share service is doing good work with your donations. This year we supported Elmhurst Walk-In Assistance Network, St Johns Food Pantry, Elmhurst Yorkfield Food Pantry, Young Life of Elmhurst and The Night Ministry. Our “What's Fair is Fare” program is getting our members to their destinations in the company of a church friend with a smile. Thanks to Linda Donahue for her coordination of the program over the years – we look forward to getting back up and running soon!
MUSIC MINISTRY
Jim Molina

The Music Ministry is continuing to make plans for the Easter Cantata that will be performed on April 10. If anyone would like to sing with the choir for this festive event, now would be the perfect time to join! We meet on Thursdays from 7:00 - 8:30 pm. All voices are welcome! We also welcome anyone who wishes to sing or perform an instrument for a Sunday service. Feel free to reach out to Jim Molina. We know this can be a cold and frigid month so we invite you to worship with us on Sundays and warm your spirit with inspiring messages and uplifting music.

GREEN TEAM
Karen Pachyn

Order Your Organic Seedlings Now!
Orders Due by the End of the Month.

The Organic Seedling Sale is up and running. Go to our online store and order your organic seedlings: https://elmhurstucc.org/store/ Don’t delay. Orders must be in no later than February 28.

West Star Organics is back as our supplier. They are a certified organic grower located in Cottage Grove, WI. They have been growing spring starter plants since the inception of the National Organic Program in 1999. With their help, we are offering all your old favorite organic plants as well as some fun new varieties in 3 1/2" pots.

Green Team Tip of the Month - February
Plastic Bottle Recycling

While avoiding single use plastic bottles is the best thing for the environment, sometimes it’s unavoidable or just too convenient to resist. And I’m sure you know that if you do use one, you should recycle it. Did you know that when you do, you shouldn’t smash or flatten it? Recycling machinery is designed to capture plastic bottles that are shaped like bottles. Flattened bottles can get mixed up with recycled paper at some facilities and contaminate the batch. Another tip – place the cap on the bottle. Loose plastic water bottle caps are too small to capture in recycling machines and usually fall through disc screens used for sorting materials and end up with the glass. Another advantage to leaving the cap on – its less likely to end up as litter. They are one of the most often found loose trash items.

This tip is from the book “Can I Recycle This? A Guide to Better Recycling” by Jennie Romer. My thoughtful husband gave it to me for Christmas and there are a lot of helpful tips in it. Look for more from the book in future newsletters.

Karen Pachyn
Green Team Chair

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 …
On the 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 will be providing pastoral care. She 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 contact the church office at 630-832-2580.

CELEBRATIONS AND CONCERNS

1 Mary Swanson 19 Steven Ogdon
2 Marcia Fleming 19 Greg Hamby
3 Julia Morrow 22 Susan Graybill
12 Cady Hamby 25 Lucas Hennen
15 Ron Tueber

Jeff Barkley  Susan Graybill
Janet Brown  Louis Reed
Angela Burrell  Janet Rowe
Katy McCann Carlson and Baby  Basia Rudy
Phyllis Crosley  Joyce Stevens & Family
Dan Dallas  Ken Stratton
Ed Eckert  Bob Tracy

MARK YOUR CALENDAR
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>February</th>
<th>Event/Room</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Choir Rehearsal</td>
<td>7:00 – 8:30 p.m.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Sunday Worship Service with Sunday School</td>
<td>10:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Annual Chili Cook-Off Fundraiser</td>
<td>11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Heritage Bunch – Parlor</td>
<td>10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Choir Rehearsal</td>
<td>7:00 – 8:30 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Sunday Worship Service with Sunday School “Souper Bowl Sunday”</td>
<td>10:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Choir Rehearsal</td>
<td>7:00 – 8:30 p.m.</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Sunday Worship Service with Sunday School</td>
<td>10:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>Heritage Bunch – Parlor</td>
<td>10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Choir Rehearsal</td>
<td>7:00 – 8:30 p.m.</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>Sunday Worship Service with Sunday School</td>
<td>10:00 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Congregational Annual Meeting with Pancake Breakfast</td>
<td>11:00 a.m.</td>
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**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.

Click HERE for more info on Tithe.ly

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**Partners in Christ’s Service**

Pastoral Care
Rev. Janet Davis
revjcd@aol.com
(630) 400-7747

Church Staff
Martha Mendoza, Director of Christian Education
Jim Molina, Director of Music
Heather Cross, Bookkeeper
Kim Brigman, Office Assistant

Rev. Dr. Ernest H. Huntzinger, Emeritus Minister

Contact Us
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