

Tree of Life Newsletter

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



MAY 2022

FROM OUR MODERATOR

Margaret Chittaro

"Spring work is going on with joyful enthusiasm." -- John Muir

As spring arrives, our vibrant church shines!

We kicked off spring with an amazing Women's Spiritual Gathering.
And we shared in a beautiful Palm Sunday Cantata.

Still to bloom at First Congregational ...

- the perennially extraordinary Green Garden Fair on May 7,
- the inspiring Puerto Rico Work Trip June 4 - 11,
- the ever bountiful church picnic on June 12,
- and the all-hands-on-deck De Colores Summer Camp August 1 - 5.

I list but a FEW of the events our boards bring to us.
And with it the opportunity to participate in God's work within our community.

We have so much to share and are blessed to share it together.

HAPPY SPRING!

SAVE THE DATE- SUNDAY, JUNE 12

Please mark your calendars and plan on joining us for our **All-Church Picnic**. This is a great opportunity to reconnect with each other and get to know new members.

Hope you can join us on Sunday, June 12 immediately following our worship service!

WORSHIP MINISTRY

Martha Mendoza, Jim Molina, Margaret Chittaro, Claire Richter

The Worship Team continues to meet every Wednesday to plan out worship service.



We were so lifted by the beautiful Palm Sunday Cantata, so moved by the Good Friday service lead by Rev. Jorge Morales, and so inspired by the beautiful Easter service. We hope you felt lifted, moved and inspired too!

It's an exciting time at First Congregational ... spring is here (almost?) and with that some special services to mark in your calendar:

May 1 we celebrate our confirmands,
May 8 we celebrate Mother's Day,
May 22 we commission the Puerto Rico Work Trip Delegation,
and May 29 we celebrate Memorial Day.

Important events that are lifted up by inspiring guest ministers.

We hope you can join us to welcome and engage with Rev. Jorge Morales, Martha Mendoza, Rev. John Gibbon, Rev. Robert Buckner and Jim Molina.

We continue to seek out guest ministers that inspire us. 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.

As a reminder, while our Sunday service is now mask-optional, we continue to monitor Illinois guidelines.

We look forward to seeing all of your faces on Sundays ... with or without masks!

FROM OUR TREASURER

Margaret Chittaro

Members of our congregation have asked we remind those that qualify, you can make **tax-free distributions** to First Congregational directly from your IRA.

Below are some of the general points to help you decide if this would be a good fit for you:

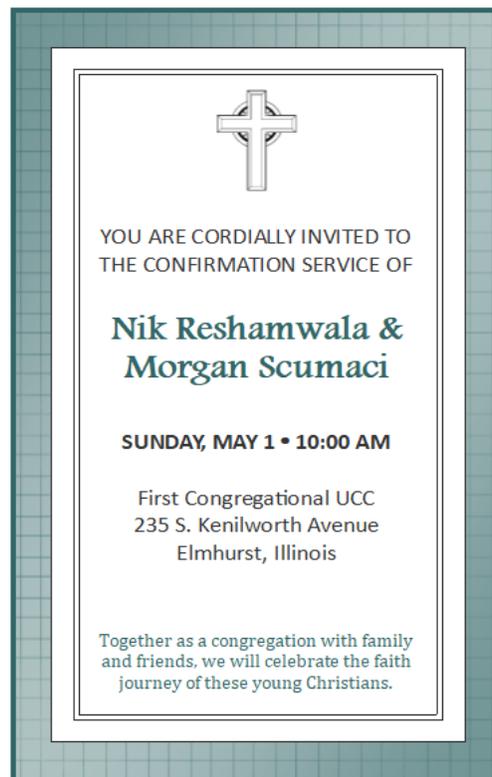
- A qualified charitable distribution is an IRA withdrawal that is paid directly from your IRA to a qualifying charity.
- IRA owners must be age 70 1/2 or older to make a tax-free charitable contribution.
- Those who meet the age requirement can transfer up to \$100,000 per year directly from an IRA to an eligible charity without paying income tax on the transaction.

- Charitable contributions can only be made from IRAs, not 401(k)s or similar types of retirement accounts.
- An IRA charitable contribution satisfies the annual minimum distribution requirement for your IRA.

Please contact your financial advisor for more information.

BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Vanessa Jackson, Martha Mendoza, Amarelis Morales-Berent, Lynette Rosen



Youth Service Project
Saturday, May 7, 2022
8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Our church is organizing one of its biggest events of the year, our Green Garden Fair.

At the event on Saturday, May 7, volunteers are needed to help with an array of tasks. Youth are especially needed to make this event happen.

Parents, please talk to your youth about being a part of this event. One of our greatest need is on the morning of Saturday the 7th from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. We look forward to our youth being a part of this day!

Commission Sunday
May 22, 2022
10:00 a.m.

“Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I; send me!”



Join us on Sunday, May 22, 2022. We will be commissioning our summer work delegation during our 10:00 a.m. worship service.

It is so important that you, our members, are present for this blessing over our work delegation that will be working in Puerto Rico during the first week of June. Please plan on joining us for this special Sunday.

THE DIACONATE BOARD

Bridget Bixler, Brian Brigman, Calvin Jackson, Raquel & William Roman

Thank you all for those who attended and brought guests during an amazing Lent and Easter worship season. It was special to worship with you all.

As we look towards May, many of the Sundays are filled with special services rejoicing our congregation and we look forward to seeing you each week:

- May 1 – Confirmation Sunday confirming our newest youth members
- May 8 – Mother’s Day celebrating the strong female role models of First Church
- May 15 – New member welcoming
- May 22 – Puerto Rico work trip group commissioning

As a reminder, we are always looking for Scripture readers...please see the sign-up sheet in the foyer and we welcome participation from the young adults of First Church.

Finally, a thank you to Terry Hennen for changing the light bulbs in the sanctuary!

MISSION BOARD

Rev. Jorge Morales, Gail Ogdon, Amy Reshamwala and Ann Thoele

For Mother’s Day we will once again be raising awareness, funds and support for Teen-Parent Connection from Mother’s Day to Father’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 and there are three ways to offer your support:

1. Tithely - Please specify Teen – Parent Connection
2. Teen-Parent Connection has a wish list 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. Checks can be mailed to (please specify Teen-Parent Connection):

First Congregational Church (Attention: Bookkeeper)
235 S Kenilworth Ave
Elmhurst, IL 60126

MUSIC MINISTRY

Jim Molina

To say that April was an exhilarating month would be quite an understatement! The Music Ministry was in full form with a Cantata, “Arise” on Palm Sunday! This special Sunday was also a dedicated Sunday toward “giving” to the Music Ministry and we successfully raised nearly \$2,000! This was also our first “livestream” Sunday service. At this point this YouTube video has received over 100 views. You can still see the service here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cguF4q1AvMY&t=4327s>

And if the Cantata was not enough the choir sang beautifully on Good Friday, lending its voice to Rev. Jorge Morales’ stirring service centered around the last seven words of Christ. You can still see the service here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cVQgyrdqOZQ&t=2422s>

And of course, the celebration of Christ’s resurrection is not complete without an Easter service and the climactic “Hallelujah Chorus” by Handel. If you were not able to make the Easter service, you can still see it here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JZdmbuXPONk&t=3077s>

As always, the Music Ministry is blessed to have such strong support from First Congregational and we humbly thank you for your generosity, your spirit, and your genuine love!

In honor of all those who contributed so much of their time and talent we wish to recognize all those in the Music Ministry who worked so tirelessly during this special month of April.

Sopranos – Michelle Maiers, Mary Swanson, Amy Lee, Carina Kanzler

Altos – Meg McGarry, Gayle Dawson, Sue Forsyth, Dorothy Hamby, Lisa Griffith

Tenors – Nick Drahos, Kevin Loeper, Jim Mowers

Basses – Al Thurkow, Ron Teuber, Martin Pacheco

Guitar – Dave Benziger

Violin – Daniel Ziesemer

Piano, Organ, Orchestrations – Jim Molina

We look forward to new and exciting services as continue to blend our voices and instruments in spirit and song! See you in May!

GREEN TEAM

Don Haraf, Jennifer Hennen, Carolee Luppino, Chris Murray, Gail Ogdon, Karen Pachyn, Claire Richter, Bob Tracy

The Green Garden Fair is Almost Here and We Need Your Help!

Our Green Garden Fair is coming soon. It will be from 9 AM to 1 PM on Saturday, May 7. If you preordered organic seedlings, they will be available for pick up at the Fair. And if you didn't, don't worry. We'll have additional plants available for purchase. We'll also have a limited number of bags of organic compost and growing mix for your garden too.



We have a great selection of exhibitors coming this year. As usual, the University of Illinois Extension Master Gardeners will be back to help you with your gardening questions. City Bee Savers will be selling raw, local honey and sharing their expertise on bee keeping. The Sierra Club and the Conservation Foundation will be joining us and you will be able to order a rain barrel. Synapse House Flour to Power Bakery will be back too selling fresh baked goods made by individuals with brain injuries. And there will be many other organizations present to help us learn how to live a more sustainable life.

Of course, this doesn't all happen without the help of volunteers. Please plan on joining us. We'll need people to set up and take down, help sell the seedlings, load bags of compost and growing mix into cars and man our church table. If you can spare a little time between 8:00 AM, until everything is cleaned up after we shut down at 1:00 PM on May 7, we'll have a role for you. We also need help sorting the seedlings into individual orders on May 6. Please look for the Sign Up Genius in your inbox, or on the church website. You can also let Karen Pachyn know you'd love to help.

Thanks for all your support. We know Saturday, May 7 will be a great day. Pray for good weather!!



Memorial Day Parade

After a two-year hiatus due to Covid, we'd like to revive our tradition of marching in the Elmhurst Memorial Day Parade. In addition to passing out De Colores fliers, historically we have also helped

clean up our city by picking up water bottles, beverage cans, paper and other recyclables from parade watchers as we marched along the route. In order to be able to do so again we need to have a pick-up truck to march with us that can display our “Clutterbug” and in which we can put the bags of recyclables we collect as they fill up. If you have a truck and would be willing to join us on Monday, May 30 in the 9:30 AM parade, please let Karen Pachyn know (630-279-7403 or pachynk1@comcast.net). And plan on joining us to march too, even if you don't have a truck. It will be fun!

Green Team Tip of the Month - May

In case you missed it – we were blessed to have Kay McKeen, Founder and Executive Director of SCARCE (School and Community Assistance for Recycling and Composting) join us for our Earth Day Service on Sunday, April 24. Kay shared with us some small things we can each do to make a big difference. She suggested that in addition to collecting bag tags and pop tops, we start collecting the following:



- 1) Wine corks – real cork ones, not plastic imitations. A variety of things can be done with these, including the construction of bird houses.
- 2) Used plastic gift cards – SCARCE makes guitar picks out of them for Veterans. Please no credit cards as they have raised numbers on them and the picks must be smooth.
- 3) Keys – they are made from metals that can be recycled
- 4) Plastic prescription medicine containers – amber colored ones only. They must be washed and dried with the lids on, and have the labels and any glue removed. The containers are being sent to Ukraine and Poland to be used in providing medicine to refugees.
- 5) Medical equipment such as wheelchairs, walkers, crutches and sterile bandages – SCARCE is also sending these to Ukraine.

Once the Green Team survives the Green Garden Fair we will set up collection bins for items 1, 2 and 3 in the Tree of Life Foyer near where we will continue to collect bag tags and pop tops. Since there is critical urgency to get items 4 and 5 above to Ukraine, we suggest you take any of those items directly to SCARCE's offices at 800 S Rohlwing Rd, Addison, IL. <https://www.scarce.org/> They would also appreciate receiving energy bars to send to feed the Ukrainians. Please note that SCARCE is closed on Mondays and accepts drop offs during these hours: 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. Tuesday - Friday and 9 - 11:30 a.m. on Saturdays. If you are bringing more than 5 boxes, please call in advance.

One of the things Kay said we should NOT collect is seashells as it removes valuable minerals and homes for hermit crabs from our waters. Please leave those souvenirs on the beaches when you visit Florida and other coastal areas.

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
from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

CHURCH APARTMENT FOR RENT



The 1-bedroom apartment in the church, located on the lower level south east side of the building, is currently vacant and available for lease. Please contact Carrie Stone (773-569-2444) or Margaret Chittaro (312-961-8067) if you would like more information.

CELEBRATIONS AND CONCERNS



10 Martha Mendoza
16 Janet Rowe
25 Ernie Huntzinger



Angela Burrell	Ed Eckert
August (Augie) Carlson	Susan Graybill
Maxine Cassidy	Basia Rudy
Dan Dallas	Bob Tracy

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

May	Event	Time
1	Confirmation Sunday Worship Service with Sunday School	10:00 a.m.
5	Seedling Sale Delivery & Set Up	8:00 a.m.
5	Choir Rehearsal	7:00 – 8:30 p.m.
6	Seedling Sale Sorting- Fellowship Hall	9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
7	Youth Service Project at the Green Garden Fair	8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
7	Green Garden Fair and Seedling Sale Pick-Up	9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
8	Mother's Day Worship Service	10:00 a.m.
11	Heritage Bunch – Parlor	10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
12	Choir Rehearsal	7:00 – 8:30 p.m.
15	New Member Sunday Worship Service with Sunday School	10:00 a.m.
19	Choir Rehearsal	7:00 – 8:30 p.m.
22	Commission Sunday Worship Service with Sunday School	10:00 a.m.
25	Heritage Bunch – Parlor	10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
26	Choir Rehearsal	7:00 – 8:30 p.m.
29	Sunday Worship Service with Sunday School	10:00 a.m.
30	Memorial Day Parade with the Clutterbug	9:30 a.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. Click [HERE](#) for more info on Tithe.ly <https://get.tithe.ly/>



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Partners in Christ's Service

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Jim Molina, Director of Music
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