

Tree of Life Newsletter

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



JUNE 2022

All-Church Picnic

Join us for our annual church picnic. Food, fellowship & fun!

**SUNDAY, JUNE 12
11:00 AM**



First Congregational UCC
235 S. Kenilworth Avenue
Elmhurst, Illinois

FROM OUR MODERATOR

Margaret Chittaro

I think everyone knows by now, how fond I am of our congregation. Made up of so many extraordinary individuals with extraordinary stories.

I want to shine a light on one of those extraordinary members .. Karen Pachyn. We all witnessed another incredibly successful Green Garden Fair. Congratulations! What everyone might not see is the seemingly endless energy, time and effort Karen Pachyn puts into this event.

Every year I am in awe.

She is knowledgeable, enthusiastic, well organized, and always grateful.

She is the first person to say it takes a team and I agree, so kudos to the entire Green Team and all the volunteers, for this accomplishment!

But a special round of applause goes to Karen Pachyn for bringing it all together and leading this event to such success!

It should make us all proud to have someone so dedicated representing our church in the community!

Thank you Karen!

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.

WORSHIP MINISTRY

Martha Mendoza, Jim Molina, Margaret Chittaro, Claire Richter

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

We continue to seek out guest ministers that move us, inspire us, and challenge 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.



PASTORAL SEARCH COMMITTEE

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

The Search Committee has considered several candidates to fill our pastor position. Every person who applied was given the opportunity to interview with the search committee, and most accepted that opportunity. We have spoken to some very interesting candidates who have much to offer, but so far none of the people we have considered have been the right fit for our congregation. Our search has exhausted the candidate pool. For the moment, at least, there are no interested candidates to be considered.

After consultation with our contact at UCC's Illinois Conference, Rev. Terrill Murff, we are temporarily softening our search. The posting on the UCC employment website has been taken down, and we will not be actively recruiting through the end of the summer. Having a posting stay up on a job board for an over-long period of time can be off-putting to candidates. We will re-post the position this fall after the candidate pool has had a chance to refresh itself.

In the meantime, we have asked Rev. Murff to keep us apprised of any new candidates who might consider a Chicago area position. We remain eager to consider interested candidates throughout the summer and beyond.

BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

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



Please keep our work trip delegation in your prayers. They will be in Puerto Rico Saturday June 4 through Saturday, June 11.

Brian Brigman
Luke Brigman
Adison Goble
Payton Hicks
Vanessa Jackson
Martha Mendoza

Amelia Morrow
Jeff Morrow
Julia Morrow
William Roman
Jack Rosen
Keil Rosen

Lynette Rosen
Sam Rosen
Olivia Scumaci
Alex Stone
Carrie Stone
Erin Stone



Summer is a fun time for kids! With vacations and outdoor activities, it's a great time to engage and connect kids with God's creation and people.

On Sunday, June 12, we kick off Summertime Sunday School. Each Sunday during the coming summer season, First Congregational will be carrying out different activities to further your children's faith formation and enjoyment of the season. We hope to see you and your kids at church during these summer months.

Our De Colores ministry celebrates its 8th year. Wow, that went fast. As we get in high gear to carry out this effort volunteers are needed.

During the month of June, youth who have signed up to be Program Aides will be meeting **from 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM on Sunday, June 26**. Youth in 7th through 12th grade must attend an informational meeting to be eligible to participate. A sign-up sheet has been established in the foyer.



THE DIACONATE BOARD

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

Thank you everyone for making all the May services so special. From Confirmation to Mother's Day to commissioning our mission trip volunteers, we loved seeing everyone on Sunday mornings.

As June begins, please mark your calendars for June 12, the All-Church Picnic where we enjoy fellowship and community and share our favorite summer recipes. Invite a friend or a neighbor and we ask you all say a quick prayer for a little sunshine, warm weather and plenty of deviled eggs!

Finally, cheers to all you super Dads...Happy Father's Day in advance!

Don't forget to sign up to read scripture during service...and we welcome participation from the young adults of First Church.

MISSION BOARD

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

The Mission Board's annual collection for Teen-Parent Connection continues through Father's Day. Please consider supporting this important organization.

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

On Wednesday, May 25, First Congregational hosted the Hinsdale Music Club's May program, "A Romantic Celebration", with outstanding piano performances by Jim Molina and Justin Gjata, an almost 20 year old pianist who will be continuing his Bachelor in Piano Performance degree at Roosevelt University. Four lovely Chopin pieces were presented and about thirty people were in attendance. Afterward the Heritage Bunch provided a luncheon which was a big hit. It was an inspirational and fun event.

An upcoming event that may be of interest to our congregation is a free concert sponsored by Western Springs Music Club, Celebrating 101 Years, on Sunday, June 12, 3 PM @ First Congregation Church of Western Springs, 1106 Chestnut. There will be instrumentalists and vocalists. Our former music director, James Winfield, will be performing along with several others. A reception will follow at the church.

Our Chancel Choir was active in May singing most Sundays and will sing through June 5, then take a summer break while they regroup and prepare for fall. During the summer soloists and ensembles will continue to provide joyful and inspirational music.

The Music Ministry appreciates and thanks you for your continued support.

GREEN TEAM

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

Thanks to Everyone Who Helped With the Green Garden Fair!

Many thanks to everyone who helped make our 2022 Green Garden Fair a huge success. After a week of really crummy weather, God blessed us with a spectacular day that brought out a big crowd of people.

It couldn't have happened without the many church members and friends who spent time Thursday morning unloading 1,998 plants, 112 bags of compost and 56 bags of growing mix from the delivery truck and then spent all day Friday sorting the seedlings.



On Saturday, you were there as early as 7:30 AM to put up signs, set up tables and tents and carry out all the seedlings to the front lawn. During the four hours of our fair, you distributed 139 orders, sold an additional \$1,742 of seedlings and added seven new names to our mailing list.

We also hosted 13 exhibitors who helped educate our visitors about how to live more sustainably. Follow up e-mails with each of them indicated they felt they really benefitted from the event and are looking forward to being back next year. A special thanks to those from our church who stayed to help clean up and put everything away. And we weren't done on Saturday. We sold our leftover plants on Sunday and raised another \$202. In the end, we only had 21 plants left over that were donated to a giving garden and will help feed those who need a little assistance.



In total, we took in \$10,481.50 and netted, after expenses, about \$4,500. This is just a little over last year's result but given that we were forced to raise the prices on our seedlings, compost and growing mix and moved the preorder deadline up from the end of March to the end of February, we can all be very proud of the results. Proceeds go into the church's general funds so we will all benefit from this project.

We can also be very proud of how we all came together to make our 8th annual Organic Seedlings Sale and 6th annual Green Garden Fair (after two years off for Covid) such a fun event. Even more important than the bottom-line financial contribution is the visibility we create for our church in our community. Fabulous work everyone. You are all amazing!

Green Team Tip of the Month – June

A graphic with an orange background. On the left, white text says "Grocery bags, aka 'tanglers,' in the biz" with a white arrow pointing to a white plastic bag. The bag has red text that reads "THANK YOU THANK YOU FOR NOT RECYCLING CURBSIDE". On the right, large white text reads "RULE #1: NO BAGS".

Never, ever, put plastic bags in your curbside recycling container. Don't put them in loose or use them to accumulate other recyclables that then go into your blue bins. Plastic bags are the number-one contaminant in recycling loads. Plastic bags act as "tanglers," getting caught in machinery and shutting down the equipment at recycling facilities. Furthermore, in some centers, when plastic bags full of recyclables arrive at a recycling facility, workers are not allowed to open the bags. That means the entire bag, even if it's full of water bottles, goes into the trash.

Grocery bags [dissolve into potentially harmful microplastics](#) and, in the case of ingestion or entanglement, [hurt and kill animals](#). They're pretty much the worst. Even though these bags are technically recyclable, you must take them to a specialized drop-off area, not put them in your curbside bin. Collect your plastic bags and bring them to Jewel Osco or most other grocery stores and deposit them in containers designed specifically for collecting them.

Though grocery bags may be poster children of plastic pollution, sandwich bags, bubble wrap, plastic wrapping and other flimsy materials that don't survive [the poke test](#) — where the plastics are soft enough to push your finger through it — are also prime candidates for commercial drop-off areas, not the residential recycling bin.

We're hoping readers of this newsletter have significantly reduced the number of plastic bags that come into their homes because you have already followed our advice to use canvas bags at the grocery store and reusable containers where you might in the past have used plastic bags. So this is just a suggestion for further fine tuning your conservation efforts!

Karen Pachyn - Source for the above information: [7 Tips to Recycle Better - Earth Day](#)

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.

CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES!

Carina Kanzler, New York University

I'm feeling so blessed and proud to be graduating with a BFA from NYU Tisch after four of the most intense, exhausting, and rewarding years! From Shakespeare to Zoom musicals to Fosse to two of my own plays being produced, I'm excited to move into the next chapter of my life. Although I'm excited to continue living and auditioning as an actor in NYC, I'm mostly looking forward to creating new work that will make more space in this industry for women, especially LGBTQ+ women, which I've realized is where both the theatre industry and my educational experience has been sorely lacking. I owe so much to everyone at First Congregational, my family, and my NYU tribe for pushing me to my fullest potential and affirming that we do have the power to be the change we want to see!

Julia Morrow, Illinois State University

I am so thankful to First Congregational for it's continued support, even as I attended Illinois State University and was unable to come to church as often! During my 4 years at school I was in the honors program for 2 of them, I completed a 500 hour internship, and I was active in Phi Gamma Nu, a business fraternity. I have finally graduated this May with a Bachelors of Social Work! I am very excited to continue my education at Loyola University Chicago this fall. I will be completing an Advanced Standing, 1 year program for my Masters of Social Work. I look forward to attending church more often since I will be closer to Elmhurst!

Erin Stone, Indiana University

Erin Stone graduated from Indiana University this spring with a degree in Economic Strategy and Public Policy. She is also on track to Commission as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Colorado National Guard this summer. She plans to relocate to the Denver area next summer after she completes her training within the Logistics Branch of the U.S. Army. We are very proud of her!

Olivia Scumaci, York Community High School

Olivia graduated this month with a membership in the National Honor Society. During her time at York, Olivia was involved and participated in many activities. She was a member of the tennis team, a contributing reporter to This Is York/YTV (the student news and media site), a freshman mentor and a member of the York Dance Company. She sang in the choir and was also involved in York's theater program most recently performing in Godspell. Olivia has been First Congregational's Sunday School teacher for the past three years and is active in our youth group. She is part of the work trip delegation traveling to Puerto Rico this summer and plans to attend DePaul University in the fall. Good luck Olivia with all your future endeavors!

CELEBRATIONS AND CONCERNS



15 Jack Rosen
 17 Gayle Dawson
 20 Claire Richter
 28 Don Haraf



August (Augie) Carlson	Basia Rudy
Maxine Cassidy	Karen Sloma
Dan Dallas	Ann Thoele
Ed Eckert	Bob Tracy
Susan Graybill	

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

June	Event	Time
2	Choir Rehearsal	7:00 – 8:30 p.m.
4	Work Trip Delegation Leaves for Peurto Rico	5:45 a.m.
5	Sunday Worship Service with Sunday School	10:00 a.m.
8	Heritage Bunch – Parlor	10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
9	Choir Rehearsal	7:00 – 8:30 p.m.
12	Sunday Worship Service with Summertime Sunday School Kick-Off	10:00 a.m.
12	Church Picnic	11:00 a.m.
16	Choir Rehearsal	7:00 – 8:30 p.m.
19	Father’s Day Sunday Worship Service with Sunday School	10:00 a.m.
22	Heritage Bunch – Parlor	10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
23	Choir Rehearsal	7:00 – 8:30 p.m.
26	Sunday Worship Service with Sunday School	10:00 a.m.
26	De Colores Program Aide Meeting	11:00 a.m.
30	Choir Rehearsal	7:00 – 8:30 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. 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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