

Tree of Life Newsletter

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



NOVEMBER 2022

FROM OUR MODERATOR

Margaret Chittaro

November has arrived ... it is officially the Month of Gratitude. While it seems every thing on earth has their own special day (butter, apple cider, pickles and Beaujolais Nouveau all have their own National Day in November!), I think National Month of Gratitude works.

Obviously Thanksgiving is celebrated in November ... we gather around the dinner table with friends and family and share all that we are thankful for.

And in the life of our church, stewardship season is also celebrated in November. First Congregational's stewardship campaign is underway and it makes me giddy!

Reading the stewardship letter and hearing Carrie Stone speak to all that our church is blessed with, fills my heart.

There is so much our church has accomplished.

And there is so much potential our church can still recognize ... I hope it fills your heart and makes you giddy too!

I am excited to see us create a year like no other in 2023.

And it all starts this month ... with all of us!

Together we can reach our potential, together we can prosper and grow, together we can reach new people and learn new ways to pray and minister.

I AM FILLED WITH GRATITUDE ... for all of you!

Happy, happy Thanksgiving!

WORSHIP MINISTRY

Martha Mendoza, Jim Molina, Margaret Chittaro, Claire Richter

The Worship Team is busy planning worship service through the end of the year.

During our meetings, we are continuously looking for ways to engage, inspire and motivate. We evaluate and dissect your church experience to be better. Our 'battle cry' is Question Everything.

We continue to discuss our collection basket ... should this remain part of our service?

Yes, there are so many different ways to now give to the church. (See Treasurer's article re: Venmo, Tithely, Paypal)

Technology has made it easy for us to give and that is a good thing.

But it has been said, the collection of Tithes and Offerings is not just a part of our service but an act of worship.

We are handing back to God all that He has blessed us with. A practical and spiritual receipt of ALL the gifts with which we are blessed.

What do you think?

Its an exciting time to be part of this team and its very apparent during our meetings! The energy, enthusiasm, brilliant ideas and collaborative spirit are very inspiring.

Keep checking your email for all of the inspiring and festive services and events coming to First Congregational this holiday season!

THE TREASURER

Margaret Chittaro

1) Payment for any event, fundraiser, or offering can be done online.

We have many options to meet people where they are! Here are our giving options online:

VENMO: User is @FCUCCEImhurst



First Congregational UCC of...
@FCUCCEImhurst



venmo

PAYPAL: Use [paypal.me @fcuccelm](https://www.paypal.me/fcuccelm) Paypal users can setup an account and store their CC and bank to make payments.



TITHELY: <https://tithe.ly/give?c=317447>

And this holiday season, don't forget **AMAZONSMILE!**

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*.

2) 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.

THE PASTORAL SEARCH COMMITTEE

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

The Search Committee has resumed its work of finding a candidate for our pastor position to present to the congregation. While new profiles have not been as plentiful as we had hoped, we have two candidates under active consideration. We hope to schedule time to talk with them soon.

THE TRUSTEES

[Fritz Baumgartner](#), [Margaret Chittaro](#), *Treasurer*; [Jan Davis](#), [Don Haraf](#), [Mike Hennel](#), [Carrie Stone](#), *Chair*

It is Stewardship and Budgeting Season and your Board of Trustees is hard at work! We are asking our Members and Friends to make a new or renewed pledge to the church in 2023. We hope you will consider an increase in your pledge, if you are able, to help us manage the impacts of inflation and allow us to continue making investments in outreach.

Outreach includes many things, from investments in programs and staff to the care of our building. We all know the feeling at home when we are cleaning and sprucing up to welcome guests; giving careful thought to creating a positive experience for them. It's the same at church - we put our best foot forward to welcome guests and share a bit about who we are.

Our church went into COVID strong. Attendance at Worship was up 19% and two new programs, De Colores and Green Garden Fair, were growing and are still growing at double and triple digit rates. Like all churches, we are still recovering from COVID, but compared to national averages, we are doing very well. Our participation and donation trendlines are excellent, our staff is exceptional, our lay leaders are passionate. We hope that you will agree that WE are a great investment now capable of creating an inspired future - a legacy of which we can be proud!

We provided two Stewardship Presentations in October. A recording is available on our website for your at-home viewing.

MISSION BOARD

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



We have officially kicked off our gift giving project for the children of Ford Heights and Humboldt Park. The tags are available on the Hospitality Table in the foyer. When you take a tag(s), please make sure you write your name next to the corresponding number on the sign-up sheet on the clipboard and provide the information needed to help us with the distribution of the gifts.

Our Mission and Christian Education boards are so excited to be carrying out this outreach effort in person again. For those of us that are able, please consider buying your gifts yourself. There is something special in picking out a gift for a child in need. If you are not able to purchase the gifts, please consider giving a donation to this amazing cause. Checks can be written to First Congregational Church with Magi Gifts written on the memo line. You can also use the Tithe.ly app and choose Magi Gifts.

Gifts should be a minimum of \$25.00 and should **not** be wrapped but it is helpful if they are put in a decorative gift bag. All gifts should be at the church by Sunday, December 11. For further details, please contact Diane Wells at d.l.wells@sbcglobal.net.

THE BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Vanessa Jackson, Amarelis Morales-Berent, Lynette Rosen



Extra...Extra...Read All About It!

2023 Summer Work Trip Planning Meeting

Sunday, November 13, 2022

10:00 a.m. Worship

11:00 a.m. Meeting & Lunch

It is with much excitement that youth and adults are invited to our first very important work trip meeting for the summer of 2023. This summer is the time we stay on the mainland to serve others.

We are looking at two options that will allow us to serve others. We can't wait to share with you on Sunday, November 13 at 11:00 a.m. immediately after the 10:00 a.m. worship service.

Come let us fill your spirit in worship, with lunch and a great start to planning this summer's work trip.

Youth Service Project
Sunday, November 20, 2022
10:00 a.m. Worship
11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Hanging of the Greens

Our church's Diaconate Board is inviting our youth to participate in the all-church Hanging of the Greens. This service project begins immediately after our 10:00 a.m. worship service.

Lunch will be provided to all that are a part of this effort. Mark your calendars and plan on joining us for this is a great service opportunity.



Our major focus during children's Sunday School this month is building upon what our children already know about the Christmas story.

In Sunday School during November we will be preparing for our Christmas program by highlighting and bringing to life the individual stories of biblical heroes that prepared the way for the birth of Jesus.

Parents, we hope you will have your youth be a part of Sunday School during November and our Christmas program on Sunday, December 11.

Our confirmation class met on Sunday, October 23 right after the worship service. Together with parents we looked through our calendars and have made some minor changes on our school year schedule.



Confirmands are being asked to help out with worship on Sunday, November 6 and stay from class.

Confirmands are also invited to help with the Hanging of the Greens on Sunday, November 20 as part of their service to the church. What a great start!

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to take care of you, not abandon you, plans to give you the future you hope for". Jeremiah 29:11

THE DIACONATE BOARD

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

The holidays – a special time at First Church to connect, be in community and celebrate the love of family! And this year our Sundays are full of opportunities to rejoice and breath in the love of the season.

We have many special services planned this month and hope you will join us. November 6 is All Saints Day remembering all those special individuals in our lives that we've lost along the way. November 20 we call on all of our decorating experts for our annual Hanging of the Greens event after worship. Please come if you are able to beautify the sanctuary. Lunch will be served after! November 27 begins Advent with our ceremonial candle lighting.

Moving into December we celebrate new members on December 4 so please plan on attending and officially welcoming them to the First Church family. December 11 is our annual Christmas Pageant and Bake Sale. December 18 is the Christmas Cantata sure to fill your musical soul. Finally, our traditional Christmas Eve candlelight service is planned for 7:00 p.m. and Christmas Day will host a morning service at 10:00 a.m.

We are so fortunate to have so many new Scripture readers involved in service lately...thank you and if you are interested, please ask any usher for more info on how you can get involved.

MUSIC MINISTRY

Gayle Dawson, Linda Donahue, Jim Molina, Nilesh Reshamwala, Carol Ringhoff, Mary Swanson



Thank you to all of those who were present for our Gospel Concert on Sunday, Oct. 9. It was truly a celebration of music and soul. The Music Ministry now prepares itself for Sunday singing and we are looking forward to having the full choir again when we honor the saints on Nov. 6.

We are also working diligently on our 2022 Christmas Cantata, "The Gift" by Lloyd Larson. We are looking for extra singers to participate in this production so if you wish to make a small commitment to the choir, now would be a great time! We practice on

Thursday nights from 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. We sing, we practice, and we have fun! There's an open seat waiting for you. Speak to Jim Molina after service or email him at jimmolinamusic@gmail.com. We will also be looking forward to welcoming back Mary Grittani and Jo Chiko to play bells on Nov. 13.

GREEN TEAM

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



Green Team Tip of the Month – November

Saturday, October 29 was National Drug Take Back Day. But don't fret if you missed it. If you have some medicine in your cabinets that you no longer want or need, maybe because it's expired or for other reasons, you can drop it off at any time in the container in the lobby of the Elmhurst Police Department. They will accept prescription or over the counter medications and mercury thermometers used on humans and pets. Pills should be removed from their containers and put in a plastic bag (they take up less room in the collection containers that way.) Liquids should be left in their original bottles and also put in a plastic bag. Never pour liquid medications down the drain to contaminate our water supply. Be sure to remove labels that might have any personal information.

If your empty prescription bottles are the amber colored ones as shown in the photo above, please remove the label and any goo associated with it and bring the clean bottles in to church. We hope to have a basket in the Tree of Life foyer to collect them soon. Until we get one, you can just leave them in a bag near the shelving unit where we collect our other recyclables. We will take them to SCARCE who is sending them to Ukraine to help with distribution of medicines. They only want the amber ones.

EpiPens, needles and syringes shouldn't go in the Police Department collection box but you can take them to the DuPage County Sheriff's Office, 501 N. County Farm Road, Wheaton. That's in the DuPage County office complex. There's an outside drop off box you can put them in and a parking space reserved especially for those who are heading for the drop box.

Stay healthy and happy as we to into the 2022 holiday season!

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.

PASTORAL CARE

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. If you find yourself needing pastoral support, please contact our church office at 630-832-2580. We will reach out to Rev. Jan Davis or a member of the pastoral care support team to contact you.

CELEBRATIONS AND CONCERNS



23 Jack Donahue
26 Payton Hicks
28 Kim Brigman



August (Augie) Carlson	Chris Murray
Maxine & Wade Cassidy	Randy Price
Dan Dallas	Basia Rudy
Ed Eckert	Mark Swanson
Susan Graybill	Bob Tracy
Virginia & Jim Moss	

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

November	Event	Time
3	Choir Rehearsal	7:00 – 8:30 p.m.
6	Sunday Worship Service and Sunday School	10:00 a.m.
9	Heritage Bunch	10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
10	Choir Rehearsal	7:00 – 8:30 p.m.
13	Sunday Worship Service with Sunday School	10:00 a.m.
13	Youth & Parents Summer Work Trip Planning Meeting	11:00 a.m.
17	Choir Rehearsal	7:00 – 8:30 p.m.
20	Sunday Worship Service with Sunday School	10:00 a.m.
20	All- Church Service Project- Hanging of the Greens	11:00 a.m.
23	Heritage Bunch	10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
27	Sunday Worship Service and Sunday School	10:00 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](https://get.tithe.ly/) for more info on Tithe.ly



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Partners in Christ's Service

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Jim Molina, Director of Music

Heather Cross, Bookkeeper

Kim Brigman, Office Assistant

Rev. Dr. Ernest H. Huntzinger, Emeritus Minister

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