

Tree of Life Newsletter

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



November 2023

FROM THE MODERATOR

Janet Russell

Hello again,

I hope everyone who attended our Fall Fest had a great time. Before we know it, it will be Thanksgiving and then Christmas.

We have started our Stewardship Campaign and our Christmas Magi Star program. I have one more thing for you to think about - church officers, boards and committees. Before we turn around it will be time for our annual meeting and approvals of the slate of officers and boards. We will need your help to have a full slate. Having served as your moderator and on various boards I can honestly say it is a commitment of time. If you ask how much time all I can say is that it depends on your office, board or committee. The Diaconate has responsibilities on Sunday mornings for our services. Christian Ed has a couple of lunches that require some man power. They are all different. Some meet every month, some every quarter and some as needed. I would also like to see the Mission Board make a come back.

So, right now all I am asking is for everyone to think about where they might like to serve. If you have questions, please ask. If I don't know I can certainly find out or direct you to the person who does know. Also, if there is a board or committee that you are interested in let me know that too.

I think our year is going very well. We've had great Sunday services and many exciting events: the Memorial Day Parade, Des Colores Spanish camp, a painting party. We have more things planned: Women's Night Out, the Christmas cantata, our children's Christmas program. Thank you to all the individuals who have made it all possible. Let's keep things going!

Take care,

Jan

FROM THE TRUSTEES

Fritz Baumgartner, Dorothy Hamby, Don Haraf, Mike Hennel, and Carrie Stone (chair)



The Trustees are in budgeting season and have launched our annual Stewardship Campaign so we can confidently plan for the coming year. By now, you have received a letter with our appeal and we hope that you will consider giving generously. We are so blessed with the inheritance of our beautiful building where we gather and our Endowment Fund that largely provides for its care.

Every dollar that you give goes directly to our amazing staff and programming that bring life into this space and our faith. Thank you in advance!

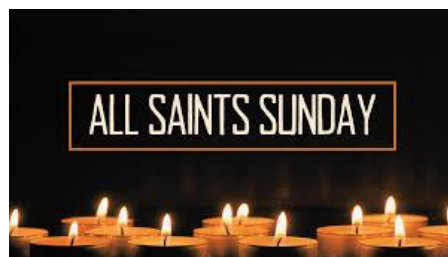
We continue adjusting our mindset around care of our Building & Grounds so that we can be proactive with all our major building systems, rather than primarily reacting to problems. We have completed maintenance work on our boiler system this fall and heat is on in the building. This sounds a bit mundane, but it is essential and our systems are not new. We are grateful that our vendor partner, Service Express, is working closely with us on the care of our system.

We are excited to upgrade the majority of our building lighting to LED fixtures and bulbs, for long term savings. We have partnered with a company that secured a \$15,000 grant from ComEd for this purpose leaving very little cost for us to bear. Many thanks to Karen Pachyn and Don Haraf for taking the lead on this project. The work will take place this week.

We will also proceed with a roofing project this fall to repair the steeple roof and the roof over the old west entrance to the church as these are both failing. Finally, we have renewed our lease with the Sanchez Family to live in the manse for another year.

COME AND TAKE PART

Join us for a heartfelt church service this **Sunday, November 5** at 10:00 a.m. as we come together to remember and honor the saints – those beloved individuals who have passed away but remain forever in our hearts.



This special service offers a moment of reflection, gratitude, and remembrance, as we celebrate their enduring presence in our lives. We invite you to join us in this cherished tradition of honoring the saints and finding solace in our faith. Special music and candle lighting will add to the meaningful spirit of this service.

BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Vanessa Jackson, Martha Mendoza, Amarelis Morales-Berent, Lynette Rosen (chair), and Donna Scumaci



Magi Star Gift Giving Project

We are so excited to be carrying out our Christmas gift giving project again this year. It is among our prayers that you will pick out some tags and purchase gifts for children whose family cannot afford to buy them a Christmas or Three Kings Day gift. Tags are available on our hospitality table in the foyer.

This year we will continue our partnership with San Lucas United Church of Christ in Humboldt Park in Chicago. Our ongoing partnership with God Can Ministries in Ford Heights has ended due to them having to limit their outreach efforts.

We are excited to share that we have established a partnership with Advocate United Church of Christ on the east side of Chicago and they will distribute gifts to the children in their church and community.

Please consider adding Magi Star gifts to your Christmas budget.

Also, mark your calendar and come out and meet Rev. Malcolm J. Griffith from Advocate United Church of Christ who will be our guest minister on Sunday, November 19.



Come sip and create!

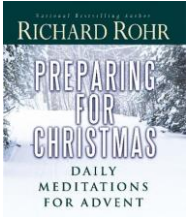
*Friday, November 17
6 pm to 8 pm - Church Parlor*

games, laughter, appetizers, and wine

*We will make cards to send to our
young adults far and wide.*

SAVE THE DATE!

Advent Study
Wednesday, December 6, 2023
Dinner at 6:30 p.m.
Study from 7:00–8:00 p.m.



The Christian season of Advent could not come at a busier time. Kicking off the season by attending our study will strengthen and remind you of our connection with Christ, the adult Christ.

Led by Rev. John Gibbon we will refresh ourselves or even learn new ways to strengthen our Advent journey as we prepare for Christmas.

As part of our time together, you will receive a copy of “Preparing for Christmas, Daily Meditations for Advent” book by Richard Rohr. Father Richard Rohr is a Franciscan priest recognized globally as an ecumenical teacher and his daily guide is a great resource for the busy season.

Please sign up on the sign up sheet in the church foyer to let us know if you will be joining us.



THE DIACONATE BOARD

Claire Richter, chair; Bridget Bixler, Brian Brigman, Rev. Jan Davis, Calvin Jackson, Carolee Luppino, William Roman, and Ann Thoele

The holidays are just around the corner and we have many special services planned.

November 5 is our "Remembering the Saints" service. This year we will be doing something different, we will have candles on the altar to light in place of crosses.

November 12 is our first hybrid Communion Sunday. Everyone will come up to the altar, choose between an individual cup or the bread to dip in wine. Those who are not able to come up will be served.

November 17 (Friday) is a Women's Night Out from 6:00–8:00 PM.

November 19 is the Hanging of the Greens. We need everyone to be there. Many hands make light work. We will also be welcoming Rev. Malcolm Griffith, pastor or Advocate UCC, our new Magi Gift Giving Project partner. Note: Their church burned down a few weeks ago.

December 3 is the first Sunday of Advent, Hope.

December 6 (Wednesday) is our Advent study "Preparing for Christmas" led by Rev. John Gibbon. Dinner at 6:30 PM, program 7:00–8:00 PM.

December 10 is the Youth Christmas Program.

December 17 is the Christmas Cantata.

December 24 is Christmas Eve, two services 10:00 AM and Candlelight service at 7:00 PM.

Looking forward to seeing everyone as we share God's love.

Claire Richter, chair

MUSIC MINISTRY

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

Greetings from the Music Ministry. This fall season the choir is working on special music for our Saints Day service on November 5 as well as other services. The expressive and meaningful music will add to this special worship experience. The service will conclude with a rousing "When the Saints Go Marching In".

We are also busy working away on our Christmas Cantata that will be presented on Dec. 17. We look forward to serving the church this holiday season as we lift our voices in song and spirit.

THE GREEN TEAM

Don Haraf, Carolee Luppino, Gail Ogdon, Karen Pachyn, Claire Richter, and Carol Ringhoff

Green Team Tip of the Month November 2023

It's time for the annual reminder to keep your Halloween pumpkin out of the garbage and compost it instead. If you don't have your own compost pile and live in Elmhurst, you can take your pumpkin to the "Pumpkin Smash" at the Public Works Department at 985 S. Riverside Drive between 9 and Noon on Saturday, November 4th. Check this link <https://www.scarce.org/pumpkins/#locator> to find one of the other 76 Pumpkin Smash locations in Illinois. Why is this important? Because it avoids greenhouse gas emissions from decomposing organics (currently, landfills are the 3rd largest producers of methane in the U.S.!), it produces a useful, nutrient-dense soil amendment and pumpkins are 90% water which is great for our soil, not so good in our landfills. Then on Saturday, November 25th you can take the cooking oil you deep fried your Thanksgiving turkey in to the same Elmhurst location, again between 9:00 and noon, so it can be recycled into biodiesel fuel. Pouring it down the drain can cause all sorts of clogging problems which should be avoided. The Elmhurst event is a one-time event but for permanent cooking oil recycling locations, see this list: <https://www.scarce.org/cooking-oil/>



The Green Team wishes you a happy holiday season. We also want to share our excitement over having Carol Ringhoff join our team. Thanks Carol, for your support.

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

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 Katie Cooper
28 Kim Brigman



Jeff Barkley
The Buckner Family
August (Augie) Carlson
Maxine & Wade Cassidy

Cheryl & Ed Eckert
Susan Graybill
Virginia and Jim Moss
Randy Price

Basia Rudy
Jean Schildbach
Ann Thoele

FROM THE TREASURER

Margaret Chittaro

For your convenience, payment for any event, fundraiser, or offering can be done multiple ways. Below are our giving options.

For online givers, we urge you to switch to PayPal or Venmo as both of these services greatly reduce our processing fees.

1. PAYPAL: Use [@fcucceim](https://www.paypal.me/fcucceim)

We prefer and recommend PayPal for electronic giving at this time.

We receive a reduced processing fee, which is a benefit for both you as the donor, and First Church as the recipient. Paypal users can setup an account and store their credit card and bank to make payments.

2. VENMO: User is @FCUCCEImhurst

We are excited to offer the option to use Venmo.

Click the icon below, or simply enter @FCUCCEImhurst in your Venmo app.

<https://account.venmo.com/u/FCUCCEImhurst>

3. You may mail a check to:

First Congregational UCC
Attn: Bookkeeper
235 S Kenilworth
Elmhurst, IL 60126

4. Tithely

We continue to keep our legacy e-giving platform, Tithely, active.

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

Partners in Christ's Service

Pastoral Care
Rev. Janet Davis
revjcd40@aol.com (630) 400-7747

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

Rev. Dr. Ernest H. Huntzinger, Emeritus Minister

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