

The



TIDINGS

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH (United Church of Christ)

An Open and Affirming Congregation

La Grange, Illinois - 708-352-0800 - Fax 708-352-0863

Web Site www.fcclg.org - Email info@fcclg.org

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DECEMBER 6, 2011

No. 25

**DECEMBER 11, 2011
10:00 a.m. Worship
Christmas Musical Performance**

**DECEMBER 18, 2011
10:00 a.m. Worship
Choral Sermon**

From the Minister's Keyboard

Rereading the church constitution this week (our church has a constitution? Yes! Cool huh?), I came across the "duties of the members of this church." Do you know what they are? Read them again (or maybe for the first time). Members are empowered:

1. To live in all their relationships according to the spirit and teachings of Jesus.
2. To attend faithfully the services of worship of this Church.
3. To contribute as able to its support and to its benevolences.
4. To share as able in its organized work.

December has arrived, a good time to reflect on our year together. As we round out 2011 and approach the new year, I've seen you -- members of this church -- live out these duties of membership in many ways. In the past months, worship life has been lively and full. Attendance has been up, and the joy that exudes from a full sanctuary is tangible. Many members responded generously in regards to this year's stewardship requests. And benevolences have been twofold: both openhandedness and openheartedness. Together, we organize many ways to be involved, and you join in mission, fellowship and service. You have given time, talent and treasure. Your generosity has been both financial and spiritual - a spirit of hope in the midst of many changes.

There are so many ways to interpret our task to "live out all our relationships according to the spirit and teaching of Jesus." In Advent - this time of anticipation, waiting for the Christ-child to come - we have a chance to consider again how we might live our lives in response to God. Do we have courage to change? Are we fearless enough to trust God (instead of ourselves, or our "golden calves") to show us the way? Do we have the nerve to be who God calls us to be?

The energy, imagination, intelligence and love -- it's all here. It's all here within this congregation - to trust God, to be courageous in change, to live into God's call to accept all, reach out, and touch lives. Can you imagine it?

In Christ,
Rev. Katie Snipes Lancaster

First Congregational Church/United Church of Christ 100 S. 6th Avenue, La Grange, IL 60525

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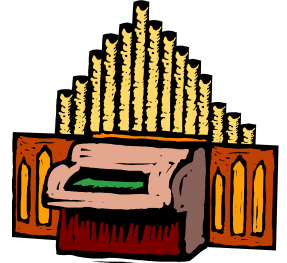
NEW FCCLG OFFICE HOURS...

The church office is now open Tuesday through Thursday from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, on Sunday mornings, and on Monday afternoons. The office will now be **CLOSED** Monday mornings and all day Friday. The church has a very reliable voicemail system. The ministers will be checking their voicemail boxes regularly when they are not in (Ext. 125 for Rich Wolf and Ext. 127 for Katie Lancaster.) The best policy moving forward is to **CALL THE CHURCH OFFICE** before stopping by, in order to make sure there is someone there to respond to your need. Thank you.

NEW CHURCH DIRECTORIES ARE HERE! Stop by the office and pick up your copy of the 2012 member directory.

THE PIPE ORGAN

Our wonderful pipe organ is in need of serious repair. One of the leather compartments used to regulate wind/air pressure going to the pipes has a large hole and the leather on the other three compartments and the reservoir in the organ is close to the end of its working life, and should be replaced. All the leather is original to the organ and is now approaching 33 years of age, so it is not unusual for it to begin to wear out at this stage. The organ's full functionality has been slowly deteriorating over time. Our organists have been very good about trying to make the best of it, but now are having to limit what they can offer as worship leaders. A quote has been received of \$22,945 to restore the organ to its full capability with the major parts that can deteriorate all in mint condition. This means that it's unlikely for any additional major repairs for many years. The Ministry of Worship has \$4525 in its budget to contribute, and a generous member of our congregation has added \$2000 towards the repair. Council has authorized the Ministry of Worship to go over its budget so the repairs can be completed before Christmas. At this time, the Ministry of Worship will gladly accept any other gifts toward the organ repair. Please contact the church office to let them know that you wish to contribute to the organ repair. Thank you for your support.



Gifts of Gratitude: Please bring your wrapped gift with the heart attached, to the 10:00 a.m. worship service **on Sunday December 11th**. **All gifts must be received by the sorting time directly after the 10:00 a.m. service on 12/11.** If you did not have a chance to visit the tree, you are still welcome to bring a wrapped and tagged gift

(indicating age and gender) for the children's procession, following the Christmas musical at the 10:00 a.m. service.

You may drop off your gift prior to 12/11 by delivering it to our office or to Debbie Jackson. Please be aware of our new Church office hours, calling ahead for delivery of gifts prior to 12/11 is always a good idea! We thank you in advance for participating in the Gifts of Gratitude program,

how wonderful to experience the joy of giving to others in need. Nancy Durkalski and Debbie Jackson.

All children are welcome to participate in the Gifts of Gratitude procession. Children seated in the congregation are invited to join in the procession of gifts directly following the Christmas musical. Thank you. Debbie Jackson.

Sorting all those gifts? Yes please!! Meet in the Sanctuary after the 10:00 a.m. service on December 11th, and help us sort the Gifts of Gratitude gifts! Many hands and teamwork is the recipe for quick sorting! Thank you!! Debbie Jackson

PAPERLESS TIDINGS

The Tidings is now paperless! Going forward, the Tidings will be electronic only, unless you have "opted-in" to having your tidings mailed to you. Contact the office if you would like to opt-in to having a paper tidings sent to your mailing

address! Thank you for going paperless and participating in a fiscally sound, eco-friendly future at FCCLG.

The Legend of the Poinsettia

The Legend of the Poinsettia tells about the miraculous appearance of the poinsettia flower in a little church in Cuernavaca, Mexico. A little girl was sad because she had no flowers to take to

church and place beside the manger where an image of the baby Jesus lay. An angel appeared and told the child to pluck a weed from the roadside and place it on the altar. After the girl

did this the weed blossomed into a brilliant scarlet flower. That is how the poinsettia became the a flaming star evocative of the biblical Star of Bethlehem. **You can bring the legend alive in our sanctuary this Christmas season by donating a plant in honor or memory of someone special in your life.** The cost of each plant is \$12.00 and you can take the plant home

Dave Brubeck coming to FCCLG! Well, not quite. But one of his compositions is. This Advent's Choral Sermon is Brubeck's "La Fiesta de la Posada." The chancel Choir, soloists and jazz combo will present this festive piece that is difficult to categorize. It has elements of jazz, Latin and classical music. When combined it is a vivid description of "the Posada," a custom

Christmas Eve Festival Choir: Do you love singing Christmas music? Want to sing more than carols? Can't sing with the choir regularly? Well, join the Chancel Choir for Christmas Eve. Please contact Ryan Cox if you are interested.

Blue Christmas Service: We are now entering the "Christmas Season" with candy canes and Christmas trees, strings of lights and childhood memories. Yet, despite all of the yuletide joy, many of us experience an undercurrent of sorrow and mourning. All is not as it once was. As people of faith, we acknowledge that the holiday season can be difficult when we are grieving the loss of loved ones, have had difficult family relationships, struggle with joblessness, physical and mental illness, depression or stress, and feel deeply the pain of those in our world who suffer the effects of war, poverty, and disease. So we gather as a community to express and acknowledge these conflicting emotions, and to remember that it was into such a world as this that God's love took on flesh in Jesus, our Redeemer. **Please join us for the Blue Christmas service on December 18th at 7pm.**

HOLIDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Christmas Eve worship opportunities begin with a 5:00pm "family friendly" service in the sanctuary. Our 11:00pm service includes special choir music, a Christmas message from Dr. Wolf, and a candlelight setting. A pre-service concert begins at 10:30pm. On Sunday morning, December 25 (Christmas Day) we will gather for worship at the usual 10:00am time, and share a "Festival of Carols." We will sing many sacred Christmas favorites throughout the service.

COFFEE HOUR

Do you enjoy coffee, delicious treats and the fellowship of our FCCLG family? Then please consider hosting a Coffee Hour one Sunday. Coffee, juice and all of the paper products are provided. You simply need to bring

most prized of all the flowers of the holiday season. Its brightly colored leaves resemble after the Christmas Day service. Please call or email Susan Blazek at 708-352-1862 or csblaze@sbcglobal.net to order your poinsettia. You may also call the church office to order your poinsettia. (708) 352-0800. The Ministry of Worship thanks you

depicting Mary and Joseph's search for lodging that is portrayed throughout Latin America and the American Southwest. We are bringing the custom to you, no plane ticket required. The Posada is a community event, so bring a guest to 10am worship on December 18.

The rehearsal schedule is:

December 8 7:30-8:15 pm

December 15 8-8:30 pm

December 20 8-9:30 pm

Johnny Gillespie Ordination... all are invited to celebrate the ordination of church member Johnny Gillespie. Johnny's service of ordination will be held in the FCCLG sanctuary on Sunday afternoon, December 18, at 3:00pm. The festive service will include denominational officials, many clergy participants, special music, and the rite of ordination to the Christian Ministry in the United Church of Christ. A time of refreshments and fellowship will follow the service.

Hooks and Needles: The Hooks and Needles gals will be stitching at home over the holidays. We will resume our get-togethers on Monday, January 16, at 7pm in the family room off the Chapel. Beginning knitters and crocheters are always welcome.

the treats of your choice, and serve the drinks. Individuals, couples, friends, and committees all are welcome to sign up! The sign up sheet is in the church office. Thank you. - Ministry of Nurture.

BURNING CALORIES FOR A GOOD CAUSE

Mary Jo Benak -- certified Power Pilates instructor -- will be offering a Saturday morning Pilates class for beginners from 8-8:45 am. The cost is \$10/per class (cash only, please) and all proceeds support God's Closet, supplying free gently used and new clothing, shoes and supplies to people in need during the Saturday Meals

Program. Come on Saturday, bring an exercise mat and dress comfortably. Use the NW Cossitt Ave. (glass door) entrance, and park on the street or in the La Grange Parking Garage only.

REMINDERS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

ZACKLY H.S. YOUTH GROUP: Zackley regular meetings are on Sunday evenings at 6:30 p.m. Contact Katie Lancaster with questions, katie@fcclg.org.

GPS: Confirmation Dinner May 4th and Confirmation on May 5th. There will be another lock-in and a retreat to Pilgrim Park to be scheduled.



**HOSPITALIZED
(Currently and Recently)**

Plymouth Place Healthcare
Lexington Healthcare
La Grange Hospital

Ruth Philbrook
Don Olson
Lydia Georgoff

If you know of someone from our Congregation that is in the hospital, please inform one of the ministers or the office staff.

Our Members at Home ~ Emil Balz is at home and recovering well. **John Hultman** is at home and recovering well.

IN MEMORIUM

We extend our sympathies to the friends and family of **Marilyn Watts**, who passed away October 29, 2011. A funeral service will be held for Marilyn on Saturday, December 10, at 2:00 p.m. in Dole Hall at Plymouth Place.

We extend our sympathies to the friends and family of **Nancy Ericksen**, on the death of her son, **Eyvind Jeffrey Ericksen**, grandson of Lillian & Lyman Hoadley, long time members of the church.

***** Please visit our website at www.fcclg.org. *****

Next Deadline for Tidings articles is THURSDAY, December 15 at 9:00 a.m.