



Monday night Adult Education is back! The subject will be Church and Christian faith history and formation.

Zzzzzz???? Boring some might say. I will share with you that when I was taught these things in seminary I won-

dered why my home church had never shared this stuff with me? Because so much of it was critical to understanding what we believe from childhood and how it formed us. It made me see my faith, scripture and the church in a whole new light.

Some examples of what we will cover: Ever wonder how the doctrine of Trinity came to be since it is nowhere mentioned in Scripture? Who chose what books to be in the Bible and what was left out? Why do Catholics and Protestants have different numbers of sacraments? Why can't Protestants take communion in Catholic churches? Why can't priests marry? What about evil and the Devil? Did people of faith always believe what they do about heaven and hell? What is grace? How did the church understand the two natures of Jesus as Divine and Human? When was the Bible in its present state formed? Why do catholic Bibles have more books? If these have ever been questions that you wrestle with in your faith, come and join us for the history behind the beliefs that came to be known as orthodox Christianity.

I will do my best to make this at or near a seminary level course, mirroring my own church history experiences at Duke. You don't have to be seeking an MDIV to get a lot out of it!

WHEN: Starting Monday, January the 15th at 1:00pm and 6:30pm-8pm. This will be potluck, so please bring a food item to share. We will hold classes in the church parlor. I hope you can attend!

**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

JANUARY 2018

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A note from our pastor continues....

JANUARY 14th a BIG day at First Congregational UCC

MARTIN LUTHER KING: On January 14th to honor Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and to engage in conversation about how we can work toward unity and togetherness we will be joined by guest speaker Dr. Daniel Davis, a tenured Professor of African American Studies at Kennedy-King College and an adjunct professor of History at Saint Xavier University. We look forward to hosting him here. He will speak with me during worship for our Sunday message, and also remain for a Q and A session immediately following worship. I hope you will be able to join us as we continue to seek how we might be workers in the fight for dignity and equality for all God's children.

EXPLORING MEMBERSHIP AT FIRST CONGREGATIONAL

A gathering will be held Sunday, January 14th after worship, after our MLK celebration Q and A at 11:30am in the church library Room 502 to talk about what it means to be a part of this faith community. We'll share a little about the United Church of Christ, our history, what we believe, how we are organized as a church and who we are. Refreshments will be provided at \$5 a person. We hope you can attend.

CALLING ALL MEMBERS...CALLING ALL MEMBERS.. BEING THE CHURCH IN 2018

Always wanted to say that. It reminds me of the old show "Adam 12...calling all cars, repeat calling all cars".

It is my seventh year here as a pastor with you in ministry at First Congregational United Church of Christ. Seven is a good Biblical number. Biblically the seventh year was the year of rest and spiritual reflection; an exhale to all our inhales. It was a purposeful time to regenerate and ask the Holy Spirit to heal, mend and prepare for the next six years of work. To begin we must consider the changing landscape Christianity in which Christianity finds itself.

As fewer people go to any church as a normal practice, younger generations become more distrustful of anything institutional, including the church. Fundamental Christians have been often the most vocal and visible. We have a culturally jaded mainstream view of all of Christianity that leans to the negative. Political and social economic and even ideological differences have become more culturally apparent. Peoples' time commitments and schedules –even for children- are much different than they were 50 years ago and the days of accomplishing most of the work of the church through volunteerism are fading. Even the ways in which we interact and communicate are radically different with text, tweet and Instagram messenger. We must discern and take seriously how these changes are impacting ministry and seek God's guidance for how to be church in 2018 and beyond.

In the book of Acts, Jesus tells the disciples (men and women) that he charges them with bringing the Gospel to Jerusalem, to Samaria and to the ends of the earth. That is their mission. But before they consider what they will say, or break out maps and plan where they are going they PRAY. The early church realized that if the church simply identifies needs and then hurriedly begins going about meeting those needs without first seeking the Holy Spirit, they will run out of steam, become discouraged, or perhaps most dangerous just do what they do because it is a good thing, forgetting who they are and WHY they are community in the first place.

I am going to ask and challenge us ALL to commit, for 90 days, from January 1st to Easter , for 90 days to pray for our church, pray for our leaders and ministries, and to ask God to speak to us and guide our visioning as we examine and look at long range visioning. It is INCREDIBLE what God can accomplish, truly miraculous when the body of Christ opens itself together in prayer.

In conjunction with our prayer we will have some visioning events to engage as a congregation questions of who we are and how God is manifest among us. We will consider who our neighbors are, and how we are or are not effectively meeting our community in the love and good news of Jesus. What are we doing well- the lifeblood of our church? And in what areas are we doing things that may or may not fit with the main mission of the church- I.E. practices that we may have done for many years but have not asked: How does this fit into the mission and life Jesus calls us into?

Perhaps most importantly- each member can/should ask: If Jesus were sitting across from you today and spoke to you, where do you think Jesus would challenge you into deeper, more radical discipleship? How does or can the church facilitate that so that each and every disciple here is challenged and finds themselves in meaningful, spiritual awakening and life changing discipleship?

Are we measuring success by number of occupants or sent number of people who have been prepared for life as disciples?

To be the church we will need you, your prayers and your voice and spirit. The best ideas we have are in our congregation. Please start by praying today, and committing to 90 days of daily prayer for our church. ALSO consider joining us on February during fellowship hour- for a light lunch \$5 a person, and our first visioning session.



THE PILGRIM



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How to Pay for College Without Going Broke

First Congregational Church
Sunday, January 28th, 2018

12:00 - 1:30 PM

Location: Parlor, Contact: Mrs. P. at denapro@comcast.net

Complimentary Registration Required

mycollegeplanningteam.com/workshops



Women's Fellowship

Ladies Of The Morning & Evening



We're going out for Breakfast! Friday, January 5 at 9:30 AM at Lemont Street Café, 7329 Lemont Rd., Downers Grove, IL 60516, (630) 968-2944. If you plan on coming please email or call me. It is nice to have some idea of how big a table to get. Two weeks later we'll stay at the church for Stitch and Chat in the Parlor, Friday, January 19, from about 9:30-11:30 AM. (It happens to be Patti Miller's birthday!) You don't need to bring anything to stitch, but can just hang out and chat. This is a very casual gathering. Come if and when you can, even if for only a few minutes. Questions? Contact me, Peggy Gutzke Home: 630/971-1382 Cell:630/632-3014 peggy.gutzke@gmail.com

Happy New Year! FCLC is getting ready for a fantastic 2018. Keep your calendars open for our Third Annual FCLC Art Show on February 10th. There will be artwork this year that church members will be able to bid on. All proceeds are used to buy art supplies for the program.



BLOOD DRIVE



We are entering our 36th year of blood drives at First Congregational! Can we count on YOU for continued success? Please plan on supporting the blood drive on Tuesday, January 16 from 3-7 pm. You can be someone's lifesaver! One unit of blood helps 3 people. Come and see how safe and easy it is to be a donor. You will be glad you did! All participants will receive a coupon for a noodle bowl (a \$13.00 value) from Noodles & Co. You can make an appointment at www.heartlandbc.org or contact Joyce at (630) 971-3423 - jddoemland@aol.com. Walk-ins are also welcome. Thank you!

PADS Thank You

Gracious thanks to all members and friends who volunteered or donated food, coats, or gift cards for PADS this Fall and Christmas season. It was a brighter, warmer holiday for over 80 PADS guests including 15 families with 24 kids. The gifts and cards were distributed on December 18 and received with many smiles and a few tears—and a couple of hugs. Thank you for bringing joy to some of our neighbors again this year.

February 12

One of our support churches had to drop from our PADS rotation in February. Another church has stepped in on February 5, but we are in need of support for Monday February 12. Looking for a group or ministry or a company that would furnish, prepare and serve dinner for 70 that Monday night and a group that would prepare and serve breakfast for 40-45 on Tuesday morning. Will also need six volunteers to supervise the three evening and over night shifts: 8:30-11 pm, 11-3 am, and 3-7 pm (2 per shift). Please contact Tom Williams (630-664-8915) if interested.



How to Care for Creation, Plus Your Health and Budget



What if I told you that there is a way that you can save money, eat healthier, AND help the planet? You can accomplish all three goals if you give up red meat one day per week. I eat and enjoy steaks, burgers, and prime rib roasts; I'd have a hard time giving them up. My grandfather was a butcher. But I don't eat red meat every day, or even every week, for health and budget reasons. And recently I learned that raising cattle and sheep is a huge drain on land and water resources, and it adds greenhouse gases to the atmosphere.

According to a 2014 study by Gidon Eshel, published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, raising cattle in the US uses 28 times as much land, and 11 times as much irrigation water, plus pumps at least five times as much planet-warming gases into Earth's atmosphere, than producing the equivalent calories of dairy products, poultry, pork, or eggs. According to a University of California study, beef takes over 6 times the amount of carbon emissions to produce than chicken:

Beef: 330 grams

Chicken: 52 grams

Fish: 40 grams

Vegetables: 14 gram

Cattle and sheep produce methane gas as part of their digestive process. Methane gas (CH4) is a greenhouse gas like carbon dioxide (CO2), and according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, it is more than 20 times as effective as carbon dioxide at trapping heat in the atmosphere.

Here's where you can make an impact: One day a week, replace red meat with chicken, fish, or vegetables, and you will help reduce carbon emissions. There are many delicious recipes that don't include red meat, and are healthier for you, your wallet, and the planet. Researchers have found that the Mediterranean diet has only a slightly higher environmental impact than vegan or vegetarian diets. The Mediterranean diet consists of fish and poultry at least twice a week, red meat a few times a month, and eating primarily plant-based foods such as fruits, vegetables, legumes, and nuts.

Not ready to give up red meat completely? Then reduce your portion size to the recommended 4 ounces, roughly the size of a deck of cards.

To help you get started, Caring for Creation team members have collected a few of our favorite meatless recipes and posted them on the Caring for Creation web site <http://uccdg-caring-for-creation.weebly.com/> You'll find recipes for black bean burritos, split pea soup, black bean soup, chickpea veggie burgers, black bean lentil tacos, ground turkey meatloaf, and ground turkey sloppy joes.

Here are a few links to learn more about why and how to replace red meat in your diet.

<https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/climate-lab>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/mediterranean-diet/art-20047801>

<http://www.meatlessmonday.com/favorite-recipes/>

Laurel Carlson, for the Caring for Creation team



B&G Update

The Sanctuary Lighting Project is completed. Special thanks to Bill Hammack for his hours and efforts in making this happen. In addition to the new overhead LED lighting, we have added chancel floor outlets to become more compliant with Downers Grove Fire Department standards.

In 2014, our combined payments to Nicor and ComEd totaled \$43,812 as we began our Capital Campaign. Building and Grounds budget request for 2018 for these utilities is \$31,450 or a savings of over \$1,000 per month from 2014. The new roofs, 50 ton HVAC roof top unit, insulated ductwork and centralized temperature controls are making a meaningful impact.

If Capital Campaign funding is available in 2018, B&G would like to replace the ceiling and upgrade the lighting in Fellowship Hall, replace the rusting center railings on the west steps, purchase some sort of generator or battery backup for the elevator and the level one sump pumps, and renovate the Parlor kitchenette into a visitors welcoming center.

LIVE MUSIC Every Friday Since 1970!

TWO WAY STREET COFFEE HOUSE

1047 Curtiss Street • Downers Grove, Illinois 60515 (across from the Public Library)
www.twowaystreet.org • 630-969-9720



ENTERTAINMENT SCHEDULE

Friday	January 5	WHEN THE CAT'S AWAY — Talented mice on our volunteer staff play while Tim's away: Thirsty Night Pluckers, Lonesome Eagle, John Risinger, Woodshop Boys, Kilty Pleasure, Amelia Sweet Bluebird, Stephen Davis, JB and P, Karen Jenson, Phyllis Betenia, John Lebbing!
Friday	January 12	BRIAR ROAD: Dan Zahn, Kate Moretti & Rusty Winchel — 3-part harmony, guitar, mandolin, banjo, dulcimer, bass. "Exceptional vocals, musicianship, excellent originals, covers, and traditional material. Warm, wonderful!" (Lilli Kuzma, WDCB)
Friday	January 19	¹ TRET FURE — Legendary, award-winning songwriter in today's folk world, she earlier opened for the iconic Yes, Poco, and J. Geils bands! Her 15 albums routinely top the charts, and her latest, <i>Rembrandt Afternoons</i> is her best!
Friday	January 26	KATIE DAHL — Wisconsin singer-songwriter has performed in West Africa, France, and across America. "Poetic lyrics...gorgeous melodies... lovely guitar picking. Katie's low, rich voice is the real deal." (WI Public Radio)
Friday	February 2	AMY DIXON-KOLAR — Prize-winning singer-songwriter: Celtic, traditional, blues and folk styles plus honest lyrics and distinctive guitar & vocals. Her song "Rosa Sat" is a YouTube sensation! Latest CD: <i>Dancing Through the Storm</i> .
Friday	February 9	ABBIE GARDNER — Fiery Dobro player with an infectious smile toured with Americana darlings Red Molly for eleven years. Award-winning songs of love and loss, both gritty and sweet, from her 3 solo CDs. New CD soon!
Friday	February 16	OPEN MIKE — All welcome! Great variety of acoustic artists! So popular we may limit number of acts. 2 – 3 songs, 10 -15 minutes . Open 7:30 for signups – first come, first served. Show starts 8:00 . Info: 630-968-5526.
Friday	February 23	ASHLEY & SIMPSON — A soulful and energetic show with Jennifer Ashley (classical piano, guitar) & Joel Simpson (guitar). The irresistible duo sings carefully crafted popular cover songs plus originals showcasing both their writing skills.

¹Featured on WFMT 98.7 "Folkstage" with Rich Warren. ²Featured on WDCB 90.9 "Folk Festival" with Lilli Kuzma.

Saturdays February 10 & March 10 8:00pm	Old Time Barn Dance — Reels, squares, line dancing, waltzes and more, plus the music of our great live band. Fun for the whole family! All dances taught and called by our expert leaders. No experience, costume or partner needed. Plank Road Folk Music Society is co-sponsor.
2 nd Tuesday, 7-9pm Jan 9, Feb 13, Mar 13	2nd Tuesday Song Circle — BYOS (Bring Your Own Songs). A monthly opportunity to informally & acoustically perform your songs or covers for the circle. Plank Road Folk Music Society co-sponsors.
Saturdays, 2-4pm Jan 6 & 20, Feb 3 & 17 Mar 3 & 17	Sing-Around — Our popular song fests where beginners and experienced musicians can learn and/or share songs. Listeners and singers welcome too! Songbooks provided. Plank Road Folk Music Society co-sponsors. First and third Saturday afternoons of every month at 2:00 pm.
Saturdays, 2-4pm Jan 27, Feb 24, Mar 24	Bluegrass Jam — Musicians of all experience levels gather to improve skills, learn/share tunes, & have fun! 4th Saturdays, 2:00-4:00pm. Plank Road Folk Music Society is co-sponsor.
Saturdays, 2-4pm Mar 31, Jun 30, Sep 29	5th Saturday Country/Western Jam — Whenever there are five Saturdays in a month, beginners and experienced musicians jam! 2:00-4:00pm. Plank Road Folk Music Society is co-sponsor.
Thursdays Jan 25, Feb 22, Mar 29 7:00-9:30pm	LAST THURSDAY! — Monthly open mike for high school & college age students. Last Thursday of every month. Music, poetry, any performance art — 10 min. max. Signups begin 7pm — first come, first served. Info at twowaystreet.org , on Facebook, or call 630-968-5526.

Live entertainment is featured every Friday night beginning at 8:15. Doors open by 7:30. \$10.00 donation requested. Beverages and snacks available. The *Two Way Street Coffee House* is a not-for-profit community project of the First Congregational United Church of Christ, Downers Grove. Member: Plank Road Folk Music Society, Fox Valley Folklore Society, Old Town School of Folk Music, Aural Tradition, Folk Alliance International. For current entertainment listings and updates, booking and other information, visit us on the web at [www.twowaystreet.org](http://twowaystreet.org) and on Facebook.



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UNITED IN GOD'S LOVE

THE PILGRIM JANUARY 2018 EDITION

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