

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF LAGRANGE

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ

S. LAGRANGE RD AT COSSITT AVE.
100 S. Sixth Ave.
LAGRANGE, IL

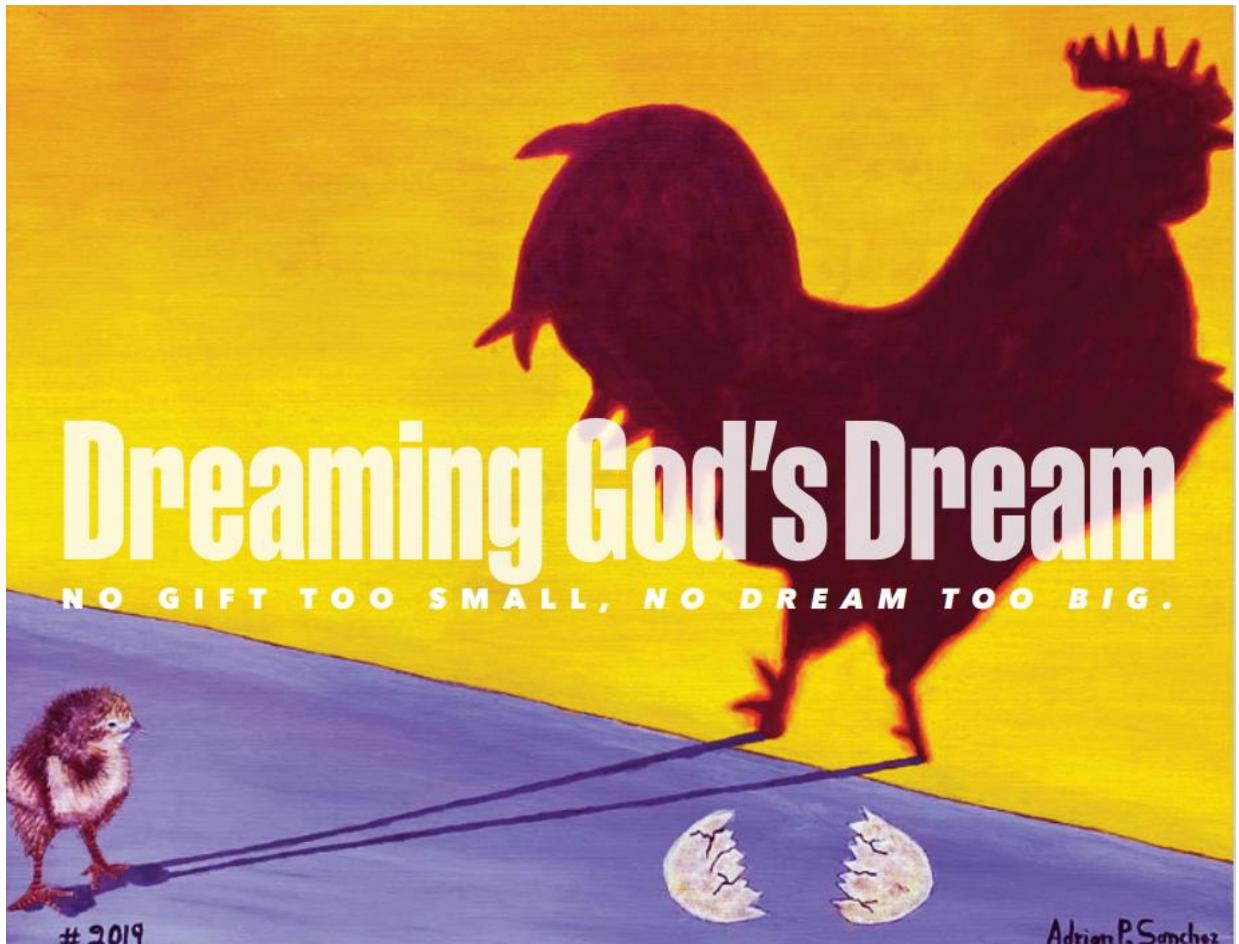
mainoffice@FCCLG.org
www.FCCLG.org
708.352.0800

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 23, 2025

WE EXTEND A WARM WELCOME TO ALL WHO WORSHIP WITH US TODAY

We acknowledge that First Congregational Church of LaGrange sits on the unceded, traditional, and ancestral homelands of Native peoples. We honor with gratitude the land itself and the Indigenous peoples who have been caretakers of the land for thousands of years, into the present day.

**Signifies Please stand as you are able.*



PRELUDE

Thanks Be to Thee

attr. to Handel

arr. Linker and McFadden

Carillon Handbell Choir and AnnLaura Tapia, organ

WELCOME

Jim Marciniak

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Jim Marciniak

One: We gather in Abundance, away from the rush and the race, to celebrate the generous spirit that sings, without fear, "may all have enough."

Many: We gather to live into the work of God's call.

One: We gather in Grace, awake to the sin of despair and degradation, awake to the chance to be more and the possibilities seeded within.

Many: We gather to grow: to change moment-by-moment, in grace again-and-again.

One: We gather in Hope, ready to do more than talk, ready to make change one letter, one meal, one home, one gift, and one hand at a time. Ready to live and move and be. Ready to be the Change God calls us to be.

Many: We gather to give of our time and our talents, our hopes and our energy. We gather to be.

***GATHERING HYMN**

New Century Hymnal #420

We Praise You, O God

KREMSER

***PRAYER OF TRANSFORMATION (*unison*)**

Jim Marciniak

Holy God, God of life, hear our prayer: guide us in our transformation for we often follow those paths that do not lead to life, that lead instead to violence, or hate, or fear, paths that lead to dread and death. Remind us again in this hour of worship that you offer us life, Life that is abundant and eternal, Life that began at the creation of all things. Guide our transformation, turn us to the right path, and let your love and grace flow over us and the world. For we want to be your faith consecrating stewards in all things. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

***SONG**

May the Peace of Christ Be with You

arr. Lori True

May the peace of Christ be with you. May the love of Christ dwell
 deep in your heart. May the Spir - it en - light - en your
 way. May you walk in the com-fort of God's care.

SCRIPTURE:

Deuteronomy 26:1-11

Jim Marciniak

“When you have come into the land that the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance to possess and you possess it and settle in it, you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from the land that the LORD your God is giving you, and you shall put it in a basket and go to the place that the LORD your God will choose as a dwelling for his name. You shall go to the priest who is in office at that time and say to him, ‘Today I declare to the LORD your God that I have come into the land that the LORD swore to our ancestors to give us.’ When the priest takes the basket from your hand and sets it down before the altar of the LORD your God, you shall make this response before the LORD your God: ‘A wandering Aramean was my ancestor; he went down into Egypt and lived there as an alien, few in number, and there he became a great nation, mighty and populous. When the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, by imposing hard labor on us, we cried to the LORD, the God of our ancestors; the LORD heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. The LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with a terrifying display of power, and with signs and wonders; and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. So now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground that you, O LORD, have given me.’ You shall set it down before the LORD your God and bow down before the LORD your God. Then you, together with the Levites and the aliens who reside among you, shall celebrate with all the bounty that the LORD your God has given to you and to your house.

KIDS QUEST

Rev. Brian Damrow

SERMON

Stewardship of Thanksgiving

Rev. Brian Damrow



Choir: 1. Give thanks, O Chris - tian peo - ple, for work - ers
 Choir: 2. Give thanks, O Chris - tian peo - ple, for lead - ers
 Choir: 3. Give thanks, O Chris - tian peo - ple, for all who
 All: 4. Give thanks, O Chris - tian peo - ple, for life in



of our day who heed the call to ser - vice and
 of our years who live to share with oth - ers our
 love the Lord, who live each day be - liev - ing in
 fel - low - ship with all who trust our Sav - ior their



make it their life's way to go to feed the
 joy when Christ ap - pears, to teach the ones who
 God's e - ter - nal Word: to share Christ's love in
 serv - ing to e - quip: to ease an - oth - er's



hun - gry, to tend to those in need, to work for
 seek light, to guide the fal - t'ring feet, to lead the
 liv - ing, to wit - ness with each deed, to use the
 bur - dens, to cope in joy and stress, to mag - ni -



e - qual jus - tice, till all God's folk are freed.
 fol - l'wers for - ward our liv - ing Lord to meet.
 tal - ents giv - en to plant the gos - pel seed.
 fy God's mes - sage and Christ's great love con - fess.

Text: Mary Jackson Cathey, from *Fresh Winds of the Spirit* by Lavon Baylor, and copyright © 1986 The Pilgrim Press. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Tune: *ES FLOG EIN KLEINS WALDVÖGELEIN*, Memmington ms., 17th cent. (PD).

Music: Used in a setting by Michael Burkhardt (ASCAP), newly composed, and copyright © 2022 Birnamwood with this publication.

PASTORAL PRAYER

Rev. Brian Damrow

THE LORD'S PRAYER (UNISON)

Rev. Brian Damrow

**Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

MISSION MOMENT Church Council

Kent Llewellyn

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY

Place your gift in the offering plate
or
Text your gift to
708-688-5486
or

Jim Marciniak



or go to
<http://tinyurl.com/FCCLGChangingLives>

LITANY OF COMMITMENT

Rev. Brian Damrow

Creator of all, the earth is yours, the world and all who live in it.

You have entrusted us with gifts— time, talent, energy, treasure— and asked us to use them to build your kin-dom. With thanks and praise we respond to your call.

We bring these gifts you have given, returning your generosity, paying it forward.

We offer ourselves, our lives, our hopes and fears, our dollars and our hours. We commit ourselves to work for your world, to love and serve wherever you call.

We ask your blessing on this, your church, as we seek to follow you with heart, mind, and soul.

Bless also these gifts, and our promise of our personal and corporate investment in your future, that they may multiply in faith, hope, and love. Amen.

**GATHERING OF OUR GIFTS AND
FAITH PROMISES**

What Can I Do?
Words and Music: Paul Rumbolt and Michele McCarthy

What can I do? What can I bring? What can I say?
What can I sing? I'll sing with joy.
I'll say a prayer. I'll bring my love. I'll do my share.

The musical score is written on a single treble clef staff in 2/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of three lines of music. The first line contains three phrases: 'What can I do?', 'What can I bring?', and 'What can I say?'. The second line contains two phrases: 'What can I sing?' and 'I'll sing with joy.'. The third line contains three phrases: 'I'll say a prayer.', 'I'll bring my love.', and 'I'll do my share.'. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together, and rests.

OFFERTORY

All Creatures of Our God and King

arr. Hal Hopson
Carillon Handbell Choir

***OFFERTORY RESPONSE (UNISON) Dream God's Dream** Words and Music: Bryan Sirichio

Chorus

Dream God's dream! Ho - ly Spir - it help us dream of a
world where there is jus - tice and where ev - 'ry one is
free to build and grow and love, and to sim - ply have e -
nough. The world will change, when we dream God's dream.

The musical score is written on a single treble clef staff in 6/8 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of four lines of music. The first line contains the phrase 'Dream God's dream! Ho - ly Spir - it help us dream of a'. The second line contains 'world where there is jus - tice and where ev - 'ry one is'. The third line contains 'free to build and grow and love, and to sim - ply have e -'. The fourth line contains 'nough. The world will change, when we dream God's dream.'. The music features a mix of quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes, often beamed together, and rests.

***BLESSING**

Rev. Brian Damrow

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION (UNISON)**

Rev. Brian Damrow

Holy God, you have blessed us with tangible gifts and intangible dreams. Use these gifts that we have shared to bring us closer to your vision for us. Help our community to grow in generosity and love. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Jim Marciniak

***HYMN**

New Century Hymnal #419

Now Thank We All Our God

NUN DANKET

***BENEDICTION**

Rev. Brian Damrow

POSTLUDE

Now Thank We All Our God

Paul Manz, trans. Culli

Michael Brozick, trumpet and AnnLaura Tapia, organ

THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS:

Reader Leader: Jim Marciniak

Audio/Video: David Watts & Lizza Obeng

Usher: Lawrence Bain

Laundry Hero: Laurie Braun

Coffee Hour Hosts: Potluck Luncheon

Prayer Requests

- For Bill and Juanita, family of Nancy Coleman, for strength and healing.
- For Reid Bannecker, brother-in-law of Julia and Kevin Cunningham, who is battling stage four cancer.
- For Church Member, Barbara Hultman, prayers for healing while she recovers at home.
- For Camille (Dave Watt's sister) and Brian Bell.

If you or someone you know needs pastoral care, please call the main office at (708) 352-0800

This Week at Church

Sunday	11/23	10:00 a.m.	Celebration of Worship	Sanctuary/ online
		11:00 a.m.	Potluck Luncheon	Founders' Room
		11:30 a.m.	All-Ages Musical Rehearsal	Choir Room
		7:00 p.m.	OA	Drawing Room
Monday	11/24	11:00 a.m.	Weekly Staff Meeting	Church Office
		6:30 p.m.	AA	Drawing Room
Tuesday	11/25	7:30 p.m.		
Wednesday	11/26	7:00 p.m.		
Thursday	11/27		<i>THANKSGIVING</i>	
Friday	11/28	9:00 a.m.	OA	Drawing Room
		3:00 p.m.	Private Event	Chapel
		3:30 p.m.	Continuing Adult Education through Study	Zoom
Saturday	11/29	9:00 a.m.	Saturday Meals Program	Dining Room
		2:00 p.m.	Private Event	Chapel
		5:30 p.m.	Private Event	Founders Room
Sunday	11/30	10:00 a.m.	Celebration of Worship	Sanctuary/ online
		11:00 a.m.	Coffee Hour	Founders' Room
		11:15 a.m.	Social Justice Meeting	Drawing Room
		11:30 a.m.	All-Ages Musical Rehearsal	Room 304
		7:00 p.m.	OA	Drawing Room

Advent and Christmas Worship Calendar:

November 30 — 1st Sunday of Advent

December 7 — 2nd Sunday of Advent: Communion and Gifts of Gratitude

December 14 — 3rd Sunday of Advent: Carillon Handbell Choir

December 21 — 4th Sunday of Advent: All Ages Musical

December 28 — Christmas Eve services at 5pm & 10pm.

(Preludes start 15 minutes beforehand)

Announcements

November 23rd Consecration Sunday and Potluck. Please join us after service in the Founders Room for a potluck Luncheon and fellowship. Thank you to all who brought in a dish to share and demonstrating your culinary skills!



FCCLG is now accepting nominations for Vice Moderator of the Church Council. This is an important leadership position that helps guide the direction of our church community. If you feel called to serve—or know someone whose gifts would bless our congregation—please submit your nomination or address any questions to any church council member. Let's discern together who God is calling to lead this season.

Deck the Sanctuary: After service today, we will be decorating our beautiful sanctuary for the season. There are tasks for the strong and limber as well as the detail-oriented who may prefer to sit. Thank you for your help!



Christmas Fund Offering. Beginning next Sunday and throughout the Advent season will be our Christmas Fund offering. The Christmas fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the UCC for over 100 years, providing Grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas "Thank You" gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees. UCC congregations and members have blessed the Christmas Fund with their generosity for many years. This year, your care and compassion will be especially appreciated by those servants of the church who are facing a time of need. Thank you!



The Wacky Walkers Christmas Party will be held on Saturday, December 13th at 2:30pm. No walking this time, only a gathering in fellowship to celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. As always, we will gather at the Palmer house, 7912 Summer Lane, Downers Grove. We understand the hustle and bustle of the season, but we sincerely hope you'll be able to take just a couple hours of your day to come and enjoy being in fellowship with each other. Your RSVP is greatly appreciated: Petra Hentzel, 630-272-9135 or hentzel91@comcast.net

Sanctuary Poinsettia Plants. Please consider donating a plant in honor or memory of someone special in your life to decorate our Sanctuary for Christmas Eve Services. The cost of each plant is \$18.00. Please contact the church office by December 11th to place your order. You may take your plant home after the 10pm Christmas Eve Service or you can contact the office to make other arrangements.





FCCLG will be hosting a Flu Shot Clinic on Saturday December 6th, during Saturday Meals. Please stop by the Dining Room between 9am-12pm, no Appointment needed, to receive a shot! (Medical services arranged through Walgreens).



FCCLG Food Drive. Due to the severe crisis of food insecurity caused in part by the pause in governmental food assistance, the FCCLG Missions Team is sponsoring a food drive through December 21st. Kindly drop off nonperishable food items in the boxes labeled 'food drive' inside the Cossitt Ave. entrance. Suggested donations include peanut butter, jelly, pasta, rice, cereal, and canned goods such as meats, fish, fruit and vegetables. Collected items will be distributed to the Second Baptist Food Pantry and other local food banks in the area.



Gifts of Gratitude



FCCLG is again partnering with Casa Central to provide Christmas gifts to children in their early childhood programs. To select a child to purchase a gift for, scan the QR code or go to our sign up:

<https://signup.com/go/OJCJGW>

Gift instructions: Please wrap your gift or use a gift bag. Include a tag with the child's name and taped securely to the package. Drop off the gift in the sanctuary on or before December 7th. Suggested price range: \$30-\$35.

If you prefer not to sign up online, contact the office and we can help you select a recipient.

FCCLG Leadership in 2025

Council:		
Moderator of Council	Tom Lowry	moderator@fcclg.org
Past Moderator	Nancy Coleman	
Vice Moderator	Kent Llewellyn	
Clerk	Sherri Ries	
Treasurer	Amanda Ries	treasurer@fcclg.org
Members At Large	Kevin Cunningham (yr 3/3) Noah Gartner (yr 2/3)	
Transitional Pastor	Rev. Brian Damrow	pastor@fcclg.org
Ministries:		
Volunteer Coordinator	Stephanie Johnston	
Communications (social media)	Amanda Murphy	
Communications (Broadcasting)	John Hoo Lizza Obeng	Amanda Murphy David Watts
Education	Jerry Palmer (Adult Ed) Amanda Ries (Sunday School)	
Membership	Petra Hentzel* Janet Sampson	Sherri Ries Faith Ullrich
Missions	Lisa Aulerich-Marciniak Kathy Donaldson* Jim Marciniak	Michelle Meuer Wendy Seifert
Nurture	Betsy Colombe * Amy Crumrine LuAnn Hall Angela Harrison	Sue Hoffman Sandra Kappmeyer Amanda Ries
Personnel	Noah Gartner LaShinda C. John	Jill Tobin*
Property	Peter Blais Dick Lauterbach Dave Ries	Mike Ries* Erik Sander Dave Watts
Stewardship	Ellen Hamilton Susan Lynch	Jean O'Brien Mike Ries
Worship	Lawrence Bain Lexie Carther	Bob Klestil
	*Team Contact	

Ministers
 Music Director
 Organist
 Office Administrator
 Events & Building Coordinator

www.fcclg.org
Ryan@fcclg.org
AnnLaura@fcclg.org
MainOffice@fcclg.org
Events@fcclg.org

All of Us
 Ryan Cox
 AnnLaura Tapia
 Tammy Bauer
 Jamie Dougherty

November 23, 2025

Reign of Christ | 24th Sunday after Pentecost

Colossians 1:11-20

Today is the Reign of Christ Sunday, also known as Christ the King Sunday. For the faithful, it is the Church's New Year's celebration as the liturgical calendar year comes to close. A new cycle of Scripture passages then begins with the first Sunday of Advent.

On this day, we remember how Jesus the Christ came as promised to usher in a kingdom of love and grace. And even though those with earthly power tried to silence him with death on the cross, Jesus triumphed.

As Handel's "Hallelujah" chorus from his beloved "Messiah," in which he composed in 1741 proclaims, "And he shall reign forever and ever."

This is indeed a celebratory Sunday for Jesus Christ does reign forever and ever.

I have a friend, though, who takes a different approach to this Sunday, preferring to delete "King" and use the word "kin" instead. When I asked why she changes it to "Christ the Kin Sunday" she replied that it better captures who Jesus is for us today.

A king, she explained, insists on his people to fall in line and follow royal edicts. "In a kingdom there really is no freedom for those who are not in the inner circle of privilege. There is always someone being crushed under the power," she said. "Is 'king' really the best way to describe our Lord?"

I never really thought of the baggage the word "king" might have, and perhaps Christ is not my king. Disclaimer: Jesus is indeed my Lord, and that is a profession of faith I will fall on my knees proclaiming every day that I have breath. But king?

Now "kin," which means members of a family, that is a more thought provoking description of Jesus. For aren't we all part of the family of Christ? Aren't we all siblings through his blood that was shed for us on the cross? And as our kin, Jesus doesn't issue royal edicts to further earthly powers, rather he issues Godly edicts to further humankind: Edicts to love one another as he has loved us.

As we sing of Christ's reign ruling forever and ever, let us also lift a note of praise for Christ Our Kin, our brother who reminds us that no matter what our ancestry searches discover, we all belong to the family of God.

Mission Moments tell a story about our congregation's connection with the United Church of Christ. You make possible these ministries through our gifts to Our Church's Wider Mission in our Annual Budget. For more information visit [https:// www.ucc.org](https://www.ucc.org)

