

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 FEBRUARY 22, 2026

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

It is Well with My Soul

arr. Cathy Moglebust

Carillon Handbell Choir and Michael John Ferry, violin

WELCOME

Dennis Zander

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Dennis Zander

One: Then the Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness.

Many: Come, beloved, into the wilderness of our heartbreaking and troubled days.

One: During our hunger for comfort, provoked by lies of scarcity,

Many: This Lent journey promises bread and abundance.

One: During our longing for safety, enticed by promises of security,

Many: This Lent journey promises angels and costly solidarity.

One: During our clinging to power, lured by the ease of complicity,

Many: This Lent journey promises prayer and turning around.

One: The Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness.

Many: Come, beloved, to worship, venturing deeper and deeper into the wilderness of our broken and beautiful world.

***GATHERING HYMN**

New Century Hymnal #205
Forty Days and Forty Nights

HEINLEIN

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

Dennis Zander

God of Eden's morning, we know that Lent is a hard time for us. In a culture which showcases success, you call us to sacrifice ourselves for others. In a world which promotes power, you invite us to deny ourselves. In a society which encourages us to 'feel good,' you point us to the struggles of siblings, the burdens others bear. By your mercy, guide our transformation, Hope of our lives. Remind us that as we journey with Jesus, we learn the steps of discipleship. As we listen to his call to obedience, may we learn how to say 'no' to all that tempts us. As we see his suffering, may we live out the good news which has come to us through our Lord Jesus the Christ.

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

***SONG**

Peace I Leave with You, My Friends

PEACE, MY FRIENDS

Peace I leave with you, my friends, sha-lom, my peace, in
all you do. Peace I leave with you, my friends.
I give to you so you can give to oth - ers, too.

SCRIPTURE:

Matthew 4:1-11

Dennis Zander

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil. He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was famished. The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But he answered, "It is written,

‘One does not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’ ”

Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written,

‘He will command his angels concerning you,’
and ‘On their hands they will bear you up,
so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.’ ”

Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’ ”

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! for it is written,

‘Worship the Lord your God,
and serve only him.’ ”

Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

KIDS QUEST

Rev. Brian Damrow

SERMON

Longing for Wholeness

Rev. Brian Damrow

MESSAGE IN MUSIC

Jesus, Lover of My Soul

Terre Johnson
Chancel Choir and piano

Jesus, lover of my soul, let me to thy bosom fly,
while the nearer waters roll, while the tempest still is high;
hide me, O my Savior, hide, till the storm of life is past;
safe into the haven guide, O receive my soul at last!

Other refuge have I none; hangs my helpless soul on thee;
leave, ah! leave me not alone, still support and comfort me.
All my trust on thee is stayed, all my help from thee I bring;
cover my defenseless head with the shadow of thy wing.

Plenteous grace with thee is found, grace to cover all my sin;
let the healing streams abound; make and keep me pure within.
Thou of life the fountain art; freely let me take of thee;
spring thou up within my heart, rise to all eternity

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.**

Place your gift in the offering plate

or

Text your gift to

708-688-5486

or



or go to

<http://tinyurl.com/FCCLGChangingLives>

OFFERTORY

I'm Just a Poor Wayfaring Stranger

arr. Hart Morris

Carillon Handbell Choir and Michael John Ferry, violin

***OFFERTORY RESPONSE (UNISON) Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow OLD HUNDREDTH**

Praise God from whom all bless-ings flow; Praise God, all crea-tures here be - low;

Praise God for all that love has done; Cre - a - tor, Christ, and Spir - it One. A - men.

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION (UNISON)**

Dennis Zander

May the privileged always share with the forgotten, may the powerful learn the grace of humility, and may our generosity reveal our gratitude for all the blessings we have been given so we can share them with others. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dennis Zander

***HYMN**

New Century Hymnal #209
O Love, How Vast, How Flowing Free
verses 1-4, 6

DEO GRACIAS

***BENEDICTION**

Rev. Brian Damrow

POSTLUDE

Erbarm dich mein, o Herre Gott (Have Mercy on me, Lord God) Nicolaus Hanff
AnnLaura Tapia, organ

THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS:

Reader Leader: Dennis Zander

Usher: Lawrence Bain

Coffee Hour Hosts: Angela Harrison, Betsy Colombe

Audio/Video: John Hoo & David Watts

Laundry Hero: Laurie Braun

Prayer Requests

- For 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.
- For church member Larry Adkison, prayers for healing.
- For church member Stephanie Johnston who is recovering from an injury.

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

This Week at Church

Sunday	2/22	10:00 a.m.	Celebration of Worship	Sanctuary/ online
		11:00 a.m.	Coffee Hour	Founders Room
		11:30 a.m.	Ring and Sing	Room 304
		7:00 p.m.	OA	Drawing Room
Monday	2/23	11:00 a.m.	Weekly Staff Meeting	Church Office
		6:00 p.m.	Galaxy Theater Rehearsal	Dining Room
		6:30 p.m.	AA	Drawing Room
Tuesday	2/24	6:00 p.m.	Galaxy Theater Rehearsal	Dining Room
Wednesday	2/25	7:30 p.m.	Carillon Handbell Choir	Room 305
Thursday	2/26	4:15 p.m.	Confirmation Class	Zackley Youth Center
		7:00 p.m.	Chancel Choir	Choir Room
Friday	2/27	9:00 a.m.	OA	Drawing Room
		3:30 p.m.	Continuing Adult Education through Study	Zoom
		5:00 p.m.	Private Event	Drawing Room
Saturday	2/28	9:00 a.m.	Saturday Meals Program	Dining Room
Sunday	3/1	10:00 a.m.	Celebration of Worship	Sanctuary/ online
		11:00 a.m.	Coffee Hour	Founders Room
		11:30 a.m.	Ring and Sing	Room 304
		7:00 p.m.	OA	Drawing Room

Check out our new website!
Same address: fcclg.org
New Look!

Announcements

FCCLG Book Club will meet next on Tuesday, March 24th at 7:30 pm via zoom. Our selected book is the *Frozen River*, by Ariel Lawhon, a historical fiction mystery set in 1789 Maine, centered on midwife Martha Ballard. The story uses her actual meticulous diary entries as a foundation for a fictionalized murder investigation. Following the discovery of a man's body in the frozen Kennebeck River- who was accused of rape-Martha investigates the murder while fighting against a dismissive, male dominate community to secure justice for victims. All readers are welcome! Contact Kathy Donaldson kathygdonaldson@gmail.com for a Zoom invitation or with any questions.

FCCLG Ministry Teams: If you have not yet scheduled a meeting with Pastor Brian, please contact the office at mainoffice@fcclg.org for scheduling.

A New Role for AnnLaura Begins this week! In addition to sharing her talents on the organ and piano for our Sunday service, AnnLaura Tapia will be joining the office staff as the new Office Administrator starting tomorrow. We are very excited to welcome her to our weekday staff!

Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) is the way our congregation participates in the ministry of the wider United Church of Christ — supporting vital work **in the Illinois Conference and across the globe.**

Through OCWM, local churches like ours empower:

- **Leadership support and care** for clergy and congregations across Illinois
- **Resources and training** that strengthen churches in times of change
- **Justice and compassion ministries** serving communities in need
- **National and global mission work**, including disaster relief, refugee support, and long-term community development

Every gift to OCWM helps extend Christ's love far beyond our own walls — strengthening the church, equipping leaders, and supporting ministries of compassion, justice, and welcome throughout the world.

Thank you for giving generously to this wider mission we share.



Save the Date: You're invited to walk with FCCLG in the 2026 Pet Parade! We'll be grooving through the decades with a 1960's theme. Please hold the morning of **Saturday, May 30th**, on your calendar and help us fill the streets with good vibes! Friendly furry friends are, of course, welcome to join.



Galaxy Theater Company



Neil
Simon's

Presents

The

Odd

Couple

Female
Version



February 20th-March 1st

Show Location: First Congregational Church of LaGrange,

100 S. Sixth Ave. LaGrange

Show times: Friday and Saturday at 7:30pm and Sunday at 2:00pm.

Ticket prices: \$20 adult/ \$17 Students-Seniors.

Running time: 135 minutes.

For ticket sales visit:

<https://www.onthestage.tickets/show/galaxy-theater-company/68fee9ac9394f610002e4cb0>

Find Your Calm:

Free!

Tools to Reduce Stress, Beat Burnout, & Boost Mental Well-Being

Open to adults and high school students

Tuesday
February 24, 2026
6:30 – 8 pm

Lyons Township High School South
4900 Willow Springs Rd
Western Springs

Resource Room open
before and after
presentations

Details/RSVP

Visit OptWell.org/events



Or email info@OptWell.org

Presented by:

OptWell
choosing healthy. thriving together.

Speakers:

- **Michelle Anderson**, Co-Host of *Cozy Conversations with The Sister Project* Podcast
 - Warm, humorous advocate for slower, calmer, more intentional living
- **Jim Maley**, Host of *The Maley Way* Podcast, Teacher, Former D1 Basketball Player
 - Overcame depression with mission to destigmatize asking for help
- **Stef Schodrof**, Wellness-preneur & Founder, SENSEORY
 - Champion of wellness hacks and burnout prevention tools to thrive daily
- **Alma Jimenez Tapia**, MSW, LCSW, Pillars Community Health
 - Teaches Mental Health 101, suicide prevention, and resources for support
- **Michelle Halm**, LPC, FT, Founder, Grief Connection Space
 - Advocate for coping skills including emotional awareness, self-soothing, and mindfulness

Thank you to our Sponsors:



FCCLG Leadership in 2026

Council:			
Moderator of Council	Kent Llewellyn	moderator@fcclg.org	
Past Moderator	Tom Lowry		
Vice Moderator	Patrick John		
Clerk	Sherrri Ries		
Treasurer	Amanda Ries	treasurer@fcclg.org	
Members At Large	Noah Gartner (yr 3/3) Kaki Lynch (yr1/3)		
Transitional Pastor	Rev. Brian Damrow	pastor@fcclg.org	
Ministries:			
Volunteer Coordinator	Stephanie Johnston		
Broadcasting	John Hoo Lizza Obeng	Amanda Murphy David Watts	
Faith Formation	Jerry Palmer (Adult Ed)	Amanda Ries (Sunday School)	
Green Team	Laurie Braun Claudia Byrne	Mary Ann Daniels Diane Kasnick	Dawn Mackie
Membership	Petra Hentzel* Janet Sampson	Sherrri 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	Open	Open	Open
Property	Dick Lauterbach Dave Ries	Mike Ries* Erik Sander	Dave Watts
Social Justice	Laurie Braun	Kathy Donaldson	
Social Media	Amanda Murphy		
Stewardship	Ellen Hamilton Kent Llewellyn	Tom Lowry 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

February 22, 2026
First Sunday in Lent
Matthew 4:1-11

The season of Lent begins with a 40-day trip into the harsh and desolate wilderness. While it might not be as enticing as a trip to Tahiti, it is an important one nevertheless. It is our time to learn from Jesus how to deal with our own wild beasts, our own hungers and thirsts, and our own run-ins with the Tempter, by leaning on God's Word.

This year, though, I don't need to say "yes" to this invitation to follow Jesus into the desert. That's because I have never emerged. I have been in a state of wilderness lostness for quite some time. Wild beasts remain nipping at my ankles. False promises of stones turning into bread have not satiated the hollow pit in my soul. And tempters seem to be trying to get my attention everywhere I turn.

It is easy to "do" Lent when everything is right in the world. When we feel safe and hopeful, Lent becomes a season of eagerly listening to God, slowing down, praying more, and helping others. But when worries of rising grocery bills and whether it is safe to go out in a public place overtake your thoughts, you wonder: Is this harsh world the norm?

I know I am not alone asking this, as studies show how hurtful and hateful society has become. There was a recent poll that revealed a whopping 47% of Americans agreed that people have become ruder to one another since Covid. The other day, a colleague shared an insight that I found profound. She observed how there was a growing sense of entitlement, yet no one had any shame over the things they said and did.

Perhaps this Lenten season is not so much about entering the wilderness as it is about helping one another exit it — to find our way back to hope by holding even tighter to God's Word, by kicking the wild beasts away, and by claiming the name of Christ when tempters tout false promises.

For here is the good news for all my perpetual wilderness wanderers. There are always — always — angels among us eagerly waiting to administer the help that we need. Perhaps there is one sitting in the pew next to you.

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)

