

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 MARCH 15, 2026

Dreaming God's Dream

NO GIFT TOO SMALL, NO DREAM TOO BIG.

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

Variations on Amazing Grace

Gwyneth Walker
AnnLaura Tapia, organ

WELCOME

Angela Harrison

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Angela Harrison

One: Early each morning, God waits to greet us with joy and wonder.

Many: We awake to find ourselves enveloped in grace.

One: During the day, Jesus comes to invite us to serve.

Many: We rise from our work and leisure to bring healing and hope to others.

One: In the shadowed evenings of our fears and worries, the Spirit is with us.

Many: The Light of life shines on us in every moment of every day.



1. Long-ing for light, — we wait in dark-ness. Long-ing for
2. Long-ing for peace, — our world is trou-bled. Long-ing for
3. Long-ing for food, — man-y are hun-gry. Long-ing for
4. Long-ing for shel-ter, man-y are home-less. Long-ing for
5. Man-y the gifts, — man-y the peo-ple, man-y the



1. truth, — we turn to you. Make us your own, —
2. hope, — man-y de-spair. Your word a-lone —
3. wa-ter, man-y still thirst. Make us your bread, —
4. warmth, — man-y are cold. Make us your build-ing,
5. hearts that yearn to be-long. Let us be ser-vants



1. your ho-ly peo-ple, light for the world to see.
2. has pow'r to save us. Make us your liv-ing voice.
3. bro-ken for oth-ers, shared un-til all are fed.
4. shel-ter-ing oth-ers, walls made of liv-ing stone.
5. to one an-oth-er, mak-ing your king-dom come.



Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the dark-ness.



Christ, be our light! Shine in your church gath-ered to-day.

Pastor: One thing we know, listener to our hearts: you are the One who sends us on journeys and waits for us at the final destination.

All Sing: verse 1

Pastor: One thing we know, Healer of our lives: when we find ourselves in valleys veiled in shadows, you are walking alongside us even though we may never notice.

All Sing: verse 2

Pastor: One thing we know, Comforter of our souls: when we are weakened by the burdens of our lives, you come to us, to rest your strengthening peace upon us.

All Sing: verse 3

Pastor: One thing we know, God in Community: once we could not see you in every moment, but now our eyes are opened wide, and so we pray together, saying:

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

All Sing:

verses 4 & 5

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

Angela Harrison

Like Cinderella, Loving God, we sit in the ashes of our hopes, but you see us as your beloved children. We pay strict attention to all who break the rules but ignore the grace which is poured out upon us. We try to box you in with boundaries we can manage, but you continue to burst forth to bring newness into the world. Transform us and open our eyes to your presence among us. As you look at our hearts, may we see others in a different way, not as enemies or strangers, but sisters and brothers of the same family, and kin to Jesus the Christ, and sons and daughters of the mystery we know as love. Amen.

SCRIPTURE:

John 9:1-41

Angela Harrison

As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am he." But they kept asking him, "Then

how were your eyes opened?" He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' Then I went and washed and received my sight." They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know."

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see." Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not observe the Sabbath." Others said, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And they were divided. So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened." He said, "He is a prophet."

The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" His parents answered, "We know that this is our son and that he was born blind, but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself." His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, "Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner." He answered, "I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" He answered them, "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?" Then they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." The man answered, "Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." They answered him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?" And they drove him out.

Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" He answered, "And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him." Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he." He said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped him. Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see may see and those who do see may become blind." Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard this and said to him, "Surely we are not blind, are we?" Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, 'We see,' your sin remains.

KIDS QUEST

Rev. Brian Damrow

SERMON

Longing for Community

Rev. Brian Damrow

PASTORAL PRAYER

Rev. Brian Damrow

***MESSAGE IN MUSIC**

My Song in the Night

arr. Harold Burgmayer
Chancel Choir and piano

O Jesus my Savior, my song in the night,
Come to us with thy tender love, my soul's delight.
Unto thee, O Lord, in affliction I call,
My comfort by day, and my song in the night.
O why should I wander, an alien from thee,
Or cry in the desert thy face to see?
My comfort and joy, my soul's delight,
O Jesus my Savior, my song in the night.

Place your gift in the offering plate

or

Text your gift to

708-688-5486

or



or go to

<http://tinyurl.com/FCCLGChangingLives>

OFFERTORY

Deep in Our Hearts

Words: John Oldham
Music: Ron Klusmeier
Chancel Choir and organ

Deep in our hearts there is a common vision;
Deep in our hearts there is a common song;
Deep in our hearts there is a common story,
telling Creation that we are one.

Deep in our hearts there is a common purpose;
Deep in our hearts there is a common goal;
Deep in our hearts there is a sacred message,
justice and peace in harmony.

Deep in our hearts there is a common longing;
Deep in our hearts there is a common theme;
Deep in our hearts there is a common current,
flowing to freedom like a stream.

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

Musical score for the Offertory Response. It consists of two systems of music, each with a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment line (bass clef). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are: "Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures 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)**

Angela Harrison

Creator of all, through your son Jesus you have taught us that we can indeed anoint others with grace, prepare feasts for the hungry, welcome the stranger, and love those we consider to be our enemies. Bless these gifts, and use our lives for others, we pray. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Angela Harrison

***HYMN**

New Century Hymnal #547
Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound
verses 1-3, 5

AMAZING GRACE

POSTLUDE

Go To Dark Gethsemane

Ludwig Lenel
AnnLaura Tapia, organ

THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS:

Reader Leader: Angela Harrison
Usher: Lawrence Bain
Coffee Hour Hosts: Nurture

Audio/Video: John Hoo & Lizza Obeng
Laundry Hero: Kathy Donaldson

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 in hospice.
- 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	3/15	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	3/16	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	3/17	7:00 a.m.	Polling Place	Dining Room
		5:00 p.m.	Meditative Prayer Ministry	Chapel

Wednesday	3/18	6:00 p.m.	Galaxy Theater Rehearsal	Dining Room
		7:30 p.m.	Carillon Handbell Choir	Room 305
Thursday	3/19	4:15 p.m.	Confirmation Class	Zackley Youth Center
		7:00 p.m.	Chancel Choir	Choir Room
Friday	3/20	9:00 a.m.	OA	Drawing Room
		3:30 p.m.	Continuing Adult Education through Study	Zoom
Saturday	3/21	9:00 a.m.	Saturday Meals Program	Dining Room
Sunday	3/22	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

Announcements



Holy Week Worship Schedule

Palm Sunday: Celebration of Worship 10:00 a.m.

Maundy Thursday: Tenebrae Service at 7:00 p.m.

Good Friday: Worship Service at 7:00 p.m.
at Plymouth Place, 315 N La Grange Rd

Easter Morning: Celebration of Worship 10:00 a.m.



Easter Flowers: Help bring the sanctuary to life on April 5 by dedicating a lily to a loved one. The cost per lily is \$20 and orders must be placed by next Sunday, March 22nd, with the church office.

The lily cross that adorns the altar is another way to recognize a loved one. Please contact the office if you would like to donate the cross this year. The cost is \$135.

An additional tradition is the "Living Cross" - stay tuned for more info as Easter approaches.

Sandwich Sunday for BEDS Plus: Please join us in the dining room after service today to prepare a variety of sandwiches for clients of BEDS Plus. Through the various outreach services provided by BEDS Plus, over 100 sandwiches are distributed daily, so our help is much needed and appreciated. Thank you!



Lenten Concert: Today at 3pm, Walter Whitehouse, organ; Ryan Cox, baritone; AnnLaura Tapia, harp; and other wonderful musicians will be giving a concert of Lent and Easter music at Our Lady of Sorrows Basilica. The basilica is one of the architectural and acoustical treasures in the region. 3121 W. Jackson, Chicago, IL, 60612. Free will offering. There is secure, off-street parking.

Wacky Walkers: Wacky Walkers will meet on Sunday, March 22nd. The walking will occur at 1:00, location to be announced. Fellowship will start at 2:30 at the Palmer house in Downers Grove. Please contact Petra Hentzel for more information.

Missions Giving Priorities Survey: The Ministry of Missions seeks your input on key areas you want our church community to support through our monetary donations. There are paper surveys available on the table at the back of the church. Please fill out a form and place it in the treasure box, or use the QR code to fill out a form online.



Meditative Prayer Ministry: We are grateful for the many ways our church family continues to seek God's presence together. Our Meditative Prayer Ministry will be on Tuesday evenings from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., in our chapel. During these Tuesday evening hours, the chapel will be open to all. There will be no formal program, no required structure—only a sacred, welcoming space for silence, reflection, Scripture meditation, and personal prayer.

Extra, Extra, Extra! Stuff needs a new home. After organizing some storage areas at FCCLG, there are several items no longer used here. If you can use them, please take them home! Items are located just inside the Founder's Room. Items remaining after 3/22 will be donated.

Help Host Coffee Hour! The Nurture Team is looking for volunteers to host Coffee Hour. Don't worry—you won't be on your own! A team member will be there to assist as you serve the treats you provide. Our church community truly values this time of connection and fellowship. You can sign up online or in the Founders Room. Thank you for helping make this special time possible!



What is One Great Hour of Sharing?

For over 75 years, the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering (OGHS) has been helping Christians bring God's hope and healing to hurting people both in the US and around the world. OGHS's mission is to support domestic and international development, fight poverty and its consequences, bring aid and relief to communities torn by war or ravaged by national disaster, provide advocacy and resettlement assistance for refugees and displaced persons, and combat injustice in its many forms. OGHS provides funding and hands-on assistance in collaboration with local and international partners. Each year, OGHS is gathered by several denominations and Church World Service (CWS) under a single theme developed by the ecumenical OGHS Committee. In the United Church of Christ, the Global H.O.P.E. team oversees the distribution of the offering. You can learn more about this team at www.ucc.org/global-hope. Envelopes for this offering can be found on the table at the back of the sanctuary. Thank you for supporting One Great Hour of Sharing for over 75 years. You continue to embody a love offering to the world.

March 15, 2026

Fourth Sunday in Lent

John 9:1-41

One of the most haunting questions in John comes when after Jesus restores the sight of a man born blind and the Pharisees begin asking, "Surely, we are not blind?" From the very beginning of this healing story, there's much debate and misinformed assumptions from the community, including Jesus' disciples, as all wonder whose sin was responsible for the man's affliction: His own or his parents? Curses and blessings pave much of the Old Testament theological road, so it was popular belief

that when bad things happened it was because of something you or a family member did or didn't do.

Jesus announces, though, the blindness was no one's sin, and with a little divine spit and saliva rubbed onto the man's eyes, Jesus heals him. The man returns from washing his eyes in the Pool of Siloam, which means "sent," as Jesus instructed him to do. He returns with eyes that see everything vividly, even the truth of who Jesus is — the Holy One of God.

Skepticism prevails, though, and the Pharisees relentlessly question the man. It is then that Jesus makes the comment that he came into the world so that those who do not see may see, and those who do may become blind. He said it loud enough for the educated religious elite to hear. And when they do, they wonder, "Surely, we are not blind?"

Surely, I am not blind. Surely, you are not blind. We can see clearly what is right and what is wrong in the world, correct? Surely, we can see with the restored eyes of the blind man not only the beautiful blues in the sky and the lush greens in the meadows but the power and majesty of Christ among us.

The question of blindness is a haunting one because it reminds us that often we see only what we want to see, and we believe only what we want to believe. Like the Pharisees, none of us are free from misinformed assumptions and inherited prejudices and stymying skepticism.

How then do we gain our spiritual sight? I suppose it starts by allowing this question to haunt us. For only when we begin to ask if we ourselves are blind will we begin to admit that we need corrective spiritual lenses.

All-knowing and all-seeing God, heal us from our own blindness that keeps us from seeing the world with the eyes of Jesus. May this day we regain our spiritual sight to see those who are hungry, who hurt, and who are lonely. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

(Rev. Donna Frischknecht Jackson is a communications specialist for the United Church of Christ and author of today's *Sunday Bulletin*.)

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)

