

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF LAGRANGE

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ

S. LAGRANGE RD AT COSSITT AVE.
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LAGRANGE, IL

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SUNDAY APRIL 5, 2026
EASTER SUNDAY

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

Eastertide Carols
Christ Is Arisen
He Is Risen
O Sons and Daughters
AnnLaura Tapia, organ and Ensemble

***GATHERING HYMN**

New Century Hymnal #233
Christ the Lord Is Risen Today
(Verse 3 sung by the Chancel Choir)
EASTER HYMN
arr. W. Thomas Jones

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: Christ is risen!

All Voices: Christ is risen indeed!

One: Christ is risen!

All Voices: Christ is risen indeed!

One: Exhale. Go ahead, exhale. Breathe out. Let go. On this Easter Sunday, allow your souls to be replenished. Take in the joy. Take in peace. Take in the togetherness. Take what you need.

And wonder. Wonder, and imagine, and reflect, and question, and listen. Listen deeply to the words and the songs. Listen deeply to the Holy Spirit. And hear the words that God has for you.

We emerge from the long days of Lent; our journey through the wilderness. And we acknowledge that there is a darkness that seems to loom in this world. And we remember that nestled within the great mystery of the Resurrection is a great light. Search for that light, that hope on this day.

So, we come into this space, this sacred space, and we bring ourselves; our whole selves. We encourage you to embrace your body and we invite you to use your body to give God a hand clap of praise, to sing, to jump around, to dance, to celebrate. And, as we celebrate the Risen Savior, we invite you to bring your full selves into worship because Christ is risen!

All Voices: Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

One: After the Sabbath, as the first light of the new week dawned, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to keep vigil at the tomb. Suddenly the earth reeled and rocked under their feet as God's angel came down from heaven, came right up to where they were standing. He rolled back the stone and then sat on it. Shafts of lightning blazed from him. His garments shimmered snow-white. The guards at the tomb were scared to death. They were so frightened, they couldn't move. The angel spoke to the women: "There is nothing to fear here. I know you're looking for Jesus, the One they nailed to the cross. He is not here. He was raised, just as he said. Come and look at the place where he was placed. Now, get on your way quickly and tell his disciples, He is risen from the dead. He is going on ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there.' That's the message." The women, deep in wonder and full of joy, lost no time in leaving the tomb. They ran to tell the disciples. Then Jesus met them, stopping them

in their tracks. “Peace be with you!” he said. They fell to their knees, embraced his feet, and worshiped him. Jesus said, “You’re holding on to me for dear life! Don’t be frightened like that. Get up! Go tell my brothers that they are to go to Galilee, and that I’ll meet them there. And remember! I will be with you always, yes, even until the end of the ages.”

Holy wisdom, holy words.

All Voices: Thanks be to God.

***CHORAL RESPONSE:**

Risen, Alleluia!

Allen Koepke
Chancel Choir and Organ

Risen, risen, Christ the Lord is risen, Alleluia!

***SILENT PRAYER**

***EASTER STATEMENT OF FAITH (*UNISON*):**

We believe in God, whose love is the source of all life and the desire of our lives whose love was given a human face in Jesus of Nazareth, whose love was crucified by the evil that waits to enslave us all and whose love, defeating even death, is our glorious promise of freedom. Therefore, though we are sometimes fearful and full of doubt we trust in that love: and in the name of Jesus the Christ, we commit ourselves, in the service of others, to seek justice and to live in peace, to care for the earth and to share the commonwealth of God’s goodness, to live in the freedom of forgiveness and in the power of the Spirit of love, and in the company of all the faithful past, present, and yet to come, so to be the Church, for the glory of God. Amen.

Our hearts be pure from e - vil, that we may see a - right
the Christ who reigns e - ter - nal in res - ur - rec - tion light;
We lis - ten for the teach - ings once heard so calm and plain,
for we, too, want to fol - low and raise the vic - tor strain.

KIDS QUEST

Rev. Brian Damrow

SERMON

When God Writes a Comma

Rev. Brian Damrow

PASTORAL PRAYER

Rev. Brian Damrow

***HYMN**

Midnight Sharpness, Starfields, Fading

TASHME



1 Mid-night sharp-ness, star-fields, fad-ing, creep-ing hues en-gulf the east,
2 Cold of win-ter, dark of eve-ning, can-not crush the light-seed sown,



strips of grave cloth cloud re-flect-ing faint-est lines in crim-son-grey:
flames on fro-zen, dew-wrapped grass-es, spark-ling tears of Joy Un-known:



Her-ald Dawn's first heart-beat glow-ing, blood-red streaks of fire flow
Christ is ris-en! Christ is ris-en! Shout O skies! Re-joice O fields!



'cross the fields of fur-rowed la-bor, signs of liv-ing, pro-mise, hope.
Hal-le-lu-jah! Je-sus! Sav-ior! Let the Bells of Morn-ing peal!

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY

Rev. Brian Damrow

Place your gift in the offering plate

or

Text your gift to

708-688-5486

or



or go to

<http://tinyurl.com/FCCLGChangingLives>

Now the earth is risen again from the winter's bond and pain!
Bring we leaf and flower and spray to adorn this Easter day.

Once again the word comes true, all the earth is born anew.
Now the coldest days are o'er, and light and gladness as before.

How our hearts leap with the Spring! How our voices soar and sing!
Life has triumphed over death, and beauty rises, sings on every breath.

Change, then, mourning into praise, with loudest voices anthems raise.
All our fears and griefs shall be lost in immortality.

***OFFERTORY RESPONSE (UNISON)**

LASST UNS ERFREUEN

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

low. Al- le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! Praise God for all that love has

done; Cre - a - tor, Christ, and Spir- it, One. Al- le - lu - ia, al - le -

lu - a! Al- le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

O God, you have shattered the grave and given us new life through your Son. With joyful hearts, we bring our gifts as signs of resurrection hope. Use them to proclaim your victory and to bless your world. In the name of the Risen Christ, we pray. Amen.

***COMMUNION HYMN**

New Century Hymnal #347
Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ

LINSTEAD

COMMUNION INVITATION

Rev. Brian Damrow

COMMUNION PRAYER

Rev. Brian Damrow

On this day, we celebrate the risen Christ.

On this day, we celebrate resurrection in our lives.

On this day, we embrace the grace which reaches from the tomb.

On this day, we embrace faith by committing to love in action.

On this day, we shout Hallelujah!

On this day we shout, Christ is risen! Alleluia!

It is through our neighbors and creation that we see the rising of Christ, O God. Creator of Our Earth: We celebrate the shifting of seasons from one to the next. As the earth sheds its snow, it begins to drink in the warm rains and creation comes alive once again.

And so, in this spirit of brightness and life, we celebrate. We celebrate the risen Christ in our midst. We celebrate at the table where we can join with friends and strangers.

Through this meal which has stood the test of time, we covenant to love you, God. We covenant to love as Jesus the Christ loved us - loving our neighbors as ourselves. Through a simple meal of grain and grapes, we, your children, unite.

As we enter this season of Easter, we ask that the warm winds of the Spirit encircle this table and accompany us on our journey. May this Spirit help us to recognize the Christ-

presence in our midst. May the Spirit open our souls in order for us to see humanity, God and creation through the eyes of Jesus.

It was Jesus who introduced this meal to his followers. Even though Jesus knew he would be betrayed and deserted by those at this supper, he still continued to join them at the table, sharing time and space with whom he grew closest.

As the night lengthened, Jesus took a simple portion of bread. He blessed it and broke it and shared it with the disciples. He urged them: Remember me.

Afterwards, Jesus took the cup. During his blessing, Jesus reminded them how he would go to the ends of the earth in his love for them.

Today, we celebrate this earth-shaking love of Jesus – a love that sent him to the cross and a love that lives eternally with us, encouraging us to live a resurrected life.

SHARING THE ELEMENTS

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING (UNISON):

Through this space and time together today, we celebrate the covenant that ties us with God, Jesus the Christ, our neighbors and creation. Thank you, Divine Crafter of the Table, for fashioning us a holy meal that unites us with the Body of Christ. Send us into the world resurrected, refreshed and ready to share Christ’s unconditional love. Amen.

Singers wanting to join the choir for the Hallelujah Chorus, use the side aisles and make your way to the chancel and floor near the pulpit and lectern.

***HYMN**

Hallelujah Chorus

G. F. Handel

***BENEDICTION**

Rev. Brian Damrow

POSTLUDE

Tocatta in F Major, BuxWV 157

Dieterich Buxtehude
AnnLaura Tapia, organ

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR EASTER ENSEMBLE:

Trumpet: Jim Kloss*

Oboe: Anna Velzo^

Soprano Saxophone: Jeremy Ruthrauff^

Alto Saxophone: Brian Shannon*

Bass Clarinet: Corry Shannon*

Violin: Julia Cunnigham* Joyce Hagen-McIntosh* Jacob Johnson** Jo Marie Sison**

Viola: Sharon Robbert* Emma Strohbusch^

Cello: Megan Lauterbach**

Bass: Julian Romane^

Percussion: Alex Hagen-McIntosh* Peter VanKempen*

*Member or Friend of FCCLG

^Sponsored by First Conservatory

**Sponsored by the Friends of Music

Jim Kloss is playing in loving memory of Ron Kloss, Dolores Kloss and John Bednar.

THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS:

Reader Leaders: Chris Bart, Noah Gartner, Amanda Murphy, Stephanie Johnston

Audio/Video: John Hoo

Usher: Lawrence Bain

Laundry Hero: Wendy Seifert



Easter Lilies are Provided by:



Lexie Carther

Dennis Zander and Sandra Kappmeyer

Nancy Coleman, for Peace on Earth

Neil O'Brien, in memory of David J. O'Brien

Sara Carr, in memory of Tyler Llewellyn and Cindy Carr

Betsy Colombe, in memory of John Colombe

Janet Bednar, in memory of John Bednar

Jean Tomkinson, in memory of Ted Tomkinson

Tom Lowry, in memory of Richard and Dolores Lowry

Lex and Mary Bart, in honor of Barbara Hultman, and our families

Gary Melkonian, in memory of Margaret Melkonian

Chris and Renee Bryant, in memory of Renee's brother, Bryan Vaughn
and Chris' mom, Bonnie Bryant

In memory of Robert and Marcella Klestil,
from their children: Robert, Marcelline, & Sharon

Barb Brumley, Janet (Brumley) Abramson, Diane (Brumley) Marty, and David Brumley,
in loving memory of our Dad/Husband

Janet (Brumley) Abramson, Diane (Brumley) Marty, and David Brumley, in honor of our
mom, Barbara Treat Brumley

Diane Kasnick, in memory of Merlyn Schlenker and Shirley Schlenker

Gail Allinson, in memory of Olive Marie Ahlgrim and Gregg Thomas Allinson

Ragnhild Swanson, in memory of David M. Swanson

Carol Berman, in memory of loved ones

Anonymous, in memory of John Bednar and his role with the Zackleys

Brian and Dawn Damrow, in memory of Ellsworth & Cleo Damrow, Herb Semsch,
and Tom Hafner



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.
- For Wyatt, nephew of Jean O'Brien's friend, that God will show him a path.

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

This Week at Church

Sunday	4/5	8:30 a.m.	Easter Breakfast	Founders' Room
		10:00 a.m.	Celebration of Worship	Sanctuary/ online
		7:00 p.m.	OA	Drawing Room
Monday	4/6		Office Closed	
		6:30 p.m.	AA	Drawing Room
		6:00 p.m.	Galaxy Theatre Rehearsal	Dining Room
Tuesday	4/7	5:00 p.m.	Meditative Prayer Ministry	Chapel
Wednesday	4/8	6:00 p.m.	Galaxy Theatre Rehearsal	Dining Room
Thursday	4/9	6:00 p.m.	Galaxy Theatre Rehearsal	Dining Room
Friday	4/10	9:00 a.m.	OA	Drawing Room
		3:30 p.m.	Continuing Adult Education through Study	Zoom
Saturday	4/11	9:00 a.m.	Saturday Meals Program	Dining Room
Sunday	4/12	10:00 a.m.	Celebration of Worship	Sanctuary/ online
		11:00 a.m.	Coffee Hour	Founders' Room
		11:15 a.m.	Ring and Sing	Room 304
		11:15 a.m.	Ministry Teams Meeting	Dining Room
		7:00 p.m.	OA	Drawing Room

Announcements

Missions Giving Priorities Survey: We're wrapping up our survey and would love to hear from you! Your feedback will help guide our giving focus and the causes our church community supports. If you have not already responded, please do so today. Paper copies are available at the back of the sanctuary and can be placed in the treasure box, or use the QR code to fill out a form online.





One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) is a Special Mission Offering of the United Church of Christ that supports partners worldwide with ministries that fund health, education, and agricultural development, emergency relief, refugee ministries, and both international and domestic disaster response. We will be collecting for this offering through April 12th. Thank you for your support of this offering!

Meditative Prayer Ministry: Christianity has a rich tradition of contemplative prayer, inviting us to draw closer to God through silence and stillness. At First Congregational Church of LaGrange, we gather on Tuesday evenings to quiet our minds and listen for God’s presence within.

We meet in the Beatitudes Chapel (the 6th Avenue Entrance will be open) from 5–7 pm on most Tuesdays. This is an open, welcoming space for prayerful reflection and calm.

No experience is needed, and you don’t need to attend every week—or attend for a set period of time, come whenever you are able and stay for as long as you like. All are welcome.

Information on special events and meditations will be announced, periodically, in the weekly bulletin. If you have any ideas on how to make this time more spiritually rewarding, please reach out to Tom Lowry.



Pet Parade: Represent FCCLG in this year’s Annual Pet Parade. The theme this year is decades, and ours is the 60’s. Join us to walk the 1.5 mile route. (Wacky Walkers – this means you!) We’re also looking for financial donations for swag to pass out to spectators, and for a banner to carry. Please note “Pet Parade” on your donation envelope or online donation.

Civics Lecture Series: Debra Shore – A Soggy Past...A Turbulent Future? – Reflecting on 18 Years on the Waterfront: As we prepare to vote, knowledge about the natural resources that are critical to our health and the economy of our region is important. Join the discussion with this leader...who has extraordinary experience at the level where elections impact policy decisions...as she looks at the future. Friday, April 10th at 2:00 p.m. in Dole Hall, Plymouth Place. Organizing committee: David Bryant, Doris Bryant, Lee Daniels, Joyce Linn, & Marti Tracy

Hygiene Kits: The Ministry of Missions is organizing a hands-on project to provide personal hygiene kits for Saturday Meals clients. Over the next several weeks we are collecting items to include in these kits, various everyday necessities that promote cleanliness, safety, and peace of mind. Later in April we will gather on a Sunday after service to assemble the kits. Please consider purchasing some of the following supplies and help contribute to the well-being of individuals and families we feed on Saturday. You can deposit your donations in the large bin by the Cossitt Avenue entrance door.

Alternatively, you can make a donation, and note “Hygiene Kits” on the check or donation envelope.

Items we are collecting include:

Unopened toothbrush, Toothpaste, Bar of soap, Wet Wipes, Stick deodorant, Shampoo *(These items should be travel-sized to make them easier to transport and store.)*

Socks (large size, unisex), and Protein bars

Contact Kathy Donaldson or any member of the Missions team with questions.



First Congregational Church
of Western Springs

HUGE 2-DAY RUMMAGE SALE

Tue & Wed, April 28 & 29
5:30-8pm (1/2 price & bag sale Wed)

1106 Chestnut St., Western Springs



DONATE YOUR RUMMAGE

In church parking lot on April 25 & 26



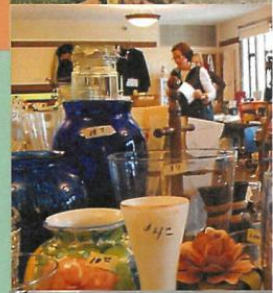
VOLUNTEER YOUR TIME (& SHOP EARLY)

*Help is needed from April 24-April 30
Advanced online sign-up is helpful but not required.*



SHOP YOUR HEART OUT, RAIN OR SHINE

All profits go to charity.
Seeing is believing!
Learn more/sign up at wscongo.org.



Stepping Toward New Life

April 5, 2026

Easter Day

John 20:1-18

There has always been something powerful about Mary's lonesome walk to the tomb that first Easter morning as each grief-filled step leads to renewed hope. And the beauty is that while we know what awaits her — not a lifeless body, but rather the Risen and Resurrected Lord — she doesn't.

In her pre-dawn funeral march, she has no clue that with just a few more difficult steps she will understand how God's promises are true. She will be awed to see how death doesn't get the victorious last word. She will hear the blessed new hellos that come after the heart-breaking good-byes.

Whenever I find myself moving in slow motion and the weight of loss makes it hard to take even one tiny shuffle forward, I take my side next to Mary. I imagine walking with her to the tomb of death that will be revealed as the tomb of life. I walk with her noticing how the darkness gradually changes color. One step forward and the black sky turns to gray. Another step forward and the gray lightens with twinges of pink. Yet another step and the pinks give way to dazzling golden hues. Each step, a step of faith. Each step, a step of promise. Each step leading to the promise of a resurrected life.

It happened to Mary, and it can happen to you on this day, the Resurrection of Our Lord Sunday!

Remember Mary and find the courage in your losses of life to keep stepping forward, for those are the steps leading to hope and healing. Those are the steps that will reveal to us the loving compassion of our Risen Lord and Friend.

God of Resurrection Hope, we praise You for the new day dawning. In Jesus, our hopes are renewed. In Jesus, grief will turn into joy. In Jesus, our tombs will indeed be made empty. May the steps of faith we take be strengthened by Your Love and may we never step moving forward toward Your beautiful promises. 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)

