

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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708.352.0800

SUNDAY APRIL 12, 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

Prelude on "Unser Herrscher"

Alan McMillan
AnnLaura Tapia, organ

WELCOME

Angela Harrison

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Angela Harrison

One: Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Many: The whole creation rejoices; the birds sing from every tree.

One: Alleluia! Christ is in our midst!

Many: Babies babble with sounds of joy; words cannot express our overflowing hearts.

One: Alleluia! Christ is our light forever!

Many: Breathing peace on us in these moments; surrounding us with grace and hope.

***OPENING HYMN**

New Century Hymnal #238
Now the Green Blade Rises

NOËL NOUVELET

***PRAYER OF TRANSFORMATION**

Angela Harrison

Hear the echoes of our locked hearts, Path of Life. We cross the borders into temptation and never seem to find our way back. We multiply the sorrows of others by our hurtful words and the harmful deeds we do. We see the ones you would give us to serve but believe we do not have the ability to care for them. Guide our transformation, God whose Breath gives us life. Walk through the closed doors of our worries and doubts to stand in our midst, offering us that grace which can heal us, that hope which can enliven us, and that faith which enables us to follow Jesus the Christ. Amen.

SCRIPTURE:

John 20:19-31

Angela Harrison

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors were locked where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

KIDS QUEST

Rev. Brian Damrow

SERMON

True Faith

Rev. Brian Damrow

PASTORAL PRAYER

Rev. Brian Damrow

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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

***HYMN**

New Century Hymnal #254
These Things Did Thomas Count

DISTRESS

MISSION MOMENT

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY

Angela Harrison

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



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

We walk by faith, and not by sight;
No gracious words we hear
From Him who spoke as none ne'er spoke,
But we believe him near.

We may not touch His hands and side,
Nor follow where He trod;
But in His promise we rejoice,
And cry, "My Lord and God!"

Help then, O Lord, our unbelief;
And may our faith abound,
To call on you when you are near,
And seek where you are found.

That when our lives of faith are done,
In realms of clearer light,
We may behold you as you are,
With full and endless sight.

*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!

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION (UNISON)**

Angela Harrison

May the gifts we offer be used to open doors closed to strangers, hands shut tight against generous giving, and hearts frozen by fears of the unknown. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Angela Harrison

***HYMN**

New Century Hymnal #244

O Sons and Daughters, Let Us Sing

O FILII ET FILIAE

***BENEDICTION**

Rev. Brian Damrow

POSTLUDE

O Sons and Daughters, Let Us Sing

Jean Francois Dandrieu
AnnLaura Tapia, organ

THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS:

Reader Leader: Angela Harrison

Audio/Video: John Hoo & Lizza Obeng

Usher: Lawrence Bain

Laundry Hero: Sherri Ries

Coffee Hour Hosts: Sherri & Dave Ries and Deb Wroblewski

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	4/12	10:00 a.m.	Celebration of Worship	Sanctuary/ online
		11:00 a.m.	Coffee Hour	Founders Room
		11:15 a.m.	Ministry Teams Meetings	
		11:30 a.m.	Ring & Sing	Room 304
		7:00 p.m.	OA	Drawing Room
Monday	4/13	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
		7:00 p.m.	Knitting/Crochet Group	Chapel Family Room
Tuesday	4/14	5:00 p.m.	Meditative Prayer Ministry	Chapel
Wednesday	4/15	6:00 p.m.	Galaxy Theater Rehearsal	Dining Room
		7:00 p.m.	Church Council Meeting	Zoom
		7:30 p.m.	Carillon Handbells	Room 305
Thursday	4/16	4:14 p.m.	Confirmation Class	Zackley Room
		6:00 p.m.	Galaxy Theater Rehearsal	Dining Room
		7:00 p.m.	Chancel Choir	Choir Room
Friday	4/17	9:00 a.m.	OA	Drawing Room
			Continuing Adult Education through Study	Zoom
		3:30 p.m.		
Saturday	4/18	9:00 a.m.	Saturday Meals Program	Dining Room
Sunday	4/19	10:00 a.m.	Celebration of Worship	Sanctuary/ online
		11:30 a.m.	Ring and Sing	Room 304
		7:00 p.m.	OA	Drawing Room

Announcements

All Teams Meetings: Ministry teams will meet today after worship. Grab something to eat and drink, and sit with your team.



UCC Pride Pins: Please pick up a rainbow or Pride comma lapel pin from the baskets in the Founders Room, and show your support of the LGBTQ community, United Church of Christ, and "God is Still Speaking." There is a suggested donation of \$5.

‘Sunday Take Away’ videos: Amanda Murphy will be looking for volunteers for one minute or less ‘Sunday Take Away’ videos for social media. Participants will be asked during coffee hour what they took from the day’s scripture lesson, or from a particular verse. If you’re interested in sharing faith based reflections as part of outreach and formation, let her know!

Friends of Music: We are fortunate to have a vibrant music program with volunteers as the cornerstone. Augmenting our volunteers with guest musicians for special services is made possible through the Friends of Music fund. Choral Sermons, Easter and Christmas Eve musicians, Jazz Sunday and other special services would not be possible without these gifts. This year’s donations will also help sponsor a concert on June 7. Brochures are available or you may donate online.



Hygiene Kits: Every day, there are people in our community who go without basic hygiene items like soap, toothpaste, and deodorant—essentials that help maintain health and dignity. On Sunday, April 19, during Coffee Hour, we will assemble hygiene kits for the individuals and families served by our Saturday Meals program. We need your help to reach our goal of 75 completed kits.

Here is how you can contribute:

- **Make a monetary gift:** Cash donations allow us to purchase the specific items needed to complete our kits. You can give cash to any member of the Missions team or write a check and note "Hygiene Kits" on the check or donation envelope
- **Donate items:** We are currently collecting Bar soap, Deodorant, Wet Wipes, Shampoo, Protein bars, Socks (large size, unisex). You can deposit your donations in the large bin by the Cossitt Avenue entrance door.
- **Spread the word:** Please share this message with your friends and family.

Thank you for your support of this mission.

Meditative Prayer Ministry: At FCCLG, 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.

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. Thank you for your support.



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.

Holy Language

April 12, 2026

Second Sunday of Easter

John 20:19-31

The season of Easter is underway. It's a time where we are being invited to experience the full 50 days of Eastertide, embracing the resurrection promise that breathes newness and vitality into our ordinary days. Chances are, though, there are many — perhaps even you, dear reader — who are feeling anything but hopeful. Perhaps your faith in a great God is as stale as the leftover jellybeans that filled last week's Easter baskets.

Take heart, for you are not alone. Doubts plague everyone, even the saintliest of saints among us. After her death, it was revealed how Mother Teresa battled many dark nights of the soul, questioning God's presence in her life. And long before Mother Teresa's doubting, there was Thomas. Known as "the twin," Thomas was absent that first Easter evening when Jesus came into the room speaking words of comfort and assurance: "Peace be with you."

Still reeling from Jesus' death, Thomas couldn't believe his friends who told him the great news of Jesus being alive. He didn't dare to believe for the pain of losing Jesus once before was enough. Why dare to hope again? To protect his heart from breaking with false hope, Thomas said that he had to see Jesus in the flesh for himself. He had to be able to put his fingers in Jesus' pierced side to believe the impossible news that he was walking among the living. Thomas got what he asked for. Jesus returns and stands before the doubter and shows him the scars. It's then Thomas utters the first public confession of faith, "My Lord and my God!"

Doubt. It haunts us all. It makes us insist on proof today for evidence of a better tomorrow. Why do we need to see before we believe? It is not an intellectual quest as some might think, but a protective reflex born out of too many shattering-heart let downs.

Like Thomas, we can relate to the scary vulnerability of risking our hearts to believe in hopeful possibilities, especially when there's no guarantee we won't be let down yet again.

But as Eastertide gets underway, we are given the good news that with God we can risk our hearts. We can believe boldly in God's care for us, even without hard proof. Even on those days when we think God has forgotten us. God has not. God shows up at the right time. The Easter promise is that our hopes will never be crushed, because God who raised Jesus from the dead is raising us from our own tomb of doubts.

God of new beginnings and bright promises, transform our doubts into beautiful truths this Eastertide. Open our guarded hearts to the amazing possibilities that You have waiting for us. And help us, O God, to always believe without the proof we often insist on. 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)

