

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 APRIL 26, 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

Holy Ghost, with Light Divine
We All Believe in One True God

Robert Noehren
Friedrich Wilhelm Zachow
AnnLaura Tapia, organ

WELCOME

Alex Hagen-McIntosh

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Alex Hagen-McIntosh

One: We have come together as one.

Many: One people, gathered in the name of the one God.

One: We will worship together as one.

Many: One community, giving praise and honor to the Righteous One.

One: We are being empowered as one by One.

Many: One body and one Spirit, called to the hope of one calling,

One: One faith, one baptism,

Many: One God and Creator of all who is above all and through all and in all.

One: Now, in the name of our Creator we act as one.

Many: One people, giving witness to the power of One.

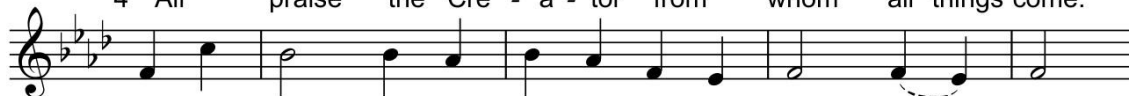
***OPENING HYMN**

They'll Know We Are Christians

Words and Music: Peter Scholtes



1 We are one in the Spir - it; we are one in the Lord.
2 We will walk with each oth - er; we will walk hand in hand.
3 We will work with each oth - er; we will work side by side.
4 All praise the Cre - a - tor from whom all things come.



We are one in the Spir - it; we are one in the Lord.
We will walk with each oth - er; we will walk hand in hand.
We will work with each oth - er; we will work side by side.
And all praise to Christ Je - sus, God's on - ly Son.



And we pray that all u - ni - ty may one day be re - stored.
And to - geth - er we'll spread the news that God is in our land.
And we'll guard each one's dig - ni - ty and save each one's pride.
And all praise to the Spir - it, who makes all things one.

Chorus:



And they'll know we are Chris-tians by our love, by our



love. Yes, they'll know we are Chris-tians by our love.

***PRAYER OF TRANSFORMATION**

Osten Crumrine

God of unity and love, place within each of us a spirit of hope and community. Have mercy upon us when we speak without love or act without humility. Cleanse us with the living water of your grace. Create in us willing hearts to live in patience and gentleness. Raise us up to be your children, growing toward maturity in faith and love. Strengthen this church, that we may be a model of ministry and unity for all the world to see. In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.

SCRIPTURE:

Ephesians 4:14-24

Ryan Ries

We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.

Now this I affirm and insist on in the Lord: you must no longer walk as the gentiles walk, in the futility of their minds; they are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of their ignorance and hardness of heart. They have lost all sensitivity and have abandoned themselves to licentiousness, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. That is not the way you learned Christ! For surely you have heard about him and were taught in him, as truth is in Jesus, to put away your former way of life, your old self, corrupt and deluded by its lusts, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

KIDS QUEST

Rev. Brian Damrow

SERMON

The Formation Protocol

Rev. Brian Damrow

CONFIRMATION CLASS OF 2026 STATEMENTS OF FAITH

Osten Crumrine

Ryan Ries

Alex Hagen-McIntosh

***HYMN**

New Century Hymnal #292
Breathe on Me, Breath of God

TRENTHAM

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY

Ryan Ries

Place your gift in the offering plate

or

Text your gift to
708-688-5486

or



or go to

<http://tinyurl.com/FCCLGChangingLives>

OFFERTORY

More Love

setting by Sid Davis
Chancel Choir and organ

More love, more love;
The heavens are blessing, the angels are calling, O Zion, more love.

If ye love not each other in daily communion,
how can ye love God, whom ye have not seen?

More love, more love!
The heavens are blessing, the angels are calling, O Zion, more love.

***OFFERTORY RESPONSE (UNISON)**

LASST UNS ERFREUEN

Musical score for Offertory Response (Unison) in G major (one sharp). The score consists of four staves of music with lyrics underneath. The lyrics are: "Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise God, all creatures here below. Alleluia, alleluia! Praise God for all that love has done; Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One. Alleluia, alleluia! Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!"

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION (UNISON)**

Alex Hagen-McIntosh

Almighty Giver of All Good Gifts: Grow in us the wisdom to know that all we have to give is in our hands only because you have given it to us first. Remind us that you have called us in Christ to be gentle, patient, and loving – and at one with your children everywhere. May the gifts we have been given and the gifts we share reflect the debt of our gratitude for your many blessings. We pray this in the holy name of Jesus the Christ. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Osten Crumrine

***HYMN**

Christian, Rise and Act Your Creed

ST. GEORGE'S WINDSOR



1 Chris-tian, rise and act your creed; let your prayer be in your deed;
2 Of-fer oth-ers hope and joy, and God's wor-ship your em-ploy;



Seek the right, per-form the true, raise your work and life a-new.
Giv-ing thanks in hum-ble zeal, learn-ing all God's will to feel.



Hearts a-round you sink with care; you can help their load to bear;
Come then, law di-vine, and reign: faith that doubt as-sails in vain,



You can bring in-spir-ing light, strength-en them to do the right.
Per-fect love be-reft of fear, born in heaven and ra-diant here.

***BENEDICTION**

Rev. Brian Damrow

POSTLUDE

They'll Know We Are Christians by Our Love

arr. Lani Smith
AnnLaura Tapia, organ

THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS:

Reader Leader: Confirmands
Usher: Lawrence Bain
Coffee Hour Hosts: Confirmands

Audio/Video: John Hoo & Lizza Obeng
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 in hospice.
- For Camille (Dave Watt's sister) and Brian Bell.
- 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	4/26	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.	Ring & Sing	Room 304
		7:00 p.m.	OA	Drawing Room
Monday	4/27	11:00 a.m.	Weekly Staff Meeting	Church Office
		6:30 p.m.	AA	Drawing Room
Tuesday	4/28	5:00 p.m.	Meditative Prayer Ministry	Chapel
Wednesday	4/29	7:00 p.m.	Church Council Meeting	Zoom
		7:30 p.m.	Carillon Handbells	Room 305
Thursday	4/30	4:15 p.m.	Confirmation Class	Zackley Room
		5:00 p.m.	TallGrass Stage Performance	Dining Room
		7:00 p.m.	Chancel Choir	Choir Room
Friday	5/1	9:00 a.m.	OA	Drawing Room
		3:30 p.m.	Continuing Adult Education through Study	Zoom
		5:00 p.m.	TallGrass Stage Performance	Dining Room
Saturday	5/2	9:00 a.m.	Saturday Meals Program	Dining Room
Sunday	5/3	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

Dear Church Family,

As our church enters the next season of our transition journey, we are prayerfully beginning the process of discerning and calling a new, permanent minister to lead and shepherd our congregation. This is a sacred responsibility, and we are seeking individuals who feel called to serve on the Minister Selection Committee.

The Committee will be entrusted with guiding the search process, starting with writing the new minister's profile, reviewing candidates, engaging in thoughtful discussions with the Congregation and seeking God's wisdom every step of the way. We are looking for members who represent the diversity and heart of our church community. Additionally, you may be called to use your talents in specific aspects of the process, for example writing job profiles.

Serving on this committee is a meaningful opportunity to help shape the future of our church. If you feel led to serve, please speak to a member of church leadership to include your name for consideration. Over the next several weeks we will gather the names of those interested and then will hold an informational meeting for all to explain the details of the assignment.

With hope and gratitude,

The Church Council

Upcoming Sundays at First Congregational

May 3: An Eco-Faith Sunday service done in Jazz

Sermon: "She Cries to be Free"

May 10: Mother's Day – bring the women who have raised and supported you

Sermon: "The Feminine Tone"

May 17: Confirmation Sunday

Sermon: "Journey Over Destination"

May 24: Pentecost Sunday

Sermon: "To Be the Church"

Honoring the Earth: “We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children.” This Earth Month, the Green Team encourages you to regard every day as the Earth’s and make decisions that will benefit your children and grandchildren. A few examples:

- Minimize your use of plastic by carrying a reusable water bottle and buying clothes made of 100% natural fibers.
- Buy electric vs gas appliances whenever possible.
- Consider installing solar panels or, if these are not in the budget, signing up for community solar.

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.

FCCLG Book Club: Book Club will meet next on Tuesday, May 12 at 7:30 pm. Our selected book is *Lula Dean's Little Library of Banned Books* by Kirsten Miller. Described as "a sharp, funny and socially observant novel," the story is set in a small Georgia town where a campaign against “dangerous” books sets off a chain of unexpected consequences. The author is said to have the ability to take a serious subject and make it funny and entertaining.

Book Club meets virtually via Zoom. All readers are welcome! For a Zoom invitation or with any questions, please email Kathy Donaldson (kathygdonaldson@gmail.com).

Lawnmowing Volunteers: The lawnmowing schedule currently has 3 spots open for a volunteer to help: May 2, May 30, and June 27. Please sign up on the volunteer sheet in the Founders Room, or look on our SignUp.com page. If you have any questions, please contact the office: mainoffice@fcclg.org.

Sandwich Sunday for BEDS Plus on May 3rd: Please join us in the dining room after service next Sunday 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. The Ministry of Missions will provide all the fixins. Cash donations will be accepted to help defray the cost of the sandwich ingredients, or you can donate online through the church website by giving to “ACH Unpledged Contributions” and adding



“Sandwich Sunday” in the comments field. Contact any Missions Team member with questions. Thank you!

Women’s Retreat 2026: Join us for a weekend of reflection, empowerment, and sisterhood. July 10-12 at Tower Hill Camp. Dr. Carol Ann Munro will be the guest speaker. Contact Angela Harrison (angiss2010@yahoo.com) for more information to sign up, or add your name to the sheet located in the Founders Room.

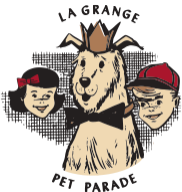
Summer Camp: Looking for a week of adventure for the kids this summer? Have you considered church camp at Tower Hill? H.U.G. (Helping Us Grow) Camp is July 5-10 for campers finishing 4th grade thru 11th. There are all sorts of activities including an adventure course, archery, crafts, hiking, spongeball, and ultimate frisbee as well as time on beautiful Lake Michigan. Add in songs and s'mores around a fire, a visit to God's mailbox and a shaving cream extravaganza and you have a week of fun and friendship that keeps you coming back. Visit their website for more info: hugcamp.com.

'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!



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.

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.



Pet Parade: Represent FCCLG in this year's Annual Pet Parade on Saturday, May 30. 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.

2026 FCCLG First Quarter Financial Report

Through March of 2026 our financial picture is favorable; with income of ~ \$170,000 and expenses of ~ \$140,000. Due to the completion of the endowment transfer and timing of some pledge payments, the First Quarter income is in excess of the YTD amount.

The current expenses exceed our YTD budgeted expenses due to timing of property insurance payments and unexpected plumbing costs.

	1st Quarter 2025	1st Quarter 2026	2026 YTD Budget	2026 Annual Budget
Income	\$189,575	\$170,111	\$115,719	\$462,878
Expense	\$133,584	\$139,780	\$121,487	\$485,950

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
 Office Administrator
 Events & Building Coordinator
 Financial Coordinator

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

All of Us
 Ryan Cox
 AnnLaura Tapia
 Jamie Dougherty
 Tammy Bauer

Powerful Witness

April 26, 2026

Fourth Sunday of Easter

Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

With that opening verse, Psalm 23 soars to the top of the greatest psalms of all time chart, becoming words whispered when lonely shadows are our only friends or when a sea of mourners need a blessed balm for broken hearts.

Psalm 23 is our perennial witness of the powerful truth that with the Lord we do not need anything else. But as popular as the psalm is, have you ever stopped to truly understand what the psalmist was saying about this incredible provision of love? For example, what does it mean to have a table prepared for us in the presence of our enemies?

Personally, I would not welcome such a dinner party in my life. But understanding ancient Middle Eastern culture helps us see better what God is up to for the host of a meal was not just offering a delectable leg of lamb. The host, through the meal, was offering protection for the guest that was invited. Once a seat was taken at the host's table, no enemy was allowed access to the guest. So that table prepared for us among all our enemies is God saying, "I got you. In the presence of danger, no harm will come to you because you are at my table."

While we are here unpacking familiar verses, let's take a closer look at the Lord anointing our head with oil. Yes, anointing one's head is a symbolic act of consecrating a person chosen by God, and we are all chosen — called — by God to care for one another. But anointing with oil was also a common practice among shepherds for their sheep. The oil would be poured on the sheep's head to act as a barrier against pesky flies. The oil would also act as a soothing balm, helping to heal scratches on the sheep's head from either branches, thorny brush or the occasional head-butting from another sheep.

So, when we hear the Lord anoints our heads, he is not just setting us aside for the holy work of loving our neighbors. He is providing us with a barrier against those proverbial buzzing insects and confrontational head-butts in life, because such annoyances just don't happen to sheep, do they?

Yes, the Lord is our shepherd. With him, we lack nothing. His protection of us is abundant.

Shepherding God, it is a joy and a privilege to be part of your Son's flock. We thank You for the constant care You give us each day. May we never take such love for granted. 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)

