

# 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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[www.FCCLG.org](http://www.FCCLG.org)  
708.352.0800

SUNDAY JULY 5, 2026

## Dreaming God's Dream

NO GIFT TOO SMALL, NO DREAM TOO BIG.

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### 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.*

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### PRELUDE

Be Known to Us in Breaking Bread

Daniel Burton  
AnnLaura Tapia, organ

### WELCOME

Jim Marciniak

### \*CALL TO WORSHIP

Jim Marciniak

One: Come, beloved of God, you who are weary of fear, but still holding on.

**Many: We come to remember who we are, and whose we are.**

One: When the waters rise, when the fire blazes, when the moment calls for courage—

**Many: God says, "Do not be afraid, for I am with you."**

One: Perhaps you were born for such a time as this.

**Many: So come, let us worship the One who calls us by name.**

One: We come to be renewed in strength, and to choose, again, the way of love.

**Many: We choose now to follow your light, and to live in your love.**

One: In this hour, let us make our decision—

**Many: To trust in your presence, to walk in your truth, and to stand in your name.**

One: Let us choose now—

**Many: To be faithful, to persevere, and to worship you.**

One: Let us choose now—

**Many: To be your people, and to be your light in the world.**

**\*PRAYER OF TRANSFORMATION**

Jim Marciniak

**We come before you today, holy one, with a heart full of urgency and hope. We know that every moment is a gift, and every decision carries weight. Help us to see beyond the comfort of delay and to trust in your perfect timing. Lord, we ask for the courage to choose “now” over “later.” Fill us with the strength to act in alignment with your will, even when the path ahead is uncertain. Remove the excuses that keep us from moving forward and replace them with faith in Your guidance. Guide our transformation so that where we have been waiting, we now step forward. Where we have been hesitating, we now move with purpose. May our actions today be a testimony of your power and presence. Grant us wisdom to discern your direction, and boldness to follow it without fear. Let our “now” be rooted in your truth, so that every choice we make today is a step toward your purpose. Thank You for the opportunities you place before us in the present moment. May we never let the future’s unknowns keep us from living fully today. Amen.**

**SCRIPTURE:**

2 Corinthians 6:1-11

Jim Marciniak

As we work together with him, we entreat you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. For he says,

“At an acceptable time I have listened to you,  
and on a day of salvation I have helped you.”

Look, now is the acceptable time; look, now is the day of salvation! We are putting no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: in great endurance, afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; in purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors and yet are true, as unknown and yet are well known, as dying and look—we are alive, as punished and yet not killed, as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing and yet possessing everything.

We have spoken frankly to you Corinthians; our heart is wide open to you.

**KIDS QUEST**

Rev. Brian Damrow

**SERMON**

To Be the Church: The Now Factor

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 #578*  
You Shall Prophesy, All My People  
*verses 1-3*

PROPHECY

**INVITATION TO GENEROSITY**

Jim Marciniak

Place your gift in the offering plate

or

Text your gift to

708-688-5486

or



or go to

<http://tinyurl.com/FCCLGChangingLives>

**OFFERTORY****The Lord Is My Light**

Frances Allitsen  
Ryan Cox and AnnLaura Tapia

The Lord is my light and my salvation; Whom, then, shall I fear?  
The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom, then, shall I be afraid?

Though an host of men were laid against me,  
Yet shall not my heart be afraid;  
And though there rose up war against me, yet will I put my trust in Him.  
For, in the time of trouble, He shall hide me in His tabernacle,  
Yea, in the secret places of His dwelling shall He hide me,  
And set me up upon a rock of stone.

The Lord is my light and my salvation; Whom, then, shall I fear?  
The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom, then, shall I be afraid?

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

The musical score is written for a unison voice part. It consists of two systems of music. The first system has a treble and bass staff joined by a brace. The melody is in the treble staff, starting on a G4 note. The lyrics 'Praise God from whom all bless-ings flow; Praise God, all crea-tures here be - low;' are written below the first staff. The second system also has a treble and bass staff joined by a brace. The melody continues in the treble staff, ending with a double bar line. The lyrics 'Praise God for all that love has done; Cre - a - tor, Christ, and Spir - it One. A - men.' are written below the first staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C).

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)**

Jim Marciniak

**Giving God, make us a people who not only receive your gifts, but empower us to give in mutual measure so that all needs are met. Bless these gifts and amplify their impact as a witness to your goodness and so all may flourish in your name. Amen.**

## \*COMMUNION HYMN

We Will Take What You Offer Words and Music: John L. Bell



We will take what you of-fer, we will live by your word; we will love one an-  
oth-er and be fed by you, Lord. We will take what you of-fer, we will  
live by your word; we will love one an - oth-er and be fed by you, Lord.

## COMMUNION INVITATION

Rev. Brian Damrow

## COMMUNION PRAYER

We remember, Gracious God, that Jesus ate and drank with the poor, the marginalized, and the wealthy, with the spiritually lost, and with those who were spiritually sound alike. When he saw the multitude that followed him with nothing to eat, he took some loaves of bread and a few fish, and after giving thanks to you, he divided the bread and gave it to the disciples. And all who ate were filled.

When his arrest seemed near, Jesus sat at the table in the upper room, with his closest friends and relatives. As he had done so many times before, he took the bread and after giving thanks to you he shared it among the disciples, vowing to continue the struggle despite the risk. He said, "I will not eat this again until it is fulfilled in the Beloved Community of God."

Likewise, after the meal he took the cup and after giving thanks he gave it to them saying, "Truly I tell you, I will never drink of the fruit of the vine until I drink it new with you in the Beloved Community of God."

For a time, it seemed that all was lost. Jesus was executed by the authorities, and his disciples scattered in fear and despair. But at an evening meal in Emmaus, and at a breakfast campfire by the sea of Galilee, Jesus once more took the bread and after giving thanks to you divided it and gave it to his disciples, opening their eyes, binding up their wounds, continuing the meal, and revealing plainly that your steadfast love is stronger even than death, and your labor with us continues for the sake of your Kin-dom.

**Holy are you and blessed is your Son, Jesus the Christ. Your Spirit anointed him to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of**

sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, and to announce that the time had come when you would save your people. He healed the sick, fed the hungry, and ate with sinners. By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection you gave birth to your Church, delivered us from all that holds us captive, even onto death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

SHARING THE ELEMENTS

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Gracious and loving God, you have made us one in the body of Christ and nourished us at your table with holy food and drink. Thank you for feeding our hunger and relieving our thirst. Now send us into the world to do the work you have called us to do: to find the lost and lonely, to heal broken souls, to free prisoners, and to make the powerful care. Grant us the strength to persevere in resisting evil, to proclaim in all we say and do, your good news in Christ Jesus. Amen.

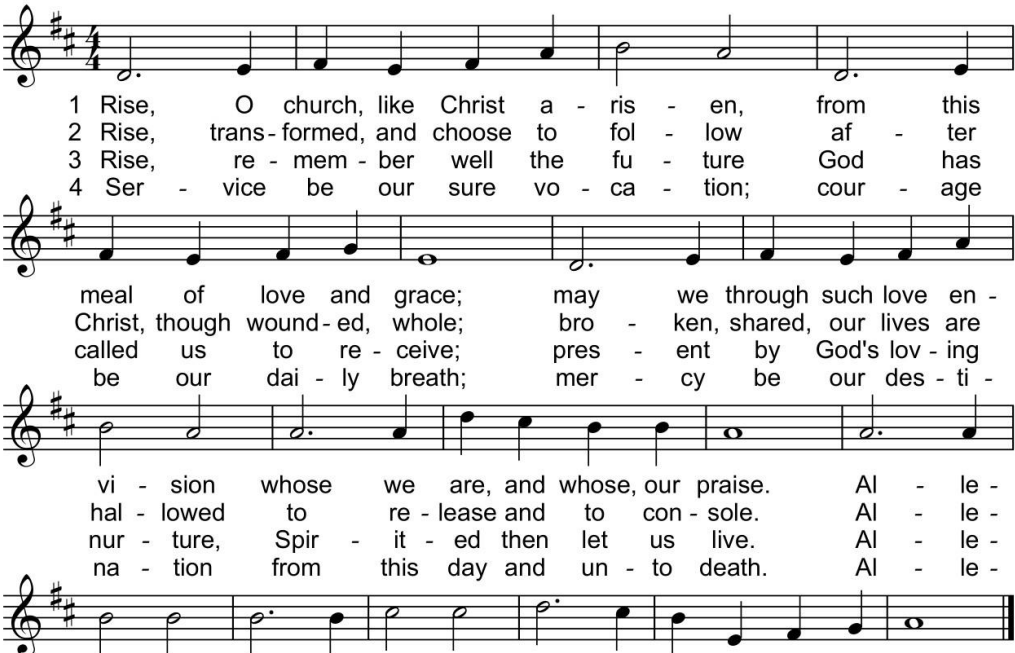
ANNOUNCEMENTS

Jim Marciniak

\*HYMN

Rise, O Church, like Christ Arisen

SURGE ECCLESIA



1 Rise, O church, like Christ a - ris - en, from this  
2 Rise, trans - formed, and choose to fol - low af - ter  
3 Rise, re - mem - ber well the fu - ture God has  
4 Ser - vice be our sure vo - ca - tion; cour - age

meal of love and grace; may we through such love en -  
Christ, though wound - ed, whole; bro - ken, shared, our lives are  
called us to re - ceive; pres - ent by God's lov - ing  
be our dai - ly breath; mer - cy be our des - ti -

vi - sion whose we are, and whose, our praise. Al - le -  
hal - lowed to re - lease and to con - sole. Al - le -  
nur - ture, Spir - it - ed then let us live. Al - le -  
na - tion from this day and un - to death. Al - le -

lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia: God the won - der of our days.  
lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia: Christ, our pres - ent, past, and goal.  
lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia: Spir - it, grace by whom we live.  
lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia: Rise, O church, a liv - ing faith.

\*BENEDICTION

Rev. Brian Damrow

POSTLUDE

Rejoice, Ye Pure in Heart

Robert J. Powell  
AnnLaura Tapia, organ

THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS:

Reader Leaders: Jim Marciniak  
Usher: Lawrence Bain

Audio/Video: John Hoo and David Watts  
Coffee Hour Hosts: LaShinda and Patrick John

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.
- For Kenneth McIntosh, brother of Joyce Hagen-McIntosh, who is in the hospital fighting an infection.
- For Mike Tobin, brother of Jill, who is going through treatment for kidney cancer.
- For Cindy Boze, friend of Gail Allinson, for health and strength as she undergoes medical diagnostic testing.

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

This Week at Church

|           |     |                                      |                   |
|-----------|-----|--------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Sunday    | 7/5 | 10:00 a.m. Celebration of Worship    | Sanctuary/ online |
|           |     | 11:00 a.m. Coffee Hour               | Founders Room     |
|           |     | 7:00 p.m. OA                         | Drawing Room      |
| Monday    | 7/6 | 11:00 a.m. Weekly Staff Meeting      | Church Office     |
|           |     | 6:30 p.m. AA                         | Drawing Room      |
| Tuesday   | 7/7 | 5:00 p.m. Meditative Prayer Ministry | Chapel            |
| Wednesday | 7/8 |                                      |                   |

|                 |             |                                                    |                   |
|-----------------|-------------|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Thursday</b> | <b>7/9</b>  |                                                    |                   |
| <b>Friday</b>   | <b>7/10</b> | 9:00 a.m. OA                                       | Drawing Room      |
|                 |             | 3:30 p.m. Continuing Adult Education through Study | Zoom              |
| <b>Saturday</b> | <b>7/11</b> | .                                                  |                   |
| <b>Sunday</b>   | <b>7/12</b> | 10:00 a.m. Celebration of Worship                  | Sanctuary/ online |
|                 |             | 11:00 a.m. Coffee Hour                             | Founders Room     |
|                 |             | 7:00 p.m. OA                                       | Drawing Room      |

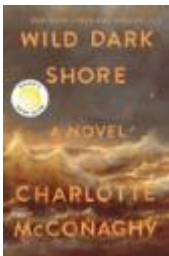
## Announcements

**Sandwich Sunday for BEDS Plus on July 5:** Please join us in the dining room today after service to prepare a variety of sandwiches for clients of BEDS Plus. If you cannot join us to make sandwiches, please consider making a donation to help defray the cost of sandwich ingredients. 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!

**Search Committee Installation:** On July 12, we will hold a brief congregational meeting to vote on confirming and installing the search committee for our permanent pastor. As per our constitution, your attendance at church will be needed, so please mark your calendars.



**FCCLG Book Club:** Book Club will meet on Tuesday, July 14 at 7:30 pm. Our selected book is *Wild Dark Shore* by Charlotte McConaghy. Described as a deeply atmospheric novel, it is set on the fictional and remote Shearwater Island, where an estranged woman searches for her missing husband amidst a community grappling with grief, secrets, and isolation. The novel explores themes of climate change, the interconnectivity of life and death, and the complex bonds within families.

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](mailto:kathygdonaldson@gmail.com)).

**Meditative Prayer Ministry:** At FCCLG, we meet in the Beatitudes Chapel (the 6th Avenue Entrance will be open) from 5–7 pm on most Tuesdays to quiet our minds and listen for God’s presence within. Come whenever you are able and stay for as long as you like. All are welcome.



## School Supply Drive June 28 – August 2

**Ministry of Missions is collecting school supplies to support students in the greater La Grange area\* along with families served by the Migrant Ministry.**

We are requesting a wide range of supplies, including:

- BACKPACKS
- MEAD SPIRAL NOTEBOOKS
- CRAYOLA CRAYONS
- CRAYOLA MARKERS (BROAD AND FINE LINE)
- CRAYOLA COLORED PENCILS
- PRE-SHARPENED PENCILS
- ELMER'S WASHABLE GLUE STICKS
- PAPERMATE ERASERS
- KIDS' SCISSORS
- POST-IT NOTES (3in x 3in)



Please bring donations to the back of the sanctuary and place in the containers provided.

\*Collection and distribution coordinated by the LaGrange Public Library in partnership with local organizations.

**FCCLG's Digital Outreach - Call to Action:** We need Google reviews! In addition to Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, Google reviews are another important way people learn more about our church. Please take a few moments to write a review that may help someone decide if they want to visit our church. Simply look up FCCLG on Google, then click the "Write a review" button. No matter how long or short, every review makes a big difference in our outreach.

**First Congregational Church of La Grange**  
5.0 ★★★★★ 20 Google reviews  
Reformed church in La Grange, Illinois

Website Directions Reviews

Save Share Call

Address: 100 6th Ave, La Grange, IL 60525  
Get There: 7 min · 1 min  
Phone: (708) 352-0800  
Hours: Open · Closes 3:30 PM

### Reviews from the web

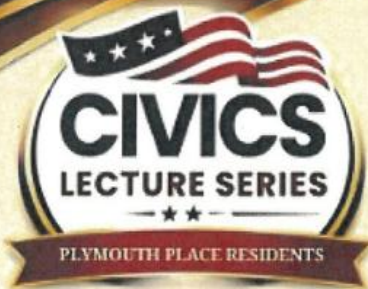
Facebook  
4.6/5  
10 votes

WeddingWire  
5/5  
2 reviews

### Reviews ⓘ

Write a review Add photos

- "I look for 4 main things in a church: preaching, **music, people** and community."  
★★★★★
- "If looking for a **place** to worship I would highly recommend attending FCCLG."  
★★★★★
- "Come check it out, you may quit shopping too."  
★★★★★



**TUESDAY  
JULY 7  
2:00 PM  
DOLE HALL**

## NEW TRANSPORTATION POLICY



**ADOPTED BY THE ILLINOIS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

Major changes will affect our region as the second largest transit system in the United States evolves to meet the opportunities of the 21st Century economy.



### ANALYSIS: LOCAL ECONOMIC IMPACT



Chairman Dillard will address the opportunities and challenges coming as policies and structure change to successfully meet the future.



**KIRK DILLARD**

**CHAIR**

**REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY**



Dave Bryant

Doris Bryant

**ORGANIZING COMMITTEE:**  
Lee Daniels

Joyce Linn

Marti Tracy



**EDUCATE**

**ENGAGE**

**EMPOWER**



# FCCLG Leadership in 2026

## Council:

|                      |                                             |                     |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Moderator of Council | Kent Llewellyn                              | moderator@fcclg.org |
| Past Moderator       | Tom Lowry                                   |                     |
| Vice Moderator       | Patrick John                                |                     |
| Clerk                | Sherri Ries                                 |                     |
| Treasurer            | Amanda Ries                                 | treasurer@fcclg.org |
| Members At Large     | Noah Gartner (yr 3/3)<br>Kaki Lynch (yr1/3) |                     |
| Transitional Pastor  | Rev. Brian Damrow                           | pastor@fcclg.org    |

## Ministries:

|                       |                                               |                                                    |                                 |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Volunteer Coordinator | Stephanie Johnston                            |                                                    |                                 |
| Broadcasting          | John Hoo<br>Lizza Obeng                       | Amanda Murphy<br>David Watts                       |                                 |
| Faith Formation       | Jerry Palmer (Adult Ed)                       | Amanda Ries (Sunday School)                        |                                 |
| Green Team            | Laurie Braun<br>Claudia Byrne                 | Mary Ann Daniels<br>Diane Kasnick                  | Dawn Mackie                     |
| Membership            | Petra Hentzel*<br>Janet Sampson               | Sherri Ries<br>Faith Ullrich                       |                                 |
| Missions              | Lisa Aulerich-Marciniak<br>Kathy Donaldson*   | Jim Marciniak                                      | Michelle Meuer<br>Wendy Seifert |
| Nurture               | Betsy Colombe *<br>Amy Crumrine<br>LuAnn Hall | Angela Harrison<br>Sue Hoffman<br>Sandra Kappmeyer | Amanda Ries                     |
| Personnel             | Open                                          | Open                                               | Open                            |
| Property              | Dick Lauterbach<br>Dave Ries                  | Mike Ries*<br>Erik Sander                          | Dave Watts                      |
| Social Justice        | Laurie Braun                                  |                                                    |                                 |
| Social Media          | Amanda Murphy                                 |                                                    |                                 |
| Stewardship           | Ellen Hamilton<br>Kent Llewellyn              | Tom Lowry<br>Susan Lynch                           | Jean O'Brien<br>Mike Ries       |
| Worship               | Lawrence Bain<br>Lexie Carther                | Bob Klestil*                                       |                                 |
|                       | *Team Contact                                 |                                                    |                                 |

Ministers  
Music Director  
Office Administrator  
Events & Building Coordinator  
Financial Coordinator

[www.fcclg.org](http://www.fcclg.org)  
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All of Us  
Ryan Cox  
AnnLaura Tapia  
Jamie Dougherty  
Tammy Bauer

## Chosen Journeys

July 5, 2026

Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

My husband wonders why I make life hard for myself. He especially wonders this when, under the scorching sun, he watches me walk by the hose he bought — the one with the extra-long extension — choosing instead to lug sloshing buckets of water from the house to my out-of-the-way garden. It is a bit odd. I sometimes question my own sanity, too. But I have chosen this garden journey as a spiritual discipline. For in the arduous act of carrying water buckets, I'm reminded of those who still walk miles for their water. It is a small, prayerful act that keeps my coddled heart conscious of the urgent need for clean, accessible water for all. Last summer, though, I finally admitted that watering the garden this way was becoming too much for me. My husband smiled, thinking the prized hose he bought would finally be used. He was wrong. Rather, what arrived a few days later in the mail was a 19th-century wooden yoke from a farmer in Lithuania. Its well-worn patina featured ornate notches carved into the wood that kept the buckets from sliding. I placed the arch of the yoke behind my neck and masterfully balanced the buckets. The yoke did help to distribute the weight of the water, lightening the load a bit, and making my task a bit easier. And it also deepened my spiritual gardening discipline, as feeling the buckets sway with my steps, I heard my Savior's invitation once again: Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. I thought about the heavy burdens I carried that no one knew of — the worries that sloshed around in my spiritual buckets. I had grown weary by their weight. I had a tiredness in my bones that no sleep could cure. It was a tiredness that came from the constant buzz of stress keeping my nerves on high alert. How many times would I ignore Jesus' help? Why did I insist on carrying all of life's burdens alone? It is no wonder Jesus told the people of his time to take his yoke, for his was an easy one. Before modern machinery, farmers would use a wooden yoke on their animals. The frame that joined two beasts of burdens would mean they would share the weight of a load, making it easier to keep moving forward. What a beautiful invitation we have as well. This is our opportunity, this day, to finally give our burdens to the one who will make them lighter. Will you embrace Jesus' yoke? I have. The garden hose, though? That I still ignore.

*Patient God, how tiresome it must be to watch us struggling with the burdens and stresses and worries that we insist on carrying by ourselves. Help us to finally accept Jesus' invitation to take his yoke. May we stop being crushed by the weight of this world. May we know that all we struggle with is now in Jesus' capable and loving hands. 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)

