

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 AUGUST 16, 2026

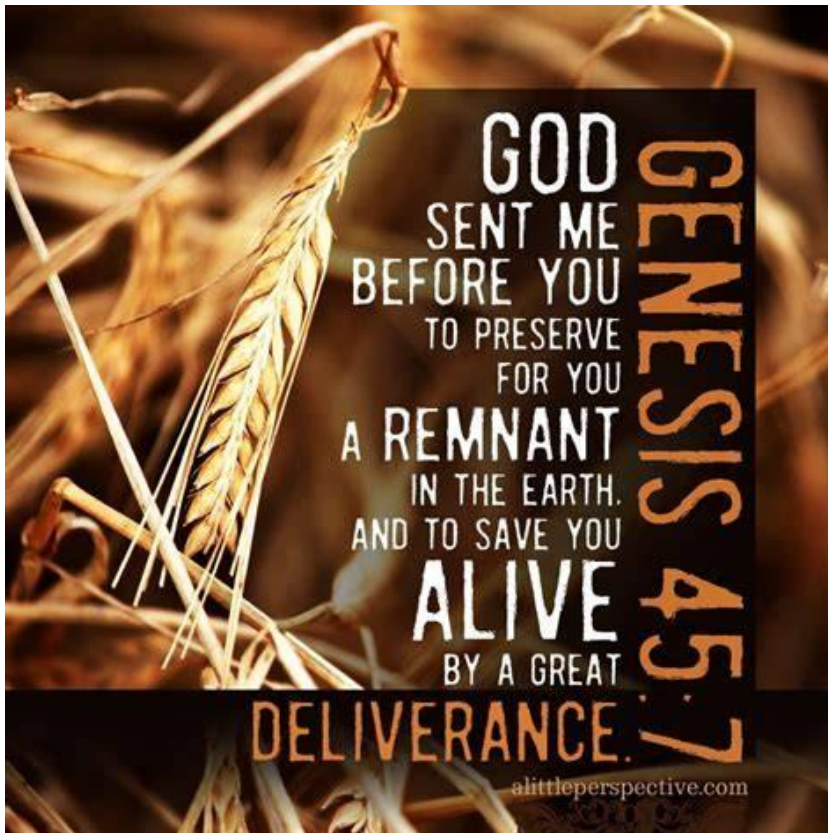
Dreaming God's Dream

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

Finlandia Jean Sibelius, arr. Jack Bullock
Cora Van Kempen, cello and Peter Van Kempen, piano

WELCOME

Dick Lauterbach

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Dick Lauterbach

One: Here we can come together, people searching for healing and hope:

Many: Here we are met by the One who would bless us with abundant life.

One: Here we are called to gather as the family of God:

Many: We may find those who are strangers yet are beloved siblings of ours.

One: Here we discover the truth that God makes no distinctions among us:

Many: Here we are welcomed and embraced by the One whose arms are open to all.

***OPENING HYMN**

New Century Hymnal #427
God Made from One Blood

ST. DENIO

PRAYER OF TRANSFORMATION

Dick Lauterbach

We admit, Providing God, that we have difficulties living as your children. We could live in unity, but our words fracture relationships with family and friends. We have been shown the way to your kingdom but turn into blind guides when asked for the directions by others. When we could offer others the precious oil of peace, we hand them the vinegar of despair and rejection.

Guide our transformation, when you, our still speaking God, calls to us, may we listen with open ears, understand with embracing hearts, and share your grace with others, even as we have been graced by Jesus the Christ. Amen.

SCRIPTURE:

Genesis 45:1-15 (NSRVUE)

Dick Lauterbach

Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, "Send everyone away from me." So no one stayed with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard it. Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?" But his brothers could not answer him, so dismayed were they at his presence.

Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come closer to me." And they came closer. He said, "I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life. For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are five more years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to keep alive for you many survivors. So it was not you who sent me here but God; he has made me a father to Pharaoh and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me; do not delay. You shall settle in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children, as well as your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. I will provide for you there, since there are five more years of famine to come, so that you and your household and all that you have will not come to poverty.' And now your eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that it is my own mouth that speaks to you. You must tell my father how greatly I am honored in Egypt and all that you have seen. Hurry and bring my father down here." Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, while Benjamin wept upon his neck. And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them, and after that his brothers talked with him.

KIDS QUEST

Rev. Brian Damrow

SERMON

Risky Behavior

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 #482
I Will Lift the Cloud of Night
verses 1, 2, & 4

JONES

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY

Dick Lauterbach

Place your gift in the offering plate

or

Text your gift to
708-688-5486

or



or go to

<http://tinyurl.com/FCCLGChangingLives>

OFFERTORY

Encourage One Another

Mark Burrows

The Van Kempen Family and AnnLaura Tapia, piano

Chorus: Encourage one another, and build up each other.

Be the hands of friendship. Be the feet of action.
Be the heart of peace and hope,
of kindness and care, and love we all share. [Chorus]

Be the ears that listen, be the words that comfort.
Be the song that sings out strong
of wonder and light, of joy taking flight. [Chorus]

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

Musical score for the Offertory Response, 'Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow' (Old Hundredth). The score is written for a unison voice part and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is common time (C). The melody is simple and hymn-like, with the lyrics: '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)** Dick Lauterbach

Just as we would not offer crumbs to the hungry, may we not offer just our mere crumbs to the ministry you have called us to. May our gifts become grace, hope, justice, and love to all around us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS Dick Lauterbach

***HYMN** *New Century Hymnal #20*
God of Abraham and Sarah CONSTANTINE

***BENEDICTION** Rev. Brian Damrow

POSTLUDE St. Denio Nigel Williams
AnnLaura Tapia, organ

THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS:

Reader Leaders: Dick Lauterbach
Usher: Lawrence Bain
Coffee Hour Hosts: Nurture

Audio/Video: Amanda Murphy and David Watts
Laundry Hero: Gail Allinson

Prayer Requests

- For Juanita, family of Nancy Coleman, for strength and healing.
- For Camille (Dave Watt's sister) and Brian Bell.
- 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 the Mark Twain Elementary School community.

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

This Week at Church

Sunday	8/16	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	8/17	12:00 p.m. Weekly Staff Meeting	Church Office
		6:30 p.m. AA	Drawing Room
Tuesday	8/18	5:00 p.m. Meditative Prayer Ministry	Chapel
Wednesday	8/19		
Thursday	8/20		
Friday	8/21	9:00 a.m. OA	Drawing Room
		3:30 p.m. Continuing Adult Education through Study	Zoom
Saturday	8/22	9:00 a.m. Saturday Meals Program	Dining Room
Sunday	8/23	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
		7:00 p.m. OA	Drawing Room

Announcements

August 23 Summer Choir: All singers 4th grade and up are invited to sing an anthem and lead the hymns **next Sunday!** Please contact ryan@fcclg.org to sign up. Rehearsal is at 9:15am in the sanctuary.



Choirs and Ensembles Begin Soon: It's time to sing, ring, and play together again! FCCLG ensembles are for everyone and are a great way to introduce the community to our church.

Contact ryan@fcclg.org to express interest.

Chancel Choir: 1st rehearsal is Thursday, September 3 at 7pm.

All singers of high-school age and up are welcome.

Carillon Handbell Choir: 1st rehearsal is Wednesday, September 9 at 7:30pm.

All ringers of high-school age and up are welcome.

Ring and Sing: 1st rehearsal is 9/20 at 11:30am for 1st - 8th graders.

Youth Handbell Ensemble: 1st rehearsal is 9/20 at 12pm for 4th - 8th graders.

Save the Date: Kickoff Sunday is September 13th! We will be having a booth at the La Grange Farmer's Market on September 17th. And our annual Crop Walk will be Sunday, September 27th. More information on both events will be coming soon.



Adopt-a-Chair Campaign: We have 41 choir chairs in our Sanctuary that have served us faithfully for many years and are now badly in need of reupholstering. For a suggested donation of \$150—or contributing whatever amount you can—you can adopt one of our choir chairs and help give it a much-needed new lease on life.

Please indicate "Adopt a Chair" in the comment line of your donation. Thank you!

Meditative Prayer Ministry: At FCCLG, we meet in the Beatitudes Chapel (the 6th Avenue Entrance will be open) from 5–7pm 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. Bibles and prayer cards are available in the chapel. All are welcome.



Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) is the way our congregation participates in the ministry of the wider United Church of Christ — supporting vital work **in the Illinois Conference and across the globe.**

Through OCWM, local churches like ours empower:

- **Leadership support and care** for clergy and congregations across Illinois
- **Resources and training** that strengthen churches in times of change
- **Justice and compassion ministries** serving communities in need
- **National and global mission work**, including disaster relief, refugee support, and long-term community development

Thank you for giving generously to this wider mission we share.

Bold Moves

August 16, 2026

Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

Genesis 45:1-15

I recently heard a saying that if you hold tightly to grudges your hands are not free to catch the blessings.

Joseph, the dreamer in the Bible, had every right to hold a grudge. He was betrayed by his brothers and sold to a group of Ishmaelites who then brought him to Egypt.

The young boy could have allowed his circumstances to sour his spirit. But he didn't. Instead, Joseph grew up, rising to the position of prime minister to the Pharaoh. He was second-in-command of all of Egypt.

So, when a seven-year famine, in which Joseph had seen in one of his dreams, devastated his family's land of Caanan, he was now able to help his brothers who came seeking relief. At first, though, they didn't recognize Joseph as the brother they had sold. But as the story unfolds, the tears of realization and redemption flow freely among the broken siblings.

Joseph's story is not an easy one for us to embrace, especially when we prefer the heaviness of grudges to the lightness of forgiveness. But it is a story that reminds us that wrongs can be righted on the God path. In those times of feeling lost and wondering where in heaven's name is God, we must not let despair or even anger take hold.

I know this is easier said than done. Even as I write, I hesitate with each click of the keyboard because while my heart knows how gracious God is, my head is reciting a monologue of doubt. If my hands weren't typing, I am sure they would be found curled into a tight ball of frustration, hurt and anger. It is not easy to believe that good can come out of something painful. But it can. Because God is our God of bold moves, and the boldest of moves was showing us that new life does emerge from the tomb.

Hope never dies. But holding on to that grudge is slowly doing its best to suffocate it. So put down this bulletin right now, unclench your hands, and catch that blessing.

Redemptive God, help us to let go of the grudges that we have been holding on to for far too long. May we realize they are serving no purpose in our lives. They are, in fact, robbing us of the life You want for us. With Your help, pry our clenched fists open now. We surrender all the hurt to you and wait patiently for the blessings. 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)

