

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 SEPTEMBER 13, 2026

KICKOFF SUNDAY

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

Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken

Michael Larkin
AnnLaura Tapia, piano

WELCOME

Kendra Van Kempen

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Kendra Van Kempen

One: In sacred times of word, wonder, and awe, in ordinary days of work and play:

Many: in every moment, God is with us.

One: Whether we are stuck in doubt's mud, or standing on faith's shoreline:

Many: in every place, God is with us.

One: In those who teach us, and those who trouble us, in those who surprise us,
and those who forgive us:

Many: in every person, God is with us.

***OPENING HYMN**

New Century Hymnal #70
God Is Here! As We Your People Meet

ABBOT'S LEIGH

PRAYER OF TRANSFORMATION

Kendra Van Kempen

Loving Creator, grant us courage to embrace the changes you are bringing into our lives. Remove fear and hesitation and fill us with bold faith to follow your lead. Remind us that you are with us wherever we go. Transform our spirit to face new seasons with confidence in your promises. Strengthen us to step out in obedience and trust in your perfect plan. May we walk fearlessly in the path you set before us. In Jesus' name, Amen.

SUNG RESPONSE**Amen, We Praise Your Name****AMEN, SIAKUDUMISA**

Amen, we praise your name, O God! Amen, we praise your name, O God!
A-men si - a - ku - du - mi-sa! A-men, si - a - ku - du - mi-sa!

A-men, a-men. A-men, a-men, A-men, we praise your name, O God.
A-men, ba-wo. A-men, ba-wo. A-men si - a - ku - du - mi-sa.

The musical score is written for two staves, Treble and Bass, in 4/4 time. The melody is simple and repetitive, using a mix of eighth and quarter notes. The lyrics are written below the notes, with some words in italics. The score ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

SCRIPTURE:**Matthew 18:21-35 (NSRVUE)****Kendra Van Kempen**

Then Peter came and said to him, “Lord, if my brother or sister sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

“For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him, and, as he could not pay, the lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions and payment to be made. So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him by the throat he said, ‘Pay what you owe.’ Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

KIDS QUEST

Rev. Brian Damrow

SERMON

To Settle Accounts

Rev. Brian Damrow

MESSAGE IN MUSIC

If I Have Been the Source of Pain
Chancel Choir; Peter Van Kempen, guitar; AnnLaura Tapia, piano

Pablo Sosa

If I have been the source of pain, O God,
if to the weak I have refused my strength,
if, in rebellion, I have strayed away, forgive me, God.

If I have spoken words of cruelty,
if I have left some suffering unrelieved,
condemn not my insensitivity, forgive me, God.

If I've insisted on a peaceful life,
far from the struggles that the gospel brings,
when you prefer to guide me to the strife, forgive me, God.

Receive, O God, this ardent word of prayer,
and free me from temptation's subtle snare,
with tender patience, lead me to your care. Amen, amen.

PASTORAL PRAYER

Rev. Brian Damrow

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.

Place your gift in the offering plate

or

Text your gift to

708-688-5486

or



or go to

<http://tinyurl.com/FCCLGChangingLives>

OFFERTORY

Blessing

Percy Grainger, arr. Douglas E. Wagner

Chancel Choir and organ

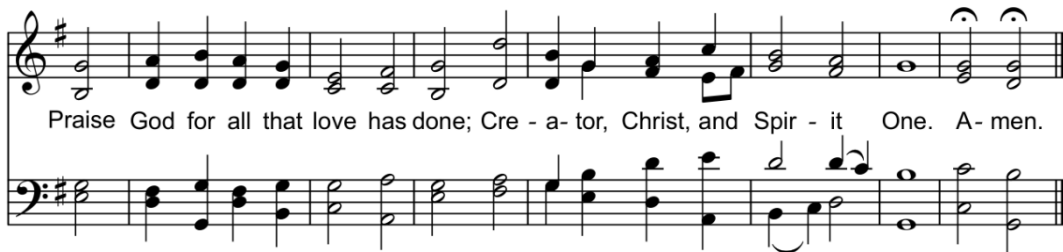
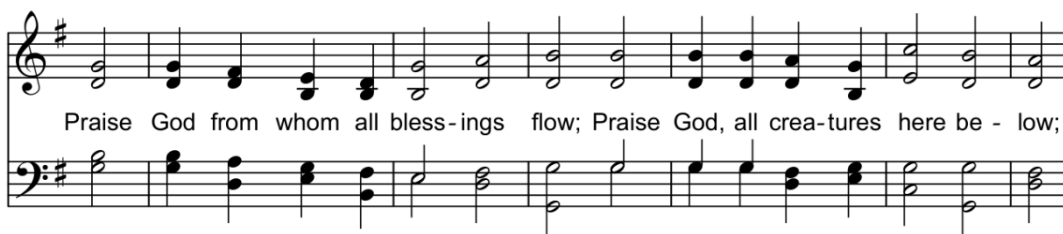
God bless the people gathered here; may love and peace abide;

And as we walk our daily paths, the Lord be at our side.

God bless our homes and all within; let thoughts of peace there dwell;

Protect and lead us through each day, that we may serve thee well.

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



***PRAYER OF DEDICATION (UNISON)**

Kendra Van Kempen

We are all different, yet the gifts you give us are all the same - grace, hope, love, kindness, and so much more. May we not hoard them but be as generous with sharing them as you are in offering them to us in the first place. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Kendra Van Kempen

***HYMN**

Go Now in Peace, Worship Continues

EARTH AND ALL STARS (abridged)



1 Go now in peace, wor-ship con - tin - ues; ser - vice be -
2 Go now in joy: cel - e - brate liv - ing! Sing and praise
3 Go now in love. Led by Christ's teach - ing, share with your



gins as you go from this place. Taught by God's Word, safe in God's
God with re - joic - ing each day. Lift - ed in hope, filled with thanks -
neigh - bor the love that you know. Gifts from the heart out - ward - ly



tend - ing, hold to the path that will run the good race.
giv - ing, spread the good news as you go on your way.
reach - ing car - ry love's mes - sage wher - ev - er you go.

***BENEDICTION**

Rev. Brian Damrow

POSTLUDE

Earth and All Stars

Setting by Michael Burkhardt

AnnLaura Tapia, organ

THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS:

Reader Leaders: Kendra Van Kempen

Audio/Video: Amanda Murphy and David Watts

Usher: Lawrence Bain

Laundry Hero: Sherri Ries

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.
- For Bob Berg, brother of Tom Berg, for healing.
- For Carol, sister of Judith Fennema, for strength and healing.
- For Ed Keating, father of Catherine Keating, who has entered hospice care.

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

This Week at Church

Sunday	9/13	10:00 a.m. Celebration of Worship	Sanctuary/ online
		11:00 a.m. Kickoff Sunday!	Dining Room
		7:00 p.m. OA	Drawing Room
Monday	9/14	11:00 a.m. Weekly Staff Meeting	Church Office
		6:30 p.m. AA	Drawing Room
Tuesday	9/15	5:00 p.m. Meditative Prayer Ministry	Chapel
Wednesday	9/16	7:30 p.m. Carillon Handbell Choir	Room 305
Thursday	9/17	7:00 a.m. Farmer's Market Tent	LG Farmer's Market
		7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir	Choir Room
Friday	9/18	9:00 a.m. OA	Drawing Room
		3:30 p.m. Continuing Adult Education through Study	Zoom
Saturday	9/19	9:00 a.m. Saturday Meals Program	Dining Room
Sunday	9/20	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

Please note: All Teams will meet next Sunday, September 20th.

Volunteers needed: There are a variety of volunteers needed for Sundays at FCCLG. If you are willing to help with any of the following opportunities, please sign up on the sheet in the Founders Room, or let AnnLaura know in the church office: mainoffice@fcclg.org.

Reader Leader: Lead the welcome, call to worship, Scripture reading, unison prayers, and announcements during worship.

Greeter(s): Assist JoAnne Konkle in offering a welcoming presence to all who attend our worship service. This role is perfect for individuals as well as families with children.

Coffee Hour Hosts: The Nurture Team is looking for volunteers to host Coffee Hour. You can sign up with a member of the Nurture Team or a friend. And the Nurture team will be there to assist as you serve the treats you provide. Our church community truly values this time of connection and fellowship.

Adult Bible Class Survey: Rev. Damrow will be starting adult Bible class as part of our Faith Formation program. Please fill out the survey to help us plan for best days and times. The survey is available online via the QR code, or paper copies are in the Founders Room.



Choirs and Ensembles: It's time to sing, ring, and play together again!

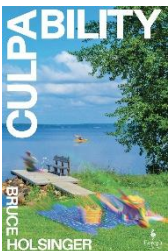
FCCLG ensembles are for everyone and are a great way to introduce the community to our church. Contact ryan@fcclg.org to express interest.

Chancel Choir: Rehearsals continue on Thursday evenings at 7pm. All singers of high-school age and up are welcome. It's not too late to join!

Carillon Handbell Choir: Rehearsals are Wednesdays 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.



FCCLG Book Club: Book Club will meet next on Tuesday, September 15 at 7:30 pm. Our selected book is *Culpability* by Bruce Holsinger, a contemporary family drama that explores the moral complexities of technology and responsibility following a fatal self-driving car accident involving the Cassidy-Shaw family.

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).



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.



CROP Hunger Walk: What are you doing on Sunday afternoon, September 27? Here is an opportunity to visit with friends, make new friends, enjoy the outdoors, get exercise AND help change the world! Come walk with us in the CROP Hunger Walk to raise funds to fight hunger in our community AND around the world. Walkers will meet at 1:30 pm at the Donaldson residence, 900 N. Stone Avenue, LaGrange Park, right by the entrance to the Salt Creek Trail where our walk begins. After the walk, around 2:30 pm, we will gather for food and fellowship back at the Donaldsons. Everyone is welcome!

You can make an online donation through the QR code which will take you to FCCLG's Team Linda page. From there you can click on the yellow 'Make a Donation' button.



You also can contribute with a check. Please make checks payable to FCCLG and write CWS Crop Walk on the memo line. There will be opportunities to donate at Coffee Hour through the month of September.

Thank you for your support of individuals and families impacted by poverty and disaster.

Gather Your Cruisin' Crew for CARS Fall Benefit: September 24th, 2026 at 6 p.m.
Drury Lane, 100 Drury Lane, Oakbrook Terrace
Get your engines ready for retro-cool music, a high energy paddle raise, classic silent auction, vintage cars and more! Please visit <https://onecau.se/carsfallbenefit> or scan the QR code to purchase tickets.





Additional Event Hosts Needed!

We are seeking church members ages 18 and up to serve as event hosts for onsite events. Our event hosts play an important role in helping ensure that events are properly supported, welcoming, and successfully carried out.

We cannot book or host onsite events unless an approved event host is available to assist. Event hosts are an essential part of the event process, and their availability must be confirmed before an event can be scheduled.

Event Host Requirements

To serve as an event host, individuals must:

- Be 18 years of age or older.
- Be a church member or relative/trusted friend of a church member.
- Complete the required training on the church's Safe Church Policy before serving as an event host.
- Be available to assist with the onsite responsibilities associated with the event.

Event hosts may assist with greeting and welcoming attendees, hospitality, directing guests to restrooms, checking on supplies, and other onsite event support such as light cleanup.

Event Host Compensation

Each event host will receive \$180 in cash for their service at the event. Each event is approximately 4-6 hours in length.

To volunteer or learn more about becoming an event host, please contact Jamie Dougherty in the church office (events@fccg.org).

Thank you for your willingness to serve and help support our church's onsite events!



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) 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	Sherri 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 Sandra Kappmeyer Dick Lauterbach	Mary Anne Daniels Lisa Aulerich-Marciniak Diane Kasnick	Susan Lynch Jim Marciniak Jill Tobin and many more!
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

September 13, 2026

Exodus 14:19-31

Road to Freedom

Even if you have not spent much time in church or in Bible study, the story of the crossing of the Red Sea is probably a little familiar. Take a look at the story with new eyes today, reading it through a lens that is new to you. What new message or insight do you get from this story by reading it in this new way?

A literary reading considers the story from the point of view of literature. How does the plot arc and flow keep you, as the reader or listener, engaged? What are some of the literary devices, such as use of language? Who are the characters and how are they developed? What is your point of view as a reader or listener? How does the story change if you consider it from another point of view?

A historical reading considers the story from the point of view of its place in history. Take into account the place and time that the story takes place. What is the culture of God's people and of Pharaoh's people at the time? What are other forces at work in these societies?

Another way to read a Bible story is as a story of God's work in the world. In reading this way, pay attention to where God is and what God is doing. What is God like in this story and how does this compare to God's presence in other stories? How does God look and sound? In what ways does God circumvent expected or natural law in order to accomplish Divine goals?

You may also want to read a scripture story devotionally, as a way to intentionally deepen your walk with God. In reading this way, read the story slowly three times. The first time, pay attention to any words or phrases that jump out at you and make note of them. The second time, read while asking God to show you God's purpose in the world. The third time, read asking God to reveal something that you need for your own particular faith walk.

Yet another way to read the Bible, and perhaps a particularly helpful one on this Just Peace Sunday (<https://www.ucc.org/just-peace/>), is through a liberation theology lens. Liberation theology is based on the fundamental value that God's preference is always for the marginalized and oppressed. As you read this way, look for clues that God is working for freedom for the enslaved, and disruption of systems of oppression.

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)

