



Grace and peace to you, beloved church,

We recently baptized a baby at church and it was beautiful.

The space was full. Kids were running around. Voices lifted in song. Even Ms. Rosita made an appearance at the organ. It was one of those Sundays where you could feel it; something deeper than just a gathering. My heart was full.

Every day we gather as a church is a good day. But this one, in particular, felt like one of those thin moments where the veil between heaven and earth feels just a little more open. Where time itself feels a bit... loose. Where the Holy Spirit breaks in.

Just as the Spirit descended on Jesus at his baptism, so the Spirit was descending on us, too. We also celebrated Daughters' Day, giving thanks for all the ways women have contributed and continue to contribute to the work of God in the world. It was a day full of life. Full of promise.

And yet, just the day before, I found myself in a very different kind of holy moment.

I was in Wisconsin for my aunt's funeral.

Family dynamics can be complicated. Our lives rarely resemble a Norman Rockwell painting. Relationships strain. Break. Sometimes distance, measured in years or even decades, settles in. It had been a long time since I had seen parts of my family. And yet, even in the midst of grief, even in the presence of old wounds, something unexpected happened.

There was reconnection.

Stories were shared. Gaps were filled in. I learned where some of my ancestors are buried. I sat with cousins, aunts, and uncles I hadn't seen in years. And somehow, quietly, gently, there was healing.

It reminded me that we are people who believe in a God who does new things. A God who brings life out of places that have known death. A God who restores what feels lost.

And that's where Psalm 23 has been echoing in my heart:

"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for you are with me."

The same God who meets us in the joy of a baptism is the God who walks with us through grief. The same Shepherd who gathers us into green pastures is the One who stays with us in the valley. We do not live in one place or the other all the time. Life holds both. Moments of laughter and singing. Moments of loss and longing. But in all of it, God is present.

I am grateful for both of these moments last week: the fullness of life in baptism and the quiet, complicated healing at the funeral.

Both were holy. Both were places where God was at work. And both remind me that life is always blossoming, even when we can't see it yet.

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Adam D. Dowd".

Lunch Bunch



We will meet at Chucks, 8025 Cass Avenue, Darien, on Tuesday, May 12th, at 11:30 AM. If you are interested in attending, please RSVP to Connie Kilros at 708-296-3786. Please plan to pay with cash, as cash is preferred by the restaurant.



May 2 Penny S.	May 15 James E
May 3 Susan R.	May 18 Rene B
May 9th Janet K.	May 19 Wendy A
May 11 Francesco C.	May 29 Andrea M
May 12 Dan B	

thank you

Council Recognition for the month goes to all who helped with the Easter food bins, especially to Elsy, with her great organization, and a big thank you to all the Good Friday presenters. We are so grateful to have cheerful members to spread joy throughout the community. Thanks to your smile and generous spirit, it has shown those how God can change their lives.

Senior Spirits

We will meet on Thursday May 21, 2026 at noon. We will have our usual Potluck lunch and as always everyone is welcome! Any questions please call Marilynn at 630-927-9996

Outdoor Worship



We're gathering outside on the 4th Wednesday of each month, May through October, at 6:30 PM.

Come enjoy a peaceful evening of worship in our church yard — music, prayer, community, and the beauty of God's creation all around us.

Spread Mulch



Our church grounds are ready for a spring refresh, and we need your help! Join us on Saturday, May 9, at 9:00 AM as we gather to spread mulch and beautify our flower beds and walkways.

BINGO

Join us on May 8th at 6:30 pm for a fun-filled evening of Bingo, fellowship and prizes! Whether you're a season player or new to the game, all are welcomed to enjoy the excitement. Bring your lucky charms, invite a friend, and get ready for an unforgettable night. Please bring a dish to share for a potluck dinner. Please no shellfish.



GREEN GARDEN FAIR

Saturday May 9, 2026

9 a.m. to Noon



Organic Vegetable, Herb and Flower Seedlings
Bagged Organic Compost and Potting Mix
Eco Friendly Exhibitors and much more!



First Congregational UCC
235 S Kenilworth Ave
Elmhurst IL 60126

www.elmhurstucc.org

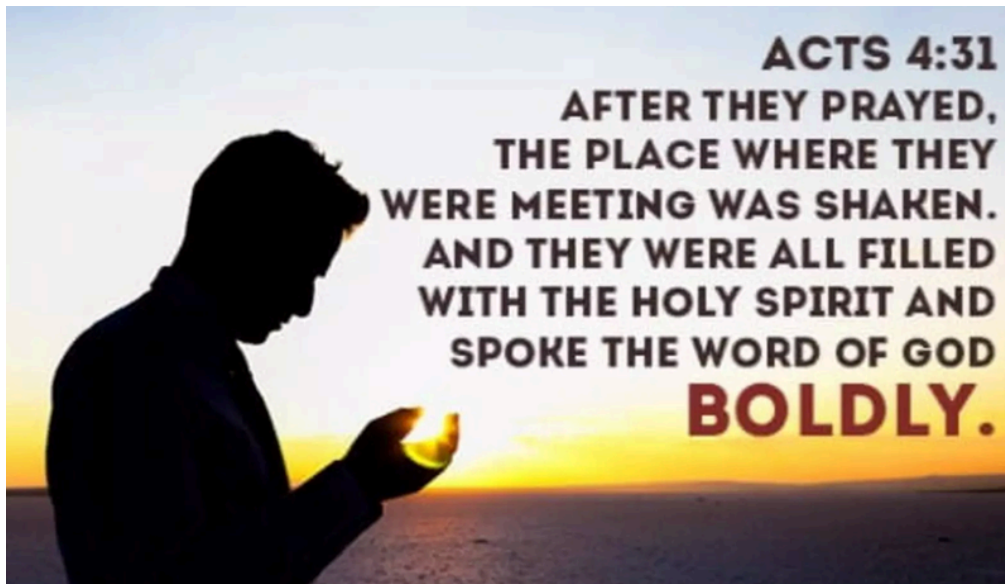
Pastor Adam will be attending this Green Garden Fair after spreading mulch.

MAKE SURE
TO WEAR
RED ON
MAY 24TH
FOR TO
CELEBRATE
PENTECOST.



It is All Faiths Night at the Kane County Cougars on June 12th. Tickets at \$13.00 for reserve seats and parking, at the end of the game there will be post-game fireworks, and you are able to run the bases. If you are interested, please sign up in the Sanctuary.

ACTS 4:31
AFTER THEY PRAYED,
THE PLACE WHERE THEY
WERE MEETING WAS SHAKEN.
AND THEY WERE ALL FILLED
WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT AND
SPOKE THE WORD OF GOD
BOLDLY.



2026 Council Members

- **Marilynn Sells - President, Personnel**
- **Ron Matta - Vice President, Property, Personnel**
- **Linda Glover - Secretary, Worship and Music, Christian Education**
- **Jim Kelly - Treasurer, Finance**
- **Marlene Carlson - RIC**
- **Art Kardatzke - Property**
- **Kellie Kerfin**
- **Ray Kozak**
- **Kathy Kratochvil**
- **Debbie McNichols - Hospitality**
- **Judy Padera - LCW**
- **Joy Prueter - Children and Hunger**
- **Alice Tangorra**
- **Pastor Adam - Christen Education, Evangelism, Personnel**

Committee Report

Finance:

March donations were exceptional. The \$29,441 total is the highest March not just in the last ten years, but in the last 25 years by over \$7,200; exceeding a weak 2025 (\$13,375) by \$16,066 and a good 2024 (\$15,693) by \$13,748. March expenses (\$22,879) were higher than 2025 (\$20,717) by \$2,162 and higher than 2024 (\$19,457) by \$3,423. March operations generated a \$6,561 surplus. The year-to-date deficit decreased to \$12,736 and is the third lowest at the end of three months in the last ten years.

At the end of three months, 25.00% of the year, 24.2% of the budget was spent. Most categories that exceeded 24.2% were highly seasonal. However, it should be noted that in prior years the percent expended has been several percent lower than the completed portion of the year.

Donations through March recorded in Shepherd's Staff agree in total and by fund with the financial records.

No pass-through funds are overdrawn. Fourteen on-line donations totaling \$933.82 were received by the last counters report date (03/30/26). There were no Thrivent donations (YTD there have been 2 Thrivent donations totaling \$150).

The balance sheet remains strong. There is no long term debt. Total assets have decreased by \$11,335 since 12/31/25. The decrease is due to the operational deficit.

James T. Kelly
Treasurer

Council Highlights

Pastor's Report

- **Holy Week Review**
 - Strong attendance and meaningful services.
 - Positive feedback on Good Friday reflections.
 - Suggested improvement:
 - Better communication about foot washing opportunity.
- **Programming Adjustments**
 - Discontinue morning Lenten services (low attendance).
 - Continue:
 - Morning Bible study
 - Evening Holden Prayer
- **Community Engagement**
 - Exploration of forming a Green Team through Faith in Place:
 - Environmental justice initiatives
 - Advocacy and sustainability efforts
 - Participation in:
 - DuPage River cleanup
 - Legislative advocacy (environmental policies)
- **Worship & Attendance**
 - Stable in-person attendance
 - ~30 online viewers weekly
 - Continued growth in engagement

Old Business

- Asset inventory and safe deposit review ongoing.
 - To be completed before next meeting.

New Business

- **Bulletin Format Change**
 - Proposal:
 - Move to simplified bulletin
 - Use screens for liturgy
 - Provide printed copies for those who need them
 - Goal:
 - Reduce printing costs
 - Improve sustainability
 - Decision:
 - Trial run beginning this Sunday

- **Ministry in Context (MIC) Student**
 - Brandon Fuhr approved as student placement.
 - Starts September.
 - Council to form support/education committee.

- **Technology Update**
 - Transition from Zoom → Google Meet
 - Cost savings (~\$169/year)
 - Already included with Google suite

- **Future Considerations**
 - Early exploratory conversations about possible church partnership/merger
 - Focus on long-term sustainability

Committee Reports

- **Children & Hunger**
 - Easter food distribution highly successful:
 - 13 bins filled
 - Strong congregational participation

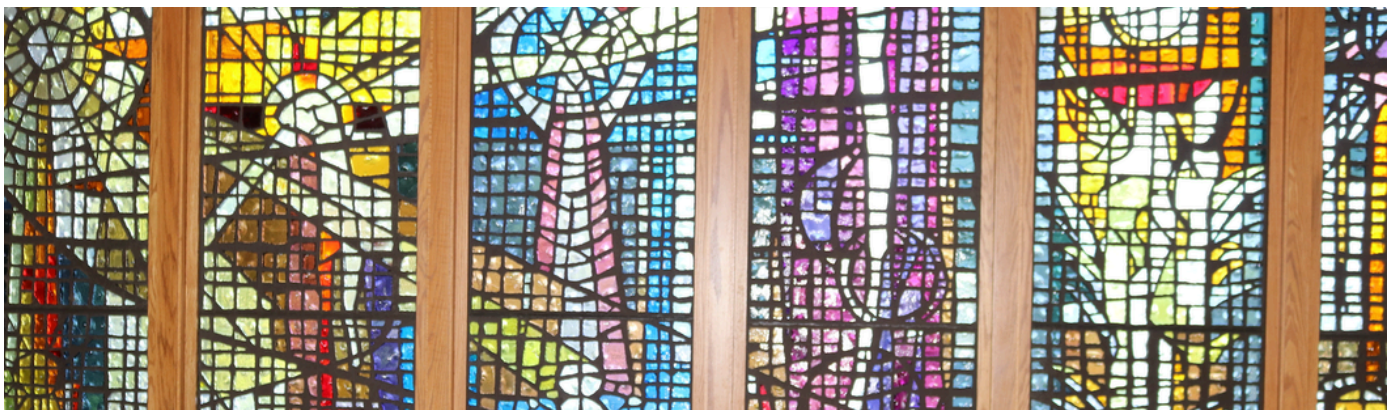
- **Evangelism**
 - Planning summer outreach postcard

- **Personnel**
 - Ongoing search for musician
 - Outreach to colleges and networks

- **RIC (Reconciling in Christ)**
 - Planning Pride participation
 - Upcoming documentary screening event

- **Finance**
 - Deficit decreasing
 - Additional large donation received

- **Property**
 - Camera issues resolved



April Month in Review



May

SUN 26	MON 27	TUE 28	WED 29	THU 30	FRI May 1	SAT 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10am Worship Serv 1pm Loving Word S 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12pm Evangelism M 5:15pm OA 7pm 40th Annivers: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10am Bible Study 7pm AA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7pm OUT Spoken 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:30am Card Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9am SDA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10am Baptism 10am Worship Serv 2 more 		Cinco de Mayo <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5:15pm OA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10am Bible Study 7pm AA 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:30am Card Group 6:30pm Bingo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9am Green Garden 9am SDA 2 more
Mother's Day <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10am Worship Serv 1pm Loving Word S 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11:30am Lunch Bun 5:15pm OA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10am Bible Study 7pm AA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6:45pm Bill Oldham 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:30am Card Group 5pm Funeral Servic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9am SDA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10am Worship Serv 1pm Loving Word S 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5:15pm OA 7pm Church Counc 7pm Church Counc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10am Bible Study 12pm Evangelism M 7pm AA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12pm Senior Spirits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:30am Card Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9am SDA
Pentecost <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10am Worship Serv 1pm Loving Word S 	Memorial Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5:15pm OA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10am Bible Study 6:30pm Outdoor W 7pm AA 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:30am Card Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9am SDA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10am Worship Serv 1pm Loving Word S 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1pm Property Comr 1pm Property Meet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5:15pm OA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10am Bible Study 7pm AA 		Synod Assembly <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:30am Card Group 	Synod Assembly <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9am SDA 11am DG Pride Fest