Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:
Grace and Peace to you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Emma Hooper in her novel, "Our Homesick Songs," tells the story of a Newfoundland family's struggle to maintain home. Finn, the twelve year old son who plays the accordion, is gathering people to sing and to play music. One day he asked the postwoman Sophie, do you play any instruments or sing?

Hm. Well, I’m a decent bodhran, and, well, everyone can sing, can’t they?

Sure, sure they can. Everyone can sing.

Isaiah called the Israelites to sing a new song. This new song will be about God’s deliverance of Israel from the Babylonian Captivity. This new deliverance will be similar to the exodus from Egypt but unlike the original; this one will be without travail. God will do a new thing. Listen to Isaiah:

I will lay waste mountains and hills,
and dry up all their herbage;
I will turn the rivers into islands,
and dry up the pools.
I will lead the blind
by a road they do not know,
by paths they have not known
I will guide them.
I will turn the darkness before them into light,
the rough places into level ground.

During Lent and Easter, we remember and participate in the new thing God is doing through Jesus Christ. Like Isaiah and Finn, I invite you to come and "sing" a new song to God as we experience new exoduses in our lives from bondage and oppression.

Sing to the Lord a new song, his praise from the end of the earth!

Open hearts.
Open minds.
Open doors.

C. Joseph A. Johnson
Christ’s Servant,
SUNDAY, MARCH 3

By a slim margin, the special session of the general conference of the UMC — held in St. Louis the last week of February — voted to uphold the Traditional plan. There are no changes for now. Following worship, please join Pastor Joe in Wesley Hall for a Digest of the Session.

TUESDAY, MARCH 19

Join Us in an Open Community Conversation
ELMHURST YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

SPEAKER: Amy Strauss, National Alliance on Mental Illness


Elmhurst Youth (6th-12th grades), Families, & Friends are Welcome
Optional Supervised Youth Games provided during the Program (ages 8+)
No Registration Required. Questions: Chris Squier squierc@gmail.com

LGBTQ:

Upcoming Events commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Stonewall Uprising in New York. These demonstrations by members of the gay community against a police raid in June of 1969 are seen as a catalyst for the start of the gay liberation movement and the modern fight for LBGT rights in the United States.

THURSDAY, MAY 9

Progressives For Change (P4C) hosts an LGBTQ Dialogue at 7:00 pm here at First Church
Invited speakers will address transgender issues and the Night Ministry’s emergency housing for youth who have been displaced by their families.

THURSDAY, JUNE 6

First Church sponsors a public, outdoor event to commemorate the 50 year Stonewall Anniversary & to celebrate the start of Pride Month. Bring your friends and to this candlelight gathering at Wilder Park. There will be music and presentations from the Illinois Department of Human Rights well as from individuals within our community.
Loving & Giving at First Church

First Church Memorial Garden
Spring is a good time to walk around our First Church Memorial Garden. It is at the southeast corner of our parking lot and has 23 engraved bricks. There is a Dick Norgaard memorial bench in the garden where you can sit to pray or meditate.

If you are interested in making a donation to engrave a brick in memory of a loved one, orders for 2019 will be taken between April 7 and June 2. This is an annual campaign so if you are not ready now, you will have another chance during May of 2020.

A sample of an engraved brick and order forms are available on the Capital Campaign table in Wesley Hall. The order form should be accompanied by a $125 donation. If you would like a replica of your engraved brick for yourself or a family member, there will be an additional cost of $20. Order forms along with a check payable to First United Methodist Church of Elmhurst may be placed in an envelope and put in the offering plate on Sunday or mailed to the church office.

Questions can be directed to Lola Hotchkis, lola@hotchkis.org, 630-833-6026.

FRIDAY, MARCH 1
CLOTHING CENTER REOPENS FOR DONATIONS
After a short hiatus in February while the lower level underwent an asbestos abatement and the hallway and classroom floors were prepared for new tiles, the Clothing Center will resume accepting donations on March 1. Regular volunteers are needed to help sort and hang clothing and to organize toys, shoes, and books.

Contact Beth Valdez at bvaldez1142@sbcglobal.net.
Learning & Growing at First Church

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 24
BIBLE PRESENTATION SUNDAY
First Church 3rd-5th graders were presented with their own Bibles during Worship.

- Hadley Cross mentored by Jennifer Hagstrom
- Zoë Ejma mentored by Ruth Zervas
- Allison Janes mentored by Chris Squier
- Jack Mathias mentored by Dave Cooke
- Elsie Phipps mentored by Dena Vincent
- Anabella Potter mentored by Marlene Stratton
- Matteus Potter mentored by Ed Miner

Congratulations to these young people and thank you to their wonderful mentors for living out the baptismal vows that we make as a congregation:
to nurture one another in Christian faith and surround those being baptized with love.

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES. The children’s Sunday morning classes have been continuing to explore amazing stories from the Bible. In the month of February they learned the story of the Good Samaritan, ending the lesson by creating their own Good Samaritan banners. The banners included ways that they would work to be Good Samaritans in their own homes, schools and communities.

Coming up in March are the stories about Jesus calling his Disciples followed by a discussion of Holy Week, and learning about the Fruit of the Spirit.

SUNDAY, MARCH 17. The classes will have a chance to put the lessons they have learned into practice by volunteering in the Clothing Center.

Kudos to our Church School Teachers — Jennifer Grisolia, Jamie Falconer, Anne Mathias, and Ellyn, Kate and Ava Gerhke — for being so flexible during the classroom renovations on the lower level. These wonderful women have continued to share God's word with our children despite the less than ideal conditions.

CONFIRMATION SUNDAY, MAY 12
Nine of our First Church youth and their dedicated teachers are completing the last few months of their year together in bible study, prayer, and thought-provoking activities while following the curriculum in Confirm: Your Faith, Your Commitment, God’s Call. On May 12, following a celebratory breakfast with their families and teachers, the Confrmands will be taking a significant step in their faith journey as they are received into membership through the rite of confirmation.
SUNDAY, MARCH 3, 10:30 am WORSHIP
Youth Group is preparing for the annual Youth Worship Service to share with you what it means to them to Be B.O.L.D. in our world today. You won't want to miss this music-filled, energetic, inspiring service created by our own First Church Youth.

SUNDAY, JULY 28
Youth Group will be heading back to Clendenin, West Virginia, for the Summer 2019 Mission Trip. While there, the youth will serve the community through building and repair projects as well as relational ministry. Each night will include engaging and inspirational worship services. PLUS: a fun-filled free day at Adventures on the Gorge. There are still a few openings. Interested? Contact Lisa Rogers by March 12.

The Youth will be raising funds for the trip with their annual Memorial Day Refreshment Stand on MONDAY, MAY 27. Save the date!
MISSIONS TEAM announces: **SPLIT PEA WINS the SOUPER BOWL on FEBRUARY 3!**

95 quarts of soup were sold but Split Pea was the run-away favorite in pre-orders with 20. Thanks to the ‘souper’ cooks — Anne Toohey, Carolyn Heiney, Darlene Van Meir, Jack Phipps, Ed Miner, and Marlene Stratton —, Pastor Joe for his home-baked bread, and Jan Reese for the soup containers. $1036 was donated to UMCOR.

**UMCOR SUNDAY, MARCH 31**

*Another opportunity to support UMCOR!*

When United Methodists give generously on UMCOR Sunday, they share the goodness of life with those who hurt.

**BUTTER BRAID BREADS for MISSIONARY SUPPORT  MARCH 3 ~ MARCH 31**

Back by popular demand, the Missions Committee will again be sponsoring this fundraiser just in time for your special Easter meals. Various flavors may even find their way to Fellowship Time for sampling. Order forms will be available beginning Sunday, March 3, and are due back by March 31. Take a form and collect orders from extended family, co-workers, friends, & neighbors. There will also be a form available here at church for individual orders. **Funds raised from this event will go toward supporting missionary Clara Biswas**, who has visited our church. For questions, see members of the Missions Committee.

**SATURDAY, MARCH 9  11am-6pm**

*St. Patrick's Parade at the POTTERS to support First Church Missions*

St. Patrick's Parade FUNdraiser & Fellowship Event

suggested donation: $10/adult, $5/kid  plus BYOB!

The Potter Family opens their home for all church members with families and friends to join them for the Elmhurst St. Patrick's Day Parade. The parade starts promptly at 12pm and the lineup is right in front of their house at 764 Spring Road. All are welcome to enjoy amazing food, watch the parade, socialize, and support our missions work. Questions? Contact Adriana Potter: adrianapotter2009@gmail.com, cell (815) 341-3736.
All-Church Event

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 23 at FMSC

A group of 53 from First Church helped pack 267 boxes of MannaPack Rice, providing 33,480 meals, which will feed 91 kids for a year. Awesome! And about half the group gathered at Portillo’s afterwards for a casual dinner and fellowship.

While giving our time is a great thing, Feed My Starving Children does rely heavily on monetary donations to fund their cause. For the meals we provided, the cost to produce and ship those meals is $7,366. Please consider making a donation to help cover this cost. FMSC is an efficient charity, meaning over 90% of funds raised go directly back to providing meals. You can make a donation directly to FMSC, via mail or online at https://www.fmsc.org
First United Methodist Church is proud to present

**The Gospel of Mark**

as told by **Prairie Wind Guild**

These tellers, who include our own Marlene Stratton, are passionate about bringing Scripture to life through the ancient-future art of biblical storytelling. The Gospel of Mark is the Guild’s flagship presentation. In 2 hrs 20 minutes (including a 10-minute intermission), just like an evening at the movies, experience the drive, intensity and mystery of Mark's Gospel.

**Suggested Donation: $5**

**Pot-Luck Supper & Post-Show Discussion**

Join us in Wesley Hall at 5:30pm for an old-fashioned pot-luck! Bring your favorite dish and drop it off in the kitchen prior to the performance!

**For more about Prairie Wind Guild: Tellers of Sacred Stories go to** [https://www.prairiewindguild.org/](https://www.prairiewindguild.org/)
SUNDAYS MARCH 17 & 31
Salt Creek Cluster Pulpit Exchange

What is the Salt Creek Cluster? First Church belongs to the Elgin District of the Northern Illinois Conference of the United Methodist Church. Within the Elgin District, we are part of a smaller group that is called the Salt Creek Cluster — including churches from Addison, Bensenville, Elmhurst, and Wood Dale. Pastor Joe meets regularly with our friends in the cluster. We are all looking forward to the Pulpit exchanges in March and to our combined Worship Service here on Good Friday.

The Salt Creek Cluster Pastors from left to right:

So Yang Kim, First UMC/Bensenville; Julie Bleurinar, Calvary Methodist/Bensenville; James Fu, Christ UMC/Elmhurst; Uziel Hernandez, Faith Evangelical UMC/Elmhurst; Terry McDormant, Community UMC/Wood Dale.

Not pictured: Sang Han, Good Samaritan UMC/Addison; Joseph Johnson, First UMC/Elmhurst.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27, 7pm
NIC-UNITED METHODIST: Night with the Chicago Bulls to benefit the 2019 Bishop’s Appeal for NIC Youth Camps to children and youth who otherwise may not financially be able to attend camp. Discounted tickets, all three levels. $5/ticket will support the Bishop’s Appeal. https://groupmatics.events/event/Northernillinois21

GOOD FRIDAY, APRIL 19, 7pm

The Salt Creek Cluster churches will join us in observing Good Friday at First Church. This observance at 7:00 pm will include the Seven Last Words of Christ, combined choirs and the Rev. Darnether Murph-Heath, Elgin District Superintendent, preaching.
First Church Library

Treasures on the Lower Level

CHANGE OF DATE for BOOK DISCUSSION:
SUNDAY, MARCH 31 at 3:30pm

Doug Hotchkis will lead a discussion on *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* by Malcolm X and Alex Haley. Originally published in 1964, Malcolm X tells the extraordinary story of his life and the growth of the Black Muslim movement. His fascinating perspective on the lies and limitations of the American Dream, and the inherent racism in a society that denies its nonwhite citizens the opportunity to dream, gives *extraordinary insight into the most urgent issues we are still facing today.*

*The Autobiography of Malcolm X* stands as the definitive statement of a movement and a man whose work was never completed but whose message is timeless. It is essential reading for anyone who wants to understand America.

No need to buy the book. The Elmhurst library has a copy and there are many copies available from our partner libraries through LINKin. However, if you are like Doug, you might want a copy for your own library so you can read it frequently.

A powerful true story about the potential for mercy to redeem us, and a clarion call to fix our broken system of justice—from one of the most brilliant and influential lawyers of our time. Last November, Rev. Rich Havard, campus minister at UIC, joined us for a Sunday service.

Our apportionment dollars help support his ministry. During his message to our congregation he mentioned the book — *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption* by Bryan Stevenson. Chosen for the Elmhurst Public Library’s “One Book, One Community” this summer, there will be discussions and other programs planned around this book. Details will be forthcoming.
LENT: CONSIDERING THE PASSION OF CHRIST

During the season of Lent, a new portrait will be gracing the west wall of the Quiet Room. Painted by Ellen Hoeltgen, it is a copy of the El Greco masterpiece: Christ Carrying the Cross. El Greco painted several versions — but the one pictured here hangs in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. It depicts Christ’s sacrifice for mankind with his hands gently embracing the cross and his tearful eyes with a heavenward gaze.

About El Greco “The Greek”: Domenikos Theotokopoulos (1541-1614) was a painter of the Spanish Renaissance. Born in Greece, he studied art in Italy, and lived and worked in Toledo, Spain. Interestingly, he most often signed his work with his full birth name in Greek letters adding the work Kres, Greek for Cretan, in homage to his birthplace of Crete. Presumed to have converted from Greek Orthodox to Roman Catholicism, he painted many religiously inspired paintings.

A Note from Mary Hoeltgen: Many of you know that I have absolutely no background in art or art history other than my enjoyment of it. I have been painting in oils and acrylics since 2007. So, undertaking of a copy of a masterpiece such as this was an extremely bold move. It inspired me. I was compelled. Thank you for hanging it. I hope it moves you.

SUNDAY MORNINGS ~ MARCH 10-APRIL 14

Lenten Series for Adult Spiritual Growth. Be guided through the five means of grace that John Wesley “instituted,” meaning these are spiritual practices in which Jesus himself participated and which he encouraged his followers to do. A life of genuine prayer inevitably leads to a life of hospitality, mercy, and justice.

Meet in Aldersgate at 9:15am.

*Five Means of Grace, Experiencing God’s Love the Wesleyan Way* by Elaine A. Heath

SUNDAY MORNINGS ~ APRIL 28-MAY 19

Dr. Harvey spoke at First Church last August. In a panel discussion with youth of all races, they all said one thing: they wished their churches spoke more about race. This is a wonderful opportunity to become self-aware. Dr. Harvey’s approach is to do away with “color-blindness” (which she argues hasn’t worked) and embrace Race-Conscious Parenting. Join this 4-week session to take a look at our own sensitivities and how we communicate.

*Raising White Kids* is for families, churches, educators, and communities who want to equip their children to be active and able participants in a racially diverse society which unfortunately remains full of racial tensions. While we talk a lot about the impact of race and racism on children of color, meaningful dialogue about the impact of race on white children is woefully absent. *Raising White Kids* steps into that void.

*Raising White Kids, Bringing up Children in a Racially Unjust America* by Jennifer Harvey.
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<td>Silent Meditation in Sanctuary 10-10:20am</td>
<td>Bulletin announcements deadline: 12 noon each Wednesday</td>
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<td>YOUTH SERVICE with Holy Communion ShopwithScrip forms available</td>
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<td>ASH WEDNESDAY 6:00 – 7:00 Lenten Devotional, Supper &amp; Activities</td>
<td>Clothing Center OPEN 9-11am, 7-9pm</td>
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<td>Missions FUNdraiser: St. Patrick’s Parade at the Potters</td>
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<td>Parent Group 9:15 Salt Creek Pulpit Exchange Rev. Uziel Hernandez, guest preacher ShopwithScrip pickup</td>
<td>St. Patrick’s Day Elmhurst Youth Mental Health Conversation 7pm</td>
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<td>Elmhurst Schools Spring Break</td>
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<td>Night with the CHICAGO BULLS 7:00 pm Naomi Cicle 7:30pm</td>
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Church School,  
Confirmation, & Adult Series 9:15am  
Worship 10:30 am  
Fellowship 11:30 am | Silent Meditation in Sanctuary  
10-10:20am | Bulletin announcements deadline:  
12 noon each Wednesday | 12 Step Group  
7:30pm |  | 5 | 6 |
| 31 4th SUNDAY in LENT  
UMCOR SUNDAY  
Salt Creek Pulpit Exchange  
LIBRARY DISCUSSION  
3:30 pm | **APRIL 1** | 2 | 3 | 4  
Clothing Center OPEN  
9-11am, 7-9pm | 5 | 6 |
| 7 5th SUNDAY in LENT  
ShopwithScrip forms available  
Mark’s Gospel & Potluck | 8 | 9  
Staff Meeting 10:30  
Initiative Meeting 7pm | 10  
P4C 7pm | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| 14  
Palm Sunday  
HS Breakfast Out 9:15  
Palm Processional  
ShopwithScrip due. | 15 | 16 | 17  
MAUNDY THURSDAY | 18  
GOOD FRIDAY  
Observance 7:00pm with Rev. Darneather Murph-Heath | 19  
Clothing Center OPEN 9-11am  
Youth Breakfast Ministry 8:30-11  
Set up for Easter Brunch | 20 |
| 21 Easter Sunday  
Brunch 9am  
Easter Vigil with Bonfire | 22 | 23  
Staff Meeting 10:30 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 27 2nd Sunday of Easter  
New Adult Series begins | 28 | 29 | 30  
**MAY 1**  
Clothing Center OPEN  
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<td>12 Step Group  7:30pm</td>
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<td><strong>Beginning May 26</strong></td>
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<td><strong>JUNE 1</strong></td>
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<td>Youth: Memorial Day Stand Prep</td>
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<td>Memorial Day Closed Youth Group Refreshment Stand 9-11am</td>
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Notes from Trustee chair Robert Potter:

1. The 5 North-facing Sanctuary windows which have been removed for restoration are expected to be reinstalled by the middle of March — well ready for Easter.

2. The asbestos abatement on the lower level began on February 11 and was successfully completed ahead of schedule. Bluestone Environmental pulled up all the old tile and prepared the floors for retiling. All areas have been tested and declared “clean”. Huge thanks to everyone — including the many groups using our building — for their forbearance and flexibility during this process.

3. In mid February, a ComEd Transformer with a broken insulator caused loss of phase and tripped numerous electrical circuits here at First Church, including blowing a fuse in the sanctuary. Thanks to Bob Lee and Dench Electric, we were back in business right away.

4. After careful consideration of new flooring for the lower level hallways and classrooms, new tiles and carpeting have been selected. The goal is to have the lower level refurbished before Easter. Prayers are always in order.

Look for Birthdays & Anniversaries in the Weekly Bulletin Announcements!

Prayer List

Recent Concerns ~ Ann Gills; Rick Anthoney (friend of Sandy Bodie); Emily Locke (daughter of Pam & Ed Locke); Clyde Farwell (father of Danelle Achepohl); Kristen (granddaughter of Kay Michael); Nick Allen (grandson of Sally Allen); Joelle Bailey (cousin of Marlene Stratton); Cindy Engdahl Sekera; Matt Johnson (Janet Soltys)

Ongoing Prayers ~ Janet H. (friend of Marlene Stratton); Terse Stamos (sister-in-law of Carol Norgaard); the homebound; the military; those who are struggling with depression and anxiety; those who are homeless or in shelters; those in nursing homes; and caregivers.

Submit a PRAYER REQUEST:
1. Via EMAIL to PASTOR JOE at joseph.johnson@umcelmhurst.org with a copy to the CHURCH OFFICE at admin@umcelmhurst.org
2. Via PHONE MESSAGE to the CHURCH OFFICE at 630-834-2440
3. Via WRITTEN PRAYER REQUEST on your Sunday Morning Attendance Sheet.

Council Notes & News

Staff Directory

General Office: (630) 834-2440
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Doug Peters, Director of Music Ministry
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Lisa Rogers, Dir of Children & Youth Ministries
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Jennifer Jordan, Financial Services
Jordan Daily Money Management
jennifer@jordan-dmm.com

Mike Capra, Custodial Services
Capra Janitorial Services
The Clothing Center at First Church is open to guests three times a month on the 1st Thursday of the month from 9-11am and from 7-9pm, and on the 3rd Saturday of the month from 9-11am.

**Donations** of clothing, shoes, bedding, books, toys and other household goods may be dropped off from 8-6 pm Monday-Friday at the Church Business Office entry on the north side of the building. Tax receipts are available at the drop-off area. Volunteers are always welcome.

The **Youth Breakfast Ministry**, coordinated by our middle school and high school youth, provides a free breakfast to our Clothing Center Guests on the 3rd Saturday of every month from Oct—April.