

Summer Marks 15 Years for Worship in the Park

“Fifteen years ago people still really dressed up for worship,” remembers Pastor Dean Francis. “Wearing a suit and tie in the sanctuary in August was not very comfortable.”

Worship in the Park arose, in part, from this discomfort. As the staff explored other summer worship settings, Francis recalled a Traverse City, MI, church that held a large outdoor service on the beach. He decided First Church would try it – on a smaller scale.

The church applied for a park permit with the City of Evanston for Sunday mornings in Lunt Park, just across Sheridan Road from the lake. At that time the parsonage was just a stone’s throw from the site, so Francis visited his neighbors, describing the plans to and asking for their support.



Worship in the Park, our outdoor summer worship service, begins June 9 at 9:00 a.m. in Lunt Park. Above: Creation Camp 2012 participants are introduced during a Worship in the Park service last summer. Photo by Clark Federer.

Worship in the Park began in June 1999 without a sound system, but that didn’t last long. By midsummer, longtime member Ariel Schrodtt had jerry-rigged a sound system using a car battery. “That did the trick for a while,” chuckles Francis.

“At first we tried for a half hour service,” recalls Francis, “but over time we added pieces.” Now worship is about 45 minutes long. New this summer is a children’s moment and then “WOW” (Worship Our Way), where children of all ages are

invited to accompany Children’s Ministry Coordinator Cherie Asante to another area of the park for age-appropriate exploration of the worship theme.

Weather, of course, has been problematic at times. Worshipers have gotten wet more than once. Once a large limb fell on a worshipper who was taken to the hospital. Summer art festivals, athletic events, and motorcycle caravans also have posed challenges to the service. But perhaps the biggest challenge for

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- Sack lunch ministry continues
- Photos from children’s musical “Oh, Jonah!”
- Material for the August issue is due July 19 Please send info to Editor@faithatfirst.com.

The Dean's List



Dear Friends:

Later this week we will gather in St. Charles, IL, for our Northern Illinois Annual Conference. There will be some important highlights for First Church at the conference. Tom Rawlinson, a First Church member and former intern will be commissioned on Saturday as a Provisional Member of the Annual Conference. This is the final step *before* full ordination as an Elder and we will be there to rejoice with Tom.

He has also been appointed ($\frac{1}{4}$ time) to St. Matthew UMC in Chicago as the Pastor of Community Development. Tom's current appointment at Glenview UMC becomes $\frac{3}{4}$ time to give him full employment! Because of Tom's increased responsibilities, Mary Rawlinson (Tom's partner) will be leaving our employment this summer to be able to worship and serve with Tom. We also just received word that Megan Dean, another ministry candidate from First Church, will receive an appointment as the Associate Pastor at Gary Memorial UMC in Wheaton. So the influence of First Church continues to expand, and I'm so grateful to serve this congregation that calls others into ministry and service.

In the last couple of weeks the storms in Oklahoma and Missouri have been devastating. Within two days the United Methodist Committee on Relief

help local churches provide food and shelter. Of course there will be much more to do. If you would like to give to this effort you can go to www.umcor.org or send a check to the church.

As school comes to a close and we move to our 'summer mode' here at First Church I encourage you to look carefully at the service and worship opportunities here. This year we are adding a children's moment and 'chapel' type activity for children during Worship in the Park (WIP). We hope this will encourage more children's participation in WIP. We don't go on vacation here over the summer, but things do change so please continue to join us as we continue to do the work of Jesus here in Evanston and in many, many more places.

Grace and peace,

—Dean Francis
Senior Pastor

(UMCOR) provided a truck-load of food and clean up supplies. UMCOR immediately released \$10,000 to



First Church 2013 Confirmands. Photo by Frank Montagna.

Journaling Group Welcomes New Members

Mari Leonard is a journaling devotee. For almost 40 years she has kept a regular journaling practice and has actively participated in a journaling group. Leonard's enthusiasm for journaling as a spiritual practice led to the creation of a small group that meets monthly at the church.

"It makes a lot of sense to have a faith-based journaling group," says Leonard. "Journaling is about reflecting on your experiences and mulling over the challenges of life to make yourself the best person you can be. As Christians, we are striving to reach the full potential God created for us. Isn't that the same thing?"

Unlike most other small groups, the First Church journaling group begins with 30 minutes of silence. As people enter the room, they are invited to write (or draw) quietly. After that, a writing prompt is presented by someone in the group, and all respond in writing to that prompt (or perhaps to another, internal prompt) for another 30 minutes. Only after that are group members invited to share verbally if they wish.

Like several others, participant Maryellen Scott was new to journaling. "I had no idea what this was going to be like," she said, yet she felt drawn to participate. Susan Ardern also was new to journaling, although she has

came in the room, maybe just about your day. You don't have to share at all. We come to each person's sharing with a spirit of open acceptance."



The chancel was crowded during worship on May 19 when 11 eighth graders and their families came forward to take confirmation vows. Photo by Judith Campbell.

kept a diary from time to time. Journaling is different, she says, in that it comes from within.

Leonard, facilitator for this group, specifies the "rules" of engagement for this experience: "You share what you feel comfortable talking about—it might be about the prompt, or about what you wrote when you first

The women who have participated clearly appreciate this openness and flexibility. The Journaling Group meets this summer on Tuesday evenings at 7:30 p.m. in Glenna Hall on June 25, July 23, and August 27, and will continue in the fall. Interested women are welcome to participate this summer and into the next year as schedules permit.

Summer at First Church

First Church
UNITED METHODIST
EVANSTON

Join us this summer for **Worship in the Park**, an informal, 40-minute worship service at 9:00 a.m. in Lunt Park on the corner of Church St. and Sheridan Road, and 10:30 **Worship** in air-conditioned Tittle Chapel.

New this summer is **WOW (Worship our Way)**. After children's time during **Worship in the Park**, kids of all ages are invited to experience worship through hands-on activities, stories, and songs with Cherie Asante, our Children's Ministry Coordinator.

Our sack lunch ministry continues all summer. Each Sunday we invite you to the church kitchen at 10:00 a.m. to assemble lunches that are distributed to hungry persons in the community.

For details on First Church programs, please visit www.faihtfirst.com.



June

Sunday	2	Last day of the church program year. Worship at 10:30 a.m. in the sanctuary; summer mission trip participants commissioned. Sack lunch ministry at 11:30 a.m. in Great Hall.
Monday	3	Fighting Methodists softball game at 6:45 p.m. at Robert Crown, followed by a potluck at Pastor Dean's house
Friday	7	First Friday Sack Lunch Ministry
Sunday	9	Summer worship schedule begins. Worship focus: Ruth, Person of Interest sermon; music by the Gospel Choir. Sack lunch ministry at 10:00 a.m.
Monday	10	Fighting Methodists softball game at 9:15 p.m. at Robert Crown.
Monday-Thursday	17-20	Creation Camp
Sunday	16	Worship focus: Rebekah, Person of Interest sermon; music by the Bell Choir. Sack lunch ministry at 10:00 a.m.
Monday	17	Fighting Methodists softball game at 6:45 p.m. at Robert Crown.
Sunday	23	Pancakes on the Lawn. Worship focus: Deborah, Person of Interest sermon; music by Creation Camp participants. Sack lunch ministry at 10:00 a.m.
Monday	24	Fighting Methodists softball game at 8:00 p.m. at Robert Crown.
Wednesday	26	Journey (high school youth group) – 7:00-8:30 p.m.
Sunday	30	Worship focus: Hannah, Person of Interest. Sack lunch ministry at 10:00 a.m.

<h1>July</h1>		
Monday	1	Fighting Methodists softball game at 8:00 p.m. at Robert Crown.
Wednesday	3	Journey (high school youth group) – 7:00-8:30 p.m.
Friday	5	First Friday Sack Lunch Ministry
Sunday	7	Worship focus: What Jesus Teaches Us sermon series begins. Sack lunch ministry at 10:00 a.m.
Monday	8	Fighting Methodists softball game at 8:00 p.m. at Robert Crown.
Monday-Thursday	8-11	Vacation Bible School
Saturday-Saturday	13-20	ASP Youth Mission Trip
Sunday	14	Worship focus: What Jesus Teaches Us; Sack lunch ministry at 10:00 a.m.
Sunday	21	Worship focus: What Jesus Teaches Us; music by the Chancel Choir. Sack lunch ministry at 10:00 a.m.
Wednesday	24	Journey (high school youth group) – 7:00-8:30 p.m.
Monday-Wednesday	29-31	CIA Camp (Children in Action Mission Camp)
Wednesday	31	Journey (high school youth group) – 7:00-8:30 p.m.
Sunday	28	Worship focus: What Jesus Teaches Us; music by the saxophone ensemble. Sack lunch ministry at 10:00 a.m.
Monday-Thursday	29-8/1	Rockford Youth Mission Trip

<h1>August</h1>		
Friday	2	First Friday Sack Lunch Ministry
Sunday	4	Worship focus: What Jesus Teaches Us; music by the Gospel Choir. Sack lunch ministry at 10:00 a.m.
Wednesday	7	Journey (high school youth group) – 7:00-8:30 p.m.
Sunday	11	Beach Day at Lighthouse Beach and Picnic Shelter. Worship focus: Living Out Our Faith sermon series begins; music by the Jazz Band. Sack lunch ministry at 10:00 a.m.
Wednesday	14	Journey (high school youth group) – 7:00-8:30 p.m.
Monday-Thursday	12-15	Music and the Arts Camp
Friday-Sunday	16-17	Family Camp at Covenant Harbor on Geneva Lake
Sunday	18	Worship focus: Living Out Our Faith; music by Music and the Arts Camp participants. Sack lunch ministry at 10:00 a.m.
Sunday	25	Worship focus: Living Out Our Faith; music by male quartet. Sack lunch ministry at 10:00 a.m.
Sunday	1	Worship focus: Living Out Our Faith; music by the Bell Choir. Sack lunch ministry at 10:00 a.m.
Friday	6	First Friday Sack Lunch Ministry
Sunday	8	Rally Day. Church Program year begins. 10:30 Worship in the sanctuary. Picnic on the lawn after worship.
<h1>September</h1>		

Sack Lunch Ministry Continues All Summer

Since January, every Sunday the First Church congregation has been making 80 sack lunches that are distributed through Connections for the Homeless. Volunteers are welcome to continue this practice during the summer by meeting in the church kitchen at 10:00 a.m., between the two

gational Church House.

Lisa Todd, Community Relations Manager for Connections for the Homeless in Evanston, believes a sack lunch is much more than just a lunch. “A bag lunch offers nutrition but also flexibility and safety,” says Todd. “Someone

For years First Church has hosted a weekly soup kitchen on Thursday evenings in our building. Each week First Church volunteers coordinate with groups from other churches who provide the meal, and First Church volunteers cook and serve the Thursday supper once a month.



worship services. Lunch assembly typically takes about 30 minutes. The Sunday lunch coordinators are David and Catherine Cerra and Deb Hays.

Our First Friday sack lunch ministry, which began in March 2012, also continues through the summer on June 7, July 5, and August 2. On “First Fridays” volunteers make and serve lunches to hungry persons at First Congre-

who has a lunch in their bag can stay safe and warm where they are. Someone who has a lunch in their bag can travel to interviews or appointments without being hungry. A bag lunch doesn’t address the systemic issues of poverty. In a real way though, it can give someone who feels powerless a chance to make choices and take advantage of opportunities.”

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Francis was his dog.

“Astro wouldn’t sit still through a whole service, so he couldn’t come to Worship in the Park,” recalls Francis. “We had to keep him at home in the parsonage, which at the time was across the street. During the sermon he would hear my voice through the sound system and whine – loudly.”

Worship in the Park enters its fifteenth season on Sunday, June 9, at 9:00 a.m. Dress comfortably and bring your beach blanket or folding chair and one to share. Worship in the Park typically draws visitors who are new to the area or travelling.

During the summer the 10:30 worship service moves to air-conditioned Tittle Chapel.

FACES AT FIRST

The Tale of a Whale

During worship on Sunday, May 12, our Children's Choir told the story of Jonah and the whale. With singing, motions, props, costumes, and yes, a "big, bossy whale", the children taught us about responding to God's call. Thanks to Lara Korneychuk, David Castillo Gocher, Nancy Rose, and the choir members for this meaningful performance.



Photos by Frank Montagna

NEWS AND NOTES FROM AROUND FIRST CHURCH

BRING THE KIDS

Spaces are still available for Vacation Bible School this July 8-11. From 5:30-7:30 p.m. each evening campers enjoy dinner, crafts, singing, and activities around the theme of serving God, family, and neighbor. This camp is for children entering kindergarten through 4th grade. \$15 includes dinner each evening. Online registration at www.faithatfirst.com.

FIRST CHURCH, DON BAKER RECOGNIZED

At the Northern Illinois Annual Conference early this month, First Church was recognized as

District Leadership Church for its support of United Voices for Children and child-serving agencies. Also, Don Baker received the Bishop Jesse R. Dewitt Child Advocacy Award for his efforts on behalf of children, youth, and families.

PANCAKES ON THE LAWN

The worshipping community and visitors are invited to the annual Pancakes on the Lawn breakfast on Sunday, June 23 at 9:45 a.m. between the two worship services. Thanks to our Men's Breakfast fellowship group for hosting this event.



2012 Pancakes on the Lawn.

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