

Parish Visitor

Web Edition

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First Congregational
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

An Ecumenical Congregation in the Congregational Tradition

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Hours

Monday—Thursday

9:00 am to 12:00 noon

1:00 pm to 3:00 pm

Friday

9:00 am to 12:00 noon

From Pastor Jay



A New Beginning

Legendary football coach Vince Lombardi was a devout Roman Catholic. He began every day of his adult life attending 8am Mass at a nearby Catholic church – no matter where he lived.

At one point in his career, he was trying to decide whether to leave his present coaching position and move to another city to accept a new position. He was torn between the choices and struggled to decide.

His wife Marie was included in these discussions, so she knew of his internal tussle. She offered a suggestion. “Go to church,” she said. “Sit in a pew and don’t come back home until you know what to do.”

So Vince did. He ended up sitting in the church sanctuary for 3-4 hours and didn’t reenter the world until he made his decision.

Marie’s advice was sound. Sometimes the most effective prayer we can pray is to ask God to empty us; empty our minds, our hearts, our souls. If a vessel is already full, nothing new can be poured in.

Today can be a good day to remember the Basic Three Step Process of Change –

- 1) Letting go of the old
- 2) An empty or fallow time
- 3) A new beginning

Experiencing change is almost never clearly delineated by precise and orderly steps between three intellectual and spiritual phases. Nevertheless, I say the following can be a good way to go...

Set aside three days of your life (the Bible likes three-day periods for transformation to occur). You don’t have to go anywhere but within your soul. The first day – ask God to reveal to you what in your life you need to let go. The second day – make no decisions. Empty your soul. Live your day and focus on slow, deep breathing. Revel in a fallow time.

The third day – welcome to a new beginning. Your soul is full. You know what to do. Take a leap of faith.

Blessings—Pastor Jay

Here's What's Happening

| WHAT | WHEN | WHERE |
|--------------------------------------|---|--------------|
| Regular Worship Service | Sundays 9:30 am | Sanctuary |
| Social Time | Sundays 10:30 am | Social Hall |
| Adult Forum | Sundays 11:00 am | Chapel |
| Chancel Choir Rehearsal | Thursday 7:00 pm to 8:15 pm | Choir Room |
| Youth Choir Rehearsal | Sunday, 2/2, 2/9, Sing in Worship Service 2/16 | |
| Health, Healing and Fitness Ministry | Will resume at a later date | |
| Health, Healing and Fitness, Karate | Will resume at a later date | |

Groundhog Day February 2



Punxsutawney Phil, the “official” groundhog since 1886 makes his prediction annually on this day. Legend goes that if Phil emerges from his burrow, sees his shadow and returns to his burrow, there will be six more weeks of winter. If he does not see his shadow, winter will end shortly. Estimates are that on-the-average, Phil’s predictions are only 36% to 39% accurate. At that rate, it is not recommended that you plant your spring flowers based on Phil’s predictions! (It is also recommended not to take stock and investment tips from Phil.)

Black History Month

Black History Month grew out of efforts by Carter G. Woodson to promote the contributions of African-Americans to United States history. Woodson was the son of enslaved parents. He became the first Black man to be awarded a PhD by Harvard University. Woodson saw African-American contributions "overlooked, ignored, and even suppressed by the writers of history textbooks and the teachers who use them."

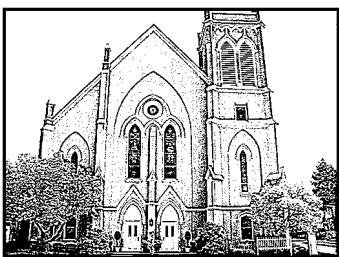
In 1926 Woodson launched *Negro History Week* to bring attention to this cause. His concept eventually grew into *Black History Month*, which became official in 1976. Woodson died in 1950, but his legacy endures through Black History Month, each February.

Church Membership Session

Are you considering joining our church? Would you like to learn more about us?
Then please attend the Church Membership Information Session.

Led by Pastor Jay and Deacons, this is an informative and informal time together. We will learn of the history and theology of our faith community. You will be led on a tour of the church building. And there will be pizza!

Hope to see you there!

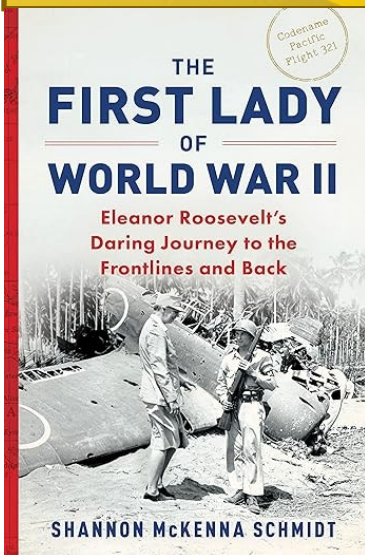


WHEN: Sunday February 16, NOON

WHERE: In the Social Hall



Book Review



Shannon McKenna Schmidt, *The First Lady of World War II: Eleanor Roosevelt's Daring Journey to the Frontlines and Back*. Copyright Shannon McKenna Schmidt, 2023. Sourcebooks: Naperville IL: 2023.

How does a private person come to terms with unexpected life challenges? In Eleanor Roosevelt's life, there were many. Raised to be a dutiful wife, she married an ambitious man and delivered six children, five of whom lived. She learned camping to teach her sons coping skills. She learned to be a thorough and intelligent inspector of public services to assist her husband's programs, and she learned to follow her own star in spite of loud public criticism.

She practiced humility and generosity with her own time, money, discipline, and understanding. She provided her husband with eyes and ears outside Washington, D.C., after polio crippled his legs. It helped that she loved to travel and was an early advocate for air travel.

In this stirring account, Mrs. Roosevelt travels to the South Pacific in wartime, 1943, as an inspector for the American Red Cross. She leaves secretly, writing her daily newspaper column in advance to broadcast an apparent presence in Washington. She carries only her Red Cross uniforms, typewriter, and a few personal items, for a grueling trip on military transport planes and vehicles. In the course of this trip, she personally visits hundreds of hospitalized servicemen, inspects Red Cross service stations, interviews officers and enlisted men at work and at leisure; crosses hundreds of miles of ocean; exhausts the officers assigned to escort her. She advocated for assistance for returning veterans after the war, hoping to escape a repetition of the aftermath of World War I. She worked hard for the League of Nations, and she faced down racism and sexism in the armed forces and at home. It She contacted the families of the men she visited to relay their personal news.

Schmidt has written a carefully documented account of this trip. Eleanor surprised her hosts in many ways, and succeeded in boosting morale in a number of grim places. Her detractors are also represented, including critics who insisted that she should stay home as a good wife should. The reader must share Schmidt's admiration of the determination Mrs. Roosevelt showed to make a difference for the good.

The prayer Mrs. Roosevelt carried in her wallet throughout the war is also inscribed on a memorial overlooking Pearl Harbor: *Dear Lord , Lest I continue my complacent way, help me to remember somehow out there a man died for me today. As long as there be war I then must ask and answer "Am I worth dying for?"* - Kris S.

Valentine's Day



Every year, we celebrate love and romance on February 14th = Valentine's Day. We give each other gifts of candy, jewelry, intimate dinners, and eventually turn on the Hallmark channel to watch a romantic movie that ends "happily ever after". As a nation we spend almost \$26 billion dollars each year on Valentine's Day. So, how did this holiday begin?

Valentine's Day is named for an actual saint - Saint Valentine. The Catholic Church recognizes at least three different saints named Valentine or Valentinus, all of whom were martyred. Which one is responsible for Valentine's Day?

There are many legends about which Valentine is the responsible for the holiday, and how he died. Here is one such legend.

Valentine was a priest who served during the third century in Rome. When Emperor Claudius II decided that single men made better soldiers than those with wives and families, he outlawed marriage for young men. Valentine, realizing the injustice of the decree, defied Claudius and continued to perform marriages for young lovers in secret. When Valentine's actions were discovered, Claudius ordered that he be put to death.

Whether or not any of that is true, it certainly adds to the mystique of Valentine's Day every year!





Identity Theft happens when someone uses your personal or financial information without your permission. This information can include: Names and addresses, credit card or Social Security numbers, bank account numbers and/or medical insurance account numbers. ID thieves are stepping up their efforts by targeting senior citizens.

Because ID theft methods are becoming more sophisticated and more clever, we'll run a series of ID theft protection tools that will help to keep you informed.

1. Impersonation scams

Impersonation scams can be as simple as receiving a call, text or email to confirm your financial information or solve a problem, or as complicated as building a relationship with you over the course of a time.

The most important thing to remember is that **no legitimate company, provider, financial institution or government agency will ask you to provide sensitive personal or financial details by text or email.** For phone calls, tell the caller you will call them back at a verified customer support line to resolve any issue. (NOT the phone number they give you!)

on
the
lighter
side...

IT WAS A LOUSY CRUISE. RAINED MOST OF THE TIME. BUT THEY HAD A GREAT BUFFET! I ATE 2 OF EVERYTHING !!

