

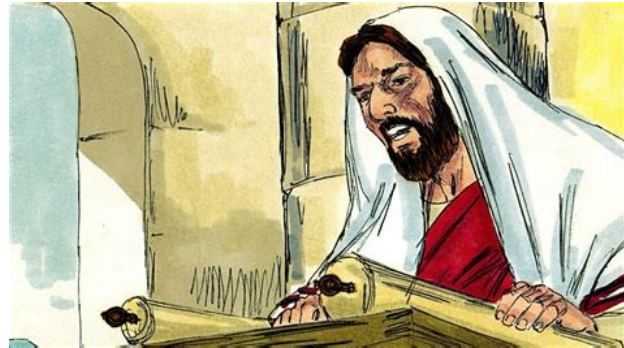
THE ECHO

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2025

A PUBLICATION OF EDEN UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

JESUS PROCLAIMS “THE YEAR OF THE LORD’S FAVOR”

¹⁸ *‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.’*
--Luke 4:18-19



Good news. Release. Freedom. Recovery of sight. FAVOR.

Jesus’ prophetic vision is anchored in his Biblical tradition (the prophet Isaiah), he claims this Good News for his time, and he takes this mandate *personally*. The “good news,” we remember from this story, feels good temporarily for those who have their native land’s pride assuaged. Then, it turns ugly when he reminds them they are not The Exclusive Center of God’s great plans for healing and shalom.

Every Christian disciple is called to journey with Jesus, to take in his examples and teachings as the Word-made-flesh, to grow in his grace and to be conformed to *his image*. How faithfully we understand and prioritize HIS PRIORITIES can have a grave impact on our own well-being and empowerment, as well as on all the other vulnerable children of God in our spheres of influence.

The policy divisions and dilemmas of our time are clear. American Christians don’t understand our problems and solutions in the same way, we don’t hold uniform views on God’s desires or ways, and the many children of God espouse widely varying needs for “Good News.” What’s Good News for some, can be bad news or hard news for others... even dangerous news. So it has always been. Discerning Christ’s will and way is our cross to bear as a gathered community.

How do we affirm the centrality of Jesus Christ’s life and message in these days? How do we bear His name and represent him in our thoughts and actions? In our own impact near and far? Jesus’ vision from Luke should be the plumb line by which we assess and address any policies - near or far – which affect our communities and neighbors. This is not to impose social agendas on others, but to provide our own moral compass as we seek to understand how to love our neighbors as we love ourselves.

This is a hard time for many, and there is much to discern. What is YOUR vision of how we go about this? Where and how do you wrestle? While I will refrain from using the Eden pulpit for any partisan ends, I believe it is essential that we have honest conversations within our faith family about this time in which we live. I am here for you —ALL OF YOU — as we seek to live in favor, peace and justice.

In Christ’s Peace,
Pastor Jacki

WORSHIP

“I, God, am in your midst. Whoever knows me can never fall. Not in the heights, nor in the depths, nor in the breadths. For I am love, which the vast expanses of evil can never still.”

--Hildegard of Bingen



Ushers

Feb 2- Daryl Dahmer & Katie Dahmer
Feb 9- Ed & Debi Thomas
Feb 16- Kelly Borgardt & Jeffrey Lorenty
Feb 23- David Chernich & Jeffrey Lorenty

Mar 2- Daryl & Katie
Mar 5- Daryl & Katie
Mar 9- Ed & Debi T
Mar 16- Kelly B & Jeffrey
Mar 23- Sheri & Noel Brooks

Readers

Katie Dahmer
James Schranz
Carla Riggs
David Chernich

Penny Dahmer
Various (Ecumenical)
Mike Dwyer
Nora Edens
James Schranz

Communion

Debi Thomas

Penny Dahmer



Reminder: Our worship service is offered each Sunday at 10am in person and via Zoom.

Join Zoom Meeting by clicking visiting:
<https://ministrelife.zoom.us/j/2954166836>

Or call in by dialing:
1-312-626-6799
Meeting ID: 295 416 6836

Remember, all services are recorded and can be found at a link at www.edemuccchicago.org



Recent Worship Attendance

a=adults, c=children, z = zoom

November

11/3 25a-5c-8z
11/10 13a-5c-8z
11/17 14a-2c-8z
11/24 @CCJP 46 Sanctuary, 5 zoom

December

12/1 13a-4c-8z
12/8 15a-5c-8z
12/15 28a-13c-8z
12/22 17a-2c-6z
12/24 Christmas Eve 44a-3c-7z
12/29 37a-9c-7z

January 2025

01/05 16a-7c-8z
01/12 18a-5c-10z
01/19 24a-8c-8z
01/26 19a-4c-7z

WORSHIP & FELLOWSHIP

Birthday Blessings

SOME OF OUR PRAYERS

Contact office for an up-to-date list.

February Birthdays

Ed Lorenty – 1st
Elaine Vedder – 1st
Robert Lorenty -2nd
Olive Lorenty--3rd
Mykah Lorenty – 8th
Thijs Lorenty – 8th
Brigitte Manzke – 20th
Benjamin Angel – 21st
Helen Pavia – 22nd
Linda Stirk – 23rd
Brittany Tollinchi – 26th

March Birthdays

Ingrid Tellfors-1st
Nora Edens- 5th
Debra Miranda- 7th
*Robert Lutzow-13th
*Diane Carpenter -15th
*Dennis Bieze-15th
Tomás Dwyer-26th

**Note: we include in our birthday and anniversary lists the names of loved ones who have departed unless family members request that we not do so. We hope this will serve as a meaningful reminder of the "ties that bind" eternally.*



Thank
you

Our deep apology for October

Echo omission: We're so sorry that we omitted acknowledgement of the September memorial gift given by Dave and LaVerne Carlson for our dear Gene Schnarr.

We are still savoring these examples of generosity in Fall and Winter!

Donation of new Keurig machine for coffee, tea, cocoa. Thanks to Penny Dahmer!

New Christmas tree for sanctuary - thanks to Fritzi Fleck, Daryl Dahmer and Penny Dahmer.

REPORTS FROM CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Report of the President

January 19th, 2025

Eden Members,

Happy New Year! I wish the members and friends of Eden a happy and healthy new year.

As I look back on the past 7 1/2 years, I am amazed at how far we have come. As I wrap up my last 6 months as council president I have stopped to reflect more. I look back at those who were cornerstones of Eden, many we have lost over the 30 years I have been part of Eden. I see all the building improvements we have made to allow Eden to thrive. I see more neighborhood engagement. I see a new and energetic membership that is bringing ideas and talent to Eden. I see Eden providing a safe space for anyone to worship. Oh, how far we have come and I can't wait to watch the growth and evolution of this beautiful congregation.

2025 will be another year of transition. As I grow older, I have come to understand that change is one of the only constants in life. In many cases how we embrace that change helps craft the outcome. Jeff Lorenty has accepted the role of Council Secretary filling this important role. As I mentioned above, I will be transitioning out of my current role in June. One of my weaknesses is to ask for help. I realize how precious time is to everyone. If anyone has any questions about the role and responsibilities of the council president, I would be happy to sit down and discuss. We are also still in need of a treasurer. We have discussed making this role a multi person team if that helps ease hesitation in volunteers.

This paragraph from my report in January 2024 rings true today. We have continued the mission to grow, a slow and steady progress that is gaining steam. The Eden community has continued to remain dedicated to our mission. From the capital improvement front we continue to pay off the line of credit for the roof repair and are planning the much-needed basement upgrades. As I have said before we need to continue to push forward and try new things, ideas are welcome from everyone.

Building usage continues to grow. We have had more interest from neighbors, an encouraging sign of our growing visibility in the community. We have continued our relationship with Scouts BSA and the Girl Scouts. Gym rentals are consistent with soccer and basketball rentals.

We continue our work to serve our Eden and Jefferson Park communities. I am thankful to all Members of Eden and friends of Eden that continue to step up to support our mission.

In Christ,

Ed Thomas
Council President

“In Good Company” (Pastor’s Scripture of the Day)

12 As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. 13 Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. 14 Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. 15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. 17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Colossians 3:12-17

REPORTS FROM CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

PASTORAL MINISTRY SUMMARY (cont).

As I reflect on our year together last year, HEART comes to mind. Generous servant hearts, passionate and protective hearts, open and opening hearts, hearts of all ages knit together by grief, the “heart of the matter” (that holds tradition in the right grounding sense), the promise that there is a place “near to the heart of God.”

*My heart is with you, with us, as we follow our hearts and build relationships in this well-anchored and evolving place. My heart is with you because I have a sense of what many of you carry, what you worry over, what you hope to bring to the world as the gift that you are. And I know some of the tender places as we all carry concerns for our loved ones, community, nation and world. **As I reflect on last year, I see so many ways you’re sharing your hearts with one another and our community.***

The Colossians passage on page 4 touches my heart as a gift for this Hour. Let us journey on to discover more fully the peace of Christ this year, and to let that peace RULE in our hearts in the midst of all that might disturb this peace.

*In Christ’s Peace,
Pastor Jacki*

MILESTONES & TRANSITIONS July-December 2024

Relocations/Transfers: None

Funerals/Pastoral Presence in Hospice Journey: Gene Schnarr (Chicago and Phoenix), Cynthia Staples

Baptism: Edie Beal (daughter of Dan and Annie Beal, Geneva IL)

New Members: Laurel Peters, Dina Walters, Ryan Walters



On behalf of the entire congregation, I would like to express our sincere thanks for the following gifts to the Forget-Me- Not-Fund:

- In memory of Gene Schnarr from Dave and Laverne Carlson, George Craig, Jim and Sharon Schranz, Carla Riggs and Jacki Belile, Kevin Kenerson, and Floyd Johnson
- In memory of Bob Decker from Carla Riggs and Jacki Belile
- In memory of Erin Ravelingeen from Carla Riggs and Jacki Belile

We are beyond grateful for these generous donations!

Penny Dahmer
FMN Fund Administrator

REPORTS FROM CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Minister of Community Care January 2025 Report

Welcome to 2025! These past few months at Eden have been exciting and fulfilling. While I began my new role in the neighborhood in September I am very happy I was able to remain a part of the Eden community. Throughout the last few months, we have continued connecting with our neighbors through many community events, like our shared Thanksgiving service and Christmas Carol Sing with the Congregational Church of Jeff Park and Redeemer of Calvary, our continuation of the weekly breakfast club, In Good Company dinner events with our neighbors and our two other big projects listed below. Thank you all for all that you have done to make these things work so well, and I look forward to what we will do this year.



Bridging Jefferson Park has been actively meeting each month this fall and winter. Since the migrants have largely moved out of the police stations and into shelters our focus in 2024 expanded back out to continue our work with our new and unhoused neighbors. In the fall we conducted a toy drive benefiting Kids Above All which gives Christmas gifts to underserved children across the area. We are also

working with non-profits and government officials in the area to gather and create a resource guide for those in need of services in our area. As we look forward into 2025 we are working on planning a bi-lingual family movie night with other organizations in the area. We are also working on planning more educational and discussion events so that caring neighbors in our area can learn how to best care for one another. If you like to be involved keep an eye out for questions or reach out to me with questions.

Be well,
Sarah Foster
Minister of Community Care

Sustainable Solutions Team (S4)
*“Your building is not a liability...
it is your greatest ministry asset.”*

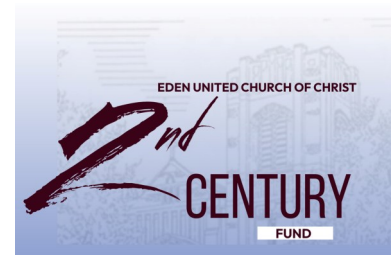
“Eden Open: Embodying Sanctuary for a New Day”

Project Team: Rev. Jacki Belile, Sarah Foster, David Angel, Rev. Hope Chernich, Larry Pavia, Mike Dwyer and Dina Walters

Background:

Our work on the S4 project began in the winter of 2021-2022 when we applied to and were accepted into Sustainable Solutions for Sacred Sites (S4). This 3-year program of consultation, companionship, and resources for congregations aims to develop financially sustainable uses for their buildings. The lead line and motto is: “Your building is NOT a liability; it is your greatest ministry asset.”

—Continued on p. 7



Your gifts year-round to the Second Century Fund ensure our savings and readiness for major building projects. Consider today your 2025 gift(s), matching gifts with your employer (if able) and your willingness to consider planning an estate gift for our beloved community.

Together, we are the instruments of God's Providence.

REPORTS FROM CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS TEAM REPORT (CONTINUED)

Over the three years, Eden's S4 team has worked with our coach Caleb (Linden) Lehman, national S4 staff, and our Chicago cohort of churches. We spent Year One in orientation, coaching, resourcing trainings, and discernment about Eden's path forward to the ideal "intersection of mission and money" for our sustainability. It was then our obligation to craft a specific project to focus on for the duration.

In the Fall of 2022, our team worked with trustees and proposed to Council the program "**Eden Open: Embodying Sanctuary for a New Day**" as the main focus of our continued work. We intended to build upon the previous few years of intentionally creating more community spaces and events within our building AND to move the needle on wise, proactive recruitment of additional partners' use - for both mission impact and revenue. Our goals have been to:

1. Search for more space-sharers *proactively (with the goal of finding 1-2 "long-term anchor tenants")*. *We've updated flyers, made a space-sharing portal on website, and been placed in external listings.*
2. Continue cultivating partnership and mutuality with our current and future sharers. *We've assessed and revised current policies, fees, agreements etc and created a coordinated on-line calendar.*
3. Undertake and/or recommend space improvements for security, efficiency, aesthetics and accessibility. *Examples: naming/supporting upgrades to Fellowship Hall, parlor; securing pro bono architect assessments re physical accessibility, vetting and passing on solar options, discerning grant applications for basement rehab (City of Chicago, 2022; Partners for Sacred Spaces 2024).*
4. Create new administrative staffing/processes to coordinate space use wisely

In November of 2024, some members of the Eden S4 team met with the members of the other member churches of the Chicago Cohort. During this meeting. We learned about the work each congregation did over the last three years. It was enormously beneficial for all of us to learn about what others were doing with their buildings in the city.

While the official program has ended the Chicago cohort has agreed to continue to meet quarterly in 2025 to support each other in our building work. Members of the Eden Team met on December 5 for our final session with our coach. ***We have agreed to meet monthly for an additional 3-6 months to wrap up or hand off tasks essential to this momentum in growing how we share our space well with our neighbors.***

ALL FOR THE INTERSECTION OF MISSION & MONEY!



REPORTS FROM CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Christian Education Report 2024

Since our last meeting, the CE committee has accomplished a number of projects / events. Beginning in June, after a successful Summer FunCamp session, the Rec Room floor was removed, abated and replaced with a durable vinyl tile for many years of service. A huge "thank you" to Nora and Mike Edens and all the folks who helped in coordinating and moving items out, preparing the space, and replacing all the items back after the new floor was installed. Throughout summer and fall, Nora Edens (with Mike's help as well as others), have continued re-organizing various book cases, shelves and the CE closet off the upstairs hall. It's much easier to find the many things used by our families and children now. Late in the summer, we had a well-attended Campfire Nite and Rally Day Weekend that included community-related as well as faith-related events. From S'mores to scary stories; and from kids activities to craft projects, Rally Day Weekend was a most enjoyable time! Two more Friday events, another Campfire Nite and a Movie Nite, were attended by both Eden families and others from the neighborhood. In the fall, an adult-education book study was led by Pastor Jacki based on the book of Revelation.

After Larry Pavia started an "R-Space Drop-in" event for December before Christmas a couple years ago, this year's event was a great success! Parents were able to run last minute holiday errands while their kids played in the gym and Rec Room. In all, some 27 children attended and \$180 was netted for the CE after expenses. Nora had teens Tiernan and Emmett and Josie Lee help with staffing, helping the day go smoothly. Speaking of R-Space, the popular after-school program has been averaging between 25 to 30 children on Tuesday afternoons. Staff and volunteers ranging from Pastor Jacki, Sarah Foster to Larry Pavia, Nora Edens, Gwynne Carlson (R of C), Megan Dunning, Eleanor Maas, Sarah Delezen and others, have all helped make R-Space a safe, fun environment for kids in our church and community. Closing out 2014 was our Christmas Holiday Santa Bash with 13 children attending craft projects and other activities, receiving gifts from Santa [put name here], and a festive buffet lunch to cap it off.

As we head into 2025, we will be hosting a Family Games Nite on January 24 as well as another Movie Nite in late February / early March. In April or May (depending on weather) we will head back outside for Campfire / Game Nite events. Meanwhile, Larry and Nora are planning for Summer FunCamp '25! Proposed dates are the two weeks following the end of the CPS school year, or June 16-20 and June 23-27, along with a couple Summer FunDays for July / August. There will be activities proposed for Palm Sunday and Easter as well as a year-end event. With the addition of several children during church, a faith-based "Sunday School" and kids-in-church activities are going to be looked into. Pastor Jacki will be engaging, with assistance by Sarah Foster, additional adult-oriented programs such as In Good Company dialogue practice sessions, and more book studies (if interested, see Jacki). In all, 2025 is promising to be a fun and eventful year for our CE team!

Nora Edens
Larry Pavia
Co-Chairs, CE Team and Committee

EDEN UCC FAMILY



REPORTS FROM CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Diaconate Committee Report

Members: Debi Thomas, Zachary Thomas, and Penny Dahmer

- We had a productive zoom meeting with Pastor Jacki on Jan. 9, reviewed description of diaconate and what Eden constitution says about it (2 year term, 4 members, examples of possible expectations)
- We have been trying to keep things going the way Gene taught us (changing out the altar cloths and banners, filling candles with oil, altar flowers, thank you to everyone who has helped us with these tasks)
- We no longer have 4 deacons so Debi and Penny will cover communion dates previously scheduled for Gene and Zach. We have discussed the possibility of others involved in serving and or assisting in serving communion because it does not have to be done by a deacon. The communion schedule is set through June so we have some time to plan for how that will work.
- Our scripture reader schedule is also set through June but we are looking for people to volunteer to read for the next cycle so we would be so grateful if you would sign up to read in person or on zoom.
- Gene Schnarr was also in charge of the Care Fellowship Committee which the Diaconate has taken on. We are in the process of revamping that worthwhile committee and hope to get some volunteers to lend a hand.
- Next Meeting – Feb. 16, 11:30-12:00 to discuss Member Care and Retention so if you have ideas you would like to share about that, please share them.

FINANCIAL PICTURE 12/31/24

UNDESIGNATED CASH ASSETS : 23,138.69

Savings: 2133.35

Checking: \$13,771.12

Hoyne CD: 7234.22

DESIGNATED CASH ASSETS: 70,796.32

Savings: 26,577.26

(3 Grants, 2nd Century Building Fund, Queen of Hearts Holdings for Winner, 2028 Pastoral Sabbatical)

Checking: 13,854.47

Forget-Me-Not: 22,242.69

Scholarship Fund: 5167.45

Christian Education Committee: 2954.45

DEBT: 34,913.49*

*Original line of credit \$83K opened in 2021 for Roof/Organ Campaign and used exclusively for those purposes -and none since - in 2021. Paid down additional \$16,958.32 in 2024 over payments in 2022-2023.

Expires May 2031/Guaranteed interest of 3.25% expires May 2026.

PROPERTY ASSETS NOT INCLUDED ABOVE

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REPORTS FROM CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

TRUSTEES REPORT JULY 2024-JANUARY 2025

The past six months has seen many work projects/repairs made to our church home. After our last Congregational Meeting on June 23, 2024, the asbestos abatement of the recreation room on the second floor was performed June 26-28 at a cost of \$8400.00. On July 8th, Luna flooring began the install of the new floor in the recreation room and completed their work on July 11th. Total Cost \$11,364.00

Later in July Fortune Restoration began exterior tuck pointing repairs on the east and north walls of the addition. Repairs were also made to failing interior cinder blocks on the east wall of the gymnasium. Total bill for services \$3,860.00. Our deposit for the work was \$1,148.00 leaving a balance of \$2,712.00. We received word from the President of Fortune Restoration, Mr. Robert Fortune that this balance was being forgiven as a gift to our church. In addition to this gift, Fortune also donated their services for stripping and refinishing the exterior Sanctuary doors on Gunnison St. in loving memory of our late Office Manager, Erin Ravelingeen.

On August 7th Servicemaster began stripping and refinishing the floors in the Gymnasium, Fellowship Hall, Kitchen and west stairwell and landing. Work was completed on August 8th. Total cost \$3,123.00. On September 16th the main water line feeding the boiler was replaced. Total cost \$940.00 (This repair was made with funds donated earlier by Gene Schnarr).

On November 26th, repairs to replace a leaking hot water line in the basement hall were made. Total cost \$1,718.00.

**Special Thanks to David Chernich and Mike Edens who made additional repairs and upgrades in the bell tower to prevent further access by squirrels, birds and other potential varmints.*

**Special Thanks to Sheri & Noel Brooks for donating services of their landscaper to provide grass cutting and edging during the HOT months of July & August!*

Daryl is most appreciative!!

**Special Thanks to Ed & Debbie Thomas, Nora & Mike Edens, Mike Dwyer, Katie Dahmer, Penny Dahmer, Jeff Lorenty & sons, and Scout Leaders who helped move out, and back in all furniture and items in the Recreation Room during the rehab work.*

In late November all gutters were cleaned for a cost of \$260.00. Bids were solicited for snow removal and deicing services from four different vendors in late fall. Bids ranged from a high of \$270.00 to a low bid of \$160.00 per service of 1"-6" of accumulation. The low bid was accepted and approved.

The following is a list of items repaired/replaced by Trustee Ed Lorenty:

- Replace door bell, chime, and button on Leclair St Door.
- Rework timers for lighting of courtyard at Fellowship Hall entry.
- Replace fixtures in first floor coat closet and basement storage room.
- Repair pendant fixture in first floor bathroom.
- Parsonage work: Replace defective switch in first floor bathroom, replace broken pull chain fixtures in basement and bedroom closet. Repairs for flag pole lighting will have to wait for warmer weather to replace broken parts.

Trustee Debbie Lorenty is currently securing bids for cleaning services from several service providers.

Respectfully Submitted By Trustees (Daryl Dahmer, Debbie Lorenty, Ed Lorenty)

SAVE THE DATES



LENT AND HOLY WEEK

Ecumenical Wednesday Breakfast Series

9:30am– 10:30am Each Wednesday in Lent we will gather at a neighborhood church for a brief devotional service and meal.

March 12- The Redeemer of Calvary UMC (5320 W. Gunnison St)

March 19- Congregational Church of Jefferson Park UCC (5320 W. Giddings St)

March 26- Eden UCC (5051 W. Gunnison St)

April 2- Congregational Church of Jefferson Park UCC (5320 W. Giddings St)

April 9- Eden UCC (5051 W. Gunnison St)

April 6: “In Easter Anticipation” - Special Recital with Mr. Ron Jung, 3:30pm. Free will offering received. Reception to follow.

April 13: Blessing the Palms @ Roberts Square Park, 9:15am. Palm Sunday Worship & Luncheon. Details forthcoming.

April 17: *Maundy Thursday, A light soup supper will be served at 5:30pm followed by service at 7pm. We welcome our friends from CCJP for this joint service.*

April 18: In solemn observance of Good Friday the sanctuary will be open for contemplative prayer from 3pm-8pm.

April 20: Easter Worship (8am) & Breakfast. Egg Hunt for all Ages.



IN GOOD COMPANY

Friends of Eden Series”

Zoom Sessions

Wednesdays March 12-26th

7pm Central Time

Zoom Meeting ID:

295 416 6836

Storytelling and reflecting on Eden’s legacy of 110+ years

EDEN+UCC

Eden United Church of Christ
5051 West Gunnison Street
Chicago, IL 60630
www.edenuccchicago.org
773-283-5557

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“Your Kindness Leads Us to Repentance”

**SERVICE OF WORSHIP
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5
7:00pm (Sanctuary & Zoom)**

**We welcome our friends from
Redeemer of Calvary UMC and Congregational Church of Jefferson Park for this ser-
vice.**

Ashes will be distributed at Eden’s altar from 8am-9am and 12noon to 6:30pm.