



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

*We are a
progressive,
inclusive,
spiritually alive
servant community.*

THE PILGRIM COLONY

August 2017

Worship Themes for August 2017

- August 6** We will begin with a sermon on “**What do we mean by ‘God’?**” When I talk with people about why they do or do not believe in God, the conversation quickly turns to ‘What do you mean by “God”?’ Even a casual scan of philosophy over history reveals a wide array of ideas, most of which serve to fit into a logical system. Our thoughts begin with 1 Kings 19:9-14, but keep going! The C4 Choir, led by Doug Johnson, will be our musical guests.
- August 13** We continue the theme by broadening our thinking a bit by looking at ‘**Ten Surprises about God from the Bible**’. The first seven come pretty easily (Psalm 82 infers that there was more than one god), the last three I will get to by August 13. What strikes you as surprising about God? Kelvin Kwok will sing.
- August 20** **Paul ‘God’s Competition’** 20th Century theologians like Paul Tillich and H. Richard Niebuhr were keen observers of the ways that humans found ways to have ultimate loyalties to human ideas that they called ‘God’. Today Neil Gaiman’s *American Gods* takes a somewhat whimsical look at the deities that American’s really worship. Whether high brow or low brow culture the conclusion is the same: God’s got competition. Exodus 20:1-11. The Julie Houston Trio will sing.
- August 27** ‘**When God’s not There**’ Psalm 20. There are times that we feel tight with God---that we love our God and take comfort in knowing God’s love for us. And there are times that we feel---nothing. And instead of a comforting presence we wonder if there is anything ‘out there’ that we can rely upon. Jesus’ words from the cross echo in our lives, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’ Our Bell Choir will play.

Pastor’s Reflection

In the old days before any of us were alive, church was simple in the summer. A bulletin was printed for June and July with no changes week to week. (It read ‘HYMN’ and during the service people were told the number. Same with Scriptures.). And in August, we didn’t have church. It was too hot and God apparently took the month off to go to the cabin up in Michigan, where God worked as a gardener. Some New England churches took the whole summer off because school was not in session. Life resumed its regular schedule after Labor Day.

But now the Indianapolis school district begins the year on July 31. Professional football begins in August. The critical issues of our lives: what gives us meaning? The crushing weight of poverty and oppression, the slow but steady erosion of the environment, the forces of hatred and fear---these don’t go away. There is, there always has been, a lot to do in August! For most of us, August will bring a lot of fun:

- The **C4 Choir**, led by Doug Johnson, will sing in our worship service on Sunday, August 6 and will give one of their annual concerts in our sanctuary Sunday evening on August 13. Our special music fund gets half the proceeds, so do come, and bring friends!

- Our first ever '**Chautauqua Sunday**' will be on August 20. Details are elsewhere but planners hope that the day will provide a fun and rewarding experience. Chautauqua is a community in New York that gained fame in the 19th Century for hosting an annual adult education experience that included music, recreation and lectures on the burning issues of the day.

It will be a fun month! Come and enjoy!

– Rev. Michael H. Montgomery

Chautauqua Sunday

We will celebrate our 160th birthday by hosting a day long Chautauqua event at the church. This event will include:

- **IUPUI's Sheila Kennedy** who will teach us about the rise of the 'ALICE' cohort of our society, (**Asset Limited, Income Constrained but Employed**) the 'working almost poor' who make up 37% of Indiana.
- A worship service will look at '**God's Competition**', linking our social concerns with the need to be authentically spiritually vital.
- **Hands on mission activities** to benefit Riley Children's Hospital
- **Both indoor and outside games** (bridge in an air conditioned parlor, croquet outside)
- **Food** (breakfast at 8:30 a.m. Lunch at noon, Tea, scones and birthday cake around 4 o'clock before vespers at 4:30.
- **Spiritual exercises** like yoga or coloring as a spiritual activity

We will have **birthday cake at 4 p.m.** to celebrate our 160th Anniversary.

What you need to know:

- Come to all or part of the day's activities!
- The meals will be provided by the church out of funds unspent from our 150th Anniversary. We do need to know roughly how many people are coming, so please sign up by calling the church office or filling out the sign up sheets in the narthex.

Sheila Kennedy

Sheila Sues Kennedy is Professor of Law and Public Policy at the School of Public and Environmental Affairs at Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis. She is a Faculty Fellow with both the Center for Religion and American Culture and the Tobias Center for Leadership Excellence, an adjunct professor of political science and founder of the Center for Civic Literacy at IUPUI.

Professor Kennedy holds a B.S. from Indiana University, and received her J.D. with honors from I.U. in 1975, where she was managing editor of the *Indiana Law Review*. She practiced real estate, administrative and business law in Indianapolis and served as Corporation Counsel for the City of Indianapolis from 1977-1980. In 1980, she was the Republican candidate for Indiana's then 11th Congressional District seat. Professor Kennedy was president of Kennedy Development Services from 1987-1992, when she became Executive Director of the Indiana Affiliate of the American Civil Liberties Union. She joined the faculty of the School of Public and Environmental affairs in 1998.

Professor Kennedy is the author of eight books; She was also the co-editor of *To Market, To Market: Reinventing Indianapolis*, an analysis of Indianapolis' privatization experience under former Mayor Stephen Goldsmith (University Press of America).

In addition to her books, Professor Kennedy has published numerous book chapters and articles in scholarly journals, and law reviews and local newspapers. For fourteen years, she was a columnist for the Indianapolis Star, and she continues to write regular columns for the Indianapolis Business Journal and for Inequality.org. Professor Kennedy blogs regularly at www.sheilakennedy.net, and is a frequent contributor to other blogs and periodicals.

Sheila and her husband Bob have five grown children and four perfect grandchildren.

Mission Trip

A meeting to discuss a mission trip in 2018 will be held on Wednesday, August 30 2017 at the church. We will discuss our interest in a mission trip to Nicaragua to be held in either January or February, 2018. Mission trips are opportunities for three types of goals:

- They provide an opportunity for poor communities in other parts of the world to get organized to accomplish particular projects that will benefit them in concrete ways. The primary benefit is the building of human social capital: the knowledge of planning, community building and sense of accomplishment in areas of the world where these skills are in short supply.
- They do good: the projects are an end in themselves.
- They help us to broaden our perspectives to understand what life is like under conditions of extreme poverty and the gifts of community that we can learn for our lives from our friends in Nicaragua.

There is money set aside for financial assistance to members who want to participate. Come on August 30 to learn full details.

An Opportunity for Witness

During our last 'Buzz' a number of people said that they were interested in a 'Faith in Action' group which would monitor and respond to current social justice issues-local, state, national and world—from a faith perspective. The goal is to have a non-partisan and spiritually progressive social witness, seeking to express our faith so as not to yield the public discussion to the Christian Right. We will have an exploratory gathering to explore this as a 'break-out session' during one of the afternoon times at our Chautauqua event on August 20, 2017. All are welcome to join in the conversation. If you would like to participate, please contact Jim Rutherford at caloosa@caloosaspirt.net, 317-431-3948.

Spiritual Explorers

A 'Spiritual Explorers' group will gather on Saturday, August 26 at the home of Jackie and Rich Gibson at 5726 Toad Hollow Lane in Indianapolis. This group will meet monthly to explore different spiritual practices. Details are still developing about this first meeting (pitch-in? dessert?), so email Rich at hoot eagle@me.com or call at 317-735-2895.

Indianapolis' C4 Choir Here on August 6 and 13

The 'Circle City Chamber Choir, or C4 Choir will sing at our morning worship service on Sunday, August 6 and will be in concert at First Congregational Church on Sunday, August 13 at 7 p.m. The concert will conclude with a reception for the choir members in the church parlor. The choir was founded three years ago by our then choir director Doug Johnson. When Doug moved on last year it was agreed that the choir would continue to rehearse at FCC and in exchange would have one concert here and sing at one of our worship services. There will be a free-will offering taken at the concert, half of which will come to the church to support its special music fund.

From the Moderator

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted. - Ecclesiastes 3:1-2

During his sermon on July 16, Worth Hartman mentioned having to write a paper titled "What I Love about the United Church of Christ" as part of his ordination process.

Later in the day as I read the Sunday paper, I saw that Rev. Lori Bievenour of St. Peter's UCC was one of the featured writers for the "Faith + Values" section. Rev. Lori makes several statements about what she would like others to know about faith. As I read her list, I realized that one of the things I love about the UCC is that our theology is not stagnant by repeating the same old dogma.

Her list is as follows:

Faith Changes

Living faith is more important than having faith

Faith is more about questions than answers

The Bible is one of many sacred and inspiring texts

People are people and love is love

Faith is not about you
Love is more courageous than fear
Christianity isn't the only way to be faithful
Resistance is at the heart of Christianity
Bad stuff happens and faith communities matter
Many people have been hurt by religion (especially Christianity) but it's still worth being a part of a faith community
God will always love

While some will be offended by these statements, I love being a member of a denomination that encourages us to challenge our understanding of faith and purpose of religion.

— Bob Cook, Moderator

Sunday Adult Class

All classes meet in the Library (room 212) at 9:45 a.m. All are welcome!

During August (and September) the sessions on Sunday morning will continue the study Into The World: The Acts of the Apostles. The experiences of the early church as told by Luke in Acts will relate to our practices and experiences as much as possible. Specific class plans are:

August 6 – “Into All the World”

We will examine the visions of Cornelius and Peter (Acts 10). Looking at examples of kosher dietary laws, we will try to understand why they were important to Peter? We will define the basis on which Peter and the Jerusalem church decided the new faith would be open to Gentiles. Does Peter's ministry with Cornelius relate to our congregation's guidelines for accepting new members?

August 13 – “Antioch and Jerusalem”

This session will look at the importance of teaching in Antioch and Jerusalem? Does this relate to the importance of teaching in our congregation? How? Reviewing the compassionate response to need as narrated in Acts 11, we will compare it with the national church and congregations today. Reading Luke's description of Herod's persecution of the young church, we will examine the results of that effort.

August 20 – Chautauqua Sunday – No Class

August 27 - “Barnabas and Paul”

On maps, we will trace the first missionary journey of Barnabas and Paul. We will examine the relevance of Paul's speech at Antioch (Acts 13) for the newly developing church and for the church today. Reading about the persecution Barnabas and Paul faced, we will relate the outcome to Luke's purpose in writing Acts. Assessing the process by which the early church handled the disagreement reported in Acts 15, we will relate it to our processes today on local and national denominational levels.

New Creation Worship

August 6 **What do we mean by ‘God’?** We will continue the morning's discussion, but in the New Creation way with movie excerpts, Scripture and brainstorming. Who is God for us?

August 13 **God's Competition** ‘Ya gotta serve somebody’ sang Bob Dylan. ‘It may be the devil, or it may be the Lord, but ya gotta serve somebody’. What do we serve? How do we make room for God in our lives?

August 20 **4:30 p.m. Chautauqua Day Vespers.** We give thanksgiving for our journeys, and pray for the continuation of that journey.

August 27 **God's Absence.** One of the surprising themes about God in the Bible is God's frequent absence from the lives of God's followers. We will reflect on this and

explore alternative ways of being open to God.

Call to Service

"Here am I; send me!" Isaiah 6:8"

Mission of the Month, Humane Society of Indianapolis

Located in northwestern Indianapolis at 79th Street and Michigan Road, the Humane Society advocates for the welfare of the city's homeless animals and seeks to improve their quality of life, providing shelter, food, medical care, and foster care for dogs and cats waiting to be adopted into loving forever homes. Indy Humane offers behavior classes for pets, spay/neutering, emergency vet services, micro-chipping, lost and found services, low-cost vaccinations, a dog park where families can bring their canine fur babies to play, and has partnered with the Cat Cafe in Fountain Square to provide another venue for cat adoptions. While owner-requested euthanasia is available for terminally ill pets as well as a pet loss support group, Indy Humane is a NO KILL shelter and animals are never put down for their length of stay or space demands. Beginning this past year, Indy Humane began a Pet Adoption Wagon (PAW), which brings adoptable cats and dogs to the neighborhoods and communities throughout the city. Indy Humane is a local non-profit that does not receive government funding, nor is it affiliated with the ASPCA or the Humane Society of the United States. Indy Humane is always in need of the following:

- Dry and canned dog and cat food
- Gently used towels and blankets
- Pet toys
- Cardboard boxes
- Dog and cat treats

Additionally, the full wish list is available online on Amazon.com or by following this link: https://indyhumane.org/donate/shelter_wish_list. Items ordered on Amazon will be shipped directly to the Humane Society's campus.

— Nathan Howard

Pantry Items of the Month

During August we are collecting the following items: white bathroom tissue, peaches, pears, beans, jelly and jam.

Our Monthly Food Donations

Our monthly food contributions to the Northside Food Pantry continue to be outstanding. While we did well in June, the increased amount that we gave in the first two weeks of July overflowed our three baskets and means that a second delivery is needed this month. Thanks so much – this is TERRIFIC!

Interesting Additions to our Church Library

Many books have been donated to our library, some by Mark Jacobs when he completed his studies at Christian Theological Seminary. However, they are on an array of topics. One new one by Walter Brueggemann, Chosen, discusses Israel's right to the land they now occupy. Borg and Crossan have one relating to our adult Sunday studies: The First Paul. The First Hundred Days by Roger Throw illustrates how adequate nutrition during pregnancy and early weeks after birth can make a huge difference in a baby's chance to survive and grow into an adult. Emily Bowen (who worked with us during her seminary years) has co-authored Toward a Hopeful Future which discusses positive directions of current churches. The Benedict Option by Rod Dreher explores the choice of some to practice Christianity through prayer and meditation instead of joining a church community. A very timely book, Ferguson and Faith by the new dean at Christian Theological Seminary describes her role, along with other clergy, making a stand between police and angry mobs in Ferguson in the days following the shooting of Michael Brown. If you are new to bible study, you might like Ron Allen's Reading the Bible for the First Time.

In addition to those on the cart, other new books will be on a shelf in a library hutch, at least until we get the book listing up to date and find room on our shelves.

Green Team

Our First Congregational Church Foundation continues to be a valuable asset to us in times of need. Please consider contributing to it, either currently or in your will, to help us when special needs arise, such as a new roof or special projects that the congregation feels are needed. Upgrades in our systems are sometimes needed too, such as storm windows and the sanctuary’s Public Address system. If you have an interest in supporting these or other projects, see Rev Michael, Bill Gillette, or Bob Cook.

Our earth’s environment continues to be in need of our strong support. As individuals we can make a difference in the health of our air, water, and the earth’s crust. Consider how you can help and encourage others to do likewise.

I worked in an office when the old motivational posters first came out, followed shortly by DE-motivational posters. I think my favorite of the latter was the picture of a sinking ship with the caption, "Sometimes the purpose of your life is to serve as a warning to others."

This memory resonated with me when I noticed the reaction to President Trump's taking the USA out of the Paris Climate Accord. At the very next large public opportunity, the other members of the Group of 20—the twenty largest economic powers in the world—effectively doubled down on their commitment to the Paris Accord. Meanwhile, back here in America, a group calling itself America's Pledge has enlisted nine states, 227 cities and counties, and over 1,650 businesses and investors to affirm their intention to abide by the emission-reducing goals of the Paris agreement. One of the founders expressed a commitment to redouble its efforts to achieve these goals.

In short, President Trump's decision has drawn the disagreement on climate change into sharper focus. Just as forces both within and without the USA are redoubling their efforts to reduce fossil fuel emissions, let us rededicate ourselves to do the same.

Financial Update

1. Current Year Actual vs Budget Summary

1/1/2017 through 6/30/2017 Using 2017A

Category	1/1/2017 Actual	- Budget	6/30/2017 Difference
INCOME	118,170	117,844	327
M. Unrestricted Contributions	118,170	117,844	327
M.01 Pledged Offerings	107,102	102,312	4,790
M.02 UnPledged Offerings	5,287	9,750	-4,463
M.03 Surplus from Prior Year	4,479	4,479	0
M.04 Endowment Income 2016	0	0	0
M.05 Transfer from Minister's Fund	1,303	1,303	0
EXPENSES	117,451	124,722	7,270
A. Pastoral Leadership	47,570	48,268	697
B. Worship & Faith	20,298	19,700	-598
C. Care & Connections	205	275	71
D. Witness & Welcome	398	450	52
E. Outreach & Service	11,352	16,100	4,748
F. Trustees	59	275	216
G. Administration & Operations	10,304	13,813	3,508
H. House & Grounds	24,307	22,200	-2,107
I. Miscellaneous	2,958	3,642	683
Net Difference:	719	-6,878	7,597

Overall, we are slightly positive to our budget. Income is essentially on budget, with higher than planned pledges offsetting a shortfall in other contributions. Expenses are almost \$7,000 below the budget, and for the first six months we are “running in the black,” with slightly more income than expense. Some observations on expenses for the first 6 months:

- Admin & Operations - \$3,508 below budget – Most of this is true savings – a special thanks to Cheryl Dillenback for her outstanding efficiency!
- Outreach & Service - \$4,748 below budget – a matter of timing, as most of our mission contributions are made later in the year

- House & Grounds - \$2,107 above budget – mostly attributable to natural gas. This is a matter of timing, and should balance out over the course of the year as we go through the low-usage months.

It's certainly good that we are doing slightly better than our budget; however, recall that our budget had a built-in deficit "gap" of \$6,000, so we still have much work to do to end the year in the black. Thanks to everyone for your continued generous giving and careful expense management.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Jim Lootens, Treasurer
lootens.jb@gmail.com

What's Happening at FCC

Memorial Service

A memorial service for Marla Dankert will be held this coming Saturday, July 29, 2017. A special 'one woman show' of Marla's quilt and other art work will be held beginning at 2 p.m., with the memorial service beginning at 3 p.m.

Circle City Chamber Choir Concert

On August 13 at 7:00 PM we have the honor of hosting our third annual concert by the Circle City Chamber Choir ("C4") under the direction of Doug Johnson. We once again welcome this outstanding group of singers as they share a variety of musical genres and eras. Please join us for this wonderful evening of music. A free-will offering at this event helps to support both C4's future endeavors and our own Special Music Fund.

September Colony Submission Deadline

The submission deadline for all announcements, articles, reports, and events is Tuesday, July 15, 9 p.m.

Discussion Group/Pitch-In

There will be a Discussion Group at the Gibson's home on Saturday, Aug 12, starting at 5:30. Our theme this time is going to be Poverty, Humanity and Compassion. Please read the link below to an essay by a man who grew up about one-half step above, in plain sight of, and with roots in "trailer trash." The next group in September, we hope to extend the discussion by encouraging everyone to watch the movie "Beasts of the Southern Wild" and come ready to talk about it.

<http://bittersoutherner.com/digging-in-the-trash-david-joy>

A preliminary list of things to think about:

- Why do you think the author says, "Sometimes people just need to be heard?"
 - How does this make you feel, considering the traditional ways we've tried to help the poor?
- Think about the line, "I loved the helpless people I loved."
 - Could Jesus have said this? Does any trace of judgement adhere to this thought? Traditional Calvinist thought? Our own family traditions?
- Think about the line, "Desperation is a way of living."
 - And "That's what every single addict I've ever known really wanted: just a second to breathe."
 - And "Is gentleness a resource of the privileged?"
 - And "Maybe hope is a resource of the privileged..."
- Digest as much of this as you can. Spend some time letting these insights just soak in. Then let's get together and talk about them.

To RSVP, please contact Jackie Gibson at jackiengibson@gmail.com, or call [317-735-2895](tel:317-735-2895)



Calling all performers and artists!

**"FCC'S GOT TALENT!"
is looking for you
to help make Friday October 13
an evening to remember.**

**Sign up now to display your art work or give a performance
for an evening of fun raising and fund raising
to benefit the Special Music Fund.**

**Sign up on the signup sheet in the narthex.
Give us your name, how to reach you, and tell us about
the art you will display or about your performance.**

Announcements from the Congregation

Plymouth Rockers

The Plymouth Rockers will meet at noon on Tuesday August 29 to hear and discuss the topic, "Working for our best Physical Fitness – Why and How."

Men's Lunch

This lunch and discussion gathering for men of First Congregational meets at various restaurants in the greater Indianapolis area. They meet every other Thursday at 1 p.m. This month they will meet on July 10 and 24. Please contact Randy Walker at (317) 796-2081 or rk10walker@gmail.com for information.

Women's Lunch Bunch

All women of the church are invited to get together once a month for lunch, friendship, and fellowship. This month we will meet Thursday, August 24 at 11:45 a.m. For any questions or for information please contact Sue Chapman, 317-259-1806 or caolsuech@sbcglobal.net.

Assistance Needed

Susan Kent's petite orange female tabby cat, Mango, is looking for a temporary home for 4.5 months beginning January 3, 2017. All food and litter will be provided as well as a bed and toys. Susan is willing to pay for her care. If interested please contact Susan at (317) 351-0510 (H) or (317) 965-9632(C).