



Worship Themes for November 2017

- November 5** **The core theme is gratitude.** On this All Saints Sunday we will honor those whom we love who have died in this past year, in gratitude for the ways that they have enriched our lives. We will **celebrate Holy Communion**, in gratitude for God's presence with us. The sermon will reflect on the continued admonitions to live with a spirit of gratitude. Psalm 28:7, Colossians 3:12-17, Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30.
- November 12** **Rich Harvests.** Based on Paul's writings in 2 Corinthians 9:6-15, we will reflect both on how the work of others has enriched our lives, and the rich harvests that God's work lays before us. This is Stewardship Sunday; bring your pledges and time and talent forms for our offering!
- November 19** **Thanksgiving Sunday.** As I looked over our bulletins over the past hundred years of Thanksgiving/Forefathers/Pilgrim Heritage, the worship bulletins weren't much different from one another (or from a normal Sunday, either). The subtexts of why we were doing this varied greatly. Traditions are that way: so what do we mean by this time of year and this national holiday? The sermon is on **Subtexts**, based on Deuteronomy 8:7-18.
- November 26** **Paul: Reign of Christ.** Well, actually in the liturgical calendar this is called 'Christ the King Sunday', which celebrates the end of the material world and the return of Christ to rule over the Kingdom of God. The UCC worship bulletin service softens that by calling it the Sunday of 'Reigning Compassion', which is pretty good. But it avoids some tough issues that progressive churches need to think about. Matthew 25:31-46 and Ephesians 1:15-33.

Pastor's Reflection

This past summer the sermon discussion group had a discussion on gratitude. Everyone at the table had something to say about this. As we reflected upon our lives, one of our common themes was the ways our lives had been nourished by other people and by what can only in hindsight be called the inexplicable work of God. In the months that followed I started reading up on gratitude and discovered two different sources of thinking about gratitude in contemporary writing. The first business literature. Sir Richard Branson, founder of Virgin Records, Virgin Recording, Virgin Atlantic and so forth, tells the story of going through airport security and saying 'thank you' to the security guard who cleared him for passage. The man gave a double take, and Branson asked him why. "I've been working here for three years, and you are the first person to say 'thank you' after I cleared them" was the response. That got Branson thinking about the importance of gratitude in management. No matter how well paid people may be, senior leadership had better be appreciative of people's efforts. Gratitude was essential, and Branson redoubled his efforts to communicate this message. The second theme came from the recovery movement, of people who are working through their addictions to alcohol, drugs and other powers. A common characteristic in recovery is the recognition of the need to express one's gratitude for healing and life by working to 'pass it on' to someone else.

To put it in more traditional religious language, stewardship is a three-step process:

1. Recognize that we have been blessed by God.
2. Respond to these blessings and passing them on to others through the work of the church and
3. Make sure that we are making the best use of our resources through what we do in our lives and as a community.

The theme of gratitude will be explored more thoroughly in November 5's worship services, we are invited to bring our pledges of 'time, talent and treasure' on Sunday, November 12.

But first things first: what are you grateful for? How has God been active in your life and in the life of this church?

– Rev. Michael H. Montgomery

Upcoming Events

Community Thanksgiving Service

The Indianapolis Community Thanksgiving Service will be held on Tuesday, November 21 at 7 p.m. at our neighbor the Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation. This interfaith service provides for a time for all of the major faith traditions can come together and give thanks for the gifts of life.

Daylight Savings Time Ends November 5

Fall back! We get an hour of extra sleep this Sunday (or the opportunity to get a lot done before church!). Remember to reset your clocks.

Looking ahead to Christmas

Based on the discussions that we had over the summer the Board of Worship and Faith has determined that our Christmas celebrations will include:

- **A Musical Festival** in our December 17 worship service
- **On December 24 we will celebrate:**
 - **11 a.m. worship service**
 - **7 p.m. Candlelight Christmas Service, with cello and harp.**
 - **10 p.m. Jazz Candlelight Christmas Service**

Mark your calendars!

Mark Jacobs to be ordained

Mark Jacobs, who interned with us as a seminary student in 2013-14 and worshipped with us after that, will be ordained into Christian ministry on Sunday, December 10 at 3 p.m. Central Standard Time in Champaign, Illinois. Some of us will be going if the weather is good. Call the church office if you would like a ride.

Thanks Goes To:

Ann Leatherman, Katie Booth and all those who volunteered to help with our week of Family Promise. We did good work!

Rita Hummel, Susan Kent and Carol Sowle for planning our 2017 'FCC's Got Talent' Celebration. Almost \$600 was raised for our special music fund and we had a blast! Kudos to all the acts, emcee Rich Gibson and the food team led by Wendy Baldwin for their efforts.

Sally Coombs for organizing our CROP Walk team, which raised almost \$2,000 for Church World Service's work to combat hunger in the United States and the world. Our walkers included Katie Booth, Sally Coombs, Cheryl Dillenback, Worth Hartman, Evan Hoffman, Michael Montgomery, Janet and Ron Selby, and thanks to all of those who contributed---without you this would have all been for nothing!

Bob Cook, Nathan Howard and Steve Leatherman for planning and implementing our booth at this year's Festival of Faiths.

If it seems like there was a lot going on in October---you would be right! Thanks to those who made it happen!

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

In October 1925 Mohandas Gandhi published a list he titled "Seven Deadly Social Sins." The themes are so powerful I will let the words speak for themselves; however you will see how they are still pertinent and critical today.

"Seven Deadly Social Sins
Politics without principle
Wealth without work
Commerce without morality
Pleasure without conscience
Education without character
Science without humanity
Religion without sacrifice"

While I can think of many offices (particularly political ones) where I'd like to see this posted AND practiced, the best I can do is to start with me.

— Bob Cook, Moderator

Sunday Adult Class

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

After we conclude our look at violence, the class will study the concept of "shalom" through another Kerygma study. This will carry us into Advent and beyond. On Thanksgiving Sunday, Carol will bring us a refreshing look at the Pilgrims. Welcome to any and all who would like to join us for these current issues related not only to our society and world, but to our church. Source material for many of these sessions comes from the UCC Justice and Witness Ministries, supplemented by other resources. Specific class plans are as follows:

November 5 – "Uncovering Hope in the Midst of Violence"

This session will incorporate insights from the World Council of Church's "Decade to Overcome Violence".

November 12 - "Peace in the Scriptures of the Three Abrahamic Religious Traditions"

This session will supplement the lesson of October 1st on violence.

November 19 – "The Pilgrim Story" We all know the story of the Thanksgiving meal shared between the Pilgrims and the Indians, but are there other times of equal importance? Carol Sowle will lead the discussion

November 26 – We will begin Kerygma (Greek word from the New Testament meaning preaching) study; Shalom.

New Creation Worship

New Creation

New Creation worship is a jazz based worship experience that weaves together prayer and an interactive interaction with the Bible, usually but not always on the same themes as the morning worship service. Think of it as a house church with a really good band. For updates on the themes of November worship services, see the weekly E-pistle. **On Sunday, November 19 we will have a pitch-in dinner following our worship service.** Come join us!

Call to Service

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

Mission of the Month, Merom Camp and Retreat Center, Inc.

Our Mission of the Month for November is Merom Camp & Retreat Center, Inc. This is the new name for the place we've known as Merom Conference Center. Merom is best known among our congregations as a place for youth retreats and summer camps. Other events that happen on-site include: family reunions; weddings; church retreats; vacation Bible school; day camp for our community children; weekly community meals; outdoor education; confirmation retreats; work weeks; adult retreats (like the crafting weekend that Linda Lupton and Sally Coombs attended this fall); anniversary and birthday parties; wedding and bridal showers; special occasion dinners; meeting groups and retreats. This year is also the kick-off to a capital campaign to do some improvements. Our main building, College Hall, was roofed in October. Other projects on the list include tuck-pointing the chapel/gym building, HVAC for the gym and building a new year-round retreat building. As Merom Institute from the 1930s to the 1990s, Merom was incorporated as a stand-alone partner of the Indiana-Kentucky Conference. In 2001 the Indiana-Kentucky Conference incorporated Merom into their annual budget and oversight. Merom is once again independent and a stand-alone resource for our United Church of Christ congregations. For more information about Merom, check out our website www.merom.org or go to the Merom Facebook page.

— Susan Larson

Pantry Items of the Month

During November, we are collecting the following items: tooth paste, fruit cocktail, spaghetti sauces, and quick oats.

Our Monthly Food Donations

I'm happy to announce that our September donation to the Northside Food Pantry was at a very high level. We donated over 100 pounds of combined food and nonfood items, including a LOT of paper towels which don't weigh much. We're making a substantial impact. Thanks to those who donated. Others, please consider giving if you can, as the food is badly needed. Our contributions are well managed. Donations go into the wicker baskets in the narthex. [The baskets are already full as this is written on October 10, so a second delivery to the pantry will be needed this month].

--Bill Gillette for the Missions Board

Important Information Concerning the Gift of Stock

In the past giving the church your gift of stock was a bit confusing. However, the good news is that we have finalized an easy way to complete this transfer! In all situations where you would like to donate stock, you just need to tell your broker to use the following information to deposit those shares into the First Congregational Brokerage account.

Fidelity's Depository Trust Company

DTC No: 0226

Account No: Z50424340

In all situations, Fidelity (our broker) is instructed to sell the stock when transfer is complete and then to move the money to our cash portion of the account. We then move the money to the account that respects the donor's wishes (such as Pledge). If you still have questions, please contact Jim Lootens.

Financial Update

When We Give, We Reach Out With Helping Hands

When we give to the ministries of First Congregational UCC, we are serving those inside and outside our church community. As 1st Peter 4:10 says: "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, with whatever gift each of you has received."

Trends through September:

- **Contributions** are running below our 2017 budget and slightly below last year. Pledges are up but other unrestricted contributions are down.
- **Expenses** are being managed well. All controllable expenses are essentially on or below budget.
- Through 9 months we have spent about \$9,000 more than we've taken in.

Looking to the end of the year, **we foresee a budget deficit in the range of \$5,000 - \$6,000** unless overall contributions pick up in the last 3 months.

To achieve our goal of a balanced budget for the year, any additional gifts you can make in 2017 over and above your pledge would be greatly appreciated.

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

Jim Lootens, Treasurer
lootens.jb@gmail.com

1. Current Year Actual vs Budget Summary

1/1/2017 through 9/30/2017 Using 2017A

Category	1/1/2017 Actual	- Budget	9/30/2017 Difference
INCOME	164,522	169,659	-5,137
M. Unrestricted Contributions	164,522	169,659	-5,137
M.01 Pledged Offerings	152,000	149,252	2,747
M.02 UnPledged Offerings	6,741	14,625	-7,884
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	173,500	184,196	10,696
A. Pastoral Leadership	71,983	72,401	418
B. Worship & Faith	29,409	29,550	141
C. Care & Connections	376	413	37
D. Witness & Welcome	584	675	91
E. Outreach & Service	16,897	21,600	4,703
F. Trustees	59	388	328
G. Administration & Operations	15,714	20,719	5,005
H. House & Grounds	34,276	33,300	-976
I. Miscellaneous	4,202	5,151	948
Net Difference:	-8,978	-14,536	5,559

What's Happening at FCC

October Colony Submission Deadline

Please have your submissions sent to me by **Wednesday, November 15.**

Update from House & Grounds – Building Assessment Meeting on Sat, 11/4

Part of our ministry at First Congregational is to maintain our “house of worship” as well as make judicious improvements that help us better follow our stated mission. As part of this effort, we are creating a Building Assessment Team (BAT) to identify various projects in our building and grounds.

This group will work on evaluating usage of various areas, determining maintenance needs, and making recommendations for improvements. We would like to create a 5 year plan. Gathering congregational input will also be part of this process.

We will have our first gathering on Saturday, 11/4, from 9:30-11. At this session, we will start touring the building and constructing our list. Attending on 11/4 does not commit you to the team. If you can't come, but have some ideas, please contact Wendy Baldwin.

And just an update on some of the other projects in the building –

- Most of the lighting has been upgraded to LED. This makes things brighter while reducing our electric use.
- The Nursery School made updates to the playground, which is now certified as a “Nature Explore Classroom”.
- The “crib room” was thoroughly cleaned and reorganized to meet the needs of New Creation storage and people wanting to use it for baby care.
- Flooring is being polished throughout the building.
- Various water leaks into the building have been repaired.
- The roof was inspected for possible hail damage, and declared sound; we are 11 years into the life of the 40-year shingle.
- A great deal of overhanging honeysuckle has been removed from the parking lot and driveway.

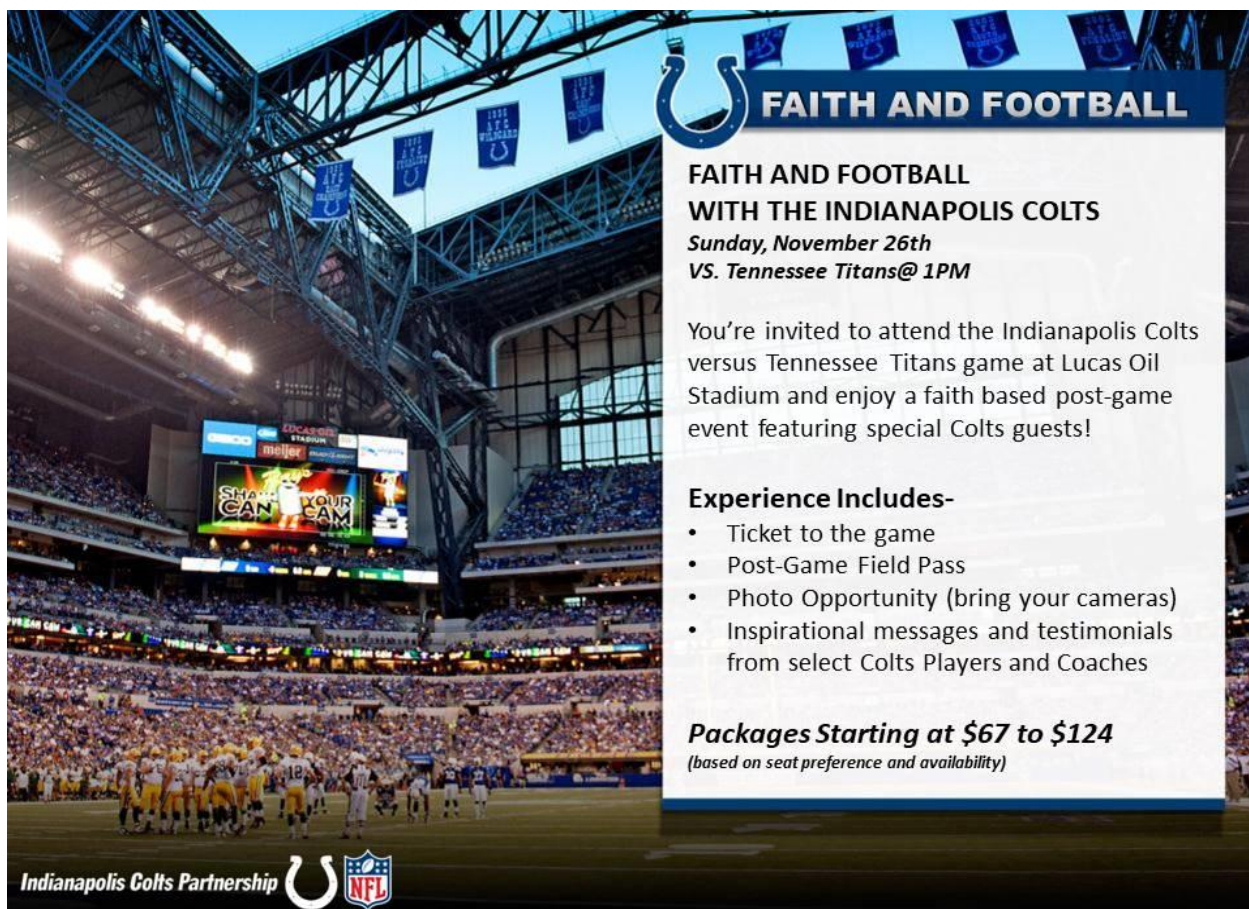
Thanks to the “helping hands” that have helped in these, and the many other maintenance projects throughout the year!

Thanksgiving Sunday Buffet Dinner -

On Sunday, 11/19, we will have a Thanksgiving buffet dinner at 12:15 to celebrate and give thanks for our many blessings.

This year’s dinner will be a bit different from past years. The church will provide turkey, dressing, mashed potatoes, and gravy. To share your Thanksgiving traditions, we’re asking folks to bring a side dish that is meaningful to you. Please bring vegetables, rolls, cranberry sauce, or a pie. Sign-up sheets will be available ahead of time.

Colts Faith and Football: We have an opportunity to get a block of seats for the November 26th game between the Colts and the Tennessee Titans at reduced rates—starting at \$78/person—and we need at least ten people to sign up. Rich Gibson has more details, and a notice is on the bulletin board. You can reach him at hoot eagle@me.com or 317-735-2895



FAITH AND FOOTBALL


WITH THE INDIANAPOLIS COLTS
Sunday, November 26th
VS. Tennessee Titans @ 1PM

You're invited to attend the Indianapolis Colts versus Tennessee Titans game at Lucas Oil Stadium and enjoy a faith based post-game event featuring special Colts guests!

Experience Includes-

- Ticket to the game
- Post-Game Field Pass
- Photo Opportunity (bring your cameras)
- Inspirational messages and testimonials from select Colts Players and Coaches

Packages Starting at \$67 to \$124
(based on seat preference and availability)

Indianapolis Colts Partnership  

Volunteers Wanted

Volunteers are needed for two projects as we get ready for our new settled minister:

1. One or two or three people to update our 'membership map' which will hang in the Minister's office. This is an 'in church activity', but coffee is provided. Expect this to take one or two hours.
2. Update our hymnal record. This is a one person job where you write the date that we last sang each hymn. This way the new minister can see what we have sung and when.

Announcements from the Congregation

Plymouth Rockers

The Rockers won't meet in November as our meeting date is too close to Thanksgiving. A similar date conflict exists in December, with Christmas. We'll meet again in January. Questions? See Bill Gillette

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 November 2, 16 and 30. Please contact Randy Walker at (317) 796-2081 or aa28977rwalker@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 November 16 at 11:45 a.m. For any questions or for information please contact Sue Chapman, 317-259-1806 or caolsuech@sbcglobal.net.

Circle IV

Circle IV will meet on Tuesday, Nov. 21 at 1:30 p.m. at the home of Sue Chapman. The group is discussing *The Book of Joy*, conversations between His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. All women of the church are invited to attend. For any questions or for more information, please contact Sue Chapman.

Green Team Showing

The Green Team will show Al Gore's documentary *An Inconvenient Sequel* on Sunday, October 29 at 7 p.m. in the Mayflower Room. Organic popcorn provided! All are welcome!

Green Team Tip: Helping Planet Earth as We Prepare for Winter

We know that cold weather will be arriving soon and that we can take actions to save energy as well as to keep ourselves more comfortable when it does. Now is the time to install more insulation if ours isn't at the ideal level. And it's prudent to plug holes and gaps that allow mice to enter and warm air to exit. Sealing gaps around exterior doors and windows saves a surprising amount of heat in the winter as well as cold in the summer. Consider lowering the house thermostat a few degrees during the day and a few more at night while we sleep. Remember to have the car serviced, including oil change, air and oil filter changes, antifreeze check, and tire pressure check. The battery should be checked too, since cold weather reduces the amount of electricity available to start the motor. New cars are becoming more and more fuel efficient, so investigate thoroughly if you're in the market; electric and hybrid cars are very common now and save a lot of fuel. All these actions will help the planet and most will save us money as well.