



**F I R S T**  
**CONGREGATIONAL**  
**UNITED CHURCH**  
**OF CHRIST**

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

**THE PILGRIM COLONY**

**October 2017**

**Worship Themes for October 2017**

- October 1** **World Wide Communion Sunday.** At a time when the divisions of the world loom large, we will re-imagine unity on World Wide Communion Sunday. So often our statements of unity are either so altruistic as to have no connection with reality; this service seeks to be grounded in our connections with Christians in the Caribbean nations. Philippians 2:1-13, Luke 14:15-22
- October 8** **Abject Bodies and the Jesus Movement.** Many of us have bodies that aren't 'right' for the standards of this day: we are too old, too this, too that. Bartimaeus was all of the above, and found healing with Jesus. Mark 10:46-52.
- October 15** **The Greatest Commandment!** There is a description of liberal Christians, somewhat pejorative, that we are 'Golden Rule Christians', content with merely loving our neighbors and not wrestling with the really demanding Scriptures. But Jesus seems to hold loving God and loving your neighbor. They are, for him, one law. He might be onto something (ya think?!). Matthew 22:34-40.
- October 22** **Basic Truths.** Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, Give to God what is God's, says Jesus. But which is which? To tell the truth, we are building the foundation for this year's stewardship campaign, which is gratitude for God's work and love. Matthew 22:15-22.
- October 29** 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Reformation: **A continuing Reformation.** Admittedly, the story of Luther's pounding his 95 Theses for theological debate is not a direct part of our heritage, but it did launch a general reformation of western Christianity that continues to this day. We continue the work of reformation both with ourselves and with our society. Romans 1:16-17.

**Pastor's Reflection**

By the end of October we will have celebrated our talent (or lack thereof) in our 'FCC's Got Talent' celebration, had our CROP Walk, hosted Family Promise for a week, started our spiritual reflections on how we are grateful for God's gifts and work, begun work in the Adult Sunday School class on violence and justice, a process that will lead us, perhaps, for consideration of a formal 'Just Peace Church' designation, and prayed for our search committee as they make the gradual shift from reading profiles to interviewing candidates to going and listening to people preach at another, 'neutral' site.

At the end of the month there is the old celebration of Reformation Sunday. Red stoles and ties will abound, we will sing 'A Mighty Fortress is Our God' and we will wonder a bit why we are celebrating a German beginning of the Reformation back in the early 16<sup>th</sup> Century. Why do this? Well, in part because we are the grandchildren of that movement to reform church

and society. Reform movements broke out in Italy, Bohemia, Poland, France, Switzerland, England, Scotland, the Netherlands and Germany. Some lost, some won, and here we are. But more importantly, we continue the work of reformation when we struggle with inclusive language to bend our lives towards gender justice, examine difficult issues on violence and justice and do the work listed above in the first paragraph.

The reformation continues. The church, as H. Richard Niebuhr put it, is in a continual reformation, a continual revolution in the world, working always towards God's justice, God's love, God's realm. Amen!

– Rev. Michael H. Montgomery

### **New Members**

On September 17 we received as new members:

Travis Schueller and Austin Crigger, young men who are discovering themselves as gay young men who are Christian, with both aspects, as well as their love for one another, defining their lives.

Angela Edwards who is a former graphic artist, current chef and a woman of passion for social justice.

Ron and Susan Zorn. Ron is a very recently retired DOC minister who joins us as an associate member. He is a massage therapist specializing in Emotional Freedom Technique, or 'tapping'. Susan found us in a web search for a progressive Christian church!

Daryl and Ann Greene. Daryl is a retired UCC minister with advanced work in spiritual formation and meditation. Ann is a native of Germany, came to the US for a study year in social work in Boston but met Daryl. The rest is history!

### **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*

We have reached that point in the search process when it seems the Search Committee will be sequestered for a long time. They are in the process of reading candidates' profiles and conducting interviews by phone, Skype, or in person. While the content of discussions at this time needs to be confidential, let us continue to give the Search Committee a show of support through prayer and words of appreciation for their dedicated work. Even though they cannot share names, locations or other specific information, a simple "Thanks for your time and effort in the search process," will let them know they have not been forgotten.

Our Search members are:

|                     |                |                  |
|---------------------|----------------|------------------|
| Randy Walker, chair | Sean Baker     | Katie Booth      |
| Lianna Campos       | Larry Eckel    | Judy Fletcher    |
| Chuck Kiphart       | Ann Leatherman | Alice Rutherford |

— Bob Cook, Moderator

### **Sunday Adult Classes**

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

The adult class on Sunday mornings (9:45) will continue to interpret Jesus' life for us. The theme for October will be violence and peace.

Violence and peace: in the Bible, in faith traditions, in our society and in our church. Before you get lost in the forest because of all of these trees, let us assure you the issues we propose raising will stimulate our thinking about what each of us can do about combatting violence and promoting peace.

We will begin looking at violence in three faith traditions and what our scriptures say about violence. Then we will touch on different forms of violence: hoarding, speech, touching, and oppression before we look at hope in the midst of violence.

Finally, the class will study the concept of "shalom" through another Kerygma study. This will last several weeks, and carry us into Advent. 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.

**October 1:** "Violence in the Scriptures of the Three Abrahamic Religious Traditions" - This cursory review will help us see that across the world violence has been a part of the world's religions, and even condoned under many circumstances.

**October 8:** "Violence Wears Many Disguises" - This session will focus on the many kinds of violence in our world, society, and even in the church. From our discussion, we hope to discover what kinds of violence concern our class members and adjust future sessions accordingly.

**October 15:** "Violence of the Tongue" - This discussion will incorporate a recent article by Paul Krugman on "Contempt." Where do we hear violent speech and what are our responses?

**October 22:** "The Violence of Hoarding" - Income inequality both here in our country and across the world is a major violence to the poor. We will discuss the ramifications of this in many violent situations.

**October 29:** "The Violence of Oppression" - In many countries and in our own, there are groups that are being oppressed, either outright or subtly. Many countries are divided into tribes, parties or various segments of society, with those in power legislating rules to keep others "in their place." The tremendous number of displaced people across the world is a result. What are causes and what can be done?

## **New Creation Worship**

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. Come join us!

### **Call to Service**

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

### **Mission of the Month, Neighbors in Need**

Our October Mission of the Month is the UCC's Neighbors in Need offering. In most churches, this is an extremely difficult offering to promote---but not here at First Congregational! This offering goes to fund our Native American ministries, supporting the work of CAIM (Council of American Indian Ministries) which empowers and supports churches on reservations in the United States. It goes as well to provide grants to churches for ministries that will empower local churches to initiate programs, ministries and innovations that provide wider assistance to our US based neighbors who are in need. When they get the money, they will give the grants---that makes it hard to explain in one sense, but in another, what NIN does is empower love and action. Please give generously!

### **Pantry Item of the Month**

During October we are collecting the following items: bread, baking mix, vegetables, and soups.

### **Our Monthly Food Donations**

I'm happy to announce that our August donation to the Northside Food Pantry was again substantial. We donated 83 pounds of food items and 30 pounds of nonfood items. We're making a substantial impact. Thanks to those who donated. Others, please consider giving if

you can, as the food is badly needed and our contributions are well managed. Donations go into the wicker baskets in the narthex.

--Bill Gillette for the Missions Board

### Foundation Update

The Foundation continues to serve its function of providing financial stability for the church and being a source of funds in case of financial emergency. Please consider donating to one of the four Foundation funds if you are able. The funds are: Endowment, Capital Improvements, Ministers' and Organ. Contributions are deductible. For more information, contact Rev Montgomery, Judy Fletcher, Al Moore, or Bill Gillette.

### Increased Logging in our State Forests

Over the past 12 years, the Indiana Division of Forestry has gradually increased the commercial logging in our state forests by 400%. This has been done in part to supplement their operating budget, which has been cut. Now the DOF plans to log about 300 acres in the **backcountry area** [BCA] of Morgan Monroe and Yellowwood State Forests, an area that was set aside in 1981 to provide a wilderness experience for those who seek nature and solitude in their outdoor adventures. This action is extremely upsetting to environmentalists and others. There are trees in the tract 130 to 160 years old. Biologist surveys have found that 21 endangered species live in this forest, including the Indiana bat, timber rattlesnake, and worm-eating warbler. This entire BCA comprises just 1.7% of the total Indiana state forest lands. Couldn't this tiny percent be allowed to remain unlogged?

The plan is to log 23%, almost one-fourth, of the standing tree volume in half of these BCA acres. Two popular trails, the Tecumseh Trail and the Possum Trot Trail, will be closed for 3 years to facilitate logging. The operation will leave many damaged trees, eroded ground on steep slopes, stumps, other debris, and gravel roads which will be visible for many years.

If you would like to express an opinion on this, you may join hundreds of other Hoosiers who have contacted Gov. Holcomb by phone at 317-232-4567 or by U.S. mail at Governor's Office, Statehouse, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2797. Thank you for caring about our forests!

- Janet Selby for the Green Team

## 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 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 4:10 says: "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, with whatever gift each of you has received."*

### 1. Current Year Actual vs Budget Summary

1/1/2017 through 8/31/2017 Using 2017A

| Category                           | 1/1/2017<br>Actual | -<br>Budget    | 8/31/2017<br>Difference |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|-------------------------|
| <b>INCOME</b>                      | <b>150,489</b>     | <b>151,814</b> | <b>-1,325</b>           |
| M. Unrestricted Contributions      | 150,489            | 151,814        | -1,325                  |
| M.01 Pledged Offerings             | 138,531            | 133,032        | 5,499                   |
| M.02 UnPledged Offerings           | 6,177              | 13,000         | -6,823                  |
| 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                       |
| <b>EXPENSES</b>                    | <b>156,291</b>     | <b>166,155</b> | <b>9,864</b>            |
| A. Pastoral Leadership             | 64,626             | 65,133         | 506                     |
| B. Worship & Faith                 | 26,179             | 26,267         | 88                      |
| C. Care & Connections              | 336                | 367            | 31                      |
| D. Witness & Welcome               | 494                | 600            | 106                     |
| E. Outreach & Service              | 15,039             | 19,767         | 4,728                   |
| F. Trustees                        | 59                 | 350            | 291                     |
| G. Administration & Operations     | 14,537             | 18,417         | 3,879                   |
| H. House & Grounds                 | 31,244             | 30,608         | -636                    |
| I. Miscellaneous                   | 3,777              | 4,648          | 871                     |
| <b>Net Difference:</b>             | <b>-5,802</b>      | <b>-14,341</b> | <b>8,539</b>            |

Overall, we are positive to our budget. Income is \$1,325 below budget due to a continued shortfall in non-pledge contributions. Expenses are \$9,800 below the budget. The expense trends are similar to what we saw for the first 7 months:

- Admin & Operations - \$3,900 below budget – Most of this is true savings.
- Outreach & Service - \$4,800 below budget – a matter of timing, as most of our mission contributions are made later in the year.
- House & Grounds - \$635 above budget – mostly attributable to natural gas.
- 

We've made up a fair amount of the \$14,000 deficit that was built into our 2017 budget, but there's still 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 First Congregational**

### **November Colony Submission Deadline**

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

### **Spiritual Explorers**

The Spiritual Explorers met to review different methods of using the Bible for spiritual practices rather than as simply 'Bible Knowledge'. Next up will be practicing the uses of music and poetry in our spiritual lives. Contact Jackie Gibson or Rev. Michael Montgomery for more information on this month's explorations. We meet next on Sunday, October 8 at 12 p.m.

### **Save the Dates – Family Promise**

We are again hosting the Interfaith Hospitality Network/Family Promise for the week beginning on October 1. Please sign up to help our neighbors in need. We also received our hosting schedule for 2018. We will be hosting the weeks of May 20 and September 16.

### **What the Buzz?**

The next Buzz will be held Sunday, October 22 immediately after traditional worship with a pitch-in lunch in the Mayflower Room.

The first topic for discussion will be information sharing regarding our Safe Church Policy facilitated by Diana Kemper and Larry Eckel. Then we will have a discussion on what elements are meaningful for Thanksgiving worship which will be led by the Faith and Worship Board.

Please join us as the Buzz sessions are a valuable vehicle for communication and sharing of ideas. Questions may be directed to Bob Cook.

### **CROP Walk**

Mission and Outreach board has an opportunity for you to actively participate in CROP Walk on Sunday, October 15, to help stop hunger locally and worldwide through Church World Services. Come walk and/or donate to a walker! See Sally Coombs (317-446-2853) to sign up to work or donate. Look for more information concerning the CROP Walk on the table in the Narthex. You can also donate online at our First Congregational UCC website for CROP Walk: <https://www.crophungerwalk.org/indianapolisin/Team/View/47909/First-Congregational-UCC>

### **Festival of Faiths**

The Festival of Faiths will be held at the Veterans Memorial Plaza from 1-5 p.m. on October 15. Our booth will attempt to connect our heritage as a refugee people (Pilgrims!) with the New England migration to Indiana to the GLBT migration to Indianapolis today. If interested please contact Nathan Howard at [nahoward1984@gmail.com](mailto:nahoward1984@gmail.com).

## **Two Groups you should know**

The **Pastor-Congregation Relations Committee** (PCRC) serves to nurture the relationship between the minister and the congregation, at times supporting, at times working with to address little problems before they become BIG problems, and at all times loving. Members of this committee at this time include Jim Rutherford, Bill Gillette, Nancy Dickinson and Karen Walker.

The **Personnel Committee** serves to provide policy oversight and support to the employees of the church (administrative assistance, organist and choir director) and other work as commissioned by the Council. ('policy oversight' because direct supervision is the responsibility of the minister). Current members are Al Moore, Steve Leatherman and Bill Hummel.

### **October 1 Nicaragua meeting**

On Sunday, October 1 we will have an open meeting after the 11 a.m. worship service to discuss work camps and mission trips. We have on the horizon a possible trip to Nicaragua in either January or February, 2018. But while our friends in Nicaragua always have room for us, at this time this is our need more than it is theirs. We have funds that have been designated for support of Nicaraguan ministries, that cannot be changed. But our time and resources might also be better put to use in disaster clean up in Texas, Florida or the Caribbean or a peace and justice tour of the Holy Land. What does God call us to do? This meeting will explore possibilities.

### **Bread for the World - update**

In this year of proposed deep budget cuts, we wrote letters to encourage lawmakers to maintain programs that help hungry people locally and worldwide. The bipartisan appropriations bill recently passed for the remainder of fiscal year 2017 provides \$1 billion for famine relief and protects programs that help hungry people in the United States and developing countries such as WIC and international maternal and child nutrition programs. Much appreciation goes to the negotiators, the bipartisan legislative supporters of this effort and the 3,630 letters from 42 congregations in central Indiana!

### **Church Women United (CWU)**

Members of our church have been long supporters of Church Women United – including Ceil Larson, Nancy Dickinson and others. Our church is also now a member. CWU is a national Christian women's group that has a strong local chapter whose current president is Mary Boggs. The members are from diverse denominations such as AME (African Methodist Episcopal), Baptist, Friends, Mennonite, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist, UCC, and others. CWU has the following purpose: To encourage Christian women to come together in a visible community to witness to their faith in Jesus Christ and enabled by the Holy Spirit, believing we are one in the Spirit, to go out together into every neighborhood and nation in search of a common ground, as instruments of reconciling love. Common ground has been found in the current four national priorities – Childhood education; Childhood hunger alleviation; Women's Health; Racial, Ethnic Equality and Cultural Inclusion. There are about 10 meetings/programs per year, some are nationally focused and some are local – I am especially appreciative of the opportunities to build relationships across the city and join with diverse churches. We will be sending out information about specific programs but feel free to contact Karen Walker or Nancy Dickinson for more information.

### **Congregation Thanksgiving Dinner**

Save the Date & Sign Up! Sunday, November 19 following morning worship! A free will offering will be taken to benefit our missions.

The church will provide the main meal of turkey, dressing, potatoes and gravy. Please plan to bring a side dish to share that represents your family's Thanksgiving Day traditions. We will make time during our meal together to share about our own Thanksgiving Day traditions. Please sign the signup sheet in the Narthex to help us plan and provide an abundant meal.



## **It's Coming! FCC's Got Talent!**

**Friday October 13 at 7PM on the Mayflower Stage  
to benefit the Special Music Fund.**

**Admission for all adults is \$10 at the door.  
(Yes, even the performers and helpers!)  
Kids free.**

**Come and enjoy a variety of acts and art displays,  
featuring US being US! If you can, let us know you are coming by signing up on  
the signup sheet in the Narthex.**

**Visual artists, please have your work at the church before Friday.  
For more info, contact Carol Sowle 317-496-9732  
or Rita Hummel 317-875-8388**

**Becoming a Nature Explore Classroom  
Ginny Hacker, Director  
Meridian Hills Cooperative Nursery School & Kindergarten**

The Nature Explore Classroom is a collaborative program of the National Arbor Foundation and Dimensions Educational Research Foundation. Well over a year in the planning, we are proud to be the first school in Indianapolis to receive this designation. More can be found at <https://natureexplore.org/> The 10 required areas for certification are noted in italics.

Without the support of our host, the First Congregational Church UCC, becoming a Nature Explore Classroom would not have been possible and we are very grateful.

In this era when two year olds know how to swipe on a phone and an iPad is at the end of little arms magnetizing eyes to focus, I feel that it is our job to connect children to each other and the natural world around them.

The REIMAGINED Playground includes:

- A newly established raised garden area called The Sensory Garden,
- All new native perennial plants and flowers in multiple garden areas,
- The Creek, built to control erosion down the hillside
- A Nature Art Area
- An entry area designed by The Willow Man to serve as a one-of-a-kind arbor surrounding
- Established buildings and play equipment, some built by FCC member Carl Rothe
- A commemorative MHCNS&K 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Brick Pathway

To make this entire idea come together, we planned a fundraising effort to honor a beloved former teacher and director and dedicated our 'Reimagined Playground' to Shari Robinson, who passed away in the fall of 2015. Shari was a nature and art lover and after retiring in 2000 after teaching for 25 years, she remained involved with the school by inviting classes to her home for fall nature scavenger hunts and to make cider from her vintage cider press. As a watercolor artist, she returned annually to visit classes to lead individual and class still life projects. We raised an historic amount, nearly doubling the original goal. Families donated in

Shari's honor to fund the dry creek bed, build a new entry arbor, build garden boxes and establish butterfly and sensory gardens, and restore her cider press with much gratitude to **FCC member and chair of the board of trustees, Glenn Evans**, for his work on that restoration.

The additional summer workdays were well-attended and included a long-time friend of Shari and her two daughters and one granddaughter who came to weed, dig and transplant alongside the current staff and parents. Plants from Shari's home now sit in the new Directors' Corner Garden, situated between the school entrance and the welcome entry to the playground. In the history of 57 years of the school, there have only been three (3) to serve as directors, two past (**Dessie Partenheimer Koch and Shari Robinson**) and one **current, Ginny Hacker**. All three women were co-op parents, teachers and directors at this school and plants from the other two women's homes join Shari's.

A dedication of our new Nature Explore Classroom will take place on September 23, 2017 at the annual Fall Picnic. Current families, staff, alumni donors and friends of the school will come together, drink apple cider from her press and celebrate our newly renovated space honoring the legacy of Shari Robinson. A commemorative limestone marker at the toe of the gate marks the dedication of the REIMAGINED Playground. For more information and pictures, go to <https://meridianhillscoop.org/> or their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/MHCNS>.

## **Announcements from the Congregation**

### **Small Groups**

#### **Young Adults Group**

The Young Adults Group will meet on Sunday, October 1 for food and a Pokemon adventure hike. We will meet after New Creation Worship service. All are invited.

#### **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 October 5 and 19. Please contact Randy Walker at (317) 796-2081 or [rk10walker@gmail.com](mailto: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 October 26 at 11:45 a.m. For any questions or for more information please contact Janet Selby, 317-873-9539 or [janet.selby@gmail.com](mailto:janet.selby@gmail.com).

#### **Circle IV**

Circle IV will meet on October 17, at 1:30. All women of the church are invited to attend. For any questions or for more information, please contact Mary Lou Rothe.

#### **Discussion Group Potluck**

The Gibson's will host the Discussion Group at their home on Sunday, October 29, 2017 at 1:30 PM. We will announce a theme, based on one of Reverend Michael's sermons, soon; so check your e-pistle for updates. Please RSVP by email or phone no later than Thursday, October 26, to Jackie at 317-735-2895, or [jackiengibson@gmail.com](mailto:jackiengibson@gmail.com).

#### **Plymouth Rockers**

The Rockers plan to meet at the church at noon on Tuesday October 24. We'll have a pitch-in lunch followed by a program. Watch for the signup sheet on the table in the narthex. All are welcome.



