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e-pistle for the week of March 15, 2018

Minister's Message

Dear First Congregational Family,

Do you remember what it was like to be a young child and open Christmas presents? You see the gift wrapped, sitting beneath the tree, and you wonder with excitement what could be inside? My first two weeks for me feel like opening beautifully wrapped gifts as I encounter new people, new ideas and new ways of being church. For me, being your new pastor is like opening a gift I have eagerly waited for...and now the wrapping paper comes off and I get to see what is inside the box. Inside First Congregational, I am finding gifts of faith, hope, passion, peace, compassion, joy and love.

Now since it is Lent and not Advent or Christmas, I considered not sharing these thoughts with you for fear that I may be viewed as out of season. However, sometimes Christmas comes in Lent. Sometimes the gift of Christ comes as a surprise. Sometimes God's gifts show up after the Christmas decorations have been put away. This church is a gift...to me and to so many others.

Thank you for all the kind words of welcome and encouragement as we start our journey together. It is wonderful to get to know each of you. You are a gift to me.

I hope to see you Sunday!

Blessings,

- Pastor Sarah

What's the Buzz? Find out this Sunday!

Please join us for pitch in lunch at 12:30 to have opportunity for discussion and fellowship with each other and Pastor Sarah! For questions please contact Karen Walker.

Lenten Breakfasts

The Southeastern Association of the Indiana Kentucky Conference is once again sponsoring a series of 'Men's Breakfasts' on Saturday mornings at 8 a.m. at different churches. Each breakfast includes a meal, a devotion and an offering that will go to support a ministry of the host church.

Men will meet at our church at 8:00 AM this Saturday, March 17. We'll have breakfast in the Mayflower Room, followed by a time of devotion in the Sanctuary. Volunteers are needed and appreciated. For questions see Randy Walker.

The next and last breakfast will be on March 24:

Zion Evangelical UCC

Corner of North and New Jersey Streets

Please call the host church by Monday, March 20 at (317)-639-6411.

Worship for Sunday

Adult Class - 9:45 a.m.

Our topic this week will be " Hope for Peace - Part II."

Meet in the library.

Traditional Service - 11:00 a.m.

Pastor Sarah's sermon this week will be "The Joy of God's Salvation". Join us for her message of love!

New Creation - 5:30 p.m.

Continuing our Lenten journey of discipleship, this week we explore ways in which Jesus was – and was not – inclusive in his ministry, and what his ministry says for ours in this regard. Who do we include and how do we go about that? What more can we do? Matthew

15:21-28 tells us how Jesus learned something about being more inclusive, and surely there's more for us to learn as well. All are welcome.

What's Happening at FCC

Mission of the Month, One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS)

2017 was a year of unprecedented disasters—Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria; heavy rainfall in California followed by deadly landslides; extreme heat and wildfires; tornadoes in the South and Midwest; earthquakes in Mexico and on the Iran/Iraq border; flooding and monsoons in Bangladesh and India; drought and famine in the Horn of Africa. It went on and on. But if you contributed to One Great Hour of Sharing last year, you were there helping. OGHS provides funds to react quickly to disasters around the world. Working with local organizations world-wide, OGHS has infrastructure in place to respond rapidly whenever and wherever disaster strikes. We don't know where the need will come this year, but we can be sure there will be new disasters affecting communities that will need our help. OGHS is one of the UCC's "5 for 5" offerings, which FCC has committed to support. While small donations are always welcome, this is one offering that we urge you to support generously. Be there helping with the next crisis by donating now. Use the special envelopes or put OGHS in the notation line of your check. Thank you.

Pantry Items of the Month

During March we are collecting the following items: rice, juices, peanut butter and bar soap

Easter Lilies

Easter is right around the corner. Please order a plant (Lily, tulip, hyacinth) to help celebrate Easter. The cost per plant is \$10.00. Order forms will be in the bulletin or call the church office. Any questions see or email Sally Coombs at sallysews73@gmail.com

Deadline: March 25, 2018

Display : April 1, 2018

Plymouth Rockers

The Plymouth Rockers will meet on March 27 at noon, at the church. We'll have a bring-our-own lunch, followed by a program related to the church. Come and bring friends

Family Promise Clothing Drive, March 2-18.

Looking forward to spring? Starting to get those spring clothes ready? Here's an opportunity to do an inventory of your clothes and do some good in the process. Pick out those gently used clothes you no longer wear, bring them to church in white kitchen trash bags or put them in bags provided in the cloak room, drop them in the white laundry baskets and help out Family Promise. **No shoes or accessories, please.** Thanks in advance, because every bag helps Family Promise receive a \$5 clothing voucher from Goodwill to help families with emergency clothing for children or even work apparel for adults. Below are important dates to keep in mind:

Friday, March 2 to Sunday, March 18: **Congregations collect clothing.**

Monday, March 19-Saturday, March 24: **Congregations deliver clothing** to the FPGI Day Center at 1850 N. Arsenal Ave., Indianapolis, IN 46218 between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

Eat Pizza while supporting Merom Conference and Retreat Center (MCRC)!

Come to Monical's Pizza on Southport Road, Avon or Trader's Point on Saturday, April 7 for dine-in or dine-out. In return, they will donate 20% of each check to MCRC. If interested, please pick up a flyer in the church office or contact the church office for the flyer to be emailed to you. The flyer must accompany the order for the donation to be applied.

Pastoral Care

Please contact Rev. Sarah at (386) - 478-9012 or PastorSarah@fcindy.org.