



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

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

## e-pistle for the Week of August 23, 2018

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## E-Pistle for the week of August 23rd

### **Minister's Message**

#### **Dear First Congregational Church Family,**

Thanks to all the volunteers who helped on Saturday to make our church grounds more beautiful. We are blessed to have such dedicated members who help out when needed. I've enjoyed coming to church day-to-day and being surrounded by beauty. I often hear from visitors that they feel drawn to our church because it feels peaceful. Nature has a powerful way of speaking to our spirits. Nature has its own ministry of hospitality.

I love that our church believes in protecting and preserving the Earth. This, too, is a ministry: caring for Creation. We are nearing our \$60,000 goal for raising funds for solar panels. Thanks to all who have contributed. We are still receiving donations, so if you have not yet made a gift, please be part of this effort. Any and every amount helps us. Thank you!

My family has offered the Meridian Hills Cooperative Preschool and Kindergarten students, staff, and families a challenge gift opportunity of \$500 for the solar panels. How wonderful to be in partnership with the school as we seek to install solar panels to care for Creation!

What a joy to be in ministry with you all. Thanks for all that each of you do to help build community and to care for others.

With care for Creation,  
Pastor Sarah

### **Worship for Sunday**

#### **Adult Class - 9:45 a.m. Just Peace**

August 26 - Katie Booth will present her insights of our relationship and service with Family Promise as a prelude to the "buzz" after church that day by the head of Family Promise, Mike Chapuran.

#### **Traditional Service - 11:00 a.m.**

Pastor Sarah will preach on "Struggle in Heavenly Places."

### New Creation - 5:30 p.m.

This week we'll finish up our Gospel According to Star Wars series by focusing our attention on how love – or the power of the Force – overcomes fear, hate, or anger, no matter how intense or entrenched those negative emotions may be. Whether or not you've attended the previous two sessions this is the one not to be missed, as we examine the culmination of this epic story from our progressive Christian faith perspective.

### Let us Pray...

As we join in prayer for refugee families and the future of the refugee resettlement program, let us hear from Scripture:

"When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him." So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod..."

Matthew 2:13-14

"One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, "Which commandment is the first of all?" Jesus answered, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." Mark 12:28-31.

### Litany for Refugees and Asylum-Seekers

O God of the wandering Israelites, refugees in a harsh land, who heard their cries for freedom, comfort, and refuge,

**Forgive us for having hearts as hard as Pharaoh's, when we resist your calls for care and mercy for those who have fled or are fleeing violence.**

O God of the Psalmist, who hears the lament of those surrounded by death, destruction, and fear,

**Give us the strength to embody "the land of the living" where refugees and asylum-seekers can safely begin life anew.**

O God of the Christ-Child, whose own earthly parents were forced to flee the state-sanctioned violence of Herod, and find safety in a foreign nation,

**Give us hearts like the people of Egypt to offer not only refuge but welcome to those who arrive at our doorstep in need of safety and protection.**

O God who calls us to offer welcome to the stranger, just as we would offer it to Christ,

**Remind us today and every day that we need not fear what we do not know, but are freed by following your Gospel call to welcome.**

O God of all people, of all nations and of all the earth, protect this day those in need of safety, put a salve on the souls of those grieving the loss of home, family, loved ones and memories,

**Give us the conviction to offer welcome, safety, Christian love and a space for new beginnings to refugees and asylum-seekers. Instill in our hearts the courage to love as Jesus taught us, in a world that encourages suspicion, fear and scarcity.**

**O God of all sojourners in search of refuge, We ask you to create peace in this world so that none of your children live in places endangered by violence and civil unrest. We ask for comfort for all who have been forced to flee their homes, and we ask that those in need of peace and protection find both refuge and welcome. We give you thanks this day for refugees and asylumseekers in our midst, and for the blessings they bring to our families, churches, communities and nation. Amen.**

- Amanda K. Sheldon, Program Associate for UCC Refugee Ministries & UCC Disaster Ministries

## **What's Happening at FCC**

### **Double Buzzes on August 26 on Family Promise Hosting**

Whether you've been involved with FCC's Family Promise hosting already or are new and wondering what it really involves, the August Buzzes are for you. We will have two Buzzes that day—one following a pitch-in lunch after Traditional worship and the other after New Creation worship at 6:45 p.m., with heavy snacks. Mike Chapuran, Executive Director of Family Promise of Greater Indianapolis, will conduct a workshop on family hosting, helping us understand better what their expectations of us are and how best to interact with our guests. Each hosting week involves at least 60 church members, and we hope everyone who participates is informed and comfortable with the experience. This is your best opportunity to refresh your understanding or learn for the first time. Please plan to attend one session on August 26 and come with your questions.

### **90th Birthday Celebration**

Marion Harcourt and her family invite you to celebrate her 90th birthday on Saturday, August 25th at Marquette Senior Living Community (4th Floor Card Room) from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

How do you know Marion? What are your favorite memories of your times together?

Please bring a card filled with memories to share with her.

In lieu of gifts, Marion would appreciate a donation to First Congregational Church.

### **Installation for New Indiana-Kentucky UCC Conference Minister**

Rev. Chad Abbott gave the "Charge for the Congregation" on June 10 for Pastor Sarah's

installation service supporting her, our church and the UCC as the newly nominated Indiana Kentucky Conference minister. His own installation service to that position is on Saturday, August 25<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 p.m., at Sweeney Chapel, CTS. Pastor Sarah will be providing an invocation, Wendy Baldwin will be participating as she led the search committee to fill that position, and Sean Baker and Shannon Abbott will be contributing to the music of the service. A great opportunity to come together as a conference to celebrate in the ministries of the wider church together!

### **Choir Rehearsals Begin and Welcome New Members!**

The first choir rehearsal after summer break is Thursday, August 30<sup>th</sup> from 7:00- 8:30 pm in the second floor choir room. We welcome new members to join us. Anyone who is interested in learning more about the choir may email choir director Julie Houston at: [juliehouston@comcast.net](mailto:juliehouston@comcast.net)

### **Green Team Tip**

It's been a weird summer, hasn't it? No rain, then almost too much. Have you considered rain barrels, or a rain garden? Weather is likely to get more extreme, so it's smart to be ready for too much and too little...

### **FCC Solar Project!!!**

Our fund drive ends Sep 1, and we're still a little short of our goal! Please take time this week for prayerful contemplation and see if you can't put a little extra in the collection plate this Sunday, the last one before the drive ends. If you want to help but can't see your way clear right now, a pledge would be wonderful. Please call or email Rich Gibson, (770) 548-5217 or [hooteagle@me.com](mailto:hooteagle@me.com) if you have questions. Thanks!

### **Save the Date!**

All Church Picnic, Saturday, September 8 at 4pm. More details to come.

### **Chautauqua Update**

Have you seen the bulletin board or previous announcements about the Chautauqua Grant? If you're eligible, you should be filling out an application now and giving it to Shannon. We're accepting applications through September 30<sup>th</sup>! Please contact Rich Gibson, Nancy Dickinson, Worth Hartman, Chuck Kiphart, or Pastor Sarah if you have any questions.

### **New Member Sunday!**

Make First Congregational UCC your new church home and join with others on Sunday, October 28<sup>th</sup> during the 11am worship service. Pastor Sarah is looking forward to hearing

about your faith journey and welcoming you into this church family. Contact Pastor Sarah to schedule a conversation about membership [pastorsarah@fcindy.org](mailto:pastorsarah@fcindy.org).

### **Church Social Media/Website/Design Team Update**

We are blessed by a talented team of volunteers who help with church social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter), Website and design. Team members include Sean Baker, Angela Edwards, Josh Cody, and Pastor Sarah. Pastor Sarah leads this team and is the primary contact for members wishing to share church information on social media and the website. Thank you for helping to spread the good news about the mission and ministry of the church through the website and social media. These are popular platforms for people to first learn about our church and where most of our visitors find information about us. We want to hear from you, so please contact Pastor Sarah with your social media and website updates.

### **August Mission of the Month: Greater Indy Habitat for Humanity**

Celebrating 30 years of providing strength, stability, and independence through home ownership, in 2017, 5650 GIHH volunteers built or rehabbed 26 homes and repaired 63. A study by the Sagamore Institute revealed that Habitat homeowners benefit in many ways. Chronic housing-related illnesses decrease. 71% of homeowners started, completed, or plan to complete higher education or professional training. Homeowners end or reduce their dependence on public assistance programs like Public Housing Assistance, Utility Bill/Energy Assistance, Supplemental Nutritional Assistance (SNAP), Temporary Aid for Needy Families (TANF), and aid to Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).

FCC has supported Habitat for over 20 years financially and through volunteer hours on builds. Please give generously in August to support Greater Indy Habitat. Single dollar bills in the offering plate will go to Habitat. For larger amounts, please use the Special Offering envelopes noting "Habitat" or put that in the notation line of your check. Thank you!

### **Pantry Items of the Month**

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

### **Pastoral Care**

Please contact Pastor Sarah at (386) 478 - 9012 or at [pastorsarah@fcindy.org](mailto:pastorsarah@fcindy.org).

### **This Week at First Congregational**

|                             |                   |   |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|---|
| <b>Thursday, August 23</b>  | <b>1:00 p.m.</b>  | Men's Lunch   |
| <b>Saturday, August 25</b>  | <b>11:00 a.m.</b> | Bell practice   |
| <b>Saturday, August 25</b>  | <b>1:00 p.m.</b>  | Marion Harcourt's 90 <sup>th</sup> Birthday (see above) |
| <b>Saturday, August 25</b>  | <b>3:00 p.m.</b>  | IKC Installation of Rev. Chad Abbott, CTS<br>Chapel     |
| <b>Sunday, August 26</b>    | <b>12:30 p.m.</b> | Family Promise Workshop with Mike<br>Chapuran           |
| <b>Sunday, August 26</b>    | <b>5:30 p.m.</b>  | New Creation  |
| <b>Sunday, August 26</b>    | <b>6:45 p.m.</b>  | Family Promise Workshop with Mike<br>Chapuran           |
| <b>Tuesday, August 28</b>   | <b>10:00 a.m.</b> | Care & Connections                                      |
| <b>Wednesday, August 29</b> | <b>7:30 p.m.</b>  | New Creation Planning                                   |
| <b>Thursday, August 30</b>  | <b>7:00 p.m.</b>  | Choir Rehearsal   |
| <b>Sunday, September 2</b>  | <b>9:45 a.m.</b>  | Adult Class – Just Peace                                |
| <b>Sunday, September 2</b>  | <b>11:00 a.m.</b> | Traditional Worship                                     |
| <b>Sunday, September 2</b>  | <b>5:30 p.m.</b>  | New Creation  |