



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 July 19, 2018

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Minister's Message

Dear First Congregational Church Family,

For the past nine years, my family has trekked up to the North Woods of Wisconsin to spend quality time together reunited with siblings, cousins, aunts, uncles, parents and grandparents from both sides of the family. It's a lot of people and it's a lot of fun. We stay at a lake house with swimming, kayaking, canoeing, fishing and campfire activities daily. The timing falls on the week of our son's birthday, so it's an extra special time of celebration.

As a child, I grew up spending time at the Lake of the Ozark in the summer with my cousins and they are some of the most fun memories of my childhood. I'm so happy this family tradition continues for the next generation. Different lake, but same concept: family togetherness and time outdoors enjoying nature.

We look forward to our summer reunion all year long. Like many extended families, now we live all over the country: Minnesota, Missouri, Florida, and Indiana. So we have to be intentional about making time to be together.

Last week we met for our annual reunion and it was everything we hoped for and more. The weather was perfect, no one got hurt and we enjoyed unhurried time to just be, to pick wildflowers, to read books, to play games, to blow bubbles, and to enjoy home cooked meals.

To me this is more than vacation. This is sacred time to experience God's love and grace through relationships with people who've known me my whole life. Just as God loves us no matter what, there are people who love us just as we are and when you are with them, you know it. You don't have to prove anything or be someone you are not.

Church communities can offer a similar experience of creating relationships where we can truly be ourselves and know that we are loved. I realize that not everyone has a family and not all families offer unconditional love. Churches can be our chosen family. A place where we extend grace and love, a place to be reminded of our value and worth simply because we are children of God.

I am grateful to be part of this church family and hope that you will feel and experience the love of God through community life together. Families and churches can be messy and imperfect. It's God's unconditional love and grace that make the difference, always calling us back to our whole, best selves. With God in our midst and with attention towards God's Spirit guiding us, we can continue to grow in our relationships with one another as we welcome new people who are looking for a church family.

Thank you for being God's Family. May God continue to build us up and strengthen our church so that we can share this blessing with others.

With God's love,
Pastor Sarah

Worship for Sunday

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

July 22: Ephesians 2:14; read about Union Congregational UCC and note their covenant; take a look at direct action as a peace making strategy.

Traditional Service - 11:00 a.m.

The message from Rev. Dr. Sarah Lund will be "Sacred Pause." Our music will be provided by pianist Sean Baker and the Mayflower Quartet.

New Creation - 5:30 p.m.

What makes up a salad? Lettuce, cucumbers, peppers, radishes, tomatoes, carrots, celery, ham, eggs, croutons.... The list can go on and on. But for many of us the more different items in the salad, the better the whole thing tastes. The New Creation Team saw some similarities between the variety of foods in a tasty tossed salad and the variety of faith journeys that we all bring to First Congregational UCC. So this Sunday, as we finish our series on Growing Our Faith, we'll be sharing a salad dinner together. Please join us for salad and faith stories. Bring whatever salad item you want to toss in, along with your story of how your faith fits with FCC.

Adult Ed - Just Peace

Is FCC a Just Peace Church?

Becoming a Just Peace Church will be the focus of the Adult Education classes for the five Sundays in July. Truth is, FCC has in the past and is already now doing many things that promote peace and justice. But we have not yet taken the formal step of writing a Just Peace Church covenant and declaring ourselves to be a Just Peace Church via a congregational vote. FCC - which often takes a lead in UCC initiatives - is a little behind. According to a list from http://www.ucc.org/just_peace_churches, there are at least 162 UCC churches that have declared themselves to be a Just Peace Church. Four of those churches are in the Indiana-Kentucky conference:

1. First United, Rising Sun, IN
2. Zion UCC, Henderson, KY
3. Shalom UCC, Lafayette, IN
4. Zion UCC, South Bend, IN

Isn't it time that we joined them? Not so fast - there is a process and a time of discernment (though I'm liking your enthusiasm!). For the past several months the Adult Education class has been exploring the interrelated topics of peace, nonviolence, Shalom, and justice. All of that study and discussion has been good preparation for beginning to look in earnest about becoming a Just Peace Church. For five Sundays in July, we will look at the process and what other churches have done. Come join us!

July 29: 1 Peter 3:15; present the 9 step process for becoming a Just Peace Church; review

our lists of things FCC already is doing and our list of what we might want to do; review suggested actions for ongoing Peace Making from the "Just Peace Church Handbook"

For more information and lots of suggested resources, begin at http://www.ucc.org/justice_just-peace. Also, we are in the process of forming a Just Peace Committee to lead this effort. Please let Nancy Dickinson or Pastor Sarah know if you have an interest in being on the committee.

What's Happening at FCC

Exciting New Opportunity!

Have you heard about Chautauqua? It's a summer retreat that gives you space for religious, spiritual, aesthetic, intellectual and personal growth. A long-time FCC member has had such a wonderful time there, for so many years, that they decided to fund other FCC members to enjoy a week there each year. The first selectee will attend in the summer of 2019. We're about to roll out more information on applying and being selected, so stay tuned!

Sunday, July 29, 12:00 - Spiritual Explorers invite you to a labyrinth experience

Last August, FCC's Board of Worship & Faith began a new group, called "Spiritual Explorers." It meets in the library one Sunday a month, soon after the 11 AM service, to explore different spiritual practices, such as lectio divina, journaling, music, and poetry. During each meeting, members report briefly on what they've experienced on their own during the previous weeks, and the group decides on which spiritual discipline to focus during the following month.

On July 29, after a brown-bag lunch following traditional worship, Spiritual Explorers will meet at 12:45 at St. Luke's United Methodist Church (100 W. 86th St.) to walk its (outside) labyrinth. All FCC members and visitors who want to walk the labyrinth are welcome. Please inform either Pastor Sarah, PastorSarah@fcindy.org, or susanna-judith rae, at her new email address, sjrae@iu.edu, if you want to become a Spiritual Explorer, walk the labyrinth on July 29, or both. Betty Brandt, director of St. Luke's Spiritual Life Center, encourages labyrinth walkers to wear sunscreen and sunhats and to carry an umbrella.

FCC Solar Project!!!

The First Congregational Green Team has launched a fund drive to install solar panels. We're planning to raise \$60,000 by September 1st. To give this effort a boost,

Rich Gibson has pledged to match all contributions, dollar for dollar, up to \$20,000. Simply write "solar panels" on your check. If you'd rather pledge, or even donate shares of stock or mutual funds, we can accommodate that, too. Please contact Rich Gibson, hoot eagle@me.com, 770-548-5217 (cell) or 317-735-2895 (home) for details. Thanks!

Mission of the Month, Underneath it all

This mission provides underwear and school uniforms for children in IHN/Family Promise Aftercare. This helps families getting back on their feet stretch their budget through having fewer school clothes to purchase. You can help by doing any of the following:

1. **Buy underwear/socks/shirts/pants** in any size from **child size 4 to adult** - boys or girls. Put in the white laundry baskets in Narthex during July. Small size boys & girls underpants are particularly desired.
2. **Donate new or gently used pants, shirts, skirts, or jumpers**-all sizes from child size 4 to adult. Shirts must be collared in any solid color, without decoration or logo. Pants, skirts, or jumpers must be a solid color (tan, navy or black) with no decoration.
3. **Donate \$ in July to buy uniforms or underwear in-** change, dollar bills and checks designated **Underneath It All** in the memo line will help. We will buy clothes with the money donated.

I know it seems early, but school starts again Aug 1st for many schools, so new uniforms will be needed soon. The Aftercare Program of the Family Promise/IHN program helps those who get housing remain housed. Our past donations have provided each child in the Aftercare Program at least 1 full new uniform including underwear and socks. This is very much appreciated by the families and by Family Promise, so please continue to be generous.

If you have questions or want to help with this ministry, please contact Sandy Wood csjlwood@att.net 317-863-8238 (home) or 317-225-6206 (cell).

Pantry Items of the Month

During July we are collecting the following items: juice, pasta, canned meat, and shampoo.

UCC Keep Families Together Special Offering:

In light of the current situation at our southern border, the UCC has created a special fund to provide assistance to the families fleeing violence in Central America and seeking asylum in the United States. Those of us who ask "What can I do?" when faced with this humanitarian crisis can contribute through the United Church of Christ. You can go

to http://www.ucc.org/keep_families_together (underline in the space between words) and donate online or write a check to First Congregational Church with “Keep Families Together” in the notation line. If you donate online please identify yourself as a member of our church. The above-listed Website is also an up-to-date source of information and answers many questions for those concerned about this situation.

Pastoral Care

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

New Office Email

We have a new office administrator and with that comes a new office email address. Please direct all administrative needs to shannon@fcindy.org. Shannon will continue to receive emails directed to the previous administrative email account, but please direct future correspondence to the new email address.

This Week at First Congregational

Sunday, July 22	9:45 a.m.	Adult Class – Just Peace.
Sunday, July 22	11:00 a.m.	Traditional Service
Sunday, July 22	12:30 p.m.	Worship & Faith Meeting
Sunday, July 22	5:30 p.m.	New Creation
Thursday, July 26	11:45 a.m.	Women’s lunch –at East side LePeep
Thursday, July 26	1:00 p.m.	Men’s lunch – at Rusty Bucket
Sunday, July 29	9:45 a.m.	Adult Class – Just Peace
Sunday, July 29	11:00 a.m.	Traditional Service
Sunday, July 29	5:30 p.m.	New Creation