





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 June 28 , 2018

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Minister's Message

Dear First Congregational Family,

“Who will be the next one hundred people to join our congregation? Why will they join our church rather than some other congregation? After they join, how active will these new members be in the life, program, fellowship, ministry and witness of this congregation? How long will it take our congregation to receive one hundred new members? A year? A month? A decade?” From an article titled, “Membership Recruitment,” The Parish Paper, Yokefellow Institute, May 1974.

Wow. This is the opening paragraph of an article in old newsletter I discovered while going through a box of donated materials and the newsletter is dated May of 1974. While a lot has changed about American society and the trends of church membership, what has not changed is the desire for congregations like ours to grow. We want to grow both in deepening our faithfulness and in our impact in making the world a more just and loving place. We would like for more people to know about our mission, to get involved, to join us

and to grow with us.

How do churches grow? According to this newsletter, the key to growth is “to build new and strengthen existing friendship lines between members of your congregation and persons who are not actively involved in the life of any worshipping congregation. Studies of rapidly growing congregations reveal that most new members had at least one friend or relative in that congregation who opened the door to membership. While it is difficult to increase the number of kinship ties, the number of friendship ties can be increased by systemic, persistent and intentional efforts to increase face-to-face contacts and to focus on the other person’s need.”

I think this focus on membership growth through friendships is worth giving some additional thought. While many of our first time visitors report discovering our church through our website or our Facebook page, we know that people looking for a church home are looking for connection. I like this idea of keeping in mind the people we know and intentionally “opening the door” for people to experience worship at First Congregational UCC. As we look towards the future, we know that we want to grow with new members. How long will it take for us to get 100 new members? I’m not sure the answer to that question. But I do know that it is important for all of us to reach out to others, invite them to church, and help us to grow as the body of Christ.

With hope for growth,
Pastor Sarah

Worship for Sunday

Adult Class - 9:45 a.m.

Peace is Possible video; definition of Just Peace; look at two covenants - one brief and one extensive - from two UCC churches; begin a list of what FCC is already doing. See further description below.

Traditional Service - 11:00 a.m.

The message from Rev. Dr. Sarah Lund will be "Blessed are the Perplexed".

New Creation - 5:30 p.m.

Throughout July New Creation worship will focus on the variety of faith traditions that make us all one church. This Sunday we'll explore the traditions that comprise the United Church of Christ from several different perspectives. Whether or not you are familiar with the various faith paths that are joined together as the UCC, you can expect to learn something

new this Sunday.

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 1: Peace is Possible video; definition of Just Peace; look at two covenants - one brief and one extensive - from two UCC churches; begin a list of what FCC is already doing.

July 8: Ezekiel 37:26; Look at St. Peter & Trinity UCC; review our list of what we are already doing; what are the 10 Just Peace Making practices?

July 15: John 10:10; how has the history of the Just Peace movement in the UCC changed from 1985 to today?; read about Clackamas UCC; begin a list of what FCC might want to do in the future to support Peace and Justice

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.

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

Saturday, June 30th, 9:00 - #FamiliesBelongTogether

Individuals who wish to participate in the #FamiliesBelongTogether rally in Indianapolis are invited to car pool from the church on Saturday, June 30 at 9:00am and we will leave the parking lot at 9:15am. The rally begins at 10am and is taking place at the Birch Bayh Federal Building and United States Courthouse. This is an opportunity for individuals to put their faith into action and express their support of keeping immigrant children together with their parents/caregivers. This event is not officially sponsored by the church and does not represent the views of the congregation as a collective body. If you have questions, please contact Pastor Sarah.

Saturday, June 30th, 2:00 - Young Adults - Bowling!

The young adult group have scheduled to meet at the Woodland Bowling Center at 3421 East 96th St. at 2:00 next Saturday. For more information, please contact Lianna Campos (317-954-1601).

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. Sports bras & 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.

Short term office expectations

Please keep in mind we will not be creating a July Colony, due to the staff shortage. Thank you! Any questions, please call Karen Walker or Pastor Sarah.

Pastoral Care

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

This Week at First Congregational

Sunday, July 1	9:45 a.m.	Adult Class – Just Peace
Sunday, July 1	11:00 a.m.	Traditional Service
Sunday, July 1	12:30 p.m.	Worship & Faith
Sunday, July 1	5:30 p.m.	New Creation
Tuesday, July 3	1:00 p.m.	Care & Connections
Wednesday, July 4		Church Office Closed
Thursday, July 5	7:00 p.m.	Trustees
Sunday, July 8	9:45 a.m.	Adult Class – Just Peace
Sunday, July 8	11:00 a.m.	Traditional Service
Sunday, July 8	5:30 p.m.	New Creation