

 [FirstCongregationalUCCIndy](#)

 [Forward](#)



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

e-pistle for the week of December 13, 2018

Minister's Message

Dear First Congregational Family,

Advent is a rich time of opportunities to come together in worship and in community.

- I hope you can join us **this Sunday** for our special worship service at 11am of “**lessons and carols**” filled with beautiful music as we invite the melodies of the season to speak to our hearts.

- Take time for your spirit to be renewed and come to experience **yoga for your spirit on Monday, December 17 at 7pm** in the church parlor led by Shannon

Abbott.

- Take time to honor your emotions and all the feelings of this time of year by coming to our **“Blue Christmas” service and dinner on Friday, December 21 at 6pm.** This will be a brief, reflective and comforting time of worship, followed by fellowship and a light soup dinner.

Many times people feel overwhelmed with the holiday season. We can choose a different way to be in the world. We can choose to slow down, take time for reflection, prayer, worship and time with people we love. My Advent prayer is that these opportunities to deepen our faith with bless each of you.

I am looking forward to the celebration of Christ’s birth, and our first **Christmas Eve candlelight service together on Monday, December 24 at 7:30pm.**

May we be held in God’s love and light,
Pastor Sarah

Worship for the Third Sunday of Advent

Adult Class - 9:45 a.m.

On December 16th, this group will discuss the topic of "Go Into All Nations Making Disciples."

Traditional Service - 11:00 a.m.

This Sunday we will worship together through sharing in Lessons & Carols. The Advent Wreath will be lit by Elizabeth Price.

Prayground

As the Christian body celebrates Advent--a time for us to prepare our hearts, our minds, and our spirits for the coming of the Christ child, at First Congregational Church UCC, one way that we are leaning into this concept of welcoming is by providing a Prayground. Located in the front right in the sanctuary, the Prayground offers children and families a space just for them and allows all to fully engage in meaningful worship. The Prayground has soft foam mats along with liturgically and age appropriate worship materials.



The Playground will be evaluated for permanency after an estimated six to twelve months. As time goes, we commit to asking for and listening to feedback from the congregation to best support everybody's faith development and worship experience, and to best welcome our children and families. With the full support of the Worship and Faith Board, the FCC Mental Health WISE Team, and the Church Council, the Playground will be available for use beginning December 2nd. As we prepare our hearts to welcome the Christ child, let us prepare a dedicated space in our sanctuary that welcomes all children.

For feedback, questions, concerns, and/or comments, please talk to Lianna Campos (lcamos33@gmail.com, W&F Board Representative to Council) or Nancy Dickinson (dickinson.nls@gmail.com, Chair of W&F Board) or Pastor Sarah (pastorsarah@fcindy.org).

**THIS CHRISTMAS,
WE REMEMBER
THAT JESUS WAS
A REFUGEE...**

MATTHEW 2:13-14

#WELCOMEREFUGEES
#WELCOMEASYLUMSEEKERS
#WELCOMECHRIST

UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

A message from our Refugee Resettlement partner, Church World Service:

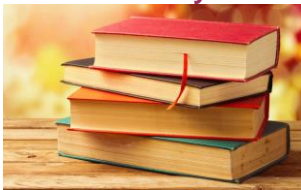
All people have the right to seek a safe place to call home, and seeking asylum is protected within U.S. and international law. Join faith leaders and communities across the country for a week of action as we stand in solidarity with the migrant caravan and all who seek refuge in the U.S. Together, we are calling on the U.S. to end the detention and deportation of immigrants, respect the human right to migrate, and end the militarization of the border. The “Love Knows No Borders” week of action begins on Dec. 10, International Human Rights Day, and ends on Dec. 18, International Migrants’ Day. For more information about the week of action, [click here](#).

Check out our **new interfaith toolkit** to join our moral call for migrant justice and participate in the week of action: <http://bit.ly/2rmcx4O>. Here are the **top 5 ways to take action**:

1. **Attend or Organize a Local Event in Solidarity:** [Click here](#) to search for an event already organized in your area, and [click here](#) to register your own. [Click here](#) for an organizer’s toolkit.
2. **Call Congress:** Tell your Members of Congress to protect families and cut funding for detention, deportations, and border militarization. [Click here](#) to receive a call that connects to your 2 Senators and 1 Representative.
3. **Share on Social Media:** [Click here](#) for sample social media graphics.
4. **Write for Media:** This [template](#) contains a sample op-ed to pitch to local media outlets. Interfaith talking points are available here: <http://bit.ly/FaithCaravanTalkingPoints>.
5. **Collect & Share Stories:** The faith community is collecting stories among caravan members. [Click here](#) to submit stories to the collection form. [Click here](#) to download & print a PDF to hand-write answers, and please submit answers to Meredith Owen at mowen@cwsglobal.org.

What's Happening at FCC

The Book Party is Back!!



TOMORROW, Friday, December 14th we will read books and do activities with 2 kindergarten classes at IPS 106, 5301 Roxbury, just east of Cathedral High School. The

teachers, Ms. Kormos and Mrs. Anderson formerly taught at IPS 42 where several FCC members tutored. It is a terrific way to get into the holiday spirit! We will have 2 sessions, 11:15 a.m. to noon and noon to 12:45 p.m. If you'd like to help with either session, please tell Sandy Wood - her contact info is csjlwood@att.net or 317-225-6206.

January Colony Submissions Due, December 15th

REMiNDER



All submissions for the January Colony are due **THIS SATURDAY, December 15th**. Thank you to those of you who have already submitted your articles. Please email all Colony submissions to shannon@fcindy.org

What Shall We Bring?



Thank you to those who have responded to our 2019 Annual Campaign! To date, we have received 49 pledges for almost \$166K of financial support in 2019.

For those who have not yet responded, please consider the following:

1. Your pledge of financial and service resources greatly benefits FCC's planning for 2019;
2. Your pledge is an intention to give, and can be changed, either to give more or give less, based on your circumstances;
3. Your pledge is a way to bring your whole self to God and be generous with your life.

Please try to turn in your pledge by late December in order to assist our boards with preliminary planning. Pledge and service cards are available in the Narthex, and can be deposited in the basket or the offering plate. Or you can contact Shannon Abbott in the Church Office to have cards sent to you.

What shall we bring? Thank you to all who share your gifts and help First Congregational be dynamic and vital, energized to be a servant community of Jesus Christ!

Poinsettia Time

THIS SUNDAY, December 16th is your last opportunity to order a poinsettia(s) to help celebrate this special Season. The cost per plant is \$10.00. Any questions see or email Sally Coombs at sallysews73@gmail.com



The Giving Tree



Again this year we will be collecting gift cards in \$25 denominations from big-box stores such as Target, Meijer, or Wal-Mart or gas cards for the After-Care families of Family Promise. These families now have housing but are under the watchful care of Family Promise for up to two years to assure that they succeed. Please attach your gift cards to the bows on the tree in the parlor, and please bring them in **by THIS SUNDAY, Dec. 16** so families will have time to shop before Christmas.

Mental Health Team offers “Yoga for the Holidays”

Holidays are often a time when our cups become so full that there is little room for anything new. Yoga can be a powerful catalyst for emptying our cup to make room to receive. Make room to receive the many gifts of the season, including self-care and compassion.



You are invited to participate in Yoga for the Holidays with Shannon Abbott in the church parlor on Monday, December 17, 6:00 – 7:00p.m.

This practice will be a gentle practice of mindfulness and movement, and will also offer the option of modifications using a chair, so all are welcome to participate.

- Please wear loose, comfortable clothing, and bring a yoga mat if you have one (If you have an extra mat, please bring one to share with someone who may not have one.)

Please email Shannon at shannon@fcindy.org for more information and to register. A free-will, gratitude offering will be appreciated.

Blue Christmas Service, December 21st, 6:00 p.m.



We often think of the holidays as a time of joy, but for many it is a time of loss, depression, and generally feeling “blue.” For this reason, the Worship and Faith Board is offering a Blue Christmas Service as a time of prayer, comfort, and support during a season that can be difficult for people feeling “blue.” Worship begins at 6pm in the Sanctuary followed by a light meal of soup for fellowship and conversation.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship, December 24th at 7:30 p.m.



“For unto us a child is given, unto us a Savior is born and the order of the world will be upon his shoulders.” With the birth of Jesus, our lives are forever changed. We are transformed by his model and message. Let us join together in celebrating the light of the world, the birth of Jesus the Christ through worship, special music, and the lighting of

candles to represent this light which is the center of our lives.

Mittens and More!



This Christmas season we will be collecting the usual mittens, gloves, scarves, hats, and socks for the refugees who are served by Exodus Refugee Immigration. But in addition we will also collect new or gently-used winter coats for all ages as well as blankets. Winter is a difficult time for refugees, who often come from warm climates and are not prepared for Indiana weather. Having to supply a whole family with warm outerwear is a burden, and we can help with our generous donations. Put small items on or under the “Mitten Tree” and coats and blankets in the Exodus box in the coat room. Monetary donations in the offering plate marked “Exodus—Winter” are welcome too. Donations will continue to be accepted after Christmas as well. Thank you.

Foundation - 1857 Society

The newly formed **1857 Society** is up and running. All of us who include First Congregational in our wills or estate plans are eligible to join. Doing so strengthens the church’s long term financial base, allowing us to do more of God’s work. Consider if this is something of enduring value in which you’d like to participate. Commitment forms are available in the narthex or from the office.

Guided Meditation at Hoosier Village - Saturdays at 7p.m.

FCC members and friends are invited to attend guided meditation sessions at Hoosier Village. The Meditation Circle meets every Saturday at 7 p.m. in the Great Hall Conference Room. Use the Chapel parking lot and turn right after entering the hallway. We are listening to Guided Imagery Meditations to let go of stress and find peace and healing. No previous meditation experience necessary. Contact Anne or Daryl Greene for more information.

Green Team Tip

Though they take more time, think about simple homemade gifts that show love

December Mission of the Month is The Christmas Fund

The UCC’s Christmas fund assists retired pastors and their spouses living on reduced incomes. This offering provides funds for pension supplements, health premium supplements, emergency health or unexpected travel expenses, and Christmas “Thank

You” checks. Use the special envelopes for your gifts or make a notation of “Christmas Fund” on your check to FCC. Single dollar bills in the offering plate will also go to this offering. Please be generous in your support of those who have served the church and now need our help.

Pantry Items of the Month

During December we are collecting the following items: Muffin mix, Noodle, Cereal, and Laundry detergent.

Pastoral Care

Pastor Sarah may be reached at (386) 478 - 9012 or at pastorsarah@fcindy.org.

This Week at First Congregational

| | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Thursday, December 13 | 1:00 p.m. | Men’s Lunch |
| Thursday, December 13 | 2:00 p.m. | Mental Health Team Meeting |
| Thursday, December 13 | 7:00 p.m. | Choir Rehearsal |
| Saturday, December 15 | 11:00 a.m. | Bell Choir Rehearsal |
| Sunday, December 16 | 9:45 a.m. | Adult Class |
| Sunday, December 16 | 11:00 a.m. | Special Music with Lessons & Carols |
| Monday, December 17 | 6:00 p.m. | Yoga for the Holidays |
| Tuesday, December 18 | 1:30 p.m. | Circle IV |
| Thursday, December 20 | 7:00 p.m. | Choir Rehearsal |
| Friday, December 21 | 6:00 p.m. | Blue Christmas Service |
| Sunday, December 23 | 11:00 a.m. | Traditional Worship Service |
| Monday, December 24 | 7:30 p.m. | Candlelight Christmas Eve Service |