



# FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

## THE PILGRIM COLONY

December 2019

### Pastor's Reflections

As the year 2019 comes to a close and as the season of Advent begins, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to First Congregational. Looking back over this past year, I rejoice at the ways we have grown together in faith, in love, in service and as the Body of Christ. Our church continues to deepen our commitment to being a place to belong, a place to heal and a place to love. As I look ahead to 2020, I trust that this growth will continue as we seek out God's wisdom for us.

Thank you for your generous gifts of time, talent and treasure that help support our ministries and mission. I invite you to consider making an end of year contribution to the church in the form of cash, check, credit card, stock, Donor Advised Fund, family foundation, electronic transfer from your bank account, or a Qualified Charitable Contribution directly from your IRA. This may also be a good time to establish or review your planned giving and include our church in your plans in support of future generations of First Congregational. All who include the church in their planned giving will be recognized in the 1857 Society.

The church is not a business, but we do need to be good stewards of our resources. We are invited to partner with each other and with God to be co-creators of a just world for all. Each one of us can make a difference as we seek to make the world a better place. I especially want to give thanks for our church staff, officers, council members, board members, team members, choir members, interns, and all who work hard behind the scenes helping us to Be The Church.

As a church, we look to Jesus as our guide, seeking to follow Jesus and love like Jesus. This Advent season, I invite us all to prepare ourselves for the One who comes into the world bringing peace, justice, hope and love. This Advent I give God thanks for you and for the love we share in Christ.

Blessings,  
Pastor Sarah



## Pastoral Congregation Relations Committee

The pastoral office and other positions of staff leadership exist to build up the congregation as part of the Body of Christ and to equip the saints for the mission of the church. The particular relationship between a pastor and congregants should be tended deliberately, so that the ministries of both pastor and congregation complement each other and further God's grace in the world. As with any relationship, it must be respected and nurtured to grow in healthy and projective ways. For this reason, a Pastoral Congregation Relations Committee (PCRC) exists in a congregation to advise, assist, and promote the growth of this vital relationship.

PCRC meet quarterly and are available throughout the year for support and conversation. We are blessed to have both Pastor Sarah and Pastor Carol serve our congregation. Currently, Pastor Carol's focus is on the following areas: pulpit supply, pastoral care visits, Adult Education and Worship Leader coordination.

PCRC for Pastor Sarah: Randy Walker, Lianna Campos, Nancy Dickinson, Chuck Kiphart

PCRC for Pastor Carol: Bob Cook, Janet Selby, Clark Collier, susana-judith rae

- Pastor Sarah

## Moderator's Reflections

### Welcoming New Faces

One of the great rewards of being Moderator or Vice Moderator is that you sit in on Board meetings. (Not that it's an exclusive right: we seek to be an open, transparent church, and any member can sit in on any Board or Council meeting. They're all posted on the church calendar, so knock yourself out if you so desire!) Anyway, I try to sit in on every Board meeting, and it gives me a sense that I know What's Going On. It may be an illusion, but it's a powerful one.

This is prologue to the fact that I sat in on the November Witness and Welcome Board meeting the other day, and got caught up in a fascinating discussion about how we treat both newcomers and new members. We're getting so many new folks rattling around the church on a Sunday morning, it can be easy to get lost or confused. My own opinion is that we are pretty good at welcoming strangers. I think Bob Cook, chair of the Witness and Welcome Board, would agree strongly with the sentiment that we could stand to take it up a notch. Let's get extravagant! (Of course, I don't mean "flashy" extravagant, with bugles and banners; but warm, sincere and open.)

And another point is that a new face to you might be someone who just walked in the door, or a brand-new member you hadn't noticed before. So, an illuminating anecdote from my own distant past: Once I started to get a little rank in the Air Force, I found myself running an office. Over the course of several different assignments, being the guy in charge became part of the job. We'd occasionally get visitors, and I became the guy they came to see. I vividly remember a man with an unfamiliar face coming up to me, sticking out his hand, greeting me and saying his name with a big smile. I smiled back, shook and said, "It's great to meet you!" His face fell and he said, "Uh, we met two weeks ago." Imagine my embarrassment. From that moment on, I got in the habit of greeting everyone I didn't recognize with a big smile, a handshake, and "Great to see you!" Now, I'm not the most socially adept person you ever met, but this one-word change, "see" for "meet," worked like a charm. I suppose this is a lesson all of us need to learn, sooner or later.

Another way to improve your welcome is to remember the last time you greeted a stranger and ask yourself how you would have felt if you were the brand-new face and another member had said that to you. How would that make you feel? Humor can be an ice breaker; on the other hand, it may come across as offensive to someone you do not know. We need to learn to "read the body language" of people we have just met. We shouldn't say, "This is what I've always said." Christianity, as I've noted before, isn't easy. We are called on a daily basis to be better versions of ourselves. What worked yesterday may not be quite good enough today.

Social climates have changed and continue to change—it can be dizzying. These are all topics we will address in our February BUZZ.

For now, we may want to keep things simple. Whenever you see a new face, smile and say, “Hi! It’s good to see you!” How can you be friendly without being intrusive? If you want to start a conversation, “What brought you to First Congregational?” is a lovely question that doesn’t discriminate between first-timers and new members. It starts off the conversation with something you obviously have in common.

We longer-tenured members have a responsibility to our church. As a welcoming church, it is incumbent on the Old Guard to show what an extravagant welcome looks like. Set an example for the next generation. Come on! You’ve spent your whole life getting to know the other long-tenured members. Give yourself and a new person a little more time to get to know each other.

God bless you all,  
Rich Gibson

**Intern Reflections**

**A Message from FC’s Just Peace Intern**

Thank you all for welcoming me into your church family these past few months. I have loved getting to know you and hear your stories over coffee and fellowship. Each Sunday, I never fail to be impressed with the passion for justice in the community and the selfless service in the church. I am so excited to talk with you all during the buzz about the best things about your church and a couple synthesized suggestions from you all to make it even better. Thank you again for your hospitality and showing me Christ's love in so many ways!

Thanks,  
Grace Langford, Just Peace Intern



**A Message from FC’s Student Pastor**



I continue to enjoy each and every second with you at the church and am thrilled to be working on this year’s Advent plans and Blue Christmas set for December 20th at 6:30pm. Thanks for all you’re teaching me about what it means to be a church family — from the hospitality I feel the second I enter the door, to the ways you all tend to the details of the building, and the beauty of prayers through shared hopes and sadnesses. This church has truly taught me what it means to be “welcoming” and I hope to carry that with me wherever I go. See you all soon!

—Cassidy Hall, Student Pastor

**Welcome to Our Nursery Attendant!**



My name is Olivia Beeman and I am from Cleveland, Ohio. I am currently a student at Butler University studying Accounting. I love to travel and try to new things! – Olivia

**Sunday morning Nursery Care** for preschool and younger is offered from 10:30am—12:30pm. Our Nursery Attendant, Olivia Beeman, will be joined by a church volunteer each Sunday. We will use the playroom at the end of the first floor hallway on the right side. Parents will be asked to fill out a drop off form for each child. If you have any questions or are interested in being a volunteer, please contact Pastor Sarah or Lianna Campos.

This Month at First Congregational UCC

|                         |            |  |
|-------------------------|------------|--|
| All Sundays             | 9:45 a.m.  | Sunday Adult Class                                 |
| All Sundays             | 11:00 a.m. | Worship  |
| All Thursdays           | 7:00 p.m.  | Choir Rehearsal                                    |
| Sunday, Dec 1           | 12:30 p.m. | Just Peace Buzz & Lunch                            |
| Tuesday, Dec 3          | 1:00 p.m.  | Worship Design Team                                |
| Wednesday, Dec 4        | 11:00 a.m. | Witness & Welcome                                  |
| Wednesday, Dec 4        | 6:00 p.m.  | Just Peace Presentation<br>(repeat from 12/1 Buzz) |
| Wednesday, Dec 4        | 7:00 p.m.  | Trustees   |
| Thursday, Dec 5         | 11:45 a.m. | Women's Lunch Bunch                                |
| Thursday, Dec 5         | 1:00 p.m.  | Men's Lunch  |
| Sunday, Dec 8           | 12:15 p.m. | Outreach & Service                                 |
| Tuesday, Dec 10         | 4:00 p.m.  | Care & Connection                                  |
| Wednesday, Dec 11       | 5:00 p.m.  | Mental Health Team                                 |
| Sunday, Dec 15          | 11:00 a.m. | Worship – Lessons & Carols                         |
| Sunday, Dec 15          | 12:45 p.m. | PCRC (Pastor Sarah)                                |
| Wednesday, Dec 18       | 6:00 p.m.  | Calling Circle                                     |
| Thursday, Dec 19        | 1:00 p.m.  | Men's Lunch  |
| Friday, Dec 20          | 6:30 p.m.  | Blue Christmas Service                             |
| Tuesday, Dec 24         | 7:00 p.m.  | Christmas Eve Service                              |
| Tuesday, Dec 24 – Jan 1 |            | Church Office Closed for<br>Holidays               |

WORSHIP & FAITH

Elizabeth Price, Chair

Sunday Adult Class

All classes meet in the Library (room 212) at 9:45 a.m. All are welcome!

For December, the Adult Ed class will move through the Advent Season by taking up the first four sessions from *Hallelujah: The Bible and Handel's Messiah*, a curriculum from Kerygma. We will be listening to parts of *Handel's Messiah*, and engaging with the scriptural references. Come and be awed!

- Dec 1 - led by Carol - "Comfort, Comfort My People"  
2 Kings 17-19  
Isaiah 40:1-1; 1:21-31  
John 10:1
- Dec 8 - Led by Worth - "Who May Abide the Day of His Coming?"  
Haggai 1:1-14 & 2:1-9;  
Malachi 1:6-14; 2:1-9 and 3:1-4  
Ezra 1:2-4; 3:10-13; 6:3-5  
Revelation 4:1-6
- Dec 15 - Led by Nancy - "For Unto Us a Child is Born"  
Isaiah 7:1-17; 9:2-7  
Matthew 1:18-25; 4:12-16
- Dec 22 - Led by Carol - "Glory to God in the Highest"  
Luke 2:1-14  
Isaiah 40:1-11  
Matthew 11:28-29
- Dec 29 – NO ADULT ED

Save the dates and join us for meaningful encounters with song, scripture, and one another.  
- Pastor Carol





## December Worship Theme: “Reject Racism.”

In continuing our “Be the Church” focus in worship over the next few months, in the month of December we will engage in what it means as the church to “reject racism.”

### November Worship Leaders

Dec 1 – Pat Larracey  
 Dec 8 – Nancy Dickinson  
 Dec 15 – Pat Larracey  
 Dec 22 – Wendy Baldwin  
 Dec 29 – Sue Chapman

### Love Your Neighbor Tip

I recommend driving past your local mega grocery store and shopping at a small independent grocery store in one of the “drive thru” neighborhoods or a dollar general or a CVS or Wal-Greens to get a sense of how too many people have to live and feed their families. – George Meier

### Advent: Come let us Prepare!

FC has traditionally observed Advent as a time of waiting and preparing for the birth of the Christ. Long ago, Jesus, the Christ was born in a manger in Bethlehem, and fulfilled the prophecy in ancient scriptures about the coming of the Messiah. As Christians, we continue to prepare for the full revelation of the Christ that was, is now, and not yet fully realized. During the four weeks leading to Christmas Day, we invite you to intentionally prepare your home, your heart, your worship, and your life for the birth of the Christ. Christ came to us in the form of Jesus of Nazareth and now we anticipate and prepare for Christ's birth again within and among us.

*Advent is from an old Latin phrase – ad venio, loosely translated “until the coming.” It is a time for reflection during which we prepare for Christ's coming. Christmas is itself the adaptation of an ancient ritual known as Saturnalia – a raucous and ribald occasion that celebrated the return of the light. It took place on the eve of the winter solstice – an evening that marked the sun's slow walk back from the lengthening nights. The light was returning. When early Christian communities, who knew very little about how or when the birth of Jesus actually took place, wanted to find a fitting time to commemorate his birth, they appropriated this pagan ritual and decided the return of the light was the perfect metaphor for celebrating the coming of Jesus: Saturnalia became Christmas. (quoted from the UCC website)*



We will observe Advent in the four Sundays leading up to Christmas day:

On the First Sunday of Advent, **December 1**, we will place the Advent wreath with four candles for Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. Other symbols of everlasting life and light will fill our sanctuary reminding us of what Christ offers us. In this first Sunday, our focus will be **Hope** and preparing our homes. Following worship, we will have a Just Peace Buzz and anyone who wants can pick up a devotional and make an advent wreath to take home for your kitchen table.

**December 8** we will prepare our hearts by offering the gift of **peace** from our compassion for all those who are incarcerated. In our worship, we will seek healing for racism within us and in our communities. Come prepared to write letters to those who are incarcerated during this holy season. Sample letters will be provided.

In the third week of Advent, we will prepare our spirits with **Lessons and Carols** in the morning worship on Sunday **December 15**. Our musicians will lead us in the sounds of the season as we prepare ourselves for the coming **Joy**.

Come celebrate the Winter Solstice with our ecumenical neighbors on Thursday, **December 19** at 7:00 PM. We will reserve tickets for the Winter Solstice Service at the Unitarian Universalists Church of Indianapolis. We will have a sign up in the Narthex so don't miss it if you would like to celebrate or learn more about origins of many of the symbols Christians hold dear.

We know that all are not joyful during this season. On **Friday, December 20** at 6:30 PM, we will come together for our annual Blue Christmas Service. We will gather to honor and support all those whose spirits are heavy with grief, loss, or for any of us who have trouble navigating the holiday season. Come and join this welcoming community and share a meal after the service.

We will light the candle for Love during the fourth Sunday of advent as we prepare ourselves to truly love one another. Our Christmas Eve service will be held in our sanctuary on **December 24** at 7:00 PM. We will sing the familiar hymns of Christmas and leave the sanctuary having prepared for the birth of Christ in our homes, our hearts, our spirits, and in our world. What do you need to let go of to prepare for this miraculous event? What do you need to embrace? Join us this Advent season and let us prepare together.

**Buzz Pitch-In Lunch: Just Peace - Sunday, December 1**  
**12:30 PM Pitch In Lunch**  
**1:00 PM Program (repeat program on Wed, Dec 4, 6:00pm in the library)**



**“The Future of Just Peacemaking at First Congregational Church”**

The Just Peace Church Team invites you to this important presentation and discussion. We will hear from our Just Peace Intern, Grace Langford, who has been with us for three months studying our just peace process. She has summarized the findings of eleven just peace surveys, interviewed current and past team members and others involved in our just peace efforts and observed how we are doing in our first year as an official Just Peace Church.

- What is the way forward?
- Do we still need a Just Peace Team?
- Have we integrated Just Peacemaking into our identity and regular practice?
- Is there some other entity to oversee this work?
- We have been introduced to a peace/justice/social action group called Faith in Indiana. Should that be our just peace focus and vehicle for the future?
- Is there some central or core issue that can focus our various just peace activities?

Join us for this time of discernment and receiving parting gifts from our Just Peace intern, Grace.

- Rev. Worth Hartman, Just Peace Team

**Drone Warfare Adult Ed Summary**

In September, I attended the Interfaith Conference on Drone Warfare. I had the opportunity to connect with many leaders in different faith communities as well as retired military leaders. The conference has advocated for three main recommendations which I have copied below.

**The Washington-based Interfaith Working Group on Drone Warfare, with which INDW partners, is making three recommendations to the U.S. government**

- **Study the long-term impacts of drone warfare.** The U.S. should carry out a thorough study of how drone strikes have impacted communities, national stability of affected countries, U.S.

national security, and other U.S. interests. Special attention should be paid to how drone strikes have impacted social cohesion, family structures, legitimacy of the various national governments, and communities' perception of the United States and other international actors.

- **End the CIA's authority to carry out drone strikes.** CIA drone strikes are largely carried out in secret with little accountability and without justice for affected civilians. The CIA carries out strikes in at least four countries, and the CIA's program of lethal drone strikes has lasted through three Administrations. It is in effect a secret war - one never specifically authorized by Congress or formally acknowledged to the American public.
- **Maintain meaningful human control over lethal weapons.** The United States must commit to not develop Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS), which would be able to autonomously target and kill. The government should also encourage international institutions to ban LAWS, and ensure that there is meaningful human control over and responsibility for all lethal strikes.

If you would like to learn more, please reach out to me at [glangfor@butler.edu](mailto:glangfor@butler.edu) or go to [www.interfaithdronenetwork.org](http://www.interfaithdronenetwork.org) to learn more!

- Grace Langford, Just Peace Intern

### **CHURCH COUNCIL**

Rich Gibson, Chair

### **Council Activity**

The Council met on Wednesday, November 13. Among its deliberations, the following items would benefit from wider exposure to the congregation:

- The Chautauqua Fund Committee announced the award of grants to pay the expenses for a week's trip to the Chautauqua summer programs!
  - Cheryl Dillenback will attend in 2020
  - Don and Chris Golliher will attend in 2021
  - As the Fund is set up to send one person a year or one couple every two years, the next opportunity to apply will be in the fall of 2022 for attendance in the summer of 2023
- Upcoming Buzzes:
  - **December 1, on Just Peace.** Grace Langford will present findings from her work here as a Just Peace intern. Her internship ends December 13.
  - **January 12, on Inclusivity.** The Worship and Faith Board will discuss our efforts to incorporate more inclusive wordings in Bible readings during services
  - **February 16, on Extravagant Welcoming.** The Witness and Welcome Board will discuss taking our already good welcoming process for newcomers and raising it up a notch!
- We have a nursery attendant, Olivia Beeman, for parents who choose not to bring their children to the Prayground. (Use of the nursery and/or Prayground is up to each parent.) Sandy Wood and Lianna Campos are organizing volunteers to provide one member a week to serve alongside Olivia
- Other Upcoming Events
  - The Council will not meet in December
  - The Board of Trustees and Council will meet on **January 8** to review and finalize the 2020 Budget for presentation to the congregation at the Annual Meeting on January 26
  - All Boards, Teams and Committees are urged to provide their annual reports to the church office no later than **January 3**
  - The slate of church officers, the budget, the Treasurer's Report and the Foundation Report are due to the church office by **January 10**
  - The Annual Report will be available in hard copy to the congregation before the worship service on **January 19**
  - The **Annual Meeting** will be following the worship service on **January 26**

## OUTREACH & SERVICE

Sue Chapman, Chair

### December Mission of the Month – The Christmas Fund

December's Mission of the Month is the Christmas Fund, one of the "5 for 5" offerings of the United Church of Christ that FCC has committed to support. The Christmas Fund, formerly known as the "Veterans of the Cross Offering," gives congregations and members an opportunity to reach out in loving compassion, providing assistance to those who have so faithfully served our churches and now find themselves facing unexpected financial needs. Most of these retired pastors served in times and places where their retirement benefits are much smaller than those of pastors retiring today. These funds enable the Pension Board's Ministerial Assistance program to provide, on behalf of the whole Church, pension supplements, health premium supplements, emergency grants for health or unexpected travel expenses, and Christmas "Thank You" gift checks to individuals and families in need.



This December \$230,000 in "Thank You" gifts will be distributed to 460 individuals. By August of this year \$938,233 had been given in small monthly annuity supplementation as well as \$176,244 in health premium supplementation and \$71,775 in emergency grants.

This year's theme is "A Light Shines in the Darkness." Your gifts this December will bring light into the darkness of financial need of deserving retired church workers and keep needed funds coming in the year ahead. Watch for the weekly bulletin inserts during Advent for stories of how individuals and their families have been helped by the Christmas Fund.

### Advent Giving Opportunities

We have several opportunities to give to those in need during Advent. Some are old traditions, others are new:

- The **"Mitten Tree"** in the narthex will again be collecting hats, mittens, gloves, scarves, and socks for both children and adults. These will be **delivered to Exodus Refugee on December 16.**
- The **"Giving Tree"** in the parlor will again be collecting \$25 gift cards for big-box stores such as Target, Meier, and Wal-Mart. These will be **delivered to Family Promise on December 16** for the After Care families for purchasing their own gifts.
- After the gift cards are removed from the **"Giving Tree"** on Dec. 15, it will become a place to donate items for the **Church World Service hygiene kits** that will be taken to the Southwest Border by our delegation in mid-January. Many of the items are being provided by the Outreach & Service Board, but there will be tickets on the tree for the remaining items needed. This is a way for all of us to be a part of this Witness at the Border. These items should be returned by **Sunday, Jan. 5, Epiphany Sunday.**
- **New this year** is the **Reverse Advent Calendar** for collecting food items for the Northside Food Pantry. Instead of you getting a treat each day during Advent, you will be adding a designated food item to bring to church. Items should be turned in weekly, and they will be delivered weekly. Flyers with the list of items will be on the narthex table or may be accessed on the following page.

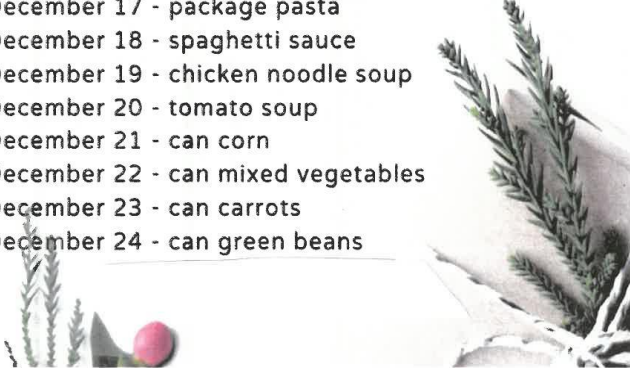


# REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR

BRING YOUR ITEMS EACH WEEK.

THEY WILL BE DELIVERED WEEKLY TO THE NORTHSIDE FOOD PANTRY.

December 1 - box of cereal  
December 2 - peanut butter  
December 3 - stuffing mix  
December 4 - boxed potatoes  
December 5 - macaroni and cheese  
December 6 - canned fruit  
December 7 - canned tomatoes  
December 8 - canned tuna  
December 9 - dessert mix  
December 10 - jar of applesauce  
December 11 - canned sweet potatoes  
December 12 - cranberry sauce  
December 13 - canned beans  
December 14 - box of crackers  
December 15 - package of rice  
December 16 - package of oatmeal  
December 17 - package pasta  
December 18 - spaghetti sauce  
December 19 - chicken noodle soup  
December 20 - tomato soup  
December 21 - can corn  
December 22 - can mixed vegetables  
December 23 - can carrots  
December 24 - can green beans



This has always been a generous congregation, and the Outreach & Service Board thanks you in advance for supporting these giving opportunities.



## Our October Donations to the Northside Food Pantry

We had another good month, donating 75 pounds of attractive, nutritious food and 13 pounds of needed nonfood items. Congratulations and thanks to all who contributed. Let's keep up the effort, filling those baskets in the narthex, knowing that the holiday season is difficult for many of our neighbors. – Bill Gillette, Outreach & Service

## Mental Health Team: Final Draft of the W.I.S.E. Covenant

Dear First Congregational people, your mental health team along with your involvement presents the FINAL draft of the WISE, Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, Engaged Covenant which will be on the agenda for our Annual Meeting on January 26 and hopes to receive your vote of acceptance. When we vote to approve, First Congregational will become the FIRST UCC church in our Indiana-Kentucky Conference to have a WISE Covenant!!

Thank you again for your help. Please read and be prepared to come and vote on Jan 26!!



**FINAL Draft W. I. S. E. WELCOMING, INCLUSIVE, SUPPORTIVE, and, ENGAGED**  
(Proposed First Congregational UCC Covenant from FC Mental Health Team)

We, the people of First Congregational United Church of Christ in Indianapolis, IN, affirm our commitment to be a welcoming congregation so that “no matter who you are or where you are on your life’s journey, you are welcome here in this progressive, inclusive, spiritually alive, servant congregation of Jesus Christ.” We pledge to work to destigmatize mental illness through education within our church, our community and beyond. We welcome any who are marginalized to share and be honored for their experiences and stories regarding living with mental health challenges.

We will do this by being W. I. S. E. (Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, and Engaged).

**WELCOMING:** We will actively welcome those experiencing mental health challenges into our faith community and provide a safe environment in which people can worship, serve, and share their journeys. We will create safe boundaries in our church and offer a radical welcome to everyone, including individuals with mental health and/or brain disorder challenges.

**INCLUSIVE:** Our language in church events and worship services will be inclusive of all people, including those experiencing mental health challenges. It is through the inclusivity of people and the awareness of intersectionality (the interconnected nature of race, class, ability, sexuality, and, gender) that we affirm neurodiversity among us.

**SUPPORTIVE:** We commit our continuing support to all facing mental health challenges by offering spiritual support and connection to mental health resources available in our community. We also promise our support to the loved ones of those living with mental health challenges.

**ENGAGED:** We shall find opportunities to be in shared mission, ministry, fellowship and advocacy with others, including the United Church of Christ Mental Health Network and the United Church of Christ Disabilities Ministries. Because covenant and justice go hand-in-hand, we will promote our mission, educate, advocate and reach out to those living with mental illness and/or brain disorders.

NOTE: This covenant was created by the people of this church, including those living with mental health challenges.

- Thank you from your Mental Health Team

## **Check it out! - Church Women United on December 2**

CWU (Church Women United) will be meeting at our church on Monday, Dec 2 from 9:30 - 11:30. At the meeting December 2, the focus is on Human Rights - presenting the annual Humanitarian award, and there will be a presentation from Project Transformation - a United Methodist literacy-based summer program for disadvantaged youths.

All are welcome to attend - there will be light refreshments and a short service (with participation from our Carol Sowle), and we will be collecting articles and donations for the Julian Center – (suggested items include: towels, washcloths, adult blankets, fitted twin sheets, deodorant, lotion, bars of soap, baby care items and umbrellas).

We have been affiliated with this organization since the Indiana chapter was started over 70 years ago. This ecumenical group has representatives from a dozen different denominations including Roman Catholic, Episcopal, Baptist, Methodist, AME (African Methodist Episcopal) and over 100 churches. It is a “racial, culturally, and theologically inclusive Christian women's movement, celebrating unity in diversity and working for a world of peace and justice ... impassioned by the Holy Spirit to act on behalf of women and children throughout the world”. I feel privileged to belong to an organization whose early history includes fighting to desegregate the hotels in Indy, before laws forced the issue, and we have been actively involved in social justice ever since.

If you have any interest in or questions about this organization - please contact Karen Walker or Nancy Dickinson.

**WITNESS & WELCOME**

Bob Cook, Chair

*Anyone is invited to sit in on our next meeting on Wednesday, Dec. 4 at 11:00.*



**Game Night Success!**

Our first W&W game night held on Saturday, Nov. 9 was a success with nine people participating in pizza, games and fun. Those gathered agreed that we should do this again and set a tentative date of Leap Day, Feb. 29 for the next game night. Mark your calendars now.

**Love One Another**

Our fall campaign for the bright yellow yard signs is now over. We ask you to remove your yard sign from the colder winter weather. You may either store it at home or bring it to church and we will store it for you. Our plan is to once again use these signs during the primary election cycle and again in the fall. Thanks to all who participated.



**Greeters Needed**

The Board of Witness and Welcome is responsible for supplying greeters at the door for worship and several other events such as memorial services, concerts, special programs etc. We can always use a few more volunteers to carry out this mission. For more information or to volunteer, please contact Bob Cook.

**Faith in Indiana**

Thanks to all who came to the Nov. 10 BUZZ to learn about Faith in Indiana, a movement that is rooted both locally and nationally to assist the underserved members of our society. We will continue to learn more about this organization and keep you posted. If you are aware of their work and would like to be on our initial task force team to explore more, please contact Bob Cook.

As a follow up to our November 10 BUZZ regarding Faith in Indiana, Rev. Nicole Barnes has welcomed interested FCC members to attend their leadership training at no cost.

Leadership Assembly  
Dec. 12th at 7:00 PM  
Universalist Unitarian Church  
615 W. 43rd Street

If interested in attending, please contact Bob Cook by December 1.  
Thanks.

**CARE & CONNECTIONS**

Wendy Baldwin, Chair

**Updates about Ways to Serve in 2020 –**

The Care & Connections Board is responsible for filling the slate of church officers and boards for the congregation’s approval at our Annual Meeting at the end of January. There will be several openings on our various boards, and we hope you will consider getting involved with one of them.



Of note, there are 3 open leadership positions:

The **Moderator** position is our church's top lay position, with the primary function of leading Church Council, among other things. It is normally filled by the Vice Moderator from the prior year. Lianna Campos agreed to be our Vice Moderator in April 2019, and has chosen to not continue in leadership during 2020. Alice Rutherford, who has a background of serving on boards and Church Council, has agreed to be on the slate for 2020 for the Moderator position. If you would also like to be considered, or have a suggestion of someone who could step into the Moderator position, please contact Wendy Baldwin by 12/20.



At this time, we have no candidate for the 2020 **Vice Moderator** position. This position assists the Moderator, and is in line for being Moderator in 2021. If you would like to be considered, or have a suggestion, please contact Wendy Baldwin by 12/20.

George Meier has been our **Financial Secretary** for several years, and he no longer wishes to serve in this role. The Financial Secretary records our pledges, gifts, and donations. This position is the only person in the church who has access to what individuals give. One needs to have a comfort level with numbers and tracking details. If you would like to be considered, or have a suggestion, please contact Wendy Baldwin by 12/20.

Thank you to all who have served on boards in 2019, and our great appreciation to Lianna and George as their service journeys follow a different path in 2020!

**Fellowship and fun!**

Check the bulletin board at the patio door entrance to see what's coming up, and ways to connect and share fellowship!



**Friday Night at the Movies** – *note a change of date in December from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday to the 4<sup>th</sup> Friday – 12/27, 6:30ish:* Join us this month on 12/27 to avoid the hectic Christmas shopping season. We'll meet at 6:30ish at Keystone Art Cinema in the Fashion Mall at Keystone, and decide which film(s) to see, get refreshments, and socialize. Then, after the movie, hang out at the Indie Lounge for more fellowship. Questions? Contact Wendy Baldwin

**TRUSTEES**

Randy Walker, Chair

**Annual Stewardship Campaign –  
Devoted to Generosity**

Thank you to everyone who has completed a pledge card for 2020! Your financial gifts fund the many ministries of our church, as we seek to reflect God's generous love for us all.

If you have not yet turned in a pledge card, we hope to have all pledges by 12/15. This helps us as we start our planning for 2020. Extra cards are available in the Narthex, and can be placed in the offering plate or mailed to the church.



Thank you for all of the generous ways that you give to the church and to the world!



# Financial Update

When We Give, We Reach Out With Helping Hands

Here are the financial results through October 31, 2019.

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| 1. Current Year Actual vs Budget Summary   |                 |          |                       |
|--|-----------------|----------|-----------------------|
| 1/1/2019 through 10/31/2019 Using Budget 1 |                 |          |                       |
| Category                                   | 1/1/2019 Actual | - Budget | 10/31/2019 Difference |
| INCOME                                     | 201,581         | 199,232  | 2,350                 |
| M. Unrestricted Contributions              | 201,581         | 199,232  | 2,350                 |
| M.01 Pledged Offerings                     | 144,942         | 146,844  | -1,902                |
| M.02 UnPledged Offerings                   | 15,251          | 20,999   | -5,748                |
| M.03 Rollover Prior Year Surplus_D...      | 4,766           | 4,766    | 0                     |
| M.04 Foundation - Endowment Fund...        | 20,000          | 10,000   | 10,000                |
| M.05 Foundation - Minister Fund Draw       | 15,000          | 15,000   | 0                     |
| M.06 Foundation - Trad. Music Fund...      | 0               | 0        | 0                     |
| M.07. Transfer from Youth Fund             | 0               | 0        | 0                     |
| M.08 Other Transfers from Restr Ac...      | 1,623           | 1,623    | 0                     |
| EXPENSES                                   | 206,980         | 216,140  | 9,160                 |
| A. Pastoral Leadership                     | 101,518         | 102,549  | 1,030                 |
| B. Worship & Faith                         | 31,585          | 34,742   | 3,157                 |
| C. Care & Connections                      | 298             | 438      | 139                   |
| D. Witness & Welcome                       | 174             | 583      | 409                   |
| E. Outreach & Service                      | 14,152          | 14,263   | 111                   |
| F. Trustees                                | 232             | 140      | -92                   |
| G. Administration & Operations             | 15,528          | 18,052   | 2,524                 |
| H. House & Grounds                         | 38,528          | 39,803   | 1,275                 |
| I. Miscellaneous                           | 4,964           | 5,571    | 607                   |
| Net Difference:                            | -5,399          | -16,908  | 11,509                |

## Highlights:

Our financial results through October present the same picture as in previous months – undesignated giving (that is, giving to support normal church operations) continues to fall short of both our 2019 budget and our actual giving in 2018. We are managing expenses well to offset the shortfall.

- **Income of \$201,600** was \$7,600 below budget (after adjusting for the timing of draws from the FCC Foundation).
- **Expenses were \$207,000**, a savings of \$9,000 vs. budget, with most of the savings in Worship and Faith (Alternative Worship) and Administrative Operations.
- Our **cash position** at October 31 was strong thanks to draws from the FC Foundation - \$20,400 in checking and \$25,200 in our Fidelity money market fund. We expect some large cash outlays in November/December, including over \$15,000 for final payment on our solar panels.
- Our October 31 **net position** (cash plus investments minus restricted funds and other committed obligations) was \$10,200 negative.

## Mission of the Month - October

We collected \$1,216 for Neighbors in Need, the October mission of the month.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

- Jim Lootens, Treasurer  
lootens.jb@gmail.com

### Writing a Poem

By susanna-judith rae

*"Keep busy always in your work for the Lord, since you know that nothing you do in the Lord's service is ever useless" (1 Corinthians 15:58 TEV).*

After reading rules of a poetry contest, i prayed for God's will. On December 13, 2008, i realized i was, indeed, to write a poem. i closed my eyes, prayed, and soon saw a sweet little baby. Continuing to pray, i wondered if the baby was one of my adult sons or grandchildren as an infant. Suddenly, i understood that *baby Jesus* was to be the topic. After writing the first stanza, words i had heard in a recent dream popped into my mind: "growing in wisdom and stature." i added the words and continued to pray and write. Soon the resulting "Each Advent Anew" was finished, submitted, and published in Eber & Wein Publishing's *Verses and Visions: Unknown Paths*.

"Each Advent Anew"

Sweet Baby Jesus, we worship Thee  
For what You are, for what You will be:  
our shining light,  
comfort just right,  
hope in the night.

Child growing up in wisdom and stature,  
teen so determined, courageous, and pure.  
Man teaching others how to fully love  
and grow spiritually, for life above.

Yet mostly you show us how to be true  
to what God values our whole lives through:  
How to stand firm, whate'er others may do.

Yes, Baby Jesus, each Advent anew  
we study Your life and think about You,  
though not enough, 'cause our egos rush in  
with worldly desires that lead us to sin  
and hunger for pleasures that crowd out Your name  
and make empty gestures in hope of mere fame.

Please, help us, dear Jesus, be true to You  
as Christmas approaches and all yearlong, too.  
Our precious Christ Baby, we need You, we do.  
Thank You, dear Friend, Lamb of God, our Jesús.

### Meridian Hills School: Families and Traditions

I recently spent some time with my extended family celebrating the life of my aunt. She lived a wonderful, long and full 86 years. As we cousins sat around reminiscing, I got to thinking about all the times we spent together. Some of the occasions were just fun vacations enjoying each other's company. Other times we were celebrating a birthday, anniversary, marriage, or holiday. As we laughed and cried together, I looked around and realized that we all were connected. My uncle (my dad's brother) had been married to my aunt for 65 years. That makes for a lot of gatherings and many memories. What struck me is that my aunt's relatives had become a part of our lives just as much as my father and uncle's relatives. Over the years, we all had become one big family. And with that came big warm smile in my heart.

When families gather to say good bye there are usually a "few" photos included in the celebration. Well, this gathering was no exception. There were photos made from slides, black and white ones touched up, and digitals that came to life on paper. Looking through

them all, we were listening to our parents share of the occasions that were in the photos. Recounting the time, place, meal and the people in these photos was window into their past. Listening to them share their stories about their celebrations, I started to put some pieces together about my own family history. I began to realize how and why my family growing up did certain celebrations. Seeing my father's family history and the connection to what we did as a young family began to have a new light. I also thought about what my mother's side of the family had brought to our family's celebrations. Traditions run deep and their significance as well.

Then when I got married and had a young family we took family celebrations and traditions from both sides of our families and incorporated them into our family. As I celebrated with his family, I could see their rich history and traditions and the importance of them. Some traditions are very different and some are very similar. As we went through the seasons and celebrations, it's fun to note where the crossovers are. For me, it's a way to feel connected on a deeper level.

Even though each family might have had a different way to celebrate, we all were celebrating with time honored traditions that were important to each family. In my family we have taken traditions from my parents (both sides) and my husband's parents (both sides) and created some new ones of our own. Sharing the history and significance with our children will keep the traditions alive and all of us connected to our families. Enjoy your time with your family and enjoy the rich traditions that are a part of each celebration you have throughout the year!

Hugs,  
Linda Foley

## Meagan Johnson

Alexander Technique  
for Music & Life



### **A Moment of Ease - Taking Time in Daily Life**

One of the main purposes of the Alexander Technique is to unlearn harmful habits of tension that lead to stress, pain, and strain. Students learn about their habits using simple activities like sitting, standing, and walking as a "laboratory" of sorts, developing awareness and the ability to observe themselves and make constructive choices. Why do we focus on these seemingly simple activities instead of those that are more complex? How can paying attention to ourselves in these "little" moments help us to unlearn harmful habits?

I think of our activities on a spectrum of "low stakes" to "high stakes." Examples of low stakes activities include washing the dishes, sweeping the floor, walking, feeding your pet, or folding laundry. Low stakes activities are such because the quality of the outcome typically isn't that important. If you spill a little pet food on the floor, it doesn't matter - you can pick it up. If your towels are not folded *just* so before you put them in the cabinet, it doesn't really matter! Life moves on. High stakes activities, on the other hand, typically have great importance attached to their outcome. Examples might be a public presentation (speech, vocal or instrumental performance) artistic endeavor, or other precision activity.

The intensity of the stakes of an activity has a direct relationship to how easy or difficult it is to change your habits. To change our own habits in a permanent, meaningful way, we have to change our thought processes. Often, that change requires a risk - it means daring to be wrong, because that openness to failure allows you to experiment, to try new ways of using your Whole Self that may or may not work. Is it easier to dare to be wrong while folding the laundry or while giving an important presentation? If you're anything like me, definitely the laundry! It also requires taking time, being willing to not just "get the job done quickly," but to be attentive to the steps of the process.

The way you do anything is the way you do everything. More clearly - the way you use your Whole Self (body+mind) when folding the laundry can be the same way you use your Whole

Self in singing, speaking, athletics, or anything else. The ease with which you pour pet food into the dish may become the ease with which you sing a challenging phrase of music. If you're serious about change, practice in low-stakes activities BEFORE trying it in those with higher stakes. Trying for change in the higher stakes, more complex activities too soon may cause you to tighten in response to the changes, or to believe the changes don't work. Give yourself time. Try them in daily life first. Then you'll learn more about yourself, and you'll be able to observe and release the habits that don't serve you - which lets you be the most creative and powerful in every activity. (More at [www.sound-direction.com/blog](http://www.sound-direction.com/blog).)

- Megan Johnson

**Bread for the World-Indiana hosts Rick Steves – Sunday, December 1**

**Clowes Memorial Hall**

4602 Sunset Ave, Indianapolis, Indiana 46208



Sunday, December 1, 3:00 – 4:30 p.m. Rick Steves is a well-known travel writer, author, TV personality, and also a passionate advocate for the hungry. As part of their Listen Up speaker series, the Indiana Bread for the World team and WFYI are partnering to present an evening with Rick Steves. He will be discussing his recent travels focused on international hunger and poverty and the resulting documentary Rick Steves in Ethiopia and Guatemala: Hunger and Hope, to be aired first quarter of 2020.

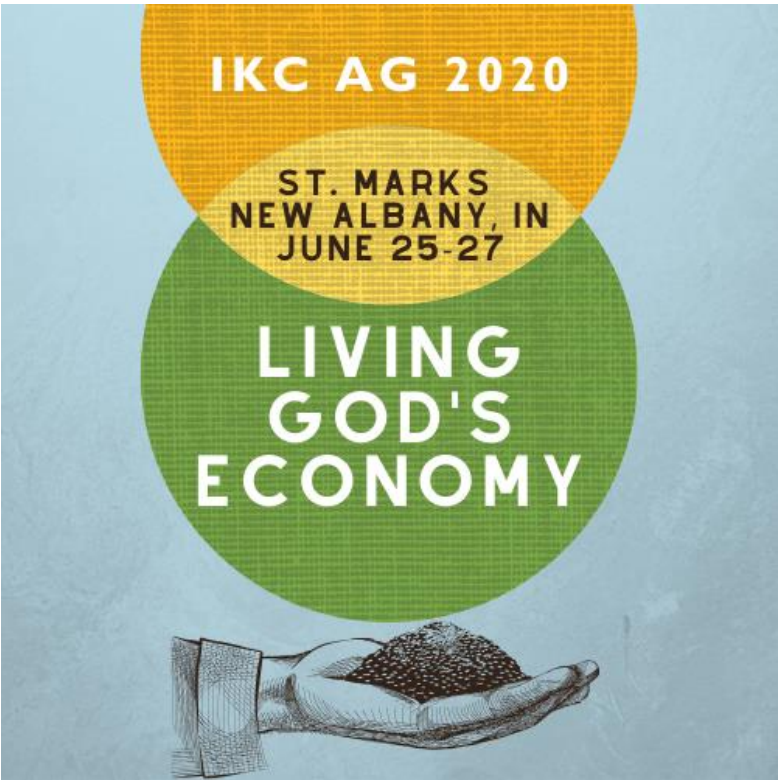
Buy tickets here:

<https://oss.ticketmaster.com/aps/clowesh>

[all/EN//buy/staticmap/ECU1201M](https://www.ticketmaster.com/aps/clowesh)

**Indiana-Kentucky Conference of the UCC**

**Save the Date: IKC Annual Gathering, June 25-27, 2020**





**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Men’s Lunch:** This lunch and discussion gathering for men of First Congregational meets at various restaurants in the greater Indianapolis area. They meet every other Thursday at 1 p.m. This month they will meet on **December 5<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>**. Please contact Randy Walker at (317) 796-2081 or [aa28977rwalker@gmail.com](mailto:aa28977rwalker@gmail.com) for information.

**The Book Circle** will meet at **1:30 p.m.** on **Tuesday, Dec. 17** at the home of Nancy Dickinson. The group will share Christmas devotionals or Christmas memories of a spiritual nature. We will begin discussing Joan Chittister's book *The Time Is Now* in January. For further information, contact Sue Chapman at (317) 259-1806 or [carolsuech59@gmail.com](mailto:carolsuech59@gmail.com).

**January Colony Submission Deadline:** Please have your submissions sent to Shannon no later than **December 15<sup>th</sup>**. The church office will be closed December 24<sup>th</sup> – January 2<sup>nd</sup>; therefore, the January Colony will be sent out on December 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Women’s Lunch Bunch:** All women of the church are invited to get together once a month for lunch, friendship and fellowship. This month we will have our combined Nov./Dec. gathering on **Thursday, Dec. 5<sup>th</sup> at 11:45 a.m.** For questions or more information please contact Sue Chapman at 317-259-1806 or [carolsuech59@gmail.com](mailto:carolsuech59@gmail.com).

**No Holiday Book Party:** This December there will not be a Holiday Book Party with the kindergarten at IPS 106. We are planning a spring project that we will inform you about in the next few months. For more information, please contact Sandy Wood or Betty Schnur.

**Poinsettia Time:** It is the Advent Season. Please order a poinsettia to help celebrate this special time of year. The cost per plant is \$10.00. Have any questions, please see or email Sally Coombs at [sallysews73@gmail.com](mailto:sallysews73@gmail.com).



**POINSETTIA ORDER FORM**

Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ poinsettia plants.

In honor of: \_\_\_\_\_

In remembrance of: \_\_\_\_\_

Donor's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount of money with this order (\$10 per plant):  
\_\_\_\_\_

Delivery to home-bound members?    YES                      NO

Other instructions: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_


Place order form with check or money in the offering plate or give to Sally Coombs. Orders may be mailed to or dropped off at the church office.

**Deadline:** December 15<sup>th</sup>  
**Display:** December 22<sup>rd</sup>



# KINDNESS CALENDAR: DECEMBER 2019



| SUNDAY  | MONDAY   | TUESDAY  | WEDNESDAY   | THURSDAY   | FRIDAY  | SATURDAY  |
|---|--|--|---|--|---|---|
| 1 Encourage kindness. Share the Kindness Calendar with others | 2 Support a charity, cause or campaign you really care about     | 3 Give kind comments to as many people as possible today               | 4 Listen wholeheartedly to others without judging them  | 5 Leave a positive message for someone else to find              | 6 Notice when you're hard on yourself or others and be kind instead | 7 Make gifts to give to people who are homeless or feeling lonely |
| 8 Do something helpful for a friend or family member          | 9 Be generous. Feed someone with food, love or kindness today    | 10 Count your blessings: list the kind things others have done for you | 11 Give someone your place in a queue (in traffic or in a shop)   | 12 See how many different people you can smile at today          | 13 Buy some extra items and donate them to a local food bank        | 14 Share a happy memory or inspiring thought with a loved one     |
| 15 Visit an elderly neighbour and brighten up their day       | 16 Look for something positive to say to everyone you meet today | 17 Thank people who do things for you but you may take for granted     | 18 Offer to help someone who is facing difficulties at the moment   | 19 Give away something that you have been holding on to          | 20 Congratulate someone for an achievement that may go unnoticed    | 21 Shop locally and support independent producers                 |
| 22 Invite over someone who would otherwise be alone           | 23 Choose to give or receive the gift of forgiveness             | 24 Offer spontaneous hugs to your loved ones and friends               | 25 Treat everyone with kindness today, including yourself!  | 26 Encourage others to join you outside and enjoy time in nature | 27 Call a relative who is far away to say hello and have a chat     | 28 Be kind to the planet. Eat less meat and use less energy       |
| 29 Turn off digital devices and really listen to people       | 30 Let someone know how much you appreciated their gift          | 31 Plan what extra acts of kindness you will do in 2020...             | <p><b>"Do your little bit of good where you are; those little bits together overwhelm the world" ~ Desmond Tutu</b></p>  |  |   |   |
|   |  |  |   |  |   |   |

**ACTION FOR HAPPINESS**

**#DoGoodDecember**



[www.actionforhappiness.org](http://www.actionforhappiness.org)

Your happiness is part of something bigger



Join the movement for a happier and kinder world