



# FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

## THE PILGRIM COLONY

November 2019

### Pastor's Reflections

Our Be The Church worship series continues with November's theme inviting us to think about what it means to "forgive often." It is one thing to forgive, it is another to forgive often. In the Bible story from the gospel of Matthew, we see this exchange between Jesus and Peter, "Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times." (Matthew 18:21-22). It's hard to miss Jesus' point that God's forgiveness stretches us way beyond our comfort zone. We will take some time together to reflect on the ways our lives have been impacted and changed by forgiveness—whether that is forgiving someone else, forgiving God or forgiving ourselves. One thing is for sure: life provides multiple opportunities to practice forgiveness. Maybe that is what Jesus was getting at when he says "seventy-seven times."

"We cannot change the past, but we can change our attitude toward it. Uproot guilt and plant forgiveness. Tear out arrogance and seed humility. Exchange love for hate — thereby, making the present comfortable and the future promising." — Maya Angelou

During the month of November we will be celebrating the spirit of generosity that supports our congregation's mission. Everyone's contributions of their time, talents, passions, and treasure help us to Be The Church. Because of your support, ministry happens here that touches people's hearts and changes people's lives. Thank you for your dedication and financial gifts. God takes what we offer and uses our gifts for building the kin-dom of God in practical ways. We will celebrate Generosity Sunday on November 24.

I give God thanks for First Congregational and the ways we come together. It is a joy and gift to serve as your pastor.

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

#### Completing the Circle

As moderator, I have devoted a few Colony articles to effective and healthy communication. In keeping with that theme, the Council created a committee tasked with developing a process to conduct subjective, qualitative assessments of various ministries in the church. The Completing the Circle Committee members are Karen Walker, Lianna Campos, Elizabeth Price, Nancy Dickinson and myself.✚ We're trying to follow a published church assessment process and will start with one topic--worship at First Congregational. Our plan is to learn from this first effort, expand it, and eventually cover all of our ministries (education, outreach, etc.).



Why have I linked assessments to effective, healthy communication? Because our concept is that assessment, done correctly, is nothing more than good feedback. Good communication is two-way: both sides speaking and listening, transmitting and receiving. Transmitting has to be clear; listening has to understand the message, and it needs to include **feedback** that lets the transmitter understand how the message was received. Let's look at this a little more closely in terms of our worship ministry. Pastor Sarah, the Worship and Faith

Board, the musicians and the choir are collaborating to create a worship experience that is spiritually meaningful and uplifting. They need **feedback** to understand how effective the worship experience is for the congregation and to help guide future developments. The Completing the Circle Committee is going to structure the assessment process to capture feedback of our worship experience. [Just to hammer the point here: we're taking this step, not because we perceive a problem with worship, but because good **feedback** is a necessary part of a healthy church's healthy communications.]

The committee wants this process to reach every member of the congregation, by group interviews and by written surveys. This is key: we will be asking for your individual experience of worship: How does each part of the service make you feel? How do you respond internally? What touched you? What did not? We want your subjective, emotional and intellectual response ("I couldn't follow the point of the sermon," or "the sermon helped me understand the scriptural reading in a new way that really enriched my understanding").

We have an ambitious schedule. We hope we can meet it! We hope to send out a letter to each of you, explaining the process in more detail, and to follow up with group interviews and surveys. Stay tuned!

God bless you all,  
Rich Gibson

Intern Reflections

A Message from FC’s Just Peace Intern

I am about half way through my internship at FC UCC and have already learned so much. The last couple weeks I have been meeting one on one with many members to get to know them, learn about their experience with the church, and their reflections on just peace. I have been so encouraged by listening to members' stories and heart for this church and just peace. If anyone would like to meet with me, my email is [glangfor@butler.edu](mailto:glangfor@butler.edu). Please don't hesitate to reach out; I would love to hear your story and input! I will soon be proposing a strategy plan to the Just Peace team and am looking forward to feedback. Thank you for your hospitality and support!

Thanks,  
Grace Langford, Just Peace Intern



A Message from FC’s Student Pastor



Hello Church! I’ve been so blessed to journey alongside you as your Student Pastor these past few months. Thank you so much for your patience with me as I learn and grow both in and out of the church. One thing I want to thank you for is your continued eagerness as individuals and a church—you never cease to amaze me in the ways you long to truly care for and love *all people*. Being a part of a church that strives to do that in so many unique ways has powerfully and positively impacted my life as a seminary student and a fellow church member. I really look forward to continuing this journey with you! As always if you ever want to connect or chat more, you can find me at [studentpastor@fcindy.org](mailto:studentpastor@fcindy.org)

Thanks!  
Cassidy Hall, Student Pastor

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
Saturday, Nov. 2	10:30 a.m.	Bell Choir
Sunday, November 3	2:00 a.m.	<b>Daylight Savings Time Ends (set clock back 1 hour)</b>
Tuesday, Nov. 5		<b>Election Day</b> (in parlor)
Wednesday, Nov. 6	11:00 a.m.	Witness & Welcome
Wednesday, Nov. 6	7:00 p.m.	Trustees
Saturday, Nov. 9	5:30 p.m.	Game Night
Sunday, Nov. 10	12:30 p.m.	Buzz: Faith in Indiana
Wednesday, Nov. 13	11:00 a.m.	Music Support Team
Wednesday, Nov. 13	5:00 p.m.	Mental Health Team
Wednesday, Nov. 13	7:00 p.m.	Church Council
Thursday, Nov. 14	1:00 p.m.	Men’s Lunch
Thursday, Nov. 14	6:30 p.m.	In Harmony
Sunday, Nov. 24	1:30 p.m.	Spiritual Explorers Labyrinth Walk
Thurs-Fri, Nov. 28 - 29		<b>Church Office Closed for Thanksgiving</b>

## **WORSHIP & FAITH** Elizabeth Price, Chair

### **Sunday Adult Class**

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

On **November 3 & 17**, Rich Gibson will be using a curriculum titled "Plymouth's Pilgrims: Their Church, Their World; and Ours." Pat Larracey obtained this for us from the Congregational Library & Archives in Boston, MA. It was produced as a 4 part discussion guide for churches on the occasion of the 400th Anniversary of the Landing of the Pilgrims. Copies of the discussion guide will be made available for attendees. Come with an open mind to learn more about our Congregational ancestors.

On **November 10 & 24**, our Just Peace Intern, Grace Langford, will be presenting:

- **November 10**

Grace had the opportunity to attend the Interfaith Network for Drone Warfare at Princeton Seminary last month. She will be sharing an impactful video about drone warfare and taking time to discuss and react to the impact of drone warfare. Next, we will learn about ways to draw attention to this issue and be advocates for just peace.

- **November 24**

We are going to take a look at the 2019 Hunger Report from Bread for the World. The report this year is called "Back to the Basics" and focuses on five key aspects: nutrition, gender, fragility, climate, and livelihoods. We will discuss each of these key aspects in the context of the world and local community.

Hope to see you there!



### **November Worship Theme: "Forgive Often"**

In continuing our "Be the Church" focus in worship over the next few months, in the month of November we will engage in what it means as the church to "forgive often."

### **November Worship Leaders**

November 3	Rev. Worth Hartman
November 10	Sue Chapman
November 17	Steve Coomer
November 24	Marion Harcourt

### **Advent: Come let us Prepare!**

FCC 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.

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.

Saturday, December 21 is the Winter Solstice. 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 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.

**FC's 2019 Final Labyrinth Walk**



FC's fourth and final 2019 labyrinth-walking experience is on Sunday, November 24<sup>th</sup> at First Congregational. We will join together in walking a portable labyrinth following the meal in the Mayflower room.

All FC members and visitors are invited to walk the labyrinth. This is an excellent time to invite family members, friends, and neighbors to FC's Sunday 9:45 AM Adult Class, 11:00 AM worship service, followed by a meal and walking a labyrinth. - susanna-judith rae

**Come Ring With Us!**

Interested in ringing with our bell choir? We often say you only need to count to 4, know your alphabet from A - G, know your right hand from your left and you qualify to ring with us. This year we might ask you to count to 7.

We play for worship 4-5 times per year with rehearsals being on the 3 Saturday mornings prior to the date we play. Please see Bob Cook for more information. Not only do we make music but we also have a few laughs along the way.

- Bob Cook, Bell Choir Director



## **Just Peace Borderland Buzz: Thank You!**

I want to express my gratitude to First Congregational UCC for hosting me, Rebecca and Jim to share our witness to the US Southern border. The work you and the congregation are doing to realize the vision of Just Peace is so important in this world.

Thank you,  
Jill Ollinger

### **CHURCH COUNCIL**

Rich Gibson, Chair

The Council recently passed the following resolution:

*"First Congregational UCC shall encourage inclusive language in worship whenever appropriate."*

We came to this decision with some measure of enthusiasm:

God is Spirit, and those that worship God must do so in spirit and in faith...which means, as Spirit, God has no gender. To refer to God as He/Him/His inherently limits our conception of God. To remove gender from our conception of God is not "politically correct," but spiritually correct.

This improvement to our conception of God cannot be complete in one fell swoop; old habits are deeply ingrained. We don't have the final word in stone as to how we will implement this, but we're going to start small and move forward in a deliberate and intelligent way. For now, you should start seeing and hearing the removal of gendered pronouns when referring to God in the spoken and printed scriptural readings during Sunday services. The Inclusive Bible shall be a primary reference as we work our way through this. To expand on this point: the UCC does not have an official or authorized translation of the Bible. We use the NRSV a lot, but not exclusively. Future readings are likely to be wholly NRSV sometimes, wholly King James occasionally, NRSV with changes inspired by the Inclusive Bible, wholly taken from the Inclusive Bible, or something else. Each week, Pastor Sarah and that week's worship leader will work together to develop a reading that meets the intent of the Council's resolution.

For example,

- "God" and "God's" will be used instead of "He," "Him," and "His."
- "Loving Parent," "Sacred Presence," or "Divine Creator" instead of "Father"
- "Lord" may just disappear

This is not an exhaustive list, but a place to start. If you have comments or suggestions, we'd love to hear from you!

- Rich Gibson

### **OUTREACH & SERVICE**

Sue Chapman, Chair

## **November Mission of the Month: Family Promise**



This month our Mission of the Month is Family Promise of Greater Indianapolis, the organization that serves families in crisis by providing short term housing while helping them to find permanent housing and providing skills that will help clients keep jobs and manage finances. FCC has been

affiliated with Family Promise, formerly known as Interfaith Hospitality Network, for over 25 years. As our congregation's make-up and size have changed in recent years, the Council has approved a recommendation from Outreach & Service for us to discontinue hosting families at our church but to continue as a "supporting congregation." This means providing monetary support, taking part in the clothing drives, providing school clothing for the children in the After Care program through our "Underneath It All" drives, and providing Christmas gifts from the gift cards on our "Giving Tree." Our monetary support helps with maintaining the day center and services for clients, including providing bus passes and gas

cards. Since we are no longer hosting, our monetary support is even more important now. Please give generously to support the important service Family Promise provides to homeless families in our city.

**Pantry Items of the Month**

During November, we are collecting the following items: fruit cocktail, spaghetti sauce, quick oats, and tooth paste.

- Betty Schnur



**Support for the Northside Food Pantry**

Most of us are blessed with an abundance of life's essentials. Thanks to adequate finances we have a good shelter and access to sufficient nutritious food. But the same can't be said for some of our neighbors who must live hand to mouth, not always knowing the source of their next meal.

We can be proud that, as a church, we have been generous in our food donations to the Northside Food Pantry. Staffed with volunteers, this pantry receives and dispenses our monthly contributions efficiently, seeing that they get into the hands of those needing them. Last month we contributed ninety three pounds. Thanks to all who donated! Your donations are appreciated. Let's keep it up!

- The Board of Outreach and Service

**Get Ready for the Mitten Tree!**

Again this year Outreach & Service will be sending mittens, gloves, hats, scarves, and warm socks for adults and children to Exodus Refugee for their clients, most of whom come here unprepared for winter weather. If you knit or crochet, get out your needles now. If you are a bargain hunter, start looking early! The tree itself will go up at the beginning of Advent, but we'd like to be able to deliver the donations around December 16. Thank you for your support.



**Too Many Calendars?**

Most of us receive multiple calendars at this time of year, many more than we need. Please bring your spare 2020 calendars in for clients of Exodus Refugee Immigration, and deposit them in the marked receptacle in the coat room. Note pads are welcome as well. Thank you.



**Hoosier Village Alternative Gift Event: Sunday, November 17, 1:30-4:00 p.m. in the Chapel**

Do you struggle to find meaningful Christmas gifts for your family and friends? Do you dread receiving more "stuff" for Christmas?



This event, led by FCC members Darryl and Anne Greene and supported by our Outreach & Service Board, is an alternative to the commercialization of Christmas. You and your family members will have the opportunity to make donations in a loved one's name to one or more not-for-profit agencies that provide a variety of needed services in Marion and Boone

counties. 10-12 organizations will have representatives on-site to talk with you about the valuable work they do in the community. Best of all, none of your personal information will be shared, so you will not be inundated with future solicitations. Musical entertainment and delicious refreshments will be provided.

If you are unable to attend, you may pick up order forms in our narthex for absentee participation. Questions? Contact Sue Chapman, chair of Outreach & Service Board.

**Mental Health Team: Alzheimer's Stories - Sound & Spirit Concert**

Friday, November 8, 2019, 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm  
Northminster Presbyterian Church  
1660 Kessler Boulevard East Drive  
Indianapolis, IN 46220

A work of art can bring us to our darkest places and show us a light to illuminate our fears, ease our anxieties and heal our pain. American composer Robert Cohen's *Alzheimer's Stories* gives communal voice to those suffering with dementia and their caregivers.

Soon after the Susquehanna Valley Chorale of Lewisburg, PA commissioned Cohen to compose the work in 2009, he asked his colleague and friend, Herschel Garfein, to write the libretto. While researching, they were struck by evidence of music's ability to awaken those with dementia and to dramatically ease symptoms of aggression and anxiety. With this as the basis, they created *Alzheimer's Stories*. Composed for 2 soloists, chamber orchestra, and chorus, the work is constructed in three movements – first focusing on the clinical aspects of the disease followed by stories of those suffering from dementia, and finally, presenting hope for the caregivers and victims.

Jake Runestad's *A Silence Haunts Me*, allows the audience, through sound and silence, to experience Beethoven's struggles to compose, despite his increasing deafness. Composed in 2018, Todd Boss's poetry and Runestad's use of piano and voices invites listeners to empathize with the great composer, as he agonizes over the impending loss of the asset he holds most dear.

The common denominator in these and other pieces on the Nov. 8th concert is faith and music, and how these can sustain us when nothing else can. This is a special experience designed to bring people together around the struggles of those suffering and those caring for the suffering. (from [www.northminster-indy.org](http://www.northminster-indy.org))

**WITNESS & WELCOME**  
Bob Cook, Chair

**November BUZZ with Pitch-In: Faith in Indiana**

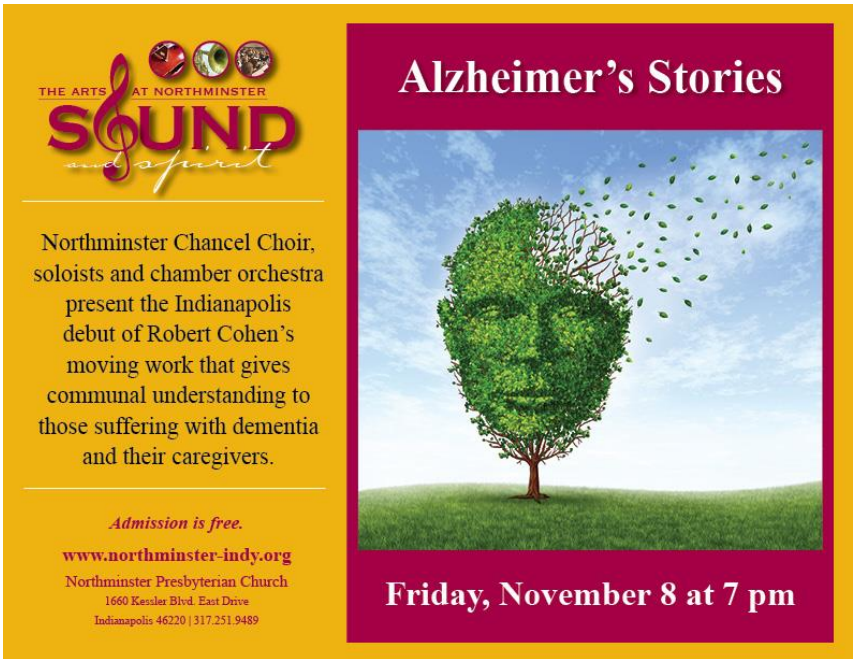
After worship on **Sunday, November 10**, there will be a pitch in lunch followed by a BUZZ session. The BUZZ topic will be Faith in Indiana (please see Pastor Sarah's article below on Faith in Indiana for more information).

The purpose of this BUZZ is to explore the possibility of becoming a member of this organization of 60+ churches and other groups working together to address social justice issues in our city. Faith in Indiana was formerly known as IndyCann.

When considering what food to take to Nov 10<sup>th</sup> Buzz's pitch-in, you might want to take something other than a dessert! Why? Because susanna-judith rae is providing lots of birthday cake—chocolate sheet cake, white sheet cake, and a layered carrot cake—to celebrate the 80<sup>th</sup> birthday of her husband, Earl Hoppert.

**Faith in Indiana**

Faith in Indiana is a statewide faith-based organization that works with clergy and leaders from various faith traditions to address and resolve social justice issues facing rural, urban,



and suburban communities. Faith in Indiana has chapters in Allen, Elkhart, Marion, Lake, and St. Joseph counties. As a multi-faith and multicultural organization, Faith in Indiana provides opportunities for diverse communities to come together across the state to resolve issues affecting Indiana families and our collective future as a State. Since 2011, Faith in Indiana, (formerly IndyCAN!), has successfully worked with community stakeholders, clergy and community leaders and elected officials to address and resolve issues from transit and criminal justice reform to healthcare and immigration. Faith in Indiana is a member of the PICO National Network. Through constant communication with tens of thousands of people from more than 20 member congregations across Central Indiana, Faith in Indiana is deeply rooted in the stories of our people and our shared faith values. By staying connected together, we expand the human capacity to make measurable systemic change.

Pastor Sarah

**New Friends! New Games!**

The Board of Witness and Welcome will host a game night at First Congregational on Saturday, November 9, beginning at 5:30 pm. This is an opportunity to invite friends to join us and also get to know our recent visitors and new members.



Snacks will be provided, pizzas will be ordered and we'll plan to eat by 7 pm. Please bring your own beverages (Coke, Pepsi, ice tea, decaffeinated, sugar-free, whatever way you like it).

We will have several games on hand to play; however, feel free to bring your favorite game to share and teach the group how to play. Can't be here by 5:30? Drop in anytime during the evening and join the fun.

**CARE & CONNECTIONS**

Wendy Baldwin, Chair

**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**, 11/15, 6:30ish: Join us on the third Friday of each month at 6:30ish at Keystone Art Cinema in the Fashion Mall at Keystone. We'll 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

**House & Grounds Update**

Have you been on the top floor of the church and seen the new look in three of the rooms? New carpet was installed on Sept 30 in the church office, the library, and Meagan Johnson's room. The church office has been going through an update during the past year, with the carpet being the final touch. In the library, the carpet installers said that the pad and carpet was in very bad shape. Plus, we were even able to put a new coat of paint on the library walls before the carpet installation. The carpet in the room occupied by our tenant, Meagan Johnson, was horribly stained and dirty. Thanks to the many people who helped move furniture out of the rooms, paint, and move things back in.

On Saturday, Oct 19, we had an impromptu outdoor workday. Over 10 people showed up to help remove overgrowth and trim bushes in the front of the building, do some clearing along the driveway and parking lot, and work on additional clearing of weedy grass in the parking lot island, as well as hauling loose bricks to a better spot. In the spring, a group of folks will tend the parking lot island into a wild flower butterfly haven.

During the workday, we discovered water leaking in the Main Floor landing of the north stairwell. The drips continued expanding throughout the day and Sunday. We believe the

source was a faulty ring on the toilet in the small bathroom off of the Minister's Office on the top floor, compounded by water coming from a loose 'bleeder' on the radiator in the bathroom. The good news is that the plumber was able to fix the toilet on Monday morning, and there is no sign of bad pipes. The other good news is that a fraction of your financial gifts to the church provide for an excellent insurance policy, with insurance advisors who were very helpful in getting a restoration company out quickly. Who knew how much damage little trickles of water can cause! There are holes in the ceiling and walls that will be repaired, and Pastor Sarah will get a new carpet in her office, since a large chunk was water damaged. Your patience during this time is appreciated.

In late October-November, our church will 'host' at least 3 events for outside groups in our facility. We charge a very reasonable building use fee, and have gotten good reviews in the past for our hospitality.

If you see a building or grounds matter that needs attention, please let me know. We can't address everything immediately, but it is good to know about things that are concerning you.

Thanks for your support - Your Building Manager, Wendy Baldwin

Financial Update

When We Give, We Reach Out With Helping Hands

Here are the financial results through September 30, 2019.

10/17/2019

1. Current Year Actual vs Budget Summary  
1/1/2019 through 9/30/2019 Using Budget 1

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Category	1/1/2019 Actual	- Budget	9/30/2019 Difference
INCOME	169,624	184,163	-14,539
M. Unrestricted Contributions	169,624	184,163	-14,539
M.01 Pledged Offerings	134,657	133,876	781
M.02 UnPledged Offerings	13,579	18,899	-5,320
M.03 Rollover Prior Year Surplus_D...	4,766	4,766	0
M.04 Foundation - Endowment Fund...	0	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	186,635	193,234	6,599
A. Pastoral Leadership	91,708	92,593	885
B. Worship & Faith	28,494	31,428	2,934
C. Care & Connections	298	394	96
D. Witness & Welcome	174	525	351
E. Outreach & Service	12,823	12,845	22
F. Trustees	232	60	-172
G. Administration & Operations	14,352	16,245	1,894
H. House & Grounds	34,075	34,085	10
I. Miscellaneous	4,479	5,059	580
Net Difference:	-17,011	-9,071	-7,940

Highlights:

Our overall financial results through September present the same picture as in previous months – undesignated contributions continue to fall short of expectations but expenses are being managed well.

- Income of \$169,600 was \$14,500 below budget. However, \$10,000 was timing only – an FCC Foundation draw budgeted for September that didn't occur until October. The true shortfall was \$4,500.

- **Expenses were \$186,600.** This was \$6,600 below budget, with most of the savings in Worship and Faith and Administrative Operations.
- Our **cash position** at September 30 was strong, with \$26,900 in the checking account and \$15,200 in our Fidelity money market fund. We will have several large cash outlays in October, including solar panel final payment, new carpeting on the second floor, and property insurance.
- Our September 30 **net position** (cash + investments – restricted funds and other committed obligations) was \$21,900 negative. That will be helped in October by a \$20,000 draw from the Foundation.

### **Mission of the Month - September**

We collected \$508 for Hoosier Interfaith Power and Light, the September mission of the month.

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

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

## **FOUNDATION**

### **A Note from the Church's Foundation**

During the last century, some of First Congregational's members understood that for long term stability, a financially healthy church must have a solid financial base. Several families established individual funds intended to provide such a base. These funds eventually became our present First Congregational Church Foundation which has served us well, providing essential support as we have needed it. But it needs replenishing from time to time and the Foundation Board asks that church members and friends who are able to make a gift to do so either during their times here on earth or as bequests. Joining the 1857 Society is one option. Thanks for considering your support. For more information see a Foundation Board member or Pastor Sarah.

- Bill Gillette

## **COMMUNITY**

### **A Powerful Way to Deal with Christmas Blues**

By susanna-judith rae

*"Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise (God), my savior and my God" (Psalm 42:5 NIV).*

In the late 1980s, i attended numerous 12-step meetings, mostly of Al-Anon and Adult Children of Alcoholics. More than a few times, i heard members declare, "There are two times when we need to go to meetings: when we know we need to and when we think we don't." Maybe the same applies to attending Blue Christmas Services.

Off and on, as Advent 2019 has approached i've reflected, with gratitude, on last year's Blue Christmas Service. Pastor Sarah introduced 18 of us to this unusual service four days before Christmas. i hope this religious ritual will become an annual meaningful, and cherished, part of FC's Advent and Christmas Services.

Last year, perhaps you learned about the Blue Christmas Service in the same way i did—through an explanation published in the December 2018 *Pilgrim Colony*: 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." [...]

While pondering those words, i relived blue Christmases of the past, such as in 1976 to 1978 when my then-husband, our two young sons, and i lived in São Paulo, Brazil. Far away from family and friends, and back when long distance phone charges were exorbitant, i dreaded what, indeed, turned out to be some Blue Christmases. Elvis's "I'll have a blue Christmas without you" and Bing Crosby's "I'll be home for Christmas... if only in my dreams" ran repeatedly through my mind. Regrettably, in São Paulo, i wallowed in self-pity, felt downcast, and embraced little of the joy and the Good News of Christmas.

In contrast, Pastor Sarah's Blue Christmas Service was consoling, though, Earl, a retired UCC minister, at first, briefly seemed sad to no longer lead Christmas services. Then, Pastor Sarah asked Earl to carry a large Bible into the sanctuary as we all marched into the Blue Service together. Earl felt useful and needed as he carried the Bible.

The evening's soup, fellowship, and conversation were also meaningful. Josh Sanders had spent hours preparing delicious and nutritious soups, salad, sliced raw vegetables, and even home-made bread and butter.

Shannon Abbott's "Meditation of Comfort" was quite soothing and restorative, too, as were the healing oils she had prepared for Pastor Sarah to use in anointing all who wanted to be blessed. After the anointing of various oils, cinnamon, and other spices mentioned in the Bible, i fully enjoyed the aroma of the concoction Pastor Sarah had spread on my right wrist.

The following morning, memories of the joy of taking in the Bible verses, hymns, and scents continued to gladden my heart. Recently i noted that what i had felt quite burdened by in December, 2018, no longer seemed burdensome. Praise God for the difference!

### LGBTQ Film Festival

The 2019 Indianapolis LGBTQ Film Festival will be held November 8 - 10 on the grounds of the Indianapolis Art Museum. Tickets are available online and most showings are only \$10 with a full 3 day pass being \$50.

Go to 2019 Indianapolis LGBTQ Film Festival for a listing of show titles, locations and prices. Proceeds from this film festival support the work of Indiana Youth Group (IYG).

- Bob Cook



## 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 **November 14<sup>th</sup>**. Please contact Randy Walker at (317) 796-2081 or [aa28977rwalker@gmail.com](mailto:aa28977rwalker@gmail.com) for information.

**Circle IV Book Discussion:** Circle IV will be meeting at the home of Nancy Dickinson on Tuesday, **November 19<sup>th</sup>** at 1:30 pm. We will discuss the third section of *Jayber Crow* by Wendell Berry. All are welcome to join us. Feel free to carpool. For further information, contact Sue Chapman at (317) 259-1806 or [carolsuech59@gmail.com](mailto:carolsuech59@gmail.com).

**December Colony Submission Deadline:** Please have your submissions sent to Shannon by **November 15<sup>th</sup>**.

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

**Flower Calendar:** The 2019 Flower Calendar is on the bulletin board by the garden doors. Flowers can be for any occasion, and can come from the store, florist, or from your garden. The cost is \$25.00 from our florist. Any questions, please email Sally Coombs at [sallysews73@gmail.com](mailto:sallysews73@gmail.com) or call 317-446-2853. You can also let Shannon Abbott know the occasion at [shannon@fcindy.org](mailto:shannon@fcindy.org) or call the church office at 317-257-5397.