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# FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Epistle for the Week of November 28, 2019



 american greetings

**Dear First Congregational,**

Thank you for being a church devoted to generosity! We are blessed with the love, kindness, and caring that flows through us as we seek to Be The Church. This goodness comes from God and together we can be God's hands and feet in the world. We can each choose to work together to use our lives to make the world "a bit better" as Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote. Here is Emerson's quote from last Sunday's sermon:

*To laugh often and much;  
To win the respect of intelligent people  
And the affection of children;  
To earn the appreciation of honest critics  
And endure the betrayal of false friends;  
To appreciate beauty;  
To find the best in others;*

*To leave the world a bit better  
Whether by a healthy child,  
A garden patch, or a redeemed social condition;  
To know even one life has breathed easier  
Because you lived here.  
This is to have succeeded.*

Thank you for helping First Congregational be a church that seeks to faithfully live out our mission and ministry. Thanksgiving blessings to each of you.

Blessings,  
Pastor Sarah

## **Worship**

### **Adult Class - 9:45 a.m.**

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 Pastor Carol) "*Comfort, Comfort My People*" (2 Kings 17-19; Isaiah 40:1-1; 1:21-31; John 10:1)

**Sunday Worship Service : Generosity Sunday - 11:00 a.m.**

Pastor Sarah will preach on "Be the Church: Reject Racism."

Scripture: Isaiah 2:1-5

**Just Peace Buzz with Pitch In Lunch, Sunday, December 1, 2019, 12:30 p.m.**

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. Join us for this time of discernment and receiving parting gifts from our Just Peace intern, Grace. Also, join us for **Advent wreath making** during and after the Buzz (1 wreath per family).



**Sneak Peek at Upcoming Special Worship Services - Please Mark Your Calendar!**

**Lessons & Carols - December 15, 11:00am**

**Blue Christmas - December 20, 6:30pm**

**Christmas Eve - December 24, 7:00pm**

**What's Happening at FC**

(See [December](#) Colony for monthly announcements and further details.)

**Annual Stewardship Campaign – Devoted to Generosity**

Thank you to all who have already turned in a pledge card and/or Time & Talent card for

2020. The ministries of our church depend on our faithful gifts. If you have not turned one in, extra cards are available in the Narthex, or by contacting the church office; to help with our planning, please turn these in by December 1.

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

**Hanging of the Greens, Saturday November 30<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.**

Please come help decorate the church for the Advent Season. Any questions, email Sally Coombs at [sallysews73@gmail.com](mailto:sallysews73@gmail.com) or call 317-446-2853.

**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).

Deadline: December 15th. Display: December 22nd.

**Advent Devotionals**

Advent devotionals are available in the narthex. Please take one as we reflect during the season of waiting.

**Check it out! - Church Women United on December 2, 9:30 -11:30 a.m.**

CWU (Church Women United) will be meeting at our church on Monday, Dec 2 from 9:30 - 11:30 a.m.. At the meeting on 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.

### **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!

### **The Green Team wants YOU!**

The Green Team could use more members! Fresh off our success in getting solar panels installed, we have fresh ideas for 2020--but could use some help dragging them across the finish line. If you have any interest in joining up to help, please contact any of us, particularly Rich Gibson, Nancy Dickinson, Bill Gillette, Ann Leatherman or Katie Booth

### **Green Team Tip**

When the dishwasher has finished running (before it goes to the dry cycle), open the door to let the hot humid air put warmth and humidity into the house. (If you want to share a green

habit, please send it to [hoot.gibson.tds@gmail.com](mailto:hoot.gibson.tds@gmail.com).)



### **Food Donations for the Northside Pantry**

Donations have been generous and are appreciated. Please keep them coming!

### **December Mission of the Month: The Christmas Fund**

The Christmas Fund is one of the “5 for 5” offerings of the United Church of Christ that FC 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. 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 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 [here](#).

#### **Pastoral Care**

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

**Holiday Pastoral Care:** While Pastor Sarah is visiting family for the Thanksgiving holiday from Nov 27-30, Rev. Worth Hartman may be reached at (317) 417-0806 or at [whartman@westminstervillage.com](mailto:whartman@westminstervillage.com).

#### **THIS WEEK AT FIRST CONGREGATIONAL**

<b>Sunday, December 1</b>	<b>9:45 a.m.</b>	<b>Sunday Adult Class w/ Pastor Carol</b>
<b>Sunday, December 1</b>	<b>11:00 a.m.</b>	<b>Worship – First Sunday of Advent</b>
<b>Sunday, December 1</b>	<b>12:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Just Peace Buzz Pitch-In w/ Grace Langford &amp; Advent Wreath Making</b>
<b>Monday, December 2</b>	<b>9:30 a.m.</b>	<b>Church Women United</b>
<b>Tuesday, December 3</b>	<b>1:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Worship Design Meeting</b>
<b>Wednesday, December 4</b>	<b>11:00 a.m.</b>	<b>Witness &amp; Welcome Meeting</b>
<b>Wednesday, December 4</b>	<b>6:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Just Peace Presentation w/Grace Langford (repeat from 12/1)</b>
<b>Wednesday, December 4</b>	<b>7:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Trustees Meeting</b>
<b>Thursday, December 5</b>	<b>11:45 a.m.</b>	<b>Women’s Lunch</b>
<b>Thursday, December 5</b>	<b>1:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Men’s Lunch</b>
<b>Thursday, December 5</b>	<b>7:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Choir Rehearsal</b>

<b>Saturday, December 7</b>	<b>10:30 a.m.</b>	<b>Bell Choir Rehearsal</b>
<b>Sunday, December 8</b>	<b>9:45 a.m.</b>	<b>Sunday Adult Class w/ Rev. Worth Hartman</b>
<b>Sunday, December 8</b>	<b>11:00 a.m.</b>	<b>Worship – Second Sunday of Advent</b>
<b>Sunday, December 8</b>	<b>12:15 p.m.</b>	<b>Outreach &amp; Service</b>