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FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Epistle for the Week of December 5, 2019



Dear First Congregational,

I am looking forward to our special advent worship services that prepare us for celebrating the birth of Christ. As we seek to Be The Church, we will explore this Sunday how John the Baptist speaks to us in today's world as we seek to reject racism. We prepare the way for Jesus by listening to the voices that cry out from the wilderness...what do they have to teach us about ourselves and about our neighbor and about God?

In the coming weeks we will enjoy special music Sunday, December 15th with singing favorite carols paired with favorite poems for the season.

We will once again gather for a special service of Blue Christmas on Friday, December 20 at 6:30pm followed by a light soup supper. This is a time for all of us to bring our shadow sides near the light of Christ, knowing that all of who we are and all of what we think and feel is embraced by the love of Christ. Our Student Pastor Cassidy Hall is planning and leading the service, working to make this a meaningful time together.

Now is the perfect time to reach out and invite a friend or family member to join you for worship at church. The church is prepared to welcome guests and we know that it pleases God when we can share the love that we feel here with others.

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 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

Sunday Worship Service

Pastor Sarah will preach on "Cries from the Wilderness."

Scripture: Matthew 3:1-6



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.)

Choir Rehearsal TONIGHT!

The FC Choir rehearses on Thursdays from 7:00 to 8:30 PM. We welcome new members. If anyone is interested in joining the choir, please email Julie at juliehouston@comcast.net. We would love to have you join us!

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.

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

You're Invited!

Our friends at St. Peter's UCC invite us to join them for a Blue Christmas Service on Wednesday, December 11th at 7:00 p.m.

3106 East Carmel Drive

Carmel, IN

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!

Holiday Recycling Done Right

by Len Detwiler on Dec 4, 2018 in [LEARNING CENTER](#)



It's estimated that an additional 100 million tons of trash are generated every week between Thanksgiving and New Years Day. All that food, wrapping paper, cardboard and packing material adds up! So, we're going to get you ready with some pointers for Recycling Right this holiday season.

- **Capture the Cardboard & Preserve the Paper:** there's so much packaging! Hold on to what you can reuse and recycle the rest. Cardboard and chipboard (like those shirt boxes or the wrapping paper tubes) are accepted in the curbside recycling programs offered by [Ray's Recycling](#) and [Republic Services](#). Large pieces should be cut down so they fit easily in your curbside bin. Flattened cardboard and chipboard are also accepted at the [District's Recycling Drop-off Centers](#). While we're on the subject, let's talk holiday cards for a minute: the paper ones are recyclable (along with the envelope they came in), but the photo cards are not.
- **Battery Basics:** gadgets and gizmos use batteries. Alkaline batteries are safe to be thrown away (they can be recycled at [Tox-Away Days](#) or at [a few local retailers for a fee](#)). Button batteries and rechargeable batteries should always be recycled at any [one of these fine, local retailers](#), or at Tox-Away Day.
- **Lights to Lowe's:** let your old Christmas lights have a new life by recycling them at Lowe's. Look for bins near the customer service desk inside the front door. (FYI: Lowe's accepts compact fluorescent bulbs, plastic bags and rechargeable batteries for recycling, too. Rock on, you recycling rock stars!)
- **Electronics Everywhere:** if you have some old, unwanted electronics to get rid of, first consider reuse! If the item still works, consider Goodwill, Salvation Army or the Habitat ReStore as options (except for TVs...no one wants your old, huge CRT TV, sorry...). If the life has left your old device, recycling is the next best option (and landfilling them is no longer allowed). Fortunately, e-waste recycling options abound here in Hendricks County. In addition to our [Tox-Away Days](#), these [other organizations](#) will accept most of your electronic waste for recycling free-of-charge. TV's are a different kettle of fish, however. Recycling TVs is expensive and only a handful of companies will even accept them for recycling. You can expect to pay to

have them taken away and recycled. The District will also accept TVs at our Tax-Away Days—we charge \$20 or \$25 each, depending on size, to recycle them.

- **Taking out the Tree:** natural, undecorated Christmas trees can be recycled this winter into excellent mulch for next spring. The District will be collecting (naked) Christmas trees at our [Yard Waste Recycling Centers](#) in Brownsburg (90 Mardale Drive) and Plainfield (7020 S. County Road 875 E.) from December 21st through January 21st. The sites will be open 24/7 and there is no charge to drop off your tree. Our friends at GreenCycle-McCarty in Danville will also accept Christmas trees for recycling. They are located at 494 S. County Road 200 E. and their number is 317-745-2000.

Have questions about other stuff we didn't cover above? Check out our online [Recycling Directory](#) or contact us at the District office. We're always glad to help! Season's Greenings!

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

Temperatures are changing: have you checked your tire pressure recently? (If you want to share a green habit, please send it to 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.

THIS WEEK AT FIRST CONGREGATIONAL

Thursday, December 5	11:45 a.m.	Women's Lunch
Thursday, December 5	1:00 p.m.	Men's Lunch
Thursday, December 5	7:00 p.m.	Choir Rehearsal
Saturday, December 7	10:45 a.m.	Bell Choir Rehearsal
Sunday, December 8	12:15 p.m.	Outreach & Service
Tuesday, December 10	4:00 p.m.	Care & Connections
Thursday, December 12	7:00 p.m.	Choir Rehearsal
Saturday, December 14	10:30 a.m.	Bell Choir Rehearsal
Sunday, December 15	9:45 a.m.	Sunday Adult Class
Sunday, December 15	11:00 a.m.	Worship: Lessons & Carols
Sunday, December 15	12:45 p.m.	PCRC (w/ Pastor Sarah)