

 [FirstCongregationalUCCIndy](#)

 [Forward](#)



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Epistle for the Week of December 26, 2019

Dear First Congregational,

Merry Christmas beloved of God! From my heart to your heart, I give thanks to God for this life of faith and community that we share at First Congregational. As we embrace this gift of God-with-us, we are reminded that in Jesus Christ we are made ONE. There is no place I'd rather be than in a church that extends to me the gift of radical, unconditional love of God in Christ Jesus. This is the gift of Christmas: knowing that God comes to Earth and says, "I love you!"

You are loved. So very much. Let this gift of love delight you and comfort you. Christmas is here! "Go tell it on the mountain, over the hill and everywhere. Go tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born!"

With Christmas love,
Pastor Sarah

Church Office Closed for the Holidays

The church office will be closed Dec 24 – Jan 1.

Worship

No Adult Class this Sunday, Dec 29th.

Sunday Worship Service - 4th Sunday of Advent: Love

Pastor Carol will be preaching on "Hear the Angels?"

Scriptures: Psalm 148 & Matthew 2: 13-23



What's Happening at FC

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

No Choir Rehearsal TONIGHT!

The FC Choir will return for rehearsals in the new year 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!

TOMORROW! Friday Night at the Movies: December 27, 6:30pm

Note a change of date in December from the 3rd Friday to the 4th 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

Annual Stewardship Campaign – Devoted to Generosity

Thank you to all who have 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 31. Thank you for all of the generous ways that you give to the church and to the world!

Thank You for Your Generosity!

Outreach & Service thanks everyone who contributed to the Giving Tree and the Mitten Tree. This week we were able to deliver \$640 in gift cards to Family Promise so that the After Care Families can buy gifts for their families. We also delivered three large trash bags full of hats, gloves, scarves, and socks to Exodus Refugee for their clients. Many of the lovely items were hand knit or crocheted. You can also show your generosity by continuing to participate in the Reverse Advent Calendar and in providing gifts for the hygiene kits for the border."

Thank You for Your Generous Christmas Gift Donations!

We are overwhelmed with the outpouring of generosity from everyone who donated gifts so quickly for the family in need request that went out last Friday. We were able to provide each boy with multiple outfits, socks, underwear, hats, coats, gloves, shoes, toys, and also some gift cards for the family to be able to purchase anything else they might need. Shannon Abbott personally delivered these gifts to the family, and the mother was so very grateful. Thank you all for your generosity!



A Chance to Offer International Help

Shannon Abbott, Cassidy Hall and Sandy Wood will be going to the U.S. Mexico border January 14th with a group from the Indiana-Kentucky Conference of the UCC to witness what is happening there. Outreach and Service Board is making 25 **hygiene kits** for our host congregation, Good Shepherd UCC in Tucson, AZ. to use in their work

with migrant shelters there and in Mexico.

The Board is providing most of the items for the kits, but has asked the congregation's help in obtaining hand towels and white adult size tube socks. The tree in the Parlor which had gift cards for Family Promise will now contain ornaments specifying an amount of socks or towels to buy. Please take an ornament, buy the item(s) on the ornament, and return the item(s) and ornament to the tree by Sunday Jan 5th. On Sunday January 5th we will assemble the kits after worship. If you have questions, please contact Sue Chapman, Cassidy or Sandy. **Thanks for your efforts to help refugees!**

Will You Serve on a Board in 2020?

Most of the ministries of our church are planned and managed by our 5 boards. We currently have several openings for 2020. This is a great way to get involved, and make a difference in people's lives. Our boards are: Worship & Faith, Care & Connection, Witness & Welcome, Outreach & Service, and Trustees. Also, we are looking for a new Financial Secretary; this position records our pledges, gifts, and donations, and one needs to have a comfort level with numbers and tracking details. If you would like to learn more about these opportunities, please contact Wendy Baldwin.

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

If you are fortunate to gather with friends and family this Christmas, what can we share with them about "living green?" What will we learn from them? (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! We are grateful to the Meridian Hills Nursery School and Kindergarten who has joined us in donating and delivering food to the pantry.

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.

Pastoral Care

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

While Pastor Sarah is visiting family for the holidays from Dec 25 – Jan 3, Pastor Carol may be reached at (317) 496-9732 or casowle@gmail.com.

THIS WEEK AT FIRST CONGREGATIONAL

Sunday, December 29

Sunday, December 29

Thursday, January 2

Sunday, January 5

Sunday, January 5

Sunday, January 5

11:00 a.m.

7:00 p.m.

9:45 a.m.

11:00 a.m.

12:30 p.m.

NO SUNDAY ADULT CLASS

**Worship w/ Pastor Carol Sowle
preaching**

Choir Rehearsal

Sunday Adult Class

Worship

PCRC (w/Pastor Carol)