



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

THE PILGRIM COLONY

February 2020

Pastor's Reflections

Every day I give thanks that our faith community is growing. We are growing in the most important ways: in our relationships with each other and our relationships with God. We are also growing in new members, many of whom come from the millennial generation, young people looking for a place to belong, a place to heal, and a place to love. This tells me we are entrusted with the gift of passing on the faith to the next generation. That means all of us matter and all of us are needed. Each one of us have stories and gifts to share with each other. This is why we are focusing our efforts on deepening our connection and relationships with one another. Our spiritual growth will depend on the strength of our connections. I'm filled with joy to see our connections deepen. This is what it means to be the church.

February marks the beginning of new church lay leadership and so we give thanks for the promise of the year ahead. I am grateful for the many talented, committed and faithful leaders of our church! Also, throughout February we will continue to explore in worship what it means to Be The Church. February's focus will be on the theme "Share Earthly and Spiritual Resources."

Our precious time and energy are key resources. How will you use your time and energy this month? I encourage you to pray about how God wants you to use your time and energy. I pray God leads you here to our church and that by so doing, you experience a place to belong, a place to heal and a place to love.

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

Moderator's Musings

From the first day my parents sent me to Sunday School as a kindergartener, "church" has been a part of my life. Growing up I learned Bible stories, traditional hymns, and how to sit still through a sermon. I also learned what it means to be a Congregationalist. Like many (most?) churches in New England, the small community church of my childhood grew from Congregational roots. When the United Church of Christ came into being in 1957, the visionary leaders of Riverdale Congregational saw the wisdom in being part of that new-born denomination. So I consider myself a life-long UCC Congregationalist.

When I was confirmed in my teens, I took my new membership seriously enough to attend congregational meetings. That's where I developed my understanding of congregationalism – and democracy – from Gus Youngberg. Dear old Gus. Gus was the person (I expect there's one in every Congregational church) who always had something to say at a meeting, no matter how obtuse or tangential. From my youthful perspective, Gus was older than God and made about as much sense. Folks would silently groan (and sometimes not so silently) whenever Gus stood up to make his usually bombastic contribution to the discussion. But folks would listen respectfully, and when Gus sat down business would carry on, sometimes taking Gus's comments into consideration but many times not. What I learned from watching that "ritual" was that, while not everyone gets their way, everyone always gets their say. For me, that's congregationalism – and democracy – in a nutshell.

Here in Indy, First Congregational has been a part of my adult life for almost 40 years. Along with others among us, I have ridden the church's wave crests and troughs throughout those years – membership growth and contraction, new and old ways to worship, inspiring and troublesome pastors, new friends and lost friends. Through it all this has been my church family and home, and my life has been richly blessed by my membership here. Indeed, after Jim and I retired and lived aboard a boat in the tropics for the following six-plus years, when our cruising life came to an end the bonds of FC, among others, brought us back to Indy. My investment in and love for this church runs deep.

As I embark on this new path of serving as FC's Moderator, I eagerly await new opportunities to know more among you and more about each of you, for YOU are First Congregational United Church of Christ. I welcome your companionship and support on this journey, whatever crests or troughs we may encounter.

In faith,
Alice Rutherford

Student Pastor Reflections

Thank you so much for all your support for those of us who traveled to the Arizona/Mexico border. Your presence through prayers was felt and encouraged us throughout the process! While there, I learned so much about the various crises at our border and the many ways in which we can help as a church and as individuals. Many of you know I was able to film a number of stories while there and will be working on piecing together a short documentary about our trip. I look forward to sharing this with you all as soon as it is complete (hopefully by May of this year). I also just began my fourth semester at CTS and am really enjoying my coursework. I look forward to being with you another semester and cannot wait to continue to learn and grow alongside you.

- Cassidy Hall, Student Pastor (studentpastor@fcindy.org)



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, February 1	10:30 a.m.	Bell Choir Rehearsal
Wednesday, February 5	1:00 p.m.	Worship & Design
Thursday, February 6	1:00 p.m.	Men's Lunch
Saturday, February 8	9:00 a.m.	Board Retreat
Sunday, February 9	12:00 p.m.	Student Pastor Support Team
Monday, February 10	6:30 p.m.	Border Education & Vigil
Wednesday, February 12	5:00 p.m.	Mental Health Team
Wednesday, February 12	7:00 p.m.	Church Council
Saturday, February 15	10:30 a.m.	Bell Choir Rehearsal
Sunday, February 16	12:00 p.m.	Buzz & Pitch-In: Expanding Our Extravagant Welcome
Wednesday, February 19	6:30 p.m.	Calling Circle
Thursday, February 20	1:00 p.m.	Men's Lunch
Wednesday, February 26	6:30 p.m.	Ash Wednesday Worship
Friday, February 21	6:30 p.m.	Movie Night
Thursday, February 27	11:45 a.m.	Women's Lunch
Saturday, February 29	5:30 p.m.	Game Night

WORSHIP & FAITH

Elizabeth Price, Chair

Sunday Adult Class

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

Feb 2 – We will finish the study on "Embracing the Prophets in Contemporary Culture: Walter Brueggemann on Confronting Today's 'Pharaohs'." This final topic will be on "The Grief of Loss as Divine Judgement."

Feb 9 – For Black History Month on Sunday February 9th we'll be taking a look at Black theology and Womanist theology. We'll discuss what these theologies are, why they're important, and some of the key voices within these theological movements. After this, we'll then consider their importance for our lives individually and as a church. Join us to celebrate and learn from these important voices in theology!

Feb 16 & 23 - Marion Harcourt traveled to the Holy Land in 2001, at a time when very few tourists were there because of tension in the land. On Feb 16 and 23, she will talk about Capernaum in Galilee, where Jesus spent three years teaching, and where Jesus fed the 5000. There are wonderful, old Italian memorials for these events. She will also share about Nazareth and Cana in Galilee, where Jesus performed his first miracle, and the River Jordan, the route from Galilee to Jerusalem, where John the Baptist baptized Jesus.

At a later date, not set, she will show slides of Jerusalem and the slides of the Last Week.

- Pastor Carol



February Worship Theme:

In continuing our "Be the Church" focus in worship over the next few months, in the month of February we will engage in what it means as the church to share earthly and spiritual resources.

February Worship Leaders

Feb 2 – Wendy Baldwin **Feb 16** – Nancy Dickinson
Feb 9 – Pat Larracey **Feb 23** – Elizabeth Price

Lenten Immigration Journey

Our Lenten Immigration Journey begins on Ash Wednesday. Through the season of Lent, we will explore, reflect, and pray about the biblical and contemporary theme of immigration. What does the Bible say about immigration? What is the Still Speaking God saying to the church today about immigration? What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus in light of the complex realities at the US/Mexico border? Through community worship and small groups, everyone is invited on this Lenten immigration journey. Let's see where this journey leads us.

First Congregational Lenten Immigration Journey

February 26: Ash Wednesday Worship at 6:30pm

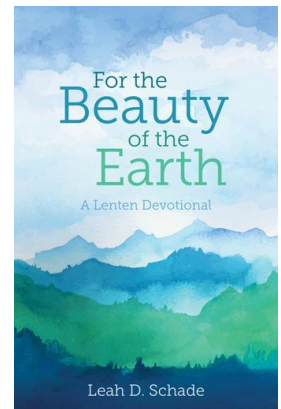
March 2 - March 20: Small Groups

April 5 - April 10 - Holy Week: Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday

April 12 - Easter

Lenten Devotionals: For the Beauty of the Earth

As we mark the 50th Earth Day (April 22, 2020), Christians can reflect on how caring for God's creation is connected to our faith. Drawing on the beloved hymn "For the Beauty of the Earth," each week of this 40-day Lenten devotional focuses on a different aspect of the splendor of nature, how God nurtures our spirit through creation, and how we must protect our precious home. As we walk with Jesus along shorelines, through gardens, and among trees, we learn from the birds of the air and the lilies of the field (chalicepress.com). **Lenten devotionals are available for pick up in the narthex on Sunday, February 16.**



OUTREACH & SERVICE

Sue Chapman, Chair

February Mission of the Month: Peace Learning Center

Now that our church has become a Just Peace Church we have an opportunity to witness to our commitment to peace and support the Peace Learning Center, an internationally recognized community educational institution promoting peace-building and conflict resolution with programs replicated in eight US cities and five countries. Since 1997, the PLC has reached more than 210,000 people locally and internationally.

Peace Learning Center educates, inspires and, empowers people to live peacefully. Its vision is to build a community of peace where respect is primary and justice is real. Through the modeling of behaviors, community collaboration, and by providing services, the PLC values:

- Peaceful resolution of all conflicts
- Strength of diversity in our community
- The potential of youth
- Responsible stewardship of the environment and community resources

The PLC works directly with schools, community nonprofits, businesses, juvenile correctional facilities, and faith groups to facilitate peace education. The Peace Learning Center believes everyone can be a peacemaker. Programs teach safe and simple ways to manage anger, solve problems, and develop appreciation for differing perspectives. Programs include:

- [Be the Change](#): The family-friendly exhibits in the lower level of PLC
- School year field trips.
- [One Indy](#): changing school environments.
- Peace Education Lessons: In-class Peace Education in social-emotional learning, character building, communication & conflict resolution.
- [Peers Making Peace](#) peer mediation program.
- Professional Development: [Implicit Bias](#) and Restorative Practices
- [Summer Programs](#): Climate Camp, Peacebuilders Camp, [Social Justice Leadership Camp](#), Summer Fun Family
- Workshops & Retreats in Conflict Styles, Managing Stress, Diversity & Inclusion, Communication

Consider a generous contribution to our February Mission of the Month, the Peace Learning Center. You can learn more about this inspiring organization at

www.peacelearningcenter.org

- Worth Hartman, Just Peace Team

Pantry Items of the Month

During February, we are collecting the following items: jelly/jam, canned tuna/chicken, pasta, and bar soap.



Donations to the Northside Food Pantry

We are grateful to the Meridian Hills Nursery School & Kindergarten for volunteering to deliver donations to the Northside Food Pantry. We are grateful to you for your generosity.

Supply Drive for Family Promise

In February Family Promise will hold a supply drive to collect many items needed for use by families at the Day Center and while in the IHN shelter and After Care programs. Fliers listing needed items will be in the narthex beginning Feb. 2 or can be accessed directly under this article. Donations will be collected from Feb. 7 through Feb. 23. Please put items in the large white laundry hampers in the narthex or use the white trash bags that are in those hampers. Supplies will be delivered to Family Promise from Feb. 24 through Feb. 27. Your generosity will be appreciated by Family Promise and those they serve.



2020 Supply Drive Needs List

Cleaning Supplies

- All-purpose household cleaners
- Glass and bathroom cleaners
- Disinfectant cleaning wipes
- Disinfectant/deodorizer spray
- Distilled vinegar
- Lemon juice
- Laundry detergent (*pods preferred*)
- Dryer sheets

Paper Products

- Toilet paper
- Paper towels
- Tissue boxes
- White kitchen trash bags
- Large outdoor trash bags (*39-gallon size or larger*)
- Plastic or paper cups (*8-12 oz. size*)
- Coffee cups (*Styrofoam, 8-12 oz size*)
- Plastic forks, spoons, and knives
- Paper plates and paper bowls

Twin-sized Blankets (*new only*)

Bed Pillows (*new only*)

Personal Hygiene

- African-American hair care products
- Baby wash and baby bottles
- Bar soap and body wash
- Deodorant (*for both women and men*)
- Disposable razors
- Diaper/baby wipes
- Diapers (*sizes 4, 5 & 6*)
- Thanks to generous donations, other size diapers are not needed at this time.*
- Pull-ups (*2T-3T, 3T-4T, & 4T-5T*)
- Feminine hygiene products (*all sizes*)
- Hand sanitizer (*large bottles*)
- Liquid soap (*large and small bottles*)
- Shampoo and conditioner
- Towels & washcloths (*new or gently used*)
- Underwear (*all sizes for children & adults*)

Miscellaneous

- Batteries (*9V for smoke detectors*)
- Coffee (*large containers*)
- Creamer (*nonperishable*) & Sugar

Delivery week for 2020 supply drive is Monday, February 24 through Saturday, February 29 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Please bring items to Family Promise of Greater Indianapolis Day Center at 1850 N. Arsenal Ave. Indianapolis, IN 46218.

Questions? Call staff at 317-261-1562.

Nicaragua Mission Trip 2020

On **February 2nd** there will be a meeting after church for those interested in going on a mission trip to the Central American country of Nicaragua. Our time in Nicaragua will be facilitated by CEPAD, the Council of Protestant Churches in Nicaragua. CEPAD was formed in 1972 to aid victims of the 6.3 earthquake that destroyed the capital city of Managua. It was the deadliest earthquake in the western hemisphere since 1780. Today, CEPAD continues to provide aid and teaches leaders from rural areas strategies to improve the situation of their communities. Its programs strive to enable them to become self-sustaining and empower women to take care of their families.

After level 5 hurricane Mitch washed away towns along the rivers and destroyed 70% of the country's infrastructure, our congregation was called to help. In the spring of 2000, we made our first mission trip to the town of Wiwilí where we helped construct houses on higher ground, away from the river. Since then, we have returned to Nicaragua to accompany communities and families as they continue work to improve their situation.



(Photo from Spring 2000 trip to Nicaragua)

During our past mission trips to Nicaragua some of the projects in which we assisted were building a foot bridge, a water purification system, barriers to combat erosion, and planting fruit trees that combat food insecurity and provide a crop to sell. We always brought supplies and books to support teachers who had none.

The physical work we do on our trips is good, but the most important things that come out of going to Nicaragua are close relationships. As we work, eat, play, and worship together we come to see each other as equals who are more alike than different.

If you would like to learn more about going on a mission trip to Nicaragua this year, come to our meeting in the library after church on February 2nd. Contact Rita Hummel for more information at 317-875-8388 or rithum1970@comcast.net.

- Rita Hummel

On the Border Vigil, February 10, 6:30 p.m.

As most of you know, Cassidy Hall, our Student Pastor, Shannon Abbott, our Office Administrator and I recently returned from the U.S. Mexico border. We were there with a group from the Indiana-Kentucky Conference of the United Church of Christ to learn what is going on there and to witness, in other words, to pass along what we saw and learned on the trip. One thing we learned is several Mexican nationals, most of them young men, have been killed at the border by the U.S. Border Patrol. The following is a specific case that has received attention because the dead boy's mother and family persist in their efforts to get some justice for their dead family member. Below is a recounting I wrote up after Internet research that included the Tucson newspaper electronic edition, the American Civil Liberties Union website, an electronic publication called Latino Voices, and a website called Find Law. I am happy to provide the resources I used to any who are interested in researching them further.



The Killing of Jose' Antonio Elena Rodriguez

On October 10, 2012 Jose' Antonio Elena Rodriguez, a 16 year old Mexican teen, was walking in the evening along Calle Internacional Street parallel to the border between Nogales, Sonora, Mexico where he was, and Nogales, AZ, USA. In another location along the border in the same town there was possible drug smuggling when a parcel was thrown from the Mexican side to the U.S. side followed by rock throwing as a distraction from the throwing of the parcel. Jose had been with friends playing basketball and was


walking to meet his brother and then go home, 4 blocks away. Border Patrol Agent Lonnie Swartz aimed his gun through the border fence and shot 14-30 shots- 10 of which hit Jose mostly in the back and killed him.

The Border Patrol stated the use of force was in self-defense though Jose did not have a gun or rocks and made no aggressive moves in the direction of Agent Swartz. Border Patrol refused to extradite the agent to face a hearing in Mexico and, initially, no charges were filed in the U.S. In 2014, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) on behalf of Jose's mother, Araceli Rodriguez, filed a civil suit in federal court in the U.S. against Agent Swartz and the Border Patrol questioning whether a U.S. border agent can shoot at foreign nationals through a border barrier with no constitutional consequences. The ACLU asserted that, as a U.S. citizen, Agent Swartz on American soil is subject to U.S. laws. In 2015 a U.S. district court denied a request by the U.S. government to dismiss the case. That denial was appealed to the 9th Circuit Federal Court which again denied the appeal to dismiss the case. The case was then appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court which will hear the case in June 2020.

A separate criminal suit was filed and a federal grand jury indicted Agent Swartz on a charge of 2nd degree murder but he was acquitted of that charge in April 2018. That jury in April 2018 could not agree on a separate charge of involuntary manslaughter so he was tried on the manslaughter charge in November 2018 and found not guilty after a 13 day trial, 14.5 hours of deliberation and repeated communication from the jurors that they were hopelessly deadlocked to which the judge said they had to continue to deliberate.


The U.S. Supreme Court civil case questioning the legality of a U.S. Border Agent shooting a foreign national across an international border is on the docket for June 2020. The group Border Patrol Victims Network is asking for prayer vigils each month on the 10th of each month (the day Jose' was killed) until the case comes to the Supreme Court. They are seeking justice for Jose' and others who have been killed by Border Patrol agents.

- Sandy Wood




FEBRUARY

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JOSE ANTONIO ELENA RODRIGUEZ
WAS KILLED BY BORDER PATROL
ON THE MEXICAN SIDE OF THE BORDER



WHAT: An educational program about what is happening at the U.S. Mexico border followed by a prayer vigil for Jose Antonio Elena Rodriguez a young boy killed by U.S. Border Patrol Oct 10, 2012 in Nogales, Sonora, Mexico.

WHERE: First Congregational United Church of Christ,
7171 North Pennsylvania, Indianapolis, IN 46240.

WHEN: Monday February 10, 2020 6:30-8:30 p.m.

WHO: For anyone who wants to learn more and help make a change.

FCINDY.ORG

WITNESS & WELCOME

Bob Cook, Chair

Buzz with Pitch-In Lunch: Expanding our Extravagant Welcome

Sunday, February 16, 12:00 p.m.

"Excuse me. You are in the pew where we sit every week." We hear this kind of story but does it really happen? While I am not aware that it has occurred at FCC, recently a friend told me this is exactly what was said to her and her husband when they attended their regular church but at a different worship time. The comment was followed by an awkward stare until my friend got up and moved.

While most churches have some variation of a sign that states, "Everyone is Welcome," there are those occasional mishaps that cause a first time visitor to question the welcome they have received. During the Feb. 16 BUZZ we will examine some welcoming stumbling blocks and make a list of welcoming statements that with a little practice will make our welcoming experience easier for our members and our visitors. In other words, everyone will benefit from our BUZZ session.



Bring a dish for lunch to share, enjoy the conversation and expect a few laughs.

Game Night - February 29, 5:30 p.m.

Saturday, Feb. 29 (Leap Day!) the Board of Witness and Welcome along with the Board of Care and Connection will host a game night open to everyone- members, visitors, guests, children, young adults, older adults... truly everyone. Childcare will be available but please sign up and we'll arrange our regular nursery attendant.

Games will start at 5:30, we'll eat around 6:30, and then games will continue until 8:00 PM. Please come anytime during the evening but we ask that everyone bring their own beverage. Snacks will also be provided with our main menu including chili and dessert.

Come enjoy the evening and invite a friend.

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 – Join us on the 3rd Friday of each month – 2/21, 6:30ish: We 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.

"Around a table" – Fellowship, Fun, & Food

For the first go around, we had 3 groups of people who have been getting together for 4 months – some for meals, some for desserts, and lots of talking and fellowship! Now it is time to sign up for the next round – to meet monthly March through June. It doesn't matter if you participated or not the first time – sign up for this next round! We will be changing the groups around – the idea is to be in fellowship and get to know different people – so the more the merrier! If interested, please complete the attached sign up sheet (page 13) and return it to church by February 16. A small team will take all the sign up sheets and create groups of 5-7 people, based on time and setting preferences and the goal of growing fellowship! Once the groups are selected, each group



will be expected to get together at least 4 times if possible – rotating the planning within the group. The group members can decide whether to host meals or snacks or just conversation at their houses, or to meet at restaurants or coffee shops, or anything else. After 4 months, we will have new sign up sheets, and new groups will be created again. Presented by Care & Connections board – please contact Karen Walker (317-319-8950 or karen.e.d.walker@gmail.com) or Wendy Baldwin (317-319-0806 or wendy.baldwin@rci.com) for any questions or help with sign up.

Address Directory



We are producing a new Address Directory by the end of the month. Please check your address and contact info on the master copy in the Narthex, or if there have been changes, or you do not see your name and contact information in there, inform the church office or Wendy Baldwin.

TRUSTEES

Randy Walker, Chair

Financial Update: 2019 Operating Results vs. Budget

Highlights:

- Income was \$6,200 better than budget. Pledges exceeded budget by \$24,000! Thank you for your amazing generosity, which enabled us to reduce our draw from the FCC Foundation by \$11,200 (\$41,780 drawn vs. budget of \$53,000).
- Expenses were \$8,600 below budget, with savings in Worship and Faith, Administrative Operations and House and Grounds.
- We ended the year with a \$15,327 surplus. We'll apply the surplus toward 2020 operating expenses.

1. Current Year Actual vs Budget Summary - Last year
1/1/2019 through 12/31/2019 Using Budget 1

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Category	Actual	2019 Budget	Difference
INCOME	263,652	257,420	6,232
M. Unrestricted Contributions	263,652	257,420	6,232
M.01 Pledged Offerings	196,689	172,796	23,893
M.02 UnPledged Offerings	18,799	25,200	-6,401
M.03 Rollover Prior Year Surplus_D...	4,766	4,766	0
M.04 Foundation - Endowment Fund...	25,775	25,775	0
M.05 Foundation - Minister Fund Draw	15,000	26,260	-11,260
M.06 Foundation - Trad. Music Fund...	1,000	1,000	0
M.07. Transfer from Youth Fund	0	0	0
M.08 Other Transfers from Restr Ac...	1,623	1,623	0
EXPENSES	248,325	256,920	8,595
A. Pastoral Leadership	121,471	119,722	-1,748
B. Worship & Faith	38,666	41,380	2,714
C. Care & Connections	374	525	151
D. Witness & Welcome	224	700	476
E. Outreach & Service	20,020	20,500	480
F. Trustees	388	300	-88
G. Administration & Operations	19,183	21,666	2,483
H. House & Grounds	41,403	45,082	3,679
I. Miscellaneous	6,596	7,045	449
Net Difference:	15,327	500	14,827

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.
- Jim Lootens, Treasurer
lootens.jb@gmail.com

COMMUNITY

Opportunities to Increase Empathy

By susanna-judith rae

*"...The things most people think are important are worthless as far as God is concerned."
(Luke 16:15 CEV)*

Did you read the outstanding "Love Your Neighbor Tip" which FC member George Meier submitted to the December, 2019 *Pilgrim Colony*? In case you missed it, or would like to take a second look at George's words, i think reading them (again) certainly bears repeating:

"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

Perhaps you, as i did, identified with George's tip. After reading his recommendation, taking it in, and prayerfully reflecting on its message, i felt moved to email him a reply. Much of the rest of this piece is from that email, starting with "George, thank you for your 'Love Your Neighbor Tip' in the December *Colony*."

i agree with your suggestion. i have discovered that shopping in the stores George mentioned are excellent opportunities to talk to our brothers and sisters of various races, ethnicities, ages, educational backgrounds, and ways of life. Moreover, i've enjoyed occasions to converse with people in these stores on various topics, such as ideas printed on T-shirts (worn by them as well as ones i happen to be wearing). i've especially found meaningful times when we've discussed our respective faith communities—both theirs and mine. Though rarely one to begin an evangelistic-type conversation, i've appreciated the numerous times others have asked me which church i attend.

When they have, some of my favorite conversations have been after i've piled onto a store's checkout counter various items for FC's annual "Mitten Tree" or articles of clothing—including IPS student uniforms—for "Underneath It All, We're All the Same" contributions. The usually large number of items for each, at times, has led to questions like, "Why are you buying so many of these?" When the employee or fellow shopper has, then, heard about FC's Mitten Tree or about the "Underneath It All" program, their responses have included comments like, "Oh, i wish my church did that."

Such remarks make me appreciate my membership in a faith community that has an annual Mitten Tree, as well as a Giving Tree. Likewise, i celebrate that FC, on our own, continues to participate in "Underneath It All" many years after the original sponsoring Interfaith Alliance Indianapolis (IAI) disbanded to consolidate with other interfaith groups to form the [Center for Interfaith Cooperation](#).

May FC always participate in such joyous activities that provide badly needed practical assistance to families and to children both around holidays and in the fall at the beginning of new school years when students need new underwear and school uniforms. Likewise, may we all ponder and heed George's tip about one way to love our neighbors.

Do you like the idea of talking to fellow customers and employees of the "drive thru" neighborhoods, as George recommended? In doing so, we can find opportunities to increase our empathy for others, surely an activity we all need to engage in frequently.

Southeast Association of the Indiana-Kentucky Conference

Lenten Breakfast Series: God's Open House

Saturdays: February 29, March 7, March 14, March 21, March 28, April 4

8:30am—10:30am

Locations TBD

SE Association Annual Meeting

Sunday, April 26 3:30pm

First Congregational United Church of Christ

7171 N. Pennsylvania St. Indianapolis, IN 46240

Meridian Hills School

Developing character begins at birth. How we approach life and the people in our world impacts how we interact with them. When you are a parent, the very direct and daily contact with your children influences them. As a teacher, the same holds true. Knowing the importance of character, it can feel a bit daunting to a parent. How do I/we help shape and guide this little person to hold dear the qualities that I/we deem important?

Begin with choosing the qualities that are important to you and your family, kindness, perseverance, love, forgiveness, and gratitude to name a few. When we incorporate them into our daily lives, they become repeated thoughts and actions. These repeated thoughts and actions evolve into habits. These habits then evolve into forming our character. What we choose to think, say and do all develop into who we become. It doesn't happen overnight. It grows slowly. There are ups and downs. There are obstacles that come between us and our goal. There are even life altering situations that cause us to reflect and evaluate and perhaps make a major change. This is all a part of character building. We are not looking for perfection. We are focusing on developing life long habits that contribute to developing our character.

When working with young children either in my house or in the classroom, I find it important to show children what the expectation is and explain it to them as well. Brushing teeth after meals, bringing plates to the counter, feeding the pets are activities we do on a daily basis. They help us to learn how to take care of ourselves, be a contributing member of the family, and to be responsible to a pet who counts on us to care for them. Two things to remember when working with young children, 1) you must model this behavior 2) you need to be consistent. This is important because a child will see right through the process if you, the adult, is not doing as you are saying, and if you aren't doing it daily. If we want our children to develop healthy positive habits that contribute to their character development, we need to make sure that we are also doing our best to show them.

Along with physical habits, social-emotional habits are also important in developing character. Being kind is more than just a pleasant gesture. It is a mindset. And your children are Always watching. To promote kindness and then yell at a sales clerk doesn't add up in a child's mind. Nor should it. How can we expect them to be kind to their sibling, a child at school, if we ourselves are not practicing the character building habits that we want to see develop in them? When we get frustrated doing taxes, painting a room, or needing to walk a dog in freezing cold weather, what and how we speak impacts our children. Perseverance goes out the window when we throw our hands up in the air and fuss and complain. It is very eye-opening when a child calls you out for your behavior. The best thing to do is to acknowledge it, talk about correcting it and work to change it. After all, in doing this, you have just showed your child how to get back on track after a side step. Be the change you want to be and model it for your children as they continue to grow and develop in their character building journey.

Hugs,
Linda Foley

INTERFAITH SEDER

Monday, March 23, 2020
6:30 P.M.

Congregation Beth-El Zedeck



600 W. 70th St., Indianapolis

\$13.50 per person

Congregation Beth-El Zedeck invites the interfaith community of Indianapolis to explore the origins of the Seder ritual and to share a Passover supper together. Rabbi Jenni Greenspan and Cantor Melissa Cohen will lead and explain the Passover rituals. There will be ample opportunity for discussion and for questions during the Seder. School-aged children are welcome to attend the Seder with an adult family member, teacher, or youth leader.

Seder Menu

Matzo Ball Soup · Gefilte Fish & Horseradish · Chicken · Vegetables
Dessert · Grape Juice · Coffee & Tea
(Vegetarian menu upon request with registration form)

Ceremonial Foods: Matzo · Charoset · Roasted Egg

Reservations are limited to 200. We strongly suggest early registration as we often reach capacity well before the deadline.

- Plan to arrive by 6:15 p.m. to allow for check-in and seating.
- There will be no assigned or reserved seating.
- We will keep a waiting list. If you are on the waiting list, we will call if there is a cancellation. (Note that this may be the day of the Seder.)



To register, or for any questions, please contact Sharon Mishkin at 317.253.9211 or sharonm@bezgallery.org. Checks should be made payable to: Sisterhood of Congregation Beth-El Zedeck, 600 W. 70th Street, 46260

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 **February 6 & 20**. Please contact Randy Walker at (317) 796-2081 or aa28977rwalker@gmail.com for information.

The Women's Book Circle will meet at the home of Betty Schnur on Tuesday, **Feb. 18 at 1:30 p.m.** We will continue discussing Joan Chittister's book, *The Time Is Now*.

March Colony Submission Deadline: Please have your submissions sent to Shannon by **February 15th**.

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 meet on **Thursday, February 27th at 11:45 a.m.** For questions or more information please contact Sue Chapman at 317-259-1806 or carolsuech59@gmail.com.

Flower Calendar: The 2020 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 or call 317-446-2853. You can also let Shannon Abbott know the occasion at shannon@fcindy.org or call the church office at 317-257-5397.

Around a table – sign up!
Please complete and return to church office or the narthex no later than February 16.

Fellowship and fun!! All who sign up will be assigned to groups of 5-7 people. Then the people in that group will take turn planning times to get together – preferably at least once per month for the next 4 months (March through June).

Name: _____ Contact (phone/email): _____

Please note all the days/times combinations that could work for you – there is room for notes below. Remember that this is for once a month – so you don’t have to have the time free every week - check as many options as you can to create the broadest flexibility of groups. Meeting times will be worked out within each group – if there is any strong preference, feel free to write that in.

Day \ Time	Mornings	Lunch times	Afternoons	Dinner times	Evenings
Mondays					
Tuesdays					
Wednesdays					
Thursdays					
Fridays					
Saturdays					
Sundays					




Preference – location (check all that apply)
_____ Homes _____ Restaurant or other public meeting place _____ Church

Would you like assistance with transportation? _____

Any restrictions or other helpful information you would like us to consider?
(such as when you ‘can’t’ participate)



ACTION CALENDAR: FRIENDLY FEBRUARY 2020

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
 2 Ask a friend what good things have happened to them recently	3 Do something supportive and friendly for your colleagues	4 Notice the good qualities of everyone you meet today	5 Get in touch with an old friend you've not seen for a while	 6 Thank someone and tell them how they made a difference for you	 7 Show an active interest by asking questions when talking to others	1 Send someone a message to say how much they mean to you
9 Put away digital devices & really focus on who you're with	10 Try to involve others and invite them to join your conversations	11 Smile at the people you're with and try to brighten their day	12 Send an encouraging note to someone who needs a boost	13 Be kind especially when your first instinct is to be unkind	14 Tell loved ones why they are so special to you	8 Say friendly things to people who work in your local shop or cafe
16 Call a friend to catch up and really listen to them	17 Respond positively to everyone you meet today	18 Look for the good side when other people frustrate you	19 Tell a loved one about their strengths that you value most	20 Actively listen to what people say, without judging them	21 Give sincere compliments to three people you meet today	15 Make an effort to have a friendly chat with a stranger
23 Take time to speak with a neighbour and get to know them	24 Do an act of kindness to make life easier for someone else	25 Make positive comments to as many people as possible today	26 Thank three people you feel grateful to and tell them why	27 Share what you're feeling with someone you really trust	28 Be gentle with someone who you feel inclined to criticise	22 Make a plan to meet up with others and do something fun
						29 Make uninterrupted time for your loved ones

ACTION FOR HAPPINESS



www.actionforhappiness.org

Find out more about the Ten Keys to Happier Living, including books, guides, posters and more here: www.actionforhappiness.org/10-keys