



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

THE PILGRIM COLONY

April 2020

Pastor's Reflections

I give God thanks for First Congregational United Church of Christ. Together, we create a community for all of us to **belong, heal** and **love**. This is true more so today than ever before. As we enter into the month of April, we remain under our government's direction to shelter-in-place to protect the health and safety of one another during the global pandemic of COVID19. This reality has impacted how we live into our mission and how we seek to Be The Church.

For April, our **Be The Church** message is to "**Love God.**" I invite all of us to consider how these challenging times create pathways to love God in deeper ways. As the United Church of Christ, we say "**no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are always welcome here.**" Well, here we are in this very uncertain place. And no matter where we are...or how we gather...God's love welcomes us. No matter where you find yourself, in a place of frustration, grief, sadness, anxiousness, confusion, anger, fear, or boredom or peacefulness...no matter how you are feeling or what you are experiencing, God welcomes you with love. I believe this is our deepest spiritual practice, to allow God's love for us to be made real.

Thank you to our church for the ways you are showing your love for God by showing love to one another and love to our neighbors. This love is what will save us. I invite us all to be open to the ways God wants to love us, including being open to getting help from others.



In the days and weeks to come, embrace God's love for you. **God loves you and in God's love there is new life.**

With hope,
Pastor Sarah

Pastoral Care and Support: Contact Pastor Sarah at pastorsarah@fcindy.org and (386)478-9012. We are here for you.



NEW! FC Emergency Fund - In lieu of Easter Lilies, donations will be received for the Emergency Fund. You can make a \$20 gift in celebration, memory or honor of someone and you will get a virtual Easter Lily shared on our church social media. Please email this information to Shannon (shannon@fcindy.org). The funds collected will support our church Emergency Fund. Mail checks to the church or give on-line.

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 Reflections

As I write this in mid-March, I have just participated (as much as possible) in our first virtual worship service. I want to express my deep gratitude to Pastor Sarah Lund and Music Designer Sean Baker for making that experience possible. Today I see the beginning of a whole new chapter in First Congregational's long history – that of worshipping on line. The possibilities are breathtaking – welcoming new worshippers in other states or countries, worship shared with home-bound and out-of-town members, offering worship at times other than Sunday mornings, and other benefits of which we may yet be unaware. I find such possibilities truly exciting.

Of course, the primary reason for this initial dive into virtual worship is anything but exciting – except perhaps in a negative sense of the word. As the novel coronavirus and its related disease, covid-19, wreak havoc with our social and economic connections, our Church Council took the prudent and loving step (prior to direction from local officials) to suspend our worship and other in-person church gatherings to limit exposure of our elder church population – of which I am one. For those who may not know, besides being a senior citizen I also have an underlying health condition which puts me at high-risk for the virus. I am under ongoing treatment for lung disease that makes me susceptible to bronchitis, pneumonia, and any other ailments that could further compromise my respiratory system. So I'm taking social distancing very seriously. As I now experience what it's like to be pretty much home-bound, I have an increased sense of empathy for those for whom this is a way of life.

I'm finding that through this difficult time of isolation I feel an enhanced sense of gratitude. At this point I'm reasonably healthy, so is my husband Jim, and there are many activities we can still pursue at home. I have family and friends to reach out to via email, social media, video calling, or text. (Thank you, God, for digital communications!) Spring is showing itself in the crocuses blooming, the grass greening, the trees budding, and the daffodils sprouting. Soon Holy Week and Easter will be upon us, and we'll experience the Resurrection once again. By the time this Colony is published, there will likely be a decision regarding the possible continuation of our social distancing into April. Just as the disciples felt confused and in disarray when they lost The One who held them together, we may experience that same sense of being cut off from the familiar if we cannot celebrate Easter together when it appears on the calendar.

But maybe this year our Resurrection experience will take on new meaning when we eventually gather in person as a faith community once again, whenever that may be. Just as the disciples saw a different Jesus that first Easter morning, maybe we'll be transformed by this wilderness experience of personal distance. Maybe we'll see more clearly what the Resurrection can mean to our church life together. Maybe we'll be able to move forward more deliberately, more compassionately, more lovingly as a result of this very different – perhaps extended – time of Lent and Resurrection.

So as the weeks pass keep on washing hands, bumping elbows, sanitizing, and doing

everything else necessary to protect you and your family. Don't forget to include fun activities at home! Blessings and prayers for everyone's physical and mental health, until we meet again – in person.

- Alice Rutherford, Moderator

Intern Reflections

Student Pastor Reflections



Church family!
These days of uncertainty are tough and you've given me so much hope in our togetherness. Thank you for the many ways you've found to creatively show up to each other. You remind me of the generative and creative power of community and the fact that love will always find a way. I continue to be so proud to be a part of this church and look forward to our growth in this process together. As I near the end of this semester, CTS has also gone through numerous changes to adapt and I'm finding some time to write my papers and dig into various theologies (I hope to begin to share more

about what I'm learning online!).
Thank you for being the church, for embodying the church in your homes and in your very bodies. It is a blessing to know you and be on this journey with you.
- Cassidy Hall, Student Pastor (studentpastor@fcindy.org)

Just Peace Intern Reflections



Serving as your Just Peace intern for these past few months has been the highlight of my semester and, even though our time together may have been cut short, I am so thankful for how welcoming you all have been. It is clear that helping the community and learning about the injustices of the world is a passion that everyone holds and I am so glad that I had the opportunity to work through the issue of immigration with you and keep expanding the reach of the Just Peace Covenant. I am beyond grateful for your support throughout the year and can't wait to see the Just Peace team grow and continue to make a difference.
Thanks!
Olivia Bradley, Just Peace Intern

WORSHIP & FAITH

Elizabeth Price, Chair

Sunday Adult Class, 9:30-10:30 am

Class will meet via Zoom (see instructions below)

- **April 5** - Carol Sowle, a Bible Study for Palm Sunday
- **April 12** - Wendy Baldwin "Devoted to Generosity"
- **April 19** - Sue Chapman "Bread for the World"
- **April 26** - Cassidy Hall "Experiences at the Border"

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/9264494206>

Meeting ID: 926 449 4206

Phone call only: 1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago), you will be prompted for the meeting ID 926 449 4206, followed by the # sign. If you don't have a device with visual display, you can simply call in and participant as a 'conference call'.



April Worship Theme: Love God

In continuing our “Be the Church” focus in worship over the next few months, throughout the month of March we will engage in what it means as the church to Love God.

First Congregational Holy Week Journey

April 5 - Palm Sunday

April 9 - Maundy Thursday Tenebrae Service, 6:30 p.m. (see upcoming Epistles for more info)

April 10 - Good Friday

April 12 - Easter

Just Peace During Social Distancing

Social Justice and Advocacy Movie and Documentaries:

Most of these movies can be found Netflix, Hulu, or OnDemand. Most of the documentaries can be found on Kanopy which is free if you have a public library card or are a student/professor.

Criminal Justice

- Just Mercy
- American Son
- The Hate You Give
- 13th
- When They See Us
- If Beale Street Could Talk
- 12 Angry Men
- The Central Park Five

Sexual Violence

- Unbelievable
- The Hunting Ground
- Surviving R. Kelly

Gender/Sexuality

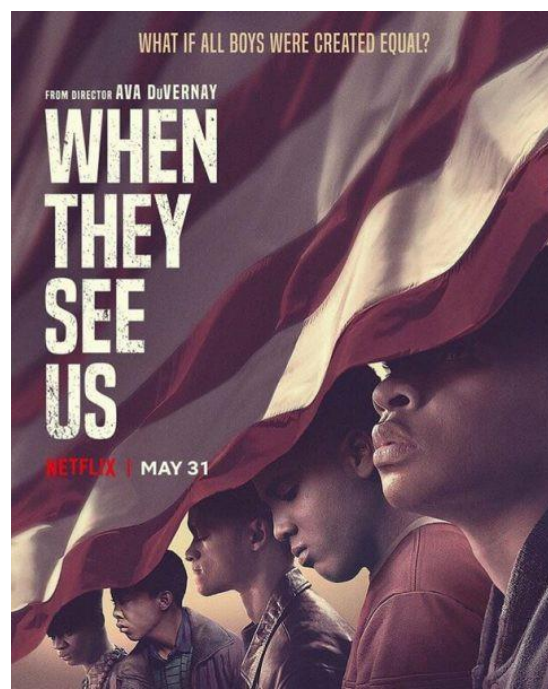
- Half the sky
- Feminists: What were they thinking
- On the Basis of Sex
- Pink Saris
- How to Survive a Plague
- Miss Representation
- Support the Girls
- Tough Guise

Sustainability/Environment

- Rotten
- Climate Refugees
- Chasing coral
- Food Inc.

Race

- Harriet
- Same Kind of Different as Me
- Hello privilege, it's me Chelsea
- Teach Us All
- The Help
- Hidden Figures
- BlackKkKlansman



- Do the Right Thing
- Dark Girls

Physical and Mental Health

- Sicko
- Inside Out
- To the Bone
- Still Alice

Immigration

- Which Way Home
- Llevate mis Amores
- Climate Refugees
- Who is Dayani Cristal
- Hotel Rwanda

Other

- Short Term 12
- Beasts of No Nation
- Living on a Dollar



Photo: Jacob Lund; Fotolia

Social Justice and Advocacy Books:

I know most local book stores have closed, but some bookstores (Barnes and Noble) may still be open for curbside pickup. Thriftbooks.com is a really good website that offers cheap books in new condition with free shipping that may still be shipping. You might also check and see if any of these books are available in Kindle version on amazon.com or as electronic books through your public library's website.

Race

American Swastika by Pete Simi and Robert Futrell

- Can We Talk About Race? by Beverly Daniel Tatum
- The Girl Who Fell From the Sky by Heidi W. Durrow

Immigration

- Enrique's Journey by Sonia Nazario
- Christians at the Border by M. Daniel Carroll
- Behold the Dreamers by Imbolo Mbue
- This Land is our Land by Suketu Mehta
- The Ungrateful Refugee by Dina Nayeri
- City of Thorns by Ben Rawlence

Gender/Sexuality

- Symptoms of Being Human by Jeff Garvin
- We should all be Feminists by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
- 7 Women by Erin Metaxas
- Torn by Justin Lee
- Bad Feminist by Roxanne Gay
- I am Malala by Malala Yousafzai
- Who Cooked the Last Supper? by Rosalind Miles

Criminal Justice

- Just Mercy by Bryan Stevenson
- The New Jim Crow by Michelle Alexander
- There are no Children Here by Alex Kotlowitz

Environment/Sustainability

- Climate Justice by Mary Robinson

Sexual Violence

- Not that bad by Roxanne Gay
- Everyday Sexism by Laura Bates

Other

- Behind the Beautiful Forevers by Katherine Boo
- The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down by Anne Fadiman

OUTREACH & SERVICE

Ann Leatherman, Chair

April Mission of the Month: Exodus Refugee Immigration

The Mission of the Month for April is Exodus Refugee Immigration. Exodus is an Indianapolis based refugee resettlement agency that assists refugees with valid visas as they arrive in Indiana to find a place to live, to learn English, to find a job, and adjust to a new life in the United States. In 2019, Exodus welcomed 394 new refugees from 11 countries including Burma, Ivory Coast, Sudan, Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Republic of Congo, Guatemala, El Salvador, Syria, and Afghanistan. In January 2020, Governor Holcomb announced his support of programs like Exodus in the face of national actions that have reduced the flow of refugees to the United States and encouraged States and Municipalities to veto local resettlement efforts.

During this Covid-19 pandemic their Employment Team is assisting refugee clients who have lost their jobs to apply for unemployment, while leveraging their network of 90+ employment partners to help find new jobs. Exodus is also providing limited financial assistance for rent, utilities, food, childcare, medicine, and other needs.

This offering is an opportunity to extend our welcome to new immigrants and support a program whose very existence has been threatened in the last few years. Send a check or donate online at: <https://www.exodusrefugee.org/donate/>

W.I.S.E. Mental Health Team: Tips to Help During Social Distancing



#ONE: Go to YouTube and click on Neil Diamond singing his classic "Sweet Caroline" with a new chorus of "washing hands." It is wonderful!!

#TWO: With the help of Shannon's news, Pat registered and attended on ZOOM a 90 minute class that 106 people tuned in to hear a therapist share ways of dealing with stress, anxiety, and panic. I share part two of that conference and hope that you find it helpful. Beyond that I add number three.

"Supporting Others Well in a Time of Stress, Anxiety, and Panic"

A webinar sponsored by the Mental Health & Congregational Life of the Center for Congregations

Guest lecturer: Dr. Hillary L. McBride

HOW TO HELP YOURSELF

a) Schedule self-check-ins

Leave notes, set an alarm — pay attention to your emotions
Know when you are overloaded; be careful with vicarious promises;
know your boundaries

b) Track your emotions as they emerge

Like bird watching — notice your emotions and what they are doing to your body

c) Allow yourself to receive care, and ask for help

d) Complete the cycle: discharge your stress by responding with dancing, walking, moving,

yoga, exercise, breathing in and out; recognize what happens to you and release the stress

e) Talk to your stress

For example: put your hand on where you feel tightness like on your chest and say, 'thank you' for protecting me, I am so glad that you are there, you don't have to work so hard, you can take a break too
THEN note the feeling between your hand and where you are touching

Lastly, Dr. McBride spoke of our RESILIENCE — Our Spirit which we as church people know better as the HOLY SPIRIT which holds you in its ever-loving arms. Do I hear an AMEN? AMEN!!

#THREE: Something I have found helpful in retirement is keeping a JOURNAL. A blank book to write, yes write down about what I am feeling, experiencing, what emotions are effecting and affecting me. This is not a diary, but daily effects may touch your feelings, etc to write down. We have a bird feeder on a pole away from our house outside our kitchen window. We love watching the birds especially Carlos and Carlotta that kiss each other beak to beak before they have breakfast. They are a pair of cardinals, so beautiful. Reminds me of God's wonderful creation.

Let us know if we can be of assistance to any of you and any time.
Peace and Love, Pat Larracey

WITNESS & WELCOME

Aniseh Ebbini, Chair

Expanding our Extravagant Welcome While Social Distancing

During these unprecedented times, when we have closed our church to in-person activities, our extravagant welcome does not end!

While Pastor Sarah and the Worship & Faith board have found ways to make our Sunday services and Adult Ed classes virtual, we have a unique opportunity to welcome visitors from outside Central Indiana. During Sunday virtual services, there have been viewers from as far away as Canada. Let's make sure to type up a friendly "hello" in the comments section and welcome them into our church family, even if only virtually.

Looking forward to when we can all get together again.

We are a people of
**EXTRAVAGANT
WELCOME**

June PRIDE Events Postponed

We have received official notice that all PRIDE Events including the parade and festival have been postponed. The new dates will be published after the current limitations on crowd gatherings has been lifted and the health crisis has subsided.

- Bob Cook

CARE & CONNECTIONS

Wendy Baldwin, Chair

Fellowship and fun!

Staying Connected Using Zoom –

First Congregational has its own Zoom account which we are trialing. It allows us to be in community with one another, while we are “physical distancing”. We are encouraging boards, teams, and other groups to begin meeting using Zoom, so look for communication from your group’s meeting facilitator about scheduling times to get together.

Our church is also using Zoom to socially connect with one another, with a variety of activities. Please look for info about these activities in church emails, as well as our online calendar at fcindy.org. If you have suggestions for an activity, contact Wendy Baldwin.

Don’t have a computer or other device? That’s okay – you can still participate by calling in, and you will be in “conference call” mode with us. (Unfortunately, a toll-free line is not available.)

For each of these Zoom sessions, use the following info:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/9264494206>

Meeting ID: 926 449 4206

Phone call only: 1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago), you will be prompted for the meeting ID 926 449 4206, followed by the # sign.

If you don’t have a device with visual display, you can simply call in and participant as a ‘conference call’.

Instructions for Zooming:

1. If you plan to use your smart phone or tablet, you need to download the Zoom app before the meeting. Find it in the app store for your mobile device.
2. If you plan to join the meeting via your computer and don't already have ZOOM on your computer, you'll be asked to download it. It will self-install and then you'll be taken to the meeting.
3. **NOTE: you do not have to register or set up a free account to be a participant in a meeting.**
4. You will asked whether you want to join with video (I hope you say Yes) and what type of audio you wish to use, your phone or your computer.
5. To use your phone's audio, you will have to select "use internet audio."



Jesus Christ Superstar and the Bible

Using Zoom, we will explore the connection between the Bible and this 1970's hit! Join us for the discussion, viewing (if you have video capability), listening, and even singing along. Contact Wendy Baldwin if you are interested, and she will send you Word documents with related Bible passages and the words to the songs. This is a **3-part series**, which will occur on **Tuesdays at 7 pm (3/31, 4/7, and 4/14)** and **Sundays at 4 pm (4/5, 4/12, and 4/19)**.

Need Toilet Paper & Disinfectant?

Even though stores are trying hard to re-stock supplies, it is still difficult to find these items. First Congregational is expecting a shipment in early April from its supplier. We will have 2-ply toilet paper, spray disinfectant, paper towels, and gloves (our supplier is also out of stock of hand sanitizer and wipes). Please contact Wendy Baldwin to arrange pick-up or delivery. Donations to cover the cost of the supplies will be gratefully accepted.



Photo: USAToday

TRUSTEES

Steve Coomer & Randy Walker, Co-Chairs

Financial Update

When We Give, We Reach Out With Helping Hands

Here are the financial results through February 29, 2020.

1. Current Year Actual vs Budget Summary 1/1/2020 through 2/29/2020 Using 2020 Budget 1

Category	1/1/2020 Actual	- Budget	2/29/2020 Difference
INCOME	47,368	51,403	-4,035
M. Unrestricted Contributions	47,368	51,403	-4,035
M.01 Pledged Offerings	29,757	32,726	-2,969
M.02 UnPledged Offerings	2,283	3,350	-1,067
M.03 Rollover Prior Year Surplus_D...	15,327	15,327	0
M.04 Foundation - Endowment Fund...	0	0	0
M.05 Foundation - Minister Fund Draw	0	0	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...	0	0	0
EXPENSES	45,605	44,843	-763
A. Pastoral Leadership	20,035	20,442	407
B. Worship & Faith	6,999	6,982	-17
C. Care & Connections	188	70	-118
D. Witness & Welcome	369	145	-223
E. Outreach & Service	2,690	2,699	9
F. Trustees	0	0	0
G. Administration & Operations	3,806	3,498	-308
H. House & Grounds	10,383	9,976	-407
I. Miscellaneous	1,135	1,031	-105
Net Difference:	1,762	6,560	-4,798

Highlights:

- **Income of \$47,400** was \$4,000 below budget.
- **Expenses were \$45,600**, over budget by \$750.
- Our **cash position** at February 29 was solid - \$24,000 in checking and \$15,000 in our money market account.
- Our February 29 **net position** (cash plus investments minus restricted funds and other committed obligations) was \$2,600 negative.

Mission of the Month – January and February

January – Indiana Youth Group: \$644.00

February – Peace Learning Center: \$342.50

Looking Forward – Impact of COVID-19

The COVID-19 situation will put a strain on the church's budget. We are losing in-person Sunday donations but expenses are largely unaffected. And of course many members are facing unexpected financial challenges which may further reduce giving. We have cash reserves to cover near-term shortfalls. We will keep you informed as we work through these difficult times together. You can continue to satisfy your pledges and make other gifts either through the mail or online via our website.

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

- Jim Lootens, Treasurer

lootens.jb@gmail.com

COMMUNITY

The Virus Part I

Fearful
Anxious
Where am I
I do not know

Our fences are useless
The unseen enemy
Slips by
When we hold hands

Isolate
The word itself is cold
It grates against me
I need 'together'

I greeted a friend
She backed away
It stung
She was the one who cared

The unseen enemy
Cares not about friends
Its law is survival.

Isolate
No, Social distancing
At least we can smile
But I am fearful
Anxious

The Virus Part II

*"The only thing we have to fear
Is fear itself"*
But this fear ...
This fear of the unpredictable.
And unseen ...

What did Moses feel as he crossed the Red Sea?
What did Jesus feel as he turned toward Jerusalem?
What did Lincoln feel at the cemetery in Gettysburg?
What did Churchill feel at the invasion of Normandy?

"Lift up your staff and stretch your hand over the sea and divide it"
"The Son of Man must undergo great suffering ..."
"That this nation, under God, shall have a new burst of freedom ..."
"I bring you only blood, toil, tears, and sweat, ..."

Leaders arose
Who spoke truth.
Their pain and fear
Marshaled their courage.

But their enemies were
Dictators, countries, guns.
How do you show courage
Against, a virus?

"Social distancing."
The virus can exist only *within* us
Six feet between you
And you
And you

Unfed, the enemy
Will leave. Please, let it go.
You can love and share
From six feet away

Virus III

It is spring
Daffodils are blooming
Buds on the maples are swelling
Ducks are mating

Our COVID-19 is not *their* virus

Soon tadpoles
And lilacs
And baby ducks
Will remind us that
Life goes on

Including the laundry

- Poem by Marion Harcourt

Talk about Suicide, Save Lives

"I refuse to give up because I know God will never let me down" (Isaiah 50:7 CEV).

Tell City, Indiana's Evangelical UCC minister, the Rev Jeff McCarn, is one of the Indiana-Kentucky Conference WISE Team Members. Perhaps you read, in FC's January 2020 *Pilgrim Colony*, these two attention-getting sentences of McCarn: "Suicide is a topic no one really wants to talk about, especially in the local church. However, having conversation around suicide in the local church may save someone's life" (p. 12).

Apparently i'm a rare individual who wants to talk, and write, about suicide. Perhaps it's because twice i have intervened when Earl was suicidal—in 1993 and then in 2003. In my opinion, congregations **need** to talk openly about suicide. In 2004, when FC's Plymouth Union sponsored an evening event focused on mental health, Earl and other FC members were asked to speak. Though it was challenging for him, Earl courageously talked about his breakdown and hospitalization the previous December. Then Marion Harcourt suggested i go up front and describe what Earl's breakdown was like for me, as his spouse. i appreciated her suggestion, because family members' experiences and observations are important, and noteworthy, also.

Some of my experience with suicidal individuals has come from being an Indiana Certified Marriage and Family Therapist until the fall of 2004, when i retired to be at home writing and giving care to Earl after his recent diagnosis of Lewy body dementia.

Most of my experience, though, in dealing with suicidal ideation, plans, and attempts are from my volunteer work as a Clinical Associate with Indianapolis's local Mental Health Association in the early 1980s and with Mental Health America in 2007 to 2013. i thought FC members might be interested in reading a bit about what i learned from these stretches of two three-hour weekly shifts focused on suicidal thoughts, plans, and attempts of Crisis Line callers.

You might ask **why** i volunteered to answer crisis and suicide calls. In the early 1980s, i volunteered for mostly selfish purposes: to test the waters before investing in graduate school to see if i had what it took to be a mental health professional. i concluded that i did; in 1986, i earned a Master's Degree, then became an Indiana Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist.

In 2007, my reason was because God told me to. The way this divine assignment was presented suggested two reasons to volunteer this go-round. First, we all ought to engage in *community service*, a term which frequently is connected to part of a judicial sentence to get out of a jail term for criminal behavior. Surely our Maker wants us to skip the criminal part and—of our own free will—**choose** to serve our community. The second reason was to make use of my skills as a trained—though retired—mental health professional. Both reasons made sense to me.

After saying "Yes, Lord, whatever you want" in 2007, i extended my one-year commitment into about 6 years. Why? i believe that all of us human beings want to experience being listened to and feeling heard. In his 1965 classic *Between Parent and Child: New Solutions to Old Problems* Israeli psychologist Haim Ginott summarized the healing aspect of being listened to this way: "Comfort and consolation come from sharing deep emotions with a listener who cares." Sadly, before calling a crisis hotline, many callers have not often, if ever, experienced feeling listened to. i wanted to do my part by listening supportively and referring stressed-out persons to mental health centers, support groups, and other programs which can assist individuals in the ways they need.

After callers poured out their pain, no matter how challenging my life seemed, i often focused on counting my blessings. i gained renewed perspective. The challenges of my life weren't so difficult.

Listening to others is often satisfying. Once i spent close to an hour talking to a man who had already written a suicide note to the woman in his life; suddenly he realized he needed to call the Crisis Line number. After listening and listening, i put into words—in much detail—what i was hearing from him about all he'd been through and how it had affected him. i paused and realized that he was taking in my words. Soon he exclaimed, "i'm going to fight again!" and then, "Talking to someone has helped."

i feel privileged to have answered crisis line calls and to have been someone who cared and who listened.

- susanna-judith rae

Meridian Hills School: Reflections from the Past Few Weeks

There's an old song, "What a difference a day makes" sung by Dinah Washington that has been playing in my mind a lot lately. Each day seems to have brought on new changes and/or challenges. For me, it is in my attitude and approach that will guide me through these uncharted times. Hence the and/or. It is in how we see and do things that will lead us through. I can be strong for myself and others and yet still be uncertain. And that's ok because I don't have all the answers and neither do the professionals. I can choose to fall apart over this or take each day as it comes and move forward.

Decisions came quickly and fast action was needed. Our little school closed when the Mayor called for all schools to close. My daughter's college changed the move out deadline up a week. Being a Senior, she and her friends barely had time to process the first announcement. I put on my parent hat and promptly went over to pack up and move her home. My new priority was to help her get settled in and process this all. With her spirit and strength, we worked together to make sense of this all and to make new plans. As we talked through all of her feelings and the cancellations etc I shared with her that she will learn a much more valuable life lesson when all of this is over. Flexibility has always been a strong life skill for me. I heard once from a wise person, 'you can plan your plans, but you can't plan the results'. That phrase has stuck with me for years and gotten me through some pretty hairy times. With that in mind, I started helping my daughter think of alternative ideas and plans that still incorporated the initial activity. The 'Moms Weekend', Spring Break, Grad parties etc

can all be redone, just in a different fashion. And that has left us with some fun time for dreaming, instead of fussing and complaining about it. It's all in the perspective.

Another odd encounter I had was with my parents. We are a very tight knit family and I am fortunate that they live very close to me. They are Very capable and independent people. The problem with that is they still kept going out and about to do their errands, workouts etc. Did I mention they are a tad older than me..? Yes, they knew that they were of the older set, but they saw themselves as healthy and fit, not 'compromised'. They heard those words together "older and compromised". They didn't have any health issues, therefore they weren't 'compromised'. At least that's how they saw it. It was a difficult conversation to have with them when I needed to explain that they couldn't go out and about in public places and do their normal life's activities. I say normal because they do so much all on their own. Except for plumbing and electrical I like to add, as is my philosophy too! They finally understood and I became their errand girl. They thank me too much for this. I like to remind them, it's the least I could do for them after all, they raised me and took care of me for many years. They get out and do their walks in their neighborhood. My dad comes over to bike in my basement. All is good.

For my school children and families, I went on a drive by wave circuit for the families who live far away. I did a bike by wave for those who live near me. After I was done, I think both parents and children needed that. I know I certainly did. It absolutely filled me up and warmed my heart! I have started reading stories to the group on video and sharing activity ideas with them related to the stories. I am writing letters and drawing pictures to send to them. I am doing individual FaceTime so that I can connect with each child. There are parent texts groups as a way for them to connect as well. We will probably do a group video chat too. So many changes and so many new ways to explore connecting in the world. And yet some oldies are popping up. Lots of fancy jigsaw puzzle making, game playing, basic art activities being done at home. So while technology is helping us in a way we never thought possible or that we would ever even need, I see a resurgence of favorite pastime activities. Boy, "What a difference a day makes". Go out make this a GREAT Day!

(Virtual) Hugs,
Linda Foley

Indiana-Kentucky Conference of the United Church of Christ (IKC UCC)

Weekly Prayer and Conference Minister Pastoral

Word

We have begun a weekly tradition that will last the duration of this virus by praying on Wednesdays together at noon. Someone from the Conference will offer a written prayer that we will post online each week and then we just ask that you consider pausing at noon on

Wednesday just to pray with your siblings in Christ across the conference. This week you can expect two other things to accompany this prayer time. (Image from www.dosp.org)



1. In addition to the prayer time, in the email you will receive with the prayer, you will also receive a short video of the Minister of Music at St. Andrew UCC in Louisville, KY, J.R. Cannaday, providing us with a musical offering of the song "Let Your Faith Be Stronger Than Your Fear." May it be a thin place of connection with God during this time.

2. Just after prayer, at 12:15pm Eastern/ 11:15am Central, please go to the Indiana-Kentucky Conference Facebook page to experience a live pastoral word from our Conference Minister, the Rev. Chad Abbott. He will address us each week at 12:15pm over these next several weeks.

Faith in a Time of Pandemic

Our Conference Minister, the Rev. Chad Abbott has joined with his colleagues Rev. Shana Johnson and Rev. David Long Higgins from the Illinois South and Heartland Conferences to have a video discussion every Friday at 3pm EST/ 2pm CST live from the Indiana-Kentucky Conference Facebook page.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

May Colony Submission Deadline: Please email your submissions to Shannon at shannon@fcindy.org by April 15th.



ACTIVE COPING CALENDAR: APRIL 2020

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>"Everything can be taken from us but one thing: the freedom to choose our attitude in any given set of circumstances" ~ Viktor Frankl</p> <p>5 Get active. Even if you're stuck indoors, move & stretch</p> <p>12 Immerse yourself in a new book, TV show or podcast</p> <p>19 Do three acts of kindness to help others, however small</p> <p>26 Take a small step towards an important goal</p>	<p>6 Contact a neighbour or friend and offer to help them</p> <p>13 Respond positively to everyone you interact with</p> <p>20 Make time for self-care. Do something kind for yourself</p> <p>27 Thank three people you're grateful to and tell them why</p>	<p>7 Share what you are feeling and be willing to ask for help</p> <p>14 Play a game that you enjoyed when you were younger</p> <p>21 Send a letter or message to someone you can't be with</p> <p>28 Make a plan to meet up with others again later in the year</p>	<p>1 Make a plan to help you keep calm and stay in contact</p> <p>8 Take five minutes to sit still and breathe. Repeat regularly</p> <p>15 Make some progress on a project that matters to you</p> <p>22 Find positive stories in the news and share these with others</p> <p>29 Connect with nature. Breathe and notice life continuing</p>	<p>2 Enjoy washing your hands. Remember all they do for you!</p> <p>9 Call a loved one to catch up and really listen to them</p> <p>16 Rediscover your favourite music that really lifts your spirits</p> <p>23 Have a tech-free day. Stop scrolling and turn off the news</p> <p>30 Remember that all feelings and situations pass in time</p>	<p>3 Write down ten things you feel grateful for in life and why</p> <p>10 Get good sleep. No screens before bed or when waking up</p> <p>17 Learn something new or do something creative</p> <p>24 Put your worries into perspective and try to let them go</p>	<p>4 Stay hydrated, eat healthy food and boost your immune system</p> <p>11 Notice five things that are beautiful in the world around you</p> <p>18 Find a fun way to do an extra 15 minutes of physical activity</p> <p>25 Look for the good in others and notice their strengths</p>



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