



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Epistle for the Week of April 23, 2020

ALL in-person church activities are CANCELED through the end of April.

Dear First Congregational,

Together we are living into our church's mission to be a community to **belong**, to **heal** and to **love**. Thanks to each of you for reaching out to love one another during this uncertain time. One thing is certain: God's love. As a faith community, we continue to BE THE CHURCH through our **Worshipping**, our **Connecting**, and our **Loving** of the world.

Worshipping: Join us every at 11am on Sunday morning on Facebook on First Congregational's Facebook Page for Worship. This is a time to pray together, hear scripture, discern how God is still speaking to us today, and lift up ways to serve. Our music program continues by providing you special music every Sunday with a video of the hymn and anthem for you to enjoy. All of these can be found through links in the Epistle, the weekly electronic Sunday bulletin and on our church's FB page. If you need technological support accessing FB for worship, please reach out and let me know. We have wonderful volunteers who will walk you through the steps over the phone. We can worship at home by thanking God each day for the small blessings, for the simple gifts of grace that come to us each day.

Connecting: Join us every day for ways to stay connected to church members and friends. Our Care and Connections Board offers several ways for us to connect, so be sure to do your

part to reach out to others through making phone calls, sending text messages, writing notes and cards, and participating in the online community activities on Zoom and Facebook. Staying connected during this time of physical distancing is vital to our mental, spiritual and physical health.

Loving: Join us in answering God's invitation to love our neighbors through generous sharing of our time, talents and resources. Our world is hurting now and needs our help. Our church partners with local, national and global communities in ministries of compassion and hope. Support the Mission of the Month by mailing a check to the church or making an online donation on our website www.fcindy.org. We can show our love praying for the hungry, the sick, the homeless, the imprisoned, and all who are vulnerable to injustice. Use your time to lift your voice for justice and equality for all. Soon we will be engaging in our annual Bread for the World letter writing campaign. We can show our love for the Earth by caring for Creation, recycling and reducing our waste. God knows our church has a lot of love to share.

I invite you to choose one thing you can do each day to worship, connect and love. One simple thing can make a world of difference. Say a prayer, call someone who lives alone, write a check. These simple actions help us to BE THE CHURCH so that, as the old song goes, "they will know we are Christians by our love."

You are not alone. We are in this together. God loves you.

Blessings,
Pastor Sarah

Join us for our weekly "**Soul-Care with Pastor Sarah**" a time for church members to check-in and to pray together. This will be Tuesdays from 4:00pm—5:00pm, starting Tuesday, April 14. We will use zoom. Here is the link: <https://zoom.us/j/494018938?pwd=a3BrdnNyWXEza0tFMUgwek1CVFpYQT09>

FC Emergency Fund - The FC Emergency Fund seeks to support your housing, food, and medical needs if you find yourselves unemployed or underemployed. You can send a check to the church with "emergency fund" on the memo or make a donation on the church website. To request funds for you or your family, please contact me by email pastorsarah@fcindy.org or cell (386) 478-9012.

Worship

Sunday Adult Worship, 9:30 a.m.

Class will meet via

Zoom: <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/9264494206?pwd=dmtWbWE5UXRBTk5pcHZlYlB0aEFVUT09>

- **April 26** - "Experiences at the Border" with Cassidy Hall

Sunday Worship Service on Facebook Live, 11:00 a.m.

Pastor Sarah will preach on "Christian Mysticism"

Scripture: Luke 24:13-35

Zoom into Coffee Hour - Sundays at noon

Please join us for coffee hour each Sunday at 12pm.

Zoom

link: <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/9264494206?pwd=dmtWbWE5UXRBTk5pcHZlYlB0aEFVUT09>



What's Happening at FC: Support While Physical Distancing

Staying Connected

FC Facebook page (click [here](#))

"First Congregational Indy Fellowship" group on Facebook (click [here](#)).

Pastoral Care

We are all still here for you and will stay connected. You can contact Pastor Sarah for pastoral care needs at (386) 478-9012 or pastorsarah@fcindy.org.

Additional Church Support Contacts

Pastor Carol (casowle@gmail.com)

Office Administrator, Shannon (shannon@fcindy.org)

Moderator, Alice Rutherford (alice@caloosaspire.net)

Vice Moderator, Larry Eckel (lspeckel@comcast.net)

How to access our Zoom gatherings

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/9264494206?pwd=dmtWbWE5UXRBTk5pcHZlYlB0aEFVUT09>

Meeting ID: 926 449 4206

Password: 7171

If you click on the URL, you should not need to enter in the Meeting ID and Password.

To dial in by phone: +1 312 626 6799, Meeting ID 926 449 4206, Password 7171.

All Zoom gatherings are now monitored to 'admit' attendees, to help prevent "Zomb-bombing".

Social Gatherings through Zoom

- **Friday Fellowship: Friday, 4/24, 5:00pm**
- **Coffee Hour: Sunday, 4/26, 11:30am (after worship)**

SouthEast Association Virtual Gathering

We will have a SouthEast Association Gathering on **Sunday, April 26 at 3:30pm eastern using the Zoom link below**. This will be a time for check-in, sharing about mission and ministry, fellowship and a brief time of worship. We will end by 4:30pm eastern. Please address any questions or concerns to Rev. Dr. Sarah Lund, SE Association President at pastorsarah@fcindy.org.

Topic: Southeast Association Spring Meeting

Time: Apr 26, 2020 03:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/655204054?pwd=TDd4Q20rTUNHem56NU1rUVVlZlFhUT09>

Time for a Buzz!

Yes, we can still gather for some food and conversation, even while social distancing. So on **Sunday, May 3 at 12:30 PM**, we hope many will tune in on **Zoom** for a **Q and A session**. (Feel free to have lunch as we chat!) Our focus will be next steps regarding our in-person gatherings. By that time we'll have more guidance from the CDC, state and local officials, and our own Church Council around what to expect in coming weeks. It seems that we've all been living day by day (even as the days all seem to blend together), and we all wonder what's around the next corner. So please give some thought to what questions you'd like to have answered, and feel free to submit those ahead of time to either Pastor Sarah (pastorsarah@fcindy.org) or me (alice@caloosaspire.net). I can't guarantee that we'll have all

the answers, but all questions will provide us with opportunities for meaningful discussion. Any topic related to covid-19's impact on First Congregational is fair game. Watch upcoming Epistles and other communications for the info for joining the Zoom Buzz. Hope to see everyone's faces there!

- Alice Rutherford, Moderator

Care & Connect

Our church is known for its warm welcome and care; let's show this quality by reaching out to others in our church family while we are not able to be together in person! Can you contact 3-5 people each week, by phone, text, e-mail, or a card in the mail? Think of the people that you say 'hi' to at church on a "normal" Sunday, and continue that tradition while we are apart. Reach out to different people each week so we broaden our circle. If needed, a recently updated 'address directory' is located in the "Minutes" section of our website (password protected), or let me know if you need a copy. Let's "Be the Church" within our church family during this time of isolation. - Wendy Baldwin, Care & Connection Chair

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 delivery. Donations to cover the cost of the supplies will be gratefully accepted.

W.I.S.E. Mental Health

Anyone feeling anxiety from the pandemic should be encouraged to call the **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Disaster Distress Helpline at 800-985-5990**, or **text "TalkWithUs" to 66746**. Users will be connected with trained crisis counselors.

Counseling Services

The Counseling Center at Christian Theological Seminary continues to provide counseling services to the community during this time of distress and uncertainty. All services have transitioned to telehealth platforms in order to ensure continuity of care for clients and the health and safety of all. The Center is now accepting new clients for tele-mental health services and will begin scheduling new client appointments on Monday, April 20.

"This pandemic has had a far reaching and unprecedented impact on the world and our local community," said Bryan Votaw, Clinic Director. "It's important for us at the Counseling Center to adapt our service model to continue to provide care to our current clients and also to offer support to others who are being impacted by this crisis."

To reach the Center, please call the virtual front desk at 317-924-5205. Visit the Center website at www.cts.edu/Counseling-Center for more information.

Please visit www.cts.edu for more information.

Additional Resources

Samaritan Center's Emotional Wellness Helpline:

- for mental health support (not for physical symptoms). Speak to a therapist for support, referral, or resources
- available **Monday – Friday 8 am – 5 pm EST CALL: 812-886-6590**

SAMSA Recovery Resources

<https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/virtual-recovery-resources.pdf>

American Psychiatric Association

<https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/covid-19-coronavirus>

Bowen Center

<https://www.bowencenter.org/covid19>

Indiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence

<http://icadvinc.org/covid19/>

Food Assistance Availability Map

<https://www.in.gov/fssa/dfr/5768.htm>

VANCO Donation?

If you made a donation through VANCO, and want to designate the money to a special account, other than pledges or contributions, please email Cheryl Dillenback with your wishes for the money. Her email address is dillenback@sbcglobal.net.

IKC Project: Making Face Masks

A common theme among our church congregants is their desire to help eliminate the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, but do not know how they can make a difference. Therefore, I am sending you this email to offer your association churches a tangible way in which they can participate.

This week the IKC Disaster Preparedness and Response Ministry Team (DPRMT) initiated a

conference-wide project of **making cloth face masks for health care facilities**. Some of our churches are already doing this, but not on this large scale. The IKC Disaster Preparedness webpage <http://ikcucc.org/ministries/disaster/> and the "[IKC Disaster Response](#)" Facebook page provide details of this project.

The DPRMT would appreciate you sharing this information with your association churches and encourage their participation. Together we can make a difference in protecting our communities.

Blessings,

Greg Denk, Disaster Coordinator

Indiana-Kentucky Conference - United Church of Christ

Hunger Fact of the Week: People of color in Indiana are 3 times more likely than whites to live with poverty and hunger. The national average for this group is 2 times more than whites. Nationally African Americans have been 43% more likely to die of Covid-19 than whites and up to 65% more in the South. Their kinds of jobs, housing, use of public transportation, higher rates of underlying health conditions, and lack of access to medical care are all factors in these outcomes. These facts all converge to make people of color especially vulnerable during the pandemic and in need of food assistance. (Bread for the World and Science News)



April Mission of the Month: Exodus Refugee Immigration

This month we are supporting our local refugee resettlement agency, Exodus, a 501c3 agency. Exodus serves thoroughly vetted, legally admitted refugees who are fleeing persecution in their home countries and cannot return there. Exodus initially provides housing and other basic needs but goes on to support these newcomers with a variety of programs to help them adjust and thrive in their new community. These programs include medical and social services including mental health services, language classes, cultural orientation, job training and placement, and special programs for women and for youth. 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. Your single dollar bills in the offering plate, larger bills in the "Special Offering" envelopes or checks marked MOM or "Exodus" in the notation line will go to support this work. Please be generous in your support of refugees.

Send a check to the church with MOM: Exodus Refugee in the memo line, or donate online at: <https://www.exodusrefugee.org/donate/>

Continue Your Support of First Congregational UCC

Please continue supporting the mission and ministries of your local church at <http://www.fcindy.org/online-giving/>

Support Your Local IN-KY Conference Through Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM)

The staff of the IKC are working tirelessly to support local churches as we all discern best practices and how to get through this time together. Please remember to support the work they do and the many ministries they support through your **OCWM**

Giving at: <https://ikcucc.org/connect/donate/>

Eviction Ministry Donations

The Eviction Ministry is a new ministry of the SouthEast Association of the Indiana-Kentucky Conference of the UCC. The purpose of this ministry is to offer assistance to those who do not qualify for other state or local assistance programs and without such assistance would be evicted from their homes. During this time of increased financial concerns and unemployment, we anticipate an increase of requests for assistance. Please consider making a donation. **Checks can be made out to: Southeast Association of the IKC UCC.** Please include in the **memo line: "Eviction Ministry."**

Donations can be mailed to the treasurer at:

SE Association Eviction Ministry

Attn: Margie Potter

726 Coach Rd.

Indianapolis, IN 46227

Thank you for your generosity!

- Shannon Abbott, Eviction Ministry Team

Feeding Families

Gleaner's and Second Helpings are two of the food banks currently offering food to children who usually get their meals from school.

Donate to **Gleaner's** by clicking on the link [here](#).

Donate to **Second Helpings** by clicking on the link [here](#).

THIS WEEK AT FIRST CONGREGATIONAL

Sunday morning worship 11AM via Facebook Live
at <https://www.facebook.com/FirstCongregationalUCCIndy/>

All in-person events have been canceled through the end of April.

This Week on Zoom

Friday, April 24	5:00 p.m.	Friday Fellowship
Sunday, April 26	9:30 a.m.	Sunday Adult Class
Sunday, April 26	11:00 a.m.	Worship
Sunday, April 26	12:00p.m.	Coffee Hour
Sunday, April 26	3:30 p.m.	SouthEast Association Virtual Gathering
Tuesday, April 28	4:00 p.m.	Soul Care with Pastor Sarah
Wednesday, April 19	7:00 p.m.	Special Church Council Meeting
Friday, May 1	5:00 p.m.	Friday Fellowship
Sunday, May 3	9:30 a.m.	Sunday Adult Class
Sunday, May 3	11:00 a.m.	Worship
Sunday, May 3	12:00 p.m.	Coffee Hour
Sunday, May 3	12:30 p.m.	Buzz: Q&A