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FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Epistle for the Week of April 30, 2020

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

Dear First Congregational,

Thank you to the faithful, dedicated and hard working leaders of First Congregational for taking wise action to ensure the physical safety and health of our church during this global pandemic. Last night at a special church council meeting, we voted to extend the church closure until the end of May.

What are we learning about ourselves and our church during this experience? What does it mean to Be The Church right now?

We invite the whole church family to come together online for a time of conversation, asking questions and sharing concerns this Sunday for our first-ever Zoom Buzz session at 12:30pm. Church leaders will be on the Zoom meeting to listen to questions and concerns as we discern

together now to continue to faithfully fulfill our mission today and in the days to come. I hope you will be able to join us.

Stay healthy. Stay safe. Stay home if you can. Stay held in God's loving embrace.

You are not alone. You are loved.

Peace,
Pastor Sarah

Join us for our weekly **"Soul-Care with Pastor Sarah"** a time for church members to check-in, reflect on Richard Rohr's weekly meditations, and to pray together. This will be at a **NEW TIME, Tuesdays from 5:00-6:00 p.m.** We will use zoom. Here is the link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84830474505?pwd=Ny9oeE84a0lpcTUrWHU2dUhFVUZZQT09>

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>

- **May 3** - WISE Mental Health

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

Pastor Sarah will preach on "What in the World is God Doing?"

Scripture: Acts 2:42-47

Zoom into Coffee Hour - Sundays after worship

Please join us for coffee hour each Sunday at 11:30 a.m. (or immediately after worship)

Zoom

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

Time for a Buzz!

Yes, we can still gather for some food and conversation, even while social distancing. So **THIS 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@caloosaspirt.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. Hope to see everyone's faces there!

- Alice Rutherford, Moderator



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 Ruthertord (alice@caloosaspirit.net)

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

Tech Support: Help with Zoom/Facebook

Remaining in community through these challenging times is more important than ever. And so it's a true blessing that we have the ability to see one another's faces and hear each other's voice through technology. Virtual contacts may be difficult for some, so if anyone needs assistance to join our online gatherings, we have dedicated and caring church members who are ready to help. Contact Taylor Franklin (tnl6694@gmail.com, 630-640-6998) to set up a time for technical support. She or another member of her team can walk you through the steps to access Zoom and/or Facebook from a computer, tablet, or phone. We're all in this together, so let's be together in it!

Click this link for more ideas on how to boost your

WIFI: <https://s2.washingtonpost.com/28defab/5ea9a4d0fe1ff66289077de4/YWxpY2VAY2Fsb29zYXNwaXJpdC5uZXQ%3D/22/68/27d3240feb55b9c1f9999917436f367f>

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, 5/1, 5:00pm**
- **Coffee Hour: Sunday, 5/3, 11:30am (or immediately after worship)**

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.

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: On April 23 World Food Programme (WFP) Executive Director David Beasley warned that in addition to the threat posed by COVID-19, the world faces “multiple famines of biblical proportions” that could result in 300,000 deaths per day — a “hunger pandemic”. Speaking at an online briefing broadcast by the UN, Beasley highlighted the fact that there are currently 821 million food-insecure people in the world. “If we don’t prepare and act now, to secure access, avoid funding shortfalls and disruptions to trade,” he said, the result could be a “humanitarian catastrophe ... in a short few months.” Beasley added: “Millions of civilians living in conflict-scarred nations, including many women and children, face being pushed to the brink of starvation, with the spectre of famine a very real and dangerous possibility.” (WFP.org)



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 May.

This Week on Zoom

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	11:30p.m.	Coffee Hour
Sunday, May 3	12:30 p.m.	Buzz: Q&A
Tuesday, May 5	5:00 p.m.	Soul Care with Pastor Sarah
Wednesday, May 6	7:00 p.m.	Trustees
Friday, May 8	5:00 p.m.	Friday Fellowship
Sunday, May 10	9:30 a.m.	Sunday Adult Class
Sunday, May 10	11:00 a.m.	Worship – Bread for the World Sunday
Sunday, May 10	11:30 p.m.	Coffee Hour