

 FirstCongregationalUCCIndy

 Forward



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Epistle for the Week of May 14, 2020

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

Dear First Congregational,

This week I participated with local pastors on a panel hosted by Dr. Leah Gunning Francis and Christian Theological Seminary. I was honored to be invited and knew that because of our covenant and our structure as the United Church of Christ, I was speaking not “for” First Congregational UCC, but speaking as the pastor of our church. I value the freedom this allows all of us as individuals to speak our truth and not hide our light. Each one of us has the God given freedom of belief and thought and the right to determine for ourselves what is best. Here is the link to the recording of the

panel: <https://www.facebook.com/ctsindy/videos/vb.585240754848493/1164174043933805/?type=2&theater>

Additionally, here is the local news media’s coverage of this event and interviews with me:

- <https://cbs4indy.com/news/indy-faith-leaders-to-hold-online-discussion-on-how-to-return-to-in-person-worship/>
- <https://fox59.com/news/indy-faith-leaders-how-does-the-city-return-to-in-person-worship/>

We hold our individual freedoms alongside our covenant calling us as followers of Jesus to live in ways that honor, respect, and love one another and God. This is where we must find our answers during this challenging time. Our covenant with God and one another will guide us with wisdom during these days as we discern how we are to Be The Church.

I am thankful for each one of you, for the long 400 years of traditional congregational values, and for the ways First Congregational seeks to faithfully listen to The Still Speaking God as we seek to Be The Church: a community for **belonging**, for **healing**, and for **loving**.

You are not alone. You are loved.

Blessings,
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.

A Message from your Moderator

Two weeks ago our Church Council made the difficult decision to continue with no in-person gatherings through the month of May. As painful as that decision was, we have now made the decision to continue that policy through July. We'll continue to make periodic evaluations for moving forward. We're aware that this decision is difficult to accept, especially given that businesses across Indiana (and soon in Indianapolis) are now gearing up for re-opening.

However, our covenant of care for one another dictates that we follow the path of faith and do what is best for our congregants. We hope for a consensus of understanding and acceptance around this position.

Our recently appointed “Comeback Team”, charged with determining protocols for returning to worship, has shared what that return will probably look like. Universal face masks, no opportunities for greeting Pastor Sarah or each other, social distancing in every third pew, no singing – these are just a smattering of what we can expect whenever we venture back to our sanctuary. And so we wonder, “Why bother?” While virtual worship keeps us distant, we can at least see one another’s full faces on our screens, sing along at home, and greet one another with texted comments.

In coming weeks we’ll be discerning how we can continue to “Be the Church” virtually, without expectations for a near-future end. I was reminded recently that the Israelites in Babylon had to learn to worship differently in a different place, and through their faith they figured it out. I believe that we at First Congregational Church in Indianapolis can do the same. Throughout our 163-year history our church has met many challenges, and we’re still here and strong. So let us grieve what we have lost in this coronavirus wilderness, but let us also step boldly into a new way of being church, knowing that our church’s past saints watch with encouragement and love. God is calling us into a new creation, so let’s follow where God leads.

- Alice Rutherford, Moderator

Worship

Sunday Adult Worship, 9:30 a.m.

Class will meet via

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

- **May 17 - "Quotable Scriptures"** Do you have a favorite scripture? Maybe one that you repeat over and over in the dark or on sleepless nights? One that is helping you cope with the coronavirus pandemic? Share a favorite scripture and, if you like, reflect on its meaning in your life. Or draw a picture of your scripture and share it via the share screen feature of Zoom. This is an opportunity to share something of our individual faith journeys with one another. (try searching for "free scripture coloring pages" on the internet for examples.)

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

Pastor Sarah will preach on “Circles of Care.”

Scripture: Matthew 11:28-30

Alternative method to experience Sunday worship:

Would you like to 'attend' Sunday worship, but you don't have Facebook or an internet device? Join Wendy Baldwin for a 'watch/listen' party on Sunday at 11 am. She will be sharing her screen, so you can be a part of worship. There are 2 ways to participate – 1) Call in on your phone, and listen to worship, or 2) Login on your computer/ipad/phone and see the worship service. This is an experiment to see how well this works – if interested, please contact Wendy at 317-319-0806 or wendy.baldwin@rci.com .

Zoom into Coffee Hour - Sundays after worship

Please join us for coffee hour at 12:00 p.m. (or immediately after worship)

Zoom

link: <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/9264494206?pwd=dmtWbWE5UXRBTK5pcHZlYlB0aEFVUT09>

Pastor Carol's PCRC on Zoom THIS Sunday, May 17 from 12:45 PM to 2:30 PM.

Committee members are Janet Selby, Bob Cook, Clark Collins, and susanna-judith rae.



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@caloosapirit.net)

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

Mental Health Helplines

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.

TODAY! NEW Spiritual Support Group, Thursdays from 5:00 - 6:00 PM, on Zoom

TODAY begins our weekly SPIRITUAL SUPPORT GROUP FOR MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS. We gather on the church's ZOOM from 5:00 to 6:00 and will EVERY Thursday. Pastor Sarah and Pat Larracey will be leading this wonderful WISE program and is OPEN to all with mental illness and those living with mentally ill loved ones. We look forward to greeting each of you with love.

Zoom

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

TODAY! Men's Virtual Lunch, 1:00 p.m.

We are doing another Zoom virtual luncheon tomorrow. Here is the link to join the meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9264494206?pwd=dmtWbWE5UXRBTk5pcHZlYlB0aEFVUT09>

Please join if you can. If anyone needs any assistance, please call Randy Walker.

Social Support Gatherings through Zoom

- **Men's Virtual Lunch: Thursday, 5/14, 1:00 pm**
- **Spiritual Support Group: Thursday, 5/14, 5:00 pm**
- **Friday Fellowship: Friday, 5/15, 5:00 pm**
- **Coffee Hour: Sunday, 5/17, 12:00 pm (or immediately after worship)**
- **Spiritual Support Group: Thursday, 5/21, 5:00 pm**

Zoom

Link: <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".

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!

Cherished Just Peace Resources

Thank you, Linda Lupton, for answering my May 7th E-pistle request for FC members to share their favorite resources on peace. Here is her response:

Although I can carry on whole conversations in movie dialogue with Lou, nothing related to peace comes to mind EXCEPT my favorite folk songs (among others) of the 50's and 60's. Peter, Paul and Mary's, "Where Have all the Flowers Gone"; John Lennon's "Imagine" and "Give Peace a Chance", Cat Stevens (aka Yusuf), "Peace Train", Pete Seeger, "If I had a Hammer", Michael Jackson's "Let there be Peace on Earth (and let it begin with me)" and "The Man in the Mirror". How's that for a trip down a musical memory lane?

Linda, surely many of us can relate to your trip down a musical memory lane. While reading your reply, my mind turned to joyous memories of Pete Seeger. In the fall of 1964, he sang, and his audience enthusiastically joined in. I was in my first year at Atlanta's Emory University—when Civil Rights was a big concern to many of us students, though Emory had just started to accept a few black students. Most moving was when Seeger encouraged all to sing and sway in a large circle with our arms around each other. Peace and peaceful interactions between races were certainly on my mind, especially as we sang many heartfelt verses of "We Shall Overcome." Fortunately, 59.9% of Emory students are now minorities or people of color. What progress!

Do you have a favorite Bible verse, quotation, book, film, website, or song focused on peace? Please send your favorites to me at sjrae@iu.edu, as I am FC's Peace Team member who is supplying "Just Peace Posts" for FC's May, 2020 E-pistles.

- susanna-judith

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.



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/>

May Mission of the Month: UCC Mental Health Network

The UCC Mental Health Network works to reduce stigma and promote the inclusion of people with mental illness/brain disorders and their families in the life, leadership and work of the congregation. Send a check to the church with MOM: UCC MHN in the memo line, or donate online at: www.mhn-ucc.org

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

The staff of the IKC continue to work 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 **UCWM**
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. 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

Indiana Undocumented Youth Alliance

Undocumented people are facing challenges during this pandemic. There are groups trying to help them, specifically young people who have D.A.C.A. Four organizations are cooperating in this effort, but it is being administered by IYUA, the Indiana Undocumented Youth Alliance. Email or call if you want to donate or volunteer. The email is undocuhoosierfund@gmail.com and the phone number is 317-205-6424.

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

Thursday, May 14	1:00 p.m.	Men's Lunch
Thursday, May 14	5:00 p.m.	Spiritual Support Group
Friday, May 15	5:00 p.m.	Friday Fellowship
Sunday, May 17	9:30 a.m.	Sunday Adult Class
Sunday, May 17	11:00 a.m.	Worship – Mental Health Sunday (FB Live)
Sunday, May 17	12:00 p.m.	Coffee Hour
Sunday, May 17	12:45 p.m.	Pastor Carol PCRC
Tuesday, May 19	1:30 p.m.	Book Circle
Tuesday, May 19	5:00 p.m.	Soul Care with Pastor Sarah (see <u>above</u> for zoom link)
Wednesday, May 20	7:30 p.m.	Witness & Welcome
Thursday, May 21	5:00 p.m.	Spiritual Support Group
Friday, May 22	5:00 p.m.	Friday Fellowship
Sunday, May 24	9:30 a.m.	Sunday Adult Class
Sunday, May 24	11:00 a.m.	Worship
Sunday, May 24	11:45 a.m.	Coffee Hour