

 [FirstCongregationalUCCIndy](#)

 [Forward](#)



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Epistle for the Week of May 21, 2020

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

Dear First Congregational,

There's no doubt that these days are challenging. Seasons of life that were hard are made even harder during the pandemic. This is especially true of the death of a loved one. For the health and safety of those we love, we cannot gather in person as we would like without significant risk. Fortunately, dying with dignity is still possible with hospice care and home hospice services. I've experienced the importance of a "good death" just this week when my beloved Grandmother, Beulah Mae Wilson, died peacefully at her son's home in Texas on Saturday, May 16 under the care of home hospice. She was 99.5 years young. Two nights before her death, over FaceTime, I led the family gathered at her bedside in prayers for the dying from the UCC Book of Worship. My mother was there to make a sign of the cross on our Grandmother's forehead with blessed olive oil.

My family does not yet know when the in-person memorial service at her church will be because large gatherings are not possible at this time. We are looking at perhaps the fall of 2021, but we do not yet know and this is unsettling. We are figuring out now the logistics of a three person graveside service at the cemetery that is livestreamed on Facebook. I am talking now with the cemetery staff in Columbia, Missouri, to see how I might be able to lead the graveside service online from my home in Indiana. These are strange times that complicate grief even further.

I am grateful for the affirmation, compassion, and support of our church family during this time of bereavement. With the blessings of our church leaders, I will be taking sacred time to remember, celebrate, give thanks and feel all the emotions stirred up by my Grandmother's death. I am heeding the words of the Rev. Otis Moss of Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago who says, "May you be unafraid to mourn." This time of family bereavement will begin Wednesday of this week and will go through this Sunday, May 20-24. Of course, grief lasts more than five days, but these five days will be special, set apart for the purpose of doing the deep work of healing. During this time Pastor Carol will be available by phone to provide pastoral care. Our worship for Sunday is in the capable and gifted hands of our Worship Design Team.

I invite your prayers for our family. Our Grandmother's quiet, unconditional love made each one of us better. She had a way of shining a light on what was good. In these five days I will explore more deeply the power of her light and rest in the comfort of her everlasting love.

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. **Tuesdays from 5:00-6:00 p.m.**

Here is the Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/494018938?pwd=a3BrdnNyWWEza0tFMUgwek1CVFpYQT09>

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.

Moderator Message

As we continue to listen for God's voice in leading us forward through the coronavirus crisis, we have valuable assistance from our national UCC office and the Indiana-Kentucky Conference. Both resources have given us excellent insights into how and when to return to in-person church gatherings. By and large, we're finding that our deliberations and decisions are in concert with our denomination's guidance. A recent communication from the national UCC office includes these words: *"We want to send a clear and strong message to congregations who are considering going back to meeting in person: We urge you to wait until ALL safety concerns have been addressed."* I hear these words as supportive to our covenant of caring as we hold off on returning to worship in our sanctuary for at least two more months. The entire article can be found at https://www.ucc.org/news_pastoral_letter_should_churches_return_to_worship_in_their_sanctuaries_05192020 I highly recommend it.

Church Council will be meeting again next week, and more information about our deliberations will be forthcoming in the June Colony. We hope to determine the best ways we can continue to "Be The Church" virtually. We ask for your continued prayers and support as we blaze this new path.

- 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 23 - "Devotion to Generosity"** with Wendy Baldwin

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

Worship this Sunday is provided by the UCC Council of Conference Ministers.

Scripture: Acts 17:22-31

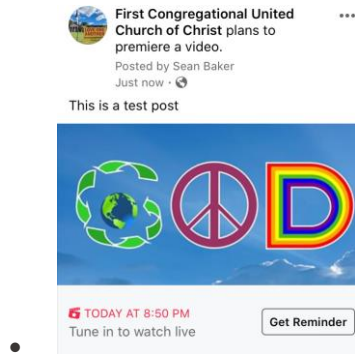
Instructions for viewing worship on Facebook this week:

1. For mobile Facebook app users (preferred method):

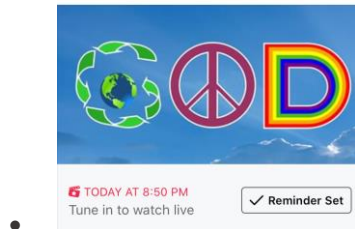
Follow this link.

(https://www.facebook.com/pg/FirstCongregationalUCCIndy/posts/?ref=page_internal)

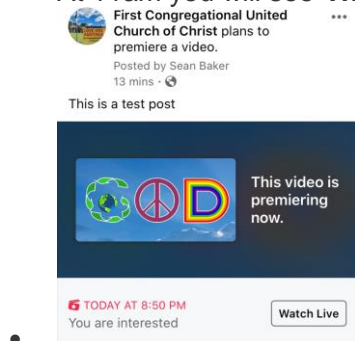
- The placeholder for the Sunday morning broadcast will be in the posts
- Click **"Get Reminder."** It will then display **"Reminder Set."**



-
- At 3 minutes before broadcast you will see a countdown.



-
- At 11am you will see "The video is premiering now."



-
- Click "Watch Live" and enjoy!

2. For Laptop or PC users:

Follow the link

(https://www.facebook.com/pg/FirstCongregationalUCCIndy/posts/?ref=page_internal)

- Laptops and PC's don't auto-refresh, so at 11am, auto-refresh your browser and click "Watch Live."
- We highly recommend using the mobile app for more convenience.

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>



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. While Pastor Sarah takes time this week (May 20-24) to grieve the loss of her grandmother, Pastor Carol is available at (317) 496-9732 or casowle@gmail.com.

Additional Church Support Contacts

Pastor Carol (casowle@gmail.com)

Office Administrator, Shannon (shannon@fcindy.org)

Moderator, Alice Rutherford (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!

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.

Social Support Gatherings through Zoom

- **Spiritual Support Group: Thursday, 5/21, 5:00 pm**
- **Friday Fellowship: Friday, 5/22, 5:00 pm**
- **Coffee Hour: Sunday, 5/24, 12:00 pm (or immediately after worship)**
- **Spiritual Support Group: Thursday, 5/28, 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".

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

Our weekly SPIRITUAL SUPPORT GROUP FOR MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS gathers on the church's ZOOM from 5:00 to 6:00 pm 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>

Women's Lunch Bunch - Thursday, May 28, 11:30 a.m.

All women of the church are invited to get together once a month at 11:30 a.m. via Zoom for lunch, friendship and fellowship. For questions or more information please contact Sue Chapman at (317) 259-1806 or carolsuech59@gmail.com.

Men's Lunch - Thursday, May 28, 1:00 p.m.

This lunch and discussion gathering for men of First Congregational is meeting via Zoom. They meet every other Thursday at 1 p.m. Please contact Randy Walker at (317) 796-2081 or aa28977rwalker@gmail.com for information.

Cherished Just Peace Resources

Thank you, Janet Selby, for answering my May 14 E-pistle request for FC members to share their favorite resources on peace. Janet is a past member of FC's "Just Peace Team." Here is her response:

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called [sons and daughters] of God" (Matthew 5:9).

Peace Prayer of St Francis

Bird Songs of Southern Indiana, recorded by Geoff Keller

On Man and Nature by Henry David Thoreau

"Canon in D," by Pachelbel

"Music for Zen Meditation"

"The Romance of the Violin," performed by Joshua Bell

"Great Is Thy Faithfulness"

"That Cause Can Neither Be Lost Nor Stayed"

"In the Bulb There Is a Flower"

"How Great Thou Art," verses 1 and 2

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

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 **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. 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

I 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 July.

This Week on Zoom

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 – (FB Premiere)
Sunday, May 24	12:00 p.m.	Coffee Hour
Tuesday, May 26	5:00 p.m.	Soul Care with Pastor Sarah (see above for zoom link)
Wednesday, May 27	6:30 p.m.	Calling Circle
Wednesday, May 27	7:30 p.m.	Church Council – Special Meeting
Thursday, May 28	11:30 a.m.	Women's Lunch
Thursday, May 28	1:00 p.m.	Men's Lunch
Thursday, May 28	5:00 p.m.	Spiritual Support Group
Sunday, May 31	9:30 a.m.	Sunday Adult Class
Sunday, May 31	11:00 a.m.	Worship

Sunday, May 31	12:00 p.m.	Coffee Hour
----------------	------------	-------------