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FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Epistle for the Week of May 28, 2020

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

Dear First Congregational,

This week marks a grim milestone for all of us: over 100,000 deaths in the United States from COVID19. Without the ability to gather in person for community memorial services, much of our tools for processing grief are not available to us. This afternoon my family will experience a “virtual” graveside service for my Grandmother. The cemetery will use Facebook live to broadcast the service and I will FaceTime from my home in Indianapolis to the graveside in Columbia, Missouri, to read scripture and offer a prayer. Then tomorrow our family will have a Zoom reception to share stories about her life.

Thank you for the many cards, kind words, and prayers of support as our family grieves. Thank you for the bereavement time last week because it granted me the gift of reflection on my grandmother’s long and good life. As Christians, we know that grief is an important part of our

walk with God. The time also helped me to prepare for today's graveside service.

This Sunday we will hear the story of the church's first experience of Pentecost. What does Pentecost teach us about how to Be The Church during a global pandemic? I invite us to consider how we are being changed during this time. How is God's Still Speaking voice being heard? Where are you seeing signs of the Spirit?

I am seeing the Spirit move in and through (and sometimes despite of) technology. While far from perfect, our technology opens up for us ways to connect, to be present, and to listen to the Spirit. I trust God's Spirit will be with us at the graveside service and that prayers through the internet are just as powerful and just as good.

Blessings,
Pastor Sarah

Soul Care with Pastor Sarah - Join us on **Tuesdays from 5:00-6:00 p.m.** for a time to check-in, reflect on Richard Rohr's weekly meditations, and to pray together.

Here is the Zoom link:

<https://us02web.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.

Upcoming Buzz

Following worship on **June 14**, join us on Zoom for another opportunity to gather in fellowship virtually. Our focus will again be on how we are navigating through the coronavirus crisis as a community of faith. The Comeback Team will share our deliberations, along with some of the guidance we regularly receive from the national UCC and the Indiana-Kentucky Conference. We also want to hear thoughts, questions, and concerns from everyone as well, so please plan to join in with video, audio, or just a phone. And feel free to enjoy lunch as we chat! - Alice Rutherford, Moderator

Worship

Sunday Adult Education, 9:30 a.m.

Class will meet via

Zoom: <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/9264494206?pwd=dmtWbWE5UXRBTK5pcHZlYlB0aEFVU>

May 31 - Global Pandemic Dreams about Bugs and Other Weird Things, discussion led by susanna-judith rae

- Are weird dreams exposing what is bothering us during our waking hours these days? We will discuss dreams, including scary nightmares and hopeful, spiritual dreams. To prepare, you can read these articles, the first in the *New York Times*, and the second by the Associated Press:
- "Infecting Our Dreams; Pandemic Sabotages Sleep Worldwide," Associated Press, April 28, 2020 <https://apnews.com/b7fb8585527db3a7f06563dce7982eff>.
- Weaver, Caity, "Why Am I Having Weird Dreams Lately?" *New York Times*, April 13, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/13/style/why-weird-dreams-coronavirus.html>.

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

Pastor Sarah will preach on "Transformed by the Spirit."

Scripture: Acts 2:1-21

Instructions for viewing worship on Facebook:

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

Follow this link.

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

- The placeholder for 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. 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@caloosaspirt.net)

Vice Moderator, Larry Ecker (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 Helpline

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 for Mental Health: Thursday, 5/28, 5:00 pm**
- **Coffee Hour: Sunday, 5/31, 12:00 pm (or immediately after worship)**
- **Spiritual Support Group for Mental Health: Thursday, 6/04, 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>

TODAY! 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.

TODAY! 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, Paul Terheide, for answering my request for a "Just Peace Post" for FC's May 28 E-pistle. Here's what Paul, a past member of FC's "Just Peace Team," submitted:

"You ask that I might share some of my practices for peace in my life. One thing I like to do is to spend quiet time meditating, looking at the lush green woods that are in back of our house. The time I spend in the morning meditating and centering is crucial for me to have a peaceful day. This time brings me into the present moment, connecting with my God in the moment. For, me these days are always peaceful. Another thing I do during the day, especially in the morning, is make a mental gratitude list. It helps keep perspective. *Jesus Calling* by Sarah Young is a good devotional for me.

Thanks for Asking."

Paul is certainly an excellent role model for practicing peace in one's life!

And, finally, thank you again, Linda Lupton, Janet Selby, and Paul Terheide for sharing your peace resources and practices in FC's "Just Peace Posts" throughout May 2020 E-pistles.

- susanna-judith

Bread for the World

Thank you to everyone who has written or emailed as part of our virtual Offering of Letters. So far we have sent 64 letters or emails to our senators and representatives on the 2020 Bread for the World issues. If you have written or emailed but forgot to report to Shannon, please contact her at shannon@fcindy.org telling whom you contacted and the method. This information is helpful for our report to the Central Indiana Bread organizers. If you haven't yet written, there is still time to do so. Every contact makes a difference.

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

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 28	11:30 a.m.	Women's Lunch Bunch
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 – (FB Premiere)
Sunday, May 31	12:00 p.m.	Coffee Hour
Tuesday, June 2	5:00 p.m.	Soul Care with Pastor Sarah (see above for zoom link)
Wednesday, June 3	7:00 p.m.	Trustees

Thursday, June 4	5:00 p.m.	Spiritual Support Group
Sunday, June 7	9:30 a.m.	Sunday Adult Class
Sunday, June 7	11:00 a.m.	Worship (FB Premiere)
Sunday, June 7	12:00 p.m.	Coffee Hour