

 [FirstCongregationalUCCIndy](#)

 [Forward](#)



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Epistle for the Week of June 4, 2020

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

Dear First Congregational,

Here is a letter I wrote this week as the President of the Southeast Association:

Greetings of peace and love to you. We live in the shadows of a global pandemic, racial unrest, societal chaos and political division. During these times of significant challenge, our congregations are called to love like Jesus. Thank you for the ways you are adapting and responding, taking church online and taking justice to the streets. I see you leading spiritual formation groups on Zoom, using the chat feature to share prayers, and posting sermons on Facebook. I see you showing up with your masks on to pray at hospital beds and to protest in the streets.

Now is the time to Be The Church in transformative ways. We know that church buildings and

Bibles are not props for a photo opportunity. We know that true and lasting peace takes hard conversations, education, uncomfortable dialogue, and courageous changes to systems oppressing people of color. We know that as followers of Jesus, now is the time to lift our voices in the public square. Black lives matter: George Floyd and Dreajson Reed and Breonna Taylor.

I signed a letter to the mayor of Indianapolis asking for the city to adopt policies and plans that (1) regulate police use of force, (2) enforce police discipline policies, (3) train police in de-escalation and justice, (4) implement group violence intervention recommendations, (5) respond to mental health crisis with treatment, not incarceration, (6) remove unfair protection for officers in law enforcement contracts, and (7) require independent investigations of police violence. You can sign this letter, too, and read more about this interfaith movement here: www.faithinindiana.org.

I invite you and members of your congregation to take action now as followers of Jesus to end anti-black violence, racism, and injustice. Write letters to your local elected officials and let them know that your faith calls you to love your neighbors, especially our neighbors that are victimized and killed because they are black in America. Then take this love of Jesus for our neighbors to the polls and help get out the vote. Join the national UCC movement: Our Faith, Our Vote: <https://www.ucc.org/ourfaithourvote>.

At the Committee on Ministry meeting on June 2, led by God's Spirit, we made a commitment to work on a strategy to require anti-racism training for authorized ministers in the Southeast Association. If we want to change the world, we must begin by changing ourselves first, examining our own prejudices and biases. We plan to bring a proposal for this new requirement to the Southeast Association Annual Business meeting to be held on Zoom on Sunday, August 2 at 3:00pm. Thank you all for the ways you are faithfully showing up to Be The Church. We know God is with us, God's Spirit guides us and the living Christ walks with us, giving us strength and courage for the living of these days.

First Congregational, I ask for your prayers as we seek to include anti-racism training as a requirement for ministry.

With faith,
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=a3BrdnNyVWxEZaUtFMUgwek1CVFpYQ1U9>

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=dmfWbWE5UXRBTk5pcHZlYlB0aEFVU>
T0

June 7: focus on **Matthew 28:16-20**; "***What opportunities did you have this week to teach someone about Jesus?***" Click [HERE](#) for a guide for this week's study.

Some reflection questions we will explore together are:

1. *Why might some of the disciples doubt the reality of Jesus when they finally see him after the resurrection?*
2. *If you would have been with them, what might have been your response?*
3. *What does it mean to "make disciples"?*
4. *What is your favorite name for God?*
5. *Share a time when your day was interrupted by a word of hope.*
6. *Who in your life might need a word of hope? How might you be an ambassador of hope to that person?*

Sunday Worship, 11:00 a.m.

Pastor Sarah will preach on "Making Anti-Racism Disciples"

Scripture: Matthew 28:16-20

3 Ways to Connect for Worship

YOUTUBE

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWV9wqAvPiUKSkEbjav6Zpw>

- YouTube Live Premiere will broadcast at 11am Sunday morning. There will be a countdown before. We highly recommend using the mobile app for more convenience as it will refresh.
- Use this option for live interacting and messaging.
- If using a laptop, you will need to refresh your browser after 11am to click to watch live.

FACE BOOK

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

- The video will be posted at 11am.
- This is for viewing only. For live interacting and commenting, please use the YouTube option.

DIAL-IN

- Dial **317-204-3862**
- Landline is preferred for clarity.
- If calling with a smart phone, setting your cellular setting to Wi-Fi calling will be clearer.

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=dmtWbWE5UXRBTk5pcHZlYlB0aEFVUT0>

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What's Happening at FC: Support While Physical Distancing

A Letter from CTS to Congregations

Dear Friends of God,

Once again, our nation has come face to face with our systemic racism. We are failing our people. We are not listening to the voices of those oppressed. We need to reform our justice system. We need to reform our police practices. We need to reform our economic system that deepens the impact of racism and dehumanizes our people. We need to reform our hearts. Communities of faith must be part of these reforms. We must put our faith into action. We must rise up and use our voices and our power. **We, at Christian Theological Seminary, believe that congregations can make a difference.**

Our Dean, Dr. Leah Gunning Francis, and Faith in Indiana organized a Processional for Racial Justice on May 31, the Feast of Pentecost, in downtown Indianapolis. As religious leaders and people of faith in the city and the region we gathered and raised our voices in unison with countless others in our city and across the nation over the ongoing racism against black and brown people in our country. On Sunday, hundreds of us enacted a die-in for 8 minutes and 46 seconds, which was how long police officer Derek Chauvin kept his knee on the neck of George Floyd, resulting in his death. During the gathering, we called upon Mayor of Indianapolis, Joe Hogsett, to implement a series of police reforms that would provide equal protection for black and brown people. President Mellott and other members of the CTS faculty, staff, students and alumni were present.

Christian Theological Seminary calls upon all congregations to act in their cities and regions. Demand that your local officials put the appropriate measures in place that will provide justice and equality for everyone. Check out the LIVE FREE Reform Agenda of Faith in Indiana for inspiration. Join with people of other faith traditions and any who are committed to dismantling white supremacy and its destructive power. Organize peaceful protests and demonstrations to compel your local leaders act and lend your support. The gospel of Jesus calls us to speak out and act when justice is denied. When you do, know that you are not alone. We are taking action too.



Racism a deadly virus that white people must help eradicate, UCC panel says

"The virus infecting the killers of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd and other Black people in America is much older than COVID-19. It will stop killing people only if society, the church and especially white people focus relentlessly on a cure, over the long haul, using resources that are already available.

Naming the effects of that virus – racism – and how the church can respond were central themes of "The Cross and the Lynching Tree: A Requiem for Ahmaud Arbery," a May 31 United Church of Christ online panel discussion. It was recorded and can be viewed on the UCC YouTube channel.

The urgency of the Sunday-evening conversation was further heightened by the events of the week leading up to it. Thousands of nonviolent demonstrators filled the streets of several U.S. cities, responding to Floyd's death at the hands of Minneapolis police. Curfews were in place in several of those cities, due to property damage by small numbers of people who broke away from the nonviolent protests."

Read more of this article and watch the video [HERE](#).

Resources for Education (provided by the Central Indiana Community Foundation):

Click the link below for recommended books, documentaries, podcasts, and learning journeys that have influenced the staff and our knowledge about race and racism in America:


<https://www.cicf.org/what-we-do/inclusivitycity/tools-for-accountability/>

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.

The Impact Of Racism On Mental Health:



Feeling disconnected / lonely

Second-guessing things

Decreased hope
(in the future, justice, the government etc.)

Increased "Survival Mode"

Decreased trust

Worry

Feelings of powerlessness
(You can do the right thing and still end up with a horrific outcome)

Increase risk of depression and anxiety


Trauma
(both from the present and triggering past instances / generational trauma)

Existential questioning
"How can the world be so cruel?"

Panic

#BlackLivesMatter

@RealDepressionProject



TODAY! Thursdays for the Soul: Mysticism & Mindfulness, June 4, 3:30pm

This free webinar will offer conversation and practice from some of the leading mystics and mindfulness practitioners in the UCC. Come and listen alongside the Rev. Dr. John C. Dorhauer, Rev. Shannon Abbott, Rev. Dr. John T. Myers, and Rev. Brendan Curran. Come where you are with a willing heart and spirit, and leave grounded and nourished.

Register here:

https://ucc.zoom.us/webinar/register/6415901205529/WN_ZQB7MzluRqCsIEkm3UoNBg?fbclid=IwAR1zb24Ux9fUJpInxx8ex1l8RrP0ybY6S_2YoaLycvMI9XYrYhujGBzMwlg

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=dmtVbWVlZUxRBTk5pcHZlYlB0aEFVUT09>

Social Support Gatherings through Zoom

- **Spiritual Support Group for Mental Health: Thursday, 6/4, 5:00 pm**
- **Coffee Hour: Sunday, 6/7, 12:00 pm (or immediately after worship)**
- **Spiritual Support Group for Mental Health: Thursday, 6/11, 5:00 pm**

Zoom

Link: <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/9264494206?pwd=dmtVbWVlZUxRBTk5pcHZlYlB0aEFVUT09>

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".

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/>

June Mission of the Month: Hoosier Interfaith Power and Light

HIPL is an interfaith organization dedicated to advocating for sustainable living and changes to protect God's creation of life on this earth, both human and others. Its mission is to educate

congregations on sustainable living practices that will reduce our carbon footprint, and promote the use of renewable energy resources. The organization is funded primarily from contributions from its member congregations and additional support is always needed to continue the work of improving the care for creation advocated by almost all major religious teachings. Please send a check to the church with MOM: HIPL in the memo line, or donate online at: <http://fcindy.org/online-giving/> (Please designate MOM: HIPL in your online giving).

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](#).

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 Eckel (lspeckel@comcast.net)

THIS WEEK AT FIRST CONGREGATIONAL

THREE Ways to Worship on Sunday morning at 11AM:

FACEBOOK

[https://www.facebook.com/pg/FirstCongregationalUCCIndy/posts/?ref=page_in
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Weekly Calendar

| | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------|---|
| Thursday, June 4 | 3:30 p.m. | UCC National Event: Mysticism & Mindfulness |
| Thursday, June 4 | 5:00 p.m. | Spiritual Support Group |
| Friday, June 5 | 10:00 a.m. | PCRC (Pastor Sarah) |
| Sunday, June 7 | 9:30 a.m. | Sunday Adult Class |
| Sunday, June 7 | 11:00 a.m. | Worship |
| Sunday, June 7 | 12:00 p.m. | Coffee Hour |
| Tuesday, June 9 | 5:00 p.m. | Soul Care with Pastor Sarah (see <u>above</u> for zoom link) |
| Wednesday, June 10 | 5:00 p.m. | WISE Mental Health Team |
| Wednesday, June 10 | 7:00 p.m. | Church Council |
| Thursday, June 11 | 1:00 p.m. | Men's Lunch |
| Thursday, June 11 | 5:00 p.m. | Spiritual Support Group |
| Sunday, June 14 | 9:30 a.m. | Sunday Adult Class |
| Sunday, June 14 | 11:00 a.m. | Worship |
| Sunday, June 14 | 12:00 p.m. | Coffee Hour |
| Sunday, June 14 | 12:30 p.m. | Buzz: Q&A + New Member Reception |