



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

THE PILGRIM COLONY

June 2020

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

Pastor's Reflections

Today, along with generations before us, as people of faith we hold fast to what is good. We uphold our core values as followers of Jesus: to love God and love our neighbors as ourselves. Along with the prophets, we seek to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God.

At First Congregational, we are committed to be a Just Peace, Open and Affirming, Green, and WISE for mental health church. We read the Bible through the lens of love, justice, inclusion, stewardship, healing, and peace.

In a time of global pandemic, racial unrest, societal chaos and political turmoil, we are guided by our faith. How we choose to Be The Church matters during this time. How you choose to respond matters.



I invite you to join me in praying for our world. I invite you to join me in lifting your voice for racial justice and peace. I invite you to join me in living our faith out loud. Now is the time for bold, public witness. We cannot remain silent.

May the world know that we are Christians by our love, not our hate. May we work together to transform God's world. May the Holy Spirit guide us with wisdom and courage.

Peace,
Pastor Sarah

Pastor Sarah joined interfaith leaders for the Faith In Indiana Call to Action at the State House on Sunday, May 31. Click this link to add your voice for justice: <https://faithindiana.salsalabs.org/livefree>

Pastoral Care and Support: Contact Pastor Sarah at pastorsarah@fcindy.org and (386)478-9012. We are here for you.

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>

Pastoral Congregation Relations Committee

The pastoral office and other positions of staff leadership exist to build up the congregation as part of the Body of Christ and to equip the saints for the mission of the church. The particular relationship between a pastor and congregants should be tended deliberately, so that the ministries of both pastor and congregation complement each other and further God's grace in the world. As with any relationship, it must be respected and nurtured to grow in healthy and projective ways. For this reason, a Pastoral Congregation Relations Committee (PCRC) exists in a congregation to advise, assist, and promote the growth of this vital relationship.

PCRC meet quarterly and are available throughout the year for support and conversation. We are blessed to have both Pastor Sarah and Pastor Carol serve our congregation. Currently, Pastor Carol's focus is on the following areas: pulpit supply, pastoral care visits, Adult Education and Worship Leader coordination.

PCRC for Pastor Sarah: Randy Walker, Lianna Campos, Nancy Dickinson, Chuck Kiphart

PCRC for Pastor Carol: Bob Cook, Gloria Boedeker, Clark Collier, susana-judith rae

- Next meeting: Sunday, July 19th at 1:00 p.m. (Zoom)

Moderator's Reflections

And so another month has passed while we're still physically apart from one another. And at least another two months of the same await us. No, this is not what we want, but it is our reality. Church Council has made the decision to remain away from in-person gatherings through July because of our covenant of caring for one another. We're fortunate to have guidance from both the UCC national office and our own Indiana-Kentucky Conference that supports this decision, but it was still a difficult one to make. We won't really know for several more weeks what the impact of the state and local "re-opening" will be, and warnings of a second wave of covid-19 as a possible result are something we're taking quite seriously. We have been blessed and successful so far in protecting our vulnerable church family members, and we want to do all we can to see that status continue.

As we look toward the future – uncertain as it may be – we have some ideas of what returning to our sanctuary for worship will look like. The Comeback Team has developed some protocols for that return, and there's more information elsewhere in this newsletter about that vision. Let me say here that those protocols present a vision of sanctuary worship so different from what we're familiar with, that for me they paint a grim picture. Gathering without close physical contact with one another – not to mention the exclusion of vulnerable members – just feels alien to all that I value in worship at FC.

So we will continue gathering together virtually. It's my hope that more and more of us will boldly step into this "new thing" that God is leading us to. Virtual worship will soon be available on more platforms, and even by telephone. Boards and teams will continue their ministries in new ways, using technology to our advantage. New members will be joining us via Zoom. We can witness to our faith virtually in ways we will continue to discern.

We also want to listen and communicate as much as possible as we support and encourage one another as a faith community. There will be an opportunity to converse and share in a **Buzz session on Zoom following worship on June 14**. I hope to see some new faces there with new thoughts about the coming months. Together we will continue to "Be The Church", whether or not we gather at 7171 Pennsylvania St.

- Alice Rutherford, Moderator

What Will In-Person Worship Look Like?

Once in-person worship begins again at First Congregational, while the Corona virus is still a threat, we will need to observe social distancing and protect against air-borne particles as much as possible. A "Come Back" Team, composed of Alice Rutherford, Larry Eckel, Pastor Sarah, and Wendy Baldwin, is working on various protocols that we will need to have in place. These incorporate learnings and recommendations from various UCC conferences and leadership, as well as other denominations. We are trying to prayerfully consider what is best for us.

So imagine this:

- Worshippers will need to enter the patio area and building with a minimum of 6 feet between family groups and proceed directly to the sanctuary.
- Worshippers will be encouraged, if not required, to wear face masks.
- Seating will involve using the ends of the pews, with 2 empty pews between worshippers, allowing 20-40 people to be present.
- Pastor Sarah will be in the altar area, and will enter and leave it using the back stairway (behind the altar/pulpit).
- There will be music from the choir loft, but no singing, since it propels aerosol particles at further distances.
- At the end of the service, worshippers will leave by family group, and proceed directly to their car.
- There will be no coffee/refreshments, or any form of gathering in the Parlor, Narthex, or hallways.
- We will not use name tags, hymnals, etc; bulletins and offering plates will be available at stationary stands; in other words, nothing will be passed from person to person, including communion.
- For the people who are not able to attend, we will record or live stream worship

Our goal is to ensure, as much as possible, that worship is safe and that asymptomatic transmission does not occur. While we all miss our lively interactive in-person times together, we also don't want to make each other sick, or worse.

In covenantal love – Wendy Baldwin, Building Manager

Congratulations and Farewell to Our Choir Director, Julie Houston



We are grateful for the years of service we have been blessed with under the musical direction of Julie Houston. While your presence at FC will be missed, we congratulate you on your retirement as Choir Director from FC, and wish you well as you continue to bless the wider community with your musical gifts and talents.

In celebration of Julie, we are collecting gifts for her retirement adventure fund. You are invited to make a donation to the church with "Julie" in the memo line of your check or make the donation on our website at www.fcindy.org. Please make donations by Tuesday, June 30.

Please also consider sending Julie a personal note through email at juliehouston@comcast.net, perhaps with a favorite musical memory with her.

This Month at FC*

SUNDAYS	9:30 a.m.	Sunday Adult Class
SUNDAYS	11:00 a.m.	Worship
SUNDAYS	12:00 p.m.	Coffee Hour
TUESDAYS	5:00 p.m.	Soul Care with Pastor Sarah
THURSDAYS	5:00 p.m.	Spiritual Support Group for Mental Health
Wednesday, June 3	7:00 p.m.	Trustees Meeting
Thursday, June 4	3:30 p.m.	UCC National Event: Mysticism & Mindfulness
Friday, June 5	10:00 a.m.	Pastor Sarah PCRC
Wednesday, June 10	5:00 p.m.	W.I.S.E. Mental Health Team
Wednesday, June 10	7:00 p.m.	Church Council
Thursday, June 11	1:00 p.m.	Men's Lunch
Sunday, June 14	12:30 p.m.	Buzz: Q&A & New Member Reception
Tuesday, June 16	1:30 p.m.	Book Circle
Wednesday, June 17	7:00 p.m.	Witness & Welcome
Wednesday, June 24	7:00 p.m.	Special Church Council Meeting
Thursday, June 25	11:30 a.m.	Women's Lunch Bunch
Thursday, June 25	1:00 p.m.	Men's Lunch
Friday, June 26	2:00 p.m.	1857 Society
Fri-Sun, June 26-28		IKC Virtual Annual Gathering
Sunday, June 28	11:00 a.m.	ONA Sunday

**All activities are through the use of Zoom, Facebook, YouTube, or phone call-in.*

WORSHIP & FAITH

Elizabeth Price, Chair

Sunday Adult Class, 9:30-10:30 am

Adult Education will continue to meet via Zoom during the month of June.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/9264494206>

Meeting ID: 926 449 4206

Phone call only: 1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago), you will be prompted for the meeting ID 926 449 4206, followed by the # sign. If you don't have a device with visual display, you can simply call in and participant as a 'conference call'.

The Adult Ed team decided to push back our planned series on the Psalms, because we needed more time to figure out how to adapt it to Zoom. Instead, we will be using a Lectionary resource we used in April that has been graciously made available by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA).

June 7: focus on *Matthew 28:16-20*; "What opportunities did you have this week to teach someone about Jesus?"

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?

June 14: Wendy Baldwin presents "Devoted to Generosity"

June 21: focus on *Matthew 10:24-39*, "When do you need courage from God?"

Some reflection questions we will explore together are:

1. What is the opposite of fear?
2. If you were afraid and someone told you to stop being afraid, would that work? Why or why not?

3. How effective are people when they are afraid?
4. How does it make you feel to know you might be rejected because of your faith?
5. When we are committed to Jesus Christ, how might rejection help strengthen faith?

June 28: focus on **Matthew 10:40-42**, “**How have you welcomed someone this week as though that person were Christ?**”

Reflection questions include:

1. If you knew Jesus was coming tonight to a meeting at your congregation, what would you do?
2. If you were at a meeting at your congregation and a stranger walked in, what would you do?
3. Describe a time when you were warmly welcomed.
4. How do we learn how to welcome people?
5. What advice would you give to someone who wanted to increase their welcoming skills?
6. How might we become more welcoming?

3 Ways to Connect for Worship



FACE BOOK

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



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.
- If using a laptop, you will need to refresh your browser after 11am to click to watch live.



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.

Just Peace Team: The Homeless and the Coronavirus

The homeless are already at risk for disease, and the risk is critical at this time. What steps has Indianapolis taken to address the situation?

In late March two emergency shelters were opened to encourage people to seek shelter and to alleviate crowding at Wheeler Mission and other existing shelters. A special, secret location was established for quarantining homeless persons who were suspected of having the virus. (Testing wasn't always available.) Eskenazi Hospital oversees staffing, and the Indiana National Guard handles security.

Facilities serving meals, like the Horizon House, staggered their serving times to reduce the number of clients dining at one time. Food pantries went to a walk-through format with people picking up to-go bags of food so as to enable social distancing while continuing to serve as many as possible. The mayor continued to seek additional shelter facilities to deal with possible increased need.

Family Promise of Greater Indianapolis, which FCC has supported for many years, was faced with the inability of churches in the Interfaith Hospitality Network program to continue housing and feeding the homeless. FPGI acted quickly to secure new housing options in hotels. This proved expensive, so a fund drive was initiated to pay for renting 8 apartments. The drive raised enough funds to provide 9 apartments!

We can feel good about these positive moves made by our city. Of course, the need remains great. Wheeler Mission, Horizon House, Family Promise and other groups supporting the homeless still need your support. Thank you for caring.

- Janet Selby, Just Peace Team member

OUTREACH & SERVICE

Ann Leatherman, Chair

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. It assists congregations to establish their own green teams and look at and address issues of sustainability at their places of worship and among their congregants. The organization provides

workshops and events for congregations to participate in. they also help local congregations advocate for clean energy policies with reducing our fossil fuel dependence and promoting renewable energy resources as well as encouraging other efforts to promote sustainable living. They were instrumental in helping us start and maintain the study and work process that has led to our efforts to decrease our church's carbon foot print with changes to our lighting and now the installation of a photovoltaic system that will allow the church to capture part of its energy from a renewable source. 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.

FC is supporting Hoosier Interfaith Power and Light as the Mission of the Month. 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).

WISE (Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive and Engaged) Mental Health Team: Living into Our First Congregational WISE Covenant

We shared this WISE CONGREGATION CERTIFICATION with you during worship on May 17, Mental Health Sunday. We received this from our national UCC Mental Health Board. Again, we thank all of you who helped to make this possible through conversation, within the Buzz we held, and, the discussion and vote at our annual meeting last January. We celebrate this special recognition as we are the FIRST church within our Indiana-Kentucky Conference to have a WISE Covenant and then to be recognized nationally. Again, thank you.



You may now cut this picture out and tape to your frig as the magnets are not ready yet. Haha.

NEXT, we are happy to share that we have begun our SPIRITUAL SUPPORT GROUP FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS. You may attend this EVERY Thursday, 5 to 6 PM, on the church's Zoom. Pastor Sarah Lund and Rev. Dr. Patrick Larracey facilitate this time together

with those who have a mental illness, for those who live with a loved one with mental illness, relatives and friends, and, those struggling during these troubling days. Please feel free to visit with Pastor Sarah and Pat every Thursday afternoon.

We are fulfilling our WISE - Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive and Engaged Covenant where we stated, “We commit our continuing support to all facing mental health challenges by offering spiritual support . . .” Also according to the WISE Congregation for Mental Health booklet we used to create our covenant, on page 11f, under “Living into Our First Congregational WISE Covenant” under Support, we find: “ . . . offer a Spiritual Support Group for Mental Health in which individuals living with mental health challenges, their families and their friends can share their stories in a faith-based safe [and confidential] space.”

Spiritual: listening to each other and listening to God. Our Spiritual Support Group is a loving, supportive and confidential meeting place, held regularly — EVERY Thursday, 5 to 6 on Zoom, held by your church where those challenged with mental illness — and/or their family members and friends —can share and hear how faith and reliance on a Higher Power can be helpful when coping with this disease.

Grace and Peace be with you,
Pat Larracey, co-chair of our WISE Mental Health Team

WITNESS & WELCOME
Aniseh Ebbini, Chair

Indy PRIDE

This year's PRIDE Parade and Festival have been canceled due to the social distancing and ban on large gatherings at this time. However, we will still participate in a virtual parade scheduled by INDY PRIDE on Saturday, June 20. Currently we do not have specific details about this event but will soon communicate via facebook, email, and e-pistle how to watch the parade.

- Bob Cook



CARE & CONNECTIONS
Wendy Baldwin, Chair

During this time of no in-person church gatherings, please check the weekly e-pistles for opportunities to be in community.



- The following Zoom gatherings are scheduled for June:
- **Sunday “Coffee Hour”:** Sundays at 12:00 pm, or immediately following worship
 - **Spiritual Support Group for Mental Health:** Thursdays at 5:00 pm
 - **Buzz: Q&A –** Sunday, June 14th at 12:30 pm

To join these Zoom meetings, click this link:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9264494206?pwd=dmTWbWE5UXRBTk5pcHZlYlB0aEFVUT09>
Meeting ID: 926 449 4206 Password: 7171

To Join by Phone call only: 1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago), you will be prompted for the meeting ID 926 449 4206, followed by the # sign, and the Password 7171, followed by the # sign.
If you don't have a device with visual display, you can simply call in and participant as a 'conference call'.

Need Toilet Paper & Disinfectant?

Even though stores are trying hard to re-stock supplies, it is still difficult to find these items. First Congregational has 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.



Photo: USAToday

TRUSTEES

Steve Coomer & Randy Walker, Co-Chairs

Financial Update

When We Give, We Reach Out With Helping Hands

Here are the financial results through April 30, 2020.

1. Current Year Actual vs Budget Summary			
1/1/2020 through 4/30/2020 Using 2020 Budget 1			
Category	1/1/2020 Actual	- Budget	4/30/2020 Difference
INCOME	83,973	89,081	-5,108
M. Unrestricted Contributions	83,973	89,081	-5,108
M.01 Pledged Offerings	63,914	67,054	-3,140
M.02 UnPledged Offerings	4,732	6,700	-1,968
M.03 Rollover Prior Year Surplus_D...	15,327	15,327	0
M.04 Foundation - Endowment Fund...	0	0	0
M.05 Foundation - Minister Fund Draw	0	0	0
M.06 Foundation - Trad. Music Fund...	0	0	0
M.07. Transfer from Youth Fund	0	0	0
M.08 Other Transfers from Restr Ac...	0	0	0
EXPENSES	88,920	89,520	600
A. Pastoral Leadership	40,286	41,133	846
B. Worship & Faith	13,040	13,963	923
C. Care & Connections	188	140	-48
D. Witness & Welcome	0	336	336
E. Outreach & Service	5,552	5,479	-73
F. Trustees	138	24	-114
G. Administration & Operations	7,255	6,997	-258
H. House & Grounds	20,339	19,387	-952
I. Miscellaneous	2,121	2,061	-60
Net Difference:	-4,947	-439	-4,508

Highlights:

April Year to Date - We are running a deficit of \$4,900 for the year to date, \$4,500 worse than our budget.

- Income of \$84,000 was \$5,100 below budget. The shortfalls were primarily due to slower than expected pledge income and building use income.
- Expenses of \$89,000 were \$500 below budget.

The pandemic and church closure have caused some loss of revenue, but so far we are not seeing a steep decline. Also, in early May we received a Small Business Administration loan for \$34,000 under the Payroll Protection Plan. We expect to be able to use most of the loan proceeds for payroll and utilities, which will allow us to convert that portion of the loan into a grant.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

- Jim Lootens, Treasurer
lootens.jb@gmail.com

Update from the First Congregational Church Foundation

As you know the financial markets have taken a hard hit with all the pandemic restraints. Our investments have been affected of course. But since they are relatively conservatively invested, the effects on the Foundation funds have not been as bad as some funds have seen. In 2019 our investments were up 19% and in the first quarter of 2020 they were down 15.7%. We will wait and see what happens the rest of the year, but our advisors at Goelzer Investment Management are telling us to keep to our plan, not making emotional changes in investments because of the market volatility.

Fund balances are currently as follows:

United Church Funds as of May 14, 2020

Organ Fund	\$9,833.58
Chautauqua Fund	49,915.55
Minister's Fund	63,159.72
Traditional Music Fund	24,896.75

Goelzer Investment Funds as of March 31, 2020

Endowment Fund	63,456.00
Capital Improvement	613,804.00

As you remember, the First Congregational Church Foundation is a separately organized entity that receives and manages certain gifts and bequests for the Church. (as stated in the church bylaws). The basic purpose of the Foundation is to endow First Congregational Church of Indianapolis in a secure and prudent manner and to perpetuate its ministry. All members of First Congregational Church in good standing are members of the Foundation. (as stated in the Foundation bylaws). The Foundation is managed by a five member board of directors. The current board consists of: Glenn Evans, Pastor Sarah Lund, Randy Walker, Steve Fletcher, Sandy Wood.

1857 Society to meet June 26

The Foundation is sponsoring the 1857 Society in order to help ensure the long term strength of the church's finances. All church members and friends who commit to include the church in their wills can be members of the 1857 Society. It's expected that most donations will be made through wills, but other means such as trusts and life insurance may be used. The 1857 Society has an annual meeting of members. Last year the meeting was a luncheon meeting, but this year due to social distancing restrictions the meeting has been postponed until June 26, 2020 at 2:00 PM. This will likely be a Zoom meeting but final arrangements are still pending. If you would like to attend, please contact one of the Foundation board members. All current 1857 Society members will receive an email invitation the week before the meeting with a link to the meeting and other information about attending. Our speaker this year will be Dean Weseli, Certified Financial Planner, who will address the following topics related to planned giving:

- Tax changes from Tax Cuts and Job Act of 2017 (increase standard deduction)
- Benefit of gifting appreciated securities versus direct gifts
- RMD (required minimum distribution) changes from SECURE act
- RMD pass allowed for 2020 with CARES act
- ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance factors) Investing Overview

COMMUNITY

Aging and Celebrating Milestones during a Global Pandemic

My granddaughter Jane's parents and her almost 15-year-old brother planned a dinner at home to celebrate Jane's high school 2020 graduation without a prom, commencement ceremony, or other events that Jane had looked forward to since a young age. To help Earl and me not feel extremely sad about not being at Jane's Thursday graduation dinner in their northwest-of-Chicago suburban home, i bought two packages of paper napkins with drawings of llamas, colored bright orange, hot pink, and white. One pack was to send to Jane's parents for their Thursday dinner table, and one was for ours. Though far away, we'd feel connected!



Image: Big Dot of Happiness

Why llamas, you might ask? Because ever since Jane was a preschooler, she's loved and appreciated llamas. Plus, in the graduation letter i wrote to Jane, i quoted from a May 6, 2020 *New York Times* article titled "[Hoping Llamas Will Become Coronavirus Heroes](#)" since "antibodies from [...] a 4-year-old llama [...] have neutralized coronavirus and other infections in lab experiments."

After emailing Jane's dad Monday, requesting that he inform me when the napkins arrived, on Wednesday morning i read his late Tuesday night email: "Hi Mom, we received the napkins—very cool! Love, Mike."

Here's my reply, with a few changes for clarity:

Mike, thank you! i'm pleased to hear the napkins arrived safely. i thought you'd find interesting my instant, out loud response to your "very cool" comment about the napkins: "Oh, Mike's such a nice young man. ..."

Immediately, i laughed upon realizing that in about a year and 8 months, you'll be 50 years old! "Oh, he's such a nice middle-aged man!" i, then, exclaimed. Next, i wondered if calling you middle-aged would offend you. So i Googled "when does middle age start?" If you weren't likely already sitting down, i'd proclaim, "You might want to sit down to hear what Wikipedia states. Are you sitting?" Wikipedia defines middle age as "the time between 45 and 65." Did you know that for three years you've, been "such a nice middle-aged man"? Pretty much every time i've seen you in your adult years, i thought you still looked in your early 20s... Have all the recent global pandemic stressors caused you to look middle-aged yet?

Mike, maybe you can guess what my next question of Google was: "when does old age begin?" [According to liveabout.com](#), "on average, adults between the ages of 30 and 49 think old age begins at 69. People who are currently 50-64 believe old age starts at 72. Responders who are 65 and older say old age begins at 74." Oh, good, i have at least a year and 4 days before i'm considered "old." Thus, in recent years, i've jumped the gun when talking to you or Rob and referring to myself as "your old mom..."

i think i told you recently that when listening to NPR, i heard a young female reporter do a segment on individuals "at high-risk to the coronavirus due to old age." In her description of "an elderly woman of 70," the journalist said the woman walked in a way that made her conclude that at 70, everyone needed a young person to watch their every step and catch them before they keel over. Fortunately, that hasn't happened to me yet. Maybe when i wake up on my 74th birthday, i'll start keeling over frequently! What do you think?

Love,
Mom

Where have your thoughts dwelled since the coronavirus outbreak? Because the media have repeatedly cautioned us that we who are 65 and older are at high-risk, lately my mind has, at times, lingered on aging. If you're like many members of First Congregational UCC, i suspect that you have dreaded, like i have, hearing those never-ending admonitions. One way i console myself about these dire warnings has been to turn to scripture, such as "My mind and my body may grow weak, but God is my strength; [God] is all i ever need." (Psalm 73:26 TEV).

- susanna-judith rae

Meridian Hills School: Vocabulary Lessons

While biking the other day, my mind started to wander as it often does when I am biking. I began to think about words that I had been hearing and reading about these past few weeks. And the next thing I knew, I was thinking about Vocabulary Lessons in the age of Covid-19. Some of the words I thought of were new to me and some words had taken on a new meaning in these times.

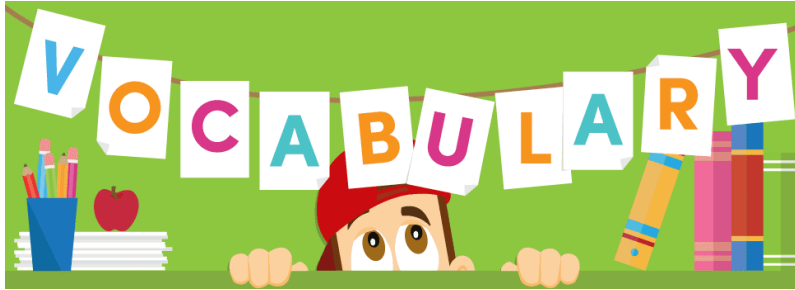


Image: Education City

Zoom, when I first heard this word recently I couldn't believe it. I immediately thought of the PBS show from the 70's that was geared for the post Sesame Street crowd. We were living in Cambridge, MA when this show was created. It suited us just fine in our elementary years and early middle school. Now we are using Zoom daily, weekly and monthly for meetings that we can't hold in person. But, Zoom isn't just for meetings. We are using it for social gatherings as well. People are having Zoom gatherings for Happy Hours, Book Clubs, Family chats and Birthday parties. I have now had three birthday Zooms with family from all over the country. We have decided to do this more often and why hadn't we thought of it before...? There was FaceTime and Skype but those didn't do what Zoom can do. And the need to gather and see one another hadn't presented itself as it has now. "Necessity is the mother of invention"

Social Distancing, this was a brand new concept for me. Now I hear it every day, all day. Walking my dog- making sure I give the other people space to walk their dog or just to walk. Biking/Walking- there are signs along paths reminding people to keep 6 ft apart. Grocery stores and the like have signs and spaces marked off so we all know where to stand to keep ourselves and others safe. The block where I live has had evening gatherings in the street with lawn chairs and folks standing at 6 ft distances because the need to connect is still there while being safe.

Drive by, usually when I had heard or read these words it had been associated with a very negative concept, even criminal i.e. Drive by shootings. Now a Drive by is associated with celebratory and happy occasions. Since we can't get together to celebrate there are Drive By birthdays, graduations, weddings, honoring end of the year for teachers and children and many more to come. It's a small way to show we care. Our family did a drive by Easter Parade for the all of the Grandparents as this was our first time Not being together. Lucky for them, I did not attempt a rendition of Judy Garland's "Easter Parade".

Lockdown, I have generally thought of this when there has been a robbery or crime near a school. To keep the children and staff safe, schools go on Lockdown keeping everyone inside until it is safe. Now we are keeping the people in cities and towns safe by having us all go on Lockdown. While it is the same concept, keeping people in to keep them safe, for me seeing it and hearing it used daily is all quite new.

Shelter in Place, a phrase I am not sure I've ever heard before. As a child, for big storms and tornadoes we would go down into the basement with radios, flashlights and snacks etc. This was way before all of the current weather technology was around so we had to prepare for the worst and perhaps a long time. We would ride it out and then emerge when the storms had passed. Sometimes the power was out for many hours, even days but we always knew it would get repaired and come back on. Just like we knew the storm would pass and move along. Now Shelter in Place seems to have an open ended and uncertain time frame/future. Being prepared and having items stocked up is very much a priority now versus then.

Face masks, previously I thought of them for Halloween, sports protection and dental office workers. Now they are an everyday and essential part of life. I have them in my car, purse and table by the front door. We wash them frequently. I have been frustrated with them

sliding down my face, readjusting as needed, glasses steaming up when I am trying to read the grocery or drugstore list etc. I am adjusting to this new standard as I know it is important keeping me safe and others.

Later today I'll probably take a bike ride and I'm sure my mind will wander hopefully taking in all the spring beauty as we move into summer. Each day provides itself with a new beginning. For now, I choose to focus on the positive, do what I need to do to be safe, stay safe and help to keep you all safe as well.

Be Safe,
(Virtual) Hugs,
Linda

Meagan Johnson

Alexander Technique
for Music & Life



Mindy-Body-Spirit Unity in a Time of Discomfort by Meagan Johnson

How do you find yourself dealing with change? With the discomfort of this time? With the shift in daily rhythms, or the grief around loss of work, performances, opportunities, or just being able to be with friends and loved ones? What do you notice in your body as you consider this?

The Alexander Technique is a practice of embodied mindfulness. This work recognizes that the way we think influences how we move and how we feel, and that how we use our bodies has a profound impact on our mental and emotional/spiritual well-being. As I've been thinking about what my work can offer in this particular moment, I was reminded of a quote from the textbook I use in my university AT course for musicians, *Indirect Procedures* by Pedro de Alcantara. He writes:

"Working on yourself means to face a situation and react constructively to it. It means to deal with discomfort if the discomfort is inevitable, as it often is when you pass from the known to the unknown. It also means to discover, explore, and conquer new ideas and techniques, and to connect to your innermost energies, moment by moment."

This is why I practice and teach the Alexander Technique. It is the best work I know to adapt to and respond to ever-changing life — even the really, really big changes. Yes, I have had some moments over this past two months where I really didn't want to adapt, but I have done my best to use the powerful embodied mindfulness offered by Alexander work to try to respond constructively even to my resistance.

While I was trained primarily to teach the Alexander Technique in person, hands-on, I have been delighted to find that there are effective and powerful ways to teach and learn this work online. Drawing on my 10+ years of Alexander teaching experience, hands-off work done with groups, and learning from other Alexander teachers who work online, I've been offering online Alexander Technique lessons to both continuing and new students. Similarly, I have loved connecting with voice students — even as young as 10 years old! — using distance technology. Do you find you miss singing? Or would you like to feel more at ease in your body while staying at home? If so, I'd be happy to work with you. At this time, I am offering sliding-scale lesson fees to those whose income has been impacted by the pandemic, or who are essential workers. I also plan to host some online classes over the summer - please join my mailing list at sound-direction.com if you'd like to stay in the loop.

Do I plan to return to in-person teaching when it becomes safe? You bet. In the meantime, we still have work to do. Because our responses are Whole Self responses – that is, body, mind, spirit – we must include the Whole in our self-work. The Alexander Technique is truly the best work I know to remind yourself that body and mind are unified, and you can change

your whole life – bringing ease and calm to every situation – by changing how you use your Whole Self.

To read more, contact Meagan, or schedule a lesson, please visit: sound-direction.com

United Church of Christ – 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/WN_ZQB7MzluRqCsIEkm3UoNBg

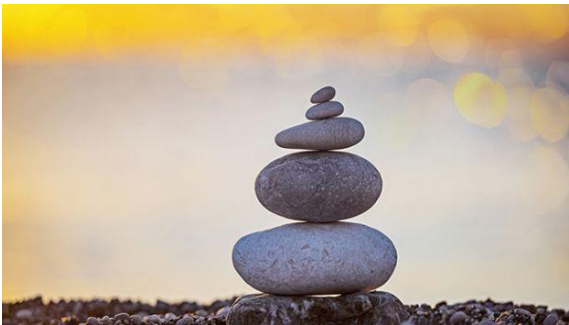


Photo by Wingedbull/Shutterstock

Indiana-Kentucky Conference of the United Church of Christ (IKC UCC)



We are thrilled to bring you our **Annual Gathering in a virtual space**. Just like we have all found ways to be the church together, even when we are physically apart, your Conference has found a way to meet for our Annual Gathering.

This year a **flat registration fee of \$50** gives you access via the Zoom videoconferencing platform to our Friday Agape Love Feast Gathering, our Saturday workshops and business meeting, and a Conference Wide Virtual Worship service on Sunday afternoon.

At this year's IKC Annual Gathering, we will be voting to approve the W.I.S.E. Resolution and Covenant to become a W.I.S.E. (Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, & Engaged) Conference.

Register for this **June 26, 27 & 28** virtual gathering now!

Registration Link:

<https://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/eventReg?oeidk=a07eh2esx5r7ff66571&oseq=&c=&ch=>

ELCA & IKC UCC Joint Letter on Race

May 29, 2020

Dear Friends,

Today we write to you with a heavy heart. The events of the past several weeks and months with racial violence and brutality in our country has been both tragic and overwhelming. As both a Bishop in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America and a Conference Minister in the United Church of Christ sharing the same geographies of service in Indiana and Kentucky, we both wanted to join our collective voices in this moment.

In recent days we have seen alarming trends of racial violence from two white men murdering Ahmaud Arbery in Georgia, a police officer placing his knee on the neck of George Floyd in Minnesota, a drive by shooting of a mosque and the killing of Dreasjon Reed in Indianapolis and Breonna Taylor being killed as she slept in her Louisville apartment. The continual harming of black bodies raises to our awareness a need for us to speak out and say "No More" to this hate and harm to our siblings in the human family. As people of faith, we believe in a beloved community, where no matter who you are and where you are on life's journey, you are welcome and ought to feel safe. When a person of color cannot jog, sleep, or pray without harm coming to them, then we must find a way to change as a society.

As people faith, we have a different narrative to share in the world than the one that is currently on display. We are people who are called to "Do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God." We are called upon to say as Paul indicates in 1 Corinthians 12 "The eye can't say to the foot, 'I have no need of you.'" No, we are all members of the body, all members of the human family, created in the beautiful image of our beloved Creator. Yet, the continual harming of people of color seems to suggest that we are saying "we have no need of you." This is not our narrative as Christians. We are all children of God and we are, as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "caught up in an inescapable network of mutuality, a single garment of destiny." This means that, as Paul writes, "When one member suffers we all suffer and when one member rejoices we all rejoice." Today, we mourn and grieve with the Arbery, Floyd, Reed, and Taylor families and with all of our communities of color. We ask as your Bishop and Conference Minister that we all extend beyond our praying and begin to do the hard work of dismantling racism. It is hard work. For those of us who are white, it means coming into awareness of our biases and privilege. It means standing with others whose lives experience the trauma of racial violence. It means a willing heart to humbly learn. We will soon be inviting you to join us in a joint effort across two denominations to embrace this hard work together. We will have conversations across our churches and we will discern together how to develop strategies of advocacy that can address these historic and ongoing injustices in our world. We pray for God's healing and justice to roll down like an ever-flowing stream, so that there may be peace. Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with each of us.

Sincerely,

Rev. Chad R. Abbott
Conference Minister, IN-KY Conference, UCC

Rev. Bill Gafkjen
Bishop, Indiana-Kentucky Synod, ELCA

ANNOUNCEMENTS

July Colony Submission Deadline: Please email your submissions to Shannon at shannon@fcindy.org by **Tuesday, June 23rd**.

Women's Lunch Bunch: 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. This month, they meet on **June 25**. For questions or more information please contact Sue Chapman at (317) 259-1806 or carolsuech59@gmail.com.

Men's Lunch: This lunch and discussion gathering for men of First Congregational is meeting via Zoom. They meet every other Thursday at **1 p.m.** This month, they are meeting **June 11 & 25**. Please contact Randy Walker at (317) 796-2081 or aa28977rwalker@gmail.com for information.

Book Circle is meeting via Zoom on **Tuesday, June 16, 1:30 - 3:30**.

We are discussing Rachel Held Evans - *Searching For Sunday*, sections 3 and 4 - Holy Orders and Communion. Even if you haven't read the book yet, these sections (focused on a particular sacrament) are easy to find angles to talk about!

Here is a link to the meditation on confession that Carol provided - thank you!

https://www.ucc.org/daily_devotional_the_strength_of_repentance#.Xq107zUg6qQ.gmail

Contact Karen Walker at (317) 319-8950 or karen.e.d.walker@gmail.com for more information.

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.