

 FirstCongregationalUCCIndy

 Forward



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Epistle for the Week of September 10, 2020

The building of First Congregational UCC is currently closed for group gatherings. Masks are required for gatherings occurring outside.

Dear First Congregational,

Everyone seems to have a pandemic story. Each one of us feels the impact of this challenging time. Each one of us has a story to tell. The story being told from churches across the country varies, but there is an emerging theme: pastors are burning out. And not just pastors, but lay leaders as well are feeling the burden of this time.

Here is an article that is making the rounds among clergy because it speaks a hard truth. It's written by a clergy colleagues of mine who serves as a coach to clergy across the country: <https://www.laurastephensreed.com/blog/the-coming-tidal-wave-of-pastoral-departures>. It's difficult to read, but necessary to know how pastors and churches are being impacted.

I thankfully the IKC, working with its Board of Directors and the Mental Health Team, are creating new programs to support clergy wellness in our Conference. This will help. What also helps is knowing that we are here for one another in covenant and that we will get through this together. I ask for your continued prayers for me, our staff and our lay leaders as we seek to discern what is going to keep us healthy, safe, and sustainable for the future.

Know that I am grateful for First Congregational and that I am committed to being here with you.

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 and to pray together.

Here is the Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/494018938?pwd=a3BrdnNyWXEza0tFMUgwek1CVFpYQT09>

Worship

Sunday Adult Education, 9:30 a.m. (Zoom)

September 13: Led by Wendy Baldwin, join us to discern and discuss a selected Bible passage, and how it speaks to us about **generosity and stewardship**.

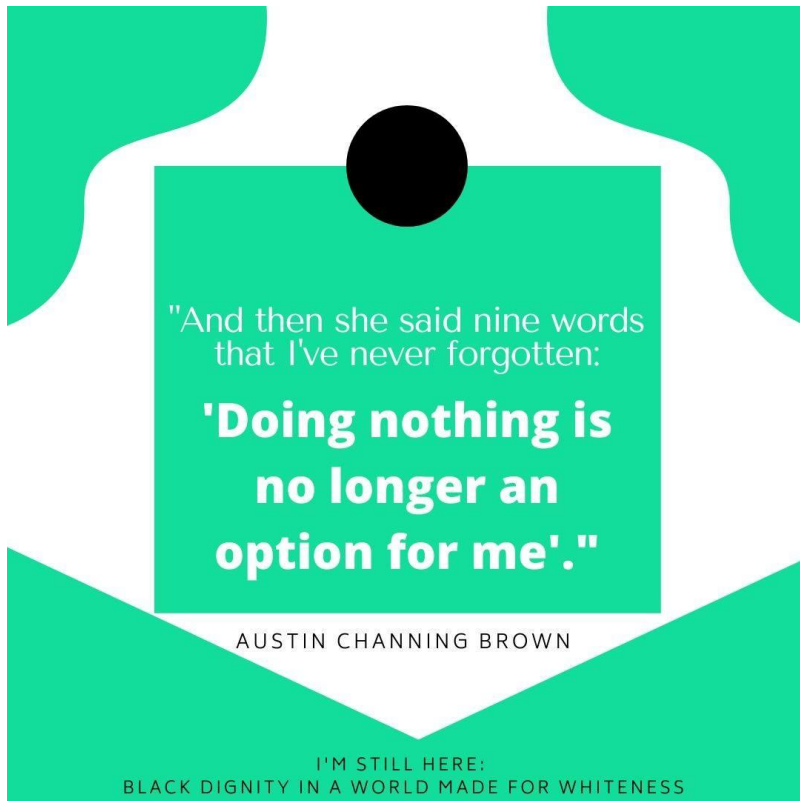
Sunday Worship, 11:00 a.m. (YouTube, Facebook, or Dial In)

Student Pastor, Cassidy Hall is preaching on "Yes Means Yes"

Scripture: Matthew 5:33-37

Coffee Hour, 12:00 p.m. (via Zoom, immediately after worship)

Book Buzz - The Series is starting THIS SUNDAY!



This Sunday the 13th at 12:30 - grab your lunch and join us for our first Book Buzz!

Through 6 meetings over 3 months, we will discuss themes from Austin Channing Brown's book, *I'm Still Here: Black Dignity in a World Made For Whiteness*. Pastor Sarah will lead our first meeting focusing on introductions and what we are hoping to accomplish with these conversations, as well as an introduction to Austin Channing Brown, so only the first chapter is recommended at this time. But no requirement to read before Sunday - join us for a safe and open discussion! We hope these discussions can help our congregation both understand the current environment better and lead us towards future action.

If you don't have a book yet, they will be available Saturday at the church from 10am-12pm during the pantry drop off time, or contact Karen Walker or Carol Sowle to get one to you (Karen: 317-319-8950, karen.e.d.walker@gmail.com, Carol: 317-496-9732, casowle@gmail.com). The church is providing the book on loan to anyone who wants to read it, and we will donate them to the conference to be used elsewhere next year.

All Sunday Zoom Gatherings use the following link unless otherwise specified:

Zoom

Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9264494206?pwd=dmtWbWE5UXRBTK5pcHZlYlB0aEFVUT09>

To dial in by phone: 1 312 626 6799 US, Meeting ID: 926 449 4206, Password: 7171

Church Hum-a-long: Sunday, September 20th at 6:30pm (outside)

First Congregational UCC presents...

HUM-A-LONG

A Night of Music and Fellowship



What's Happening at FC

All Zoom Gatherings use the following link unless otherwise specified:

Zoom

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

To dial in by phone: 1 312 626 6799 US, Meeting ID: 926 449 4206, Password: 7171

Lifeline: 1-844-493-8255; en español, 1-888-628-9454



Lifesaving Measures

by Rev. Dr. Rachael Keefe, UCC Mental Health Network

Here is a list of some things you can be doing right now:

1. **Increase your knowledge** about mental illness and suicide prevention. NAMI is a great source for mental health information and AFSP is a good place to learn more about suicide prevention.
2. **Create small groups** of active members and friends of your congregation with a designated leader. The leader would be responsible for making sure each small group member is contacted each week. This can be done via Zoom or another platform, emails, texts, phone calls, or letters. In the congregation I serve, small groups have lessened the burden for congregational care teams.
3. **Consider creating interest groups** for building kinship. These groups would meet online monthly (or weekly if there is interest). The topics of the groups can vary from book clubs to hobbies. There is no limit if people are willing to share their skills, interests, and hobbies.
4. **Ask your pastor** to host a weekly online gathering time for folks to check-in. There's no specific topic, just a time to talk with each other.
5. **Identify any people** who might be particularly vulnerable during the pandemic and make sure they are connected to the community. Make sure to note those who live alone and might be feeling isolated, elders living in care settings who are not able to have in-person visits, those who live with ongoing mental health challenges, and those who are struggling with physical health conditions. There may be circumstances in your community that increase the risk for mental health conditions for a particular population (e.g. farmers, factory workers, those who are furloughed or unemployed due to COVID-19). Be sure to include these people on your list for additional outreach.
6. **Include local resources** for mental health care in your church newsletter.
7. **Online support groups** can be started for people experiencing an increase in mental health challenges.

8. **Online support groups** can also be started for those experiencing grief or loss.
9. **Explore the possibility** of getting connective technology to those who don't have it. For example, can simple tablets be donated or purchased for those who don't have a smartphone? Are there internet providers in your area offering free or reduced-price services for those in need?
10. **Name mental health struggles** in prayers during worship. It is as important as ever to break the stigma and silence surrounding mental illness.

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.

TODAY! Spiritual Support Group for Mental Health Conditions, Challenges, and Wellness, Thursdays from 5:00 - 6:00 PM (Zoom) - This group openly invites anyone seeking spiritual care concerning their well being. We have covenanted with:

- care givers of loved ones who have mental illness, i.e. dementia and Alzheimer's
- chaplains seeking to renew their wellness
- burned out and overwhelmed medical folk
- fears of parents, grandparents, and teachers about school and college
- those with trauma, grief, up and down moods, disorders, stigma, emotional issues

All sessions are confidential and are led by Pastor Rev. Dr. Sarah Lund and Rev. Dr. Patrick Larracey, co-chair of the church's WISE Team. Please feel free to call or email either of us if you have questions: Pastor Sarah: pastorsarah@fcindy.org, or 386-478-9012. Dr. Pat: plainandfancy1963@att.net, or 317-625-6801. You do not have to be alone with your struggles or journey.

Food Drive & Fellowship! THIS Saturday, September 12th from 10AM - 12PM

Let's help fight poverty and hunger through our food donations to the Northside Pantry. You can also spend a few minutes at the Food Drive to share in fellowship with those there, while maintaining safe distance protocols.

Preferred donation items are:

- Vegetables: Green Beans, corn, diced tomatoes, peas
- Fruit: Pineapple chunks, Mandarin oranges, Applesauce
- Macaroni & Cheese

- Canned Tuna or chicken
- Spaghetti, Elbow macaroni, Egg noodles, Rice
- Peanut butter
- Strawberry or grape jelly
- Pancake mix
- Oils
- Toilet paper
- Kleenex

*Please note – regular size cans and jars are preferred.

NEW! Wellness Wednesdays, 10:30 - 11:30 AM (Zoom) – During times of stress, the tendency is to disconnect, not only outwardly, but also internally. This fracturing of our wholeness (the connection between mind, body, and spirit) can lead to physical, emotional, or spiritual dis-ease. Wellness Wednesdays are an opportunity to check in with one another, and to learn new practices (breathing, meditation, physical movements) that can be used on a daily basis to help lower stress and reconnect as the whole person God created us to be. Based on your comfort level, you may have your camera on or off during this practice. All Wellness Wednesday practices are recorded and shared on the church website and Facebook page.

Book Circle - Tuesday, September 15th at 1:30 pm (Zoom) - We are starting a new book - the classic, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, by Zora Neale Hurston. We will be reading the first 2 chapters or 50 pages. Click [HERE](#) for a discussion guide to the book. Contact Karen Walker with any questions.



Family Promise – Help Provide Supplies for an Apartment for a Homeless Family!

As part of our Just Peace Ministries, FC Indy is participating in a drive to help furnish apartments for the homeless; we are partnered with Carmel UMC and All Soul's UU to supply 1 apartment. These are leased by Family Promise through a new grant they received. Thanks to a great response, all of the items needed have been accounted for. FC Indy purchased

some larger ticket items, and your financial gifts will cover these costs. You can mail a check to the church (specify FP Apt on memo line), or donate online. Questions? Contact Sandy Wood or Wendy Baldwin. **Thank you for helping in this effort to house a homeless family!**

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/>

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. Pastor Sarah may be reached 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

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. You must have or create a user account and be logged in to message live.
- 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.

How to Access our Zoom Gatherings

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/9264494206?pwd=dmtWbWE5UXRBTk5pcHZlYlBoaEFVUT09>

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.

Weekly Calendar

Thursday, Sept 11	5:00 p.m.	Spiritual Support Group for Mental Health and Wellness
Saturday, Sept 12	10:00 a.m.	Outdoor Food Drive
Sunday, Sept 13	9:30 a.m.	Sunday Adult Class
Sunday, Sept 13	11:00 a.m.	Sunday Worship (YouTube, Facebook, & Dial In)
Sunday, Sept 13	12:00 p.m.	Coffee Hour (immediately after worship)
Sunday, Sept 13	12:30 p.m.	Book Buzz
Tuesday, Sept 15	5:00 p.m.	Soul Care with Pastor Sarah
Wednesday, Sept 16	10:30 a.m.	Wellness Wednesday
Wednesday, Sept 16	6:30 p.m.	Calling Circle
Thursday, Sept 17	1:00 p.m.	Men's Lunch
Thursday, Sept 17	5:00 p.m.	Spiritual Support Group for Mental Health
Sunday, Sept 20	9:30 a.m.	Sunday Adult Class
Sunday, Sept 20	11:00 a.m.	Worship (YouTube, Facebook, & Dial In)
Sunday, Sept 20	12:00 p.m.	Coffee Hour (immediately after worship)
Sunday, Sept 20	6:00 p.m.	Church Hum-a-long (outside at FC)

***All events are on Zoom unless indicated otherwise.**