



# **FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

**THE PILGRIM COLONY**

**December 2020**

## **Pastor's Reflections**

December marks the ending weeks of 2020, and the beginning church season of Advent. I invite us to let go of 2020's traumas, and to prepare to embrace the changes that promise new life. Many of the world's people have lived with isolation and fear this year. As a church in these fearful times, we have remained connected, making space for hope in our lives.

We acknowledge the truth that our hearts are broken by the injustices of our times. In the face of injustice, we hold up our deep communal desire for healing with those who have been silenced, diminished, and objectified. As people of faith, we seek peace with all, and recommit to justice with our lives. The gift of Advent is the intentional invitation to greet strangers, neighbors, and friends with God's love, making a place for joy in the chaos of injustice.

Awaiting a future announced and promised by the Living God, we make room for love in our habits, hearts, and homes. This Advent season of 2020, we ask the Holy One to make the crooked ways clear and mend broken hearts. This season think of people who are feeling lost and lonely—send them extra love in the form of text messages, phone calls, emails, letters, and prayers. God asks us to bring joy to people experiencing suffering. You just never know how meaningful your simple words of care might be timed just right to save someone's life, replacing the shadows of despair with the glimmering light of hope.

In this time of transition, as we prepare to end 2020, so we may begin anew, God's grace is with us. Take time to nurture your spiritual life this December, so that God may rebirth love in you and in our world. I look forward to joining you on this journey, trusting that we journey not alone, but united together in God's love.

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>  
Meeting ID: 494 018 938 Password: 46208

**Intern Reflections**



Dear Church,  
As we approach the colder months and soon Christmas, I am thinking about all of our deepest longings for togetherness. I am praying for our safety as individuals and as a church. I am hopeful that this time of separation will continue to deepen our connections in the mystery of God. Knowing each of you and being a part of this community has been one of the greatest joys of my Seminary career and I celebrate you in gratitude and joy. Thank you for supporting me and helping me to learn what it means to be the church! I continue my studies next semester online and am looking forward to continually sharing more about what I learn!  
Honored to be your Student Pastor,  
Cassidy Hall  
[studentpastor@fcindy.org](mailto:studentpastor@fcindy.org)

**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

## Personnel Committee Staff Review Survey

You should have very recently received a brief survey related to our staff either through email or on paper (however you get the colony). If you did not receive one, please contact Karen Walker (317-319-8950 or [karen.e.d.walker@gmail.com](mailto:karen.e.d.walker@gmail.com)) or Bill Hummel (317-875-8388 or [whummel001@comcast.net](mailto:whummel001@comcast.net)) of the Personnel Committee. Please take the time to complete the survey and help us grow in our ministries - thanks!

### Moderator's Reflections

Another month has come and gone as we continue to face an escalating pandemic. Sadly, we remain apart – a faith community in diaspora, if you will. But just as the Diaspora of our faith ancestors eventually came to an end, so will this one – some day. With the recent good news of vaccine research, a glimmer of that day may now be visible. I am hopeful that we will again gather in worship in person sometime during 2021, but as yet we continue to gather virtually on YouTube, Facebook, and Zoom.

As we enter Advent, I'm increasingly aware of night's darkness enveloping us. Throughout my life, this season has been one of my most joyful as I anticipate firelight and candlelight surrounded by my loving family. This year I'll still have the firelight and candlelight, but my family visits will be on Zoom. Once again I thank God for video communication technology!

For me, worship has always been one of the highlights of this holy season, and this year – even virtually – I'm eagerly anticipating thoughtful, inspiring Advent and Christmas Eve worship services on First Congregational's YouTube channel. I look forward to hearing familiar scripture passages, lighting candles of hope, love, joy, and peace, and singing beloved hymns and carols – all as in past years, but this year in the warmth of my fire-lit living room. I hope to share those services with all of my beloved faith community, and to visit on Zoom for "coffee hour". Merry Christmas to all, and see you on Zoom and the YouTube chat!

- Alice Rutherford, Moderator



## This Month at FC\*

SUNDAYS	9:30 a.m.	Sunday Adult Class (Zoom)
SUNDAYS	11:00 a.m.	Worship (YouTube, Dial In, Facebook)
SUNDAYS	12:00 p.m.	Coffee Hour (Zoom - immediately after worship)
SUNDAYS	4:30 p.m.	Outdoor Vespers
TUESDAYS	5:00 p.m.	Soul Care with Pastor Sarah (see special Zoom link in Pastor announcements)
TUESDAYS	7:00 p.m.	Vespers (Zoom)
WEDNESDAYS	10:30 a.m.	Wellness Wednesdays (Zoom)
THURSDAYS	5:00 p.m.	Spiritual Support Group (Zoom)
Wednesday, Dec 2	5:00 p.m.	WISE Mental Health Team (Zoom)
Wednesday, Dec 2	7:00 p.m.	Trustees (Zoom)
Thursday, Dec 3	1:00 p.m.	Men's Lunch
Sunday, Dec 6	11:00 a.m.	Communion Sunday
Wednesday, Dec 9	7:00 p.m.	Church Council (Zoom)
Saturday, Dec 12	10:00 a.m.	Food Drive, Mitten Collection, & Christmas Kit pick-up
Thursday, Dec 17	11:30 a.m.	Women's Lunch Bunch (Zoom)
Thursday, Dec 17	1:00 p.m.	Men's Lunch
Friday, Dec 18	7:00 p.m.	IKC Intergenerational Blue Christmas Service (Zoom)
Thursday, Dec 24	7:00 p.m.	Christmas Eve Worship (Zoom)
Thursday, Dec 24	8:00 p.m.	Christmas Eve Zoom Gathering
Friday, Dec 25	3:00 p.m.	Christmas Zoom Gathering
Dec 27 – Jan 3	-----	Pastor Sarah Vacation

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

**To join 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. You can call in and participant as a 'conference call'.

## Council/Comeback Team

### Current Building Policy

The church building is closed to in-person church gatherings **until the following parameters are reached, based on guidance from Dr Virginia Caine, Marion County Public Health Director:**

**A 7-day average of 5% (or less) positivity among unique individuals tested for a two-week period, and new cases per day at 35 or under in Marion County,** per the metrics shown on [www.coronavirus.in.gov](http://www.coronavirus.in.gov) .

The church grounds remain available for in-person gatherings where 6 ft distancing and face coverings are used. Participants are asked to bring their



own chairs and beverages; restrooms are available for use. If there is inclement weather, defined as below 50 degrees, raining, OR winds above 20 mph, outdoor events may be cancelled.

The Meridian Hills Cooperative Nursery School has been meeting outside, but has decided to go virtual in December.

If you need to be in the building, please wash your hands in the kitchenette or use the sanitizer at the cleaning cart, sign in, and wear a face mask. We value the opportunity to be together, but are equally desirous to keep one another healthy by limiting ways to inadvertently shed virus!

## **WORSHIP & FAITH**

Elizabeth Price, Chair

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

Adult Education will continue to meet [via Zoom](#). This month we will pause our discussion on racial justice and give our time to celebrating the Advent season. Advent is a time of both waiting and preparing for the arrival of Jesus, a time of spiritual renewal.

Our Adult Ed class did receive a gift this month! CTS offered us a presentation from one of their professors. After talking with the coordinator of the project, and telling her about our class, she chose to send us **Dr. Rob Saler, who will be speaking to us December 13 on “The Theological and Historical Origins of Race.”**

We will also devote a Sunday to “Devoted to Generosity” with Wendy Baldwin facilitating. As 2020 draws to a close and 2021 dawns with hopes for a new beginning, Generosity remains a key spiritual practice.

Finally, for those of you who want to continue learning about racial justice, I recommend this article from The Atlantic. Titled “The Next Reconstruction.” <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2020/10/the-next-reconstruction/615475/>

**December 6:** This Sunday we will read and reflect together on the Advent devotion for December 6 from the Advent devotional made available to our members this year.

**December 13:** CTS professor Dr. Rob Saler presents on “The Theological and Historical Origins of Race.” Let’s do our best to make being on time part of our warm welcome to Dr. Saler.

**December 20:** This Sunday we will read and reflect together on the Advent devotion for December 27 from the Advent devotional made available to our members this year.

**December 27:** Led by Wendy Baldwin, join us to discern and discuss a selected Bible passage, and how it speaks to us about **generosity and stewardship**.

## Advent Devotionals



Social distancing is our new way of life. What a strange and alienating reality. Humans are wired for connection, and we do better -- mentally and physically -- with touch. So what is a human to do when drawing near is both what we most need and, in an age of pandemic, what might end us?

Find connection, find nearness, find God in all things this Advent (through Christmastide) with the Stillspeaking Writers' Group and contributors in *Draw Near*.

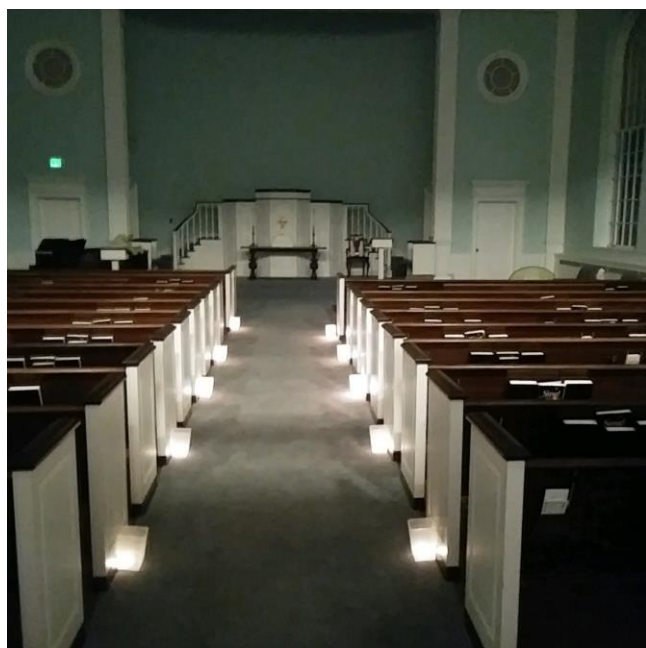
From the writers of the popular online [Daily Devotional](#), *Draw Near* includes a biblical text, reflection, and prayer for each day of Advent through Epiphany. (Image and article from [www.thepilgrimpress.com](http://www.thepilgrimpress.com))

*Pick up your copy in the church narthex.*

## Advent Worship

The Worship Design Team has been diligently working on worship services for Advent (beginning November 29) and Christmas Eve. All services will be videos on our YouTube channel. Here's what our congregation can expect in worship during this holy season:

- This year, with all its darkness and loss, it seems appropriate to focus on music and light as we again await the coming of the Christ child. You will see images of our sanctuary lit with luminaries, and music to lift our spirits will be plentiful. Advent hymns and Christmas carols will both be offered throughout the season.
- Our Advent services will include a variety of leaders and readers. We're happy to welcome additional faces and voices as another way of connecting with each other, especially while we are distanced by the pandemic.
- Each Advent service will include a candle-lighting segment, so we encourage everyone to gather some candles and create your own "Advent wreath" in whatever way works for your home. There will be a moment in each service for you to light a candle in community with fellow worshippers.
- A weekly segment will feature learning sign language for "This Little Light of Mine". This is an opportunity for our children to learn and participate, and we hope the rest of us will join in with a young-at-heart spirit.
- On two Saturdays, December 12 and 19, "Christmas kits" will be available for pick-up at church. This is another way in which we're finding ways to



bring us together in community, even as we gather in worship only virtually. In your kit will be a battery-operated candle, along with a few other goodies (one kit for each person in your home). The battery candle will play a role in our Christmas Eve virtual worship, so we hope everyone will have one before Christmas Eve. Delivery of the kits will be available by request of anyone not able to pick one up.

- Our Christmas Eve service will be much like past Christmas Eve services with lessons and carols. Our traditional candle-lighting accompanied by the singing of "Silent Night" will still be a feature, so this is where your battery candle(s) will literally shine! The team considered the logistics of some kind of Christmas Eve event on the church grounds, but in view of the dramatically rising coronavirus cases, we opted for our congregation's safety by remaining completely virtual that evening.

The Worship Design Team hopes these services will fill our lives with music and light, providing us all with spiritual support during the pandemic isolation. Please plan to join us in celebrating Advent and Christmas in these challenging times. Watch for more specifics in the weekly Epistles.

Worship Design Team – Sean Baker, Bob Cook, Cassidy Hall, Pastor Sarah Lund, Alice Rutherford, Pastor Carol Sowle

### 3 Ways to Connect for Worship



**FACE BOOK**

[https://www.facebook.com/pg/FirstCongregationalUCCIndy/posts/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/FirstCongregationalUCCIndy/posts/?ref=page_internal)



**YOUTUBE**

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

- YouTube Live broadcasts at 10:45am with 15 minutes of gathering music. The service begins at 11am.



**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.

### **OUTREACH & SERVICE**

The Outreach & Service Board has been hard at work streamlining and consolidating our outreach ministries for greater impact in these challenging times. We have learned from our Just Peace interns the value and depth of experience in partnering with justice organizations, so we are exploring some ways to develop more advocacy in how we carry out our outreach ministry.

Watch for opportunities for input to this process as we look ahead to how we live into “being the church” in 2021. Questions and suggestions to anyone currently engaged in this process are always welcome: Nancy Dickinson, Larry Eckel, Steve Leatherman, Pastor Sarah Lund, George Meier, Alice Rutherford, Paul Terheide.

## Mission of the Month (MOM): Christmas Fund

*“For Such a Time as This” Esther 4:14*

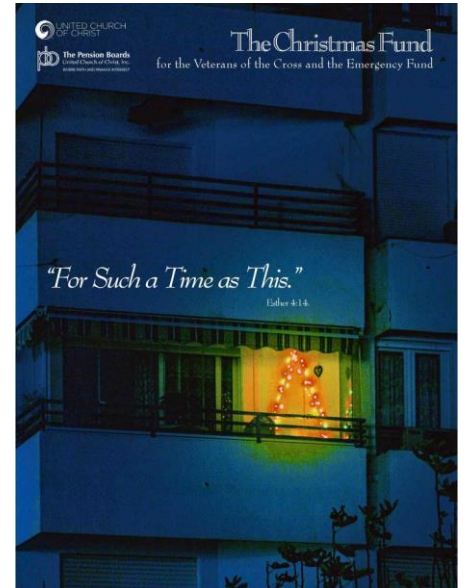
The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas “Thank You” gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees.

Over the past nine months, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the emergency financial needs of many who serve the church have increased dramatically. In such a time as this, the need for the Christmas Fund is more urgent than ever.

United Church of Christ congregations and members have blessed the Christmas Fund with their generosity for many years. This year, your care and compassion will be especially appreciated by those servants of the church who are facing a time of need. Thank you!

(Article link:

[https://www.pbucc.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=290&Itemid=300](https://www.pbucc.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=290&Itemid=300) )



## Virtual Giving Tree 2020

Beloved of First Congregational and St. Peter's-

We are thrilled to share the joy of giving between our two congregations this year! 2020 has been an unprecedented year in many ways. This year has threatened to create bigger divisions and a wider separation among people. In an effort to come together, be safe, and love our neighbors, our two congregations offer this joint Virtual Giving Tree.

We selected three organizations, all of whom we already partner with throughout the year. We have set up online registries/sign ups for each organization in an effort to keep the process as safe and seamless as possible. We thank you in advance for grace as we use this new Virtual Giving Tree model. Please follow the instructions below:

**Exodus Refugee:** Click this link [here](https://www.exodusrefugee.org/) to support Exodus Refugee. These items will be delivered directly to Sara Hindi of Exodus Refugee. To learn more about this organization please visit: <https://www.exodusrefugee.org/>

**Family Promise:** We are sponsoring two families experiencing homelessness. We will send out a sign up genius list for gifts as soon as we receive the lists. Please purchase the gifts online and have them sent to **St. Peter's UCC 3106 E Carmel Dr. Carmel, IN 46033**. Gifts will be delivered to the families in a safe contactless way. To learn more about this organization, please visit: <https://www.fpgi.org/>



**Trinity Haven:** In an effort to support this new organization which offers safe, supportive, and affirming housing for LGBTQ+ youth and young adults, we will purchase \$25 gift cards from Target & Kroger. Follow the links below to purchase:

**Target:** <tgt.gifts/TrinityHavenIndy>

**Kroger:** <https://giftcards.kroger.com/our-store-cards/kroger-enterprise-egift>.

When asked for email recipient please insert Jenni's email from Trinity Haven: [jenni@trinityhavenindy.org](mailto:jenni@trinityhavenindy.org)

Trinity Haven has specifically asked for gift cards so that they can purchase items based on their current and evolving needs. To learn more about this organization, please visit: <https://www.trinityhavenindy.org/>

After the holidays we will reach out to share and reflect on this experience. We hope you will join us in this season of giving and gratitude. If you have any questions, please email Becca Lockwood at [becca@stpeterscarmel.org](mailto:becca@stpeterscarmel.org)

With hope & gratitude, St. Peter's UCC & First Congregational Church of Indianapolis

**Northside Food Pantry**

# Reverse Advent Calendar

Each day add 1 of the most needed non-perishable items to the box.

Dec 1 - box of cereal	Dec 13 - canned tuna
Dec 2 - peanut butter	Dec 14 - peaches
Dec 3 - stuffing mix	Dec 15 - pineapples
Dec 4 - boxed potatoes	Dec 16 - mandarin oranges
Dec 5 - mac 'n' cheese	Dec 17 - mixed fruit
Dec 6 - tomato soup	Dec 18 - spaghetti
Dec 7 - beef broth	Dec 19 - shaped pasta
Dec 8 - chicken broth	Dec 20 - pasta sauce
Dec 9 - green beans	Dec 21 - dessert mix
Dec 10 - corn	Dec 22 - dried beans
Dec 11 - mixed vegetables	Dec 23 - applesauce
Dec 12 - canned chicken	Dec 24 - crackers

## Northside Food Pantry

## **“Mitten Tree” Combines with Food Drives**

This year our “Mitten Tree” collection will continue but will combine with the monthly Food Pantry Drives. We will collect winter hats, mittens, gloves, and scarves for both children and adults for Exodus Refugee. Bring your winter items to the Food Drives (Nov. 14 and Dec. 12) or drop them off at church during the week and deposit them in the specially designated containers. Exodus has greatly appreciated our support in this way in the past and looks forward to our help this year. **The deadline will be December 13.**



## **WISE Mental Health Team (Next Zoom meeting: December 2<sup>nd</sup>)**



The FC WISE Mental Health Team seeks new members interested in promoting mental health, removing stigma of mental illness and working for justice for those affected by mental illness. We meet monthly (currently [via Zoom](#)) the second Wednesday of each month from 5 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. Come join our active and caring team trying to live out God's call to love one another through our commitment to those experiencing mental health challenges, their families and friends.

At our December meeting, we will discuss plans and budget for the 2021 year. For more information contact co-chairs, Pat Larracey, [317-625-6801](tel:317-625-6801)-[plainandfancy1963@att.net](mailto:plainandfancy1963@att.net) and Sandy Wood, 317-225-6206- [csjlwood@att.net](mailto:csjlwood@att.net).

## **Spiritual Support Group for Mental Health Conditions or Challenges, and Wellness: Thursdays from 5:00-6:00PM [on 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

We are an open group with confidentiality guidelines. Sessions are on Zoom and are led by Pastor Rev. Dr. Sarah Lund and Rev. Dr. Patrick Larracey, co-chair of the church's WISE Team.

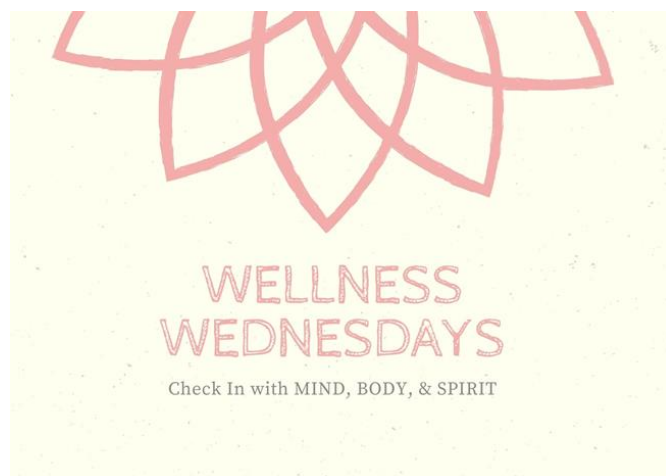
**On December 24<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup>, we will not meet via Zoom, but Pat will be available for support via phone or email.** Please feel free to call or email either of us if you have questions: Pastor Sarah: [pastorsarah@fcindy.org](mailto:pastorsarah@fcindy.org), or 386-478-9012. Dr. Pat: [plainandfancy1963@att.net](mailto:plainandfancy1963@att.net), or 317-625-6801.

Thank you,  
Rev. Dr. Patrick Larracey



## Journey through Advent as we Connect through the Distance in Mind, Body, and Spirit with Wellness Wednesdays in December

Throughout most of December, we will use excerpts from the *Still Speaking Writer's Group* Advent devotional, *Draw Near*, to guide us as we nurture ways we can connect with one another and connect within ourselves.



This month, we are going to switch it up a little bit, and have [live Zoom](#) the first 4 weeks of December, and then on December 30<sup>th</sup>, there will be a pre-recorded ritual of letting go and setting intentions as we transition into the coming year.

- ❖ **December 2:** Nurturing Wellness through Knowing God for Myself
- ❖ **December 9:** Nurturing Wellness through Watching (Paying Attention)
- ❖ **December 16:** Nurturing Wellness through the Solidness of Breath
- ❖ **December 23:** Nurturing Wellness through the Essentials
- ❖ **December 30:** Nurturing Wellness through a Ritual of Transition (pre-recorded)

Contact Shannon at [shannon@fcindy.org](mailto:shannon@fcindy.org) with any questions.

### **CARE & CONNECTIONS**

Wendy Baldwin, Chair

## Spreading Christmas Cheer

Who do you miss seeing at church during this Christmas time? Let's spread Christmas cheer by reaching out to others in our church family by calling, texting, or sending a Christmas card! If you need an address/phone directory, please contact Wendy Baldwin.

## Christmas Eve Zoom Gathering – Thursday, 12/24, 8:00 pm

Immediately following our virtual Christmas Eve service on YouTube, we will meet [on Zoom](#) to share fellowship and light our candles together in our Zoom space.



## Christmas Day Zoom Gathering – Friday, 12/25, 3-4 pm

Celebrate Christmas Day with our church family when so many of us are unable to be with others. We'll meet [on Zoom](#), share our favorite stories and traditions, and even try some activities. We hope you can be there, either on screen or on the phone!



## Feeding the Community

### **Food Drive & Fellowship! Second Saturday – December 12, 10-noon:**

Let's help fight poverty and hunger through our food donations to the Northside Pantry, who is very grateful that we are doing this! You can also bring your plastic bottle caps and paper to recycle, as well as any unwanted 2021 calendars and notepads that you may be receiving in the mail; we are collecting these for Exodus Refugee, along with hats, mittens, gloves, and scarves; these need to be received by 12/13 at the latest. And our greatest gift – the ability to spend a few minutes of in-person fellowship with those that are there, while maintaining safe distance protocols.

**Please note: In 2021, the monthly food drives will be held on the FIRST Saturday of the month.**

### **Vesper Gatherings – Sundays, 4:30-5 pm, in the Patio Courtyard & Tuesdays, 7-7:30 pm on Zoom**

With lessening daylight and colder weather, we are exploring ways to continue the fellowship we have shared in our Vesper gatherings. On Sundays at 4:30, join us in the patio courtyard for a quiet time to ponder scripture, and share our joys and concerns. Bring a chair and face mask as we spend some precious time with one another in person; if the weather is inclement – ie temperature is below 50 degrees, raining, OR winds more than 20 mph – we will not meet. On Tuesdays, we are meeting at 7 pm for a half hour on Zoom, to be together virtually.



### **Monthly Walks – 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the month, 11 am**

Join us each month for a half hour walk in the beautiful neighborhood around the church. On Saturday, 12/19, we'll meet at 11 am and head off for a walk and a time to catch up with one another. Please wear a mask, and dress appropriately for the weather.



## TRUSTEES

Steve Coomer & Randy Walker, Co-Chairs

### Financial Update

#### *When We Give, We Reach Out With Helping Hands*

Here are the financial results through October 31, 2020.

#### 1. Current Year Actual vs Budget Summary 1/1/2020 through 10/31/2020 Using 2020 Budget 1

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Category	1/1/2020 Actual	- Budget	10/31/2020 Difference
INCOME	177,493	198,282	-20,789
M. Unrestricted Contributions	177,493	198,282	-20,789
M.01 Pledged Offerings	153,507	140,205	13,302
M.02 UnPledged Offerings	8,659	16,750	-8,091
M.03 Rollover Prior Year Surplus_D...	15,327	15,327	0
M.04 Foundation - Endowment Fund...	0	10,000	-10,000
M.05 Foundation - Minister Fund Draw	0	16,000	-16,000
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	205,629	215,769	10,140
A. Pastoral Leadership	99,355	102,457	3,102
B. Worship & Faith	29,014	34,908	5,894
C. Care & Connections	188	350	162
D. Witness & Welcome	350	909	559
E. Outreach & Service	14,688	14,020	-668
F. Trustees	195	256	61
G. Administration & Operations	16,643	17,492	849
H. House & Grounds	39,986	39,823	-163
I. Miscellaneous	5,210	5,555	345
Net Difference:	-28,136	-17,487	-10,648

#### Highlights - Year to date:

- **Income** of \$177,500 was \$20,800 below budget. However, adjusting for \$26,000 of Foundation draws that were budgeted but not needed, income was actually \$5,200 better than budget. This is thanks to strong pledge receipts more than offsetting shortfalls in other contributions.
- **Expenses** of \$205,400 were \$10,100 below budget. This is primarily due to virtual services - no choir director since June, lower music and child care expenses. Also, Pastor Sarah's professional expenses are below budget.
- **Cash** at October 31 was stable, with a net of \$23,500 in our Chase accounts and \$23,400 in the Fidelity money market account. Cash balances have been greatly helped by our government stimulus funds (\$34,400).
- **Contributions** - despite COVID, our unrestricted cash contributions through 10/31 (excluding our PPP funds) were slightly ahead of last year (\$2,000).

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

Jim Lootens, Treasurer

lootens.jb@gmail.com

## Annual Campaign for 2021

Thank you to those who have responded with your pledge card and Time & Talent sheet to provide funding and resources for our ministries and programs in 2021. If you have not yet responded, we hope to have all the information by the end of December, since the Trustees will be working on the 2021 budget in early January. Please contact Wendy Baldwin if you need a pledge card and Time & Talent sheet.



We are so thankful for your generosity in 2020, even in the midst of a pandemic! We pray for continued support in 2021 as we navigate how to Be the Church in new and different times.

May God bless us as we journey together

– Wendy Baldwin

## Green Team Reflection

With the holiday season upon us and the new year approaching, it's a good time to consider if we're doing all that we can to help our environment. Are we recycling as well as we might and are we avoiding the use of unnecessary, harmful items such as disposable plastic bags? There are frequent reports of large amounts of trash accumulating both on land and in the sea. We need to support the earth in whatever ways we can, so please reflect, reuse and recycle.

Best Wishes from the Green Team

## COMMUNITY

### Ordinary and Extraordinary

*"You must help the Weak" (Acts 20:35 The Inclusive Bible)*

Dear Roberta, Abbey, and the rest of your staff,

Thank you for your kind Oct. 21<sup>st</sup> letter that celebrated the week of Oct. 18<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup>, National Friends of Libraries Week. I liked that you included your entire Indianapolis Public Library Foundation staff in the signing of the letter. Plus, I love the cool peel-off stickers, especially the one broadcasting, "I Love My Public Library." Many of us do, indeed, love our public libraries ever so much. My second favorite sticker asserts, "All Booked Up." Thanks to libraries, such as yours, I am almost always all booked up, as are countless other library patrons throughout central Indiana.

Perhaps you'd like to guess what happened on Saturday, Oct. 31<sup>st</sup> as i drove to Indy Public Library's Wayne branch to return library items, as well as to check out books and DVDs "on hold" for me. i had the strong feeling that Earl's book tile had recently been attached to Wayne Branch's wall/bookshelf. And yet, a couple of days earlier, i had seen that "Earl's tile" was not yet there.

i realized that my sudden feeling might have been wishful thinking. After all, the little kid in me is always eager to celebrate birthdays, particularly those of loved ones. Naturally, upon spotting the book tile proclaiming "Earl Hoppert," i immediately dashed to our car to beckon Earl and to joyfully sing "Happy Birthday to You" as he followed me into the library, all the time looking puzzled.

Because of Earl's dementia, Earl rarely ever expresses emotion anymore; nevertheless, he was obviously thrilled when he saw his name on the wall. Next, he was, also, delighted to see that his book tile was placed right next to a tile with Jim and Jean Preer's names. Fortunately, Roberta, Earl still remembers your being in First Congregational Church's choir, and he also recalls the spring and fall Broad Ripple Park picnics that Earl and i enjoyed periodically with Jim and Jean before they moved to Boston.

Thus, Earl's birthday present was a huge success! The only gift that could have, perhaps, topped the book tile, would have been a year of his favorite Bazbeaux's colossal pizza!

After expressing his excitement, and as Earl and i received plenty of stares from library users for the ruckus we were making—sorry! —Earl asked me why his name was on the library's wall. i said, something like, "to honor you on your 81<sup>st</sup> birthday and to support the Indianapolis Public Library; i've always liked my step-father's use of the idiom: 'Put your money where your mouth is.'"

Even with his mask on, Earl's smile and joy were evident that particular day!

i'll also drive Earl over to the Wayne branch so that he can see his book tile again on Nov. 14<sup>th</sup> and other days when he might need an emotional boost. Re-experiencing positive times—as if for THE VERY FIRST TIME—is one of the rare "benefits" of dementia.

Abbey and Roberta, thank you for your parts in enabling Earl to have an incredibly happy 81<sup>st</sup> birthday during a global pandemic. Abbey, i hope it is not too much to ask if you might please email me, a technological dinosaur, a photo attachment of Earl's book tile. i can imagine that off-and-on showing Earl a photo of his book tile will be most welcome for him as he soon experiences cabin fever on a forthcoming ever-so cold or snowy day this winter. Thank you for considering emailing me a photo of Earl's book tile.

And thank you for all the good work you each do in support of reading, of books, and of libraries, wonderful libraries!

When i recently saw a prayer from the book *Touch Holiness*, by Ruth C. Duck and Maren Tirabassi, i thought it would be a fitting way to end this thank you note:

*Gracious God, who gives and gives and gives to us again, hear our plea for one more gift: a generous spirit that we might find and use and return to you all that you have given of ordinary and extraordinary, for you are the source and gift of life itself.*

Fondly,  
susanna-judith rae

## **IKC Intergenerational Blue Christmas – Friday, December 18th, 7-8pm on Zoom - ALL ARE WELCOME!**



Join us for an evening of lament and communal grief as we approach the difficulty of the holiday season, honoring that the season isn't joyful for everyone. The night will consist of prayers, poetry, scripture, and togetherness. You're invited to bring a candle (battery-powered or otherwise) to the service in order to remember the time of solidarity and communal care that we will

share. If you have any questions, you can email Student Pastor Cassidy Hall who is helping lead and design the event: [studentpastor@fcindy.org](mailto:studentpastor@fcindy.org)

Blue Christmas Service – Friday, December 18<sup>th</sup> at 7:00-8:00 PM on Zoom  
See upcoming Epistles for the Zoom link.

## **When the Church Saves Lives: A Reflection on the WISE Mental Health Conference**

"We normally think of going to church as the place we go to get saved. But, there is more than one way to be saved. The church can be a place where those struggling with mental health challenges can find the safety needed to literally save their lives. There has never been a time more important than right now to be a lifesaving church." These are some of the words that I heard at the recent WISE Mental Health Conference that was co-sponsored by the Mental Health Network of the UCC and the Indiana-Kentucky Conference. I attended presentations on mental health 101, being a trauma informed church, suicide prevention, and joined in small groups to have conversation on how we break the stigma of mental illness in our faith communities. Several of these presenters shared their personal experience of how it was a local church that literally saved their lives from suicide attempts or other traumas faced because of a mental health challenge. The power of these stories reminded me just how essential the work of a local church is in their community.

It occurs to me as I write this that we have 123 potential life-saving churches right here in the IKC. Each week our congregations are offered an opportunity to be Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, and Engaged (WISE) when it comes to the mental health of those who attend. We can be safe, healing, and supportive spaces for every person to encounter a loving God who meets them on their mental health journey and not only abides with them but offers them an extravagant welcome as a beloved child of God as they are. Your church can be that space where we sit in the pain and trauma and struggle, especially in this Covid moment, and hold each other in love without having to fix or offer solutions. God is able to carry each of us in love and there are people in each of our communities who need to know that there exists a



church that opens its collective life to those with mental health challenges and their communities of support. And opens its life not just as a ministry or side project, but as a core value lived out at the heart of each church. We can be that church, friends. We are called to be that church.

This past summer the Indiana-Kentucky Conference became the third Conference in the United Church of Christ to declare itself a WISE for Mental Health Conference. We did not declare ourselves this to check a box. Our WISE covenant actually states that in living out being WISE “we participate in the Kingdom of God and help build a just and compassionate world for all people, including those with mental health challenges and other forms of neurodiversity and their communities of support.” We declared ourselves WISE to offer windows into ministry that saves lives and creates spaces that are holy and sacred. We currently have two congregations that have gone through the WISE process and I would like to encourage you all to discern together as members of the congregations that make up this Conference whether God might be calling you to be a WISE church or association. What would it look like for your church to enter into that conversation and embrace a mental health ministry? The Conference has a WISE Mental Health Team and a new Mental Health Educator staff position to assist you in discerning what that process might look like or to have a workshop on the topic of mental health in your church or association. I ask you to pray over this and begin talking about this in your local church or association because it could just be your church that welcomes someone that needs such a space to love them as they are. For more information on how to become a WISE Congregation you can check out the UCC Mental Health Network’s website at <https://www.mhn-ucc.org/> or reach out to our new Mental Health Educator, Sheronda Lucas, at [mentalhealth@ikcucc.org](mailto:mentalhealth@ikcucc.org).

Peace, Blessings, and Compassion,  
Rev. Chad R. Abbott  
Conference Minister United Church of Christ in Indiana and Kentucky

## **IKC Guidance to Congregations for Healthy Continuity of Ministry and Mission during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

Dear Ministry Partners,

Below we've linked to a document providing the full scope of guidance compiled for your use by the IKC leadership. We have made this detailed report available here and [on our web site](#), so that you can implement safe practices for your congregation or ministry setting going into (and perhaps beyond) the winter of 2020/2021. We have attached a PDF of this information to this email for you to download. Simply click the red button at the bottom of this email to see and download the full document.

### Summary

- ❖ Keep doing virtual worship and ministry if this is what you have been doing
- ❖ Switch to virtual or outdoor worship if your county is scored orange or red (colors according to your state's COVID case mapping, see links below)
- ❖ Suspend all indoor gatherings of any size until your county is scored

blue/green or yellow

- ❖ If you must have an indoor gathering, limit the number of people to no more than 10
- ❖ Suspend 1:1 visitations with pastors until your county is scored blue/green or yellow

Examples of the Indiana & Kentucky COVID-19 case maps (images from Nov. 16, 2020)



INDIANA CASE MAP LINK: IN county scores

<https://www.coronavirus.in.gov/2393.htm>

KENTUCKY CASE MAP LINK: KY county scores

<https://govstatus.egov.com/kycovid19>

Whenever two or more do gather:

- *Wear a face mask*
- *Stay at least 6 feet apart*
- *Do not attend if you feel ill, even if it is just mildly ill*
- *Do not attend if you have been tested for COVID and are still waiting for a result*
- *Do not attend if you have tested positive for COVID in the last 14 days*
- *Do not attend if you have been in close contact with someone that has tested positive or had symptoms in the last 14 days unless you have tested negative.*

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For the full, 5-page guidance document, click the button below. It contains specific guidance for your congregation by state, as well as all the new or updated information the Conference leadership has gathered. Remember that you can access this document and other resources on our web site here: <http://ikcucc.org/connect/resources/>.

## **The Gift of Home: IKC UCC Southeast Association Eviction Ministry**

Home is not just a shelter from the elements. It is a place of welcome, a place where family gathers and children are raised. It is a place of belonging. When families are evicted, the sense of belonging becomes unstable. Children grow up not knowing what *home* is.

Take a moment to think of your childhood home, or the home where you live now. What words come up when you think of *home*? Now imagine that you can help even other families to be able to hold on to their home...to all of those words you just thought of that describes *home*.

The brief reprieve in evictions due to the pandemic gives



us the opportunity to prepare for the needs of Central Indiana families in the coming year. As we prepare for 2021, we need your support. During this holiday season, as we purchase gifts, please consider giving to the Southeast Association Eviction Ministry so that others can keep their home.

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

Other ways you can help:

- Join our Team - We welcome new members who want to join our team so that we can continue to grow and expand this ministry.
- Legal resources - If you have legal experience with the eviction process, we would love to talk with you to gain better insight into the legal process of eviction in Indiana.

- Rev. Shannon Abbott ([shannon@fcindy.org](mailto:shannon@fcindy.org)), Pastor Sarah Frische-Mouri Hannigan ([pastorsarahzucc@gmail.com](mailto:pastorsarahzucc@gmail.com)), Walter Ziebell ([wziebell@gmail.com](mailto:wziebell@gmail.com))

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**January Colony Submission Deadline:** Please email your submissions to Shannon at [shannon@fcindy.org](mailto:shannon@fcindy.org) by **Thursday, December 15<sup>th</sup>**.

**Office Admin Vacation:** Shannon will be on vacation from **December 24<sup>th</sup> – January 4<sup>th</sup>**. If there are items you need to have included in the Epistle or bulletins while she is on vacation, please plan to get these to her by mid-December. (See Colony announcement above.)

**Women's Lunch Bunch:** All women of the church are invited to get together once a month at **11:30am**. via Zoom for lunch, friendship and fellowship. This month, they meet on **December 17<sup>th</sup>**. For questions or more information please contact Sue Chapman at (317) 259-1806 or [carolsuech59@gmail.com](mailto:carolsuech59@gmail.com).

**Men's Lunch:** This lunch and discussion gathering for men of First Congregational meets every other Thursday at **1:00pm**. This month, due to Thanksgiving, they are meeting only on **December 3<sup>rd</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup>**. Please contact Randy Walker at (317) 796-2081 or [aa28977rwalker@gmail.com](mailto:aa28977rwalker@gmail.com) for more information.

**Book Circle:** We meet on the third Tuesday of each month from **1:30 - 3:30pm**. For more information please contact Karen Walker at 317-319-8950 or [karen.e.d.walker@gmail.com](mailto:karen.e.d.walker@gmail.com)

**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



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# KINDNESS CALENDAR: DECEMBER 2020

MONDAY

7 Leave a positive message for someone else to find

14 Share a happy memory or inspiring thought with a loved one

21 Appreciate kindness and thank people who do things for you

28 Be kind to the planet. Eat less meat and use less energy

TUESDAY

1 Share the Kindness Calendar with others and spread kindness

8 Do something helpful for a friend or family member

15 Contact an elderly neighbour and brighten up their day

22 Congratulate someone for an achievement that may go unnoticed

29 Turn off digital devices and really listen to people

WEDNESDAY

2 Contact someone you can't be with to see how they are

9 Notice when you're hard on yourself or others and be kind instead

16 Look for something positive to say to everyone you speak to

23 Choose to give or receive the gift of forgiveness

30 Let someone know how much you appreciate them and why

THURSDAY

3 Offer to help someone who is facing difficulties at the moment

10 Listen wholeheartedly to others without judging them

17 Practice gratitude. List the kind things others have done for you

24 Bring joy to others. Share something which made you laugh

31 Plan some new acts of kindness to do in 2021

FRIDAY

4 Give kind comments to as many people as possible today

11 Be generous. Feed someone with food, love or kindness today

18 Give away something that you have been holding on to

25 Treat everyone with kindness today, including yourself!

SATURDAY

5 Make a gift for someone who is homeless or feeling lonely

12 Buy an extra item and donate it to a local food bank

19 Buy locally and support independent shops near you

26 Get outside. Pick up litter or do something kind for nature

SUNDAY

6 Support a charity, cause or campaign you really care about

13 See how many different people you can smile at today

20 Contact someone who may be alone or feeling isolated

27 Call a relative who is far away to say hello and have a chat

Let's look beyond our differences and help each other. Every act of kindness matters

ACTION FOR HAPPINESS

#DoGoodDecember

[www.actionforhappiness.org](http://www.actionforhappiness.org)

Learn more about this month's theme at [www.actionforhappiness.org/do-good-december](http://www.actionforhappiness.org/do-good-december)

Keep Calm · Stay Wise · Be Kind