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# FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Epistle for the Week of November 26, 2020

## Dear First Congregational,

I give God thanks for each one of you, for our faith community at First Congregational, and for the creative and meaningful ways we come together to Be The Church. As part of the United Church of Christ, we join together with our wider church family to pray this special Thanksgiving Day Prayer:

*On this day, O God, we give thanks  
in all kinds of communities, or even in solitude.  
Our desire in this moment is to come before you  
with our prayers of thanksgiving.  
For some of us the words we offer  
will flow easily from our lips.  
For others trying to name our blessing may prove difficult.  
Thanksgiving 2020 may be very different from previous years:  
a smaller table at which to sit,  
new persons sitting with us,*

*or a dear one absent,  
worries crowding out our sense of blessing.  
These realities may reshape our prayers from years past.  
To seek joy may lead through heartbreak.  
Whatever our reality, O God,  
We ask that you help us focus  
not so much on material things  
(whether their abundance or scarcity)  
but rather on how we are living our lives.  
Help us recognize  
all the ways you are present in our lives this year.  
Help us gather the strength we need for today  
and for all of our tomorrows.  
Grant us the satisfaction of intimacy with Jesus,  
your great gift to us, through whom you offer  
Living Water, Bread of Life,  
more than we can ask or imagine.  
Help us to extend our prayers of thanksgiving to you  
into tomorrow with joyful spirits.  
We are loved and blessed and thankful. **Amen.***

**Prayer for Thanksgiving Day** was written by Henrietta Stith Andrews, a retired UCC Pastor who served as Associate Conference Minister in Michigan. Rev. Andrews is a certified Spiritual Director and presently residing in Powderfield, GA.

Blessings,  
Pastor Sarah

## **THIS SUNDAY**

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

**November 29:** Poetry as Prophecy – Student Pastor Cassidy Hall will be walking us through some poetry (including videos of readings) so that we can discuss the prophetic nature of poetry. You're encouraged to bring your own poem to share with the group, as we plan to hear from a variety of poets. One thing to keep in mind when selecting a poem: *what makes this poem or this poet feel prophetic?*

### **Advent**

Advent begins this Sunday! Join us on YouTube as we light the candle of hope. We begin our preparation for Christ's coming with scripture passages Isaiah 40:1-

11 and Mark 1:1-15, and we'll sing and hear inspirational seasonal music. Pastor Carol Sowle will be leading worship while Pastor Sarah enjoys some needed time of rest and renewal.

For ideas for Advent candles, luminaries, and other festive home décor, check out this link: [40+ I Believe Even When... ideas in 2020 | paper bag lanterns, luminary, luminaries bags \(pinterest.com\)](#)

*Advent devotionals may be picked up in the narthex.*



### **The 1st Sunday of Advent Worship, 11AM (YouTube, FaceBook, Dial In)**

**Scriptures:** Isaiah 40:1-11 and Mark 1:1-15

**Sermon:** "Comfort and Joy" (Pastor Carol preaching)

**Mission of the Month: Faith in Indiana**

**Coffee Hour via Zoom, immediately after worship**

### **Outdoor Vespers on Sundays from 4:30 - 5:00 p.m.**

Join us for a time of togetherness, Scripture, and sharing of joys and concerns. Bring a chair and face mask. We practice our love by keeping distant and wearing face coverings. *Note: Outdoor vespers will not be held if the temperature is below 50, it is raining, OR the winds are above 20 mph.*

### **Thank You for Your Support of First Congregational UCC**

Please continue supporting the mission and ministries of your local church at <http://www.fcindy.org/online-giving/>

## THIS WEEK AT FC (11/19 - 11/25)

### **TODAY! Thanksgiving Zoom Gathering – Thurs, 11/26, 3 pm**

We'll gather together with our church family on our Zoom link to share Thanksgiving fellowship, fun, and friendship.

**No Spiritual Support Group today** due to the holiday. However, Pat Larracey is available by phone or email for anyone needing support. You can contact him at [plainandfancy1963@att.net](mailto:plainandfancy1963@att.net), or 317-625-6801.

**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=a3BrdnNyWWEza0tFMUgw1CZFpYQT09>

*\* Please note that this Zoom link is different from the Zoom links used for other FC events.*

### **Zoom Vespers on Tuesdays from 7:00 - 7:30 p.m.**

Join us for a time of togetherness, Scripture, and sharing of joys and concerns.

### **Wellness Wednesdays: 10:30AM (Zoom)**

Throughout most of December, we will use excerpts from the 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.

**Wednesday, December 2:** Nurturing Wellness through Knowing God for Myself

### **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!

### **Mission of the Month for November: Faith In Indiana**

The NOVEMBER MISSION OF THE MONTH is the Indianapolis based community action organization Faith in Indiana. Faith in Indiana helps churches to more actively address local social needs. In Indianapolis, the current action agenda includes addressing the issues of gun violence, mass incarceration, immigrant justice, economic dignity, healthcare, and voting rights. Faith in Indiana provides an opportunity to work with other churches and have a greater voice and impact than if we acted alone. Faith in Indiana acts in the spirit of our Church's historical mission to join with others in faith to address the needs of others in our local community.

For more information, go to: <https://faithinindiana.org/what-we-do/>. To contribute to this effort, write a check to First Congregational, and designate Faith in IN in the Memo line, or go to <http://www.fcindy.org/online-giving/>.

## COMING UP

**WISE Mental Health Team - Wednesday, Dec 2 at 5:00 PM (on Zoom)** - 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).

**Trustees - Wednesday, Dec 2 at 7:00 PM (on Zoom)**

**Men's Lunch - Thursday, Dec 3 at 1:00 PM** - Please contact Randy Walker at (317) 796-2081 or [aa28977rwalker@gmail.com](mailto:aa28977rwalker@gmail.com) for more information.

### **Devoted to Generosity - Annual Campaign to Fund our Ministries for 2021**

We are currently in the midst of our Annual Campaign for 2021. Even during a pandemic, First Congregational continues its mission to transform lives through so many important ministries. Will you show your support by mailing in your pledge card and Time & Talent by November 30, 2020? Questions, or need the materials, contact Wendy Baldwin.



### **BOOK BUZZ and I thank you!**

Thanks for a wonderful Book Buzz journey! A lot of sharing of hearts, minds, and perspectives, with some personal movement along the journey for racial justice. Through some discussion focused on what we do next we recognize that everyone is at their own point on their journey of understanding racial justice. In considering a variety of options for the church to support - more study, more dialogue, partnerships, and actions - we see many possible directions toward fighting racism embedded systemically, institutionally, and socially. We have a grant from Bethany Fellows to help us move in our direction(s) of choice. If anyone would like to join the task force to determine the next steps on this long journey, please contact any of us currently on the team.

The videos of Maya Angelou that Cassidy shared were especially powerful and meaningful - here are the links

Still I Rise poetry reading: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qviM\\_GnJbOM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qviM_GnJbOM)

Lessons from her life: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N8RA4JsoKjY>

Passing the books on: If you have a copy of *I'm Still Here* that was provided by the church - please bring it back to church by December 15 so we can pass them on to another congregation to use. It is fine if they are written in and marked up as long as there isn't any private information in there. There is a box inside the patio door of the church to collect them, if you can bring them when you drop off other donations that would be great! Please contact Karen Walker (karen.e.d [walker@gmail.com](mailto:walker@gmail.com) or 317-319-8950) - Thanks!

- The racial justice task force: Pastor Sarah, Carol, Cassidy, Alice, Karen

**Please click [HERE](#) to view the November Colony with more information and events happening this month!**

## **CONNECTION & SUPPORT**

**FC Facebook page** (click [here](#))

**"First Congregational Indy Fellowship"** group on Facebook (click [here](#)).

### **Pastoral Care**

Pastor Sarah is on vacation from Nov 26 - 29. Pastor Carol may be reached

at (317)496-9732 or [casowle@gmail.com](mailto:casowle@gmail.com) for pastoral care needs.  
After Nov 29th, Pastor Sarah may be reached at (386)478-9012  
or [pastorsarah@fcindy.org](mailto:pastorsarah@fcindy.org).

### **Pastor Sarah's Sabbath Days: Mondays & Saturdays**

The congregation covenant with Pastor Sarah to provide 2 days per week for personal rest and family renewal. On Mondays and Saturdays, Pastor Sarah is not available unless it is a pastoral emergency. Thank you for honoring this sacred gift of Sabbath time for our Pastor and her family.

### **Upcoming Vacation:**

Our Office Admin, Shannon, will be on vacation Nov 26 - Nov 30.  
Pastor Sarah will be on vacation Nov 26 - Nov 29.

### **Additional Church Support Contacts**

Pastor Carol ([casowle@gmail.com](mailto:casowle@gmail.com))  
Office Administrator, Shannon ([shannon@fcindy.org](mailto:shannon@fcindy.org))  
Moderator, Alice Rutherford ([alice@caloosaspirt.net](mailto:alice@caloosaspirt.net))  
Vice Moderator, Larry Eckel ([lspeckel@comcast.net](mailto:lspeckel@comcast.net))

### **Mental Health Support:**

- **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Disaster Distress Helpline:** 1-800-985-5990, or text "TalkWithUs" to 66746.
- **National Suicide Prevention Hotline:** 1-800-273-TALK (8255) (press 1 for veterans, 2 for Spanish)
- **National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)** Information HelpLine provides information and referral services. 1-800-950-NAMI (6264) and [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org).
- **The Trevor Project hotline** offers support for LGBTQIA+ youth and families struggling with mental health challenges at 1-866-4-U-TREVOR (488-7386) and [www.theTrevorProject.org](http://www.theTrevorProject.org)

### **FC Covid Protocols:**

Effective immediately, 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).

At that time, the Council will decide reopening measures.

## **THIS WEEK AT FIRST CONGREGATIONAL**

### **3 Ways to Connect for Worship**

#### ***YOUTUBE***

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

- YouTube Live broadcasts at 10:45am with 15 minutes of gathering music. The service begins at 11am..
- Use this option for live interacting and messaging. You must have or create a user account and be logged in to message live.

#### ***FACE BOOK***

[https://www.facebook.com/pg/FirstCongregationalUCCIndy/posts/?ref=page\\_internal](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=dmtWbWE5UXRBTK5pcHZlYlBoaEFVUTo9>

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, Nov 26	3:00 p.m.	Zoom Thanksgiving Gathering
Sunday, Nov 29	9:30 a.m.	Sunday Adult Class
Sunday, Nov 29	11:00 a.m.	1st Sunday of Advent Worship (YouTube, FB, Dial In) w/ Pastor Carol preaching
Sunday, Nov 29	12:00 p.m.	Zoom Coffee Hour
Sunday, Nov 29	4:30 p.m.	Outdoor Vespers
Tuesday, Dec 1	5:00 p.m.	Soul Care w/ Pastor Sarah
Tuesday, Dec 1	7:00 p.m.	Zoom Vespers
Wednesday, Dec 2	10:30 a.m.	Wellness Wednesday
Wednesday, Dec 2	5:00 p.m.	WISE MH Team
Wednesday, Dec 2	7:00 p.m.	Trustees
Thursday, Dec 3	1:00 p.m.	Men's Lunch
Thursday, Dec 3	5:00 p.m.	Spiritual Support
Sunday, Dec 6	9:30 a.m.	Sunday Adult Class
Sunday, Dec 6	11:00 a.m.	2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent/Communion Sunday Worship (YouTube, FB, Dial In)
Sunday, Dec 6	12:00 p.m.	Zoom Coffee Hour
Sunday, Dec 6	4:30 p.m.	Outdoor Vespers

\*All events are on Zoom unless indicated otherwise.