

 [FirstCongregationalUCCIndy](#)

 [Forward](#)



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Epistle for the Week of December 3, 2020

Dear First Congregational,

I want to express my heartfelt thanks for the generous support of First Congregational through one of the most challenging years in our lifetime. I am grateful for the ways our church members have found creative ways to come together despite the difficulties of not being able to gather safely in-person in our beautiful church. We have adapted, keeping an open mind, and trying new things. Thank you for your patience, kindness, faithfulness, and trust. As your pastor, I see how hard you are working to help our church not only survive 2020, but also to thrive. THANK YOU.

Throughout 2020, we continued to fulfill our mission and to carry out our ministries to be a community of belonging, healing, and loving. We have provided food for the hungry, comfort to the sick, care for Creation, and advocated for the rights of the most needy. We have lifted our voices in praise and worship, we have prayed, and we learned together about how to be more loving to all of God's children. THANK YOU.

We are in the process of dreaming about our mission and ministry for 2021. Please share your pledge with us by mailing it to the church so we can create the ministry budget God calls us to in order to fulfill our mission. Every check, every gift, every dollar of your financial support makes a difference. Together we are building God's beloved community, making a more just world for all.

Please consider making an end of the year financial gift to First Congregational. I believe your generosity will be a blessing to us all. THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

Blessings,
Pastor Sarah

THIS SUNDAY

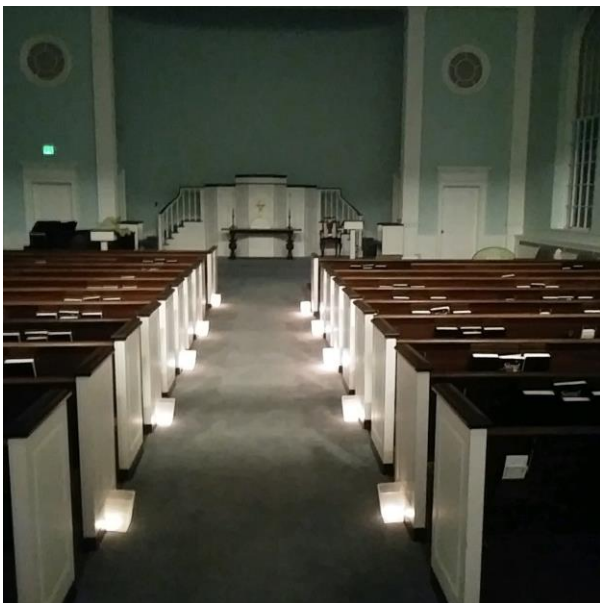
Sunday Adult Education, 9:30 a.m. (Zoom)

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.

Advent devotionals are available in the church narthex.

Advent

On this second Sunday of Advent we'll again explore a passage from Isaiah (7:1-14) along with the birth story from Matthew's gospel. The opening verses are usually omitted from readings of this gospel, but we've decided to include them in this Advent season. We hope you enjoy our light touch to this passage. Don't forget to have a candle handy to join in our Advent lighting of the candle of love, and be ready to learn some new sign language and a new verse of "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear."



The Second Sunday of Advent Worship, 11AM (YouTube, FaceBook, Dial In)

Scriptures: Isaiah 7:1-14 & Matthew 1:1-15

Sermon: "Advent of Love"

Mission of the Month: The Christmas Fund

Coffee Hour via Zoom, immediately after worship

Sunday Outdoor Vespers - Canceled this Sunday due to cold temperatures.

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

TODAY!

- **Men's Lunch, 1:00 PM** - Contact Randy Walker at (317) 796-2081 or aa28977rwalker@gmail.com for more information.
- **Spiritual Support Group, 5:00-6:00 PM** - You can contact Pastor Sarah at (386)478-9012 or pastorsarah@fcindy.org, or Pat Larracey at plainandfancy1963@att.net, or 317-625-6801 for more information.

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>

** 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.

Wednesday, December: Nurturing Wellness through Watching/Paying Attention.

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) or Bill Hummel (317-875-8388 or 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 December: The Christmas Fund

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! For more information, go to: <https://www.pbucc.org/index.php/christmas-fund-home>. To contribute to this effort, write a check to First Congregational, and designate Christmas Fund in the Memo line, or go to <http://www.fcindy.org/online-giving/>.

Reminder for VANCO Online Users

When using VANCO for online contributions/pledges, please remember that I ONLY receive your name and the amount. I do not receive any information as to which account you want the money to be reported. Unless you contact me with specific information by email or by text, your VANCO money will be reported as a contribution or a pledge, not as Mission of the Month or Memorial or any other

account.

If you want your money to go to an account other than a contribution or pledge, email me at dillenback@sbcglobal.net or text me at 317-694-6471 after you complete your online form.

Please contact me if you have further questions or concerns.

Take Care, Be Safe,
Cheryl Dillenback
Financial Secretary

COMING UP

Food Drive & Fellowship! Second Saturday – December 12, 10-noon - Bring your canned and dry goods to the church to benefit the Northside Pantry, who is so appreciative of the ministry we are doing. You can use the “reverse Advent” list in the [December Colony](#) for a list of items to bring. Also, this is the last opportunity to bring gloves, mittens, hats, and scarves to benefit Exodus Refugee. As a “thank you” for being a part of our church, we have a small poinsettia for you to take home, to remind you of your church family.

Virtual Giving Tree 2020

Exodus Refugee: Click this link [here](#) 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. Please click [here](#) to use Sign Up Genius to let us know what you are pledging to purchase. 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
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/>

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

Thank you to those who have already mailed in your pledge card and Time & Talent sheets! If you haven't, please prayerfully consider how you will help First Congregational with its transforming ministries in 2021, and mail your response to the church as soon as possible. Your support of our church makes a difference to so many lives! Questions, or need the materials, contact Wendy Baldwin.



Please click [HERE](#) to view the December 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 may be reached at (386)478-9012 or 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.

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)

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.
- **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

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.

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

- 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

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|-------------------------|-------------------|---|
| Thursday, Dec 3 | 1:00 p.m. | Men's Lunch |
| Thursday, Dec 3 | 5:00 p.m. | Spiritual Support Group |
| Sunday, Dec 6 | 9:30 a.m. | Sunday Adult Class |
| Sunday, Dec 6 | 11:00 a.m. | Second Sunday of Advent/Communion Worship (YouTube, FB, Dial In) |
| Sunday, Dec 6 | 12:00 p.m. | Zoom Coffee Hour |
| Sunday, Dec 6 | 4:30 p.m. | Outdoor Vespers |
| Tuesday, Dec 8 | 5:00 p.m. | Soul Care w/ Pastor Sarah |
| Tuesday, Dec 8 | 7:00 p.m. | Zoom Vespers |
| Wednesday, Dec 9 | 10:30 a.m. | Wellness Wednesday |

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| Wednesday, Dec 9 | 7:00 p.m. | Church Council |
| Thursday, Dec 10 | 5:00 p.m. | Spiritual Support Group |
| Saturday, Dec 12 | 10:00 a.m. | Food Drive |
| Sunday, Dec 13 | 9:30 a.m. | Sunday Adult Class |
| Sunday, Dec 13 | 11:00 a.m. | Third Sunday of Advent Worship (YouTube, FB, Dial In) |
| Sunday, Dec 13 | 12:00 p.m. | Zoom Coffee Hour |
| Sunday, Dec 13 | 4:30 p.m. | Outdoor Vespers |