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FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Epistle for the Week of December 10, 2020

Dear First Congregational,

Now is the time to plan for experiencing the spirit of Christmas with First Congregational. We are honored to be your church family and we have something special planned. Many of us will not be physically present with church family or loved ones. Yet, we've found a way to experience the power of spiritual presence with God and one another. For Christmas Eve, we invite each person to participate in the worship service video by joining in the lighting of the candle that is symbolic of the light of Christ shining in each one of you.

Come pick up your battery operated electric candle (safe for all ages), your special Christmas cookie, and a Christmas note. There is a "Christmas Kit" assembled in an easy to carry gift bag for each person. These Christmas Kits are available starting Saturday, December 12 to pick up at the church.

Also pick up your Christmas poinsettia and your UCC Advent/Christmas Tide (through January 9) daily devotional. All of these items are gifts for YOU! If you'd

like items delivered to your home or mailed to you, please let us know.

You are LOVED! You are not alone. We are united in Christ.

Blessings,
Pastor Sarah



Christmas Kits Available

- Christmas cookie
- Christmas card
- battery operated candle for Christmas Eve

*One kit per person
in each household*

*Advent & Christmastide Devotionals
& Poinsettias are still available
in the narthex.*

THIS SUNDAY

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

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.

Advent

Advent continues with lighting a candle of joy this Sunday, along with more from the prophet Isaiah (57: 14-19) as he tells his people of God’s comfort and healing – words we very much need to hear today. This Sunday we’ll also hear the beloved story from Luke’s gospel of Mary’s encounter with the Angel Gabriel, recounted by the voices in the story. Don’t forget to pick up your Christmas kits this Saturday or next (or anytime in between). If pick up is not possible, a simple request to Wendy

Baldwin (wendy.baldwin@fci.com or 317-319-0806) for a delivery is welcome.



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

Scriptures: Isaiah 57:14-19 & Luke 1:1-4, 26-56

Sermon: "Advent of Joy"

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

How to Access our Zoom Gatherings

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/9264494206?pwd=dmtWbWE5UXRBTk5pcHZlYlB0aEFVUT09>

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.

TODAY! 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.

This Saturday! Food Drive – Saturday, 12/12, 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. If you have a [I’m Still Here](#) book, please bring that, too. 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, as well as picking up your “Christmas kit” to prepare for Christmas Eve.

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 16: Nurturing Wellness through the Lessons of a Mountain

Personnel Committee Staff Review Survey

If you have not had a chance to complete the staff survey (click [HERE](#) for link), please complete it by this Sunday. For those who have filled out the survey - thank you! - your feedback will help shape future work. If you have any problems with it or questions, please contact Karen Walker (317-319-8950 or karen.e.d.walker@gmail.com) or Bill Hummel (317-875-8388)

or wrummel001@comcast.net).

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/>.

January Colony Deadline: Tuesday, December 15th - Please submit all January Colony articles to Shannon at shannon@fcindy.org by Tuesday, December 15th.

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

Women's Lunch Bunch - Thursday, 12/17 at 11:30 a.m. via Zoom

For questions or more information please contact Sue Chapman at (317) 259-1806 or carolsuech59@gmail.com.

Men's Lunch - Thursday, 12/17 at 1:00 p.m.

Please contact Randy Walker at (317) 796-2081 or aa28977rwalker@gmail.com for more information.

IKC Blue Christmas Service - Friday, 12/18, 7:00-8:00 PM



Join us for an intergenerational service of prayer and lament. This service is co-sponsored by FC and is led by Student Pastor, Cassidy Hall. Register in advance for this

meeting: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEsdU2hrDsiHtVmZwBkU-f4_DbtOITZsdFo

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Monthly Neighborhood Walk – Saturday, 12/19, 10-noon

We'll take a walk in the neighborhood at 11 am. But you can also use this as an opportunity to bring canned and dry goods to the church to benefit the Northside Pantry. 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, as well as picking up your “Christmas kit” to prepare for Christmas Eve.

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**

5100 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](https://www.target.com/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.ill.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

Thursday, Dec 10	5:00 p.m.	Spiritual Support Group
Saturday, Dec 12	11:00 a.m.	Food Drive (at FC)
Sunday, Dec 13	9:30 a.m.	Sunday Adult Class
Sunday, Dec 13	11:00 a.m.	Third Sunday of Advent/Communion Worship (YouTube, FB, Dial In)
Sunday, Dec 13	12:00 p.m.	Zoom Coffee Hour
Tuesday, Dec 15	5:00 p.m.	Soul Care w/ Pastor Sarah
Tuesday, Dec 15	7:00 p.m.	Zoom Vespers
Wednesday, Dec 16	10:30 a.m.	Wellness Wednesday
Wednesday, Dec 17	11:30 a.m.	Women's Lunch
Thursday, Dec 17	1:00 p.m.	Men's Lunch
Thursday, Dec 17	5:00 p.m.	Spiritual Support Group
Friday, Dec 18	7:00 p.m.	IKC Blue Christmas Service
Saturday, Dec 19	11:00 a.m.	Neighborhood Walk (at FC)
Sunday, Dec 20	9:30 a.m.	Sunday Adult Class
Sunday, Dec 20	11:00 a.m.	Fourth Sunday of Advent Worship (YouTube, FB, Dial In)
Sunday, Dec 20	12:00 p.m.	Zoom Coffee Hour

*All events are on Zoom unless indicated otherwise.