

 [FirstCongregationalUCCIndy](#)

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# FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Christmas Eve Epistle - December 24, 2020

## Dear First Congregational,

Prepare your hearts to receive the good news: unto us a child is born and this child is a gift to all of Creation! As we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ this Christmas, we do so in ways similar to the early Christians' simple worship at home long ago. This past year, our homes have become sanctuaries and our kitchen tables our altars. Our breakfast coffee and toast is our holy communion. Our phone calls, emails, texts, cards, and chats are our prayers. Our computers open new portals of fellowship and our porches are the narthex of our home sanctuaries. This year while our indoor church sits in silent prayer, the pews holding our seats for us, our church grounds buzz with food donation drop-offs, vespers circles (in warmer weather), Christmas Kit pick-ups, and more!

In the midst of all the changes, unknowns, and uncertainty, tonight we will celebrate the coming of God's light into the world. Come, light of Christ, come! I hope you will join us tonight at 7:00pm on our church YouTube channel for our special Christmas Eve Candle lighting Lessons and Carols, followed by Christmas

Eve fellowship time on our church zoom. We will be the church together this holy night, trusting God's Spirit to connect us to one another and to God's love.

Merry Christmas everyone!

Blessings,  
Pastor Sarah

### **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.

## **CHRISTMAS EVE & CHRISTMAS DAY**

### **TODAY! Christmas Eve - December 24**

Christmas Eve is here! Even as we must remain apart on this holy night, we'll gather virtually to celebrate as we traditionally have. Tonight's service will feature lighting the Christ candle, scripture readings of Luke's sacred birth story from a variety of readers, beloved Christmas carols, and raising our candles high as we sing "Silent Night" together. We hope everyone has acquired a battery candle from a Christmas Kit for tonight's service (you'll also enjoy that cookie!), but any candle will do. We hope all will join us on our YouTube channel at 7:00 PM this evening, and plan to meet up afterward on our Zoom link for "cookie-sharing".



**Christmas Eve Worship at 7:00PM (YouTube, Facebook, Dial In)**

Click [here](#) for bulletin

**TONIGHT! Christmas Eve Fellowship - immediately following worship (on Zoom)**

Immediately following the Christmas Eve service on YouTube, join us on Zoom for some fellowship time. We can see each other using our lighted candles as we anticipate the birth of the Christ Child, and share our hopes and dreams for the new year.

**TOMORROW! Christmas Day Fellowship – Friday, 12/25, 3:00 on Zoom**

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

**THIS SUNDAY**

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

**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**.

**Sunday Worship at 11AM (YouTube, FaceBook, Dial In)**

Worship today is provided by the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ.

**Scriptures:** Psalm 140 & Luke 2:22-40

**Mission of the Month: The Christmas Fund**

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

**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**

**No Spiritual Support Group TONIGHT** - Although there is not a Spiritual Support Group gathering today, you can contact Pat Larracey at [plainandfancy1963@att.net](mailto:plainandfancy1963@att.net), or 317-625-6801 for spiritual support.

**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)**

On **Wednesday, December 30**, Wellness Wednesday will include a pre-recorded video of **Nurturing Wellness through Ritual**. During this time, you are invited to let go of things from this past year, and create a new intention for the coming year.

**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](mailto:karen.e.d.walker@gmail.com)) or Bill Hummel (317-875-8388 or [whummel001@comcast.net](mailto:whummel001@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/>.

**Office Administrator Vacation: Dec 24 - Jan 4**

## **COMING UP**

### **Monthly Food Drive – Saturday, January 2, 10-noon**

In 2021, we will hold our monthly food drives on the FIRST Saturday of the month. Bring canned and dry goods to the church patio to benefit the Northside Pantry, who so gratefully appreciates our ministry to help the hungry. It's also an opportunity to have short in-person visits with each other!

### **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**

While Pastor Sarah is on vacation from 12/25 – 1/3, Pastor Carol Sowle may be reached at (317) 496-9732 or [casowle@gmail.com](mailto:casowle@gmail.com)

After 1/3, 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.

### **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@caloosaspire.net](mailto:alice@caloosaspire.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.ill.gov](http://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](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>

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### Weekly Calendar

Thursday, Dec 24	7:00 p.m.	Christmas Eve Worship
Thursday, Dec 24	8:00 p.m.	Christmas Eve Zoom Gathering
Friday, Dec 25	3:00 p.m.	Christmas Day Zoom Gathering
Sunday, Dec 27	9:30 a.m.	Sunday Adult Class
Sunday, Dec 27	11:00 a.m.	Sunday Worship (YouTube, FB, Dial In)
Tuesday, Dec 29	7:00 p.m.	Zoom Vespers
Wednesday, Dec 29	-----	Wellness Wednesday
Saturday, Jan 2	10:00 a.m.	Food Drive (at FC)
Sunday, Jan 3	9:30 a.m.	Sunday Adult Class
Sunday, Jan 3	11:00 a.m.	Sunday Worship (YouTube, FB, Dial In)

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