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FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Epistle for the Week of December 31, 2020

Dear First Congregational,

Beloved First Congregational, we have arrived. It is the last day of the longest year of our lives. Heartfelt thanks to each one of you for the sacrifices you have made in order to keep as many of our church family safe and healthy as possible. We gave up a lot in 2020, and 2020 took a lot from us. We all carry tremendous sorrow and loss. In the last two stanzas of her poem, "Burning the Old Year," poet Naomi Shihab Nye writes, "Where there was something and suddenly isn't, an absence shouts, celebrates, leaves a space. I begin again with the smallest numbers. Quick dance, shuffle of losses and leaves, only the things I didn't do crackle after the blazing dies." There's so much we didn't do in 2020, and there is a heavy grief in all the loss. May God's comfort and love hold us close, wiping away our tears. Goodbye 2020.

As 2020 burns away with the setting sun this night, we look to the rising sun of a new day and a fresh new year. May the coming of 2021 bring us gracious space for inward healing as we begin to move forward and do the work of justice and

peace. We will continue to be the Church, fulfilling our mission and ministries in safe and healthy ways so that all may know of God's liberating love. I am thankful to be on this journey with you all. Thank you for your ongoing love and faithful support.

May it indeed be a "Happy New Year!"

Blessings,
Pastor Sarah

THIS SUNDAY

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

January 3: Part 1 of "If It Weren't for the Women: Women's Leadership in Social Justice."

Epiphany & Communion Sunday Worship, 11AM (YouTube, FaceBook, Dial In)

Today's Worship service is provided by the Indiana-Kentucky Conference in collaboration with the Illinois South and Heartland Conferences.

Scriptures: Matthew 2: 1-12

Sermon: "Unexpected Gifts in An Unexpected Time"

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

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.

No Spiritual Support Group Today - Although the Spiritual Support Group is not meeting today, due to the holiday, you can contact Pat Larracey today at plainandfancy1963@att.net, or 317-625-6801 for spiritual support.

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!

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.

NEW TIME & LINK! Soul Care with Pastor Sarah via Zoom- Join us after Zoom Vespers on **Tuesdays at 7:30p.m.** Simply stick around after vespers for a time to check-in and to pray together.

Wellness Wednesday, January 6th

On Wednesday, January 6th, you are invited to participate in a pre-recorded Star Shining Ritual in celebration of the season of epiphany. This video will be posted on the FC Facebook page and website.

Annual Meeting Report Deadline: Friday, January 15th - Please submit all Annual Reports to Shannon at shannon@fcindy.org by Friday, January 15th.

Reminder: Office Admin is on vacation through Jan 4.

COMING UP

Next Thursday! Men's Lunch - Thursday, 1/7 at 1:00 p.m.

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

Monthly Neighborhood Walk – Saturday, 1/16, 11:00AM

On Saturday, 1/16, we'll meet at FC 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. Contact Wendy Baldwin at wendy.baldwin@rci.com or (317) 319-0806 for more information.

Racial Justice Team - next steps and new book to read for January

As follow up from our book buzz discussions we are working in multiple directions. We are submitting a resolution to the council to partner with Faith In Indiana for advocacy action. We are also continuing our journey of education. Many people suggested another book study. We have chosen another story from an African American perspective. It is the Young Adult novel "The Hate You Give" by Angie Smith (I was not familiar with THUG as that acronym). Our process will be a little different this time - please obtain the book yourself - there are lots of copies, both hard back and electronic, available at the library. We will only have a single buzz discussion about this book - on February 7.

You can read more details about this book in the January Colony. Feel free to get a head start on the reading and watch for more information over the coming weeks!

Thank you,

the Racial Justice Team: Pastor Sarah, Carol, Cassidy, Alice, Karen

Please click [HERE](#) to view the January 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

After 1/3, Pastor Sarah may be reached at (386) 478-9012 or pastorsarah@fcindy.com.

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 (casowie@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=dmtWbWE5UXRBTk5pcHZlYlBoaEFVUT09>

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Weekly Calendar

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.	Communion Sunday Worship (YouTube, FB, Dial In)
Sunday, Jan 3	12:00 p.m.	Zoom Coffee Hour
Tuesday, Jan 5	7:00 p.m.	Winter Vespers
Tuesday, Jan 5	7:30 p.m.	Soul Care w/ Pastor Sarah
Wednesday, Jan 6	-----	Wellness Wednesday
Wednesday, Jan 6	7:00 p.m.	Trustees
Thursday, Jan 7	1:00 p.m.	Men's Lunch
Thursday, Jan 7	5:00 p.m.	Spiritual Support Group

Sunday, Jan 10	9:30 a.m.	Sunday Adult Class
Sunday, Jan 10	11:00 a.m.	Sunday Worship (YouTube, FB, Dial In)
Sunday, Jan 10	12:00 p.m.	Zoom Coffee Hour

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