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e-pistle for the week of April 5, 2018

Minister's Message

Dear First Congregational Family,

Today is the first day for small groups so that we can get to know each other. I am looking forward to hearing your hopes and dreams for us as we enter into this new season in the life of the church. Sign up sheets are still available in the narthex and we will be adding more small group dates for May.

As we enter more fully into the Easter season, we are invited to explore together the dreams God has for our lives and for this church. I am eager to hear your thoughts and your ideas, and so see what God leads us. Thank you all for this wonderful beginning to our ministry together.

Blessings,

Pastor Sarah

Worship for Sunday

Adult Class - 9:45 a.m.

Our topic this week will be "A World Uprooted: Responding to Migrants, Refugees and Displaced People."

Meet in the library.

Traditional Service - 11:00 a.m.

Pastor Sarah's sermon this week will be "The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the Cost of Peace."

New Creation - 5:30 p.m.

As a Resurrection people, we're curious about the relationship between continuing to follow Jesus and our own human condition, sometimes known as "sin." In the next few weeks, based on the first letter of John, we'll focus our attention on how we can balance that relationship. This week we'll explore how we might define "sin" in our world and in our own lives.

What's Happening at FCC

Mission of the Month, Exodus Refugees

Despite significant cuts to the US immigration program by the present administration, refugees are still arriving in Indianapolis to make their new homes. Exodus Refugee Immigration is a local, independent, nonsectarian, not-for-profit 501 C3 organization that

resettles legally admitted refugees who have experienced persecution in their home countries and are unable to return. Since 1981 Exodus has been welcoming thoroughly vetted refugees and helping them achieve self-sufficiency in their new homes in our community. Exodus is still serving new arrivals, arriving from Burma (now including Rohingya), Congo, and Syria, and those already here with a variety of programs designed to help them achieve self-sufficiency. Exodus not only meets the basic needs of these newcomers but provides a full array of services including social and medical services, English language training, cultural orientation, and employment services, all of which help these new members of the community settle in and thrive.

Please give generously to support the important work Exodus does. You may contribute dollar bills in the offering plate or larger amounts in the "Mission Offering" envelopes in the pew pockets. If you choose to write a check, make it out to the church and mark "Exodus" on the notation line. At a time when we sometimes wonder "What can I do?" this is something we **can do** to make a difference. Exodus and these newcomers will greatly appreciate your help. Thank you for your support.

Pantry Items of the Month

During April we are collecting the following items: bread, cereal, soups and deodorant.

Plymouth Rockers

The Plymouth Rockers will meet at noon on Tuesday April 24. Following a bring-your-own lunch, we'll be treated to a program on the history of First Congregational Church, given by Marion Harcourt.

Eat Pizza while supporting Merom Conference and Retreat Center (MCRC)!

Come to Monical's Pizza on Southport Road, Avon or Trader's Point on Saturday, April 7 for dine-in or dine-out. In return, they will donate 20% of each check to MCRC. If interested, please pick up a flyer in the church office or contact the church office for the flyer to be emailed to you. The flyer must accompany the order for the donation to be applied.

Pastoral Care


For this week please contact Pastor Sarah at (386) - 478- 9012 or pastorsarah@fcindy.org.


Monday—Friday April 9-13, Pastor Sarah will be out of the office serving the wider church as a leader in the Bethany Fellows Project, a mentoring program for young pastors. During this time, Carol Sowle and/or Worth Hartman will provide pastoral care. Carol can be

contacted at (317) 496-9731 and Worth can be contacted at 317-417-0806 or on his work phone at 317-823-6841 extension 1410.

7171 N. Pennsylvania St.
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e-pistle for the week of April 12, 2018

Minister's Message

Dear First Congregational Family,

In the church in general we often wonder about the future health and vitality of our congregation. We wonder what are the steps we can take as a church to more faithfully live into our calling to follow the way of Jesus, and we wonder how we can more fully be beloved community...a people of love, peace and justice. These are important questions to ask ourselves.

Equally important is to ask, "who will lead us?" I am continuing to give thanks for the invitation and opportunity to be your pastor. To be a leader in the church is both a great blessing and a great challenge. Yet, we trust that with God's help, wisdom, grace and courage, together we can do great things.

This week I am in Nashville, TN, at a retreat center across from the Vanderbilt Divinity School where I am serving the wider church as a mentor with 30 young pastors from UCC and other denominations who are in their first few years of local church ministry.

They are overwhelmed, scared, tired, and stressed. But this week they will laugh, pray,

listen, share, sing, and be reminded that God loves them and God is with them. Today is their 24 hour day of silence. Will you join me in praying for them? Pray that all their fears will melt away, and pray that they get deep rest. Pray that these young pastors will emerge from the silence reminded of God's radical grace and be better able to share that message with their congregations on Sunday morning.

I'll be with you all on Sunday and I look forward to sharing with you all the grace and love of God that is so freely given that all we need to do is open ourselves up to receive it.

With gratitude and an open heart,

Pastor Sarah

Worship for Sunday

Adult Class - 9:45 a.m.

Our topic this week will be "Doing Justice: Amos calls us to speak out for justice."
Meet in the library.

Traditional Service - 11:00 a.m.

Pastor Sarah's sermon this week will be "What is in a Name?"

New Creation - 5:30 p.m.

Join us for worship as we gather for continued reflection and conversation about the meaning of sin in the scriptures and how we interpret the different types of sin in our world today.

What's Happening at FCC

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Dine-Out-For-Life: Thursday, April 26

Annual fund raiser for the Damien Center!


Join the choir as we gather for dinner at Canal Bistro 6349 Guilford Avenue at 5:15.

Twenty-five percent of our dinner price goes to assist those living with HIV.

For more info contact Bob Cook or Nick Fennig.

Pastoral Care

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e-pistle for the week of April 19, 2018

Minister's Message

Dear First Congregational Family,

This week at our church council meeting with the inspiration from our Moderator and Vice Moderator we began to dig into dreaming about the future of our congregation's life. We started with reflections about our mission statement and shared what most inspired us about our common calling as a church. Above all else, as a council, we felt that our church is a place that strives to welcome all and we still have ways to grow into this desire of our hearts. It was just a taste of things to come, and it was just a start to an exciting journey of living more fully into our mission in this new season of the church's life.

I don't hear many of my clergy friends saying very often that their church council meeting was inspiring...yet, that's exactly how I felt at the end of this week's council meeting once we prayed the prayer Jesus taught us to close our time together. So let me pause here to give thanks to the outstanding lay leaders of this congregation. I am grateful for each of you who offer your manifold gifts, talents, skills, time, and treasure so that we can continue to evolve and grow into the beloved community that God's is calling us to become. I feel blessed to serve with you as your pastor.

With a grateful heart,

Pastor Sarah

Sunday is Earth Day!

Join us in celebrating Earth Day this Sunday with our Traditional worship led by the Green Team and also a special outdoor Earth Day Celebration with our preschool families this Sunday at 2 p.m. in the outdoor play area. Festivities include arts and crafts, snacks and inter-generational fun that celebrates the sun's power. The church will provide an educational exhibit on the topic of solar power for the children and a sun visor making craft.

What's the Buzz?

April's "What's the Buzz?" session and pitch-in is scheduled for Sunday, April 29th following the Traditional service. The topic will be the unveiling of the design for our church's new sign on Pennsylvania Street. The Witness and Welcome Board, Trustees and Church Council have been working hard on this project to update the street sign. Come and see the design and learn about the importance of its design for sharing our church's mission and core values with people who have yet to experience the wonderful community at First Congregational UCC.

Worship for Sunday

Adult Class - 9:45 a.m.

Our topic this week will be: A "Green" Experience. Meet in the library.

Traditional Service - 11:00 a.m.

The message from the Green Team will be "God's Gift of Our Sun and its Power."

New Creation - 5:30 p.m.

Join us for tonight's New Creation Earth Day worship service in the church parlor at 5:30pm as we continue to explore the various ways Christian tradition has interpreted the theological meaning of "sin" and our relationship to the Earth. Have we sinned against Mother Nature? An often taboo topic for progressive Christians, we are fearlessly diving into the various interpretations of sin in our various faith traditions.

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Annual fund raiser for the Damien Center!


Join the choir as we gather for dinner at Canal Bistro 6349 Guilford Avenue at 5:15.

Twenty-five percent of our dinner price goes to assist those living with HIV.

For more info contact Bob Cook or Nick Fennig.

Pastoral Care

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e-pistle for the week of April 26, 2018

Minister's Message

Dear First Congregational Family,

This morning I joined with others from First Congregational to participate in the annual spring Faith and Action Project's day of learning hosted by Christian Theological Seminary. The project seeks to inspire and mobilize members of faith communities to partner others to end poverty in Indianapolis.

The morning's keynote speaker, Dr. Elizabeth Hinton from Harvard University, left us with this question, "what if we turned prisons into colleges?" Based on her research, higher college graduation rates lead to lower incarceration rates. Our city has 33 percent of its children living in poverty and education is seen as the key to stopping that cycle of poverty that often leads to prison.

As we journey together as a faith community, I invite you all to think, talk and pray with me about how our church can partner with others to help end poverty here in Indianapolis. Our prayers, our hopes, and our conversations together can lead us as to taking action to help the children of our city find, as Jesus says, "abundant life." The city's children are God's

children and our children, too.

Blessings,

Pastor Sarah

What's the Buzz?

April's "What's the Buzz?" session and pitch-in is scheduled for Sunday, April 29th following the Traditional service. The topic will be the unveiling of the design for our church's new sign on Pennsylvania Street. The Witness and Welcome Board, Trustees and Church Council have been working hard on this project to update the street sign. Come and see the design and learn about the importance of its design for sharing our church's mission and core values with people who have yet to experience the wonderful community at First Congregational UCC.

CPR Certification

Our tenant, MHCNS, is offering a CPR course for their teachers and parents. They have graciously offered us the opportunity to participate as well. Those who desire to take the class should complete step 1 below, and notify Cheryl or Pastor Sarah so the nursery school can get a good headcount.

The two-part certification must be taken in this order:

- 1) Heartsaver CPR First Aid AED Online is \$30 and registration is at <https://elearning.heart.org/course/9>. The class is a total of 6 hours and easily broken into time modules, but must be completed before the next step;
- 2) June 8, 2018 Skills Class with an instructor is approximately \$70 (cash, check or charge to Joe Martin; actual amount will depend on how many take the class) - 9:30-11:30 a.m.

Worship for Sunday

Adult Class - 9:45 a.m.

Our topic this week will be: "Doing Justice". Meet in the library.

Traditional Service - 11:00 a.m.

The message from Pastor Sarah will be "When Love Wins".

1 John 4:7-12.

New Creation - 5:30 p.m.

Join us for worship as we gather for continued reflection and conversation about the meaning of sin in the scriptures. Weather permitting we will worship outside.

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For more info contact Bob Cook or Nick Fennig.

Annual Yard Day, Saturday, 4/28, 9-noon

Please join us for fellowship and sweat equity on Saturday, 4/28, for our spring yard day. This is a great way to give to the church, share camaraderie, and have a great feeling of accomplishment. The more, the merrier, and we'll find a task for you, no matter what your experience level is! Jobs include:

- Spreading mulch
- Pulling weeds
- Raking and sweeping
- Trimming bushes and removing undergrowth
- Cleaning outdoor benches

There are also indoor cleaning jobs, if that is more to your liking. If you have them, bring work gloves and your favorite garden tools. If you can come, please sign up on the sheet in the Narthex or contact Wendy Baldwin

Pastoral Care

Please contact Pastor Sarah at (386) - 478 - 9012 or pastorsarah@fcindy.org.