





F I R S T
CONGREGATIONAL
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*We are a
progressive,
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servant community.*

e-pistle for the week of August 2, 2018

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E-Pistle for the week of {August 2nd}

Calendar

Minister's Message

Dear First Congregational Church Family,

The church garden is showing signs of growth, with the skin of the cherry tomatoes turning from green to red. The teachers are back on campus preparing the Meridian Hills Pre-School and Kindergarten for students. As summer begins its dance into fall, we notice signs of new activity and change around us. Along with these changes come growth and opportunities to be challenged. Will the tomato taste sweet? Will the children make new friends? Will this new season be a blessing?

As people of faith, we lift our prayers for all who are in seasons of new beginnings. For teachers and students, for families of all kinds, for volunteers offering extra support in the schools, we pray for a new school year filled with learning, joy, growth, and flourishing. May this season of our lives be a blessing for us, no matter where we find ourselves on life's journey...may we experience the blessings that come with knowing we are infinitely and unconditionally loved by God.

Blessings,
Pastor Sarah

Worship for Sunday

Adult Class - 9:45 a.m. Just Peace

August 5 & 12 - Continued discussion of "Just Peace" and Just Peace Church process.

Traditional Service - 11:00 a.m.

Pastor Sarah will be preaching on Speaking the Truth in Love.

New Creation - 5:30 p.m.

At New Creation worship this Sunday we'll reprise a fun activity from several weeks ago – "Church in a Bag". If you missed it, come this time for a new experience of worship. If you got to enjoy it the first time, come again for more fun with scripture. And be sure to stay after worship for the first film in our Star Wars series, *Revenge of the Sith*, at 6:45 (food will

be provided). Our worship series based on John McDowell's Gospel According to Star Wars begins August 12.

Adult Ed - Just Peace

August 19 - Rev. Paul ("Chip") Jahn, will share his experiences with the Just Peace movement and the ministry his two churches have had in peaceful pursuits.

August 26 - Katie Booth will present her insights of our relationship and service with Family Promise as a prelude to the "buzz" after church that day by the head of Family Promise, Mike Chapuran

What's Happening at FCC

Exciting New Opportunity!

Have you heard about Chautauqua? It's a summer retreat that gives you space for religious, spiritual, aesthetic, intellectual, and personal growth. A long-time FCC member has had such a wonderful time there, for so many years, that they decided to fund other FCC members to enjoy a week there each year. The first selectee will attend in the summer of 2019. There are applications on the bulletin board.

"Chain Saw" Work Day - Saturday, August 18th, 9-Noon

The honeysuckle has taken over the edges of our drive way, parking lot, and other areas. We are going to take out as much as we can, and we plan to have a chipper onsite to make mulch out of all the wood debris. There are also several other outdoor and indoor cleaning jobs that need attention. Let's make this a fun time of sharing fellowship and sweat equity, even if your role is to simply help with refreshments. In particular, we are in need of chain saws, and their people. If you can come or have questions, please contact Wendy Baldwin or fill out the sign-up sheet in the Narthex.

Free Concert! Sunday, August 19th

In past summers, many of us have thoroughly enjoyed the music of the Circle City Chamber Chorus (fondly known as C4), under the direction of First Congregational's one-time choir director Doug Johnson, as they presented a free concert following their summer rehearsals at FCC. This year they have moved their rehearsals to Meridian Street United Methodist Church (5500 North Meridian St.), so they'll be presenting their free concert there on Sunday, August 19, at 4:00 PM. We at FCC are again encouraged to attend and support this excellent group of singers. The concert usually lasts about an hour, so the timing will work well for folks to drive the short distance up Meridian Street for New

Creation worship at 5:30.

Double Buzzes on August 26 on Family Promise Hosting

Whether you've been involved with FCC's Family Promise hosting already or are new and wondering what it really involves, the August Buzzes are for you. We will have two Buzzes that day—one following a pitch-in lunch after Traditional worship and the other after New Creation worship at 6:30 p.m., with heavy snacks. Mike Chapuran, Executive Director of Family Promise of Greater Indianapolis, will conduct a workshop on family hosting, helping us understand better what their expectations of us are and how best to interact with our guests. Each hosting week involves at least 60 church members, and we hope everyone who participates is informed and comfortable with the experience. This is your best opportunity to refresh your understanding or learn for the first time. Please plan to attend one session on August 26 and come with your questions.

Green Team Tip

Avoid chemical fertilizers on lawn and garden. Avoid bug sprays because our bees are dying.

FCC Solar Project!!!

The First Congregational Green Team has launched a fund drive to install solar panels. We're planning to raise \$60,000 by September 1st. To give this effort a boost, Rich Gibson has pledged to match all contributions, dollar for dollar, up to \$20,000. Simply write "solar panels" on your check. If you'd rather pledge, or even donate shares of stock or mutual funds, we can accommodate that, too. Please contact Rich Gibson, hooteagle@me.com, 770-548-5217 (cell) or 317-735-2895 (home) for details. Thanks!

Mission of the Month: Greater Indy Habitat for Humanity

Celebrating 30 years of providing strength, stability, and independence through home ownership, in 2017, 5650 GIHH volunteers built or rehabbed 26 homes and repaired 63. A study by the Sagamore Institute revealed that Habitat homeowners benefit in many ways. Chronic housing-related illnesses decrease. 71% of homeowners started, completed, or plan to complete higher education or professional training. Homeowners end or reduce their dependence on public assistance programs like Public Housing Assistance, Utility Bill/Energy Assistance, Supplemental Nutritional Assistance (SNAP), Temporary Aid for Needy Families (TANF), and aid to Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).

FCC has supported Habitat for over 20 years financially and through volunteer hours on

builds. Please give generously in August to support Greater Indy Habitat. Single dollar bills in the offering plate will go to Habitat. For larger amounts, please use the Special Offering envelopes noting "Habitat" or put that in the notation line of your check. Thank you!

If you have questions or want to help with this ministry, please contact Sandy Wood csjlwood@att.net 317-863-8238 (home) or 317-225-6206 (cell).

Pantry Items of the Month

During August we are collecting the following items: beans, canned peaches, canned pears, jelly and jam, and bathroom tissue.

UCC Keep Families Together Special Offering:

In light of the current situation at our southern border, the UCC has created a special fund to provide assistance to the families fleeing violence in Central America and seeking asylum in the United States. Those of us who ask "What can I do?" when faced with this humanitarian crisis can contribute through the United Church of Christ. You can go to http://www.ucc.org/keep_families_together (underline in the space between words) and donate online or write a check to First Congregational Church with "Keep Families Together" in the notation line. If you donate online, please identify yourself as a member of our church. The above-listed website is also an up-to-date source of information and answers many questions for those concerned about this situation.

Pastoral Care Coverage for August 6-9

Pastor Sarah is taking a few days of vacation to see her grandmother in Missouri and will be away from Monday - Thursday, August 6-9. During this time, Rev. Worth Harman will be available for pastoral care and can be reached at his cell 317-417-0806 or email whartman@westminstervillage.com

This Week at First Congregational


| | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Sunday, August 5 | 5:30 p.m. | New Creation |
| Wednesday, August 8 | 7:30 p.m. | New Creation Planning Team |
| Thursday, August 9 | 1:00 p.m. | Men's Lunch |
| Sunday, August 12 | 9:45 a.m. | Sunday Adult Class |
| Sunday, August 12 | 11:00 a.m. | Traditional Service |
| Sunday, August 12 | 5:30 p.m. | New Creation |




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e-pistle for the Week of August 9, 2018

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E-Pistle for the week of August 9th

Minister's Message

Dear First Congregational Church Family,

On Sunday we heard the Apostle Paul's words about speaking the truth in love. Churches can learn from the theory of Non-Violent Communication, developed by Marshall B. Rosenberg, Ph.D. as presented in his book, Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life.

Here is a recap of my adaptation for us to consider:

1. Observation that God is in the Moment: As Paul says, we are to lead a life worthy of the calling to which we are called as followers of the way of Jesus. This means humility, gentleness, patience bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

So we begin with observing in a spirit of humility, gentleness and patience, we notice what is around us without judging, without labeling good or bad. We notice simply what is there in the present moment. We observe that God is also present in this moment. This is taking time to observe before we speak.

2. Feeling Unity in the Spirit: Paul says, there is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Creator of all, who is above all, and through all and in all.

Take a moment to notice what you are feeling, what are the various emotions and physical sensations. Feeling is different than thinking. This is a time to feel God's Spirit, to feel the oneness with the body of Christ, to feel God's presence and to feel whatever else is going on emotionally and physically. Before we speak, we check in with our spirits, our emotions, our body. We connect ourselves in unity with the Spirit that makes us one.

3. Noticing the Needs of the Body of Christ: Paul says, each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift. We each are in need of grace, grace from God and grace from one another. Everyone needs and deserves God's grace.

Taking a moment before we speak, we honor that everyone has need for grace.

Understanding this need will help us to cultivate empathy so that we can speak the truth in love.

4. Speaking the truth in Love: Paul says, speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into Christ, from whom the whole body is joined and knit together, promoting the body's growth in building itself up in love.

The fourth and last step to remember when we seek to speak the truth in love is to ground our words in God's love. This means that what we say is true because it honors who we are as children of God, it honors who others are as children of God. What we say is loving and true because it build us up in love, it does not tear us down and it is not hateful.

Speaking the truth in love means that what we say is a request for action that is realistic and positive, that is concrete and immediate. Speaking from a place of truth and love is what Christ calls us to do.

We speak the truth in love by (1) making the observation that God is present in this moment (2) Feeling unity in the Spirit (3) Noticing the Needs of the Body of Christ (4) Speaking the truth in Love.

This is something we can use in our daily lives with our partners, friends, family, at work, at church, at community meetings...anytime we find ourselves desiring to as Paul says, "lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility, gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

Spoken with love,
Pastor Sarah

Worship for Sunday

Adult Class - 9:45 a.m. Just Peace

August 12th - Continued discussion of "Just Peace" and Just Peace Church process.

Traditional Service - 11:00 a.m.

Pastor Sarah will be preaching on "Faith in a Radiant Light."

New Creation - 5:30 p.m.

A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away.... Well, it's actually not so far away or long ago at this time, because this Sunday we begin our exploration of the "theology" of Star Wars. The relationships depicted in the films will form the backdrop for our theme of the redemptive power of love. If you missed the viewing of *Revenge of the Sith (Episode III)* last Sunday, no worries because there will be a few clips from the film to focus our worship. Please join us for this unique opportunity to revisit this classic tale and to explore a new perspective on it. We will view *The Empire Strikes Back (Episode V)* at 6:45 following worship in preparation for next Sunday's service.

* There will be extra cars in the parking lot this Sunday evening for a neighborhood event, so please plan accordingly.

Adult Ed - Just Peace

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Green Team Tip

Don't forget reusable shopping bags when doing your grocery shopping. Carry them into dry goods stores to avoid plastic there as well.

FCC Solar Project!!!

The First Congregational Green Team has launched a fund drive to install solar panels. We're planning to raise \$60,000 by September 1st. To give this effort a boost, Rich Gibson has pledged to match all contributions, dollar for dollar, up to \$20,000. Simply write "solar panels" on your check. If you'd rather pledge, or even donate shares of stock or mutual funds, we can accommodate that, too. Please contact Rich Gibson, hoot eagle@me.com, 770-548-5217 (cell) or 317-735-2895 (home) for details. Thanks!

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ways. Chronic housing-related illnesses decrease. 71% of homeowners started, completed, or plan to complete higher education or professional training. Homeowners end or reduce their dependence on public assistance programs like Public Housing Assistance, Utility Bill/Energy Assistance, Supplemental Nutritional Assistance (SNAP), Temporary Aid for Needy Families (TANF), and aid to Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).

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Pantry Items of the Month

During August we are collecting the following items: beans, canned peaches, canned pears, jelly and jam, and bathroom tissue.

Pastoral Care

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

This Week at First Congregational


| | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|---|
| Sunday, August 12 | 5:30 p.m. | New Creation |
| Wednesday, August 15 | 7:30 p.m. | New Creation Planning Team |
| Saturday, August 18 | 12:30 p.m. | Music Support Team |
| Sunday, August 19 | 9:45 a.m. | Adult Class – Just Peace, with guest, Chip Jahn |
| Sunday, August 19 | 11:00 a.m. | Traditional Service, guest preacher, Chip Jahn |
| Sunday, August 19 | 5:30 p.m. | New Creation |




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e-pistle for the Week of August 16, 2018

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E-Pistle for the week of August 16th

Minister's Message

Dear First Congregational Church Family,

Being church is a beautiful thing. We are the church whenever we gather, with two or three people the Bible says, we are the church. Last Saturday, four of us from our church participated in a vitality day of education offered by the Indiana-Kentucky UCC Conference. We spent the day together being church, exploring ways to encourage active engagement in the life and ministries of our church. As we talked, we realized that for us, the key is strengthening our sense of community. This feels right to me. I believe God is calling us to a time of renewing and connecting ourselves more deeply, in trust and in love, with one another. It's a time to welcome new people into our community, while at the same time nurturing bonds with people who may have called First Congregational home for a while.

We strengthen the church when we invest our time in being church, spending time together both inside the church and outside the church. So you will notice that there will be more opportunities to build community coming in the near future. My request is that you make time to join us when possible. We really want to connect in meaningful ways. We really need each other in order to be the church. This is good news. This is what it means to be the Body of Christ. This is what it means to be the Beloved Community.

I continue to be thankful for this congregation and for the privilege of partnering with you in ministry. I look forward to strengthening our bonds of connection.

With hope for tomorrow,
Pastor Sarah

Worship for Sunday

Adult Class - 9:45 a.m. Just Peace

August 19th - Rev. Paul "Chip" Jahn, will share his experiences with the Just Peace movement and the ministry his two churches have had in peaceful pursuits.

Traditional Service - 11:00 a.m.

Guest Preacher, Rev. Paul "Chip" Jahn will preach "Let Justice Roll and Love Be Sincere."

New Creation - 5:30 p.m.

This Sunday we continue with our Star Wars series based on John McDowell's book *The Gospel According to Star Wars* and our theme of the redemptive power of love. Our focus this week will be on the relationship between Luke Skywalker and Darth Vader as Luke is mentored by Obi-Wan and Yoda to become a Jedi Knight. The powers of love and fear are on full display in all of these relationships. Please join us for this opportunity to explore "the Force" from a Christian perspective and how love guides our lives. We will view *The Return of the Jedi (Episode VI)* at 6:45 along with a light supper in preparation for next Sunday's service.

Adult Ed - Just Peace

August 26 - Katie Booth will present her insights of our relationship and service with Family Promise as a prelude to the "buzz" after church that day by the head of Family Promise, Mike Chapuran.

What's Happening at FCC

Exciting New Opportunity!

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90th Birthday Celebration

Marion Harcourt and her family invite you to celebrate her 90th birthday on Saturday, August 25th at Marquette Senior Living Community (4th Floor Card Room) from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

How do you know Marion? What are your favorite memories of your times together? Please bring a card filled with memories to share with her.

In lieu of gifts, Marion would appreciate a donation to First Congregational Church.

Installation for New Indiana-Kentucky UCC Conference Minister

Rev. Chad Abbott gave the "Charge for the Congregation" on June 10 for Pastor Sarah's installation service supporting her, our church and the UCC as the newly nominated Indiana Kentucky Conference minister. His own installation service to that position is on Saturday, August 25th at 3:00 p.m., at Sweeney Chapel, CTS. Pastor Sarah will be providing an invocation, Wendy Baldwin will be participating as she led the search committee to fill that position, and Sean Baker and Shannon Abbott will be contributing to the music of the service. A great opportunity to come together as a conference to celebrate in the ministries of the wider church together!

Double Buzzes on August 26 on Family Promise Hosting

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Choir Rehearsals Begin and Welcome New Members!

The first choir rehearsal after summer break is Thursday, August 30th from 7:00- 8:30 pm in the second floor choir room. We welcome new members to join us. Anyone who is interested in learning more about the choir may email choir director Julie Houston at: juliehouston@comcast.net

Save the Date!

All Church Picnic, Saturday, September 8 at 4pm. More details to come.

New Member Sunday!

Make First Congregational UCC your new church home and join with others on Sunday, October 28th during the 11am worship service. Pastor Sarah is looking forward to hearing about your faith journey and welcoming you into this church family. Contact Pastor Sarah to schedule a conversation about membership pastorsarah@fcindy.org.

Church Social Media/Website/Design Team Update

We are blessed by a talented team of volunteers who help with church social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter), Website and design. Team members include Sean Baker, Angela Edwards, Josh Cody, and Pastor Sarah. Pastor Sarah leads this team and is the primary contact for members wishing to share church information on social media and the website. Thank you for helping to spread the good news about the mission and ministry of the church through the website and social media. These are popular platforms for people to first learn about our church and where most of our visitors find information about us. We want to hear from you, so please contact Pastor Sarah with your social media and website updates.

Green Team Tip

Do you use refillable water bottles and avoid plastic?

FCC Solar Project!!!

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Pastoral Care

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This Week at First Congregational

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|-----------------------------|-------------------|---|
| Sunday, August 19 | 5:30 p.m. | New Creation |
| Sunday, August 19 | 6:45 p.m. | Movie: Return of the Jedi (+ light supper) |
| Tuesday, August 21 | 7:00 p.m. | Outreach & Service Board |
| Wednesday, August 22 | 7:30 p.m. | New Creation Planning |
| Thursday, August 23 | 11:45 a.m. | Women's Lunch |
| Thursday, August 23 | 1:00 p.m. | Men's Lunch |
| Thursday, August 23 | 7:00 p.m. | Choir Rehearsal |
| Saturday, August 25 | 11:00 a.m. | Bell Practice |
| Saturday, August 25 | 1:00 p.m. | Marion Harcourt's 90 th Birthday (see above) |
| Saturday, August 25 | 3:00 p.m. | IKC Installation of Rev. Chad Abbott, CTS Chapel |
| Sunday, August 26 | 9:45 a.m. | Adult Class – Just Peace |
| Sunday, August 26 | 11:00 a.m. | Traditional Service |

Sunday, August 26

12:30 p.m.

Family Promise Workshop with Mike Chapuran

Sunday, August 26

5:30 p.m.

New Creation

Sunday, August 26

6:45 p.m.


Family Promise Workshop with Mike Chapuran




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E-Pistle for the week of August 23rd

Minister's Message

Dear First Congregational Church Family,

Thanks to all the volunteers who helped on Saturday to make our church grounds more beautiful. We are blessed to have such dedicated members who help out when needed. I've enjoyed coming to church day-to-day and being surrounded by beauty. I often hear from visitors that they feel drawn to our church because it feels peaceful. Nature has a powerful way of speaking to our spirits. Nature has its own ministry of hospitality.

I love that our church believes in protecting and preserving the Earth. This, too, is a ministry: caring for Creation. We are nearing our \$60,000 goal for raising funds for solar panels. Thanks to all who have contributed. We are still receiving donations, so if you have not yet made a gift, please be part of this effort. Any and every amount helps us. Thank you!

My family has offered the Meridian Hills Cooperative Preschool and Kindergarten students, staff, and families a challenge gift opportunity of \$500 for the solar panels. How wonderful to be in partnership with the school as we seek to install solar panels to care for Creation!

What a joy to be in ministry with you all. Thanks for all that each of you do to help build community and to care for others.

With care for Creation,
Pastor Sarah

Worship for Sunday

Adult Class - 9:45 a.m. Just Peace

August 26 - Katie Booth will present her insights of our relationship and service with Family Promise as a prelude to the "buzz" after church that day by the head of Family Promise, Mike Chapuran.

Traditional Service - 11:00 a.m.

Pastor Sarah will preach on "Struggle in Heavenly Places."

New Creation - 5:30 p.m.

This week we'll finish up our Gospel According to Star Wars series by focusing our attention on how love – or the power of the Force – overcomes fear, hate, or anger, no matter how intense or entrenched those negative emotions may be. Whether or not you've attended the previous two sessions this is the one not to be missed, as we examine the culmination of this epic story from our progressive Christian faith perspective.

Let us Pray...

As we join in prayer for refugee families and the future of the refugee resettlement program, let us hear from Scripture:

"When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him." So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod..."

Matthew 2:13-14

"One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, "Which commandment is the first of all?" Jesus answered, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." Mark 12:28-31.

Litany for Refugees and Asylum-Seekers

O God of the wandering Israelites, refugees in a harsh land, who heard their cries for freedom, comfort, and refuge,

Forgive us for having hearts as hard as Pharaoh's, when we resist your calls for care and mercy for those who have fled or are fleeing violence.

O God of the Psalmist, who hears the lament of those surrounded by death, destruction, and fear,

Give us the strength to embody "the land of the living" where refugees and asylum-seekers can safely begin life anew.

O God of the Christ-Child, whose own earthly parents were forced to flee the state-sanctioned violence of Herod, and find safety in a foreign nation,

Give us hearts like the people of Egypt to offer not only refuge but welcome to those who arrive at our doorstep in need of safety and protection.

O God who calls us to offer welcome to the stranger, just as we would offer it to Christ,

Remind us today and every day that we need not fear what we do not know, but are freed by following your Gospel call to welcome.

O God of all people, of all nations and of all the earth, protect this day those in need of safety, put a salve on the souls of those grieving the loss of home, family, loved ones and memories,

Give us the conviction to offer welcome, safety, Christian love and a space for new beginnings to refugees and asylum-seekers. Instill in our hearts the courage to love as Jesus taught us, in a world that encourages suspicion, fear and scarcity.

O God of all sojourners in search of refuge, We ask you to create peace in this world so that none of your children live in places endangered by violence and civil unrest. We ask for comfort for all who have been forced to flee their homes, and we ask that those in need of peace and protection find both refuge and welcome. We give you thanks this day for refugees and asylumseekers in our midst, and for the blessings they bring to our families, churches, communities and nation. Amen.

- Amanda K. Sheldon, Program Associate for UCC Refugee Ministries & UCC Disaster Ministries

What's Happening at FCC

Double Buzzes on August 26 on Family Promise Hosting

Whether you've been involved with FCC's Family Promise hosting already or are new and wondering what it really involves, the August Buzzes are for you. We will have two Buzzes that day—one following a pitch-in lunch after Traditional worship and the other after New Creation worship at 6:45 p.m., with heavy snacks. Mike Chapuran, Executive Director of Family Promise of Greater Indianapolis, will conduct a workshop on family hosting, helping us understand better what their expectations of us are and how best to interact with our guests. Each hosting week involves at least 60 church members, and we hope everyone who participates is informed and comfortable with the experience. This is your best opportunity to refresh your understanding or learn for the first time. Please plan to attend one session on August 26 and come with your questions.

90th Birthday Celebration

Marion Harcourt and her family invite you to celebrate her 90th birthday on Saturday, August 25th at Marquette Senior Living Community (4th Floor Card Room) from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

How do you know Marion? What are your favorite memories of your times together?

Please bring a card filled with memories to share with her.

In lieu of gifts, Marion would appreciate a donation to First Congregational Church.

Installation for New Indiana-Kentucky UCC Conference Minister

Rev. Chad Abbott gave the "Charge for the Congregation" on June 10 for Pastor Sarah's

installation service supporting her, our church and the UCC as the newly nominated Indiana Kentucky Conference minister. His own installation service to that position is on Saturday, August 25th at 3:00 p.m., at Sweeney Chapel, CTS. Pastor Sarah will be providing an invocation, Wendy Baldwin will be participating as she led the search committee to fill that position, and Sean Baker and Shannon Abbott will be contributing to the music of the service. A great opportunity to come together as a conference to celebrate in the ministries of the wider church together!

Choir Rehearsals Begin and Welcome New Members!

The first choir rehearsal after summer break is Thursday, August 30th from 7:00- 8:30 pm in the second floor choir room. We welcome new members to join us. Anyone who is interested in learning more about the choir may email choir director Julie Houston at: juliehouston@comcast.net

Green Team Tip

It's been a weird summer, hasn't it? No rain, then almost too much. Have you considered rain barrels, or a rain garden? Weather is likely to get more extreme, so it's smart to be ready for too much and too little...

FCC Solar Project!!!

Our fund drive ends Sep 1, and we're still a little short of our goal! Please take time this week for prayerful contemplation and see if you can't put a little extra in the collection plate this Sunday, the last one before the drive ends. If you want to help but can't see your way clear right now, a pledge would be wonderful. Please call or email Rich Gibson, (770) 548-5217 or hooteagle@me.com if you have questions. Thanks!

Save the Date!

All Church Picnic, Saturday, September 8 at 4pm. More details to come.

Chautauqua Update

Have you seen the bulletin board or previous announcements about the Chautauqua Grant? If you're eligible, you should be filling out an application now and giving it to Shannon. We're accepting applications through September 30th! Please contact Rich Gibson, Nancy Dickinson, Worth Hartman, Chuck Kiphart, or Pastor Sarah if you have any questions.

New Member Sunday!

Make First Congregational UCC your new church home and join with others on Sunday, October 28th during the 11am worship service. Pastor Sarah is looking forward to hearing

about your faith journey and welcoming you into this church family. Contact Pastor Sarah to schedule a conversation about membership pastorsarah@fcindy.org.

Church Social Media/Website/Design Team Update

We are blessed by a talented team of volunteers who help with church social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter), Website and design. Team members include Sean Baker, Angela Edwards, Josh Cody, and Pastor Sarah. Pastor Sarah leads this team and is the primary contact for members wishing to share church information on social media and the website. Thank you for helping to spread the good news about the mission and ministry of the church through the website and social media. These are popular platforms for people to first learn about our church and where most of our visitors find information about us. We want to hear from you, so please contact Pastor Sarah with your social media and website updates.

August Mission of the Month: Greater Indy Habitat for Humanity

Celebrating 30 years of providing strength, stability, and independence through home ownership, in 2017, 5650 GIHH volunteers built or rehabbed 26 homes and repaired 63. A study by the Sagamore Institute revealed that Habitat homeowners benefit in many ways. Chronic housing-related illnesses decrease. 71% of homeowners started, completed, or plan to complete higher education or professional training. Homeowners end or reduce their dependence on public assistance programs like Public Housing Assistance, Utility Bill/Energy Assistance, Supplemental Nutritional Assistance (SNAP), Temporary Aid for Needy Families (TANF), and aid to Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).

FCC has supported Habitat for over 20 years financially and through volunteer hours on builds. Please give generously in August to support Greater Indy Habitat. Single dollar bills in the offering plate will go to Habitat. For larger amounts, please use the Special Offering envelopes noting "Habitat" or put that in the notation line of your check. Thank you!

Pantry Items of the Month

During August we are collecting the following items: beans, canned peaches, canned pears, jelly and jam, and bathroom tissue.

Pastoral Care

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

This Week at First Congregational

| | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|---|
| Thursday, August 23 | 1:00 p.m. | Men's Lunch |
| Saturday, August 25 | 11:00 a.m. | Bell practice |
| Saturday, August 25 | 1:00 p.m. | Marion Harcourt's 90 th Birthday (see above) |
| Saturday, August 25 | 3:00 p.m. | IKC Installation of Rev. Chad Abbott, CTS Chapel |
| Sunday, August 26 | 12:30 p.m. | Family Promise Workshop with Mike Chapuran |
| Sunday, August 26 | 5:30 p.m. | New Creation |
| Sunday, August 26 | 6:45 p.m. | Family Promise Workshop with Mike Chapuran |
| Tuesday, August 28 | 10:00 a.m. | Care & Connections |
| Wednesday, August 29 | 7:30 p.m. | New Creation Planning |
| Thursday, August 30 | 7:00 p.m. | Choir Rehearsal |
| Sunday, September 2 | 9:45 a.m. | Adult Class – Just Peace |
| Sunday, September 2 | 11:00 a.m. | Traditional Worship |
| Sunday, September 2 | 5:30 p.m. | New Creation |



F I R S T
CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

*We are a
progressive,
inclusive,
spiritually alive
servant community.*

E-Pistle for the week of August 30th

[Calendar](#)

Minister's Message

Dear First Congregational Church Family,

Hosting overnight guests for a week at the church is both an honor and a responsibility. Our church makes this commitment twice a year and coming up the week of September 16 we are blessed to do it again. Last Sunday at our two Buzz session we heard from Mike Chapuran, the director of Family Promise of Greater Indianapolis and we learned how each one of us can participate in this critical ministry to families experiencing crisis. We can be kind, offer a safe environment, food, and our prayers as the families with children journey to a better future. I am grateful to our coordinators Katie Booth and Ann Leatherman for their leadership and dedication to this ministry.

Let's see if we can fill all the spots on the volunteer sign up board early!

Blessings,
Pastor Sarah

Worship for Sunday

Adult Class

No Adult Class this Week!

Traditional Service - 11:00 a.m.

Pastor Sarah will preach on "Pure Religion."

New Creation - 5:30 p.m.

Labor Day weekend is culturally considered the last hurrah of summer. As schools and other programming ramp up the following week, things tend to go back to normal. While we never think of New Creation as "normal" no matter the season, we will take one last shot this Sunday at something different and fun. The parable of the oil lamps may or may not be familiar to many of us, but we found it ripe for some... let's just call it "elaboration". Come and join us for a new and participatory look at this old story, and how it relates to growing God's beloved community.

Let us Pray...

Gracious and Loving God, We know O God, that this is Your world, a world that was created without walls and without borders. And yet we also know that there are thousands upon thousands of refugees waiting to be "let in"; waiting to hear a word of where they will be accepted and what place might become their new home. We don't really know their stories; we don't always know why they left their homes and families for an unknown and risky future. But we do know that they are your children just as we are your children.

We pray that the actions of our leaders in welcoming those seeking refuge will be a reflection of the love you have for all children. May we be a country that is anxious to share the many gifts we have rather than a country afraid of what we might lose. Please God, open our clenched hands and closed hearts.

And while so many wait for news of where they will call home, may we have the courage to speak for those whose voices are not yet heard as they are not yet here. This is our prayer. Amen.

(- prayer written by Dr. Edith Guffey, Conference Minister of the Kansas-Oklahoma Conference UCC)

Call to Action

Call your Member of Congress and tell them we want to welcome at least 75,000 refugee families in 2019. Find a short and simple script to help guide you through the conversation at: http://www.ucc.org/action_alert_for_refugee_community_advocacy_month

What's Happening at FCC

Choir Rehearsals Begin and Welcome New Members!

The first choir rehearsal after summer break is TODAY, August 30th from 7:00- 8:30 pm in the second floor choir room. We welcome new members to join us. Anyone who is interested in

learning more about the choir may email choir director Julie Houston at: juliehouston@comcast.net

The Music Support Team hopes you have enjoyed the variety of music and styles that have been offered in the Traditional service throughout the summer. If so, you're in for another treat on September 9 when the choir returns to the loft. Sean Baker has prepared another of his signature arrangements for choir, flute, viola, bells, percussion, piano, and organ to infuse the service with another level of spiritual energy. Please plan to be present for this opportunity to hear God speak to us through music.

Heard at the Buzz

On Sunday we heard a brief music update about the music program for the Traditional service. The music team is working with the Worship and Faith Board on a proposal that will be reviewed and discussed by the Council. We seek your prayers, support and input as we discern together ways to continue excellent traditional music to enhance our worship experience. Please talk to Pastor Sarah for further information.

Solar Panel Funding Campaign - THANK YOU!!!

We in the Green Team launched a campaign back on June 10th, the day of Pastor Sarah's Installation, to raise funds to install solar panels here at FCC. We set a goal of \$60,000 by September 1st, based on funds already in hand and the estimates from two reputable installers. The end date gave us plenty of time to raise money, and allows us to decide on an installer and get work begun and completed before bad weather rolls in. As the decision point loomed, I asked the bidders to update their estimates. One came in at a much lower price than his original bid, such that as of last week, we had sufficient funds in-hand to proceed. So,

THANK YOU, EVERYBODY! We're going to get solar panels this year, and I could not be more excited! Your generosity is a wonderful thing to experience. The Green Team and Planet Earth both thank you!!

If you had pledged to donate funds, thank you too! While we have more money than we need for the installation, we're pretty sure that we'll have to spend the excess on maintenance costs, perhaps as early as five years from now. If you still want to donate funds for solar panels, we'll certainly accept them—but if you'd rather spend your money on a more urgent need, we certainly understand. We are happy to release you from your obligation.

Again, THANK YOU! EVERYBODY!

Green Team Tip

Fall is a good time to plant trees. Does your yard need one or two?

Church Picnic & Sing-Along

Saturday, September 8th, 4-7 p.m.

Kick off the fall at FCC with fun, faith, food, friends, and even a singalong! Weather-permitting, we will be outdoors. Think of a song that you would like us to sing, and let us know in advance so we can be prepared. The church will provide fried & baked chicken, supplemented by your pitch-in contributions. For our planning, please sign-up in the Narthex by Wed 9/5 or contact Wendy Baldwin.

Chautauqua Update

Have you seen the bulletin board or previous announcements about the Chautauqua Grant? If you're eligible, you should be filling out an application now and giving it to Shannon. We're accepting applications through September 30th! Please contact Rich Gibson, Nancy Dickinson, Worth Hartman, Chuck Kiphart, or Pastor Sarah if you have any questions.

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September Mission of the Month is the UCC Mental Health Network.

The United Church of Christ Mental Health Network works to reduce stigma and promote the inclusion of people with mental illnesses/brain disorders and their families in the life, leadership and work of congregations. Its stated values are

- Jesus has shown us the way to embrace those who are marginalized by society and advocate with and for them.
- Every person has value and worth and deserves love, dignity and respect.

- All people, regardless of mental health or disability status, have something to contribute to the life, leadership and work of their congregations.
- Community matters. A sense of belonging is important to us all, whether we face mental health challenges ourselves or not.
- True compassion in ministry and relationships is based on equality.

The Network also helps churches such as FCC that are considering becoming a W.I.S.E. Church (Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, Engaged) by providing resources and support to reach that goal and to do so by embodying the love of Jesus in the process. During the month of September your loose dollar bills in the offering plate or larger amounts in the Mission Offering envelopes marked “Mental Health Network” or checks with that notation will go to support its work.

Pantry Items of the Month

During September we are collecting the following items: soups, beans, rice, mac'n'cheese, paper towels, and body wash.

Pastoral Care

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

This Week at First Congregational

| | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Thursday, August 30 | 7:00 p.m. | Choir Rehearsal |
| Sunday, September 2 | 11:00 a.m. | Traditional Service |
| Sunday, September 2 | 5:30 p.m. | New Creation |
| Wednesday, September 5 | 7:00 p.m. | Trustees Meeting |
| Wednesday, September 5 | 7:30 p.m. | New Creation Planning Team |
| Thursday, September 6 | 1:00 p.m. | Men’s Lunch |
| Thursday, September 6 | 7:00 p.m. | Choir Rehearsal |
| Saturday, September 8 | 4:00 p.m. | Church Picnic |