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FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Epistle for the Week of August 6, 2020

Through the end of August, the building of First Congregational UCC is closed. Masks are required for limited gatherings occurring outside. (See additional details below.)

Dear First Congregational,

I love being a pastor in the United Church of Christ. The UCC is my home. It's a joy to serve as your pastor, to serve as the Southeast Association President, and also serve the national setting of the UCC as Minister for Disabilities and Mental Health Justice. In these three ways, I experience the full depth and breadth of what it means to be in covenant at the local, regional and national level of the church. This brings me great joy and energizes me.

Recently in a conversation with the national UCC Disaster Ministries team, the leader said to the group, "Now remember, August has two "u's" in the name. That means pay extra attention, twice as much, to you!" She encouraged us to take the month of August for extra time to care

for our mind, body and spirit. Too often we focus our energies on caring for other people, that our own needs get neglected.

I'd like to encourage each of you to take extra time for "u." Take time in August for doing what brings you joy, what brings you comfort, what brings you relaxation, what brings health and wholeness. I read this article (<https://www.chicagotribune.com/columns/mary-schmich/ct-met-schmich-august-20200801-hmupygp75vhopjtmzkpxcgtqae-story.html>) that encourages us to take time in August to write on an index card one thing each day that we are thankful for. I like this idea of creating a practice of gratitude. Maybe you will write on an index card a daily gratitude. Or maybe you will give yourself permission to do that thing that brings you a sense of wonder, delight, and abundant life.

Our Music Designer/Organist, Sean Baker, will be taking well deserved vacation this Sunday. Our worship service will celebrate our covenant with the national setting of the UCC and highlight our denomination's national youth ministry. The worship video includes original music by UCC ministers and a sermon by the Rev. Trayce Potter who oversees our youth ministry programs. I am in the video a couple of times as well, a reminder that we are all connected in Christ.

Whatever it is this month of August, find or make time for "u." God loves you!

Blessings,
Pastor Sarah

Good News from First Congregational UCC -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KuMKigsOZhw>

FC Emergency Fund - The FC Emergency Fund is available to support housing, food, and medical needs for any of our church family who find themselves unemployed or underemployed due to Covid-19 impacts. To request funds for you or your family, please contact Pastor Sarah by email pastorsarah@fcindy.org or cell (386) 478-9012. To make a donation, send a check to the church with "emergency fund" on the memo or make a donation on the church website.

Soul Care with Pastor Sarah - Join us on **Tuesdays from 5:00-6:00 p.m.** for a time to check-in, reflect on Richard Rohr's weekly meditations, and to pray together.

Here is the Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/494018938?pwd=a3BrdnNyWXEza0tFMUgwek1CVFpYQT09>

worship

Sunday Adult Education, 9:30 a.m.

Class will meet via

Zoom: <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/9264494206?pwd=dmtWbWE5UXRBTK5pcHZlYlB0aEFVUT09>

August 9: This week we will read an article titled “**White identity in America is ideology, not biology. The history of ‘whiteness proves it.’**” by Nell Irvin Painter, author of the book *The History of White People*. A key point is that “The idea of one big white race did not just spring to life full-blown and unchanging, which is what most people assume – and white supremacists rely on.” The article can be found at this link or by googling the title: <https://www.nbcnews.com/think/opinion/white-identity-america-ideology-not-biology-history-whiteness-proves-it-ncna1232200>

Sunday Worship, 11:00 a.m.

This Sunday's worship is brought to us by the United Church of Christ National Youth Event. Rev. Trayce Potter is preaching.

3 Ways to Connect for Worship

YOUTUBE

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWV9wqAvPiUKSkEbjav6Zpw>

- YouTube Live Premiere will broadcast at 11am Sunday morning. There will be a countdown before. We highly recommend using the mobile app for more convenience as it will refresh.
- Use this option for live interacting and messaging. You must have or create a user account and be logged in to message live.
- If using a laptop, you will need to refresh your browser after 11am to click to watch 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.

Coffee Hour, 11:45 a.m. (or immediately after worship)

Zoom

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

To dial in by phone: +1 312 626 6799, Meeting ID 926 449 4206, Password 7171.

What's Happening at FC

Mental Health Helpline

Anyone feeling anxiety from the pandemic should be encouraged to call the **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Disaster Distress Helpline at 800-985-5990**, or **text "TalkWithUs" to 66746**. Users will be connected with trained crisis counselors.

TODAY! Spiritual Support Group, Thursdays from 5:00 - 6:00 PM

Our weekly SPIRITUAL SUPPORT GROUP FOR MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS gathers on the church's ZOOM from 5:00 to 6:00 pm EVERY Thursday. Pastor Sarah and Pat Larracey will be leading this wonderful WISE program and is OPEN to all with mental illness and those living with mentally ill loved ones. We look forward to greeting each of you with love.

Zoom

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

To dial in by phone: +1 312 626 6799, Meeting ID 926 449 4206, Password 7171.

Food Drive for the Northside Pantry - Saturday, August 8, from 10 am – 12 pm

Let's help fight poverty and hunger through our food donations. We will meet on the outside church patio. Bring dry and canned goods, as well as personal care items (soap, deodorant, etc). You can also bring your plastic bottle caps and paper for recycling. In future communications, we will let you know of particularly desired items. Per new church policy on in-person gatherings, only 10 people may participate (physically distanced) at a time and masks are REQUIRED. Please contact Wendy Baldwin if you are interested in helping.

Outdoor Vespers Worship - August 11 & 25, 7:00 – 7:30 p.m., Memorial Garden

Join us for an outdoor evening vesper service. Our current plans are to have these every 2 weeks. Our outdoor protocols will apply, so bring your own chair and beverage, and keep 6

feet distant from others. Face masks are required per City of Indianapolis ordinance. It's a time to be in community, while being safe and loving with one another.

NEXT Thursday! Men's Lunch - August 13th, 1:00 p.m.

This lunch and discussion gathering for men of First Congregational meets every other Thursday at **1 p.m.** This month, they are meeting **August 13th & 27th**. Please contact Randy Walker at (317) 796-2081 or aa28977rwalker@gmail.com for more information.

Book Circle - August 18th, 1:30 p.m.

We will be finishing the book, "Searching for Sundays," and deciding on our next book. Contact Karen Walker at (317) 319-8950 or karen.e.d.walker@gmail.com for more information.

From the Comeback Team

We have been enjoying the small outdoor in-person events at church – so great to visit and see people! There are various protocols to follow, and to make it easier to remember, we are using the mantra of "Bring your own germs, keep them to yourself, and take them home with you". Hence the recommendations to bring your own chairs, bring your own beverage and/or food, wear face masks, limit going inside the building, and definitely maintain 6 ft distances. To be on the safe side, we also want to keep track of who attended each event.

During this pandemic, each one of us has personal thoughts about what is, and isn't, safe. However, when the event is a "church event", we need to be in covenant with one another - We are now REQUIRING face masks to be worn at church events. If you are not wearing one, and someone asks you to put one on, please hear this request with love. But better yet, please don't let others feel uncomfortable by not wearing a mask in their presence.

Protocols for outdoor gatherings:

1. Must be scheduled with Pastor Sarah, Shannon Abbott (Admin), and Wendy Baldwin (Bldg Mgr); groups may use any area of the church grounds (such as the patio, parking lot, Memorial Garden) where surface contact is minimized (not the playground for now)
2. Before the gathering, the group leader will receive the protocols to be observed, and make sure attendees are aware of these; the group leader is responsible that the protocols are followed
3. After the gathering, the group leader must send info about who attended to Pastor Sarah and Wendy Baldwin, for contact tracking purposes
4. Limit of 10 people at a time
5. A distance of 6 feet shall be observed between people of different households; no physical contact shall occur
6. Face masks are required

7. People who do not feel well should not attend
8. People should bring their own beverage/water bottle (do not use the church drinking fountains, water, ice, etc)
9. People should bring their own chair
10. Church restrooms should only be used for emergencies, and one will be required to sanitize after its use

Indiana-Kentucky Conference of the UCC: Anti-Racism Task Force

At our Annual Gathering in June, we passed an Anti-Racism resolution that calls us to address systemic and structural racism within the Indiana-Kentucky Conference through a newly formed Justice and Witness Ministry Task Force. As such, we are sending you an introductory letter providing you with all the necessary information to begin energizing folks in your church and association regarding the work ahead.

Our first task is to populate this new Task Force. According to the passed resolution, we need at least one member (lay or clergy) from each association. If you or someone you know is interested in being considered for the task force, we would welcome these submissions. This initial team will have a limited size, and some team members will be asked to lead smaller groups with a particular focus. If desiring to submit your name or another's, please have them contact:

Izzy Harbin
574-903-7099
pastorizzy@firstucelkhart.org

Once we have populated the task force, we will organize the work before us. To give you a snapshot of what is to come, here are some of our key priorities:

- Studying and understanding the institutional structures within our associations and local churches that still promote, consciously or unconsciously, systemic racism
- Develop a conference-wide action plan designed to address issues of racism in our churches, in our associations, and in association and conference committees
- Present action plan to full Board of Directors prior to the 58th Annual Meeting of the IKC to be voted on and, if passed, implemented by the Board
- Provide intentional spaces at our 58th Annual Meeting to include workshops and round table discussions, including evening activities on understanding and seeing racism in our communities
- Strongly urge all associations to require anti-racism training for all authorized ministers

While not explicit in the resolution, it is our hope that the Justice and Witness Ministries Task

Force will become a key part of the structure of the IKC with an ongoing focus of addressing all areas of inequality and injustice within our conference, associations, and their respective committees.

For those interested in justice work, this is a beginning. The formation of this Task Force has the potential to change the face of the IKC for the better; to strengthen our individual churches; and to make inclusivity of all a reality, not just a catch phrase. We are blessed to have historically black churches and clergy within our conference, and it is time that we acknowledge their contributions to the United Church of Christ, their contributions to the health and vitality of the Indiana-Kentucky Conference, and their gifts in making us all more Christ-like.

Please take time to share this letter with any and all members of your congregation or association who you think might be interested in participating in our future work together.

Enthusiastically,
Rev. Izzy Harbin
Treasurer, IKC Board
Pastor, First Congregational Church UCC, Elkhart, IN

Rev. Chad R. Abbott
Conference Minister
Indiana-Kentucky Conference, UCC



Continue Your Support of First Congregational UCC

Please continue supporting the mission and ministries of your local church at <http://www.fcindy.org/online-giving/>

Support Your Local IN-KY Conference Through Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM)

The staff of the IKC continue to work tirelessly to support local churches as we all discern best practices and how to get through this time together. Please remember to support the work they

do and the many ministries they support through your **UCWM**
Giving at: <https://ikcucc.org/connect/donate/>

Eviction Ministry Donations

The Eviction Ministry is a new ministry of the SouthEast Association of the Indiana-Kentucky Conference of the UCC. The purpose of this ministry is to offer assistance to those who do not qualify for other state or local assistance programs and without such assistance would be evicted from their homes. Please consider making a donation. **Checks can be made out to: Southeast Association of the IKC UCC.** Please include in the **memo line: "Eviction Ministry."**

Donations can be mailed to the treasurer at:
SE Association Eviction Ministry
Attn: Margie Potter
726 Coach Rd.
Indianapolis, IN 46227

Thank you for your generosity!
- Shannon Abbott, Eviction Ministry Team

Indiana Undocumented Youth Alliance

Undocumented people are facing challenges during this pandemic. There are groups trying to help them, specifically young people who have D.A.C.A. Four organizations are cooperating in this effort, but it is being administered by IYUA, the Indiana Undocumented Youth Alliance. Email or call if you want to donate or volunteer. The email is undocuhoosierfund@gmail.com and the phone number is 317-205-6424.

Feeding Families

Gleaner's and Second Helpings are two of the food banks currently offering food to children who usually get their meals from school.

Donate to **Gleaner's** by clicking on the link [here](#).

Donate to **Second Helpings** by clicking on the link [here](#).

Staying Connected

FC Facebook page (click [here](#))

"**First Congregational Indy Fellowship**" group on Facebook (click [here](#)).

Pastoral Care

We are all still here for you and will stay connected. Pastor Sarah may be reached

at (386)478-9012 or pastorsarah@fcindy.org.

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)

THIS WEEK AT FIRST CONGREGATIONAL

THREE Ways to Worship on Sunday morning at 11AM:

YOUTUBE

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWV9wqAvPiUKSkEbjAV6Zpw>

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Weekly Calendar

Thursday, August 6	5:00 p.m.	Spiritual Support Group for Mental Health
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Friday, August 7	10:00 a.m.	PCRC (Pastor Sarah)
Friday, August 7	1:00 p.m.	Worship & Design Team
Saturday, August 8	10:00 a.m.	Food Drive
Sunday, August 9	12:00 p.m.	Coffee Hour (or immediately after worship)
Tuesday, August 11	1:00 p.m.	Worship & Design Team
Tuesday, August 11	5:00 p.m.	Soul Care with Pastor Sarah
Tuesday, August 11	7:00 p.m.	Outdoor Vespers Service
Wednesday, August 12	5:00 p.m.	W.I.S.E. Mental Health Team
Thursday, August 13	1:00 p.m.	Men's Lunch
Thursday, August 13	5:00 p.m.	Spiritual Support Group for Mental Health
Friday, August 14	1:00 p.m.	Worship & Design Team
Sunday, August 16	9:30 a.m.	Sunday Adult Class
Sunday, August 16	11:00 a.m.	Worship (YouTube, FB, & Dial In)
Sunday, August 16	12:00 p.m.	Coffee Hour
Sunday, August 16	12:45 p.m.	Worship & Faith

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