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FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Epistle for the Week of December 3, 2020

Dear First Congregational,

I want to express my heartfelt thanks for the generous support of First Congregational through one of the most challenging years in our lifetime. I am grateful for the ways our church members have found creative ways to come together despite the difficulties of not being able to gather safely in-person in our beautiful church. We have adapted, keeping an open mind, and trying new things. Thank you for your patience, kindness, faithfulness, and trust. As your pastor, I see how hard you are working to help our church not only survive 2020, but also to thrive. THANK YOU.

Throughout 2020, we continued to fulfill our mission and to carry out our ministries to be a community of belonging, healing, and loving. We have provided food for the hungry, comfort to the sick, care for Creation, and advocated for the rights of the most needy. We have lifted our voices in praise and worship, we have prayed, and we learned together about how to be more loving to all of God's children. THANK YOU.

We are in the process of dreaming about our mission and ministry for 2021. Please share your pledge with us by mailing it to the church so we can create the ministry budget God calls us to in order to fulfill our mission. Every check, every gift, every dollar of your financial support makes a difference. Together we are building God's beloved community, making a more just world for all.

Please consider making an end of the year financial gift to First Congregational. I believe your generosity will be a blessing to us all. THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

Blessings,
Pastor Sarah

THIS SUNDAY

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

December 6: This Sunday we will read and reflect together on the Advent devotion for December 6 from the Advent devotional made available to our members this year.

Advent devotionals are available in the church narthex.

Advent

On this second Sunday of Advent we'll again explore a passage from Isaiah (7:1-14) along with the birth story from Matthew's gospel. The opening verses are usually omitted from readings of this gospel, but we've decided to include them in this Advent season. We hope you enjoy our light touch to this passage. Don't forget to have a candle handy to join in our Advent lighting of the candle of love, and be ready to learn some new sign language and a new verse of "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear."



The Second Sunday of Advent Worship, 11AM (YouTube, FaceBook, Dial In)

Scriptures: Isaiah 7:1-14 & Matthew 1:1-15

Sermon: "Advent of Love"

Mission of the Month: The Christmas Fund

Coffee Hour via Zoom, immediately after worship

Sunday Outdoor Vespers - Canceled this Sunday due to cold temperatures.

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

TODAY!

- **Men's Lunch, 1:00 PM** - Contact Randy Walker at (317) 796-2081 or aa28977rwalker@gmail.com for more information.
- **Spiritual Support Group, 5:00-6:00 PM** - You can contact Pastor Sarah at (386)478-9012 or pastorsarah@fcindy.org, or Pat Larracey at plainandfancy1963@att.net, or 317-625-6801 for more information.

Soul Care with Pastor Sarah - Join us on **Tuesdays from 5:00-6:00 p.m.** for a time to check-in and to pray together. Here is the Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/494018938?pwd=a3BrdnNyWXEza0tFMUgwek1CVFpYQT09>

** Please note that this Zoom link is different from the Zoom links used for other FC events.*

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)

Throughout most of December, we will use excerpts from the Advent devotional, *Draw Near*, to guide us as we nurture ways we can connect with one another and connect within ourselves.

Wednesday, December: Nurturing Wellness through Watching/Paying Attention.

Personnel Committee Staff Review Survey

You should have very recently received a brief survey related to our staff either through email or on paper (however you get the colony). If you did not receive one, please contact Karen Walker (317-319-8950 or karen.e.d.walker@gmail.com) or Bill Hummel (317-875-8388 or whummel001@comcast.net) of the Personnel Committee. Please take the time to complete the survey and help us grow in our ministries - thanks!

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/>.

Reminder for VANCO Online Users

When using VANCO for online contributions/pledges, please remember that I ONLY receive your name and the amount. I do not receive any information as to which account you want the money to be reported. Unless you contact me with specific information by email or by text, your VANCO money will be reported as a contribution or a pledge, not as Mission of the Month or Memorial or any other

account.

If you want your money to go to an account other than a contribution or pledge, email me at dillenback@sbcglobal.net or text me at 317-694-6471 after you complete your online form.

Please contact me if you have further questions or concerns.

Take Care, Be Safe,

Cheryl Dillenback

Financial Secretary

COMING UP

Food Drive & Fellowship! Second Saturday – December 12, 10-noon - Bring your canned and dry goods to the church to benefit the Northside Pantry, who is so appreciative of the ministry we are doing. You can use the “reverse Advent” list in the [December Colony](#) for a list of items to bring. Also, this is the last opportunity to bring gloves, mittens, hats, and scarves to benefit Exodus Refugee. As a “thank you” for being a part of our church, we have a small poinsettia for you to take home, to remind you of your church family.

Virtual Giving Tree 2020

Exodus Refugee: Click this link [here](#) to support Exodus Refugee. These items will be delivered directly to Sara Hindi of Exodus Refugee. To learn more about this organization please visit: <https://www.exodusrefugee.org/>

Family Promise: We are sponsoring two families experiencing homelessness. Please click [here](#) to use Sign Up Genius to let us know what you are pledging to purchase. Please purchase the gifts online and have them sent to **St. Peter's UCC 3106 E Carmel Dr. Carmel, IN 46033**. Gifts will be delivered to the families in a safe contactless way. To learn more about this organization, please visit: <https://www.fpgi.org/>

Trinity Haven: In an effort to support this new organization which offers safe, supportive, and affirming housing for LGBTQ+ youth and young adults, we will purchase \$25 gift cards from Target & Kroger. Follow the links below to purchase:

Target: <tgt.gifts/TrinityHavenIndy>

Kroger: <https://giftcards.kroger.com/our-store-cards/kroger-enterprise-egift>. When asked for email recipient please insert Jenni's email from Trinity

Haven: jenni@trinityhavenindy.org

Trinity Haven has specifically asked for gift cards so that they can purchase items

based on their current and evolving needs. To learn more about this organization, please visit: <https://www.trinityhavenindy.org/>

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

Pastor Sarah may be reached at (386)478-9012 or 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)

Office Administrator, Shannon (shannon@fcindy.org)

Moderator, Alice Rutherford (alice@caloosaspirit.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=dmtWbWE5UXRBTK5pcHZlYlBoaEFVUTo9>

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.

Weekly Calendar

Thursday, Dec 3	1:00 p.m.	Men's Lunch
Thursday, Dec 3	5:00 p.m.	Spiritual Support Group
Sunday, Dec 6	9:30 a.m.	Sunday Adult Class
Sunday, Dec 6	11:00 a.m.	Second Sunday of Advent/Communion Worship (YouTube, FB, Dial In)
Sunday, Dec 6	12:00 p.m.	Zoom Coffee Hour
Sunday, Dec 6	4:30 p.m.	Outdoor Vespers
Tuesday, Dec 8	5:00 p.m.	Soul Care w/ Pastor Sarah
Tuesday, Dec 8	7:00 p.m.	Zoom Vespers
Wednesday, Dec 9	10:30 a.m.	Wellness Wednesday

Wednesday, Dec 9	7:00 p.m.	Church Council
Thursday, Dec 10	5:00 p.m.	Spiritual Support Group
Saturday, Dec 12	10:00 a.m.	Food Drive
Sunday, Dec 13	9:30 a.m.	Sunday Adult Class
Sunday, Dec 13	11:00 a.m.	Third Sunday of Advent Worship (YouTube, FB, Dial In)
Sunday, Dec 13	12:00 p.m.	Zoom Coffee Hour
Sunday, Dec 13	4:30 p.m.	Outdoor Vespers

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FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Epistle for the Week of December 10, 2020

Dear First Congregational,

Now is the time to plan for experiencing the spirit of Christmas with First Congregational. We are honored to be your church family and we have something special planned. Many of us will not be physically present with church family or loved ones. Yet, we've found a way to experience the power of spiritual presence with God and one another. For Christmas Eve, we invite each person to participate in the worship service video by joining in the lighting of the candle that is symbolic of the light of Christ shining in each one of you.

Come pick up your battery operated electric candle (safe for all ages), your special Christmas cookie, and a Christmas note. There is a "Christmas Kit" assembled in an easy to carry gift bag for each person. These Christmas Kits are available starting Saturday, December 12 to pick up at the church.

Also pick up your Christmas poinsettia and your UCC Advent/Christmas Tide (through January 9) daily devotional. All of these items are gifts for YOU! If you'd

like items delivered to your home or mailed to you, please let us know.

You are LOVED! You are not alone. We are united in Christ.

Blessings,
Pastor Sarah



THIS SUNDAY

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

December 13: CTS professor Dr. Rob Saler presents on “The Theological and Historical Origins of Race.” Let’s do our best to make being on time part of our warm welcome to Dr. Saler.

Advent

Advent continues with lighting a candle of joy this Sunday, along with more from the prophet Isaiah (57: 14-19) as he tells his people of God’s comfort and healing – words we very much need to hear today. This Sunday we’ll also hear the beloved story from Luke’s gospel of Mary’s encounter with the Angel Gabriel, recounted by the voices in the story. Don’t forget to pick up your Christmas kits this Saturday or next (or anytime in between). If pick up is not possible, a simple request to Wendy

Baldwin (wendy.baldwin@fci.com or 317-319-0806) for a delivery is welcome.



The Third Sunday of Advent Worship, 11AM (YouTube, FaceBook, Dial In)

Scriptures: Isaiah 57:14-19 & Luke 1:1-4, 26-56

Sermon: "Advent of Joy"

Mission of the Month: The Christmas Fund

Coffee Hour via Zoom, immediately after worship

Sunday Outdoor Vespers - Canceled this Sunday due to cold temperatures.

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

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TODAY! Spiritual Support Group, 5:00-6:00 PM - You can contact Pastor Sarah at (386)478-9012 or pastorsarah@fcindy.org, or Pat Larracey at plainandfancy1963@att.net, or 317-625-6801 for more information.

This Saturday! Food Drive – Saturday, 12/12, 10-noon

Bring your canned and dry goods to the church to benefit the Northside Pantry, who is so appreciative of the ministry we are doing. You can use the “[reverse Advent](#)” list in the [December Colony](#) for a list of items to bring. If you have a [I’m Still Here](#) book, please bring that, too. Also, this is the last opportunity to bring gloves, mittens, hats, and scarves to benefit Exodus Refugee. As a “thank you” for being a part of our church, we have a small poinsettia for you to take home, to remind you of your church family, as well as picking up your “Christmas kit” to prepare for Christmas Eve.

Soul Care with Pastor Sarah - Join us on **Tuesdays from 5:00-6:00 p.m.** for a time to check-in and to pray together. Here is the Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/494018938?pwd=a3BrdnNyWXEza0tFMUgwek1CVFpYQT09>

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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)

Throughout most of December, we will use excerpts from the Advent devotional, *Draw Near*, to guide us as we nurture ways we can connect with one another and connect within ourselves.

Wednesday, December 16: Nurturing Wellness through the Lessons of a Mountain

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) or Bill Hummel (317-875-8388)

or wrummel001@comcast.net).

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January Colony Deadline: Tuesday, December 15th - Please submit all January Colony articles to Shannon at shannon@fcindy.org by Tuesday, December 15th.

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If you want your money to go to an account other than a contribution or pledge, email me at dillenback@sbcglobal.net or text me at 317-694-6471 after you complete your online form.

Please contact me if you have further questions or concerns.

Take Care, Be Safe,

Cheryl Dillenback

Financial Secretary

COMING UP

Women's Lunch Bunch - Thursday, 12/17 at 11:30 a.m. via Zoom

For questions or more information please contact Sue Chapman at (317) 259-1806 or carolsuech59@gmail.com.

Men's Lunch - Thursday, 12/17 at 1:00 p.m.

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

IKC Blue Christmas Service - Friday, 12/18, 7:00-8:00 PM



Join us for an intergenerational service of prayer and lament. This service is co-sponsored by FC and is led by Student Pastor, Cassidy Hall. Register in advance for this

meeting: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEsdU2hrDsiHtVmZwBkU-f4_DbtOITZsdFo

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Monthly Neighborhood Walk – Saturday, 12/19, 10-noon

We'll take a walk in the neighborhood at 11 am. But you can also use this as an opportunity to bring canned and dry goods to the church to benefit the Northside Pantry. As a "thank you" for being a part of our church, we have a small poinsettia for you to take home, to remind you of your church family, as well as picking up your "Christmas kit" to prepare for Christmas Eve.

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Haven: jenni@trinityhavenindy.org

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THIS WEEK AT FIRST CONGREGATIONAL

3 Ways to Connect for Worship

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How to Access our Zoom Gatherings

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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.

Weekly Calendar

Thursday, Dec 10	5:00 p.m.	Spiritual Support Group
Saturday, Dec 12	11:00 a.m.	Food Drive (at FC)
Sunday, Dec 13	9:30 a.m.	Sunday Adult Class
Sunday, Dec 13	11:00 a.m.	Third Sunday of Advent/Communion Worship (YouTube, FB, Dial In)
Sunday, Dec 13	12:00 p.m.	Zoom Coffee Hour
Tuesday, Dec 15	5:00 p.m.	Soul Care w/ Pastor Sarah
Tuesday, Dec 15	7:00 p.m.	Zoom Vespers
Wednesday, Dec 16	10:30 a.m.	Wellness Wednesday
Wednesday, Dec 17	11:30 a.m.	Women's Lunch
Thursday, Dec 17	1:00 p.m.	Men's Lunch
Thursday, Dec 17	5:00 p.m.	Spiritual Support Group
Friday, Dec 18	7:00 p.m.	IKC Blue Christmas Service
Saturday, Dec 19	11:00 a.m.	Neighborhood Walk (at FC)
Sunday, Dec 20	9:30 a.m.	Sunday Adult Class
Sunday, Dec 20	11:00 a.m.	Fourth Sunday of Advent Worship (YouTube, FB, Dial In)
Sunday, Dec 20	12:00 p.m.	Zoom Coffee Hour

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

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FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Epistle for the Week of December 17, 2020

Dear First Congregational,

During Advent our worship services have ended with a special benediction that reminds us of the ongoing work of God's Spirit bringing the world hope, joy, peace, and love. Here are the words from our Advent series benediction created by our worship design partner Marcia McFee:

*"We wait for justice, but we do not wait to work for change;
We wait for restored health, but we do not wait to work to heal;
We wait for wholeness, but we do not wait to work at binding brokenness;
We wait for peace, but we do not wait to work to eliminate hatred.
And so, my friends, like bells ringing out the news that God is ever-present with us,
continue to fill the night left by sadness with messages of joy. Go into your lives
humming the tunes that keep that joy alive in you and that spur you on in your work
of justice and reconciliation."*

I thank you for your faithful support of the mission and ministries for our beloved

First Congregational throughout 2020. Thank you for your end of year gifts, for your pledges to support our ministries for 2021, and for sharing your love through acts of service, prayers, and kindness. I am grateful for our gifted and hardworking staff, lay leaders, and members of our church. May we each find “the tune that keeps joy alive in you and that spur you on in your work of justice and reconciliation.”

Blessings,
Pastor Sarah

PS: Please register on this link (click [HERE](#)) for Friday’s Blue Christmas at 7pm led by Student Pastor Cassidy Hall in partnership with the Indiana-Kentucky Conference.

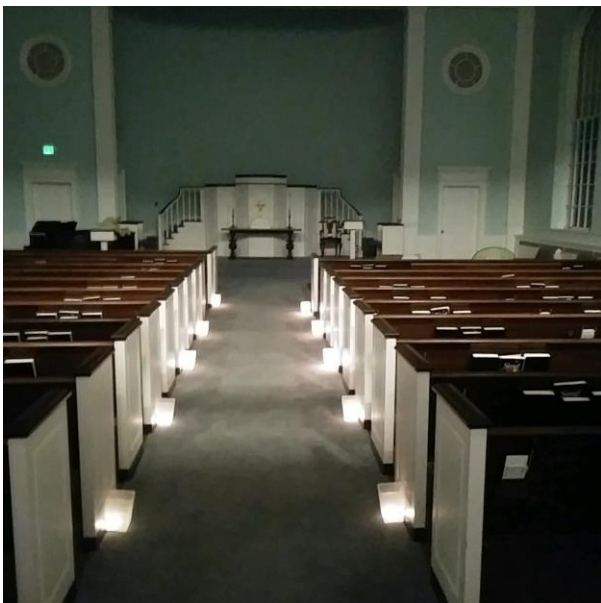
THIS SUNDAY

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

December 20: This Sunday we will read and reflect together on the Advent devotion for December 27 from the Advent devotional made available to our members this year.

Advent

As we look toward our last Sunday of Advent, we’re aware that Christmas is near. We continue this Sunday with another passage from Isaiah (chapter 9: 2-7) and the opening verses of John’s gospel (chapter 1: 1-18). Both writers speak of God’s holy light coming to humankind to shine in the darkness of despair, so this Sunday we light a candle of peace. **Christmas kits** are available for pickup again this Saturday (or any day after). Everyone will want to have one on Christmas Eve for our Lessons and Carols, along with our candle-raising to “Silent Night”! If pickup is not possible, feel free to contact Wendy Baldwin (wendy.baldwin@rci.com or 317-319-0806) for a delivery.



The Fourth Sunday of Advent Worship, 11AM (YouTube, FaceBook, Dial In)

Scriptures: Isaiah 9:2-7 & John 1:1-18

Sermon: Advent of Peace

Mission of the Month: The Christmas Fund

Coffee Hour via Zoom, immediately after worship

Sunday Vespers – Cancelled due to wintry weather, until further notice. If temperatures allow, we'll have "pop-up" outdoor Vespers, and we will notify folks via email.

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/>

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

TODAY!

- **Women's Lunch Bunch - Thursday, 12/17 at 11:30 a.m. via Zoom** - For questions or more information please contact Sue Chapman at (317) 259-1806 or carolsuech59@gmail.com.
- **Men's Lunch - Thursday, 12/17 at 1:00 p.m.** - for more information aa28977rwalker@gmail.com Please contact Randy Walker at (317) 796-2081 or
- **Spiritual Support Group, 5:00-6:00 PM** - You can contact Pastor Sarah at (386)478-9012 or pastorsarah@fcindy.org, or Pat Larracey at plainandfancy1963@att.net, or 317-625-6801 for more information.

TOMORROW! IKC Blue Christmas Service - Friday, 12/18, 7:00-8:00PM



Join us for an intergenerational service of prayer and lament. This service is co-sponsored by FC and is led by Student Pastor, Cassidy Hall. Register in advance for this

meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/join/zoom-join?secret=7171&meetingRef=9264494206>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

THIS SATURDAY! Monthly Neighborhood Walk – Saturday, 12/19, 10-noon

We'll take a walk in the neighborhood at 11 am. As a "thank you" for being a part of our church, we have a small poinsettia for you to take home, to remind you of your church family, as well as picking up your "Christmas kit" to prepare for Christmas Eve.

Virtual Giving Tree 2020 - Deadline THIS SUNDAY, 12/20!

Family Promise still has several items to be selected on the Sign Up Genius. We still have a few days until the deadline of this Sunday. There are only two gift cards left to be selected on the Target registry for Trinity Haven which is great. And Sara Hindi of Exodus emailed to say she's received gifts from the wish list from our congregations. Please continue to give generously!

Exodus Refugee: Click this link [here](https://www.exodusrefugee.org/) to support Exodus Refugee. These items will be delivered directly to Sara Hindi of Exodus Refugee. To learn more about this organization please visit: <https://www.exodusrefugee.org/>

Family Promise: We are sponsoring two families experiencing homelessness. Please click [here](https://www.fpgi.org/) to use Sign Up Genius to let us know what you are pledging to purchase. Please purchase the gifts online and have them sent to **St. Peter's UCC 3106 E Carmel Dr. Carmel, IN 46033**. Gifts will be delivered to the families in a safe contactless way. To learn more about this organization, please visit: <https://www.fpgi.org/>

Trinity Haven: In an effort to support this new organization which offers safe, supportive, and affirming housing for LGBTQ+ youth and young adults, we will purchase \$25 gift cards from Target & Kroger. Follow the links below to purchase:

Target: tgt.gifts/TrinityHavenIndy

Kroger: <https://giftcards.kroger.com/our-store-cards/kroger-enterprise-egift>.

When asked for email recipient please insert Jenni's email from Trinity

Haven: jenni@trinityhavenindy.org

Trinity Haven has specifically asked for gift cards so that they can purchase items based on their current and evolving needs. To learn more about this organization, please visit: <https://www.trinityhavenindy.org/>

Soul Care with Pastor Sarah - Join us on **Tuesdays from 5:00-6:00 p.m.** for a time to check-in and to pray together. Here is the Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/494018938?pwd=a3BrdnNyWXEza0tFMUgwek1C>

VFPTQTU9

** Please note that this Zoom link is different from the Zoom links used for other FC events.*

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)

Throughout most of December, we will use excerpts from the Advent devotional, *Draw Near*, to guide us as we nurture ways we can connect with one another and connect within ourselves.

Wednesday, December 23: Nurturing Essential Wellness

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) or Bill Hummel (317-875-8388 or 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/>.

COMING UP

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



Holiday Zoom Worship & Fellowship Schedule:

- Dec 18, 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. - IKC Blue Christmas Service
- Dec 24, 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. – Christmas Eve Worship (FC Zoom)
- Dec 24, 8:00 p.m. – Christmas Eve Zoom Fellowship
- Dec 25, 3:00 p.m. – Christmas Day Zoom Gathering

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Weekly Calendar

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Thursday, Dec 17	1:00 p.m.	Men's Lunch
Thursday, Dec 17	5:00 p.m.	Spiritual Support Group
Friday, Dec 18	7:00 p.m.	IKC Blue Christmas Service (IKC Zoom)
Saturday, Dec 19	11:00 a.m.	Neighborhood Walk (at FC)
Sunday, Dec 20	9:30 a.m.	Sunday Adult Class
Sunday, Dec 20	11:00 a.m.	Fourth Sunday of Advent/Communion Worship (YouTube, FB, Dial In)
Sunday, Dec 20	12:00 p.m.	Zoom Coffee Hour
Tuesday, Dec 22	5:00 p.m.	Soul Care w/ Pastor Sarah
Tuesday, Dec 22	7:00 p.m.	Zoom Vespers
Wednesday, Dec 23	10:30 a.m.	Wellness Wednesday

Thursday, Dec 24	7:00 p.m.	Christmas Eve Worship (YouTube, FB, Dial In)
Thursday, Dec 24	8:00 p.m.	Christmas Eve Zoom Fellowship
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.	First Sunday of Christmas Worship (YouTube, FB, Dial In)
Sunday, Dec 27	12:00 p.m.	Zoom Coffee Hour

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

 [FirstCongregationalUCCIndy](#)

 [Forward](#)



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

even 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

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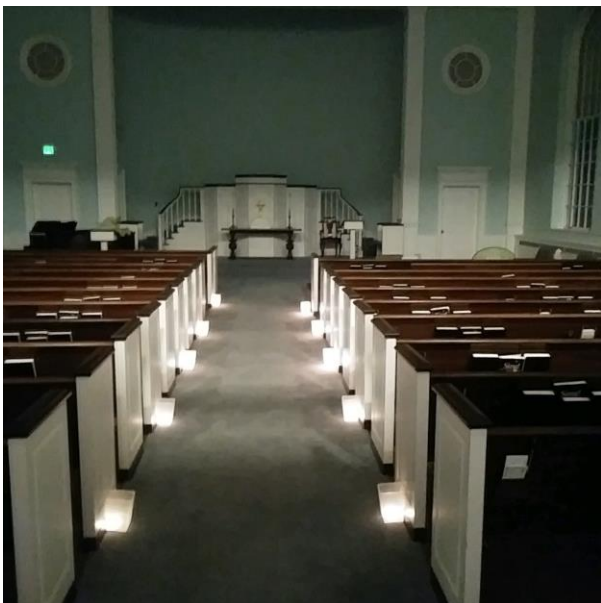
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CHRISTMAS EVE & CHRISTMAS DAY

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 146 & 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, 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) or Bill Hummel (317-875-8388 or whummel001@comcast.net).

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Office Administrator Vacation: Dec 24 - Jan 4

COMING UP

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

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THIS WEEK AT FIRST CONGREGATIONAL

3 Ways to Connect for Worship

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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)
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 [FirstCongregationalUCCIndy](#)

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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

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THIS WEEK AT FC

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

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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

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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.**