



Worship Themes for September 2017

Virtues for Progressive Christians

- September 3** Sometimes we look at 'being progressive' as having the right kind of ideas. This month we will look at Progressive Christianity as a vocation that requires practicing and getting good at particular virtues like justice-making, compassion giving and hope living. We begin on Labor Day weekend with the foundational idea: being progressive Christian is a vocation. Based on Romans 12:8-21, Paul urges us to equip ourselves with virtues for the struggle. **Being Good at our Job**
- September 10** Progressive Christians have a vocation for justice. Amos 5:21-27 explores the call of the prophet Amos, not about personal righteousness but about social righteousness. We are all in this together! Paul in Romans 13:8-14 talks about the need to love our neighbors. Jesus calls us to a love ethic for justice. **Getting Good at Justice**
- September 17** Progressive Christians have compassion for others and for the world (and for each other). See Isaiah 54:4-10. Progressive Christians are not content with being right, they seek to act with love. **The Practice of Compassion**
- September 24** Progressive Christians live with hope. Paul, who knew a thing or two about defeat, writes about living with hope (2 Corinthians 4:8-18). **Living with Hope!**

Pastor's Reflection

This autumn will mark a bit of a change in the life of First Congregational Church in that we will more consciously be focused on preparing for the future.

- The Search Committee is hard at work and seems to be pleased with the number and quality of the people who are interested in serving with First Congregational Church as your next settled minister.
- The Stewardship Team is being led by Judy Fletcher and is about to meet and design our plans for having the resources to do what we want to do as a church.
- September 23 brings our annual **AMP** planning event so that the members of the church are fully involved in the work and direction of the church.
- New members will be received.
- Our worship services will revisit key practices that are important for progressive Christians to practice until we get good at them.

Amidst all of this we will be engaged in mission, the Gospel will be preached and lived, those who cannot come to church will be visited at their homes. We will love one another and seek to be a transforming presence for God in our lives and in the world. That's the key: to be good at being who we want to be for God. As our Statement of Mission affirms:

First Congregational UCC is called by Jesus to be a transforming presence for God in the world. By this we mean that:

- propelled by God's grace, we strive to welcome and love everyone;
- seeking to hear God's voice in today's world, we worship, learn and grow in faith individually and as a community;
- responding to God's call for compassion, justice, and care of the earth, we equip and empower each other to make a difference in our lives and in the world.

This is what we mean by being the church! What a wonderful time!

– Rev. Michael H. Montgomery

Upcoming Events

New Members Received

New members will be received in worship on Sunday, September 17. People join churches like ours by covenanting with the rest of the congregation to join in Christian discipleship with the other people here. . There will be a light supper and meeting to discuss what this means on Sunday evening, **September 10 at 6:30 p.m.** Contact Rev. Michael Montgomery if you are interested in attending!

AMP Up!

We will hold our Annual Ministry Planning event (AMP) on Saturday, September 23 at 9 AM. This event was part of our strategic plan to get full congregational input into envisioning the next year. We have a new constitution and organization of boards - so this is the perfect opportunity to see how they are doing and what they have been doing and help plan what comes next! There will be short readouts from each board and council and open sharing of ideas as well as a chance to participate with individual boards.

- AMP is for everyone!
- AMP combines new ideas with existing strategies
- AMP grows our culture of intentional, purposeful planning to empower our congregation to 'take control' of its future
- AMP will grow our decision-making capacity
- AMP will have donuts and other goodies and coffee!

Any questions, please contact Karen Walker

New Frontiers in Giving

Scott Shirai from the UCC's national Office for Philanthropy and Stewardship will be with us on Sunday, **September 24, 2017** to discuss new frontiers and strategies for the canny donor. He will make a brief presentation in our morning worship service which will be followed by a lunch and then a one hour conversation on how to make creative giving an effective part of your personal stewardship.

From the Moderator

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted. - Ecclesiastes 3:1-2

Recently I read an article where the writer was out jogging and saw a young man running toward her wearing a shirt with the slogan, "Don't go to church." When she turned around to look at his back, she saw these words, "Be the church."

I fully expected to continue reading the article and find some mention of the UCC slogan that is part of "God is still Speaking" campaign but was disappointed when there was no reference to the UCC. When I googled the slogan I found no less than a dozen sites for "Don't go to church. Be the church" including song lyrics with the same title and a sermon chastising churches for using this misleading phrase.

Nevertheless, as we approach our AMP meeting to prepare for 2018, I would like to us to review these phrases from the UCC "Be the Church:"

Protect the environment. Care for the poor. Embrace diversity.

Reject racism.
Fight for the powerless.

Forgive often.
Share earthly and spiritual resources. Love God.
Enjoy this life!

May we continue to be the church as we carry out our stated mission and plan for 2017.

— Bob Cook, Moderator

Sunday Adult Class

All classes meet in the Library (room 212) at 9:45 a.m. All are welcome!

During September the sessions on Sunday morning will continue the study Into The World: The Acts of the Apostles. The experiences of the early church as told by Luke in Acts will relate to our practices and experiences as much as possible. Specific class plans are:

September 3 – Worth Hartman will present session #12, "Paul Upsets the Empire"

"In Athens, Paul comes face to face with the hard core of pagan religion. Idolatry, which seems so primitive to moderns, is in reality alive and well in the present day. An idol may be defined as something in which one puts ultimate trust, other than the true God....Paul's arguments hold up well for those today who put their ultimate trust in money, violence, astrology, superstition, or a host of other idols."

September 10 - Rich Gibson will present session 13, "Riots and Encouragement"

"The riot at Ephesus echoes several themes: the worship of idols - particularly money; Paul's willingness to suffer as long as the gospel is proclaimed; the help and companionship of the Christian fellowship.... [The] references to the ministry of encouragement...and the weekly breaking of bread by the community of faith.....are two basics which the Christian church in every age needs to keep center stage."

September 17 – Nancy Dickinson will present session 14 "Story Without End"

"Paul has been in constant danger of death almost since the moment of his conversion. Knowing Christ is not the promise of an easy life; it means a life of servanthood to the purposes of God. God has time and again spared Paul, not for Paul's sake, but for the sake of the gospel." How can we today keep the story alive and going?

September 24 – Rev. Michael Montgomery will lead a discussion with Scott Shirai from the UCC's national Office for Philanthropy and Stewardship.

New Creation Worship ***Virtues for Progressive Christians***

September 3 Being a progressive Christian is a vocation rather than an opinion. Our Labor Day Weekend worship services explore this work of faith as a combination of liberating tasks and personal virtues. Exodus 3:1-15, Romans 12:8-21

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Call to Service

"Here am I; send me!" Isaiah 6:8"

Mission of the Month, UCC Open and Affirming Coalition

Our Mission of the Month is the United Church of Christ (UCC) Open and Affirming (ONA) Coalition. Over 30 years ago the UCC adopted a resolution that launched the ONA movement in the UCC. The ONA Coalition is an independent non-profit part of the UCC with funding coming primarily from individual and congregational gifts. The UCC ONA Coalition does not receive funds from Our Church's Wider Mission, a major source of revenue for other UCC mission initiatives. The Coalition is currently working on building a 100% Open and Affirming Church. They aim to make UCC congregations safe church homes for LGBTQ and transgender Christians of all ages and their families, advocate for strong anti-bullying and suicide prevention policies in all public and private schools and make UCC churches safe for LGBTQ youth. The Coalition also supports LGBTQ asylum seekers from countries where being LGBTQ is criminalized, works to assure equal protection under the law, and resists assaults on LGBTQ civil rights. You can contribute loose change and dollar bills or put larger bills or a check in an envelope marked ONA Coalition or Sept MOM. Make checks out to FCC and put ONA Coalition in the memo line. Thanks!

— Sandy Wood

Pantry Items of the Month

During September, we are collecting the following items: body wash or hand soap, paper towels, peanut butter, rice and beans.

Our Monthly Food Donations

Our monthly food contributions to our Northside neighbors, who are food insecure, are at an all-time high. Two deliveries to the Northside Food Pantry were needed in July, instead of the usual one. Our contributions are well managed and appreciated.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH FOUNDATION (FCCF)

Over the years since its formation, the FCCF has contributed greatly to needs of the church that could not be anticipated or handled by the normal church budget process. We can all be grateful to the founders who began the FCCF about 50 years ago. It is managed by a Board, reports to the church Trustees, and is always subject to the will of the Congregation. A report for the past year appears in each church annual report. Contributions strengthen the FCCF and are needed to insure its continued health. The most common methods of giving are individual contributions and bequests. When giving, please specify which fund you intend to support: the Endowment, Capital Improvements Fund, Ministers Fund, or Organ Fund.

Important Information Concerning the Gift of Stock

In the past giving the church your gift of stock was a bit confusing. However, the good news is that we have finalized an easy way to complete this transfer! In all situations where you would like to donate stock, you just need to tell your broker to use the following information to deposit those shares into the First Congregational Brokerage account.

Fidelity's Depository Trust Company
DTC No: 0226
Account No: Z50424340

In all situations, Fidelity (our broker) is instructed to sell the stock when transfer is complete and then to move the money to our cash portion of the account. We then move the money to the account that respects the donor's wishes (such as Pledge). If you still have questions, please contact Jim Lootens.

Financial Update

When We Give, We Reach Out With Helping Hands

When we give to the ministries of First Congregational UCC, we are serving those inside and outside our church community. As 1st Peter 4:10 says: "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, with whatever gift each of you has received."

1. Current Year Actual vs Budget Summary

1/1/2017 through 8/1/2017 Using 2017A

Category	1/1/2017 Actual	- Budget	8/1/2017 Difference
INCOME	132,077	135,377	-3,299
M. Unrestricted Contributions	132,077	135,377	-3,299
M.01 Pledged Offerings	120,539	118,167	2,371
M.01.a Checks or Cash	108,395	108,017	378
M.01.b Online	3,894	0	3,894
M.01.c PrePaid Pledges	5,250	5,250	0
M.01.d PostPaid Pledges	100	2,000	-1,900
M.01.e MHCNS Rental Fees	2,900	2,900	0
M.02 UnPledged Offerings	5,757	11,427	-5,671
M.02.a Plate_Usher Counted	1,262	879	383
M.02.b Contributions	3,582	9,376	-5,794
M.02.c Miscellaneous	913	1,172	-260
M.03 Surplus from Prior Year	4,479	4,479	0
M.04 Endowment Income 2016	0	0	0
M.05 Transfer from Minister's Fund	1,303	1,303	0
EXPENSES	141,095	148,697	7,601
A. Pastoral Leadership	57,792	58,098	306
B. Worship & Faith	23,037	23,089	53
C. Care & Connections	205	322	118
D. Witness & Welcome	398	527	129
E. Outreach & Service	13,205	17,992	4,787
F. Trustees	59	314	255
G. Administration & Operations	13,198	16,189	2,991
H. House & Grounds	29,875	28,004	-1,872
I. Miscellaneous	3,325	4,161	835

Overall, we are slightly positive to our budget. Income is \$3,300 below budget due to a continued shortfall in non-pledge contributions. Expenses are almost \$7,600 below the budget. The expense trends are similar to what we saw for the first 6 months:

- Admin & Operations - \$3,000 below budget – Most of this is true savings – continued kudos to Cheryl Dillenback for her outstanding efficiency!
- Outreach & Service - \$4,800 below budget – a matter of timing, as most of our mission contributions are made later in the year.
- House & Grounds - \$1,875 above budget – mostly attributable to natural gas.

It's certainly good that we are doing slightly better than our budget; however, we are spending more than we are taking in, so we still have much work to do to end the year in the black. Thanks to everyone for your continued generous giving and careful expense management.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Jim Lootens, Treasurer
lootens.jb@gmail.com

What's Happening at FCC

October Colony Submission Deadline

The submission deadline for all announcements, articles, reports, and events is Friday, **September 15, 9 p.m.**

Discussion Group/Pitch-In

The Discussion Group and Pitch-In will meet Saturday, September 9, 2017, 5:30 PM, at the home of Rich and Jackie Gibson for supper. The theme will again be Poverty, Humanity and Compassion. Those interested should watch the movie "Beasts of the Southern Wild" on their own, and come prepared to discuss it. (The Indy Public Library has ten [10] copies, and Rich and Jackie have a copy to lend). Roger Ebert wrote of this movie, "This film is a remarkable creation, imagining a self-reliant community without the safety nets of the industrialized world... Sometimes miraculous films come into being, made by people you've never heard of, starring unknown faces, blindsiding you with creative genius...one of the year's best films."

Please RSVP by email or phone no later than Thursday, September 7, to Jackie at 317-735-2895, or jackiengibson@gmail.com.

FCC's Got Talent!



Calling all performers and artists!

"FCC'S GOT TALENT!"

is looking for you

**to help make Friday October 13
an evening to remember.**

**Sign up now to display your art work or give a performance
for an evening of fun raising and fund raising
to benefit the Special Music Fund.**

**Sign up on the signup sheet in the narthex.
Give us your name, how to reach you, and tell us about
the art you will display or about your performance.**

FAQ:

- 1. Everyone says I'm the life of the party when I tell a joke or two. Can I tell a joke or two for this event?** *Yes, humor is welcome. Just keep it clean and respectful.*
- 2. I like to do needle work. Could I display some of my pieces for the event?** *What a great idea! There will be various types of display areas for art work. Or did you mean you were going to sew something on stage before our very eyes?*
- 3. I've been secretly taking harmonica lessons. I'm a beginner, but I'd love to share my progress thus far. Would this be ok?** *Gosh you're brave...but why not?*
- 4. How much is this going to cost me?** *There is no fee to display your artwork or give a performance. Isn't that great? To enjoy all the other entertainment and great hors d'oeuvres will cost each adult a modest \$10.00 (children are free!). So little for so much enjoyment and such a great cause - and think of how good the applause will feel!*

Dress for Success

After months of unemployment, an Indianapolis woman completed a training course, applied for a new job, and has an appointment for an interview. Then there is a new problem – what shall she wear? Her closet has no business clothes appropriate for an interview, and unemployment has left her without resources to shop. You – and Dress for Success – can be the solution to this dilemma.

Dress for Success provides business-appropriate clothing and accessories to women who need assistance in making the transition to employment. Items needed include suits, slacks, blazers, skirts, low-heeled shoes, purses and conservative jewelry. You may take your contribution to any Classic Cleaner store, or leave it on the designated rack in the narthex coat room. Questions? See Mary Lou Rothe

Colts Faith and Football: We have an opportunity to get a block of seats for the November 26th game between the Colts and the Tennessee Titans at reduced rates—starting at \$78/person—and we need at least ten people to sign up. Rich Gibson has more details, and a notice is on the bulletin board. You can reach him at hooteagle@me.com or 317-735-2895



**FAITH AND FOOTBALL**
**FAITH AND FOOTBALL
WITH THE INDIANAPOLIS COLTS**
*Sunday, November 26th
VS. Tennessee Titans @ 1PM*

You're invited to attend the Indianapolis Colts versus Tennessee Titans game at Lucas Oil Stadium and enjoy a faith based post-game event featuring special Colts guests!

Experience Includes-

- Ticket to the game
- Post-Game Field Pass
- Photo Opportunity (bring your cameras)
- Inspirational messages and testimonials from select Colts Players and Coaches

Packages Starting at \$67 to \$124
(based on seat preference and availability)



Family Promise Clothing drive starts Friday, August 25

Here's a way to get your fall change of season clothing inventory done and do some good in the process. Inventory what you have, pick out those gently used clothes you no longer wear, bring them to church in white kitchen trash bags or use the trash bags provided in the cloak room, drop them in the white laundry baskets and help out Family Promise. **No shoes or accessories, please.** Thanks in advance, because every bag helps Family Promise receive a \$5 clothing voucher from Goodwill to help families with emergency clothing for children, or even work apparel for adults. Below are the important dates to keep in mind:

Friday, August 25 to Sunday, September 10 - **Congregations collect clothing**

Monday, September 11 to Saturday, September 16 - **Congregations deliver clothing** to the FPGI Day Center at 1850 N. Arsenal Avenue, Indianapolis, IN 46218 between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

Family Promise will again be here at FCC! Family Promise works with families to empower their move from being homeless to having homes. They provide training for job search, skill building for caring for homes, and assistance in finding a house or apartment that will be sustainable in the long run for the family. Our part in this ministry is to house three or four families for one week, twice a year, while they are in training to be housed and employed. To do this we will need groups that will plan and cook dinners, volunteers for specific tasks such as driving the Family Promise van to pick up and deliver our guests, initial set-up and final take down, and two people each night to sleep in the church as chaperones/emergency resources. We will receive our next guest on October 1 through October 8. More information is coming! Please contact Katie Booth or the church office if you are interested in assisting.

Faith In Action Team of Witness & Welcome

The Faith In Action Team met at 3pm, 8/20, during our Chautauqua Day event. Nine members participated in this organizational meeting. They covenanted to be a non-partisan team for addressing public issues based in faith and scripture as followers of Jesus.

Initial issues for monitoring on a weekly basis were: environment; minimum wage; A.L.I.C.E.; voting rights; criminal justice & drug crimes; witnessing on short notice; immigration & deportation; dishonesty in government; electoral college inequities; and gerrymandering in state government. Many more to be discerned.

The next meeting is called for Sunday, 9/17, 7:00-8:30 PM. For more info contact Jim Rutherford, Convener.

PCR Committee launched: one of the committees called for in our new constitution is the PCR – Pastor Congregation Relations Committee. This committee has now launched and met with Michael and we want everyone to be aware – and to bring any questions or concerns to us. The current committee members are: Nancy Dickinson, Bill Gillette, Jim Rutherford, and Karen Walker. Our job description (from our council approved charter) is to: provide support and advocacy for the relationship between the pastor & congregation by serving as a liaison for concerns and feedback, interpretation, and conflict mediation. Working through things directly between individuals is preferred, but not all issues may work that way. We will provide process and support for facilitating through any concerns if needed (other than safe church related issues which need to be referred to that committee). Please see any one of us for additional information or if you have any concerns or issues you would like to raise.

Safe Church Committee: It is important to keep this policy – the Safe Church Policy Concerning Harassment, Exploitation, and Stalking Prevention - and its process in front of everyone at the church. Diana Kemper and Larry Eckel are the current committee members who are dedicated to investigating any questions or issues raised that fall under the purview of this policy which is in place to promote a safe environment for all. There is a copy of the policy on our website on the faith and fellowship page and copies are available at the bulletin board at church if anyone wants more information. There will be a repeated education event about this policy early next year.

Announcements from the Congregation

Plymouth Rockers

The Plymouth Rockers will meet at noon on August 29 at the church. We'll each bring a salad, side dish, beverage or dessert, and the group will order pizza (to be delivered) The program is, "Working for Our Best Physical Fitness – Why and How". Sign up on the sheet on the table in the narthex. All are welcome. Questions? See Bill Gillette

Men's Lunch

This lunch and discussion gathering for men of First Congregational meets at various restaurants in the greater Indianapolis area. They meet every other Thursday at 1 p.m. This month they will meet on September 7 and 21. Please contact Randy Walker at (317) 796-2081 or rk10walker@gmail.com for information.

Women's Lunch Bunch

All women of the church are invited to get together once a month for lunch, friendship, and fellowship. This month we will meet September 28 at 11:45 a.m. For any questions or for information please contact Sue Chapman, 317-259-1806 or caolsuech@sbcglobal.net.