



Sarah Griffith Lund Called as Minister!!!

In a unanimous vote in a congregational meeting following her candidating sermon, the Rev. Dr. Sarah G. Lund was called to be our next settled minister. She will begin on March 1, 2018. Rev. Lund is currently the Vice President for Seminary Advancement at Christian Theological Seminary here in Indianapolis. A UCC minister, Rev. Lund has served churches in Minnesota and Florida and on the conference staff of the Florida Conference of the United Church of Christ. More to come in the March Colony!

Worship Themes for February 2018

- February 4** **A Place of Healing.** Based on Isaiah 40:21-31 and Mark 1:29-39, the Scriptural foundation on the work of Jesus and the power of God as relates to healing, raises a challenge to churches: how can we be places of healing? Communion will be served.
- February 11** **A Place of Light.** Based on 2 Corinthians 4:3-6 and Mark 9:2-9. In times when it seems like the night rises among us, the insights Paul and the gospels have about Jesus being a source of light for our lives seems particularly important. What does it mean for the church to be a place of light, where we see more clearly and are a source of light for the world?
- February 14** **Ash Wednesday: A time of focus and blessing.** We will celebrate Taize-style with chanting and reflection with optional communion and the imposition of ashes. And it's St. Valentine's Day! What could be more appropriate (we are working on how to fit these two themes together!)
- February 18** **A Place of Christ's Presence.** Based on 1 Corinthians 12:12-26 and Ephesians 4:1-16, we look at what it means for the church to be the Body of Christ.
- February 25** **A Place of God's Blessing.** Based on Genesis 12, 1 Corinthians 13 and Matthew 5:13-16, we reflect on the church as being a place where people discover God's blessings. This will be Dr. Montgomery's last Sunday with us!

Being the Beloved Community - Our Lenten Journey

Our journey together this Lenten season will be different than in the recent past. For one thing, it is a time of heightened excitement and anticipation as we prepare to receive our new settled pastor, Rev. Sarah Lund. On the other hand, it is a time of sadness as we prepare to say goodbye to Rev. Michael. But isn't that how Lent has always been - a time of reflection on what to let go of in order to make room for what will be? Lent can be a solitary journey of self-reflection, but it can also be a journey embarked upon together by the community of faith.

Our theme for 2018 is "Being the Beloved Community" and our programming will explore this theme in various ways. In past years, we have scheduled our Lenten gatherings to be on

Wednesday evenings, preceded by a soup supper. This year our gatherings will be at different times in order that more people will be able to participate in at least some of the gatherings. Please put the following dates and times on your calendar and plan to join in.

Wednesday Feb 21 "Lessons and Challenges for our Community," presented by Rev. Michael in his signature interactive style. Please join us at 6:15 for a light supper. The program begins at 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday Feb 28 The Green Team will present on how the Beloved Community cares for God's beloved creation. The leader will be Carol Johnston, CTS Professor Emerita of Theology and Culture. Please join us at 6:15 for a light supper. The program begins at 7:00 p.m.

**Sunday March 4
1:00-3:00 PM.** A workshop on communication presented by guest speaker Cynthia Drouin. Ms. Drouin graduated from Christian Theological Seminary in 2016 with a Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling. She is a Licensed Mental Health Counseling Associate, working towards full licensure. She is skilled at teaching groups of diverse people ways of communicating that help them set and meet their goals while at the same time affirming one another even when compromise is necessary. Ms. Drouin has a history with FCC; she grew up in our church and is the daughter of the beloved Rev. Waldo Savage and Priscilla Savage. Come join us for an afternoon of learning and practicing ways of communicating within the beloved community. If you wish, bring a sick lunch. Refreshments will be served during the break.

Sunday March 11 The folks from New Creation will present a Lenten program that will help us all deepen our faith through creative and innovative approaches to the scriptures. Come and be prepared to be inspired! Better yet, come an experience New Creation worship service from 5:30 - 6:30; enjoy a light meal from 6:30 - 7:00, and stay for the Lenten program.

New Creation Worship

February 4 We continue our theme of expressing our devotion to God by looking at how other people's lives have influenced our lives of faith. Who have been our exemplars? Shaped us through their examples. Romans 16.

February 11 Our final worship service in the season of Epiphany will feature worship in a 'Quaker meeting' style of silence and speaking only when the Spirit says 'Speak!'

February 18 Lent is a time when Christians prepared for baptism and formally choosing to follow Christ. Which raises the question of other than penance for our sins, what is important to progressive Christians in following Jesus? We begin by asking the basic question: "What's Important about Jesus?"

February 25 Theme: How do we follow Jesus? By showing compassion for others!

Minister's Reflections

We have now past the half way mark of January and the weather scientists tell us that winter itself is now half over. Part of us doesn't believe that---January is when we realize that it will only get worse in February and we remember that our biggest snow storms usually come in March. But change is like that. Even when it is happening, we often don't recognize it until it is long after it has changed. We learn that with the change of the seasons, with education, with the growth of our families and yes, with our church.

Change does not stop at the moment that we reflect on change. It is a continuing process that adapts to changing situations and people. It continues; and none of us knows what the future will bring.

We know only how we can join the processes, be a part of what happens, shape it and accept being changed ourselves. It is to be a transformed and transforming place for God's work. That work is shaped by God's actions with us, shaped by what we do and yes, by the leadership that we call to walk with us on this journey of faith. Day to day it will seem like much remains the same, and it will. But with time, much will be different and, I pray, will advance God's causes in the world.

– Rev. Michael H. Montgomery

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

2017 has been the year for adjusting to the newly organized Boards, implementing new ideas, and upholding our Stated Mission to be “called by Jesus to be a transforming presence for God in the world.”

Many thanks to our Board chairs, Glenn Evans, Rich Gibson, Nathan Howard, Carol Sowle, and Sandy Wood, who tirelessly led their individual Boards throughout the year, attended monthly Council meetings, and wrote endless reports to communicate the ongoing projects.

Additional thanks to Wendy Baldwin, Worth Hartman, and Karen Walker who served on Council in their respective roles as clerk, member at large, and vice moderator. Their input has been valuable.

Jim Lootens gallantly stepped up to fulfill the job of treasurer and George Meier humbly agreed to become our financial secretary. Their dedicated work made our jobs much easier.

The Search Committee, led by Randy Walker, exceeded our expectations and delivered a super candidate for our consideration. We rejoice in their success.

Thanks for all our friends and members who make being a part of First Congregational a meaningful experience. While one can worship God alone, it sure is more fun in a group.

And finally, THANKS to Rev. Michael for guiding us through the last 2 ½ years as we restructured our organization, evaluated our work, and set goals for our future. We greatly appreciate his patient leadership.

Sincerely,

— Bob Cook, Moderator

Sunday Adult Class

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

Specific class plans are as follows:

February 4 – Christ Brings Peace with God to the Church

February 11 - Blessed are the Peacemakers - Part I

February 18 – Blessed are the Peacemakers - Part II

February 25 – Christians as Peacemakers

Call to Service

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

Board Retreat Saturday, February 10 10:00 – 12:30

This will serve as the first meeting of all the boards that have just been elected! We will spend a little time as a larger group eating brunch, and then break into individual board meetings to kick off the new year. This is a time to learn about each other and the details about your board. Please attend if at all possible - time to choose board chairs and preferred meeting times moving forward. The foundation was laid very well last year with our new constitution/bylaws and new board structure and now with Pastor Sarah we can continue and build on that foundation! Any questions please contact Karen Walker.

Mission of the Month, Indiana Youth Group (IYG)

Indiana Youth Group (IYG) was founded in 1987 by Franklin College grads and partners Chris Gonzalez and Jeff Werner. Both men volunteered for the Gay and Lesbian Switchboard in Indianapolis and noticed the huge number of calls coming from youth under age 21 with issues of homelessness, suicide and dropout.

For over 30 years the mission of IYG has been to create safe spaces, provide wellness programming and educate LGBTQ youth and the community. The result is self-actualized, competent adults providing leadership and advocacy in our greater community.

With the assistance of grants, donations and fund raising, IYG moved into a newer and larger facility a few weeks ago. The new facility is located at 3733 N. Meridian and will allow IYG to increase its programming.

This year our monetary donations will be used in the following areas:

- SWAP Closet- IYG youth can obtain appropriate clothing for job interviews, school, or other life situations. IYG is also accepting donations of gently used clothing for these purposes.
- Food Pantry – Each day that IYG is open meals provided by volunteer organizations are served to the youth. Often times this meal is the only food some of the youth have that day. The Pantry is available to provide nourishing food to youth for those days when the Center is closed.
- In late summer 2018, IYG and Trinity Episcopal Church will be opening Trinity House, an LGBTQ homeless shelter which will have space for 14 youth. Our donations will help furnish this facility to provide safe housing for youth who have been outcast from their families because they are LGBTQ.

Our generous support will help make a better present for the young people in our community. Within the last decade there has been a national project titled "It Gets Better" to give hope to LGBTQ individuals. It can be better, today with our assistance.

-Bob Cook

Pantry Items of the Month

During February, we are collecting the following items: bar soap, jelly/jam, canned spaghetti, and canned tuna/chicken

Our Monthly Food Donations

Our food donations to the Northside Pantry were super again in December. We donated 116 pounds of food and 32 pounds of nonfood items (soap, tissue paper, etc.). Items requested in January are bread, soup, applesauce, deodorant and shampoo (other food items are welcome, too). Your donations, placed in the wicker baskets in the narthex, are needed and appreciated.

-Bill Gillette for the Missions Board

Celebrating Rev. Michael!

Please join us on Saturday, Feb 24, at 5-6:30 pm for a celebration event of Rev Michael's ministry with us. This is a time for us to have fun and give thanks for Rev Michael, and wish him well on his future journey. As part of the event, we will have a pitch-in dinner and fun activities. A signup sheet is available in the Narthex. Please plan to come, even if you can't contribute to the pitch-in, for this time of community, celebration, thanksgiving, and well-wishing!

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.

Announcements from the Congregation

March Colony Submission Deadline

Please have your submissions sent to me by **Thursday, February 15.**

The First Congregational Church Foundation

The First Congregational Church Foundation had an especially good year in 2017. The stock market did well, and significant donations were made by members. A healthy Foundation with its several funds aids the financial stability of the church and allows us to do things that would otherwise be out of reach. Please consider contributing to one of the funds, Endowment, Capital Improvements, Minister's, Organ, or Music support. If you have questions, please contact the Minister, Al Moore, Judy Fletcher, or Bill Gillette. Gifts of any size are welcome.

Plymouth Rockers

The Plymouth Rockers will meet at the church at noon on February 27. We'll have a brown bag lunch followed by a program. Save the date. All are welcome, not just retirees.

-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 February 8 and 22. Please contact Randy Walker at (317) 796-2081 or aa28977walker@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 February 22 at 11:45 a.m. For any questions or for information please contact Sue Chapman, 317-259-1806 or caolsuech@sbcglobal.net.

Circle IV

Circle IV will meet on Tuesday, February 20 at 1:30 p.m. at the home of Gloria Boedeker. All women of the church are invited to attend. For any questions or for more information, please contact Gloria.

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."

2017 Operating Results vs. Budget

Highlights:

- Contributions were on budget.
- Expenses were \$12,000 below budget and almost \$10,000 below last year!
- We began the year with a \$14,000 deficit in our operating budget. Thanks to great expense management and strong December contributions, we ended the year with a deficit of only \$2,409 – 1% of our operating budget.

I will provide a final 2017 financial report for the 2018 annual meeting.

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

Jim Lootens, Treasurer
lootens.jb@gmail.com

Category	Actual	2017 Budget	Difference
▼ INCOME	231,200	231,072	128
▼ M. Unrestricted Contributions	231,200	231,072	128
▶ M.01 Pledged Offerings	202,133	197,073	5,060
▼ M.02 UnPledged Offerings	14,569	19,500	-4,932
M.02.a Plate_Usher Co...	2,589	1,500	1,089
M.02.b Contributions	10,979	16,000	-5,021
M.02.c Miscellaneous	1,001	2,000	-1,000
M.03 Surplus from Prior Year	4,479	4,479	0
M.04 Foundation - Endo...	8,717	8,717	0
M.05 Foundation - Ministe...	1,303	1,303	0
▼ EXPENSES	233,609	245,618	12,009
▶ A. Pastoral Leadership	95,468	96,535	1,067
▼ B. Worship & Faith	40,013	39,400	-613
▶ B.01. Traditional Worship	24,938	23,200	-1,738
▶ B.02 New Creation Worship	14,575	14,050	-525
B.03 Special Service Music	0	750	750
B.04 Education	135	600	465
B.05 Flowers	0	300	300
B.06 Other W&F Expenses	365	500	135
▶ C. Care & Connections	474	550	76
▶ D. Witness & Welcome	816	900	84
▶ E. Outreach & Service	25,797	28,100	2,303
▶ F. Trustees	94	500	406
▶ G. Administration & Operations	20,122	27,625	7,503
▶ H. House & Grounds	44,802	44,725	-77
▶ I. Miscellaneous	6,023	7,283	1,260
Net Difference:	-2,409	-14,546	12,137