



Pastor's Reflections

April marks my second month serving as your new settled senior pastor and it also is a time in the season of the church liturgical year where we embrace our identity as an "Easter people." What I like about the timing of this new chapter in the life of the church occurring in the Easter season is that it helps us to see that our journey together is for the purpose of experiencing God's gifts of abundant life. In the experience of the mysteries surrounding the resurrection of Jesus, like the first disciples, we open ourselves to following the Risen One, even if we don't know where the path will take us.

In this time of new beginnings, I join with you on this journey of following Jesus. I find myself listening closely, so that I can understand more clearly the character, identity, history, culture, personality, and ways of this particular body of Christ. As I seek to get to know our church, I am seeking to get to know each person who calls this church home. I look forward to discovering more about you, more about this spiritual community, and more about how God is calling us to be disciples today. I hope you will share with me your hopes and dreams for our church as we seek to fulfill our covenant: serve God with faithfulness; treat one another with acceptance, love and compassion; bear witness to the world with love; and live our faith humbly, yet boldly.

Thank you for your warm welcome. Thank you for calling me to be your spiritual leader. Thank you for opening up your hearts and minds as we join together to marvel, delight, and follow the One who is risen.

With Easter hope,

– Pastor Sarah Lund
(386) 478-9012 or pastorsarah@fcindy.org

Getting-To-Know- You Events with Pastor Sarah

Pastor Sarah would like to get to know each of us better, so the Board of Care & Connections has set up some small group events to assist with this. These gatherings will be held at different locations, days, and times in April and May to cover our varied schedules. The get-togethers will last up to 1 ½ hours and light refreshments will be available.

Each event will be limited to 8-10 people to provide good interaction within the group. Signup sheets are available at church, or contact Wendy Baldwin for availability.

Thursday, April 5, 1-2:30 pm, at Nancy Dickinson's (Robin Run)
Sunday, April 8, 7:30-9 pm, Young Adults gathering, Brics, 901 E 64th St
Thursday, April 19, 7-8:30 pm, at the Coomers (Delaware Trails area)
Saturday, April 21, 10-11:30 am, at the church
Tuesday, April 24, 7-8:30 pm, at the Gibsons (near Allisonville & 57th)
Wednesday, May 2, 2-3:30 pm, at the Walkers (North Willow Farms)

More sessions will be scheduled, as needed. If you are unable to attend one of these

gatherings, please contact Wendy Baldwin with desired location and timeframes. What a great opportunity for us to get to know each other better!

May 31-June 2: Annual Gathering

What's New?

Venue

*Friedens United Church of Christ
8300 S. Meridian St, Indianapolis, IN*

Church is the heart of what we do, so we are thrilled that Friedens UCC will be welcoming us into their church home.

Entertainment

Carrie Newcomer Concert

The singer/songwriter inspires community, encourages passion.

Keynote Speaker

Dr. Marcia McFee

Creator of Worship Design Studio, this author, speaker, and worship designer will help us discover new ways to worship and spark faith.

Youth and Children's Initiatives

Daily childcare provided for kids grades K-5

Childcare for kids June 1 & 2—just register your child in advance, \$30 per child. Youth will be invited to stay at Friedens each night in an old-school, retreat-style setting.



Who Should Attend?

Clergy

Come to reconnect with friends, equip yourself with new ideas for ministry, and share your vision for igniting church.

Laypeople

Come to network with others to strengthen your congregation's ministries, learn and understand how the conference supports you, and discover ways that you can support the conference.

Youth and Children

Come tell your faith story, learn about what it means to be a part of the UCC, and get to know teens from churches across the conference.

Register

Register soon for the cheapest rate, to ensure child care, and take part in the youth program and much, much more!



Faith & Action Poverty Conference April 26 9 – 5 at St. Luke's UMC

Individuals and groups from Central Indiana's nonprofit, faith and government sectors are invited to "Push Back Poverty" at the Faith & Action Project's second annual spring conference on April 26. A day of workshops, networking and inspiring community action, the conference will include insights from national experts and more than 20 local leaders to highlight the impact of collaborative efforts to reduce poverty in Indianapolis. Details at:

<https://fasc2018.eventbrite>.

PUSH BACK POVERTY

No effort to turn back the tide of poverty will succeed unless we also examine the barriers that trap people in poverty. On April 26 the Faith & Action Project's Push Back Poverty conference will assemble national and local anti-poverty experts and activists to examine such barriers and identify action-oriented solutions.

Keynoting this conversation will be **Elizabeth Hinton**, the Harvard professor and author whose work on the entanglement of anti-poverty measures and anti-crime measures culminated in the award-winning book *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime: The Making of Mass Incarceration in America*. Hinton will address issues of poverty and racial inequality as well as efforts to remove barriers to employment and rehabilitation.

Closing the conference will be **Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis**, co-director of the Kairos Center for Religions, Rights and Social Justice and the Co-Chair of the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival and **Willie Baptist**, a long-time educator, organizer, and the Co-Coodinator of the Poverty Scholarship and Leadership Development for the Kairos Center.

Between those bookends, breakout sessions will highlight effective efforts in the areas of employment, education, service navigation, and more. The result will be a day that inspires, informs and equips individuals and organizations to provoke and build on lasting change in our community.

Gather friends, fellow worshippers in your faith community, peers in your service organizations, colleagues at work, and others to join in this important event. Christian Theological Seminary, with support from the Mike and Sue Smith Family Fund and Lumina Foundation, is facilitating the Faith & Action Project to inspire collaboration among individuals, faith communities, nonprofits and government agencies to reduce area poverty.

New Creation Worship

First Congregational's New Creation Worship service at 5:30 p.m. on Sunday evenings will focus on the different ways we respond to Jesus through our discipleship. These services are interactive with music led by our New Creation Ensemble. Every Sunday is different!

Following Easter, New Creation worship will continue its exploration of how to be good disciples of the Resurrected Christ in today's world. Watch for details in weekly e-pistles. All are welcome to participate in this casual but authentic worship experience.

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

I am writing this on a sunny day in March and my spirits rise with thoughts of spring! It feels extremely fitting that we have been beginning our time with Pastor Sarah at the beginning of this season of hopeful excitement. We are getting to know each other and will continue to add opportunities for all of us to interact and build relationships.

All the newly populated boards and council have held meetings and Pastor Sarah is learning about them ALL. Projects that have been in the works by many people are coming to

fruition - from updating the directory to the updating of the minister's office to updating the sign.

The website continues to get updates - sermons are updated weekly - an excellent way to expand our voice - send a link to friends and they can hear Pastor Sarah's voice when considering a visit. We are starting to post documents on the web site behind the password – please contact me or Cheryl in the church office if you don't know the password. Included are the constitution and a contact list identifying who to contact for a variety of our teams and functions. Minutes of key meetings will be posted as they get approved. Not all of the links have documents yet, it is an ongoing process, but check it out at fcindy.org! If you think of other things you would like to see posted on the website - please let me know. I am not involved in the design of the website, but I can help get items published!

We do have an opening on the Care & Connections board - let me know if you have any interest or are willing to help out on tasks with that board. We are checking with people who turned in that interest on the time and talent sheets - those have been very helpful!

I am grateful to be in service with and for all of you as you all have been with and for me through this beloved community!

- Karen Walker
317-319-8950
Karen.e.d.walker@gmail.com

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:

April 1 - Easter Stories

April 8 - A World Uprooted: Responding to Migrants, Refugees and Displaced People

April 15 - Doing Justice: Amos Calls US to Speak Out for Justice

April 22 - A "Green" Experience

April 29 - Doing Justice

Pantry Items of the Month

During April, we are collecting the following items: bread, cereal, soups and deodorant.

Call to Service

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

Mission of the Month, Exodus Refugee

Despite significant cuts to the US immigration program by the present administration, refugees are still arriving in Indianapolis to make their new homes. Exodus Refugee Immigration is a local, independent, nonsectarian, not-for-profit 501 C3 organization that resettles legally admitted refugees who have experienced persecution in their home countries and are unable to return. Since 1981 Exodus has been welcoming thoroughly vetted refugees and helping them achieve self-sufficiency in their new homes in our community. Exodus is still serving new arrivals, arriving from Burma (now including Rohingya), Congo, and Syria, and those already here with a variety of programs designed to help them achieve self-sufficiency. Exodus not only meets the basic needs of these newcomers but provides a full array of services including social and medical services, English language training, cultural orientation, and employment services, all of which help these new members of the community settle in and thrive.

Please give generously to support the important work Exodus does. You may contribute dollar bills in the offering plate or larger amounts in the “Mission Offering” envelopes in the pew pockets. If you choose to write a check, make it out to the church and mark “Exodus” on the notation line. At a time when we sometimes wonder “What can I do?” this is something we **can do** to make a difference. Exodus and these newcomers will greatly appreciate your help. Thank you for your support.

-Sue Chapman

Church Foundation

The Foundation has several funds that strengthen the church’s financial status. In addition to the Endowment and Capital Improvements Fund, there are Ministers, Organ, and Traditional Music funds. Please consider supporting the fund of your choice, for the church’s benefit both now and in the future. For information about the foundation or the various forms of gifts, contact one of the Foundation Board members, Judy Fletcher, Bill Gillette, Pastor Sarah Lund, Al Moore or Randy Walker.

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.

FCC Hosts “Courageous Conversations in our Complex World”

On Wednesday, April 11, from 7-8:30 pm, the Mayflower Room of First Congregational will be the site of this joint UCC/DOC event. It features Rev Robert Chase, author of “Beyond the Comma”, and will also include Rev John Thomas, former General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ, and Rev Dr Richard Hamm, former General Minister and President of the Christian Church (Disciples). The interactive event focuses on learning how to courageously converse across boundaries and break down walls through genuine conversation and care.

This event is being promoted to the local UCC and DOC community, and we are honored to be the hosting site. All are welcome to attend, so hope you can join us. If you have questions, contact Wendy Baldwin.

Announcements from the Congregation

May Colony Submission Deadline

Please have your submissions sent to me by **Sunday, April 15.**

Plymouth Rockers

The Plymouth Rockers will meet at the church at noon on April 24 in the parlor. Following a brown bag lunch we’ll have a program by Marion Harcourt on our church’s history. Due to her vast knowledge, it’s sure to be interesting. Save the date and plan for a meeting on May 22 as well.

-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 April 5 and 19. Please contact Randy Walker at (317) 796-2081 or aa28977rwalker@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 on Thursday, April 26 at 11:45 a.m. For any questions or for information please contact Sue Chapman at 317-259-1806 or at carolsuech@sbcglobal.net.

Flower Calendar

The Flower Calendar is on bulletin board by the garden doors. The cost for flowers is \$25.00. Sign up for any occasion and email Cheryl Dillenback and/or Sally Coombs. The flowers can come from the florist, store or your garden.

Annual Yard Day, Saturday, 4/28, 9-noon

Please join us for fellowship and sweat equity on Saturday, 4/28, for our annual spring yard cleanup. There will be mulch to spread, weeds to pull, undergrowth to trim, and whatever else is needed to help spruce up our grounds.

We are adding refreshments and fellowship to our scheduled 'work days'. This is a great way to give to the church, share camaraderie, and have a great feeling of accomplishment. The more, the merrier, and we'll find a task for you, no matter what your experience level is!

Please contact Wendy Baldwin if you are interested in coming.

Coming May 5TH: Annual Reduce-Reuse-Recycle (Rummage) Sale

STUFF: "The Story of Stuff" is the title of a book I'm currently reading. Many of us are being drowned in "stuff" in this country, and we do not need to be reminded that we consume far more than our share of resources. Look around to see what stuff you have and do not need. (No, not just updating by replacing.) Plan to participate on **May 5th** in our "Reduce, Reuse and Recycle" sale. As in previous years, you rent a table (\$10), price your items, sell them and keep the proceeds, and clean up. Begin now to lay aside extraneous items that can be reused by someone else and that you would like to offer for sale to others. As in recent years, the sale will take place on the main level in the narthex and parlor. The deadline for table reservations is April 29.

- Nancy Dickinson

Solar Power

James 1:17: "...every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change

Matthew 6:33

But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all...things will be given to you...

The United Nations has calculated that the annual potential of solar energy is anywhere from three to almost a hundred times 2012's worldwide total energy consumption. In the USA, we use more than 300 billion kWh each year, but the potential we could capture from sunlight falling on North America alone is more than 100 times that!

A major challenge confronting us all converting to solar power tomorrow is of storage: we don't collect any energy between sunset and sunrise, when satellite photographs show the entire country lit up like a diamond-studded charm on a bracelet. Fortunately, battery technology is stepping up to the need. The Tesla Powerwall, for example, is on the market for homeowners serious about relying on their own solar power, day and night.

Political issues may exist. Installing and using solar panels might not be as remunerative as it was a short time ago. On the other hand, any investment you make in solar energy is highly likely to pay for itself over time. Solar energy gets cheaper every day, and it does not foul the environment with carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, or coal ash. It is indeed the perfect gift that comes from above. So don't worry, little flock—go solar!

NOTE: Solar Power will be the topic of our Earth Day service on April 22, 2018. The Green Team is setting up a restricted account to gather funds for the installation of solar panels at FCC. We already have some seed money for this, although we drew on it significantly to install LEDs throughout the church. We will begin soliciting donations and gifts at that service

- Rich Gibson

Thank You, O God!

During Pastor Sarah's March 11 sermon, she encouraged all present to tell others our own stories as well as the stories of loved-ones. Similarly, the UCC 2018 Lent Devotional's March 12 entry, by Emily C. Heath, Senior Pastor of the Congregational Church in Exeter, New Hampshire, declared, "Church should be a place where our stories are not hidden, but are shared for others to hear" (p. 30). Rev. Heath's entry, titled "Saying So," based on Psalm 107:1-3, with which this piece ends, focused on the importance of giving testimonies even though she admitted, "We don't talk about testimony much in the more progressive branches of Christianity" (p. 30).

While reflecting on the words of both ministers, my mind went to advice from my husband Earl Hoppert's neurologist. Having heard Earl and me proclaim often how meaningful attending FCC and its many activities are to us, she has recommended that we periodically update our congregation concerning Earl's condition and concerning any support we could use. Surely it's time for another update.

Clicking on https://www.alz.org/indiana/documents/2007_spring.pdf, will take readers to a *Greater Indiana Alzheimer's Association Newsletter* story that I was asked to write, "Early Stage Dementia" (on p. 1 and p.3). Praise God, Earl continues to have numerous strengths, and the information in the 2007 article still applies to Earl—even though the included photo of us, with two of our grandchildren, shows Emily—now a junior at DePauw University—when she was 9 and Dalton—now a high school senior—when he was 7.

"O give thanks to the LORD, for God is good; for his steadfast love endures forever. Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, those God redeemed from trouble and gathered in"

- (Psalm 107:1-3 NRSV).

- susanna-judith rae

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."

It is too early in the year to identify meaningful trends in income or expense. One item of note: the "underspending" in Pastoral Leadership is a matter of timing of benefit payments, not actual expense savings.

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

Jim Lootens, Treasurer
lootens.jb@gmail.com

1. Current Year Actual vs Budget Summary
1/1/2018 through 2/28/2018 Using 2018 Budget B

Category	1/1/2018 Actual	- Budget	2/28/2018 Difference
INCOME	32,851	43,680	-10,829
M. Unrestricted Contributions	32,851	43,680	-10,829
M.01 Pledged Offerings	28,763	39,723	-10,960
M.02 UnPledged Offerings	4,359	4,756	-397
M.03 Rollover Prior Year Surplus_Deficit	-2,409	-2,409	0
M.04 Foundation - Endowment Fund Draw	0	0	0
M.05 Foundation - Minister Fund Draw	0	0	0
M.06. Transfer from Youth Fund	1,610	1,610	0
M.07 Other Transfers from Restr Accts	528	0	528
EXPENSES	38,463	41,379	2,916
A. Pastoral Leadership	15,146	16,493	1,347
B. Worship & Faith	5,821	6,918	1,097
C. Care & Connections	120	125	5
D. Witness & Welcome	160	144	-16
E. Outreach & Service	3,753	3,433	-319
F. Trustees	0	16	16
G. Administration & Operations	2,015	3,715	1,700
H. House & Grounds	10,573	9,632	-941
I. Miscellaneous	876	903	27
Net Difference:	-5,612	2,301	-7,913