



# FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

## THE PILGRIM COLONY

March 2019

### Pastor's Reflections

The month of March marks my one year anniversary serving in ministry with First Congregational and the beginning of the Christian sacred season of Lent with Ash Wednesday the first week of March. Every day I give thanks for this congregation and the gift of being the Body of Christ together. Thank you for supporting me as your pastor with your prayers, encouragement, and Christian love. I look forward to our continued ministry together for years to come and all the ways we seek to grow.

We mark this Lenten season with special opportunities to come together to grow in friendship and faith. Together we will look at how each one of us is an important part of the Body of Christ through:

- Lenten Small Groups
- All Church Retreat March 22-23
- Special worship services on Ash Wednesday March 6 at 6:30pm and Holy Thursday, April 18 at 6:30pm.

We invite you to sign up to join a Lenten Small Group and also to register for the All Church Retreat March 22-23 at the newly renovated and peaceful Benedict Inn Retreat Center in Beech Grove. More information is included here in the March Colony.

I'm looking forward to the ways that the Lenten season invites us to grow in friendship and faith as we seek as the Body of Christ to follow Micah 6:8 doing justice, loving mercy and walking humbly with God.

With hope and blessings,

Pastor Sarah

(386) 478-9012 or [pastorsarah@fcindy.org](mailto:pastorsarah@fcindy.org)

### Moderator's Reflections

*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'm writing this in February, just a few weeks after our annual meeting. Before I get into it, you need the background: We are an income-poor church. Last year, we decided to grow by inviting Pastor Sarah to join us. At this year's annual meeting, we agreed to continue the journey; not just by staying the course, but also by widening the range of our music and giving broader scope to the impressive talents of our musicians. (We also voted unanimously to

declare ourselves a Just Peace Church. See the related article for more on that.) These two actions, continuing to employ Padtor Sarah and expanding our music program, have led us to live with deficit budgets. Indefinitely. We are fortunate to have a Foundation with good-sized reserves. Our situation is not sustainable, but we can proceed on this course quite a while. Thus, we the congregation have decided to make a long-term investment--and like all investments, it offers both reward and risk. It's an exciting time to be a member of First Congregational UCC!

I am excited to serve as your Moderator. I think we have a stellar Council. We just met for the first time, and I was overwhelmed by the fresh outlooks and freewheeling ideas. If energy and imagination can help us with our challenges, then I really like our chances.

As I noted above, we cannot sustain our current way of being a church. We have to change or close. The really good news is, we've started our journey of change in an exciting, even fun way! I urge you to get engaged and stay engaged through your friends, the website, Teams, Boards, Committees, and Council. We're going to have a wonderful time!

Rich Gibson  
317-735-2895 or [hoot.gibson.tds@gmail.com](mailto:hoot.gibson.tds@gmail.com)

**Sunday Adult Class**

To celebrate March as Women’s History Month Adult Ed offerings will be “Uppity Women of the Bible” Our primary resource is a Living the Questions DVD series by Dr. Lisa Wolfe, Professor of Hebrew Bible at Oklahoma City University and a UCC minister. Dr. Wolfe is a lively, entertaining, and knowledgeable presenter who introduces us to strong, courageous women of the Hebrew Bible.

**March 3 & March 10 : Ruth**

Consider the vulnerability of widows and the difficult situation of foreigners in biblical times. Explore themes of loyalty, bitterness, courage, poverty, and seduction. What really happened on the threshing floor? What can we learn about the themes of hospitality and welcoming the stranger, refugee, or immigrant? What do Ruth's words mean to you?  
*Where you go I will go. Where you lodge I will lodge.  
Your people shall be my people. And your God my God. 1:16*

**March 17 & March 24: Esther**

Enter into an exotic and fanciful Persian kingdom with a dim witted king, defiant queen, an evil, genocidal commander and loyal uncle. How can the beautiful and courageous Esther avert disaster for her people?  
Explore this challenge spoken to Esther:  
*If you keep silence at such a time as this...you and your father's family will perish...  
Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this. 4:14*

**March 31: Song of Songs (Solomon)**

Explore this mysterious, beautiful, alluring collection of love poetry. Who are these lovers Dr. Wolfe names Rayati (woman) and Doti (man)? We will laugh, blush, and wonder how this racy material got in the bible and encounter Rayati, this assertive, articulate woman who affirms her own sexuality and selfhood.  
Relish this song:  
*Arise my love, my fair one, and come away.  
For now the winter is past, the rain is over and gone.  
The flowers appear on the earth.  
The time of singing has come. 2:10-12*

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

## Call to Service

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

### March Mission of the Month: One Great Hour of Sharing

After the 2017 Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, for which aid is still ongoing, 2018 brought even more disasters: Hurricanes Michael and Florence in Florida and the Southeast, wildfires in California, floods and volcanic eruptions in Hawaii, a typhoon in the Philippines, an earthquake and tsunami in Indonesia. It went on and on. But if you contributed to One Great Hour of Sharing last year, you were there helping. OGHS provides funds to react quickly to disasters around the world. Working with local organizations world-wide, OGHS has infrastructure in place to respond rapidly whenever and wherever disaster strikes. We don't know where the need will come this year, but we can be sure there will be new disasters affecting communities that will need our help. In 2018 OGHS provided over \$2 million in cash and volunteer support to 26 countries and 16 U.S. states. OGHS, working with Church World Service, also has provided support to refugees and asylum seekers. OGHS is one of the UCC's "5 for 5" offerings, which FCC has committed to support. While small donations are always welcome, this is one offering that we urge you to support generously. Be there helping with the next crisis by donating now. Use the special envelopes or put OGHS in the notation line of your check. Thank you.

### Pantry Items of the Month

During March, we are collecting the following items: spaghetti, rice, juices, peanut butter, and bar soap.

- Betty Schnur

### **Experiencing Lent at First Congregational UCC** ***Renewing rituals and relationships to encounter the Divine***



March 6<sup>th</sup> marks the beginning of Lent: a season of filling ourselves with the Holy Spirit. It is a season to lean into the yearning our souls feel for the God of life. It is a season of invitation to deepened relationships with creation, with one another, with ourselves, and with the Spirit that dwells within. This Lenten season, you are

invited to join a short-term small group. The small groups will meet 4 times over the course of Lent, and will explore and experience ancient spiritual practices.

Additionally, there will be three congregation-wide opportunities to experience Lenten worship and fellowship. On Ash Wednesday, March 6<sup>th</sup>, at 6:30, we will gather in the sanctuary for mindful movement and worship with fellowship time afterward. On March 22<sup>nd</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup>, we will gather at the Benedict Inn in Beech Grove for the FCC Whole-Church Retreat to learn about and honor the spiritual gifts present in us all. On Maundy Thursday, April 18<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 we will share a meal in the Mayflower room in honor of the Last Supper.

You may sign up for the small group that meets your scheduling and location needs in the narthex. You may also inquire about and/or sign up for a small group by contacting Lianna Campos at [lcampos33@gmail.com](mailto:lcampos33@gmail.com) or 317-954-1601.

## Expressing Our Best Welcome

For several months the Board of Witness and Welcome has discussed our visitor welcoming process and you will notice a few changes beginning in March.

\* The task of the greeter at the door will simply be to greet everyone and make all visitors feel welcome with directions to the sanctuary, restrooms, or other information.

\* "Connect Cards" will be available in the pews. Connect cards are for visitors and members to fill out as appropriate, e.g. prayer requests, address information, etc.

\* Visitors may or may not be wearing name tags. If you see someone without a name tag, assume they are visiting and express an extravagant welcome to FCC.

\* There will be a Welcome Center located in the vestibule. The purpose of the Welcome Center is to make sure our visitors have one last point of contact before leaving. Connect cards may be turned in at the Welcome Center and first time visitors will receive a gift to take home.

The reason for these changes is to eliminate some of the congestion that sometimes occurs at the entry doors and to reflect the current trends in making visitors comfortable and leaving with a favorable impression. Later this year we will have a BUZZ session to discuss our welcoming process in detail. Thank you.

- Board of Witness and Welcome



A lot has happened on the Just Peace front recently. Late last year, the Just Peace (JP) Team circulated a draft covenant. In December, the Council endorsed it and forwarded it to the congregation at the Annual Meeting for consideration to adopt it and declare ourselves a JP Church. On January 27th, the congregation voted unanimously to do so. We are a Just Peace Church!



That's not all. On Sunday, February 3rd, we hosted Rev Michael Neuroth for Adult Education at 9:45 and then to discuss JP at a Buzz luncheon. Rev Neuroth is the Policy Advocate for International Issues in the UCC Justice and Witness Ministries office in Washington DC. He welcomed us as a new member of UCC Just Peace churches, and discussed the next steps we could take. In short, there are lots of opportunities! He left the crowd enthusiastic and eager to move forward.

So what is the next step? The Fifteenth General Synod pronouncement and proposal for action lists four components to become and to be a Just Peace church: spiritual development, JP education, political advocacy, and community witness. I assert that we need to do significant work in the first two before strapping on the last two.

The upcoming Lenten season provides a wonderful opportunity for spiritual development and JP education. Our Lenten theme comes from Micah 6:8; the passage exhorts us to walk humbly with our God. We should fill this period with study, prayer, discernment, discussion and learning. During this period, I strongly recommend Dr. King's Letter from a Birmingham Jail ( [https://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles\\_Gen/Letter\\_Birmingham.html](https://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html)). It is so full of





wisdom that applies directly to Just Peacemaking: what peace without justice looks like; what patient, painstaking, brick-on-brick preparation for nonviolent direct action looks like; what the twin perils of inaction and overreaction look like; and so much more.

The Just Peace Team will be engaging with you in Lent with more opportunities for prayer, discussion and discernment. By the way, we could use more members, as well! Please reach out to Worth, Nancy, Rich, or any other team members of you're interested. Thanks!

**Mental Health Team**

The FCC Mental Health Team is planning to provide the worship service on Sunday May 19th, which is Mental Health Sunday. If interested in helping plan or participate in this service please contact Dr Pat Larracey, 317-625-6801 or plain and [fancy1963@att.net](mailto:fancy1963@att.net). The team is also exploring becoming a W.I.S.E. congregation for mental health which means being Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, and Engaged to those dealing with mental health issues, something many other churches have not done. We hope to provide not only support, but also resources and education related to mental health. If you are interested in the W.I.S.E. process, please go to <http://www.mhn-ucc.org> for more information.



- Pat Larracey and Sandy Wood

**Some Safety Concerns**



Several years ago, First Congregational invested in a keypad lock system for our main doors – the “patio” door and the red door, primarily used by the Meridian Hills Cooperative Nursery School. Prior to that time, these doors were left unlocked (and unattended) during the day, or there was a hidden key that many people knew about (the hidden key has been moved). This practice allowed *anyone* to enter our building, and we were getting some surprises of strangers wandering our premises.

With the keypad system, if you need to access the building, please learn the new code, which was changed this past January. If you don't know what it is, ask Wendy Baldwin or some other frequent user of the building. Do NOT leave the patio door unlocked if it is not going to be attended, ie for a meeting or event that is not in the Parlor or sanctuary. If you have unlocked the door, please be sure you lock it before leaving the building at the end of your event.

When using the building during the week, if our office admin, Shannon Abbott, and/or Pastor Sarah are in (typically Tuesday-Friday mornings), please first stop by and let them know you are there (and say hi!). This allows them to not be startled by strange noises they may hear from whatever you are doing in the building.

When driving to and from the parking lot – PLEASE SLOW DOWN on the driveway, especially by the curve. The posted speed limits are 5-15 mph, and this is for a reason and applies at all times – you don't know if someone is coming from the other direction. Even if you are running late, adding a minute or 2 to ensure you are safely using the drive way helps us be a hospitable congregation that is concerned for others in the simplest way.

Thank you for your consideration – Wendy Baldwin, House & Grounds

## Fun & Fellowship at First



Pre-Mardi Gras Pancake Brunch and Games: Come join us at the church on Saturday, March 2, from 11-2 for brunch and playing various board and card games. Come for the whole time, or come when you can.

First Congregational's Historic Roots in Indy: On Sunday, April 7, Marion Harcourt, our most tenured member, will give a presentation during the Adult Ed hour. Following worship, we'll have a light lunch at church and then board a bus for Marion's tour of historic sites connected to FCC's 162 years in Indy.

Jesus Christ Superstar Karaoke: Kick off Holy Week a day early – on Saturday, April 13, from 2-4, we'll be showing Jesus Christ Superstar in the Mayflower Room, and encouraging those who want to sing along. Also, you can learn about the Gospel scriptures which most of the songs are based on.

FCC's Got Talent (Again) (Still): Save the date and start planning how you might participate on Friday, October 4 at 7 pm. While music plays a big part in this event, we will also showcase other skills and talents among our diverse congregation. More info to come!

These events are sponsored by Care & Connections, and there will be more to come. Questions? Contact Wendy Baldwin.

## Green Team

I really like how quiet an electric mower is, I tell people it's as loud as a box fan on its highest setting. I can mow any time of day or night without disturbing our neighbors or my young son's sleep. I do not feel hearing protection is at all necessary, but the spinning blade is not to be under-estimated. Staying clear of the underside, keeping children away, and wearing eye protection are just as important as with any power mower.



I also like that I am no longer using/ filling/ transporting/ or storing gasoline for my lawn mower. No more smelly drips in my car's trunk or on the garage floor. This is better for the environment but it's also a safety advantage I feel good about, and the cost is less than using gasoline. I am a member of IPL's green power option at the 100% level, I find this very affordable, so I'm using green electricity to mow my lawn. I do make an effort to charge batteries at night or early morning when electrical demand on the grid is low.

It uses a Lithium-ion battery; the manufacturer of my mower/ batteries states that the batteries may be charged at any level for any length of time without risk of harming the battery. Using an electric mower is much like using a gas powered mower with a few small exceptions. When mowing in tall grass the mower will bog down, which reduces battery life significantly. It is best to cut more often and keeping the grass short. When away for a week or more and getting good rain, you may want to mow with the mower set high and then cut a second time at your normal height a day or two later. I did use my mower this past fall to chop up the leaves that fell in my yard vs bag them for collection. As I explained earlier, when the mower is under a significant load it bogs down and my batteries didn't last nearly as long; so this did take several shorter mowings to accomplish the task.

The mower in the picture has a bagger attached, but I chose to use the mulching option so as not to create any additional yard waste. Self-propelled models are also available, but I feel pushing keeps me more active and does not use power from the battery. I wish this mower had a higher setting to use when the grass does grow taller than desired; we all get busy with life.

- Jimmy Hodges

# Bread for the World

## Workshop

**Saturday, March 9, 2019**

Trinity Episcopal Church  
3243 N. Meridian Street  
Indianapolis

**Join us at 9am** to prepare  
for the 3rd Annual Joint  
Ecumenical Offering of  
Letters. This year's focus  
is on Child Nutrition.



Heather Valentine, Bread for  
the World's Director of  
Government Relations

**Join us at 11am** for "How Red and Blue Can  
Work Together to End Hunger." This will  
feature a conversation with special guest,  
Heather Valentine, Bread for the World's  
Director of Government Relations.

**Register at Eventbrite:** <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/indiana-offering-of-letters-workshop-and-spring-gathering-tickets>

**breadfortheworld**  
HAVE FAITH. END HUNGER.

### What's the Buzz on IYG?



There will be a BUZZ (pitch-in lunch and discussion) on March 10 immediately following the worship service and this month's topic is Indiana Youth Group (IYG). Maxx Pyron, IYG's volunteer coordinator, will join us to share information about IYG and opportunities how FCC can get more involved. IYG has served self-identified LGBTQ youth for over 30 years and is one of the nation's oldest organizations serving the gay community.

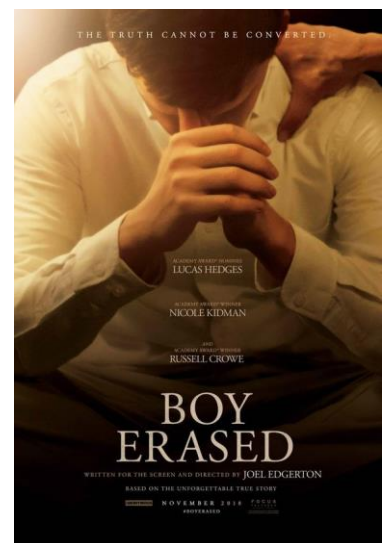
For several years FCC has supported IYG through our mission of the month. Come join us in exploring this valuable organization and experience the first step of volunteer orientation.

- Board of Witness and Welcome

### Movie & Pizza Night

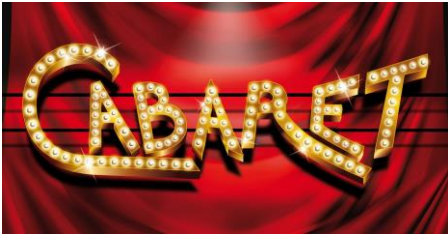
"Boy Erased"  
Sunday, March 10<sup>th</sup>  
5:30 PM

As part of our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of being Open & Affirming, we invite everyone to join us at 5:30 PM on Sunday, March 10<sup>th</sup> for pizza and a screening of the 2018 Golden Globe nominated film "Boy Erased," starring Lucas Hedges, Nicole Kidman, and Russell Crowe. Based on real life events, this is the story of Jared Eamons, the gay teenage son of Baptist parents. When a fellow classmate outs him, Jared is sent to a conversion therapy program, which claims to turn him straight and his account of what actually went on during his time there. Stay for conversation after the film. See you on March 10<sup>th</sup>.



- Nathan Howard





### Cabaret at FCC

Famous Indianapolis cabaret diva Jeannie Logan teams up with Sean Baker the Music Maker to present an evening of hilarious original cabaret at FCC on Saturday, March 16<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. This show is vaudeville for the mensa set! Lyrics fly fast and furious in this tour de force authored by New York composer & lyricist R. George Winters.

### First Congregational Whole-Church Retreat *Different, Equal, and Whole: Coming Together as One*

During this Lenten season, we are going on a retreat! On March 22nd through March 23rd, you are invited to gather at the Benedict Inn in Beech Grove for our Whole-Church Overnight Retreat. Through scripture, worship, dialogue, and prayer, we will seek to encounter the Divine by recognizing the spiritual gifts in ourselves and one another. This night away offers respite from the busyness and the distractions of our everyday life to allow us to dwell in the Spirit as Jesus taught and modeled. We will explore and engage 1 Corinthians 12, seeking guidance, understanding, and inspiration on how we can live more fully as the body of Christ.

Registration is \$35 per person plus a modest lodging fee due March 13th. If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Sarah. Pick up a registration form in the narthex or download here: [2019 FCC Retreat Registration Form](#).



### Mindful Movement for Stress Reduction *Every moment can be a mindful moment.*



Join Shannon Abbott in the church parlor on Tuesdays, March 5<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m. as we **slow down, quiet the chatter** of our minds, and **mindfully take notice** of the little things, like the sound of our **breath**, the **ground** underneath us, the ways we **feel** each movement of the body, the **silence**, and the **peace** that settles in our body, mind, and spirit.

**As we enter into the season of Lent, this is a wonderful way to renew, refresh, and reconnect with the oneness of you, and with the Spirit of God that flows through you.**

- Mindful Movement is a *donation-based class*.
- Please wear loose, comfortable clothing.
- We have a limited number of yoga mats available. If you have one, please bring it, but if you don't, please don't let that stop you from coming. We've got you covered.
- Chairs are also available for those more comfortable participating in a chair.



An Invitation from the Indiana-Kentucky Conference

In coordination with the events of the Indiana-Kentucky Conference 2019 Annual Gathering, we look forward to strengthening partnerships and deepening our commitment together in Christ's mission. This year, to lessen the burden on Frieden's UCC volunteers, the Conference is calling upon all the churches of the Southeast Association to supply hands for the work.

We are seeking 1-3 volunteers from First Congregational during the Gathering held at Frieden's UCC (Greenwood) May 30<sup>th</sup> – June 1<sup>st</sup>. Volunteers from Friedens will manage the events for Education Day on Thursday. On Friday, volunteers will be divided into two shifts, morning and evening. Saturday there will only be one shift, in the morning. Volunteers are not required to staff the full shift if they are not able, and folks may split shifts.

- Volunteers should NOT be: delegates, conference staff, paying visitors, or clergy representatives.

No special skills are required for volunteers, but anyone with technology experience should describe that in the comment section. Lunch will be provided for volunteers, so please note any dietary restrictions.

Please sign up no later than April 15<sup>th</sup>. If you have any questions about volunteering at the IKC Annual Gathering, please contact Dakota Roberts at (317) 789-5066 or [droberts@eden.edu](mailto:droberts@eden.edu)

2019 IKC Annual Gathering Volunteer Sign Up Form



Church: \_\_\_\_\_

Friday 5/31 8am-2pm
Name:
Phone:
Email:
Meal: Vegan? Veg? Gluten Free?

Friday 5/31 2pm-8pm
Name:
Phone:
Email:
Meal: Vegan? Veg? Gluten Free?

Saturday 6/1 8am-12pm
Name:
Phone:
Email:
Meal: Vegan? Veg? Gluten Free?

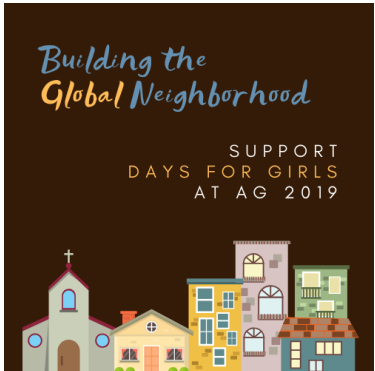
Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Building the Global Neighborhood

from the IKC Annual Gathering Planning Team

We are inviting each IKC congregation to support the global mission, [Days for Girls](#), which is "is changing the status quo, through quality menstrual care solutions, health education, and income-generation opportunities." We'd love for you to collect the following items and bring them to Annual Gathering 2019:

- 100 pairs of 100% cotton brief-style women's underpants in dark and dark-patterned colors. We need youth sizes 10 through 14, and women's sizes 6 and 7. (If you send packs with lighter colors, no



problem! The lighter colored underwear will be donated to local IKC agencies.)

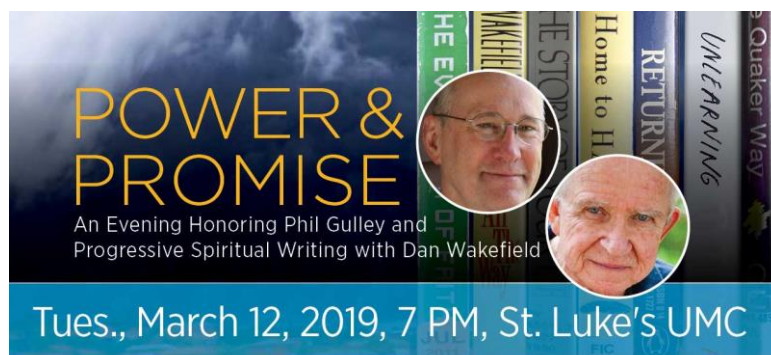
- 200 gallon size bags of Ziploc brand freezer bags, with the standard "zipper" closure, no slider bags. They must be this type and brand.
- 100 washcloths, 100% cotton, in dark, appealing colors.

We will use these items to create feminine hygiene kits for young women in places where access to and education about feminine hygiene is scarce or non-existent. With washable and reusable kits, which last about 3 years, young women can continue to learn, work, and socialize without interruption.

In addition to the items above, we are also calling on those with tracing, cutting, and sewing abilities to pitch-in to make the cloth pads and liners for these kits. Patterns and more information can be requested from the Indiana-Kentucky Conference Office (see below) or by contacting Sally Coombs at (317)446-2853 or [sallysews73@gmail.com](mailto:sallysews73@gmail.com), Sue Chapman at (317)259-1806 or [carolsue59@gmail.com](mailto:carolsue59@gmail.com), or Shannon Abbott at (317)257-5397 or [shannon@fcindy.org](mailto:shannon@fcindy.org).

If you'd like to know more about Days for Girls, visit their web site <https://www.daysforgirls.org/>. Contact the conference office at [ikc@ikcucc.org](mailto:ikc@ikcucc.org) for information about ways to support local sewing teams putting together feminine hygiene kits for Days for Girls.

## **Power & Promise: An Evening Honoring Phil Gulley and Progressive Spiritual Writing with Dan Wakefield**



Join Christian Theological Seminary to honor Phil Gulley and the power of progressive spiritual writing on March 12 at 7:00 PM at St. Luke's United Methodist Church, 100 W. 86th St. Indianapolis.

Register at: <https://power-promise.eventbrite.com>

Admission is \$25. *Students of any age, free with registration.*

*Proceeds benefit Building a Rainbow, writing & literacy program for youth in Indianapolis.*

Gulley, longtime Quaker pastor and Indiana native, is the author of numerous books including the "Harmony" series of novels, *Front Porch Tales*, *If the Church Were Christian*, *The Evolution of Faith*, and, *Unlearning God: How Unbelieving Helped Me Believe*. The evening will include a talk by Dan Wakefield, fellow Hoosier and celebrated author of *Going All the Way*, *Starting Over*, *Returning: A Spiritual Journey*, and more.

## **The Importance of Being An Ally**

"Whoever goes hunting for what is right and kind  
finds life itself—*glorious life!*" (Proverbs 21:21 *The Message*).

During First Congregational Church's January 27 worship service—complete with music and dance, as well as cake and ice cream afterward—we joyously celebrated our 25th anniversary of being an Open and Affirming (ONA) Church. Pastor Sarah's sermon, "A More Excellent Way: 25 Years of ONA," was based on 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a. After preaching,

Pastor Sarah encouraged us to reflect silently on how God was inviting each of us to be a part of FCC's Open and Affirming journey.

Immediately, one of my IUPUI Labor Department classes came to mind: my Spring 2017 "Bullying in the Workplace" course. Our readings, class discussions, and assignments included sexual orientation as one of numerous issues around which employees are bullied both in and out of their workplaces.

In one class discussion, I related that during the summer of 2016, FCC members viewed the 2011 documentary film *Chely Wright: Wish Me Away*—about country music singer Chely (pronounced "Shelly") Wright. After keeping secret, throughout her life, that she was gay, she came out of the closet and felt sure that her loyal fans would continue to support both her and her music. They did *not*. In fact, her scheduled singing appearances were canceled, her CDs were boycotted, and she was shunned. Included in the film was an interview of one of Wright's straight friends who introduced me to the term "ally," a way to be supportive of individuals of the LGBT community. One hopeful learning from the film: Wright's younger family members, unlike some of her older ones, in-laws, and fans, were most supportive of her. Hooray for youngsters!

In Rev. Andrea Ayvazian's excellent article "Interrupting the Cycle of Oppression: The Role of Allies as Agents of Change" in the Jan-Feb 1995 issue of *Fellowship*, the courageous author defines and gives examples of allies and of being agents of change. She also tells the importance of taking risks for individuals in targeted groups of which we are not members and of having the backs of all target group members. According to Ayvazian, "An ally is a member of a dominant group in our society who works to dismantle any form of oppression from which she or he receives the benefit. Allied behavior means taking personal responsibility for the changes we know are needed in our society, and so often ignore or leave to others to deal with. Allied behavior is intentional, overt, consistent activity that challenges prevailing patterns of oppression, makes privileges that are so often invisible visible, and facilitates the empowerment of persons targeted by oppression,"

[https://www.mtholyoke.edu/sites/default/files/diversity/docs/interpreting\\_oppression.pdf](https://www.mtholyoke.edu/sites/default/files/diversity/docs/interpreting_oppression.pdf).

A surprising idea the author emphasizes is that we are all members of both "dominant" groups and of "target" groups—though it may take a while for us to realize that reality. Both *Wish Me Away* and Ayvazian's article reinforce my desire to be an ally to numerous individuals, including people who are gay, black, immigrants, women, seniors, mentally ill, physically handicapped, Muslim, and members of other religious groups targeted by bullies. It seems to me that empathy is a communication skill with which we can do our best to respectfully back all who face various kinds of systemic challenges. In my 2017 IUPUI class, some of my fellow students seemed surprised to hear about our ONA congregation. I am pleased to be a part of our ONA faith community that is made up of many of us who focus on being allies.

- susanna-judith rae

### **Meridian Hills Cooperative School:**

One of my favorite activities about Co-op is the Parent Education component. I remember so vividly when I was student teaching at Meridian Hills under Shari Robinson gathering in the evenings for Group Meetings. I was fascinated by the fact that these parents came together to discuss their children's growth, struggles and successes. And that their teacher helps lead the discussion and provide input when needed. Having just finished our winter Group Meetings, this memory is fresh in my mind. I also remember how I felt as a parent at Meridian Hills sitting with the other classroom parents talking and sharing about our children. It was so refreshing and reassuring to me that other parents had questions, comments and concerns about their child's growth and development. It was a comfort as well knowing that as we shared, we were learning, growing and building trusting relationships. Those relationships have been with me ever since. There is a special bond that develops in a Co-op environment. How can it not? We are with each other daily in the classrooms, on committees and attend events together. And each time, learning and growing as we go.



The parenting lessons/advice that I have received over the years has served me well. As my children grew into each new developmental phase, it was a comfort to know that I had wise and caring people around me to guide me through and support me. As my children went from elementary to middle to high school, I can remember pulling out of my 'toolbox' the tips I had learned. And now, as one is in college and the other is just out of college starting his first real man job and moved into his first man apartment (student apartments and house rentals don't count...) I find myself needing to remember those key phrases. After all these years, they still help me be a better parent. I want to be supportive and not smothering. I want to be encouraging and not enabling. So often we parents want to fix situations and make them better for our children. It's just in our nature to want to. For me, it is important to remember to wait and be asked for my advice/ideas and not rush in with answers. Even as they get older, sometimes all they need is for us to 'be there' for them and listen to them, just as they did when they were young.

Hugs,

Linda Foley, Acting Director of Meridian Hills Cooperative Nursery School & Kindergarten

## Announcements

**Spring Cleaning?** Have gently used professional clothes you are no longer wearing? Dress for Success can give them to people who can't afford interview clothes to help them be better prepared when job hunting. Put donations in the cloakroom by the sign. Contact Sandy Wood for more information.

**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 **March 7<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>**. Please contact Randy Walker at (317) 796-2081 or [aa28977rwalker@gmail.com](mailto:aa28977rwalker@gmail.com) for information.

**Sacred Organ Music Sunday – March 24<sup>th</sup>**, Special guest organist Charles Manning.

**April Colony Submission Deadline:** Please have your submissions sent to Shannon by Friday, **March 15<sup>th</sup>**.

**Circle IV Book Discussion:** Circle IV will be meeting at the home of Nancy Dickinson on Tuesday, **March 19<sup>th</sup>** at 1:30 pm. We are reading Section 2 in the Robert Reich book, "The Common Good." All are welcome to join us. Feel free to carpool. For further information, contact Nancy Dickinson at (317)251-3671 or [dickinson.nls@gmail.com](mailto:dickinson.nls@gmail.com).

**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, **March 28** at 11:45 a.m. For any questions or for more information please contact Sue Chapman at 317-259-1806 or at [carolsuech59@gmail.com](mailto:carolsuech59@gmail.com).

**Flower Calendar:** The 2019 Flower Calendar is on the bulletin board by the garden doors. Cooperstown be for any occasion. Flowers can come from the store, florist or from your garden. The cost is \$25.00 from our florist. Any questions, please email Sally Coombs at [sallysews73@gmail.com](mailto:sallysews73@gmail.com) or call 317-446-2853. You can also let Shannon Abbott know the occasion at [shannon@fcindy.org](mailto:shannon@fcindy.org) or call the church office at 317-257-5397.

**Financial Update**  
*When We Give, We Reach Out With Helping Hands*

Here are the financial results for January 2019.

I9

1. Current Year Actual vs Budget Summary - Last month 1/1/2019 through 1/31/2019 Using Budget 1			
Category	Actual	January 2019 Budget	Difference
INCOME	42,335	40,142	2,193
M. Unrestricted Contributions	42,335	40,142	2,193
M.01 Pledged Offerings	34,414	31,654	2,760
M.02 UnPledged Offerings	1,533	2,099	-566
M.03 Rollover Prior Year Surplus_D...	4,766	4,766	0
M.04 Foundation - Endowment Fund...	0	0	0
M.05 Foundation - Minister Fund Draw	0	0	0
M.06 Foundation - Trad. Music Fund...	0	0	0
M.07. Transfer from Youth Fund	0	0	0
M.08 Other Transfers from Restr Ac...	1,623	1,623	0
EXPENSES	26,380	26,800	420
A. Pastoral Leadership	12,900	12,696	-205
B. Worship & Faith	2,859	3,213	354
C. Care & Connections	173	44	-129
D. Witness & Welcome	50	58	8
E. Outreach & Service	1,500	1,500	0
F. Trustees	0	0	0
G. Administration & Operations	1,704	1,803	99
H. House & Grounds	6,803	6,975	171
I. Miscellaneous	390	512	122
Net Difference:	15,955	13,342	2,614

**Highlights:**

We are off to a good start:

- Income was \$2,200 ahead of budget thanks to \$4,000 of 2018 pledge income that was received in January 2019.
- Expenses were slightly under budget.

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

Jim Lootens, Treasurer  
lootens.jb@gmail.com

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL ALL CHURCH RETREAT REGISTRATION FORM

Different, Equal, and Whole – Coming Together as One  
1 Corinthians 12

Benedict Inn Retreat & Conference Center  
1402 Southern Ave  
Beech Grove, IN 46107

Schedule for Friday 3/22 – Saturday 3/23:

Friday, 3/22:            5:00            Gathering  
5:30            Dinner  
6:30-9:00      Group Activities  
  
Saturday, 3/23:            8:00            Breakfast  
                         9:00-noon      Group Activities  
                         Noon            Lunch  
                         1:00-4:00      Group Activities  
                         4:00            Retreat Ends

Registration Fee: \$35 per person (covers meals and retreat costs)

\$\_\_\_\_\_

Room Fees: Rooms have 2 twin beds and a sink. They are on a hallway with a common bathroom and a private family bathroom.

\_\_\_ Single Occupancy, with common bathroom:            \$44.00  
\$\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Single Occupancy, with private bathroom:            \$57.00  
\$\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Double Occupancy, with common bathroom:            \$52.00  
\$\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Double Occupancy, with private bathroom:            \$62.00  
\$\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ I/We do not plan to spend the night  
\$\_\_\_\_\_ 0

Additional gift to go towards retreat financial assistance  
\$\_\_\_\_\_

Total to be paid by check (payable to FCC) or online Donate button (fcindy.org)

\$\_\_\_\_\_

**If financial assistance will enable you to attend the retreat, please contact Pastor Sarah.**

I/We plan to attend the following meals:  
\_\_\_ Friday Dinner    \_\_\_ Saturday Breakfast            \_\_\_ Saturday Lunch  
Any special dietary or accommodation considerations?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Contact Info, in case of last minute changes:\_\_\_\_\_

**Registration is due by Wednesday, March 13. Questions? Contact Pastor Sarah**