



# FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

THE PILGRIM COLONY

July 2019

## Pastor's Reflections

As we move into the thick of summer here in Indiana, with summer thunderstorms and lightening bugs, we are drawn into the ways God expresses energy, light and life in all of Creation. I treasure the moments to soak in these summer days. I encourage you to take time this summer to delight in the beauty of Creation.

The energy, light and life in Creation inspires my work as your pastor. As a congregation, we are also filled with God's energy, light and life. Our sanctuary's open window design and the natural light that shines upon us reminds us of our connection to God's power. As we continue to change and grow as church, seeking faithfulness to fulfilling our mission, we will need to be connected to God's energy and guidance. We realize that we are part of something greater, we are part of God's movement for justice, peace, healing and love in the world.

I'm excited about being your pastor and partnering with you in this ministry we share. I want to thank each of you for your faithful support of our ministries, and the generous ways you share your talents, your time and your gifts so that we can grow in Christ's love. I pray that these summer days bless you and renew your spirit, filling you with the divine energy, light and life of God's good creation.

Peace,  
Pastor Sarah



## Moderator's Reflections

What's the best way to make decisions in a participatory democracy, such as First Congregational? There's at least three ways I know of; the one in vogue these days is called "consensus." I'd like to spend a few moments of your time sharing my thoughts on this. One way to decide in a democracy is to require unanimous consent. In theory, this ensures harmony and unity of purpose. In reality, it usually leads to paralysis, as "unanimity" means that each and every voter has a veto.

Another way, a majority vote, has its pluses and minuses. The biggest plus is, it's effective: To pass a measure, all you need is half of all the voters plus one. The biggest minus is, it might trample on minority rights. Any decision passing by a slim majority is apt to upset almost half of the entire group. To address this, some organizations require a "super-majority," such as three-fifths or two-thirds, for the more contentious issues, such as budgets.

The third way is consensus. Consensus sounds nicer. It basically means, no-one is unalterably opposed to a proposed course of action. When consensus is reached, everyone's opinion ranges from fervent support to emotionless "oh, all right, whatever." The mechanics are different from a simple show of hands. One way I've seen is, everyone is asked to show thumbs up, down, or sideways. Up and down are self-evident, but sideways means "I can live with it." A motion will pass by consensus if all the thumbs are up or sideways. This is where consensus can turn into hard work: One thumb down means consensus is not reached. If consensus is necessary, a round of discussion, negotiation, bargaining or horse-trading must ensue with two requirements for success: Under the revised terms of the proposal, all of the down thumbs must at least change to sideways; and none of the formerly sideways or up thumbs can go down. So: "achieve consensus" can be just as easy to say and hard to do as "love your neighbor." Of course, if you think about it, there's a lot of overlap in those two, isn't there?

- Rich Gibson

## MEET THE INTERNS

First Congregational is blessed to partner with two young adults this fall as we seek to train, equip and prepare leaders of tomorrow. I invite you to be open to ways that our congregation can help young people see the church as relevant in today's world and how the church can be a place where young people feel welcomed. I'm excited that Cassidy Hall (Christian Theological Seminary) and Grace Langford (Butler University) will each be serving under my supervision this fall as they seek to deepen their education and get experience serving in a local church. Please contact me if you have any questions or want to learn more.



**Grace Langford** is a rising senior at Butler University studying Actuarial Science and Spanish with a minor in religion. The past two summers she has worked for Next Step Ministries, a non-profit with 13 mission sites across the US that provides short-term mission experiences paired with long-term community growth. She is passionate about putting her faith into action and loving others the way Jesus did. At Butler, she is very involved with Butler University Dance Marathon as well as leading the Bible study at her sorority. Grace is excited to be the Just Peace intern this fall and to get to know the First Congregational UCC community!



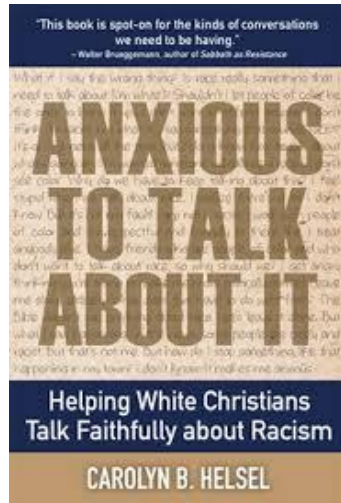
**Cassidy Hall** is the director of the forthcoming film, *Day of a Stranger*, a documentary about Trappist monk Thomas Merton's hermitage years. She is the co-author of *Notes on Silence*, and a co-producer on the globally released documentary film, *In Pursuit of Silence*. She co-hosts the *Encountering Silence* podcast and is Secretary of the International Thomas Merton Society. Cassidy holds a Masters degree in Counseling and is currently pursuing her MDiv at CTS in Indianapolis. Her writing has been published in the [Convivium Journal](#), [The Thomas Merton Seasonal](#), and has been featured on [The Huffington Post](#), [Patheos](#), and the [National Catholic Reporter](#). She

speaks and presents work on silence, contemplation, social justice, and activism globally. Currently, Cassidy is working on the completion of her directorial debut, [Day of a Stranger](#), and a forthcoming book about her 2012-13 pilgrimage to the seventeen Trappist/Cistercian Monasteries of the United States.

## Elizabeth Price, Chair

Elizabeth Price, Chair

## Sunday Adult Class



The Adult Ed class will continue to read and discuss the book "Anxious to Talk About It; Helping White Christians Talk Faithfully About Racism." You do not need to buy a copy of the book to be a part of this "book group," since we will be displaying the book on the TV during class. Should you wish your own copy, it is available on Amazon Kindle for about \$10.00. A copy of the introduction is available on the publisher's website, and there are copies on the table in the narthex.

Come join us!  
- Pastor Carol

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

## Greetings & Thanks from Rev. Lawrence Richardson



6/3/19  
To All the members of the wonderful  
community of First Congregational Church:  
Thank you so much for the invitation  
to preach and fellowship on Sunday, June  
2nd. I sincerely enjoyed our time  
together. Your extravagant welcome and  
your hospitality will never be forgotten.  
I pray that the Holy Spirit resides in your  
midst always, and that the state of Indiana  
flourishes because of the witness, hope and  
love that shines through First Church Indy!  
Warmest regards, Lawrence Richardson

## OUTREACH & SERVICE

Sue Chapman, Chair

## July Mission of the Month: Underneath It All

This mission provides underwear and school uniforms for children in IHN/Family Promise Aftercare. The Aftercare Program of Family Promise/IHN helps homeless families who get housing remain housed. You can help in any of the ways listed below.

- 1) **Buy underwear/socks/undershirts/underpants** in any size from **child size 4 to adult Large** - boys or girls. Put in the white laundry baskets during **July**.

- 2) **Donate new or gently used pants, shirts, skirts, or jumpers**-all sizes from child size 4 to adult. **Shirts** must have collars and can be **any solid color**, without decoration or logo. **Pants, skirts, or jumpers** must be a solid color (**tan, navy or black**) with no decoration.
- 3) **Donate \$ in July to buy uniforms or underwear in-** change, dollar bills and checks designated **Underneath It All** in the memo line will help. We will buy clothes with the money donated.

With the year-round school calendar, school starts again in early Aug for many schools, so new uniforms will be needed soon. Past donations have provided each child in the Aftercare Program at least 1 full new uniform including underwear and socks. This is much appreciated by the families and Family Promise, so please continue to be generous.

For questions or help with this ministry, please contact Sandy Wood [csjlwood@att.net](mailto:csjlwood@att.net) 317-863-8238 (home) or 317-225-6206 (cell).

- Sandy Wood

### Thanks

Thanks to all who contributed to the May Mission of the Month, the UCC Mental Health Network. We collected \$593.69 which the UCC Mental Health Network will use to reduce stigma related to mental illness and promote inclusion of persons/ families dealing with mental health issues.

- FCC Mental Health Team

### Pantry Items of the Month

During July, we are collecting the following items: juice, pasta, canned meat, pancake mix, shampoo and conditioner. - Betty Schnur



### Support for the Northside Food Pantry

Our food donations to the community continue to be needed. While the economy is robust, there are many of our neighbors who are in need of assistance through no fault of their own. Illnesses can wipe out the assets of many who behaved responsibly and were considered to be moderately

well off. Children need good nutrition if they are to become responsible, productive adults. Those of us who can help should do so. Our monthly food donations to the Northside Food Pantry are well managed and may result in satisfactory nutrition in a needy family. Please place donated items in the baskets located in our narthex. Thank you for your continued support!

- Bill Gillette

### W.I.S.E. Mental Health Message: Pronouns *Why they matter and why you should care*

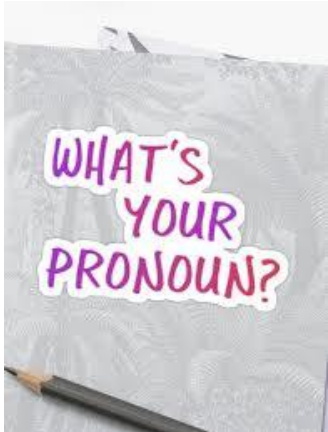
When it comes to pronouns there are a lot of misunderstandings, confusion, and plain ignorance. At the basic level, pronouns are how we refer to people without having to use their name multiple times in a sentence. It's a very simple concept and most people use pronouns without a second thought.

So why do pronouns matter? People who are transitioning from their gender assigned at birth, to the pronouns that match what they identify as, is one of the first steps in having other people recognize their correct gender. In this case, we all typically know the pronouns "she/her/hers" and "him/him/his." These pronouns have for a long time been referred to as "female" and "male" pronouns.

Before I continue, why male and female in quotation marks? Pronouns are not inherently gendered. By saying "I use female pronouns," it's assuming that anyone who uses

she/her/hers pronouns identifies as female, but that's not necessarily true. Someone who identifies as non-binary could still use these pronouns.

You may be thinking "Brandi, what do you mean 'could' use these pronouns." In short, it's because there are other gender-neutral pronouns that have been introduced in the English language, the most commonly used being "they/them/theirs." And again, you may be thinking to yourself "Brandi, they/them is used to refer to multiple people! How can it be one person's pronoun?" Or, you may be thinking, "I'm a grammar purist, and won't use that as a singular pronoun."



In fact, there is noted use of they/them as gender neutral pronouns as far back 1881. For example, in a letter in 1881, Emily Dickinson wrote "Almost anyone under the circumstances would have doubted if [the letter] was theirs, or indeed if they were themselves." People have for very long used the singular "they" to describe someone whose gender is unknown for a very long time. Several publishers have started to use they as neutral terminology rather than the clunky use of she/he. Both the Merriam-Webster dictionary and the American Dialect Society have accepted and asserted the use of they/them pronouns as gender neutral.

Admittedly, a person specifically asking to use they as their pronouns is different and it can take some time to understand. However, that does not negate the necessity of trying to use the correct pronouns.

I do want to note there is a concept called "neo-pronouns." Neo-pronouns are often used by transgender, non-binary, and/or gender nonconforming people as an alternative to they/them pronouns. There are four common neo-pronouns used at this time. They are:

Xe/xem/xyr – Pronounced "zee/zem/zeer/" Ex: Xe doesn't want ketchup with xyr fries.

Ze/hir/hirs – Pronounced "zee/heer/heers" Ex: Ze doesn't want ketchup with hir fries.

Fae/faer/fairs – Pronounced "fay/fair/fairs" Ex: Fae doesn't want ketchup with faer fries.

Ey/em/eirs – Pronounced "ay/em/heir" Ex: Ey doesn't want ketchup with eir fries.

These are the most common ways to pronounce these pronouns, but it can vary and it's typically okay to ask someone how they pronounce their pronouns. It is normal to get hung up on neo-pronouns, they are new in society, but what's important is to respect them and make an effort, as is the truth for any pronoun.

Some people use two different pronouns. For example, I use both they/them and she/hers. Why two pronouns? For me it's that they both are comfortable and feel right to me. It also helps me in situations where I don't want to tell people my identity – typically in work settings. Other people are gender fluid and may change between their pronouns to fall more in line with where they are on the spectrum depending on what they feel is most appropriate at the time and that needs to be respected as well!

There's a quote in the LGBTQ+ community that is "My correct pronouns are not preferred, they're required. And my correct pronouns are the ones I say are correct." What does this mean for others? It means that refusing to use the correct pronouns (even they/them) is in fact a form of bigotry. It's actively telling a person that "I don't care what you say you are, I'm only going to refer to you as what I've decided you are" It's in essence saying that you're not somebody to be trusted and that you may call yourself an ally, but you're only saying that for appearances.

It's also important to note, that sometimes we make mistakes – we are all human. When you use the wrong pronouns by accident, don't deny it or try to trivialize it. But also, don't make a scene and self-deprecate. That means don't say "She – I mean he. Oh gosh I'm the absolute worst person in the entire world. I don't even know why you're friends with me anymore." Instead, it means saying "She – sorry, he –" and move on.

Now, overall why am I writing this? I suggested to the Care and Connections team a way to have pronouns visible on our name badges. Why? For the simple fact that by normalizing telling each other our pronouns, or having it visible for others to see, we normalize people using pronouns other than what people will perceive as pronouns. Because the truth is, you can't ascertain someone's pronouns just by looking at them, the same way you can't ascertain someone's gender or sexuality by looking at them.

If we as a church make an active effort to make it normal for us to have pronouns in every day conversations. When the Care and Connections team moves forward with having pronoun stickers available to add to name badges, I would encourage everyone to add pronouns to their badge! Not only does it normalize the use of pronouns, but it assists with our efforts as an Open and Affirming church. It tells members of the community that we are willing to actively engage in pronouns discussions. And it affirms to the community that we will accept you as you are.

Please feel free to contact me with questions or concerns regarding pronouns! I don't claim at all to be an expert on this topic, but rather a member of the community who is active and wants to open other people's mind and hopefully create a more welcoming society.

- Brandi Pudlo

### **CHURCH COUNCIL**

Rich Gibson, Moderator

#### **Shannon Abbott's Call**

There's been a lot of discussion about our office administrator, Shannon Abbott, and her calling. Her article in last month's Colony was very illuminating to show the depth of her commitment. In light of that, it seems time to lay out a few more facts:

1. Both the Mental Health Team and the Council reviewed the processes Shannon is undergoing. While both bodies are excited and supportive, neither has "issued a call" to Shannon, or even proposed that FCC do so. The Council is aware of and approves of her efforts. It was a profound miswording to characterize this position in the March Council minutes as "issuing a call." The note-taker and all those in the Council who read and approved those minutes deeply regret this miswording. Those minutes have been amended, approved and posted.
  2. Shannon is already an ordained minister in another Protestant denomination. She is working with the Southeast Association of our Indiana-Kentucky Conference to seek a way to transfer her ordination to the UCC. FCC's involvement in this effort is minimal
  3. Shannon feels a very deep personal call to become a Minister of Health and Wellness. Her article last month gives great insight. Her call is deep, profound, and sincere. What exactly such a minister does is an excellent question. Shannon is going to be trying various ideas and techniques, on her own time. We are all welcome to participate with her, as we are willing, able and available.
  4. Shannon is enjoying her time and job as our office administrator very much! She has neither the desire nor the intention of letting her personal call and her exploration interfere with her duties.
- Rich Gibson

## **WITNESS & WELCOME**

Bob Cook, Chair

Dear Bob and all at First Congregational UCC,

Thanks for such a wonderful PRIDE experience today! Your hospitality started our day together; your generous breakfast was delicious. Our time at the parade was the beginning of something, we hope... something that will continue to share the witness of God's love for ALL and a partnership that will further spread the message of inclusion and justice that we wholeheartedly believe. It was also a joy to have our booths just a few feet from one another... It was lovely to look up and see your "GOD" logo and know that you were sharing goodness just as we were only a few steps away.

Truly, thank you for willing to change things up this year and experience PRIDE together. As Pentecost dawns tomorrow, we will be praying with you. May the many languages that we speak and the many actions that we share as expressions of God's love bring us together in new and creative ways, and may the joy of being neighbors continue to surprise us, just as it did on that Pentecost day so many years ago.

Blessings for the journey...

Pastors Becca and Lori, and the members of St. Peter's UCC



## **CARE & CONNECTIONS**

Wendy Baldwin, Chair

### **Fellowship and fun!**



Community Singing practices on Wed, July 10 and Thurs, 7/26, 6-7:30 pm: Our church has been hosting a small group test, to practice a special singalong technique. It is led by Sally McSpadden, who is a music teacher at Orchard School, a co-founder of Justice Choir - Indianapolis, and a member of Indianapolis Women's Chorus, among many other musical credits. We are invited to join her 'group sing' practices in the Mayflower Room. It includes all genre of music, and the key thing is to share community and fun with those involved. Sally emphasizes that musical skill is not necessary!

Friday Night at the Movies, 7/19, 6:30ish: Piggy-backing on a St Peter's UCC program, let's meet on the third Friday each month at 6:30ish at Keystone Art Cinema at the Fashion Mall at Keystone. We'll decide which film(s) to see, get refreshments, and socialize. Then, after the movie, hang out at the Indie Lounge for more fellowship with our fellow FCC folk, as well as getting to know and share with St Peter's people.



Forming a team for the Talent Show: FCC will be featuring the many talents of our church family at a talent show on Friday, Oct 4. But first we need a team to work on how to best do this! If you are willing to help out, please contact Wendy Baldwin by 7/22.

### **FOUNDATION**

Bill Gillette, Chair

## **The First Congregational Church Foundation**

Our Foundation's main duty is to strengthen our church's financial base. It generally does a good job of managing its assets and providing assistance to the church when needed. Another place where the Foundation can help is in encouraging church members in the careful management of their personal assets. Many of us neglect to make a formal plan for the disposition of our financial assets when we die. Setting up a will or a trust is not difficult, but often it's not done or not done properly. The result is that a decedent's assets may go to people or places never intended rather than where the decedent wished. Do you have a will or trust that specifies your wishes in acceptable legal terms? If so, have you reviewed it recently to be sure that it's up to date? Family and financial circumstances change, as do inheritance laws, so wills and trusts should be reviewed every 3 to 5 years, or immediately if assets or intended heirs change.

- Bill Gillette for the Foundation

### **TRUSTEES**

Randy Walker, Chair

## **Green Team: Solar Panels Update**

You've all probably noticed that the solar panels are all up on our roofs now. As a matter of fact, maybe you haven't—they certainly blend in, don't they?

All that's left as I write (mid-June) is:

- Waiting on Indianapolis Power and Light to respond to an "interconnection agreement."
  - o This is a formal agreement that we're hooking our panels into their grid. A few financial and safety measures are involved with this
- installing the inverters;
- Wiring everything together;
- And finally, flipping the switch!



Update 1: I have more to tell you as of Colony deadline time: On June 7, the Indianapolis Fire Department conducted an inspection of our church and found the placement of the panels on the roof to be in violation of the code. I passed the word on to the Phil Teague, the president of Rectify. He's upset, having a) never encountered this before and b) having already jumped through countless hoops in the way of filling out forms and plans, submitting them, and getting them approved and certified. He has an appointment with the very fire

inspector who filed the violation on June 19.

Update 2: Phil met with the fire inspector, and presented documentation that his original plan, the one used to put those panels on our roof, is fully in compliance. She was swayed, but felt uncomfortable reversing herself, and suggested he file a "variance" (sounds a lot like "waiver" to me) that her superiors could review and approve. Phil also talked to his structural engineer, a college friend of the inspector's, who felt that if he talked to her, she might drop the violation altogether without requiring a variance.

So it's not over yet. The more likely outcome is that our present layout will be approved, and we'll have to wait a little while before our system is complete and operational. The less likely outcome is that Phil and his company will have to do a lot of re-planning and reinstalling. We should see no additional cost on our end, but we will have a much longer wait. Stay tuned! It's not over yet...

- Rich Gibson, Green Team

## **Update from your "Building Manager" & Dreams for the Parlor on Sat, July 6**

For many years, the maintenance of First Congregational's building and grounds has primarily been managed by the "Chair of House & Grounds". This term is unfamiliar to many in our congregation, and also to vendors, and it implies that there is a team to be a chair of. With the blessing of the Trustees, I am now using the title "Building Manager", which better describes the functions I cover in this purely volunteer role. Here is an update on some of the work that has been done this year.

- **Building Assessment Process:** Earlier this year, Randy Walker, Glenn Evans, and I reviewed the building, where we identified a long list of projects and updates to the building, which will keep us busy for several years to come. I provide an update each month to the Trustees, and get input and approvals on next steps. One of the projects that we are getting bids on is for new carpet in the Office, Library, and the room used by Meagan Johnson.
- **Parlor dreams and wish list:** Please come to a brainstorming session on Saturday, 7/6, at 10 am. The Parlor is widely used for a variety of purposes, and is showing signs of wear and tear. Several have made suggestions in recent years about next steps for this area. Please come to share your thoughts, or email me with ideas and suggestions.
- **Church Office update:** Recently, we have (mostly) completed an update to the Church Office, which included new paint, new file cabinets, new counter tops, new blinds, and repositioning furniture.
- **Storage area reorganizing:** Karen Walker has been leading an effort to clear out and reorganize some of our storage areas. The room across from the church office has been greatly cleared out, with many of the items removed and sold at the Recycle Reuse Rummage sale, or donated to Goodwill. Recently, an update was made to the Coat Room, where an area was created for storage and the remainder to be used as a coat room.

In order to be good stewards of our monetary gifts to FCC, which include covering the day-to-day expenses for the church building and grounds, many volunteer hours are given from a variety of folks, for which we are very grateful! Please let me know of work that needs to be done, or ideas for updates so we can incorporate them into our plans.

- Wendy Baldwin

# Financial Update

When We Give, We Reach Out With Helping Hands

Here are the financial results through May 31, 2019.

19

| 1. Current Year Actual vs Budget Summary  |                 |          |                      |
|---|-----------------|----------|----------------------|
| 1/1/2019 through 5/31/2019 Using Budget 1 |                 |          |                      |
| Category                                  | 1/1/2019 Actual | - Budget | 5/31/2019 Difference |
| INCOME                                    | 106,640         | 100,415  | 6,225                |
| M. Unrestricted Contributions             | 106,640         | 100,415  | 6,225                |
| M.01 Pledged Offerings                    | 91,950          | 83,527   | 8,423                |
| M.02 UnPledged Offerings                  | 8,302           | 10,500   | -2,198               |
| 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                                  | 107,837         | 112,603  | 4,766                |
| A. Pastoral Leadership                    | 52,079          | 52,768   | 690                  |
| B. Worship & Faith                        | 16,211          | 18,166   | 1,955                |
| C. Care & Connections                     | 196             | 219      | 23                   |
| D. Witness & Welcome                      | 99              | 291      | 192                  |
| E. Outreach & Service                     | 6,986           | 7,172    | 186                  |
| F. Trustees                               | 182             | 0        | -182                 |
| G. Administration & Operations            | 8,358           | 9,023    | 665                  |
| H. House & Grounds                        | 20,989          | 21,953   | 964                  |
| I. Miscellaneous                          | 2,736           | 3,011    | 275                  |
| Net Difference:                           | -1,197          | -12,188  | 10,991               |

## Highlights:

Our financial results for the first five months continue to be better than our budget:

- Expenses of \$107,800 exceeded income of \$106,600. This \$1,200 deficit was actually \$11,000 better than our budget.
  - **Income** was \$6,200 above budget due largely to timing - a handful of large annual pledges that came in during March. Pledge income will likely level out during the rest of the year.
  - **Expenses** were \$4,800 below budget. The savings were across the board, with the majority coming from Worship & Faith and House & Grounds.
- Our cash position at May 31 was strong, with \$32,400 in the checking account and \$25,000 invested in a money market fund.
- Our May 31 net position ((cash + investments) – restricted account obligations) was \$6,000 negative.

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

Jim Lootens, Treasurer - lootens.jb@gmail.com

## COMMUNITY

### Live the Golden Rule

By susanna-judith rae

*For this is the message you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. 1 John 3:11 NRSV*

Did you attend FCC's worship service several months ago when Pastor Carol preached an excellent sermon as well as an outstanding "Message for All Ages," focused on the charming picture book *The Runaway Bunny*? Both the children in the playground and the little kid in

each of us adults seemed to very much enjoy Pastor Carol's expressive reading of the delightful story.

As i listened, i remembered that *The Runaway Bunny* was a significant part of *Wit*, an exceptional play and, years later, a similarly remarkable film. The play—for which Atlanta kindergarten teacher Margaret Edson won the 1999 Pulitzer Prize for Drama—is available through the Indianapolis Public Library. The 2001 film of the same title stars Emma Thompson, who plays the role of 50 year-old English professor Vivian Bearing. *Wit*'s DVD and Blu-Ray can be rented through Netflix.

When Vivian's English Literature supervisor, 80-year-old E. M. Ashford, finds out that Vivian has been hospitalized with stage 4 uterine cancer, Ashford visits her and treats her with utmost respect and kindness. After Vivian states "I feel so bad," her mentor "furtively slips off her shoes and swings up on the bed," putting her arm around Vivian. After affectionately saying, "There, there. There, there, Vivian," Ashford tenderly reads to her *The Runaway Bunny*, which she had purchased earlier that day for her 5-year-old great grandson, Jeffrey.

In the middle of reading this touching story, Ashford summarizes the book and its significance this way: "Look at that. A little allegory of the soul. No matter where it hides, God will find [the baby bunny]. See Vivian?" Alas, Vivian is in such pain that she only moans. Nevertheless, it's clear that Vivian appreciates that Ashford, her only visitor in the hospital, has held her and read to her. Similarly, i think the FCC kids and adults appreciated that Pastor Carol read the *Runaway Bunny* to us.

Unfortunately, Ashford's tender reading of the children's picture book is one of few kind, compassionate experiences Vivian had as a patient in the hospital. According to the first item of *Wit*'s "Trivia" at [Internet Movie Data Base](#), "The film is often shown at medical colleges as an example of how doctors and researchers should **not** behave."

Unlike Vivian's physicians and interns, fortunately, in various passages of the New Testament, Jesus models how to behave and how to love one another. Let's each do our best to follow Jesus's example and daily live the Golden Rule.

**IKC Women's Retreat**



The 2019 IKC Women's Retreat will take place Friday, September 27<sup>th</sup> - Sunday, September 29<sup>th</sup> at the Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center in Beech Grove, IN. The theme is Quiet Spaces: A Time for Meditation & Storytelling. The cost to attend the retreat is \$125 for Friday and Saturday only or \$140 for all three days (meals and overnight accommodations included). The deadline to register is August 31, 2019.

You can register online below, or download and mail this printable brochure\* to the attention of Rebecca Braganza at the IKC office (1100 West 42nd Street, Suite 155 Indianapolis, IN 46208) along with your payment: [IKC Women's Retreat 2019 Brochure](#).

[REGISTER ONLINE](#)

\*There are also a few copies of the registration brochure in the church office. Pick one up to check out the retreat schedule of events and register!

# Meagan Johnson

Alexander Technique  
for Music & Life



## **A Moment of Ease - It is solved by walking.**

As the story goes, the Greek philosopher Zeno concluded, using logic, that motion was an illusion. When Diogenes the Cynic heard this he reportedly responded without speaking, simply standing up and walking away to show that motion did, in fact, exist. The Latin phrase *solvitur ambulando*, translated as "it is solved by walking" and attributed to St. Augustine, has come to refer to a problem that can be solved by a practical demonstration. I'm intrigued by this phrase for two reasons.

First, the above definition reminds me to stay grounded in the practical applications of theory and philosophy. F.M. Alexander was by all accounts a person who put practice first, and only afterwards, worked out the theory. The method he originated, which became known as the Alexander Technique, is a fundamentally practical work that addresses practical issues with practical solutions: Can we choose our responses to the stimuli of living? How can we be poised and balanced in our whole selves - body + mind - to be free of habit and preconceived ideas, and be present and open to the possibilities in around us? The answers to these questions are not purely philosophical, but practical. The solution is in how I sit, how I type, how I breathe, how I rest, how I walk.

This brings me to the surface meaning of the phrase: "It is solved by walking." I know that I feel my best on the days I teach Alexander Technique, because I really pay attention to how I use my whole self. I'm both deliberate and free in my movements and in my thinking. A good saunter in the woods (or, when possible, near water) makes things better, no matter how I'm feeling. (A day when I get to teach the Technique AND go for a walk is the best!) I also love going to a yoga class or doing yoga on my own at home if I'm feeling short on time. You don't have to be in a special setting, either - just a lap around your neighborhood, or even your office building, can do the trick!

But I forget how good it can feel to simply move, with ease and with love for myself in however I am in my movement that day. I let myself sink into over-thinking or ruminating on a problem, get stuck on social media or doing work on the computer when a good walk would probably move me through whatever the matter is. Remember, body and mind are a unity - they're the same thing. How you move your body IS how you move your mind. Don't get "stuck" in your thoughts by being "stuck" in your movements.

In what ways do you like to move? Do you like slow walks, fast hikes, cycling, silly dancing in your kitchen, running, hula hooping, yoga, lifting weights, raking leaves? You don't have to walk, or do yoga, but moving in whatever ways your body likes to move, with ease and self-love, can work wonders.

- Meagan Johnson is a certified teacher of the Alexander Technique and voice instructor. Her studio is in the "Treehouse Room" on the second floor of the church, next to the library.

## **Meridian Hills Cooperative School**

I love learning. I enjoy reading. And I really like sharing my passion for education and young children with others. I find the brain, especially in children an interesting subject matter. With summer here I thought I would share some of my favorite reading selections with you all. For me these books aren't about 'work' as I find them all so captivating in their subject matter. Yes, they do pertain to my work. However, when you love what you do, reading more about it is just pleasure reading for me.

- *The Power of Play*, by David Elkind, how spontaneous, imaginative activities lead to happier, healthier children.
- *The Hurried Child* and *All Grown Up and No Place To Go* also by David Elkind- both Wonderful reads!

- *Last Child in the Woods* by Richard Louv- saving our children from Nature Deficit Disorder.
- *Quiet* by Susan Cain, the power of Introverts in a world that can't stop talking.
- *Beyond Measure* by Vicki Abeles, rescuing an overscheduled, overtested, underestimated generation. From the Director of the documentary, "Race to Nowhere"- fascinating one.
- *Creative Schools* by Ken Robinson and Lou Aronica, the Grassroots Revolution That's Transforming Education. Ken Robinson also has fabulous Ted Talks!
- *Multiple Intelligences- New Horizons* by Howard Gardner, revised and updated from the original 1993 with new research and discoveries.

Now for my new share, I have finally bought one of the original books about Co-op. It has been on my mind for years. It has also been out of print and hard to find. It is much more available now with all the different avenues to research online.

- *Parents and Children Learn Together* by Katharine Whiteside Taylor. I'm excited to dive into this one.

In the meantime, Happy Summer and enjoy some good reads!

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

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**FCC Spiritual Explorers, Sunday, July 7<sup>th</sup>:** The Spiritual Explorers get together to explore various spiritual practices. On Sunday, July 7, 12:15 PM, in the library, we will discuss which spiritual practices to focus on in coming months, such as silence, gratitude, poetry, journaling, music, and ways God is calling us. All are welcome! Contact [susanna-judith.rae](mailto:susanna-judith.rae) for more information.

**Family Promise Clothing Drive in August:** For those of you used to spring and fall clothing drives, this year Family Promise is just doing one in August. So we will not be doing a big push this spring. If you are doing spring cleaning and can't save donations at home, we will have a place to store them at church. Just bring them in in tall white trash bags that are securely tied, and we'll keep them here.

**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 **July 11<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup>**. Please contact Randy Walker at (317) 796-2081 or [aa28977rwalker@gmail.com](mailto:aa28977rwalker@gmail.com) for information.

**August Colony Submission Deadline:** Please have your submissions sent to Shannon by **July 15<sup>th</sup>**.

**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, **June 25<sup>th</sup>** at 11:45 a.m. For any questions or for more information, please contact Sue Chapman at 317-259-1806 or [carolsuech59@gmail.com](mailto:carolsuech59@gmail.com).

**Flower Calendar:** The 2019 Flower Calendar is on the bulletin board by the garden doors. Flowers can be for any occasion, and 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.

## General Synod Highlights

By Pastor Sarah

Highlights from the United Church of Christ 32<sup>nd</sup> General Synod in Milwaukee, Wisconsin include:

1. Passage of the Break the Silence Sunday Resolution co-sponsored by our congregation
2. Passage of the Mental Health Network Resolution becoming a Historically Underrepresented Group
3. Passage of the Green New Deal Resolution supporting our mission to be a Green Church
4. Creating space for individuals and groups to experience care as we provided a Self-Care Suite and Community Care Space for the first time at General Synod
5. Standing on the arrest line with Rev. Traci Blackmon and other interfaith leaders at the Milwaukee ICE building to witness to God's desire for justice and peace for refugees
6. Celebrating fellowship with the Indiana-Kentucky Conference delegates and Conference Minister, the Rev. Chad Abbott and Shannon Abbott
7. Sharing reflections about disabilities justice and mental health justice at the Health and Wholeness Advocacy luncheon
8. Experiencing the Gala dinner and Gospel Choir from Trinity United Church of Christ of Chicago
9. Learning from civil rights leader and thinker Ruby Sales about systemic racism and the Church
10. Speaking on a panel at the Open and Affirming National Gathering about the intersectionality of race, ability, gender identity and sexual orientation
11. Supporting youth as they wrestled with the tension within the wider UCC of the diversity of views as they realized not all UCC churches are Open and Affirming
12. Supporting Shannon Abbott in her Wellness Ministry Workshop, offering healing and positive energy to delegates
13. Speaking at the Members in Discernment Breakfast an encouraging word as they discern and navigate their vocational journey in the midst of caring for their whole selves: mind, body, and spirit
14. Meeting with Conference Ministers from across the UCC and learning about their churches desire to be WISE (Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, and Engaged) for mental health and A2A (Accessible to All)
15. Learning about how our churches can be involved in a healing response to the opioid crisis and train ourselves to respond to overdoses in a way that saves lives
16. Celebrating the newly formed fellowship of Latinx in the UCC called The Collective
17. Electing our new Associate General Minister, the Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson, a colleague and friend of mine from our days serving together in the Florida Conference of the UCC
18. The robust discussion as we re-elected our General Minister and President, the Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer, about the role of diversity in our top leadership positions
19. Connecting with old friends and making new friends as we seek to be the Body of Christ together
20. Reminded that First Congregation UCC in Indianapolis is part of a broad network of congregations across the country and together, with God's help, we can do great things!



Save the date: the 33<sup>rd</sup> General Synod will be July 16-20, 2021 in Kansas City!