



# FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

## THE PILGRIM COLONY

September 2019

### Pastor's Reflections

First Congregational is part of the movement of Jesus followers seeking to transform the world through radical acts of peace and justice. We are part of a network of approximately 5,000 churches and one million members in the United Church of Christ. This fall and spring we will explore what it means to be the church reflecting the principles of the UCC. In worship on Sundays we will ask the questions: What does it mean to BE THE CHURCH? What is my part in being church? Indeed, WE are the church, WE are the body of Christ. And together WE can transform the world. Let's BE THE CHURCH together.



Here are the different principles we will explore as part of our BE THE CHURCH series:

Protect the Environment--September  
Care for the Poor--October  
Forgive Often--November  
Reject Racism--December  
Fight for the Powerless--January  
Share Earthly and Spiritual Resources--February  
Embrace Diversity--March  
Love God--April  
Enjoy this life--May

I am excited to BE THE CHURCH with First Congregational!

Peace,  
Pastor Sarah

### Pastoral Congregation Relations Committee

The pastoral office and other positions of staff leadership exist to build up the congregation as part of the Body of Christ and to equip the saints for the mission of the church. The particular relationship between a pastor and congregants should be tended deliberately, so that the ministries of both pastor and congregation complement each other and further God's grace in the world. As with any relationship, it must be respected and nurtured to grow in healthy and projective ways. For this reason, a Pastoral Congregation Relations Committee (PCRC) exists in a congregation to advise, assist, and promote the growth of this vital relationship.

PCRC meet quarterly and are available throughout the year for support and conversation. We are blessed to have both Pastor Sarah and Pastor Carol serve our congregation. Currently, Pastor Carol's focus is on the following areas: pulpit supply, pastoral care visits, Adult Education and Worship Leader coordination.

PCRC for Pastor Sarah: Randy Walker, Lianna Campos, Nancy Dickinson, vacancy

PCRC for Pastor Carol: Bob Cook, Janet Selby, Clark Collier, susana-judith rae

- Pastor Sarah

## **Moderator's Reflections**

At our last Green Team meeting, I announced the following, to give the team time to find a new leader. Benjamin Franklin once wrote, "Three people can keep a secret if two of them are dead." As stories often change as they spread, I thought it best to get the truth out to you all at the earliest opportunity.

Two momentous things happened to me in late November-early December of 2017:

- Jackie told me that she was not comfortable at First Congregational, and was going to look for another church home. She wanted me to go with her
- Michael Montgomery and the Council asked me to be the vice moderator. I realized this entailed two years' service at FCC

After some thought, meditation, prayer, and discussion with Jackie, I decided to accept the Council's invitation.

My term as moderator will end at the Annual Meeting on January 26, 2020. I owe Jackie more spiritual companionship. Come February, I intend to accompany her to St Christopher's Episcopal Church in Carmel. At the time of my writing this, I am undecided whether I will time-share between First Congregational and St Christopher's, to what extent, or for how long. Don't expect to see me, but don't be surprised if I show up occasionally.

The last two years have been a wonderful, challenging journey. I have been honored to serve the members of First Congregational, many of whom I love dearly. FCC is on an exciting journey of growth and hope, and I'm proud to have been involved in it.

God bless you all,  
Rich Gibson

## **A Message from Our New Student Interns**

### **Student Pastor: Cassidy Hall, CTS**



My hope in being your student pastor is to accompany you as individuals and as a whole community as we move towards greater love, more truth, and deeper wisdom. In my time with you, I hope to learn and grow as a pastoral leader in my pursuit of ordination. Wherever you are on your spiritual journey, I am thrilled to be with you and humbled to grow alongside you.  
Many thanks,  
Cassidy Hall, [studentpastor@fcindy.org](mailto:studentpastor@fcindy.org)

### **Just Peace Intern: Grace Langford, Butler University**



As the Just Peace intern, my goal is to work alongside the members of First Congregational UCC to create a solid foundation to grow the new Just Peace program. I hope to raise awareness and understanding of the Just Peace program and to activate members to participate in the program as a community.

Best,  
Grace Langford, [justpeaceintern@fcindy.org](mailto:justpeaceintern@fcindy.org)

This Month at First Congregational UCC

All Sundays	9:45 a.m.	Sunday Adult Class
All Sundays	11:00 a.m.	Worship
All Thursdays	7:00 p.m.	Choir Rehearsal
Wednesday, Sept. 4	10:00 a.m.	Care & Connections
Wednesday, Sept. 4	11:00 a.m.	Witness & Welcome
Wednesday, Sept. 4	5:00 p.m.	Just Peace Team
Wednesday, Sept. 4	7:00 p.m.	Trustees
Thursday, Sept. 5	1:00 p.m.	Men's Lunch
Thursday, Sept. 5	6:00 p.m.	In Harmony
Sunday, Sept. 8	12:15 p.m.	Green Team Lunch
Sunday, Sept. 8	2:00 p.m.	Spiritual Explorers Labyrinth Walk
Wednesday, Sept. 11	11:00 a.m.	Music Support
Wednesday, Sept. 11	5:00 p.m.	Mental Health Team
Wednesday, Sept. 11	7:00 p.m.	Church Council
Sunday, Sept. 15	12:15 p.m.	Outreach & Service
Tuesday, Sept. 17	1:30 p.m.	Circle IV Book Group
Thursday, Sept. 19	1:00 p.m.	Men's Lunch
Thursday, Sept. 19	6:30 p.m.	Bread for the World Dinner
Friday, Sept. 20	6:30 p.m.	Friday Night at the Movies
Sunday, Sept. 22	12:30 p.m.	Just Peace Sunday & Southern Border Buzz
Sunday, Sept. 22	1:00 – 5:00 p.m.	Festival of Faiths
Wednesday, Sept. 25	6:30 p.m.	Calling Circle
Thursday, Sept. 26	11:45 a.m.	Women's Lunch
Sunday, Sept. 29	12:30 p.m.	Church Chat with Rev. Chris Davies

WORSHIP & FAITH

Elizabeth Price, Chair

Sunday Adult Class

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

- Sept 1 - begin "Conclusion: The Anxious Bench from Anxious To Talk About It
- Sept 8 - finish "Conclusion..." and debrief
- Sept 15 - WISE presentation with Shannon Abbott: The Practice of Whole-Self Care through Movement and Meditation.
- Sept 22 & 29 - See upcoming Epistles for more information.

Come join us!  
Pastor Carol

September Worship Leaders

Sept 1	Wendy Baldwin
Sept 8	Sue Chapman
Sept 15	Clark Collier
Sept 22	Pat Larracey
Sept 29	Gini Coomer



## FCC Welcomes Guest Speaker, Rev. Chris Davies

Rev. Dr. Chris S. Davies is a Connecticut native and a Cleveland transplant and a wandering Irish Rover at heart. She loves the church deeply, and is committed to finding ways to continue to bring the gospel into the world. She attended Smith College for her undergrad work and Andover Newton for both a Masters of Divinity and Doctor of Ministry. Chris grew up in the United Church of Christ, and was baptized and ordained within her home congregation in Connecticut. She has served at the local church level at two churches in Connecticut, on the Connecticut Conference Board of Directors (class of 2004), and as a delegate to the United Church of Christ's General Synod in 2005, 2007, and 2015.



She is currently serving on the National Staff of the United Church of Christ as the Program Manager of Congregational Assessment, Support, and Advancement. Chris is a queer femme, a local beer enthusiast, and a creative networker of communities. She is passionate about justice and Jesus, and is the founder and curator of the Queer Clergy Trading Cards, a project bringing visibility to queer clergy, using humor and irreverence to help change the conversation highlighting the common awe (and absurdities) in faith work.

Chris lives in Cleveland, OH, where she is still seeking community and continuing to learn in faith and live justly, serving Christ in all things. She will join us for worship on **Sunday, September 29<sup>th</sup>** and have an informal chat with us over coffee following worship about her ministries in the UCC.

## Advent Alternative Worship



Are you interested in joining a creative group to plan and implement an Alternative Worship experience for Advent? Do you want to plan a series of small group studies/experiences? Large group sessions that might include yoga, guided meditation, massage, Reiki, Frankinsense and Myrrh? Something else? Any and all creative people welcome! Please see Elizabeth Price after Sunday worship or email her at [eprice235@gmail.com](mailto:eprice235@gmail.com). See upcoming Epistles for planning meeting dates.

## FCC's 2019 Labyrinth Walks Continue

On August 11, five members of St. Peter's Church kindly and hospitably joined FCC Spiritual Explorers in walking the labyrinth at St. Peter's. In addition to focusing on spiritual centering and contemplation, before and after the walk, we had fun getting to know some of our UCC neighbors in Carmel.

FCC's second 2019 labyrinth-walking experience will be on **September 8** at Second Presbyterian Church, 7700 N. Meridian St., **following FCC's Green Team's 12:15 lunch**. Persons who attend the Green Lunch, as well as those who do not, can all meet at **2:00** at Second Pres to walk the labyrinth.



Please mark your calendars, also, for walking labyrinths at St. Luke's United Methodist Church on **October 13** at 1:00 and in FCC's Mayflower room following the **November 24** FCC meal.

All FCC members and visitors are invited to walk the remaining three 2019 labyrinth walks. Each occasion is an excellent time to invite family members, friends, and neighbors to FCC's Sunday 9:45 AM Adult Class, 11:00 AM worship service, followed by waking a labyrinth.

- susanna-judith rae

**September Buzz: Witness to the Southern US Border - Let US see our Neighbor**  
**Sunday, September 22, 12:30 p.m.**



Witness can take many forms and for this event, Jill Olinger, member of St. Peter's UCC in Carmel, and President of the Indiana Kentucky Conference, will share stories of a personal journey of more than 10,000 miles and taken over 10 weeks in early 2019 along the US/Mexico border. The stories will be shared and conversation will be guided based on the UCC's 3 Great Loves: Love of Children, Love of Neighbor, and Love of Creation. The stories are based on Jill's experiences and interactions at the border when someone simply shows up and is willing to be present, to see, to hear, and to learn.

**OUTREACH & SERVICE**

Sue Chapman, Chair

**September Mission of the Month – Hoosier Interfaith Power and Light**

HIPL is an interfaith organization dedicated to advocating for sustainable living and changes to protect God's creation of life on this earth, both human and others. Its mission is to educate congregations on sustainable living practices that will reduce our carbon footprint, and promote the use of renewable energy resources. It assists congregations to establish their own green teams and look at and address issues of sustainability at their places of worship and among their congregants. The organization provides workshops and events for congregations to participate in. they also help local congregations advocate for clean energy policies with reducing our fossil fuel dependence and promoting renewable energy resources as well as encouraging other efforts to promote sustainable living. They were instrumental in helping us start and maintain the study and work process that has led to our efforts to decrease our church's carbon foot print with changes to our lighting and now the installation of a photovoltaic system that will allow the church to capture part of its energy from a renewable source. The organization is funded primarily from contributions from its member congregations and additional support is always needed to continue the work of improving the care for creation advocated by almost all major religious teachings. Please support them with the September Mission of the Month.

- Ann Leatherman. Green Team

**Pantry Items of the Month**

During September, we are collecting the following items: bread, baking mixes, canned vegetables, and deodorant.

- Betty Schnur



**Support for the Northside Food Pantry**

Our donations in July were notable, continuing the generosity that we have shown in 2019. We donated 76 pounds of nutritious food in addition to 9 pounds of requested personal hygiene items. While most of us are secure in our food requirements, the

same cannot be said for many in our community. Our donations are important in getting nutritious food into the hands and mouths of our neighbors in need. Thank you, and please keep your donations coming.

- Bill Gillette

**Northside Food Pantry Volunteer Opportunity**

The pantry, located in 2<sup>nd</sup> Presbyterian Church, is in need of client liaison workers, who accompany clients as they select their food. Training is provided. Ideally FCC would have a team of 4-5 people who could help one day a month on a regular basis, such as the 1st Wed. or the 2nd Sat. Shifts most in need of workers are Wed. 4:00 – 6:30 p.m. and Sat. 10:00- 12 noon. Workers need to arrive 30 min. prior to start of shift. The full schedule can be seen

on their website, [www.secondchurch.org](http://www.secondchurch.org) by viewing the online sign-up. They would love to partner with FCC on this!

If you would be interested in this opportunity to assist people one-on-one, please contact Janet Selby at [janet.selby@gmail.com](mailto:janet.selby@gmail.com) Thanks! – Janet Selby

**CARE & CONNECTIONS**  
Wendy Baldwin, Chair

**Fellowship and fun!**

Start checking the bulletin board at the patio door entrance to see what's coming up, and ways to connect and share fellowship!

**Friday Night at the Movies, 9/20, 6:30ish:** Join us on the third Friday of each month at 6:30ish at Keystone Art Cinema in 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. Questions? Contact Wendy Baldwin



**"FC's Got Talent", Oct 4, 6:30:** Do you have a gift or talent that you're willing to share with your FC family? These can include various acts of music, song, dialogue (3-5 minutes in length), as well as displays of art, writing, handicrafts, etc. Start thinking now about what you want to share with us, and sign up by 9/22 with your talent on the sheets in the Narthex. Questions? Contact Wendy Baldwin or Bob Cook

**Around a table:** Would you like to build connections with other members outside of worship? Those interested will be placed in groups to get together for meals or snacks over a 4 month period. We will then repeat with new sign ups and new groups! If interested, please complete the attached sign up sheet and return it to church by September 22. A small team will take all the sign up sheets and create groups of 5-7 people, based on preferences but with goal of growing fellowship! Once the groups are selected, each group will be expected to get together at least 4 times if possible – rotating the planning within the group. The group members can decide whether to host meals or snacks or just conversation at their houses, or to meet at restaurants or coffee shops, or anything else. After 4 months, we will have new sign up sheets, and new groups will be created for the next 4 months. Presented by Care & Connections board – please contact Karen Walker (317-319-8950 or [Karen.e.d.walker@gmail.com](mailto:Karen.e.d.walker@gmail.com)) for any questions or help with sign up.



**In Harmony: a community singing group**



Sally McSpadden is starting a new singing group, which will be hosted by First Congregational. It is called "In Harmony", and is a non-auditioned, non-performing, intergenerational singing group for ALL voices. Music is taught aurally, no music reading ability necessary. There will be occasional special guests speaking on a range of topics including mindful movement and breath. It will meet twice a month on **Thursdays, from 6-7 pm**, in the Mayflower Room. The dates are **9/5, 9/19, 10/3, 10/17, 11/7, and 11/21**. A small fee will apply, with the bulk going to support First Congregational.

This group will include people from outside our church, and is also open to anyone in our church family. If you are interested, learn more about it on Facebook -



**Witness & Welcome**  
Bob Cook, Chair

**Visitors Galore!**

This summer we have experienced the wonderful gift of visitors almost every Sunday. What a joy. Please review our current visitor process and see how each one of us fits into this plan.

Your presence at worship makes a visitor feel included in something communal. When a visitor walks into the sanctuary with many others, there is a feeling of welcome and belonging. Plus it also energizes each of us as a member.

1. An FC member will always be at the door to welcome everyone. Visitors are asked to fill a name tag with their first name only. Other information will be shared on the Connect Cards in the pews.
2. During the worship service, scan around for visitors with handwritten name tags and be sure to welcome them to First Congregational. There is no need for lengthy conversations with visitors at this time so that others have a chance to welcome them also. BTW whenever someone fills out a Connect Card, we always make sure they have a printed name tag for their return visit. So if you see someone with a printed tag and you do not know them, introduce yourself.
3. After worship is the most important time to talk with visitors. If a visitor is allowed to leave the building without additional contact, their last impression of us is a feeling of emptiness. Invite them to coffee hour, chat them up, find out more about them, and introduce them to others. A member of Witness and Welcome will hand first time visitors a reusable canvas bag that stresses our green mission. Our hope is that whenever they use our gift bag, it will remind them of their visit to First Congregational.



Thank you for all you do to make visitors welcome.

**2019 Festival of Faiths**



On Sunday, September 22, First Congregational will once again participate in the Festival of Faiths from 1-5 p.m. that day at the Veterans' Plaza located at the corner of Meridian and Michigan Streets. This year's theme is "Embracing Religious Diversity."

Anyone who would like to volunteer to be in our booth for an hour to share the good news of FCC, please contact Bob Cook. This is always an educational and festive event to attend and truly exposes us to the diversity within Indianapolis. There are also music performances planned along with other hands on activities. In the event of rain, the festival is moved indoors. Come join the fun.

**Understanding Gender Fluidity**

Tuesday, Sept. 10, 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.  
Phoenix Theatre - 705 N. Illinois St.

Conversations in accepting and supporting our LGBTQIA neighbors and embracing the changing landscape of our culture.

Call 317-635-7529 to reserve space  
Tickets are free / Donations accepted.



**FOUNDATION**

Bill Gillette, Chair



Thanks to the generosity and insight of one of our church families, a member of our congregation is currently (as this notice is being written) enjoying and benefitting from a week at Chautauqua in upstate New York. The donation that led to the creation of the Foundation's Chautauqua Fund is an example of the thoughtfulness and creativity of individual members within our congregation and the resulting benefits. It provides an example of an act of nontraditional generosity and may lead others of us "to think outside of the box."

Thanks for your continued support of the Foundation. For questions, see one of the Board members.

The Foundation Board

Pastor Sarah, Judy Fletcher, Glenn Evans, Randy Walker and Bill Gillette

**TRUSTEES**

Randy Walker, Chair

**Financial Update**

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

Here are the financial results through July 31, 2019.

Category	1/1/2019 Actual	- Budget	7/31/2019 Difference
INCOME	127,510	144,332	-16,822
M. Unrestricted Contributions	127,510	144,332	-16,822
M.01 Pledged Offerings	109,416	108,244	1,172
M.02 UnPledged Offerings	11,705	14,699	-2,994
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	15,000	-15,000
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	146,895	154,629	7,735
A. Pastoral Leadership	71,730	72,679	950
B. Worship & Faith	22,573	24,802	2,229
C. Care & Connections	298	307	8
D. Witness & Welcome	99	408	309
E. Outreach & Service	9,805	10,009	204
F. Trustees	182	0	-182
G. Administration & Operations	10,624	12,633	2,009
H. House & Grounds	28,064	29,757	1,693
I. Miscellaneous	3,519	4,035	516
Net Difference:	-19,385	-10,297	-9,087

**Highlights:**

Our overall financial results for the first seven months are slightly better than budget, after taking into account timing of a draw from the church's Foundation. However, contributions are running below our budget.

- **Income of \$127,500** was \$16,800 below budget. However, our budget had assumed \$15,000 in income in June from a draw from the FCC Foundation; the draw actually took place in August. So excluding the timing of the Foundation draw, our income was \$1,800 below budget.
- **Expenses were \$146,900**, \$7,800 below budget. Savings were achieved in essentially all areas.



- Our **cash position** at July 31 was acceptable, with \$18,000 in the checking account and \$20,000 in our Fidelity money market fund.
- Our July 31 **net position** (cash + investments – restricted funds and other committed obligations) was \$24,000 negative. This has improved significantly with the \$15,000 Foundation draw in August.

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

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

## Green Team: Solar Update

The last news was that our solar panel installer, Rectify, had been cited for a fire code violation. The violation entailed placing the panels too close to the edge of the roof. This is apparently a common practice among solar installers in the local area, since it allows more roof space to pack in the panels efficiently. Rectify filed a variance, asking for approval to proceed with the original layout despite the violation. Among the evidence presented in support of the request was a photograph of a Bloomington fire station with solar panels installed exactly the same way!



Rectify has informed us that the request has been approved! By the time you're reading this, on or after September 1<sup>st</sup>, we may well have a fully functional solar installation!

- Rich Gibson, Green Team

## A "Green Luncheon"



Everyone is invited to a rare culinary opportunity on Sunday, September 8th, following worship: Join the Green Team in our "green" luncheon. This will be "green" in two ways: the ingredients will be mostly green, and the total lunch will offer new ideas on ways we can be more "green" (or more globally sustainable) in our menus. Come join us for food and fellowship.

- Nancy Dickinson, Green Team

## COMMUNITY

### 160<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Plymouth Congregational Dedication

Plymouth Congregational was the first church of the denomination in Indianapolis; it was founded in 1857. The denomination had only one other church (Terre Haute) and a few 'preaching stations' in the state. The wider denomination was particularly interested in the success of this new church, and the Connecticut Missionary Society contributed liberally to the building of Plymouth, especially because it was in the capitol of the state. Plymouth dedicated their building **4 September 1859**, and Rev. H. M. Storrs of Cincinnati preached the sermon. The cornerstone litany forecast the progressive path the church would take into the next over 150 years.

*"We lay the cornerstone of this church.*

- This is building that shall stand as a symbol of the Church Universal, the cornerstone of which is truth, the creed of which is love, and its towers eternal hope,*
- This shall be a church that shall exalt not a religion of creed or of authority, but a religion of saving grace, of personal experience, and of spiritual power,*
- This shall be a church that shall exalt the ministry of the open Bible, with its faithful record of human life, its unfolding of the redeeming of God through Jesus Christ, its message of warning, inspiration, comfort, and hope,*
- This shall be a church that shall be a renewing and cleansing power in the community, and that loves every other communion that exalts Christ in the service of persons,*
- This shall be a church that shall fulfill a ministry of social service and be a blessing unto persons,*

- *This shall be a church with an open door for all people, rich or poor, homeless or desolate, who need the help of God through us,*
- *This shall be a church which shall gather the children in its arms and hold them close to Christ, that they may grow up in the church and never be lost from the fold,*
- *This shall be a church which takes hold on two worlds, and stands for the unseen and eternal, and which offers to men and women the abundant life which is now.*  
*We lay the cornerstone of this church."*

Rev. Nathaniel Alden Hyde, one of the most influential of our denomination in the last 50 years of the 19th century, wrote later,

*"To a man from New England ... it was humiliating to be called upon to explain the meaning of our name and to tell what kind of people we are. Many supposed we were a new sect. It seemed presumptuous for a new-comer to claim to represent a denomination as old as the country itself and one that had borne a distinguished part in the making of the nation.*

- Marion Harcourt, Historian

## Woeful Parallels

By susanna-judith rae

"Speak up for the people who have no voice, [...] Stand up for the poor and destitute!" (Proverbs 31:8-9, *The Message*).

On Good Friday, April 19, 2019, God blessed me with a vision while i prayed rosary prayers focused on the Sorrowful Mysteries, which are five challenging events in Jesus' life: "Agony in the Garden," "Scourging at the Pillar," "Crowning with Thorns," "Carrying of the Cross," and "Jesus' Crucifixion," <https://www.rosarycenter.org/homepage-2/rosary/how-to-pray-the-rosary/sorrowful-without-distractions/>.

i was not surprised by the vision, for visions and auditions have been a part of my Good Friday rosary prayers for many years. What surprised me was the vision's content: it looked like material from the tan, all-weather coat of my husband, Earl Hoppert. At least, what Earl's coat would look like if he had slept in our yard for several nights while wearing the coat!

After praying to learn what God intended me to learn from seeing the vision's soiled, gritty tan material, i concluded that i was to focus on the woes of migrants at our Southern border, about which i had written and submitted an article six days before Good Friday, to FCC's May 2019 *Pilgrim Colony*. Next, i concluded that the vision was somewhat similar to a December 4, 2006 dream which my Maker had given me that i soon realized was reinforcement to enroll in a particular Spring 2007 IUPUI class. In the dream, Earl and i are sleeping on a sidewalk in downtown Indianapolis. Though i was a bit nervous in the dream, i knew God was taking care of us. My anxiety increased when a man lay down on the sidewalk nearby. ...

The class that i did, indeed, take was titled "Do the Homeless Count?" Here's my conclusion from taking the class, which included us students participating in Indianapolis's formal 2007 count of homeless people: yes, the homeless do most certainly count!

Until August 11, 2019, when FCC Spiritual Explorers walked St. Peter's labyrinth at their Carmel UCC church, i had, at times, felt guilty for not yet writing an article for the *Colony* about my Good Friday 2019 vision. i had felt certain that God wanted me to. Surprise! After a St. Peter's member mentioned that their sanctuary walls had quilts from the Migrant Quilt Project, <http://migrantquiltproject.org/>, i blurted out details of my Good Friday 2019 vision. When i, then, entered St. Peter's sanctuary, i found that some of the tan material used in the quilts looked the very same as in the vision. At last, it was time to write the *Colony* article.

According to information on 9"x4" cards titled "Migrant Quilt Project," located in St. Peter's narthex, the project is "a collaborative effort of artists and quiltmakers to express compassion for migrants from Mexico and Central America who died in the Southern Arizona deserts on their way to create better lives for themselves and their families." Can you guess the color of the background on both the front and the back of the cards? Tan, just like Earl's coat.

Do you notice any parallels between 1) the "Sorrowful Mysteries" i focused my Good Friday prayers on, 2) the vision with which God blessed me, and 3) St. Peter's "Migrant Quilt Project," which can also be viewed at the Indiana Interchurch Center, 1100 W 42<sup>nd</sup> St #110, Indianapolis until September 26? Perhaps we can all prayerfully reflect on the parallels and the quilts and, then, share our thoughts with each other.

### **You're Invited: Ecclesiastical Council for Shannon Abbott, September 29, 3pm at St. Peter's UCC (Carmel, IN)**

Last November I began the process of transferring my ordination credentials to the United Church of Christ. On September 29<sup>th</sup>, clergy and lay people from throughout the Southeast Association of the Indiana-Kentucky Conference will gather to (hopefully) affirm my call to ministry within the UCC. As First Congregational has been an important part of supporting this ministry, I would like to personally extend an invitation for you to join me for this important event. If you would like a copy of my paper with more details on my call to ministry and how it connects with the UCC, please email me at [shannon@fcindy.org](mailto:shannon@fcindy.org) and I will send you a copy.

- Shannon Abbott



### **'Evicted' prompts UCC action that keeps Indy families housed**

August 26, 2019

Written by Hans Holznagel

United Church News / [ucc.org](http://ucc.org)

The book "[Evicted](#)" and a [General Synod speech](#) have inspired United Church of Christ members in Indianapolis to keep two families from losing their home – and to start a fund to do more of the same.

The rapid response began when [Zion UCC](#) in Indianapolis got a call Thursday, Aug. 15, from the head of one of two families who shared a home. They were about to be evicted the next day. The Rev. Sarah Frische-Mouri Hannigan, Zion's pastor, regularly gets calls from people needing help. In an age of phone and internet scams, churches can be hesitant about pleas for money. They refer callers to community agencies for needs such as rent and housing assistance.

"Our congregation has limited resources," Frische-Mouri Hannigan said. "We work with our local ministerial association for some minimal assistance, food and gas. But just listening to her story and what she had been through and hearing the concern in her voice and how desperate she was – something about her story really struck home."

Zion's lay leaders said they would pitch in. "But I knew that several people in our Conference and Association had been affected by Matthew Desmond's speech at General Synod," she said. Desmond, the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of "Evicted," was the keynote speaker June 22 at the UCC's [biennial national meeting](#) in Milwaukee. He spoke about the lack of affordable housing and how that keeps families in poverty. "I kind of hesitated to reach out



to other churches, but I felt like we had to try something. I wanted to see if there would be a way we could collectively respond."

One that did was [First Congregational UCC](#).

"I heard her story and it was like I was reading the book," said Shannon Abbott, the administrative assistant at First Congregational. "It was like the stories Matthew Desmond told at Synod."

Here is the story Frische-Mouri Hannigan and Abbott heard from the caller, who goes by the initials TK.

Injured in an assault, TK had fallen behind on rent – both because she couldn't work while hospitalized and because of the resulting hospital bills. She was now back to working two jobs, earning enough to keep up with current rent but not enough to catch up on payments she had missed.

The property manager had given her an eviction deadline of Friday, Aug. 16. TK had two paychecks coming the week of Aug. 19, but the company would neither extend the deadline nor accept less than the past-due rent in full, almost \$2,200. TK was trying to sell her car to keep from losing the home.

Abbott, a former social worker, recognized that TK was falling between the cracks of systems that otherwise might help. TK's income was above the maximum level for rent-assistance programs. She just needed to catch up once, Abbott said, and the stakes were high. If she sold the car, she might lose one or both jobs and spiral into a more permanent cycle of poverty and evictions.

Abbott and Frische-Mouri Hannigan compared notes; TK's detailed story checked out – including the fact that a UCC congregation she had once attended elsewhere had encouraged her to reach out to Indianapolis UCC churches for help. Abbott joined the effort to contact other area churches.

Others did respond, including [St. Peter's UCC](#), Carmel, where a book group happened to be finishing its study of "Evicted" that evening. Group members had been talking about ways to help, so leaders there would mention TK's case in case anyone wanted to contribute.

Abbott also mentioned TK's dilemma to her husband, the Rev. Chad Abbott, Conference Minister of the UCC's Indiana-Kentucky Conference. He told her about an Indianapolis-area Synod delegate who, motivated by Desmond's speech, was interested in follow-up action. "I gave him a call thinking that, if nothing else, he could put out a call to the church he's a member of and get a few people to help," Shannon Abbott said. "He said, 'I really think we should create a fund – get our Association's churches together so that we don't have to chase money. How much does she need?' I told him the amount.

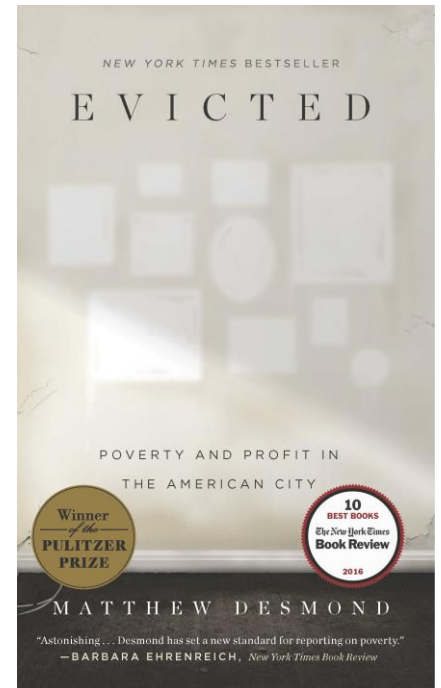
"He said, 'I can swing that.'"

Shannon replied, "You can what?"

To her astonishment, the donor volunteered to cover TK's entire past-due amount. On Friday, the eviction deadline day, he hand-delivered a cashier's check in that exact amount to TK's property-management company.

With the encouragement of the donor, who asked to remain anonymous for this article, the money raised by Zion, St. Peter's and others will be placed in a new fund for churches in the Southeast Association of the Indiana-Kentucky Conference to prevent evictions in similar circumstances. "I hope we can make some lasting impact with this and improve some people's lives," the donor said.

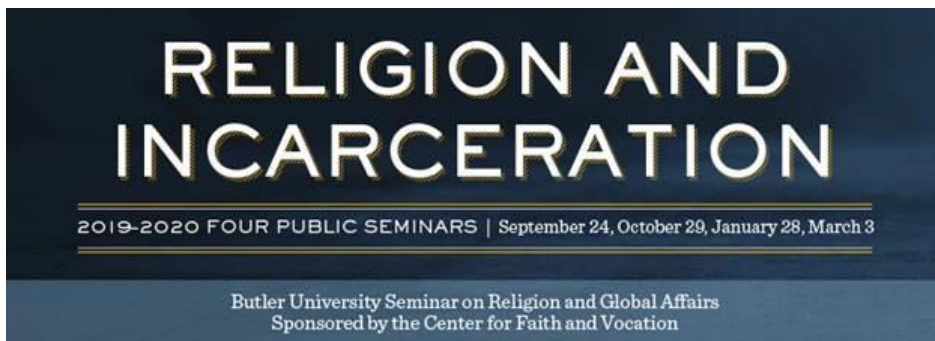
Shannon Abbott said the fund would be held very temporarily by the Conference until Indianapolis-area churches can decide the details of where it will be lodged locally and how it will be managed.



"I talked with my council, and we're hopefully going to do some special fundraising to help get this new ministry going," Frische-Mouri Hannigan said. "There's a gap for those who are working one or two or three jobs and an emergency happens or something comes up and they get behind. There aren't that many organizations that can fill that gap between just hanging on and winding up on the streets.

"The main thing for me is recognizing that we have this collective body of churches where we can reach out to one another and do common work for justice. That's really important. We don't have to do this work alone."

"Obviously, as Christians, you're called to help the poor and less fortunate," said the anonymous donor. "For me, one of the core ways is to provide housing to people who don't have it. It's kind of the core of Christ's calling."



The Butler University Center for Faith and Vocation would like to invite you to a four-part series of free and public lectures that are part of the Butler Seminar on Religion and Global Affairs, this year focusing on the theme **"Religion and Incarceration"**. Attached is a full brochure that shows the specifics of each event, including brief bios of keynote speakers and respondents. All of this information can also be found on our website [here](#).

The basic details are as follows:

#### **Incarceration, Christianity, and Black Bodies**

**Tuesday, September 24, 2019 - 7:00 pm in the Shelton Auditorium on South Campus, Butler University.** *Why are black Americans disproportionately incarcerated in America? In this session, we explore the historical, social, cultural, and religious roots of this injustice through the lens of black theology and with reference to the resources of the black church. The keynote speaker will be Rev. Dr. Kelly Brown Douglas, author of "Stand your Ground: Black Bodies and the Justice of God."*

#### **The Most Merciful: Muslim Work with Ex-Offenders**

**Tuesday, October 29, 2019 - 7:00 pm in the Shelton Auditorium on South Campus, Butler University.** *Many of America's prisoners have embraced Islam while incarcerated, and Muslims have also been active in caring for the social and religious needs of ex-offenders. In this session, we explore what Islam has to say and what Muslims are doing about incarceration in America. (With support from the Muslim Studies Endowment).*

Please take a look at the details at the website above and if you have any questions, feel free to reach out to Daniel Meyers, the Director of Butler's Center for Faith and Vocation, at [dgmeyers@butler.edu](mailto:dgmeyers@butler.edu). We hope you will be able to attend and be enriched by the academic and public discourse the Butler Seminar on Religion and Global Affairs has strived to foster in our community for over 20 years.

### **Meridian Hills Cooperative School**

**It's 3:50 p.m. and I'm in the pick-up line at school.** I love the moment my two children get into my vehicle, because I have missed being with them all day. My 8-year-old daughter begins to tell me an anecdote of her day before the door is shut and I can safely pull away. She always ends her story with "...and did you bring me a snack?" :)

I have learned not to ask my 11-year-old "how was your day?" because the answer will always be one word and the conversation is over. If I want to hear about his day, I have to ask a better question and to successfully parent him I need to listen to his answers.

I'm sure many of us have seen the list of "[50 Questions to Ask Your Kids Instead of "How Was Your Day."](http://www.herviewfromhome.com)" (www.herviewfromhome.com) There are great questions to get the after school conversations rolling:

- What made you laugh today?
- Was anyone absent?
- Who did you play with?
- What are you reading?
- What made you feel happy?
- What made you feel frustrated?

Indeed these are better questions with more focus on the small things that make up a child's day. **But I've started something new with my two children.** Because while I do care about what they are learning, I care more for how they treat others and themselves. So now when they pile into the vehicle -- some days tired and other days still energetic -- we talk about kindness. I ask them:

- What is something kind you did for someone today?
- What is something kind that someone did for YOU?
- How did you give yourself grace?

**I love hearing THIS part of their day.** I hear stories of sharing and giving of supplies. I hear about holding doors and letting someone at the drinking fountain first. I hear how they felt by helping peers understand the work they are doing, and how they appreciate the help when it's returned. I hear how they aren't giving up when they are frustrated and extending grace to themselves in the learning process -- because there will be a tomorrow to understand something better. Their stories to me quickly become a conversation between the two of them: my son lending support to his little sister and she returns the good feelings with admiration of what her big brother gets to do. I listen and learn more about my children as people with these three questions than anything else. **I challenge you to spread kindness, receive kindness, and extend grace to yourself every single day.** Ask your children (even your grown children) what they did that was kind. Ask your partner. *"Because part of being successful is about asking questions and listening to the answers."* -- Anne Burrell, chef.  
Yours in parenting,

Chris Wise, Director Meridian Hills Cooperative Nursery School & Kindergarten

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Men's Lunch:** This lunch and discussion gathering for men of First Congregational meets at various restaurants in the greater Indianapolis area. They meet every other Thursday at 1 p.m. This month they will meet on **September 5<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup>**. Please contact Randy Walker at (317) 796-2081 or [aa28977rwalker@gmail.com](mailto:aa28977rwalker@gmail.com) for information.

**Circle IV Book Discussion:** Circle IV will be meeting at the home of Nancy Dickinson on Tuesday, **September 17<sup>th</sup>** at 1:30 pm. We will discuss the first section of *Jayber Crow* by Wendell Berry. 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).

**September Colony Submission Deadline:** Please have your submissions sent to Shannon by **September 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, **September 26** at 11:45 a.m. For any questions or 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.



Around a table – sign up!

Please complete and return to church by September 22 at the latest.

Fellowship and fun!! All who sign up will be assigned to groups of 5-7 people. Then the people in that group will take turn planning times to get together – preferably at least once per month for the next 4 months.

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

Contact (phone/email): \_\_\_\_\_

Please check all the days/times combinations that could work for you – there is room for notes below. Meeting times will be flexible within the group – this is opportunity to share if there is a very strong preference for specific times during the week.

Day \ Time	Mornings	Lunch times	After- noons	Dinner times	Evenings
Mondays					
Tuesdays					
Wednesdays					
Thursdays					
Fridays					
Saturdays					
Sundays					

Preference – location (check all that apply)  
\_\_\_\_\_Homes      \_\_\_\_\_Restaurant or other public meeting place      \_\_\_\_\_Church

Would you like assistance with transportation? \_\_\_\_\_

Any restrictions or other helpful information you would like us to consider?  
(such as when you ‘can’t’ participate)  
\_\_\_\_\_