



# FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

## THE PILGRIM COLONY

January 2020

### Pastor's Reflections

Happy New Year to the beloved ones at First Congregational United Church of Christ! What a joy to be crossing the threshold of 2020 together with you all as your pastor. As I dream and pray about what 2020 will bring, I anticipate that God will continue to lead us down paths of spiritual growth, deepening relationships, and ministries of compassion and justice. My prayer is that our congregation continues to be a place to **belong**, to **heal** and to **love** in 2020. I invite you to be open in your mind and spirit to all that God desires for you and for us as a community of faith. A special word of thanks to our staff and for all of our members who step up into leadership roles and who volunteer to help us fulfill our mission and ministries!

In 2020, expect to be surprised! Expect to be challenged! Expect to be uncomfortable (in good ways... Jesus invites us to follow in the ways of justice and peace and sometimes that means being uncomfortable)! Expect to BE THE CHURCH that is alive, thriving, and flourishing...making a positive impact, making a difference in people's lives and helping to build a better world. Together, we can change the world as disciples of Jesus.

What I love about being church is that we covenant with God and with each other to LOVE no matter what. And it is a special thing to be part of a loving community, to be part of something larger than yourself, something that will last long after we are gone. In 2020 may our church continue to grow in JOY, PEACE, HOPE and LOVE...all to the glory of God.

With New Year's blessings,  
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, Chuck Kiphart

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

## Moderator's Reflections

### God is Still Speaking...

I had the great good fortune back in November to help commemorate the upcoming 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Mayflower's voyage in 1620. It led to the establishment of Congregationalists in North America, who among other things introduced participatory democracy and the first Thanksgiving ceremony. Although Europeans had been trying to exploit this vast new hemisphere for the 128 years since Columbus' discovery, Plymouth was only about the fourth successful European settlement in what is today the USA, after St Augustine (1565), Jamestown (1607), and Santa Fe (1610). In my studies, two things hit me with uncommon force.

Among the treasures I discovered was a sermon by their pastor John Robinson given to the pilgrims before the Mayflower set off. In part, it read:

"I am verily persuaded the Lord hath more truth and light yet to break forth from His holy word. The Lutherans cannot be drawn to go beyond what Luther saw. Whatever part of His will our God has revealed to Calvin, they (Lutherans) will rather die than embrace it; and the Calvinists, you see, stick fast where they were left by that great man of God, who yet saw not all things. This is a misery much to be lamented."

Robinson was telling his congregation that no-one has yet discovered God's Word in all its perfect completeness; that despite much great work by Luther and Calvin and others, much remains to be learned. In other words, God is still speaking! This is still a basic tenet of the United Church of Christ. When I realized this, I felt an intense sense of connection with those pilgrims across those 400 years. What joy!

As to my second big takeaway: An integral point of Luther's rebellion against the Catholic church was rejecting its insistence that the Word of God was to be handed down only from the church hierarchy to the laity; that the laity was not to try to work it out on their own. Following his lead, the pilgrims saw their duty to God as figuring out God's Word by and for themselves. This is one of those statements that are much easier said than done. It requires:

- A Bible written in the vernacular
- Universal literacy
- A community of people willing and able to study the Bible together and discuss it, learning more about God's Word as they go

I could write quite a bit about the efforts, tribulations, even executions of scholars 400-500 years ago as they worked on an English translation of the Bible; of the establishment of schools nationwide across Tudor England with the purpose of enabling people to read the Bible; and the formation of congregations coming together, often feeling oppressed and persecuted, to read and discuss the Bible together. Rest assured the history is out there and richly rewards further study.

So my second big realization was: Where are we today? Our rich legacy tells us that God is still speaking, but are we still called by that legacy to listen? When was the last time you read from the Bible? When is the last time you talked about it with someone? When I ask myself these questions, my honest response is, "Uhhh....."

A new year is upon us, and it's the traditional time for resolutions. Let's resolve to make Bible study a regular part of our daily lives. Let's seek out others we can study with and discuss issues. Let's try to find that little spark of resonance that links us to those brave travelers, in body and spirit, who came to America 400 years ago. Four. Hundred. Years. I can think of no better way to commemorate their courage and commitment than to follow their example.

God bless you all,  
Rich Gibson

Intern Reflections

A Message from FC’s New Just Peace Intern



Hi! My name is Olivia Bradley, and I am beyond excited to begin serving as your Just Peace intern this coming semester. I grew up in Grand Rapids, Michigan, but love it here in Indy, and can’t imagine being anywhere else. I am currently a sophomore at Butler University studying Social Work and Policy, Spanish, and Gender Studies. I believe strongly in giving back to those in need and giving a voice to those who have been silenced, and I am looking forward to connecting the communities of faith and social justice through this internship. I’m looking forward to working with and getting to know everyone!

- Olivia Bradley, Just Peace Intern

We welcome Olivia who begins January 13<sup>th</sup> and will be with us through April 27<sup>th</sup>.

A Message from FC’s Student Pastor

I am so grateful to be your Student Pastor and love learning from each of you! I’ve just finished up another semester at CTS where I completed a course in Ethics, The History of American Christianity, and was lucky enough to be a TA for a course on Pastoral Leadership Across Difference and Polarization. I’m looking forward to the holiday season with you all and continue to be so grateful for your kindness and patience with me as I learn and grow into this role with you and our great church. As always, if you ever have any questions or just want to meet to chat more, email me at [studentpastor@fcindy.org](mailto:studentpastor@fcindy.org)

- Cassidy Hall, Student Pastor



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
Sunday, January 5	12:30 p.m.	PCRC w/ Pastor Carol
Wednesday, January 8	11:00 a.m.	Witness & Welcome
Wednesday, January 8	1:00 p.m.	Worship Design
Wednesday, January 8	5:00 p.m.	Mental Health Team
Wednesday, January 8	7:00 p.m.	Joint Trustees & Church Council Meeting
Thursday, January 9	1:00 p.m.	Men’s Lunch
Sunday, January 12	12:30 p.m.	Buzz: Inclusive Language
Sunday, January 19	12:30 p.m.	Worship & Faith Meeting
Sunday, January 19	6:00 p.m.	Worship Service for Week of Christian Unity @ Zion
Sunday, January 22	6:30 p.m.	Evangelical UCC
Thursday, January 23	11:45 a.m.	Calling Circle
Thursday, January 23	1:00 p.m.	Women’s Lunch
Sunday, January 26	12:00 p.m.	Men’s Lunch
		Annual Meeting

## WORSHIP & FAITH

Elizabeth Price, Chair

### **Sunday Adult Class**

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

In January, Adult Ed will study "Embracing the Prophets in Contemporary Culture; Walter Brueggemann on Confronting Today's 'Pharaohs'."

We will do the first five sessions. Each session consists of a DVD with a 15-20 minute presentation by Walter Brueggemann, followed by filmed interaction with a diverse small group. We will then make use of a study guide to facilitate our own conversation on the material.

How to sum up this material? One reviewer put it this way:

*"Embracing the Prophets is a remarkable gift for anyone interested in the Israelite prophets and their significance for contemporary faith. The series weds the always compelling, deeply relevant, and clear teaching of Walter Brueggemann with thought-provoking group reflections and helpful study questions. The result is a richly substantive, accessible exploration of these 'strange' ancient voices and what it means to heed their persistent call for covenant fidelity in our own time."* -Christine Roy Yoder, Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, GA

**Jan 5** - "Moses, Pharaoh, The Prophets and Us"

**Jan 12** - "The Prophets as Uncredentialed Purveyors of Covenant"

**Jan 19** - "Moral Coherence in a World of Power, Money and Violence"

**Jan 26** - "The Shrill Rhetoric that Breaks Denial"

**Feb 2** - "The Grief of Loss as Divine Judgement"

Come and join your voice with those ancient voices of accountability and hope.

- Pastor Carol



### **January Worship Theme:**

In continuing our "Be the Church" focus in worship over the next few months, in the month of January we will engage in what it means as the church to "Fight for the Powerless."

### **January Worship Leaders**

Jan 5: Sue Chapman

Jan 12: Worth Hartman

Jan 19: Elizabeth Price

Jan 26: Clark Collier

### **Buzz Pitch-In Lunch: Inclusive Language - Sunday, January 12**

Worship and Faith is hosting a Buzz on the use of Inclusive Language in our worship services. We will have a panel discussion with members of our congregation on January 12 after worship. You are invited to bring a dish and voice your experience of the recent changes we have made in our use of scripture, doxology, and prayer.

## CHURCH COUNCIL

Rich Gibson, Chair

All Board Chairs, Committee Chairs, and Team Leaders need to be writing up their annual reports! The deadline for all Boards, Committees and Teams is January 3rd, 2020. Please forward your reports to Shannon Abbott ([shannon@fcindy.org](mailto:shannon@fcindy.org)) in a timely manner.

Thanks!

Rich



## **OUTREACH & SERVICE**

Sue Chapman, Chair

### **January Mission of the Month – INDIANA YOUTH GROUP (IYG)**

The Indiana Youth Group (IYG) was formed by volunteers in 1987 to provide safe spaces for LGBTQ+ youth under 21 and is one of the oldest support groups for LGBTQ+ youth in the country.

IYG strives to provide safer spaces to build self-confidence, explore individualism, and develop friendships within the LGBTQ+ community. IYG promotes a space of acceptance, equity, and restorative practices.



Since IYG moved into its new facility located at 3733 N. Meridian, it is now on the red line bus route. Attendance, participation and need for all services have grown tremendously. All programs and services are offered free of charge to the youth as well as their parents and allies. As a safe community for all, youth remain under adult supervision at all times.

IYG also advocates for LGBTQ+ youth in schools, the community, and through family support services. They create safer spaces to foster community and provide programming that empowers youth and magnifies their voices. Their vision is that Indiana will have supporting, affirming communities where LGBTQ+ youth live vibrant and empowered lives.

First Congregational is proud to continue our support of IYG through this month's mission of the month.

- Bob Cook, IYG Volunteer

### **Pantry Items of the Month**

During January, we are collecting the following items: noodles, muffin mix, cereal, shampoo.



### **Donations to the Northside Food Pantry**

We are grateful to the Meridian Hills Nursery School & Kindergarten for volunteering to deliver donations to the Northside Food Pantry.

### **Mental Health Team**

This is the season to celebrate as we begin a new year at First Congregational!

*"Please be aware of the range of experience folks have with holidays. You don't have to try to 'fix' anything. Give space, presence, and peace to all."*

This was shared by Rev Kirk Moore pastor of St. Paul's UCC in Downers Grove, IL, and a member of the executive board of the UCC Mental Health Network. Visit [mhn-ucc.org](http://mhn-ucc.org) and sign up for the blogs of information.



**Come to our Annual Meeting and vote regarding approval of our FCC Mental Health Covenant.**

**FINAL Draft W. I. S. E. WELCOMING, INCLUSIVE, SUPPORTIVE, and, ENGAGED**  
(Proposed First Congregational UCC Covenant from FC Mental Health Team)

We, the people of First Congregational United Church of Christ in Indianapolis, IN, affirm our commitment to be a welcoming congregation so that “no matter who you are or where you are on your life’s journey, you are welcome here in this progressive, inclusive, spiritually alive, servant congregation of Jesus Christ.” We pledge to work to destigmatize mental illness through education within our church, our community and beyond. We welcome any who are marginalized to share and be honored for their experiences and stories regarding living with mental health challenges.

We will do this by being W. I. S. E. (Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, and Engaged).

**WELCOMING:** We will actively welcome those experiencing mental health challenges into our faith community and provide a safe environment in which people can worship, serve, and share their journeys. We will create safe boundaries in our church and offer a radical welcome to everyone, including individuals with mental health and/or brain disorder challenges.

**INCLUSIVE:** Our language in church events and worship services will be inclusive of all people, including those experiencing mental health challenges. It is through the inclusivity of people and the awareness of intersectionality (the interconnected nature of race, class, ability, sexuality, and, gender) that we affirm neurodiversity among us.

**SUPPORTIVE:** We commit our continuing support to all facing mental health challenges by offering spiritual support and connection to mental health resources available in our community. We also promise our support to the loved ones of those living with mental health challenges.

**ENGAGED:** We shall find opportunities to be in shared mission, ministry, fellowship and advocacy with others, including the United Church of Christ Mental Health Network and the United Church of Christ Disabilities Ministries. Because covenant and justice go hand-in-hand, we will promote our mission, educate, advocate and reach out to those living with mental illness and/or brain disorders.

NOTE: This covenant was created by the people of this church, including those living with mental health challenges.

Thank you,  
Sandy Wood and Rev Dr Pat Larracey, Co-Chairs of FC Mental Health Team

**Mental Health Team: Webinar Series on Self-Care Strategies (FREE)**

The Administration for Community Living (ACL) is promoting a three-part webinar series on self-care, managing anxiety, and mental health for those caring for a loved one or individuals living with paralysis. The Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation Paralysis Resource Center (PRC) will host the series:

**Wed., Jan. 8, 2:00 p.m. EST, [Using mindfulness to support life after paralysis: Strategies to increase mindfulness](#)**

Studies indicate that mindfulness can be helpful for stress, anxiety, depression, insomnia, chronic pain and other health conditions. Mindfulness helps us respond rather than react, avoid and/or judge. It takes us out of being a victim of our thoughts.

**Tues., Jan. 14, 12:00 p.m. EST, [When Religion & Obsessive Compulsive Disorder \(OCD\) Collide: Scrupulosity](#)**

Scrupulosity is a form of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) involving religious or moral obsessions where individuals are overly concerned that something they thought might be a violation of religious or moral doctrine. This webinar will help us to understand this form of OCD, and how it may be distinguished from normative religious practices and beliefs.

## **WITNESS & WELCOME**

Bob Cook, Chair

### **Faith in Indiana**

We had 3 visitors from St. Monica Church at our Dec. meeting to discuss their church's relationship with Faith in Indiana. It was valuable background information as we pursue what kind of relationship might work for First Congregational. Several representatives from FCC attended the leadership workshop on Dec. 12. We will hear back from them at our Jan. meeting. Stay tuned for more.

### **Love One Another**

Please store your yard signs inside for the winter or bring them back to church and we'll keep them for you. Our next LOVE campaign will be during the May primary.



### **Website**

We are working on updating and keeping our website as current as possible. This will mean contracting someone per hour to accomplish this. We believe we can accomplish this through our budgeted fund. Most of our current visitors indicate that they found us on the web; therefore, we must put our best face forward.

## **CARE & CONNECTIONS**

Wendy Baldwin, Chair

### **Fellowship and fun!**

Check 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** – Join us on the 3rd Friday of each month – 1/20, 6:30ish: We meet at 6:30ish at Keystone Art Cinema in the Fashion Mall at Keystone, and 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

### **“Around a table” – Fellowship, Fun, & Food**

For the first go around, we had 3 groups of people who have been getting together for 4 months – some for meals, some for desserts, and lots of talking and fellowship! Now it is time to sign up for the next round – to meet monthly March through June. It doesn't matter if you participated or not the first time – sign up for this next round! We will be changing the groups around – the idea is to be in fellowship and get to know different people – so the more the merrier! If interested, please complete the attached sign up sheet (see page 15) and return it to church by February 16. A small team will take all the sign up sheets and create groups of 5-7 people, based on time and setting preferences and the 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 again. 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)) or Wendy Baldwin (317-319-0806 or [wendy.baldwin@rci.com](mailto:wendy.baldwin@rci.com)) for any questions or help with sign up.



## TRUSTEES

Randy Walker, Chair

### Solar Update



As of November 7th, our solar panels were providing power to the church. As of December 5th, the last puzzle piece was installed: A bidirectional power meter which records both the power we take in from IP&L, and the power we produced and don't need that we pushed back to them, to our credit! On Epiphany Sunday, January 5th, we will have a special Blessing of the Solar Panels ceremony during the 11:00 service to dedicate our solar panels. Phil from Rectify Solar will also be there. Don't miss it!

- Rich Gibson

### Financial Update

Here are the financial results through November 30, 2019.

#### 1. Current Year Actual vs Budget Summary

1/1/2019 through 11/30/2019 Using Budget 1

019

Category	1/1/2019 Actual	- Budget	11/30/2019 Difference
<b>INCOME</b>	<b>224,810</b>	<b>214,300</b>	<b>10,510</b>
M. Unrestricted Contributions	224,810	214,300	10,510
M.01 Pledged Offerings	166,649	159,812	6,837
M.02 UnPledged Offerings	16,773	23,100	-6,327
M.02.a Plate_Usher Counted	2,447	2,567	-120
M.02.b Contributions	10,194	16,500	-6,306
M.02.c Miscellaneous	3,342	4,033	-691
M.02.d Investment Income	790	0	790
M.03 Rollover Prior Year Surplus_D...	4,766	4,766	0
M.04 Foundation - Endowment Fund...	20,000	10,000	10,000
M.05 Foundation - Minister Fund Draw	15,000	15,000	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
<b>EXPENSES</b>	<b>226,358</b>	<b>236,717</b>	<b>10,359</b>
A. Pastoral Leadership	111,099	112,504	1,405
B. Worship & Faith	34,894	38,056	3,162
C. Care & Connections	353	482	129
D. Witness & Welcome	174	641	467
E. Outreach & Service	16,061	16,581	520
F. Trustees	388	220	-168
G. Administration & Operations	17,051	19,857	2,806
H. House & Grounds	40,819	42,292	1,473
I. Miscellaneous	5,520	6,084	564
<b>Net Difference:</b>	<b>-1,548</b>	<b>-22,417</b>	<b>20,869</b>

#### Highlights:

**November year to date results** - Our finances remain tight. Expenses are exceeding income, but the deficit is smaller than what was budgeted.

- **Income is on budget excluding timing of Endowment draw.**
  - Our income is \$10,000 better than budget. However, this is just a timing phenomenon, as we budgeted a \$10,000 draw from the Endowment Fund through November but we actually drew \$20,000. Excluding this timing issue, our income is right on budget.
  - Pledges are \$6,800 ahead of budget; other contributions are \$6,300 below budget.
- **Expenses are \$10,400 below budget.** The bulk of the savings is from:
  - Unused funds budgeted for alternative Lenten worship;
  - Lower than budgeted administrative expenses; and
  - Lower than budgeted building maintenance expenses.
- **Our Nov. 30 cash balance of \$54,000 is comfortable.**
- **Adding it all up** - for the first 11 months:
  - Expenses exceeded income by \$1,500 (by \$11,500 excluding the timing of the Endowment draw).



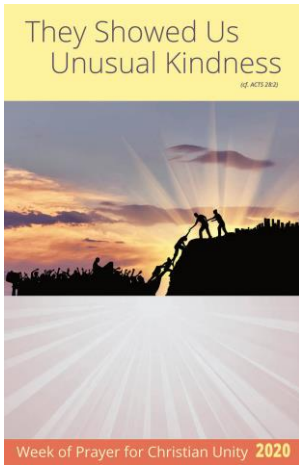
- That deficit is \$11,000 less than budgeted (excluding Foundation draw timing), thanks to our expense savings.

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

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

## COMMUNITY

### Week of Prayer for Christian Unity: Worship Service, January 19<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 p.m.



**Zion Evangelical United Church of Christ**  
**603 N New Jersey Street**  
**Indianapolis, IN, 46202**

Zion Evangelical UCC (downtown) is hosting a worship service in recognition of the annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Service. Fr. Rick Ginther, from the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, is coordinating the service this year. **Pastor Sarah is the preacher**, and you are invited to come and show your support.

### Beat the Clock, Save the Planet

By susanna-judith rae

*"[...] When you are tempted, God will also give you a way to escape that temptation. Then you will be able to endure it" (1 Corinthians 10:13 Easy-to-Read Version).*

Not long ago, i read that to conserve water, we should limit showers to 5 minutes. Who would disagree, even though we'd all enjoy starting or ending the day with a luxurious, 10-minute shower? While long, hot showers are tempting, we need to say "no more!" Here's one article on the topic: <https://www.greenlifestylechanges.com/take-5-minute-showers/>. Suspecting that my showers were too long, i got out my inexpensive electronic timer. Alas, with the shower running, i could not hear its alarm. So, i hung our old-fashioned, mechanical timer on a doorknob, set the timer for 5 minutes, stepped into the shower, and was surprised how quickly the time flew by. i had work to do.

Then, i recalled the old TV game show *Beat the Clock*, in which, according to *Internet Movie Database.com*, "a huge clock counted down the seconds, as host [Bud] Collyer provided commentary and encouragement" while contestants rushed to perform stunts and win prizes, <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0042080/>.

Sadly, the timer was about as loud and irritating as *Beat the Clock's* huge clock. Moreover, its jarring alarm was almost as startling. For my emotional well-being, i needed a gentler way to time myself and use less water.

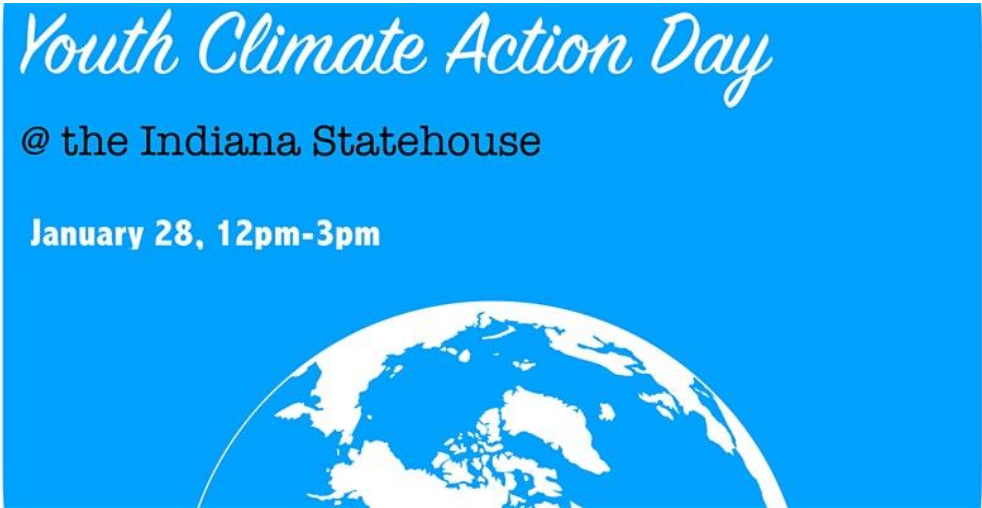
After trying quieter, less disconcerting ways to time showers, i want to share some of my learnings. Singing each verse of "This Little Light of Mine" takes 20 seconds, as does "Jesus Loves the Little Children." Each verse of "Jesus Loves Me" takes 30 seconds, as does praying "The Lord's Prayer." The *King James Version* of Psalm 23, which Miss Jessie B. Huff insisted her Grace Elementary School sixth graders memorize, takes about a minute. And, finally, Matthew 5:1-12, commonly called the Sermon on the Mount or the Beatitudes, can be recited in 1 ¼ minutes.

Each of us will come up with our own personalized ways to conserve water. My preference while showering is to focus on a combination of hymns, Bible passages, and prayers that add up to 4 to 5 minutes. Sometimes, i, also, picture my future active, energetic great-grandchildren and their descendants joyfully smiling and engaging in sports, living life to the

fullest, and being joyful that their ancestors made it a priority to conserve water, energy, and other resources. Why that priority? Because they were mindful of the needs of others throughout the world and all through the future.

Over a couple of months, at times, i have lowered my shower time to about 4 ½ minutes. My 2020 New Year's resolution is to get my time down to less than 4 minutes and to continue using lower temperatures of water. As each of us washes our physical body, various Bible verses, prayers, hymns, and images of a positive future can renew our spirit as we do our best to do our part to beat the clock and save the planet.

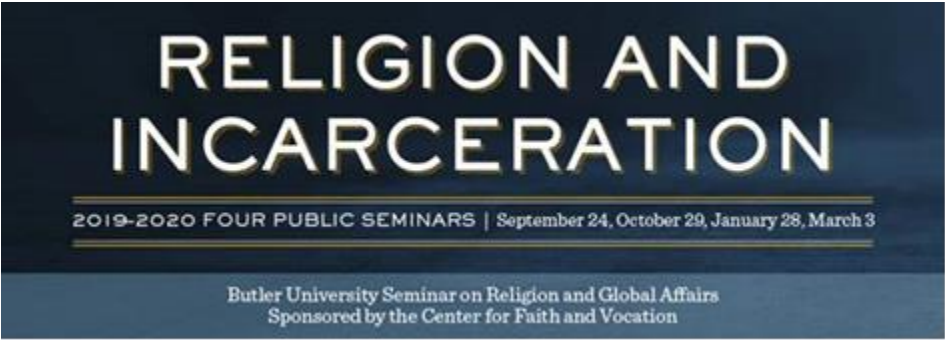
*Dear God, when we are tempted to selfishly put our egotistical wants before the needs of others, thank You for giving us “a way out to escape that temptation.” Every time we make the better, more loving choice that will support individuals in the future, may we feel pleased and closer to You, O God. Amen.*



**Join with fellow Hoosiers at the Indiana Statehouse** (200 W. Washington St. Indianapolis, IN 46204) **to demand our state take necessary actions to face the climate crisis.**

**About this Event**

- 12pm-1pm: Lunch and Press Conference with Youth Climate Leaders (Bring your lunch and water bottle and we'll provide cookies!)
- 1-3pm: Meet with your State Senators and Representatives, create letters for lawmakers, and check out the Indiana Statehouse in action. Hear from Representative Carey Hamilton about her efforts to draw attention to the issue of climate change.



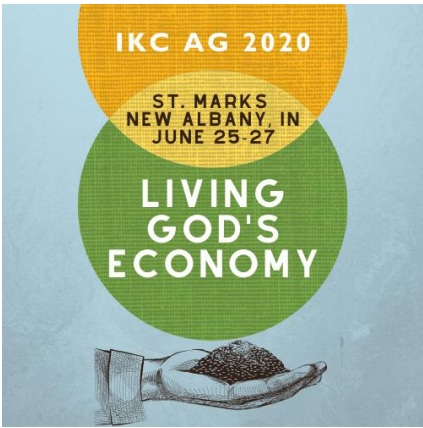
**Dharma in Hell: Buddhist Mindfulness in Prisons**

**Tuesday, January 28, 2020 - 7:00 pm in the Shelton Auditorium on South Campus, Butler University**

*From the office to the hospital room, the benefits of mindfulness have been scientifically proven. In this session, we learn about various efforts to improve the lives of inmates through the practice of meditation. Fleet Maull will be the keynote speaker, founder of the Prison Mindfulness Institute and author of “Dharma in Hell” and “Radical Responsibility.”*

# Indiana-Kentucky Conference of the UCC (IKC UCC)

## Annual Gathering 2020 News: Living God's Economy



Annual Gathering: Mindful of Our Past, Present, & Future

In 2018 we moved our Annual Gathering out of a university setting and into a church setting at Friedens UCC in Indianapolis. The theme, Igniting Church, was a hit, as were Marcia McFee and Carrie Newcomer. This investment in centering ourselves in the church was valuable.

In 2019, we returned to Friedens and saw an uptick in attendance; there was a lot of energy in our Building the Neighborhood theme. We designated a new award, the Lou and MaryAnna Speller Humanitarian Service Award. We'll soon be announcing the nominations process and look forward to lauding the first honoree next year.

For 2020, we decided to move the gathering to a church that would bring us out of Indianapolis and to other parts of our Conference. St. Marks, New Albany, IN, can accommodate the size of our gathering while allowing us to be present just across the Ohio River from Louisville, KY, one of the southernmost parts of our geography.

As we continue to explore what it means to be a Just Peace Conference at the next few Annual Gatherings, we will continue to honor our past and traditions, be nimble and present in our current contexts, and to look toward positive change and sustainability in our future.

**Note the Date:** In 2020 we meet **June 25-27**, roughly 3 weeks later than we have traditionally met.

### IKC WISE Team: Suicide Awareness

Suicide is a topic no one really wants to talk about, especially in the local church. However, having conversation around suicide in the local church may save someone's life. This became very clear to me while attending the workshop on suicide at the WISE (Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, Engaged) Conference in Phoenix this year.

- Suicide is the 11th leading cause of death in Indiana according to the latest report from the state of Indiana.
- Males account for eighty percent of all suicide.
- Suicide is the second leading cause of death for people ages 15 to 34.
- The method in which Hoosiers died by suicide include firearms (53%), suffocating to include drowning (25.6 %), poisoning (15.8%) and other means (5.6%).
- Suicide is also the 11th leading cause of death in the state of Kentucky.
- More than three times as many people die by suicide in Kentucky than by homicide.
- Suicide costs Kentucky at total of \$746,659,000 of combined lifetime medical and work loss cost.

Conversation around suicide must take place in our local churches. Rachael Keefe, author of *The Lifesaving Church: Faith Communities and Suicide Prevention*, credits the church for saving her life. Racheal led the discussion at the workshop on suicide at the WISE Conference. She feels when the church is truly acting as the Body of Christ and embodies the love of Christ it can and does save lives.

Rachael concludes the preface of her book: "The church is a community bound together for life through the love of Christ. It is the Body of Christ, as a whole, rather than separate individuals. Jesus asks us to carry one another's burdens. How better to do this than assume responsibility for healing the Body of Christ?"

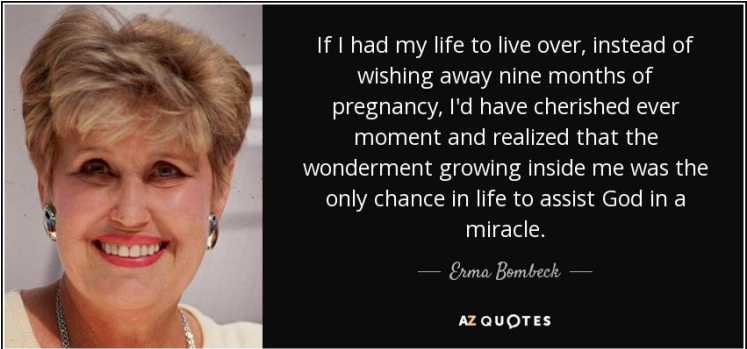
Working together as the Body of Christ and being the church God dreamed, the local church can gracefully and compassionately discuss suicide, allowing humans to know all are welcome no matter where they find themselves on life's journey.

Grace and peace,  
Rev. Jeff McCarn, IKC WISE Team Member  
Evangelical UCC  
Tell City, IN

**Meridian Hills School**

Erma Bombeck is one of my favorites. Her wit and wisdom really gets me laughing. She has a certain way of writing, describing a life situation that really gets me going. I honestly laugh out loud. Whether it's about her spouse, children, or neighbors she has a very clever way of writing it so the reader feels as if they have experienced it alongside her. It doesn't matter if it's an article or a book, she is one funny lady. Digging deeper under the surface giggle, she has some very insightful thoughts and perspectives. I was thinking about some of her insights recently especially one article she had written shortly after she found out she had cancer. My take away from it was on living in the here and now.

In the article titled, "If I had to Live my Life Over" the ideas that made an impact on me were burning the 'pretty' candles and not saving them for guests, using the 'fancy' towels and not just saving them for guests, listening more and talking less, more "I Love you" and less "I'm sorry", not worrying about having everything cleaned and tidy, enjoying the moment and to stop sweating the small stuff, and to cherish life and relationships. As a parent and a teacher I was thinking how these influence my life. Our children are always watching us, listening to how we speak to others, treat others and interact in our world. We are their primary role models. They look to us for guidance. I was thinking about the items listed above that Erma referenced and thought, if we always save the 'good stuff' for guests and others, what does that say about how we view our own families? I do realize that some 'fancy' things are saved for special occasions ( holidays, specific celebrations and such) I am referring to having and using the 'fancy' items with our families. For example, we have fun decorating up the dinner table with placemats, candles in candlesticks and seasonal accessories and making our meals daily celebrations throughout the year. And, yes, when we receive 'pretty' candles throughout the year we burn and enjoy them. I have also thought about how we talk and interact with our children and families. Have you ever noticed how polite people can be with others but not with their own families? You can see it in public both in the positive and negative. I remember when my children commented on it. Boy, if that isn't an eye-opener. They asked why people talked so differently when guests came over... At the time I didn't have an answer for them. But it did cause me to stop and reflect. How we treat children and our families does matter and makes an impression on them. Aren't they deserving of all the 'pretty' things and 'polite' words that we share and save for others?



When I first read this article by Erma, I was sad because I realized that she was dying. Then I realized what a gift she gave us all. Through her humor she was able to reflect and comment on what was important to her and hopefully make an impact on others. She did on me as I



read this article years ago and still think about it often. My hope is that she is smiling down on me knowing that her insightful words directly influenced how I view day to day interactions with children and my family. She has made me stop, think and enjoy life in a different manner that I had. As another new year begins I look to savor the moment and take in all that I can from all that is around me.

Hugs,  
Linda Foley

## **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 **January 9<sup>th</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup>**. Please contact Randy Walker at (317) 796-2081 or [aa28977rwalker@gmail.com](mailto:aa28977rwalker@gmail.com) for information.

**The Book Circle** will meet at **1:30 p.m.** on **Tuesday, January 21** at the home of Rita Hummel. We will begin discussing Joan Chittister's book *The Time Is Now*. For further information, contact Sue Chapman at (317) 259-1806 or [carolsuech59@gmail.com](mailto:carolsuech59@gmail.com).

**February Colony Submission Deadline:** Please have your submissions sent to Shannon by **January 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, January 23<sup>rd</sup> at 11:45 a.m.** For questions or more information please contact Sue Chapman at 317-259-1806 or [carolsuech59@gmail.com](mailto:carolsuech59@gmail.com).

**Flower Calendar:** The 2020 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.



# HAPPY NEW YEAR CALENDAR - JANUARY 2020

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>5</b> Get moving. Do something physically active (ideally outdoors)	<b>6</b> Say something positive to everyone you meet today	<b>7</b> Take ten minutes to sit still and just breathe	<b>1</b> Find three good things to look forward to this year	<b>2</b> Make time today to do something kind for yourself	<b>3</b> Spread a bit of happiness by doing kind things for others	<b>4</b> Write a list of things you feel grateful for in life and why
<b>12</b> Switch off all your tech 2 hours before bedtime	<b>13</b> Be gentle with yourself when you make mistakes	<b>14</b> Take a different route today and see what you notice	<b>8</b> Look for the good in others and notice their strengths	<b>9</b> Learn something new and share it with others	<b>10</b> Thank three people you're grateful to and tell them why	<b>11</b> Have a friendly chat with a stranger
<b>19</b> Get back in contact with an old friend you miss	<b>20</b> Go to bed in good time and give yourself time to recharge	<b>21</b> Take a small step towards an important goal	<b>15</b> Put a worry into perspective and try to just let it go	<b>16</b> Get outside and notice five things that are beautiful	<b>17</b> Eat healthy food which really nourishes you today	<b>18</b> Make something happen for a good cause
<b>26</b> Say hello to a neighbour and get to know them better	<b>27</b> Challenge your negative thoughts and look for the upside	<b>28</b> Count how many people you can smile at today	<b>22</b> Try out something new to get out of your comfort zone	<b>23</b> Decide to lift people up rather than put them down	<b>24</b> Today do something fun and invite others to join you	<b>25</b> Put away your devices and focus fully on who you're with

"Happiness is not something ready made. It comes from your own actions" - Dalai Lama



## ACTION FOR HAPPINESS

[www.actionforhappiness.org](http://www.actionforhappiness.org)

Find out more about the Ten Keys to Happier Living, including books, guides, posters and more here: [www.actionforhappiness.org/10-keys](http://www.actionforhappiness.org/10-keys)

**Around a table – sign up!**  
**Please complete and return to church office or the narthex no later than February 16.**

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 (March through June).

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

Please note all the days/times combinations that could work for you – there is room for notes below. Remember that this is for once a month – so you don't have to have the time free every week - check as many options as you can to create the broadest flexibility of groups. Meeting times will be worked out within each group – if there is any strong preference, feel free to write that in.

Day \ Time	Morning s	Lunch times	Afternoo ns	Dinner times	Evenings
Mondays					
Tuesdays					
Wednesd ays					
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)

\_\_\_\_\_