



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

THE PILGRIM COLONY

August 2020

Pastor's Reflections

We are more than half-way through the year and before I cast my gaze ahead, I find myself wanting to pause here to reflect for a moment. While 2020 certainly will be remembered for the devastating impact of the global pandemic along with national racial unrest, I want to also remember the smaller things. As your pastor, I don't want to forget the little things that our faith community experienced during this year of "big things." So here is my list of top "little things" of the year 2020 so far:

1. The neighbors say they missed seeing us at the church
2. The church property gardens and grounds became open "green space" for people in the neighborhood hungry to connect to nature
3. Hard questions about fulfilling our mission led us to find creative ways to remain "open" by collecting food for the Northside Food Pantry
4. We moved our worship life online using new technology and received a grant from the Center for Congregations to support our technology needs
5. We moved our adult education programming onto Zoom the very first Sunday of online worship and this important time of learning continues to connect us to each other
6. We became the first WISE (Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, and Engaged) for mental health congregation in the Indiana-Kentucky Conference
7. We sent two members of the congregation to participate in the IKC border trip and held a vigil for justice for the young man, Jose Antonio Elena Rodriguez, killed at the border
8. We welcomed new members into the church family, growing as we seek to be a community of belonging, healing and loving
9. Our Student Pastor, Cassidy Hall, was approved to begin her journey as a Member in Discernment in the United Church of Christ as she seeks ordination as an authorized minister
10. We started a weekly Spiritual Support group as part of our mental health ministries

There are so many more "little things" about the year 2020 that bring me hope and are signs of God's life among us. I encourage you to create your own list of "little things" about 2020. It turns out, many of these "little things" are not so little. It turns out that big things are happening in 2020 that are life-giving, hope-filled, and good. In the midst of the suffering, trauma and harm of this year, as followers of Jesus, we experience a deeper movement of life-giving Spirit.

God invites us to be part of this movement of "little things" that shine a light of hope, healing, and love in a time of great tragedy. God is with us in the "big things" and in the "little things." I am thankful to be on this journey together with you all. Thank you for your love and support.

Blessings,
Pastor Sarah



Another "little thing" to celebrate is our new outdoors memorial garden vespers service.
Pictured here: George Meier, Ginny and Bill Gillette.

Soul Care with Pastor Sarah - Join us on **Tuesdays from 5:00-6:00 p.m.** for a time to check-in, reflect on Richard Rohr's weekly meditations, and to pray together. Here is the Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/494018938?pwd=a3BrdnNyWXEza0tFMUgwek1CVFpYQT09>

Pastoral Care and Support: Contact Pastor Sarah at pastorsarah@fcindy.org and (386)478-9012.

Antiracism – what next?

These days, there is a lot of emotion stirring around words and concepts like racism, racist, and white supremacy. We would like to offer a space to explore this together. Our first step will be to read and discuss (following a study guide) a book by a black author – a memoir that provides her story and perspective on today's situation. Listening to her 'voice' will provide a common jumping off point for us – for discussion, for exploring current terms and evolving definitions, as well as exploring our reactions and feelings. Each one of us will bring different perspectives and different questions that will help enrich us all. Our current plan is to hold ninety minute sessions on the second and fourth Sundays of each month this fall starting on September 13 at 12:30. They will be zoom meetings which will break into small groups if needed, depending on how many people sign up. We hope to use the book "I'm Still Here" by Austin Channing Brown, but we are still checking on availability and resources to fund the purchase of the books. Watch for more news and opportunities to sign up and get the book in future epistles! This is only a first step in a long journey to understand what God is calling each of us and our church to do. Thank you for considering and may you feel God's grace throughout this journey.

- Pastor Sarah, Carol Sowle, Alice Rutherford, Cassidy Hall, and Karen Walker.

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.

Moderator’s Reflections

It's hard to believe we are already approaching August. Summer is marching by. Usually by this time Jim and I have done some quality camping and have taken or are planning a road trip to recharge and refresh our lives. Not so this year. Our camper trailer has yet to hit the open road this summer, but we hope that by the time this Colony goes to press we'll have vacationed for a few days here in Indiana. Of course, such a sojourn this summer will entail face masks and social distancing. Camping naturally allows for social distancing, and that's one of the things we particularly like about it. We're not hermits, but for us the allure of camping is more about nature than people, and being among the trees in a new and different setting reinvigorates us. But when I give myself the chance, I can also be greatly invigorated just by our church life. God's work is alive and well within our congregation. From the hundreds of pounds of food collected for Northside Pantry, to new signage proclaiming our message of love and inclusion, to study of how to be an anti-racist church, to healing the wounds of mental illness, to presenting meaningful weekly virtual worship – we are finding our ways to “Be The Church” in today's world.

Another way for us to “Be The Church” is by demonstrating our love and caring for one another. In that spirit Church Council has decided to continue our “no indoor in-person gatherings” policy for at least another month. Small group opportunities outdoors are still available (as weather permits), but with coronavirus case numbers moving in the wrong direction, prudence dictates continued caution. Wearing face masks at all church functions is another way we can care for each other, as well as do our part to help bring the numbers down.

It's really hard in these coronavirus times to keep putting one foot in front of the other as we follow the path Jesus showed us, but it's oh-so rewarding, too. Rev. John C. Dorhauer, General Minister and President of the UCC, has shared his thoughts on this subject in this video: <https://youtu.be/N9ZGW1-Mcz4>. I found his message touching and uplifting, and I highly recommend a listen. Also, I find it helpful to remember that we at FC have 160+ years of history behind us, and the resiliency of that history can rouse us to say, “We can do this!” – as our ancestors in faith said many times before us.

I hope others among our congregation find times of renewal and refreshment through this strange summer. I'm gratified that such opportunities can be had in our own church community when we're open to experiencing them.

- Alice Rutherford, Moderator

From the Comeback Team

First Congregational UCC has been closed to in-person gatherings since 3/12/20, and it is currently closed through the end of August. Even for those interacting virtually, we are missing an integral element of “being church” – the ability to personally see and interact with one another, if even briefly. This is especially missed as other elements of our society are participating in “re-opening”. Recognizing the benefit of these occasions, the church now allows small in-person gatherings outdoors.

We have been enjoying these gatherings and activities – so great to visit and see people! There are various protocols to follow, and to make it easier to remember, we are using the mantra of “Bring your own germs, keep them to yourself, and take them home with you”. Hence the protocols to bring your own chairs, bring your own beverage and/or food, wear face masks, limit going inside the building, and definitely maintain 6 ft distances. To be on the safe side, we also want to keep track of who attended each event.



During this pandemic, each one of us has personal thoughts about what is, and isn't, safe. However, when the event is a "church event", we need to be in covenant with one another - We now REQUIRE face masks to be worn at church events. If you are not wearing one, and someone asks you to put one on, please hear this request with love. But better yet, please don't let others feel uncomfortable by not wearing a mask in their presence.

Through the end of August, First Congregational UCC is closed to all in-person gatherings inside the church building. However, gatherings of 10 or less may occur outside. Protocols for these gatherings include:

- 1. Must be scheduled with Pastor Sarah, Shannon Abbott (Admin), and Wendy Baldwin (Bldg Mgr); groups may use any area of the church grounds (such as the patio, parking lot, Memorial Garden) where surface contact is minimized (not the playground for now)
- 2. Before the gathering, the group leader will receive the protocols to be observed, and make sure attendees are aware of these; the group leader is responsible that the protocols are followed
- 3. After the gathering, the group leader must send info about who attended to Pastor Sarah and Wendy Baldwin, for contact tracking purposes
- 4. Limit of 10 people at a time
- 5. A distance of 6 feet shall be observed between people of different households; no physical contact shall occur
- 6. Face masks are REQUIRED
- 7. People who do not feel well should not attend
- 8. People should bring their own beverage/water bottle (do not use the church drinking fountains, water, ice, etc)
- 9. People should bring their own chair
- 10. Church restrooms should only be used for emergencies, and one will be required to sanitize after its use
- 11. If entering the building, people are required to sanitize their hands, and disinfect any surfaces where there is contact of more than 3 minutes; use of face masks is required

This Month at FC*

SUNDAYS	9:30 a.m.	Sunday Adult Class (Zoom)
SUNDAYS	11:00 a.m.	Worship (FB, YouTube, Dial In)
SUNDAYS	12:00 p.m.	Coffee Hour (Zoom - immediately after worship)
TUESDAYS	5:00 p.m.	Soul Care with Pastor Sarah (see special Zoom link in Pastor announcements)
THURSDAYS	5:00 p.m.	Spiritual Support Group for Mental Health (Zoom)
TUESDAYS/FRIDAYS	1:00 p.m.	Worship & Design Team (Zoom)
Sunday, August 2	11:00 a.m.	Communion Sunday
Sunday, August 2	3:00 p.m.	SE Association Meeting (IKC Zoom link)
Wednesday, August 5	7:00 p.m.	Trustees (Zoom)
Friday, August 7	10:00 a.m.	PCRC (Pastor Sarah)
Saturday, August 8	10:00 a.m.	Outdoor Food Drive
Tuesday, August 11	7:00 p.m.	Outdoor Vespers Service
Wednesday, August 12	5:00 p.m.	W.I.S.E. Mental Health Team (Zoom)
Thursday, August 13	1:00 p.m.	Men's Lunch (Location TBD)
Sunday, August 16	12:45 p.m.	Worship & Faith Meeting (Zoom)
Tuesday, August 18	1:30 p.m.	Book Circle (Zoom)
Wednesday, August 19	7:00 p.m.	Witness & Welcome Meeting (Zoom)
Tuesday, August 25	7:00 p.m.	Outdoor Vespers Service
Wednesday, August 26	7:00 p.m.	Church Council (Zoom)
Thursday, August 27	11:45 a.m.	Women's Lunch (Zoom)
Thursday, August 27	1:00 p.m.	Men's Lunch (Location TBD)

****All activities are through the use of Zoom, Facebook, YouTube, or phone call-in unless otherwise stated.***



To join Zoom meetings, click this link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9264494206?pwd=dmtWbWE5UXRBTk5pcHZYIB0aEFVUT09>

Meeting ID: 926 449 4206

Password: 7171

To Join by Phone call only: 1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago), you will be prompted for the meeting ID 926 449 4206, followed by the # sign, and the Password 7171, followed by the # sign.

If you don't have a device with visual display, you can simply call in and participant as a 'conference call'.

WORSHIP & FAITH

Elizabeth Price, Chair

Next Worship & Faith Meeting: Sunday, August 16, 12:45pm

What a summer! Parts of my family are doing summer as usual. Birthday parties at the pool and summer baseball games with dinner afterward. Other parts of my family have not been outside of their homes except to take walks far away from anyone else. Shopping, meals, and socializing have all been done shuddered at home. Pandemic is full of hard decisions.

I'm in the middle. I work at the hospital and I also work from home. I do not go to baseball games and I joined the pool party in a mask outside of the pool area and distanced myself from my extended family. I wear a mask everywhere and won't go near others who do not wear masks. Tired of the pandemic, we all respond in different ways to taking care of ourselves and our spirits.

Harder still, for most all of us, is to miss out on face-to-face worship and service with our church family, especially at a time when we would turn to our church community to cope with the loss of intimacy and newly created stressors in our lives. Our church has created a wonderful place in the middle for experiencing church during this season and this Board wishes to express gratitude for our faithful worship, education, and service leaders. We have been fed with truly inspired worship online and shared our lives with one another during virtual coffee hour. We have dropped off food items to share with our community, some have helped out with caring for the church grounds, and we have seen beautiful pictures of our church during the changing seasons. We have served hundreds of people we would not have even met if we hadn't created our virtual services. So on behalf of the congregation, thank you!

For now, I will hang out here in the middle. The middle has a lot to offer and our church is responding in many creative ways. I will look forward to seeing you face to face sometime in the future, serving side-by-side, sharing more intimate moments with family and friends, and getting through and over to the other side. Until then, we wait, we wonder, and we create. If you need something, say something. If you get inspired, create something and share it. May we all find moments of joy and blessing here in the middle of it all.

- Elizabeth

Sunday Adult Class, 9:30-10:30 am

Adult Education will continue to meet via Zoom during the month of August.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/9264494206>

Meeting ID: 926 449 4206

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Our focus this month will be Racial Justice. We will look at some articles that explore certain aspects of the whole movement.

August 2: Wrap up discussion on last month's article from The Christian Century, December 27, 2018 titled "**Ten Myths White People Believe About Racism**" by Caroline B. Helsel. The article can be found at the link below, or by goggling the title:

August 9: This week we will read an article titled **"White identity in America is ideology, not biology. The history of 'whiteness' proves it."** by Nell Irvin Painter, author of the book *The History of White People*. A key point is that "The idea of one big white race did not just spring to life full-blown and unchanging, which is what most people assume – and white supremacists rely on." The article can be found at this link or by goggling the title:
<https://www.nbcnews.com/think/opinion/white-identity-america-ideology-not-biology-history-whiteness-proves-it-ncna1232200>

August 16: Wendy Baldwin presents **"Devoted to Generosity"**

August 23: This week we will read an interview with Michelle Alexander from "The New Yorker" titled **"Ten Years After 'The New Jim Crow.'"** The article can be found at this link or by goggling the title. There is a place on the page to listen to the actual interview, which is 13 minutes long.
<https://www.newyorker.com/news/the-new-yorker-interview/ten-years-after-the-new-jim-crow>

August 30: This week we will read an article from NPR titled, **"Jesus Was Divisive: A Black Pastor's Message To White Christians."** The pastor is the Rev. Lenny Duncan, author of *Dear Church: A Love Letter From a Black Preacher to the Whitest Denomination in the US*. The article can be found at this link or by goggling the title:
<https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2020/06/12/699611293/jesus-was-divisive-a-black-pastor-s-message-to-white-christians>

3 Ways to Connect for Worship



FACE BOOK

https://www.facebook.com/pg/FirstCongregationalUCCIndy/posts/?ref=page_internal



YOUTUBE

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWV9wgAvPiUKSkEbjaV6Zpw>

- YouTube Live Premiere will broadcast at 11am Sunday morning. There will be a countdown before. We highly recommend using the mobile app for more convenience as it will refresh.
- If using a laptop, you will need to refresh your browser after 11am to click to watch live.



DIAL-IN

- **Dial 317-204-3862**
- Landline is preferred for clarity.
- If calling with a smart phone, setting your cellular setting to Wi-Fi calling will be clearer.

Outdoor Vesper Service – Tuesday 8/11 & 8/25, 7-7:30 pm



Join us in the lovely setting of the Memorial Garden for a quiet time to be together, ponder scripture, and share our joys and concerns. Bring a chair and face mask as we spend some precious time with one another, and practice our love by keeping distant and wearing face coverings. Note: if the weather is threatening, the event will be cancelled, since we cannot run into the building to take cover.

OUTREACH & SERVICE

Ann Leatherman, Chair

WISE (Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive and Engaged) Mental Health Team



The FC WISE Mental Health Team seeks new members interested in promoting mental health, removing stigma of mental illness and working for justice for those affected by mental illness. We meet monthly (currently via Zoom) the second Wednesday of each month from 5 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. (Next meeting is August 12th). Come join our active and caring team trying to live out God's call to love one another through our commitment to those experiencing mental health challenges, their families and friends. For more information contact co-chairs, Pat Larracey, [317-625-6801](tel:317-625-6801)-

plainandfancy1963@att.net and Sandy Wood, 317-225-6206- csjlwood@att.net.

Spiritual Support Group EVERY Thursday, 5 to 6 PM on Zoom

We invite you to participate in this highly confidential support group for those with mental illness AND for those who care for loved ones with mental illness or brain disorder. Pastor Sarah Lund and I are glad to be available for those who have joined us off and on. You do not have to attend every Thursday, come and go as your time allows, or as circumstances arise. No session is recorded in any manner and what is shared stays in the group. Attendees bring the agenda and we have stayed within our hour to honor your time and sometimes continue conversations the following week. If you have any questions concerning this support group, please feel free to contact Pastor Sarah or myself.

This group is for YOU. It fulfills our wonderful WISE covenant we created together, therefore, it is Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, and, Engaged. This is our ministry and I share our GUIDELINES FOR THIS GROUP:

1. We honor each other's' presence and therefore we listen carefully to one another.
2. We allow each person time and opportunity to express himself or herself before anyone speaks twice.
3. It is OK to stay silent. You can "pass" at any time.
4. Share feelings as well as thoughts including personal insights about your spiritual experiences.
5. Our main purpose is not to resolve difficulties but rather to listen, support and comfort each other. Any wisdom that emerges belongs to the group.
6. We use "I" statements when sharing our experiences, what we have learned, and what has been helpful or not helpful in our own lives. We do not offer advice to others unless they ask.
7. We are open to the expressions of how one's faith or spirituality has been a help and/or a hindrance. This group welcomes all faith traditions or none, and welcomes everyone's understanding/experience of spirituality.
8. We agree that everyone has something of value to share with the group, if they so choose, so that no one monopolizes the time.
9. Confidentiality is maintained in the group. We cannot share whatever a person says here anywhere else.
10. We seek to provide a safe environment in which a person can share without judgment.

11. We keep our comments in the here and now.
12. If a person needs to leave the meeting at anytime, they are free to do so.
13. We begin and end on time.

Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9264494206?pwd=dmtWbWE5UXRBTk5pcHZlYlB0aEFVUT09>

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Thank you,

Rev. Dr. Patrick Larracey

Contact me at 317-625-6801, or email: plainandfancy1963@att.net, or attend a session anytime to discover for yourself.

UCC Mental Health Network: This, Too, Is Mental Health Advocacy

By David Finnegan-Hosey

By some accounts, the three largest mental health institutions in the United States are prisons. We can change this. And this, too, is mental health advocacy.

Somewhere between one third to one half of all people who are killed by police in the United States have a mental illness and/or other form of disability.

We can change this. And this, too, is mental health advocacy.

Around half of Americans rely on their employer for health insurance, which means that millions of Americans who have lost employment in the past few months are not only out of work, but also potentially locked out of the healthcare system.

We can change this. And this, too, is mental health advocacy.

Americans owe billions of dollars in unpaid medical bills, with most bills leading to medical debt averaging around \$600.

Photo: Kaylene Bain Photography

We can change this. And this, too, is mental health advocacy.

Protestors around the country are crying out against police violence and systemic racism.

This, too, is mental health advocacy.

When people speak up to advocate for an end to mass incarceration, an end to militarized policing, the redistribution of economic resources toward community health and wellness, the relief of medical debt, the expansion of Medicaid, the universal right to healthcare:

This, too, is mental health advocacy.

To advocate for mental health is not only to speak about a specific area of health concern; nor is it solely to encourage good mental health hygiene and self-care. These are important matters. But the work of changing systems, ending violence, and radically shifting how we think about matters of health, safety, and well-being in our community:

This, too, is mental health advocacy.

Let's be mental health advocates. It can be hard, discouraging work; and my bipolar brain is prone to anxiety and despair. And yet working together for the health, safety, and wholeness of our communities and world is an act of holding on to hope. It is, itself, a form of care.

This, too, is mental health advocacy.



Just Peace Team: Faith Promise Housing Update

As you know from the June COLONY, Faith Promise of Greater Indianapolis (FPGI) acted quickly this spring to address the crisis of the IHN host congregations being unable to continue housing and feeding the homeless. A fund drive raised enough money to rent 9 apartments, and somehow funding was found for a tenth.

Leases were arranged, additional congregational support to furnish the apartments was solicited, and in late May the first apartments became available. Volunteers moved in donated furniture and kitchenware, and the first families moved in. Additional families were able to move in in June and July. The hope is that families will be able to take over the lease of their apt., which will enable a new family to move into a new apt, and on and on.

Currently FPGI has applied for a grant that would enable them to acquire 10 more apartments! (Family Promise of Hendricks County just received a grant of \$100,000 from the Covid 19 Community Economic Relief Program.) More details, including a video tour of one of the newly furnished apartments, can be found on FPGI's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/familypromiseindy>

Thank you, FCC, for your continued support of Faith Promise in our community!
- Janet Selby for the Just Peace Team

WITNESS & WELCOME

Aniseh Ebbini, Chair

Next Witness & Welcome Meeting: August 19, 7:00pm



If you've been by the church lately, you may have noticed new signage in front of the building. Witness and Welcome added a "Black Lives Matter" sign, and a banner and yard signs promoting our online worship services. If you would like a yard sign promoting our virtual services for your home, a limited number are available at the church on a First come, first served basis.

CARE & CONNECTIONS

Wendy Baldwin, Chair

Food Drive & Fellowship! Second Saturday - August 8, 10-noon

Let's help fight poverty and hunger through our food donations to the Northside Pantry. In July, we delivered over 700 pounds of food and supplies, and the Northside Pantry is very grateful! You can also spend a few minutes at the Food Drive to share in fellowship with those there, while maintaining safe distance protocols.

Since the Pantry is pre-packaging much of what is given to those in need, their preferred donation items are:

Vegetables: Green Beans, corn, diced tomatoes, peas

Fruit: Pineapple chunks, Mandarin oranges, Applesauce

Macaroni & Cheese

Canned Tuna or chicken

Spaghetti, Elbow macaroni, Egg noodles, Rice

Peanut butter

Strawberry or grape jelly

Pancake mix

Oils

Toilet paper

Kleenex

Please note – regular size cans and jars are preferred.

TRUSTEES

Steve Coomer & Randy Walker, Co-Chairs

Next Trustees Meeting: August 5, 7:00pm

Financial Update

When We Give, We Reach Out With Helping Hands

Here are the financial results through June 30, 2020.

1. Current Year Actual vs Budget Summary 1/1/2020 through 6/30/2020 Using 2020 Budget 1

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Category	1/1/2020 Actual	- Budget	6/30/2020 Difference
INCOME	116,883	123,461	-6,578
M. Unrestricted Contributions	116,883	123,461	-6,578
M.01 Pledged Offerings	95,521	88,084	7,437
M.02 UnPledged Offerings	6,035	10,050	-4,015
M.03 Rollover Prior Year Surplus_D...	15,327	15,327	0
M.04 Foundation - Endowment Fund...	0	0	0
M.05 Foundation - Minister Fund Draw	0	10,000	-10,000
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...	0	0	0
EXPENSES	127,230	129,313	2,083
A. Pastoral Leadership	60,041	61,574	1,534
B. Worship & Faith	19,005	20,945	1,940
C. Care & Connections	188	210	22
D. Witness & Welcome	350	527	177
E. Outreach & Service	8,814	8,260	-555
F. Trustees	195	48	-147
G. Administration & Operations	10,629	10,495	-134
H. House & Grounds	24,606	23,761	-845
I. Miscellaneous	3,401	3,494	92
Net Difference:	-10,347	-5,852	-4,495

Highlights – year to date:

- **Income** of \$116,900 was \$6,600 below budget – but the shortfall is strictly a timing issue. We budgeted a \$10,000 draw from the FCC Foundation in the first half of the year but didn't need it thanks to our Payroll Protection Program funds. Absent this timing issue,

income was actually \$3,400 better than budget due to strong pledge receipts, which more than offset COVID-related shortfalls in contributions and building use revenue.

- **Expenses** of \$127,200 were \$2,100 below budget, with the savings coming from Pastoral Leadership and Worship & Faith.
- Our June 30 **cash** was strong - \$39,400 in checking and \$23,400 in the Fidelity money market account.
- **PPP update** – we received \$34,450 funding from the federal Payroll Protection Program which can be used for payroll and utilities. Through June 30, we spent all but \$4,700 of the funds. We will use the remaining funds in July.

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

Jim Lootens, Treasurer

lootens.jb@gmail.com

Solar Panels on the Church Roof: A report on electrical output and status to date

First Congregational's solar panel system was activated late last year. It was designed to provide electricity ("power") for all the regular needs of the church. Estimating this capacity required a little guesswork since some days are cloudy, reducing panel output. When the panels generate more power than we need at any time, the excess is sent to our power company, Indianapolis Power and Light (IPL), and we receive credit for it. But IPL discourages that, making the exchange rate favorable to itself.

We are able to see the electrical output of the panels at any time and over periods of time through a computer program. Examination of the output records shows that the system is operating and is generating significant electricity. It will be interesting to compare last year's power consumption with this year's power output. This year's consumption will be an outlier since the building has been in reduced operation for several months due to the Covid-19 closure. As of July 10, our panel system had generated 11.7 Megawatt hours of electricity since it began.



For people of faith, conservation of electricity continues to be an important responsibility, in church and in our homes. Keeping consumption as low as possible helps both our pocketbooks and the environment. We can save electricity in ways that are well known, including by turning off unused lights, not overcooling our homes in the summer, closing off unused rooms, opening and closing windows depending on the

temperatures outside, minimizing use of electric clothes driers, having our homes examined for air leaks, and adding insulation if needed. While we've already done some of these, we may be able to do more.

- Bill Gillette and the Green Team

COMMUNITY

God's Protective, Radiant Light

"O house of Leah and Rachel and Jacob, come, Let us walk in the light of YHWH!" (Isaiah 2:5 The Inclusive Bible).

In January 1999, I went on a mission trip to Puerto Rico to help rebuild churches and a social service center damaged by a hurricane. One evening after sundown, about 15 members of our Indiana-Kentucky UCC group climbed into two boats and slowly toured a picturesque bay. Suddenly the boats' motors quieted, and we were still. Our Puerto Rican guide encouraged us to put our hands over the side of the boats and into the water. We splashed the water and joyously exclaimed; the water seemed to sparkle with fluorescent glitter. Every drop of splashed water flashed as if emitting sparks in a continuous stream until gravity brought it down.

The guide encouraged us to swim. Few of us had worn bathing suits under our clothes. Those with swimsuits bantered back and forth about who would go in. Suddenly i heard a loud splash. A young woman had dived in. Treading water, she began to lightly hit the water and squeal at the visual luminescent delight. Soon she splashed her arms vigorously. A human-sized Tinker Bell, exuberantly playing in the water, had joined us. She swam here and there. With every stroke and every kick, her movements brought forth incandescent displays in the water. Our water sprite obviously enjoyed herself! In addition, she was sensitive to our requests for more. Despite the frigid water and cool night air, she repeatedly climbed back into the boat and then dived in again, thrilling us each time with the glistening, luminous splashes. Eventually, another woman joined her in the water.

As i played with the water and observed the spectacularly brilliant sights, i felt close to God. i realized that i was being told to hold on tightly to this visual memory and kinesthetic experience. i was to remember that God continuously envelopes us in a bright, luminescent spiritual shield, day and night, whether we can see it or not. Its job is to protect us. This shield of light is God's gift. We need to do our part in accepting the blessing and standing firmly in faith, which will keep us calm and surrounded in God's protective, radiant light, which we all need during global pandemics and other times.

During the 21 years since this peak experience in beautiful Puerto Rico, i have numerous times used this God-given resource. Sometimes when i need extra strength, courage, or calm, i close my eyes, pray, and see myself in a sparkling, luminescent bubble, a lot like Tinker Bell. Other times i start the day watching myself serenely going about the tasks of the day, surrounded in the scintillating, bright protective shield. Sometimes when i pray for others, i see them in similar ways. Once when a friend of advanced years expressed concern about her son traveling, non-stop, across several states by car, i suggested she envision the moving car he and his friends would be driving in surrounded in God's bright, glittery light. She did, and later told me, after her son had arrived safely, how much comfort and calmness the luminescent visualization brought her. It always does the same for me—no matter what stress, frustration, or challenge befalls me, *if* i remember to use this powerful resource.

May each of us make good use of every spiritual resource with which God blesses us.
-susanna-judith rae

Meridian Hills School

This summer has brought me the opportunity to spend a lot of time with my husband and two children. And i'm glad. A typical summer would have been filled with four weeks of camps between my children (which they have missed) and lots of trips to the water park and pool. But this summer is different.

No camps. No zoo. No museums. No pools. None of our typical experiences.

Instead we've spent a lot of close time exploring the beautiful waterways of Indiana via boat. And with that has come some really great memories:

- My son getting up on water skis for the first time
- Our daughter using crackers to try and catch fish
- My husband catching a small fish in a bucket because his daughter insisted it could be done
- Sunsets on the water
- Watching my children play together on the shore with nothing but two buckets, rocks, and Indiana clay
- Laughing
- Listening to music
- Hearing "mom watch this" over and over

All of this made me think of all of the new ways we are doing things while continuing to care for ourselves and others. With new ways comes new experiences, and new experiences make us stronger and smarter--children and adults alike.

We're asking our school families to have new experiences as we navigate what preschool in 2020 looks like. We're very much like a boat trip--we're all onboard, we all want to get to the same destination, and we're all a bit uncertain of the waters we are in. But we're experiencing this together.

I hope there are smooth waters for all of us ahead.

Cooperatively,
Chris Wise

**Indiana-Kentucky Conference of the UCC (IKC UCC):
SouthEast Association Meeting – Sunday, August 2, 3:00pm**

We will be voting to welcome a new church into the SE Association and voting on a resolution to require anti-racism training for authorized ministers.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82975117370?pwd=MmlwbDILY1hXNmZHd1A0Vlpkd2tIQT09>

Meeting ID: 829 7511 7370

Password: 332916

One tap mobile

+13126266799,,82975117370#,,,0#,,332916# US (Chicago)

+16468769923,,82975117370#,,,0#,,332916# US (New York)

United Church of Christ:

Rev. Dr. Sarah Lund featured as “Faith Leader of the Month” at Immanuel UCC in Ferguson, MO

Sarah is passionate about loving God, her family, and being part of faith communities. Her personal mission is to partner with others to share God's healing and hope. She is an ordained minister with standing in the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and has served as pastor to churches in Brooklyn, NY, Minneapolis, MN, and New Smyrna Beach, FL. Sarah also served as Regional Minister for the Florida Conference of the United Church of Christ where she worked with congregations on vitality and renewal. After serving Christian Theological Seminary as Vice President for Advancement, Pastor Sarah was called in January of 2018 to serve as senior pastor of First Congregational UCC of Indianapolis, IN.

Sarah's formal education includes degrees from Trinity University (BA), Princeton Theological Seminary (MDiv), Rutgers University (MSW), McCormick Theological Seminary (DMin). Sarah also completed the certificate in Fundraising Management from the IUPUI School of Fundraising.

Sarah is an active community volunteer and has served as a board member of the Indianapolis Martin Luther King Community Center and on the board of the national United Church of Christ Mental Health Network. Sarah currently serves on the leadership team for the Bethany Fellows, a national program mentoring young pastors. She is the Open and Affirming Consultant for the Indiana-Kentucky Conference of the United Church of Christ.

Sarah received the Princeton Engle Preaching Prize in 2002 for excellence in preaching and the Bob and Joyce Dell Award for Mental Health Education from the United Church of Christ Mental Health Network in 2015 for "her outstanding authorship and leadership in breaking the silence about mental illness in family and in church and offering healing and hope." She is the author of the widely regarded book Blessed are the Crazy: Breaking the



Silence About Mental Illness, Family and Church (Chalice Press, 2014) and blogs at sarahgriffithlund.com.

In April of 2018, Sarah was called to serve on the UCC National Staff in a part-time position with the Wholeness Advocacy Team of Justice and Local Church Ministries, serving as the newly created Minister for Disabilities and Mental Health Justice.*

Rev. Lund advocates daily for the full inclusion of all people in love, grace, and sacraments of God through Jesus. She has dedicated her life and her ministry to extending an extravagant welcome, a helping hand, and a loving embrace to all she encounters and whose voices she amplifies. Her work as a pastor, an author, and a friend exemplify the absolute best of what it means to be a Faith Leader. We encourage you to read Dr. Lund's book, friend her on Facebook, and if you would like more information on the UCC's Mental Health Ministry or what it means to be a WISE congregation please visit,

https://www.ucc.org/disabilities_and_mental_health_justice

* biographical information provided by the UCC National Website ucc.org

ANNOUNCEMENTS

September Colony Submission Deadline: Please email your submissions to Shannon at shannon@fcindy.org by **Friday, August 21st**.

Women's Lunch Bunch: All women of the church are invited to get together once a month at **11:30 a.m.** via Zoom for lunch, friendship and fellowship. This month, they meet on **August 27th**. For questions or more information please contact Sue Chapman at (317) 259-1806 or carolsuech59@gmail.com.

Men's Lunch: This lunch and discussion gathering for men of First Congregational meets every other Thursday at **1 p.m.** This month, they are meeting **August 13th & 27th**. Please contact Randy Walker at (317) 796-2081 or aa28977rwalker@gmail.com for more information.

Book Circle is meeting via Zoom on **Tuesday, August 18th** from **1:30 – 3:30 p.m.** Contact Karen Walker at (317) 319-8950 or karen.e.d.walker@gmail.com for more information.

FC Emergency Fund - The FC Emergency Fund seeks to support your housing, food, and medical needs if you find yourselves unemployed or underemployed. You can send a check to the church with "emergency fund" on the memo or make a donation on the church website. To request funds for you or your family, please contact me by email pastorsarah@fcindy.org or cell (386) 478-9012.