



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

THE PILGRIM COLONY

March 2021

Pastor's Reflections

"It's a New Day" is our theme carrying us through the season of Lent. I invite you during this time of spiritual renewal to begin to imagine what good things the future might have just waiting for us to discover. Making time and space to dream can be challenging as many people carry the emotions of fear, sadness, anger, and grief of the past year through the multiple pandemics of COVID19 and racism. Over 500,000 Americans have died from the virus and Black lives continue to be devalued. It can be hard to dream of rainbows when all we see is rain without sunshine. Yet, what our faith tradition teaches and what the scripture promises is that the new day does come and the rainbow does appear in the sky. God promises all of us a new day of hope, even as we cannot yet see it or imagine it.

The invitation for all of us is to step into this new day with courage, boldness, faith, hope, and love. It can be intimidating, scary, and even risky to do something new, go someplace new, try a new thing, and not know exactly what might happen. I believe that guided by faith, prayer, and the love of God we will discover the blessings awaiting us all. I believe God will bless us in this seeking of how to Be The Church for this new day. And I'm here for all of it. I'm here with you all as we proclaim with joy, that it's a new day.

I want to offer my heartfelt thanks to each member of our congregation for your generosity. Thank you for faithfully supporting the church's mission and ministry through your giving of time, talent, and treasure. We have deeply committed, talented, and hardworking lay leaders who help us Be The Church. We have gifted staff who are dedicated to this ministry we share. I thank God that we are in a good position to enter into this new day. Together, we are making a difference in the world and sharing God's love with all.

Blessings,
Pastor Sarah

Soul Care with Pastor Sarah (Zoom) - Join us on **Tuesdays from 7:30-8:30pm** immediately following Vespers for a time to check-in and to pray together.

Pastoral Care and Support:

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

Intern Reflections

Just Peace Intern

During my first month with First Congregational, I have been overwhelmed at how welcoming and invested the congregation has been in discussions about justice and addressing inequity. Not only does the work that FC create more just peace in modern society, but it challenges us as individuals to cultivate our own sense of peace and understanding in the world.

Now, my focus turns toward our partnership with Faith in Indiana and working alongside the congregation to lobby for effective and meaningful change on the part of the whole community. Sometimes it may be easy to reflect on our own position, privileged though it may be, and push off inaction because such problems do not affect us. But I argue that this is exactly why we must be more devoted, more attentive, and respond to the needs of our community.



So many in God's creation are in pain constantly, often by no fault of their own. Let us continue to be the voice for the voiceless, the support for the burdened, and the place of safety for those who are outcast. I am excited for what the next month brings in our partnership with Faith in Indiana, and eagerly await what else our congregation may do!

- David Clark

daclark1@butler.edu

From Your Student Pastor



Hello, Church! I'm deep into another semester at CTS where I'm hopeful to complete my studies by December of 2021. This trying time of pandemic has left us all weary in various ways and I reflected today on that collective weariness with this John O'Donohue Blessing. As always, you can contact me at studentpastor@fcindy.org anytime!

Reflect with me:

- What parts of ourselves have we forsaken amid "the race of days"?
- How can we return to ourselves despite our weariness?
- How can we escape perpetual exhaustion in a world of unrelenting news, pursuits, and truths?

May we all give ourselves the gift of excessive gentleness.

May we all return to ourselves time and time again.

May we rest.

May we rest.

May we rest.

A Blessing by John O'Donohue titled "For One Who Is Exhausted"

"When the rhythm of the heart becomes hectic,

Time takes on the strain until it breaks;

Then all the unattended stress falls in
On the mind like an endless, increasing weight.

The light in the mind becomes dim.
Things you could take in your stride before
Now become laborsome events of will.

Weariness invades your spirit.
Gravity begins falling inside you,
Dragging down every bone.

The tide you never valued has gone out.
And you are marooned on unsure ground.
Something within you has closed down;
And you cannot push yourself back to life.

You have been forced to enter empty time.
The desire that drove you has relinquished.
There is nothing else to do now but rest
And patiently learn to receive the self
You have forsaken in the race of days.

At first your thinking will darken
And sadness take over like listless weather.
The flow of unwept tears will frighten you.

You have traveled too fast over false ground;
Now your soul has come to take you back.

Take refuge in your senses, open up
To all the small miracles you rushed through.

Become inclined to watch the way of rain
When it falls slow and free.

Imitate the habit of twilight,
Taking time to open the well of color
That fostered the brightness of day.

Draw alongside the silence of stone
Until its calmness can claim you.
Be excessively gentle with yourself.

Stay clear of those vexed in spirit.
Learn to linger around someone of ease
Who feels they have all the time in the world.

Gradually, you will return to yourself,
Having learned a new respect for your heart
And the joy that dwells far within slow time."

Love, Cassidy

(Student Pastor Cassidy Hall will be preaching on Sunday, March 7th.)

Moderator Reflections

Question: For those of you (and there were many!) who attended the Annual Meeting several weeks ago, were you as astonished as I was by the sheer volume and variety of activities, pursuits and ministries undertaken by our church members and staff during the past year? It really is quite remarkable! In a particularly arduous period of pandemic, with all its attendant stress, uncertainties, and personal limitations, First Congregational has demonstrated its resilience and recalibrated its vision of how to “be the church.” In fact, we have not only held steady but have *increased* our commitment to a broad spectrum of needs, issues, people, and programs. Operating on a virtual basis has led us to become more creative and resourceful than ever.

As you read through this issue of the Colony, please take note of the monthly calendar of events, the board and team reports, the classes, discussion groups, social events, and more. I suspect you will feel as inspired and blessed as I do to be a part of such a dynamic, compassionate, and supportive community. May we continue to grow, give, and serve meaningfully together during the inevitable challenges and opportunities in the months ahead.

Yours in faith,
Larry Eckel

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, Gloria Boedeker, Clark Collier, susana-judith rae

This Month at FC*

SUNDAYS	9:30 a.m.	Sunday Adult Class (Zoom)
SUNDAYS	11:00 a.m.	Worship (YouTube, Facebook, Dial In)
SUNDAYS	12:00 p.m.	Coffee Hour (Zoom - immediately after worship)
TUESDAYS	7:00 p.m.	Winter Vespers (Zoom)
TUESDAYS	7:30 p.m.	Soul Care with Pastor Sarah (Zoom)
WEDNESDAYS	12:00 p.m.	Lenten Lunch & Learn (Zoom)
THURSDAYS	5:00 p.m.	Spiritual Support Group (Zoom)
SATURDAYS	10:00 a.m.	SE Association Virtual Lenten Series
Wednesday, March 3	7:00 p.m.	Trustees (Zoom)
Saturday, March 6	10:00 a.m.	Food Drive (at FC)
Sunday, March 7	11:00 a.m.	Communion Sunday w/ Student Pastor Cassidy Hall preaching (YT, FB, Dial In)
Sunday, March 7	12:30 p.m.	Special Congregational Meeting (Zoom)
Wednesday, March 10	7:00 p.m.	Church Council (Zoom)
Thursday, March 11	1:00 p.m.	Men's Lunch (Zoom)
Sunday, March 14		DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME
Tuesday, March 16	1:30 p.m.	Book Circle (Zoom)
Saturday, March 20	11:00 a.m.	Neighborhood Walk (at FC)
Wednesday, March 24	5:00 p.m.	WISE Mental Health Team (Zoom)
Wednesday, March 24	6:30 p.m.	Calling Circle (IKC Zoom)
Thursday, March 25	11:30 a.m.	Women's Lunch (Zoom)
Thursday, March 25	1:00 p.m.	Men's Lunch (Zoom)

**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=dmtWbWE5UXRBTk5pcHZlYlB0aEFVUT09> 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. You can call in and participant as a 'conference call'.

Church Council

Comeback Team: Current Building Policy

The church building is closed to in-person church gatherings **until the following parameters are reached, based on guidance from Dr Virginia Caine, Marion County Public Health Director:**

A 7-day average of 5% (or less) positivity among unique individuals tested for a two-week period, and new cases per day at 35 or under in Marion County, per the metrics shown on www.coronavirus.in.gov.

If you need to be in the building, please wash your hands in the kitchenette or use the sanitizer at the cleaning cart, sign in, and wear a face mask. We value the opportunity to be together, but are equally desirous to keep one another healthy by limiting ways to inadvertently shed virus!

Special Congregational Meeting: Sunday, March 7th at 12:30 p.m.

I wish to let you know of a special Congregational Meeting following our church service on Sunday, March 7 at 12:30 PM on the church Zoom link. The

reason for the meeting is to propose and discuss with you a new model of shared leadership. It was brought up at the Board Workshop on February 6 and was more recently approved by the Church Council as a recommendation for a congregational vote and approval of next steps. A copy of the proposal is attached below for your review.

As your newly elected moderator, I want to assure you that I am both pleased and excited about the advantages and opportunities that the shared leadership model offers for all of us. I am eager to hear your thoughts about it, along with any questions you may have. Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to seeing you soon!

With all best wishes,
Larry Eckel
Moderator

Leadership Proposal

For many years, First Congregational UCC has struggled to fill the Vice Moderator position. This position provides backup to the Moderator in the first year, and typically becomes the Moderator the following year for its one-year term. People are concerned about the 2 year commitment of the Vice Moderator/ Moderator positions, the perceived individual responsibility, and the time required for these positions. For people that are fairly new to our church's governance processes, it is unknown for them - and also for the church - about whether they have the gifts, talents, and the call for the Vice Moderator/Moderator positions.

Another problem is that some very capable people are already serving the church in other leadership roles. By moving to Vice Moderator/Moderator, it can create other leadership gaps.

Is it time to rethink this leadership model? Reflecting the call to "Be the Church" by using holy imagination and holy experiment, let's consider the functions of these positions and how they could be handled in a way that allows members to be willing to participate and serve. To discern next steps, let us approach this in an open and transparent way to trust our process, and one another, during a potential time of change for a long established governance model.

At the Church Council meeting on 2/10/21, the Council approved for recommendation to the congregation the following proposal:

First Congregational UCC shall suspend the parts of its Constitution and Bylaws (CBL) regarding the Vice Moderator and Moderator positions in order to explore the following shared leadership model. This suspension shall be reviewed by the Church Council in December 2021, for further recommendations to the congregation at the Annual Meeting in January 2022. Dependent on that review, it is anticipated to continue the suspension and shared leadership model in 2022, with another review by the Church Council in December 2022, to determine if formal amendments for the CBL shall be presented to the congregation at the Annual Meeting in January 2023.

The shared leadership model is:

1. The Moderator/Vice Moderator positions are replaced by a "Senior Council" of "senior councilors", comprised of 3-4 members.
2. The senior councilors will meet regularly with the minister.
3. The senior councilors will alternate as the "lead councilor" for a quarter, providing a primary contact person, as well as the designated person to conduct Church Council meetings.
4. Attendance at various board, committee, and team meetings will be allocated to individual senior councilors in order to share the time commitment.
5. Each year, at least 1 new person will be added to the Senior Council, with at least 1 person leaving.
6. A person can serve on the Senior Council for a maximum of 5 consecutive years.
7. All senior councilors shall attend Church Council meetings, with voice. Only the lead councilor will have voice and vote; other councilors may have voice and vote if they are attending the council in a different role (ie a board representative). If a lead councilor is also a board rep, it is recommended that that board be represented by another person.
8. The senior councilors shall be nominated through the normal annual slate process.
9. Regarding any legal roles of a Moderator (ie signing papers on behalf of the congregation), these shall be assigned to the lead councilor; a "schedule" designating who is the lead councilor will be approved at a Church Council meeting, and written into the minutes.

Criteria & Expectations for Senior Councilors:

1. A senior councilor must be a member (full or Associate) of First Congregational.
2. A senior councilor can also serve on a board, and be its chair.
3. A senior councilor can also be an officer.
4. A senior councilor cannot also serve in a staff position.
5. A senior councilor is involved in the life and ministries of the church.
6. Desire a mix of people with past leadership experience at First Congregational and those with limited/no experience
7. Ability to work collegially while providing input
8. Willingness to organize and lead meetings
9. Ability to participate in Council meetings, regular Senior Council meetings, and other meetings of the church

The benefits of this proposal are:

1. Less daunting to prospects
2. Shared learning and responsibility
3. Provides leadership training and experience without the full responsibility
4. Provides a more collegial and supportive model for lay leadership
5. Honors diversity and is more inclusive
6. Provides greater continuity in leadership flow
7. Provides greater flexibility in resourcing leadership

The risks are:

1. Stronger personalities may overwhelm others
2. Could develop into 1 main leader with several "vice moderators"
3. It's an unknown leadership model for us, although it is commonly used in the Quaker tradition
4. Possibility of conflict of interest by a senior councilor serving multiple roles

WORSHIP & FAITH

Aurelia Glennan-March, Chair

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

Adult Education will continue to meet [via Zoom](#).

For March, we are going to read and reflect on the Lenten devotions for the Sundays in March from the UCC resource "Promises, Promises." If you like, bring a poem that speaks to you on your Lenten journey to share with the class, or a piece of art that speaks to you. Our goal is to grow together in faith and love, through listening, reflecting, and sharing.

Mar 7: Carol will reflect on the devotion for 3/7, 1 Cor.1:23

Mar 14: Wendy will share on the stewardship theme of "Beloved, Love"

Mar 21: Nancy will reflect on the devotion for 3/21, Jeremiah 31:33

Mar 28: Worth will reflect on the devotion for 3/28, Mark 11:4-6

Hope to see you there!

Pastor Carol

3 Ways to Connect for Worship- Sundays at 11AM



FACE BOOK

[https://www.facebook.com/pg/FirstCongregationalUCCIndy/posts/?ref=page i
nternal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/FirstCongregationalUCCIndy/posts/?ref=page_internal)



YOUTUBE

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWV9wqAvPiUKSkEbjav6Zpw>

- YouTube Live broadcasts at 10:45am with 15 minutes of gathering music. The service begins at 11am.



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.

Lenten Lunch & Learn



Join us for a Lenten study as we explore "A New Day" with poet Sonia Sanchez. The gatherings will be curriculum-based, and you are welcome to join to eat your lunch and listen as we gather to learn from videos of Sonia and others from The Katie Geneva Cannon Center for Womanist Leadership. Womanist work and theology centers on the insights and wisdom of Black women, and we will therefore be focusing on hearing from those voices through this study.

Questions? Email Student Pastor Cassidy Hall at studentpastor@fcindy.org

OUTREACH & SERVICE

Alice Rutherford, Chair

As we continue our Just Peace Covenant Outreach through the spring (see descriptions of Family Promise <https://familypromise.org> and Exodus <https://www.exodusrefugee.org> elsewhere in this newsletter), we want to additionally highlight our annual UCC special offering of One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS). This year we have set aside some budgeted funds to contribute to our UCC special offerings, but we invite individual contributions to supplement our donations to this important global ministry.

From the UCC website:

"One Great Hour of Sharing, part of Our Church's Wider Mission, is the special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that carries God's message of love and hope to people in crisis. The UCC works with international partners to provide sources of clean water, food, education and health care, small business micro-credit, advocacy and resettlement for refugees and displaced persons, and emergency relief and rehabilitation. One Great Hour of Sharing also supports domestic and international ministries for disaster preparedness and response. Sixty percent of the UCC's offering supports international development initiatives, including annual support for missionaries. Currently, there are two One Great Hour of Sharing supported missionaries and one Global Mission Intern working in disaster relief, health care, education, sustainable agricultural development, and refugee support. The offering also funds disaster preparedness and response, and disaster-related volunteer initiatives in the U.S."

Donations to OGHS should be identified separately from donations to Covenant Outreach, which are currently supporting Family Promise, Peace Learning Center, Exodus, and Faith In Indiana. As always, FCC's generosity is greatly appreciated.

- Alice Rutherford, Chair

Covenant Outreach: Family Promise of Greater Indianapolis

Family Promise is partnership of congregations and community organizations that serves the homeless families of greater Indianapolis. In 1993 a woman named Karen Olson came to the Indianapolis area to give a talk. She had started the first Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN) in Summit, New Jersey. Only about a dozen people attended her talk that evening, but one man, Dr Dean Linsey, a doctor who had just retired, and was discerning what to focus his life on next, took it to heart. He spoke with Karen after the meeting and over a period of time and some community research it became clear to him what he needed to do was to form an interfaith outreach group. At this time he met Pastor Brian Byrne from St. Peter's United Church of Christ and others and started the The Northside Indianapolis Interfaith Hospitality Network. Later the North Side was dropped from their name. On October 3, 1994 the first family was served at Carmel UMC. The IHN grew to include over 35 churches and 1500 volunteers serving homeless families of Indianapolis. In 2013 they expanded their services to include the Aftercare Program and changed their name to Family Promise to reflect their additional outreach to families.

For the past 25 years we have been working alongside of Family Promise to eliminate homelessness in Indianapolis by providing temporary housing for whole families. Typical homeless shelters do not. We all know how critical it is to keep children together with

both parents especially in the developmental years. From the beginning our church has been one of the hosting congregations, and Family Promise has been held up as one of our Missions of the Month for many years. Our 2020 annual report shows we gave generously to this worthy organization. And we invite your continued generosity this year through our Covenant Outreach.



As we are exploring ways to advocate along with our monetary giving, I noticed the following opportunities. Their Interfaith Hospitality Network offers the chance to join with the team from another church that is hosting a family. Duties would include set-up beds, cook meals, drive vans, stay overnight, wash sheets, plan children's activities, and more. If you might be interested you can e-mail Mike at mike@fpqi.org.

Another opportunity where they need volunteers is at their Day center. Here you would have the opportunity to answer the phone from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. weekdays, do occasional maintenance, or even adopt-a-room to decorate on a service day! If you would like to offer any of these services or discuss other services you have to offer please email info@fpqi.org. Please consider this community when you are thinking about where to spend your time talent and treasure.

- Paul Terheide

WISE Mental Health Team (Next Zoom meeting: March 24th, 5:00PM)



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 fourth Wednesday of each month from 5 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. 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, Sandy Wood, 317-225-6206-csjlwood@att.net and Pat Larracey, 317-625-6801-plainandfancy1963@att.net.

Need a Lift in Your Spirit? Join us every Thursdays for Spiritual Support Group for Mental Health at 5:00-6:00PM [on Zoom](#)

This gathering is open to everyone and is an informal time to check-in about how you are doing, get emotional support from church family, and offer prayer for one another as we navigate nurturing positive mental health in these difficult days.

We are an open group with confidentiality guidelines. Sessions are on Zoom and led by Pastor Rev. Dr. Sarah Lund and Rev. Dr. Patrick Larracey, co-chair of the church's WISE Team. Please feel free to call or email either of us if you have questions: Pastor Sarah: pastorsarah@fcindy.org, or 386-478-9012.

CARE & CONNECTIONS

Wendy Baldwin, Chair

Celebrating our Special Days

As a church family, we would like to honor and remember the special dates that we individually celebrate. In the Colony each month, we will list people with events that they are celebrating or remembering; due to privacy concerns, we won't include specific dates. This will provide an opportunity for each of us to reach out to one another, and the church will also start celebrating with individuals with a small token of our love.



We currently only have a partial list, so we hope you will let us know of birthdays, anniversaries, etc that you celebrate. Also we want to know of "angel-versaries" where you are remembering a special someone or event in your life. In late February, we sent out a letter and a form that you can fill out, as well as an online version. We hope to hear from everyone, so we can be a family in

celebrating and supporting one another!

March Birthdays

Gloria Boedeker
Nancy Dickinson
Glenn Evans
Ginny Gillette

Judy Hamm
Wendy Harrison
Susan Larson
Roxanne Vaden-Hamm



Feeding the Community

Food Drive & Fellowship! 1st Saturday of the Month – March 6, 10-noon:

Our food donations to the Northside Pantry are helping to fight hunger needs, and the Pantry is very grateful that we are doing this – in 2020 we contributed over 2000 lbs of food and supplies! And our greatest gift – the ability to spend a few minutes of in-person fellowship with those that are there, while maintaining safe virus protocols. We will also have cards for people to sign for those with March events.

Vesper Gatherings – Tuesdays, 7-7:30 pm on Zoom

On Tuesdays, we are meeting at 7 pm for a half hour on Zoom, to be together virtually to share some scripture and joys & concerns. For those who want, Pastor Sarah will be available for pastoral discussion following Vespers.

Monthly Walks – 3rd Saturday of the month, March 20, 11 am

Join us each month for a half hour walk in the beautiful neighborhood around the church. On Saturday, 3/20, we'll meet at 11 am and head off for a walk and a time to catch up with one another. Please wear a mask, and dress appropriately for the weather.

Need Some Coffee?

A year ago, the church bought Equal Exchange coffee to last us several months for our coffee times together. During the shutdown, this coffee has been stored in the fridge or freezer. Since it will be some time before the church can use it, it is available to you for a \$5 donation per pack – both regular and decaf. You can pick it up inside the patio door entrance, or if you would like some and can't come to the building, please contact Wendy Baldwin.



Updated Address Directory



In March, we will be producing an updated address directory. Printed copies will be available at the church, as well as an electronic file. Look for announcements in the E-pistles for when these are ready.

TRUSTEES

Financial Update

When We Give, We Reach Out With Helping Hands

Here are the financial results for January 2021.

1. Current Year Actual vs Budget Summary - Last month 1/1/2021 through 1/31/2021 Using 2021 Budget

Category	Actual	January 2021 Budget	Difference
INCOME	-2,621	731	-3,352
M. Unrestricted Contributions	-2,621	731	-3,352
M.01 Pledged Offerings	17,223	21,172	-3,949
M.02 UnPledged Offerings	1,440	843	597
M.03 Rollover Prior Year Surplus_D...	-21,284	-21,284	0
M.04 Foundation - Endowment Fund...	0	0	0
M.05 Foundation - Minister Fund Draw	0	0	0
M.06 Foundation - Trad. Music Fund...	0	0	0
M.07. Transfer from Youth Fund	0	0	0
M.08 Other Transfers from Restr Ac...	0	0	0
M.09 PPP Loan Forgiveness	0	0	0
EXPENSES	23,693	24,073	380
A. Pastoral Leadership	10,154	10,344	191
B. Worship & Faith	2,696	2,572	-124
C. Care & Connections	18	8	-11
D. Witness & Welcome	0	41	41
E. Outreach & Service	1,433	1,375	-58
F. Trustees	0	0	0
G. Administration & Operations	1,765	1,736	-29
H. House & Grounds	7,169	7,380	212
I. Miscellaneous	458	617	159
Net Difference:	-26,314	-23,342	-2,972

Highlights:

Our finances are off to an OK start in 2021:

- Our January income is negative \$2,600, but that's because we had to roll over our 2020 deficit of \$21,300. We actually took in \$18,700, which was below budget but not a cause for concern after only one month.
- Expenses were slightly under budget.

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

Jim Lootens, Treasurer

lootens.jb@gmail.com

COMMUNITY

Welcoming Arms

"The eternal God is your dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms" (Deuteronomy 33:27 English Standard Version).

On December 29, 2020, my sister, Gloria, who lives in Orlando, emailed me a *Calvin and Hobbes* comic strip.



In the first frame, six-year-old Calvin shouts, "Mom, the washer is done." From afar, his mother calls back, "OK."

In the second frame, Calvin asks: "Aren't you going to put the wash in the dryer?" His mom, sitting in front of a computer, answers: "Calvin, can't you see I'm busy right now??"

In the third panel, Calvin goes to Hobbes and calmly reports, "She says she's busy."

In the final panel, Hobbes is shown soaking wet, with his strong tiger arms holding himself up as he peers out of the washer and looks frustrated, his chin resting on his hands. As water spills out of the washing machine, Hobbes, looking depressed, declares, "I hope the next time she takes a bath, there aren't any towels."

(Watterson, Bill. *Calvin and Hobbes*. © Universal Press Syndicate, n.d.)

While reading the creative comic strip of Bill Watterson, who, alas, retired in 1995, my mind zoomed to São Paulo, Brazil. Why? Because my younger son, Mike, when four years old, once endured his own anguish somewhat parallel to Calvin's anguish of his pal Hobbes being stuck in the family washer. Just as Calvin was unable to help his beloved Tiger, Mike was, at times, unable to rescue his "blankey" from either the washer or the dryer in our laundry room. Plus, just as Calvin dragged Hobbes around throughout the family home and even outside in their yard, Mike did the same with his cherished soft, yellow blanket that his Aunt Gloria had created for him in anticipation of his birth in 1972. Of course, both Hobbes and Mike's blanket needed frequent washings in the family washing machines.

One day, Mike, tired and needing a re-energizing nap, told me he could not find his blankey; i responded that it was in the dryer after having been in the washing machine. Mike turned toward the dryer with a sad, forlorn look. Soon, Mike lay down right on the concrete floor next to the dryer and not very patiently awaited the end of the drying cycle. Fortunately, his beautiful soft, cuddly blanket was promptly dry and pleasantly warm. Removing it from the dryer, i joyfully placed it in Mike's welcoming arms. Immediately he hugged it tightly and headed for his bedroom, where his bed—much more comfortable than the laundry room floor—awaited him.

Sometimes we human beings—in ways similar to Hobbes and to Mike's blanket—are surely in need of physical bathing, spiritual bathing, renewal, and solace. Fortunately, God and God's everlasting arms are always eager to hold us, envelope us, comfort us, and invigorate us.

Dear God, thank You for the many ways you comfort babies, toddlers, young children, teens, and adults of all ages. Thank you for memories of the sweet, charming antics of the numerous children in our lives—both real ones and fictional ones like Calvin, along with his buddy Hobbes. Amen.

- susanna-judith rae

IKC UCC Southeast Association Eviction Ministry Update

We received another call this month from a tenant we had helped in the past. She had just started a new job, but was already one month behind on her rent. She won't get paid in time to pay her late rent before her landlord files for eviction. (Her landlord gave her a three day notice.) Even if she did use her check to pay her late rent, what would she use to pay her current rent?



This story is all too familiar. So many families are living paycheck to paycheck. Even a brief time of unemployment (due to injury, illness, etc) can create a cycle of late fees and dodging eviction....or in some cases, not dodging it.

We are a small, entirely volunteer based ministry with a budget that relies entirely on the donations of individuals like you. That means that helping two tenants avoid eviction could wipe out our entire budget for several months. The hardest thing we have to do is choose whether or not helping someone we've already helped once before will mean not being able to help someone new who calls next week. We almost had to make that decision about the tenant mentioned above. Fortunately, a last minute donation came in, and her landlord agreed not to file for eviction if we could deliver the check in hand to her office before 5:00p.m.

Most organizations are not set up to be able to act in a matter of hours or even days. That's one of the wonderful things about our ministry. We are grateful for those of you who make donations so we can do this incredible work and hear the sigh of relief and the smile on the other end of the phone when we get to tell someone that they won't lose their home. Wouldn't you love to be a part of this?

How can you help?

- Join our Team - We welcome new members who want to join our team.
- Legal resources - If you have legal experience with the eviction process, we would love to talk with you to gain better insight into the legal process.
- Checks can be made out to:
Southeast Association of the IKC UCC. Please include in the memo line: "Eviction Ministry." Donations can be mailed to the treasurer at:
SE Association Eviction Ministry
Attn: Margie Potter
726 Coach Rd.
Indianapolis, IN 46227

- Rev. Shannon Abbott (shannon@fcindy.org), Pastor Sarah Frische-Mouri Hannigan (pastorsarahzucc@gmail.com), Walter Ziebell (wziebell@gmail.com)

Southeast Association Virtual Lenten Series



Southeast Association Virtual Lenten Series *Highlighting and Celebrating our Chaplains*

When: Saturdays from 10:00am—11:00am
February 20, 27, March 6, March 13, March 20

What: Stories from active chaplains serving in ministry, questions and answers, and time for community prayers

Why: To Build Community in the Southeast Association as we seek to love and serve like Jesus

Who: Everyone from the Southeast Association is invited to join us

Where: On the Indiana-Kentucky Zoom Link
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81305889617?pwd=dVNMTXRpdE12M0IRcDREcUJDVWVxQT09>

For more information, contact
Rev. Dr. Sarah Lund at pastorsarah@fcindy.org

Join IKC Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81305889617?pwd=dVNMTXRpdE12M0IRcDREcUJDVWVxQT09>

Meeting ID: 813 0588 9617

Passcode: 661797

One tap mobile

+13126266799,,81305889617#,,,,*661797# US (Chicago)

+16468769923,,81305889617#,,,,*661797# US (New York)

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kXPV3i1e5>

United Church of Christ NEWS: TV series explores abiding power of Black church

by [Hans Holznagel](#) | published on Feb 22, 2021 (www.ucc.org)

The United Church of Christ is in “The Black Church.” The TV special, that is.

The four-hour documentary, airing this month on PBS, features several UCC ministers.

Viewers can check local air dates at the [series web page](#). They can also stream it there — or [on YouTube](#) — in two episodes of two hours each. Harvard Professor [Henry Louis Gates Jr.](#) wrote and created the series.

Six UCC ministers

The UCC is visible throughout as part of the wider Black church. Among many ministers and public figures on screen are:

- The Rev. **Otis Moss III**. He is senior pastor of [Trinity UCC](#), Chicago, and was an advisor to the series.
- The Rev. **Dwight Andrews**. He is senior minister of [First Congregational UCC](#), Atlanta, and was an advisor to the series.
- The Rev. **Andrew Young**. A member of First Congregational, Atlanta, he was part of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.’s core team in the 1960s. He was also, later, mayor of Atlanta and the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations.
- The Rev. **Jeremiah Wright**. He is pastor emeritus of Trinity UCC, Chicago.
- The Rev. **Yvette Flunder**. She is founder and senior pastor of [City of Refuge UCC](#), Oakland, Calif., and presiding bishop of the [Fellowship of Affirming Ministries](#).
- The Rev. **Traci Blackmon**. She is associate general minister of [Justice and Local Church Ministries](#). She was also pastor of [Christ The King UCC](#), Florissant, Mo., through 2020, when her interview was filmed.

Wide range of topics

Their topics include the power of the pulpit, the role of music, the church as an agent of social and racial justice, and issues of women’s and LGBTQ inclusion.

“The Black church to me still remains the strongest demonstration of God with us that we have,” Blackmon says near the end of the documentary. She also offers a comment about the church’s historic local power — and a clue about its future.

“It is those small Black churches that have made the difference in our communities,” she says. “It is that strength that I want the church to tap back into.”

ANNOUNCEMENTS

April Colony Submission Deadline: Please email your submissions to Shannon at shannon@fcindy.org no later than **Friday, March 19th**.

Women's Lunch Bunch: All women of the church are invited to get together once a month at **11:30am**. via Zoom for lunch, friendship and fellowship. This month, they meet on **March 25th**. 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 **1:00pm**. This month, they are meeting only on **March 11th & 25th**. Please contact Randy Walker at (317) 796-2081 or aa28977rwalker@gmail.com for more information.

Women's Book Circle: We meet on the **third Tuesday** of each month at **1:30** on the church **zoom** account. Join us! For more information please contact Karen Walker at 317-319-8950 or karen.e.d.walker@gmail.com

Members In Need Fund - The Members In Need Fund is available to support financial needs for any of our church family who find themselves in need. To request funds for you or your family, please contact Pastor Sarah by email pastorsarah@fcindy.org or cell (386) 478-9012.