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FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Epistle for the Week of April 29, 2021

Dear First Congregational,

What does it mean to live in covenant with God, one another at First Congregational, with the Southeast Association of the Indiana-Kentucky Conference, and with the United Church of Christ? On Sunday we celebrated living into our covenants through our shared learning, worship, fellowship, Buzz conversation, and the Southeastern Association Annual Meeting with guest, UCC Associate General Minister, Wider Church Ministries and Operations and Co-Executive for Global Ministries, Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia A. Thompson (see her poem Embrace below). Covenant means that we trust one another, honor the unique gifts we each bring into the relationship, and nurture our mutual desire to be in relationship. We are so much stronger when we engage in ministry together! That's why Jesus had 12 disciples and was not a one person show.

Sunday was my last day serving as the President of the Southeast Association of the IKC and I celebrate the many fruitful gifts of our shared ministry over the two

year term. From May 2019—May 2021, together in covenant with the SE Association and the IKC we accomplished so much together, highlights include: creating an IKC Mental Health Team, becoming a WISE Conference, hiring two staff roles on the IKC to support mental health, created Communities of Practice (peer support for authorized clergy) pilot, becoming an Anti-Racism Conference, the SE Association becoming the first association in the IKC voting to require Anti-Racism training, welcoming a new congregation in the SE Association, launching the SE Association Eviction Ministries (special thanks to Shannon Abbott who helped birth this ministry), providing direct support to our Members in Discernment (with gift cards and monthly thinking of you cards), and hosting a SE Association Lenten Zoom Chaplain Celebration series (of which three First Congregational clergy provided leadership, thank you Elizabeth Price, Lisa Anderson, and Worth Hartman). Thank you to First Congregational for believing so strongly in the power of our partnerships with our covenantal relationships with the wider church. I am honored by the opportunity to serve.

May God continue to bless us as we seek the wisdom, support, and love that we discover when we trust in the power of shared covenant, mutuality, and the ways God moves through our partnerships for justice and peace.

Blessings,
Pastor Sarah

embrace

*residents in the midst of chaos unfurling
a world astir with despair and breach
echoing the tumult of fears
lives overshadowed by disrepair
we push away
Sophia steps in
gathering us close
willing us to live different
breathing in us the desire to love
to be at one with all surrounding
rifts set us adrift
forcing us from the serenity of the One
the interconnectedness of all
fading in the shadows of brokenness*

*we forget we are one
voices of the Divine interrupt
dismayed at who we have become
slivers of our humanity remain
shattered apart by selfishness and greed
their whispers calling us to return to knowing
holding tight to what does not serve
our fingers blister, our hands peeled raw
gripping hatred and detesting the other
the toxic bile a cloud feeding discord
we force dis-ease
Ancestors stir in distress
reminding us of dangers
in this living on the edges of discontent
dissatisfied with ourselves
longing for what we do not own
heartbreak visits often
the pain of separation a weight
a millstone tied to the love we need
breaking apart the best of humanity
we disconnect from flourishing
quietness enfolds us
tranquility a companion arriving
with neighbors and strangers
calling us back to unity
pulling us back to loving*

- Rev, Dr, Karen Georgia Thompson



**Are you ready to get back to
the people and activities you love?**

Your vaccination brings us one day closer
to controlling the pandemic and
reopening Church.

Get your vaccine ASAP!

Register at ourshot.in.gov or call 211.

THIS SUNDAY

Sunday Adult Education, 9:30 a.m. (Zoom)

Adult Education will continue to meet via Zoom. Join us for lively discussions and thoughtful reflections. In May we will talk about Bread for the body, Health for the mind, and Love for the community. We will have two opportunities to share slices of our own faith formation by sharing some vignettes of our own stories. Come, join us!

May 2: “A Christian Response to Hunger.” This Sunday, guest speaker Rev. Dr. Dick Hamm will lead us in a discussion about Bread for the World and its mission to respond to hunger in the world. Among Dick’s many activities, Dick serves on the Bread for the World Indiana Leadership Team.

Communion Sunday Worship, 11AM (YouTube, FaceBook, Dial In)

Scripture: Acts 8:26-40

Sermon: “We Do Better When We Know Better” with Student Pastor Cassidy Hall preaching

Coffee Hour via Zoom at 12:00PM



CELEBRATE STUDENT PASTOR CASSIDY HALL'S
LAST SUNDAY SERVING FIRST CONGREGATIONAL

as her field education internship wraps-up.

Join us for worship with Cassidy preaching
and celebration during coffee hour/fellowship
and contribute to a special gift for Cassidy.

Cassidy's last Sunday with us is THIS SUNDAY, May 2. She will share a sermon during worship and the coffee time following worship will be a time for conversation. Join us on on-line for this special time.

The Church Council has approved her Support Team's recommendation for a financial gift — a scholarship for her last semester at CTS - **A GIFT FOR CASSIDY !** She will not have time for another internship or job, thus no income as she completes this counseling training.

Send your donations to the church marked "A Gift for Cassidy". We will award this to Cassidy later in May to allow you time to send your gift for the gift which has been ours through her ministry with First Congregational.

If you have questions, please direct them to Rev. Dr. Patrick Larracey, chair of Cassidy's Support Team. We plan to "stick with her" through her training and preparation for ordination in the United Church of Christ. Thank you for your support and gift for the future of this maturing UCC pastor.

Thank You for Your Support of First Congregational UCC

Please continue supporting the mission and ministries of your local church by

mailing a check to the church or through online donations at <http://www.fcindy.org/online-giving/>

THIS WEEK AT FC

How to Access our Zoom Gatherings

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/9264494206?pwd=dmtWbWE5UXRBTk5pcHZlYlB0aEFVUT09>

Meeting ID: 926 449 4206

Password: 7171

If you click on the URL, you should not need to enter in the Meeting ID and Password.

To dial in by phone: +1 312 626 6799, Meeting ID 926 449 4206, Password 7171.

TODAY!

- **Women's Lunch Bunch** will **not** meet today, but will meet by **Zoom at 11:30 a.m. on Thursday, April 29.**
- **Spiritual Support Group at 5:00 p.m. (Zoom)** - This group openly invites anyone seeking spiritual care concerning well being. Contact Pastor Sarah at pastorsarah@fcindy.org, or 386-478-9012.

Fun at First! – Friday, April 30, 6-8 pm, Church Playground & Front Lawn

Looking for some in-person fun and community? We will gather outdoors at the church playground to have some pizza, play various games, and share community, while observing safety protocols of distancing and mask wearing. We'll have croquet & corn hole, as well as table games & cards. Dress appropriately for the cooler weather, and come when you can/leave when you want. There will also be donation basket to help cover the cost of the pizza. All ages welcome, and bring a friend! So we have an idea of expected attendance, please let Wendy Baldwin know if you plan to attend.

Food Drive & Fellowship! 1st Saturday of the Month – May 1, 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 2021 we have already contributed over 1300 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.

Vespers (Outdoor/Zoom) on Tuesdays from 7:00 - 7:30 p.m.

Join us for a time of togetherness, Scripture, and sharing of joys and concerns. When weather conditions allow, Vespers will be outdoors at the church at 7 pm. Please bring a lawn chair and wear a mask. We will also try to connect to Zoom for those unable to attend in person. We will NOT meet outdoors if the temperature is below 50 degrees, it's raining, or winds are greater than 20 mph; you can join us on Zoom.

Faith In Indiana - Thursday, May 6 at 7 PM

Please join Faith In Indiana and members of ours and other congregations who have met with political leaders this spring for a debrief from these sessions and next steps. To register, please go to:

<https://faithindiana.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJwscuGprDgrHN2AdcbNBfJkpBVBklCZBHgm>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

If you have any questions please contact Worth Hartman or Karen Walker.

Outreach & Service

If you haven't already done so, please remember to donate to #NightWithoutABed for Family Promise before the end of this week. Any donations made before this Saturday will elicit matching funds, so your contribution will have double its effect! More information about this Just Peace ministry for homeless families can be found at [\(16\) Family Promise of Greater Indianapolis | Facebook](#) and [Family Promise](#). The Outreach & Service Board always appreciates First Congregational's generosity in supporting our wider community's needs.

COMING SOON

Virtual Mental Health First Aid Training – May 15th

Mental Health First Aid is a nationally recognized early intervention public education program. It teaches adults how to recognize signs/symptoms of potential mental health challenges, how to listen nonjudgmentally, to give reassurance to someone who may be experiencing a mental health challenge and to refer that person to appropriate professional services.

Thanks to a grant, the cost of the training has been reduced from \$50 to \$25 per person. In addition, several scholarships are available to make your cost zero. If you are interested in this training, use the following link to register for the class: https://secure.lglforms.com/form_engine/s/bOAM_odBAx0wnS9ji7GU_w

Ten participants are required for the workshop to be held, so please register as soon as possible if you are interested. The deadline for registration is May 7th.

Click [HERE](#) for additional information on the workshop, how to pay, or scholarships.

This is an exciting learning opportunity for our congregation and I hope to “see” several of you at this virtual workshop.

- Sandy Wood (csjlwood@att.net or call/text 317-225-6206)

May 16th- Mental Health Sunday Buzz & Christ on the Psych Ward Books - We are fortunate to have a guest preacher, David Finnegan-Hosey, at our virtual Mental Health Sunday this year who has also agreed to do a Buzz after Worship. During our Buzz he will be discussing his 2018 book “Christ on the Psych Ward” published by Church Publishing. Though you do not have to have read this book to attend and benefit from his talk, there is a cart containing the books and a sign-up for pick-up in the hallway by the garden door. If you wish to have a book delivered to you, and there are books available, please let Sandy Wood know (csjlwood@att.net or 317-225-6206).

Please click [HERE](#) to view the May Colony with more information and events happening this month!

CONNECTION & SUPPORT

FC Facebook page (click [here](#))

“First Congregational Indy Fellowship” group on Facebook (click [here](#)).

Pastoral Care

Pastor Sarah may be reached at (386) 478-9012 or pastorsarah@fcindy.

Pastor Sarah's Sabbath Days: Mondays & Saturdays

The congregation covenant with Pastor Sarah to provide 2 days per week for personal rest and family renewal. On Mondays and Saturdays, Pastor Sarah is not available unless it is a pastoral emergency. Thank you for honoring this sacred gift of Sabbath time for our Pastor and her family.

Additional Church Support Contacts

Pastoral Care Associate: Pastor Carol (casowle@gmail.com)

Office Administrator: Shannon (shannon@fcindy.org)

Lead Councilor: Larry Eckel (lspeckel@comcast.net)

(Senior Councilors: Steve Coomer, Larry Eckel, Alice Rutherford)

Mental Health Support:

- **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Disaster Distress Helpline:** 1-800-985-5990, or text "TalkWithUs" to 66746.
- **National Suicide Prevention Hotline:** 1-800-273-TALK (8255) (press 1 for veterans, 2 for Spanish)
- **National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)** Information HelpLine provides information and referral services. 1-800-950-NAMI (6264) and www.nami.org.
- **The Trevor Project hotline** offers support for LGBTQIA+ youth and families struggling with mental health challenges at 1-866-4-U-TREVOR (488-7386) and www.theTrevorProject.org

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.

FC Covid Protocols:

Effective immediately, 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.

At that time, the Council will decide reopening measures.

THIS WEEK AT FIRST CONGREGATIONAL

3 Ways to Connect for Worship

YOUTUBE

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

- YouTube Live broadcasts at 11am..
- Use this option for live interacting and messaging. You must have or create a user account and be logged in to message live.

FACE BOOK

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

- The video will be posted at 11am.
- This is for viewing only. For live interacting and commenting, please use the YouTube option.

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.

How to Access our Zoom Gatherings

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/9264494206?pwd=dmtWbWE5UXRBTk5pcHZlY1BoaEFVUTo9>

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Password: 7171

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Weekly Calendar

Thursday, April 29	11:45 a.m.	Women's Lunch Bunch
Thursday, April 29	5:00 p.m.	Spiritual Support Group
Friday, April 30	6:00 p.m.	Friday Fun Night (outside at FC)
Saturday, May 1	10:00 a.m.	Food Drive (outside at FC)
Sunday, May 2	9:30 a.m.	Sunday Adult Class

Sunday, May 2	11:00 a.m.	Sunday Worship with Student Pastor Cassidy Hall Preaching (YouTube, FB, Dial In)
Sunday, May 2	12:00 p.m.	Zoom Coffee Hour
Tuesday, May 3	7:00 p.m.	Vespers (outside & Zoom)
Wednesday, May 5	7:00 p.m.	Trustees
Thursday, May 6	1:00 p.m.	Men's Lunch (private Zoom)
Thursday, May 6	5:00 p.m.	Spiritual Support Group
Sunday, May 9	9:30 a.m.	Sunday Adult Class
Sunday, May 9	11:00 a.m.	Sunday Worship (YouTube, FB, Dial In)
Sunday, May 9	12:00 p.m.	Zoom Coffee Hour

***All events are on Zoom unless indicated otherwise.**