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FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

e-pistle for the week of December 6, 2018

Minister's Message

Dear First Congregational Family,

As we prepare our hearts and spirits to welcome the Christ child, this Advent we also welcome a new way of worship that includes the sanctuary Playground. As we experiment with this way of being open and inclusive of all ages, we realize that change is challenging.

Thank you all for being a church willing to explore and experiment. This takes courage and patience. We will learn and adapt as we move forward. God is with us on our journey. This is good news!

Continued Advent blessings,
Pastor Sarah

Worship for the First Sunday of Advent

Adult Class - 9:45 a.m.

On December 9th, this group will discuss the topic of "Christ's Way of Leadership is Servanthood."

Traditional Service - 11:00 a.m.

Lianna Campos is serving as preacher this week. She will be preaching on "Finding Mercy in the Wilderness."

Scripture: Luke 3:1-6

Advent Wreath to be lit by Jimmy, Aniseh, & James Hodges.

Prayground


As the Christian body celebrates Advent--a time for us to prepare our hearts, our minds, and our spirits for the coming of the Christ child, at First Congregational Church UCC, one way that we are leaning into this concept of welcoming is by providing a Prayground. Located in the front right in the sanctuary, the Prayground offers children and families a space just for them and allows all to fully engage in meaningful worship. The Prayground has soft foam mats along with liturgically and age appropriate worship materials.



The Prayground will be evaluated for permanency after an estimated six to twelve months. As time goes, we commit to asking for and listening to feedback from the congregation to best support everybody's faith development and worship experience, and to best welcome our children and families. With the full support of the Worship and Faith Board, the FCC Mental Health WISE Team, and the Church Council, the Prayground will be available for use beginning December 2nd. As we prepare our hearts to welcome the Christ child, let us prepare a dedicated space in our sanctuary that welcomes all children.

For feedback, questions, concerns, and/or comments, please talk to Lianna Campos (lcampos33@gmail.com, W&F Board Representative to Council) or Nancy Dickinson


(dickinson.nls@gmail.com, Chair of W&F Board) or Pastor Sarah
(pastorsarah@fcindy.org).



**THIS CHRISTMAS,
WE REMEMBER
THAT JESUS WAS
A REFUGEE...**

MATTHEW 2:13-14

#WELCOMEREFUGEES
#WELCOMEASYLUMSEEKERS
#WELCOMECHRIST



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

What's Happening at FCC

What Shall We Bring?



As we wrap up our Annual Campaign for 2019 resources, thank you to those who have responded! You have pledged to provide for First Congregational's ministries in 2019 that touch so many lives.

For those who have not yet responded, please consider the following:

1. Your pledge of financial and service resources greatly benefits FCC's planning for 2019;
2. Your pledge is an intention to give, and can be changed, either to give more or give less, based on your circumstances;

3. Your pledge is a way to bring your whole self to God and be generous with your life.

Please try to turn in your pledge by early December in order to assist our boards with preliminary planning. Pledge and service cards are available in the Narthex, and can be deposited in the basket or the offering plate. Or you can contact Shannon Abbott in the Church Office to have cards sent to you.

What shall we bring? Thank you to all who share your gifts and help First Congregational be dynamic and vital, energized to be a servant community of Jesus Christ!

Poinsettia Time

It's Advent Season. Please order a poinsettia(s) to help celebrate this special Season. The cost per plant is \$10.00. Any questions see or email Sally Coombs at sallysews73@gmail.com

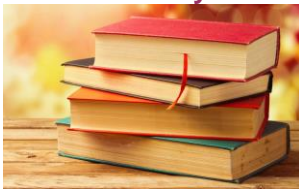


Flowers Needed

Flowers have a way of bringing beauty into the worship service. There are several empty Sundays on the Flower Calendar located on the bulletin board by the garden doors. Will you sign up for a Sunday? The flowers can be for any occasion and come from the florist, store, or your garden. The cost is \$25 from our florist. If you have any questions, please email Sally Coombs at sallysews73@gmail.com or call 317-446-2853. You can also let Shannon know the occasion at shannon@fcindy.org or call the church office at 317-257-5397.

The following date are currently available in the Flower Calendar: December 16

The Book Party is Back!!



On Friday, December 14th we will read books and do activities with 2 kindergarten classes at IPS 106, 5301 Roxbury, just east of Cathedral High School. The teachers, Ms. Kormos and Mrs. Anderson formerly taught at IPS 42 where several FCC members tutored. It is a terrific way to get into the holiday spirit! We will have 2 sessions, 11:15 a.m. to noon and noon to 12:45 p.m. If you'd like to help with either session, please tell Sandy Wood - her contact info is csjilwood@att.net or 317-225-6206.

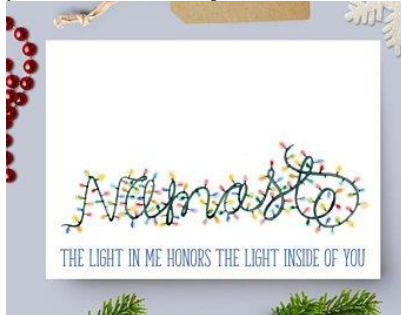
The Giving Tree



Again this year we will be collecting gift cards in \$25 denominations from big-box stores such as Target, Meijer, or Wal-Mart or gas cards for the After-Care families of Family Promise. These families now have housing but are under the watchful care of Family Promise for up to two years to assure that they succeed. Please attach your gift cards to the bows on the tree in the parlor, and please bring them in **by Sunday, Dec. 16** so families will have time to shop before Christmas.

Mental Health Team offers “Yoga for the Holidays”

You are invited to participate in Yoga for the Holidays with Shannon Abbott in the church parlor on Monday, December 17, 6:00 – 7:00p.m.



This practice will be a gentle practice of mindfulness and movement, and will also offer the option of modifications using a chair, so all are welcome to participate.

- Please wear loose, comfortable clothing, and bring a yoga mat if you have one (If you have an extra mat, please bring one to share with someone who may not have one.)

Please email Shannon at shannon@fcindy.org for more information and to register. A free-will, gratitude offering will be appreciated.

Blue Christmas Service, December 21st, 6:00 p.m.



We often think of the holidays as a time of joy, but for many it is a time of loss, depression, and generally feeling “blue.” For this reason, the Worship and Faith Board is offering a Blue Christmas Service as a time of prayer, comfort, and support during a season that can be difficult for people feeling “blue.” Worship begins at 6pm in the Sanctuary followed by a light meal of soup for fellowship and conversation.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship, December 24th at 7:30 p.m.



“For unto us a child is given, unto us a Savior is born and the order of the world will be upon his shoulders.” With the birth of Jesus, our lives are forever changed. We are transformed by his model and message. Let us join together in celebrating the light of the world, the birth of Jesus the Christ through worship, special music, and the lighting of candles to represent this light which is the center of our lives.

Mittens and More!



This Christmas season we will be collecting the usual mittens, gloves, scarves, hats, and socks for the refugees who are served by Exodus Refugee Immigration. But in addition we will also collect new or gently-used winter coats for all ages as well as blankets. Winter is a difficult time for refugees, who often come from warm climates and are not prepared for Indiana weather. Having to supply a whole family with

warm outerwear is a burden, and we can help with our generous donations. Put small items on or under the “Mitten Tree” and coats and blankets in the Exodus box in the coat room. Monetary donations in the offering plate marked “Exodus—Winter” are welcome too. Donations will continue to be accepted after Christmas as well. Thank you.

Foundation - 1857 Society

The newly formed **1857 Society** is up and running. All of us who include First Congregational in our wills or estate plans are eligible to join. Doing so strengthens the church’s long term financial base, allowing us to do more of God’s work. Consider if this is something of enduring value in which you’d like to participate. Commitment forms are available in the narthex or from the office.

Guided Meditation at Hoosier Village - Saturdays at 7p.m.

FCC members and friends are invited to attend guided meditation sessions at Hoosier Village. The Meditation Circle meets every Saturday at 7 p.m. in the Great Hall Conference Room. Use the Chapel parking lot and turn right after entering the hallway. We are listening to Guided Imagery Meditations to let go of stress and find peace and healing. No previous meditation experience necessary. Contact Anne or Daryl Greene for more information.

Green Team Tip

Advent is here. How are you planning to celebrate Jesus’ birthday with appropriate gifts to him, recognizing what he taught us about sharing?

December Mission of the Month is The Christmas Fund

The UCC’s Christmas fund assists retired pastors and their spouses living on reduced incomes. This offering provides funds for pension supplements, health premium supplements, emergency health or unexpected travel expenses, and Christmas “Thank You” checks. Use the special envelopes for your gifts or make a notation of “Christmas Fund” on your check to FCC. Single dollar bills in the offering plate will also go to this offering. Please be generous in your support of those who have served the church and now need our help.

Pantry Items of the Month

During December we are collecting the following items: Muffin mix, Noodle, Cereal, and Laundry detergent.

Lost & Found



Did you lose an earring at church? Do you know someone who did?
 Contact Shannon in the church office at shannon@fcindy.org or call at 317-257-5397 to
 reclaim your lost items.

Pastoral Care

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

This Week at First Congregational

Thursday, December 6	7:00 p.m.	Choir Rehearsal
Saturday, December 8	11:00 a.m.	Bell Rehearsal
Sunday, December 9	12:30 p.m.	Worship & Faith Meeting
Wednesday, December 12	6:30 p.m.	Church Council Meeting
Thursday, December 13	11:00 a.m.	Witness & Welcome Meeting
Thursday, December 13	1:00 p.m.	Men's Lunch
Thursday, December 13	2:00 p.m.	Mental Health Team Meeting
Thursday, December 13	5:00 p.m.	Just Peace Team Meeting
Thursday, December 13	7:00 p.m.	Choir Rehearsal
Friday, December 14	11:15 a.m. & 12:00p.m.	Book Party
Saturday, December 15	11:00 a.m.	Bell Rehearsal
Sunday, December 16	9:45 a.m.	Sunday Adult Class
Sunday, December 16	11:00 a.m.	Special Music with Lessons & Carols