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FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Epistle for the Week of May 7, 2020

ALL in-person church activities are CANCELED through the end of May.

Dear First Congregational,

One of the positive changes in 2020 for me is a renewed commitment to a spiritual discipline of prayer. Starting in January, I began to observe a monthly day of prayer. In addition to daily prayer, this practice of a day of prayer once a month invites deeper reflection, meditation and connection to God and others through prayer. In my day of prayer I spend time lifting up our congregation, each of our members, families and friends. I pray for our community, for the wider church, for our nation and for our world. My day of prayer for June will be June 2.

Yesterday as I observed my day of prayer, I enjoyed reading over the letters I have received from you. Thank you for sending me your responses to Wendy's letter as a way to help stay better connected and to know how you are doing. I encourage you to take a few minutes to fill this out and send to me. I love hearing from you and I am praying for you. Knowing how you

are doing and how we can better support you is important. Now is the time to reach out and connect. Know that you are not alone. Know that you are loved.

I am grateful that through prayer we can stay connected, to God and to one another.

Blessings,
Pastor Sarah

Join us for our weekly “**Soul-Care with Pastor Sarah**” a time for church members to check-in, reflect on Richard Rohr’s weekly meditations, and to pray together. This will be at a **NEW TIME, Tuesdays from 5:00-6:00 p.m.** We will use zoom.

Here is the

link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84830474505?pwd=Ny9oeE84a0lpcTUrWHU2dUhFVUZZQT09>

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.

Worship

Sunday Adult Worship, 9:30 a.m.

Class will meet via

Zoom: <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/9264494206?pwd=dmtWbWE5UXRBtk5pcHZlYlB0aEFVUT09>

- **May 10** - Bread for the World Letter Writing

Bread for the World Sunday Worship Service on Facebook Live, 11:00 a.m.

Pastor Sarah will preach on “The Recipe for Happiness”

Scripture: Luke 9:10-17

Zoom into Coffee Hour - Sundays after worship

Please join us for coffee hour at 12:00 p.m. (or immediately after worship)

Zoom

link: <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/9264494206?pwd=dmtWbWE5UXRBtk5pcHZlYlB0aEFVUT09>

THIS SUNDAY, May 10, is Bread for the World Sunday: Please plan to take part in our virtual Offering of Letters for Bread for the World. You can read about the issues in the May *Colony* and get the specific instructions in the special Epistle sent out on Wed. And remember to report your participation to the church office at shannon@fcindy.org. We hope to have sent the bulk of the letters, emails, or calls by May 17. Thank you for participating.



What's Happening at FC: Support While Physical Distancing

Staying Connected

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

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

Pastoral Care

We are all still here for you and will stay connected. You can contact Pastor Sarah for pastoral care needs at (386) 478-9012 or pastorsarah@fcindy.org.

Additional Church Support Contacts

Pastor Carol (casowle@gmail.com)

Office Administrator, Shannon (shannon@fcindy.org)

Moderator, Alice Rutherford (alice@caloosaspirit.net)

Vice Moderator, Larry Eckel (lspeckel@comcast.net)

Mental Health Helplines

Anyone feeling anxiety from the pandemic should be encouraged to call the **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s Disaster Distress Helpline at 800-985-5990**, or text “TalkWithUs” to 66746. Users will be connected with trained crisis counselors.

Tech Support: Help with Zoom/Facebook

Remaining in community through these challenging times is more important than ever. And so it's a true blessing that we have the ability to see one another's faces and hear each other's voice through technology. Virtual contacts may be difficult for some, so if anyone needs assistance to join our online gatherings, we have dedicated and caring church members who are ready to help. Contact Taylor Franklin (tnl6694@gmail.com, 630-640-6998) to set up a time for technical support. She or another member of her team can walk you through the steps to access Zoom and/or Facebook from a computer, tablet, or phone. We're all in this together, so let's be together in it!

Click this link for more ideas on how to boost your

WIFI: <https://s2.washingtonpost.com/28defab/5ea9a4d0fe1ff66289077de4/YWxpY2VAY2Fsb29zYXNwaXJpdC5uZXQ%3D/22/68/27d3240feb55b9c1f9999917436f367f>

Social Support Gatherings through Zoom

- **Friday Fellowship: Friday, 5/8, 5:00 pm**
- **Coffee Hour: Sunday, 5/10, 12:00 pm (or immediately after worship)**
- **Spiritual Support Group: Thursday, 5/14, 5:00 pm**

Zoom

Link: <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.

All Zoom gatherings are now monitored to 'admit' attendees, to help prevent "Zomb-bombing".

GOOD NEWS from your WISE Mental Health Team: NEW Spiritual Support Group

Beginning, **Thursday, May 14, 5:00 - 6:00 PM, on Zoom**, and every Thursday

OUR SPIRITUAL SUPPORT GROUP FOR MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS

hosts will be Pastor Sarah Lund and Patrick Larracey, co-chair of FC WISE Team.

This group is open to all with mental illness and those living with mental illness loved one. It is open to you, neighbors, friends & acquaintances.

Zoom

Link: <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/9264494206?pwd=dmTWbWE5UXRBTk5pcHZlYlB0aEFVUT09>

GUIDELINES

1. We honor each others' 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.

Cherished Just Peace Resources

Do you have a favorite Bible verse concerning peace? And a favorite quotation, book, film, and website focused on peace? Please send your favorites to me at sjrae@iu.edu, as i am FC's Peace Team member who is supplying "Just Peace Posts" for FC's May, 2020 E-pistles. Now that many of us have more time to read books and view films at home, it seems a good time to share with each other resources meaningful to us.

Here are some of my favorites:

- Scripture: "Blessed are those who work for peace: They will be called children of God" (Matthew 5:9 *The Inclusive Bible*).
- Quotation: "Peace is rarely denied to the peaceful," (2010), from *Amish Proverbs: Words of Wisdom from the Simple Life*, by Suzanne Woods Fisher.
- Book: *Non-Violence in Peace and War*, (1949), by Mohandas K. Gandhi.
- Film: *All Quiet on the Western Front*. (versions produced in 1930 and 1979). Though the film is about World War I, i think it outstandingly advocates peace, while vividly and

powerfully showing the horrors of war.

- Website: Indianapolis's Peace Learning Center, <https://peacelearningcenter.org/>

Looking forward to hearing about your favorite Bible verses, quotations, books, films, websites, and other resources focused on peace. - susanna-judith

Care & Connect

Our church is known for its warm welcome and care; let's show this quality by reaching out to others in our church family while we are not able to be together in person! Can you contact 3-5 people each week, by phone, text, e-mail, or a card in the mail? Think of the people that you say 'hi' to at church on a "normal" Sunday, and continue that tradition while we are apart. Reach out to different people each week so we broaden our circle. If needed, a recently updated 'address directory' is located in the "Minutes" section of our website (password protected), or let me know if you need a copy. Let's "Be the Church" within our church family during this time of isolation.

- Wendy Baldwin, Care & Connection Chair

Need Toilet Paper & Disinfectant?

Even though stores are trying hard to re-stock supplies, it is still difficult to find these items. First Congregational is expecting a shipment in early April from its supplier. We will have 2-ply toilet paper, spray disinfectant, paper towels, and gloves (our supplier is also out of stock of hand sanitizer and wipes). Please contact Wendy Baldwin to arrange delivery. Donations to cover the cost of the supplies will be gratefully accepted.



Continue Your Support of First Congregational UCC

Please continue supporting the mission and ministries of your local church at <http://www.fcindy.org/online-giving/>

May Mission of the Month: UCC Mental Health Network

The UCC Mental Health Network works to reduce stigma and promote the inclusion of people with mental illness/brain disorders and their families in the life, leadership and work of the

congregation. Send a check to the church with MOM: UCC MHN in the memo line, or donate online at: www.mhn-ucc.org

Support Your Local IN-KY Conference Through Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM)

The staff of the IKC continue to work tirelessly to support local churches as we all discern best practices and how to get through this time together. Please remember to support the work they do and the many ministries they support through your **OCWM**

Giving at: <https://ikcucc.org/connect/donate/>

Eviction Ministry Donations

The Eviction Ministry is a new ministry of the SouthEast Association of the Indiana-Kentucky Conference of the UCC. The purpose of this ministry is to offer assistance to those who do not qualify for other state or local assistance programs and without such assistance would be evicted from their homes. Please consider making a donation. **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

Thank you for your generosity!

- Shannon Abbott, Eviction Ministry Team

Feeding Families

Gleaner's and Second Helpings are two of the food banks currently offering food to children who usually get their meals from school.

Donate to **Gleaner's** by clicking on the link [here](#).

Donate to **Second Helpings** by clicking on the link [here](#).

THIS WEEK AT FIRST CONGREGATIONAL

Sunday morning worship 11AM via Facebook Live

at <https://www.facebook.com/FirstCongregationalUCCIndy/>

All in-person events have been canceled through the end of May.

This Week on Zoom

Friday, May 8	5:00 p.m.	Friday Fellowship
Sunday, May 10	9:30 a.m.	Sunday Adult Class: Bread for the World Letter Writing
Sunday, May 10	11:00 a.m.	Worship – Bread for the World Sunday (FB Live)
Sunday, May 10	12:00 p.m.	Coffee Hour
Tuesday, May 12	5:00 p.m.	Soul Care with Pastor Sarah (see <u>above</u> for zoom link)
Wednesday, May 13	5:00 p.m.	WISE Mental Health Team
Wednesday, May 13	7:00 p.m.	Church Council
Thursday, May 14	5:00 p.m.	Spiritual Support Group
Friday, May 15	5:00 p.m.	Friday Fellowship
Sunday, May 17	9:30 a.m.	Sunday Adult Class
Sunday, May 17	11:00 a.m.	Worship – Mental Health Sunday (FB Live)
Sunday, May 17	11:45 a.m.	Coffee Hour

 FirstCongregationalUCCIndy

 Forward



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Epistle for the Week of May 14, 2020

**ALL in-person church activities are CANCELED
through the end of July.**

Dear First Congregational,

This week I participated with local pastors on a panel hosted by Dr. Leah Gunning Francis and Christian Theological Seminary. I was honored to be invited and knew that because of our covenant and our structure as the United Church of Christ, I was speaking not “for” First Congregational UCC, but speaking as the pastor of our church. I value the freedom this allows all of us as individuals to speak our truth and not hide our light. Each one of us has the God given freedom of belief and thought and the right to determine for ourselves what is best. Here is the link to the recording of the

panel: <https://www.facebook.com/ctsindy/videos/vb.585240754848493/1164174043933805/?type=2&theater>

Additionally, here is the local news media’s coverage of this event and interviews with me:

- <https://cbs4indy.com/news/indy-faith-leaders-to-hold-online-discussion-on-how-to-return-to-in-person-worship/>
- <https://fox59.com/news/indy-faith-leaders-how-does-the-city-return-to-in-person-worship/>

We hold our individual freedoms alongside our covenant calling us as followers of Jesus to live in ways that honor, respect, and love one another and God. This is where we must find our answers during this challenging time. Our covenant with God and one another will guide us with wisdom during these days as we discern how we are to Be The Church.

I am thankful for each one of you, for the long 400 years of traditional congregational values, and for the ways First Congregational seeks to faithfully listen to The Still Speaking God as we seek to Be The Church: a community for **belonging**, for **healing**, and for **loving**.

You are not alone. You are loved.

Blessings,
Pastor Sarah

Join us for our weekly “**Soul-Care with Pastor Sarah**” a time for church members to check-in, reflect on Richard Rohr’s weekly meditations, and to pray together. This will be at a **NEW TIME, Tuesdays from 5:00-6:00 p.m.** We will use zoom.

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A Message from your Moderator

Two weeks ago our Church Council made the difficult decision to continue with no in-person gatherings through the month of May. As painful as that decision was, we have now made the decision to continue that policy through July. We'll continue to make periodic evaluations for moving forward. We're aware that this decision is difficult to accept, especially given that businesses across Indiana (and soon in Indianapolis) are now gearing up for re-opening.

However, our covenant of care for one another dictates that we follow the path of faith and do what is best for our congregants. We hope for a consensus of understanding and acceptance around this position.

Our recently appointed “Comeback Team”, charged with determining protocols for returning to worship, has shared what that return will probably look like. Universal face masks, no opportunities for greeting Pastor Sarah or each other, social distancing in every third pew, no singing – these are just a smattering of what we can expect whenever we venture back to our sanctuary. And so we wonder, “Why bother?” While virtual worship keeps us distant, we can at least see one another’s full faces on our screens, sing along at home, and greet one another with texted comments.

In coming weeks we’ll be discerning how we can continue to “Be the Church” virtually, without expectations for a near-future end. I was reminded recently that the Israelites in Babylon had to learn to worship differently in a different place, and through their faith they figured it out. I believe that we at First Congregational Church in Indianapolis can do the same. Throughout our 163-year history our church has met many challenges, and we’re still here and strong. So let us grieve what we have lost in this coronavirus wilderness, but let us also step boldly into a new way of being church, knowing that our church’s past saints watch with encouragement and love. God is calling us into a new creation, so let’s follow where God leads.

- Alice Rutherford, Moderator

Worship

Sunday Adult Worship, 9:30 a.m.

Class will meet via

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

- **May 17 - "Quotable Scriptures"** Do you have a favorite scripture? Maybe one that you repeat over and over in the dark or on sleepless nights? One that is helping you cope with the coronavirus pandemic? Share a favorite scripture and, if you like, reflect on its meaning in your life. Or draw a picture of your scripture and share it via the share screen feature of Zoom. This is an opportunity to share something of our individual faith journeys with one another. (try searching for "free scripture coloring pages" on the internet for examples.)

Mental Health Sunday Worship Service on Facebook Live, 11:00 a.m.

Pastor Sarah will preach on “Circles of Care.”

Scripture: Matthew 11:28-30

Alternative method to experience Sunday worship:

Would you like to 'attend' Sunday worship, but you don't have Facebook or an internet device? Join Wendy Baldwin for a 'watch/listen' party on Sunday at 11 am. She will be sharing her screen, so you can be a part of worship. There are 2 ways to participate – 1) Call in on your phone, and listen to worship, or 2) Login on your computer/ipad/phone and see the worship service. This is an experiment to see how well this works – if interested, please contact Wendy at 317-319-0806 or wendy.baldwin@rci.com .

Zoom into Coffee Hour - Sundays after worship

Please join us for coffee hour at 12:00 p.m. (or immediately after worship)

Zoom

link: <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/9264494206?pwd=dmtWbWE5UXRBTK5pcHZlYlB0aEFVUT09>

Pastor Carol's PCRC on Zoom THIS Sunday, May 17 from 12:45 PM to 2:30 PM.

Committee members are Janet Selby, Bob Cook, Clark Collins, and susanna-judith rae.



What's Happening at FC: Support While Physical Distancing

Staying Connected

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Pastoral Care

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Anyone feeling anxiety from the pandemic should be encouraged to call the **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Disaster Distress Helpline at 800-985-5990**, or **text "TalkWithUs" to 66746**. Users will be connected with trained crisis counselors.

TODAY! NEW Spiritual Support Group, Thursdays from 5:00 - 6:00 PM, on Zoom

TODAY begins our weekly SPIRITUAL SUPPORT GROUP FOR MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS. We gather on the church's ZOOM from 5:00 to 6:00 and will EVERY Thursday. Pastor Sarah and Pat Larracey will be leading this wonderful WISE program and is OPEN to all with mental illness and those living with mentally ill loved ones. We look forward to greeting each of you with love.

Zoom

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TODAY! Men's Virtual Lunch, 1:00 p.m.

We are doing another Zoom virtual luncheon tomorrow. Here is the link to join the meeting:

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

Please join if you can. If anyone needs any assistance, please call Randy Walker.

Social Support Gatherings through Zoom

- **Men's Virtual Lunch: Thursday, 5/14, 1:00 pm**
- **Spiritual Support Group: Thursday, 5/14, 5:00 pm**
- **Friday Fellowship: Friday, 5/15, 5:00 pm**
- **Coffee Hour: Sunday, 5/17, 12:00 pm (or immediately after worship)**
- **Spiritual Support Group: Thursday, 5/21, 5:00 pm**

Zoom

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

Meeting ID: 926 449 4206

Password: 7171

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Cherished Just Peace Resources

Thank you, Linda Lupton, for answering my May 7th E-pistle request for FC members to share their favorite resources on peace. Here is her response:

Although I can carry on whole conversations in movie dialogue with Lou, nothing related to peace comes to mind EXCEPT my favorite folk songs (among others) of the 50's and 60's. Peter, Paul and Mary's, "Where Have all the Flowers Gone"; John Lennon's "Imagine" and "Give Peace a Chance", Cat Stevens (aka Yusuf), "Peace Train", Pete Seeger, "If I had a Hammer", Michael Jackson's "Let there be Peace on Earth (and let it begin with me)" and "The Man in the Mirror". How's that for a trip down a musical memory lane?

Linda, surely many of us can relate to your trip down a musical memory lane. While reading your reply, my mind turned to joyous memories of Pete Seeger. In the fall of 1964, he sang, and his audience enthusiastically joined in. I was in my first year at Atlanta's Emory University—when Civil Rights was a big concern to many of us students, though Emory had just started to accept a few black students. Most moving was when Seeger encouraged all to sing and sway in a large circle with our arms around each other. Peace and peaceful interactions between races were certainly on my mind, especially as we sang many heartfelt verses of "We Shall Overcome." Fortunately, 59.9% of Emory students are now minorities or people of color. What progress!

Do you have a favorite Bible verse, quotation, book, film, website, or song focused on peace? Please send your favorites to me at sjrae@iu.edu, as I am FC's Peace Team member who is supplying "Just Peace Posts" for FC's May, 2020 E-pistles.

- susanna-judith

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- Wendy Baldwin, Care & Connection Chair

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Donations can be mailed to the treasurer at:
SE Association Eviction Ministry
Attn: Margie Potter
726 Coach Rd.
Indianapolis, IN 46227

Thank you for your generosity!
- Shannon Abbott, Eviction Ministry Team

Indiana Undocumented Youth Alliance

Undocumented people are facing challenges during this pandemic. There are groups trying to help them, specifically young people who have D.A.C.A. Four organizations are cooperating in this effort, but it is being administered by IYUA, the Indiana Undocumented Youth Alliance. Email or call if you want to donate or volunteer. The email is undocuhoosierfund@gmail.com and the phone number is 317-205-6424.

Feeding Families

Gleaner's and Second Helpings are two of the food banks currently offering food to children who usually get their meals from school.

Donate to **Gleaner's** by clicking on the link [here](#).

Donate to **Second Helpings** by clicking on the link [here](#).

THIS WEEK AT FIRST CONGREGATIONAL

Sunday morning worship 11AM via Facebook Live
at <https://www.facebook.com/FirstCongregationalUCCIndy/>

All in-person events have been canceled through the end of May.

This Week on Zoom

Thursday, May 14	1:00 p.m.	Men's Lunch
Thursday, May 14	5:00 p.m.	Spiritual Support Group
Friday, May 15	5:00 p.m.	Friday Fellowship
Sunday, May 17	9:30 a.m.	Sunday Adult Class
Sunday, May 17	11:00 a.m.	Worship – Mental Health Sunday (FB Live)
Sunday, May 17	12:00 p.m.	Coffee Hour
Sunday, May 17	12:45 p.m.	Pastor Carol PCRC
Tuesday, May 19	1:30 p.m.	Book Circle
Tuesday, May 19	5:00 p.m.	Soul Care with Pastor Sarah (see <u>above</u> for zoom link)
Wednesday, May 20	7:30 p.m.	Witness & Welcome
Thursday, May 21	5:00 p.m.	Spiritual Support Group
Friday, May 22	5:00 p.m.	Friday Fellowship
Sunday, May 24	9:30 a.m.	Sunday Adult Class
Sunday, May 24	11:00 a.m.	Worship
Sunday, May 24	11:45 a.m.	Coffee Hour

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FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Epistle for the Week of May 21, 2020

**ALL in-person church activities are CANCELED
through the end of July.**

Dear First Congregational,

There's no doubt that these days are challenging. Seasons of life that were hard are made even harder during the pandemic. This is especially true of the death of a loved one. For the health and safety of those we love, we cannot gather in person as we would like without significant risk. Fortunately, dying with dignity is still possible with hospice care and home hospice services. I've experienced the importance of a "good death" just this week when my beloved Grandmother, Beulah Mae Wilson, died peacefully at her son's home in Texas on Saturday, May 16 under the care of home hospice. She was 99.5 years young. Two nights before her death, over FaceTime, I led the family gathered at her bedside in prayers for the dying from the UCC Book of Worship. My mother was there to make a sign of the cross on our Grandmother's forehead with blessed olive oil.

My family does not yet know when the in-person memorial service at her church will be because large gatherings are not possible at this time. We are looking at perhaps the fall of 2021, but we do not yet know and this is unsettling. We are figuring out now the logistics of a three person graveside service at the cemetery that is livestreamed on Facebook. I am talking now with the cemetery staff in Columbia, Missouri, to see how I might be able to lead the graveside service online from my home in Indiana. These are strange times that complicate grief even further.

I am grateful for the affirmation, compassion, and support of our church family during this time of bereavement. With the blessings of our church leaders, I will be taking sacred time to remember, celebrate, give thanks and feel all the emotions stirred up by my Grandmother's death. I am heeding the words of the Rev. Otis Moss of Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago who says, "May you be unafraid to mourn." This time of family bereavement will begin Wednesday of this week and will go through this Sunday, May 20-24. Of course, grief lasts more than five days, but these five days will be special, set apart for the purpose of doing the deep work of healing. During this time Pastor Carol will be available by phone to provide pastoral care. Our worship for Sunday is in the capable and gifted hands of our Worship Design Team.

I invite your prayers for our family. Our Grandmother's quiet, unconditional love made each one of us better. She had a way of shining a light on what was good. In these five days I will explore more deeply the power of her light and rest in the comfort of her everlasting love.

Blessings,
Pastor Sarah



Join us for our weekly **“Soul-Care with Pastor Sarah”** a time for church members to check-in, reflect on Richard Rohr’s weekly meditations, and to pray together. **Tuesdays from 5:00-6:00 p.m.**

Here is the Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/494018938?pwd=a3BrdnNyWWEza0tFMUgwek1CVFpYQT09>

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.

Moderator Message

As we continue to listen for God's voice in leading us forward through the coronavirus crisis, we have valuable assistance from our national UCC office and the Indiana-Kentucky Conference. Both resources have given us excellent insights into how and when to return to in-person church gatherings. By and large, we're finding that our deliberations and decisions are in concert with our denomination's guidance. A recent communication from the national UCC office includes these words: *"We want to send a clear and strong message to congregations who are considering going back to meeting in person: We urge you to wait until ALL safety concerns have been addressed."* I hear these words as supportive to our covenant of caring as we hold off on returning to worship in our sanctuary for at least two more months. The entire article can be found at https://www.ucc.org/news_pastoral_letter_should_churches_return_to_worship_in_their_sanctuaries_05192020 I highly recommend it.

Church Council will be meeting again next week, and more information about our deliberations will be forthcoming in the June Colony. We hope to determine the best ways we can continue to "Be The Church" virtually. We ask for your continued prayers and support as we blaze this new path.

- Alice Rutherford, Moderator

Worship

Sunday Adult Worship, 9:30 a.m.

Class will meet via

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

- **May 23 - "Devotion to Generosity"** with Wendy Baldwin

Sunday Worship Service on Facebook Premiere, 11:00 a.m.

Worship this Sunday is provided by the UCC Council of Conference Ministers.

Scripture: Acts 17:22-31

Instructions for viewing worship on Facebook this week:

1. For mobile Facebook app users (preferred method):

Follow this link.

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

- The placeholder for the Sunday morning broadcast will be in the posts
- Click **"Get Reminder."** It will then display **"Reminder Set."**

First Congregational United Church of Christ plans to premiere a video.
 Posted by Sean Baker
 Just now · 🌐

This is a test post



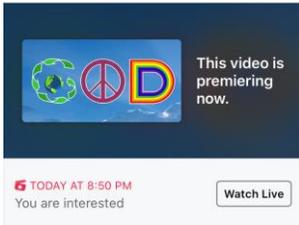
-
- At 3 minutes before broadcast you will see a countdown.



-
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 Posted by Sean Baker
 13 mins · 🌐

This is a test post



-
- Click "Watch Live" and enjoy!

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worship service. This is an experiment to see how well this works – if interested, please contact Wendy at 317-319-0806 or wendy.baldwin@rci.com .

Zoom into Coffee Hour - Sundays after worship

Please join us for coffee hour at 12:00 p.m. (or immediately after worship)

Zoom

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



What's Happening at FC: Support While Physical Distancing

Staying Connected

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

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

Pastoral Care

We are all still here for you and will stay connected. While Pastor Sarah takes time this week (May 20-24) to grieve the loss of her grandmother, Pastor Carol is available at (317) 496-9732 or casowle@gmail.com.

Additional Church Support Contacts

Pastor Carol (casowle@gmail.com)

Office Administrator, Shannon (shannon@fcindy.org)

Moderator, Alice Rutherford (alice@caloosaspire.net)

Vice Moderator, Larry Eckel (lspeckel@comcast.net)

Tech Support: Help with Zoom/Facebook

Remaining in community through these challenging times is more important than ever. And so it's a true blessing that we have the ability to see one another's faces and hear each other's voice through technology. Virtual contacts may be difficult for some, so if anyone needs assistance to join our online gatherings, we have dedicated and caring church members who are ready to help. Contact Taylor Franklin (tnl6694@gmail.com, 630-640-6998) to set up a time for technical support. She or another member of her team can walk you through the steps to access Zoom and/or Facebook from a computer, tablet, or phone. We're all in this together, so let's be together in it!

Mental Health Helplines

Anyone feeling anxiety from the pandemic should be encouraged to call the **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Disaster Distress Helpline at 800-985-5990**, or text **"TalkWithUs" to 66746**. Users will be connected with trained crisis counselors.

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- **Friday Fellowship: Friday, 5/22, 5:00 pm**
- **Coffee Hour: Sunday, 5/24, 12:00 pm (or immediately after worship)**
- **Spiritual Support Group: Thursday, 5/28, 5:00 pm**

Zoom

Link: <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/9264494206?pwd=dmtWbWE5UXRBTK5pcHZlYlB0aEFVUT09>

Meeting ID: 926 449 4206

Password: 7171

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Our weekly SPIRITUAL SUPPORT GROUP FOR MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS gathers on the church's ZOOM from 5:00 to 6:00 pm EVERY Thursday. Pastor Sarah and Pat Larracey will be leading this wonderful WISE program and is OPEN to all with mental illness and those living with mentally ill loved ones. We look forward to greeting each of you with love.

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Women's Lunch Bunch - Thursday, May 28, 11:30 a.m.

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. For questions or more information please contact Sue Chapman at (317) 259-1806 or carolsuech59@gmail.com.

Men's Lunch - Thursday, May 28, 1:00 p.m.

This lunch and discussion gathering for men of First Congregational is meeting via Zoom. They meet every other Thursday at 1 p.m. Please contact Randy Walker at (317) 796-2081 or aa28977rwalker@gmail.com for information.

Cherished Just Peace Resources

Thank you, Janet Selby, for answering my May 14 E-pistle request for FC members to share their favorite resources on peace. Janet is a past member of FC's "Just Peace Team." Here is her response:

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called [sons and daughters] of God" (Matthew 5:9).

Peace Prayer of St Francis

Bird Songs of Southern Indiana, recorded by Geoff Keller

On Man and Nature by Henry David Thoreau

"Canon in D," by Pachelbel

"Music for Zen Meditation"

"The Romance of the Violin," performed by Joshua Bell

"Great Is Thy Faithfulness"

"That Cause Can Neither Be Lost Nor Stayed"

"In the Bulb There Is a Flower"

"How Great Thou Art," verses 1 and 2

Do you have a favorite Bible verse, quotation, book, film, website, or song focused on peace? Please send your favorites to me at sjrae@iu.edu, as I am FC's Peace Team member who is supplying "Just Peace Posts" for FC's May, 2020 E-pistles.

- susanna-judith

Need Toilet Paper & Disinfectant?

Even though stores are trying hard to re-stock supplies, it is still difficult to find these items. First Congregational is expecting a shipment in early April from its supplier. We will have 2-ply toilet paper, spray disinfectant, paper towels, and gloves (our supplier is also out of stock of hand sanitizer and wipes). Please contact Wendy Baldwin to arrange delivery. Donations to cover the cost of the supplies will be gratefully accepted.



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Please continue supporting the mission and ministries of your local church at <http://www.fcindy.org/online-giving/>

May Mission of the Month: UCC Mental Health Network

The UCC Mental Health Network works to reduce stigma and promote the inclusion of people with mental illness/brain disorders and their families in the life, leadership and work of the congregation. Send a check to the church with MOM: UCC MHN in the memo line, or donate online at: www.mhn-ucc.org

Support Your Local IN-KY Conference Through Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM)

The staff of the IKC continue to work tirelessly to support local churches as we all discern best practices and how to get through this time together. Please remember to support the work they do and the many ministries they support through your **OCWM**

Giving at: <https://ikcucc.org/connect/donate/>

Eviction Ministry Donations

The Eviction Ministry is a new ministry of the SouthEast Association of the Indiana-Kentucky Conference of the UCC. The purpose of this ministry is to offer assistance to those who do not qualify for other state or local assistance programs and without such assistance would be evicted from their homes. Please consider making a donation. **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

I thank you for your generosity!
- Shannon Abbott, Eviction Ministry Team

Indiana Undocumented Youth Alliance

Undocumented people are facing challenges during this pandemic. There are groups trying to help them, specifically young people who have D.A.C.A. Four organizations are cooperating in this effort, but it is being administered by IYUA, the Indiana Undocumented Youth Alliance. Email or call if you want to donate or volunteer. The email is undocuhoosierfund@gmail.com and the phone number is 317-205-6424.

Feeding Families

Gleaner's and Second Helpings are two of the food banks currently offering food to children who usually get their meals from school.

Donate to **Gleaner's** by clicking on the link [here](#).

Donate to **Second Helpings** by clicking on the link [here](#).

THIS WEEK AT FIRST CONGREGATIONAL

Sunday morning worship 11AM via Facebook Live
at <https://www.facebook.com/FirstCongregationalUCCIndy/>

All in-person events have been canceled through the end of July.

This Week on Zoom

Thursday, May 21	5:00 p.m.	Spiritual Support Group
Friday, May 22	5:00 p.m.	Friday Fellowship
Sunday, May 24	9:30 a.m.	Sunday Adult Class
Sunday, May 24	11:00 a.m.	Worship – (FB Premiere)
Sunday, May 24	12:00 p.m.	Coffee Hour
Tuesday, May 26	5:00 p.m.	Soul Care with Pastor Sarah (see above for zoom link)
Wednesday, May 27	6:30 p.m.	Calling Circle
Wednesday, May 27	7:30 p.m.	Church Council – Special Meeting
Thursday, May 28	11:30 a.m.	Women's Lunch
Thursday, May 28	1:00 p.m.	Men's Lunch
Thursday, May 28	5:00 p.m.	Spiritual Support Group
Sunday, May 31	9:30 a.m.	Sunday Adult Class
Sunday, May 31	11:00 a.m.	Worship

Sunday, May 31

12:00 p.m.

Coffee Hour

 [FirstCongregationalUCCIndy](#)

 [Forward](#)



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Epistle for the Week of May 28, 2020

**ALL in-person church activities are CANCELED
through the end of July.**

Dear First Congregational,

This week marks a grim milestone for all of us: over 100,000 deaths in the United States from COVID19. Without the ability to gather in person for community memorial services, much of our tools for processing grief are not available to us. This afternoon my family will experience a “virtual” graveside service for my Grandmother. The cemetery will use Facebook live to broadcast the service and I will FaceTime from my home in Indianapolis to the graveside in Columbia, Missouri, to read scripture and offer a prayer. Then tomorrow our family will have a Zoom reception to share stories about her life.

Thank you for the many cards, kind words, and prayers of support as our family grieves. Thank you for the bereavement time last week because it granted me the gift of reflection on my grandmother’s long and good life. As Christians, we know that grief is an important part of our

walk with God. The time also helped me to prepare for today's graveside service.

This Sunday we will hear the story of the church's first experience of Pentecost. What does Pentecost teach us about how to Be The Church during a global pandemic? I invite us to consider how we are being changed during this time. How is God's Still Speaking voice being heard? Where are you seeing signs of the Spirit?

I am seeing the Spirit move in and through (and sometimes despite of) technology. While far from perfect, our technology opens up for us ways to connect, to be present, and to listen to the Spirit. I trust God's Spirit will be with us at the graveside service and that prayers through the internet are just as powerful and just as good.

Blessings,
Pastor Sarah

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:

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Upcoming Buzz

Following worship on **June 14**, join us on Zoom for another opportunity to gather in fellowship virtually. Our focus will again be on how we are navigating through the coronavirus crisis as a community of faith. The Comeback Team will share our deliberations, along with some of the guidance we regularly receive from the national UCC and the Indiana-Kentucky Conference. We also want to hear thoughts, questions, and concerns from everyone as well, so please plan to join in with video, audio, or just a phone. And feel free to enjoy lunch as we chat! - Alice Rutherford, Moderator

Worship

Sunday Adult Education, 9:30 a.m.

Class will meet via

Zoom: <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/9264494206?pwd=dmtWbWE5UXRBTK5pcHZlYlB0aEFVU>

May 31 - Global Pandemic Dreams about Bugs and Other Weird Things, discussion led by susanna-judith rae

- Are weird dreams exposing what is bothering us during our waking hours these days? We will discuss dreams, including scary nightmares and hopeful, spiritual dreams. To prepare, you can read these articles, the first in the *New York Times*, and the second by the Associated Press:
- "Infecting Our Dreams; Pandemic Sabotages Sleep Worldwide," Associated Press, April 28, 2020 <https://apnews.com/b7fb8585527db3a7f06563dce7982eff>.
- Weaver, Caity, "Why Am I Having Weird Dreams Lately?" *New York Times*, April 13, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/13/style/why-weird-dreams-coronavirus.html>.

Pentecost Sunday Worship Service on Facebook, 11:00 a.m.

Pastor Sarah will preach on "Transformed by the Spirit."

Scripture: Acts 2:1-21

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Zoom

Link: <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/9264494206?pwd=dmTWbWE5UXRBTk5pcHZlYlB0aEFVUT09>

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Cherished Just Peace Resources

Thank you, Paul Terheide, for answering my request for a "Just Peace Post" for FC's May 28 E-pistle. Here's what Paul, a past member of FC's "Just Peace Team," submitted:

"You ask that I might share some of my practices for peace in my life. One thing I like to do is to spend quiet time meditating, looking at the lush green woods that are in back of our house. The time I spend in the morning meditating and centering is crucial for me to have a peaceful day. This time brings me into the present moment, connecting with my God in the moment. For, me these days are always peaceful. Another thing I do during the day, especially in the morning, is make a mental gratitude list. It helps keep perspective. *Jesus Calling* by Sarah Young is a good devotional for me.

Thanks for Asking."

Paul is certainly an excellent role model for practicing peace in one's life!

And, finally, thank you again, Linda Lupton, Janet Selby, and Paul Terheide for sharing your peace resources and practices in FC's "Just Peace Posts" throughout May 2020 E-pistles.

- susanna-judith

Bread for the World

Thank you to everyone who has written or emailed as part of our virtual Offering of Letters. So far we have sent 64 letters or emails to our senators and representatives on the 2020 Bread for the World issues. If you have written or emailed but forgot to report to Shannon, please contact her at shannon@fcindy.org telling whom you contacted and the method. This information is helpful for our report to the Central Indiana Bread organizers. If you haven't yet written, there is still time to do so. Every contact makes a difference.

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Sunday, May 31	9:30 a.m.	Sunday Adult Class
Sunday, May 31	11:00 a.m.	Worship – (FB Premiere)
Sunday, May 31	12:00 p.m.	Coffee Hour
Tuesday, June 2	5:00 p.m.	Soul Care with Pastor Sarah (see above for zoom link)
Wednesday, June 3	7:00 p.m.	Trustees

Thursday, June 4	5:00 p.m.	Spiritual Support Group
Sunday, June 7	9:30 a.m.	Sunday Adult Class
Sunday, June 7	11:00 a.m.	Worship (FB Premiere)
Sunday, June 7	12:00 p.m.	Coffee Hour