



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

*No matter who you are, or
where you are on life's journey,
you are welcome here!*



FirstCongregationalUCCIndy



FCINDY DOT ORG

www.fcindy.org
317.257.5397

7171 N. Pennsylvania St.
Indianapolis, IN 46240

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Welcome to your Spiritual Home!

We celebrate being a Just Peace making, Green for care of Creation, and WISE (Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive and Engaged) for mental health church, with an Open and Affirming covenant supporting the LGBTQAAL+ community.

Whether you choose to join us online or in-person, we believe we are called together by Jesus to be a transforming presence for God in the world. **We are a place to belong, a place to heal and a place to love.** At First Congregational we recognize God as a loving, creating, all-encompassing Spirit who is not limited by usual human boundaries. Therefore, we practice the use of inclusive, expansive, and non-gendered language when speaking of and to God.

We welcome all who worship with us today and include **all ages** in our hybrid worship service. We invite guests and members to fill out a Welcome/Prayer card found in the pew holder, and put it in the offering plate. Children are invited to play quietly in the “pryground” at the front of the church, or use a “Quiet Bag” found in the Narthex.

***Disclaimer:** Today’s worship service is being live-streamed. While the focus will be on the worship leaders, anything you say or do may be on film. If you have any questions or need to ensure you are not on camera please speak with our minister.

Pastoral Care: You may reach out to Pastor Sarah for Pastoral Care. She may be reached at (386) 478-9012 or pastorsarah@fcindy.org.

In-Person Office Hours: Cassidy (admin) is in office 9-12 on Thursday, meeting with Pastor Sarah by appointment.

Out of concern for community health, we request that you remain up to date with your vaccinations. Mask as needed. Please stay home if you feel unwell.

We celebrate our worship leaders today:

Rev. Dr. Sarah Lund (she/her), Preacher

Sean Baker (he/him), Music Director

Scott Semester (he/him), Worship Song Leader

Mayflower Singers

Steve Coomer, Trumpet

Ben James (he/him), Media Technician

Rev. Elizabeth Price and Sean Baker, Liturgists

DECEMBER 24, 2023

11:00 AM

*Please speak the **bold**-printed words in unison.*

Asterisk () indicates those who choose to may stand in body/spirit.*

PRELUDE

Gesù Bambino

arr. Baker

INTROIT

The Universe Is Bending

Mayflower Singers

Entering Into the Sacred

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

TRUMPET FANFARE

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: A herald said love is coming.

All: It is hard to hear.

One: A herald said do not be afraid.

All: It is hard to be brave.

One: A herald said God is with us.

All: It is hard to believe.

One: Let us worship God, listening to the voices of God's heralds today. Amen.

OPENING PRAYER

INVITATION TO CONFESSION

*SONG OF REFLECTION #103 Watcher, Tell Us of the Night *New Century Hymnal*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & JOYS AND CONCERNS

MEDITATION

PASTORAL PRAYER

PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR (from UCC Book of Worship)

Our God in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

PRAYER RESPONSE

Mayflower Singers

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

INTERLUDE

Angels We Have Heard on High

arr. Baker

*DOXOLOGY *Song of Thanks*

**All praise to God we now do sing.
Our gifts this Advent now we bring.
This waiting time of love we share,
As for the Christ our hearts prepare.**

OFFERTORY PRAYER

All: Gracious God, signs of your love are all around us. We are grateful for this community and for every congregation collecting offerings of love today. Bless these gifts so that all might know of your great love being born again into the world. Amen.

ANTHEM OF SENDING

Still, Still, Still

Mayflower Singers

*BENEDICTION

One: Hark! Did you hear the good news today?

All: YES!

One: Hark! Will you share that love with the world?

All: YES!

One: Hark! Go in God's light and peace. Amen.

BLESSING SONG

The Universe Is Bending

Mayflower Singers

POSTLUDE

O Holy Night

Cappeau, Adam

Music for Sending Forth

Opportunities for Giving, Sharing, Fellowship and Fun!

Because of you, our church changes lives! Thank you to all who have turned in a pledge and/or Time & Talent sheet to support the ministries of First Congregational in 2024! While there are many ways to support the congregation, our annual campaign provides a chance to think about the choices we make with our money, time, and talent in support of First Congregational. For those who have not yet responded, please prayerfully consider all the ways that our church blesses your life and the lives of others, and turn them in by December 31. You can: Put them in the offering plate during worship OR, mail them to the church. Thank you to all who contribute in so many ways to our ministries!

New Constitution & Bylaws Adopted: At a congregational meeting on December 10, 2023, the proposed Constitution & Bylaws was adopted. It is now posted in the Meeting Minutes & Docs on www.fcindy.org. Thank you to the CBL Team, as well as the hearty discussions and feedback that were involved in formulating this new document.

Youth Group will Resume in the New Year: Join the FC Indy Youth Group, beginning in January, each Friday from 6:30-8:30PM. We will have pizza and games and be a safe space for middle school and high school students.

Cards to Our Church Family – Please sign the cards on our “card stand”, for those celebrating birthdays, or in need of prayers.

Food Donations to Northside Pantry – Help those with hunger insecurity by bringing donations of canned or boxed food, and place in the baskets in the Narthex.

Sunday Mornings at 10:00 AM – Several options are available on Sundays before worship. Join our Adult Ed group for thoughtful study and discussion (upstairs at church). Or go to choir practice to rehearse for that morning’s singing; all skill levels welcome!

Spiritual Support Group, Thursdays at 5:00pm (Zoom) – This group openly invites anyone seeking spiritual care concerning well-being. Contact Pastor Sarah at pastorsarah@fcindy.org, or 386-478-9012. ***This group will begin meeting only on the first Thursday of each month, beginning on December 7th.



Thank You for Your Financial Gifts! Our current Covenant Outreach focus is related to our Just Peace Covenant which includes supporting the following organizations: Faith in Indiana, Peace Learning Center, Exodus Refugee Immigration and Family Promise.



Gifts of single dollars, or those designed to Covenant Outreach, are divided evenly to these groups, unless otherwise specified. Also, your pledge or undesignated gifts are greatly appreciated to support the mission and ministries funded by First Congregational’s operating budget. You can place gifts in the offering plate, mail a check to the church, or give online at www.fcindy.org

Mental Health Support:

The 988 Lifeline: 988 is now active across the United States. (call or text) **National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI.ORG):** information and referral services: 1-800-950-NAMI (6264) **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

THIS WEEK AT FC INDY:

Tuesday, December 26	3:00 PM	Staff Meeting (Zoom)
Thursday, December 28	1:00 PM	Men’s Lunch
Sunday, December 31	10:00 AM	Adult Education
Sunday, December 31	11:00 AM	Worship (In-Person, YouTube, FB) – Rev. Elizabeth Price Preaches

Today's Readings

SCRIPTURE HERALD: Matthew 1:18-25

This is how the birth of Jesus came about. When Jesus' mother, Mary, was engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Joseph, her husband, an upright person unwilling to disgrace her, decided to divorce her quietly. This was Joseph's intention when suddenly the angel of God appeared in a dream and said, "Joseph, heir to the House of David, don't be afraid to wed Mary; it is by the Holy Spirit that she has conceived this child. She is to have a son, and you are to name him Jesus—'Salvation'—because he will save the people from their sins." All this happened to fulfill what God has said through the prophet: "The virgin will be with child and give birth, and the child will be named Immanuel" —a name that means "God is with us." When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of God had directed, and they went ahead with the marriage. He did not have intercourse with her until she had given birth; she had a son, and they named him Jesus.

MODERN HERALD

James Baldwin

"Love takes off the masks that we fear we cannot live without and know we cannot live within."

Priests for Equality. The Inclusive Bible. Sheed & Ward. Kindle Edition.



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