



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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First Congregational United Church of Christ Calls New Senior Minister *First Woman Called to Lead Church Brings Array of Abilities, Involvements, and Experience*

In a unanimous vote on January 7, the congregation of First Congregational Church Indianapolis made history by calling the **Rev. Dr. Sarah Griffith Lund** as its senior minister – making her the first woman to lead the church in its 161-year history.

Lund begins her ministry with the congregation on March 1. “For our first year together,” said Lund, “we will focus on building trusting and life-giving relationships with each other, the neighborhood and wider community!”

Ordained with standing in both the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ, Lund served since 2014 as vice president for seminary advancement at Christian Theological Seminary. Prior to that appointment she worked with nearly fifty congregations in Florida to strengthen their vitality, and as a congregational pastor responsible for preaching, teaching, presiding over the sacraments, providing pastoral care, and community ministry.

A proliferate speaker and writer about mental health, Lund is the author of the widely regarded book “Blessed are the Crazy: Breaking the Silence About Mental Illness, Family and Church.” She blogs at www.sarahgriffithlund.com and is an active board member of the Martin Luther King Community Center in Indianapolis.

This breadth of leadership experience should serve Lund and First Congregational Church Indianapolis well.

“Reverend Dr. Sarah Lund clearly stands out as an extremely talented and experienced leader who has exhibited that talent in multiple organizations and situations,” said Randy Walker, chair of the search committee that found Lund. “Her personality, attitude, writings, education and other life experiences show she has had to deal with some very difficult situations. When you find someone this good, you want to be a part of what they are doing as well as invite them to be a part of what you are trying to do as a church.”

Lund’s formal education includes a bachelor of arts in religion from Trinity University, a master of divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary, a master of social work from Rutgers University, and a doctor of ministry from McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago. She also completed the certificate in fundraising management from the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy at Indiana University.

Nancy Dickinson, chair of the congregation's board for worship and faith, described the excitement the congregation has for this new season of its ministry. "Sarah's generous, compassionate spirituality, her progressive inclusiveness, and social justice advocacy are all aligned closely with our church's mission and will help us rise towards current and future challenges. Clearly, Sarah's passionate work with many organizations on Mental Health Awareness and Education can significantly boost our effectiveness, both within this area of ministry in our church and across our community. We look forward to Sarah's ministry with us!"

When asked what she hopes will characterize the congregation's ministry during her tenure, Lund replied, "I hope we will be seen as a place of radical hospitality that welcomes all. I hope we flourish as a progressive, inclusive, and spiritually alive servant community of Jesus!"

Lund received the prestigious Engle Award in Preaching from Princeton Theological Seminary.

Lund's first Sunday in the pulpit will be **March 4**. All are invited to worship at 11:00 AM and 5:30 PM at First Congregational United Church of Christ, 7171 North Pennsylvania Street, in the Broad Ripple area.

Lund is married to Jonathan Lund, who is a medical massage therapist at Carmel Wellness. They are the very proud parents of second grader Carter.

For more information about Lund or First Congregational United Church of Christ, please visit www.fcindy.org or call Cheryl Dillenback, communications coordinator, at 317.257.5397.

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Credit: Ellie Wilson, @pellwilsonphotography

Reverend Dr. Sarah Griffith Lund
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