



# FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

## THE PILGRIM COLONY

February 2019

### Pastor's Reflections

My heart is filled with gratitude to God and to each of you at First Congregational. At our January 27 annual meeting we made significant decisions together that will shape not only this coming year but many years to come. Among these important decisions was to be a Just Peace church. We are asking ourselves, "now what?"

What does it mean for us to be a Just Peace church? Join us February 3 for our special adult education, worship service and buzz session where we will engage in this conversation with the Rev. Mike Neuroth, UCC National Staff Minister for Just Peace churches.

Begin praying now and asking God to show us how to live out this covenant of being a peace-making people. What ways can we witness to Just Peace in our local community, and at the state, national and global levels? How would Jesus respond to the issues of our day? How are we called to follow Jesus as people committed to peace with justice?

There may be more questions than answers right now and that is okay. In faith we have made the first important steps. I trust that in time God will show us and together we will discern the path forward.

With hope,

Pastor Sarah  
(386) 478-9012 or [pastorsarah@fcindy.org](mailto:pastorsarah@fcindy.org)

### Moderator's Reflections

*For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted. - Ecclesiastes 3:1-2*

I am writing this two weeks before the annual meeting, and I expect you are reading it after the annual meeting, not quite as "real time" as social media – thank goodness! I am expectant and hopeful that the meeting will go well (went well?) and we are successfully launched for 2019! It was an honor to serve as moderator in 2018 and I greatly appreciate the whole council I served with and especially Rich for jumping in 'early' and running the annual meeting while I am away. 2018 was a year of renewal and we have taken steps together with Pastor Sarah towards our future. This new year will offer us many opportunities to keep that momentum going! We will have to continue to be good stewards of our resources to keep us focused on our priorities! Some of the things already on the list for this year: alternative worship planning, our spring retreat, how we approach Family Promise, exploring just peace practices, exploring WISE certification! How do we continue to refresh our magnificent building (from the doors to the floors, from the sanctuary to the offices to the courtyard to the front yard)? How

do we promote wellness and offer a place of healing – with music, yoga, other services? With Pastor Sarah and Rich Gibson as moderator, along with all of us participating with faith and love and some elbow grease, I know 2019 will be a year of growth!

Karen Walker  
317-319-8950 or Karen.e.d.walker@gmail.com

### **Sunday Adult Class**

February is Black History Month, and our Adult Ed class will celebrate that by exploring the work of current African American leaders who, following in the footsteps of historic African American leaders, are devoting their lives and talents to making the world a better place for all people.

Feb 3 - We will welcome guest pastor Michael Neuroth to address our class about issues of Justice. (See Just Peace article below for more on Michael.)

Feb 10 - We will explore the work of Rev. Dr. William Barber II.

A short bio from the Chalice Press website: *"Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II is pastor of Greenleaf Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Goldsboro, NC, president of the North Carolina NAACP, and a member of the National NAACP Board. As a full-time pastor, he has given countless volunteer hours to civil rights and movement building, because of his conviction that there is no real worship without a commitment to justice and social change. He has been featured in the Wall Street Journal, CNN, MSNBC, the New York Times, and numerous other publications, and has spoken, preached and lectured around the country. In 2018 he was named as a recipient of the prestigious MacArthur Fellowship Genius Grant."*

Feb 17 - We will explore the work of Rev. Dr. Traci Blackmon.

*"Rev. Traci Blackmon's life calling is to serve God and the church in ways that encourages us to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly in fellowship with all believers. She is grateful to live out this calling as Acting Executive Minister of Justice & Witness Ministries for The United Church of Christ and as Pastor of Christ The King United Church of Christ in Florissant, MO. Initially ordained in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Rev. Blackmon served in various ministry capacities for 9 years, prior to becoming the 18th installed and first woman pastor in the 159 year history of Christ The King United Church of Christ. She obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing from Birmingham - Southern College (1985), a Master of Divinity degree (2009), and an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from Eden Theological Seminary."*

Feb 24 - We will explore the passions and work of 7 up and coming young African America Leaders: Mari Copeny age 10, Nyeeam Hudson age 12, Marley Dias age 13, Grace Dolan-Sandrino age 17, Yara Shahidi age 17, Tony Weaver age 23, and Malcolm Mitchell age 24.

Come and join in and be inspired!

*All classes meet in the Library (room 212) at 9:45 a.m. All are welcome!*

### **Call to Service**

*"Here am I; send me!" Isaiah 6:8"*

### **February Mission of the Month: Peace Learning Center**

As our church becomes a Just Peace Church we have an opportunity to witness to our commitment to peace and support the Peace Learning Center, an internationally recognized community educational institution promoting peace-building and conflict resolution with programs replicated in eight US cities and five countries. Since 1997, the PLC has reached more than 210,000 people locally and internationally.

Peace Learning Center educates, inspires and, empowers people to live peacefully. Its vision is to build a community of peace where respect is primary and justice is real. Through the modeling of behaviors, community collaboration, and by providing services, the PLC values:

- Peaceful resolution of all conflicts
- Strength of diversity in our community
- The potential of youth
- Responsible stewardship of the environment and community resources

The PLC works directly with schools, community nonprofits, businesses, juvenile correctional facilities, and faith groups to facilitate peace education. The Peace Learning Center believes everyone can be a peacemaker. Programs teach safe and simple ways to manage anger, solve problems, and develop appreciation for differing perspectives. Programs include:

- [Be the Change](#): The family-friendly exhibits in the lower level of PLC
- School year field trips.
- [One Indy](#): changing school environments.
- Peace Education Lessons: In-class Peace Education in social-emotional learning, character building, communication & conflict resolution.
- [Peers Making Peace](#) peer mediation program.
- Professional Development: [Implicit Bias](#) and Restorative Practices
- [Summer Programs](#): Climate Camp, Peacebuilders Camp, [Social Justice Leadership Camp](#), Summer Fun Family
- Workshops & Retreats in Conflict Styles, Managing Stress, Diversity & Inclusion, Communication

Consider a generous contribution to our February Mission of the Month, the Peace Learning Center. You can learn more about this inspiring organization at [www.peacelearningcenter.org](http://www.peacelearningcenter.org)

- Worth Hartman

## Pantry Items of the Month

During February, we are collecting the following items: jelly/ jam, pasta, canned tuna/chicken, bar soap.

- Betty Schnur



Every  
Donation  
Makes A  
Difference

## Food Donations to the Northside Food Pantry

Your donations to the Northside Pantry continue to be significant and needed. In December we donated 88 pounds of food, about our monthly average. With the US government budget freeze, many workers both government and

nongovernment, have experienced absence of paychecks and possibly hunger resulting from the inability to buy food. I expect the crisis to be over by the time this notice reaches you, but if it's not, please contribute extra amounts if you can. Thank you for your continued support of the needy among us!

- The Board of Outreach and Service

## The First Congregational Church Foundation

As the stock market did poorly in 2018, our holdings did not grow. However the Board's strategy is to invest conservatively, so our losses were not crippling. Details may be found in the report presented at the Annual Meeting of the church on January 27.

At the time of this writing, the Board's quarterly meeting in late January had not yet been held, so we had not heard the market analysis and projected performance for 2019 from our Goelzer representative. We anticipate possible consolidation of our accounts to one firm but do not expect it to result in any marked change in performance of our funds.

The Foundation benefitted from two significant gifts in 2018, resulting in the formation of the Traditional Music Fund and the Chautauqua Fund. Details may be found in the church Annual Report. We are grateful to the donors for their thoughtfulness and generosity. We expect that the benefits to be derived will be substantial.

We are hopeful that other church members and friends may similarly find that donating for specific projects, or for the general welfare of First Congregational, is worthwhile and satisfying. One method is in joining the new 1857 Society, where one designates a portion of their estate to the church Foundation. More information on this exciting new endeavor and other methods of donating is available from Pastor Sarah and Board members.

- Bill Gillette, Foundation President

## Why Have a Will?

Everyone has the right to a Last Will & Testament, and regardless of how much you might own at death, it is your right and responsibility to determine how your remaining assets should be distributed.

A will allows you to:

- Provide for your spouse and other loved ones at your death; otherwise, the distribution of assets is left to state law and the courts.
- Determine the guardianship of any minor children.
- Identify who will oversee the distribution of your estate.
- Provide a charitable gift to First Congregational Church UCC that will provide a witness to your heirs about the importance of your Christian faith and the church in your life.

A will should always be written by a qualified attorney familiar with your financial circumstances, family situation and your wishes. Advice from an attorney and other professional advisors should be sought when considering charitable giving.

To learn more about leaving a legacy gift to First Congregational Church from your estate please contact either your lawyer, your financial advisor and/or a member of the FCC Foundation. We are not experts but know people who are and can get you started. Anyone that has already created a legacy gift to FCC or sets up a new one before the end of April, 2019 will automatically become a founding member of the 1857 Society of First Congregational Church.

- Randy Walker, Member FCC Foundation



The United Church of Christ is a JUST PEACE denomination and First Congregational is continuing to learn more about what it means to be a JUST PEACE church. Sunday, February 3 we will celebrate JUST PEACE with Rev. Michael Neuroth for a time of education, inspiration and empowerment. Rev. Neuroth will be with us leading Adult Education at 9:45am, preach at the 11am Service and lead a BUZZ conversation about the Justice Ministry of the UCC, nationally and globally, as well as what it means for First Congregational to be a JUST PEACE church. The BUZZ and pitch in luncheon will be following the Traditional Service. Read more about Rev. Neuroth here:



Michael is an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ and serves as the Policy Advocate for International Issues in the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries' office in Washington DC. Prior to joining the staff of the UCC, Michael worked with various ecumenical and interfaith organizations including the World Council of Churches, Church World Service, Ecumenical Advocacy Days, and the Parliament of the World's Religions. His current work on international justice focuses on coordinating the UCC's work and witness as a Just Peace church and related international peace, human rights, and economic justice issues reflected in UCC policy. He also

currently serves as the co-chair for the board of Jubilee USA. Michael holds master's degrees in divinity, theology, and social work from Princeton Seminary and Rutgers University. He currently resides in Washington D.C. with his wife, Amber, and their two boys.

## The Nest Thermostat: Give Your Furnace/AC an Update and Save

Recently when a technician from IP&L rang my doorbell and announced he was here for the energy audit I had signed up for, I was pleasantly surprised by the offering of a new smart thermostat. It does much more than any that I have ever seen. I'm sure there are other smart thermostats, but this one was offered and installed free of charge by the technician as part of a free energy audit. According to their website I can expect a \$100-300 savings a year. And of course I reduce my carbon footprint in the process.



The main features are:

A. **Eco Settings:** Helps you determine how you can make the most efficient energy settings.

B. **History:** Records your usage and sends you an email every month if you wish.

C. **Auto-Away:** Adjust temperature to the minimal required when you leave the house utilizing the GPS on your smart phone.

D. **Scheduling:** The Nest learns from your manual adjustments and then automatically adjusts the temperature to your comfort. When I wake in the morning our home temperature

is coming up to a comfortable 68 degrees. If you prefer, you can change the programming easily to fit a different schedule.

I have to say I have not had my Nest long enough to notice much change in my bill, but I am hopeful it will be a good addition to our family's efforts to reduce our carbon footprint. All this technology that is all manageable from an application on your smart phone! You may check all this out at [www.nest.com](http://www.nest.com).

Sincerely,

Paul Terheide, Green Team, First Congregational Church

## Friends of First Jazz Trio



Join us Saturday February 16th in the Mayflower room for a concert of music presented by our worship musicians Julie Houston, Sean Baker, and Jesse Wittman. These musicians' careers have expanded beyond the roles of choir director, organist, and bassist for worship services. Julie will bring us some of her expertise in Brazillian music and jazz. Sean's inventive and sometimes comical arrangements of standards will delight you. If you've never heard a string bass player really swing, Jesse is one of the best jazz bass soloists in the city! The concert starts at 7:00

p.m. but come early to get your choice of desserts.

Tickets are \$10 and available each Sunday after church. Please see any choir member.

## Mindful Movement for Stress Reduction

Are you overwhelmed by a constant list running through your head? Do you consciously notice when you use each of your senses (taste, touch, sight, smell, sound), or have you come to take them for granted? Are you comfortable with silence?

Join Shannon Abbott in the church parlor on Tuesdays, February 5<sup>th</sup> & February 19<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m. as we **slow down, quiet the chatter** of our minds, and **mindfully take notice** of the little things, like the



sound of our **breath**, the **ground** underneath us, the ways we **feel** each movement of the body, the **silence**, and the **peace** that settles in our body, mind, and spirit.

- Mindful Movement is a donation-based class.
- Please wear loose, comfortable clothing.
- If you have a yoga mat, please bring it.
- Chairs will also be available for those more comfortable participating in a chair.

## **New Hearts and New Spirits**

I'll give you a new heart. I'll put a new spirit in you. I'll cut out your stone heart and replace it with a red-blooded, firm-muscle heart. Then you'll obey my statutes and be careful to obey my commands. You'll be my people! I'll be your God! (Ezekiel 11:19-20 *The Message*)

"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me"  
(Psalm 51:10 *NRSV*).

As Valentine's Day approaches, we think about valentines, hearts, and love. Surely now is a good time to consider why a number of us are ill-tempered these days. Let's start with what was wrong with the Grinch in Dr. Seuss's beloved children's book *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*. Perhaps you recall what the Grinch's problem was. The author explained clearly why the Grinch was so grouchy and grumpy: his heart was "two sizes too small." ("Grinch," "Word of the Day," *Merriam-Webster.com*, December 24, 2018 <https://www.merriam-webster.com/word-of-the-day>).

Maybe having a heart two sizes too small is an issue for many of us. Fortunately, our Maker can help us with such a difficulty in the same way described in the Ezekiel 11 verses with which this piece begins. Won't you join me in praying for all of us throughout the world to do our part to increase our hearts to just the right size, the size that God intends for each of us to have? Let's pray in this vein:

Dear loving God, thank You for Theodor Geisel, a.k.a. Dr. Seuss, and other writers of fiction and non-fiction who help us understand various reasons for the lack of love, empathy, and compassion in today's world. We pray for Your will, O God, for all of us human beings to do our part to have the "red-blooded, firm-muscle hearts" that You intend for us to have. We desire to be more loving. We want to be Your people. We want You to be our God. We love You, and we aspire to love all Your children the way You love us. Thank you for the healing that You have in store for us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

- susanna-judith rae

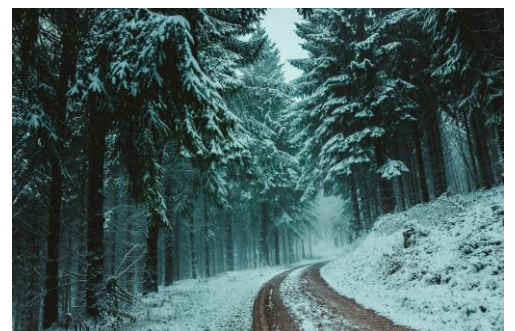
## **Meridian Hills Cooperative School: The Value of a Snowy January**

Winter gets a lot of bad press which the forecast certainly confirms and the following experience illustrates, but it will also reference my over-arching feeling.

We were stuck on the hilly road in our new Windridge Condominium complex last Saturday. We were the second car behind an elderly gentleman whose big car with old tires couldn't make it up the hill. Several of us jumped out to help push him, but to no avail. Long story short, the plow and salt truck eventually came to the rescue, but in the interim I stood out in the snow loving the beauty of the surrounding area of what will become our new home. I am sure I would have had the same sentiment if we had driven smoothly up the hill, but I was forced to stop in the quiet and be grateful for the beauty. It was an unintentional a gift of time.

"The woods are lovely dark and deep..."

Our little school is so intent on embracing every weather whim of the outdoors that I am pleased that I don't I hear



any complaints about the winter weather from you! Pausing the other day before the Kinderbird meeting with Bes, Malkah and interested parents, I watched dozens of little ones sledding on our hill with joyful enthusiasm with helpful teachers and parents.

At one point during our meeting a (really) bundled up Robin came inside the classroom and stopped quickly at the door when he saw the group. He paused for a couple of heartbeats. Then said, "Hi Guys" and then we heard his snow pants swish as he clomped over to his cubby to deposit an extra set of gloves. Then he swished and clomped back out the door.

Unfazed by winter.

Best in parenting,

Ginny Hacker, Director - Meridian Hills Cooperative Nursery School & Kindergarten

## Announcements

**Men's Lunch:** This lunch and discussion gathering for men of First Congregational meets at various restaurants in the greater Indianapolis area. They meet every other Thursday at 1 p.m. This month they will meet on **February 7<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>**. Please contact Randy Walker at (317) 796-2081 or [aa28977walker@gmail.com](mailto:aa28977walker@gmail.com) for information.

**All Church Board Retreat – Saturday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 9:00 a.m. – Noon:** All newly 2019 elected Board members plan to be present for this All Church Board Retreat.

**February Buzz - February 3, 12:30 p.m.:** At this month's Buzz, we welcome guest, Rev. Michael Neuroth, as he leads a discussion on UCC Justice Ministries and what it means to be a Just Peace Church. Please join us for discussion and a light lunch.

**Sacred Organ Music Sunday - February 10:** Special guest organist Charles Manning.

**March Colony Submission Deadline:** Please have your submissions sent to Shannon by Friday, **February 15<sup>th</sup>**.

**New Member Sunday - Sunday, February 17:** Thinking about making First Congregational UCC your church home? Pastor Sarah is happy to talk with anyone who is interested in learning more about becoming a member of this Open and Affirming family of God.

**Circle IV Book Discussion:** Circle IV will be meeting at the home of Sandy Wood on Tuesday, **February 19<sup>th</sup>** at 1:30 pm. We are reading *Common Good* by Robert B. Reich. All are welcome to join us. Feel free to carpool. For further information, contact Sandy Wood at (317)863-8238 or [csjlwood@att.net](mailto:csjlwood@att.net).

**Women's Lunch Bunch:** All women of the church are invited to get together once a month for lunch, friendship, and fellowship. This month we will meet on Thursday, **February 28<sup>th</sup>** at 11:45 a.m. For any questions or for information please contact Sue Chapman at 317-259-1806 or at [carolsuech59@gmail.com](mailto:carolsuech59@gmail.com).

**Flower Calendar:** The 2019 Flower Calendar is on the bulletin board by the garden doors. Cooperstown be for any occasion. Flowers can come from the store, florist or from your garden. The cost is \$25.00 from our florist. Any questions, please email Sally Coombs at [sallysews73@gmail.com](mailto:sallysews73@gmail.com) or call 317-446-2853. You can also let Shannon Abbott know the occasion at [shannon@fcindy.org](mailto:shannon@fcindy.org) or call the church office at 317-257-5397.

**Save the Date:** All Church Retreat will be held **March 22-23** at Benedict Inn. See upcoming Epistles and March Colony for more information.

## Financial Update

*When We Give, We Reach Out With Helping Hands*

### Highlights:

- Income was \$15,300 below budget – but that's because we didn't need as much Foundation funding as we had expected. Pledged and unpledged offerings were \$1,900 better than budget.
- Expenses were \$18,750 below budget. The savings came primarily from lower than expected health insurance for Pastor Sarah and administrative expenses.
- We began the year expecting to need a \$57,700 Foundation draw to balance the budget. We ended the year with a \$4,750 surplus after a \$40,000 Foundation draw; in other words, we only needed \$35,250 from the Foundation to balance the budget.
- We'll apply the \$4,750 surplus toward 2019 operating expenses.

### 1. Current Year Actual vs Budget Summary - Last year 1/1/2018 through 12/31/2018 Using 2018 Budget C

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Category	Actual	2018 Budget	Difference
<b>INCOME</b>	<b>250,643</b>	<b>265,949</b>	<b>-15,306</b>
M. Unrestricted Contributions	250,643	265,949	-15,306
M.01 Pledged Offerings	190,090	184,420	5,670
M.02 UnPledged Offerings	20,232	24,000	-3,768
M.03 Rollover Prior Year Surplus_D...	-737	-737	0
M.04 Foundation - Endowment Fund...	20,000	27,600	-7,600
M.05 Foundation - Minister Fund Draw	20,000	30,136	-10,136
M.06. Transfer from Youth Fund	1,610	1,610	0
M.07 Other Transfers from Restr Ac...	-552	-1,080	528
<b>EXPENSES</b>	<b>245,877</b>	<b>264,637</b>	<b>18,760</b>
A. Pastoral Leadership	111,140	121,448	10,308
B. Worship & Faith	38,227	39,771	1,544
C. Care & Connections	535	560	25
D. Witness & Welcome	744	865	121
E. Outreach & Service	24,500	24,600	100
F. Trustees	502	500	-2
G. Administration & Operations	17,442	25,815	8,373
H. House & Grounds	46,994	44,660	-2,334
I. Miscellaneous	5,792	6,418	626
<b>Net Difference:</b>	<b>4,766</b>	<b>1,312</b>	<b>3,454</b>

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Jim Lootens, Treasurer  
lootens.jb@gmail.com