



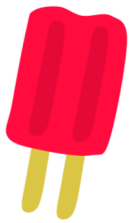
Finding the Spirit in Life

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The Epistle - August 2019



**One Worship Service Sunday,
September 1 at 10:00a.m.
Followed by
Popsicles with our Pastor**



On this day, you will find that a variety of flavors of popsicles will be served... including some that might not sound great to you but seem delicious to someone else. This is intentional. It's a reflection of our experiences of faith. We all experience God in different ways, through different events, and call The Sacred by different names. It's beautiful, really. To honor the diversity and playfulness of our congregation, and to send Lori off on sabbatical with the encouragement to try new things, we will joyfully share in this time of fellowship. Join us! Carol Dobrotka will serve as the point person for this event. If you have any questions, please contact her at c_dobrotka@yahoo.com

Read more about Lori's Sabbatical on pages 6, 7, 8

**What Does The Formative Congregations Grant Mean for
Our Congregation? Find out on pages 8, 9, 10**

General Synod Reflection on page 17, 18

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August 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3 Parlor in Use 9-10a.m.
4 Worship 8:30 Fellowship Hour 9:45a.m. Worship 11:00	5	6 Carpet Cleaning 1:30p.m. Art of Listen- ing 6:30-8pm	7 "George" Book Study 6:30-8p.m. Parlor	8 Migrant Quilt Project 12-1pm "Evicted" Book Study 6:30- 8p.m. Parlor Ministry Coun- cil 7-8:30p.m.	9	10 Parlor in Use 9-10a.m.
11 Worship 8:30 Fellowship Hour 9:45a.m. Worship 11:00 Summer Parables	12	13 Young Adult Books & Brews 7p.m. Art of Listen- ing 6:30-8pm	14 Waterford HOA Meeting 1-3:30.m. "George" Book Study 6:30- 8p.m. Parlor	15 Men's Break- fast 8a.m. Staff Meeting 1:30 Worship Staff 2:00p.m. "Evicted" Book Study 6:30- 8p.m. Parlor	16 Movie Night	17 Parlor in Use 9-10a.m.
18 Worship 8:30 Fellowship Hour 9:45a.m. Worship 11:00	19 Preschool Staff Meet- ing 8:30- 1:15p.m.	20 Music Team 6:45p.m. Art of Listen- ing 6:30-8pm	21 Missions Team 6p.m. Waterford HOA 6- 8:30pm	22 Migrant Quilt Project 6:30- 7:30pm Parlor	23	24 Parlor in Use 9-10a.m.
25 Worship 8:30 Fellowship Hour 9:45a.m. Worship 11:00 Summer Parables	26 Preschool Parent Ori- entation 7p.m.	27 Preschool Visitation 9:30-11am Art of Listen- ing 6:30-8pm Young Adults Books&Brew 7p.m.	28 Preschool Vis- itation 9:30- 11a.m. Governance 6:30pm	29	30	31 Parlor in Use 9-10a.m.

From Your Clergy Team

Lori Bievenour
Becca Lockwood
Sam Locke

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From Lori

This summer, I have been fascinated by lightening bugs/glow bugs/fireflies (and I am sure there are other names for them too!). I have found myself outside at night, just watching the fireflies do their thing – which seems to be to flit about, glow occasionally, and then fly off to another part of our yard. I find watching fireflies to be soothing, and I am grateful to live in a place where I can watch them while I listen to crickets and cicadas, even in the midst of an urban center.

Recently, I realized that the fireflies hold a theological significance for me as well. It's pretty simple. You see, as a person of faith, I am asked to shine my light. (This can be found in Matthew 5:16, and for full disclosure, it was the verse that helped me to discern a call to ministry while in Ghana, West Africa, and it was the verse used at my ordination 15 years ago. I return to it regularly.) I didn't realize how much I needed this verse this summer, but in a completely different way.

See, like many of you, I have been overwhelmed by the pain in our world – the constant arguing, the unending tragedies, the rhetoric that just doesn't seem to help anybody. I don't have answers as to how that pain can be lessened, but the fireflies have reminded me that there are times to shine my light and also times to rest. As people of faith, we are asked/encouraged/expected to shine our lights... and we are also told that sabbath/rest is important! It's as simple as that. Sometimes, in the midst of the most difficult of times, we need to shine our lights so that others can see a way forward – or maybe so that we can see our own ways forward. And other times, as the fireflies do, we need to rest – to rejuvenate in order to shine brightly once again!

The fireflies taught me something important this summer... Not that I have to shine my light, but that I don't have to do it ALL of the time – only when it is needed. I am guilty of wanting to work constantly – to go, go, go. I have been known to shine a light for too long and then run out of batteries or firewood or fuel or energy. I shine and shine and shine and then... crash. You get the point.

But fireflies, in their simplicity, have taught me that it is important to shine one's light when it is needed, but not all of the time. In fact, fireflies can't shine their lights all of the time. It would be dangerous, in fact – making them more of a target for predators and reducing their energy for other important activities (like gathering food or building a place to live.) Imagine if we used this approach with faith as well... share our faith and shine our lights when they are needed... and rest from shining our lights when that is needed as well. Both are imperative to life! It's not that our lights would be gone forever if we took a rest – just that they would not be on 24/7, and therefore, rest could happen. And what happens when rest happens? Growth and change. Transformation. Dreams.

This is one of the goals that I am going to take with me into the renewal period coming up September 2 – November 30. I will shine my light in new ways AND I will rest when I need to. I will stretch new muscles, fly to new places, and I will share what I can with others – just like the fireflies do – and then I will rest.

If you are interested in reading more about my plans for this renewal period, please check out Pages 6-8. In the meantime, go outside some evening soon and spend some time with the fireflies. It's a spiritual experience.

Finally, I should share that when I looked up the meaning of the firefly (after writing everything up until this point), this is what I found:

- It is a symbol of passion and self-illumination.
- It encourages that anything is possible and encourages the magic of believing.
- It reflects the energies of the heart of a child and the freedom of spirit.



From Your Clergy Team

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Cool. All of those resonate with me. And then... "Another reason Firefly might make itself known is when you have over-extended yourself. Don't use your energy resources without careful consideration. You cannot do everything all at once, even if you might wish it were so. One moment, one thought, one well-considered action at a time is the Firefly's advice." (www.whatismyspiritanimal.com)

Wow. That's an important reminder to me right now. Take life one moment, one thought, one action, one love at a time. All of these insights offer me inspiration and remind me of God's love for me... even in a time of rest. I hope that you can connect with the joy and simplicity of the firefly or another animal that will reveal God to you in surprising ways in the coming days. And, by all means, when you do have that connection, share the story with someone!

From Becca

I have been anticipating this month for a while. It's the month before Lori goes on Sabbatical. It's the month when we will cross our t's and dot our i's and make sure we've done everything to prepare well for her time away. We've already done a lot of planning, preparing, and praying. But this month will be like the final hours before preparing for a trip...those last moments when you make sure you have the things you usually forget...like your headphones, your phone charger, or your toothbrush. And then, before you know it, you're off, and the adventure has begun.

Lori and I are both grateful for this time. While it will be hard in both expected and surprising ways, and while I will miss my colleague, I know that her spirit and our shared ministry with each other and the congregation, will benefit in profound ways. Scripture reminds us how necessary rest and renewal is. Biology reminds us how important rest and renewal is. Agriculture reminds us how necessary rest and renewal is. So we will take this time to learn from the wise world of sacred words and holy Creation, and we will rest and find renewal alongside Lori.

Our adventure as the congregation will look a little different than Lori's. We'll take this time to focus on each other, to listen deeply, and to form deeper connections with one another. We were awarded a grant from the Center for Congregations to help us do exactly that. You can find more details about the grant on Pages 8-10.

As a very active and growing congregation, we have a lot going on! How on earth will we do it all when we're a clergyperson down? The answer is, we simply won't be able to do all the things, and that's ok. Our teams will use this time to focus on their essential programming and purposes and lean into those efforts. I will also be focusing on being as present and intentional with my time as well. To that end, I will be aiming to follow a more structured schedule this fall.

On Mondays and Thursdays I will be in the office focusing on the bulletin, other publications, communication, and anything else that comes up--as it often does. On Tuesdays I will work from home. This will be intentional time for worship preparation, sermon writing, and spiritual reflection. And Wednesdays--this is the day I'm most excited about--is chat with your pastor day! Part of the burnout Lori and I have been feeling comes from a separation of the work we are called to, which is ministry and that means being with you! So, while I will be available the other days of the week as well, Wednesday is a specific day where I will be scheduling coffee, lunch, walks on the monon, hospital visits, home visits, etc. with you! If you need or want to have a conversation--about anything--we can talk baseball, art, theology, cats, existentialism--you name it. This is a day where I'm available to you. I can't wait!

Fridays and Saturdays will continue to be my sabbath days, because as I said before, rest and renewal is important.

This is going to be an important time for us as a congregation. This is a time for us to dig deep into who we are as a community, lean into what matters to us most, and form even stronger connections to one another. I look forward to what awaits!

The Bible Doesn't Say That!

Summer Sermon Series

As you have already learned, Lori, Becca, and Sam are presenting a sermon series this summer that explores things the Bible doesn't say. Sort of. We are diving into phrases commonly thought of as biblical but aren't, verses that sound great on a bumper sticker but mean something completely different in context, and verses where words have been changed to reflect periodic special interests.

A brief look at what we've learned so far:

Week 1 "God will never give you more than you can handle"

God won't give our community more than it can handle, when we walk together in search of hope and inspired to faithful action. Alone, it is easy to feel as though you have more than you can handle. Together, let us work to lighten one another's loads.

Week 2 "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me"

This doesn't always mean we will achieve anything we want or will get through every tough situation. It does mean that Christ gives us the spiritual fortitude to help us through every moment of our lives - good, bad, and in between.

Week 3 "Money is the root of all evil"

Money itself isn't evil, it is how a society loves it and uses it that can cause problems. Are we aware of how this plays out in our own use of money as individuals and as a community?

Week 4 "Speak truth to power"

We are called to speak the truth, in love. This moves us beyond militant drive to achieve our goals but an awareness of care for those around us while we do so.

Week 5 "You reap what you sow"

This should be read as an internal statement for self reflection, not a projection of our beliefs onto others - we all reap in the harvest of God's kingdom and have a personal responsibility to make sure all are included in said harvest.

Week 6 "The devil tempted Eve"

More direct interpretations do not gender the two first humans created by God, so our subsequent assignment of blame based on the action of Eve are misplaced.

Week 7 "Man shall not lie down with man"

The clobber passages are not reflective of same-gender relationships as we know them today and, even in context, paint a much more affirming story of hospitality instead of the anti-gay sentiment they are often used to further.

Schedule for the rest of the series:

August 4	"I know the plans I have for you"	Lori Bievenour
August 11	"God helps those who help themselves"	Sam Locke
August 18	"Do not judge"	Lori Bievenour
August 25	"This too shall pass"	Becca Lockwood

Senior Pastor Sabbatical/Renewal Period Q&A

September 2 – November 30

We are one month away from an amazing period in the life of our congregation. For the second time in my 15-year tenure with St. Peter's, I will be on sabbatical for a three-month period. I thought a little Question & Answer might be helpful as we prepare for this time together. All of the questions have been asked of me by someone in our congregation... and if you have more questions, by all means contact me! I will be among you until September 2.

What is a sabbatical?

It's a time for intentional reflection, a time for renewal, a time for the space to explore my continued call to ministry, a time for study, rejuvenation, connection with others, and a time away from a congregation.

Will you produce anything during this time?

Maybe, but maybe not. I am not doing research or writing a book as is common in academic circles. In congregational life, although some pastors do use sabbatical time for research or further studies, the focus of a sabbatical is renewal of one's spirit. That is my intention during this time. Parish ministry is fulfilling and exhausting all at the same time. I am eager to take this time to renew my spirit.

I don't get a sabbatical. Must be nice. A three-month vacation.

OK, these aren't questions as much as they are statements. You're right. A sabbatical is a gift. It is a unique part of a call agreement for a pastor. The logic is that ministry is different from many other jobs and requires a different type of sabbath/renewal as a result. In the most basic way, it is important to note that pastors do not typically have two days off in a row with their families. We also don't have the benefit of long weekends, unless we use vacation time. We are also on call for emergencies all of the time. Our contracts at St. Peter's are written for four vacation Sundays a year. Sabbatical offers a time for an extended renewal, which is needed due to the intensity of the work the rest of the year. That said, I absolutely recognize this time as a gift and I thank YOU for making it possible.

Are you leaving St. Peter's?/Are you going to come back?

No and Yes! I have no intention of leaving St. Peter's, and I am coming back on December 1. I do not feel a call away from parish ministry at this time in my life, and I am really excited about continuing as one of the pastors with this congregation. (Also, it's a rule that a pastor stay for at least a year after sabbatical for the sake of all involved. No worries. I do not feel a pull away from what God is calling us to do together.) In fact, I couldn't be more excited about what is ahead for us. While I am away, please trust that I will miss you. It's true. I will miss being with you on a daily/weekly basis, but I also know that my spirit needs a bit of time and space to be geared up for what comes next in our journey together!

What about your family?

As many of you know, my mother, husband, daughter, and in-laws worship at St. Peter's regularly. All of them will be among you this fall! Torrey, Tess, and I will go visit some friends at their congregations (worshipping elsewhere is something we rarely get to do as a family, and for pastors, it's important to "just be in the pews" every now and again.) That said, St. Peter's is home for our family, so it will be important to keep up that connection as well. So, although I won't be present in worship, my family will be. One request: Please respect their desire to worship and do not bombard them with questions about how my sabbatical is going. I promise Becca will share updates if/when I send them to her!

What are you going to do while you're not here?

First, thanks for asking. I am calling this "The Sabbatical of Unfinished Projects." There are a lot of things that I just don't get around to doing because of my schedule as a local pastor. The photo album from my *last* sabbatical (2011) is still unfinished.

Senior Pastor Sabbatical/Renewal Period Q&A (Cont.)

September 2 – November 30

Torrey and I have started to install a charging station for our electric car *last* November, and that still needs to be completed. There's a landscaping project that we started about two years ago, and I have a lot of purging of stuff to do... I have learned that when you have a kid, your stuff multiplies in ways you never knew was possible. But I won't be doing the unfinished stuff for the entire three months. Not hardly.

September and November will be months of projects, rest, renewal, and creativity. October is my month for deepening my soul. I'll be doing that through three main experiences:

1. In early October, I will be attending a retreat in Lake Geneva, WI called **The Growing Edge**. It is facilitated by Parker Palmer and Carrie Newcomer. I applied for this retreat three times and was JUST accepted this last time. (They only take 100 applications each time, and only 25 people can participate. I am SO HUMBLED AND HONORED to be a part of this experience.
2. Right after The Growing Edge retreat, I will drive from WI to Des Moines, IA, to be with six other clergy for a few days of continuing education and a retreat. We call ourselves a **Covenant Group**. We met a number of years ago. Four of us have transitioned from being the associate pastor to the senior pastor in the same congregation. We come from CA, MA, IA, FL, and IN. We are all about the same age and all serve large UCC congregations. We trusted God's nudging and have committed to being together for at least another year in a covenant group. (Next fall, the group will visit Indianapolis!) This group will help me to process the retreat in WI, and we will also nurture/challenge one another as colleagues. I know that this will be sacred time.
3. At the end of October, I will travel to Denver, CO to attend **The Art of Hosting**. A friend of mine told me about it, and the more I prayed about it, the more I needed to attend this event. You can learn more at <http://www.artofhosting.org>. It's a grassroots movement to encourage deeper and more meaningful interactions/conversations. This opportunity also makes me nervous in the best way possible. As I've noted, we are at an incredibly exciting time in the life of St. Peter's... My gut tells me that learning a bit more about facilitation and hosting conversations that matter will be a useful tool and an important practice in my ministry in the near future. Here's to whatever I learn on this leg of my journey. I am open to it all!

That's enough for now. We are considering an opportunity to travel as a family, but we are not planning that just yet. NOT being completely planned out is one of my goals for this time away... and thus, September and November will remain unscheduled for now. Deep breaths. Sabbatical & Renewal, here I/we come!

Who will be in charge while you are away? Who's going to preach?

Becca Lockwood, our Associate Pastor for Missions & Education will take the lead while I am away, and she will be supported by our excellent team of lay leaders. Ministry Intern Sam Locke will also be sharing in some responsibilities; he and Becca will provide theological reflections on Sunday mornings, and 24 different lay people will be offering their testimonies/sharing their stories during worship as well. You won't want to miss these Sundays! (Read more on Page 8-9.) Carol Dobrotka was my Senior Pastor Support Team Leader recently, and she is helping to coordinate a number of things while I am away. Jill Olinger is administering the Formative Congregations Grant during my absence. You can read more about various things that will be happening while I am away on Page 9-10. Bottom line: there are a LOT of people who are going to make this a fantastic time in the life of our congregation.

Senior Pastor Sabbatical/Renewal Period Q&A (Cont.)

September 2 – November 30

I imagine there are more questions that you might have about this sabbatical period. Please reach out to me; I'm happy to converse more! In the meantime, will you please pray for me as I prepare for this time away? Although I am grateful for this opportunity, I am also nervous. It's not easy to leave a community that you love – even for the best of reasons – for an extended period of time. Thank you for praying me through; I will do the same for you. Promise.

After a break, a stretch, and a cup of coffee/tea/water/other beverage, I encourage you to continue reading through Page 10. In this section, we will share some of what YOU can do during the sabbatical time and how the Formative Congregations Grant will enhance our renewal time!

Formative Congregations Grant

What Does It Mean for Our Congregation?

As announced last month, the Center for Congregations awarded us (and only a handful of other congregations) a Formative Congregations grant. The grant totals \$50,000, and all of that money must be used within our congregation. Our proposal was bold; there are many opportunities planned for St. Peter's over the course of the next year. Here are a few things coming up that our grant will support:

Spiritual Life Groups – In recent years, we have found Spiritual Life Groups to be a valuable way to build relationships, explore topics of faith, and support our faith community. This fall, we will offer another opportunity for you to engage in hope-filled and curious experiences, held in members' homes throughout greater Indianapolis. Our guide will be the book *Conversation the Sacred Art: Practicing Presence in an Age of Distraction* by Diane M. Millis. You can sign up for a group in September. They will last 6-8 weeks (each group determines their own schedule), and books will be provided through the generosity of our grant. Interested in hosting a group? Contact Lori Bievenour at lori@stpeterscarmel.org. No prior experience is necessary to lead or join a group!

Storytellers in Worship– Worship is a sacred time of prayer, scripture study, and storytelling, among other things. It's a time for us to be together and to explore our understandings of God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. It is a time for rituals and a time for spiritual formation. And this fall, we have an incredible opportunity for you!

24 storytellers – all members of our congregation – have volunteered to share *their* stories of faith with you during worship. The inspiration was a dream that Lori had many years ago: a dream in which people were telling each other the stories that they often told her and the pastoral staff. It was beautiful. Truly, the pastoral staff loves hearing your stories; the contents is inspiring, heart-wrenching, bewildering, tragic, laughable, and the list goes on. In a dream, Lori imagined those stories spreading into the world and transforming communities. It's a vision that she can barely describe with words. The Formative Congregations Grant is making Lori's dream a reality.

A different person will tell their story at the 8:30 and 11:00 worship services September 8 – November 24. The stories will be podcasted so that you can listen to them later, but we encourage you to attend as many as you can... LIVE! Becca and Sam will offer theological reflections on these stories paired with a reading from the Psalms each week during worship. Why the Psalms? Because the Psalms include the entire range of human emotion and are some of the most beautifully written prose and poetry in the entire Bible. We will listen for God in the words of scripture AND in the words of one another.

After each storyteller shares their story, YOU will have an opportunity to connect more deeply with them. Just fill out the slip of paper in the bulletin and indicate that you would appreciate further conversation with that particular storyteller. If you can, share why you've connected to this person's story. The story tellers will each be given a \$100 gift card (courtesy of the Formative Congregations Grant), and we are asking them to continue the conversation with those who are interested... maybe over lunch or coffee or dinner. It's up to the story tellers how many or how few people their connected with post-story. We are trusting that the Holy Spirit will guide us all as we share our stories.

One more thing: The storytellers will be named in the September Epistle. Please pray for them as they work on their stories and continue to be in conversation with God about this experience. Also, in August, the storytellers will participate in a retreat in downtown Indianapolis (also funded by the Formative Congregations Grant) so that they can meet each other and share part of this journey together. Will you please pray them through these next few months of soul-searching and faith sharing? Thank you!

The Art of Listening – A Four Week Series on Tuesdays (August 6, 13, 20, and 27) 6:30-8:00p.m. Led by Senior Pastor Lori Bievenour. Listening is a sacred act. It can be an act of compassion, an act of resistance, an act love, and act of rebellion. To hone our listening skills is to connect more deeply with The Sacred. Join others for this four-part series focused on the power and practice of listening. This will be a great way to prepare for the fall, when 24 different members of St. Peter's will share their stories of faith and doubt in worship. Please sign up through Realm or in Fellowship Hall so that we can prepare an appropriate place for the group to meet! Questions, contact Lori Bievenour at lori@stpeterscarmel.org or 317 846 6882.

Leadership Retreat - Did you know that the United Church of Christ (our denomination) practices congregational polity? This means that every local congregation is its own highest authority. Thus, it is the CONGREGATION that makes decisions for our church, not a national setting. In our context, this means that we have a congregational meeting to vote on things like our budget and officers. Our LAY LEADERS do the work of our congregation, and these leaders are amazing.

Every year, our Leadership Team (members of the Governance, Finance & Operations, and Ministry Councils) gets together for a retreat prior to the kickoff of our program year. This year, we are doing things a little bit differently. Our Leadership Team is going on retreat in late September, and they are going to experience an ArtMix WorkSmART retreat (also funded by the Formative Congregations Grant). There will be about 25 leaders gathered to enjoy a creative and spirit-filled time. Please pray for our leaders as they prepare for this upcoming sabbatical when our Senior Pastor is not present... We are confident that they will lead in amazing ways during this renewal time, and we are grateful for their support during this exciting time in the life of our congregation!

Pray Day & Brunch Hour on September 29 – Mark your calendars! On Sunday, September 29, we will have a Brunch Hour and Pray Day in between services, starting at 9:45. Randy & Pat Wahl will be coordinating the main dish for this day, and we encourage you to bring something to share. We'll eat for about a ½ hour, and then we'll break up into four groups. Those groups will be guided by members of our Generosity Team to four sites on our grounds. At each site, you will be met by one of our Team Leaders, and you will pray for a specific ministry of our congregation. No worries – you just have to show up with an open heart. Prayer will lead us through this time of transformation, and it is a fantastic way to weave our spirits together and honor the many ways that we are a community of faith. Look for more information in the September Epistle, but mark your calendars NOW!

Old Banners & New Banners – In September, you will see a change in our sanctuary. Our “Horizon Banners” will be hanging. They were made with a local fabric artist, Stephanie Robertson, a few years back. Members of our congregation painted the banners with Stephanie’s help, and the words on the bottoms of the banners are words that we used to describe our congregation. As these banners guide us into the fall season, let us remember that there is always another horizon for us to journey towards! And, as if that’s not enough, a surprise is in the works! Rachel Enlow, an artist among us, is creating a new set of banners for our Advent worship experience. We can hardly wait to share them with you... Please pray her through this creative experience of sharing her faith through art!

History Reception & All Saints Sunday on November 3 – Again, mark your calendars! On Sunday, November 3, we will have a special reception between services that honors our history. Our storytellers on that Sunday will share their connections to our congregation and other UCC congregations from many decades ago. An assortment of photos and mementos from our predecessor congregations (Central Avenue Reformed and Carrollton Avenue Evangelical and Reformed) will be on display. We will be attempting to contact those who had connections to these congregations, so if you know of people who might enjoy an invitation, please contact Carol Dobrotka, who is coordinating this reception!

Focus Groups: Envisioning St. Peter’s Future – We are seeking to hear ideas from the congregation about four large ideas: St. Peter’s UCC identity, values, impact inside and outside our walls, and how we reconcile our vision with our budget and our capacity. We will schedule four groups with room for 10-12 people in each group. (If the groups fill up and more interest is indicated, we will attempt to facilitate more groups.) Your input will be included as we seek to hear wider themes on these big ideas. Ultimately a report will be put together and shared with the entire congregation. By signing up, you are not committing to actually making any decisions at this time, but you are lending your voice to a deeper conversation beyond our Annual Meeting that will hopefully inform a set of questions and decisions in our future. Please join us for honest, reflective, and deeper conversation on who we are, what we value, and what impact we can make. These sessions will be facilitated by Daniel Meyers, Staff Support Team Lead and Seth Kreigh, Generosity Team Lead.

The Listening Sessions:

- 1: Sunday, 9/15, between services 10-11 am
- 2: Sunday, 9/22, between services, 10-11 am
- 3: Wednesday, 10/2, 7-8 pm
- 4: Sunday, 10/13, between services, 10-11 am

Please RSVP for a specific date by Sunday, September 8 through Realm or by emailing Laurie Hesselink at office@stpeterscarmel.org



Music Team

Team Leader: Sarah Scholl

musicministrylead@stpeterscarmel.org

Music Director : Cheryl Keckler

musicdirector@stpeterscarmel.org

A Great Time at the Ball Park

Sunday, July 7 was a grand day at the Indians baseball park. St. Peter's singers had a wonderful time joining with Central Christian singers for the National Anthem. We even got to meet Rowdie, as you can see by the photo.



Treble Ensemble

Time for the Treble Ensemble! That's for all "treble" voices. So ladies, youth and children (grade 3 and older), you are invited to share your talents. We will sing *Down to the River to Pray* on **Sunday, August 11** with one rehearsal on the preceding **Thursday, August 8 at 6:30 (NOTE: REHEARSAL TIME changed)**. Please let Cheryl know at musicdirector@stpeterscarmel.org if you will be singing.

Music for Children and Youth

Music for children and youth (grade 2 and older) will start on **Sunday, September 8 from 9:45-10:15 in the Music Room**. Through the year we will have different music opportunities – singing, ringing chimes, Orff instruments. The first Sunday children and youth will participate in worship will be **October 6, World Communion Sunday**. Come share your talents and join in the music making!

Music is Good for You, So Join In

Summer goes by so quickly. We are already looking to the fall when choirs at St. Peter's will once again start rehearsing. First rehearsals are on **Thursday, September 5**.

Handbells from 6:00-7:00 p.m. in the sanctuary

Chancel Choir from 7:00-8:30 p.m. in the Music Room

Music is good for your health, for your stress level, for the community – so continue your music making OR get started making music! New members are always welcome! For more information, please contact Cheryl at musicdirector@stpeterscarmel.org or 317-213-1871. Come join others in making music at St. Peter's.

Please share comments regarding our music program with any team member: Heather Kane, Don Kaufman, Sarah Scholl, Jim Vandivier; Addie Yoder, organist; or Cheryl Keckler, Music Director.

Hospitality

Team Leader: Julia Stolle

hospitalitylead@stpeterscarmel.org

Dine with Nine

It is time to sign up for Fall Dine with Nine Groups – these groups will run late September through early December. If you have never participated, haven't for a long time, or join every round, we urge you to join us – you meet new people, forge deeper bonds with others, and eat great food! The signup sheet is posted in Fellowship Hall. Questions? Please contact Ann-Marie Rohe at amrohe@sbcglobal.net.

All Church Picnic & Education Kickoff

The All Church Picnic/Education Kickoff Celebration is coming up Sunday September 8th at 12:30 at West Park. We have reserved the large pavilion adjacent to the restrooms and the playground, where there is a water feature for all to cool off. We will provide both beef and black bean burgers, please bring a dish to share. The Education Team will be providing some games, feel free to bring your soccer balls and lawn games to share. This is a great chance for folks from both services to play together! Please sign up in Fellowship Hall so we can get an idea of how many burgers to provide.

Fellowship Hour Hosting

We have MANY openings to fill Fellowship Hour hosts between services. If each family filled one slot only once per year, our roster would be full. Especially if you have not taken a turn this year, please consider serving YOUR community in this way. You can sign up to be to host Fellowship Hour at [signupgenius.com https://www.signupgenius.com/go/5080a4daea62aa4ff2-stpeters](https://www.signupgenius.com/go/5080a4daea62aa4ff2-stpeters)

Missions Team

Team Leader: Katie Lukes

missionslead@stpeterscarmel.org

Family Promise Update

This is a busy time of year for Family Promise! First, a big THANK YOU to all of the volunteers (drivers, cooks, basketball players, crafters, puzzlers, kids at heart, over nighters, cleaner uppers & new volunteers with fresh ideas) who welcomed our Family Promise guests for 2 weeks in July. Highlights include cooking together, Popeye's chicken, an indoor cookout, Hearts & Paws, movie nights, basketball trick shots, crafts, a youth group volunteer evening and so much more. Thank you to our St. Peter's community for continuing to show such generosity and love to families who are impacted by homelessness.

Upcoming ways that you can support Family Promise include:

- Donate bags of clothing for the clothing drive (we will collect **(preferably white)** trash bags of clothing - only clothing please - until Aug 18)
- Be part of Home Sweet Home, Family Promise's annual fundraiser. Dinner, silent auction, dessert auction. You can buy tickets or a table to attend the event. You can also make a donation for the silent auction! Contact Judy Joutras for more details.
- Mark your calendar now for our final hosting of 2019 - we will host the week of Oct 20.

Family Promise is only successful because of the power of volunteers. YOU make it a unique program and St. Peter's is especially known for being welcoming, accepting, understanding, and loving to our guests. If you would like to know more or get involved, please reach out to our main coordinator, Judy Joutras (jjoutras@yahoo.com).

Missions Team

Team Leader: Katie Lukes

missionslead@stpeterscarmel.org

Crossing Over: The Migrant Quilt Project

St. Peter's, along with the Indiana Interchurch Center, is privileged to host the next installation of the Migrant Quilt Project which began when Jody Ipsen learned that a record 282 people died when trying to cross the border in the Tucson Sector between 2004 and 2005. She has worked individually and with others to document every person who died in the Tucson sector of the desert since the year 2000. "Los Desconosidos", the unknown ones, along with those whose names are known, are listed on a quilt each year. Those who have participated in the border immersion experience at The Good Shepherd UCC have had the opportunity to view some of these quilts. Our group, and those across the county who have seen the quilts are taken aback by the impact they have. The exhibit will be on display in our sanctuary and at the Interchurch Center from August 3rd through September 26th. We encourage you to spend some time experiencing them in both locations and honoring the memory of those whose courage is sometimes beyond our imagination.

At St. Peter's, we are offering four opportunities to visit the exhibit while you learn more about the situation at our Southern border with Mexico. Come to learn about the history of immigration in the United States and the role we have played in the current crisis, and to hear the stories of some who have visited the border and are engaged in ministry to migrants there. Two programs will be offered in August and two in September. The following programs will take place in the parlor at St. Peter's:

Thursday, August 8 at 12:00 - 1:00 pm. Jill Olinger will share her experiences at the border over the last two years. Bring a brown bag lunch. Drinks will be provided.

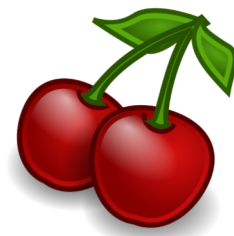
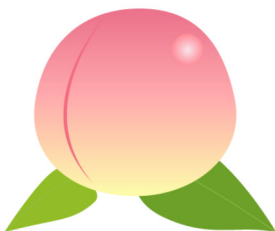
Thursday August 22 at 6:30-7:30 pm. Jim Armstrong and Rebecca McElfresh will show the film Trails of Hope and Terror by Miguel de la Torres and will lead a discussion following the film. Desert will be served.

Tuesday, Sept 10 at 12:00 - 1:15 pm. Jim Armstrong and Rebecca McElfresh will show the film Trails of Hope and Terror by Miguel de la Torres and will lead a discussion following the film. Bring a brown bag lunch. Drinks will be provided.

Tuesday, Sept 24 at 6:30 - 7:30 pm. Jill Olinger will share her experiences at the border over the last two years. Desert will be provided.

Carmel UMC Food Pantry Donations for August

In August we are focusing our collection on canned and packaged fruit. It is helpful to the food pantry if you make your donation in a paper bag or a reusable cloth bag instead of plastic. We will also continue to collect "luxury items" like feminine products (pads, tampons), lotion, toothpaste, and hair conditioner. Also, anyone with garden produce can drop directly at Carmel UMC. Contact Liz Chandler at gentlemomlc@gmail.com for info on dropping directly to the pantry.



Education Team

Team Leader: Lori Radford

educationlead@stpeterscarmel.org

Youth Group

We're so excited for Youth Group to kick-off for our program year! Your youth group leaders have met and planned a fabulous year for you all. We will continue with meeting twice a month. One meeting will be more conversation based and the other more activity based. For our discussion this year, Netflix will be our helper! *One Day at a Time*, is a show on Netflix that deals with the daily struggles of life, being human, and being part of a community. Activities will vary from bowling, to group building games, to lock-ins and much more! Check out our Fall Schedule below!

August 16 & 17: 5:00pm-8:30am, Lock-In

August 25: 12:30-2:00, Fun day

September 15: 12:30-2:00, One Day at a Time

October 4&5: Camp-out at the Atkinson's

October 20: 12:30-2:00, Activity/Family Promise set up

November 3: 12:30-2:00, Activity

November 17: 12:30-2:00, One Day at a Time

December 1: 12:30-2:00, Activity

December TBD: Christmas in Cincinnati

December 27 & 28: 5:00pm-8:30 am, Lock-In

Communication: Remind App

Remind App is a tool we will use this year to communicate with the youth group and parents as well. This is an app used in many school systems as a way to remind students about upcoming events, assignments etc. We're hopeful this tool will allow for quicker and more accessible communication for everyone.

Young Adult Group

This ministry has been so much fun and we're excited for another year ahead of learning more about each other, having fun, learning some really helpful and life-altering trivia, and simply being together. As a reminder, this group is for young adults. Age is not a factor! If you are young at heart (or in numbers) you are invited! We gather every 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month at Books & Brews in Carmel at 7:00pm. We look forward to seeing you there!

Politics in a Purple Church - Back by Popular Demand!

Join the Current Events education hour (10am on Sundays) this fall as we again take a look at political issues from a theological/spiritual perspective as they face voters and community leaders this fall and beyond. Since the 2019 elections are municipal, many of the issues we will focus on will be local in nature, inclusive of St. Peter's home of Carmel and recognizing that many of our community members live in Indianapolis and other cities. Stay tuned for a detailed list of speakers and topics. The series will start September 15th and run until November 10th, taking a break the week of the all-church brunch. We are excited to present this popular and informative series once again!

Education Team

Team Leader: Lori Radford

educationlead@stpeterscarmel.org

Summer Parable Exploration

This summer - The journey will continue with the story of the lost (prodigal) son. Youth will explore concepts around independence, financial responsibility, celebration, the power of coming 'home', and forgiveness. In addition to focusing on the parable of the Prodigal Son, we will also be taking a look at these parables:

August 11, 2019 Great Banquet (Luke 14: 15-24), **August 25, 2019** Parable of Treasure (Matthew 13:44)

Holly Irwin and David Hoff will be leading our youth and other volunteers. *The program will run on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month through August 25th, 2019.*

Education Hour

Activities for learning and fellowship that occur from 10 to 11:00a.m. in between the two Sunday services:

- **Movies & Munchies:** Explore alliteration and faith formation as we watch a short film that has a message for us to ponder and some lessons to teach us about the value of storytelling. Becca, Lori, and Sam will rotate leading this class. All ages are encouraged to join us!
- **Lectionary:** Each week we will gather in the Parlor to discuss our scripture passage for that morning. All are welcome to attend. No theological background or savviness is required; just an inquisitive mind and a willingness for conversation.

*Due to our clergy team's summer schedule we will be staffing only two offerings on Sundays during the summer.

"Evicted" Book Study

August 8 & 15, 6:30-8:00pm in the Parlor

Evicted, by Matthew Desmond, vividly paints a detailed and heartbreaking portrait of America's eviction problem, and how it feeds into a cycle of poverty. Many of the characters that populate this book are women and children. They are true heroes, showing great courage and strength against forces that are much larger than the individual. This is a story about one of the most basic human needs...a roof overhead. Indianapolis is discouragingly ranked in the top 20 cities for highest eviction rates. You won't want to miss this opportunity to discuss the book & this social justice crisis. Evicted is "the all read" book chosen by the UCC for this season. They have created a study guide, which we will use to lead our discussion. Hope you will join us.

Inter-generational Book Study

This summer we have been reading the book, *George*, as an intergenerational book study. It's a story about gender transitioning and how emotions, family relationships, friendships, and school all respond to George becoming Charlotte. While this book is written at a 4th-6th grade reading level, we encourage people of all ages to join us, especially parents with their kids!

We will meet from 6:30-8pm in the Parlor at St. Peter's. We have two more weeks together, August 7 & 14. We look forward to future conversations with the congregation and the wider community!

Spiritual Life Team

Team Leader: Chrissy Searcy

spirituallifelead@stpeterscarmel.org

Hosting the First Congregational United Church of Christ Indianapolis Spiritual Explorer Team at the St. Peter's Labyrinth

The First Congregational UCC-Indy Spiritual Explorer Team is exploring labyrinths over the next few months and will be at the St. Peter's labyrinth on Sunday, August 11. Come and join First Congregational UCC-Indy people and the St. Peter's Spiritual Life Team for a unified spiritual experience and discussion, beginning at 1:30. After we experience the labyrinth, there will be a discussion about our labyrinth story and future. Snacks will be provided... Contact Brian Atkinson if you plan on coming and if you have any questions. brianeatkinson@gmail.com and 317-413-6471 (text okay).



New to St. Peter's? Connections Group to Start October 6th

A new Connections group will begin meeting on Sunday, October 6th. "Connections" is a place to learn more about St. Peter's: how it's organized, what it offers. For those who are ready to affirm participation with St. Peter's officially, it's a way of getting oriented to the workings of our congregation and, especially, for learning where and how you might want to get engaged. For others who are considering affirming participation, it's an opportunity to ask questions and discern in community if this is the right place for you. Above all, it's a place to make friends, an experience to share where you are on your spiritual journey. Co-led by Chrissy Searcy, Kyle Kroehler and Jon Kroehler, the group meets at 9:45 A.M. in the parlor for a total of four sessions. Subsequent meetings have been proposed for October 13th, October 20th and October 27th, but these dates are flexible, and the group will confirm workable dates once together. Those who wish to formally affirm participation with St. Peter's will do so following the completion of these classes. You can sign up in Fellowship Hall or by contacting the office at office@stpeterscarmel.org. Questions can be directed to Kyle Kroehler at Kyle@Kroehlers.com

St. Peter's Men's Retreat

The Men's Retreat will take place September 20th to 21st at Camp Palawopec, near Nashville Indiana and Brown County State Park. Come join in togetherness by spending time with friends, family and the spirit which binds us. Take a walk alongside God through fellowship in nature. Anyone is welcome to join this retreat. If you feel you wish to attend, you are welcome regardless of gender or gender identity. Any questions contact Bob Werner, (317) 709-6596, bob.werner@yahoo.com

Art Display

We will be showcasing 14 canvases that contain photography that Jill Olinger took of the border between Mexico and America. We will also display Jill's larger piece of that was displayed on the altar last year. Her pieces are very impactful.

General Synod Update

Reflections on General Synod 32

The reflections below were submitted by Rev. Chad Abbott. Watch for more reflections on General Synod in the following months.

The 20 delegates that made up the Indiana Kentucky Conference delegation for the 32nd General Synod of the United Church of Christ have all returned home from a full week of reflection, community building, celebrating, voting, debating, protesting, marching, and attempting to get to the heart of our identity as a denomination. What an experience it was, friends. As always, it is exhilarating to connect with colleagues and friends, exhausting from morning till night, tense through times of disagreement, and yet hopeful at the work God is doing in our midst as we gather. The power of this gathering for me has been our capacity for resiliency to stay at the table and continue to live in covenant even when our conversations clearly remind us of our differences and diversity of faith across this denomination. In a world where there is significant polarization, we need a Church like the United Church of Christ to be having these kinds of hard conversations with each other with dignity, grace, justice, love, and compassion. Did we accomplish this as a Church at synod? My answer is that there were glimpses.....but not yet.

One of my observations of this Synod was just how closely our conversations and resolutions dovetailed with our being a Just Peace Conference. Many years ago our Conference designated itself as a Just Peace Conference, having worked for three decades advocating and partnering with our siblings in Christ in Sri Lanka. The four elements of a Just Peace are:

- Justice for the Earth
- Justice for the Economy
- Justice for the Neighbor
- Justice for the Global Community

As we discerned our life together as a denomination, many of the resolutions and debates centered in these four areas. From condemning private prisons, recognizing opioid addiction as a public health crisis, addressing global migration, recognizing the complexity of poverty and evictions in the United States, denouncing white supremacy and sexual violence, to condemning the use of Styrofoam, publicly supporting the Green New Deal, calling us to step back from the brink of nuclear war, and getting to the heart of the local church as the basic unit of our polity. The most challenging resolution was resolution committee #8, which addressed the use of exhibit space at synod. At the heart of this resolution brought forth by the Michigan Conference was a challenge to find a systemic solution to how exhibit space is used by those groups that may not be affirming of the LGBTQ community, particularly the Faithful and Welcoming movement in our denomination. Resolution 8 really pushed us to think long and hard about our statement, "No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here." Does this statement have limitations? How far does our extravagant welcome extend? In the end, this resolution, while tense and strongly debated on both sides, was tabled to be handled by the United Church of Christ Board of Directors to set up a behavioral covenant for those using exhibit hall space.

I was grateful to see that the work we do as a Conference around Just Peace, which extends into these four areas seemed to span most of our conversations as a denomination. This also suggests to me

General Synod Update (cont.)

that the conversations we had at our Annual Gathering around “Who is our neighbor?” was the exact right conversation at this time. The world needs us engaged in that conversation and I am so grateful to our delegates who lived out courageous conversations with depth, hope, and compassion.

The Indiana Kentucky Conference was represented so well by these delegates. From Sarah Frische-Mouri Hannigan leading a committee, several individuals taking leadership and speaking on the floor during debate, to resolution submissions, and Sarah Lund working with the Mental Health Network to get them to be recognized by our denomination as an historically underrepresented group, the IKC offered a significant voice to this Synod.

It is my sense that Synod is a national, perhaps even international and inter-denominational, conversation about who God is calling us to be at this time in the life of the Church. For this very reason, I find it thrilling to be a part of such a Church. Are we having this conversation and living this covenant perfectly? Of course not. But, getting closer to the kingdom of God, closer to where we have been called as a Covenant people will require significant courage to have the kinds of hard conversations our delegation had at Synod. The conversations we had in Milwaukee were only the beginning. And now comes the most important part. How will we as a Conference carry on these important conversations? Perhaps invite one or more of the delegates to your church or association gathering and engage them in conversation. There is some significant conversation at this moment coming out of Synod about wanting to become a WISE Conference for Mental Health. I am certain that we will hear more about this as we discern together as a conference at our next annual gathering.

One of the other important conversations that we need to think about is the ongoing crisis at our nation’s southern border and the treatment of children. Several of us from the IKC went to the border this past January and spoke at our annual gathering about our experience. It was a clear topic at Synod as well. I would like to invite you to consider coming with me to the border this coming January to further this conversation. We are organizing a trip to Arizona with our partners at the Good Shepherd UCC and their work on the border. There will be a separate email coming out next week on this and there is a blurb in this newsletter on it as well. But, if you are at all interested, we will be taking a group of 15 people to the border in January 2020. Please email me at c.abbott@ikcucc.org to express your interest by July 31st.

In the end, if Synod did anything for me it reminded me of our deep and abiding connection as God’s people, that there is a broader calling of our life together than just the local setting of ministry, and that being a part of something that is as expansive as the United Church of Christ demands that we have hard conversations with each other that are rooted in the compassion of Christ. I look forward to having such conversations with you in this biennium leading to General Synod 33 in Kansas City



Notes from the Church Office

Laurie Hesselink, Office Administrator

office@stpeterscarmel.org

Office Hours & Staff Schedules

Office staffing is Monday thru Friday 8:30-2:30. Please do not hesitate to contact our pastors.

Lori Bievenour, Senior Pastor

lori@stpeterscarmel.org, 317.846.6882 x222 (Friday Sabbath/day off)

Becca Lockwood, Associate Pastor for Missions & Education

becca@stpeterscarmel.org, 317.846.6882, x223 (Friday Sabbath/day off)

Laurie Hesselink, Office Administrator

office@stpeterscarmel.org, 317-846-6882

Newsletter Articles

Articles for the September newsletter should be sent to office@stpeterscarmel.org by August 19.

Pastoral Support Teams

St. Peter's Constitution requires support teams for both of our pastors. Carol Dobrotka leads the Senior Pastor Support Team, with team members Ryan Hand, Eddie Meyer, and Sue Nye. The Associate Pastor Support Team is led by Elizabeth Roe, and includes Jaesoo Kim, Nan Bucksten, and Eric Smith.

Weekly Emails

Community prayers and announcements are emailed weekly. Notify the church office if you would like to receive these communications.

Altar Flower Donations

Sign up in Fellowship Hall or contact the church office to request floral arrangements for Sunday worship services. **(\$50 donation requested.)** Make checks payable to St. Peter's UCC, "altar flowers" in the memo line. When signing up in Fellowship Hall, please be sure to include your name. If you would prefer to not share your name with the congregation, please sign up by contacting the church office.

Donating Stock or Mutual Fund Shares at St. Peter's

Thank you for generously supporting the mission of St. Peter's United Church of Christ! Donating stock or mutual fund shares to the church is a wonderful way to experience both the joy of giving AND significant tax advantages.

The tax advantages may include:

- * NO CAPITAL GAINS TAX payable either by you or by the church
- * NO GIFT OR ESTATE TAX because SPUCC is a charitable organization
- * AN INCOME TAX DEDUCTION based on the present value of the gift

You may find numerous examples of just how powerful this method of giving is by searching online for "donating appreciated stock tax benefits".

An important determination in deciding how to best gift your shares is whether they have increased or decreased in value. If your shares have increased in value they should be "donated" to the church, NOT "redeemed" or "sold" or "cashed-in". If your shares have decreased in value, it's better to sell the shares first and then give the proceeds to the church by personal or brokerage firm check so you may deduct the loss on your taxes.

St Peter's has an account with Merrill Lynch Wealth Management who will help facilitate you in the gifting process. For more information, including our Merrill Lynch account number (not provided here for security reasons), please contact Adam Scholl Financial Secretary (financialsecretary@stpeterscarmel.org), Jenny Terry Financial Secretary-Elect (financialsecretaryelect@stpeterscarmel.org), or Seth Kreigh, Generosity Team Leader (generositylead@stpeterscarmel.org).

THANK YOU for your interest in supporting St. Peter's in this way!

St. Peter's Staff

Lori Bievenour

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lori@stpeterscarmel.org

Becca Lockwood

Associate Pastor of Missions
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Cheryl Keckler

Director of Music
musicdirector@stpeterscarmel.org

Adeline Yoder

Organist

Mission Statement of St. Peter's United Church of Christ

*St. Peter's is a welcoming community, sharing God's love
with our world and finding the Spirit in Life.*

Covenant of Welcome

"Welcome" to everybody who has faith or seeks it, who lives in hope or who needs it..

"Welcome" to all who rejoice and are strong, or who mourn and are weary.

"Welcome" to those who know Christ, and to those who long for an introduction.

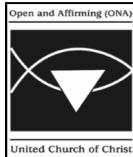
We believe God's grace is extended to all. To anyone who has felt unwelcome or has experienced rejection elsewhere, we say, "All are welcome here."

We acknowledge our diversities and we welcome, respect and support people of every race, ethnicity, economic status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, citizenship status, political affiliation, age, marital status and physical and mental ability. We are a community where all are equal, all are loved and all are respected for who and what they are, and what they can become.

We acknowledge that our fears and ignorance sometimes hinder us. We challenge one another to follow the teachings of Jesus, who denied no one and welcomed all. We strive to live our faith by supporting inclusive eness and justice for all humanity, and we invite all who gather here to participate in our ministries of service, word and sacrament.

St. Peter's United Church of Christ

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#carmelucc #findingspirit

TO: