



Centerpiece

Volume 1 Number 2

A Newsletter from the Indianapolis Center for Congregations

Welcome to the first issue of Centerpiece!

We are excited to provide this quarterly resource to the clergy, leaders and staff of area congregations.

The mission of the Indianapolis Center for Congregations is to help area congregations find and use the best resources available to address important issues and challenges they face. Another significant part of our purpose is to share what we are learning. *Centerpiece* is one of the ways we hope to keep you informed about the emerging issues and trends that faith communities are facing now and in the future.

In this issue, you will learn about our upcoming worship conference, "Meaningful Worship in a Changing Culture." We have designed this conference in response to the issues about which you who are involved in the planning and directing of congregational worship have expressed concern. I invite all clergy, staff and interested lay members from area congregations to attend this conference. I know that you will be inspired by our presenters and discover many ways to enrich the worship experiences in your congregation.

This is an exciting time as we at Indianapolis Center for Congregations strive to help you strengthen the ministries of your congregation by connecting you with excellent resources. As we continue to grow in our capacity to serve you, we are above all gratified by the wonderful work and ministry being accomplished by congregations in this community. We are privileged to walk beside you on this journey of hope and faith.

John Wimmer
Director,
Indianapolis Center
for Congregations



Conference to address changing worship practices

As members of congregations cope with ever-increasing stresses of change in our culture, the worship practices of a congregation are perhaps the most important place where the life and mission of the faith community are expressed and enriched. But while some members are demanding new worship styles that are lively and spirited, others remain comforted and challenged by the long-standing practices of their tradition. In this environment it has become increasingly important for all who are involved in worship – from planning to leading to participating – to examine the effectiveness and faithfulness of their congregation's worship practices.

To assist clergy, staff and congregation members in the continuous development of life-giving worship, the Indianapolis Center for Congregations is offering a three-day conference, **Meaningful Worship in a Changing Culture**, January 18-20, 2001. Presented in conjunction with the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Mich., the conference will address many of the issues facing faith communities as they seek to worship God in new ways.

"Both churches and synagogues are experiencing significant changes in their worship processes and practices," said John Witvliet, director of the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship. "Congregations are dealing with the challenges of how to create new and enriching worship models while remaining true to the values and traditions that their faith was built on."

The conference features 14 worship specialists from the Roman Catholic, Jewish and Protestant faith traditions. The presenters will discuss recent trends about changing worship models and share personal experiences about worship in their own lives.

"These leaders are not only experts in their field, they also practice new and progressive worship models within their own faith communities," said Tim Beuthin, co-coordinator of the conference and education director at the Indianapolis Center.

(continued on page 2)

Conference Registration

Registration deadline:

January 4, 2001

Registration Fees:

Thursday

Symposium A - \$5

Evening Session – FREE

Friday

Interfaith Clergy Luncheon - \$10

Symposium B - \$5

Friday Evening and Saturday

Worship and Learning - \$30

Festival of Worship – FREE

To register now or for an informative brochure, call 317-237-7799.

Register online at the Indianapolis Center for Congregation's web site at www.centerforcongregations.org.

Meaningful Worship in a Changing Culture

(continued from page 1)

Thursday focus: Synagogue Leadership

Thursday, January 18, the Jewish Community Center will be the site of an afternoon symposium for synagogue clergy and staff. Rabbi Lawrence Hoffman, professor of liturgy at Hebrew Union College/Jewish Institute of Religion in New York, will address the complexities of preserving both tradition and ritual while instituting change in worship practices. Thursday evening, he will focus on the growing interest in spirituality and prayer.

"Although both of these sessions were created with Jewish congregations in mind, any conference participant who has an interest in the issues, no matter their faith, is welcome to attend," stressed Beuthin. "Rabbi Hoffman is gifted in looking at worship traditions across all faiths."

Friday lunch focus: Interfaith Clergy

On Friday, January 19, during an interfaith clergy luncheon, Lawrence Hoffman (Jewish), Janet Walton (Roman Catholic) and Richard Mouw (Evangelical Protestant) will discuss how our changing culture has shaped worship practices in their own faith communities.



"Meaningful Worship in a Changing Culture" will give conference participants an opportunity to hear from and network with conference leaders from around the country and worship leaders from around the city.

Friday afternoon focus: Christian Worship Leaders

Through plenary sessions and workshops, participants will explore worship as the nourishing center of congregational life, the distinctive roles church staff play in worship and models of collaborative worship planning.

Friday evening and Saturday focus: Worship and Learning

Targeted for all persons interested in Christian worship, the Friday evening and Saturday sessions will include a plenary exploring "what is so precious about worship that we must preserve at all costs?" and "what recent innovations can't we live without?"

On Saturday, participants can choose from a variety of workshops (see below).

A key component of the worship conference is the opportunity to experience worship in addition to attending the presentations and workshops.

"In planning this conference we felt that it would be enriching to participants to incorporate actual worship and spiritual time into the conference framework," said Witvliet.

The conference will conclude with a special "Festival of Christian Worship" on Saturday, January 20, at 3 p.m. at the East 91st Street Christian Church.

The festival, which features a large combined choir from area congregations, will "emphasize that the people's song is at the heart of Christian worship," Witvliet said. "We are hoping for a very large crowd to celebrate together in praise." The festival is open to the public and is free.

To register for all or any component of the conference, call 317-237-7799, or register online at www.centerforcongregations.org.

Workshop Offerings

- Preaching and Text and Texture of Worship
- Integrating Worship, Hospitality and Evangelism Ministries
- Preparing and Involving Children and Youth in Worship
- Helping People Sing Their Hearts Out
- Halle, Halle, Halle: Global Music for Local Practice
- Worship and Spirituality
- The Organist as Leader of Congregational Song
- Touchstones of Worship for Postmoderns
- What is Theological about Worship?
- Imagination and Improvisation: Developing Dialectical Forms of Congregational Worship
- Preaching Sin in a Changing Culture
- Taize and Other Models of Contemplative Musical Prayer
- Sing and Play Gospel
- Leading a Congregation through Changes in Worship Practices
- Worship and Today's Culture: Finding a "Third Way"
- Sacred Spaces: Textures, Forms, Sounds and Smells that Invite Embodied Participation in Worship
- The Catechumenal Model: A Paradigm for Being Church in Post-Christian North America
- Intergenerational Worship: Children and Youth as Full Participants in Worship

Center provides innovative computers and ministry grants program

In a program that is the first of its kind, Indianapolis Center for Congregations is assisting area faith communities use computer technology for ministry.

Through the Computers and Ministry Grants Initiative, the Center has accepted 62 congregations (see list at right) into a program to help them strengthen their ministries through the use of technology.

“Congregations have found very few vendors or software specialists who speak their language. We are helping them find ways to accomplish their goals more effectively and efficiently.”
—Aaron Spiegel

“We haven’t found any other institutions doing this type of work,” said Aaron Spiegel, coordinator of the project and information technology director for the Indianapolis Center for Congregations. “Congregations are searching for this type of help, and they just couldn’t find it anywhere.”

According to Spiegel, the impact of technology on parish ministry is still emerging, and the congregational leaders are hungry for assistance.

“Congregations have found very few vendors or software specialists who speak their language or understand their needs,” Spiegel said. “We are helping them find ways to accomplish their goals more effectively and efficiently.”

Spiegel said that the priority of the Computer Ministry Grants Initiative program is to “create educated consumers and help them use this emerging technology to advance the ministry of their congregation.”

He explained that each congregation that was accepted into the program must complete four stages before becoming eligible for a grant award.

They are required to:

1. Participate in a “Computers and Ministry” course;
2. Schedule on-site visits with Indianapolis Center consultants;
3. Develop a technology plan;
4. Submit a grant proposal for funding for up to half the cost of implementing the plan.

Through the program, the Indianapolis Center for Congregations is guiding each of the congregations through the process and helping to increase the initial application vision.

“We never realized all that technology could be doing for our congregation and mission. The Indianapolis Center for Congregation’s staff is showing us how technology can carry the vision of the church further,” said Rev. Bill Toombs, assistant pastor of Indianapolis Christian Fellowship.

Toombs said his initial application request has grown from just requesting some basic assistance to having a plan that could stretch well into the future.

“The assistance that the Center has offered has been tremendous,” Toombs said. “They have been so helpful in expanding our vision and have shown us how technology can fit into and enhance our vision.”

The Computers and Ministry Initiative program is funded by a grant from the Lilly Endowment Inc. as an effort to help congregations in the Indianapolis area address the challenging issues they face utilizing emerging computer technology.

Computer technology and ministry will be more closely connected at these 62 congregations in the Indianapolis area. Each was accepted into the Indianapolis Center for Congregations Computers and Ministry Grants Initiative program.

Breeding Tabernacle CME Church
Carmel Lutheran Church, Carmel
Centennial Bible Church, Westfield
Center United Methodist Church
Christ the Savior Lutheran Church, Fishers
Christ United Methodist Church
Church of the Living God, Temple 3
Clermont Christian Church
Community Christian Church of Brownsburg
Community Church of Mooresville
Congregation Beth-El Zedeck
CrossRoads Church at Westfield
Downey Avenue Christian Church
Eagle Creek Assembly of God
Fairview Presbyterian Church
First Baptist Church of Cumberland
First Baptist Church of Greenwood
First Baptist Church of Plainfield
First Baptist of West Indianapolis
First Christian Church, Mooresville
First Free Methodist Church
First Lutheran Church
First-Meridian Heights Presbyterian Church
Garfield Park Baptist Church
Geist Christian Church
Geist Community Baptist Church
Holy Angels Catholic Church
Holy Cross Catholic Church
Hope Community Church, Brownsburg
Hope Evangelical Covenant Church
Horizon Christian Fellowship
Immanuel United Church of Christ
Indian Creek Christian Church
Indianapolis Christian Fellowship
Living Christ Lutheran Church, Avon
Monrovia Christian Church, Monrovia
Mt. Paran Missionary Baptist Church
Mt. Zion Baptist Church
Mt. Zion General Baptist Church
New Birth Ministries
New Faith Ministries
North United Methodist Church
Northeast Community Church
Northside New Era Missionary Baptist Church
Northwood Christian Church
Our Shepherd Lutheran Church
Peace Lutheran Church for the Deaf
Pilgrim Lutheran Church
Resurrection Lutheran Church
Second Missionary Baptist Church
Southeastern United Church of Christ
Southport United Methodist Church
St. Christopher Catholic Church
St. Gabriel Catholic Church
St. Mark Catholic Church
St. Mary Catholic Church
St. Michael Catholic Church, Greenfield
The Church Within
There Is Hope Christian Church
Western Star Baptist Church
Zion Evangelical United Church of Christ
Zionsville United Methodist Church



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Join us in our new home

The Indianapolis Center for Congregations will be moving to a new home early in 2001.

Construction is in full swing at the new offices at 303 N. Alabama St. (the corner of New York and Alabama Streets) in downtown Indianapolis.

According to John Wimmer, director of the Indianapolis Center for Congregations, the facility, a former restaurant, will be a professional but welcoming office space and resource center.

"The Center has been experiencing growing pains since our opening in September 1997. With a staff that has expanded from a lone director to a total of nine staff members, as well as the Center's increasing number of program offerings, the need for more space has become a necessity," said Wimmer.

A spacious gathering/meeting area will eventually be the main feature of the new offices. In addition, a large library of printed materials and publications will be available for congregation leaders and staff to utilize. Computer terminals with Internet access will make many congregational resources a simple mouse click away. Users can also test the most recent versions of software.

Congregations in need of meeting space will be welcome to use the conference room, which is also large enough for Indianapolis Center for Congregations' educational programs and gatherings.

"We can't wait to give everyone a tour as soon as the facility is completed," said Wimmer. Look for details about an open house in the next issue of *Centerpiece*.

Coming soon to the Center

George Bullard, executive director of New Reformation Solutions, will bring his 25 years of consulting and coaching experience with congregations and denominational and parachurch organizations to Indianapolis area congregations. He will work with a group of leaders who are ready to redirect their congregations through revisioning and revitalization.

More details of this four-session coaching event will appear in the next issue of the newsletter.

Session dates with Dr. Bullard will be:

April 23 - 24, 2001

June 1 - 2, 2001

September 10 - 15, 2001

February 22 - 23, 2002

