More than 15 years ago, the Indianapolis Center for Congregations began its work with the assumption that congregations can learn to address challenges and opportunities with just the right amount of help. The Center assists congregations in finding that help by connecting pastors, leaders, staff and laity to resources that advance their knowledge and skills. We facilitate this connection through grants, education events and resource conversations. The Center helps with almost every imaginable issue identified by congregations – youth ministry, community outreach, strategic planning, spirituality, leadership development and more.

Technology is always a prevalent issue for Indiana congregations, as their leaders strive to expand the ways these tools can serve their missions – blending progress with tradition. It is important that mission drives the use of technology, not the other way around. The Center looks for the best resources to facilitate this balance, whether it involves scripture software, social media tools, an overall technology plan, congregation management software, computer networking or any of the varied facets of this growing field for congregations.

To address this important topic, the Center for Congregations worked with central Indiana congregations through the Technology and Ministry Grants Initiative (TMGI) and began planning for a statewide TMGI. This initiative includes an educational component, coaching and financial support in the form of matching grants. TMGI helps participants learn more about technology and ministry, develop plans to address technology needs unique to their congregations, and receive assistance and financial support toward implementing their own technology plans.

Our work with congregations and technology was one of many advancements in 2011. The Center now has five offices throughout Indiana. The satellite office in Crown Point is the newest member of the Center team. The year 2011 saw a record number of education events and meetings hosted by the Center – 148 events, drawing a record 2,294 participants. Center staff had more than 7,500 conversations with Indiana congregations in 2011. We continue to work with our national affiliate, the Alban Institute, to share with others what we are learning from congregations statewide.

We are happy to be part of the lives of Indiana congregations. Strengthening these faith communities continues to be our mission, our passion and our work. We look back on 2011 with a sense of accomplishment, and we look forward to 2012 with a sense of anticipation of the good things that are to come.

Tim Shapiro
Center President
Teenage members of Progressive Baptist Church have the routine down to a science. Give them a few minutes, and they can clear the sanctuary of its 500-plus chairs, musical instruments and potted plants, and turn it into an expansive basketball court, complete with a backstop at either end. The flexibility of the space has served the Indianapolis congregation well since members erected the family life center a dozen years ago. A dedicated sanctuary was slated as the next major construction project, but the recession got in the way. “So we changed our thought process from ‘Let’s raise money to build something new’ to ‘let’s improve what we already have,’” explains Marti Prather, the church business manager.

Topping the list of much-needed upgrades was an efficient sound system. “Depending on where you were seated, you might not hear the worship service,” says Associate Pastor Benny Polin. “The ceiling speakers were in a cluster, and the sound was muffled.” Members were so familiar with the acoustics problem that they knew which chairs to occupy and which to avoid on Sunday mornings. But what about visitors?

“One of my greatest fears was that someone might come for the first time and sit in the wrong spot,” says Prather. “Why would they ever come back?” The pastoral staff shared her concerns and agreed enthusiastically when she recommended they pursue the opportunity to participate in the Center for Congregations’ Technology and Ministry Grants Initiative (TMGI), announced last year. “I remember reading about the initiative in a newsletter and saying to Pastor [Michael] Jones, ‘We have to do this!’ It quickly became a priority for our church.”

In creating TMGI, the Center revised and updated another successful initiative. Its first major grants initiative, offered in 2000, was called Computers and Ministry. “The name gives a hint at the difference between the two initiatives,” explains Aaron Spiegel, the Center’s information technology director. “We wanted to broaden the scope beyond computers because technology now affects everything from theatrical lighting to musical instruments to smart phones to heating and cooling systems. Congregations have embraced the reality that technology isn’t a choice or a luxury anymore. It’s a necessary tool of ministry.”

Application for TMGI was open to congregations in eight Central Indiana counties. The Center’s intent was to select 30 participants, but that number swelled to 33 because the field was so competitive and “the grant proposals were so good,” according to Spiegel. Participants varied in size, faith tradition and geographic location, but one characteristic remained constant. “Every congregation came into the initiative saying, ‘we want to do X-Y-Z,’” says Spiegel, “and they ended up doing X-Y-Z plus A-B-C.” The three all-day educational sessions increased their knowledge of available technology and expanded their vision of how tech tools could support and streamline their ministries.

With guidance from a Center consultant, each congregational team prepared and fine-tuned its proposal and applied for a grant of up to $30,000, which the congregation agreed to match. The Center’s eventual payout was $892,175, says Spiegel, but because several congregations more than matched the grant amounts, “the total investment in technology exceeded $2 million.”
Raising the matching funds was a challenge for some con-
gregations and put their creativity to the test. As an example,
Progressive Baptist Church decided to complete its sound-
system upgrade in two phases to ease the financial burden
on likely donors. A campaign called “Set Aside a Sacrifice”
encouraged members to break a habit, forfeit a treat—a fast-
food lunch, a midday latte, a weekend movie—and make a
contribution instead. A poster, tacked to a wall in the wor-
ship area, depicted a thermometer inching upward toward
the $30,000 goal. The campaign’s tagline asked: “Progressive,
Can You Hear Me Now?” Early feedback indicated the
answer to the question was an enthusiastic “yes.”

“Even though we don’t have all the new speakers installed
yet, people are saying, ‘Wow! We can hear you now, and
we’re only halfway done!’” reports Prather. “They’re excited
about the positive changes and look forward to seeing—and
hearing—what’s next.”

**BLENDING PROGRESS WITH TRADITION**

Sound quality of a different type was the dilemma that
prompted Congregation Beth-El Zedeck to apply for inclu-
sion in TMGI. “We had a phone system that was so old that the
receivers were no longer being produced,” explains Bonnie
Craig, human resources and foundation coordinator at the
Indianapolis synagogue. “If a handset went down, we had to
try and find one that was refurbished. Replacing the entire
system was such a significant expense that we didn’t feel we
could to do it without help from the Center.”

Participation in the Center’s
educational sessions benefited Beth-El Zedeck’s tech team
in two ways. First, “it was a wonderful networking oppor-
tunity,” says Craig. “I was able to talk with other congrega-
tions that had recently gone through a phone system change.
They recommended vendors we should consider and told us
about the problems they encountered along the way. It saved
an enormous amount of time.”

Second, the interaction convinced Craig and her
colleagues that new phones were a good starting place…
but much more was possible. Their sprawling facility, built
in 1958, is home to a large and diverse congregation of 800
families. Some 200 youth attend the synagogue’s religious
school, and 220 preschoolers—only half of them Jewish—are
enrolled in its early childhood program. Fifty employees are
spread throughout the building, adding to the internal and
external communication challenge. Keeping in touch was no
easy task.

“Our young members had been pushing us to take advan-
tage of innovative technology,” says Rabbi Dennis Sasso.
“They convinced us that people don’t send flyers and invita-
tion by mail anymore; they send ‘e-vites.’ We learned that
more members read our news on the Web than in the printed
bulletin. With the help of the Center and some savvy people
on our staff, we’ve significantly transformed the way we
communicate our programs and activities and the way the
synagogue does its business.”

In addition to a new phone system, the building now has
wireless Internet access in areas where parents congregate
as they wait for their children
to complete religious classes.
A new security camera
enables teachers in the educa-
tion wing to remain in their
classrooms and see who is
at the outside door request-
ing admission. Sasso has use
of a state-of-the-art projector
when he leads adult educa-
tion classes or makes presen-
tations at board meetings,
and staff members can access
information about various
employee benefits by simply
logging onto an intranet site. To
no one’s surprise, the feedback on the new equipment and
its capabilities has been overwhelmingly positive, a response
that is in keeping with the synagogue’s long-held point of
view.

“We like to describe ourselves as a congregation rooted in
tradition but engaged in modernity,” says Sasso. “Our catch-
phrase is ‘tradition has a vote but not a veto.’ We don’t wait
for the future to happen.”
As an interesting postscript to Beth-El Zedeck’s foray into technology, the antiquated telephone system that set the project in motion is still in use, but not at the synagogue. Members of the tech team contacted Nancy Armstrong, their consultant at the Center, and asked for suggestions about donating the equipment. Armstrong put them in touch with a newsletter aimed at nonprofit agencies, and “we found an organization that was terribly excited to take our phone system,” says Bonnie Craig.

**Countdown to Worship**
Covenant United Methodist Church in Fort Wayne sought help from the Center’s northeast Indiana regional office when it embarked on an effort that Pastor Jack Scott describes as “bringing the church into the 21st century.” Upgrading the sanctuary’s technology was at the heart of the $170,000 project, which also included carpeting and a fresh coat of paint. Motivation for the new lighting, sound system, projection equipment and multiple screens was a desire to expand church membership.

“We’ve been holding our own for a couple of years,” explains John Kratzat, music director. “We wanted to approach a younger demographic with the kinds of things they expect in worship, especially if in the past they’ve attended a big nondenominational church that used a lot of technology. We certainly don’t want to ‘steal’ members from other congregations, but we do want to appeal to the unchurched. When people move into the area and visit us, we want them to stay.”

To accomplish that goal without alienating older members, the church conducts two traditional worship services on Sunday mornings, with a contemporary service wedged in between. The sermon remains the same, but everything else varies. “We’re trying to put on two very different kinds of services,” says Greg Krempel, hired this year to oversee the contemporary worship experience. “We need to cater to people who prefer a traditional style and those who want a more contemporary approach. We have to get across the same idea and accomplish it in a service that is only an hour long.”

Kratzat agrees with his colleague’s assessment and admits that a traditional worship service can become stagnant without the occasional addition of a new element. While technology may play a more obvious role in a contemporary setting, it also can enhance the familiar. “We try to stretch folks,” he says. “But we have to do it delicately...whether it’s with a piece of music, the pastor’s message or a video clip.”

A resource grant from the Center gave a boost to the church’s fundraising campaign that has benefited both worship experiences. For six weeks the congregation gathered in fellowship hall on Sunday mornings while the sanctuary underwent extensive renovation. The 20-year-old speakers were replaced; bars of lights and new projectors were positioned on the ceiling; screens were placed at strategic points; and a control booth was equipped with a digital board that could be set one way for the traditional service and flipped another way for the contemporary version. Monitors outside the sanctuary now show a timer that gives a countdown to the start of the contemporary service: Five minutes until worship; four minutes...three minutes....

“To use the countdown timer before the traditional service would be like committing suicide,” jokes Pastor Scott. “You learn what you can and can’t do. I can’t make traditionalists into contemporary folks; and I wouldn’t want to. As a preacher, I always have to think of my audience.” He says both Covenant audiences have given the recent improvements two thumbs up, and he agrees with them. “I’ve been pastoring for 28 years, and I think it’s exciting suddenly to have all these tools available. Sometimes I wonder how we did ministry without them.”

Covenant United Methodist Church in Fort Wayne
## Educational Events

- 148 Educational Events and Meetings
- Including 46 held in Central Indiana
- 35 in the Northeast area
- 24 in the Southwest
- 22 in the Southeast
- and 21 in the Northwest
- 2294 People representing
- 1008 Congregations from
- 105 Faith Groups or Denominations

### A Celebration of Giving
A Place of Welcome
A Practical Guide to Congregational Planning
Alban Institute Board of Directors
Archdiocese of Indianapolis meeting
Assessing Our Situation Luncheon Series
Auburn Ministerial Association
Brownstown Christian Church meetings
Brownstown Area Ministerial Association
Brownstown Nazarene leadership meeting
Calvary Lutheran Church, Indianapolis
Charting Our Direction Luncheon Series
Christ Apostolic Church meeting
Circle of Care
Columbus First Baptist planning meeting

<table>
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<th>Southwest</th>
<th>Southeast</th>
<th>Northwest</th>
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<td>998 Conversations in</td>
<td>1004 Conversations in</td>
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<td>94 are New Cases with</td>
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<td>46% were laity</td>
<td>52% were laity</td>
<td>39% were laity</td>
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### Grant Recipients
Abundant Harvest United Methodist Church, Avon Christian Church, Batesville Christian Church, Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Bible Church of Indianapolis, Bloomington First Christian, Boggstown Presbyterian Church, Branchville United Methodist, Bremen United Methodist, Bridgeway Community Church, Calvary Christian Church, Calvary United Methodist Church, Carmel Lutheran Church, Carmel Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Central Presbyterian Church, Christ Community Church, Christian Park Reformed Church, Church at Mt. Gilead, College Park Church, Congregation Beth-El Zedeck, Covenant United Methodist Fort Wayne, Cross Lane Community Church, Crossroads Community Church, Cumberland First Baptist Church, Dale Presbyterian Church, Eagle Church, Eighth Street Mennonite Church, Epworth United Methodist Church, Evangelical United Church of Christ, Fairlawn Presbyterian Church, Faith Church, Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church, Fall Creek Community Church, First Baptist Church of Columbus, First Presbyterian Church of Jasper, First Presbyterian Church of Jeffersonville, First Presbyterian Church of Scottsburg, First Unitarian Church of Hobart, First Wayne St. United Methodist Church, Fort Wayne Baptist Church, Fortville Christian Church, Freedom Church, Genesis Church, Griffith Lutheran Church, Harvest Bible Chapel Indy West, Hazel Dell Christian Church, Heartland Church, Heartland Church of the Nazarene, Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church, Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, Iglesia Metodista Vida Nueva, Indiana Chin Baptist Church, Indianapolis Christian Fellowship, Indianapolis Grace Ethiopian Church, Indy Metro Church, Jamestown Christian Church, Life Journey Church, John Knox Presbyterian Church, King of Glory Lutheran Church, Korean Presbyterian Church, Messiah Lutheran Church, Mooresville Friends Meeting, Mt. Auburn United Methodist Church, Mt. Carmel Baptist Church, Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Nativity Catholic Church, New Hope Christian Church, New Hope Presbyterian Church, New Covenant Christian Center, New Direction Worship Center, New Life Church, NYI Council Planning Meetings, Olive Branch/Centenary Christian Church, Plymouth Congregation Staff Retreat, Quaker Life Advisory Committee, Resource Grant Information Sessions, Resourcing Congregations, Roanoke Seminary Retreat, Shaping a Theology of Giving, Social Media for Congregational Leaders, St. Joseph United Methodist staff meeting, St. Paul Lutheran council meeting, Staying on Track Luncheon Series, Sustainable Youth Ministry, SW Book Giveaway Open House, Technology and Ministry Grant Initiative, The Art of Being a Healing Presence, The River Christian Church, Transformative Philanthropy, Trends in Religious Giving, Understanding Generational Differences, Understanding Religious Giving, Unitarian Universalist Committee Meeting, United Churches of Christ Clergy Group, Vibrant Music and Worship, Youth Activities that Reach and Teach, North Salem United Methodist Church, North United Methodist Church, Northside New Era Missionary Church, Old Bethel United Methodist Church, Pilgrim Lutheran Church, Progressive Missionary Baptist Church, Redeemer Lutheran Church, Redeemer Presbyterian Church, Roberts Park United Methodist Church, Searle Creek Christian Church, Sheridan United Methodist Church, Sherwood Oaks Christian Church, Sinai Synagogue South Bend, Southland Community Church, St. Anthony Catholic Church, St. Christopher’s Episcopal Church, St. Francis-in-the-Field Episcopal Church, St. James Lutheran Church, St. Joan of Arc Catholic Church, St. John Lutheran Church of Kendallville, St. John Lutheran Church, St. Jude Catholic Church, St. Mark’s United Methodist Church, St. Peter’s United Church of Christ of Carmel, St. Thomas Episcopal Church, St. Thomas Evangelical Lutheran Church, Tabernacle Presbyterian Church, Traders Point Christian Church, Trinity Episcopal Church, Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Unitarian Universalist Church, Unitarian Universalist Church of Evansville, Wilkinson Church of Christ, Woodburn Missionary Church, Zion United Church of Christ, Zionsville Presbyterian Church
### Financial Report

#### STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION AND ACTIVITIES

The following is a summary of the statement of financial position and the statement of activities of the Center as of December 31, 2011 and for the year then ended. This financial information was extracted from the audited financial statements of the Indianapolis Center for Congregations, Inc. It does not, however, include all disclosures normally associated with financial statements prepared in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles. The complete financial statements, including footnotes and the report of our auditors, BKD, LLP, are available for review upon request.

#### Assets

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#### Net Assets

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#### Summary Statement of Financial Position

#### Summary Statement of Activities

**Revenues and other support**

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**Expenses and losses**

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**Change in net assets**

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<tr>
<td>Contributions</td>
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<td>(4,566,539)</td>
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Indianapolis Center for Congregations
303 N. Alabama St., Suite 100
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204
Phone 317-237-7799
Fax 317-237-7795
Toll free 866-307-2381

Covenant United Methodist Church in Fort Wayne

Mission
The mission of the Indianapolis Center for Congregations is to strengthen Indiana congregations by helping them find and use the best resources available to address the challenges and opportunities they identify — and then to share what we learn nationwide.

The Indianapolis Center for Congregations is funded by Lilly Endowment Inc. and is a supporting organization of the Alban Institute. Alban is a research, publishing, education and consulting organization based in Herndon, Virginia. Founded in 1974, Alban is an independent center of learning and leadership development with a focus on congregations.

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Nancy DeMott, Resource Director
Kara Faris, Education Director
Doug Hanner, Southeast Director
Wendy McCormick, Southwest Director
Aaron Spiegel, Information Technology Director
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Eunita Sullivan, Northeast Administrative Assistant
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Herndon, Virginia
Rev. Dr. Timothy Shapiro
Indianapolis, Indiana (non-voting)

Acknowledgements
Photography
Chris Minnick
Writing
Holly G. Miller