Anyone familiar with the Indianapolis Center for Congregations knows that we keep detailed records of the phone calls we receive, the conversations we have, and the resources we offer. This is one of the ways we tune into the needs and concerns of Indiana congregations and keep abreast of the challenges they face. Faith communities care deeply about their children and youth. They want to build programs that can sustain momentum even after high school seniors move on to college and charismatic youth leaders move on to new assignments. This year’s annual report tells the story of five congregations that have utilized Center services to strengthen efforts to pass faith traditions on to the next generation. You’ll read how:

- An Angola church used funds from a Flourishing Congregations grant to teach youth about social justice and instill an appreciation of community ministry.
- A resource grant enabled teenage members of an Indianapolis parish to attend an intense summer program that focuses on liturgical and spiritual formation.
- A Zionsville congregation earmarked part of a Life Together grant to design a strategic youth ministry plan that has a goal of engaging members of all ages.
- Two neighboring Terre Haute churches, one Presbyterian and one United Methodist, are participating in a Center long-term learning opportunity to strengthen their combined youth program.

Also in 2010, the Center announced a major grants initiative called “Technology and Ministry.” We currently have 33 diverse congregations designing and implementing projects that utilize technology to enhance worship, promote interactivity, and connect members with the services they need. Also in 2010, we collaborated with our colleagues at the Alban Institute on a series of events that introduced seven faith-based organizations to our approach to working with congregations. Representatives from as far away as New York, Georgia and Colorado gathered to consider ways they might adapt the Center’s method of identifying resources for congregations to their organizations.

Our ability to walk alongside Hoosier congregations expanded this year as we neared completion of a plan to open satellite offices in the state’s four corners. No longer will congregational leaders have to travel to Indianapolis to attend workshops or seminars. Because our programming now is accessible to all Hoosiers, the 124 education events that we hosted this past year drew a record 1,879 participants. By the time this report is circulated, we will have opened our fourth satellite; a northwest Center, based at Crown Point. We are ready and willing to strengthen congregations throughout Indiana by connecting them with resources to help them address their challenges and opportunities.

Tim Shapiro
Center President

Front cover photos show (clockwise from top left): First Congregational United Church of Christ in Angola; Sacred Heart of Christ Catholic Church, Indianapolis; Christ Church, the Lutheran Church of Zionsville; and Central Presbyterian Church in Terre Haute.
Whenever Pastor Deb Davis announces plans for a field trip, members of the confirmation class at First Congregational United Church of Christ in Angola know they’re in for an adventure. Past destinations have included the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C., a stop along the underground railroad in Ohio and a dynamic African-American church in urban Chicago. Closer to home, the kids have toured a church-supported clinic for patients without health insurance, and they hang out at Cahoots, an ecumenical coffee house—cosponsored by the UCC and Methodist congregations—where teens can access free tutoring and counseling services.

“This is what a church does when it lives out the gospel,” says Davis. Her church, known for its inclusiveness, has been a catalyst for most, if not all, of the city’s outreach ministries. It also is one of several congregations in Indiana that are utilizing grants from the Center for Congregations to prepare the next generation of church leaders.

“This is a congregation with a long and significant history of community service,” says Brian Witwer, director of the northeast office of the Center for Congregations. “It’s been a strong advocate for human rights in Angola, and its influence reaches far beyond its relatively small size.”

A desire to pass along its tradition of social activism to its youth was a factor in the church applying for a Flourishing Congregations grant in 2008. Taking a nudge from UCC’s national headquarters that encouraged congregations to have conversations about race, the Angola church created an in-depth plan to sensitize its members to issues of subtle discrimination that exist today.

“Racism is still present in society, but it often is under the radar,” says Davis. Activities designed to spark discussion included a “Diversity Sunday,” a series of anti-racism training sessions and an unforgettable road trip that took youth to a former North Carolina plantation where slaves once had to pick their weight in cotton.

The group—four youth and three adults—traveled by van, which enabled them to stop along the way to visit Cincinnati’s Freedom Center. The hours spent on the road gave Davis the chance to engage the kids in a dialogue about Jesus’ ministry to the marginalized people of his time. She stressed that contemporary Christians have similar opportunities to serve today. “The kids are learning about who Jesus is and where we can see him in our world,” she says. “I think those kinds of lessons have more impact than merely memorizing Bible verses.”

When they arrived at the former plantation, now home to the UCC’s Franklinton Center, the youth met four African-American teens who acted as guides and shared their stories of racism. A staff member walked them through a cotton field and showed them the shackles once worn by slaves. The message was sobering.

“Before the trip I took so many things for granted,” says Anna Finley, “but not anymore.” Added seventh grader Tyler Kissinger, “I felt like I was in a different world.”

Diversity Sunday is now an annual celebration at Angola’s UCC church, and members are hoping to attract international students from nearby Trine University to their worship services. Although the grant is completed, its impact continues.

“There is no question that those who participated in the program—and even those who didn’t—see the world differently,” says Davis. “They are eager to learn and stretch and grow, especially our youth. Education at its best opens our minds to other ideas, and that is what has happened here.”

A SENSE OF EXPECTATION
An oversized photograph, dated 1911, hangs outside Father Larry Janezic’s office at Sacred Heart of Christ Catholic Church on the south side of Indianapolis. It depicts row after row of young communicants, dressed in starchy white and posed in front of their stately parish home. “Sacred Heart was once a Catholic mega-church,” explains Mike Perigo, a 20-year member of the congregation. “More than 5,000 families worshipped here.”
Today that number has shrunk to 400. The church closed its two elementary schools and high school, and its friary no longer provides housing for priests assigned to ministries throughout the city. Because it was established in 1875 to serve all German immigrants who settled near the Hoosier capital, Sacred Heart has no parish boundaries. Many members live close to other churches but opt to drive the extra miles to attend Mass in Sacred Heart’s beautiful neo-Gothic sanctuary.

“There is a sense of expectation that grows from the belief that our best days are not behind us,” says Perigo. “A lot is still happening here.”

That belief recently prompted a core of members to draft a plan to prepare leaders to help guide the congregation’s future work. Supported in part by a resource grant from the Center, the plan included a week of training for youth at Saint Meinrad School of Theology in southern Indiana. The five-day program, called One Bread, One Cup, is an intense learning experience that focuses on liturgical and spiritual formation.

“It’s a lot like boot camp,” says Perigo, who attends adult classes at Saint Meinrad and recommended the youth program to his colleagues at Sacred Heart. “The day starts early and goes well into the night. The kids study the Bible, plan worship services and read theological texts that would challenge college students. They come home with an understanding of theology and liturgy that is profound and personal. They’re truly transformed.”

The task for the congregation now is to provide opportunities for the youth to put their newly acquired knowledge to work. Father Larry, who arrived at the end of 2010, recognizes the potential and hopes to recruit the teens for a liturgy team that he is building. He also would like to add a staff member to oversee youth programming and to harness the enthusiasm generated by the Saint Meinrad experience.

“I wasn’t familiar with the One Bread, One Cup program,” he says, “but I recognize good theology when I see it.” He contrasts the old way of spiritual formation—“memorizing the right answers to the catechism”—to a new way that involves a thoughtful exploration of the faith followed by a mature commitment to it. He characterizes the old way as “an automatic kind of indoctrination” that begins with baptism.

“If you are baptized, you are in,” he says, “and you are baptized as a child.”

The concept of youth assuming leadership responsibilities extends beyond serving as acolytes and helping to administer the Eucharist. Among the parish’s outreach activities is a designated work day that began a decade ago to commemorate the church’s 125th anniversary. Called “Angels from the Heart,” the annual event attracts hundreds of volunteers from the city who tackle a variety of service projects in the neighborhoods that surround the congregation. Parish youth work side by side with adults.

“Kids are willing to be involved in the church, but we haven’t always called on them,” says Perigo. “I think Protestants are more attuned to the idea of call. Catholics tend to be a little more passive. Maybe we don’t ask for a commitment because we’re afraid people will say ‘no’ but these kids have already said ‘yes.’ They came back from Saint Meinrad excited and anxious to serve. Now we need to work through the concept of engagement.”

**YOU ARE NOW ENTERING THE MISSION FIELD**

The inscription over an exit door at Christ Church, the Lutheran Church of Zionsville, reminds parishioners: “You are now entering the mission field.” This summer, the congregation’s youth will accept that challenge when they travel 1,600 miles round-trip to Elizabeth City, N.C. They will rehab the homes of elderly and disadvantaged residents. Like the youth at Sacred Heart, they will roll up their sleeves and work alongside adult volunteers in an effort to positively impact the community.

The support that the church has for its youth is evident throughout the building. In the new welcome center, a bulletin board advertises the opportunity to “buy” a mile toward the North Carolina destination. When the congregation received a Life Together grant from the Center last year, members cited youth ministry as one of five priorities deserving of attention. “We worked really hard to gather everyone’s opinion,” explains Stephen Enz, a member of the Life Together leadership team. In the end, a survey and focus groups revealed widespread interest in developing a youth program that was sustainable regardless of changes in the congregation or its professional staff.

“The middle school program has been strong but the high school program has been dwindling,” says Enz, who teaches Sunday school and has a daughter in the youth group. “Every once in a while we have a bunch of kids who are tied together...
but they graduate and go off to college. This grant allowed us to assess our strengths and figure out a plan for sustainability.”

To help design such a plan the congregation hired Youth Ministry Architects consultants, who coached the congregation through a goal-setting process. One of the goals was achieved when the church recruited a half-time youth director to oversee fellowship, study and outreach activities for the congregation’s middle grade and high school students. The staff addition has met with overall approval despite its impact on the budget.

“In a tight financial year there’s always a temptation to slash things,” says Nancy Schaus, director of the Life Together team. “That hasn’t happened. In fact, support has grown.”

Other aspects of the program are still unfolding. A youth ministry team meets monthly to assess progress, and members hope to visit and learn from neighboring churches that have strong programs. They’re considering new ways to boost interaction between their congregation’s youth and adults. In a vision statement drafted for the Life Together planning process, members agreed that “youth are the continuing lifeblood of the church” and equipping them to carry on the Lutheran faith tradition is a responsibility of the entire church.

**The power of youth**

Expanding support for youth ministry also is the goal of congregational leaders in Terre Haute who recently made the two-hour trip to Evansville in a blinding snowstorm to attend a Center event on the topic. “Our driver was a little white-knuckled,” admits Lant Davis, pastor of Central Presbyterian Church and one of five passengers in the van en route to the first training session of Sustainable Youth Ministry, a long-term learning program offered by the southwest Center for Congregations. Waiting for the Central Presbyterian delegation were Mark DeVries and Stephanie Caro, consultants with Youth Ministry Architects, the same organization that assisted the leadership team at Christ Church in Zionsville.

“A colleague recommended DeVries’ book, Sustaining Youth Ministry, and emailed information about the training program,” says Cheryl Moles, Christian educator at Central Presbyterian. “We ordered several copies, liked what we read and wanted to learn more.” The Center’s long-term learning program came along at just the right time. Participation in this initiative offers them four days of training with the book’s author and telephone coaching sessions between the meetings. The team is determined to build a program that will continue regardless of staff changes.

“It’s a sustainable model because it doesn’t depend upon the charisma of the youth leader,” says Davis. “If the organization is in place and the plans are humming along, the thing can almost run itself. That’s what attracted us to it.” Convincing volunteers to step up and get involved is the team’s current assignment.

Central Presbyterian collaborates in its youth ministry with its neighboring congregation Centenary United Methodist. Together the congregations are building a single, strong youth ministry.

In the meantime, the blended youth group meets each Sunday evening, alternating monthly between the two church buildings. At first the teens tended to cluster according to their congregational membership but “now they’re starting to warm up to each other,” says youth leader Amanda Tramel, who had no difficulty finding a curriculum that was acceptable to both denominations. “It’s fun to see them cross the line.” The ease of crossing the line and finding common ground gives the leadership team hope for future collaborations.

“There are all kinds of ways we can cooperate,” says Davis. “In the flush days there was no incentive to be ecumenical. All you had to do was build a church, open the doors and the pews filled up. Now we feel a need to pull together, and that’s good.” He believes that different styles of worship and polity appeal to different groups of people, and a congregation’s role is to serve those parishioners who gravitate to its model of ministry. Beyond that, he says, “We can work collaboratively as the broader church in the community. What we’re doing right now with the youth program is a real witness to that. I hope it spreads to other areas.”
# Annual Report Statistics

## Central
- 4300 Conversations in
- 695 Cases of which
- 398 are New Cases with
- 580 People representing
- 410 Congregations

47% were clergy
53% were laity

### The Top Issues
- Information Technology
- Appreciative Inquiry
- Congregational Vitality
- Building
- Youth Ministry
- Strategic Planning

Advances in Health Care Directives
Alban Institute Meetings
Blackford County Community Foundation
Brownstown Ministerial Association
Building A Good Foundation
Calvary Lutheran Church Planning Session
Children and Your Congregation’s Ministry
Children Ministries Luncheon, Fort Wayne
Christian Theological Seminary Meeting
Church of the Brethren Invitational
Clark County Resource Grant Initiative
Clergy Economic Meeting
Columbus First Nazarene
Communities of Learning and Practice

## Northeast
- 940 Conversations in
- 202 Cases of which
- 141 are New Cases with
- 184 People representing
- 122 Congregations

55% were clergy
45% were laity

### The Top Issues
- Congregational Finance
- Mission and Vision
- Conflict
- Ecological
- Children’s Ministries
- Community Ministry
- Leadership

## Southwest
- 877 Conversations in
- 155 Cases of which
- 110 are New Cases with
- 131 People representing
- 98 Congregations

53% were clergy
47% were laity

### The Top Issues
- Congregational Finance
- Youth Ministry
- Demographics
- Inclusion & Welcoming
- Stewardship
- Strategic Planning
- Appreciative Inquiry

## Southeast
- 1014 Conversations in
- 187 Cases of which
- 136 are New Cases with
- 177 People representing
- 93 Congregations

43% were clergy
57% were laity

### The Top Issues
- Appreciative Inquiry
- Outreach
- Youth Ministry
- Children’s Ministries
- Building
- Congregational Finance
- Leadership

## Northwest
- 241 Conversations in
- 51 Cases of which
- 37 are New Cases with
- 33 People representing
- 39 Congregations

67% were clergy
33% were laity

### The Top Issues
- Mission and Vision
- Strategic Planning
- Youth Ministry
- Congregational Vitality
- Leadership
- Congregational Finance
- Building

## Grants

### Grant Recipients
Barnes United Methodist Church
Bethlehem United Church of Christ
Brandywine Community Church
Brookville Road Community Church
Calvary Christian Church of Hartford City
Calvary United Methodist Church
Castleton United Methodist Church
Central Christian Church
Chapel Rock Christian Church
Charm City Community Church
Community Church of Columbus
Community of Hope Church of the Nazarene
Corydon Presbyterian Church
Crosspoint
Crossroads Community Church
Cumberland Christian Church
Ephrata United Methodist Church

Faith Fellowship Apostolic Church
Fellowship Missionary Church
First Baptist Church
First Church of the Nazarene, Columbus
First Presbyterian Church, Seymour
First Presbyterian Church, Columbus
First Presbyterian Church, Goshen
Grace Lutheran Church
Holy Redeemer Catholic Church
Horizons of Faith United Methodist Church
Iglesia Pentecostal Lirio de los Valles
Jamestown Christian Church
Judah Ministries
Kingsway Christian Church
Korean Presbyterian Church
Kurtz Church of the Nazarene
Life Tabernacle Church
Little Bethel Missionary Baptist Church
Lockerie Central United Methodist Church
Manchester Church of the Brethren
Meridian Street United Methodist Church
Mt. Olive United Methodist Church
Mt. Zion Wesleyan Church
New Revelation Baptist Church

Kendallville First Church of God
Lafayette Clergy Gathering
Let’s Talk Preaching
Lilly Endowment Gathering
Marketing 101
Methodist Clergy Meeting, Fort Wayne
Missionary Pastors Gathering, Fort Wayne
NE Association of UCC Clergy Group
New Castle Clergy Gathering
New Haven UMC Staff Development Meeting
Pike County Invitational
Proactive Policies and Procedures
Resilient Congregations
Resource Grant Information Sessions
Resourcing Congregations
St. Peter’s UCC Planning Session
Strengthening Your Worship Team
Sustainable Youth Ministry
Take Your Tech Guy to Lunch
TMGI Information Session & Classes
Tri-Circuit Missouri Synod Lutheran Pastors
Walk in the Light Christian Church
Welcoming and Nurturing Luncheon

## Educational Events

- 124 Educational Events and Meetings
- Including 26 held in the Northeast area
- 21 in the Southwest
- 17 in the Southeast
- and 9 in the Northwest
- 1879 People representing
- 782 Congregations from
- 86 Faith Groups or Denominations

- $604,817 for
- 62 Grants of which
- 8 were Flourishing Congregations Grants totaling $58,182
- 54 were Resource Grants totaling $46,625

- 241 Conversations in
- 51 Cases of which
- 37 are New Cases with
- 33 People representing
- 39 Congregations

- 67% were clergy
- 33% were laity

### The Top Issues
- Leadership
- Building
- Children’s Ministries
- Youth Ministry
- Appreciative Inquiry
- Strategic Planning
- Mission and Vision

## Annual Report

- 782 Congregations from
- 184 People representing
- 141 are New Cases with
- 940 Conversations in

- 67% were clergy
- 33% were laity
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, 2010 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.

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<th>Assets</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2009</th>
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<td>Total expenses</td>
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<td>Net assets, end of year</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

Mission
The mission of the Indianapolis Center for Congregations is to help 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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Chris Minnick

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