



Executive Director:
Rev. Dr. Angelique Walker-Smith

Organizing, Energizing and Mobilizing the Faith Community Since 1912

**Denominations and
Congregations represented:**

- African Methodist Episcopal Church
- African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church
- American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.
- Assemblies of God Church
- Church of God, Anderson
- Church of God in Christ
- Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
- Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
- Church of the Brethren
- Church of the Living God
- The Episcopal Church
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
- Greek Orthodox Church
- Independent Baptist
- Independent Christian
- Interdenominational Community Churches
- International Council of Community Churches
- Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church
- Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod
- Mennonite Church
- Moravian Church
- National Baptist Convention of America
- National Baptist Convention, U.S.A.
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- Pentecostal Apostolic
- Pentecostal Assemblies of the World
- Presbyterian Church U.S.A.
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- Roman Catholic Church
- The Salvation Army
- Society of Friends
- Unity Church
- United Church of Christ
- The United Methodist Church

Mission:

“Striving to make visible God’s gift of unity in Jesus Christ and the quality of community God wills for the human family.”

Spiritual Outlook

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Sacrifice & Blessing: Ruth, Naomi & You

By Rev. Dr. Angelique Walker-Smith

February 12 began the holy season of Lent for Christians all over the world. This period of 40 days and 40 nights before Easter is a season of sacrifice, prayer and fasting that seeks to prepare us for the celebration of the Great Resurrection of Jesus the Christ. It is a period for spiritual renewal and affirmation that we belong to God.

This year the Season of Lent occurs at the same time as the public observances of Black History month and Women’s History month. This got me thinking about Ruth and Naomi. Many recognize the book of Ruth as a lesson about hospitality, love and devotion. They are correct. At the same time, another lesson we learn from both Ruth and Naomi is a lesson concerning sacrifice. Who are these two women who gave up their homes and sojourned into foreign places that intimidated even the bravest of men and women in their time? Who is Ruth, a Moabite woman, who dared to give up her God, her way of life and the family she had known since birth? Who is this woman who would marry into a Hebrew family estranged from the Moabite people?

Ruth’s sacrifice to follow her mother-in-law and leave her home was an important step of faith but we should also remember that Naomi also left her home and managed to survive the death of her husband and her two sons as well as the departure of her daughter-in-law, Orpah. She too made a decision, with her family, to live in a place that was unfamiliar to them because of the famine. The sacrifices both Ruth and Naomi made were extraordinary. In the end, they braved the lonely journey back to Naomi’s home together.

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1100 West 42nd Street, Suite 345 • Indianapolis, IN 46208
Phone: 317/926-5371 • Fax: 317/926-5373
churches@churchfederationindy.org • www.churchfederationindy.org

Their lives certainly give witness to what it means to live through seasons of major sacrifice for the greater good and blessings for others and self.

Today we are faced with the same decision of choosing that which is for the greater good and blessings not only for ourselves but for others. What are we willing to do for the greater good and blessings for our families, our neighborhoods, our state, our nation, our world as well as our selves? Lent is a time to prayerfully reflect on this systematically and to address our personal and communal spiritual needs. The beauty of Lent is that it is a season of intercessory prayer and fasting all over the world. Imagine the power of such intense devotion and contemplation! Truly, this is your time to join the sacrificial legacy of Ruth, Naomi and their family. This is the time to remember the wilderness experience of Jesus for forty days and forty nights and the ultimate sacrifice He made for all of us by sacrificing His life. This is a season for unusual blessings. What are you willing to sacrifice to receive your blessing?