



WELCOME TO FIRST CHURCH!

If you are visiting today and looking for a church home, welcome! For more than 171 years our Covenant has been: We covenant with the Lord Jesus Christ and one another, and bind ourselves in the presence of God to live together in all God's ways as revealed to us by the Holy Spirit and holy scripture. The church acknowledges that all members have the right of individual interpretation of the principles of the Christian faith and respects them in their honest convictions. In accordance with the teaching of our Lord, the church recognizes two sacraments: Baptism and Holy Communion.

LEADERSHIP IN TODAY'S LITURGY

The Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Ahrens, *preacher*

The Rev. Joanna Samuelson, *co-celebrant*

David Hogrefe, *liturgist and pianist*

Melissa Kulwicki, *worship leader*

Geoff Dean, *livestream ministry*

Enter to Worship – Depart to Serve. Please use this time for quiet preparation for worship.

'We have waited in silence on your loving-kindness, O God, in the midst of your temple.' (Psalm 48:9)

PRELUDE

ENTER TO WORSHIP

David Hogrefe

Leader: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty.

People: **Who was, and is, and is to come.**

Please stand as you are able. (indicates congregation standing)*

Leader: God the Creator is in this place.

People: **The love of God is with us.**

Leader: Jesus our Redeemer is in this place.

People: **The grace of our Lord is with us.**

Leader: The Holy Spirit is in this place.

People: **The communion of the Spirit is with us.**

Leader: We welcome the fullness of God's presence.

People: **God the Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer be with us now and forever. Amen.**

*OPENING HYMN
 "Holy, holy, holy!"

Nicaea, John Bacchus Dykes, 1861
 Reginald Heber, 1827

Descant

4 Ho - - - ly,

1 Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! Lord God Al - might - y!
 2 Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! all the saints a - dore thee,
 3 Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! though the dark - ness hide thee,
 4 Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! Lord God Al - might - y!

ho - - - ly,

Ear - ly in the morn - ing our song shall rise to thee.
 cast - ing down their gold - en crowns a - round the glass - y sea;
 though the eye of sin - ful - ness thy glo - ry may not see,
 All thy works shall praise thy name, in earth and sky and sea.

ho - - - ly,

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! mer - ci - ful and might - y!
 cher - u - bim and ser - a - phim fall - ing down be - fore thee,
 on - ly thou art ho - ly; there is none be - side thee,
 Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! mer - ci - ful and might - y!

God in three per - sons, bless - ed Trin - i - ty.

God in three per - sons, bless - ed Trin - i - ty!
 who wert, and art, and ev - er - more shalt be.
 per - fect in power, in love and pu - ri - ty.
 God in three per - sons, bless - ed Trin - i - ty!

*INVOCATION

The Rev. Joanna Samuelson

Leader: God be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Let us pray.

People: Almighty and everlasting God, you have given to us, your servants, grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of your divine Majesty to worship the Unity: Keep us steadfast in this faith and worship, and bring us at last to see you in your one and eternal glory, O Creator; who with the Son and the Holy Spirit live and reign, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

*WELCOME AND PASSING OF THE PEACE

The Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Ahrens

Leader: The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Let us greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace.

** When you return to your seat, please find the blue Welcome notebook, sign it and pass it on to your neighbor so you may greet them by name.*

CHILDREN'S TIME

Melissa Kulwicki

During the sermon time, the young children are welcome to participate in "Sunday Stories" with Melissa Kulwicki and Maggie Myers.

THE HEBREW SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 6:1-8

David Hogrefe

Leader: A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah, chapter 6.

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple. Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. And one called to another and said:

"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts;
the whole earth is full of his glory."

The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke. And I said: "Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!"

Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. The seraph touched my mouth with it and said: "Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out." Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I; send me!"

Leader: The Word of God for the people of God.

People: Thanks be to God.

Leader: Ascribe to God, you heavenly beings,
ascribe to God glory and strength.

**People: Ascribe due honor to God's holy Name,
worship the Most High in the beauty of holiness.**

Leader: The voice of God is upon the waters;
the God of glory thunders;
God is upon the mighty waters.

**People: The voice of God is a mighty voice;
the voice of God is a voice of splendor.**

Leader: The voice of God breaks the cedar trees;
God breaks the cedars of Lebanon;

**People: God makes Lebanon skip like a calf
and Mount Hermon like a young wild ox.**

Leader: The voice of God splits the flames of fire;
the voice of God shakes the wilderness;
God shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.

**People: The voice of God makes the oak trees writhe
and strips the forest bare.**

Leader: And in the temple of the Holy One,
all are crying, "Glory!"

**People: God sits enthroned above the flood,
enthroned as Sovereign for evermore.**

Leader: God shall give strength to the people;

All: God shall give the people the blessing of peace.

THE GOSPEL

John 3:1-17

Rev. Ahrens

Leader: A reading from the Gospel according to John, the third chapter.

There was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God." Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" Jesus answered him, "Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

"Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

“Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

Leader: The Word of God for the people of God.

People: Thanks be to God.

SERMON

“The Wall and the Book”

Rev. Ahrens

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Rev. Samuelson

Leader: Let us pray as Christ our Savior has taught us.

All: Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,

for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

THE OFFERTORY

To give online, please scan this QR code, or see additional instructions in Depart to Serve:



MISSION INVITATION

Kitty Rohrer

Cash and designated gifts go to support Deep Griha, in Pune, India. For the past 49 years, Deep Griha has worked in low-income communities in and around Pune, India to provide access to education, healthcare, and most importantly capacity building. Deep Griha brings these through sponsorships, a rural school, clinics, and livelihood skill training programs. In 1974, Dr. Neela Onawale and her husband Rev. Bhaskar Onawale lived in Columbus, ministering and connecting with members of First Congregational and First Community Churches. In 1975, they decided to go back to Pune and started a one-room clinic to treat the residents of Pune’s marginalized communities. With the support of First Congregational, First Community and UCC Dublin, their ministry has thrived and continues to change the lives of innumerable children and women.

Led now by their daughter, Ashlesha Onawale, Deep Griha remains committed to providing care and support to these communities. Post pandemic, it has also had to evolve in response to changing needs. Deep Griha now has a healthy aging program to serve seniors in these underserved communities. Another exciting new initiative is partnering with global research organizations to study post-partum diabetes in urban India.

Members from the three churches came together and formed The Deep Griha USA Board to continue to bring awareness to the extraordinary work that Deep Griha does. Please consider joining the Deep Griha USA Board. Thank you for your generosity.

OFFERTORY HYMN

Grosser Gott, Allgemeines Katholisches Gesangbuch, c. 1774

“Holy God, we praise your name” Attr. Ignaz Franz, c. 1774; trans. Clarence Alphonsus Walworth, 1858

1 Ho - ly God, we praise your name; Lord of all, we
 2 Hark! The glad ce - les - tial hymn an - gel choirs a -
 3 All a - pos - tles join the strain as your sa - cred
 4 Ho - ly Fa - ther, Ho - ly Son, Ho - ly Spir - it:

bow be - fore you. All on earth your scep - ter claim;
 bove are rais - ing; cher - u - bim and ser - a - phim,
 name they hal - low; proph - ets swell the glad re - frain,
 three we name you, while in es - sence on - ly one;

all in heaven a - bove a - dore you. In - fi - nite your
 in un - ceas - ing cho - rus prais - ing, fill the heavens with
 and the bless - ed mar - tyrs fol - low, and from morn to
 un - di - vid - ed God we claim you, and a - dor - ing,

vast do - main, ev - er - last - ing is your reign.
 sweet ac - cord: “Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord!”
 set of sun, through the church the song goes on.
 bend the knee while we own the mys - ter - y.

COMMUNION
COMMUNION HYMN
"Come and fill our hearts"

Rev. Samuelson
Confitemini Domino, Jacques Berthier, 1982

Chord markings: D, Bm, D, A (first system); Em, C, Em, A, D (second system)

Lyrics: Come and fill our hearts with your peace. You a-lone, O Lord, are ho-ly.
Come and fill our hearts with your peace. Al-le-lu-ia!

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Rev. Ahrens

Leader: Let us pray.

All: We give you thanks, Almighty God, that you have brought us from darkness to light, from slavery to freedom, from death to rebirth. Transform our lives with this heavenly food, that we may shine with your love and take to the world the risen life of your Son Jesus Christ. Amen.

COMMUNITY NOTICES - DEPART TO SERVE

Ms. Kulwicki

Leader: Let us depart with a heart to serve.

People: Thanks be to God.

*CLOSING HYMN
"God be with you till we meet again"

Randolph, Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1906
Jeremiah Eames Rankin, 1880

1. God be with you till we meet a - gain; Lov - ing coun - sels
guide, up - hold you, With a Shep-herd's care en - fold you:
God be with you till we meet a - gain.

The image shows a three-system musical score for the hymn "God be with you till we meet again". Each system consists of a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment line (bass clef). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The lyrics are printed below the vocal line. The first system covers the first two lines of lyrics, the second system covers the next two lines, and the third system covers the final line of lyrics.

*BENEDICTION

Rev. Ahrens

POSTLUDE

Please be seated for the postlude and use this time for quiet reflection.

Thank you for attending worship this morning. We hope that you have found peace and grace here and invite you to return often. If you would like more information or have any questions about First Church, please ask anyone wearing a name tag. We would be delighted to assist you.

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Enter to Worship
Depart to Serve

May 26, 2024

This Week at First Church

Sunday, May 26

- 9 a.m. Morning Prayer & Holy Communion
(Parish Hall & Virtual)
10 a.m. Bible Study (Classroom C)
First Serves (Sam Gordon Playground)
11 a.m. Worship Service (Sanctuary & Virtual)

Monday, May 27

Memorial Day
Church and Office Closed

Tuesday, May 28

- 10 a.m. Church Growth Committee Mtg
(Fanning Rm)
12 Noon Healthy Congregations Mtg (Fanning Rm)
4:30 p.m. Church Vitality Commission Mtg (Zoom)
5:15 p.m. Laundry Love (Wash Land)

Wednesday, May 29

- 10:30 a.m. Book Study (Classroom C & Zoom)

Thursday, May 30

- 6:00 p.m. Bell Choir Rehearsal (Bell Rm)
7 p.m. Transition Team Listening Session
(Gladden Chapel)

Saturday, June 1

- 9:30 a.m. Alumni and Church Choir Rehearsal
(Parish Hall)
10:30 a.m. Sacred Earth Committee Mtg
(Adult Library)

Sunday, June 2

- 9 a.m. Morning Prayer & Holy Communion
(Parish Hall & Virtual)
10 a.m. Bible Study (Classroom C)
11 a.m. Worship Service & Holy Communion
(Sanctuary & Virtual)
12:30 p.m. Celebration of Dene Barnard (Parish Hall)

Calling All Graduates!

If you or a family member is graduating from high school or college this year, please send us information, including the individual's name, the school they are graduating from, and their degree and possible future plans. We will be recognizing our graduates in an upcoming Connections email and in worship on June 9. Send the information to awagner@first-church.org. You also may include a photo (electronic image only).

The Golden Jubilee Service for G. Dene Barnard

June 2 at 11 a.m.

The 2024 Gladden Lecture Series:

The Rev. Dr. Yvonne V. Delk
**“Truth Telling: A Mission for
the Church and Country in
an Era of Afrophobia, Critical
Race Theory, and Christian
Nationalism”**

Sunday, June 23, 4 p.m.

Join us Sunday, June 23 at 4 p.m. for the 2024 Gladden Lecture series featuring The Rev. Dr. Yvonne V. Delk. For over 60 years, Rev. Delk has been a strong ally in the fight for human and civil rights for people of color, children, and the poor.

The Rev. Delk will also preach at both the 9 and 11 a.m. worship services on Sunday, June 23. The 2024 Gladden Lecture is being co-sponsored by the Washington Gladden Social Justice Park and a reception following the lecture will be held in the Social Justice Park.

Transition Listening Group

The Transition Team wants to hear from you as they prepare for the time after Rev. Ahrens' retirement in November. This is a time to thoughtfully consider how God is calling the church into the future. Join one of the small groups to share your perceptions and dreams for First Congregational Church. Each of us, no matter how long we have been part of this church community, sees strengths and areas for potential growth. Your experience and ideas will help the Transition Team shape our future ministry and leadership. Let's dream big as we prepare for our future together.

Please join members of the Transition Team at 7 p.m. on Thursday, May 30, for our first small group discussion. We will meet in the Gladden Chapel for no more than 90 minutes. If you are unable to attend this session, we will provide additional ways to hear from you, through in-person and Zoom meetings, surveys, and conversations. Everyone's voice is important and each of us has a part to play in these changing times. Register by clicking the QR code below.



First Church Book Club:

**Wednesday, June 5, 7 p.m. on
Zoom**

The Fraud

**Wednesday, July 10, 7 p.m. on
Zoom**

Poverty, by America

Come enjoy lively conversation and fellowship this June and July with the First Church Book Club. Questions? Want to receive book club emails? Please call Kathy Reed, 614-442-7742.

Healthy Congregations Workshop

Sunday, June 9

12:15 p.m. - 2:15 p.m.

Parish Hall



Stonewall Columbus Pride March

Saturday, June 15

March Steps Off at 10:30 a.m. at Broad and High Streets

Come join us for the Columbus Pride March on June 15 as we will be in this year's parade. Step-off is at 10:30 a.m. and will start at the State House (more details are coming). The walk is approximately 1.5 miles on asphalt pavement and will take approximately 2 hours. If you are interested in marching or supporting Columbus Pride please register by clicking the QR code below.

T-shirts are available starting at \$21 and must be pre-paid. You must order your shirt no later than June 2. Please indicate the size needed. We will have two styles: t-shirt and tank top. This year's t-shirts will be lavender to symbolize empowerment as we continue to advocate and fight for LGBTQ+ rights and visibility.



Keep in Prayer

Members Nancy Burba; Julia Myers; Tim Holt; Dene Barnard; Mary Kay Beall Carter and John Carter; Carol Lowy; Scott Warrick; Clinton Brown; John and Francille Firebaugh; Tom Bishop; Dan Axt; Rick Sayre; Anne Morganstern; Martha Huey; Twink Starr; and Janice White.

Family and friends Janet Axt's mother, Alice Paugh; Annette McCormick's father, Charles McCormick; Margaret Cipriani's friend, Kathryn Schlarb; Barry Moenter's brother-in-law, Tom Huss; Gilda Perry's friend, Kathryn Schlarb; L.J. and Gretchen Cooks' brother, Kione Cooks; Jim Griffin's friends, Andy Bell and John Alatsis; Jill Hultin's brother, Ken Hultin; Todd and Mary Anne Jacobson's friend, Lisa Lang, and Mary Anne's nephew, Peter Poppleton; Diana and Bob Kutschbach's cousin, Carson Samples; Susie Loik's grandson, Alex Glover and his parents, Kristen and Wes; Arevena Nirote's sister and brother-in-law, Marlene and Gary Gallion; Fran and Bruce Panek's friends, Richard and Beverly Cicenas; and Victor John's cousin, Devin Endlick, and his parents, Charles and Mary Jane, and sister.

Those who mourn Albert and Cynthia Adcock on the death of his sister, Barbara Ontal; and Joanna Samuelson's friend, Elyshua Jackson, on the death of her husband, Aaron Jackson.

We keep Stephen Ministers in prayer as they care for our church members.

We pray for all people in war zones around the world including Gaza/Israel and other Middle East conflicts, Sudan, Ukraine, and Myanmar.

In the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle, we pray for the people and churches in Angola and Mozambique. We also pray for our UCC partner in mission, the Kyoto Kyoku of the UCC in Japan.

Give

At First Church, our financial resources enable us to "Enter to worship, depart to serve." You can support the mission and ministry of First Church now by using Realm, EasyTithe or PayPal, by visiting <https://www.first-church.org/give/>, or by sending your offering directly to First Congregational Church, 444 E. Broad Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215. For more information, please contact Annette McCormick at amccormick@firstchurch.org.

Cash and designated checks go to support Deep Griha. For the past 49 years, Deep Griha has worked in low-income communities in and around Pune, India to provide access to education, healthcare, and most importantly capacity building. Deep Griha brings these through sponsorships, a rural school, clinics, and livelihood skill training programs. In 1974, Dr. Neela Onawale and her husband Rev. Bhaskar Onawale lived in Columbus, ministering and connecting with members of First Congregational and First Community Churches. In 1975, they decided to go back to Pune and started a one-room clinic to treat the residents of Pune's marginalized communities. With the support of First Congregational, First Community, and UCC Dublin, their ministry has thrived and continues to change the lives of innumerable children and women.

For more information please visit:

Deep Griha USA - <https://deepgrihausa.org/>

Deep Griha Pune - <https://deepgriha.org/>

CHURCH LEADERSHIP

Senior Minister: Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Ahrens, D.Min., M.Div.

Designated Minister: Rev. Joanna Samuelson, M.Div.

Minister of Music: Joshua Stafford, M.M.

Administrative Manager: Amy Wagner

Communications Manager: Melissa Kulwicki

Office Assistant: Pat Patterson

Business Administrator: Annette McCormick

Building and Grounds Superintendent: Quang Pham

Custodians: Alexis Wayne, Bill McCabe

Wedding Coordinators: Amy Wagner, Shelly Gies, Margaret Cipriani

Nursery Staff: Miranda Brooks, Shelly Gies, Celecia Smith

Commissioned Minister for Social Justice: Tom Brownfield

Commissioned Minister for Spiritual Formation and Direction: Jacquelyn Dean

Stephen Leader and Stephen Ministry Program Coordinator: Gary Glover

Stephen Leader and Stephen Ministry Training Coordinator: Wendy Kennedy

Stephen Leader and Stephen Ministry Referrals Coordinator: Susie Loik

Senior Deacon: Tom Kiesel

Deacons: Allen Baker, Heather Jones, Brian Kemp, Nan Kreimer, Allison Lowery Palmer, Dayna McCrary, Matt Myers, Fran Panek, Andy Smith Verhage, Thom Smith, Lynn Wallich, Martha Worth

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Chairperson: Frank Cook

Trustees: Greg Halbe, Elizabeth Iannarino, Todd Jacobson, Victor John, Melody Leidheiser, Janet Miller, Judy Smith, (Secretary), Hugh Schultz

CHURCH COUNCIL LEADERSHIP

Moderator: Gregory Halbe

Moderator-elect: Sarah Reed

Treasurer: James Velo

Treasurer-elect: Ramona Moenter

Secretary: Antoinette Koolemans-Beynen

Secretary-elect: Martha Wilson

Nominating Chair: Sarah Reed

COMMISSIONERS

Church Stewardship and Church Growth: Janice Taft

Church Stewardship and Church Growth-elect:

Church Vitality: Pat Patterson

Church Vitality-elect:

Communications and Technology Commission: Mike Kennedy

Communications and Technology Commission-elect: Stefan Duga

Faith Formation Commission: Mariner Taft

Faith Formation Commission-elect: Cami Curren

House & Grounds: Eric Klintworth

House & Grounds-elect:

Justice & Mercy: Janet Miller

Justice & Mercy-elect:

Music, Arts & Heritage: Jim Griffin

Music, Arts & Heritage-elect: Cheryl Hoskinson

Member-at-Large: Jacquelyn Dean

Personnel: David Hogrefe

Personnel-elect: Sandra Mathias

Youth Member-at-Large:

WELCOME STATEMENT

You are welcomed, affirmed, and loved here; our faith informs us that you are a child of a loving God. Your characteristics and gifts will enrich our congregation. In this community, you will be celebrated, embraced, and honored, no matter how you identify or how your identity may evolve. Wherever you are on your faith journey, we invite you to join us in our diverse yet united experience.

FIRST CHURCH IS A FAITH COMMUNITY

† Called together by God, the Creator and Sustainer of life, to worship, pray and serve;

† Led by Jesus Christ, our Teacher and Savior, to learn the faith and welcome all God's children;

† Empowered by the Holy Spirit to witness God's love and justice between ourselves, and throughout the world.

OPEN AND AFFIRMING STATEMENT

We, the members of First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, Columbus, Ohio, welcome and affirm all. We believe we are all created in God's image and called to love our neighbors as Jesus loves us. We believe we are many members, but one body in Christ, called to unite all people in God's love. We are a community seeking God's presence and love in our lives. We seek to unite persons of all ages, races, nationalities, ethnicities, sexual orientations, sexes, gender identities and expressions, family structures, mental, intellectual and physical conditions, economic circumstances, political, theological and faith backgrounds. Together in our diversity, and being empowered and directed by the Holy Spirit, we will "do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God." (Micah 6:8)

—Adopted September 8, 2002 by the congregation

Revisions adopted January 27, 2019 by the congregation

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www.first-church.org/Worship.aspx

