

**A CELEBRATION OF LIFE FOR
JOHN DAVID FIREBAUGH**

March 27, 1934 ~ June 5, 2024

Participants

Pastor

The Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Ahrens
Senior Minister

Organist

Jamie Bobb

Monday, June 24, 2024

11 a.m.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Columbus, Ohio

John David Firebaugh

John Firebaugh, age 90, passed away on June 5. John is survived by his wife of 54 years, Dr. Francille (Maloch) Firebaugh, and over 20 nieces and nephews. John was the youngest of nine children, and he is predeceased by his eight siblings: sisters, Della Daugherty, Anne Australia Baldrige, and Marian Vermillion; and brothers, George Lawrence Firebaugh, Wyman Firebaugh, Jay Glenn Firebaugh, Lowell Wayne Firebaugh, and Charles Daniel Firebaugh. He is also predeceased by his parents, George Marshall and Mary Lillian (Coffman) Firebaugh.

John grew up on a dairy farm outside Wooster, Ohio, and graduated from The Ohio State University with a degree in Civil Engineering. He remained in Columbus to work for the U.S. Department of Agriculture in the areas of soil conservation and farming home administration. In Columbus he met Francille at the Ohio Hiking Club, and they married in 1970.

In 1978 John was appointed by USAID to work on a two-year drainage project in a remote region of Afghanistan. Francille was able to join him by taking a leave of absence from her administrative position at Ohio State. After one year there, they had to be evacuated to India when the Russian army moved in. They eventually arrived in Nepal where they stayed for six months before returning to the U.S.

In 1988 John and Francille moved to Ithaca, New York, where Francille accepted a position as Dean of Human Ecology at Cornell University, and John continued his work for the U.S. Department of Agriculture. They moved back to Columbus in 2008, after they had both fully retired.

John was very recognizable at Cornell as the non-college guy who navigated Ithaca's hilly terrain on his bicycle. Because Francille usually walked to her job at the university, their car rarely left the garage. But they did love to travel internationally, and it was a rare treat to visit their home, where you would be shown items purchased from around the world, and told the stories behind them.

John was a gentle, unassuming man with a sly sense of humor. A good week for John would include solving an engineering problem that had been puzzling him, finding a new way to use some of the plants in his garden, and attending a lecture or two at the university on virtually any topic, from macroeconomic theory to black matter.

John was notoriously frugal with himself and graciously generous with others. Back in the days when cameras required film, John had failed to buy film for one of his birthday celebrations because he wanted to wait until it went on sale the next day. At the same time, he and Francille gave magnanimously to nieces, nephews, and other family members, in their times of need.

John was inviting and easy going. He had a young-at-heart quality. You could get a flavor of this as he would carry on a conversation or tell stories, seated on the kitchen counter with his feet dangling and swinging back and forth.

A memorial service will be held at 11:00 am Monday, June 24, at the First Congregational Church in Columbus (444 East Broad Street), where John was an active long-time member. The service will also be livestreamed (fcchurch.org). In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the American Cancer Society or the First Congregational Church, Columbus.

A CELEBRATION OF LIFE FOR JOHN D. FIREBAUGH

PRELUDE

WORDS OF PROMISE AND HOPE

The Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Ahrens

** The Congregation is invited to stand.*

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: I am the Resurrection and the Life.

People: All who believe in me, though they die, yet shall they live.

Leader: And whoever lives and believes in me shall never die.

People: As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives.

Leader: Gracious is our God and righteous; our God is full of compassion.

People: I will walk in the presence of God in the land of the living.

Leader: will fulfill my vows to God in the presence of all God's people.

**People: Precious in the sight of God is the death of those
who die in faithfulness.**

*HYMN OF ADORATION
"Amazing grace"

Amazing Grace
John Newton, 1725

1 A - maz - ing grace, how sweet the sound, that
2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and
3 Through man - y dan - gers, toils, and snares, I
4 The Lord has prom - ised good to me; his
5 When we've been there ten thou - sand years, bright

saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but
grace my fears re - lieved. How pre - cious did that
have al - read - y come. 'Tis grace has brought me
word my hope se - cures. He will my shield and
shin - ing as the sun, we've no less days to

now am found, was blind, but now I see.
grace ap - pear the hour I first be - lieved!
safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.
por - tion be as long as life en - dures.
sing God's praise than when we'd first be - gun.

*INVOCATION

Dr. Ahrens

Let us pray.

Holy God, source of life and every gift that adds meaning to our days, we acknowledge you above all others. We thank you for everything you provide for us, especially the loving relationship which gives joy to our living. Even now in our sorrow, we come with hope in the assurance of life eternal. Lift us out of our darkness and distress, that we might experience the peace of your presence among us now. Amen. (Boynton Merrill)

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Psalm 23

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.
He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil:
for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest
my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell
in the house of the LORD forever.

Ecclesiasties 3:1-8

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:

a time to be born, and a time to die;

a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;

a time to kill, and a time to heal;

a time to break down, and a time to build up;

a time to weep, and a time to laugh;

a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together;

a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

a time to seek, and a time to lose;

a time to keep, and a time to throw away;

a time to tear, and a time to sew;

a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
a time to love, and a time to hate;
a time for war, and a time for peace.

Romans 8:9-11, 31-39

But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, then the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else?

Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.

Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us.

Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered."

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present,

nor things to come, nor powers,

nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Revelation 21:1-6

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away."

And the one who was seated on the throne said, "See, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true." Then he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life.

John 14: 1-3, 18-19, 25-27

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me.

In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also.

"I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you.

In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live.

"I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.

WORDS OF REMEMBRANCE

“Our Guerilla Gardner”

Dr. Ahrens

TIME OF REMEMBRANCE

PASTORAL PRAYER

Dr. Ahrens

THE LORD'S PRAYER (*Unison*)

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.

COMMENDATION

Dr. Ahrens

*CLOSING HYMN

“It is well with my soul”

Ville du Havre, Philip P. Bliss, 1876

Horatio G. Spafford, 1876

1 When peace like a riv - er at - tend - eth my way, when
2 Though Sa - tan should buf - fet, though tri - als should come, let
3 He lives: O the bliss of this glo - ri - ous thought. My
4 Lord, has - ten the day when our faith shall be sight, the

sor - rows like sea bil - lows roll, what - ev - er my lot, thou hast
this blest as - sur - ance con - trol, that Christ hath re - gard - ed my
sin, not in part, but the whole, is nailed to the cross and I
clouds be rolled back as a scroll, the trum - pet shall sound and the

taught me to say, it is well, it is well with my soul.
help - less es - tate, and hath shed his own blood for my soul.
bear it no more. Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!
Lord shall de - scend; e - ven so it is well with my soul.

Refrain

It is well with my soul;
It is well with my soul;

it is well; it is well with my soul.

*BENEDICTION

Dr. Ahrens

POSTLUDE

Pièce d'Orgue, BWV 572

Johann Sebastian Bach

It is the custom of First Church to remain seated for the postlude.

You are invited to greet the family in the Parlor for light refreshments.

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.

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

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 to God's love and justice between ourselves, and throughout the world.



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST
God is still speaking,

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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