



## WELCOME TO FIRST CHURCH!

*If you are visiting today and looking for a church home, welcome! For more than 172 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. Dr. William R. Nirote, *officiant*

Maggie Myers, *liturgist*

Melissa Kulwicki, *worship leader*

David Hogrefe, *pianist*

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

Maggie Myers

Leader: The grace of our Savior Jesus Christ, the love of God,  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**People: And also with you.**

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

Leader: Wait for the Lord, like those who hope in God's mercy.

**People: God's steadfast love endures forever.**

Leader: Watch for God, like those who eagerly await the morning.

**People: We watch for God, whose power redeems us.**

Leader: Hear God's hopeful word, like those who long for pardon.

**People: Sing praise to God and rejoice in God's love.**

\*OPENING HYMN  
"God of the ages"

*National Hymn*, George William Warren,  
Daniel Crane Roberts, 1876, alt.

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). It consists of four systems, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The first system includes an optional introduction for the piano. The lyrics are arranged in four stanzas, with the piano accompaniment providing harmonic support. The score concludes with a final double bar line and a fermata over the final chord.

(optional)

1 God of the a - ges, whose al-might - y  
2 Thy love di - vine hath led us in the  
3 From war's a - larms, from dead - ly pes - ti -  
4 Re - fresh thy peo - ple on their toil - some

hand leads forth in beau - ty all the star - ry band  
past. In this free land by thee our lot is cast.  
lence, be thy strong arm our ev - er sure de - fense.  
way. Lead us from night to nev - er - end - ing day.

of shin - ing worlds in splen - dor through the skies,  
Be thou our rul - er, guard - ian, guide, and stay:  
Thy true re - li - gion in our hearts in - crease.  
Fill all our lives with love and grace di - vine,

our grate - ful songs be - fore thy throne a - rise.  
thy word our law, thy paths our cho - sen way.  
Thy boun - teous good - ness nour - ish us in peace.  
and glo - ry, laud, and praise be ev - er thine.

\*INVOCATION

The Rev. Dr. William R. Nirote

Leader: God be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

Leader: Let us pray.

**People: Almighty God, you have built your Church upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief cornerstone: Grant us so to be joined together in unity of spirit by their teaching, that we may be made a holy temple acceptable to you; through Jesus Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever 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 Amy Wagner.*

THE HEBREW SCRIPTURE

Lamentations 3:21-33

Maggie Myers

Leader: A reading from the Book of Lamentations, the third chapter.

This I call to mind,

and therefore I have hope:

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases,

his mercies never come to an end;

they are new every morning;

great is your faithfulness.

"The Lord is my portion," says my soul,

"therefore I will hope in him."

The Lord is good to those who wait for him,

to the soul that seeks him.

It is good that one should wait quietly

for the salvation of the Lord.

It is good for one to bear

the yoke in youth,

to sit alone in silence

when the Lord has imposed it,

to put one's mouth to the dust

(there may yet be hope),

to give one's cheek to the smiter,

and be filled with insults.

For the Lord will not  
reject for ever.  
Although he causes grief, he will have compassion  
according to the abundance of his steadfast love;  
for he does not willingly afflict  
or grieve anyone.

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

**People: Thanks be to God.**

THE PSALTER

Psalm 30

Maggie Myers  
The St. Helena Psalter

I will exalt you, O God,  
because you have lifted me up  
and have not let my enemies triumph over me.

**O my God, I cried out to you,  
and you restored me to health.**

You brought me up, O God, from the dead;  
you restored my life as I was going down to the grave.

**Sing to God, you servants of God,  
and give thanks for the remembrance of God's holiness.**

For divine wrath endures but the twinkling of an eye,  
divine favor for a lifetime.

**Weeping may spend the night,  
but joy comes in the morning.**

While I felt secure, I said,  
"I shall never be disturbed.

You, O God, with your favor, made me as strong as the mountains."

**Then you hid your face,  
and I was filled with fear.**

I cried to you, O God;  
I pleaded with you, saying,

**"What profit is there in my blood, if I go down to the Pit?  
Will the dust praise you or declare your faithfulness?**

Hear, O God, and have mercy upon me;  
O God, be my helper."

**You have turned my wailing into dancing;  
you have put off my sack-cloth and clothed me with joy.**

Therefore my heart sings to you without ceasing;  
O God, my God, I will give you thanks forever.

Leader: A reading from the Gospel according to Mark, the fifth chapter.

When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered around him; and he was by the sea. Then one of the leaders of the synagogue named Jairus came and, when he saw him, fell at his feet and begged him repeatedly, "My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live." So he went with him.

And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him. Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years. She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse. She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, for she said, "If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well." Immediately her hemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my clothes?" And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, 'Who touched me?'" He looked all around to see who had done it. But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."

While he was still speaking, some people came from the leader's house to say, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?" But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue, "Do not fear, only believe." He allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. When they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, he saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. When he had entered, he said to them, "Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him. Then he put them all outside, and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him, and went in where the child was. He took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha cum," which means, "Little girl, get up!" And immediately the girl got up and began to walk about (she was twelve years of age). At this they were overcome with amazement. He strictly ordered them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

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

**People: Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

"Ending Poverty in America"

Rev. Ahrens

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Rev. Nirote

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 the *Depart to Serve* leaflet:



### MISSION INVITATION

Rev. Larry Miller

Cash and designated gifts go to support **Horizon Prison Initiative**. Its mission is to transform inmates and break the cyclical tendency of incarceration and its societal impact. The yearlong program guides the incarcerated participants, living in dormitory style arrangements separate from the general prison population, in refocusing their lives. Courses focus on topics such as trauma recovery, victim awareness, and implicit bias, amongst others. Horizon is the only multi-faith program serving Ohio's prisons. Thank you for your generosity.

### OFFERING HYMN

“Lord, whose love through humble service”

*Beach Spring*, Albert F. Bayly, 1961

1. Lord, whose love in hum-ble ser - vice bore the weight of hu-man need,  
2. Still your chil - dren wan-der home-less; still the hun - gry cry for bread;  
3. As we wor - ship, grant us vi - sion, till your love's re - veal-ing light

who up - on the cross for - sak - en, worked your mer - cy's per - fect deed;  
still the cap - tives long for free - dom; still in grief we mourn our dead.  
in its height and depth and great-ness dawns up - on our quick-ened sight,

we, your ser - vants, bring the wor - ship not of voice a - lone but heart;  
As you, Lord, in deep com - pas - sion healed the sick and freed the soul,  
mak-ing known the needs and bur - dens your com - pas - sion bids us bear,

con - se - crat - ing to your pur - pose ev - ry gift which you im - part.  
by your Spir - it send your pow - er to our world to make it whole.  
stir-ring us to ar - dent ser - vice, your a - bun - dant life to share.

COMMUNION  
COMMUNION HYMN  
"Come and fill our hearts"

Rev. Ahrens  
*Confitemini Domino*, Jacques Berthier, 1982

D Bm D A

Come and fill our hearts with your peace. You a-lone, O Lord, are ho-ly.

Em C Em A D

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 line of lyrics, the second system covers the second line, and the third system covers the third line. The score ends with a double bar line.

\*BENEDICTION

Rev. Ahrens

POSTLUDE

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

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*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**

**June 30, 2024**

## **This Week at First Church**

### **Sunday, June 30**

- 9 a.m. Morning Prayer & Holy Communion (Parish Hall & Virtual)  
10 a.m. Bible Study (Classroom C)  
11 a.m. Worship Service (Sanctuary & Virtual)  
1:30 p.m. Greenlawn Cemetery Tour (Greenlawn Cemetery)

### **Monday, July 1**

- 12 Noon Congregational Care Ministry (Fanning Rm)  
6:30 p.m. House & Grounds Commission Mtg (Classroom D & Zoom)  
7 p.m. Faith Formation Commission Mtg (Classroom C & Zoom)

### **Tuesday, July 2**

- 7 p.m. Communications and Technology Commission Mtg (Zoom)  
7 p.m. Justice & Mercy Commission Mtg (Classroom C & Zoom)  
7 p.m. Personnel Commission Mtg (Zoom)

### **Wednesday, July 3**

- 4 p.m. Church Vitality Commission Mtg (Zoom)

### **Thursday, July 4**

Church and Church Office are closed in Celebration of the 4th of July

### **Sunday, July 7**

- 9 a.m. Morning Prayer & Holy Communion (Parish Hall & Virtual)  
11 a.m. Worship Service & Holy Communion (Sanctuary & Virtual)  
12 Noon Coffee Hour & Coffee Sales

## **T-shirts Still Available**

We still have some First Church Open and Affirming shirts available in both the tie-dye and solid lavender, as well as a few lavender tank tops left in some sizes for \$21. If your size is not currently in stock, we are placing another order, and it will be in stock soon.

We also have the grey First Church BREAD shirts available for \$10.

If you are interested, please email Melissa Kulwicki at [mkulwicki@first-church.org](mailto:mkulwicki@first-church.org) and include the size, color/style, and quantity, or see her after worship. Payments for shirts can be made through Realm, in person, or by placing cash or check in an envelope, marked with your name and a memo of either Pride Shirt or BREAD Shirt and placed in the offering plate.

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## **Opportunity for a History Buff**

Your archive team is interested in compiling information about the Gladden Lecture Series. As Tom Worley noted in his comments at this year's lecture, the series is in its 101st year of existence. It seems fitting that we create a document that chronicles that path.

All of the information that would be needed to create this document is in our church's archives. We need an interested history buff (or buffs) to go through the material and write it up. If writing gives you pause, we can find editors to do the polishing. The archive team will provide assistance to help you access the materials needed. This is a great opportunity to handle a lot of our church history and to have the joy and satisfaction of creating a new resource that helps tell our always-evolving story. Contact Greg Duncan [interprep@earthlink.net](mailto:interprep@earthlink.net) or 404-401-8363 to enlist.

## Book Club News

### Planning Your Summer Reading?

Come enjoy lively conversation and fellowship with the First Church Book Club. We'll be reading and discussing the following books in the next nine months. All are welcome! The book club meets on the first Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m. on Zoom, excluding holidays.

July 10 - *Poverty, by America* by Matthew Desmond (nonfiction; 284 pgs.); led by Todd Jacobson.

Aug. 7 - *Horse* by Geraldine Brooks (fiction; 401 pgs.); led by Janet Newcity.

Sept. 4 - *Our Missing Hearts* by Celeste Ng (fiction; 335 pgs.); led by Mary Jacobson.

Oct. 2 - *Gender Queer: A Memoir* by Maia Kobabe (nonfiction graphic novel; 239 pgs.); led by Kathy Reed.

Nov. 6 - *Tom Lake* by Ann Patchett (fiction; 309 pgs.); led by Andrew Welsh-Huggins.

Jan. 8, 2025 - *The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store* by James McBride (fiction; 385 pgs.); led by Chris Farquhar.

Feb. 5, 2025 - *Master Slave, Husband Wife: An Epic Journey from Slavery to Freedom* by Ilyon Woo (nonfiction; 410 pgs.); led by Jean Lebold. One of two winners of the 2024 Pulitzer Prize for Biography.

March 5, 2025 - *North Woods* by Daniel Mason (fiction; 372 pgs.); led by Fran Panek.

Questions? Want to receive book club emails? Please call Kathy Reed, 614-442-7742.

## Church is Finalist in Grant Contest

In February, our church submitted a letter of interest seeking a \$250,000 building repairs grant. The National Fund for Sacred Places selected our church as one of 38 finalists from a group of nearly 500 submissions. A program of the Partners for Sacred Places in collaboration with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Fund provides grants for urgent capital projects at historic religious buildings that are valued for their cultural importance as well as their role in providing human services, strengthening communities, and revitalizing neighborhoods.

The Fund was made possible by a gift from the Indiana-based Lilly Endowment Inc., with additional funding from the Gerry Charitable Trust. Since 2016, the Fund has awarded or pledged \$18 million to 97 community-serving congregations representing 24 faith traditions in 36 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. In 2023, Lilly awarded the grant program an additional \$28 million.

Our application met the Fund's specific list of eligibility requirements, which included: being located in the U.S. or its territories, having originally been built to be a house of worship, and currently owned by an active community of faith; possessing historical, cultural, or architectural value (designation as a local landmark or listing on the National Register of Historic Places preferred; property occupied by a congregation that is community-minded and also serves nonmembers; property must have urgent repair needs related to structural components, walls, roof, and/or other elements of the building envelope; and the congregation must demonstrate a need for project funds that exceeds the congregation's typical donor base and membership, and must exhibit several signs of positive organizational health including stable or growing membership, and financial strength and stability.

### Application Process

Having met the eligibility requirements and having been designated as a finalist, our church is now busy completing the formal grant application that is due July 12. The application form is 24 pages long and includes over 60 questions. Each October, the Fund announces the actual grant award winners (about half of the designated finalists). In the meantime, keep your fingers crossed.

## Keep in Prayer

**Members** Alex Palmer; Bill Rhodes; Sherri Moreen; Maddie McWilliams; Lila Bendick; Kathy Reed; Beverly Halbe; Nancy Burba; Tim Holt; Dene Barnard; Mary Kay Beall Carter and John Carter; Carol Lowy; Scott Warrick; Clinton Brown; Tom Bishop; Dan Axt; Rick Sayre; Anne Morganstern; Martha Huey; Twink Starr; and Janice White.

**Family and friends** Tim Ahren's friend, Rev. Charles Watterson; the Gillies and Samuelson's neighbor and friend, Rev. Dr. George Zoehl; Wendy Kennedy's stepfather, Chuck; Nancy Loy's friend, Rev. Peggy O'Connor; Melva Fisher's sister and brother-in-law, Velma and Jamie Christy, and her daughter-in-law, Mindy Fisher; Torrence; Leslie Huntington's friend, Becky Edwards Williams; Annette McCormick's father, Charles McCormick; Liz Kuhn; Mike Kennedy's father, Allan Kennedy; Tim Ahrens' mother, Lorene Ahrens, sister, Debbie Ahrens, niece and fiancé Josie and William; and granddaughter and Sarah Ahrens Stadie's daughter, Aurelia Stadie; Janet Axt's mother, Alice Paugh; 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** Kate Erickson on the death of her father, John White; Francille Firebaugh on the death of her husband, John Firebaugh.

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

We pray for all people involved in mass shootings, especially the victims both in Columbus and across the nation.

In the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle, we pray for the people and churches in Sudan, South Sudan, and Uganda. We also pray for our UCC partner in mission, the Christian Church Disciples of Christ in Paraguay.

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## 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](mailto:amccormick@firstchurch.org).

Cash and designated gifts go to support **Horizon Prison Initiative**. Its mission is to transform inmates and break the cyclical tendency of incarceration and its societal impact. The yearlong program guides the incarcerated participants, living in dormitory style arrangements separate from the general prison population, in refocusing their lives. Courses focus on topics such as trauma recovery, victim awareness, and implicit bias, amongst others. Horizon is the only multi-faith program serving Ohio's prisons. Thank you for your generosity.

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## Upcoming Mission Offerings

<b>June 30</b>	<b>Horizon Prison Initiative</b>
July 7	Gladden Food Pantry
July 14	Sandy Hook Promise
July 21	Broad Street Food Pantry
July 28	Faith in Public Life

# 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:** Sebastian Kulwicki

## 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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