



WELCOME TO FIRST CHURCH!

If you are visiting today and looking for a church home, welcome! For nearly 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. Joanna Samuelson, *minister*

The Rev. Dan Clark, *liturgist*

Melissa Kulwicki, *worship leader*

Barry Moenter, *organist*

Michael Kennedy, *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

Toccata and Adagio in C (BWV #564)

Johann Sebastian Bach, 1713

ENTER TO WORSHIP

The Rev. Dan Clark

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: Come, rest your spirits in the Lord.

People: We come, hungering and thirsting for God's word.

Leader: This is a place of peace and hope, where all may be fed and healed.

People: Bring us to the time of healing.

Leader: Come, place your trust in God who is always near you.

People: Open our hearts, Lord, to hear your word and feel your presence. Amen.

*OPENING HYMN
“Oh God of every nation”

Llangloffan, Welsh folk melody, 1872
William Watkins Reid, 1958

1 O God of ev - ery na - tion, of ev - ery race and land,
2 From search for wealth and pow - er and scorn of truth and right,
3 Lord, strength-en those who la - bor that all may find re - lease
4 Keep bright in us the vi - sion of days when war shall cease,

re - deem the whole cre - a - tion with your al - might - y hand.
from trust in bombs that show - er de-struc-tion through the night,
from fear of rat - tling sa - ber, from dread of war's in - crease;
when ha - tred and di - vi - sion give way to love and peace,

Where hate and fear di - vide us and bit - ter threats are hurled,
from pride of race and sta - tion and blind-ness to your way,
when hope and cour - age fal - ter, your still small voice be heard;
till dawns the morn-ing glo-rious when truth and jus - tice reign

in love and mer - cy guide us and heal our strife - torn world.
de - liv - er ev - ery na - tion, e - ter - nal God, we pray.
with faith that none can al - ter, your ser-vants un - der - gird.
and Christ shall rule vic - to - rious o'er all the world's do - main.

INVOCATION

The Rev. Joanna Samuelson

Leader: God be with you.

People. And also with you.

Leader: Let us pray.

People: **O God, the protector of all who trust in you, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy: Increase and multiply upon us your mercy; that, with you as our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we lose not the things eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, 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 at the end of the pew,
sign it and pass it on to your neighbor so we many greet one another 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 Todd Cunningham.*

THE HEBREW SCRIPTURE

2 Kings 4:42-44

Rev. Clark

Leader: A reading from the Second Book of Kings, the fourth chapter.

A man came from Baal-shalishah, bringing food from the first fruits to the man of God: twenty loaves of barley and fresh ears of grain in his sack. Elisha said, "Give it to the people and let them eat." But his servant said, "How can I set this before a hundred people?" So he repeated, "Give it to the people and let them eat, for thus says the Lord, 'They shall eat and have some left.'" He set it before them, they ate, and had some left, according to the word of the Lord.

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

People: Thanks be to God.

THE EPISTLE

Ephesians 3:14-21

Rev. Clark

Leader: A reading from the Letter of Paul to the Ephesians, the fourth chapter.

I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

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

People: Thanks be to God.

*THE GOSPEL HYMN

“Break thou the bread of life”

Bread of Life, William Fisk Sherwin, 1877

Mary A. Lathbury, 1877

1 Break thou the bread of life, dear Lord, to me,
2 Bless thou the truth, dear Lord, now un - to me,

as thou didst break the loaves be - side the sea.
as thou didst bless the bread by Gal - i - lee.

Be - yond the sa - cred page I seek thee, Lord.
Then shall all bond - age cease, all fet - ters fall.

My spir - it pants for thee, O liv - ing Word!
And I shall find my peace, my all in all.

THE GOSPEL

John 6:1-21

Rev. Ahrens

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

Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?" He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. Philip answered him, "Six months' wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little." One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?" Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in all. Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, "Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost." So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, "This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world."

When Jesus realized that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing. When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were terrified. But he said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." Then they wanted to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the land toward which they were going.

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

People: **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

"Christian Nationalism: Neither Christian nor Patriotic"

Rev. Ahrens

HYMN OF THE DAY

"My country, 'tis of thee" (*stanzas 1 and 4*)*America*, Harmonia Angelicana, 1744

Samuel Francis Smith, 1932

My country, 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing;
 Land where our parents died, land of the pilgrim's pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring.
 Our parents' God, to thee, author of liberty, to thee we sing;
 Long may our land be bright with freedom's holy light, protect us by thy might, great God, our King.

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 the Depart to Serve leaflet:



MISSION INVITATION

Rev. Clark

Cash and designated gifts go to support **Faith in Public Life**. Faith in Public Life advances the moral imperative for a just, inclusive and equitable country so everyone is able to live into their full humanity. Their coalition of influential faith leaders – who reflect the diversity of the nation – collectively discern, set faith-forward strategy and take transformative action. By building cultures of belonging and leveraging the collective power of our multifaith and multiracial coalition, their strategy hub leads Faith in Public Life them closer to realizing a healthy and equitable democracy. Thank you for your generosity.

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

“Solace”

Scott Joplin, 1909

*PRESENTATION HYMN

Nun Danket all Gott

**Now thank we all our God
with heart and hands and voices,
Who wondrous things has done,
in whom this world rejoices;
Who, from our parents' arms
has blessed us on our way
With countless gifts of love,
and still is ours today.**

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Rev. Samuelson

Leader: Let us pray.

People: **O God of New Life, out of the abundance of our lives, we offer our gifts to you.
Through your blessing and our willingness to share and serve, may these offerings
become a source of hope and love within our congregation and in the community
beyond us. In your precious name, we pray, Amen.**

COMMUNITY NOTICES - DEPART TO SERVE

Ms. Kulwicki

L: Let us depart with a heart to serve.

P: **Thanks be to God.**

*CLOSING HYMN

"O living Bread from heaven"

Aurelia, Samuel Sebastian Wesley, 1864

Johann von Rist, 1651; trans. Catherine Winkworth, 1858

1 O liv - ing Bread from heav - en, how well you feed your guest!
2 My Sav - ior, you have led me with - in your ho - liest place,
3 You gave me all I want - ed; this food can death de - stroy.
4 Oh, grant me then, well-strength-en ed with heav'n-ly food, while here

The gifts that you have giv - en have filled my heart with rest.
and here your - self have fed me with trea - sures of your grace;
And you have free - ly grant - ed the cup of end - less joy.
my course on earth is length - ened, to serve you, free from fear;

O won-drous food of bless - ing! O cup that heals our woes!
for you have free - ly giv - en what earth could nev - er buy,
My Lord, I do not mer - it the fa - vor you have shown,
and bring me home to praise you where none can peace de - stroy,

My heart, this gift pos - sess - ing, in thank-ful song o'er - flows!
the bread of life from heav - en, that now I shall not die.
and all my soul and spir - it bow down be - fore your throne.
where I will ev - er raise you glad songs in end - less joy.

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Fugue in G (BWV #577)

Rev. Ahrens

Johann Sebastian Bach, 1713

Please be seated for the Postlude.

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.

† THE FLOWERS THIS MORNING are given to the glory of God and in celebration of the 39th anniversary of Albert and Cynthia Adcock.

† GREETING AT THE EXITS

Rev. Ahrens — Narthex (Broad Street entrance)

Rev. Samuelson — East Door (Ninth Street entrance by the Church Office)

Ms. Kulwicki — West Door (Cleveland Avenue entrance by the Chapel)

MUSIC NOTES

Note on “O living Bread from heaven”: The phrase "bread of life" as a metaphor for scripture has misled many people into thinking of this hymn as being connected with the Lord's Supper, when its true subject is Bible study. Both the author and the composer were active in the work of the Chautauqua Assembly.

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Enter to Worship Depart to Serve

July 28, 2024

This Week at First Church

Sunday, July 28

- 9 a.m. Morning Prayer & Holy Communion
(Parish Hall & Virtual)
10 a.m. First Serves (Classroom D)
Transition Listening Circle (Classroom C)
Open Discussions with Rev. Tim (Parlor)
11 a.m. Worship Service (Sanctuary & Virtual)

Monday, July 29

- 10 a.m. Church Growth Committee Mtg
(Fanning Rm)
12 Noon Grief Support (Classroom C & Zoom)

Tuesday, July 30

- 5:15 p.m. Laundry Love (Wash Land)

Saturday, August 3

- 10:30 a.m. Sacred Earth Committee Mtg
(Adult Library)

Sunday, August 4

- 9 a.m. Morning Prayer & Holy Communion
(Parish Hall & Virtual)
10 a.m. Open Discussions with Rev. Tim (Parlor)
11 a.m. Worship Service & Holy Communion
(Sanctuary & Virtual)
12 Noon Coffee Hour & Coffee Sales (Parish Hall)

Summer Sermon Series

“Then and Now: A Final Sermon Series”

- The Rev. Dr. Tim Ahrens Preaching
Sundays at 9 and 11 a.m.
In-person and Livestreaming on YouTube and Facebook Live
Sunday, July 28 “Christian Nationalism: Neither Christian nor Patriotic”
Sunday, August 4 “The Devil and the Arch Villains”
Sunday, August 11 “Racism and Caste: The Skin and Bones of the Matter”
Sunday, August 18 “A Parable of Madness”
Sunday, August 25 “What Does the Bible say about Homosexuality?”
Sunday, September 1 “To Love and to Work”

Save the Date

Healthy Congregations Workshop

Sunday, August 18

12:15 - 2:15 p.m. in Parish Hall

Transition News

Interim ministry is not regular ministry!

Though “interim” means temporary, it does not mean partial, incomplete, or part-time. The sense of loss when Rev. Tim leaves in October is like any loss. Without time to grieve the loss, our feelings can get stuck. Interim ministry can help provide an environment in which change can occur positively, creatively, and helpfully. After celebrating 25 years of ministry with Rev. Tim Ahrens, we can work with our interim ministers to focus on our future ministry in Columbus. Being future-focused will help the church discern God’s call and prepare for the arrival of new pastoral leadership.

The interim time is a time for discernment. The Transition Team of First Church asks for your participation in listening and discerning.

Upcoming Listening Circles, meeting in Classroom C

July 28, 10 a.m., Open meeting for members

August 6, 10 a.m., Open meeting for members

August 14, 7 p.m., Zoom meeting for members

Your voice is important! Please join us once, or often, to share your perspectives. Let’s all be part of the change.

First Church Book Club:

Wednesday, August 7 *Horse*

Wednesday, September 4

Our Missing Hearts

7 p.m. on Zoom

Come enjoy lively conversation and fellowship this August and September with the First Church Book Club.

On Wednesday, August 7, Janet Newcity will lead a discussion of Geraldine Brooks’ ***Horse***.

On Wednesday, September 4, Mary Jacobson will lead a discussion of ***Our Missing Hearts*** by Celeste Ng.

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

Save the Date New Members Class Saturday, August 24, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

If you are potentially interested in joining our community of faith, we invite you to attend our new member class on Saturday, August 24, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the church. A boxed lunch will be served.

You are not required to attend a new member class to join our church. We are a large congregation, however, so the class introduces you to lay leaders and clergy and the many opportunities for worship, fellowship, learning and service.

If you would like to attend the new member class, please contact one of the ministers or the church office.

Keep in Prayer

Members Margot Connor and John Anderson; Albert Adcock; Francille Firebaugh; Pauline Fritz; Jean Wetmore; Alex Palmer; Bill Rhodes; 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 Ahrens' granddaughter and Sarah Stadie's daughter, Aurelia Stadie; Wendy Reber's cousin, Marie Disney and family; 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; Annette McCormick's father, Charles McCormick; 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; 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 Panel'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 Mike Kennedy on the death of his father, Allan Kennedy; Jim Griffin on the death of his friend, John Alatsis.

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

In the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle, we pray for the people and churches in the Republic of Congo, Gabon, Sao Tome, and Principe. We also pray for our UCC partner in mission, the United Church of Christ in the Marshall Islands.

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 gifts go to support **Faith in Public Life**. Faith in Public Life advances the moral imperative for a just, inclusive, and equitable country so everyone is able to live into their full humanity. Their coalition of influential faith leaders – who reflect the diversity of the nation – collectively discern, set faith-forward strategy and take transformative action. By building cultures of belonging and leveraging the collective power of our multifaith and multiracial coalition, their strategy hub leads them closer to realizing a healthy and equitable democracy. Thank you for your generosity.

Upcoming Mission Offerings

July 28	Faith in Public Life
August 4	Good Samaritan
August 11	Ohio Council of Churches
	Anti-Racism Ministry
August 18	Pathway Clubhouse
August 25	Equitas

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 Klintonworth

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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