



WELCOME TO FIRST CHURCH!

If you are visiting today and looking for a church home, welcome! For 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*
- Duan Cannon, *liturgist*
- Melissa Kulwicki, *worship leader*
- James Bobb, *organist*
- Victor John, *soloist*
- Mike 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

Récit de Tierce en Taille

Nicolas de Grigny, 1672-1703

ENTER TO WORSHIP

Duan Cannon

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: Give thanks to God!

People: **We thank God for joy, for laughter, for abundant blessings of every kind.**

Leader: Give thanks to God at all times and for everything!

People: **We thank God, when we can and as we can, for struggles, for solitude, for challenges.**

Leader: Give thanks to God at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

People: **We thank God that, in Christ, our joys as well as our pain, our losses as well as our laughter, are in God’s heart and hands.**

—Thom Shuman, based on Ephesians 5:20, alt.

*OPENING HYMN
 "Hope of the world"

Donne secours, Genevan Psalter, 1551
 Georgia Harkness, 1891-1974



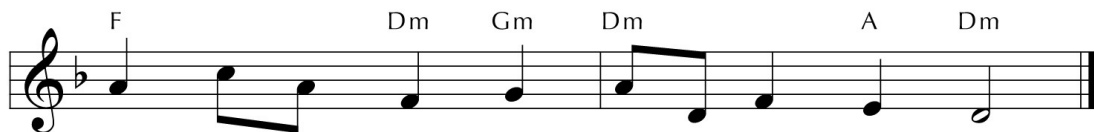
1 Hope of the world, thou Christ of great com - pas - sion:
 2 Hope of the world, God's gift from high - est heav - en,
 3 Hope of the world, a - foot on dust - y high - ways,
 4 Hope of the world, who by thy cross didst save us
 5 Hope of the world, O Christ, o'er death vic - to - rious,



speak to our fear - ful hearts by con - flict rent;
 bring - ing to hun - gry souls the bread of life:
 show - ing to wan - dering souls the path of light:
 from death and deep de - spair, from sin and guilt:
 who by this sign didst con - quer grief and pain:



save us, thy peo - ple, from con - sum - ing pas - sion,
 still let thy Spir - it un - to us be giv - en
 walk thou be - side us lest the tempt - ing by - ways
 we ren - der back the love thy mer - cy gave us;
 we would be faith - ful to thy gos - pel glo - rious;



who by our own false hopes and aims are spent.
 to heal earth's wounds and end our bit - ter strife.
 lure us a - way from thee to end - less night.
 take thou our lives and use them as thou wilt.
 thou art our Lord! Thou dost for - ev - er reign!

INVOCATION

The Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Ahrens

Leader: God be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Leader: Let us pray.

People: **Almighty God, you have given your only Son to be for us a sacrifice for sin, and also an example of godly life: Give us grace to receive thankfully the fruits of his redeeming work, and to follow daily in the blessed steps of his most holy life; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.**

*WELCOME AND PASSING OF THE PEACE

The Rev. Joanna Samuelson

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 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 Rev. Larry Miller.

THE HEBREW SCRIPTURE LESSON

Proverbs 9:1-6

Duan Cannon

Leader: A reading from the book of Proverbs, the ninth chapter.

Wisdom has built her house,
she has hewn her seven pillars.
She has slaughtered her animals, she has mixed her wine,
she has also set her table.
She has sent out her servant-girls, she calls
from the highest places in the town,
"You that are simple, turn in here!"
To those without sense she says,
"Come, eat of my bread
and drink of the wine I have mixed.
Lay aside immaturity, and live,
and walk in the way of insight."

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

People: Thanks be to God.

SOLO

"With What Shall I Come Before the Lord"

John Ness Beck, 1930-1987

THE EPISTLE

Ephesians 5:15-20

Duan Cannon

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

Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. So do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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

People: Thanks be to God.

*THE GOSPEL HYMN
 "I want Jesus to walk with me"

Sojourner, African American spiritual
 African American spiritual



1. I want Je - sus _____ to walk with
 2. In my tri - als, _____ Lord, walk with
 3. When I'm in trou - ble, _____ Lord, walk with



me; _____ I want Je - sus _____ to walk with
 me; _____ in my tri - als, _____ Lord, walk with
 me; _____ when I'm in trou - ble, _____ Lord, walk with



me; _____ all a - long my _____ pil - grim
 me; _____ when my heart is _____ al - most
 me; _____ when my head is _____ bowed in



jour - ney, _____ Lord, I want Je - sus _____
 break - ing, _____ Lord, I want Je - sus _____
 sor - row, _____ Lord, I want Je - sus _____



to walk with me. _____
 to walk with me. _____
 to walk with me. _____

Leader: A reading from the Gospel according to Luke, the fifteenth chapter.

Then Jesus said, "There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the wealth that will belong to me.' So he divided his assets between them. A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant region, and there he squandered his wealth in dissolute living. When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that region, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that region, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. He would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, and no one gave him anything. But when he came to his senses he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands."' So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate, for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate.

"Now his elder son was in the field, and as he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. He replied, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf because he has got him back safe and sound.' Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command, yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your assets with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!' Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.' "

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

People: Thanks be to God.

SERMON

"The Parable of Madness"

Rev. Ahrens

Fourth in a six part sermon series entitled "Then and Now"

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. Ahrens and Doug Taft

Cash and designated gifts go to support the **Pathway Clubhouse**, a community-based program of psychosocial rehabilitation for people who have a mental illness. The Clubhouse model began in New York in 1948 with Fountain House and has grown nationally and internationally as a holistic (addressing the whole person) approach empowering people living with mental illness. Opportunities for social interaction, developing relationships, employment, education and building community are integral to the holistic approach of the Clubhouse model. Pathway's mission is to maximize and strengthen their members' independence in working, living, and socializing in the community. This mission is accomplished through their Cultural Awareness and Rehabilitative Services that emphasize the building of skills, respect, friendship, teamwork, and the celebration of individual achievements. Thank you for your generosity.

OFFERTORY SOLO

"Precious Lord, Take My Hand"

Thomas A. Dorsey, 1899-1993, arr. Jack Schrader, b. 1942

*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 Generous and Giving God, we dedicate these gifts to the work of your church through our congregation. May all that we offer weave a tapestry of compassion and action, faith and fellowship, justice and joy, and hope and wholeness. Amen.

COMMUNITY NOTICES - DEPART TO SERVE

Ms. Kulwicki

L: Let us depart with a heart to serve.

P: Thanks be to God.

*CLOSING HYMN
 "Come, labor on"

Ora Labora, T. Tertius Noble, 1867-1953
 Jane Laurie Borthwick, 1813-1897

Capo 1: (G) (C) (G) (Em) (C) (G) (C) (D) (G)
 A^b D^b A^b Fm D^b A^b D^b E^b A^b

1 Come, la-bor on. Who dares stand i - dle on the har - vest plain
 2 Come, la-bor on. Claim the high call - ing an - gels can - not share;
 3 Come, la-bor on. Cast off all gloom - y doubt and faith - less fear!
 4 Come, la-bor on. No time for rest, till glows the west - ern sky,

(Em) (B7) (Em) (B) (Em) (C) (D)
 Fm C7 Fm C Fm D^b E^b

while all a - round us waves the gold - en grain? And to each
 to young and old the gos - pel glad - ness bear. Re - deem the
 No arm so weak but may do ser - vice here. Though fee - ble
 till the long shad - ows o'er our path - way lie, and a glad

(G) (Em) (C) (G) (Am) (D7) (G)
 A^b Fm D^b A^b B^bm E^b7 A^b

ser - vant does the Mas - ter say, "Go work to - day."
 time; its hours too swift - ly fly. The night draws nigh.
 a - gents, may we all ful - fill God's righ - teous will.
 sound comes with the set - ting sun, "Well done, well done!"

*BENEDICTION

Rev. Ahrens

POSTLUDE

I'll Praise My Maker While I've Breath

Max Reger, 1873-1916

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 on memory of parents, Elizabeth and Mars Fontana, by Marty Worth.

† PLEASE JOIN US IN PARISH HALL for our Healthy Congregations Workshop.

† GREETING AT THE EXITS

Rev. Samuelson — Narthex (Broad Street entrance)

Ms. Kulwicki — East Door (Ninth Street entrance by the Church Office)

Rev. Ahrens — West Door (Cleveland Avenue entrance by the Chapel)

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Enter to Worship
Depart to Serve

August 18, 2024

This Week at First Church

Sunday, August 18

- 9 a.m. Morning Prayer & Holy Communion
(Parish Hall & Virtual)
- 10 a.m. Open Discussions with Rev. Tim
(Parlor)
Justice & Mercy Meeting
- 11 a.m. Worship Service (Sanctuary & Virtual)
- 12:15 p.m. Healthy Congregations Workshop
(Parish Hall)

Tuesday, August 20

- 5:30 p.m. Budget & Finance Mtg
(Classroom C & Zoom)
- 6 p.m. BREAD New Team Member
Orientation (Parish Hall)
- 7 p.m. Church Council Mtg
(Classroom C & Zoom)

Wednesday, August 21

- 10 a.m. The Largest Table Food Prep &
Delivery (Kitchen)
- 12 Noon Healthy Congregations Mtg
(Fanning Rm)
- 6:30 p.m. Stephen Ministry Group Supervision
Mtg (Fanning Rm)

Friday, August 23

- 10 a.m. Full Circle Connections (Parlor)

Saturday, August 24

- 10 a.m. New Members Class (Classroom C)

Sunday, August 25

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

Open Discussion with Rev. Tim

10 a.m.

Church Parlor

Each Sunday at 10 a.m. during the Summer Sermon Series, join Rev. Tim in the Church Parlor for an open discussion time. The parlor is located on the main floor across from the church office.

Upcoming Mission Offerings

- August 18 Pathway Clubhouse
- August 25 Equitas

Transition News

The Transition Team has been at work developing a plan for the church's spiritual and pastoral care during the time between Rev. Tim's departure and the beginning of Interim leadership. At present, Rev. Joanna will be joined by clergy members of our congregation to lead worship and respond to pastoral care needs of membership and staff. Our Deacons and Stephen Ministers will continue to do what they do so well to support the spiritual life of the church. More details will be forthcoming as we approach October 20.

From our Listening Circles we are learning how much our members value the Social Justice and Music ministries of First Church. We also hear the concerns raised about rebuilding ministry to young families and youth, as well as strengthening congregational connections and care. The feedback from listening groups will provide a foundation for our journey forward. Please join us once, or often, to share your perspectives. Your voice is important!

Upcoming Listening Circles

8/23, 10 a.m., Full Circle Connections, Parlor

8/25, 10 a.m., Open meeting for members, Classroom C

9/15, 10 a.m., Open meeting for members, Classroom D

9/16, 7 p.m., Open meeting for members, Zoom

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

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

Spiritual Gifts Workshop Saturday, September 7, 2024 1-3 p.m. Room C

Have you ever wondered what your spiritual gifts are and how you can be of service to the life and mission of First Congregational Church? Have you ever felt that you would step up and volunteer if you just knew where your gifts fit in?

Please come on Saturday, September 7 for a Spiritual Gifts Workshop where these and other pertinent questions will be answered.

The workshop will be led by Jacquelyn Dean our Commissioned Minister in Spiritual Formation and Direction from 1-3 p.m. Room C in the Education Wing.

You can register by contacting Jackie Dean at jelainestith@hotmail.com.

Deadline to register is Tuesday, September 3.

First Church Engagement Fair Sunday, September 8 10-11 a.m., 12:15-1:15 p.m. Parish Hall

Get ready to take your next steps at First Church! Join us on Sunday, September 8, right after either worship service in Parish Hall for an exciting opportunity to deepen your connection with our church community at our Engagement Fair.

Come chat with fellow members, explore the wonderful opportunities that await you, see which speak to your passions, and take that next step – whatever next step may be for you. See you there!

Keep in Prayer

Prayers of joy for the birth of Nalani Este Panahon, daughter of Carly Kutschbach Panahon and Ray Panahon, and granddaughter of Diana and Bob Kutschbach.

Members Margot Connor and John Anderson; Francille Firebaugh; Pauline Fritz; Jean Wetmore; Nancy Burba; Mary Kay Beall Carter and John Carter; Carol Lowy; Clinton Brown; Dan Axt; Rick Sayre; Anne Morganstern; Martha Huey; Twink Starr; and Janice White.

Family and friends Pat Patterson's niece, Tamara Howard; Quang Phan and wife; David Hogrefe's mother, Linda Hogrefe; Joanna Samuelson's friend, Jo Anne Nay; 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; 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 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 family and friends of G. Dene Barnard; Nan Kreimer's friend, Keiara, on the recent loss of both of her parents; Margaret Cipriani, on the death of her friend, Kathryn Schlarb; family and friends of Timothy Holt on his death; Victor John's friend Dollie Farrow on the passing of her mother; Barry Moenter on the death of his brother-in-law, Tom Huss; and Jim Griffin on the death of his friend, Carla Fontaine.

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 Liberia and Sierra Leone. We also pray for our UCC partner in mission, the Peace Commission of the Evangelical Council (CEDECOL) of Columbia.

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.

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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.

Interim Director of Faith Formation: Leslie Fulford

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, Denise Vogt

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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