



### 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*
- Saturn Cooks, *liturgist*
- Melissa Kulwicki, *worship leader*
- James Bobb, *organist*
- First Church Choir
- Pat Patterson, *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

*Von Gott will ich nicht lassen* (From God Can Nothing Move Me), BWV 658

Johann Sebastian Bach c. 1748

#### ENTER TO WORSHIP

Saturn Cooks

**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:** How wonderful it is to be in a dwelling-place for God!

**People:** **The refreshing springs of God's love clean and restore us.**

**Leader:** There is a place here for everyone. No one is turned away.

**People:** **The least and the lost; the homeless and hopeless are always welcome in God's house.**

**Leader:** Praise to God who invites and shelters us all.

**People:** **Praise to God who heals and sends us forth to serve. Amen.**

\*OPENING HYMN

*Weisse Flaggen*, German melody, 1741

“When the morning stars together”

Albert F. Bayly, 1966

1 When the morn-ing stars to - geth - er their Cre - a - tor's  
2 When in syn - a - gogue and tem - ple voic - es raised the  
3 Voice and in - stru - ment in un - ion through the a - ges  
4 Lord, we bring our gift of mu - sic; touch our lips and

glo - ry sang, and the an - gel host all shout-ed till with  
psalm-ists' songs, of - fering up the ad - o - ra - tion which a -  
spoke your praise. Plain-song, tune - ful hymns, and an - thems told your  
fire our hearts. Teach our minds and train our sens - es; fit us

joy the heav - ens rang, then your wis - dom and your great-ness  
lone to you be - longs; when the sing - ers, trum - pets, cym - bals  
faith - ful, gra - cious ways. Choir and or - ches - tra and or - gan  
for these sa - cred arts. Then with skill and con - se - cra - tion

their ex - ul - tant mu - sic told, all the beau - ty  
 all com - bined, your praise to share, awe - struck peo - ple  
 each a sa - cred of - fering brought, while, in - spired by  
 we would serve you, Lord, and give all our powers to

and the splen - dor which your might - y works un - fold.  
 saw your glo - ry fill the sa - cred house of prayer.  
 your own Spir - it, po - et and com - pos - er wrought.  
 glo - ri - fy you, and in serv - ing ful - ly live.

INVOCATION

The Rev. Joanna Samuelson

Leader: God be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

Leader: Let us pray.

**People: Grant, O merciful God, that your Church, being gathered together in unity by your Holy Spirit, may show forth your power among all peoples, to the glory of your Name; 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 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 Jenny Provenzano.*

Leader: A reading from the Book of Genesis, the nineteenth chapter.

The two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gateway of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground. He said, "Please, my lords, turn aside to your servant's house and spend the night and wash your feet; then you can rise early and go on your way." They said, "No; we will spend the night in the square." But he urged them strongly, so they turned aside to him and entered his house, and he made them a feast and baked unleavened bread, and they ate. But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people to the last man, surrounded the house, and they called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, so that we may know them." Lot went out of the door to the men, shut the door after him, and said, "I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly. Look, I have two daughters who have not known a man; let me bring them out to you, and do to them as you please; only do nothing to these men, for they have come under the shelter of my roof." But they replied, "Stand back!" And they said, "This fellow came here as an alien, and he would play the judge! Now we will deal worse with you than with them." Then they pressed hard against the man Lot and came near the door to break it down. But the men inside reached out their hands and brought Lot into the house with them and shut the door. And they struck with blindness the men who were at the door of the house, both small and great, so that they were unable to find the door.

Then the men said to Lot, "Have you anyone else here? Sons-in-law, sons, daughters, or anyone you have in the city—bring them out of the place. For we are about to destroy this place, because the outcry against its people has become great before the Lord, and the Lord has sent us to destroy it." So Lot went out and said to his sons-in-law, who were to marry his daughters, "Up, get out of this place, for the Lord is about to destroy the city." But he seemed to his sons-in-law to be jesting.

When morning dawned, the angels urged Lot, saying, "Get up, take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or else you will be consumed in the punishment of the city." But he lingered, so the men seized him and his wife and his two daughters by the hand, the Lord being merciful to him, and they brought him out and left him outside the city. When they had brought them outside, they said, "Flee for your life; do not look back or stop anywhere in the plain; flee to the hills, or else you will be consumed." And Lot said to them, "Oh, no, my lords; your servant has found favor with you, and you have shown me great kindness in saving my life, but I cannot flee to the hills, for fear the disaster will overtake me and I die. Look, that city is near enough to flee to, and it is a little one. Let me escape there—is it not a little one?—and my life will be saved!" He said to him, "Very well, I grant you this favor too and will not overthrow the city of which you have spoken. Hurry, escape there, for I can do nothing until you arrive there." Therefore the city was called Zoar. The sun had risen on the earth when Lot came to Zoar.

Then the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the Lord out of heaven, and he overthrew those cities and all the plain and all the inhabitants of the cities and what grew on the ground. But Lot's wife, behind him, looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.

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

**People: Thanks be to God.**

ANTHEM

"Eternal Spirit of the Living Christ"

*Plainsong* mode V, 1697  
Frank von Christierson, 1974

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

Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness. As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace. With all of these, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints. Pray also for me, so that when I speak, a message may be given to me to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it boldly, as I must speak.

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

**People: Thanks be to God.**

“In the midst of new dimensions”

Julian B. Rush, 1979

1 In the midst of new di - men - sions, in the face of  
 2 Through the flood of starv - ing peo - ple, war - ring fac - tions,  
 3 As we stand, a world di - vid - ed by our own self -  
 4 We are man and we are wom - an, all per - sua - sions,  
 5 Should the threats of dire pre - dic - tions cause us to with -

chang - ing ways, who will lead the pil - grim peo - ples  
 and de - spair, who will lift the ol - ive branch - es?  
 seek - ing schemes, grant that we, your glob - al vil - lage,  
 old and young, each a gift in your cre - a - tion,  
 draw in pain, may your blaz - ing phoe - nix spir - it

*Refrain*

wan - dering in their sep - arate ways?  
 Who will light the flame of care?  
 might en - vi - sion wid - er dreams. God of rain - bow, fi - ery pil - lar,  
 each a love song to be sung.  
 res - ur - rect the church a - gain.

lead - ing where the ea - gles soar, we your peo - ple, ours the jour - ney

now and ev - er, now and ev - er, now and ev - er - more.

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

Jesus said, “Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever.” He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum.

When many of his disciples heard it, they said, “This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?” But Jesus, being aware that his disciples were complaining about it, said to them, “Does this offend you? Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But among you there are some who do not believe.” For Jesus knew from the first who were the ones that did not believe, and who was the one that would betray him. And he said, “For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted by the Father.”

Because of this many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him. So Jesus asked the twelve, “Do you also wish to go away?” Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.”

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

**People: Thanks be to God.**

## SERMON

“What Does the Bible Say about Homosexuality?”

Rev. Ahrens

*Fifth 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

Dr. Lynn Wallich

Cash and designated gifts go to support **Equitas**. Equitas Health is one of the nation’s largest LGBTQ+ and HIV/AIDS-serving organizations. It offers primary and specialized medical care, pharmacy, dentistry, mental health and recovery services, and HIV/STI treatment and prevention. Equitas also advocates for the health of the LGBTQ+ community. Your donation helps to fund the many services Equitas provides that are not paid through Medicaid, Medicare, and medical insurance. Thank you for your generosity.

OFFERTORY ANTHEM  
"Fight the Good Fight"

John Gardner, 1964  
John S. B. Monsell, 1863

Fight the good fight with all thy might.  
Christ is thy strength and Christ thy right.  
Lay hold on life, and it shall be  
thy joy and crown eternally.

Run the straight race through God's good grace;  
lift up thine eyes, and seek Christ's face.  
Life with its way before us lies;  
Christ is the path, and Christ the prize.

Cast care aside; lean on thy guide.  
God's boundless mercy will provide.  
Trust, and thy trusting soul shall prove  
Christ is its life, and Christ its love.

Faint not nor fear: God's arms are near.  
God changeth not, and thou art dear.  
Only believe, and thou shalt see  
that Christ is all in all to thee.

\*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 One, may our offering this day reflect our deep desire for your love to transform our time, our efforts, and our gifts into works of creative compassion for one other, for our wider community, and for the world beyond. 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

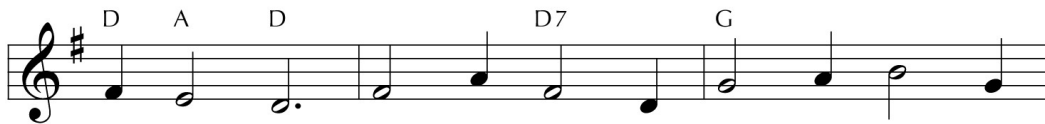
"Christ is made the sure foundation"

Westminster Abbey, Henry Purcell, c.1680

Latin, 7th cent., trans. John Mason Neale, 1851



1 Christ is made the sure foun - da - tion, Christ the head and  
2 To this tem - ple, where we call you, come, O Lord of  
3 Here be - stow on all your ser - vants what they seek from  
4 Laud and hon - or to the Fa - ther, laud and hon - or



cor - ner - stone, cho - sen of the Lord and pre - cious,  
hosts, and stay; come, with all your lov - ing - kind - ness;  
you to gain; what they gain from you, for - ev - er  
to the Son, laud and hon - or to the Spir - it,



bind - ing all the church in one; ho - ly Zi - on's  
hear your peo - ple as we pray, and your full - est  
with the bless - ed to re - tain; and here - af - ter  
ev - er three and ev - er one: one in might and



help for - ev - er, and our con - fi - dence a - lone.  
ben - e - dic - tion shed with - in these walls to - day.  
in your glo - ry ev - er - more with you to reign.  
one in glo - ry while un - end - ing a - ges run!

BENEDICTION

Rev. Ahrens

POSTLUDE

Toccata in G Major

Théodore Dubois, 1886

*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 honor of her husband, John Anderson's birthday by Margo Connor.

† COFFEE HOUR THIS MORNING is hosted by the Euphoric Neighborhood Care Circle.

† GREETING AT THE EXITS

Rev. Samuelson and Mr. Bobb — Narthex (Broad Street entrance)

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

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

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*Enter to Worship*  
**Depart to Serve**

**August 25, 2024**

**This Week at First Church**

**Sunday, August 25**

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

**Monday, August 26**

- 10 a.m. Church Growth Committee Mtg  
(Fanning Rm)
- 12 Noon Grief Support Group  
(Classroom C & Zoom)
- 6:30 p.m. Transition Team Mtg  
(Classroom C & Zoom)
- 6:30 p.m. BREAD Team Mtg (Parish Hall)

**Tuesday, August 27**

- 5:15 p.m. Laundry Love (Wash Land)
- 7 p.m. Deacons Mtg (Zoom)

**Wednesday, August 28**

- 11 a.m. Good Samaritan Mtg (Fanning Rm)

**Thursday, August 29**

- 6:00 p.m. Bell Choir Rehearsal (Bell Rm)  
BREAD New Team Members  
Orientation (Parish Hall)

**Sunday, September 1**

- 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 “Love Works”

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**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.

## 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*

8/25, 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

## 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 and to our community? 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](mailto:jelainestith@hotmail.com).

Deadline to register is Tuesday, September 3.

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## BREAD Event Monday, August 26 7 p.m. in Parish Hall

On Monday, August 26 at 7 p.m., BREAD will celebrate the 28 years that the Rev. Dr. Tim Ahrens has invested in this organization. All past, present, and future BREAD Network members are invited to attend.

RSVP to [antoINETTEKBR79@gmail.com](mailto:antoINETTEKBR79@gmail.com)

**First Church Book Club:  
Wednesday, September 4**

*Our Missing Hearts*

**7 p.m. on Zoom**

**Wednesday, October 2**

*O Gender Queer: A Memoir*

**7 p.m. on Zoom**

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

On Wednesday, September 4, Mary Jacobson will lead a discussion of *Our Missing Hearts* by Celeste Ng. This is the story of the bond between a mother and child living in a fearful society.

Government overreach causes ordinary people to be jailed and children removed from their parents. Police violence, political protest, book banning, and discrimination thrive. What are the powers—and limitations—of words, of stories, of art, to create change in the world? What lessons and legacies do we pass on to our children? How do any of us survive a broken world with our hearts intact?

On Wednesday, October 2, Kathy Reed will lead a discussion of *Gender Queer: A Memoir* by nonbinary, queer author and illustrator Maia Kobabe. This 2019 graphic memoir recounts Kobabe's journey from adolescence to adulthood growing up non-gender-conforming, exploring gender identity and sexuality, ultimately identifying as being outside of the gender binary. The American Library Association ranked it as the most challenged/banned book in schools and public libraries in 2021, 2022, and 2023.

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

**First Church Engagement Fair**

**Sunday, September 8**

**10-11 a.m., 12:15-1:15 p.m.**

**Parish Hall**

Come learn about all the amazing projects happening at First Church at our Engagement Fair! Join us Sunday, September 8, in Parish Hall, right after either worship service, for an exciting opportunity to learn about our activities and connect with other members.

As you see the many ways we work in the community and within our church family, you may discover a group whose activities speak to your heart! And you'll get to connect with folks you see in worship but might not have met yet. From small discussion groups to "done in a day" projects to serving on a committee, you'll see many opportunities for connection here.

Our Technology Help Desk will be available to answer your questions about our Realm online member directory and how to register online for church events using Realm. We'll even take your picture for our online member directory.

Come chat with fellow members, put names with the faces, and explore wonderful opportunities for service, finding those that speak to your heart!

See you there.

## Keep in Prayer

**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 daughter, Susan Wood, and her sister and brother-in-law, Velma and Jamie Christy; Annette McCormick's father, Charles McCormick; Janet Axt's mother, Alice Paugh; Margaret Cipriani's friend, Kathryn Schlarb; 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 Cicenias; 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; family and friends of Timothy Holt on his death; Victor John's friend Dollie Farrow on the passing of her mother; and Barry Moenter on the death of his brother-in-law, Tom Huss.

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 Cape Verde, The Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, and Senegal. We also pray for our UCC partner in mission, the Centre for Social Equity and Inclusion in India.

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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 **Equitas**. Equitas Health is one of the nation's largest LGBTQ+ and HIV/AIDS-serving organizations. It offers primary and specialized medical care, pharmacy, dentistry, mental health and recovery services, and HIV/STI treatment and prevention. Equitas also advocates for the health of the LGBTQ+ community. Your donation helps to fund the many services Equitas provides that are not paid through Medicaid, Medicare, and medical insurance. Thank you for your generosity.

# 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:**

**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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