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
Charlie Knerr, liturgist
Melissa Kulwicki, worship leader
Ann Eliot, 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 Charlie Knerr

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: Summer wanes and the autumn draws close.

People: Lord, help us to be ready for opportunities of service.

Leader: We have felt the refreshment of time away.

People: Lord, give us spirits of joy for the times ahead.

Leader: Come, let us celebrate God's eternal presence and love.

People: Let us open our spirits to receive God's direction for our lives. Amen.

"Come down, O love divine"

Bianco da Siena, c. 1367; trans. Richard Frederick Littledale, 1867



*Invocation

The Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Ahrens

Leader: God be with you. **People.** And also with you.

Leader: Let us pray.

People: God of all power and might, the author and giver of all good things: Graft in our

hearts the love of your name; increase in us true religion; nourish us with all goodness; and bring forth in us the fruit of good works; through Jesus Christ our Savior, who

lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

*Welcome and Passing of the Peace

Rev. 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 the pad 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 Janice Taft.

THE HEBREW SCRIPTURE LESSON Dev

Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9

Charlie Knerr

Leader: A reading from the book of Deuteronomy, the fourth chapter.

Moses said: So now, Israel, give heed to the statutes and ordinances that I am teaching you to observe, so that you may live to enter and occupy the land that the Lord, the God of your ancestors, is giving you. You must neither add anything to what I command you nor take away anything from it, but keep the commandments of the Lord your God with which I am charging you.

You must observe them diligently, for this will show your wisdom and discernment to the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and discerning people!" For what other great nation has a god so near to it as the Lord our God is whenever we call to him? And what other great nation has statutes and ordinances as just as this entire law that I am setting before you today?

But take care and watch yourselves closely, so as neither to forget the things that your eyes have seen nor to let them slip from your mind all the days of your life; make them known to your children and your children's children.

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

People: Thanks be to God.

The Psalter Charlie Knerr
Psalm 15 The St. Helena Psalter

O God, who may dwell in your tabernacle; who may abide upon your holy hill?

Those who lead blameless lives and do what is right, who speak truthfully from the heart.

There is no guile upon their tongues; they do no evil to their friends; they do not heap contempt upon their neighbors;

In their sight the wicked are rejected, but they honor those who fear God.

They have sworn to do no wrong and do not take back their word.

They do not give their money in hope of gain, nor do they take a bribe against the innocent.

Whoever does these things shall never be overthrown.

THE GOSPEL Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23 Rev. Ahrens

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

When the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around him, they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. (For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders; and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it; and there are also many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.) So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, "Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?" He said to them, "Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written,

'This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines.'

You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition."

Then he called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand: there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile." For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person."

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

People: Thanks be to God.

SERMON "Love Works" Rev. Ahrens

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

Prayers of the People Rev. Ahrens

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.

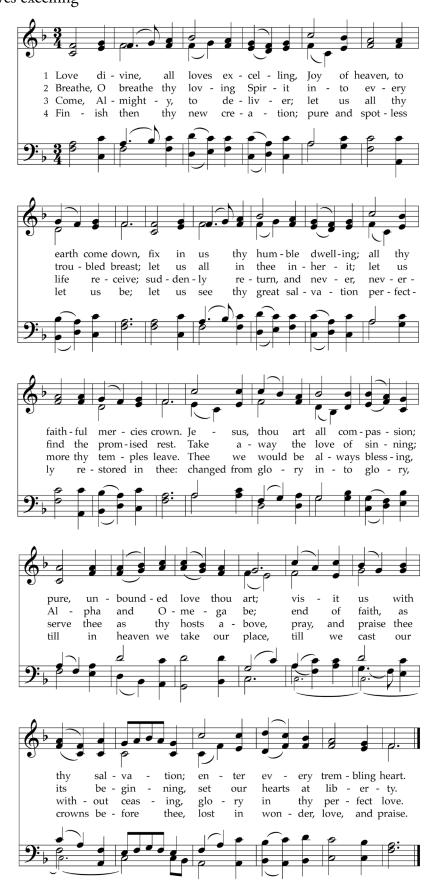
THE OFFERTORY

To give online, please scan this QR code, or see additional instructions in Depart to Serve:



Mission Invitation

Cash and designated gifts go to support the Mid-Ohio Workers Association (MWA), a free and voluntary, unincorporated membership association, uniting service workers, temporary workers and others who are low income since 2001. MWA is 100% volunteer run and independent of government funding. MWA seeks to eradicate the poverty status of this majority segment of the workforce, and achieve a means to determine our own collective destiny. MWA's members are the backbone of the economy, yet often receive wages that don't cover survival needs for a family. 30% of Central Ohioans don't earn enough to afford food, rent and utilities. The majority of MWA's membership work in jobs that are not recognized by the federal labor laws and they therefore do not have the right to form unions and engage in collective bargaining. Thank you for your generosity.



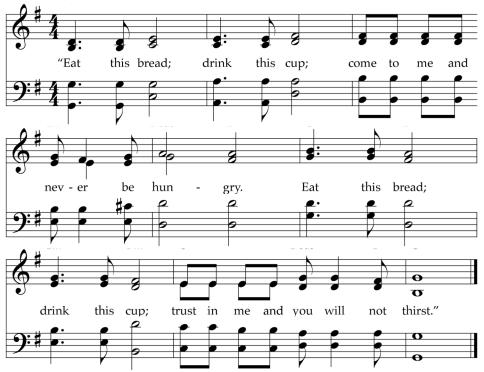
Communion Rev. Ahrens

Communion Hymn

Berthier, Jacques Berthier, 1984

"Eat this bread"

Robert J. Batastini and Taizé Community, 1984



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.

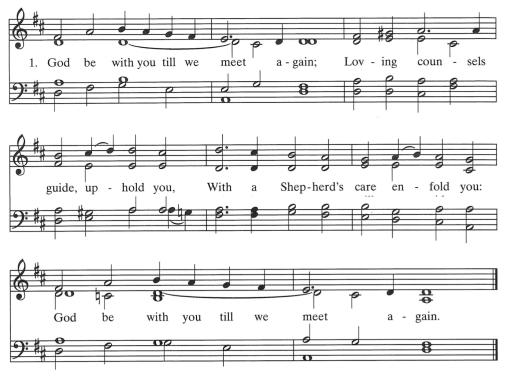
COMMUNITY NOTICES - DEPART TO SERVE

Ms. Kulwicki

Leader Let us depart with a heart to serve.

People: Thanks be to God.

"God be with you till we meet again"



*Benediction Rev. Ahrens

Postlude

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.

† Permissions and Copyrights

The following are printed and/or livestreamed under permission of OneLicense #A-717661. All rights reserved.

"Eat this bread." Words: Robert Batastini and the Taizé Community. Music: Jacques Berthier. ©1984 Less Presses de Taizé (admin. GIA Publications, Inc.) All rights reserved.



September 1, 2024

This Week at First Church

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)

Monday, September 2

Church and Church Office is closed in celebration of Labor Day

Tuesday, September 3

4 p.m. Church Vitality (Zoom)

7 p.m. Security Mtg with Steve Flowers

(Classroom C & Zoom)

Justice & Mercy Commission Mtg

(Fanning Rm)

Communications (Zoom)

Wednesday, September 4

6:30 p.m. Stephen Ministers Monthly Mtg

(Fanning Rm)
Book Club (Zoom)

Thursday, September 5

9 a.m. Good Sam Distribution Day

4 p.m Choristers (Choir Rm)

6 p.m. Bell Choir Rehearsal (Bell Rm)

7:15 p.m First Church Choir Rehearsal (Choir Rm)

Saturday, September 7

9 a.m House & Grounds Work Day & Mtg 10:30 a.m Sacred Earth Mtg (Adult Library)

1 p.m. Spiritual Gifts Workshop (Classroom C)

Sunday, September 8

9 a.m. Morning Prayer & Holy Communion

(Parish Hall & Virtual)

10 a.m. Engagement Fair (Parish Hall)

11 a.m. Worship Service (Sanctuary & Virtual)

12:15 p.m. Engagement Fair (Parish Hall) 12:30 p.m. Confirmation Open House

(Classroom C)

Open Discussion with Rev. Tim 10 a.m. in the 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.

House and Grounds Workday Saturday, September 7

9 a.m.- Noon

The House & Grounds Commission will hold a work day Saturday, September 7, from 9 a.m. to Noon. All skill levels are welcome. There will be both indoor and outdoor work, weather permitting. Text or call Eric Klintworth at 614-499-7056 for a door code or to discuss.

The Commission will hold our business meeting after the work day.

Transition News

On Saturday, October 19, we are all invited to join Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Ahrens to celebrate his ministry with First Congregational Church through the last twenty-five years. During his ministry with us, the church has nearly doubled in membership, increased its property holdings and created the Social Justice Park, added stained glass windows that commemorate its ministries, raised its voice in sharing the Social Gospel, grown ministry partnerships in the greater Columbus area, added a 9 a.m. worship service to welcome families, and there is so much more. Please join the party. The dinner ticket price is \$26. Additional contributions and sponsorships will provide those in need the opportunity to attend, as well as offset the total cost of the event. Scan the QR Code below to purchase tickets or make a contribution

On October 20, Rev. Tim will lead us in worship for the last time as our Senior Minister. On the next day, we begin a period of separation between us that will last one year beyond our call of a new settled pastor. This separation will likely be 24 – 36 months in duration. It's both appropriate and important for him and members of the church to establish healthy boundaries during this time. Rev. Tim creates a time for rest and renewal, First Church creates a space to reflect on the ministry of the last twenty-five years and the next twenty-five, and our Interim Ministers have clear opportunities to build relationships with this congregation. This promises to be an exciting time for all of us!

Upcoming Listening Circles

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

9/16, 7 a.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 <u>jelainestith@hotmail.com</u>.

Deadline to register is Tuesday, September 3.

Interfaith Prayer Service for Peace September 22, at 4 p.m. First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ 444 East Broad Street Columbus, Ohio 43215

Join us for an afternoon of prayer and music as we come together to pray for peace.

First Church Book Club: Wednesday, September 4 Our Missing Hearts 7 p.m. on Zoom Wednesday, October 2 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 Bob O'Brien; 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, and her friend, Shellie Thompson; 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 Cicenas; and Victor John's cousin, Devin Endlick, and his parents, Charles and Mary Jane, and sister.

Those who mourn family and friends of Richard (Rick) Sayre; and family and friends of G. Dene Barnard.

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 Benin, Ivory Coast, and Togo. We also pray for our UCC partner in mission, the Theological Education by Extension in Zambia.

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 the Mid-Ohio Workers Association (MWA), a free and voluntary, unincorporated membership association, uniting service workers, temporary workers and others who are low income since 2001. MWA is 100% volunteer run and independent of government funding. MWA seeks to eradicate the poverty status of this majority segment of the workforce, and achieve a means to determine our own collective destiny. MWA's members are the backbone of the economy, yet often receive wages that don't cover survival needs for a family. Thirty percent of Central Ohioans don't earn enough to afford food, rent, and utilities. The majority of MWA's membership work in jobs that are not recognized by the federal labor laws and they therefore do not have the right to form unions and engage in collective bargaining. Thank you for your generosity.

Church Leadership

CHURCH COUNCIL LEADERSHIP

Moderator-elect: Sarah Reed

Treasurer-elect: Ramona Moenter

Nominating Chair: Sarah Reed

Church Vitality: Pat Patterson

Church Vitality-elect:

House & Grounds-elect:

Personnel: David Hogrefe

Justice & Mercy-elect:

Justice & Mercy: Janet Miller

Secretary: Antoinette Koolemans-Beynen

Church Stewardship and Church Growth:

Faith Formation Commission: MarinerTaft

House & Grounds: Eric Klintworth

Music, Arts & Heritage: Jim Griffin

Member-at-Large: Jacquelyn Dean

Personnel-elect: Sandra Mathias

Faith Formation Commission-elect: Cami Curren

Music, Arts & Heritage-elect: Cheryl Hoskinson

Youth Member-at-Large: Sebastian Kulwicki

Church Stewardship and Church Growth-elect:

Communications and Technology Commission: Mike Kennedy

Moderator: Gregory Halbe

Treasurer: James Velo

Secretary-elect:

COMMISSIONERS

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: Communications and Technology Commission-elect: Stefan Duga

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

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



