



### 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*
- Leslie Fulford, *liturgist*
- Melissa Kulwicki, *worship leader*
- Joshua Stafford, *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

Improvisation on “Nearer, my God, to thee”

Sigfrid Karg-Elert, 1912

#### ENTER TO WORSHIP

Leslie Fulford

**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:** Wisdom cries out in the street.

**People:** **We hear and struggle to understand.**

**Leader:** Come and listen to the works of life and love.

**People:** **We hear and proclaim our faith in the one who brings life.**

**Leader:** Let us worship the God of life and wisdom

**People:** **Whose words guide our lives on the right paths.**

\*PROCESSIONAL HYMN

*Rathbun*, Ithamar Conkey, 1849

“In the cross of Christ I glory”

John Bowring, 1825

1 In the cross of Christ I glo - ry, tower - ing  
 2 When the woes of life o'er - take me, hopes de -  
 3 When the sun of bliss is beam - ing light and  
 4 Bane and bless - ing, pain and plea - sure, by the  
 5 In the cross of Christ I glo - ry, tower - ing

o'er the wrecks of time; all the light of sa - cred  
 ceive, and fears an - noy, nev - er shall the cross for -  
 love up - on my way, from the cross the ra - diance  
 cross are sanc - ti - fied; peace is there that knows no  
 o'er the wrecks of time; all the light of sa - cred

sto - ry gath - ers round its head sub - lime.  
 sake me; lo, it glows with peace and joy.  
 stream - ing adds more lus - ter to the day.  
 mea - sure, joys that through all time a - bide.  
 sto - ry gath - ers round its head sub - lime.

\*INVOCATION

The Rev. Joanna Samuelson

Leader: God be with you.

**People. And also with you.**

Leader: Let us pray.

**People: O God, because without you we are not able to please you, mercifully grant that your Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. 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.*

THE REAFFIRMATION OF BAPTISM

Kathy Reed, *Church Growth*: I invite all those who have been in conversation with First Church and now wish to accept our invitation of membership to please step forward as I read your names: Jack Drake (associate member), and Michael Russell.

Tom Kiesel, *Senior Deacon*: Friends in Christ, we all are received into the church through baptism. These persons standing before you have found nurture and support in our spiritual family. Through study, discussion, and prayer they have been led to reaffirm their baptism and to enter into a covenantal relationship with the members of this church. They are ready to offer their devotion and service to Jesus Christ, using the unique gifts provided them.

Rev. Ahrens: You are no longer strangers, but are now one of us. We are delighted to have you here and willingly share with you all of our resources. I invite all the members and friends of First Church to unite with those joining in reading together our church's statement of faith and covenant.

STATEMENT OF FAITH AND COVENANT

**The church is a community of faith called to witness and to serve. 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.**

Rev. Ahrens: Will all people of faith please rise? By our baptism we are made one in the body of Christ. Today we rejoice in the journey which has brought you here. We give thanks for other communities which have been your spiritual home, and we celebrate your commitment to continue your sojourn in this household of faith. Let us read together:

\*WELCOME

**We welcome you with joy to the life and ministry of The First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ of Columbus, Ohio. We promise you our friendship and prayers as we share the hopes and labors of the church of Jesus Christ. By the power of the Holy Spirit may we continue to grow together in God's knowledge and love, and be faithful witnesses to the ways of Christ, our Lord and Savior.**

Rev. Samuelson: Let us pray. O God, we praise you for calling us to be disciples and for gathering us into the Church, the body of Christ. We thank you for your people gathered in this congregation and rejoice that you have increased our community of faith. Together may we live in the Spirit, building one another up in love, sharing in the life and worship of the church, and serving the world for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Rev. Ahrens: In the name of Jesus Christ and on behalf of the First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, we extend to you the hand of Christian love, welcoming you into the company of this church. We look forward to getting to know you better. Welcome to First Church!

*You are invited to welcome the new members at the Chancel steps following the service  
and then join us for the reception in Parish Hall.*

CHILDREN'S TIME - RECOGNITION OF SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS

Leslie Fulford and  
Rev. Ahrens

Thank you to the following teachers and nursery workers who will help us grown in faith and friendship this program year: Melissa Kulwicki, Todd Cunningham, Stacie and Mark Sholl, Matt Myers, Cami Curren, Thom Smith, Mariner Taft, Rev. Larry Miller, Rev. Margot Connor, Jonathan Miller, Rev. Joanna Samuelson and nursery staff Miranda Brooks, Shelly Gies, and Celecia Smith.

A LITANY FOR THE BEGINNING OF THE NEW SUNDAY SCHOOL YEAR

Leader: We celebrate the beginning of this new season of our Faith Formation ministries and learning opportunities for all ages.

**People: We celebrate the message of God's love and welcome and inclusion of all people.**

Leader: We give thanks for the gift of learning about God's presence in our lives through our Sacred Scriptures with the support of this Christian community.

**People: We give thanks for the many ways that we can respond and share God's love with all ages.**

Leader: For children who come with curiosity, questions, energy and enthusiasm:

**People: We give you thanks, O God.**

Leader: For teachers who share their time and talents in teaching our young people and adults.

**People: We give you thanks, O God.**

Leader: For all who participate in the spiritual nurture of our congregation.

**People: We give you thanks, O God.**

Leader: We dedicate this new Sunday School year to you, O God, and pray that all of us will continue to grow in faith and love as followers of Jesus Christ.

**All: Thanks be to God. Amen.**

*During the sermon time, the young children are welcome to participate in "Sunday Stories" with  
Melissa Kulwicki and Jonathan Miller.*

THE HEBREW SCRIPTURE LESSON

Isaiah 50:4-9a

Leslie Fulford

Leader: A reading from the Book of Isaiah, the fiftieth chapter.

The Lord God has given me

the tongue of a teacher,

that I may know how to sustain

the weary with a word.

Morning by morning he wakens—

wakens my ear

to listen as those who are taught.

The Lord God has opened my ear,

and I was not rebellious,

I did not turn backward.

I gave my back to those who struck me,

and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard;

I did not hide my face  
from insult and spitting.  
The Lord God helps me;  
therefore I have not been disgraced;  
therefore I have set my face like flint,  
and I know that I shall not be put to shame;  
he who vindicates me is near.  
Who will contend with me?  
Let us stand up together.  
Who are my adversaries?  
Let them confront me.  
It is the Lord God who helps me;  
who will declare me guilty?

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

**People: Thanks be to God.**

ANTHEM

“Be ye followers of God”

Leo Sowerby, 1963

Ephesians 5:1-2, 6:10-13

Be ye followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor. Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Wherefore, take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

THE EPISTLE

James 3:1-12

Leslie Fulford

Leader: A reading from the Letter of James, the third chapter.

Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers and sisters, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. For all of us make many mistakes. Anyone who makes no mistakes in speaking is perfect, able to keep the whole body in check with a bridle. If we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we guide their whole bodies. Or look at ships: though they are so large that it takes strong winds to drive them, yet they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great exploits.

How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire! And the tongue is a fire. The tongue is placed among our members as a world of iniquity; it stains the whole body, sets on fire the cycle of nature, and is itself set on fire by hell. For every species of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by the human species, but no one can tame the tongue-- a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this ought not to be so. Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and brackish water? Can a fig tree, my brothers and sisters, yield olives, or a grapevine figs? No more can salt water yield fresh.

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

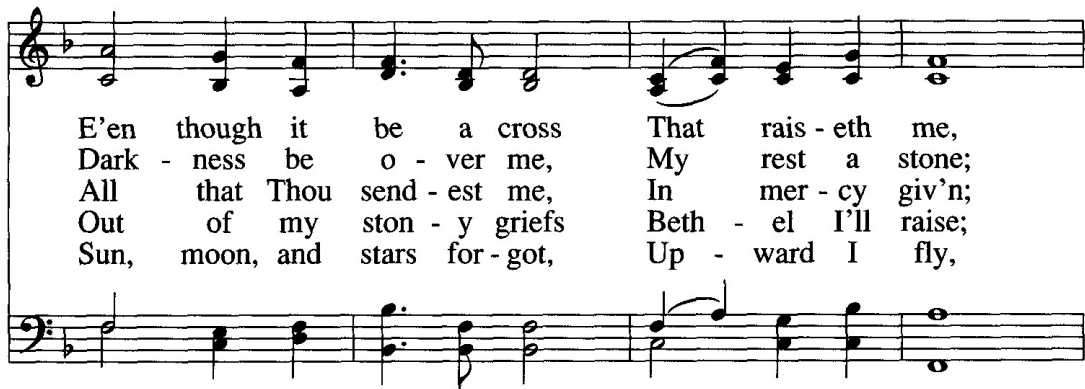
**People: Thanks be to God.**

\*THE GOSPEL HYMN  
"Nearer, my God, to thee"

Bethany, Lowell Mason, 1856  
Sarah Flower Adams, 1841



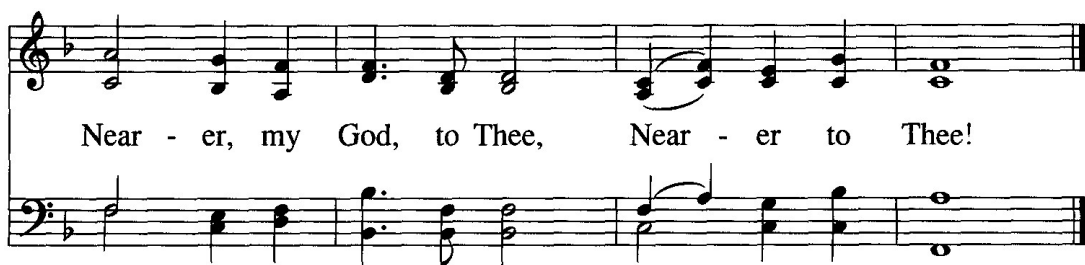
1. Near - er, my God, to Thee, Near - er to Thee!  
2. Though like the wan - der - er, The sun gone down,  
3. There let the way ap - pear, Steps un - to heav'n;  
4. Then, with my wak - ing thoughts Bright with Thy praise,  
5. Or if, on joy - ful wing Cleav - ing the sky,



E'en though it be a cross That rais - eth me,  
Dark - ness be o - ver me, My rest a stone;  
All that Thou send - est me, In mer - cy giv'n;  
Out of my ston - y griefs Beth - el I'll raise;  
Sun, moon, and stars for - got, Up - ward I fly,



Still all my song shall be, Near - er, my God, to Thee;  
Yet in my dreams I'd be Near - er, my God, to Thee;  
An - gels to beck - on me Near - er, my God, to Thee;  
So by my woes to be Near - er, my God, to Thee;  
Still all my song shall be, Near - er, my God, to Thee;



Near - er, my God, to Thee, Near - er to Thee!

Leader: A reading from the gospel according to Mark, the eighth chapter.

Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" And they answered him, "John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets." He asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah." And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.

Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

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

**People: Thanks be to God.**

## SERMON

"The Way of the Cross"

Rev. Ahrens

## 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

Gail and Jim Lowe

Cash and designated gifts today go to support **First Church's Unsheltered Ministry**. During a nighttime blizzard in February of 2022, First Church volunteers made their first trip to deliver blankets, winterwear, and hot food to unhoused people on our church grounds. That visit grew into a weekly dinner mission that became an ongoing expression of our church's "extravagant welcome." Church leaders set the priority for the ministry - to help unsheltered people get into safe, affordable housing. Policies for the ministry were formed, and volunteers donated time and funds for weekly meals, and to fund a much-needed Port-a-John onsite. We recently curtailed sleeping on the grounds, but the ministry and our primary goal continue. Partnering with Columbus Discovery District and others, we guide people through the housing application process, including replacing IDs and other documents. We sometimes help with security deposits or first-month rent, and we have matched start-up renters with folks who can donate used household goods. So far, we have helped three people gain permanent homes, and several others are "in the pipeline." Until people get into long-term housing, we provide necessities for life "on the street" and link them to human services. We have also helped transport them to medical and social work appointments. In all, we have served over 80 people, and we have been blessed by their gracious thanks. So far, most expenses have been funded by individual donations from a handful of church members, but the need continues to grow, so your financial and volunteer support would be deeply appreciated. Please give generously.

### OFFERTORY ANTHEM

"When I survey the wondrous cross"

When I survey the wondrous cross  
on which the Prince of glory died,  
my richest gain I count but loss,  
and pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it Lord, that I should boast,  
save in the death of Christ, my God!  
All the vain things that charm me most,  
I sacrifice them to His blood.

Lowell Mason, 1824, arr. Gilbert M. Martin, 1968

Isaac Watts, 1707

See, from His head, his hands, his feet,  
sorrow and love flow mingled down!  
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,  
or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realms of nature mine,  
that were a present far too small;  
love so amazing, so divine,  
demands my soul, my life, my all. Amen.

### \*DOXOLOGY

"Praise God, from whom all blessings flow"

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise Christ, all creatures here below;  
Praise Holy Spirit evermore;  
Praise Triune God, whom we adore. Amen.**

*Old 100th*

Genevan Psalter, 1551



Leader: Let us pray.

People: **For gifts given and received, O God, we offer our praise. May we share our abundance with all who have need, and may we share our hope in like measure. Amen.**

COMMUNITY NOTICES - DEPART TO SERVE

Ms. Kulwicki

L: Let us depart with a heart to serve.

P: **Thanks be to God.**

\*CLOSING HYMN

*Bourbon*, attr. Freeman Lewis, 1814

“Take up your cross, the Savior said”

Charles William Everest, 1833, alt.

1 Take up your cross, the Sav - ior said, if  
 2 Take up your cross; let not its weight fill  
 3 Take up your cross; heed not the shame, and  
 4 Take up your cross, then, in Christ's strength, and

you would my dis - ci - ple be; take up your cross with  
 your weak spir - it with a - larm; Christ's strength shall bear your  
 let your fool - ish pride be still; the Lord for you ac -  
 calm - ly ev - ery dan - ger brave: it guides you to a -

will - ing heart, and hum - bly fol - low af - ter me.  
 spir - it up and brace your heart and nerve your arm.  
 cept - ed death up - on a cross, on Cal - vary's hill.  
 bun - dant life and leads to vic - tory o'er the grave.

BENEDICTION

Rev. Ahrens

POSTLUDE

*Allegro moderato e serio* from Sonata No. 1

Felix Mendelssohn, 1845

*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 appreciation and thanksgiving of the ministry of Rev. Tim Ahrens by Bert and Bev Cook.

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

† 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)



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

**September 15, 2024**

## **This Week at First Church**

### **Sunday, September 15**

- 9 a.m. Morning Prayer & Holy Communion  
(Parish Hall & Virtual)
- 10 a.m. Bible Study (Classroom C)  
Sunday School (Various Classrooms)  
Transition Listening Session  
(Classroom D)  
Sunday Morning Choir Rehearsal  
(Choir Rm)
- 11 a.m. Worship Service (Sanctuary & Virtual)
- 12:15 p.m. Coffee Hour & Coffee Sales (Parish Hall)

### **Monday, September 16**

- 7 p.m. Transition Listening Session (Zoom)

### **Tuesday, September 17**

- 5:30 p.m. Budget & Finance Mtg  
(Classroom C & Zoom)
- 7 p.m. Church Council Mtg  
(Classroom C & Zoom)  
Neighborhood Care Circle Leaders Mtg  
(Zoom)

### **Wednesday, September 18**

- 6:30 p.m. Stephen Ministry Group  
Supervision Mtg (Fanning Rm)

### **Thursday, September 19**

- 4 p.m. Choristers (Choir Rm)
- 6 p.m. Bell Choir Rehearsal (Bell Rm)
- 7:15 p.m. First Church Choir Rehearsal (Choir Rm)

### **Sunday, September 22**

- 9 a.m. Morning Prayer & Holy Communion  
(Parish Hall & Virtual)
- 10 a.m. Bible Study (Classroom C)  
Sunday School (Various Classrooms)  
Transitional Listening Session  
(Classroom D)  
Sunday Morning Choir Rehearsal  
(Choir Rm)
- 11 a.m. Worship Service (Sanctuary & Virtual)
- 12:15 p.m. Reception for Rev. Thompson  
(Parish Hall)  
Confirmation Class (Classroom C)
- 4 p.m. Interfaith Prayer Service (Sanctuary)

## **Welcome**

### **Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia A. Thompson**

The Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia A. Thompson, General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ, will preach her sermon "Drawing Closer" at both 9 and 11 a.m on Sunday, September 22. Rev. Thompson will also be available for an informal discussion in Parish Hall during the 10 a.m. hour.

At 4 p.m., she will also join us for the Interfaith Prayer service for Peace.

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## **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.

## Legacy Sunday is Sunday, September 29

Please mark your calendar for our church's 172nd birthday party! We'll have a picnic after the 11 a.m. worship service, with hot dogs and hamburgers provided by the Trustees, and a potluck spread provided by you. There will be a beautiful cake in celebration of the baptism of the Deliman babies provided by grandparents, Shelly and Tom Gies. Like last year, food will be set out in the Education Wing and we'll gather in the shaded areas around the Education Wing. If you would like to, please bring lawn chairs, outside lawn games and what you think will make our time together relaxing and fun.

Please sign up on Realm using the QR code below. There will also be printed invitations that can be turned into the church office.

We would appreciate help setting up and tearing down tables and chairs if you are able!



## Transition News

With Rev. Ahrens' retirement fast approaching, questions raised in Listening Circles have been something like, "What are we going to do without a Senior Minister?" Indeed, the idea that we are without spiritual leadership sounds scary. The truth is that we do and will continue to have spiritual leadership at First Church. Rev. Joanna is creating a plan with capable and Godly leaders to serve our worship and pastoral care needs. We are also a congregation of can-do members. Think of all the times we have come together to face challenges, and we have thrived because of our faith and actions. This practice of interim or transitional ministry has existed for many years. Many in our congregation remember the interim ministers who followed Rev. Chalmers Coe, Rev. Dale Rosenberger, and Rev. Bob Tschannen-Moran. As in those times, we will again work together to prepare for our ministry of the future. Today, tomorrow and the tomorrow after that, together, we serve our God!

### *Upcoming Listening Circles*

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

9/16, 7 p.m., To be rescheduled.

Please click the QR Code below to register for the Celebration of Rev. Tim's Ministry and Retirement on Saturday, October 19, at the Columbus Museum of Art.



## Keep in Prayer

**Members** Elaine Warren; Janice Taft; Ashton Smith; 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; 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; Tim Ahrens' granddaughter and Sarah Stadie's daughter, Aurelia Stadie; 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; Jill Hultin's brother, Ken Hultin; 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** Margaret Cipriani on the death of her friend, Kathryn Schlarb; and the family and friends of Richard (Rick) Sayre.

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 Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay. We also pray for our UCC partner in mission, the National Council of Churches in the Philippines.

## 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 today go to support First Church's **Unsheltered Ministry**. During a nighttime blizzard in February of 2022, First Church volunteers made their first trip to deliver blankets, winterwear, and hot food to unhoused people on our church grounds. That visit grew into a weekly dinner mission that became an ongoing expression of our church's "extravagant welcome." Church leaders set the priority for the ministry - to help unsheltered people get into safe, affordable housing. Policies for the ministry were formed, and volunteers donated time and funds for weekly meals, and to fund a much-needed Port-a-John onsite.

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So far, most expenses have been funded by individual donations from a handful of church members, but the need continues to grow, so your financial and volunteer support would be deeply appreciated. Please give generously.

# 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:**

**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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*[www.first-church.org/Worship.aspx](http://www.first-church.org/Worship.aspx)*

