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. Karen Georgia A. Thompson, preacher
The Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Ahrens, worship leader
The Rev. Joanna Samuelson, worship leader
Aarav Peter, liturgist
Leslie Fulford, worship leader
Joshua Stafford, organist & director
The First Church Choir
Peter Murray, 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

Fantasia John Weaver, 1983

Enter to Worship Aarav Peter

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: Happy are those who follow the ways of the Lord.

People: God's ways are just and merciful.

Leader: Those who follow God's ways are continually nourished in faith.

People: In all that they do, they prosper.

Leader: Come, let us open our hearts to God's compassionate love.

People: Let us celebrate God's mercy and justice. Amen.

"Open now thy gates of beauty"

Benjamin Schmolck, 1732; trans. Catherine Winkworth, 1863, alt.



*Invocation

The Rev. Joanna Samuelson

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

Leader: Let us pray.

People: Grant us, Lord, not to be anxious about earthly things, but to love things heavenly; and even now, while we are placed among things that are passing away, to hold fast to those that shall endure; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

Welcome and Introduction of The Rev. Dr. Thompson

Dr. Gregory Halbe

*Passing of the Peace Dr. Halbe

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 Leslie Fulford

During the sermon time, the young children are welcome to participate in "Sunday Stories" with Leslie Fulford and Barb Clapham.

THE HEBREW SCRIPTURE LESSON

Jeremiah 11:18-20

Mr. Peter

Leader: A reading from the Book of Jeremiah, the eleventh chapter.

It was the Lord who made it known to me, and I knew;

then you showed me their evil deeds.

But I was like a gentle lamb

led to the slaughter.

And I did not know it was against me

that they devised schemes, saying,

"Let us destroy the tree with its fruit,

let us cut him off from the land of the living, so that his name will no longer be remembered!"

But you, O Lord of hosts, who judge righteously,

who try the heart and the mind,

let me see your retribution upon them,

for to you I have committed my cause.

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

People: Thanks be to God.

Anthem

Charles Villiers Stanford, 1910

William Cowper, 1769

"O, for a closer walk with God"

O for a closer walk with God, a calm and heavenly frame; a light to shine upon the road that leads me to the Lamb!

Return, O holy Dove, return! sweet messenger of rest;

I hate the sins that made thee mourn, and drove thee from my breast.

So shall my walk be close with God, calm and serene my frame; so purer light shall mark the road that leads me to the Lamb.

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

Who is wise and understanding among you? Show by your good life that your works are done with gentleness born of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not be boastful and false to the truth. Such wisdom does not come down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish. For where there is envy and selfish ambition, there will also be disorder and wickedness of every kind. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace.

Those conflicts and disputes among you, where do they come from? Do they not come from your cravings that are at war within you? You want something and do not have it; so you commit murder. And you covet something and cannot obtain it; so you engage in disputes and conflicts. You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, in order to spend what you get on your pleasures.

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.

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

People: Thanks be to God.



THE GOSPEL

Mark 9:30-37 The Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia A. Thompson

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

Jesus and his disciples passed through Galilee. He did not want anyone to know it; for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again." But they did not understand what he was saying and were afraid to ask him.

Then they came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house he asked them, "What were you arguing about on the way?" But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another who was the greatest. He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all." Then he took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in his arms, he said to them, "Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me."

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

People: Thanks be to God.

SERMON "Drawing Closer" Dr. Thompson
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

The Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Ahrens

Cash and designated gifts go to support the UCC Neighbors in Need (NIN), a special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that supports ministries of justice and compassion in the United States. In 2024, the Neighbors in Need theme is "Mental Health Justice For All!" This year's focus is on Mental Health Justice. In 2015, the General Synod of the United Church of Christ passed a resolution to become WISE (Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, and Engaged) for mental health. A just world for all is a world where the human rights and well-being of people with mental health challenges are respected, no matter who you are or where you are in life's mental health journey.

One-third of the offering supports Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM). Two-thirds are used by Justice and Witness Ministries to provide grants to UCC churches and organizations as well as supporting a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects. Please give generously.

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

"Draw us in the Spirit's tether"

Harold Friedell, 1957 Percy Dearmer, 1931

Draw us in the Spirit's tether; for when humbly, in thy Name, two or three are met together, thou art in the midst of them: Alleluya! Alleluya! Touch we now thy garment's hem.

As the brethren used to gather in the Name of Christ to sup, then with thanks to God the Father break the bread and bless the cup, Alleluya! Alleluya! So knit thou our friendship up.

All our meals and all our living make as sacraments of thee, that by caring, helping, giving, we may true disciples be. Alleluya! We will serve thee faithfully.

*Doxology Old 100th Genevan Psalter, 1551

"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.

Prayer of Dedication Rev. Samuelson

Leader: Let us pray.

For gifts given and received, O God, we offer our praise. May we share our abundance People:

with all who have need, and may we share our hope in like measure. Amen.

COMMUNITY NOTICES - DEPART TO SERVE

Dr. Ahrens

L: Let us depart with a heart to serve.

P: Thanks be to God.

John L. Bell and Graham Maule, 1987



Benediction Dr. Thompson

Postlude

Toccata John Weaver, 1968

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 memory of our parents and grandparents by Greg Duncan and Gary Glover.
- † Please Join us in Parish Hall for a reception to greet Dr. Thompson.

† Greeting at the Exits

Rev. Samuelson — Narthex (Broad Street entrance)

Mr. Stafford — East Door (Ninth Street entrance by the Church Office)

Mrs. Fulford — West Door (Cleveland Avenue entrance by the Chapel)

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"Praise with joy the world's creator." Words: John L. Bell and Graham Maule. © 1985. Wild Goose Resource Group, The Iona Community. GIA Publications, Inc., agent. All rights reserved.

Depart to Serve

This Week at First Church

Sunday, September 22

9 a.m. Morning Prayer & Holy Communion

(Parish Hall & Virtual)

10 a.m. Bible Study (Classroom C)

Sunday School (Various Classrooms)

Informal Discussion with Rev. Thompson (Parish Hall)

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)

Monday, September 23

10 a.m. Stewardship & Church Growth Mtg (Fanning Rm) 6:30 p.m. Transition Team Mtg (Classroom C & Zoom)

Tuesday, September 24

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

7 p.m. Deacons Mtg (Zoom)

Minister of Music Advisory Group Mtg (Classroom C)

Wednesday, September 25

12:45 p.m. The Big Table (Parish Hall)

Thursday, September 26

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

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

Friday, September 27

10 a.m. Full Circle Connections (Parlor)

12 Noon Faith Mission Dinner Prep & Serve (Kitchen)

Saturday, September 28

10 a.m. Bell Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary)

Sunday, September 29

9 a.m. Morning Prayer & Holy Communion

(Parish Hall & Virtual)

10 a.m. Bible Study (Classroom C)

Sunday School (Various Classrooms)

Sunday Morning Choir Rehearsal (Choir Rm)

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

12:15 p.m. Legacy Sunday Picnic (Education Wing & North Lot)

September 22, 2024 Interfaith Prayer Service for Peace Today at 4 p.m.

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

Celebrating the Ministry and Retirement of Rev. Ahrens

Now that September has arrived, the time to celebrate Rev. Tim is right around the corner. Please plan to join us the evening of Saturday, October 19 at the Columbus Museum of Art for a dinner and program to celebrate his ministry. If you are planning to attend, please click the QR Code below and complete your sign up as soon as possible so the committee can plan accordingly. Thank you, and we hope to see you there!



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!



Join The Big Table Wednesday, September 24 12:45 p.m.- 2 p.m.

For the past few years, our church and Mosaic students (who study at our church every weekday) have hosted a discussion program as part of the community's Big Table initiative of the Columbus Foundation. Mosaic is a high school experiential learning program in the humanities.

This year's Big Table event is Wednesday, September 25. The program starts with a free lunch with the students at 12:45 p.m. The interactive, intergenerational discussion program will be held from 1-2 p.m. Mosaic students will serve as facilitators of several small groups of 5 or 6 participants. The topic is gun violence in our community.

We need 40 adults to join 20 students for an effective discussion program. Come and join others in the Columbus community on this special day in this special way.

Tom Worley will be available after both worship services with a sign-up sheet in Parish Hall to take reservations, or you may click on the QR code below to register.



First Church Choristers Rehearsals Resume

Any youth in grades 2 through high school are welcome to become a part of First Church Choristers! Led by Joshua Stafford, our Minister of Music and Organist, we meet each Thursday afternoon from 4:30-6 p.m. in the Music Activities room. Together we develop our vocal and musical skills and have great fun singing and making music together! Join us beginning Thursday, October 10 at 4:30 p.m.! We'd love to see you there!

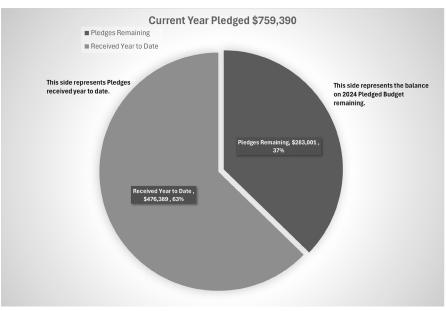
First Church Book Club: Wednesday, October 2, 2024 Gender Queer: A Memoir Wednesday, November 6, 2024 Tom Lake 7 p.m. on Zoom

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

Music Ministry Adivsory Group

While members of the congregation are always able to speak directly to Josh Stafford about their thoughts on the Music Ministry of First Church, Council also makes available the Minister of Music Advisory Group which offers a private and confidential channel for communicating the congregation's compliments and concerns to the Minister of Music. This group also serves as a supportive sounding board for professional matters on the Minister of Music's mind. Discussions between parishioners and advisory group members, as well as the content of meetings with the Minister of Music, are confidential. Group members, all of whom are laity or non-active clergy, do not participate in job performance evaluations. Members of the congregation who would like their reflections, insights, or concerns shared with the Minister of Music are invited to contact any of the members of the advisory group before its next meeting scheduled for September 24.

Members of the advisory group are Whitney Carr (whitneykcarr@gmail.com), Cami Curren (camillacurren@gmail.com), Greg Duncan (interprep@earthlink.net), Dianne Frazer (dianne@diannefrazer.com), Dameon Jones (ddjones24@yahoo.com), and Nancy Livingston (revnancy62@gmail.com).



Keep in Prayer

Members Twink Starr; Victor John; Elaine Warren; Janice Taft; Ashton Smith; Margot Connor and John Anderson; Francille Firebaugh; Pauline Fritz; Nancy Burba; Mary Kay Beall Carter and John Carter; Carol Lowy; Clinton Brown; Dan Axt; Anne Morganstern; Martha Huey; 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 Greg Buzzell and family on the death of his father, Robert Buzzell; Sallie Danneberger on the death of her friend, Lisa Colosimo; 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 Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, and Peru. We also pray for our UCC partner in mission, the House of Hope GMIT in Indonesia.

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

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.

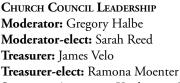
OPEN AND AFFIRMING STATEMENT

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

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www.first-church.org/Worship.aspx



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 Commissioned Minister for Spiritual Formation and Direction: Communications and Technology Commission-elect: Stefan Duga

Faith Formation Commission: MarinerTaft 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

