



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. Joanna Samuelson, *preacher*

The Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Ahrens, *celebrant*

Shane Gillies, *liturgist*

Melissa Kulwicki, *worship leader*

Joshua Stafford, *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

Shane Gillies

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: Here, in this place, we will not be afraid to sing the good news.

People: **We will praise our God, now and always.**

Leader: Here, with this people, we will not fear in living the good news.

People: **We will walk with Jesus, as he comes with justice in his hands.**

Leader: Here, in these moments, we will not be scared to tell the good news.

People: **We will be open to all the Holy Spirit is doing in our midst.**

—Thom M. Shuman, 2018

*OPENING HYMN

Azmon, Carl Gotthelf Gläser, 1828

“O for a thousand tongues to sing”

Charles Wesley, 1739, alt.

*INVOCATION

The Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Ahrens

Leader: God be with you.

People. And also with you.

Leader: Let us pray.

People: Grant us, O Lord, to trust in you with all our hearts; for, as you always resist the proud who confide in their own strength, so you never forsake those who make their boast of your mercy; 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. Joanna Samuelson

Leader: The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Let us greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace.

** When you return to your seat, please find the blue Welcome notebook, sign the pad and pass it on to your neighbor so you may greet them by name.*

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

THE HEBREW SCRIPTURE LESSON

Isaiah 35:4-7a

Shane Gillies

Leader: A reading from the Book of Isaiah, the thirty-fifth chapter.

Say to those who are of a fearful heart,

'Be strong, do not fear!

Here is your God.

He will come with vengeance,
with terrible recompense.

He will come and save you.'

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;
then the lame shall leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.

For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert;
the burning sand shall become a pool,
and the thirsty ground springs of water.

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

People: Thanks be to God.

THE PSALTER

Psalm 146

Shane Gillies

The St. Helena Psalter

Alleluia! Praise God, O my soul!

I will praise God as long as I live;

I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.

**Put not your trust in rulers, nor in any child of earth,
for there is no help in them.**

When they breathe their last, they return to earth,
and in that day their thoughts perish.

**Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help,
whose hope is in their God;**

Who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them;
whose promise abides forever;

**Who gives justice to those who are oppressed
and food to those who hunger.**

God sets the prisoners free
and opens the eyes of the blind;

God lifts up those who are bowed down;

**God loves the righteous
and cares for the stranger;
God sustains the orphan and widow,
but frustrates the way of the wicked.**

God shall reign forever,
your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. Alleluia!

THE GOSPEL

Mark 7:24-37

Rev. Samuelson

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

Jesus set out and went away to the region of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there. Yet he could not escape notice, but a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him, and she came and bowed down at his feet. Now the woman was a Gentile, of Syrophenician origin. She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. He said to her, "Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." But she answered him, "Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." Then he said to her, "For saying that, you may go—the demon has left your daughter." So she went home, found the child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.

Then he returned from the region of Tyre, and went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. They brought to him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they begged him to lay his hand on him. He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue. Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened." And immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. Then Jesus ordered them to tell no one; but the more he ordered them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. They were astounded beyond measure, saying, "He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."

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

People: Thanks be to God.

SERMON

"Ephphatha - Be Opened!"

Rev. Samuelson

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:



Cash and designated gifts go to support the **Good Samaritan Program**. Each month the number of people calling for help from Good Samaritan increases. Many people who call have seen their rent increase but not their wages. They have to decide if they should pay their rent, pay some of their utility bills, or buy food for their family. When you donate to Good Samaritan you make it possible for families to stay in their homes, have their utilities on, and put food on their tables. Each month we donate about 40 small gift cards for specific needs and pay for as many utility bills in disconnect as we have available funds. Please give generously so we can continue to help people in need.

OFFERTORY HYMN

“We come to you for healing, Lord”

Land of Rest, American folk melody

Herman G. Stuempfle, 2002

1 We come to you for heal - ing, Lord, of
 2 As once you walked through an - cient streets and
 3 Through nights of pain and wake - ful - ness, through
 4 We come to you, O lov - ing Lord, in

bod - y, mind, and soul, and pray that by your
 reached toward those in pain, we know you come a -
 days when strength runs low, grant us your gift of
 our dis - tress and pain, in trust that through our

Spir - it's touch we may a - gain be whole.
 mong us still with power to heal a - gain.
 pa - tience, Lord, your calm - ing peace to know.
 nights and days your grace will heal, sus - tain.

COMMUNION

Rev. Ahrens

COMMUNION HYMN
"Eat this bread"

Berthier, Jacques Berthier, 1984
Robert J. Batastini and Taizé Community, 1984



"Eat this bread; drink this cup; come to me and
nev - er be hun - gry. Eat this bread;
drink this cup; trust in me and you will not thirst."

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.

*CLOSING HYMN

“God be with you till we meet again”

Randolph, Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1906

Jeremiah Eames Rankin, 1880

1. God be with you till we meet a - gain; Lov - ing coun - sels
guide, up - hold you, With a Shep-herd's care en - fold you:
God be with you till we meet a - gain.

The image shows a three-system musical score for a hymn. Each system consists of a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment line (bass clef). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The lyrics are: "1. God be with you till we meet a - gain; Lov - ing coun - sels guide, up - hold you, With a Shep-herd's care en - fold you: God be with you till we meet a - gain." The music is written in a simple, hymn-like style with a mix of quarter, eighth, and half notes.

*BENEDICTION

Rev. Samuelson

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.

† PLEASE JOIN US IN PARISH HALL FOR THE ENGAGEMENT FAIR sponsored by the Church Growth Committee.

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Enter to Worship
Depart to Serve

September 8, 2024

This Week at First Church

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)

Monday, September 9

- 10 a.m. Stewardship & Growth Commission Mtg
(Fanning Rm)
- 12 Noon Congregational Care Ministry Mtg
(Fanning Rm)
- 6:30 p.m. Transition Team Mtg (Zoom)
- 7 p.m. Faith Formation Commission Mtg
(Classroom D)
Trustee Mtg (Classroom C & Zoom)

Tuesday, September 10

- 6 p.m. Music Committee Mtg (Parlor)
- 7 p.m. Executive Committee Mtg
(Classroom C & Zoom)

Thursday, September 12

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

Friday, September 13

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

Saturday, September 14

- 9 a.m. Learning to Listen Workshop (Parish Hall)

Sunday, September 15

- 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)
- 11 a.m. Worship Service (Sanctuary & Virtual)
- 12:15 p.m. Coffee Hour & Coffee Sales (Parish Hall)

Transition News

Celebrating and Listening

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 this time, 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 with an opportunity to attend, as well as offset the total cost of the event. Click on the button below or go to the church's website to register.

Upcoming Listening Circles

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

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

Join Zoom Meeting at

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87918155130?pwd=xebLpESHlqDce7zZ2iibFxFx4l0bOi30.1>

Meeting ID: 879 1815 5130

Passcode: 475673



Faith Formation Update
Sunday School Returns
Sunday, September 15
at 10 a.m.

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; 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; Janet Axt's mother, Alice Paugh; Margaret Cipriani's friend, Kathryn Schlarb; L.J. and Gretchen Cooks' brother, Kione Cooks; 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 Cicenias; 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.

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 Ghana and Nigeria. We also pray for our UCC partner in mission, the Mission Service of the Reformed Church in Hungary.

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 **Good Samaritan Program**. Each month the number of people calling for help from Good Samaritan increases. Many people who call have seen their rent increase but not their wages. They have to decide if they should pay their rent, pay some of their utility bills, or buy food for their family. When you donate to Good Samaritan you make it possible for families to stay in their homes, have their utilities on, and put food on their tables. Each month we donate about 40 small gift cards for specific needs and pay for as many utility bills in disconnect as we have available funds. Please give generously so we can continue to help people in need.

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.

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

