



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*

The Rev. Joanna Samuelson, *celebrant*

Dr. Scott A. Jones, *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

Dr. Scott A. Jones

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.

*OPENING HYMN

“Take up your cross, the Savior said”

Bourbon, attr. Freeman Lewis, 1814

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.

*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, sign the pad and pass it on to your neighbor so you may greet them by name.*

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 Amy Wagner.

THE HEBREW SCRIPTURE LESSON

Isaiah 50:4-9a

Dr. Jones

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

THE PSALTER
Psalm 116:1-9

Dr. Jones
The St. Helena Psalter

I love you, O God, because you have heard the voice of my supplication,
because you have inclined your ear to me whenever I called upon you.

**The cords of death entangled me;
the grip of the grave took hold of me;**

I came to grief and sorrow.

Then I called upon your holy Name:

“O God, I pray you, save my life.”

**Gracious are you and righteous;
you are full of compassion.**

You watch over the innocent;

I was brought very low, and you helped me.

**Turn again to your rest, O my soul,
for God has treated you well.**

For you, O God, have rescued my life from death,
my eyes from tears, and my feet from stumbling.

**I will walk in the presence of God,
in the land of the living.**

I believed, even when I said,

“I have been brought very low.”

In my distress I said, “No one can be trusted.”

THE GOSPEL

Mark 8:27-38

Rev. Ahrens

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 Depart to Serve:



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 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!

COMMUNION

Rev. Samuelson

COMMUNION HYMN

Berthier, Jacques Berthier, 1984

“Eat this bread”

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 the 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 printed below the vocal line.

*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.

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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.

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.

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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

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

