



### 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. Karen Georgia A. Thompson, *preacher*
- The Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Ahrens, *worship leader*
- The Rev. Joanna Samuelson, *worship leader*
- Julia Myers, *liturgist*
- Leslie Fulford, *worship leader*
- David Hogrefe, *pianist*
- 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

#### ENTER TO WORSHIP

Julia Myers

**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.**

\*OPENING HYMN

*Unser Herrscher*, Joachim Neander, 1680

“Open now thy gates of beauty”

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

1 O - pen now thy gates of beau - ty, Zi - on, let me  
2 Gra - cious God, I come be - fore thee; come thou al - so  
3 Speak, O Lord, and I will hear thee; let thy will be

en - ter there, where my soul in joy - ful du - ty  
un - to me; where we find thee and a - dore thee,  
done in - deed; may I un - dis - turbed draw near thee,

waits for God who an - swers prayer; O how bless - ed  
there a heaven on earth must be; to my heart O  
while thou dost thy peo - ple feed. Here of life the

is this place, filled with so - lace, light, and grace.  
en - ter thou; let it be thy tem - ple now.  
foun - tain flows; here is balm for all our woes.

\*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.

\*PASSING OF THE PEACE

Rev. Reed

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

**People: And also with you.**

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

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

CHILDREN'S TIME

Leslie Fulford

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

THE HEBREW SCRIPTURE LESSON

Jeremiah 11:18-20

Julia Myers

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.**

THE PSALTER

Julia Myers

Psalms 54

The St. Helena Psalter

Save me, O God, by your Name;  
in your might, defend my cause.

**Hear my prayer, O God;  
give ear to the words of my mouth.**

For the arrogant have risen up against me,  
and the ruthless have sought my life,  
those who have no regard for God.

**Behold, God is my helper;  
it is God who sustains my life.**

Render evil to those who spy on me;  
in your faithfulness, destroy them.

**I will offer you a freewill sacrifice  
and praise your Name, O God, for it is good.**

For you have rescued me from every trouble,  
and my eye has seen the ruin of my foes.

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 Depart to Serve:*



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 HYMN

“Praise with joy the world’s Creator”

*Lauda anima*, John Goss, 1869

John L. Bell and Graham Maule, 1987

1. Praise with joy the world’s Cre - a - tor, God of jus - tice, love and peace,  
 2. Praise the Son who feeds the hun - gry, frees the cap - tive, finds the lost,  
 3. Praise the Spir - it sent a - mong us, lib - er - at - ing truth from pride,  
 4. Praise the Mak - er, Son and Spir - it, one God in com - mu - ni - ty,

source and end of hu - man knowl - edge, force of great - ness with - out cease.  
 heals the sick, up - sets re - li - gion, fear - less both of fate and cost.  
 forg - ing bonds where race or gen - der, age or na - tion dare di - vide.  
 call - ing Chris - tians to em - bod - y one - ness and di - ver - si - ty.

Cel - e - brate the Mak - er’s glo - ry, power to res - cue and re - lease.  
 Cel - e - brate Christ’s con - stant pres - ence— Friend and Strang - er, Guest and Host.  
 Cel - e - brate the Spir - it’s trea - sure— fool - ish - ness none dare de - ride.  
 Thus the world shall yet be - lieve, when shown Christ’s vi - brant u - ni - ty.

COMMUNION

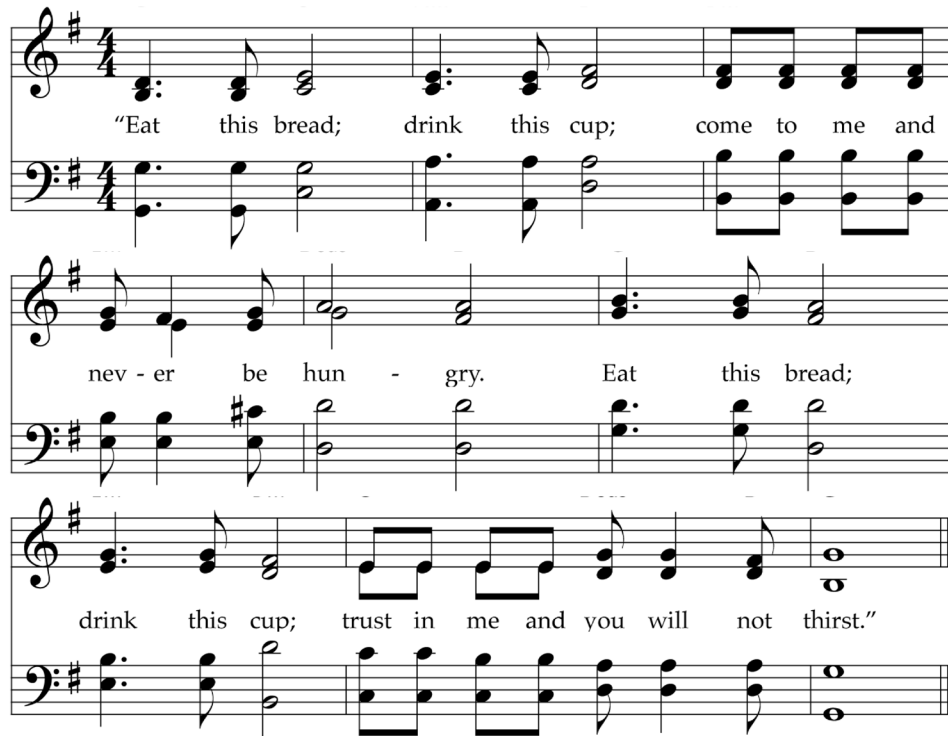
Rev. Samuelson and Dr. Ahrens

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. Samuelson

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

Dr. Ahrens

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 written below the vocal line. The first system covers the first line of lyrics, the second system covers the second line, and the third system covers the third line. The score ends with a double bar line.

\*BENEDICTION

Dr. Thompson

POSTLUDE

*Please be seated for the postlude.*

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

*Enter to Worship*  
**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.

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## **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!

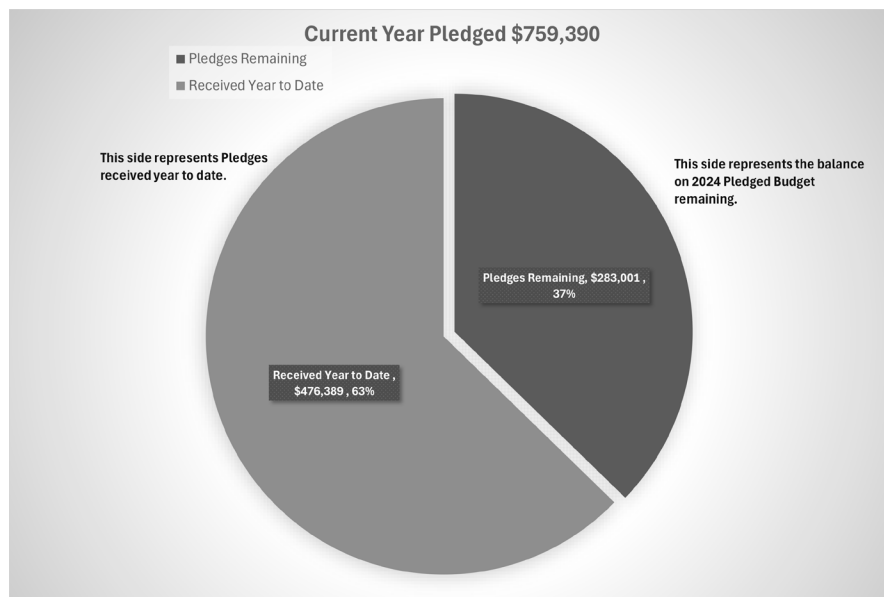
**First Church Book Club:**  
**Wednesday, October 2, 2024**  
*Gender Queer: A Memoir*  
**Wednesday, November 6, 2024**  
*Tom Lake*  
**7 p.m. on Zoom**

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

## Music Ministry Advisory 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](mailto:whitneykcarr@gmail.com)), Cami Curren ([camillacurren@gmail.com](mailto:camillacurren@gmail.com)), Greg Duncan ([interprep@earthlink.net](mailto:interprep@earthlink.net)), Dianne Frazer ([dianne@diannefrazer.com](mailto:dianne@diannefrazer.com)), Dameon Jones ([ddjones24@yahoo.com](mailto:ddjones24@yahoo.com)), and Nancy Livingston ([revnancy62@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto: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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*Bulletins and audio podcasts of services are available on the website for each week:*

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

