



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. Amanda Conley, *worship leader*

Kelly Dodd, *liturgist*

Melissa Kulwicki, *worship leader*

David Hogrefe, *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

Kelly Dodd

Leader: The glory of the Lord shall be revealed,

People: and all flesh shall see it together.

Please stand as you are able. (indicates congregation standing)*

Leader: The days are shorter and darkness comes early to our lives.

People: Lord, hear our prayers through the darkness.

Leader: Come, seek the Lord. Place your hope in God's mercy and love.

People: Lord, we seek your presence among us.

Leader: Look closely! God is making us ready.

People: Brighten our spirits this day, and help us to receive your Good News. Amen.

*OPENING HYMN

Stuttgart, Witt's Psalmodia Sacra, 1715

"Come, thou long-expected Jesus"

Charles Wesley, 1744

1. Come, Thou long - ex - pect-ed Je - sus, Born to set Thy peo - ple free;
 2. Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, Hope of all the earth Thou art;
 3. Born Thy peo - ple to de - liv - er, Born a child and yet a King,
 4. By Thine own e - ter - nal Spir - it Rule in all our hearts a - lone;

From our fears and sins re - lease us; Let us find our rest in Thee.
 Dear de - sire of ev - ery na - tion, Joy of ev - ery long - ing heart.
 Born to reign in us for - ev - er, Now Thy gra - cious king - dom bring.
 By Thine all - suf - fi - cient mer - it Raise us to Thy glo - rious throne.

*INVOCATION

The Rev. Amanda Conley

Leader: God be with you.

People. And also with you.

Leader: Let us pray.

People: Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Kelly Dodd and Dean Hafey

Leader: O God, you have created a universe of light: forgive us when we return to darkness.
 Lord, have mercy.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: Lord Jesus, you are the light of the world: cleanse and heal our blinded sight.
 Christ, have mercy.

People: Christ, have mercy.

Leader: Holy Spirit, you give us light in our hearts: renew us in faith and love.
 Lord, have mercy.

People: Lord, have mercy.

A moment of silence is observed as the first candle is lighted.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

The Rev. Joanna Samuelson

In Jesus Christ, God has given us a kingdom that cannot be destroyed. May our eyes be open to God's truth, our hands be strengthened to do God's will, and may we find the joy of God's kingdom. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, our sins are forgiven. **Amen.**

*WELCOME AND PASSING OF THE PEACE

Rev. 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.*

CHILDREN'S TIME

Melissa Kulwicki and Leslie Fulford

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

THE HEBREW SCRIPTURE

Jeremiah 33:14-16

Kelly Dodd

Leader: A reading from the book of the prophet Jeremiah, the thirty-third chapter.

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: "The Lord is our righteousness."

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

People: Thanks be to God.

THE PSALTER

Kelly Dodd

Psalms 25:1-10

The St. Helena Psalter

To you, O God, I lift up my soul;
my God, I put my trust in you;
let me not be humiliated,
nor let my enemies triumph over me.

**Let none who look to you be put to shame;
let the treacherous be disappointed in their schemes.**

Show me your ways, O God,
and teach me your paths.

**Lead me in your truth and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation;
in you have I trusted all the day long.**

Remember, O God, your compassion and love,
for they are from everlasting.

**Remember not the sins of my youth and my transgressions;
remember me according to your love
and for the sake of your goodness, O God.**

Gracious and upright are you;
therefore you teach sinners in your way.

**You guide the humble in doing right
and teach your way to the lowly.**

All your paths are love and faithfulness
to those who keep your covenant and your testimonies.

**For your Name's sake, O God,
forgive my sin, for it is great.**

THE GOSPEL

Luke 21:25-36

Rev. Samuelson

Leader: A reading from the gospel according to Luke, the twenty-first chapter.

Jesus said, "There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in a cloud' with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

Then he told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees; as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

"Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day catch you unexpectedly, like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."

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

People: Thanks be to God.

ADVENT MEDITATION

"A Fresh Perspective"

Rev. Samuelson

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Rev. Conley

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

Rev. Samuelson

Cash and designated gifts go to support **The Largest Table**. Every Wednesday, for more than twelve years, volunteers provide food for individuals and families in the community who are in need. This program transitioned to grab-and-go lunches during COVID in the Spring of 2020. The First Church meal team gathers on the third Wednesday of each month to make and pack up to 100 lunches. Your gifts will help purchase the supplies for our meal team to support this feeding ministry. Thank you for your generosity.

*OFFERTORY HYMN

Truro, Musica Sacra, c. 1778

“Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates” George Weissel, 1642, trans. Catherine Winkworth, 1855, 1863

1 Lift up your heads, ye might - y gates; be - hold the
2 Fling wide the por - tals of your heart; make it a
3 Re - deem - er, come! I o - pen wide my heart to

King of glo - ry waits; the King of kings is
tem - ple, set a - part from earth - ly use for
thee; here, Lord, a - bide. Let me thy in - ner

draw - ing near; the Sav - ior of the world is here.
heaven's em - ploy, a - dorned with prayer and love and joy.
pres - ence feel; thy grace and love in me re - veal.

COMMUNION
COMMUNION HYMN
“Wait for the Lord”

Revs. Samuelson and Conley
Wait for the Lord, Jacques Berthier, 1984
Taizé Community, 1984

The musical score is written for two staves, Treble and Bass clef, in a 3/2 time signature with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody is primarily composed of chords and rests. The lyrics are: "Wait for the Lord, whose day is near." and "Wait for the Lord; be strong; take heart!". The score concludes with a double bar line.

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Rev. Conley

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
"Come, come Emmanuel"

Come, Come Emmanuel, James J. Chepponis, 1995

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It consists of two systems. The first system has a vocal line in treble clef and a piano accompaniment in bass clef. The vocal line begins with the lyrics "Come, come Em - man - u - el. Come, Em -". The piano accompaniment features a steady bass line with chords. The second system is divided into two parts: "For repeat" and "Final ending". Both parts have a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line continues with "man - u - el." in both sections. The piano accompaniment includes a repeat sign and a final cadence.

*Benediction and Dismissal

Rev. Samuelson

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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"Advent candles tell their story." Words: Mark Earey, 2002.

"Wait for the Lord." Words: Communauté de Taizé, 1991. Music: Jacques Berthier, 1984. ©1991 Les Presses de Taizé, GIA Publications, Inc., agent. All rights reserved.

"Come, come Emmanuel." Words and Music: James J. Chepponis, 1995. © 1995 GIA Publications, Inc. All rights reserved.

Enter to Worship
Depart to Serve

December 1, 2024

This Week at First Church

Sunday, December 1

- 9 a.m. Morning Prayer & Holy Communion
(Parish Hall & Virtual)
- 10 a.m. Bible Study (Classroom C)
Sunday School (Various Classrooms)
Parent Conversations (Adult Library)
Stewardship Mtg (Fanning Room)
Sunday Morning Choir Rehearsal
(Choir Rm)
- 11 a.m. Worship Service & Holy Communion
(Sanctuary & Virtual)
- 12:15 p.m. Coffee Hour & Coffee Sales
(Parish Hall)

Monday, December 2

- 12 Noon Card Care Ministry (Fanning Rm)
- 6 p.m. First Church Campanelle Rehearsal
(Bell Rm)
Designated Minister's Advisory Mtg
(Parlor)
- 7 p.m. House & Grounds Mtg
(Classroom C & Zoom)
Faith Formation Mtg (Fanning Rm)

Tuesday, December 3

- 4 p.m. Church Vitality Mtg (Zoom)
- 7 p.m. Justice & Mercy Mtg (Zoom)
Personnel Mtg (Zoom)
Communications & Technology Mtg
(Zoom)

Wednesday, December 4

- 12:15 p.m. Music at Midday (Sanctuary)
- 6:30 p.m. Stephen Ministers Dinner

Thursday, December 5

- 4:30 p.m. Choristers (Choir Rm)
- 6 p.m. Bell Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary)
- 7:15 p.m. First Church Choir Rehearsal
(Choir Rm)

Friday, December 6

- 9 a.m. Good Samaritan Distribution Day
(Good Sam Office)

Saturday, December 7

- 9 a.m. Bell Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary)
- 10:30 a.m. Sacred Earth Mtg (Adult Library)
Choir Rehearsal (Choir Rm)

Sunday, December 8

- 9 a.m. Morning Prayer & Holy Communion
(Parish Hall & Virtual)
- 10 a.m. Bible Study (Classroom C)
Sunday School (Various Classrooms)
Parent Conversations (Adult Library)
Transition Team Listening Circle
(Classroom D)
Sunday Morning Choir Rehearsal
(Choir Rm)
- 11 a.m. Worship Service
(Sanctuary & Virtual)
- 5 p.m. Christmas Potluck & Carol Sing
(Parish Hall)
- 7 p.m. Christmas Eve Pageant Rehearsal
(Parish Hall)

Music at Midday History of the Carol

Wednesday, December 4

12:15 p.m.

Elizabeth McConnaughey, *soprano*
Sean Ferguson, *lute*

Take a break from the busy holiday season to listen to some of your favorite carols from around the world and learn the stories behind them!

Sunday Stories Readers Needed!

Story time reading is an easy and fun way to get to know the children of First Church and helps them get to know a wider range of church members. Could you help for 30 minutes this season? Here's how it works. You go out with Miss Melissa after Children's Time in the service, read a story that is pre-chosen for you, have a short discussion or activity and return to church at the end of the sermon. Easy peasy! If you have a suggestion for a children's book you would like to read, please email Melissa at mkulwicki@first-church.org and let her know.

Readers are needed for all 9 a.m. services. Please contact Leslie Fulford at lfulford@first-church.org to sign up or learn more. Thank you!

Save the Date! Christmas Ugly Sweater Potluck and Carol Sing Sunday, December 8 5 p.m.

We will gather on December 8, at 5 p.m. in Parish Hall for a Christmas Ugly Sweater Potluck and Carol sing. Everyone is invited to share in the food and fun. Children and Youth will help serve as judges for the "Ugly Sweater Contest," so everyone is encouraged to wear their most "festive" holiday attire.

More details and a link to sign-up are coming soon!

Bridge Team Contact Information

During this time of transition we are thankful for our Bridge Team. If you need to contact any of the Team Members, you will find a list of contact information below.

Leader: Joanna Samuelson
jsamuelson@first-church.org
(214) 995-3525

Ron Botts
cabo@copper.net
(614) 235-8065

Amanda Conley
aconley025@gmail.com
(614) 599-5661

Bill Nirote
wnirote@gmail.com

Thank You!

Thank you to all who donated and sorted our Thanksgiving food items to the Gladden Community House and Broad Street Presbyterian Pantries! And a special thank you to Dawn George for her loading and delivering the boxes to Gladden House in the rain!

From our friends at The Gladden Community House: "Thank you, First Congregational Church, for the generous Thanksgiving donations!"

Keep in Prayer

Members Sarah Giffen; Steven and Katie Deliman's daughter, Caroline; Malcolm Gillies; Mike Weddle; Elaine Warren; Victor John; 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 Victor John's father, Charles and mother, Mary Jane; Melissa Kulwicki's niece, Kaitlyn Fuller, and great nephew Oliver; Amy Wagner's friend Bill Kelley; David Wyatt's friend, Rusty Bell; Michael Russell's friend Teresa Elliott; Amanda Butler's aunt, Hattie Coatney; Leslie Fulford's sister-in-law, Donna Fulford; Jennifer Provenzano's friend, Anita Wright; Pat Patterson's brother, Dan Stone; Linda Patten; George Ferzli's family, Tanios, Julie, Maher, Michel, Cynthia, Gabriel, and Lynn; Bob and Lorraine Quinichett's daughter, Susan Webster; Rose and David Kandel's friend, Lou Kline; David Hogrefe's mother, Linda Hogrefe; Tim Ahrens' mother, Lorene Ahrens; 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; and Fran and Bruce Panek's friends, Richard and Beverly Cicenas.

Those who mourn David Wyatt and the Bell family (wife Kristen) on the passing of David's friend Rusty Bell; Marti Rideout and Lissa Wade and family, on the death of husband and father Rob Rideout; Nancy Livingston on the death of her mother, Mildred Livingston; and Gail and Jim Lowe's daughter and family, Andrea, Ben and Sam Sebastian, on the death of Ben's mother, Nancy Lemke.

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 Myanmar and Thailand. We also pray for our UCC partner in mission, the Health and Education Foundation of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission in Turkey.

Growing our Future Together The 2025 Annual Stewardship Campaign Update

Family Units:
122 Family Units
48.8% of 250 Goal

Pledged Dollars
\$590,796
67.3% of \$877,854.00 Goal

- To pledge online, scan the QR Code below.
- If you prefer, you can also fill out a hard copy and place the form in the offering plate during Sunday services or mail your pledge form to First Congregational Church, 444 East Broad Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215



Youth Pageant Update Calling All Middle and High School Students!

All Youth, Grades 6-12, are encouraged to participate in the beloved Pageant of the Nativity tradition. The pageant takes place at the 7:30 p.m. Christmas Eve Service and tells the story of Jesus' birth through beautiful music, dramatic lighting, and exquisite costumes. No experience is needed and there are no speaking parts.

Our first rehearsal will be Sunday, December 8th, at 7 p.m., following the Christmas Ugly Sweater Potluck and Carol Sing. Additional rehearsals will occur following Lessons and Carols on Sunday, December 15, at 6 p.m. and Sunday, December 22, at 6 p.m. Dinner will be served at the last two rehearsals.

If your youth would like to participate, please email Leslie Fulford at lfulford@first-church.org with the following information:

- Name
- Age / grade
- Previous roles played in the pageant
- Desired role this year

We look forward to kicking off the Advent season with our youth!

The Christmas Giving Tree First Serves December

Once again this year we will help the children at Childcare Wonderland for Christmas. Starting on Sunday, December 1, stop by the Giving Tree in the Education Wing Breezeway, to choose a children's wish ornament. The ornament will have a child's first name, age, gender, and wished-for gift (typically totally around \$50). Shop for the items and return the items, unwrapped in a bag with the wish ornament attached, to the Giving Tree by 10 a.m., December 15, when we will gather to wrap the gifts for our December First Serves activity.

In addition to wish ornaments, there will be snowmen with requests for Walmart gift cards in the amount of \$25. First Serves will match each \$25 gift card. We hope to give each Childcare Wonderland family and employee \$100 worth of Walmart gift cards. Gift cards can be returned to the offering plate or to the church office.

If you prefer to make a financial contribution, there are dedicated First Serves envelopes that can be dropped in the offering plate. Donations of gift bags, wrapping paper, and tape are also welcome!

The gifts will be delivered by our staff to Childcare Wonderland Center.

Thank you for your help and generosity!

Upcoming Missions

December 1 Largest Table

December 8 Bethlehem on Broad Street

December 15 Concert Fund/ YWCA Family Center

December 22 Huckleberry House

December 24 Good Samaritan

December 29 Sandy Hook Promise

CHURCH LEADERSHIP

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
Maintenance: Mike Sharrock
Custodians: Alexis Wayne, Bill McCabe, Bob O'Brien
Handbell Director: Jennifer Fry
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: Jim Lowe
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



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
444 E Broad Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215 | 614-228-1741
www.firstchurcharts.org | home@first-church.org

