



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. William R. Nirote, *preacher*
- The Rev. Joanna Samuelson, *worship leader*
- Dr. Ronald Jenkins, *liturgist*
- Melissa Kulwicki, *worship leader*
- Stefan Duga, *crucifer*
- Greg Duncan and Gary Glover, *vergers*
- The First Church Choir
- Joshua Stafford, *organist and director*
- The First Church Ringers
- Jennifer Fry, *director*
- Pat Patterson, *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

*In the Bleak Midwinter*

arr. Karen Buckwalter, 1991

ENTER TO WORSHIP

Dr. Ronald Jenkins

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: A voice cries out in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord!"

People: **Make God's paths straight.**

Leader: Every valley will be filled, and every mountain will be leveled.

People: **The crooked will be made straight.**

Leader: The rough and rocky ways will be smoothed.

People: **All will see the salvation of God.**

Leader: See the light from on high. The dawn is breaking!

People: **The Lord is coming! The Lord is coming!**

—(from Luke 1, 3)

\*PROCESSIONAL HYMN

“On Jordan's bank”

*Winchester New*, Musikalisches Handbuch, 1690

Charles Coffin, 1736; trans. John Chandler, 1837, alt.

1 On Jor - dan's bank the Bap - tist's cry an -  
2 Then cleansed be ev - ery life from sin; make  
3 We hail you as our Sav - ior, Lord, our  
4 Stretch forth your hand; our health re - store, and

nounc - es that the Lord is nigh; a - wake and heark - en,  
straight the way for God with - in, and let us all our  
ref - uge and our great re - ward; with - out your grace we  
make us rise to fall no more. O let your face up -

for he brings glad ti - dings of the King of kings!  
hearts pre - pare for Christ to come and en - ter there.  
waste a - way like flowers that with - er and de - cay.  
on us shine and fill the world with love di - vine.

\*INVOCATION

The Rev. Joanna Samuelson

Leader: God be with you.

**People.** And also with you.

Leader: Let us pray.

**People:** Merciful God, who sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

\*RESPONSE

Angel Voices, Francis Pott, 1861

“Advent candles tell their story”

Mark Earey, 2002

1. Ad - vent can - dles tell their sto - ry as we watch and pray,  
 2. Pro - phet voi - ces loud - ly cry - ing, mak - ing path - ways clear;

long - ing for the Day of Glo - ry, "Come, Lord, soon," we say.  
 glimps - ing glo - ry, self - de - ny - ing, cal - ling all to hear.

Pain and sor - row, tears and sad - ness changed for glad - ness on that day.  
 Through their mes - sage, chal - lened shak - en, hearts a - wak - en: God is near.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Mark, Stacie, and Miles Shall

Leader: O God, you call us to repent of our sins: soften our proud and stubborn hearts.  
 Lord, have mercy.

**People: Lord, have mercy.**

Leader: Lord Jesus, you declared the forgiveness of God: teach us to forgive one another.  
 Christ, have mercy.

**People: Christ, have mercy.**

Leader: Holy Spirit, you search our hearts and show us the truth:  
 direct us in your way of righteousness.  
 Lord, have mercy.

**People: Lord, have mercy.**

*A moment of silence is observed as the candles are lighted.*

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

The Rev. Dr. William R. Nirote

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. Nirote

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.*

## THE REAFFIRMATION OF BAPTISM

Kathy Reed, *Church Growth*: I invite all those who have been in conversation with First Church and now wish to accept our invitation of membership to please step forward as I read your names: Alicia Meckstroth and Brian Towns and Vicki Lyden.

Tom Kiesel, *Senior Deacon*: Friends in Christ, we all are received into the church through baptism. These persons standing before you have found nurture and support in our spiritual family. Through study, discussion, and prayer they have been led to reaffirm their baptism and to enter into a covenantal relationship with the members of this church. They are ready to offer their devotion and service to Jesus Christ, using the unique gifts provided them.

Rev. Samuelson: You are no longer strangers, but are now one of us. We are delighted to have you here and willingly share with you all of our resources. I invite all the members and friends of First Church to unite with those joining in reading together our church's statement of faith and covenant.

### STATEMENT OF FAITH AND COVENANT

**The church is a community of faith called to witness and to serve. 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.**

Rev. Samuelson: Will all people of faith please rise? By our baptism we are made one in the body of Christ. Today we rejoice in the journey which has brought you here. We give thanks for other communities which have been your spiritual home, and we celebrate your commitment to continue your sojourn in this household of faith. Let us read together:

### \*WELCOME

**We welcome you with joy to the life and ministry of The First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ of Columbus, Ohio. We promise you our friendship and prayers as we share the hopes and labors of the church of Jesus Christ. By the power of the Holy Spirit may we continue to grow together in God's knowledge and love, and be faithful witnesses to the ways of Christ, our Lord and Savior.**

Rev. Nirote: Let us pray. O God, we praise you for calling us to be disciples and for gathering us into the Church, the body of Christ. We thank you for your people gathered in this congregation and rejoice that you have increased our community of faith. Together may we live in the Spirit, building one another up in love, sharing in the life and worship of the church, and serving the world for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Rev. Samuelson: In the name of Jesus Christ and on behalf of the First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, we extend to you the hand of Christian love, welcoming you into the company of this church. We look forward to getting to know you better. Welcome to First Church!

### 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.*

ANTHEM

William Mathias, 1973

“Lift up your heads, O ye gates”

Psalm 24:7-10

Lift up your heads, O ye gates,  
and be ye lift up ye everlasting doors,  
and the King of glory shall come in.  
Who is this King of glory?  
The Lord strong and mighty in battle.  
Lift up your heads, O ye gates,  
even lift them up, ye everlasting doors,  
and the King of glory shall come in.  
Who is this King of glory?  
The Lord of hosts is the King of Glory.

THE HEBREW SCRIPTURE

Malachi 3:1-4

Dr. Jenkins

Leader: A reading from the book of the prophet Malachi, the third chapter.

See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight-- indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

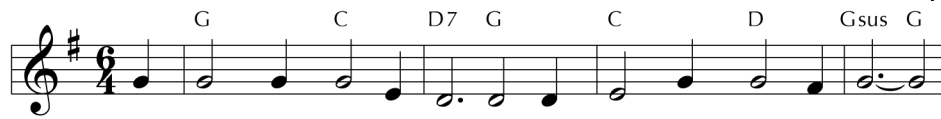
For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.

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

**People: Thanks be to God.**

\*THE GOSPEL HYMN  
 "Prepare the way, O Zion"

*Bereden väg för Herran*, Then Svenska Psalmboken, 1697  
 Frans Mikael Franzen, 1812, 1819. trans. Augustus Nelson, 1958



1 Pre - pare the way, O Zi - on, your Christ is draw - ing near!  
 2 He brings God's rule, O Zi - on; he comes from heaven a - bove.  
 3 Fling wide your gates, O Zi - on; your Sav - ior's rule em - brace,



Let ev - ery hill and val - ley a lev - el way ap - pear.  
 His rule is peace and free - dom, and jus - tice, truth, and love.  
 and ti - dings of sal - va - tion pro - claim in ev - ery place.



Greet One who comes in glo - ry, fore - told in sa - cred sto - ry.  
 Lift high your praise re - sound - ing, for grace and joy a - bound - ing.  
 All lands will bow re - joic - ing, their ad - o - ra - tion voic - ing.



O blest is Christ who came in God's most ho - ly name.

THE GOSPEL

Luke 3:1-6

Rev. Nirote

Leader: A reading from the gospel according to Luke, the third chapter.

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

"The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

'Prepare the way of the Lord,  
 make his paths straight.  
 Every valley shall be filled,  
 and every mountain and hill shall be made low,  
 and the crooked shall be made straight,  
 and the rough ways made smooth;  
 and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'"

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

**People: Thanks be to God.**

ADVENT MEDITATION

"Preparing for Our God"

Rev. Nirote

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

David Holt and Gail Lowe

For over 40 years, Bethlehem On Broad Street (BOBS) has offered a warm haven for hundreds of our neighbors who are cold, hungry, or without companionship on Christmas Day. That means a hot, sit-down meal, joyous music, fellowship, spiritual support, referrals to help agencies, and gifts of winter wear, blankets, toiletries, and toys for kids. Without BOBS, many of our guests wouldn't have these necessities or experience these holiday joys. Through most of its history, Bethlehem On Broad Street has been hosted by First Congregational Church, with the partnership of many other churches and organizations, and the volunteer efforts of over 200 people annually. First Church members and others make this mission possible with your financial support, your volunteer time, your gifts of toys, and your donations of cooked turkeys, hams, breakfast treats, and desserts. And, when the day ends, Bethlehem On Broad Street continues, with the donation of all left over food and gifts to partner and ally agencies who serve people in the same circumstances as those who come to First Church on Christmas Day. BOBS and our guests are thankful for your help in any form, and for your prayers for our neighbors.

### OFFERTORY ANTHEM

Charles Wood, 1915

"O thou, the central orb"

Henry Ramsden Bramley, 1873

O thou the central orb of righteous love, pure beam of the Most High,  
eternal Light of this our wintry world,  
thy radiance bright awakes new joy in faith; hope soars above.

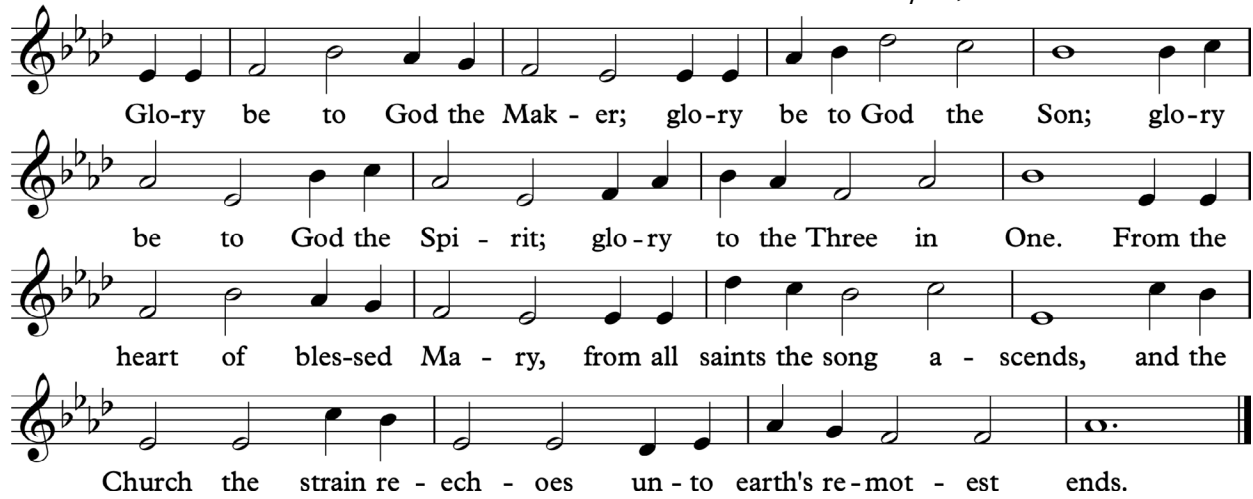
Come, quickly come, and let thy glory shine,  
gilding our darksome heaven with rays divine.

Thy saints with holy lustre round thee move as stars about thy throne  
set in the height of God's ordaining counsel,  
as thy sight gives measured grace to each thy power to prove.

Let thy bright beams disperse the gloom of sin,  
our nature all shall feel eternal day, in fellowship with thee,  
transforming clay to souls erewhile unclean, now pure within. Amen.

\*DOXOLOGY

*Raquel, Skinner Chávez-Melo, 1985*



Glo-ry be to God the Mak - er; glo-ry be to God the Son; glo-ry  
be to God the Spi - rit; glo-ry to the Three in One. From the  
heart of bles-sed Ma - ry, from all saints the song a - scends, and the  
Church the strain re - ech - oes un - to earth's re - mot - est ends.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Rev. Samuelson

Leader: Holy One, this Advent season we wait with love,

**People: And we give with love.**

Leader: Love for you, our God;

**People: Love for your beautiful people.**

Leader: Receive our offerings,

**People: And use them for your works of love in our world. Amen.**

COMMUNITY NOTICES - DEPART TO SERVE

Ms. Kulwicki

Leader: Let us depart with a heart to serve.

**People: Thanks be to God.**



\*CLOSING HYMN

Merton, G William Henry Monk, 1850

“Hark! A thrilling voice is sounding”

Latin, 6th c., tr. Hymns Ancient and Modern 1861, alt.

1. Hark! a thrill - ing voice is sound - ing. “Christ is nigh,” it seems to say;  
2. Wak - ened by the sol - emn warn - ing, from earth’s bond - age let us rise;  
3. Lo! the Lamb, so long ex - pec - ted, comes with par - don down from heaven;  
4. So when next he comes with glo - ry, and the world is wrapped in fear,  
5. Hon - or, glo - ry, might, and bless - ing to the Fa - ther and the Son,

“Cast a - way the works of dark - ness, O ye chil - dren of the day.”  
Christ, our sun, all sloth dis - pell - ing, shines up - on the morn - ing skies.  
let us haste, with tears of sor - row, one and all to be for - given;  
may he with his mer - cy shield us, and with words of love draw near.  
with the ev - er - last - ing Spir - it while un - end - ing a - ges run.

BENEDICTION

Rev. Nirote

POSTLUDE

*Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme*, Op. 78, No. 18

Sigfrid Karg-Elert, 1912

*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 by Tom Kiesel in memory and in honor of the birthdays of his parents, Harvey and Hilda Kiesel.

† GREETING AT THE EXITS

Rev. Nirote — Narthex (Broad Street entrance)

Rev. Samuelson — East Door (Ninth Street entrance by the Church Office)

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

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“Doxology.” Music: Raquel, Skinner Chavez-Melo, 1985. ©2005 Estate of Skinner Chavez-Melo. All rights reserved.



*Enter to Worship*  
**Depart to Serve**

**December 8, 2024**

## **This Week at First Church**

### **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)

### **Monday, December 9**

- 10 a.m. Stewardship & Growth Mtg (Fanning Rm)
- 6 p.m. First Church Campanelle Rehearsal (Bell Rm)
- 6:30 p.m. Transition Team Mtg (Fanning Rm & Zoom)
- 7 p.m. Trustees Mtg (Classroom C & Zoom)

### **Tuesday, December 10**

- 5:30 p.m. Budget & Finance Mtg (Classroom C & Zoom)
- 6 p.m. Music Committee Mtg (Parlor)
- 7 p.m. Executive Committee Mtg (Classroom C & Zoom)

### **Thursday, December 12**

- 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 13**

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

### **Sunday, December 15**

- 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)  
Sunday Morning Choir Rehearsal (Choir Rm)
- 11 a.m. Worship Service (Sanctuary & Virtual)
- 12:15 p.m. Coffee Hour & Coffee Sales (Parish Hall)
- 4 p.m. Lessons & Carols (Sanctuary)
- 6 p.m. Christmas Eve Pageant Rehearsal (Sanctuary)

## **Christmas Ugly Sweater Potluck and Carol Sing Today at 5 p.m.**

Put on your jolliest clothing and head to Parish Hall for the Second Annual Ugly Sweater Potluck and Carol Sing. We will gather to eat, sing carols, and vote for the festive yet questionable fashion choices. There will be fabulous prizes for all different categories so the uglier the better!

The Faith Formation Commission will provide a Main Meat and Vegetarian Dish. The suggested potluck guide is A-J please bring a Dessert K-R please bring a Side Dish S-Z please bring a Salad

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## **Youth Pageant**

All Youth, Grades 6-12, are encouraged to participate in the beloved Pageant of the Nativity tradition. The first rehearsal will be today, following the Christmas Ugly Sweater Potluck and Carol Sing. If your youth would like to participate, please email Leslie Fulford at [lfulford@first-church.org](mailto:lfulford@first-church.org)

## **The Christmas Giving Tree First Serves December**

If you would like to help make the holidays a little brighter for the children, families and staff at Childcare Wonderland, stop by the giving tree and pick up a:

- Wish Ornament
- Gift Card Snowman
- Donation Envelope

We are also in need of wrapping supplies for our December 15 First Serves Project. We will gather in Classroom D to wrap the donated gifts for Childcare Wonderland. If you have questions please see Leslie Fulford [lfulford@first-church.org](mailto:lfulford@first-church.org).

[Thank you for your help and generosity!](#)

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## **HoneyBaked Ham Sale**

Faith Formation is partnering with HoneyBaked Ham to raise money for a summer mission trip and it couldn't be easier to support! If you like HoneyBaked Ham and goodies for the holidays, just order a gift card online to pay for your items and 20% of the purchase will go to First Church! You can take care of all of your whole menu in one spot – ham, brisket, BBQ, bacon (a Christmas morning faavorite!) sides and desserts. Gift cards make great gifts too! Order directly on the First Church fundraising page all month for cards to use all year. Click the QR Code below to order.



## **Columbus Landmarks 2024 Grand Hallelujah Tour of Historic Churches Saturday, December 14**

Mark your calendars for Saturday, December 14, and immerse yourself in the rich history and breathtaking architecture of Columbus' most iconic churches. Starting at 12 p.m., embark on an unforgettable journey through time and artistry as Columbus Landmarks presents the 2024 Hallelujah Grand Tour of Churches. First Church is proud once again to be included in this remarkable event!

Click the QR Code below to purchase tickets.



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## **Christmas Lessons and Carols Sunday, December 15 4 p.m**

Join us for our traditional Christmas Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols. This community celebration of Christmas features the First Church Choir, First Church Ringers, Brass, Percussion, and organ. We also welcome readers from our congregation and the greater Columbus community. A free-will offering will be shared by First Church Arts and the YWCA Family Center, which provides emergency shelter and critical services to stabilize homeless families in central Ohio.

## **Volunteers Needed for Laundry Love "Love Never Ends"**

Laundry Love needs volunteers in January, February, and March at Washland at 1469 W. Broad Street. Volunteers help on the last Tuesday of the month and the hours are 5:15 p.m. until 7:15 p.m. If you are interested please join us on December 17 at Washland at 1469 W. Broad Street. Volunteering for Laundry Love is easy and very rewarding. Volunteers use a form to keep a tally of washers and dryers used. They put the detergent and fabric softener in the machines. The most important job is meeting and talking with the people who come in to do their laundry. The people we help are very appreciative and respectful to our volunteers. Please join us on December 17 at Washland if you are interested in supporting this important mission.



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## **Upcoming Missions**

December 8 Bethlehem on Broad Street  
December 15 First Church Arts /  
YWCA Family Center  
December 22 Huckleberry House  
December 24 Good Samaritan  
December 29 Sandy Hook Promise

## **Transition News - Listening**

A distinction can be made between listening to and listening for. Although it might happen accidentally, listening is always an intentional activity. It requires paying attention to what is said, as well as what is left unsaid. Through listening circles with members of First Church, the Transition Team has been listening to concerns and listening for the voice of the Spirit in what is being shared. This task has been both informative and important.

So far, we have learned of the overwhelming love that members have for the people and ministries of this church. We hear this through the affirmations for social justice ministry, music programs, growing congregational care, and hospitality. We also hear it in the expressions of concern for better communication from leadership, the desire to see more youth and families and more opportunities for them, the need for more people to accept positions of leadership, and the desire for connection and fellowship.

The Transition Team has much more to do to listen for where God is calling us. We continue to hold Listening Circles and prepare a congregational survey. We also look forward to Rev. Becky David's arrival in a couple of weeks to add her voice to our listening task.

Upcoming Transition Team Listening Circles  
12/8, 10 a.m., Classroom D

## 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** Shelly Gies' brother, Mike Simms; Victor John's father, Charles and mother, Mary Jane. Amy Wagner's friend Bill Kelley; 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; 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** Geneva Rice on the death of her sister-in-law, Margaret Leick; Melva Fisher on the death of her sister, Mary Barbara Bittle; 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 Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. We also pray for our UCC partner in mission, the Christian Development Commission of Honduras.

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## Growing our Future Together Annual Stewardship Campaign Update

**Family Units:**  
**128 Family Units**  
**51.2% of 250 Goal**

**Pledged Dollars**  
**\$600,006**  
**68.35% 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 offer
- ing plate during Sunday services or mail your pledge form to First Congregational Church, 444 East Broad Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215



# 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:** Amanda Butler  
**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



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