



### 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. Ronald Botts, *worship leader*
- Jill Hultin, *liturgist*
- Melissa Kulwicki, *worship leader*
- Leslie Fulford, *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

Jill Hultin

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: Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say Rejoice!

**People: Our joy is in the Lord who blesses us.**

Leader: Shout for joy, for the Lord is near!

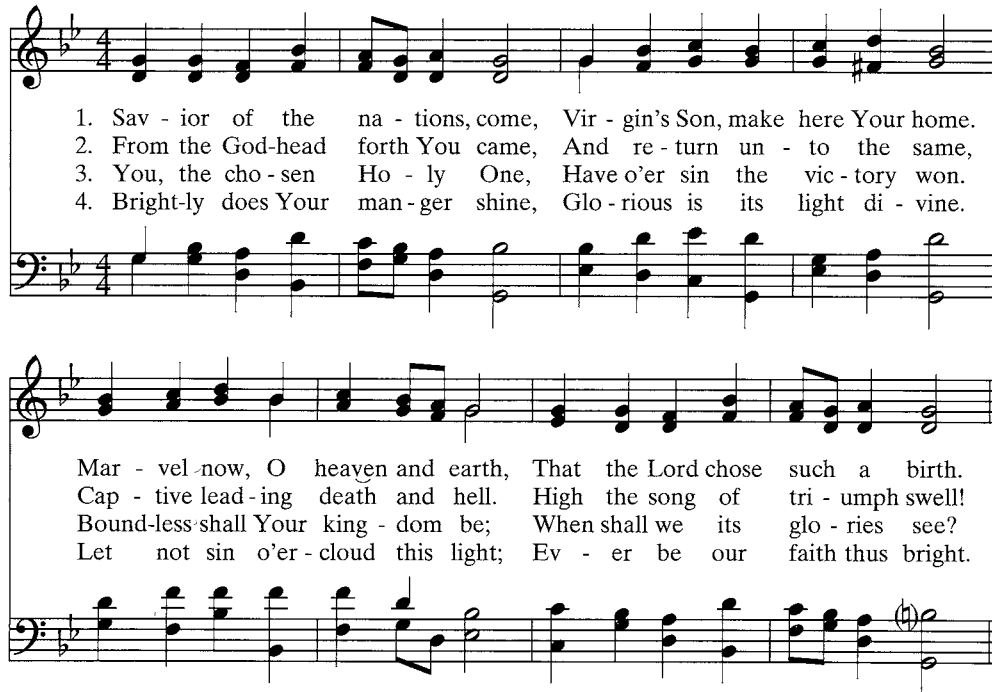
**People: Our praises ascend to God for the mighty things God has done.**

Leader: Let your praise dance and swirl in tribute to God!

**People: Surely God blesses and saves us. Hallelujah! Praise be to God. Amen.**

\*OPENING HYMN  
"Savior of the nations, come"

*Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland*, Eyn Enchiridion, Erfurt, 1524  
attr. Ambrose of Milan, 4th c, para. Martin Luther, 1524,  
trans. Williams Reynolds, 1850



1. Sav - ior of the na - tions, come, Vir - gin's Son, make here Your home.  
2. From the God-head forth You came, And re - turn un - to the same,  
3. You, the cho - sen Ho - ly One, Have o'er sin the vic - tory won.  
4. Bright-ly does Your man - ger shine, Glo - rious is its light di - vine.

Mar - vel - now, O heaven and earth, That the Lord chose such a birth.  
Cap - tive lead - ing death and hell. High the song of tri - umph swell!  
Bound - less shall Your king - dom be; When shall we its glo - ries see?  
Let not sin o'er - cloud this light; Ev - er be our faith thus bright.

\*INVOCATION

The Rev. Ronald Botts

Leader: God be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

Leader: Let us pray.

**People: Stir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and forever. Amen.**

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Katarina Cochrane-Yamaguchi and Henry

Leader: O God, you call us to prepare for the coming of your Son:  
forgive us our unreadiness to receive Him.  
Lord, have mercy.

**People: Lord, have mercy.**

Leader: Lord Jesus, you were proclaimed by John the Baptist:  
help us also to prepare your way.  
Christ, have mercy.

**People: Christ, have mercy.**

Leader: O God, you speak through the prophets:  
make us attentive to hear your word.  
Lord, have mercy.

**People: Lord, have mercy.**

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

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Rev. Botts

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

The Rev. Joanna Samuelson

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

**People: And also with you.**

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

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

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

Zephaniah 3:14-20

Jill Hultin

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

Sing aloud, O daughter Zion;  
shout, O Israel!

Rejoice and exult with all your heart,  
O daughter Jerusalem!

The Lord has taken away the judgments against you,  
he has turned away your enemies.

The king of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst;  
you shall fear disaster no more.

On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:  
Do not fear, O Zion;

do not let your hands grow weak.

The Lord, your God, is in your midst,  
a warrior who gives victory;

he will rejoice over you with gladness,  
he will renew you in his love;

he will exult over you with loud singing  
as on a day of festival.

I will remove disaster from you,  
so that you will not bear reproach for it.

I will deal with all your oppressors  
at that time.

And I will save the lame

and gather the outcast,

and I will change their shame into praise  
and renown in all the earth.

At that time I will bring you home,  
at the time when I gather you;  
for I will make you renowned and praised  
among all the peoples of the earth,  
when I restore your fortunes  
before your eyes, says the Lord.

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

**People: Thanks be to God.**

THE CANTICLE

Isaiah 12:2-6

Jill Hultin  
The First Song of Isaiah

Surely, it is God who saves me;  
I will trust in him and not be afraid.  
**For the Lord is my stronghold and my sure defense,  
and he will be my Savior.**

Therefore you shall draw water with rejoicing  
from the springs of salvation.

**And on that day you shall say,  
Give thanks to the Lord and call upon his Name;**

Make his deeds known among the peoples;  
see that they remember that his Name is exalted.

**Sing the praises of the Lord, for he has done great things,  
and this is known in all the world.**

Cry aloud, inhabitants of Zion, ring out your joy,  
for the great one in the midst of you is the Holy One of Israel.

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.**

THE GOSPEL

Luke 3:7-18

Rev. Samuelson

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

John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise." Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what should we do?" He said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages."

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, “I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

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

**People: Thanks be to God.**

ADVENT MEDITATION

“What, Then, Should We Do?”

Rev. Samuelson

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Rev. Botts

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:*



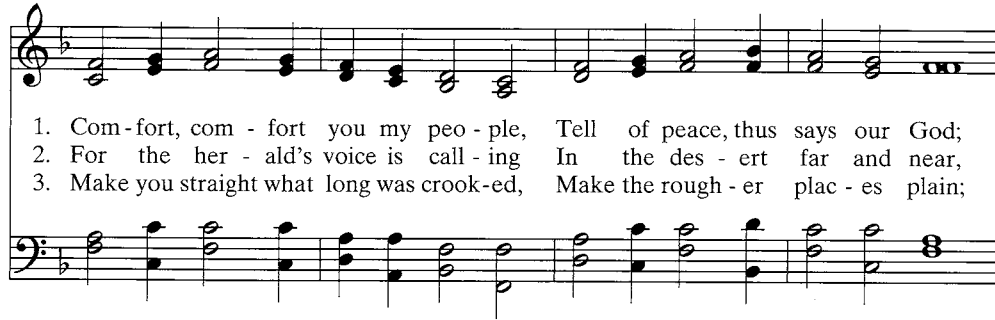
MISSION INVITATION

Richard Brant

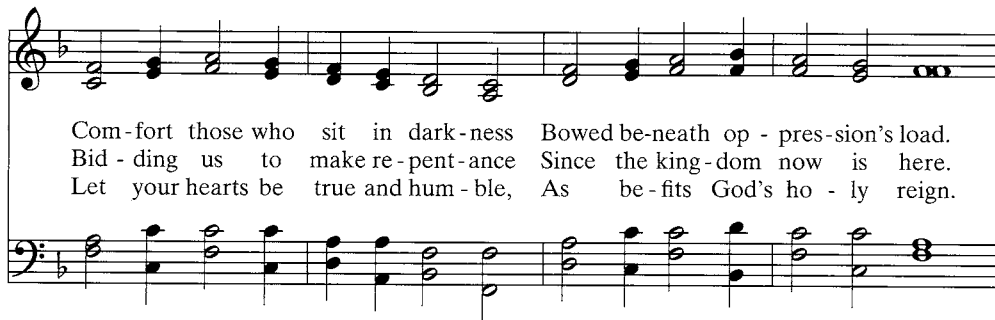
Cash and designated gifts go to support **Laundry Love**. Laundry Love is an initiative in partnership with individuals, groups and local laundromats throughout the country to wash the clothes and bedding of individuals and/or families living in poverty. Thank you for your generosity.

"Comfort, comfort you my people"

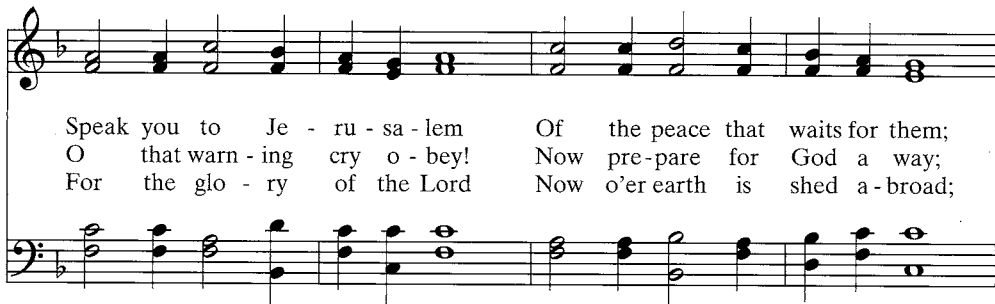
Johannes Olearius, 1671. trans. Catherine Winkworth, 1863, alt.



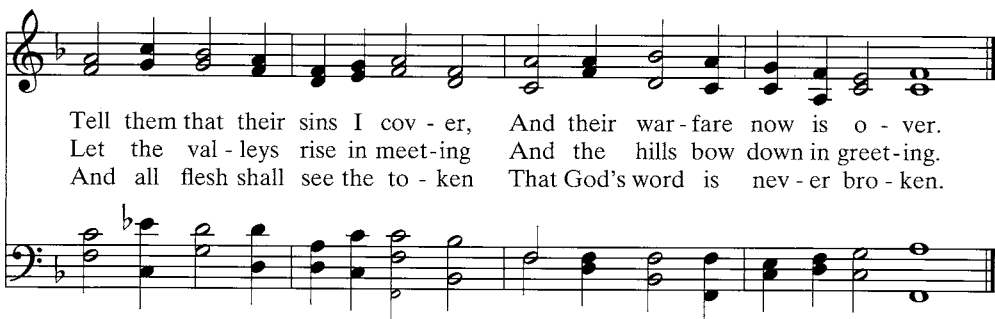
1. Com - fort, com - fort you my peo - ple, Tell of peace, thus says our God;  
 2. For the her - ald's voice is call - ing In the des - ert far and near,  
 3. Make you straight what long was crook - ed, Make the rough - er plac - es plain;



Com - fort those who sit in dark - ness Bowed be - neath op - pres - sion's load.  
 Bid - ding us to make re - pent - ance Since the king - dom now is here.  
 Let your hearts be true and hum - ble, As be - fits God's ho - ly reign.



Speak you to Je - ru - sa - lem Of the peace that waits for them;  
 O that warn - ing cry o - bey! Now pre - pare for God a way;  
 For the glo - ry of the Lord Now o'er earth is shed a - broad;



Tell them that their sins I cov - er, And their war - fare now is o - ver.  
 Let the val - leys rise in meet - ing And the hills bow down in greet - ing.  
 And all flesh shall see the to - ken That God's word is nev - er bro - ken.

COMMUNION  
COMMUNION HYMN  
"Wait for the Lord"

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

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.

Wait for the Lord; be strong; take heart!

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It consists of two systems. The first system has a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The second system also has a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The piano accompaniment features a steady bass line and chords that support the vocal melody.

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Rev. Botts

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*, James J. Chepponis, 1995

"Come, come Emmanuel"

Come, come Em - man - u - el. Come, Em -

man - u - el. man - u - el.

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It consists of two systems. The first system has a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The second system has a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The piano accompaniment features a steady bass line and chords that support the vocal melody. The second system includes a 'For repeat' section and a 'Final ending' section.

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





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

**December 15, 2024**

**This Week at First Church**

**Sunday, December 15**

- 9 a.m. Morning Prayer & Holy Communion (Parish Hall & Virtual)
- 10 a.m. Bible Study (Classroom C)  
First Serves (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)
- 4 p.m. Lessons & Carols (Sanctuary)
- 6 p.m. Christmas Eve Pageant Rehearsal (Sanctuary)

**Monday, December 16**

- 6 p.m. First Church Campanelle Rehearsal (Bell Rm)

**Tuesday, December 17**

- 5:15 p.m. Laundry Love (Wash Land)
- 7 p.m. Church Council Mtg (Classroom C & Zoom)

**Wednesday, December 18**

- 10 a.m. The Largest Table (Kitchen)

**Thursday, December 19**

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

**Saturday, December 21**

- 1 p.m. Memorial Service for Robert Rideout (Sanctuary)

**Sunday, December 22**

- 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. Coffee Hour & Coffee Sales (Parish Hall)

**Christmas  
Lessons and  
Carols  
Today at  
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, as well as 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.

## 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 your whole menu in one spot – ham, brisket, BBQ, bacon (a Christmas morning favorite!) sides and desserts. Gift cards make great gifts too! Click the QR Code below to order.



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## 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.



## Full Circle Connections Friday, December 13, 10 a.m. Church Parlor

This Friday's topic in Full Circle Connections is Crossing Thresholds. If you can't make it this time, be sure to mark your calendar for our next gathering. We meet for an hour on the second and fourth Fridays every month. All are welcome and bring a friend! Reach Jan Hamilton on Realm or by email ([hamiltonjan30@yahoo.com](mailto:hamiltonjan30@yahoo.com)).

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## First Church Book Club: Wednesday, January 8, 2025 7 p.m. on Zoom *North Woods*

## Wednesday, February 5, 2025 7 p.m. on Zoom *Master Slave, Husband Wife: An Epic Journey from Slavery to Freedom*

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

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## Upcoming Missions

- December 15 Laundry Love  
First Church Arts /  
YWCA Family Center
- December 22 Huckleberry House
- December 24 Good Samaritan
- December 29 Sandy Hook Promise

## Keep in Prayer

**Members** Steven and Katie Deliman's daughter, Caroline; Mike Weddle; Elaine Warren; Victor John; 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; 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** John Matchett and family on the death of his brother, Nelson Matchett; 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.

We pray for Rev. Becky David and her family as she prepares to serve our congregation as our interim senior minister.

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 Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, and the Mainland of China. We also pray for our UCC partner in mission, the Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants in Hong Kong.

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## Growing our Future Together Annual Stewardship Campaign Update

**Family Units:**  
**138 Family Units**  
**55.2% of 250 Goal**

**Pledged Dollars**  
**\$621,596**  
**70.81% of \$877,854.00 Goal**

- To pledge online, scan the QR Code
- 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



# CHURCH LEADERSHIP

**Interim Senior Minister:** Rev. Becky David, 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  
**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



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
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