



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. Ronald Botts, *worship leader*
Antoinette Koolemans-Beynen, *liturgist*
Leslie Fulford, *worship leader*
Joshua Stafford, *organist*
Aran Cunningham, *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

Noël Suisse - Grand jeu et duo

Louis-Claude Daquin, 1757

Noël "Étranger" sur les jeux d'Anches, sans tremblant et en Duo

ENTER TO WORSHIP

Antoinette Koolemans-Beynen

Leader: Let everything that has breath praise God!

People: All the mountains and hills, the valleys and plains, shall resound with praises to God.

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

Leader: All creatures on earth, in the skies, in the seas, shall sing praise to God.

People: Let us, here and now, praise God.

Leader: We praise God!

People: Let us praise God with our whole heart and soul and strength.

*OPENING HYMN
 "Go tell it on the mountain"

African American Spiritual
 Arranged John W. Work II, 1907

Refrain

Go tell it on the moun - tain, o - ver the hills and

ev - ery - where; go tell it on the moun - tain, that

Je - sus Christ is born!

1 While shep - herds kept their
 2 The shep - herds feared and
 3 Down in a low - ly

watch - ing o'er si - lent flocks by night, be -
 trem - bled when lo! a - bove the earth rang
 man - ger the hum - ble Christ was born, and

Repeat Refrain

hold, through-out the hea - vens there shone a ho - ly light.
 out the an - gel cho - rus that hailed our Sa - vior's birth.
 God sent us sal - va - tion that bless - ed Christ - mas morn.

*INVOCATION

The Rev. Dr. William R. Nirote

Leader: God be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Let us pray.

People: Almighty God, you have poured upon us the new light of your incarnate Word: Grant that this light, enkindled in our hearts, may shine forth in our lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

*WELCOME AND PASSING OF THE PEACE

The Rev. Ronald Botts

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.*

CHILDREN'S TIME

Leslie Fulford

THE HEBREW SCRIPTURE

1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26

Mrs. Beynen

Leader: A reading from the first book of Samuel, the second chapter.

Samuel was ministering before the Lord, a boy wearing a linen ephod. His mother used to make for him a little robe and take it to him each year when she went up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. Then Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife and say, "May the Lord repay you with children by this woman for the loan that she made to the Lord," and then they would return to their home. Now the boy Samuel continued to grow both in stature and in favor with the Lord and with the people.

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

People: Thanks be to God.

THE PSALM

Mrs. Beynen

PSALM 148

The St. Helena Psalter

Alleluia! Praise God from the heavens;
sing praise in the heights.

**Praise God, all you angels;
sing praise, all the heavenly host.**

Praise God, sun and moon;
sing praise, all you shining stars.

**Praise God, heaven of heavens
and you waters above the heavens.**

Let them praise the Name of God,
by whose command they were created.

**God made them stand fast for ever and ever,
and gave them a law which shall not pass away.**

Praise God from the earth,
you sea-monsters and all deeps;

**Fire and hail, snow and fog,
tempestuous wind, doing God's will;**

Mountains and all hills,
 fruit trees and all cedars;
Wild beasts and all cattle,
creeping things and winged birds;

Sovereigns of the earth and all peoples,
 leaders and all rulers of the world;

Young men and maidens,
old and young together.

Let them praise your Name, O God,
 for your Name only is exalted;
 your splendor is over earth and heaven.

You have raised up strength for your people
and praise for all your loyal servants,
the children of Israel, a people who are near you. Alleluia!

*THE GOSPEL HYMN
 "Once in royal David's city"

Irby, Henry John Gauntlett, 1849
 Cecil Frances Alexander, 1848, alt.

1 Once in roy - al Da - vid's cit - y stood a low - ly
 2 He came down to earth from heav - en who is God and
 3 Je - sus is our child - hood's pat - tern; day by day like
 4 And our eyes at last shall see him, through his own re -

cat - tle shed, where a moth - er laid her ba - by in a
 Lord of all, and his shel - ter was a sta - ble, and his
 us he grew; he was lit - tle, weak and help - less; tears and
 deem - ing love; for that child so dear and gen - tle is our

man - ger for his bed: Mar - y was that moth - er
 cra - dle was a stall; with the poor and meek and
 smiles like us he knew; and he feels for all our
 Lord in heaven a - bove; and he leads his chil - dren



THE GOSPEL

Luke 2:41-52

Rev. Nirote

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

Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents were unaware of this. Assuming that he was in the group of travelers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him they were astonished, and his mother said to him, "Child, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously looking for you." He said to them, "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" But they did not understand what he said to them. Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was obedient to them, and his mother treasured all these things in her heart.

And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years and in divine and human favor.

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

People: Thanks be to God.

SERMON

"Home Alone"

Rev. Nirote

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 the Depart to Serve leaflet:



MISSION INVITATION

Mrs. Beynen

Cash and designated gifts go to support **Sandy Hook Promise**, established in part to educate and train people to know the signs of gun violence before it happens. Financial support of Sandy Hook allows the organization to continue educating on gun safety and expanding their no-cost Know the Signs program to more schools and communities. Thank you for your generosity.

OFFERTORY HYMN “The first Nowell”

The First Nowell, English carol; Sandys’ *Christmas Carols*, 1833
English carol; *Some Ancient Christmas Carols*, 2nd ed., 1823

1. The first Now - ell the an - gel did say Was to cer - tain poor
2. They look - ed up and saw a star Shin - ing in the
3. And by the light of that same star, Three wise men
4. This star drew nigh to the north - west; O'er Beth - le -

shep - herds in fields as they lay; In fields where they lay a - keep - ing their
east be - yond them far, And to the earth it gave great
came from coun - try far; To seek for a king was their in -
hem it took its rest; And there it did both stop and

sheep, On a cold win - ter's night that was so deep.
light, And so it con - tin - ued both day and night. Now - ell, Now -
tent, And to fol - low the star wher - ev - er it went. Now - ell, Now -
stay, Right o - ver the place where Je - sus lay.

ell, Now - ell, Now - ell, Born is the King of Is - ra - el.

*PRESENTATION CAROL

“What child is this,” v. 3

Greensleeves, English Ballad, 16th c.

William Chatterton Dix, 1871

So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh; Come, one and all, to own Him.

The King of kings salvation brings; Let loving hearts enthrone Him.

This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;

haste, haste to bring Him laud, the Babe, the son of Mary.

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Rev. Botts

COMMUNITY NOTICES - DEPART TO SERVE

Mrs. Fulford

Leader: Let us depart with a heart to serve.

People: Thanks be to God.

*HYMN

In dulci jubilo, German folk tune, 14th c.

“Good Christian friends, rejoice”

Medieval Latin, tr. and para. John Mason Neale, 1853

1. Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice With heart, and soul, and voice;
 2. Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice With heart, and soul, and voice;
 3. Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice With heart, and soul, and voice;

Give ye heed to what we say: Je - sus Christ is born to - day;
 Now ye hear of end - less bliss: Je - sus Christ was born for this!
 Now ye need not fear the grave: Je - sus Christ was born to save!

Ox and ass be - fore Him bow, And He is in the man - ger now.
 He hath o - pened heav - en's door, And we are blest for - ev - er - more.
 Calls you one and calls you all To gain the ev - er - last - ing hall.

Christ is born to - day! Christ is born to - day!
 Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!
 Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

*BENEDICTION

Rev. Nirote

POSTLUDE

“God rest you merry, gentlemen”

William Lloyd Webber, 1961

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 from Rebecca and Sheldon Taft on their 62nd Wedding Anniversary.

† GREETING AT THE EXITS

Rev. Nirote — Narthex (Broad Street entrance)

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

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

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Enter to Worship
Depart to Serve

December 29, 2024

This Week at First Church

Sunday, December 29

10 a.m. Worship Service (Sanctuary)

Tuesday, December 31

12 Noon Church Office Closes
for New Year's Eve

Wednesday, January 1

Church Office Closed in Celebration of
New Year's Day

Saturday, January 4

10:30 a.m. Sacred Earth Mtg (Adult Library)
1:30 p.m. Book Club Gathering (Parlor)

Sunday, January 5

9 a.m. Morning Worship & Holy
Communion (Parish Hall)
10 a.m. Sunday School
(Various Classrooms)
Parent Conversations
(Adult Library)
11 a.m. Worship Service & Holy
Communion (Sanctuary)
12:15 p.m. Coffee Hour & Coffee Sales
(Parish Hall)
12:30 p.m. Unhanging of the Greens
(Church)

Unhanging of the Greens

Sunday, January 5

12:30 p.m.- 4 p.m.

All are invited to help with our Unhanging of the Greens. We will have fun, food, and a sense of fulfillment when packing away the decorations that we have enjoyed this Advent and Christmas season.

We will meet in Parish Hall to divide into teams for the various tasks. There are jobs for everyone – of every age and ability! Food and drink will be served.

Click the QR Code below to register.



Save the Date

Sunday, January 12
Following 11 a.m. Worship

Join us as we celebrate and welcome Rev. Becky David, Interim Senior Minister, into the life and ministry of First Congregational Church.

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, sides and desserts. Gift cards make great gifts too! Click the QR Code below to order.



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.



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.

First Church Arts Second Annual Family Organ Day Saturday, January 11 at 10 a.m.

Join First Church Arts for the second annual Family Organ Day on Saturday, January 11 starting at 10 a.m.: an opportunity for the young and young-at-heart to meet the two magnificent pipe organs at First Church!

Click the QR Code below to view the event. All are welcome - please reach out to us if you or your child(ren) need any accommodations!



Upcoming Missions

January 5 UCC Hurricane Recovery Appeal
January 12 Columbus Relief
January 19 NAACP Legal Defense Fund
January 26 Trustees' Knight-Perry Fund

Keep in Prayer

Members Allison Lowery Palmer; 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 Rev. Joanna Samuelson's neighbor and friend, Rev. Dr. George Zoebli; BOBS volunteers, John Holly and Sandy Waters-Holly; Shelly Gies' brother, Mike Simms; Victor John's father, Charles and mother, Mary Jane; Amy Wagner's friends Lee Gatton and 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 Cicenias.

Those who mourn Jonathan and Finnegan Miller on the death of Jonathan's mother and Finnegan's grandmother, Ann Wall Richards; Leslie Fulford on the death of her friends Ann Aldrich and Lew Wexler.

We pray for Rev. Becky David and her family as she transitions to her new role 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 Stateless people of the world. We also pray for our UCC partner in mission, the Near East School of Theology in the Middle East.

Growing our Future Together Annual Stewardship Campaign Update

Family Units:	Pledged]Dollars
146 Family Units	\$648,308
58.4% of 250 Goal	73.85% 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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