



WORSHIP AT ELEVEN
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

September 8, 2019 The Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost/Proper 18

WELCOME TO FIRST CHURCH!

If you are visiting today and looking for a church home, welcome! *For more than 166 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.*

Please silence all electronic devices.
 Assistive listening devices and large-print bulletins with hymns of the day are available at the Sanctuary doors. Deacons wearing white roses and Ushers wearing red roses can assist you.
 Cards requesting prayer are in the Welcome Notebooks and should be placed in the offering plate.
 (*) Indicates the congregation should stand as they are able.

*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 48:8)*

PRELUDE Prelude in G Major, BWV 541 J.S. Bach

ENTER TO WORSHIP Alex Palmer

Leader: The grace of our Savior Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

People: And also with you.

** Then all stand.*

L: We come with praise for the wonderful works of God.

P: Even before we speak, God knows us completely.

L: The Holy One knows us and sustains us,
 even in our moments of confusion and doubt.

P: Who can count the thoughts of God?

They are more than all the sands of the desert.

L: Like clay in the hand of the potter,
 we are shaped into vessels of divine will.

P: We come with praise for the wonderful works of God.

* PROCESSIONAL HYMN 470 O Day of Radiant Gladness
Es flog ein kleins Waldvögelein

* INVOCATION The Rev. Emily Krause Corzine

L: God be with you.

P. And also with you.

L: Let us pray.

P: Grant us, O God, to trust in you with all our heart; for as you always resist the proud who confide in their own strength, so you never forsake those who make their boast in your mercy; through Jesus Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

* WELCOME AND PASSING OF THE PEACE The Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Ahrens

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

P: And also with you.

L: Let us greet one another with the sign of Christ's peace.

Please find the attendance pad in the Welcome Notebook at the end of each pew, sign it and pass it on to your neighbor.

CHILDREN'S TIME Mark S. Williams

THE HEBREW SCRIPTURE Deuteronomy 30:15–20 (O.T. p. 186) Mr. Palmer

L: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the church.

P: Thanks be to God.

MOTET O Praise the Lord Adrian Batten

O praise the LORD, all ye people, praise him all ye nations.
 For his merciful kindness is evermore and more towards us
 and the truth of the LORD endureth for ever and ever. Amen.

— Psalm 117

THE EPISTLE Philemon 1:1–21 (N.T. p. 215) Mr. Palmer

L: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the church.

P: Thanks be to God.

* GOSPEL HYMN 393 Take Up Your Cross Bourbon

Children, Kindergarten through 2nd grade, are invited to the Worship Connections in the Children's Library on the 2nd floor of the Education Wing. They will return after the sermon. A fully-staffed childcare ministry is provided during each Sunday Morning Worship Service and Education Hour for infants through age 4. This ministry is located in the nursery and toddler rooms on the first floor of the Education Wing.

THE GOSPEL Luke 14:25–33 (N.T. p. 78) Rev. Ahrens

L: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the church.

P: Thanks be to God.

SERMON "Cross Talk" Rev. Ahrens

A time of reflection follows.

A LITANY - OPEN AND AFFIRMING ANNIVERSARY Rev. Corzine

L: Seventeen years ago today, this congregation voted to become an Open and Affirming Congregation. As we celebrate this important milestone in our life together, let us pray to the Lord:

In the many silences of the heart, O God, when feeling is beyond saying,
 Your faithful people everywhere wait upon Your Spirit. In the silence of joy –

when a baby is born,
 when a sunset blazes,
 when a loved one is restored to health,
 when peace replaces strife –

P: In our joy, we wait upon You, O God. We give You thanks and praise.

L: In the silence of sorrow – when love is lost,
 when pain is too constant a companion, when time brings change that is hard to bear, when death seems victorious –

P: In our sorrow, we wait upon You, O God. You alone are our rock and our refuge.

L: In the silence of anger –
 when justice is postponed until tomorrow, when violence shatters body and soul,

when prejudice sets neighbor against neighbor, when no one will listen –
P: In our anger, we wait upon You, O God. Teach us the ways of justice and mercy.

L: Let us put our trust where it belongs, not in our positions of power or wealth, for such things are lighter than breath.

P: In our joy, our sorrow, our anger, we trust in God's unfailing love and guidance. We rely upon the blessing of being a community of faith, a Church universal. Sisters and brothers of many colors, ages, sexual orientations, gender identities, and abilities, we are one in Christ! Together, let us wait upon the God of our salvation!

L: Let us pray for the needs and concerns of this congregation ...
(We pray for the needs and concerns of this congregation, the members, family, and friends who are listed in the Depart to Serve leaflet and whom we hold in our hearts in prayer. As directed, you are invited to pray silently or aloud for those needs and concerns you have.)

Silence.

L: Lord, in your mercy,

P: Hear our prayer.

L: Joining our hearts, minds, and voices together, let us pray the prayer that Jesus taught us, saying:

P: 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.

—by the Rev. Ann B. Day, Program Coordinator, Open and Affirming Program of the United Church of Christ Coalition for LGBT Concerns
 1987–2007 Based on Psalm 62:5–12 Originally published in *Shaping Sanctuary*

THE OFFERTORY

MISSION INVITATION Sue Cook

Cash and designated checks go to **Health Gives Hope**. Health Gives Hope is a non-profit organization formed to create a long-term relationship with the communities in rural Ethiopia. Health Gives Hope provides health care, clean water and sanitation and health education to the citizens of Bora, Ethiopia. Thank you for your generosity.

ANTHEM The House of Faith Has Many Rooms Craig Phillips
 The house of faith has many rooms where we have never been; there is more space within God's scope than we have ever seen.
 We dare not limit God's domain to what our creeds declare, or shrink from probing things unknown lest God should not be there.
 The way to God is not escape, though truth does make us free: the life of chosen servant hood is perfect liberty.
 Yet still we seek at journey's end the last and sweetest grace, the gift of room to turn around and know God face to face.
 —Carl P. Daw, Jr.

* PRESENTATION HYMN 591 Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow *Old Hundredth*

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
 Praise Christ, all creatures here below;
 Praise Holy Spirit evermore;
 Praise Triune God, whom we adore. Amen.**

* PRAYER OF DEDICATION Rev. Corzine
Please be seated for the Notices.

COMMUNITY NOTICES - DEPART TO SERVE Mark S. Williams
 L: Let us depart with a heart to serve.
P: Thanks be to God.

* CLOSING HYMN 210 Our God, Our Help in Ages Past *St. Anne*

* BENEDICTION Rev. Ahrens

POSTLUDE Fugue in E-flat ("St. Anne"), BWV 552 Bach
Please be seated for the Postlude.

Thank you for attending worship this morning. We hope that you have found welcome, 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 nametag. We'd be delighted to assist you. Please join us for Coffee Hour in the Parish Hall immediately following the service.

WE WELCOME THE FIRST CHURCH CHOIR to worship leadership as they return from their summer break.

† ACOLYTES: Erin Dean and Grace Glaros

† CRUCIFER: Mia Provenzano

† BANNER CARRIER: Peter Spofforth

† MUSIC: The First Church Choir; Kevin Jones, *organist and director*

† THE FLOWERS THIS MORNING are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Pat Navin by Dana Navin.

† GREETING AT THE EXITS TODAY:
 Broad Street – Rev. Ahrens
 Ninth Street – Rev. Corzine
 Education Wing – Mr. Williams

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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 to 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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