



MORNING PRAYER AND HOLY COMMUNION AT NINE  
**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**  
 UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

October 2, 2022

The Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost/Proper 22/World Communion Sunday

**WELCOME TO FIRST CHURCH!**

If you are visiting today and looking for a church home, welcome! *For more than 170 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.*

*The liturgy of Morning Prayer is a form of daily worship adapted through the ages that has its earliest roots in our Jewish heritage. Its premise is one of praying to God at the beginning of the day—giving thanks for another day ahead. The service falls roughly into three main parts: Opening sentences and singing/reading of the Psalms; readings from Holy Scripture - usually one from the Hebrew texts, and one from the Gospels - interspersed with ancient songs of the church; and prayers. To this we add Holy Communion, bringing further meaning to the totality of the prayers we have already offered. The liturgy presupposes full and hearty congregational involvement in the spoken and sung responses, preparing us to be sent forth from this house of worship into the wider world to live out the Great Commission.*

PRELUDE

Ann Eliot, *pianist*

OPENING SENTENCES

The Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Ahrens

Leader: This is the day which God has made.

**People: Let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

*\* Please stand as you are able*

\* THE INVITATORY AND PSALTER

Rev. Ahrens

L: O God, open our lips.

**P: And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.**

L: Praise to the holy and undivided Trinity, one God:

**P: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

\* OPENING SONG - PSALM 95

O COME AND SING UNTO THE LORD

*Irish*

1. O come and sing un - to the Lord, To God our voic - es raise; Let  
 2. Be - fore God's pres - ence let us come With praise and thank - ful voice; Let

us in our most joy - ful songs, The Lord, our Sav - ior, praise.  
 us sing psalms to God with grace, With grate - ful hearts re - joice.

\* PSALM OF THE DAY  
(read responsively by verse)

PSALM 37:1-9

Rev. Ahrens

L: Do not fret because of the wicked; do not be envious of wrongdoers,

**P: For they will soon fade like the grass, and wither like the green herb.**

L: Trust in the LORD, and do good; so you will live in the land, and enjoy security.

**P: Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart.**

L: Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him, and he will act.

**P: He will make your vindication shine like the light, and the justice of your cause like the noonday.**

L: Be still before the LORD, and wait patiently for him; do not fret over those who prosper in their way, over those who carry out evil devices.

**P: Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath. Do not fret--it leads only to evil.**

L: For the wicked shall be cut off, but those who wait for the LORD shall inherit the land.

A LITANY FOR RETURNING FROM SABBATICAL

Rev. Ahrens, Rev. Samuelson

Today we give thanks to God for the ministry that we all share, here, at First Church and for the faithful leadership that Mr. Mark Williams has been providing among us for over fifteen years.

We ask for God's blessing on Mr. Williams, his family, and our congregation as he returns from his sabbatical time.

We give thanks to God for using this intentional time away for Mr. Williams to seek rest and renewal for his body, mind and spirit.

We praise God for bringing Mr. Williams back into our community, and we look forward to what God will continue to do through all of us, together, as we seek to glorify God with our gifts to serve all people.

We rejoice that God has brought you back into our presence, Mark, and we welcome you with open arms!

\* WELCOME AND PASSING OF THE PEACE

Rev. Ahrens

L: The peace of God be always with you.

**P: And also with you.**

CHILDREN'S TIME

Mr. Williams

*A reading from the book of Habakkuk, chapter 1-2.*

The oracle that the prophet Habakkuk saw. O Lord, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not listen? Or cry to you “Violence!” and you will not save? Why do you make me see wrong-doing and look at trouble? Destruction and violence are before me; strife and contention arise. So the law becomes slack and justice never prevails. The wicked surround the righteous— therefore judgment comes forth perverted.

I will stand at my watchpost, and station myself on the rampart; I will keep watch to see what he will say to me, and what he will answer concerning my complaint. Then the Lord answered me and said: Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so that a runner may read it. For there is still a vision for the appointed time; it speaks of the end, and does not lie. If it seems to tarry, wait for it; it will surely come, it will not delay. Look at the proud! Their spirit is not right in them, but the righteous live by their faith.

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

**P: Thanks be to God.**

\* CANTICLE: THE FIRST SONG OF ISAIAH

*Thomas Merton*

1. Sure - ly it is God who saves me; trust - ing you, I shall not fear. For the  
2. Make God's deeds known to the peo - ples; tell out God's ex - alt - ed Name. Praise the  
Lord de - fends and shields me and God's sav - ing help is near. So re -  
Lord, who has done great things; make it known in all the world. Zi - on,  
joyce as you draw wa - ter from sal - va - tion's liv - ing spring; in the  
lift your voice in sing - ing; for with you has come to dwell, in your  
day of your de - liv - erance thank the Lord, God's mer - cies sing.  
ve - ry midst, the great and Ho - ly One of Is - ra - el.

*A reading from the Gospel of Luke, chapter 17.*

The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!” The Lord replied, “If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you. “Who among you would say to your slave who has just come in from plowing or tending sheep in the field, ‘Come here at once and take your place at the table?’ Would you not rather say to him, ‘Prepare supper for me, put on your apron and serve me while I eat and drink; later you may eat and drink?’ Do you thank the slave for doing what was commanded? So you also, when you have done all that you were ordered to do, say, ‘We are worthless slaves; we have done only what we ought to have done!’

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

**P: Thanks be to God.**

\* CANTICLE: A SONG OF WISDOM

Brewer

1. Wis - dom freed a ho - ly peo - ple, blame-less from op - pres-sor's sword,  
 2. Through the Red Sea safe - ly brought them, led a - long the wa - ters steep,  
 and with-stood, with signs and won - ders, rul - ers dread to serve the Lord.  
 but their en - e - mies she swallowed, o - ver-whelmed them in the deep.  
 Giv - ing them re - ward of la - bors, led the saints a - long her way,  
 For sal - va - tion, Lord, the right-eous praised your name with one ac - cord:  
 she was blaze of stars in dark-ness and a shel - ter through the day.  
 song - filled tongues of new-born peo - ple ut - tered Wis-dom's might - y word.

HOMILY

“Seized by Tenderness”

Rev. Ahrens

*Part four of the sermon series, “Revive Us Again: A Return to Jesus’ Original Plan”*

THE CALL TO PRAYER

Rev. Samuelson

Be still, be still. Be still and know that I am God.  
 Be still, be still. Be still and know that I am God.  
*repeat ad lib.*

L: God be with you.

**P: And also with you.**

L: That there may be purpose and fulfillment, O God, in all that we do,

**P: Christ have mercy.**

L: That we may show others this day the love that you have taught us,

**P: Christ have mercy.**

L: That the church throughout the world may respond to your call for peace and justice,

**P: Christ have mercy.**

L: That those who are in need be helped and comforted,

**P: Christ have mercy.**

*(We pray for the special needs and concerns of this congregation, the members, family, and friends who are listed in the Depart to Serve 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.)*

L: That we may be strengthened by your grace for the tasks of this day,

**P: Christ, have mercy.**

#### OUR LORD'S PRAYER

**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.**

#### CLOSING PRAYER

Eternal God, you create us by your power and redeem us by your love. Guide and strengthen us by your Spirit, that we may give ourselves in love and service to one another and to you, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

#### THE OFFERTORY

*Want to give online? Please scan this QR code link, or see additional instructions in the Depart to Serve leaflet:*



#### MISSION INVITATION

Designated gifts go to support **Neighbors in Need**. Neighbors In Need expresses the United Church of Christ's commitment to ministries of justice and compassion in the United States and Puerto Rico, as we speak prophetically to those in power and advocate for the voiceless. In the spirit of Christ, we seek to confront evil in the world and to alleviate suffering through justice advocacy and direct service. Thank you for your generosity.

Rev. Samuelson

*Unison* F C7

Je - su, Je - su, fill us with your love, show

F Gm/B $\flat$  C7 F *Last time, end*

us how to serve the neigh-bors we have from you.

F Dm7 Gm C C7/E

1 Knelt at the feet of his friends, si - lent - ly wash - ing their  
 2 Neigh-bors are rich and poor, var - ied in col - or and  
 3 These are the ones we should serve, these are the ones we should  
 4 Lov - ing puts us on our knees, show - ing our faith by our  
 5 Kneel at the feet of our friends, si - lent - ly wash - ing their

F Dm Dm7/C Gm/B $\flat$  C7 F *to Refrain*

feet, Je - su, you act - ed as ser - vant to them.  
 race, neigh-bors are near and far a - way.  
 love; all these are neigh-bors to us and you.  
 deeds, serv - ing the neigh-bors we have from you.  
 feet, this is the way we should live with you.

**Eat this bread. Drink this cup. Come to me and never be hungry.  
 Eat this bread. Drink this cup. Trust in me and you will not thirst.**

POSTCOMMUNION PRAYER

Rev. Samuelson

**Almighty God, we give you thanks for the gift of our Savior's presence in the simplicity and splendor of this holy meal. Unite us with all who are fed by Christ's body and blood that we may faithfully proclaim the good news of your love and that your universal church may be a rainbow of hope in an uncertain world; through Jesus Christ our Redeemer. Amen.**

WELCOMING REV. JOANNA SAMUELSON AS INTERIM ASSOCIATE MINISTER

Rev. Ahrens

COMMUNITY NOTICES - DEPART TO SERVE

Mr. Williams

L: Let us sing the closing hymn as we depart with a heart to serve.

P: **Thanks be to God.**

\* CLOSING HYMN

GOD BE WITH YOU

*Randolph*

God be with you till we meet a-gain; lov - ing coun - sels guide, up - hold you,

with a shep - herd's care en - fold you; God be with you till we meet a - gain.

\* BLESSING

Rev. Ahrens

POSTLUDE

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Worship Leaders  
The Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Ahrens, *preacher and celebrant*  
The Rev. Joanna Samuelson, *liturgist*  
Mr. Mark Williams, *liturgist*  
Ann Eliot, *pianist*

## This Week at First Church

### 10/2

- 9 a.m. Service of Morning Prayer  
(Parish Hall & Virtual)
- 10 a.m. Faith Formation for All Ages  
(Various Classrooms)  
Coffee Sales (Education Wing)
- 11 a.m. Worship (Sanctuary & Virtual)
- 12 Noon Acolyte Training (Narthex & Sanctuary)
- 2 p.m. Testament in Tapestry Lecture Series 3  
(Columbus Museum of Art)
- 6 p.m. Youth Connections (Parish Hall)

### 10/3

- 12 Noon Congregational Care Ministry Mtg  
(Family Parish Rm)
- 6:30 p.m. House and Grounds Mtg (Virtual)

### 10/4

- 6 p.m. Personnel Committee Mtg (Virtual)
- 6:30 p.m. Christian Education Mtg (Virtual)
- 7 p.m. Justice and Mercy Mtg (Virtual)  
BREAD House Mtg (Virtual)

### 10/5

- 9 a.m. Good Samaritan Distribution Day  
(Virtual)
- 7 p.m. Book Club (Virtual)  
Unsheltered Discussion Group (Virtual)

### 10/6

- 7:15 p.m. First Church Choir Rehearsal  
(Parish Hall)

### 10/9

- 9 a.m. Service of Morning Prayer  
(Parish Hall & Virtual)
- 10 a.m. Faith Formation for All Ages  
(Various Classrooms)
- 11 a.m. Worship (Sanctuary & Virtual)
- 12:30 p.m. BREAD House Mtg  
(Classroom C & Virtual)
- 4 p.m. Congregational Concert (Sanctuary)

## Liturgical Banner Exhibit Opens Today

First Church will celebrate the fabric artwork of one of our members, Deb Anderson, with an exhibit of her work from October 2 – November 20, 2022. The exhibit will be on display in the Gladden Chapel. We hope you will visit this exhibit and learn more about this artist and her special contribution to our church through the legacy of her banners.

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## Faith Formation for Adults This Week Sunday, October 2 10-10:50 in Classroom C

Inspired by Dr. Scott Graham's presentation on "Transitions" last month, our Faith Formation class continues to explore this theme further as we consider the various transitions that we all move through in our personal lives as well as in our life together as First Church. This coming Sunday, we will reflect on the significant endings and new beginnings that we find in the Old Testament story of Ruth and Naomi. Rev. Joanna will facilitate our conversation this week. You need not prepare in advance – just come as you are. All are welcome!

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## First Church Book Club

All are invited to the First Church Book Club. The next meeting is on October 5 at 7 p.m. by Zoom and the selection is Harlem Shuffle by Colson Whitehead. For more information and the Zoom link, contact Elaine Warren at [melainewarren232@gmail.com](mailto:melainewarren232@gmail.com).

## **Fun Friday Bowling Night**

**Friday, October 14, 2022, 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.**

**Columbus Square Bowling Palace**

**5707 Forest Hills Blvd, Columbus, OH 43231**

Is bowling right up your alley? If yes, bring your family and friends and let's get the ball rolling!

Meet us at the Bowling Palace, a family-owned and operated business since 1983. It's only 10 minutes from Polaris, Westerville, Easton, or Gahanna. Feel free to grab dinner from the Palazzo Restaurant inside and check out the amazing arcade while you're there! We look forward to seeing you at this unforgetta-bowl night!

The cost to bowl is \$15 per person and includes rental shoes and 2 hours of bowling. This will be paid directly to the bowling lanes.

Please register on Realm by October 12 and be sure to list all family members so we can reserve the right number of spots for you.

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## **Time Out Tuesday**

**October 20, 6-7 p.m.**

**Valter's at the Maennerchor,**

**976 S. High Street, Columbus, OH 43206**

Please join us for dinner at a German Village landmark! Valters, located at the Columbus Männerchor, serves German food and beers along with some new American twists, in this beautiful and historic place. The Männerchor was founded over 168 years ago and has become the nation's largest and longest continually active German singing society and social club. Let's share a meal and enjoy the history, culture, and community. Please register on Realm by October 17. Prost!

## **Lunch Bunch**

**October 27, 12-1 p.m.**

**Can't Believe It's Vegan**

**584 W. Schrock Rd, Westerville, OH 43081**

Let's embrace plant-based nutrition that only Chef Clayton can provide! He is known for his natural talent of combining flavors and perfect seasonings into dishes that are delectable and satisfy even the most ardent omnivores. We look forward sharing this time of church fellowship with you. Please register on Realm by October 24.

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## **BREAD House Meetings**

BREAD held its first two House Meetings at the end of September. Five more are scheduled for October and hopefully you will be able to find a date that works for you. Each meeting is open to anyone who is interested in finding out more about BREAD and the campaigns we are sponsoring this year. So please look at the schedule below and contact the person who will be leading these groups if you need more information or would like to attend.

In addition, there will be opportunities to get involved with our Research process as we are looking to make recommendations for proven ways to improve solutions to our problems.

**October 4:** 7:00 p.m. House meeting (Zoom), at Jim Lowe's home (614-397-7512)

**October 5:** 7:00 p.m. House Meeting (In Person), at Steve Sterrett's home (614-935-1183)

**October 9:** 12:30 House Meeting (In Person) at Church (Rm C, Ed Wing); Bill Catus leading (614-271-9479)

**October 17:** 12:30 p.m. House Meeting; Rev. Tim Ahrens leading (614-228-1741) Place and type of meeting TBD.

**October 23:** 12:30 p.m. House Meeting (In Person); at the Church (Parish Family Room); Antoinette Koolemans-Beynen leading (240-557-9770)

**Concerts at First Church presents  
Congregational Concert  
ISABELLE DEMERS, Organist  
Sunday, October 9, 2022, 4 p.m.**

A native of Québec and a doctoral graduate of the Juilliard School, Dr. Demers is Associate Professor of Organ at McGill University (Montréal, Québec). She has appeared in recital throughout Europe, Oman, Australia, New Zealand, the United States, and Canada with reviews describing her playing as “bracing virtuosity...fearless and extraordinary.”

Dr. Demers is in continual high demand by her colleagues as witnessed by performances for numerous regional and national conventions of the American Guild of Organists, the Institute of Organ Builders and International Society of Organbuilders, the Royal Canadian College of Organists, and the Organ Historical Society.

She has released three CD recordings on the Acis and Pro Organo labels.

Isabelle Demers will perform on both of our organs at First Church, the first concert of the 2022-2023 season.

There are few churches in the country that boast two world-class, independent pipe organs under one roof. Our CHANCEL ORGAN, a 1931 W.W. Kimball out of Chicago Il, has four manuals (keyboards), 66 stops (different sounds like flutes, oboe, harp, trumpet piccolo, clarinet, celeste, cello, tuba, English horn, bourdon, diapason, trombone, viola, mixtures and many more), 66 ranks (sets of pipes, one pipe for each note of the keyboard in each set of pipes, a total of 4,407 pipes). Our GALLERY ORGAN, a 1972 Rudolf von Beckerath instrument from Hamburg, Germany, has three manuals, 47 stops, 73 ranks of pipes, with 3,719 pipes. The stops include principals, flutes, mixtures, trumpet, Spanish Trumpet, viola, cornet, oboe, cromorne, gedeckt, posaune, and mixtures, among others. The pipes range in size from that of a slim pencil to 32' in length.

Organists from all over the country are thrilled to be invited to perform on our extraordinary organs and many have done so in our fifty-one years of offering concerts at First Church.

Plan to attend this concert by Dr. Isabelle Demers. Invite your family, music-loving friends, and neighbors to come and experience an exciting performance on our truly magnificent instruments.

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**Coming Soon  
Coffee Hour returns on October 30!**

Coffee Hour returns on October 30! Let's celebrate our church fellowship and reconnect with one another in the Parish Hall after the 11 a.m. service. We look forward to seeing you there!

## Give

At First Church, our financial resources enable us to “Enter to worship, depart to serve.” You can support the mission and ministry of First Church now by using either EasyTithe or PayPal, by visiting <https://www.first-church.org/give/>, or by sending your offering directly to

First Congregational Church, 444 E. Broad Street,  
Columbus, Ohio 43215.

For more information, please contact Annette McCormick at [amccormick@firstchurch.org](mailto:amccormick@firstchurch.org).

Designated gifts go to support **Neighbors in Need**. Neighbors In Need expresses the United Church of Christ’s commitment to ministries of justice and compassion in the United States and Puerto Rico, as we speak prophetically to those in power and advocate for the voiceless. In the spirit of Christ, we seek to confront evil in the world and to alleviate suffering through justice advocacy and direct service. Thank you for your generosity.

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## Global Mission Partner

### Anne Gregory, Thailand

Anne Gregory serves with the Church of Christ in Thailand (CCT), an association of Protestant Christian churches and ministries. Originally mainly Presbyterian, CCT churches are now about half Baptist, due to demographic shift. Some of the ministries of the member churches are development and support of hospitals, clinics, schools, colleges, and seminaries throughout the country. They have also worked to alleviate the effects of human trafficking and to develop cash crops to replace poppy growing. CCT played an active part in disaster response to the Tsunami at Christmastime in 2004.

Ms. Gregory works at the national offices of the CCT, helping the branches to communicate with each other and with partners in other countries. This includes helping to obtain visas for workers and visitors, gathering and disseminating information to supporters around the world, and helping visiting groups of Christians to tour the country. She promotes building support for the CCT’s ministries of justice, economic development, education, healthcare, social work, and spiritual development.

## Keep in Prayer

**Members** Katie Kutschbach; Mark Williams and Tim Carsey; Bill Catus; Amy Wagner; Larry Dixon; Martha Huey; Tom Gies; Sarah Ahrens Stadie; Bob Davis; Twink Starr; Lola Edwards; Rick Brant; Betsy Zahn; Janice White; Barbara Knox; John Carter and Mary Kay Beall Carter.

**Family and friends** Pat Patterson’s son, Jay Patterson; Charlie Weaver’s daughter and family, Stefanie and Chris Bonhert and twins Malcolm and Madeline; Martha Huey’s sister, Stephanie Childs; Melissa Kulwicki’s friends and neighbors, John and Carrie Mosley; Heather Jones’ father, Sam Gray; Bev and Bert Cook’s sister-in-law, Sue Jones; Gretchen Atkinson’s cousin, Linda Lambeth; and Amy Wagner’s friend, Ken Burke.

**Those who mourn loved ones** Tom Kiesel on the death of his father, Harvey Kiesel; and Gretchen Weller-Cooks on the death of her grandmother, Olive Weller.

In the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle, we lift the people and churches of Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, and Peru. We pray for Global Ministries Anne Gregory in Thailand.

Please note that individuals will remain on the prayer list for three weeks, unless specified to clergy or staff.

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## Food Pantry Donations

Justice and Mercy is accepting canned and boxed foods. On the first Monday of each month, the food will be donated on a rotating schedule to either Broad Street Presbyterian Church Food Pantry (even months) or Gladden House (odd months). Both organizations are in need of canned fruits, vegetables, and meats. There will be baskets by the church office, by the entrance to the Education Wing, and inside the front entrance of the church.

# Church Leadership

Senior Minister: Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Ahrens, D.Min., M.Div.  
Interim Associate Minister: Rev. Joanna Samuelson, M.Div.  
Director of Christian Education: Mark S. Williams, M.Ed.  
Interim Organist: Barry Moenter  
Interim Choral Director: Jim Gallagher  
Commissioned Minister for Social Justice: Tom Brownfield  
Commissioned Minister for Spiritual Formation and Direction: Jacquelyn Dean  
Administrative Manager: Amy Wagner  
Office Assistant: Pat Patterson  
Communications Consultant: Melissa Kulwicki  
Business Administrator: Annette McCormick  
Building and Grounds Superintendent: Mark Dahnke  
Custodian: Jenkins Smith  
Wedding Coordinators: Amy Wagner, Shelly Gies, Margaret Cipriani  
Nursery Staff: Miranda Brooks, Shelly Gies, Courtney Palmer

Senior Deacon: Martha Wilson  
Deacons: Scott Graham, Tom Kiesel, Antoinette Koolemans-Beynen, Nan Kreimer, Gail Lowe,  
James Lowe, Allison Lowery Palmer, Dayna McCrary, Lynn Wallich, Hank Wilson, Marty Worth

Church Council Leadership  
Moderator: Christine Farquhar  
Moderator-elect: Greg Halbe  
Treasurer: Andy Bensing  
Treasurer-elect: James Velo  
Secretary: Nicole Moss  
Secretary-elect: Gretchen Atkinson

Board of Trustees  
Chairperson: Sue Cook  
Trustees: Allen Baker, Cindy Conn (Treasurer), Elizabeth Iannarino, Todd Jacobson, Victor John, Judy Smith, Christopher Washington

Commissioners  
Administration: Chris Glaros  
Administration-elect:  
Church Growth: Steve Sterrett  
Church Growth-elect:  
Church Vitality: Kosby Carrico  
Church Vitality-elect: Wendy Kennedy  
Education: Margaret Graham  
Education-elect:  
House & Grounds: Mark Brown  
House & Grounds-elect: Mike Kennedy  
Justice & Mercy: Kris Brant  
Justice & Mercy-elect:  
Music, Arts & Heritage: Sandra Mathias  
Music, Arts & Heritage-elect: Melissa Kulwicki  
Members-at-Large: Dayna McCrary and Alyssia Palmer  
Nominating Committee Chair: Alec Deitz

## 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



UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST  
God is still speaking,

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FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
444 EAST BROAD STREET, COLUMBUS, OHIO 43215-3885  
PHONE: 614.228.1741 FAX: 614.461.1741  
WWW.FIRST-CHURCH.ORG

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