



WORSHIP AT ELEVEN  
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

December 11, 2022

The Third Sunday of Advent

## 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.*

*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

“Es ist ein Ros’ entsprungen”  
Change Ring Prelude on Divinum Mysterium  
First Church Ringers

J. Brahms  
arr. Douglas E. Wagner

ENTER TO WORSHIP

Nancy Braverman

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: In the midst of the barren land,

**P: flowers burst into bloom.**

L: In the midst of the dry desert,

**P: streams of water gush forth.**

L: In the midst of sorrow and sighing,

**P: joy and gladness dance together.**

**All: We shall see the glory of God!**

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.

## \* INVOCATION

The Rev. Joanna Samuelson

L: God be with you.

**P. And also with you.**

L: Let us pray.

**P: 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.**

## \* CONFESSION OF SIN

The Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Ahrens

L: It is time to wake from sleep. Salvation is near! Let us make our confession to God.

**P: Faithful God, we confess that in thought, word, and deed we have turned away from you. We have not eagerly expected your coming. We have been slow to serve you and our neighbor. Restore us, God of might. Let your face shine upon us. And we shall be saved. Amen.**

*Silence may be observed for reflection and prayer.*

## \* KYRIE ELEISON

Healey Willan

Lord, have mer - cy up - on us. Christ, have mer - cy up -  
 on us. Lord, have mer - cy up - on us.

\* ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Rev. Ahrens

L: God hears the confession of our hearts and lips. Through Jesus Christ we are forgiven all our sin, and by the Holy Spirit we are empowered for new life.

**P: We believe the good news of Jesus Christ. Amen.**

\* WELCOME AND PASSING OF THE PEACE

Rev. Ahrens

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

**P: And also with you.**

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

*\*Please find the attendance pad at the end of the pew,  
sign it and pass it on to your neighbor so you may greet them by name.*

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES

Matt Stevens and James Velo

*Refrain*

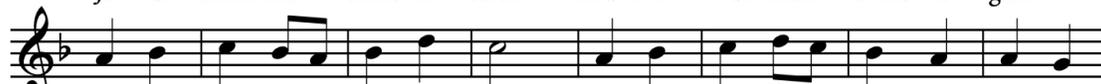


Light the light, the fire of life, let the can - dle re - veal his glo - ry.

*Fine*

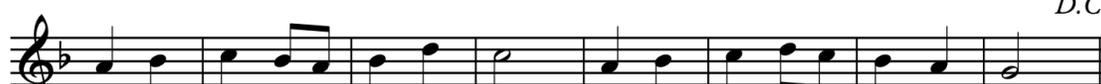


Je - sus Christ has come to earth and for us shall come a - gain.



3. Light the can - dle of his joy, light the light of shep - herds' com - ing,

*D.C.*



light the can - dle of his joy, light the light that shows the way.

*Il Est Ne*

PRESENTATION OF THE 2022 LAY LEADERSHIP AWARD

Greg Halbe, *Moderator Elect*

Jacquelyn Dean  
Lola Edwards

CHILDREN'S TIME

Mark S. Williams

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY BAPTISM FOR AMELIA JOYCE STEWART  
*We welcome Amelia, parents Amy and David, and Senior Deacon Martha Wilson.*

WELCOME

Leader: . . . But when Jesus saw it, Jesus was indignant, and said to them,

**People: "Let the children come to me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the realm of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the realm of God like a child shall not enter it."**

ADDRESS

L: . . . the sign and seal of their participation in God's forgiveness, and the beginning of their growth into full Christian faith and discipleship.

**P: This is the water of baptism. Out of this water we rise with new life, forgiven of sin and one in Christ, members of Christ's body.**

## QUESTIONS OF THE CANDIDATE

### \* CONGREGATIONAL ASSENT

*The congregation is invited to stand.*

L: . . . Do you, who witness and celebrate this sacrament, promise your love, support, and care to the one about to be baptized, as Amelia lives and grows in Christ?

**P: We promise our love, support, and care.**

### \* AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

L: Let us unite with the church in all times and places in confessing our faith in the triune God.

Do you believe in God?

**P: I believe in God.**

L: Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

**P: I believe in Jesus Christ.**

L: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

**P: I believe in the Holy Spirit.**

*The congregation may be seated.*

### PRAYER OF BAPTISM

L: Christ be with you.

**P: And also with you.**

L: Let us pray.

### ACT OF BAPTISM

### NAMING OF THE CHILD

L: Amelia Joyce Stewart, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Rise from the waters of baptism and give glory to God all the days of your life.

**P: Amen.**

### PRAYER FOR THE BAPTIZED

L: Grant us grace to receive, nurture, and befriend this newest member of the body of Christ.

**P: Give to Amelia strength for life's journey, courage in time of suffering, the joy of faith, the freedom of love and the hope of new life; through Jesus Christ, who makes us one. Amen.**

### THE HEBREW SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 35:1–10

Mrs. Braverman

*A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah, chapter 35.*

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, the majesty of our God. Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God who will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. God will come and save you."

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp, the grass shall become reeds and rushes. A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray. No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

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

**P: Thanks be to God.**

ANTHEM

Thou Shalt Know Him

Mark Sirett

*Thou shalt know him when he comes, Not by any din of drums,  
Nor his manners, nor his airs, Nor by anything he wears.*

*Thou shalt know him when he comes, Not by his crown or by  
his gown, But his coming known shall be, by the holy harmony  
which his coming makes in thee. Amen.*

THE MAGNIFICAT

Luke 1:46b-55

Mrs. Braverman

*A reading from the Gospel of Luke, chapter 1.*

And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, who has looked with favor on the lowly state of his servant. Surely from now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name; indeed, God's mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. God has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. God has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty. God has come to the aid of his child Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

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

**P: Thanks be to God.**

1 My soul gives glo - ry to my God. My heart pours out its praise.  
 2 My God has done great things for me: yes, ho - ly is God's name.  
 3 From age to age, to all who fear, such mer - cy love im - parts,  
 4 Love casts the might-y from their thrones, pro-motes the in - se - cure,  
 5 Praise God, whose lov - ing cov - e - nant sup-ports those in dis - tress,

God lift - ed up my low - li - ness in man - y mar-vel-ous ways.  
 All peo - ple will de - clare me blessed, and bless - ings they shall claim.  
 dis - pens-ing jus-tice far and near, dis - miss - ing self - ish hearts.  
 leaves hun - gry spir-its sat - is - fied, the rich seem sud-den-ly poor.  
 re - mem-ber-ing past prom-is - es with pres - ent faith - ful - ness.

## \* THE GOSPEL

Matthew 11:2-11

Rev. Ahrens

*A reading from the Gospel according to Matthew, chapter 11.*

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.” As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written, ‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.’ Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

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

**P: Thanks be to God.**

## SERMON

“The Light of Jubilee”

Rev. Ahrens

*Part three of the sermon series, “Walking Together in the Light of God”*

## THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Rev. Samuelson

OUR LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come, they 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 link, or see additional instructions in the Depart to Serve leaflet:*



MISSION INVITATION

Designated gifts go to support Bethlehem on Broad Street (BOBS). BOBS started more than 30 years ago in response to a single request for dinner on Christmas Day. BOBS provides Christmas for many each year. For information about volunteering visit the website: [bethlehemonbroadstreet.org](http://bethlehemonbroadstreet.org). Thank you for your generosity.

Allison Lowery Palmer and Becky Taft

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

He Comes to Us

*Jane Marshall*

*He comes to us as One unknown, without a name,  
as of old, by the lakeside He came, He came to those men  
who knew Him not. He speaks to us, He speaks the same  
word: "Follow thou me!" And sets us to the tasks which  
He has to fulfill for our time.*

*He commands. And to those who obey Him, whether they  
be wise or simple, He will reveal Himself in the toils, the  
conflicts, the sufferings which they shall pass through in  
His fellowship, and, as an ineffable mystery, they shall learn  
in their own experience Who He is.*

*O Morning Star, how fair and bright Thou beamest forth in  
truth and light! O Sovereign meek and lowly. Thou Root of  
Jesse, David's Son, My Lord and Master, Thou hast won My  
heart to serve Thee solely! Thou art holy, Fair and glorious, all  
victorious, Rich in blessing, Rule and might o'er all possessing.*

\* PRESENTATION HYMN

Praise God from whom all blessings flow

sung to *Tallis' Canon*

**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. Samuelson

COMMUNITY NOTICES - DEPART TO SERVE

Mr. Williams

L: Let us depart with a heart to serve.

**P: Thanks be to God.**

1. Re - joi - ce! Re - joi - ce, be - liev - ers, And let your lights ap - pear;  
 2. See that your lamps are burn - ing, Re - plen - ish them with oil;  
 3. Our hope and ex - pec - ta - tion, O Je - sus, now ap - pear;

The eve - ning is ad - vanc - ing And dark - er night is near.  
 Look now for your sal - va - tion, The end of sin and toil.  
 A - rise, Thou sun so longed for, A - bove this sha - dowed sphere!

The Bride - groom is a - ris - ing And soon He will draw nigh;  
 The mar - riage feast is wait - ing, The gates wide o - pen stand;  
 With hearts and hands up - lift - ed, We plead, O Lord, to see

Up, watch with ex - pec - ta - tion, At mid - night comes the cry.  
 A - rise, O heirs of glo - ry, The Bride - groom is at hand!  
 The day of earth's re - demp - tion, And ev - er be with Thee!

\* BENEDICTION

Rev. Ahrens

POSTLUDE

“The Rejoicing”, from Music for the Royal Fireworks”  
*Please be seated for the Postlude.*

G. F. Handel

*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'd be delighted to assist you.*

† THE FLOWERS THIS MORNING are given to the glory of God and in honor of their beautiful grandchildren, Alice, Talia, and Frank, by Frank and Sue Cook.

† We welcome Matt Stevens and James Velo to light the third Advent candle.

† GREETING AFTER THE SERVICE TODAY

Rev. Ahrens – In the Narthex

Rev. Samuelson – At the West Breezeway Door

Mr. Williams – At the Education Wing Door

LEADERSHIP IN THE LITURGY

The Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Ahrens, *preacher*

The Rev. Joanna Samuelson, *liturgist*

Mark Williams, *liturgist*

Nancy Braverman, *liturgist*

Ethan Murray, *crucifer*

Erin Dean and Emma Dean, *acoltyes*

Barry Moenter, *interim organist*

Jim Gallagher, *interim choir director*

Jennifer Fry, *interim handbell director*

Peter Murray, Mike Kennedy, Geoff Dean, Pat Patterson, *livestream ministry*

### **This Week at First Church**

<p><b>12/11</b>            9 a.m. Service of Morning Prayer            (Parish Hall &amp; Virtual)</p> <p>10 a.m. Faith Formation for All Ages            (Various Classrooms)            Children's Play Rehearsal            (Parish Hall Stage)            BREAD Team Meeting            (Parish Family Room)            Fudge Sales (Parish Hall)</p> <p>11 a.m. Worship (Sanctuary &amp; Virtual)</p> <p>12 Noon Children's Christmas Play (Parish Hall)            Coffee Hour &amp; Light Refreshments            (Parish Hall)            Fudge Sales (Parish Hall)</p> <p>6 p.m. Youth Connections / Pageant Rehearsal            (Parish Hall)</p> <p><b>12/12</b>            7 p.m. Trustees Meeting (Virtual)</p> <p><b>12/13</b>            5:30 p.m. Budget &amp; Finance Meeting (Virtual)            7 p.m. Executive Committee/Council Meeting            (Virtual)</p>	<p><b>12/14</b>            12:15 p.m. Organ Meditations (Sanctuary)            6 p.m. Time Out Wednesday            (Nostalgia Brewing, Gahanna)</p> <p><b>12/15</b>            7:15 p.m. First Church Choir Rehearsal            (Parish Hall)</p> <p><b>12/18</b>            9 a.m. Service of Morning Prayer            (Parish Hall &amp; Virtual)</p> <p>10 a.m. Faith Formation for All Ages            (Various Classrooms)</p> <p>11 a.m. Worship (Sanctuary &amp; Virtual)</p> <p>12 Noon Coffee Hour &amp; Coffee Sales            (Parish Hall)</p> <p>4 p.m. Festival of Lessons and Carols            (Sanctuary &amp; Virtual)</p> <p>6 p.m. Youth Connections / Pageant Rehearsal            (Parish Hall)</p>
--	---

### **Livestream Ministry Update**

The availability of our Livestream Ministry team members has been temporarily reduced, and we have made the difficult decision to suspend live streaming of the Sunday morning 9 a.m. service for the next few months. We hope to return to capacity during the first part of 2023. All are welcome to join the Livestream of the Sunday 11 a.m. service, which we anticipate will continue as normal.

We are looking for new members of the Livestream ministry team. If you are familiar with the structure of the worship service and have a knack in pushing buttons, the Livestream ministry is for you. (You can even wear jeans and sneakers to the 11 a.m. service as you participate in worship from the livestream room in the church office!) Contact Peter Murray ([peter@pandc.org](mailto:peter@pandc.org)) if interested.

## **The 2023 Annual Campaign**

Thank you to those who have submitted their pledge to the 2023 Annual Campaign “Together in Mission. Sharing God’s Love.” Your commitment supports the mission and ministry of First Congregational Church and allows the Budget and Finance committee to plan a sustainable operating budget.

If you have not submitted your pledge yet, there is still time. Visit [www.first-church.org/annual-campaign](http://www.first-church.org/annual-campaign) or Realm to pledge online. Pledge forms can also be found in the church office and in each week’s Depart to Serve newsletter.

---

### **Meditative Prelude of Advent Piano Arrangements with David Hogrefe Sunday, December 11 Beginning at 8:40 a.m. Parish Hall**

David worships at the piano bench, in church, and in solitude in his living room. There are too many beautiful Advent pieces not to share, and he would love to share the gift of music this season by playing an extended, meditative prelude of Advent piano arrangements, and start at 8:40 a.m. this Sunday, ahead of the 9 a.m. worship service.

Extended Prelude selections will include “Still, Still, Still, Christmas”; “Glorious, Christmas”; “O Come Little Children/Rocking Carol”; “Of the Father’s Love Begotten”; “Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming”; and “Bring A Torch, Jeanette, Isabella”. The Postlude will feature “Go Tell it on the Mountain” with “Rise Up Shepherds and Follow.”

## **Faith Formation for Adults Meditations for Advent Sunday, December 11 10 a.m., Room C**

Faith Formation for Adults will return December 4-18 with First Church member Rev. Sarah Reed leading us through “Meditations for Advent.” This is a wonderful time to focus on the meaning of Advent in this time of transition and being so busy. Join us in Room C or online.

---

### **First Church Fudge**

First Church Fudge is back! It’s a “sweet” way to start your holiday gifting and help the First Church Youth at the same time. Proceeds from the fudge go to the Youth Mission Trip Fund. Orders can be picked up in Parish Hall this Sunday following each service. If you didn’t get a chance to place your order, additional quantities will be available for purchase.

Payment is by cash, card, or through Easytithe.

---

### **Advent Music Meditations Thomas Fielding, organist Wednesday, December 14 12:15 p.m.**

Thomas Fielding is director of music and liturgy for St. Augustine Cathedral, Kalamazoo, MI, and is a graduate of the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music where his principal teacher was Christopher Young. Fielding has taken first prize in the national Arthur Poister (Syracuse, NY) and San Marino (CA) performance competitions, and has won several national composition prizes. He has played recitals both in this country and abroad. His scholarly work has been featured in The American Organist magazine. His works have been performed by soloists, choirs and orchestras throughout the U.S., Canada, Europe, and Asia. His compositions also have been broadcast on National Public Radio on Weekend Edition and Pipedreams.

**A Christmas Festival of  
Lessons & Carols  
December 18, 2022, 4 p.m.**

A Christmas Festival of Lessons & Carols will be heard on Sunday, December 18. Under the direction of Jim Gallagher, the First Church Choir will sing seasonal anthems by Mark Sirett, Boris Ord, Elizabeth Poston, John Rutter, William Croft, Gustav Holst, and Morten Lauridsen. The First Church Ringers will offer festive music under the direction of Jennifer Fry. Organist Dene Barnard will play a much loved piece by Jean Langlais during the prelude and Jeremy Bankson will serve as organist for the service. The congregation will sing numerous Christmas carols, including one by our own Mary Kay Beall Carter and John Carter.

Doors open at 3:15 p.m. and the Prelude begins at 3:40 p.m.

---

**Interim Director of Christian  
Education Search Committee**

Last week, Church Council appointed the following as members of the Christian Education (Faith Formation) Search Committee: Margaret Graham, Chair; Jennifer Provenzano; Emily Kutschbach Schmitt; Jackie Dean; Jonathan Miller; Camille Bendick; Matty Provenzano; Aran Cunningham; Rev. Dr. Tim Ahrens, ex officio; Administration Commissioner (Chris Glaros), ex officio; and (Chris Farquhar), ex officio.

---

**Lions, Tigers, Bears, and 3,000,000 LED Lights, Oh My!  
Wildlights Meet Up at the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium  
West Powell Road, Powell, OH  
Wednesday, December 21 at 5:30 p.m.**

Come meet-up with your First Church friends at the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium for some festive fun! Participants will be responsible on their own for entry to the zoo. The group will meet at 5:30 p.m. at a designated spot inside the zoo. All ages are welcome to join the fun!

Register at:

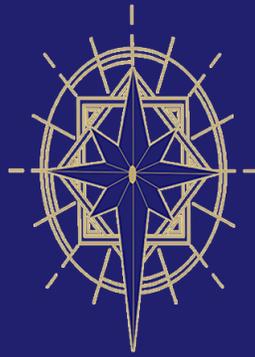
<https://onrealm.org/TheFirstCongreg/PublicRegistrations/Event?linkString=MGQ1YTIIOTctYzRlZi00MjQxLWlx-N2YtYWY2NDAxNDY5ZmY1>

**Time Out Wednesday  
December 14  
6-7 p.m.**

**Nostalgia Brewing  
81 Mill Street, Suite 150  
Gahanna, OH, 43230**

Let's enjoy dinner and church fellowship together in the beautiful Creekside District of Gahanna! Meet us at Nostalgia Brewing and enjoy one of their delicious wraps, salads, fancy grilled cheeses, or even a skillet mac and cheese dish—comfort food at its finest! We hope to see you there! Please register by December 13.

<https://onrealm.org/TheFirstCongreg/PublicRegistrations/Event?linkString=NWRIM2RkZjUtYTJhNC-00MWVmLWJmZTAAtYWY0OTAwZGYwODll>



## **WALKING TOGETHER IN THE LIGHT OF GOD**

2022 Advent & Christmas Sermon Series  
First Congregational Church, UCC

November 27, The First Sunday of Advent  
The Rev. Dr. Tim Ahrens Preaching  
“Let Us Walk in the Light of God”  
Worship at 9 & 11 a.m.  
In-Person & Streaming Online at 11 a.m.

December 4, The Second Sunday of Advent  
The Rev. Joanna Samuelson Preaching  
“A New Way”  
Worship at 9 & 11 a.m.  
In-Person & Streaming Online at 11 a.m.

December 11, The Third Sunday of Advent  
The Rev. Dr. Tim Ahrens Preaching  
“**The Light of Jubilee**”  
Worship at 9 & 11 a.m.  
In-Person & Streaming Online at 11 a.m.  
12:30 p.m. The Children’s Christmas Play

December 18, The Fourth Sunday of Advent  
The Rev. Dr. Tim Ahrens Preaching  
“Comfort in the Darkness”  
Worship at 9 & 11 a.m.  
In-Person & Streaming Online at 11 a.m.  
4 p.m Festival of Lessons and Carols  
(Doors open at 3:15 p.m. Prelude begins at 3:40 p.m.)

December 24, Christmas Eve  
Family Worship Service 3 p.m.  
7:30 p.m The Rev. Dr. Tim Ahrens Preaching  
“A Flashlight in the Manger”  
Followed by the Drama of the Nativity  
11 p.m. The Rev. Dr. Tim Ahrens Preaching  
“Bright Light in the Darkest Night”

December 25 Christmas Day  
The Rev. Dr. Tim Ahrens Preaching  
“You are the Light of God!”  
Worship 10 a.m.  
In-Person & Streaming Online

## 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 **Bethlehem on Broad Street (BOBS)**. BOBS started more than 30 years ago in response to a single request for dinner on Christmas Day. BOBS provides Christmas for many each year. For information about volunteering visit the website: [bethlehemonbroadstreet.org](http://bethlehemonbroadstreet.org). Thank you for your generosity.

---

## Global Mission Partner Alex Maldonado, Colombia

Alex Maldonado-Lizardi serves with the Christian Centre for Justice, Peace, and Nonviolent Action (Justapaz), Bogota, Colombia. Justapaz is an anabaptist organization that serves communities, churches, and social organizations affected by Colombia’s 50- year armed conflict. They strive to develop an active group of citizens participating in the development of a just, nonviolent and peaceful society.

Mr. Maldonado serves in Justapaz’s area of historical memory, human rights, and political advocacy. They document cases of human rights violations in evangelical churches in the context of Colombia’s historical armed conflict, in order to provide legal and psycho-social accompaniment for people stricken by the conflict. They also keep an Observatory (OSEAS – JustaPaz) to measure the conflict’s reality in Colombia and its implications for the diverse faith traditions and practices.

## Keep in Prayer

**Members** Annette McCormick; Melva Fisher; Lesley Schaab; Larry and Diane Dixon; Rick and Lourdes Henderson; Kay Neffenger; Martha Huey; Bob Davis; Twink Starr; Lola Edwards; Rick Brant; Betsy Zahn; Janice White; John Carter and Mary Kay Beall Carter.

**Family and friends** Margaret Cipriani’s friend, Marilyn Niethammer; Kathy Reed’s friend, Sue Pinkerton; David Holt’s son, Brian Holt; Paula Terry-Locke; Pat Patterson’s family friend, George Ullman; Joe Provenzano’s mother, Mary Jo Senter; Bev Cook and Lynn Wallich’s friend, Jeanie Schultz; Victor John’s parents, Charles and Mary Jane John; Nanette Maciejunes’ husband, George Maciejunes; Tom Gies’ sister, Monica Depinet; Nancy Mayle; Martha Huey’s sister, Stephanie Childs; Melissa Kulwicki’s friends and neighbors, John and Carrie Mosley; and Bev and Bert Cook’s sister-in-law, Sue Jones.

**Those who mourn loved ones** David Hogrefe’s neighbors, the Fortener-Quigley family who were in an auto accident and lost their 5-year-old daughter; Christine Farquhar, her sister and family on the death of her sister’s husband, Tom Horton.

**In the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle**, we lift the people and churches in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. We pray for Global Ministries worker Alex Maldonado in Colombia.

We pray for those identified by Homeland Security for being targeted with hate and violence. We also pray for those suffering through and recovering from the tripledemic of Covid, RSV, and Influenza.

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

# 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, Alexis Wayne  
Wedding Coordinators: Amy Wagner, Shelly Gies, Margaret Cipriani  
Nursery Staff: Miranda Brooks, Shelly Gies, Courtney Palmer

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

## Church Council Leadership

Moderator: Christine Farquhar  
Moderator-elect: Greg Halbe  
Treasurer: Andy Bensing  
Treasurer-elect: James Velo  
Secretary: Marty Worth  
Secretary-elect:  
Board of Trustees  
Chairperson: Sue Cook  
Trustees: Allen Baker, Cindy Conn (Treasurer), Elizabeth Iannarino, Todd Jacobson, Victor John, Judy Smith, Hugh Schultz, 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

## 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,

Bulletins are printed on recycled paper with a minimum 50% post-consumer content.  
All music in the bulletin is reprinted under OneLicense.net #A-717661. All rights reserved.  
Bulletins and audio podcasts of services are available on the website for each week:  
[www.first-church.org/Worship.aspx](http://www.first-church.org/Worship.aspx)



---

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](http://WWW.FIRST-CHURCH.ORG)

---

