



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

December 18, 2022

The Fourth 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.*

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: The glory of the Lord shall be revealed,
People: and all flesh shall see it together.

CONFESSION OF SIN AND ASSURANCE OF PARDON

L: John the Baptist called people to repentance, to prepare them for the coming of God's reign. Let us, too, repent, that we may be ready for God who comes to us.

A brief period of silence follows

P: God, we confess that it is not easy to wait for you. Our world worships the power that acts quickly through force; how difficult it is for us to wait for the power of your rule which comes slowly through love. We admit, that while claiming to desire your reign of peace and justice, we take part in the ways of war, hatred, and injustice. We leave little room for you to act in our lives. We turn now to you in repentance and openness to your Spirit. Forgive us, and show us how to clear a path for you. Come to us in your Christ, and reveal your reign on earth. Amen.

L: God says: Remember these things, O Israel, for you are my servant; you will not be forgotten by me. I have swept away your transgressions like a cloud, and your sins like mist; return to me, for I have redeemed you. I say to you in the name of Jesus the Christ, our sins are forgiven.

P: Amen. Thanks be to God.

** Please stand as you are able*

* THE INVITATORY AND PSALTER

The Rev. Joanna Samuelson

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

VENITE

1. Come, let us sing to God on high, The Rock of our sal - va - tion praise; Come
2. For God is high a - bove all gods, The heights and depths are in God's hand; God
3. Bow down and let us wor - ship God Who is our Ma - ker and our Lord; We

with thanks - giv - ing to God's courts And raise our joy - ful psalms in praise.
made the sea and all there - in, God's hands have mol - ded the dry land.
are God's peo - ple and God's sheep; To - day, then, hear - ken to God's Word.

* PSALM OF THE DAY

PSALM 80:1-7, 17-19

Rev. Samuelson

(read responsively by verse)

L: Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock!

You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth

P: before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh. Stir up your might, and come to save us!

L: Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved.

P: O LORD God of hosts, how long will you be angry with your people's prayers?

L: You have fed them with the bread of tears, and given them tears to drink in full measure.

P: You make us the scorn of our neighbors; our enemies laugh among themselves.

L: Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved.

P: But let your hand be upon the one at your right hand, the one whom you made strong for yourself.

L: Then we will never turn back from you; give us life, and we will call on your name.

P: Restore us, O LORD God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved.

* WELCOME AND PASSING OF THE PEACE

Rev. Ahrens

L: The peace of God be always with you.

P: And also with you.

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

The congregation may be seated.

CHILDREN'S TIME

Mr. Mark S. Williams

Light the Light, the Fire of Life *vs. 4*

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.



4. Light the can - dle of his love, light the light of Beth-lehem's sta - ble,

D.C.



light the can - dle of his love, light the light by which we see,

THE FIRST READING

ISAIAH 7:10–16

Rev. Samuelson

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah, chapter 7.

Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, “Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test.” Then Isaiah said: “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore the LORD himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.”

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 - velous 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 - b'ring all past prom - is - es with pres - ent faith - ful - ness.

THE SECOND READING

MATTHEW 1:18-25

Rev. Ahrens

A reading from the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 1.

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

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

P: Thanks be to God.

* CANTICLE: SONG OF SIMEON

American Folk Medley

C F B \flat F C Dm C C7 F Am

1. Lord, bid Your ser - vant go in peace, Your word is now ful - filled.
2. This is the Sav - ior of the world, The Gen - tiles' prom-ised light,

Dm C Dm Am B \flat F C7 F B \flat C7 F

These eyes have seen sal - va - tion's dawn, This child so long fore - told.
God's glo - ry dwell - ing in our midst, The joy of Is - ra - el.

HOMILY

“Comfort in the Darkness”

Rev. Ahrens

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

THE PRAYERS

Rev. Samuelson

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.

THE OFFERTORY

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



MISSION INVITATION

Kris Brant

Designated gifts go to support the Good Samaritan Fund. The Good Samaritan Fund provides help every month to those who come to the door of First Church in need. Thank you for your generosity.

OFFERTORY HYMN

Gentle Joseph, Joseph Dear

Joseph lieber, Joseph mein

Unison

E♭ *B♭/E♭* *E♭*

1 "Gen - tle Jo - seph, Jo - seph dear, stay with me, for the
 2 "Glad - ly Mar - y, Mar - y mine, I will cra - dle the
 3 "Peace to all and God's good-will," heaven and earth with this

B♭/E♭ *Fm* *Fm7* *B♭7*

ba - by's near; God will sure - ly your good - ness hear, as
 child di - vine; Here will heav - en and earth com - bine, for
 song will fill; Soon will God, in the 'eve - ning still, be

Gm *Cm* *Fm/A♭* *B♭* *A♭/E♭* *E♭*

you will love this new - born child," says Mar - y.
 you will bear God's child, O dear - est Mar - y."
 born in Beth - le - hem, the child of Mar - y.

Taste and See (*sung three times*)

Taste and see. Taste and see the good - ness

The first system of music consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 3/4 time signature. It contains the vocal melody with lyrics: "Taste and see. Taste and see the good - ness". The lower staff is in bass clef and provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and single notes.

of the Lord. — O taste and see. Taste and

The second system continues the melody. The upper staff has lyrics: "of the Lord. — O taste and see. Taste and". There is a long horizontal line under "of the Lord." indicating a breath or a pause. The lower staff continues the accompaniment.

see the good - ness of the Lord, — of the Lord. Fine

The third system concludes the piece. The upper staff has lyrics: "see the good - ness of the Lord, — of the Lord. Fine". The lower staff concludes with a final chord. The word "Fine" is written above the end of the staff.

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Rev. Samuelson

We give you thanks, Almighty God, that you have brought us from darkness to light, from slavery to freedom, from death to rebirth. Transform our lives with this heavenly food, that we may shine with your love and take to the world the risen life of your Son Jesus Christ. Amen.

DEPART TO SERVE

Mr. Williams

* CLOSING HYMN

Wait for the Lord (*sung three times*)

Lento ♩ = 48

Wait for the Lord, his day is near.

The first line of the musical score is for the hymn 'Wait for the Lord'. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The tempo is marked 'Lento' with a quarter note equal to 48 beats. The first staff begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The lyrics 'Wait for the Lord, his day is near.' are written below the notes. The second staff also begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic.

Wait for the Lord: be strong, take heart!

The second line of the musical score continues the hymn. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The tempo is marked 'Lento'. The first staff begins with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The lyrics 'Wait for the Lord: be strong, take heart!' are written below the notes. The second staff also begins with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic.

* BLESSING

Rev. Ahrens

POSTLUDE

† We welcome the Brant / Kiesel family to light the fourth Advent candle.

This Week at First Church

12/18

- 9 a.m. Service of Morning Prayer
(Parish Hall & Virtual)
- 10 a.m. Faith Formation for All Ages
(Various Classrooms)
Fudge Sales (Parish Hall)
- 11 a.m. Worship (Sanctuary & Virtual)
- 12 Noon Coffee Hour & Coffee Sales
(Parish Hall)
Fudge Sales (Parish Hall)
- 12:30 p.m. Confirmation Class (Classroom C)
- 4 p.m. Festival of Lessons and Carols
(Sanctuary & Virtual)
- 6 p.m. Youth Connections / Pageant Rehearsal
(Parish Hall)

12/19

- 12 Noon Grief Support Group (Virtual)

12/20

- 4 p.m. Annual Campaign Meeting (Virtual)

12/21

- 10 a.m. Largest Table Food Prep and Delivery
(Kitchen)

12/22

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

12/23

- Christmas Eve Observed
Church Office Closes at Noon

12/24

- 3 p.m. Christmas Eve Family Worship Service
(Sanctuary)
- 7:30 p.m. Christmas Eve Service & Pageant
(Sanctuary & Virtual)
- 11 p.m. Christmas Eve Service
(Sanctuary & Virtual)

12/25

- 10 a.m. Christmas Day Service
(Sanctuary & Virtual)

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.

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.

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 or Realm to pledge online. Pledge forms can also be found in the church office and in each week’s Depart to Serve newsletter.

Faith Formation in January

Adult Faith Formation starts the new year focusing on Human Trafficking. On January 8, Freedom a la Cart Cafe + Bakery will present its program and how it serves those who have been trafficked. January 15 will feature the “She Has a Name” organization and how their program gives hope and provides skills. First Serves will be on January 22 and will focus on the S.O.A.P. project. We will gather in the Education Wing to put emergency trafficking number stickers on bars of soap for hotels. This will be an amazing month of learning and action. All sessions are in Room C at 10 a.m.

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 Easytithes.

Archive Project

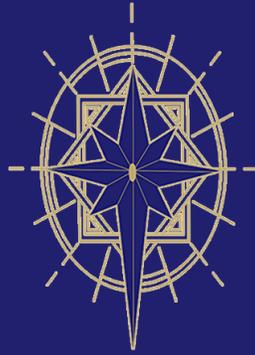
Our First Church heritage committee is embarking on a 4-day project to sort the approximately 100 archive boxes that were returned to our church from the Ohio Historical Society shortly before the pandemic began. During this rare week when the Parish Hall will not be in use, we will be working in the mornings on December 27 - 30, from 9 a.m. to noon. If you are available and interested in joining us in this task, please email David Mailer at dmailer44@gmail.com. If you cannot make it on any of these dates but would like to join our small group of archives volunteers, we would love to have you on our team! Just email Dave.

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>



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. (Music Begins at 7:20 p.m.) The Rev. Dr.
Tim Ahrens Preaching
“A Flashlight in the Manger” Followed by the Drama
of the Nativity
11 p.m. (Music Begins at 10:35 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.

Designated gifts go to support the **Good Samaritan Fund**. The Good Samaritan Fund provides help every month to those who come to the door of First Church in need. Thank you for your generosity.

Global Mission Partner Fiona Kendall, Italy

Fiona Kendall serves with Mediterranean Hope (MH), Italy. This program for refugees and migrants was created in early 2014 in response to the surge in numbers seeking to reach Europe by undertaking dangerous crossings of the Mediterranean. In addition to its “Observatory on Migration” on the island of Lampedusa, MH now manages two reception centers for migrants on Sicily. The Casa delle Culture in Scicli houses 40 of the most vulnerable migrants; the Casa dei Mirti in Palermo houses 15 young men who came to Europe as unaccompanied minors. From Rome, MH coordinates the ecumenical humanitarian corridors project whose mission is to bring migrants safely and legally into Europe.

Ms. Kendall has been seconded to work with the Mediterranean Hope project as their European and Legal Affairs Advisor. She represents the organization and lobbies for constructive approaches to migration. This work requires her to keep abreast of European migration policy, network with other organizations and policymakers, draft papers, and deliver presentations at conferences and meetings within Italy and beyond. She is also involved in working with the press office to counter anti-migration rhetoric which is so prevalent in society today.

Keep in Prayer

Members Wendy Reber; 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 Tim Ahrens’ friends Janis and Jerome Cripe; Paula Terry-Locke; Margaret Cipiani’s friend, Marilyn Niethammer; Kathy Reed’s friend, Sue Pinkerton; David Holt’s son, Brian Holt; 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 Kulwicky’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.

We pray for Global Ministries worker Fiona Kendall in Italy.

We pray for those suffering with covid or other respiratory diseases. We pray for the children and parents of Ukraine as they celebrate this Christmas season.

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,

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