



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

January 8, 2023

Baptism of Christ/The First Sunday after Epiphany

**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

David Hogrefe, *pianist*

OPENING SENTENCES

The Rev. Joanna Samuelson

Leader: The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth, the life and light of humanity.

**People: Great is God's love for us. Alleluia!**

*Please stand as you are able*

*(\* indicates Congregation standing)*

\* THE INVITATORY AND PSALTER

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

I Sing as I Arise Today

*Seed of Life*



1. I sing as I a - rise to - day! I call on my Cre - a - tor's might:  
 2. The word of God to be my speech, The hand of God to be my stay,  
 3. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia,



The will of God to be my guide, The eye of God to be my sight.  
 The shield of God to be my strength, The path of God to be my way.  
 Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

L: Ascribe to God, you heavenly beings; ascribe to God glory and strength.

**P: Ascribe due honor to God's holy Name; worship the most High in the beauty of holiness.**

L: The voice of God is upon the waters; the God of glory thunders; God is upon the mighty waters.

**P: The voice of God is a powerful voice; the voice of God is a voice of splendor.**

L: The voice of God breaks the cedar trees; God breaks the cedars of Lebanon;

**P: God makes Lebanon skip like a calf and Mount Hermon like a young wild ox.**

L: The voice of God splits the flames of fire; the voice of God shakes the wilderness;

God shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.

**P: The voice of God makes the oak trees writhe and strips the forests bare.**

L: And in the temple of the Holy One, all are crying, "Glory!"

**P: God sits enthroned above the flood, enthroned as Sovereign for evermore.**

L: God shall give strength to the people;

**P: God shall give the people the blessing of peace.**

\* WELCOME AND PASSING OF THE PEACE

The Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Ahrens

L: The peace of God be always with you.

**P: And also with you.**

CHILDREN'S SERMON

Mark S. Williams

LITANY OF BAPTISMAL AFFIRMATION

Rev. Ahrens, Rev. Samuelson

L: Lord and life-giving Spirit, who brooded over the waters when first the world began:

**All: Help us renounce evil and receive new life in Christ.**

L: Who led your people out of slavery through the waters of the Red Sea and into freedom through the waters of the Jordan: who overshadowed Mary of Nazareth and caused her to be the mother of Jesus.

**All: Help us renounce evil and receive new life in Christ.**

L: Who anointed Jesus as Messiah as he was baptized by John in the Jordan: Who raised Jesus Christ from the grave and proclaimed Christ "Son of God" in all power over the living and the dead.

**All: Help us renounce evil and receive new life in Christ.**

L: Who appeared in tongues of flame on Pentecost: Who charges the waters of baptism through and through with power to give new life.

**All: Help us renounce evil and receive new life in Christ.**

L: Lord, hear our prayer.

**All: Let our cry come to You.**

PRAYER OVER THE WATER OF BAPTISM

Rev. Samuelson

*Please stand.*

\* THE RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL VOWS

Rev. Ahrens

*As we sing, Rev. Ahrens will share the water of baptism with all using these words:*

Leader: Remember your baptism and keep it holy.

**All: Amen.**

We have put on Christ this day, sing al - le - lu - ia and re - joice.  
We have been bap - tized in Him; sing al - le - lu - ia and re - joice.  
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, sing al - le - lu - ia!  
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, sing al - le - lu - ia!

\* CLOSING PRAYER

Rev. Samuelson

Let us pray.

**Almighty and everlasting God, who out of pure mercy decreed both the creation and the renewal of the world, be present and active in the sacraments which you have instituted for our salvation. Send forth the Spirit of adoption in full measure that those who are born of water and the Spirit may live under the power of the same Spirit all the days of their life and so arrive safely in their heavenly home; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

*Please be seated for the readings.*

THE FIRST READING

Isaiah 42:1-9

Rev. Samuelson

*A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah, chapter 42.*

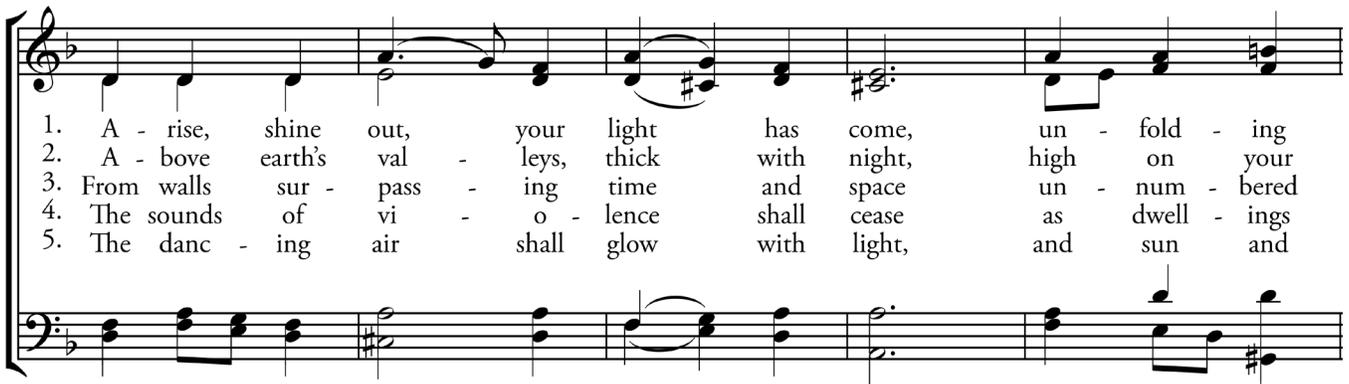
Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry out or lift up his voice or make it heard in the street; a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not grow faint or be crushed until he has established justice in the earth, and the coastlands wait for his teaching.

Thus says God, the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people upon it and spirit to those who walk in it: I am the Lord; I have called you in righteousness; I have taken you by the hand and kept you; I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness. I am the Lord; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to idols. See, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth, I tell you of them.

L: May light break forth on God's Holy Word.

**P: Thanks be to God.**

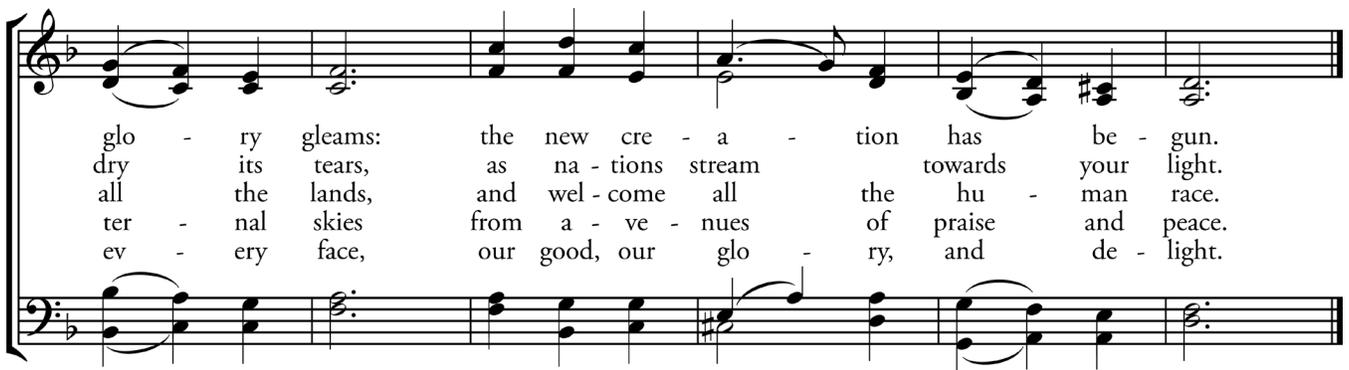
Today we sing stanzas 1 and 2.



1. A - rise, shine out, your light has come, un - fold - ing  
 2. A - bove earth's val - leys, thick with night, high on your  
 3. From walls sur - pass - ing time and space un - num - bered  
 4. The sounds of vi - o - lence shall cease as dwell - ings  
 5. The danc - ing air shall glow with light, and sun and



ci - ty of our dreams. On dis - tant hills a  
 walls the dawn ap - pears, and his - to - ry shall  
 gates, like o - pen hands, shall gath - er gifts from  
 of sal - va - tion rise to spar - kle in e -  
 moon give up their place, when love shines out of



glo - ry gleams: the new cre - a - tion has be - gun.  
 dry its tears, as na - tions stream towards your light.  
 all the lands, and wel - come all the hu - man race.  
 ter - nal skies from a - ve - nues of praise and peace.  
 ev - ery face, our good, our glo - ry, and de - light.

THE SECOND READING

Matthew 3:13-17

Rev. Ahrens

*A reading from the Gospel according to Matthew, chapter 3.*

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now, for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw God's Spirit descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from the heavens said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased."

L: May light break forth on God's Holy Word.

**P: Thanks be to God.**

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,  
 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.

BAPTISMAL MEDITATION

“Grace Flowing from Water and Spirit”

Rev. Ahrens

THE PRAYERS

Rev. Samuelson

L: God be with you.

**P: And also with you.**

L: Let us pray.

**P: Almighty God, you have given us the Word in flesh. Let the Word be the wisdom for all that we do in our lives; through Jesus Christ, this Word, who reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

*(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.)*

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, our beginning and our end, be our starting point and our haven, and accompany us in this day’s journey. Use our hands to do the work of your creation, and use our lives to bring others the new life you give this world in Jesus Christ, redeemer of all. **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

Rev. Samuelson

Designated gifts go to support **Laundry Love**. Laundry Love is an initiative in partnership with individuals, groups and local laundromats throughout the country to wash the clothes and bedding of individuals and/or families living in poverty. Thank you for your generosity.

1. O God be-yond all prais - ing, we wor-ship you to - day  
 2. The flower of earth - ly splen - dor in time must sure - ly die,  
 3. Then hear, O gra - cious Sav - ior, ac - cept the love we bring,

and sing the love a - maz - ing that songs can - not re - pay;  
 its fra - gile bloom sur - ren - der to you, the Lord most high;  
 that we who know your fa - vor may serve you as our King;

for we can on - ly won - der at ev - ery gift you send,  
 but hid - den from all na - ture the'e - ter - nal seed is sown—  
 and wheth - er our to - mor - rows be filled with good or ill,

at bless - ings with - out num - ber and mer - cies with - out end.  
 though small in mor - tal sta - ture, to hea - ven's gar - den grown:  
 we'll tri - umph through our sor - rows and rise to bless you still:

We lift our hearts be - fore you and wait up - on your Word,  
 for Christ, your gift from heav - en, from death has set us free,  
 to mar - vel at your beau - ty and glo - ry in your ways,  
 we hon - or and a - dore you, our great and might - y Lord.  
 and we through him are giv - en the fi - nal vic - to - ry.  
 and make a joy - ful du - ty our sac - ri - fice of praise.

HOLY COMMUNION

Rev. Samuelson

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Rev. Ahrens

**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.**

COMMUNITY NOTICES - DEPART TO SERVE

Rev. Ahrens

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

**P: Thanks be to God.**

LITANY OF THANKSGIVING AND RELEASING

**Rev. Ahrens:** Today we say farewell to one who is leaving our community of faith. In 2007, this congregation welcomed Mark S. Williams to serve with us as Director of Christian Education. Today we gather to celebrate and give thanks to God for the ways we have been nourished and inspired by his ministry among us.

**Mr. Williams:** I thank First Congregational Church, its members and friends for the love, kindness, and support shown me these last 15 1/2 years. I ask forgiveness for the work begun but not completed, for expectations not met, for wounds not healed, for gifts not shared and promises not kept and for the mistakes I have made. I am grateful for the ways my leadership has been accepted. As I leave, I carry with me all that I have learned here. Your kindness and support, your caring and love have sustained me, and I shall remember you with gratitude to God.

**People:** We receive your thankfulness and ask forgiveness for our mistakes. We accept that you now leave to minister elsewhere. We give thanks for our journey together in this place. We express our gratitude for your time among us. Your influence on our faith and faithfulness will not leave us at your departure.

**Mr. Williams:** I forgive you and accept your gratitude, trusting that our time together and our parting are pleasing to God.

*\*(the congregation may stand)*

**Mrs. Christine Farquhar, moderator:** Do we, the members and friends of First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, Columbus, Ohio, release Mark Williams from service as our Director of Christian Education?

**People:** We do, with the help of God.

**Mrs. Farquhar:** Do we offer our encouragement for his ministry as it unfolds in new ways?

**People:** We do, with the help of God.

**Mrs. Farquhar:** Do you, Mark, recognize and accept the completion of your ministry in this role with this congregation?

**Mr. Williams:** I do, with the help of God.

**Mrs. Farquhar:** Do you offer your encouragement for the continued ministry of Faith Formation here and on the relationship with another who will come to serve?

**Mr. Williams:** I do, with the help of God.

**Mrs. Farquhar:** On behalf of First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, I witness to the words spoken: words of thankfulness, forgiveness, and release. The members and friends of our congregation hold you in prayer and pledge our support in the transitions signified in this service. Thanks be to God.

**Rev. Ahrens:** Loving God, Alpha and Omega, you are both beginning and end. Our endings and our beginnings are rooted in your love. Whether near or far, we are held close by your love, and kept safe from any lasting loss. Let our time together end with your blessing. Touch all memories with your grace and peace. Help us to live with courage and gladness in the future you present us. In every time and place, may we offer you our highest and our best, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All: Alleluia! Amen.**

**All: The Lord watch between us while we are absent one from another – in the Name of the Creator, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

\* CLOSING HYMN

Many are the Lightbeams

*Lightbeams*

Ma - ny are the light-beams from the one light. Our one light is Je-sus.  
Ma - ny are the light-beams from the one light; we are one in Christ.

\* BLESSING AND DISMISSAL

Rev. Ahrens

POSTLUDE

Enter to Worship  
**Depart to Serve**

January 8, 2023

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## This Week at First Church

**1/8**  
9 a.m. Service of Morning  
Prayer & Communion  
(Parish Hall & Virtual)  
10 a.m. Adult Faith Formation  
(Classroom C & Virtual)  
11 a.m. Worship Service (Sanctuary & Virtual)  
12:15 p.m. Reception for Mark Williams  
(Parish Hall)

**1/9**  
12 Noon Congregational Care Ministry Mtg  
(Fanning Rm)  
6:30 p.m. House and Grounds Mtg (Virtual)  
7 p.m. Trustees Mtg (Virtual)

**1/10**  
5:30 p.m. Budget and Finance Mtg (Virtual)  
7 p.m. Executive Committee Mtg (Virtual)

**1/11**  
12 Noon Lunch Bunch (Agape, Polaris Pkwy)

**1/12**  
12:30 p.m. Church Vitality Mtg (Virtual)  
7 p.m. Security Team Mtg (Virtual)  
7:15 p.m. First Church Choir Rehearsal  
(Parish Hall)

**1/14**  
9 a.m. House and Grounds Work Day  
(Church)

**1/15**  
9 a.m. Service of Morning  
Prayer & Communion  
(Parish Hall & Virtual)  
10 a.m. Adult Faith Formation  
(Classroom C & Virtual)  
Coffee Sales (Parish Hall)  
11 a.m. Worship Service (Sanctuary & Virtual)  
12:15 p.m. Coffee Hour (Parish Hall)  
Coffee Sales (Parish Hall)  
6 p.m. Youth Connections (Parish Hall)

## This Week in Faith Formation

### Sunday, January 8, 10 a.m.

### “She Has a Name”

Our Adult Faith Formation class will begin this new year by focusing on human trafficking. This Sunday, Courtney Schmackers, the Executive Director of the “She Has a Name” organization, will educate us about the extent of human trafficking within our community. We also will learn how “She Has a Name” responds to human trafficking through education, advocacy, and care for those who are directly impacted.

Please join us for what will surely be an eye-opening look at what is seldom discussed openly and is often misunderstood throughout our society. If you are unable to attend this class in person, you may join us via Zoom by using the following link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82717081754?pwd=c1BjTmhaUUtPRmlYdm-MyZmtoR2hBZz09>. The passcode is 058882.

We are also delighted that Ms. Schmackers and her family will join us for worship at the 11 a.m. service! Please contact Rev. Joanna Samuelson if you need additional information. Hope you can join us.

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## 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.

## **Time Out Friday**

**January 20**

**5:30-7 p.m., Jazz starts at 6 p.m.**

**Northstar Café at Easton**

**4015 Townsfair Way**

**Columbus OH, 43219**

**614-532-5444**

If you like hearing free live jazz music and eating good food, then we have the perfect event for you! Join us for dinner on Friday, January 20 at 5:30pm at the Northstar Café (at Easton) where they offer live jazz music at 6pm! It will be a lovely time to connect and enjoy the talents of local musicians. It's important that everyone register by January 18 so we can be sure to save you a seat. We hope to see you there!

To register visit <https://onrealm.org/TheFirstCongreg/PublicRegistrations/Event?linkString=MjY5OTg3NjctMjViNS00NTUzLTkzMzgtYWY3MjAx-MTUxMzEz>

## **Book Lovers Alert!**

At last! A book to accompany your morning cup of equal exchange coffee! What's more, you can get them both at the same time. The Adult Library is being reimaged with TLC, and some books will look for a new home. Books that are duplicate copies or not an asset to the collection will be available to you starting in January. During coffee sales on the first and third Sundays of the month, there will be a cart of orphan books located near the coffee cart. You are welcome to browse through the books and take whatever you like.

Donations will be accepted. Money from any contribution will be used for environmental-related needs of the church. Each Sunday you may find a different set of titles, so come often, browse, and enjoy!

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## **Lunch Bunch**

**Wednesday, January 11, 12-1 p.m.**

**Agape**

**405 Polaris Parkway Suite 101,**

**Westerville OH 43082**

**614-948-2025**

Looking for a way to meet and connect with new church friends? Let's do lunch! Agapé in Westerville offers full flavor, quick-serve Mediterranean-style food in a bowl, salad, or pita made with all fresh ingredients. We hope to see you there for the food and friendly conversation! Please register by January 10 at <https://onrealm.org/TheFirstCongreg/PublicRegistrations/Event?linkString=NzU5MzhiNjktOWQ5NS00M-I1LTgwZTYtYWY3OTAwZjBkZWZmZ>

## 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 **Laundry Love**. Laundry Love is an initiative in partnership with individuals, groups and local laundromats throughout the country to wash the clothes and bedding of individuals and/or families living in poverty. Thank you for your generosity.

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## Global Mission Partner Korea: Abigail Reed

Abigail Reed is a global mission intern serving with the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK). PROK is a close partner with Global Ministries and is very active in clergy and mission exchanges with many Disciples and UCC congregations and seminaries. PROK is a progressive denomination, bearing witness to a number of peace and justice concerns within the Church, in Korean society, and globally.

In Haenam, Yangmuri Church works through the Reading Star program, teaching English through reading books. The English program focuses on faith practices and character building. Ms. Reed currently teaches in the English Education ministry at Yangmuri Church while also offering support to the PROK Ecumenical office in Seoul.

## Keep in Prayer

**Members** Rick Sayre; Gretchen Atkinson; Chris Farquhar; Leslie Boltz; Wendy Reber; Annette McCormick; 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** Gail and Jim Lowe’s great niece, Ani; Margaret Cipriani’s sister and brother-in-law, Sara and Terry Godwin; Barb Clapham’s friends Bruce and Pat DeLong; Nancy Loy’s friend, Maxey; Tim Ahrens’ friends Janis and Jerome Cripe; Paula Terry-Locke; Margaret Cipriani’s friend, Marilyn Niethammer; Kathy Reed’s friend, Sue Pinkerton; Bev Cook and Lynn Wallich’s friend, Jeanie Schultz; Victor John’s parents, Charles and Mary Jane John; 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** Carl, Beth, and Jude Gelfius, on the death of Carl’s father; Phil Armbruster, on the death of his father; the family and friends of the Rev. Carol Joyce who, as an officer of the UCC, was the first woman elected to national leadership in a mainline Protestant denomination.

We pray for the Catholic Church on the death of Pope Benedict the 16th, and a blessing for Pope Francis the 1st as he presides at his funeral and continues his care for the church.

We pray for Damar Hamlin and his family, and all athletes who suffer serious injuries.

In the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle, we lift the people and churches in Iran, Iraq, and Syria. We pray for Global Ministries worker Abigail Reed in Korea.

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 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



UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST  
God is still speaking,

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[www.first-church.org/Worship.aspx](http://www.first-church.org/Worship.aspx)

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