



WORSHIP AT ELEVEN
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

March 5, 2023

The Second Sunday in Lent

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 48:9)*

PRELUDE

Pastorale in E, Op. 19

César Frank

ENTER TO WORSHIP

Fran Panek

Leader: Our help is in the name of God, who made heaven and earth. Let us worship God.

** Please stand as you are able. (* indicates Congregation standing)*

L: Come, all who need help!

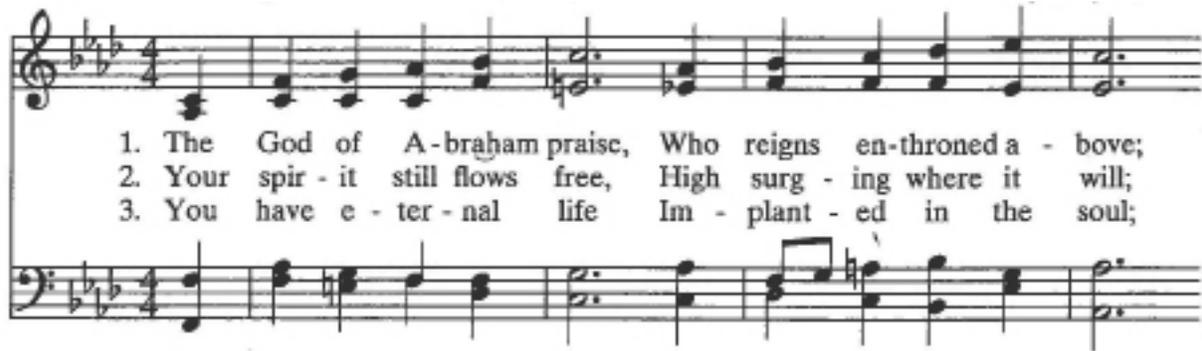
P: Our help comes from God, the one who made heaven and earth.

L: Come, all who desire blessing!

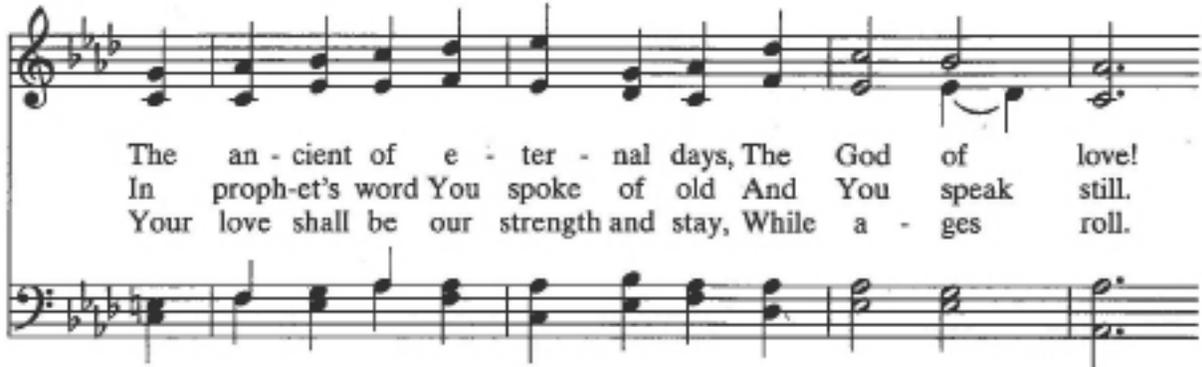
P: Our blessing comes from God, the God of Abraham, the God of the ages.

L: Come, all who long for salvation!

P: Our salvation comes from Jesus Christ, the one sent by God to save the world.



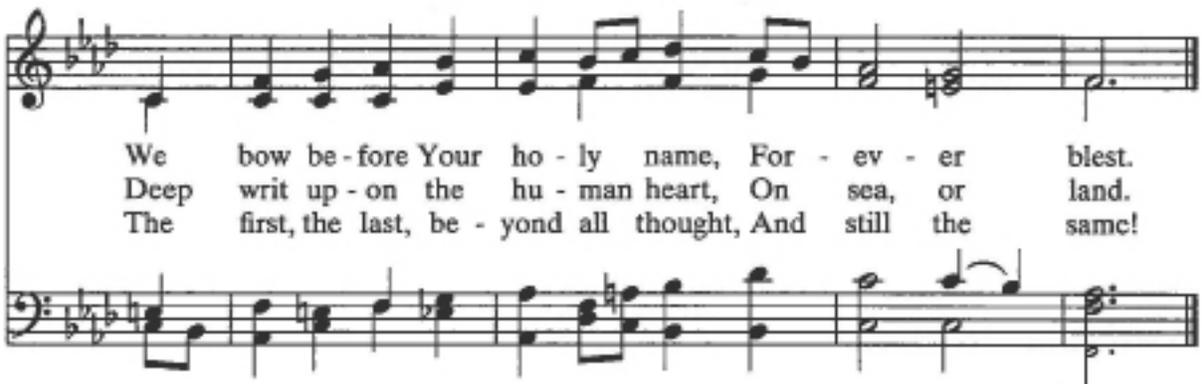
1. The God of A-bra-ham praise, Who reigns en-throned a - bove;
2. Your spir - it still flows free, High surg - ing where it will;
3. You have e - ter - nal life Im - plant - ed in the soul;



The an - cient of e - ter - nal days, The God of love!
In proph-et's word You spoke of old And You speak still.
Your love shall be our strength and stay, While a - ges roll.



The Lord, the great I Am, By earth and heaven con - fessed,
Es - tab - lished is Your law, And change-less it shall stand,
We praise You, liv - ing God! We praise Your ho - ly name;



We bow be - fore Your ho - ly name, For - ev - er blest.
Deep writ up - on the hu - man heart, On sea, or land.
The first, the last, be - yond all thought, And still the same!

* INVOCATION

The Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Ahrens

L: God be with you.

P. And also with you.

L: Let us pray.

P: O God, whose glory it is always to have mercy: Be gracious to all who have gone astray from your ways, and bring them again with penitent hearts and steadfast faith to embrace and hold fast the unchangeable truth of your Word, Jesus Christ; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

* PRAYER OF CONFESSION

The Rev. Joanna Samuelson

L: We are called to examine our faithfulness to God's covenant with us. God, in whose presence we gather, promises us grace and pardon when we acknowledge our weakness and brokenness. Let us confess our sin to almighty God.

ALL: Eternal God, whose Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, we recognize and confess that we have failed to respond faithfully to your gracious presence in our lives. Through Jesus Christ you have offered us new life, fulfillment, and the freedom to serve you. We confess that we are captive to sin, that our sin binds us with false pride, and that the wrong we do is made worse by the good we leave undone. Reconcile us to you and to all people. God of mercy, forgive all our sin and strengthen us anew for life as you intend it; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

Silence may be observed for reflection and prayer.

* KYRIE ELEISON

William Mathias

(organ)

Lord, have mer - cy. Lord, have mer - cy. Lord, have
mer - cy. Christ, have mer - cy. Christ, have mer - cy. Christ, have mer -
- cy. Lord, have mer - cy. Lord, have mer - cy. Lord, have mer - cy.

* ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Rev. Samuelson

L: Almighty God, who is great in mercy and promises forgiveness of sin to all who truly repent and are sincere in faith, have mercy on us, pardon and deliver us from all sin, confirm and strengthen us in all goodness, and bring us to everlasting life.

P: Amen. Thanks be to God.

* 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 blue Welcome notebook at the end of the pew,
sign it and pass it on to your neighbor so you may greet them by name.*

THE HEBREW SCRIPTURE

Genesis 12: 1-4a

Mrs. Panek

A reading from the book of Genesis, chapter 12.

Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.

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

P: Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM

Grieve Not the Holy Spirit of God

T. Tertius Noble

Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed, unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you. Amen.

Cynthia Adcock, soprano

Dianne Frazer, piano

THE EPISTLE

Romans 4:1-5, 13-17

Mrs. Panek

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans, chapter 4.

What then are we to say was gained by Abraham, our ancestor according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness." Now to one who works, wages are not reckoned as a gift but as something due. But to one who without works trusts him who justifies the ungodly, such faith is reckoned as righteousness.

For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation. For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations")—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

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

P: Thanks be to God.

1 God loved the world, and lov - ing gave
 2 Christ Je - sus is the ground of faith,
 3 If you are sick, if death is near,
 4 Be of good cheer, for God in Christ

a won - drous gift, the lost to save,
 who was made flesh and suf - fered death;
 this truth your trou - bled heart can cheer;
 for - gives the flock, by sin en - ticed,

That all who would in Christ be - lieve
 All who con - fide in Christ a - lone
 Christ Je - sus saves us all from death;
 And jus - ti - fied by Je - sus' blood,

should ev - er - last - ing life re - ceive.
 are built on this chief cor - ner - stone.
 that is the firm - est ground of faith.
 your bap - tism grants the high - est good.

A reading from the Gospel according to John, chapter 3.

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.” Jesus answered him, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.” Nicodemus said to him, “How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?” Jesus answered, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, ‘You must be born from above.’ The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.” Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?” Jesus answered him, “Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things? “Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.” Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

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

P: Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION MEDITATION

“Born Again Forgiveness”

Rev. Ahrens

Third in the Lenten sermon series, “Forgiveness”

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Rev. Samuelson

THE OFFERTORY

To give online, please scan this QR code link, or see additional instructions in the Depart to Serve leaflet:



MISSION INVITATION

Ms. Thompson

Designated gifts go to **GivePower**. GivePower uses solar and battery storage technologies to deliver essential services to the developing world. All gifts received will go towards an installation at the Ride 4 a Woman Community Center, a charitable organization that supports women struggling with HIV, domestic violence, and poverty in Uganda and currently employs over 300 women from 11 villages. GivePower is a Guide Star Gold Rated 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, awarded by Fast Company Magazine as one of the top World-Changing Ideas of 2021. Thank you for your generosity.

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

God So Loved the World

Bob Chilcott

God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son
that who-so believeth in him, should not perish, but have
everlasting life. God so loved the world.

Cynthia Adcock, soprano

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

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

We practice open communion: Wherever you are on your faith journey, you are welcome at the Lord's table.

Please come forward as directed by the Deacons to receive the common elements for communion. If you are worshipping online, you are invited to gather elements of communion in your home. Please hold the elements until you are directed to partake together. Sealed and separated gluten-free elements are available in the center basket.

* INVITATION

Rev. Ahrens

Beloved in Christ, the Gospel tells us that on the first day of the week Jesus Christ was raised from death, appeared to Mary Magdalene, on that same day sat at the table with two disciples, and was made known to them in the breaking of the bread. This table is for all Christians who wish to know the presence of Christ and to share in the community of God's people.

* SURSUM CORDA

Plainsong

The musical notation consists of three staves of music in a single system, each with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are written below the notes. The first staff is for the Leader and the second and third staves are for the People. The lyrics are: "The Lord be with you. And also with you. Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right to give our thanks and praise."

* COMMUNION PRAYER

We give you thanks, God of majesty and mercy, for calling forth the creation and raising us from dust by the breath of your being. We bless you for the beauty and bounty of the earth and for the vision of the day when sharing by all will mean scarcity for none. We remember the covenant you made with your people Israel, and we give you thanks for all our ancestors in faith. We rejoice that you call us to reconciliation with you and all people everywhere and that you remain faithful to your covenant even when we are faithless. We rejoice that you call the entire human family to this table of sacrifice and victory.

We come in remembrance and celebration of the gift of Jesus Christ, whom you sent, in the fullness of time, to be the good news. Born of Mary, our sister in faith, Christ lived among us to reveal the mystery of your Word, to suffer and die on the cross for us, to be raised from death on the third day, and then to live in glory. And now we give you thanks for the hope to which you call us in your Son, that following in the faith of all your saints, we may run with perseverance the race that is set before us, and with them receive the unfading crown of glory. We bless you, gracious God, for the presence of your Holy Spirit in the church you have gathered. With your sons, daughters, and all children of faith in all places and times, we praise you with joy.

organ

Ho - ly, Ho - ly, Ho - ly Lord. God of power and might, —

organ

Heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho-san-na in the high-est.

Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san-na in the high - est.

The congregation may be seated.

We remember that on the night of betrayal and desertion, and on the eve of death, Jesus gathered the disciples for the feast of Passover. Jesus took bread, and after giving thanks to you, broke it, and gave it to the disciples, saying: "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

Therefore we proclaim the mystery of our faith.

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Eternal God, we unite in this covenant of faith, recalling Christ's suffering and death, rejoicing in Christ's resurrection, and awaiting Christ's return in victory. We spread your table with these gifts of the earth and of our labor. We present to you our very lives, committed to your service on behalf of all people. We ask you to send your Holy Spirit on this bread and wine, on our gifts, and on us. Strengthen your universal church that it may be the champion of peace and justice in all the world. Restore the earth with your grace that is able to make all things new.

Be present with us as we share this meal, and throughout all our lives, that we may know you as the Holy One, who with Christ and the Holy Spirit, lives for ever. Amen.

Let us pray as Christ our Savior has taught us.

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.**

Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;

Therefore let us keep the feast.

The gifts of God for the people of God. Come, for all things are ready.

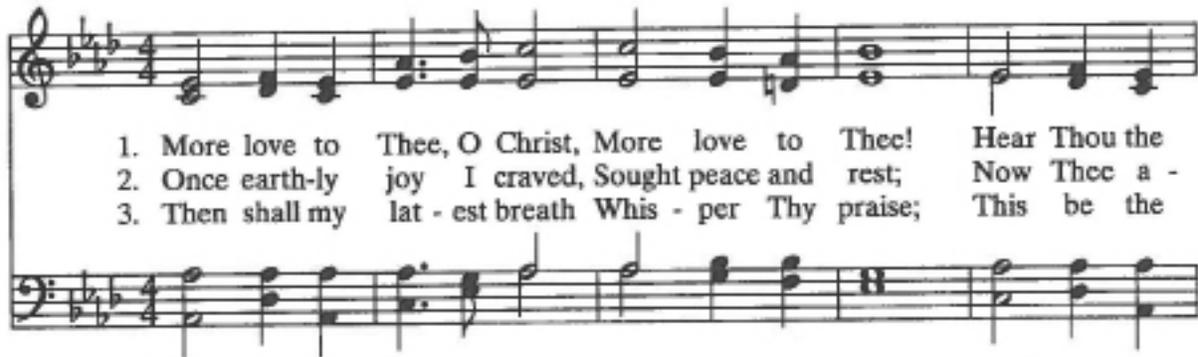
SHARING OF THE ELEMENTS

Please come forward as directed by the Deacons to receive the common elements for communion. If you are worshipping online, you are invited to gather elements of communion in your home. Please hold the elements until you are directed to partake together. Sealed and separated gluten-free elements are available in the center basket.

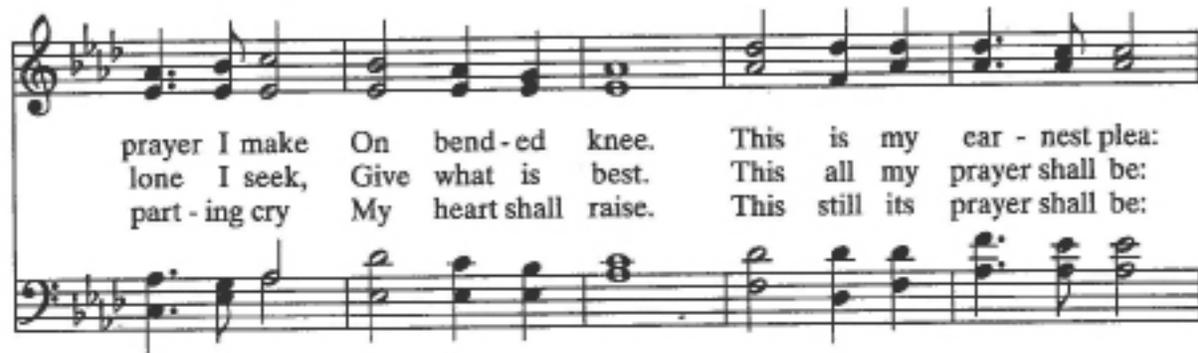
COMMUNION HYMN

“More Love to Thee, O Christ”

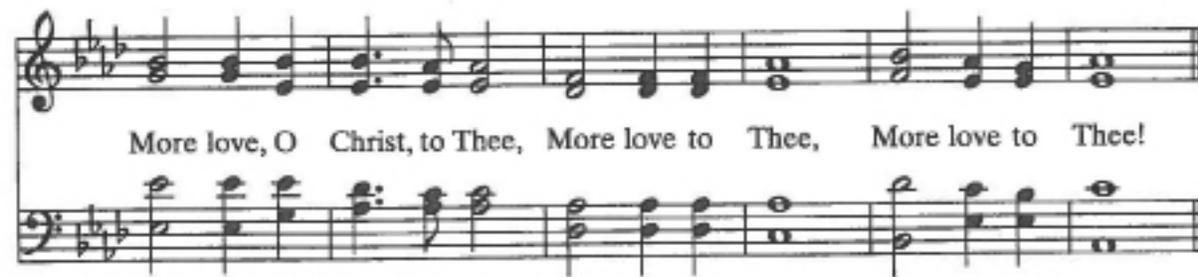
More Love to Thee



1. More love to Thee, O Christ, More love to Thee! Hear Thou the
2. Once earth-ly joy I craved, Sought peace and rest; Now Thee a -
3. Then shall my lat - est breath Whis - per Thy praise; This be the



prayer I make On bend - ed knee. This is my ear - nest plea:
lone I seek, Give what is best. This all my prayer shall be:
part - ing cry My heart shall raise. This still its prayer shall be:



More love, O Christ, to Thee, More love to Thee, More love to Thee!

BREAKING BREAD AND POURING WINE

The bread is broken and the wine is poured as visible and audible reminders of the sacrificial self-giving of Jesus Christ. These actions call to mind the cost as well as the joy of Christian discipleship.

The bread which we break is the communion of the body of Christ.

Take and eat, this is the body of Christ, broken for you. **Amen!**

The cup of blessing which we bless is the communion of the blood of Christ.

Take and drink, this is the cup of the new covenant, poured out for you. **Amen!**

L: Let us pray.

P: We thank you, God, for inviting us to this table where we have known the presence of Christ and have received all Christ's gifts. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and let us show forth your praise in our lives; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

COMMUNITY NOTICES - DEPART TO SERVE

Melissa Kulwicki

L: Let us depart with a heart to serve.

P: Thanks be to God.

* CLOSING HYMN 371

"Lift High the Cross"

Crucifer

Lift high the cross, the love of Christ pro - claim

Till all the world a - dore His sa - cred name.

Till all the world a - dore His sa - cred name. *Fine*

1. Come, Chris - tians, fol - low where our Sav - ior trod,
 2. Each new - born ser - vant of the Cru - ci - fied
 3. O Lord, once lift - ed on the glo - rious tree,
 4. So shall our song of tri - umph ev - er be:

Repeat Refrain

The Lamb vic - to - rious, Christ, the Son of God.
 Bears on the brow the seal of Christ who died.
 Your death has brought us life e - ter - nal - ly.
 Praise to the Cru - ci - fied for vic - to - ry.

Please be seated for the Postlude.

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 by the Flower Fund.

† GREETING AT THE EXITS

Rev. Ahrens – Narthex

Rev. Samuelson – Education Wing breezeway

Melissa Kulwicki – Education Wing door

LEADERSHIP IN THE LITURGY

The Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Ahrens, *preacher and co-celebrant*

The Rev. Joanna Samuelson, *liturgist and co-celebrant*

Fran Panek, *liturgist*

Deb Thompson, *worship leader*

Melissa Kulwicki, *worship leader*

Malcolm Gillies, *crucifer*

Emma Dean, *acoltye*

Barry Moenter, *interim organist*

Jim Gallagher, *interim choir director*

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

Enter to Worship
Depart to Serve

March 5, 2023

This Week at First Church

- 3/5**
9 a.m. Service of Morning Prayer and Communion (Parish Hall & Virtual)
10 a.m. Faith Formation (Education Wing)
Coffee Sales (Parish Hall)
11 a.m. Worship Service (Sanctuary & Virtual)
12:15 p.m. Coffee Hour & Coffee Sales (Parish Hall)
12:30 p.m. Confirmation Class (Classroom C)
- 3/6**
9 a.m. Good Samaritan Distribution Day (Virtual)
12 Noon Congregational Care Ministry (Fanning Rm)
6:30 p.m. House & Grounds Mtg (Virtual)
- 3/7**
1 p.m. Healthy Congregations Mtg (Parish Family Rm)
7 p.m. Justice & Mercy Mtg (Virtual)
Personnel Committee Mtg (Virtual)
- 3/9**
12 Noon Lunch Bunch (Koble Grill, Westerville)
6 p.m. First Church Ringers Practice (Bell Rm)
7 p.m. Security Team Mtg (Virtual)
7:15 p.m. First Church Choir Rehearsal (Parish Hall)
- 3/12**
9 a.m. Service of Morning Prayer and Communion (Parish Hall & Virtual)
10 a.m. Faith Formation (Education Wing)
11 a.m. Worship Service (Sanctuary & Virtual)
12:15 p.m. Coffee Hour (Parish Hall)
12:30 p.m. Confirmation Class (Classroom C)

Faith Formation Today

10-10:50 a.m

Pre-School-5th Grade Children's Library

The lesson of the week is based on John 3:1-17 All ages (children and adults) are invited to join us in the Children's Library for a story and Earth themed lesson.

Adult Faith Formation Sacred Earth Classroom C in the Education Wing

Meet members of Sacred Earth who will share the history of this committee which falls under our Justice and Mercy Commission. Learn about some of the programs and initiatives to raise money for the greening of our church they have done over the years. Please come and hear why Sacred Earth is important to them and learn how you can get involved.

Book Discussion *The Genius of Justice* Sunday, March 12 10 a.m.- 10:50 a.m. Parish Hall

Join Rev. Tim for an interactive discussion about his book "The Genius of Justice" during the Education hour on Sunday, March 12. All ages are invited to join this exciting discussion.

The book is also the selection for the Wednesday Book Study. The group meets the first and third Wednesday of each month from 10:30-11:45 a.m. on Zoom. For more information and Zoom links please contact Pat Patterson at ppatterson@first-church.org.

Books are available for purchase in the church office. The price is \$22.00, a 20% savings off the list price.

Lunch Bunch

Thursday, March 9

12 noon - 1 p.m.

Koble Grill

7 N State Street, Westerville, OH

Join us for lunch at Koble Grill in Westerville. Koble Grill is a fast-casual, urban restaurant. Their menu is a mixture of both Greek and Italian cuisine. Offerings range from gyros and kebobs to paninis and pastas. It is located in Uptown Westerville, a historical area of eclectic shops and restaurants.

To register, scan the QR code below or visit <https://onrealm.org/TheFirstCongreg/PublicRegistrations/Event?linkString=NTUyMjE1NmEtMGJw-Mi00ODE4LTk2NTItYWZiMzAwZGQ4NjBi>



Come & Sing

Who: First Church Children Grades 3-6

For: The Columbus Children's Choir will be the closing concert for the First Congregational Church '22-23 Concert Series. This concert will be at 4 p.m. on Sunday, April 23, 2023.

What: The concert will close with area church, school, and community young singers joining the Columbus Children's Choir for singing a piece together: Ken Berg's arrangement of 'This Little Light of Mine'. Dr. Mathias will work with students in grades 3-6 at First Church, who would like to be a part of this experience.

Here are the details:

Rehearse with Dr. M: Sundays, March 12, 19, 26, and April 16, from 9:30 -10 a.m. in the Children's Library, on the second floor of the education wing.

Final rehearsal: April 23, before the concert at 3:15 p.m., in the sanctuary with all singers.

Please e-mail Dr. Mathias by Monday, March 6 if your child would like to be a part of this special opportunity to sing with over 60 other young singers. Dr. M's email address is: sjmath5659@gmail.com

Global Ministries

Jordan: Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees and the Orthodox Initiative

The Middle East Council of Churches is a fellowship of 27 member churches gathered in four families: Oriental Orthodox, Eastern Orthodox, Evangelical, and Catholic. Spanning the Middle East and North Africa from Algeria to Iran, 12 to 15 million Christians are thus represented in this all-inclusive Council. The Council has several units and programs, including the Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees (DSPR). Over 70,000 Palestinians benefit from the health clinics in DSPR areas of operation, particularly in Gaza and Jordan. DSPR also provides vocational training in such subjects as carpentry, metal and aluminum works, secretarial studies, English, dressmaking, hairdressing, and knitting. A long-time focus of DSPR has been the construction of cisterns in the many communities that have few or no dependable water sources.

The Orthodox Initiative was established in 2011 to strengthen the Christian community in the Middle East. The Initiative works in many different ways to realize its goal of a united Christian community throughout the Middle East and the world. This movement comes at a time of great threat to Middle Eastern Christians when emigration seems like the only hope of safety for their children. In the midst of such strife, the Initiative challenges families to reach out to one another for strength, to remain steadfast in their homelands, and to remind the rest of society that "we have equal rights, and we are here."

Friday Fun Night

Friday, March 17

5:30 p.m.

Parish Hall

Do you have the luck of the Irish? Wear your favorite shamrock outfit and celebrate St. Patrick's Day with us! Join us in Parish Hall for a casual evening of games and fun on Friday, March 17, at 5:30 p.m. Light snacks and lemonade will be provided. Feel free to pack a dinner to bring with you to enjoy before we get started with the games at 6 p.m. Please enter via the Ninth Street door or elevator, which will be unlocked from 5:15 p.m.-6:15 p.m. If you arrive after 6:15 p.m., please use the intercom at the Ninth St. door to be buzzed in. All attendees will need to sign-in/out upon entering/exiting the building. We will have a variety of games available but please also bring any games or puzzles you'd like to share for the evening. Kids at heart and kids of all ages are welcome!

To register, scan the QR code below or visit <https://onrealm.org/TheFirstCongreg/PublicRegistrations/Event?linkString=OWUwMzYzM2YtNGFkN-C00YTI0LWFkZTUtYWZiMzAwZWJhNjc2>



Time Out Friday

Friday, March 24

6 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Grizzlybird Brewing Company

5901 Chandler Ct

Westerville, Ohio

Join us on Friday, March 24 at 6 p.m. for Time Out Friday at Grizzlybird Brewing Company. They are a family-friendly nanobrewery located in Westerville. They brew on-site and have created unique and bold flavors for their IPA's, lagers, and seasonal flavors. In addition to beer, they have a great selection of wine and spirits to satisfy what you are looking for. While you are there grab a specialty taco or burrito from the Comeda el Catrin Food truck that will be onsite for the evening. Come and join the fun!

To register, scan the QR code below or visit <https://onrealm.org/TheFirstCongreg/PublicRegistrations/Event?linkString=OWNkNDI0ZDUtNTg2MS-00MmRhLTgwMWUtYWZiMzAwZWJhNjc1>



Forgiveness

2023 Lenten Sermon Series

Ash Wednesday - February 22, Noon & 7:30 p.m.
Rev. Dr. Tim Ahrens preaching
“Forgiven and Forgiving”

First Sunday in Lent - February 26, 9 & 11 a.m.
Rev. Amanda Conley preaching
“The Truth about Forgiveness”

Second Sunday in Lent - March 5, 9 & 11 a.m.
Rev. Dr. Tim Ahrens preaching
“Born Again Forgiveness”

Third Sunday in Lent - March 12, 9 & 11 a.m.
Rev. John Aeschbury preaching
“A Key to Forgiveness: Remember Where You Came From”

Fourth Sunday in Lent - March 19, 9 & 11 a.m.
Rev. Sarah Reed preaching
“Seeing / Seen: Forgiving / Forgiven”

Fifth Sunday in Lent - March 26, 9 & 11 a.m.
Rev. Laurence Miller, Jr., preaching
“Forgive and Raise Dry Bones”

Palm Sunday - April 2, 9 & 11 a.m.
Rev. Joanna Samuelson preaching
“A Forgiving Spirit”

Easter Sunday – April 9, 7 a.m. Sunrise Service, 8:45 & 11 a.m.
Rev. Dr. Tim Ahrens preaching
“Forgiven and Risen”

Lenten Resources

We invite you to take a look at the materials tables located in the Narthex and at the exits. There you will find a variety of Lenten materials such as devotionals and activity guides. Please feel free to take some for yourself, and your friends, and neighbors.

Lenten Circles

In keeping with First Church tradition, we will offer small group opportunities throughout this Lenten season for the purpose of engaging in meaningful and supportive conversation in relation to our Lenten theme this year, forgiveness.

Our Lenten Circle discussions will be inspired by “The Book of Forgiving: The Fourfold Path for Healing Ourselves and Our World” by the late Archbishop Desmond Tutu and his daughter, the Reverend Mpho Tutu (2014). Copies of this book are available through the Columbus Metropolitan Library, local bookstores, and online. In addition, there are a few books available (\$10 each) in the church office. If you’d like us to set one aside for you, please let Rev. Joanna know soon.

The hosts and participants of each Lenten Circle will decide together the day and time that works best for everyone in the group as well as the frequency of their gatherings.

We have planned Lenten Circles to be hosted by the following First Church members:

Becky Taft at Westminster-Thurber retirement community in Victorian Village.
To register, please contact Becky at 614.702.1011 or rrtaft@columbus.rr.com.

Marty and Gerry Worth at their home in Upper Arlington.
To register, please contact Marty at 614.937.2466 or marthaworth@att.net.

Martha and Hank Wilson at their home in Grandview Heights (this group will be co-hosted by Lynn Wallich and Tom Kiesel).
To register, please contact Martha at 540.588.0324 or marthawilson@gmail.com.

In addition, Rev. Joanna will host two Lenten Circles to be held at church at two different times:
Wednesday evenings, 7-8:30 p.m. (March 15, 22, and April 5)
Friday mornings, 10-11:30 p.m. (March 17, 24, and 31)
To register, please contact Rev. Joanna at 214.995.3525 or jsamuelson@first-church.org.

Concerts at First Church

Lenten Meditations

Michael Schreffler

Wednesday, March 15

12:15 p.m. - 12:45 p.m.

Michael Schreffler, organist at St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Upper Arlington, began his musical studies with piano lessons at the age of 9 and continued in college while majoring in English. For 30 years, Michael worked as a casualty claims adjuster for the State Farm group of companies, all the while continuing as a church musician. He currently studies with Richard Fitzgerald of St. Joseph Cathedral in Columbus. Michael accompanied the St. Mark's choir during their choral residency at Wells Cathedral in 2022. He will perform works by Max Reger, Percy Whitlock, Richard Fitzgerald, and Leo Sowerby on the Kimball Organ.

Michael Unger

Wednesday, March 22

12:15 p.m. - 12:45 p.m.

Michael Unger, Associate Professor of Organ and Harpsichord at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, will present a program of music by Johann Sebastian Bach on the Ben Bechtel harpsichord. Dr. Unger is a multiple award-winning performer who appears as a soloist and chamber musician in North America, Europe, Japan, and South Korea. He will perform on the two-manual French-style harpsichord, modeled after one by Pascal Taskin in 1769, built by First Church member Ben Bechtel, his final instrument before his death in 2008.

Amanda Mole

Wednesday, March 29

12:15 p.m. - 12:45 p.m.

Amanda Mole is Principal Organist and Assistant Director of Music at St. Joseph Catholic Cathedral in Columbus. She obtained a Bachelor of Music degree with honors from Eastman, a Master of Music degree in Organ Performance and Sacred Music at the Yale Institute of Sacred Music, and is currently completing a Doctor of Musical Arts at the Eastman School of Music. She is a first-prize winner of the 2017 International Musashino-Tokyo Organ Competition, has performed internationally across the USA, Europe, and Japan, and at the AGO National Convention in Seattle WA in 2022, among many other competitions and venues.

Congregational Concert

Eric Plutz, Organist

Sunday, March 26

4 p.m.

Eric Plutz is University Organist at Princeton University, where his responsibilities include playing for weekly services at the Chapel, Academic Ceremonies, and solo concerts, as well as accompanying the Chapel Choir in services and concerts. He coordinates the weekly After Noon Concert Series, is Lecturer in Music and Instructor of Organ at Princeton University, and maintains a private studio. He earned a Bachelor of Music degree from Westminster Choir College and a Master of Music degree from the Eastman School of Music. Additional study was in Paris and The Hague.

Eric has accompanied many organizations, including the Symphonic Choir at Westminster Choir College, the Bach Choir of Bethlehem, Choral Arts Society of Washington, the Cathedral Choral Society (DC).

Mr. Plutz has accepted concert engagements in distinguished locations across the United States and abroad, including Germany, Austria, Philadelphia, New York City, Washington, DC, and San Francisco. He has been a featured artist in Regional and National Conventions of the American Guild of Organists.

In celebration of Louis Vierne's 150th birthday in 2020, Eric initiated The Vierne Project, performances of the complete organ symphonies, which were released on CD in 2022. We are privileged to hear one of those symphonies during his concert at First Church.

On the Beckerath Organ, Eric will perform The Third Sonata by Gerald Near, dedicated to Eric Plutz, and the famous Passacaglia by J. S. Bach. After the intermission he will perform Concert Overture in C Minor by Alfred Hollins and the Deuxième Symphonie by Louis Vierne on the Kimball Organ. Eric has written extensive program notes that will enrich your listening experience.

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 **GivePower**. GivePower uses solar and battery storage technologies to deliver essential services to the developing world. All gifts received will go towards an installation at the Ride 4 a Woman Community Center, a charitable organization that supports women struggling with HIV, domestic violence, and poverty in Uganda and currently employs over 300 women from 11 villages. GivePower is a Guide Star Gold Rated 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, awarded by Fast Company Magazine as one of the top World-Changing Ideas of 2021. Thank you for your generosity.

Volunteers Needed to Host Future Coffee Hours

We hope everyone has had a chance to enjoy the return of Coffee Hour following the 11 a.m. service in Parish Hall! Church Vitality is looking for volunteers who are interested in helping us continue to provide this opportunity to socialize and connect with our church family. We will provide simple guidelines to follow that will make it a fun and easy way to volunteer at First Church! Please contact Wendy Kennedy (wendykennedy@yahoo.com) if interested.

Keep in Prayer

Members Barbara Sterrett; Bill Kutschbach; Leigh Briggs; Ron Cook; Bob Monahan; Rick Sayre; Melva Fisher; Anne Morganstern; Glenn and Sharon Bardus; Gretchen Atkinson; Rick and Lourdes Henderson; Martha Huey; Bob Davis; Twink Starr; Lola Edwards; Rick Brant; Betsy Zahn; Janice White; John Carter and Mary Kay Beall Carter.

Family and friends Joanna Samuelson’s mother, Debbie Arner; Susie Loik’s friend and neighbor, Dottie Clark, and Susie’s friend, Jan Lanier and family; Melody Leidheiser’s nephew, Mick Clark; Matt Farabaugh’s friend Pamla Mineo; Samuelson/Gilles family friends, Eric Williams and Leslie Kern; Melissa Kulwicki’s friend, Deb Rambo; Gail and Jim Lowe’s great niece, Ani; Margaret Cipriani’s sister and brother-in-law, Sara and Terry Godwin; Nancy Loy’s friend, Maxey; Paula Terry-Locke; Kathy Reed’s cousin, Michael Chambers; Victor John’s parents, Charles and Mary Jane John; Tom Gies’ sister, Monica Depinet; Nancy Mayle; and Martha Huey’s sister, Stephanie Childs.

Those who mourn loved ones Amy Wagner on the death of her uncle, Chuck Evans; Victor John on the death of his friend, Doug Marloni; Jim Griffin on the death of his friend, Jeff Huey; and Celeste Feather and family on the death of her mother, Cecil Mae Thornburg Feather.

In the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle, we lift the people and churches in Ireland, and the United Kingdom: England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. We also pray for the Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees and the Orthodox Initiative in Jordan.

We pray for peace in Ukraine, for the 50,000 earthquake victims in Turkey and Syria, and for the crews removing contaminated soil and water from the toxic train wreck site and the citizens in Palestine, Ohio.

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.

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

Custodians: Jenkins Smith, Alexis Wayne

Wedding Coordinators: Amy Wagner, Shelly Gies, Margaret Cipriani

Nursery Staff: Miranda Brooks, Shelly Gies

Senior Deacon: Martha Wilson

Senior Deacon-elect: Lynn Wallich

Deacons: Cami Curren, Tom Kiesel, Nan Kreimer, Gail Lowe, James Lowe, Allison Lowery Palmer, Alex Palmer, Fran Panek, Joel Mathias, Dayna McCrary, Matt Myers, Tyler Rogers, Hank Wilson, Martha Worth

Church Council Leadership

Moderator: Gregory Halbe

Moderator-elect: Sarah Reed

Treasurer: James Velo

Treasurer-elect: Ramona Moenter

Secretary: Antoinette Koolemans-Beynen

Secretary-elect:

Nominating Chair: Christine Farquhar

Board of Trustees

Chairperson: Sue Cook

Trustees: Cindy Conn (Treasurer), Greg Halbe, Elizabeth Iannarino, Todd Jacobson (Secretary), Victor John, Melody Leidheiser, Janet Miller, Judy Smith, Hugh Schultz

Commissioners

Administration: Thomas Brownfield

Administration-elect: David Hogrefe

Church Growth: Steve Sterrett

Church Growth-elect:

Church Vitality: Wendy Kennedy

Church Vitality-elect: Annette McCormick

Education: Janice Taft

Education-elect: Mariner Taft

House & Grounds: Mike Kennedy

House & Grounds-elect:

Justice & Mercy: Kris Brant

Justice & Mercy-elect: Janet Miller

Music, Arts & Heritage: Melissa Kulwicki

Music, Arts & Heritage-elect: Jim Griffin

Members-at-Large: Jacquelyn Dean and Aran Cunningham

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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www.first-church.org/Worship.aspx



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