



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

March 5, 2023

The Second Sunday of 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.*

*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: Jesus says: If you would come after me, deny yourself and take up your cross and follow me.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN AND ASSURANCE OF PARDON

L: God calls us in our lives to be like the grain of wheat which dies, which lets go of one form in order to be transformed into new, and fuller life. And yet we often fear the risk and change which new growth involves. Let us ponder for a moment the places where we may be resisting God moving in our lives.

*A brief period of silence follows.*

L: When we resist your call to change our hearts and allow a deepening of relationship:

**P: Lord, have mercy.**

L: When we nurse our wounded hearts and withhold forgiveness which may transform relationship:

**P: Christ, have mercy.**

L: When fear for our own security leads us to close our hearts from those who are in need:

**P: Lord, have mercy.**

**All: The One who makes a covenant on our hearts is faithful, and forgives us our sins and failures. In Christ, God offers forgiving grace and welcome into a community of trust, abundance, and hope. Let us give thanks, for the mercy of God is from everlasting to everlasting. Amen.**

*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.**

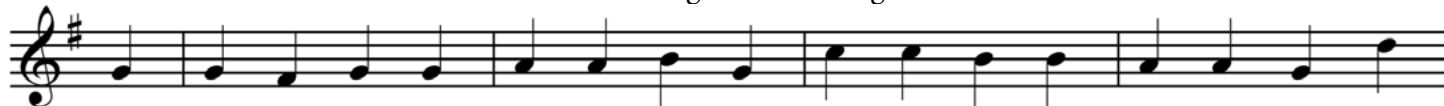
L: Praise to the holy and undivided Trinity, one God:

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

\* OPENING SONG

Come, let us sing to God on high

*Tallis' Canon*



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 mold - ed the dry land.  
are God's peo - ple and God's sheep; To - day, then, heark - en to God's Word.

\* PSALM OF THE DAY

Psalm 121

The Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Ahrens

L: I lift up my eyes to the hills— from where will my help come?

**P: My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth.**

L: God will not let your foot be moved; the One who watches over you will not fall asleep.

**P: Behold, the One who keeps watch over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.**

L: The LORD is your keeper; the LORD is your shade at your right hand.

**P: The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night.**

L: The LORD will keep you from all evil; and is the One who shall keep you safe.

**P: The LORD will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.**

\* WELCOME AND PASSING OF THE PEACE

L: The peace of God be always with you.

**P: And also with you.**

*\*Please find the blue Welcome notebook, sign it and pass it on to your neighbor so you may greet them by name.*

CHILDREN'S TIME

Rev. Ahrens and Deb Thompson

THE FIRST READING

Genesis 12:11-4a

Rev. Samuelson

*A reading from the book of Genesis, chapter 2.*

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.**



1. Wis - dom freed a ho - ly peo - ple, blame - less from op - pres - sor's sword,  
2. Through the Red Sea safe - ly brought them, led a - long the wa - ters steep,



and with - stood, with signs and won - ders, rul - ers dread to serve the Lord.  
but their en - e - mics she swal - lowed, o - ver - whelmed them in the deep.



Giv - ing them re - ward of la - bors, led the saints a - long her way.  
For sal - va - tion, Lord, the right - eous praised your name with one ac - cord:



she was blaze of stars in dark - ness and a shel - ter through the day.  
song - filled tongues of new - born peo - ple us - tered Wis - dom's might - y word.

*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.**

What Wondrous Love Is This

1. What won-drous love is this, O my soul, O my soul,  
 2. To God and to the Lamb I will sing, I will sing,  
 3. And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing on,

What won - drous love is this, O my soul!  
 To God and to the Lamb, I will sing;  
 And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on;

What won-drous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss  
 To God and to the Lamb who is the great I Am,  
 And when from death I'm free, I'll sing and joy - ful be,

To bear the heav - y cross for my soul, for my soul,  
 While mil - lions join the theme, I will sing, I will sing;  
 And through e - ter - ni - ty I'll sing on, I'll sing on,

To bear the heav - y cross for my soul!  
 While mil - lions join the theme, I will sing!  
 And through e - ter - ni - ty I'll sing on!

## 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

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.

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.

Music at Communion

Taste and see

Musical score for the hymn "Taste and see". It consists of three systems of music, each with a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment line (bass clef). The lyrics are: "Taste and see. Taste and see the good - ness of the Lord. O taste and see. Taste and see the good - ness of the Lord, of the Lord." The score ends with a double bar line and the word "Fine" above it.

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

Melissa Kulwicki

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

**P:** **Thanks be to God.**



\* CLOSING HYMN

God be with you till we meet again

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

The first system of musical notation consists of a vocal line in treble clef and a piano accompaniment line in bass clef. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are: "God be with you till we meet a-gain; lov - ing coun - sels guide, up - hold you,"

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

The second system of musical notation continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "with a shep - herd's care en - fold you; God be with you till we meet a-gain."

\* BLESSING AND DISMISSAL

Rev. Ahrens

POSTLUDE

Enter to Worship  
**Depart to Serve**

March 5, 2023

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## 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.

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## 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](mailto: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=NTUyMjE1NmEtMGIw-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](mailto:sjmath5659@gmail.com)

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## **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-C00YTI0LWFkZTUtYWZiMzAwZTk5Njc2>



## **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-00MmRhLTgwMWUtYWZiMzAwZWJhNjg1>



## 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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.

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## 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 ([wendyjkenedy@yahoo.com](mailto:wendyjkenedy@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



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OF CHRIST  
God is still speaking,

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