



WORSHIP AT ELEVEN
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

March 12, 2023

The Third 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

Aria for Handbells
First Church Ringers

Dale Wood

A way to Calvary leadeth from dark Gethsemane.
May every one behold him who weary walks that way.
The way doth lead to perfect bliss, but a way of pain it is.
C. G. Liander

ENTER TO WORSHIP

Diana Kutschbach

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, let us sing to the Lord!

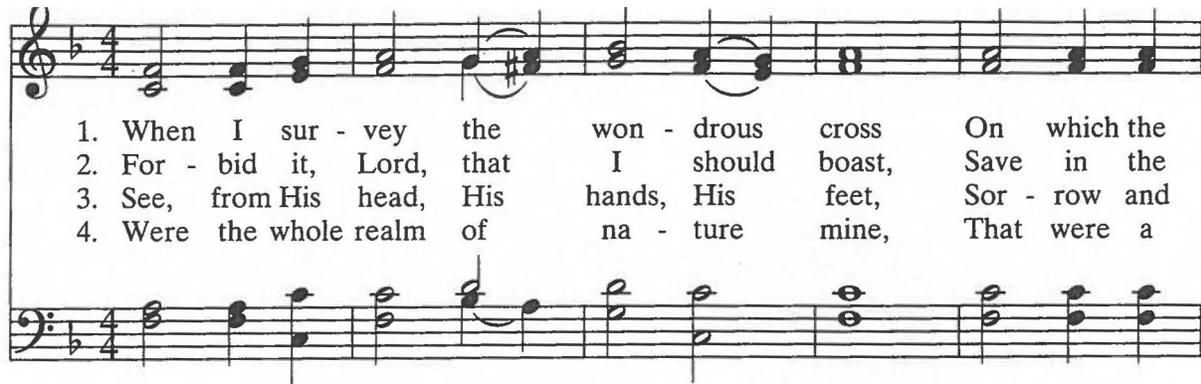
P: Let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!

L: Let us come into God's presence with thanksgiving!

P: Let us make a joyful noise to God with songs of praise!

L: Come, let us worship and celebrate God's loving presence with us.

P: We sing to God with our hearts and our spirits. Amen.



1. When I sur - vey the won - drous cross On which the
2. For - bid it, Lord, that I should boast, Save in the
3. See, from His head, His hands, His feet, Sor - row and
4. Were the whole realm of na - ture mine, That were a



Prince of glo - ry died, My rich - est gain I
death of Christ my God; All the vain things that
love flow min - gled down; Did e'er such love and
pres - ent far too small; Love so a - maz - ing,



count but loss, And pour con - tempt on all my pride.
charm me most, I sac - ri - fice them to His blood.
sor - row meet, Or thorns com - pose so rich a crown?
so di - vine, De - mands my soul, my life, my all.

* INVOCATION

The Rev. Joanna Samuelson

L: God be with you.

P: And also with you.

L: Let us pray.

P: Almighty God, you know that we have no power in ourselves to help ourselves: Keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls, that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through our Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

* PRAYER OF CONFESSION

The Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Ahrens

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. Ahrens

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. Samuelson

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.*

CHILDREN’S TIME

Rev. Samuelson

A reading from the book of Exodus, chapter 17.

From the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages, as the LORD commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. The people quarreled with Moses, and said, "Give us water to drink." Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the LORD?" But the people thirsted there for water; and the people complained against Moses and said, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?" So Moses cried out to the LORD, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me." The LORD said to Moses, "Go on ahead of the people, and take some of the elders of Israel with you; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink." Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarreled and tested the LORD, saying, "Is the LORD among us or not?"

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

P: Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM

Sicut Cervus

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina

Sicut cervus desiderat ad fontes aquarum:
ita desiderat, anima mea ad te, Deus.

Just as a hart desires to find a well-spring,
so my soul longs for Thee, O Lord,
who art our God.

THE EPISTLE

Romans 5: 1-11

Mrs. Kutschbach

A reading from the gospel according to the Romans, chapter 5.

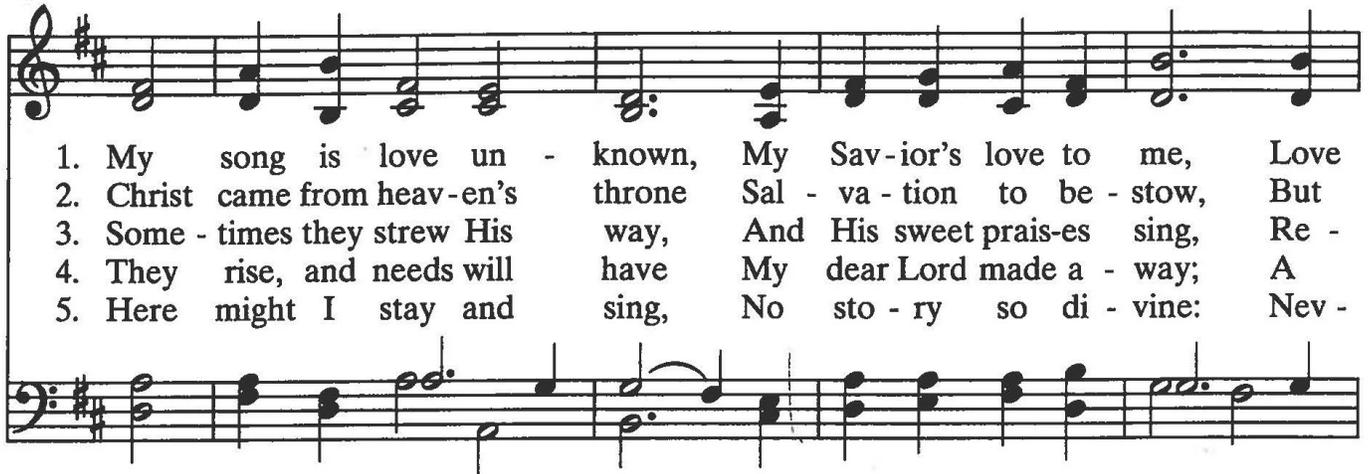
Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

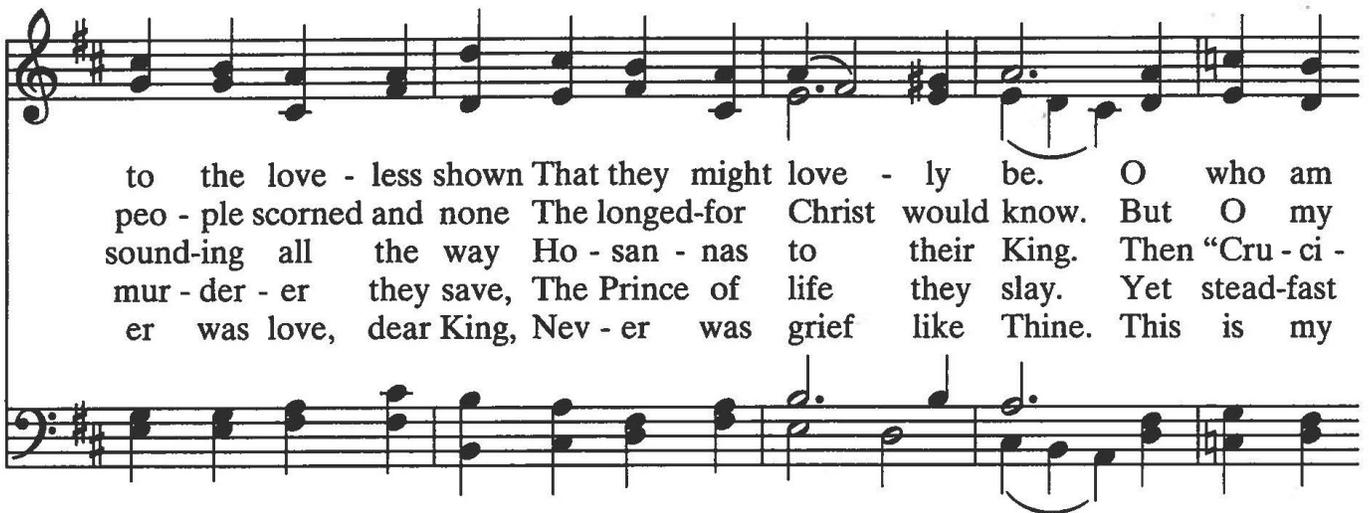
Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of God's Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

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

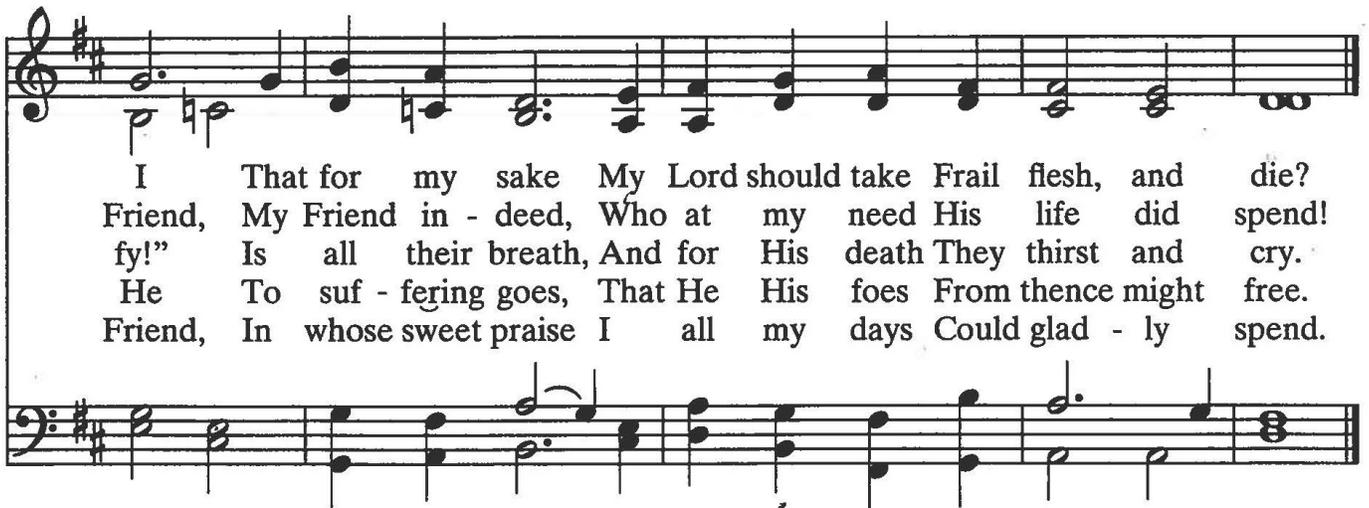
P: Thanks be to God.



1. My song is love un - known, My Sav-ior's love to me, Love
 2. Christ came from heav-en's throne Sal - va - tion to be - stow, But
 3. Some - times they strew His way, And His sweet prais-es sing, Re -
 4. They rise, and needs will have My dear Lord made a - way; A
 5. Here might I stay and sing, No sto - ry so di - vine: Nev -



to the love - less shown That they might love - ly be. O who am
 peo - ple scorned and none The longed-for Christ would know. But O my
 sound-ing all the way Ho - san - nas to their King. Then "Cru - ci -
 mur - der - er they save, The Prince of life they slay. Yet stead-fast
 er was love, dear King, Nev - er was grief like Thine. This is my



I That for my sake My Lord should take Frail flesh, and die?
 Friend, My Friend in - deed, Who at my need His life did spend!
 fy!" Is all their breath, And for His death They thirst and cry.
 He To suf - fer-ing goes, That He His foes From thence might free.
 Friend, In whose sweet praise I all my days Could glad - ly spend.

A reading from the Gospel according to John, chapter 4.

So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon. A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." The woman said to him, "Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?" Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life." The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water." Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come back." The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!" The woman said to him, "Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem." Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.

You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us." Jesus said to her, "I am he, the one who is speaking to you."

Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, "What do you want?" or, "Why are you speaking with her?" Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, "Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?" They left the city and were on their way to him. Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, "Rabbi, eat something." But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." So the disciples said to one another, "Surely no one has brought him something to eat?" Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. Do you not say, 'Four months more, then comes the harvest'? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor." Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I have ever done." So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Savior of the world."

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

P: **Thanks be to God.**

THE LORD’S PRAYER

**Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,
for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

THE OFFERTORY

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



MISSION INVITATION

The Rev. Laurence Miller

Designated gifts go to support the **Riverview International Center (RIC)**, which assists newly-arrived immigrants through welcoming, empowering, and providing cultural education to become self-sufficient in the United States, many of whom live on Riverview Drive in the University City area in Columbus. Support for Welcome Starter Services will equip immigrants with tools such as English classes and digital literacy, assist with transportation, healthcare, and utilities, and provide basic furniture and household supplies. Help finding job opportunities is also provided. Thank you for your generosity.

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

Grant Us Thy Peace

Felix Mendelssohn

Grant us Thy peace, Almighty Lord,
Thou Source of every blessing!
Feeble and frail, trust we Thy word,
All things in Thee possessing.
In Thee is our hope and safety

* THE DOXOLOGY

“Praise God, from whom all blessings flow”

Tallis Canon

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

COMMUNITY NOTICES - DEPART TO SERVE

Melissa Kulwicki

L: Let us depart with a heart to serve.
P: **Thanks be to God.**

1. Be - neath the cross of Je - sus I fain would take my stand,
2. Up - on the cross of Je - sus Mine eye at times can see

The shad - ow of a might - y rock With - in a wea - ry land;
The ver - y dy - ing form of One Who suf - fered there for me:

A home with - in the wil - der - ness, A rest up - on the way,
And from my strick - en heart with tears Two won - ders I con - fess:

From the burn - ing of the noon - tide heat, And the bur - den of the day.
The won - ders of re - deem - ing love And my un - wor - thi - ness.

*BENEDICTION

Rev. Aeschbury

POSTLUDE

It Is Well With My Soul

Philip B. Bliss
arr. Howard Helvey

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 and in gratitude to all First Church volunteers by Amy Wagner.

† GREETING AT THE EXITS

Rev. Aeschbury – Chancel Steps

Rev. Ahrens – Narthex

Rev. Samuelson – Education Wing breezeway

LEADERSHIP IN THE LITURGY

The Rev. John Aeschbury, *preacher*

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

The Rev. Joanna Samuelson, *liturgist*

Diana Kutschbach, *liturgist*

Melissa Kulwicki, *worship leader*

Ethan Murray, *crucifer*

Aubrey Schmitt, *acoltye*

Cynthia Adcock, *pianist*

Jim Gallagher, *interim choir director*

Jennifer Fry, *bell choir director*

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

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Enter to Worship
Depart to Serve

March 12, 2023

This Week at First Church

3/12

- 9 a.m. Service of Morning Prayer and Communion (Parish Hall & Virtual)
10 a.m. Faith Formation (Education Wing)
Justice Discussion (Parish Hall)
11 a.m. Worship Service (Sanctuary & Virtual)
12:15 p.m. Coffee Hour (Parish Hall)
12:30 p.m. Confirmation Class (Classroom C)

3/13

- 7 p.m. Trustees Mtg (Virtual)

3/14

- 5:30 p.m. Budget & Finance Mtg (Virtual)
7 p.m. Executive Committee Mtg (Virtual)

3/15

- 10 a.m. Largest Table Prep & Delivery (Kitchen)
10:30 a.m. Book Study (Virtual)
12:15 p.m. Organ Meditation (Sanctuary)

3/16

- 6 p.m. First Church Ringers Practice (Bell Rm)
7:15 p.m. First Church Choir Rehearsal (Parish Hall)

3/17

- 5:30 p.m. Friday Fun Day (Parish Hall)

3/19

- 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)

A Reception to Honor our Interim Musicians Sunday, March 19 Immediately Following the 11 a.m. Service

*Gratitude is the music of the heart when its chords
are swept by the breeze of kindness.*

All are welcome to attend the dessert reception in Parish Hall on March 19 when we will recognize and express our gratitude to Jim Gallagher, Barry Moenter, Marti Rideout, Sandy Mathias, and Joel Mathias for sharing their musical gifts with our congregation throughout this interim time at First Church. Please join us for cake, coffee, and this opportunity to express our gratitude for their generous and inspiring leadership throughout these past eight months. See you there!

Save the Date The 2023 Spring Retreat

Save the dates: Friday, April 14 through Sunday, April 16 for a three-day-long Spring Retreat at Templated Hills Camp in Bellville, Ohio. This is a wonderful time to be outside and to reconnect with our friends at First Church. This event is for all ages! There will be time for devotion, crafts, games, fishing, and much more! More information and registration is coming next week.

If you have questions or would like to help with the planning, please contact Rev. Joanna (jsamuels@first-church.org) or Melissa Kulwicki (communications@first-church.org).

Summer Camp Registration

Throughout the summer months, a variety of weeklong camps are planned for our children/youth who have completed the second grade and above. All the camps include swimming, hiking, games, crafts, singing, and worship – as well as the opportunity to make new friends from other UCC congregations that are part of our Conference. There is even a “Grandparents Camp” for kindergarteners and first graders to attend with a grandparent. In addition, there are camps for families and just for adults.

In order to review this year’s schedule and descriptions of the various camps – and to register – please go to <https://heartlanducc.org/templed-hills/>. Some of the camps fill up quickly so be sure to check out the schedule and register soon!

We are able to offer a 50% camp scholarship on the early registration fee (after the \$75 deposit) to any First Church child or youth who wants to go to camp. In order to request the Alma Keeler scholarship, please complete the “Campership Request” form and submit it to Annette McCormick by Friday, April 14.



Friday Fun Night **Friday, March 17 at 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 the 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 Court** **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

Remaining Sermons

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 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 some 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 also 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, Washington 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, and 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.

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Global Ministries

Japan: Jeffrey and Martha Mensendiek

Jeffrey Mensendiek serves with Kwansai Gakuin University in Tokyo, Japan. Mr. Mensendiek has worked with the United Church of Christ in Japan for over 22 years. The church in Japan is a minority church, as only one percent of the population is Christian. In this environment, the church is one of many subcultures that are discriminated against because it goes against the norms. He is now working as a chaplain at Kwansai Gakuin University.

Some of the challenges facing the church in Japan are:

- Passing on the faith to the next generation
- Discrimination as a minority people
- Internal division within the church over theological differences
- The ongoing nuclear disaster (protecting life in the face of powers who deny the dangerous truth)
- Being a prophetic voice against increasing nationalism and militarism

Keep in Prayer

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

Family and friends Melissa Kulwicki’s sister, Jennifer Scruggs; Cara Harasaki; Joanna Samuelson’s mother, Debbie Arner; Susie Loik’s friend and neighbor, Dottie Clark; Melody Leidheiser’s nephew, Mick Clark; Matt Farabaugh’s friend Pamla Mineo; Samuelson/Gilles family friend, Eric Williams; Susie Loik’s friend, Jan Lanier and family; Margaret Cipriani’s sister and brother-in-law, Sara and Terry Godwin; Nancy Loy’s friend, Maxey; Kathy Reed’s cousin, Michael Chambers; Victor John’s parents, Charles and Mary Jane John; Tom Gies’ sister, Monica Depinet; Nancy Mayle; Martha Huey’s sister, Stephanie Childs; Callie Mitchell’s prayers for Connie Hollins.

Those who mourn loved ones David Temple on the death of his mother, Erna Temple; the family and friends of Ecumenical leader and seeker of Social justice Marilyn Shreffler; Jenkins Smith on the death of his brother, Richard E. Thompson; David Kandel and family on the death of his sister; 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 Denmark, Faroe Islands, Finland, Greenland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. We also pray for Jeffrey Mensendiek and Martha Mensendiek in Japan.

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 East Palestine, Ohio, and all people everywhere affected by extreme weather events.

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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