



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

WORSHIP AT NINE

April 2, 2023

Palm/Passion Sunday

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.*

PRELUDE

THE LITURGY OF THE PALMS

* THE PALM SUNDAY GOSPEL

Matthew 21:1-11

The Rev. Joanna Samuelson

A reading from the gospel according to Matthew, chapter 21.

When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, just say this, 'The Lord needs them.' And he will send them immediately." This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet, saying, "Tell the daughter of Zion, Look, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey." The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!" When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, "Who is this?" The crowds were saying, "This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee."

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

P: Thanks be to God.

* ENTER TO WORSHIP

The Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Ahrens

L: On this day Jesus entered the holy city of Jerusalem in triumph, and was proclaimed as King of Kings by those who spread their garments and branches of palm along his way. Let these branches be for us signs of his victory, and grant that we who bear them in his name may ever hail him as our King, and follow him in the way that leads to eternal life.

All lift and wave palm branches until the Invocation.

L: Hosanna to the Son of David!

P: Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!

* HYMN

All glory, laud, and honor

Valet will ich dir geben

Refrain

All glo - ry, laud, and hon - or To Thee, Re - deem - er, King!

To whom the lips of chil - dren Made sweet ho - san - nas ring. *Fine*

1. Thou art the King of Is - rael, Thou Da - vid's roy - al Son,
2. The peo - ple of the He - brews With palms be - fore Thee went;
3. To Thee, be - fore Thy pas - sion, They sang their hymns of praise;
4. Thou didst ac - cept their prais - es; Ac - cept the prayers we bring,

Repeat Refrain

Who in the Lord's name com - est, The King and bless - ed One.
 Our praise and prayers and an - thems Be - fore Thee we pre - sent.
 To Thee, now high ex - alt ed, Our mel - o - dy we raise.
 Who in all good de - light - est, Thou good and gra - cious King!

* INVOCATION

Rev. Samuelson

L: God be with you.

P: And also with you.

L: Let us pray.

P: Almighty and everliving God, in your tender love for humanity you sent your Son our Savior Jesus Christ to take upon him our nature, and to suffer death upon the cross, giving us the example of his great humility: Mercifully grant that we may walk in the way of his suffering, and also share in his resurrection; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

* WELCOME AND PASSING OF THE PEACE

Rev. Ahrens

L: The peace of the Lord be always with you.

P: And also with you.

During the passing of the Peace, you are invited to place your palms in the middle of the labyrinth in the shape of a cross.

A reading from the prophet Isaiah, chapter 50.

The Lord God has given me the tongue of a teacher, that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word. Morning by morning the Lord God wakens — wakens my ear to listen as those who are taught. The Lord God has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I did not turn backward. I gave my back to those who struck me, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I did not hide my face from insult and spitting. The Lord God helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame; the Lord God who vindicates me is near. Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together. Who are my adversaries? Let them confront me. It is the Lord God who helps me; who will declare me guilty?

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

P: Thanks be to God.

MEDITATION

“A Forgiving Spirit”

Rev. Samuelson

Seventh in the Lenten sermon series, “Forgiveness”

A time of reflection follows.

PASTORAL PRAYER

Rev. Ahrens

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

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



MISSION INVITATION

Rev. Ahrens

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

During the singing of the hymn, a wooden cross is brought forward and placed on the palms.

1. Ah, ho - ly Je - sus, how have you of - fend - ed, That mor - tal judg - ment
 2. Who was the guilt - y? Who brought this up - on you? It is my trea - son,

has on you de - scend - ed? By foes de - rid - ed,
 Lord, that has un - done you. 'Twas I, Lord Je - sus,

by your own re - ject - ed, O most af - flic - ed!
 I it was de - nied you; I cru - ci - fied you.

THE PASSION OF OUR LORD ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

*The Congregation sits through the Passion until the verse that mentions "place that is called the skull." Then, please stand.
 The congregation speaks the parts printed in bold type.*

Matthew 26:57–68

... Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "He has blasphemed! Why do we still need witnesses? You have now heard his blasphemy. What is your verdict?" They answered, "**He deserves death.**" Then they spat in his face and struck him; and some slapped him, saying, "**Prophecy to us, you Messiah! Who is it that struck you?**"

Matthew 26:69—27:2, 27:11–26

... Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus killed. The governor again said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" And they said, "**Barabbas.**" Pilate said to them, "Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?" All of them said, "**Let him be crucified!**" Then he asked, "Why, what evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "**Let him be crucified!**" So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves." Then the people as a whole answered, "**His blood be on us and on our children!**" So he released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

Matthew 27:27-61

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole cohort around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand and knelt before him and mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!"

. . . Then two bandits were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, "You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking him, saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he wants to; for he said, 'I am God's Son.'" The bandits who were crucified with him also taunted him in the same way.

After the Passion is concluded, all sit. Silence is kept.

Please stand as you are able.

* CLOSING PRAYER

Rev. Ahrens

Leader: Let us pray. Everliving God, in your tender love for us, you sent your Son to take our nature, and to suffer death on the cross, giving us the example of great humility:

All: mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

HYMN

O sacred head, now wounded

Herzlich tut mich verlangen

1. O sa - cred head, now wound - ed, With grief and shame weighed down;
 2. What Thou, my Lord, hast suf - fered Was all for sin - ners' gain:
 3. What lan - guage shall I bor - row To thank Thee, dear - est friend,

Now scorn - ful - ly sur - round - ed With thorns, Thine on - ly crown;
 Mine, mine was the trans - gres - sion, But Thine the dead - ly pain.
 For this Thy dy - ing sor - row, Thy pit - y with - out end?

O sa - cred head, what glo - ry, What bliss till now was Thine!
 Lo, here I fall, my Sav - ior! 'Tis I de - serve Thy place;
 O make me Thine for - ev - er; And should I faint - ing be,

Yet, though de - spised and gor - y, I joy to call Thee mine.
 Look on me with Thy fa - vor, Vouch - safe to me Thy grace.
 Lord, let me nev - er, nev - er Out - live my love to Thee.

There is no Postlude on this Holy Day. Please depart in silence.

You are invited to take your palms from the Palm Cross and take them home if you wish.

LEADERSHIP IN THE LITURGY

The Rev. Joanna Samuelson, *preacher*

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

Ann Eliot, *pianist*

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

PASSION READERS

Matt Myers – *Narrator*

Julie Roth-Alexander – *Bystander 1*

Scott Graham – *Caiaphas*

Tammy Alexander – *Jesus*

Maggie Myers – *Servant Girl*

Nate Vogt – *Peter*

Denise Vogt – *Bystander 2*

Thom Smith – *Pilate*

Lee Kiesel – *Pilate's Wife*

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Enter to Worship
Depart to Serve

March 26, 2023

This Week at First Church

- 4/2** Palm Sunday
9 a.m. Service of Morning Prayer
(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 and Coffee Sales
(Parish Hall)
12:30 p.m. Confirmation Class (Classroom C)
- 4/4**
12 Noon Lunch Bunch
(Maple Street Biscuit Co., Polaris)
- 4/5**
9 a.m. Good Samaritan Distribution Day
(Virtual)
10:30 a.m. Book Study (Virtual)
7 p.m. Book Club (Virtual)
- 4/6**
7:15 p.m. Holy Communion (Parish Hall)
7:30 pm. The Office of Tenebrae (Sanctuary)
- 4/7**
12 Noon Good Friday Service (Sanctuary)
- 4/9** Easter Sunday
7 a.m. Easter Sunrise Service
(Gladden Social Justice Park)
8:45 a.m. Easter Service of Morning Prayer
and Communion (Sanctuary & Virtual)
10 a.m. Easter Egg Hunt (West Lawn)
Special Easter Sunday Coffee Hour
(Parish Hall)
11 a.m. Easter Worship Service
(Sanctuary & Virtual)

Holy Week at First Church

Palm/Passion Sunday - April 2, 9 & 11 a.m.

Maundy Thursday - April 6, 7 p.m, Begins in Parish Hall

Good Friday - April 7, 12 Noon, Sanctuary

Easter Sunday - April 9, 7 a.m. Social Justice Park,
8:45 a.m. Sanctuary, 11 a.m. Sanctuary

Forgiveness: 2023 Lenten Sermon Series Remaining Sermons

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

Easter Egg Hunt Easter Sunday, April 9 at 10 a.m.

First Church will host an Easter Egg Hunt beginning at 10 a.m. on the West lawn. The youngest children will be “hunting” in the playground area. This activity is geared toward children age 12 and younger.

Hope your families can join us!

First Church Book Club
Wednesday, April 5, at 7 p.m.
Zoom.

Everyone is invited to join the First Church Book Club. The next meeting is Wednesday, April 5, at 7 p.m. and the book that will be discussed is “The Book Woman’s Daughter” by Kim Michele Richardson. For more information or for the Zoom link email Elaine Warren (melainewarren232@gmail.com).

Rev. Tim’s Book Study
Wednesday, April 5, at 10:30 a.m.
Zoom.

Everyone is welcome to join Rev. Tim and other members of his book study on Wednesday, April 5 at 10:30 a.m. on Zoom, as they study his recently published book, “The Genius of Justice.” The group will cover the first two sections of the book on the 5th. And then the third and fourth sections of the book on the 19th. If you have any questions, please contact Rev. Tim at (tahrens@first-church.org)

Time: Apr 5, 2023 10:30 AM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85264683868?pwd=Nk-dlY2dNQldsR25EMVBaNUxkazRNZz09>

Meeting ID: 852 6468 3868

Passcode: 384371

Register for the Spring Retreat
Friday Evening, April 14 - Sunday, April 16



Join us for a three-day-long Spring Retreat at Temples 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!

To register, scan the QR code or visit <https://onrealm.org/TheFirstCongreg/PublicRegistrations/Event?link-String=NzViNzA5YzEtY2JiYy00OWE0LWFiOTAtYWZjNTAxMDE3NjY0>

Contact Rev. Joanna (jsamuelson@first-church.org) or Melissa Kulwicki (communications@first-church.org) for more information.

April Lunch Bunch
Maple Street Biscuit Co.
1310 Polaris Parkway, Columbus, OH 43240
Tuesday, April 4
12 Noon - 1 p.m.



Join First Church for a taste of comfort food with a modern twist. Mark your calendars and sign up before April 2 and we’ll save you a seat. We look forward to seeing you there!

This event is sponsored by Church Vitality.

Global Ministries China Christian Council and Amity Foundation

The China Christian Council (CCC) was established in 1980. Within the CCC, institutional protestant denominations no longer exist and all believers worship together. Differences in theological or liturgical background are dealt with according to the principle of mutual respect. More than 60,000 churches and meeting places have been opened, 70% of which are newly built. Of the more than 26 million Protestant Christians, 70% live in rural areas.

Lay training, theological formation and Bible distribution are among the top priorities of the CCC. Seventy million Bibles have been printed and distributed in China. There are currently 22 theological seminaries and Bible schools and hundreds of lay training centers throughout China.

CCC works closely with the National Committee of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement of the Protestant Churches in China (TSPM). CCC/TSPM advocates theological renewal and sinicization of the Chinese church to build up a theology that is biblically grounded and rooted in Chinese culture, to provide a sound explanation of Christian faith in the modern Chinese context.

Amity Foundation is an independent Chinese organization founded in 1985 on the initiative of Chinese Christians. It is made up of people from all walks of society and works to promote education, public health, social welfare, community development, environmental protection, and disaster relief in China and other parts of the world. Amity projects have benefited more than ten million people.

New Members Class

Are you interested in joining First Church? Come join the New Members class on Monday, April 17, and Monday, April 24, at 7 p.m. New members will join the church during 11 a.m. worship on Sunday, April 30. During this two-session class, you will learn more about First Church as well as the United Church of Christ. The class will be held in person at the church, with the possibility of Zoom access. Please contact Rev. Tim (tahrens@first-church.org) or Rev. Joanna (jsamuelson@first-church.org) if you are interested.

Opportunities in April and May to Review Church Governance

Church members will have opportunities to consider recommendations to improve the administrative structure and operations of our congregation during a series of discussion meetings during April and May.

After a 10-month study, the First Church Governance Task Force presented its report in late December. Among the report's recommendations are changes to some church commissions, numerous amendments to the church constitution, recognition of church volunteers, and greater accountability and transparency.

The first discussion meeting will be conducted during the monthly meeting over Zoom of the Church Vitality Commission. The 30-minute discussion will begin at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, April 12. The focus of the discussion will be on ways to recruit and retain church volunteers, incentives for members to serve on committees and in lay leadership, and opportunities for fellowship. The meeting also will be open to questions and comments about the task force's other recommendations.

Here is the link to the Zoom meeting:
Time: Apr 12, 2023 11:00 AM Eastern Time

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89496620186?pwd=OGpzV0dKaWlwWlJ2b1BCSzJ6QjVHUT09>

Meeting ID: 894 9662 0186
Passcode: 310784

A discussion meeting will be held during the 10 a.m. education hour on Sunday, April 30. Additional discussion meetings will be announced in the next few weeks.

For more information and to offer comments on the report's recommendations, contact Steve Sterrett, chair of the task force, at sterrett.1@osu.edu.

Give

At First Church, our financial resources enable us to “Enter to worship, depart to serve.” You can support the mission and ministry of First Church now by using either EasyTithe or PayPal, by visiting <https://www.first-church.org/give/>, or by sending your offering directly to

First Congregational Church, 444 E. Broad Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215. For more information, please contact Annette McCormick at amccormick@firstchurch.org.

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

BREAD:

Join us at Nehemiah Action Tuesday, April 25, at 6:45 p.m.

BREAD’s big annual Nehemiah Action will take place on April 25 at the Celeste Building on the State Fair Grounds at 6:45 p.m. At this event we will show our support for the research that was done to find solutions for some of the problems that concern us so much. Please get your BREAD T-shirt at the coffee hour and sign up to be there. Together we can make a difference, because BREAD rises!

If you need help accessing Realm or to join our email list please send an email to home@first-church.org.

Keep in Prayer

Members Matty Provenzano; Karin Sandell; John Anderson; Sarah Giffen; Nancy Braverman; 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; Betsy Zahn; Janice White; John Carter and Mary Kay Beall Carter.

Family and friends AJ McWilliams’ friend, Bryce Miller; Melissa Kulwicki’s sister, Jennifer Scruggs; Cara Harasaki; Susie Loik’s friend and neighbor, Dottie Clark; Melody Leidheiser’s nephew, Mick Clark; Matt Farabaugh’s friend Pamla Mineo; Susie Loik’s friend, Jan Lanier and family; Victor John’s parents, Charles and Mary Jane John; Tom Gies’ sister, Monica Depinet; and Nancy Mayle.

Those who mourn loved ones Fred Hunker and family on the death of his mother, Beth Hunker; and Callie Mitchell on the death of Connie Hollins.

We pray for Community Church of Chesterland UCC, as their hearts break at the face of bigotry, homophobia, hatred, and violence. We stand with them in affirmation and support for each person’s human dignity and worth.

In the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle, we lift the people and churches in the Balkan countries of Albania, Bosnia, and Herzegovina, along with Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Slovenia. We also pray for the China Christian Council and Amity Foundation in China.

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.

Minister of Music: Joshua Stafford, M.M.

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

Building and Grounds Superintendent: Quang Pham

Custodians: Jenkins Smith, Alexis Wayne

Wedding Coordinators: Amy Wagner, Shelly Gies, Margaret Cipriani

Nursery Staff: Miranda Brooks, Shelly Gies, Celecia Smith

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:

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

Board of Trustees

Chairperson: Sue Cook

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



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST
God is still speaking,

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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