Welcome to First Church!

If you are visiting today and looking for a church home, welcome! For more than 171 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.

LEADERSHIP IN TODAY'S LITURGY

The Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Ahrens, preacher
The Rev. Joanna Samuelson, liturgist
Jill Hultin, liturgist
Melissa Kulwicki, worship leader
David Hogrefe, pianist
Geoff Dean, livestream ministry

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

Enter to Worship Jill Hultin

Leader: Blessed be God, Light of the world, bright Morning Star, and Spirit of love.

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

Leader: Beautiful are the works of God.

People: Beautiful also are the skins of God's people!

Leader: Beautiful is the mind of God!

People: Beautiful also are the hopes of God's people!

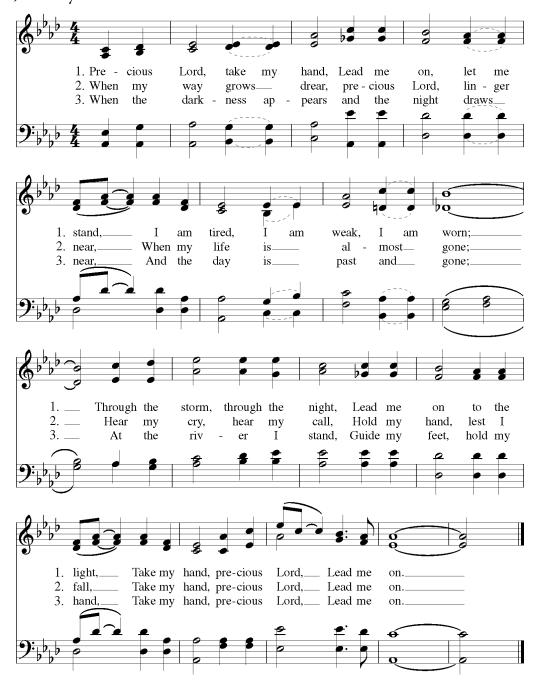
Leader: Beautiful is the heart of God!

People: Beautiful also are the souls of God's people!

Leader: God made the heavens and the earth!

People: To God be the glory for the things God has done.

—from the UCC Book of Worship, Trinity UCC, Chicago



*Invocation

The Rev. Joanna Samuelson

Leader: God be with you. **People.** And also with you.

Leader: Let us pray.

People: Almighty God, by the hand of Moses your servant you led your people out of slavery, and made them free at last: Grant that your Church, following the example of your prophet Martin Luther King, Jr., may resist oppression in the name of your love, and may secure for all your children the blessed liberty of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

*Welcome and Passing of the Peace

The Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Ahrens

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

People: And also with you.

Leader: Let us greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace.

* When you return to your seat, 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 Melissa Kulwicki

During the sermon time, the young children are welcome to participate in "Sunday Stories" with Melissa Kulwicki and Rev. Joanna.

THE HEBREW SCRIPTURE LESSON

1 Samuel 3:1-10

Jill Hultin

Leader: A reading from the First Book of Samuel, the third chapter.

Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the Lord under Eli. The word of the Lord was rare in those days; visions were not widespread.

At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was. Then the Lord called, "Samuel! Samuel!" and he said, "Here I am!" and ran to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down. The Lord called again, "Samuel!" Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. The Lord called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that the Lord was calling the boy. Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place. Now the Lord came and stood there, calling as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

Leader: The Word of God for the People of God.

People: Thanks be to God.

The Psalter

Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18 (St. Helena Psalter)

Jill Hultin

O God, you have searched me out and known me; you know my sitting down and my rising up; you discern my thoughts from afar.

You trace my journeys and my resting-places and are acquainted with all my ways.

Indeed, there is not a word on my lips, but you, O God, know it altogether.

You press upon me behind and before and lay your hand upon me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is so high that I cannot attain to it.

Where can I go then from your Spirit; where can I flee from your presence?

I will thank you because I am marvelously made; your works are wonderful, and I know it well.

My body was not hidden from you, while I was being made in secret and woven in the depths of the earth.

Your eyes beheld my limbs, yet unfinished in the womb; all of them were written in your book; they were fashioned day by day, when as yet there was none of them.

How deep I find your thoughts, O God; how great is the sum of them!

If I were to count them, they would be more in number than the sand; to count them all, my life span would need to be like yours.

Oh, that you would slay the wicked, O God! You that thirst for blood, depart from me.

Leader: A reading from the Gospel according to John, the first chapter.

Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth." Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him, "Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!" Nathanael asked him, "Where did you get to know me?" Jesus answered, "I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you." Nathanael replied, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" Jesus answered, "Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these." And he said to him, "Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

Leader: The Word of God for the People of God.

People: Thanks be to God.

SERMON "The Highway of Our Lord" Dr. Ahrens

Prayers of the People Dr. Ahrens

Leader: Let us pray as Christ our Savior has taught us.

All: 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, or see additional instructions in the Depart to Serve leaflet:



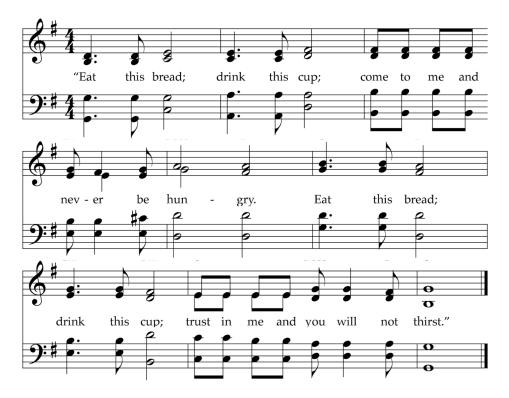
Mission Invitation Rev. Samuelson

Cash and designated gifts go to support MLK Kitchen for the Poor. Located in Toledo, the kitchen was established in 1969 by Reverend Harvey Savage Sr. It feeds more than 200 people each day including homeless, school age children, and elderly. In addition, they provide meal delivery to elderly and disabled. They provide ingredients for food stamp recipients needed to prepare meals at home. Throughout the year they provide counseling, clothing, and toys to people in need. We selected this mission to honor The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday. Thank you for your generosity,

Adaption by Zilphia Horton, Frank Hamilton, Guy Carawan, and Pete Seeger



"Eat this bread"



Post Communion Prayer

Dr. Ahrens

Leader: Let us pray.

All: 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

Ms. Kulwicki

Leader Let us depart with a heart to serve.

People: Thanks be to God.

*Closing Hymn

Christ Be Our Light, Bernadette Farrell, 1987

"Christ, be our light"



*Benediction

Postlude	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 one of our pastors or anyone wearing a name tag. We would be delighted to assist you.

Dr. Ahrens

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2024 Nominating Slate

Officers

Moderator: Greg Halbe Moderator Elect: Sarah Reed

Treasurer: James Velo

Treasurer Elect: Ramona Moenter

Secretary: Antoinette Koolemans-Beynen

Secretary Elect: Martha Wilson

Commissioners

Church Vitality Commissioner:

Church Vitality Commissioner Elect:

Faith Formation Commissioner:

Faith Formation Commissioner Elect:

House & Grounds Commissioner: Eric Klintworth

House & Grounds Commissioner Elect:

Justice & Mercy Commissioner: Janet Miller

Justice & Mercy Commissioner Elect:

Music, Arts, & Heritage Commissioner: Jim Griffen

Music, Arts, & Heritage Commissioner Elect: Personnel Commissioner: David Hogrefe

Personnel Commissioner Elect:

Stewardship Commissioner: Janice Taft

Stewardship Commissioner Elect: Mariner Taft

Technical & Communications Commissioner: Mike Kennedy

Technical & Communications Commissioner Elect:

At-Large Members

Adult Member At-Large: Jacquelyn Dean

Youth Member At-Large:

Nominating Chair

Sarah Reed

Trustees

Co-Chair: selected by Trustees 2-year term: Todd Jacobson 4-Year term: Frank Cook

Deacons

Senior Deacon: Tom Kiesel

Senior Deacon Elect: elected by Deacons

1-year term: Heather Jones3-year term: Thom Smith

3-year term: 3-year term:

3 year term: Andy Verhage Smith (Substitute)



This Week at First Church

Sunday, Jan. 14

9 a.m. Morning Prayer & Holy Communion

(Parish Hall & Virtual)

10 a.m. Bible Study on 1 Corinthians

(Classroom C)

Sunday School for Children & Youth

(Various Classrooms)

11 a.m. Worship Service (Sanctuary & Virtual) 12:30 p.m. Healthy Congregations Workshop

(Parish Hall)

Monday, Jan. 15

The Church and Church Office will be closed in honor of The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Tuesday, Jan. 16

7 p.m. Council Mtg (Classroom C & Zoom)

Wednesday, Jan. 17

10 a.m. Largest Table Food Prep and Delivery

(Kitchen)

10:30 a.m. Book Study (Classroom C & Zoom)

1:15 p.m. New Members (Fanning Rm)

6:30 p.m. Stephen Ministry Group (Fanning Rm)

Thursday, Jan. 18

4:30 p.m. Choristers (Choir Rm)

7:15 p.m. First Church Choir Rehearsal

(Choir Rm)

Saturday, Jan. 20

10 a.m. Family Organ Day (Sanctuary)

Sunday, Jan. 21

9 a.m. Morning Prayer & Holy Communion

(Parish Hall & Virtual)

10 a.m. Bible Study on 1 Corinthians

(Classroom C)

Sunday School for Children & Youth

(Various Classrooms)

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)

4 p.m. Choral Evensong (Sanctuary)

The Annual Meeting Sunday, January 28 One Worship Service at 10 a.m. Meeting at 11 a.m.

Everyone is encouraged to attend this very important yearly event in the life of our church. Childcare will be provided during worship and the annual meeting.

Voting Members are active members of First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, Columbus, Ohio. Voting Members must be present to vote. Non-Voting Members are Associate Members of First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, Columbus, Ohio, and guests.

The Annual Meeting will be recorded but will not be accessible through Zoom or Live-Stream.

First Serves January Diaper Drive Sunday, January 21 10-10:45 a.m.

All are invited to participate in our intergenerational First Serves Activity for January. We will be having a Diaper Drive to benefit Little Bottoms Free Store. We will be collecting and assembling packs of size 4,5,6 diapers, baby wipes, and boxes of gallon-sized Ziplock bags. If you would like to participate by donating these items, please visit the Giving Tree located in the Education Wing Breezeway to choose a "diaper" with one of these items. Donated items can be returned to the baskets under the tree on or before January 21 at 10 a.m. when we gather to assemble the packs.

Little Bottoms Free Store is located near Franklinton and provides diapers, wipes, and baby clothes to families in the Central Ohio area for children 0-3 years old.

Coffee Hour This Week

There is no Coffee Hour this week due to the Healthy Congregations Workshop.

Save the Date Family Organ Day Saturday, January 20, 2024 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Our first Family Organ Day will be held on January 20. This is a not-to-be-missed opportunity for children of all ages to get up close and personal with the Kimball and Beckerath organs of First Church. There will be an organ demonstration, a brief concert, and even an opportunity for children to try playing the organs.

Upcoming Mission Offerings

January 15 January 21 January 28 February 4 MLK Kitchen for the Poor Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) The Knight Perry Fund The Largest Table

Lunch Bunch East Market Thursday, January 25, 11:30 a.m.

Join us for Lunch Bunch on Thursday, January 25 at 11:30 a.m. at the East Market, 212 Kelton Avenue, Columbus. The East Market has transformed the historic West Car Barn of the old "Trolley Barn" property into a modern mix of the best local and independent businesses and restaurants. Register by clicking the QR Code below and enjoy a fun and unique dining and shopping experience!



Rev. Tim's Wednesday Book Study Wednesday, January 17, 10:30 a.m.

Join us on Wednesday, January 17 at 10:30 a.m. in Classroom C or on Zoom as we begin a new year and a new book study on *Jesus and the Disinherited* by Howard Thurman.

Please note our new Zoom link and meeting times for the Book Study.

January 17, 2024 10:30 a.m.

February 7, 2024 10:30 a.m.

Febbruary 21, 2024 10:30 a.m.

Join Zoom Meeting

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81627149619?pwd =QjJhbjg0NlYvcC9NeU9jajJkUTkxZz09

Meeting ID: 816 2714 9619

Passcode: 984584

Keep in Prayer

Members Janice Taft; Hugh Schultz; Ann Eidson; Steve Anderson; Dene Barnard; Tim Holt; Connie Johnson; Sarah Ahrens Stadie; John Carter and Mary Kay Beall Carter; Marilyn Potts; Dan Axt; Karl Schaab; Rick Sayre; Anne Morganstern; Martha Huey; Twink Starr; Janice White.

Family and friends Gary Glover and Greg Duncan's friend, Barb Wilson; Mary Ann Jacobson's nephew, Peter Poppleton; Diane Kutschbach and Emily Kutschbach Schmitt's aunt and great aunt, Lola, and Diana and Bob Kutschbach's cousin, Carson Samples; Melissa Kulwicki's mother-in-law, Bev Kulwicki; Susie Loik's grandson, Alex Glover and his parents, Kristen & Wes; Evin Hatch's grandmother, Shirley Hatch; Annie Hatch's extended family member, Ranae Walters; Wayne Piper; Hugh Schultz's friend, Barbara Van Riper; Arevena Nirote's sister and brother-in-law, Marlene and Gary Gallion; Melva Fisher's sister, Mary Bittle; Jill Hultin's sister, Gail Nelson; Fran and Bruce Panek's friends, Richard and Beverly Cicenas; Victor John, his parents, Charles and Mary Jane, and sister; Lorraine Quinichett; Martha Huey's sister, Stephanie Childs and cousin, Martha Dieckmann; Melody Leidheiser's niece and husband, Kathy and Mick Clark; Amy Brooks' father, Michael Hamlin; and Karl and Sallie Danneberger's friend, Ron Kendzier.

We keep Stephen Ministers in prayer as they care for our church members.

In the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle, we pray for the people and churches in Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. We also pray for our UCC partner in mission, the Ecumenical Foundation for Peace and Justice (House of Hope) in Haiti.

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 Realm, 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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Pastoral Care

If you are in need of pastoral care please contact Rev. Tim Ahrens <u>tahrens@first-church.org</u> or Rev. Joanna Samuelson <u>jsamuelson@first-church.org</u>.

Stephen Ministry

Stephen Ministry offers skilled, confidential, one to one spiritual and emotional caregiving for those who are experiencing difficult times in their lives. Our purpose is to be vessels of God's love and grace, and to create a safe space for people to share their struggles and find solace in their faith. Contact our Stephen Ministry at stephen-ministry@first-church.org.

Church Leadership

Senior Minister: Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Ahrens, D.Min., M.Div.

Designated Minister: Rev. Joanna Samuelson, M.Div.

Minister of Music: Joshua Stafford, M.M. Administrative Manager: Amy Wagner Communications Manager: Melissa Kulwicki

Office Assistant: Pat Patterson

Business Administrator: Annette McCormick **Building and Grounds Superintendent:** Quang Pham

Custodians: Alexis Wayne, Bob O'Brien

Wedding Coordinators: Amy Wagner, Shelly Gies, Margaret

Cipriani

Nursery Staff: Miranda Brooks, Shelly Gies, Celecia Smith Commissioned Minister for Social Justice: Tom Brownfield

Commissioned Minister for Spiritual Formation and Direction: Church Vitality: Wendy Kennedy

Jacquelyn Dean

Stephen Leader and Stephen Ministry Program Coordinator:

Gary Glover

Stephen Leader and Stephen Ministry Training Coordinator: House & Grounds: Mike Kennedy

Wendy Kennedy

Stephen Leader and Stephen Ministry Referrals Coordinator:

Susie Loik

Senior Deacon: Martha Wilson Senior Deacon-elect: Tom Kiesel

Deacons: Nan Kreimer, Gail Lowe, James Lowe,

Allison Lowery Palmer, Fran Panek, Joel Mathias, Dayna McCrary, BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Matt Myers, Lynn Wallich, 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: Martha Wilson Nominating Chair: Sarah Reed

COMMISSIONERS

Administration: Thomas Brownfield Administration-elect: David Hogrefe

Church Growth: Steve Sterrett

Church Growth-elect:

Church Vitality-elect: Education: Janice Taft

Education-elect: Mariner Taft

House & Grounds-elect: Eric Klintworth

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

Chairperson: Sue Cook

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

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

