



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



WORSHIP AT 11 A.M.
FEBRUARY 18, 2024
THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT



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. Dr. William R. Nirote, *worship leader*
Melissa Kulwicki, *worship leader*
Ethan Murray, *crucifer*
Joshua Stafford, *organist and director*
Aran Cunningham, *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

Attende Domine, Op. 8, No. 3

Jeanne Demessieux, 1947

ENTER TO WORSHIP

The Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Ahrens

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)*

Leader: The Lord has called us here this day.

People: Lord, reveal your purposes for us.

Leader: Open our hearts to receive God's good news.

People: Lord, make us ready to serve you.

Leader: Come, let us worship God!

People: Let us sing praises to the Almighty One. Amen.

*PROCESSIONAL HYMN
"Forty days and forty nights"

Aus der tiefe rufe ich, Martin Herbst, 1676
George Hunt Smyttan, 1856

1 For - ty days and for - ty nights you were fast - ing in the wild;
2 Shall not we your sor - row share and from world - ly joys ab - stain,
3 Then if Sa - tan on us press, flesh or spir - it to as - sail,
4 So shall we have peace di - vine: ho - lier glad - ness ours shall be;
5 Keep, O keep us, Sav - ior dear, ev - er con - stant by your side,

for - ty days and for - ty nights temp - ted, and yet un - de - filed.
fast - ing with un - ceas - ing prayer, strong with you to suf - fer pain?
vic - tor in the wil - der - ness, grant that we not faint nor fail!
round us, too, shall an - gels shine, such as served you faith - ful - ly.
that with you we may ap - pear at the e - ter - nal Eas - ter - tide.

*INVOCATION

The Rev. Dr. William R. Nirote

Leader: God be with you.

People. And also with you.

Leader: Let us pray.

People: Almighty God, whose blessed Son was led by the Spirit to be tempted by Satan: Come quickly to help us who are assaulted by many temptations; and, as you know the weaknesses of each of us, let each one find you mighty to save; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Rev. Ahrens

Leader: 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: Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

Silence may be observed for reflection and prayer.

*KYRIE ELEISON

Missa de Sancta Maria Magdalena, Healy Willan, 1928

Lord, have mer - cy up - on us. Lord, have mer - cy up -
 on us. Lord, have mer - cy up - on us. Christ, have mer - cy up -
 on us. Christ, have mer - cy up - on us. Christ, have mer - cy up -
 on us. Lord, have mer - cy up - on us.
 Lord, have mer - cy up - on us. Lord, have mer - cy up - on us.

*ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Rev. Ahrens

Leader: 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.

People: Amen. Thanks be to God.

*WELCOME AND PASSING OF THE PEACE

Rev. 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 Dr. Wendy Kirkland.

THE HEBREW SCRIPTURE

Genesis 9:8-17

Rev. Nirote

Leader: A reading from the book of Genesis, the ninth chapter.

God said to Noah and to his sons with him, "As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to

destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.” God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.”

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

People: Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM

Eurydice V. Osterman, 2019

“Create in me a clean heart”

Psalm 51:10-13

Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from thy presence;
and take not thy holy spirit from me.
Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation;
and uphold me with thy free spirit.
Then will I teach transgressors thy ways;
and sinners shall be converted unto thee.

THE EPISTLE

1 Peter 3:18-22

Rev. Nirote

Leader: A reading from the First Letter of Peter, the third chapter.

Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you-- not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

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

People: Thanks be to God.

"Lord, who throughout these forty days"

Claudia F. I. Hernaman, 1873

1. Lord, who through-out these for-ty days For us didst fast and pray,
 2. As Thou with Sa-tan didst con-tend, And didst the vic-tory win,
 3. And through these days of pen-i-tence, And through Thy Pas-sion-tide,
 4. A-bide with us, that so, this life Of suf-fering o-ver-past,

Teach us with Thee to mourn our sins, And close by Thee to stay.
 O give us strength in Thee to fight, In Thee to con-quer sin.
 Yea, ev-er-more, in life and death, O Lord, with us a-bide.
 An Eas-ter of un-end-ing joy We may at-tain at last!

THE GOSPEL

Mark 1:9-15

Rev. Ahrens

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

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."

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

People: Thanks be to God.

SERMON

"Jesus and Temptation"

Rev. Ahrens

Second in the Lenten sermon series, "Jesus"

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Rev. Nirote

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

Melody Leidheiser

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

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

attr. Richard Farrant, 16th c.

“Lord, for thy tender mercy’s sake”

J. Bull, Christian Prayers and Holy Meditations, 1568

Lord, for thy tender mercy's sake, lay not our sins to our charge,
but forgive that is past, and give us grace to amend our sinful lives:
to decline from sin and incline to virtue,
that we may walk in an upright heart,
before thee now and evermore. Amen.

*DOXOLOGY

Old 100th

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

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Rev. Ahrens

COMMUNITY NOTICES - DEPART TO SERVE

Ms. Kulwicki

L: Let us depart with a heart to serve.

P: Thanks be to God.

CLOSING HYMN
"It is Well With My Soul"

Ville du Havre, Philip P. Bliss, 1876
Horatio G. Spafford, 1876

1 When peace like a riv - er at - tend - eth my way, when
2 Though Sa - tan should buf - fet, though tri - als should come, let
3 He lives: O the bliss of this glo - ri - ous thought. My
4 Lord, has - ten the day when our faith shall be sight, the

sor - rows like sea bil - lows roll, what - ev - er my lot, thou hast
this blest as - sur - ance con - trol, that Christ hath re - gard - ed my
sin, not in part, but the whole, is nailed to the cross and I
clouds be rolled back as a scroll, the trum - pet shall sound and the

taught me to say, it is well, it is well with my soul.
help - less es - tate, and hath shed his own blood for my soul.
bear it no more. Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!
Lord shall de - scend; e - ven so it is well with my soul.

Refrain

It is well with my soul;
It is well with my soul;

it is well; it is well with my soul.

*BENEDICTION

Rev. Ahrens

POSTLUDE

Tocata in D Minor, BWV 538

Johann Sebastian Bach, c. 1712

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 would be delighted to assist you.

† THE FLOWERS THIS MORNING are given to the glory of God and in honor and remembrance of our parents, Joseph and Betty Niemiec and Victor and Ruth Adcock by Cynthia and Albert Adcock.

† GREETING AT THE EXITS

Rev. Ahrens — Narthex (Broad Street entrance)

Rev. Nirote — East Door (Ninth Street entrance by the Church Office)

Ms. Kulwicki — West Door (Cleveland Avenue entrance by the Chapel)

† COFFEE HOUR THIS MORNING is hosted by Carol and Jim Gallagher. Please join us in Parish Hall, located downstairs immediately below the sanctuary.

ON THE COVER

Him Only Shalt Thou Serve

Artist Sketch for the Jeffrey Window, Nicola D'Ascenzo Studios, Philadelphia, PA, 1931

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Enter to Worship
Depart to Serve

February 18, 2024

This Week at First Church

Sunday, Feb. 18

- 9 a.m. Morning Worship & Holy Communion
(Parish Hall & Virtual)
- 10 a.m. Bible Study (Classroom C)
Sunday School (Various Classrooms)
- 10:30 a.m. Confirmation Class
(St. Dominic's Church)
- 11 a.m. Worship Service (Sanctuary & Virtual)
- 12 p.m. Coffee Hour & Coffee Sales
(Parish Hall)
- Second Nurture (Classroom C)
- 4 p.m. Choral Evensong (Sanctuary)
- 6 p.m. Youth Group Gathering (Parish Hall)

Monday, Feb. 19

- 6 p.m. Time Out Monday (Café Istanbul)

Wednesday, Feb. 21

- 10 a.m. The Largest Table (Kitchen)
- 10:30 a.m. Book Study (Classroom C & Zoom)
- 6:30 p.m. Stephen Ministers Group (Fanning Rm)

Thursday, Feb. 22

- 4:30 p.m. Choristers (Choir Rm)
- 6 p.m. Bell Choir Rehearsal (Bell Rm)
- 7:15 p.m. First Church Choir Rehearsal
(Choir Rm)

Saturday, Feb. 24

- 9 a.m. Faith Mission Lunch Prep (Kitchen)

Sunday, Feb. 25

- 9 a.m. Morning Worship & Holy Communion
(Parish Hall & Virtual)
- 10 a.m. First Serves (Education Wing)
- 11 a.m. Worship Service (Sanctuary & Virtual)
- 12 p.m. Neighborhood Care Circles
(Parish Hall)
- 6 p.m. Youth Group Gathering (Parish Hall)

Choral Evensong Today at 4 p.m.

Neighborhood Care Circles Luncheon Sunday, February 25 After 11 a.m. Worship Parish Hall

Learn all about our new neighborhood groups and how they will help all of us create new connections with our church family. Enjoy a taco bar and get to know your neighbors! Dessert contributions are welcome. Representatives from Church Vitality and Deacons will pass out invitations this Sunday following both worship services. Donations for the luncheon are encouraged. Please RSVP by placing your completed invitation in one of the baskets outside the sanctuary.

First Serves: SOAP Project Sunday, February 25 10-10:45 a.m.

This month, we will work alongside one another to label bars of soap that we will donate to The Soap Project (soaproject.org). It is a nationwide organization that works to end human trafficking by mobilizing communities to provide prevention education and advocacy and to facilitate restorative experiences for survivors. We are asking for monetary donations to purchase the supplies. Please visit the Giving Tree in the Education Wing and take an envelope. You can place your donation in the envelope and drop it in the collection plate. You can also give online; just make sure to designate it for "First Serves." Thank you for your generosity!

Keep in Prayer

Members Annette McCormick; Maggie Myers; Kathy Brownfield; Bob and Sherri Moreen; Bridget Tharp and Tony Baker; Wendy Reber; Antoinette Beynen; Elaine Warren; Steve Anderson; Dene Barnard; Connie Johnson; John Carter and Mary Kay Beall Carter; Dan Axt; Rick Sayre; Anne Morganstern; Martha Huey; Twink Starr; Janice White.

Family and friends David Kandel's mother, Dottie Kandel; Jim Griffin's friends, Andy Bell and John Alatsis; Pastor Michael Bean and family on the death of his sister, Eloise Downing; Joshua Stafford and Stefan Duga's friend, Robert Moody, on the death of his husband, James Jones; Duan Cannon's mother, Lois Fields; Marti Rideout; Pat Patterson's son, Jay Patterson; Jill Hultin's brother, Ken Hultin; Mary Ann Jacobson's nephew, Peter Poppleton; Diana and Bob Kutschbach's cousin, Carson Samples; Susie Loik's grandson, Alex Glover and his parents, Kristen & Wes; Arevena Nirote's sister and brother-in-law, Marlene and Gary Gallion; Fran and Bruce Panek's friends, Richard and Beverly Cicenas; Victor John, his parents, Charles and Mary Jane, and sister; Martha Huey's sister, Stephanie Childs and cousin, Martha Dieckmann; Amy Brooks' father, Michael Hamlin; and Karl and Sallie Danneberger's friend, Ron Kendzier.

Those who mourn loved ones Melody Leidheiser and her niece, Kathy Clark, on the death of Melody's nephew and Kathy's husband, Mick Clark; Jill Hultin on the death of her sister, Gail Nelson; Geneva Rice on the death of her dear friend, Jim Monsul.

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 France, Germany, and Monaco. We also pray for our UCC partner in mission, the people of Inba Illam, the Happy Home, in India.

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.

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

Coffee Hour and Coffee Sales

Sacred Earth will be in Parish Hall following the 9 and 11 a.m. worship services. The coffee cart will be open; stop by and pick up fair trade coffee, tea, and cocoa!

Carol and Jim Gallagher will host Coffee Hour after 11 a.m. worship.

Upcoming Mission Offerings

February 18	Good Sam
February 25	Equal Justice Initiative
March 3	Sanctuary Night
March 10	First Serves

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: Jacquelyn Dean
Stephen Leader and Stephen Ministry Program Coordinator: Gary Glover
Stephen Leader and Stephen Ministry Training Coordinator: 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, 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: Wendy Kennedy
Church Vitality-elect:
Education: Janice Taft
Education-elect: Mariner Taft
House & Grounds: Mike Kennedy
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

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

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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