



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



WORSHIP AT 11 A.M.  
FEBRUARY 25, 2024  
THE SECOND 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. Joanna Samuelson, *officiant*

Todd Cunningham, *liturgist*

Melissa Kulwicki, *worship leader*

Sebastian Kulwicki, *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

*Méditation*, Op. 31, No. 7

Louis Vierne, 1913

### ENTER TO WORSHIP

Todd Cunningham

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 pathway is just beginning.

**People: We have encountered the wilderness.**

Leader: Now we are moving rapidly toward Jerusalem.

**People: Along the way we will witness astonishing acts of mercy and justice.**

Leader: Lord, be with us on the journey.

**People: Guide our lives and our steps, we pray. Amen.**

\*PROCESSIONAL HYMN

“Called as partners in Christ's service”

Beecher, John Zundel, 1870

Jane Parker Huber, 1981

1 Called as part-ners in Christ's ser-vice, called to min-is-tries of grace,  
 2 Christ's ex-am-ple, Christ's in-spir-ing, Christ's clear call to work and worth,  
 3 Thus new pat-terns for Christ's mis-sion, in a small or glob-al sense,  
 4 So God grant us for to - mor-row ways to or - der hu - man life

we re-spond with deep com-mit-ment fresh new lines of faith to trace.  
 let us fol-low, nev - er fal-tering, rec - on - cil - ing folk on earth.  
 help us bear each oth - er's bur-dens, break-ing down each wall or fence.  
 that sur-round each per - son's sor-row with a calm that con-que-ers strife.

May we learn the art of shar-ing, side by side and friend with friend,  
 Men and wom-en, rich - er, poor - er, all God's peo-ple, young and old,  
 Words of com-fort, words of vi-sion, words of chal-lenge, said with care,  
 Make us part-ners in our liv-ing, our com-pas-sion to in - crease,

e - qual part-ners in our car-ing to ful - fill God's cho - sen end.  
 blend-ing hu - man skills to - geth - er gra - cious gifts from God un - fold.  
 bring new power and strength for ac - tion, make us col - leagues, free and fair.  
 mes - sen - gers of faith, thus giv - ing hope and con - fi - dence and peace.

\*INVOCATION

The Rev. Joanna Samuelson

Leader: God be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Leader: Let us pray.

People: **O God, whose glory it is always to have mercy: Be gracious to all who have gone astray from your ways, and bring them again with penitent hearts and steadfast faith to embrace and hold fast the unchangeable truth of your Word, Jesus Christ your Son; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, forever and ever. Amen.**

\*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

The Rev. Dr. Timothy C. 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. Samuelson

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

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.*

# THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY BAPTISM FOR MALCOLM JAMES BLANKS

*We welcome Malcolm, parents Trai and Kristen, brothers Dominick and Adrian,  
godparents Jenn and Juan Poniciano, and Senior Deacon Tom Kiesel.*

## \*BAPTISMAL HYMN

“These treasured children” (vv. 1–2)

*Puer Nobis*, Trier Manuscript, 15th c.

Jacque B. Jones, 2009

1. These treas - ured chil - dren pres - ent now are bound to us by sa - cred vow: with  
2. Our an - cient sto - ry we shall tell, till these our chil - dren know it well with-

love, we make a heart - felt claim to wel - come them in Je - sus' name.  
in their souls and minds and hearts, for this is where their jour - ney starts.

## WELCOME

Leader: . . . But when Jesus saw it, Jesus was indignant, and said to them,

**People:** “Let the children come to me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the realm of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the realm of God like a child shall not enter it.”

## ADDRESS

Leader: . . . the sign and seal of their participation in God’s forgiveness, and the beginning of their growth into full Christian faith and discipleship.

**People:** **This is the water of baptism. Out of this water we rise with new life, forgiven of sin and one in Christ, members of Christ’s body.**

## QUESTIONS OF THE CANDIDATE

### \*CONGREGATIONAL ASSENT

*\*The congregation is invited to stand.*

Leader: . . . Do you, who witness and celebrate this sacrament, promise your love, support, and care to the one about to be baptized, as Malcolm lives and grows in Christ?

**People:** **We promise our love, support, and care.**

### \*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Leader: Let us unite with the church in all times and places in confessing our faith in the triune God. Do you believe in God?

**People:** **I believe in God.**

Leader: Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

**People:** **I believe in Jesus Christ.**

Leader: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

**People:** **I believe in the Holy Spirit.**

*The congregation may be seated.*

PRAYER OF BAPTISM

Leader: Christ be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

Leader: Let us pray.

ACT OF BAPTISM

NAMING OF THE CHILD

Leader: Malcolm James Blanks, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Rise from the waters of baptism and give glory to God all the days of your life.

**People: Amen.**

PRAYER FOR THE BAPTIZED

Leader: Grant us grace to receive, nurture, and befriend this newest member of the body of Christ.

**People: Give to Malcolm strength for life's journey, courage in time of suffering, the joy of faith, the freedom of love and the hope of new life; through Jesus Christ, who makes us one. Amen.**

\*BAPTISMAL HYMN

*Puer Nobis*, Trier Manuscript, 15th c.

"These treasured children" (vv. 1-2)

Jacque B. Jones, 2009

The image shows a musical score for a hymn. It consists of two systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are written below the notes. The first system contains three lines of lyrics, and the second system contains two lines. The music is a simple, homophonic setting of the text.

3. We long to trust as chil - dren do and so en-trust our days to you; in  
4. Come, Ho - ly Spir - it, help us be a nur - tur - ing com - mu - ni - ty; em -  
5. Then, ten - der God, each child em-brace; God give them bless - ings, grant them grace. Sur -  
their young lives we clear - ly see a les - son in hu - mil - i - ty.  
pow - er us to re - a - lize the realm of God through chil - dren's eyes.  
prise them, God, with won - ders still, and gent - ly guide them to your will.

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

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

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said to him, “I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous.” Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, “As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. God said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall give rise to nations; kings of peoples shall come from her.”

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

**People: Thanks be to God.**

Leader: A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans, the fourth chapter.

For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation. For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, as it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations”) —in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become “the father of many nations,” according to what was said, “So numerous shall your descendants be.” He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was already as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah’s womb. No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. Therefore his faith “was reckoned to him as righteousness.”

Now the words, “it was reckoned to him,” were written not for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.

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

**People: Thanks be to God.**

"Will you come and follow me"

The Iona Community, 1987



1. Will you come and fol - low me if I but call your name?
2. Will you leave your - self be - hind if I but call your name?
3. Will you let the blind - ed see if I but call your name?
4. Will you love the "you" you hide if I but call your name?
5. Christ, your sum - mons e - choes true when you but call my name.



Will you go where you don't know and nev - er be the same?  
 Will you care for cruel and kind and nev - er be the same?  
 Will you set the pris - oners free and nev - er be the same?  
 Will you quell the fear in - side and nev - er be the same?  
 Let me turn and fol - low you and nev - er be the same.



Will you let my love be shown, will you let my name be known,  
 Will you risk the hos - tile stare should your life at - tract or scare?  
 Will you kiss the lep - er clean, and do such as this un - seen,  
 Will you use the faith you've found to re - shape the world a - round,  
 In your com - pa - ny I'll go where your love and foot - steps show.



will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?  
 Will you let me an - swer prayer in you and you in me?  
 and ad - mit to what I mean in you and you in me?  
 through my sight and touch and sound in you and you in me?  
 Thus I'll move and live and grow in you and you in me.

## THE GOSPEL

Mark 8:31-38

Rev. Ahrens

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

Then he began to teach them that the Anointed One must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Anointed One will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."



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

**People: Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

“Jesus and His Call to Follow”  
*Third in the Lenten sermon series, “Jesus”*

Rev. Ahrens

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Rev. Samuelson

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. Ahrens

Cash and designated gifts go to the **Equal Justice Initiative**, whose mission includes ending the mass incarceration and excessive punishment in the US. They challenge racial and economic injustice for the most vulnerable people in society and strive to protect basic human rights. They established the Legacy Museum in 2018 which explores the history of racial inequality. Thank you for your generosity.

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

African American Spiritual

“Give me Jesus”

arr. Wendell Whalum, 1978

Oh, when I come to die, give me Jesus.

You may have all this world, give me Jesus.

I heard my mother say, give me Jesus.

Dark midnight was my cry, give me Jesus.

In the morning when I rise, give me Jesus.

\*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. Amen.**

\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Rev. Samuelson

**For gifts given and received, O God, we offer our praise.**

**May we share our abundance with all who have need,**

**and may we share our hope in like measure. Amen.**

COMMUNITY NOTICES - DEPART TO SERVE

Ms. Kulwicki

L: Let us depart with a heart to serve.

**P: Thanks be to God.**

\*CLOSING HYMN  
 "Take up your cross"

*Bourbon*, attr. Freeman Lewis, 1825  
 Charles William Everest, 1833

1. Take up your cross, the Sav - ior said, If  
 2. Take up your cross, let not its weight Fill  
 3. Take up your cross, heed not the shame, And  
 4. Take up your cross, then, in Christ's strength, And

you would My dis - ci - ple be; Take up your cross with  
 your weak spir - it with a - larm; Christ's strength shall bear your  
 let your fool - ish heart be still; The Lord for you ac -  
 calm - ly ev - ery dan - ger brave: It guides you to a -

will - ing heart, And hum - bly fol - low af - ter Me.  
 spir - it up And brace your heart and nerve your arm.  
 cept - ed death Up - on a cross, on Cal - vary's hill.  
 bun - dant life And leads to vic - tory o'er the grave.

*Please be seated for the Commissioning.*

COMMISSIONING OF 2024 OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH

Revs. Ahrens and Samuelson

Leader: Hear these words of Scripture:

"I give you a new commandment that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

Do you seek to experience God in new ways through this time of service as officers of First Congregational Church?

Officers: We do, with the help of God and one another.

Leader: Will you listen to the wisdom and experience of those you meet during this time of service?

Officers: We will, with the help of God and one another.

Leader: Do you promise to share your talents, skills and energy, as you are able, serving alongside and with others?

Officers: We do, with the help of God and one another.

Leader: Members of this household of faith, you have heard the promises of our siblings in Christ, who have answered God's call to service. Let us affirm our intention to live in covenant with them.

**People: We gather in celebration of the joy that is ours to be partners with you in the service of Jesus Christ. We promise to love you and keep you in prayer. We promise to keep in prayer those with whom you will serve, that together we may be a faithful church of Jesus Christ.**

Leader: We commission you on behalf of this congregation and in covenant with the United Church of Christ to be officers of this church and disciples of Christ in this place. Love one another, as Christ has first loved you.

\*BENEDICTION

Rev. Ahrens

POSTLUDE

*Toccata*, Op. 53, No. 6

Louis Vierne, 1926

*Please be seated for the Postlude.*

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*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 memory of George John Miller and Paul Vincent Miller III by Jonathan Miller.

† GREETING AT THE EXITS

Rev. Samuelson — Narthex (Broad Street entrance)

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

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

† Please join us in Parish Hall, located downstairs immediately below the sanctuary for the Neighborhood Caring Circle luncheon.

ON THE COVER

*Go Teach All Nations*

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

Rightmost medallion in the upper band of the Jeffrey Window.

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*Enter to Worship*  
**Depart to Serve**

February 25, 2024

## **This Week at First Church**

### **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)
- 12:30 p.m. Neighborhood Care Circles  
(Parish Hall)

### **Monday, Feb. 26**

- 10 a.m. Stewardship & Growth Commission  
Meeting (Fanning Rm)
- 12 Noon Grief Support Group  
(Classroom C & Zoom)

### **Tuesday, Feb. 27**

- 5:15 p.m. Laundry Love (Wash Land)
- 7 p.m. Deacon's Mtg (Zoom)

### **Thursday, Feb. 29**

- 10 a.m. Memorial Service for James Borling  
(Sanctuary)  
Reception to follow (Parish Hall)
- 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)

### **Friday, Mar. 1**

- 6 p.m. Pysanky Egg Workshop (Parish Hall)

### **Saturday, Mar. 2**

- 10:30 a.m. Sacred Earth Mtg (Adult Library)
- 1:30 p.m. Pysanky Egg Workshop (Parish Hall)

### **Sunday, Mar. 3**

- 9 a.m. Morning Worship & Holy Communion  
(Parish Hall & Virtual)
- 10 a.m. Bible Study (Classroom C)  
Sunday School (various Classrooms)
- 11 a.m. Worship Service & Holy Communion  
(Sanctuary & Virtual)
- 12:30 p.m. Confirmation Class (Classroom C)
- 4 p.m. Concerts at First Church (Sanctuary)

## **Neighborhood Care Circles Luncheon**

**Today, After 11 a.m. Worship  
Parish Hall**

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**Concerts at First Church  
Ahreum Han, organist  
Sunday, March 3  
4 p.m. - 5 p.m.**

Organist Ahreum Han Congdon's imaginative, powerful, and extraordinary performances have thrilled audiences throughout the United States, Asia, and Europe. She has been a featured soloist at many conventions and festivals, including the 2012 National Convention of the American Guild of Organists, the 2010 AGO Winter Conclave, the Young Virtuosi Festival, and the White Mountain Musical Arts Bach Festival.

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## **Pysanky Workshop**

**Two Dates:**

**Friday, March 1, 6 - 9 p.m.**

**Saturday, March 2, 1:30- 4:30  
p.m. in Parish Hall**

**Register on Realm**

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## **Deep Griha Dinner**

**Friday, March 8, 6 – 8 p.m.**

**First Community North Campus**

Please join us for the catered dinner at First Community North Campus, 3777 Dublin Road, Dublin Ohio 43221. The event is Friday, March 8, 6 – 8 p.m. Tickets are \$25/person and you can register online at [tinyurl.com/deepgrihadinner2024](https://tinyurl.com/deepgrihadinner2024).

# Jesus: A Lenten Sermon Series

February 14, 2024, Ash Wednesday  
The Rev. Dr. Tim Ahrens Preaching “Jesus and Forgiveness”  
Worship at Noon & 7 p.m.

February 18, 2024, First Sunday in Lent  
The Rev. Dr. Tim Ahrens Preaching “Jesus and Temptation”  
Worship at 9 & 11 a.m.

February 25, 2024, Second Sunday in Lent  
The Rev. Dr. Tim Ahrens Preaching “Jesus and His Call to Follow”  
Worship at 9 & 11 a.m.

March 3, 2024, Third Sunday in Lent  
The Rev. Dr. Tim Ahrens Preaching “Jesus, Anger, and Justice”  
Worship at 9 & 11 a.m.

March 10, 2024, Fourth Sunday in Lent  
The Rev. Dr. Tim Ahrens Preaching “Jesus and the Agony of Prayer”  
Worship at 9 & 11 a.m.

March 17, 2024, Fifth Sunday in Lent  
The Rev. Joanna Samuelson Preaching “Jesus in Our Midst”  
Worship at 9 & 11 a.m.

March 24, 2024, Palm/Passion Sunday  
The Rev. Dr. Tim Ahrens Preaching “Jesus and the Children”  
Worship at 9 & 11 a.m.

March 28, 2024, Maundy Thursday  
7 p.m. Communion, followed by the Office of Tenebrae Service

March 29, 2024, Good Friday  
The Rev. Dr. Tim Ahrens Preaching “Jesus and the Way of the Cross”  
Service at 12 Noon

March 31, 2024, Easter Sunday  
The Rev. Dr. Tim Ahrens Preaching “Jesus: Rising Now and Forever”  
Sunrise Service, 8:45 a.m. & 11 a.m.

## Lenten Book Study Groups

We are offering book study groups throughout this Lenten season. The book that we'll read as a congregation this year is *Following Jesus: Finding Our Way Home in an Age of Anxiety* by the beloved author Henri Nouwen. We have copies of the book available for your purchase for \$17 in the church office or you may find a copy of the book at the public library or bookseller.

Our Lenten Book Study Groups will be hosted by the following First Church members:

### **Marty and Gerry Worth**

(Marty and Gerry's home in Upper Arlington)  
Wednesdays, 7-8 p.m., beginning on Wednesday, March 6. Contact Marty to register at 614.488.2169 or [martha-worth@att.net](mailto:martha-worth@att.net)

### **Becky Taft**

(Ohio Living Westminster-Thurber in Victorian Village/Columbus) Thursdays, February 22 - March 28, 10-11:15 a.m. Contact Becky at 614.702.1011 or [rrtaft@columbus.rr.com](mailto:rrtaft@columbus.rr.com)

### **Melissa Kulwicksi**

(First Church Parlor)  
Thursdays, 7-8:30 p.m., beginning on February 29  
Contact Melissa at [mkulwicksi@first-church.org](mailto:mkulwicksi@first-church.org)

### **Rev. Tim Ahrens**

(First Church Parlor)  
Wednesdays, 12-1:30 p.m., March 13, 20 and 27  
Contact Tim at [tahrens@first-church.org](mailto:tahrens@first-church.org)

### **Lynn Wallich and Bev Cook**

(Lynn's home in Victorian Village/Columbus)  
Thursdays, 6-8 p.m., beginning on March 7  
Contact Lynn at 614.563.2560 or [lrw25@yahoo.com](mailto:lrw25@yahoo.com)

### **Melva Fisher**

(Melva's home on the east side near Reynoldsburg)  
Wednesdays, 7-8 p.m., Thursday, 3/6 and 3/20  
Contact Melva at 614.264.7476

Please contact the host directly for more details and directions. Please reach out to Rev. Joanna at [jsamuelson@first-church.org](mailto:jsamuelson@first-church.org) or 214.995.3525 (cell) with questions.

## First Church Book Club

Wednesday, March 6 at 7 p.m.

*Paved Paradise: How Parking Explains the World*

Wednesday, April 3 at 7 p.m.

*A Long Petal of the Sea*

Come enjoy lively conversation and fellowship this March and April with the First Church Book Club.

On Wednesday, March 6, Todd Jacobson will lead a discussion of Henry Graber's *Paved Paradise: How Parking Explains the World*, an entertaining, enlightening, and utterly original investigation into one of the most quietly influential forces in modern American life—the humble parking spot. Parking dominates and frustrates our lives and actually consumes more space in America than housing. The Los Angeles Times says this is a “highly entertaining romp, packed with tales of anger, violence, theft, lust, greed, political chicanery, and transportation policy gone wrong.”

On Wednesday, April 3, Jackie Dean will lead a discussion of *A Long Petal of the Sea* by Isabel Allende. This epic novel follows two young people fleeing the aftermath of the Spanish Civil War, searching for a place to call home. As the battle between freedom and repression plays out across the world, they create a new life in Chile as refugees while still hoping to someday return to Spain. A story of political upheaval, war, loss, survival, and love. Questions? Call Kathy Reed, 614-442-7742.

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## Stephen Ministry: Do You Know Someone Who Is Hurting?

Suggest a Stephen Minister and ask whether you can have a Stephen Leader contact him or her. You can help! A Stephen Minister offers one-to-one confidential care. Contact our Stephen Ministry at [stephenministry@first-church.org](mailto:stephenministry@first-church.org)

# Keep in Prayer

**Members** Annette McCormick; Maggie Myers; Kathy Brownfield; Bob and Sheri 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** Alexis Wayne; 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 and 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** Melissa Kulwicki's cousins, Linda and Lexi Brown on the death of Linda's daughter and Lexi's sister, Mia Brown; Elaine Borling on the death of her husband, James Borling.

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 Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands. We also pray for our UCC partner in mission, the Ecumenical Foundation for Integral Development, Capacity Building, and Education, and the Evangelical United Methodist Church of Ecuador.

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## 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](mailto:amccormick@firstchurch.org).

Cash and designated gifts go to the **Equal Justice Initiative**, whose mission includes ending the mass incarceration and excessive punishment in the US. They challenge racial and economic injustice for the most vulnerable people in society and strive to protect basic human rights. They established the Legacy Museum in 2018 which explores the history of racial inequality. Thank you for your generosity.

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## Pastoral Care

If you are in need of pastoral care please contact Rev. Tim Ahrens [tahrens@first-church.org](mailto:tahrens@first-church.org) or Rev. Joanna Samuelson [jsamuelson@first-church.org](mailto:jsamuelson@first-church.org).

## Upcoming Mission Offerings

<b>February 25</b>	<b>Equal Justice Initiative</b>
March 3	Sanctuary Night
March 10	First Serves
March 17	Columbus Relief

# 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

**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:** Tom Kiesel

**Senior Deacon-elect:**

**Deacons:** Allen Baker, Leslie Boltz, Heather Jones, Brian Kemp, Allison Lowery Palmer, Joel Mathias, Dayna McCrary, Matt Myers, Fran Panek, Andy Smith Verhage, Thom Smith, Lynn Wallich, 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

**Church Stewardship and Church Growth:** Janice Taft

**Church Stewardship and Church Growth-elect:**

**Church Vitality:** Pat Patterson

**Church Vitality-elect:**

**Communications and Technology Commission:** Mike Kennedy

**Communications and Technology Commission-elect:** Stefan Duga

**Faith Formation Commission:** Mariner Taft

**Faith Formation Commission-elect:** Cami Curren

**House & Grounds:** Eric Klintworth

**House & Grounds-elect:**

**Justice & Mercy:** Janet Miller

**Justice & Mercy-elect:**

**Music, Arts & Heritage:** Jim Griffin

**Music, Arts & Heritage-elect:** Cheryl Hoskinson

**Members-at-Large:** Jacquelyn Dean

**Personnel:** David Hogrefe

**Personnel-elect:** Sandra Mathias

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**Chairperson:** Frank Cook

**Trustees:** David Holt (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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