



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



WORSHIP AT 11 A.M.

MARCH 3, 2024

THE THIRD 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 and co-celebrant*

The Rev. Joanna Samuelson, *co-celebrant*

Fran Panek, *liturgist*

Melissa Kulwicki, *worship leader*

Malcolm Gillies, *crucifer*

Joshua Stafford, *organist and director*

Jennifer Fry, *handbell director*

Pat Patterson, *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

Meditation on *Beautiful Savior*

arr. Cathy Moglebust, 1996

### ENTER TO WORSHIP

Fran Panek

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: O God, open our lips.

**People: And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.**

Leader: Praise to the holy and undivided Trinity, one God:

**People: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

\*PROCESSIONAL HYMN

"The church of Christ in every age"

Wareham, William Knapp, 1738

Fred Pratt Green, 1969

1 The church of Christ in ev - ery age, be - set by  
 2 A - cross the world, a - cross the street, the vic - tims  
 3 Then let the ser - vant church a - rise, a car - ing  
 4 For Christ a - lone, whose blood was shed, can cure the  
 5 We have no mis - sion but to serve in full o -

change but Spir - it - led, must claim and test its  
 of in - jus - tice cry for shel - ter and for  
 church that longs to be a part - ner in Christ's  
 fe - ver in our blood, and teach us how to  
 be - dience to our Lord: to care for all, with -

her - i - tage and keep on ris - ing from the dead.  
 bread to eat, and nev - er live be - fore they die.  
 sac - ri - fice, and clothed in Christ's hu - man - i - ty.  
 share our bread and feed the starv - ing mul - ti - tude.  
 out re - serve, and spread Christ's lib - er - at - ing word.

INVOCATION

The Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Ahrens

Leader: God be with you.

**People. And also with you.**

Leader: Let us pray.

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

\*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

The Rev. Joanna Samuelson

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.*

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

## THE EPISTLE

1 Corinthians 1:18-25

Mrs. Panek

Leader: A reading from the First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians, the first chapter.

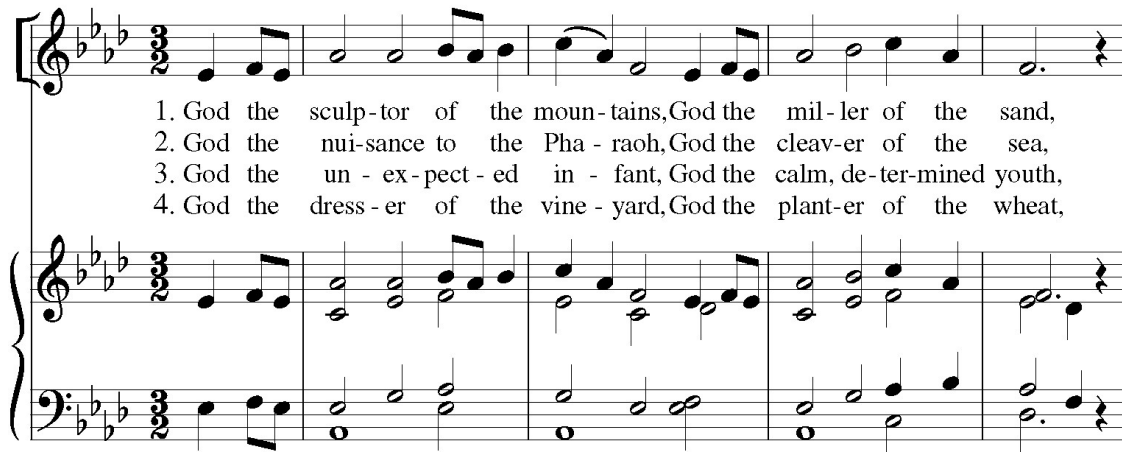
The message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart." Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

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

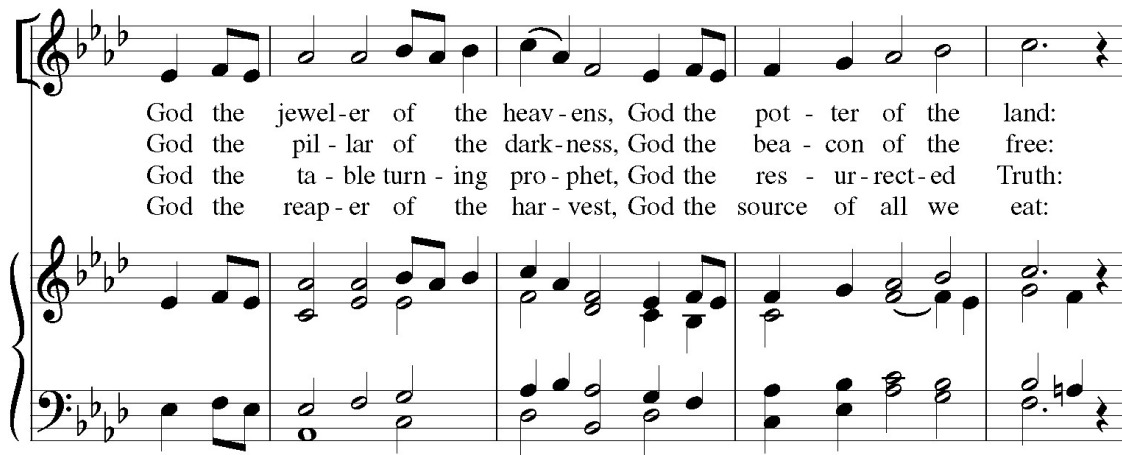
**People: Thanks be to God.**

\*THE GOSPEL HYMN  
"God the sculptor of the mountains"

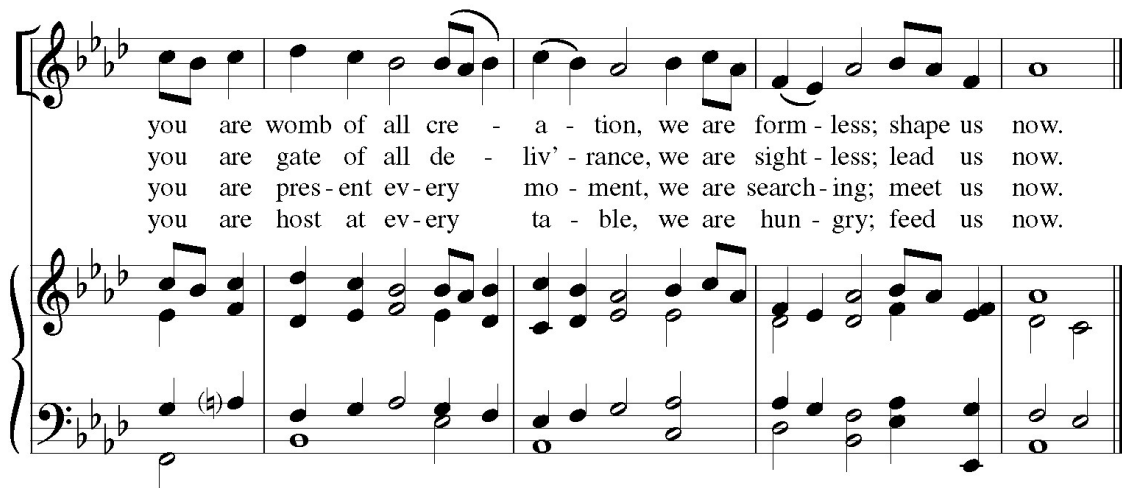
Sandria, Gerre Hancock, 1988  
John Thornburg, 1994



1. God the sculp-tor of the moun-tains, God the mil-ler of the sand,  
2. God the nui-sance to the Pha-raoh, God the cleav-er of the sea,  
3. God the un-ex-pect-ed in-fant, God the calm, de-ter-mined youth,  
4. God the dress-er of the vine-yard, God the plant-er of the wheat,



God the jewel-er of the heav-ens, God the pot-ter of the land:  
God the pil-lar of the dark-ness, God the bea-con of the free:  
God the ta-ble turn-ing pro-phet, God the res-ur-rect-ed Truth:  
God the reap-er of the har-vest, God the source of all we eat:



you are womb of all cre-a-tion, we are form-less; shape us now.  
you are gate of all de-liv'-rance, we are sight-less; lead us now.  
you are pres-ent ev-ery mo-moment, we are search-ing; meet us now.  
you are host at ev-ery ta-ble, we are hun-gry; feed us now.

THE GOSPEL

John 2:13-22

Rev. Ahrens

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

The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. He told those who were selling the doves, "Take

these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!" His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me." The Jews then said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this?" Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?" But he was speaking of the temple of his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

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

**People: Thanks be to God.**

COMMUNION MEDITATION

"Jesus, Anger, and Justice"

Rev. Ahrens

*Fourth in the Lenten sermon series, "Jesus"*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Rev. Samuelson

### THE OFFERTORY

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



MISSION INVITATION

Nancy Hashman

Cash and designated gifts go to **Sanctuary Night**. Sanctuary Night is a sacred, drop-in space serving vulnerable womxn who are at risk for sexual exploitation. Located on the west side of Columbus, Sanctuary Night provides a place to rest, eat, connect, and get desired resources. This vibrant community is led by survivors and champions to promote the flourishing of all who sit at our table. Thank you for your generosity.

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

John Tavener, 1982  
William Blake, 1789

The Lamb

Little Lamb who made thee?  
Dost thou know who made thee?  
Gave thee life and bid thee feed  
By the stream and o'er the mead;  
Gave thee clothing of delight,  
Softest clothing wooly bright;  
Gave thee such a tender voice,  
Making all the vales rejoice:  
Little Lamb who made thee?  
Dost thou know who made thee?

Little Lamb I'll tell thee,  
Little Lamb I'll tell thee:  
He is called by thy name,  
For he calls himself a Lamb:  
He is meek and he is mild,  
He became a little child:  
I a child and thou a lamb,  
We are called by his name:  
Little Lamb God bless thee.  
Little Lamb God bless thee.

\*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.**

## THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

*We practice open communion: Wherever you are on your faith journey, you are welcome at the Lord's table.*

*As directed by the deacons, please come forward down the center aisle, receive the elements of communion, partake them, and place the cup in the basket provided. Individual bread and cup will be offered to you by the communion ministers.*

*Gluten-free wafers are available. Please deposit the plastic cups in the bins by the side aisles.*

### \*INVITATION

Rev. Ahrens

Beloved in Christ, the Gospel tells us that on the first day of the week Jesus Christ was raised from death, appeared to Mary Magdalene, on that same day sat at the table with two disciples, and was made known to them in the breaking of the bread. This table is for all Christians who wish to know the presence of Christ and to share in the community of God's people.

### \*SURSUM CORDA

Plainsong

The musical notation consists of three staves of plainsong. The first staff has two parts: 'Leader' and 'People'. The lyrics are: 'The Lord be with you. And also with you.' The second staff also has two parts: 'Leader' and 'People'. The lyrics are: 'Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.' The third staff has two parts: 'Leader' and 'People'. The lyrics are: 'Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right to give our thanks and praise.'

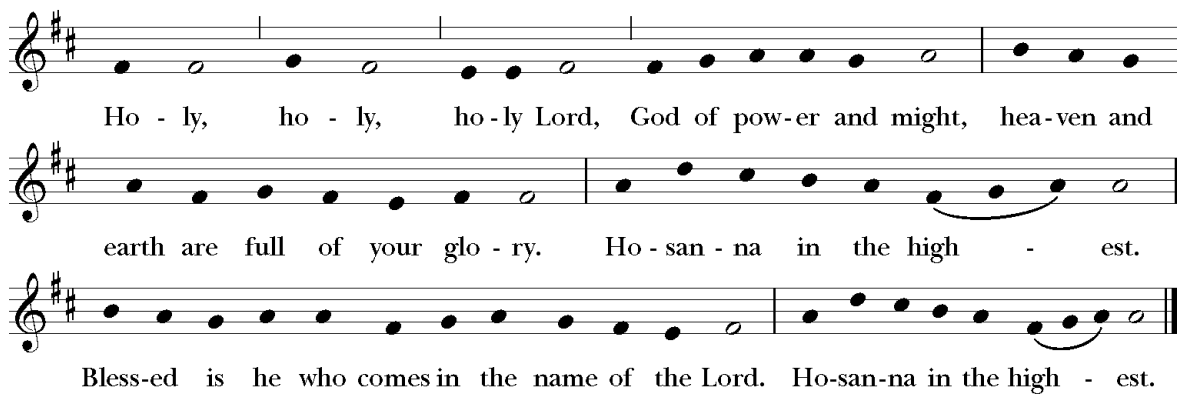
### \*COMMUNION PRAYER

Revs. Ahrens and Samuelson

We give you thanks, God of majesty and mercy, for calling forth the creation and raising us from dust by the breath of your being. We bless you for the beauty and bounty of the earth and for the vision of the day when sharing by all will mean scarcity for none. We remember the covenant you made with your people Israel, and we give you thanks for all our ancestors in faith. We rejoice that you call us to reconciliation with you and all people everywhere and that you remain faithful to your covenant even when we are faithless. We rejoice that you call the entire human family to this table of sacrifice and victory.

We come in remembrance and celebration of the gift of Jesus Christ, whom you sent, in the fullness of time, to be the good news. Born of Mary, our sister in faith, Christ lived among us to reveal the mystery of your Word, to suffer and die on the cross for us, to be raised from death on the third day, and then to live in glory. And now we give you thanks for the hope to which you call us in your Son, that following in the faith of all your saints, we may run with perseverance the race that is set before us, and with them receive the unfading crown of glory. We bless you, gracious God, for the presence of your Holy Spirit in the church you have gathered. With your sons, daughters, and all children of faith in all places and times, we praise you with joy.





Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and might, hea - ven and  
 earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.  
 Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

*The congregation may be seated.*

We remember that on the night of betrayal and desertion, and on the eve of death, Jesus gathered the disciples for the feast of Passover. Jesus took bread, and after giving thanks to you, broke it, and gave it to the disciples, saying: "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

Therefore we proclaim the mystery of our faith:

**Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

Eternal God, we unite in this covenant of faith, recalling Christ's suffering and death, rejoicing in Christ's resurrection, and awaiting Christ's return in victory. We spread your table with these gifts of the earth and of our labor. We present to you our very lives, committed to your service on behalf of all people. We ask you to send your Holy Spirit on this bread and wine, on our gifts, and on us. Strengthen your universal church that it may be the champion of peace and justice in all the world. Restore the earth with your grace that is able to make all things new.

Be present with us as we share this meal, and throughout all our lives, that we may know you as the Holy One, who with Christ and the Holy Spirit, lives for ever. **Amen.**

Let us pray as Christ our Savior has taught us.

**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.**

Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;

**Therefore let us keep the feast.**

The gifts of God for the people of God. Come, for all things are ready.

## SHARING OF THE ELEMENTS

*Please come forward as directed by the deacons to receive the common elements for communion.*

*Receive the bread and grape juice at one of the stations. You are invited to consume the elements as you receive them.*

*Gluten-free bread is available in the center of the tray. Place empty cups in the baskets on the tables by the transepts.*

*If you are worshipping online, you are invited to gather elements of communion in your home.*

## COMMUNION ANTHEM

Samuel Sebastian Wesley, 1861

"Lead me, Lord"

Psalms 5:8 & 4:9

Lead me, Lord, lead me in thy righteousness; make thy way plain before my face.

For it is thou, Lord, thou, Lord only, that makest me dwell in safety.

## PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Rev. Samuelson

Leader: Let us pray.

**People: We thank you, God, for inviting us to this table where we have known the presence of Christ and have received all Christ's gifts. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and let us show forth your praise in our lives; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.**

## COMMUNITY NOTICES - DEPART TO SERVE

Ms. Kulwicki

L: Let us depart with a heart to serve.

**P: Thanks be to God.**

\*CLOSING HYMN  
"In the cross of Christ I glory"

Rathbun, Ithamar Conkey, 1849  
John Bowring, 1825

1 In the cross of Christ I glo - ry, tower - ing  
2 When the woes of life o'er - take me, hopes de -  
3 When the sun of bliss is beam - ing light and  
4 Bane and bless - ing, pain and plea - sure, by the  
5 In the cross of Christ I glo - ry, tower - ing

o'er the wrecks of time; all the light of sa - cred  
ceive, and fears an - noy, nev - er shall the cross for -  
love up - on my way, from the cross the ra - diance  
cross are sanc - ti - fied; peace is there that knows no  
o'er the wrecks of time; all the light of sa - cred

sto - ry gath - ers round its head sub - lime.  
sake me; lo, it glows with peace and joy.  
stream - ing adds more lus - ter to the day.  
mea - sure, joys that through all time a - bide.  
sto - ry gath - ers round its head sub - lime.

\*BENEDICTION

Rev. Ahrens

POSTLUDE

Air

Gerre Hancock, 1963

*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 honor and memory of beloved deceased husband and father, Dick Potts, on what would have been his 90th birthday, by Marilyn Potts and family.

† GREETING AT THE EXITS

Rev. Ahrens — Narthex (Broad Street entrance)

Rev. Samuelson — 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 Bridget Tharp and Tony Baker. Please join us in Parish Hall, located downstairs immediately below the sanctuary.

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ON THE COVER

*Shall Be the House of Prayer*

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

Second medallion from the right in the top band of the Jeffrey Window

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

**March 3, 2024**

**This Week at First Church**

**Sunday, March 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 (Sanctuary & Virtual)  
12:30 p.m. Confirmation Class (Classroom C)  
4 p.m. Concerts at First Church (Sanctuary)

**Monday, March 4**

- 12 Noon Congregational Care Ministry Mtg  
(Fanning Rm)  
7 p.m. Education Commission Mtg  
(Classroom C & Zoom)

**Tuesday, March 5**

- 9 a.m. Good Sam Distribution Day (Church)  
7 p.m. Justice & Mercy Mtg (Zoom)  
Personnel Commission Mtg (Zoom)

**Wednesday, March 6**

- 10:30 a.m. Book Study (Classroom C & Zoom)  
12:15 p.m. Wednesday Meditations (Sanctuary)  
3 p.m. Church Vitality Commission Mtg  
(Zoom)  
6:30 p.m. Stephen Ministers Monthly Mtg  
(Fanning Rm)  
7 p.m. Book Club (Zoom)  
Melva Fisher's Small Lenten Group  
(Fisher Home)  
The Worths' Small Lenten Group  
(Worth Home)

**Thursday, March 7**

- 10 a.m. Becky Taft's Small Lenten Group  
(Westminister Thurber)  
4:30 p.m. Choristers (Choir Rm)  
6 p.m. Bell Choir Rehearsal (Bell Rm)  
Lynn Wallich's Small Lenter Group  
(Wallich Home)  
7 p.m. Melissa Kulwicki's Small Lenten Group  
(Parlor)  
7:15 p.m. First Church Choir Rehearsal **Saturday,**  
**March 9**  
9 a.m. House & Grounds Commission Mtg  
(Adult Library)

**Sunday, March 10**

- 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)  
12:15 p.m. Coffee Hour & Coffee Sales  
(Parish Hall)  
6 p.m. Youth Group Gathering  
(Columbus Square Bowling Palace)

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**Concerts at First Church**  
**Ahreum Han, organist**  
**Today, 4-5 p.m.**

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**Wednesday Meditation:**  
**Daniel Colaner, organ**  
**Wednesday, March 6**  
**at 12:15 p.m.**

# 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.

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### **An Extravagant Lenten and Easter Welcome**

As we move through the season of Lent to Easter, we encourage you to join our Church Growth Committee in extending an Extravagant Welcome to our neighbors and friends. We have postcards listing all the events happening during the season to offer a personal invitation, as well as flyers to be posted in public spaces. If you live in a high-traffic or walkable spot, please consider hosting a yard sign inviting others to Experience Easter at First Church. Please email Communications Manager, Melissa Kulwicki ([mkulwicki@first-church.org](mailto:mkulwicki@first-church.org)) to request a yard sign.

## 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** (in Upper Arlington)  
Wednesdays, 7-8 p.m., beginning on Wednesday, March 6. Contact Marty to register at 614.488.2169 or [marthaworth@att.net](mailto:marthaworth@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 Kulwicki** (First Church Parlor)  
Thursdays, 7-8:30 p.m., beginning on February 29  
Contact Melissa at [mkulwicki@first-church.org](mailto:mkulwicki@first-church.org)

**Rev. Tim Ahrens** (First Church Parlor)  
Wednesdays, 12-1:30 p.m., March 13, 20 and 27  
Contact Tim at 614.886.6765 or [tahrens@first-church.org](mailto:tahrens@first-church.org)

**Lynn Wallich and Bev Cook** (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** (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.

## First Church Book Club

**Wednesday, March 6, 7 p.m.**

***Paved Paradise: How Parking Explains the World***

**Wednesday, April 3, 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.

## Introducing First Stories



The history of First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ in Columbus, Ohio spans more than 170 years and is rich with captivating stories. These accounts span from its abolitionist founders to advocates of the social gospel, from visionaries who constructed the splendid “cathedral of grace” on East Broad Street to today’s dedicated contributors to the church and the wider community.

Within the congregation, many long-time members—some being seniors—have grown up here and have established deep roots and countless memories. Others, while perhaps not as longstanding, have nonetheless been active participants for many years, with some having dedicated decades to this community of believers. Adding to this dynamic mix are newcomers who are attracted by the church’s mission, its service to the community, and its worship, and who make their own valuable contributions throughout any given year.

Every member, regardless of background, holds unique stories and memories about First Church just waiting to be shared. “First Stories” seeks to make that sharing possible. Sponsored by the Heritage Committee, audio interviews will be hosted by journalist and church member Nancy Gilson Braverman and will feature members of this faith community who will share their reflections, experiences, and hopes for the future.

Stay tuned for the first interview, featuring long-time member Jackie Dean, in next week’s Connections.

## First Serves March:

### Period Packs

**Sunday, March 24 at 10 a.m**

Period poverty is an invisible form of poverty affecting over 22 million people in the United States. It is the inability to afford or access the necessary menstrual products needed to manage a period. Recent studies show that 2 in 5 people who menstruate experience period poverty.

Apart from the mental, physical, and financial burdens, period poverty also affects one’s ability to attend work, school, and other events every month.

In honor of Women’s History Month, we invite you to participate in March First Serves our monthly intergenerational service project. This month we will be assembling period packs to donate to Church World Service and various agencies to help ensure women and girls do not miss educational and other opportunities due to a lack of period supplies.

Period packs are a relatively new Church World Services kit and require some specific supplies. During the weeks leading up to the event, please visit the Giving Tree located in the education wing. On the tree, you will find tags listing the needed supplies. If you would like to donate supplies, choose a tag, purchase the listed supplies, and return them to the baskets located under the tree on or before the event on March 24. There will also be some envelopes if you would like to make a monetary contribution to purchase some of the supplies for this project. You can place the envelope in the giving plate or return it to the church office.

Thank you for your generosity.



## Neighborhood Care Circles

Church Vitality sponsored the kick-off of our Neighborhood Care Circles event last Sunday. We had over 100 people enjoy our taco bar and learn all about this new program. Church Vitality has divided church members into groups by neighboring zip codes. These groups are designed to be just the right size to plan gatherings outside of church and organize several Coffee Hours throughout the year. Leaders for each group were chosen and each group has already planned their first get-together outside of church. Group leaders will be responsible for sharing information about all upcoming activities with their group members, including those who did not attend Sunday's meeting. Watch your email for what's happening in your Neighborhood Care Circle!

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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).

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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 4322 on Friday, March 8, 6 – 8 p.m. Tickets are \$25/person and you can register online at [tinyurl.com/deepgrihadinner2024](https://tinyurl.com/deepgrihadinner2024).

## **Youth Group Bowling Sunday, March 10 at 6 p.m. Columbus Square Bowling Palace**

Please mark your calendars for the next Youth Event on Sunday, March 10 at 6 p.m. We will be bowling at Columbus Square Bowling Palace. We encourage Youth Grades 6-12 to join us, and bring a friend! Questions? Email Melissa Kulwicki at ([mkulwicki@first-church.org](mailto:mkulwicki@first-church.org))

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### **Save the Date: The Spring Retreat: “One Last Time in the Hills” Friday, April 26-Sunday, April 28 Templed Hills Camp and Retreat Center Bellville, Ohio**

**More information coming soon!**

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### **Save the Date: BREAD Network Meeting March 18, 5:30-8 p.m.**

The BREAD Network meeting to prepare for the Nehemiah Action is set for March 18 from 5:30 to 8 p.m. Please plan to attend! BREAD Rises!

## Keep in Prayer

**Members** Jason Allen; Ron Jenkins and Will Davis; Annette McCormick; Maggie Myers; Kathy Brownfield; Sherri and Bob 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** the Haslett family's neighbor and friend, Dave Amundson and his wife, Lindsay; L.J. and Gretchen Cooks brother, Kione Cooks; Alexis Wayne; David Kandel's mother, Dottie Kandel; Jim Griffin's friends, Andy Bell and John Alatsis; 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 Cicenias; 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** Duan Cannon on the death of her mother, Lois Fields; 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 Ireland, the United Kingdom of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. We also pray for our UCC partner in mission, the Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services in Egypt.

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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 **Sanctuary Night**. Located on the Westside of Columbus, Sanctuary Night is a sacred space serving vulnerable womxn who are at risk for sexual exploitation. They provide a place to rest, eat, connect, and get desired resources. It is a vibrant community led by survivors and champions to promote the flourishing of all who sit at their table. Thank you for your generosity.

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## Pastoral Care

## Upcoming Mission Offerings

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).

<b>March 3</b>	<b>Sanctuary Night</b>
March 10	First Serves
March 17	Columbus Relief
March 24	Give Power



# 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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