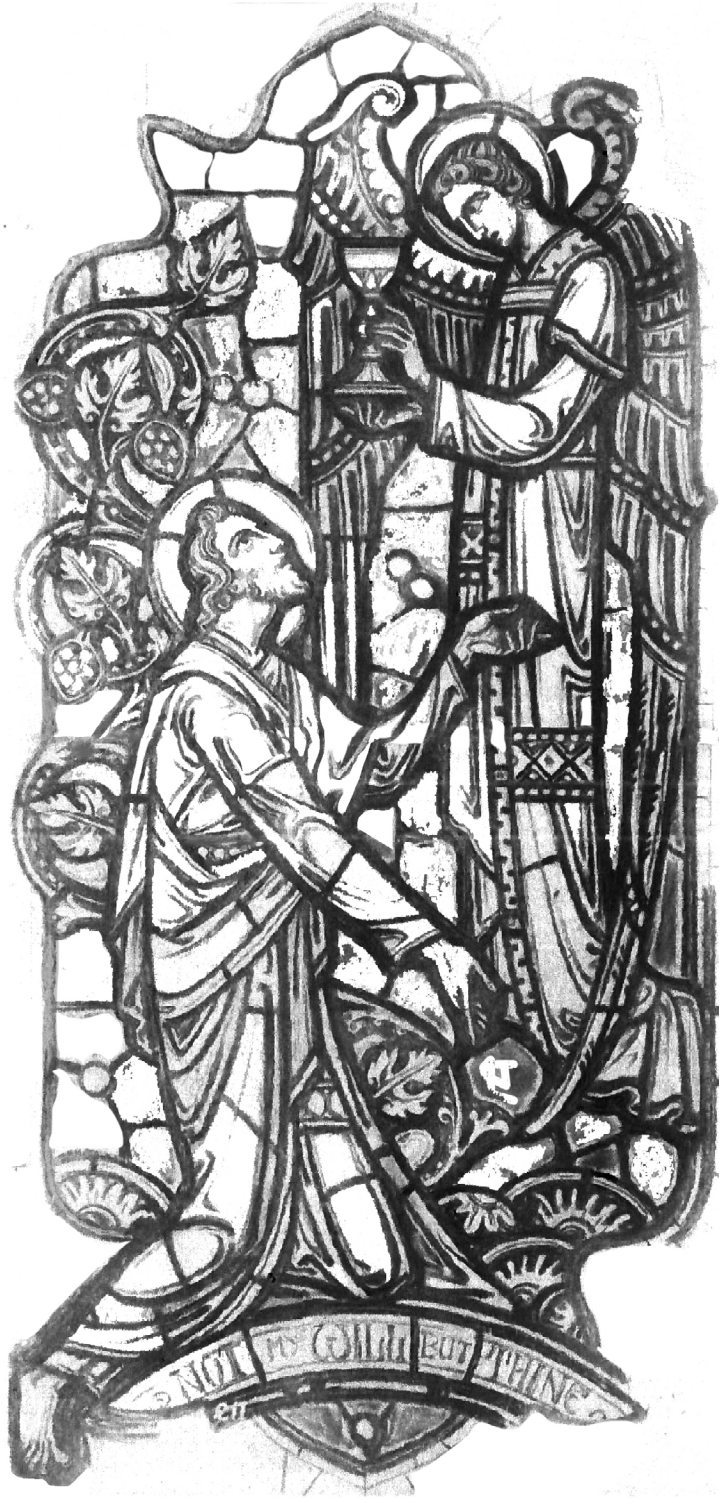




FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



WORSHIP AT 9 A.M.
MARCH 10, 2024
THE FOURTH 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*

Cami Curren, *liturgist*

Melissa Kulwicki, *worship leader*

David Hogrefe, *pianist*

Geoff Dean, *livestream ministry*

Enter to Worship – Depart to Serve. Please use this time for quiet preparation for worship.

'We have waited in silence on your loving-kindness, O God, in the midst of your temple.' (Psalm 48:9)

PRELUDE

ENTER TO WORSHIP

Cami Curren

Leader: God loves us with a steadfast love.

People: Let the redeemed of the Lord say so!

Leader: God loves us so much he gave us his Son.

People: Let us believe and have eternal life!

Leader: God loves us with a great love, rich in mercy.

People: Let us have faith to receive this grace!

All: Give thanks to the Lord, for God is good.

*OPENING HYMN

Noel, English melody, arr. Arthur Sullivan, 1874

“O God, who give us life and breath”

Carl P. Daw, Jr., 1990

1 O God, who gives us life and breath, who shapes us in the womb,
2 O God, who calls your people out to venture and to dare,
3 O God of cov - e - nant and law, re - vealed in cloud and flame,

who guards our lives from birth to death, then leads us from the tomb:
to plumb the bleak a - byss of doubt and find you e - ven there:
your might - y deeds e - voke our awe; we dare not speak your name.

de - liv - er us from fears that kill the life we have from you.
when we de - spair in wan - der - ing through wastes of emp - ty lies,
Yet we by faith are drawn to you and will your peo - ple prove,

Help us to know your Spir - it still is mak - ing all things new.
re - fresh us with the liv - ing spring of hope that nev - er dies.
as on our hearts you write a - new the cov - e - nant of love.

*INVOCATION

The Rev. Joanna Samuelson

Leader: God be with you.

People. And also with you.

Leader: Let us pray.

People: Gracious Father, whose blessed Son Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be the true bread which gives life to the world: Evermore give us this bread, that he may live in us, and we in him; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

The Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Ahrens

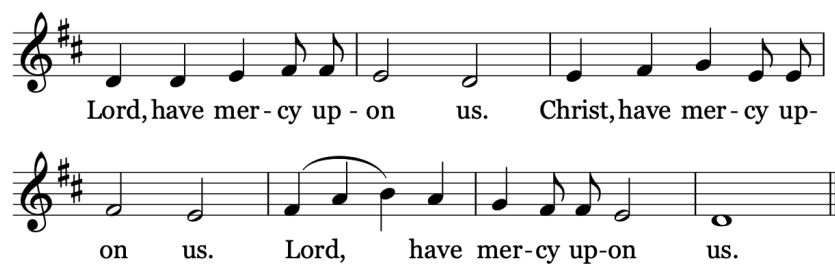
Leader: We are called to examine our faithfulness to God’s covenant with us. God, in whose presence we gather, promises us grace and pardon when we acknowledge our weakness and brokenness. Let us confess our sin to almighty God.

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, Healey Willan, 1928



*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. Samuelson

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, 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 Terri Young.

Leader: A reading from the book of Numbers, the twenty-first chapter.

From Mount Hor the Israelites set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; but the people became impatient on the way. The people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food." Then the Lord sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. The people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned by speaking against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord to take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said to Moses, "Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live." So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

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

People: Thanks be to God.

We give you thanks, O God, for you are good;
your mercy endures for ever.

**Let all those whom you have redeemed proclaim
that you redeemed them from the hand of the foe.**

You gathered them out of the lands;
from the east and from the west,
from the north and from the south.

**Some were fools and took to rebellious ways;
they were afflicted because of their sins.**

They abhorred all manner of food
and drew near to death's door.

**Then they cried to you in their trouble,
and you delivered them from their distress.**

You sent forth your word and healed them
and saved them from the grave.

**Let them give thanks to you for your mercy
and the wonders you do for your children.**

Let them offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving
and tell of your acts with shouts of joy.

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

Jesus said, "Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

"Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather

than light because their deeds were evil. For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.”

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

People: Thanks be to God.

SERMON

“Jesus and the Agony of Prayer”

Rev. Ahrens

Fifth in the Lenten sermon series, “Jesus”

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 Depart to Serve:



MISSION INVITATION

Ms. Kulwicki

Cash and designated gifts go to **First Serves**. First Serves is one of First Church’s monthly outreach mission opportunities on the fourth Sunday of the month. Started in 2021, First Serves is a combined effort between Faith Formation and Justice and Mercy commissions to engage our community of faith in hands-on mission projects. From disaster relief kits for Church World Service to blankets to support children in foster care, First Church makes a difference in the lives of others. Thank you for your generosity.

OFFERTORY HYMN
"Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling"

Softly and Tenderly, Will L. Thompson, 1880
Will L. Thompson, 1880

1 Soft - ly and ten - der - ly Je - sus is call - ing, call - ing for
2 Why should we tar - ry when Je - sus is plead - ing, plead - ing for
3 O for the won - der - ful love he has prom - ised, prom - ised for

you and for me. See, on the por - tals he's wait - ing and watch - ing,
you and for me? Why should we lin - ger and heed not his mer - cies,
you and for me! Though we have sinned, he has mer - cy and par - don,

Refrain
watch - ing for you and for me.
mer - cies for you and for me? "Come home, come home!
par - don for you and for me. "Come home, come home!

You who are wea - ry, come home." Ear - nest - ly, ten - der - ly,

Je - sus is call - ing, call - ing, "O sin - ner, come home!"

COMMUNION

Rev. Samuelson

COMMUNION HYMN

Bless the Lord, Jacques Berthier, 1994

“Bless the Lord, my soul”

Taizé Community, 1984

Bless the Lord, my soul, and bless God's ho - ly name.

The first system of musical notation consists of a treble and bass staff in 4/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody is written in the treble clef, and the bass line is in the bass clef. The lyrics are placed below the treble staff.

Bless the Lord, my soul, who leads me in - to life.

The second system of musical notation continues the melody and bass line from the first system. It concludes with a double bar line. The lyrics are placed below the treble staff.

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Rev. Ahrens

Leader: Let us pray.

All: We give you thanks, Almighty God, that you have brought us from darkness to light, from slavery to freedom, from death to rebirth. Transform our lives with this heavenly food, that we may shine with your love and take to the world the risen life of your Son Jesus Christ. Amen.

COMMUNITY NOTICES - DEPART TO SERVE

Ms. Kulwicki

Leader Let us depart with a heart to serve.

People: Thanks be to God.

*CLOSING HYMN
"Jesus, remember me"

Remember Me, Jacques Berthier, 1981
Taizé Community, 1881

Je - sus, re - mem - ber me when you come in - to your king - dom.

The first system of the musical score consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and a 3/4 time signature. The bottom staff is in bass clef with the same key signature and time signature. The lyrics are written below the top staff.

Je - sus, re - mem - ber me when you come in - to your king - dom.

The second system of the musical score consists of two staves, identical in notation to the first system. The lyrics are written below the top staff.

*BENEDICTION
POSTLUDE

Rev. Ahrens

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.

ON THE COVER
Not My Will But Thine

Artist Sketch for the Jeffrey Window, Nicola D'Ascenzo Studios, Philadelphia, PA, 1931
Center-Left medallion in the middle band of the Jeffrey window

PERMISSIONS AND COPYRIGHTS

All music in the bulletin is reprinted and livestreamed under OneLicense.net #A-717661. All rights reserved.



Enter to Worship
Depart to Serve

March 10, 2024

This Week at First Church

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

Monday, Mar. 11

- 12 Noon Stewardship & Growth Commission Mtg
(Fanning Rm)
- 7 p.m. Trustees Mtg (Classroom C & Zoom)

Tuesday, Mar. 12

- 12 Noon Healthy Congregations Mtg
(Parish Family Rm)
- 5:30 p.m. Budget & Finance Mtg (Classroom C)
- 7 p.m. Executive Committee Mtg (Zoom)

Wednesday, Mar. 13

- 12 Noon Ahrens Lenten Group (Parlor)
- 3 p.m. Church Vitality Commission Mtg (Zoom)
- 7 p.m. The Worths' Lenten Group (Worth Home)

Thursday, Mar. 14

- 10 a.m. Taft's Lenten Group (Westminister Thurber)
- 4:30 p.m. Choristers (Choir Rm)
- 6 p.m. Bell Choir Rehearsal (Bell Rm)
Wallich's Lenter Group (Wallich Home)
- 7:15 p.m. First Church Choir Rehearsal (Choir Rm)

Sunday, Mar. 17

- 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)
- 12:15 p.m. Coffee Hour & Coffee Sales (Parish Hall)
- 12:30 p.m. Confirmation Class (Classroom D)
Second Nurture (Classroom C & Nursery)

Youth Group Bowling

Today at 6 p.m.

Columbus Square Bowling Palace

Youth grades 6-12 join us this evening at 6 p.m.
Feel free to bring a friend! Email Melissa Kulwicki at
(mkulwicki@first-church.org) with questions.

BREAD Network Meeting

March 18, 5:30-8 p.m.

Please plan to attend! BREAD Rises!

Become a Stephen Minister

Be involved in a meaningful ministry that uses your spiritual gifts. Serving as a Stephen Minister gives people an opportunity to put their spiritual gifts into action—gifts such as faith, mercy, compassion, and encouragement. Ministry that draws on your gifts is personally fulfilling and touches people's lives in powerful ways. One of the blessings of being a Stephen Minister is being part of a community of people who care, all of whom lift one another up as they strive together to provide the best possible ministry for the members of our congregation. The strong relationships you'll form as a Stephen Minister are both rewarding and a great source of support. To find out more about becoming a Stephen Minister at First Church, contact Gary Glover at stephenministrycoordinator@first-church.org. Our next Stephen Minister Training Course begins on Wednesday, May 1.

Lunch Bunch at Loving Hut

March 13 at 12 noon

More information and registration can be found on Realm.

Jesus

A Lenten Sermon Series

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”

7 a.m., 8:45 a.m. & 11 a.m.

Safety and Security

Volunteers are needed for the Safety and Security Committee. Working on this committee will acquaint you with the day-to-day operations of our busy church building and staff, and you will get to know your fellow lay leaders on the House and Grounds and the Technology and Communication commissions, as well as the Deacons. If you have any questions or are especially interested in joining this committee, please contact Greg Halbe, Moderator, at greghalbe@gmail.com or 262-902-4848 (call or text).

Summer Camp Registration

Throughout the summer months, a variety of weeklong camps are planned at Temples Hills for children/youth who have completed the second grade and older. Camper scholarships are available for First Church children and youth because of the generosity of the late Alma Keeler, a longtime First Church member. For more information about camp, Camper Scholarships, and how to register, click the QR Code below.



Minister of Music Advisory Group

Our church's first Minister of Music Advisory Group has been formed and approved by Church Council. This group functions as a channel for communicating the congregation's compliments and concerns to the Minister of Music. It also serves as a supportive sounding board for professional matters on the Minister of Music's mind. Discussions between parishioners and advisory group members, as well as the content of meetings with the Minister of Music, are confidential. Group members, all of whom are laity or non-active clergy, do not participate in job performance evaluations. Members of the congregation who would like their reflections, insights, or concerns shared with the Minister of Music are invited to contact any of the members of the advisory group prior to its first meeting on March 20. Members of the advisory group are Cami Curren (camillacurren@gmail.com), Greg Duncan (interprep@earthlink.net), Dianne Frazer (dianne@diannefraser.com), Dameon Jones (ddjones24@yahoo.com), and Nancy Livingston (revnancy62@gmail.com).

First Serves March:

Period Packs

Sunday, March 24 at 10 a.m



Keep in Prayer

Members Jason Allen; Ron Jenkins and Will Davis; Maggie Myers; Kathy Brownfield; Bob and Sheri Moreen; Bridget Tharp and Tony Baker; Wendy Reber; 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 Gilda Perry's friend, Kathryn Schlarb; the Haslett family's neighbor and friend, Dave Amundson and his wife, Lindsay; L.J. and Gretchen Cooks' brother, Kione Cooks; 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 & 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 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 Denmark, Faroe Islands, Finland, Greenland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. We also pray for our UCC partner in mission, the National Christian Council in Japan.

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 **First Serves**. First Serves is one of First Church's monthly outreach mission opportunities on the fourth Sunday of the month. Started in 2021, First Serves is a combined effort between Faith Formation and Justice and Mercy commissions to engage our community of faith in hands-on mission projects. From disaster relief kits for Church World Service to blankets to support children in foster care, First Church makes a difference in the lives of others. Thank you for your generosity.

Save the Date:

The Spring Retreat:

"One Last Time in the Hills"

Friday, April 26-Sunday, April 28

Templed Hills

Bellville, Ohio

Upcoming Mission Offerings

March 10	First Serves
March 17	Columbus Relief
March 24	Give Power
March 31	One Great Hour of Sharing

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 McCabe

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



*Bulletins are printed on recycled paper with a minimum 50% post-consumer content.
All music in the bulletin is reprinted under OneLicense.net #A-717661. All rights reserved.
Bulletins and audio podcasts of services are available on the website for each week:
www.first-church.org/Worship.aspx*

