



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



WORSHIP AT 9 A.M.
MARCH 17, 2024
THE FIFTH 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. Joanna Samuelson, *preacher*
The Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Ahrens, *officiant*
Jill Hultin, *liturgist*
Melissa Kulwicki, *worship leader*
David Hogrefe, *pianist*
Geoff Dean, *livestream ministry*

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

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

PRELUDE

ENTER TO WORSHIP

Jill Hultin

Leader: The Lord is making a new covenant with the people of God.

People: Here in this place, Christ writes the law of love on our hearts.

Leader: We are children of the living God.

People: Together, let us worship the Lord of Love!

*OPENING HYMN

Nyland, Finnish folk

"O Jesus, I have promised"

Ernest Bode, 1866



1 O Je - sus, I have prom - ised to serve thee to the end:
2 O let me hear thee speak - ing in ac - cents clear and still,
3 O Je - sus, thou hast prom - ised to all who fol - low thee,



be thou for ev - er near me, my Mas - ter and my friend;
a - bove the storms of pas - sion, the mur - murs of self - will;
that where thou art in glo - ry there shall thy ser - vant be;



I shall not fear the bat - tle, if thou art by my side,
O speak to re - as - sure me, to has - ten or con - trol;
and, Je - sus, I have prom - ised to serve thee to the end;



nor wan - der from the path - way, if thou wilt be my guide.
 O speak, and make me lis - ten, thou guard - ian of my soul.
 O give me grace to fol - low, my Mas - ter and my friend.

*INVOCATION

The Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Ahrens

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. Joanna Samuelson

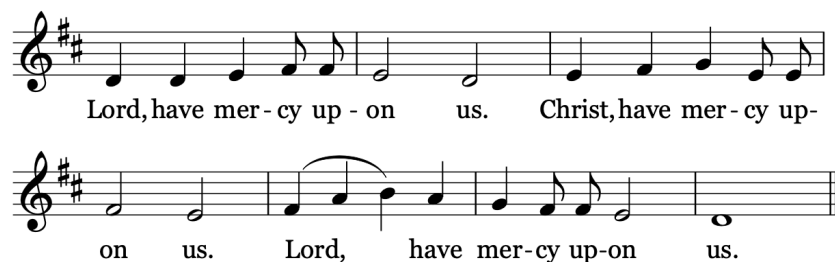
Leader: We are called to examine our faithfulness to God's covenant with us. God, in whose presence we gather, promises us grace and pardon when we acknowledge our weakness and brokenness. Let us confess our sin to almighty God.

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, Healey Willan, 1928



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

Rev. Ahrens

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

People: And also with you.

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

** When you return to your seat, please find the blue Welcome notebook, sign it and pass it on to your neighbor so you may greet them by name.*

CHILDREN'S TIME

Melissa Kulwicki

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

THE HEBREW SCRIPTURE

Hebrews 5:5-10

Jill Hultin

Leader: A reading from the letter of Paul to the Hebrews, the fifth chapter.

Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him,

"You are my Son,
today I have begotten you";
as he says also in another place,
"You are a priest forever,
according to the order of Melchizedek."

In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

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

People: Thanks be to God.

THE PSALTER

Psalm 51:1-12

Jill Hultin

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your loving-kindness;
in your great compassion blot out my offenses.

**Wash me through and through from my wickedness
and cleanse me from my sin.**

For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.

**Against you only have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight.**

And so you are justified when you speak
and upright in your judgment.

**Indeed, I have been wicked from my birth,
a sinner from my mother's womb.**

For behold, you look for truth deep within me,
and will make me understand wisdom secretly.

**Purge me from my sin, and I shall be pure;
wash me, and I shall be clean indeed.**

Make me hear of joy and gladness,
that the body you have broken may rejoice.

**Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my iniquities.**

Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.

**Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your holy Spirit from me.**

THE GOSPEL

John 12:20-33

Rev. Samuelson

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

Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

“Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

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

People: Thanks be to God.

SERMON

“Jesus in Our Midst”

Rev. Samuelson

Sixth in the Lenten sermon series, “Jesus”

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Rev. Ahrens

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

All: Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,

for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

THE OFFERTORY

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



MISSION INVITATION

Debi Cunningham, Annmarie Osbourne, and Vickie Mascarella

Cash and designated gifts go to **Columbus Relief**, a faith based, non-profit organization serving our community since 2015. Their mission is to journey into communities of homelessness to bring life-transforming guidance through God’s love and relationship building. Columbus Relief meets people where they are, in the streets of Columbus, where they build trust through a consistent and accessible approach. Thank you for your generosity.

OFFERTORY HYMN

Wondrous Love, Walker's Southern Harmony, 1835

"What wondrous love is this"

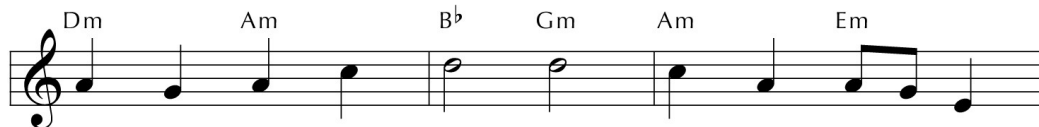
American folk hymn, c. 1811



1 What won - drous love is this, O my soul, O my
 2 When I was sink - ing down, sink - ing down, sink - ing
 3 To God and to the Lamb, I will sing, I will
 4 And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing



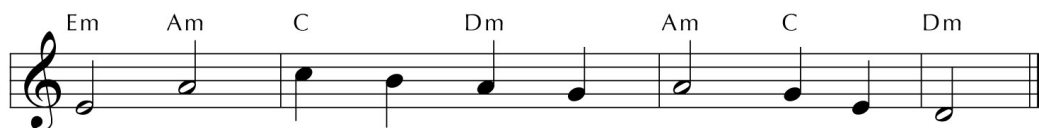
soul, what won - drous love is this, O my soul! What
 down, when I was sink - ing down, sink - ing down, when
 sing, to God and to the Lamb, I will sing; to
 on; and when from death I'm free, I'll sing on; and



won - drous love is this that caused the Lord of
 I was sink - ing down be - neath God's righ - teous
 God and to the Lamb who is the great I
 when from death I'm free, I'll sing and joy - ful



bliss to bear the dread - ful curse for my soul, for my
 frown, Christ laid a - side his crown for my soul, for my
 AM, while mil - lions join the theme, I will sing, I will
 be, and through e - ter - ni - ty, I'll sing on, I'll sing



soul, to bear the dread - ful curse for my soul!
 soul, Christ laid a - side his crown for my soul!
 sing; while mil - lions join the theme, I will sing!
 on; and through e - ter - ni - ty I'll sing on.

COMMUNION

Rev. Ahrens

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.

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

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Rev. Samuelson

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.

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

COMMISSIONING OF B.R.E.A.D. TEAM
(Building Responsibility, Equality, and Dignity)

Rev. Ahrens

*BENEDICTION

Rev. Samuelson

POSTLUDE

Please be seated for the Postlude.

Thank you for attending worship this morning. We hope that you have found peace and grace here and invite you to return often. If you would like more information or have any questions about First Church, please ask anyone wearing a name tag. We would be delighted to assist you.

ON THE COVER

Blessed are the Pure

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

Center-Right medallion of the middle band of the Jeffrey Window

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Enter to Worship
Depart to Serve

March 17, 2024

This Week at First Church

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 (Parlor)
Second Nurture (Classroom C & Nursery)

Monday, Mar. 18

- 6:30 p.m. Transitions Team Mtg (Fanning Room)
- 7 p.m. BREAD Mtg (Parish Hall)

Tuesday, Mar. 19

- 6 p.m. Music Committee Mtg (Parlor)
- 7 p.m. Church Council Mtg
(Classroom C & Zoom)
Neighborhood Care Circle Leaders Mtg
(Zoom)

Wednesday, Mar. 20

- 10 a.m. The Largest Table Food Prep & Delivery
(Kitchen)
- 10:30 a.m. Book Study (Classroom C & Zoom)
- 12 Noon Ahrens' Small Lenten Group (Parlor)
- 6:30 p.m. Stephen Ministers Group Supervision Mtg
(Fanning Rm)
- 7 p.m. Music Minister Advisory Group Mtg
(Classroom C)
Worths' Small Lenten Group
(Home of Gerry & Marty Worth)

Thursday, Mar. 21

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

Friday, Mar. 22

- 12 Noon Faith Mission Dinner Prep & Serve
(Kitchen)

Sunday, Mar. 24

- 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)

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.

BREAD Network Meeting

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

Please plan to attend! BREAD Rises!

Jesus

A Lenten Sermon Series

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. and 11 a.m.

Time Out Monday
March 25 at 5:30 p.m.
Matt the Miller’s Tavern



Summer Camp Registration

Throughout the summer months, a variety of weeklong camps are planned at Tempel 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 (interpret@earthlink.net), Dianne Frazer (dianne@diannefrazer.com), Dameon Jones (ddjones24@yahoo.com), and Nancy Livingston (revnancy62@gmail.com).

Healthy Congregations

Plan to attend the next Healthy Congregations workshop on Sunday, April 7, after the 11 a.m. service. Join Dr. Emylnn Ott in Parish Hall for a session on our church history and how that forms our future. Participants will create a 30-foot timeline beginning with the first church in 1856 and through the current year. It’s not too early to think about what church milestones have had the greatest impact on our community. Look for details on how to register and plan for a buffet lunch from Freedom ala Cart. See you there!

Keep in Prayer

Members Elaine Borling; Jason Allen; Ron Jenkins and Will Davis; Kathy Brownfield; Wendy Reber; Steve Anderson; 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; 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 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 Sandra Geronimo on the death of her brother, Tony Geronimo; the Samuelson/Gillies family friend, Elyshua Franklin on the death of her husband, Aaron Franklin; the Haslett family on the death of their neighbor and friend, Dave Amundson; and Duan Cannon on the death of her mother, Lois Fields.

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 Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. We also pray for our UCC partner in mission, the Association for Theological Education in Myanmar.

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 **Columbus Relief**, a faith based, non-profit organization serving our community since 2015. Their mission is to journey into communities of homelessness to bring life-transforming guidance through God's love and relationship building. Columbus Relief meets people where they are, in the streets of Columbus, where they build trust through a consistent and accessible approach. 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 17	Columbus Relief
March 24	Give Power
March 31	One Great Hour of Sharing
April 7	Green Columbus

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, Bill 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

Member-at-Large: Jacquelyn Dean

Youth Member-at-Large:

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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