



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

WORSHIP AT NINE
APRIL 14, 2024
THE THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

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, *co-celebrant*

Maggie Myers, *liturgist*

Melissa Kulwicki, *worship leader*

Joshua Stafford, *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

Maggie Myers

Leader: Alleluia! Christ is risen!

People: Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Please stand as you are able. (indicates congregation standing)*

Leader: How joyful it is to celebrate the good news of God's love!

People: We are called to be Easter people!

Leader: Darkness cannot claim us!

People: Fear cannot bind us!

Leader: Christ is risen!

People: Christ is risen, indeed! Amen!

*OPENING HYMN
"Now the green blade riseth"

Noël Nouvelet, French Carol, 15th century
John M. C. Crum, 1928



1. Now the green blade ris - eth from the bur - ied grain, wheat that in dark earth
2. In the grave they laid him, Love whom hate had slain, think - ing that nev - er
3. Forth he came at Eas - ter, like the ris - en grain, he that for three days
4. When our hearts are win - try, griev - ing, or in pain, your touch can call us



man - y days has lain; love lives a - gain, that with the dead has
he would wake a - gain, laid in the earth like grain that sleeps un -
in the grave had lain, quick from the dead my ris - en Lord is
back to life a - gain, fields of our hearts that dead and bare have

Refrain



been:
seen: Love is come a - gain like wheat that spring - eth green.
seen:
been:

*INVOCATION

The Rev. Timothy C. Ahrens

Leader: God be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Let us pray.

People: O God, whose blessed Son made himself known to his disciples in the breaking of bread: Open the eyes of our faith, that we may behold him in all his redeeming work; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

*WELCOME AND PASSING OF THE PEACE

The Rev. Joanna 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 Miriam Myers.

Leader: A reading from the book of Acts, the third chapter.

Peter addressed the people, "You Israelites, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we had made him walk? The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our ancestors has glorified his servant Jesus, whom you handed over and rejected in the presence of Pilate, though he had decided to release him. But you rejected the Holy and Righteous One and asked to have a murderer given to you, and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. And by faith in his name, his name itself has made this man strong, whom you see and know; and the faith that is through Jesus has given him this perfect health in the presence of all of you.

"And now, friends, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. In this way God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, that his Messiah would suffer. Repent therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord."

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

People: Thanks be to God.

Answer me when I call, O God, defender of my cause;
you set me free when I am hard-pressed;
have mercy on me and hear my prayer.

**"You mortals, how long will you dishonor my glory;
how long will you worship dumb idols
and run after false gods?"**

Know that the Lord does wonders for the faithful;
when I call upon the Lord, he will hear me.

**Tremble, then, and do not sin;
speak to your heart in silence upon your bed.**

Offer the appointed sacrifices
and put your trust in the Lord.

**Many are saying, "Oh, that we might see better times!"
Lift up the light of your countenance upon us, O Lord.**

You have put gladness in my heart,
more than when grain and wine and oil increase.

**I lie down in peace; at once I fall asleep;
for only you, Lord, make me dwell in safety.**

Leader: A reading from the Gospel according to Luke, the twenty-fourth chapter.

Jesus himself stood among the disciples and said to them, "Peace be with you." They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said to them, "Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate in their presence.

Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.

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

People: Thanks be to God.

SERMON

"How Can I Help?"

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 Depart to Serve:



MISSION INVITATION

Rev. Samuelson

Cash and designated gifts go to support the **Community Refugee and Immigration Services (CRIS)**, an independent non-profit agency serving refugees, asylees and immigrants in central Ohio. Among local community-based organizations, CRIS is the largest agency providing services to immigrants in Central Ohio, and is the agency providing the most extensive services to immigrant populations in our area. They help resettle families from countries all over the world; their services include immigration legal services and interpretation and translation. Thank you for your generosity.

OFFERTORY HYMN

Hymn to Joy, Ludwig van Beethoven, 1842

“Christ is risen! Shout Hosanna!”

Brian Wren, 1984

1 Christ is ris - en! Shout Ho - san - na! Cel - e - brate this day of days!
 2 Christ is ris - en! Raise your spir - its from the cav - erns of de - spair.
 3 Christ is ris - en! Earth and heav - en nev - er - more shall be the same.

Christ is ris - en! Hush in won - der: all cre - a - tion is a - mazed.
 Walk with glad - ness in the morn - ing. See what love can do and dare.
 Break the bread of new cre - a - tion where the world is still in pain.

In the des - ert all - sur - round - ing, see, a spread - ing tree has grown.
 Drink the wine of res - ur - rec - tion, not a ser - vant, but a friend.
 Tell its grim, de - mon - ic cho - rus: “Christ is ris - en! Get you gone!”

Heal - ing leaves of grace a - bound - ing bring a taste of love un - known.
 Je - sus is our strong com - pan - ion. Joy and peace shall nev - er end.
 God the First and Last is with us. Sing Ho - san - na ev - ery - one!

COMMUNION
COMMUNION HYMN
"Eat this bread"

Rev. Samuelson
Berthier, Jacques Berthier, 1984
Robert J. Batastini and Taizé Community, 1984

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of three systems of two staves each (treble and bass clef). The lyrics are: "Eat this bread; drink this cup; come to me and never be hungry. Eat this bread; drink this cup; trust in me and you will not thirst."

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
"God be with you till we meet again"

Randolph, Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1906
Jeremiah Eames Rankin, 1880

1. God be with you till we meet a - gain; Lov - ing coun - sels
guide, up - hold you, With a Shep-herd's care en - fold you:
God be with you till we meet a - gain.

The image shows a three-system musical score for the hymn "God be with you till we meet again". Each system consists of a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment line (bass clef). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The lyrics are printed below the vocal line. The first system covers the first line of lyrics, the second system covers the second line, and the third system covers the third line. The piano accompaniment features a steady bass line with chords that support the vocal melody.

*BENEDICTION

Rev. Ahrens

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.

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Enter to Worship
Depart to Serve

April 14, 2024

This Week at First Church

Sunday, April 14

- 9 a.m. Morning Prayer & Holy Communion
(Parish Hall)
- 10 a.m. Bible Study (Classroom C)
Study School for Children & Youth
(various classrooms)
- 11 a.m. Worship Service (Sanctuary & Virtual)
- 4 p.m. Concerts at First Church (Sanctuary)

Monday, April 15

- 10 a.m. Stewardship & Growth
Commission Mtg (Fanning Rm)
- 3:30 p.m. Adult Library Space Mtg (Adult Library)
- 6:30 p.m. Transition Team Mtg (Fanning Rm)

Tuesday, April 16

- 7 p.m. Church Council Mtg
(Classroom C & Zoom)

Wednesday, April 17

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

Thursday, April 18

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

Sunday, April 21

- 9 a.m. Morning Prayer & Holy Communion
(Parish Hall)
- 10 a.m. Bible Study (Classroom C)
Study School for Children & Youth
(various classrooms)
- 11 a.m. Worship Service (Sanctuary & Virtual)
- 12:30 p.m. Confirmation Class (Classroom C)
- 4 p.m. Evensong (Sanctuary)

Concerts at First Church Richard Elliott, organist

Today at 4 p.m.

Rev. Tim's Book Study on

Poverty, by America

by Matthew Desmond

Wednesday, April 17

10:30 a.m.

Classroom C or Zoom

Please join us Wednesday, April 17 for a study on *Poverty, by America*, by Matthew Desmond.

Desmond, the author of *Evicted*, illustrates how poverty injures the impoverished — physically, financially, and spiritually — and how the wealthiest country in the world has developed a bifurcated system that favors those who are better off (in the form of tax breaks, hoarded benefits, and walled-off communities).

Time Out Monday

Monday, April 22, 5:30 p.m.

Andon's Pub

We're heading to a pub so join us and other First Church members for a relaxing evening together! Andon's Pub will be the place to be as having fun is their main objective. Register by clicking the QR Code below.



Stephen Ministry at First Church

Invite Your First Church Bestie Sign-up Together for Our Next Stephen Minister Training Course!

Stephen Minister Training Course begins on Wednesday, May 1. Like and follow the new Stephen Ministry Facebook page. Click the QR Code below to view the page.



Washington Gladden Social Justice Park Earth Day Event April 28 Picnic at 12:30 p.m. Dedication at 2 p.m.

Mark your calendars! In the week when we celebrate Earth Day, more than 40 trees – including elm, hornbeam, redbud, cherry, and Japanese maple – will be dedicated at Sunday, April 28, at 2 p.m. These trees have been given in honor or in remembrance of a variety of people. They help to beautify the unique Social Justice Park while supporting the City's Urban Forestry Master Plan. All are welcome to attend this brief ceremony. You also are invited to a Picnic in the Park that will begin at 12:30 p.m. prior to the dedication event. Food and beverages will be provided.

First Serves April: CWS Disaster Hygiene Kits April 28, 10-10:45 a.m.

Thank you to all who made monetary donations, donated supplies, and time to help assemble Period Packs for First Serves March. Through your generosity, we were able to assemble and donate 100 kits, as well as donate additional feminine hygiene products to the Coalition for the Homeless. We will assemble Church World Service Hygiene Disaster Kits for First Serves on April 28. For someone who has just experienced a disaster, these kits help ensure that the person has the hygiene supplies they need to start their day out right. We will be collecting supplies as well as monetary donations. The total cost to assemble each kit is \$15.

A list of items needed can be found by clicking the QR Code below, or on cards located on the Giving Tree. Envelopes will also be available and can be returned in the offering plate or to the church office. Thank you for your generosity!





The Spring Retreat:
“One Last Time in the Hills”
Friday, April 26 - Sunday, April 28
Templed Hills Camp & Retreat Center
Bellville, Ohio
Deadline to Register:
Monday, April 22 at Noon

Our intergenerational spring retreat will take place Friday evening, April 26, through Sunday morning, April 28 at Templed Hills, the camp and retreat center of our conference, Heartland Conference United Church of Christ. Templed Hills is located one hour north of Columbus in a woodsy setting in Bellville among the rolling hills just outside of Mansfield. You are welcome to stay the entire time or for just one night or even part of the day on Saturday – whatever works best for you!

It will include some planned activities, walks in the woods, arts and crafts, plenty of “downtime,” camp songs around the campfire (and yummy s’mores, of course!) as well as an informal worship gathering on Sunday morning. All our meals will take place in the dining hall and will be prepared by the staff of Templed Hills and lodging is available in two of the camp houses. Most of the rooms have single and/or bunk beds.

The total cost for the weekend is \$100/Adult. Costs for children are covered through the generosity of the Alma Keeler Fund. Please register by clicking the button below. If you need assistance with the cost, please contact Rev. Joanna at jsamuelson@first-church.org. If you have any additional questions, please contact Melissa Kulwicki at mkulwicki@first-church.org.



Keep in Prayer

Members Tom Bishop; Jason Allen; Kathy Brownfield; Wendy Reber; Steven Anderson; John Carter and Mary Kay Beall Carter; Dan Axt; Rick Sayre; Anne Morganstern; Martha Huey; Twink Starr; Janice White.

Family and friends Amy Wagner's friend, Brenda Jackson; Barry Moenter's brother-in-law, Tom Huss; Joanna Samuelson's friend, Tijuana Scott; 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; and Amy Brooks' father, Michael Hamlin.

Those who mourn loved ones Karl and Sallie Danneberger on the death of their friend, Ron Kendzier; and Steve and Karen Sterrett on the death of Steve's mother, Barbara Sterrett.

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 Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania. We also pray for our UCC partner in mission, the Academias Discipulos de Cristo (the Disciples in Puerto Rico).

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 **Community Refugee and Immigration Services (CRIS)**, an independent non-profit agency serving refugees, asylees and immigrants in central Ohio. Among local community-based organizations, CRIS is the largest agency providing services to immigrants in Central Ohio and is the agency providing the most extensive services to immigrant populations in our area. They help resettle families from countries all over the world; their services include immigration legal services and interpretation and translation. Thank you for your generosity.

Upcoming Mission Offerings

April 14	CRIS
April 21	Green Columbus
April 28	Good Samaritan
May 5	Cue Seminiaries

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

Deacons: Allen Baker, Heather Jones, Brian Kemp, Nan Kreimer, Allison Lowery Palmer, Dayna McCrary, Matt Myers, Fran Panek, Andy Smith Verhage, Thom Smith, Lynn Wallich, Martha Worth

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

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

Personnel: David Hogrefe

Personnel-elect: Sandra Mathias

Youth Member-at-Large:

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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