



## WELCOME TO FIRST CHURCH!

*If you are visiting today and looking for a church home, welcome! For 172 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*

Dr. Greg Halbe, *worship leader*

Amy Wagner, *liturgist*

Melissa Kulwicki, *worship leader*

Joshua Stafford, *organist*

Cynthia Adcock, *soloist*

Aran Cunningham, *livestream ministry*

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

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

### PRELUDE

*Andante Sostenuto* from *Symphonie Gothique*, Op. 70

Charles-Marie Widor, 1895

### ENTER TO WORSHIP

Amy Wagner

**Leader:** The grace of our Savior Jesus Christ, the love of God,  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**People:** **And also with you.**

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

**Leader:** God interrupted Samuel with an unexpected call.

**People:** **"Here I am, Lord. Send me!"**

**Leader:** We join with Christ and are a part of God's new creation.

**People:** **O Mighty God, we come to join the harvest.**

**Leader:** Gather us in, O Holy One, for we would be your people.

**People:** **Amen.**

\*PROCESSIONAL HYMN  
"For the fruit of all creation"

*East Aclam*, Francis Jackson, 1957  
Fred Pratt Green, 1970



1 For the fruit of all cre - a - tion, thanks be to  
2 In the just re - ward of la - bor, God's will be  
3 For the har - vests of the Spi - rit, thanks be to

God. For his gifts to ev - ery na - tion,  
done. In the help we give our neigh - bor,  
God. For the good we all in - her - it,

thanks be to God. For the plow - ing, sow - ing, reap - ing,  
God's will be done. In our world - wide task of car - ing  
thanks be to God. For the won - ders that as - tound us,

si - lent growth while we are sleep - ing, fu - ture needs in  
for the hun - gry and de - spair - ing, in the har - vests  
for the truths that still con-found us, most of all that

earth's safe - keep - ing, thanks be to God.  
we are shar - ing, God's will be done.  
love has found us, thanks be to God.

INVOCATION

Dr. Gregory Halbe

Leader: God be with you.

**People. And also with you.**

Leader: Let us pray.

**People: Keep, O Lord, your household the Church in your steadfast faith and love, that through your grace we may proclaim your truth with boldness, and minister your justice with compassion; for the sake of our Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and 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 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 Barbara Clapham.*

## THE OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 17: 22-24

Ms. Wagner

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

Thus says the Lord God:

I myself will take a sprig

from the lofty top of a cedar;

I will set it out.

I will break off a tender one

from the topmost of its young twigs;

I myself will plant it

on a high and lofty mountain.

On the mountain height of Israel

I will plant it,

in order that it may produce boughs and bear fruit,

and become a noble cedar.

Under it every kind of bird will live;

in the shade of its branches will nest

winged creatures of every kind.

All the trees of the field shall know

that I am the Lord.

I bring low the high tree,

I make high the low tree;

I dry up the green tree

and make the dry tree flourish.

I the Lord have spoken;

I will accomplish it.

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

**People: Thanks be to God.**

## ANTHEM

*Domine Deus* from *Gloria*

Latin, 4<sup>th</sup> c.

Antonio Vivaldi, 1715

*Domine Deus, Rex celestis, Deus Pater omnipotens.*

Lord God, heavenly king, almighty God and father.

Leader: A reading from the Second Letter of Paul to the Corinthians, the fifth chapter.

We are always confident; even though we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord-- for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yes, we do have confidence, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. For all of us must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense for what has been done in the body, whether good or evil.

Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we try to persuade others; but we ourselves are well known to God, and I hope that we are also well known to your consciences. We are not commending ourselves to you again, but giving you an opportunity to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast in outward appearance and not in the heart. For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them. From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!

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

People: **Thanks be to God.**

\*THE GOSPEL HYMN

*St. Botolph*, Gordon Slater, 1929

"We walk by faith, and not by sight"

Henry Alford, 1844

1. We walk by faith, and not by sight; no gra-cious words we hear  
 2. We may not touch His hands and side, nor fol-low where He trod;  
 3. Help then, O Lord, our un-belief; and may our faith a-bound  
 4. That, when our life of faith is done, in realms of clear-er light,

from Him who spoke as none e'er spoke, but we be-lieve Him near.  
 but in His prom-ise we re-joice and cry, "My Lord and God!"  
 to call on You when You are near and seek where You are found.  
 we may be-hold You as You are with full and end-less sight.

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

Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come."

He also said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade."

With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.

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

**People: Thanks be to God.**

## SERMON

"Waiting is Active"

Rev. Samuelson

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Dr. Halbe

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

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

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

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

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

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

## THE OFFERTORY

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



## MISSION INVITATION

David Nassau

Cash and designated gifts go to support **Bikes for All People**, a community bicycle shop owned and operated by the United Methodist Church and Community Development for All People. Bikes for All People is committed to providing affordable and reliable services and support to all bicyclists in the community, whether the bike is used for transportation, recreation, or racing. They offer a bike shop, youth outreach which includes giving young children free bikes, group rides, and bike repair classes. Thank you for your generosity.

OFFERTORY ANTHEM  
Simple Song

Psalm 121 and Stephen Schwartz, 1971  
Leonard Bernstein 1971

Sing God a simple song: Lauda, Laude  
Make it up as you go along: Lauda, Laude  
Sing like you like to sing.  
God loves all simple things,  
For God is the simplest of all,  
I will sing the Lord a new song  
To praise Him, to bless Him, to bless the Lord.  
I will sing His praises while I live  
All of my days.  
Blessed is the man who loves the Lord,  
Blessed is the man who praises Him.  
Lauda, Lauda, Laude  
And walks in His ways.  
I will lift up my eyes  
To the hills from whence comes my help.  
I will lift up my voice to the Lord  
Singing Lauda, Laude.  
For the Lord is my shade,  
Is the shade upon my right hand,  
And the sun shall not smite me by day  
Nor the moon by night.  
Blessed is the man who loves the Lord,  
Lauda, Lauda, Laude,  
And walks in His ways.  
Lauda, Lauda, Laude,  
Lauda, Lauda di da di day. All of my days.

\*DOXOLOGY

*Old 100th*

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise Christ, all creatures here below;  
Praise Holy Spirit evermore;  
Praise Triune God, whom we adore. Amen.**

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Dr. Halbe

Leader: Let us pray.

**People: O Giver of Life and Source of Freedom, all that we have is from your hand. You call us to be stewards of your abundance and caretakers of all that you have entrusted to us. Help us to use your gifts wisely and to share them generously. May our faithful stewardship bear witness to your loving presence in our very midst. Amen.**

COMMUNITY NOTICES - DEPART TO SERVE

Ms. Kulwicki

L: Let us depart with a heart to serve.

**P: Thanks be to God.**

\*CLOSING HYMN

"All the colors of the rainbow"

*Abbot's Leigh*, Cyril Vincent Taylor, 1941

Carl P. Daw, 2016

1. All the co - lours of the rain-bow live un - seen in dai - ly light,  
2. All the bo - dy's parts are wan - ted, nor can one de - spise the rest:  
3. Ev - ery lang - uage gains more mu - sic when the words for peace ap - pear:  
4. Teach us, God, our need of oth - ers; through them help us ful - ly live.

but their splen - dors find ex - pres - sion when re - leased to hu - man sight;  
head and hand must work to - get - ther, as must eye and ear and chest;  
Pax, Sa - laam, Ei - ri - ni, Hei - wa, Pa - ce, San - ti, Frie - den, Mir.  
Wean us from our sel - fish hab - its; let us list - en, learn, for - give.

so the church re - veals most beau - ty where di - ver - si - ty is real:  
so the church needs all its mem - bers for a range of min - i - stries:  
Though our tongues make sounds that va - ry all be - speak a com - mon home:  
May we see your longed - for im - age in each hu - man heart and face,

breadth of race and class and gen - der, room for doubt and space to heal.  
var - ied gifts with one great mis - sion, "Do this for the least of these."  
long - ing for the end of con - flict and a new life in God's Sha - lom.  
and be - hold how those a - round us can be chan - nels of your grace.

\*BENEDICTION

Rev. Samuelson

POSTLUDE

*Finale* from Symphony No. 8, *Op. 42, No. 4*

Charles-Marie Widor, 1885

*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.*

† THE FLOWERS THIS MORNING are given to the glory of God and in gratitude to all First Church volunteers by the Flower Fund.

† GREETING AT THE EXITS

Rev. Samuelson — Narthex (Broad Street entrance)

Mr. Stafford — East Door (Ninth Street entrance by the Church Office)

Dr. Halbe — West Door (Cleveland Avenue entrance by the Chapel)

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Enter to Worship  
**Depart to Serve**

June 16, 2024

## This Week at First Church

### Sunday, June 16

- 9 a.m. Morning Prayer & Holy Communion  
(Parish Hall & Virtual)
- 10 a.m. Bible Study (Classroom C)
- 11 a.m. Worship Service  
(Sanctuary & Virtual)
- 12:15 p.m. Coffee Hour & Coffee Sales  
(Parish Hall)

### Tuesday, June 18

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

### Wednesday, June 19

Church and Church Office Closed for the Juneteenth Holiday

### Thursday, June 20

- 4:30 p.m. Gladden Lecture Planning Mtg  
(Zoom)

### Saturday, June 22

- 9 a.m. Faith Mission Lunch  
Prep & Serve (Kitchen)

### Sunday, June 23

- 9 a.m. Morning Prayer & Holy Communion  
(Parish Hall & Virtual)
- 10 a.m. Bible Study (Classroom C)
- 11 a.m. Worship Service  
(Sanctuary & Virtual)
- 4 p.m. Gladden Lecture (Sanctuary)

## 2024 Gladden Lecture Series:

**The Rev. Dr. Yvonne V. Delk**

**Sunday, June 23, 4 p.m.**

Join us for the 2024 Gladden Lecture series featuring The Rev. Dr. Yvonne V. Delk. For over 60 years, Rev. Delk has been a strong ally in the fight for human and civil rights for people of color, children, and the poor. In 1974, Rev. Delk became the first African American woman to be ordained as clergy in the UCC. She is the editor of the book *Afro-Christian Convention: The Fifth Stream of the United Church of Christ*.

The Rev. Delk will preach at both the 9 and 11 a.m. worship services; her sermon is entitled "There Is A River." The 2024 Gladden Lecture is being co-sponsored by the Washington Gladden Social Justice Park. A reception following the lecture will be held in the Social Justice Park.

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## First Serves June

### Donations for Laundry Love

For First Serves in June, we will be collecting supplies for Laundry Love. Laundry Love needs detergent and fabric softeners to continue this mission. Please donate any size and type of liquid laundry detergent (no pods or powder). Fabric softener sheets (not liquid) are also needed. Visit the Giving Tree to pick up a reminder tag. First Serves envelopes are also available if you wish to make a monetary contribution. Please place your Laundry Love donations in the baskets under the Giving Tree through Sunday, June 30. Thank you for your generosity!

## Book Club News: Planning Your Summer Reading?

Come enjoy lively conversation and fellowship with the First Church Book Club. We'll be reading and discussing the following books in the next nine months. All are welcome! The book club meets on the first Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m. on Zoom, excluding holidays.

July 10 - *Poverty, by America* by Matthew Desmond (nonfiction; 284 pgs.); led by Todd Jacobson.

Aug. 7 - *Horse* by Geraldine Brooks (fiction; 401 pgs.); led by Janet Newcity.

Sept. 4 - *Our Missing Hearts* by Celeste Ng (fiction; 335 pgs.); led by Mary Jacobson.

Oct. 2 - *Gender Queer: A Memoir* by Maia Kobabe (nonfiction graphic novel; 239 pgs.); led by Kathy Reed. (According to the American Library Association, this was the most "challenged" book in 2022 for the second year in a row. From July 2021 to Dec. 2022, the book was banned in 56 school districts, the most of any book, according to PEN America. The book has been challenged for LGBTQIA+ and sexually explicit content.)

Nov. 6 - *Tom Lake* by Ann Patchett (fiction; 309 pgs.); led by Andrew Welsh-Huggins.

Jan. 8, 2025 - *The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store* by James McBride (fiction; 385 pgs.); led by Chris Farquhar.

Feb. 5, 2025 - *Master Slave, Husband Wife: An Epic Journey from Slavery to Freedom* by Ilyon Woo (nonfiction; 410 pgs.); led by Jean Lebold. One of two winners of the 2024 Pulitzer Prize for Biography.

March 5, 2025 - *North Woods* by Daniel Mason (fiction; 372 pgs.); led by Fran Panek.

Questions? Want to receive book club emails? Please call Kathy Reed, 614-442-7742.

## Transition News

Whatever it might be at the time, a two-year-old wants it now. There's no waiting. "I want it now!" To prepare for his ministry, Jesus went into the wilderness to pray and meditate. His teaching was filled with metaphors that allowed listeners to interpret and apply his words to their lives and situations. The work of the church during a time of transition is more like the model of Jesus to wait, meditate, and interpret, than the demands of the two-year-old.

First Church has begun a once in a generation opportunity to shape the future of our ministry in Columbus. The Transition Team is asking leaders and church members to metaphorically wander through the wilderness to listen for and contemplate our call for ministry in the coming years. First Church was established on a foundation to care for the community and care for each other. Whatever this will look like, we must be intentional to call spiritual leaders who advocate for mercy and justice. To do this will take time.

Our metaphorical wandering is not without a plan. Small group discussions are being held to share how each of us hears God's call for our ministry. The Transition Team has submitted its request for an intentional interim minister. This person has specialized training to support our separation from one called pastor to the beginning of the next. Qualified candidates will be vetted and interviewed, and then the best person will be hired for an interim ministry that will span 1-2 years. As we navigate this process, we continue to be the hands and feet, ears and voice, for Christ at First Church.

Remember, *The times, they are a changing...* Let's all be part of the change.

## Keep in Prayer

**Members** Maddie McWilliams; Lila Bendick; Kathy Reed; Beverly Halbe; Nancy Burba; Julia Myers; Tim Holt; Steven and Katie Deliman; Dene Barnard; Mary Kay Beall Carter and John Carter; Carol Lowy; Scott Warrick; Clinton Brown; Tom Bishop; Dan Axt; Rick Sayre; Anne Morganstern; Martha Huey; Twink Starr; and Janice White.

**Family and friends** Wendy Kennedy's stepfather, Chuck; Nancy Loy's friend, Rev. Peggy O'Connor; Melva Fisher's sister and brother-in-law, Velma and Jamie Christy, and her daughter-in-law, Mindy Fisher; Torrence; Leslie Huntington's friend, Becky Edwards Williams; Annette McCormick's father, Charles McCormick; Liz Kuhn; Mike Kennedy's father, Allan Kennedy; Nan Kreimer's friend, Sabrina; Tim Ahrens' mother, Lorene Ahrens, sister, Debbie Ahrens, niece and fiancé Josie and William, and granddaughter and Sarah Ahrens Stadie's daughter, Aurelia Stadie; Janet Axt's mother, Alice Paugh; Margaret Cipriani's friend, Kathryn Schlarb; Barry Moenter's brother-in-law, Tom Huss; L.J. and Gretchen Cooks' brother, Kione Cooks; Jim Griffin's friends, Andy Bell and John Alatsis; Jill Hultin's brother, Ken Hultin; Todd and Mary Anne Jacobson's friend, Lisa Lang, and Mary Anne's nephew, Peter Poppleton; Diana and Bob Kutschbach's cousin, Carson Samples; Susie Loik's grandson, Alex Glover and his parents, Kristen and Wes; Arevena Nirote's sister and brother-in-law, Marlene and Gary Gallion; Fran and Bruce Panek's friends, Richard and Beverly Cicenas; and Victor John's cousin, Devin Endlick, and his parents, Charles and Mary Jane, and sister.

**Those who mourn** Kate Erickson on the death of her father, John White; Francille Firebaugh on the death of her husband, John Firebaugh; and David Wyatt's friends Hugh and Joelle Endsley on the death of their son, Simon Endsley.

We keep Stephen Ministers in prayer as they care for our church members.

We pray for all people in war zones around the world including Gaza/Israel and other Middle East conflicts, Sudan, Ukraine, and Myanmar.

In the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle, we pray for the people and churches in Botswana and Zimbabwe. We also pray for our UCC partner in mission, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Ghana.

## 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 support **Bikes for All People**, a community bicycle shop owned and operated by the United Methodist Church and Community Development for All People. Bikes for All People is committed to providing affordable and reliable services and support to all bicyclists in the community. They offer a bike shop, youth outreach which includes giving young children free bikes, group rides, and bike repair classes. They also accept almost any bicycle-shaped or bicycle-related donation: bikes, cycling-related items like wheels, parts, clothing, accessories, books, videos, tools, etc. Just send pictures and a brief description of your donation to [info@bikes4allpeople.com](mailto:info@bikes4allpeople.com) so that they can coordinate a great time for drop-off. Thank you for your generosity.

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## Upcoming Mission Offerings

June 16	<b>Bikes for all People</b>
June 23	UCC Strengthen the Church
June 30	Horizon Prison Initiative

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## Greenlawn Cemetery Tour

**Sunday, June 30, 1:30 - 3 p.m.**

Jim Griffin will lead a tour of the Greenlawn Cemetery highlighting the famous Ohioans buried there. Register by clicking the QR code.



# 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:** 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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