



Welcome to First Church!

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.

Please use this time for quiet preparation for worship.

Welcome to the season of Lent. As you worship with us during this season, you will notice many things in our service are different than usual. Lent is a wilderness time of sorts that prepares us for Easter Resurrection. Every change we have made is intended to help you drop into that mystery more deeply. Worship is more solemn, more penitent, more quiet. We hope these changes help you find your way inward.

GATHERING

Prelude

A period of silence is observed at the ringing of a bell.

*Invocation Julia Myers

Leader: In this sacred space,

in these moments of stillness,

our thoughts and silence are like incense.

Holy God,

Whose glory touches and transfigures the mind and the material,

Whose intimate, gentle Spirit embraces our vulnerability

and fills our empty spaces with hope,

may we know the deep calm that only You can give.

People: Through the mystery of absence and presence,

come, fill us with Your emptiness, Your eternal silence. Amen.

Welcome Rev. Joanna



Thomas, Marty Haugen, 1984 Marty Haugen, 1984



Tree of Life and awe-some mys-t'ry, in your death though you we are re born, 2. Seed that dies to rise in glo - ry, may we see our - selves in you, if we

3. We re - mem - ber truth once spo- ken, love passed on through act and word, ev - 'ry 4. From the dawn - ing of cre - a - tion, you have loved us as your own; stay with



die in all of his-t'ry, still you rise with ev-'ry morn, still you rise with ev-'ry morn. learn to live your sto-ry we may die to rise a-new, we may die to rise a-new. per-son lost and bro-ken wears the bo-dy of our Lord, wears the bo-dy of our Lord. us through all temp-ta-tion, make us turn to you a-lone, make us turn to you a-lone.

Confession Rev. Becky

Leader: Let us pray, **People: Hidden God,**

we bring to this sanctuary

place on this table,

our burdens and brokenness,

our self-image bruised and hurting,

our fears, shame, doubts and anxieties,

the raw materials we ask You to bless and change,

that in our dark tunnels

we may begin to see light

and in our desert experiences

we may find You.

Leader: Hear the good news: Anyone who is in Christ is a new creation.

The old life is gone; a new life has begun.

Friends, believe the gospel: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven!

People: Thanks be to God!

Passing of the Peace Rev. Joanna

CHILDREN'S MOMENT Melissa Kulwicki

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

LISTENING

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

Romans 10:8B-13 Julia Myers

Leader: A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans, the tenth chapter.

"The word is near you,

on your lips and in your heart"

(that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. The scripture says, "No one who believes in him will be put to shame." For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. For, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

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

People: Thanks be to God.

PSALM 91:1-2, 9-16 Julia Myers

You who live in the shelter of the Most High, who abide in the shadow of the Almighty,

will say to the Lord, "My refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust."

Because you have made the Lord your refuge, the Most High your dwelling place,

no evil shall befall you,

no scourge come near your tent.

For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.

On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.

You will tread on the lion and the adder;

the young lion and the serpent you will trample under foot.

Those who love me, I will deliver;

I will protect those who know my name.

When they call to me, I will answer them;

I will be with them in trouble;

I will rescue them and honor them.

With long life I will satisfy them and show them my salvation.

Luke 4:1-13 Rev. Becky

Leader: A reading from the gospel according to Luke, the fourth chapter.

After his baptism, Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished. The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread." Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone."

Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And the devil said to him, "To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." Jesus answered him, "It is written,

'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'"

Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written,

'He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you,'

and

'On their hands they will bear you up,

so that you will not dash your foot against a stone."

Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test." When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

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

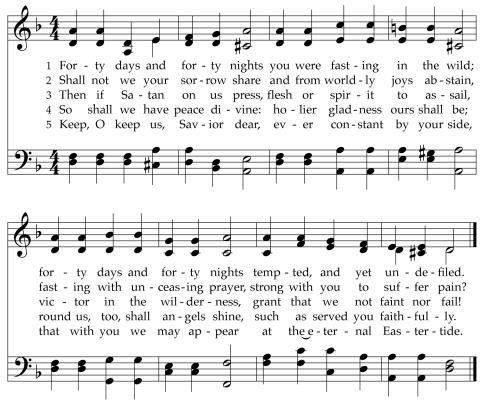
People: Thanks be to God.

Reflection Rev. Becky

Responding

Hymn of Preparation "Forty days and forty nights"

Aus der Tiefe rufe ich, attr. Martin Herbst, 1676 George Hunt Smyttan, 1856, alt.



Prayers of the People

Rev. Joanna

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 Jim Lowe

Cash and designated gifts go to support **The Largest Table**. For more than twelve years, volunteers provide food each Wednesday to individuals and families in the community who are in need. The First Church meal team gathers on the third Wednesday of each month to make and pack up to 100 lunches. Your gifts will help purchase the supplies for our meal team to support this feeding ministry. Thank you for your generosity.

Prayer of Dedication Rev. Becky

All: Accept these gifts, we humbly pray, O God.

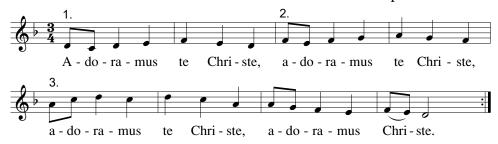
Let them give you honor and glory as we serve the needs of your people. And let the called and redeemed of God say, "Amen."

Communion

Rev. Becky and Rev. Joanna

Communion Hymn "Adoramus te Christe"

Adoramus Te Christe, Marty Haugen, 1984 Antiphon from Good Friday Liturgy



Post-Communion Prayer

Rev. Joanna

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.

SENDING

COMMUNITY NOTICES - DEPART TO SERVE

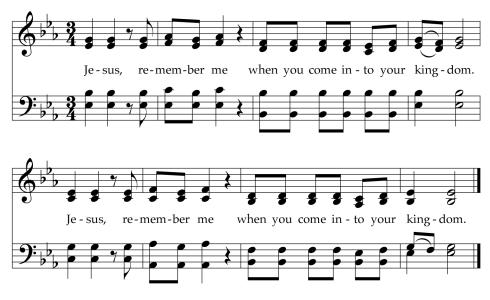
Melissa Kulwicki

Leader Let us depart with a heart to serve.

People: Thanks be to God.

*Benediction Rev. Becky

"Jesus, remember me"



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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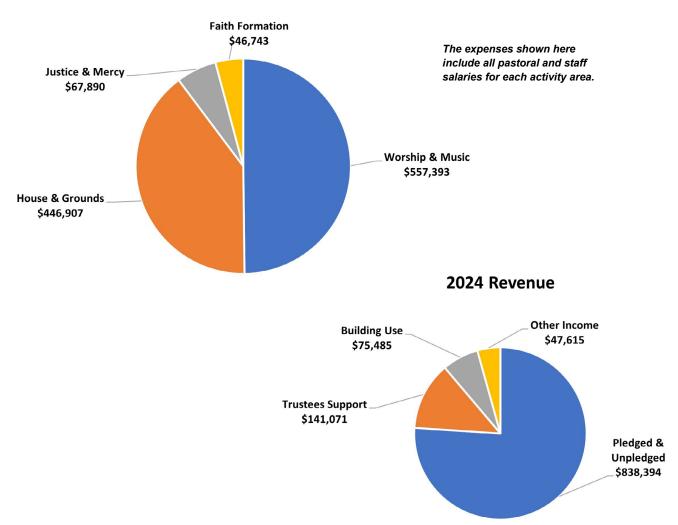
"Jesus, remember me" Text: Taizé Community, 1981. Music: Jacques Berthier, 1981. © Words and Music 1981 Les Presses de Taizé (admin. GIA Publications, Inc.) All rights reserved.

Leadership in Today's liturgy
The Rev. Becky David, preacher
Julia Myers, liturgist
Melissa Kulwicki, worship leader
David Hogrefe, pianist
Peter Murray, livestream ministry

Your 2024 Pledge Dollars at Work at First Church!

Thank you for your generous and faithful giving that enables our ministry and missions!

2024 Ministry and Missions Expenses



Worship & Music - \$557,393 / 50% of our 2024 Expenses

Our shared worship and music ministry — both in-person and livestreamed — unites, inspires, challenges, and uplifts our congregation.

- Sunday and Special Worship Services Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion Choral Evensong
- · Sacred Music from Our Choirs and Instrumental Ensembles with our two organs, handbells, pianos, harpsichord
- Pastoral Care Home, Shut-In, and Hospital Visits Premarital Counseling Bereavement Counseling
- Celebrations of Life's Milestones
 Weddings
 Funeral Services

Justice & Mercy – \$67,890 / 6% of our 2024 Expenses

From serving meals to advocating for justice to contributing to a different mission each Sunday, our outreach programs uplift the most vulnerable in Central Ohio, our state, and across the world.

- Good Samaritan monthly community financial support program Sunday Mission Offerings
- Bethlehem on Broad Street (BOBS) Faith Mission meals The Largest Table sandwich meals
- Laundry Love Unsheltered Ministry First Serves Intergenerational Projects
- Sacred Earth Gladden Lecture
- BREAD (Building Responsibility, Equality, and Dignity community interfaith program)

Faith Formation & Congregational Care - \$46,743 / 4% of our 2024 Expenses

Faith Formation for all ages includes Bible study, intergenerational activities for children, youth, and adults, and small group gatherings that deepen our spiritual journey together.

Our Congregational Care Ministries provide tangible ways for us to care for one another.

- Sunday Faith Formation Classes, including Adult Bible Study, Godly Play for children, Confirmation classes for youth
- Lenten Small Study Groups Book Study Groups
- Christmas Potluck Dinner Easter Egg Hunt Pride Parade marchers Engagement Fair
- Bereavement Ministry Team Card Ministry Team Care & Share Kitchen Ministry Team Full Circle Connections
- Neighborhood Care Circles Stephen Ministry Team Proposed formation of Congregational Care Ministry Commission

House & Grounds - \$446,907 / 40% of our 2024 Expenses

Preserving our historic home, listed on the National Registry of Historic Places, for worship and community with essential upkeep, modern safety features, and sustainable improvements.

- Sanctuary roof and gutter repairs Landscaping and gardening
- Senior Minister's Office renovations Music Minister's office repairs
- Magnetic door locking hardware, including installation, wiring, and painting Automatic controls for steam boiler
- Education wing window refurbishment Education wing LED lighting installation
- LED light strings for the Sanctuary Christmas tree in coordination with Sacred Earth committee
- Insurance Utilities Cleaning Routine Maintenance

Your pledge sustains the heart of First Church: Worship, outreach, education, and a home for our community.

Thank you for your generosity. We are grateful!



March 9, 2025

This Week at First Church

Sunday, March 9

9 a.m. Informal Worship Service

(Parish Hall)

10 a.m Sunday School

(Classrooms B, E & F)

Parent Conversations (Adult Library)

Adult Education (Classroom C)

11 a.m. Worship Service (Sanctuary)

12:15 p.m. Gratitude Sunday Coffee Hour

(Parish Hall)

2:00 p.m. Kelton House Tour

(586 E. Town St.)

Monday, March 10

10 a.m. Stewardship & Growth

Commission Mtg

(Classroom C & Zoom)

7 p.m. Trustees Mtg

(Classroom C & Zoom)

Tuesday, March 11

11 a.m. Congregational Care Ministry Mtg

(Parlor)

5:30 p.m. Budget & Finance Mtg

(Classroom C & Zoom)

6 p.m. Music Committee Mtg (Parlor)

7 p.m. Executive Committee Mtg

(Classroom C & Zoom)

Wednesday, March 12

7 p.m. Book Club (Zoom)

Thursday, March 13

4:30 p.m. Choristers (Music Activities Rm)

6 p.m. Bell Choir Rehearsal (Bell Rm)

7:15 p.m. First Church Choir (Choir Rm)

Friday, March 14

10 a.m. Full Circle Connections (Parlor)

Bexley & East Side Lenten Study Group (Home of Pauline Fritz)

Westminister-Thurber Lenten Group

(Goodale Community Rm)

7 p.m. Shaun Boothe and the Unauthorized

Biography Series (Riffe Center)

Saturday, March 15

10 a.m. New Members Class (Classroom C)

Sunday, March 16

9 a.m. Informal Worship Service

(Parish Hall)

10 a.m. Sunday School

(Classrooms B, E & F)

Parent Conversations (Adult Library)

Adult Education (Classroom C)

11 a.m. Worship Service (Sanctuary)

12:15 p.m. Coffee Hour & Coffee Sales

(Parish Hall)

4:00 p.m. Choral Evensong (Sanctuary)

Lenten Invitation from the Moderator

In last week's letter to the congregation, we lamented that change is not easy. How synchronistic it is that our church is looking inward to reimagine itself while all Christianity enters this Lenten season of contemplation and reflection. Looking inward and being honest with oneself is hard work, but what a great opportunity to look into our collective mirrors and see ourselves more clearly. What a great time to ask, "How did get we get to this place of dis-ease?" This is the perfect time to do this, because throughout Lent we are reminded that all of us are beloved children of God. No matter who we are or what our past has been, God extends arms wide to embrace us and First Church in love and mercy. How reassuring it is to look inward with the confidence that we are liberated to move forward!

Return to the LORD your God, for God is gracious and merciful.

— Joel 2:13

Everything in Between: Meeting God in the Midst of Extremes Lenten Devotional Booklet and Cards

Pick up your Lenten Devotional booklets and daily devotional cards at any exit.

Booklet: Beginning with Ash Wednesday, the weekly devotional booklet follows the scriptures of the *Everything In Between* series through Easter Sunday. Each week offers commentary, poetry, visual art, written reflections, hymns, and reflection prompts.

Daily Devotional Cards: A collection of 52 daily devotional cards for Ash Wednesday through Easter. Each card has a question for reflection and a short prayer. These are especially great for middle and high school youth, college students, and adults of all ages.

Lenten Book Study Groups

In keeping with a cherished First Church tradition, we are planning to offer the Lenten Book Study Groups throughout the upcoming Lenten season. The book that we'll read together as a congregation this year is *Grounded: Finding God in the World – a Spiritual Revolution* by Diana Butler Bass. We have ordered copies of the book for you to pick up in the church office (for \$11) or you may find a copy of the book at the public library or your favorite bookseller.

The Lenten Book Study Groups will take place in the homes of First Church members who live in different neighborhoods of the Columbus area. If you would like more information, please contact Rev. Joanna at jsamuelson@first-church.org.

Fiber Arts Ministry Thursday, March 20, 10 - 11:30 a.m. In the Fanning Room

The Fiber Arts Ministry team will gather in the Fanning Room on Thursday, March 20, from 10–11:30 a.m. We hope you will come and join us to find out more about our ministry, connect with fellow creatives, and learn about the many benefits to both the artists and the recipients of their gifts.

Look for the rainbow on the bulletin board along the first-floor level of the education wing! This month, the Congregational Care Ministry highlights Sarah Giffen and her inspiring story of compassion—sharing her gifts and making a difference through the Fiber Art's Ministry.

For more information, contact Sarah Giffen through <u>care@first-church.org</u>.



Full Circle Connections Friday, March 14, at 10 a.m. In the Church Parlor

Full Circle Connections will meet Friday, March 14; the topic is "Staying Present."

If you can't make it this time, be sure to mark your calendar for our next gathering. We meet for an hour on the second and fourth Fridays every month. All are welcome and bring a friend! Reach Jan Hamilton on Realm or by email (hamiltonjan30@yahoo.com).



First Church Book Club:
Wednesday, March 12, 7 p.m.
You Could Make This Place
Beautiful: A Memoir
Wednesday, April 2, 7 p.m.
The Heaven & Earth
Grocery Store

On Wednesday, March 12, Andrew Welsh-Huggins will lead a discussion of *You Could Make This Place Beautiful: A Memoir* by Columbus poet Maggie Smith.

On Wednesday, April 2, Chris Farquhar will lead a discussion of James McBride's novel *The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store*. Winner of the 2024 Library of Congress Prize for American Fiction, it's Depression-era tale of a community of Jewish immigrants and African Americans coming from the South during the Great Migration who live in a poor Pennsylvania neighborhood, near the wealthier, white part of town.

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

Teen & Adult Outing
Shaun Boothe's Unauthorized
Biography Series
presented by CAPA
Friday, March 14, at 7p.m.
Riffe Center

Tickets are \$5 and the church will purchase the first 20. Contact Leslie Fulford at <u>lfulford@first-church.org</u> as soon as possible to secure seats and plan carpooling.

Sunday Morning Book Study
Saying Yes and Saying No: On
Rendering to God and Caesar
With Rev. Dr. Nancy
Livingston
Sunday, March 16 Sunday, April 27
(No Class on Easter)
10 a.m. in Classroom C

Join Rev. Dr. Nancy Livingston for an exploration of Robert McAfee Brown's 1986 book about historic tensions between governments and the church. Beginning with the Barman Declaration, the document the Confessing Church produced in Germany in response to the Nazi take-over in government and the capitulation of the German Evangelical Church. Copies of the book can be found at your local library, bookstore, or on Amazon.

Lunch Bunch Thursday, March 13, 12 noon 1:30 p.m. Schokko Cafe at the Columbus Museum of Art

Come have lunch at the Schokko Cafe in the Columbus Museum of Art with others from the church. We'll have a good lunch and relaxing time together. There's no registration or sign up, just come and enjoy a good meal and get to know other members of the church a little bit better. See you at the museum!

Keep in Prayer

Members Lynn Wallich; Nancy Loy; Lisa Fravel-Dean; Mark Brown; Grace Glaros and family; Beverly Halbe; Mike Weddle; Elaine Warren; Margot Connor and John Anderson; Francille Firebaugh; Pauline Fritz; Nancy Burba; John Carter; Carol Lowy; Clinton Brown; Dan Axt; and Janice White.

Family and friends Wendy and Robert Reber's sister-in-law, Judy Reber; Tom Kiesel's friend, Carrie; Robyn and Mike Petras; our Evensong organist, Jon Tyillian; Marcy Essig's daughter-in-law, Daniella Essig; Joanna Samuelson and family's neighbor, Donna Hammond; Matt Myers' sister, Erin Myers; Michael Russell's friend, Donald Featheroft; BOBS volunteers, John Holly and Sandy Waters-Holly; Shelly Gies' brother, Mike Simms; Victor John's father, Charles John and mother, Mary Jane John; Amy Wagner's friend, Lee Gatton; Michael Russell's friend, Teresa Elliott; Amanda Butler's aunt, Hattie Coatney; Pat Patterson's son, Jay Patterson, and brother, Dan Stone; Bob and Lorraine Quinichett's daughter, Susan Webster; Melva Fisher's daughter, Susan Wood; Annette McCormick's father, Charles McCormick; Diana and Bob Kutschbach's cousin, Carson Samples; Arevena Nirote's sister and brother-in-law, Marlene and Gary Gallion; and Fran and Bruce Panek's friends, Richard and Beverly Cicenas.

Those who mourn Stephanie and Bob Childs on the death of her sister, Martha Huey; Amy Wagner on the death of her friend, Bill Kelley; John Carter on the death of his wife, Mary Kay Beall Carter; the family and friends of Martha Huey.

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

In the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle, we pray for the people and churches in Ireland, and the United Kingdom including England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. We also pray for our UCC partner in mission, the Middle East Council of Churches in Syria.

You Are Cordially Invited ...

Join the Justice & Mercy Commission of First Congregational Church in welcoming Deep Griha Society Director Ashlesha Onawhale at two area events on Sunday, March 30 and Friday, April 4.

First Church and other UCC congregations in Columbus have appreciated and supported the groundbreaking work of Ashlesha Onawale and her parents, the founders of the Deep Griha Society (DGS), centered in Pune, India. Deep Griha means "house of lamps" in many Indian languages. Through the illuminating paths of education, healthcare, and community building, DGS has, since 1975, equipped individuals in marginalized communities with the skills, confidence, and resources to build brighter futures.

Please RSVP soon to reserve your seats for one or both activities.

Deep Griha Society Fellowship Luncheon Sunday, March 30 12:15 - 2 p.m. First Congregational Church

To register click the QR code below.

Deep Griha 50th Anniversary Dinner
Friday, April 4
6 – 8 p.m.
First Community North
\$25 Per Person: Reservations Required
To register click the QR code below.





Church Leadership

Interim Senior Minister: Rev. Becky David, M.Div. Designated Minister: Rev. Joanna Samuelson, M.Div.

Minister of Music: Joshua Stafford, M.M.

Interim Director of Faith Formation: Leslie Fulford

Administrative Manager: Amy Wagner Communications Manager: Melissa Kulwicki

Office Assistant: Pat Patterson

Business Administrator: Annette McCormick

Maintenance: Mike Sharrock

Custodians: Alexis Wayne, Bill McCabe, Bob O'Brien

Handbell Director: Jennifer Fry

Wedding Coordinators: Amy Wagner, Shelly Gies, Margaret

Cipriani, Denise Vogt

Nursery Staff: Miranda Brooks, Shelly Gies, Celecia Smith Commissioned Minister for Social Justice: Tom Brownfield

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: Martha Worth

Deacons: Allen Baker, Heather Jones, Brian Kemp, Allison Lowery Justice & Mercy: James Lowe Palmer, Dayna McCrary, Matt Myers, Fran Panek, Gary Seigerst,

Thomason Smith

BOARD OF TRUSTEES Chairperson: Frank Cook

Trustees: Matthew Bendick, Todd Jacobson, Victor John, Melody Leidheiser, Janet Miller, Sarah Reed, Judy Smith, (Secretary),

Hugh Schultz

CHURCH COUNCIL LEADERSHIP Moderator: Sarah Reed **Moderator-elect:**

Treasurer: Ramona Moenter

Treasurer-elect:

Secretary: Amanda Butler

Secretary-elect:

Nominating Chair: Gregory Halbe

COMMISSIONERS

Church Stewardship and Church Growth: Stephen Sterrett Commissioned Minister for Spiritual Formation and Direction: Church Stewardship and Church Growth-elect: Kathy Reed

Church Vitality: Pat Patterson

Church Vitality-elect:

Communications and Technology Commission: Mike Kennedy

Communications and Technology Commission-elect:

Faith Formation Commission: Cami Curren Faith Formation Commission-elect: Mariner Taft

House & Grounds: Eric Klintworth

House & Grounds-elect: Justice & Mercy-elect: Janice Taft Music, Arts & Heritage: Jim Griffin

Music, Arts & Heritage-elect: Cheryl Hoskinson

Member-at-Large: Martha Wilson Personnel: Sandra Mathias

Personnel-elect:

Youth Member-at-Large: Sebastian Kulwicki

FIRST CHURCH IS A FAITH COMMUNITY

† Called together by God, the Creator, Redeemer, 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.

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.

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



