Worship at Nine
June 29, 2025
Third Sunday After Pentecost

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.

GATHERING

Prelude

Welcome Rev. Joanna

*Passing of the Peace

Rev. Joanna
Living God Daniel Iverson, 1926

*Gathering Hymn

Living God, Daniel Iverson, 1926

"Spirit of the Living God"

Daniel Iverson, 1926



*Call to Worship Rev. Becky

Leader: God is a God who calls.

People: We are here to worship and to hear that call.

Leader: God is a God who equips.

People: We are here to worship and to be shaped into the body of Christ.

Leader: God is a God who sends.

People: We are here to worship so that we may carry that spirit of unity out into the world.

Leader: God is a God who blesses.

People: We are here to worship and to receive a blessing that we may bless others.

Now let us worship God — together!

Opening Prayer Rev. Becky

Leader: Let us pray.

People: O Good and Gracious God, You call us to live out our faith in ways

that honor You and bless our neighbors, and we recognize that worship is an essential part of our ongoing faith formation.

We believe that what we experience together, here,

deepens our commitment and inspires our witness out in the world around us. O God, we pray that You would shape and reshape our hearts through worship, and may our discipleship be evident through our love for You and for our neighbor.

This, we pray, in Jesus' name, Amen.

CHILDREN'S TIME Melissa Kulwicki

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

LISTENING

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

2 KINGS 2:1-2, 6-14 Jill Hultin

Leader: A reading from the Second Book of Kings, the second chapter.

When the Lord was about to take Elijah up to heaven by a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here; for the Lord has sent me as far as Bethel." But Elisha said, "As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they went down to Bethel.

Then Elijah said to him, "Stay here; for the Lord has sent me to the Jordan." But he said, "As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So the two of them went on. Fifty men of the company of prophets also went, and stood at some distance from them, as they both were standing by the Jordan. Then Elijah took his mantle and rolled it up, and struck the water; the water was parted to the one side and to the other, until the two of them crossed on dry ground.

When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, "Tell me what I may do for you, before I am taken from you." Elisha said, "Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit." He responded, "You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it will be granted you; if not, it will not." As they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them, and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind into heaven. Elisha kept watching and crying out, "Father, father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!" But when he could no longer see him, he grasped his own clothes and tore them in two pieces.

He picked up the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. He took the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and struck the water, saying, "Where is the Lord, the God of Elijah?" When he had struck the water, the water was parted to the one side and to the other, and Elisha went over.

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

People: Thanks be to God.

LUKE 9:51-62 Rev. Joanna

Leader: A reading from the Gospel according to Luke, the ninth chapter.

When the days drew near for Jesus to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. And he sent messengers ahead of him. On their way they entered a village of the Samaritans to make ready for him; but they did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. When his disciples James and John saw it, they said, "Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" But he turned and rebuked them. Then they went on to another village.

As they were going along the road, someone said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." To another he said, "Follow me." But he said, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." But Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God." Another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home." Jesus said to him, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

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

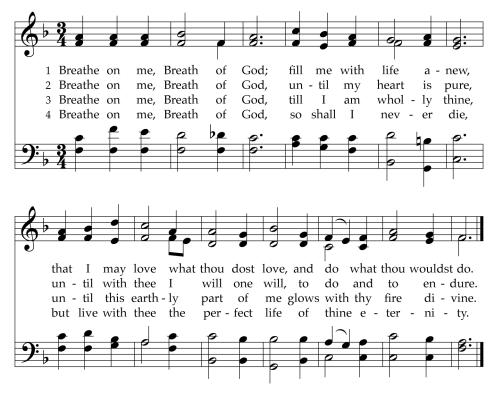
People: Thanks be to God.

SERMON "Called to Follow" Rev. Joanna

Responding

Hymn of Preparation "Breathe on me, breath of God"

Trentham, Robert Jackson, 1888 Edwin Hatch, 1878



Prayers of the People

Rev. Becky

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 Tom Brownfield

Cash and designated gifts go to **Faith in Public Life**, a national network of clergy and faith leaders united in the prophetic pursuit of justice and the common good. With staff in three states including Ohio, they work closely with our members to take strategic moral action that informs policy both locally and nationally. They believe that faith leaders have a unique moral power to shape public debates and build more just and equitable communities. Thank you for your generosity.

Prayer of Dedication Rev. Becky

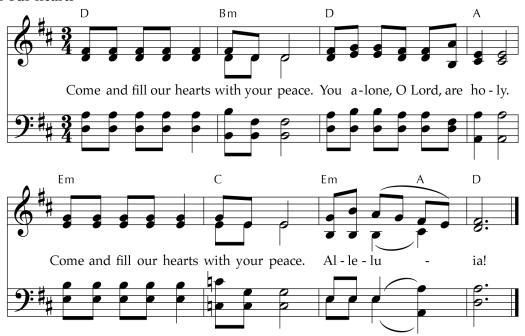
Liberating God who calls us to true freedom, we offer these gifts as a sign of our commitment to live by the Spirit's leading. May our generosity reflect Your love, and through Your grace, may we sow seeds of compassion and justice in our lives and in the wider community. With thankful hearts, we dedicate ourselves to Your transforming work. In Christ's name, we pray, Amen.

Communion Rev. Joanna and Rev. Becky

COMMUNION HYMN

Confitemi Domino, Jacques Berthier, 1982

"Come and fill our hearts"



Prayer of Thanksgiving

Rev. Becky

O Holy One, may we who have been fed enact our gratitude out in the world by joining the Spirit in Her holy work of breaking down the boundaries that divide us and through building up communities that restore us. Amen.

SENDING

COMMUNITY NOTICES - DEPART TO SERVE

Melissa Kulwicki

Leader Let us depart with a heart to serve.

People: Thanks be to God.

Order for Times of Passage: Farewell

Moderator Rev. Sarah Reed: Our church family is constantly changing. People come and go. Babies are born. Children grow up. People commit themselves to one another. Loved ones and friends among us come to the end of their lives. Individuals move into our community and church life. Others leave us, moving to new places, new experiences and new opportunities.

It is important and right that we recognize these times of passage, these times of endings and beginnings.

Today, we bid farewell to Rev. Joanna Samuelson who is leaving and will serve David's United Church of Christ in Kettering, Ohio as the Intentional Interim Minister.

During the summers of 2021 and 2022, Rev. Samuelson provided pastoral support while the previous ministers, Rev. Dr. Timothy Ahrens and Rev. Emily Corzine, were on sabbatical, respectively.

In August 2022, First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, hired Rev. Samuelson as the Intentional Interim Associate Minister. In May 2023, her contract was extended, and her title was changed to Designated Minister.

Rev. Samuelson: I thank First Church and its members and friends for the love, kindness and support that you have shown me during these last three-plus years that I have been journeying alongside all of you.

I am grateful for the different ways that my leadership has been accepted, and I ask for forgiveness for the mistakes that I have made. As I leave, I carry with me all that I have learned here.

Congregation: We receive your thankfulness, offer forgiveness, and accept that you now leave to minister elsewhere. We express our gratitude for your time among us. We ask for forgiveness for the mistakes that we have made. Your influence on our faith and faithfulness will not leave us at your departure.

Rev. Samuelson: I forgive you and accept your gratitude, trusting that our time together and our parting are pleasing to God.

Vows of Release

(All who are able may stand.)

Moderator Reed: Do you, the members and friends of First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, release Rev. Samuelson from her duties as our Designated Minister?

Congregation: We do, with the help of God.

Moderator Reed: Do you offer your encouragement for her ministry soon to begin as the Intentional Interim Minister at David's UCC in Kettering?

Congregation: We do, with the help of God.

Moderator Reed: Do you, Rev. Samuelson, release this congregation from turning to you and depending on you?

Rev. Samuelson: I do, with the help of God.

Moderator Reed: Do you offer your encouragement for the continued ministry here, at First Church, and in the congregation's relationships with Rev. Becky David, Rev. jessica young chang, and the other authorized ministers who will come to serve?

Rev. Samuelson: I do, with the help of God.

Witness of the Association

Moderator Reed: On behalf of the United Church of Christ, I witness to the words spoken: words of thankfulness, forgiveness and release. The member churches of our Association and Conference hold each of you in prayer. We pledge our support in the transitions signified in this service.

Congregation: Thanks be to God.

Prayer (all): O God, whose everlasting love for all of us is trustworthy, help each one of us to trust the future which rests in your care. The time we shared together, in your name, saw our laughter and tears, our hopes and disappointments. Guide us as we hold these cherished memories but move in new directions until that time comes when we are completely one with you and with one another. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray, amen.

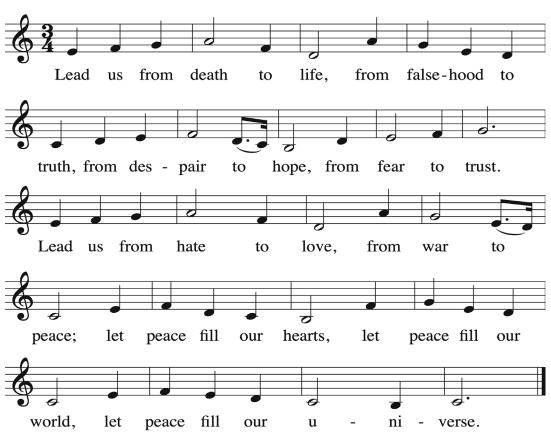
*Benediction Rev. Joanna

*Closing Hymn

"Lead us from death to life"

World Peace Prayer, Marty Haugen, 1985

Satish Kumar, 1981



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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Leadership in Today's liturgy
The Rev. Joanna Samuelson, preacher
The Rev. Becky David, worship leader
The Rev. Sarah Reed, worship leader
Jill Hultin, liturgist
Melissa Kulwicki, worship leader
David Hogrefe, pianist
Geoffrey Dean, livestream ministry



This Week at First Church

Sunday, June 29

9 a.m. Worship Service &

Holy Communion (Parish Hall)

10 a.m. Adult Education (Classroom C)

Family Playground Time

(Sam Gordon Playground)

11 a.m. Worship Service (Sanctuary)

12:15 p.m. Celebration of Rev. Samuelson

(Parish Hall)

12:30 p.m. Teen Time (Teen Rm)

Tuesday, July 1

7 p.m. Communications & Technology

Mtg (Zoom)

Justice & Mercy Mtg (Classroom C & Zoom) Personnel Mtg (Zoom)

Friday, July 4

Church Closed in Celebration of Independence Day

Sunday, July 6

9 a.m. Worship Service &

Holy Communion (Parish Hall)

10 a.m. Family Playground Time

(Sam Gordon Playground)

11 a.m. Worship Service (Sanctuary)

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

(Parish Hall)

Family Playground Time 10 a.m. on the Church Playground

It's summer – let's get outside! Join your First Church friends for outdoor play between services!

June 29, 2025 Celebrating Rev. Joanna Samuelson Today after Worship at 11 a.m.

Rev. Samuelson's service at First Congregational has come to an end. Please attend this reception to thank her for all of her work for us and on behalf of us. There will be a short program of thanks.

Adult Faith Formation Pride Retrospective with David Hogrefe Today at 10 a.m. Classroom C

From his early Pride marches during the 1980s AIDS crisis in Atlanta and DC, to where we are today, David Hogrefe has witnessed the evolution of Pride in America. Join David for this Pride month discussion.

Teen Time with Maggie and Leslie Today from 12:30 - 1 p.m.

Stop by the teen room off of Parish Hall to play ping pong and learn about summer youth activities, including a new teen Bible study for 14 to 20-year-olds, led by Maggie Myers, which will begin July 13.

Full Circle Connections Friday, June 27 at 10 a.m. in the Church Parlor

Full Circle Connections will meet next Friday, June 27. The topic is *Hope*. 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).



Lunch Bunch Land Grant Brewing Thursday, July 10 12 noon - 1 p.m.

Come have an enjoyable time with others from the church. We are going to an historic factory in Franklinton built in 1920 that is home to Land Grant Brewing.

Land Grant offers an inclusive and welcoming space where anyone can feel welcomed. They work to make meaningful engagement through inspiring people, passions, and projects happening throughout Ohio. Scan the QR code below to register



First Church Book Club The Women by Kristin Hannah

On Wednesday, July 9, 2025 at 7 p.m. on Zoom, come enjoy lively conversation and friendship with the First Church Book Club.

The Women is a story of unsung heroes during the Vietnam War — female nurses serving courageously, risking their lives to care for others in the midst of danger, and the deep friendships, sacrifices, and courage under fire they show in Vietnam, and then as they transition back into civilian life.

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

How Many People Have Been Helped by Stephen Ministry?

More than one-and-a-half million people have received care from a Stephen Minister in a formal and confidential one-to-one caring relationship and millions more have been touched by Stephen Ministry in informal ways. A new Stephen Ministry Training course starts on August 6. Contact care@first-church.org for more information.



Fiber Arts Ministry

Fiber Arts Ministry is on the move...that is to a new time! So, relax at home, have an extra cup of coffee, then come and join us at 11 a.m. in the Ralph Fanning Room on the first and third Thursdays of each month.

Here's a list of our upcoming meetings so you'll be sure to find us!

Thursday, July 10, 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Thursday, July 24, 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Remember 11 a.m. . . . it'll be a stitch!



Sacred Earth Eco Tip

The City of Gahanna is holding a Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day this Saturday, June 28, from 8 a.m. - 2 p.m. at Hadley Park, 6398 Clark State Road, Gahanna, OH 43230.

If you can't take your items to this event, click the button below to check the SWACO website for a recycling drop off location near you. Together we can make a difference.

Volunteer Opportunity: Urgent Need for Sanctuary Care — Sanctuary Preparation

The Need: Volunteers are needed following worship services and other events including weddings in the sanctuary to prepare the sanctuary for the next event. Tasks include but are not limited to checking the pew pads, the pew racks, the tables at the entrances, and the floors for any dropped items. These tasks can be performed during the week prior to any service in the sanctuary.

Currently, two individuals are managing this, but we have a dire need to expand the team so that each individual would serve no more than once a month.

For more information, please contact Amy Wagner at awagner@first-church.org.

Keep in Prayer

Members John Bachman; Nancy Livingston; Janice Taft; James Velo; Grace Glaros and family; Beverly Halbe; Mike Weddle; Francille Firebaugh; Pauline Fritz; Nancy Burba; John Carter; Clinton Brown; Dan Axt; and Janice White.

Family and friends Rose Kandel's sister, Linde Klein; Rev. Becky David's brother-in-law, Scott Bickford; Melissa Kulwicki's mother, Judy Blandi and her friend, Sandy Bushong; Stephanie and Bob Childs; the Speakman family; Wendy and Robert Reber's sister-in-law, Judy Reber; Tom Kiesel's friend, Carrie; Robyn and Mike Petras; Matt Myers' sister, Erin Myers; Shelly Gies' brother, Mike Simms; Victor John's father, Charles John and mother, Mary Jane John; Amy Wagner's friend, Lee Gatton; Bob and Lorraine Quinichett's daughter, Susan Webster; Diana and Bob Kutschbach's cousin, Carson Samples; and Fran and Bruce Panek's friends, Richard and Beverly Cicenas.

Those who mourn Mark Sholl on the death of his mother.

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 Malawi and Zambia. We also pray for our UCC partner in mission, the National Coordination of Widows of Guatemala (Coordinadora Nacional de Viudas de Guatemala or CONAVIGUA).

Summer Fun with a Little Jesus

We would love to see all the fun places our members and friends are traveling with a "little Jesus!" Please send photos and a little bit about your fun to Melissa Kulwicki (mkulwicki@first-church.org) or post on social media using the #FirstChurchJesus and we will share them throughout the summer in *Connections* and on our First Church social media. If you need a Little Jesus figure, please see Melissa.

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, Fubara Braide, Stella Braide, Heather Jones, Justice & Mercy: James Lowe Brian Kemp, Allison Lowery Palmer, Dayna McCrary, Matt Myers, Justice & Mercy-elect: Janice Taft

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: Antoinette Koolemans-Beynen

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: 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



