

Worship at Nine August 31, 2025 Twelfth 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 and Passing of the Peace

Rev. Becky



"Psalm 23" Estate of John August Swanson, https://www.johnaugustswanson.com/



Opening Prayer Rev. David

Leader: Hospitable God, you invite us to a banquet

where the last may be first,

and the humble and the mighty trade places.

Let us share your abundance with no fear of scarcity;

let us greet strangers as angels you have sent!

People: Send your Spirit now

so that we may find a place at your table and welcome others with radical hospitality.

In the name of Jesus, Guest at all our tables, we pray. Amen.

CHILDREN'S TIME Leslie Fulford

### LISTENING

### SCRIPTURE LESSONS

JEREMIAH 2:4-13 Barbara Mason

Leader: A reading from the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah, the second chapter.

Hear the word of the Lord, O house of Jacob, and all the families of the house of Israel. Thus says the Lord:

What wrong did your ancestors find in me

that they went far from me,

and went after worthless things, and became worthless themselves?

They did not say, "Where is the Lord

who brought us up from the land of Egypt,

who led us in the wilderness,

in a land of deserts and pits,

in a land of drought and deep darkness,

in a land that no one passes through,

where no one lives?"

I brought you into a plentiful land

to eat its fruits and its good things.

But when you entered you defiled my land,

and made my heritage an abomination.

The priests did not say, "Where is the Lord?"

Those who handle the law did not know me;

the rulers transgressed against me;

the prophets prophesied by Baal,

and went after things that do not profit.

Therefore once more I accuse you, says the Lord, and I accuse your children's children.

Cross to the coasts of Cyprus and look,

send to Kedar and examine with care;

see if there has ever been such a thing.

Has a nation changed its gods,

even though they are no gods?

But my people have changed their glory for something that does not profit. Be appalled, O heavens, at this, be shocked, be utterly desolate, says the Lord, for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and dug out cisterns for themselves, cracked cisterns

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

People: Thanks be to God.

that can hold no water.

Luke 14:1, 7-14 Rev. Becky

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

On one occasion when Jesus was going to the house of a leader of the Pharisees to eat a meal on the sabbath, they were watching him closely.

When he noticed how the guests chose the places of honor, he told them a parable. "When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down at the place of honor, in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited by your host; and the host who invited both of you may come and say to you, 'Give this person your place,' and then in disgrace you would start to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit down at the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher'; then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at the table with you. For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

He said also to the one who had invited him, "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

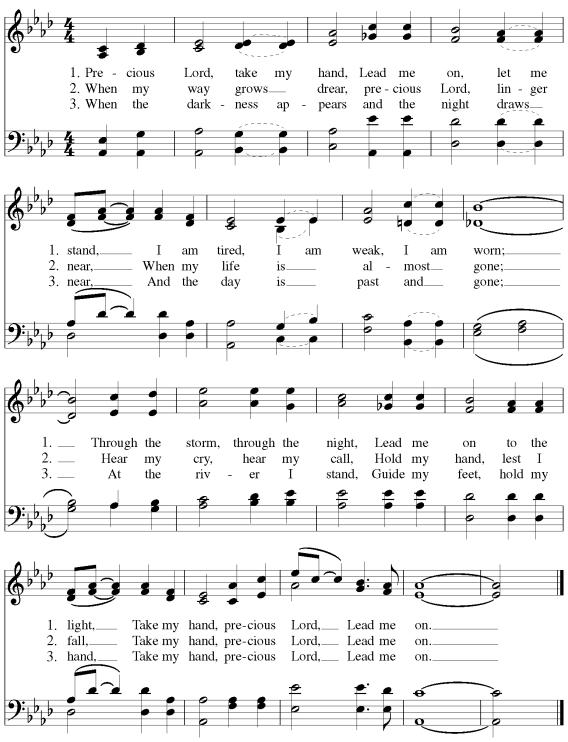
Leader: The Word of God for the people of God.

People: Thanks be to God.

Reflection Rev. Becky

## RESPONDING

HYMN OF PREPARATION *Precious Lord*, George N. Allen, 1844; arr. Thomas A. Dorsey, 1938 "Precious Lord, take my hand" verses 1-2 Thomas A. Dorsey, 1938



Prayers of the People Invitation to Silent Prayer

Rev. Becky

### PASTORAL PRAYER

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.

SUNG RESPONSE

Precious Lord, George N. Allen, 1844; arr. Thomas A. Dorsey, 1938

"Precious Lord, take my hand" verse 3

Thomas A. Dorsey, 1938

### THE OFFERTORY

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



Mission Invitation Darren Raymond

Cash and designated gifts go to **Mid-Ohio Workers Association (MWA)**, a free and voluntary, unincorporated membership association, uniting service workers, temporary workers and others who are low income since 2001. MWA's 11-point membership benefit program provides members with emergency food, clothing, legal advice, translation and language services, preventive medical care, and more. MWA activist campaigns have included working to stop electric power shut-offs, opposing utility rate hikes, and organizing for living wage protection. Entirely organized and run by volunteers, MWA depends on the financial support of members and allies. Thank you for your generosity.

### OFFERTORY MUSIC

Prayer of Dedication Rev. David

Leader: We give in

We give in grateful thanksgiving for all that God has given us.

In the upside down world of the gospel,

we measure our wealth not by what we have,

but what we can give away.

Let us give away generously, in this offering,

To bless your church, your people, your creation.

Communion Rev. Becky

# Communion Hymn "Let us be bread"

I am the bread of life, Thomas J. Porter Thomas J. Porter, 1990



Prayer of Thanksgiving

Rev. Becky

Leader: Loving God,

People: Let us be bread for the world, blessed by the Lord

Broken and shared, life for the world. Let us be wine, love freely poured. Let us be one in the Lord. Amen.

### SENDING

COMMUNITY NOTICES - DEPART TO SERVE

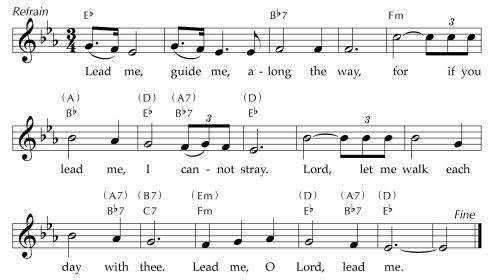
Melissa Kulwicki

Leader Let us depart with a heart to serve.

People: Thanks be to God.

\*Benediction Rev. Becky

LEAD ME, GUIDE ME "Lead me, guide 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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"Lead me, guide me." Words and music: Doris M. Akers. © 1953 Doris M. Akers, admin by Chappell & Co/Alfred Publishing Co, Inc. All rights reserved.

Leadership in Today's liturgy
The Rev. Becky David, preacher
Barbara Mason, liturgist
Leslie Fulford, worship leader
Melissa Kulwicki, worship leader
Ann Eliot, pianist
Geoffrey Dean, livestream ministry



August 31, 2025

## This Week at First Church

Sunday, August 31

9 a.m. Worship Service & Holy

Communion (Parish Hall)

10 a.m. Family Playground Time

(Sam Gordon Playground)

Adult Education (Classroom C)

11 a.m. Worship Service (Sanctuary)

12:15 p.m. Welcome Reception (Parish Hall)

12:30 p.m. Youth Bible Study (Youth Rm)

Monday, September 1

Church closed in celebration of Labor Day

Tuesday, September 2

4 p.m. Church Vitality (Zoom)

7 p.m. Communications & Technology Mtg

(Zoom)

Justice & Mercy Mtg (Classroom C

& Zoom)

Personnel Mtg (Classroom D)

Wednesday, September 3

6:30 p.m. Stephen Ministry Class (Fanning Rm)

Stephen Ministers Monthly Mtg

(SM Office)

Thursday, September 4

9 a.m. Good Samaritan Virtual Distribution

Day

11 a.m. Fiber Arts Ministry (Fanning Rm)

6 p.m. First Church Ringers Rehearsal

(Bell Rm)

Saturday, September 6

9:30 a.m. House & Grounds Mtg

(Classroom C)

10:30 a.m. Sacred Earth Mtg (Adult Library)

Engagement Fair Setup

(Parish Hall)

Sunday, September 7

9 a.m. Worship Service &

Holy Communion (Parish Hall)

10 a.m. Engagement Fair (Parish Hall)

Family Playground Time (Sam Gordon Playground)

11 a.m. Worship Service (Sanctuary)

12:15 p.m. Engagement Fair (Parish Hall)

# Adult Education Today, August 31, at 10 a.m

First Church member, David O'Connor will present Part 4 comparing all parts of his series. Join David for this interesting discussion in Classroom C.

# Welcome Reception Sunday, August 31, at 12:15 p.m.

Join the Transition Team in welcoming our new Interim Associate Minister, Rev. jessica young chang. The reception will be in Parish Hall following today's 11 a.m. service.

# Light the Way Youth Bible Study Sunday, August 31, at 12:30 p.m.

"Light the Way" Youth Bible Study ends it's summer series. We thank Maggie Myers, high school senior and lifelong First Church member, for her leadership of this study. There will be time for pizza and ping pong today!

# Save the Date First Church Engagement Fair Sunday, September 7

FCC Engagement Fair = Helping our members find engagement, service, and friendship opportunities that speak to their hearts here at First Church!

Come learn about all our mission projects, activities, and ways to become engaged and serve here at First Church at our annual Engagement Fair! Join us in Parish Hall right after each worship service for an opportunity to connect with other members as you learn about our activities. Come chat with fellow members, put names to faces, and explore wonderful opportunities for service, engagement, and friendship!

Commission and committee members are asked to come Saturday, September 6 between 10:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. or Sunday morning between 8 and 8:40 a.m. to set up your displays and/or handouts. Please contact coordinator, Kathy Reed at kbreed2010@gmail.com for more information about this informative program.

# Miracles and Wonders Book Study Friday, September 5, at 10 a.m.

A group of dedicated First Church members have been meeting weekly on the 8th floor of the Goodale Landing building (340 West Goodale Street) at Ohio Living Westminster Thurber following their Lenten study.

They are studying new scientific Biblical publications that have been piquing their curiosity, and it has them given much to think about. They invite other members of First Church to join their study. On September 5 at 10 a.m., they will start a new discussion on Elaine Pagels' *Miracles and Wonders*. There is plenty of parking, so please join them! Antoinette Koolemans-Beynen (240-557-9770).

# First Church Book Club James by Percival Everett Wednesday, September 10 7 p.m. on Zoom

Come enjoy lively conversation and get to know other church members at the First Church Book Club on Zoom.

James is a brilliant, action-packed reimagining of Mark Twain's Adventures of Huckleberry Finn. Told from the enslaved Jim's point of view, it's both harrowing and ferociously funny. As we see Jim's agency, intelligence and compassion, he emerges as a man of great dignity, altruism, and intelligence. Percival Everett was awarded both the 2025 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and the 2024 National Book Award for Fiction for James.

Want to receive book club emails? Please email Kathy Reed at <a href="mailto:kbreed2010@gmail.com">kbreed2010@gmail.com</a>.

# Adult Education Bible Study and Young Peoples Sunday School Sunday, September 14, at 10 a.m

Our Adult Bible Study season begins in Classroom C. The Revs. Margo Connor and Larry Miller will lead this season on the theme of The Parables of Jesus in an Autocratic World.

Also, Sunday School returns for young children and middle school and high school students! Please contact Leslie Fulford at lfurford@first-church.org to register for Sunday School.

## **Council Minutes**

July's Church Council Minutes are available on Realm. The meeting minutes can be found under Group Resources for "The First Congregational Church" Files. If you need an invite to Realm, please contact the church office at 614-228-1741.

## Keep in Prayer

**Members** Jane Ward; Gretchen Atkinson; Jean Lebold; Stella Braide; Jennifer Fry; Steve Wild; Nancy Livingston; Janice Taft; James Velo; Grace Glaros and family; Beverly Halbe; Mike Weddle; Francille Firebaugh; Nancy Burba; John Carter; Clinton Brown; Dan Axt; and Janice White.

Family and friends Annette McCormick's family member, Zay Snyder, and friend, Dannie Crace; Leslie Fulford's sister, Kelly Flood; Amy Wagner's friends, Megan Dosch and Greg Mullusky, and Andrew Deedrick; Candy Cummings' friend, Robdonda Hardin; Geoffrey Dean's aunt, Vivian Heaney; Jason Harrell's mother, Sherry Harrell; Rose Kandel's sister, Linde Klein; Melissa Kulwicki's friend, Sandy Bushong; Wendy and Robert Reber's sister-in-law, Judy Reber; Tom Kiesel's friend, Carrie; Robyn and Mike Petras; Matt Myers' sister, Erin Myers; Victor John's father, Charles John and mother, Mary Jane John; 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** Janice Cook on the death of her husband, Ron Cook.

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 the Cape Verde, The Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, and Senegal. We also pray for our UCC partner in mission, the Evangelical Lutheran Church initiative Popular Education in Health (EPES) in Chile.

## "Mama Bears" Thank You!

The "Mama Bears" film screening and panel discussion was a huge success! Thank you to all who attended and to our panelists and volunteers. We would also like to extend a special thank you to Gail and Jim Lowe whose hard work and dedication made this event possible.

## Share Your Garden's Bounty

Fresh fruits and veggies are always in high demand at the Broad Street Presbyterian Church Food Pantry at 760 E. Broad St. You can drop off any extra veggies, herbs, and fruit from your garden at the Pantry weekday mornings or at the church office weekday afternoons. There's nothing better than sharing your homegrown produce!

# An Eco Tip from Sacred Earth about Paper Towels

Did you know that paper towels are NOT recyclable? The reason is the fibers in paper towels are too short to be recycled. Each time a paper towel is recycled the fibers get shorter. As a result they should not be put in your residential recycling bin.

If the towels do not contain chemicals, they can be composted through a food scrap drop off program or in your backyard compost bin. If you don't have access to composting, you can put them in the trash.

Instead of paper towels use Swedish dish towels or cloth towels. Together we can make a difference!

## Church Leadership

Interim Senior Minister: Rev. Becky David, M.Div.

**Interim Associate Minister:** Rev. jessica young chang, 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

Stephen Leader and Stephen Ministry Communications, Media House & Grounds-elect:

and IT Coordinator: Annette McCormick

Senior Deacon: Martha Worth

Deacons: Allen Baker, Fubara Braide, Stella Braide, Heather Jones, Music, Arts & Heritage: Jim Griffin

Brian Kemp, Allison Lowery Palmer, Dayna McCrary, Matt Myers, Music, Arts & Heritage-elect: Cheryl Hoskinson

Fran Panek, Gary Seigerst, Thomason Smith

Transition Team: Jacquelyn Dean and Nancy Loy, co-chairpersons, Personnel: Sandra Mathias Todd Cunningham, Rev. Becky David, Scott Graham, Gregory

Halbe, Susie Loik, Allison Lowery, Pavan Peter, Sarah Reed, Joshua Youth Member-at-Large: Sebastian Kulwicki

Stafford

**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

Justice & Mercy: James Lowe Justice & Mercy-elect: Janice Taft

Member-at-Large: Martha Wilson

Personnel-elect: Neal Brower

### 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



