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. jess

*Passing of the Peace Rev. jess



"Celebration", John August Swanson, 1997



INVOCATION Rev. jess

Leader: God who Sustains,

each of us knows what it is to feel forsaken.

You remind us, through your grace and your presence,

that all are precious to you.

People: Draw near to us, Holy One, and draw us near to you.

Fill us with your breath, your Spirit,

that we may love and worship you in thought, word, and deed. Amen.

CHILDREN'S TIME Leslie Fulford

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

LISTENING

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

I TIMOTHY 1:12-17 Aryn Mason

Leader: A reading from the First Letter of Paul to Timothy, the first chapter.

I am grateful to Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because he judged me faithful and appointed me to his service, even though I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and a man of violence. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the foremost. But for that very reason I received mercy, so that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display the utmost patience, making me an example to those who would come to believe in him for eternal life. To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

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

People: Thanks be to God.

Luke 15:1-10 Rev. jess

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

All the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to Jesus. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them."

So he told them this parable: "Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.' Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

"Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.' Just so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

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

People: Thanks be to God.

Reflection Rev. jess

RESPONDING

Hymn of Preparation

Living God, Daniel Iverson, 1926



"Spirit of the living God"

Daniel Iverson, 1926

Prayers of the People

Rev. jess

Invitation to Silent Prayer

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.

THE OFFERTORY

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



Mission Invitation

Antoinette Koolemans-Beynen

Cash and designated gifts go to support B.R.E.A.D. (Building Responsibility, Equality, and Dignity). B.R.E.A.D. is the organization through which our congregation responds to our call to do justice. B.R.E.A.D. has a nearly 30-year history of improving the quality of life in Central Ohio by researching serious community problems and utilizing the power of people from a wide range of different faith traditions, to press public officials to implement proven solutions to those problems. B.R.E.A.D. rises! Thank you for your generosity.

OFFERTORY MUSIC

Prayer of Dedication

Rev. jess

Leader: Creator of all good things,

we give this offering of time, talent, treasure,

In gratitude for your generosity and goodness.

Use this offering, and use us, to do your work in this, your world. Amen.

Communion

Rev. jess

Communion Hymn "Let us be bread"

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



Prayer of Thanksgiving Rev. jess

Leader: God of Abundance,

People: Thank you for Your presence in this holy meal,

and the work it does in our hearts and our lives.

Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and send us forth into the world in courage and peace,

rejoicing in the Holy Spirit. Amen.

SENDING

Stewardship Moment Jim Griffin

A LITANY FOR THE BEGINNING OF THE NEW SUNDAY SCHOOL YEAR

Rev. jess and Leslie

Leader: Let us rejoice in the turning of the seasons and

the beginning of school years and education programs.

We celebrate the beginning of this new season of our Faith Formation ministries and

learning opportunities for all ages.

People: We celebrate the message of God's love, welcome, and inclusion of all people.

Leader: We give thanks for the gift of learning about God's presence in our lives

through our Sacred Scriptures with the support of this Christian community.

People: We give thanks for the many ways

that we can respond and share God's love with all ages.

Leader: For children who come with curiosity, questions, energy and enthusiasm:

People: We give you thanks, O God.

Leader: For teachers, counselors, nurses, teachers' aids, and support staff

who share their time and talents in teaching our young people and adults.

People: We give you thanks, O God.

Leader: For all who participate in the spiritual nurture of our congregation.

People: We give you thanks, O God.

Leader: We pray for protection, connection, and creativity for students of all ages,

that they may be safe to learn in community and with grace and openness.

People: Keep them safe, O God.

Leader: We pray for wisdom and insight in the hearts and minds of those in education

in this church, in this city, in this state,

that they may know the true way of guiding learners and thinkers.

People: Give them strength and peace, O God.

Leader: We dedicate this new year of learning to you, O God,

and pray that all of us will continue to grow in faith and love as followers of Jesus Christ.

All: Thanks be to God. Amen.

COMMUNITY NOTICES - DEPART TO SERVE

Melissa Kulwicki

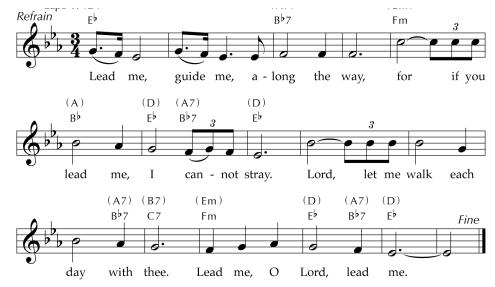
Leader Let us depart with a heart to serve.

People: Thanks be to God.

*Benediction Rev. jess

*CLOSING HYMN
"Lead me, guide me"

Lead Me, Guide Me, Doris Akers, 1953, arr. Richard Smallwood Doris Akers, 1953



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.

† Permissions and Copyrights

The following are printed and/or livestreamed under permission of OneLicense #A-717661. All rights reserved.

"All are welcome (Let us build a house)." Words and music: Marty Haugen. © 1994 GIA Publications, Inc. All rights reserved.

"Spirit of the Living God" Daniel Iverson, 1926. © 1935, 1963 Birdswing Music. All rights reserved. "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. jessica young chang, preacher
Aryn Mason, liturgist
Leslie Fulford, worship leader
Melissa Kulwicki, worship leader
Joshua Stafford, pianist
Geoffrey Dean, livestream ministry



September 14, 2025

This Week at First Church

Sunday, September 14

9 a.m. Worship Service &

Holy Communion (Parish Hall)

10 a.m. Sunday School

(Various Classrooms)

Adult Bible Study (Classroom C)
Parent Coffee & Conversations

(Adult Library)

11 a.m. Worship Service (Sanctuary) 12:15 p.m. Coffee Hour (Parish Hall) 12:30 p.m. Youth Group (Youth Rm)

Monday, September 15

6 p.m. First Church Campanelle Rehearsal

(Bell Rm)

6:30 p.m. Transition Team Mtg (Fanning Rm

& Zoom)

Tuesday, September 16

5:30 p.m. Budget & Finance Mtg

(Classroom C & Zoom)

7 p.m. Church Council Mtg (Classroom C

& Zoom)

Wednesday, September 17

10 a.m. Largest Table Food Prep & Delivery

(Kitchen)

6 p.m. Faith Formation Mtg (Classroom C

& Zoom)

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

Stephen Ministry Supervision Mtg

(SM Office)

Thursday, September 18

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

12:30 p.m. BREAD House Mtg (Fanning Rm)

6 p.m. First Church Ringers Rehearsal

(Bell Rm)

7:15 p.m. First Church Choir Rehearsal

(Choir Rm)

Sunday, September 21

9 a.m. Worship Service &

Holy Communion (Parish Hall)

10 a.m. Sunday School

(Various Classrooms)

Adult Bible Study (Classroom C)
Parent Coffee & Conversations

(Adult Library)

11 a.m. Worship Service (Sanctuary)

12:15 p.m. Congregational Conversation

(Parish Hall)

Congregational Conversation Sunday, September 21, at 12 p.m.

As we move through our preparation to search and call our next settled pastors, the Transition Team will hold another congregational conversation after the 11am worship service on September 21st. Our time together will focus on being a neighbor.

Lunch will be offered at a suggested donation of \$5. Please register on Realm.

Council Minutes Reminder

Church Council meets Tuesday, September 16, and the August minutes are to be approved at that meeting. Those minutes will be posted on Realm in the Group Resources for "The First Congregational Church" Files. If you need an invite to Realm, please contact the church office at 614-228-1741.

Welcome Our New Building and Grounds Superintendent Kevin Salem

Kevin brings over 10 years of facilities and maintenance as well as over twenty years of management experience. Kevin is originally from Cleveland, Ohio, and graduated from Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio, with a B.F.A in Theatre Design and Technology. While at Wright State he learned critical building manager skills such as painting, welding, fabricating, running electrical lines, and much more. Kevin served as Facility/Property Manager at the YMCA of Greater Erie Camp Sherwin for 9 years, overseeing major capital projects and camp improvements. He has also worked in retail management and for the YMCA of Central Ohio.

Kevin and his wife live with his sister-in-law, their uncle, and a cat named Batsy in Linworth. When he is not working, he likes to spend time with his family. Kevin has a twin brother, and is especially happy that his niece, Clare, is a first year student at The Ohio State University. He is an Eagle Scout and also enjoys working on art projects and reading.

Adult Education, and Young Peoples Sunday School Today, September 14

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 lfulford@first-church.org to register for Sunday School.

A new offering, Youth Group, will meet after the 11 a.m. service This replaces the 10 a.m. youth and high school Sunday School class. Today's class for middle and high school students is led by Leslie Fulford and Saturn Cooks. The Bible Study with Maggie Myers will begin on September 21.

Please register teens and/or parents on the GroupMe app at https://groupme.com/join_group/109929664/42gy7Uqz for safe and easy communication within the group.

Also, Parent Conversations begins today on the topic of When Kids Ask Hard Questions. Join other parents at 10 a.m. in the Adult Library.

Join in the wonderful educational offering of your choice.

Legacy Sunday Sunday, September 28, at 11 a.m.

Plans are underway for our Legacy Sunday following one church service at 10 a.m. It will be a potluck and held in the north parking lot, weather permitting. We will have grilled burgers, hot dogs and a veggie burger, with iced tea and water for beverages. All the plates, napkins and utensils will be provided.

Here is what you can bring to share according to your last name:

A-J — Salad

K-R — Dessert

S-Z — Side Dish

You can also bring chairs, blankets, and your favorite outdoor games!

Invitations are being handed out before services that you can RSVP on, or you can register on Realm for this fun time together!



We will be putting together crews to help set up and tear down as well as general clean up. If you would like to help please contact Pat Patterson at ppatterson@first-church.org to sign up!

Keep in Prayer

Members Jane Ward; Gretchen Atkinson; Stella Braide; 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 Pat Patterson's grandson, Jayden Patterson, and daughter-in-law, Chelsea Powell; Annette McCormick's family member, Zay Snyder, and friend, Dannie Crace; Leslie Fulford's sister, Kelly Flood, and her father-in-law, Al Fulford; 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 Rev. Becky David and family, on the death of her brother-in-law, Scott Bickford.

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 Ghana and Nigeria. We also pray for our UCC partner in mission, the The Ekalesia Kelisiano Tuvalu and the Pacific Conference of Churches.

BREAD House Meetings are Scheduled

House meetings are designed to discover what issues in our community BREAD should address. We typically get together with a group of 8-10 First Church members and friends and listen to each other.

All issues brought forward are then discussed at the Annual Assembly on November 19, and the most prevalent one will be chosen by vote for further study and possible solutions.

Local government representatives will be consulted and recommendations made. The path leads to the Nehemiah Action in May 2026 where commitments are cemented.

Please join us and make BREAD rise!

Prescription Pill Bottle Reminder

Prescription pill bottles are not accepted in curbside recycling. However, we have a recycling bin marked for Prescription Bottles at the giving tree in the Education Wing. Prescription bottles need to be empty and the labels removed. Prescription pill bottles that aren't recycled are discarded in the trash and end up in the landfill. Please bring in your prescription bill bottles and let us help you and our planet!



Sarah Giffen will lead a luncheon meeting at 12:30 p.m. on September 18 in the Fanning Room; please register through the QR code if you would like to attend.



Todd Jacobson will host a house meeting at 7 p.m. in his home in Upper Arlington on September 23; he invites you to register with the QR code.



Steve Sterrett will host a house meeting on September 25 in his home in Clintonville at 7 p.m.; to register please use the QR code.



Antoinette Koolemans-Beynen will host the last meeting at 7 p.m. at Westminster-Thurber on October 22 and invites anyone to join.

Editor's note: Church Council is creating an aspirational budget for 2026 that reflects the inspiring goals and dreams of our faith community for ministries, programming, staffing and facilities. During September and October, our commissions and boards will share their bold goals for 2026 in "Connections" and "Depart to Serve."

Music, Arts, and Heritage Commission's Goals and Dreams for 2026

By Jim Griffin, Commissioner of the Music, Arts, and Heritage Commission

The Art Committee encourages the arts in our liturgy, building, and congregational life. The Art Committee chaired by Becky Taft hopes to purchase new furniture for the senior pastor's and associate pastor's offices. In addition, a refresh of the Youth Room is a priority, as is replacing the carpet in the lower narthex with stone flooring. Finally, the Art Committee plans to remove all nails in plaster walls, repair the holes and use the 1931 molding to hang artwork using a STAS hanging system.

The Heritage Committee maintains the church's archives of historic records, organizing and making them available when needed. Heritage would like to enhance our archival efforts by:

- Software purchases to enable us to capture Rev. David's sermons in written form so the Archives can maintain and preserve the sermons as we have from previous ministers.
- Equipment purchases to make possible the digitization of thousands of written documents and other historical records from our archives that will be housed and made available to the congregation and the public-atlarge through the Memorandum of Understanding established between First Church and the Columbus Metropolitan Library.
- Additional software and equipment to continue to support the creation and publication of the monthly "From the Archives" entries and the quarterly "First Stories" interviews conducted by Nancy Braverman.

Our music program led by Minister of Music Josh Stafford has an exciting concert series planned for the coming year. Highlights include:

- February 22nd (Sunday) organ and orchestra. This will be a smaller orchestra ensemble conducted by Ron Jenkins with Josh at the organ in the Gallery.
- March 5th (Thursday) Concordia Choir. The choir will perform at no charge to the church. Concordia Choir will ticket for the concert separately.
- April 4th (Saturday) Easter Vigil. Josh is proposing a new first for the church at 7 p.m. He hopes to have brass and a reception afterwards.
- April 5th (Sunday) Easter. Josh is proposing only one service with choir and brass.
- May 3rd (Sunday) First Church Ringers. This will be the group's first concert.

The Campanelle Bell Group has been organized by Jennifer Fry. Family Organ Day returns in January. A Singing and Bell Ringing Day Camp is planned for June 8-12, 2026.

Music continues to expand audiences for events and the type of events.

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 Building and Grounds Superintendent: Kevin Salem 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: Neal Brower

Todd Cunningham, Rev. Becky David, Scott Graham, Gregory

Joshua 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:

Halbe, Susie Loik, Allison Lowery Palmer, Pavan Peter, Sarah Reed, 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



