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

- * Welcome Rev. Becky
- *Gathering Song

Hanson Place, Robert Lowry, 1864

"Shall we gather at the river"



*Invocation Rev. Becky

Leader: O God, who writes on our hearts,

you have never abandoned us. In amazing and persistent grace, you have kept covenant with us.

We thank you for loving us even when we have not loved you.

People: We long to behold the day of your appearing,

Even as we stand now in the view of your kingdom,

Promised and made present in Christ Jesus,

In whose name we pray. Amen.

*Passing of the Peace Rev. Becky

CHILDREN'S TIME Leslie Fulford

During the sermon time, our young children are welcome to participate in "Sunday Stories."

LISTENING

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

THE FIRST SCRIPTURE READING Jeremiah 31:31-34

Dean Hafey

Leader: A reading from the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah, the thirty-first chapter.

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, "Know the Lord," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

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

People: Thanks be to God.

Luke 18:1-8 Rev. Becky

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

Jesus told his disciples a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart. He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, 'Grant me justice against my opponent.' For a while he refused; but later he said to himself, 'Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming." And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them? I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

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

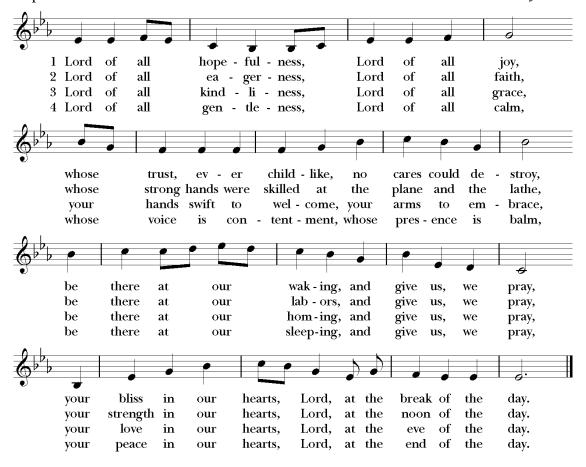
People: Thanks be to God.

Reflection Rev. Becky

RESPONDING

Hymn of Preparation "Lord of all hopefulness" vv. 1–2

Slane, Irish Folk Melody Jan Struther, 1931



PASTORAL PRAYER

SUNG RESPONSE

"Lord of all hopefulness" vv. 3-4

Rev. Becky

Slane, Irish Folk Melody

Jan Struther, 1931

THE OFFERTORY

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



Mission Invitation Dawn George

Cash and designated checks will support Sacred Earth's green improvements of the Church. Sacred Earth provides support to the House and Grounds Commission and the work they do in maintaining our Church. These funds will be used for new lighting in the Fanning Room, changing them from the current fluorescent lamps which contain mercury, a heavy metal, to a mercury-free LED light source. LED track lighting to accent the artwork with also be purchased. Thank you for your generosity.

Offertory Music David Hogrefe

Prayer of Dedication Rev. Becky

Leader: Let us pray.

We bring, O God, the first fruits of our labors,

the best of all we have,

a portion of the bounty you entrust to use.

People: Accept our gifts, gracious God,

as a symbol of our renewed commitment

to follow in the ways of Jesus,

bending us always towards justice. Amen.

Communion Rev. Becky

Communion Prayers Rev. Becky

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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,

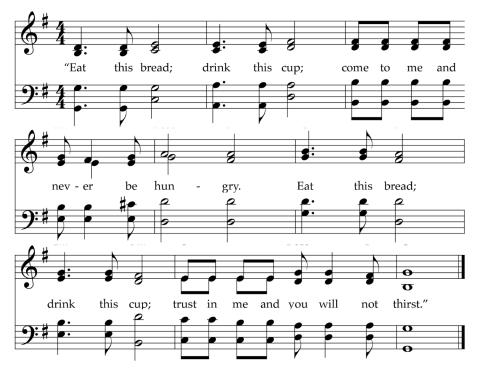
for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

SHARING THE ELEMENTS

Communion Hymn

"Eat this bread"

Berthier, Jacques Berthier, 1984 Robert J. Batastini and the Taizé Community, 1984



Prayer of Thanksgiving

Rev. Becky

Leader: God of our longing,

Thank you for this meal shared in the company of friends.

All: Having rested and been fed,

May we go from this place

Committed to feeding any person

Who hungers for love,

Offering the same blessings we have received. Amen.

SENDING

STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

Susie Loik

COMMUNITY NOTICES - DEPART TO SERVE

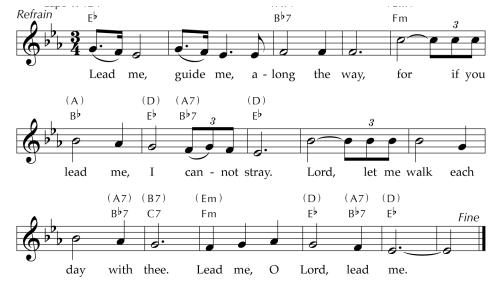
Melissa Kulwicki

Leader: Let us depart with a heart to serve.

People: Thanks be to God.

*Benediction Rev. Becky

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.

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"Lord of all hopefulness." Words: Jane Struther, 1931. © 1931 Oxford University Press. All rights reserved.

"Eat this bread." Words: Robert Batastini and the Taizé Community. Music: Jacques Berthier; Less Presses de Taizé (admin. GIA Publications, Inc.) 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. Becky David, preacher Dean Hafey, liturgist Leslie Fulford, worship leader Melissa Kulwicki, worship leader David Hogrefe, pianist Geoffrey Dean, livestream ministry

October 19, 2025

This Week at First Church

Sunday, October 19

9 a.m. Worship Service & Holy Communion

(Parish Hall)

10 a.m. Sunday School (Various Classrooms)

Adult Bible Study (Classroom C)
Parent Conversations (Adult Library)

Stewardship 101 (Fanning Rm)

11 a.m. Worship Service (Sanctuary) 12:15 p.m. Coffee Hour & Coffee Sales

(Parish Hall)

4 p.m. Congregational Concert and

Reception (Sanctuary & Parish Hall)

Monday, October 20

6 p.m. First Church Campanelle Rehearsal

(Bell Rm)

6:30 p.m. Transition Team Mtg

(Classroom C & Zoom)

Tuesday, October 21

7 p.m. First Church Council Mtg

(Classroom C & Zoom)

Wednesday, October 22

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

7 p.m. BREAD House Mtg

(Westminister-Thurber)

Thursday, October 23

6 p.m. First Church Ringers Rehearsal

(Bell Rm)

7:15 p.m. First Church Choir Rehearsal

(Choir Rm)

Friday, October 24

10 a.m. Full Circle Connections (Parlor)

Saturday, October 25

9 a.m. Faith Mission Meal Prep & Serve

(Kitchen)

10 a.m. Central SE Association Fall Mtg

(David's UCC)

11 a.m. BOBS Planning Mtg (Zoom)

Sunday, October 26

9 a.m. Worship Service &

Holy Communion (Parish Hall)

10 a.m. First Serves (Classroom D)

Adult Bible Study (Classroom C)

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

> Stewardship 101 Today, October 19 10 a.m.

Steve Sterrett, Stewardship and Growth Commissioner, and Annette McCormick, Business Administrator, will explain the aspirational budget during the education hour today. The session will begin at 10 a.m. in the Fanning Room. All are invited to attend.

A Hymn Festival Today, October 19 4 p.m.

The Organ, the Choir, and the Congregation will come together in the Sanctuary for a Hymn Festival with Richard Webster.

Noted composer, arranger, and choral conductor, Richard Webster, formerly of Trinity at Copley Square in Boston, leads us in a hymn festival with the First Church Choir, brass, percussion, organs, and congregational song.

A reception will follow the concert in Parish Hall.

BREAD House Meeting Wednesday, October 22 7 p.m.

This season's final House Meeting will take place at Westminster-Thurber (Ohio Living Westminster-Thurber, 645 Neil Avenue, Columbus). Please register to join us and share your concerns about living conditions or anything else. There is plenty of

parking, and there is no obligation to join. Antoinette K.-Beynen will host.

BREAD Rises!



Full Circle Connections Friday, October 24

Full Circle Connection is a welcoming place and time to gather and discuss "things that matter." The subject currently being discussed is navigating change. All who participate in the circle have equal access, are respectfully heard, and share the responsibility of maintaining an atmosphere of acceptance. Please contact Jan Hamilton for more information at Hamilton/main30@yahoo.com.

Time Out Dinner Wednesday, October 29 6:00 p.m.

Award-winning chef Mike Mariola founded The Rail Burger in 2011 as a full-service burger restaurant and bar suitable for any occasion. Mike's vision of the concept shifted and led to a new brand - The Rail Craft Kitchen.

It's a fun place to gather and get to know each other. It is located at 1064 Dublin Rd, in Grandview Crossing. Come join in and use the QR Code to register on Realm to reserve your place at the table.



First Serves Sunday, October 26 10 a.m.

The Gladden 2025 Halloween Party will be held on October 30. The party continues to be a treasured tradition in the community.

First Serves is collecting candy for this fun community party so please bring your candy to the giving tree! The people of Gladden expect approximately 300 children to attend. To ensure every child gets enough treats, they need a lot of candy. This event relies entirely on community generosity to make the party possible.

On October 26, we will put together individual bags for the Gladden children in Classroom D.

In addition to candy, Gladden would like volunteers to help with the party. On Thursday, October 30, they need help setting the gym up, adults to interact with the kids during the party, and help cleaning up afterwards. To help please register with them using the QR Code.

New Member Class Sunday, November 2 at 12:15 p.m. Thursday, November 13 at 7 p.m.

If you're a visitor to First Congregational Church, we encourage you to take the next step to consider joining our faith community. We will have a two-session class for potential new members next month at the church. We will serve a boxed lunch during the Sunday class.

This is an opportunity to meet our ministers and lay leaders, learn about our church's history, and see how you might serve and grow spiritually through our activities and programs. You are not required to attend a new member class to join our church. The class will help you become better acquainted with our large congregation.

Please call the church office at (614) 228-1741 to register for the class.

Keep in Prayer

Members Janice Taft; Maggie Myers; Lincoln Schmitt; Al Waddell; Pat Liebchen; Jane Ward; Gretchen Atkinson; Jean Lebold; Stella Braide; Steve Wild; James Velo; Grace Glaros and family; Beverly Halbe; Francille Firebaugh; Nancy Burba; John Carter; Clinton Brown; Dan Axt; and Janice White.

Family and friends Pat Patterson's daughter-in-law, Chelsea Powell; Candy Cummings' friend, Robdonda Hardin; Geoffrey Dean's aunt, Vivian Heaney; Jason Harrell's mother, Sherry Harrell; Melissa Kulwicki's friend, Sandy Bushong; Wendy and Robert Reber's sister-in-law, Judy Reber; Tom Kiesel's friend, Carrie; Matt Myers' sister, Erin Myers; Victor John's father, Charles John and mother, Mary Jane John; Bob and Lorraine Quinichett's daughter, Susan Webster; and Diana and Bob Kutschbach's cousin, Carson Samples.

Those who mourn the family and friends of Bradford Myers.

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 Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico. We also pray for our UCC partners in mission at the Université Protestante au Congo in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

On the House & Grounds Aspirational Budget for 2026

Eric M. Klintworth, House & Grounds Commissioner

The First Church House & Grounds Commission exists to care for our unique house of worship and the surrounding grounds. That care begins with routine cleaning and landscape maintenance but quickly expands to encompass minor and major repairs and refurbishment, plus the occasional large-scale project. We do all this with love and respect for the historic character of our buildings.

Our aspiration is simply to do this work in a more timely and thorough fashion like: cleaning the gutters and downspouts before they're clogged solid, trimming bushes and plants before they turn into Audrey, repairing damaged plaster before it's an eyesore, and planning for the future so we're prepared when serendipitous opportunities arise.

To that end, we just hired Kevin Salem as our full-time Building Superintendent, after many months trying to make do without. Our aspirational budget fully funds his position while maintaining all existing custodial staff hours—to allow time for deep cleaning inside, plant trimming and leaf cleanup outside, and so much more.

Our aspirational budget further includes funding for significant plaster repair and for preparation of a complete engineering site plan covering the entire church property. That site plan, drawn to scale, will include underground drainage and utilities, hardscaped areas and buildings, and will inform and form the basis of future projects.

We've also included funds for expected electric and gas rate increases when our supply contracts renew next spring, as well as full funding for the two security officers already on-site every Sunday morning.

On Legacy Sunday, it was easy to look around and see what generous legacies have been left to enrich our worship and time together. We aspire today to care thoughtfully for these gifts left for us, and to perhaps leave a small legacy of our own.

Personnel Commission's Bold Goal for 2026

By Neal Brower, Commissioner, Personnel Commission

The Personnel Commission provides leadership and guidance in all matters related to human resources at First Church. Our twelve-member committee leads searches for new staff, interprets and upholds First Church's personnel policies and procedures, and plays an oversight role in the performance management of the church's seven full-time employees and five part-time employees.

An active subcommittee focuses on staff appreciation and strives to represent the congregation's gratitude to our hardworking staff through at least four events each year. The Personnel Commission is also responsible for ensuring that staff compensation aligns with the broader market for church professionals.

Given our responsibility to recruit and retain the excellent First Church staff, and in consideration of the following factors: first, that justice is core to First Church's identity; and, second, that our staff did not receive a pay increase in 2025, we came to an immediate consensus when the Stewardship and Growth Commission tasked Personnel with identifying our commission's aspirational goals for 2026.

Rather than offering a lengthy "wish list" of aspirational goals to fund, Personnel's single submission to the "Aspirational Goals" exercise was this: In 2026, First Church aspires to provide our staff a pay increase of five percent.

Five percent may seem like a large increase to some of you – after all, Social Security benefits increased by 3.2% for 2024 and by just 2.5% for 2025. To others, though, 5% probably seems like "too little, too late" - State of Ohio employees received a 5% increase in 2024 and another 4.5% this year. More broadly, the Society for Human Resource Management reports that employers are delivering an average total increase of 3.5% in 2025. Of course, the key context point here is that First Church employees received no raise this year, and we need to make up ground in 2026.

Our staff delivers the sermons and educational programs that nurture our spirits and fulfill us, they lead and perform the music that inspires us, they keep our building clean and safe, and they provide the administrative leadership that makes First Church work. And the compensation we provide for our staff is a measure of our commitment to justice.

Please pledge generously for 2026.

Central SE Association Meeting Saturday, October 25 10 a.m.

Join the Central Southeast Association Fall Meeting for a time of community and connection, including worship, workshops, and lunch together. The theme is "Into the Deep: Let Your Love Abound!" It will be held at David's UCC in Canal Winchester from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Come be nourished and inspired so God's love within you might abound and overflow, rippling out into all you do and all you serve. Cost: \$25 registration & \$8 lunch. Register online at https://cseoa.org/.

Camp Akita Fun Day Sunday, October 26 1-4 p.m.

Enjoy the afternoon in the beautiful Hocking Hills at Camp Akita, a UCC church owned camp, for fun activities including scenic hikes, canoeing, fishing,

hayrides, pumpkin carving, scavenger hunts, tower climbing, giant swings, and s'mores around the campfire with your family! The event is free but please register on Realm by using the QR Code.



Congregational Care Ministry

By Susie Loik

What is Congregational Care Ministry (CCM)? It is a group of ministries, each with a leader/facilitator that offers loving care, fellowship, and means to build community among our congregation. In 2024, CCM was an idea. In August, 2025, CCM became a part of the diaconate by a unanimous vote by Council. The diaconate now includes worship and care deacons.

Our aspirational budget requests funds to meet the needs of these ministries. We continue to grow the Stephen Ministry Program and are currently training five more Stephen Ministers. In 2026, we would like to offer a third Stephen Ministers training class and provide funds to train more Stephen Leaders.

Budget and Finance Update

While the 2025 YTD financial picture is still very solid, September Pledge Revenue continued the summer pattern. August and September combined were \$27,000 under pledge budget. Let's push for a strong 4th quarter!

September YTD Income

Pledge/Unpledged YTD over budget by \$82,975 Other Revenue YTD over budget by \$9,818 Total Revenue YTD over budget by \$92,793

September YTD Expenses

Total Expenses YTD under budget by \$41,263

Net Income

Net Income YTD actual \$13,415 vs budget of (\$120,640) with a positive variance \$134,055

Laundry Love 2026 Calendar Collection

Laundry Love would like to give 2026 calendars to the clients they serve. They will mark with with the dates of future Laundry Love offerings.

If you have calendars you will not be using for 2026 please donate them to Laundry Love by putting them in the box by the Giving Tree.

There is also a tub by the Giving Tree and by the Office where you can drop off liquid detergents, dryer sheets and trash bags. Your donations to this program are greatly appreciated.

Save the Date Sunday, November 9

A Congregational Conversion on Congregational Life Cycle will be held following the 11 a.m. service on November 9 in Parish Hall. More information and registration will be coming.

Confirmation Classes Sunday, November 9

If your student is in 7th-9th grade or older and has not been confirmed, please join the confirmation journey. Led by Rev. jess, students will explore their faith and that of others, go on field trips and service activities, question, learn, and build relationships with church friends.

Classes will be held twice a month on Sundays from 12:30-2pm. A confirmation info meeting will be held November 2nd at 10am. Contact Leslie Fulford at 614-354-0720 or <a href="mailto:lightcharper-legenges-super-legen

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 Training Coordinator:

Wendy Kennedy

Stephen Leader and Stephen Ministry Referrals Coordinator:

Stephen Leader and Stephen Ministry Communications, Media Faith Formation Commission-elect: Mariner Taft

and IT Coordinator: Annette McCormick

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

Transition Team: Jacquelyn Dean and Nancy Loy, co-chairpersons, Music, Arts & Heritage-elect: Cheryl Hoskinson Todd Cunningham, Rev. Becky David, Scott Graham, Gregory Halbe, Susie Loik, Allison Lowery Palmer, Pavan Peter, Sarah Reed, Personnel: Neal Brower

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

House & Grounds: Eric Klintworth

House & Grounds-elect: Music, Arts & Heritage: Jim Griffin

Member-at-Large: Martha Wilson

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

