



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

WORSHIP AT NINE
OCTOBER 26, 2025
TWENTIETH 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

* WELCOME

Rev. Becky



“Pharisee and the Publican,” James Tissot, 1836-1902

*GATHERING SONG
 "Great is thy faithfulness"

Faithfulness, William M. Runyan, 1923
 Thomas O. Chisholm, 1923

1. Great is Thy faith-ful-ness, O God my Fa-ther, there is no shad-ow of
 2. Sum - mer and win-ter, and spring-time and har-vest, sun, moon and stars in their
 3. Par - don for sin and a peace that en - dur-eth, Thy own dear pres-ence to

turn - ing with Thee; Thou chang - est not, Thy com - pas - sions they fail not;
 cours - es a - bove join with all na - ture in man - i - fold wit-ness
 cheer and to guide; strength for to - day and bright hope for to - mor-row,

Refrain
 as Thou hast been Thou for - ev - er will be.
 to Thy great faith - ful - ness, mer - cy, and love. Great is Thy faith-ful-ness!
 bless - ings all mine, with ten thou-sand be - side!

Great is Thy faith-ful-ness! Morn-ing by morn-ing new mer-cies I see; all I have

need-ed Thy hand hath pro - vid-ed— great is Thy faith-ful-ness, Lord, un-to me.

*INVOCATION

Rev. Becky

Leader: Ever-calling God,
We give thanks that you have gathered us into your church
and graced us with your faithful presence.
We ponder our history, ancient and still developing,
and marvel at the many expressions of your church.
Grant us the vision to be a part of a new reformation for the Church
that will bring ever more joy and justice to the world.

**People: Continue to gather us, the diverse lot of us,
into Jesus' vision and dream
that your faithful people may be one in you. 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

Joel 2:23-32

Jill Hultin

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

O children of Zion, be glad
and rejoice in the Lord your God;
for he has given the early rain for your vindication,
he has poured down for you abundant rain,
the early and the later rain, as before.
The threshing floors shall be full of grain,
the vats shall overflow with wine and oil.
I will repay you for the years
that the swarming locust has eaten,
the hopper, the destroyer, and the cutter,
my great army, which I sent against you.
You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied,
and praise the name of the Lord your God,
who has dealt wondrously with you.
And my people shall never again be put to shame.
You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel,
and that I, the Lord, am your God and there is no other.
And my people shall never again
be put to shame.
Then afterward
I will pour out my spirit on all flesh;
your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
your old men shall dream dreams,
and your young men shall see visions.

Even on the male and female slaves,
in those days, I will pour out my spirit.

I will show portents in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved; for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the Lord has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the Lord calls.

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

People: Thanks be to God.

LUKE 18:9-14

Rev. Becky

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

Jesus told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt: "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, was praying thus, 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of all my income.' But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even look up to heaven, but was beating his breast and saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his home justified rather than the other; for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted."

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

People: Thanks be to God.

REFLECTION

Rev. Becky

RESPONDING

HYMN OF PREPARATION
“Spirit of the living God”

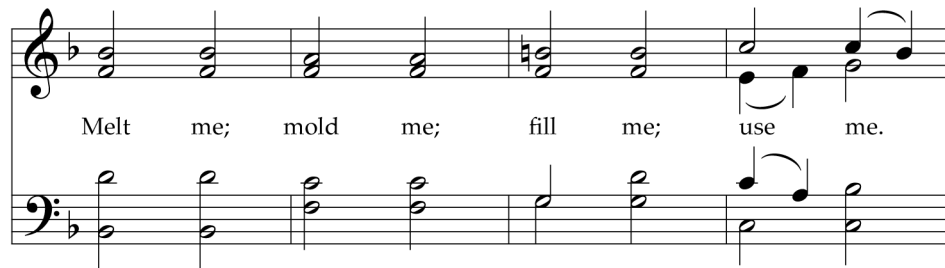
Daniel Iverson, 1926



Spir - it of the liv - ing God, fall a - fresh on me.



Spir - it of the liv - ing God, fall a - fresh on me.



Melt me; mold me; fill me; use me.



Spir - it of the liv - ing God, fall a - fresh on me.

PASTORAL PRAYER

Rev. Becky

SUNG RESPONSE

Daniel Iverson, 1926

“Spirit of the living God”

THE OFFERTORY

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



MISSION INVITATION

Gail Lowe

Cash and designated gifts go to support First Church's **Good Samaritan Fund**. Each month "Good Sam" provides financial help to people in need who call our church seeking assistance. Every effort is made to meet the unique, emergency needs of these neighbors. The number of people who need help has continued to grow recently, so your support is especially helpful now as the days and nights get colder. Thank you for your generosity.

OFFERTORY MUSIC

Anne Eliot

Once the gifts have been brought forward, you are invited to bring your pledge card forward.

If you have already turned in your pledge card, we invite you to bring forward a blank card so you may still participate in this important gesture of stewardship.

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.**

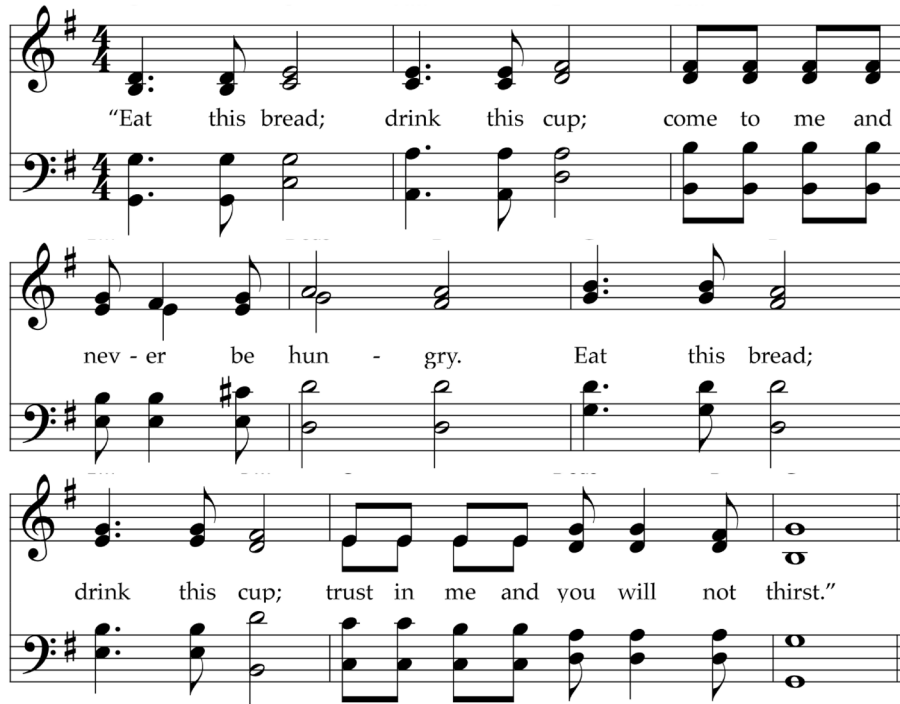
SHARING THE ELEMENTS

COMMUNION HYMN

"Eat this bread"

Berthier, Jacques Berthier, 1984

Robert J. Batastini and the Taizé Community, 1984



"Eat this bread; drink this cup; come to me and

nev - er be hun - gry. Eat this bread;

drink this cup; trust in me and you will not thirst."

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

COMMUNITY NOTICES - DEPART TO SERVE

Melissa Kulwicki

Leader: Let us depart with a heart to serve.

People: Thanks be to God.

*BENEDICTION

Rev. Becky

*CLOSING HYMN

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

"Lead me, guide me"

Doris Akers, 1953

Refrain

Lead me, guide me, a - long the way, for if you

lead me, I can - not stray. Lord, let me walk each

day with thee. Lead me, O Lord, lead 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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LEADERSHIP IN TODAY'S LITURGY

The Rev. Becky David, *preacher*

Jill Hultin, *liturgist*

Leslie Fulford, *worship leader*

Melissa Kulwicki, *worship leader*

Anne Eliot, *pianist*

Geoffrey Dean, *livestream ministry*

Enter to Worship **Depart to Serve**

October 26, 2025

This Week at First Church

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)

Monday, October 27

- 6 p.m. Associate Minister Advisory Group Mtg (Parlor)
First Church Campanelle Rehearsal (Bell Rm)
- 6:30 p.m. Security Committee Mtg (Classroom C & Zoom)

Tuesday, October 28

- 5:15 p.m. Laundry Love (Wash Land)
- 7 p.m. Deacons Mtg (Zoom)

First Serves Today, October 26 10 a.m.

First Serves has collected candy for this fun community party. Today we will put together individual bags for the Gladden children in Classroom D.

The Gladden 2025 Halloween Party will be held on October 30th. This party is a treasured tradition in the community. In addition to candy, Gladden needs volunteers to help with the party. If you are available to help please register with them using the QR Code.



Wednesday, October 29

- 6 p.m. Time Out Dinner (The Rail Craft Kitchen & Bar)
- 6:30 p.m. Healing Circle (Chapel)
Stephen Ministry Class (Fanning Rm)

Thursday, October 30

- 6 p.m. First Church Ringers Rehearsal (Bell Rm)
- 7:15 p.m. First Church Choir Rehearsal (Choir Rm)

Saturday, November 1

- 10:30 a.m. Sacred Earth Mtg (Adult Library)
- 11 a.m. BOBS Planning Mtg (Zoom)

Sunday, November 2

- 9 a.m. Worship Service & Holy Communion (Parish Hall)
- 10 a.m. Confirmation Family Information Mtg (Fanning Rm)
Adult Bible Study (Classroom C)
Sunday School (Various Classrooms)
- 11 a.m. Worship Service (Sanctuary)
- 12:15 p.m. Coffee Hour & Sales (Parish Hall)

Faith to Lead, Courage to Act Today, October 26

If you haven't already pledged, fill out your stewardship pledge today (pledge forms are in the worship bulletins). During the worship service we will conclude the formal phase of the annual stewardship campaign with a liturgy celebrating the pledge church members have made for 2026.

Nearly 75 percent of our church's annual operating budget is raised through pledges made by church members. Let your pledge reflect your generosity in response to God's gifts to you.

Mid-Ohio Workers Holiday Benefit Today, October 26 12:15 p.m.

Join us in Parish Hall in supporting MWA's Day of the Dead Tamale Benefit. They will be selling tamales to raise funds for their Holiday Budget Saving Program that aids members. Tamales can be purchased for pickup on Sunday, November 2, from 1 to 6 p.m.

Time Out Dinner Wednesday, October 29 6 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 other First Church members. It's located in the Grandview Crossing at 1064 Dublin Road. Come join in and please use the QR Code to register on Realm to reserve your place at the table.



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

If you are 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.

First Church Book Club Wednesday, November 4 7 p.m.

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

The Mighty Red is a moving story of mothers and daughters, and a love triangle among three teens, in North Dakota's Red River Valley. A small prairie community is impacted by both the 2008 economic collapse and its rippling consequences, and by the industrial farming of sugar beets. This multigenerational saga contains humor and sorrow, along with desperation, regrets, grief, and love. It's a meditation on what it means to belong . . . to a place, to a people, to oneself.

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

Congregational Conversation Sunday, November 9 12:30 p.m.

A Congregational Conversation on the Congregational Life Cycle will be held following the 11 a.m. service on November 9 in Parish Hall. Registration will be available for this conversation soon.

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 12:30-2 p.m. A confirmation informational meeting will be held November 2nd at 10 a.m. Please contact Leslie Fulford at 614-354-0720 or lfulford@first-church.org to learn more.

Keep in Prayer

Members Gerry Worth; Emily Wilson; 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 Melissa Kulwicki's father, Jack Blandi; 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; 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 the Caribbean. We also pray for our UCC partners in mission at the Diaconal Center in Beit Jala, in the West Bank of Palestine.

Healing Rev. jess young chang

I'm really looking forward to our Healing Service next month, on Sunday, November 23, at 10 a.m. here at First Church, and I hope you are too. Some of us in this community are ready to let go of the pain and turn the page on the pain or resentment you've been carrying around. Some of us aren't ready yet. Even pain can be something we get familiar with experiencing, and the idea of putting it down, softening our hearts, and starting fresh is scary. If you are anything like me, you may be holding on to a story or an expression of grief or resentment. Maybe you don't feel like you have any place to put it, or maybe you don't know what will happen if you put it down.

Our God has a thought about that, and we heard from Pastor Becky about it just last week. "[T]he days are coming, says YHWH, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah... I will put my Law in their minds and on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people... All of them, high and low alike, will listen to me, says YHWH, for I will forgive their misdeeds and will remember their sins no more." (Jeremiah 31:31, 33). God is inviting us into a season of new covenant as a congregation, rooted in the love of Christ and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. But to have our hearts and spirits ready for this service, we need to leave our gift at the altar and be reconciled to our sibling, as Christ teaches us to do.

To help with this process, First Church is hosting Healing Circles between now and our Healing Service on November 23. Facilitated by your Interim Ministers, Circle Practice emerges from spiritual, cultural, and religious practices and communities all over the world and it has been practiced in circles of community, healing, decision making, and restorative justice for centuries. In this practice, participants engage in safe, open communication and presence, and practice deep, confidential listening, and story sharing from the tenderness and vulnerability of our hearts. Please join us for deep listening, open sharing, and acknowledging of pain that is blocking our way to experiencing the healing and transformation of Christ.

There are three opportunities to experience a Healing Circle: Wednesday, October 29, 6:30-8 p.m.; Thursday, November 6, 6-7:30 p.m., and Monday, November 10, 2-3:30 p.m. Please don't miss an opportunity to join Spirit, others, and your own listening heart to share what you need to and bear confidential witness to one another. Join us in the circle.

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
Commissioned Minister for Spiritual Formation and Direction: Jacquelyn Dean
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 and IT Coordinator: Annette McCormick
Senior Deacon: Martha Worth
Deacons: Allen Baker, Fubara Braide, Stella Braide, Heather Jones, Brian Kemp, Allison Lowery, Dayna McCrary, Matt Myers, Fran Panek, Gary Seigerst, Thomason Smith
Transition Team: Jacquelyn Dean and Nancy Loy, co-chairpersons, Todd Cunningham, Rev. Becky David, Scott Graham, Gregory Halbe, Susie Loik, Allison Lowery, Pavan Peter, Sarah Reed, 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
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: Nathaniel Powell
Faith Formation Commission: Cami Curren
Faith Formation Commission-elect: Mariner Taft
House & Grounds: Eric Klintworth
House & Grounds-elect:
Justice & Mercy: James Lowe
Justice & Mercy-elect: Janice Taft
Music, Arts & Heritage: Jim Griffin
Music, Arts & Heritage-elect: Cheryl Hoskinson
Member-at-Large: Martha Wilson
Personnel: Neal Brower
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

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
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