



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.

Please use this time for quiet preparation for worship.

VOLUNTARY

Marche des Rois Mages

Théodore Dubois, 1886

ENTER TO WORSHIP *by Bruce Power*

Dr. Sandra Mathias

Leader: Light! Light, light and more light!

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of God has risen upon you.

**People: Nations shall come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your rising.**

Please stand as you are able. (indicates congregation standing)*

*Leader: When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, wise men came from the East, saying:
Where is he who is born king of the Jews?

**People: For we have seen his star in the East,
and have come to worship him.**

Leader: The wonderful light of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

People: And also with you.

*PROCESSIONAL HYMN
"The first Nowell"

The First Nowell, English carol
English carol; Some Ancient Christmas Carols, 2nd ed., 1823, alt.

1 The first Nowell the an- gel did say was to cer-tain poor
2 They look - ed up and saw a star shin-ing in the
3 And by the light of that same star three wise men
4 This star drew nigh to the north-west; o'er Beth - le -

shep-herds in fields as they lay, in fields where they lay keep-ing
east be - yond them far; and to the earth it gave
came from coun - try far; to seek for a king was their
hem it took its rest, and there it did both stop

their sheep, on a cold win-ter's night that was so deep.
great light, and so it con - tin - ued both day and night.
in - tent, and to fol - low the star wher-ev - er it went.
and stay, right o - ver the place where Je - sus lay.

Refrain

Now - ell, Now - ell, Now - ell, Now - ell,
born is the King of Is - ra - el.

*WELCOME AND PASSING OF THE PEACE

Rev. Becky David

Leader: The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Let us greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace.

** When you return to your seat, please find the blue Welcome notebook at the end of the pew, sign it and pass it on to your neighbor so we may greet one another by name.*

INVOCATION

Rev. Dr. William R. Nirote

Leader: Almighty God,
Your Spirit swept over the waters of creation;
You are sweeping over us now, creating something new.
Call us away from the distractions of the world
to experience what You are doing now, in us, and through us, and in our world.
Open us to a new awakening, a new beginning,
where we look through the lens of the goodness of Your creation,
experiencing all possibilities in You.
Turn us away from the negative lens and lead us to the light.
In the name of Jesus, who leads us into life, we pray.

People: Amen.

THE FIRST SCRIPTURE READING

Isaiah 60:1-6

Dr. Mathias

Leader: A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, the sixtieth chapter.

Arise, shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.
For darkness shall cover the earth
and thick darkness the peoples,
but the Lord will arise upon you,
and his glory will appear over you.

Nations shall come to your light
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

Lift up your eyes and look around;
they all gather together; they come to you;
your sons shall come from far away,
and your daughters shall be carried in their nurses' arms.

Then you shall see and be radiant;
your heart shall thrill and rejoice,
because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you;
the wealth of the nations shall come to you.

A multitude of camels shall cover you,
the young camels of Midian and Ephah;
all those from Sheba shall come.

They shall bring gold and frankincense
and shall proclaim the praise of the Lord.

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

People: Thanks be to God.

The Choir introduces the Antiphon, after which the People join in singing the Antiphon, repeating as indicated after the Choir chants the verses.

Give the King your justice, O God, and your righteousness to the King's Son;

That he may rule your people righteously and the poor with justice;

Antiphon.

He shall rule from sea to sea,
and from the River to the ends of the earth.

The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall pay tribute,
and the kings of Arabia and Saba offer gifts.

Antiphon.

For he shall deliver the poor who cry out in distress,
and the oppressed who have no helper.

He shall have pity on the lowly and poor;
he shall preserve the lives of the needy.

Antiphon.

May his Name remain for ever and be established as long as the sun endures;
may all the nations bless themselves in him and call him blessed.

Antiphon.

*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Sussex Alleluia

All stand. The Choir introduces the Alleluia, which is then repeated by the Congregation.

Following the verse, all repeat the Alleluia twice.

Following the verse, all repeat the **Alleluia** note.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Verse: We saw his star at its rising
and have come to do him homage.

*THE GOSPEL

Matthew 2:1-12

Rev. David

Leader: A reading from the Gospel according to Matthew, the second chapter.

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, magi from the east came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star in the east and have come to pay him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him, and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it has been written by the prophet:

'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah,
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel.' "

Then Herod secretly called for the magi and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." When they had heard the king, they set out, and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen in the east, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

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

People: Thanks be to God.

SERMON

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Rev. David

Rev. Nirote

HYMN

"As with gladness men of old"

Dix, Conrad Kocher, 1838

William Chatterton Dix, c. 1858

THE OFFERTORY

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



MISSION INVITATION

Jim Lowe

Cash and designated gifts go to support Columbus Relief, a faith based, non-profit organization that has served our community since 2015. Columbus Relief's mission is to journey into communities of homelessness, bringing life-transforming guidance through God's love and honest relationship building. Columbus Relief meets our neighbors where they are, on the streets of Columbus, to build trust through a consistent and accessible approach. They also act as a hub to link people to community resources, such as the Free Clinic. Thank you for your generosity.

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

My Lord Has Come

Will Todd, 2010

Shepherds, called by angels, called by love and angels:
No place for them but a stable.
My Lord has come.
Sages, searching for stars, searching for love in heaven;
No place for them but a stable.
My Lord has come.
His love will hold me, his love will cherish me, love will cradle me.
Lead me, lead me to see him, sages and shepherds and angels;
No place for me but a stable.
My Lord has come.

*PRESENTATION CAROL

“What child is this,” v. 3

Greensleeves, English Ballad, 16th c.

William Chatterton Dix, 1871

**So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh; Come, one and all, to own Him.
The King of kings salvation brings; Let loving hearts enthrone Him.
This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
haste, haste to bring Him laud, the Babe, the son of Mary.**

COMMUNION PRAYERS *by Moira Laidlaw*

Revs. David and Nirote

Leader: We give you thanks, O God, for making your love evident since the very beginning of time when you spoke the word which replaced the darkness of chaos with life-giving light.
A light which has nurtured generations of people, and plants and creatures, great and small.
A light which also revealed the fear and powerlessness caused by corrupt and evil actions.
And so you spoke the Word which would once and for all dispel the darkness of chaotic lives.
Through your love for the world the Word became flesh and lived among us full of grace and truth.
The angels caroled glory to you in the highest heavens and peace to all people on earth, and we join with them and with all people to praise your holy name:

People: **Holy Lord, God of endless love,
heaven and earth are surely full of your glory.
The angels sang of it—we have been lavished with it.
Blessed is he who was born that we might have life.
Glory to God and on earth peace to all people.**

Leader: Holy God, as the travelers with their treasures were overwhelmed with joy on finding Jesus, so we also are overwhelmed on finding out the depth of his love for us.
For Jesus showed just how beloved we are to him, by loving us and giving himself for us.
On that night when he gave himself up for us,
as he sat at the table and broke bread with his friends, he said:
'Take and eat; this is my body which is broken for you.
Remember me each time you do this.'
After they had eaten, he took the cup, and said:
'Remember me as you drink from this, for it is my life, poured out for you—the beginning of a new relationship with God.'

Send the power of your Holy Spirit upon these gifts of bread and wine, O God, that we may experience the presence of the Word-made-flesh—Jesus Christ.

People: **Breathe your Spirit in us that we may be one body with him—
living out his ministry in the world today and every day.
This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.**

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 OF THE ELEMENTS

Please come forward as directed by the vergers to receive the common elements for communion.

*Receive the bread from the pastor, and as you approach the cup,
dip just the edge of the bread into the juice (this is called intinction)*

If you require a Gluten-free piece, please proceed to the front.

*If you are unable to rise and come forward and would still like to partake of communion,
please tell a verger when they are at your pew.*

If you are worshipping online, you are invited to gather elements of communion in your home.

COMMUNION ANTHEM

"Lully, lulla, lullay"

Lully lulla, lully lulla
Lully lulla, lully lulla
By by lully lullay
Lully lulla
Thou little tiny child
By by, lully lullay

Oh sisters too
How may we do
For to preserve this day?
This poor youngling
For whom we sing
By by lully lullay?

Philip Stopford, 2011
Traditional English carol

Herod, the king
In his raging
Chargèd he hath this day
His men of might
In his own sight
All young children to slay

That woe is me
Poor child for the!
And ever morn and day
For thy parting
Neither say nor sing
By by lully lullay!

SENDING OF HOME COMMUNION

Rev. Nirote

Leader: My brothers and sisters,
you are sent to bring the Word of God
and the Bread of Life from this assembly
to the sick and friends at home.
Go to them with our love and our prayers
in the name of Jesus Christ.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

COMMUNITY NOTICES - DEPART TO SERVE

Ms. Kulwicki

Leader: Let us depart with a heart to serve.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

*CLOSING HYMN

“On this day earth shall ring”

Personent Hodie, Piae Cantiones, 1582

trans. Jane Marion Joseph, c. 1917

BENEDICTION

Rev. David

VOLUNTARY

Sortie sur "Venez, divin Messie"

César Franck, ca. 1858

Please be seated for the postlude.

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 one of our pastors or anyone wearing a name tag. We would be delighted to assist you.

† THE FLOWERS THIS MORNING are given to the glory of God by the Flower Fund.

† PLEASE JOIN US IN PARISH HALL FOR COFFEE HOUR, hosted by the Grateful Neighborhood Care Circle, led by Steve and Karen Sterrett.

† GREETING AT THE EXITS

Rev. Becky David — Narthex (Broad Street entrance)

Rev. William Nirote — East Door (Ninth Street entrance by the Church Office)

Mrs. Fulford — West Door (Cleveland Avenue entrance by the Chapel)

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LEADERSHIP IN TODAY'S LITURGY

The Rev. Becky David, *preacher*

The Rev. Dr. William R. Nirote,

Dr. Sandra Mathias, *liturgist*

Melissa Kulwicki, *worship leader*

Stefan Dugas, *crucifer*

Jason Harrell and Henry Wade, *vergers*

Joshua Stafford, *director and organist*

The First Church Choir

Peter Murray, *livestream ministry*



Enter to Worship Depart to Serve

January 4, 2026

This Week at First Church

Sunday, January 4

9 a.m. Worship Service & Holy Communion (Parish Hall)
10 a.m. Sunday School (Various Classrooms)
11 a.m. Worship Service (Sanctuary)
12:15 p.m. Coffee Hour & Sales (Parish Hall)
4 p.m. Twelfth Night Concert (Sanctuary)

Monday, January 5

9 a.m. Good Samaritan Distribution Day (Church)
9:30 a.m. Stewardship & Growth Mtg (Classroom C & Zoom)
12 Noon Card Care Ministry Mtg (Fanning Rm)
6 p.m. First Church Campanelle (Bell Rm)
6:30 p.m. Transition Team Mtg (Fanning Rm & Zoom)
7 p.m. House & Grounds Mtg (Classroom C & Zoom)

Tuesday, January 6

7 p.m. Communications & Technology (Zoom)
Justice & Mercy Mtg (Classroom C & Zoom)
Personnel Mtg (Zoom)

Commissioner Reminder

The deadline for submitting your commission reports for inclusion in the 2025 Annual Report is **Wednesday, January 7, 2026**. All files should be sent to Amy Wagner at awagner@first-church.org.

Wednesday, January 7

6:30 p.m. Stephen Ministers Monthly Mtg (SM Office)
7 p.m. Book Club (Zoom)

Thursday, January 8

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

Friday, January 9

10 a.m. Full Circle Connections (Parlor)

Sunday, January 11

9 a.m. Worship Service & Holy Communion (Parish Hall)
10 a.m. Sunday School (Various Classrooms)
J&M Informational Mtg (Fanning Rm)
11 a.m. Worship Service (Sanctuary)
12:15 p.m. Coffee Hour (Parish Hall)
12:30 p.m. Confirmation Class (Parish Hall)

Annual Meeting & Chili Cookoff

Sunday, January 25

10 a.m.

Note the date for the First Congregational Church Annual Meeting that will be followed by a congregational gathering for a chili cookoff. On that Sunday, there will be one church service at 10 a.m., followed by our meeting to review the accomplishments of 2025, elect leaders, and pass a budget for 2026. We will then celebrate with a chili cookoff party in Parish Hall. More information is to come.

Keep in Prayer

Members Gail Lowe; Jane Weddle; Gerry Worth; Al Waddell; Jane Ward; Stella Braide; James Velo; Grace Glaros and family; Beverly Halbe; Francille Firebaugh; Nancy Burba; John Carter; Clinton Brown; Dan Axt.

Family and friends Shelly Gies' father, Robert Simms and brother, Mike Simms; Susie Loik's friends, Julia and Jim Perry; Kevin Salem's uncle, Harold Allen; Wendy and Robert Reber's life-long friend, David Roberts and family; Geoffrey Dean's aunt, Vivian Heaney; Jason Harrell's mother, Sherry Harrell; Tom Kiesel's friend, Carrie; Matt Myers' sister, Erin Myers; Victor John's father, Charles John and mother, Mary Jane John; and Diana and Bob Kutschbach's cousin, Carson Samples.

Those who mourn Rev. jess young chang on the death of her friend, A.J. Banks.

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 Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, and Palestine. We also pray for our UCC partner in mission the Bishopric of Public, Ecumenical and Social Services (BLESS) in Minya, Egypt.

Sacred Earth Eco Prayer

Lord, we pray that people everywhere become more caring towards the environment in which they live, and that politicians, planners & developers seriously consider environmental concerns when making decisions.

praying-nature.com

First Church Book Club

Wednesday, January 7

7 p.m.

Enjoy lively conversation with other church members at the First Church Book Club. Our selection is *The Plot Against America* by Philip Roth.

This is alternative history at its literary best. Aviation hero, isolationist, and Hitler supporter Charles Lindbergh defeats Franklin Roosevelt in the 1940 presidential election. Lindbergh negotiates a cordial accord with Adolf Hitler, accepts his conquest of Europe and anti-Semitic policies, igniting a storm of fear for Jewish families across America. Through the eyes of a child, we see how ordinary adults and children can have their lives affected, influenced and turned upside-down by the decisions of those with power and authority.

Questions? Want to receive book club emails? Please email Kathy Reed at kbreed2010@gmail.com.

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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