



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

WORSHIP AT NINE
JANUARY 4, 2026
EPIPHANY SUNDAY

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

The First Nowell, English carol

“The first Nowell” vv. 1–3

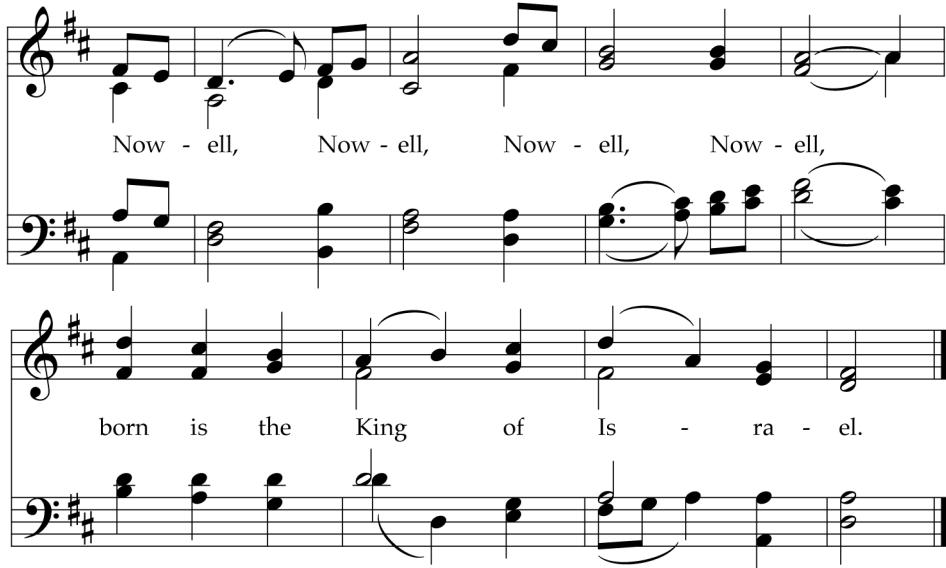
English carol; Some Ancient Christmas Carols, 2nd ed., 1823, alt.

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.

*OPENING PRAYER (*posted on Rev-o-lution.org*)

Rev. Becky

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.

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

Rev. Becky

CHILDREN'S TIME

Julia Myers and Maggie Myers

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

LISTENING

THE FIRST SCRIPTURE READING

Isaiah 60:1-6

Mary Anne Jacobson

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 GOSPEL

Matthew 2:1-12

Rev. Becky

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.

REFLECTION

Rev. Becky

RESPONDING

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Rev. Becky

HYMN OF PREPARATION

“As with gladness men of old” vv. 1–2

Dix, Conrad Kocher, 1838

William Chatterton Dix, c. 1858

1 As with gladness men of old did the guid-ing star be-hold;
2 As with joy - ful steps they sped, Sav - ior, to thy low - ly bed,
3 As they of - fered gifts most rare at thy man-ger, rude and bare,
4 Ho-ly Je - sus, ev - ery day keep us in the nar - row way;
as with joy they hailed its light, lead - ing on - ward, beam-ing bright;
there to bend the knee be - fore thee, whom heaven and earth a - dore;
so may we with ho - ly joy, pure and free from sin's al - loy,
and when earth-ly things are past, bring our ran-somed souls at last
so, most gra-cious Lord, may we ev - er - more be led to thee.
so may we with will - ing feet ev - er seek thy mer - cy seat.
all our cost-liest trea-sures bring, Christ, to thee, our heaven-ly king.
where they need no star to guide, where no clouds thy glo - ry hide.

PASTORAL PRAYER

Rev. Becky

SUNG RESPONSE

“As with gladness men of old” vv. 3–4

Dix, Conrad Kocher, 1838

William Chatterton Dix, c. 1858

THE OFFERTORY

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



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 MUSIC

Joshua Stafford

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Rev. Becky

COMMUNION

Rev. Becky

COMMUNION PRAYERS AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Rev. Becky

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

"Come and fill our hearts"

Confitemini Domino, Jacques Berthier, 1982

Jacques Berthier, 1982

Come and fill our hearts with your peace. You a-lone, O Lord, are ho-ly.

Come and fill our hearts with your peace. Al-le-lu-ia!

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Rev. Becky

Leader: God, this meal we shared together is a remembrance of your radical embrace of the outcast and oppressed.

All: **May it strengthen us as we open our minds and hearts to new ways of recognizing your presence among us. 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
“Christ, be our light”

Bernadette Farrell, 1993

Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the
dark - ness. Christ, be our light! Shine in your
church gath - ered to - day.

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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“Christ be our light.” Words and music by Bernadette Farrell. ©1993 OCP. All rights reserved.

LEADERSHIP IN TODAY'S LITURGY

The Rev. Becky David, *preacher*

Mary Anne Jacobson, *liturgist*

Julia Myers and Maggie Myers, *worship leaders*

Melissa Kulwicki, *worship leader*

Joshua Stafford, *pianist*

Geoffrey Dean, *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)
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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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