



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

WORSHIP AT NINE
JANUARY 11, 2026
BAPTISM OF CHRIST 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. jess

*GATHERING SONG

Beach Spring, The Sacred Harp, 1844

“Wash, O God, your sons and daughters”

Ruth Duck, 1987

1 Wash, O God, your sons and daughters, new-born creatures
2 Every day we need your nurture; by your milk may
3 O how deep your holy wisdom! Un - i - mag - ined,
(D) (Bm)
F Dm
of your womb. Num-ber them a - mong your peo - ple, raised like
we be fed. Let us join your feast, par - tak - ing cup of
all your ways! To your name be glo - ry, hon - or! With our
(G) (D) (A)
B-flat F C
Christ from death and tomb. Weave them gar - ments bright and
bless - ing, liv - ing bread. God, re - new us; guide our
lives we wor - ship, praise! We your peo - ple stand be -
(Bm) (F#m) (Bm) (G) (A) (D)
Dm Am Dm B-flat C F
spark-ling; com-pass them with love and light. Fill, a - noint them;
foot - steps, free from sin and all its snares, one with Christ in
fore you, wa - ter-washed and Spir - it - born. By your grace, our
(Bm) (G) (D)
Dm B-flat F
send your Spir - it, ho - ly dove and heart's de - light.
liv - ing, dy - ing, by your Spir - it, chil - dren, heirs.
lives we of - fer. Re - cre - ate us; God, trans - form!

*OPENING PRAYER

Rev. jess

Leader: Over the murmur of the stream,
over the crashing of the ocean,
Over the shattered scatter of the rain,
over the stillness of the morning lake before the wind:
The wind, the Spirit.

People: **Over the rushing of blood through our bodies,
thudding our heads, breaking our hearts, aching our feet:
the voice of the Lord over the waters, stirring up trouble, calling our names.**

Leader: Call our names, God: pour Your spirit like water over us,
reminding us that our body is a gift from you,
a teacher of our faith, a safe place to land.

People: **The sound of your name is the sound of our breath, God.
The rhythm of your presence is the rhythm of our heartbeat.
Remind us we are always with you, always on holy ground. Amen.**

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

Rev. jess

CHILDREN'S TIME

Melissa Kulwicki

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

LISTENING

THE FIRST SCRIPTURE READING

Exodus 3:1-10

Barbara Mason

from The Inclusive Bible: The First Egalitarian Translation

Leader: A reading from the Book of the Exodus, the third chapter.

Moses was tending the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian. Leading the flock deep into the wilderness, Moses came to Horeb, the mountain of God.

The messenger of YHWH appeared to Moses in a blazing fire from the midst of a thornbush. Moses saw—"The bush is ablaze with fire and yet it isn't consumed! Moses said, "Let me go over and look at this remarkable sight—and see why the bush doesn't burn up!"

When YHWH saw Moses coming to look more closely, God called out to him from the midst of the bush. "Moses! Moses!"

Moses answered, "I am here."

God said, "Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground!"

"I am the God of your ancestors," the voice continued, "the God of Sarah and Abraham, the God of Rebecca and Isaac, the God of Leah and Rachel and Jacob!"

Moses hid his face, afraid to look at the Holy One.

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

People: **Thanks be to God.**

YHWH, often pronounced 'Yah-Weh' is the Romanization of the Hebrew name of God used in the Hebrew bible. It is written with four aspirated consonants that aren't in our al-phabet and represented as Y H W H. For more information on this name of the Divine, and its relationship to human breath and language, please return next week or tune in for Rev. jess's sermon on January 18, 2026.

*THE GOSPEL

Matthew 3:23-27

Rev. jess

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

Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented. And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.”

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

People: Thanks be to God.

REFLECTION

Rev. jess

RESPONDING

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

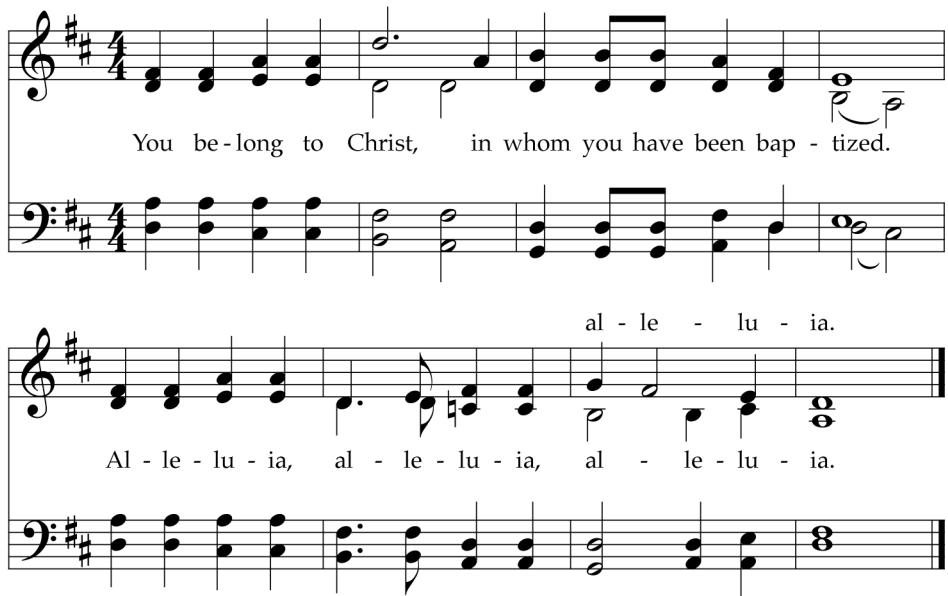
Rev. jess

HYMN OF PREPARATION

“You belong to Christ”

You Belong to Christ, Robert A. Hobby, 2003

Holy Baptism and Related Rites, Renewing Worship 3, 2002



PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Rev. jess

SUNG RESPONSE

“You belong to Christ”

You Belong to Christ, Robert A. Hobby, 2003

Holy Baptism and Related Rites, Renewing Worship 3, 2002

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 the **Knight Perry Fund**. Through the Board of Trustees, the Knight-Perry Fund provides support for persons in the church in financial need. The Senior Minister, in strict confidence, approves all loan requests. Thank you for your generosity.

OFFERTORY MUSIC

David Hogrefe

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Rev. jess

All: **God of the open hand, we thank you for your continued blessing of us, our hearts, and our lives. Take this, our offering of time, talent, and treasure, and use it, and use us, to manifest Your Kin-dom, on Earth, as it is in Heaven. Amen.**

COMMUNION

Rev. jess

COMMUNION PRAYERS AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Rev. jess

Leader: We eat this meal as one body.
And that one body includes your body.
And it looks like your body.
It has skin like your own. Brown, black.
Scarred, tattooed. Itching, hairy, calloused, sore.
It is fat. Or skinny. Or thick. Or jacked.
It has lost limbs. It was made with extra digits...
It is Christ's body. Here and now.
The whole church gathered as your body.
Blessed. Broken. Shared.

People: **We eat this meal as one body.**
And that body includes your body.
But it looks nothing like your body.
But like another body completely different from your own.
Your neighbor's body.
Your enemy's body.
That body, Christ's body. Hosting us. Every body.
Revealing to us the Living God.
Here and now. In this meal.
Every body is welcome.

Leader: On the night of Jesus' trial, Jesus gathered...
Praying now as Jesus taught us, we say with the words most comfortable for 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.

SHARING THE ELEMENTS

COMMUNION HYMN

“Come and fill our hearts”

Confitemini Domino, Jacques Berthier, 1982

Jacques Berthier, 1982

3

D Bm D A

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

Em C Em A D

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

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Rev. jess

All: And so we thank you, Holy Spirit, and we ask that you take this food we have shared and make it into one body. Take our bodies and make us into one body. Christ's body. Breathing, crying, spitting, bleeding, blessing, breaking, sharing, revealing to all the Living God. Here and now. 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. Jess

*CLOSING HYMN
“Christ, be our light”

Bernadette Farrell, 1993

Refrain G C G Em Bm Em

Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the

Am7 D G Dsus D Em Em7

dark - ness. Christ, be our light! Shine in your

C Am7 D G Am7 G

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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LEADERSHIP IN TODAY’S LITURGY
The Rev. jessica young chang, *preacher*
Barbara Mason, *liturgist*
Leslie Fulford, *worship leader*
Melissa Kulwicki, *worship leader*
David Hogrefe, *pianist*
Peter Murray, *livestream ministry*

Nominating Committee: Slate of Officers for 2026 Council

Officers

Moderator: Sarah Reed

Moderator Elect:

Treasurer: Ramona Moenter

Treasurer Elect:

Secretary: Amanda Butler

Secretary Elect:

Commissioners

Church Stewardship & Growth Commissioner: Steve Sterrett

Church Stewardship & Growth Commissioner Elect: Kathy Reed

Church Vitality Commissioner: Antoinette Koomans-Beynen

Church Vitality Commissioner Elect:

Communications & Technology Commissioner: Mike Kennedy

Communications & Technology Commissioner Elect: Nathaniel Powell

Faith Formation Commissioner: Cami Curren

Faith Formation Commissioner Elect: Mariner Taft

House & Grounds Commissioner: Eric Clintworth

House & Grounds Commissioner Elect:

Justice & Mercy Commissioner: James Lowe

Justice & Mercy Commissioner Elect:

Music, Arts, & Heritage Commissioner: Jim Griffen

Music, Arts, & Heritage Commissioner Elect: Cheryl Hoskinson

Personnel Commissioner: Neal Brower

Personnel Commissioner Elect:

At-Large Members

Adult Member At-Large:

Youth Member At-Large:

Trustees

Chair: (elected by Trustees)

4 year term: David Hogrefe

4 Year term:

Deacons

Senior Deacon: (elected by Deacons)

3 year term: Barbara Mason

3 year term:

3 year term:

3 year term:

3 year term:

Nominating Chair: Greg Halbe



Enter to Worship Depart to Serve

January 11, 2026

This Week at First Church

Sunday, January 11

9 a.m. Worship Service (Parish Hall)
10 a.m. Sunday School
 (Various Classrooms)
 Adult Education (Classroom C)
 Justice & Mercy Informational Mtg
 (Fanning Rm)
11 a.m. Worship Service (Sanctuary)
12:15 p.m. Coffee Hour (Parish Hall)
12:30 p.m. Confirmation Class (Classroom C)

Monday, January 12

6 p.m. First Church Campanelle Rehearsal
 (Bell Rm)
7 p.m. Trustees Mtg (Classroom C & Zoom)
 Assoc. Minister Advisory Group Mtg
 (Parlor)

Tuesday, January 13

5:30 p.m. Budget & Finance Mtg
 (Classroom C & Zoom)
7 p.m. Church Council Mtg
 (Classroom C & Zoom)

Wednesday, January 14

12 Noon Church Office Closes

Thursday, January 15

11 a.m. Fiber Arts Ministry Group (Fanning Rm)
6 p.m. First Church Ringers Rehearsal
 (Bell Rm)
7:15 p.m. First Church Choir Rehearsal
 (Choir Rm)

Saturday, January 17

10 a.m. Family Organ Day (Sanctuary)

Sunday, January 18

9 a.m. Worship Service (Parish Hall)
10 a.m. Sunday School (Various Classrooms)
 Adult Education (Classroom C)
11 a.m. Worship Service (Sanctuary)
12:15 p.m. Coffee Hour & Coffee Sales
 (Parish Hall)
4 p.m. Evensong (Sanctuary)

Adult Education Today at 10 a.m.

Adult Bible Study will meet in Classroom C. A new series on *Connecting with our Passion for Social Justice* will begin. Alejandro Rodriguez and Taimur Chaudhri will lead this series.

Mr. Chaudhri will lead the study on Sunday, January 18.

Church Office Announcement Wednesday, January 14 Noon Closure

Now that the holidays are behind us, the church staff will celebrate with a special holiday lunch. Therefore, the church office will close for the afternoon of January 14.

Also, in recognition of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, the office will be closed all day on Monday, January 18.

Can We Balance the Budget? — Please!

Very soon the church will meet for its Annual Meeting. We'll celebrate the ministries of 2025, elect leaders and pass an operating budget for 2026. It is always our goal to present a budget that is fully funded by the pledges and revenues of the church, and this year we are almost there, but we have some work yet to do.

The Stewardship Committee, in collaboration with the Budget & Finance Commission, set a 2026 pledge goal of \$850,000. To date, we have \$801,052 pledged, reflecting 187 units (households). This is about \$60,000 more than pledges for 2025. We are very grateful for this exceptional giving, especially for the many members who increased their pledges over last year. Thank you.

The church relies on pledged giving to plan the program year, to pay all staff fairly, and to maintain the building. Your pledge is part of the covenantal relationship that defines us as a faith community. If you have not completed your pledge intention please contact our Financial Administrator, Annette McCormick (614-228-1741, ext 111) as soon as possible. Please help to balance the budget.

You make a difference!
Sarah Reed, Moderator

Family Organ Day Saturday, January 17 10 a.m.

Join the third annual Family Organ Day for an opportunity for the young and young-at-heart to interact with the two magnificent pipe organs at First Church — the Kimball from 1931 and the Beckerath from 1972!

The morning includes: a short, family-friendly concert; an explanation and demonstration of the organs; an opportunity to build a small pipe organ; and a chance to play the organs!

This is a great opportunity for children interested in music, especially piano students, to experience the thrill of hearing and playing a pipe organ. There is no charge for this event.

Worship Survey Results

Thank you to everyone who participated and offered comments in the worship survey that was conducted in November. There were 184 respondents who shared perspectives and constructive feedback about their worship experience at First Church.

At both the 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. worship services, the overall experience, as well as communion and the format for worship, was significantly viewed as meaningful. Comments addressed the need to improve the flow of communion at 11 a.m. and concerns in ensuring the safety of communion by intinction at both services. The preaching and messages of our interim pastors was affirmed, and time for prayer and reflection are important. Your comments expressed concern that hymns be “singable.” Requests were made for additional musical instruments in the 9 a.m. service, and during the summer months at 11 a.m. The processional entrance of the liturgist and the book of the Lectionary was seen as “flashy” and “parade-like,” and the informality at 9 a.m. was just as important as the formality at 11 a.m.

Transition time is our opportunity to consider new ways of “doing church.” We appreciate your willingness to try out the changes, as it is very possible that we will see more happening in the future, especially at the 9 a.m. service. The results of the survey are posted on the Transition Team bulletin board in the main hallway of the church.

Evensong Sunday, January 18 4 p.m.

Choral Evensong is rooted in the rich liturgical tradition of the 1662 Book of Common Prayer. This venerable Anglican service has a storied history that dates back to the early days of the Church of England. Originally crafted during the English Reformation, the Book of Common Prayer became a cornerstone of Anglican worship, and Choral Evensong stands as one of its most cherished expressions.

Join us in the Sanctuary for this late afternoon service offering attendees a serene and contemplative experience, where scripture, music, and prayer intertwine.

Adult & Youth Education

Sunday, January 18

10 a.m.

Youth grades 4 through college are invited to a special lesson on the teachings of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and walk to the Social Justice Park to learn about the inspiration of Martin Luther King, Jr. in the signature artwork, Our Single Garment of Destiny. This class will be led by former Washington Gladden Social Justice Park director, Tom Worley and Taimur Chaudhri. Parents and adults are welcome to attend.

First Serves

Sunday, January 25

12 Noon

Our January First Serves mission will be a diaper drive for CelebrateOne! CelebrateOne is a nonprofit organization and the City of Columbus' initiative focused on ensuring every baby reaches its first birthday and beyond. They work with families, healthcare providers, community partners, and local leaders to reduce infant mortality and support healthy pregnancies, safe beginnings, and strong families across Columbus.

Items to be donated need to be unopened and unused packs of diapers in any child size, and unopened packs of diaper wipes. Please bring your donated items to the Education Wing's Giving Tree. We will also collect money to purchase diapers and wipes for this cause (see the Giving Tree for cash amounts). All donations should be delivered by Sunday, January 25. Please join us after the annual meeting to help load up diapers and wipes for delivery!

Please reach out to Donna and Denise Vogt at dvogt@first-church.org with any questions. To learn more about CelebrateOne and how to get involved, please visit <https://celebrateone.org/>

Annual Meeting & Chili Cook-off

Sunday, January 25

On January 25, following a 10 a.m. worship service, First Congregational Church will hold its Annual Meeting. At the meeting, members will receive a copy of the church's annual report, and approve last year's minutes, our annual budget, and the nomination of new commissioners.

Following the meeting there will be a chili cook-off in Parish Hall. Look for more details on the cook-off.

Keep in Prayer

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

Family and friends Janice Taft's cousin, Teri Williams; Jim and Gail Lowe's friends, Gretta Hibbs and Billy; 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; and Diana and Bob Kutschbach's cousin, Carson Samples.

Those who mourn Victor John and family on the death of his mother, Mary Jane John; 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 Iran, Iraq, and Syria. We also pray for our UCC partner in mission the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs in Hong Kong.

Justice & Mercy Missions

Upcoming missions will be:

January 11 - Knight Perry

January 18 - ACLU - Ohio

February 1 - Community Refugee & Immigration Services (CRIS)

January 25 - Church World Services (CWS)

February 8 - Good Samaritan Fund

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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