



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

WORSHIP AT SEVEN
FEBRUARY 18, 2026
ASH WEDNESDAY

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.

PRELUDE

Prelude in F Minor, BWV 534

J.S. Bach, ca. 1710

ENTER TO WORSHIP

*At the tone of the bell, the ministers enter.
A period of silence is observed.*

*INVOCATION

Rev. Becky David

Leader: God be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Let us pray.

God of compassion and justice,
the worship you choose for us is to loose the bonds of injustice,
to let the oppressed go free,
to share bread with the hungry,
to shelter the homeless poor.

Then your light shall break forth like the dawn
and your healing shall spring up quickly.

**People: So in praise and wonder, we come to worship you
not just with our words
but with our hearts and our lives.
Glory and honor be to you, O God,
Creator of a new heaven and a new earth;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

*KYRIE ELEISON

William Mathias, 1976

Lord, have mer - cy.

Lord, have mer - cy. Lord, have mer - cy.

Christ, have mer - cy. Christ, have mer - cy. Christ, have mer - cy.

Lord, have mer - cy. Lord, have mer - cy. Lord, have mer - cy.

Leader: A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah, the fifty-eighthth chapter.

Shout out, do not hold back!

Lift up your voice like a trumpet!

Announce to my people their rebellion,
to the house of Jacob their sins.

Yet day after day they seek me
and delight to know my ways,
as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness
and did not forsake the ordinance of their God;
they ask of me righteous judgments,
they delight to draw near to God.

“Why do we fast, but you do not see?

Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?”

Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day,
and oppress all your workers.

Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight
and to strike with a wicked fist.

Such fasting as you do today
will not make your voice heard on high.

Is such the fast that I choose,
a day to humble oneself?

Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush,
and to lie in sackcloth and ashes?

Will you call this a fast,
a day acceptable to the Lord?

Is not this the fast that I choose:
to loose the bonds of injustice,
to undo the thongs of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to break every yoke?

Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,
and bring the homeless poor into your house;
when you see the naked, to cover them,
and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,
and your healing shall spring up quickly;
your vindicator shall go before you,
the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.

Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer;
you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am.

If you remove the yoke from among you,
the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,
if you offer your food to the hungry
and satisfy the needs of the afflicted,

then your light shall rise in the darkness
and your gloom be like the noonday.
The Lord will guide you continually,
and satisfy your needs in parched places,
and make your bones strong;
and you shall be like a watered garden,
like a spring of water,
whose waters never fail.
Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;
you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;
you shall be called the repairer of the breach,
the restorer of streets to live in.

THE PSALTER

Psalm 103:8-14

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



The Lord re - mem - bers that we are but dust.

The Lord is full of compassion and mercy, slow to anger and of great kindness.
He will not always accuse us, nor will he keep his anger for ever.
He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our wickedness.

Antiphon

For as the heavens are high above the earth, so is his mercy great upon those who fear him.
As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our sins from us.
As a father cares for his children, so does the Lord care for those who fear him.

Antiphon

THE GOSPEL

Matthew 6:1-6,16-21

Rev. young chang

Leader: A reading from the Gospel according to Mark, the sixth chapter.

Jesus said, "Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

"So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

"And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

"And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

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

People: Thanks be to God.

SERMON

Rev. young chang

ANTHEM

Henry Purcell, 1695

“Thou knowest, Lord”

attr. to Notker, monk of St. Gall, late 9th c.

Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets of our hearts;
shut not thy merciful ears unto our prayer;
but spare us, Lord, spare us, Lord most holy, O God most mighty,
O holy and most merciful Saviour,
thou most worthy Judge eternal, suffer us not,
at our last hour, for any pains of death, to fall from thee. Amen.

CONFESSION OF SIN

Rev. young chang

Leader: Holy and Most Beautiful Lord,
We are humbled by Your compassion and mercy.
We recognize that within us is much that has hurt and offended You.
We acknowledge our faithlessness
and admit that we are undeserving of Your commitment to us.

(Silence)

But now, empowered by Your grace,
given to us through Jesus’s life, death and resurrection.
We seek to renew our commitment,
and consciously deepen our relationship with You.

**People: We recognize, O Lord, that we are simply dust.
Remind us through these ashes of our dependence on You.
May we know the strength of Your Spirit as we seek to follow You;
May we know the discipline of Your love as we seek to draw nearer to You;
May we know the insight of Your wisdom as we seek to learn of You.
As we receive the ashes upon our foreheads,
may we know the joy of sharing with You in ministry,
in suffering, in death and in life.
For Your glory and your kingdom’s sake.**

PARDON

Rev. young chang

Let your soul receive this rest: neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, neither heights nor depths—nor anything else in all creation—can separate us from the love of God, that is given to us through Christ Jesus. Breathe in deeply the forgiveness of our God.

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Rev. David and Rev. young chang

After the ministers impose ashes on one another, those who wish may come forward to receive the mark of the cross on the forehead or palm of the hand.

If you do not wish to receive the ashes, remain in prayer.

Those who are worshipping with us online are invited to make the mark of the cross on your forehead or palm. When the ashes are imposed, you are invited to say, "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." After all who wish to receive ashes have received them, the prayers of confession are concluded with these words:

MEDITATION

Rev. David

Blessing of Ashes by Jan Richardson

All those days you felt like dust, like dirt,
as if all you had to do was turn your face toward the wind
and be scattered to the four corners
or swept away by the smallest breath as insubstantial—

Did you not know what the Holy One can do with dust?

This is the day we freely say we are scorched.

This is the hour we are marked by what has made it through the burning.

This is the moment we ask for the blessing that lives within the ancient ashes,
that makes its home inside the soil of this sacred earth.

So let us be marked not for sorrow.

And let us be marked not for shame.

Let us be marked not for false humility

or for thinking we are less than we are

but for claiming what God can do

within the dust, within the dirt, within the stuff of which the world is made,

and the stars that blaze in our bones,

and the galaxies that spiral inside the smudge we bear.

Silence

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Rev. young chang

Leader: Holy One, at the threshold of Lenten time,
we remember who You are, and who You have called us to be.

**People: God of Love,
We remember that You are Love, that You created us from Love.**

Leader: We lift up those among us whose hearts are broken,
who are lonely, afraid, grieving and hurting.
Pour Your love on us, that we may know Your love.

People: God, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

**People: God of Justice,
We remember that justice is Your love in action
and comes from You.**

Leader: We lift up those among us groaning and struggling
under the weight of injustice,
who are alienated, dehumanized, and dispossessed.
Pour out Your justice on us, that we may know Your justice.

People: God, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

**People: God of Joy,
We remember that You have created so much beauty,
so much delight in Your world, and to ignore it is to ignore You.**

Leader: We lift up those among us who are angry, who are sad,
those for whom the color has gone out of life
and joy feels extinct.
Pour out Your joy on us, that we may know Your joy.

People: God, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

**People: God of Peace,
We acknowledge that in this world, peace within us,
peace between us, and peace throughout creation
is Your vision for life.**

Leader: We lift up those among us
whose bodies, hearts, homes, and streets
are broken and torn apart by the absence of peace.
Pour out Your peace on us, that we may know Your peace.

People: God, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

Leader: Spirit of the Living God, fall fresh on us this day.
May we know love.
May we know justice.
May we know joy.
May we know peace.
This day and every day, in the name of Christ we pray,

People: Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

**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.**

*HYMN

“Lord, who throughout these forty days”

St. Flavian, Day’s Psalter, 1562
Claudia F. I. Hernaman, 1873, alt.

1 Lord, who through-out these for - ty days for us did fast and
2 As you with Sa - tan did con-tend and did the vic-tory
3 And through these days of pen - i - tence, and through this Pas-sion-
4 A - bide with us, till when this life of suf - fering shall be
pray, teach us with you to mourn our sins and close by you to stay.
win, O give us strength to per - se - vere, in you to con-quer sin.
tide, yes, ev - er - more, in life and death, O Lord, with us a - bide.
past, an Eas - ter of un - end - ing joy we may at-tain at last.

BENEDICTION

Rev. young chang

All depart in silence.

LEADERSHIP IN TODAY’S LITURGY
The Rev. jessica young chang, *preacher*
The Rev. Becky David, *worship leader*
Joshua Stafford, *organist and director*
The First Church Choir
Geoffrey Dean, *livestream ministry*

Your offering today will go to support the **Good Samaritan Ministry** of First Church. For decades now, our Good Samaritan Fund has been providing financial assistance to our neighbors who are struggling to make ends meet and are unable to pay their utility bills. Every effort is made to meet the unique needs of each person seeking financial assistance. The need, here, in the Columbus area continues to grow as the number of those seeking financial assistance climbs each month. You may also give online following the QR code below. Thank you for generous support of this vital First Church ministry to our wider community.

To give online, please scan this QR code.



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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