



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

WORSHIP AT ELEVEN
JULY 26, 2026
NINTH 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.

Please use this time for quiet preparation for worship.

VOLUNTARY

Prelude & Fugue in B Major, Op. 99, No. 2

Camille Saint-Saëns, 1894

ENTER TO WORSHIP

Lee Wetmore

written by Joan Stott

Leader: Blessed and Righteous God,
Your truths and grace are revealed to us as we search Your Holy Word.

People: We come today, to listen to the Word of the Lord.

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

*Leader: Gracious God,
You help us to know You through Your Holy Word, which guides and blesses us.

People: We come today, to worship the Lord our God.

Leader: Holy God,
we gather to worship and praise You, to learn from Your Word in fellowship with others.

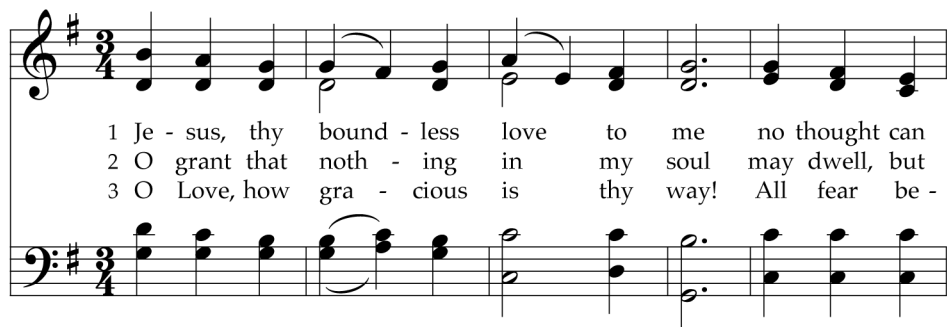
People: We come today, to praise the Lord our God. Amen.

*PROCESSIONAL HYMN

"Jesus, thy boundless love to me"

St. Catherine, Henri Frederick Hemy, 1864

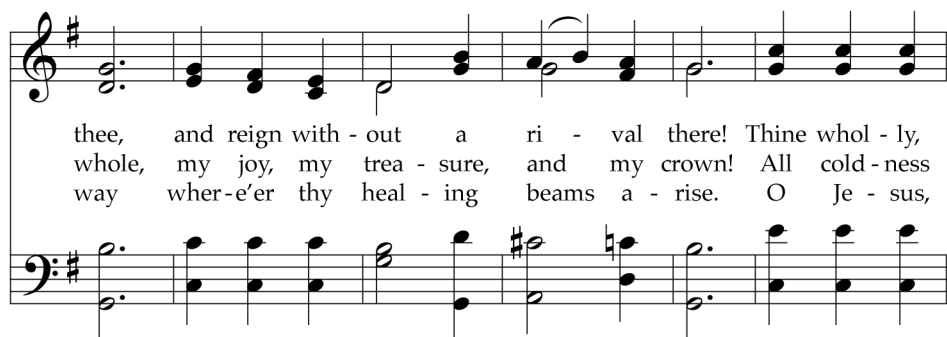
Paul Gerhardt, 1653; trans. John Wesley, c. 1739, alt.



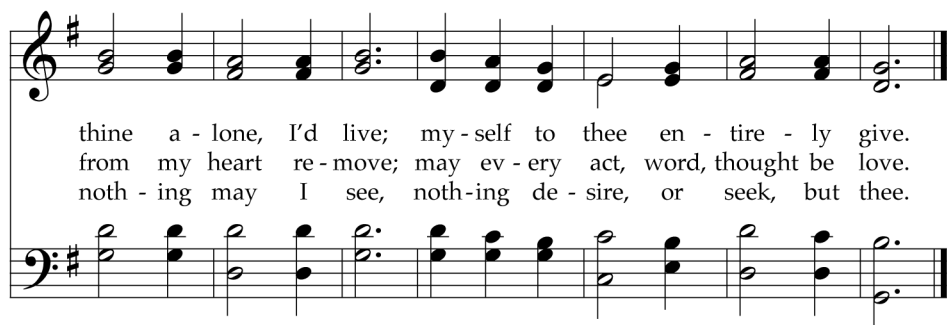
1 Je - sus, thy bound - less love to me no thought can
 2 O grant that noth - ing in my soul may dwell, but
 3 O Love, how gra - cious is thy way! All fear be -



reach, no tongue de - clare; O knit my thank - ful heart to
 thy pure love a - lone; O may thy love pos - sess me
 fore thy pres - ence flies; care, an - guish, sor - row melt a -



thee, and reign with - out a ri - val there! Thine whol - ly,
 whole, my joy, my trea - sure, and my crown! All cold - ness
 way wher - e'er thy heal - ing beams a - rise. O Je - sus,



thine a - lone, I'd live; my - self to thee en - tire - ly give.
 from my heart re - move; may ev - ery act, word, thought be love.
 noth - ing may I see, noth - ing de - sire, or seek, but thee.

*WELCOME AND PASSING OF THE PEACE

Rev. jessica young chang

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 many greet one another by name.*

Leader: Loving God,
we are Yours.

**People: We come as we are,
with our cares and concerns.
We long to touch You
and find healing in Your embrace.
Strengthen our faith and heal our brokenness,
that we may worship You with joy. Amen.**

THE FIRST SCRIPTURE READING

Romans 8:26-39

Mr. Wetmore

Leader: A reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans, the eighth chapter.

The Spirit, too, comes to help us in our weakness. For we don't know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit expresses our plea with groanings too deep for words. And God, who knows everything in our hearts, knows perfectly well what the Spirit is saying, because her intercessions for God's holy people are made according to the mind of God. We know that God makes everything work together for the good of those who love God and have been called according to God's purpose. They are the ones God chose long ago, predestined to share the image of the Only Begotten, in order that Christ might be the firstborn of many. Those God predestined have likewise been called; those God called have also been justified; and those God justified have, in turn, been glorified. What should be our response? Simply this: "If God is for us, who can be against us?" Since God did not spare the Only Begotten, but gave Christ up for the sake of us all, we may be certain, after such a gift, that God will freely give us everything. Who will bring a charge against God's chosen ones? Since God is the One who justifies, who has the power to condemn? Only Christ Jesus, who died—or rather, was raised—and sits at the right hand of God, and who now intercedes for us! What will separate us from the love of Christ? Trouble? Calamity? Persecution? Hunger? Nakedness? Danger? Violence? As scripture says, "For your sake, we're being killed all day long; we're looked upon as sheep to be slaughtered." Yet in all this we are more than conquerors because of God who has loved us. For I am certain that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, neither heights nor depths—nor anything else in all creation—will be able to separate us from the love of God that comes to us in Christ Jesus, our Savior.

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

People: Thanks be to God.

The congregation joins in singing the entirety of the Psalm.

Each measure of the chant corresponds to one half-verse of the Psalm, with notes changing at the | symbol.



129. Your decrees are | wonderful;
therefore I obey them with all my | heart.
130. When your word goes forth it gives | light;
it gives understanding to the | simple.
131. I open my mouth and | pant;
I long for your com- | mandments.
132. Turn to me in | mercy,
as you always do to those who love your | Name.
133. Steady my footsteps in your | word;
let no iniquity have dominion | over me.
134. Rescue me from those who op- | press me,
and I will keep your com- | mandments.
135. Let your countenance shine upon your | servant
and teach me your | statutes.
136. My eyes shed streams of | tears,
because people do not keep your | law.

*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Matthew 13:35

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

Following the verse, all repeat the Alleluia.



Verse: I will open my mouth to speak in parables;
I will proclaim what has been hidden since the foundation.

*THE GOSPEL

Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

Rev. young chang

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

Jesus presented another parable to the crowds: “The kingdom of heaven is like the mustard seed which a farmer sowed in a field. It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is the biggest shrub of all—it becomes a tree so that the birds of the air come to perch in its branches.” Jesus offered them still another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like the yeast a baker took and mixed in with three measures of flour until it was leavened all through.” “The kingdom of heaven is like a buried treasure found in a field. The ones who discovered it hid it again, and, rejoicing at the discovery, went and sold all their possessions and bought that field. “Or again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant’s search for fine pearls. When one pearl of great value was found, the merchant went back and sold everything else and bought it. “Or again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net thrown into the sea, which collected

all kinds of fish. When it was full, the fishers hauled it ashore. Then, sitting down, they collected the good ones in a basket and threw away those that were of no use. This is how it will be at the end of time. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the just and throw the wicked into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and the gnashing of teeth. “Have you understood all this?” “Yes,” they answered. To this Jesus replied, “Every religious scholar who has become a student of the kingdom of heaven is like the head of a household who can bring from the storeroom both the new and the old.”

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

People: **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

Rev. young chang

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Rev. young chang

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.**

*HYMN

Slane, Irish melody

“Be thou my vision”

Irish poem; trans. Mary E. Byrne, 1905; vers. Eleanor Hull, 1912, alt.

1 Be thou my vi - sion, O Lord of my heart;
2 Be thou my wis - dom, and thou my true word;
3 High King of hea - ven, when vic - tory is won,
all else be nought to me, save that thou art—
I ev - er with thee and thou with me, Lord;
may I reach hea - ven's joys, bright hea - ven's Sun!
thou my best thought, by day or by night,
thou my great Fa - ther; thine own may I be;
Heart of my heart, what - ev - er be - fall,
wak - ing or sleep - ing, thy pres - ence my light.
thou in me dwell - ing, and I one with thee.
still be my vis - ion, O Ru - ler of all.

THE OFFERTORY

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



MISSION INVITATION

Rev. young chang

"If you have more than enough material possessions and see your neighbors in need yet close your hearts to them, how can the love of God be living in you?" –1 John 3:17

Out of gratitude to God and in keeping with our mission and values, every week our offering goes to support a vanguard humanitarian organization. Cash and designated gifts go to **Bikes for All People**, Bikes for All People, a service of the non-profit Community Development for All People. Bikes for All People provides low cost or free bicycles, parts, accessories, and repairs, and offers volunteer opportunities for people to learn about bicycle care and repair. The shop also accepts donated bikes that they refurbish and offer to low income community members. By connecting cyclists from differing cultures, means, and experience levels, Bikes for All People promotes diversity and helps improve the quality of life on the South Side of Columbus. Thank you for your generosity.

You can use the QR code to donate to both this week's mission and to First Church! If you are giving by cash or check and would also like to give something to First Congregational Church, please use one of the giving envelopes available in the pew racks, and mark it accordingly. Thank you so much for your consideration and generosity. Any amount significant to you is significant to us.

"Put the entire tithe into the storehouse so there be food in my house! Put me to the test, says Yahweh Omnipotent, and see if I do not open windows in the sky and pour so much blessing on you that you cannot contain it!" –Malachi 3:10

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

Felix Mendelssohn, 1836

"Sei getreu bis in den Tod"

Revelation 2:10

*Sei getreu bis in den Tod
so will ich dir die Krone
Fürchte dich nicht,
ich bin bei dir,
fürchte dich nicht!*

Be thou faithful unto death,
and I will give to thee a crown of life
Be not afraid,
my help is night,
be not afraid!

*DOXOLOGY

Old 100th

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Christ, all creatures here below;
Praise Holy Spirit evermore;
Praise Triune God, whom we adore.**

Leader: Let us depart with a heart to serve.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

*CLOSING HYMN

"God of grace and God of glory"

Cwm Rhondda, John Hughes, 1907

Harry Emerson Fosdick, 1930, alt.

1 God of grace and God of glo - ry, on thy peo - ple
 2 Lo! the hosts of e - vil round us scorn thy Christ, as -
 3 Cure thy chil - dren's war - ring mad - ness; bend our pride to
 4 Save us from weak res - ig - na - tion to the e - vils

pour thy power; crown thine an - cient chur - ch's sto - ry; bring its
 sail his ways! From the fears that long have bound us free our
 thy con - trol; shame our wan - ton, self - ish glad - ness, rich in
 we de - plore. Let the gift of thy sal - va - tion be our

bud to glo - rious flower. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,
 hearts to faith and praise. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,
 things and poor in soul. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,
 glo - ry ev - er - more. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,

for the fac - ing of this hour, for the fac - ing of this hour.
 for the liv - ing of these days, for the liv - ing of these days.
 lest we miss thy king - dom's goal, lest we miss thy king - dom's goal.
 serv - ing thee whom we a - dore, serv - ing thee whom we a - dore.

BENEDICTION

Rev. young chang

VOLUNTARY

Nicht zu schnell und sehr markiert, Op. 58, No. 2

Robert Schumann, 1845

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 Sandra and Joel Mathias in celebration of their 60th wedding anniversary on July 31.

† PLEASE JOIN US IN PARISH HALL FOR COFFEE HOUR, hosted by the Church Vitality Commission, led by Antoinette Koolemans Beynen.

† GREETING AT THE EXITS

Rev. young chang — Narthex (Broad Street entrance)

Mr. Stafford — East Door (Ninth Street entrance by the Church Office)

Ms. Kulwicki — West Door (Cleveland Avenue entrance by the Chapel)

† PERMISSIONS AND COPYRIGHTS

All scripture readings used in today's service are from *The Inclusive Bible*.

LEADERSHIP IN TODAY'S LITURGY

The Rev. jessica young chang, *preacher*

Lee Wetmore, *liturgist*

Melissa Kulwicki, *worship leader*

Aarav Peter, *crucifer*

Geoffrey Gear, *soloist*

Joshua Stafford, *organist*

Nathaniel Powell, *livestream ministry*



Enter to Worship **Depart to Serve**

July 26, 2026

This Week at First Church

Sunday, July 26

- 9 a.m. Worship Service and
Holy Communion (Parish Hall)
- 10 a.m. Adult Faith Formation (Classroom C)
Sunday School Chat with Leslie (Playground)
Family Playground Time (Playground)
- 11 a.m. Worship Service (Sanctuary)
- 12:15 p.m. Coffee Hour (Parish Hall)

Monday, July 27

- 6 p.m. Campanelle Rehearsal (Bell Rm)

Tuesday, July 28

- 5 p.m. Laundry Love (Wash Land, 1469 W. Broad St.)
- 7 p.m. Deacons Mtg (Zoom)

Saturday, August 1

- 10:30 a.m. Sacred Earth Mtg (Library)

Sunday, August 2

- 9 a.m. Worship Service and
Holy Communion (Parish Hall)
- 10 a.m. Family Playground Time (Playground)
- 11 a.m. Worship Service (Sanctuary)
- 12:15 p.m. Coffee Hour & Sales (Parish Hall)

Sacred Earth Eco Tip for a 'Plastic-Free Month'

How much Plastic does it take to kill ocean animals?

Ocean Conservancy scientists along with University of Toronto researchers studied this question. The results are alarming.

It takes SIX small pieces the size of a pea to kill a seabird. For sea turtles, less than half a baseball's worth of plastic. For a sperm whale it takes 28 pieces of plastic smaller than the size of a tennis ball to kill a whale. These results underscore the importance of interventions like beach cleanups and better management of plastic waste to protect marine life.

**THINK BEFORE YOU TOSS THAT PLASTIC BOTTLE
IN THE TRASH—REUSE OR RECYCLE!!**

To learn more information visit oceanconservancy.org.

Adult Faith Formation Today at 10 a.m. in Classroom C

Alejandro Rodriguez will share information about the Washington Gladden Social Justice Park. Come learn about the Park's history, its plans, and why it's so important now as we strive for a more just society for all.

Family Playground Time! Today at 10 a.m. on the Sam Gordon Playground

Join the First Church playground gang between services having outdoor fun while parents catch up. We'll be outside playing every Sunday this summer, weather permitting.

Come to the Table: Care & Share Kitchen Ministry Meeting

Congregational Care is hosting an informational and brainstorming meeting for the Care & Share Kitchen Ministry. We are planning a discussion on past practices and looking ahead for new ways to grow this important ministry. We would love your input and your enthusiasm!

We are meeting on Sunday, August 9, at 12:15 p.m. in the parlor. Please let either Susie Loik or Wendy Kennedy know if you plan on attending. We welcome all former, current, and those newly interested to attend this meeting. We hope to look ahead to how we can grow this ministry further and help connect with others through food and fellowship.

Justice & Mercy Missions

Upcoming missions will be:

July 26 - Bikes for All People

August 2 - Gladden Community House

August 9 - Good Samaritan

Joy is an Act of Resistance

Friday, August 14, 2026

The Washington Gladden Social Justice Park and the Human Service Chamber are seeking enthusiastic volunteers to help create a welcoming, joyful morning for the nonprofit professionals, social workers, educators, advocates, healthcare workers, and community leaders who strengthen Central Ohio every day.

Joy is an Act of Resistance is a free community appreciation event celebrating those who dedicate their lives to serving others. Through breakfast, music, games, creative activities, reflection, and connection, we'll create a space for renewal and gratitude—because caring for those who care for our community strengthens the movement for social justice. It runs from 7 to 11 a.m.

Please use the QR Code to volunteer for this event. Should you have questions about becoming a volunteer please email Barb Poppe at Barbara.poppe.77@gmail.com



Good Works!

Engaging with Our Church and Our Community ... January – June 2026

Our church has been busy during 2026. Our church members continue to respond to God's call and serve one another.

Church Vitality

Monthly Time Out Small Group Dinners – each attended by six to 14 people

- February 10 at Starliner Diner in Hilliard
- March 25 at Rusty Bucket in Bexley
- April 29 at Starliner Diner in Hilliard
- May 27 at TAT Ristorante di Famiglia in east Columbus

Monthly Lunch Bunch Small Group Luncheons – each attended by six to 14 people

- February 26 at Delaney's Diner in Westerville
- March 10 at George's Linworth Diner
- May 13 at Chef-O-Nette in Upper Arlington
- June 16 at Over the Counter in Worthington

Easter Brunch – Sunday, April 5

- Served hot cross buns and hot chocolate after the 7 a.m. Easter Sunrise Service
- Served doughnuts, pastries, and juice at 10 a.m. before the 11 a.m. Easter Sunday Service

Women's Retreat – April 18

- Program led by Spiritual Director Jackie Dean
- Snacks and lunch provided by Church Vitality

Coffee Hour – every Sunday (January-June 2026)

- Hosted by commissions, committees, and Neighborhood Care Circles

Special Coffee Hour – May 31

- Celebrating the baptism of Dakotah Saunders during worship

Keep in Prayer

Members Kelly Dodd; Fran Panek; Lynn Wallich; Jane Weddle; Victor John; Mary Day Fewless; Ramona Moenter; Nancy Livingston; Jane Ward; Grace Glaros and family; Beverly Halbe; Francille Firebaugh; Nancy Burba; John Carter; Clinton Brown; Dan Axt.

Family and friends Leslie Fulford's sister, Kim Barth; Pat Patterson's friend, Cindy Shealy; Jenny Provenzano's mother, Joyce Beitzel; Melissa Kulwicki's father, Jack Blandi, and her mother-in-law, Beverly Kulwicki; Rev. Becky David; David Wyatt's uncle, Richard Hendrix Wyatt; Rev. Jess Young Chang's friend Rev. Steve Swisher's mother Barbara Swisher; Annette McCormick's sister, Kathy McCormick; Amy Wagner's great nephew, Brody Wilson; Kathy Reed's cousin, Barbara Works; Malini Peter's friend, Usha Rangarajan; Susan Brooks' friends, Marti and Ned Timmons; Dakotah Saunders' friend, Trisha; Susie Loik's daughter, Kelly and son, Laeric; Janice Taft's cousin, Teri Williams; Shelly Gies' father, Robert Simms and brother, Mike Simms; Kevin Salem's uncle, Harold Allen; Jason Harrell's mother, Sherry Harrell; and Matt Myers' sister, Erin Myers.

Those who mourn Wendy Reber and family on the death of her husband, Robert Reber; Jim Griffin on the death of his friend, Randelle Bowman; and Melva Fisher on the death of her brother-in-law Michael Bittle.

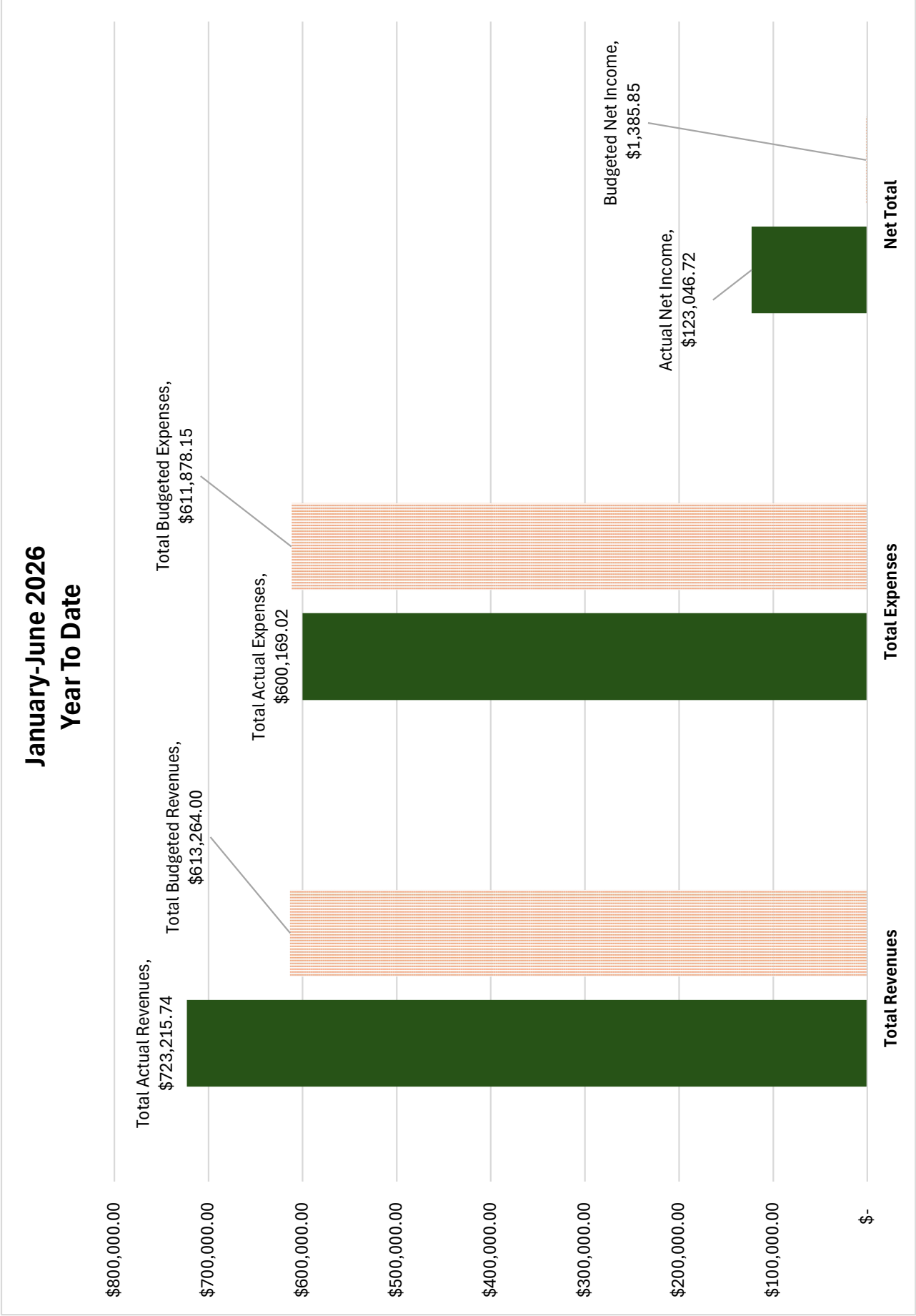
We keep Stephen Ministers in prayer as they care for our church members.

We keep our Search Committee and our Future Pastor in our prayers.

In the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle, we pray for the people and churches of Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Rwanda. We also pray for our UCC partner, the Inanda Seminary in South Africa.

The financial picture for First Church shows very good news through the first six months of 2026. Revenue reflects the fact that many members pay their yearly pledge at the beginning of the year. Expenses are in line with budget.

June showed a significant drop in revenue as the summer season begins. Don't forget First Church as you enjoy your summer vacation!



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

Senior Deacon: Dayna McCrary

Deacons: Fubara Braide, Stella Braide, Camilla Curren, Kelly Dodd, Sandra Geronimo, Dean Hafez, Jason Harrell, Brian Kemp, Allison Lowery, Barbara Mason, Fran Panek, Gary Seigerst, Thomason Smith, Martha Worth

Transition Team: Jacquelyn Dean and Nancy Loy, co-chairpersons, Todd Cunningham, Rev. Becky David, Gregory Halbe, Susie Loik, Allison Lowery, Pavan Peter, Sarah Reed, Joshua Stafford

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Chairperson: Frank Cook

Trustees: Matthew Bendick, David Hogrefe, Victor John, Melody Leidheiser (Secretary), Janet Miller, Sarah Reed, Hugh Schultz, Charlie Weaver

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: Antoinette Koolemans-Beynen

Church Vitality-elect:

Communications and Technology Commission: Mike Kennedy

Communications and Technology Commission-elect: Nathaniel Powell

Faith Formation Commission: Mariner Taft

Faith Formation Commission-elect:

House & Grounds: Eric Klintworth

House & Grounds-elect: Fran Panek

Justice & Mercy: James Lowe

Justice & Mercy-elect:

Music, Arts & Heritage: Jim Griffin

Music, Arts & Heritage-elect: Cheryl Hoskinson

Member-at-Large: Martha Wilson

Personnel: Neal Brower

Personnel-elect: Chris Brooks

Youth Member-at-Large:

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

444 E Broad Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215 | 614-228-1741

www.firstchurcharts.org | home@first-church.org

