



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

WORSHIP AT NINE
AUGUST 16, 2026
TWELFTH 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.

GATHERING

PRELUDE

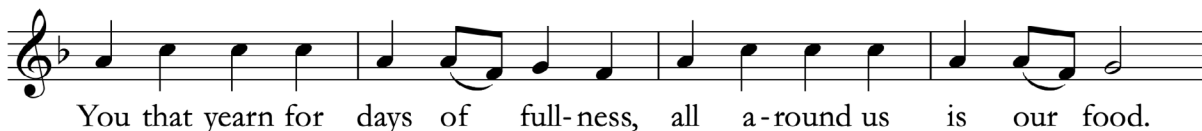
RINGING OF THE BELL

*GATHERING SONG

Holy Manna, William Moore's Columbian Harmony, 1825

"All who hunger gather gladly"

Sylvia G. Dunstan, 1990



*INVOCATION

Albert Adcock

Leader: Let us pray.

Loving God, with open arms You welcome all who call on Your name—
who acknowledge You as Lord, and look to You in faith.
No one stands outside the circle of Your mercy and love.
And so we come to offer You our worship—
to declare that You are our God, and that we are Your people,
called and chosen by You from the very beginning.

People: **Through the presence of Your Holy Spirit**

open our eyes to see You here;

open our minds to receive Your truth,

and our mouths to speak and sing Your praise.

For You alone are God—

worthy of all praise and worship, now and to the end of time. Amen.

*WELCOME AND PASSING OF THE PEACE
CHILDREN'S TIME

Rev. Bill
Leslie Fulford

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

CHILDREN'S HYMN
"God is so good"

God is So Good, Traditional African
Paul Makai, tr. Marilyn Foulkes, ca. 1970, rev.

1. God is so good, God is so good,
2. God cares for me, God cares for me,
3. God's all I need, God's all I need,

God is so good, God's so good to me.
God cares for me, God's so good to me.
God's all I need, God's so good to me.

LISTENING

THE FIRST READING

Isaiah 56:1, 6-8

Albert Adcock

Leader: A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, the fifty-sixth chapter.

"Do what is right! Work for justice!

For my liberation is about to come, and my justice is about to be revealed."

And the foreigners who join themselves to me, ministering to me,

loving the name of YHWH and worshiping me—

all who observe the Sabbath and do not profane it,

and cling to my Covenant— these I will bring to my holy mountain

and make them joyful in my house of prayer.

Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be acceptable on my altar,

for my house will be called a house of prayer for all peoples!"

Thus says the Sovereign YHWH, who gathers the diaspora of Israel:

"There are others I will gather besides those already gathered."

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.



1. May God be merciful to us and | bless us,
show us the light of his countenance and | come to us.
2. Let your ways be known upon | earth,
your saving health among all | nations.
4. Let the nations be glad and sing for | joy,
for you judge the peoples with equity
and guide all the nations upon | earth.
5. Let the peoples praise you, O | God;
let all the peoples | praise you.
6. The earth has brought forth her | increase;
may God, our own God, give us his | blessing.
7. May God give us his | blessing,
and may all the ends of the earth stand in | awe of him.

THE GOSPEL

Matthew 15:10-28

Rev. Bill

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

Jesus called the crowd together and said to them, "Hear this and understand: it's not what enters your mouth that defiles you—it's what comes out of your mouth that defiles you." Then the disciples approached him and said, "Do you realize that the Pharisees were offended by what you said?" Jesus replied, "Every plant that my Abba God in heaven has not planted will be pulled up by the roots. Ignore them—they are blind people leading other blind people. And when the blind lead the blind, they all will fall into a ditch." Then Peter said to him, "Explain this parable to us." Jesus replied, "Do you still not understand? Don't you realize that everything that goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and eventually finds its way into the sewer and is gone? But what comes out of the mouth comes from the heart. This is what makes a person 'unclean.' For from the heart come all sorts of evil intentions—murder, sexual infidelity, promiscuity, stealing, lying, even foul language. These things make a person unclean—not eating with unwashed hands!" Jesus left there and departed for the district of Tyre and Sidon. It happened that a Canaanite woman living in that area came and cried out to Jesus, "Heir to the House of David, have pity on me! My daughter is horribly demon possessed." Jesus gave her no word of response. The disciples came up and repeatedly said to him, "Please get rid of her! She keeps calling after us." Finally Jesus turned to the woman and said, "My mission is only to the lost sheep of the House of Israel." She then prostrated herself before him with the plea, "Help me, Rabbi! He answered, "But it isn't right to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." "True, Rabbi," she replied, "but even the dogs get to eat the scraps that fall from the table." Jesus then said in reply, "Woman, you have great faith! Your wish will come to pass." At that very moment her daughter was healed.

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

People: Thanks be to God.

RESPONDING

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Rev. Bill

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

Faithfulness, William Marion Runyan, 1923

“Great is thy faithfulness”

Thomas O. Chisholm, 1923

1. Great is Thy faith-ful-ness, O God my Fa-ther, there is no shad-ow of
 2. Sum - mer and win-ter, and spring-time and har-vest, sun, moon and stars in their
 3. Par - don for sin and a peace that en - dur-eth, Thy own dear pres-ence to

turn - ing with Thee; Thou chang - est not, Thy com - pas-sions they fail not;
 cours-es a - bove join with all na - ture in man - i - fold wit-ness
 cheer and to guide; strength for to - day and bright hope for to - mor-row,

Refrain
 as Thou hast been Thou for - ev - er will be.
 to Thy great faith - ful - ness, mer - cy, and love. Great is Thy faith-ful-ness!
 bless-ings all mine, with ten thou-sand be - side!



THE OFFERTORY

Rev. Bill

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



“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. This week, cash and designated gifts go to support **Laundry Love**, a nationwide program for which First Church is the Columbus partner. Once each month, our Laundry Love volunteer team brings the supplies and pays for the washers and driers at a laundromat on West Broad Street, to wash clothing and bedding for low-income or no-income families and individuals. But Laundry Love also brightens the lives of our guests by welcoming them, talking with them as neighbors, and getting to know them. Through Laundry Love, we give our guests our respect for them as members of our community. We share our love for them, and we acknowledge and celebrate their value as human beings. 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 ask one of our deacons for an envelope and mark it accordingly. Thank you so much for your consideration and generosity. Any amount significant to you is significant to us.

“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

Sing Me to Heaven

Daniel Gawthrop, 1991

Jane Griner, 1991

In my heart's sequestered chambers
lie truths stripped of poet's gloss,
Words alone are vain and vacant
and my heart is mute.
In response to aching silence
memory summons half heard voices,
And my soul finds primal eloquence
and wraps me in song,
Wraps me in song.

If you would comfort me,
sing me a lullaby.
If you would win my heart,
sing me a love song.
If you would mourn me and bring me to God,
Sing me a requiem, sing me to heaven.
Touch in me, all love and pleasure, pain and passion,
touch in me, grief and comfort,
love and pleasure, pain and passion.
Sing me a lullaby, a love song, a requiem.
Love me, comfort me, bring me to God:
Sing me a love song, sing me to heaven.

COMMUNION

Rev. Bill

Leader: Our God is here.

People: God's Spirit is with us.

Leader: Open your hearts to the One who is Love:

People: We open our hearts to You, O God.

Leader: Let us give thanks to God who sets us free.

People: It is our joy to give You thanks!

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

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

People: Thanks be to God.

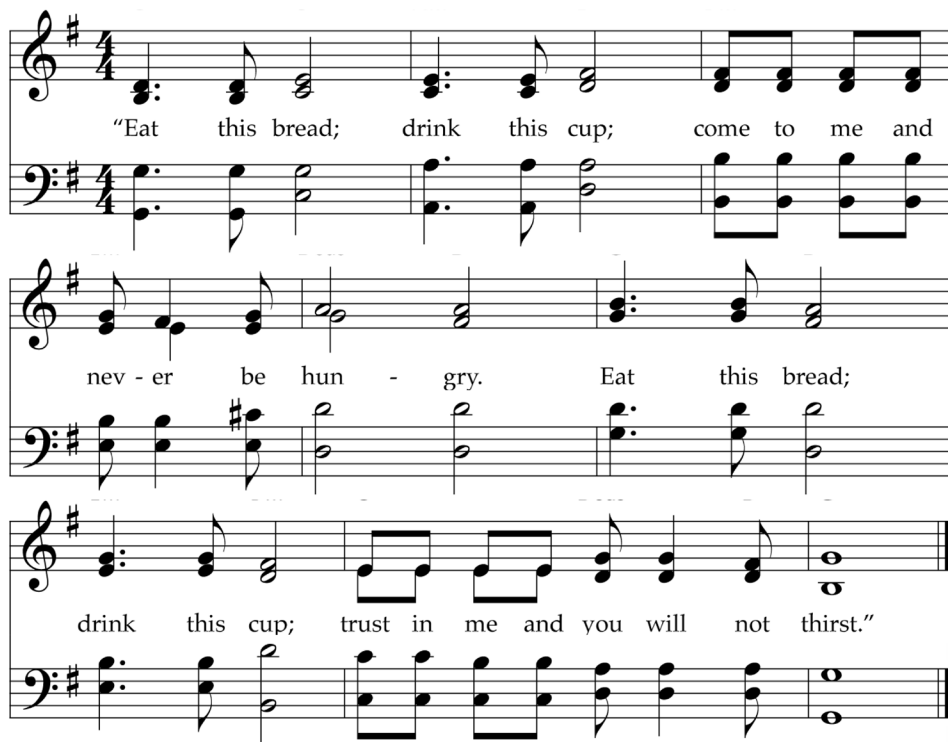
Leader: Come, for all things are ready.

COMMUNION HYMN

"Eat this bread"

Berthier, Jacques Berthier, 1984

Robert J. Batastini and the Taizé Community, 1984, alt.



"Eat this bread; drink this cup; come to me and
nev - er be hun - gry. Eat this bread;
drink this cup; trust in me and you will not thirst."

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Rev. Bill

Leader: Let us pray.

We remember, Creator God, that all we have in this world is first a gift from You that requires the collaboration of human hands.

Through our sharing in this food,
may we be nourished in heart, mind, and body,
so that we might more fully collaborate in bringing to fruition
the gifts that You have given to us.

People: We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

SENDING

COMMUNITY NOTICES - DEPART TO SERVE

Leslie Fulford

Leader: Let us depart with a heart to serve.

People: Thanks be to God.

*CLOSING HYMN

“Lead us from death to life”

World Peace Prayer, Marty Haugen, 1984

Satish Kumar, 1981



*BENEDICTION

Rev. Bill

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

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LEADERSHIP IN TODAY'S LITURGY

The Rev. Dr. William R. Nirote, *preacher*

Albert Adcock, *liturgist*

Leslie Fulford, *worship leader*

Cynthia Adcock, Allison Ellenberger, Geoffrey Gear, Emily Riggin, Julius Tabery, *quintet*

Joshua Stafford, *pianist*

Geoffrey Dean, *livestream ministry*



Enter to Worship Depart to Serve

August 16, 2026

This Week at First Church

Sunday, August 16

- 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)

Monday, August 17

- 6:30 p.m. Transition Team Mtg (Fanning Rm & Zoom)

Wednesday, August 19

- 10 a.m. Largest Table Food Prep & Delivery (Kitchen)
- 6 p.m. Faith Formation Mtg (Classroom C & Teams)
- 6:30 p.m. Stephen Ministers Monthly Mtg (SM Office)
- 7 p.m. Assoc. Minister's Advisory Group (Parlor)

Thursday, August 20

- 11 a.m. Fiber Arts Ministry (Fanning Rm)

Sunday, August 23

- 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 (Parish Hall)

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.

Save the Date: August 23 at both Worship Services when we will Bless the Backpacks

Keep in Prayer

Members Pat Patterson; Lynn Wallich; Jane Weddle; Victor John; Mary Day Fewless; Ramona Moenter; 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, and brother-in-law, Al Fulford; 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; 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; and Jim Griffin on the death of his friend, Randelle Bowman.

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 Cameroon, Central African Republic, and Equatorial Guinea. We also pray for our UCC partner, the Evangelical Church in Morocco.

Justice & Mercy Missions

Upcoming missions will be:

August 16 - Laundry Love

August 23 - Faith in Public Life

August 30 - The Largest Table

Back to School Blessings!

Let's kick off the school year with blessings for our students and school supplies for our neighbors!

Students of all ages are encouraged to bring their backpacks for the Blessing of the Backpacks on August 23 at both 9 and 11 a.m. services.

And please help us support our neighbor students at the Gladden Community House by donating school supplies for their Back to School Rally. We are collecting the following items as part of First Serves:

- folders
- notebooks
- pencils
- coloring pencils
- sharpeners
- erasers
- glue sticks
- markers

Please drop off your donated items by the Giving Tree in the Education Wing by August 30. We will pack up the supplies for delivery on Sunday, August 30, at 10 a.m. in Classroom D as part of First Serves.

Sacred Earth Eco Tip

Have you heard about Swedish dishcloths?

They are friendly to the earth and your wallet. It's an all-natural replacement for paper towels and can absorb up to a whopping 20 times its weight in liquids. Over the lifespan of 6-9 months, it will replace roughly 17 rolls of paper towels. Clean it with your laundry or in the dishwasher and compost it at the end of life. Use it on counters, dishes, windows/mirrors, sinks, and more.

A wide variety of colors and designs can easily be found with a quick internet search. They are also available from Walmart, Target, and Amazon.

Our Discovery District Neighborhood: Enjoy Summer Fun at Alley Islands 2026

On **Saturday, August 22, noon to 10 p.m.**, visit Alley Islands, in the alleys surrounding 162 N. 6th St. This is our neighborhood street festival celebrating art, music, food, fun, and local creativity here in the Discovery District.

You'll find artists, crafters, small business artisans, live music, dance, comedy, storytelling, and food trucks. Fifteen mural artists, selected from 300 applicants, will paint murals on neighborhood buildings. Visit neighborhood gallery spaces, artist studios, fashion labs, and event spaces. The whole day is sprinkled with street performers, magicians, circus performances, and visual experiences. All ages are welcome.

The \$10 entry fee pays the artists. More info is available at alleyislands.com. First Church is a member of the Discovery District Civic Association, and a sponsor of the fair with partner Blockfort Gallery and Studios.

Calling All Golfers Monday, August 31

The 21st Annual David Liebchen Memorial will be played at York Golf Club in Worthington. This is a great opportunity to get out and enjoy a day of golfing while supporting information equity and independence empowerment through VOICEcorps. VOICEcorps' mission is to enrich the lives of people with low-vision, blindness, or other conditions by reading print news and other information 24/7/365.

First Church member and wife of David, Pat Liebchen is still involved with VOICEcorps. Please call VOICEcorps at 614-274-7650 or email dsims@voicecorps.org with any questions or to register to play golf!

First Church Book Club Wednesday, September 2, at 7 p.m.

Come enjoy lively conversation and get to know other church members at the First Church Book Club as we discuss *Paper Girl: A Memoir of Home and Family in a Fractured America* by Beth Macy (set in Urbana, Ohio) on Zoom.

Questions? Want to receive book club emails? Please call Kathy Reed at 614-442-7742.

Lunch Bunch

Wednesday, September 10, at 12 Noon

Join others from First Church at Katalina's on High Street in the heart of Clintonville. This Little Cafe has Lots of Local Goodness™, is Home of The Original Pancake Balls™, and offers so much more. The food is homemade with attitude... Latin-leaning and Southern slanted... it's filled with friends and flavor galore so come join us!

Reserve your place on Realm.



Livestream Ministry Needs You

The Livestream Ministry needs volunteers to extend our Sunday worship services to our online viewers. Online worshipers include members of our faith community who view from home or while traveling, and individuals looking for spiritual connection.

No video production experience is needed, and training is provided. Please contact Melissa Kulwicki, Communications Manager, at mkulwicki@first-church.org if you are able to join this ministry. You are needed for this very important part of our worship services.

Adult Education Topics

Faith Formation is looking for those who have a passion for a topic and would like to share it. They are also asking for suggestions of topics you'd like to see offered. Biblical content, current events, and social justice concerns are topics we want to schedule for the adult education sessions. Faith Formation wants to know what you are curious about and want to learn more about.

Please contact Leslie Fulford with your suggestions and ideas at lfulford@first-church.org.

Join Our Celebration Committee

On Sunday, September 26, 2027, First Congregational Church, Columbus, Ohio, UCC will celebrate its 175th Anniversary. According to David Hogrefe, this will be our Demisemiseptcentennial!

A Celebration Committee has formed and they are looking for First Church community members to join them in planning this extravagant celebration.

They meet on the 4th Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. via Teams. The next meeting will be Wednesday, August 26, 2026. If you would like to join in the planning, please be in touch with Christine Farquhar at Farquhar128@sbcglobal.net.

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: Nathaniel Powell

Communications and Technology Commission-elect:

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

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