



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

WORSHIP AT NINE
AUGUST 23, 2026
THIRTEENTH 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

Twin Oaks, Marty Haugen, 1994

"Let us build a house"

Let us build a house where love can dwell, and all can safe-ly live, a
place where saints and chil - dren tell how hearts learn to for - give. Built of
hopes and dreams and vi-sions, rock of faith and vault of grace; here the
love of Christ shall end di - vi - sions: all are wel - come;
all are wel - come; all are wel - come in this place.

*INVOCATION

Jill Hultin

Leader: God of Ripening,
You show us what it is to embody Your vision for us in good and right time.
You remind us that whatever may be,
Your presence and Your care remain an omnipresent blessing.

People: Soften our hearts and open our ears,
that we may receive that which You have for us.
Holy Spirit, accompany us in worship and move our spirits,
so that we may know that we are Yours,
and so that we may share Your love with all we meet.
In the name of Christ, and for the sake of the world we pray,
Amen.

*WELCOME AND PASSING OF THE PEACE

Rev. Sarah

LITANY FOR BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS

Leslie Fulford and Rev. Sarah

Leader: God will be with you every day at school. No matter how good or bad things are going,
God will be there. You can count on God's presence.

Leader: When it's the night before going to school, and you are picking out clothes and
making sure you have all of your school supplies,

Children: Jesus is with me.

Leader: When you are waking up and eating a healthy breakfast to start the day,

Children: Jesus is with me.

Leader: When you are getting on the school bus or being driven to school,

Children: Jesus is with me.

Leader: When you meet your teachers and new friends in your class,

Children: Jesus is with me.

Leader: When you are playing with friends at recess,

Children: Jesus is with me.

Leader: When you are finding the right school bus to ride home,

Children: Jesus is with me.

Leader: When you are telling your family about my day at school,

Children: Jesus is with me.

Leader: When you are praying at night and thanking God for your family, friends, and school,

Children: Jesus is with me.

Leader: Let's pray together:

All: God of Wisdom, we give you thanks for schools and classrooms
and for the teachers and students who fill them each day.
We thank you for this new beginning,
for new books and new ideas.
We thank you for the gift of making mistakes and trying again.
Today we give you thanks for these your children,
and we ask you to bless them with curiosity, understanding and respect.
May their backpacks,
which they carry from home to school and back again,
be a sign to them that they have everything they need
to learn and grow this year in school.
May they be guided by your love.
All this we ask in the name of Jesus, Amen.

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

Romans 12:1-8

Jill Hultin

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

Sisters and brothers, I beg you through the mercy of God to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God - this is your spiritual act of worship. Don't conform yourselves to this age, but be transformed by the renewal of your minds, so that you can judge what God's will is—what is good, pleasing and perfect. In light of the grace I have from God, I urge each of you not to exaggerate your own importance. Each of you must judge yourself soberly by the standard of faith God has given you. Just as each of us has one body with many members— and these members don't have the same function - so all of us, in union with Christ, form one body. And as members of that one body, we belong to each other. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophecy, use it in proportion to your faith. If your gift is ministry, use it for service. If you are a teacher, use your gift for teaching. If you are good at preaching, then preach boldly. If you give to charity, do so generously; if you are a leader, exercise your authority with care; if you help others, do so cheerfully.

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. I will give thanks to you, O Lord, with my whole | heart;
before the gods I will sing your | praise.
2. I will bow down toward your holy temple and praise your | Name,
because of your love and | faithfulness;
3. For you have glorified your | Name
and your word above all | things.
4. When I called, you | answered me;
you increased my strength with- | in me.
5. All the kings of the earth will praise you, O | Lord,
when they have heard the words of your | mouth.
6. They will sing of the ways of the | Lord,
that great is the glory of the | Lord.
7. Though the Lord be high, he cares for the | lowly;
he perceives the haughty from a- | far.
8. Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you keep me | safe;
you stretch forth your hand against the fury of my enemies;
your right hand shall | save me.

Note: v. 9 Second Half of Chant

9. The Lord will make good his purpose for | me;
O Lord, your love endures for ever;
do not abandon the works of your | hands.

THE GOSPEL

Matthew 16:13-20

Rev. Sarah

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

When Jesus came to the neighborhood of Caesarea Philippi, he asked the disciples this question:

“What do people say about who the Chosen One is?” They replied,

“Some say John the Baptizer, others say Elijah, still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

“And you,” he said, “who do you say that I am?”

“You are the Messiah,” Simon Peter answered, “the Firstborn of the Living God!”

“Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon ben-Jonah! No mere mortal has revealed this to you, but my Abba God in heaven. I also tell you this: your name now is Rock, and on bedrock like this I will build my community, and the jaws of death will not prevail against it.

“Here I’ll give you the keys to the reign of heaven:

Whatever you declare bound on earth will be bound in heaven,

and whatever you declare loosed on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

Then Jesus strictly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

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

People: Thanks be to God.

RESPONDING

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Rev. Sarah

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

McKee, African American spiritual

"The church of Christ cannot be bound"

Adam M.L. Tice, 2005



1 The church of Christ can - not be bound by
 2 True faith will o - pen up the door and
 3 True love will not sit i - dly by when
 4 If what we have we free - ly share to
 5 The church of Christ can - not be bound by



walls of wood or stone. Where char - i - ty and
 step in - to the street. True ser - vice will seek
 jus - tice is de - nied. True mer - cy hears the
 meet our neigh - bor's need, then we ex - tend the
 walls of wood or stone. Where char - i - ty and



love are found, there can the church be known.
 out the poor and ask to wash their feet.
 home - less cry and wel - comes them in - side.
 Spir - it's care through ev - ery self - less deed.
 love are found, there can the church be known.

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. Cash and designated gifts this week go to **Faith in Public Life**, a national non-profit, non-partisan organization founded in 2009 to advocate and organize for a just, inclusive, and equitable country. Ohio is one of four priority states where FPL is supporting organizing on critical state and national issues. FPL works to build a spiritual connection among all people, to connect us with a sense of belonging and the knowledge that our human rights are held sacred. FPL uses collective power to build coalitions among diverse faith communities, and to deliver resources that help them become centers of action in our communities. FPL’s goal is to protect and expand the vision for our democracy, and to support communities that live in freedom. The organization works to identify faith-based, sustainable solutions that overcome our current divides with transformative policies and accountability from policy-makers. Faith in Public Life is committed to building collective power in a deeply rooted multi-faith community. They are committed to creating partnerships that share knowledge, trust, and mutual respect for one another. 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

Felix Mendelssohn, 1846

“O rest in the Lord”

Julius Schubring, 1846

Oh rest in the Lord, wait patiently for him,
and he shall give thee thy heart’s desires.

Commit thy way unto him, and trust in him,
and fret not thyself because of evil-doers.

COMMUNION

Rev. Sarah

Leader: We are the body of Christ.

**People: We are made one body through the love of Jesus
and the work of the Holy Spirit.**

Leader: We gather at the table to retell the story of death, resurrection, and oneness with God.
The night Jesus was betrayed, he gathered with his friends:

**People: Friends who would betray him,
friends who would deny him,
friends who would flee from him.**

Leader: Still, out of love, Jesus gathered them unto himself,
so they could eat, connect and remember.

Breaking the bread, He gave us the words of our sacrament:

People: Take, eat. This is my body broken for you. Eat it to remember me.

Leader: After supper, Jesus poured and blessed the cup,
and gave us the meaning of our remembrance:

People: Take, drink. This is my blood, shed for all. Drink it to remember me.

Leader: Anointed One, we gather at Your table to affirm Your sacrifice and our faith.
By making ourselves one in Your sacrament, we unmake our fears,
our limitations, and our obstacles to Your way.

**People: We join hearts and hands in this covenant of faith
and this observance of community and sustenance.**

Leader: Come Holy Spirit, Come. Twine yourself within these crumbs, dive deep within these
cups, so that for us as we receive these elements, we receive nothing less than your love and
presence; when we go from this place, changed by this sacrament, we embody nothing less
than your love in the world.

People: In the name of Jesus and for the sake of the world we pray, Amen.

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.

The musical score is written for a four-part setting (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) in G major and 4/4 time. It consists of three systems of staves. The lyrics are: "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. Sarah

Leader: Generous, life-giving God,
Through this gift of Communion You have offered Your very self to us.

People: **May this meal give us the strength to go into the world, prepared to do the same;
To offer to others our very selves for the continued healing and redemption of
humankind.**

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

SENDING

COMMUNITY NOTICES - DEPART TO SERVE

Melissa Kulwicki

Leader: Let us depart with a heart to serve.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

*CLOSING HYMN

World Peace Prayer, Marty Haugen, 1984

"Lead us from death to life"

Satish Kumar, 1981

Lead us from death to life, from false-hood to
truth, from des - pair to hope, from fear to trust.
Lead us from hate to love, from war to
peace; let peace fill our hearts, let peace fill our
world, let peace fill our u - ni - verse.

*BENEDICTION

Rev. Sarah

*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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“The church of Christ cannot be bound.” Words: Adam M. L. Tice, 2005. © 2005 G.I.A. Publications, Inc. All rights reserved.

“Eat this bread.” Words: Robert Batastini and the Taizé Community. Music: Jacques Berthier; ©1984 Less Presses de Taizé (admin. GIA Publications, Inc.) All rights reserved.

“Lead us from death to life.” Marty Haugen, 1985. © 1985 GIA Publications, Inc. All rights reserved.

LEADERSHIP IN TODAY’S LITURGY

The Rev. Sarah Reed, *preacher*

Jill Hultin, *liturgist*

Leslie Fulford, *worship leader*

Melissa Kulwicki, *worship leader*

Julius Tabery, *soloist*

Joshua Stafford, *pianist*

Geoffrey Dean, *livestream ministry*



Enter to Worship Depart to Serve

August 23, 2026

This Week at First Church

Sunday, August 23

- 9 a.m. Worship Service and
 Holy Communion (Parish Hall)
- 10 a.m. Youth Group Planning Breakfast
 (Classroom D)
- Family Playground Time (Playground)
- 11 a.m. Worship Service (Sanctuary)
- 12:15 p.m. Coffee Hour (Parish Hall)

Monday, August 24

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

Tuesday, August 25

- 5 p.m. Laundry Love (Wash Land)
- 6:30 p.m. Sacred Journeys through Reproductive
 Justice Mtg (Classroom C & Teams)
- 7 p.m. Deacons Mtg (Zoom)

Wednesday, August 26

- 7 p.m. 175th Anniversary Planning Mtg (Teams)

Thursday, August 27

- 7 p.m. Choir Rehearsal for Brahms Requiem
 (Parish Hall)

Sunday, August 30

- 9 a.m. Worship Service and
 Holy Communion (Parish Hall)
- 10 a.m. First Serves (Classroom)
- 11 a.m. Worship Service (Sanctuary)
- 12:15 p.m. Coffee Hour (Parish Hall)
- MERJ/Faith Choice Ohio Kit Building
 (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.

Youth Group Planning Breakfast **Today at 10 a.m. in Classroom C**

All youth, grades 7-12, are invited to a youth group planning meeting this Sunday, August 23, at 10 a.m. in Room D in the education wing. We will vote on your favorite activities and times for youth group this year. Let your voice be heard!

Donuts will be provided. Any questions, contact Leslie Fulford at lfulford@first-church.org.

Blessings of Backpacks Today

Today during both 9 and 11 a.m. services, students of all ages will receive Blessings for their Backpacks.

We are also kicking off the new school year school with supplies for our neighbors. Please help us support the 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 |
| - sharpeners | - glue sticks | - erasers |
| - coloring pencils | - markers | |

Please drop off your donated items by the Giving Tree in the Education Wing by Sunday, August 30, at 10 a.m. in Classroom D where we will pack the supplies for delivery to the Gladden Community House.

Our Celebration Committee for our **Demisemiseptcentennial**

On Sunday, September 26, 2027, First Congregational Church will celebrate its 175th Anniversary. The Celebration Committee has formed and they are looking for community members of First Church to join them in the planning.

They will meet this Wednesday, August 26, at 7 p.m. via Teams. They will meet on the 4th Wednesday of the month. If you would like to be a part of the planning, please contact Christine Farquhar at Farquhar128@sbcglobal.net.

Calling All Golfers

Monday, August 31

The 21st Annual David Liebchen Memorial will be played at York Golf Club in Worthington. This is a fun way to get out and golf while supporting information equity and independence empowerment through VOICEcorps. VOICEcorps enriches 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 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 & flavor galore so come join us!



Reserve your place on Realm.

Justice & Mercy Missions

Upcoming missions will be:

August 23 - Faith in Public Life

August 30 - The Largest Table

Sept. 6 - Coalition of Immokalee Workers

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.

Sacred Earth Eco Tip

2 Ways Plastic Straws May Be Bad for You

1. Sipping from straws delivers air into the digestive tract, which can cause uncomfortable digestive symptoms, like gas and bloating.
2. Drinking sugary or acidic drinks with a straw acts like a hose hitting a specific area of the teeth which can lead to the erosion of enamel and cause tooth decay.

For anyone attached to their straw habit, there are paper straws and reusable straws. They're available from online vendors and stores. The above information was taken from treehugger.com.

Keep in Prayer

Members Jane Weddle; Pat Patterson; Lynn Wallich; 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.

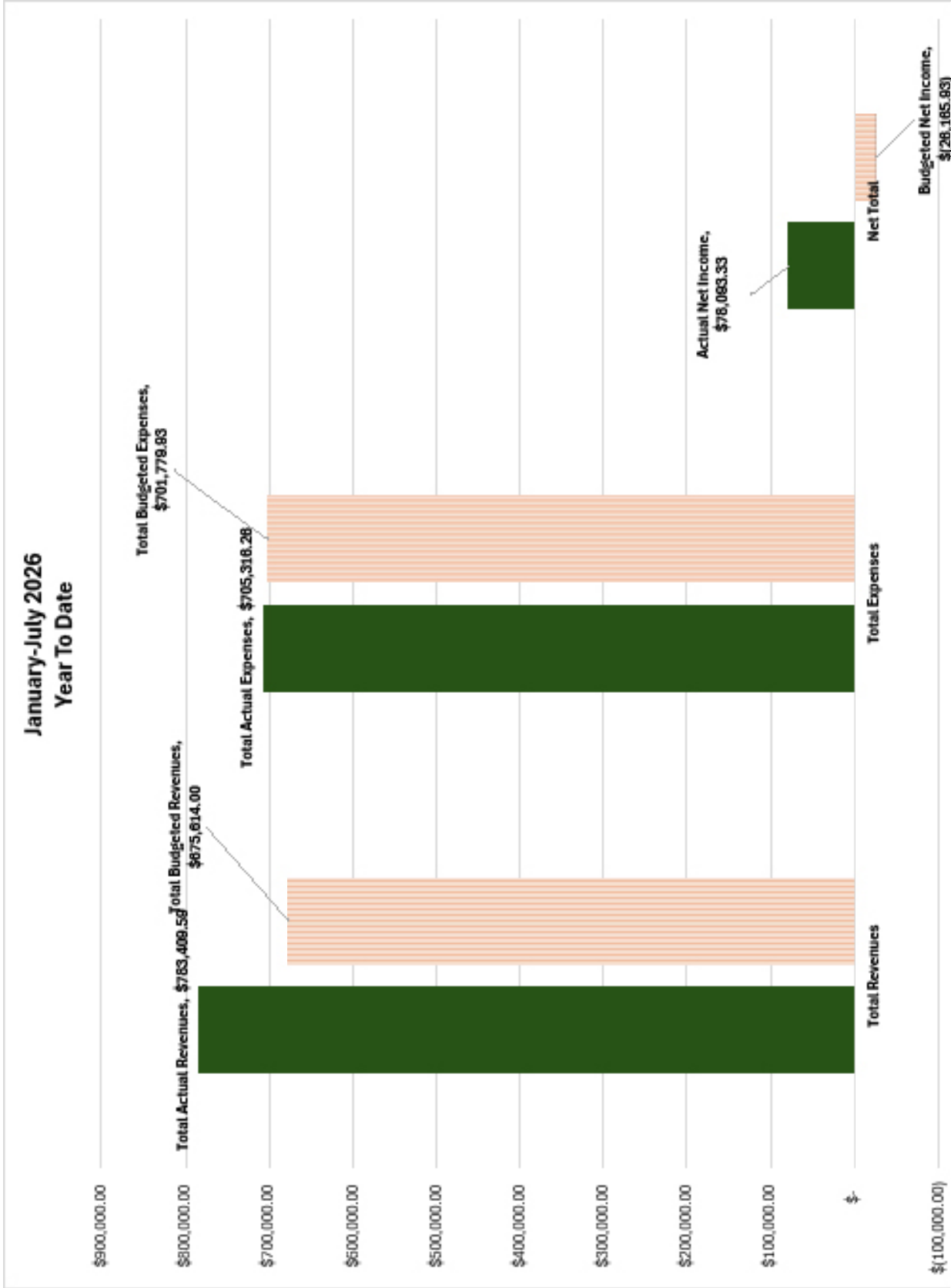
In the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle, we pray for the people and churches of Liberia and Sierra Leone. We also pray for our UCC partner, the El Buen Pastor Church in Pijal, Ecuador.

Preserving the Past, Stepping into the Future

Construction continues for the grant preservation project. Scaffolding has been erected both outside and inside the church. The work crew has been busy removing 2 inches of mortar for the stonework on the south and east façade of the building. A chemically-balanced mortar mix will be applied to replace what has been removed.

On Monday, August 24, Berglund Construction will begin removing stained glass window panels from the Rose Window. They will be shipped to Chicago where they will be cleaned and restored by the stained glass artisans of Daprato Rigali Studios.

Final plans are in the making for several information sessions where you can learn more about the preservation grant project and how you can help support it.



Pledges & Gifts remain in a very solid position - \$104,000 over budget. These have slowed considerably during the summer - the last 2 months only \$70,000 total received.

Expenses are being well managed - utilities are the only real outlier at \$4000 over budget (heating in winter/and A/C in summer) and are largely out of our control.

Net Income is still \$104,000 over budget but is down from a high of \$187,000 in April.

Keep those pledges and gifts coming - 5 months to go in 2026!

Ramona

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

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

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

