



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

WORSHIP AT ELEVEN
OCTOBER 4, 2026
TWENTIETH 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

Voluntary in G Major, Op. 5, No. 3

John Stanley, 1748

ENTER TO WORSHIP

Marti Van Cleef

Leader: God of Change, God of Growth, God of Transformation:
You are the same yesterday, today, and forever.

**People: O God, return to us—
Let Your face smile on us, and we will be saved!**

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

*Leader: We come to You in the waning of the sunlight,
We come to You in the changing of the seasons.

People: Shine Your light of grace and peace down on us,
Deepen our breath, calm our nerves.

Leader: We don't know what will be tomorrow,
In tough times, we feel far from You.

**People: O Holy One of Hosts, return to us—
Let your face smile on us, and we will be saved.**

Leader: Let us worship you in Spirit and in Truth.

People: Let us worship you in thought, word, and deed.

*PROCESSIONAL HYMN

"Christ is made the sure foundation"

Westminster Abbey, Henry Purcell, c. 1680

Latin, 7th c.; trans. John Mason Neale, 1851, alt.

Descant

The musical score is written for three parts: Soprano, Alto, and Bass. It features a descant at the beginning. The lyrics are arranged in four systems, each with a corresponding musical staff. The first system includes a four-part setting of the opening line. The second system continues the lyrics with a four-part setting. The third system includes a four-part setting of the lyrics. The fourth system concludes the hymn with a four-part setting. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The descant is marked with a 'D' and a 'C'.

4 Here vouch - safe to all thy serv - ants what they ask of

1 Christ is made the sure foun - da - tion, Christ the head and
2 All that ded - i - cat - ed ci - ty, dear - ly loved of
3 To this tem - ple, where we call thee, come, O Lord of
4 Here vouch - safe to all thy serv - ants what they ask of

thee to gain; what they gain from thee, for ev - er

cor - ner - stone, cho - sen of the Lord, and pre - cious,
God on high, in ex - ult - ant ju - bi - la - tion
Hosts, to - day; with thy wont - ed lov - ing - kind - ness
thee to gain; what they gain from thee, for ev - er

with the bless - ed to re - tain, and here - af - ter

bind - ing all the Church in one; ho - ly Zi - on's
pours per - pet - ual mel - o - dy; God the One in
hear thy serv - ants as they pray, and thy full - est
with the bless - ed to re - tain, and here - af - ter

in thy glo - ry ev - er - more with thee to reign.

help for ev - er, and her con - fi - dence a - lone.
Three a - dor - ing in glad hymns e - ter - nal - ly.
ben - e - dic - tion shed with - in its walls al - way.
in thy glo - ry ev - er - more with thee to reign.

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.*

INVOCATION

Rev. jessica young chang

Leader: Holy One of All Creation,
You are outside of time, and in this present moment,
You dwell here with us, with our joys, our grief, our struggle.
Even when we forget, and we forget a lot,
You are present, delighting in us, loving us, dwelling with us.

**People: Hold our hands, Beloved Lord, and hold our hearts.
Remind us of Your teachings, Your love, Your call on our lives.
Be here among us, within us, in this present moment.
Amen.**

THE HEBREW SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 5:1-7

Ms. Van Cleef

Leader: A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, the fifth chapter.

Let me now sing of my friend—
it is a love song about a vineyard.
My friend had a vineyard
on a fertile hillside.
My friend dug the soil, cleared the stones,
and planted the choicest vines;
then within it built a watchtower,
and constructed a winepress.
My friend anticipated the crop of grapes,
but what it yielded was rotten grapes.
"Now, inhabitants of Jerusalem and people of Judah—
judge between me and my vineyard:
What more could I have done for my vineyard
that I haven't done?
Why, when I looked for the crop of grapes,
did it bring forth bad fruit?
Now I will let you know
what I mean to do to my vineyard:
take away its hedge, give it over to grazing,
break through its wall, let it be trampled!
I will let it go to wilderness;
it will not be pruned or hoed,
but overgrown with thorns and briars.
I will command the clouds not to send rain upon it."

The vineyard of the YHWH Omnipotent
is the house of Israel
and the people of Judah are Gods cherished vine.
YHWH looked for justice, but found bloodshed;
for righteousness, but found only a cry of suffering.

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

People: Thanks be to God.

THE PSALTER

Psalm 80:7–14

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



Restore us, O God of hosts;
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.
You have brought a vine out of Egypt;
you cast out the nations and planted it.
You prepared the ground for it;
it took root and filled the land.
The mountains were covered by its shadow
and the towering cedar trees by its boughs.

Antiphon

You stretched out its tendrils to the Sea
and its branches to the River.
Why have you broken down its wall,
so that all who pass by pluck off its grapes?
The wild boar of the forest has ravaged it,
and the beasts of the field have grazed upon it.
Turn now, O God of hosts, look down from heaven;
behold and tend this vine;
preserve what your right hand has planted.

Antiphon

THE EPISTLE

Philippians 3:4b-14

Ms. Van Cleef

Leader: A reading from the Letter of Paul to the Philippians, the third chapter.

If they think they have the right to put their trust in external evidence, I have even more right! I was circumcised on the eighth day, being of the stock of Israel and the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrew origins; in legal observance I was a Pharisee, and so zealous that I persecuted the church. I was above reproach when it came to justice based on the Law.

But those things I used to consider gain, I now count as loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss in light of the surpassing knowledge of my Savior Jesus Christ, for whose sake I have forfeited everything. I count everything else as garbage, so that Christ may be my wealth—indeed, that I may be found in Christ, not having any justice of my own based on observance of the Law. The justice I possess is that which comes through faith in Christ. It has its origin in God and

is based on faith. All I want is to know Christ, and the power of the resurrection, and how to share in Christ's sufferings by being formed into the pattern of Jesus' death—perhaps even to arrive at the resurrection from the dead.

It's not that I have reached it yet, or have already finished my course; but I'm running the race in order to grab hold of the prize if possible, since Christ Jesus has grabbed hold of me. Sisters and brothers, I don't think of myself as having reached the finish line. I give no thought to what lies behind, but I push on to what is ahead. My entire attention is on the finish line as I run toward the prize—the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

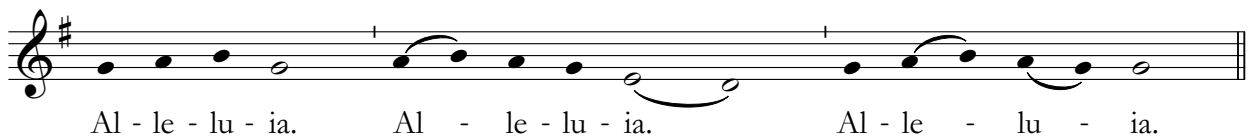
Leader: The Word of God for the people of God.

People: Thanks be to God.

*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

John 15:16

*The Choir introduces the Alleluia, which is then repeated by the Congregation.
Following the verse, all repeat the Alleluia.*



Verse: I have chosen you from the world, says the Lord,
to go and bear fruit that will remain.

*THE GOSPEL

Matthew 21:33-46

Rev. David

Leader: A reading from the Gospel according to Matthew, the twenty-first chapter.

"Listen to another parable. There was a property owner who planted a vineyard, put a hedge around it, installed a winepress and erected a tower. Then the owner leased it out to tenant farmers and went on a journey.

"When vintage time arrived, the owner sent aides to the tenants to divide the shares of the grapes. The tenants responded by seizing the aides. They beat one, killed another and stoned a third. A second time the owner sent even more aides than before, but they treated them the same way. Finally, the owner sent the family heir to them, thinking, 'They will respect my heir.'

"When the vine growers saw the heir, they said to one another, 'Here's the one who stands in the way of our having everything. With a single act of murder we could seize the inheritance.' With that, they grabbed and killed the heir outside the vineyard. What do you suppose the owner of the vineyard will do to those tenants?"

They replied, "The owner will bring that wicked crowd to a horrible death and lease the vineyard out to others, who will see to it that there are grapes for the proprietor at vintage time."

Jesus said to them, "Did you ever read in the scriptures,

'The stone which the builders rejected
has become the chief cornerstone;
it was our God's doing
and we find it marvelous to behold?'

"That's why I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to people who will bear its fruit.

“Those who fall on this stone will be dashed to pieces, and those on whom it falls will be smashed.”

When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard these parables, they realized that Jesus was speaking about them. Although they sought to arrest him, they feared the crowds, who regarded Jesus as a prophet.

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

People: **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

Rev. David

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Rev. young chang

Leader: ...In your mercy,

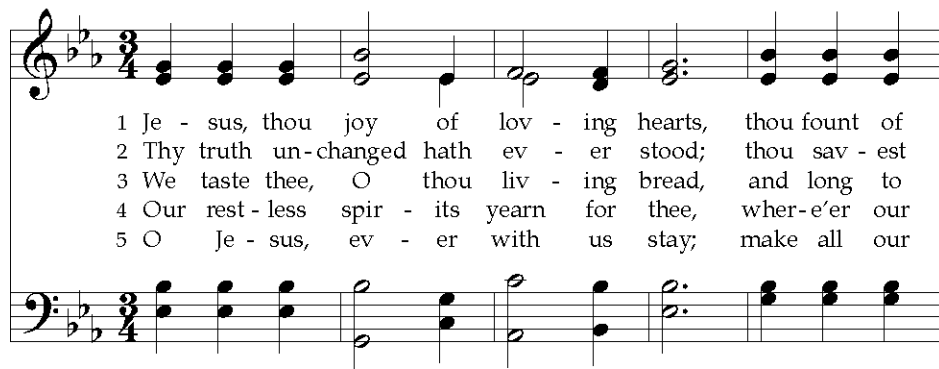
People: **Beloved Lord, hear our prayer.**

*HYMN

Quebec, Henry Baker, 1854

“Jesus, thou joy of loving hearts”

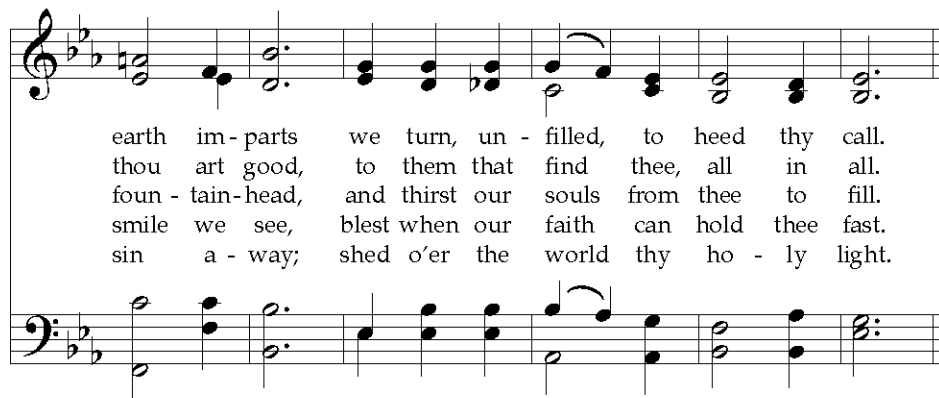
Latin, 12th c., trans. Ray Palmer, 1858, alt.



1 Je - sus, thou joy of lov - ing hearts, thou fount of
2 Thy truth un - changed hath ev - er stood; thou sav - est
3 We taste thee, O thou liv - ing bread, and long to
4 Our rest - less spir - its yearn for thee, wher - e'er our
5 O Je - sus, ev - er with us stay; make all our



life, thou light of all, from the best bliss that
those that on thee call; to them that seek thee
feast up - on thee still; we drink of thee, the
change - ful lot is cast, glad when thy gra - cious
mo - ments calm and bright. O chase the night of



earth im - parts we turn, un - filled, to heed thy call.
thou art good, to them that find thee, all in all.
foun - tain-head, and thirst our souls from thee to fill.
smile we see, blest when our faith can hold thee fast.
sin a - way; shed o'er the world thy ho - ly light.

STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

Wendy Kennedy, Congregational Care Commissioner

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. This week, cash and designated gifts go to support **B.R.E.A.D. (Building Responsibility, Equality, and Dignity)**. B.R.E.A.D. is the organization through which our congregation responds to our call to do justice. B.R.E.A.D. has a nearly 30-year history of improving the quality of life in Central Ohio by researching serious community problems and utilizing the power of people from a wide range of different faith traditions, to press public officials to implement proven solutions to those problems. B.R.E.A.D. rises! 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 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

Alfred V. Fedak, 1999

"Unless the Lord build the house"

Ephesians 2:20–21, Psalms 84, 127, 136

Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it. But built on the strong foundation of the apostles and the prophets, the household joins and rises, a holy temple in the Lord. With Christ Jesus himself the cornerstone, blessed are they that dwell in the house, they will praise the Lord and sing. His mercy endures for ever.

*PRESENTATION HYMN

East Acklam, Francis Jackson, 1957

"For the fruit of all creation"

Fred Pratt Green, 1970

For the fruit of all cre - a - tion, thanks be to God.

For the gifts to ev - ery na - tion, thanks be to God.

For the plow-ing, sow - ing, reap-ing, si - lent growth while we are sleep-ing,

fu - ture needs in earth's safe-keep - ing, thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

(liturgy written by Mary Luti)

Rev. David and Rev. young chang

*SURSUM CORDA

Plainsong

The musical notation for the Sursum Corda section is written on three staves. The first staff shows the Leader and People parts. The Leader part is on the left and the People part is on the right. The lyrics are: "The Lord be with you. And also with you." The second staff shows the Leader and People parts. The Leader part is on the left and the People part is on the right. The lyrics are: "Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord." The third staff shows the Leader and People parts. The Leader part is on the left and the People part is on the right. The lyrics are: "Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right to give our thanks and praise."

Leader: For the power of love in human life and history, we give thanks and praise.
 Long ago our ancestors knew love's power and they became the tellers of love's tale.
 Love bound them in covenant, teaching them to live in community
 with compassion and concern for the poorest among them.
 Yet centuries of domination and violence
 shaped a different kind of community based on selfishness and inequality.
 In the struggle against oppression, Jesus became the face of love,
 showing us the way to abundant life.
 In the spirit of that vision, we join our voices in singing God's glory.

SANCTUS

A Community Mass, Richard Proulx, 1971

The musical notation for the Sanctus section is written on five staves. The lyrics are: "Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and might, heaven and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est." The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and bar lines.

Leader: In word and deed, Jesus announced love's new reign of justice, reconciliation, and peace.
 Filled with the courage and passion of love's spirit,
 he gave his life to challenge the unjust systems of this world.
 On the night of his betrayal and arrest, as he shared a meal with his friends,
 Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to his followers, saying:
 "Share this bread among you; this is my body which will be broken for justice.
 Do this to remember me."
 When supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
 "Share this wine among you; this is my blood which will be shed for liberation.
 Do this to remember me."
 Let us pray,
 God of love, spirit of compassion, bless us and this bread and wine.
 May this meal be food and drink for our journey—
 renewing, sustaining, and making us whole.
 When we eat this bread and drink from this cup
 we experience again the presence of Jesus in our midst.

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.**

SHARING OF THE ELEMENTS

*Please come forward as directed by the vergers to receive the common elements for communion.
 Receive the bread from the pastor, and as you approach the cup,
 dip just the edge of the bread into the juice (this is called intinction)
 If you require a gluten-free piece, please proceed to the front.
 If you are unable to rise and come forward and would still like to partake of communion,
 please tell a verger when they are at your pew.
 If you are worshipping online, you are invited to gather elements of communion in your home.*

Leader: The table is ready. All are welcome. The gifts of God for the people of God.

People: Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION ANTHEM

Darius Julian Revie, 2018

"I am the true vine"

John 15:5

I am the true vine, and you the branches.

If you remain in me, and I in you, you will bear great fruit. Alleluia.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Rev. young chang

Leader: Let us pray.
 God of love, we give You thanks for satisfying our hungry hearts with this meal.
 Send us from here to reveal Your love in the world.
 Inspire in us the resolve and the courage, the compassion and the passion,
 to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with You.

People: Amen.

Leader: Siblings in Christ, we invite you to receive the Word of God
and the sacrament of communion to our beloved community and friends at home.
Go to them with our love and prayers, in the name of Jesus Christ.

All: Amen.

COMMUNITY NOTICES - DEPART TO SERVE

Melissa Kulwicki

Leader: Let us depart with a heart to serve.

People: Thanks be to God.

*CLOSING HYMN

Ebenezer, Thomas John Williams, 1890

"Come, O Spirit, dwell among us"

Janie Alford, 1979

1 Come, O Spir - it, dwell a - mong us; come with
2 We would raise our al - le - lu - ias for the
3 Come, O Spir - it, dwell a - mong us; give us

Pen - te - cos - tal power; give the church a
grace of yes - ter - years; for to - mor - row's
words of fire and flame. Help our fee - ble

strong - er vi - sion; help us face each cru - cial hour.
un - known path - way, hear, O Lord, our hum - ble prayers.
lips to praise you, glo - ri - fy your ho - ly name.

Built up - on a firm foun - da - tion, Je - sus Christ, the
In the church -'s pil - grim jour - ney you have led us
Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Spir - it, Three in One: what



*BENEDICTION

Rev. David

VOLUNTARY

Allegro from Concerto in D Minor, BWV 596

J.S. Bach, 1713, after Vivaldi

Please be seated for the voluntary.

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 Wendy Reber, in loving memory of her husband Robert Reber, whose memorial service was held here yesterday.

† GREETING AT THE EXITS

Rev. David— Narthex (Broad Street entrance)

Rev. young chang — East Door (Ninth Street entrance by the Church Office)

Joshua Stafford — West Door (Cleveland Avenue entrance by the Chapel)

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"Come, O Spirit, dwell among us." Words: Janie Alford, 1979. © 1979 Hope Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

LEADERSHIP IN TODAY'S LITURGY
The Rev. Becky David, *preacher*
The Rev. jessica young chang, *worship leader*
Marti Van Cleef, *liturgist*
Leslie Fulford, *worship leader*
Neal Brower, *crucifer*
Jason Harrell, *verger*
Joshua Stafford, *organist and director*
The First Church Choir
Pat Patterson, *livestream ministry*



Enter to Worship Depart to Serve

October 4, 2026

This Week at First Church

Sunday, October 4

- 9 a.m. Worship Service & Holy Communion (Parish Hall)
Godly Play (Library)
- 10 a.m. Family Playground Time (Sam Gordon Playground)
- 11 a.m. Worship Service (Sanctuary)
- 12:15 p.m. UCC 101 (Parish Hall)
Confirmation Class (Classroom C)

Monday, October 5

- 12 Noon Card Care Ministry (Fanning Rm)
- 6 p.m. First Church Campanelle Rehearsal (Bell Rm)
- 6:30 p.m. Transition Team Mtg (Fanning Rm & Zoom)
- 7 p.m. House & Grounds Mtg (Classroom C & Zoom)

Tuesday, October 6

- 9 a.m. Good Samaritan Distribution Day (Social Justice Office)
- 7 p.m. Communications & Technology Mtg (Zoom)
Justice & Mercy Mtg (Classroom C & Zoom)
Personnel Mtg (Teams)

Wednesday, October 7

- 12:15 p.m. Music at Midday (Sanctuary)
- 6:30 p.m. Stephen Ministers Education & Supervision Mtg (Stephen Ministry Office)
- 7 p.m. Book Club (Zoom)

Thursday, October 8

- 12 Noon Lunch Bunch (La Chatelaine in Worthington)
- 6 p.m. First Church Ringers Rehearsal (Bell Rm)

Saturday, October 10

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

Sunday, October 11

- 9 a.m. Worship Service & Holy Communion (Parish Hall)
Godly Play (Library)
- 10 a.m. Family Playground Time (Sam Gordon Playground)
- 11 a.m. Worship Service (Sanctuary)
- 12:15 p.m. UCC 101 (Parish Hall)

Keep in Prayer

Members Margaret Cipriani; Sandy Mathias; Matt Stevens and Jim Velo; Jane Weddle; Victor John; Ramona Moenter; Jane Ward; Grace Glaros and family; Beverly Halbe; Francille Firebaugh; Nancy Burba; John Carter; Clinton Brown; Dan Axt.

Family and friends Annette McCormick's sister, Kathy McCormick; Jim and Gail Lowe's daughter, Kim Lowe; Amanda Butler's father, Tom Lynch; Kevin Salem's uncle, Harold Allen and niece, Clare Salem; Vicki Lyden's sister, Connie Dolder; 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 mother-in-law, Beverly Kulwicki; David Wyatt's uncle, Richard Hendrix Wyatt; 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; Jason Harrell's mother, Sherry Harrell; and Matt Myers' sister, Erin Myers

Those who mourn David Wyatt on the death of his mother, Sybil Foley-Kalail; and Kathy Reed and family on the death of her cousin, Barbara Works.

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 Colombia, Ecuador, and Venezuela. We also pray for our UCC partner, the Church of the American Ceylon Mission in Sri Lanka.

Godly Play Today at 9 a.m.

The Godly Play Sunday school class will be in the Library during the 9 a.m. worship hour. Godly Play is a creative, imaginative approach to children's faith formation led by Miss Melissa and Mr. Todd. During the 9 a.m. worship, children can get a snack, then go to the Library, then return to Parish Hall for communion. Come join in the fun!

Family Playground Time! Today at 10:00 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, weather permitting.

UCC 101 — What does it mean to be the United Church of Christ? Today, at 12:15 p.m. in Parish Hall and Sundays, October 11 and 18

First Church is a member congregation of the United Church of Christ (UCC); therefore, all First Church members are members of the UCC. What does that mean? What difference does that make? What is the United Church of Christ, anyway?

These and other questions will be addressed in a three week "short course" on the history, polity, and theology of the UCC. The sessions will be led by the Rev. Dr. Nancy Livingston and Rev. Dr. Marti Baumer, both of whom have many years of involvement in the UCC at all levels.

A simple lunch will be served so please register on Realm for each date you are able to attend.



October 11

October 18



Music at Midday Wednesday, October 7, at 12 p.m. in the Sanctuary

Join us for our first Music at Midday performance of the 2026–2027 season. We are delighted to welcome organist Abraham Wallace to the Kimball and Beckerath organs. This 45-minute program is free and open to all.

Abraham Wallace is currently the Associate Director of Music at Christ Church Cathedral (Episcopal) in Cincinnati, Ohio. He has served various different churches in the capacity of organ scholar, chorister, and director of music, notably as the Edwards Organ Scholar at St. John's Episcopal Church (Detroit, MI) under the direction of Dr. Huw Lewis. In 2023, he was selected to be the AAM Gerre Hancock Organ Scholar at St. George's Episcopal Church (Nashville, TN) for the 2023–2024 choral season.

The midday concert takes place in the sanctuary — a beautiful setting to pause, listen, and be refreshed. To see the full 2026–2027 season, please visit the website, firstchurcharts.org.

Correction from the September 27 Depart to Serve. The Book Club date was shown as October 1. It was an error. The correct date is listed below. We apologize for any confusion.

Book Club Wednesday, October 7, at 7 p.m. on Zoom

Come enjoy lively conversation and get to know other church members at the First Church Book Club on Wednesday, October 7, on Zoom. First-timers are welcome!

Buckeye by Patrick Ryan is set in a small Ohio town during WWII through the Vietnam War. The lives of two families become intertwined through one bad decision that defines them and their children. How do we forgive ourselves and others? How complicated are second chances? And – ultimately – how can you be true to yourself? Andrew Welsh-Huggins will lead our discussion. *Buckeye* is the winner of the 2026 Ohio Book Award for Fiction, given by the Ohioana Library.

To receive book club emails or the Zoom link, please email Kathy Reed at kbreed2010@gmail.com.

First Church Engagement Fair

Sunday, October 25

in Parish Hall

following 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. worship

Come celebrate our meaningful projects and activities on Sunday, October 25, in Parish Hall, following the 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. worship services. Tasty food will be served!

Learn about our mission projects and explore opportunities for service that speak to your heart! See the many ways we work in the community and within our church family. From small discussion groups to “done in a day” projects to serving on a committee or commission, you’ll find opportunities for connection and service at the Engagement Fair.

Our First Church FREE Store will offer First Church items, including books, t-shirts, water bottles, and more. Come celebrate our mission activities, community, and friendships!

Livestreaming Update

First Church will no longer stream worship services directly to Facebook. Over the last several months, Facebook's frequent platform changes and issues have forced our volunteer team to troubleshoot problems in real time. Services will continue to stream live on YouTube, and links will be shared on Facebook, so viewers can easily find each broadcast. If funding becomes available for a reliable service that can stream simultaneously to both platforms, the Communications and Technology Commission may revisit this decision. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to Nathaniel Powell, Commissioner of the Communications and Technology Commission, at npowell@first-church.org.

Aspirations for the Diaconate

In the Book of Acts 6: 1-6, we learn about the original seven deacons: Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus. These esteemed men were chosen from and by the community of disciples because the Apostles' hands were full. So full in fact, that the Apostles were receiving complaints. The Greek-speaking Jews complained against the Hebraic Jews that their widows were being neglected in the daily food distribution. Scandalous! The Apostles basically said that they were far too busy studying the Word, praying, and ministering to be serving some old, hungry widows! This reads like hot, dramatic gossip to me, but I am slightly dramatic.

The original deacons were selected from among the disciples to help and to serve. At First Church, our Diaconate has the same charge, minus the drama. Our Diaconate helps and serves with the following ministries: Worship Deacons, Stephen Ministers, Card Care, Home Communion and Visitation, Care and Share Kitchen, Fiber Arts, and Vergers.

Our ministries do not require a large line item in the church's annual budget. We are fortunate to have the material resources we need to serve our congregation; therefore, my aspirational budget doesn't include any money at all. My aspiration is that we would be blessed with more deacons in 2027.

Will you share your time and talents to help serve the members of this church? Are you willing to serve as a deacon at 9 a.m. or 11 a.m.? Are you willing to provide confidential 1:1 support to a member who may be experiencing challenges in life? Do you have time to write a note to a member to help recognize and celebrate a birthday, anniversary, or other major life event? Are you able to visit our home-bound members? Do you bake a mean casserole? Are you willing to knit or crochet a prayer shawl? Will you serve as a verger--extending an extravagant welcome to members and visitors and assisting with worship?

There are many opportunities to respond to the needs of our congregation. Please consider joining the Diaconate in 2027. We need you to join us in helping and serving, just like the original seven.

Dayna McCrary, Senior Deacon

2026-2027 Overview CCM

Established in 2025, the Congregational Care Ministry is an umbrella for seven groups that helps meet the physical, spiritual, and personal needs of our congregation.

Each is focused on specific needs and interests of our church members.

The Bereavement Ministry Team helps grieving families plan gatherings after memorial or funeral services that honor their loved ones. These receptions offer comfort and a sense of closure to family and friends.

The Card Care Ministry recognizes birthdays and anniversaries and offers encouragement during illness, bereavement, and other difficult times. Many of you have likely received one of its thoughtful cards. This simple outreach strengthens the bonds within our church family.

The Fiber Arts Ministry cares for others by creating prayer shawls, newborn blankets, warm hats, scarves, and more. Everyone — from beginners to experienced artisans — is welcome to take part in this meaningful ministry.

The Care & Share Kitchen stocks the freezer with meals for people in need. Volunteers deliver the food, providing both nourishment and valuable personal connection.

The Home Communion Ministry equips commissioned volunteers to serve Communion to members of our church family who cannot attend worship in person.

The Home Visitation Ministry builds meaningful connections by visiting those who are unable to attend church in person.

Stephen Ministry are the *after people . . . after a relationship ends . . . after the funeral*, when everyone has left and the emotions you held come crashing in on you . . . *after the last child leaves home . . . after your friends and family have heard your story* one too many times, but you still need to talk it out.

They are commissioned lay caregivers who provide confidential, one-on-one care to individuals facing difficult circumstances. Please read this past week's Reflections for a care receiver's personal expression on the support they received from Stephen Ministry.

We hope each of these ministries continues to grow. When we support one another, we strengthen connections; those connections build community, and a strong community can create meaningful change.

Susie Loik and Wendy Kennedy, Leaders, Congregational Care and Stephen Ministers

Preserving the Past, Stepping into the Future

Thank you to all who have sent in your pledge cards for the preservation grant campaign. We are at a critical moment to make the final decisions on the extent of our construction project. With your generous support, we hope to exceed our goal of raising \$200,000 for the grant match. We are hoping to add some other segments of repair work for the building while we have the skilled workers available on site.

More information about the progress being made to preserve our historic building for the future is available from the grant project website at: www.first-church.org/preservation.

Justice & Mercy Missions

Upcoming missions will be:

Oct. 4 - BREAD

Oct. 11 - UCC Neighbors in Need

Oct. 18 - Sacred Earth for the First Church Library

Thoughts on Gratitude

"The true meaning of life is to plant trees
under whose shade you do not expect to sit."

- Nelson Henderson

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 Hafey, 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, Denise Vogt, 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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