# First Congregational Church
# United Church of Christ

Worship at Nine
October 18, 2026
Twenty-First 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 — *Gather Us In*

"Here in this place" — Marty Haugen, 1979



*Invocation — Albert Adcock

Leader: Holy God,
You have made us in Your image, and we belong to You alone.
Therefore we offer ourselves to You, in service, love, and praise.
**People: Use us for the glory of Your realm and the good of Your people;**
**Through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

*Welcome and Passing of the Peace — Rev. Becky

*During the sermon time, our young children are welcome to participate in "Godly Play."*

## Listening

The First Reading — Isaiah 45:1-7 — Albert Adcock

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

"Thus says YHWH to the Anointed One, Cyrus, whom I have taken by the right hand, for whom I have subdued nations, stripped the loins of monarchs, and thrown open all doors so that even the town gates cannot be shut: I will go before you and level the mountains; I will shatter the bronze doors and cut through the bars of iron. I will give you the hidden treasures, and hoards from secret places, so that you may know that I am YHWH, Israel's God, who calls you by name. For the sake of Leah and Rachel and Jacob, my Servant, and for the sake of Israel, my chosen one, I called you by name, conferring on you an honored title, even though you do not know me. I am YHWH, and there is no other; there is no God besides me. It is I who arm you, though you know me not, that nations may know from the rising to the setting of the sun that there is no one besides me. I am YHWH, there is no other. I form light and create darkness. I make peace and create evil. It is I, YHWH, who do all these things.

Leader: The Word of God for the people of God.
**People: Thanks be to God.**

The Psalter — Psalm 96:1–9

*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. Sing to the Lord a | new song;
   sing to the Lord, all the whole | earth.
2. Sing to the Lord and bless his | Name;
   proclaim the good news of his salvation from day to | day.
3. Declare his glory among the | nations
   and his wonders among all | peoples.
4. For great is the Lord and greatly to be | praised;
   he is more to be feared than | all gods.
5. As for all the gods of the nations, they are but | idols;
   but it is the Lord who made the | heavens.

6. Oh, the majesty and magnificence of his | presence!
   Oh, the power and the splendor of his | sanctuary!
7. Ascribe to the Lord, you families of the | peoples;
   ascribe to the Lord honor and | power.
8. Ascribe to the Lord the honor due his | Name;
   bring offerings and come into his | courts.

   *V. 9 Second Half of Chant*

9. Worship the Lord in the beauty of | holiness;
   let the whole earth tremble before | him.

The Gospel — Matthew 22:15-22 — Rev. Becky

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

Then the Pharisees went off and began to plot how they might trap Jesus by his speech. They sent their disciples to Jesus, accompanied by sympathizers of Herod, who said, "Teacher, we know you're honest and teach God's way sincerely. You court no one's favor and don't act out of respect for important people. Give us your opinion, then, in this case. Is it lawful to pay tax to the Roman emperor, or not?" Jesus recognized their bad faith and said to them, "Why are you trying to trick me, you hypocrites? Show me the coin which is used to pay the tax." When they handed Jesus a small Roman coin, Jesus asked them, "Whose head is this, and whose inscription?" "Caesar's," they replied. At that, Jesus said to them, "Then give to Caesar what is Caesar's, but give to God what is God's." When they heard this, they were astonished and went away.

Leader: The Word of God for the people of God.
**People: Thanks be to God.**

Reflection — Rev. Becky

## Responding

Prayers of the People — Rev. Becky

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 *Beach Spring*, The Sacred Harp, 1844

"God, whose giving knows no ending" Robert L. Edwards, 1961, alt.




## The Offertory

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

Mission Invitation Rev. Becky

*"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 checks will support **Sacred Earth's green improvements of the church**. Sacred Earth is providing support to the church library with a window shade option with heat shield technology. In summer months in particular, the amount of heat generated by the morning sun is substantial. The heat shielding option could be beneficial in an area of our church that doesn't have ductwork for air conditioning. Sacred Earth is working with the Library Committee to help bring the library back as a viable option for meetings and gatherings for our church. 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 Music — John Ness Beck, 1986

Consecration — Francis Ridley Havergal, 1874

Communion — Rev. Becky

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!**

It is our shared joy to thank God for all God is doing in our lives, and for the time to gather around Christ's table and share the meal of remembrance, community, transformation. As we gather at this table, as we remember Christ, we also remember those who share the bread and the cup through time and space, as they return to the table nourished and comforted by the eternal and never-ending welcome of Christ.

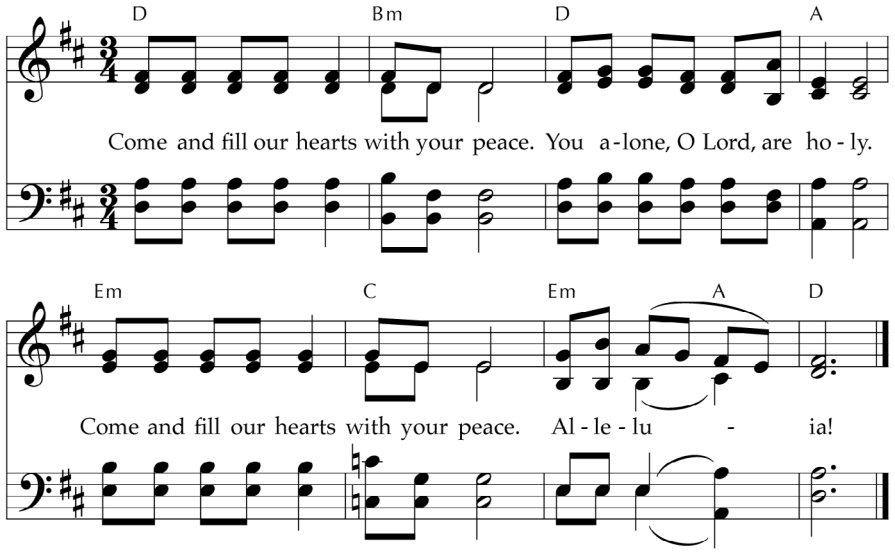
When Jesus gathered with the students, the night before the trial, the night before execution, Jesus took bread, gave thanks for it, and broke it, saying, "This is my body, broken for you. When you do this, remember me." After supper, Jesus took the cup and blessed it, saying, "This is the cup of the New Covenant poured out for all. Whenever you drink from it, remember me."

Holy One, we join hearts and hands in this covenant of faith, this sacrament of transformation, and this observance of community and sustenance with all who wish to eat at Your table and with Your children the world over. 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.

Leader: The gifts of God for the people of God.
**People: Thanks be to God.**
Leader: Come, for all things are ready.

Communion Hymn — *Confitemini Domino*, Jacques Berthier, 1982

"Come and fill our hearts" — Jacques Berthier, 1982




Prayer of Thanksgiving — Rev. Becky

Leader: Holy One, You have connected us
to You and to one another through the sharing of this meal.
Thank You for Your love, thank You for Your sacrifice,
thank You for Your connection.

**People: Use Your sacrament to work in us**
**that we might share Your love with all we meet, in all we do. Amen.**

## Sending

Stewardship Moment — Jim Griffin, Music, Art and Heritage Commission

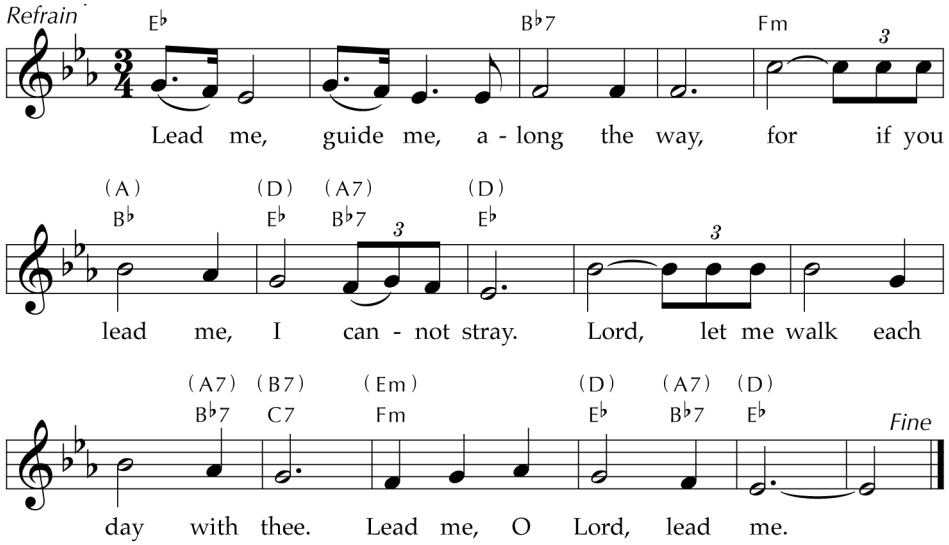
Community Notices - Depart to Serve — Melissa Kulwicki

Leader: Let us depart with a heart to serve.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

*Closing Hymn — *Lead Me, Guide Me*, Doris Akers, 1953

"Lead me, guide me" — Doris Akers, 1953



*Benediction Rev. Becky

*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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"Lead me, guide m." Words and music: Doris M. Akers. © 1953 Doris M. Akers, admin by Chappell & Co/Alfred Publishing Co, Inc. All rights reserved.

Leadership in Today's liturgy

The Rev. Becky David, *preacher*
Albert Adcock, *liturgist*
Melissa Kulwicki, *worship leader*
Joshua Stafford, *pianist*
Cynthia Adcock, *soloist*
Geoffrey Dean, *livestream ministry*

Enter to Worship

# Depart to Serve

**October 18, 2026**

## This Week at First Church

**Sunday, October 18**

| | |
|---|---|
| 9 a.m. | Worship Service & Holy Communion (Parish Hall) |
| | Godly Play (Library) |
| 10 a.m. | First Serves (Classroom D) |
| 11 a.m. | Worship Service (Sanctuary) |
| 12:15 p.m. | UCC 101 (Parish Hall) |

**Monday, October 19**

| | |
|---|---|
| 6 p.m. | First Church Campanelle Rehearsal (Bell Rm) |
| 6:30 p.m. | Transition Team Mtg (Fanning Rm & Zoom) |

**Tuesday, October 20**

| | |
|---|---|
| 7 p.m. | Church Council Mtg (Classroom C & Teams) |

**Wednesday, October 21**

| | |
|---|---|
| 6 p.m. | Dinner Out (High Bank Distillery Co.) |
| | Faith Formation Mtg (Classroom C & Teams) |
| 6:30 p.m. | Stephen Ministers Supervision Mtg (SM Office) |

**Thursday, October 22**

| | |
|---|---|
| 6 p.m. | First Church Ringers Rehearsal (Bell Rm) |

**Saturday, October 24**

| | |
|---|---|
| 8:45 a.m. | Faith Mission Food Prep & Serve (Kitchen) |
| 10 a.m. | Central Southeast Ohio Association Fall Mtg (Highwater UCC, Newark) |
| 10:30 a.m. | Engagement Fair Setup (Parish Hall) |

**Sunday, October 25**

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

## Keep in Prayer

**Members** Lee Wetmore; Melva Fisher; 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; and Dan Axt.

**Family and friends** Melva Fisher's cousin, Ray James; Annette McCormick and her sister, Kathy McCormick; Dakotah Saunders' friend, Olena Glotova; 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; 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** Dameon Jones on the death of his aunt, Belinda Tracey; and David Wyatt on the death of his mother, Sybil Foley-Kalail.

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 Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico. We also pray for our UCC partner, the Université Protestante au Congo (UPC) in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo.

## Justice & Mercy Missions

Upcoming missions will be:

Oct. 18 - Sacred Earth for the Church Library

Oct. 25 - Pathway Clubhouse

Nov. 1 - Laundry Love

## Godly Play
## Today at 9 a.m.

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

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## First Serves
## Today at 10 a.m.
## in Classrooom D

First Serves has collected candy, and now your donation will give the children of the Gladden Community a great party.

We will join together for fall games, treats, and fun for all ages as we gather the candy for the Gladden Community House Halloween Party. Come have a spooktacular time with our church friends. Costumes are welcome!

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

Come join the Rev. Dr. Nancy Livingston and Rev. Dr. Marti Baumer for their last presentation on the UCC. A simple lunch will be served.

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## Central Southeast Ohio Association Fall Meeting
## Saturday, October 24, at 10 a.m.

You are invited to the Central Southeast Ohio Association Fall Meeting, United and Uniting: Let's Go Deeper, for a time of community and connection, including worship, workshops, and lunch together. Childcare is available.

The Fall Meeting will be held at the Highwater UCC in Newark. Registration is $25 and lunch is $10. You can register at https://cseoa.org/; it closes today.

## Dinner Out
## Wednesday, October 21, at 6 p.m.
## at High Bank Distillery in Grandview

High Bank Distillery is an elevated, yet casual, distillery pub with seasonally inspired takes on modern American cocktails and cuisine. It's known for great food, cold drinks, and fun times in. They pair their creative cocktails with some traditional pub food for a perfect night out.

Join in with others from First Church for a dinner out by registering on Realm.

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# 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!

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## Adult Education
## Sunday, November 1, at 10 a.m.
## in Classroom C

Join us as we honor **Native American Heritage Month** with a closer look at the culture and history of the largest US tribe, the Navajo Nation. Educator and lifelong learner, Vicki Lyden, will share her experiences and insights from time spent alongside members of the Navajo Nation Reservation, offering an opportunity to deepen our understanding and appreciation of Navajo culture.

# Communications and Technology Stewardship

Although the Communications and Technology Commission has existed for several years, it is still defining its role. Our constitution charges us with advancing effective communication with members, staff, and the wider community. As we look toward 2027, that charge is helping establish clearer priorities and a stronger vision for our work.

Since I became commissioner in July 2026, the commission has worked quickly to identify priorities, clarify responsibilities, and, for the first time, develop an aspirational budget for 2027. This is an important step toward building a stronger communications foundation.

One need we identified is greater coordination across the church. Communications, marketing, and advertising efforts currently happen independently in many places. We have begun working with commissions, staff, and other stakeholders to develop a coherent churchwide communications strategy and policy. This will help us communicate more effectively and clarify responsibility for planning, funding, and execution.

Several 2027 priorities represent significant technology investments that would not be possible without the congregation's support. These include improvements to microphones and other sound system components in Fellowship Hall, replacement of aging livestream equipment, and upgrades to improve reliability and make operation easier for volunteers.

Beyond equipment, we hope to strengthen our social media presence and restore simultaneous livestreaming to YouTube and Facebook. Social media is often where people first encounter the church, and restoring livestreams would help introduce them to our worship and congregation.

We've also begun work on a redevelopment of the website, giving us an opportunity to improve how we present information, tell our story, and help people engage with church life. Our website and social media are among our most important tools for connecting with members, helping others discover the church, understand who we are, and see how our congregation lives out its call to Enter to Worship, Depart to Serve.

Nathaniel Powell, Commissioner

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### *Thoughts on Gratitude*

"I would rather have it said 'he lived usefully' than 'he died rich'." - Benjamin Franklin

# Stewardship Campaign for 2027 Promotes Faith and Love in Action

Our church will begin its annual stewardship campaign this Sunday under the banner of "First Congregational Church at 175: Faith and Love in Action." Stewardship letters to church members were mailed last week.

The stewardship campaign seeks pledges of financial support for 2027 to meet the congregation's annual operating budget. The Stewardship and Growth Commission has set a goal of raising $850,000 from 200 households. The campaign will formally conclude with an offering of pledges on Sunday, October 25.

Throughout September and October, representatives of the church's commissions are offering brief Stewardship Moments during the worship services and written reports in "Connections" and "Depart to Serve." They are explaining their commission's goals and aspirations for 2027, as well as accomplishments in 2026.

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# Sacred Earth Eco Tip

Why aren't napkins, paper towels, or tissues accepted for recycling? Soft paper products such as napkins, paper towels, and tissues don't meet the quality standards necessary to turn them into new products. Soft paper products are usually made from a high percentage of recycled paper, and each time natural fibers are recycled, they become shorter and shorter. After 5-7 times through the recycling process, paper fibers are too short to be recycled again.

However, these fibers are the perfect length for rapid composting! Compost your soft paper products, or avoid them entirely with reusable options such as cloth napkins and hand towels. Think about it – for all of modern human history until recently people used cloth for cleaning up their messes and wiping their hands.

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# Prayer Requests

First Church's Prayer Cards are an important way for congregants to share personal struggles, celebrations, or health concerns with the ministry staff and our church community. Our prayer cards have recently undergone changes to include requests for meals from the Care & Share Kitchen.

You can find these new, updated Request Cards in each pew where the old ones used to be. Let's support one another and keep our church family connected through love and prayer.

# 2027 Aspirational Budget

This is the Aspirational 2027 Budget, which includes all proposed ideas/goals from commissions/staff.

The draft Revenue represents what will be required to accomplish these aspirational goals, and adjustments will be made to the final budget based on what is committed in the Stewardship campaign.

You should have received pledge campaign materials in the mail by this time - please respond generously so we can achieve these laudable goals!

Ramona Moenter, Budget and Finance Commissioner

| Accounts | 2026 Annual Budget | 2027 Aspirational Budget |
|---|---|---|
| Revenues | | |
| Pledges & Gifts | $ 860,395 | $ 1,135,607 |
| Building & Facilities-Rentals | $ 92,382 | $ 98,208 |
| Other Regular Income | $ 45,500 | $ 38,450 |
| Trustees Support | $ 104,000 | $ 114,000 |
| Assigned Funding-Major Projects | $ - | $ 11,174 |
| Total Revenues & Support | $ 1,102,277 | $ 1,397,439 |
| | | |
| Expenses | | |
| ADMINISTRATION | | |
| STAFF SALARY & BENEFITS | | |
| Ministers | $ 255,721 | $ 298,131 |
| Office | $ 193,488 | $ 202,359 |
| House & Grounds | $ 116,970 | $ 123,653 |
| Music | $ 155,903 | $ 170,824 |
| Faith Formation | $ 49,143 | $ 122,478 |
| Total STAFF SALARY & BENEFITS | $ 843,587 | $ 992,980 |
| Office Expenses | $ 24,100 | $ 24,800 |
| IT Contracts & Services | $ 38,200 | $ 35,873 |
| Total ADMINISTRATION | $ 905,887 | $ 1,053,654 |
| HOUSE & GROUNDS | | |
| Utilities | $ 70,100 | $ 81,850 |
| H&G Operations | $ 85,300 | $ 69,075 |
| Total HOUSE & GROUNDS | $ 132,500 | $ 150,925 |
| MUSIC, ARTS, & HERITAGE | $ 12,550 | $ 10,050 |
| JUSTICE & MERCY | $ 48,462 | $ 59,450 |
| FAITH FORMATION | $ 6,950 | $ 6,050 |
| CHURCH VITALITY | $ 2,500 | $ 4,125 |
| CHURCH GROWTH | $ 3,200 | $ 4,200 |
| DEACONS | $ 5,100 | $ 7,811 |
| Trustees-Support | $ 80,000 | $ 90,000 |
| Major Projects Funded | $ - | $ 11,174 |
| Total Expenses | $ 1,197,148 | $ 1,397,439 |

# 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:** 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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