First Congregational Church
United Church of Christ

Worship at Nine
October 25, 2026
Twenty-Second 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.

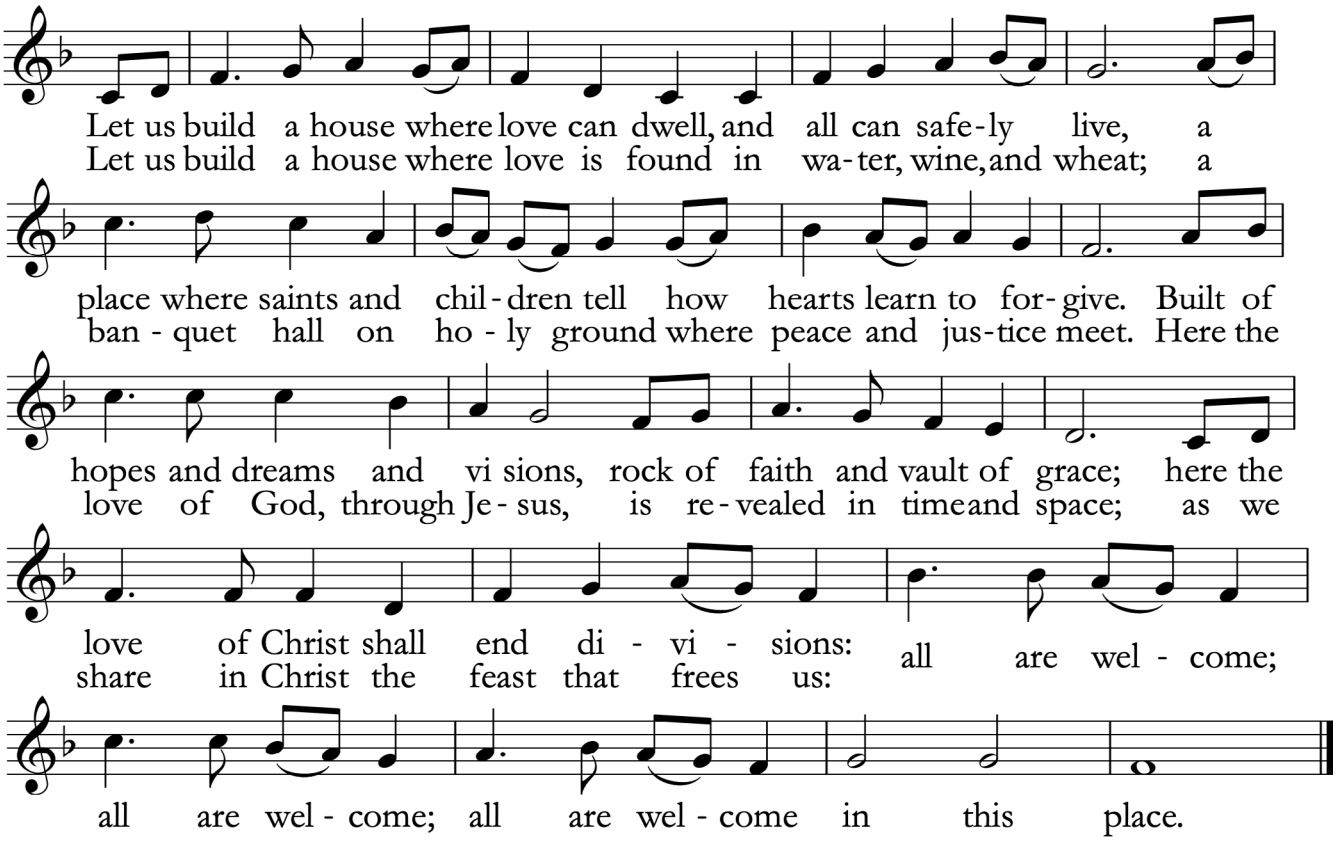
Gathering

Prelude

Ringing of the Bell

*Gathering Song — *Twin Oaks*, Marty Haugen, 1994

"Let us build a house"



*Invocation — Jill Hultin

Leader: My God, You who are charity and love itself.
Help us to love ourselves in You, for You and by You,
and to love our neighbors for Your sake.
May we each possess You as our sole treasure and our one glory,
far dearer than all creatures or things.
Grant that we may rejoice this day and always in Your perfect love for us.
Above all else, help us always to remember that we have only one soul,
that we have only one short life that must be lived only by each of ourselves,
that we have only one death to die, and that there is only one glory that is eternal.

People: Amen.

*Welcome and Passing of the Peace — Rev. Becky

Our young children are welcome to participate in "Music with Mr. Todd."

Listening

The First Reading — Leviticus 19:1-2, 15-18 — Jill Hultin

Leader: A reading from the Book of Leviticus, the nineteenth chapter.

YHWH told Moses to tell the entire Israelite community these things:

Be holy, for I, YHWH, am holy.
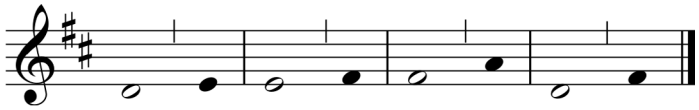
Do not be corrupt in administering justice. Do not show partiality to the poor or give honor to the great. Judge your neighbor with fairness. Do not go about slandering others.

Do not profit by the blood of your neighbor. I am YWHW. Do not nurse hatred for a neighbor. If you are angry with a neighbor, speak frankly about it, to avoid stirring up ill feelings. Never seek revenge or hold a grudge toward your relatives. You must love your neighbor as you love yourself. I am YHWH.

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

The Psalter — Psalm 1

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 Happy are they who have not walked in the counsel of the | wicked,
nor lingered in the way of sinners,
nor sat in the seats of the | scornful!

2 Their delight is in the law of the | Lord,
and they meditate on his law day and | night.

3 They are like trees planted by streams of water,
bearing fruit in due season with leaves that do not | wither;
everything they do shall | prosper.

4 It is not so with the | wicked;
they are like chaff which the wind blows a- | way.

5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand upright when judgment | comes,
nor the sinner in the council of the | righteous.

6 For the Lord knows the way of the | righteous,
but the way of the wicked is | doomed.

The Gospel — Matthew 22:34-46 — Rev. Becky

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

When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had left the Sadducees speechless, they gathered together, and one of them, an expert on the Law, attempted to trick Jesus with this question: "Teacher, which commandment of the Law is the greatest?" Jesus answered: "'You must love the Most High God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind.' "That is the greatest and first commandment. The second is like it: 'You must love your neighbor as yourself! On these two commandments the whole Law is based—and the Prophets as well."

While the Pharisees were gathered around him, Jesus asked them this question: "What do you think about the Messiah? Whose descendant is the Messiah?" They said, "David's." Then Jesus asked, "Then how is it that David, inspired by the Spirit, calls the Messiah 'Sovereign'? For he says,

'The Most High said to my Sovereign,
"Sit at my right hand
until I place your enemies under your foot."'

"If David calls the Messiah 'Sovereign,' how can the Messiah be a descendant of David?"
No one could reply, and from that day on no one dared ask him any more questions.

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

Reflection — Rev. Becky

Responding
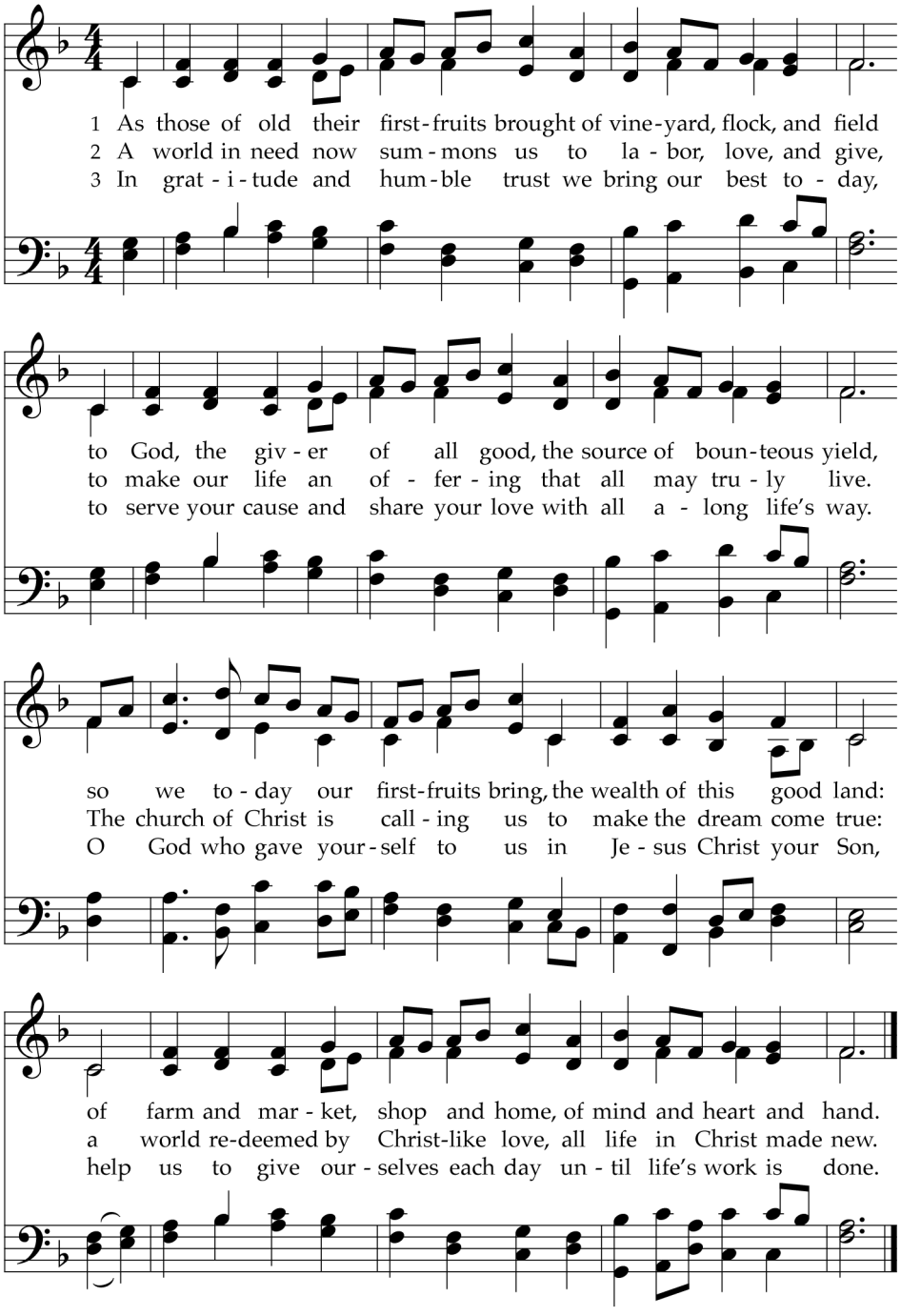
Prayers of the People — Rev. Becky

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
"As those of old their firstfruits brought"

Forest Green, English Folk Melody
Frank von Christierson, 1960, 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 gifts go to support **Pathway Clubhouse**, which provides a friendly, communal space for adults living with mental illness in Franklin County. Pathway offers the opportunity for members to participate in new experiences, while engaging with fellow members in the development of social relationships, employment and education opportunities, and community involvement. The Clubhouse Model is a national and international holistic approach to empowering its members with mental illness, while providing steps to rehabilitation. Membership in the Clubhouse is lifelong, and is at the member's discretion. Opportunities for social interaction are integral to the holistic approach of the Clubhouse model. The Pathway mission is to maximize and strengthen members' independence in working, living, and socializing in the community. 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

Once the gifts have been brought forward, you are invited to bring your pledge card forward.

If you have already turned in your pledge card, we invite you to bring forward a blank card so you may still participate in this important gesture of stewardship.

Communion — Rev. Becky

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: Christ's death begins with a meal.
"Eat, drink."
The ask is that we would remember Christ in our bodies.
This is more than mere symbolism. It is not just poetry.
People: The path to liberation is to stay in our bodies.
Leader: In a world that demands strength, power, and might,
In a world that preys on softness, on need, and on struggle,
Christ teaches us to love through the act of closeness,
through touching our vulnerability and treasuring the tenderness of others.
People: The path to liberation is to stay in our bodies.
Leader: As we encircle the table of Christ today,
and use our bodies to remember the miracle,
the miracle of Christ, the miracle of life, the miracle of love,
we take and eat, and we let our lives be changed
by always turning our faces again to God.

People: **The path to liberation is to stay in our bodies.**

Leader: When the Anointed One gathered with the disciples, before his own body became the portal for love of the world, 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.

People: **Sacred God, we gather around Your table, thankful for Your gifts. Bless now these elements, so that for us as we receive Your bread and Your cup, we receive Your love and presence; when we go from this place, changed by this sacrament, we embody Your love in the world.**

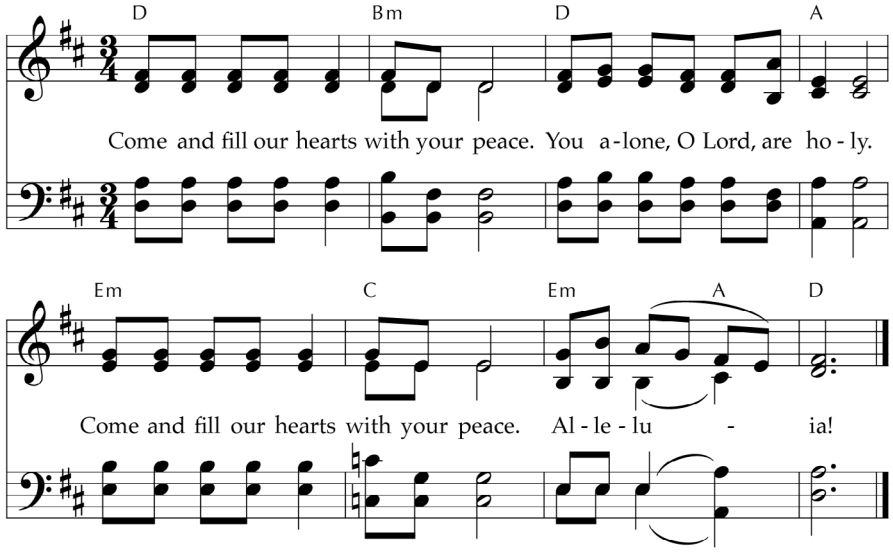
Leader: The gifts of God for the people of God.

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: God of all bodies,

People: **We are made more free and more loving**
by Your unmaking of Yourself in this sacrament.

Leader: Thank You for the union of love and peace
that comes in the disintegration of cruelty and selfishness.

People: **May the work of Communion meet us deeply,**
and transform us completely. Amen.

Sending

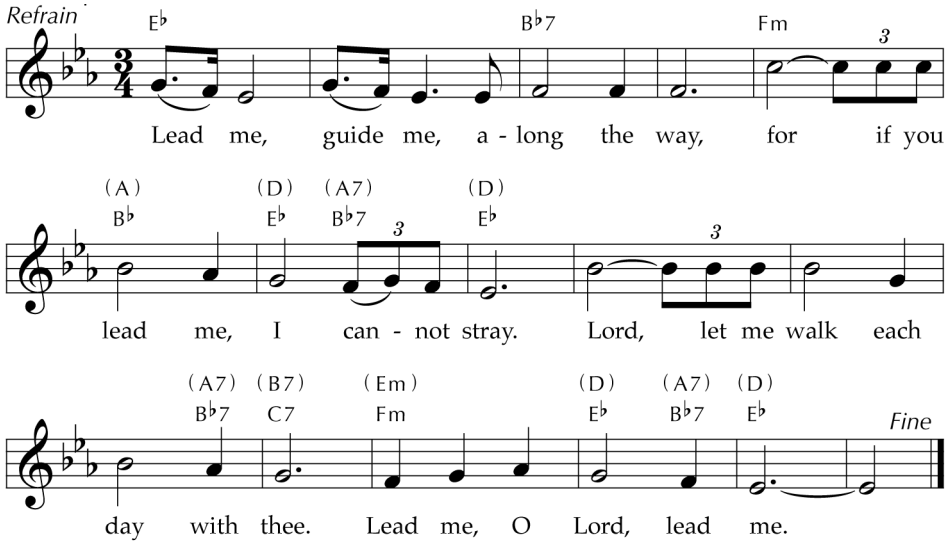
Community Notices - Depart to Serve — Melissa Kulwicki

Leader: Let us depart with a heart to serve.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

*Closing Hymn — *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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"As those of old their first fruits brought." Words by Rank von Christierson, 1960. © 1961, ren 1989 The Hymn Society (admin. Hope Publishing Company.) All rights reserved.

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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*
Jill Hultin, *liturgist*
Melissa Kulwicki, *worship leader*
Julius Tabery, *pianist*
Geoffrey Dean, *livestream ministry*

Enter to Worship

Depart to Serve

October 25, 2026

This Week at First Church

Sunday, October 25

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

Monday, October 26

6 p.m.	First Church Campanelle Rehearsal (Bell Rm)
7 p.m.	Personnel Mtg (Teams)

Tuesday, October 27

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, October 28

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

Thursday, October 29

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

Friday, October 30

7:30 p.m.	Silent Film Series (Sanctuary)

Sunday, November 1

9 a.m.	Worship Service & Holy Communion (Parish Hall)
	Godly Play (Library)
10 a.m.	Adult Faith Formation (Classroom C)
	Family Playground Time (Sam Gordon Playground)
11 a.m.	Worship Service (Sanctuary)
12:15 p.m.	Coffee Hour (Parish Hall)
	Confirmation Class (Classroom C)
	BREAD Mtg (Parlor)

Thoughts on Gratitude

"Think of giving not as a duty but as a privilege."

- John D. Rockefeller

First Church Engagement Fair Today in Parish Hall

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

Come celebrate our meaningful projects and activities. 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 "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. Tasty food will be served! Come celebrate our mission activities, community, and friendships!

Godly Play Today at 9 a.m.

The Godly Play Sunday school class happens during the 9 a.m. worship hour. During 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. Come join in the fun!

2027 Stewardship Campaign

Bring Your Stewardship Pledge Today

During worship services today, we will conclude the formal phase of the annual stewardship campaign with a liturgy that celebrates the pledges church members have made for 2027. If you've not already made your pledge electronically or mailed your pledge to the church office, please bring your pledge to one of the worship services this Sunday. Pledge forms will be available at each entrance.

Nearly 75 percent of our church's annual operating budget is raised through pledges made by church members during the annual stewardship campaign. Let your pledge reflect your generosity in response to God's gifts to you.

Silent Film Series
Friday, October 30, at 7:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary

Just in time for Halloween, experience one of the most iconic films ever made. F.W. Murnau's ***Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror*** (1922) introduced the world to Count Orlok, one of cinema's most chilling figures, and its shadowy imagery and mounting dread remain as powerful as ever. Joshua Stafford performs a live organ accompaniment on the church's magnificent 1931 Kimball organ, bringing this landmark of German Expressionism thrillingly to life in the spectacular sanctuary of First Congregational Church in downtown Columbus. A haunting evening perfect for the season.

Free and open to the public | Freewill offering

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.

B.R.E.A.D. Meeting
Sunday, November 1, at 12:15 p.m. in Classroom C

Please join B.R.E.A.D. on November 1, immediately after the 11:00 Service in the Church Parlor for a House Meeting that will provide insights into how B.R.E.A.D. operates and how you can participate as we seek to "do justice".

B.R.E.A.D. stands for Building Responsibility, Equality And Dignity. Join us and become part of its many successes since 1996. Email Gary Hammond at tuna.gary@gmail.com to register.

First Church Book Club
Wednesday, November 4, at 7 p.m.

Come enjoy lively conversation and get to know other church members at the First Church Book Club on Wednesday, November 4, on Zoom as we discuss NY Times #1 bestseller *Whistler*.

Whistler is the story of a middle-aged woman trying to make peace with her parents after a chance reunion with her long-lost stepfather. What makes a family? When do we realize the past never stays in the past? Feeling known by one other person, even for a short time, can change everything. And we each need to tell our stories in order to heal.

First-timers are always welcome! Questions? Want to receive book club emails? Please call Kathy Reed at 614-442-7742.

Lunch Bunch
Tuesday, November 10, at 12 p.m. at Cuco's Taqueria on Henderson

Once a Mexican grocery store with a tiny taco counter, Cuco's has grown into a full-fledged, successful restaurant that still sells a few Mexican goods. It's authentic Mexican cuisine.

For a great taste of Mexico in Columbus, Cuco's Taqueria is the place to be. Come join us for lunch by registering on Realm, and enjoy fun vibes, great times, and a menu with all the Mexican classics!

Justice & Mercy Missions

Upcoming missions will be:

Oct. 25 - Pathway Clubhouse
Nov. 1 - Laundry Love
Nov. 8 - Good Samaritan Fund

Sacred Earth Eco Tip

Even though temperatures are cooling off, we still love our ice cream. Did you know you can rinse out your paper ice cream cartons then recyclable them in Franklin County curbside and drop-off programs?

When we recycle, we reduce pollution and conserve our natural resources!

Keep in Prayer

Members Sam Spofforth; Janet Miller; Lee Wetmore; Melva Fisher; Margaret Cipriani; Sandy Mathias; Matt Stevens and Jim Velo; Jane Weddle; Victor John; Jane Ward; Grace Glaros and family; Beverly Halbe; Francille Firebaugh; Nancy Burba; John Carter; Clinton Brown; 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.

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 The Caribbean. We also pray for our UCC partner, the Union of Evangelical Churches (UEK) in Germany.

New Prayer Request Cards

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 undergone some changes to include requests for meals from the Care & Share Kitchen and a way to identify who is sharing a concern for another church member. We hope these changes make it easier to share concerns and request help for yourself or someone in our church family.

Supporting each other through prayer and outreach is an important but simple way you can make a difference. It only takes a moment, but it can be the connection that someone needs. You can find the 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.

Preserving the Past, Stepping into the Future

Pledges and gifts to the Preserving the Past, Stepping into the Future fundraising campaign total more than $360,000. Because you have shown great enthusiasm for the preservation project, additional repairs can be made to our historic 1931 church building.

The preservation construction committee has recommended three options as priority supplemental projects. They represent a continuation of the needed window restoration and mortar repair work.

Church council approved the recommendations subject to available funding. The supplemental projects include: 1) mortar repairs and window restoration on the west façade including kitchen, chapel, and faith formation office windows, 2) completing mortar repairs on the north façade around the Education Wing breezeway, and 3) window restoration of the servery and sacristy windows.

For those who wanted to participate in the fundraising campaign, grant pledge cards are still being accepted which will help us to complete all three supplemental projects.

Visit the grant project website: www.first-church.org/preservation for more information about the progress being made to preserve our historic building. The Preserving the Past, Stepping into the Future fundraising campaign is a great success. It is anticipated that the great success will continue as the church undertakes its annual stewardship campaign.

Veterans Day Food Drive

Egan-Ryan Funeral Home is sponsoring their twelfth annual Veterans Day Food Drive to help our local needy veterans and their families. Join with Egan-Ryan Funeral Services in giving thanks to our Vets and donate to their Veterans Day Food Drive.

Non-perishable food items, personal care items, monetary donations can be dropped off at either of Egan-Ryan's two locations at 403 E. Broad St. or 4661 Kenny Rd., Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. beginning November 1 through November 11. Call 614-221-6665 with questions.

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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