

Welcome to the
First Church in Oberlin,
United Church of Christ

Sunday Worship

10:00 AM

December 7, 2025

Third Sunday of Advent

David Hill, Pastor

Thomas Bandy, Director of Music & Organist

Scott Reed, Liturgist

www.firstchurchoberlin.org

No matter who you are or where you are on
life's journey, you are welcome here.



Welcome to Worship!

No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome in this United Church of Christ congregation. We invite you to become a part of our community of faith, to grow spiritually, to encounter God's inclusive and effusive grace in worship and fellowship, and to work and witness for greater justice and peace in our world.

- Large-print bulletins and hearing-assist devices are available, ask an usher.
- If you are moved to express gratitude or appreciation during the service, please respond by saying, "Amen!"
- Please remember to silence your cell phones as you enter worship.
- Our Wi-Fi network has the name "FC Guests" and the password is "CGFinney".

Children in Worship

We strive to welcome children - and their occasional restlessness - in worship. Materials are in the hallway outside the worship space for children who would like a quiet activity during worship. Nursery care is available for young children in the James Brand wing if parents would enjoy some quiet time. Please see an usher if you need directions or more information.

Children of kindergarten age or older are invited to join Storytime during the worship service. They will leave for Room 3 after the Front Row Moment.

Are you interested in receiving our electronic newsletter—"First Things First"? Please contact the church office and we will add you to our mailing list.

Miranda Schaum: office@firstchurchoberlin.org
David T. Hill: pastor@firstchurchoberlin.org

Building and Church Office Hours:

Monday - Friday: 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM, with additional appointments as needed.

Our staff will gladly make arrangements to meet with you at other times.

Please call (440) 775-1711 to schedule an appointment.

ORDER OF WORSHIP
December 14, 2025
Third Sunday of Advent



Opening Music

Sonata in C-sharp minor, Op. 27 No. 2 - Ludwig van Beethoven
I. *Adagio sostenuto*

Welcome

***Call to Worship** (based on Psalm 146)

One: Happy are those whose hope is in God,
maker of heaven and earth -

All: for God keeps faith forever!

One: God executes justice for the oppressed
and gives food for the hungry.

**All: God sets the prisoners free
and opens the eyes of the blind.**

One: God lifts up those who are bowed down.

**All: God watches over the strangers
and upholds the orphan and the widow.**

One: People of God, sing praise to the One who is your help -

All: for God keeps faith forever!

***Congregational Song #112** *Keep Awake, Be Always Ready*

***Call to Confession**

***Prayer of Confession** (Unison)

God, it is not a year abundant with hope. We cry out for solace, for rest, for strength; we curse in anger at the horrors we see perpetrated in your name; we turn our backs on those who suffer, and we scorn those who bring suffering upon others. We are lost and demoralized, aching for the hope in your Word, and yet when you speak, we do not hear. We do not quiet the spirit within or allow your peace to fall upon us. We root ourselves in devastation when true strength is born out of your tender grace. Forgive us, God, for abandoning hope in favor of fear and a desire for retribution.

***Words of Assurance**

One: God does not turn us away when we falter. We are, instead, taken in and given sanctuary so that we may revive in God's tender mercy. God will be our shelter while we rest, as well as when we are ready, once again, to rise up.

All: Thanks be to God!

**The asterisk invites all who are able to rise in body and/or spirit*

*The Peace

One: May peace be with you

All: And also with you.

Front Row Moment and Advent Candlelighting

The Word in Music

Jesus Christ the Apple Tree (1971) - Elizabeth Poston

Scripture Lessons: James 5:7-10; Luke 1:46-55

One: A Word of God that is still speaking,

People: And we are still listening. Thanks be to God.

Reflection

Prayers

Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme, BWV 645 - J. S. Bach

During the musical offering you are invited to share joys and concerns via the prayer pad in the pew, FB chat, or email (prayers@firstchurchoberlin.org)

Announcements

Offering

One: As we prepare ourselves to encounter the presence of Christ in the sacrament of communion, what shall we offer in gratitude for God's love and care?

All: As followers of Jesus, we seek to minister to one another, our community, and the world. To this ministry we bring our time, talents, and other resources as we are able, asking God's blessing as we come together to share this sacred meal.

Celebration of the Lord's Supper

Invitation

Communion Prayer

Lord's Prayer

You are invited to use whatever language for God best fits your understanding of God. Some options are provided in the prayer.

**Our Creator/Mother/Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.**

**Thy Kingdom/Kin-dom/Realm 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.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the Kingdom/Kin-dom/Realm,
the power and the glory forever. Amen.**

Sharing of the Elements

Prayer of Thanksgiving (**Unison**)

**Loving God in Jesus Christ,
with gratitude for your holy nourishment about this table we dedicate:
our lips to be the hopeful voice of Christ to the despairing;
our hands to reach out in Christ's name to heal the broken;
our feet to walk with Christ to visit those who are shunned;
our bodies to be Christ's living sacrifice
to break the power of death.
Take us. Empower us. Use us. Amen.**

***Congregational Song #131** *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear*

***Blessing**

Closing Music

Toccata on 'Veni Emmanuel' - Andrew Carter

*You are welcome to remain for the Closing Music or to leave quietly for
fellowship on the patio (weather permitting) or in Fellowship Hall.*

Christmas Eve Service

*We welcome everyone to attend our family-friendly candlelight service on
Wednesday, December 24th, at 7:00 PM. It will be both in the Meeting House
and on our Facebook page.*

Coffee Hour: The Fellowship Committee is asking for volunteers to host coffee hour after church. Don't worry if you are not sure how to make the coffee. Training can be provided. There is a sign up sheet in Fellowship Hall hallway. If you have any questions please talk with Sandy Matthews.

Oberlin Ecumenical Carol-Sing: The First Church Outreach and Service Committee is inviting you to join us and other members of our community as we participate in Oberlin's Ecumenical Carol-Sing on Sunday, December 14th. We will meet in Tappan Square at the flagpole at 3:00 PM. At 3:15 we will move into Oberlin's downtown and carol in its shops and restaurants until 4:15. Anne Schaum will be our song leader! Caroling song booklets will be provided. At 4:15 PM, we will begin moving to the First Church Fellowship Hall, and we will there savor hot chocolate, apple cider, Christmas cookies, and each other's company until 5:30 PM. We look forward to seeing you!

2025 Advent Devotional: Soon and Very Soon

The Stillspeaking Writers invite you to plan your Advent observances around the theme, Soon and Very Soon, also the title of 2025's Advent Devotional. The theme acknowledges our need for radical hope, and encourages us to prepare for God's best.

The following worship resources are available as free PDF downloads:

- Advent Candle-Lighting Liturgy (on hope, peace, joy, love)
- Advent Candle-Lighting Liturgy (on the RCL texts from Matthew)
- Sermon Series ideas (3 distinct themes for Advent preaching)

Soon and Very Soon reflects the tenor of Romans 13:11-12, "Salvation is nearer to us than when we became believers. The night is far gone; the day is near."

We have several FREE copies of this book on the Welcome Table. Donations are welcomed, but not required. For those that don't get a hard copy of the book, you are also able to purchase a PDF for \$3.00 and/or hardcopy version of the book for \$5.00 using the link in the eNews. If purchasing the PDF version, please purchase one PDF per reader. Upon purchase, a link will be emailed to you for downloading the PDF. Any questions or concerns, feel free to reach out to the office at office@firstchurchoberlin.org or (440)775-1711.

Furniture Moving Group: Our Furniture Moving Group is such a hit among our renters that we are EXPANDING the group and adding some people so no one gets burnt out! Some questions you may have before joining the group:

- **What is the Furniture Moving Group?** Folks who rearrange furniture on the stage in the Meeting House for various community events for the church.
 - **How often do you move furniture?** As often as you'd like! The amount of times Miranda asks for help from the group varies in the year, but the busiest times of year are usually the late fall, early winter, and general spring time. We do ask for help in the other times, though!
 - **What do we ask to move?** Anything that is on the stage EXCEPT THE PIANO could be moved off of the stage, and the piano can be moved around the stage.
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- **How will you know how to move these delicate items on this delicate stage?**
We will train you! There are casters on everything that you may be moving, as well!

Please consider joining this crew because it takes a village to provide space for our community! Thank you for your consideration.

Have you enjoyed our third Wednesday night suppers this fall? Do you have some thoughts about future themes and menus? Whether you'd like to join the Wednesday night supper planning team or just hop on to contribute some thoughts, ask Miranda, our office manager, to add you to the zoom session link for the next meeting. It's scheduled for Tuesday, December 16, at 10:00 am. Join us remotely as we plan for the third Wednesday in January and think ahead to February through May. Or, you can always speak to Linda Slocum, Joanne Bennett, Marty Buck, Carol or Brian Burke, or Sandy Matthews, to let them know you're interested. More ideas yield better results and many hands make light work.

Christmas Fund: The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas "Thank You" gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees.

United Church of Christ congregations and members have blessed the Christmas Fund with their generosity for many years. This year, your care and compassion will be especially appreciated by those servants of the church who are facing a time of need, as reflected in the theme of this year: **Be the Light!** This year's offering will be collected on December 24th, but donations may be given at any point before Christmas Eve.

It is possible to contribute in one of three ways:

1. By mailing a check made out to The First Church in Oberlin with "Christmas Fund" in the memo line to the church office,
2. By using the offering envelopes on the Welcome Table and depositing your donation in the donation boxes in the Meeting House by the doors exiting the room,
3. Or, by going to our First Church website, scrolling down and clicking on "Donate Online" and then going to the "Christmas Fund" section. Alternatively, scan the QR code in your pew and it'll bring you to the page.

See the next page for more information on this special offering. More information can also be found on the UCC website. Let your gift help those who have given so much for our communities.



*...WHEN THEY SAW THE STAR,
THEY WERE FILLED WITH JOY...”*

MATTHEW 2:10

Be the Light

Kindness and Support

From the many letters and stories the Pension Boards has received from those touched by gifts from The Christmas Fund, we share these words:



During this time, I've had to say to God, 'I don't know why this is happening, but I thank you that you have been like footprints in the sand.' It can only be God, in addition to the support we received from our village of friends, family, neighbors, and the kindness of strangers.

- **Veronica Kyle, Member of Covenant UCC**
South Holland, IL

Thanks to your generosity, last year The Christmas Fund provided over \$1.7 million in pension and health benefits, emergency grants, and thank-you checks to retired clergy and their families.

Every gift came from people like you. This year, please give what you can to continue supporting those who have devoted their lives to serving others.



This Christmas, celebrate the blessings in your life by making a gift to our ministers, church workers, and their families.

Visit christmasfund.org to learn more and donate online.



Donate Online Here!