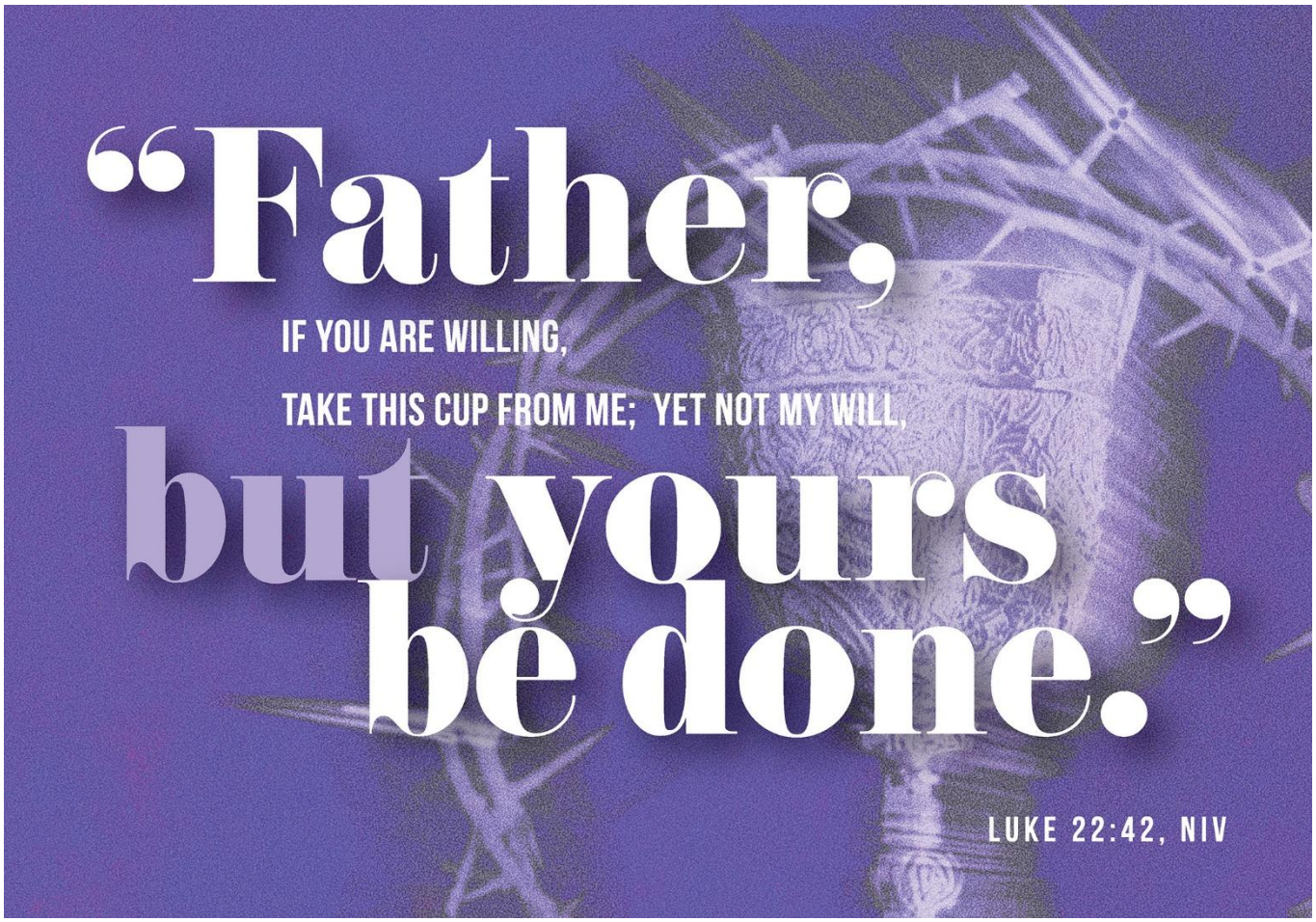


THE FIRST CHURCH

Congregational – United Church of Christ

†

Gathered December 16, 1685

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

MAUNDY THURSDAY

Sacrament of Communion and Service of Tenebrae

April 2, 2026 7:30 PM

This is an adaptation of an early fourth century service. Please enter silently and leave silently. Meditate on the meaning of Jesus' last supper with His twelve disciples. The extinguishing of the lights is symbolic of the flight of the disciples, the approach of the dark hate of Jesus' enemies, and the passion of our Lord. The moment of total darkness recalls the days our Lord was in the tomb. The relighting of the single candle is prophecy of the Easter so soon to dawn.
Please leave the service in silence.

TOWER CHIMES Lisa Cleveland

The Choral music for this Maundy Thursday service
presents the complete Cantata
JESU, DER DU MEINE SEELE - BWV 78 (*1724*)
Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685 – 1750)

INTROITUS I. *Jesu, der Du meine Seele* *(Chorus introduction)*
STAFF SINGER OCTET
FIRST MUSIC CHAMBER PLAYERS

Jesu, der Du meine Seele	Jesus, Thou who my soul,
Hast durch deinen bittern Tod	has through Thy bitter death,
Aus des Teufels finstrer Höhle	out of the Devil's dark pit
Und der schweren Seelennot	and the heavy distress of the soul
Kräftiglich heraus gerissen	has powerfully ripped out,
Und mich Solches lassen wissen	and me such knowledge has left
Durch Dein angenehmes Wort,	through Thy pleasant Word,
Sei doch jetzt, o Gott, mein Hort!	since now, O God, my Hoard (*treasure*)!

GREETING

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: We are gathered to recall the story of the night in which Jesus Christ was betrayed. Are you prepared to come to the table of Jesus Christ, Whose life was poured out for you?

People: **By the grace of God, we are.**
Leader: Are you able to watch with Jesus at prayer in the garden, indeed to struggle yourselves to be in unity with God's will?
People: **By the grace of God, we are.**
Leader: Will you follow Jesus even into the night of betrayal?
People: **By the grace of God, we will.**
Leader: Then let us praise God, even in this hour of darkness!
All: **God of grace and steadfast love, greatly is Your name to be praised in all the earth!**

***HYMN 170** *O Sacred Head Now Wounded* PASSION CHORALE
(see next page)

UNISON PRAYER
O God, Who by the example of Your son, our Savior, Jesus Christ, teaches us the greatness of true humility and calls us to watch with Him in His passion: give us grace to serve one another and to enter into the fellowship of Christ's suffering, in His name and for His sake. Amen.

ANTHEM **II.** *Wir eilen mit schwachen doch emsigen Schritten* *(Duet)*
JANET POISSON, soprano
ABRA MUELLER, alto

Wir eilen mit schwachen, doch emsigen Schritten,	We rush with weak, but busy steps,
O Jesu, o Meister, zu helfen zu Dir.	O Jesus, O Master, to help Thee.
Du suchest die Kranken und Irrenden treulich.	Thou seekest the sick and the erring faithfully.
Ach! höre, Ach! höre... Ach! höre, wie wir	Oh hear, Oh hear... Oh hear how we
Die Stimmen erheben, um Hilfe zu bitten!	our voices raise, for Thy help to ask!
Es sei uns Dein gnädiges Antlitz erfreulich!	May to us Thy gracious countenance be joyful!

(reprise of opening text)

MEDITATION "Willing the Good" Rev. Dr. Andrew Armstrong

***HYMN 178** *'Tis Midnight, and on Olive's Brow* OLIVE'S BROW
(see following page)

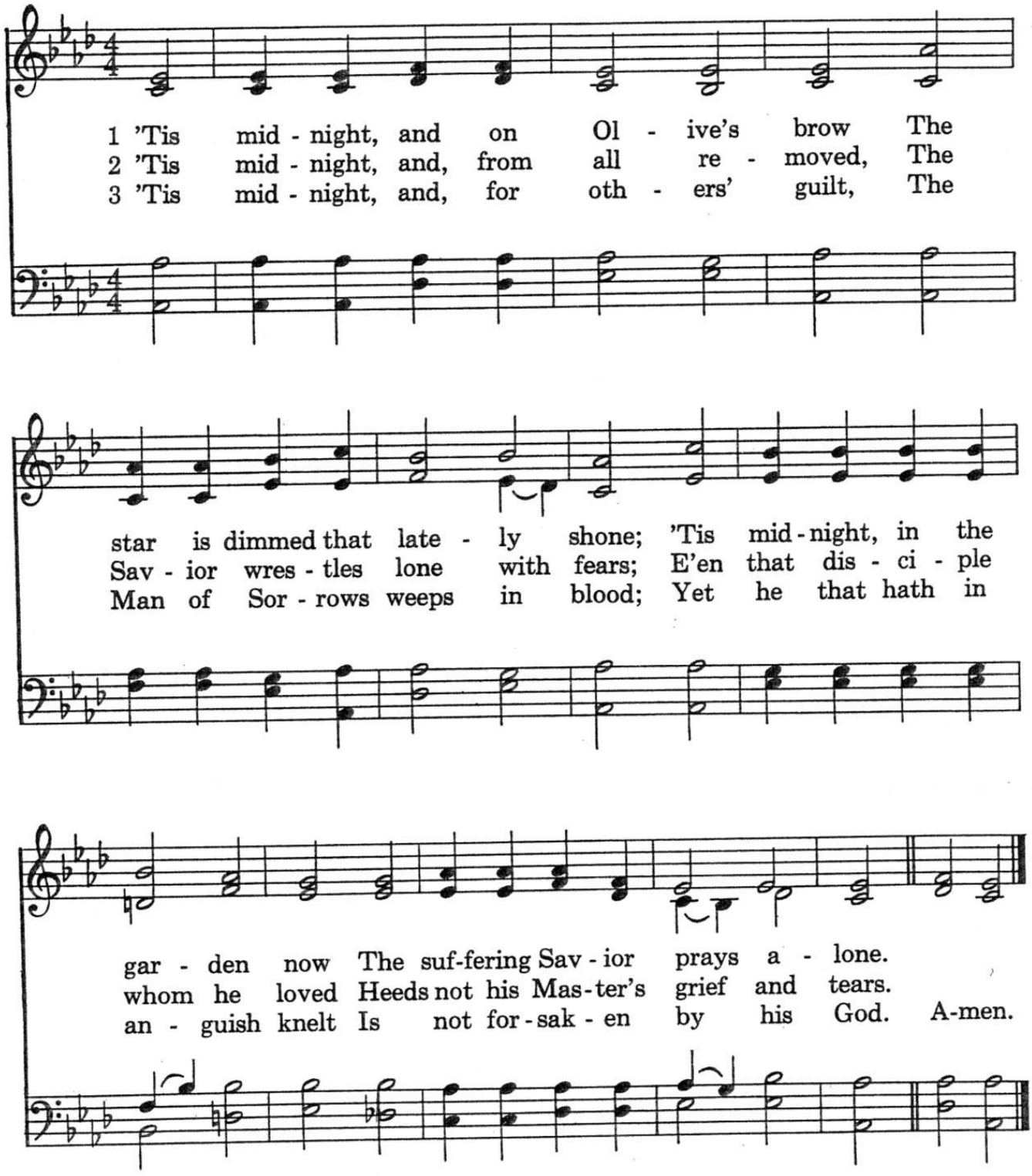
O Sacred Head Now Wounded

CCLI#3034682

'Tis Midnight, and on Olive's Brow

William B. Tappan, 1794-1849, alt.

OLIVE'S BROW L.M.
William B. Bradbury, 1816-1868



4 'Tis midnight, and from heavenly plains
Is borne the song that angels know;
Unheard by mortals are the strains
That sweetly soothe the Savior's woe.

CCLI#3034682

PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND PROMISES OF GRACE

THE HOLY COMMUNION

It is a tradition at The First Church that we eat the bread and drink the cup together as the people of God renewing our covenant.

INVITATION, SURSUM CORDA AND COMMUNION PRAYER

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them up to the Lord.

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

Leader: It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to You through Jesus Christ our Lord. For our sins He was lifted high upon the cross, that He might draw the whole world to Himself; and, by His suffering and death, He became the source of eternal salvation for all who put their trust in Him. Therefore we praise You, joining our voices with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven, who forever proclaim the glory of Your name:

SANCTUS 550

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts,
Heaven and earth are full of thy glory:
Glory be to thee, O Lord most high. A-men.

PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

Leader: Holy and gracious God, in Your infinite love You made us for Yourself; and when we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death, You, in Your mercy, sent Jesus Christ, Your only and eternal Son, to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to You, the God and Father of all. He stretched out His arms upon the cross, and offered Himself, in obedience to Your will, a perfect sacrifice for the whole world. On the night He was handed over to suffering and death, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when He had given thanks to You,

He broke it, and gave it to His disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."
After supper He took the cup of wine; and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."
Therefore, we proclaim the mystery of faith:

People: **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again**.

Leader: We celebrate the memorial of our redemption, Gracious God, in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Recalling His death, resurrection, and ascension, we offer You these gifts. Sanctify them by Your Holy Spirit to be for Your people the body and blood of Your Son, the holy food and drink of new and unending life in Him. Sanctify us also that we may faithfully receive this holy Sacrament, and serve You in unity, constancy, and peace; and at the last day bring us with all Your saints into the joy of Your eternal kingdom. All this we ask through Your Son Jesus Christ. By Him, and with Him, and in Him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is Yours, Almighty Father, now and forever. Amen.

PRAYER OF HUMBLE ACCESS AND LORD'S PRAYER

People: **We do not presume to come to this table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in Your manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under Your table. But You are the same Lord, Whose way is always mercy. Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord, to partake of this Sacrament of Your son Jesus Christ so that we may walk in newness of life, may grow into His likeness, and may evermore dwell in Him. Amen.**

Leader: And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say:

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 sins as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

Leader: Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;

People: **Therefore let us keep the feast.**

Leader: The gifts of God for the people of God.
Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on Him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

INSTITUTION AND SHARING OF THE BREAD

III. *Ach, ich bin ein Kind der Sünden!* *(Rezitativ)*

ANDREW SOKOL, tenor

Ach! ich bin ein Kind der Sünden,	Oh! I am a child of sin,
Ach! ich irre weit und breit.	Oh! I am wandering far and wide.
Der Sünden Aussatz, so an mir zu finden,	The leprosy of sin, as is found in me,
Verlässt mich nicht in dieser Sterblichkeit.	Do not abandon me in this mortality.
Mein Wille trachtet nur nach Bösem.	My will seeks only evil.
Der Geist zwar spricht:	The spirit indeed says:
ach! wer wird mich erlösen?	oh! who will redeem me?
Aber, Fleisch und Blut zu zwingen	But, flesh and blood to force
Und das Gute zu vollbringen,	and good (deeds) toaccomplish,
Ist über alle meine Kraft.	is beyond all of my strength.
Will ich den Schaden nicht verhehlen,	I will the damage not hide
So kann ich nicht, wie oft ich fehle, zählen.	So can I not, how often I fail (even) count.
Drum nehm' ich nun	Therefore now I take away
der Sünde, Schmerz und Pein	the sin, pain and suffering
Und meiner Sorgen Bürde,	and my burden of worries,
So mir sonst unerträglich würde,	otherwise it would become unbearable to me,
Ich liefre sie Dir, Jesu, seufzend ein.	I deliver them to Thee, Jesus, with a sigh.
Rechne nicht die Missethat,	Do not count the misdeed,
Die Dich, Herr, erzürnet hat!	which Thou, Lord, has made (so) angry!

INSTITUTION AND SHARING OF THE CUP

IV. *Dein Blut, so meine Schuld durchstreicht* *(Arie)*

Dein Blut, so meine Schuld durchstreicht,	Thy blood, thus my guilt erasing,
Macht mir das Herze wieder leicht	makes my heart again light
Und spricht mich frei.	and proclaims me free.
Ruft mich der Höllen Heer zum Streite,	Should the hosts of Hell call me to battle,
So stehet Jesus mir zur Seite,	so stands Jesus by my side,
Dass ich beherzt und sieghaft sei.	that I courageous and victorious may be.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING (Unison)

Eternal God, You have graciously accepted us as living members of Your son, our Savior Jesus Christ, and You have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of His body and blood. Grant us strength and courage to love and serve You with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE APPROACH OF DARKNESS

INTROITUS V. *Die Wunden, Nägel, Kron' und Grab* *(Rezitativ)*

MARK ANDREW CLEVELAND, bass

Die Wunden, Nägel, Kron' und Grab,	The wounds, nails, crown and grave,
Die Schläge, so man dort dem Heiland gab,	the blows that were given to the Savior,
Sind Ihm nun mehro Siegeszeichen	are moreso now His signs of victory
Und können mir erneute Kräfte reichen.	and can grant me renewed strength.
Wenn ein erschreckliches Gericht	If a terrible court
Den Fluch für die Verdammten spricht,	a curse to the damned would speak,
So kehrst Du ihn in Segen.	So bringest Thou upon him blessing.
Mich kann kein Schmerz und keine Pein bewegen,	No pain or suffering can move me,
Weil Sie mein Heiland kennt;	because Thou my Savior knows;
Und da Dein Herz für mich in Liebe brennt,	and there Thy heart for me burns in love,
So lege ich hinwieder	So I lay it down again:
Das meine vor Dir nieder.	all that is mine, (now) placed before Thee.
Dies, mein Herz, mit Leid vermenget,	This, my heart, with sorrow mingled,
So Dein theures Blut besprenget,	So Thy precious blood is sprinkled,
So am Kreuz vergossen ist,	Thus on the Cross it was shed,
Geb' ich Dir, Herr Jesu Christ.	I give to Thee, Lord Jesus Christ.

Matthew 26:20-25 **Emma Coppi**

Matthew 26:31-35 **Zenalia Eaves**

Matthew 26:36-46 **Dale Neth**

Matthew 26:47-56 **Monica Gallant**

Matthew 26:69-75 **Sue Englander**

Matthew 27:15-23 **Todd Whitney**

Matthew 27:27-31 **Bill Thorp**

SOLO **VI.** *Nun Du wirst mein gewissen Stillen* *(Arie)*

Nun, Du wirst mein Gewissen stillen,	Now, Thou shalt my conscience appease,
So wider mich um Rache, um Rache schreit,	so if vengeance (*if vengeance*) against me cries out,
Ja, Deine Treue wird's erfüllen,	Yes, Thy loyalty shall fulfill it,
Weil mir Dein Wort die Hoffnung beut.	Because to me Thy Word hope brings.
Wenn Christen an Dich glauben,	When Christians in Thee believe,
Wird sie kein Feind in Ewigkeit	shall no enemy ever (eternally)
Aus deinen Händen rauben.	snatch them from Thy hands.

Matthew 27:32-50 **Rev. Dr. A.W. Armstrong**

CHORALE **VII.** *Herr, Ich glaube, hilf Mir, Schwachen*

Herr, ich glaube, hilf mir Schwachen,	Lord, I believe, help me, the weak one.
Laß mich ja verzagen nicht;	Let me despair not;
Du, Du kannst mich stärker machen,	Thou, Thou cannst make me stronger,
Wenn mich Sünd' und Tod anficht.	when (on) me sin and death assail.
Deiner Güte will ich trauen,	(In) Thy goodness shall I trust,
Bis ich fröhlich werde schauen	until I become happy in seeing
Dich, Herr Jesu, nach dem Streit	Thee, Lord Jesus, after the battle
In der süßen Ewigkeit.	In the sweetness of eternity.

TIME OF DARKNESS AND TENEBRAE

STREPITUS (*the sounding of harsh noise signifying Jesus' death*)

BENEDICTION

Please leave the sanctuary in silence.

OFFICIANTS

Rev. Dr. Andrew W. Armstrong, Senior Minister
Rev. Nancy Haynes, Associate Minister

AV TEAM: Lee Hauenstein and Roy Rumbaugh
LICENSING: CCLI (streaming) 20119862; CCS 12820; OneLicense A-736284
SCRIPTURE: NRSV reprinted by permission of the National Council of the Churches of Christ

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Flowers in the pulpit are given in loving memory of Greg Staradub, by his Family.

FIRST MUSIC CHAMBER PLAYERS

Violin I	**Jeffery Kazukiewicz** *(concertmaster)*	**Violin II**	**Alice Hallstrom**
Viola	**Luther Warren**	**Cello**	**Young Sook Lee**
Bass	**Carion Chu**	**Flute**	**Dianne Spoto**
Oboe I	**Elizabeth England**	**Oboe II**	**Camden Ward**

MINISTER OF MUSIC

Organ Conductor **Joseph R. Olefirowicz – MA, CAGO**

STAFF SINGER OCTET

(Soloists)	**Janet Poisson, Soprano**	**(Chorus)**	**Kate Klingel, Soprano**
	Abra Mueller, Alto		**Christine Petkus, Alto**
	Andrew Sokol, Tenor		**Joshua L. Gore, Tenor**
	Mark Andrew Cleveland, Bass		**Scott Taylor, Bass**

THE FIRST CHURCH

STAFF

Senior Minister, *Rev. Dr. Andrew W. Armstrong*, aarmstrong@tfcucc.org
Associate Minister, *Rev. Nancy Haynes*, nhaynes@tfcucc.org
Minister of Music, *Joseph R. Olefirowicz-MA,CAGO,* jolefirowicz@tfcucc.org
Church Business and Marketing Manager, *Dianne Smigliani*, dsmigliani@tf
Office Manager, *Tasha Drew*, tdrew@tfcucc.org
Christian Formation Coordinator, *Amanda Steere*, asteere@tfcucc.org
Communications/Copyright/Marketing Coordinator, *Jim Ferguson III*, jferguson@tfcucc.org
Sexton, *James Halstead*, jhalstead@tfcucc.org

Pastors Emeriti, *Rev. James S. Chaloner and Rev. Dr. Jeffrey C. Evans*

WELCOME

A warm welcome is extended to all who are attending this worship service. A special greeting to those who are visiting or worshiping with us for the first time. Please sign the guest book in the back of the sanctuary or fill out the **visitor card** found in the pew racks. Fill out the back of the card, and put it in the offering plate or hand it to a minister, Usher or Deacon so we may acknowledge your visit. Join in the time of fellowship, in Fellowship Hall, following worship. If you have any questions about the life and ministry of First Church please seek out the individuals wearing colored nametags; they are members of the various boards and committees.

INFORMATION

The First Church, was gathered on December 16, 1685 as The Church of Christ in Dunstable. On the same day, Thomas Weld was ordained and settled as minister of the church. The current building, built in 1894, is the tenth building to house the First Church community. In 1961, the church entered fellowship with the United Church of Christ. We welcome into our membership any who will own the covenant of First Church and seek to continue the ministry of Jesus Christ in the community and world. Those interested in joining the church should contact the church office for information. The Sacrament of Communion is celebrated on the first Sunday of the month and the Sacrament of Baptism on the last. First Church is supported almost entirely by pledges. Every member is expected to make a financial pledge according to their ability.

PASTORAL CARE

Pastoral Care is available to all in need. Please keep the ministers informed of occasions of sickness, sorrow, and joy. Let the church office know if you or family member or friend is hospitalized.

COMMUNICATIONS

If you have a change of address, phone number, or email address, please let the church office know so that we may keep our records current. All information for the weekly bulletin must be in the office by noon on Wednesday. All information for the monthly newsletter must be in the office by 4:00 PM on the second Monday of the month.

All use of the building must be scheduled by the Office Manager.