

WASHINGTON GLADDEN SOCIAL JUSTICE PARK

The Washington Gladden Social Justice Park at E. Broad Street and Cleveland Avenue is the first park of its kind in the nation. It recognizes past achievements for social justice and illuminates current struggles. The park is an oasis of hope on the path toward equality and human dignity for all.



The park features an award-winning captivating sculpture – Our Single Garment of Destiny – based on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s statement in his Letter from Birmingham Jail. The unique sculpture appears to disappear at a particular angle.

The Pathway of Justice leads visitors through the park on guidestones engraved with quotes from world-renowned social justice champions. A mural in the center of the park introduces visitors to Columbus Social Justice Legends.

The park, sponsored by First Congregational Church, UCC, receives wide community support and hosts an annual Gladden Lecture and other educational events and exhibits throughout the year, including programs for children, to serve as a beacon toward a more just future.



website:
socialjusticepark.org

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[@socialjusticepark](https://www.instagram.com/socialjusticepark)

1ST CITIZEN OF COLUMBUS WASHINGTON GLADDEN

Washington Gladden, pastor of First Congregational Church of Columbus, Ohio from 1882 to 1918, was one of America's pre-eminent social reformers of the Progressive Era.

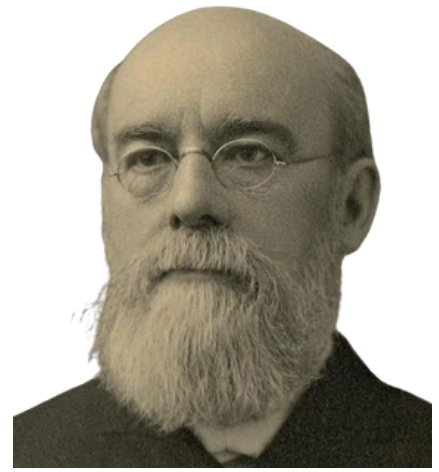
Founded by abolitionists in 1852, throughout its history First Congregational has been a beacon for social justice.

During his 36 years at First Congregational, Gladden led major reforms at the city, state and national levels.

At the local level, Gladden led coalitions to regulate public utilities, provide all citizens with clean drinking water and pure milk, and clean up vice districts that plagued Columbus. He brought together faith leaders of 20 Protestant, Catholic and Jewish congregations to confront the toughest social issues of the day.

At the state level, Gladden was a delegate to Ohio's 1912 state constitutional convention, successfully advocating for women's right to vote, municipal charters, civil service, and direct democracy – the initiative and referendum.

At the national level, Gladden collaborated with Teddy Roosevelt, Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. DuBois and other reformers and became known as the "Father of the Social Gospel" – the call that Christianity must be lived out each day in service to others, especially the poor and oppressed. He was an advocate for equality, racial harmony, clean government, labor rights, poor relief and progressive ideals. Gladden was a forceful writer and widely published. He was asked to lecture at Harvard, Oxford and Yale.



learn more:



visit the park

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