Dear Friends,

Author Christopher Moore once wrote, “Children see magic because they look for it.” During Akron Fire, nothing rang truer than this amongst the campers as they were introduced to new ideas through art, challenged to explore their creativity, and encouraged to use their imagination each day. The camp was made possible in partnership with Living the Legacy, allowing campers to participate in a variety of artistic activities to include drama, visual arts, music, writing and poetry, arts and crafts, painting and drawing, as well as various team building games and playground time.

Each day, campers were exposed to new ideas and challenges, which they so bravely tackled in every activity. In the process, the campers learned how to communicate more openly with one another, as well as how to express their feelings and emotions in safe and creative ways. From creating slime in arts and crafts with Ann Snyder, learning how to reenact fun scenarios in drama with Rev. Nanette, creating fun stories in writing class with Curtice Taylor, learning notes and songs on the acoustic guitar with Mike Vincent, creating stain glass art in painting with Grace Worley, making canvas art in visual arts with Amber Cullen, and keeping the volunteers on their toes on the playground, the campers brought great energy, excitement, and joy into so many spaces of our church!

You may have heard it said that “out of the mouth of babes,” comes wisdom, but so do silly songs about flying tacos, stories about the floor being lava, and questions like, “what are we having for lunch?” All of these things, dare I say, are what contribute to our children gaining the wisdom that life is meant to be celebrated through friendships, making memories, and love. As we reflect on the success of Akron Fire this summer and look towards the future of its growth, may we be reminded of the simple joys that come from working with children and encouraged by how God uses them to see the magic in life.

Many blessings,

Antigone
A Busy Summer Kicks Off

This summer promises to be active and productive at First Church with plenty of volunteer opportunities to put our faith into action.

As you will read later on page 2, we will worship together once again this year at Lion’s Lodge in Cuyahoga Falls followed by a shared meal. The newly organized Fellowship Team will be organizing the meal following the worship service. This is a very family friendly time together – both our Church family as well as the family you live with.

Our first Akron Fire summer camp experience, capably organized by Associate Minister Antigone, has had a wonderful response from the congregation with 27 people offering to help.

In August, the Church will once again participate fully in Akron Pride to actively demonstrate our values: Rooted in Christ - Fostering Justice - Celebrating Diversity. All are invited to march from Highland Square to Hardesty Park and/or promote First Church at our booth. Over 10,000 people attended the event last year. The Membership Board is our host.

And, of course, every month one has the chance to be a worship leader in the 9:30am Celebrate service, usher in the 11am Festival service, help with Communion and volunteer in the Feed My Sheep Garden.

In other volunteer news, the Food Pantry – our largest ministry to the community – is considering a significant expansion to further promote one of our strategic priorities: Food Justice. More information on that initiative will be forthcoming.

The church submitted a Letter of Intent to the National Fund for Sacred Spaces in an attempt to obtain a significant grant to address the HVAC (Heating, Ventilation & Air Conditioning) systems at the church. It was a very competitive submission process with over 240 applications. Unfortunately, the church’s proposal was not chosen to move on to the next round. The Building and Grounds Board will continue to look at alternatives to improve both the comfort and the efficiency of our historic building.

Finally, you will soon receive a survey to complete generated by the Working Group, which includes Ruth Ann Allison, Logan Baez, Beth Cooper, Jay Hershey, Kellie Ramirez, Sarah Vradenburg, Larry Becker, Rev. Nanette Pitt and consultants Mark Chupp and Kathleen McDonnell.

(continued in next column)

Summer Sunday Mornings

Please note that Church School will not be meeting over the summer. Classes will resume again with the start of the new program year.

9am-12:15pm: Early Morning Childcare for age 4-7 is available on the 2nd floor.

9am-12:15pm: Nursery care (infants and toddlers ages 3 and under) is available on the 2nd floor.

9:30am Worship: Children and youth are invited to attend worship with their families. There is an activity carpet available in the worship space.

11am Worship: Children and youth are welcome to attend worship with their families. The Family Room at the rear of the Meetinghouse is also available for your use and is equipped with toys, toddler furniture, a changing table, a rocking chair, and has access to a restroom.

Sunday Worship Flowers

Sponsoring flowers in the worship service is a wonderful way of celebrating a loved one, an anniversary, or some other special occasion. The $50 arrangement may be taken home or marked for our pastors to deliver to a homebound member of First Church. If you would like to order worship flowers, please contact Patty Durkos at 330.253.5109 x110 or patty.durkos@akronfcc.org.

Get Social!

First Church is on social media! Have you “liked” our Facebook page? You can find us at FCCofAkron. We will keep you up-to-date with the latest news and events, so be sure to visit our page. Prefer Twitter? Follow 1stChurchAkron.
Summer Highlights

Jazz Sunday. On July 21, join us for summertime jazz worship. At 9:30am the service will be led by Dave Aberth, Mike Vincent, Brian Randall and Kellie Ramirez and at 11am by Theron Brown, Tom Lehman, Chris Coles, Zire Darden, and Jordan McBride who visited with us this past Mardi Gras Sunday and led a wonderful worship experience. Invite a friend along!

Summer Hymn Sing. Save the date of Sunday, August 11 for our summer hymn sing at 11am. At this worship service, congregation members will be invited to call out a favorite hymn tune from the Chalice and Pilgrim Hymnals as we sing some classic favorites and newer hymns together.

Sunday Funday. Children and youth are invited to join Pastor Antigone and volunteers on Sunday, August 11 for a fun craft activity during each of the worship activities. Come on out!

Church Picnic

This year, on Sunday, August 18, we’ll meet for one combined worship service at 11am at Lion’s Lodge in Cuyahoga Falls (641 Silver Lake Ave). Following worship, we’ll enjoy a time of fellowship with food and fun for everyone. There will be activities and for young and old alike, including a cornhole tournament with a white elephant prize for the winner! ATTENTION: If you have a cornhole set we can borrow for that day, please contact Judy Young. The church will provide charcoal grilled hamburgers and hot dogs, buns, condiments, drinks and paper products. You’re invited to provide: last name A-M side dish or salad, last name N-Z dessert. Remember to bring a serving utensil!

We could use some volunteers for set-up of tables & chairs, food set-up, clean-up, and games and crafts. If any of these opportunities appeal to you, please contact the Fellowship Team facilitators, Stephanie Corbin at shtefiec@gmail.com or Chris Becker at bitemegal@gmail.com.

Submitted by Chris Becker and Stephanie Corbin

Akron Pride

Join us on August 24 for the Akron Pride March and Festival. First Church will represent the love and extravagant welcome of God and our faith to the LGBTQ+ community. The 2019 March for Equality steps off at 10am in Highland Square, leading to Hardesty Park, where the festival runs until 7pm.

If you are interested in joining the First Church group in the march or volunteering at our booth at the festival, please sign up in the church office. You will be able to select a shift to fit your schedule and allow you to enjoy the festivities. We hope to see you there! Contact the church office or Membership Board for more information.

Chancel Choir Open House

Do you enjoy singing? Has it been a while since you sang in a choir? Try the Chancel Choir out for one Sunday!

On Sunday, August 25 for women, and Sunday, September 1 for men, meet us in the Choir Room at 9:15am to rehearse and prepare special music for the 11am worship service! These special groups are being offered with no strings attached, just a dedicated time to sing and fellowship. We would love for you to join us and please bring a friend! We hope to see you and many others at 9:15am. Donuts and coffee will be supplied!

If you have any questions, please contact Julie Lehman at julie.lehman@akronfcc.org.

Survey Sundae

Together with our consultants from Case Western Reserve University, we invite everyone who is a part of our community to share their thoughts and feelings by Sunday, July 21, so we can continue to strengthen our already vibrant and beloved church.

Complete a survey online at http://bit.ly/2XysIxD at your convenience with a few quick clicks. Survey’s are submitted directly to our consultants at Case Western Reserve University and, unless you submit your name requesting further conversation, are completely anonymous.

We invite everyone who has completed a survey to enjoy a sundae after each worship service on Sunday, July 21. You’re even welcome to complete the survey on your phone or tablet while enjoying your sundae! We will have hard copy surveys available on July 21 and consultant Dr. Mark Chupp will be with us to collect them.

We invited the consultants to join us for a six-month period to strengthen and unify our congregation and increase understanding between members who may hold different points of view.

Summer is Here!

The okra is blooming, tomatoes are ripening, the greenhouse is filling up, and the cold weather crops are long gone - summer is here! There is a brief moment after the hustle and bustle of the spring, when all the summer crops are planted out and it’s not quite time to sow the fall seeds yet, in which we can pause, look around, and realize that all of a sudden we have a bountiful garden around us.

I have a tendency to get lost in the weeds, so to speak, of planting, tending, and harvesting each crop individually so that I lose sight of the bigger picture - I can’t see the garden for the plants, if you will. So there’s no better time to stop and appreciate the magic that is happening all around us in the garden: flowers opening before your eyes, bees pollinating, the first touch of red ripening on a pepper... but just for a moment, because there’s always more to do! You can find the fruits and vegetables of our labor every Tuesday morning in the Food Pantry, as well as every Tuesday evening from 4-7pm at the Summit Lake Neighborhood Farmers’ Market (380 W. Crosier St).

We are honored and grateful to have hosted a group from our new neighbor, Asian Services In Action (ASIA) Inc. for a work day in June. Twelve participants in ASIA’s English language class joined us for a tour of the garden, a couple hours’ work, and lunch in the Conference Room. This kind of community engagement benefits the students by building relationships as well as immersing them in an English-speaking setting. As the saying goes, many hands make light work - and we got so much done! The participants split into groups to work with the Feed My Sheep Garden crew on three tasks: weeding our perennial flower beds, building a new trellis, and digging a trench and post holes for our vertical strawberry planters. We were able to accomplish all of this just before the rain came, and enjoyed a long lunch together. These tasks would have taken our crew alone multiple days to accomplish, but instead, it was finished in a fraction of the time and we had the opportunity to welcome our new neighbors as well.

Thank you for your continued support for the Feed My Sheep Garden! As a reminder, the garden is open for volunteers and visitors every Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday morning from 8am to 12pm. Please consider popping in to say hello or donating an hour or so of your time. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at sam@letsgrowakron.org.

Submitted by Sam Phillips, Garden Manager

Mission of the Month

July’s Mission of the Month is the Boys and Girls Club of the Western Reserve. Their mission is to inspire and enable all young people to realize their full potential as productive, responsible and caring citizens. The Boys & Girls Clubs have three priority outcome areas: Academic Success, Good Character & Citizenship and Healthy Lifestyles. On July 14, representatives from the organization will be present at the 11am worship to share more about the organization and offer you a chance to ask questions. To make a donation, please make your check out to First Church with Mission of the Month written on the memo line.

Mission of the Month Updates

Thank you to all who donated to our recent Missions of the Month. First Church commits to donate $600 to our Mission of the Month and donations from the congregation are added to that total. Due to your generosity, we were able to contribute a total of $804 Open M in May and $1,067.50 to Gennesaret in June! Thank you!

Thank you!

We thank you that through your gift to Open M, you are joining us in meeting a need in response to [Matthew 25:35-40]. We commit to you that your gift will be used to reach out the community in need to provide practical and loving help. We are so grateful for your trust in us and are so thankful that you are able to be involved to share in this service. We thank you for your loyalty to the work of Open M.

In Him, Robert D. Titus, Chief Executive Officer of Open M
**Security Updates**

In early 2019, we began an in-depth look at our safety, security, and functionality here at First Church. As a result, we identified items that we needed to improve structurally in order to enhance our safety both inside and outside our building.

One enhancement is that we now have doors that can shut soundly, and be locked, on all of our education wing classrooms. Thanks to a recent B&G workday, we have removed shrubbery around the perimeter of our building that could either conceal someone behind, or was blocking our exterior lighting from completely illuminating an area. Exterior signage is now in the fabrication stage to clearly identify our parking areas, as well as our main and accessible entrances, so that our guests know where to go when they visit. A corner sign is also being produced that will allow us more opportunities to advertise our events, service times, and more.

Work is continuing on our 5S project to clean, organize and correctly utilize our storage areas. We will keep you posted on our continuing work in these areas, but if you have any questions please feel free to contact Janis Worley, Finance and Operations Manager, at janis.worley@akronfcc.org.

**Pardon Our Dust**

Our Food Pantry continues to be a wonderful success every Tuesday morning meeting. Looking for sustainable ways to continue to meet the need of our neighbors in the Greater Akron area without taxing our current crew of volunteers, coordinators Deb and Clay Canfield have approached church leadership and consulted with the Chancel and Handbell choirs with the proposal that includes reallocating the current choir room for Food Pantry use.

Both the music and food justice programs are core to the identity of First Church and this reflected in the thoughtful conversation that has led to a decision to refurbish the current Small Dinning Room (formally Memorial Lounge) as a Music Room. With the guidance of our music librarian Margaret Maurer and Julie Lehman, adjustments are being made on the third floor to accommodate the Music Library in the room adjacent to our current Archives. We are also working closely with our Handbell Choir Director, Christine Allison to ensure the bell choir’s needs are met.

In future we anticipate utilizing the Conference Room and Chapel more fully to accommodate groups that use our facilities. To make the Conference Room more flexible for these meeting needs, new tables, chairs and storage will be added. Work is already underway in some areas, and we are hoping to have the projects completed by the start of the program year in September. We appreciate your patience and flexibility during the summer months as the work progresses!

If you have any questions please contact Janis Worley at janis.worley@akronfcc.org.

**First Aid**

Bumps and bruises can happen wherever you go, so as part of our on-going look at safety and security, we have reviewed First Church’s ability to provide first aid when needed. As a result of this study, we have purchased well-stocked first aid kits and have placed them in strategic areas throughout the building. Kits are now easily accessible from the Meetinghouse, the Upper Room, Fellowship Hall/Kitchen, and main office, as well as throughout the education wing and Food Pantry. How do you know where to find them? We have marked their locations with a sign so that they can be easily found when needed. Plans are underway to hold an onsite CPR/AED/First Aid training class at First Church later this summer, so keep an eye out for more details.

If you have any questions about the first aid kits, please contact Facility Maintenance Coordinator, Russ Gaipe at russ.gaipe@akronfcc.org.

**Library Renovations**

Due to a generous gift from the Stalnaker family in memory of Gene Stalnaker, we are refurbishing our Library. The Library is located on our main floor, adjacent to the Food Pantry, across from Pastor Nanette’s study. This room, which is available to all members, currently houses many books and hosts the occasional board meeting as well as the Faith Formation morning sessions. The room update will include new carpeting, new wood-handled upholstered armchairs, and coffee tables. The walls will be stripped of the wallpaper and repainted, and the woodwork updated. Our collection of books is being reviewed, and will be put back on the shelves by topic so that it will be easier to locate a helpful book. We are excited to add some new books to our collection to address topics facing our families in today’s world. Our goal is to have the work finished by the beginning of the program year. If you have any questions please contact Janis Worley at janis.worley@akronfcc.org.
**In Sympathy**

Our condolences to the following families...

Chris and Walter Cumrine on the passing of their mother, Pat Crumrine, on June 11. A Memorial Service was held here at First Church on June 17.

Pat McKay and the family of Reverend Duane Angel who passed away on June 28. Duane served as Minister for Pastoral Care from 2007-2015. During his lifetime, Duane pastored a number of churches in Texas, Indiana, and Ohio. A Memorial Service was held at First Church on July 3.

Jeanine Rodefer and the family of Reverend Bill Rodefer who passed away on July 4. Bill served First Church as Assistant Pastor in 1999 and then as Minister for Pastoral Care from 2000-2005. Prior to serving churches in Ohio and Indiana, Bill was an Army Chaplain, retiring in 1988 with the rank of Colonel. A Memorial Service will be held here on July 25.

**Thank you!**

Kathy Berg, Jessica Fox, Barbara Hansford, George Kostan, Art Wallach, and Doug Weyrick.

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**Stewardship/Finance Report (unaudited)**

**May 2019 - FINAL**

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<th></th>
<th>May 2019</th>
<th>May YTD</th>
<th>May YTD Budget</th>
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<td>2019 Loyalty Campaign</td>
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| **EXPENSES**         |          |         |                |                  |
| Personnel & Admin Expenses | $62,606  | $221,808| $229,378       | 96.7%            |
| Membership Board      | $621     | $750    | $2,940         | 25.5%            |
| Governing Board       | $7,700   | $8,356  | $9,591         | 87.1%            |
| Food Pantry           | $2,097   | $14,596 | $22,935        | 63.6%            |
| Other Special Ministries | $1,100  | $5,976  | $15,627        | 38.2%            |
| Congregational Care & Education | $623 | $2,302  | $6,026         | 38.2%            |
| Music                 | $2,132   | $7,603  | $9,212         | 82.5%            |
| Fellowship Team       | $0       | $0      | $334           | 0.0%             |
| Development Team      | $0       | $0      | $438           | 0.0%             |
| Food Service Expense  | $1,769   | $8,388  | $7,640         | 109.8%           |
| Maintenance/Utilities | $16,938  | $118,408| $136,537       | 86.7%            |
| **TOTAL**             | $95,586  | $388,187| $440,656       | 88.1%            |

Net Income/Loss: $-26,511 / $30,826 / $-50,740 / -60.8%

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**In Our Prayers**

**Kathy Berg, Jessica Fox, Barbara Hansford, George Kostan, Art Wallach, and Doug Weyrick.**

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Dear Gustley Scholarship and First Church,

Thank you for selecting me for the grant. I greatly appreciate the $1,000. I am grateful you guys have offered this scholarship. I’m sorry though that I couldn't attend the announcement at the worship service. Thank you for everything thus far.

*Sincerely, Nicholas Speight*

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Dear First Church,

Thank you for selecting me as one of the recipients for the Gustely Family Memorial Scholarship... Your generosity has inspired me to help others and give back to the community. Thank you again for this honor.

*Sincerely, Katie Thompson*
Keep Calm and Carry Yarn

Thank you to all who donated yarn to the Mansfield Correctional Institution for the Warm Up America! Project. The group was formed as a tool to reduce anxiety and stress among inmates by crocheting winter items for area homeless shelters. With your generous donations, the group has made 26 fleece blankets, 26 crochet blankets, 28 scarves, 171 hats, 2 shawls, and 1 pair of mittens.

The group has also made over 100 baby hats for premature babies in East Africa. Thank you so much for your support! Donations of yarn are still being accepted to help the group create more for those in need. It will be accepted in any form: remnants from other projects, leftovers from crafts, tangled balls. Please drop off your donations in the church office. Thank you!

Earth Saving Ideas!

During the summer, there are plenty of opportunities to recycle and work to save our planet. Here are a few ideas:

When mowing the lawn, turn grass clippings into a compost pile! According to Planet Aid, the EPA says that yard waste fills up nearly 18% of landfills. Save some space by grass-cycling!

Re-purpose or repair old beach toys. Many of these are made from non-recyclable plastic. You could turn that old sandcastle into an interesting planting pot! If you're looking to buy new pool toys, be sure to check they're made from recyclable products.

At BBQs and picnics, create a designated area for recyclables like plastic bottles and glass. Instead of plasticware, turn to reusable or biodegradable products.

When you're updating your summer wardrobe, consider donating old items to Goodwill or a thrift store. One person's trash is another's treasure!

Seasonal Recipes from the Archives

Mrs. Crawford’s “Can’t Pass It By” Candy

Submitted by Eloise Allison

Ingredients:
- 2 pounds of white chocolate
- 1 cup of creamy peanut butter
- 2 cups of mini marshmallows
- 2 cups of Rice Krispies
- 3 cups of Cap’n Crunch
- 1½ cups of mixed nuts

Directions:
Melt the white chocolate and peanut butter in a double boiler. Remove from heat and add the other ingredients. Mix together just enough to blend evenly. Drop by teaspoon on wax paper into small clusters and let harden.

Habitat for Humanity

As a member of the Akron Area Interfaith Council, First Church is united with AAIC on the support of Habitat for Humanity. For several years, HFH has built many homes in decent communities in which every person can live and grow into all that God intended. It is a nonprofit organization that both builds and repairs homes for qualified low income families. They have completed over 200 homes in the local area.

This year, they will build a house located on Valdes Ave. in Akron. The partner family is a single mother working for Akron Public Schools as a secretary. She has two children, ages one and four. The financial goal of the location is to fund half the cost of the house, which is $40,000. The mother who lives there will assume the mortgage.

Volunteers from local churches are needed to help with Habitat’s various projects around the community. The three areas for volunteers to consider are fundraising, building, and providing lunches for the working volunteers. Summer projects have already begun, but continue through December. Work days are Thursdays and Saturdays. If you are interested in volunteering, please see a list of possible dates in the church office. To sign up, please contact Elizabeth Fesler.

Submitted by Elizabeth Fesler, First Church AAIC Rep

Retirement Announcement

Patty Durkos, our Administrative and Financial Assistant, has announced that she will be retiring this December 31, 2019. Patty has worked at First Church for nearly 31 years and in that time has formed many relationships with staff, members, and other people who have served our church and community, including various groups who utilize our space for meetings, those who tend our garden, and workmen who care for our building. Many church members may remember her as Patty Gillespie. She reports that she is grateful for the opportunity to serve the church for these past 31 years, and she is looking forward to spending more time with her husband Larry, their grandchildren, and their family. We look forward to honoring Patty’s long-time service with us closer to her retirement date.

Submitted by Sue Yoder, Human Resource Board Chair
Summer Highlights

Jazz Sunday
Sunday, July 21, 9:30am and 11am
Services will be led by Dave Aberth (9:30am) and Tom Lehman and friends (11am) Invite a friend along!

Summer Hymn Sing
Sunday, August 11, 11am
Congregation members will be invited to call out a favorite hymn tune from the Chalice and Pilgrim Hymnals as we sing some classic favorites and newer hymns together.

Sunday Funday
Sunday, August 11, for both 9:30 and 11am worship
The children and youth of the congregation are invited to complete a special craft with Associate Minister Antigone during both worship services.

Summer Worship & Picnic
Sunday, August 18, 11am
Gather with us for one worship service at the Lion’s Lodge in Cuyahoga Falls (641 Silver Lake Ave). Worship will followed by a picnic, fellowship, and outdoor games.

Akron Pride
Saturday, August 24, 10am
The Equality for All March steps off in Highland Square at 10am in Highland Square, followed by the festival at 11am.