



MARCH 2020 • Number 2

Chronicle

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF AKRON

Rooted in Christ • Fostering Justice • Celebrating Diversity

Dear friends,

As we enter Lent on our approach to Easter, we can feel again the movement of God's Spirit calling forth resurrection, renewal, and restoration. These are only fully known in community and so our faith calls us into community. It calls us to care for others as we accept God's grace for ourselves. The Christian faith is, at its core and in its practice, a communal faith. Jesus called the first disciples along the shore of Galilee and we read in the book of Acts how the Holy Spirit gathered and extended the church. The church is created as we respond to the Good News and as we begin our journey of discipleship in community.

It's easy for us to err on the side of thinking of the church only as a gathering of independent people forgetting that it is God who calls us through the Spirit and Christ who is our head. It's easy for us to err in another direction too, thinking that the church exists within and because of its physical location or an organizational structure.

One aspect of Lent in the earliest traditions of the church was that it was a time of preparation for those who sought baptism, which traditionally happened on Easter. Baptism is the moment when we publicly declare our desire to be a part of God's Good News, to be a part of Christ's Church. There is beautiful symbolism then in this being the season in which we contemplate our need for reconciliation with God and one another, allowing ourselves to become aware of our vulnerability, our humanity, and our need for community as we come to know grace and restoration more fully.

At First Church, as at most churches, we are a completely volunteer-based organization – people voluntarily affiliate. We call it “covenant” because we believe God calls us into this relationship and that it's a special kind of relationship full of the grace, mercy, forgiveness, and joy we each need and yearn for.

As we seek to follow God's Spirit in every season, let us remember this Lent that the church, our church, is a delicate, Spirit-led creation that always needs our nurture. We are gathered only because we each choose to come, following Christ. This is a truly precious gift!

In faith,

Nanette



Ministry & Structure Evaluation

During last May's Annual Congregational Meeting, the Nominating Board recommended a change in the Bylaws to reduce the number of formally elected Boards (eliminating Music, Christian Education and Christian Outreach) and to instead create more flexible ministry teams: Fellowship, Communion, Care, and Development.

The primary reason the changes were undertaken was because Nominating Board had been unable to fill the 90+ elected positions required in the church Bylaws for a number of years. These changes were adopted by vote of the congregation for a period of one year.

Recently Pastor Nanette convened a Ministry Team Roundtable. A group of 25 or so church leaders representing various elected Boards, the aforementioned ministry teams, staff and other ministries (such as the Food Pantry, Contemporary, Mason CLC, PB&J) met to share information and to review how the new structure is working as we approach this year's congregational meeting in May.

Several questions were posed to the attendees seeking their thoughts and feedback:

1. From your Team's perspective, what is working well in the life of the church?

Highlights:

- More efficient Governing Board meetings,
- New Mason team works well together and is open to having additional help,
- Established lines of communication – now know who to speak to and when/for what, particularly on staff,
- Staff perspective – ministries with definitive outcomes (prayer blanket, PBJ, food pantry) show high participant satisfaction, people very willing to try to figure things out when needed and are gracious about trying new things,
- Pastor perspective – church's vision and the level of commitment and faithfulness, strong lay leadership

2. From your Team's perspective, what could be working better?

Highlights:

- Given changes in investment practices, exploring the relationship between the Endowment and the Stewardship & Finance Board,
- Future vision of our staying in the current building; future reality of cost to remain – how can we be exploring more grant writing and other ways to source funds,
- Lots of room for growth in the children's ministries,
- Ministry to elders – the ministry model has changed and now members don't know if it's happening and how,
- We should celebrate our successes more/more often.

- Not sure how to figure out who can help do what – connecting members/friends with various ministries,
- Ministries should arise from actual need, not perceived need, and be open to shifting, growing, adapting with the times.
- Ministries need to be evaluated and allowed to phase out if they are no longer “salty.”

3. Reflections on the temporary church structure – what is God calling us to do and be in terms of our structure?

Highlights:

- When we adopted the temporary structure, something was said about who to go to for new ideas/projects. We've forgotten so we need a reminder of who to go to when we have an idea,
- Some feel a bit murky on who is taking the lead on some of the things that are not taken care of by boards (e.g. care cards),
- Explore social entrepreneurship: food stand, food truck (sell to businesses, use proceeds to fund meals provided for homeless), employment for underemployed,
- How we have conversations around the life of the church, our ministries, etc.

There was MUCH more discussed and the conversation(s) were rich, powerful and full of optimism for the future of ministry at First Church. The temporary structure will continue to be reviewed by the Governing and Nominating Boards as we anticipate conversation and a proposal for the congregation's consideration at the May Congregational meeting.

If anyone is interested in receiving a copy of the notes that were taken at the Roundtable meeting, please contact Kellie Ramirez, Nominating Board chair or Larry Becker, Moderator. Questions should be directed to Pastor Nanette or Larry Becker, Moderator.

Submitted by Larry Becker, Moderator



Women's History Month Potluck

Please join us for a potluck meal in the church Fellowship Hall following both worship services on Sunday, March 29. Bring a dish to share that was a favorite (to eat or to make) of a woman in your life whom you've most loved and/or admired. Any is fine: appetizer, main, side, salad, or dessert. If you'd like, put a card next to your dish to explain more about it and your relationship to the woman you celebrate. Come and enjoy whether or not you can provide a dish!



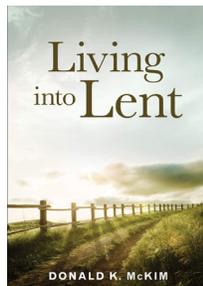
Ash Wednesday

Wednesday, February 26, 7:30pm

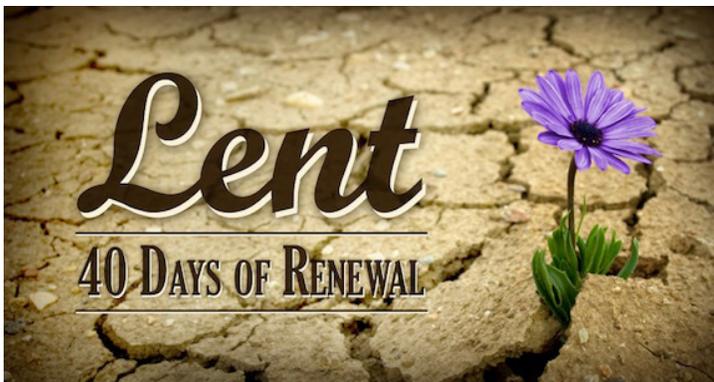
Our Ash Wednesday Service of Remembrance and Recommitment marks the beginning of the season of Lent, the period of 40 days leading to Easter Sunday. Beginning Lent with this service deepens the journey into one's own spirituality and experience of this most important time in the Church. The service includes the optional imposition of ashes, along with quiet, contemplative music, and an affirming message. All are welcome. Childcare will be available.

First Church Reads this Lent

The Lenten journey is a shared journey – Christians join with others along the way of faith, following Jesus and seeking to live out the will and purpose of God. *Living into Lent*, written by noted theologian, educator, and author Donald K. McKim, sets aside time during the Lenten season for readers to reflect on their Christian identities, listen to God's Word and will, and engage in practices that deepen the Christian experience through discipleship.



Copies of the book will be available in the church office after February 15 for a suggested donation of \$10 or may be purchased for Kindle online or sourced from your favorite bookseller.



Commune Lenten Worship

Wednesdays in Lent, 7pm, Chapel

Refresh and renew your spirit during Lent at a midweek service blending contemporary and classic music with an uplifting message and Communion.

Led by Pastor Nanette and Samara Peddle on guitar. Community dinner is served each Wednesday from 6pm. See page 7 for more details.

Holy Week

Palm Sunday, April 5

9:30am Celebrate Worship in the Upper Room

11am Festival Worship in the Meetinghouse with a Palm Processional by the children and Chancel Choir

Maundy Thursday, April 9

6pm in Fellowship Hall

Service in the style of dinner church, gathered around tables in small groups, sharing a meal together and serving Communion with relaxed live music and space for conversation. This intergenerational service focuses on Jesus' New Commandment accompanied by a reenactment of foot washing that attendees can observe or participate in, as they choose.

Good Friday, April 10

9am – noon Chapel open for prayer and meditation

12pm Scripture reading and organ music in the Chapel

7:30pm Traditional Tenebrae Worship in the Meetinghouse

Easter Sunday, April 12

9:30am Worship in the Meetinghouse

A lighthearted and relaxed service followed by an Easter

Egg Hunt for children (toddlers – grade 4)

11am Worship in the Meetinghouse

Uplifting Festival Worship followed by an Easter Egg Hunt for children (toddlers – grade 4)

March Mission of the Month

Limitless Ambition, Inc. uses creative approaches to help girls and young women overcome boundaries to their success. Built and led by women, the nonprofit preserves and promotes the visions of emerging women who have been discouraged from pursuing their goals. By providing resources, training, and support - this young organization assists girls and young women in developing their limitless ambitions. The mission of Limitless Ambition is to empower emerging women in Northeast Ohio to relentlessly pursue their dreams. Limitless Ambition has impacted over 3,000 young women since inception in 2013. Limitless Ambition has been able to make this impact through its four programming arms that advance the organization's goals.

Funding from First Church will support Limitless Ambition's Purposely Chosen Teen Enrichment Programs in Akron, Ohio. This program help students at Jennings Middle School, North High School and STEM Middle School. The Purposely Chosen Teen Enrichment Program is a facilitated curriculum-based program for teen girls ages 13-18. The curriculum is designed around the Social-Emotional Learning Theory, one of the Ohio Department of Education's four learning domains that has been found to contribute to the holistic success of a child. Each week's activity can be completed in an hour or less. Modules are flexible enough to allow for customization according to group needs and interests. Sessions are supervised by the organization's Executive Director, but are directly facilitated by successful young women. Because of their age and life experiences, Purposely Chosen facilitators are able to develop a special rapport with the Purposely Chosen girls, simultaneously serving as invaluable role models and grow themselves from the leadership opportunity. To ensure accessibility and participation, Purposely Chosen sessions all take place during the school day. With this program Limitless Ambition equips girls with the tools they need to pursue passion, demonstrate leadership, and overcome obstacles. Since it began, Limitless Ambition has had over 100 teens complete the program and demonstrate signs of increased self-esteem, increased academic performance and increased emotional regulation skills.

On Sunday, March 8, Alicia Robinson, the Founder and Executive Director at Limitless Ambition will be at the 11am service to share the great work of this organization in the community. You will have the opportunity to meet her and ask questions in the Fellowship Hall following worship.

 **Limitless Ambition**

Love Truck Community Dinner

The next meal service will be on Saturday, March 28 from 4-6:30pm. If you are unable to volunteer, but would like to contribute, the Love Truck is accepting donations of food, either prepared or specific ingredients. Cash donations are always welcome too. For more on the ministry, visit www.thelovetruck.org or contact Tiffany Thorne at 330.592.0282.



THE LOVE TRUCK Sweets needed!

Love Truck is seeking dessert donations for the community dinner! The desserts can be store-bought or homemade and can be dropped off at First Church during the week before the next serving on Saturday, March 28. Please drop donations at the church on the Thursday or Friday before. Thank you!



Habitat for Humanity of Summit County is hosting the 5th annual Build in Style Purse & Accessory Party on May 28. In preparation for this fundraiser, First Church is holding a collection for gently-used purses, jewelry, and women's shoes. This event will directly benefit the HFHSC homeownership program as well as help to raise awareness and funds for other local programs. In February, there will be a collection bin in the front office. Please consider donating if you can!



Change The Conversation

Please join us for our Empowering Epilepsy Support Group with
EMPOWERING EPILEPSY YOGA
in Akron at the
Fairlawn Kiwanis Community Center
3486 S. Smith Rd.
7:00 TO 9:00 P.M.

Meet others who understand epilepsy, learn strategies to manage your or your family members' seizures and make new friends. Food will be provided and the event is free. Wear comfortable clothing and it is suggested that you do not eat anything after 4:15 p.m. that day.

MEETING DATES:
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 15
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15
WEDNESDAY, MAY 13
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT Leigh Goldie • 440-248-6158 • leigh@empoweringepilepsy.org
VISIT - [HTTP://EMPOWERINGEPILEPSY.ORG](http://EMPOWERINGEPILEPSY.ORG) OR WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/EMPOWERINGEPILEPSY

If you, or someone you know, is living with Epilepsy and you have any questions, please contact Tana Alexander at 330.836.8576 MsTA1950@aol.com.

WELCOME

Our Youth on Sunday Mornings

At Church School, children and youth are working through the Holy Moly curriculum and reviewing stories about Jesus and how he cared for people on the margins. These lessons help to challenge and encourage our children and youth to consider how they, too, can show care and love to those around them. Participation in Church School, monthly Sunday Funday, and other youth programming is a great way to stay connected in the lives of our children and youth at First Church, and we encourage you to consider getting involved! For more information, please contact Associate Minister Antigone Lowery: antigone.lowery@akronfcc.org.

Childcare for infants and toddlers is on the 2nd floor Nursery and Village, beginning at 9am every Sunday until after the 11am worship service.

During the 9:30am service in the Upper Room, youth are invited to attend worship with their families. There is an activity carpet available in the worship space and activity packs are available.

At the 11am service, 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. Activity packs are also available in the front foyer.

MARCH 1: Communion Sunday

MARCH 8: Church School classes

MARCH 15: Sunday Funday! with Amber Cullen Art

MARCH 22: Church School classes

MARCH 29: Church school classes

Youth Ministry Nights

First Church is blessed by the presence and participation of many middle school and high school aged students in both the 9:30am and 11am Sunday worship spaces, and desires to create more opportunities for engagement and fellowship. In an effort to engage more deeply with our middle school and high school youth, First Church is hosting Youth Nights for students ages 12-18. These Youth Nights will be an opportunity for both students and adults to discuss relevant issues in a relaxed space with pizza and games. The first Youth Night will be held on Friday, March 20 from 6-8pm in the Education Wing. If you have an interest in being part of this fellowship opportunity with our youth, please contact Associate Minister Antigone Lowery at antigone.lowery@akronfcc.org for more information.

Time with Tots

After 4 meetings, Time with Tots, a space for families with children 3 years and under, has quickly taken shape and is blossoming beautifully! As a new ministry in the life of the church, Time with Tots is a wonderful opportunity for parents and guardians to socialize and discuss with one another all of the joys and challenges of parenting young children. Likewise, the children have an opportunity to play and enjoy other children in a fun and safe space! If you are someone who enjoys young children, or may have wisdom to share with other parents/guardians, we invite you to participate in and support this ministry every 2nd Saturday of the month! Please contact Associate Minister Antigone Lowery at antigone.lowery@akronfcc.org for more information.



Church School Team Meeting

A brief Childcare and Church School Spring Team Meeting will be held on Sunday, March 15 starting at 12:30pm in the Upper Room. This meeting will be an opportunity for staff, teachers, current and prospective volunteers who work regularly with children and youth to review Safe Church policies, emergency preparedness procedures, and other pertinent information. To learn more, join Associate Minister Antigone Lowery on Sunday, March 15 in the Upper Room, following the 11am service. Questions?

Contact Antigone: antigone.lowery@akronfcc.org / 330.780.8122

Easter Egg Hunt

We are holding an Easter Egg hunt for children, toddlers to grade 4, after both services on Easter Sunday, April 12.

The hunt will begin on the front lawn, weather permitting. If we experience bad weather, we will move into the Fellowship Hall. Please consider donating bags of individually wrapped candy that will be used for the hunt! If you can, please consider candies that are vegan and nut-free. The candy can be dropped off at the church office on or before Sunday, April 5. Any extra candy will be distributed to our Food Pantry clients. Thank you!

We are also recruiting a group of volunteers to help fill eggs on Sunday, April 5, following the 11am worship service. If you are available, please contact Antigone: antigone.lowery@akronfcc.org / 330.780.8122



Live in Concert: Zydeco Kings!

We are hosting a special Music Event on Friday, March 20, featuring the Zydeco Kings. The concert is at 7pm in the Meetinghouse. It's free and open to the public so invite your friends and family along!

The Zydeco Kings are a mixture of old school rhythm & blues infused with the spirit of New Orleans, steeped in gumbo boogie woogie, a dash Caribbean soul, rollicking piano, accordion, guitar, saxophone, bass, drums and of course, some rubboard. As you can tell, the Zydeco Kings celebrate the music of Louisiana. You can RSVP for the concert here: <http://zydecokingsatfirstchurchakron.eventbrite.com/?s=119166195>. The concert is free and has open seating in the Meetinghouse. So come out on Friday, March 20, for an evening of rollicking fun at First Church with the Zydeco Kings Live in Concert!

We are seeking ushers and hosts for the event. Please contact Kasey Kalchert if you would be available to volunteer as we welcome the public into our building.



First Congregational Church of Akron + Let's Grow Akron's
Second Annual



Plant Sale



May 16 + 17
9 am - 3 pm

Fundraiser benefits First Church's Feed My Sheep Garden + Let's Grow Akron

Vegetable, herb, annual flower,
and native perennial seedlings

Located at 292 E. Market St.

Entrance and free parking on S. Union St.

Daylight Savings Reminder

Daylight Savings begins on Sunday, March 8. Don't forget to spring your clocks forward! First Church will be hosting the regularly scheduled services times at 9:30am in the Upper Room and 11am in the Meetinghouse. We hope to see you there!

About the Chronicle

The April deadline for the Chronicle is Friday, March 20. Please make your submissions to Kasey Kalchert, Congregational Life Coordinator, at kasey.kalchert@akronfcc.org. Please contact Kasey at 330.253.5109 ext 112 if you have any questions. Thanks for reading!

✕



Easter Flowers

Flowers are \$9 per plant. Please return your completed form with payment to the church office by March 29, 2020.

In memory of: _____

In honor of: _____

The Easter Sunday bulletin will list the names of those being remembered and honored.

We're ordering daffodils, lilies and tulips. Flower selection is first come, first serve on Easter Sunday. Please be sure to pick up your flowers after the 11am Easter Sunday service on April 12 -- or on April 14 when the church reopens.

Ordered by: _____

Phone: _____

**Please make your checks to First Church with "Easter flowers" on the memo line.*

Bible Study for Men*

You are warmly invited to join Rev. Steven Savides for a thematic exploration of the scriptures on the first Saturday of each month. The group meets over breakfast in Fellowship Hall from 7:30 to 9am.

The theme for March 7 and 21 is *Jesus' Prayer for the Unity of the Church* with a focus scripture: John 17; 20-24.

Participants are encouraged to read the focus scriptures before the meeting, to bring a Bible (any translation will do), and to be prepared for a journey through scripture aimed at providing both perspective and depth.

Please RSVP to Kasey Kalchert: kasey.kalchert@akronfcc.org

**The designation "men" is meant to create a space in which all who identify as male or who embrace a masculine identity can feel welcome and find fellowship.*

Wednesday Community Dinners

When our Wednesday programs are offered, we also offer a dinner in Fellowship Hall. The meal will be served at 6pm with a suggested donation of \$8 per person. Please make reservations for each week's dinner online or in the church office by noon each Monday.

The dinners provide a wonderful opportunity to gather with other members in fellowship. Hope to see you there!



Night at the Movies

If you enjoy thought-provoking, insightful, and entertaining cinema, grab your free ticket for Wednesday Night at the Movies at 6:45pm, with discussion to follow. Each week's showing and conversation are facilitated by Bernie Babb. Visitors and new attendees are always welcome. Please contact Bernie with any questions at 330.687.0823. We hope you will join us for a fun evening in the 2nd floor Theatre Room.

To learn more about the movies or what we will watch this month, please visit www.akronfcc.org/explore-learn/groups/movies

Holy Week Programming

During Holy Week, April 5-10, we will be hosting special Holy Week services instead of regular programming. Wednesday programming will begin again on April 15.



Lenten Bible Study

10:45am-noon in the Library through April 1

This Lenten season, join Associate Minister Antigone Lowery for a 6-week study of *Lent in the Liturgical Calendar*. Each week, we will use Scripture and other resources to follow the timeline of events leading up to the death and Resurrection of Jesus. As Theologian Don E. Saliers once observed, "*Lent is a double journey—a journey together (and alone) toward the mystery of God's redemptive embrace in the death and resurrection of Christ. At the same time, it is a journey into the depths of our humanity.*" Together, may we begin to see the beauty and mystery of Lent with fresh eyes and open our hearts to experience the fullness of life and ministry of Jesus which continues through each of us!

Breakfast with the Bunny

Saturday, March 28, 9-11am, Fellowship Hall

Our annual outreach event – Breakfast with the Bunny is free and open to the public; please invite your favorite "peeps" to attend! From 9am-11am, we will be serving a pancake and sausage breakfast while children can meet the Easter bunny!

With breakfast, there will be children's activities, including a seasonal craft. All in attendance can take a picture with the Easter bunny himself and receive a keepsake photo. The event is free and open to the public. We hope to see you there!

We are seeking volunteers to help! If you are interested, please contact Paula Speight or Kasey Kalchert at kasey.kalchert@akronfcc.org.



Earth Saving Ideas:

Waste-Free Challenge

Have you ever considered doing a week of zero waste? This experiment can show just how much trash that you use in a single day or a week, and help you to be more conscientious to reduce your waste as a whole. If you do you decide to give it a try, give yourself a small container, like an old bottle or box, to track the trash you do accumulate. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Look to re-purpose things around your home. Have an empty cereal box? Turn it into a craft for the kids!
- Old t-shirts and towels are great cleaning resources.
- Create an at-home compost pile to minimize food waste (learn more at http://www.compost-info-guide.com/beginner_guide.htm)

Get creative with your non-waste week and if you need extra ideas, Google the challenge! It's popular among bloggers and you can see how others made it successful. Going 100% waste free may seem impossible, but every little bit can help!



Looking for a good book?

Last fall First Church completed a renovation of the Library, which included painting, new carpeting and chairs. Since that time, we have been focused on organizing the books to make it easier to find books on particular topics. Church member, and former librarian, Judy Mills has been working hard to get our books in Dewey Decimal order, and by late spring we should have everything marked, organized and ready to go! In the meantime, if you are interested in viewing or possibly borrowing a book, please stop in the church office, we would be happy to help you! There are also two new bins designated for book return. They are located in the church office or in the Library itself. Please drop your returns as you're finished to get them back on the shelves!



When to Call Your Ministers

You can call on us:

You could also call if you win the lottery, want to request a favorite hymn or have a good joke to tell. No matter what, please do reach out!

- When you don't know your minister, but would like to.
- When you are facing a problem with your job, children, parents or anything or anyone else where a sympathetic friend might be helpful.
- When you've lost your job.
- When you're considering a new career.
- When you're having trouble in your relationship or marriage.
- When someone you know is interested in the church.
- When you'd like to invite a friend to church but you're not sure how to go about it.
- When there is illness or hospitalization. *Remember that hospitals can no longer legally notify a church when you are in the hospital. We won't be able to visit and bring your church family's prayers if you don't let us know you've been hospitalized or ask a friend or family member to let us know.*
- When someone close to you has died, is critically ill, is struggling, or is facing an operation.
- When there is a wedding planned.
- When you are considering a divorce.
- When you must make an important decision.
- When you are pregnant and glad you are or wish you weren't.
- When you would like to have children but can't.
- When you feel ready to join First Church.
- When you are unhappy about First Church.
- When you are delighted with First Church.
- When you need someone to talk with in confidence.
- When you are facing a religious struggle.
- When you have religious questions.
- When you want to have your child baptized.
- When you are feeling joyful and want to share your joy.

Rev. Nanette Pitt, Senior Minister
Office: 330.253.5109, ext. 100
Cell: 330.907.1050
Email: nanette.pitt@akronfcc.org



Antigoné Lowery, Associate Minister
Office: 330.253.5109, ext. 101
Cell: 330.780.8122
Email: antigone.lowery@akronfcc.org





SMALL GROUP ministry

Contem-PAINT

On Sunday, March 1 all are invited to join Amber Cullen in the 2nd Floor Art Room for Contem-PAINT. From 4-6pm, this is a space designed for you to get creative! Contem-PAINT is the first Sunday of each month. For more information, or to RSVP, contact Amber at ambercullenart@gmail.com / 330.310.0406.

Coming Out Christian

Spread the word and join us as we rethink God's love toward LGBTQ+ Christians in this support group. The next meeting is Sunday, March 8.

In a safe space, members of the LGBTQ+ community can come together to explore Christianity and the possibility of understanding faith in new ways as we reclaim and explore our faith journeys. The group meets on the second Sunday of each month in the First Church Chapel from 6-7pm. All ages are welcome.



Women's Spiritual Journey

The Women's Spiritual Journey meets on the first and third Mondays of each month for lunch and discussion. This group of retired women welcomes you to join them. A meal can be purchased from the kitchen for \$8 or you're welcome to bring your own. Please contact Linda Peshina with any questions at 330.606.5874.

Men's Lunch Bunch

A small group of retired men in the church gather each week for lunch, conversation, and a documentary. Newcomers are welcome. On Mondays, a hot lunch is served, starting at 11:45 am. The program is a continuation of the excellent Great Courses series about colonial America. For additional information, contact Howard Tolley at 330.867.1469.

AAIC Council Meeting

All are invited to attend the Akron Area Interfaith Council meeting, to be held at First Church on Tuesday, March 3 starting at 11:30am. Please feel free to bring a brown-bag lunch and join the discussion!



St. Patrick's Day Luncheon

Please join us for a St. Patrick's Day luncheon at 12pm on Tuesday, March 17 in the Fellowship Hall. Come and enjoy a traditional corned beef and cabbage lunch, served with salad and dessert. All this AND entertainment for only \$8! Reservations are a must! Please sign up in the church office by Tuesday, March 10. Wear your green proudly! "Kiss me I'm Irish" buttons are optional.



Soul Armor Yoga

Join Karen Scott for Soul Armor Yoga on March 10 and 24 in the Fellowship Hall at 6pm. Come as you are and connect with yourself, your breath and your body in a yoga class that meets you where you are. Questions? Contact Karen at kscott8356@sbcglobal.net / 440.371.9927.



Parish Nurse

The Parish Nurse Team will be available for the monthly blood pressure and diabetes checks in the Conference Room on Sunday, March 15 between 10:30am and 1pm.

COMMUNITY DISCUSSIONS about Housing in Akron

The Bible and the book *Evicted* by Matthew Desmond will guide conversations about housing issues in Akron.

We will meet the fourth Tuesday of every month at
Cascade Village YMCA, 210 E. North St., Akron, OH 44304
All meetings are from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.

September 24, 2019	January 28, 2020	April 28, 2020
October 22, 2019	February 25, 2020	May 26, 2020
November 26, 2019	March 24, 2020	

REGISTER AT <https://akronhousingdiscussion.eventbrite.com>

The eight session study is a joint effort of the
ast Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church and the United Church of Christ.



To learn more about the ways that members of the First Church community have been engaging in this conversation and are BECOMING involved in housing advocacy in Akron, contact First Church member Margaret Maurer.

Weather Closures

Church Winter Weather closing information can be heard on iAlert WKYC TV3, WEWS TV5 and WTAM 1100 AM radio and will be posted to our church website www.akronfcc.org and Facebook page.



Make your Donations Count!

Not everyone is a Zuckerberg, a Gates, or a Rockefeller, but everyone can maximize their charitable contributions with just a few simple strategies.

- *Give where you really care.* Organizations that you are not too familiar with may not have goals, or strategies to achieve those goals, that match your interests. When you give to organizations that you are actively involved in, you already know that they align with your interests, and it saves you the time and effort of fact checking before you give.
- *Don't be a control freak.* Instead of checking the box that specifically directs your money to a particular region or project, just give what you can and let the organization decide what to do with the money. Charitable donations should be viewed as an investment in social good – trust the experts to make the most of what you can donate.
- *Only donate to a small number of charities, and only donate once each year.* It's a nice impulse to spread out your giving, but many forms of electronic giving systems charge a per transaction processing cost to the charity. Your selected organization will receive more of your money if you give once than if you spread it out over weeks or months, because they will only have to pay the processing cost once. Focusing your donations on a small number of organizations means that you are able to give more substantial gifts to each, allowing them to benefit more from your generosity.

If you would like to discuss how your donations to First Church can be used more effectively, please contact Finance and Operations Manager Janis Worley at janis.worley@akronfcc.org. Thank you!

Submitted by Janis Worley, Finance and Operations Manager



UA Symphony Orchestra

Join us on Thursday, March 12, for a performance of the University of Akron Symphony Orchestra. The concert will be held in our historic Meetinghouse, starting at 7:30pm. Conducted by Dr. Guy Bordo, the orchestra will play selections from Carlyle Sharpe's Native Moments for Orchestra, and the School of Music Concerto Competition winner, Rimsky-Korsakov's *Le Coq d'Or Suite*. The concert is free and open to the public.



Summer Camp Applications

Starting Sunday, March 15, summer camp scholarship applications will be available to children and youth in the front office. Each year, the United Church of Christ hosts children and youth from all across the state of Ohio at Templed Hills for a variety of fun camps, to include sports camps, music camps, and wilderness adventures! If your child or youth has an interest in attending camp at Templed Hills or elsewhere, we encourage them to apply! For more information about camps held at Templed Hills, please contact Associate Minister Antigone: antigone.lowery@akronfcc.org / 330.780.8122



Seasonal Recipes from the Archives

Over the years, First Church has published many recipe books. Each month we'll share a recipe from the archive celebrating the submissions made by church members.

Breakfast Lasagna

Submitted by Sarah Vradenburg

Ingredients:

- 12 lasagna noodles, cooked
- 1 lb of bacon, 1 inch strips
- 1 cup of chopped onions
- 1/3 cup of bacon drippings
- 1/3 cup of flour
- 1/2 tsp of salt
- 1/4 tsp of pepper
- 4 cups of milk
- 12 hard-cooked eggs
- 8 oz of shredded Swiss cheese
- 1/3 cup of grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 tablespoons of chopped parsley

Directions:

- Cook bacon until crisp. Drain drippings, set aside. Cook onions in drippings. Add flour, salt, and pepper; stir until a paste forms. Add milk: stir and cook until thick (almost to a boil). In a 9x13inch baking dish, layer in this order: white sauce, noodles, bacon, sauce, eggs, Swiss cheese. Top with Parmesan cheese. Bake at 350 degrees for 25-30 minutes. Let set for 10 minutes before serving.





In Our Prayers

Mildred Andrews, Marilyn Bednar-Kasarda, Margaret Civitello-Poole, Jessica Fox, Barbara Hansford, Liam Kennep, George Kostan, Betty Speight, Wanda Tettelbach, Art Wallach, and Doug Weyrick.

Thank you!

To the beautiful people at First Church,

I was recently a patient at Akron General Hospital. I'm a very self-sufficient person who works 60-70 hours a week and suddenly I was struck down by a resistant "super-bug" bacteria. It's very difficult to go 100 miles an hour and suddenly have your life upside down and in a sick bed. A halo nurse came into my room with a special bag and she pulled out the "patches of God's Light" square and explained that they are prayed over by your church. I put the square in my hand and read the card and felt an overwhelming blanket of love that people whom I've never met would take the time to walk with me through this difficult time. Thank you for taking the time to construct those squares and how many countless lives you have touched! I hope one day to meet you in Heaven and rejoice together. Thank you for the work you are doing and making a difference in someone's life.

Love, Mary

Dear Pop Tab Partner,

Thank you so much for your generous pop tab gift! They're on their way to a local recycler who will turn them into cash for us.

Since we started our Pop Tab Program in 2009, it has earned [the Ronald McDonald] House an average of \$2,000 to \$4,000 a year... money we have put to good use for our families. Thanks again for helping us keep families close!

From Susan, House Volunteer



Sunday Parking at Church

Please remember the upper parking lot nearest to the church building is reserved for disabled drivers on Sundays and the lower lot for those who have mobility challenges.

Hearing Assistance Devices

If you are in need of a hearing assistance device for the 11am worship service, please stop by the church office. Our devices can connect with the user's personal hearing aid or we can provide an earphone. We ask that users return the devices to the office immediately following worship each week.

Sermon Recordings Available

Did you miss a Sunday service and still want to hear the Word? You can listen online at akronfcc.org or request a CD copy of the sermon. To request a copy, please see the form in the sign-up sheet binder in the front office. You will be notified when your copy is available for pick-up.

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**.

Seeking Lay Readers

Would you be interested to read scripture at the 11am worship service? For more information, or to sign up, please contact Kasey Kalchert at kasey.kalchert@akronfcc.org or 330.253.5109 ext 112.

Worship Flowers

First Church requests donations of worship flowers for the 11am service. If you would like to honor, celebrate, or remember a loved one, please contact Kasey Kalchert at 330.253.5109 x112 to see which dates are available. Order forms are available in the office.



Homeless Outreach

We are accepting donations for winter clothing items, including winter items such as gloves, socks, hats, scarves, pants, sweaters, etc. Please bring your donations to the front office. Thank you!

Pop Tabs to Help Families

Did you know the Ronald McDonald House of Akron turns pop tabs into cash to help support operations of the House and to provide services for families? Collect your pop tabs and help families who have sick children at Akron Children's Hospital! Drop your tabs off anytime in the church office. Thank you!



Rooted in Christ · Fostering Justice · Celebrating Diversity



Event Highlights

Ash Wednesday Services

Wednesday, February 26, 7:30pm, Chapel

Begin Lent with our Ash Wednesday service. More information on page 3.

Akron-Area Interfaith Council Meeting

Tuesday March 3, 11:30am, Fellowship Hall

More information can be found on page 9.

Bible Study for Men*

Saturday, March 7 and 21, 7:30-9:30am, Fellowship Hall

Be sure to RSVP for the March meetings! More information can be found on page 7.

Time with Tots

Saturday, March 14, 9-10am, Village and Nursery

Families with children ages 3 and under are invited. Find more information on page 5.

Zydeco Kings

Friday, March 20, 7pm, Meetinghouse

The Zydeco Kings are coming to First Church! More information is on page 6.

Breakfast with the Bunny

Saturday, March 28, 9-11am, Fellowship Hall

More information on page 7.

