



SUMMER 2020 • Number 5

Chronicle

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH OF AKRON

Rooted in Christ · Fostering Justice · Celebrating Diversity



Beloved friends,

We have been called for such a time as this. We have been prepared for such a time as this.

In an everyday, linear sense of time – what might be best understood in terms of the Greek word *chronos* – we can look, in this general election year, to reports and statistics about how the coronavirus is affecting some groups in society more acutely than others, to news stories about Black and Brown citizens being unjustifiably killed by law enforcement officers more frequently than white citizens, to the disproportionate mass incarceration of Black and Brown men, and to the growing chorus throughout society demanding greater equality for a vast intersectional array of peoples. We can listen to the rhetoric of national leaders and see how white privilege and supremacy have been naturalized to such a high degree in our society that many in our nation and communities either cannot or choose not to face the truth that some lives simply do not matter as much as others.

Even more, orienting ourselves to a different sense of time – what the Greeks identified by the word *kairos* – we can begin to look through the headlines to the underlying causes of injustice as well as God’s continuing love for and action in the world. As we see the moment we’re in as one that is laden with possibility and opportunity to bring about a Christly sense of justice and peace in our society, we can find reason to hope that a different world is possible – here and now.

When we embrace the current moment as a *kairos* moment, we can join our voices with those of Black theologians in South Africa at the height of apartheid who boldly declared in the aptly named Kairos Document (1985):

The time has come. The moment of truth has arrived. [Our country] has been plunged into a crisis that is shaking the foundations and there is every indication that the crisis has only just begun... It is the KAIROS moment of truth not only for apartheid but also for the Church... A crisis is a judgment that brings out the best in some people and the worst in others. A crisis is a moment of truth that shows us up for what we really are. There will be no place to hide and no way of pretending to be what we are not in fact. At this moment in [our country] the Church is about to be shown up for what it really is and no coverup will be possible. (South African Kairos Document, 1985)

In our time of crisis now there is really no place to hide. Mordecai reminded Esther as the Jews faced a grave existential threat: “Do not think that in the king’s palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews... Who knows? Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this” (Esther 4:13-14). Perhaps we too can recognize that as “a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people” (see 1 Peter 2:9), we have been called for just such a time as this!

I would venture to say that we are indeed called. Not only are we called, but we are equipped for such a time as this!

Grace and peace,

Reverend Nanette Pitt, Senior Minister

A Letter from Pastor Antigóné

CONCERNING THE DEATH OF GEORGE FLOYD AND OTHERS, ANTI-RACISM, AND PROTEST

To share Christ's light and welcoming, open and loving message with all people. This is not just the mission statement of our church, but a core part of our identity as disciples of Jesus. As an African-American minister of this church who has experienced and witnessed the depth of this light and welcoming message, I feel compelled at this time to speak candidly about the need for this to be shown outside of our church walls, specifically towards our Black brothers and sisters. The current state of our nation as it relates to the deaths of innocent Black people at the hands of law enforcement, the obligation of the church to model anti-racism, and the need for protest as a way of opposing injustices towards Black Americans cannot be ignored. Lest we forget that we have been called to love one another as Christ first loved us, we must act in solidarity with our Black neighbors, and we must act now.

The recent murder of George Floyd, an unarmed Black man at the hands of officers in the Minneapolis Police Department, as well as others, was an unnecessary atrocity

First Christian Church Partners

First Christian Church in Cuyahoga Falls is seeking affiliation with the United Church of Christ. They are currently affiliated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and would like dual affiliation with both bodies.

In the process that leads to this, a church is mentored by another that is already affiliated. Earlier this year, our local Living Water Association of the United Church of Christ approached First Church through Pastor Nanette to ask if we might be a match for this journey. Our Governing Board unanimously approved our providing this support, knowing that we have supported many other churches before and have various ties to our sister churches in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

If you have interest in being a part of the small group of members from each church who will meet remotely via Zoom in September and October to share in conversation, please contact Pastor Nanette.

Before our Association's meeting in November when the area UCC church representatives will vote on whether to receive First Christian into covenant, we will have a few opportunities to meet together remotely and learn more about one another and our stories. Please find information in these pages about the upcoming pulpit exchange between Pastor Debbie Saxe and Pastor Nanette, as well as our PUBLIC Theology night for conversation via zoom. Join us in celebrating a sister church, new to the UCC.

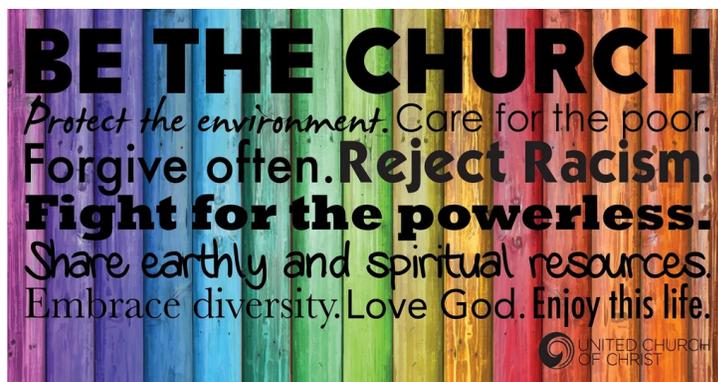
that stems from several hundred years of systemic racism in America. Failing to name and call out such an inhumane act for what it is not only demeans the humanity of the individual, but inadvertently excuses the offense. It is true that Jesus instructed his disciples to forgive those who repent, but he first instructed them to rebuke those who offend. We cannot reach the point of repentance until we have first called out the offense.

The term, "anti-racism" may make some people uncomfortable, but what's more uncomfortable is choosing to ignore or dismiss how racism has and continues to subjugate Black and Brown people in our country. Practicing anti-racism does not just mean that you are against racism, but rather that you educate yourself about matters concerning people of color so that you might be equipped to lead and participate in initiatives that better the lives of Black and Brown people. Christ modeled for us the need to enter into spaces that were not our own so that we may lift up those in the margins; therefore, we have a responsibility to do the same.

Likewise, the protests across the nation and world in response to these harsh realities towards Black people serve as an outward expression of years of pain, frustration, and injustice. To assume that everyone who protests either in the streets or in private is doing so to cause havoc misses the point. Protests declare that we will no longer idly stand by and accept the status quo of inequality and that we will use our collective voices to demand what should always have always been – freedom and equality.

As a Black minister of this church who has been deeply affected by the harsh realities of racial inequality in this country, I see this moment as a necessary opportunity to remind us of who we are. We are disciples of Christ, each made in the image of God with value and worth. We are the hands and feet of Jesus in this world. Together, and only together, can we truly "share Christ's light and welcoming, open and loving message with all people" by standing in solidarity with our Black brothers and sisters.

In Christ,
Antigóné Lowery, Associate Minister





Jazz Sunday in July

This summer we are thrilled to have the opportunity to welcome local jazz artists back to our Festival worship service for a special music Sunday. Join us remotely on Sunday, July 26, at 11am to hear Theron Brown, Chris Coles, Jordan McBride, and Tom Lehman sharing their faith through music.

Pulpit Exchange

On Sunday, August 16, our Pastor Nanette and Pastor Debbie Saxe of First Christian Church, Cuyahoga Falls will switch pulpits as our two churches are getting to know one another this summer and fall. First Christian is seeking to become a part of the United Church of Christ.

Hymn Sing Service Online

View anytime at <https://vimeo.com/414589390>

Featuring our beautiful Casavant Frères organ, trumpet, flute, and the quartet, the service is a great blessing of song and sound! Recorded in the Meetinghouse, it brings us stirring hymns, reminding us of God's grace and comfort.

A Midweek Time of Reflection

WEDNESDAY PRAYER AND REFLECTION

Join our pastors each Wednesday at noon for a live stream time of prayer and inspiring readings and ideas. If you miss them, you can always find the posts on Facebook and on our website afterwards to watch at your leisure.



Sunday Worship Online

While our building remains closed, worship continues on Sunday mornings as the church gathers together online.

NEW WORSHIP FORMAT BEGINNING IN AUGUST

From Sunday, August 2, until September 13, our worship format will shift from live streaming to one combined service at 9:30am on zoom. This will allow for more interaction and a time of fellowship following each week's service. Weekly registration will be necessary. Please visit <https://bit.ly/AkronFirstChurch> to register. Recordings of the services will be posted to our website and Facebook page for those who would prefer to watch worship at 11am or another time.

In July, please continue to join us for livestreamed worship services at 9:30 and 11am at www.akronfcc.org/live or on www.facebook.com/FCCofAkron. Before services, worship materials – the order of service as well as children's activity bulletins – are available to download at www.akronfcc.org/live. A *Thoughts for the Young* video is also posted each week.

Words About Worship

I participate because I need to hear the message, it helps me set the tone for my week and center me. Having even an online form of church also provides some "normalcy" in such crazy times. ~Gina

I attend online service because worshiping together is important. I feel the loving energy that is sent forth. It gives me hope that we will return to seeing each other in person. First Church is alive! ~Judy

I work Sundays, so it is great to be able to watch the service when I am able to. ~Sam

I so appreciate the quick adaptation First Church has made (continues to make) to online format! The tech challenges are what they are, and don't frustrate us. We understand! We appreciate the improvements that have been made to the mics/sound, so that we better can hear all speakers/vocalists. ~Andy

The service is very meaningful and it wouldn't feel like "Sunday" if I didn't participate. I wish to express my gratitude to everyone who works hard every week to make it happen. ~Sue

I really miss church! The online worship helps me to still feel connected to my First Church family. ~Terri

Worship has been my "rock" through this time of great isolation, and great concern, due to COVID-19 and to the social injustice in our society. I wait for this service every week and am so thankful for this ministry in our lives. ~Christi

I appreciate the work the volunteers are doing distributing food, singing, running the cameras, other mission work, everything Nanette and Antigoné are doing. THANK YOU! Thanks also for representing at peaceful demonstrations to inspire change in our city. ~Elaine

I love the online service and midweek prayer time! ~Karen

Summer Garden

I'm happy to report that the 2020 Plant Sale Fundraiser was a huge success, thanks entirely to the support of our community! Whether you volunteered in person, helped plan the event, shared it on social media, or purchased seedlings - your time, energy, and generosity of spirit enabled us to exceed our goal by raising over \$5000 for Let's Grow Akron and the Feed My Sheep Garden here at First Church. Thank you to our volunteers for being willing to go out of their comfort zone during a global pandemic in order to help our community grow their own food.

And with that, the growing season has begun in earnest! Tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, okra, basil, parsley, kale, collards, Swiss chard, and tomatillos have been transplanted; beans, radishes, beets, turnips, carrots, lettuce, arugula, and kohlrabi have been seeded. Flowers have set on our new strawberry plants, and the blackberries that were transplanted in the fall are covered in leaves. Early June is a special time in the garden. We find ourselves in a brief lull when the first round of crops are in, the weeds haven't come back yet, and there's still a few weeks until the first market harvest. I cherish this moment. It is in these pauses that I'm known to say things like "How is it June already?" and "We have plenty of space here for a chicken coop..."

I heard feedback from our Plant Sale volunteers that it was a relief to be able to socialize with other people again from a safe distance and while working for a great cause. If this appeals to you, the Feed My Sheep Garden is accepting volunteers throughout the growing season. Are you able to take a morning off from working at home? Were you laid off and looking for a way to keep busy? Do you have older teens whose summer job or sports camp was cancelled? Volunteering in the garden is an excellent way to stay active, engage with your community, and support the essential Food Justice Ministry here at First Church while maintaining social distance and following all safety guidelines from the Ohio Department of Health. If you have questions or are interested in getting involved, please contact me at sam@letsgrowakron.org.

Submitted by Sam Phillips, Garden Manager

Governing Board Meetings

The monthly Governing Board meetings are open to any members and friends of First Church. Summer meetings will take place on Zoom on the last Monday of the month: Monday, July 27 and Monday, August 31, at 6:30pm on zoom. If you would like to attend, please contact both Moderator Larry Becker and Kasey Kalchert at kasey.kalchert@akronfcc.org to receive the agenda and link.



SMALL GROUPS

Happy Hour PUBLIC Theology

On Thursday, July 23 at 6:30pm, you are invited to join an online group from First Church and First Christian Church for happy hour, more commonly known as PUBLIC Theology. Join us, via zoom, to talk about life, faith, the multiverse, and anything else that may be on your mind at the moment. Feel free to bring a drink or cocktail to the conversation. Please RSVP for the event to Kasey Kalchert at kasey.kalchert@akronfcc.org by 5pm for the link.

Coming Out Christian

This summer the group will be meeting on zoom on July 12 and 26 and August 9 and 23. This group provides members of the LGBTQ+ community a space to come together to explore Christianity. To join the discussion, please RSVP to Kasey Kalchert at kasey.kalchert@akronfcc.org by 5pm before each Sunday meeting and she'll email the link so you can join the conversation.



Bible Study for Men*

You are warmly invited to join Steven Savides online for an exploration of the scriptures on the first and third Saturday morning of the month at 8am. Participants are encouraged to have a bible with them (any translation) and to be prepared to journey through scripture with thought-provoking conversation.

Steven is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Notre Dame and an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ. To attend, please RSVP to Kasey Kalchert by 4pm the Friday before at kasey.kalchert@akronfcc.org and she'll email you the zoom link to join the conversation.

**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.*

Cross and the Lynching Tree

Join our pastors for thoughtful conversation online to discuss "The Cross and the Lynching Tree" by James H. Cone. Discussions will be held every Wednesday evening from 7-8:30pm on Zoom.

Please RSVP to kasey.kalchert@akronfcc.org by 5pm each Wednesday to receive a link to join the conversation. Each week's conversation will begin at 7pm. At 7:15pm, the group will close to latecomers. We appreciate your understanding given the nature of the conversation.

About the book: The cross and the lynching tree are the two most emotionally charged symbols in the history of the African American community. Both the cross and the lynching tree represent the worst in human beings and at the same time a thirst for life that refuses to let the worst determine our final meaning.

Copies can be sourced from your favorite bookseller. We hope that you will join the discussion this August!

Coffee & Conversation

Are you missing the chance to see and catch up with other members and friends? Join our pastors and others from church online for fellowship. RSVP to Kasey at kasey.kalchert@akronfcc.org and you'll receive a zoom link to join the conversation.

Thursday, July 16, 8:30-9:30am and 6:30-7:30pm
Thursday, August 20, 8:30-9:30am and 6:30-7:30pm



Time with Tots Breakfast

Join Pastor Antigone on July 25 and August 15 from 8am-9:30am for another time of connection and fellowship. As we anticipate gathering again in person, we hope that this virtual opportunity for families with toddler age children proves to be just as valuable and fun! To RSVP, please send an email to Kasey Kalchert at kasey.kalchert@akronfcc.org the Friday before, by 4pm. We look forward to seeing each of you bright and early with coffee in hand!



Cooling Heats Our Ministry Up

First Church as a whole is blessed by the generosity of our individual members – by you and others. In this season of ongoing ministry, we have been identifying a number of projects that would help us serve our neighbors more effectively and we have been blessed by seed monies to begin funding these projects.

The most pressing need is for an air conditioning system for the Feeding Hope Food Pantry storage and serving areas. According to the Foodbank, dry storage areas are to be kept between 50 and 70 degrees. Our storage and serving areas are large, high ceilinged rooms, containing eight large coolers and chest freezers that generate heat. That, coupled with the fact that these rooms do not have any air conditioning or venting systems built-in, means we are not meeting the temperature requirement. Last summer, we added portable units which help to bring down the temperature, but the mobile units do not have the necessary capacity and cost an excessive amount to operate. To add the appropriate air conditioning units, plus the necessary electrical work that would be needed, would cost approximately \$25,000.

In addition, food pantry coordinators, Clay and Deb Canfield, proposed in 2019 that we upgrade to a commercial walk-in freezer in order to store larger quantities of frozen items, such as meat. Adding a commercial grade freezer would provide a larger, better performing freezer unit, and would allow First Church to decommission all four of the current, residential quality chest freezers. A new commercial walk-in freezer, (approximately 8' x 8' x 9'), plus additional electrical wiring, would cost close to \$16,000.

Last, but certainly not least, the Building and Grounds Board recommended that consideration be given to the needed repair of the air conditioning unit that services both the Upper Room and Fellowship Hall. This unit ceased function in the fall of 2018, and has not been operational since that time. Due to the age and complexity of the system, parts of the current unit must be replaced during the repair which will cost approximately \$66,000.

These three projects total \$107,000. First Church applied for and received a \$4,000 grant from Living Water Association of the United Church of Christ, specifically for the walk-in freezer, and a First Church member has donated \$5,000 towards this project, bringing our total funding needed down to \$98,000.

Ruth Ellen Smith, a First Church member since 1949, who passed away on July 18, 2019, left the church a bequest of \$75,000 showing her appreciation and support of our programs and ministries. The bequest was received late this spring and upon the recommendations of various boards and ministry leaders, the Governing Board

voted in June to move forward with the Food Pantry air conditioning upgrade and the freezer project, with the remaining monies to be put towards the Upper Room/ Fellowship Hall air conditioning project when more funds are raised.

Please consider making a designated donation towards this project. Gifts in any amount help us reach our goal.

The two projects we are able to move ahead with now would never have had the chance to be addressed without the generosity and forward thinking of Ruth Ellen Smith. Please consider adding First Church to your will or trust, and help provide for future generations and blessing the church's continued ministries. Contact Janis Worley, Finance and Operations Manager for questions or more information at janis.worley@akronfcc.org or 330-253-5109 x111.



Members and staff delivered summer gift and inspirational bags to 39 families with children in the church, reminding them that they are not far from our thoughts.

Congregational Meeting Called

The next Congregational meeting will be held on Sunday, September 13, after one combined online 9:30am service.

The agenda will include the congregation voting on a new slate of Board members and Church Officers for 2020-21. Copies of the agenda, prior meeting minutes, and absentee ballots for those unable to attend will be available prior to the meeting. Currently, the Governing Board is planning to hold this meeting remotely on zoom. Registration is necessary, please visit <https://bit.ly/AkronFirstChurch>.

For additional information, please contact Moderator Larry Becker at larrybecker2900@yahoo.com.

Updates from the Food Pantry

First Church's Food Justice Ministries have remained active during the pandemic. The food pantry has continued to serve clients every Tuesday morning from 9:30-11am and on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month from 6:30-7:30pm. A mostly new crew of volunteers and the church staff and pastors have been supporting the continuation of the ministry with Deb and Clay Canfield continuing to offer overall leadership and guidance remotely.

The food pantry was recently featured on Akron's Channel 5 News. See it in action (skip ahead to 5:10): www.youtube.com/watch?v=r6smnMk2pWY&feature=youtu.be&t=120

Our thanks to all of you who have been praying for those hardest hit by this pandemic, to those who have donated to support this ministry especially during this time, and to all who have been able to volunteer to make it possible.



Patio Pollinator Garden Project

The church patio at our Chapel entrance had a wonderful makeover this past fall, including laying new concrete, renovating benches, and adding a bicycle rack. Now we can support the environment and our Feed My Sheep vegetable garden with a newly envisioned pollinator garden alongside our patio. If you are interested in donating plants either through a purchase or as you split plants in your garden this autumn, or if you are able to spend a little time doing some planting in this area, please contact project coordinator, Sarah Vradenburg.

Nominating is Happening

Our church ministries remain as vital during the pandemic and many boards and committees have been meeting online as they adapt and continue their ministry. In anticipation of our Congregational Meeting on Sunday, September 13, 2020, the Nominating Board will begin recruiting members for our various boards. Are you interested in learning more about the activity of a particular board? Would you like to support the church and be more involved this program year? Please visit www.akronfcc.org/nominating to volunteer or contact the Nominating Board chairperson, Kellie Ramirez.



Cookware Donations

Are you using the pandemic as an opportunity to spring clean? Do you have spare cookware? Buying new dishes? Upgrading your silverware? Don't throw away your old pans or dishes, donate them to the Feeding Hope Food Pantry. These items are greatly appreciated by our clients. We can accept your donations when the church building reopens to the public. Please also hold donations of other items for the food pantry until this time. Thank you!



Pride Time in Akron

The Annual Pride Festival and Equality March is hosted in Akron each August but has been cancelled this year due to the coronavirus pandemic.

First Church has actively supported this event as a sponsor since its inception. Many of our members march and then serve to welcome our LGBTQ+ family, friends, and neighbors, sharing our open and affirming stance, at a festival booth.

Our Open and Affirming Welcome Statement, printed below, affirms the stance we chose to take as a congregation in 2016 and it also speaks aspirationally of the identity we believe God is still calling us to grow into. It is broad and deep in its focus and call, and it will continue to invite our attention, prayer, and discernment in order for us to fully live into the vision it casts of the beloved community.

While we appreciate the opportunity each year at Pride to represent an aspect of our Open and Affirming Welcome, it is the ministry our faith calls us to each and every day. So while we regret that Akron Pride will not occur in 2020, we recommit ourselves to our statement and its values.

OPEN AND AFFIRMING WELCOME STATEMENT

First Congregational Church of Akron unconditionally affirms all people as we live out our call to follow Jesus Christ and his teaching of inclusive love.

We welcome people of every race, age, nationality, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, family circumstance, socio-economic status, physical and mental ability, or spiritual background. We invite all who are seeking God's presence in their lives to participate fully in our church life, ministry, and leadership.

We strive to be a safe place, free from the fear of judgment, where wounds can heal, differences are cherished, and inclusivity is intentional. We commit ourselves to the struggle against injustice, discrimination, violence, and hatred, in order to foster a world of peace and wholeness.

God loves you. Christ invites you. We embrace and celebrate you.



Various essential building projects have been happening during the pandemic. Most notably the repair of the foyer plaster and stained glass windows in the Upper Room. A very big THANK YOU to the current Building and Grounds board (chair Denny Conrad, Todd Brown, Kathy Petsko, and Eric Roberts), and to all that served on that board in the past few years, for their dedication to pursuing these projects.

Summer Pride Art Project

While our building may remain closed to in-person gatherings, God's Doors are Open to All!

We would like to make our welcome plain this summer by placing an open door art installation on our lawn on Market Street. Do you have an old or unused door you could donate? Do you have a can of paint or some brushes to donate? Do you have a few hours to paint outdoors or help install this project on our lawn? Please contact Congregational Life Coordinator, Kasey Kalchert at kasey.kalchert@akronfcc.org or 330.253.5109 x112.

Earth-Saving Ideas

Milk Carton Bird Feeder

What you'll need:

- Half-gallon milk carton
- Hole punch
- Box-cutter
- String or yarn
- Chopstick
- Birdseed



Directions:

1. Clean the milk carton with soap and water and dry.
2. Cut a semi-circular shape into one side of the carton. It should be about one-third from the bottom of the carton. Cut another of the same size and shape directly across on the opposite side of the carton.
3. Using the hole punch, cut a small hole below each of the openings you just made. Make it wide enough to stick your chopstick all the way through the carton, to act as a perch for the bird.
4. Get creative! You can use paint or markers to decorate the bird feeder. Use any other items around the house too, such as buttons.
5. Using the hole punch, make a hole at the top of your milk carton, and another directly across. Using your yarn, string through and tie with enough space to be able to hang your carton.
6. Fill your carton with bird seed and hang from a low hanging branch.
7. Enjoy the birds that come to visit!



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! We will begin accepting donations again when our building reopens to the public. Thanks!

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.

Fresh Salsa

Submitted by Peggy Young Arvay

Ingredients:

- 1 large tomato
- 1 medium red onion
- 1 green pepper
- 1 jalapeño, or more to taste
- 2 tablespoons of cilantro
- Juice of 1 lime
- 1 tablespoon of olive oil
- 1 mango
- 1 cup of corn
- 1 can of rinsed black beans

Directions:

- Chop tomatoes, red onion, green pepper, jalapeño, cilantro and mango and combine. Add lime juice, olive oil, corn, and black beans. Refrigerate to let flavors blend.
- Serve with tortilla chips, or anything you'd like.



Logic Puzzle

There are four children, Amanda, Bill, Cathy, and Dorothy that are in first, second, third, or fourth grade. Each child has a different favorite color: blue, red, pink or green. Use the clues below to figure out what grade each child is in and what their favorite color is.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Blue	Red	Pink	Green
Amanda								
Bill								
Cathy								
Dorothy								
Blue								
Red								
Pink								
Green								

CLUES:

1. The 4th grader is a boy who does not like pink.
2. Dorothy is the youngest and likes blue.
3. Cathy is one grade ahead of Amanda.
4. The 2nd grader likes red.



Love & Marriage in a Pandemic

Congratulations to Natalie Miller and Caroline Altizer on their wedding! Their marriage ceremony was held in the Meetinghouse on Saturday, June 22, with Pastor Nanette Pitt officiating.

Like many couples in 2020, Natalie and Caroline faced the dilemma of whether to postpone their planned nuptials or go ahead with a private ceremony and no reception. Caroline and Natalie found a creative solution: taking their wedding to the road! Natalie and Caroline's story was featured on the community pages in the Akron Beacon Journal on June 9, which you can read at www.the-daily-record.com/news/20200605/love-in-time-of-coronavirus--pandemic-causes-couples-to-change-wedding-plans Congrats to the happy couple!



In Memory

We extend our prayers to the following families...

Susan Berg-Herman and Theresa Berg and their families following the passing of Ed Berg on June 5, 2020. Ed and Kathy, who passed away last October, were active members of First Church for the past 20 years. A memorial service was held in the Meetinghouse on Saturday, June 27, with Pastor Nanette Pitt officiating. The service was limited to immediate family, but streamed online for the congregation to view.

The family of Bill Williams, who passed away into the next life on June 8, 2020. Bill was a lifetime member of First Church, joining membership in 1946. Despite living in Virginia to be near his family, Bill's passion for our worship and food pantry where he had volunteered, never waned.

In Our Prayers

We offer daily prayers of thanksgiving for all who are struggling in body, mind, or spirit each day. We pray especially for all those around the world who are affected by the coronavirus; those who are sick and those who care for them, those who work tirelessly to provide treatment and vaccine. We give thanks for our public officials and leaders, those who staff hospitals and work in grocery stores, for first responders and emergency service providers. Within our community we pray for Lola, Marilyn, Margaret, Jessica, Carole, Barbara, Carole, George, Chuck, Madeline, Sean, Betty, Wanda, Art, and Doug.

Thank you

Dear First Church,

On behalf of the members of the Akron Board of Education, I would like to thank you for your generous donation.

Your donation will be used by Project Rise in support of printing street cards.

Support such as yours enhances the education of our students and we thank you for making a difference. We are honored that you have chosen to support the Akron Public Schools.

Sincerely, Ryan Pendleton, CFO Treasurer, Akron Board of Education

Devotional Booklet Now Online

Once a month, First Church receives and distributes copies of The Upper Room magazine around the building, a free resource available to anyone who wishes to keep a copy. The magazine is a devotional resource where people all over the world are able to share prayers and stories of faith.

During this time, as we continue our efforts to social distance and with our building being closed to the public, The Upper Room publication has made the July/August 2020 issue of The Upper Room magazine available for download at www.akronfcc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/URE_July-August2020.pdf

We hope that you will find The Upper Room valuable during this time, and please know that physical copies will be available in the church, once a month, once we are re-opened.

Congratulations!

Congratulations to Lisel Shoffner Powell and Eric Powell on the birth of their baby daughter! Charlotte Helena Powell was born on May 11, 2020, in Tennessee. Susanne Shoffner is the proud grandmother.

Congratulations to Janis Worley, Finance and Operations Manager at First Church, who has been selected for Leadership Akron's 2020-2021 Signature Program! Learn more at www.leadershipakron.org/news-events/leadership-akron-announces-signature-class-37

Congratulations 2020 College & High School Graduates connected to our church community – Jonathan Lemmon, Cassidy McCallion, and Colin Pierce Bishop.

Please share your family's news in our next edition by emailing Kasey Kalchert at kasey.kalchert@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**.

First Congregational Church of Akron				
2020-21 Budget				
	2020-21 Budget	2019 Actual	\$ Change	% Change
INCOME				
Pledge Income	\$186,242	\$209,771	-\$23,529	-11.2%
Non-pledge Income	\$60,000	\$66,151	-\$6,151	-9.3%
External Donations and Grants	\$78,000	\$0	\$78,000	0.0%
Food Pantry	\$31,773	\$28,506	\$3,267	11.5%
Other Special Ministries	\$7,994	\$14,870	-\$6,876	-46.2%
Endowment, Sprowls Trust, Pollock	\$591,297	\$569,727	\$21,570	3.8%
Rental and Food Service Income	\$4,000	\$30,318	-\$26,318	-86.8%
Other Income	\$13,850	\$76,480	-\$62,630	-81.9%
TOTAL	\$973,156	\$995,823	-\$22,667	-2.3%
EXPENSES				
Personnel	\$503,066	\$489,352	\$13,714	2.8%
Admin and Mktg	\$49,805	\$49,804	\$1	0.0%
Membership Board	\$1,960	\$5,703	-\$3,743	-65.6%
Governing Board	\$10,000	\$21,138	-\$11,138	-52.7%
Food Pantry	\$42,000	\$41,829	\$171	0.4%
Other Special Ministries	\$35,379	\$39,688	-\$4,309	-10.9%
Congregational Care	\$6,230	\$4,591	\$1,639	35.7%
Music	\$24,350	\$19,793	\$4,557	23.0%
Christian Education	\$6,662	\$2,905	\$3,757	129.3%
Fellowship Team	\$440	\$446	-\$6	-1.3%
Development Team	\$600	\$0	\$600	0.0%
Food Service Expense	\$2,500	\$21,375	-\$18,875	-88.3%
Maintenance/Utilities	\$290,164	\$309,488	-\$19,324	-6.2%
TOTAL	\$973,156	\$1,006,112	-\$32,956	-3.3%
Net Income/Loss	\$0	-\$10,289	\$10,289	-100.0%

Our Fiscal Year Has Shifted

Happy New Year! No, its not the first of January, but it is a new year for First Church and our financial systems!

In 2019, the Governing Board, upon the recommendation of the Stewardship and Finance Board, agreed to shifting the First Church fiscal year to match its program year allowing new board members and board chairs, normally elected in May, to start their program year with a fresh budget. This change was approved at a Congregational Meeting, and put into effect on January 1, 2020.

This change meant that First Church needed a transitional budget to cover the “stub period”, (the period between the end of the old ‘calendar’ fiscal year and the start of the newly adjusted ‘program’ fiscal year). That stub period was from January 1, 2020 through May 31, 2020. The final financials for that period, along with the final 2019 financials, will be presented at the Congregational Meeting in September. If you would like to view them sooner, please contact Stewardship and Finance Board chair, Bob Renner.

Our new fiscal year will now operate from June 1 through May 31 each year, and program budgets will follow the

same pattern. This means that the budget process will now occur each year during late winter/early spring.

Giving statements will continue to be released quarterly, and will show the annual calendar giving amounts for tax purposes.

We encourage you to review your pledge and/or recurring gift in light of this shift so that you might continue to invest in the valuable ministry and mission we are undertaking collectively at this crucial time. Pledging will follow the new fiscal year, with your pledge starting in June and ending in May the following year, and pledge status updates will be provided on the quarterly statements. If you have any questions or concerns, or would like more information on how to set up a pledge, how to use the First Church online donation page (www.akronfcc.org/donate), or how to set up or change a recurring donation, please contact Janis Worley at janis.worley@akronfcc.org or 330.253.5109 x111.





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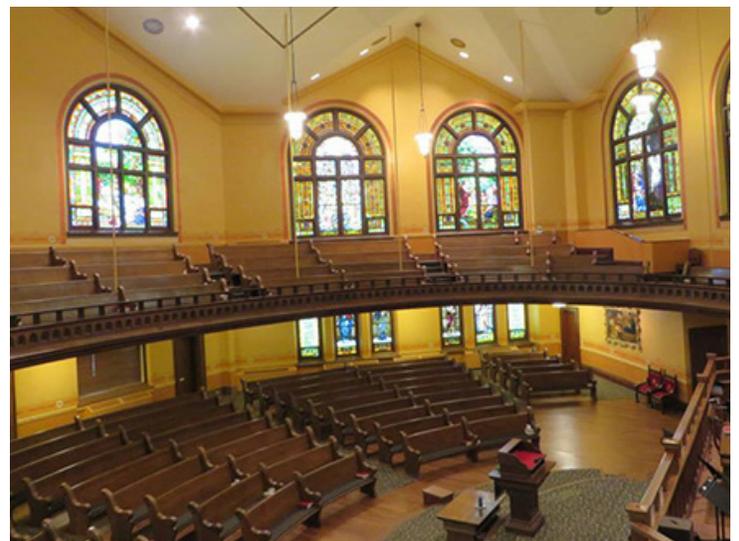
Now Streaming Sunday Worship Services

JOIN WORSHIP FROM WHEREVER YOU ARE!

At 9:30am and 11am on Sundays join us remotely at www.akronfcc.org/live or www.facebook.com/FCCofAkron.

Midweek Time of Prayer and Reflection

Wednesdays at noon, Pastor Nanette and Pastor Antigone will be live on www.akronfcc.org/live or www.facebook.com/FCCofAkron for a time to center and reflect.



Congregational Meeting

A Congregational Meeting has been called for Sunday, September 13, 2020, following an online 9:30am worship service. The church will support members by various means to ensure that all members can participate in this event. Please contact the church office or Moderator Larry Becker with any questions in advance of the meeting.