



ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

AUGUST 16, 2020

9:30 AM

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF AKRON

OPEN & 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.

PRELUDE

Toccata in D Major

Johann Krueger

WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP[†]

One: We are not alone.

All: We live in God's world.

One: We are not afraid.

All: We receive God's promises.

One: We are not timid.

**All: We are borne up on eagles' wings
and held in the palm of God's hand.**

One: In life, in death,
in life beyond death,

All: God is with us.

We are not alone!

**Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, who rules all creation.
 O my soul, worship the well spring of health and salvation.
 All ye who hear, now to God's temple draw near.
 Join me in the glad adoration.**

**Praise to the Lord, who o'er all things so wondrously reigneth;
 who, as wings of an eagle uplifted, sustaineth.
 Hast though not seen? All that is needful hath been
 granted in what God ordaineth**

**Praise to the Lord, who doth prosper thy work and defend thee.
 Surely God's goodness and mercy here daily attend thee.
 Ponder anew what the Almighty can do,
 who with great love doth befriend thee.**

**Praise to the Lord, who doth nourish thy life and restore thee,
 fitting thee well for the tasks that are ever before thee.
 Then to thy need God as a mother doth speed,
 spreading the wings of grace o'er thee.**

**Praise to the Lord! O let all earth's peoples and races,
 all that hath life and breath, give thanks for manifold graces.
 Let the Amen sound from God's people again.
 Gladly forever sing praises.**

CENTERING AND OPENING PRAYER

READING FROM THE PSALMS

Psalm 67

God may you be gracious to us and bless us and may your face to shine upon us,
 that your way may be known upon earth, your saving power among all nations.

Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you.

Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you judge the peoples with equity
 and guide the nations upon earth.

Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you.

The earth has yielded its increase; God, our God, has blessed us.

May God continue to bless us; let all the ends of the earth revere God.

Elisha picked up the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. He took the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and struck the water, saying, "Where is the Lord, the God of Elijah?" When he had struck the water, the water was parted to the one side and to the other, and Elisha went over.

When the company of prophets who were at Jericho saw him at a distance, they declared, "The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha." They came to meet him and bowed to the ground before him. They said to him, "See now, we have fifty strong men among your servants; please let them go and seek your master; it may be that the spirit of the Lord has caught him up and thrown him down on some mountain or into some valley." He responded, "No, do not send them." But when they urged him until he was ashamed, he said, "Send them." So they sent fifty men who searched for three days but did not find him. When they came back to him (he had remained at Jericho), he said to them, "Did I not say to you, Do not go?"

Now the people of the city said to Elisha, "The location of this city is good, as my lord sees; but the water is bad, and the land is unfruitful." He said, "Bring me a new bowl, and put salt in it." So they brought it to him. Then he went to the spring of water and threw the salt into it, and said, "Thus says the Lord, I have made this water wholesome; from now on neither death nor miscarriage shall come from it." So the water has been wholesome to this day, according to the word that Elisha spoke.

He went up from there to Bethel; and while he was going up on the way, some small boys came out of the city and jeered at him, saying, "Go away, baldhead! Go away, baldhead!" When he turned around and saw them, he cursed them in the name of the Lord. Then two she-bears came out of the woods and mauled forty-two of the boys. From there he went on to Mount Carmel, and then returned to Samaria.

SERMON

Be Careful What You Wish For

HYMN

A Mighty Fortress is Our God

**A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing,
 our present help amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing.
 For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe,
 with craft and power great, and armed with cruel hate,
 on earth without an equal.**

**Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing,
 but there is one who takes our side, the one of God's own choosing.
 You ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is he
 with mighty pow'r to save, victorious o'er the grave,
 Christ will prevail triumphant!**

God's word above all earthly powers, no thanks to them abideth.

The Spirit and the gifts are ours, through Christ, who with us sideth.

Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also.

The body they may kill, God's truth abideth still;

God's reign endures forever!

INVITATION TO PRAYER

One: The Lord be with you.

All: **And also with you.**

SUNG MEDITATION

Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying

Lord, listen to your children praying,

Lord, send your spirit in this place;

Lord, listen to your children praying,

send us love, send us pow'r, send us grace! Repeat

PASTORAL PRAYER AND THE LORD'S PRAYER *(please use the language most familiar to you)*

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,

thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts,

as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

OFFERING

Shall We Gather at the River

arr. John Coates

*Please visit www.akronfcc.org/donate to support
the vital and ongoing ministries and missions of First Church
or mail your donation to 292 East Market Street, Akron OH 44308.*

OFFERING PRAYER

SONG

We'll Build a Land

**We'll build a land where we bind up the broken. We'll build a land where the captives go free,
where the oil of gladness dis-solves all mourning. Oh, we'll build a prom-ised land that can be.**

**Come build a land where sis-ters and broth-ers, filled with the Spi-rit, may then create peace:
where jus-tice shall roll down like wa-ters, and peace like and ev-er flow-ing stream.**

**We'll build a land where we bring the good tidings to all the af-flict-ed and all those who mourn.
And we'll give them garlands instead of ashes. Oh, we'll build a land where peace is born.**

**Come build a land where sis-ters and broth-ers, filled with the Spi-rit, may then create peace:
where jus-tice shall roll down like wa-ters, and peace like and ev-er flow-ing stream.**

**We'll build a land where the forests are fer-tile, where the waters and wind run clean and clear
and com-mun-ity matters more than possessions. Come share this land, let's build it right
here.**

**Come build a land where sis-ters and broth-ers, filled with the Spi-rit, may then create peace:
where jus-tice shall roll down like wa-ters, and peace like and ev-er flow-ing stream.**

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

This Little Light of Mine

Mark Hayes

*If you have joined the service live on zoom, either online or by phone, please consider
remaining on the call for a time of fellowship after worship.*

LEADING WORSHIP TODAY

Rev. Nanette Pitt, Senior Minister

Antigoné Lowery, Associate Minister

Rev. Deborah Saxe, Guest Preacher

*Our thanks to Pastor Debbie for today's pre-recorded message which forms part of our
sponsorship of First Christian Church's process towards affiliation with the United Church of Christ.*

Kevin Kowalski, Reader

Julie Lehman, Choir Director and Organist

Dave Aberth, Celebrate Service Music Leader

Amanda-Joyce Abbott, Nicholas Campagna, Stephanie Corbin, Dave Lehman, Kellie Ramirez, Vocalists

Stephanie Corbin, Matt Dudack, Tom Lehman, Mike Vincent, Instrumentalists

† Drawn from *Prayers from Chautauqua*

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