



# FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF AKRON

COMMUNION SUNDAY  
SEPTEMBER 6, 2020  
9:30 AM

## 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

*No Matter*

Roger Miller

WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP<sup>†</sup>

One: Creator of the cosmos, of eternity and time:

**All: Be with us in this time**

One: Savior of the world, healer of the nations:

**All: Be with us in this place**

One: Breath of all that lives, of people near and far

**All: Stir within our lives**

One: Maker-Spirit-Son

**All: God of here and now: Be present in our worship,  
that we may find new ways  
to be present in your world.**

SONG

*Draw the Circle Wide*

*Refrain:* **Draw the circle wide, draw it wider still  
let this be our song, no one stands alone,  
standing side by side.  
Draw the circle wide.**

**God, the still-point of the circle,  
'round whom all creation turns  
Nothing lost, but held forever  
in God's gracious arms. Refrain**

**Let our hearts touch far horizons,  
so encompass great and small.  
Let our loving know no borders  
faithful to God's call. Refrain 2x**

CENTERING AND OPENING PRAYER

INVITATION TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Joe Seramane, Christian Aid Lifelines, South Africa

**You asked for my hands that you might use them for your purpose,  
I gave them for a moment, then withdrew them, for the work was hard.**

**You asked for my mouth to speak out against injustice.  
I gave you a whisper that I might not be accused.**

**You asked for my life that you might work through me.  
I gave a small part that I might not get too involved.**

**Lord, forgive my calculated efforts to serve you  
only when it is convenient for me to do so,  
only in those places where it is safe to do so,  
and only in those who make it easy to do so.**

**Lord, forgive me, renew me, heal me, nurture me,  
empower me, send me out as an instrument of your peace and justice  
that I might take seriously the meaning of servant-leadership.**

TIME OF SILENT REFLECTION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

ANTHEM

*Amazing Grace*

arr. John Ness Beck

THOUGHTS FOR THE YOUNG

READING FROM THE HEBREW BIBLE

Leviticus 19:9-18

When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest. You shall not strip your vineyard bare, or gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the alien: I am the Lord your God.

You shall not steal; you shall not deal falsely; and you shall not lie to one another. And you shall not swear falsely by my name, profaning the name of your God: I am the Lord. You shall not defraud your neighbor; you shall not steal; and you shall not keep for yourself the wages of a laborer until morning. You shall not revile the deaf or put a stumbling block before the blind; you shall fear your God: I am the Lord. You shall not render an unjust judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great: with justice you shall judge your neighbor. You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not profit by the blood of your neighbor: I am the Lord. You shall not hate in your heart anyone of your kin; you shall reprove your neighbor, or you will incur guilt yourself. You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.

READING FROM THE EPISTLE

Romans 13:8-12

Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet"; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, "Love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.

Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.

SERMON

Season of Creation Week 1: *The Greatest Commandment: Love Your Neighbor*

DUET

*The Prayer*

Danny McClurkin

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

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

OFFERING

*In This Very Room*

Ron and Carol Harris

*Please visit [www.akronfcc.org/donate](http://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

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Invitation

One: The Lord be with you.

**All: And also with you.**

One: Lift up your hearts.

**All: We lift them to the Lord.**

One: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**All: It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

Prayer of Consecration 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.**

Sharing the Bread and Cup

*His Eye is on the Sparrow*

arr. Mark Hayes

*We celebrate an open communion table; everyone is welcome to participate.*

*Gather juice and bread to celebrate Communion during this interlude.*

*If you are gathered with others, you may serve one another saying: "The bread of heaven" and  
"the cup of new life."*

Prayer of Thanksgiving

SONG

*We Call Ourselves Disciples*

**We call ourselves disciples, as pilgrims on the way.**

**We seek the truth in wisdom and beauty in each day.**

**As women, men, and children, we serve, Christ's path to clear.**

**In joyful expectation we see God's reign draw near**

**The cup and cross before us, proclaim our hope above,  
the sign of our Redeemer, the vessel of his love.  
Once more the cross is lifted, the cup poured out for all.  
When gathered at the table, we hear our common call.**

**We join with all disciples to live the Word in deed,  
to share the cup of water and bread with all in need;  
to work til God's compassion and righteousness prevail,  
till all this planet's people know justice without fail.**

**So now the vision brightens, the light of Christ burns still  
in hearts of all disciples to be the church God wills.  
From quiet meditation and the joyous hymns of praise,  
we go to do God's mission! Christ, lead us all our days!**

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

*Prelude in G Major*

J.S. Bach

*If you have joined the service live on zoom or on the 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

Chip Houghton, Reader

Julie Lehman, Choir Director and Organist

Dave Aberth, Celebrate Service Music Leader

Amanda-Joyce Abbott, Nicholas Campagna, Stephanie Corbin, Ben Hayes, Kellie Ramirez, Brian Randall, and Courtney Zimmerman, Instrumentalists and Vocalists

† Iona Abbey Worship Book, ISBN 1-901557-50-2

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