



NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

OCTOBER 11, 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

I Want Jesus to Walk with Me

arr. Mark Hayes

WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP

Matthew 5:1-12

One: Come all who are poor in spirit,
all who mourn and all who are meek.

All: For the Lord, our God, provides comfort and rest.

One: Come all who are hungry,
and all who thirst for righteousness.

All: For the Lord, our God, nourishes our souls.

One: Come all who yearn to know mercy
and pureness of heart.

All: For the Lord, our God, calls us each to be blessed.

One: Let us rejoice and be glad,
for our reward is in the Lord,

All: whom we worship together with joy!

There's revival, and it's spreading like a wildfire in my heart.
 Sunday morning, Hallelujah, and it's lasting all week long.
 Can you hear it? Can you feel it?
 It's the rhythm of a gospel song.
 Oh, once you choose it, you can't lose it.
 There ain't nothing, there ain't nothing gonna steal my joy.

Refrain: I got an old church choir singing in my soul.
 I've got a sweet salvation and it's beautiful.
 I've got a heart overflowing 'cause I've been restored.
 There ain't nothing gonna steal my joy,
 no, there ain't nothing gonna steal my joy.

When the valleys that I wander turn to mountains that I can't climb.
 Oh, you are with me, never leave me,
 oh, 'cause there ain't nothing,
 there ain't nothing gonna steal my joy. *Refrain*

Clap your hands and stomp your feet
 'til you find that gospel beat
 'cause he's all you'll ever need. All you'll ever need.

I've got an old church choir singing in my soul.
 I've got a sweet salvation and it's beautiful. *Refrain*

CENTERING AND OPENING PRAYER

THOUGHTS FOR THE YOUNG

READING FROM THE PSALMS

Psalm 23

God is my shepherd; I shall not want.

God makes me lie down in green pastures; God leads me beside still waters;

God restores my soul. God leads me in right paths the sake of God's name.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff — they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of God my whole life long.

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**

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

**Our Father, which 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.**

READING FROM THE EPISTLE

Philippians 4:1-9

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved.

I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. Yes, and I ask you also, my loyal companion, help these women, for they have struggled beside me in the work of the gospel, together with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

READING FROM THE GOSPEL

Matthew 5:1-12

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

SERMON

We are Blessed
Sermon Series: Sermon on the Mount

HYMN

O Day of Peace That Dimly Shines

**O day of peace that dimly shines
Through all hopes and prayers and dreams,
Guide us to be justice, truth, and love,
Delivered from our selfish schemes.
May swords of hate fall from our hands,
Our hearts from envy find release,
Till by God's grace our warring world
Shall see Christ's promised reign of peace.

Then shall the wolf dwell with the lamb,
Nor shall the fierce devour the small;
As beasts and cattle calmly graze,
A little child shall lead them all.
Then enemies shall learn to love,
All creatures find their true accord;
The hope of peace shall be fulfilled,
For all the earth shall know the Lord.**

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

OFFERING

O Love of God

David Harris

*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

Loving You, O Christ

*Refrain: Loving only you, O Christ, loving only you, O Christ.
Loving only you, O Christ, and never looking back.
I follow in your steps, my Lord,
While never giving up, my Lord.
I fall before your altar, Lord
While never looking back.*

**Loving only you, O Christ, listening to your message Christ
Loving only you, O Christ, I seek to do your will**

**I will protect the weak, my Lord.
I will defend the poor, my Lord.
I will proclaim your reign, my Lord.
While never turning back. *Refrain***

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

The Solid Rock

arr. Larry Shackley

*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

Judy Young, 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