



OCTOBER 2020 • Number 7

Chronicle

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH OF AKRON

Rooted in Christ · Fostering Justice · Celebrating Diversity



Dear Beloved,

As the season shifts into autumn, I find myself wondering where the summer has gone! So many of our regular summertime activities were curtailed by the COVID-19 pandemic that it seems Fall has arrived unexpectedly this year! Yet here we are with tinges of color on the trees and the smells of wood burning in the air.

The seasons are resolute and indifferent to the plagues that beset us. In a similar way, though so much has changed, we still find our way through to each new day. While many days have brought new challenges our way, we find – if we look back squarely and honestly – that God’s grace is enough for each day.

As a church community God has truly graced us during this time and I am deeply grateful for the continued energies of our members and friends. We had one hundred and eleven members and three guests join our online Annual Meeting by internet and phone on Sunday, September 13. We have consistently had a majority of our members worshipping and fellowshiping together remotely on Sundays and have had some new members joining and guests consistently attending. The varied offerings of music, videos, and messages have been uplifting and inspiring.

We have wrestled faithfully in response to the issues around racism in society, in particular, that surfaced this summer and we continue to talk about our response, individually and collectively. Our outreach ministries continue to flourish and evolve as we attempt to respond effectively and responsibly to the needs of our neighbors.

As the seasons shift in our lives and in the world around us, may we be like the trees around us and relinquish all we’ve held onto for so long. May we see in our innermost parts the forming of a new season’s growth already – branches and buds full of life’s potential. May we welcome in the new possibilities that spring to life out of times of dormancy – an active rest in which new ideas are birthed.

I am hopeful that this fall we will yet be together face to face and that, no matter what, we will continue to find ways to remain connected through this time. God’s grace be with you, with us all!

Grace and peace,

Nanette



Social Justice: Housing

As a congregation we become stronger by understanding our location. By learning about our neighbors, we can strengthen our relationships with them. What about our Middlebury neighborhood? What is the history of the neighborhood and our congregation's relationship with it? How have things come to be the way they are? What is happening in our neighborhood now? Who is working to make it stronger?

We yearn to connect with our neighbors. As a people of faith, we offer programs to support the neighborhood around us. Join us for the Middlebury Neighborhood Roundtable as we learn together how to turn our faith into action.

The Middlebury Neighborhood Roundtable will be a series of three Wednesday evening zoom conversations on November 4, 11, and 18 from 7-8:30pm featuring speakers who are already knowledgeable about Middlebury and embedded in the neighborhood.

Visit <https://bit.ly/MiddleburyNeighborhood> or contact Kasey Kalchert (kasey.kalchert@akronfcc.org / 330.253.5109 ext 112) to register to join us. This program is open to anyone in the greater Akron community, so don't hesitate to share information about it with friends that you think might be interested.

Warriors Journey Home Gala



First Church is supporting Warriors Journey Home (WJH) and its Annual Fundraising Gala on October 23. The Fundraiser is held each year to support the spiritual healing and soul repair of WJH towards veterans and their families across Northeast Ohio. To learn more WJH or to support the Fundraising

event, please contact Associate Minister Antigone Lowery at antigone.lowery@arkonfcc.org or go the WJH website at <https://warriorsjourneyhome.org>.

Welcome Into Covenant

On Sunday, September 13, First Church welcomed new members to the church family! If you would like to extend a welcome to our new members, please contact Kasey Kalchert (kasey.kalchert@akronfcc.org / 330.253.5109 ext 112) in the church office for their contact information.

Sanda Katila

Sanda regularly attends the Ilam Festival worship on Sunday mornings and Faith Enrichment on Wednesday evenings. She is an Associate Professor at Kent State University. Sanda is a mom to Max and Emily Katila. She lives with her life partner, David, her dog, Maggie, and cats, Diego and Sweetie Boy. In her spare time, Sanda enjoys gardening and hiking. She also volunteers at local animal shelters and helps to make sure shelter dogs get regular exercise!



Toby & Keith Liechty-Clifford

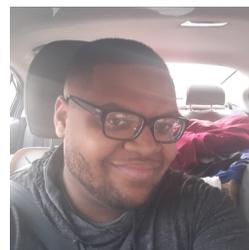
Toby and Keith attend the 9:30am Celebrate! service on Sunday mornings and are enjoying getting to know the church community. Toby works as a teacher, while Keith is a school administrator. They both enjoy traveling and home projects.



Welcome Onto Staff

Join us in welcoming a new staff member to First Church!

Michael Curry



Michael Curry was hired as an AV Technician this past month following the resignation of Greg Petusky. Greg had served as our AV Tech since November 2018 and has now moved on to teaching music online. Michael hails from Cleveland Ohio. He works part-time at iHeartRadio as

a Board Operator/ Promotions Assistant and has previous experience managing sound at a church. A fun fact about Michael is that he is a huge LA Lakers fan and has been to Los Angeles. He is a huge Kobe Bryant fan as well. We're so excited to welcome Michael, who will be working to keep livestreaming worship sustainable, even after the pandemic ends!



CHURCH at HOME

All Saints Sunday

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 9:30AM

Celebrate the saints of your life on Sunday, November 1, together with others at First Church in this celebration of life and the legacy that continues on in the church as we build God's beloved community together through the generations.

Worship Update – Streaming

Work is well underway to install new equipment that will allow us to “stream” (relay video to viewers over the internet in real time) worship and other events from our Meetinghouse. Wires and cables have been run, a new ethernet connection is in place, and we anticipate the installation of cameras and equipment soon. A slight complication continues to be the interruptions to supply chains caused by the pandemic and so the church's patience has been much appreciated. We believe the end result and the new equipment will ensure an improvement in audio-visual quality.

Until the project is completed, we will continue to worship via zoom in one combined service each Sunday at 9:30am. Did you know...

- Anyone can watch the service live on Facebook? You don't need to have a Facebook account, just visit www.facebook.com/FCCofAkron
- You don't need internet to join worship on zoom? Dial-in users, please call Kasey Kalchert (330.253.5109 x112) for login information.
- To register to join the zoom experience, visit <https://bit.ly/AkronFirstChurch>.
- Before services, worship materials – the order of service, News and Notes, as well as children's activity bulletins – are available to download at www.akronfcc.org/live.
- Each worship service is available to view afterwards, at your convenience, both on Facebook and at www.akronfcc.org/connect/worship-archive/

Inquirer's Gatherings

Would you like to learn more about First Church and our branch of the Christian faith tradition? We're hosting Inquirer's Gatherings remotely this fall for all who are interested in learning more about our history and vision. Please join us on zoom on Sunday, October 25 AND Sunday, November 8 from 6-7pm. To register, please contact Kasey Kalchert (kasey.kalchert@akronfcc.org / 330.253.5109 ext 112).

Joining Sunday will be held on Sunday, November 22 during worship. Please worship with us as we welcome our new members.

Mason Ministry Fall Coat Drive

Mason CLC has asked for our assistance in rounding up some winter outerwear for the children this year. This collection will be in place of the Christmas gifts, as requested by Mason. Due to the pandemic and the fact that the children are currently learning remotely, we are collecting winter coats, hats, gloves, mittens and scarves to keep them warm this winter. We will need sizes ranging from 3T to adult size XL. If you would rather make a monetary donation, we are collecting for the CLC coat supply closet, and other Mason needs, as well. Please make checks payable to First Church and note Mason CLC in the memo line.

Please contact Laura Bishop at 330.620.3754, either via phone or text, to discuss coat size and if it is for a boy or a girl. We will have two drop-off days at the church where you can drive up with your mask on, stay in your car and hand us your donations. The dates are Saturday, October 17 from 10am- noon Sunday, October 25 from 11am-1pm. Please note, there is no need to wrap your donations.



Get Social

First Church is on social media! You can follow us on Instagram (@firstchurchakron) or Twitter (@1stChurchAkron) or on Facebook (www.facebook.com/FCCofAkron). Be sure to check out our posts about special events, announcements and more!

Reflections from the Field

Every summer, soldiers in the Army Reserve and National Guard spend 2 weeks in a field training environment to conduct their Annual Training. The training is always specific to the unit's mission and is designed to help soldiers maintain and improve the skills for which the Army has trained them.



As the Chaplain, part of my role during Annual Training is to ensure that each soldier has access to religious support, to include advisement, counseling, and worship services. Typically, I am inclined to offer support using my words, but this year's Annual Training reminded me that sometimes the most valuable support we can show others is the ministry of presence.

The ministry of presence requires nothing from us but to be present with someone when no one else is willing or able to be and helps ensure that no person is left isolated or abandoned. It is a simple, but valuable form of ministry which is rooted in love that is made even more possible through technology. So, the next time you feel you don't have the right words to show care to someone you love, remember how valuable your presence on the other end of the phone call, over a video call, or physically can be!

Submitted by Antigone Lowery, Associate Minister

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 Mildred A., Barabara H., Jen M., Margaret P., Patty N., George K., Art W., and Doug W.

If you would like a name added to our prayer list, please email kasey.kalchert@akronfcc.org or speak with a pastor.

In Loving Memory

We extend our prayers to the family of Lola Rothmann, who passed away into the next life on September 17, 2020. Lola has been a First Church member since 1957.



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.

Bean & Pasta Soup

Submitted by Lola Rothmann

Ingredients:

- 1 cup of dried white beans
- 2 tablespoons of olive oil
- 1 cup of diced onion
- 1 cup of diced carrots
- 1 cup of diced celery
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1/4 cup of green pepper, minced
- 2 bay leaves
- 8 cups of chicken broth
- 4 oz. of small pasta (ie: bow tie)
- 1/2 cup diced sun-dried tomatoes
- 1/4 cup of chopped parsley
- salt to taste
- Parmesan cheese

Directions:

- In a large pot, cover beans with cold water and bring to a boil. Remove from heat; cover and let stand 1 hour; drain.
- Heat oil in soup pot over medium heat. Add vegetables and bay leaves. Cover and cook for about 15 minutes, until onions are tender. Stir occasionally. Add beans and broth. Bring to a boil; cover partially and simmer until beans are tender, about an hour. Add pasta and tomatoes and cook until pasta is done. If too thick, add more broth.
- Add parsley and salt as necessary. Discard bay leaves. Pass Parmesan cheese separately. Makes about 4 servings.



Small groups

Zoom Youth Night

Attention middle school and high school aged youth! A special Youth Night event will be held virtually on Friday, October 16 from 6pm-7pm. This month we will try our hand at the hilariously fun game *Before You Were Born!* and have an opportunity to connect with other First Church youth. To register for the event and receive a Zoom meeting link, please send an email to Kasey Kalchert at kasey.kalchert@akronfcc.org by 5pm on Thursday, October 15. We hope to see you there, and feel free to invite a friend to join!

Save the date for the next zoom Youth Night on Friday, November 20 at 6pm!

Time with Tots Breakfast

First Church will host another Time with Tots gathering on zoom for families with toddler aged children on Saturday, October 10, from 8am-9am. This will be great opportunity for parents and guardians to check in with one another and for your toddlers to do the same! To RSVP, please send an email to Kasey Kalchert at kasey.kalchert@akronfcc.org by Friday, October 9, at 4pm to receive the link to join. We hope to see your family there!

Mark your calendars for the November meeting, which will be held on Saturday, November 14 at 8am on zoom.

Coming Out Christian

Coming Out Christian meets on zoom every other Sunday. In October, the meeting dates are Sunday, October 4 and 18.



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.

The Challenge of Jesus

WEDNESDAY FAITH ENRICHMENT

This month we're beginning a series that comprises a short DVD featuring Dr. John Dominic Crossan sharing insights about Jesus' historical landscape to unearth the forces that shaped Jesus' circumstances and message. It's aimed to help us gain an understanding of the multi-faceted connections between Greece, Rome and the Jews that shape our understanding of Jesus today. The group will meet each week with Pastor Nanette from 7-8:30pm on zoom. To join, please register online at www.bit.ly/OctoberFE

Saturday Morning Bible Study

Designed for those who identify with the masculine arc of the gender spectrum, this study led by Steven Savides invites participants to engage in interpretation of biblical texts as a primary source of Christian theology.

Adding to our conversations about Scripture, the confessional theology of Barmen and Belhar, the South African Kairos Document, Dr. King's Letter from Birmingham Jail, and current events, we'll be studying the theme of "moral courage" for our two October sessions.

Please contact the church office for the reading materials: White Paper on Moral Courage by Rushworth Kidder and Martha Bracy. If you're pressed for time just read the sections Moral Vs. Physical Courage and Moral Courage Defined (pages 3-6) and the Attaining Moral Courage section (pages 10 to 13). As a caution, please note that the introductory paragraphs relate the moral/ethical lapses of a youth sports team in connection with a sex tape that involved a 15-year-old girl and 16-year-old boy.

In terms of Scripture, three readings will be offered, but attendants should be prepared to think about other examples of moral courage in the Bible. Peruse, if you would, the stories of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (Daniel 3), Daniel in the Lion's Den (Daniel 6), and the one-chapter-long book of Susanna. If you don't have a Bible that includes the Apocrypha, you can find Susanna at <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Susanna&version=NRSV> The Apocrypha is a collection of books that are canonical for Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic Christians but were rejected by our Protestant forebears.

The group will meet on zoom on Saturday, October 3 and Saturday, October 17 from 8-9am. To RSVP or receive the reading materials, please contact Kasey Kalchert at kasey.kalchert@akronfcc.org / 330.253.5109 ext 112 by Friday at 4pm the day before the meeting to receive the link to join. We look forward to seeing you!

First Congregational Church of Akron				
2020-21 Financials				
	August	YTD Actual	YTD Budget	% Change
INCOME				
Pledge Income	\$16,487	\$43,541	\$46,561	93.5%
Non-pledge Income	\$6,236	\$17,701	\$15,000	118.0%
External Donations and Grants	\$0	\$4,000	\$19,500	20.5%
Food Pantry	-\$6,245	\$6,503	\$7,946	81.8%
Other Special Ministries	\$168	\$943	\$1,998	47.2%
Endowment, Sprowls Trust, Pollock	\$42,593	\$135,592	\$147,824	91.7%
Rental and Food Service Income	\$946	\$2,171	\$1,125	193.0%
Other Income	\$24,008	\$24,008	\$3,338	719.3%
TOTAL	\$84,193	\$234,458	\$243,292	96.4%
EXPENSES				
Personnel	\$34,492	\$104,162	\$125,767	82.8%
Admin and Mktg	\$1,428	\$4,173	\$12,451	33.5%
Membership Board	\$0	\$0	\$415	0.0%
Governing Board	\$1,450	\$4,450	\$4,750	93.7%
Food Pantry	\$703	\$2,389	\$10,500	22.7%
Other Special Ministries	-\$2,046	\$3,051	\$4,440	68.7%
Congregational Care	\$71	\$187	\$1,558	12.0%
Music	\$670	\$1,970	\$5,912	33.3%
Fellowship Team	\$0	\$0	\$160	0.0%
Christian Education	\$0	\$0	\$2,416	0.0%
Development Team	\$0	\$0	\$150	0.0%
Food Service Expense	\$104	\$149	\$625	23.8%
Maintenance/Utilities	\$14,699	\$65,592	\$73,507	89.2%
TOTAL	\$51,571	\$186,122	\$242,650	76.7%
Net Income/Loss	\$32,622	\$48,336	\$642	7531.5%

Feeding Hope in Wintertime

With the risk of COVID-19 exposure remaining high and the cold weather months approaching, the Feeding Hope Food Pantry will be changing to a choice-model to pre-packed bags only starting in November on Tuesday mornings only from 9:30-10:30am. Canned and boxed food as well as produce, meat, dairy, and bakery items will be pre-packaged and distributed according to family size.

Patrons arriving by car will remain in their vehicles and volunteers will place food items in their trunk. Patrons arriving on foot will also receive pre-packed items and will be encouraged to avail themselves of the free Doordash delivery system offered by United Way through 2-1-1.

First Church will begin actively seeking volunteers from the community for distribution and also pre-packing on Tuesday evenings from 5:30-7pm. Please help us spread the word and contact Clay and Deb Canfield at food.pantry@akronfcc.org with questions or to sign up.



Loyalty Sunday Changes

At the recommendation of the Stewardship & Finance and Governing Boards, the congregation has shifted its fiscal year from calendar to program, running from June 1 until May 31 of the following year. This, in turn, means that First Church will no longer hold a Stewardship Campaign or celebrate Loyalty Sunday each fall. Have no fear though, the much loved traditions of the church will remain, simply at a different time. Please still join us on All Saint's Sunday in November for a meaningful celebration of those who are precious in our lives and our world. This service will also still feature the treasured hymn *Sunset of the Year*.

Donate on Social Media

Did you know there is now an even quicker and easier way to contribute to the many ministries and missions at First Church through social media? Both our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/FCCofAkron) and our new Instagram page ([@firstchurchakron](https://www.instagram.com/firstchurchakron)) are equipped to accept your donations! Please visit to learn more about our missions and consider how you might offer support.

Church Community Directory

We encourage everyone who attends First Church, members and friends, to sign up for the First Church Community Directory.

The directory is available at <https://members.instantchurchdirectory.com>. Those who participate in the directory are able to access it. If you have not participated and require contact information for a member, please call the church office. Instant Church Directory is accessible from a web browser or participants can download the free Instant Church Directory app on their smartphone or tablet. **How to log in:**

- Enter the email provided on the Household Directory form as your username.
- Enter your password. (If this is your first-time logging into Instant Church Directory, you can create a new password. If you do not know your password, please reset it on the login page. The church office does not have access to member passwords.)

You can:

- Search the directory for other members' contact information
- Upload a photo to your profile
- Update your information (please keep the church office informed of changes!)

If you have questions, please contact the church office.



Save Your Acme Receipts!

It's Acme Cashback time again, so start saving your Acme receipts! We welcome you to mail them to the church office at 292 E Market Street, Akron, 44308, or when we reopen for in person worship, please drop them off in the office. After the Cashback period ends, the receipts are submitted to Acme, who will then make a donation to First Church based on the totals from the collected receipts. Every receipt counts – in 2019 we earned \$579! Please contact janis.worley@akronfcc.org if you have any questions.

1. Buy store brands at your local  and save your register receipts from August 6, 2020 – December 26, 2020.

Invite your friends and family to save receipts!

2. Place your receipts in our collection box by February 1.

Can You Make a QCD?

What's a QCD you ask? A QCD, also known as a Qualified Charitable Distribution, is money that a person can give directly from their IRA accounts to a nonprofit. Anyone over the age of 70.5 can give a pre-tax QCD gift from their traditional IRA. (Roth IRAs are post-tax money, so they don't have the same advantages.)

In 2017, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act doubled the standard deduction for tax years 2018 through 2025. This means that 90% of taxpayers now get a bigger tax break from taking standard deductions than they do from itemizing deductions.

This, in turn, means that the majority of people don't get any tax benefits from cash donations to charities. But, when donors make a gift out of their IRAs, they actually lower their overall taxable income (versus increasing their deductions.) This is a tax break for all donors who give from their IRAs.

And don't forget about your RMD! An RMD (Required Minimum Distribution) is the amount that IRA owners have to withdraw from their accounts after they turn 72 (or if they'd already turned 70.5 before January 1, 2020). When a person doesn't take out this money, they face a large tax penalty. So, they can either withdraw the money, which increases their taxable income, or donate it as a QCD, which will lower their taxable income.

Please consider First Church as a recipient for your charitable QCD donations! It will help the church to manage its annual budget, and help you to save on taxes! If you have any questions or would like to learn more, please contact Finance and Operations Manager Janis Worley at janis.worley@akronfcc.org.

Submitted by Janis Worley, Finance and Operations Manager

Governing Board Meeting

The monthly Governing Board meetings are open to any members and friends of First Church. The next meeting will take place on zoom on the last Monday of the month: Monday, October 26, at 6:30pm on zoom. If you would like to attend, please contact Moderator DeAnn Clemons or Kasey Kalchert at kasey.kalchert@akornfcc.org to receive the meeting link.

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!



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Now Streaming Sunday Worship Services

JOIN WORSHIP FROM WHEREVER YOU ARE!

At 9:30am on Sundays join us for zoom worship. Register to attend at <https://bit.ly/AkronFirstChurch> or watch live on 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.



All Saints Sunday

Sunday, November 1, 9:30am worship

Join us for a service of memory and celebration!

Thanksgiving Sunday

Sunday, November 22, 9:30am worship

Join us for a meaningful service of uplifting thanksgiving!