



JUNE 2021 • Number 4

# Chronicle

## FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF AKRON

*Rooted in Christ · Fostering Justice · Celebrating Diversity*



Dear First Church Family and Friends,

This has been a year like no other! As we begin emerging once again this summer, I am hopeful that we won't simply return to "life as usual" or as it was pre-pandemic but that each of us will take time to pause, as the prayer poem below invites. To pause and consider what is most important and to build that into our lives relying on our faith through prayer and reflection.

As you rebuild and return to a social life, civic engagement, and other activities, I also pray that you will intentionally make room for First Church. Perhaps you will return to a previously cherished activity at church or find new ways of seeing God's presence active in your life and in the world. Know that I am here to support you on this journey and am happy to meet and talk.

Yours in service of Christ,

Nanette

O Love,  
Let there be pauses  
Enough to stop the world  
Mad with urgencies that rush  
Ignoring the wonder  
Inside every living thing.

Let time stand still  
Reverencing mysteries so close  
Sometimes simply called breath  
Or blossom or being itself.

Let such sights You offer  
In the deluge of the daily  
Gift me with graces  
Noticing the blossoming  
Your Spirit forms.

Yes, offer everyone and everything  
A spaciousness of soul  
Somehow leaving all breathless  
In wonder, awe, and praise.

Pause me, O Love,  
Into the mystery of You  
Rising in every living thing  
Infinite in variations of color  
Every petal precious  
Revealing a trinity of Life  
By which beauty rises  
By which every body rises  
Through some Spirited grace  
For which words finally fail  
Leaving the heart alone  
To savor the unspeakable  
Gift You offer along the Way.

Rev. David Long-Higgins, Transitional Conference Minister for the Heartland Conference of the UCC

## Thank You and Farewell

For almost two and a half years, the First Church community have shown me love, affirmed my gifts, and supported my calling as both the Associate Minister and an Army Reserve Chaplain. As I prepare to spend the next year away from First Church, I will take and share that same love, affirmation, and support with those I will serve during my residency program in Texas.

So, thank you, dear First Church members, Pastor Nanette and staff, for being a faith community that loves without demands, affirms without expectations, and supports without limits. I pray that God continues to equip each of you and look forward to re-joining you all next year.

*Submitted by Associate Minister Rev. Antigone Pearson*

### REV. ANTIGONE PEARSON TRANSITIONS AWAY



On Sunday, May 30, 2021, we thanked, released, and blessed Reverend Antigone Pearson on her final Sunday with us for the next year.

If you weren't able to be a part of the virtual services, please do visit the website

to watch at your convenience [www.akronfcc.org/connect/worship-archive/](http://www.akronfcc.org/connect/worship-archive/)

Rev. Antigone joined First Church on January 14, 2019, primarily to minister to our youngest members and visit with our oldest. In that time, we have also supported her ministry as Chaplain to the 256th Field Hospital, an Army Reserve unit in Twinsburg, Ohio.

Rev. Antigone is now taking a year's temporary separation from her duties at First Church to participate in the Army's School for Spiritual Care Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) Residency Program at Fort Sam Houston, TX. The program runs from mid-June 2021 through mid-June 2022.

The HR Board has released Rev. Antigone from all of her responsibilities at First Church so that, as she transitions back to active duty, she might focus solely on the residency program.

With foresight and wisdom, the HR Board has also stipulated that as part of our releasing Rev. Antigone, we will suspend direct one-on-one communication so that no members of our community will feel either favored or forgotten. She will send First Church regular updates that will be shared in church-wide communications and we will commit to support her and her wife, Rachel, prayerfully throughout the course of the year ahead. Rachel, who is also a member of First Church, will remain here in Akron, entering the second year of her Juris Doctorate degree studies at the University of Akron.

## Extending a New Welcome



Bobby Burtt is joining us as Acting Associate Minister from May 2021 through July 2022. Bobby will provide pastoral support to many of our existing ministry programs and take on a few special projects as we begin to transition into a post-pandemic season.

Bobby was born in Massillon, Ohio, where he grew up attending Myers United Church of Christ. During high school Bobby developed a deep love for music as a member of bands, choirs, and musicals.

He then obtained a degree in French Literature and Culture from Ohio University in Athens, Ohio in 2012. At OU, Bobby developed a deep love for experiential education during his employment with Residential Housing, and found his passion for social justice through work with his honors fraternity, and the University Program Council.

Since his time at OU, Bobby has held a variety of positions, some of the most notable being a Bass Soloist for a summer music festival in Siena, Italy; doing training and development for several large restaurant companies; being Co-Director of Music, Mime Art, Drama and Dance Camp; and Chair of the Division of Outdoor Ministries for the Heartland Conference of the United Church of Christ. In 2019, Bobby began attending University of Dubuque Theological Seminary in Dubuque, IA. When the school went online because of COVID-19, Bobby decided to move home to Akron and on May 1 this year he graduated with a master's in Christian Leadership.

Please join us in extending a warm First Church welcome to Bobby who can be reached at 330.253.5109 x101 (office), 330.780.8122 (cell for call/text), [bobby.burtt@akronfcc.org](mailto:bobby.burtt@akronfcc.org)

## Pizza Dinner With Bobby

We would love for you and your family to get to know Bobby! So we've given him a pizza budget - you invite and he'll bring the pizza! Invite him over and you'll get to see for yourself how infectious his personality can be, as well as hear some of his hopes and dreams for this coming year and share your own. Bobby would love to connect with you and your children. If dinner isn't possible, why not grab some ice cream or meet outdoors someplace? No matter when, I encourage you to reach out to Bobby and get to know him better, as we all re-emerge this summer and reconnect to life at First Church.

*Submitted by Senior Minister Rev. Nanette Pitt*

# We're Regathering In Person!

The First Church facility has reopened and we are starting to host in-person programs once again, beginning in small and measured ways. All persons entering the building for any reason, are required to follow safety protocols. This is an act of care so that all of our members, even the vulnerable, might feel comfortable returning in person as soon as possible. We are grateful for your patience and perseverance during the pandemic and look forward to seeing you soon! Find all the details in our In-Person Regathering Plan at [www.akronfcc.org/together-2021](http://www.akronfcc.org/together-2021).

## SMALL GROUPS AND EVENTS

Small groups are gathering with limitations on the number of people, based on room size and set-up to maintain physical distance. To reserve a meeting or event space for any gathering or meeting, please contact Congregational Life Coordinator Alex Morris: 330.253.5109 x112, [alex.morris@akronfcc.org](mailto:alex.morris@akronfcc.org).

## SUNDAY WORSHIP

We are pleased to invite the community back into the Meetinghouse for Sunday Worship! The Celebrate service now begins at 9:00am and the Festival service remains at 11:00am. Advance registration is required.

To register for upcoming services visit [www.akronfcc.org/together-2021](http://www.akronfcc.org/together-2021). Registration for each service will open a month in advance. You may also contact Alex Morris: 330.253.5109 x112, [alex.morris@akronfcc.org](mailto:alex.morris@akronfcc.org).

The building will only open twenty minutes before each worship service and we ask that you enter through the chapel doors. The Family Room will be available to a family requiring privacy during worship. No childcare or children's programming is currently available and Fellowship Hall is closed on Sunday mornings. Those who wish to may gather on the front lawn for fellowship after worship, weather permitting. Both services can still be attended virtually online at <https://bit.ly/First-Church-YouTube>.



## First Church Is On YouTube

First Church now has a YouTube channel and is listing all of our worship services and video content here. We encourage you to visit often as we build our channel. YouTube offers great features for channels with higher numbers of subscribers so please click on the "subscribe" button and share our channel on your social media.



## SAFETY PROTOCOLS

Until further notice, all persons on the premises are required to take the following precautions to make sure everyone is safe and comfortable: (1) Masks need to be worn at all times, covering the nose and mouth. (2) Physical distancing guidelines will be observed, including distanced seating (household units are welcome to sit together). (3) Hand sanitizer will be readily available. (5) Personalized items such as the order of service and self-contained prepackaged bread and juice communion cups will be handed out individually at check in by volunteers wearing gloves. Items will not be passed or shared during worship. Donation boxes are available throughout the building for your tithes and offerings. (6) Hymns and songs will be printed in the order of service and sung by a soloist only. We request that attendees refrain from singing and suggest humming instead. (7) All participants are asked to immediately depart at the conclusion of the service to facilitate sanitizing.

To best love our First Church family and our neighbors, we ask that you please stay home if any of the following apply to you: (1) You have been in contact with someone in the past 14 days who has tested positive for COVID-19. (2) You have a high-risk health issue. (3) You are experiencing any symptoms associated with COVID-19 (cough, fever, body aches, trouble breathing). (4) Your temperature is equal to or higher than 100.4 degrees.

## Chronicle Submission Deadline

To submit information for the Summer edition of the Chronicle newsletter, please email [communications@akronfcc.org](mailto:communications@akronfcc.org). The deadline for the Summer 2021 issue is Monday, June 14.

## 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](http://www.facebook.com/FCCofAkron)). Be sure to check out our posts about special events, announcements and more!



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS  
OF NORTHEAST OHIO**

## Mission of the Month - Boys & Girls Clubs of Northeast Ohio

Our Mission of the Month for the month of June is the Boys & Girls Clubs of Northeast Ohio.

Boys & Girls Clubs provide safe, fun places for kids ages 6-18 to go after school. The Clubs focus on academic achievement, healthy lifestyles and character development. The Clubs' youth development professionals provide programming that includes arts, athletics, and homework help.

Your donations, *in addition to* our allocated Mission of the Month award of \$600, will further the Boys & Girls Clubs mission of providing vital services to those in our community who are in need of these social services, especially as families continue to contend with the dramatic effects of the pandemic. Please consider mailing a donation with 'Mission of the Month' in the memo line or donating online. Thank you!

## Plan Your Charitable Giving

### DO YOU HAVE A CHARITABLE GIVING PLAN?

Throughout any given year, we are often asked to make donations to this or that cause or organization. Perhaps you give because you have a connection to that organization, or perhaps you give because you were asked by a friend to support their favorite cause. But are your donations making a difference in the areas you want to support? Start by asking yourself who you want to support. What is your connection with these organizations, and are there others that you might be interested in supporting? Is there a common theme (they all support food for the needy for example)? Next, look at your list and ask yourself, why? Why are these organizations important to me? Has your family been impacted by their work? Would you rather give a little to many organizations, or would you rather make a larger commitment to a smaller group? And finally, ask yourself, how? How do I want to support these selected organizations? There are many options, from a direct check, to assigning life insurance or IRA beneficiaries, to creating planned giving options in your will or trust. All have different impacts on your current or future taxes, so some options might suit you better than others. We would be happy to discuss your charitable giving plan, and how First Church might play a part. Please contact Janis Worley, Finance and Operations Manager, at 330.253.5109 x111 or [janis.worley@akronfcc.org](mailto:janis.worley@akronfcc.org) to set up a meeting.

## Feed My Sheep Garden

### WELCOME TO THE 2021 GROWING SEASON!

Thanks to all who supported our third annual Plant Sale fundraiser on May 15 & 16! The event was very successful with healthy plants, happy customers, and great weather. The annual Plant Sale fundraiser supports the Feed My Sheep Garden and First Church's partnership with Let's Grow Akron. Extra plants were donated to local community gardens.

The Feed My Sheep Garden is now in full swing for the season. Our crew is harvesting spring-planted crops such as peas, radish, greens, and onions. The strawberry planters are producing for their first full season. Tomatoes, peppers, okra, melons, and other full-season crops are planted out. Our fresh produce is available weekly in the Feeding Hope Food Pantry. Beginning June 8, we will also be at the Summit Lake Farmer's Market every Tuesday evening through September.

With the pollinator gardens in bloom and seedlings sprouting everywhere you look, it's a magical time to visit the garden. Please feel free to stop by at your convenience during office hours and enjoy the view, or get in touch with me for fun, outdoor, family-friendly volunteer opportunities this summer. You can always reach me by email at [sam@letsgrowakron.org](mailto:sam@letsgrowakron.org).

Thanks and happy growing!

Submitted by Garden Manager Sam Phillips





# small groups

## Sole Searching

### NEW YOUNG ADULT HIKING GROUP

**SATURDAYS, JUNE 12 & 26, 10am-11am**

Looking for some young adult fellowship and to spend time outdoors? Everyone ages 16-30(ish) are invited to join Bobby this summer for a series of young adult **Sole Searching** hikes at the Akron Metro Parks.

On June 12, join Bobby on a hike at the Gorge Metro Park:  
1160 Front St, Cuyahoga Falls, OH 44223

On June 26, you'll find Bobby at the Sand Run Metro Park:  
1400 Sand Run Pkwy, Akron, OH 44333

You do not need to register; just come as you are. Bobby will be at the above addresses on the respective dates at 10am. Each hike will last roughly one hour. If you have any questions, please contact [bobby.burtt@akronfcc.org](mailto:bobby.burtt@akronfcc.org).

Come Sole Searching! Remember, even if you get lost, you're found! So come out and join Bobby this summer and hike the trails with others from First Church.

## Time with Tots - New Time!

**SUNDAY, JUNE 20, 10:15AM-10:45AM**

First Church parents and guardians are invited to join their toddler aged children in June for our Time with Tots gathering on a Sunday this month. The June gathering will be a perfect opportunity to fellowship with other First Church families and will feature a fun memory game for the children! This gathering will held **in person** between Sunday morning worship services. As always, we look forward to connecting with you and your family during our monthly Time with Tots gathering!

## Coming Out Christian

On the second and fourth Sundays of the month, from 6-7pm, members of the LGBTQ+ community come together online to explore Christianity and the possibility of understanding faith in new ways as we reclaim and explore our faith journeys. Join us as we rethink God's love toward LGBTQ+ Christians! If you would like to join the group this month on June 13 or 27, please register at <https://bit.ly/ComingOutChristian>.

## Conversation on Race Continued

We live in a multicultural, multiracial, world. The Economist predicts that the United States will become majority non-white in less than 25 years. As many of us came to realize in the summer of 2020, we also live in a world with a broken heart and a broken humanity where our oneness is challenged by our fear and anxiety, by our greed for power and prejudice, and more.

This summer, we will have opportunities to gather together again for conversation, in person and virtually, to explore this aspect of our faith and life and to increase our antiracist skills. We encourage you to read and watch ahead of our meetings in July and August

### I AM NOT YOUR NEGRO: DOCUMENTARY

Filmmaker Raoul Peck envisions the book James Baldwin never finished in this [powerful and enlightening documentary](#). The book, unfinished at the time of his death, was a revolutionary, personal account of the lives and assassinations of three of his close friends: Medgar Evers, Malcolm X, and Martin Luther King, Jr.

### UNCOMFORTABLE CONVERSATIONS: BOOK

In *Uncomfortable Conversations With a Black Man*, Emmanuel Acho takes on all the questions, large and small, insensitive and taboo, many white Americans are afraid to ask yet which all Americans need the answers to, to increase understanding and join in the antiracist fight.

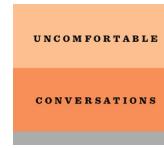
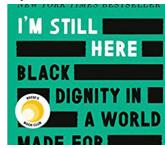
### I'M STILL HERE: BOOK

This incisive memoir by Austin Channing Brown takes a penetrating look at race and the Christian faith. Brown's experiences and lifelong exploration of racial understanding and reconciliation offer a modern take on the double consciousness first written about by W.E.B. DuBois. *I'm Still Here* is an eye-opening account of growing up Black, Christian, and female that exposes how white America's love affair with "diversity" so often falls short of its ideals.

### HOW TO BE AN ANTIRACIST: BOOK

At its core, racism is a powerful system that creates false hierarchies of human value; its warped logic extends beyond race, from the way we regard people of different ethnicities or skin colors to the way we treat people of different sexes, gender identities, and body types.

In *How to Be an Antiracist*, Ibram X. Kendi takes readers through a widening circle of antiracist ideas that will help readers see all forms of racism clearly, understand their poisonous consequences, and work to oppose them in our systems and in ourselves.



# Earth-Saving Idea: Clotheslines

While there may not seem to be time for it in our lives, there are many compelling reasons to dust off, restring, or install a clothesline in your yard this year.

## IT CAN SAVE YOU MONEY

Not using your clothes dryer can save you more than \$25 a year on your power bill. You'll also save on buying dryer sheets.

## IT IS GENTLER ON CLOTHING

The clothes dryer tumbling and tossing can be hard on fabrics and will wear them down quicker. Using a clothesline will help preserve your clothes for longer.

## ENHANCES FRESHNESS

That beautiful smell of clean bed sheets that have been blowing in the wind all day long... you can't buy that.

## IT SAVES ENERGY

In many homes, the dryer is the third most energy consuming appliance.

## HELPS YOU AVOID THE CLOTHES DRYER'S "SECOND CYCLE"

### TRAP

We're all guilty of it. You put laundry in the dryer, turn it on, and then forgot about it. Hours later, you remember, but by this time, the clothes have sat for so long that they're full of wrinkles. Easy fix – just turn the dryer on again for a second cycle. If you forget about your laundry on the clotheslines, there won't be any surprise wrinkles.

## THE DRYER HEATS UP THE HOUSE WHEN IN USE

Especially in the summer, this is the last thing that we want. Now your air conditioner has to cool down the air (using more energy).

## FRESH AIR HELPS REMOVE STUBBORN ODORS FROM FABRIC

You can't beat the freshening power of outdoor air. Sunlight exposure also helps kill odor causing germs that can be found in fabric.

## IT'S SAFER

Clothes dryers are one of the main causes of house fires.

## IT SAVES TIME

Clotheslines offer more flexibility in terms of time because when the laundry is dry, you don't have to be present to fold the items to prevent wrinkles. Before you hang them out to dry, give them a good shake. This helps lessen any wrinkling. With a clothes dryer, you have to fold the clothes right away to avoid wrinkles.



## June is LGBTQ Pride Month!



## First Church 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.

## Resources Worth Exploring

### MY MIND WAS CHANGED

A new way to talk about the dignity of LGBT people that helps move undecided Christians through their religious and emotional conflicts to stand for – not against – LBGT equality. A free download from Auburn Media

<https://auburnseminary.org/report/my-mind-was-changed/>

### FAITH IN OUR FAMILIES

Stories that show how people from different faith traditions have re-examined their spiritual beliefs after learning about the sexual orientation or gender identity of a loved one.

<https://openandaffirming.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Faith-in-Our-Families.pdf>

### INSTITUTE FOR WELCOMING RESOURCES

<http://welcomingresources.org>

### OPEN AND AFFIRMING COALITION RESOURCES

<https://openandaffirming.org/resources/>

# Serving in 2021-2022

Thank you to all those who have volunteered to serve in a leadership capacity on one of our boards, committees, and ministry teams. We're so grateful for all that you do. This year the following individuals are serving on boards:

## Church Officers

Jim Gartner, Moderator  
*Vacant*, Vice Moderator  
Jen Kowalski, Secretary  
Mark Hornak, Treasurer

## Governing Board At Large Members

Jay Hershey, Tim Keneppe and Courtney Zimmerman

In addition to the individuals above, the Governing Board consist of the chairpersons of the following boards:

## Buildings & Grounds Board

Todd Brown, Jake Cook (chair), JoAnne Dawson, Judy Nicely, Kathy Petsko and Eric Roberts

## Human Resources Board

Julie Brandy, Cal Robertson, Kevin Speight, Martha Vye, Andy Weyand and Victoria White (chair)

## Membership Board

Caroline Alitzer, Natalie Altizer, Karen Bruno, Amanda Cole, Amber Cullen, Jessica Keneppe, Toby Liechty-Clifford (chair) and Keith Liechty-Clifford

## Nominating Board

Tiffani Akers, Larry Becker, Nancy Jenkins (chair), Pat McKay and Judy Young

## Stewardship & Finance Board

Dennis Conrad, Mark Hornak, Jay Hultz, Kevin Kowalski (chair), Beth Robertson, Sarah Vradenburg and Cheri Xeros



Jim Gartner  
Moderator



Jen Kowalski  
Secretary



Mark Hornak  
Treasurer



# Robert's Rules of Order Workshop

Chairing a meeting can be daunting; even following along when others are familiar with the procedures and you are not, can prove alienating. Most organizations, including First Church, profess to use Robert's Rules of Order but often, even this standard is not uniformly applied!

Back in 1863, US Army Major Henry Martyn Robert was chosen to preside over a church meeting. In accepting this role, he identified the need for one standard parliamentary procedure which he then began to develop – what we now know as Robert's Rules of Order.

Join us for a Robert's Rules of Order Workshop, led by Janis Worley on Wednesday, June 23, 5-6pm on Zoom. Janis will offer an overview of the rules, highlighting some of the basic norms and little known facts, including a review of standard minute-taking. This workshop is open to the public and all are welcome to register at <https://www.bit.ly/RobertsRulesTraining>.

## Revisiting the Garden of Eatin'

### FIRST CHURCH RECIPE BOOK PROJECT

Have you been cooking and baking more than normal this past year during the pandemic? Have you perfected your favorite recipe or discovered some delightful new ones? Are you always looking for new recipes to try out?

Would you like to be part of a team that compiles a new First Church recipe book? We have a wonderful tradition of cookbooks at the church but haven't done one in years.

If you're interested in joining the team, please contact Bobby at [bobby.burtt@akronfcc.org](mailto:bobby.burtt@akronfcc.org). The team will be starting in late summer with the hopes of having a recipe book ready for Christmas.

## Meal Train Blessings

### MEALS OF BLESSING IN OUR CHURCH FAMILY

We all know what it is like to be hit with an unexpected health crisis, job loss, or other personal emergency. Even a joyful event, like the arrival of a new child in the family, can be overwhelming and throw all our routines out of wack!

At times like these our pastors are able to offer a Meal Train to those who've been affected and then other members of our First Church community rally to deliver a meal to the doorstep. These run the gamut from home cooked to store bought, from simple to elaborate. They take into account the allergies and preferences of the recipient and are delivered according to a schedule developed by the recipient and pastor. If you would like to volunteer to deliver a meal when you are able, please contact Bobby at [bobby.burtt@akronfcc.org](mailto:bobby.burtt@akronfcc.org), 330.253.5109 x101.



## Building Project Update

Various special projects, repairs, and maintenance efforts are now underway at First Church. In the photographs to the left, you can see trenches being dug for the electricity and water supply for the anticipated Memorial Garden fountain. Below that, Darren Jones-Baker is removing a disused and rusted metal pipe next to the Chapel patio area and at the bottom, you can see the newly fitted air conditioner units that are a part of the repairs for the combined system in Fellowship Hall and the Upper Room.

We're grateful for the support of our members and friends as we continue to maintain the facility that supports our missions and ministries to serve our neighbors in the Greater Akron area. For more information on any project, contact Facility Maintenance Coordinator, Russ Gaippe, at 330.253.5109 x115 or [russ.gaippe@akronfcc.org](mailto:russ.gaippe@akronfcc.org).



## Flower Bed Maintenance Team

The Building and Grounds Board and friends have been hard at work to improve the garden beds around the front of the church on Market and Union Streets.

These beds are always visible to the public and help to show passersby that there is an active and welcoming church within.

We are in need of volunteers to continue tending the flower beds through the growing season. Volunteers can do what they are able, at their convenience. Tools are available during normal church operating hours. To sign up please contact Facility Maintenance Coordinator, Russ Gaippe, at 330.253.5109 x115 or [russ.gaippe@akronfcc.org](mailto:russ.gaippe@akronfcc.org).



## Governing Board Meeting

The monthly Governing Board meetings are open to any members and friends of First Church. The meetings take place on the last Monday of each month on Zoom. The next meeting will take place on Monday, June 28, at 6:30pm. If you would like to attend, please contact Moderator Jim Gartner as well as Alex Morris who will provide you with the link: 330.253.5109 x112, [alex.morris@akronfcc.org](mailto:alex.morris@akronfcc.org).

## Care Team Meeting

First Church has an actively engaged Care Team who have done a fabulous job of staying connected to our elderly and isolated members during the pandemic. Members variously call or mail cards on behalf of the church.

The team will be meeting on Thursday, June 24, on Zoom from 6-7pm.

If you would like learn more about the team, please feel free to reach out to Acting Associate Minister Bobby Burtt at [bobby.burtt@akronfcc.org](mailto:bobby.burtt@akronfcc.org), 330.253.5109 x101.

# Feeding Hope Food Pantry

First Church recently received the 2020 Network Partner Report from the Akron-Canton Foodbank. This explains how our Feeding Hope Food Pantry performed during the 2020 calendar year. In the report Katie Carver Reed, Director of Network Partners and Programs, states that, "the need for food has always existed in our community (the eight-county region that the Foodbank services) but was made far worse by the pandemic. Through your tireless efforts, we were able to work together to distribute 27.4 million meals in our community in 2020. This is unprecedented in our history, and we will need to continue this heightened level of response as our community moves from crisis to recovery in the years to come."



The overall food insecurity rate in Summit County was 17.3%, with a 31% increase caused by COVID-19. The child food insecurity rate was 26.2% in Summit County, with a 44% percent increase caused by COVID-19.

Our program, the Feeding Hope Food Pantry, distributed: 172,599 pounds of food; 42,952 pounds of produce.

In obtaining food, we were able to source:  
62.1% was free;  
27.7% was at a reduced cost;  
10.2% were considered amazing values.

A Network Partner Site Visit was held with our pantry on April 6, 2021. Our Foodbank Partner Coordinator, Lonnie Pratt, met with pantry leadership members to do a yearly "check-in". This included a tour of the pantry, inspections of files, method of food storage, cleanliness, and compliance with FDA and Ohio Job and Family Services Regulations.

We are happy to share that we received a 100% rating!

Presently we are in need of additional volunteers. Help is needed on Saturday mornings to pick up boxes of food from Walmart on Arlington Road; more people would be appreciated on Tuesday mornings to help with food orders when the pantry is open; and helpers are needed to pick up Panera baked goods from the Montrose location on Sunday evenings when they close.

We appreciate the past donations of plastic grocery bags and egg cartons for the pantry. Currently, we are only in need of plastic grocery bags. For the time being we do not need any more egg cartons, clothing or housewares. If the needs change in the future, we will advise accordingly.

Thank you to everyone who has volunteered, contributed, or helped in any large or small way to help us minister so effectively to our neighbors. We look forward to continuing in years to come to do God's will – serve people in need. If you have questions about pantry operations, don't hesitate to connect with our team. You can reach us at [food.pantry@akronfcc.org](mailto:food.pantry@akronfcc.org):

Larry Becker – Tuesday Distribution

Kellie Ramirez and Laura Bishop – Monday Pre-Packing

Chip Houghton – Inventory/Ordering Food

Sue Yoder – Akron-Canton Foodbank Liaison

Submitted by Sue Yoder

## Akron Pride Festival Team

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 28, 2021, DOWNTOWN AKRON**

Each year First Church has represented our Open and Affirming commitment at Akron's Equality March and Pride Festival through sponsorship and active participation. You are invited to volunteer on the team that coordinates the logistics and facilitates the rest of the congregation's participation in this meaningful annual event. If you are available this year, please reach out to Pastor Nanette at 330.325.5109 x100 or [nanette.pitt@akronfcc.org](mailto:nanette.pitt@akronfcc.org).



<b>Stewardship/Finance Report (unaudited)</b>				
Actual Thru April, 2021				
	April	April YTD	YTD Budget	Percent to Budget YTD
<b>INCOME</b>				
Pledge Income	\$9,994	\$138,876	\$170,722	81.3%
Non-pledge Income	\$4,910	\$81,302	\$55,000	147.8%
Grant Income	\$0	\$10,197	\$71,500	14.3%
Food Pantry	\$1,505	\$21,295	\$29,125	73.1%
Other Special Ministries	\$25,070	\$161,779	\$7,328	2207.7%
Endowment, Sprowls Trust, Pollock	\$46,808	\$568,363	\$542,022	104.9%
Rental and Food Service Income	\$309	\$9,625	\$3,667	262.5%
Other Income	\$0	\$133,195	\$12,696	1049.1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$88,596</b>	<b>\$1,124,631</b>	<b>\$892,060</b>	<b>126.1%</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>				
Personnel	\$48,286	\$399,968	\$461,144	86.7%
Admin and Mktg	\$4,173	\$37,884	\$45,655	83.0%
Membership Board	\$0	-\$12	\$1,822	-0.6%
Governing Board	\$3,053	\$8,601	\$9,417	91.3%
Food Pantry	\$189	\$12,603	\$38,500	32.7%
Other Special Ministries	\$2,525	\$30,211	\$33,899	89.1%
Congregational Care	\$329	\$1,943	\$5,711	34.0%
Music	\$3,341	\$20,706	\$22,379	92.5%
Fellowship Team	\$0	-\$24	\$420	-5.7%
Christian Education	\$287	\$555	\$5,857	9.5%
Development Team	\$57	\$136	\$550	24.7%
Food Service Expense	\$57	\$2,779	\$2,292	121.3%
Property Expense	\$21,951	\$369,002	\$266,306	138.6%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$84,247</b>	<b>\$884,352</b>	<b>\$893,950</b>	<b>98.9%</b>
<b>Net Income/Loss</b>	<b>\$4,349</b>	<b>\$240,279</b>	<b>-\$1,890</b>	<b>-12713.3%</b>

## Matching Gifts

Corporate matching gifts are a type of philanthropy in which companies financially match donations that their employees make to nonprofit organizations. Companies of all sizes match donations their employees make to nonprofits because it's an easy, structured way for them to support good work in their communities.

When an employee makes a donation, the employee will request the matching gift from their employer, who then also makes a donation. Companies usually match donations at a 1:1 ratio, but some will match at a 2:1, 3:1, or even a 4:1 ratio (meaning the company's donation will be FOUR times the value of the employee's donation!)

Over 18 million individuals work for companies with matching gift program – are you one of them?

Some companies provide their employees with a list of approved non-profits to select from for a matching gift.

If First Church is not on the list, ask your employer how to get us added and send that information to Janis Worley, Finance & Operations Manager at [janis.worley@akronfcc.org](mailto:janis.worley@akronfcc.org), 330.253.5109 x111 who will work with you to provide the necessary information.

An estimated \$4-\$7 billion in matching gift funds goes unclaimed each year. That's a lot of money left on the table! Help First Church to benefit from your company's matching gift program today!



## In Our Prayers

Trusting in God's unfailing love for each and every person, we offer to God expressions of joy and concern in prayer. In our First Church community, we pray for Patti N., Elizabeth V., Karen F., Mildred A., Chris B., Bill F., Barbara H., Callahan H., Joan L., Michael L., Chuck M., Nanette P., Margaret P., Barbara S., Betty S., Rick T., and Art W.

If you have any questions about those listed or would like a name added to our prayer list, please email Acting Associate

## In Sympathy

### WE OFFER OUR HEARTFELT CONDOLENCES:

To the Weyrick family – Anna, Jacob and Alex – who lost husband and father, Doug, on Thursday, April 22, 2021 after a years-long battle with brain cancer.

To the families of Janet B. Ross and Betty Walcott who both passed away peacefully on April 26. A burial service was held for Betty at Crown Hill Cemetery in Twinsburg on Wednesday, May 5, with Rev. Antigoné Pearson officiating and a number of First Church members attending. Janet's family plans to hold a Memorial Service at a later date.

To the family of George Kostan who passed away on January 6 of this year.

## Congratulations

We offer our congratulations to the Painter family – Katie (Gartner) and Joey – who welcomed Hudson James into their family on Thursday, April 22, 2021.



## In Gratitude

Dear First Church family,

"Thank you" can't fully capture the depth of appreciation we feel for the myriad ways you have helped us cope after I broke my ankle in mid-April. It has been a humbling and heartwarming experience to be cared for and ministered to by all of you during this time. We are so grateful for the meals, flowers, cards, and acts of service and care. My healing journey is going well although it will be a long road yet so I appreciate your continued patience and understanding as I edge my way back to a normal work schedule and full participation in Sunday worship.

*Love, Nanette and Steven*

Dear First Church Singers and Julie Lehman,

Thank you for your melodious contributions to "Joining Hands, Joining Voices". Your anthem and hymn leadership was a great blessing to the gathering. We appreciate your gifts of time, talent, and energy. God bless you all.

*Gratefully, Deacon Ruth Anderson, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church*

### JOINING HANDS, JOINING VOICES DRIVE

Thank you to everyone who donated to the Joining hands, Joining Voices drive. 70 tubes of toothpaste and 167 brushes were collected.

Dear Rev. Pitt,

Thank you for First Church's Mission of the Month donation of \$1,200 to OPEN M in support of our programs and services.

OPEN M is truly grateful for your support. Through your generous donation, we are able to focus on helping those who need assistance to reclaim their lives and become more sustainable.

Much growth has occurred at OPEN M during the past year because we chose to view the challenges of 2020 as opportunities to provide services in better, more efficient ways. Some of our successes included, increasing telehealth services by 100%, thus providing our nearly 500 active patients in our health clinic with the healthcare they needed to enable them to go to work and provide for themselves and their families.

Your continued support and prayers for OPEN M help us continue to serve as a beacon of light for individuals and families in need. Please know, you are appreciated for all you do to help us with our mission of providing pathways out of poverty for those in need.

*Sincerely, Christine R. Curry, Chief Executive Officer*



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL  
CHURCH OF AKRON

292 East Market St.  
Akron, OH 44308

*Rooted in Christ · Fostering Justice · Celebrating Diversity*



## Join Us For In-Person Worship! Connected & Connecting Online Sunday Worship Services

### JOIN WORSHIP FROM WHEREVER YOU ARE!

Celebrate Worship at 9am and Festival Worship at 11am on Sundays – join us in-person. Register to attend at <https://www.akronfcc.org/together-2021/> or watch live at <https://bit.ly/First-Church-YouTube>

See page 3 for more information about services.

## Also in this Edition...

IN-PERSON REGATHERING PLAN

COMMUNITY MEMBER MESSAGES & UPDATES

BUILDING PROJECT UPDATES

SMALL GROUP OPPORTUNITIES IN JUNE

FAMILY FAITH FORMATION SURVEY RESULTS

SEMI-ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING RESULTS

