

WELCOME TO FIRST CHURCH

We seek to share Christ's light and welcoming, open, and loving message with all people. Please join us for fellowship after worship. We look forward to meeting you!

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.

FLOWERS

Sue Yoder gives today's flowers in memory of "in loving memory of my husband, Jess, and my parents, Jeannette and Ed Buess."

LEADING WORSHIP

Rev. Nanette Pitt, Senior Minister
Antigoné Lowery, Associate Minister
Julie Lehman, Choir Director and Organist
Amanda-Joyce Abbott, Tim Borham, Nicholas Campagna, and Stephanie Corbin, Soloists
Tiffani Akers, Reader



THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

March 15, 2020

11:00 AM

PRELUDE

WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP

* HYMN NO. 622 (red)

Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah

* PRAYER OF INVOCATION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION[†]

**Merciful Magnificent God,
we confess that we have strayed from your ways.
We have seized our independence, forgetting
your provision.
You gave us the earth for our home,
but we squander earth's resources and hoard
its bounty.
You gave us neighbor to love, but we pursue
our own ambition and not the mutual good.
Forgive us our sin and
draw our wandering hearts back to you
as we lift our silent prayers...**

TIME OF SILENT REFLECTION

[†] Drawn from *Feasting on the Word Worship Companion*.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

John 3:16-17

One: Friends, God is for us and not against us!

**All: For that reason God sent the Son into the world
not to condemn the world,
but that the world may be saved through him.**

One: Believe the good news,

All: in Jesus Christ we are forgiven!

* VOICES CELEBRATING

Gloria Patri

**Glo-ry to the Cre-a-tor, and to the Christ, and to the Ho-ly Ghost;
As it was in the be-gin-ning, is now, and ev-er shall be, world with-out end.
A-men. A-men.**

THOUGHTS FOR THE YOUNG

WELCOMING THE NEWEST MEMBERS OF FIRST CHURCH

* Congregation's Responsive Covenant

**We then, members of First Church, welcome you to this household of faith.
We offer to share with you the hopes and labors and joys of this church of Christ.
We promise to walk with you in Christian love.
We welcome you to be a part with us in the blessings and promises of God's Covenant,
to a place in the duties, privileges and glories of God's great church, and to the
fellowship of that multitude which no person can number.
God grant that we may be prepared through this earthly fellowship for the
perfect fellowship of our heavenly home.**

ANTHEM

PASTORAL PRAYER

THE LORD'S PRAYER, NO. 307 (red)

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Exodus 17:1-7

From the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages, as the Lord commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. The people quarreled with Moses, and said, "Give us water to drink."

Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?" But the people thirsted there for water; and the people complained against Moses and said, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?" Moses cried out to the Lord, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me."

The Lord said to Moses, "Go on ahead of the people, and take some of the elders of Israel with you; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink." Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarreled and tested the Lord, saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?"

SERMON

Thirsting for change!

* HYMN NO. 489 (red)

Bless Now, O God, the Journey

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

* HYMN NO. 566 (red)

Be Still, My Soul

* OFFERING PRAYER[†]

**We give you thanks and praise, O God,
for the free and abundant gift of grace
you have given us in Jesus Christ.
Let the simple gifts of our lives,
our time, talent, and treasure,
be a sign of our unending gratitude
for your undying love.
Amen.**

* BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

*Offerings, gifts, and tithes to support the ministries and mission of First Church
will be gratefully received as you exit today.
You may place monies in the plates held by the ushers or in the donation boxes at each exit.*

* Please rise, as you are able.

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