



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF AKRON

EARTH DAY CELEBRATION

APRIL 26 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.

WELCOME

CENTERING REFLECTION & PRAYER

TIME OF PRAISE AND WORSHIP

Come On In!

Our door is always o-pen so won't you come on in?

You are always wel-come

no matter where you've been.

**When you seek Christ in fellowship,
community begins.**

Our door is always o-pen so won't you come on in?

Refrain **Come on in! Come on in! Our door is always o-pen so won't you come on in?**

Come on in! Come on in! Our door is always o-pen so won't you come on in?

**This is the house of wondrous love,
being Christian is our creed.
See the light through Jesus Christ,
our Sav-ior indeed.
He helps us live our daily lives, for benefit of all.
To keep the world in harmony
so surely is God's call. *Refrain***

Morningstar

**You are the Morningstar, you are the Fountain,
life breathing Spirit, hope from the mountain.**

Refrain **We sing for joy of you, while our souls cling to you.
You are the Morningstar.**

**In dry and weary lands, you give us water,
greeting each wanderer as son or daughter. *Refrain***

**Liberate yesterday, free for tomorrow.
Guide all who search for you, in stress or sorrow. *Refrain***

**In faith we seek your face, power and brilliance,
strong and uplifting hands, grace-filled resilience. *Refrain***

Christ Is Risen! Shout Hosana!

**Christ is risen! Shout hosanna! Celebrate this day of days.
Christ is risen! Hush in won-der; all creation is amazed.
In the desert all-sur-rounding, see, a spreading tree has grown.
Healing leaves of grace a-bounding bring a taste of love un-known.**

**Christ is risen! Raise your spirits from the caverns of des-pair.
Walk with glad-ness in the morning. See what love can do and dare.
Drink the wine of resurrection, not a servant, but a friend;
Je-sus is our strong com-pan-ion. Joy and peace shall never end.**

**Christ is risen! Earth and heaven never-more shall be the same.
Break the bread of new creation where the world is still in pain.
Tell its grim, demonic chorus: "Christ is risen! Get you gone!"
God the first and last is with us. Sing Hosana every-one!**

TIME OF PRAYER

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

MUSIC REFLECTION

SCRIPTURE: Luke 24:13-35

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad.

Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him."

Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

MESSAGE: *Bread for Life*

SENDING SONGS: *This Is My Father's World*

**This is my Father's world,
And to my listening ears
All nature sings, and round me rings
The music of the spheres.
This is my Father's world:
I rest me in the thought
Of rocks and trees, of skies and seas –
God's hand the wonders wrought.**

**This is my Father's world:
The birds their carols raise,
The morning light, the flowers bright,
Declare their Maker's praise.
Our God has made this world:
And shines in all that's fair;
In rustling grass I hear God pass,
Who speaks to me everywhere.**

**Our God has made this world:
O let us ne'er forget
That though the wrong seems oft so strong,
God is the Ruler yet.
God trusts us with this world:
To keep it clean and fair,
All earth and trees, the skies and seas,
God's creatures everywhere.**

May the Blessing of God

**May the blessing of God go before you,
May her grace and peace abound.
May her spirit live within you,
May her love wrap you 'round.
May her blessing remain with you always,
May you walk on holy ground.**

BLESSING

NEWS & NOTES

LEADING WORSHIP TODAY

Rev. Nanette Pitt, Senior Minister
Antigoné Lowery, Associate Minister

Music and vocals: Kathy Johnson, Kellie Ramirez, Brian Randall, & Mike Vincent

CCLI License #11234842 and CCS License #8399

COVID-19 Cancellations. We continue to be the church and to live out our mission while supporting the efforts of local and state officials to protect our neighbors and ourselves from the spread of COVID-19 by ceasing to hold in-person gatherings. Sunday worship services are only available remotely via livestream at www.akronfcc.org/live or via our Facebook page www.facebook.com/FCCofAkron and we continue to operate our other essential ministries (more information below).

Pastoral Care and our Care Team. Our pastors are here to support and speak with members remotely. Our staff members are also on hand to assist with administrative needs. Please feel free to reach out. Our Care Team is actively reaching out to our homebound and senior members extending care and comfort during this time.

Midweek Time of Reflection. Join our pastors each Wednesday at noon for a livestream time of prayer and inspiring readings and ideas at www.akronfcc.org/live or on our Facebook page www.facebook.com/FCCofAkron. If you miss them live, you can always find the posts on Facebook and on our website blog afterwards to watch at your leisure.

Thoughts for the Young. One of our pastors offers an inspiring and age- appropriate message each Sunday and the video is posted to both Facebook and our website between services. Encourage your kids to watch this weekly video message with you!

Feeding Hope Food Pantry. In keeping with our Food Justice vision priority and to provide a source of healthy food in this difficult time for families in need, the pantry remains open as scheduled on Tuesday mornings from 9:30am-11:30am and the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month from 6:30-7:30pm. Operating with a skeleton crew of volunteers, the process for distribution is vastly different from usual. Patrons are

asked to stay in their vehicles if they drive or to stand outside in a line, 6 feet apart, if they arrive on foot. We encourage your continued support of this vital ministry. However, in light of the shelter in place order, we can only accept monetary donations (no donated items at this time), please visit www.akronfcc.org/donate to offer whatever you are able. Donations in any amount are appreciated.

Feed My Sheep Garden Plant Sale. We are holding our second Annual Plant Sale, in partnership with Let's Grow Akron, on May 16 and 17 to offer plant starts, seeds, supplies, and gardening information to the community and benefit our Feed My Sheep Garden and Let's Grow Akron. We are seeking a small crew of volunteers to run a socially-distanced / online ordering plant sale this year. Please contact Sam Phillips, Garden Manager: sam.phillips@letsgrowakron.org.

April Governing Board Meeting. First Church's Governing Board and many other boards and ministry teams have continued to meet during this time, online. The Governing Board's next meeting is this coming Monday evening, April 27, at 6:30pm. As always, members are welcome to attend. Please contact Moderator Larry Becker for access information if you wish to join this remote online meeting.

Communion Sunday. This coming Sunday, May 3, is Communion Sunday and we plan to celebrate this sacrament together remotely in real time so plan to have your juice and bread / crackers ready for worship online at 9:30am streaming from the Upper Room or 11am streaming from the Meetinghouse at www.akronfcc.org/live or on our Facebook page www.facebook.com/FCCofAkron.

Coming Out Christian. In this group held on May 3, 17, and 31, 6-7pm, members of the LGBTQ+ community can 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 discussion, please RSVP to Kasey Kalchert at kasey.kalchert@akronfcc.org by 5pm on the meeting day. You will receive a Zoom link in your email to join the conversation.

Summer Camp Applications. We are still accepting applications for scholarships for children and youth to attend summer camp. Please download an application at www.akronfcc.org/summer-camp-scholarships or contact Associate Minister Antigone at antigone.lowery@akronfcc.org.

AAIC Hunger Walk. The Akron Area Interfaith Council Hunger Walk is going virtual this year to help raise funds for the Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank. Job loss and other factors resulting from the coronavirus have heightened the need in our community and any contribution will help! Please consider donating online at www.facebook.com/AkronInterfaith or www.akroninterfaith.org/hunger-walks.

IN OUR DAILY 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 Chris, Marilyn, Margaret, Jessica, Lola, Barbara, Carole, George, Madeline, Betty, Wanda, Art, and Doug.

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