



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF AKRON

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

MAY 17, 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

Perpetual Praise

**Your many blessings are new each morning
and with each dawning we sing your praise!**

**From early morning to restful evening
our grateful hearts sing praises!**

**Your love and mercy, shining bright,
bring hope and joy
as we follow in your Light.**

**You breathe within us.
You sing within us.
You move our hearts to perpetual praise!
Through all of our days.
Perpetual praise! *Repeat from beginning***

The Grace of God is Yours

**Reach out your hands, accept the gift.
Reach out your hands, accept the gift.
Reach out your hands, embrace the gift,
the grace of God is yours.**

**Reach out your hands, receive the gift.
Reach out your hands, receive the gift.
Reach out your hands, embrace the gift,
the grace of God is yours.**

**And it is free, free, free. And it is free, free, free.
And it is free, free, free. The grace of God is yours.**

**Reach out your hands, accept the gift.
Reach out your hands, accept the gift.
Reach out your hands, embrace the gift,
the grace of God is yours.**

**Reach out your hands, and share the gift.
Reach out your hands, and share the gift.
Reach out your hands, embrace the gift,
the grace of God is yours.**

**And it is free, free, free. And it is free, free, free.
And it is free, free, free. The grace of God is yours. *Repeat***

The Gift of Love

**Though I may speak with bravest fire and have the gift to all inspire
but have not love, my words are vain as sounding brass and hopeless gain.**

**Though I may give all I possess and doing so my love profess
but not be led by love inside, then I gain nothing but my pride.**

**Come, Spirit, come, our hearts control, our spirits long to be made whole.
Let inward love guide all we do, by this we worship and follow you.**

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: John 14:15-21

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

"I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them."

MESSAGE: *Advocating for Truth*

SENDING SONGS:

Every Time I Feel the Spirit

Refrain Every time I feel the Spirit moving in my heart, I will pray.

Yes, every time I feel the Spirit moving in my heart, I will pray.

Up on the mountain, my Lord spoke. Out his mouth came fire and smoke.

All around me looks so fine, ask my Lord if all was mine. Refrain

Jordan River chilly and cold, chills the body, not the soul.

Ain't but one train on this track, runs to heaven and right back. Refrain

I have heartache, I have woe, I have trouble here below.

While God leads me, I'll not fear, I am sheltered by God's care. Refrain

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

Support First Church's Ministry. Visit www.akronfcc.org/donate to support the vital and ongoing ministries and missions of this congregation. You are also welcome to mail a donation to 292 East Market Street, Akron OH 44308. Thank you!

Support First Church's Ministry. Give securely to First Church on our website! Go to www.akronfcc.org/donate to make a donation or to set up a recurring donation. We have a secure website to manage our online transactions, so you do not need to worry about electronic giving! If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact Janis Worley at janis.worley@akronfcc.org.

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. Pastor Antigoné is hosting a Care Team meeting on Zoom, TODAY Sunday, May 17 at 1:30pm Please email antigone.lowery@akronfcc.org if you would like to attend.

Coming Out Christian. Coming Out Christian is meeting tonight, May 17 from 6-7pm. In this group, 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 May 17. You will receive a Zoom link in your email to join the conversation.

Weekly Video Challenges for the Family. Starting Sunday, May 17 we invite your family to join in creating a dance using your favorite song! These dances can be as creative or as simple as you want with silly moves or great theatrics. Half the fun is figuring it out together. Maybe you will be inspired by a song you haven't heard in a while, or perhaps you'll want to use popular songs such as "Baby Shark" or "Old Town Road." Whatever song you choose, we hope it will help you feel confident to bust a move! If you would like your dance to be shared with the Church on our website, please submit a video of 2 minutes or less to Pastor Antigone at antigone.lowery@akronfcc.org by Sunday, May 24 at 5pm and remember to have fun!

Online Wednesday Bible Study. Join us on zoom on Wednesday evenings in May for our bible study, Great Themes of the Bible. It's led by First Church member Brenda Waddell, who is a Member in

Discernment for ordained Christian ministry with the United Church of Christ. Brenda will be graduating from Methodist Theological School in Ohio next month and looks forward to serving God and others through ministry. If you would like to join us for this thought-provoking study, please RSVP to Kasey Kalchert at kasey.kalchert@akronfcc.org by 5pm each week. We look forward to seeing you online!

Calling All Graduates and Teachers! June 7 is Graduate and Teacher Recognition Day. We recognize that this school year has been challenging in many ways for our students and teachers and that much has been taken away as a result of COVID-19. As such, First Church wants to recognize and celebrate all the hard work and accomplishments of our graduates and teachers! If your family has a high school or college student graduating this year, or if you are currently serving as a teacher and would like to be recognized, please send an email to Kasey Kalchert at kasey.kalchert@akronfcc.org with the graduate or teacher name and school by Thursday, June 4 at 5pm.

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.

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.

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

South Street Ministries is the May Mission of the Month. South Street Ministries upholds its mission of “unlikely partners taking shared risks to renew our community for Christ’s sake” through youth programs, recovery services and the Front Porch Café. Programs include programs for youth, Faithful Servants Urgent Care Center and South Street Recovery Services. Funds raised from Mission of the Month will be used for summer youth programs including, RICH Kids and Bike Shop, to empower these programs to minister to youth more regularly. If you like to make a contribution, please make your check out the First Congregational Church of Akron with “South Street Ministries” in the memo line or donate online at www.akronfcc.org/donate

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.

First Congregational Church of Akron

292 East Market Street

Akron, OH 44308

www.akronfcc.org

330.253.5109 church@akronfcc.org