



# FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF AKRON

COMMUNION SUNDAY

3 MAY 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

*No Matter*

**Refrain No matter who, no matter what  
no matter where you are on the journey of life;  
you're welcome, welcome in this place.**

**No matter who, no matter what,  
no matter where you are on the journey of life:  
accepted, welcomed by God's grace.**

**For we are family, meant to be  
purposed for eternity. Born in love, from above,  
God's community. Refrain.**

**And in diversity, unity  
harmony for all to see: justice and equity,  
God's community. *Refrain***

**Together we will sing, worship bring,  
hands and hearts outstretched to all. Jesus praise,  
hearts ablaze, listen to God's call. *Refrain***

**The God who spoke through Christ, speaks to us;  
listen to our Savior's call. Welcome home,  
welcome in, welcome one and all. *Refrain***

*Christ the Lord Is Risen*

**Christ the Lord is risen!  
Christ the Lord is risen! Yesu. *Repeat***

**He has conquered death...  
Come and worship him...  
Christ our Lord is risen!...  
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!...**

*Come, Share the Lord*

**We gather here in Jesus' name,  
his love is burning in our hearts like living flame;  
for through the loving Son God Almighty makes us one:**

*Refrain* **Come, take the bread;  
come, drink the cup;  
come, share the Lord.**

**No one is a stranger here, everyone belongs;  
finding our forgiveness here,  
we in turn forgive all wrongs.**

**He joins us here, he breaks the bread,  
the Lord who pours the cup is risen from the dead;  
the one we love the most is now our gracious host: *Refrain***

**We are now a family of which the Lord is head;  
though unseen he meets us here  
in the breaking of the bread.**

**We'll gather soon where angels sing;  
we'll see the glory of our Lord and coming King;  
now we anticipate the feast for which we wait: *Refrain***

#### 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***

#### SCRIPTURE: John 10:1-10

“Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.” Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

So again, Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.”

MESSAGE: *Jesus the Shepherd, Jesus the Gate*

#### COMMUNION

SENDING SONGS: *The Answer*

**So many questions,  
the world is reaching.  
So many hurting, so many lost.  
With all this striving  
who can we lean on?  
Creation's crying out from the dark.**

*Refrain* **I know the answer to every question,  
the one solution through every fear.  
I know my help and where it comes from.  
Jesus, he is the answer.**

He sees our sadness,  
he feels our sorrow;  
and in our weakness, he is strong.  
He holds the weight of  
all of our failings.  
Great is our sin, but greater the cross. *Refrain*

For every heart that's breaking,  
For every soul that's shaking,  
For every sickness,  
There's healing in your hands.

Let every heart awaken  
To see it's you who saves us.  
You are my hope  
And the rock on which I stand.

You are the answer, to every question,  
the one solution, through every fear.  
You are my help and where it comes from.  
Jesus: you are the answer.  
Oh Jesus: you are the answer.

*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: Dave Aberth, 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](http://www.akronfcc.org/live) or via our Facebook page [www.facebook.com/FCCofAkron](https://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](http://www.akronfcc.org/live) or on our Facebook page [www.facebook.com/FCCofAkron](https://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!

**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](mailto:kasey.kalchert@akronfcc.org) by 5pm on the meeting day. You will receive a Zoom link in your email to join the conversation.

**Great Themes of the Bible – May Bible Study Online.** Join us on Wednesday evenings in May from 7-8:30pm for Great Themes of the Bible study, an online bible study led by our own First Church member Brenda Waddell. Brenda is also a Member in Discernment for ordained Christian ministry with the United Church of Christ and will be graduating from Methodist Theological School in Ohio next month. She 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 at [kasey.kalchert@akronfcc.org](mailto:kasey.kalchert@akronfcc.org) by 6pm each week and she'll email you the Zoom link. We look forward to seeing you online!

**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](http://www.akronfcc.org/donate) to offer whatever you are able.

**Time with Tots Breakfast Online.** We invite families with toddlers and young children to join Pastor Antigone on Saturday, May 9, from 8am-9am for a breakfast gathering online! This will be a time to catch up, discuss some of the joys and challenges of parenting at home during COVID-19, while enjoying your favorite breakfast at home. Please RSVP to Kasey at [kasey.kalchert@akronfcc.org](mailto:kasey.kalchert@akronfcc.org) by Friday, May 8, at 5pm and she'll email you the Zoom link. We look forward to seeing you online!

**Win a Pizza – Youth Night Scavenger Hunt Online.** If you enjoy participating in scavenger hunts outside, then you will surely enjoy a scavenger hunt in your own home! We invite all middle school and high school aged students to join Pastor Antigone for a Zoom scavenger hunt on Friday, May 15, from 6pm-7:30pm. Each student will be given a list of items to find around their home and the first student to find all the items on the list will win a free pizza which will be delivered to you! This scavenger hunt will be unlike any you have ever played before, so we hope you are ready for lots of fun, laughter, and thrills! Please RSVP to Kasey Kalchert at [kasey.kalchert@akronfcc.org](mailto:kasey.kalchert@akronfcc.org) by Friday, May 15, at 5pm to join!

**Spring Plant Sale.** First Church and Let's Grow Akron are hosting our Second Annual Spring Plant Sale fundraiser on May 16 & 17. Proceeds will benefit the Feed My Sheep Garden and Let's Grow Akron. Offerings will include heirloom varieties of tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, greens, herbs, and flowers all grown with organic practices right here at the Feed My Sheep Garden. You can browse the [online store](#) between now and May 14. Don't forget to [schedule a pick-up time](#) between 9am and 3pm on May 16 and 17. We are seeking a small crew of volunteers to run the socially distanced plant sale this year. If you might have some time to help, please contact Garden Manager, [Sam Phillips](#).

**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](http://www.akronfcc.org/summer-camp-scholarships) or contact Associate Minister Antigone at [antigone.lowery@akronfcc.org](mailto: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](https://www.facebook.com/AkronInterfaith) or [www.akroninterfaith.org/hunger-walks](http://www.akroninterfaith.org/hunger-walks).

**South Street Ministries is the May Mission of the Month.** South Street Ministries lives out 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 Church with “South Street Ministries” in the memo line or donate online at [www.akronfcc.org/donate](http://www.akronfcc.org/donate)

### **IN SYMPATHY**

Our thoughts are with the family of Willa Douglas, who passed away on April 28, 2020. Willa was a member of First Church for 68 years. A private memorial service is planned for a later date for family who reside mostly in South Carolina.

We also extend our prayers to Janet K. Wright’s family. Janet, a member for 60 years, passed away on Monday, April 20, 2020. Reverend Nanette Pitt officiated a private burial at Chestnut Hill Memorial Park with close family and friends on Monday, April 27, 2020.

### **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**

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