



SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

JULY 26, 2020

9:30 AM

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF AKRON

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

Spirit, Fill Me

Spirit come and fill me, fill me with your peace,

Fill me with your joy and your love.

Spirit come and show me, show me how to care,

Show me how to share your light.

Help me give my hand to those in need.

Let my heart be open to receive.

When we share your love, we can work together

To heal this broken world.

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Fill us with your joy and you love.
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How Great is Our God

**The splendor of the king clothed in majesty
Let all the earth rejoice, let all the earth rejoice.
He wraps himself in light and darkness tries to hide
And trembles at his voice, trembles at his voice.**

Refrain: How great is our God
**Sing with me, how great is our God!
And all will see how great,
How great is our God!**

**Age to age he stands, and time is in his hands;
Beginning and the end, beginning and the end.
The Godhead, three in one, Father, Spirit, Son
The lion and the lamb, the lion and the lamb. *Refrain x2***

**He's the name above all names,
You are worthy of all praise.
My heart will sing
How great is our God! *Repeat 3x***

Dazzling Bouquet

Refrain: Mine is the church where everybody's welcome.
**I know it's true 'cause I got through the door.
We are a dazzling bouquet of every kind of flower.
Jump in the vase, 'cause we've got room for more.**

**Come here, all you six foot gladiolas.
Come all you purple lilacs shining bright.
Come let us all bloom together in one garden.
A carnival of fragrance and delight. *Refrain***

**We don't simply tolerate each other.
We ask and tell, we don't just turn away.
We give attention to every bud and blossom.
Let every face come grace the grand bouquet. *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***

MUSIC REFLECTION

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 119:129-136

Your decrees are wonderful; therefore my soul keeps them.
The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple.
With open mouth I pant, because I long for your commandments.
Turn to me and be gracious to me, as is your custom towards those who love your name.
Keep my steps steady according to your promise, and never let iniquity have dominion over me.
Redeem me from human oppression, that I may keep your precepts.
Make your face shine upon your servant, and teach me your statutes.
My eyes shed streams of tears because your law is not kept.

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

Jesus put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."

Jesus told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.

"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

“Have you understood all this?” The disciples answered, “Yes.” And Jesus said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”

MESSAGE: *The Teaching Heart of Jesus*

SENDING SONGS: *Pass It On*

**It only takes a spark to get a fire going.
And soon all those around can worm up in its glowing.
That's how it is with God's love, once you've experienced it:
You spread God love to everyone, you want to pass it on.**

**What a wondrous time is spring, when all the trees are budding.
The birds begin to sing, the flowers start their blooming;
That's how it is with God's love, once you've experienced it.
You want to sing, it's fresh like spring; you want to pass it on.**

**I wish for you my friend, this happiness that I've found.
On God you can depend, it matters not where you're bound.
I'll shout it from the mountain top,
I want my world to know: the Lord of love has come to me, I want to pass it on.**

**I'll shout it from the mountain top, I want my world to know:
The Lord of love has come to me, I want to pass it on.**

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, Matt Dudack, Kellie Ramirez, & 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!

Coming Out Christian with Special Guest. Tonight at 6pm, Members of the LGBTQIA+ community are invited to join us this Sunday evening on zoom for a conversation with guest Rev. Phiwa Langeni. Learn more on our [website](#). Please email your [RSVP to Kasey Kalchert](#) by 5pm today. You will receive a zoom link in your email to join the conversation.

Worship services on zoom. Beginning on Sunday, August 2, until September 13, our worship format will shift from live streaming to one combined service at 9:30am on zoom. Weekly registration will be necessary. Please visit <https://bit.ly/AkronFirstChurch> to register. If you would like to participate and don't have a computer, there is an option to dial in and listen. For more information, please contact Kasey in the office at kasey.kalchert@akronfcc.org or 330.253.5109 ext 112. Recordings of the services will be posted online.

First Church Reads – The Cross and the Lynching Tree. In collaboration with members of First Christian Church, Cuyahoga Falls and Rev. Debbie Saxe, this August we will read and discuss "The Cross and the Lynching Tree" by James H. Cone. The first meeting is August 5 from 7-8:30pm on Zoom, and follow every Wednesday in August. Please RSVP to kasey.kalchert@akronfcc.org by 5pm each Wednesday to receive a link to join the conversation. *About the book:* The cross and the lynching tree are the two most emotionally charged symbols in the history of the African American community. Both the cross and the lynching tree represent the worst in human beings and at the same time a thirst for life that refuses to let the worst

determine our final meaning. Copies can be sourced [Amazon](#) from your favorite bookseller.

Summer Pride Art Project. While our building may remain closed to in-person gathering, God's Doors are Open to All! We want to make our welcome plain with the installation of an open door art project on our front lawn. Do you have an old, unused door or paint and brushes that you could donate? Please contact kasey.kalchert@akronfcc.org for more information or if you would like to get involved with painting and assembly. Thanks!

Governing Board Meeting. First Church members and friends are invited to attend the Governing Board meetings with church leadership, which are held on the last Monday of each month. The next meeting is tomorrow, Monday, July 27 at 6:30pm on Zoom. If you would like to attend, please email kasey.kalchert@akronfcc.org for the meeting information.

Pulpit Exchange. On Sunday, August 16, Pastor Nanette and Pastor Debbie, from the First Christian Church Cuyahoga Falls, will switch pulpits as our churches are getting to know each other more this summer and fall. First Christian is seeking to become part of the United Church of Christ.

Patio Pollinator Garden Project. The church patio at the Chapel entrance has been redone over the last six months, with a new concrete foundation and a bike rack. This summer, the next step is to add a pollinator garden, that will benefit the Feed My Sheep Garden. If you are interested to donate plants or get involved, please contact Sarah Vradenburg!

Seeking Garden Volunteers. Are you looking for a way to stay busy during these uncertain pandemic times? Consider volunteering in the Feed My Sheep Garden! This opportunity gives you the chance to support our essential Food Justice ministry, while staying active, and maintaining all social distancing and safety guidelines set forward by the Ohio Department of Health. Contact Sam Phillips, the Feed My Sheep Garden Manager, for more information!

Asian Services in Action, Inc. is the July Mission of the Month! [Asian Services in Action, Inc. \(ASIA\)](#) strives to empower and advocate for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI); and to provide AAPIs and other communities access to quality cultural and linguistically appropriate information, health and social services. ASIA has taken on the challenging tasks to help the underserved, low-income, and immigrant communities across the state. Funds raised from the Mission of the Month will be used to support the "Lucky Seniors" program, specifically for the congregate meals. If you like to make a contribution, please make your check out the First Congregational Church of Akron with "Akron-Area YMCA" 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, Patty, Jessica, Lola, Barbara, Carole, George, Madeline, Betty, Wanda, Art, and Doug.

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