



COMMUNION SUNDAY  
AUGUST 2, 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.

PRELUDE

*Gabriel's Oboe*

arr. Silvio Caroli

WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Come to the Lord with gladness,

**All: for the Spirit of the Lord rest upon us.**

One: Lift high your hearts and your voices,

**All: to proclaim the good news of our Savior.**

One: Be renewed in the stream of God's love,

**All: who pours out living water to all who are thirsty.**

One: Come, let us magnify God's holy name.

**We gather together to ask for God's blessing;  
to turn to a wisdom surpassing our own;  
the pow'rs that oppress us now cease to distress us.  
O God, be present with us and make your will known.**

**Beside us to guide us, O God, we perceive you  
ordaining, maintaining the power of life.  
Yes, yours be the glory; let all tell the story.  
Our God, be ever with us, in gladness and strife.**

**May all sing your praises, Redeemer triumphant,  
defend us, befriend us, whatever may be.  
May your congregation escape tribulation.  
Your name be praised forever, O God make us free!**

## CENTERING AND OPENING PRAYER

## INVITATION TO CONFESSION

## PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**Majestic and mysterious God,  
behind our flaws and wrongdoings  
is the history of a broken world.  
Too often we see neighbors hurting neighbors,  
and friends causing harm to friends.  
We sometimes find it hard to see your light  
or to feel your presence in this world.  
Help us to see beyond ourselves,  
to know your goodness which surrounds us,  
and your love that resides within us.  
Hear us as we lift our silent confessions to you...**

## TIME OF SILENT REFLECTION

## WORDS OF ASSURANCE

## READING FROM THE PSALMS

Psalm 145:8-9, 14-21

God gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.  
God is good to all and has compassion over all that God has made.  
God upholds all who are falling, and raises up all who are bowed down.  
The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season.  
You open your hand, satisfying the desire of every living thing.

God is just in every way, and kind in every deed.  
God is near to all who call, to all who call on God in truth.  
God fulfills the desire of all who are in awe of God;  
God also hears their cry and saves them.  
God watches over all who love God, but will destroy all the wicked.

#### INVITATION TO PRAYER

#### PASTORAL PRAYER

#### READING FROM THE GOSPEL

Matthew 14:13-21

Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick.

When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves." Jesus said to them, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." They replied, "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish." And he said, "Bring them here to me."

Then Jesus ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

#### SERMON

*The Heart of Jesus Series: The Compassionate Heart of Jesus*

#### SONG

*As Grain on Scattered Hillsides*

**As grain on scattered hillsides, when gathered, makes one bread,  
God, gather all your people as one in Christ our head.  
We come from many places and we are not the same,  
yet your strong love has called us to meet in Jesus' name.**

**A grain of wheat is fruitless until in earth it lies;  
then, dying to its old life, it bears and multiples.  
So may we die to hatred, to all our hurtful ways,  
reborn to common living, to love, to work, to praise.**

**O Christ, our risen Savior, O Spirit, holy dove,  
come now and move among us; make us a sign of love.  
Come, knead and blend each texture with strong and gentle hands,  
that we may be one body, one loaf in many lands.**

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

OFFERING

*The Lord is My Rock*

Camille Saint-Saëns

*Please visit [www.akronfcc.org/donate](http://www.akronfcc.org/donate) to support  
the vital and ongoing ministries and missions of First Church  
or mail your donation to 292 East Market Street, Akron OH 44308.*

OFFERING PRAYER

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Invitation

One: The Lord be with you.

**All: And also with you.**

One: Lift up your hearts.

**All: We lift them to the Lord.**

One: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**All: It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

Prayer of Consecration and the Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts,  
as we forgive our debtors.**

**And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

Sharing the Bread and Cup

*One Bread, One Body*

*We celebrate an open communion table; everyone is welcome to participate.*

*Gather juice and bread to celebrate Communion during this interlude.*

*If you are gathered with others, you may serve one another saying: "The bread of heaven" and  
"the cup of new life."*

Prayer of Thanksgiving

SONG

*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.

## BENEDICTION

## POSTLUDE

*Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us*

arr. by Phillip Keveren

*If you have joined the service live on zoom or on the phone, please consider  
remaining on the call for a time of fellowship after worship.*

## LEADING WORSHIP TODAY

Rev. Nanette Pitt, Senior Minister

Antigoné Lowery, Associate Minister

Elizabeth Wilson, Reader

Julie Lehman, Choir Director and Organist

Dave Aberth, Celebrate Service Music Leader

Amanda-Joyce Abbott, Nicholas Campagna, Stephanie Corbin, Dave Lehman, Kellie Ramirez, Vocalists

Stephanie Corbin, Matt Dudack, Mike Vincent, Instrumentalist