



TWELVETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

AUGUST 23, 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

*Praise to the Lord, the Almighty*

arr. Phillip Keveren

WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP<sup>†</sup>

One: We give thanks to God with our whole heart.

**All: We give thanks for God's steadfast love and faithfulness!**

One: Though beyond all things, God sees the lowly.

**All: Even when we are in deep trouble,  
God makes us live again.**

**The love of God lasts forever!**

OPENING SONG

*Welcome to the House of the Lord / You Are Good*

**Welcome to the House of the Lord  
Welcome to the house of the Lord,  
It's a house filled with praise,**

**a house filled with joy.  
Gathered in one accord,  
Let the people rejoice in the house of the Lord. *Repeat***

**Lord, you are good  
and your mercy endures forever. *Repeat***

**People from every nation will come, from generation to generation;  
We worship you, Hallelujah! Hallelujah!  
We worship you for who you are.**

**We worship you, Hallelujah! Hallelujah!  
We worship you for who you are. You are good!**

**Lord, you are good  
and your mercy endures forever. *Repeat***

**People from every nation will come, from generation to generation;  
We worship you, Hallelujah! Hallelujah!  
We worship you for who you are.**

**We worship you, Hallelujah! Hallelujah!  
We worship you for who you are. You are good!**

**People from every nation will come, from generation to generation;  
We worship you, Hallelujah! Hallelujah!  
We worship you for who you are.**

**We worship you, Hallelujah! Hallelujah!  
We worship you for who you are,  
for who you are,  
for who you are,  
and you are good!**

#### CENTERING AND OPENING PRAYER

#### READING FROM THE PSALMS

Psalm 138

I give you thanks, O God, with my whole heart; before the gods I sing your praise;

I bow down toward your holy temple and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness; for you have exalted your name and your word above everything.

On the day I called, you answered me, you increased my strength of soul.

All the kings of the earth shall praise you, O God, for they have heard the words of your mouth.

They shall sing of the ways of God, for great is the glory of the God.

For though God is high, God regards the lowly; but the haughty God perceives from far away.

Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve me against the wrath of my enemies; you stretch out your hand, and your right hand delivers me.

God will fulfill God's purpose for me; your steadfast love, O God, endures forever. Do not forsake the work of your hands.

#### INVITATION TO PRAYER

One: The Lord be with you.

**All: And also with 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**

#### PASTORAL PRAYER

THE LORD'S PRAYER (please use the language most familiar to you)

**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.**

#### READING FROM THE EPISTLE

Romans 12:1-8

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect. For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.

For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

SERMON

*Transformation*

ANTHEM

*Fairest Lord Jesus*

*arr. Richard DeLong*

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

OFFERING

*Children's Song Medley*

Mark Hayes

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the vital and ongoing ministries and missions of First Church  
or mail your donation to 292 East Market Street, Akron OH 44308.*

OFFERING PRAYER

HYMN

*My Life Flows On*

**My life flows on in endless song, above earth's lamentation.  
I hear the clear, through far off hymn that hails a new creation.**

*Refrain: No storm can shake my inmost calm while to that Rock I'm clinging  
Since love is Lord of heav'n and earth, how can I keep from singing?*

**Through all the tumult and the strife, I hear that music ringing.  
It finds an echo in my soul. How can I keep from singing? Refrain.**

**What though my joys and comforts die? I know my Savior liveth.  
What though the darkness gather round? Songs in the night he giveth. Refrain.**

**The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart, a fountain ever springing!  
All things are mine since I am his! How can I keep from singing? Refrain.**

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

*Festive Praise*

Lloyd Larson

*If you have joined the service live on zoom, either online or by 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

Brenda Waddell, Guest Preacher

Michael Desposito, 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, Tom Lehman, Mike Vincent, Instrumentalists

† Drawn from *Feasting on the Word*

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