



SEASON OF CREATION  
SEPTEMBER 27, 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

*Lord of Glory, Who Hast Bought Us*

Paul Manz

WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: We gather together, our souls uplifted,  
eager to worship the Lord.

**All: We yearn to walk in the ways of the Lord,  
to be led in truth and humility.**

One: Let us commit ourselves to righteous living  
and to covenant with the Lord at all times.

**All: For the Lord, our God, regards us with grace  
and preserves our lives with love.  
Come, let us worship the Lord with joy!**

O Lord, my God! when I in awesome wonder  
 Consider all the worlds thy hands have made,  
 I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,  
 Thy pow'r throughout the universe displayed;

*Refrain:* Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee;  
 How great thou art! How great thou art!  
 Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee;  
 How great thou art! How great thou art!

When through the woods and forest glades I wander,  
 And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;  
 When I look down from lofty mountain grandeur  
 And hear the brook and feel the gentle breeze; *Refrain*

And when I think that God, his Son not sparing,  
 Sent him to die, I scarce can take it in,  
 That on the cross my burden gladly bearing,  
 He bled and died to take away my sin; *Refrain*

When Christ shall come, with shout of acclamation,  
 And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart!  
 Then I shall bow in humble adoration  
 And there proclaim, "My God, how great thou art!" *Refrain*

#### CENTERING AND OPENING PRAYER

#### THOUGHTS FOR THE YOUNG

#### READING FROM THE PSALMS

Psalm 25:1-9

To you, O God, I lift up my soul.  
 O my God, in you I trust;  
 do not let me be put to shame;  
 do not let my enemies exult over me.  
 Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame;  
 let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.

Make me to know your ways, O God;  
 teach me your paths.  
 Lead me in your truth, and teach me,  
 for you are the God of my salvation;  
 for you I wait all day long.

Be mindful of your mercy, O God, and of your steadfast love,  
for they have been from of old.

Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions;  
according to your steadfast love remember me,  
for your goodness' sake, O God!

Good and upright is God;  
therefore God instructs sinners in the way.  
God leads the humble in what is right,  
and teaches the humble God's way.

#### INVITATION TO PRAYER

One: The Lord be with you.

**All: And also with you.**

#### SUNG MEDITATION

*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 HEBREW BIBLE

Exodus 17:1-7

From the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages, as the Lord commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink.

The people quarreled with Moses, and said, "Give us water to drink." Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?" But the people thirsted there for water; and the people complained against Moses and said, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?" So Moses cried out to the Lord, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me."

The Lord said to Moses “Go on ahead of the people, and take some of the elders of Israel with you; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink.” Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarreled and tested the Lord, saying “Is the Lord among us or not?”

READING FROM THE GOSPEL

Matthew 21:23-32

When Jesus entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?” Jesus said to them, “I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?” And they argued with one another, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ But if we say, ‘Of human origin,’ we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet.” So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And he said to them “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.”

“What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, “Son, go and work in the vineyard today.” He answered, “I will not;” but later he changed his mind and went. The father went to the second son and said the same; and the son answered, “I go, sir,” but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, the tax-collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax-collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.”

SERMON

*The Gift of Water*

SONG

*Here I am Lord*

**I, the Lord of sea and sky, I have heard my people cry.  
All who dwell in deepest sin my hand will save.  
I, who made the stars of night, I will make their darkness bright.  
Who will bear my light to them? Whom shall I send?**

*Refrain: Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord? I have heard you calling in the night.  
I will go, Lord, if you lead me. I will hold your people in my heart.*

**I, the Lord of snow and rain, I have borne my people's pain.  
I have wept for love of them, they turn away.  
I will break their hearts of stone, give them hearts for love alone.  
I will speak my word to them. Whom shall I send? *Refrain***

**I, the Lord of wind and flame. I will tend the poor and lame.  
I will set a feast for them, my hand will save.  
Finest bread I will provide till their hearts be satisfied.  
I will give my life to them. Whom shall I send? *Refrain***

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

OFFERING

*Make Me a Channel of Your Peace*

Sebastian Temple

*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

SONG

*Pass It On*

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

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

*Savior Like a Shepherd Lead Us*

Larry Shackley

*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

Chelsea Weyand, Reader

Julie Lehman, Choir Director and Organist

Dave Aberth, Celebrate Service Music Leader

Amanda-Joyce Abbott, Nicholas Campagna, Stephanie Corbin, Ben Hayes, Dave Lehman, Kellie Ramirez, Mike Vincent, Courtney Zimmerman, Vocalists and Instrumentalists