



# FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF AKRON

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

OCTOBER 18, 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.

PRELUDE

*Day by Day*

arr. Mark Hayes

WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP

Matthew 5: 14-16, Isaiah 58:6-8

One: Jesus calls us to be the light of the world –

**All: To lose the bonds of injustice,  
open the eyes that are blind,  
and deliver from prison those who sit in darkness.**

One: God invites us to be a light to the nations –

**All: To carry God's justice to the ends of the earth.**

One: The Holy Spirit dwells in us, giving us strength to do God's work.

**All: We live in God's foolish hope for us and for the world!**

SONG

*We Gather Together*

**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

#### THOUGHTS FOR THE YOUNG

#### READING FROM THE PSALMS

Psalm 122

I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord!"

Our feet are standing within your gates, O Jerusalem.

Jerusalem—built as a city that is bound firmly together.

To it the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, as was decreed for Israel, to give thanks to the name of the Lord.

For there the thrones for judgment were set up, the thrones of the house of David.

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: "May they prosper who love you.

Peace be within your walls, and security within your towers."

For the sake of my relatives and friends I will say, "Peace be within you."

For the sake of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek your good.

#### 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**

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

**Our Father, which 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 GOSPEL

Matthew 5:21-26, 43-48

“You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, ‘You shall not murder’; and ‘whoever murders shall be liable to judgment.’ But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment; and if you insult a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council; and if you say, ‘You fool,’ you will be liable to the hell of fire. So, when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift. Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court with him, or your accuser may hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. Truly I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Be perfect, therefore, as God is perfect.”

SERMON

*You Have Heard It Said*  
Sermon Series: Sermon on the Mount

HYMN

*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.  
Spirit come and fill us,  
Fill us with your peace,**

**Fill us with your joy and your love  
Spirit come and show us,  
Show us how to care, show us how to fill your light.**

**Help us give our hands to those in need  
Let our hearts be open to receive.**

**When we share your love, we can work together to heal this broken world. Repeat**

#### INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

OFFERING

*Anthem Offertory*

John Ness Beck

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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

SONG

*O For A World*

**O for a world where everyone respects  
Each other's ways, where love is lived and  
All is done with justice and with praise**

**O for a world where goods are shared and misery relieved,  
Where truth is spoken,  
Children spared equality achieved.**

**O for a world preparing for God's glorious reign  
Of peace, where time and tears will be no more  
And all but love will cease.**

#### BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

*Choral Song*

Samuel Wesley

*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

Tim Kenepp, Reader

Julie Lehman, Choir Director and Organist

Dave Aberth, Celebrate Service Music Leader

Amanda-Joyce Abbott, Nicholas Campagna, Stephanie Corbin, Ben Hayes, Kellie Ramirez, Brian Randall, and Courtney Zimmerman, Instrumentalists and Vocalists