



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF AKRON

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

OCTOBER 25, 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

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty

arr. Phillip Keveren

WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: We are here,

All: gathered in the name of Christ Jesus.

One: So ask right now,

All: and it shall be given.

One: Seek right now,

All: and we will find.

One: Knock right now,

All: and the door will be opened.

**Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, who rules all creation.
 O my soul, worship the well spring of health and salvation.
 All ye who hear, now to God's temple draw near. Join me in the glad adoration.**

**Praise to the Lord, who o'er all things so wondrously reigneth;
 who, as wings of an eagle uplifted, sustaineth.
 Hast though not seen? All that is needful hath been granted in what God ordaineth**

**Praise to the Lord, who doth prosper thy work and defend thee.
 Surely God's goodness and mercy here daily attend thee.
 Ponder anew what the Almighty can do, who with great love doth befriend thee.**

**Praise to the Lord, who doth nourish thy life and restore thee,
 fitting thee well for the tasks that are ever before thee.
 Then to thy need God as a mother doth speed, spreading the wings of grace o'ver thee.**

**Praise to the Lord! O let all earth's peoples and races,
 all that hath life and breath, give thanks for manifold graces.
 Let the Amen sound from God's people again. Gladly forever sing praises.**

CENTERING AND OPENING PRAYER

THOUGHTS FOR THE YOUNG

READING FROM THE PSALMS

Psalm 90:1-6, 13-17

Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God. You turn us back to dust, and say, "Turn back, you mortals."

For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is past, or like a watch in the night. You sweep them away; they are like a dream, like grass that is renewed in the morning; in the morning it flourishes and is renewed; in the evening it fades and withers.

Turn, O Lord! How long? Have compassion on your servants! Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, so that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad as many days as you have afflicted us, and as many years as we have seen evil. Let your work be manifest to your servants, and your glorious power to their children. Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and prosper for us the work of our hands— O prosper the work of our hands!

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 7:7-14

“Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for bread, will give a stone? Or if the child asks for a fish, will give a snake? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!
“In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets. Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the road is easy that leads to destruction, and there are many who take it. For the gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life, and there are few who find it.”

SERMON

Knocking at the Narrow Gate
Sermon Series: Sermon on the Mount

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.***

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

OFFERING

Fairest Lord Jesus

arr. Richard DeLong

*Please visit 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

We Call Ourselves Disciples

**We call ourselves disciples, as pilgrims on the way.
We seek the truth in wisdom and beauty in each day.
As women, men, and children, we serve, Christ's path to clear.
In joyful expectation we see God's reign draw near
The cup and cross before us, proclaim our hope above,
the sign of our Redeemer, the vessel of his love.
Once more the cross is lifted, the cup poured out for all.
When gathered at the table, we hear our common call.**

**We join with all disciples to live the Word in deed,
to share the cup of water and bread with all in need;
to work til God's compassion and righteousness prevail,
till all this planet's people know justice without fail.**

**So now the vision brightens, the light of Christ burns still
in hearts of all disciples to be the church God wills.
From quiet meditation and the joyous hymns of praise,
we go to do God's mission! Christ, lead us all our days!**

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Prelude in G Major

J.S. Bach

*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

Rev. Michael Howard, Lay Leader

Julie Lehman, Choir Director and Organist

Dave Aberth, Celebrate Service Music Leader

Amanda-Joyce Abbott, Tim Borham, Nicholas Campagna, Stephanie Corbin, Ben Hayes, Mickey

McGroarty, Dave Lehman, Kellie Ramirez, Brian Randall, and Courtney Zimmerman, Instrumentalists
and Vocalists