



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF AKRON

WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY

OCTOBER 4, 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

Highland Cathedral

Piping Tune by Roever and Korb

WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP[†]

One: As the seasons turn towards harvest,

All: we celebrate the goodness of God's creation.

One: In the people we celebrate this World Communion Sunday -

All: we see the image of God in the diversity of our world community.

One: In the creatures we celebrate this Pet Blessing Sunday -

All: we see the faithfulness, the love, and the energy of God reflected.

One: In all things, we give thanks for the blessings of God

All: woven through all creation, God's goodness is visible!

HYMN

Creating God, Your Fingers Trace

**Creating God, your fingers trace
the bold designs of farthest space;
Let sun and moon and stars and light and
what lies hidden praise your might.**

**Sustaining God, your hands uphold the earth's
Mysteries known for yet untold; let water's fragile
Blend with air, enabling life, proclaim your care.**

**Redeeming God, your arms embrace all
Now despised for creed or race; let peace, descending
Like a dove, make known on earth your healing love.**

**Indwelling God, your gospel claims one
Family with a billion names; let every life be
Touched by grace until we praise you face to face.**

CENTERING AND OPENING PRAYER

INVITATION TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**God of grace and mercy,
on this day we acknowledge the walls we've built
between ourselves and others;
the divides we've left unbridged
between neighbors and nations,
and how we have ignored the cries of those in need.
Forgive us and redeem us as a part of your creation.
As we celebrate your creatures - humans and other - today,
renew us through your grace, for the work of your love in the world.
We pray this as we lift our silent prayers to you...**

TIME OF SILENT REFLECTION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

THOUGHTS FOR THE YOUNG

READING FROM THE EPISTLE

Galatians 6:14-18

May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything; but a new creation is everything! As for those who will follow this rule — peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. From now on, let no one make trouble for me; for I carry the marks of Jesus branded on my body. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers and sisters. Amen.

READING FROM THE GOSPEL

Matthew 11:25-30

At that time Jesus said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

"Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

SERMON

Come to Me

HYMN

We Are Not on Our Own

We are not alone. Earth names us: past and present, peoples near and Far, family and friends and strangers show us who we are.

Through a human life God finds us; dying, living, love is fully Known and in bread and wine reminds us: we are not our own.

Therefore, let us make thanksgiving, and with justice, willing, and aware Give to earth and all things living, liturgies of care.

Let us be a house of welcome, living, stone upholding living Stone, gladly showing all our neighbors we are not our own!

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

HYMN

O God, Your Creatures Fill the Earth

**O God, your creatures fill the earth with wonder and delight,
And every living thing has worth and beauty in your sight.
So playful dolphins dance and swim; Your sheep bow down and graze.
Your songbirds share a morning hymn To offer you their praise.**

**You made the pets we welcome in- They're wondrous blessings, too.
With paws and whiskers, wings and fins, They offer praise to you.
O Lord, you call us to embrace These creatures in our care.
May we show kindness, love and grace To all pets everywhere.**

**You made the creatures on each farm; You know the things they need.
May they grow healthy, safe from harm, And safe from human greed.
Just as a shepherd loves the sheep, You know their joy, their pain.
Lord, bless the animals we keep; May all farms be humane.**

**Your creatures live in every land; They fill the sky and sea.
O Lord, you give us your command To love them tenderly.
We're called to have dominion here--To care for them always.
By loving creatures you hold dear, We offer you our praise.**

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

OFFERING

Bonse Aba

traditional Zambian song / arr. Andrew Fischer

Translation: All that sing have the right to be called Children of God.

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

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 (*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.**

Sharing the Bread and Cup *Faces of Jesus with World Music*

*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

This is My Song

**This is my song, O God of all the nations,
A song of peace for lands afar and mine.
This is my home, the country where my heart is;
Here are my hopes, my dreams, my holy shrine;
But other hearts in other lands are beating
With hopes and dreams as true and high as mine**

**My country's skies are bluer than the ocean,
And sunlight beams on clover leaf and pine
But other lands have sunlight too, and clover,
And skies are everywhere as blue as mine.
O hear my son, thou God of all the nations,
A song of peace for their land and for mine.**

**This is my prayer, O Ruler of all nations:
Let thy reign come; on earth thy will be done.
In peace may all earth's people draw together,
And hearts united learn to live as one.
O hear my prayer, thou God of all the nations;
Myself and I give thee; let they will be done.**

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Let Us Break Bread Together

arr. D. Aberth

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

Julie Brandy, 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

† Iona Abbey Worship Book, ISBN 1-901557-50-2

CCLI License #11234842 and CCS License #8399