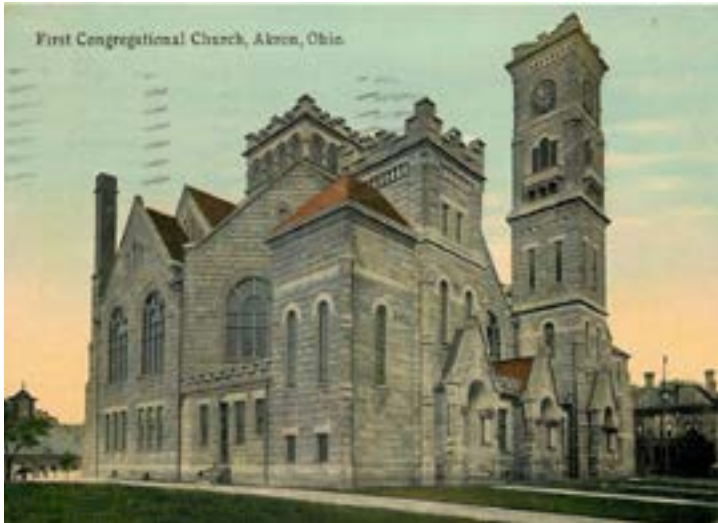




Chronicle

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH OF AKRON

Rooted in Christ • Fostering Justice • Celebrating Diversity



Sacred Snapshots: A Chronicle of Cherished Memories in Our Church Family

AS WRITTEN AND TOLD BY CHRIS GODARD

In celebration of FCC's 190th Anniversary, longtime member Chris Godard generously offered to share some of his favorite memories of our church. The following is the first installment of Chris' recollection of times past. More to come in future editions of the Chronicle.

INTRODUCTION

As a time traveler going back to a grand era, I remember things like the organ being played by Richard Warner and the chancel choir singing gallantly to the congregation below. The congregation encompassed generations from WWI to WWII and then our generation – the Baby Boomers. Yeah, the pace of the church, the throngs of members going in and out the door, on the original flooring, through the narthex. Dr. Paul Kirchner was our Senior Minister. When he moved about the Meetinghouse, he appeared to me like an ole Abe Lincoln. I made a few airplanes out of leaflets while sitting there with my grandparents, Miles and Kitty Godard. I sent the airplanes down the nextdoor staircase after service. My Pop, Miles, ushered for many years before he turned that duty over to my uncle, Fred Godard. My dad, Warren, was always involved in the finances of the church because he was on the board of trustees and in the insurance business. My mom, Liz, became one of the primary ed teachers for over 35 years. How she loved those little ones!

CHURCH SCHOOL MEMORIES

Most of my youth, I remember being in various classrooms upstairs in the Upper Room. Yes, all those rooms bulged with kids. God only knows how those kindly teachers put up with us. We rolled many a crayon and pencil down those sloping floors to the very edge until Mr. Grant would pull the curtain, saying, "Two minutes." We all knew it was time to pack up and boogie down to the punch bowl in the dining room.

THE NEW CHAPEL

Short story – One of those fine teachers who patiently tolerated us took us all down to the new chapel of our church. This was around late 1958. When the door opened, Mr. Sanford quietly told us to be careful of the rubble all around. There was wood, sawdust, cement, and pieces of marble all over the floor. He said, "Take a look around and remember this moment." He then told us to pick up a piece of marble as a keepsake. I still have that marble today, and I think of it every time I enter our chapel.

MEMBERSHIP

Our church thrived back then, with folks like our blimp guy, Howard Tolley. Howard was head of PR for the Goodyear blimp. We had members who were doctors, lawyers, and many business people. The University of Akron gave us the likes of Jay Hershey, Wayne Duff, Dudley Johnson, Dick Wright, Dick Hansford, Ron McDonald, Jim Banks, and Sid Foster. All of these members contributed so very much to every facet of the church.

MEMORIES OF TRICK-OR-TREATING

Harold Hibbard, my mentor and good family friend, showed me as a young boy about giving of yourself in a really fun way. He sent us all home with little orange UNICEF boxes to take trick or treating. We'd go door to door every Halloween yelling "Trick or Treat and UNICEF!" After we stuffed our faces with candy, we'd bring the boxes full of coins back to church the next Sunday. I felt really good knowing that each penny I contributed allowed a family somewhere to have five glasses of milk. When I was an older teen, Harold gave me the opportunity to volunteer for Open M. First, I went out to nearby downtown Akron neighborhoods to clean up fenced areas. Then, a partner and I took arts and crafts and lunches to the kids. Bob and Sue Ralph ran the organization and made a huge impact on me. We even took a troupe of kids up to Sea World. Man that was fun!



THE JOURNEY OF HOLY WEEK

Holy Week will guide us through the profound moments leading up to Easter Sunday. This week holds immense significance in our faith journey, marking the culmination of Jesus' earthly ministry. Each service has been crafted with care and reverence, offering opportunities for reflection, prayer, and communal worship. Together, let us walk in the footsteps of Jesus, from the triumphant entry into Jerusalem to the solemn observance of the Last Supper, and ultimately to the awe-inspiring celebration of resurrection.

PALM SUNDAY

MARCH 24, 2024 - 9AM & 11AM

Join us for a Palm Sunday service as we commemorate Jesus Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem. This sacred day marks the beginning of Holy Week, a time of reflection, renewal, and spiritual growth. Palm branches will be distributed symbolizing peace and victory.

Whether you're a longtime member of our congregation or seeking a spiritual connection during this holy season, we welcome you with open arms to join us for this uplifting service.

MAUNDY THURSDAY

MARCH 28, 2024 - 6:30PM

Maundy Thursday is a significant day in the Christian tradition, commemorating the Last Supper of Jesus Christ with his disciples before his crucifixion. Join us for a light Maundy Thursday meal of potato soup, vegetarian vegetable soup, and bread as well as an informal worship service and discussion. Please RSVP to events@akronfcc.org by Monday March, 25. Feel free to invite friends and family to join us as we observe this meaningful occasion together.

GOOD FRIDAY

MARCH 29, 2024 - 12PM & 7PM

At our Good Friday service we will come together to reflect on the solemn and significant events of this day. It is a time to remember the sacrifice made for us and to contemplate the deep meaning of redemption and forgiveness.

12pm – a short worship service featuring Scripture reading and organ music

7pm - Tenebrae Worship featuring organ and choir and the successive dimming of the lights with scripture reading as participants contemplate the meaning of Jesus death.



EASTER SUNDAY

MARCH 31, 2024 - 7AM, 9AM, & 11AM

Come and celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ with us on Easter Sunday, a day of hope, renewal, and joy!

7AM SUNRISE WORSHIP

Bring a lawn chair and join us for a brief outdoor service (weather permitting) to welcome in the dawn of hope, as we begin the day's celebration.

9AM CELEBRATE WORSHIP

A contemporary service followed by an Easter Egg Hunt for children (toddlers- grade 4). Service also online at www.youtube.com/FirstChurchAkron

11AM FESTIVAL WORSHIP

A traditional worship followed by an Easter Egg Hunt for children (toddlers - grade 4). Service also online at www.youtube.com/FirstChurchAkron

EASTER EGG HUNT

MARCH 31 AFTER 9 AM AND 11 AM SERVICES

It's Lent, and that means Easter is coming!! First Church will be hosting an Easter Egg Hunt for children ages 1-13. To make this successful we will need donations of plastic eggs (ours are old and not in good shape anymore) and candy or toys that can fit into the eggs. Donations will need to be brought to the church office by March 24. We will also need volunteers who can help stuff the eggs on March 24 after our 11am service. Finally, we will need 2 - 4 volunteers to help hide eggs on Sunday during the 9am and 11am services. Please contact Pastor Bobby.burtt@akronfcc.org, if you have any questions, or would like to volunteer.



NEW FACES

We'd like to introduce several new additions to the First Church staff – be sure to say hello!

Randy Alderman – Randy joined our facility maintenance staff this past fall as a part-time Facility Maintenance Assistant, and will be handling maintenance and facility update projects throughout the building.

Jennifer Barcus – Jen has joined First Church in a new role as our full-time Administrative Assistant. She will be the one greeting our guests as they enter the building, and will manage our correspondence, calendars, Sunday worship bulletins and more. You can reach her directly at admin@akronfcc.org.

Amanda Daniels – Amanda has joined First Church in the newly created part-time role of Building and Food Services Manager. Amanda will be overseeing all the facility maintenance, cleaning, and food service staff. You can reach her directly at bldgservices@akronfcc.org.

Patrice Robinson – Patrice is the new part-time First Church Events Manager. Patrice will be responsible for the scheduling and management of all events that occur at First Church, and will be working to bring in new groups and events. You can reach her directly at events@akronfcc.org.

SOJOURNER TRUTH

Mark your calendar for May 29 and plan to attend the unveiling of the Sojourner Truth Statue. The Sojourner Truth Committee intentionally aligned the unveiling with the May 29, 1851, date of Truth's speech known as 'Ain't I a Woman?' to honor the impact of Truth's life's work on Akron's history. In June of 2022, First Church chose to step up as a Presenting Sponsor, and we'd like to invite everyone to join us for this much anticipated unveiling!

POP TABS TO HELP FAMILIES

The Ronald McDonald House of Akron turns pop tabs into cash to help support operations of the House and to provide services for families. It's that time to turn in your pop tabs and help families who have sick children at Akron Children's Hospital! Drop your tabs off anytime in the church office.

UPCOMING EVENTS

TRANS DAY OF VISIBILITY CELEBRATION

March 29, 6pm - 9pm Bounce Innovation Hub, 526 S Main St., Akron. Free event celebrating the accomplishments of the transgender and gender non-conforming people within our communities.

LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY NIGHT-

April 14, 5pm - 7pm First Church, 292 E Market, Akron in the theatre. Viewing and discussion of Brene Brown's, *Atlas of the Heart*, followed by a campfire in the garden to roast marshmallows and hotdogs (weather permitting).



SOLAR ECLIPSE VIEWING PARTY

We're throwing a Solar Eclipse Viewing Party, and you're invited! Meet in the garden here at First Church on Monday, April 8 at 2:45 pm. The celestial event should last about 45 minutes. You bring a lawn chair, and we'll provide viewing glasses* for safe observation and some fun "eclipse" snacks. It's going to be "sunsational"! *Glasses available for the first 60 people.

SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING NOTICE

MAY 5, 2024 - FOLLOWING ONE 10AM SERVICE

The First Church 2024 Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting will be held on Sunday, May 5, following one combined 10am worship service in the Meetinghouse. While in person attendance is encouraged, for a quorum, participants will also be able to sign up to attend virtually. Meeting materials will be loaded to the church website in early April and a virtual link will be advertised. Please contact the church office for any additional questions or information.

The agenda and items to be voted on will include:

1. Slate of Board Members and Church Officers
2. Budget for the 2024-2025 fiscal and program year
3. Endowment wording changes

If you are unable to attend, either in person or virtually, please contact the church office at your convenience and complete an absentee ballot. Absentee ballots do not count toward quorum.

CHURCH OUTINGS

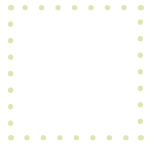
Plan to join First Church on the following outings:

APRIL 14 - 6:30PM

First Church will be heading to Zion UCC, 415 S Main St., N. Canton, to enjoy "Carousel of Life", presented by A Chorus for a Cause. There's no cost of admission but donations are appreciated and proceeds will benefit Refuge of Hope. Doors will open at 6pm.

APRIL 28 - 4PM

The Harmony Ringers present "Anything Goes" at Uniontown UMC, 13370 Cleveland Ave NW, Uniontown. This concert has a lot to offer: Monkeys, Beach Boys, Summertime, Girl from Ipanema and more. There will be a free-will offering, and doors open at 3:30pm.



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NEW FAITH ENRICHMENT

WACKY WEDNESDAYS – SMALL GROUP MINISTRIES

On the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, (and maybe even the 5th!) Wednesdays of the month, from 6:30pm - 8:30pm, the Faith Enrichment opportunity will be Wacky Wednesdays. There will be three small groups to choose from. All groups focus on community building, faith-enrichment, and are open and affirming. These groups are open to everyone, and you can choose the group that's right for you!

FIBER FRIENDS is for people who love to craft whether that be knitting, sewing, crocheting, painting, scrapbooking, or whatever craft project suits your fancy. Bring your materials and join the group as we work on our individual projects together.

MOVIES AND MEDITATIONS is perfect for you if you want to learn more about your faith and Holy Scripture. We will watch 15-20-minute movies and then partake in some discussion and meditation over the content that has been shared.

CHILDREN'S GROUP is for kids from 4 years old-8th grade. This group is a great opportunity for your child to continue deepening their faith and have some fun with their friends from church all at the same time.

Have an idea for a group that you would like to lead? Have questions about the groups that are already taking place? Contact Pastor Bobby at bobby.burt@akronfcc.org.

MESSY CHURCH

What is Messy Church? Messy Church is church like you've never seen church before! Messy Church is appropriate for all ages and abilities, open and affirming, and FREE! Join us as we deepen our faith on the First Wednesday of the month. Here's a sneak peak of what we have planned for our next Messy Church:

April 3 - 6:45pm - Join us in the Chapel as we celebrate Easter all over again remembering the promises of spring with seed planting, Easter egg coloring, and an epic Egg Hunt you won't soon forget. Gather your family and friends together and hop on down for an egg-cellent time!