

## BIG CHANGES, BRIGHT FUTURES: UPDATES ON THE RAMP AND NEW PROPERTY

As we look toward a new year, we're thrilled to celebrate the completion of two major projects that will help shape the future of our church and its mission.

### A Ramp to Accessibility and Fellowship

Back in 2020, we envisioned a more accessible and versatile connection between our church building and the garden—a space cherished for picnics, gatherings, and quiet reflection. Today, that vision is nearly complete! The newly constructed ramp ensures that our garden is now handicap accessible from inside the building. Beyond accessibility, it also makes transporting tables, chairs, and food to the garden easier, opening up exciting possibilities for outdoor events. While we await the final touch—the installation of custom-fabricated handrails—the ramp will be fully open and functional when the weather warms this spring. This marks a new chapter of inclusion and convenience for all who gather here.



### New Property, New Horizons

In early 2023, the church embarked on another significant journey—the purchase of land from the University of Akron. This October, we officially closed on the property and recently received the deed in the mail!

This expansion offers exciting opportunities to serve our community and grow our ministries. To guide this effort, the church is assembling a visioning team, comprised of members nominated by the congregation, to explore how best to use this new space. This team will prayerfully discern the potential of this property to reflect our mission and values.

We're excited to share photos of both the ramp and the new property, giving a glimpse into the incredible progress made. These projects are milestones in our journey as a church community, and we can't wait to see how they will enhance our ability to serve and gather.

Stay tuned for updates as we continue to dream, build, and grow together!

## 'TIS THE SEASON BRINGS HOLIDAY JOY!

On Sunday, December 8, our church hosted the University of Akron Choir and Jazz Band for their festive concert, 'Tis the Season. The event was a wonderful success, drawing church members, community guests, and proud families of the talented students. Adding to the holiday cheer, Santa himself made a special appearance, spreading joy to all. It was an afternoon filled with beautiful music, laughter, and the spirit of the season—a delightful time for everyone who attended!



# FONDLY REMEMBERING

As we reflect on our church's rich history, we are reminded of the many ministers and moments that have shaped our journey. This edition, we feature an excerpt from a piece written February 7, 2016 by Pastor Pitt titled, *It is Good for Us to Be Here* and based on Luke 9:28-36. While we honor the past, we remain excited about the present work God is doing among us and the bright future that lies ahead. Our mission continues, not just in remembering where we've been, but in faithfully stepping forward into what God is calling us to do now and in the years to come.

*"...I believe the Spirit is calling us once again to follow our Savior up onto the mountain to hear the voice in the cloud and to follow Christ out into the world with the intent to respond to it as it is now; to pay attention to what we need to do and be in this world today, in Akron today. I believe we all know what this means and that we all yearn for the mountaintop, spirit-filled experience that lifts us up out of the mundane, everyday life and that leads us back out into the world invigorated and passionate. But we also become stuck as we hold onto what is special, to what feels holy and divine. Friends, this day let us trust in the God who brings us those moments, and let us renew our commitment to following, knowing that there are more mountaintops ahead of us on the journey to renew us as we go out into the world to serve, to welcome the stranger as friend, and to renew God's love, peace and justice in this time and place."*



**Rev. Nanette Pitt**  
First Congregational Church  
Minister 2015-2024

# CHRISTMAS GIVING

This year at AkronFCC, our special Christmas offering is dedicated to two deeply cherished causes, each a reflection of God's boundless love.



When you give, 90% of your gift will support our Music Ministry Fund, empowering us to share a vibrant tapestry of musical expression that inspire and unite. The remaining 10% of your gift will be shared with the UCC Christmas Fund, which has faithfully supported United Church of Christ ministers, church workers, and their families for over a century.



This Christmas, let us come together to create music that stirs the soul and to offer care that renews the spirit. Every gift matters, resonating beyond our walls to spread love, compassion, and joy. Thank you for your generosity, your faith, and your heart. Together, let us make this season one of profound impact and enduring hope.

# FAITH ADVENTURES

Elementary aged kids are welcome to come join Faith Adventures during the 11am service where they learn about the Bible with scripture readings, fun activities, and crafts. Last month we learned about the book of Ruth. This month we are learning about Luke chapter 1 where we focus on the birth of John and events leading up to the birth of Jesus.



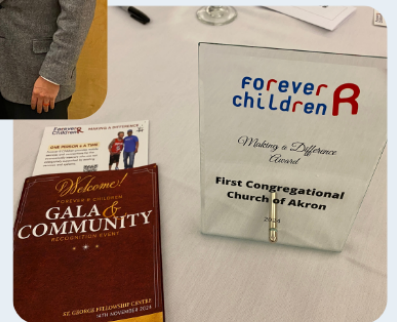
# AKRONFCC RECEIVES "MAKING A DIFFERENCE" AWARD

We are thrilled to share that our church received the "Making a Difference" Award at the Forever R Children Awards Gala on November 14. This recognition highlights our ongoing commitment to serving those in need and partnering with organizations that make a meaningful impact in our community.

Forever R Children is dedicated to supporting the economically insecure in Summit County, meeting the basic needs of the homeless while honoring their dignity. One of their groundbreaking initiatives, the Shower Bus, provides access to showers, meals, and clothing for those in Greater Akron, promoting both physical and emotional well-being.

We are grateful to be part of a community that values compassion, collaboration, and empowerment. This award is a testament to the combined efforts of our congregation and the shared vision we hold with organizations like Forever R Children.

Thank you to everyone who supports our church's mission of making a difference!



Thank you so much to everyone who volunteered! Thank you for your time, effort, and heart in helping make our recent Community Meals such a success!



Whether you volunteered to cook, serve, clean, or donate desserts, your contributions made a meaningful impact on our church and community.



ANNUAL CELEBRATION  
JANUARY 19, 2025  
4:00PM



292 E Market St  
Akron, OH

All are welcome.

For more information:  
Contact Cazzell M. Smith, Sr.  
330.807.9559 or  
Peggy Holmes 33.322.6933



Christmas Eve  
Worship

DECEMBER 24  
7pm



Longest Night  
SERVICE

For many, the holiday season brings complex emotions—grief, uncertainty, or simply not feeling like celebrating. On Saturday, December 21, 2024, at 4:15pm in the Chapel, we will hold our Longest Night Gathering—a gentle space for those carrying loss, worry, or the weight of challenging times, and for those who want to offer their support. Together, we'll share in music, candle lighting, quiet reflection, communion, and moments of hope, honoring the darkness and welcoming light. Whether you come seeking peace or to stand alongside others, you are welcome.



Carol  
Sing  
Service

Sunday  
December 29  
10am

## IN GRATITUDE...

*"Dear FCC Members- I was deeply touched and want to extend my sincere thanks to all that attended Jim's calling hours. Your kindness and compassion during this difficult time will always be remembered. - With Gratitude, Cherie Vaughan & Family"*



**A CHORUS FOR A CAUSE**

In concert

Featuring

SHERI DAVIDSON  
 on Soprano Saxophone



December 15, 2024 | 3:30 pm

St. Timothy's Episcopal Church  
 226 3rd St., Massillon, OH

December 17, 2024 | 7:30 pm

Faith United Methodist Church  
 300 9th St. NW, North Canton, OH

DONATIONS  
 APPRECIATED



Looking for a way to make a difference? Check out our volunteer opportunities at AkronFCC and see how you can lend a helping hand. Whether you have an hour to spare or a whole afternoon, there's a place for you to get involved and make a positive impact!



The Pantry is busy all week long. Volunteer on Monday morning or in the evening, or on Tuesday morning, or perhaps Friday morning or Saturday morning. Contact Larry Becker for specific information at 330-696-6709. The need for help is greatest on Monday evening and Saturday morning.



Consider serving as a liturgist at either the 9 AM or 11 AM service! It's a meaningful way to participate by reading scripture and sharing announcements—materials are provided in advance to make it easy. Call the church office to get more information or sign-up



We're looking for volunteers to help with Faith Adventures during the 11 AM Meetinghouse service! Classes include engaging Bible stories, fun activities, and a snack. If you're interested in teaching, please email Julie at [childrensministry@akronfcc.org](mailto:childrensministry@akronfcc.org) to learn more.