

CHRONICLE

2025

First Congregational Church of Akron



**“I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth; do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.”
~ Isaiah 43:19 (NRSVue)**

October 2 is officially one month since I began as your settled senior pastor. What a welcome you have given me! You all have been gracious in teaching me the things I need to know, including your names. Please do not be offended if I ask your name again, even if you have told me many times. I promise you, it is not because you are not memorable, but simply that my brain is filled with a lot of new things. It is also helpful if you make sure to grab your nametag on your way into worship, so I have a “cheat sheet” of sorts.

Speaking of new things... I have received some questions about what I am going to change. Let me first say that you will notice changes, some of which are procedural, but overall, my first year is about learning about you: your priorities, your passions, your people. It is human nature to feel anxious about change, so let me begin by saying that most of the changes you see will be small, and all of them will be made in conversation with the leadership of this congregation. One of the things that was clear in your profile (and in your name) is the importance of congregationalism. I value that and not only want your input, but I also want to empower you to take responsibility for this church that you love.

One important change that I want to share with you is our plan to call a new Associate Minister. That position has historically been a hired position, and that was done through our Human Resources Board. Because of the congregational nature of our church, Pastor Jeff suggested that it be a called position, and I enthusiastically concur. That means that a search committee will need to be formed and that it will take some time. That means I will be managing solo for a while, so I ask for your patience and grace. The things which you are passionate about may not be at the top of my list right away, but it does not mean I do not hear you. I promise I will attend to them.

I am excited to be doing ministry with all of you, and as the prophet Isaiah reminds us, none of us are doing this alone; God is by our side.

Pastor Brooke

Pastor Brooke Baker

EVENTS@AKRONFCC

By Events Manager, Alex Morris



When's the last time you saw a wedding in the Meetinghouse?

I'm sure your answer is along the lines of "too long ago." Since we've reopened

our doors to facility rentals, we've scheduled over sixty events from baby showers to weddings, board meetings to boxing matches. This is bringing in additional revenue which I'm sure no one can complain about. More importantly, though, is the exposure AkronFCC is getting. Hundreds, if not thousands, of people unfamiliar with AkronFCC and its many missions have already filed through the halls, giving us the chance to advertise our worship services, internal events, and ministries that benefit the community (possibly including them).



If you, a friend, family member, or organization you're familiar with needs somewhere to hold a meeting, party, training session, etc., urge them to visit www.akronfcc.org/rentals and learn about our facility rentals. 501c3 (non-profit) organizations automatically receive a sizable discount, and AkronFCC members don't pay room fees at all!

BEHIND THE MUSIC: A WORD FROM THE PRAISE BAND

By Hannah Pyett

Each Sunday at 9am, you see us with instruments, microphones, music stands, and often praying that the projector cooperates with the lyrics. What you may not see are the moments leading up to worship. The quick tuning, the last minute lyric or key changes, the laughter at missed notes, and the small edits that make everything come together. Each of us comes from a different background with the shared goal of pointing the congregation to God through music.

For us, leading worship is not a performance. It's about creating a space where all voices are lifted, where people of all rhythms and backgrounds can join in. Or even just listening and sitting quietly in God's presence.

SECOND SUNDAY SALADS RETURNS – LETTUCE REJOICE!

By Christine Allison

Mark your calendars (and maybe loosen your belts) because Second Sunday Salads is making a delicious comeback this October! Originally launched in March 2024, this flavorful fellowship was created for one simple reason: people + food = community magic. And honestly, who doesn't want to bond over a buffet of leafy goodness?

Yes, the church is a building... but it's also the Body of Christ – and bodies need nourishment! Spiritually and salad-ly. Whether you're into spinach or soul care, this is your chance to gather, gab, and graze with fellow believers.

Each month features a beautifully themed tablescape that sets the tone – and gives our salad creators a fun challenge. (not a requirement...common salads are good, too.)

Speaking of salads, we have a lovely team of Salad Slingers – but we could always use a few more, because running out of food is a sin (probably). So, come join us Sunday, October 12th after the 11:00 worship.

Whether you're weary from the world or just really hungry, you'll find laughter, connection, and a table full of joy – and maybe even a surprise crouton or two. Email Christine Allison at, cdanotes@gmail.com if you want to join the crew and flex your leafy talents.

Come for the fellowship, stay for the feta.



When the congregation joins in, whatever that may look like, that's when worship feels whole. And it reminds of us a simple truth; worship belongs to us all!

Next month, we're excited to share a special "Meet the Praise Band" article. You'll get to learn a little more about who we are, the instruments we play, and the songs that shape our worship. Our hope is that as you get to know us better, you'll feel even more connected to the music we make together each week.

Until then, thank you for being part of the music.



FINANCE REPORT

Stewardship/Finance Report (unaudited)

Actual Thru August, 2025

	August	August YTD	YTD Budget	Percent to Budget YTD
INCOME				
Offerings Income	\$7,128	\$31,853	\$37,500	84.9%
Unrestricted Grant Income	\$2	\$117	\$1,248	9.3%
Designated Income	\$2,083	\$6,250	\$30,786	20.3%
Endowment, Sprowls Trust, Pollock	\$90,783	\$212,675	\$186,592	114.0%
Rental and Food Service Income	\$1,664	\$5,937	\$9,996	59.4%
Other Income	\$15,955	\$15,955	\$1,248	1278.5%
TOTAL	\$117,616	\$272,787	\$267,370	102.0%
EXPENSES				
Loan Expense	\$2,645	\$7,950	\$7,875	101.0%
Membership Board	\$0	\$0	\$716	0.0%
Governing Board	\$0	\$0	\$750	0.0%
Food Pantry	\$5,679	\$12,771	\$13,753	92.9%
Congregational Care	\$319	\$1,934	\$2,733	70.8%
Worship & Music	\$721	\$1,298	\$3,597	36.1%
Christian Education	\$19	\$216	\$1,416	15.2%
Development Team	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.0%
Food Service Expense	\$354	\$3,512	\$3,253	108.0%
Personnel	\$53,368	\$124,671	\$155,170	80.3%
Other Admin Expense	\$6,152	\$23,797	\$26,059	91.3%
Media Relations/Marketing	\$507	\$2,018	\$2,590	77.9%
Maintenance/Insurance/Utilities	\$10,585	\$48,545	\$60,859	79.8%
TOTAL	\$80,349	\$226,712	\$278,771	81.3%
Net Income/Loss	\$37,267	\$46,076	-\$11,401	404.1%

LEAVE A LEGACY OF FAITH AND HOPE

By Finance and Communications Manager, Janis Worley

Legacy Giving, sometimes called Planned Giving, is a meaningful way to continue supporting AkronFCC beyond your lifetime. Through a will or other planned gift, you can ensure that the ministries and mission that matter to you today will continue to bless others for years to come.

Planned gifts may be given over time in cash, or in non-cash assets such as stocks, life insurance policies, or retirement accounts. They can also be designated after your passing. For those who give while living, there are potential tax benefits, and you have the opportunity to help shape how your gift will be used to strengthen our church's future.

If AkronFCC has touched your life, nurtured your spirit, or given you a community of faith you value, we invite you to prayerfully consider including AkronFCC in your estate planning. Your legacy can be one of hope, service, and love.

If you are considering such a gift, or have already included AkronFCC in your plans, please reach out to Janis Worley at finance@akronfcc.org. Together, let us make sure the legacy you leave is one of faithfulness and purpose.

SUPPORT AKRON FCC

Supporting First Church through pledge donations or Sunday offerings help to offset the annual operating costs of the church. Consider making a donation, or setting up a recurring donation, to support a ministry that is near and dear to your heart.

Discretionary Assistance
Fund
Endowment
Feeding Hope Food Pantry
Mason CLC Fund
Mason PB&J Fund
Garden Improvement
Program
Music Fund



MEETINGHOUSE DOME ROOF REPAIR UPDATE

By Finance and Communications Manager, Janis Worley

At our Spring Congregational Meeting, members approved an important repair to the Meetinghouse Dome roof, with authorization to use up to \$120,000 from the Endowment. We are pleased to share that the project has made excellent progress and is nearing completion.

In July, the interior of the dome was carefully protected by tarping off the area to shield the stained-glass dome during the work. By August, the structural repairs to the roof were completed, including enhancements to help prevent future water damage. September brought the start of the copper roof installation, which will be followed by the final step of adding foam insulation and a venting fan to guard against condensation and rot.

Thanks to the generosity of church members who contributed directly to this project, the financial outlook is brighter than anticipated. While the total project cost is estimated at \$110,000, the Endowment draw is expected to be only \$86,000—well below the amount originally approved.

The protective tarping over the dome will remain in place through the winter months as an added precaution. Come spring, once we are confident the repairs have weathered the season well, the tarping will be removed.

We are grateful for the support and understanding of the congregation throughout this process. If you have any questions or would like more information, please reach out to Building & Grounds Chair Todd Brown at justtodd@mac.com.

SILVER LINING LUNCHEON

Senior and retired members are warmly invited to join us at noon on Wednesday, October 29 for our fall Silver Lining Luncheon! Enjoy a delicious hot lunch, good company, and a short musical program provided by Julie Lehman to brighten the season. Please RSVP to our Events Manager, Alex Morris at events@akronfcc.org.

HELP US FILL THE MISSING NOTE

Can you read music? Do you know note values? If you do, then our bell choir needs you as a substitute at occasional Wednesday evening rehearsals. Each ringer is expected to find their own sub. Contact Christine Allison at cdanotes@gmail.com if you are interested.

THANK YOU TO THE NOGC!

By Finance & Communications Manager, Janis Worley

Thank you to the Northern Ohio Golf Charities and Foundation for their grant to the Feeding Hope Food Pantry which allowed us



to purchase three new chest freezers, allowing us to relocate older freezers into the basement. The new freezer directly impacts the ability of the Feeding Hope Food Pantry to serve. Moving the older freezers to reserve storage means smoother, more accessible distribution days—eliminating confusion and making the experience faster and easier for clients who rely on the pantry. The additional space will also allow the Pantry to make larger, cost-effective purchases from the Foodbank and local markets, ensuring Akron's families have consistent access to the foods they need. We are grateful for the support and recognition of the importance of our food pantry program!



A MOMENT WITH THE MODERATOR

By Tori White

Well, the summer has flown by and we inch into fall. Looking back, summer was full of exciting events. Our time with Reverend Jeff Jackson has come to an end here at the First Congregational Church of Akron. Jeff led us with a smile and a steady presence. He provided and built a path for us to receive Pastor Brooke. Jeff ran a good race, including the Akron Pride. Our members who were able to attend saw the beauty that is Pride. Such a great time to spread our love and acceptance. For me, I cry with overwhelming joy multiple times during the Pride March.

Pastor Brooke brings energy and enthusiasm. Her challenge will be to continue to help us grow our outreach programs to serve the community. She is full of great wisdom and wonder for our future.

I am humbled to be your Moderator and still cannot believe how lucky I am to serve with such passionate and dedicated followers of Christ. I look forward to the year to come.

PRIDE 2025

This year's Akron Pride Festival & Equity March was a vibrant celebration of community, visibility, and hope. Organizers estimate attendance in the tens of thousands, with some sources putting recent festivals at upwards of 45,000 guests.

Our church was honored to participate again this year. We staffed a booth throughout the event, walked together in the march, and greeted thousands of attendees with smiles and conversations.

Pastor Brooke was there offering "glitter blessings" (think Ash Wednesday style, but colorful and full of sparkle) for those who wished to receive one. The response was wonderful: people were excited, touched, and deeply appreciative.



It was more than a festival: it was an outward sign of God's love, visible and unapologetic, and a reminder that our congregation is committed to being present in the world – with open arms, glitter, and a faithful heart.



LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY NIGHTS

Join us for October's LGBTQ+ Community Night. Spooky Season is here so embrace the changing leaves and crisp air with us as we carve pumpkins and (weather permitting) enjoy a campfire and s'mores. Our group meets from 5-7 pm at the church the second Sunday of each month. All who identify as LGBTQ+ are welcome.



MUSIC @ Akron FCC

RESERVE YOUR TICKETS AT:
www.akronfcc.org/concert-series



TERESA WALTERS

October 19, 2025

4:00 PM

Free Tickets

PIANO

All Concerts at
292 E Market St
Akron, OH 44308
330.253.5109



Help support Music@AkronFCC:
<https://bit.ly/fcc-music-donate>


2025-2026 CONCERT SERIES

Our Music@AkronFCC Concert Series for the 2025-2026 season is underway! Make sure to reserve your ticket ahead of time (most are free).

Music@AkronFCC is funded by your generous donations. Consider how you can help support arts and culture in Akron!

- October 19, 2025: Dr. Teresa Walters, piano, 4:00 PM This concert is free and open to the public.
- December 7, 2025: UA's 'Tis the Season, 5:30 PM The University of Akron Choral, Brass, and Jazz Programs present 'Tis the Season, a joyous celebration including Christmas and Hanukkah music, as well as Secular pieces celebrating the Winter-time. The concert is free and open to the public.
- Early Spring, 2026: UA Jazz Band (tentative)
The University of Akron Jazz Band holds a cafe-style concert in the Upper Room.
- April 19, 2026: Valerie Thorson, organ and George Pope, flute, 4:00 PM. This concert is free and open to the public
- May 2, 2026: Metropolitan Chorus, 4:00 PM & 7:30 PM This concert will be a double feature, with a program of Splendid Serenades by the Children's Choir Program at 4pm and Mozart's Requiem at 7:30pm by the Metropolitan Chorus.

OCTOBER 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 Faith Enrichment 10:45am AA 12pm Bell Choir 5:15pm	2 AA 12pm	3 AA 10am PB & J 11:30am	4 Food Pantry Load In 8am Pet Blessing 10am
5 World Communion Sunday Upper Room Service 9am Meetinghouse Service 11am Bakers Sunday 12pm Grad Party(rental) 5:30pm Bible Study 6pm	6 Shower Bus 9am AA 12pm Men's Lunch 12 pm B&G Board 5:15pm Food Pantry 6:30pm	7 Food Pantry 9am Bible Study 11:30am Staff Meeting 1pm	8 Faith Enrichment 10:45am AA 12pm Bell Choir 5:30pm SSOULE 6pm	9 PB & J 11:30am AA 12pm MLK Committee 5:15pm	10 AA 10am	11 Food Pantry Load In 8am DAR 8am Fall Church Outing 10am Wedding Reception 3:30pm
12 Upper Room Service 9am Meetinghouse Service 11am Salad Sunday 12pm LGBTQ Comm. Night 5pm Bible Study 6pm	13 Indigenous People Day OFFICE CLOSED AA 12pm Food Pantry 6:30pm	14 Food Pantry 9am Bible Study 11:30am Staff Meeting 1pm All About Oz BINGO 6pm Membership Board 7pm	15 Faith Enrichment 10:45am AA 12pm Bell Choir 5:30pm	16 Tuff Stuff Probate 8:45am AA 12pm PFLAG 7pm	17 AA 10am PB & J 11:30am	18 Food Pantry Load In 8am Recital Rehearsal 10am Phi State Ohio 11am Wedding 1pm
19 Upper Room Service 9am Meetinghouse Service 11am Bakers Sunday 12pm PFLAG Board Mtg. 2pm Walters Piano Recital 4pm Bible Study 6pm	20 AA 12pm Men's Lunch 12pm S&F Mtg. 5:30pm Food Pantry 6:30pm	21 Food Pantry 9am Bible Study 11:30am Staff Meeting 1pm Junior League Akron 6pm HR Board 6pm	22 Faith Enrichment 10:45am AA 12pm Bell Choir 5:30pm	23 AA 12pm	24 AA 10am PB & J 11:30am	25 Food Pantry Load In 8am Spiritual Companion 9am Baby Shower 11am Boxing 6pm
26 Upper Room Service 9am Meetinghouse Service 11am Trunk or Treat 2pm Bible Study 6pm	27 AA 12pm Men's Lunch 12pm Governing Board 6:30pm Food Pantry 6:30pm	28 Food Pantry 9am Bible Study 11:30am Staff Meeting 1pm	29 Faith Enrichment 10:45am AA 12pm Silver Lining Luncheon 12pm Bell Choir 5:30pm	30 AA 12pm	31 Foster Grandparents 9am AA 10am PB & J 11:30am	Sunday Services 9am &11am All are welcome! 