

CHRONICLE

2025

First Congregational Church of Akron



We are embarking on a season of thankfulness. In recent years, social media has encouraged people to post something every day for which they are thankful. It is a positive aspect of social media (which is sometimes difficult to find) to not only be reminded that there are things for which to be thankful, but to see what others have gratitude for in their lives. It is a way to bring people together.

Gratitude is one way in which to draw people together, but so too is giving. First Congregational Church of Akron is embracing this season of thankfulness by embarking on a stewardship campaign, with the theme, Dreaming God's Dream. Stewardship is about more than giving financially – although that is certainly part of it – it is about coming together to work towards bringing God's dream to this world. It is about working together through our time and our financial contributions to support the ministries of First Congregational Church of Akron.

Keep your eyes open for more information arriving in your mailbox about how and when you can come together with others to make your commitment to dreaming God's dream. You might just find yourself adding "giving to support that dream" on your own gratitude list.

Blessings,

Pastor Brooke

Pastor Brooke Baker

THANK YOU!

Thanks to the generosity of this congregation – through your financial support and your donation of coats – we were able to donate 302 coats to the children at Mason CLC! The coats were picked up on October 27th and the children received them on October 30 st –



just in time for the cooler temperatures. Thank you to everyone who made a difference in a child's life. Also a special thank you to Ashlee James and the Mason Ministry for gathering, sorting, and communicating with Mason to insure they were picked up and able to be distributed.

PASSWORDS

By Lead AV Technician, Alex Morris



In today's digital world, protecting our personal information is just as important as locking our front doors. Many of us use the internet for email, banking, shopping,

or even connecting with family. That's why using strong passwords (and changing them regularly) is so important.

Think of your password like the key to your house. If it's too simple (like "123456") it's easy for someone to break in. A strong password should be at least 12 characters long and include a mix of letters, numbers, and symbols. Try using a phrase you'll remember, like "ILove2Walk@Sunset!"

It's also wise to change your passwords every few months. And never use the same one for everything; if one account gets hacked, the rest are at risk too.

Be cautious of suspicious emails or texts, especially those asking for personal information or urging you to click a link. Scammers often pretend to be banks, delivery companies, or even your pastor. When in doubt, don't click, call the organization directly instead.

Staying safe online doesn't require fancy technology, just a few good habits. Protecting your digital life helps you stay connected and secure!

HAVE YOU CONSIDERED A GIFT OF STOCK?

By Finance and Operations Manager, Janis Worley

Giving takes many forms—food drives, clothing donations, financial gifts—but one of the most impactful ways to give is through a gift of stock. Donating stock allows you to make a larger gift at a lower cost to you, while also offering potential tax benefits.

When you give appreciated stock that you've owned for at least a year, you can take a charitable deduction for its fair market value and avoid paying capital gains taxes on the increase in value. It's a thoughtful way to extend generosity and be financially wise at the same time.

If you're interested, your financial advisor can help identify which stocks to donate. Then contact your brokerage to begin the transfer, and reach out to AkronFCC for the information needed to complete it. Let us know which stock you're sending so we can acknowledge your gift and provide a tax-deductible receipt.

Unrestricted gifts are especially valuable because they allow AkronFCC to respond to the greatest needs and opportunities, though designated gifts are also welcome.

To learn more, contact Finance and Operations Manager Janis Worley at finance@akronfcc.org. Your generosity today helps strengthen the ministries and mission that make AkronFCC such a vital part of our community.

FOOD PANTRY NOVEMBER FOCUS ITEMS

This November, we're focusing our Feeding Hope Food Pantry donations on personal care items—simple necessities that help restore dignity and confidence for our guests. These items are always in high demand and often among the first to run out.

Requested donations include:

- Men's and women's body wash
- Men's and women's lotion
- Brushes
- Combs



In addition, the pantry has been facing difficulty obtaining frozen proteins such as pork, chicken, beef, and seafood. To help us meet this essential need, we're seeking grocery store gift cards—from any store, in any amount—which will allow us to purchase frozen proteins directly. Please send gift cards to the church office, attn: Food Pantry.

We're also exploring a partnership with local butchers to purchase a whole cow, which would provide a steady supply of meat, allow us to choose how it's packaged, and support a local business. If you'd like to contribute to this effort, monetary donations can be made to the Feeding Hope Food Pantry.

Your continued generosity allows us to meet not only the physical needs of our neighbors but also to share compassion and care in a tangible way. Thank you for being part of this vital ministry of hope and love.



FINANCE REPORT

Stewardship/Finance Report (unaudited) Actual Thru September, 2025

	September	September YTD	YTD Budget	Percent to Budget YTD
INCOME				
Offerings Income	\$16,621	\$48,473	\$50,000	96.9%
Unrestricted Grant Income	\$3	\$120	\$1,664	7.2%
Designated Income	\$2,083	\$8,333	\$41,048	20.3%
Endowment, Sprowls Trust, Pollock	\$60,946	\$273,622	\$248,789	110.0%
Rental and Food Service Income	\$2,978	\$8,395	\$13,328	63.0%
Other Income	\$0	\$15,955	\$1,664	958.8%
TOTAL	\$82,631	\$354,899	\$356,493	99.6%
EXPENSES				
Loan Expense	\$2,639	\$10,589	\$10,500	100.8%
Membership Board	\$0	\$0	\$854	0.0%
Governing Board	\$0	\$0	\$5,000	0.0%
Food Pantry	\$5,692	\$18,463	\$18,336	100.7%
Congregational Care	\$1,829	\$3,764	\$4,659	80.8%
Worship & Music	\$926	\$2,224	\$6,316	35.2%
Christian Education	\$67	\$282	\$1,892	14.9%
Development Team	\$50	\$50	\$0	0.0%
Food Service Expense	\$1,986	\$5,499	\$4,336	126.8%
Personnel	\$46,335	\$171,006	\$202,453	84.5%
Other Admin Expense	\$2,625	\$25,598	\$28,818	88.8%
Media Relations/Marketing	\$1,214	\$3,232	\$3,588	90.1%
Maintenance/Insurance/Utilities	\$30,503	\$78,887	\$80,001	98.6%
TOTAL	\$93,866	\$319,594	\$366,753	87.1%
Net Income/Loss	-\$11,234	\$35,305	-\$10,260	344.1%

KIOSK

By Lead AV Technician, Alex Morris

Our new Giving Kiosk by the church office is always available to make tithing more convenient for everyone. It's a safe, secure way to give, especially helpful for those who no longer carry cash or checks as often.

Using the kiosk is simple. It has a touchscreen where you can choose the amount you'd like to give and whether it's a one-time gift or a regular donation. You can use a debit or credit card, and your information is kept secure, just like at a store checkout.

If you're unsure about using the kiosk, don't worry, anyone in the office can help guide you through the process. No one will see how much you give, and a receipt will be emailed for your records.

A few reminders: never share your PIN or card info with anyone, and always double-check the screen before completing a transaction. If you receive emails or texts asking for donations that seem odd, it's best to call the church office before clicking any links.

This new tool is just another way we're making giving easier while keeping your information safe. Thank you for your generosity!

SUPPORT AKRONFCC

Supporting AkronFCC 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.

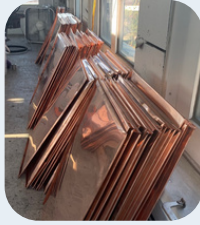
- Discretionary Assistance Fund
- Endowment
- Feeding Hope Food Pantry
- Mason CLC Fund
- Mason PB&J Fund
- Garden Improvement Program
- Music Fund



MEETINGHOUSE DOME ROOF REPAIR UPDATE #2

By Finance and Operations Manager, Janis Worley

We are pleased to share that the project has made excellent progress and is nearing completion. Late September brought the start of the copper roof installation. After several weeks of work, the copper roof has been completed. One remaining step, adding foam insulation and a venting fan to guard against condensation and rot, will be done in November.



As a reminder, 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 jsttodd@mac.com.

A MOMENT WITH THE MODERATOR

By Moderator, 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 cried 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.

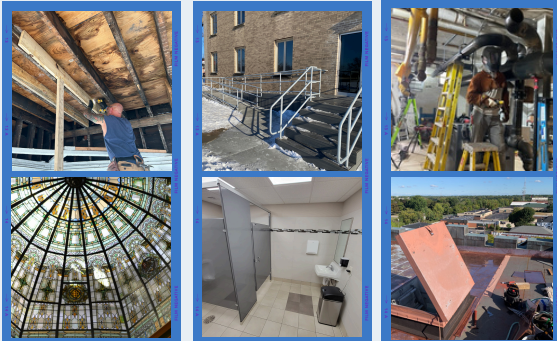


MINISTRY OF THE MONTH

By Stewardship & Finance Board Chair, Dennis Conrad

As I sit here looking out my dining room window at the beautiful blue sky and multicolored foliage, I realize how fortunate I am—and we are—here at AkronFCC. We are truly blessed in so many ways!

Foremost to me is the caring and sharing congregation. In addition to the personal friendships that have developed over the years, your generosity has enabled AkronFCC to support many missions in our community. Many of them you are probably familiar with and will be mentioned during the upcoming Stewardship Month.



Here at AkronFCC, we are also blessed with a strong Endowment Fund that over the years has enabled the church to get through many major repairs and emergencies without affecting the church's missions. Among these projects are the numerous roof leak repairs, the recent glass dome emergency repairs, storm sewer and water backup repairs, major heat boiler repairs and replacements, and the various ADA upgrades to our facilities, to mention a few.

But even as we enjoy the security of our endowment, Stewardship Sunday will be a reminder that our individual gifts matter. They keep our community ministries vibrant, welcome newcomers, and ensure

that our church remains a place where all are welcome and where God's work can flourish. Every contribution, no matter the size, is an act of faith and a sign of our commitment to this community.

Stewardship is about more than just financial support. It's about how we use all that God has entrusted to us, including our time and our talents, to share our love with our community.

During the upcoming Stewardship Month, I hope you will consider how you can participate in supporting AkronFCC and its many missions in any way you can.



BEHIND THE MUSIC: A WORD FROM THE PRAISE BAND

By Praise Band Co-Leader, Hannah Pyett

Our praise band is more than just music on Sunday mornings; it's a group of people who love using their gifts to help lead our congregation in worship. In this new "Meet the Praise Band" series, we're introducing you to the talented individuals who make it all happen.

First up is Grace, our amazing bassist! Through this Q&A, you'll get to know more about her musical background, what inspires her, and how she connects her faith and music.



What instruments do you play and what's your role in the praise band?

I play electric bass in the praise band, but I also play the tuba and trombone.

How long have you been a part of the praise band?

I have been a part of the praise band since October of 2024.

What's your favorite song to lead in worship?

My favorite song to play is The Blessing.

What does worship mean to you personally?

To me, worship can mean finding faith in your fellow people-- to understand that there is and always will be good in the world in spite of the darkness. Through that belief, we can be energized to make the world a better place for everyone.

What's your favorite food?

My favorite food is watermelon, although I haven't been able to eat it for over 10 years.

Do you have a favorite pastime or hobby outside of music?

My hobbies outside of music include quilting and D&D.

What do you hope the congregation experiences during worship?

I hope that the congregation is able to find the strength to go out into the world to do good and to keep fighting the good fight, even in the face of great adversity and hatred.

MUSIC IN OUR SOULS

By Organist & Chancel Choir Director, Julie Lehman

Music has always been at the heart of worship. From the psalms of David to the hymns sung in churches today, music opens a door between heaven



and earth. It allows us to express what words alone cannot—our gratitude, our longing, our joy, and our hope. When we lift our voices together, something sacred happens: hearts unite, faith deepens, and God's presence feels near.

In the church, music is more than melody; it is ministry. A single note can comfort the weary, inspire the discouraged, and celebrate the goodness of God. Whether it's a soaring choir anthem, a quiet hymn, or the simple strum of a guitar, music speaks to the soul and draws us closer to the One who created it.

As we sing, play, and listen, we remember that music is a gift from God—one meant to be shared. It invites us to worship not only with our voices, but with our very lives. Truly, when music fills the church, it also fills our souls.



MEMBERSHIP BOARD FALL EVENTS





AkronFCC Christmas Calendar

11.26-11.28 Office closed for Thanksgiving

11.30 Hanging of the Greens

Join us after the 11am service to deck the halls for Christmas! Enjoy a cozy afternoon of decorating, fellowship, and good food. Soup and beverages will be provided—bring along a favorite side or dessert to share.

12.7 UA 'Tis the Season

The University of Akron Choral, Brass, and Jazz Programs - a joyous celebration of the coming season including Christmas and Hanukkah music, as well as Secular pieces celebrating the Winter-time. The concert is free and open to the public.

12.13 Breakfast with Santa

Join us in Fellowship Hall for a festive morning of fun and holiday cheer! Enjoy a free delicious pancake breakfast, visit with Santa, and snap a few photos to remember the day. All are welcome—bring your family and friends!

12.21 Blue Christmas Service

Our Blue Christmas service offers a quiet, reflective space for those experiencing loss, hardship, or simply needing a moment of peace amid the holiday rush. All are welcome—whether you're seeking comfort or offering support to others. Join us at 6pm in the chapel.

12.24 Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Join us in the Meetinghouse for our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service. Arrive at 7pm for special music that will allow us to prepare our hearts for service at 7:30pm. Celebrate the beauty and wonder of Christ's birth through scripture, song, and candlelight. All are invited—please extend the invitation to family and friends.

NOVEMBER 2025

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	<i>In all things, give Thanks</i>		NOTE: <i>Italicized events</i> are private rentals by individuals or outside organizations; all others are church activities, (including worship and meetings) or public events.			1 Food Pantry Load In 8am
2 All Saints Sunday Upper Room Service 9am Meetinghouse Service 11am Bakers Sunday 12pm Grad Party 5:30pm Bible Study 6pm	3 Shower Bus 9am AA 12pm Men's Lunch 12pm B&G Board 5:15pm Food Pantry 6:30pm	4 Food Pantry 9am Bible Study 11:30am Staff Meeting 1pm	5 Faith Enrichment 10:45am AA 12pm Bell Choir 5:15pm	6 Living Water Meeting 10am AA 12pm	7 AA 10am PB & J 11:30am	8 Food Pantry Load In 8am DAR 8am
9 Upper Room Service 9am Meetinghouse Service 11am Salad Sunday 12pm New Member Class 12:30pm LGBTQ Comm. Night 5pm Bible Study 6pm	10 AA 12pm Men's Lunch 12pm Food Pantry 6:30pm	11 Food Pantry 9am Bible Study 11:30am Staff Meeting 1pm All About Oz BINGO 6pm Membership Board 7pm	12 Faith Enrichment 10:45am AA 12pm Bell Choir 5:30pm SSOULE 6pm	13 AA 12pm MLK Committee 5:15pm	14 AA 10am PB & J 11:30am	15 Food Pantry Load In 8am Organ Crawl 12am Chili Cookoff 6pm
16 Upper Room Service 9am Meetinghouse Service 11am Bakers Sunday 12pm PFLAG Board Mtg. 2pm Bible Study 6pm	17 AA 12pm Men's Lunch 12pm S&F Mtg. 5:30pm Food Pantry 6:30pm	18 Food Pantry 9am Bible Study 11:30am Staff Meeting 1pm HR Board 6pm	19 Faith Enrichment 10:45am AA 12pm Bell Choir 5:30pm	20 Tuff Stuff Probate 8:45am AA 12pm PFLAG 7pm	21 Foster Grandparents 9am AA 10am PB & J 11:30am	22 Food Pantry Load In 8am
23 Stewardship Sunday Upper Room Service 9am Meetinghouse Service 11am Church Family Meal 12pm Bible Study 6pm	24 AA 12pm Men's Lunch 12pm Governing Board 6:30pm Food Pantry 6:30pm	25 Food Pantry 9am Bible Study 11:30am Staff Meeting 1pm	26 OFFICE CLOSED AA 12pm	 27 THANKSGIVING OFFICE CLOSED AA 12pm	28 OFFICE CLOSED AA 12pm	29 Food Pantry Load In 8am
30 Upper Room Service 9am Meetinghouse Service 11am Hanging of the Greens 12pm Bible Study 6pm						Sunday Services 9am & 11am All are welcome! 