NO. 11

CHRONICLE

2026

First Congregational Church of Akron UCC

PASTOR'S COLUMN



Rev. R. Brooke Baker

First Congregational Church of Akron is the oldest congregation in the city of Akron, having been chartered in 1833. That means that this year we celebrate 193 years of being a congregation. That is 193 years of people coming together to build the kindom of God. The church is not this building, but the people who have made it survive for 193 years. On November 22 we will celebrate Anniversary Sunday. Each person – regardless of whether you are a member or not – will have the opportunity to contribute to a piece of art, naming what it is about First Congregational Church of Akron that is important to you. Members can choose the color that corresponds to the time in which they joined, or simply the color of your choice.

It is the congregation and your faithfulness that allows us to continue as a worshiping body; your faithfulness through your presence and your financial faithfulness. While our forebearers did much to plan for the future by establishing an endowment and the generations since have continued to care for that endowment, it is an act of spiritual discipline that we continue to give to the congregation. We will conclude our Stewardship Campaign on November 8 with an opportunity to make a financial commitment to the congregation for the coming year.

Our congregation has been around for 193 years – that is something to celebrate. And our faithfulness by our congregation today will ensure that we can be here for generations to come. I look forward to seeing you as we celebrate both of these things in the coming weeks.

Blessings,

Pastor Brooke

A NEW NAME AROUND AKRONFCC!



You may start noticing a new name popping up on emails, letters, and in conversations around the church. Janis Andrews! Our Finance and Operations Manager, formerly known as Janis Worley, said "I do" to her now-husband, Lee, on Saturday, October 17.



The two were married right here in the Meetinghouse, surrounded by immediate family and close friends for a small, intimate ceremony officiated by Pastor Brooke.

We're sharing a little sneak peek from their special day, but if you'd like to see more, stop by Janis's office to offer your congratulations. We're sure she'll be happy to share a few more pictures and let you in on the details of their big day.

Congratulations to Janis and Lee! We wish them a lifetime of love, laughter, and happiness as they begin this exciting new chapter together.









FINISH STRONG: COMPLETE YOUR 2026 PLEDGE BY DECEMBER



By Janis Andrews
Finance & Operations Manager

As the year winds down, we want to say a heartfelt thank you to everyone who has given of their time, talents, and resources to support our church community this year. Your generosity makes the work of our church possible, and we are so grateful for you.

If you made a pledge in November, 2025 for the 2026 Stewardship Campaign, this is a friendly reminder to complete it by the end of December. Not sure where your giving stands? Janis Andrews, our Finance and Operations Manager, can check your status. Just reach out to her at finance@akronfcc.org.

Ways to Give

There are plenty of easy ways to fulfill your pledge or make an additional gift:

- **One-time gifts:** Make a single donation anytime through our website.
- **Recurring gifts**: Set up automatic giving through our website, so your gift arrives on schedule without a second thought.
- **Checks:** You can always drop off a check at the church or mail one in.

A quick note about online giving: donations made through the website carry a processing fee. Bank transfers have a smaller fee than credit card payments, so if you'd like more of your gift to go directly toward our mission, a bank transfer is a great choice.

Give Where Your Heart Is

Your gift can support the church's general work, or you can direct it to a specific ministry or program close to your heart, including:

- **Mason School**
- **PB&J**
- **Endowment**
- **Music Fund**
- **Discretionary Assistance Fund**
- **Food Pantry**

Looking Ahead to 2027

Pledge forms for the 2027 Stewardship Campaign are now available in the church office. Stop by and pick one up if you need one to fill one out.

Whether your gift is large or small, one-time or recurring, every donation counts. Thank you for being part of this community and for helping us care for one another and our neighbors. We're grateful to share this work with you!



Stewardship/Finance Report (unaudited)
Actual Thru Sep, 2026

		September	Sep YTD	YTD Budget	Percent to Budget YTD
INCOME					
Offerings Income		$21,189	$57,385	$56,667	101.3%
Unrestricted Grant Income		$4	$10	$1,667	0.6%
Designated Income		$1,667	$6,667	$41,950	15.9%
Endowment, Sprowls Trust, Pollock		$64,107	$263,313	$263,094	100.1%
Rental and Food Service Income		$2,663	$11,909	$10,000	119.1%
Other Income		$0	$5,359	$1,667	321.5%
	TOTAL	$89,629	$344,643	$375,045	91.9%
EXPENSES					
Loan Expense		$2,572	$10,321	$10,217	101.0%
Membership Board		$0	$133	$1,175	11.3%
Governing Board		$0	$53	$1,667	3.2%
Food Pantry		$7,170	$17,385	$16,341	106.4%
Congregational Care		$873	$1,256	$6,627	19.0%
Worship & Music		$8,763	$12,641	$6,389	197.9%
Christian Education		$0	$1,595	$1,974	80.8%
Development Team		$103	$103	$0	0.0%
Food Service Expense		$1,296	$3,526	$3,333	105.8%
Personnel		$36,136	$162,425	$206,992	78.5%
Other Admin Expense		$928	$4,592	$14,461	31.8%
Media Relations/Marketing		-$106	$1,745	$6,122	28.5%
Maintenance/Insurance/Utilities		$35,113	$85,821	$92,328	93.0%
	TOTAL	$92,847	$301,596	$367,626	82.0%
Net Income/Loss		-$3,218	$43,047	$7,419	580.2%

Supporting AkronFCC UCC 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
Music Fund

Scan Here for Everything AkronFCC UCC

LOVE SOUNDS LIKE SOMETHING



Hannah Pyett
Praise Band Co-Leader

Reflections from Your Worship Leader

I wonder sometimes if we underestimate what happens when we sing together. We gather on Sunday mornings, carrying all the things that make us human. Some of us arrive with hearts full of gratitude. Others come carrying grief, exhaustion, uncertainty, or questions that don't have easy answers. Some of us are holding on to faith with both hands. Others aren't quite sure what we believe anymore. And then, somehow, we sing. Not because everything is right with the world. Not because we've figured it all out. Not even because we necessarily feel like singing. But because there is something beautiful about lending our voices to one another. I've come to believe that music is one of the ways we practice love. When we sing together, we make room for one another's humanity. On the days when our own voices feel not enough, the voices around us can carry the song. And perhaps on another Sunday, ours will be the voice that carries them. Isn't that a beautiful picture of what the Church is meant to be? A place where we hold hope for one another. Where we make space for joy and grief, certainty and doubt. Where belonging isn't dependent upon having the right answers. As a worship leader, I think often about the responsibility and privilege of choosing the songs we sing. Because the words we put into our mouths matter. The stories we tell about God matter. The way we sing about ourselves and our neighbors matters. Our music can reinforce fear, shame, and division. Or it can remind us of the liberating love of God that does not stop at the boundaries we humans are so good at drawing. I want our music to sound like that kind of love. I want our children to grow up hearing that they are wonderfully made, that their questions are welcome, and that God's love is not something they must earn. I want those who have been hurt by religion to hear something different in our songs. And I want our music to move beyond the walls of our building. Because if we sing about justice, may we become people who work for justice. If we sing about peace, may we become peacemakers. If we sing about love, may we become people who love abundantly. Perhaps this is one of the quiet miracles of congregational singing. We are practicing the world we hope to create. And there is room for every voice in that song. I think Jesus understood something about this kind of love. He made room at the table for those who had been told they didn't belong. He noticed the overlooked. He showed us that love is an action. My hope for our music ministry is not simply that we make beautiful music. My hope is that we make people feel loved. Because perhaps the most sacred thing about our music isn't how beautifully we sing. Perhaps it's how beautifully we learn to love one another through the singing. And that is a song worth sharing.

WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS

“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” – Matthew 6:21

Stewardship is more than an annual giving campaign. It is a spiritual practice that invites us to reflect on what matters most and how we share the blessings God has given us. When we give of our time, talents, and financial resources, we are putting our faith into action and helping carry out the mission and ministries of our church.

Over the past several weeks, we have heard how our gifts make a difference, supporting the many ministries, programs, and outreach efforts that touch lives both within our congregation and throughout our community. Every gift matters, and every contribution helps make our church a place where God’s love is shared and lives are enriched.

As we look ahead to Stewardship Sunday on November 8, we invite you to prayerfully consider how you can participate in this year’s giving campaign. No gift is too small, and your generosity truly makes a difference. It takes all of us, sharing what we can, to care for God’s people and continue the important work we are called to do together.

Thank you for being part of this congregation and for sharing your heart through your generosity!

A CLEARER VIEW OF THE BEAUTY ABOVE US



After completing the recent work on the Meetinghouse dome, we've brought in Azure Stained Glass Studio, the company that has handled the cleaning and repair of our stained glass throughout the building, to give both the Meetinghouse and Upper Room domes a thorough cleaning.

The work is an important part of caring for these beautiful features of our church. Over time, dust and buildup can take away some of the clarity and brilliance of stained glass. A professional cleaning helps bring that beauty back into view while allowing us to continue preserving these pieces for years to come.

REPORT FROM EVENTS MANAGER

By Alex Morris, Events & Communications Manager

Event rentals at AkronFCC have really taken off; we're on the way to having full weekends on the regular. Here's what's been happening:



Black Diamonds Women's Conference 2026

The weekend of October 23-25 was particularly busy. We hosted the Black Diamonds women's conference, which brought in over 200 high schoolers on Friday and almost 100 women on Saturday. They received keynote addresses and were able to choose from a myriad of workshops to attend. The High School session on Friday filled up the ENTIRE building, including every single classroom and youth room on the second floor. A local caterer, who used to work out of the Northside Market before they closed, rented the kitchen that evening.

On Saturday, Freedom BLOC University held a class in Upper Room and there was a wedding in the Meetinghouse that afternoon officiated by Pastor Brooke. The bride was the granddaughter of a former member (Oldfield) who was also married at AkronFCC, making it a very meaningful ceremony.

On Sunday, after worship services, PFLAG held a board meeting in the conference room while we hosted a Mickey Mouse-themed birthday party in the Fellowship Hall and retirement party in the Upper Room.



Retirement party hosted in the Upper Room

Remember, this was all in one weekend! Over 800 people came through our doors for these events, wiping out our literature tables which means all of those brochures, flyers, postcards, and other swag are now out in the community representing AkronFCC. A number of vendors from the Black Diamonds conference, as well as someone who attended the retirement party, have already reached out about having their own events at our facility.

Also notable is the amount of weddings we have hosted compared to recent years. For example, we are in the middle of a four-weekend wedding spree: October 17, 24, 31, and November 7.

Someone recently used the phrase "the unused classrooms on the second floor", so let's make sure everyone is aware just how much those rooms actually get used! Since we began marketing the second floor for rental spaces, we have hosted workshops, parties, classes, receptions, child and adult daycare outings, children's music programs, and now the women's conference mentioned above, which is already scheduled again for next year.



One of four couples saying "I do" at AkronFCC in a four-week stretch!

PASTORAL SUPPORT TEAM

The role of this team is to help maintain a healthy relationship between our pastor and our congregation. Sometimes that may mean listening, sometimes offering another perspective, sometimes encouraging communication, and sometimes simply being there to support Pastor Brooke.

The team also provides a confidential place to bring concerns or questions about the pastor/ congregation relationship. If a member of the congregation has a concern that they feel needs to be addressed, one of the Pastoral Support Team members is available to listen and help determine the appropriate way to move forward. They are not here to take sides or to solve every problem, but to encourage honest, respectful and healthy communication.

Members are: Ruth Ann Allison, Karen Babri, Marian Carlson and Nancy Jenkins

LEADERSHIP RETREAT RSVP REMINDER

All incoming and outgoing board members, please RSVP for the Leadership Retreat on Saturday, November 14, at 9am in the Upper Room. You can call Jen in the church office at x112 or use the form sent by email on October 20.

We need a response from everyone, even if you cannot attend! Since we pay the caterer per person, an accurate headcount helps us plan responsibly and avoid unnecessary costs. Please also let us know if you have any food allergies or dietary restrictions.

LGBTQ+ FRIENDSGIVING

The AkronFCC LGBTQ+ Group will be gathering for a Friendsgiving celebration at AkronFCC on November 8 at 5pm. Join us for some good food and time together. We'll provide the main dish, and you're welcome to bring a side or dessert to share if you're able, but it's certainly not required.

Whether you come to our regular gatherings or are joining us for the first time, we'd love to see you!

Please let us know if you're coming so we can plan for enough food.
RSVP: lgbtq@akronfcc.org



SAVE THE DATE: CONGREGATIONAL MEETING DECEMBER 13

Please mark your calendars for Sunday, December 13, 2026. We will hold one 10am worship service that day, followed by our Congregational Meeting.

As we transition to a calendar fiscal year, the congregation will vote on two important matters: the budget for the new fiscal year, the slate of officers, and board members. These decisions help guide the work and ministry of AkronFCC in the year ahead. A quorum is required for the church to conduct official business, so participation is important.

A formal letter with meeting details will be mailed to members in the coming days. The meeting agenda, minutes from the previous annual meeting, draft budget, and information about absentee voting will also be made available on our website at akronfcc.org/congregational-meeting. Watch for that information as the meeting approaches.

Following the meeting, we'll gather for a meal and continued fellowship. We hope you'll plan to be part of the conversation and decisions!

THE NEEDS OF OUR NEIGHBORS

Our Feeding Hope Food Pantry is always working to meet the needs of our neighbors, and we could use your help! In addition to food, our guests rely on us for everyday household and personal-care essentials. Here are some items currently in need:

- Gloves
- Shaving cream
- Plastic grocery bags
- Laundry and dish detergent
- Body lotion and toothpaste
- Room air freshener
- Socks (men's, women's, and children's)
- Cleaning products, including toilet bowl cleaner, Lysol, and Mr. Clean

Want to make an even bigger impact?

Grocery store gift cards in any amount are also greatly appreciated and give families a little flexibility to purchase what they need.

Every donation, large or small, helps us care for our neighbors. Thank you for continuing to support the Food Pantry and the people we serve!

SNAPSHOT OF OUR UPCOMING SCHEDULE

- Sunday, November 1 - All Saints Sunday 10am Combined Worship
- Sunday, November 8 _ Stewardship Sunday 10am Combined Worship
- Sunday, November 15 - Sunday December 6 return to two services. 9am Contemporary & 11am Traditional.
- Sunday, December 13 - 10am Combined Worship followed by Congregational Meeting
- Monday, December 21 - Blue Christmas at 7:30pm
- Thursday, December 24 - Christmas Eve Service at 7:30pm

HOLIDAY OFFICE CLOSURE

Due to the Thanksgiving holiday, the church office will be closed November 25, 26, and 27.

CHRONICLE
First Congregational Church of Akron UCC
292 E Market St.
Akron, OH 44308

MUSIC @ Akron FCC

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



MAX JOHNSON 3

November 6, 2026

7:30 PM

Free Tickets

JAZZ TRIO

More info on the 26-27
Music@AkronFCC Concert Series:
www.akronfcc.org/concert-series

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

Organ DAY

A FREE PRESENTATION

First Congregational Church of Akron UCC
Akron FCC



Organist
Nik Stackpole



SUNDAY
NOV. 15
3:00 PM

292 E MARKET ST
AKRON, OH
330.253.5109
church@akronfcc.org

Nik Stackpole, director of music at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Akron, and a voicer and service technician at the Schantz organ company presents "Organ Day," an interactive experience with the organ in our Meetinghouse.

- Short presentation
- Interactive exploratory groups
- Play and touch the organ!

Upper Room Worship 9am
Meetinghouse Worship 11am

November 2026

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF AKRON UCC
AkronFCC

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1  All Saints Sunday Combined Worship 10am Bakers Sunday 12pm	2 AA 12pm B&G 5:15pm Food Pantry 6:30pm	3  Voting in FH ALL DAY Food Pantry 9am *Bible Study* 11:30am	4 Faith Enrichment 10:45am AA 12pm *Bell Choir* 5:30pm	5 BLOC U 11am AA 12pm Banquet 3:30pm Wedding Rehearsal 5pm Living the Legacy 6pm	6 AA 10am PB&J 11:30am Max Johnson Trio Concert 7:30pm	7 Food Pantry Load In 8am *Freedom BLOC* 9am *Wedding & Reception 5pm*
8  STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY Combined Worship 10am Salad Sunday 11am LGBTQ+ Friendsgiving 5pm	9 AA 12 pm *Indivisible Akron* 6pm Food Pantry 6:30pm	10 Food Pantry 9am *Bible Study* 11:30am *Staff Meeting* 1:30pm *All About Oz* 6pm Membership Bd 7pm	11 Faith Enrichment 10:45am AA 12pm *Bell Choir* 5:30pm SSOULE 6pm	12 AA 12pm	13 AA 10am PB&J 11:30am	14 Leadership Retreat 9am *DAR 9am*
15 Upper Room Worship 9am Meetinghouse Worship 11am Baker's Sunday 12pm Event rental in FH 2pm Organ Day Presentation 3pm	16 AA 12 pm S&F Board 5:30pm Food Pantry 6:30pm	17 Food Pantry 9am *Bible Study* 11:30am *HR Board* 6pm	18 Faith Enrichment 10:45am AA 12pm Review Meeting 3pm *Bell Choir* 5:30pm	19 *Tuff Stuff* 8:45am Living Water Mtg. 9am AA 12pm PFLAG 7pm	20 *Foster Grandparents* 9am AA 10am PB&J 11:30am	21 Food Pantry Breakfast 9am *Party Rental 3pm*
22  ANNIVERSARY SUNDAY Upper Room Worship 9am Meetinghouse Worship 11am Banquet Rental 2pm	23 AA 12 pm Food Pantry 6:30pm	24 Food Pantry 9am *Bible Study* 11:30am *Staff Meeting* 1pm	25  OFFICE CLOSED AA 12pm	26  OFFICE CLOSED AA 12pm *Family Gathering Rental 2pm*	27  *OFFICE CLOSED* AA 10am	28
29  1st Sunday of Advent Upper Room Worship 9am Meetinghouse Worship 11am Hanging of the Greens	30 AA 12 pm Food Pantry 6:30pm Governing Board 6:30pm					*NOTE: Italicized events are private rentals by individuals or outside organizations; all other others are church activities, (including worship and meetings) or public events.* *Event times and dates are subject to change.*