

PATHWAYS

January 2019

*You show me the path of life. In your presence there is
fullness of joy...Psalm 16:11*



First Christian Church of Stow, 3493 Darrow Road, Stow, Ohio 44224
www.firstchristianstow.org

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## **Martin Luther King Jr. Community Service**

Monday, January 21 7:00 pm

First Christian Church of Stow Sanctuary

## **Fourth Annual Winter Soup Cookoff**

Sunday, January 27, following Second Service

## **Superbowl Sub Sunday**

February 3, after Both Services

Sponsored by our Youth

## **Boy Scout Sunday**

February 10

Meet and Greet our Scouts at the 10:45 Service



From the  
Pastor's  
Desk

Happy New Year! Here we are: 2019. The last year of this decade which still doesn't have a name that rings like "The 80's", "The 90's" or even "The 2000's." No matter. History won't forget this decade, no matter how hard we might want to try! (I'm not really

sure what I mean by that; it was just a cheap effort to make a joke. I certainly don't want to forget this decade as it was the decade God blessed my wife and I with our daughter and son. But I digress.)

With this New Year kicking off I want to pass along to you a question. It's not a question I came up with, but it is a question that has been on my mind since a colleague shared it with me just before the beginning of this New Year. He asked me, "*What do you and God want to accomplish in the New Year?*" This question resonated with me, and I haven't been able to stop thinking about it and considering my answer, or really, answers.

What first struck me about this question was it was not the tired and worn out, "What are your New Year's resolutions?" If you've been reading these January Pastor's Pens for the last decade, you might recall I am not a fan of making New Year's resolutions. Yes, I have penned and preached a time or two with such as a focal point, but when I did it was usually with tongue in cheek and/or as a means of conceding a point to make another point of emphasis. To me "*What do you and God want to accomplish in the New Year?*" sounds more hopeful, more interesting. It reminds me that I don't go into this New Year alone and that I've got everything I need to make the year before me one that is blessed and life giving.

Also, I think it creates space for us to breathe, while still making and taking a new effort toward something better in our lives, but still affording us the opportunity to rejoice in having moved forward, if only a little, even if we come up short of a desired end, because even in coming up short, God's love for us is still there no matter what.

I was also struck by this question because it seems to have invited me to dream dreams by putting pen to paper with expression of hope that I can see more clearly than before, and be reminded in each day to make some effort, even if only a prayerful one, to make these dreams and hopes a reality. I've started to do this by compartmentalizing the responses into spaces that will help me differentiate and focus more succinctly within a particular framework of mind—family, church,

personal, professional, and (simply) fun—because I do believe God wants us to have fun, a byproduct of Joy if you ask me. And it has been fun, even exhilarating. Maybe it will be for you too. Give it a try and see. Even if you don't put pen to paper to record your answers, maybe just think about it for a few moments—"*What do you and God want to accomplish in the New Year?*"

We don't know where the New Year will take us. We can be certain there will be times of struggle and pain, just as we can be certain there will be times of joy and fun. And we can be certain still that in this New Year, and throughout it, God will be present at all times and in all places, ready to partner with us in truly making it a *Happy New Year*. I look forward to partnering with God, and with each of you, in making this year a good and faithful and blessed one for our church family, for our community, for the Church at-large, and for our world. And I can't wait to see what God will help us all accomplish in 2019.

Your Pastor and Friend,  
Jonathan

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Pastor's Class
Begins Sunday, March 10th,
9:30 a.m.

Attention all youth in fifth grade or older who have not been baptized or made a reaffirmation of their baptism, and their parents: You are invited to be part of this year's Pastor's Class that will begin on Sunday, March 10th, and will run through Baptism Sunday on April 28th.

The class will meet in the church library during the Sunday School hour. If you are interested in being part of the class, please contact the church office, or if you have questions please contact Jonathan.



News from the Music Department

Happy New Year everyone!! I hope the blessings God has bestowed on us continue to sustain and support us as we continue to serve Him through our ministries at FCC-Stow.

There's not much to share with you at the start of the new year. We finished a very busy schedule this past month:

Joy Bells had three performances outside of the church and played twice in worship for us in December.

Joyful Noise played twice last month.

Joy Bells, Joyful Noise and Summit Bells (a community handbell ensemble that I direct) played a concert at the church.

Chancel Choir and Spiritus were even busier providing anthems at every worship service through Christmas Eve.

Andrea did a wonderful job as always accompanying and leading worship through her beautiful and expert keyboard skills.

The Resurrection Brass "took over" an entire service on the 23rd playing the prelude, offertory, and postlude! We even helped Andrea with the carols.

Scott Haywood offered a beautiful rendering of Handel's For Unto Us a Child Is Born on Christmas Eve.

The children's choirs and Crusader Bells did a fantastic job on their program on the 16th.

The Way continues to impress and inspire us through their talents.

Silent Praise again evoked emotion and awe as they lead us by signing Silent Night on Christmas Eve.

Even Cheryl Lorenz had a hand in our worship on the 30th when she filled in for a very ill Andrea. Cheryl was in town visiting her mother and offered to sing a solo that day, and then agreed to play piano for both services when she found out Andrea was under the weather!! Thank you, Cheryl.

All in all, it was a very busy time for Andrea, Molly, Barb, Cora, the singers, ringers, brass, guitarists, drummers, and me. (Did I leave anybody out? I hope not.) I can't thank each of you **enough** for the time, energy and talents all of you gave to help celebrate the Birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. You are all a marvelous group of people with whom to work, and I thank God every day for the opportunity He has given me to serve Him here at First Christian Church-Stow.

Again, may the New Year bring all of you joy and peace as we serve Him. Amen.

Chuck

Youth Group

Oh The Places You'll Go!

The Youth Group will meet in January on Sundays, January 13th and 27th. On the 13th we will meet right after church until 2 p.m. Lunch will be served, obviously! We will have a brief task to compete for the Membership Team—numbering the cups for the Super Soup Cook-Off! And then we will continue to explore our theme for the year and look toward our Youth Sunday time of worship in the Spring.

At our meeting on the 27th, we will help out with the Super Soup Cook-Off, and then if there is time remaining, check in about our February calendars, and make plans for our Super Bowl Sub sales on February 3rd. Hope to see you at Youth Group!

Youth Group Super Bowl Subs

On sale February 3rd after both services!

Once again the Youth Group will be selling Super Bowl Subs on Super Bowl Sunday! These hearty sandwiches will be available for purchase after both services on February 3rd just in time for the big game. Make plans to buy some for lunch, as well as some to have on hand as you watch the Patriots play some other team. But Bill Dowey is predicting the Indianapolis Colts will make it to the big game this year. If he is right, free fireball candy with every sub you buy!!

All proceeds will go toward Christian Education and Youth Ministry projects.

Recycle Bonus Week

January 14 – 18

Bring in all of your gift wrap, holiday card and gift boxes when you bring your other papers to our River Valley Recycle bin. This bin is located in the lower parking lot. River Valley Paper Company will be paying a bonus during the week of January 14 for all their pick ups, so not only will you rid yourself of unwanted paper but you will help the church earn a little extra.

Sanctuary Renewal Update: Lighting

Tom Safford

In January we will begin work on refurbishing and upgrading the lighting in our sanctuary. The exact schedule is still in flux. Halper Lighting Solutions and Ott Electric will be performing the work during the work week, so disruptions on Sundays will be minimal. We are doing this project with money already on hand. Although we will not be able to accomplish everything on our wish list, we will have the following items completed:

1. Complete refurbishment of the 5 main chandeliers. These fixtures will be completely rewired with improved, modern LED lights installed. All fixtures will be cleaned and the damaged and discolored glass will be replaced.
2. Installation of 3 lighting fixtures in the ceiling to provide direct, overhead lighting to the choir and musicians. These will replace the current spotlights in the ceiling perimeter. These new lights will illuminate the performers' music instead of shining in their eyes.
3. Replacement of the overhead lighting fixtures in the east and west first floor sections under the balcony.
4. Replacement of the sconces (candle fixtures) on the columns on the first and second floor. Additionally we will have two new fixtures installed on the first floor north wall where the original candle fixtures went missing years ago. These replacement and new fixtures will solve the shadow problem under the balcony overhang.
5. Installation of a programmable, state of the art dimming system throughout the sanctuary. This dimming system will enable us to change the lighting levels in the sanctuary to suit special services, performances, weddings, funerals, etc at the push of a button. Customizing the lighting for special occasions currently takes an inordinate amount of time and effort that detracts from other church needs. No more changing light bulbs to dim the sanctuary for Search for the Christ Child and Christmas Eve.

The major piece we cannot afford at this time is replacement of the florescent light fixtures in the balcony alcoves. The problem with these fixtures is that they are not suited for the current use of those spaces. Our bell choirs, in particular, are compelled to use several floor lamps to provide enough lighting to read their music. The dimming system will be installed so that any future replacement fixtures can be fully integrated.

While working on the chandeliers Halper Lighting Solutions will remove one of the smaller chandeliers to make fabricate a template for the replacement glass. There will be one or more Sundays while this being done. That should be only disruption affecting Sunday services.

We appreciate your continued patience as we work through this final step in the renewal of our sanctuary....our most holy and important space.

Be Air Aware—

It Makes Scents Sense!

Scented products can aggravate health problems already present in people, especially those who suffer from asthma, allergies, and other medical conditions. We all can help those suffering from such conditions by using fragrance free and unscented shampoos, hairsprays, deodorants, lotions, and other products, and avoiding application of perfume and cologne—it's called being air aware. The air we breathe is shared by all around us, especially when in worship with one another.

Can we rid the air around us of every scent? Of course not. And no one is being asked to do so. We can, however, be aware of others who have health conditions exasperated by airborne scents, and strive to consider how we can help the air around us all when in closer quarters like the Chapel and Sanctuary. When it comes to the health of our church family and guests, being air aware makes sense!

Monday Afternoon Study Group

Back at it each Monday Afternoon at 1:30 p.m.

The Monday Afternoon Study Group took a break for the holidays, but it is back at it, from 1:30 to 2:30 in the church library, each (surprise, surprise) Monday afternoon!

Our current viewing topic is "*Women of the Bible.*" Each week is separate from the week before, so if you miss one week, you won't fall behind. Coming up: Queen Ester—Far Away and Long Ago; Scarlet Women of the Bible; Mary Magdalene: The Hidden Apostle; Adam and Eve: Lost Innocence; Solomon and Sheba: An Epic Love Story; Samson and Delilah: Love and Betrayal.

This informal group typically watches video based content followed by discussion, and is open to any and all who are interested in growing their faith, deepening their relationship with God, and engaging in meaningful dialogue with the pastor and others. And there is always plenty of coffee on hand!



FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH
of STOW
Fourth Annual
SOUP COOKOFF
January 27, 2019
following the
10:45 am service

To enter your award-winning soup, please see Bill or Cora Dowey, the church office or indicate on the back of your connection card.

SOUPER COOKERS:

- Bring soups to Fellowship Hall in crock pots, hot and ready to serve
- Write type of soup and mark appropriate check boxes on placemats provided
- Help serve soup to the congregation during the event

EATERS:

- Come hungry and ready to vote on the best soup!



We know we have Souper Cooks! Enter to win!
You may be our next

Souperhero Soup Maker!!!

Martin Luther King Jr. Service of Remembrance
Monday, January 21, 7 p.m.

Every third Monday of January we remember and honor the life and work and ministry of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and this year the Stow Clergy is seeking to help our community in furthering our efforts to honor King's legacy in two ways.

First, each congregation is invited to bring to their churches non-perishable food items on Sunday, January 20th. This collection of goods will go toward a combined community wide donation for Good Neighbors. Or, you are welcome to make a monetary donation toward this collection.

Second, each congregation is invited to join in a special time of worship on Monday, January 21st, at 7 p.m. at our church, and bring the collected items and donations, which will be dedicated as part of the service.

This time of worship will have as its focus God's call for unity and love, while using Dr. King's life and ministry as examples of, and inspiration for, our shared work toward this call.

We hope you will make plans to be part of this community wide-effort to remember Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., support those in need, and to come together as the body of Christ in worship.



Random Acts of Kindness With...
an Umbrella?

Barb Bell

We all know how a random act of kindness can change the mind, heart, body, and soul for the better. Not just for the recipient, but for the giver as well. It's doesn't have to be a huge act to have a huge impact. And the CWF ministries want to help us all give a random act of kindness.

You may have noticed a basket of umbrellas in the Gathering Area. They are a spinoff from the Women's Retreat held back in November. The umbrellas are intended to be given away, by YOU, as a random act of kindness. Please take one with you, and keep it in your car for a rainy day. When you see someone who appears to have been surprised by an unexpected rain shower, simply give it to them. You will be amazed at much it brightens their day.

Each umbrella is tagged with a First Christian Church of Stow magnet so the recipients will know the source of the kindness.

Tech and Social Media Team

Are you interested in becoming more involved in church life? Do you have an interest in computers, video, and social media? Do you have a desire to get your hands on the multi-media system in the Sanctuary? If you answered yes to any of these questions then you should check out our Media Tech Team. We are in need of folks who are willing to help with a wide variety of tech and social media needs.

If you have any interest, or are even just the least bit curious about what it all entails, then let us know! Contact Jonathan or indicate your interest on the back of a Sunday morning Connection Card, an e-mail, phone call, Facebook, or Twitter! Just let us know of your interest and we will be in touch!

2018 Leap of Faith Financial Update

Lisa Roseman and the Stewardship Team

THANK YOU, and PRAISE GOD!

The Stewardship/Finance team is thrilled to report our faith family ended 2018 with a great response to our 'Leap of Faith' budget. The finance staff is still finalizing the numbers but we are estimating our income will exceed the budgeted amount by 8%. And just as important, our expenses will come in under budget by approximately 3%. This means we will be able to provide another \$3,000 for our Chalice Grant fund, and the distribution of such will be discussed throughout 2019.

This momentum of faithful giving and intentional, thoughtful spending positions us in 2019 to continue to find even more ways to serve and to share God's blessings both locally and globally.

Final numbers for 2018 will be presented to the Governing Board on January 14, and made available to anyone interested in the details.

Individual giving statements will also be delivered by the end of January!

Coffee Fellowship

Every Sunday we offer a time of fellowship accompanied by some light snacks unless it is a "special" Sunday which would include holidays or days the church is hosting a more substantial meal. We encourage everyone to stay after the 10:45 service (between services during summer hours) and get to know one another or catch up on news of friends you know.

We hope you are taking advantage of this weekly time of fellowship. And we hope you will consider taking it a step further and providing light snacks one Sunday in 2018. It is not hard. You need not cook or bake unless you enjoy doing so. If you are not a cook or baker, storebought offerings are just fine!

There is a sign-up sheet by the library doors (or on the table on Sundays) where you can choose a Sunday and plan to bring in a treat. Coffee and drinks are provided. Questions? See John McCreight or call the church office. Thank you!

New Year = Time to Update the Calendar

Our church uses a computer program which is wonderful in oh, so many ways! However, the calendar/scheduling module of this program has some shortcomings. One is that repeating events cannot repeat forever. So, if you are in charge of a meeting or other repeating event, it is time to update the office with your scheduling needs. Thank You!



The church sometimes receives special thank you notes in the mail. As we are closing the books on Christmas 2018, we wanted to share these two (out of many) thank you notes received. Please know that your efforts at church have a positive impact and are greatly appreciated by many.

Dear First Christian Church,

My family and I just got home from your "Search for the Christ Child" event. We had a wonderful time and I wanted to pass along my appreciation. I have 3 boys (ages 10, 8 & 3). Your congregation made the story of Jesus' birth come alive for them! They enjoyed the "search" and learned new details. Thank you for investing in your community and the next generation!

Sincerely,

To the Acorn & Crusader Choirs,

I know this card is a bit late, but I wanted to send it anyway to let you know that my husband and I really enjoyed your Holiday Show. We are not from your church but saw the sign outside and decided to check it out.

We couldn't stay afterward so I also wanted to include this small token of our appreciation.

Keep up the Spirit and thanks again for a delightful evening!

We have also received many personal thanks from those helped by our Ingathering program as well.

Why do we put so much effort into our Holiday Offerings? So that others, within our congregation and our community, will learn of, see and feel the Love that God has for them. May God continue to bless us all in 2019.