

PATHWAYS

December 2017

*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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## **Christmas Program and Children's Musical**

Sunday, December 3, at 6:00 p.m.

## ***Search for the Christ Child* Rehearsal**

Saturday, December 9 • 9:00 a.m.

## **Congregational Meeting**

Sunday, December 10, immediately following both services

## **Luncheon Honoring Andrea Drews' 25 Years as Organist**

Sunday, December 10, following 10:45 service and meeting

## ***Search for the Christ Child***

Sunday, December 10, 5:00-7:00 p.m.

Invite family, friends, and neighbors!

## **Christmas Ingathering • Sunday, December 17**

Distribution on Tuesday, December 19

## **Christmas Eve Worship**

### **Morning Worship**

One service only at 10:00 a.m.

### **7:00 p.m. Child-Friendly and Candlelight Worship**

Children will be invited up onto the Chancel  
to hear the Christmas story in a special way,  
and receive a fun gift from the pastor.

### **9:30 p.m. Musical Prelude**

### **10:00 p.m. Candlelight Worship**



From the  
Pastor's  
Desk

*Haul out the holly; put up the tree  
before my spirit falls again.  
Fill up the stocking,  
I may be rushing things,  
but deck the halls again now.  
For we need a little Christmas,  
right this very minute,  
Candles in the window, carols at the spinet.  
Yes, we need a little Christmas, right this very minute.  
It hasn't snowed a single flurry,  
but Santa, dear we're in a hurry...*

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These are the lyrics from the popular Christmas song "We Need a Little Christmas" that originated from Jerry Herman's 1966 Broadway musical *Mame*, and was first performed by Angela Lansbury. And it's one of my favorite Christmas songs. Well, it has one of my favorite lines from a Christmas song! Typically my rendition goes a little something like this: "*Oh we need a little Christmas, right this very minute... (hummmm...something-something, hummmm...)* Yes, we need a little Christmas, right this very minute. (Repeat.) Hey, I'm a preacher, not a singer.

I like this song and these specific lyrics because they ring true for me, and I bet they ring true for you too. Don't we all need a little Christmas, right now!? I'm talking, right now...this **very** minute. Not waiting until December 24<sup>th</sup> or 25<sup>th</sup>. Not waiting until whenever schedules are right for all the family to get together. I'm talking right now, as you read this. Wouldn't a little Christmas be a good thing? Right now? Yep. For me too. So what's stopping us from making a little Christmas happen, right now?

We spend a lot of time and energy getting ready for Christmas. And that is good and right. Decorations, cards, cookies, presents, wrapping—all of it is good and right. Advent is a season to prepare us for Christmas, to get us ready for the coming of the Messiah, once again. And then Christmas comes. Christmas happens. And all the work and energy has its day, finally. And it is good and right. But what if...maybe...we made a little Christmas happen right now. Right this very minute? Could that be good and right too? I think so.

Right now there are people who aren't getting ready for Christmas because they are simply trying to get through today. And then at the end of today, they are going to be thinking and wondering how they are going to get through tomorrow. It might be a day of loneliness or isolation. It might be a day of pain, anxiety, or fear. It might be a day of anger, regret, or

confusion. It might be a day where the phone hasn't rung, again. It might be a good day, but there isn't anyone to share it with. It might be a day of delivering mail and packages, and no one has said a kind greeting. It might be a day of scanning items at a checkout, and no one has really asked how their day is going. It might be a day of teaching your kids or grandkids, or tending to those who are sick and injured, and no one has said, "*Thanks for all you do.*" It might be a day that is simply void of Christmas. But what is Christmas? I say it's more than just a day or a season. Christmas is a feeling, an action, even a lifestyle of hope, peace, joy, and love. That is what Christmas is, I think. And I know it is what Jesus, not Santa, brings. And it is what we are called to share...right now.

So let's do it. Let's bring a little Christmas, right now. Pick up the phone. Drop in. Engage in conversation. Express thanks. Ask and listen. Let's do something that will bring a little Christmas... right this very minute. Someone will be glad you did. Merry Christmas everyone!

Your Pastor and Friend,  
Jonathan

### **Advent Devotionals**

Daily advent devotionals can be delivered right to your email inbox. Go to the Christian Church in Ohio website at [www.ccinoh.org](http://www.ccinoh.org), and sign up to receive Advent Devotions written by pastors and laity from our region, including our own pastor. Or you may have us email a .pdf that you can print. There are a few printed copies available at church as well. We hope these devotionals will be a useful resource as you and your family journey through this season of hope, peace, joy, and love.

## **Celebrating Our Sterling Silver Servant:**

### **Andrea Drews**

Andrea Drews, our gifted and accomplished church organist and accompanist, brings to our worship and church music ministries inspiring and moving gifts and talents week after week. And she has been doing so, here at First Christian Church as our organist and accompanist, for 25 years!

For 25 years, and for her entire life, Andrea has offered herself and her gifts, in service to God, and to all who gather to give praise and worship to God. She has been blessed by God, and in turn she has blessed others. And now we want to honor, thank, and celebrate this Sterling Silver Servant of God!

Next Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup>, we will recognize and honor Andrea and her 25 years of service here at FCC Stow during each worship service. Then, following second service, we will have a luncheon celebration for her in Fellowship Hall. Please make plans to be part of these events.

And you are invited to express your individual thanks and appreciation for Andrea's ministry. A card box will be available on Sunday morning to collect such for Andrea.

## **Need A Ride To Church? Give A Ride To Church!**

### **Ride To Church Ministry**

There are folks in our church family who want to come to church on Sunday morning, but are sometimes unable to do so because they don't drive and they need a ride. And there are folks who do drive, but don't feel comfortable driving after dark.

This is an opportunity where help is needed! So as we live into figuring out how we might fill this need, please consider how you might be able to help. It will first take some folks willing to help figure out how to coordinate filling this need. It will take folks willing to volunteer to be a driver. It will take someone to coordinate rides. And it will take someone to think about the things that need to be thought about that haven't been thought of yet!

Please prayerfully consider how you might have a role in this new and needed ministry. Indicate your interest on the back of a Sunday Connection Card, or by calling the church and talking with Jonathan. Let's work together to help make sure all who want to come to church can come to church!

## **Youth Group** **Keeping it R.E.A.L!**

The Youth Group will meet THIS on Sunday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>, right after church for our annual Christmas shopping trip for the In-Gathering Outreach project. This year we'll be shopping for nine young people who will be served by this ministry. We will have lunch at the church and then head to the Stow-Kent Plaza Target for our shopping expedition!

Parents: This outing may run past our normal end time, so we will call you when we are nearly done, and have you pick up your students at Target.

Additionally, all Youth are invited to participate in this year's *Search for the Christ Child* production that is set for Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup> from 5-7 p.m. See more information about *Search* in this newsletter.

Then on Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup> all Youth are invited to the annual Youth Group Christmas Party! This will happen right after worship and will go until 2 p.m. Lunch will be served. And at this party we will plan our Christmas Break Outing. What will it be this year?! Come to Youth Group and help us decide!

## **Congregational Meeting** **December 10**

A congregational meeting will be held immediately following both worship services on December 10. We will vote on the 2018 budget and slate of officers. The proposed budget may be viewed in the office.

## **Bulldog Bags**

Mid-December through mid-January, we will be collecting toothpaste and toothbrushes.

Please place in bin marked Bulldog Bags. Thank you for your continued support.

## Getting to Know You

Greetings!! It's been a month since I became your new Director of Music and frankly, it's been a very exciting and rewarding time. It's Thursday evening as I write this and we just finished choir rehearsal. As always, everyone as put forth their best effort. What a joy to work with such a dedicated group of people, both ringers and singers! Just so you know, the Joy Bells will be performing at the Akron Children's Hospital Memorial Service on Tuesday night (Dec. 5). Thanks to Barb Eppley who has been "filling the gap." She will be leading them at this event and has done a wonderful job as the interim bell director. I also want to thank Scott Haywood who filled in as interim choir director. Words cannot express the appreciation we should all feel for the superb job these two musicians did the last few months.

I also want to invite all of you to the Children's Choir Program this Sunday, Dec. 3 at 6 p.m. in the Sanctuary. I know Andrea, Molly, Cora, all the children and their parents have worked hard to put this presentation together. Please make every effort to support our children as they help welcome the Christmas Season.

Are you a singer? We still have lots of room for others to join in the fun and rewards of singing in the choir. We rehearse on Thursdays from 7:30 to 9 p.m.

Have you ever played a musical instrument? Have you given any thought to ringing with one of our bell choirs? The Joyful Noise is a great group to ring in, especially if you're a beginner and would like to try your hand at ringing. Barb will teach you all there is to it. They rehearse Wednesday evenings at 7. The Joy Bells need ringers who have experience reading music. At present we are ringing 3 octaves, but we have 5 octaves total! Three more ringers would enable us to utilize all of the bells. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at [ckobb@att.net](mailto:ckobb@att.net) or [dirmusic@firstchristianstow.org](mailto:dirmusic@firstchristianstow.org), or call me at 330-760-5177. Our rehearsals are on Thursdays from 6-7:15. See you Sunday!!  
Chuck



## Christmas Eve Worship

### **Morning Worship**

One service only at 10:00 a.m.

### **7:00 p.m. Child-Friendly and Candlelight Worship**

Children will be invited up onto the Chancel to hear the Christmas story in a special way, and receive a fun gift from the pastor.

### **9:30 p.m. Musical Prelude 10:00 p.m. Candlelight Worship**

## Monday AFTERNOON

### Study Group!

### **Mondays, 1:30-2:30p.m.**

For three weeks in December, (4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 18<sup>th</sup>) the now Monday AFTERNOON Study Group will study Rick Warren's "**The Purpose of Christmas**" series. Christmas is the most celebrated holiday of the year for billions of people. But what is the purpose of Christmas? What makes Christmas so special? What's God's purpose for Christmas?

Bestselling author and Pastor Rick Warren will lead us through a video-based study on the true purpose of Christmas through three teaching lessons that come from the Gospel of Luke. In this series we will explore why God's act for redemption is found in Christmas and why Jesus is the greatest gift God gave to the world.

The Monday Morning Afternoon Study Group is an informal group that watches video based content which is then followed by discussion. The class 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!

**Our Christmas Ingathering Relies on an  
Outpouring of Giving!**

The Christmas Ingathering program is run through our Outreach committee. Families are selected through the Stow School. The schools provide us with wishes and ideas. Members, groups and organizations sponsor the families, and the outpouring of giving occurs.

On December 19, thirty-five to forty families will visit our Church to pick up the gifts made possible by the generosity of all. They will leave with boxes of food, cookies, fleece blankets for the children and presents for all. The children get clothes and presents based on their needs and wants. Adults can choose a gift. Coats are available. Filled purses are popular. Tables are set with a variety of items for stocking stuffers, necessities and niceties. Every family gets a box of food and a grocery gift card. (Please take a food list and give generously. Donations for the families and the food expenses are always welcome!) December 17th will be the last day to donate food.

Any questions? See Ann Halpin or any member of World Outreach.

Christmas gift suggestions:  
To your enemy, forgiveness.  
To an opponent, tolerance.

To a friend, your heart. To a customer, service.  
To all, charity. To every child, a good example.  
To yourself, respect.

-- Oren Arnold

**Breakfast with Santa**

Santa will be at FCCStow on Saturday, December 16. Linc-worldwide is sponsoring Santa's visit and breakfast. You may choose breakfast at 8-10 or 10:30-12.

Adults \$15.00 Kids \$10.00  
2 & under free

Please call or text 330-931-0042 for reservations.  
See flyers in Gathering Area.

**Save The Date! Congregational  
Conclave: Saturday, February 10<sup>th</sup>**

Calling all church folk! Save the Date for our "Congregational Conclave" that will be held on Saturday, February 10<sup>th</sup>, beginning at 8:30 a.m.

A "conclave," if you are a curious, is not something only Catholic Cardinals do to elect a new Pope! Rather a "conclave" is "an assembly or gathering, especially one that has special authority or influence." And this Congregational Conclave will certainly have special authority and influence on our spiritual lives as well as the church family that is FCC Stow.

So mark your calendars now for this important event in the life of our church!

