



3493 Darrow Road, Stow, Ohio 44224
330.688.4450
www.firstchristianstow.org

PATHWAYS FEBRUARY 2020

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

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Week(s) of Compassion! **February 2020** ***Invest In Futures***

Superbowl Sub Sunday
February 2, after Both Services
benefits our Youth

Boy Scout Sunday
February 9
Meet and Greet our Scouts at the 10:45 Service

Laity Sunday
February 23, both services

Ash Wednesday
Wednesday, February 26, 6:30 p.m.

Pastor's Class
Sunday, March 1, 9:30 a.m.

FROM THE PASTOR



February marks the time when we as a church give focus to the relief, refugee and development mission fund of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada called Week of Compassion.

At the heart of their ministry is the vision of a world where God's people transform suffering into hope. And our church aims to be among God's people who help do just that.

Here are two short accounts of how suffering is being turned into hope by churches like ours, and Week of Compassion.

Following a flood in Wharton County, Texas, resident, Steve B., recounted, *"In town the water was knee deep. The muddy flood waters went in houses through windows, and after the water receded, the mud had to be raked out with hoes and shovels. The streets and yards were nothing but mud caked caverns."* The flood left Steve and many of his friends practically homeless and jobless, as their small farms were destroyed. As they started to get back on their feet, another flood came just a few years later.

Week of Compassion is partnering with the Wharton West End Initiative to help Wharton not only recover from Hurricane Harvey and the 2019 floods, but also invest in a flourishing future in the West End, celebrating its rich cultural history, addressing systemic racism and generational housing inequality, and preparing for the next flood that will wash along the banks of the Colorado in Wharton County.

Following a disaster, immediate needs are clear: food, water, shelter, emergency care. But many other needs emerge in the longer term, and one of the most critical is the need for children to return to school. And every new school year brings with it expenses for tuition, uniforms, bags, and books. The school year had just begun when Hurricane Matthew struck Haiti in October of 2016. With newly purchased uniforms and books destroyed, and with schools severely damaged, many students dropped out of school. Some were sent to live with friends or relatives in less affected areas. When this happens, it increases the risk of child domestic servitude. When children live with families other than their own, they may be exploited and used for household chores. In many cases,

they are denied the right to education, get little rest, and may suffer from physical, verbal, or sexual abuse.

Working closely with our partner Church World Service, Week of Compassion approaches the reconstruction of schools not only as a response to disaster, but also as a way to prevent exploitation of children and to protect students and teachers against the impact of future disasters.

This year's theme and focus for our Week of Compassion offering is *"Invest In Futures"* which seeks to remind and inform us that when we give to Week of Compassion we invest in the futures of those who are working and striving to overcome their suffering and difficult state in life, and fulfill their call and ministry in the world. Our gifts not only provide relief, but they also provided education, vocational training, basic necessities, and community support, all of which generate hope, as well as opportunities for living life in ways that permits others to fulfill their call and ministry in the world.

So as we invest in futures and serve as co-workers with God, the future becomes one of endless possibility and opportunity for all of us. And that is a great return on our investment.

May we all prayerfully consider how we can support Week of Compassion as we seek to partner with them, once again, to transform suffering into hope.

Your Pastor and Friend,
Jonathan

Free Firewood

During a recent wind storm a tree fell near the Williamson Rd. exit. It is on the ground and has been cut to length. It is FREE to the first person that comes and gets it.



News from the Music Department

On Sunday, January 26, Spiritus sang an anthem that was suggested to me by Bill Johnson: Mansion Over the Hilltop. I

must admit that I was not familiar with this old Southern Gospel song. Bill had requested it this past summer to sing as a hymn in our worship services. Unfortunately, I could not find it in any of the hymnals that Janice and I own (which is quite a few). I found recordings of the hymn on the internet (including one by Elvis Presley) and liked it immediately. So, it irked me that I couldn't honor Bill's request. Then later in the fall, I was attending a choral music reading session in Columbus and "lo and behold" one of the anthems we sang was Mansion Over the Hilltop! Well, I bought it, and last Sunday, Spiritus sang it. I was greatly moved when looking out over the congregation, I saw many of you mouthing the words with us as we sang! What a great testament to a song's power.

I ran across the story of the composer, Ira Stanphill's inspiration for the song on the internet and would like to share it with you:

In 1945, a young Christian businessman stood one evening in an evangelistic service in Dallas, Texas, and told how he had learned a valuable lesson from a small child.

The gentleman stated that his business, for a number of months, had been in a steady decline. It looked as if it would completely fail. Since the situation seemed beyond his ability to understand or control, he found himself slipping into despondency, discouragement and feelings of despair.

He related how one day, for a period of diversion and relaxation, he decided to get into his car and drive out into the countryside. He traveled for miles, out beyond the busy streets and residential areas. He stopped his car on a lonely road and continued on foot. Soon, he found himself on a deserted, out-of-the-way trail, where eventually he came upon a dilapidated cottage. It was in great disrepair with some of the windows replaced with cardboard. Out front was a young girl playing with a doll. Although the stuffing in the doll was protruding in several places, the child seemed to be content and happy.

He approached the front yard - keeping his distance for fear of frightening the child - and asked, "Little girl, would you tell me how you can be happy living in such a house? It is broken down, and the windows are out in several places. The doll you have in your hand is broken with the stuffing coming out. How can you be happy?" The little girl looked up with a smiling face and a gesturing hand and said, "Mister, my daddy just came into a lot of money, and he is building

us a brand-new mansion just over that hilltop. Don't know when it will be done, but I won't have to live in this house forever."

The young businessman testified that those words pierced his heart. He realized, for the first time, that though his earthly business was faltering, the heavenly father had greater things in store for him. It was as though he heard God saying, "Son, don't you know that I have a mansion prepared for you just beyond those clouds?"

The young businessman concluded his story by telling how he went back home with a new determination to live for God and let the heavenly father take care of the business.

Ira Stanphill, the famed songwriter, was in the audience that evening. He was so moved with the story, he went home still thinking about what he had heard. He rose early the next morning, went to his piano, and wrote the song, "Mansion Over the Hilltop."

Thanks to my sources:

<https://originofsongs.blogspot.com/> and
<https://www.staugustine.com/>

Laity Sunday, February 23rd **Both Services**

Our church's annual Laity Sunday is a time honored and faithful time of worship in the life of our church. On Laity Sunday members are invited to take part in leading each element of the worship service, reinforcing the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) stance we call "*The priesthood of all believers*", a view that stresses each person has a role in sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Special thanks to the Worship Team for their work in coordinating this great day, and continuing to honor this long standing and faithful tradition in the life of our church.

Week(s) of Compassion!
February 2020
Invest In Futures

Week of Compassion is the relief, refugee and development mission fund of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada. Week of Compassion (WOC) seeks to equip and empower Disciples to alleviate the suffering of others through disaster response, humanitarian aid, sustainable development and the promotion of mission opportunities. This year's WOC theme is "***Invest In Futures***" which helps us see that when we support WOC, God's goodness, grace, hope, and healing will help ensure a bright future for all God's children.

Did you know that out of every dollar given to Week of Compassion: 50 cents goes toward emergency responses; 25 cents to sustainable development, 8-10 cents to ecumenical partners, mission stations and volunteer work trip grants; 8 cents to refugee and immigration ministries? Did you further know that just 6-8 cents goes for administrative costs. With our help, Week of Compassion is able to change the world in an accountable, efficient, trustworthy, effective, sustainable way.

In various parts of worship for the final three weeks in February we will hear about the work and ministry of WOC. This year, our church has once again set as a goal for our offering the amount of \$2,000. (This offering is over and above our general fund giving.) And back again this year will be the Week of Compassion Bake Sale! (See more info about it in this issue of the Pathways.)

Please prayerfully consider how you can support this vitally important ministry because our individual offerings matter. Gifts to Week of Compassion multiply a thousand times over, enabling the Church as one body to achieve significant change in the world. We are one in Christ Jesus, and our many gifts together, make a world of difference.

For more information check out the Week of Compassion website at www.weekofcompassion.org

Scout Sunday, February 9th

Our church will once again host our annual Scout Sunday to highlight the Boy Scout Troop, Cub Scout Pack and Girl Scout Troop that all meet at our church throughout the year. This is a great opportunity to greet the scouts and leaders alike and remind them how grateful we are to have them as part of the First Christian Church family.

Ash Wednesday Time of Worship,
with a Light Soup Dinner
Wednesday, February 26, 6:30 p.m.

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the season of Lent, the time when we commemorate Jesus' post-baptismal, forty days of fasting and temptation in the wilderness as preparation for his ministry to follow. Lent is also the time when we strive to prepare ourselves spiritually for the ministry we are called to. We do this prior to Easter through personal introspection, study, prayer, sacrifice or giving something up, or maybe even by taking up something such as volunteering/serving or getting involved in a new ministry. And what better way to begin this Holy season than in worship.

On Wednesday, February 26th, beginning at 6:30 p.m., an Ash Wednesday time of worship and light soup dinner will be held in the gym.

We will share in a simple meal that will segue into a simple time of worship that will include imposition of ashes on your forehead or hand as a symbolic reminder of repentance, along with the reminder that earthly things may become ash and dust, but the divine love of God and Jesus are eternal.

The Worship Ministry Team hopes to see each of you on Ash Wednesday, February 26th, in the Disciple Hall at 6:30 p.m. and we wish you a spirit-filled Lenten season of preparation for our Savior's death and resurrection.

Volunteers Needed
February 8, 9 a.m.

Keeping our church building in good order requires a lot of work. Saturday February 8th starting at 9 a.m. the floors in Fellowship Hall and Kitchen will be cleaned and waxed. We have mops, buffers and scrubbers that will fit all sizes of hands. If you can come for an hour or 3 hours your help will be appreciated. Any questions ask Rick Lloyd.

**Youth Group Subs, Meetings,
Events and Frivolity!**

Put Your Weight On It

Super Bowl Subs sale this Sunday, February 2! All youth are encouraged to be at the church at 8:45 a.m. to help make subs. Special thanks to Debbie and Mike Kostensky and Mike's Place of Kent, Ohio for once again generously donating all the fixings for those subs!



All youth are encouraged to be on hand after worship on February 9th to help with the Weeks of Compassion Bake Sale!

Youth Group will have regular meetings on Sunday, February 16th and Sunday March 1st, right after church until 2 p.m. Lunch will be served! During both of these meetings we will continue to focus on our theme for the year, while also getting ourselves ready for being part of Sketti and Skits on Sunday, March 8th.

Super Soup Cook-Off

Our annual Super Soup Cook-Off was once again enjoyed by soup-makers and soup-tasters alike. Many pots were submitted with delicious results!

Congratulations to our winners!

1st place Rev. Jonathan Rumburg

2nd place Cora Dowey

3rd place Joyce Anthony



**Pastor's Class
Begins Sunday, March 1st,
9:30 a.m. Church Library**

All youth in fifth grade or older who have not been baptized, and their parents are invited to be part of this year's Pastor's Class set begin on Sunday, March 1st and will run through Baptism Sunday on April 19th. 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, indicate your interest on the back of your Connection Card, or if you have questions please contact Jonathan.

**That Time of the Month to Talk
About Hygiene"**

Kaylee Lott, Youth Group Member

My name is Kaylee Lott, and I'm a member of First Christian Church of Stow, and a Youth Group member. I am a junior at Stow-Munroe Falls High School and am currently enrolled in the Athletic Health Care and Fitness career program at Kent Roosevelt. For our program, we're doing a Health Professions Affinity Community (HPAC) project, where groups of my classmates are coming together to alleviate different needs of the community. My group and I have decided to address the issue of health and safety in young girls, and to do so we are focusing on the stigmas surrounding menstruation.

Many young girls are embarrassed or afraid of their bodies due to the confusion and stigma surrounding menstrual cycles, while others cannot afford or do not have access to feminine hygiene products. To raise awareness of this issue as well as helping it, we aim to supply local middle schools and high schools with feminine pads and tampons. To do this, we ask for your help.

In the month of February, I will have a donation box outside the sanctuary to collect any donations of pads or tampons you would like to make. The need is real, and goes largely unaddressed. Any donation you can make will be greatly appreciated! Thank you!

Church honors sponsors of Christmas Ingathering program

(as featured in the January 19, 2020 Stow Sentry)

An award was presented to Hudson United Methodist Nursery School for its 24 years of support for the First Christian Church of Stow's Christmas Ingathering program. Pictured are Ann Halpin of the church, left, and Lisa Van Buskirk, Director, Hudson United Methodist Nursery School.



An award was presented to Carla Herbert of Harvest Home Realty for 20 years of support for First Christian Church of Stow's Christmas Ingathering program. Pictured is Herbert holding the award, Dave Lovette, agent and Ann Halpin of First Christian Church of Stow.

First Christian Church of Stow has successfully completed their annual Christmas Ingathering program. The program, which has existed for many, many years provides a box of nonperishable food, \$50 voucher for perishable groceries, gifts for children in the home and an adult gift for every adult in the household.

In addition, the program provides winter coats, hats and gloves, socks and underwear, stocking stuffers, school supplies and much miscellaneous for participants. Recipients are referred from the Stow Munroe Falls School system and Family Promise of Summit County. This year, 50 families were served which included 42 families with children.

This huge outreach program would not be possible without the generosity of community sponsors and congregation members. This year, a special acrylic recognition award was presented to four longtime community sponsors. The award recognized each sponsor for "Making a Difference" by their "Exceptional, Continuous Dedication to the Children of This Community at Christmas." Awards were presented to Carla Herbert of Harvest Home Realty for 20 years of support for this program – every year they have been in business. Awards were also presented to Michelle Primm, Cascade Auto Group; Ron Marhofer, Marhofer Chevrolet; and to Lisa Van Buskirk, director, Hudson United Methodist Nursery School, which has supported this program for 24 years

the
ROARING
SKETTI 20's
& SKITS

Sunday March 8th 5pm

Adults: \$8.00

Children: \$4.00

Children 3 and under: Free

"Sketti" dinner includes:
Spaghetti dinner with
meat sauce or plain
sauce, Cheese, Salad,
Bread, Beverages, and
Dessert.

"Skits" entertainment will
follow with magic tricks,
songs, talents, skits, and
more!

Do you have a talent, magic trick, song or dance or something
else you would like to perform?

Sign up on your connection card or with Anna & Richelle.