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PATHWAYS

MARCH 2020

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

Psalm 16:11

Find us on Social
Media @FCCStow!



Pastor's Class

Sunday, March 1, 9:30 a.m.

Sketti & Skits

March 8, 5 pm Fellowship Hall
Spaghetti Dinner & Talent Show

Plan ahead for these Special Holiday Events and Services

- ***All-Day Prayer Vigil***, Saturday, April 4
from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.
- ***Palm Sunday***, April 5, Worship
at 8:30 a.m.
10:45 a.m. featuring **Children's Spring Musical**
Easter Egg Hunt, April 5, following late service
- ***Maundy Thursday Service***, April 9
at 6:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary
- **Community Good Friday Service**, April 10, noon
Holy Family Catholic Church
- ***Easter***, April 12, Sunrise Service at 7:00 a.m.,
Worship at 8:30 a.m. and 10:45 a.m.

FROM THE PASTOR



It is here! The season of Lent! My most favorite liturgical season of the year! (Has anyone, ever in your life, shared with you what their favorite liturgical season was? First time for everything, huh? Anyway...) I love Lent

because it is a time to actively focus on drawing closer to the Divine in a manner that models what Jesus did for forty days and nights in the wilderness just prior to the beginning of his ministry. It is about us and God, and that in our lives we need to face so that we can better ourselves, and prepare ourselves for the ministry we are called to do.

But I have to admit something. The season of Lent means it is March. And it being March means it's that much closer to being May. Or more specifically, *May 17, 2020*. That's the Sunday before we begin the Clergy/Congregational Renewal time that will happen throughout the summer. Or as most are calling it, my sabbatical.

When this Clergy/Congregational Renewal time for summer 2020 was announced last Fall I admitted I was struggling with the idea of taking a sabbatical, but that I had been reminded by many—clergy colleagues and friends, the Elders, my Pastoral Relations Committee—that sabbaticals are not just for me, they are also for my family and they are for you the church as well. In order to be the husband, father, and pastor I am called to be, time for renewal is an imperative. But in order for the church to be what it is called to be, time for renewal is an imperative as well. And that is a critical piece I hope we all will begin to seriously think about in this season of Lent: *Sabbatical is not just for me and my family. Sabbatical is for all of us.* But just as it is important to take time for renewal, it is just as important to prepare for time of renewal.

And that's what we are going to do during this Lenten season. After all, Lent is a time for introspection, it is a time for rest, it is a time of preparation, it is a time to seek out renewal, and be open to it. So throughout the season of Lent we as a church are going to do this, with an eye toward the Clergy and Church Renewal unique, rare, and special opportunity that is happening for us this summer. And one way we are going to do this will be by asking ourselves—individually and communally—some important questions that can help us prepare for sabbatical and be open to its renewal opportunities. Questions like...

*What does "sabbatical" mean to me?
How do I think it will impact me?*

Do I think you have a role within the sabbatical? If so, what?

Am I taking seriously opportunities for Sabbath? If not, how might I do better?

When I wake up on resurrection Sunday, how do I want to be different than when I started this Lenten journey?

These questions, and others that will surely come up, can help get our minds, hearts, and spirits ready, and even excited, about what the Clergy/Congregational Renewal time can be. And it will be an imperative to do that so this unique, rare, and special chance is not lost or wasted, because what we do—*ministry...being church...living out our call*—these are profoundly important, not only to our family and church family, and the people directly served, but also to the larger community and society. This clergy renewal program honors pastors *and* congregations and the yoke they are called to take upon themselves by creating opportunities that are not typically available. It is a unique, rare, and special chance for introspection, rest, preparation, and renewal, and we must not miss it.

So I hope and pray you are excited about the Lenten season like I am. It is our time to draw closer to the Divine in a manner that models what Jesus did for forty days and nights in the wilderness just prior to the beginning of his ministry. And it will be a time for us to focus on, and prepare for the Clergy/Congregational Renewal opportunities we will be blessed with throughout the summer. I look forward to making this journey with you.

Your Pastor and Friend,
Jonathan



Spring
Forward!

March 8, 2020



Youth Group In March

There's a lot of Youth Group that will happen in March. It will be fun, faithful, and maybe even a little adventuresome! Check it out...

Sunday, March 1st we will have a regular youth group meeting that will include lunch and getting a group skit ready for Sketti N Skits.

Sunday March 8th we will participate in Sketti N Skits with skits and helping serve up the sketti.

Sunday, March 15th right after church and lunch we will head to Stow Munroe Falls High to help staff the FCC Stow booth at the Community Showcase.

Sunday, March 29th a regular youth group meeting after church where we will continue to explore our theme of "*putting our weight on our faith.*"

Look for the Youth Group flyer that will be mailed to your house for more information!

Daily Lenten Devotionals

We are glad to make available to you a daily Lenten devotional from the Society of St. Andrew, "*Renewed By Living Water.*" This booklet is available in the Information Corridor on the small table just outside the library. They include daily scripture readings, reflections, and prayers.

Dorcas / Rebekah Guild Meeting

The Dorcas / Rebekah Guild will meet on Thursday, March 12 at noon in Room 202. A speaker from the Cleveland Clinic Akron General Speakers Bureau will give the program. The topic is Fall Prevention and Balance. All ladies are invited to attend. Bring your lunch. The dessert and coffee is provided.

Service Opportunity: Pop-Up Pantry

Tom Safford, Elder

Last fall, during our Church Chats, many of our members said that our church should look for ways to increase our visibility in the community, serve the needy, and model Christ-like behavior. Now we have that opportunity.

The Akron Canton Regional Foodbank (ACRB) has begun a Pop Up Pantry food distribution program to provide healthy food to the hungry. A Pop Up Pantry is just what it sounds like. The ACRB will deliver a selection of food items to a location that does not normally have a food pantry for a one time distribution to the hungry.

What the ACRB needs is a location in the general community to host the Pop-Up Pantry and volunteers to help distribute the food items. These food items includes canned goods, dry goods, baked goods, and produce, all of which is supplied by the ACRB free of charge.

With the support of our World Outreach Team and the Elders we have approached the ACRB with the offer to host a Pop Up Pantry on Tuesday March 24 from 11:00am to 1:00pm.

As shown by the Bulldog Bags program, the need in Stow is acute and our area is underserved by traditional food pantries. The ACRB expects that we will be serving 40 to 60 families. This is scheduled during Stow Schools spring break when school meals are not available for those who qualify.

We will need 7 to 10 volunteers to help set up tables, distribute food items, and take down tables. Please consider how you might support this opportunity to serve those in need in our community.

from the Music Department

In 1844 a young Irishman, Joseph Scriven, had completed his college education and returned home to marry his sweetheart. As he was traveling to meet her on the day before the planned wedding, he came upon a horrible scene—his beautiful fiancée tragically lying under the water in a creek bed after falling off her horse.

Later, Scriven moved to Canada and eventually fell in love again, only to experience devastation once more when she became ill and died just weeks before their marriage. For the second time, this humble Christian felt the loss of the woman he loved.

The following year, he wrote a poem to his mother in Ireland that described the deep friendship with Jesus he had cultivated in prayer through the hardships of his life.

The poem was published anonymously at first under the title, “Pray Without Ceasing.” Ten years later, he finally acknowledged this well-loved text had been written by him and his friend, Jesus. In 1868, attorney Charles Converse set the text to a tune and renamed it “What a Friend We Have in Jesus.” Ken Osbeck tells the story in his book 101 Hymn Stories.

Instead of thinking God was punishing him, Scriven cherished God’s friendship through all of this hardship—a friendship he discovered in prayer. May we learn that our relationship with God will grow the same way—in prayer.

Source: factsand trends.net

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.

WeekS of Compassion Thank You!

This year’s Week of Compassion (WOC) theme was “Invest in Futures” and sought to help us to see and know that when we support WOC, God is working in us and through us to create bright, hope filled futures for all of God’s children. Our church set as a goal for our offering the amount of \$2,000. If you would still like to contribute to this total know there is still time! Simply place it in an offering plate on a Sunday morning with clear notation that is it for Week of Compassion, or drop your donation off at the church office.

Thank you for your generous support of this incredible and important ministry that has life-giving impacts here in the United States, and around the globe.

Super Bowl Sub Sale Success!

On February 2nd the Youth Group was on hand to sell Super Bowl Subs on Super Bowl Sunday! These hearty sandwiches were available for purchase after both services just in time for the big game. We want to express a huge THANK YOU to Mike and Debbie Kostensky and Mike’s Place in Kent for their generous donation of all the sub fixings. They continue to support this fundraiser year after year. Around 100 subs were made and sold and the proceeds will go toward Youth and Christian Education ministries. THANK YOU to EVERYONE who supported this fund raiser! We hope you enjoyed your subs, and we hope that next year we will be making subs for the Cleveland Browns Super Bowl Sunday!

Maundy Thursday Agape Service

Thursday, April 9th, 6:30 p.m.

Maundy Thursday at FCC Stow is an evening unlike any other throughout the rest of the year. We gather in our Disciples Hall which has been transformed from rec hall to Upper Room. There we join with our Savior on that night before he was crucified to share with him a meal—a simple meal of light foods indicative of this first century setting. It is a meal intended to fill us up spiritually more so than physically because this meal, like the one Jesus shared with his Disciples, leads to a profound and moving time of worship where the dim setting, impactful music, moving and touching prayers, holy scripture, and living words of institution take on a deeper and more powerful meaning than any other time of the year.

Please inform the church office of your attendance, and how many in your party, so that seating and food arrangements are sufficiently made.



Community Good Friday Time of Worship

Friday, April 10th, Noon

Holy Family Catholic Church

The Stow Ministerial Association will hold an inter-denominational Good Friday time of worship on April 10th, beginning at noon, at Holy Family. This time of scripture, meditation, and song will guide us through the passion narratives found in the Gospels while guiding us in considering and remembering again the sacrifice Jesus made so that we would have eternal and everlasting life. You are invited and encouraged to make this part of your Holy Week experience.

Coffee Fellowship

You are invited to stop in the library each Sunday after the 10:45 worship service for a snack and a moment of fellowship with other worshippers. You are also invited to host, or help host, this time of community in our church. The hosting calendar is on the wall outside the library. Coffee will be made ~ you need only bring some snacks. For more information or to volunteer, please contact John or Janice McCreight at 330-814-3825.



Sketti & Skits **Sunday March 8** **at 5pm.**

Fellowship Hall

Come and enjoy this tasty dinner and exceptional talent show. You'll leave with a full stomach and tears of laughter on your face!

"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!

Adults: \$8.00, Children: \$4.00

Children 3 and under: Free.

