

First Christian Church of Stow
(Disciples of Christ)
3493 Darrow Road, www.firstchristianstow.org

PATHWAYS - April 2019
*You show me the path of life.
In your presence there is fullness of joy..
.Psalm 16:11*

Holy Week

As we move toward the conclusion of this season of Lent, we will do so by observing each important element of Holy Week apart, yet still connected by God's Holy Spirit.

The following is a listing of services and observances that will be streamed via Facebook Live and then recorded and posted to our YouTube Channel. We hope you will make plans to be part of these Holy Week services and observances.

Palm Sunday Worship, April 5th, 10 a.m.

We need not hear the trumpets sound...We need not see the children wave the palms...We need not be in a crowd shouting "*Hosanna! Hossanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!*" to celebrate Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem. For no matter where we are, Jesus still comes ready to do what he has come to do.

So let us join together in our homes and in our spirits and celebrate the one who comes in the name of the Lord once again on Palm Sunday.

Maundy Thursday, April 9th, 7 p.m.

On Maundy Thursday we remember the night Jesus gathered with his Disciples and shared in his Last Supper, where Jesus washed his disciple's feet, when he prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, when he was betrayed by Judas Iscariot, and was arrested and taken to trial in the dead of night.

It is a somber night for sure, yet there is power in all it holds.

Traditionally we would gather in in our Disciples Hall which would be transformed from rec hall to Upper Room, and share in a simple meal of light foods indicative of this first century setting. And though we will not be together in person, we will gather from afar and still be led to have a profound and moving time of worship where the dim setting, impactful music, moving prayers, holy scripture, and living words of institution can still take on a deeper and more powerful meaning than any other time of the year.

Make plans to gather with family around a table in your home that will become an extension of our Lord's Table, and let us share in a time of worship on this holy and sacred Maundy Thursday.

Good Friday Time of Worship, April 10th, TBD

Traditionally our church joins together with the churches of Stow to share in a time of worship on Good Friday for a time of worship led by the Stow Ministerial Association through an inter-denominational Good Friday time of worship. While that service cannot happen this year, we will still honor and observe this holy day in worship that will be a time of scripture, meditation, and song designed to guide us through the passion narratives found in the Gospels while leading us in remembering again the sacrifice Jesus made so we would have eternal and everlasting life.

More information about time and where you can find this service online will be forth coming.

Prayer Vigil, April 11th, 7 a.m.- 7 p.m.

There is so much to be holding in prayer in these uncertain days, there are many laments to lift to the Lord, along with many prayers of gratefulness. Let us be intentional to take time on this Holy Saturday to be in prayer, together, wherever we may be.

More information about the prayer vigil, and how you can be part of it is inside this issues of the Pathways.

Easter Sunday, April 12th, 10 a.m.

The days we are in may be hard and full of uncertainty...but Easter is coming. There may be difficult news, and long projections of when all this will be over...but Easter is coming. We may not know much about what is yet to come but we do know...Easter is coming.

Nothing, not life or death, not virus or social distancing can keep this great and glorious day of resurrection from coming. So let us gather together from our homes and celebrate the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Easter is coming...no matter what!

FROM THE PASTOR



God's grace and peace be with you all.

This is about the fourth Pastor's Pen I've started in the last week. Each time I go to write I find myself feeling like I need to start again because by

the time I have returned to my writing things in the world have changed so significantly that what I had already written seems out of date. The matters around the world, in our country, state, and even right here in our community are moving and changing and happening so rapidly in this COVID-19 season that it seems impossible to keep up. And truth be told, when I do try to keep up, I get overwhelmed by it all.

This is hard. This time, this situation, the uncertainty, the projection's and foreshadowing of all that is coming and may come...it's really, really hard.

I don't say that for any other reason than this is the truth. For me, for you. But to be clear, my family and I, we are doing fine. As fine as anyone today, and admittedly, more so than a lot. But like you and your family and friends, and our church family, we are all in a hard, hard time. And there is immense importance and meaning in saying those words—we are in a *hard, hard* time. There is importance and meaning in acknowledging this very real truth because when we speak it we are allowing ourselves to be honest with the feelings we are having and the situation we are in, and when we do such—give deeply honest expressions of feelings—we are taking back the power and control we have lost, because the lost power and control we are experiencing—it exasperates the hardness.

But there is something we can do. No, we can't change the hardness we are going through, but we can take back the lost power and control by faithfully expressing it. A verbal expression of feelings and distress and worry and hardness of life is faithful. It's even necessary. And the Psalmist reminds us that we can and should express these feelings to God and the Psalmist shows us how.

Psalm 18:6 ***"In my distress I called upon the LORD; to my God I cried for help."***

Psalm 27:7 ***"Hear, O LORD, when I cry aloud...."***

Psalm 28:2 ***"Hear the voice of my pleas for mercy, when I cry to you for help...."***

Psalm 40:13 ***"Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me! O LORD, make haste to help me!"***

These are Psalms of lament, and lament is one way to faithfully and constructively process our deep inner pain, sorrow, and anger. It helps us go all the way into the hardness, and brings us out on the other side because our lament takes us straight to the heart of God.

Even Jesus cried out in lament, doing so by quoting Psalm 22. Matthew tells us in chapter 27, ***"And at the ninth hour, Jesus cried out with a loud voice, 'Eloi Eloi lama sabachthani?' which means, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?'"***

This is such a huge example and model to see from Jesus, but it becomes even more powerful when we remember where Jesus was when he said this. He was in a hard, hard place. The hardest of places. He said this while on the cross. In the midst of unthinkable pain, and sorrow, and grief, and I believe even anger, Jesus lamented to God exactly what He was feeling. Jesus pulled no punches, expressing Himself fully to God His Father.

And how did that work out for Jesus? What did God do in and through Jesus?

Resurrection.

Expressing our anger our sorrow, our sadness to God during times of grief and hardness of life helps us through this time in ways that are faithful, constructive, and even hopeful because they get the pain and fear and hopelessness that is inside us...out. Lament gets all of this out into the open, fully expressed, handed over to the one who is present to us, the one who is in control and who is at work to make all things good. It is a faithful act

shown and modeled to us by Jesus himself.

I don't know when the chaos and uncertainty of this COVID-19 pandemic is going to end. But I do know how it will end. It will end with *resurrection*—some form of new life will be breathed into each and every one of us. For that I have no doubt.

So as we look toward Palm Sunday and Holy Week and Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday and Holy Saturday and that glorious celebration of the resurrection on Easter, may we share our laments with our God. May we begin to take back our power and our control by giving ourselves again and again to the one who is in control. For in doing so we are being faithful. And we are making ourselves ready for the new life that is surely coming.

May God continue to bless each of you and your families. Please stay safe, healthy, and well.

Your Pastor and Friend,
Jonathan

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### **Pastor's Class Update**

Jonathan Rumburg

Eight young, budding theologians. That's how many students are in this year's Pastor's Class. Eight young students eager and excited about all Pastor's Class would involve, but yet with some underlying trepidation about getting baptized with *all those people* looking at them.

Pastor's Class is among my favorite parts of my job because the energy and emotion and memories are among the most vibrant part of the ministry I get to do. And yet all of that is on hold right now. But only for right now. When this situation is over, we will find a way to resume our classes that will lead these youngsters to making their confessions of faith, being baptized, and receiving their first communion. And what a great and glorious day that will be.

Until then, please keep in your prayers those eight students: Isabelle, Katie, Lillie, Zoey, Alex, Logan, Nolan, and Thomas. Please pray God continues to feed their excitement and wonder about taking this next step in their faith journey.

### **Calling ALL Crusader Choir Kids**

We just want to let you know we miss you and hope you are all feeling well! We're sad that we aren't meeting right now but know we will be back together in time. Until then, we do not know how long our program will be delayed, though not cancelled. Please feel free to pop your CD in every once in awhile and sing because remember Our Savior Lives! We pray for your health and safety Ms. Andrea, Miss Molly, Mrs. Dowey

### **Pop-Up Pantry: It Made A Difference**

Tom Safford, Elder

On Tuesday March 24 FCC Stow hosted its first PopUp Pantry. The Akron Canton Regional Foodbank supplied us with individual boxes containing 25lbs of assorted shelf stable food items. The Foodbank also supplied oranges that we were able to distribute. We served over 50 families comprised of over 215 individuals.

Thanks to the efforts of our volunteers over 215 people did not have to worry about where their next meals were coming from. Further, they now know that people want to help them meet their daily challenges with dignity and love. In just over 2 hours we were able to help people with more than their physical need for food. We also helped their spiritual needs by showing them that they are loved and worthy.

This is a project the Elders hope our church will continue. In the coming days we will investigate ways to make this a monthly occurrence and we will explore alternative, community funding sources so we can add a new outreach program without robbing Peter to pay Paul. Thanks again to everyone for your prayerful support of this ministry. Without a doubt, it made a difference.



**from the Music Department**

RAY PALMER (1808-1887), a doctor of theology and a poet, wrote the words to “My Faith Looks Up to Thee” as part of a collection of poems. He offered this poem to Lowell Mason to use in a hymn. Mason (1792-1872) was a doctor of music, the first public American school music teacher, and the superintendent of music for the Boston Schools. As you read the words, note how it applies to us in the present time of turmoil. It speaks of “my fainting heart,” “life’s dark maze,” “griefs around me,” and “death’s cold sullen stream.” With our world turned upside down due to the uncertainty of the covid19 progress, it’s important to remember that we are not the first to ever go through troubling times. WWII, the War between the States, Spanish flu, Swine flu, and the Great Depression come to mind. Each upheaval brings new doubts, fears, and a search for answers. And through it all, one thing stands: God loves us and is there for us. He may not always give us the answers we seek (His ways are a mystery) but God is sovereign over all that happens. Our only response should be to be faithful.

1 My faith looks up to Thee,  
Thou Lamb of Calvary,  
Savior divine!  
Now hear me while I pray,  
take all my guilt away;  
O let me from this day  
be wholly Thine.

2 May Thy rich grace impart  
strength to my fainting heart,  
my zeal inspire;  
as Thou hast died for me,  
O may my love to Thee  
pure, warm, and changeless be,  
a living fire.

3 While life’s dark maze I tread,  
and griefs around me spread,  
be Thou my guide;  
bid darkness turn to day,  
wipe sorrow’s tears away,  
nor let me ever stray  
from Thee aside.

4 When ends life's transient dream,  
when death’s cold, sullen stream  
shall o'er me roll,  
blest Savior, then in love,  
fear and distrust remove;  
O bear me safe above,  
a ransomed soul.

**Zoom! Zoom!**

Even though we can’t be together in person, we can span the distance between us via Zoom!

Zoom is a web-based video conferencing tool with a local, desktop client, and mobile app that allows users to meet online, with or without video.

Our church now has a Zoom account that will allow us to have online meetings and gatherings with Jonathan one on one, or as a group. Want to check in with someone, let’s zoom! Want to have morning coffee (or an afternoon coffee) with Jonathan and some others from the church, let’s zoom! A “meeting” will be set-up on the church’s end for a day and time that works for you and others, and then an email invite will be sent to you with instructions, meeting ID, and password—everything you’ll need to Zoom!

Please email, call, or text Jonathan or leave a message on the church voicemail and someone will be in touch to get things set up with. Let’s Zoom together!



## **From Our Financial Team**

During this time where our church building is closed we continue to identify alternate methods for all of those actions we normally do in person. Therefore, the Finance/Stewardship team is sharing this information about our financial giving.

We support the following options for electronic giving:

- Electronic File Transfer using your bank account, or Credit Card payments.
  - This can be set up by you through a secure link on our website ([www.firstchristianstow.org](http://www.firstchristianstow.org)) – find the Electronic Giving option on the home screen.
- PayPal (a popular online payment service)
  - You can use the paypal link below, and it will soon also be available on the church website. It is straightforward if you already have a Paypal account set up. [paypal.me/FirstChristianStow](https://www.paypal.com/FirstChristianStow)
- Bill Pay, via your own bank's website
  - Similar to setting up for making any other payments, setting this up will result in your bank sending a computer generated check to the church based on the amount and schedule you define.

Any of these can be used for a one-time donation, or for scheduling recurring donations.

And of course you can still write a check and mail it to the church. We can even provide pre-addressed/stamped envelopes for anyone who requests them.

Please feel free to give me a call or email if you have any questions about these options.

Lisa Roseman – Financial Secretary  
(330.338.1327, [LisaRoseman@hotmail.com](mailto:LisaRoseman@hotmail.com))

As always – thank you for trusting us with your financial gifts, as we strive together to do God's work!

## **Prayer Vigil: New Day-New Way** **Saturday April 11, 7 a.m.-7 p.m.**

The Apostle Paul calls for us to “*pray without ceasing.*” He didn’t mean we have to be on our knees or kneeling before a chancel 24/7, but rather that we are open to God’s presence with us at all times, and that a prayerful life is what ought to lead us in our daily lives.

As we continue to focus on the essentials of being church, we are mindful that being a church of prayer is among those essentials. And, during this global pandemic, the health and wellbeing of our church and our community remain among our essentials as well. Therefore, to tend to both essentials, our church will have our 2020 Prayer Vigil offsite from the church, from the safety of your homes or in a safe, socially distant location of your choosing.

The prayer vigil was originally set for a different Saturday, but we have moved it to Holy Saturday, April 11, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and put it within our Holy Week observances. You can follow this link to our Sign-Up Genius and sign-up for a half hour time slot for the prayer vigil:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040e4ca5af22a0fb6-fccstow>

If the time you would like is already taken, please feel free to still take that time to be in prayer.

It won’t be difficult to come up with matters to lift in prayer, but some themes and focuses to pray about could include: Essentials for our members and community, healing for those in need, peace for those feeling restless, hope for those feeling hopeless, comfort for those feeling alone, gratefulness for God’s constant and abiding presence.

Let us join our hearts and minds and spirits together, no matter the distance between us, and go to God in prayer in these uncertain times.

From the Elders:

GOOD MORNING FIRST CHRISTIAN FAMILY!!!

I have been wanting to say that for what seems like an eternity, and I hope it brings a smile to you. I miss seeing and talking with everyone, the social aspect is important to all of us. I guess we will have to make due with contact through our technologies for now. I am writing to let you know I understand how hard it is to be confined to your homes; no malls, no sports (that's a big one for me), financial impacts, and pretty much life as we knew it pre-COVID-19. It has impacted us all.

Many times, people thrive on adversity, and I believe our church has always stood true to that test. You know the saying "tough times bring out the best in us", and can even make us stronger. We live in a great country, and have plenty of things to be thankful about; especially the freedom to worship as we want. We must, however, remain faithful, faithful to ourselves, to each other and especially to God, our Christ and Savior. I think sometimes we expect God to protect us, to think he will use his magic to keep us safe. It often doesn't happen that way and is hard to understand. I know I have often thought that. Instead, he has given us the reins to care for the earth and each other under our own free will. Being a believer and faithfulness to Him puts us under his love and eternal protection. Being faithful to our God right now means we need to band together and demonstrate what he has taught us, compassion, love, and faithfulness, and to continue to help one another; locally, nationally and abroad and to bring peace to all. We can support one another and communities via drive-through restaurants, giving money for church operation and outreach, calling or texting people inside and outside of our church, and for sure by prayer. Prayer is a powerful way to connect to God and with each other.

When things get too overwhelming for me I go to my favorite scripture, Psalm 23, "The Lord is My Shepherd". Hopefully this inspires you to pull out your Bibles and read this passage, as well as others that are inspirational to you. The Elders will be staying in touch with you via Devotionals/scriptures or maybe just a story about

what is going on in our homes through congregational emails. We are also going to make phone calls and/or send cards to our Homebound members. This is God's church and you are our church family. We shall overcome this together and through God. If we don't have your email, contact Kathy Gustafson, myself, or any of the Elders. We as Elders, along with Reverend Jonathan, and leaders of our church want stay in touch with you and to share God's peace throughout the course of these trying times. God bless each and every one of you. Stay safe and stay healthy.

Yours in Christ

Jim Hindel  
Chair of Elders  
[Jimbaseball45@gmail.com](mailto:Jimbaseball45@gmail.com)  
(330) 592-3548

### **Sunday Morning Worship**

Our Sunday morning worship continues as we cope with social distancing. We broadcast our Worship Service on Facebook Live at 10am and we will continue to do this each week as long as the COVID 19 guidelines require. In case you missed a service or do not have access to Facebook the link below will direct you to the YouTube video to watch or re-watch anytime!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nJ94CBbrOeo>

Stay safe, healthy and well everyone! Please let us know how things went; comment below the video, send us a message or email.

Blessings!