



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

PATHWAYS SEPTEMBER 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!



Welcome Sunday!

Sunday, September 13, 2020

Facebook Live at 10 a.m., YouTube shortly after

ZOOM Meetings

Stewardship	Wednesday, September 2, 7 p.m.
Membership Team	Monday, September 14, 6 p.m.
Elders	Monday, September 14, 7 p.m.
Worship Team	Tuesday, September 15, 7 p.m.
Governing Board	Tuesday, September 15, 7 p.m.*

*Please note change in DAY

The Church Office is Closed on Labor Day, September 7.

“Anxious To Talk About It”

A book study starting September 3rd, 7 p.m. via Zoom

Youth Group

Kick-Off, Sunday, September 13th, 11:30ish to 1 p.m.

Loaves and Fishes

September 20, 4-6 pm Lower Level Entry

Bulldog Bags Special Offering **for September**

More information on all these events and so much more inside this newsletter

"You rarely have time for everything you want in this life, so you need to make choices.

And hopefully your choices can come from a deep sense of who you are."

~Fred Rogers

FROM
THE
PASTOR



I grew up with Mr. Rogers—via public television that is, just like many of you. But I had a friend who quite literally grew up with Mr. Rogers. No joke. Literally. Her dad was a Presbyterian minister in the

greater Pittsburgh area, and you will recall that Fred Rogers was a Presbyterian minister as well. So my friend's dad knew Mr. Rogers, and they were actually very close friends who got together regularly. And because of their friendship Mr. Rogers literally came to her neighborhood, her house, her dining room and had dinner with her and her family. On a regular basis! Can you imagine Mr. Rogers sitting at your dinner table eating your mom's meatloaf? (My mom made amazing meatloaf so that's the dish I always go with.)

I thought of all this, again, because it's what I do when I consider my friend literally being Mr. Rogers' friend. But I also thought of all this when the other day I saw the above quote from Fred Rogers. This quote resonated with me because of the truth it speaks. So few of us do rarely have time for all we want in this life, and as a result we do have to make choices of what we will do. Yes, we have to do things we have to do, and they may not always be what we want to do, but hopefully there are times when we can choose what we want to do. And they really should be choices that come from a deep sense of who we are, and core values we live from.

But that begs the question...Who are we?

We see this question unfold all throughout the Bible, most especially in the Gospels. One of the most poignant "who am I" stories that stands out to me is the story of Nicodemus who was a Pharisee, which means that while he was a person of faith, he was also (and probably mostly) a politician. But then Jesus and his teaching began to challenge and change Nicodemus's mind, heart, and spirit. The Kingdom of God became for Nicodemus what it was supposed to be—a life altering encounter—literally. In the dead of night. With Jesus right there. Literally.

This was still incredibly hard for Nicodemus because it put him squarely between a rock and a hard place. How could he be who he was, but still be who he was called to be by God? Well, he did it, by working at it each and every day after having that encounter with Jesus.

Nicodemus went to Jesus in the middle of the night and had a life altering conversation, but he never left his life's work as a Pharisee and a member of the Sanhedrin—the high ranking court/tribunal of Elders who served as a legislative and governing body in Jerusalem. He stayed who he was, doing the work he was doing, living around the people he was living with, but he was still changed. Different. Transformed. For the better. Because he had a life altering encounter with Jesus.

I love the story of Nicodemus because in so many ways he is each of us. We are who we are to those around us, but then we have an experience that changes us and its change that can so often be hard to present to others. Will others see us as weak, and giving in? Will others still accept us for having a change of mind, heart, spirit? Will we still be accepted?

I wish I could tell you the answer to all those questions would be that everything will be fine. But I can't. The reality is some people in our lives will react poorly to changes of mind, heart, and spirit. I can tell you, though, that when you live from the deep sense and awareness of who you are—a holy and beloved child of God who strives to live and walk in the ways of Christ—that life will be fine and good even in spite of the struggles and disappointment and sorrow.

Nicodemus kept living his life, but he did so from a deep sense of who he was. And we see this play out just before Jesus' crucifixion when he saw the how the Sanhedrin—the body he was fully entrenched within—was skirting their own rules and law. He knew it was wrong and unjust, and he said so, making happen the importantly critical and powerful trial Jesus went through.

Nicodemus made a choice. And it came from a deep sense of who he was, which came from his experience with Jesus. May we too, always strive to make choices from the deep sense of who we are.

Your Pastor and Friend,
Jonathan

Welcome Sunday!

Sunday, September 13, 2020

Facebook Live at 10 a.m., YouTube shortly after

Mark your calendars! Welcome Sunday is set for Sunday, September 13, at 10 a.m. via Facebook Live and YouTube.

No, this is not the Welcome Sunday we all want, but may we remember that the spirit of Welcome Sunday remains the same—we welcome one another “back” from our summer jaunts, we focus on the “new year” ahead, we are reminded of our role as church, **and** we invite others to come to church with us—even if it is virtually!

Let’s not lose our focus on our role as the body of Christ, and let’s keep sharing Jesus’ invitation to come and be part of the redeeming work God is always doing.

Looking forward to “seeing” everyone on September 13 for *Welcome Sunday!*

Zoom Coffee Fellowship

Sunday, September 13

On **Sunday, September 13, right after worship** we will hold another Virtual Zoom Coffee Fellowship. An email will be sent out to all those we have email addresses for with a link to join the coffee fellowship. All you have to do is click the link and it will do the rest. You won’t have to linger long, and you’ll have to supply your own coffee and treats, but it will be a chance to see some familiar faces and say hello to your church family. Hope to see you at our Zoom Coffee Fellowship!

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, especially now that we are live streaming worship services? 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!

“Anxious To Talk About It”

**A book study starting September 3rd
7 p.m. via Zoom**

Last year during a Church-Chat it was discussed how we could faithfully respond to the struggles and unrest unfolding in our society. Among the brainstorming ideas that came directly from you, the congregation, were: Look at oneself/Introspection; Keep Talking-Keep Listening-Approach with curiosity; and Listen! And so in the spirit of what you the congregation implored and encouraged, we will be offering a book study that will lead us to do all of these practices by studying the book: *“Anxious To Talk About It: Helping White Christians Talk Faithfully about Racism”* by Carolyn B. Helsel

This six week book study will be done via Zoom on **Thursday evenings from 7-8p.m.**, and will also include an online message board for ongoing discussion. We will utilize a discussion guide developed by the author for churches and small groups.

The book can be purchased on Amazon or on ChalicePress.com, or the church can order a copy for you. Please sign-up for this study by letting Jonathan know—call, text, email, whatever works for you!

Sunday Sermons and Pastoral Prayers Available By Snail Mail

If you or someone you know would like printed copies of the Sunday sermons and pastoral prayers sent via snail mail please let the church office know. We will be glad to mail copies to anyone who would enjoy reading the pastor’s message.

Also note that all sermons and prayer are also available on our church website, and videos of weekly worship services are always available at our church’s Facebook page and YouTube Channel.

Youth Group

Kick-Off, Sunday, September 13

11:30ish to 1 p.m.

It has been way too long since the Youth Group was last together—so let's get together... socially distant of course.

On Sunday, September 13th at, or around 11:30 a.m. all youth are invited to come to the church til 1 p.m. for a socially distanced Youth Group Kick-Off. (Parents, if your youth is ok with it, you may stay for the meeting too.) At this meeting we will eat, talk about the year ahead, and maybe play a game or two of...Human Battleship! Weather permitting this game may involve participants getting a teeny-tiny bit wet, so wear appropriate clothing.

Look for a Youth Group flyer with more information via snail-mail coming to your home soon!

Planning Ahead: Christmas In-Gathering

Each year through the Christmas In-Gathering Outreach Program our church provides families the opportunity to have a very Merry Christmas through the giving of food and gifts they could not otherwise afford. And since this is such a huge ministry, the Outreach Team works all year long to make it a success, and therefore is already hard at work preparing for this tremendous ministry endeavor by purchasing adult gifts, socks, undergarments, hats, coats, and much more.

As the Outreach Team continues to prepare, they invite all of us to think about Christmas, too! If you are interested in shopping for a family for this year's In-Gathering, or interested in supporting this ministry in anyway, please let the church office, or Ann Halpin, know how you would like to help.

Loaves and Fishes

Our drive through food distribution will be September 20th from 4-6 p.m. at the lower door. We will be providing in a to go container: breaded chicken strips, potatoes, coleslaw, a brownie and a water for anyone who needs a meal. Each month we are serving more meals. Helpers are always needed for distribution. Brownie bakers are needed.

Contact Mary Ellen Neitz
330-929-7793

Jr Church: At-Home Edition

Much like this summer's At-Home Vacation Bible School the Christian Education team is putting together **Jr Church At Home Edition: Fall Activity Packs!** Kits will be available for pickup beginning Sunday September 13th - Pull up to the ramp to pick up from the bin right outside the main doors. Be sure to stop by and grab yours!

In addition, we will have a **Jr Church Zoom Meeting on Sunday September 13th at 6:30pm** for all our kiddos! Watch your email for this Zoom Invite! Let Anna and Richelle know if you need to be added to the church email list.

Bulldog Bag Special Offering

School is back in session much to the delight (and maybe some dismay) to students and parents. And though there was a break from in-person schooling, followed by summer vacation, the needs of food insecure students never stopped, which is why Bulldog Bags supports Stow Munroe Falls Students during the school year AND throughout the summer.

Since the inception of Bulldog Bags our church, and many other community churches, have faithful supported their work, however, without in-person worshipers coming to churches donations have dropped. So for two weeks in September our church will take a special offering that will go to help Bulldog Bags span this gap. Please consider supporting this special offering—an offering over and above your regular giving—by making an extra donation to the church with the notation it is for Bulldog Bags.

Bulldog Bags, Inc. is an all-volunteer-managed, community, non-profit business that was organized to address food insecurity in children in the Stow-Munroe Falls City School District, and are able to support a student with TWO Bulldog Bags each month for the ENTIRE school year at a cost of just \$60. How many students can First Christian Church of Stow sponsor for the 2020-21 school year?



Diversity, Equity, Inclusivity Committee

Stow-Munroe Falls Schools and Communities

The Stow Munroe Falls School District, along with the Cities of Stow and Munroe Falls has recently formed the *Diversity, Equity, Inclusivity, Committee* which is intended to be a school/community initiative that will actively address the issue of racism, its root causes, and its presence in our schools and communities. This committee is made up of area school teachers, faculty, staff and Board of Education members; along with city mayors, police officers, and local clergy, which includes our Pastor, Jonathan.

The vision of the Diversity Equity Inclusivity committee (DEI) of the Stow-Munroe Falls City School District will intentionally promote equitable opportunities for students and staff through its school/community partnership, thus increasing student achievement and enhancing social and emotional learning. We will create a new climate where equity, diversity and inclusion drive our decision making and policy guidelines. We will model integrity and transparency while creating a sustainable culture that values and understands that diversity, equity and inclusion are essential to creating a safe, supportive and empowering school environment for all students and staff. We will accomplish this by:

1. Celebrating diversity and the differences that exist in our community.
2. Intentionally build relationships with students and families.
3. Creating pathways to growth and understanding through the use of curriculum, classroom instruction and professional development for all stakeholders in the district.
4. Generating an equitable environment at every grade level, we will hold staff and students accountable for bringing needed changes to our district.

Currently, the DEI committee is reviewing curriculum, instruction, student experience, climate/culture, the Stow-Munroe Falls community culture, professional development, and policy and hiring practices. After the review of these eight areas the committee will create an action plan.

Please keep this committee in your prayers as they do this important work of making our community even more diverse, equitable, and inclusive.

Church Family Fun Night

Sunday, September 25th, 7-8p.m.

On **Sunday, September 25th**, from **7-8p.m.** at the Vespers spot within the north greenspace, the Membership Team will host a bonfire evening.

This is intended to be a simple gathering, for folks to come and be together to have some fun, see and say hello to our church family and friends and make some much needed connections with one another. Masks and social distancing will be necessary. If you need a mask, the church can provide you with one. Please bring your own chair, beverages, and snacks.

ATTENTION ACME SHOPPERS

JUST A REMINDER

Save those Acme receipts !

This years campaign runs thru the end of December. Put your receipts in a safe place and we will be collecting them later in the year. Thanks for your help.

Update! Subscribe To The First Christian Church YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUqm9zCA8RaUQM6YYaP5UIg>

86. That's how many subscribers we have on YouTube. 86. That is 9 more than we had last month, but it is still 14 short of the 100 subscribers we need to make more options available that will make it easier for our church to be found on YouTube.

And while I know each of you reading of already subscribed, (and are now tired of reading this nearly same article for the third month in a row!) how about we invite family and friends to subscribe too!? You could forward them the email with the link to this issue of the Pathways, and invite them to see what your church is doing, and then kindly ask them to subscribe to our YouTube channel and check us out some Sunday for worship! It's so easy!

Meetings In September

Even though we cannot gather in person, church leaders are still meeting. And you and your teams and ministry groups can too! The Elders and Governing Board have all done, as well as the church choir.

The following meetings are set to happen in the Month of September:

- **Stewardship Team** will meet **Wednesday, September 2nd** at 7 p.m. via Zoom.
- The **Church Office** will be closed on **Monday, September 7th** for Labor Day.
- **Membership Team** will meet on **Monday, September 14th** at 6p.m. via Zoom.
- **Elders** of the church will meet on **Monday, September 14th** at 7p.m. via Zoom.
- **Worship Team** will meet on **Tuesday, September 15th** at 6p.m. via Zoom.
- The **Governing Board** of the church will meet on **Tuesday, September 15th** at 7 p.m. via Zoom.

Please note the DAY change for the Governing Board—it will meet on **TUESDAY**, September 15th. The Elders want to gather the day before so as to have an up-to-date report for the Governing Board.

If any other group or ministry team wishes to have a Zoom meeting, please let Jonathan know and he can help get it set up.

Yoga Resumes!

Wednesdays, 5:45p.m.

We are happy to report the weekly First Christian Church yoga class, led by Tammy Lott, a certified yoga instructor, will resume beginning Wednesday, September 9th at 5:45 p.m. in the gym of the church.

The class is open to all levels of yoga, with a particular openness to those new to yoga. So if you have always thought about trying this incredible style of both physical and mental exercise, this is your chance. No sign-up required, just show up! Bring with you a yoga mat or a towel, and give it a try. Cost for the 50 minute class is by donation, with a suggestion amount of \$5. Please plan to wear a mask into, and out of, the building, and to maintain social distancing for the duration.

Fall Hiking Spree and FCC!

September 1st-November 30th

Summer may be coming to an end, but the outdoor fun and fellowship does not have to! And one way to keep it going is with the Fall Hiking Spree in our Summit County Metro Parks.

Participation is easy as all you need is a participation form, available online or the church can help get you one, then complete eight hikes on the Metro Parks hiking trails and you're done! First-year hikers earn a hiking staff and shield. Veteran hikers earn a shield for their staff. Spree rewards are FREE to Summit County residents.

And while you're at it, why not make your hiking spree into a fellowship opportunity with your church family?! Reach out to someone from the church and invite them to join you for a hike. Or call Jonathan and finally tell him to go "*take a hike*" with you! Or let Jonathan, or anyone from the Membership Team know you are doing the hiking spree and we will spread the word to those we know who are doing it too so you can connect and hike together—socially distant of course. This is a great way to get moving, connect, and enjoy God's beautiful creation!

Fair Thee Well Pat and Judy

Long time members, Pat and Judy Mahaffey, recently moved to Columbus. Both will be missed immensely as they have both been deeply entrenched in the life of the church serving as Elders, Choir members, youth sponsors, and much more. And while we are sad to see them leave, we rejoice in this new chapter of life for them that will have them close to family. Let us pray God continues to bless them, and continues to bless other through them. Their new address is 1530 Bolingbrook Dr., Columbus, OH 43228.

Christian Church in Ohio Renewal Initiative Summer and Fall 2020

The Christian Church in Ohio and Camp Christian had to make the tough but necessary decision to not hold in-person Summer Camp, as well as postponing all Regional events for the Spring, Summer, and now into the Fall. It is clear that these sad but needed decisions have left a void in the lives of many people, especially those who were eager to spend time at Camp this summer. This situation has also caused a real, tangible financial hardship for the Region and Camp Christian. Registration fees and donations made in conjunction with those events help pay for our staff, operations, buildings and grounds, and general upkeep of the Camp.

To that end, we are now launching a Renewal Initiative which will help raise funds not just to offset financial losses from the impact of the coronavirus, but to sustain the mission of the Ohio Region and Camp Christian in the future. By the end of this year, we hope to be able to call a new Regional Minister who will help to focus our vision and leadership. In 2021 we aim to embark in creative new ministry pathways, and as a part of that, we want to create long-term planning and funding for Camp Christian so that we can ensure the longevity of this faithful ministry of the Christian Church in Ohio.

Our initial financial goal is to raise \$75,000 so that we can:

- Extend an offer to a Regional Minister at the end of 2020
- Fully open Camp Christian for the Summer of 2021
- Explore new Ministry Opportunities through the findings of the Regional Transition Team
- Jump-start a renewed purpose, strengthen relationships and support local ministries and leaders
- In 2021 we aim to embark in creative new ministry pathways, and as a part of that, we want to create long-term planning and funding for the Region and Camp Christian so that we can ensure the longevity of this faithful ministry of the Christian Church in Ohio.

Through the years, the ministries of the Christian Church in Ohio and Camp Christian have thrived because of the continued generosity and active participation from people like you. We ask that you please review the renewal initiative brochure available at www.ccinoh.org and prayerfully consider a donation. Gifts of any amount will help us to reach our goal and continue the work of Camp Christian and the church in Ohio and beyond.

Peace and Blessings,

Candis Wilson, Jennie Stoddart Bernard, Rev. Alan Dicken, Ted Nelson, Wendy Taylor

The Staff and Leadership of the Christian Church in Ohio and Camp Christian



from the Music Department

Hello all,
Can you believe it?
Summer is almost over!
It seems like I had just

written an article for the Pathways last week, but Kathy assures me that it has been longer than that. And so, here I am desperately trying to come up with something to say. As you know, if this were a normal year, our special music lineup would be winding down and the choirs would be “chomping at the bit” to get back to rehearsals. Instead, we are still in limbo as far as when and how rehearsals would start. I would normally be selecting at least a month’s worth of music and getting folders ready. Emails and phone calls would help get the word out. But right now, I am as much in the dark as anyone else. I do know that we will be trying to get small groups together to sing or play on the online services until it is safe to put the larger groups back together. I just want to thank everyone for their patience and kind words of encouragement through all of this.

Usually around now, I would also be thanking the many people who have given their time and talents to do the special music throughout the summer months. But in the interest of health and safety, it’s been pretty much a two-man band. Thank you, Andrea for accompanying me for these last ??? weeks. You have been a blessing and source of encouragement these many weeks.

Thank you, Scott Haywood, for filling in for me a couple of weeks ago. It is nice to have someone of your talent taking over as it were and carrying the load when I had to be gone. And to Janice Kobb and Sandy Roeger, thanks for filling in for Andrea on organ and piano when she had to be gone.

It is my sincere hope that we can be together again soon in worship and that we can one day look back and see how the hand of God worked to keep His people strong in their faith.

In Christ, Chuck