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PATHWAYS

JUNE 2021

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

Find us on Social
Media @FCCStow!



- **Church Family Fun Night, June 6**
- **Loaves and Fishes Plus Pantry, June 20**
- **Baptism Sunday, June 27**
- **Summer Camps and Conferences at Camp Christian, July**
- **Vacation Bible School, July 11-15**
- **First Christian Church night at Canal Park with the Akron Rubberducks, August 21**

FROM THE PASTOR



Pastor's Pen, June 2021

Though it is probably the least celebrated Christian holiday and holy day (ok, it is *absolutely the least* celebrated Christian

holiday and holy day) Pentecost still holds a special place in my heart. Yes, it's challenging to celebrate the entity of our faith that is impossible to visualize because the Holy Spirit is hard to "see" let alone put into words. (See my May 23rd Pentecost sermon on the church website for more about all this!) Still we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit, coming as "tongues of fire" and the "sound of a rushing wind" which always seems cool to me. Add in, it's the birthday of the Church so sometimes there's cake! Not to mention, Pentecost can make for some fun and unique Children's Sermon fodder—which means sometimes there's cake! And I love the idea of throngs of people all gathered together in Jerusalem, "*Jews from every nation*" as the text tells us, further telling how not everyone spoke the same language, but then suddenly that wind and those tongues of fire came and engulfed the people, and with it all came the ability for everyone to hear and understand in their own language the Good News of Jesus Christ being shared. And because of it all, lives were forever changed for the better.

Those are just a few of my favorite things about Pentecost. But then there is this from the story in the second chapter of Acts, verse 17, quoting the prophet Joel, who says... "*In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men [and women] shall see visions, and your old men [and women] shall dream dreams.*" *Dream dreams... dreaming dreams...* those words... that idea... the act of... it all resonates with me in ways difficult to put into words. Kind of like the Holy Spirit.

These words resonate with me because the prophet Joel is telling us of a day, a time, a place, a way we don't yet have, but one day will be. The only place such exists now is in our dreams—so let us dream these dreams—but let us also know, through our faith, that these dreams

will come true because God is going to make these dreams come true.

If you are like me, you have been dreaming dreams of better days, easier days, days that are no longer so chaotic, busy, hard, heartbreaking, divided, and discouraging. If you're like me, you have been dreaming dreams of days when we are *all* able to safely be back together on Sunday morning for worship. If you are like me, you have been dreaming dreams of warmer weather, gathering with friends and family; going to...oh I don't know...*places!* If you are like me, you have been dreaming dreams of peace on earth, good will to all, unity, kindness, grace, joy, love. These days—surely they are coming! No we are not there yet, but we are getting closer. I believe we are. I have to believe we are because if I don't then what's the point, right?

There is work still to be done though. More listening needs to be done. More believing of what others are feeling needs to be done too. More empathy and kindness needs to be shared. More vaccines need to get into arms. More consideration of others needs to be emphasized. More laughter needs to be heard. More grace needs to be given. More love needs to be offered. There is work still to be done.

Now I get it, because if you are like me, you're tired, you're done, you're overwhelmed, you're all of it. Which is why we need to not let the *absolutely least celebrated Christian holiday and holy day* come and go. Not now. Not this time. Because we need to dream dreams. We need to remind ourselves, over and over again, these dreams we dream—the dreams we *all* are dreaming—to keep dreaming them and keep them in the forefront of our minds and hearts and spirits. We need to stay mindful that God is, through the work of the Holy Spirit, at work to make these dreams become a reality.

So let us not give up. Let us keep going. Let us keep working. Let us keep dreaming. For when we do then we share the Good News of Jesus Christ in ways and languages everyone will understand, and once again lives will be forever changed for the better. Let us dream these dreams.

Your Pastor and Friend,
Jonathan

Community Outreach

Loaves and Fishes

From Tom Safford:

On May 16 we held the fifth Plus Pantry Food Distribution held in conjunction with our monthly Loaves & Fishes Dinner. We served:

- 20 households
- A total of 52 people.
- This total included:
 - o 13 children
 - o 19 seniors.

This is our second highest total month, trailing February by just 2 households and 3 people. As word spreads we look to keep increasing the number served.

The people who came to Loaves & Fishes + Pantry were very grateful to receive both a meal and groceries. Seeing their smiles and receiving their thanks validates **all** the outreach work that our church and its members do throughout the entire year.

A special thanks to the volunteers who do the work behind the scenes to make this ministry possible.

The next Loaves and Fishes will be held June 20th from 4-6 p.m.

Bulldog Bags

From Wanda Deiwert:

Thanks again to the generous participation to bulldogs donations during the school year.

Bulldogs is now sponsoring the summer box program providing 10 meals per monthly box to assigned families. Our donation will be cans of chili beans and chili seasoning packets due July 24. You can put your donation in the outside box marked bulldogs or in the gathering area in the designated box. Thank you for your continued support to the community program.

A Message from the Pastor and Elders Regarding Worship

June 1, 2021

*The following information will go into effect
For the June 6th Sunday Service.*

To The Congregation:

At long last the COVID-19 pandemic is becoming manageable. The CDC has issued new guidelines. Vaccinated people may now resume most activities without masks. Non-vaccinated people should still follow masking and social distancing best practices. While the COVID-19 threat is minimal for those who are vaccinated, the danger for non-vaccinated and immune-compromised people remains. Additionally, vaccines have not been approved for children under 12 years old.

In light of this good news the Elders spent the past week praying, discerning, and discussing how we as a church can move forward while keeping the health and safety of all our members foremost. Our church congregation includes people in all categories: vaccinated, unvaccinated, immune-compromised, and ages 12 and under. And because we do, we must keep this in mind as we make transitions to the new guidelines, for as is written in 1 John 3:21-24, *“And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. All who obey his commandments abide in him, and he abides in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit that he has given us.”*

Therefore, with such in mind, here are the elements of our Sundays that will change and what our church expectations will entail because of new CDC COVID-19 guidelines:

- **Mask Mandate:** Non-vaccinated people should continue to wear masks. Vaccinated people do not have to wear masks but may choose to do so voluntarily.
- **Passing of the Peace:** People may choose to pass the peace through physical contact. Please respect the desires of those who choose not to have any physical contact.
- **Singing:** We request those who wish to sing do so while masked. Singing has long been recognized as an activity that

increases the danger of spreading COVID-19 over a greater distance.

- **Receiving Line:** Jonathan will continue to greet folks as they exit the service. If you initiate contact he will gladly receive such. If you prefer to greet him from a social distance, he will gladly accept your greeting as such with a smile.
- **Communion and Offering:** This will remain unchanged. Individual communion elements are available for pick-up before the service and offering trays are available as you enter and exit the sanctuary.
- **Choir, Coffee Hour, and Junior Church:** These activities normally go on hiatus during the summer and will do so again this year.
- **Nursery:** The Nursery will be available. We ask that you call the church office during the preceding week if you plan to have your child in the nursery so we can notify the Nursery staff.

We all deeply appreciate the love, patience, and support you have given throughout this challenging year. We have come a long way, but COVID-19 is not completely over. So we ask for you to keep doing the good and faithful work God is leading us to do as we make our way through this stage of the pandemic. And as always, we welcome your thoughts, questions, and concerns.

Together in Christ,
The First Christian Church Pastor and Elders,
Jonathan Rumburg (Pastor), Tom Safford (Elder Chair), Jacob Aukeman, Lynn Fauvie, Joni Fitch, Dave Helmick, Jim Hindel, Sue Hobson, Andrew Robinson, Laurie Robinson, Bob Vanik, Diane Waite, Beth Weiser

Live Streaming Continues! **Sign-Ups Will Not!**

It has been a blessing to be able to offer in-person worship since the beginning of March. (What a joy it was to be together on Easter and Pentecost this year!) And as the COVID-19 pandemic becomes more and more manageable we are thrilled that our worship services will begin to

expand ever closer to the look and feel of “normal.” Please see the letter from the Pastor and Elders in this issue of the Pathways for more information about such.

However, though we will be expanding our in-person worship we want to once again remind everyone that our live streaming of worship will continue indefinitely! In fact, we are never, ever, ever going to stop live streaming our worship services, and we will forever continue to post them to YouTube! (Please subscribe to our YouTube channel if you have not already!)

And you might be happy to further know that you will no longer need to sign-up to attend worship. No more Sign-up Genius. No more need to call the church office or text Jonathan. Just come on in to worship!

Church Family Fun Night **Sunday, June 6th, 7-8p.m.**

Don't forget! Summer is nearly upon us and that means our Church Family Fun Nights are returning! Make sure you remember after church next week!

On **Sunday, June 6th, from 7-8p.m.** in the lower level parking lot we will gather, socially distant of course, to play a spirited game of Bingo!

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 while enjoying a beautiful summer evening. Please bring your own chair, beverages, and snacks. Prizes will be awarded!

Registration for Summer Camps at Camp Christian is Open!

Attention all youth and young adults! Registration for all summer camps and conferences at Camp Christian is now open! If you or someone you know is interested in attending camp this summer, sign-up forms are in the church office and online. Also, the church has scholarship funds available. Any and all who want to go to camp will be able to attend camp no matter what!

Edith Briers 80th Birthday Party!

Coming this June 19th is a celebration of Edith Briers 80th birthday! Though her birthday lands on the 16th, we will nevertheless belatedly celebrate with Edith this gift of life. Perhaps we all should be

given an extra year on our birthday for how long 2020 was? Who knows. Either way, details are listed here below so you can come and celebrate our favorite four-fifths centenarian:

Saturday, June 19th, 1 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. at Oak Park in Cuyahoga Falls. Please RSVP to Miriam Jones with her phone number: 330-322-8913.

Baptism Sunday: June 27th

We are thrilled to share the incredible news that TEN students just completed this year's Pastor's Class! That means ten young people endured weeks and weeks of Jonathan teaching them all about the Bible, God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, Baptism, the Church, the formation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), how it all connects to our spiritual journey that lasts not just during the weeks of Pastor's Class but throughout their entire lives!

And it means that these ten students, their families, and us their church family will get to celebrate and rejoice in their baptisms and their first communion. And we will do all of that during a bevy of special worship services and celebrations that will all happen on the morning of Sunday, June 27th.

Please note that because of the need to maintain COVID-19 safety precautions all baptism will be held offsite from the church on the morning of the 27th, but pictures and possible video will be part of our 10 a.m. worship at church. Then following that worship service we will have an outdoor open-house reception celebration for these ten students and their families. (Did we mention there are TEN students who will be baptized!?!)

Mark your calendars and make plans to be part of this special, joyous, and blessed day of worship!

Diversity, Equity, Inclusivity Committee **Stow-Munroe Falls Schools and Communities**

For the past year Jonathan has been a part of the Stow-Munroe Falls Schools Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity Team—a team formed at the beginning of last summer in the wake of the racial tensions that were exploding around the country. We are proud that Jonathan and First Christian Church are part of both the General Assembly, and the Stow-Munroe Falls community culture sub-committee that is among the other sub-committees of: curriculum review, student experience, climate/culture, professional development, and policy and hiring practices.

The vision of the Diversity Equity Inclusivity committee (DEI) of the Stow-Munroe Falls City School District is to intentionally promote equitable opportunities for students and staff through its school and community partnership, thus increasing student achievement and enhancing social and emotional learning. The aim to make such happen is by celebrating diversity and the differences that exist in our community, intentionally build relationships with students and families, create pathways to growth and understanding through the use of curriculum, classroom instruction and professional development for all stakeholders in the district, while also generating an equitable environment at every grade level.

In the coming weeks a “year in review” video will be produced for distribution around our committees so all can see the hard work that has been done and the positive results that have already been accomplished. Yes, there is more work to be done, and it will take all of us participating, but we can rejoice that progress is being made. We will be sure to share with you when the video is completed and made available. Please keep this committee in your prayers as they do this important work of making our community even more diverse, equitable, and inclusive.

Church Social Media Accounts

If you haven't already found us, or you haven't seen all our media outlets, look for the church on your Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter! We have a couple different pages with slightly varying names (You can thank Jonathan for that). Here's the church's handles for you to easily find us:

Facebook: First Christian Church of Stow

Instagram: fcstow

Twitter: First Christian Stow

If you're watching our livestream and waiting for it to start, also consider making a post on your page and use the “Check In” option to let us know you posted! Updates about events, news for the congregation, giving Jonathan a hard time, and other fun content can be found there. Hope to see your likes and comments soon! (If you take any fun pictures, you can email them to Christian at FCCStow@FirstChristianStow.org and they may end up on the Church's page!)

Stow Strong Celebration

On June 26th – July 5th, the city of Stow is celebrating the community spirit! Picnics, Bicycle parades, firecracker runs, and the annual July 4th parade (Now called the “Together STOW STRONG!” parade) are coming soon. Some events



require registration. Information about this spectacular summer show of our shining city can be found online at

<https://stowohio.org/stow-strong-celebration-2/>.

More information will be available at StowOhio.org under their special events tab as the event draws near. Parade approximate times and route are also posted. Make sure you don't get caught on the road when they shut down the streets for the parade!

Grow Group Summer Reading List

After an academic year of regular meetings the Wednesday Night Grow Group will begin a summer break here in June. But what a year it has been! After hearing from the congregation that it wanted to explore how we could faithfully respond to the struggles and unrest unfolding in our society we brainstormed ideas that came directly from you the congregation. Among them was to take an intentional introspective look at one's self, keep listening, and approach with curiosity, compassion, and empathy.

In an effort to tend to this focus we read and discussed the book: “*Anxious To Talk About It: Helping White Christians Talk Faithfully about Racism*” by Carolyn B. Helsel. After that study we then read and discussed the book: “*Holy Disunity: How What Separates Us Can Save Us*” by Presbyterian Pastor, Layton E. Williams. If you have not had a chance to check out either of these books the group highly recommends both!

And if you need some other summer reading suggestions may we add:

“*How To Be An Antiracist*” by Ibram X. Kendi.

“*White Fragility: Why it's so hard for white people to talk about racism*” by Robin Diangelo.

“*A House Divided: Engaging the issues through the politics of compassion*” by Mark Feldmeir.

“*The Sum of Us: What racism costs everyone and how we can prosper together*” by Heather McGhee.

But if your summer reading list is already maxed out (after all the NPR summer reading list did already come out before this publication) may we suggest some quicker reads by following the blogs of Rev. Dr. William Barber, Rev. Nadia Bolz-Webber, and Rev. John Pavlovitz. (A piece and a sampling from a Pavlovitz blog can be found in this issue of the Pathways)

No matter the time of year may we all do our part to be actively anti-racist!

Tired Of Talking About Privilege?

Jonathan Rumburg

A friend of mine recently shared with me a piece from the blog by John Pavlovitz, a writer, pastor, and activist from Wake Forest, North Carolina who has been working and ministering for social justice for over twenty five years. The piece is pointedly titled, “*Tired of Talking About White Privilege? Then You Have It.*” In part, Pavlovitz says,

“If you're tired of talking about privilege right now, that's a fairly good indicator you're terribly afflicted with it—that opting out even feels like an option. If you're sick of the topic of police brutality, it's probably because you've never been on the receiving end of it, never been terrified of those lights and sirens, never watched someone who looks like you be murdered in the street. If you find yourself becoming weary on the topic of systemic racism, that may be an alarm you are benefitting from it so much that your empathy is easily exhausted. If you're tired of talking about pervasive injustice, it is because you have the luxury of being tired of it. Justice has usually favored you.” [Tired of Talking About Privilege? Then You Have It. \(johnpavlovitz.com\)](https://johnpavlovitz.com)

These were just a few of the convicting, truth filled words in this powerfully pointed piece. And while it is my hope and prayer I have not allowed my empathy to become exhausted, I am reminded by these words that I am afforded a privilege not everyone gets to have. And this truth rests heavy on my mind, heart, and spirit. And because it does I want these words to embolden me to stay aware of this truth, and then be open to what I can do to fuel real, positive, and equal change. I want these words to remind me that it is wrong for only a select few to have the privilege and freedom to move, drive,

and shop without the eye of suspicion always upon them. I want these words to keep me mindful that others are not given the same opportunity for advancement. I want these words to change me so that I can continue to be part of systemic change in our community and beyond.

It continues to be my hope and prayer that each of us as individuals, and all of us as a church, strive to work for healing and wholeness in a broken and fragmented world by being the hands and feet and voice of Christ Jesus in all we say and all we do.

Vacation Bible School

Save the date (And The Queen!)

HUZZAH! There is still time to join us on our adventure! Gather your arms and armor, knights, for we need you on our journey with the Knights of the North Castle! Our VBS quest begins Sunday, July 11th through Thursday, July 15th from 6 to 8 p.m. There will be no shortage of adventure and surprise on the quest for the King's Armor!

Speak with your quartermasters, **Anna and Richelle** at ChristianEd@FirstChristianStow.org and sign up to serve, lead, and most of all on this adventure, HAVE FUN with The Knights of the North Castle! More info coming in the months ahead.



Registration for Summer Camps at Camp Christian Continues!

If you or someone you know is interested in attending camp this summer please let the church office know and we will get you all the information you need to get registered. Also, the church has scholarship funds available. Any and all who want to go to camp will be able to attend camp no matter what!

Please fill out hard copies of registrations forms, or fill them out online and submit, but please submit any fees to the church. The church will then make out one check to the Christian Church in Ohio to pay for registration fees.

The dates for camps this summer are:

- Chi Rho Camp, for youth who have finished grades 6- 8: Sunday, July 4- Saturday, July 10.
- CYF Conference, for youth who have finished grades, 9-12, Sunday, July 11- Saturday, July 17.
- Jr. Camp, for youth who have finished grades 2-5: Sunday, July 18- Wednesday, July 21.
- Advance Conference, post high school to age 29: Sunday, July 25-Sunday, August 1.

Please note there is an urgent need for counselors for Chi Rho camp, especially male counselors.

Also note the Christian Church in Ohio has made it a requirement that all counselors must be fully vaccinated by the beginning of the camp they serve.

Rubber Ducks Game, Fireworks, and Tailgate Party, Saturday, August 21st

Registration is still open to attend the Akron Rubber Ducks game on Saturday, August 21st. We are thrilled this summertime tradition for our church and friends is returning to Canal Park as it is a joy to spend an evening with church family watching the Rubber Ducks "*hit 'em where they ain't,*" and then take in a spectacular firework show after the game.

Don't forget, this night will feature the man the myth, the legend, Uncle Ricco (Jon Gries) from the hit cult classic film, *Napoleon Dynamite!* Don't miss your chance to have Uncle Ricco tell you, "*Back in '82, I used to be able to toss a pigskin a quarter mile.*" If that means anything to you then you know you have to be at this game. If nothing about this makes any sense to you, that's ok because it is useless knowledge and there won't be a quiz.

As stated before: Make plans to come and tailgate at the church from 4-6 that afternoon!

(Cont.)

Hot dogs, beverages, and fellowship will all be on hand for a socially distanced tailgate extravaganza!

Tickets are just \$10! What a bargain! Not as much of a bargain in past years, but hey, getting out

to a night at the ballpark and tailgating for a couple extra bucks is worth it right!? See Bill Dowey or contact the church office to reserve yours tickets today!

Update from the Stewardship Team
Financial Giving from the Congregation for
January – May 2021

We won't close the financial books for May for a couple more days, but I wanted to provide a status of where we are currently with our congregational giving.

The Total Income budget amount is \$21,181 per month. This includes congregational giving and other income sources like building rental.

For the month of May, so far, our income is \$22,131. For the month this is above the budget amount by \$950.

Year to date our income has been \$107,865. This is above the budget for Year to date by \$1,958.

This is good news! If our giving continues to exceed the budget that will help us successfully meet our 'Leap of Faith', where our budgeted expenses are higher than our budgeted income!

Here is the information in table format:

2021	Jan- Mar	Apr	May	YTD
Actual Income	\$65,146	\$20,588	\$22,131	\$107,865
Budget Income	\$63,544	\$21,181	\$21,181	\$105,907
Actual Income- Budget Income	\$ 1,602	(\$ 593)	\$ 950	\$ 1,958

As we shared in December, the budget approved by the Governing Board and the congregation for 2021 has the total expenses higher than the total income. We refer to that gap as our Leap of Faith, with the hopeful expectation that throughout the year we will be able to both increase our income and control our expenses appropriately. The 2021 Leap of Faith amount is \$20,046 for the full year.

if you personally are feeling financially stable and would like to make an additional gift to the church above your normal giving, those are always appreciated. Any increases will help position us to be able to increase the outreach assistance we can provide to our community, both local and globally.