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PATHWAYS OCTOBER 2022

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

Find us on social
media @FCCStow!

Regular Worship Hours Have Resumed

Fall is finally here! Services are at 8:30 a.m. in the Chapel, 10:30 a.m. in the Sanctuary. Sanctuary Service is livestreamed on Facebook every Sunday at 10:30 a.m.

Trunk-Or-Treat! October 23rd, 3-5 p.m.

Invite all the Trick-Or-Treaters you know! We will need Candy Donations (Drop-off is in Gathering Area) and Host Trunks! Contact the Christian Ed. team to sign up.

Children's Choir – Back in Action!

Rehearsing Sundays at the end of Junior Church.
First performance: Sunday, Oct. 30th, During Sanctuary Service.

Homebound Support: Hymnals and Sermons available!

For those who could use a printed sermon at home, contact the church office! Includes a "HomeTouch" letter, with activities and scripture for the week. Plus, we have Hymnals available if you'd like to have one at home! Read on for more info.

Youth Group: Oct 9th, Trunk-Or-Treat Prep (Lunch Provided) Oct 23rd, Carved Pumpkin Display!

Loaves and Fishes + Pantry, October 16th, 4-6 p.m.

2022 Stewardship Campaign Letter Inside!

Pastor's Pen

October 2022

New voices. Fill the void. New rules to solve new problems. Don't revert to old habits. Make it happen.

How do we restart post Covid? Overcome or exhaustion and complacency.

Give us purpose! Become more relevant to our youth.

Find what matters to them. What do they find purposeful? More one on one engagement. Fruit salad. Keep experimenting. Try something but if it doesn't work try something else. How can we get people more excited for church ministries?

Involvement. Ask face-to-face invitation. Specify individual tasks and time. What ministries are you drawn to? Ingathering. Music. Youth. Women's groups. Cleveland Christian home. Game/movie night. Coffee hour. Chili cook off. Drama ministry. What environment mental concerns I keep you from involvement? Multiple sign ups. Drive time. Fear of open-ended commitment. Covid exposure/risk.

Homebound. Sabbatical takeaways: We carried on. Soul-searching.

These were among the notes taken during the three church chats held throughout the summer as a part of the work you the congregation did for your sabbatical time. I really enjoyed reading them, and hearing from some of you about the meanings represented within these notes.

Don't revert to old habits—this is certainly a statement a preacher wants to hear from their congregation!

Overcome our exhaustion and complacency—Yes, let's do this! Especially "complacency." That's the worst, isn't it?!

Keep experimenting—Another solid Yes! from this preacher. Let's try some new ideas and new ways of being church. Experimenting is not changing for change sakes; it's just trying something new to see if it works.

Sabbatical takeaways: Soul-searching—Exactly what all of us were invited to do during this time. Search our souls for what resonates within us. What is grieving us because God's presence is ignored? What do we have within us that will make a difference?

Fruit salad—Umm... so... about this one. I mean, who doesn't love a good fruit salad, but I'm stumped here. No matter. I am sure there is a depth of faithfulness still at work here.

All of these statements and notes are good and faithful. I commend you on the hard work each of you did to go deeper into questions asked of you as individuals and as a church. As I said my first Sunday back, I loved looking at the tree that stood in the Gathering Area all summer long and the post-it-note "leaves" you put on it with responses to other hard

questions, along with prayer requests and focuses. It is apparent the summer of sabbatical work was "fruitful" for you. (Perhaps that's how the "fruit salad" is now getting prepared?!)

Give us purpose! This statement stood out to me as well. Purpose. That's something we all want and need isn't it? A purpose to get up in the morning. A purpose to do what we do each day because we know it means something and makes a difference. And certainly there are layers upon layers to having purpose, whether as a church or as an individual. And certainly we all know the purpose of any faithful church—share and spread the Good News of Jesus Christ. "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news" Mark 16:15. That is certainly among the purpose we have as a church and as followers of Christ. Another is to love God with all our heart, mind, spirit, and strength. And another then purpose is to love our neighbor as ourselves—and who is our neighbor? Everyone of course. These are all purpose-full calls and focuses we have. The deeper layer to all of it becomes, of course, the ever elusive question...How? How do we fulfill this purpose purposelessly?

That's a fantastic focus. It is a deeply faithful desire. But, yeah... that's really hard. It's hard because I can't give you that deeper purpose. I can't help guide you to it. I can encourage you to keep moving toward your purpose. I can, and do, pray for your purpose to be not only found, but then carried out and fulfilled. Because that is what is needed. You are needed. The Church needs you, and this church needs you to find your purpose because no one else—only you and God—can give you the life changing and life impacting purpose that is for you.

The work of sabbatical isn't over. In many ways, now that we are all back together, this work begins anew because if we are going to take First Christian Church of Stow to the impactful level God is calling us to have then it will require us all to keep going, to keep moving forward, to keep trying new ways of being church, of being faithful followers who spread and share the Good News. Old habits and complacency will never get this work done. Waiting for someone else to do it will never get this work done. What will get it done will be a willingness to keep moving forward, no matter how hard it might get, and find our place within this movement where God can and will use us and our gifts to make a difference.

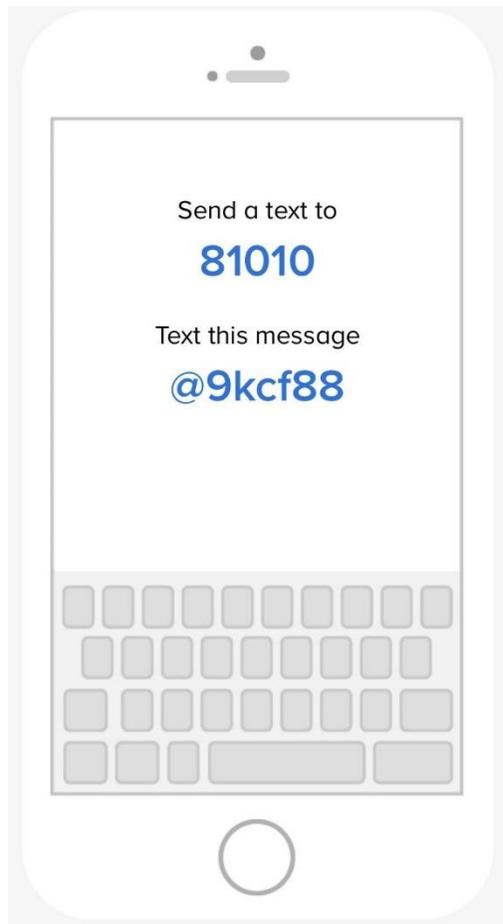
It is so good to be back with all of you. My family and I missed our church family, yet we are so grateful for the gift of sabbatical you gave to us. And now we are excited and energized to be back, and to get back to being Church with you all. The church God is calling us to be. May it be so.

Your Pastor and Friend,
Jonathan

Youth Group New Way of Communicating

This year we are going to be trying out a different way of communicating with parents and youth. I will be using an app called Remind, which will send out messages to everyone about meeting times and other updates. If you haven't already, please text 81010 and send @9kcf88 (as shown below) to sign up. I will also be posting announcements a couple of months in advance so that we can get these events on everyone's calendars. Please let me know if you have any questions!

-Katie Taylor, Director of Youth



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Loaves & Fishes + Pantry

The October drive through meal is October 16th 4-6p.m. This month's meal is ham, scalloped potatoes, green beans and applesauce. Susan Naylor will be overseeing the kitchen. Help is always appreciated!

CROP Hunger Walk October 9th 1:30 p.m. (Registration) 2:00 p.m. (Walk)

If you asked impactful aid organizations for just four words on how to have significant impact, most would say, "think globally, act locally" After a year of pandemic and a year off from it, we're back to supporting the CROP Hunger Walk. CROP's mission is to provide emergency food and programs to enable people to become self-sufficient. This is one of the many opportunities we have here in Stow to act locally, knowing that there are global impacts against hunger when we partner with CROP.

Registration for The CROP Hunger Walk is October 9th at 1:30 p.m. at Goodyear Metropolitan Park. The walk will begin at 2:00 p.m. Enjoy the beauty of Fall while raising funds for food locally and globally. We will need supporting donations for walkers, and walkers to go! Contact the church office with any questions you may have. If you have any questions, contact Mary Ellen Neitz @ 330-815-4223.

Christmas Ingathering December 20 and 21, 2022

Outreach is hard at work preparing for our Christmas Ingathering. We are obtaining information from the schools of families requesting assistance, contacting our outside sponsors as well as contacting the many of you who so graciously sponsor a family, shop for families, wrap presents, and donate food and monies that make this program such a success for the families in our community year after year. Donations now, of food and monies are greatly appreciated as we prepare to share the joy of Advent with upwards of 50 families. If you would like more information or have questions about how you can support this amazing ministry, please see Ann Halpin or call 330-524-2228.

Bulldog Bags Donation Items

Due Sept. 7th: Toothpaste and Toothbrushes

Due Oct. 12th: Bar Soap (Unscented)

Due Nov. 9th: Fruit Cups

Hymnals for Home

Want a hymnal for your home? We received a donations a couple of months ago of some Chalice Hymnals. If you would like one to use whenever you have to stay home to worship, please see Chuck or the Church Office.

Sermons Mailed are available – and expanded!

For some time, we've been sending Jonathan's Sunday Sermon to our homebound friends and family. Over the summer, we expanded the mailing to include a HomeTouch letter, which includes a devotional, crossword, and scripture for each day of the week. If you or someone you know would benefit from the extra point of contact every week, check in with them, and contact the church office with their name and mailing address.

Holiday Fiesta of Bells November 6th 4-6pm

The Fiesta of Bells is back! Coming to you the first Sunday of November to put you in the holiday spirit! This event will be providing a performance opportunity for local ensembles, with multiple different ensembles represented through the event.

There will be a Basket Raffle, with multiple baskets from the various ensembles. All proceeds from the raffling of baskets will benefit Family Promise of Summit County.

Music Notes September 2022

This is a reminder that choirs are gearing up for the fall. As you can see, we have plenty

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Trunk or Treat! Sunday **October 23rd, 3-5pm**

Join us Sunday October 23rd 3-5pm! Wear your costumes and trick or treat in the church parking lot!

We are in need of volunteers to make this event successful! See below for how to help!

— ***Host a trunk!*** *Decorate your trunk with any decorations and costumes and bring candy to give out for 75-100 kids. Sign up in the Gathering Area or email christianed@firstchristianstow.org*

— ***Candy Donations!*** *There is a bin in the Gathering Area for candy donations (individually wrapped candy please).*

Contact Anna and Richelle for questions or more information.

Child Care is available during 10:30a.m. Worship for infant to PreK

of opportunities to get involved with the music making (glorifying God with our talents, of course) and a few opportunities that are not on a regular schedule. For instance, we have a brass choir that meets for special occasions.

Here is the rehearsal schedule for this fall with starting dates.

<u>Group</u>	<u>First rehearsal</u>
Joyful Noise	Wednesday, September 7, 7-8pm in room 201
Joy Bells	Thursday, September 15, 6:00-7:15 in the bell balcony
Chancel Choir	Thursday, September 15, 7:30-9:00 in the choir room (We will sing on Sunday, September 18 at the 10:00 service.)
Children's Choir (yes, we're back!)	Sunday, September 25, during Children's Church
Children's Bell Choir (Crusader Bells)	Sunday, September 25, begin 10 minutes after the service and meet for 30 minutes
The Children's Choir	will be meeting during the
Children's Church	time on Sunday mornings. Our goal for them this year is to teach them Christian children's choruses and have them sing in church on the last Sunday of each month, beginning in October.
Children's Bell Choir	will follow the same routine we did last year. We will meet in the Bell Balcony 10 minutes after the service ends and rehearse for 30 minutes. Those who are also in the youth group will rehearse with us on the days they don't meet with the youth group, just like last year.

YOUTH GROUP

Activities for October and November

Sunday, October 9th!

11:40 am-1:10 pm

Pumpkin Carving!

We will be carving pumpkins for trunk or treat and continuing our lesson from our last meeting. I hope everyone did their homework! Lunch will be provided.

Sunday, October 23rd!

3pm-5pm

Trunk or Treat!

We will be displaying our carved pumpkins at trunk or treat! The winner for best pumpkin will win a prize.

Sunday, November 6th!

11:40 am-1:10 pm

We will be discussing what our purpose as a youth group is and how we can help out in this time of Thanksgiving. Lunch will be provided!

Sunday, November 20th!

3:30pm-6pm

Loaves and Fishes!

We will be helping out with this year's loaves and fishes Thanksgiving dinner!

Chancel Choir is always open to new members, Soprano, Alto, Tenor, or Bass. If you have previous experience singing in a choir, please consider joining us on Thursdays. We have a great time of fellowship, prayer and music making.

Joy Bells is also looking to recruit new ringers. If you have experience reading music and/or have rung before, this is the place for you. We have 5 octaves of bells to ring but are currently ringing three and a half. Lots of room for more.

Joyful Noise is looking to recruit new members as well. If you want to learn to read music, or want to learn to ring bells, this is a great way to get started.

Debi and Frank Walker are hosting a “Welcome back!” event at their house on Saturday, October 15, 2:30-6:30. Members and spouses of Chancel Choir, Joyful Noise, and Joy Bells will have the chance to fellowship and reconnect that afternoon. More details will follow via a flier in your folders at the first rehearsal.

Relay for Life Craft Bazaar **Nov. 12th, 9am – 3pm**

We’re hosting the 6th annual Relay for Life Craft Bazaar! All morning through 3 p.m., the church will be filled with crafts, such as knitted goods, cards, jewelry, baked goods, baskets, carved wood, wreathes, gift baskets, kitchen items, placemats, or even Mary Kay, Tupperware, or Pampered Chef. There’s a great variety at the Bazaar—Visit the vendors round out your Christmas Shopping or find a gift for yourself!

Admission to the event is free! Lunch will be available for purchase (such as hot

MUSIC NOTES

September 2022

Hello everyone. Our Chancel Choir is off to a rousing start. Joy Bells and Joyful Noise have been working hard AND all three groups have gained new members! Children’s Bells had five members there yesterday for our first rehearsal of the year. Hopefully the others will be back soon (hint, hint). Our Children’s Choir will begin rehearsing at the end of Junior Church on October 2.

Here is the rehearsal schedule for this fall.

<u>Group</u>	<u>First rehearsal</u>
Joyful Noise	Wednesdays, 7-8pm in room 201
Joy Bells	Thursdays, 6:00-7:15 in the bell balcony
Chancel Choir	Thursdays, 7:30-9:00 in the choir room
Children’s Choir	Sundays, during Junior Church
Children’s Bell (Crusader Bells)	Sundays, beginning 10 minutes after 10:30 service and meet for 30 minutes

Our goal for our children’s choir and bell choir is to have them sing or play once a month. Plans are for the children’s bells to play on October 23 and for the Children’s Choir to sing on October 30 right before the children’s sermon.

Debi and Frank Walker were hosting a “Welcome back!” event at their house on Saturday, October 15, 2:30-6:30. But since Debi broke her wrist, we have decided to move the party to our house (4760 Gate Post Lane, Brimfield). Members and spouses of Chancel Choir, Joyful Noise, Joy Bells and The Way will have the chance to fellowship and reconnect that afternoon. More details are in the flyers that are in the choir rooms.

dogs, sloppy joes, soup, chili, and drinks).
Visit the Bazaar and find your next

Sellers pay a modest fee for their space in the church, and all funds benefit the American Cancer Society - Relay for Life. See below for further vendor details.

Mailed Agreements with payment must be made to Becky Blankenship, 72 Judson Rd., Kent, OH 44240. Payment must be received no later than October 23rd. Spots are not guaranteed until money and agreement is received. Money from table rentals and door prize tickets will benefit the American Cancer Society Relay for Life. Tables are \$30 and if electric is needed there are a limited number of tables with access to electric plugs for \$40. We are also asking for a donation from each crafter and vendor for the door prizes. 2 chairs are provided with each space rented.

Many Thanks! + Décor Change **November 27th** **From Ann Halpin**

Thank you to all folks who stayed after church to help switch the church décor to fall! It was a tremendous help to make less trips up and down the stairs and my knee thanks you!!!

Of course, the biggest decorating holiday is just around the corner... Only 90 days until Christmas! Church decor will need to be changed after the services on NOVEMBER 20th and throughout that week- so we are ready for the first Sunday of Advent on November 27th. Many hands are needed to haul the trees out from the narthex, haul boxes of ornaments and wreaths out from storage, and carry all the fall decor upstairs to be put away. We have 6 Christmas trees to decorate so please consider doing one as a family project. If you would like to volunteer or have any questions, please see Ann Halpin or call 330-524-2228.

Acme Community Cash Back! **August 4th – December 25th**

Save all your Acme Receipts from August 4th through December 25th! There will be a box in the sanctuary to deposit your receipts in on Sundays. Proceeds will benefit Dorcas Rebekah Guild, Mary Martha Guild, and our Blanket Ministry.

A Letter from Flat Rock Homes

We had a few letters come in from Flat Rock in appreciation for our gift and to remind us of where our contribution is going to help. Read below from Rose who visited us, and Karen, Flat Rock's CEO.

“Thank you for the opportunity to share Flat Rock with you! Your generous donation will be put to good use immediately!

Many blessings,
Rose”

“Dear First Christian Church of Stow, Because of your generosity, we are able to provide for those who need us most. Your support is critical to the transformation of the lives of the individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities served by Flat Rock. Your gift will support them as they build numerous educational, vocational, life and social skills that help them become more independent and integrated in their communities.

Because of your gift, we are able to fulfill our mission to provide outstanding service which transform lives of persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities, their families and persons with critical needs through a dedication to caring and excellence that demonstrates Christian values.

Wishing you a beautiful and blessed fall!
Thank you again for your kind and generous gift!

Yours in Faith,
Karen L. Kilgo
President/CEO”

Sabbatical Summer Wrap Up

Our church was given a great opportunity from our friends at the Lily Foundation—The opportunity to breathe, reflect, and act upon those reflections. We’re through the first two parts of this process. Moments of rest and time to relax from the regular school year and its busyness came for us all. Once we were into June, we started with two different ways to share in this reflection opportunity, one through our Post It Note Tree, and through our Church Chats. As we shared together in thoughtful discussions and fellowship, more Fellowship has arisen from these chats, such as the Woman’s Fellowship Picnic, held on September 17th.

The last part of this process is yet to come: To Act on what we’ve learned, and to use what we’ve found. We’re already doing this in multiple ways, whether realizing that we want more fellowship opportunities, or that we have missed and been rightfully frustrated as we passed by opportunities to support our local community. We’ve taken the time to talk about what we care about, and have become more aware of our priorities, and our future.

The work and responsibility of acting on the reflections we have had this summer are not finished this fall, but are upon us for as long as those reflections and times of fellowship speak a ringing truth about who we are as First Christian Church. In 2023, we will continue looking for more ways to

provide the Fellowship we sought this year, and take opportunities of community outreach before us.

September Hurricanes Strike Week of Compassion Responds

Severe weather has struck multiple places, battering the east coast of the Americas, while Typhoon Noru made landfall in the Philippines. When severe weather events are happening at greater frequency, aid response efforts like those from Week of Compassion become increasingly important here in America, and around the world. While we’re being kept up to speed on our neighbors in Florida, below is more information about other communities in the world, facing similar struggles. Week of Compassion is working with local organizations in all of these regions.

On September 13th, Hurricane Fiona struck Puerto Rico and traveled far past the US to land in Nova Scotia by the 25th, knocking out power for thousands and hitting coastal cities with high waves, storm surges, and damage to homes and businesses. That damage pales in comparison to the deluge that Puerto Rico has experienced since September 13th, around 900,000 people of Puerto Rico are still without power, and 327,000 are without water as of Friday the 30th. Because of lacking resources and infrastructure, the consecutive damage of Hurricane Maria (2017) has not been fully recovered and will compound issues with Fiona.

However, on the opposite hemisphere, Noru made landfall in the capital city of the Philippines on September 25th. Being already damaged from last year’s Typhoon Rai (a category 5 storm from last December), Manila faced the fastest leap of

peak winds from Noru, as it went from 60 mph to 160 mph winds in just 24 hours, as it transformed into another category 5 storm. After landing, it traveled further north into Vietnam. There have been reports of several deaths and extensive property damage.

Lastly, Hurricane Ian struck Florida mid-afternoon on Wednesday, September 28th. Ian made landfall on the central gulf coast as a category 4 hurricane. Storm surges have made it up to 7-10 feet in many areas, and 2.5 million power outages have been reported.

“Week of Compassion is receiving updates from Regional staff, local church pastors, and ecumenical partners to assess immediate needs and responses. So far, we know of four Disciples churches affected (from minor flooding to severe building and roof damage), as well as numerous Disciples

households. In the coming days, we anticipate many more reports of damage and of Disciples providing care for their neighbors.

Week of Compassion is grateful to do this work on behalf of the church, alongside denominational colleagues at Church Extension and Pension Fund. We join the whole Disciples church, steadily praying for all impacted by this storm, and those yet to come.”

– Week of Compassion,
Hurricane Update

Gifts to Week of Compassion designated “Hurricanes 2022” will go 100% to communities in the Americas, while gifts designated “International Response” will go to aid those in the Philippines and Viet Nam.

Stewardship Campaign letter found below



**PASTORAL
APPRECIATION**
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 9TH

**Thanks to Jonathan
and all Clergy
This Sunday!**



**Stewardship is our faith in God's abundance
even in times of scarcity, and willingness to
bring abundance to others.**

The Kick-off of our Annual Stewardship Campaign is quickly approaching and while we realize that this past year has continued to challenge us physically, emotionally, and financially, we are truly blessed by the fact that you have remained "Devoted to Generosity". Our ever faithful, Pastor Jonathan has returned from his spiritually needed, and well-deserved sabbatical, rejuvenated and ready to lead us into the future. During the sabbatical, our faithful leaders of this church have kept us moving forward, and now turn the reigns back over to Pastor Jonathan to continue leading us forward and upward. While we continue our Christ journey, we continue to have our church open, and we are now worshipping together in person as well as on Facebook. The choirs and ensembles are back, the youth groups are meeting, our Christian Education team has youth Sunday School classes operating, and outside groups from within our community are filling the building during the evening hours. Because of your devotion and generosity to the mission and ministry of our church, we continue to support the ministries that are so important to so many, and to provide a place for organizations that rely on our church to meet and serve those in need.

Stewardship is not a program, it's not about percentages, and it is not simply a part of our faith. Stewardship connects to every single thing that we do with our lives as followers of Jesus Christ. It draws us into deeper relationships with each other, with our community, and with God. To be good stewards we need to have an awareness of the problems and scarcity around us. It requires us to have compassion and hope for everyone that needs help and redemption in our world. There are many ways for us to step up even when we think we aren't quite ready, and be generous with gifts of time, talents, money, and other resources that God has blessed us with.

On Sunday October 9th, we invite you to join us for this stewardship journey. Over the next few weeks, we will share stories that witness to the ministries that God has entrusted to us and show how these ministries can transform lives. These stories of our shared ministries grow out of God's love in Christ and our desire to give back some of the many blessings he has shown to us. When we are good stewards, God is revealed! When we are good stewards, God's kingdom is revealed. When we are good stewards, Jesus is glorified!

Watch for additional information coming soon, including a visual narrative budget that will focus on specific dollar amounts of our mission and ministries.

On Sunday October 30th, we will share our natural and grateful response to the generosity and salvation that God has worked in our lives. On that day we will accept your personal commitment cards during our service.

In Christian Fellowship

Jim Hindel, Chairman of the Stewardship Team

YOUTH GROUP

@FCCSTOW

**OCT
NOV**

Pumpkin Carving*

Sunday, October 9th

11:40am - 1:10pm

Trunk-Or-Treat Lunch Provided

Sunday, October 23rd

3pm - 5pm

Planning Session

11:40am - 1:10pm

Lunch Provided

Loaves and Fishes

3:30 pm - 6pm