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PATHWAYS

JANUARY 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!

All-Church Soup Cook-Off!

Sunday, January 29th, After Sanctuary Service

Bring your best Soup and get first place! Everyone can stay and enjoy a lunch of soup, bread, dessert and beverage. Vote for your favorite soup and see who will win the Golden Spoon this year!

Custodial Position Update

We're grateful to welcome Richelle Aukeman to the Custodial position here at First Christian Church of Stow! More information below from Trustee Chair John McCreight.

Superbowl Subs available Sunday, February 12th

Support Your Local Youth! Youth Group will be selling subs and chips for just \$5 on Superbowl Sunday! All proceeds go to Christian Ed/YG.

Sketti & Skits

Sunday, March 5th, 5 p.m.

Prepare for this year's Sketti & Skits! Sign ups will be available in Feb.

2022 Wrap-Up

2022 had a successful number of outreach efforts. Read on to see our impact, progress, and how we can continue to support our community in the future.

Kent State Basketball Game

February 18th, MAC Arena (Sign Up Below!)

January / February 2023

Pastor's Pen

What month is it? Still January? New Year's Day was this month, and the Three Wise Men (or maybe the 27 Wise Men?) just visited the little baby Jesus, but yet Valentine's Day is just around the corner with Ash Wednesday on its heels? But if that hasn't been enough to strain the bandwidth of our already overburdened minds, hearts, and spirits, our church family lost a saint far too soon. This is to say nothing of all the other, garden variety, everyday demands that are, well...demanding. Never before have I allowed an issue of the Pathways to be this late in getting out for which I am sorry and I do beg your pardon. 2023 is off to a banner start, isn't it?

Admittedly, I sarcastically thought this recently. We all have moments of quiet despair after all. Thankfully it passed quickly when all of it helped me remember a story I shared just last January in a sermon. All of this moved me to share that story again because maybe for you, like it did for me, it will create a space to enter into and be reminded there is always *more* happening around us than we realize, and so much of the *more* that is happening is the beauty and goodness of God.

In Washington DC, at a Metro Station, on a cold January morning, a man with a violin played six Bach pieces for about an hour. During that time, more than 3000 people went through the station, most of them on their way to work. After about four minutes, a middle-aged man noticed the musician playing, slowed his pace and stopped for a few seconds, but then moved on to meet his schedule. About four minutes later, the violinist received his first dollar from a woman who without stopping threw money in the hat and continued on. Six minutes later a young man leaned against a nearby wall and listened...but for less than a minute, then looked at his watch and started to walk again. Minutes later, a boy no older than three years stopped to take in the music and sight of the violinist, but his mother tugged him along hurriedly. The boy stopped to look at the violinist again, but the mother pushed hard and the child continued to walk, turning his head the whole time. This action was repeated by several other children, and so was the same action of every parent repeated—without exception—implored their children to move on quickly.

After forty-five minutes of continuously playing only six people had stopped and listened—each for just a short while. About twenty gave money but continued to walk at their normal pace. The man collected a total of \$32. After one hour the violinist finished the last piece and silence took over. No one noticed, no one applauded, no one asked for an encore. There was no recognition at all.

No one knew this, but the violinist was Joshua Bell, one of the greatest musicians in the world, and he had just played one of the most intricate pieces of music ever written, with a violin worth \$3.5 million dollars. Two days before, Joshua Bell sold-out a theater in Boston where the seats averaged \$100 each to sit and listen to him play the same music.

This is a true story. Joshua Bell, playing incognito in a D.C. Metro Station, was organized by the Washington Post as part of a social experiment about perception, attention, and priorities. This experiment raised several questions: ***In a commonplace environment, at an unanticipated hour, do we perceive beauty? If so, do we stop to appreciate it? Do we recognize the extraordinary in an unexpected context?***

One possible conclusion reached from this experiment could be this: If we do not have a moment to stop and listen to one of the best musicians in the world, playing some of the finest music ever written, with one of the most beautiful instruments ever made...***How many other blessings, how many life altering moments, are we missing as we rush through life?***

When we follow, when we let Christ guide us, we discover the beautiful extraordinary, life altering beauty and goodness all around us. We discover again what we have been created for—to embody the presence of Christ that reminds us we have been created for something far greater than we ever let ourselves believe. We have been created for more than the schedules we have to keep or for going as fast as we can. We've been called to be today's manifestation of God's presence in the world. We have been called to show others there is more goodness than madness; there is more splendor than evil; there is more love than hate.

May it be all of our prayers that we don't miss the *more* blessings and the *more* life altering moments all around us each day. Happy New Year everyone...even though it's almost February.

Your Pastor and Friend,
Jonathan

Kent State Basketball, February 18th, MAC Arena

Mark your calendars! On February 18th, we're headed to the MAC Arena in Kent to see the Golden Flashes play the East Michigan Eagles. Tickets are \$10 per person. Game is at 4 p.m. Please let Bill or Cora Dowey know if you want tickets! Contact them at coradowey@yahoo.com or Bill at 330-813-0050.

Sign up at the link below!

<https://forms.gle/3MrUFHmGvhDjRtSJ7>

A Letter from Our Friends Mickey Sayer & Louie Hazlett

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,
I want to thank you all from the bottom of my heart for all the blessings you showered upon Louie and I this Holiday Season! Your kindness, generosity, and caring are such a beautiful example of Christ's love for us. God bless you all with happiness and good health in the new year! Happy 2023!

-Mickey Sayer & Louie Hazlett

Sketti & Skits Sunday, March 5th

Make plans to be at this year's Sketti & Skits, Sunday March 5 at 5pm. Sketti & Skits is a time-honored tradition of FCC Stow where the food is great and the entertainment is even better!
Cost for Sketti & Skits is \$8 for adults, \$4 for children, and kids under 3 are free. All proceeds will go towards Christian Education and the Youth Activity Fund.

Do you have a talent, magic trick, song, skit or something else you would like to perform? Sign-up will be available in February.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Next Loaves & Fishes + Pantry

The January meal went well. Many hands and Tim's flexible guidance fed many with leftovers. Once again thanks to Mike Kostensky for the potatoes and green beans.

Thanks also to the Kostensky family for supporting the memorial of Rick Lloyd.

Next meal is February 19th 4-6p.m. We will try soup and sliders. Comfort food to comfort (and nourish).

Bulldog Bags

Feb. 8	Cereal Cups
Mar. 8	Band-Aids and Hand Sanitizer
Apr. 12	Bar Soap (Unscented)
May 10	Granola Bars

*See the back page for
our 2022 Wrap-Up—*

Loaves and Fishes Impact

*Being the "Feeding
Church of Stow"*

Ingathering Outreach

A Message of Thanks

Andrea Drews

Dear church family,

Please forgive my delay. Many thanks for the celebration of my 30th anniversary. I appreciate all of the kind words, gifts and continued encouragement throughout my years at the keys.

I also give thanks for the choirs and my opportunity to work with Chuck.

In His service
Andrea Drews

Thanks for your Acme Receipts!

Thank you to all who brought in their Acme tapes during this year's campaign. We receive 5% from the total cashback as donations back from Acme. The money earned helps support our fleece blanket ministry, so we can help keep those in need warm through the night. Thank you for giving back!

Custodial Position Update **From John McCreight, Trustee** **Chair**

Thanks to all who were able to help cover the custodial tasks for the past several weeks while we were searching for a new Custodian. Your help has been gratefully appreciated and has been a huge help in keeping the church clean and presentable.

To that end, we are happy to announce that Richelle Aukeman will be taking over the custodial role for us effective Jan 22. (She will also keep her role as Christian Education Co-Director).

Please note that with our recently approved 2023 budget, the Custodian will NOT be doing some of the tasks we've seen them handle in the recent past. The Custodian

STEWARDSHIP CHALLENGE

Recently, Jonathan spoke about us being today's Magi and how we need to move forward differently following the gift of Jesus this season. As we continue into the new year, and toward lent in the liturgical calendar, let us learn and embrace that forward movement – we can be reminded of what our gifts mean and do for us and our church. Giving is an expression of gratitude, trust, joy and love. Tithing allows us to come together here this morning – it puts food on tables and roofs over heads. It spreads love, builds connection and shares God's blessings.

YOUTH GROUP

Super Bowl Subs **Sunday, February 12th**

Youth Group will be taking orders starting Sunday January 29, subs can also be ordered online at

<http://www.firstchristianstow.org/superbowlsubs> and your subs will be ready for pickup right after church on Super Bowl Sunday-February 12th. \$5 per sub-includes a bag of chips. Don't forget to order your Super Bowl Subs! All proceeds will go towards Christian Education and Youth Ministry projects.

will no longer be responsible for setting up or taking down tables & chairs (other than to clean), nor remove snow from the church sidewalks (the parking lot is plowed by an outside company, but not the walks), nor opening & closing the church for worship. We are working with the Governing Board to cover these things in other ways. These changes have been made to cut down on time consuming tasks, other than cleaning, that have been assumed by the church custodians over the years.

Church Usage – If you are part of a group that is using the church (activities like Loaves & Fishes, Membership Dinners, etc.) please remember that your group will need to clean up, turn off the lights, lock-up, etc. I believe that generally this happens already, but just a reminder.

Thanks again to all who have helped via the Sign-up Genius, keeping us in your prayers, and other ways. We will continue to try to make efficiencies that we can in this, and other, areas. Just like in our homes, if something needs done we either have to do it ourselves or pay someone to do it. And we all have to work within our budgets.

John McCreight – Trustee Chair

Two Retreat Opportunities For Disciples Men!

Ohio Disciples Men's Retreat May 5 – 6th

Retreat and Camp Christian All- Regional Church Workday on May 6th

The Ohio Disciples Men's Spring Retreat will be Friday, May 5 and Saturday, May 6. The men of the Regional will gather on Friday night at 7 p.m. We will have an opening worship and then hear our speaker, Rev. Michael Doerr. Michael is presently

the Pastor at First Christian Church in Wauseon. He has a heart for God and for men's ministry. Saturday will begin with breakfast and worship followed by work around Camp Christian to get the camp ready for the camping season. More details will be coming. We look forward to seeing all of Ohio's men.

Ourelves in Changing Seasons, in Light and Dark

Disciple Men's Retreat

Friday March 17 (6 pm) - Sunday
March 19 (11 am)
Camp Christian

Christian Church in Ohio is excited to offer this weekend-long event at Camp Christian. The retreat will feature Rev. Dr. Paul Koch, an Illuman brother and Minister for the Christian Church Mid-America Region (Disciples of Christ). A Seasoned teacher and retreat leader, Paul brings to Ohio Men his warm, loving presence, and significant ongoing work in the area of men's ministry

The vernal equinox occurs March 20th, the day after the retreat concludes. Working with the theme of changing seasons and shades of light and dark within all of us, our retreat will explore the nature of our relationship with God in the changing conditions and seasons of our lives.

The cost is \$125 per registrant, and will include lodging at Camp Christian, meals and snacks. Scholarships are available and men (or their congregations) can make additional contributions to help support the retreat.

You can register online at ccinoh.com

Christian Youth Fellowship (CYF) Winter Retreat at Camp Christian

February 17-19, 2023
for High School youth in grades 9 - 12

Who God Says You Are, What the rest of the world thinks about you does not matter in comparison to what God Thinks! Join us at the CYF Winter Retreat, as we discover what the Bible Tells us about who God Says we are. Do you ever wonder about how we fit into God's Purpose or how our God given identity can and should impact the way we live. Come to camp for a fun filled weekend with your friends. Bible study, keynote speakers, games, singing and of course

s'mores by the lodge fireplace.

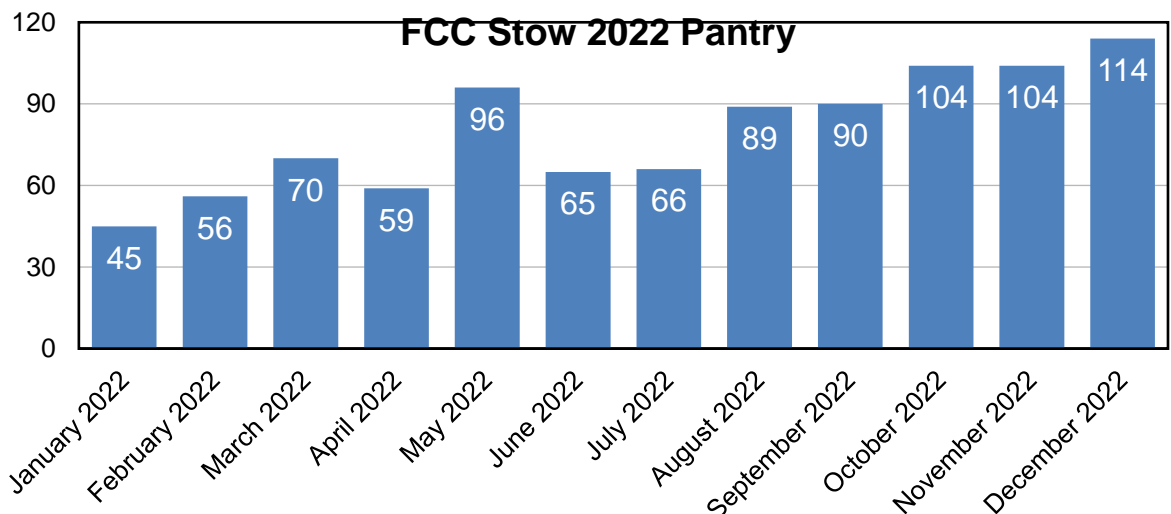
Contact Colleen Munley at:
munleycolleen@yahoo.com or Matt Thomas
at: matt.thomas1114@gmail.com.

Scholarships are available through the
Youth Scholarship Fund

Forms and registration at
<https://www.ccinoh.com/ministries/children-youth/youth-fellowship/cyf-retreat.aspx>

FCC Stow Loaves & Fishes + Pantry Summary for 2022

This chart shows the number of individuals who received groceries from our pantry during 2022. This does not include our Christmas Ingathering. As you can see we served a total of 958 people. We spent \$2,369 on food items during 2022, which comes out to \$2.47 per person.



Each person who came to us also received as many meals as they requested. Some people just got meals for themselves, some got meals for their entire family, and some got meals for hungry neighbors. We spend between \$100 and \$150 per month on food for our meals. We can all agree that was money well spent.

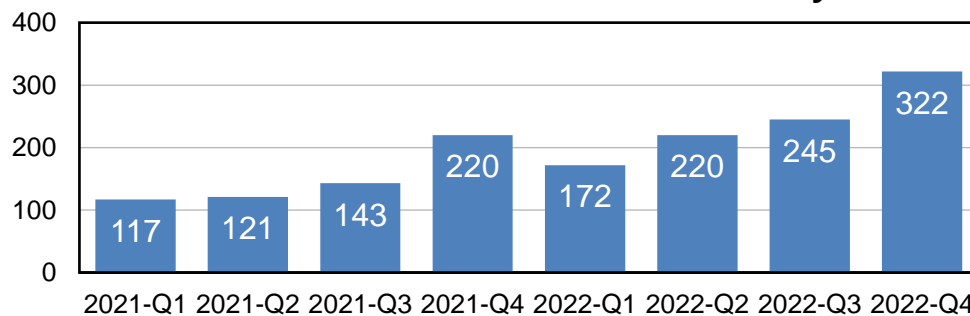
FCC-Stow L&F+P Summary 2021 - 2022

	Total	Adults	Children	Seniors	Families
2021-Q1	117	56	15	46	48
2021-Q2	121	49	20	52	52
2021-Q3	143	56	24	63	58
2021-Q4	220	127	35	58	78
2022-Q1	172	89	18	65	71
2022-Q2	220	135	28	57	79
2022-Q3	245	130	45	70	96
2022-Q4	322	189	50	83	124
Grand Total	1560	831	235	494	606

FCC Stow Loaves & Fishes + Pantry Summary for 2021 & 2022

This chart shows the total number of people who have been served over the past two years. As you can see our growth has been steady. Again, this shows the steady growth of this outreach ministry.

FCC Stow L&F+P 2 Year Summary



This table (visible on the next page) shows the numbers of children, adults and seniors that we've served since January 2021.

Once upon a time we were known to our community as “the pumpkin church”; the church that sold pumpkins once a year.

Now we're known as “the feeding church”; the church that gives away meals and groceries all year long.

An Amazing Ministry

Christmas Ingathering is a truly awesome ministry. This ministry is the collective, cooperative effort of the congregation, the outreach team and our community sponsors. Whether you played a small part, a huge part or any part in between, we needed and continue to need everyone working together to accomplish so much for so many. This year we assisted 42 families with children receiving gifts and provided food assistance to an additional 9 households for a total of 82 adults and 99 children receiving assistance. Additionally, we provided 52 coats that were requested and many more coats that families obtained the nights of distribution. Also, 81 fleece blankets were distributed.

Please thank and support our outside sponsors including:

Cascade Auto
Harvest Realty
Hudson United Methodist Preschool
Marhofer Chevrolet
Redmon Funeral Home

The congregation's dedication to this ministry is awe inspiring and your outreach team's work continues year round. Preparations are already underway for next year, with the purchase of discounted winter coats, socks & underwear and fleece.

I am eternally grateful to the outreach team. Thank you to Rae Howard and Faye Haws who contacted the recipients (multiple times) to obtain necessary information and coordinate distribution. Thank you to Al Naylor and company for counting donated food items, purchasing and delivering food items, food gift cards and boxes to the church and coordinating food box completion. Thank you to Laurie Scott for her dedication to organizing outreach rooms, purchasing socks, underwear, hats, gloves and coats, cutting fleece blankets and purchasing additional toys, books and games for the children of Ingathering and Family Promise. Thank you to Tom and Donna Stanley, MaryEllen and Tim Neitz, Sue Naylor, and Richard and Sharon Sellers who are available and willing to jump in whenever needed. An additional thank you to all folks who baked and donated cookies for our recipients: Home-made cookies are, to me, a special way to share God's love.

An additional thank you to the Silver Lake Tower ladies (Donna Maynard, Joan Alkyer, Sara Lloyd and the craft group) for tying all the fleece blankets. And a special thank you to Molly and Joe Halpin, who put up with my crazies from October through December each year! As this is my 15th year coordinating this ministry, I assure you that it is very much a group effort and we couldn't do it without YOU! God bless you all!

Ann Halpin

