



First Christian Church  
(Disciples of Christ)  
Stow, OH

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www.firstchristianstow.org

# PATHWAYS

AUGUST 2023

*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 Chats: Identity & Direction**

Topic of Discussion: *“Who is God calling us to be, and where is God calling us to go?”*  
Join us as we reflect on these questions by celebrating what we do as a church!  
August 20<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup>, 11:15 a.m. - 12:15 a.m.  
(Coffee Fellowship treats and refreshments will be served. See more information inside!)

## **Music Notes: Rehearsals Return!**

Various Rehearsals begin in September—See the Schedule below!

## **Upcoming Loaves & Fishes – August 20<sup>th</sup>, 4-6 p.m.**

Join us and serve (tentatively) Ham and Cheese Sliders and sides!  
Extra help always appreciated!

## **Rubber Ducks Game + Fireworks**

**Saturday, August 19<sup>th</sup>**

For those who got their tickets through July,  
join us for a night of great baseball and fireworks!

## **Christian Education Team will meet Sunday, August 13** **Following second service in the O.U.R. Classroom (202)**

## **Women’s Retreat Returns!**

**September 15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup>, Lake Chautauqua, NY**

We’re excited to see this fellowship opportunity return! Sign up for this retreat on the lake!  
Contact Barb Bell at [bajabe52@yahoo.com](mailto:bajabe52@yahoo.com) or 330-807-5498 for more information.

## **One Worship Service Continues** **August 6<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> @ 10:00 a.m.**

## Pastor's Pen, August 2023

As the calendar turns to August my family will be celebrating A.J.'s 10<sup>th</sup> birthday. Hard to believe it has been ten years since that fateful night when he raced—literally—into this world. And just like the obtuse sense of timing he had on the night/morning he was born, he still finds “fun” ways to make declarations of immediacy. For instance, his unbelievable ability to declare his need to use the bathroom immediately *after* we have passed a rest stop. Fortunately, over this decade of raising my boy I've learned to ask *before* we pass an upcoming rest stop if anyone needs use of its facilities. And now, every time we go to Pittsburgh, I just plan to pull into a particular half-way point rest stop on Interstate 76 eastbound. And truthfully, I have come to enjoy stopping here—but not just because they have a cool arcade racing game I like to play. I like it because I always get to pick up the latest and most up-to-date Ohio Visitor Guides, because even though I've been perusing these guides for years and know a lot of the places of interest here in “*the heart of it all*”, I always find something “new to me” of interest to possibly explore, even though in many instances this something has been around for years.

For example, did you know there is a merry-go-round museum in Sandusky? Or did you know the Wayne National Forest consists of a *quarter million acres* of Ohio's Appalachian foothills? Did you know Wapakoneta's Armstrong Air & Space Museum is home to Neil Armstrong's Learjet 28 prototype—the plane he set five aviation world records in? And here's one my wife is particularly excited about—Lake County's Taco Trail where every day is taco Tuesday! And who among us doesn't have someone in our lives we'd like to see behind bars—at the historic Ohio State Reformatory? (Ok, we all know about this one, but how many of us have gone there, even though every time we are driving on Interstate 71 we say to ourselves, “I really want to go there”?)

All of these “hidden gems”, and the plethora of others, makes me wonder... *Is First Christian Church of Stow a hidden gem?* Sure, we know about our church and all of its ministries and programs and opportunities for growth and support. Sure, we know about the fantastic music and talented singers. Sure we know about the Christian Education programs. Sure, we know about the outreach ministries we offer. And sure, we know the preacher tries really hard for mediocrity. But do others? If we are honest, we probably have to say, no, others do not know all this about our church. So what are we doing about it? What are we doing to share with others the news and wonders of the hidden gem that is First Christian Church of Stow, Ohio?

We know the state of the world today. We know the headlines are filled with more and more news of destruction, conflict, incivility, hate, war, and horror. But we further know how the Good News of Jesus Christ inspires and emboldens us to keep our eyes lifted up, with hope, for the better days that are surely coming. This is the “gem” we cannot keep hidden!

Which is why we are going to talk about how we can reveal in greater clarity this gem that is our church.

On Sundays August 20<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> we are going to have “Church Chats” right after worship until 12:15 in the Fellowship Hall to talk about who God is now calling us to be and what God is calling us to do. Light refreshments will be served in our Coffee Fellowship kind of way. During this time we will discuss thoughts and ideas about how we as a church can share with others who we are and what God is doing here at First Christian. It will be a time to help us all get on the same page about being Church as we look to kick-off a new year in the life of our church come September. Please make plans to be at one of these Church Chats on either August 20<sup>th</sup> or 27<sup>th</sup>—or feel free to come to both—and let's chat and plan together how we can reveal the hidden gem that is First Christian Church of Stow, Ohio!

Your Pastor and Friend,  
Jonathan

**Thank you to FCC Stow!**  
**From Troop 90754**

Girl Scout Troop 90754 would like to thank the church for the use of your space throughout the school year. These nine fifth graders have had campfires, cooked in the kitchen, had a sleepover in the gym (with tents!), served meals at Loaves and Fishes, shopped for Ingathering, participated in Trunk or Treat, had many meetings, and even hid a time capsule in the church! We have appreciated the use of the space and the opportunity to serve our community through the church. And a special thank you for supporting us by allowing Abby and Violet to sell Girl Scout cookies to you! We completed our Bronze Award this year by creating three Kid Kits for Ohio Guidestone's youth residential campus, a faculty that houses children ages 6-15 in need of residential health treatment. We created themed kits (Space, Animals and Camping) for kids to work with on rainy days or when they need something different to do! Your church's support through buying yummy cookies and providing our troop a home helped to make this happen. Thank you! Yours in Scouting, Abby, Aubree, Cece, Daphne, Eliza, Kamry, Nora, Piper, Violet, Ms. Julie and Ms. Amy

**2023-2024 Acme Community**  
**Cashback Begins!**

This year's Cashback program has begun. This year, we have the opportunity to collect our receipts from August 1<sup>st</sup> to February 15<sup>th</sup> of 2024, and received 5% from the total costs of those receipts. If you're shopping at Acme, don't throw that receipt away! Bring it to the Gathering Area and find the collection box so we can support our outreach with no cost to you!

# ***OUTREACH***

**Loaves and Fishes + Pantry**  
**for August 20<sup>th</sup>**

At the July meal we ran out of everything but improvised.

The August meal will be August 20th 4-6 p.m. The tentative meal is ham and cheese sliders with sides.

Many thanks to those who pitched in to help out.

**PANTRY PAPER PRODUCT**  
**PROPOSAL**

It has been 2 1/2 years since we added our pantry to our existing Loaves & Fishes outreach ministry. We have all learned quite a bit over those months. One of the main lessons is that our guests are very thankful when we have paper towels and toilet paper available to give away.

These items, of course, do cost money. When we spend money on paper products that's money that could have been spent on food for our guests, taking from Peter to pay Paul. We're all set for August's pantry but we could use some help for September through December.

We give each family one roll of paper towels and one four pack of toilet paper. We are exceeding 45 families each month, so that's roughly 50 rolls and 50 four packs or 200 of each for the rest of 2023.

Here's a challenge for our congregation: can we donate enough rolls of paper towels and four packs of toilet paper to cover our pantry needs for the rest of 2023?

**The Woman's Retreat**  
**Sept. 15, 16 & 17<sup>th</sup>, Lake Chataqua, NY**

We're excited to see the return of this special fellowship opportunity this fall on beautiful Lake Chataqua! Contact Barb Bell at [bajabe52@yahoo.com](mailto:bajabe52@yahoo.com) or 330-807-5498 for more information.

**Music Notes**  
**August 2023**

This is a reminder that choirs are gearing up for the fall. As you can see, we have plenty 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 6, 7-8pm in room 201
Chancel Choir	Thursday, September 7, 7:30-9:00 in the choir room (We will sing on Sunday, September 10 at the second service.)
Joy Bells	Thursday, September 14, 6:00-7:15 in the bell balcony
Children's Bell Choir (Crusader Bells)	Sunday, September 17, begin 10 minutes after the service and meet for 30 minutes.

# ***OUTREACH***

## **TPC from June & July**

Keep these friends and families in your prayers—If you would like to send them a letter and need their contact information, please contact the church office.

07/02/23

Ann & Joe Halpin

*(Ann had a Knee Replacement)*

07/09/23

Joe & Heidi Ott

*(Joe had neck surgery this past week)*

07/16/23

Tom & Donna Stanely

*(Tom had outpatient surgery last Thursday)*

07/23/2023

Rich & Lois Fawcett

*(The Fawcetts are celebrating their 70<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary! Congratulations to them!)*

Sue Painter

*Sue has recently begun in-home palliative care.*

Children's Choir (yes, we're back!)  
Sunday, October 15, during Children's  
Church

The Children's Choir will be meeting during  
Children's Church time on Sunday  
mornings. As was our goal last year, we  
hope to have them sing in church on or  
around 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. Any  
student, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and up is welcome to join.  
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 always 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.

### **Vacation Bible School 2023**

We had such a fun week at Twists & Turns  
VBS! 34 kids and their families came out to  
Vacation Bible School and learned how  
"Following Jesus Changes the Game!"  
Special thank you to all our volunteers, who

helped make this week so much fun- we  
appreciate you!!

### **Bulldog Bags & Boxes** **2022-2023 Impact Totals**

It's difficult to get a clear understanding  
of just how much we as a church impact our  
community. Between all the various kinds of  
outreach efforts we have here, it can be  
challenging to understand just what results  
we have, let alone the human impact that we  
have on families and their needs.  
Thankfully, Bulldog Bags has counted each  
item we have provided, and below are the  
total items provided for families in the area  
by our church. We should be celebrating this  
great work!

Bulldog Boxes Total items 9,660

Just from 2022/2023:

Sept. Toothpaste: 33 / Toothbrushes: 23

Oct. Bar soap: 59

Nov. Fruit cups: 76

Dec. Hot chocolate packets: 192

Jan. Ramen noodles: 86

Feb. Cereal cups: 100

Mar. Band-Aids: 300 / Sanitizer: 50

April. Bar soap: 56

May. Granola bars: 70

Next time someone asks what we do as a  
church, you can tell them. You can tell them  
that we are "A Movement for Wholeness in  
a Fragmented World," and means helping  
those in need. Let us celebrate our victories,  
our outreach and our love!

**Who Are We and Where Are We Going?**  
**Church Chats: Identity & Direction**  
**August 20<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup>, 11:15 a.m. - 12:15 a.m.**

*“But Moses said to God, ‘If I come to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘**What is his name?**’ what shall I say to them?’”<sup>14</sup> God said to Moses, “**I am who I am.**”<sup>[b]</sup> He said further, “Thus you shall say to the Israelites, ‘I am has sent me to you.’”...*

*This is **my name** forever,  
and this **my title** for all generations.”*  
NRSV, Exodus 3

We know the story—Right? The Israelites have been captured and living in Egypt as slaves for quite some time by now. Moses, in the wilderness, speaks to God, and is told to speak to the Israelites. Moses, suffering from *Pusillanimity* (*lacking courage*), asks, “If they keep asking, ‘What is his name?’ what do I say?”

In this moment, God gives us one of the most now-identifiable names of the Judean God. Names of God include El-Shaddai, Adonai, Immanuel, King of Kings, Lord of Hosts, Redeemer, El, and many more. Speaking to Moses, God chooses “**I am who I am**”, or sometimes, “**I am THAT I am**”, as if to say, “You already know who it is.”

In this moment, Moses is looking to identify God, and communicate the All-Mighty to an enslaved people whose great-grandparents would have worshipped, but have since forgot in the milieu of Pharaohs and the large pantheon of Egyptian gods. God cut through all of that and reminded the Israelites, “**I am.**” It worked, and the Israelites broke free of their oppression, and found their own identity without Egypt.

We, as a church, have a wide variety of ministries and services that we provide to our community. Realistically speaking, after the last three years, we’re doing an incredible job for the hand our world has been dealt. It’s difficult to summarize everything we do—From our ministries of Loaves & Fishes + Pantry, providing spaces in our church for multiple recovery groups and community organizations, and hosting so many ways to worship through music and other means.

And while our name, First Christian Church of Stow, is one we’ve had for ~~decades~~ almost two centuries God has led and guided us to become and grow beyond more than just “the first” church in our community. For instance, ask the people fed on a monthly basis at Loaves and Fishes + Pantry who we are to them, and not one of them will say, “This is the first and oldest church in Stow” because that demarcation has little to no bearing on how our church is blessing them. God has blessed us to be more than just “the first” to our community, and we continue to grow beyond that demarcation, and grow closer to God’s mission for us.

We will be meeting to celebrate the work that we do, the community we foster, and the impact we have. By celebrating what we do best and what we want to do in the future for our local community, we will prayerfully find a new name and identity that speaks to those two questions: “*Who is God calling us to be, and Where is God calling us to go?*” Join us after Church on August 20<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> at 11:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. as we answer those questions in fellowship together.

Christian Sanko  
Director of Church Relations



**2024 International Affairs Seminar  
for Youth - Christian Church in Ohio  
(Disciples of Christ)**

**Friday, March 8<sup>th</sup> 2024, 7 p.m. –  
Saturday, March 16<sup>th</sup> 2024, 4 p.m.**  
*Formerly known as “United Nations  
Seminar”*

The International Affairs Seminar for Youth (IAS) Challenges youth to learn about international affairs, U.S. Foreign policy, and the Church through study, discussion, and presentations during their time in New York City and Washington, D.C. It seeks to encourage faith-based critical thinking and reflection through prayer, worship, discussion and community building. We are excited to be partnering this impactful experience with the Heartland Conference, United Church of Christ.

The trip is limited to 46 high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors. It will cost \$1,200 per student, which will cover bussing, lodging, most meals, tour fees, 2 theatre plays, and more, including a \$200 for personal use. The trip will depart and return from 1<sup>st</sup> Christian Church in Wadsworth. If a student you know would be interested, an application form is available at [ccinoh.org](http://ccinoh.org). There are a number of pre-requisites to going on this trip, outlined in the IAS newsletter in the church office, but they are worth navigating for this very special opportunity!

If a potential student or their families are worried about the costs of this trip, there are financial assistance opportunities and scholarship options. Contact the church office for more information and share this opportunity with students you know!

**Good Neighbors School Supplies  
Through August 15th**

It's that time of year! The Church will be collecting back-to-school items for Cuyahoga Falls Good Neighbors. This is the list Good Neighbors suggests.

Pens Pencils  
Crayons Colored Pencils  
Markers Highlighters  
Notebook paper Notebooks  
Pocket folders Pencil cases  
Pencil sharpeners Erasers  
Glue Scissors Rulers  
Backpacks Calculator

Lists will be available on Outreach Display. Items can be dropped off in the wheeled cart in the Gathering Area.

**A Welcome to New Members of  
First Christian Church of Stow**

While perhaps a little overdue, we'd like to welcome our new members, Charlie and Debbie Redman, who joined in June, and everyone else who has joined our church family this year! We are grateful to know that you see the value we provide to you as members, and the impact we have as a church is worth participating in. It is heartening for new members to see new families finding their home here, just as so many have done so before.

Additionally, if you are a guest of the church looking to learn more, or to give your membership to First Christian Church of Stow, please contact the church office for any questions you may have.

**Monday Night Al-Anon @ 7 p.m.**  
**Tuesday Night Al-Anon @ 7 p.m.**  
**Let's Step It Up! - Tuesdays, 7 p.m., Library**

While AA is hosted here on Thursdays for those directly living with alcoholism, Monday and Tuesday Al-Anon is here for the friends and families of alcoholics who need support, too. These support groups meets every week to pursue spiritual growth, personal development, and sharing experiences to find strength in community. If you have questions, please contact the church office for more information. Feel free to share this with anyone you know who might need support in this way!

Don't forget—Al-Anon Monday Night meets in Fellowship Hall, and Al-Anon Tuesday Night meets in the Library.

**Loaves & Fishes + Pantry June Report**

Well, the June results are in...We set a new record for meals served and groceries provided. We served 49 families consisting of 140 individuals. Sloppy Joes, Chips, Pasta Salad, and Cookies were had by all.

This table shows the growth of our pantry by comparing the first six months of 2021, 2022, and 2023.

**January through June Year to Year Comparison**

	<b>## Families</b>	<b>## Seniors</b>	<b>## Adults</b>	<b>## Children</b>	<b>## Total Served</b>	<b>\$\$ Cost*</b>	<b>\$\$ Per Person</b>
<b>2021</b>	100	114	83	41	238	\$633.74	\$2.66
<b>2022</b>	150	158	152	82	392	\$1,023.93	\$2.61
<b>2023</b>	228	178	278	150	606	\$1,657.67	\$2.74

\*These costs are for the groceries that we give away through the pantry. The meal costs are accounted for separately.

You can see that our costs have increased as the number of people served has increased. Yet our cost per person has stayed remarkably steady.

What a tremendous honor it is to serve the hungry in our neighborhood. We couldn't do this without the time and effort put in by our volunteers, both church members and non-church members. Just as important is the financial support provided by all of you through our church budget.

**Update from the Finance/Stewardship Team**  
**Financial Giving from the Congregation through June 2023**

Hello all! Here is a mid-year update from the Finance/Stewardship team.

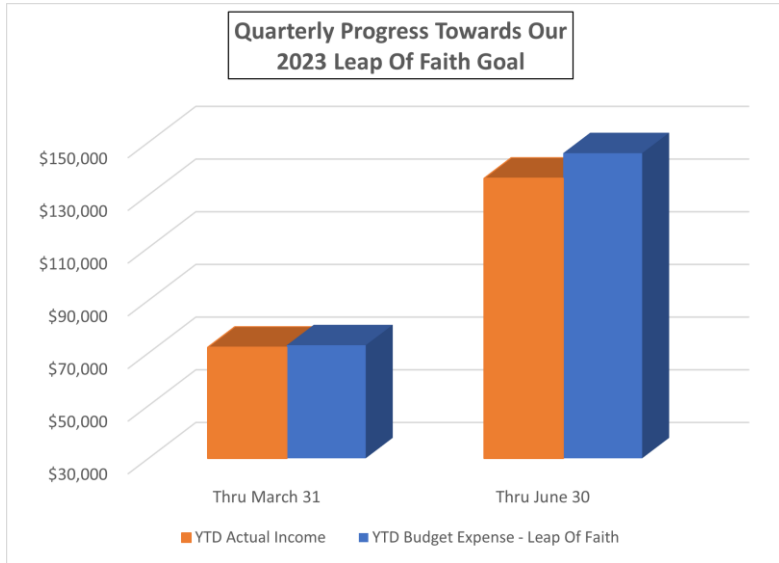
As you may recall, the Governing Board and the congregation approved the 2023 budget proposed by the Finance/Stewardship with the budgeted Expenses being higher than the budgeted Income. We refer to this difference as our Leap of Faith. We can achieve that Leap of



Faith combining 2 goals; increasing our Income (primarily made up of Individual Giving) and decreasing our Expenses by controlling our spending.

Here is a chart that shows our progress towards meeting our Leap of Faith. It compares our total actual income to our total budgeted expenses, showing how close we have been as we have ended each quarter this year. You can see that through March we were close, but our income has slowed down through the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, so we are now farther away from our goal.

The Total Income **budget** amount is \$21,664 per month. This includes congregational giving and other income sources like building rental.



The Total Expense **budget** amount is \$24,305 per month.

The Leap of Faith amount is the difference between our budgeted Expenses and our budgeted Income. For the full year that amount is \$24,687, and monthly the amount is \$2,057.

If you prefer to think of this as a percentage, our actual income needs to be 9% higher than our budgeted income to meet our Leap of Faith.

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 meet our Leap of Faith, and to sustain the outreach assistance we can provide to our community, both locally and globally.

Please let any member of the Finance/Stewardship team know if you would like to see our full reports, we are happy to share them.

*See the Glendora House "Stuff the Truck" Flyer on the back!*

# Stuff the Truck!!



## Donate Supplies for Glendora House

Family Promise is an emergency shelter program helping homeless families with children stay together and achieve sustainable independence.

The Glendora House facility enables us to serve up to 10 families at a time in individual apartment style settings so each family unit stays together. Below is a list of the supplies we are most in need of to serve the families in our program.



### Cleaning Supplies:

- Paper towels
- \*Laundry Pods
- \*Dish soap
- \*Cleaning products
- Trash bags (all sizes)
- Broom/dust pan
- Mop/bucket
- Air fresheners
- Sponges/rags

### Kitchen

- Trash can (13 gal)
- Dish Drainer
- Plastic dinnerware sets
- \* Priority Items

- Kitchen utensil set
- Oven mitts/Dish Towels
- Pots & pans/cookie sheets
- Cutting board
- Silverware w/organizer
- Mixing bowls

### Toiletries

- \*Shampoo/Conditioner
- \*Body Soap/Wash
- \*Toothpaste
- \*Mouthwash\*
- \*Lotion\*
- \*Razors\*
- \*Hairbrushes/Combs
- Hand Soap

### Linens (New items only).

- \*Bath towel sets
- \*Twin sheet sets
- \*Twin fleece blankets
- Pillows
- \*Air Mattresses/Pumps

### Bathroom

- Shower curtains/hooks
- Floor mats
- Bathroom accessory set
- Toilet paper
- Facial tissue

### Misc.

- Mini Blinds 28 1/2" or 45"

**Wednesday, August 2nd, 2023 2:00 to 6:00PM**

**Glendora House 1100 Copley Rd. | Akron**

**Monetary donations are also welcome!**