



First Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)
Stow, OH

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330.688.4450
www.firstchristianstow.org

PATHWAYS

FEBRUARY 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!

Ash Wednesday

Wednesday, February 14

Self-Guided Reflection 8 a.m. to 7p.m.

Guided Reflection: Noon and 7 p.m.

Throughout the day the sanctuary will be open for self-guided prayer, meditation, reflection, communion, and an ashen reminder to take with you. Additionally, at noon and 7 p.m., Jonathan will lead a guided time of prayer, meditation, reflection, communion, and the imposition of ashes.

Daily Lenten Devotionals

We are glad to make available to you a daily Lenten devotional from the Society of St. Andrew, "*Hope Springs Eternal*." They include daily scripture readings, reflections, and prayers. This booklet is available in the Gathering Area and the Information Corridor. If you would like one mailed to your home please contact the church office and we will be glad to send it to you.

Week(s) of Compassion!

February 2024 "Gifts To Live On"

Jesus looked up and saw rich people putting their gifts into the treasury; he also saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. He said, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them, for all of them have contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in all she had to live."

~Luke 21:1-4

Youth Group Super Bowl Sub Sale!

Sunday, February 11th – Online Sales and After Both Worship Services!

Don't miss out on the best Super Bowl Sub you'll ever get from a church Youth Group!

Why get these subs from our youth? Because you don't want to run out of food during the big game!

Because these are Taylor's favorite subs! (If you don't get that joke, don't worry) Because why buy subs from a big box store!? Because supporting Youth Ministries might help the Browns win next year! (We don't really think that.)

Governing Board, Monday, February 12th, 7 p.m.

The Governing Board will meet in-person at the church.

All members of the Governing Board are encouraged to be in attendance for this important meeting.

Loaves and Fishes + Pantry February 18, 4-6p.m.

Free monthly dinner! Drive-Thru/Carry Out, 4-6 p.m.

This will also time will also include the +pantry food distribution.

Homemade meat loaf with mashed potatoes and sides!

Pastor's Pen,
February, 2024

We Disciples are a practical people. We like to do things—build, teach, repair, clean, counsel, work. This desire to “do” carries over into many elements of our life together as church and it provides a powerful motivation for engaging in mission. We look for projects where we can be useful. A common mistake is made, however, when we think that whatever it is we are doing is in fact the purpose of the mission. This is especially true of Mission Trips, where our desire to help others puts us at risk for missing the point.

Building or repairing houses, teaching Bible school, planting a community garden, or exposing ourselves to another culture are all worthwhile tasks. And they are all tasks volunteers can do. Volunteers can show up at a soup kitchen and prepare mashed potatoes or ladle soup into bowls. Volunteers can swing a hammer or work a paint brush. Volunteers can do all kinds of things, great and small. Then volunteers can go home and feel good about the doing that was done and maybe start looking for the next task to do.

To be clear, volunteering is not in itself a bad thing. But we Disciples are called to something more than volunteer some time here and there and go home and feel good about ourselves. We as Disciples are a people of faith, and we are called to *serve*. At its best, volunteering addresses immediate needs and eases suffering. But volunteering doesn't ask us to do a whole lot more than the task at hand. *Serving*, however, addresses immediate needs and it pushes us further, compelling us to ask why those needs exist. Volunteering lends itself to relationships of inequality where the volunteer gives and the other person receives. *Serving* recognizes that relationships matter, and it requires us to be in community with those with whom we labor. Volunteering is something we can choose to do, on our terms, at our own time. *Serving* is something we are called by God to do, on God's terms and at God's time.

This February we are once again focusing on our *Weeks of Compassion* fund raising campaign to support the disaster relief and refugee entity of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) denomination. We do this year after year, and

year after year all of you continue to support this ministry generously. And now this year we are looking to take our support and partnership and service to a new level by considering an all-church Mission Trip opportunity for this coming June.

Hopefully by now you have heard that we are exploring who is interested and available to be part of a Mission Trip to parts of Kentucky still trying to recover from flooding. We are looking at the week of June 9th to 15th or June 16th to 22nd. There is more information about what this mission trip could include in this issue of the Pathways newsletter, or feel free to talk with Jonathan or Charlie Redmon who is a mission site supervisor for Week of Compassion, with years and experience working on and leading folks who take such trips. If you are even just slightly interested, please let me know so we can talk. June is not far away, and if we are going to make this happen, we need to start getting ourselves organized now.

When we move beyond volunteering to serving, we recognize that the task we are performing is not the most important thing. When we move beyond volunteering, we see that it's also not about the good feeling that comes with helping another person – in fact, we see that at it's core, it's not about helping another person at all. It's about our relationship with God: How is God calling me to use the gifts and blessings God has given? Who is God calling me to be in relationship with? What is God doing in my life as I serve in mission? What is God doing in our lives as we serve together?

When we begin to understand our mission as serving, we stop looking for something to “do” and instead look for what God is doing. When we begin to think of ourselves as servants, then we are open to be led by the Spirit, to give from what God has given, to become the hands, the feet, the heart of Jesus.

So how is God calling you to serve?

Your Pastor and Friend,
Jonathan

Stow Community **Bunny Trail Hop** **Easter Candy Donations**

The Christian Education Team will be participating in the Stow Community Bunny Trail Hop again this year at Silver Springs Park on Saturday March 23rd. There will be 400- 500 kids and their families participating and we will have treat bags to give to each of them.

We are asking for donations of individually wrapped Easter candy to help us fill the treat bags. There will be a bin in the Gathering Area beginning in February for candy donations – Donations will need to be brought to the church by **Sunday March 17th**. Thank you!

Week(S) of Compassion! **February 2024** ***“Gifts To Live On”***

Each February all Disciples churches take up a special offering for the organization Week of Compassion, the relief, refugee and development mission fund of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada. Week of Compassion seeks to equip and empower Disciples to alleviate the suffering of others through disaster response, humanitarian aid, sustainable development and the promotion of mission opportunities. This year’s WOC theme is ***“Gifts To Live On”*** shows us that when we support Week of Compassion, God’s goodness, grace, hope, and healing are transformed into gifts for others to live on and on and on.

Which is why our support of this year’s Week of Compassion: *Gifts To Live On* campaign is so important. In the midst of immense uncertainty and suffering, Week of Compassion continues to respond in places where help and hope are needed most—walking with communities in times of crisis, providing immediate relief and long-term recovery support after disasters; equipping churches and leaders for disaster preparedness; offering assistance to refugees; and supporting global development projects that empower communities around the world to thrive.

As Disciples, we are called to witness to this Gospel truth—in spite of all evidence to the

contrary—showing that even in the direst of circumstances, love remains. When we give to Week of Compassion, especially during our church-wide Special Offering, we put that love into action. Your giving shares faith, hope and love, around the world, around the year.

This year, our church has once again set as a goal for our offering the amount of \$2,000. (This offering is over and above our general fund giving.) And back again this year will be the Week of Compassion Bake Sale! (Mark your calendars for Sunday, February 25th!

Please prayerfully consider how you can support this vitally important ministry, remembering, our individual offerings matter. Gifts to Week of Compassion multiply a thousand times over, enabling the Church as one body to achieve significant change in the world. We are one in Christ Jesus, and our many gifts together, make a world of difference for people to live on.

For more information check out the Week of Compassion website at www.weekofcompassion.org

TAKING OUR OUTREACH **TO THE NEXT LEVEL** **Mission Trip with First Christian** **Church of Stow**

On these trips, folks find a deeper understanding of just how devastating an impact a disaster can have. You get to do hands-on work to help those impacted by devastating disasters.

On these trips, folks get to directly serve and help families whose lives have been tragically impacted. Then, you become a part of their comeback story.

On these trips, folks often go home tired, but with hearts and spirits ready to move mountains because they knew God used them to change lives in rare and special ways. Ordinary people get to clear away rubble and build up lives after disaster strikes. This is the work of Disaster Relief with Week of Compassion.

First Christian Church is planning a mission trip with Week of Compassion and partner disaster

relief organizations for a week in mid-June! (If you cannot commit to a full week, partial weeks have been taken in the past.)

A likely destination is Pike County in eastern Kentucky, where residents continue to work towards recovery from the 2022 July Floods. Work could include clean-up and/or rebuilding projects, or support for teams on those tasks. Those who are interested, even in the slightest bit, are encouraged to indicate your interest on the back of your Connection Card or by reaching out to Charlie Redman at (330) 283-4320, or to Jonathan here at the church.

Ash Wednesday Time of Worship

Wednesday, February 14

Self-Guided Reflection 8 a.m. to 7p.m.

Guided Reflection: Noon and 7 p.m.

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the season of Lent, the time when followers of Christ commemorate Jesus' post-baptismal, forty days of fasting and temptation in the wilderness as preparation for his ministry to follow. Lent is also the time when followers of Christ strive to prepare ourselves spiritually for the ministry God calls us to through personal introspection, study, prayer, sacrifice, giving something up, or by taking up something such as volunteering/serving or getting involved in a new ministry.

On Wednesday, February 14th the sanctuary will be open and ready to receive any and all for a time of self-guided prayer, meditation, reflection, communion, and an ashen reminder that from ashes we have come, and ashes we will return, yet still by Christ's gracious gift we are given everlasting life. You are welcome to come for as long as you need and like. Please enter quietly as others may already be present.

Additionally at noon and 7 p.m., Jonathan will lead a guided time of prayer, meditation, reflection, communion, and the imposition of ashes.

Whether in the church sanctuary or as we go about our daily schedule, may we all take a reflective moment to remember the Good News of God's reconciling love toward all, and embrace the truth: *Through Christ, God chose to reconcile the whole universe, making peace through the shedding of Christ's blood upon the cross—to reconcile all*

things, whether on earth or in heave, through Christ alone. (Colossians 1:20)

Week(S) of Compassion Bake Sale!

Sunday, February 25th

Want to satiate your sweet-tooth and help our church meet and beat our Week of Compassion fund raising goal!? If so then you won't want to miss out on the annual Week of Compassion Bake Sale set for Sunday, February 25th. This bake sale has sweet treats and scrumptious eats that are sure to satisfy and peckish craving you have. Why there are often sugar free delights on hand for those among us who need to avoid diet wrecking delectables. A few bucks will have you nibbling something tasty all the way home after that boring old sermon. A few more bucks will have you waking up from your afternoon nap feeling even better because you'll have a special treat waiting for you!

And for those willing and able to provide these tempting treats for the Bake Sale—first we say thank you for your kind, thoughtful and generous support of this fund raiser. And second, we ask you to drop-off your baking pleasures on Saturday (or early Sunday morning) in the church kitchen. Members of the Outreach Team will then plate and bag all donations in appropriate proportions for the sale on Sunday.

Youth Group Meetings

Events and Frivolity!

February 11th and 25th

The Youth Group will meet Sunday, February 11th at 8:30 a.m. in the kitchen of the church where we will commence in crafting, creating, and assembling the most spectacular, amazingly delicious, culinary submarine sandwiches anyone in all of history has ever made, seen, tasted, devoured, or put in a TV commercial where they looked really amazingly delicious but when you go to the restaurant and order one it looks nothing like it looked like on TV.

All hands on subs are needed to be ready to sell subs and make fat stacks after both services!

Then mark it in your phones for Sunday, February 25th, because the Youth Group will hold a special outing to Station 300 (in Akron, just off Route 8 and Howe. Ave.) for a fun time of stone

throwing at stones to knock them over—aka *Bowling!* (Did you know bowling began when Cro-Magnon man created recreational gaming during its down-time of running from savage saber-toothed tigers? It's true. They would throw mostly rounded stones at slightly cylindrical standing stones in an attempt to knock them over. Would we lie to you? We are your church! Look it up.)

Please also put in your phones alerts for upcoming meetings in March! These will be important meetings because by March there won't be many Youth Group meetings remaining before our annual Youth Sunday Worship set for Sunday, May 12th. (Which is Mother's Day btw. No cap. Big yikes. You're gonna wanna be there or be square. Trust us—it'll be off the chain.)

Sketti and Skits: **Happy St. Patrick's Day!**

Sunday, March 10th, 5 p.m.

Do you like a good meal and good entertainment for a good price? Do you enjoy a fun-filled time of fellowship with your church family? Do you enjoy laughing until it hurts?! Do you love all things green on St. Patrick's Day?! If you answered yes to any of these questions then you will want to make sure you are at this year's Sketti and Skits, a time-honored tradition of FCC Stow where the food is great and the entertainment is even better! This year in the theme is St. Patrick's Day so bust out your green garments a little earlier than planned and get to the celebration!!

Of course all the entertainment for the night is provided by each one of you! So if you have a talent, a song, a dance, a skit, a magic trick, or whatever you would like to perform, start getting it ready now and look for the sign-up sheet in the Gathering Area in the coming weeks. (Need not be St. Patrick's Day related of course!)

No need to have the Luck of the Irish or a pot of gold to come to this event. Cost for Sketti and Skits is just a low-low price of \$8 for adults, \$4 for children, and kids under 3 are free. All proceeds will go towards Christian Education ministries.

Church Officer Nominations **February 2024**

Last year the Elders of the church recognized the challenge in taking in nominations for church officers and then doing taking the necessary steps to pursue nominations and fill soon to be open church officer positions. Which is why the Elders decided to make a shift in the nominations season into the new year, and start new term starts at March 1st of each year.

Therefore we are currently taking nominations for church officers with terms starting in March. We invite anyone to nominate folks from our church family (including themselves) for the following positions: Governing Board Chair, Elder, Deacon, Trustee. Please make your nominations known on the back of your Sunday Connection Card, by emailing Jonathan, or dropping them off in the church office.

For more information about these roles please contact Jonathan or the church office.

All Church Soup Cook-Off 2024 **Thanks and Congratulations!**

We want to thank everyone who came out to taste the soups, have fellowship, and vote! SPECIAL thanks to the 13 awesome people who made soups to share with the congregation! Congratulations to our three winners:

Dave Helmick (Gold)
Mike Drews (Silver)
Melissa Benson (Bronze)

This was a great year with a variety of soups, chilis and stews, and we're excited to see what everyone brings next year! (We know it will be soup, but we'll be excited anyway).

Sherk Jr—The Musical! **March 1st, 2nd, and 3rd** **Presented by students at** **Lakeview Intermediate School**

We are thrilled to invite all to a fun filled theater experience like no other! Sure, you could go to Cleveland and catch of star-studded performance of professionals. But why travel so far and pay so much when just around the corner you can take in

a show that will fill you with laughter, joy, warm-fuzzies, and overflowing pride for the hard work of young students right here in our Stow-Munroe Falls community. And if that wasn't already a great motivator, how about knowing that three from our FCC Stow church family will be appearing and starring in this production of Shrek Jr.! That's right, our very own Lizzie Aukeman, Ava Lazor, and Violet Rumburg are all in the cast of this whimsical show!

Shrek Jr. will be performed at Lakeview Intermediate School on Friday, March 1st and Saturday, March 2nd at 7 p.m., and again on Sunday, March 3rd at 2 p.m.

A Winter Men's Gathering with FCC of Wadsworth and FCC of Medina

Saturday, February 17th, 9:30 a.m. – 2 p.m., at The Lodge at Allardale (141 Remsen Rd, Medina) with guest speaker Derek Maul, Christian Men's Ministry Author and Journalist. This half-day program will have honest conversation on assessing our challenges in today's divisive world, exploring how we can realistically up our game to share our faith. Donation of \$25, pay at the event. Lunch provided!

Contact the Church office to sign up!

Think Pray Connect from January - February

Please continue to support these members of our church family from our TPC's of December and January.

Tony & Sue Falcione
1588 Robin Ln.
Stow, OH 44224

*Thinking of our church family members!
Reach out and wish them well!*

Debi Redman

141 S. Mantua St
Kent OH 44240

Please share support and connect with Debi as she just had a knee replacement this month!

Mr. Ron Neaffer
7831 Stoneridge Rd.
Macedonia OH 44056-2231

Pray for and reach out to Ron Neaffer who had an unexpected emergency surgery in January.

Mrs. Betty Lappin
4309 Newcomer Rd.
Kent OH 44240-1839

Keep your church family in your hearts, prayers, and cards!

2024 Summer Camp Schedule At Camp Christian

The Christian Church in Ohio is excited to share with you the 2024 Summer Program Schedule! There are Summer Programs at Camp Christian for Children and Youth from Kindergarten through 12th grade, as well as Advance Conference for Young Adults. You will also note the two Disciples Fellowship Retreats which are open to all ages. We have also included Adult Conference, which is open to all adults and is held at Northwest Christian Church in Columbus. Registration and more details about all of this coming this Winter.

We hope you'll save the dates and share this schedule with folks from your Congregations, Families, and Communities!! The first campsite event to kick off the summer schedule is the Disciples Fellowship Retreat on Friday, May 24th – Sunday, May 26th. The Regular season of camps

begins with Grandparent's Camp – Elementary on Thursday, June 6th.

The full schedule can be viewed at the following link, <https://www.ccinoh.com/camp-christian.aspx>, as well as each date on the Regional Calendar. We hope you'll be able to participate in this great annual tradition of retreat, refocusing, and reverence.

Lenten Bible Studies

Wednesday Nights, 7 p.m. – 8 p.m.
February 14th through March 20th

Barb Bell and Heidi Ott are hosting a Bible study with *An Unexpected Revival!* See the flyer below. See Barb or Heidi for more information.

FCC OF STOW
HOSTED BY: BARBARA BELL
SUPPORTING HOST: HEIDI OTT

AN
8-WEEK
BIBLE
STUDY
OF
EZEKIEL

An
**UNEXPECTED
REVIVAL**

EXPERIENCING
GOD'S GOODNESS
through
DISAPPOINTMENT
and DOUBT

**BIBLE STUDY
SESSIONS FOR
ADULTS**

Open to All!

EVERY WEDS FROM 7:00PM-8:00PM
FEB 14TH - MARCH 20TH
IN CHURCH LIBRARY

Learn more about the Scriptures and achieve a more fulfilling relationship with God through our weekly classes.

ERICA WIGGENHORN