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# PATHWAYS

MAY 2024

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

Find us on social  
media @FCCStow!

## **Cakes and Connections and Covenant!** **May 5<sup>th</sup>, Following Both Worship Services**

Cakes and Connection and Covenant will happen right after worship, in the Gathering Area, with cupcakes, coffee, and usual fellowship fare, and will all conclude by noon. More information and instructions are in this newsletter, but mark your calendar right now for Sunday, May 5th right after worship!

## **“Overcoming Adversity”** **Youth Sunday, May 12, 2024**

On Sunday, May 12<sup>th</sup> the First Christian Church Youth Group will host and lead a Youth Sunday time of worship during both the 8:30 and 10:30 services. The theme and focus for Youth Sunday will be *Overcoming Adversity* (but we’re not talking about parents!) Our youth will lead our worship liturgy, offer prayers, read scripture, bring our children’s message, and help deliver the sermon.

Make plans to be part of this special time of worship for Youth Sunday—during BOTH services—on Sunday, May 12<sup>th</sup>!

## **Pentecost Sunday** **May 19<sup>th</sup>, the Birthday of the Church!**

On Pentecost we celebrate the birthday of the Church, remembering the awesome power that descended on the people of God through the Holy Spirit, resting on them as if it was tongues of fire. This day is among our most holy days in the life of the church, so let us ignite our spirits and show our excitement for this grand day through our worship. Wear red as a symbol of the Holy Spirit!

## **All Church Picnic!** **May 19<sup>th</sup>, Water Works Park!**

It marks the un-official beginning of summer—the First Christian Church All Church Picnic! Join with your church family in kicking off the summer season right as we gather at Water Works Park for some fun in the sun that will include, food, games, food, dessert, food, cornhole, food, fun, food, and more food! Don’t miss your chance to get a head start on all the summertime fun that is coming our way!

## **Summer Worship Hours Start May 26<sup>th</sup>!**

**First Service 8:30—Coffee Fellowship 9:30—Second Service 10:00**

On Sunday, May 26<sup>th</sup> we will begin our summer worship hours. First service will remain unchanged at 8:30. Second service will begin at 10 a.m.

In between services will be a special time of coffee fellowship for those who just came from first service and those coming to second service. This coffee fellowship will be held in our Library and Gathering Area and will offer a special opportunity for folks from the two services to see and greet one another. So mark your calendar for the start of our summer worship times on Sunday, May 26<sup>th</sup>.

## May 2024

### Pastor's Pen

I've heard it said, so I can't take credit for it, yet I say it often this time of year as if it were mine—until I add the qualifier, “*That's what I've heard, and its often proven true.*” And what I have heard said, and say, is, “*May is the new December.*” I really like the saying, strangely. It makes me chuckle, but mostly I like it because it's paradoxical, and I love and treasure paradox—when something is both one thing, and another thing. I'm not sure why. Perhaps because I like to have options, and so if something can be two things at once, then there are always options. Or maybe it's because I grew up watching and playing with Transformers, toys that came with the tagline, “*Transformers! More than meets the eye!*” followed by a semitruck transforming into the morally true, defender of justice, robot Optimus Prime, who was always ready to stand up against evil Megatron.

Like December, the month of May starts off with relative ease that comes with the false assurance that though much is happening, there are plenty of days ahead to tend to it all. But then, like a proverbial snowball rolling down hill, the pace quickens, and the immensity grows and grows, all to the point where there is no stopping the inevitable crash and carnage, there is only the hope that some way, somehow, we can survive until—not Christmas Day—but rather until... *The Last Day of School!*

So yeah, I love May. I love the weather finally turning warm and sunny. (Please, please Lord let the weather be warm and sunny.) I love the blooming of flowers and trees. (Although I could do with a bit less pollen and allergic assaults on my sinuses.) I love all that comes with the end of another school year—the slow caravaning of school related supplies back home, crumbled papers that have been compacted in the back of desks and lockers—some dating back to the Christmas season. There is so much to the month of May and all of it contributes to both its chaos and its magic. Which is...wait for it...paradoxical!

And this May, not only do we get the usual spoils of a jubilantly chaotic month, but we also get the paradoxically jubilant and chaotic day of *Pentecost!* The birthday of the Church! The day the Holy Spirit of God is unleashed upon the world as tongues of fire, scattering people and languages and God's love to the far corners of the globe, ushering in whole new assurances that God's presence will forever be with us. And thank goodness, because so often the paradoxes of life end up being anything but a treasure.

The Holy Spirit of God is always present for us. We know this. We celebrate this. We depend on this. But, if we are honest with ourselves, we also forget this, don't we? And it's paradoxical when we do because sometimes we forget God is with us in good times, and sometimes we forget God is with us in difficult times. And vice versa. Often, we forget, try to go alone, have some much to tend to that we just let some things go which often has among them God's Holy Spirit.

God came into the world in flesh and blood as Jesus the Messiah who lived, taught, preached, healed, died, was resurrected, and ascended. Jesus didn't bring answers to our problems, rather he brought the opportunity for new life—to live through the problems. And likewise, the Holy Spirit of God is not an answer to life's questions or circumstances, rather it is a response—an advocate that shows up a way forward. The Holy Spirit is an opening to a new beginning, a fresh start, an unimagined possibility...to the same life we are already living but lived with renewed hope. It...the Holy Spirit of God...is a paradoxical response to the paradoxes we live with and endure.

Whatever the circumstances of your life are today, whatever has been done or left undone, whatever has or has not happened to you, the Holy Spirit is here to prevent the chaos from swallowing you up. It promises the possibility of something new and the chance for something that already is to be something different, something better. The Holy Spirit is the invitation to transform your life, to be different, to be something new, to be transformed, to be more than meets the eye.

Your Pastor and Friend,  
Jonathan

**TAKING OUR OUTREACH  
TO THE NEXT LEVEL**  
**Mission Trip with Week of Compassion**  
**Western KY – June 16<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup>**

Looking to serve, make an impact, and change our world for the better? Through the week of June 16<sup>th</sup>, we will be making our way to Mayfield, Kentucky, to do just that! On the very western end of Kentucky, in 2023, 6 to 12 inches rainfall landed during just a 10 hour period, resulting in historic-high, catastrophic flash flooding that harmed the tornado-stricken areas of Mayfield, Paducah, and southern Illinois. For more information on the flooding, see [https://www.weather.gov/pah/FloodingJuly19\\_2023](https://www.weather.gov/pah/FloodingJuly19_2023).

We have heard the call within the church to go out and do the work of restoration, and the opportunity has presented itself. With help from Charlie Redman, and working with Week of Compassion, we are hoping to add more volunteers to the team to increase our impact, as many hands make light work. There is a registration process, and a very small fee attached (\$5 per night). Additionally, if you cannot stay for the entire week, folks have been present for partial weeks before.

Registration can be made at the link below. If you need help with it, please contact the office and let Christian know. Sign up with your information and don't forget to use the password as well, when it requests one.  
<https://week-of-compassion.volunteerlocal.com/volunteer/?id=75840>

Password: Stow2024

We will be working in or near Mayfield, KY and will be housed on beds with mattresses in the Disciples Church in Paducah, KY. We may be sharing housing with others in the area for similar missions. Paducah also offers options of other activities such as the National Quilt and Inland Waterways museums, near a historic waterfront and downtown to see.

For those who have more questions, contact Charlie Redman at (330) 283-4320, or to Jonathan here at the church.

**All-Church Picnic,**  
**Sunday May 19 at 12:00 p.m. noon**  
**Little Stone Pavilion, Water Works Park**

Little Stone Pavilion is at 2025 Munroe Falls Ave. Cuyahoga Falls

Here comes summer!! Join us for this wonderful afternoon fellowship with great food and great company! Mark your calendars for this year's All-Church Picnic! Please bring your own place setting / table service and a side dish to share! The Membership Team will provide hot dogs, baked beans, watermelon, drinks, desserts and snow cones!

**Cakes and Connections and Covenant!**  
**May 5<sup>th</sup>, Following Both Worship Services**

Cakes and Connection and Covenant is a follow-up event from this past fall where we were introduced to, and connected with, the wide variety of ministry teams and service opportunities here at First Christian Church—all while enjoying cake and snacks. Now we are going to have our cake (eat it too!), make some connections again, and invite you to covenant with God to offer yourself in service to a ministry or opportunity for service here at First Christian Church. This event will happen right after worship, in the Gathering Area, with cupcakes, coffee, and usual fellowship fare, and will all conclude by noon. More information and instructions are in this newsletter, but mark your calendar right now for Sunday, May 5<sup>th</sup> right after worship!

**Mission Trip Meeting**  
**May 19<sup>th</sup>, after Sanctuary Service**

Join us after second service on the 19<sup>th</sup> for another meeting where we can take questions, recruit more volunteers, and plan for the upcoming meeting! If you know someone who is interested, share this meeting information with them and we can get them up to speed for the mission trip! If you want to start discussing transportation, what to bring, and plans for the week, please join us for this meeting!

**Youth Sunday – May 12<sup>th</sup>!**  
**“Overcoming Adversity”**

Join us on May 12<sup>th</sup> at both services as the youth of our church get the great experience of acting as an important part of the church laity—As Lay Leaders! The theme of this year's Youth Sunday

sermon is “Overcoming Adversity,” which our faith and scripture can speak great volumes on.

**Save the Date for Vacation Bible School**  
**Sunday, July 14<sup>th</sup> – Thursday July 18<sup>th</sup>**  
**6 – 8 p.m. Each Night**

It's time for a summer camp adventure with God at **Camp Firelight VBS!** Kids will learn ways they can put their trust in God when they are afraid, challenged or called to God's work and share the Good News of God's Love.

Mark your calendars for Vacation Bible School 2024, Sunday July 14 - Thursday July 18, 6-8pm. More details and information coming soon!



**Prayer Request Email List**

Friends, while many of us are getting updates regularly, there's now an easy way to get connected with the church's concerns and praises by signing up to the prayer request email list at the link below. If you have a prayer request you'd like to share, you can always directly email the church office at [Fccstow@firstchristianstow.org](mailto:Fccstow@firstchristianstow.org) with the concern. If you know anyone who might like to be signed up for Prayer Requests, please share with them the link below!

<https://www.firstchristianstow.org/prayer-chain/>

**Loaves & Fishes + Pantry**

May's drive thru meal will be May 19th 4-6p.m. We are serving ham, green beans, au gratin potatoes, and bread. All are welcome! Heidi Ott will be showing how to make focaccia bread at 9:00 a.m. Saturday the 18th as we prep.

Thanks for the generosity of those who donated bedding for Family Promise. We collected 30 sets of twin sheets, 5 comforters, 3 mattress protectors, 3 blankets and 2 pillows. The coordinator was overwhelmed by the donations.

**Think – Pray – Connect**  
**Families from April**

04/07

**Marjorie Howard**

Mulberry Gardens Memory Care Rm. #1008  
395 S. Main St., Munroe Falls OH 44262

*Please note Marjorie's new address.*

*Share a "Thinking of You from your church family!"*

04/21

**Marilyn Lown**

96 Pinehurst Rd., Munroe Falls OH 44262

**Sue and Russ Hobson**

98 E. Overdale Drive, Tallmadge OH 44278

*Please share your condolences and support for Marilyn in light of her husband, Eldon Lown's recent passing.*

*Share those also with Sue, Eldon & Marilyn's daughter.*

04/28

**Sandy Long**

1177 Southport Ave, Cuyahoga Falls OH 44221

*Please share with Sandy a "Thinking of You" from her church family!*

## **FRAUD ALERT! Artificial Intelligence** **And How to Protect Against It!**

AI (Artificial Intelligence) enabled attacks are on the rise. Phishing emails have increased by 1,265% since the launch of ChatGPT. AI cloning models for voice and video are expected to emerge throughout the year. We can expect to see a rise in AI-related cyberattacks and fraud scams in 2024. Huntington Bank has sent communication warning us as a business to be vigilant in our attempts to protect ourselves from these attacks. This information is pertinent to individuals as well. Let's start with some definitions:

- **Voice cloning or phishing:** digital simulations of trusted voices are used to request financial transfers, sensitive information.
- **Deepfakes:** Threat actors use these to create convincing video and audio recordings to impersonate public figures, executives or other trusted individuals.
- **AI-generated images or videos:** often used to create fake identities on social media, fabricate compromising situations for blackmail, or generate convincing evidence to support fraudulent claims.

What can we do as individuals in defense against Cyber Criminals and Fraudsters?

- Consider enhancing verification processes on your phone or computer through multiple factor authentication, biometric verifications, and similar methods.
- Learn about the threat of AI-enabled scams, including how to spot potential attempts, such as inconsistencies in voice or video communications.

### **Business Email Compromise**

This was the top form of cyberattack identified in 2023. These threats are effective because they prey on our instinct to be helpful, and it can be very difficult to identify. Unfortunately, AI is only making it easier for cybercriminals to impersonate legitimate and trusted sources to fool victims.

Some common scenarios include:

1. **Executive transaction request:** A fraudster masquerades as an executive asking for a time-sensitive transaction, such as an immediate funds transfer or gift card purchase.
2. **Executive data request:** Similar to the executive transaction request, scammers pose as

an executive to request HR, payroll, or employee data, including earning statements and tax records.

3. **Specific payment methods:** Attempts often include requests for funds to be transferred via wire transfers, gift cards, or other online payment platforms.

Educating yourself on the tactics threat actors use in their attempts, as well as what to do if an email or text is suspected to be from an illegitimate source, can protect you and your church or other organization you may belong to. Be aware of these

### **RED FLAGS**

- Portraying a sense of urgency, a crisis, or insisting on confidentiality.
- Sending messages at inopportune times when you might respond in a hurry without thinking clearly.
- Refusing to communicate in person or verbally.
- Asking for unusual payment amounts or payment without proper justification.

Practices to help protect against: **CHECK FRAUD**

- Use electronic methods to make payments whenever possible.
- Deliver checks to a post office instead of dropping them in the mail.
- Consider switching recurring payments from check to ACH debit.
- Review and reconcile your monthly statements immediately.
- Notify your bank immediately if you discover a check has been forged or stolen.

Cybercriminals are increasingly using AI tools to understand and generate human-like text. These tactics make it easier for victims to be manipulated into performing actions or divulging confidential information. First Christian Church of Stow has been a target of these attempts. Text messages have been sent pretending to be Jonathan asking for a gift card to be purchased. Others have pretended to be Chuck Kobb, asking for confidential payroll information. Stay alert and be aware and if anything does not feel right, stop and ask. We need to be smarter than the criminals. Keep calling the church, Jonathan, Christian, or another church employee or officer. Don't stop until you get help making an informed decision before you respond to a suspected fraudulent call, text, email, etc.



## **Master Singers Chorale**

*Singing Saved My Life,*

May 19<sup>th</sup> @ 2 p.m.

Master Singers Chorale will present "Singing Saved My Life" featuring Mass in F Major by Marcel Tyberg and Holocaust Cantata: Songs from the Camps by Donald McCullough on Sunday, May 19 at 2PM at Temple Israel, 91 Springside Dr., Akron. Please join us for this meaningful program. As always, MSC thanks First Christian for sharing the sanctuary with us for our rehearsal space.

## **Music Notes**

**May 2024**

This has been a very busy year for the choirs. We are blessed to have such varied musical opportunities here at First Christian Church:

Chancel Choir

Joy Bells

Joyful Noise (Bells)

Children's Choir

Children's Bell Choir

Back Row Singers (Men's ensemble)

Ladies' Ensemble

Resurrection Brass

Vocal Quartets

The Way (contemporary ensemble)

Thank you to all our music participants.

Praise God!

Summer is right around the corner and as always, the musical groups are ready to take a much-deserved rest from their efforts. However, that does not mean there will not be music during the summer. Our efforts will shift to solos and small ensembles, those musicians who volunteer to sing or perform

one Sunday during the months of June, July or August. If anyone is interested, you may sign up on the choir room door or email me at [cek54jmk@gmail.com](mailto:cek54jmk@gmail.com).

I would like to invite you to a concert performance by Summit Bells. Summit Bells is a community handbell ensemble that I founded approximately 40 years ago! This group has recorded 2 CDs, gone on tour several times, and played at many local, civic, and church events (including weddings) through the years. We will be performing here at First Christian Church on Monday, May 13 at 7:30pm in our sanctuary. The program will include several works by noted composer Karen Buckwalter, a march, and a transcription by George F. Handel. We hope to see you there.

## **4<sup>th</sup> of July Pancake Breakfast Returns!**

**July 4<sup>th</sup>, 7 a.m. – 10 a.m.**

Mark your calendars! The 4<sup>th</sup> of July Pancake Breakfast is back! That's right! We're partnering with the Boy Scouts to restart this popular event from 7:00 to 10:00 am on the 4th. Please help spread the word to friends and family! Your invitation goes a long way towards filling the church with fellowship. Of course, many hands make light work, and we are looking for volunteers for set-up, cooking, serving and clean up! There will be several roles to be filled after the Boy Scouts take on their responsibilities, so see below to sign up! Volunteer schedules will be put into two blocks of time, 6:00 a.m. and 8:30 a.m., and from 8:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. to cover clean up.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C094EA8AD2BA7F9C70-49499764-4thofjuly>

## **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 24<sup>th</sup> – Sunday, May 26<sup>th</sup>. The Regular season of camps begins with Grandparent's Camp – Elementary on Thursday, June 6<sup>th</sup>.

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.

Summer is fast approaching! Camp Christian has a huge variety of camps, many of which are listed below. If you or a family with children you know are interested in camp, but the cost of enrollment may be too much, don't forget that there's scholarships and sponsorships are available through the Christian Church in Ohio website

### **Grandparents Camp**

June 6th -8th at Camp Christian

*For children completing Kindergarten, 1st or 2nd grade (May/June 2024) and their Grandparent*

### **Ribbit Camp - Elementary**

June 30th - July 3rd at Camp Christian

*For children completing 2nd grade and/or 3rd and 4th graders whose parents want a shorter camp experience for their children.*

### **Otter Camp - Elementary**

June 9th - 15th at Camp Christian

*For children completing 5th grade & those in 3rd & 4th grades ready for a full-week of camp.*

### **Encore Music Camp - Junior High & High School**

June 30th - July 6th at Camp Christian

For those youth completing 6th- 12th grades.

### **Created to be Me**

For those youth completing 8th grade.

June 23rd - 29th

### **Chi Rho Camp - Junior High**

*For those youth completing 6th, 7th, or 8th grade.*

### **2 OPTIONS - Emmaus June 16th-22nd OR Cornith July 7th-13th**

*It does not matter where you live or what church you attend. You can sign up for whichever week fits best into your schedule.*

### **CYF Conference - High School**

*For those youth completing 9th, 10th, 11th, or 12th grades.*

### **2 OPTIONS - Week #1 June 16th-22nd OR Week #2 July 14th-20th**

*It does not matter where you live or what church you attend. You can sign up for whichever week fits best into your schedule.*

### **Advance Ministries Summer Conference - Young Adults**

July 21st - 28th at Camp Christian

*For all adults ages 19 to 30 (at least 1 year out of high school.)*

### **Adult Conference**

June 17th - 21st at Northwest Christian Church  
1340 Fishinger Rd., Columbus, OH 43221-2398

*For adults of all ages.*

**Camp Christian Work Day**  
**Saturday, May 11th**  
**The Christian Church in Ohio**

We will once again be hosting volunteers for a day of cleaning, repairing, and general preparation of Camp Christian in anticipation of the Summer Camp and Conference programs!

This workday is so crucial and appreciated by the staff. We all know when Spring arrives there can be

an overwhelming amount of tasks to keep up with, even at our own homes.

There are tasks suited for a wide range of ages and abilities. We hope you will join us!

More details, including specific tasks, how to sign up, how to donate, and more can be found at <https://www.ccinoh.com/regional-calendar.aspx?events=11521&action=details>



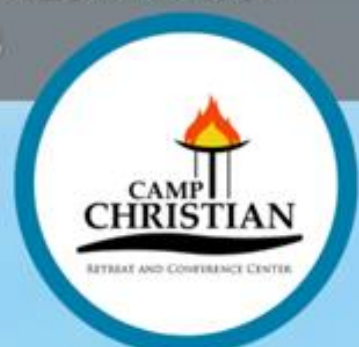
# SUMMER IS COMING...

PLAN AHEAD WITH THESE ADVENTURES IN OHIO!

## SUMMER CAMPS 2024



**TEMPLED HILLS CAMPS  
ARE LISTED IN PURPLE  
CAMP CHRISTIAN CAMPS  
ARE LISTED IN BLUE**



- **May 24–26: Disciples Fellowship Retreat, all Ages**
- **June 6–8: Grandparents Camp – Elementary. For children completing K–2 AND their Grandparent (or another related adult other than their parents)**
- **June 9–15: Otter Camp – Elementary. For children completing 5th grade & those completing 3rd & 4th, ready for a full-week of camp**
- **June 12–15, June 30 – July 3, July 14 – 17: Grands & Family, ages 4–13 (with Parent or Grandparent)**
- **June 16–22: M.M.A.D.D. (Music, Mindfulness, Art, Dance, Drama). Ages 8–18**
- **June 16–22: Camp "Out" (LGBTQIA+). Ages 8–18**
- **June 16–22: Chi Rho & CYF Week 1 Concurrent Camp – Junior High & High School. For youth completing 6–8th grades and youth completing 9th–12th**
- **June 17th–21: Adult Conference at Northwest Christian Church, Columbus**
- **June 23–29: Sports Camp. Ages 7–18**
- **June 23rd–29th: New Camp: Created to Be Me. For youth completing 8th grade.**
- **June 30th–July 3rd: Ribbit Camp. For children completing 2nd–5th grade, that may experience camp for the first time with a shorter week**
- **June 30th–July 6th: Camp Encore, Vocal and Drama Camp. For youth completing 6th–12th**
- **July 7–10: Pathfinder. Ages 10–14**
- **July 7–10: Family Camp, all ages**
- **July 7th–13th: Chi Rho Week #2. For youth completing 6th–8th**
- **July 10–13: Seek and Sip. Ages 21+**
- **July 14th–20th: CYF Week #2. For youth completing 9th–12th**
- **July 21st–July 28th: Advance Conference. For adults ages 19 to 30**
- **August, 30th–September 1st: Disciples Fellowship Retreat, all ages**



**REGISTER  
TODAY!**

**SCAN THE QR CODES  
OR GO TO:**

**HEARTLANDUCC.ORG/TEMPLED-HILLS  
CCINOH.COM/CAMP-CHRISTIAN**

