



3493 Darrow Road, Stow, Ohio 44224  
330.688.4450  
[www.firstchristianstow.org](http://www.firstchristianstow.org)

# PATHWAYS

## JULY 2025

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

Find us on social  
media @FCCStow!

### **Vacation Bible School 2025: Road Trip!**

**Sunday, July 13<sup>th</sup> – Thursday, July 17<sup>th</sup>, 6-8 p.m. each night**

Children 3-5<sup>th</sup> grade are all invited to hop on board and get “On The Go” with God! This awesome road trip will include incredible crafts, super science experiments, delicious snacks, and memorable Bible stories for kids! More info below, and registration can be found at [fccstow.org/vbs](http://fccstow.org/vbs)

### **CHRISTMAS IN JULY!**

#### **Early Outreach Planning & Assistance for Christmas Ingathering Outreach**

Though it’s just warming up, we have a big need for when it gets cold! The Ingathering Outreach team is asking for us all to think ahead this year and do our “Christmas Shopping” a little early! Details below regarding this Outreach campaign.

### **Church Directory Photography Begins!**

**July 13<sup>th</sup>, After Sanctuary Service**

By Popular Demand (And, it’s been a while!) We’re ready to start working on a Directory for 2025/26 (Pending production & Printing)! Please see Christian after 10 a.m. Sanctuary Service in the Chapel through July for photos! Come dressed as you’d like to be captured and be prepared to verify your contact information afterwards. First Come, First Served!

### **Nursery Attendant Position Search Continues**

The Christian Education & Stewardship teams are working diligently to find a long-term Nursery Attendant who can serve the needs of our congregation’s young families during worship services. If you know someone who might be interested, please contact Anna or Richelle, or let the church office know!

### **Cuyahoga Falls Good Neighbors Back-To-School Collection**

**DUE SOON! Last Collection Sunday: July 15<sup>th</sup>**

If you have time and the resources to share, please see the list of items needed for the Cuyahoga Falls Schools collection! We have just a few days left, but there’s a great need to support all the children in need around our school district!

**Loaves & Fishes + Pantry, July 20<sup>th</sup>, 4-6 p.m.**

## Pastors Pen July 2025

Hello July! One of my favorite months of the year! July comes in with pancakes and a bang (quite literally), and keeps on banging out early mornings, long days, and warm summer nights! And to all of that I say... **Merry Christmas!?**

Now it is well known by all of you that I do love the season of Advent. I love how from week to week the light of Christ grows one candle at a time until a fully lit Advent wreath helps us usher in the celebration of our newborn King. But don't worry, I'm not breaking out the Advent wreath anytime soon. And to our faithful team of church decorators, I will **not** be asking you to adorn the sanctuary with Christmas trees and lighted up garland. But we are going to still have a Christmas in July celebration!

Every year our Christmas In-Gathering Outreach project is held in November and December and is among our biggest outreach endeavors of the year, and our outreach team faithfully guides us to opportunities to support anywhere from 35 to 45, sometimes as many as 50 families, around our community. And those families who are part of this outreach endeavor find their holiday season blessed and made a bit merrier and brighter through the blessings of food boxes, gifts, and grocery store gift cards. Among these dozens of families we support include dozens of children as young as infants to as old as juniors and seniors in high school and all ages in between. And because of this outreach project, and the generosity of this congregation, those children and their families are given a glimpse of what the church really is and what the church is really there to do. These blessings not only help them celebrate the season, but they also show the families that they are seen, they are supported, and they are loved. And that is among the many reasons why God calls us to take on this immense outreach endeavor.

And yet we know, as does God, that feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, and visiting the imprisoned (which includes those in prison but also those imprisoned by circumstances beyond their control) requires followers of Jesus to do what is often difficult. And we all know that November, December, and the holidays, while festive and bright, are also challenging.

The last several years there has been a financial gap between generous support and overall need. And that gap has been bridged through the church's Giving Tree outreach fund—a restricted account within our church's finances used only when needed. In recent years the In-Gathering gap has become wider and wider. And that gap is wider not because of wholehearted and generous support. It has widened because costs have gone up. The cost of groceries has gone up; the cost of winter coats has gone up; the cost of toys and gifts have gone up—not to mention gift cards just don't go as far as they used to. What has not decreased is our commitment to support the families who need our support and love. Which is why our Outreach team is aiming to lessen the challenge that comes to all of us in November and December by holding a **Christmas in July In-Gathering Outreach Campaign!**

For the month of July, we will be collecting needed food items and monetary gifts for this incredibly important outreach endeavor. All in an effort to help ease that difficult challenge of supporting families during a time when we are also preparing for our own holiday celebrations. This will **not** replace the November-December Christmas In-Gathering Outreach campaign, rather it is simply a chance for us to get a good head start and lessen the challenge and bridge the gap.

So we invite you during this warm and muggy month of July to pull out not your ugliest Christmas sweater, but rather a little Christmas Spirit! Let us all find some Christmas Spirit in July and consider how we can begin, right now, to ensure that the candles of hope, peace, joy, and love will shine bright for all to see later this year as we all once again celebrate the birth of our newborn King!

Your Pastor and Friend,  
Jonathan

P.S. Did you see the *Christmas in July In-Gathering Outreach Campaign* display in the Gathering Area?! It's a Christmas tree...in a kiddie pool...with a Sun wearing sunglasses as the star on top! But wait! The Christmas tree itself is not made of *boughs of holly*, but *boughs of watermelon*! Brilliant! It's the **perfect** tree for Christmas in July!

**Vacation Bible School 2025: Road Trip!**  
**Sun. July 13 – Thurs. July 17, 6-8pm**

All children age 3 – 5th grade are invited to Road Trip VBS, where we will be On the Go with God! This Road Trip includes amazing science, creative crafts, fun recreation, delicious snacks and memorable Bible stories along the way. Travelers will learn that God is always with us as we share the good news of Jesus with the world. Our adventure runs from Sunday July 13 through Thursday July 17, 6-8pm each evening. Register at [www.fccstow.org/vbs](http://www.fccstow.org/vbs)

***VBS Volunteers Needed: Join us “On the Go with God!” for our Road Trip!***  
*Sign up in the Gathering Area or talk to Anna or Richelle for opportunities to serve, lead and have fun with us at Road Trip VBS!*

**Christmas Outreach in July!**  
**An Outreach Team Idea To Make Sure Christmas in December is Very Merry!**

Many people think our Christmas Ingathering is only for a few weeks in December but it's already on the minds of our church's Outreach Team! What we were discussing was the food collection we do for the families in December. Last year we were short many items so we are having a “*Christmas in July*” campaign. We are going to be targeting food items that often get overlooked. We are asking for boxed potatoes, canned tuna or chicken, canned soup, pudding and Jello-cups and graham crackers. (Please check expiration dates so they are in 2026.) Of course, we would be happy to accept donations earmarked for Christmas Ingathering 2025!

**Sunday Morning Worship**  
**A Congregational Discernment**

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow!*  
After two long years, our chapel now stands completely renovated, renewed, and ready for worship. (Ok we are still waiting on the four remaining light fixtures. Strange though, I could have sworn the first of March was more than 14 weeks ago. That's when we ordered the lights and how long we were told it would take for them to come in.) Still, our rededication of the chapel on June 1<sup>st</sup> was a blessed time of worship and celebration. I continue to be incredibly grateful to all who not only made sure the work of the chapel got done, but that it was done amazingly well and incredibly faithful.

And now that the chapel is open and ready for use, the Elders and I are contemplating what comes next for the chapel and how we can put it to good use for our church, congregation, and ministries. And the reason we are contemplating what's next is because while an 8:30 service has served our church and broader community well for years and years, it seems we are now at a crossroads of discovering how we will again faithfully use this sacred space. Here's what I mean...

Restarting an 8:30 a.m. Sunday morning worship service in the summer has proven to be a worship option that does not fit the schedules of our community. And because it doesn't, we have once again decided to suspend the 8:30 worship service. We do know, however, that an early morning worship service has been of interest and importance to the congregations before, and the Elders and I think an early morning worship could still be of viable importance moving forward but finding that viability during the summer is not the ideal time to

try and make such a discovery. Please note though, it is not our intent to make this a permanent suspension, but we do think this is the right time to ask questions of you the congregation about an earlier worship service for Sunday mornings.

And so, in the coming weeks, we will be putting together a congregational survey to invite each of you to be part of this discernment and discovery process. We will ask simple questions such as, *“Is an 8:30 service on Sunday morning an interest or an option you would like to have?”* Will also be asking questions that maybe aren’t as simple such as, *“Do you feel an early worship service has a negative impact on our later morning worship service? If so, why and how?”*

Undoubtedly, our chapel has been a blessing, is a blessing, and will continue to be a blessing that God will use in our ministries. Its humble sacredness, with just a piano and the voices of worshipers, without sound system, microphones, or even screens, has always provided a special simplicity and closeness that can only be had in smaller worship spaces. And yet, the writer of Ecclesiastes has taught us *“in everything there is a season.”* And now is an appropriate and important time to consider and prayerfully discern what season First Christian Church of Stow is in when it comes to our chapel, how it is used, and the worship opportunities we offer.

So I invite you all to begin a time of prayerful discernment and personal consideration regarding Sunday worship, the chapel, and the opportunities God is revealing to us as we move forward into a bright new future with a beautifully renewed and renovated chapel, where surely God has a vision for us that is good and right and faithful. I look forward to discovering and

discerning that vision and making it come true fruition with each of you.

Together in Christ,  
Jonathan and the First Christian Church Elders

### **Nursery Attendant Update**

Christian Education Team and Elders would like to share that our current Nursery Attendant, Megan Weiser, will need to step away from her role at the end of April. If you see Megan, please be sure to thank her for her service to our children at FCC Stow!

Work has started to find a new Nursery Attendant, please share this opening with anyone you know that may be interested. The Nursery Attendant is responsible for childcare for children ages 0 to 5 while their families attend church service. The role involves engaging in age-appropriate activities, ensuring the safety and well-being of the children, and maintaining a clean and organized environment.

Requirements for Nursery Attendant:

- Two hours on Sunday Mornings: 10am-12pm September-May & 9:30am-11:30am June-August
- Experience working with children ages 0-5
- Must be at least 18 years age
- Completion of CPR / First Aid Training
- Must complete and pass Background Check

Interested candidates can apply by emailing a resume to [christianed@firstchristianstow.org](mailto:christianed@firstchristianstow.org)

## **Church Nursery Volunteers**

In the interim while we search for a new Nursery Attendant. The Christian Education Team is seeking volunteers to staff the Nursery on Sunday Mornings so that any family who wishes to utilize the nursery can do so. Youth Group helper(s) will be available to assist you as well. There is a sign-up sheet located near the Worship Activity Bags in the Sanctuary for anyone interested in assisting in providing Nursery Care for our children ages 0-5. Thank you!

## **Loaves & Fishes + Pantry June Recap**

You never know.....

Just when you think.....

What, you may ask, do these sayings have to do with the June Loaves & Fishes + Pantry?

We're glad you asked.

You never know who many families will come to our Loaves & Fishes + Pantry. This is true not just for us but for all food pantries across the entire 7 county region that is served by the Akron Canton Regional Foodbank. All we can do is prepare for the number we think will come.

In June this number was lower than normal. Why was that? Nobody knows. The weather was good, there was no big sporting event on TV, nor were there any other obvious reasons. Regardless we served 28 families, which is about 1/3 less than our usual total.

We were all a little disappointed as 6:00pm drew nearer and our numbers remained low.

Just when we thought it's all over, a family of 6 in desperate need of a meal and groceries showed up. We were able to assuage their immediate need with hot meals and enough groceries to last a week.

This lifted our spirits and reminded us that each family that comes to our door is in need. After all, we're not here to rack up big numbers, we're here to feed the hungry.

## **Vacant Nursery Attendant Position: The Search Continues!**

The Christian Education Team and the Stewardship Team have begun work to find a new nursery attendant for Sunday mornings. (10:30 a.m. September through May; 10:00 a.m. June through August.) More information about the position is available via the church office. If you know someone who might be interested in the position please encourage them to inquire about this opportunity.

Please know that in this time of transition we will still continue to offer nursery care each Sunday. Anna and Richelle will partner in staffing the nursery, along with volunteers from the congregation, so that any family who wishes to utilize the nursery can continue to do so.

## **Rubber Ducks Game and Fireworks, Saturday, August 23<sup>rd</sup> First Pitch is set for 6:05\***

*\*Note this out of the ordinary start time!*

Once again FCC Stow will spend a summer evening with the Akron Rubber Ducks. This summertime tradition for our church and friends is a great opportunity to enjoy a carefree night at Canal Park watching the Rubber Ducks "hit 'em where they ain't," and then enjoy a spectacular

fireworks display after the game. And that is going to happen again this summer on Saturday, August 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Tickets are just \$15! What a bargain! A night at the ballpark and fireworks for just twelve bucks!? You can't even walk past the Target door-buster dollar deals for twelve bucks! Of course, if you are bringing your kids our grandkids with you then sure, things might get a little more pricy—soda-pops, hotdogs, popcorn, peanuts, Cracker Jack, Dippin Dots, and the infamous Rubber Duck bubble blower gun—but can you really put a price on making memories like that?! (Does anyone want to take the preacher's kids with them to the game?! Because the preacher might “*still be working on his sermon for Sunday*” and unable to pay for—I mean—be there to make those memories!) See Bill Dowey or contact the church office to reserve your tickets!

**Loaves & Fishes + Pantry**  
**July 20<sup>th</sup>, 4-6 p.m.**

July's meal for pick up will be July 13<sup>th</sup> 4-6.m. What's more American than pizza? We are serving pizza cups and sides! All are welcome! Though last month was a little slow, we'll certainly need volunteers to help as always!

**No Yoga for July 16<sup>th</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup>**

Please note on your calendar the listed dates above! Yoga is taking a small break for a couple weeks in July and will not be held for those two weeks.

**Summer Worship Hrs.**  
**8:30 a.m. postponed until further notice**  
**Coffee Fellowship 9:30**  
**Second Service 10:00**

Summer worship hours have begun! And that means first service will happen at 8:30 a.m. in the Chapel, and second service will begin at 10:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary.

Please note that there will be coffee, and maybe a few treats—after first service and before between services so that we can say hello and have a bit of fellowship time with those who just came from first service and those getting set to head into second service. This coffee fellowship, as usual, will be held in our Library and will offer a special opportunity for folks from the two services to see and greet one another. And then, because it just kind of organically happens, Coffee Fellowship will still happen after second service as well.

**4<sup>th</sup> of July Pancake Breakfast**  
**THANKS TO ALL VOLUNTEERS!**

We have to say “THANK YOU” to all our awesome volunteers for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Pancake Breakfast! We're grateful for every member and leader who takes part in this

**Youth Group Summertime Gatherings**  
**Time and Place TBD—But trust us! You won't want to miss out!**

Youth Sunday has come and gone, and now schools out for the summer. And while the Youth Group does take a bit of a respite for the summer, there is still plans in the works for our “youts” to gather together for some good old-fashioned summertime fun. This might just include one of our notorious putt-putt outings where everyone leaves crying because once again no one can beat Jonathan. Perhaps we will spend an afternoon “floating” the mighty Cuyahoga River...or at least the part of it that mildly meanders for a mile or so. Or maybe a

church family will graciously invite us to come to their house and enjoy a dip in their swimming pool. You just never know what will be put into the works for these summertime Youth Group Gatherings so keep your eyes peeled for information about them that will be forthcoming very soon!

**CF Good Neighbors School Supply Drive**  
**COLLECTION DUE SOON!**  
**July 1<sup>st</sup> – July 18th**

Outreach has begun its Back-to-School school supply drive for Good Neighbors. (Short Summer!) Make sure to pick up a list as we are only collecting till July 15. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from Outreach!

Good Neighbors will be providing supply-filled backpacks to local students-in-need, but they need your help! School supplies needed include:

Thick markers (10-pack)  
Thin Markers (10-pack)  
Glue Sticks (2-pack)  
Black Pens (10-pack, BIC)  
Blue Pens (10-pack, BIC)  
Red Pens (10-pack, BIC)  
Dry Erase Markers  
College Ruled & Wide Ruled Loose Paper  
Yellow Highlighters  
College Ruled & Wide Ruled Spiral Notebooks

**Disciples Hall Yoga Class**  
**Wednesdays, 5:45 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.**

Correction: The starting time for Yoga is 5:45 p.m. on Wednesdays! Your donations for admission participate in and provide for various outreach programs throughout the church, including Bulldog bags, Week of Compassion, and our Loaves & Fishes + Pantry Outreach program.

Yoga is for Every Body and Everybody!

**Poodle Skirts & Promise**  
**A 1950s Benefit for Family Promise**  
**Sept. 4<sup>th</sup>, Save the Date!**

Make sure you mark your calendars for a RETRO GOOD TIME! This event will feature Music, an Auction, a Raffle, Great Food, and Fun Photo Ops with Vintage Automobiles! More details will be posted when received from Family Promise.

**Think – Pray – Connect**  
**Families from March**

**06/15/25**

**Tom Myers**

4591 Chatwood Dr, Stow OH 44224

*Please join us in praying for and sending support to Tom Meyers, who has been in the hospital several days with pneumonia at University Hospital in Cleveland.*

**06/22/25**

**Family of Tom Myers**

4591 Chatwood Dr, Stow OH 44224

*Please send condolences and support to the family of Tom, in light of his passing this previous Monday.*

**06/29/25**

**Campers @**  
**Camp Christian**

10299 Maple Dell Rd,  
Marysville, OH 43040

*Please send encouragement and wise words to all our campers at Camp Christian! This year, we have Ava Lazor, Violet Rumburg, and Abby Ardle at Chi Rho, and AJ Rumburg at Ribbit Camp.*

**07/06/25**

**Jim & Linda Phillips**

3822 Woodbury Oval, Stow OH 44224

*Please continue to pray with Jim and Linda as Jim is in the hospital.*

