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PATHWAYS OCTOBER 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!

Consecration Campaign **Sundays Through October**

Please join us through October, as we both celebrate the ministries of our church, and as we prepare our budget for the 2026 fiscal year. This important part of our calendar year lands during the harvest season, when we talk about what we've sown, what has grown, and what we've seen fruition in during the year. Sundays will feature speakers from groups or ministries of the church, and pledge cards for 2026's giving will be available!

Trunk-or-Treat! **Sunday October 26th, 3-5 p.m.**

It's time to decorate your trunk, and break out your best costume! Please mark your calendar and start preparing your trunk! We have multiple ways to help out, and it's all listed inside this edition of Pathways!

Youth Group Meets Through November

Youth group has a packed schedule through the final quarter this year! See the article at the bottom of this Pathways for the schedule!

Loaves & Fishes + Pantry **October 19th 4-6 p.m.**

This month's meal service will feature Shepherd's Pie and sides, thanks to Guest Chef Mike Kostensky! Please consider calling in friends, family, or co-workers to help, if they are looking for places to make an impact!

Church Directory Photography Continues! **By Appointment or During The Week**

Thanks to everyone who's came out for our initial rounds of pictures in the Chapel! If you're unable to make to the church on Sundays, please reach out to the church via phone or email. Christian will work with you to make sure you're represented in this latest directory.

Sunday School Opportunities for All Ages **Continuing Through October**

Beginning in the middle of this month, Jonathan is hosting two different Sunday School events before 10:30 a.m. worship services! See below for more details! You won't want to miss it!

Pastor's Pen,
October 2025

What does it mean to be the Church? To be a church we are to share and spread the Good News of Jesus Christ. That's what I told my "Jedi Council" recently when we did our check-in at our clergy group. (Jedi Council is a reference from *Star Wars* of a group of Jedi Knights who guarded the galaxy and who routinely met to discuss distressful matters happening around the galaxy, and how best to tend to them—typically employing air tight reasoning and light sabers.) So I told my Jedi Council this is what we have been focusing on as a church—what it means to be the Church, a church, and share the Good News. Then I added a quick summation to all this stating, "*Basically, be like Jesus and don't be a jerk.*" That joke got a good chortle from the small group of ministers because they knew quite well that a lot of what we do as pastor's can be summed up in a quick turn of phrase such as that.

And while a lot of what we aim to inspire and educate others to do can be encapsulated in such a statement, there is greater depth and lofty aims in the work of being the Church, being a church, and sharing and spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ. Among them are the ideas that come from the questions, *How do we turn 'Church' from a noun into a verb? How do we take the church for a thing and turn it into a place an action?* I think Jesus would appreciate such questions. After all, he was a man of action who actively took the Good News to the people, meeting them where they were in an effort to change their lives for the better. And every time he did, he not only gave the people what they needed, he gave them an encounter with the Divine presence of God. *How do we take the Church to where the people are? How do we turn "Church" from a noun into a verb?*

These questions, and others like them, are constantly at the forefront of my thought process and my prayers. And they are

because I truly believe that asking and wrestling with these questions and others like them is among our role as Christians and a church—especially in our society today, a society that is growing increasingly apathetic toward Church.

So how do we do this? How do we turn "Church" from a noun into a verb? Or really, how do we *keep* turning "Church" from a noun into a verb? Because I believe we are doing this. We do it through the ministries we offer and the worship we share. We do it each time we greet and welcome a guest. We do it every time we revel in the sweet sound of a fussy child in worship. We do it in many, many ways.

Each of these is times when the church provides and encounter with the Divine. And it's these encounters with the Divine in the church that are crucial to take beyond the church building. This is the model Jesus gave us, and calls us to live out. And it is crucial we do, because in our society today people are all too aware of what the Church *opposes*, (which is often misinterpreted or wrong) but they are not aware of what the Church *stands* for.

The Church has been around a long, long time. But not in a Galaxy far, far away. It's been right here. And we are a part of it. The Church has been unfolding all this time, yet it is still unfolding because the need for the world to have an encounter with the Divine has been ongoing since the dawn of creation. We are participating in our own unfolding. As the Church. As a church.

So how is God calling us to participate in this unfolding? Not, how has God called us—how *is* God calling us? Right now. Today. Because the unfolding of the Church is ongoing. The need for encounters with the Divine is ongoing. How will we keep it going? I am eager to keep answering this question with each of you.

Your Pastor and Friend,
Jonathan

Consecration Campaign For 2026 **Sundays in October**

October is the month in which we as a congregation begin to think, look, and pray about all God is calling us to be and do in the coming year, and how we as followers of Christ can respond faithfully to God's call. And once again we will be led through our "*Devoted to Generosity*" consecration campaign that will include our narrative budget that will allow us to hear about the impact our annual giving has not just within our church, but beyond our walls as well. This, and much more, is intended to encourage us to continue to do the good and faithful ministry God has called us to do, and to continue to be a church devoted to generosity by being the difference makers God calls us to be.

On Sunday, October 26th, we will conclude our 2026 Devoted to Generosity consecration campaign through the making of our estimated pledge of giving for next year. As living expressions of God's generosity may our pledge to God be in response to all God has given us. Together we are witnesses to the abundant life we know in Jesus Christ. May our giving be an act of joy, generosity, and faithfulness to all God has done, and continues to do for us.

Mike's Place At First Christian Church! **Sunday, November 2nd, After Worship** **A Christmas Outreach Fundraiser!**

Want to help support some in our community in making sure their holiday season is filled with Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love? Of course you do! That's what this church does each year through our Christmas In-Gathering Outreach program. Your generosity ensures that more than 40 families around Stow-Munroe Falls will have a very Merry Christmas. And this year a new opportunity to share your generosity is being given. And this time you'll get to do so with your appetite!!

On Sunday, November 2nd, right after worship, Mike's Place of Kent, Ohio will be coming to First Christian Church of Stow!! (The presence of the X-Wing Fighter to be determined. But rest assured, Jonathan is trying to figure out how he can have it parked on the front lawn that day!)

Mike Kostensky and family of world-famous Mike's Place will be serving up a Christmas In-

Gathering Outreach Fundraising Luncheon for any and all in our Fellowship Hall! Lunch will include Italian Wedding Soup (Mike's specialty) Italian sausage sandwiches with fresh grilled peppers and onions and marinara sauce, Gouda macaroni and cheese, along with other fixings that could include chicken salad sandwiches, and coleslaw! As we get closer to the date, a more detailed menu will be updated!

Our church strives to do as much as it can to help spread and share the Good News of Jesus Christ. So make plans now to dine with Mike, Mike's Place, and your church family at this Christmas Outreach Fundraiser! And yes, because the intoxicating scents of this meal surely wafting up into the sanctuary during worship, Jonathan has been informed his sermon that day will need to be short. Very, very short!!

World Communion Sunday **October 5th**

On the first Sunday of October Christians around the world, in every culture, break bread and pour the cup to remember and affirm Christ as the Head of the Church. World Communion Sunday and offers a distinct opportunity to experience Holy Communion in the context of the global community of faith, reminding us how we are part of the whole body of believers, all while celebrating the communion liturgy in as many ways as there are congregations. And though there is diversity in how we all come to the table of our Lord, we know all still partake of the bread of life and the cup of salvation—the gifts of God for the children of God.

World Communion Sunday is a profound worship experience and a time for intentionally considering more deeply our wider community of faith that encompasses not just Stow, not just Ohio, not just the United States. It encompasses the entire world. We are all God's children, and we are all invited to our Lord's Table. Come eat the bread. Come drink the cup. Come share the Lord.

Planning Ahead: Christmas In-Gathering

Each year through the Christmas In-Gathering Outreach Program, our church provides families the opportunity to have a very Merry Christmas through the giving of food and gifts they could not otherwise afford. And since this is such a huge

ministry, the Outreach Team works all year long to make it a success and therefore is already hard at work preparing for this tremendous ministry endeavor by purchasing adult gifts, socks, undergarments, hats, coats, and much more.

As the Outreach Team continues to prepare, they invite all of us to think about Christmas too! If you are interested in shopping for a family for this year's In-Gathering, or interested in supporting this ministry in any way, please let the church office, or Ann Halpin, know how you would like to help.

All Saints Sunday **November 2nd**

On the first Sunday of November, we come together to celebrate All Saints Sunday—a special occasion that invites us to reflect on the lives of those who have walked in faith before us. This day is a poignant reminder of the communion of saints, uniting us with loved ones who have passed on and honoring the legacy they left behind.

All Saints Sunday, celebrated on the first Sunday after All Saints Day (November 1), is a time for remembrance and gratitude. It originated in the early Church to honor all saints, known and unknown, who have exemplified Christ's love and teachings. On this day, we not only remember the saints of old but also our own dear family members, friends, and church family who have moved from this life to life eternal.

During our worship service, we will read the names of those from our congregation who have gone to be with the Lord in the past year. Their contributions to our community and their steadfast faith continue to inspire us, so let us come to celebrate their memory, and let us take this opportunity to reflect on our own journeys of faith by asking: What does it mean to be a saint in today's world? How can we carry forward the lessons of those who have inspired us?

Come ready to celebrate through hymns, prayers, and heartfelt sharing as we honor the saints who have gone before us and commit ourselves to live out our faith in their memory. And may this All Saints Sunday deepen our appreciation for the richness of our shared faith and encourage us to continue the work of love and service in the world.

Trunk or Treat **Sunday October 26, 3-5pm**

Join us Sunday October 26 from 3-5pm! Wear your costume and trick or treat in the church parking lot! We are in need of volunteers to make this event successful, see below on how you can help. Sign-up's will be available in September.

— *Host a Trunk!* Decorate your trunk and bring candy for 75-100 trick or treaters. Sign up in the Gathering Area or

email christianed@firstchristianstow.org.

— *Candy Donations!* There will be in a bin in the Gathering Area for candy donations (individually wrapped candy, please).

Contact Anna or Richelle for questions/more information.

Music Notes: **There's a place for you!**

First Christian Church is greatly blessed with music, and there is a place for you! Please speak with Ralph or Cheryl, or with Barb Eppley, Cora Dowey, or Scott Haywood with any questions you have. These are our current music groups:

Chancel Choir: Thursdays 7:30-9:00 p.m.

Spiritus: Rehearsals vary.

Joy Bells: Thursdays 6:00-7:15 p.m.

Joyful Noise: Wednesdays 7:00-8:00 p.m.

Resurrection Brass: Rehearsals vary.

The Way is our worship band. Rehearsals are as needed.

Youth Bells: some Sundays, right after worship, in the balcony.

Grace Notes: Sundays 10:15-10:30 a.m.

Children's Choir: Sundays after the Children's Message.

Silent Praise: as needed, occasional Sundays after worship.

“Prayer: Does It Make Any Difference?”

**A Sunday School Class
Until October 19th, 9:30 a.m.**

Does prayer change us, or God? Or both? What is prayer? How does it work? And more importantly, does it work? These are just some of the questions and concepts that will be explored in a new six-week Sunday school opportunity that will begin on Sunday, September 14th, and will run through October 19th. The curriculum will be based in Philip Yancy’s book, *“Prayer: Does It Make Any Difference?”* In this these six thought-provoking and inspiring sessions, Yancy will guide us to explore and experience the very heartbeat—the most fundamental, challenging, perplexing, and deeply rewarding aspect—of our relationship with God: prayer.

These six sessions will be led by Jonathan, in the Our Classroom (Room 202, past the Library), and will begin promptly at 9:30 a.m. and conclude at 10:10. They will include short video presentations by Yancy himself, followed by a time of guided discussion and bible study. Outside journaling and discovery work is always optional.

“Children of God Storybook Bible” Bible Stories for Children and Pastor Beginning September 14th, 10:10 a.m.

If you have a child who might enjoy hearing and learning about the bible in story form, then make plans to join Jonathan **in the church library** at 10:10 a.m. each Sunday morning starting on Sunday, September 14th. This will be simply a brief time of sharing some of the most beloved stories from both the Old and New Testaments of the bible, as they are told from Archbishop Desmond Tutu in his books, *“Children of God Storybook Bible.”* Tutu has written the first truly global Bible for children of all nationalities, retelling more than fifty beloved stories, each one showing how God’s work is always for good.

Each week a new story will be told and shared in story form, along with time for children to share their thoughts and ask their questions. These sessions will be kind of like a longer children’s sermon that takes place during worship—light hearted, fun, whimsical, and faithful. And they will last just 15 minutes. Open to any and all children (of any age!), parents, grandparents, and caregivers.

Loaves & Fishes + Pantry

October 19th, 4-6 p.m.

The drive thru meal in October will be October 19th 4- 6p.m. Guest chef Mike Kostensky of Mike’s Place in Kent will be providing shepherd’s pie and we will add some goodies. Thank you to all that helped in September, especially the Girl Scouts. After sloppy joe was all gone they switched to hot dogs. Tim estimated we served 175.

September Recap

“Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it” These two verses from Chapter 13 of Hebrews featured prominently in the scripture reading on Sunday 9/28/25.

We don’t do the Loaves & Fishes + Pantry on the chance that a hidden angel may stop by...we do it for all kinds of reasons. Some of the people who come to us for a meal and groceries are known to us and some are not. One first timer said that during her childhood she came to FCC Stow for Bible Study. Regardless, we greet them all with a smile and fellowship. 51 families came to our door in September. They went away with a hearty hot meal, five bags of groceries, and the knowledge that people care about them: volunteers who take time out of their lives to help. What a blessing.

Halloween Costume Collection New or Gently Used

Julie Rumburg's employer is collecting new or used Halloween costumes to distribute to Access, an Akron emergency shelter for women and children. If you have children's costumes that don't fit anymore, or if you find discounts on costumes at the store, please consider donating! Costumes of any size (even for big kids) can be left in Jonathan's office up to October 12th. See Julie for questions.

Visitation Ministry—RE-Visited!

For those interested in helping visit folks from our church who aren’t getting out these days, or might need a bit of fellowship at the hospital, Debbie Smeiles is going to organize volunteering! If interested, please text or email Debbie! (330) 715-5457, dasmeiles@gmail.com.

Acme Community Cash Back
Collecting Receipts Until Feb 15th, 2026

We can't believe it either, but it's once again time to save your Acme Receipts! The Cash Back Campaign will continue until next February, so please save your receipts and bring them to the drop box in the gathering area! All proceeds benefit the blanket ministry with a portion of the cost from your receipt, with no extra charge to you! Please consider shopping at Acme to support this important mission with a portion of that receipt!

Bulldog Bags Collections
2025-2026 School Year

We're collecting items for Bulldog Bags again! Please see the list below for the WHOLE School year! We can't take items too early, but if you can plan ahead, please do. Additionally, please note: **NO NUTS IN ANY PRODUCTS**. If you can, check to make sure what you're providing doesn't have any nut/tree nut additives. Thanks to all for your contributions!

Box for donations can be found in the Gathering Area!

<u>Due</u>	<u>Items Needed</u>
9/14	Toothbrush, Toothpaste
10/12	Mac 'n' Cheese Cups
12/7	Hot Chocolate Packets
1/11	Ramen Noodles
2/8	Deodorant (Travel Size)
3/8	Pudding Cups
5/10	Shampoo (Travel Size)

Summit County Faith & Blue
Saturday, October 4th, 11 a.m. – 2 p.m.

The Summit County Sheriff's office is hosting the annual day of fun and fellowship at Hardesty Park on October 4th. Folks are invited to build community with our law enforcement organizations. There's a lot to see and do this year, with live performances, games & contests, bounce house & obstacle course, food trucks available, a touch-a-truck, a mounted unit on site, raffle prizes, and more!

Acme Community Cash Back
Cash Back is BACK! Aug 1 – Feb 15

We can't believe it either, but it's once again time to save those Acme receipts! The 2025-2026 Cash Back campaign begins August 1st and runs through February 15th, 2026. As in years past, the money we make helps support our blanket fund. This year, we need the support of this program more than ever, so please remember to put your receipts in the collection box in the Gathering Area. It's an easy way to support a great cause!

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!

Youth Schedule For Oct-Dec. 2025

- 10/5/25
Making Fleece Blankets for Ingathering
- 10/19/25
Planning For Trunk or Treat
- 10/26/25
Trunk or Treat
- 11/9/25
Making dinners for the Women's Shelter
- 11/23/25
Thanksgiving Potluck / Décor for Christmas
- 11/30/25
Target Shopping for Ingathering?
- 12/07/25
Target Shopping for Ingathering?
- 12/14/25
Gift Wrapping for Ingathering!

Think – Pray – Connect
Families from August

09/07/25

Ed Aurand

Box 1704, Stow OH 44224

Please join us in congratulating Ed Aurand on his 100th Birthday! Cards are available by the Sanctuary doors!

09/14/25

Larry Siciliano

1463 Tallmadge Rd #206,
Kent OH 44240

Please join us in praying for and sending condolences to Larry Siciliano, and his family, as they continue to mourn the loss of Gary this past week.

09/21/25

Linda Phillips

3822 Woodbury Oval, Stow OH 44224

Please join us in sending prayer, comfort, and condolences to Linda Phillips and the entire family in the light of Jim's passing.

09/28/25

John & Samantha Houk

3796 Charring Cross Dr.

Stow, OH 44224

Please join us in celebrating with John & Samantha welcomed into the world Wesley Thomas Houk on September 13th, and has continued be healthy despite being delivered early!

Consecration Campaign Letter
On The Next Page



Stewardship is our faith in God’s abundance even in times of scarcity, and willingness to bring abundance to others.

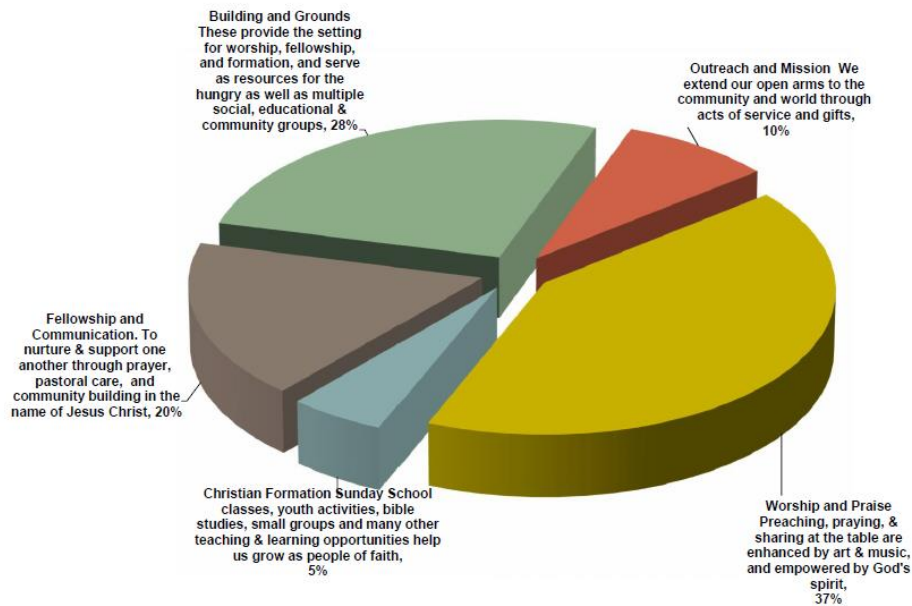
The Kick-Off for our 2025 Stewardship Campaign is quickly approaching. Over the next few several we will be sharing stories of generosity. We also have a story to tell of our shared ministry and mission at First Christian Church of Stow.

Narrative Budget

Below is a narrative budget. The visual narrative budget is presented as a Pie Chart that will give a broader perspective on specific dollar amounts of our mission and ministries.

First Christian Church of Stow

Narrative Budget Support for Mission and Ministries Approximate Percentages



There are two Sundays to be sure to mark on your calendars

On Sunday October 5th, we will kick-off this stewardship journey with Tina Payne’s report and how “The Hope and Healing Resource Center”, and how they have been able to use our Chalice Grant gift to support their work within their Shelter. Then over the next few weeks, we will share other stories that witness to the ministries God has entrusted to us and show how these ministries transform lives. These stories of our shared ministries grow out of God’s love in Christ and our desire to give back some of the many blessings given to us, for when we are faithful

stewards, God is revealed! When we are faithful stewards, God's kingdom is revealed. When we are faithful stewards, Jesus is glorified! And when we are faithful stewards, lives are blessed!

Aso, we will mail Estimate of Giving pledge cards during week 3. Then on Sunday, October 26th, we will share our faithful and grateful responses to the generosity and salvation God has worked in our lives by accepting your 2026 commitment cards during both worship services. And for those worshipping online, we will provide an opportunity to mail or email your pledge to the church.

Please look for additional information coming soon, including a visual narrative budget that will give a broader perspective on specific dollar amounts of our mission and ministries. Thank you for your continued support and faith in the ministry and mission God is calling us to here at First Christian Church of Stow.

Together in Christ,

Jim

Jim Hindel
Stewardship Committee Chair