



First Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)
Stow, OH

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PATHWAYS

FEBRUARY 2026

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

Find us on social
media @FCCStow!

Week(s) of Compassion!

February 2026

...Then some people came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. And when they could not bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him, and after having dug through it, they let down the mat on which the paralytic lay. (Mark 2: 1 - 5)

During the last three weeks of February our church will again focus on a special offering for Week of Compassion, the relief, refugee, and development mission fund of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Week of Compassion works with partners to alleviate suffering throughout the world.

This annual Special Offering is set aside for all Disciples churches to lift up and celebrate this important work we do together not just in domestic and international disaster response, but in refugee and immigrant response, and sustainable development funding worldwide.

Youth Group Super Bowl Sub Sale!

Sunday, February 8th

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? Here are four reasons why...

1. Snacking keeps energy up and prevents a mid-game slump that could result in missing the commercials!
2. Hunger can turn the most cordial fan into a grumpy and *"hangry"* one.
3. Why buy subs from a big box store!?
4. Supporting the Youth Group will help the Browns win next year! (Ok, probably not, but we can wish, right?!)

**Once again, a huge "THANK YOU!!" to the Kostensky family and Mike's Place for their generous support in making this Super Bowl Sub sale happen!*

Scout Sunday! February 15th

On Sunday, February 15th, First Christian Church will be celebrating and honoring the four different Scouting groups that are part of our church family. Scouts and their families will join us for worship and Coffee Fellowship, and some will be helping out in various ways before and during worship. See inside this issue of Pathways for more information about this special Sunday.

Loaves and Fishes + Pantry February 15, 4-6p.m.

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

This will also include the +Pantry food distribution.

Ash Wednesday, February 18th

Self-Guided Reflection 8 a.m. to Noon. - Guided Reflection and Worship: 12:30 p.m.

Throughout the morning on Ash Wednesday the sanctuary will be open for self-guided prayer, meditation, reflection, communion, and an ashen reminder to take with you. Then at 12:30 a guided time of prayer, music, song, reflection, communion, and the imposition of ashes will be held for any and all.

Let us begin the season of Lent by remembering that we begin a forty-day walk of faith toward Easter when we prepare ourselves to welcome the risen Christ with lives renewed because we took the time, and the risk, of introspection, self-examination, confession, and penitence.

February 2026 Pastor's Pen

A quote from Mya Angelou has always resonated with me...

"When someone shows you who they are believe them."

It resonates with me because this short and seemingly simple phrase carries profound depth, wisdom, and truth. When someone shows you who they are, do yourself and others a favor and believe them. Now, I do believe Angelou meant for us to go deeper than simply a superficial observation of a person. Meaning, when we see a driver not using their turn signal, we shouldn't immediately label them a terrible, horrible, no-good person. (But seriously! How hard is it to... Sorry. Some pet peeves run deep in me.) I believe Angelou means for us to believe what someone shows us in real life, in day-to-day interactions, consistent displays and patterns of behavior that reveal in a more complete and in-depth perspective of what exactly makes them who they are.

I further believe, this is exactly how Jesus saw people, how he came to understand who they were at their core. He didn't see the woman at the well as an outcast and terrible person, he saw her as someone who had been wrongfully judged. And Jesus didn't see Nicodemus as a power abusing religious leader simply because he was a Pharisee, rather Jesus looked deeper, taking in a broader perspective that revealed his heart and core values. A slip of the tongue, a poor choice, a mistake, or even an association with a particular group, career field, vocation, religion, race, heritage, gender and so forth is not how Jesus (or Angelou) looked at others. Rather it's what a person shows us who they are again and again, consistently, implicitly and explicitly—that is what we are to believe.

All this is to say, when someone shows you consistently, implicitly and explicitly they are loving and kind, believe them. When someone shows you consistently, implicitly and explicitly they are helpful, honest, and loyal, believe them. When someone shows you consistently, implicitly and explicitly they are trying to learn from their past mistakes, trying to grow and become something new, believe them. And when someone shows you consistently, implicitly and explicitly they are not who they make themselves out to be, that they are one person in some places and another person in other places, believe them too.

I bring all of this up because for a long time now we have been seeing people show us who they truly are. Yes, perspectives and images are often distorted and twisted by today's social media and opposition voices that are ubiquitous. But I still believe a person's words and actions can and will always show us a clear perspective through consistent, implicit and explicit behaviors. And when we chose to dismiss what is consistently, implicitly and explicitly shown to us; when

we turn and look the other way when such behaviors are shown over and over again, we have to ask ourselves, *"What are we showing of ourselves to others?"*

I doubt any of us think of ourselves as racist. But when racism doesn't bother us enough to call it out; when we rush to defend racist words, statements, and behaviors because it comes from someone we love or because it comes from our political side, what we are showing others about ourselves is that racism doesn't actually bother us; that standing in opposition to racism isn't something we believe is worth our time. This is especially important, and absolutely vital, for us to consider as Christians. Because when Christians ignore, defend, or laugh off words, statements, social media posts and quips as *"just a stupid joke"* or *"just a meme"* or *"that's not what they meant"* then we are *not* showing the world faithfulness, we are showing the world hypocrisy.

At some point, sooner than later I pray, we have to stop pretending we're confused about what we are really being shown. And we Christians especially need to hear this because the truth is, we don't get to worship a brown, middle eastern Savior on Sunday and then shrug our shoulders at racism on Monday. We don't get to profess we love our neighbor in our prayers, and then carefully and deliberately decide who is and who is not our neighbor in daily life. We don't get to live this way of life because following Jesus means caring about the dignity of all people who are made in the image of God.

Now if at this point you think I am making a political statement, I want to stress to you that I am not. This is not about politics. This is about character. This is about witness. This is about being followers of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. It's about whether we're willing to excuse cruelty, as long as it helps our side win. It's about what we're teaching our kids is acceptable. It's about whether power matters more to us than people made in God's image.

Jesus taught that we recognize a tree by the fruit it bears. Following Jesus produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. So if following a certain religious group, or a certain high-profile celebrity, or a certain powerful political leader keeps producing cruelty, hate and racism, and people continue to defend such, then we need to stop pretending we don't see it, and we need to start calling it what is shown to us.

Again, we may not think we are racist but if racism isn't enough to make us stand up and to speak out, then we are showing everyone that racism just doesn't bother us. And sooner or later, when we show this about ourselves, what we say will matter a whole lot less than what we actually do. Because what we show always tells the truth that others will believe.

Your Friend and Pastor,
Joathan

Sketti & Skits
March 1st, 5 p.m.

Mark your calendar for Sketti & Skits 2026! Sunday March 1 at 5pm. Sketti & Skits: Spaghetti Dinner and Talent Show is a time-honored tradition of FCC Stow where the food is great and the entertainment is even better!

Do you have a talent, magic trick, song, skit or something else you would like to perform? Sign up in the Gathering Area or email christianed@firstchristianstow.org.

Cost for Sketti & Skits is \$8 for adults, \$4 for children and kids under 3 are free. All proceeds go towards Christian Education Ministries and the Youth Activity Fund.

“A New Way”:
Week of Compassion
Special Offering 2026

Rev. Vy Nguyen, Executive Director, Week of Compassion

*When he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. So many gathered around that there was no longer room for them, not even in front of the door, and he was speaking the word to them. Then some people came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. And when they could not bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him, and after having dug through it, they let down the mat on which the paralytic lay. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “**Child, your sins are forgiven.**” (Mark 2: 1 - 5)*

In the fall of 2025, the Week of Compassion Board of Stewards gathered in San Diego, at the edge of a border where human lives and holy stories meet. There, they were reminded that displacement is not only about geography; it is about loss and resilience, faith and rebuilding. Whether caused by poverty, violence, persecution, or disaster, displacement reveals both the deep wounds of the world and the courage of those who refuse to give up home.

Whether rebuilding after a flood, finding safety after conflict, or recovering from economic hardship, Week of Compassion is finding **A New Way**— a way rooted in relationship, equity, and

hope. Together, we are strengthening the church’s long-term capacity to respond and accompany, wherever people are displaced or in need. The gifts you give make an impact around the world, ensuring that vulnerable communities are held at the center of the work, and strengthening congregations and partners to respond.

In moments when we’re most uncertain, when the usual path is blocked or can’t even be seen, we rely on each other. Like the friends who join together and make a way where there was no way, determined that their friend would see Jesus (Mark 2:1-5), in this work we share, God is opening new ways. Our task is to walk them faithfully— together, with imagination, courage, and trust in the One who makes all things new.

Scout Sunday! February 15th

Did you know FCC Stow is home to **FOUR** Scout groups?!

Girl Scout Troop 90754, Brownie Girl Scout Troop 91772, Cub Scout Pack 3169, and Boy Scout Troop 169.

Week after week, dozens of Scouts and families meet in our church building to teach, learn, support, encourage, play, plan, and prepare today’s youth to be tomorrow’s leaders who have purpose and drive to make an impact in all they do. And every February congregations around the country who are privileged to have even one Scout group celebrate and honor these young students with a special Scout Sunday during worship.

On Sunday, February 15th, First Christian Church will be celebrating and honoring all of these Scouts by inviting each of them and their families to join us for worship and Coffee Fellowship. We will even be treated to have some of these Scouts participating in various elements of worship. (Sorry, none of them wanted to preach the sermon so we’re still stuck with Jonathan.) So let us be ready to greet, welcome, and thank our Scouts on February 15th for being part of the First Christian Church family. (And let’s be ready to do so **EVEN IF** they are sitting in our pew! Seriously, be cool y’all.)

Loaves & Fishes + Pantry January Update

43 families braved the cold weather to visit Loaves & Fishes + Pantry on Sunday January 18.

We provided these intrepid guests with 115 meals of the ever-popular Jambalaya and, of course, we also supplied plenty of groceries to those guests.

We also have two very exciting pieces of news about Loaves & Fishes + Pantry.

First, an anonymous donor has made a very generous financial donation with the proviso that the funds be used to help alleviate food insecurity in our area.

Second, the Akron Canton Regional Foodbank received funding from Feeding America to increase capacity in emergency pantries. This means that we will receive a commercial refrigerator with a 43 cubic foot capacity. We will sharing this refrigerator with Bulldog Bags.

So now not only will we have the capacity to store refrigerated dairy and produce but we also will have the funds to obtain these items.

So we have much to look forward to in 2026!

Youth Group in February

The Youth Group will be on hand Sunday, February 8th selling their “*outta of this world-famous*” Super Bowl Subs for the incredibly low, economical price of just \$7. These heaping subs of turkey, ham, pepperoni, American and Swiss cheeses, along with optional accoutrements of banana peppers and Italian dressing, will also include an individual bag of chips. Proceeds from this sale, which will be pretty much 100% due to the generous donation of Mike’s Place in Kent, will help support Youth and Christian Education ministries of the church.

Additionally, the Youth Group will meet on Sunday, February 22nd, after worship until 1:15 p.m. for a regular meeting that will include lunch and skit preparation for Sketti n Skits. (Sketti n Skits is set for March 1st at 5 p.m.)

Décor Changeover: February 15th

Friends, please consider staying after church a few minutes to help us change over our décor in time for Lent!

Loaves & Fishes + Pantry February 15th, 4-6 p.m.

Our drive thru meal will be February 15th 4-6p.m. We will be serving ham and scalloped potatoes. All are welcome!

Bake Sale (Benefiting Week of Compassion) February 22nd, Before & After Service

Please mark your calendars and be ready to go home with some great baked goods! We need donations and folks to buy, so there’s something to do for anyone! Please plan to bring some cash (Or Venmo/Paypal via QR Code!) to purchase!

Camp Christian Summer Camp 2026 Schedule

It’s finally that time of year again! A link to the upcoming year’s schedule can be found here: [Camp Christian 2026 Summer Camp Schedule](#)

Additionally, the full schedule will be appended to the back of this edition of Pathways for print copies.

Emergency Pantry Items Needed

In order to serve this ministry, we need items to distribute to those in need! We have a limited and select list of items in the Emergency Pantry to best serve the broadest population possible. Please take a look at the list below, and if you have items that match these descriptions in your pantry (or your grocery cart), please consider sharing some of them with those in their time of need. Items must be unopened and shelf stable.

Canned Goods: Ready to eat stew, chili or other ready-to-eat meals, fruit (peaches or orange slices), tuna, chicken, or other canned meats, cream of chicken, tomato, or potato soups.

Ready-to-eat microwaveable meals
Peanut butter and grape jelly
Boxed pasta, pasta sauce, mac & cheese.

We also distribute some other necessities via the Emergency Pantry, including: feminine hygiene products, toilet paper, shampoo, moisturizer, toothpaste, toothbrushes, small first aid kits, or other shelf-stable necessities and toiletries.

More items will be distributed via flyers, bulletins, and special announcement soon.

Music Notes: Sweet Hour of Prayer

Hymns are a beautiful, meaningful source for prayer, meditation, and comfort – for any time, and particularly for the season of Lent. You can play recordings of hymns, read the texts/lyrics, or sing them quietly, to lead into your own personal prayer. Maybe start your quiet time with “O Lord, hear my prayer... When I call, answer me...” (Chalice Praise #104). Pray “Change my heart, O God; make it ever new” (CP86). Sing, in your mind or aloud, a beloved favorite like “I need thee every hour, most gracious Lord” (Chalice Hymnal #578), or “Precious Lord, take my hand” (CH628), or “Day by Day” (CH599).

Hymns touch the heart and spirit, and words set to music stay in our memories.

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>
12/7	Hot Chocolate Packets
1/11	Ramen Noodles
2/8	Deodorant (Travel Size)
3/8	Pudding Cups

5/10 Shampoo (Travel Size)

Acme Community Cash Back Cash Back is ALMOST DONE! Feb 15!

The last few days of the Acme Community Cashback campaign are here. The last day to earn cashback credit is Feb. 15. The receipts MUST be turned in by the 25th. Thanks to all who participated!

Church Service Announcements Recorded Announcements for Church

Don’t forget! For folks who really need to get the word out, we offer pre-recorded Church Service Announcements! CSA’s (Both as “Church Service” Announcements, but also “church SERVICE” announcements), will be played after prelude, right before Jonathan opens up our service. We will be recording 15-30 second announcement videos that we will run on Sunday Morning. If you run an outreach opportunity or have an event coming up, we can even provide On-Location recording of where your service or event will take place! Contact fccstow@firstchristianstow.org for Christian or Jonathan to sign up for your CSA before your next church event!

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!

Think – Pray – Connect Families from January

01/04/26

Bill & Cora Dowey

1947 Hawthorne, Stow OH 44224

Cora recently fell and broke her arm. She has a follow up on the 12th to x-ray the arm to determine if surgery is required.

01/11/26

Steve & Michelle Gross

4414 Smokerise Drive, Stow OH 44224

Steve is finally home! Please continue to send support and encouragement as he recovers from COVID.

01/18/26

June Neff c/o Lorenz

3658 Myersville Rd, Uniontown OH 44685

Many of you know June, Cheryl's mom, whose 95th birthday is January 31. If you're so moved, please send a note or a card to the Lorenzes - or bring to the church office - and we'll take them to her on her birthday.

01/25/26

Mike & Wanda Deiwert

867 Cormorant Circle, Cuyahoga Falls OH 44223
Please continue to send support to Mike & Wanda in light of Wanda's brother, Keith, passing away suddenly on the 13th of January. Memorial services are to be held in Greensburg, Indiana tomorrow morning, the 26th.

02/01/26

Rich Fawcett

243 Sprigge Dr, Munroe Falls OH 44262
Please send support and encouragement to the Fawcetts, as Rich was in the hospital earlier this week receiving wound care. He has since returned home on Thursday.

Plan NOW for 2026 Summer Camps, Conferences, & Retreats!

^^^ Denotes Christian Church in Ohio Sponsored Camps

*** Denotes Heartland Conference Sponsored Camps

Please note, Campers may attend any of these events regardless of affiliation.



Help us prepare for Summer!

- ❖ Saturday, May 9th – **Camp Christian Work Day – ALL ARE WELCOME!**
Tasks suited for a wide range of ages and abilities

Summer Programs – Camps, Conferences, & Retreats at Camp Christian

- ❖ Friday, May 1st – Sunday, May 3rd – **Camp Our Way** ^^
For anyone with Special Needs ages 7 and up and an Adult Companion to attend with them
- ❖ Friday, May 22nd – Sunday, May 24th – **Disciples Fellowship Retreat** ^^ – For All Ages
- ❖ Sunday, June 7th – Tuesday, June 9th – **Grandparents & Me Camp** ^^ (Concurrent Camp)
For children completing Kindergarten, 1st or 2nd grade AND their Grandparent
- ❖ Sunday, June 7th – Saturday, June 13th – **Otter Camp** ^^ – Elementary (Concurrent Camp)
For children completing 5th grade & those completing 3rd & 4th grades ready for a full-week of camp
- ❖ Wednesday, June 10th – Saturday, June 13th – **Grands, Me & Family** *** (Concurrent Camp)
For children ages 4-13 with grandparent or parent
- ❖ Sunday, June 14th – Saturday, June 20th – **Chi Rho Camp Emmaus** ^^ – Junior High (Concurrent Camp)
For youth completing 6th, 7th & 8th grades
- ❖ Sunday, June 14th – Saturday, June 20th – **CYF Conference #1** ^^ – High School (Concurrent Camp)
For youth completing 9th, 10th, 11th & 12th grades
- ❖ Sunday, June 21st – Saturday, June 27th – **Music, Mindfulness, Art, Dance, Drama / Camp OUT** *** (Concurrent Camp) Both Camps – For Children and Youth ages 8 to 18
- ❖ Sunday, June 28th – Saturday, July 4th – **SportsCamp** ***
For Children and Youth ages 7 to 18
- ❖ Wednesday, July 8th – Saturday, July 11th – **Rabbit Camp** ^^ – Elementary
For children completing 2nd grade and/or 3rd and 4th graders whose parents want a shorter camp experience for their children
- ❖ Sunday, July 12th – Saturday, July 18th – **Chi Rho Camp Corinth** ^^ – Junior High
For youth completing 6th, 7th & 8th grades
- ❖ Sunday, July 19th – Saturday, July 25th – **CYF Conference #2** ^^ – High School
For youth completing 9th, 10th, 11th & 12th grades
- ❖ Sunday, July 26th – Sunday, August 2nd – **Advance Conference** ^^ – Young Adults
For all adults ages 19 to 30 (out of high school)
- ❖ Friday, September 4th – Sunday, September 6th – **Disciples Fellowship Retreat** ^^ – For All Ages

NOT at Camp Christian: June 22-26, **Adult Conference** ^^^{***}, Northwest Christian Church, Upper Arlington

More information about the Christian Church in Ohio programs is available at

<https://www.ccinoh.com/camp-christian/summer-programs.aspx>

More information about the Heartland Conference programs is available at: <https://heartlanducc.org/storycontinues/>