



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

## PATHWAYS

MARCH 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!

### **Governing Board, Monday, March 16<sup>th</sup>, 7 p.m.**

Hear ye, hear ye! All Governing Board members are kindly reminded and encouraged to attend the next meeting of the Governing Board, set for Monday, March 16<sup>th</sup> at 7p.m. Please make every effort to be present at this meeting.

### **Loaves and Fishes + Pantry March 15<sup>th</sup>, 4-6p.m.**

Free monthly dinner! Drive-Thru/Carry Out, 4-6 p.m.  
This will also include the +Pantry food distribution.

### **Youth Group March 15<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>**

The Youth Group will meet on Sundays, March 15<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>.

### **Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Sunday**

Holy Week begins with Palm Sunday on March 29<sup>th</sup>, followed by  
Maundy Thursday on April 2<sup>nd</sup>,

Good Friday on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, and Easter Sunday on April 5<sup>th</sup>.

A Children's Processional will be part of the Palm Sunday worship service. Any children (and parents if they would like) are invited to meet in the Gathering Area just before worship where palm leaves will be handed out, and then the group will process in during the opening hymn.

**March 2026**

**Pastors Pen**

***“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.***

***Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him.”***

***~John 3:16-17***

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There has been a lot going on in the world. Normally I might write out a list of such happenings but honestly, even just thinking about the “*a lot*” is exhausting and heartbreaking. Watching it unfold is exhausting and heartbreaking. And the idea of writing them all here just adds to the exhaustion. So how about we just leave it at, ***“There has been a lot going on in the world.”*** But there is one part of that “*a lot*” going on I feel is necessary to say because now it feels like we’re on the brink of war. Now please know this is not going to be about the conflict with Iran being good or bad, this is simply me saying, ***“There has been a lot going on in the world—and among them is the feeling we are on the brink of war.”*** I think we can all agree this statement rings true with a deep level of accuracy. And because there is a lot going on in the world the question, I keep asking is this... *What do we do with all that is happening?*

For this past Sunday the lectionary reading included the famous John 3:16-17 verses, and I think these verses can guide us to begin to answer that question. When we read those words, “*For God so love the world...*” it’s important to note John tells us God loves the world—the whole *entire* world. God doesn’t just love part of the world; God doesn’t just love only the people we agree with; God doesn’t just love the ones we think are right in and with the world. John tells us God loves the world—the whole *entire* world. And when we start to address our question with this understanding, and when we start with the belief that God loves the entire world, then we will have begun from a faithful place to address this question.

Now, I will admit, the idea, the concept, the belief that God loves the *entire* world can quickly become uncomfortable. It’s uncomfortable because it means the call of Jesus isn’t just to be right or righteous, rather it is a call to love. We are to love as God loves. We are to love even when it’s complicated, even when it cost something, even when it doesn’t fit neatly into any side of the aisle or party affiliation or nationality. We are to love as God loves.

So, if we are wringing our hands because of the “*a lot*” that is happening in the world, and it is leaving us asking “*What do we do with all that is happening?*” or even “*What can we do?*”, I believe setting ourselves squarely and strongly into these verses of John we know so well is where we start. We start by refusing to let our faith be shaped by fear or outrage or whatever side we decide we’re on. We start by refusing to dehumanize people made in the image of God even when everyone else is doing it. We start by refusing to treat violence like it’s inevitable or necessary or “*just the way things are*”. We start by refusing to let our heart grow numb because it’s easier than caring and choosing instead to pay attention and tell the truth about what we are seeing—especially when we see injustice. We start to pray and speak and act like the words, “*For God so loved the world...*” actually matter to us and are foundational to the people we claim to be. We start by caring about people we will never meet in lands we will never go to. We start by letting our faith be shaped not by all that has been going on in the world, but rather we let our faith be shaped by a God who looks at a broken violent world and still chooses love.

As we continue to make our way through this season of Lent, let us keep our focus on Jesus and where he is leading us. All while staying faithful to the path he willingly took for all the world. A path of forgiveness, grace, mercy, reconciliation, and love.

Your Pastor and Friend,  
Jonathan

## **Super Bowl Sub Sale Thanks!**

On February 8<sup>th</sup> the Youth Group was on hand selling Super Bowl Subs on Super Bowl Sunday! These tasty sandwiches were available for purchase just in time for the big game and we want to express a huge and deeply heart felt **THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU** to Mike and Debbie Kostensky, Cody Kostensky, and Mike's Place in Kent for once again making a generous donation of all the sub fixings. They continue to support this fundraiser year after year. 90 subs were made and sold and the proceeds are being put toward Youth and Christian Education ministries. **THANK YOU to EVERYONE** who supported this fund raiser! We hope you enjoyed your subs, and we hope next year we will be making subs for the Cleveland Browns Super Bowl Sunday! (But we won't be holding our breath. Just as long as it's not the Ravens or the Steelers, right?!)

## **Youth Group in March** **Sundays, March 16<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>**

The Youth Group was on hand for Sketti n Skits on Sunday, March 1<sup>st</sup>, helping to serve up all that delicious spaghetti, along with helping to serve up the laughs in a skit or two during the talent show portion of the night.

And now, coming up on Sundays, March 15<sup>th</sup> and March 29<sup>th</sup>, the Youth Group will meet for a regular youth meeting that will include, as always, frivolity of epic proportions! And we will begin the long and arduous work of getting ready for their annual Youth Sunday. Ok, it's not arduous as long as we don't let Jonathan convince us that using 100 words instead of 10 words is somehow better for everyone.

And speaking of Youth Sunday, mark your calendars for that special time of worship that will be held on May 12<sup>th</sup>! Which will be here before we know it!

## **Week(s) of Compassion 2026** **Bake Sale Thank You!**

Thank you to everyone who once again helped make this year's Week of Compassion Bake sale a resounding and delectable success! Thank you to all who donated and thank you to all who so lovingly and graciously sacrificed their diet and

made purchases from the bake sale! Your willingness to do such is greatly appreciated. We hope you were somehow able to manage not letting your sweet treats go to waste—even if they did go to...waist! (Get it? Pun intended!)

And a very special and tremendous thank you to Mary Ellen Neitz and her crew of dedicated helpers who once again went above and beyond the call of duty to coordinate, organize, and lead yet another successful Week(s) of Compassion Bake Sale! Your work and service and ministry is a tremendous gift, and we are all so grateful to you for all you do!

## **Palm Sunday** **March 29<sup>th</sup>, 10:30 a.m.**

Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem was marked by crowds who were preparing for the Jewish Passover and then flooded the streets waving palm branches and throwing down their coats and cloaks, shouting shouts of "*Hosanna, Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!*" They all hailed Jesus as the messianic king they hoped and believed him to be. This day marks the beginning of Holy Week, Jesus' final agonizing journey to the cross.

You are invited to come and begin this week-long journey and walk with Jesus, who would use these holy days to teach, preach, command, convict, heal, give, and bless any and all. You are invited to walk with Jesus who willingly suffers and dies so that we might have eternal life. All are invited. All are welcome.

Additionally, a children's palm processional will be done at the beginning of this service. Meet in the Gathering Area just before worship to receive a palm leaf and then process in during the opening hymn of worship.

## **Maundy Thursday Agape Service** **Thursday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 6 p.m.**

Maundy Thursday at First Christian Stow is always a holy and sacred night and is set to be such once again this year as we gather to share in a light meal with one another, and then segue into worship on this holy night, together in Disciples Hall, where the space will once again be transformed into that sacred upper room where Jesus gathered with his Disciples on the night before his crucifixion. There

we join with our Savior to share with him a meal intended to fill us up spiritually more than physically because this meal, like the one Jesus shared with his Disciples, leads to a profound and moving time of worship where the dim setting, impactful music, moving and touching prayers, holy scripture, and living words of institution take on a deeper and more powerful meaning than any other time of the year.

Please plan to make this time of worship part of your Holy Week remembrances and celebration. A light dinner will be served at 6 p.m., followed by worship around 6:35, with an aim to conclude by 7:20 p.m. The Chancel Choir will rehearse after this time of worship.

### **Summer Camp Dates and Information!**

Camp Christian, Summer 2026

It might be March, and the warm sunny summer days of summer probably still seem so far away, but trust us when we say it's time to start thinking about Summer Camps and Conferences at Camp Christian! Please look over the list of camps and their dates and consider which one is best for you and/or your child. If you have any questions, please reach out to Jonathan. And please remember, no one who wants to go to camp will be denied this opportunity due to financial restraints. Both our church and the regional church have scholarship funds available to ensure all students who want to attend camp at Camp Christian can. Again, please contact Jonathan for information about camp scholarships.

*Please see the schedule on the last page of this edition of Pathways.*

### **“Do You Think You Might Want To Be A Lay Leader?”**

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) has always held to the stance we call “*The priesthood of all believers.*” This is a belief and view that stresses all have a role in sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ, even in and during worship. Which is why our church is aiming to do a new thing when it comes to it Lay Leadership in our weekly worship services.

If you have ever entertained the idea of helping to lead worship services, or if you have ever felt

God giving you that calling “nudge” to guide the gathered community in times of word and prayer, then you are invited to further that consideration by indicating your interest on the back of a Connection Card or by reaching out to Jonathan or the church office. And rest assured, by inquiring about and sharing your interest in this opportunity, you are not committing to being a Lay Leader. If you simply want to learn more about this opportunity and then prayerfully consider and decide if this is something you might like to try, then that is all your initial interest has to be.

As Disciples of Christ, we are all called to share our God given gifts and talents in a variety of ways. Maybe being a worship Lay Leader is a new way God is calling you to serve!

### **Loaves & Fishes + Pantry** **March 15<sup>th</sup>, 4-6 p.m.**

The March drive thru meal is March 15th 4-6p.m. We are serving meat loaf with sides for the community. All are welcome to volunteer and receive!

### **Loaves & Fishes + Pantry March Update**

On Sunday February 15 Loaves & Fishes + Pantry served 94 meals of ham and scalloped potatoes to all who came looking for a hot meal. 37 of those families also took home groceries.

Because the recent generous donation we were able to give out much more food than previously:

- 3 dinners instead of 2
- 2 cans of soup instead of 1
- 3 cans of veggies instead of 2
- 3 cans of fruit instead of 2
- 2 boxes of cereal instead of 1
- 1 box of margarine sticks instead of none
- 1 package of cheese slices instead of none

We recently obtained 5 cases of 2 pound bags of frozen chicken tenders for our March pantry. A case of 10 bags of tenders costs \$36; 5 cases would have busted our budget last year.

All of this happens because of the generous support that we receive from everyone in our church. This is a true group effort about which we should all feel good.

**Music Notes**  
**April 19: Psalms, Hymns,**  
**And Spiritual Songs**

*...and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. (Colossians 3.16b-17)*

We're in the midst of Lent now, singing and playing the slower, reflective music of the season. The music of Easter Sunday, April 5, is exuberant and triumphant. And later in April, in worship on the 19<sup>th</sup>, we'll follow the guidance of the Colossians passage: we'll read, sing, and play Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God with gratitude in our hearts!

All our music groups – Chancel Choir, Joy Bells, Spiritus, Joyful Noise, Youth Bells, Grace Notes, Children's Choir, Silent Praise, The Way, and Resurrection Brass – will make music "in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."

**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.

**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!

<b><u>Due</u></b>	<b><u>Items Needed</u></b>
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 [fcstow@firstchristianstow.org](mailto:fcstow@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**

**02/01/26**

## **Sandy Long**

3813 Fortuna Dr #312, Akron, OH 44312

*Please note the updated address, and please send cards and well-wishes to Sandy as she has moved again recently to a new nursing home.*

**02/15/26**

## **Mike and Karen Hoffman**

4123 Melcher Ave., New Franklin OH 44319

*Please send support and condolences to the Hoffmans in light of Kristen Hoffman's passing this prior Tuesday. Memorial Service will be held Tuesday, Feb. 17<sup>th</sup>, at 11 a.m. The family will receive friends beginning at 10 a.m. until the start of service.*

**02/22/26**

## **Barb Bell**

543 Crest Drive, Suffield OH 44260

*Please send support and encouragement to Barb as she recovers from shoulder surgery this past Monday. She's now recovering at home.*

**03/01/26**

## **Lindsey Hindel**

2675 Prescott Downs, Stow OH 44224

*Please send encouragement, love, and support to Lindsey Hindel, as she is in recovery for a brain-bleed earlier this week.*

## **Mary Willey**

191 Wexham Rd, Winston-Salem NC 27103

*Please send support to Mary, a long-time member and friend to many. Jim passed away a few years ago, and Mary is now in hospice. She is being cared for well by her neighbors!*

**03/08/26**

## **Lois Fawcett**

243 Spriggle Dr. Munroe Falls OH 44262

*Please send support and love to Lois Fawcett in light of the loss of Rich Fawcett, who passed away earlier this week.*

## **The Lloyd Family**

3400 Charring Cross Dr. Stow, OH 44224

*Please also send support and love to the Lloyd family in light of the loss of their father & grandfather.*

## 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, 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> grade AND their Grandparent*
- ❖ Sunday, June 7th – Saturday, June 13th – **Otter Camp** ^^ – Elementary (Concurrent Camp)  
*For children completing 5<sup>th</sup> grade & those completing 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> 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 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grades*
- ❖ Sunday, June 14th – Saturday, June 20th – **CYF Conference #1** ^^ – High School (Concurrent Camp)  
*For youth completing 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and/or 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> 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 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grades*
- ❖ Sunday, July 19th – Saturday, July 25th – **CYF Conference #2** ^^ – High School  
*For youth completing 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> 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** ^^<sup>\*\*\*</sup>, 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/>