



PATHWAYS NEWSLETTER

May 2026

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

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Pentecost Sunday

May 24th, 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!

Summer Worship Time-Shift begins May 24th!

Summertime Worship will be at 10:00 a.m.

Please take note that with the summer months nearly upon us (and not soon enough!) that means we will begin our **Summer Worship Time-Shift** (previously known as “*Summer Worship Hours*”) on **Sunday, May 24th, Memorial Day weekend**, with worship in the sanctuary beginning at 10:00 a.m. Coffee fellowship, as usual, will be held in our Library after worship. Please note, the Summer Worship Time-Shift will run **through** Labor Day weekend.

Loaves and Fishes + Pantry June 21st, 4-6p.m.

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

Fourth of July Pancake Breakfast!

Saturday, July 4th, 7 a.m. to 10 a.m.

Please consider how you can help support this annual event!

Vacation Bible School - SonTreasure Island

Sunday July 12 – Thursday July 16, 6-8 p.m.

Volunteers are needed! Look for the sign-up sheet in the Gathering Area or talk to Anna or Richelle for more information.

May 2026 Pastors Pen

Pentecost was originally an Old Testament festival called the “*Feast of Weeks*” beginning on the fiftieth day after the beginning of Passover and was originally an agricultural festival centered on celebrating and giving thanks for the “first fruits” of the early spring harvest (See Lev. 23, Ex. 23 and 34). In the Christian calendar it falls on the seventh Sunday after Easter and....

Wait, wait, wait... let’s just cut the theological history lesson for a second and go back to that idea of “*Feast of Weeks*” and drill down into finding out if that’s literally what they did, because if it was actually a *feast* that lasted for *weeks*, then we need to scrap the whole “*Pentecost*” insider language title that few really know—even Christians, abandon the weird “*tongues of fire*” imagery that confuses people at best and scares people at worst, and start using “*Feast of Weeks*” again. Because who wouldn’t want to **FEAST** for **Weeks**!

I can imagine it now...endless pepperoni and sausage pizza from all the pizza places, mostly though from Coccia House in Wooster. Bottomless wavy Lays potato chips with tub after tub of Smith’s French onion dip. All you can eat wings, complete with blue cheese and celery. Handel’s ice cream. Fay Haws’ chocolate chip cookies. Mike Drew’s award-winning soups. Bill Dowey’s baked salmon. A Dianne and Scott Haywood hosted coffee fellowship. All the sandwiches from Mike’s Place. The world-famous onion rings from Bishop’s restaurant also in Wooster. My wife’s pulled pork. And among it all (and more!) an eternal stream of my childhood favorite supper, tater-tot casserole. Please feel free to add your menu to this list and we will undoubtedly have the kind of church celebration that would bring the staunchest atheist into the church!

This “*Feast of Weeks*” style of worship is a nice image isn’t it? You’re thinking about your favorite childhood meal right now aren’t you!? And sure, I may have had a bit too much fun writing, but it’s fun to dream. It’s good to dream. In fact, it’s biblical. Acts 2 tells of how the early church dreamed dreams—dreams of glory filled days that were like feasts of abundance, and the most abundant abundance was that of hope.

The Church today needs to dream dreams like it has never dreamed them before. We find

ourselves in a sort of “*Babylonian-like*” exile where the church has been castigated as an entity not to be trusted, not to be valued, not to be seen as useful because it is no longer a place of love, compassion, inclusion, or even hope. The Church is being made irrelevant by the voices of a few who seem to speak the loudest, and their message is that if you are not of a certain way of life, belief, political party, and even socioeconomic status, then you are not worthy of God’s love.

But that is **NOT** our church? First Christian Church of Stow is a place that can be trusted to share the true Good News of Jesus Christ—proclaiming that all are loved, that all are holy and beloved children of God, and that God loves all people no matter who they are, what they have done, or what they have left undone. First Christian Church of Stow is a place where the lost and least among us can be found and embraced.

Pentecost, or what I hope will become the “*Feast of Weeks*”, is the Church’s celebration of the gift of the Holy Spirit. It comes from the realization that God’s very life, breath and energy lives in, with, and among us. It is a reminder that what we do as God’s faithful people and as God’s faithful church is not done in vain, nor should it be done simply out of habit. We are faithful people and a faithful church because God is with us, God has called us, and God is using us, i.e.—God is empowering us to be the hands and feet of Christ in our world today.

For Christians, Pentecost Sunday is a day to celebrate hope—a hope evoked by the knowledge that God, through the Holy Spirit, is at work. It is a celebration of newness, of re-creation, of renewal, of purpose, mission, and calling as God’s people. It is a celebration of God’s ongoing work in the world. Yet, it is also a recognition that God’s work is done through the people of God as the Holy Spirit is poured out upon us all.

So, on Pentecost Sunday, May 24th, go ahead and wear red to symbolize and celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit being poured out upon us and dancing in our midst as tongues of fire. But let us celebrate for weeks and weeks and weeks—say, maybe... 52 weeks!—the hope filled joy and love that God has given to all through the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Your Pastor and Friend,
Jonathan

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

At morning worship on Sunday, April 19, 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 – made music “in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”

Music touches the heart. It connects us with God, who is all around us and in us. It connects us with each other. The Psalms are ancient and timeless cries, laments, and joyful praise. Hymns and spiritual songs comfort, encourage, and teach scripture and wisdom, in elegant poetry and in meditative lyrics. The music varies widely, from centuries-old classical to rock and gospel. There’s something for everyone, in whatever place your life and heart happen to be.

We thank all those who helped us worship on this beautiful morning: singers, ringers and other instrumentalists, signers, readers... We thank directors Barb Eppley, Scott, and Cora, and we thank Andrea for her accompaniment. We thank you for sharing your gifts and for your dedication. And we thank God for each one of you. Chancel Choir will sing in morning worship through the end of May, and we look forward to a variety of musical offerings this summer.

Loaves & Fishes + Pantry
March/April Update

Traditionally as the weather warms up, we get more guests and neighbors for Loaves & Fishes + Pantry. This has held true for 2026. In March we served 108 dinners of homemade meatloaf with all the traditional sides. In April we served 115 meals of chicken sliders with enchilada soup on the side.

We had 41 families come through in March and 49 families in April.

March also saw the debut of our new commercial refrigerator, which enabled us to include butter and American cheese in the grocery bags. Not only that, but the major donation we

received earlier this year meant we could afford to give each family 2lb bags of chicken tenders in March and 1lb of ground beef and 12 hot dogs in April.

So far in 2026 we have served 91 different families. 28 of those families (30%) were new to our pantry. 7 of those 28 had never been to any pantry anywhere before coming to us.

It takes many hands to make Loaves & Fishes + Pantry work. But it couldn’t happen with the support of every member of our church. This outreach is a visible manifestation of our Christian faith. There is much that our church does that is not quite so visible but is nevertheless just as important in our mission.

Thanks to the support of all of you we are ready for whatever the rest of 2026 brings our way.

Emergency Pantry Items Needed

To maintain our emergency pantry, we periodically restock 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. If you have items on the list below in your pantry (or your grocery cart), please consider sharing some of them with those in 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 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.

Lists of other needed items will be communicated via flyers, bulletins, and special announcement soon.

Board of Trustees Update

I need somebody,
Help – not just anybody,
Help – you know I need someone, Help....
(apologies to the Beatles).

The trustees (more so the Church building & grounds) have a growing list of needs. They vary from painting, light plumbing, light building repair, changing HVAC filters, checking the batteries in EXIT signs, help with maintaining the garden areas, etc.

If you can help, please contact John McCreight & we'll match up your skills/talents to a task we have. We typically supply materials for the work. These things can generally be done on your schedule.

Thanks,
John
330-814-3825

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 are still plans in the works for our “youths” 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!

Summer Camps and Conferences at Camp Christian!

This summer students from our church family will be attending camps at Camp Christian, and there is still time for others to sign-up and get to Camp this Summer! Just check out the Christian Church in Ohio website for specific dates for each camp or talk to Jonathan about Camp options.

All camps are led and supervised by a Director, Assistant Directors, Counselors, and a Camp Staff. Youth from across the state come for an unforgettable time that includes bible study and evening worship at the hallowed Vespers spot, but also hiking, boating, fishing, swimming and more fun and games than you might think a church camp would have. (Did you know Jonathan more than once jumped in the lake, which at the time may or may not have been against Camp rules! Camp is also where he got his call to go into ministry!) Plus, there are nightly activities that include the incredibly fun Ho-Down, Skit-Night, Talent Show, Dance, and Banquet.

Camp Christian, just two hours from Stow, has been an unforgettable place for spiritual development, friendships, and fun for countless youth of our church across the decades, and we know it can be for you too! Any and all Youth who want to attend Camp, regardless of ability to pay for the registration fee, can attend the camp of their choice as scholarships are available through our church as well as the Regional Church Office.

With dedicated counselors, campers will be led through a week-long Christian experience in which, through classes, workshops, and organized play, they will strengthen their knowledge, deepen their faith, and build everlasting friendships. Each camp is deeply rooted with wonderful traditions, but all have the same goal—strengthening our faith in Jesus.

A link to this year's camp schedule can be found here: [Camp Christian 2026 Summer Camp Schedule](#)

Send a Kid to Camp Fund

As a congregation, we encourage our youth to attend and experience a week at Camp Christian. To help make the cost affordable for families we do the following:

- allocate a portion of our budget to go towards the cost of camp,
- support fundraisers like Super Bowl Subs and Sketti & Skits,
- encourage the congregation to donate towards our **“Send a Kid to Camp” (SAKTC)** fund.

For 2026, the cost of camp is \$470 per camper. Currently, we know of 5 youths who plan on attending camp this summer. Each family is asked to contribute \$50 per camper towards the cost of camp. The balance will be covered using the funds described above. If a family can pay more than \$50, that additional amount will be added directly to the SAKTC fund. Families unable to afford \$50 per camper are encouraged to reach out for further assistance.

If you would like to share in supporting our youth attending camp, we welcome donations at any time. Please mark the donation as 'Send A Kid to Camp' or 'SAKTC'. Donations can be placed in the church offering plates, mailed to the church, or submitted through online giving options.

Fourth of July Pancake Breakfast!! Saturday, July 4th, 7 a.m. to 10 a.m.

Wait, when is the 4th of July Breakfast?

If this event is not on automatic recurrence in your phone for every 4th of July until Jesus returns, then why not?! In Stow, Ohio, what is the 4th of July without a giant parade, hot dogs, hamburgers, ice cream, sparklers, fireworks and PANCAKES! It's an incomplete 4th of July, that's what it is!

This 4th of July we will again throw open the doors of the church and welcome into our building hundreds of people from the community who will come to indulge upon the tasty, all-you-care-to-eat pancakes, along with breakfast sausage, and ***REAL*** maple syrup—not that fake stuff! (Except for the sugar free syrup we offer for those guests who need it, and that stuff is tasty too!)

This of course will require many volunteers to serve in numerous roles! Please consider how you can help support this time-honored 4th of July Stow event! One great way is to invite your friends and neighbors! Invite your co-workers and even the people who walk their dog past your house every day because we don't want anyone to have an incomplete 4th of July!

Oh, and one more thing! Do you know our church offers HALF PRICE admission to the Pancake Breakfast for all those who participate in the Firecracker Run?! It's true! Coupons are in the runner's packet. Because who doesn't want to crush some pancakes smothered in butter and syrup after running four miles!?!?

Vacation Bible School 2026 Sunday July 12 - Thursday July 16, 6-8pm



All children ages 3 - 5th grade are invited! At SonTreasure Island, we will play island games, create colorful crafts, and enjoy tropical snacks. But most importantly, we will discover the greatest treasure - God's love!

Register at www.fccstow.org/vbs.

VBS Volunteers Needed: Join us on our SonTreasure Island adventure!

Sign up in the Gathering Area or talk to Anna or Richelle for opportunities to serve, lead and have fun with us at Vacation Bible School!

Rubber Ducks Game and Fireworks,
Saturday, August 22nd
First Pitch is set for 6:05*

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 22nd.

Tickets are just \$15! What a bargain! A night at the ballpark and fireworks for just fifteen bucks!? You can’t even walk past the Target door-buster dollar deals for fifteen bucks! Of course, if you are bringing your kids or 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!

2026 Women’s Retreat – Save the Date!

The women of Stow FCC will be traveling to Chautauqua New York again this fall for our annual Women's Retreat. The 2026 dates are **Friday September 25 through Sunday September 27**. Registration forms are available in the Gathering Area. If you think you might be interested in attending and/or have questions, please see Barb Bell, or give her a call at 330-807-5498. We would love to have you join us!

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

Join us for a Yoga Basics class Wednesday evenings at 5:45 p.m. Your \$5 donation for admission helps to support various outreach programs throughout the church, including Bulldog bags, Week of Compassion, and our Loaves & Fishes + Pantry Outreach program. Yoga is for Everybody and Every Body!

**“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.

In Appreciation

A huge Thank You to our Music Directors, Ralph Lorenz and Cheryl Neff Lorenz, and Andrea Drews, our Organist/Pianist for their skill and choices of Service Music each week. Very few Churches have such a large number of both Instrumental and Vocal groups to assist in Praising our Lord each and every week. Thank you also to those others who are willing to participate, we always benefit from your musical gifts.

~Barb Eppley

Think – Pray – Connect Recent Families

Lynn and John Fauvie

2669 Northland St, Cuyahoga Falls, OH 44221.
Lynn and John's daughter, Elise Fauvie and her partner Alex, welcomed into the world their daughter Maria Lynn on Thursday, April 23. Let us all join together in praying God's blessings of abundant life surround Elise, Alex, Maria, and the entire family.

Family of Betty Lappin

4309 Newcomer Rd. Kent, OH 44240.
Our dear friend Betty Lappin passed away on Thursday, April 30, just two weeks after her 104th birthday. Condolences can be sent to her son Harley at the above address.

Janet Cummings

7473 Sylvan Dr.
Kent, Ohio 44240

Janet Cummings will be moving to her daughter's home soon. Please address cards to her new address above.

Ashley Mahaffey

3493 Haas Rd.

Cuyahoga Falls, OH 44223

Ashley, a long-time member of FCC Stow, has recently been diagnosed with a recurrence of her lymphoma. She is currently hospitalized near her family in Columbus for treatment. Words of encouragement can be sent to the above address or to her parents:

Patrick and Judy Mahaffey

**1530 Bollingbrook Dr.
Columbus OH 43228**