



## PATHWAYS NEWSLETTER

**JUNE-JULY 2026**

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

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### Loaves and Fishes + Pantry June 21<sup>st</sup> and July 19<sup>th</sup>, 4-6p.m.

Free monthly dinner! Drive-Thru/Carry Out, 4-6 p.m.  
Kielbasa sandwiches and picnic-style sides are on the menu June 21st!  
This also includes the +Pantry food distribution.

### Fourth of July Pancake Breakfast! Saturday, July 4<sup>th</sup>, 7 a.m. to 10 a.m.

Please consider how you can help support this annual event!  
Sign-up sheets can be found in the Gathering Area.

### Vacation Bible School - SonTreasure Island Sunday July 12 – Thursday July 16, 6-8 p.m.

All children age 3 through 5th grade are invited!  
Register at [www.fccstow.org/vbs](http://www.fccstow.org/vbs)

### FCC Orchestra - Save the Date!

Calling on all instrumentalists! If you can play an instrument at least at the level of a hymn and would be interested in playing in the FCC Orchestra for the Sunday worship service on **August 16**, please contact Ralph with your information. He can be reached at [rlorenzmusic@yahoo.com](mailto:rlorenzmusic@yahoo.com) or 330-283-5290. Let's make a joyful noise together!

### RubberDucks Game and Fireworks, Saturday, August 22<sup>nd</sup> First Pitch is set for 6:05\*

Once again FCC Stow will spend a summer evening with the Akron RubberDucks. This summertime tradition for our church and friends is a great opportunity to enjoy a carefree night at Canal Park watching the RubberDucks and following the game, enjoying a spectacular fireworks display. Tickets are just \$15.00!  
See Bill Dowey or contact the church office to reserve your tickets.

## June-July 2026 Pastor's Pen

All throughout God's holy word, we are shown how God hears the cries of the oppressed, showing us again and again God's divine commitment to breaking chains and delivering the captive.

**Exodus 3:7-8**, *"The Lord said, 'I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians...'"*

**Isaiah 58:6**, *"Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?"*

**Luke 4:18-19**, *"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."*

**Acts 16:25-26**, *"About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone's chains came loose."*

Juneteenth is a vital day of remembrance, reflection, and celebration for our entire church family. On June 19, 1865, Union soldiers arrived in Galveston, Texas, to declare that all enslaved people were finally free. This news came a full two and a half years after the Emancipation Proclamation. As followers of Jesus Christ, Juneteenth is not just a moment in American history. It is a profound reflection of our Gospel values.

Our faith compels us to celebrate freedom and stand against injustice because God's word teaches that every person is created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). And because every person is created in the image of God, racism and slavery directly assault this divine truth. Therefore, celebrating Juneteenth honors the inherent dignity of our Black brothers and sisters. Jesus defined his own ministry as one of liberation. We read in the Gospel of Luke how Jesus declares that he was sent to *"proclaim freedom for the prisoners"* and *"to set the*

*oppressed free."* The two-year delay of this news of emancipation getting to Texas reminds us of the systemic brokenness of our world. It calls us to be active agents of God's truth, ensuring that justice should never be delayed or denied to anyone.

Therefore, when we celebrate Juneteenth, we honor God's hand in history, moving humanity closer to the fullness of God's kingdom. The Juneteenth holiday, its recognition and celebration, calls us to look inward as well as outward. So how might we do such? And how might we recognize and honor this important day? Living out our faith means moving from reflection into action, and here are some ways we can meaningfully recognize Juneteenth this year:

**Pray for Justice:** Dedicate time to pray for racial healing, the eradication of systemic injustice, and unity within the global Church.

**Listen and Learn:** Engage with books, documentaries, or podcasts that highlight Black history and the historic Black church. True fellowship requires understanding each other's stories.

**Support Local Communities:** Attend local Juneteenth celebrations, shop at Black-owned businesses, or donate to organizations working toward racial equity.

**Examine Our Hearts:** Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any implicit biases within us, committing to a lifestyle of daily repentance and love.

True freedom requires ongoing nurture, intentional community, and active love. Juneteenth invites us to remember the resilience and faith of those who endured generations of bondage. Juneteenth offers us the opportunity to rejoice in the progress achieved through courage, prayer, and systemic change. Juneteenth encourages us to recommit ourselves to loving our neighbors by dismantling bias and building bridges of unity. And by recognizing and celebrating Juneteenth, we align our hearts with God's heart for freedom, justice, and reconciliation.

As a people of faith, Juneteenth is not just a historical milestone. It is a profound reminder of God's deep desire for justice, equality, and human dignity. So let us rejoice in the freedom we share and recommit ourselves to building a world that reflects the Kingdom of God. Let us use our shared freedom to lift one another up. This Juneteenth, let our church be a beacon of hope, reflection, and joyful celebration.

Your Pastor and Friend, Jonathan

## **Music Notes**

*When in our music God is glorified,  
and adoration leaves no room for pride,  
it is as though the whole creation cried, "Alleluia!"  
How often, making music, we have found  
a new dimension in the world of sound,  
as worship moved us to a more profound alleluia!*

(Fred Pratt Green, English clergyman, hymn writer,  
1903-2000)

Thanks to all the musicians who have signed up (and will sign up) to provide summer music while the ensembles take a break. We appreciate your willingness to share the gifts the Creator has given you!

We also appreciate the support and encouragement that the congregation provides all year round for the music of First Christian Church. A strong music program has a long history here, and we are blessed that it continues. And speaking of continuing...

### ***Save the Date for FCC Orchestra***

Calling on all instrumentalists! If you can play an instrument at least at the level of a hymn and would be interested in playing in the FCC Orchestra for the Sunday worship service on **August 16**, please contact Ralph with your information. He can be reached at [rlorenzmusic@yahoo.com](mailto:rlorenzmusic@yahoo.com) or 330-283-5290. Let's make a joyful noise together!

## **Congratulations Graduates!**

Our 2026 High School Graduates were recognized at the May 17 worship service and presented with a Bible from our congregation.

Congratulations to Roger Aukeman, Emma Bullock, and Jacob Drews. We wish you much happiness and success as you pursue your dreams.

## **Summer Kicked Off at the Church Picnic!**

### **Thank you! Thank you!**

The All-Church Picnic always marks the unofficial beginning of summer! And so we want to extend a special thanks to the Membership Team for getting summer started—and getting it started with a wonderful picnic filled with food, fellowship, and some wildly entertaining cornhole play! And

special thanks to all of you who came out for the picnic and shared a dish or two for the bountiful feast that was shared by all!

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

If there's one thing we know for sure, it's that we never know how busy we will be for Loaves & Fishes + Pantry. Maybe it was the first sunny day after a month of rain....maybe it was less need....maybe it was something else entirely. Whatever the reason, we served 35 families on May 17, which was less than in April.

We served 72 meals and handed out groceries that included chicken tenders, ground beef, granola cereal, 3 types of vegetables, 2 types of soup, peanut butter, jelly, raisins, canned pears, mac & cheese, tuna, Spaghetti O's, a loaf of bread, a 3 pound bag of apples, a 5 pound bag of potatoes, plus the always popular Entenmanns, paper towels and toilet paper.

We have enough ground beef and chicken tenders left for June 21. Also, for June the Food Bank has eggs available so we'll be able to get enough for each family to receive a dozen.

How many families will come in June? Who knows. Regardless we'll be ready with a hot meal, bags of groceries and smiles on our faces.

## **Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) Founders Day 2026**

Annual Founders Day events were held in Akron June 12–14, celebrating the 91st anniversary of Alcoholics Anonymous.

This Founders Day also marks 75 years of AA meetings at First Christian Church of Stow. We are grateful for the opportunity to support this important organization and its ongoing work in our community.

## **Christmas Outreach in July!** **An Outreach Team Ministry That Blesses Everyone!**

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! And because all of you made the Christmas Outreach in July such a success and added such a huge boost to meeting all the needs of this ministry come December, the Outreach Team will once again be hosting ***Christmas Outreach in July!***

So, break out your favorite old-timey Christmas records, or find that Spotify playlist from last year, and get yourself into a little Christmas spirit each week in July and plan to help stock shelves in the Outreach Center. We especially need food items that often get overlooked such as: boxed potatoes, canned tuna or chicken, canned soup, pudding and Jello-cups and graham crackers. (Please check expiration dates, making sure they are in 2027.) Of course, we would be happy to accept donations earmarked for **Christmas Ingathering 2026**, these are greatly appreciated as well! Merry Christmas in July everyone! And God bless us, everyone!

## **Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)** **2026 General Assembly** **BEYOND: Love Surpassing**

All Disciples throughout the United States and Canada are invited to attend General Assembly, July 10-11, 2026. Ephesians 3:14-21 invites the Stone-Campbell tradition of today and tomorrow to be rooted and grounded in the love of God that surpasses knowledge and barriers, to build fuller relationships and ministries led by the limitless love of God. The prayer that calls to the church in Ephesus also calls the Christian Church to set a bigger table that surpasses our previous capacity.

More than just a series of meetings, General Assembly is a covenantal table set for education, discussion, worship, business, fellowship, and action. Each congregation is invited to boldly claim their covenantal place at the table by inviting everyone to attend online – the cost is \$30 in the hope of removing an economic barrier. Meeting every year online will allow more Disciples to connect more frequently and to work together more fully “to be the church we say we are.” If you've

never attended General Assembly before, a special welcome is extended to you.

One and all, individuals, Congregations, General Ministries, Regional Ministries, Ministry partners, and friends are invited to actively participate in our new way of being church and our church wide resolve to embody and share God's surpassing love as we gather in July.

**Click here to register today** and take your place in this year's General Assembly rooted in hope, inspired by purpose, and alive with possibility. Your voice, your presence, and your spirit matter. Come be part of what God is doing next.

## **'Send a Kid to Camp' Fund**

It is not too late to help with this endeavor. If you would like to help with the cost for our youth going to camp, please consider a contribution to our “Send a Kid to Camp” fund. Simply mark your donation “Send a Kid to Camp” or “SAKTC.” Donations may be placed in the offering plates, mailed to the church, or submitted through online giving options.

## **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.

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.

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

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

If you have ever entertained the idea of helping to lead worship services, or if you have ever felt God giving you that “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. 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.

## **Board of Trustees Opportunities**

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 (330-814-3825) and 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.

## **Fourth of July Pancake Breakfast!!**

**Friday, July 4<sup>th</sup>, 7 a.m. to 10 a.m.**

*Wait, when is the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Breakfast?*

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

This 4<sup>th</sup> 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, 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 4<sup>th</sup> 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 4<sup>th</sup> 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 runners 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 age 3 through 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](http://www.fccstow.org/vbs).

***There will be a VBS Volunteers Meeting Sunday June 28 after service in Room 202 (OUR Class).***

**RubberDucks Game and Fireworks,**  
**Saturday, August 22<sup>nd</sup>**  
**First Pitch is set for 6:05**

It just wouldn't be a summer to remember if our First Christian Church family didn't spend an evening with the Akron RubberDucks. This summertime tradition for our church and friends is a great opportunity to enjoy a carefree night at Canal Park watching the RubberDucks "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 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Tickets are just a mere \$15! Which gets you a night at the ballpark, fireworks, and the chance to buy your pastor a hot dog! How great of an opportunity is that?! It's certainly an opportunity that doesn't come around very often, that's for sure. (Unless of course you wanted to invite your pastor to another Rubber Ducks game. Or a Guardians game. He's not picky!) So, make plans now, and secure your tickets for baseball, fireworks, sodas, hotdogs, popcorn, peanuts, Cracker Jacks, Dippin Dots, and maybe that giant ice cream sundae they serve up in a batting helmet! See Bill or Cora Dowey or contact the church office to reserve your tickets!

**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 school's out for the summer. And while the Youth Group does take a bit of a respite for the summer, there will still be opportunities to gather together for some good old-fashioned summertime fun. Among the outings being planned include Putt-putt, which we may or may not tell Jonathan is happening because let's face it, he tries to leave everyone crying with his "surgical putting skills" but we really know it's him who is left hiding his tears. 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. And it is in the works that once again a church family will graciously host us at their house to enjoy a dip in their swimming pool. And this can be just the tip of the iceberg! Wait, that metaphor doesn't really work for summertime activities. No matter! If you

have suggestions as to what we as a Youth Group could partake in this summer, please let Emily know! Because 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!

**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!

**Think – Pray – Connect**  
**Recent Families**

**Faye Haws**  
**975 Howard Drive**  
**Tallmadge, Oh 44278**

*Prayers for comfort and healing following her recent hospitalization.*

**Kathy Platt**  
**2185 Suncrest Drive**  
**Cuyahoga Falls, OH 44221**

*Kathy had emergency surgery June 11th. Please keep her in your prayers as she recovers.*

**Rae Howard**  
**658 Sydney Place**  
**Tallmadge, Oh 44278**

*Prayers for comfort and healing following her  
recent surgery.*

**Campers @ Camp Christian**

**10299 Maple Dell Rd, Marysville, OH 43040**

*The week of June 14<sup>th</sup> we have Ava Lazor, Violet  
Rumburg, and Abby Ardle at Chi Rho Camp;  
Emma Bullock at CYF.*

*Please send encouragement and wise words to all  
our campers at Camp Christian this week!*

**Lynn and Mona Scott**

**4187 Vira Road**  
**Stow, 44224**

*Let them know their church family is thinking of  
them and hoping and praying that they are well.*

**Ashley Mahaffey**

**3493 Haas Rd.**  
**Cuyahoga Falls, OH 44223**

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**Patrick and Judy Mahaffey**

**1530 Bollingbrook Dr.**  
**Columbus, OH 43228**

*Words of encouragement can be sent to Ashley at  
either of the above addresses as she continues to  
battle lymphoma.*