



PATHWAYS NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2026

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

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Find us on social media @FCCStow   

Welcome Sunday **September 13, 2026**

Welcome Sunday marks a return to our regular worship time.
Join us for worship Sunday at **10:30 a.m.**

Governing Board Meeting **September 14, 2026, 7 p.m.**

All Governing Board members are encouraged to attend.

Loaves and Fishes + Pantry **September 20, 4-6 p.m.**

Free monthly dinner! Drive-Thru/Carry Out, 4-6 p.m.
This month's menu features BBQ ham sliders and delicious side dishes.
This also includes the +Pantry food distribution.

2026 Women's Retreat **Friday September 25th – Sunday September 27th**

The women of Stow FCC will again travel to Chautauqua, New York for our annual Women's Retreat. We are completing final planning and room assignments.
If you have questions, please see Barb Bell or call her at 330-807-5498.

Trunk or Treat - Save the Date!

Time to start planning your trunk décor! This year's Trunk or Treat is happening October 25th from 3-5 p.m. in the Church parking lot. More information on this event is available in this newsletter.

September 2026
Pastor's Pen

It is hard to find the words to encompass the weight of how this September 11th marks twenty-five years since the world changed in an instant. A quarter of a century has passed since the morning commercial airplanes were turned into weapons, striking the World Trade Center towers in New York City, the Pentagon in Washington D.C., and falling into a quiet field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania. For many of us, the memories are not distant history; rather they remain vividly etched in our minds because we remember exactly where we were and how we heard the news. We remember seeing the chilling blue of that autumn sky, the billowing smoke, the crumbling buildings. We remember feeling the unfolding shock and the profound grief of losing nearly 3,000 precious lives.

Now, today, a whole new generation has grown up over the last twenty-five years, knowing 9/11 only through textbooks and documentaries. Yet, whether we lived through it or were born long after, we all inhabit a world fundamentally reshaped by its aftermath. And because the events of September 11th, 2001, have fundamentally reshaped our world, milestones like this 25th anniversary naturally confront us with heavy, lingering questions. Questions like, where is God when evil strikes? How do we find security in an unstable world?

Much to the dismay of many, there are no quick and easy answers to these questions, and countless others like it. Scripture does not dismiss our grief, nor does it offer quick, superficial answers. And yet, God's holy word still anchors us. Psalm 46 reminds us: *"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea."*

The tragic events of 9/11 changed our history, but they did not—and cannot—change the unchanging character of God our Creator, the one who created order out of chaos. God remains the same yesterday, today, and forever. God is still the God who draws close to the brokenhearted, who catches our tears, and who sustains us when our feet feel ready to slip.

As a community of faith, our remembrance of this day twenty-five years ago, when the world would change forever and peace would feel

impossible, this anniversary becomes an opportunity to not only remember what we pledged to never forget, but to remember too our calling as people of faith to live out and show that even in a world that seems determined to destroy itself, God is still creating, God is still bringing forth new life, God is still at work, God's work is always for God, and God has not given up. And because God has not given up, we cannot not give up either. We should never accept that the world cannot be good again, because to do so would be to forget what else we saw on September 11th, 2001.

Let us not forget that we saw *"helpers"*—the firefighters, police officers, medical personnel, and everyday citizens who ran toward danger to save others. We saw faith leaders and chaplains, like Franciscan Father Mychal Judge, who ministered amidst the ash and smoke. Their courage reminds us that even in the dimmest of valleys, the light of human compassion and divine love cannot be put out. We saw people of every faith tradition, and no faith at all, come together to comfort one another, offer words of hope and peace, and set differences aside to realize we are all one body. We saw resolve and unity rise up from the smoke and ashes because there is no other way to rise up from smoke and ashes.

We are called to be active peacemakers. In a fractured world often marked by suspicion and polarization, our allegiance belongs to the Prince of Peace. And so, this anniversary offers us a renewed opportunity to commit our lives to *"the things that make for peace"*—cultivating understanding, healing divisions, and loving our neighbors boldly.

As we remember and honor the 25th anniversary of September 11th, 2001, let us take time to pause, pray, and remember. Let us hold in prayer the families who still carry the quiet, enduring ache of a vacant chair at their dinner tables. And let us walk forward with a hope that is not anchored in global security or political stability, but in the enduring, unbreakable love of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior who has assured us that death never ever gets to have the last word.

Your Pastor and Friend,
Jonathan

Music Notes

Use what talents you possess; the woods would be very silent if no birds sang there except those that sang best. – Henry van Dyke

September starts a new season of music, and regular rehearsals have begun! We welcome new members in most of the groups. Making music together is rewarding, spiritually fulfilling, and fun. See any of the group leaders to find out more!

Chancel Choir (high school juniors through centenarians!) rehearses Thursdays at 7:30 p.m. in the Choir Room. Ralph is the director.

Joyful Noise (beginning/intermediate handbell ensemble) meets Wednesdays 7:00 p.m. in Room 201. Director Barb Eppley invites anyone and everyone who wants to learn to play handbells to join us!

Grace Notes (middle school and high school girls) rehearse at 10:15 Sunday mornings in the Chapel. Cora Dowey directs Grace Notes.

Youth Bells (grade school through high school) meet most Sundays after worship, in the balcony. Ralph is the director.

Children's Choir (age 3 through 5th grade) meets during worship in the Choir Room; Cora Dowey directs the children's choir.

Silent Praise (adults; children are welcome accompanied by an adult) – We use American Sign Language to express music. We rehearse as needed, and anyone can learn! Cheryl leads this group.

Groups that require a certain skill level are:

Joy Bells (advanced adult handbell ensemble) meet Thursdays 6:00 p.m. in the balcony; Ralph is the director.

Spiritus is an adult vocal ensemble, meeting most Sundays at 9:15 a.m. in the Choir Room, led by Ralph and Cheryl.

The Good News Quartet meets periodically to sing four-part harmony.

Resurrection Brass rehearses as needed. Scott Haywood is the leader.

The Way is our worship band, which includes guitar, bass, percussion, and keyboards. Ralph is the director.

The FCC Orchestra is open to any instrumentalist (of any age) who can play at the level of a hymn. Play for special services, as needed.

Loaves & Fishes + Pantry

August Update

August 16th certainly was a busy day for Loaves & Fishes + Pantry. We served 52 families that day, which is the highest total of the year.

We served 111 meals to those families plus all the groceries.

The grocery bags contained all the usual items such as bread, Entenmann's, 2 different veggies, two types of canned fruit, pasta, spaghetti sauce, mac & cheese, cereal, cookies, etc. The protein in August was 1 pound of ground beef and a dozen eggs. We also handed out the always popular toilet paper and paper towels.

Based on our experience in 2025 we can expect similar numbers of families visiting for the rest of the year. Of course we cannot predict how many families will visit us, but we know that, thanks to your continued support, we will be ready for our visitors, no matter how many show up.

Volunteer Disaster Recovery Opportunities

Several people in our congregation have expressed concerns about the mountain areas of North Carolina, Tennessee, etc. that were hit by Hurricane Helene.

Long term recovery efforts are currently underway in those areas and there are opportunities for volunteers most weeks through Brethren Disaster Ministries (BDM).

BDM prepares for up to 15 volunteers each week but in recent times are often receiving only 10-12 volunteers many weeks - that leaves openings for a few volunteers most weeks. Volunteers with BDM are fed and transported throughout the week. No need to purchase food or plan meals.

See Charlie Redman for more details if interested. Or call him at (330) 283-4320.

Youth Group

Youth group has resumed their bi-weekly meeting schedule.

Meetings for the month of September will be on the **13th** and the **27th** following worship service and youth bell practice.

Come and join the fun and fellowship!

2026 Women's Retreat

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**.

We will be meeting after service on Sunday, September 20th in the Chapel to discuss final details, room assignments, and transportation. See you there!

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

Join us for this year's Trunk or Treat event on Sunday October 25th from 3-5pm. Wear your costume and trick or treat in the church parking lot!

Volunteers are always needed - and appreciated! - to make this event successful. Consider how you can help. Sign-ups will be available in the Gathering Area beginning September 20. Contact Anna or Richelle for more information.

— **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.

— **Serve Food!** Prepare and serve hotdogs, chips and a drink to attendees.

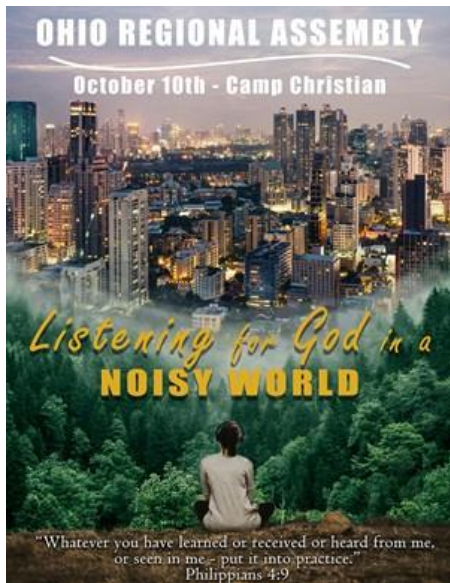
— **Candy Donations!** There will be a bin in the Gathering Area for candy donations (individually wrapped candy, please).

First Christian Church Pictorial **Directory Update**

When the church began the process of creating a new and updated pictorial directory, photos were taken in the Chapel by then Director of Church Relations Christian Sanko. During the process Christian took a new fulltime job necessitating him to reduce his work here at the church to only media and sound production for Sunday morning worship. This understandably put the directory project on hold. We are, however, thrilled to report this hold is now over, and work on the directory has resumed because Lynn Fauvie has graciously volunteered to continue and complete the new First Christian Church Pictorial Directory! If you don't know who Lynn is, then the directory is (or will be) a great resource for the purpose of getting to know the names of our fellow First Christian Church congregation.

Lynn has been working on getting additional pictures taken of some of you who appear to have missed being in front of the camera lens. She has had all your pictures printed and will have them available for pick up on Sunday, September 20 in the hallway off the library. Additionally, an information form has been created with your picture on it and Lynn would appreciate your completing the form and returning it to her so your complete and accurate contact information can be included in the directory.

We will continue to have the photos available to pick up and forms to complete until the end of October. This will also give you an opportunity to get your picture taken (or retaken if desired) if you haven't done so yet. If you would like more information about the directory project, please contact Lynn, Jonathan, or the church office. We hope to have the directory available at the beginning of the new year!



Christian Church in Ohio Regional Assembly 2026

Saturday, October 10th, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Join Christian Church in Ohio members, friends and ministry partners at the Regional Ministry Center at Camp Christian.

The theme scripture for this assembly is from Philippians 4:9 - *"Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me — everything you heard from me and saw me doing. Then the God of peace will be with you"*

Throughout the day attendees will be invited to listen for God in an all-too-noisy world. We listen so that we can see the work of God being made real among us and then go and do the work that God in Christ call us to do!

The schedule for the day includes worship, workshops, a vendor/exhibition area, lunch and more. And, the long anticipated completion of the new pool, pool house, and picnic pavilion will be celebrated thanks to the If Not Now, When? If Not You, Who? Financial campaign.

Registration is \$25 for adults and youth 12 years and older; \$10 for ages 3-11. Lunch is included.

Note: financial assistance is available, just contact the Regional Church Office.

See the following link for additional information about the Assembly, including items to be voted on during the business session - [Christian Church In Ohio](#)

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).*

As with our own homes, our church home requires ongoing maintenance. The Trustees have a growing list of needs. These 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 your skills/talents with a task we have. We typically supply materials for the work, and these things can generally be done on your schedule.

Acme Community 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 2026-2027 Cash Back campaign began August 1st and runs through February 15th, 2027.

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!

Bulldog Bags Collections
2026-2027 School Year

We're collecting items for Bulldog Bags again! This is our 10th year supporting the wonderful organization.

Please see the list below of items needed over the next couple of months. The box for donations can be found in the Gathering Area.

<u>Due</u>	<u>Items needed</u>
October 4	Juice Boxes
November 11	Cup of Soup

*Please note: **NO NUTS IN ANY PRODUCTS.**
Thanks to all for your generous contributions!

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

Sandy Long
3813 Fortuna Dr. #312
Akron OH 44312

Let's let Sandy know we are thinking of her and pray she feels in great abundance God's peace surrounding her each day.

Mike and Karen Hoffman
Allie and Chris Harris
4123 Melcher Ave.
New Franklin, OH 44319

Congratulations to Grandparents Mike and Karen Hoffman and parents Allie and Chris Harris on the birth of baby Jeremiah. Jeremiah was born in August and will no doubt be one of God's greatest blessings to this family.

Ashley Mahaffey
3493 Haas Rd
Cuyahoga Falls, OH 44223

Ashley is scheduled for a stem cell transplant sometime the end of September as the latest effort in her battle with cancer. Please pray for Ashley and her family as she approaches this treatment with anticipation and that God will provide hope and healing for Ashley.

Mike Kostensky and Family
815 Sandy Lake Rd
Kent, Ohio 44240

This week we lift up the Kostensky family following the passing of Mike's mother, Barbara Kostensky, Sunday, August 23, 2026. Barbara leaves a legacy of 5 children, 18 grandchildren, and 15.5 great-grandchildren. What a remarkable woman she must have been. Please pray that each of them will find comfort and peace as they grieve this tremendous loss.

Dorothy Robinson
783 South Lincoln St.
Kent, OH 44240

Dorothy has been hospitalized off and on for a health struggle and awaits a procedure to provide relief and healing. Please pray for God's guiding hand in her care and for peace and comfort for Dorothy, Dave and their whole family

Back to School time is here!

Stow-Munroe Falls School students return to class this coming week, along with many other local school districts. And we have college students moving into dorm rooms, many for the first time.

Let's take some time to pray for all students, teachers, administrators, bus drivers, parents, and staff. May God provide wisdom, guidance, patience, and courage as many children and adults face new experiences and new challenges. May Peace surround our schools!