



PATHWAYS NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2026

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

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World Communion Sunday

October 4th

Worship with us this Sunday as we join millions of Christians across the globe in celebrating World Communion Sunday.

Consecration Campaign

Sundays in October

During the month of October, we will be celebrating the ministries of our church and preparing our budget for the 2027 fiscal year. Sundays will feature speakers from groups or ministries of the church, and pledge cards for 2027 giving estimates will be available.

Loaves and Fishes + Pantry

October 18, 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.

Trunk or Treat

October 25, 3-5 p.m.

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 further in this newsletter.

All Saints Sunday

November 2nd

Celebrated on the first Sunday after All Saints Day, All Saints Sunday is a special time of worship during which we reflect on the lives of those who have walked in faith before us.

October 2026

Pastor's Pen

I love football. I also love soccer, baseball, hockey, basketball, volleyball, kickball, whiffleball, tennis, etc. In the simplest terms and the most convenient definition, I am a through and through sports nut. When I was a teenager, I always had a pair of shorts within reach anywhere I went just in case a soccer game, or a game of any kind suddenly broke into existence. (I wore shorts under my church clothes every Sunday morning just in case the Fellowship Hall became an indoor soccer field—which was not unheard of.) So, with that sports understanding established let me say...

If you've watched a college football game, you have likely witnessed a powerful tradition that takes place right before the start of the fourth quarter when players on the field, coaches on the sideline, and thousands of fans in the stands raise their hands and hold up four fingers. Holding up four fingers has become a universal rallying cry, a bold declaration the game is entering its final and most critical stage. Holding up four fingers signals now is the time to push through fatigue, look past the aches and pains, and dig down deep to find every ounce of physical and emotional strength left, and keep pushing and working and fighting all the way to the end of the game. Holding up four fingers is a mandate to persevere and fight to the very end... together.

As we get set to turn our calendars to the month of October, I am realizing we are entering the fourth quarter of 2026, and our church is stepping onto the field for our fourth quarter of the year. And it's instinctively causing me to hold up four fingers.

When we look back at all that has already happened this year—both within our church ministries and in our own personal lives—it is completely understandable to feel more than a bit tired. Many of us are running low on steam, energy, momentum, stamina, and resources. And if we are honest, in light of all we have seen and experienced, many of us are running low on hope and faith. We have given so much of ourselves already, and we might just be feeling like we don't have much left to give.

If you're feeling like that, please know... I get it. I really do. I feel it too. But do something right now, for me and with me... Hold up four fingers. Hold up four fingers, but not as a rallying cry. Hold

up four fingers as a prayer. No need for words in this prayer. No need to bow your head. Just four fingers, held up, to God, as your prayer and my prayer. Let our four fingers be the prayer we lift to God as we look at the calendar ahead, and the schedules that are filling up quickly. We have a mounting calendar of events, the vital work of preparing our annual church budget, and massive opportunities for impact just around the corner, and this four-finger prayer can get us ready for it all.

In just a few weeks, we will host our annual Trunk or Treat event, a beautiful bridge that brings children and parents from all around our wider community—not just those who sit in our pews—directly onto our campus to experience our hospitality and care. In the midst of this busy season, we also continue our faithful monthly rhythm with Loaves and Fishes Plus Pantry, our free dinner and pantry, ensuring our neighbors are fed and supported. And as winter approaches, our massive Christmas In-Gathering Outreach ministry will kick into high gear, calling us to support dozens of local families and their children with gifts, essential food, and critical financial assistance. Each and every one of these ministries, and the people they serve, are counting on us and our four-finger prayer.

When weariness sets in, it becomes exceedingly tempting to coast, slow down, or simply watch from the sidelines. But the game is not over yet. The year is not finished. There is still time on the clock, there is still work to do, and there is still a good fight left to fight. God has called and mandated us to keep going, not in our own limited strength, but in God's perfect power and authority. Trunk or Treat, Loaves and Fishes, and our Christmas Outreach are not just items on a checklist—they are divine opportunities to spread and share God's love, God's boundless grace, and the life-changing Good News of Jesus Christ with a world that desperately needs it.

Let's refuse to let fatigue of any kind dictate our finish. Let's encourage one another and find that second wind only the Holy Spirit can provide. We are in the final stretch, and victory is in sight if we press on, holding up four fingers together.

Your Pastor and Friend,
Jonathan

Music Notes

Gladness can scarcely be a solitary thing. The very life of praise seems choral; it is more than one bounded heart can utter. – Dora Greenwell (1821-1882)

We can praise God alone, of course – in the privacy of solitary prayer, or when holding a precious child or experiencing the beauty of nature. But it is quite another experience when we sing together.

We humans are separate entities – “bounded hearts,” as Dora Greenwell put it—each of us isolated in our own thoughts and emotions. But singing together connects us.

There’s the joy of choral singing: bringing a chord into perfect harmony; singing words with a precise cut-off together; sharing the deep meaning of an anthem with listeners... And there’s the joy of singing hymns as a congregation, voices joined in praise or hope or contemplation. Fred Pratt Green said it eloquently, in “When in Our Music God Is Glorified” (Chalice Hymnal #7):

*How often, making music,
we have found a new dimension
in the world of sound,
as worship moved us
to a more profound “Alleluia”!*

World Communion Sunday October 4th

This coming Sunday, October 4, our congregation will join millions of Christians across the globe to celebrate World Communion Sunday. On this special day, believers from diverse cultures, languages, and traditions all partake in the Lord’s Supper, standing together as a visual reminder that we are one body in Jesus Christ.

Originating in 1933 at Shadyside Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, this global observance was created to promote Christian unity and cooperation. It is not a holiday exclusive to any single denomination, but rather it is an international event celebrated across a vast spectrum of Christian traditions on the first Sunday of October each year.

At its core, World Communion Sunday means looking beyond the walls of our local church building and recognizing the global scope of God’s kingdom and highlighting our shared identity in Christ over our denominational differences. And in a world so often fragmented by division, politics, and borders, this day becomes a powerful testament to peace and reconciliation. By sharing the bread and the cup, we proclaim the table of Jesus Christ is big enough for everyone, bridging geographic and cultural gaps to unite us in a common faith.

We invite you to join us this Sunday as we gather at the table. Come ready to experience the beautiful, global tapestry of God’s family and to renew your devotion to the One who unites us all.

“Devoted to Generosity”
Launching our 2027 Consecration
Campaign
Sundays in October

This October, our church family is embarking on a powerful, month-long journey together called “*Devoted to Generosity*.” This consecration campaign is an invitation for each of us to reflect on God’s abundant blessings in our lives and consider how we can intentionally invest in the future of our ministry and community.

Generosity is more than just financial giving; it is a spiritual discipline and a heart posture that mirrors the ultimate generosity of Jesus Christ. Throughout the month, we will explore what it means to be fully devoted to this calling, by examining how our shared resources allow us to live out our mission and deepen our faith. To help us see the tangible fruits of our collective giving, each Sunday in October will feature guest speakers from groups, organizations, and our own ministry teams who will share firsthand accounts of the incredible impact their aim, work, and ministries have had over the past year. From Outreach and youth ministries to worship and pastoral care, you will hear stories of lives transformed, community needs met, and faith ignited.

These weekly moments will demonstrate exactly how a strong devotion to generosity directly empowers our ministries. Every pledge made during this campaign ensures that we can further expand our reach, strengthen our programs, broaden our ministry impact, and, most importantly, continue to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with a world in need of hope.

We ask that you begin praying now for our church and for your own household as we approach this season of consecration. Consider how God is calling you to participate and how your commitment can help carry our mission forward. And then join us each Sunday this October as we celebrate what God has done and look forward with anticipation to where God’s grace and our devotion will lead us next.

Loaves & Fishes + Pantry
September Update

If there’s one thing we’ve learned over the five years of Loaves & Fishes + Pantry, it’s that no one knows anything when it comes to forecasting how busy we’ll be. Sunday September 20th dawned cloudy and rainy. While the rain cleared out the Browns were playing an exciting game in Tampa Bay complete with a weather delay that lasted for over 2 hours while the game was on the line. Did these factors affect L&V+P? Who knows...

Regardless, 40 families came and got hot meals and groceries. The hot meals included ham sliders, deviled eggs, coleslaw, and cookies. The groceries included chicken tenders, hot dogs, red beans and rice, applesauce, corn, mac & cheese, cookies, grapes, peanut butter, jelly, butter, cereal, pork and beans, bread, and a box of Entenmann’s.

The families who came all needed help and we were there to give it. Thanks to all of you for your continued support.

Volunteer Disaster Recovery
Opportunities

Long term recovery efforts are currently underway in the mountain areas of North Carolina, Tennessee, etc. that were hit by Hurricane Helene.

There are opportunities for volunteers most weeks through Brethren Disaster Ministries (BDM). BDM prepares for up to 15 volunteers each week but recently 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.

Akron CROP Hunger Walk 2026

The CROP Hunger Walk takes steps and raises funds to provide meals for those in our own communities, and supports programs that create greater food security in communities all around the world. This year's local CROP Hunger Walk takes place **Sunday, October 11th at 1:30 p.m. at the Goodyear MetroPark**. If you are interested in participating in the walk or donating, go to the following link:

[Akron \(Goodyear Heights\) CROP Hunger Walk](#)

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 had all your photos printed and will have them available for pick up on Sundays through the end of October in the information corridor off of the library. Please complete the information form accompanying your photo so that your complete and accurate contact information can be included in the directory.

October 18th and 25th have been set for anyone desiring a "re-take" or a "first-take" in the Chapel after the worship service. Note that you ***do not*** need to be a formal member of the church to be included in the directory – if you attend worship service you are part of our Christian fellowship.

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!



2026 Women's Retreat

Thirty-five women enjoyed an inspirational weekend in Chautauqua, NY, Friday Sept 25 through Sunday Sept 27. The weather was beautiful, the food was delicious, and the love was infinite.

We learned about God's plan for Fear, Anger, and Envy in our lives. We listened to each other's stories, made new friends, sang, prayed, played, and of course we laughed..... a lot.

Disciples of Christ owns two homes within the confines of Chautauqua Institution. One has been completely rebuilt, the other updated and remodeled. These facilities are available to anyone wishing to spend a day, a weekend, or longer at Chautauqua. Check out the opportunities at <https://www.chautauquadisciples.org>.

Youth Group: October Fall Fellowship & Fun!

Autumn is officially here, and the Youth Group has an incredible lineup of activities planned for October. Whether you are looking for engaging fellowship, a thrilling night out, or a chance to serve our community, there is something for all our Youtz! (FYI, Jonathan insists that "Youtz" is plural for the word "Youth" and refuses to believe autocorrect, therefore Pathways writers and editors are mandated to use this "word" even though we all know it's not really a word. Pick your battles, right?)

Anyway... Mark your calendars and

invite your friends— you won't want to miss what we have in store!

Sunday, October 11th will be a regular youth group meeting, immediately following morning worship. We will gather in the Youth Room for lunch, a time of prayer, and an engaging group discussion—all of which makes for a perfect opportunity to reconnect and refocus before another week of school.

Next, put this in your phones, and post it on the “*Ticky-Tok!*” (Again, what Jonathan fully believes it's called.) We will be having a special outing: a Haunted Hay Ride! This will happen on Saturday, October 17th— an evening event, but precise departure time is TBA. So be ready to bundle up for some crisp autumn air and plenty of thrills and chills! (Ok, it's not all that scary, but a heck of a lot of fun!)

And then on Sunday, October 25th all youth, friends, and parents are invited to be on hand for the church's annual Trunk or Treat event, from 3-5p.m. There are loads of ways for everyone to get involved— your family can decorate a trunk to pass out candy, we can do a Youth Group coordinated and decorated trunk, pass out candy, run games, and/or connect with families from our neighborhood. Wear a fun costume and bring your festive spirit!

See all y'all at Youth Group throughout October!!

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 sheets are available in the Gathering Area 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).

Planning Ahead: Christmas In-Gathering

Each year through the Christmas In-Gathering Outreach Program, our church provides families with the opportunity to have not just a very Merry Christmas through the giving of food and gifts they could not otherwise afford, but also it provides these families with the message that they are seen and heard, they are not forgotten. And since this is such a huge ministry, the Outreach Team works all year long to make it a success and therefore is already hard at work preparing for this tremendous ministry endeavor by purchasing adult gifts, socks, undergarments, hats, coats, and much more.

As the Outreach Team continues to prepare, they invite all of us to think about Christmas too! If you are interested in shopping for a family for this year's In-Gathering, or interested in supporting this ministry in any way, please let the church office, or Ann Halpin, know how you would like to help

All Saints Sunday **November 2nd**

On the first Sunday of November, we come together to celebrate All Saints Sunday—a special occasion that invites us to reflect on the lives of those who have walked in faith before us. This day is a poignant reminder of the communion of saints, uniting us with loved ones who have passed on and honoring the legacy they left behind.

All Saints Sunday, celebrated on the first Sunday after All Saints Day (November 1), is a time for remembrance and gratitude. It originated in the early Church to honor all saints, known and unknown, who have exemplified Christ's love and teachings. On this day, we not only remember the saints of old but also our own dear family members, friends, and church family who have moved from this life to life eternal.

During our worship service, we will read the names of those from our congregation who have gone to be with the Lord in the past year. Their contributions to our community and their steadfast faith continue to inspire us, so let us come to celebrate their memory, and let us take this opportunity to reflect on our own journeys of faith by asking: What does it mean to be a saint in today's world? How can we carry forward the lessons of those who have inspired us?

Come ready to celebrate through hymns, prayers, and heartfelt sharing as we honor the saints who have gone before us and commit ourselves to live out our faith in their memory. And may this All Saints Sunday deepen our appreciation for the richness of our shared faith and encourage us to continue the work of love and service in the world.

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](#)

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
December 9	Hot Chocolate Packets

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

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!

Yoga Class
Wednesdays, 5:45 p.m.,

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

Ed Landis
Heather Knoll Skilled Nursing and
Rehabilitation
1134 North Ave
Tallmadge OH 44278

We have recently heard that Ed Landis is now residing at Heather Knoll. Please keep Ed in your prayers and let him know that he has the love and support of his church family.

Lazor Family
1275 Ritchie Rd.
Stow, OH 44224

Please hold in your prayers the Lazor family as the grieve the passing of Beverly Lazor, Sean's mother, Holly's mother-in-law, and Ava's grandmother. Beverly died Friday, September 18, 2026.

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

2026 Consecration Campaign

Our 2026 Consecration Campaign ***“Devoted to Generosity”*** begins with the following narrative budget. Over the next few weeks, we will be sharing stories that will witness to how the missions of our church continue to have a profound effect on the local community.

Below is a narrative budget. This visual gives a broader perspective on the distribution of funds for our mission and ministries.

First Christian Church of Stow

Narrative Budget Support for Mission and Ministries For 2026 Based on Current Operating Budget of \$297,540

Printed 9/28/2026

