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PATHWAYS SEPTEMBER 2024

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

Find us on social
media @FCCStow!

Celebration and Recognition of Anne Reiman and Family

Sunday, September 1st, Second Service

On Sunday, September 1st, during second service, we will honor and celebrate all of this work and ministry. It will be our chance to say “thank-you” to the whole Reiman Family. We invite you to bring cards of thanks and celebration to the church during August and place them in the collection basket so that we can give them a gift from all of us on the 1st. We hope you’ll gather together with us to bless them in this next chapter of the Reiman’s family life.

Akron Zoo: Summit County Community Appreciation Days!

Available Through All of September

See below for a great offer! Up to four free tickets are available to residents of Summit County. There’s a simple form to fill out, and you can receive your tickets! Make sure you get your ticket soon, as there’s a limited amount of tickets for each day in the month.

Women’s Retreat: Last Meeting on September 15th!

Retreat Dates: September 20th – 22nd

There’s one last meeting for anyone who’s interested in going on the trip! Barb and anyone else going should look to join the meeting on September 15th after Second Service to plan rides and rooms. If anyone is still looking to go, there’s still time to sign up! Attend the meeting on the 15th!

Last Sunday of Summer Worship Hours THIS Sunday, September 1st

Next Sunday, September 8th Returns to Regular Schedule, seen below

First Service 8:30—Coffee Fellowship 9:30—Second Service 10:30

In between services will be a special time of coffee fellowship for those who just came from first service and those coming to second service. This coffee fellowship will be held in our Library and Gathering Area and will offer a special opportunity for folks from the two services to see and greet one another!

September 2024

Pastor's Pen

Late August and early September always mark the unofficial end of summer and the unofficial beginning of fall. And with these endings and new beginnings, our Stow-Munroe Falls community (and Cuyahoga Falls, Tallmadge, Kent, Hudson, and many others) is off and running into the exciting seasonal norms— a new school year beginning, Friday night football games and band performances, Saturday athletics of all kinds, and the resuming of an array of weeknight endeavors that fill up our calendars and schedules. Summer certainly has its perks, but a routine schedule, even if crammed full, certainly has its advantages too. And yet, “*routine*” can only provide its comforts when life allows for such consistency. But life is rarely consistent, isn't it?

As those who reside in the cities of Stow and Munroe Falls, and many other surrounding communities, we know we live in a wonderfully vibrant part of Ohio that is dynamic, family friendly, and has a long history and tradition of welcoming all. We know how fortunate we are to be able to boast about our excellent schools, attractive and diverse neighborhoods, beautiful parks and trails, and an overall wonderful quality of life. All of this gives each our communities the allure of “*small-town-USA*”, which further emboldens our strong sense of community.

And yet, our vibrancy, tradition, attractiveness, distinction, and strength can still be challenged and even threatened when the harsh and ugly realities of the world slip through the cracks of even the most wonderfully welcoming community. And our community has been no exception to this truth, especially over the last several months of 2024.

With the start of a new school year, we are reminded of the incredible and immense work needing to be done by the Bulldog Bags and Boxes organization that strives to help over 700 students in our schools who are impacted by food insecurities. Just last month we had to face the harsh truth that what we believed could never happen in our community did in fact happen here when tragically a person took the life of a community member and then took their own life. And earlier this spring, many of us felt (and continue to feel) the hard impacts of a contentious divide stemming from the search and hiring of our Stow-Munroe Falls Schools Superintendent position—a divide that drove a

wedge between teachers and parents, community members and school board members, old friends and longtime neighbors.

All of this, and yet more still, reveals that harsh and ugly realities of the world have undoubtedly slipped into our beloved community, impacting our individual hearts and our community relationships. And if these harsh realities go unchecked, if we simply aim to move on as if they didn't happen or aren't happening, or we let ourselves believe these realities are over and done with, we are putting the strong community bond we have built and crafted for years and years at great risk. We are weakened as a community when we let ourselves believe “*It's not that bad.*” We are weakened as a community when we let ourselves think, “*It is what it is, nothing else can be done.*” We are weakened as a community when we don't seek out ways to heal the brokenness and division that plagues our community.

As Disciples of Christ—both as a church denomination and as holy and beloved children of God—we are called to a different way of life. And this way of life is guided by our Lord and Savior who has shown and taught us that we are stronger when we live and work together in unity and in cooperation by extending to all love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. These fruits of the Spirit will always forge a path forward for all of God's children. And that path will undoubtedly take us to the better days we know are surely coming from God our Creator and Christ Jesus our Savior.

So as we step into this new season—a new season in the life of our church, and a new unofficial season of the year—let us do so with minds, hearts, and spirits that are ready and willing to face down the harsh and ugly realities of our world by sharing with all who we cross paths with, that we can come together, despite our struggles, despite our differences, despite our discouragements, and together we can reforge our bonds as a community, united in all that makes our communities vibrant, friendly, welcoming, excellent, attractive, diverse, beautiful, and wonderful places to live.

Your Pastor and Friend,
Jonathan

Women's Retreat @ Lake Chataqua, NY
Next Meeting: Sept. 15th
After Sanctuary Service

For those still interested in going on the retreat, there's still time to join! There's going to be one more meeting on September 15th. The retreat will be September 20th – 22nd. Make sure you attend the meeting if you're looking to learn more about this great and restorative retreat!

Loaves & Fishes + Pantry
September 15th, 4-6 p.m.

Our September drive thru meal will be on Sunday September 15th, 4-6p.m. We will be serving spaghetti and sides. All are welcome help serve this important meal to Stow's needy!

Bulldog Bags Donation Items

Any donations can be placed in the Bulldog Bin in the Gathering Area.

<u>Due Date:</u>	<u>Item:</u>
Sept. 8th:	Toothpaste and Tooth Brush
Oct. 6th:	Mac and Cheese Cup
Nov. 3rd:	Cup of Soup

Coffee Fellowship Opportunities
After Both Services in the Library

Just a reminder for those who aren't yet in the know-- Coffee Fellowship will be happening *between* services for the summer at 9:30 and will be available after second service as well! Now you're in the know!

There's still plenty of slots ahead of this Sunday for volunteering to host coffee fellowship! Help connect and fellowship with your church family!

Décor Changeover, September 1st
After Sanctuary Service

Please help Ann change the décor for a few minutes before you leave for the day! It won't take much of your time, but with many hands, we can get it done and save the few who take on this task a lot of time!

Akron Zoo Summit County
Appreciation Days
Through All of September

We recently received a letter from the Akron Zoo with the following information. Don't wait to reserve your ticket and enjoy a day at the zoo for free!

Summit County Community Appreciation Days at the Akron Zoo:

- Free Admission for residents of Summit County, September 1-30, 2024
- There are a limited number of tickets available for each day, and tickets must be reserved online in advance at www.akronzoo.org/community-days
- Limit 4 tickets per household, while supplies last.

Paper tickets will be good for any day in September 2024 and must be presented at the ticket counter on the day of the visit. If anyone has trouble getting their tickets, please contact the church office, and we can contact the zoo on your behalf.

Trunk or Treat
Sunday October 13, 3-5pm

Join us Sunday October 13 from 3-5pm! Wear your costume and trick or treat in the church parking lot! We are in need of volunteers to make this event successful, see below on how you can help.

— 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

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

Contact Anna or Richelle for questions/more information.

Youth Group Details!
Watch for Next Events!

The First Christian Church Youth Group is open to all youth in sixth grade and up and their friends. We meet, typically, twice a month on a bi-weekly schedule. For more information, please contact

Director of Youth Ministries Emily Sanko,
Directors of Christian Education Anna Llyod and
Richelle Aukeman, or Jonathan.

Vacant Nursery Attendant Position: **The Search Begins!**

First Christian Church of Stow is now hiring a Nursery Attendant for Sunday Mornings. The Nursery Attendant is responsible for childcare for children ages 0 to 5 while their families attend church service. The role involves engaging in age-appropriate activities, ensuring the safety and well-being of the children, and maintaining a clean and organized environment.

Please know that in this time of transition we will still continue to offer nursery care each Sunday. Anna and Richelle will partner in staffing the nursery so that any family who wishes to utilize the nursery can do so.

Requirements for the Nursery Attendant:

- Sunday Mornings 9:30am - 12:00pm
- Experience working with children ages 0-5
- Must be at least 18 years of age
- Completion of CPR / First Aid Training

Background Check required

Interested candidates can apply by emailing a resume to christianed@firstchristianstow.org

Music Notes **September 2024**

Hello everyone,
As you know, the music program at FCC is strong and vibrant. There are many opportunities to express yourself musically at our church. I would like to extend an invitation to each of you to consider joining one of our many music groups here at First Christian-Stow:

Choral groups: Day and time of rehearsal:
Where:
Chancel Choir Thursday evenings, 7:30-9:00
Choir Room
Children's Choir Sunday mornings during Second Service Choir Room
Back Row Singers (Men's Chorus) TBD (see Chuck if interested)

Ladies Chorus TBD (see Chuck if interested)

Handbell groups:

Joy Bells* Thursday evenings, 6:00-7:15
Balcony

Joyful Noise** Wednesday evenings
Room 201

Children's Bells *** TBD (see Chuck if interested)
Balcony

Other:

Resurrection Brass As needed
Choir Room

Rehearsals for Chancel Choir, Joy Bells, and Joyful Noise will start the week after will start the week of Labor Day.

Is anyone interested in starting an orchestra? We could meet as needed and would be open to anybody who plays an instrument now or has in the past. Strings, woodwinds, brass and percussion.

*Joy Bells is an advanced bell choir, previous ringing/musical experience is necessary.

**Joyful Noise is the group for those who have never rung bells before or those with less experience.

***Children's Bell Choir is for those who are in Second grade and up.

Christmas is coming.... **Ingathering Outreach Support Options**

The Outreach team is preparing for our biggest outreach project of the year: Ingathering. You can help us prepare for this ministry by:

- 1) buying items that may be on sale now for the food boxes (please check expiration dates). Possible items can include cereal, pasta, canned tomato products, tuna, juice, canned meat, mac and cheese, jelly, peanut butter, and soup. I try to buy a little bit of something every couple of weeks when things are on sale, especially now when grocery prices are high.
- 2) Discuss with family members if you might, as a group, sponsor a family for Ingathering.

- 3) Discuss with your employer if they might like to make a donation or sponsor a family for Ingathering.
- 4) Consider donating new or used/ in good condition, household items. Families are often grateful for that lamp you no longer need, children's toys that your children have outgrown, holiday decorations, photo frames, pet supplies, folding chairs, unused candles, and women's purses to name a few. Tools, command strips, cleaners and cleaning supplies, laundry soap and plastic storage bins are also much appreciated.

Thank you for your support of this ministry!!! Any questions- contact Ann Halpin 330-524-2228.

Acme Community Cash Back Program **August Through December**

Save all your Acme Receipts from August 4th through December 25th! There will be a box in the sanctuary to deposit your receipts in on Sundays. Proceeds will benefit Dorcas Rebekah Guild, Mary Martha Guild, and our Blanket Ministry.

Fall Hiking Spree in Cuyahoga Falls **Invite a friend and take a hike!**

Start planning your hikes soon! Starting September 1st, Residents of Summit County can earn rewards for their hiking in Summit Metro Parks! (Out-of-County hikers can pay \$10 for their first-year hiking, and \$5 for returning hikers). All you have to do is sign up on <https://www.summitmetroparks.org/hiking-sprees.aspx>, download the participant form, and complete at least *eight* of the designated trails between September 1st and November 30th to receive rewards! You can update your form as you hike your chosen trails, and when you've completed the minimum of 8, stop by or send the form to the Summit Metro Park offices to receive your rewards! There's a total of 13 different trails available for hiking in the Summit Metro Parks network—Check out the map on the Spree webpage to find your best hiking options.

Summer Worship Hours **8:30 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.**

Just a reminder! Our "Chapel" services will continue to be held at 8:30 a.m. every Sunday morning, and our normal Sanctuary time has moved back by 30 minutes to 10:00 a.m. until Labor Day. Both services will be held in the Sanctuary until further notice.

Think – Pray – Connect **Families from August**

08/04/24

Gene & Janet Loch

827 Jennifer Trail, Tallmadge OH 44278
Please join us in celebrating with the Lochs as they have just celebrated their 67th anniversary in July!

Mike & Debbie Kostensky

815 Sandy Lake Rd., Kent OH 44240
Send some congratulations to Mike & Debbie as they welcome in a new grandson into the family! Congrats to their daughter Heather as well!

08/11/24

Marilyn Lown

96 Pinehurst Rd. Munroe Falls OH 44262
Marilyn will be turning 90 years young next Sunday, August 18th!

08/18/24

Richard Sellers

1925 Hawthorne, Stow OH 44224
Please continue to pray and reach out to the Sellers, as Richard is still in the hospital.

08/25/24

Kim Searcy

4281 Cheval Circle, Stow OH 44224
Please join us in supporting Kim, who is home recovering after a recent surgery to treat an early caught cancer diagnosis.

09/01/24

Anne & Dan Reiman

906 Denshire Dr,

Canal Fulton OH 44614

Send cards, congratulations, and celebrations to Anne and Dan as they enter a new chapter in their family's life!

Festival of Sharing – Church World Service

Now through the in person event on September 27th & 28th

Join Us in Spreading Compassion Through the Festival of Sharing.

At the heart of the Festival of Sharing is compassion. With your help, each kit is filled with love, packed with hope, and shared with neighbors in need at just the right time.

This year alone, your generosity has helped the Festival of Sharing provide:

- Hygiene kits and blankets for the unsheltered in Cleveland through the Nehemiah Mission.
- Emergency cleanup buckets to those affected by devastating floods in Marietta.
- School kits to children on the Westside of Columbus, giving them the tools to start the school year off right.

Together, we can do even more. Your support, combined with others, provides hope and relief to our neighbors in Ohio and around the world. We invite you to be part of this important ministry by assembling kits or making a donation to the Festival of Sharing this year.

Let's make a difference together.

Not able to assemble kits this year? You can still make a difference by making a donation and selecting the kits you want to provide! Every contribution counts in bringing hope to those in need.

To learn more and/or make a donation, go to fosohio.org. There is also a bulletin insert attached

to this email we are asking you to share with your congregations.

If you're able to bring your donations in person to the Festival of Sharing on September 27-28, you'll find them at **First Community Church—North Campus 3777 Dublin Road in Columbus**. Can't be there in person? Kits can be dropped off by **Friday Sept. 20** at your nearest drop-off location. Visit: www.fosohio.org/kits-depots/



Campaign Looking For Testimonials

By now you might have heard about our region's major fundraising campaign, "If Not Now, When? – If Not You, Who?" The campaign promotes a bold vision of developing and building a new pool at Camp Christian, facility improvements at camp and the regional church office, a full time conference center director for three years, multiple part time program positions within regional ministries, and mission projects that will benefit the Cleveland Christian Home, Hiram Farm, and the Disciples Overseas Ministries. For this vision to be successful we need your help! Not only financially but in the sharing of your own narratives and testimonials.

To make this campaign a true reflection of our collective spirit and a reflection of the Body of Christ of which we are all members, we are asking for your stories. Whether it is a cherished memory from camp, a moment of inspiration during a

regional gathering, or a meaningful experience of the gathered Body of Christ, your testimonial can inspire and uplift others. Promoting this vision for the region requires your voice!

How to Participate

1. **Video Testimonials:** Record a short video (30 seconds to 2 minutes) sharing your favorite thing about camp, our region, or the Disciples of Christ. Feel free to be creative and genuine—your personal touch makes all the difference!
2. **Written Testimonials:** If you prefer writing, share a brief (100-200 words) reflection on what our community means to you and why supporting this campaign is important.

Submission Details

Please send your videos and written testimonials to pastorchrisstark@gmail.com by **August 31**. Be sure to include your name and congregation so we

can celebrate our diverse and vibrant community together!

We encourage you to share this invitation with fellow Disciples in your church and community. The more stories we gather, the more we can showcase the incredible impact of our shared faith and commitment.

Together, we can make "If Not Now, When? – IF Not You, Who?" a resounding success. Your stories and support are vital as we work to ensure that the legacy of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Ohio continues to flourish.

Thank you for your faithfulness and generosity.

In Christ,
Rev. Christopher Kenneth Stark

Chapel Pews Free for Taking While Supplies Last!

Because construction will be starting soon for restoring the chapel, the church needs to part with the pews that have served us well for so long, but you don't have to! If you are interested in having one or more of the chapel's pews for your own use, whatever that may be, please contact the church office ASAP! Construction will begin in about two or three weeks, so we need to move fast! Additionally, if you are not able to transport these pews yourself, Dave Helmick has graciously volunteered to share his time and ability to move them. His assistance is available by appointment. Please call or email the church office with your interest, and we will coordinate

Pews come "as is," without seat cushion. The "broken" pews are in various states of damage but could all be restored with the right time and attention. Some have only a little bit of chipped wood, while others have cracked boards.

of Available Pews:

9 good

6 broken

1 minor damage

Dimensions:

7 feet long by 21 inches deep

FCC Stow Spirit Wear!
Orders Available on September 8th!

We've partnered with SimpleXpressions Personalized to offer FCC Stow "Spirit Wear!" Wearing our logo offers a wonderful opportunity to share your faith with the community, and could open the door for conversations about our ministries!

Ordering will be available beginning Welcome Sunday, September 8. T-Shirts, Crew Sweatshirts & Hoodies in Adult and Youth sizes will be available for purchase.

Ordering will be available online, linked from our fccstow.org website & an order form and samples will also be available in the Gathering Area. For questions, email christianed@firstchristianstow.org.

**When ordering online: Please select local pickup, our orders will be picked up and distributed at church.*



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**Ordering available beginning
Welcome Sunday, September 8**

Order Online:

**[https://www.simplexpressionspersonalized.com/
collections/first-christian-church](https://www.simplexpressionspersonalized.com/collections/first-christian-church)**

*When ordering online: Please select *local pickup*,
our orders will be picked up and distributed at church

**Order Form and samples will also be available
in the Gathering Area**

Email christianed@firstchristianstow.org with any questions!



Update from the Finance/Stewardship Team
Financial Giving – Through August 2024

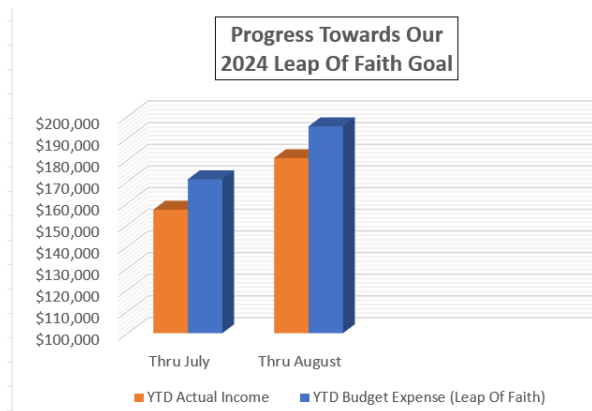
Hello all! Though we are still finalizing all expenses for August, we wanted to share the financial information as we know it so far.

We saw our giving & income increase from July to August, hopefully that trend will continue in September!

As you may recall, the Governing Board and the congregation approved the 2024 budget proposed by the Finance/Stewardship with the budgeted Expenses being higher than the budgeted Income. We refer to this difference as our Leap of Faith. We can achieve that Leap of Faith combining 2 goals; increasing our Income (primarily made up of Individual Giving) and decreasing our Expenses by controlling our spending.

The Leap of Faith amount for 2024 is \$18,787 (Budgeted Expenses minus Budgeted Income).

Here are 2 views that show our progress towards meeting our Leap of Faith. These compare our total actual income to our total budgeted expenses, showing how close we are now at the end of August, comparing that to end of July.



	Thru July	Thru August
YTD Actual Income	\$ 157,038	\$ 180,838
YTD Budget Expense (Leap Of Faith)	\$ 171,107	\$ 195,551
How Close to LOF (%)	91.8%	92.5%
How Close to LOF (\$)	\$ (14,069)	\$ (14,713)

The Total Income **budget** amount is \$22,878 per month. This includes congregational giving and other income sources like building rental.

The Total Expense **budget** amount is \$24,444 per month.

The **Leap of Faith** amount is the difference between our budgeted Expenses and our budgeted Income.

For the full year that amount is \$18,787 and monthly the amount is \$1,566.

If you prefer to think of this as a percentage, our actual income needs to be **7% higher** than our budgeted income to meet our Leap of Faith, and thru the end of August our income is **1% lower** than our budgeted income.

If you personally are feeling financially stable and would like to make an additional gift to the church above your normal giving, those are always appreciated. Any increases will help position us to be able to meet our Leap of Faith, and to sustain the outreach assistance we can provide to our community, both locally and globally.

Please let any member of the Finance/Stewardship team know if you would like to see our full reports, we are happy to share them.

