



First Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)
Stow, OH

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330.688.4450
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PATHWAYS NOVEMBER 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!

ALL CHURCH WORKDAY

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2nd! 9:00 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Friends, please consider visiting the church tomorrow morning and helping out! We have plenty to do to prepare for the winter season, both inside and out! Thank

Daylight Savings Time Starts November 3rd: FALLING BACK!

Don't forget to set your clocks back an hour on November 3rd as we're FALLING BACK and gaining an hour right before worship! Hopefully, you will be rested and energized for worship!

Get Out The Vote!

Tuesday, November 5th

Your vote is your voice! It is your voice on issues affecting our state, community, housing, education, employment, and healthcare. Help make a difference and help make your voice heard because by not voting your voice isn't heard! Early voting is easier than ever! Check your local Board of Elections scheduling for the last couple days of early voting!

All Church Thanksgiving Dinner

*****Sunday, November 24th***, 11:30 a.m.**

Are you feeling lucky?! You should be, because on Sunday, November 24th, all are invited to be part of a special Thanksgiving time of worship during both services, followed by our church's annual Thanksgiving Pot-Luck Dinner! See inside for more details about how you can be part of this long time First Christian tradition!

Loaves & Fishes + Pantry (& September's Report)

Sunday, November 17th, 4-6 p.m.

Please consider sharing your time and ability with this ministry! This meal be a turkey dinner. Additionally, read below for October's report, showing the significant impact this ministry makes in our community!

Ingathering Outreach Preparation

This holiday season has many families who are calling in already for help this Christmas season! Please consider helping out in way that you feel called to do so. Read below for more info.

Governing Board Meeting, Monday, November 18th

Members of the board, please keep this date on your calendar and prepare time to be present at the meeting as we will be preparing to approve the budget before we present it to the Congregation. Please make every effort to attend as all your voices and votes are needed and valued.

November 2024

Pastor's Pen

If you haven't heard yet, recently I shared with the congregation about a surgery I was about to have. I am glad to share now, post-surgery, that everything went well, and I am recovering in all the ways hoped and expected. This was just one part of an intentional journey to better health I put myself on when I decided to go under the care of the Summa Health Weight Management Institute Bariatric Care Center. Only after years of treatment that had successes and met goals, but not all the successes and met goals I was aiming for, did I arrive at the decision to have a *laparoscopic sleeve gastrectomy*—a procedure that removes approximately two-thirds of the stomach, thus reducing its ability to distend, causing a person to feel fuller sooner as well as decreasing overall appetite. All of this is rooted in a much longer story.

For my entire life I have struggled with my weight, my relationship with food, eating disorders, body image, and the *disease of obesity*. If that term—*disease of obesity*—sounds new or strange to you don't be alarmed. It was to me too when I started this journey to better health several years ago. Like many people I let myself believe all the harmful stereotypes and biases that target people who are obese—laziness, irresponsibility, lack of self-control, lack of intelligence, unattractiveness, and many others. These perceptions and attitudes persist despite the scientifically recognized influence of genetic, socioeconomic, and environmental factors in the development of obesity—perceptions and attitudes that have fostered a damaging stigma, resulting in prejudice and discrimination against those affected by this disease. And if these perceptions and attitudes weren't bad enough, their prevalence now rivals those discriminations based on race and age, yet it lacks comparable legal and social safeguards. (*Andreyeva T, Puhl RM, Brownell KD. Changes in perceived weight discrimination among Americans, 1995-1996 through 2004-2006. Obesity (Silver Spring). 2008 May;16(5):1129-34.*)

Even though I had been through years of treatment from the Summa Health Weight Management Institute team, it still took me a long time to push through these perceptions and stereotypes I would constantly heap upon myself—many of which were far more vicious than the few

listed above. Then on the day Julie and I met with the surgeon to discuss the “surgical option” (a.k.a. to me, the “nuclear option”) among the many questions I asked was one that finally began to change my perceptions and attitudes. I asked, “*Is this vanity?*” This question was rooted in shame and humiliation; rooted in all the past struggles and self-hate from my constant and consistent failure to do better and be healthier; rooted in the mortification that made me question if I was simply giving in to today's culture. Upon asking that question, Dr. Z., the man who would become my surgeon, looked me square in the eye and said, “*I'm going to give you nine years. Nine more years.*” (No emphasis added.) Dr. Z. went on to explain that with this surgery my health would change so much for the better that I would be blessed with the chance to live nine years more than if I did not have the surgery. That's when all I had been doing and striving for came more into focus than ever before. This was not vanity. This was about being healthier, being a loving husband and father, being open to how God was blessing me as the prophet Jeremiah tells us in chapter 29, “*For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.*”

No, this surgery will not end all my struggles. Yes, this surgery will necessitate changes and sacrifices I will have to make for the rest of my life. But it is a life-changing surgical procedure that will give me the best chance possible to embrace and enjoy and share all the plans, welfare, and future God gives me.

Jewish Rabbi, Rashi, is known for a quote we all have heard and maybe said, “*If not now, when? If not you, who?*” I know there will not be a better time for me to take this important step and seize this monumental opportunity in achieving a healthier me. And I know no one but me can take this journey toward a healthier me. And yet, I also know, I am not alone while I do so. I know, and am dependent upon, the love and support of Julie, Violet, A.J., my entire family, my friends, and all of you, my church family. Thank you for the tremendous outpouring of love and support you have given to me and my family. It has all been a life-giving blessing for which I will be forever grateful.

Your Pastor and Friend,
Jonathan

ALL-CHURCH WORKDAY **TOMORROW! 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.**

We're preparing the church for winter TOMORROW! If you have a chance, stop down by the church and make sure you dress for the weather and activity! There's plenty of work to do both inside and out, and a whole load of leaves to rake up. Please consider taking time out of your busy weekend to help us clean up the property!

Interim Custodial Support Needed

Friends, if you have a spare hour or even 30 minutes through your week to stop by and help with one of cleaning needs that we have as a church, please consider stopping by and helping maintain the worship and community center that we have in our church. There's a number of tasks that most folks can help out with, regardless of ability.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C094EA8AD2BA7F9C70-52752186-interim>

All Church Thanksgiving Dinner **Sunday, November 24th, 11:30 a.m.**

On Sunday, November 24th all are invited to be part of a special Thanksgiving time of worship during both services, followed by the return of our church's **Thanksgiving Pot-Luck Dinner!** Turkey, gravy, mashed potatoes and drinks will be provided. Since it is a potluck dinner, we ask that you bring your own place setting and a dish or two that will feed at least 12-15 people. This way we have enough food to share for everyone. No reservations are necessary! Come and enjoy good food and fellowship.

Thanksgiving is a blessed time to share in a bountiful meal and robust fellowship with our families. So let us do the same as a church family and mark our calendars for this special day of worship to celebrate all we have to give thanks for, and to give glory, honor, and praise to the One who has made it all possible. Thanks be to God. Happy Thanksgiving everyone!!

Youth Group Activities For November

Nov 3rd: Discussion: "Little Jesus Lost in the Woods"

- Activity Depending on Rain:
 - Indoors: Hide & Go Seek (Nerf Edition)
 - Outdoors: Adell Durbin Park scavenger hunt

Nov 17th: Discussion: "How Little Jesus Gives Thanks"

- Bonfire at the Smeiles

Nov 24:

- Potluck
- No Youth! Just helping serve

In Thanks for the Donated Pews **From Chris McCreight**

To the First Christian Church in Stow,

Thank you for sharing yet another generous gift with me. You welcomed, tolerated, and encouraged me as a child and young adult. You supported me in my pursuit of seminary even when I was uncertain of where that might lead. You sponsored me as a candidate for ordination. You provide a rich blessing to my parents and grandparents. And now, you have even been so willing to share another gift with me in the collection of pews from the chapel.

At this time, I am uncertain of what will become of the pews, but I am great with ideas. Perhaps the wood will be repurposed into tables or shelving. Perhaps it will remain and continue to produce seating in a place of rest for the folks to get together.

I am ever mindful of the role they provided and the spirit that has rested upon them. I will proceed with great care in recognition of what they have meant, not only to me as a child growing up, but also to all who have come before and after.

Thank you for this generous gift and for the varied gifts that you share with my family and the world.

Rev. Chris McCreight

A Note of Thanks
From Richard & Sharon Sellers

Friends, Richard Sellers reached out to the church office to express their collective thanks for the outreach from our church family during their latest health difficulties. For those who have seen the announcements, Richard has been the Think-Pray-Connect address for a few weeks this summer with a number of health complications, times of recovery, and returns home. Each week, he was greeted with more letters and calls than one could expect. They wanted to share their heartfelt gratitude for all the well-wish and prayers.

Please continue to keep them in your prayers as Sharon is in University Hospitals for Pancreatitis.

Loaves & Fishes + Pantry
November 17th, 4-6 p.m.

The November drive thru meal is always a turkey dinner, cooked and ready to feast upon. The meal will be November 17th 4-6 p.m. The previous October meal distributed every cup of chili. Thanks to everyone who made some.

Loaves & Fishes + Pantry October Recap

Sunday October 20 was a huge day for Loaves & Fishes + Pantry. People from 49 separate households visited and they represented 123 individuals.

Dinner was Chili with all the fixings and side dishes. As always, the most popular giveaway items were the paper towels and toilet paper that everyone donated. Of course, we also handed out groceries that included loaves of bread, dinners, vegetables, snacks, apples, laundry detergent and other items.

With funding from the 4th of July Pancake Breakfast, donations for the Pantry, and Bulldog Bags we have ordered a commercial freezer. We will share this freezer with Bulldog Bags. This will make it possible for us to offer our guests frozen food items.

Our next Loaves & Fishes + Pantry is scheduled for Sunday, November 17.

Trunk or Treat Thank You!

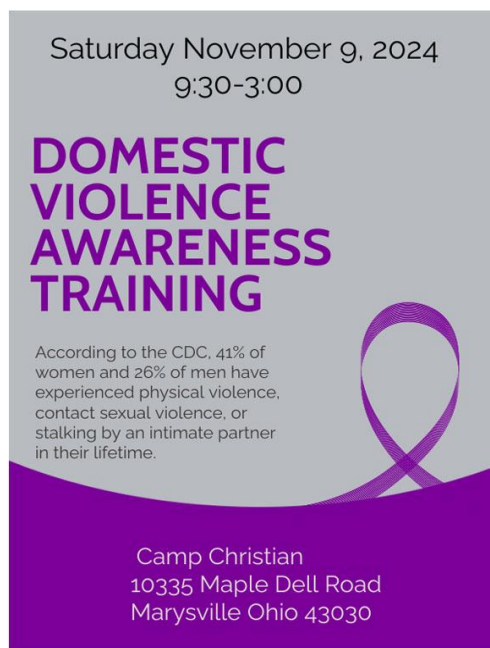
We had a fun afternoon at Trunk or Treat 2024! Thanks to everyone who stopped by, we had over 250 people attend!

Special thank you to our volunteers for hosting trunks and serving snacks & everyone who donated candy!!

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 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!

Domestic/Intimate Partner Violence
Workshop & Training
November 9, 2024 ~ 9:30am – 3:00pm



Saturday November 9, 2024
9:30-3:00

**DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE
AWARENESS
TRAINING**

According to the CDC, 41% of women and 26% of men have experienced physical violence, contact sexual violence, or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime.

Camp Christian
10335 Maple Dell Road
Marysville Ohio 43030

Camp Christian 10335 Maple Dell Rd.,
Marysville, Ohio 43040

The Christian Church in Ohio is hosting a special workshop dealing with domestic/intimate partner violence awareness and prevention. It will be on

Saturday, November 9th from 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and will be held at Camp Christian.

Training for increased identification of victims of domestic violence and increased referrals to specialist domestic violence agencies and advocacy programs.

The full registration is available online at <https://www.ccinoh.com/regional-calendar.aspx?events=11901&action=details>

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.

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

The Outreach team is preparing for our biggest outreach project of the year: Ingathering.

Your help wanted and needed!

Even though it is not yet Halloween, the outreach team is hard at work preparing for Christmas Ingathering. Ingathering is a huge and vital ministry for our church and community. Last year we served 44 families with children (food, coats and gifts) and 10 additional families with food assistance. It is a huge cooperative effort between businesses and organizations in the community, the Stow Munroe Falls City Schools and the generous and giving folks in this congregation. If you want to shop, wrap, make a donation, bake cookies, make phone calls, assist with excel program forms or want more information about the program, please see Ann Halpin or call 330-524-2228.

You can also 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.

Hurricane Helene Relief Response **Sharing is Still Caring**

Earlier this month, we quickly gathered paper products, fuel, bedding supplies, and tents, to send to affected families in North Carolina that had their homes destroyed by the flooding. Below are pictures of the supplies and Barb Bell's packed SUV. Let's all make sure we thank Barb Bell for driving down to deliver these much-needed supplies!

We are blessed to be in a position to send support to affected families that have had parts of their lives washed away. While it is tragic that there have been so many ecological disasters this year, it is a powerful representation of our faith, commitment, compassion, and care that we are driven to send help to their needs. It is proof that we are the hands and feet in the Body of Christ. We are grateful to be afforded the safety in Northeast Ohio, where we have been guarded from severe storms and disaster. Whether it is our Summer Mission Trip of assisting a home rebuild in Kentucky or sending aid for the floods and sharing a few dollars through Week of Compassion, our church family consistently shows up when the call for help is sent out. We should be proud of who we are, for what we do for others. As we acclaim the sacrifice of Christ, so too do we celebrate the gifts we make and the works we do.

Please keep the families affected by Hurricanes Milton and Helene in your prayers as the recovery

projects continue, especially in light of the upcoming holiday season. Below is another article from The Christian Church in Ohio regarding the overall Festival of Sharing event, which includes the whole number of items sent through their program.



Bulldog Bags Donation Items

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

<u>Due Date:</u>	<u>Item:</u>
Nov. 3rd:	Cup of Soup
Dec. 8 th :	Hot Chocolate Packets
Jan. 12th:	Ramen Noodle Packets

Update from the Festival of Sharing Committee Member Matthew Stevens:



Dear Festival of Sharing Supporter,

We are deeply grateful for your incredible generosity and commitment to this year's Festival of Sharing Kit collection. Because of your unwavering support, we have been able to share essential items to communities in need following Hurricane Helene and Hurricane Milton:

- **5,272 Emergency Cleanup Buckets**
- **9,560 Hygiene Kits**
- **7,280 Blankets**
- **1,800 Menstrual Hygiene Kits**
- **650 School Kits**

These supplies are crucial for recovery, offering comfort, restoring dignity and helping families rebuild their lives in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene and Hurricane Milton. *Your love for your neighbors, both near and far, is evident in every kit and bucket.* Whether you gathered items through your congregation, collected monetary donations or braved the storm to bring your contributions directly to the Festival, your efforts were vital to our success. *Thank you for making a difference!* We are truly fortunate to have such dedicated volunteers and donors in Ohio. Because of you, the Festival of Sharing can respond swiftly and effectively when disasters strike, ensuring that families have the tools they need to recover with hope. *Your partnership in this mission reflects a profound commitment to caring for others, and we are blessed to walk alongside you in this important work.*

With heartfelt thanks,
 Matthew Stevens
 Festival of Sharing Committee Member

**Thanks to All Vendors!
 Relay for Life Craft Bazaar**

It was another successful year for the Relay For Life Craft Bazaar that was held on October 12. Many thanks to those who participated by either selling or buying items. All proceeds benefit the American Cancer Society. -Donna Stanley

**Think – Pray – Connect
 Families from September**

10/06/24

Miriam Jones

281 Morrison Ave, Cuyahoga Falls OH 44221

Please send letters of comfort and condolences to Miriam Jones, as she grieves the loss of her husband, Robert Jones, who passed on September 25th.

Edith Briers

4133 Fishcreek Rd, APT 809, Stow OH 44224

*Please also share those condolences with Edith,
who was Robert's mother-in-law.*

10/13/24

Beth Burger

171 Graham Rd, Apt. 69,
Cuyahoga Falls OH 44223

*Beth has returned home after being in rehab for a few weeks.
Please cards of well-wishing and encouragement.*

10/20/24

Charlie Redman

141 S. Mantua St, Kent OH 44240

*Pray with and reach out to Charlie as he recovers from
recent hip replacement surgery*

Mike & Debbie Kostensky

815 Sandy Lake Rd., Kent OH 44240

*Send congratulations to the Kostensky Family as their
daughter Hope gave birth to grandson Octavius on the 9th of
October!*

10/27/24

Lee Ann "Pinky" Veatch

1714 Knoll Ct., Allen TX 75002

*Send well-wishes to Pinky as she has been having
health difficulties and was recently in the hospital.*