

THE MESSENGER

The United Methodist Church in Stow



August 2024

“It’s About Time”



About 2 weeks ago (July), I went into a store. There to greet me was some very large Halloween decorations. I was surprised and just mentally say something like “OK!!!” and walked on.

I do understand that retailers want to be the first to have the products in hopes of catching the early bird shoppers. But, I do think selling Halloween decorations in July is pushing it quite a bit. By the way, the decorations are some ten-foot-tall “monsters” that has nothing to do with the original celebration of All Saints Day.

About a week later I was in the same store. This time they had all of their outdoor merchandise on sale. This included lawn mowers, deck/backyard tables and chairs and other “decorations” that would be used with the tables and chairs. The clearance sale also included some annual plants. I wonder why someone would buy annual plants half way through the summer, but that is just me.

The problem that I see in all of this is that the store is encouraging us to look past the fact that it is **still summer** with Halloween decorations. They also want us to ignore the fact that it is **still summer** with supplies on clearance. To all of this I say, let’s just enjoy where we are and not spend too much time looking at where we will be.

Enjoy life.



Noisy Offering

We collected \$47.30 on 7/28 for our Noisy Offering. This offering is collected on the 4th Sunday of each month. Any loose change or other money collected goes to the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) for their missions. Our next collection will be on August 25.



Thank you for keeping our shelves stocked

We are still in need of the following:

Canned veggies-not corn, baked beans, cereal, baking mixes, hearty soups, tuna, Knorr side dishes.

Thank you for your continued support!!



Here are the YouTube links for the August worship services.

Aug 4: <https://youtube.com/live/0FsJUF39qCk?feature=share>

Aug 11: <https://youtube.com/live/YZp35LuwxR0?feature=share>

Aug 18: <https://youtube.com/live/p9qH0-Z1pOg?feature=share>

Aug 25: <https://youtube.com/live/L8iVMUslfQg?feature=share>

Strategic Plan Update

We announced our Strategic Plan for the next 3-5 years in April. As a reminder, the plan was arrived at by a team participating in the East Ohio Conference sponsored program in which a coach helped us discern where we are as a congregation and what our neighbors look like and may need. We have identified our Mission Focus as the Empty Nesters from the northeast quadrant of Stow, with 5 goals to achieve in the first 12 months.

- Effectively communicate with our congregation and encourage member engagement in the Strategic planning goals and process.
- Establish a relationship with the new Stow Senior Center.
- Increase participation of congregants in discipleship opportunities in support of Sunday morning worship.
- Establish a Welcoming Ministry.
- Improve the image of the church through updated and enhanced digital media presence.

These first months have been like building a house, laying the foundation for the work to come. We continue to meet with our coach monthly, receiving feedback and encouragement, as well as fresh eyes helping us to see our successes and new opportunities. Every one of our first 90 day goals was achieved, but it may not look like much just yet. Like the house when the walls start to go up, you will soon see evidence of progress. As summer fades and vacation season winds up, you will hear of opportunities to deepen your faith by serving this congregation and our community. We hope that you will prayerfully consider making that next step in your faith journey.

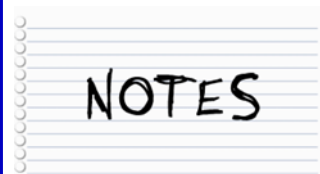
We are not the church that we used to be. The truth is that this is not unique to the UMC in Stow. Will you join in to make us the church that God wants us to be in this time and place?



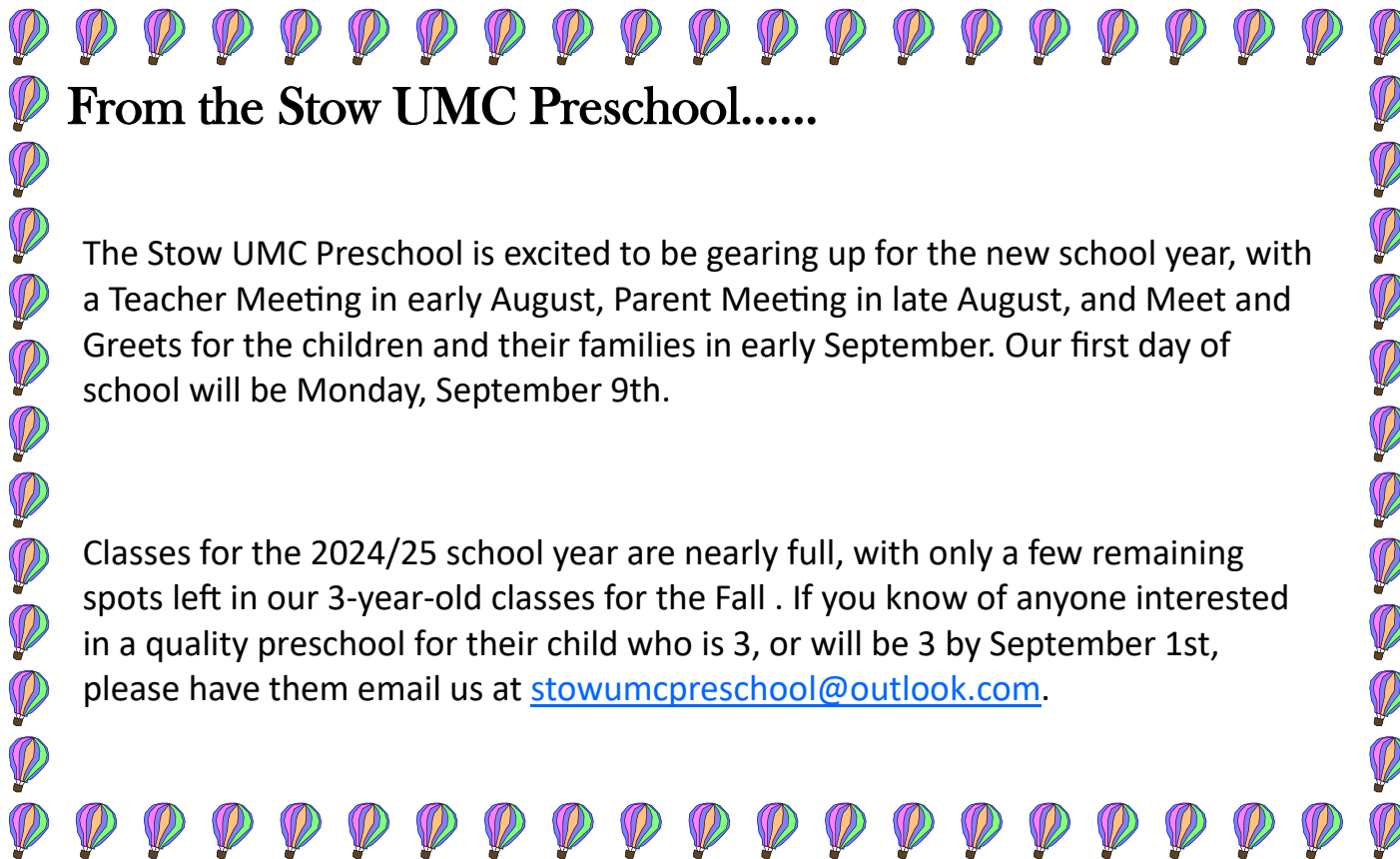
Acme Cash Back starts on August 1, 2024. When you shop Acme Fresh Market and purchase qualifying products, Acme will donate a portion of your total to the church! Please place your receipts in the donation "church" located in the outer narthex. Receipts need to be dated no later than February 15, 2025.



The next Book Club will meet on Monday, **Aug 12**, at 3 pm in the church parlor. Discussion will be on the book, Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil by John Berendt. This story is based on a true crime that took place in Savannah. Please join us!



For those of you who take notes during the service, there are note sheets available at the usher's table.



From the Stow UMC Preschool.....

The Stow UMC Preschool is excited to be gearing up for the new school year, with a Teacher Meeting in early August, Parent Meeting in late August, and Meet and Greet for the children and their families in early September. Our first day of school will be Monday, September 9th.

Classes for the 2024/25 school year are nearly full, with only a few remaining spots left in our 3-year-old classes for the Fall . If you know of anyone interested in a quality preschool for their child who is 3, or will be 3 by September 1st, please have them email us at stowumcpreschool@outlook.com.



September 15
Harvest Homecoming after church

Port-a-Potty Evangelism

Jennifer Ruth Lynn Garrison

All your works shall give thanks to you, O Lord, and all your faithful shall bless you. - Psalm 145:10 (NRSV)

The cozy white church is miles from any town on a long stretch of country road. When I first arrived as pastor and looked around, I noticed a portable toilet in the back parking lot, near the small cemetery fence but at a tactful distance from the gate.

“You’ll be surprised how many people stop here to use this,” a beloved elder of the church told me. “We set it up for people visiting the cemetery, but it gets lots of delivery drivers, service trucks, and people just trying to make it home from somewhere or other.”

You can’t actually see the little blue hut from the road, but word gets around, I guess. Whenever I’m in the church office, a truck or two will pull over just for this purpose. If I happen to be in the lot at the same time as one of the drivers, I say hello and introduce myself. Most of the time, though, I just glimpse the passersby from my office window. It might be my imagination, but it seems to me that as they drive away, they are less tense, shoulders more relaxed, breath coming easier.

I’m pretty sure when the psalmist wrote the words “*all your works shall give thanks to you...*” they couldn’t have conjured up a little rest stop in the back lot of a church yard in the rainy Pacific Northwest, and yet here we are. Providing a spot in between for flagging drivers, that they might bless rather than curse the journey.

Prayer

O Lord, make our community a true respite for weary travelers. Amen.

Rev. Jennifer Garrison is a writer, spiritual director and pastor living in the Pacific Northwest.

SUN. 9:00 am Sunday School 10:00 am Worship Service	MON. 9 am-12 pm Food Pantry 6:30 pm Scouts Troop 270/FH 6:30 pm Cub Scouts Pack 3274/Room 108 1st & 2nd Mon	TUES.	WED. 9 am-12 pm Food Pantry	THURS. 6-8 pm Food Pantry	FRI. Office closed	SAT.
				1	2	3
4  HOLY COMMUNION	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12  BOOK CLUB 3pm in the Parlor	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20  Helping Hands 9 am—noon	21	22	23	24
25 	26	27	28	29	30	31



United Methodist Church
In Stow
4880 Fishcreek Rd.
Stow, OH 44224
GROW-GATHER-GO

**RETURN SERVICE
REQUESTED**

Contact us:

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Our Mission: Grow in Faith in Christ~ Reach Out in God's Love

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Director of Music Ministries: Jeremy Gilpatric: jer4192@yahoo.com

Director of Vacation Bible School: Karen Rocco: kdrocco6@aol.com

UMC Preschool: Karen McCaffrey: stowumcpreschool@outlook.com

Church Office Hours: Monday-Thursday 9:00 am– 3:00 pm

Deadline for the Sunday Worship bulletin: Wednesdays at noon

Deadline for the newsletter, *The Messenger*: 24th of each month

Don't forget our Permanent Endowment Fund in your will. Make The United Methodist Church in Stow a part of your financial planning.