



Open Arms . . . Open Hearts . . . Open Hands

Stow Alliance
Fellowship

NEWS

January 2018



15th Annual Sportsman's Dinner Outreach

"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow is the road that leads to life and only a few find it."

Matthew 7:13-14

On Saturday, February 24, 2018 we will host our 15th annual Sportsman's Night Dinner here at Stow Alliance Fellowship. Andy Kaminski and Tom Dubois from "Rugged Cross Outdoors" will be our guest speakers after we enjoy great food and fellowship. Andy and Tom will use their talents and experience as hunters to help show all who attend how to find the narrow road and enter the narrow gate to life. They have a very unique way of showing how to get on the right path.

Who's going to be there? Hopefully you will be there because we will need help in a variety of ways. A sign up sheet will be available at the table in the lobby. Be sure to sign up to help! Tickets will go on sale beginning Sunday, January 7, 2018 and the suggested cost is \$15.00. The ticket sales go towards helping to pay for the speakers and their expenses, and to cover the other administrative costs of the event.

Who else is going to be there? Hopefully those who have yet to find the narrow path that leads to life.

Who will bring them? You will! This is your opportunity to invite and bring those who are walking on the wrong path. Please ask God to prompt you to be open to inviting the right people to this event. Remember the friends of the paralytic man in Mark 2:3 brought their friend to see Jesus, and remember that "we are Christ's Ambassadors" (2 Corinthians 5:20)! It is true most who come have a common passion for hunting and fishing, but please do not let that limit who you might invite. Women and children are welcome and more and more come every year.

Most important...we need you to pray! Pray boldly! Prayer is the means God uses to further His Kingdom. So pray now and pray then. There will also be a prayer warrior sign up at the table in the lobby. The prayer warriors will be praying during the dinner in the upstairs chapel for all aspects of the event as it is going on in the gym.

So please pray boldly!

Oh, the time - our narrow gates (the doors) open at 4:45p.m. See you there!

Thank You,
Bill Crowe
Sportsman's Night Dinner Chairman

John Kitchen, Senior Pastor

A Prayer for the New Year

Almost every day this past year I've been praying a borrowed prayer. It is a prayer first prayed by a suffering man, a desperate man, a man utterly at the end of himself. It is a prayer first prayed by Jeremiah. Most days this past year I've concluded my morning time of prayer with Jeremiah's cry to God, because it has become my cry as well. Might it become your prayer as well?

"I know, O LORD, that the way of man is not in himself,
that it is not in man who walks to direct his steps.

Correct me, O LORD,
but in justice; not in your anger,
lest you bring me to nothing."

(Jeremiah 10:23-24)

Jeremiah prays of something he *knows* and he asks for something he *needs*.

There is something each of us must *know*. I, you, we, must *know* that "the way of man is not in himself." By "man" Jeremiah intends not only males, but "man" as in humanity, mankind. What Jeremiah prays applies to every one of us.

When Jeremiah speaks of "the way" he uses a word that shows up often in the Proverbs. Proverbs speaks variously of "the way" of the violent man (3:31), the wicked (4:14), the adulteress (7:25), the fool (12:15), the treacherous (13:15), the lazy (15:19), and so forth. But it also speaks of "the way" of good men (2:20), of wisdom, of uprightness (4:11), of life (6:23), and of understanding (9:6). All of these latter ways are simply individual lanes that make up "the way of the Lord" (10:29). It is "the way" we *ought* to go, "the way" we are morally obligated to proceed in, "the way" that makes for life, rather than death.

Jeremiah similarly speaks of "the way of the wicked" (12:1) and "the way of the nations" (10:2), in contrast to "the way of the Lord" (5:4, 5). He announces: "Thus says the LORD: Behold, I set before you the way of life and the way of death." (21:8).

So "the way" that is not in me, is the way I *should* go. I can't live before God as I ought.

Jeremiah prays on ... "it is not in man who walks to direct his steps."

Whereas the first line confesses the way I *ought* to go, this line emphasizes the way I *want* to go. Every day, all day long, you and I are taking steps ... the moments pass, things happen, words are spoken, encounters with others take place. Life just keeps moving! You and I can't help but "walk" through this passage of time. But it is not in us to "direct" our "steps" aright while doing so. If I "direct [my] steps" ... I'll do it according to my desires, whims, wisdom. And if I do that, I will inevitably go astray! Again, Proverbs agrees: "There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death" (16:25).

When it comes to the battle between what I *ought* to be and what I *want* to do, each of us must know and admit this: *I can't do this!*

But there is more here than simply a reminder of what we must *know*. What I know ushers me to the necessity of what I must ask. There is something every one of us must *request*. We need this, desperately: "Correct me, O LORD"! This is the admission, "Lord, I'm going to mess this up if you don't guide me!"

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A Prayer for the New Year Cont.

The word translated “correct” describes correction that is aimed at educating a person toward a better course. It is always motivated by *love* and is always an evidence of *sonship* (Prov. 3:11-12; cf. Heb. 12:5-6). A variety of methods may be involved, but it is never merely punitive, but always instructional. The goal is not merely to shape ethical behavior, but to capture the heart for the Lord (Prov. 1:7).

“Correct me, O LORD” is a dangerous prayer. Are you willing to pray it, regularly?

“Yes,” but I quickly add: “But be gentle with me, Lord!” Correct me ... “**but in justice; not in your anger, lest you bring me to nothing**” (24b). I have to admit, this part of the prayer bothered me for a while. Even as I prayed this prayer over and over, this part just didn’t sit right with me. I wondered, “Why *justice* rather than grace or mercy or patience?” I would much prefer grace and mercy to “justice”!

But then I studied the word that is translated “justice.” It woodenly means “judgment,” but covers the entire gamut of governance. It is not merely a judicial word, but a relational word. So that the prayer actually means something like, “Rule me, Lord!” “Correct me as the one to whom I bow as my Sovereign, my King, my Lord ... not simply as a Judge!”

I came to realize that this prayer enables me to humble myself and pray, as I so desperately need to, “**Correct me, Lord, but gently, graciously, lovingly, strongly!**” It is perhaps the most basic prayer of a disciple, a learner after Christ. It is my lifeline to Him who alone has all I need and who is all I really want.

For Adults

Share the Joy! - Thank you SAF for your generous hearts! We were able to help 49 children (16 families) experience the love of Christ this Christmas!

Severe Weather—In the event a service is cancelled, Stow Alliance Fellowship will use the i-Alert system to inform the congregation of the cancellation. This is the same service used to notify the public of school closings. The closing will be broadcast on WKYC Channel 3, wkyc.com, and WCRF 103.3 FM.



Office Holiday Hours - The church office will be closed Friday, December 29th and Monday, January 1st to celebrate the New Year.

Year End Giving - All cash or check gifts for 2017 must be received or postmarked by December 31, 2017 to be counted in the 2017 giving year. All online giving for 2017 must be done by Wednesday, December 20, 2017 to be counted in the 2017 giving year due to differences in bank processing. Thank you for your generosity and faithful giving throughout the year!

2018 Bible Reading Guides - Be sure to pick up a 2018 Bible reading guide on the lobby information table and spend time each day with God in prayer and His Word! Reading guides are also available on our website: www.stowalliance.org



LIFE Groups - Life Groups will resume on Sunday, January 7th and Friday, January 12th. These adult small groups meet on Friday and Sunday evenings in individual homes. They are a great way to be a part of a group who desires to connect with others and grow in Christ through authentic relationships. Please contact Pastor Don at dmiller@stowalliance.org or 330-688-7433 if you are interested in joining a group or for more information.

For Adults

 **JuBELLation Ringers Needed** - JuBELLation, our handbell choir, is in need of 3 new ringers beginning January 9th. Practices are on Tuesday evenings at 7:00pm in the music room. If you are interested in joining or need more information, please contact Terese Gavin at 330-926-0329 or Julie Kitchen at 330-688-7433.

New Members Class - Join us for 3 information packed classes about our local church, our denomination, and what it means to become a member at SAF. Classes begin Sunday, January 21st at 9:00am in room 216. Please sign up on the back of your communication card or contact Pastor Phil at: 330-688-7433 or pchapman@stowalliance.org

Prime Timers - All senior adults are invited to join us for fun, fellowship, and faith-building on the 3rd Thursday of each month (September – April) at 12:30pm in the Seasons Room. Our next meeting will be on Thursday, January 18th at 12:30pm. Bring a sandwich; drinks and dessert is provided. Jim Shuman will be sharing with us that day.

Deeper Life Retreat - All senior adults are invited to the Central District's annual deeper life retreat on March 14-16th at the Carlisle Inn in Sugarcreek, Ohio. Rev. Jeff Miller and Don Dillavou will be the guest speakers. Come for three days of spiritual refreshment, Bible teaching, hymn singing, fellowship, Amish shopping, and much more. Brochures and registration forms are available on the lobby information table. Registration with full payment is due by February 2nd. See brochure for more details.

 **Pocket Change = Big Change!** - Thanks to everyone who participated in the baby bottle campaign for life. We raised \$770.28 for *Pregnancy Solutions and Services!* "Loose change truly can change lives!"

Nominating Committee - Please pray for the 2017 Nominating Committee as they complete their work. The members are Pastor John Kitchen, Bill Davis, Perry Gopp, Cheryl Parker, and Steve Williams. They also welcome your questions or input as they seek to nominate those God would like in positions of elected service in Stow Alliance Fellowship. Feel free to contact any one of them with your questions or thoughts.

Youth Pastor Search - Please pray as we seek God's provision for our next Youth Pastor. If you have questions about the search process please see Pastor Kitchen.

Children's Ministry Volunteers Needed - We are in need of several volunteers to step up and help in the 2 year old class during 2nd service on Sunday, January 21st. If you are able to help out, please contact Darlene Risjan at: 330-688-7433 or drisjan@stowalliance.org.

Office Volunteers Needed - We are currently looking for 1 volunteer to serve in the office on Sunday mornings on the 3rd Sunday of the month during 2nd service. We also are looking for 1 volunteer to serve at the welcome center on the 4th Sunday of the month during 2nd service. If you are interested in helping out our office ministry, please contact Karie Gilley at 330-688-7433.

Stewardship Update Through December 17, 2017:

	<u>Month</u>	<u>Year-to-Date</u>
TITHES & OFFERINGS		
Actual	\$ 52,633	\$681,417
Budget	<u>39,720</u>	<u>675,240</u>
Amount Over/(Under) Budget	12,913	6,177
GREAT COMMISSION FUND		
Actual	\$ 11,536	\$ 182,730
Promises	<u>3,987</u>	<u>67,779</u>
Amount Over/(Under) Promises	7,549	114,951

PRAISE Plan

Thank you for supporting the Praise Plan!
Your continued gifts will help us with future projects.

Especially For Men

Men's Gathering - Men of all ages are invited to join us for breakfast and fellowship on the first Saturday of each month. We will meet on Saturday, January 6th at 7:30 am in the Seasons Room.

Especially For Women

 **MOPS - Mothers of Pre-Schoolers** - MOPS is a group offering hope, encouragement, community, and mothering support to mothers of children from birth through 5 years old. Come join local moms on the 2nd Tuesday of every month from 9:30 - 11:30 am. Our next meeting will be on Tuesday, January 9th. Childcare will be provided.

NAOMI Women - All women are invited to join us for a time of fellowship, friends, and planning the next year at Corner Cup Coffeehouse (3019 Graham Rd.) on Thursday, January 11th at 7:00pm.

Wednesday Evening Ladies' Bible Study – The Wednesday evening ladies Bible study will begin a new series in January called *Stepping Up: A Journey Through the Psalms of Ascent* by Beth Moore. This study provides an in-depth Bible study of Psalms 120-134. The approximate cost is \$13 for the workbook. Please contact Sue Armentrout at 330.474.1311 or armentrouts84@yahoo.com to sign up or with any questions you might have.

For Children

 **Awana Grand Prix - Ready...Set...GO!** The Awana Grand Prix is coming on Saturday, January 27th, from 10:00am-12:00pm in the gym. Come and join us for a great time of food, fellowship, and races! Cars can be purchased starting the first week of January. If you are in need of assistance with your car, join us on Saturday, January 13th for our workshop from 1:00-3:00pm in the gym.

Youth Ministries

 **New Year's Bash** - All Jr. & Sr. High students are invited to our New Year's Bash on Friday, January 5 from 6 - 9 pm in the youth wing. Cost is \$5. Pizza and snacks will be provided. Bring your nerf gear for some team fun! Invite a friend and ring in the new year youth group style.

Please note there will be no Youth Superbowl Bash this year. Watch for info on a girl's and guy's overnighter coming soon.

Sports Ministries

Men's Basketball - Plays on Saturdays from 9:00 – 11:00am. We will play only on January 6th this month due to other activities in the gym. Come and join us!

Co-Ed Volleyball - will play on Saturday, January 6th & 20th from 7:00-9:00pm. Come and join us!

Haven of Rest

Thank you SAF for your generous and giving hearts! We were able to provide 166 gifts of various kinds for the men, women, and children at Haven of Rest and Harvest Home this Christmas.

We also provided 97 winter coats and 107 hats, gloves, and scarfs to those in need of warm winter clothes at Haven of Rest this year. Thank you!

Our SAF Family January Birthdays...



Michael McAmis	1/2	Bret Moore	1/12	Carolyn Campbell	1/23
Ann VonGunten		Karen Trowbridge	1/13	Katie Armentrout	1/24
Gideon Coop	1/4	Peter Trowbridge		Becky Caplinger	
Lizzy Gavin	1/5	Leah Rapp	1/14	Aaliyah Ruppel	
Thomas Chapman	1/6	Cheryl Crowe	1/16	Vanessa Dull	1/26
Michael Hall		Rick Rhodes		Michael Meloy	
Jeff Kuno		Ashley Smith		Bill Alvarez	1/27
Noah Parker	1/7	Michael Collins	1/17	Larry Ruppel	
AnnaLia Dye	1/8	Sadie Lohmier		Terri Sawders	1/28
Bill Crowe	1/9	David Teare	1/18	Pastor Don Miller	1/29
Pastor Phil Chapman	1/10	Debbie Koyle	1/19	Zach Oles	
Diana Meloy		Fred Thomason		Steve Cupp	1/30
Maggie Masl	1/11	Amy Cervone	1/21		

January Anniversaries...

Pat & Rae Jean Wilson 1/9



happy anniversary

Harold & Mary Miller 1/24

If you are not currently on our birthday and/or anniversary list and would like to be, please call the church office and let us know!

Our Christian Sympathy To...

Pastor John & Julie Kitchen and family on the death of Julie's father, Clinton Patterson, on November 24th.

Rob & Marlene Osborn and family on the death of Rob's brother, Ron Osborn, on November 24th.

The family and friends of Lois (Imogene) Christner who passed away on December 15th.