



Stow Alliance
Fellowship

NEWS

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

March 2018

Good Friday Service

Friday, March 30th at 7:00pm

Please join us at 7:00pm for a quiet evening of worship and reflection.



Easter Sunday Services

Sunday, April 1st at 9:00 & 10:30am

Come celebrate our Lord Jesus' resurrection through hymns and songs on Easter Sunday, April 1st. The Worship Choir will be leading us in worship. This worship event is filled with opportunities to celebrate Jesus Christ, the one true Savior, and thank Him for His perfect gift.

Stow Community Showcase

Saturday, April 7th & Sunday, April 8th

Help us represent the Kingdom to our community! Over 10,000 people will attend the Stow Community Showcase to be held at Stow Munroe Falls High School on Saturday, April 7th from 10:00am-5:00pm and Sunday, April 8th from 11:00am-3:00pm. SAF and SAP will have an exhibit at the showcase and volunteers are need for 2 hour time slots. If you can help at this outreach event, please sign up in the lobby beginning early-March. For more information, please contact Karie Gilley at: office@stowalliance.org or 330-688-7433.

Vacation Bible School

June 12th-16th

It's never too early to think about VBS! Kids ages 3 years old (and potty trained) through 5th grade completed are invited to fly with us on the *Lion of Judah Airlines*, June 12th-16th. Registration is available online now at: www.stowalliance.org (click on the link on the resource or Children's Ministry page). If you would be interested in helping out with anything (crafts, games, group leaders, snacks, Bible, etc.), please contact Darlene Risjan at: drisjan@stowalliance.org or 330-688-7433!

John Kitchen, Senior Pastor

Strength and Courage

Four times in Joshua chapter one Joshua is told, **“Be strong and courageous”** (1:6, 7, 9, 18). This follows up on his being told this twice previously (Deut. 31:7, 23). Joshua was given this command directly by God Himself (Deut. 31:23; Josh. 1:6, 7), by Moses (Deut. 31:7), and by the people he was to lead (Josh. 1:18). Not only was the leader, Joshua, given this command, the people themselves were as well (Deut. 31:6). Both leader and people are commanded by God to “Be strong and courageous.” This command would continue to be echoed down through his leadership of these people (Joshua 10:25) and at critical times in the life of the nation after them (1 Chron. 22:13; 28:20; 2 Chron. 32:7).

This same command comes down us today and with the same weight of divine demand behind it. What does it mean for us at Stow Alliance Fellowship to “Be strong and courageous”?

On the face of it the command “Be strong” is not only *not* encouraging, but almost a mocking, taunting, demeaning imperative. What is required of us is more than is within us. The challenges that stand before us are bigger than what we can gather up from within ourselves. In the face of challenges so daunting and a personal condition so depraved, the command to “Be strong” is not only futile, but mean-spirited ... *unless*, of course the command is accompanied by a promise. And in this case, that is exactly what we have. Accompanying this command is the thrice-given promise of God’s abiding presence (Joshua 1:5, 9, 17).

Thus, to live out the command to **“Be strong”** is to **live out of an alien power**. We must come into the experience of something more than what we can reach down and do with additional effort.


In New Testament terms this means living in the fullness of the Holy Spirit’s personal presence and power. We are not left the option of assessing our options and choosing our way based upon what is within us or what we are able to do by the power of redoubled efforts. We are to “Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of *his might*” (Eph. 6:10). If we rely upon our own ingenuity, our own wisdom, our own strength, we will achieve only what is humanly possible. But if we truly come into a fresh experience of the infilling of God’s Spirit, there won’t be enough time to tell the stories of what He will do through us.

Similarly, to be commanded **“Be ... courageous”** is, without divine enablement, a mocking of our naturally fearful state. By itself it amounts to little more than whistling in the dark. But with the promise of His presence and the provision of His Holy Spirit, being courageous is simply **living out an alien purpose**. No longer are we able to make our choices out of fear, comfort or passivity. Timidity, discomfort and a shrinking spirit must give way—not to something from within ourselves, not from some dredged up daring, but from the knowledge that we have been given a divine task and resourced with divine presence and power ... and so we simply step forward, confronting fear, comfort, passivity, timidity and that shrinking spirit and simply do what God calls us to do.

We are “strong and courageous” as we intentionally view our lives (and the circumstances and people and relationship that fill them) as under a purpose that is not dredged up from within us, but which is laid down upon us from above ... and when we choose to live for that purpose (rather than our own desires/wishes/whims) by the strength of God’s indwelling presence within us.

So hear it from God. Hear it from me. Hear it from one another. Hear it again and again and again, until it becomes the drumbeat by which you march through life: **“Be strong and courageous”!**

For Adults

 **Daylight Saving Time** - Don't forget to set your clocks ahead one hour on Saturday, March 10th as Daylight Saving time returns.

Baptism - Have you followed the Lord in baptism? If you have trusted Jesus Christ as Savior and He is your Lord, then in obedience to His command, you should be baptized. If you are considering baptism and have questions or are interested in being baptized, please sign the back of the Communication Card or contact Pastor Miller at 330-688-7433 or dmiller@stowalliance.org. Baptisms will be held on Sunday, March 18th.

Prime Timers - All senior adults are invited to join us on *Thursday, March 22nd* at 12:30 pm in the Seasons Room for a time of food, fellowship, and faith-building. Pastor Don Miller will be our guest speakers this month. Bring a sandwich; dessert and beverages will be provided. Please note that due to the Deeper Life retreat, our monthly gathering has been pushed back a week.

Seeking Servants - As we begin to pursue some of the projects discussed at our Annual Meeting, the Operations Committee is looking for someone(s) with experience as a contractor and/or working with architects in building design/renovation. If that's you and you're interested in potentially assisting, please let Pastor Kitchen know.

Welcome Center Volunteers Needed - We are currently looking for 2 volunteers to serve at the welcome center on Sunday mornings on the 3rd Sunday (2nd service) or 5th Sunday (1st service). If you are interested in helping out our office ministry, please contact Karie Gilley at 330-688-7433.



Children's Ministry Volunteers Needed - Our children's ministry really needs your help! We are currently looking for volunteers to fill the following open positions:

Waddlers & Toddlers class: 1st Sunday of the month - 2nd service; 3rd Sunday of the month - 2nd service

Kindergarten and 1st Grade teacher who can serve each Sunday morning during 1st service.

If you are able and willing to help invest in the lives of our children, please contact Darlene Risjan at drisjan@stowalliance.org or 330-688-7433.

Especially for Men

Men's Gathering - Men of all ages are invited to come fellowship over breakfast as we receive encouragement from God's Word the 1st Saturday of each month. Join us on Saturday, March 3rd at 7:30 am in the Seasons Room.

Men's Basketball - Plays on Saturdays from 9:00 - 11:00am. Come and join us!

Stewardship Update Through February 18, 2018:

	<u>Month</u>	<u>Year-to-Date</u>
TITHES & OFFERINGS		
Actual	\$ 38,432	\$86,995
Budget	<u>40,515</u>	<u>94,535</u>
Amount Over/(Under) Budget	(2,083)	(7,540)
GREAT COMMISSION FUND		
Actual	\$ 10,499	\$ 23,253
Promises	<u>3,936</u>	<u>9,184</u>
Amount Over/(Under) Promises	6,563	14,069

PRAISE Plan

Please prayerfully consider your participation in the PRAISE Plan. Information about the "PRAISE Plan" and how you can be involved is available in the church office.

Received to Date: \$59,231

Especially for Women

NAOMI Women - Nurturing, Advising, Organizing, Mentoring, Instructing. This Alliance Women's ministry is designed to develop and deepen our relationships with God and other women, and strengthen our skills for ministry and life. We meet on the 2nd Thursday of each month with our next meeting being on Thursday, March, 8th at 7:00pm in the Seasons Room. All women are invited to join us for a time of fellowship, friends, and lending a helping hand as we prepare freezer meals for those in need.

Women's Retreat – Mark your Calendars! The annual women's retreat will take place on Saturday, April 21, 2018 from 8:45am-4:00pm here at SAF. Our theme this year will be "Prayer", based on 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18: "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." Our speaker, Lynne Banting, is an elective Sunday school teacher at Bethel Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Enon Valley, PA. She also teaches adult education classes on painting at Butler Community College. She has been teaching and doing dramas since 1989 in Eastern Ohio, West Virginia and Western PA. Come and be a part of a time of fellowship, laughter, reflection and praise. Cost is \$35 per person which includes breakfast and lunch. Sign-ups will begin on March 18th.



MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers)—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 Tuesday, March 13th from 9:30 - 11:30 am. Childcare will be provided.

Youth Ministry

Jr. & Sr. High Guys Night - All Jr. & Sr. High guys are invited to a overnighiter here at SAF on Friday, March 9th starting at 7:00 pm in the Youth Wing. Come for "paintball" war/tourney in the gym. There is no cost. Bring a snack to share and a friend!

JH Believe Conference 2018! - One of the best Junior High events in the country is coming to Anderson University in Indiana, April 6th & 7th. Great speakers, artists, music, and more combine to make this an amazing weekend for the Junior High students! Registration is now open in the JH room! Early Bird registration cost is \$75 per person from now until March 18th. After March 18th the registration cost is \$100 per person. The deadline to sign up is March 28th. Please mark your calendars for our upcoming parents meeting on Sunday, March 25th. See Perry Gopp or Michael Ray with any questions or check out www.ciy.com/believe.

LIFE 2019 - It's not too early to be thinking about it. ORLANDO, FL! July 9-13, 2019. Mark it on your calendar. Save money. Watch for fundraisers. Do your own fundraisers. Pray. Invite. Create excitement. Anyone currently in 7th-11th grade will be eligible to attend next year. Registration will begin in late summer - so get ready to commit!

Stow Alliance Preschool



Stow Alliance Preschool registration is going on now for the 2018-2019 school year! Our preschool offers fun and learning in a Christian environment including Bible time, snack time, story hour, craft time, and field trips! Registration forms can be found on our website (www.stowalliance.org/preschool) or picked up on the table in the lobby. Please contact Jeanne Crowe for more information.

Sports Ministry

Co-Ed Volleyball - will play on Saturday, March 3rd, 17th, & 31st from 7:00-9:00pm. Come and join us!

Our SAF Family

March Birthdays...



Andrea Chapman	3/5	Kay McAmis	3/10	Julie Hetherington	3/17
		Doreen Sias		Pat Wilson	
Andrea Sparrow	3/6				
Ethan Sparrow		Evelyn Mohr	3/11	Zach Alvarez	3/25
		Lisa Sprague		Amy Masl	
Tanner Henderson	3/8			Mary Ann Sawders	
		Amy Milette	3/14		
David Dysle	3/9			Aimee Wheeler	3/26
Gail Linger		Ryan Steedly	3/16		
Mark Sumner					

March Anniversaries...

Ken & Penny Erwin	3/11		Dick & Gwen Bauer	3/24
George & Donna Utterback	3/16		Larry & Barb Ruppel	3/26
Dwight & Jennifer Husk	3/17			



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...

Steve & Stella Cupp and family on the death of Steve's father, David B. Cupp on February 15th.