



Stow Alliance
Fellowship

NEWS

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

April 2018

Good Friday Service

Friday, March 30th at 7:00pm

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

He is not here;
he has
Risen!

Luke 24:6

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.

Spring Missions Sunday

Sunday, April 8th at 9:00 & 10:30am

On Sunday, April 8th, we'll celebrate our Spring Missions Weekend. We will welcome Ben and Krista who live on mission with Christ in a middle eastern country. They will share together during both of our morning worship services. The youth, during their Sunday School hour, will hear from Tessa Mitan who serves the Lord with H²O at Bowling Green University. The children will be led during their Club 3:16 time by our Remember Nhu Kenya 2018 team.

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. Be sure to stop by!

Those Inner Conversations

Moses repeatedly warned the new generation poised to enter the Promised Land: *“Do not say in your heart ...”* (Deuteronomy 9:4a). God is concerned over the self-talk of His people. What we “say in [our] heart” is of profound consequence.

It is worth pointing out the obvious—God knows we talk to ourselves! These inner conversations are of constant occurrence. In fact, they can’t be turned off, only redirected. And that only by the grace of God. We see this warning repeatedly throughout the Old Testament. There are a number of ways to go wrong in talking to yourself.

1. The danger of *self-congratulation*. *“Do not say in your heart*, after the LORD your God has thrust them out before you, ‘It is because of my righteousness that the LORD has brought me in to possess this land,’ whereas it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is driving them out before you.” (Deuteronomy 9:4; cf. 8:17)

The Israelites faced a danger from the seductions of the peoples of the land. Of this God constantly warned them (e.g., Numb. 25:1-9). But the ideas of others, as dangerous as they were, were not the only or even primary danger facing the Israelites. It was the conversations going on within their own hearts that made them especially vulnerable.

It is when we begin talking to ourselves about ourselves and our circumstances that we are in the most danger of going astray. We all have this kind of self-talk going on within our hearts all the time. We see and experience and try to understand—but are prone to interpret and talk to ourselves in self-affirming ways (“because of my righteousness”). This stream of thought forms a jet stream that powerfully circles planet self, threatening to pull everything else into its flow.

What we fail to see is that God sometimes blesses one (in this case, Israel) because he is disciplining another (here, the Canaanites). We must talk and walk humbly. The reasons “why” our lives are as they are is much bigger than our performance before God.

2. We may err in our inner conversations by *self-exaltation*. We may not elevate others or our accomplishments over God, but we may elevate our very selves: “Now therefore hear this, you lover of pleasures, who sit securely, *who say in your heart*, ‘I am, and there is no one besides me; I shall not sit as a widow or know the loss of children’ (Isaiah 47:8). ‘I am’ – that name has already been claimed (Exodus 3:14); its Owner says He’s not sharing (Isaiah 42:8). God is committed to a certain end with those who are “proud in *the thoughts of their hearts*” (Luke 1:51).

3. We go astray when we engage in *self-dependence*. The self-talk can also lead us astray in the opposite direction: “If *you say in your heart*, ‘These nations are greater than I. How can I dispossess them?’” (Deuteronomy 7:17). Instead of elevating ourselves and denigrating others, we may overly exalt them in our eyes—making them even bigger than God. And with God out of the picture all we have left to depend upon is ourselves. That leads to fear, paralysis and despair.

4. We err when we talk ourselves into *self-justification*. The people of Jeremiah’s day denied their hardships that arose from their responsibility: “And if *you say in your heart*, ‘Why have these things come upon me?’ it is for the greatness of your iniquity that your skirts are lifted up and you suffer violence” (Jeremiah 13:22). Ultimately, denial of responsibility is a denial of hope.

But not all self-talk is bad-talk. The Bible depicts the power of telling yourself the truth.

Take, for example, David as he prays Psalm 62. He begins his prayer so positively and confidently: “For God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation” (v.1). But, as so often is the case, things get difficult. Our confidence wanes. Our faith wavers. Our prayers change. By the middle of the psalm David is still praying. In fact he is still on the same theme with which he opened, but he has transitioned from talking to God, to coaching himself: “For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from him” (v.5).

This telling-yourself-the-truth kind of self-talk is the application of faith to a wavering, struggling heart. We talk to ourselves this way because deep down we believe Jesus was right: “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:31b-32a).

We talk to ourselves as a hold out for Jesus’ rescue, Jesus’ deliverance, Jesus’ promised freedom.

Don’t stop talking to yourself. Just start telling yourself the truth. And then keep it up.

For Adults

Welcome Pastor Chris! - We are delighted to welcome Pastor Chris Miletto to our staff at Stow Alliance Fellowship as our new Youth Pastor. Please continue in prayer for Chris, Amy and their children as they adjust to following God in these new steps of faith! Pray for God to work powerfully and savingly among our students!



Easter Flowers - We will be decorating the sanctuary with a variety of spring flowers for Easter Sunday. You may purchase flowers in memory or in honor of a loved one. Orders will be taken in the office through Sunday, March 25th. Cost is \$8 per plant. Please pay for your plant(s) when you place your order. You may take your flowers home with you following the 10:30am Easter service.

Prime Timers - All senior adults are invited to join us on Thursday, April 19th at 12:30 pm in the Seasons Room for a time of food, fellowship, and faith-building. Bring a sandwich; dessert and beverages will be provided. Jerry Hurd will be sharing with us.



Celebration of LIFE - Everyone is invited to a special celebration on Sunday, May 6th, starting at 6:00pm in the sanctuary. We will be praising God for His ministry through our LIFE Groups and His people. Everyone is welcome whether you participated in a LIFE Group or not. There will be refreshments in the Seasons Room following the service. Please come join the celebration and invite a friend.

Gardeners Needed - Spring is here! Our church flower beds are in need of some tender loving care. If you would like to help beautify our flower beds now and throughout the summer, please contact Bill Azzarello at 330-688-7433 or bazzarello@stowalliance.org



The Grass is Growing - We are currently looking for volunteers who would be willing to help mow the grass around the church building. A rotating schedule will be put in place for May - September. If you are interested and able to help, please contact Bill Azzarello.

Especially for Men

Men's Breakfast - Men of all ages are invited to join us for breakfast on Saturday, April 7th at 7:30am in the Seasons Room for a great time of food, fellowship, and encouragement in your walk with God.

Men's Basketball - Come and join us as we play on Saturdays from 9:00 - 11:00am in the gym.



Men's Softball League - The 2018 softball season is around the corner and we will be starting up our men's softball team! Games will be played at Water Works Park on Mondays with practices held here at the church field on Monday evenings and Saturday mornings. There is no fee to play, but a jersey is approximately \$25.00. Men must be 16 or older and attend at least 2 church services per month here at SAF to play. Please sign up in the lobby, if you are interested in playing. Call or text Jason Kallio at: 330-328-5353 with any questions.

Stewardship Update Through March 18, 2018:

	<u>Month</u>	<u>Year-to-Date</u>
TITHES & OFFERINGS		
Actual	\$ 42,868	\$141,594
Budget	<u>40,515</u>	<u>148,555</u>
Amount Over/(Under) Budget	2,353	(6,961)
GREAT COMMISSION FUND		
Actual	\$ 11,910	\$ 37,519
Promises	<u>3,936</u>	<u>14,432</u>
Amount Over/(Under) Promises	7,974	23,087

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: \$62,331

Especially for Women

Ladies Wednesday Evening Bible Study - The Wednesday evening ladies Bible study will begin a new series called: "Twelve Women of the Bible", a look at the spiritual lessons learned from twelve biblical women and their implications in life today. The study will begin on Wednesday, April 4th at 7:00pm in room 211 and continue through the end of AWANA. Please contact Sue Armentrout at 330.474.1311 or armentrouts84@yahoo.com to sign up or with any questions you might have.



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, April 10th from 9:30-11:30am. Childcare will be provided.

Women's Retreat - The annual women's retreat will take place on Saturday, April 21st, 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 "Understanding Your Bible" and 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 run through April 15th.

Stow Alliance Preschool



Preschool Open House - SAP is having an Open House on Tuesday, April 17th from 6:00pm-8:00pm. Classes are available for 3, 4, and 5 year olds. If you or someone you know has a preschooler, this is the perfect opportunity to visit our preschool, meet the staff, and see the classrooms. Contact Jeanne Crowe at 330-688-7433 for more information.

Children's Ministry



VBS - Vacation Bible School is coming! Join us as we travel on the *Lion of Judah Airlines*: Tuesday, June 12th - Saturday, June 16th. If you are interested in helping out in any way (crafts, games, group leaders, snacks, Bible, etc.), please contact Darlene Risjan at 330-688-7433 or drisjan@stowalliance.org. If you are in 6th grade or above, and you would like to help with VBS but are not yet an approved worker, please see Darlene Risjan so you can be approved **before** June. Kids registration is available online now! Sign up at www.stowalliance.org under the Children's Ministry page.

Donations for VBS - Be on the lookout for your chance to help out with VBS by donating needed items for decorations, crafts and snacks!

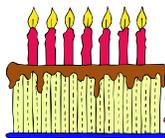
Children's Ministry Volunteers Needed - Our children's ministry really needs your help! We are currently looking for volunteers to fill the following open positions in the Waddlers & Toddlers class: 1st Sunday of the month - 2nd service; 3rd Sunday of the month - 2nd service. If you are able and willing to help invest in the lives of our children, please contact Darlene Risjan at drisjan@stowalliance.org or 330-688-7433.

Youth Ministry

Youth Group Game Night - Friday, April 6th from 7-10 pm. Open to Jr. & Sr. High (some of you will be at Believe, but if you didn't go, feel free to join us!) Come to and hang out with your friends for a night of fun and games. Snacks will be provided.

Senior High Overnighter - Friday, April 27th - Saturday, April 28th from 7pm - 9 am at SAF. Join us for fellowship, worship, prayer and fasting. This isn't your typical "overnighter". We want to see God do a mighty work and set up us for what He has next in our youth group. You don't want to miss it.

Our SAF Family



May God Bless You on Your Birthday.

April Birthdays...

Mark Loudermilk	4/1	Anna Jean Harry	4/9	Riley Wanzie	4/19
Walter Robison		Harold Miller		Tamie Wanzie	
Carl Sears		Joel Rapp			
Bruce Black	4/3	Robert Dobson	4/12	Savanah Dull	4/21
Reese Steedly				Bev Kipp	
		Ken Sawders	4/13	Dick Warman	
Craig Steele	4/4			Steve Roso	4/23
Ryan Gopp	4/5	Jennifer Husk	4/14	Elyssa Ruppel	
		Bill Luley			
Jenni Davis	4/6	Michelle Davis	4/16	Roger Smith	4/24
Christopher DeLucia	4/7	Kim Goldsboro		Pastor John Kitchen	4/26
Alison Dorton					
Clint Kitchen		Duane Armentrout	4/17	Perry Gopp	4/28
		Haley Wanzie		Sandie Hurd	
Alexander Grecco	4/8	Clark Wilson			
		Scott Milhoan	4/18		

April Anniversaries...

Jason & Jen Wedo	4/7		Bob & Mary Ann Sawders	4/28
Don & Marcie Lichi	4/10		Myron & Debbie Koyle	4/30
Rick & Vicki Rhodes			Carl & Diane Valenti	
Jim & Diana Warner	4/21			



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!