

The Season of Becoming

by Rev. Dr. Kristian Bendoraitis

There's something about the transition from spring into summer that feels like a fresh beginning.

I know January is supposed to be the season for resolutions and reinvention, but if we're honest, summer carries its own kind of energy. When the weather changes and the days get longer, we naturally begin reaching for something new. We start projects we've been putting off. We spend more time outside. We clean things out, plant gardens, plan trips, and reconnect with hobbies we forgot we enjoyed. Something about summer quietly whispers that life could feel a little fuller than it has lately.

I don't think that feeling is accidental. There is something deeply spiritual about the world waking up around us. Trees fill out with leaves, flowers return, and the sunlight stretches later into the evening. Creation itself seems to lean toward life during this season, and I wonder if our souls are trying to do the same thing.

So instead of only thinking about vacations, schedules, and summer plans, what if we also treated this season as an opportunity for spiritual renewal? What if we introduced something new into our spiritual lives this summer? What if we began or renewed a spiritual practice?

Sometimes when we hear the phrase "spiritual practices," we imagine something strict or exhausting. We picture people waking up at 4:00 am to pray for three uninterrupted hours while surviving entirely on God's love and rigid self-discipline. You could do this, but I'd certainly struggle, especially if it didn't include coffee.

Richard Foster, in his book, *Celebration of Discipline*, frames spiritual practices as ways of opening ourselves to God's presence rather than ways of earning God's approval. The deeper point of these practices is not performance – it is connection. These practices help us become more aware of the God who is already near to us.

And honestly, summer might be one of the best times to experiment with this.

The rhythms of life often change a little during this season. Even when we remain busy, there are small openings that appear in our schedules and in our attention. The longer evenings invite us to slow down, and the beauty around us naturally draws our eyes outward. Summer creates moments where we can become more attentive if we are willing to notice them.

Maybe this summer spiritual renewal does not need to look dramatic. Maybe it begins with something as simple as sitting quietly for a few minutes before the day begins instead of immediately reaching for your phone. Maybe it looks like taking a walk and paying attention to the world around you while quietly talking to God. Maybe it means reading a few verses of scripture slowly instead of rushing off to the next item on your to-do list. Maybe it means learning how to pray honestly again.

I believe this is the invitation summer places before us. Not necessarily to do more, but to become more attentive, more grounded, more connected to the presence of God in the middle of everyday life.

So as this season begins, perhaps the question is not only what you want to do this summer, but who you want to become while you are living through it.



Christian Education

By Terry Vine

The Christian Education Committee is grateful for another meaningful and active season of learning and fellowship at Avon Lake Presbyterian Church.

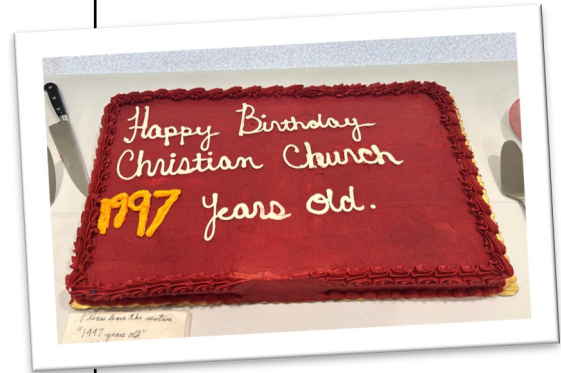
Throughout the year, our children have continued to engage in weekly Sunday School lessons led by a dedicated team of four faithful teachers. We are deeply thankful for the time, care, creativity, and consistency these volunteers bring each week as they nurture our youngest members in faith and community.

As summer begins, we will transition away from formal Sunday School classes for the season. However, families can still look forward to a welcoming children's area in the narthex each Sunday. A teacher will be available weekly to lead interested children in crafts, stories, and playtime during the summer months. We hope this provides a joyful and relaxed opportunity for children to continue connecting with one another and with God's love throughout the summer.

Our viewing and discussion of Season 3 of The Chosen will conclude on June 7. This season has offered wonderful insight and thoughtful conversation as we explored the life and ministry of Jesus together. We extend special thanks to Beth Shoemaker for leading such meaningful and engaging discussions throughout the series. We also want to express our gratitude to Jeff Spenser for his continued leadership in the weekly Bible Study/discussions.

Looking ahead, the CE Committee has already begun exploring new curriculum opportunities for all ages for the upcoming fall program year. We are excited about the possibilities ahead and the many ways we can continue growing together in faith and fellowship. Before we know it, Rally Day will be here to kick off another wonderful year of learning and connection!

We would also like to warmly invite anyone interested in becoming involved in Christian Education activities to join us. Whether you can help with one event, one month, or one year, there is a place for you. We truly believe we all grow stronger when we bring our gifts, ideas, and energy together in service and community.



Happy Birthday, Christian Church!

Pentecost was celebrated on May 25 and is often called the “birthday of the Church.” For Presbyterians, Pentecost marks the day when the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus’ followers, empowering them to share God’s message with people of every nation and language. It reminds us that the Church is not simply a building, but a community of believers called together by the Spirit to worship, serve, and share Christ’s love with the world.

Did you know...

- The word “Pentecost” comes from Greek word meaning “fiftieth,” because it is celebrated 50 days after Easter
- Red is the traditional color of Pentecost, symbolizing the flames of the Holy Spirit described in the Book of Acts
- Pentecost has roots in a Jewish harvest festival called Shavuot, which was being celebrated in Jerusalem when the Holy Spirit came to the disciples



The Colors of the Seasons

By Beth Shoemaker for Worship & Spiritual Life

We adorn the sanctuary with certain colors according to the liturgical calendar. In case you were wondering...

WHITE is for Eastertide, not just Easter! In 2026, Eastertide started on April 4 and ends right before Pentecost. May 17 will be the last Sunday with white for us.

RED is for Pentecost. Did you know that the season of Pentecost officially lasts all the way to the start of Advent? This year, there will be 25 Sundays in Pentecost. However, we will not use red for all of these, only for May 24, the actual day of Pentecost.

GREEN is for Ordinary Time. This is an alternate name given to the Sundays between Pentecost and Advent. There still are a few notable Sundays during that time, such as Trinity Sunday (May 31) and Christ the King Sunday (Nov. 22). The Sanctuary will be adorned in green, and the wisteria decorations will be hung for the summer.

Bells Will Be Ringing!

Preparing yourself for worship:

On Sunday mornings, prior to the service, we ask worshipers to quickly enter and find a seat in the sanctuary after grabbing a bulletin, signing the attendance pads, and leaving your offerings in the narthex. We ask you to quietly use this time to prepare yourself for worship, as you listen to the Gathering Music. There will be time to socialize after the service when the cookies are served, because we know you're happy to see each other! When the choir leads the music, they will line up in the narthex and enter the sanctuary about 9:54, six minutes before the service starts. This can be your signal to enter, as well.

Trinity Bells will sound:

A new element will be added to assist worshipers in knowing when to enter the sanctuary. At six minutes before the start of the service, three handbells will be rung by the doors between the narthex and sanctuary. This beautiful addition will be a lovely reminder to take your seats.

Missions By Beth Janis

Thank you for your support of the PCUSA One Great Hour of Sharing special offering.

Also, thank you for your Easter donations. The donations enable the Mission group to help people in our communities. Most recently, we assisted Lorain Cooperative Ministries (LCM) with their meals and pantry.

You might be asking yourself, "What is Lorain Cooperative Ministries?" We're glad you asked! LCM was established to pool resources to focus on the needs of families and individual that are low income, without homes, in need of assistance navigating health and human services, etc. Since ALPC is the only PCUSA church in Lorain County, we feel compelled to help in as many ways as possible. Remember packing hygiene bags and brown bag lunches? Your donations made those missions possible.

Have you noticed there's a laundry basket in the foyer again? We are planning to continue to collect new essentials that teens may need when being released from the Foster Care System. New sheets, towels, laundry pods, hygiene items (soap, dish soap, sanitary products), new backpacks, etc. Please keep your eyes open for summer sales of bedding and durable dishes.

We are open to any suggestions and welcome visitors to our meetings the second Thursday of each month. We can always use homemade or lovingly purchased cookies for lunches.



Session Highlights

from the May18 meeting

- The Deacons are helping with Staff Appreciation and a memorial service in the upcoming week.
- Family Night at the Crushers is July 18, and sign-ups are due May 24
- At the Presbytery meeting, a roundtable activity called “Seasons of Shalom” was held, and the Korean dinner was delicious
- Other churches are interested in how we have Giving Sunday once a month
- April was our first month in 2026 where expenses fell behind receipts due to escalating heating and landscaping bills
- The new Realm software is almost set up to track giving and member data. Members and friends please update your contact information and birthyear with the church office. This information remains confidential.
- The Elders of Jazz and Rev. Kurt Walker will lead worship the two Sundays in June when Kristian will be away
- A New Members’ class with three attendees is scheduled
- Our participation in the Memorial Day parade was cancelled
- A nominee was found to fill a vacancy on the Session
- Human Resources has been interviewing some candidates for Preschool Director in-person
- Session approved the updated Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy; it will be available for review by anyone interested
- Craft and story time will be held in the Narthex during the summer instead of formal Sunday School
- Adult education opportunities are being planned for the fall
- Volunteers will be needed to help with Rally Day
- The Session will be considering next steps for better serving young families, strengthening ministry alignment, and utilizing our resources wisely
- Officer training is set for June 28
- Kristian received a grant to take denominational classes in Puerto Rico for his study leave
- A confirmation class is being planned

Deacon Updates

By John Weeden

The morning chill is nearly gone and, by and by, the sounds of summer will be upon us again...the dull rumble of distant lawnmowers, the joyful cheer of a crowd that rises as their hometown heroes drive in the winning run, and the healing laughter of children as they run and play together outside again!

The Deacons at ALPC are so grateful for our loving congregation and for the amazing staff that makes it possible for us to pray, worship, and grow together! As a small token of our appreciation, on May 19th, we will be providing an in-house lunch for our hard-working staff. Our church remains a loving refuge for all who cross its threshold and we don’t want those who make it possible to go unnoticed or unappreciated!

On July 18th the Deacons are sponsoring a night under the lights at a Lake Erie Crushers baseball game. Come join us for hot dogs, peanuts, or a cold beer or pop as the boys of summer shag pop-ups and crack homeruns! It’s always a lot of fun and a fraction of the cost of a baseball game in the ‘big city’. Please sign up for this event ASAP as the cut-off for sign-ups is scheduled to be May 24th.

On August 16th, as the dog days of summer roll in, the Deacons will be hosting our annual corn roast! Gary Uhl, our resident Corn-Meister, has generously offered up his unique roasting skills for this event. He promises the freshest, steamiest, and butteriest corn this side of the Mississippi! We’ll be grilling up sizzling brats and hot dogs as well and will surely have something sweet to round off this summer cook out! Please consider joining us. This event is a crowd favorite and offers the perfect excuse to get out of the house and enjoy some heart-felt fellowship under the summer sky!

As always, the Deacons at ALPC wish each of you a healthy, happy summer filled with joy and gratitude for this church family and for this beautiful place where we all live!



Library Updates

I've chosen a few seasonally appropriate books to display for this summer. I hope you find something to enjoy. A sign by the display contains instructions for checking out any you wish to take home with you. Please return any you borrow within a couple of weeks to the library or church office.

God Is Never Late; He's Seldom Early; He's Always Right on Time by Stan Toler
God isn't taking a break when you need him, nor does he make you take a number to wait at the back of the line. He is faithful to work in your life at just the right time.

Following Jesus by N.T. Wright

If you're looking at the real Jesus, the longer you look at him, the more you will want to serve him in his world. Plenty of people in the church and outside it make up a "Jesus" for themselves, who makes them feel happy and never challenges them.

Where to Find It in the Bible by Ken Anderson

A fully-illustrated, topical resource for finding answers to today's issues, concerns, and problems. This A-to-Z listing of topics plus key scriptures at your fingertips without a lot of fancy theological language.

Crossing the Threshold of Eternity by Robert L. Wise

The last words and experiences of people at the edge of heaven are important lessons and demonstrate how the amazing insights fit with what the Bible tells us to expect. Listen and observe carefully to what the dying can teach us.

More Evidence that Demands a Verdict by Josh McDowell

A follow-up on his first book by a similar title. Gain knowledge to answer the nagging doubts that remain from negative assertions constantly made in our world and to better understand what you hear in church.

3:16 by Max Lucado

John 3:16 is a verse with an alphabet of grace, a table of contents to the Christian hope. It begins with God and ends with life, and urges us to do the same.

Your Best Life Now by Joel Osteen

Change the way you think about your life and have help accomplishing what is truly important. Experience the full potential that God intends for you.

Your church librarian,

Beth Shoemaker

Saints Alive! Is the seasonal newsletter of
AVON LAKE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Winter - Spring - Summer - Fall - Advent

Our worship services begin at 10:00 am every Sunday.

Live streaming of our services:

 @AvonLakePC |  @avonlakepresbyterianchurch6047

Our Sunday services will air on ALC-TV beginning the following Wednesday,
And continue every day throughout the week at 6:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.

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