Saints Alive!

Vol. 24, Issue 3: Fall 2026

The Gift of Beginning Again by Rev. Dr. Kristian Bendoraitis

One of the things I appreciate about the rhythm of the church year is that we are always beginning again. We begin a new calendar year. Lent arrives. Easter brings its own kind of beginning. Summer changes our rhythms. Then, Advent comes and we find ourselves preparing for Christmas. Before long, we begin again.

At first, that might seem repetitive. But there is something comforting about it. The church year reminds us that life is not a straight line. We move through seasons, but we don't return to exactly the same place. We bring some things with us, discover new things along the way, and hopefully leave some things behind.

That may be one of the gifts of a new beginning. We don't have to start completely over. We get to begin again with what we have learned.

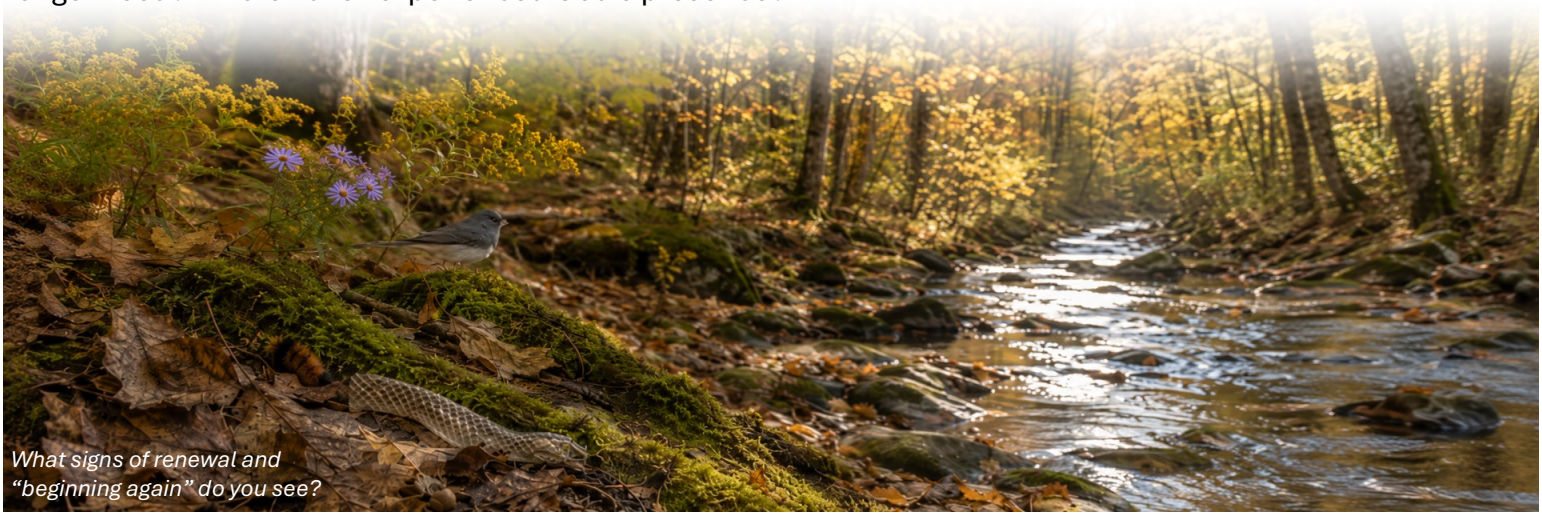
Some things are worth carrying with us: the people we love, wisdom gained through experience, moments when we have recognized God's presence, and lessons we have learned (sometimes the hard way). Other things may not need to come along: a disappointment, a resentment, a mistake we keep replaying, an expectation we have placed on ourselves that we were never meant to carry.

New beginnings like this make me think about God’s grace. We often talk about grace as God's unearned love and forgiveness. But grace can also be experienced as the freedom to begin again. Meanwhile, we get to begin again while things are still messy. God meets us where we are and continues to invite us forward. Personally, this is good news to me because I often need more than one fresh start.

At the same time, grace doesn't mean our mistakes don't matter. It doesn't erase consequences or mean we don't need to apologize, make amends, or change our behavior. But, grace means our mistakes don't have to be the end of the story; we can acknowledge what happened and try again.

I think this is part of what makes the rhythms of our faith so meaningful. We move through the seasons carrying some things forward and releasing others. We grow. We change. We remember. We let go, and God remains present through all of it.

So as we enter another season, perhaps it is worth considering what we want to carry with us and what we are ready to leave behind. What has this season taught me? What has brought life? What am I carrying that I no longer need? Where have I experienced God's presence?



What signs of renewal and “beginning again” do you see?

Worship & Spiritual Live

By Lee Lohr

We recently heard a sermon based on Romans 12 about how we as a congregation are the body of Christ. Just as our bodies have different parts, each with its own function, each one of us has a different purpose. In order for a body to work, we need to remember that no one person is more or less important than another. In I Corinthians 12, we can read about Spiritual Gifts that work much the same way. Each one of us is given a spiritual gift by the One Spirit of God. I Corinthians 12:27-31 reads: "Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But strives for the greater gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way." If we put our gifts together, we can function spiritually for the common good. What's your spiritual gift?

All Saints Sunday

It's a tradition to remember members and loved ones who have gone to be with the Lord in the past year on All Saints Sunday, the first Sunday in November. This year, we will include loved ones who died even longer ago. After all, they are remembered in spirit for longer than one year. Please send a photo of your loved one with their name to the church office (alpresby@avonlakepc.org) by Thursday, October 22 in order to give plenty of time for Kenzi to put together a slide presentation. Additionally, we will have candles at the front of the sanctuary that you may light during the time of remembrance.

Deacon Updates

By John Weeden

Another summer has come and gone, and the cool morning air has returned. With it comes a sense of renewal and the promise of change as we move closer to another beautiful Autumn on the shores of Lake Erie.

The Deacons at ALPC look forward to deepening our faith and connection with our church family, as we move into another beautiful season! A couple weeks ago we came together in fellowship, enjoying freshly roasted corn and brats at our annual Corn Roast. Special thanks go out to Gary Uhl, our resident "Corn Meister", and to all the volunteers who provided so many yummy desserts! (We made sure to bag up all extra desserts so they could be included with our Haven Center lunches.) It really was a wonderful event and we truly appreciate all the help and participation from our congregation! Michelle Meehan was kind enough to share her delicious Pistachio Fluff recipe with us…it was a crowd favorite, so I hope a few of you slip it into your recipe books!

Our church will be celebrating Julie Wasserman and the amazing work she has done for so long, as she retires from her position as Director of Cornerstone Preschool. The Deacons will be helping in any way we can to make sure Julie understands how much she will be missed, so please join us in her celebration!

We also have Rally Day coming up on September 13th, so mark it down on your calendars and come join in on the great food and fellowship! It's always fun visiting, and watching the kids cut loose in the mountain of bubbles! The Deacons will be assisting CE in any way we can to make sure it's fun for all!

October's not far away, so soon we'll be setting up crafts for the Cornerstone kids (and anyone else who would like to join in) at the annual "Trunk or Treat"! It's always fun seeing the excitement in the kids' eyes as they go from car to car gathering up their goodies!

The Deacons at ALPC want to thank you all for your continued participation in our church's events, and for the opportunity to serve you! We hope each of you have a happy and healthy Fall!



Pistachio Fluff Salad

INGREDIENTS

1 box pistachio instant pudding (3 oz.)
1 can mandarin oranges (15 oz.)
1 can crushed pineapple (20 oz.)
1 tub Cool Whip (8 oz.)
1 bag miniature marshmallows (10 oz.)
1 cup shelled pistachios or pecans (optional)

METHOD

1. In a large bowl, add pudding mix, crushed pineapple, mandarin oranges, marshmallows, and pistachios, setting aside 1-2 tbsp. of nuts for garnish, if desired. Gently mix.
2. Fold in whipped topping.
3. Transfer to serving dish and chill for at least 1 hour.
4. Garnish with chopped nuts, if desired (or try maraschino cherries or shaved coconut!).





PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

Fall GATHERING

ALPC will host the Fall Gathering of Presbyterian Women in the Presbytery of the Western Reserve. All women of the church are automatically considered Presbyterian Women—no membership is required. The gathering begins with coffee and sign-in, followed by two speakers, lunch, then a closing. More information & registration will be available later in September.

As hosts, we'll need volunteers to help with set-up, serving coffee and lunch, and clean-up. To help, please contact Lee Lohr.

SATURDAY
November 7th
9:00AM

Dear Avon Lake Presbyterian Church Family,

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for the beautiful retirement celebration and for making my send-off from Cornerstone Preschool so incredibly special.

For 18 years, Cornerstone has been such an important part of my life, and I am so grateful to Avon Lake Presbyterian Church for supporting me, our teachers, and the mission of the preschool throughout those years. Together, we have had the privilege of creating a place where children could learn, grow, feel loved, and experience God's love.

Thank you for the thoughtful gifts, kind words, cards, hugs, and all the time and effort that went into the celebration. I felt so loved and appreciated, and it meant more to me than I can possibly express.

As I close this chapter, I will always carry with me the wonderful memories, friendships, children, families, teachers, church staff, and parishioners who made Cornerstone such a special place. I feel incredibly blessed to have spent 18 years doing something I loved so much.

Thank you for celebrating this milestone with me and for giving me such a beautiful send-off. Cornerstone Preschool and Avon Lake Presbyterian Church will always hold a very special place in my heart.

With Love and Gratitude,
Julie

When we say "all hands" we mean all hands — even the pastor's!

If you've walked past the playground lately, you may have noticed that it's getting a little extra attention. Years of play and weather have taken their toll, and while we continue developing a long-term plan for a new playground, some repairs simply can't wait.

Pastor Kristian and Jay Knox have spent many hours working in the summer heat, removing deteriorated wood, replacing damaged boards, rebuilding sections, and doing what they can to keep the playground safe and usable. As the photos show, this has been a little more involved than tightening a few screws!

Doing this work ourselves allows us to stretch our dollars and make the most of the resources we have while we plan for what comes next. That spirit of hands-on stewardship is already making a real difference at ALPC — volunteer work and cost-saving projects are helping us use our resources wisely and remain in a much stronger financial position than projected for this point in the year.

The playground is also just one of several larger projects on the horizon for our church home. In the months ahead, there will be opportunities for everyone to pitch in, lend a hand, or help fund what's next.

For now, a BIG thank you to Kristian and Jay for the sweat, sore muscles, and many hours they've already put into the playground!













If you feel called to support this or any other project at Avon Lake Presbyterian Church, donations may be made online or in person at the church office. Please include a note indicating the fund you would like your gift to support (e.g., Playground, Parking Lot, etc.)

Christian Education

By Terry Vine

As we move toward the start of our fall program year, the Christian Education Committee is grateful for the steady growth, creativity, and connection that have continued to shape our ministry. We celebrate so many moments of connection, creativity, and growth across our congregation, and we are pleased to share how that momentum has carried forward into the summer and into our plans for the year ahead.

Children's Sunday School

Our Sunday School program for children has now been fully solidified for the upcoming year. Over the summer, our kids enjoyed a lively and welcoming Family Area in the narthex—an extension of the summer model described in May, when "a teacher [was] available weekly to lead interested children in crafts, stories, and playtime". This summer's activities included games, art projects, puzzles, favorite books, and wonderful conversations with our dedicated Sunday School teachers. Their presence helped maintain a sense of community and continuity for our youngest members.

Adult Education

Plans for Adult Education are also taking shape. Building on the thoughtful engagement we saw during our spring offerings—such as the viewing and discussion of The Chosen and Jeff Spenzer's ongoing Bible Study—we are preparing new opportunities for learning, reflection, and faith formation for adults of all ages.

Looking Ahead to Rally Day – September 13

Excitement is building for Rally Day, which will take place on September 13. This year's celebration will include good food, games, and entertainment for all ages. It will be a chance to renew relationships, welcome new faces, and enjoy time together as a church family. We are especially looking forward to collaborating once again with our Cornerstone Preschool families—continuing the partnership that has brought shared joy.

A Season of Possibility

As we begin this new program year, we do so with gratitude for the many hands and hearts that make Christian Education possible. We remain committed to nurturing faith across all ages and creating spaces where people can learn, grow, and experience Christ's love in meaningful ways. Rally Day marks the beginning of another year of doing God's work together—and we look forward to all that God has in store.

Session Highlights

from the August 17 meeting

- The Deacons reported the Crushers game was a washout and over 50 people came to the corn roast. Rally Day and Trunk-or-Treat are coming up.
- Met with Kara Reynolds about the Cornerstone Preschool budget for the 2026-27 school year and voted to approve it.
- Finance is starting to use the new Realm computer application.
- Approved the use of up to $700 of Memorial Funds for a new pulpit and baptismal font, to be smaller and shapelier than the current and constructed at cost by Kristian's father.
- Members are asked to provide photos of passed loved ones for remembrance on All Saints Sunday on November 1. Like last year, this will include the lighting of candles.
- Agreed that a full replacement of the parking lot pavement is needed and to investigates funding sources. Apples-to-apples quotes will be requested of the bidding contractors.
- Quotes are being obtained for cleaning the ductwork in the older building, and split units are being investigated for cooling that area.
- A new member class was held.
- Nominating needs to fill one Ruling Elder position.
- Mission was asked to put charts tracking donation goals on the bulletin boards as a way to engage members.
- Human Resources will start seeking a new coordinator of Christian Education.
- Approved a $2/hour increase to Rick Fortney's hourly rate to facilitate his leading chapel and music classes at Cornerstone Preschool.
- Christian Education is ready to start the new program year with four Sunday School teachers, the next installment of the same curriculum, and adult studies planned.
- Kristian and team have been cleaning up the sound room.
- The committees will stagger their meeting times to enable Kristian to attend more of them.
- Approved the use of up to $3,000 of unencumbered savings for a new computer for worship projections, as the current computer is nearly ten years old.

Saints Alive! Is the seasonal newsletter of

AVON LAKE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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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