

THE Lighthouse

Your quarterly newsletter featuring recent highlights in the life of your church.

FALL 2025

A JOYFUL CELEBRATION

Installation of Rev. Mark Pettis

On Sunday, September 14, 2025 **Avon Lake United Church of Christ** and the **Living Water Association** joyfully recognized **Rev. Mark Pettis** as our Senior Minister during a beautiful Service of Installation. It was a day filled with gratitude, music, and the Spirit's presence as we celebrated this new chapter in our church's life together.



We are deeply thankful for the many hands and hearts that made this day so special — our musicians, AV team, Worship Team, volunteers, and staff. A special thank-you goes to **Rev. Beau Dansizen** for coordinating much of the service and beginning our celebration with a warm welcome and prayer.



[click here to watch the service](#)

We were honored to receive a moving message from **Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer**, former ALUCC member and past General Minister of the United Church of Christ. We also appreciated the thoughtful words of encouragement and wisdom from **Rev. Dr. Cheryl Lindsay** (Charge to the Minister) and **Rev. Kent Gilbert** (Charge to the Congregation).

Grateful thanks also to **Rev. Dr. Elena Larssen** (Living Water Association), **Rev. Dr. David Long-Higgins** (Heartland Conference), **Jonathon Whittlesey** (Search Committee), and **Nate Taylor** (ALUCC Staff) for their leadership throughout the Installation service.



And of course — congratulations to Pastor Mark! We are blessed by your leadership, compassion, and vision for this faith community. May this new season of ministry be filled with joy, growth, and God's abundant grace.



Second Harvest Volunteer Event

Registration to volunteer for this event was filled within 24 hours! On Saturday, November 2, sixteen volunteers from ALUCC spent the morning at the Second Harvest Food Bank in Lorain, packing pantry boxes with shelf-stable food. Together, the team assembled 302 boxes, which were distributed through local mobile pantries to help families in need.

Big thanks to all who volunteered their time and energy to make a difference! Your service helps bring hope and nourishment to our neighbors throughout Lorain County.

For more information about future volunteer opportunities, contact Mission Team member and Second Harvest coordinator, Christine Carr.



Haven Center Meal Ministry

Once each month, members of Avon Lake UCC prepare a hot meal for the Haven Center Shelter, the only family homeless shelter in Lorain County. This November, several church members cooked and delivered a meal that served **64 people**. We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who donated dessert items—your generosity helped provide a warm and welcoming meal for our neighbors in need.



Food Drive Delivery

Thank you to all who contributed to the Fall Food Drive held in September!

Financial donations supported the needs of the church's seven agency partners:



- Haven Center is the only 24/7 homeless shelter for families in Lorain County
- St. Paul's UCC which is our sister church in Ohio City, Cleveland
- CRS (Community Resource Services) that serves our residents who are suddenly in a need of emergency assistance
- Mercy Resource Mothers in Lorain who support new, single expecting mothers through their pregnancy and their baby's first year
- Primary Purpose (male addiction rehab home)
- Road to Hope Margeau's House (female addiction rehab home)
- Genesis House (Lorain County's center for Domestic Abuse)

Thank you to **Mission Team** members, Joyce and Eric Olson for delivering the much needed supplies requested by the individual agencies.



Empty Bowls by the Lake started in Avon Lake in 2012. Laura Kirchner is the chair person for this charity in Avon Lake. She first attended one of these events in Naples, Florida and thought it would be a good idea to bring the event to the Cleveland area. In 2012 the event took place in the outdoor area at Bleser Park. After that it moved over to the **Avon Lake United Church of Christ** for several years - held both indoors and outside. It moved over to the American Legion on Walker Road when it grew too big for the church. In recent years it has been held at the Avon Lake High School Commons on the second or third weekend in October. A \$25 donation gets you unlimited soup, bread and a handmade pottery bowl.

Empty Bowls



There's always live entertainment and a silent auction as well. 100% of the proceeds benefit the Second Harvest food bank, the Avon/Avon Lake Community Resource Services (CRS), and Commodore Cupboard, which is part of Lorain County Community College.

The event is run by 100% volunteers and 100% local restaurant soup and bread donations. All of the auction items and bowls are donated. The website for Empty Bowls is emptybowlsbythelake.org

People can donate directly on the website. If anyone is interested in volunteering next year contact church member Beth Gee at bfische1@yahoo.com



One of ALUCC's great annual traditions is our Giving Tree. This year, as in many years - under the lead of Cheryl Updegraff and several members of our Mission Team - we are granting Christmas wishes for the children and families of the agencies we support: Denison UCC, Haven Center, Resource Mothers, St. Paul's Community Church, The Villages and our own church families.

487 gift tags were taken between November 23 - December 7. Those gifts will be delivered by volunteers December 15 and 16.

Thank you Mission Team! Thanks to all who generously gave to make a difference in someone's Christmas.



Project Leaves



Thank you to EVERYONE who gathered on Sunday, November 23 to rake leaves at the homes of several church families in need. Youth group students and adults met for lunch in Fellowship Hall before dividing up to tackle the projects.



Confirmation Sunday

This September we joyfully celebrated the Sacred Rite of Confirmation for twelve students. **Nate Taylor**, Director of Youth Ministries, shared words of encouragement and reflection for the class. **Jill Camp**, representing the Church Council, formally welcomed the twelve Confirmands into full membership of Avon Lake United Church of Christ (ALUCC).



AVON LAKE
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A heartfelt thank you to our Confirmation teachers — **Chris Steinman, Amy Nasr and Regan Pore** — for reading the students' Statements of Faith and for their faithful guidance throughout the past year.

Over the course of the program, Confirmation students visited other churches, completed 30 hours of service, and participated in a variety of ministry experiences both within and beyond our congregation. They spent time in spiritual reflection, wrestling with life's big questions and challenges, nurturing a curiosity that will continue to inspire their lifelong faith journeys. Each Confirmand created a Statement of Faith and designed a stole that represents their unique spiritual journey.

We proudly welcome this year's Confirmands:
Kyle Bracy, Ashley Cackowski, Reid Judkins, Presley Martter, Krysta Perry, Delaney Hamilton, Ella Rose, Marcus Lavriha, William Triplet, Janelle Coleman, TJ LePrevost, and Avery Lanigan.

Congratulations to all!



Tom Cammock Memorial Golf Outing

Thank you to EVERYONE who played, volunteered, donated, sponsored and helped out with our **Tom Cammock Memorial Golf Outing** on Saturday, October 5.



Earlier this year, our dear friend and beloved youth group volunteer, Tom Cammock passed away suddenly. He was one of the best humans there was and an avid golfer. He had a deep love and vested interest in our young people. So many of them were fortunate enough to have known him as they navigated the choppy waters of adolescence. We decided it was only fitting to rename our golf outing in Tom's honor. His family threw their support behind the event and the worthwhile cause it supports.

The Tom Cammock Memorial Golf Outing directly benefits our summer camp incentive fund. For nearly 20 years our church has provided a fund that defers the costs of sending a child to summer camp. It has encouraged additional sign-ups and provided hundreds of young people the opportunity to go to camp in the summer. This fund has directly changed lives and it has undoubtedly saved lives. Summer camping is one of the best investments you can make in the life of a young person. The benefits are countless and the memories and friendships are priceless. The support of this year's golf outing will continue to make camp a reality for so many young people.



Fall Concert Series

Cavano Concert



Autumn of 2025 brought two new events in the ALUCC music ministry's concert series.

On Tuesday, November 21, an audience gathered in our chapel to listen to a concert by **Pete and Nolan Cavano**. Members have come to know Pete from his regular appearances during Sunday morning worship services. The pair offered a varied program of Jazz, Blues, and original songs.



Piano Trio Concert



On Sunday, November 9th, we enjoyed a concert of chamber music featuring Mary Beth Ions (violin), Lauren Boudon (cello), and Scott Ewing (piano). The trio played selections by W.A. Mozart, Frank Bridge, and Argentinian tango composer Astor Piazzolla. Both concerts were well attended and continue to enjoy financial support from the audiences.



Celebration Ringers Bell Choir

Elbow grease, brass polish, and teamwork allowed some bell choir volunteers to perform an annual cleaning and maintenance of all 61 handbells (five octaves) and 37 chimes (three octaves) in early November. Thanks to all the time and talent of all the musicians, the Celebration Ringers work together to make music for worship.



Trunk or Treat

Our annual ALUCC Trunk or Treat was a great success! Despite the cool blustery day we welcomed guests to our church for Halloween fun and fellowship.



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Congrats to the costume contestants and winners.
A big thank you goes out to the many trunk hosts and volunteers that made this event possible!



Courageous Conversations

On November 16, several members of the church gathered to participate in a discussion, share thoughts, and listen to other viewpoints. The hope was to grow together from sharing and hearing different perspectives. This session explored the topic of Climate Change.



On Thursday, November 13, more than 20 members of the Men's Ministry group gathered for another world-famous TRIVIA NIGHT! This is one of the group's favorite activities and brings together guys of all ages and with wide ranges of knowledge for fun and a bit of friendly competition.

Once again, it was a big success. Throughout the evening, we found out who amongst the group knew obscure Cleveland sports facts, Avon Lake history, Final Jeopardy questions, music history and much more. Trivia Master Jasin Kessler was on his game and tested everyone's knowledge and memory with plenty of tough questions across a range of categories. Six teams duked it out (some more competitively than others ...) for the title of champion while many desserts, appetizers and slices of pizza were consumed.

Most importantly fellowship was enjoyed and connections were made—and everyone seemed to enjoy an escape from the daily grind for a few hours.

If you have questions or don't receive ALUCC Men's Ministry emails and would like to, please email Bill Calkins (williamdc1976@gmail.com), Jasin Kessler (jasinkessler@gmail.com) or Tim Schulz (membership@avonlakeucc.org) and we will put you on the list.



Game Night

Women of the church met on Tuesday, November 18th for a night of fun and fellowship. Hosting the evening was **Cynthia Kotora** and **Lynn Miller** who brought a variety of games. Several participants shared their own favorites as well. All enjoyed cider, popcorn and coffee and a chance to unwind, laugh, and enjoy time together.

LIFT is a welcoming group for all women of the church family—members, nonmembers, friends, and anyone seeking fellowship, friendship, and fun. Meetings are monthly from September through May on weekday evenings. And remember: come whenever you can. Don't stay away just because you can't make every meeting!



SAVE THE DATE



SINCE THE LAST ISSUE OF THE LIGHTHOUSE...

Baptisms

Lucy Porter Weber, parents Jocelyn Weber & Kasey Weber
11/14/25

Kendi Cleo Hunt, parents are Kelly
Hunt and Matt Fisher. 11/30/25



Podcast:

ALUCC Fellowship Hall

Sponsored and produced by the ALUCC Men's Ministry group the ALUCC Fellowship Hall podcast shares a tapestry of stories that weave through our congregation and journey together through the diverse experiences, fun stories and journeys of church leaders and our fellow members.

Special thanks to **Jasin Kessler** and **Bill Calkins** for producing Fellowship Hall.

You can listen to Fellowship Hall via our website at <https://avonlakeucc.org/community#Podcast> or subscribe via Apple Podcasts or Spotify.



We mourn the passing of the following members of our church family:

Patricia Greene 10/6/25

Barbara Austinson 10/30/25

text 'AvonLakeUCC' to 73256
 avonlakeucc.org/give
 Realm Connect app
Give securely, conveniently

avonlakeucc.org
 facebook.com/avonlakeucc
 vimeo.com/avonlakeucc
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