



### **Straight Paths of Faith**

**Trust in the Lord with all your heart,  
and do not lean on your own understanding.  
In all your ways acknowledge him,  
and he will make straight your paths.  
Proverbs 3:5-6**

Proverbs 3:5-6 is a passage I share a lot as I travel and speak on behalf of Appalachia Reach Out. Even though this is a passage of scripture most followers of Jesus can quote, it can be a challenge to live out.

Verse 5 is more well-known than verse 6. The end of this passage has been challenging me in my personal life in recent days. As a follower of Jesus I realize trust is foundational to my faith. I have to ask myself the question; do I live a true and devoted life of trust in Jesus each day (In all things and in every way)?

As I read through the passage it ends with the words "...He will make straight your paths". Sometimes I find myself making the mistake of translating this to mean, easy, but this so far from the truth. There are times in our faith journey that "easy" would be the farthest thing from describing our journey. In looking at the text again it says, "straight". It reminds me of another passage of scripture found in Isaiah 40:4 which says, "Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain".

In light of eternity, today, Jesus is making straight paths for me as I keep my eyes on Him and trust Him with ALL. My faith and trust in Him allows me to see the bigger picture when I'm walking through difficult times. The challenges I face in this life is only for a short time in light of eternity. I must have faith He makes "straight" all things as I trust Him, lean on Him, and acknowledge Him. What do you choose today? Are you walking straight paths of faith? It's our choice?

Dwayne Mills  
ARO Executive Director

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# What's New

## **ARO Looks to Welcome Our First Work and Witness Teams for 2024**

Appalachia Reach Out is excited to welcome our first team for 2024! Starting in March, Dordt University will kick off the new year followed by Olivet Nazarene University the next week. Both will be bringing students to the Martin County site. These teams will be volunteering in the local schools, at Celebrate Recovery and other area non-profits, and at work site projects all while being immersed in the Appalachia culture. ARO continues to have an eternal impact on the communities we serve and on those who graciously give of their time and resources. Below are a few statistics of the work our teams from all over the country have participated in and given to ARO since January 2021 (this is NOT an exhaustive list).

- **Volunteers - 2,199**
- **Work & Witness/Disaster Relief Teams - 174**
- **Volunteer Work Hours - 57,995**
- **Local Economic Impact - \$2,339,779.50**
  - **Martin County, KY - \$1,444,478**
  - **Nicholas County, WV - \$381,419.40**
  - **Perry County, KY - \$513,882.10**

These numbers do not include other initiatives ARO has been part of, such as, the ice storms and flooding in 2021 in eastern Kentucky and the tornado relief in western Kentucky in 2021-2022. In addition, there have been millions of dollars of resources and gift cards donated. To God be the glory!

## **Dwayne Speaks for MVNU Classes**

Dwayne will be speaking at MVNU in the Cultural Responsiveness to Health Care classes on Monday, March 25. This will be his third year being a guest speaker for this particular class. Sharing ARO's story in our universities has been part of the ongoing work of this ministry. Students begin to see the need for service in our own communities and many of them end up being part of the Work & Witness teams who visit ARO. Through the years, these connections have led to several students serving as summer interns at our various ARO sites and some have even joined the ARO leadership team. Please be in prayer as Dwayne shares with our students at MVNU this month.

## **ARO Spring Fling**

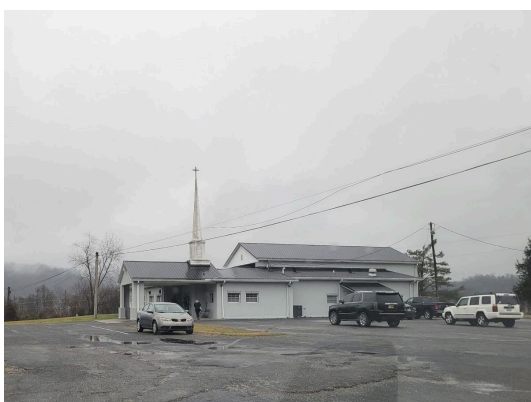
This March, ARO is partnering with Crossroads Church to host a Spring Fling at Warfield Park. Working with the Martin County schools' Family Resource Directors, we will be selecting 25 families (5 from each school) to provide with food and a day of fun! Families from the Riverside and Dempsey apartments will also be invited to join in the festivities. There will be fun carnival games, face painting, and two local food trucks. Crossroads will also include a time of fun worship songs for the kids and share the gospel!

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# Monthly Updates

## On the Road With ARO

ARO was in several churches this past month. Dwayne traveled to Durbin Nazarene on February 11 to be with Pastor Victor Messer and Associate Pastor Chad Stevens. Durbin is one of the Nazarene churches on Dwayne's home district, the Eastern Kentucky District. On February 18, Dwayne was in Cincinnati, OH at Montana Avenue with his long time friend, Meredith Moser and Greg Wells was speaking at Crossroads Church of the Nazarene with Pastor Nick Peeples and his congregation. Last week Dwayne traveled to Napoleon, OH to share in their Sunday morning services. It was his 4th time to speak in 5 years at Nap Naz. Napoleon Nazarene has been an ongoing supporter of ARO's mission and ministry. Appalachia Reach Out would not exist without churches like these who have supported us over the years. Thank you!



# Thrift Store & Pantry

## Thrift Store & Food Pantry Updates

The ARO Thrift Store and Food Pantry continue to serve our community in Martin County. We want to express our appreciation to People's Bank for their continued support of the ARO Food Pantry. Through their generous donation, the food pantry will be able to serve more families this month. Thank you again to our many volunteers who help unload and organize supplies. We are grateful for this area of our ministry, all our volunteers and our leaders Bill and Jana Zuidema!





## ARO THRIFT STORE ITEMS

- Towels
- Men's Clothing
- Sheets/Blankets
- Comforters/Quilts
- NEW socks & underwear for kids & adults
- Adult pull-ups men's and women's ALL sizes (Not diapers)
- Chucks new or gently used tennis shoes (Kids & Adults)
- Bed pillows (Not stained)
- \*Please no couch pillows

## FOOD PANTRY ITEMS

(We serviced 144 households which consisted on 307 members this month!)

\*ALL food has to have a good expiration date!

(No expired dates or dates that are close to the day you donate it!)

64 ounce juice

Hamburger Helper

Chef Boyardee

Boxes of cereal

Mustard/Ketchup/Mayo/Miracle Whip

Salt/Pepper

Pancake mix/syrup

Jam/Jelly

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Call or text Bill Zuidema at 606-534-0707 about any other items concerning the thrift store or pantry. Items need to be new or gently used, complete and in working order for the Thrift Store.

# Speaking Engagements

If you are in the area where Dwayne will be speaking, or want to plan to hear about ARO and how God is moving in the mountains, we would love to see you on the road!

## **Dwayne's Upcoming Speaking Schedule:**

### **Sunday, March 3**

– Lima (OH) Church of the Nazarene

### **Sunday, March 10**

– Pickerington (OH) Church of the Nazarene

### **Monday, March 25**

– MVNU Cultural Responsiveness to Health Care Classes

**PLEASE NOTE: Our Director of Operations, Greg Wells, will be speaking March 9, 10 at Huntsville Journey Church (of the Nazarene).**



Thank  
you!

Thank you for partnering with ARO to be *Christ's Love in Action*. Thank you for your faithful prayers, service, giving, and trust in ARO! All that has been accomplished would not be possible without you! Will you continue to pray that God would continue to guide us?



Feel free to contact ARO's Executive Director, Dwayne Mills, at [dwayne.p.mills@gmail.com](mailto:dwayne.p.mills@gmail.com)

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**Contact Us**

**Email:**

[arokentucky@gmail.com](mailto:arokentucky@gmail.com)

**Phone Number:**

606-298-7470

**Our mailing address is:**

PO BOX 2147 Inez, KY 41224