



CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN OHIO

DISCIPLES OF CHRIST

A covenant network of congregations in mission:

*We are the Body of Christ gifted and called in covenant together as Disciples of Christ
to be centers of transformation on the new mission frontier of our own communities*

Ministry Reports

*to the
Regional Church Council*

April 21, 2018

**Christian Church in Ohio
Regional Church Council Meeting
Northwest Christian Church
April 21, 2018**

Regional Pastor's Report

I begin my report by expressing appreciation to Rev. Steve Bentley. Steve is not here today. He is officially on vacation for four weeks beginning April 16, 2018. His final day of employment by the Christian Church in Ohio will be May 15, 2018. I am grateful for his 12 ½ years of faithful service to our regional church as a member of our regional of our ministerial staff.

I am confident the final two years, or so, of his ministry was by far the most difficult. And yet, he only speaks well of his experience while serving on the regional ministry staff in Ohio. His ministry will not end on May 15. I am confident Steve will be called, in due time, to another place to serve in ministry. I hope you will join with me in wishing Steve and Julie the very best in the years to come. For now, I simply want to say, on behalf of the Christian Church in Ohio, Thank You, Steve!

At a recent district clergy meeting, I made this observation: "I wish I could say the regional operation part of our annual budget was, at this point, fragile. But that would not be truthful. It is broken, maybe beyond repair." The Camp Christian side of our annual budget is rather healthy, but needs constant attention in order to remain so.

The regional operation side of the annual budget has but a few options left.

As of June we will see a positive cash flow bump as Steve's compensation is no longer in the budget, but a portion of his compensation is in the Camp Christian side and therefore, will not be fully realized in the regional operations budget. We will move out of our current office space in October. That too will add some positive cash flow to our operational budget. But after that there is not much left to cut from the budget, and stay functioning as a regional church. Therefore, the primary move left is for congregations, and/or, individuals, to increase giving to the regional operations budget.

Recently, I was asked by the pastor of a congregation planning to do some fund raising projects Camp Christian: When these projects are presented to the congregation, I know someone will ask: How the church can be certain the money is going to Camp Christian and not to something else? My reply was as follows:

"Here is my response—I apologize if it is too blunt.

- 1. Since July 2017 no money has been spent in any way other than what it was given to in the CCIIO.*
- 2. We have a completely different bookkeeping system, as of July 2017.*
- 3. If money is given that is designated for Camp Christian it is unethical and likely illegal for it to spend it anywhere else.*
- 4. If money is given for a particular project at Camp Christian, we can confirm with the congregation when that project is complete and paid for.*
- 5. The staff members that, in my opinion, made extremely poor decisions about the regional finances in the past—which includes Camp Christian—no longer work for the region.*

6. *Finally, when trust is broken, as it has been in CCIO, it means that we have to go the extra mile in order to regain that trust. We are willing to do that. But at some point we must choose to trust each other again, with the full expectation that we will be accountable to each other.”*

I am not necessarily an advocate for the basic model of regional ministry we have used since Restructure in 1968. It began to show signs of significant stress fractures—financially and structurally—in the early years of this century. I am an advocate for a model of regional ministry that can faithfully offer support the mission and ministry of the congregations of the Christian Church in Ohio. Whatever the model is, it must be lived out ethically, effectively, efficiently, with integrity and justice for all. And, for that to be successful, the congregations and individuals of our regional church must support it financially, and with a mutual practice of accountability and transparency. The involvement of our congregants and clergy is essential.

A clergy colleague out west, resigned from her position as pastor of a congregation that she learned, after her arrival, had, for different reasons from us, experienced significant conflict, trauma and broken trust. After five years of pastoral presence and care leadership, preaching and nurturing she resigned and took intentional time for herself and her family. As she prepared to return to a position in ministry she wrote:

I learned in my last job that administration is not my favorite aspect of ministry. I also learned that I can do it, so long as people are willing to work together as a team. I do not believe a church can administrate its way to health. It can only pray, listen, love, study and serve its way to health. But I have made the mistake of spending too much time around the board room table and not enough around the communion table. I have covenanted to learn from this and to take the responsibility of leading people toward holy conversations and consensus rather than win/lose scenarios or contentious divisions within the Body of Christ.

I pray this might be the fabric of who we are in the days to come as the regional church in Ohio.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Community of Disciples of Christ in the Congo is strong. They have little money. They don't much in worldly possessions, at least by our standards. But their faith is powerful, and their ministry is vast and life changing.

One of the distinctive outward expressions of the Disciples in D.R. Congo is the common fabric of their clothing—shirts for men and dresses for women. They purchased large bolts of fabric custom made, and printed with words from scripture, the name of their church, the symbol of the Chalice, and other distinctive marks of who they are, printed on the fabric. They wear clothing made of this fabric when they worship together, when they gather as church for fellowship, and when they represent the church in doing ministry.

May the fabric of who we are as the Christian Church in Ohio—possibility printed on our clothing, but more importantly on our hearts and souls—become the clothing we wear in our life together as church: A church that understands we cannot administrate our way to health. We can only pray, listen, love, study and serve our way to health. Maybe, we too, have made the mistake of spending too much time around the board room table and not enough around the communion table together. Can we...will we...covenant to learn from our brokenness, and to take the responsibility of leading people toward holy conversations and consensus rather than win/lose scenarios or contentious divisions within the Body of Christ?

Such a covenant for our life together, does not in any way negate the importance of mutual transparency and accountability, it simply places who we are, as followers of Jesus, and what we are, as the church of Christ, at a higher priority than what we have.

I have been on board with you for the past ten months. We have journeyed together on a stormy and difficult voyage. The trip is not over, but we have removed, so to speak, all the wood from the deck and from the sides above water line of the boat we call CCI. By the grace of God we are still afloat. We are taking on less water than a few months ago. But we must decide if, and how, to rebuild the boat in order for it to be seaworthy.

Right now, in my opinion, we do not have enough financial support to rebuild the CCI boat and expect it to have a functional, even though small, crew.

Respectfully submitted,

John M. Richardson
Interim Regional Pastor

(The following three pages is a copy of the report submitted to the General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), for their annual meeting.

**Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
General Board Meeting
April 14-17, 2018**

**Christian Church in Ohio (Disciples of Christ)
General Board Report**

Current Staff: John M. Richardson, Interim Regional Pastor
Jennie Stoddart Bernard, Office Administrator
Al Channel, Camp Christian Supervisor
Donna Channel, Food Service Director (Part-time)

Congregations: 153

*“How the gold has grown dim,
how the pure gold is changed!
The sacred stones lie scattered
at the head of every street.
The precious children of Zion
worth their weight in fine gold—
how they are reckoned as earthen pots,
the work of the potter’s hands!”*

~ Lamentations 4:1-2

I do wish this report could reflect how the ministries of the Christian Church in Ohio have furthered the priorities of the church. Many of our congregations faithfully offer ministries that do. But, as for the regional expression of the church, we have not, at least since the last General Board Report. In fact, the Christian Church in Ohio has been brought to its knees during the past year—a year in which decades of poor fiduciary practices, personnel conflicts, and lack of honest dialogue, brought our regional church to a precipice, and we are confronted with the question: Can we continue?

Through life experiences, I have learned that when one is brought to his or her knees—be it a person, a family, an organization, or a church—there is the hope of rising. But, while on our knees one must make a decision: Do I want to rise up? If yes, do I want to rise up and rebuild what was? Or, do I want to rise up and be open to a new way of being?

With deep humility, we are thankful for the prayers and support of the whole church. We are profoundly grateful for our deeply rooted faith in a God who journeys with us. Because of this, we know there is hope for the Disciples of Christ in Ohio. However, we know we cannot simply rebuild that which was the regional church in Ohio. There has been too much hurt, and trust has been broken. In addition, over the past 9 months we have learned our financial debt is overwhelming.

This General Board report is very different from the previous 14 General Board reports I have written for another region. Therefore, assuming most have heard something about the state of affairs of the region of Ohio, I feel it appropriate to give you a brief overview of what we have learned and experienced in the past year.

When I began serving as interim regional pastor on June 26, 2017, one special investigation task force had just completed its work on the oversight of new church pastors. A second investigation task force was reviewing a variety of complaints and made their report to the Regional Church Council in October of last year. The focus of that report was on finances. Their conclusion was that the Christian Church in Ohio had over spent its annual income by one to two hundred thousand dollars per year for over a decade. And, even though all the of the transactions were approved by the appropriate oversight bodies of the regional church, the deficit spending was covered, in part, or in whole, by spending into undesignated permanent funds, or reclassifying permanent funds in order to spend them. The report admonished former regional pastor, Bill Edwards, the Regional Church Council, and the Ohio Region as a whole, for poor fiduciary practices.

We stopped spending what permanent funds we had left, and we moved those investments from a for-profit investment company to the Christian Church Foundation. And as of August 1, 2017, our bookkeeping was moved to Treasury Services.

We also received a report from the CPA firm who had done our audits and/or financial reviews for several years. They were asked to determine if our policies were followed in the manner in which money had been spent by the region. The report concluded that although all funds were spent appropriately—at least according to precedent and practice—there were no current policies to benchmark.

The same CPA firm had said for years the Ohio Region is “not a going concern.” There was a demonstrated pattern of expenditures exceeding income and no plan in place to correct it.

On October 1, 2017, we terminated two full-time staff positions, and two part-time positions. As of May 15, 2018 another full time position will end, with the resignation of the Reverend Steve Bentley who served as

associate regional pastor for over 12 years. In October of this year our 3-year office space lease will end, and we will seek the least expensive option available. We are cutting expenses in every way possible. And yet, even if we were to balance our operational budget, we still owe the OGMP money, as well as the Lilly Foundation. And, we have an ethical, if not legal, responsibility to restore several trust funds—up to as much as \$1.6 million.

Regretfully, we withdrew from the Lilly Foundation grant program that we were awarded. The grant was designed to provide grants to pastors to help with educational debt, and to congregations to strengthen clergy compensation. But we simply did not have the capacity to raise the required matching funds. The Lilly staff was gracious in their response to our notice of withdrawal.

With all the downsizing and cutting expenses, there is also the question of how much income can, and will, our congregations provide through DMF, Christmas Offering, and other direct giving to the region. In 2017, 77 congregations in Ohio gave to Disciples Mission Fund, and about half of that number gave monthly or quarterly.

In the mist of all the difficult issues, a bright spot is the ministries offered at our regional camp and conference facility—Camp Christian. The financial challenges are not as serious, and there is a lot of interest and energy about Camp Christian. However, with Steve Bentley leaving our staff, the overall leadership for our camp programming will be challenging this summer. Steve has been our camp director for many years.

Another bright spot is the imagination and energy being given to conversations about what might be, as models for regional ministry in Ohio are discussed.

However, the question looms before us: Did we wait too long to take action?

The text from Lamentations, with which I opened this report, was written in a different context, but caught my attention because of the once significant amount of invested funds about which some in Ohio took great pride, is no longer there—how the gold has grown dim.

Today our focus must be on the people—our congregants, they are the work of the potter's hands and the people called to offer ministry in our communities and to the whole world.

May we be open to the future to which God calls the Christian Church in Ohio.

Respectfully submitted,

John M. Richardson
Interim Regional Pastor

Statement to the General Board of the Christian Church concerning the Ohio Region
Tom Stephenson, Moderator

The story of the Christian Church in Ohio is a cautionary tale for the whole church. I pray you listen carefully, think critically, and act courageously, as this body and the whole church move forward on our General Minister's vision and the structural/systemic issues we must face together as a church.

How many of you are either from Ohio and/or have served in Ohio? For generations, the Ohio region was strong, vital, growing, and influential in the life of the whole church. Like financial institutions in 2008, it was thought by those within and beyond the region that Ohio was too big to fail. That reality, or perception of reality is no more. The reality: the Ohio is broken fiscally and relationally. Some think irreparably. I am not in that camp, but I am here to speak the truth that there is much pain, distrust and confusion among Buckeye Disciples. Over the past year, we have been intentional about researching our woes, digging up our skeletons, and opening doors and windows to let the light of truth and transparency illumine our darkness.

There is so much that is wonderful about our region, its history and ministry, but for at least 20-30 years, we have been guilty of the sin of hubris. We came to believe that the general church needed us but that we didn't need the general church, and now, many among us within Ohio have come to believe they don't need the region.

We have done all we can to reduce expenses and increase revenue; we have cut staff and programs, visited throughout the region, cast deadly policies into the pit of hell, written and are writing new policies based on best practices, and began to share openly the good, the bad and the ugly about who we are, where we are, and why we find ourselves in this position.

First, I want to say thank you to our General Ministry partners who have been gracious, prayerful and supportive in spiritual and pragmatic ways. We are especially blessed by these covenant partners.

Second, I am here primarily to say this: as the fiduciary body of this church, it is well beyond the moment when we as the General Board need to take seriously our fiscal and structural issues. The time is now to address our brokenness. I began by saying, this is a cautionary tale. Take heed. While this sounds very pessimistic, I remain an optimist, and am convinced we cannot only recover but will discern new vitality within our church. But, we cannot continue as church under this rubric, so may the Lord guide and bless us in these deliberations.

**Personnel Committee Report to the Regional Church Council,
Christian Church in Ohio, April 21, 2018**

Over the last year, the Personnel Committee has shared with the rest of the Regional Church the work of prayerfully working through the issues of our financial condition and what it means in terms of our staffing levels.

Since our last meeting in October, we have received the resignation of Steve Bentley as Associate Regional Pastor, and after deciding to return the Lilly Grant funds, gave notice to and eliminated the position of Janet Mers as Thrive Project Director. Donna Channell was called as Interim Food Service Director at Camp Christian and she will serve at least through the summer camp season.

We are prepared to move forward together in whatever form the Regional Church takes moving into the future.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rev. Michael Doerr
FCC Wauseon
Chairman, Personnel Committee

Membership Development Committee

Membership Development has no new information to report. We have not met since the last meeting. Future plans for the next few months are:

- Contact current eligible members for their commitment to serve for the 2018-2020 term
- Promote RCC and review applications for new members
- Complete RCC Roster for the 2018-2020 term

Finance Committee Interim Report – April 21, 2018

The financial position of the Christian Church in Ohio is perilous. This is the first and last thing we need to say to the Regional Church Council (RCC).

We have increased our deficit position in the regional financial reports during the first two months of the year by another \$50,000. Please keep in mind that, while the regional accounting is kept in two major categories, Regional Office (or Regional Operations) and Camp Christian (Camp), we have one checkbook, one essential set of cash reserves, now managed by Treasury Services of the Office of General Minister and President (OGMP).

That checkbook is currently about \$85,000 overdrawn; we also will have to restore another \$60,000 mistakenly taken from the Lilly grant funds in the initial confusion and transfer last June 1 from our own internal financial management to the OGMP's Treasury Services oversight.

While we do not have the March financial report in hand yet, it is likely to add another \$40,000 to our total improvidence. Beginning with this month and into the next two, camp registrations will "float" the checkbook back up to a positive position, an estimated \$250,000 in sum as income for camp's three months of core service. That amount of income, combined with other more modest inflows for camp use the other nine months of the year, are normally counted upon to support the camp "half" of the budget, short about \$40-50,000 formerly covered by Regional Operations.

What is definitely not fully subscribed is the Regional Operations side of the budget. Disciples Mission Fund (DMF) income generally comes in around half of the year's total during the last month of the year, or the first month of the next, from the previous Christmas Offering. We face a challenge even at that, given that we are currently receiving 70% of DMF congregational giving, which is scheduled by OGMP/TS agreement to return to 60% as of June 1; every other region of our size and type in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) receives 40%, the goal we are aiming for in 2020.

In 2017, the Ohio Region saw 84 congregations give in any amount to DMF (5 of those were CWF only, so effectively 79). There were 13 additional churches who had DMF giving in 2016 who gave nothing in 2017. Ideally this means we could reach out to 97 congregations for enhanced DMF, but 4 have or are closing, and 3 have taken significant steps to distance themselves from the Disciples, so the target audience for regional restoration is 90 congregations. Of those, 24 constitute over 85% of DMF giving. The complicating factor is that over the last five years, significant Disciples giving by churches has been "shifted" to designations exclusive of DMF, mostly Camp Christian & Week of Compassion. It would be imprudent to assume that churches would quickly "shift back" giving to DMF.

Also, as we assess our current status, please be aware that we have negotiated to reduce our camp mortgage payment to interest only, bringing that monthly \$3,700 expense down to \$800; the additional \$2,900 will have to return to our expenses at some point subsequent to the first of next year.

If our current overdrafts are “called in” by OGMP, we could cover that with the remains of our investment accounts. We have made a verbal commitment not to spend again from those for operations; that \$222,000 represents trust obligations of held principal that are at least \$560,000 — and records research still ongoing indicates those ethical & legal obligations are in fact closer to \$1,600,000. If we are asked to make whole the OGMP & Lilly obligations from the investment remains tomorrow, we can do that, once. Anticipated income from camp operations should get us to Labor Day; we will only be able to get through the next three months with either new overdrafts or borrowing unless DMF giving sharply increases — beyond the increases needed to cover the reduced DMF percentage & restored full mortgage payment.

The Christian Church in Ohio will need by the summer’s end to make some formal declaration of insolvency, and to dissolve the current regional structures and assumptions, calling on the 90 engaged congregations in Ohio, as this present Region dies, to come together and determine how they wish to live in covenant together. Our current structure and arrangements are not sustainable, even under a relatively optimistic set of assumptions, including modest growth in DMF income. It would require an average 30% increase per congregation of DMF to be in a position to operate sustainably even at the current staffing profile, but keep in mind that in fact 12 congregations are almost 50% of all DMF giving, so the increases would also disproportionately need to come from those quarters.

Barring a massive infusion of new giving, we will come to the first of next year with zero deposits against over a half-million dollars (likely twice that) of trust obligations, the return of the full mortgage payments on the Camp Christian property, and three months’ worth of deficit spending as is standard for the beginning of the calendar year.

The financial position of the Christian Church in Ohio is perilous.

Finance review for the Ohio Region – April 21, 2018

Using DMF church/school (column #1) giving as benchmark for cooperating churches

1991 - \$962,919

176 congregations \$5,471 ave.

1995 - \$852,888

182 congregations \$4,686 ave.

2000 - \$874,620

159 congregations \$5,500 ave.

2001 - \$840,446

166 congregations \$5,063 ave.

2003 - \$641,198

129 congregations \$4,970 ave.

2004 - \$544,416

121 congregations \$4,499 ave.

2011 - \$349,285

94 congregations \$3,715 ave.

2016 - \$412,573

86 congregations \$4,797 ave.

2017 - \$327,681

79 congregations \$4,148 ave.

Projected 2025 - *50 congregations*

\$5,000 average per congregation to DMF, or \$250,000 (assume inflation adjustment, this is 2018 dollars) which means at 40% DMF return to Ohio, \$100,000; plus est. \$50,000 individual & other giving to the region, so \$150,000 regional operating budget (separate from camp side budget)

Regional Minister Search Committee

The Regional Minister Search Committee met five times in a two-month period—once in person and four times via Zoom conferences.

An initial orientation meeting was held electronically in January with our regional ministry partner in this process, the Reverend Rick Spleth of Indiana.

An in-person meeting was held in Columbus in February. We spent the morning in anti-racism training with the Reverend Dr. Yvonne Gilmore and the afternoon clarifying the process guiding our efforts.

Three electronic meetings were held on consecutive Sunday evenings in March to consult with others who could offer guidance. We talked at length with a currently-serving regional minister with considerable experience helping regions in crisis. On another occasion, we spoke with a retired regional minister who creatively redesigned the paradigm for providing regional ministry. We also met with General Minister & President Terri Hord Owens, with a general unit staff member who is in the initial stages of suggesting a different approach to regional ministry, and with Steven Gower, Chair of the Visioning Committee of the Christian Church in Ohio.

Next week, we will meet electronically to plan interactive sessions with clergy and laity to be held this spring across Ohio. We will develop a template so that all of these gatherings will follow a similar design of sharing.

Rather than a “Regional Minister Search Committee”, we more aptly may be called a “Regional Ministry Search Committee”. Conscious of the region’s financial situation, we are considering ways for regional ministry to be accomplished which would be both strategic and sustainable. Most of all, we are seeking to be Spirit-led.

We covet your prayers for our work.

Blessings,

Janet Long, Chair

Thomas Barnes
Vera Burton
Anna Hope Curwood
Amir Darr
Melanie Harrell-Delaney
Tomas Hernandez
Jae Young Rhee
Tom Stephenson, ex officio
Cliff Thompson

ADULT CONFERENCE MEETING

March 7, 2018

PRESENT: President Wanda Werking, Vice President Bob Freisthler, Secretary Carmen Mullane, Financial Liaison Bob Thompson, Rev. Todd Cosart, Marybeth Corbett

Due to the problems of the Ohio Region, several officers and members of the planning committee met to discuss the viability of holding Adult Conference this year. Wanda has talked with our Interim Regional Pastor, Rev. Richardson. Bob Thompson brought us up to date on the financial situation.

There were four accounts being held by the regional office. As of January, they were all at a zero balance. The Ramga Fund was started with \$10,000 and over the years had grown to \$11,000. The original \$10,000 is still there, but the growth and interest has been spent. There was also approximately \$10,000 in the other funds, but is now gone.

Registration fees usually cover expenses except for scholarships and travel for out of town speakers. Several options were discussed, i.e. no scholarships this year, cancelling Adult Conference, use the Thursday night offering, get speakers who do not have to travel, etc.

Attendance has decreased in the last five years from 74 to 40. About 20% are scholarships.

It was the opinion of those present to continue with Adult Conference this year since so many plans are already in place. Rev. Richardson needs to tell the attendees about the region's financial situation at orientation or a forum.

Adult Conference pays for the Bible Lecturer and Vesper Speaker, rooms for the faculty, catering, rent for the church, music, and the church custodian and secretary are given \$50. Last year the costs were \$12,000. If there are 50 conferees, leaving the registration at \$200, income would be \$10,000.

It was decided the March letter should be sent out with no changes; scholarships are available. More discussion will be held at the Planning Committee meeting on April 16. Resurrecting district meetings may encourage smaller churches to participate.

Wanda encouraged everyone to pray for the churches, the region, and the leaders.

Respectfully submitted,
Carmen Mullane

Advance Ministries Spring Meeting Report

We have a lot of exciting things happening through Advance ministries this year! We had our Winter Retreat at the end of December and our Spring retreat the weekend after Easter. At Winter Retreat we discussed divine intervention with bible study led by Audrey Connor and keynote led by Margot Connor. At Spring Retreat we explored times of comfort and challenge and how God is involved with those times. We had bible study led by Ali Miguel and our keynote speaker was a special out of state guest, Yvonne Gilmore.

Something new this year to the Advance community is our Advance Commission which was put into place last summer at conference. There are three sub-committees within the commission, which are: fundraising, programming, and outreach. Fundraising works to promote Advance's finances with a focus on supporting Advance scholarships. Programming is dedicated to executing new and exciting ideas within the commission. Outreach plans to work on expanding our community and spreading the word about what Advance is up to and about. So far, some ideas that have been planned and/or executed include: more involvement in reaching out to CYFers about Advance, visiting churches to speak about Advance, raising funds, and possibly updating our mission statement.

As for upcoming plans, Advance will be meeting in summer for our annual Summer Conference. The officers are extremely excited about our faculty members and keynote speakers for the summer, but we do not want to make those individual selections public knowledge just yet.

Advance is working hard to do our part within the camp community. Several Advance campers and alumni volunteer as counselors for other conferences, we have participated in events to help build or clean up different areas of camp, and a lot of our community has been and continues to be part of the ministry associates team during the summer. We hope to continue in our efforts to work diligently to make Advance better and to make Camp Christian better as best we can.

Anti-Racism/Pro-Reconciliation Commission Report

October 2017 – March 2018

Rev. Roger Osgood, Co-Chair

Anne C. Sowell, Co-Chair

Additional talented persons, both ministers and laypersons have joined the ART Commission. Attending regular meetings continue to be a challenge for many members for any number of reasons, distance, other commitments to church, family, etc. and many of us are just burned out trying to make something happen after having fought racism for a lifetime. ZOOM is now available to the commission and we have a phone meeting scheduled for Tuesday, April 10th at 7:30 pm. During the meeting the co-chairs will present the idea of focusing energy on Social Justice activities in our individual churches and communities. We are hoping a variety of social justice activities will ignite the ART members and congregations throughout the region.

Since our last report many devastating things have happened within our society that reminds us that reconciliation is sorely needed in this world. Social Justice activities such as Voter Registration, canvassing and making phone calls for a candidate you support, letter writing, changing gun laws, etc. to name a few, provides each commission member with the opportunity to get family, youth, church, neighborhoods and others involved in sharing and getting to know and respect each other. Once we are able to get to know each other, respect each other, reconciliation begins to take place.

The last weekend of February in observance of Black History month, the Kemper Road ART Team held anti-racism/pro-reconciliation workshops lead by Rev. April Johnson on Saturday and she preached on Sunday. The weekend was quite successful. The commission is still holding a spring and fall One Day Anti-Racism/Pro-Reconciliation workshop for new pastors to the region and others interested in the training. Our spring training will be held on April 18, 2018 from 9 am-4:30 pm at the camp. The commission's plan is to follow up with the ministers attending the workshop to determine if they initiated the plans they created after attending the workshop and provide them with support as needed.

We will give some thought to a Regional activity that will enhance Reconciliation Giving this year.

Camp Christian Committee Report

The Camp Christian Committee has been working hard to make our beloved Camp Christian a safe and meaningful place to visit this year.

We currently have subcommittees which help to facilitate the different aspects of camp:

Our Facilities sub-committee has been working to maintain the upkeep of the buildings. This year they have looked into things like new Generator for emergency power, re-roofing the craft cabin, and fixing the walkways.

Our energy sub-committee has been looking into ways to be better stewards of our world by making camp for eco-friendly.

Our Marketing sub-committee is looking to help raise money through the 1 in 1000 campaign as well as thinking about ways to increase attendance numbers. New programs are being looked into for ways we can use camp in the off season and share our space with outside groups to help with some of the cost too upkeep the property.

Chi Commission which works to make decisions about our camps for Middle-school aged youth.

CYF Commission which works to make decisions about our camps for High-school aged youth

Partnership commission which works to make decisions about camps for our younger aged youth

We are still working to get representatives from other aspects of camp to join us as we make important-overall decisions for the function of Camp Christian.

Within the past year, we worked to ensure information was available to churches to promote camp in the Spring. This information was also passed out or shown at several camp fairs in the Ohio area.

Members of the committee also worked to get a volunteer pool on the Regional website for Staff use.

Tom Stephenson also hosted a roundtable for the region to come together and discuss the future of camp. Thank Tom for organizing this, and thank you to all who came to discuss ideas and thoughts on how we can update our vision for Camp Christian.

We have not met since last year, but we do plan to meet soon to discuss changes taking place in the region and how camp will be affected. Please stay tuned for more info later this year.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Heather A. Hicks

**Christian Church in Ohio
Regional Church Council
April 21, 2018**

Recommendation regarding Food Services Policy for the Dining Hall Kitchen at Camp Christian.

Background

Because of the number of days we sell meals, prepared in our kitchen in the Dining Hall at Camp Christian, we are required to have a food service license. Donna Channel, our Food Service Director, is responsible for making sure all activity within our facility follows the Ohio Uniform Good Safety Code (see attached letter from Union County Health Department).

Although we already meet several of the requirements, there are some we do not. Often the areas we do not meet standards are for one day events or retreats, when food is brought in from homes, or untrained individuals desire access to the kitchen. With the increasing number of food related allergies and serious food related diseases, we recommend the regional church adopt as policy the Ohio Food Safety Code.

Recommendation

Recommend that we set as policy of the Christian Church in Ohio that Camp Christian Dining Hall and Kitchen follow the Ohio Food Safety Code.

940 London Ave
Suite 1100
Marysville, Ohio 43040

Administration
Environmental Health
Health Education
Phone: (937) 642-2053
Fax: (937) 645-3047

Nursing
Phone: (937) 642-2053
Fax: (937) 642-9725

Toll Free
1-888-333-9461

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Ms. Tiffany Wood

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being of all Union County
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March 15, 2018

Donna Channell
Camp Christian
Maple Dell Rd.
Marysville, OH 43040

Dear Donna,

Camp Christian is required to have a food service license because they service meals more than 52 single days per year or more than 7 consecutive days for payment/something of value. As the license holder you are responsible for making sure all activity within your facility follows the Ohio Uniform Food Safety Code. This includes but is not limited to:

- Making sure those preparing food are properly trained in safe food handling – there must be someone with Level 1 Certification in Food Protection working on every shift
- Food handlers are observing proper hygienic practices such as restraining hair and wearing a hat/hairnet, wearing a clean uniform/apron, wearing NO jewelry on hands or arms (except a plain wedding band or medical ID bracelet worn high up on the wrist), wearing gloves when appropriate and using them properly, not working while sick, etc.
- All food comes from an approved source – nothing prepared at home and brought in
- Food is held at proper temperatures – this includes during transportation to camp
- Food is prepared safely
- Food is served safely
- Appropriate records are kept (temperature logs, dishwasher temperature logs, etc.)
- Dishware and utensils are cleaned and sanitized properly
- Chemicals are stored properly
- Facility is maintained in a clean and sanitary manner
- Trash and garbage are properly handled and not allowed to accumulate
- The water supply is tested and the septic system is maintained as required

If you have any questions regarding your responsibilities as a license holder, please don't hesitate to contact me at 937.642.2053.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marcia Dreiseidel, MS, RS".

Marcia Dreiseidel, MS, RS
Director of Environmental Health

Chi Rho Commission

Spring 2018

The Chi Rho Commission has been busy preparing for the coming summer program. We know this will be a very different summer without Steve and we are striving to prepare our Directors, AD's and counselors as much as we can in his absence.

We will be holding our annual Counselor's training along with the CYF commission on May 12, 2018. At the training we will provide the necessary training to incoming and veteran counselors for their volunteer week(s) at camp.

We also started to prepare for our biannual Chi Rho Rally this fall. We will be focusing on service and have the kids helping out with various service projects at Camp.

I, Heather A. Hicks, will also be stepping down from this commission to focus my attention on the Camp Christian committee. The Chi Rho commission will elect a new chair person in the fall of 2018 after the camp season. Heather will remain on the commission until this meeting date.

Christian Youth Fellowship (CYF)

It was obvious that we (the commission) had many opportunities for improvement as was evident after the backlash from how one of the CYF conferences was led last year. From there we found further improvement opportunities when it came to planning for our events and getting that information to the regional office.

Therefore, we immediately addressed the concerns of the parents, families, and campers that came from week 2 last year. Rev Steve Bentley took point on this. From there, the commission met in late fall to discuss dates for the 2018 season. At that fall meeting we came up with a few procedures in how the commission will keep record of members. We also decided to end the SCOOP offering starting after the close of summer conference 2018. Lastly, I was elected chair of the commission.

From there we had Leadership training of which Daun Seitz was the point person. The commission and the SLT's met in March to form the Regional Youth Council. It was at this meeting that the council decided where the monies from the current SCOOP and DIG offerings will go. We began discussions on how the overall CYF programs will look for the future. We will continue this visioning process at the commission's fall 2018 meeting. The CYF Retreat will have happened by the time that you are reading this, but so far it looks to be a lower attended event. This is one of the pieces that we will continue to vision as we move forward. I think that the biggest hindrance is the timing of the event. Being so late into the second semester of school, youth are very busy with other activities. We have a set a date for Feb 1, 2, and 3, 2019 for the next event- what that will look like, we are unsure at this time.

In an attempt to be proactive to issues that might arise during the summer conference, we will be overhauling the counselor's retreat to better prepare our counselors, assistant directors, and directors for the ever evolving needs of today's (and tomorrow's) youth.

Very Respectfully,

Lucas Lerma

CYF Commission Chair

Ohio Commission on Ministry
Report to the Regional Council
April 21, 2018

The annual organizational meeting of the Ohio Commission on Ministry took place on Tuesday, January 23, at Northwest Christian Church. The purpose of this meeting was to orient commissioners to the work of their teams and determine future dates of meetings. Candidate rosters and team assignments were confirmed. The following are the Commissioners serving on each team for 2018-19:

Team 1

Carolyn Abels	Northwest Christian Church, Columbus	Laity
Rev. Mary Jo Bray	First Christian Church, Sylvania	
Rev. Dr. Eric Brown	Woodland Christian Church, Columbus	
Rev. Denise Cunningham-Doggett	Lake Shore Christian Church, Euclid	
Rev. Melanie Delaney	Good Shepherd Christian Church, Twinsburg	
Rev. Mark Garrett	Legacy Christian Church, Harrison	
Rev. Cynthia Klingemeier	First Christian Church, Wadsworth	Team Leader
Rev. Gail Lindsey-Reed	Harmony Springs Christian Church, Uniontown	
Rev. Chris McCreight	Hiram Christian Church, Hiram	
Rev. Robin Meyers	Central Christian Church, Wooster	
Brenda Osuga	Gender Road Christian Church	Laity
Jim Rivers	First Christian Church, Wadsworth	
Rev. Marc Runyon	Central Christian Church, Warren	
Anne Sowell	Bethany Christian Church, Cleveland	Laity
Deborah Stout	First Christian Church, Cambridge	Laity

Team 2

Vera Burton	Community Christian Church, North Canton	Laity
Rev. Julie Cory	First Christian Church, Kent	
Rev. Brad Donahue	Christian Temple, Lorain	
Rev. Jeff Gill	Central Christian Church, Newark	
Rev. William McConnell	Norwood Christian Church, Cincinnati	
Rev. Carol Oetzel	Legacy Christian Church, Harrison	Team Leader
Rev. Jim Painting	Grace UCC Pastor, Massillon (DOC Minister)	
Rev. Beth Pass	Disciples Christian Church, Youngstown	
Rev. Dr. Tom Stephenson	First Christian Church, Wilmington	
Rev. Jack Sullivan, Jr.	First Christian Church, Findlay	
Rev. Norman Witthuhn	Disciples Christian Church, Youngstown	

Team 3

Rev. Michael Doerr	First Christian Church, Wauseon	Team Leader
Rev. Dr. Betty Green	Central Christian Church, Kettering	
Rev. Dawn Remster	First Christian Church, Zanesville	
Rev. Tracy Siegman	First Christian Church, Middletown	
Rev. Mike Valentine	First Christian Church, Bellefontaine	

Chair Person

Rev. Dr. Jeff Wheeler	Northwest Christian Church, Columbus
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Team 1 of the Commission on Ministry is responsible for overseeing ordination candidates in both the seminary and apprentice track. Presently there are 25 candidates in the care of this team. Five of them are preparing for ordination interviews on Tuesday, June 5, at Northwest Christian Church. A pre-ordination interview for these candidates took place on March 8. Future meetings for Team 1 are planned for September 13 and November 8. Another candidate may be ready for an ordination at the end of this year.

Team 2 oversees Commissioned Ministers. Presently 24 ministers are in their care. They have meetings planned for June 16 in Newark and September 29 in Wilmington. A third meeting will be set for the Cleveland area later in the fall.

Team 3 oversees the standing of all the clergy, active and retired, in the region. Standing forms were sent early in 2018 to all ministers, and standing was reviewed by this team and confirmed in time for reporting in the Annual Yearbook of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Team 3 also works with ministers from other denominations seeking standing in the Christian Church. Five ministers are presently engaged in this process with Team 3. Team 3 will meet at NWCC on Tuesday, April 24, at which time they will schedule future meetings and candidate interviews.

In order to meet the requirements for the Policies and Criteria Manual approved by the Regional Council in October 2017, the COM is engaged in seeking additional commissioners to serve on the Working Group for Ministerial Ethics (WGME) and the Response Team that address allegations of clergy misconduct. These two groups will become team 4 of the COM. A letter of invitation has been sent to nine persons of interest. As of this writing of this report, we are still awaiting the responses of some of these invitees. People who may be interested in serving in this capacity are encouraged to contact the chair of the COM, Rev. Dr. Jeff Wheeler or talk with our Regional Pastor. We anticipate a training/orientation meeting for Team 4 to take place sometime in May at Northwest Christian Church.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeffrey Wheeler,
COM chair

Congregational Transformation Ministry Team Report

2018

Report by Timothy Brown

Our team has not met over the past year much in part because of the transitions at the regional offices. My hope is that those who have been trained to do coaching are still using these skills to help other pastor and individuals within the own congregations. In addition previous webinars continue to be available on the regional website. Before our team concluded its meetings we were looking into ways to work with the revitalization team with the Eastern Ohio and Western Reserve Association of the United Church of Christ. I believe that a partnership with them in the future could still be very helpful because they have a very effective coaches training model that I think we could benefit from. There may be other ways that we could work together as well.

The ministry team's desire is to help to build a covenant community of churches. As the new leadership established within the region I trust that God will give a new vision for how a new team can emerge which will help to build our thriving and struggling congregations. We are much stronger as we work together and share our journey together.

Respectfully,

Pastor Timothy Brown

Bailey Road Christian Church

Disciples Fellowship Retreat

DISCIPLES FELLOWSHIP RETREAT WAS CREATED FROM CAMPERS WHO HAD “GRADUATED” FROM THE ADVANCED CONFERENCE PROGRAM, LOVED CAMP CHRISTIAN, AND WANTED TO SHARE THE EXPERIENCE WITH THEIR FAMILY BUT NOTHING WAS AVAILABLE. IT HAS EVOLVED TO INCLUDE NOT ONLY FAMILIES, BUT EVERYONE: YOUNG, OLD, SINGLES, COUPLES, ETC. WE ALSO HAVE PEOPLE WHO HAVE LEFT THE DISCIPLES CHURCH FOR ONE REASON OR ANOTHER BUT STILL SHARE THE SAME LOVE FOR CAMP CHRISTIAN AND WANT TO COME BACK TO OUR RETREAT. WE HAVE OUR RETREATS (OR “EXTENDED FAMILY REUNIONS” AS SOME PEOPLE CALL IT!) TWICE A YEAR: MEMORIAL DAY AND LABOR DAY WEEKENDS, FRIDAY NIGHT TO SUNDAY AFTERNOON. WE FIND THIS WORKS WELL WITH PEOPLE BEING ABLE TO BE HOME IN TIME TO ENJOY THE MONDAY HOLIDAY.

WE FASHION OUR SCHEDULE AROUND “A DAY AT CAMP” LIKE YOU WOULD EXPERIENCE IT IF YOU CAME IN THE SUMMER: WAKEUP (ALONG WITH THE USUAL MORNING WAKEUP CALLS!), BREAKFAST, SINGING, MORNING SESSION, BREAKOUT SESSIONS, LUNCH, SINGING, AFTERNOON SESSION, BREAKOUT SESSIONS, FREETIME, DINNER, SINGING, VESPERS, TALENT SHOW, SLEEP!! WE EVEN HAVE CAMP CAPERS!! DURING THE BREAKOUT SESSIONS, WE HAVE ACTIVITIES RANGING FROM FISHING, NATURE HIKING, RECREATION, BIBLE STUDIES, CRAFTS, YOGA, PHOTOGRAPHY, SING-A-LONGS, AND LEARNING NEW TALENTS. SOME YEARS WE HAVE INCORPORATED A CLASSIC “HOE DOWN” USING ALL THE SONGS FROM THE SUMMER CAMPS—IT’S BEEN A GREAT WAY TO TEACH A NEW GENERATION THE LOVE OF CAMP TRADITIONS! DURING FREE TIME PEOPLE ENJOY FISHING, BOATING, HIKING, SPORTS, TALKING OR JUST BEING AT CAMP. WE USED TO BE ABLE TO HAVE THE USE OF THE SWIMMING POOL BUT HAVEN’T IN SEVERAL YEARS—WHEN THE WEATHER IS PARTICULARLY WARM, IT IS A BIG DISAPPOINTMENT TO A LOT OF OUR CAMPERS TO NOT HAVE THAT AVAILABLE, BUT WE HAVE PLENTY OF OTHER ACTIVITIES TO KEEP EVERYONE HAPPY.

WE TRY TO ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO COME WITH THEIR CHILDREN WHO WILL BE OF CAMP AGE SO THE KIDS KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN THEY COME TO SUMMER CAMP.

WE HAVE OUR OWN COOKS WHO HAVE BEEN WITH US FROM ALMOST THE VERY BEGINNING. THEIR EXPERTISE AND ABILITY TO COOK FOR A LARGE AMOUNT HAVE BEEN VERY BENEFICIAL IN KEEPING OUR COSTS AFFORDABLE FOR FAMILIES.

ONE OF OUR PURPOSES IS TO “GIVE BACK TO THE CAMP” BY DOING VARIOUS SERVICE PROJECTS. SOME OF THE PROJECTS WE HAVE DONE INCLUDE CLEARING OUT THE LOWER CAMPUS, PURCHASING AND MOUNTING MIRRORS IN BOTH THE BOYS AND GIRLS CABINS, PURCHASING AND MOUNTING BULLETIN BOARDS IN THE GIRLS CABINS, INSTALLING SHELVES AND SHOWER HOOKS IN THE GIRLS BATHROOMS, PURCHASING HYMNALS, PURCHASING AND MOUNTING CLOCKS IN BOYS CLUSTER 2, CUTTING WOOD, AND GENERAL CAMP CLEANUP---JUST TO NAME A FEW!

RECENTLY WE’VE PARTICIPATED IN OTHER SERVICE PROJECTS BY ASKING PEOPLE TO BRING THINGS TO DONATE FOR A CERTAIN CAUSE. WE’VE COLLECTED ITEMS, SUCH AS PENCILS, MARKERS, SCISSORS, ETC. TO HELP REPLENISH CAMP SUPPLIES AND WE’VE ALSO COLLECTED ITEMS TO HELP WITH THE CWF HYGIENE BAG OUTREACH PROGRAM. ONE OF OUR PROGRAMS IN 2017 WAS THE PROVIDENCE HOUSE OF CLEVELAND—WE WERE ABLE TO GATHER MANY SUPPLIES FOR OUR SPEAKER TO TAKE BACK AND ASSEMBLE CARE BAGS FOR THE CHILDREN WHO STAY THERE, AS WELL AS MADE A FEW FLEECE BLANKETS TO GIVE AS WELL.

OUR PROGRAMS IN THE PAST WERE SPONSORED BY DIFFERENT CHURCHES THROUGHOUT THE STATE WHO PROVIDED THE SPEAKER AND/OR PROGRAM. WE EVENTUALLY FOUND THIS HARDER AND HARDER FOR A CHURCH TO COMMIT, SO THE STEERING COMMITTEE NOW DEVELOPS THE PROGRAMS BASED ON THE

EVALUATION FORMS. WE HAVE A MAIN SPEAKER/PROGRAM AND THEN BREAK OFF INTO SMALLER, USUALLY FUN, ACTIVITY GROUPS TO COMPLETE THE PROGRAM. EVERYONE SEEMS TO ENJOY THIS FORMAT.

FOR MEMORIAL DAY 2018, WE ARE GIVING BACK ONCE AGAIN IN A HUGE WAY. WE HAVE CONNECTED WITH AL AND DONNA CHANNEL AND WILL BE USING THIS WEEKEND AS A WORK WEEKEND TO HELP GET CAMP READY FOR THE SUMMER. AS MOST OF THE STATE IS AWARE, THE CAMP STAFF WILL BE SMALL AND AL AND DONNA HAVE SPENT A LOT OF TIME TRYING TO FIND WAYS TO MAKE CAMP RUN AS SMOOTHLY AS POSSIBLE. WE FEEL THAT OUR GROUP HAS MANY PEOPLE WHO ATTEND AND WANT TO HELP KEEP CAMP ALIVE AND FRESH, SO OUR GOAL IS TO HELP WITH WHATEVER PROJECTS WE CAN—CLEANING, PAINTING, FIXING THINGS, SPRUCING UP THE AREAS, WORKING IN THE KITCHEN, ETC. (ALSO TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION PROVIDING AN ACTIVITY FOR THOSE WHO ARE ABLE/DO NOT WANT TO DO ANY PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES). WE ARE ALSO ASKING FOR DONATIONS TO THE CAMP SUPPLY BOXES IN THE OFFICE, AS WELL AS ANY OTHER DONATIONS NEEDED FOR THE CAMP. OUR HOPE IS THAT PEOPLE WHO HAVE NOT ATTENDED OUR WEEKEND BEFORE OR HAVEN'T IN A WHILE WILL FEEL COMPELLED TO COME DOWN AND HELP GET CAMP READY WITH ALL OF US. WE WILL STILL HAVE OUR NORMAL MEALS, SINGING, VESPERS, TALENT SHOW, AND SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE; THIS IS JUST TAKING THE PLACE OF A GENERAL SPEAKER.

OUR ATTENDANCE HAS BEEN FAIRLY STAGNANT MOST RETREATS, WITH SOME WEEKENDS BEING FULLER THAN OTHERS. WE HAVE A LOYAL GROUP OF ATTENDEES, MOST OF THIS IS DUE TO THE FACT THE CHILDREN OF THE FAMILIES WHO GREW UP ATTENDING DFR ARE NOW GETTING OLDER AND NO LONGER ARE ABLE TO ATTEND THE SUMMER CAMP PROGRAM BUT STILL WANT TO BE A "CAMPER"! THEIR LOVE FOR CAMP CHRISTIAN HAS SHOWN THROUGH THEIR SUPPORT AND BEING ABLE TO STILL RETURN TO ENJOY A PLACE THAT HAS MEANT SO MUCH TO THEM FOR MANY YEARS.

OUR COMMITTEE HAS MADE THE DECISION TO INCREASE OUR REGISTRATION FEE BY \$10/PERSON STARTING THIS MEMORIAL DAY IN ORDER TO CONTINUE TO PRODUCE TWO GREAT YEARLY RETREATS. THIS WILL BRING IT TO \$70/PERSON OR \$200/FAMILY UNDER 1 ROOF. WE HAVE NOT INCREASED OUR FEES SINCE 2007 (OVER 10 YEARS) AND WE REALIZE THAT WE NEED TO IMPLEMENT THIS NOW IN ORDER TO SUSTAIN OUR BELOVED RETREATS; OUR HOPE IS TO BE ABLE TO CONTINUE TO HAVE OUR RETREATS AVAILABLE FOR OUR ATTENDEES AND THEIR FAMILIES AS THEY GROW, AS WELL AS WELCOMING NEW FAMILIES AND CAMPERS EVERY YEAR.

RESPECTFULLY,

HOLLY SAJNA

CHAIR, DISCIPLES FELLOWSHIP RETREAT STEERING COMMITTEE

Ohio Disciples Outreach

ODO has not met for some time now and is sort of in limbo until we can see what we need to do for the future. It is not certain if Ohio Disciple Outreach will have a future. This is yet to be determined.

Blessings, Chair, Rev. Harry Bolen

Ohio Women's Ministries
Report to the Regional Church Council
Saturday, April 21, 2018

The planning team is down to a faithful few, and seeking new members. Members are aging, experiencing health problems, or have moved away.

Follow-up and Review of the 2017 Fall Retreat

1. The 2017 Fall Retreat evaluations were mostly positive. The keynote speaker received rave reviews. We received several suggestions for keynote speakers. The workshops received good reviews for content and relevance. The women enjoyed the hands-on workshops and activities which allowed them to be creative, but would like to see even more hands-on activities and workshops. The Journaling and Vision Board workshops were very well received.
2. Suggestions for future keynote speakers
 - Rev Crystal Walker
 - Julie Bishop Gibson
 - Pastor Karen Cane
 - Pastor Robbie Lemon
 - Candace Jerew

2018 Fall Retreat

1. 1st Planning Meeting-February 24, 2018
This year's retreat will be scaled back to one day and will be held on Saturday, September 8, 2018 at Camp Christian. Accommodations will be available at Camp Christian at the going rate for women who prefer to arrive on Friday night or stay over on Saturday night.
2. Registration will open at 9:00am and a full day of worship and workshops will be offered.
3. Theme for 2018 retreat is "Called to Action: Blooming in the Right Spot in Hard Times and Times of Crisis".
4. The team hopes to select a keynote speaker at the team meeting in April. We hope to secure a speaker from the pool of talented women serving in Ohio.
5. Service project-there is several opportunities in the Delaware community where volunteers are needed. We are assessing the needs and a service project will be chosen soon.
6. Cost of the retreat has not yet been determined. Current rates for Camp Christian are under review by the regional board/staff and will be made available to the team once they have been finalized.
7. Next scheduled team meeting is Saturday, April 14 at 10:00am at Camp Christian.

Respectfully submitted
Gena Stone Phillips and Dr. Patricia Brown
Co-Presidents, OWM

Spiritual Life Committee Report - April 2018

History and Purpose The Spiritual Life Committee plans events to provide spiritual growth opportunities for Ohio Disciples; therefore, this committee does not plan practical or academic workshops. As the Rev. Dr. Herald Monroe originally formed and convened the Spiritual Life Committee to care for and nurture the well-being and spiritual life of Ohio's ministers, the main event to be planned was the 3-day Clergy Spiritual Life Retreat (which is also open to clergy spouses who wish to attend). This retreat offers a time to relax with clergy colleagues, center down, and reconnect with the Source of Life. As we prayerfully hope for the transformation of our congregations, we believe it is crucial to offer clergy colleagues these opportunities for spiritual sustenance and growth.

Ministers' Spiritual Life Retreat - 2018: Earlier this year, the Ministers' Spiritual Life Retreat took place February 6-8, 2018 with 34 retreatants. The theme was "The Awakened Soul: Living at Our Utmost Capacity" with Quaker Minister, Writer, and Speaker Philip Gulley. A generous benefactor made it possible for us to bring Rev. Gulley to Ohio for our Retreat. The early bird registration fee was \$115, going up to \$125 afterward. Income was \$4,205 against expenses of \$3,504 (not including Rev. Gulley's fee of \$3,000), leading to a net profit of \$701.

2019: The Committee is already planning the 2019 Minister's Spiritual Life Retreat, and is able to confirm that the retreat will take place from Feb. 26-28, 2019 with the Rev. Dr. Ron Allen of Christian Theological Seminary as Retreat Leader. He will help us to explore the gift of ministry and ministerial vocation as a gift. More details will be forthcoming later.

Fall Silent Retreat - 2017: Once again, the Spiritual Life Committee offered the unstructured, no-frills 5-day Silent Retreat from Nov. 13-17, 2017 open to both clergy and laity at Camp Christian's Herald B. Monroe Lodge. We kept the daily price down to \$25 by having no food service or programming. Last year we had 6 in attendance. This was a "break even" event.

2018: Retreatants continue to give feedback that this silent time is much needed for their spiritual well-being, so this year's Silent Retreat is scheduled for October 22-26, 2018. More details later.

Resources - The Spiritual Life Committee prepared the document "A Season of Prayer and Fasting for the Christian Church in Ohio" to encourage prayer and fasting during Lent for our Regional Church.

The Spiritual Life Committee has put together resource lists of Ohio Retreat Centers, Accredited Spiritual Directors in Ohio, and Accredited Spiritual Direction Programs that are available for ministers, congregation members, and clergy groups. We continue to work on putting together resource lists for those who wish to explore Spiritual Gifts, Spiritual Formation, and Spiritual Practices, with contact information of those who offer these resources.

Social media presence on Facebook: "Spiritual Life Ministries of the Christian Church in Ohio"

Conclusion: We continue to offer spiritual growth opportunities to our clergy colleagues as well as to all Ohio Disciples as we journey in faith together, following the loving Way of Christ.

Respectfully Submitted, Spiritual Life Committee, Rev. Deborah Bolen, Chair
Rev. Harry Bolen, Rev. Paul Bomeli, Rev. Nik Donges, Rev. Philip Hunt, Rev. Priscilla Jackson,
Rev. Bev Jenkins, Rev. Tom Johnson, Rev. Kerry Reed.

**Christian Church in Ohio
Regional Church Council
Report of the Ecumenical Liaison
By the Reverend Dr. Jack Sullivan, Jr.
April 21, 2018**

It is a distinct pleasure and high privilege for me to serve as the Ecumenical Liaison of the Christian Church in Ohio. In this capacity, I sit on the governing boards of both the Ohio Council of Churches (OCC) and the Ohio Conference of the United Church of Christ (OCUCC). This report will provide a detailed accounting of my involvements with both governing boards.

Ohio Council of Churches

Executive Director: The Reverend Rebecca J. Tollefson

Director of Public Policy, Tom Smith

Points of Interest

1. Member Communions: African Methodist Episcopal, Third Episcopal District; African Methodist Episcopal Zion, Mid Atlantic One Area; Alliance of Baptists, Ohio Community; Christian Church in Ohio (Disciples of Christ); Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, Second District; Christian Science, Committee on Publication for Ohio; Church of the Brethren, Northern Ohio District and Southern Ohio District; Community Churches, Ohio Fellowship; Episcopal Church in the USA; Diocese of Ohio and Diocese of Southern Ohio; Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Northeastern Ohio Synod, Northwestern Ohio Synod, and Southern Ohio Synod; Greek Orthodox Church, Detroit Metropolis and Pittsburgh Metropolis; Moravian Church in America; Ohio Baptist General Convention; Presbyterian Church (USA), Synod of the Covenant; Religious Society of Friends, Wilmington Yearly Meeting; United Church of Christ, Ohio Conference; and the United Methodist Church, East Ohio Conference and West Ohio Conference.
2. Governing Board Meeting, October 18, 2017: This meeting was my inaugural session with the board in my capacity with Ohio Regional Council.
3. Dismantling Racism: Continuing its March 2017 efforts to address the issue of racism, those gathered during the October Board Meeting participated in a discussion on systemic racism as revealed in the documentary film, "Free to Ride." This film presented the true story of the resistance experienced by Dayton residents, mostly African American, as they tried to get to their places of employment in the nearby suburb of Beavercreek, via public transportation (bus). Our discussion, led by a staff member of Ohio State University's Kirwin Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, cast light on economic disparities in the Dayton area and the many ways race, fear and public policy intersect and serve to deny People of Color and poor persons the ability to gainfully participate in the economy.

The OCC continued its efforts to fight racism by organizing and mobilizing Ohioans to participate in the A.C.T. to End Racism Rally of the National Council of Churches (A-Awaken, C-Confront, T-Transform). A.C.T. to End

Racism featured an April 4, 2018 rally in Washington, DC, the actual 50-year anniversary of the assassination of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. This rally was organized by former Disciples General Minister and President, Dr. Sharon Watkins, and featured the participation of numerous clergy, activists, entertainers and communion leaders including our own General Minister and President, the Reverend Dr. Teresa Hord Owens. The OCC arranged for Ohioans to attend this rally by traveling to DC by chartered buses. Many Disciples from across the church, including myself, attended the rally. The OCC is now working to engage Ohio communions in the continuation and deepening of anti-racism ministries that honor the memory of Dr. King and flow from the reservoirs of our faith. See the Unite to End Racism attachment.

1. Announcement: Both Rebecca and Tom will retire on June 30, 2018! The Executive Committee has commissioned an organizational study, one which will give guidance to the future ministry of the OCC and the calling of the next Executive Director and Director of Public Policy.
2. Public Policy Brief: One of the services the OCC provides to its member communions is a Public Policy Brief. The most recent issue is attached to this report.
3. The next meeting of the Governing Board will take place on May 2, 2018.

The Ohio Conference of the United Church of Christ (OCUCC)

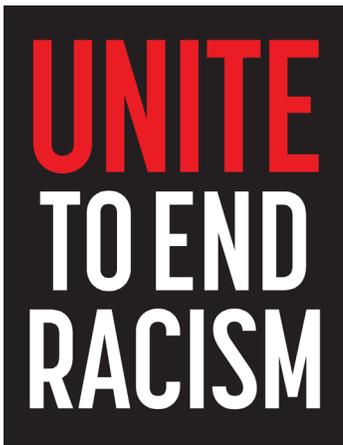
Interim Conference Minister: The Reverend John M. Gantt

Transitional Outdoor Ministry Coordinator: Joyce Oyler

Points of Interest

1. My first meeting with the OCUCC Governing Board will take place on May 18.
2. I have had the pleasure of conversing with Rev. Gantt on three occasions with each centering on the OCUCC's efforts to deepen its visible commitment to dismantling racism as inspired by denominational thrusts and the A.C.T. to End Racism event in Washington, DC. On April 8, Rev. Gantt staged a teleconference involving several people who traveled to DC for the rally. I was among those on the call. He is now working with Rev. Tollefson of the OCC and me to help the OCC continue and enliven its anti-racism ministries.
3. The OCUCC is currently involved in a search for a "Transitional Conference Minister," as Rev. Gantt will conclude his ministry this summer. During this "in between time," the OCUCC formed a Vision Team to help restructure the Conference. According to an April 2018 update on the OCUCC website, "Over the past two months, the Vision Team has held fifteen listening sessions and received dozens of emails from members across the conference with interest in the restructuring process. Our goal is to reimagine and reconstruct an organizational model of the church that faithfully fulfills the vision that God has placed on our hearts: a connected, covenantal church living the mission of Jesus Christ throughout our communities, states, and local region.

This new structure is intended to replace the six entities that currently exist – five associations and the conference – with "one nimble, and responsive judicatory that is both faithful in mission and responsible in stewardship."



ACT: Awaken! Confront! Transform!

ACT Now! Unite to End Racism

Our commitment is to awaken to the trauma of racism and the legacy of white privilege in the United States through self-evaluation and institutional assessment of embedded racism; to confront racism and white privilege through disciplined truth-telling coupled with strategies in the areas of church life and practices, and thus transform the hearts, minds and behaviors of people and institutions.

Truth Learning, Truth Telling and Relationships in Faith Communities

Truth-telling is needed to dismantle racism. Communities of faith are encouraged to create the space for truth-telling and truth hearing that will lead to changes in interpersonal relationships, in churches and in church related organizations. Interpersonal truth telling, congregational truth telling and organizational truth telling begin the process for transformative change.

Criminal Justice - Mass Incarceration

The United States is number one globally in the incarceration of its citizens. The US is 5% of the world population and houses 21% of the world's prisoners. This has not always been the case. Between 1989 and 2015 the number of people incarcerated in the US increased from roughly 500,000 to over 2.2 million. Another 4.6 million are under correctional control in the form of probation or parole. African Americans make up 13% of the US population but in 2014 African Americans constituted 2.3 million, or 34% of the total 6.8 million in the correctional population.

Economic Justice

The economy is a human creation. Unlike the weather, it follows laws laid down by humans, not by God or Nature. Most of us work a significant portion of our lives, but how much we prosper depends not only on our individual actions, but also on laws governing labor, corporations, taxation, and public investment. When Europeans began settling North America, they and their descendants established laws that appropriated land and resources from Native Americans and utilized enslaved Africans as free labor, setting the stage for the accumulation of wealth and political power primarily among people of European descent.

Media

News media often perpetuate racial stereotypes and reflect cultural norms in negative ways. A cursory look at news stories can show that crimes committed by white people are covered in very different ways than those by African Americans; likewise, those that portray the victims of crimes betray racial disparities as well. Any work that is to end racism in the US must have a strategy of changing the way race is portrayed in the media. We will work with partners, existing and new, to address racism in the media.

www.unite2endracism.org

A.C.T. NOW!
awaken confront transform

Civil and Human Rights

Racism hinders the ability of citizens to live in freedom with dignity and respect and with the opportunities to exercise the rights of full citizenship. All acts of racism are human rights violations. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaimed by the United Nations on December 10, 1948 sets “a common standard of achievement for all people and all nations” and “sets out the fundamental human rights to be universally protected.” <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>

Environmental Justice

First reported in 1971, awareness of environmental racism took a giant leap in 1982 when 523 residents of Warren County North Carolina were arrested for protesting the dumping of poisoned soil along their roads. People of color comprise the majority of the population in communities within 1.8 miles of a toxic waste facility in the United States. Worldwide, people of color have done the least to cause climate change, and yet are already (and will continue to be) the overwhelming majority of climate refugees.

Education

Racism in K-12 schools negatively impacts both school culture and student success/achievement with the dissatisfying result that there are more suspended Black and Latinx students, for example. Racism immensely impacts student achievement in class as students are missing the opportunities to grow in their learning. Furthermore, the presence of racism has provided the foundation upon which built a culture that contributed to the school to prison pipeline and exacerbated a host of institutional race issues that were mirrored by society.

Immigration

Our sacred texts and faith traditions call us repeatedly to love our neighbor, accompany the vulnerable, and welcome the sojourner. Yet the cries of the tired, poor, and huddled masses that our faith, and Lady Liberty, also demand be heard and welcomed into the U.S. have often been made worse by immigration policies imbued with scapegoating, racism, detention practices, and labor abuses that result in modern day slavery enacted both before and following immigrant arrivals.

Healthcare

Access to quality, affordable and comprehensive health care is a human right. The United States is the only industrialized nation that does not have national health care. Lack of access to affordable health care disproportionality impacts people of color.

Gun violence is a national health issue. The United States homicide rate is more than 25 times the average of other high-income countries. For every one person killed with a gun 2 more are injured. Black men are 13 times more likely to be shot and killed by a gun than white men. Violence has a traumatic impact on larger communities resulting in emotional and physical health issue.

Voting Rights

The right to vote is a basic human right. It is perhaps the single most important right in a democratic society. History verifies that voting discrimination against minority populations continues and therefore that federal oversight of state and local voting functions remains an imperative in jurisdictions with patterns of voting discrimination.

learn more at
www.unite2endracism.org

NO PARENT SHOULD HAVE THEIR CHILD KILLED WITH AN ASSAULT RIFLE WHILE ATTENDING SCHOOL!

Three teachers and 14 students had no chance to save their lives, as a troubled student, Nikolas Cruz, used an AR-15 Assault Rifle that he recently purchased even though he is only 18. All other guns in Florida require that you be 21. He came to his school Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida and carried his rifle in a large bag and was not stopped as he entered the school. He began shooting on the second floor, then moved to the third floor, but when he stopped, he still had bullets left in his magazine.

Brian Mast, a Republican Congressman was a former member of the military and carried the Army version of the AR-15 rifle. He said that this weapon should be banned from public sale. Many outlets for the sale of guns are taking them off the market. Many Corporations have dropped the NRA as members because of their unwillingness to take them off the market. Much of their funding comes from the factories that make them. The AR-15 was initially banned in 1994 by Congress but was allowed to be sold in 2004 when the Senate failed to vote to continue the ban. American has since had many more gun deaths than other countries. The NRA has used the 2nd Amendment as the argument to continue the sale of Assault Rifles. Our forefathers had no weapon that could kill hundreds of citizens in very few minutes.

Australia has given the USA information that strongly urges them to save American lives by banning assault rifles and buy back the guns as they paid \$3500 for 100,000 people. That correlated to a 50% drop in firearms homicides and a 74% drop in suicides with firearms. Another fact in the 14 years following the ban of Assault Rifles is that there have been no more massacres. America's background checks are full of holes. It does not apply to gun shows or person to person sales. Many of the guns used in Chicago were bought in Indiana and sold to criminals for a profit.

Our Governor Kasich changed his position in October following the Las Vegas massacre with the AR-15 Assault Rifles that killed 58 people and injured 800 more.

The Parkland, Florida high school, the 7th school shooting this year with 17 dead and 20 more wounded, has led to the creation of a student march to Washington D.C. on March 24th. They want action by President Trump, Congress and State Legislatures. They want Assault Rifles banned and the age increased from 18 to 21.

*“All you inhabitants of the world,
you who live on the earth,
when a signal is raised on the
mountains, look!
When a trumpet is blown,
listen!”*

(Isaiah 18:3 NRSV)

LISTEN NOW ---

IT'S TIME TO
CHANGE THE
RULES!

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You are welcome to copy or quote
from the Legislative Brief.
Tom Smith, Editor

What else can be done to protect those in school? More money needs to be spent on providing safer school entrance doors with metal detectors and 2 or 3 officers with guns to guard during school hours. It amazes me that all Congress members, State Legislators and Governors are guaranteed this protection, but never think of providing it for school students and teachers. Should politicians receive better protection than our children? Absolutely not! President Trump suggested that teachers take gun training.

Most police and other school leaders were not favorable to this idea! They have all they can handle at the time an attack would occur, such as hiding students. What do they do with their gun until its needed?

Parents are tired of hearing politicians saying "It's not time to change gun policy."

Florida has heard their voters and are moving to pass a school safety bill. They plan to spend \$500 million to increase law enforcement, metal detectors, and health counselors. They want to establish an anonymous tip line for possible school massacres being planned. The only thing missing is limitations on the size of the magazines that can be sold for AR-15 Assault Rifles.

Why is Congress unable to get the votes to ban the AR-15? Politifact reported that the GOP spent \$203.2 million between 1998 and 2017 funding candidates who helped defeat gun control. GOP Congress members who do the NRA bidding care about one thing- their jobs. The pay for a typical Congress member is \$174,000 with free parking at Reagan National Airport. The NRA knows that most voters have no interest in scraping the 2nd amendment. Voters may be interested in common safe gun laws that can prevent or reduce more school shootings.

A 2016 study in the American Journal of Medicine calculated that among 2 dozen of the world's wealthier nations, America alone

accounted for 91% of firearm deaths among children 14 and under.

The biggest mistake that Congress made in 1994 was to not vote to continue the ban on assault weapons. Sen. Bill Nelson D.-Fl., the Senate Floor Leader said after the deaths in Parkland, an AR-15 is not for hunting, it's for killing.

An absolute unacceptable action was reported by the father of a 14 year-old girl who was one of those gunned down. Fred Guttenberg met with Senator Rubio to urge that he lead the effort to ban the AR-15 Assault Rifle in Congress. Over the next few days, he received telephone calls from gun advocates harassing him and his family, even to the point of death threats. This is a family that buried their daughter only a few days before. It's very clear that these people have no common sense and should not be licensed to have any type of gun, especially an assault rifle.

I'm very proud of the young students who are planning a March to Washington on March 24th to say loudly that there has all ready been too many young lives lost in America. We want the same right to live a long life, like in Australia and Canada.

Your Congress Members and President Trump have to do better or the ultimate result will be more young lives will end in death much too early.

This is very hard for citizens to understand when the overwhelming 90% plus of American citizens want laws that ban Assault Rifles, except those used by police and our military.