Caring for Congregations

Rev. Rick Spleth
Visiting Regional Minister

The "Marks of a Faithful Regional Church" is an important document that all regions have adopted and reaffirmed over the years. Each month in the Buckeye Disciple we are focusing on one for our information and edification.

Caring for Congregations is the second of twelve marks. It says that "the Region resources congregations and extends consulting services in such areas as ministerial transition, problem-solving, conflict resolution, renewal (transformation), and planning for the future, as well as celebrations of congregational life such as anniversaries, dedications, installations and retirements."

Many of our churches know the Ohio Region because of the ways they experience Regional staff present in their congregation fulfilling one of these roles. Local churches know that they can call on the expertise and service of a Regional Minister to guide them as they go through a pastoral transition. "Search and Call" comprises a large part of the time Regional staff devote to congregational care, as Regional Ministers help congregations discern what God is calling them to do and be and then help them identify a candidate with the gifts they need to flourish in their setting.

Congregations often need a "third party" listening ear when they are caught in conflict, or uncertain about their next direction. Regional Ministers avail themselves for these important conversations. Often the challenge has been faced and overcome at a sister congregation. The Regional Minister's opportunity to travel allows for an interchange of ideas and solutions that build up the whole body.

In our Region, a dedicated group of Regional Elders helps to fulfill this "mark" of a faithful regional church. Our Regional Elders are each assigned the congregations in a particular District. They get to know the leaders and ministers of those churches and try to join with them in moments of celebration and sadness.

Caring for Congregations continued

Caring for congregations is really a continuation of the work of the Apostle Paul, who was after all the first Regional Minister! Remember what he did? He recommended pastoral leaders (Search and Call). He admonished at times and tried to intervene in difficult situations (conflict resolution). And he helped local churches cast a vision for the work of their church that was unique to their context (renewal and transformation).

Ultimately, the work of caring for congregations as a Region is not solely a staff role. We are strongest as a Region when we express our covenantal relationship to each other as congregations caring for each other. Do you know the members and minister of the Disciples church closest to you? Have you taken opportunity to visit a Disciples church of a different ethnicity than your own? Do you have resources to share to assist a new church get their best start? Have you thought about connecting with others who share your congregational responsibility in a sister church?

There are lots of ways our care as a Region can be expressed. We give thanks for all those who have faithfully done so over the years.

Camp Christian Summer Programs 2020

The Camp Christian Summer 2020 Camp and Conference registration forms and information are now available through our website. They are all available for download in one place on the Summer Forms, Downloads, and Links page. They can all also be accessed on each of the corresponding dates on the Regional Calendar. Please feel free to post and share this information with as many people as possible.

We also want to be sure to bring to your attention the option to make payments towards the registration fees. More information about this can be found on the Payment Plan PDF linked here and also on each of the program pages on the website.

There are Summer Camps and Conferences for Kindergarteners all the way through adults of all ages. We hope to see YOU at one of these amazing programs!!

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The Buckeye Disciple

Week of Compassion

We are co-workers in God’s service, planting and watering seeds for God to nurture.

“Let us plant dates even though those who plant them will never eat them,” writes Brazilian theologian Rubem Alves. “We must live by the love of what we will never see.”

Date trees can take a decade to bear fruit and 100 years to reach their full height. The hands that plant such a tree may do so knowing they may never rest in that tree’s shade. Moved by love, they invest in that unseen future.

“We are all co-workers together in God’s service,” writes Paul in 1 Corinthians 3. Some of us plant. Some of us water. But God gives the growth. Through Week of Compassion, we become like date tree planters: serving the fruitful future for which God yearns. Who knows what growth God may bring when we join hands together across distance, across traditions, and across time for the love of what we may never see?

When we give to Week of Compassion, we help make all of this new life and growth possible. Through our sharing, we are connected as co-workers. Our combined gifts have the capacity to travel all over the world. Whether we are empowering young girls through education, or helping women learn a trade; rebuilding communities after disaster, or supporting communities through agriculture as they learn to sustain themselves; in these and so many other ways, we release the waters of God’s growth when we invest in the lives of others. In sharing our gifts, we join together as both donors and recipients of generous investment in the growth God will bring. As Paul writes, “the one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose.” Moved by our common purpose, we share our gifts for the glory of God and for our neighbors’ good.

Investing in the future God will bring is rewarding in immediate ways. For when we invest in each other and in each other’s futures, we delight in knowing that we take part of God’s holy work of growing and thriving. We celebrate the profound joy of living “for the love of what we may never see.”

For more info about the Week of Compassion as well as Worship Materials, Bible Studies, Videos and more, go to https://www.weekofcompassion.org/2020.html

Regional Calendar  February 26 - August 2

February
26  Ash Wednesday

March
*7  Anti-Racism Training at First Christian Church, Zanesville 9am – 5pm
*14  Ethical Boundaries Training at Legacy Christian Church, Harrison 9am-5pm
*28  Disciples Connect Luncheon at Camp Christian
*30  Workshop for Ministers at Camp Christian

April
*4  DCEF Church Finances Workshop at Camp
4-5  Regional Youth Council Spring Meeting
10  Good Friday, RCO Closed
12  Easter Sunday
17-19  Advance Ministries Spring Retreat at Camp
18  Commission on Ministry Team 2 Meeting at Northwest Christian Church, Columbus
23  Commission on Ministry Team 1 Meeting at First Christian Church, Wadsworth

May
*2  Camp Christian Market Day
2  Otter & Ribbit Counselor Training at Northwest Christian Church, Columbus 9am-3pm
5  Ethical Boundaries Training at Camp 9am – 5pm
6  Anti-Racism Training at Camp 9am – 5pm
22-24  Disciples Fellowship Retreat at Camp Christian
25  Memorial Day, RCO Closed

June
*5-6  Grandparents Camp at Camp Christian
*7-13  Chi Rho Camp Emmaus at Camp Christian
13  Commission on Ministry Team 2 Meeting at First Christian Church, Kent
*14-20  Otter Camp at Camp Christian
15-19  Adult Conference at Northwest Christian Church, Columbus
*21-27  CYF Conference Week #1 at Camp Christian
*28- Jul 1  Ribbit Camp at Camp Christian

July
3  4th of July observed, RCO Closed
*5-11  CYF Conference #2 at Camp Christian
*12-18  Chi Rho Camp Corinth at Camp Christian
*19-25  Chi Rho Camp Damascus at Camp Christian
*19-25  CYF Conference #3 at Camp Christian
*26- Aug 2  Advance Conference Summer Conference at Camp Christian

RCO = Regional Church Office
* Online Registration is now available

For the full Calendar- http://www.ccinoh.org/calendar/regional.aspx
In Luke 4:18-21, Jesus comes to “proclaim good news to the poor, proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind, to set the oppressed free, and to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

Cleveland Christian Home’s mission is to provide hope and healing for children, youth, and families who are facing emotional, behavioral, and mental illness as the result of trauma and abuse. In fact, Cleveland Christian Home was founded in 1900 out of that very same commitment quoted in Luke 4:18-21.

As members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) many of you have been long-time supporters of our mission. For those of you who are not familiar with the work of Cleveland Christian Home, I would love to have the opportunity to tell you about the children with whom we work, the struggles they face, the challenges that we as an organization and as a society face in trying serve them, but most importantly, why there is hope!

Recently, we were able to give hope to a young boy who had been with us for over two years. He was with us for an unusually long time because there were unfortunately no placements for him. Time and time again, he was told no, or that he did not fit. We worked diligently to guide him to the right placement, and we were successful!

I look forward to sharing more stories of the work that we do, the impact that we make, and why you and your faith and support change lives. Together, we can partner in Jesus’ mission laid out in Luke chapter 4!

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Disciples Connect Spring Luncheon
ALL are invited!

Saturday, March 28th at Camp Christian

11:30am – Gathering & Fellowship
Noon – Luncheon
1:00-3:00pm - Presentations

This Disciples Connect luncheon is an opportunity for Ohio Disciples to come together in fellowship and learn more about mission and ministry opportunities with some of our partners in wider church ministries here in Ohio and beyond. In cooperation with each other, we are all able to serve and grow in our faith as a community. All are invited to attend this event and discover ways that you and your local congregation can assist and participate in these valuable and life-changing ministries. We will be featuring and have speakers and presentations from:

- Church World Service
- Cleveland Christian Home
- Hiram Farm
- Ministries Across Generations
- Ohio Council Of Churches
- Week of Compassion
- The Free Store at Camp Christian

$15.00 per person (registered by March 19th; $20.00 March 20th and after)

Full event flyer and online registration: www.ccinoh.org.
**How to Keep Church Finances in order without Compromising Ministry**

Saturday, April 4, 2020
9:30am – 1:30pm

Camp Christian
Lunch Included

Speaker:
Belinda R. King, MBA
Vice President, Disciples Church Extension Fund

Every pastor has a list of important topics that weren’t covered in a seminary classroom, and overseeing church finances is often at the top of that list. Learn how to build the financial tools needed to handle financial administration in your church. With a focus on financial stewardship and financial administration, this workshop will help you strategize for your church’s financial stability. This event is for Pastors, Treasurers, Trustees, Financial Secretaries, Elders, and anyone who wants more financial knowledge of church business.

Attendees will walk away with basic knowledge in and able to do some hands-on practice with:
- Stewardship vs. Financial Administration
- Financial Legal Matters
- Reading a Financial Statement
- Financial Myths
- Best Practices
- Financial toolbox and more!

$10.00 per person (registered by March 29th; $15.00 March 30th and after)

Full event flyer and online registration: [www.ccinoh.org](http://www.ccinoh.org).

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**Camp Christian Market Day**

We are excited to host the 2nd Annual Camp Christian Market Day on Saturday, May 2nd from 10am – 4pm. Join us at Camp for a fun-filled day featuring a variety of arts & craft vendors, home businesses, and yard sale booths. PLUS fun activities like boating, hayless hayride, yard games, and more!!

**All are invited to attend to shop the market & enjoy a beautiful spring day at Camp Christian!!**

Help us support Camp Christian’s life-changing ministry. Sign up to sell your items or bring your church group, youth group, book club, families, friends, or just treat yourself to a day out. There will be concessions sold for lunch and snack items throughout the day to benefit Camp Christian. You may even be able to get a Camp Christian Klondike!!

If you are interested in selling your items at the event, please fill out the separate Vendor Application form. Proceeds from vendor fees will go directly to Camp Christian operating funds, which helps prepare Camp for Summer Programming.

As we get closer to the date, more details will be shared through our website [www.ccinoh.org](http://www.ccinoh.org) and on the Camp Christian Facebook page [@OhioCampChristian](https://www.facebook.com/OhioCampChristian).
**MLK Commission recognized inspirational Ohioans at January 16 celebration**

*Excerpted from an Ohio Department of Administrative Services press release*

Governor Mike DeWine joined the Ohio Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Commission at the 35th annual Ohio Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Celebration to recognize six Ohioans and one organization for their efforts to advance nonviolent social change. The ceremony was held at Trinity Episcopal Church, 125 E. Broad St., Columbus.

“These Ohioans reflect a life similar to that of Dr. King’s, filled with a passion to create positive changes within their communities,” said DeWine. “Each of these awardees selflessly serve others and continue to make Ohio a great state.”

The 12-member commission advocates Dr. King’s principles of nonviolent change and the pursuit of racial, social and economic justice, and annually hosts the award ceremony in January leading up to the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday.

“These outstanding Ohioans remind us that Dr. King’s dream of inclusion, social justice and service to the common good remains alive and is flourishing in communities across the state,” said Will Lucas, chair of the commission. “They are an inspiration to us all to join our neighbors in continuing to spread Dr. King’s message of equality for generations to come.”

*Continued in the next column*

**MLK Commission continued**

**The Rev. Dr. Jack Sullivan, Jr.** received the Social Justice Award. The Social Justice Award recognizes significant contributions to achieving justice for individuals or communities, including contributions made through the legal, legislative and governmental systems as they apply to the more vulnerable elements of our society.

He is Executive Director of the Ohio Council of Churches. The organization represents the largest and most diverse group of Christians in Ohio, encompassing 4,000 congregations and two million members. The Ohio Council of Churches’ three priority areas are anti-racism, building relationships, and social justice/anti-poverty.

The nomination praised his leadership of the Council for providing “catalyst partnerships with Ohio efforts to stop executions and promote racial justice.”

A global humanitarian and life member of both the NAACP and Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., Dr. Sullivan currently also serves on the boards of three anti-death penalty organizations – and the France-based World Coalition Against the Death Penalty as well as Journey of Hope: From Violence to Healing and Death Penalty Action.

**Bring global perspectives to your congregation from Global Ministries**

The world is smaller than ever before. What happens to our neighbors all over the world matters to us. We are all part of one human family – all God’s children no matter where we may live. Because of this, sharing global perspectives in worship and congregational life is extremely valuable if not necessary. There are many ways to bring global perspectives into your worship and congregational life, but here are some resources to explore to get you started:

1. **Weekly prayers** – Share these brief prayers and mission moments written by mission co-workers in your weekly worship or perhaps your church newsletters.
2. **People-to-People Pilgrimages** – Consider organizing a group from your congregation or region to visit a global partner and learn more about their context and ministries.
3. **Child and Elder Sponsorship** – Develop a relationship with a child or elder. Learn more about their lives and walk together in mutuality and hope.
4. **Area initiatives** – Gain deeper understanding about a region in the world. The current initiative is the **Southern Asia Initiative**.

More opportunities found at [www.globalministries.org](http://www.globalministries.org).