

**Minutes of the Regional Church Council Meeting  
June 11, 2020  
Via Zoom**

**Members Present:** Candis Wilson, Faith Solon, Frances Dudley, Marybeth Corbett, Matthew Every (Left early), Chad Delaney, Alecia Hayes, Tomas Hernandez, Pamela Barnes-Jackson, Faith Solon, Jack Sullivan Jr., John Johnson, Dave Stonebraker-Martinez, Tyler Reeve, Gladys Davis

**Regional Staff:** Wendy Taylor, Alan Dicken, Jennie Stoddart-Bernard, Ted Nelson

**Regional Ministers:** Rick Spleth, Dean Phelps, Eugene James, Thad Allen

**Guests:** Thomas Barnes, Cynthia Klingemier, Don Sondles, Eric Van Boxel, Bruce Bowerman-Jett, Ali Miguel, Melanie Harrell Delaney, Kevin Greenwald, CJ, JB

**Excused Absences:** John Cox, Cory King, Roger McKinney,

**Call to Order and Devotion- Candis Wilson**

Devotion from Our Daily Bread- "Perspectives from Above", Isaiah 48:5-11,17

**Approval of February 3, 2020 Minutes**

Moved by Pamela Barnes Jackson, Second by Marybeth Corbett. Two nays. Motion carries.

**Regional and Committee Reports**

**Regional Search Committee- Melanie Delaney**

The Regional Search Committee has been working with the ideas put forward during the listening sessions. They are currently writing drafts of a regional search profile. The RSC had hoped to call a person to fill the role of regional minister starting on January of 2021. They are looking to see if this is still a feasible timeline, given the current financial situation.

Dan Sondles, FCC Wadsworth- Is there a job description available to the public?

Melanie Delaney- There is currently a draft based on the unique needs of Ohio as well as other regional minister job descriptions. It is currently not ready to be circulated to the wider church.

Rick Spleth- The RSC has been doing good work. They have been thoughtful and intentional in interviewing people from across the region to see what is desired for a regional minister moving forward. I encourage the RCC to support the continued work of the RSC.

Chad Delaney- What is the financial forecast of the Region? Can we be a fair and competitive employer?

Candis Wilson- We had budgeted to hire someone and pay them for the last 3 months of 2020. Due to current financial conditions, this money had to be reallocated. I do not believe that we would be able to financially support a hire before 2021. Comparing our current compensation

package to neighboring regions, we would need to increase this amount to be fair and competitive, mostly due to the cost of including a benefits package (pension, etc).

Melanie Delaney- People give to what excites them, and something that has a vision and a future. I encourage a degree of risk, because we have heard a lot of hope for the future and our potential.

Rick Spleth- Candis and Melanie have summarized well what the search committee and region has done thus far. Ohio currently pays our visiting regional ministers \$82,673. This is a comparable base salary, but a benefits package and travel allowance would need to be added, costing around \$20,000. As always, the RCC is in control and must decide on priorities and how the resources to the region have been invested.

Candis Wilson- The RSC has asked for confirmation of their work and a sense if they need to cease or move forward.

Gladys Davis- I urge caution. We need to be able to pay a person and know that we can continue to pay them for the future. I have some projections that would place us with no cash by May of 2021 if we were to call someone. I think we can continue to move forward, but only with caution. It would be irresponsible to call someone and not be able to pay them as promised.

Candis Wilson- We need to decide and give clear direction to the RSC.

Alicia Hayes- It is my understanding that you have devised a job description. This work is valuable. What is the search and call time to find a regional minister?

Melanie Delaney- It would take us around a month to create a regional profile. We need to have some firm numbers to do this. If we were to move forward at the current pace, we would be ready to call someone by the end of this year. If we were to put this on hold, it would be a reduplication of efforts. Asking the RSC to commit to a process that is too lengthy the RSC will lose momentum and energy.

Alicia Hayes- What is the team's suggestion?

Melanie Delaney- We have discussed hiring one person versus several part time ministers. There seems to be more interest in having one regional leader. My recommendation is to trust God, vision, and ourselves. If we were to find someone we were really excited about I trust that this will unify us and enable better fundraising.

Gladys Davis- Would you ask for the money needed to make up the benefits package before calling a regional minister?

Melanie Delaney- -----

Gladys Davis- We need to be able to hire this person and not cut other people. I am nervous about overspending as we have in the past. I think we may want to wait to call someone until we know that the churches would support this financially.

Alicia Hayes- With the current economic situation we must be wary of over asking from people and churches. With Gladys stating that it is not financially prudent, would you pause?

Melanie Delaney- I think it would be prudent to pause.

Thomas Hernandez- The first time we disbanded was for lack of funds.

Gladys Davis- We were on track until COVID19. There are a lot of unknowns. If we are able to wait 3-4 months we will have a much clearer financial picture. DMF giving has dropped 25%, which is better than anticipated.

Alan Dicken- I encourage this group to proceed cautiously. I think this region needs to be fiscally responsible, but we have also been lacking in vision, excitement and direction for several years. I believe that if we find the right person and the right call we will begin to move forward. Perhaps we begin the call with a smaller package and increase as we are able.

Faith Solon- We cannot continue as we have been. We need to either hire someone or radically change, perhaps no longer exist as a region.

Candis Wilson- We either need the RSC to move forward and call someone or we need to come up with a radically different leadership model.

Jennie Stoddart-Bernard- I want to move forward. Financially, is there a window of time that we could move forward but ask for a certain amount of money or then call it? Similar to what was done at camp.

Candis Wilson- We need to be realistic about people's time and talent. What is leadership going to look like until we complete this process.

Gladys Davis- We are having a leadership giving campaign this fall. After this we would be better able to see what is prudent. This would be a good signal if we would be able to call someone or not.

Alicia Hayes- Could we continue with the visiting regional ministers? Another 5 months might provide clarity, especially with COVID19. We are currently treading water. I don't think 2-3 months is a long wait.

Candis Wilson- Come November, if we see we can't financially call someone what do we do?

Faith Solon- I would like us to be healthy. If we cannot hire someone soon, I think the Ohio region should dissolve. To continue to rely on volunteer leadership cannot provide enough vision, and will burn everyone out.

Jennie S-B- Historically, most money in our fundraisers is raised in the first month. If we were to have this campaign in August, we could have an answer very quickly.

Melanie Delaney- If we tell people that the search team has energy, perspective and hope. If we tell people about this and they give enough before September, we could still potentially call someone come January.

John Johnson- What could we pay someone now?

Gladys Davis- We could only pay \$86,000 for the full package, benefits travel, etc.

John Johnson: I suggest that we then offer a smaller package and see what happens. Perhaps have the RSC draw some limits to justify a smaller package. I suggest we work with what we have so that we can start looking at people.

Jennie S-B: I will say that there are some generous folks around the region that have not been financially affected by COVID19. We sent out a soft ask on May 15, and as of today we have raised \$15,000. That wasn't really a fundraiser, and it was quite successful.

John Johnson: I am concerned that we could fatigue people by over asking financial support. I think we are blessed to have stayed afloat. I think we should use what we have and then move on later.

Chad Delaney: What kind of sense do we have about buy-in on this topic?

Thad Allen: I think that we are still gathering information. The congregations are pretty resilient, especially with PPP. I'm not hearing a mayday or sos over congregational financials. DMF giving is down in all regions except for 2. There is a time lag that comes into these things with congregations. COVID is a magnifying glass, congregations that were tenuous are hurting a bit more than congregations that were vital prior to COVID.

Candis Wilson: Should we have the RSC move forward with the knowledge that we are dependent on the Fall fundraiser?

Thad and Rick: The RCC would need to bless some documents before a formal call could be extended.

Melanie Delaney: The RSC could move forward if the RCC committed to the fall fundraiser. At that point we would need a "yes" or "no" I want to echo Faith's point that a "no" has serious ramifications for our future.

### **Regional Support Staff**

#### **Alan Dicken-**

There has certainly been a lot that has happened since that last the committee has met. Most of my work is around programming. I have been working on putting out virtual alternatives to camp this year. That is what I am doing in broad strokes.

Chad Delaney: I wanted to give thanks and celebrate Alan as one of the directors for Otter Camp. He has been doing great things for Camp Christian. Thanks to Alan and others who are working behind the scenes.

#### **Jennie Stoddart-Bernard-**

We did a passive ask and update regarding camp. We are being the best stewards of the gifts that have been given us, which we were already doing. There feel around here is "stone soup- esk". We the passive ask and updated raised \$15,184- \$9,654 for Camp Christian Operating, \$4,410 for Regional Operations, \$1,120 Other (Free Store, Youth Scholarship, Reconciliation) I have been working with Alan and the directors to get things organized for the summer.

Gladys Davis: I want to heap some praise upon Jennie. She has been a great champion of faithful stewardship of our limited resources.

#### **Ted Nelson-**

A lot of things have happened since February. A lot of things have happened since we started this COVID thing. My hairline has moved back about 2 inches. I have been working on shutting down the wastewater treatment to save power. I have been working on drainage. Also a community garden. I have some siding to replace on a cabin. I have people who are willing to service our HVAC. We have clearing to do.

#### **Wendy-**

Candis Wilson: Wendy had to step out, but are there any questions for Wendy? Wendy has been working hard on the Free Store and is now mobile. She is creating blessing boxes and providing no-contact meals. I thank her for her vision and commitment to our region.

### **Elders- Cynthia Klinglermeyer**

Regional Elders are meeting on Monday via Zoom.

Thad Allen: We give thanks for the elders who have continued to serve us well through this time.

Eugene James: Our regional elders have proven to be valuable partners to the visiting regional ministers.

Candis Wilson: Thank you to the regional elders for their good work.

### **Membership- Faith Solon**

John has asked that members of the RCC remain if they are able. We have some open seats.

My own ten cents is that we cannot currently fill the seats we have, which is currently fewer seats than historically accurate. We need to thoroughly evaluate what leadership looks like moving forward. Membership committee has never had a meeting, so this is all the clarity I can provide.

Gladys Davis: Nathan Russell has been asked to be added to the RCC.

Candis Wilson: I will follow up with the membership committee because frankly it is crunch time.

### **Personnel- Pamela Barnes-Jackson, written report below**

The Personnel Committee met on Thursday, June 4, 2020 to collaborate on the updating of the CCIO Employee Handbook. We went over the current document, noted some possible additions/deletions. We divided the Table of Contents amongst the group to go over and will meet again on June 18, 2020 and discuss our observations.

We should have a draft ready to share with the RCC Committee no later than July 16, 2020.

I would like to personally thank the committee members for a job well done. A big thanks and appreciation to our Regional Staff (Jennie), Camp Christian Staff (Rev. Dicken, Wendy, and Ted) for all their hard work.

We are in a season of change, although God remains constant. Let us continue to move forever onward and upward as we gather **together** in building God's Kingdom here on earth.

Ted: who is the camp christian staff?

Candis: You (Ted), Alan, and Wendy.

### **Camp Christian Committee- Bruce Jett and Ali Miguel**

(WRITTEN REPORT TO BE SUBMITTED)

Green Chair fundraiser.

COVID and closing of camp

Camp as emergency shelter from COVID

Support the work of the Free Store

A complete transition is needed to shift leadership from Chad and Alicia to Bruce and Ali. Chad and Alicia are still on the council, but they could no longer be the chairpersons due to other commitments.

**Affirm the appointment of Bruce Bowerman-Jett and Ali Miguel to be the new co-chairs.  
Motion by Tyler reeve and second by John Johnson. Motion carried unanimously.**

Candis Wilson- Thank you to Chad and Alicia for all that you have done for the CCC.

### **Treasurer's Report- Gladys Davis**

**Attach 2 pdfs.**

Ted: I think I can still shave \$600 off the power bill per month once I get everything shut down.

Gladys: We cannot spend on all of our investments because they are designated. These funds are not to be spent, only the interest that they generate. If the stock market is down, we cannot draw on these funds.

Ted: The deep pool fund that is sitting at some odd \$4,000. That bill is due, but the vendor is willing to wait due to our current circumstances.

Ted: Would it be prudent to lay me off? Or to cut my hours?

Candis: That is something that would need to be considered by the personnel committee, and only as a last resort.

Gladys: We need to raise money this Fall, and we need to continue our very close expense control until April or May for next year in the form of Camp registrations, assuming we are in a health climate that allows camp.

Thad: Thank you Gladys for these charts. They illustrate that the regional and camp are intimately tied.

Chad Delaney: If we were to extend a call, this shows that we are still very much dependent on Camp registrations. We will still be very stringent financially.

Gladys: If we can make it to May, I think we will have weathered the storm.

Alecia: This prediction does not take into account if we have to change camp protocols for next year. There is no way for us to know how much we will have to do regarding COVID.

Gladys: That is correct. Camp needs to have a certain number of campers, 100 each camp, to be fiscally viable.

Bruce Bowerman-Jett: The CCC is working actively trying to figure out alternative ways to help camp break even, as well as increasing revenue and ministry the other 9 months of the year.

Gladys: If there is not a COVID vaccine by January, we would have to increase camp fees to offset the requirements on our end.

Candis: That would further hinder camp attendance.

Chad: What can we do in the meantime?

Gladys: The recommendation was to halt the hiring process of a regional minister. We must ask the question of what is a priority.

Candis: Because camp barely breaks even every year, we must vision ways to breathe new life into this ministry. These need to be done, and there needs to be an action plan by the end of the year.

Alan Dicken: These questions are being considered by staff and the CCC. I know that the RCC is about the business of the church, but I ask that you also remember to be the church. I encourage each of you to engage racial injustice. Preach, protest, and move in ways that further our church's commitment to being Anti-Racist and Pro-Reconciling.

Gladys: We have learned a lot of cost control measures this year at camp. Hopefully this moves us to a better space in the future.

Alicia: We have to be able to pull ahead and be in a place of having 6 months of cushion, rather than waiting on money to come in so that we can make our bills.

## **Business Items**

### **Revision of the By-laws**

Candis: Is each committee committed to reviewing their portion of the bylaws so that the whole group might move through these faster? If we meet in July to just do this work, we could have them done by September.

Group consensus is positive.

### **Business Items at Regional Assembly**

Candis: Because we are not having an in-person regional assembly, we need to figure out a way to handle the business of the church. This could be a virtual voting system or virtual assembly.

Jennie: Can we write out a statement that states we are not holding an in-person regional assembly, and what will be offered instead?

Candis: Yes, that was the plan. We are not having regional assembly due to the effect of COVID on how we do large gatherings. We had planned to have a joint meeting with the Heartland UCC at First Community Church in Columbus, but that would no longer be prudent. This has been moved to the fall of 2021. The General Assembly will be in Louisville KY that year, so we are hoping that this won't cause an issue. In between the fall and next year's assembly it planning to offer some way we can still connect together in the form of a webinar, workshop series, or something similar.

## **No other business items**

## **Remarks from Area Regional Ministers**

Thad Allen: Easter is a movable feast. May 23 Terry Tate passed and June 10 Deb Bolen's father passed. I would also like to lift up Roger McKinney's retirement.

Eugene James: Two churches have called new ministers. Jason Bricker-Thompson is now at Disciples Christian Church, Cleveland Heights. Good Shepherd called Nina Miracle Nestleroad to begin August 1.

Rick Spleth: The Council did good work tonight. You listened carefully and spoke clearly. My work with my districts has expanded. Everyday I am engaged with Ohio people and the church. Our gifts, as Regional Council members, are the first gifts that allow this ministry to move forward. I would encourage you all to make a contribution to the Ohio Region as I am doing this evening.

Dean Phelps: I value work with Nick Donges and Kerry Reed. I agree that we would be sunk without the regional elders. We must continue to support ministry outside of ourselves. I look forward to working with the Commission on Ministry, they do excellent work.

Candis Wilson: I am greatly appreciative for all the work you do with Ohio.

### **Important Dates**

June 20- March on Washington (Digital Gathering), register online at [ccinoh.org](http://ccinoh.org)

June 19- adult conference is having a virtual meeting

July 5-11- Virtual CYF

July 12-17- Virtual Chi Rho

July 19-25- Virtual Junior

July 26-August 2- Virtual Advance Conference

\*Virtual camp is free, but we are accepting donations. Some things are happening live, and some things are pre-recorded.

Ethical and Boundaries Training Sept 19 and 26 decision will be made in July regarding virtual or in-person.