

# Ohio Regional Newsletter ~ October 2021



## RENEWAL INITIATIVE

FOR THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN OHIO  
AND CAMP CHRISTIAN

*Supporting the Ministries of Your Ohio Region*



### Across The Region And In My Heart

**Rev. Allen V. Harris, Regional Pastor & President, Christian Church in Ohio**

**Renewal Initiative Seeks To Strengthen Regional Ministry & Support Innovation**

As we plan for the new program year we will be sending out in the next week, via email and mail, an invitation for you to participate in the [2021 Renewal Initiative](#) of the Christian Church in Ohio. This will be an opportunity to both celebrate your gracious generosity in 2020 and to invite you to again give to support the mission and ministry of the Christian Church in Ohio in 2021. Your gift will do two things: it will keep us on solid ground and it will move us forward confidently as we reimagine new ways of being Christ's church at work and in witness to the world.

In 2020 you *far exceeded* expectations for the Renewal Initiative by giving \$120,028.44 towards our goal of \$75,000. Your gifts were designated:

- \$20,523.75 towards the Regional Church Operating Expenses
- \$55,334.69 towards the Camp Operating Expenses
- \$44,171.00 to where we needed it most

Abundant thanks go out to the 23 congregations, 65 clergy, and 156 laypersons who gave to the initiative. You have made the ministry we are doing possible.

Our hope is to raise with the Renewal Initiative at least \$100,000 this fall, and already you have given \$34,450.00 toward this goal. Once again we are asking for your generosity through your prayers and financial support. We also hope to double the number of congregations (50), clergy (130), and laypersons (300) who support the ministry of the Regional Church through this effort.

Please watch for this important piece of information and prayerfully consider what you can give to both undergird the important ministry that is now taking place while also giving us resources to think creatively and strategically about our future ministry needs.

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## Farewell Letter from Rev. Alan Dicken

Dear Christian Church in Ohio,

When I was called in January 2020 to serve as the Regional Program Director, we had no idea that in a few short months, our world and our church would be forever changed by a global pandemic. Together, we did our best to follow the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, trying to follow where God was leading us through this season of living in wilderness.

Together, we began monthly clergy zoom calls to support one another, share resources and ideas, and to give encouragement during a difficult time. We responded to the murders of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd with leadership from our Anti-Racism Commission and the Ohio Black Pastors. We made the tough decision to cancel the 2020 Camp Christian schedule. We had Christmas and Lenten video devotionals. We worked hard to bring back Camp Christian programming in 2021. We did our best to be the church.

It was not the call that I thought I was accepting in January 2020. It was, however, an opportunity to lean into God's presence in Ohio for the past couple of years. We may still be spending some time in the wilderness, but we will never be apart from the love of God we come to know in Jesus Christ. My prayer is that our time together has been good and faithful in our shared vision of living out the call to be ambassadors of Christ's love, peace, and justice to this world.

Friends, my time with you all in this journey is nearing its end. My role as Regional Program Director will conclude at the end of September and more than anything, I'd like to say thank you. Thank you for the opportunity to serve the church as the Regional Program Director. It has been an honor to minister to the Ohio Region in this capacity.

I certainly made mistakes during my time here, and for those errors, I apologize. My hope was only ever to serve God faithfully, and for the times I missed the mark, I ask for forgiveness and continued prayers to learn from my missteps and to better serve God in the future.

Thank you to Jennie Stoddart Bernard, Wendy Taylor, Ted Nelson, Tom Bowerman-Jett, Bruce Bowerman-Jett, Rev. Allen Harris, and Candis Wilson for being such helpful people to work and serve with over these past couple of years.

Please know that I will be praying for the future of the Ohio Region. I believe in the good work and the vision that Rev. Allen Harris and our Regional Church Council are engaged in, and I can already see the way that the transformative power of the Holy Spirit is guiding our church forward into more faithful servanthood.

It has been an honor and a blessing to serve alongside you. Thank you for all of the prayers, affirmations, encouragement, gentle corrections, and constant love along the way.

Peace and Love,  
Rev. Alan Dicken

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## Thank You Regional Elders!

The Christian Church in Ohio is blessed by the faithful and diligent ministry of Regional Elders across the 15 Districts of our Regional Church. These clergy voluntarily offer their time, wisdom, caring hearts, mentorship, gifts and graces out of the abundant generosity of their lives. They meet monthly with the Regional Minister via video conference and work to build up the Body of Christ by supporting and connecting our congregations and clergy across the state of Ohio. Please join us in giving thanks for these wonderful

servants of God! District 1: Rev. Joseph Hara; District 2-E: Rev. Kristine Eggert; District 3-W: Rev. Terry Bartlett; District 4: Rev. Cynthia Klingemier; District 5: Rev. Mike Valentine (retiring) and Rev. Margot Connor (to be confirmed); District 6: Rev. Priscilla Jackson; District 7: Rev. Don Baird; District 8: Rev. Tom Stephenson; Districts 10/11: Rev. Philip Hunt; District 12: Nik Donges; Districts 13-14: Rev. Brad Donahue; District 15: Rev. Ralph Wearstler. We could not fulfill the ministry needed across our Regional Church without them!

## Shalom Center, Chile

For many years the Christian Church in Ohio has been in a very close relationship with the Shalom Center in Chile. When we raised money for our "Keep the Fire Burning" campaign, we gave a portion of what we raised to our global partners so that they could purchase their campground and begin building towards the vision God had in store for them.

Over the years, we have sent many delegations to represent the Christian Church in Ohio and be in relationship with the leaders of the Shalom Center. Scores of volunteers have made the journey to the beautiful campgrounds in the Andes Mountains and have had their lives truly and wonderfully changed by such a transformative experience. More than simply traveling the world, delegates attest to the way that the Shalom Center has broadened their understanding of the vastness of God's love for the whole world.



What a treasure it is for us to be blessed by this incredible relationship with the Shalom Center!



As you all know, however, we have not been able to send delegations for the past couple of years and won't be able to go in 2022 due to the global pandemic. While we know this has taken a toll on our own congregations and regional church and camp, it has also impacted our global partners in Chile.

We would like to offer an opportunity for giving to share with the Shalom Center a gift out of our abundance to share support, prayers, and encouragement for our ministry partners

in the mission field of Chile. 100% of all funds raised will go directly to the Shalom Center. Any gift amount would be most welcome.

We hope you take time in the next few weeks to discern if you or your congregation may be able to help continue to strengthen our relationship with the Shalom Center by sending a gift. We also hope you will consider marking your calendars for January 2023 for our next delegation to our beloved friends in South America.

If you have any questions about the delegation, please contact Rev. Alan Dicken at [adicken88@gmail.com](mailto:adicken88@gmail.com).

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## **Fall Silent Retreat**

### **Camp Christian**

**November 1st – 5th**

"Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves . . . and rest a while."

Jesus is known for taking time away to be in quiet solitude and prayer (Mark 1:35). He invites us to join him in spaces of quiet prayer today, though those times and places can be harder and harder to find. Especially with the demands of pastoral, clergy, and lay leadership in this past year, we are all needing quiet prayer now more than ever.

The Spiritual Life Committee of the Ohio Region issues an invitation on behalf of Christ Jesus to ALL who are weary and worn, exhausted and exasperated, to all who seem to have lost connection to the Source, to all who are in need of quiet time to come away by yourselves and rest awhile.



This is an opportunity to come to Camp Christian's Monroe Lodge for a do-it-yourself unstructured Silent Retreat. You are free to bring your own food or to go out to eat on your own . . . or even to fast as a spiritual discipline. You are free to walk among the trees and sit at the Vesper Spot or stay in the Lodge and sit by the fireplace. There will be no programs or schedules to interrupt your sleep or your time of quiet, because you will be in control of your time at Camp Christian.

We understand that not everyone has the ability to have a full week of retreat so you may come for as long as your schedule permits.

Because we want to care for the physical health as well as the spiritual health of those on this retreat, proof of vaccination will be required for all participants. There may be additional requirements and recommendations as we continue to monitor the Delta Variant and get updates from the Union County Health Department.

If you are in need of spiritual, physical, or emotional rest, we hope you can come away... and rest for a little while.

These details and registration available at <https://www.ccinoh.com/ministries/adult/spiritual-life.aspx>.

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## CCIO Congregational News



### **Central Christian Church, Kettering To Install Rev. Dr. Betty Miller Green & Rev. Dr. Irvin Green As Co-Pastors**

On Sunday, August 29 the congregation of Central Christian Church of Kettering, Ohio confirmed the call of the Rev. Dr. Betty Miller Green and the Rev. Dr. Irvin Green as Co-Pastors of the congregation. They began their ministry in this capacity on September 1st and will be installed on Sunday, October 10th at 4:00 p.m. The Rev. Dr. Irvin Green was previously the Pastor of the congregation and the Rev. Dr. Betty Miller Green served as an Associate Pastor of Woodland Christian Church in Columbus. Rev. Dr. Betty Miller Green has her M.Div. from Chicago Theological Seminary and her D.Min is from United Theological Seminary in Trotwood and has a special ministry with women who are survivors of domestic violence, *Beyond Sunday Morning*

*Inc.* Rev. Dr. Irvin Green has his M.Div. from Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis and his D.Min. from Chicago Theological Seminary and has a special ministry in conflict mediation. Both are lifelong Disciples of Christ and look forward to sharing in ministry in this faithful congregation.

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## Rev. Joy Omslaer Concludes Fourteen Years of Ministry at Carbon Hill Christian Church

On Sunday, September 19 the Rev. Joy Omslaer concluded fourteen years of ministry as Pastor of Carbon Hill Christian Church in Carbon Hill, Ohio. A service of farewell was led by Regional Elder for Districts 13 & 14, the Rev. Brad Donahue. The congregation hosted a reception for Rev. Omslaer after the service. Please hold both Rev. Omslaer and the congregation of Carbon Hill Christian Church during this time of transition and new beginnings.



## First Christian Church of Findlay Receives LGBTQ+ Spectrum of Findlay Community Based Organization Ally of the Year Award for 2021



First Christian Church recently received this notification from Dr. Jasmin 'Jas' Bradley, Executive Director of the LGBTQ+ Spectrum of Findlay: "It is with great respect and gratitude that I inform you of the board's decision to award First Christian Church with the LGBTQ+ Spectrum of Findlay Community Based Organization Ally of the Year award 2021. This award is in recognition of your consistent and tireless effort to work

towards a more inclusive and diverse community for all. We truly appreciate all that you do."

They will celebrate the award on Sunday, October 24<sup>th</sup> when their new Pastor, the Rev. Rick Modglin-Green, will be present to join the congregation in the celebration.

## Fifth Christian Church, Cleveland Host Free Community Event

On Saturday, September 18 Fifth Christian Church in Cleveland, Ohio hosted their first Community Festival! There was music, much of it performed by members of the congregation including the Bunch Family Singers, games, community information including health and wellness information, and food. COVID information and vaccines were offered through the Cuyahoga County Board of Health. Many new and familiar faces dropped by, some they hadn't seen in a long time!



A wonderful time was had by all! The Rev. E. Regis Bunch is Transitional Minister.

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## Fifth Christian Church, Cincinnati, Celebrates Their 151st Anniversary

IN THE BEGINNING GENESIS 1:1

*Celebrating 151 Years of Service*

**FIFTH CHRISTIAN CHURCH  
(DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)**

3203 Wold Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45207  
513.221.0577

All Services Are From 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.  
Masks Are Required  
Social Distancing Will Be Enforced



  
Pastor Wenona Johnson  
*1st Women's Pastor / Minister*  
September 5, 2021

  
Pastor Michael T. Bailey  
*Men's & Boys' Minister*  
September 12, 2021

  
Arlinda Christine  
*Arlanda Christine Minister*  
September 19, 2021

  
Minister Phyllis A. Clemmons  
*Children / Youth of Disciples' Children*  
September 26, 2021

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## Regional Minister Participates In The Dedication of New Sanctuary of First Community Church, North Campus, Dublin, Ohio

On Sunday, September 26, Rev. Allen V. Harris, our Regional Pastor & President, along with the Rev. David Long-Higgins, Conference Minister of the Heartland Conference of the United Church of Christ, joined with the pastors, former staff, leaders, members, musicians, and friends of First Community Church of Columbus, Ohio to dedicate their new sanctuary. This service had been postponed because of the pandemic.



The festival service included First Community clergy, led by Senior Pastor Rev. Dr. Glen Miles, combined Chancel and Cambridge choirs, children's choirs, Whitechapel ringers, instrumentalists, and soloists. Former Senior Minister Rev. Dr. Richard Wing and Rev. Dr. Deborah Lindsay, a long-time member, and our former Executive Minister, participated in the service by offering brief words of hope and encouragement. Rev. Miles will preached the sermon "A Home for Goodness and Grace."

To watch the dedication service in its entirety, go online to:

<https://www.facebook.com/firstcommunitychurch/videos/4469931739762746>

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## General Church News



### [NBA Offers Online Workshop: Grieving Well: Addressing Grief and Depression for Clergy and Leaders](https://www.nbacares.org/event/grieving-well-addressing-grief-and-depression-for-clergy-and-leaders/)

Wednesday October 20 – 1-2:15 p.m. (online)

Join NBA's Mental Health and Wellness Director Joselyn Spence and NBA's Interim XPLOR/Young Adult Leadership Development Coordinator Rev. Rae Karim as they talk through grief strategies for clergy members. During this webinar, we will explore the foundations of grief: what we grieve, how we grieve, and the ways we can grieve well. We will also explore best practices for grief support.

More information at <https://www.nbacares.org/event/grieving-well-addressing-grief-and-depression-for-clergy-and-leaders/>

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### **New Church Hacks - Decolonizing the Church**

The term "decolonization" has recently entered popular vocabulary, highlighting the role of religious institutions in gentrification and colonial oppression. And yet this subject is complex and fraught with contradictions. How can places of worship respond? In this webinar, [New Church Ministry](#) will unpack these ideas and:

- Focus on anti-racism as a local engagement approach
- Discuss how to shape and reshape congregational DNA
- Identify ways in which your faith community may be perpetuating colonialism in its neighborhood

Host Terrell L McTyer will be joined by a panel of guests.

[Click HERE to Sign up](#)



## Reconciliation Offering



The Reconciliation Ministry Special Offering will be received in congregations this year on September 26th and October 3rd. Our theme is "Revealing God's Justice: "The Time is Always Ripe to Do What is Right." As we reflect on the events following the televised death of George Floyd, anti-Asian violence, and disparities in contraction rates of the novel Coronavirus in ethnic and racial communities, our Church strengthens its commitment to actively seek God's justice. As followers of Christ, we believe every life is precious and valued in God's beloved community.

Reconciliation Ministry is the church wide mission fund which supports programs and program partners that enable full human flourishing for everyone in every community. Your generosity has supported our capacity to provide grant awards to Bethany College's Equity Community Guide, Diversity Audit and the Region of Greater Kansas City's Becoming Beloved Community Program, as well as local congregational racial and social justice educational events. We believe that the Christian Church (Disciple of Christ) is uniquely equipped to encourage racial equity and justice in the communities where we worship and serve.

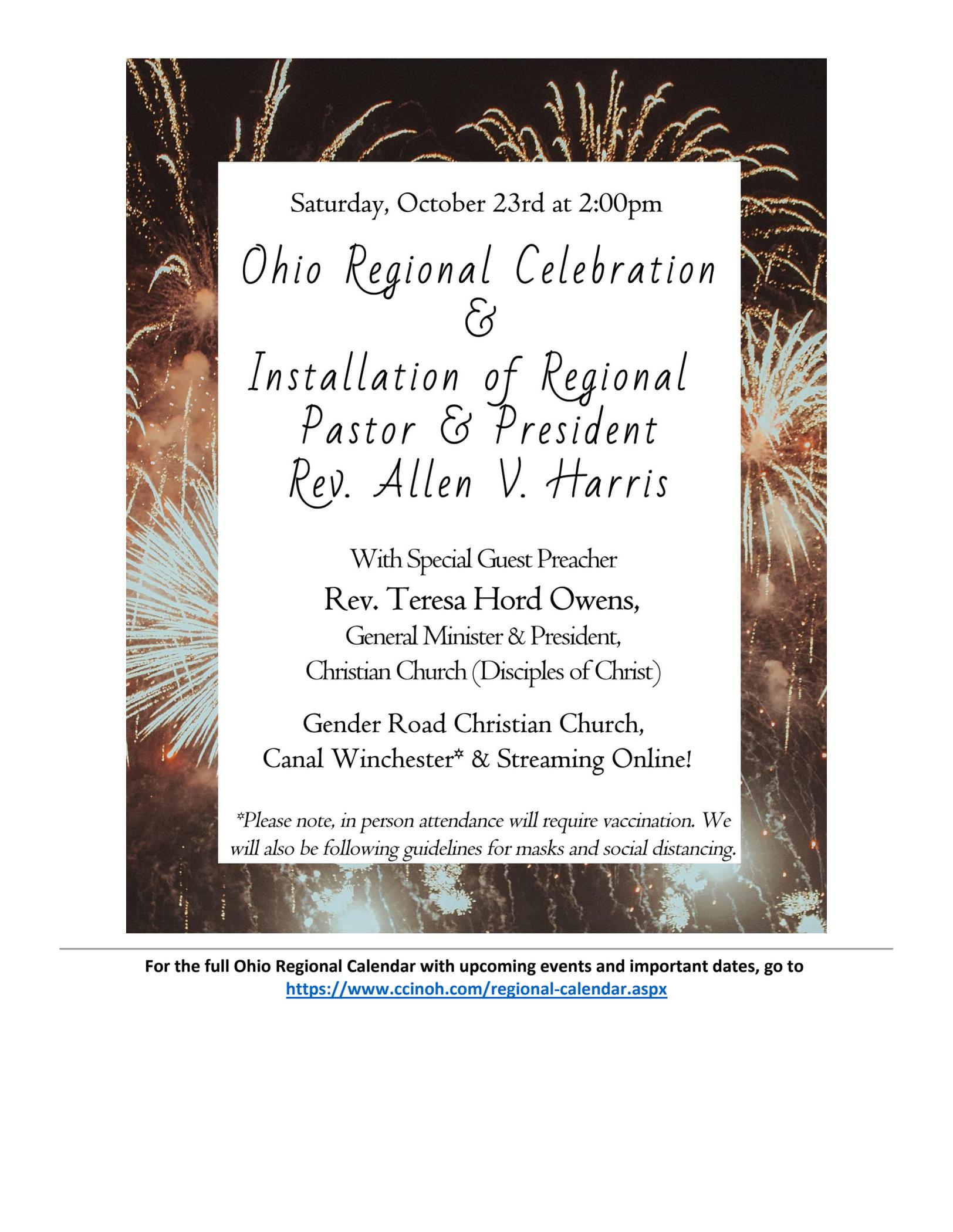
Your gifts to Reconciliation Ministry promote our mission of creating a just and loving society. The prophet Isaiah reminds us that God's salvation is for ALL of us. The scripture in Isaiah 56:1 reads, "This is what the LORD says:

"Maintain justice  
and do what is right,  
for my salvation is close at hand  
and my righteousness will soon be revealed."

All of us have a role in revealing God's justice. It is our call as the community of faith, the body of believers, and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Your giving promotes our capacity to respond and to reveal God's love and justice in such a time as this!

For more information about the Offering and the Reconciliation Ministry, go to <https://reconciliationministry.org/give/>.

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Saturday, October 23rd at 2:00pm

*Ohio Regional Celebration  
&  
Installation of Regional  
Pastor & President  
Rev. Allen V. Harris*

With Special Guest Preacher  
Rev. Teresa Hord Owens,  
General Minister & President,  
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Gender Road Christian Church,  
Canal Winchester\* & Streaming Online!

*\*Please note, in person attendance will require vaccination. We will also be following guidelines for masks and social distancing.*

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For the full Ohio Regional Calendar with upcoming events and important dates, go to  
<https://www.ccinoh.com/regional-calendar.aspx>