

Regional Church Council Meeting

November 5-6, 2021

Camp Christian Retreat and Conference Center

Friday November 5, 2021 6:30 PM

Attendees: Rev. Allen Harris, Candis Wilson, Gladys Davis, Diane Bartlett, Tom Bowerman-Jett, Bruce Bowerman-Jett, Thomas Barnes, Phil Hunt, Terry Bartlett, Becky Linn Gregory, Dr. Patricia Brown, Gena Stone-Phillips, Kaitlin Thompson, Via Zoom: Jeff Gill, Kevin Kaufman, Ralph Wearstler

Call to Order – Candis opened the Friday evening session at 6:30 pm. Prayer offered by Rev. Thomas Barnes.

Introductions by attendees since we have not met in person during COVID.

Visioning & Bible Study- John 15. What does it mean to be in covenant together and our relationship with one another? Thoughts offered: create a visual of churches by District with pics to help them become helpful to each other. Create connections. “Abide” as used in the scripture promotes culture of home, security, welcome. Abide is a great concept of what we would like to promote within Districts in our Region. Some pastors are not connected to District or Region in any way. People’s priorities have changed.

Allen offered that a Region is designed to be a connector of people and churches. Currently, there is no capacity. Networking, connecting and visioning become more difficult since effort capacity is filled with regular caretaking, which is also vital. Connection for young pastors is lacking. District meeting could provide the structure for networking & connection.

What is our purpose? What do we want to do? Strong leadership and equipping people adequately is essential to success of a strong region. Other regions have “Pastor’s Academy” or “Minister’s Institute” in an effort to support clergy. Clergy mentorships become a helpful support to new clergy.

Allen shared a concept of Honorary Moments within the region. Scriptures say to prune the dead wood in order to promote new growth. It’s tough to cut duties out of a Regional Pastor’s schedule as a way to cut out the dead wood. Do churches know what resources are available to them? Why do they not know how to contact them? It is Important to communicate & educate congregations of what individuals are now in positions to carry out work formerly accomplished by Regional Associate Ministers. It may be time to re-introduce the new structure in a creative-visual manner to every church by picturing the Regional Elder to each individual church. “Empowering” individuals within various groups to offer their skills and experience to congregations may be an additional way to introduce an additional structure within our regional organization.

Jeff Gill stated that it is time to be brutally honest in what the Region has and not try to return to models from 40-50 years ago.

Commissioned ministers who work full time jobs and serve a church part-time have difficulty connecting with their District. It is important to model new scenarios as ways to structure churches differently. Equip congregations to have realistic expectations of what may be provided by the region.

Congregations do not have a source document from the Region to guide them in salary compensation. Guidance and support to churches is critical to become a healthy Region.

How do we “Be” church today? Other regions are struggling with the same issues we are. How can we move forward as a Region?

Pruning is critical to manage new growth. **Not to destroy but to conceive and bear fruit.** Reclaiming history/core values in new ways to grow new fruit. Show the options & opportunities to be exciting and with purpose.

Summary: Good leadership, new structure, resources that equip, mentoring for clergy, ways to educate congregations and provide them with resource about expectations are all key to answering questions of new growth.

A laminated poster will be created to send to every church to disseminate information and contact info.

What would it mean to young adults to engage a Regional Pastor dedicated to Advanced? Advanced Conference becomes Church to young people.

Discussion surrounding having a, expert social media and marketing person. Allen suggested perhaps sharing such a position with UCC. How do you even contact youth without good digital info? Allen affirmed his heart is in Advanced Conference. It is front & center in his role.

How do we better reach out to advanced youth age when they relocate to other cities? How do we do a better job reaching CYF once they go off to college and secure contact info?

This concludes our session for this evening. It was helpful discussion regarding Visioning for our future.

Saturday November 6, 2021 8:30 AM

Attendees: Candis Wilson, Rev. Allen Harris, Alecia Hayes, Cory King, Becki Linn Gregory, Thomas Barnes, Philip Hunt, Faith Solon, Kevin Kaufman, Gladys Davis, Terry Bartlett, Tom Bowerman-Jett, Bruce Bowerman-Jett, Gena Phillips, Dr. Patricia Brown, Kaitlin Thompson, Diane Bartlett, via zoom: Jeff Gill, Ralph Wearstler, Dan Sonbels, Cindy Klingemier, Mary Jo Bray, Jeff Wheeler

Devotions: Matthew 28:16-20 Led by Candis Wilson, “Go and Make Disciples” (v.19)

Regional and Standing Committee Reports:

Regional Support Staff- Jennie Stoddart Bernard, Regional Administrator-Currently Working from home & in office once weekly. Camp rental groups are beginning to show interest and return to booking camp facilities as the pandemic becomes more manageable. Renewal Initiative as of November 5, 2021 over \$50K, halfway mark. Advent devotional soon in-progress & looking for written contributions. Ministerial standing forms coming up soon. Yearbook reporting approaching. Online process, ALEX, was

new with a learning curve for church users. In-person volunteers returning to help Jennie at camp has been a welcomed relief for admin duties (i.e. filing, inventory, etc.) Rental groups rental income shows as “Facility Usage” and “Food Off Season” on financials. Camp rented nearly every weekend in good season.

Tom Bowerman-Jett, Campsite Manager- Restroom project in lodge completed. Summer staff were good at accomplishing cleaning, managing Covid protocols, facility projects, etc. The group was quite self-directed. Many comments regarding a pool. Tom is working with pool sub-committee to investigate. Cabins clusters winterized now. Block house furnace not working. Replacement quoted at \$3,000. Tom continues to research. Lodge restrooms are not quite ADA compliant. Towel & soap dispensers need to be mounted lower.

Regional Elders, Rev. Phil Hunt- Several Regional Elders are here in person this weekend including: Ralph Wearstler, Terry Bartlett, Phil Hunt, Cynthia Klingemier. Elders meet monthly to review district church events and issues. See written report. Regional Elders listing will be updated on the website after today’s vote of confirmation by the Regional Church Council. Regional Elders requested the adoption of document presented to approve the roles and duties of a regional elder. Seconded by Alicia Hayes. Motion carried.

Personnel, Rev. Pamela Barnes-Jackson- Report was presented as written. Tom Bowerman- Jett hired as Campsite Manager effective September 1, 2021 and exit interview was conducted with the Rev. Alan Dicken before he concluded his time as Regional Program Director.

Membership, Rev. Faith Solon- Requesting availability of RCC to work through an educational tool to focus on leadership development. “Covenant Curriculum” involves watching a video & reading a booklet. The curriculum is 5 sessions. This should be dialog & learning for RCC. Kevin commented that evenings and time is limited, but discussion sounds good. Alicia suggested commitment to homework before come together. After a vote it was decided that 90 min sessions for discussion with homework reading done by individuals prior to session. Sessions will be monthly to begin in January 2022 on Sunday evenings.

Vision, Rev. Dr. Alecia Hayes, Chair – The committee is diverse. See written reports. The committee is still looking for additional members interested in participating. Rev. Harris spoke to the significance of visioning. The gravity of guiding the Region as a single staff member looms large. Creating a vision for the future and a clear purpose of the regional church must be defined to move forward successfully.

Ministry Reports:

Advance Conference- Kaitlin Thompson. The committee continues to meet via zoom. 3 in-person gatherings planned. Working to bolster scholarship fund. Much decline between CYF and Advance which is a concern being addressed. Financial difficulty. The goal is to be able to offer free advance conference to conferees for their first year. Fund raiser planning in-progress. Registration fee is \$100 per person for winter and spring retreats. Summer approx. \$400/week. Age limit increased to age out at 31 years old. Faith Solon raised concern about the culture lacking spirituality from her experience. That age group involves children, so childcare, etc are concerns. The “Youth Scholarship Fund” is not available to Advance. Encouraging churches to assist financially.

Camp Christian Committee- Bruce Bowerman-Jett, Chairperson. The committee is working on a theme to honor past, sustain present, prepare future. Camp season 2021 with COVID, unbalance budget had a goal to minister to our youth and re-start ministry at camp. Future involves defining the role of the Camp Christian Committee, lines of authority, decision making, etc. Definitions and roles being worked on by the committee. A goal regarding the grounds is to not sit idle 10 months of the year. Two task forces created: pool exploratory committee and camp staff task force to research use of facility in future. Dedicated staffer to fill a position to market camp has been discussed. A social media/marketing person could be paid on commission basis. Social media marketing discussed by RCC last night and camp facility could be part of the work of this same social media/marketing role. Outdoor camp resource useful to Bruce and the committee is a group of camp directors across the country. The camp sign at the end of Maple Dell Road is under review to be replaced. Dave Diehl, the original sign designer, is working on a new sign. Hope to have a new sign by spring.

Awareness was brought to the RCC attention from Terry Bartlett. It has now been 3 years without any pool. It will take 2-3 years at the earliest to add a pool if so desired. Parents and churches offer enthusiasm for a pool. Action needed by RCC to hopefully make a decision to move forward to act. Brought to RCC to lift up our awareness of time-frame. Candis mentioned that Pool exploration committee reports to Camp Christian committee. Any consideration should be brought to RCC by Camp Christian Committee. Pool exploration is at dreaming stage. If engage contractor now it will be 2023 before installation. Lack of pool may be detrimental to growth of the camp program. Data is being gathered currently. The biggest single response from camp 2021 is that we need a pool.

Candis Wilson deferred the conversation to a later date. It should be presented by the Camp Christian Committee upon recommendations from the pool sub-committee.

Free Store at Camp Christian- Bruce Bowerman-Jett. The store is now open for in-person shopping twice weekly. 75 people are being served. Looking for increased opportunities to serve. Thanksgiving tradition of homemade potpies and dessert pies will continue. Wendy Taylor to lead the Thanksgiving pot pie tradition. Giveaway scheduled for November 17. Bruce receives requests for food daily. Looking to revisit partnership with Mid-Ohio Food Bank. Thanks to all for your gifts.

Children's Ministries/Grandparents Camp- Mary Jo Bray, Co-director. Reported that Grandparents camp did not meet in 2021 due to Covid. Plans are to resume in 2022. An additional night will be added to Grandparent's Camp making it run Thurs – Sat. Vision is to add a fall Grandparent's Camp without age limits.

Commission on Ministry – Rev. Jeff Wheeler, Chair. See report. Five ordination interviews were conducted this year. Ethical Boundaries and Anti-Racism Training are now moved to on-line. Jeff Wheeler will be retiring soon leaving his role as chairman of this committee vacant. Rev. Harris commended Rev. Wheeler and Rev. Cynthia Klingemier for their work to make this work caring, thoughtful and moving smoothly.

Ohio Black Pastors Fellowship-Rev. Thomas Barnes. See report. It is necessary for the black churches and ministries to join back together. Large percentage of bi-vocational ministers in this group who need support & connection to each other and to the region. There is a greater covenant. On November 14 they are sponsoring a clergy and church wellness seminar. Rev. Thomas. Barnes commended Rev. Harris for his commitment to diversity for our Region.

Ohio Disciples Women's Ministries -Dr. Pat Brown and Gena Phillips, Co-Chairs. They are working to re-group and rejuvenate Ohio Women's ministry with a vision to make this group viable within the region again.

Spirit Life Committee – Rev. Beckie Linn Gregory, Chair. See report. The last in-person spirituality retreat was held in 2020 with a virtual retreat in 2021. An in-person Silent Retreat was held at Camp Christian this Fall. Feedback was that insecurities still abound regarding COVID. Working to plan a spring retreat for 2022.

Treasurer's Report-Gladys Davis, Chair- See Report.

1. We are at or above budget even though DMF giving from General ministry is less than expected. Expenses are less than budgeted, anticipate a surplus of \$25k for this fiscal year.
2. Camp budget did not as well after COVID due to the number of campers did not allow for breakeven basis. Deficit resulted due to lack of registration fees. An annual deficit of about \$21K expected. Capital expenditures are needed.
3. Do we have enough cash to continue to operate? Yes. Region Cash \$221K which includes invested amounts. CCF is permanent investments. \$136,319 CCF and \$83,617 CE is invested cash and able to be moved into checkbook if needed. \$560,794 restricted funds are not spendable since they are permanently invested. Discussion surrounding how cash is moved from invested CE and CCF into cash operating checkbook. The cash situation is the best we have seen in many years. We have enough cash to meet the next 9 months if no receipts.
4. How do investment fund balances work? Donor restricted funds cannot be touched. We have cash to cover all restricted donations and to cover operating needs. Since 2019 Ohio as a region has had cash to cover all permanent restricted funds. Finances returned to "above water" as of 2019. See the breakdown of Donor restricted funds on page #24 of Docket Financials. \$1.2 M combined Church Extension + Christian Church Foundation. Investments are accumulating interest as it is a mix of stocks and bonds. As of 8/31/2021 interest income equals \$12,813 as reported on financials. "ODO" line item, Ohio Disciples Outreach, in congregations encompasses many regional funds. It now all flows to the Region as a whole. On current financials, see top Income line called "Disciples Mission Fund". The "DMF" split refers to congregational outreach gifts which go to General National Church in Indianapolis. All General gifts come back to Ohio based on a percentage of 40% to Ohio and 60% to General Fund. As gifts to Indianapolis decrease, the dollar amount of our region's 40% also decreases. Ohio received a larger split over the past 3 years due to a more severe financial position. Ohio's split has now returned to the original split of 40/60. Renewal Initiative will be reflected on financials after September 2021.
5. Diane Bartlett presented a map of the 3 parcel plots of land comprising Camp Christian. It is important for RCC members to be aware of the real estate as well as official ownership named as Board of Trustees. Phil Hunt added information regarding 3 additional parcels purchased to avoid sale to an entity that may not be favorable to reside in close proximity to a youth camp. A total of 6 parcels are owned by Ohio Region. The RCC committee serves as trustee to the ownership.

Business Items:

1. **Camp Christian Committee Procedural Handbook** was brought to the RCC for approval by the Camp Christian Committee. Seconded by Alicia Hayes to accept Procedural Handbook. Rev. Harris clarified that the handbook does not oversee curriculum, rather procedures & policies that run across all camps (i.e. dress code, acceptance of LGBTQ campers, etc.) Motion carried. Bruce Bowerman-Jett will not be part of task force with matters relating to camp facilitator, Tom Bowerman-Jett, since they are partners.
2. **Pastoral Relations Committee-** Candis Wilson requested approval of nominees to the committee Eric Brown, Melanie Harrell Delaney, Don Baird, Judy Austin, Paul Long. The purpose of the committee is to support, hold the pastor accountable, provide critique, brainstorm when needed. Candis Wilson made a motion to accept the committee. Faith Solon Seconded. Motion carried.
3. **Commission on Ministry requesting approval** of Rev. Julie Cory, First Christian Kent, team 2 lead replacing Rev. Carol Oetzel. Cory King motioned to accept the appointment. Seconded by Rev. Thomas. Motion carried.
4. **Confirmation of Rev. Margot Connor as district 5 Regional Elder.** Rev Connor to replace Mike Valentine. Motion from Gladys Davis. Seconded by Alicia Hayes to approve appointment of Margo Connor as district 5 Regional Elder. Motion carried.
5. **Confirmation of Rev. Chad Delaney to represent Ohio Region on General Board.** Representative appointment will be replacing Tom Stephenson. Moved by Alicia Hayes and seconded by Faith Solon to accept appointment. Motion carried.
6. **Gratitudes:**

Expressing Gratitude for the service of Rev. Mike Valentine as Regional Elder District 5

Rev. Mike Valentine, a longtime local church pastor who had recently retired as Senior Pastor of First Christian Church, Bellefontaine, as asked by Interim Regional Minister, the Rev. John Richardson, in 2017 to be Regional Elder for District 5, he gladly accepted. He has served the clergy and congregations of his District with great wisdom, a sense of purpose, grounded in his deep faith, and with a touch of good humor. In the fall of 2021, after becoming a grandfather for the first time, Rev. Valentine offered his resignation as Regional Elder to spend more time with his family. The Christian Church in Ohio Regional Church Council, at our November 5-6, 2021 meeting, offers our deepest gratitude to Rev. Mike Valentine for his five years of service as Regional Elder to the Christian Church in Ohio.

Moved by Cory King to approve gratitude celebration to Mike Valentine, seconded by Alicia Hayes. Motion carried

Expressing Gratitude for the service of Ann Overturf, Chi Rho Director

Ann Overturf has served the Christian Church in Ohio as a youth leader and Chi Rho counselor for decades, but for the last seven summers Ann has served as a Director of

Chi Rho Camp, bringing a love of children, a deep faith, and a pure delight in the power and possibility of spiritual transformation that can happen at church camp. She has also served as co-chair of the Chi Rho Commission for many years. This fall Ann expressed a desire to move on and focus on other ministries, and so the Christian Church in Ohio Regional Church Council, at its November 5-6, 2021 meeting, offers our deepest gratitude to Ann Overturf for her many years of service to the Christian Church in Ohio, and most especially her seven years as Chi Rho Camp Director.

Moved by Gladys Davis to approve gratitude celebration to Ann Overturf, seconded by Thomas Barnes. Motion carried.

Expressing Gratitude for the service of Rev. Carol Oetzel, Team 2 Chair, Commission on Ministry

Rev. Carol Oetzel has been a local church pastor in the Christian Church in Ohio for decades, serving at Walnut Hill Christian Church in Cincinnati, Legacy Christian Church in Harrison, and Disciples Christian Church in Hamilton, as well as offering supply preaching and short term ministry in several others. She was one of the first persons who was under care in the Apprentice Track to Ordination. She has served as a Commissioner on the Commission for Ministry for about 15 years, but since we reorganized the Commission on Ministry in 2017 she has also been serving as the Team 2 Chair of the Commission On Ministry. This Team provides the care and oversight for our Commissioned Ministers, a vital and growing part of our ministry in the Church. Rev. Oetzel has led this team admirably, and provided not only care and oversight for our ministers, but has done so with a deep respect and passion for Commissioned Ministers. The Christian Church in Ohio Regional Church Council, at our November 5-6, 2021 meeting, offers our deepest gratitude to Rev. Carol Oetzel for her over four years of service as Team 2 Chair of the Commission on Ministry.

Moved by Alicia Hayes to approve gratitude celebration to Carol Oetzel, seconded by Thomas Barnes. Motion carried.

- 7. 2022 Budget-Gladys Davis-** See budget as presented in docket. Finance committee moved to adopt the budget for 2022. Motion carried.

Regional Pastor and President Report, Rev. Allen Harris. See attached report as submitted.

Conversation and sharing from the group in response to Rev. Harris' question regarding the best course of action to put in motion regarding past actions of RCC. After heartfelt and honest dialog, the transgressions of prejudice weigh on all of us. Consensus that the RCC as an entity should own prior actions and work to make public our sentiments to all in the Region.

News & Updates-Discussion regarding moving forward as a region, as a council, as congregations to remove doubts of history in the region. We bear the weight of prior decisions and actions. Together we discussed possible ways to move forward as a region.

In January, much work to shoulder to prep camp for registrations, health concerns, etc. for summer. Rev. Harris will need help.

Important Calendar Dates:

See calendar dates in docket. Added dates: 2022 Experience in Ft. Worth, TX, July 20-23, 2022

RCC meetings for 2022: February 5, 2022, May 21, 2022, August 6, 2022, November 4-5 2022

Communion and Closing -Finance Committee: Gladys Davis, Kevin Kaufman, Diane Bartlett along with Alicia Hayes offered devotion, prayer and lifted elements for communion. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted: Diane Bartlett, Secretary