



CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN OHIO
DISCIPLES OF CHRIST
A COVENANT NETWORK OF CONGREGATIONS

Ohio Regional Newsletter ~ February 2023

Around The Region And In My Heart

Rev. Allen V. Harris, Regional Pastor and President

As I write this article the unsettling juxtaposition of global events and the changing liturgical seasons once again surprises me. As we move from Epiphany, the season of light where we celebrate the many manifestations of God's presence in our world, to the Season of Lent, where we solemnly and honestly assess our lives and prepare our spirits for the true and often demanding realities of following the Christ, that movement in our world from brightness to shadows came more quickly and far more devastatingly than I would have ever expected.



The joyous life-affirming celebrations of the holidays – Advent, Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, and the New Years (both the Gregorian calendar one and the Lunar calendar one) – turned wickedly bloody with a series of mass shootings in California, Monterey Park and Half Moon Bay in particular, with yet another death of an unarmed civilian, Tyre Nichols, beaten to death by police officers in Memphis, and, most recently, the historic devastation and horrific loss of life in the earthquake across Turkey and Syria on February 6, with the number dead estimated at 16,000 at the time of this writing.

Perhaps our Epiphany commemoration has need to be shut down early and our Lenten prayers simply must begin sooner and in earnest. I just received an invitation to a Mardi Gras/Fat Tuesday celebration and, quite frankly, I don't have the heart to "make merry" with such catastrophic headlines in the news. Maybe theologically since it still is the "season of light" I **should** be looking for positive things in the midst of such difficulties. I know I **should** be more like Mr. Rogers and "look for the helpers" in times of crisis, but quite frankly, friends, that's really hard. I don't see enough "helpers" helping! Plus these crisis seem to be multiplying exponentially rather than declining, specifically rampant gun violence, the death of black and brown citizens at the hands of law enforcement personnel, and environmental disasters.

While nothing is stopping us from moving into a more intentional period of prayer, fasting, confession and repentance, and reflection on our spiritual lives, perhaps there is something to holding fast to the star of Epiphany even as we walk through the Lenten rubble around us. I am reminded of one of my favorite Psalms for times of trouble, Psalm 30, especially the second half of verse 5, "**Weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes with the morning.**" The entire Psalm

30 is worthy of our prayer and meditation during these daunting days. Maybe the hope, the peace, the joy, and the love we drank so freely of during Advent was meant to sustain us for dry and parched times just like this. Maybe those celebrations were never meant to simply put us on a sugar high, but to fatten us up so that we could dig down and do the hard work necessary for the lean times ahead.

I believe in putting our faith into action, and tangibly carrying Epiphany into Lent, so here are some very real recommendations:

Regarding addressing the crisis of gun violence in our world:

- Join the faith-based organization God Before Guns. Founded by two Disciples of Christ leaders, Rev. Kristine Eggert and David Eggert, this organization works diligently to educate about Gun violence reduction and seeks to engage their members in positive actions to change the culture in faithful and hopeful ways. Find out more and join by following this link: <https://www.godbeforeguns.org/> Craig and I are members and regular donors and active participants in God Before Guns and the December 4 vigil was held at Disciples Christian Church in Cleveland Heights. Their Board Chair is the Rev. Heidi Barham, Pastor of Ledgewood Christian Church in Novelty.

Regarding addressing environmental disasters and the climate crisis, I have two recommendations.

- Give generously to the work of Week of Compassion, our Disciples of Christ disaster relief and development ministry. Check out the article in this newsletter with more information and links to give. I have already given a large gift to Week of Compassion just this morning in response to the great need and their good work.
- Work with your congregation to become a Green Chalice Ministry if it isn't already one. There is a wonderful online course coming up with Lexington Theological Seminary called, "Developing Green Congregations" Feb. 27-March 25, 2023. Find out more and register with this link: [Find Out More](#). I'm working with Green Chalice Ministry and a group of ecumenical leaders on a retreat to build a coalition of faith leaders together on this topic.

Regarding Racial Justice and Violence Against Black and Brown People, I have a very strong recommendation.

- Our Christian Church in Ohio Pro-Reconciliation/Anti-Racism Commission has planned another Awareness Conversation after the fall one was not only very well attended, but received incredibly positive feedback. It is a totally redesigned experience from previous Anti-Racism Trainings and is for both laity and clergy. The next one is scheduled for Saturday, March 25 at Camp Christian and you can find out more and register here: <https://www.ccinoh.com/regional-calendar.aspx?events=10966&action=details>. I have signed up for this conversation and hope you will join me.

Yes, my friends, our celebrations have been cut short and crises loom around us, but God has not left us nor forsaken us. The Gospel of John reminds us boldly, "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." Let us shine our lights confidently, whatever the liturgical season it is, and know that by doing so, the Light of Jesus Christ shines more brightly than before.

Faithfully Yours,
Allen



CYF Retreat

Don't forget, the 2023 CYF Winter Retreat for High School Youth is coming up quick!!

February 17-19, 2023 at Camp Christian.

Who God Says You Are, what the rest of the world thinks about you does not matter in comparison to what God thinks! Join us at the CYF Winter Retreat, as we discover what the Bible tells us about who God says we are. Do you ever wonder about how we fit into God's purpose or how our God-given identity can and should impact the way we live. Come to camp for a fun-filled weekend with your friends. Bible study, keynote speakers, games, singing and of course s'mores by the lodge fireplace.

Registration and scholarship forms available at <https://www.ccinoh.com/ministries/children-youth/youth-fellowship/cyf-retreat.aspx>

Elders and Diaconate Training

Attention Congregational Elders and Deacons!

YOU are invited to an Elders and Diaconate training, February 25th at Camp Christian.

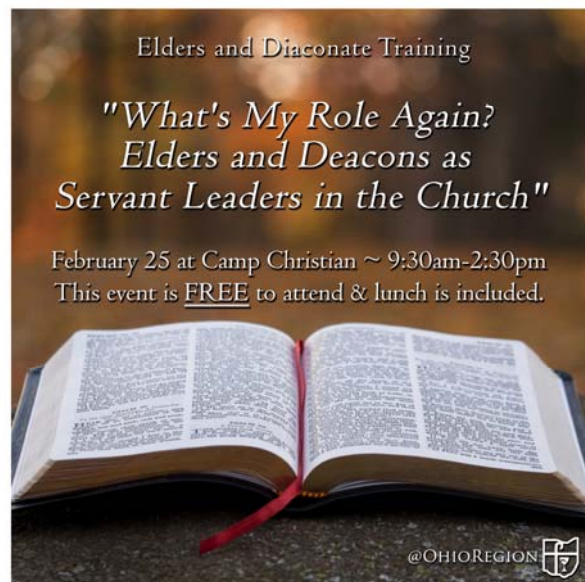
"What's My Role Again? Elders and Deacons as Servant Leaders in the Church"

This event is FREE to attend and lunch is included.

The training workshop will include some basics on what it means to be an Elder or Deacon for those new or even those stepping back into the role. It will also touch on how we can best be servant leaders in our own church settings and what is required of us as those leaders.

Please pre-register (through the link below) so we can account for space and have accurate numbers for lunch. Any donations to help cover the cost of the food are greatly appreciated.

<https://www.ccinoh.com/regional-calendar.aspx?events=10955&action=details>



Camp Staff

The 2023 Camp Christian Summer Staff Application Now Available Online!

Our Camp is truly a place where people encounter Jesus and a loving community in a real and significant manner. You can be part of that wonderful ministry in 2023.

If you or a young adult you know would be interested in this fun and fulfilling summer service ministry, please apply or encourage them to apply today.



Application and reference forms can be downloaded at <https://www.ccinoh.com/camp-christian/summer-programs/camp-christian-summer-staff.aspx>

Hold The Date – Lay Preaching Academy

"I Love to Tell the Story!"

April 21 & 22 at Camp Christian

Purpose: to train a cadre of lay preachers to fill pulpits in our Ohio churches either short term or long term.

Topics to be covered: Public speaking basics, How to do the preparation, Where are the Resources, The modern style of preaching, African American Preaching, Challenges of a Female preacher, Using Multi Media, Learning from great preachers, and much more.

Registration information coming soon.

Advance Conference Officers Celebrate Successful Winter Retreat

This year's Advance Conference Officers are Ally Bozeka, Andy Lisak, and Maddy Beeker, and they planned a wonderful Winter Retreat January 6-8 at Camp Christian. It was shaped around the theme "Pass It On," and focusing on finding the gifts of the Spirit and exploring how to pass them on. Keynote Speakers were the Rev. Ali Miguel and Rev. Seth Stout. There were 27 young adults in attendance, the largest since before COVID! The next Advance Conference Retreat will be April 28th – 30th at Camp Christian, so save the date!





Rev. Vickie Rankins-Anderson Installed As Pastor Of New Hope Christian Church, Holland

On Sunday, January 22, 2023 the Service of Installation was held for the new Pastor of New Hope Christian Church of Holland, Rev. Vickie Rankins-Anderson, pictured second from the right. Regional Minister, the Rev. Allen Harris, and Regional Elder, Rev. Joseph Hara led the service of installation and the Rev. Ruby Redford preached. Harold Grim, Lead Elder, was worship leader. Rev. Rankins-Anderson comes to us as clergy in the American Baptist Church. She is also founder and president of Uplifted Heart Ministries. Please hold Pastor Vickie and this faithful congregation in joyful prayer!

Clergy Gather To "Drink Of The One Spirit" At Minister's Spiritual Life Retreat

A group of clergy from across the life of the Christian Church in Ohio gathered the last week in January for our Minister's Spiritual Life Retreat. The group was faithfully led by the Rev. Monique Crain Spells, Christian Education and Merger Staff Person from the Disciples Home Missions. Their focus text was 1 Corinthians 12:13 and their theme was "Drink Of The One Spirit: Living Our Truths In Community." The event was planned and led by the Spiritual Life Committee, the Rev. Beckie Linn Gregory chair. It was a time of honest sharing and great learning, and the Holy Spirit was palpably present!



Joy Fenton-Jones Installed As Pastor Of First Christian Church, Cuyahoga Falls

On Sunday, February 5 the service of installation for settled Pastor, Joy Fenton-Jones First Christian Church of Cuyahoga Falls (Disciples Of Christ/United Church of Christ). Rev. Allen Harris, our Regional Pastor & President, preached and lead the liturgy of installation along with Reverend Nayiri Karjian, Association General Minister of the Living Water Association UCC and the Reverend Terry Bartlett, Regional Elder for Disciples District 3. Rev. Michael Howard, Minister of Faith in Action for the Living Water Association, led communion. Rev. Donald Baird served as Worship Leader. Please hold Pastor Joy and this faithful congregation in joyful prayer!



Reverend Harry and Reverend Deb Bolen Honored At Health & Wellness Clinic

Rev. Deborah Bolen and Rev. Harry Bolen were nominated and chosen as Members of the Month at the AGMC/Cleveland Clinic Health and Wellness Center where they exercise.

The photo shows one of the displays they made about the couple from the history and photos they asked for.

Congratulations on this fun recognition!

Saint Andrew Christian Church Volunteers at The Free Store at Camp Christian

Special thanks to St. Andrews Christian Church for helping to "Flip to Spring" at The Free Store at Camp Christian.



Pictured:

Front row: Barbara Pratt, Betty Lyle (both seated) Jane Luzadder and Linda Mattern (standing)
Back row: Elizabeth White, Sue Blaine, John Allred, Sue Ault, Caroline Tudor, Bill Luzadder, Kent Tudor, Charlette Allred - Not pictured: Rev. Morgan Wickizer

If you and/or your Congregation would like to volunteer at the Free Store, please contact Bruce Bowerman-Jett at bbowerman-jett@ccinoh.org.

Week of Compassion

*Yet it is because I remember all this
that I have hope.*

*YHWH's favor is not exhausted,
nor has God's compassion failed.*

*They **rise up anew** each morning,
so great is God's faithfulness.*

(Lamentations 3:21-23, The Inclusive Bible)

Singing this promise can give us the strength of heart to rise up anew when our hearts are weary from the work of caring about and for all those in need in this beautiful and broken world.



When rains come and waters rise, generosity follows close behind.

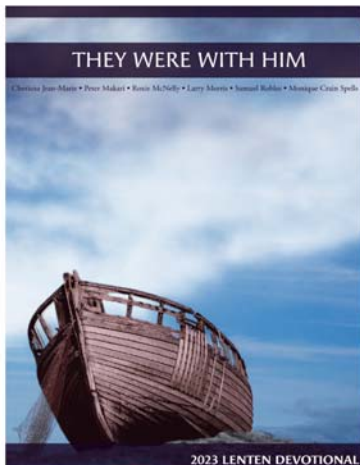
When fires rage and destruction looms, support and help are stirred up too.

When war and disease and drought are too close for too long, compassion comes closer, and God's mercies are made known through the gifts of God's people.

Through domestic disaster response in familiar communities; preparedness training for congregations and individuals; refugee response in the aftermath of national conflicts; and ecumenical partnerships that engage international disaster response and support basic human needs for shelter, food, education, and livelihoods Week of Compassion proclaims this truth: God's mercies **rise up anew** each day.

Because of your generosity, Week of Compassion meets people and communities in the midst of grief and lament, in the deepest moments of 'How could this happen?', as the very real presence of God's unfailing compassion.

For more information, including videos and worship resources, go to <https://www.weekofcompassion.org/2023.html>



DHM Lenten Resource

The Disciples Home Missions (DHM) 2023 Lenten Resource, "They Were With Him," is available to encourage and support you in this season of intentional time walking with Jesus. The reflection writers have given us much to think about as God's community.

This booklet is available to download at <https://www.discipleshomemissions.org/2023-lenten-resource/>

Please enjoy and share with those in your care.

ALEX Yearbook Reporting

The ALEX Congregational Yearbook Reporting is underway. To those congregations that have already submitted their report, THANK YOU!!

Our goal this year is to reach 70% (or more) reporting. Together, we can make it happen. The report has been simplified this year, and there are lots of resources to assist with anything you might need. The deadline this year is Wednesday, March 1, 2023.

You can find helpful articles about ALEX Yearbook Reporting on the OGMP Help Center (linked below.) On the Help Center home page, you can search for answers to common questions. If you don't find what you're looking for, send an email to alex@disciples.org, and they will get back to you as quickly as they can.

The Help Center can be found at <https://ccdoc-ogmp.freshdesk.com/support/solutions/72000348023>.



Disciples Church Extension Fund hiring

Want to work for a ministry that inspires and empowers congregations to create Holy Places where people connect with each other, God, and their communities? Then [Disciples Church Extension Fund](https://disciplescef.org) (DCEF), which provides building and capital planning services, might be right for you. DCEF is looking to hire a [Chief Financial Officer](https://disciplescef.org) (CFO) and [Development Coordinator](https://disciplescef.org). The CFO will oversee the financial operations department to ensure DCEF's financial health while the Development Coordinator will provide administrative support to the development team to execute fundraising and communications plans. Both roles are hybrid.

More information at <https://disciplescef.org/careers/>



**Invite
a mission
co-worker
to visit
your
congregation!**

Global Ministries Mission Co-worker Visits

Are you looking for a Mission Co-worker to visit – in person or virtually?

Now is a great time to invite a mission co-worker to visit your congregation for a sermon, a moment of the mission, or a

Sunday School virtually or in person. Not sure how virtual works? [Watch this conversation](#) with Claremont UCC and former Global Mission Intern Abigail Fate who shared about her work in Chiapas, Mexico. Want an in-person visit? Global Ministries will send the co-worker to you in coordination with your region or conference.

Email serve@dom.disciples.org and invite someone to join you and share their story! Additionally, you can use a sermon from our mission co-worker [Sermon Bank](#) or treat yourself to an exciting Sunday school lesson with one of our [Mission Co-worker Presentations](#).

Disciples Peace Fellowship Extends Summer Peace Intern Application Deadline

Deadline Extended!

DPF will continue accepting 2023 Peace Intern Applications until February 19.

Learn more at: disciplespeace.org/apply

If you or someone you know wants to spend the summer living out their faith while serving as an Ambassador for Peace & Justice then this life-changing 12-week, paid internship is the perfect opportunity!

2023 DPF Peace Interns will spend the summer serving on staff at church camps throughout the United States and Canada with remote work weeks built into their schedule so that they can work on specific justice projects with Disciples Justice Ministries partners. Plus, you'll get to go to Disciples General Assembly in Louisville!

Reach out to DPF Mission Director Brian Frederick-Gray (missiondirector@disciplespeace.org) with any questions or to learn more about the program!

Rev. Brian Frederick-Gray (he/him)
Director of Mission Support & The Peace Intern Program
Disciples Peace Fellowship
480-399-6945
missiondirector@disciplespeace.org
disciplespeace.org



We are partnering with the United Church of Christ Heartland Conference to share in the planning and promoting of both of our camp, conference, and retreat programs!

EXPAND YOUR SUMMER POSSIBILITIES

SUMMER CAMPS 2023

TEMPLED HILLS CAMPS ARE LISTED IN BLUE

CAMP CHRISTIAN CAMPS ARE LISTED IN PURPLE

- **May 26 – 28, Disciples Fellowship Retreat, All Ages**
- **June 8–10, Grandparents Camp, K-2nd Grade**
- **June 11–17, Elementary/Otter Camp, 3rd–5th Grade**
- **June 14–17, Grands and Family Camp 1***
- **June 18–24 M.A.D.D. (Music, Mindfulness, Art, Dance, Drama), Ages 8–18**
- **June 18–24 (NEW) Camp “Out” (LGBTQIA+ and allies), Ages 8–18**
- **June 18–24, Middle School/Chi Rho Camp 1 & High School/CYF Conference 1, 6–8th and 9–12th Grades**
- **June 19–23, Adult Conference at Northwest Christian Church**
- **June 25 – 29, Music Camp**
- **June 25–July 1 Sports Camp Ages 7–18**
- **July 5–8, Grands and Family Camp 2***
- **July 5–8, Elementary/Rabbit Camp, 2nd –4th Grade**
- **July 9–12, Grands and Family Camp 3***
- **July 9–15, Middle School/Chi Rho Camp 2, 6–8th Grade**
- **July 9–15 (NEW) Pathfinder/Confirmation, Ages 12–15 and 16–18**
- **July 12–15 (NEW) Junior Pathfinder, Ages 7–12**
- **July 16–22, High School/CYF Conference 2, 9–12th Grade**
- **July 30–August 6, Young Adult/Advance Conference, Ages 19–30**
- **September 1–3, Disciples Fellowship Retreat, All Ages**

* Ages 4–13 with Parent(s) or Grandparent(s)

REGISTER TODAY!

SCAN THE QR CODES OR GO TO

HEARTLANDUCC.ORG/TEMPLED-HILLS
CCINOH.COM/CAMP-CHRISTIAN

Details and Registration Coming Soon!

The above poster is also attached to this email as a PDF. Please share with your congregations, families, and communities.