

**Report from Regional Pastor and President, Rev. Allen V. Harris
Regional Church Council, Christian Church in Ohio, May 13, 2023
Report Period: February 11, 2023 – May 12, 2023**

Staff Development/Regional Church Office

- ❖ Met on-line weekly with the Staff for Staff Meetings at least ten times
- ❖ Ongoing care and support for Jennie Stoddart Bernard during her treatment for cancer and for Bruce and Tom Bowerman-Jett for their family medical issues.
- ❖ Celebrated Bruce Bowerman-Jett's birthday February 15 and Tom Bowerman-Jett's birthday February 18

Three Priorities:

Racial Justice

- ❖ Continue to support the Regional Church's Pro-Reconciliation/Anti-Racism Commission and Commitments and attend meetings as often as I can.
- ❖ Met with the Pro-Reconciliation/Anti-Racism Commission March 14 and May 9
- ❖ Met with the Ohio Black Clergy regarding concerns about Camp, February 16 and laid out a strategic plan to ongoing address issues.
- ❖ Distributed a listing of our predominantly African American, Latinx/Hispanic, and North American/Pacific Asian Disciples of Christ congregations and clergy to the Directors of our summer Camp, Conference, and Retreat programs as we seek to diversify our leadership.
- ❖ Attended the March 25th Awareness Conversation along with members of the Regional Church Council, Regional Elders, and Camp directors, counselors, and staff

Connecting

- ❖ Met with Eric Morse, the Executive Director of The Centers, the new Strategic Partner for the Cleveland Christian Home, along with their Development Officers, February 15. (Also worked on communication and connections with congregations between the CCH and CCinOH)
- ❖ Hosted the Monthly Regional Clergy Conversation Call on Wednesday, February 22 focused on Week of Compassion (below) and on April 26 focused on "Signs of Renewal in our Congregations." Both were very successful and energizing!
- ❖ Connected with the Rev. Courtney Richards, Communications and Development Manager for Week of Compassion (Clergy Call guest for February)
- ❖ Dinner with the Rev. Dr. Katrina Roseboro-Marsh, the new Executive Director of the Open & Affirming Coalition of the United Church of Christ March 23.
- ❖ Met with Rev. Shelley Nelson-Bridger, Executive Director and Campus Minister for the United Protestant Campus Ministries in Cleveland (serving CSU, Tri-C, and CWRU) and connected her with local clergy. <https://www.upcam.org/>

- ❖ Met Monthly with the Regional Elders: March 2, April 6, May 4
- ❖ Regular communication with the Rev. David Long-Higgins, Heartland Conference UCC Minister, re: Ecumenical Partnership including lunch on March 10 and April 25
- ❖ Met with Rev. Matt Rosine, Area Representative, Christian Church Foundation, May 1.
- ❖ Met with Mark Anderson, President, National Benevolent Association, May 3

Communication

- ❖ I make it a practice to share my Ministry Cell Number at all events so that I can be easily contacted.
- ❖ Along with Jennie, I work diligently to make the Monthly All-Region Emails informative, joyful, and timely (near the beginning of the month)
- ❖ Likewise, Jennie and I work very hard to ensure the Monthly Congregational Leaders Mailing contains relevant and helpful information for church leaders (near the middle of the month)
- ❖ I keep updated “Congregations In Search & Call” and “Ministerial Training” pages to CCinOH website

Special Initiatives

- ❖ Continued to support and promote the School for Ministry (S4M), a shared clergy and lay leader training program, along with the Illinois and Wisconsin Region, the Michigan Region, and the Illinois Conference of the United Church of Christ. Attended their Board Meeting on March 7; gave a special presentation as part of the Commission on Ministry, Team 2 gathering on April 29. <https://cciwdisciples.org/category/school-for-ministry/>
- ❖ Renewed emphasis on Lay Leader Support & Education and hosted the Elder/Diaconate training: “What’s My Role Again? Elders and Deacons as Servant Leaders in the Church” on February 25th with diverse leadership and over 100 participants!
- ❖ Celebrating the ministry of the Rev. Nik Donges, Regional Elder for District 12 for the last five years and welcoming Rev. Thomas Barnes as a new Regional Elder for District 12. Met with Rev. Mike Valentine March 10 for Regional Elder orientation.
- ❖ Worked to reinvigorate the Ohio Men’s Ministry and attended the March 17-19 Men’s Retreat – 30 men, representing a rich diversity of the Regional Church and beyond!
- ❖ I have been working with the congregations that are concluding their regular and visible ministries to distribute their belongings, particularly Disciples-specific, to other CCDoC entities, including taking Chalice Praise songbooks and NRSV Bibles from Disciples Christian Church, Boardman to the Monroe Lodge at Camp Christian. I also connected Disciples Christian Church of Hamilton with Fifth Christian Church of Cincinnati to share their Chalice paraments and communion ware.
- ❖ I have also become the distributor of the theological libraries of retired and deceased clergy. I try to offer these books to lay and clergy leaders at the events I attend.

- ❖ Attended and brought greetings to the Lay Preaching Academy's first every workshop. Nine lay leaders and eight presenters/organizers met. This exciting venture will continue to expand.

Search & Call

- ❖ Attend bimonthly on-line meeting with College of Regional Ministers re: Search & Call, February 15
- ❖ Met on-line with the Search Committee of Northwest Christian Church, February 23
- ❖ Met on-line with the chair of the Search Committee for First Christian Church of Uhrichsville, with Rev. Don Baird, March 3.
- ❖ Met on-line with chair of the Search Committee for Compass Christian Church, Mason, March 10
- ❖ Met on-line with chair of the Search Committee for Northwest Christian Church, March 24
- ❖ Met on-line with the Search Committee of First Christian Church of Bowling Green, April 4.
- ❖ Met on-site with the Search Committee for the Mid-Ohio Valley Parish in Marietta, with the Rev. Thad Allen, Regional Minister for West Virginia, April 13.
- ❖ Met on-site with the Search Committee of United Christian Church, Clayton, April 25

Congregations Actively in Search & Call – These are kept up-to-date on our website at <https://www.ccinoh.com/resources/ministers/search-and-call.aspx>

Congregations Now Receiving Profiles For Consideration:

- *First Christian Church, Bowling Green – Pastor (part-time)
- *United Christian Church, Clayton – Full Time Pastor
- *Compass Christian Church, Cincinnati - Mason – Senior Pastor – (¾ Time with Full Benefits)
- Bethany Christian Church, Columbus – Part-Time Interim Pastor
- *Northwest Christian Church, Columbus - Upper Arlington - Pastor (solo)
- *Fayette Christian Church, Fayette – Part Time Pastor
- *Jackson Christian Church – Pastor
- *Hilltop Christian Church, Mantua – Part Time Pastor
- First Christian Church, McArthur – Extended Pulpit Supply
- *First Christian Church, Uhrichsville – Part-Time Pastor
- *Champion Christian Church, Cortland - Pastor
- *Howland Community Church, Warren – Part-Time Youth Minister
-

Congregations In Process & Not Yet Ready To Receive Profiles

- Anderson Hills Christian Church, Cincinnati – Pastor
- Karl Road Christian Church, Columbus – In Discernment

- Summit Christian Church, Dayton - Pastor
- First Christian Church, Middletown – Pastor
- First Christian Church, Wilmington - Pastor

Congregations On Pause Receiving Profiles

- *First United Christian Church, Xenia – Full Time Interim Pastor

Pastoral Ministry

- ❖ Held 20 scheduled individual meetings with clergy (each one at least an hour long, not counting unexpected, shorter phone call and in-person conversations.)
- ❖ Lunch with District 7 clergy in Canton, February 12
- ❖ Dinner with Rev. Roger Osgood & Debbie Osgood, February 15.
- ❖ Lunch with Rev. Jayne Ryan Kuroiwa, former Associate Regional Minister, March 15
- ❖ Met with possible Commissioned Minister with Rev. Terry Bartlett, March 16.

Congregational Care & Nurture

- ❖ Worshipped with and shared in worship leadership at Community Christian Church, North Canton with Regional Elder, Don Baird, February 12
- ❖ Worshipped with and preached for Ghent Christian Church, Canton, with Regional Elder, Don Baird, February 12
- ❖ Met with Rev. Sarah West and Finance leaders of First Christian Church of Wadsworth to discuss and educate re: Disciples Mission Fund giving.
- ❖ Worshipped on-line with Fifth Christian Church for Ash Wednesday, February 22
- ❖ Worshipped with and preached for Bethany Christian Church in Columbus and met with members of the congregation following the sudden departure of their Pastor.
- ❖ Worshipped with and preached for the Installation Service for Norm Witthuhn Lordstown Christian Church, with Rev. Cynthia Klingemier, March 12; Dinner with congregants afterwards.
- ❖ Helped lead the New Beginnings Assessment for Fifth Christian Church, Cleveland, with Rev. Roger McKinney, March 22.
- ❖ Worshipped with First Christian Church of Paulding and met with lay leaders following, March 26.
- ❖ Led Memorial Celebration for Norma Stearns at Franklin Circle Christian Church, Cleveland, March 30.
- ❖ Worshipped on-line the Palm Sunday Service at First Christian Church of Wilmington, April 2.
- ❖ Worshipped with and brought the Word for the Maundy Thursday Service at Bethany Christian Church, Cleveland for all Cleveland area Disciples of Christ congregations.
- ❖ Worshipped on-line the Easter Celebration Service at Legacy Christian Church, Harrison, April 9.

- ❖ Worshipped with and preached for the Installation Service for Rev. Paul Bomelli as Pastor of First Christian Church of Medina, April 23.
- ❖ Met on-site with the leaders of Carthage Christian Church, Cincinnati, April 26.
- ❖ Met with and led Prayer For The Clergy at Disciples Christian Church, Hamilton, for their last service of worship, April 30.
- ❖ Worshipped with and Preached for Mantua Christian Church, Mantua May 7

Council/Commission/Committee Work

- ❖ Participated in the Regional Church Council Meeting on-line, February 13
- ❖ Met regularly with the Finance Committee
- ❖ Met with the Commission on Ministry Chairperson, Rev. Chris McCreight, March 1
- ❖ Met with the Camp Christian Committee as often as I could (see below)
- ❖ Met with the Pastoral Relations Committee March 7 and May 2
- ❖ Attended the Interim Ministry bi-monthly Check-In Call, January 19
- ❖ Met in-person with the Commission on Ministry, Team 2, for the Commissioned Minister Meeting – Northeast Ohio at Community Christian Church of North Canton April 29
- ❖ Met with the Commission on Ministry, Team 1, for Ordination Interviews of Hannah Wickizer and Bruce Bowerman-Jett at Northwest Christian Church, Columbus, May 2
- ❖ Met on-line with the Executive Committee, May 3

Finance

- ❖ Attended monthly Finance Committee meetings and fielded questions and requests; March 15.
- ❖ Extensive work with designing and publicizing our Renewal Initiative campaign: “Presence,” You can read my theme letter here: https://www.ccinoh.com/media/336683/2022_renewal_initiative_letter.pdf
- ❖ Worked with the Finance Committee and Disciples Church Extension Fund staff on the Feasibility Study. Met with the DCEF leaders and our new Team on May 1.

Camp & Conference

- ❖ Sent video greetings to the CYF Winter Retreat February 11-12.
- ❖ Met with the Camp Christian Committee February 21, March 21, April 18
- ❖ Worked with the Rev. Jim Bane as Summer 2023 Regional Camp Liaison to provide wisdom and guidance for the camp and conference program. Met onsite with Jim and Bruce Bowerman-Jett March 25
- ❖ Attended the on-line Conversation on Camping or Outdoor Ministries sponsored by the Ohio Council of Churches, March 31.
- ❖ Attended the Camp Conversation with Directors, Assistant Directors, Staff and Liaison May 3.

Social Justice/Prophetic Witness

- ❖ Attended the online Alliance Q Worship for Transgender Day of Visibility March 31
- ❖ Wrote personal letters to Florida leaders decrying the censorship of history textbooks and teaching and to Tennessee leaders decrying the limiting of parental authority for families with children who are transgender, March.
- ❖ Stood in solidarity with drag performers and transgender persons at a restaurant and Chardon and at the Community Church of Chesterland, May 1. This was picked up in the media several times, including: <https://www.ideastream.org/race-gender-identity/2023-04-01/drag-brunch-in-chardon-met-with-support-limited-protest>
- ❖ Signed onto the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Pastoral Letter Addressing the Unjust Rise of Anti-LGBTQIA Legislation in the United States, May 8. <https://disciples.org/general/pastoral-letter-addressing-the-unjust-rise-of-anti-lgbtqia-legislation-in-the-united-states/>
- ❖ Starting May 4th, I began participating in the “Thursdays In Black” initiative by the World Council of Churches to focus attention on and speaking out about gender-based violence and rape. Find out more at: <https://www.oikoumene.org/what-we-do/thursdays-in-black>

General/Larger & Ecumenical Church

- ❖ Met Monthly with the College of Regional Ministers via Zoom; March 8, April 12, May 10
- ❖ Attended monthly on-line General Board Finance Committee meetings: February 23, March 23, in person April 17
- ❖ Promoted General Assembly Promotion Sunday for February 26
- ❖ Due to time and energy constraints, I resigned my position on the Brite Divinity School Board of Trustee effective April 1, 2023.
- ❖ Attended on-line the Executive Committee of the Ohio Council of Churches, April 10
- ❖ Attended on-line and took minutes for the Ohio Council of Churches meeting, April 12
- ❖ Attended on-site the General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) April 15-18 in Florence, Kentucky.
- ❖ Attended on-site the College of Regional Ministers Meeting April 18-20 in Florence, Kentucky
- ❖ Lunch with the Rev. Will Fenton-Jones, East Ohio Conference of the United Methodist Church, and Joy Fenton-Jones, Pastor, First Christian Church of Cuyahoga Falls, April 28

Upcoming Urgent Issues or Short-Term Projects

- ❖ Work with Ohio Black Clergy to understand and address their concerns about Camp and Conference programing and leadership.
- ❖ To shepherd the Feasibility Study.

Continuing Education/Growth

- ❖ Attended (virtually) the online training: *Foundational Abuse Prevention Training*, May 8

- ❖ Currently reading (book): ***Churches and the Crisis of Decline: A Hopeful, Practical Ecclesiology for a Secular Age*** by Andrew Root

Self- Care/Vacation

- ❖ Took Mondays as my day off as best as I could, and when not possible I tried to take a compensatory day off later in the week.
- ❖ Continued to meet with my own clergy support group monthly as often as I could:
March 8
- ❖ I took vacation over the February 10-13 weekend to attend a wedding anniversary of friends.
- ❖ Continue to enjoy my on-line Book Group and we have read and discussed recently ***The Boys In The Boat*** by Daniel James Brown and ***Perestroika in Paris*** by Jane Smiley.
- ❖ Attending to my physical health with: exercise, massage appointments.
- ❖ Had annual physical and results were good.
- ❖ Two vacations planned for long weekends: May 25-30 and June 9-12.

News & Updates

- ❖ No special news as of later.

Faithfully Yours,



Rev. Allen V. Harris
Regional Pastor & President