

Report from Regional Pastor and President, Rev. Allen V. Harris
Regional Church Council, Christian Church in Ohio, February 11, 2023
Report Period: November 6, 2022 – February 10, 2023

Staff Development/Regional Church Office

- ❖ Met on-line weekly with the Staff for Staff Meetings at least 9 times
- ❖ Ongoing care and support for Jennie Stoddart Bernard during her treatment for cancer.
- ❖ Christmas gifts to all staff and worked to ensure Christmas Bonuses for all staff.
- ❖ Reminder: Bruce Bowerman-Jett's birthday is February 15 and Tom Bowerman-Jett's birthday is February 18!

Three Priorities:

Racial Justice

- ❖ Continue to support the Regional Church's Pro-Reconciliation/Anti-Racism Commission and Commitments
- ❖ Met with the Pro-Reconciliation/Anti-Racism Commission December 13, January 10,
- ❖ Met with the Ohio Black Clergy regarding concerns about Camp, December 19
- ❖ Informed Black, Hispanic/Latinx, and American Asian/Pacific Islanders throughout the Region of the openings for Summer Camp Staff
- ❖ Met with Maria and Felix Ortiz-Cotto for dinner and discussed the Hispanic/Latinx congregations in the Region, and possibilities for the future, February 3
- ❖ Promoting attendance at the March 25th Awareness Conversation by members of the Regional Church Council, Regional Elders, and Camp directors, counselors, and staff

Connecting

- ❖ The Monthly Regional Clergy Conversation Call for November 30 was focused on supporting small churches and rural churches; December 21 (evening) was our annual Virtual Clergy Christmas Party. The schedule through June 2023 has been shared. February will be a conversation with Rev. Courtney Richards of Week of Compassion
- ❖ Met on-line with District 4 January 19
- ❖ Met Monthly with the Regional Elders: January 5 & February 2
- ❖ Regular communication with the Rev. David Long-Higgins, Heartland Conference UCC Minister, re: Ecumenical Partnership

Communication

- ❖ Monthly All-Region Emails (near the beginning of the month)
- ❖ Monthly Congregational Leaders Mailing (near the middle of the month)

- ❖ Updated “Congregations In Search & Call” and “Ministerial Training” pages to CCinOH website

Special Initiatives

- ❖ Focused on getting a Regional Elder for ALL Districts. Invited new Regional Elder for District 6, Rev. Robin Myer and led an on-site orientation for her February 9. Invited Rev. Mike Valentine back as Regional Elder for District 6. Part of this work was extensive pastoral care around the illness of Rev. Priscilla Jackson and finding ways to help and to honor her and her ministry.
- ❖ Have been working diligently to find new ways to sustain our Camp, Conference, and Retreat Program and broaden the ministry of Camp Christian, including a new joint promotion of Summer 2023 programs for both the Heartland Conference United Church of Christ and the Christian Church in Ohio. You can see part of this effort on our website at: <https://www.ccinoh.com/camp-christian/summer-programs.aspx>
- ❖ I was invited to give the annual Lectures In Religion at Hiram College on Tuesday, January 17. It was one of the greatest honors I have received. The title of my lecture was “Reimagining and Retooling Faith For An Explosive World.” I invite you to watch and listen to it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r9Vx0EpYbtY>

Search & Call

- ❖ Met on-line with Candis Wilson about the Search Process at First United Christian Church of Xenia December 13
- ❖ Met on-line with the leadership of Northwest Christian Church about their pastoral search process, January 13
- ❖ Began bimonthly on-line meeting with College of Regional Ministers re: Search & Call, January 18
- ❖ Met on-line with the Interim Ministers Bi-Monthly Check-In Call, January 19, began publicizing this more.
- ❖ Met on-line with leaders of Carthage Christian Church re: future pastoral leadership, January 19
- ❖ Met on-site with the Search Committee of Anderson Hills Christian Church, Cincinnati, January 26
- ❖ Met on-site with the leaders of Central Christian Church of Wooster re: pastoral search process, February 2
- ❖ Met on-line with the Search Committee of Northwest Christian Church, February 6

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: (* denotes a listing on the Disciples Home Missions Search & Call Website)

- *United Christian Church, Clayton – Full Time Pastor
- *Fayette Christian Church, Fayette – Part Time Pastor
- *Hiram Christian Church, Hiram – Sabbatical Minister (summer 2023)
- *Jackson Christian Church, Jackson – Pastor
- *Hilltop Christian Church, Mantua – Part Time Pastor
- First Christian Church, McArthur – Extended Pulpit Supply
- *Howland Community Church, Warren – Part Time Youth Minister
- Central Christian Church, Wooster - Interim Pastor

Congregations On Hold:

- First Christian Church, Alliance – Full Time Pastor
- First United Christian Church, Xenia

Congregations In Process & Not Yet Ready To Receive Profiles

- First Christian Church of Bowling Green – Part-Time Pastor
- ❖ Anderson Hills Christian Church, Cincinnati – Full-Time Pastor
- Carthage Christian Church, Cincinnati – Part-Time Pastor
- Karl Road Christian Church, Columbus – Interim Pastor
- Northwest Christian Church, Columbus – Full-Time Pastor (solo)
- Central Christian Church, Marietta (Mid-Ohio Valley Parish) – Full-Time Yoked Pastor with First Christian Church of Parkersburg, WV
- Compass Christian Church, Mason - Full Time Pastor
- First Christian Church, Uhrichsville – Pastor

Pastoral Ministry

- ❖ Held 38 scheduled individual meetings with clergy (each one at least an hour long, not counting unexpected, shorter phone call and in-person conversations.)
- ❖ Visited Rev. Betty Adams at her home November 6
- ❖ Visited Rev. Jim Schimmel at the hospital November 8
- ❖ Participated in the memorial service for Rev. Albert Pennybacker, Shaker Heights, November 9
- ❖ Officiated and offered the eulogy for the memorial service for Rev. Jim Schimmel at Central Christian Church, Warren, November 15
- ❖ Participated in the memorial service for the Rev. Ken Coy at Northwest Christian Church in Upper Arlington
- ❖ Monthly Clergy Conversation Calls November 30 and December 20 (see above)
- ❖ Led Clergy Conversation following the Lectures In Religion at Hiram College, January 17
- ❖ Called clergy and lay leaders when I was aware of surgeries, illnesses, deaths in their family and sent cards to almost all clergy families for whom I knew of their death.

- ❖ Participated in the funeral service for the Rev. Robert “Bob” Thornton at United Christian Church, Clayton, Graveside following, February 3
- ❖ Worshipped with, preached for, and co-led the Installation Service for Joy Fenton-Jones as Pastor of First Christian Church, Cuyahoga Falls, reception following, February 6
- ❖ Met on-site with Jim Rivers, Wadsworth, February 9

Congregational Care & Nurture

- ❖ Worshipped with and preached for the 175th Anniversary of First United Christian Church of Xenia, Anniversary dinner following, November 6
- ❖ Worshipped with and preached for and officiated at the Installation Service of the Rev. Chuck Butcher, Pastor of Clyde Christian Church in Clyde, celebration dinner following, November 20
- ❖ Worshipped with and preached for the District 12 Thanksgiving Service at Kemper Road Christian Church in Cincinnati, Thanksgiving Dinner following, November 20
- ❖ Several meetings and phone conversations around the anticipated closing of Disciples Christian Church in Boardman, including with Christian Church Foundation and Disciples Church Extension Fund staff, December 1
- ❖ Met with the Pastor and Leaders of Bethany Christian Church, Columbus, December 2
- ❖ Worshipped with and brought greetings at both services, enjoyed the Children’s Christmas Program at Alliance First Christian Church, December 3
- ❖ Worshipped with and preached for the Closing Worship Service of Disciples Christian Church in Boardman, fellowship dinner following, December 10
- ❖ Met (on-line) with the Church Board of Disciples Christian Church in Boardman, December 13.
- ❖ Worshipped with and led the installation service for the Rev. Ali Miguel at New Horizons Christian Church in Akron, reception after, December 18
- ❖ Worshipped with and preached for Disciples Christian Church, Cleveland Heights, reception after, January 8
- ❖ Met virtually with Brock McCracken from Disciples Church Extension Fund re: his visit and congregations needing care, January 11
- ❖ Worshipped with and preached for South Side Christian Church of Lima, dinner out afterwards with leaders, January 15
- ❖ Worshipped with Sylvania Christian Church, Sylvania, January 22
- ❖ Worshipped with and led the Installation Service of the Rev. Vickie Rankins-Anderson, reception following, January 22

Council/Commission/Committee Work

- ❖ Led the Regional Church Council Annual Meeting at Camp Christian on-site and on-line, November 4-5
- ❖ Met regularly with the Vision Committee
- ❖ Met regularly with the Finance Committee

- ❖ Led the Called Regional Church Council Meeting to elect officers, December 10
- ❖ Met with the Commission on Ministry Chairs, December 20
- ❖ Met with the Camp Christian Committee as often as I could
- ❖ Met with the Pastoral Relations Committee, January 3
- ❖ Attended the Interim Ministry bi-monthly Check-In Call, January 19

Finance

- ❖ Attended monthly Finance Committee meetings and fielded questions and requests
- ❖ Worked through the resignation of Rev. Nina Merkle Nestlerode as our new Treasurer and finding and orienting Lena VanBuskirk as our new Treasurer.
- ❖ 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)
- ❖ Extensive work with designing and publicizing our Christmas Offering, "Repeat The Sounding Joy," (<https://ccinoh.com/other-pages/christmas-offering.aspx>) including a series of social media posts highlighting photos and quotes from several of our Regional Church Council Members.
- ❖ Worked with the Finance Committee and Disciples Church Extension Fund staff on the Feasibility Study.
- ❖ Worked with the new Treasurer and Finance Council to put together the 2023 Budget.

Camp & Conference

- ❖ Toured Templd Hills Camp, Bellville, the Heartland Conference Camp, and met with their Conference and Camp staff to talk about shared possibilities, November 5
- ❖ Attended and supported Christmas Market Day at Camp Christian, December 2
- ❖ Hosted the Heartland Conference Staff and Camp Staff for a tour of Camp Christian and talked about shared possibilities, December 16
- ❖ Attended the Christmas Party for the Free Store, December 17
- ❖ Attended Advance Conference at Camp Christian, January 6-7
- ❖ Worked to bring back the Rev. Jim Bane as Summer 2023 Regional Camp Liaison to provide wisdom and guidance for the camp and conference program, met on-site with Jim January 18
- ❖ Met on-line with the Adult Conference Planning Committee, January 19
- ❖ Met on-line with the Executive Committee, February 1

Social Justice/Prophetic Witness

- ❖ Attended the Transgender Day Of Remembrance Ecumenical Service at Pilgrim United Church of Christ, Cleveland, November 15
- ❖ Attended the God Before Guns 10th Anniversary of Sandyhook Vigil at Disciples Christian Church in Cleveland Heights, December 4. You can watch a video of the vigil here: (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8poullRHRVQ>)

- ❖ Signed onto the Ohio Council of Churches Pastoral Letter of Concern regarding the recent mass shootings and the beating death of Tyre Nichols by police in Memphis. Read the Pastoral Letter here: <https://www.ohcouncilchs.org/copy-of-january-2023>

General/Larger & Ecumenical Church

- ❖ Helped Lead the Ohio Council of Churches Post-Election Prayer Call November 14 (on-line)
- ❖ I met on-site with Chuck Tuttle, outgoing Executive Director of the Cleveland Christian Home, November 29
- ❖ Attended on-site the College of Regional Ministers Retreat and Meeting in Arizona December 5-8
- ❖ Met on-site with Maureen Horton, Director of Development for the Cleveland Christian Home, December 15
- ❖ Met Monthly with the College of Regional Ministers via Zoom
- ❖ I concluded my work as co-facilitator for the monthly THRIVE Peer Group for Lexington Theological Seminary graduates with a retreat at Lexington Theological Seminary November 16-18
- ❖ Attended monthly on-line General Board Finance Committee meetings
- ❖ Met on-line with the Brite Divinity School Board of Trustees, led closing worship, February 6

Upcoming Urgent Issues or Short-Term Projects

- ❖ Work with Ohio Black Clergy to understand and address their concerns about Camp and Conference programming and leadership.
- ❖ To shepherd the Feasibility Study.
- ❖ Work with Camp staff and Camp Christian Committee to upgrade technology in both the Monroe Lodge and Ratcliff Dining Hall to make both facilities more inviting to rental groups and user friendly for our own programs.
- ❖ To discern and invite a core group of leaders for Ohio Men's Ministries from the two upcoming retreats to create a leadership team.
- ❖ To discern and invite members of a New Ministry Team, orient and train them for their ministry.

Continuing Education/Growth

- ❖ Attended (virtually) the online training: *Abuse Prevention Considerations: Keeping Your Ministry Safe* November 30, Featuring: Christy Schiller – Vice President of Account Services, Praesidium.
- ❖ Attended the College of Regional Ministers Retreat in Arizona December 5-8
- ❖ Attended (virtually) the *Within Us, Among Us: A Preaching Workshop for Disciples Preachers*, part of the General Church's Proclamation Project, January 20

- ❖ Attended the Spiritual Life Retreat January at Camp Christian, January 24-26 at Camp Christian, led by Rev. Monique Crain Spells
- ❖ Read (book) ***Reclaiming Rural: Building Thriving Rural Congregations*** by Allen T. Stanton
- ❖ 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, January 26
- ❖ I enjoyed the full Thanksgiving holiday without ministry responsibilities
- ❖ I took my first fully disconnected vacation since I've been Regional Minister in Ohio December 23 – January 2
- ❖ I took my 60th Birthday Weekend off fully disconnected, January 27-30
- ❖ Continue to enjoy my on-line Book Group and we have read and discussed recently ***One Of Ours*** by Willa Cather, and ***Interior Chinatown*** by Charles Yu
- ❖ Attending to my physical health with: exercise, massage appointments,

News & Updates

- ❖ No special news as of later.

Faithfully Yours,



Rev. Allen V. Harris
Regional Pastor & President