



CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN OHIO

DISCIPLES OF CHRIST

*A covenant network of congregations in mission:
We are the Body of Christ gifted and called in covenant together as Disciples of Christ
to be centers of transformation on the new mission frontier of our own communities*

Phone (614) 433-0343

10335 Maple Dell Road, Marysville, Ohio 43040
Website: www.ccinoh.org

Email: ccio@ccinoh.org

August 30, 2024

A Body Bound By Love

*But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into the one who is the head,
into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knitted together by every ligament
with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly,
promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.*

Ephesians 4:15-16

Dear Christian Church in Ohio Ministry & Mission Partner,

I've always been drawn to the imagery the Apostle Paul uses to describe the *koinonia*, the community of Christ-followers in the first century, when he describes it as a "body." When he was writing Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, or our theme text from Ephesians 4, Paul must have known instinctively that every single Christian could identify with having a body and therefore he used it to help us see how important it is to take care of the body and work towards its wholeness and health.

Working with various congregations of diverse sizes, locations, and missions, whether in Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, or elsewhere along his journeys, Paul chose to emphasize how each separate community needed to be connected to the others for the work of Christ to be most effective and faithful. The Apostle's imagery of ligaments vividly reminds us of the importance of a healthy connectivity within the body. He could just as well have said muscles, arteries and veins, or our network of nerves to remind us we are inextricably and gloriously bound together as one Body for growth, "building itself up in love."

The Christian Church in Ohio – *your* Regional Church – seeks to connect all of our congregations, clergy, lay leaders, and members so that together we are bound together in love. Whether it is the Regional Church Staff and me as your Regional Pastor, or the work of our Regional Church Council or our many Commissions, Committees, and Teams, or the ministry at Camp Christian, we seek to be the vigorous sinews linking the Body of Christ in Ohio.

Some of the ways in which the Regional Church has sought to connect and build up individuals and communities in the past year include: our **Lay Preaching Academy** to help equip lay leaders offer quality sermons and meditations, guiding congregations through times of pastoral transition in the **search and call process**, forming the **Congregational Renewal Team** to help leaders and congregations understand and live into new ways to be transformed for mission and ministry, bringing in a world-class singer songwriter, Carrie Newcomer, to **deepen clergy spiritual life**, leading a joint United Church of Christ/Disciples of Christ **International Affairs Seminar** helping high school youth link their faith with public life, starting a **Development Committee** that will offer our first workshop on generosity and stewardship in October, expanding our **Pro-Reconciliation/Anti-Racism Awareness**

Conversations, and guiding dozens of **candidates for ministry in becoming commissioned or ordained** to a life of ministry, to name just a few!

One of the creative ways I've tried to help our congregations and leaders manage these challenging times was to offer a "State of the Church" address, both a sermon and a detailed presentation, to outline the challenges and the possibilities facing the church in 2024. You can find them both on our YouTube page: <https://www.youtube.com/@ChristianChurchInOhio>

These are only a few examples of the many ways in which the Christian Church in Ohio helps the entire Body of Christ to be healthier in our shared mission and ministry. Follow our social media in the coming days to learn about more such instances: Facebook (@OhioRegion), Instagram, & Threads (@ccinoh).

Your gift to the 2024 Renewal Initiative will help the Christian Church in Ohio connect with more and more congregations, clergy, and lay leaders. Last year we received \$75,993.00. Our goal this year is a stretch, \$90,000, but we believe we can make this goal with all the exciting possibilities happening across the Christian Church in Ohio. You can give to the Regional Church Operating Expenses, the Camp Christian Operating Expenses, to "Wherever Most Needed," or a combination of these three options. In any case, any gift you give will be gratefully received and used well for helping build up the Body of Christ in love.

And one of the very easiest ways to amplify your gift, and therefore reinforce the ministry of the Christian Church in Ohio into the life of congregations and leaders is to **make your gift a recurring gift**. Whether weekly, monthly, or quarterly, making the gift you give regular and predictable helps the Regional Church Office and Staff know how to expand ministry in real and tangible ways. We have a goal of adding at least 20 new recurring supporters between now and the end of the year. You can easily do this on our secure online donation page: <https://www.ccinoh.com/donation>

Please note that the Renewal Initiative is completely separate from the "If Not Now, When? If Not You, Who?" campaign. This Renewal Initiative is an annual fund and supports current mission and ministry budgets. The major fundraising campaign is for a specific amount of time and projects and focuses on future expansion of staffing and our camp capacity.

We continue to seek to earn your trust in how the Christian Church in Ohio is a good steward of all the resources you graciously give us. To view a presentation I created outlining many of these steps to be transparent about finances and accountable in healthy ways, check out: https://www.ccinoh.com/media/356082/efforts_to_stabilize_and_strengthen_the_ccinoh.pdf

Please consider giving to this year's Renewal Initiative so that the Christian Church in Ohio can help connect and support our clergy, lay leaders, congregations, and faith partners so that the Body of Christ in all its diverse and dynamic expressions may be bound together in love. And may each part work properly, thus promoting the body's growth in building itself up in love.

Faithfully Yours,



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