

Christian Church in Ohio

Minutes of the Regional Church Council April 21, 2018

Members Present: Richard Swain, Alan Dicken, Steve Brown, Judy Alston, Cynthia Tyson, Edward Davitian, Candis Wilson, Janice Hill, Jack Sullivan, Jr., Michael Doerr, Beth Pass, Heather Schimmel, Jeff Gill, Thomas Barnes, Deb Bolan, Harry Bolen, Laurie Metzko, Steven Gower, Moderator Tom Stephenson.

Regional Staff: Interim Regional Minister John Richardson, Camp Superintendent Al Channel.

Guests: Philip Hunt, Walter Neubauer, Rob Wheeler, Jeff Wheeler.

Moderator Tom Stephenson called the meeting to order. John Richardson opened with a devotion centered on the Divine breath/wind, finding God in the silence, and listening.

Minutes:

Ed Davitian moved and Judy Alston seconded motion to receive [minutes of RCC October 28, 2017](#). Passed and received.

[January 9, 2018 Executive Committee meeting minutes received.](#)

Heather Schimmel moved and Jeff Gill seconded motion to receive [minutes of RCC January 18, 2018](#). Passed and received.

Edward Davitian moved and Jeff Gill seconded motion to receive [minutes of RCC February 15, 2018](#). Passed and received.

Finance Committee: (*Report on Pages 9-11 in [Ministry Reports PDF](#)*)

[Regional Church March Financial Statement \(Linked HERE\)](#)

Jeff Gill Handed out and reviewed “[Dashboard view of CCIO Finances per 2/28/2018, +3/31/2018](#)”

- DMF giving from Feb to March is down about 7-8% but we’re keeping 70% instead of 40% so it appears like income is increasing, but actual giving from the congregations is decreasing
- For the first time in a while, the Regional Office operated at a surplus for the month of March
- We are currently burrowing from the other regions about \$82,000
- As a Region we have been living for some time on the “grace” of the General Church. IF they asked us to pay our debts right now we would still owe ~\$10,000 if we use all existing “cash.”
- We are currently out of trust by \$155,929
- The Canteen and Capital Reserves for the Camp Christian Budget do not exist in cash.
- Using DMF giving as a benchmark, our Region had 79 cooperating congregations

Richard Swain researched IRS regulations and discovered that for nonprofits, we are evaluated by our own rules. We might have some exemptions as a Church organization, but it isn’t prudent or ethical to rely on those exemptions. We could be held accountable to the internal debts that we hold.

Motion to receive the report as presented was moved by committee, passed and received.

Open discussion and thoughts about “What next?”

Camp Christian Financial Report ([*Pages 5-7 on the March Financial Statement*](#))

Motion to receive Camp Christian March Financial Report as presented was moved by committee, passed and received.

Lilly Thrive Grant Financial Report

The Region is withdrawing from the program, but this item will continue on the report because full withdrawal doesn't happen until January of 2019. ([*Pages 8-9 on the March Financial Statement*](#))

Vision Committee

Vision minutes in docket are from the email sent to the Vision Committee for further response. The presented report follows:

The Vision Committee met through ZOOM on April 5th. Alan Dicken, Judy Alston, Steven Gower, Tom Stephenson, and John Richardson were present. We reviewed several documents regarding Structure and Vision for Regional Ministry and have come to the following observations and suggestions:

1. Anything the Region does to move forward should be rooted in scripture. We suggest beginning with the church's original call, the Great Commission: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." – Matthew 28:19-20. Our hope is that the mission, structure, and vision of the Christian Church in Ohio match Christ's call for us and be as simple and easily understandable as possible. The more people can understand the Region and Vision for our Church, the easier it is for us to work together. We want to be as clear, concise, and relatable as we can be.
2. Our Vision needs to align with our General Church. We need to be missionally focused. People and money will follow, if our we can accurately identify and passionately serve our mission. Now is a time of necessary trimming of ministries in our Regional body. We must simplify. We are enthusiastic of the Search Committee's desire to have listening conferences around the Region and encourage them to challenge our members to "define what mission means to them" so that we might see where our regional ministries overlap with our call in the Great Commission.
3. The Vision Committee has identified what we believe to be the essential ministries of our Region (in alphabetical order): Camp Christian, Commission on Ministry, and Search and Call. Without these ministries, we believe our Region would cease to exist. We also identified several ministries that have great meaning and align us with the greater church (in alphabetical order): Anti-Racism and Pro-Reconciliation, Church Transformation, and Networking and Resourcing Local Congregations and Ministries. We look forward to hearing from others what they think are the most meaningful and essential ministries of the Region.
4. The Vision Committee would like for the Regional Church Council to look at the regional structure and recognize how bloated and directionless it is. We feel we need to restructure our Constitution and Bylaws and specifically the rolls of the Regional Pastor and President, Regional Church Council, and Regional Office. Judy Alston said in our meeting, "The constitution and bylaws are not dead documents, they're living documents." We as a council need to address this issue.

Therefore, the Vision Committee proposes the following motion to get us on the right path.

The Vision Committee moves that the Regional Church Council suspend its bylaws with the following stipulations:

1. If no further action is taken on voting in new bylaws, design, or structure, our current bylaws will be reinstated on May 1st, 2019.
2. The Standing Committees of Executive, Finance, Membership, Personnel, and Vison will remain functioning.

3. Each Committee is expected to write its own understanding of how it should function and supply it to the Executive for further discussion and assembling a new structure.
4. The Christian Church in Ohio stop allocating resources to all Regional Church Ministry Committees, Commissions, and Task Forces except for:
 - a. Camp Christian
 - b. Commission on Ministry
 - c. Regional Pastor Search Committee
5. The Regional Church Council be no more people than 20% of the number of active partner congregations in the Region. (If we have 90 churches, the RCC would be 18)
6. Any Regional Church Council member who has 2 unexcused absences will be removed from the Council
7. The Executive Committee will be comprised of no more than 50% of the membership of the Regional Church Council (If we have 18 members the Executive would be 9)
8. The Executive Committee will function as the governing authority of the Region.

The Vision Committee would also like to address the RCC with two additional thoughts and ideas:

1. Would we like to propose an amendment to the constitution to remove Article VI Section 4 and to amend all language to match, getting rid of the “President” title for our Regional Pastor. This amendment must be distributed throughout the Region and voted on by the members present at the next Regional Assembly. Our hope is that even more work will be done on the constitution than this small change.
2. Would we like to suggest that the Regional Church Council write and submit a Resolution to the General Body that would move the circulation of minister and church papers to the Office of Search and Call (a kind of extension of their current listings and/or secure cloud storage for each region where churches could access papers)? This would remove some of the administrative burden from Regional offices. We could utilize technology to move ministry forward.

Respectfully Submitted on behalf of the Vision Committee,
Steven Gower - Chair

Motion to Suspend Bylaws made by committee, seconded by Jeff Gill.

Open for discussion – What does this look like for operation of the Regional Church Office? Answer: The Regional Office and Staff are handled under the constitution and our obligations to them will remain.

With this motion we would be stating that we are returning to scale in operations and ministry. Has/will the Vision Committee investigate the brokenness of the church in Ohio? Look into a particular study for the nature and ministry of Jesus Christ. We could benefit from ecumenical resources on how to structure and define the middle judicatories of ministry. The RCC and the standing committees need to investigate, digest, and discern structure, ministry, possible avenues for missional engagement as quickly as possible. These meetings need to happen ASAP and be communicated with the regional church as openly and transparent as possible.

Amended motion as follows:

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5. The Regional Church Council be no more people than 20% of the number of active partner congregations in the Region. (e.g., if we have 90 churches, the RCC would be 18)
6. Any Regional Church Council member who has 2 *unexcused* absences within a 2-year term will be removed from the Council.
7. The Executive Committee will be comprised of no more than 50% of the membership of the Regional Church Council (if we have 18 members the Executive would be 9)
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Jeff Gill asks “latitude of the chair” and speaks on the history of incorporating the Christian Church in Ohio (Disciples of Christ)

Motion with amendments approved unanimously.

[Interim Regional Pastor’s Report – General Board Report – John Richardson](#)

Highlights:

- Recently, I was asked by the pastor of a congregation planning to do some fund raising projects for Camp Christian: When these projects are presented to the congregation, I know someone will ask: How the church can be certain the money is going to Camp Christian and not to something else? My reply was as follows: ‘Here is my response—I apologize if it is too blunt.
 1. Since July 2017 no money has been spent in any way other than what it was given to in the CCIO.
 2. We have a completely different bookkeeping system, as of July 2017.
 3. If money is given that is designated for Camp Christian it is unethical and likely illegal for it to be spent it anywhere else.
 4. If money is given for a particular project at Camp Christian, we can confirm with the congregation when that project is complete and paid for.
 5. The staff members that, in my opinion, made extremely poor decisions about the regional finances in the past—which includes Camp Christian—no longer work for the region.
 6. Finally, when trust is broken, as it has been in CCIO, it means that we have to go the extra mile in order to regain that trust. We are willing to do that. But at some point, we must choose to trust each other again, with the full expectation that we will be accountable to each other.’”
- The Disciples of Christ have demonstrated we understand far better how to be a “movement” than an “institution.”

[Statement to the General Board – Moderator Tom Stephenson](#)

Tom Stephenson publicly thanked Rev. Stephen Bentley for his faithful ministry among us.

Camp Superintendent Report – Al Channel

Since December, Donna and I have been meeting with all groups using Camp as we search for more MA applicants and Volunteers for THIS SUMMER. We have discussed the current issues within the region, the summer volunteer program, the food budget reduction of \$10,000, and the changes to the menu that will facilitate that reduction, reducing Canteen options, and implementing a more substantial recycling program.

Volunteer Program: consists of two dish room volunteers M-F at each camp to do meal dishes; two maintenance volunteers M-F doing daily cleaning, trash removal, mowing, and any other minor maintenance issues as they arise. On Saturdays Volunteer Church groups, and the 1984 Staff, are going to “turn the camp around”. They will basically clean the entire camp and grounds to prepare for the next week. On Sunday afternoons Volunteers will assist with registration. Sign-ups for the program have been good; but, there are still many slots available. A long term CYF counselor felt called to work as a maintenance volunteer during his counselor week THIS SUMMER. A gentleman camper from back in the 60’s will be flying in from Las Vegas for a week to work as a volunteer on maintenance. Families are calling to help with registration when they bring their campers on Sunday. Blessings abound.

Amazon Wish List: In January, during the WANEW youth retreat, two of the adult counselors met with Donna and asked her if she would be interested in setting up an Amazon wish list for the kitchen. They explained that there may be people out there in churches who cannot volunteer but would still like to do something to help the camp directly (lack of trust). Currently, we are on the second round of items as the first list of kitchen supplies and equipment has already been filled. We have spent the past two months tearfully, and with incredible joy, opening the front door to another box from Amazon. Because of all these gifts Donna will be able to eliminate all the disposables like condiment packets, and replace pre-packaged menu entrée’s with meals made from scratch. Blessings abound.

Mission Trip: Earlier this year we received a call from Karen Rule, from Wadsworth Christian Church, expressing that her church was interested in possibly doing their week long mission trip to Camp Christian this spring. We worked it out through a series of phone calls and site visits and a plan is in place for them to be here the week of 14 May. Not only are they sending a group to do much needed large scale repairs, painting, and other work, they have paid for materials and paint. In addition, many of their church members are purchasing items from the Camp Kitchen wish list. Their Local Eagles Club has donated \$500 towards smoke detectors. Blessings abound.

Natural Gas Meter: Columbia Gas replaced our natural gas meter last month. As I reported last RCC, we had a leak. They finally repaired the leak and unfortunately may have downsized the meter inappropriately which will impact natural gas delivery. Ted Thomas, a licensed Professional Engineer, has been volunteering his services to Camp since 2009 and is working with Columbia Gas to resolve the problem. Columbia Gas will be out 2 May to upgrade meter. Thanks to Ted! Blessings abound.

Solar Project. We had 6 companies come to evaluate the site. 5 of those companies placed bids. Project is being held in abeyance.

Clark-Yoder Watershed: project has been approved by the Union County commissioners. Construction will begin, after Summer Camp, the second week of August 2018. This is a tile that will run the length of camp property in the swale next to the lake. Culverts at Maple Dell Road will be replaced. From that point on to Bokes Creek will be clear cut open ditch. Our initial assessment is estimated to be slightly in excess of \$7000.

Camp Property: The Christian Church in Ohio owns 5 parcels of land along Maple Dell Road, known as Camp Christian, totaling 78.8 acres. Deeds of two of those parcels are listed as being owned by the Incorporated Board of Trustees Ohio Christian Missionary Society. I recommend these deeds be updated to reflect Christian Church in Ohio as owner. At some point, this will require a resolution from RCC. Thanks again to Ted Thomas for his assistance in this matter.

Pools vs. MA’s: The deep pool remains closed for extensive floor repairs that far exceed a monetary gift from CCC Kettering to repair it. At this point it is unknown if the shallow pool will be mechanically

functional THIS SUMMER, let alone have a lifeguard available. We have been able to only hire FOUR Ministry Associates. **None** of these folks are lifeguards. The application deadline is long past. We need six more MA's, at least one of which to be a lifeguard, THIS SUMMER.

Walk-in Freezer: failed in late March due to a refrigerant leak. The repair was \$1473. Two weeks later the freezer failed again. Initially, the diagnosis was, one of the electric cooling fans on the compressor failed. The fan was replaced and the freezer worked for half of a day and failed again. The diagnosis this time was contactor. It was replaced and still the freezer would not function. This time it was determined to be the compressor. As I write this, a new compressor is being installed at a cost of \$6,800. Due to the generosity of a gracious donor, both of these invoices were paid. Blessings abound.

In closing, I would like to offer this. Donna and I came to Camp Christian in 1998 not imagining what God would have in store for us. And, after these 20 years we continue to be committed to His service. Camp Christian means more to us than buildings, or pools, or budgets. We have had major life events both happy and sad. Our younger two children were raised here. We have also seen the deaths of our parents but celebrated also the birth of our granddaughter. We have experienced pain and felt hurt and anger over many of the issues we now share together at what has transpired within the life the Christian Church in Ohio. But we also understand the importance of working together to heal and move forward together. Camp Christian is not our property, it is not ours to own. It is not what many could say is a tangible asset for the two of us. It is, pure and simple, our ministry. We are here not to take ownership of this camp. Rather, we are here to protect and maintain a place to allow people to seek and build a relationship with God first, and then one another. As Donna shares with groups we speak to about changes in the summer menu, it isn't about the food on your plate, it is about building relationships with the people you are sharing it with. And we are committed to seeing Camp Christian continue to thrive and to grow Christians as God intended for us. Blessings abound.

Michael Doer asks that we move to the recommendation in the Camp Commission Report and asks for Al to speak on this recommendation [Starting p. 33 of Docket].

Heather Schimmel moves that we set as policy of the Christian Church in Ohio that Camp Christian Dining Hall and Kitchen follow the Ohio Food Safety Code effective immediately, and Jack Sullivan Jr. seconded. Motion is passed.

Membership Committee Report – Candis Wilson (Page 8 in [Ministry Reports PDF](#))

Personnel Committee Report – Michael Doerr (Page 8 in [Ministry Reports PDF](#))
Personnel held an exit interview with Rev. Steve Bentley.

John Richardson and the RCC want to make note that the meetings required for us to discuss the future of ministry and structure in Ohio need to happen as quickly and as frequently as possible.

Regional Minister Search Committee – Janet Long (Thomas Barnes present)
(Page 12 in [Ministry Reports PDF](#))

Adult Conference (Page 13 in [Ministry Reports PDF](#))

Advance Ministries (Page 14 in [Ministry Reports PDF](#))

Anti-Racism/Pro-Reconciliation Commission (Page 15 in [Ministry Reports PDF](#))

Camp Christian Strategic Planning Task Force – Heather Schimmel

- Began in October with 100 initial people, original chair stepped down and Heather became chair in February
- Roughly 80% of the suggestions made at the October meeting have answers
- Camp Fees do not cover the cost of camp
- Camp Attendance is declining
- What this task force comes up with for camp will not be what it is today – “What you have is not what the future holds. But, if we don’t change, we will die.”
- The camp will be more than kids. It must be holistic.

Regional Church is looking for a good Lawyer specializing in non-profit law who would like to give some pro bono work. Contact the Regional Office.

Camp Christian Committee (Pages 21-22 in [Ministry Reports PDF](#))

- Look for the Camp’s Amazon Wish List for concrete ways to address current ministry needs

Children’s Ministries – no report

- Who’s directing Ribbit Camp? Joyce Oyler & Noelle Baird-Esway

Chi Rho Commission (Page 20 in [Ministry Reports PDF](#))

Christian Youth Fellowship Commission (Page 19 in [Ministry Reports PDF](#))

Commission on Ministry – Jeff Wheeler (Pages 21-22 in [Ministry Reports PDF](#))

- The cost of the evaluation from Midwest Ministries now falls entirely onto the candidate and their sponsoring congregation
- Working on establishing a team 4 – The Working Group for Ministerial Ethics and Response Team

Congregational Transformation Ministry Team (Page 26 in [Ministry Reports PDF](#))

Ohio Disciples Outreach – Harry Bolen

- Thank you to the members of ODO
- Alan Dicken spoke about the delegation to the Shalom Center in Chile
- Judy Alston asks for clarification on the ending of relationships with the Congo
Harry Bolen and John Richardson responded that there is currently no information for establishing/continuing relationships with the Congo

Disciples Fellowship Retreat Steering Committee (Pages 24-25 in [Ministry Reports PDF](#))

Ohio Women’s Ministry (Page 26 in [Ministry Reports PDF](#))

Ohio Disciples Men – no report

Regional Elders – John Richardson

- Getting good participation from Elders across the districts. Talking about how they can be helpful in search and call and how they might be able to be more engaged.

Spiritual Life Committee – Deborah Bolen (Page 27 in [Ministry Reports PDF](#))

- Discussion on who establishes camp fees and when they were last updated – Heather Schimmel and the Camp Christian Strategic Planning Task Force will look into this

Point of Clarification from Tom Stephenson

- *In conversation with John Gantt the interim Conference Minister of the UCC, it is our responsibility to appoint a person to represent the CCIO to the UCC and it is their responsibility to appoint a person to represent the UCC to the CCIO.*

Report of the Ecumenical Liaison – Jack Sullivan, Jr. (Pages 28-33 in [Ministry Reports PDF](#))

- Represents the CCIO to the Ohio Council of Churches and the Ohio Conference of the UCC
- Quote from the April 2018 update on the OCUCC: “Over the past two months, the Vision Team has held fifteen listening sessions and received dozens of emails from members across the conference with interest in the restructuring process. Our goal is to reimagine and reconstruct an organizational model of the church that faithfully fulfills the vision that God has placed on our hearts: a connected, covenantal church living the mission of Jesus Christ throughout our communities, states, and local region.”
- There should be more information about the Poor People’s Campaign coming soon from the Ohio Council of Churches. There is a Facebook page with more information. Alan Dicken tells us there will be 40 days of action starting the day after Mother’s Day called “Moral Monday.”
- Maybe the Region should form a Public Policy Committee that would research and evaluate the policies and movements going on this world and present them in a way that churches can disseminate.
- Jack Sullivan Jr went and protested the National Payday Loan association in Florida and Tom Stephenson is part of the Payday Loan Reform group in Ohio
- Cynthia Tyson: John Gantt will end his role as interim pastor of the OCUCC in July. Pilgrim Hills camp has been sold. A task force about faith formation has been assembled.

John Richardson has agreed to extend his Call as Interim Regional Pastor beyond July to the scheduled November 10, 2018 Regional Assembly.

Tom Stephenson told the RCC to go to our congregations to prepare and engage people about camp

Janice Hill: May 21st-22nd Bethany College will be hosting some great lectures

Tom Stephenson Closed the meeting with scripture.

Submitted by Steven Gower, Acting Secretary