

**Minutes of the Regional Church Council Meeting
February 3, 2020
Via Zoom**

Members Present: Tomas Hernandez, Marybeth Corbett, Chad Delaney, Tyler Reeve, Faith Solon, Candis Wilson, Cory King, Donna Overholt, Pamela Barnes-jackson, Gladys Davis, Jack Sullivan Jr, Alecia Hayes, John Cox, Alecia Hayes

Regional Staff: Jennie Stoddart-Bernard, Alan Dicken, Wendy Taylor,

Regional Ministers: Dean Phelps, Thad Allen

Guests: Martin Appis, Dan Sondles, Phil Hunt, Nathan Russell, Mark Mathis, Bruce Bowerman-Jett

Excused Absences: Roger McKinney, Dave Stonebraker, Matt Avery

Call to Order and Devotion- Candis Wilson

Holy Spirit as burning Fire- Luke 3:15-18

Approval of December 2, 2019 Minutes

Moved by Gladys Davis, second by Marybeth Corbett. Motion carries.

2019 Recap

We are moving forward in transparency and pastoral support due to the support and partnership from the visiting regional ministers. This has been beneficial to the regional staff, regional elders, congregations and clergy. Thank you to the regional elders and visiting regional ministers who have been instrumental to the mission and work in 2019.

In 2019 our DMF giving has gone up 10.5% from 2018, per Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Comparative Statement. This shows the building of trust back into the region. On the Region's financial reports it appears as if DMF giving is down, but that is only because the portion that is returned to us has dropped back closer to normal levels.

We have a new staff person, the Rev. Alan Dicken. He is our Program Director. He has hit the ground running and has been very engaged over the four weeks he has been in this position. He has been very willing and able to do the work, and congregations have been responding well to him.

The Free Store is more active and busy than ever! Thank you to Ted for the renovations that have allowed the Free Store to have a permanent home. The Free Store has been an example of God's love to the surrounding community. Volunteers have also benefited from engaging in this ministry.

Communications has been a sore issue in the past. We have listened this year, and thanks to Jennie we will be reinstating an e-newsletter. Please read this, and pass this along to your members and congregations. We all benefit from clear lines of communication. Submit items to Jennie that you wish to be included.

Church Extension will be doing a workshop on finances and ministries. This will be a great opportunity for clergy and lay persons to receive some education. This is to be held in the Spring.

Jack Sullivan was honored on MLK Jr. Day for his work in social justice. Congratulations Rev. Sullivan.

We are back in balance with our Permanently Restricted Fund trusts. This is a huge accomplishment, not to be overlooked. This was accomplished by moving some money back into CCF as well as a beneficial market return.

2020 Vision

Moderator opened the floor for discussion around our vision for 2020. The following were brought forth by members of what they would like see for the year

Candis Wilson- Still have a strong board moving forward that has a passion for nurturing the ministries we have in the Ohio region.

Gladys Davis- I would like us to take up a capital plan for the next 5 years and find a way to fund such a plan .

Rev. Thad Allen- I would like to see search committees well sources and served for their work, including a regional search committee. I would like us to be watchful and mindful stewards of the resources that are shared with us. May we continue to be in a spirit of fasting and prayer as a regional church.

Rev. Jack Sullivan Jr. - I would like to see more congregations experience spiritual growth that will lead to strong identities and work in their ministries

Rev. Alan Dicken- I would like a clear regional flow chart for our region. I would like to see excited and focused conversations about the poor people's campaign. I would also like to see new and successful ministry models so that we might learn from one another.

Rev. Nathan Russell- I would like to see a comprehensive needs assessment done so that we can be sure that we are paying for what we need and not paying for what we do not need. Such as evaluating money spent on tech support and bank fees (\$1200 camp / \$7,164 regional). More research is needed to find out how much we are paying per credit card transaction.¹ I would also like us to go back to a 50/50 split with the DMF, I would also like members of the regional church council to commit to getting their congregations on board.

Jennie Stoddart Bernard- I would like us to continue to bring more people into the conversation. I look forward to us continuing to be more of a community through events and other opportunities to be church together.

Rev. Chad Delaney- I would like a good 3-5 year plan regarding Camp Christian that confronts the realities we are facing boldly and head-on.

Rev. Faith Solon- I would like us to keep other regions in our minds who are undergoing a similar journey to our own, especially the Capital Region.

Focus and recap by Candis Wilson- Be strong in ministry, be good stewards of our resources, continue to nurture our resources, to organize ourselves in a structure that is apparent to all, have some 5 year plans and goals for ministries and camp christian, continue our work of being neighbors with one another in fellowship and ministry and resources, and do more social justice work for our communities.

At our next meeting we need to focus on a 5 year plan for the Region and Camp Christian. This will also give some direction to the search committee.

Rev. Dean Phelps- This visioning should not just be the work of the RCC, but should also include our clergy and congregations.

¹ Update from Gladys Davis: Our credit card transaction fees are 3% of credit card transactions, plus a base fee of \$99 per month. Jennie and Treasury Services are working on getting some donations moved from the All for Good Platform to Treasury Service's platform. The rate is still 3%, but once we are not using All for Good we will eliminate the \$99 per month fee.

Dan Sondles- Did any of the board's actions come out of the listening sessions around Ohio last year?

Candis Wilson- Yes, the position that Rev. Alan Dicken has been hired to fill was created from the feedback of the sessions. We have also worked to increase understanding of DMF giving. We have started work on (but not rolled out) a campaign that will address financial needs. The restarting of the newsletter is a response to the critique of a need for more communication. Social media usage has also been begun by Camp Christian in an effort to address communication needs.

Gladys Davis- Additionally . . .

- Consistent with the RTF Report recommendations we are currently discussing holding the Region's share of DMF at 50% for another year.
- We considered the recommendation to end our arrangement with the Regional Ministers as of Dec 31 2019 and decided it would be more prudent, from a fiscal and governance standpoint, to retain that relationship for another 9-12 months until the Region calls a new Regional Minister.
- We have repaid the debt owed for our Mortgage and to our Permanently Restricted Funds.
- We are working towards building a 6 months cash operating reserve
- The Camp Christian Committee is working on ways to make Camp Christian self-sustaining.
-

Regional and Committee Reports

Regional

Jennie Stoddart Bernard- See report below.

Regional Administrator Report to the Regional Church Council

February 3, 2020 - Jennie Stoddart Bernard

In addition to my regular tasks, here are a few of the highlights and larger projects I have been working on since the December Regional Church Council meeting and will be working on over the next few months.

I worked together with Gladys Davis, the visiting Regional Ministers, and a couple members of the Finance Team on Christmas Offering messages and promotions. I very much appreciate their willingness to write messages and assist with promotion of the Christmas Offering.

Summer Camp and Conference registration forms and information were finalized in early January. They have been emailed out to Congregations, Ministers and leaders, as well as posted on our website and shared through our social media sites.

With some assistance I was able to pull together a January issue of The Buckeye Disciple. The feedback from this was very positive both through email as well as on Social Media. As I mentioned at the last meeting, my intention is to do these monthly. The part that I need the most help with is gathering content. I will be sending out a February issue this week.

The deadline for Summer Ministry Associate applications was this past Saturday, February 1. Tomorrow (Feb 4,) I will go to Camp to check on anything that came in the mail over the weekend. Wendy, Ted, Alan and I will review the applications and reference forms this week and will be contacting applicants sometime the following week to set up phone interviews. The plan is to have hiring decisions made before the end of the month.

I will be preparing an Ohio Lenten Devotional booklet again this year. The entire Regional Church Council, as well as many other ministry leaders have been asked to participate. Alan is also assisting with recruiting authors. The deadline for submissions is February 17th.

Ministerial Standing forms are being completed by the over 300 ministers with standing in Ohio. Team 3 of the Commission on Ministry reviews each of these for Ohio Standing, and I review them to crosscheck against the data that the General Office in Indianapolis has for their records and the annual Year Book. To date, approximately 80% of the forms required have been turned in. I am working with the Commission on Ministry to track down the remaining forms. This all has to be completed prior to February 28th. I will also be preparing and mailing out standing cards to the ministers with standing.

Congregational Year Book reporting is now online as well at <https://disciples.org/yearbook/>. Between now and the deadline for these reports to be submitted (March 15) I will be working with the Ministers and Congregations to get these reports done. The Regional Elders and Visiting Regional Ministers also are a big help with this process.

Rev. Alan Dicken- Much of the first month has been phone calls with ministry leaders around the region. This month will be a lot more in person work. Upcoming CYF and Spiritual Life retreat. Assisting Jennie with assembling the Lenten devotional.

Wendy Taylor- The camp kitchen is very quiet now. Many of the retreats this month are self-contained in the lodge. I have been able to focus on the summer and create a schedule that is more friendly to our staff, myself and ministry associates. I have also been brainstorming and working on ideas for the canteen this summer, such as a slushie machine. Also sprucing up the canteen to be more visible and adjusting the hours to maximize usage.

Ted (not present, but given by Cory King in his absence)- Update on physical changes at Camp: Drainage work at Camp Christian has been completed, there is some concern about cluster B being unlevel. A new grate and fireplace items have been gifted to the Monroe lodge. Electrical to the buildings has been completed. The chlorine for our water system is too high as per the EPA, so Ted is working to adjust this. There is work on some new green chairs. LED lighting has been donated to Camp, so these are being installed. The December electric bill for Camp was high, and Ted is looking into this to assess the reason with Ohio Edison.

Alicia Hayes- There was an electrical evaluation back in 2016. This evaluation was shared with Ted and the regional committee. This addresses the issue of electrical leeching. This could be due to losing it to ground or to inefficient electrical machinery.

Cory King- Ted is working on replacing the ballasts in the cabins.

Jennie- There was a noticeable seeming error that jumped in December that is being worked out with the electrical company. This is being addressed by Jennie and Ted with the electrical company.

Cory King-Ted is looking for direction in regards to the pond. There is a work day at camp this Saturday, 2/8 at 9 am.

Camp Christian Committee

Rev. Chad Delaney- Camp Christian Committee has been working on the green chair fundraiser. We talked about having to raise \$10,000. Many of the kids are interested in the bathrooms being redone and having more green chairs. The bathrooms need some more thought, but there are folks from Wadsworth church that are going to be making green chairs that will stay at Camp Christian. The hope is to establish new green chair circles. A chair will be a \$300 donation and will include a plaque on the chair with the owner's dedication. The order forms will come out by the middle to end of this month. There may also be a fundraising option to purchase a chair for personal or church use not at camp.

Rev. Alan Dicken has been helpful with giving some direction to our committee and inspiring us to vision for the future.

Rev. Alicia Hayes- Much of my report has been covered by the update on the physical changes at Camp. I do not have more to add at this time.

Rev. Phil Hunt- It might be good for the region to share how much it costs to operate Camp Christian. There is a bit of feeling thinking that Camp is paid for due to the mortgage being paid off, but that is not the case.

Rev. Chad Delaney- Agreed. The idea that campers are going to come out in droves to Camp Christian is unrealistic due to trends in mainline protestant churches. Many options need to be considered in order to make Camp more sustainable into the future. A main focus for this year needs to be increasing awareness around camp. There will be some big decisions that need to be made in the years to come in order to make camp more sustainable.

Rev. Phil Hunt- Has there been any movement in regard to the sale of a portion of the camp property? (Property owned by us but not attached to the main campus. No buildings are on this property.)

Rev. Alicia Hayes- We have been discussing bringing in a real estate broker to gain a better understanding of what would be the best use of the property, selling or renting TBD. We still need to view our options. We as a board need to come on the same page in order to make Camp at some point self-sustaining. We need to think creatively on how we will sustain camp into the future.

Elders

Rev. Phil Hunt- We did not have a meeting in January. We are looking to fill two regional elder spots near Cleveland East and Cleveland West, both in District 2. We have approached two people, but they have not yet responded. We have a meeting coming up at Camp on February 18 at 10am, but most people who have replied will attend via Zoom.

Membership Development

Rev. John Cox- I have contacted people and asked them to join the RCC. There are some people that still harbor hard feelings so I am having a hard time getting people to join the RCC.

Rev. Nathan Russell- I filled out my interest form and spiritual gifts assessment.

Candis Wilson- There seems to be a gap in our notifications due to a change in our staffing. This will be remedied.

Rev. John Cox- As the Ohio Council of Churches (OCC) representative, there are some events coming up. The OCC had a 100 year celebration. There is some money that needs to be donated to the Ohio Council of Churches.

Candis Wilson- I have received your form and I will get back to you.

Rev. Jack Sullivan Jr.- March 11 and 12 we will be protesting and moving for social justice at the Statehouse.

Personnel

Rev. Pamela Barnes Jackson-We have not met since December 2019. I am excited to announce that we called, Rev. Alan Dicken, approved by the RCC Board members on 2/3/2020, per the request of Rev. John Cox. Rev. Dicken is our new Regional Program Manager. We welcome Rev. Dicken. Rev. Dicken will be attending the District 8 Pastoral Gathering in Dayton, Ohio on February 10, 2020. The Personnel Committee will have the the CCIO Employee Handbook updated by the end of March 2020.

Rev. Thad Allen- I think it would be proper for this body to affirm the call of Rev. Dicken, with a vote so that he will be fully endorsed by this body and have that authority.

Rev. Nathan Russell- This vote also needs to be retroactive to his initial date of call according to the bylaws.

Rev. Jack Sullivan moves that we affirm the call of Rev. Alan Dicken retroactive to January 1, 2020. Second by Rev. John Cox. Motion carried unanimously.

Treasurer's Report, Gladys Davis- We have moved money into CCF and church extension...

Gladys Davis led us through the draft 2019 Financial Report provided by Treasury Services. There will be a few tweaks made to the report, then the final version will be published on the website. As stated earlier, taken as a whole, our Permanently Restricted Fund balance has been restored. For the Region specifically there is a \$1000 shortfall but we are working to address this, hopefully before the final report is issued. The \$30,000 annually we pay to treasury services is borne by the regional office, and camp is not being held responsible for this fee. This cost should be allocated to both the Region and Camp as not having the Camp bear part of the cost gives us a false sense of what it costs to run the camp.

The money to address the drainage issues at camp were planned to be funded by specific line items, such as our Capital Reserves... It does not appear that the specific line item funds were used, and operating funds were used instead. This will be addressed with John at treasury services.

Discussion regarding cash flow in regards to camp. Gladys feels that we have sufficient cash on hand to get us through to May when we receive the bulk of our Summer Registration Fees. If unplanned cash needs arise, we can leverage some of the Unrestricted Funds invested at Church Extension. The Canteen Fund is at the discretion of the Camp Christian Committee.

Nathan Russell and Cory King are going to help assess our computer support needs and see if we are overpaying for tech support. Any other people who can help examine our vendors to ensure we only pay for what we are using should contact Jennie or Gladys

Business Items

CCF Account Balance- Covered in Financial Report

2019 Financial Review- Covered in Financial Report

Business Items from the Floor- None

Remarks from Area Regional Ministers

Rev. Thad Allen- We are going to share the 12 marks of a regional church. Trust may not be up just because DMF giving is up. We need to be mindful of our top giving churches and see what is happening with them. The gifts that are given are brought to the communion table first. These are sanctified gifts.

Important Regional Dates

February

8- 9am Camp Christian Work Day

16, 23- Week of Compassion offering

18-20- Spiritual Life Retreat for Ministers

21-23-CYF Retreat

March

7-Anti Racism Training

14-Boundaries Training

11 & 12 - OCC Action Days

28- Disciples Connect Spring Luncheon

30- Workshop of Ministers

May

2- Camp Christian Market Day

Closing Prayer