

Ohio Regional Newsletter - June 2021



Across The Region And In My Heart

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

So many wonderful things are happening in our Regional Church. You will see in this monthly newsletter the results of our hard work, including several reports from a very productive (and gratitude-filled) **Regional Church Council meeting** (thanks to our Moderator, Candis Wilson and the entire Council) and the beautifully crafted **COVID-19 Memorial Service and Blessings of the Chaplains** which went live over Memorial Day weekend (thanks to the great work of our Regional Program Director, Rev. Alan Dicken and several gifted leaders from around Ohio).

I wanted to take a moment and celebrate our upcoming **Summer Church Camp Season** and the great work of so many people to help make this happen. As you are well aware planning a camp program in the midst of a global pandemic has been stressful and filled with uncertainties. Following the advice and counsel of the Union County Health Department, our camp leaders have carefully planned an inspiring and safe, though limited, camp program.

First and foremost, we are eager for **campers to register** so that we can fully prepare for their arrival and participation. Every congregation has been sent a set of registration forms, but all the details you need are online here: <https://www.ccinoh.com/camp-christian/summer-programs.aspx>

We also are needing volunteers to help our Interim Camp Site Manager, Tom Bowerman-Jett, get the facilities back into shape after a season off. We have a special Camp Work Day this Saturday, June 5 from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Details, including a list of projects and a sign up link, can be found here: <https://www.ccinoh.com/regional-calendar.aspx?events=9885&action=details>

As you will see elsewhere in this June newsletter, we are soliciting donations for our "Sponsor-A-Camper" program which will help stabilize our income stream to insure a financially successful camp season.

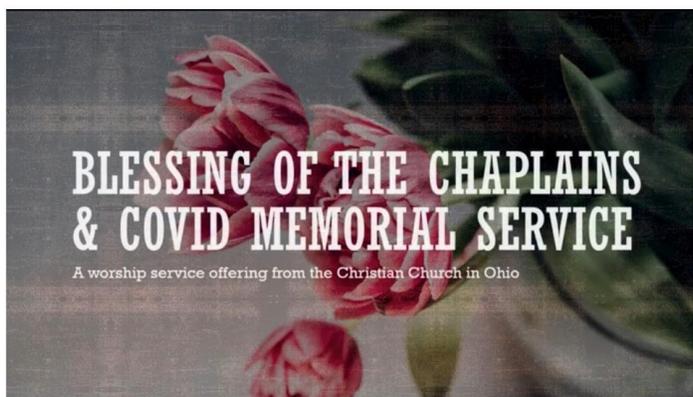
Finally, I want to point out what should be obvious to you, and that is that Camp Christian is our Regional Church's single largest asset. Our camping program also requires a significant amount of staff time and attention. For many in our church, church camp is thought of interchangeably with the Regional Church, and there is a great deal of pride and passion around camp. As the Regional Pastor & President I am responsible for making sure that this great asset and programming focus is available to as many, if not all, of our congregations, clergy, members, and communities throughout the Christian Church in Ohio. In the coming year I, together, with the Camp Christian Committee and the Regional Church Council, will be exploring more ways our beloved church camp can be accessible to and spiritually renewing for our entire Region, and thus help sustain its witness for generations to come.

Take a moment now and invite a child, youth, or young adult to summer camp at Camp Christian this summer! And may lives be changed by the love of God, the call of Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit because of it!

Faithfully Yours,
Allen

Blessing of our Chaplains and COVID Memorial Service

As a Regional Church we are profoundly aware that this past year has taken many of us into the depths of grief, heartache, and exhaustion that no one could have expected. The onset of the COVID-19 virus that enveloped our globe has surely changed us all, most especially our chaplains who often found themselves at the very center of this pandemic.



As part of the Christian Church in Ohio's awareness of all who have died from COVID-19 as well as of the service and gratitude to our chaplains for all have done, we created this service of worship. It is both a memorial to those who have died from COVID-19 and a balm to those who grieve their deaths, it is also a blessing of the ministry of our chaplains. Clergy from around the Christian Church in Ohio have come together to offer their gifts and graces for ministry, including the Rev. Dr. Alecia Hayes, Rev. Amanda Moore, Rev. Shelby Baxter-Andrews, Rev. Melanie Harrell Delaney, Rev. Seth Stout; Rev. Nathan Russell, Rev. Alan Dicken, and Rev. Allen Harris. Thanks also to Jen Radisch who shared her musical gifts as pianist. A special word of thanks to Rev. Alan Dicken for securing our leaders and beautifully crafting the final video of the service.

The Blessings of the Chaplains and the Memorial Service can be viewed on YouTube at: <https://youtu.be/1aubxn4psMo> If you know of the names of other persons in our congregations and communities who have died from COVID (known publicly) please email that information to the Regional Office: ccio@ccinoh.org



Reminder, Camp Christian Summer Registration Now Open!

Linked [HERE](#) please find the forms for the various weeks of camp as well as the health and scholarship forms. There are a few differences between previous years' forms and this year's forms due to changes we have had to make around Covid-19, so please take your time to read over the documents carefully.

We look forward to seeing all of you back at Camp Christian this summer, so please share these forms and information with anyone and everyone you know who may be interested in coming to camp! See you soon!

For any questions, please contact Regional Program Director, Rev. Alan Dicken at adicken@ccinoh.org.

AND

This year, we are introducing an exciting new way to support Camp Christian by joining in our **"Sponsor-a-Camper"** program! This is a way for those who might not have their own camper or be coming to camp themselves this summer, but would like to help another young person come to experience the power of the Holy Spirit at work in Camp Christian!

With the Sponsor-A-Camper program, anyone can pay full or partial camp fees to go towards the cost of a week at camp. You can make a donation to CYF, Chi Rho, Junior, or Advance or any combination you would like. Your donation will help that Camp or Conference cover costs associated with their specific 2021 summer program at Camp Christian.

A Note: For Sponsor-A-Camper donations to be considered tax-deductible gifts, it is important that donations be made generally to the week of Camp or Conference and not just for a specific camper/conferee, otherwise it is a registration payment and not a donation.

Sponsor-A-Camper donations can be made online at <https://www.ccinoh.com/other-pages/donation.aspx> or by mailing a check to Camp Christian, 10335 Maple Dell Rd., Marysville, OH 43040. Please note your designation clearly. Thank You!



Camp Christian Work Day Saturday, June 5th

From 7:00am until 5:00pm
Attend as you are able

We hope that there is a task suited for a wide range of ages and abilities. A detailed list of tasks and expectations can be viewed by clicking [HERE](#).

Please wear work clothes, boots or heavy duty shoes, and bring gloves. Please pack your own lunch. Snacks, Coffee and Water will be provided. Up to date Covid protocols will be followed. Anyone under the age of 18 MUST have a legal parent or guardian attending and working with them.

There is no charge to participate, but please complete the online sign up [HERE](#).

For more information about the Work Day, and how to participate and/or contribute, go to the date on the [Regional Calendar](#).



Virtual Adult Conference June 21st – 24th, 2021



Vespers Speaker
Rev. Dr. Sharon Watkins
Pastor, Bethany Memorial Church,
Bethany WV
& former General Minister & President



Bible Lecturer
Rev. Dr. Rick Lowery
President, Disciples of Christ Historical Society

The Adult Conference of the Christian Church in Ohio is pleased to invite you to our [2021 Summer Virtual Retreat from June 21-24](#). Our theme, "The Time is Now" based on 2 Corinthians 6:2: "For he says, 'At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you.' See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation!" The Rev. Dr. Rick Lowery, current president of the Disciples of Christ Historical Society, will present our bible lectures while Rev. Dr. Sharon Watkins, former General Minister and President of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and current serving minister at historic Bethany Memorial Church, will provide our Vespers message. Like any year, summer conference will feature a host of classes delivered by voices with our region and larger movement.

Each day, during conference, videos will premiere through the [Adult Conference of the Christian Church in Ohio Facebook page](#) as the schedule below indicates. Of course, if you can't make these times, the videos will be available at your leisure. Each day there will also be an opportunity for fellowship through zoom software before we join together for an evening vespers service.

More information as well as the link to RSVP can also be found at <https://www.ccinoh.com/ministries/adult/adult-conference.aspx>

Regional Church Council actions and appreciation

Freedom and Truth Christian Church Welcomed As Congregation In Formation

The Regional Church Council for the Christian Church in Ohio, at its meeting on Saturday, May 15 recognized the Freedom and Truth Christian Church in Cleveland, Ohio as an official Congregation In Formation of the Christian Church in Ohio and their founding pastor, the Rev. Shauna McGhee, as a New Church Planter of the Christian Church in Ohio. Since we are in a time of transition and reformation of the work of several of our committees, It is understood that as soon as the Regional Church Council has appointed a New Church Committee that Rev. McGhee and the leadership of Freedom and Truth Christian Church will proceed under the care and guidance of that Team until they are prepared to become a fully chartered congregation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) at which time the congregation will be presented to the Regional Church Council for consideration as such.



We give thanks for the vibrant ministry this new congregation already has. You are invited to check out their Facebook Page at <https://www.facebook.com/freedomandtruthcc>

Thank You Those Who Have Served So Well



The Regional Church Council for the Christian Church in Ohio in its meeting on Saturday, May 15 officially recognized the over two years of service to the four Visiting Regional Ministers assisting the Christian Church in Ohio: the **Rev. Eugene James** of Michigan, the **Rev. Rick Spleth** of Indiana, the **Rev. Dean Phelps** of Kentucky, and the **Rev. Thad Allen** of West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and the Northeastern Region. They each served the Christian Church in Ohio while still serving their own Regions to which they were called. This over-and-above service was vital to the stability of the Ohio Region and their work with the clergy and lay leaders around the state, as well as with the Regional Staff, Regional Church Council, their designated Committees, and the Regional Elders was critical during a time of transition in the Region and preparation for the calling of a new Regional Minister.

Regional Church Moderator, Candis Wilson, wrote to their home Regions, "It has been a blessing that you have shared your Regional Ministers with us these past 2 ½ years as we had to figure out finance, ministry, and the Covid-19 pandemic. The knowledge, love, and compassion they have shown for the Christian Church in Ohio and Ohio disciples is more than we could have asked for. They each brought their own unique gifts and talents to us in a way that allowed us to be nurtured and become stronger. Words could never express how grateful we are. We give thanks to God for the time, energy, wisdom, patience, and faithfulness of these four Regional Pastors and offer them our heartfelt gratitude.

Thank you, Rev. Allen, Rev. Phelps, Rev. Spleth, and Rev. James for your faithful service.

The Regional Church Council also celebrated the leadership of **Rev. Roger Osgood** and **Anne Sowell** at its meeting on Saturday, May 15. They recognized the service, commitment, leadership, and vision of the Rev. Anne Sowell and the Rev. Roger Osgood as Co-Chairs of the Anti-Racism/Pro-Reconciliation Commission of the Christian Church in Ohio. Anne Sowell has been a member of the Anti-Racism/Pro-Reconciliation Commission of Ohio since 2000 and became a Co-Chair in 2002. Rev. Osgood has served since 2007 and became Co-Chair in 2009. They concluded their leadership of the Commission in February of 2021. Their combined 36 years of commitment and 30 years of leadership have helped this Region understand, confront, address, call to accountability, lament, educate, transform, and offer a vision of hope to the congregations, leaders, and members of our Region. It was with deepest gratitude and heartfelt appreciation that this Region recognized Ms. Sowell and Rev. Osgood's service to the church and commitment to confronting racism and white supremacy, and we celebrate their ongoing pledge to continue this critical work in our Region.

In their letters of resignation, they wrote: Anne Sowell "This is one of the hardest emails I've written in a very long time. However, I feel that this is a must at this time. I have been a member of the Anti-Racism/Pro-Reconciliation Commission of Ohio since 2000 and became a Co-Chair in 2002. This

is a journey that resumed after my teen years during the Civil Rights Era in Birmingham, Alabama. I've experienced and continue to experience racism while learning more about cause and effect of racism and reconciliation. I've met a lot of great people along the way that want to see change and are willing to work to change institutions, but understand there is still so much to do. I am resigning from the co-chairman position but plan to continue as a commission member. I'm proud of the little accomplished during my tenure and hope all that we are witnessing daily in our nation will motivate change on a grand scale and eventually put this commission out of business."

Roger Osgood "I have been on the ARC since 2007 and became Co-Chair in 2009. This is an important ministry and I have been grateful to be included in this work and humbled by the commission's trust and grace in my often-flawed leadership. At this time the congregation I pastor is going through a major change and while I do not plan to step away completely, I do need to step back from leadership. I believe that it also may be helpful for new leadership to take over this ministry and for the commission (and region) to take a look at expanding the commission's purpose and work so that we take bold, decisive steps to actually become a Pro-reconciling/Anti-racist Region within the broader denomination.

The Regional Church Council is currently working to secure new leadership for the vital work of this committee.

Similarly the Regional Church Council for the Christian Church in Ohio at its May 15 meeting recognized the service of the **Rev. Eugene Fisher** as our Regional Elder for District 2 and **Rev. Ed Allen** as our Regional Elder for District 3 East. Their service provided a much needed gift of pastoral care, support, and wisdom to the congregations, clergy, and lay leaders of Districts 2 & 3 as well as to the entire Region of Ohio. The Council offered Rev. Fisher and Rev. Allen their gratitude for their faithful service to the church and to this Region.

The Regional Church Council for the Christian Church in Ohio, again at its May meeting, recognized the five years of service by the **Rev. Margot Connor** as one of our Clergy Healthy Boundary Trainers. Along with Pro-Reconciliation/Anti-Racism Training, this is one of our required trainings for all clergy to maintain standing in the Christian Church in Ohio. We give thanks for her much needed ministry helping seminarians, ordained and commissioned clergy, and other leaders in the church understand and maintain healthy practices and appropriate boundaries in their ministries. Please join in offering Rev. Connor our gratitude for her faithful service to the church and to this Region.

Congregational News

Here is some news from a few Congregations around the Ohio Region. If your Ohio Disciples Congregation has news you would like to share with the Region, please email it to Regional Administrator, Jennie Stoddart Bernard at jstoddartbernard@ccinoh.org.

First Christian Church, Wilmington

Since January of this year and with no clear sense of when it might reopen from its pandemic closure, the congregation was able to conduct a major capital campaign while continuing its outreach ministry. The "Raise the Roof" campaign was a \$250,000 project to replace the 113 year old roof, repair and repaint the cupola, repair multiple stained glass windows, repair a chimney, repair and paint the sanctuary that had sustained water damage, and to purchase electronic equipment to continue and enhance the congregation's online ministry. The unexpected joy was that the congregation's portion of the fundraising goal, \$150,000, was not only reached within 3-months but surpassed by almost \$42,000! All this, and more, was accomplished while still providing over \$52,000 in outreach to the community, region and general church in the past 12 months. Pastor Tom Stephenson said, "The only way I can explain this incredible generosity is the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit among our people."



First Christian Church, Stow

The Congregation is excited to share that after a long discernment process we revamped the previous Administrative Assistant position to better match where FCC Stow is today, while setting us up for a successful future. We are calling this revamped and brand new position "Director of Church Relations." It will still include much of the former position, but it will also include a broad range of new aspects, including a strong focus on digital media and social networking.

After a lengthy search process the Congregation hired someone for this position and he began his ministry as Director of Church Relations on May 3rd. His name is Christian Sanko, and he is a recent graduate of Malone University and brings with him a strong church background along with a broad skillset that is already having a positive impact for the church.

General Church and beyond the Ohio Region News

Virtual retirement celebration for the Rev. Pat Donahoo, Executive Director of Disciples Women



[Kentucky calls Regional Minister](#)

Rev. Dr. Donald K. Gillett II has been called as the new regional minister for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Kentucky. The regional board voted unanimously on Saturday, May 22, to approve the Regional Minister Search Team's recommendation that Rev. Dr. Gillett be called to this position. He will start in this position on Aug. 1.

Rev. Dr. Gillett has deep roots in the Kentucky region, having served the last 22 years as senior pastor of East Second Street Christian Church in Lexington. Since June 2017, he has been the Executive Director of the Kentucky Council of Churches and has served as an adjunct lecturer at Lexington Theological Seminary.



Rev. Dr. Gillett stated, "I am honored and privileged to have been called to regional ministry in Kentucky. I am truly excited and feel called to this ministry at this moment in time and look forward to working with all who make up the Christian Church in Kentucky."

The full press release can be viewed at <https://disciples.org/regions/kentucky-calls-regional-minister/>



Water the Plants 



PRAYER SUMMIT

SATURDAY, JUNE 5 | 10 AM PST (1 PM EST)



Find fun, faith, and fellowship at Prayer Summit

Every Tuesday morning and Thursday evening, [New Church Ministry](#) gathers intercessors on the phone to "water" church "plants" with prayer. Guided by a group leader and a monthly calendar, Disciples across the U.S. and Canada to ask God to care not only for emerging and affiliating congregations and their leaders, but regional and general ministries and

their ministers as well.

But we want to hear from [new church movement](#) supporters themselves! Join our virtual [Water the Plants](#) Prayer Summit on **June 5th from 1:00-3:00 PM EST** for scripture, music, and testimony.

Register at https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_rBkJG1kT8OAFjiFRIQniw.

DMF Day 2021 – Thursday, June 24

This will be the second year that the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) will hold a special day to celebrate our Disciples Mission Fund - DMF Day. On Thursday, June 24 make a gift on DMF Day to support Disciples Mission Fund, which makes it possible for the whole church to work together, doing far more than we could alone.

Individuals and congregations make contributions to DMF, which funds the work of regional and general ministries, who make it possible for us to be the church together, in many ways and in many places. Disciples Mission Fund giving substantially supports the ministry of the Christian Church in Ohio, in addition to many of our General Ministry partners who add tremendously to what the Regional staff can do in our congregations and faith communities.



On June 24, we will celebrate the work we do together as church because of Disciples Mission Fund. Follow Disciples social media for live events, stories, and updates throughout the day. Be sure to use and follow the hashtags #DMFDay and #DMFDoesThat on Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) to be a part of the conversation!

If you've ever...

- sat around a campfire at church camp

- had a visit from a global mission co-worker
- visited a Disciples college
- served on a search committee for a new pastor
- attended Children Worship and Wonder
- connected with other Disciples in your region

...then you've seen Disciples Mission Fund at work.

DMF Day Live Events on Facebook and Youtube

(<https://www.facebook.com/christianchurchdoc/> and <https://www.youtube.com/ChristianChurchDOC>)

Kick Off – 10:00 ET/ 7:00 PT

Kick off DMF Day with a live edition of "Imagine with Me." General Minister and President Terri Hord Owens will talk with a panel of church leaders about the power of Disciples Mission Fund to transform lives across the church and around the world.

Generosity Forum – 2:00 ET/11:00 PT

Imagine what Our Gifts Can Do: Why Generosity Matters, Plus 5 Tips for Doing Stewardship in the Digital Age Join Bruce Barkhauer of the Center for Faith and Giving and Lee Hull Moses of the Office of the General Minister and President for a brief conversation about the practice of generosity and practical tips you can use in your congregation.

Service of Gratitude – 8:00 ET/5:00 PT

Evening Prayers of Gratitude and Celebration Tune in as we give thanks for the gifts received and the work we have been given to do.

For the full Ohio Regional Calendar with upcoming events and important dates, go to
<https://www.ccinoh.com/regional-calendar.aspx>

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