

Regional Church Council Meeting

May 15, 2021

Via ZOOM

Members Present: Candis Wilson, Gladys Davis, Diane Bartlett, Bruce Bowerman-Jett, Thomas Barnes, Pamela Barnes-Jackson, Alecia Evans-Hayes, Philip Hunt, Kevin Kaufman, Cory King, Faith Solon, Terry Williams

Regional Staff: Rev. Allen Harris, Alan Dicken, Tom Bowerman-Jett

Guests: Matt Thomas, Freedom and Truth Christian Church – Rev. Shauna McGhee, Annie Adams, Danyale Lee, Jean Lightfoot

Call to Order – Candis Wilson called the zoom meeting to order with Devotions, “Renewed Vision” from I Samuel 1:10-18, 2:1-2

Approval of February 27, 2021 Minutes – Gladys Davis noted one correction to page 2: Staff update from Jennie Stoddart Bernard. The suggestion from Gladys Davis was to create a power point slide to send to churches which may be added to their decks since finance info is already communicated monthly. “Publishing a monthly slide that churches could use for their Sunday services for information about the region”. With this change, Gladys moved to accept. Second by Bruce Bowerman-Jett.

Recognition of New Regional Pastor & President – Candis Wilson led a celebration to recognize Rev. Allen Harris to his new position as Regional Pastor and President by presenting a Regional Minister stole and pen. An affirmation followed by prayer offered by Rev. Pamela Barnes-Jackson.

Committee Reports:

Personnel- Rev. Pamela Barnes-Jackson, Chair. See attached report.

The warmest of welcomes to Rev. Harris.

Personnel changes and committee updates:

- Marybeth Corbett’s death is a great loss to the RCC.
- Ted Nelson resigned as Campsite Manager.
- Tom Bowerman-Jett will fill the role of Interim Campsite Manager.
- Employee handbook being reviewed to be distributed soon after Rev. Harris has appropriate opportunity to review.
- Rev Terry Williams is a new member to this committee, currently serving on RCC as representative of UCC churches.

Phil Hunt asked if a pastoral relations committee is in place. How often does it meet? Candis Wilson said committee is in process of being formed with input of Rev. Harris to assure it is supportive of his needs.

This Pastoral Relations Committee is being formed by the Moderator, not Personnel committee. Once committee formed, it will determine frequency. Regional Elders are a part of this committee. Representatives are being sought now.

Membership – Rev. Faith Solon, Chair

- No current committee report updates.

Discussion:

Rev. Harris asked the max # of seats this committee may have. Candis said the max would be 25 members for the current term. Rev. Harris suggested that an appeal be communicated to all churches in next leader mailing.

One open spot exists on Exec Committee at this time. This results from a smaller than usual RCC committee this year. If all the executive spots were filled, the Exec Committee would resemble the full RCC. Therefore, it was decided not to fill the position at this time.

Vision – Rev. Alecia Hayes, Chair. See attached report.

- Last meeting Feb 2021. A vision statement was crafted, but is on hold until Rev. Harris has ample opportunity to become more acquainted with churches in the region. The committee will circle back to finalize the Vision statement with him soon.

Elders – Rev. Phil Hunt, Chair. See attached report.

- Much of the Regional Elders work is confidential so this is not recorded in the report.
- In April, thank you certificates for the four Visiting Regional Ministers were issued by the regional elders on behalf of the Region.
- Rev. Harris' goal is to utilize Regional Elders to a greater extent especially with Search & Call efforts.

Support Staff - Rev. Alan Dicken. See Summary report.

- Great effort to prepare Camp Christian for July in-person camps.
- COVID requirements in OH changing quickly. Summer 2021 camp policies will comply with recommendations from the Union County Health Dept. It is a challenge to keep Camp policies and guidelines updated.
- Ohio Region has a strong partnership in Chile through the Shalom Center. A delegation from Ohio is sent to Chile every 2 years since we supplied seed monies for Chile to start their own camp. COVID delayed 2021 visit. Plans for next January may be feasible. If not, it will be delayed until 2023. It is a significant partnership which is highly valued.

Support Staff-Tom Bowerman-Jett, Interim Campsite Manager. See Report.

Welcome to Tom as the Interim Campsite Manager.

- Plumbing and electrical are on-going concerns. Camp cabins being powered up.
- Volunteer help has been positive. June 5th is a work day and a good turn- out is expected. Tom asks RCC members to help get the word out. Gutters, screens, inside work, grounds all need to be done.

Discussion:

- Keven Kauffman requested a list of projects and tools be posted. See the CCIO website, Facebook or MyCampChristian blog for a listing of projects and tools needed for work day.
- Kevin Kaufman asked about kitchen inspection. It is scheduled for June 15, 2021. Tom reported that all issues with lights, caulking, and hand washing sinks will be in good order by inspection date.
- Phil Hunt asked about condition of water heaters. Are funds available for replacing water heaters? Gladys asked Tom to put together a list of what capital assets may need to be replaced this year and next year. Tom agreed to do so. Tankless water heaters will not be installed due to the hard water. The water is too hard for tankless. Softener destroys the chlorine, so camp- wide softener would need to be placed ahead of the chlorinator.
- Tom stated power equipment is available for cleanup day, but ladders and a power washer would be great additions.
- Where are we with the bathroom renovations in the Lodge? Accessibility bathrooms near completion. Tile work nearly completed. Partitions are in process to finish on 5/20. Trim kits for showers needed (8). Lodge rooms cleaned, concrete dust cleaned, curtains laundered. Non-skid floor is completed, pads are needed around sinks, shower seats and hand rails will be completed by the Rule family on 5/20/21.
- Candis said the link to projects and tools needed for the Work Day is on the website with the registration information

Rev Harris on behalf of Jennie Stoddart Bernard, Admin staff

- Rev. Harris is working with Jennie Stoddart to improve efficiency of systems. Corcent, network support vendor, has been helpful with all technical support.
- Jennie will keep the administration in the same office space while Rev. Harris and Rev. Dickens will share the other space.

Camp Christian Committee – Bruce Bowerman-Jett, Chair. Oral Report.

- 50 days until camp begins. Camp Christian committee is trying to be in a support role to help with whatever is needed.
- Working on long-term visioning with Rev. Harris.
- Please help to get the word out that monies are available for all kids to come to camp. Scholarships and sponsorships are available this year.

- Rev. Harris commented that some churches do not have transportation to get to camp. Perhaps we need to think about using funds for transportation. Rev. Alecia Evans-Hayes commented that other things needed to come to camp. This is also a stumbling block
- It is a blessing to work with Rev. Harris, Rev. Dicken and Jennie.

Treasurer's Report – Gladys Davis, Chair. See report

Review of 3/31/2021 financial statement as of March 2021:

- Ohio region is not able to apply for PPP grant because OH applied with other regions by Indianapolis. This year the OGMP did not suffer more than a 25% decline this year, therefore did not qualify. Ohio Region must have applied on our own in the prior year to be allowed to apply for PPP grant this year.
- Camp is projected to not be a break-even situation by end of the year. Camp will be a loss which includes depreciation. Before depreciation, operating loss will be approximately \$3,000. Registration fees \$192,071 vs original budget of fees \$240,274.
- Regional Administrator and Rev. Dicken's salary time now being allocated to camp accordingly which increases expense this year in comparison to prior years.
- Phil Hunt – asked about camp office not recording rent, but salaries are allocated. Gladys - Rent is not recognized but we can look at this in the future. But utilities and other expenses are allocated. Rev. Harris commented that allocating rent would set a bad precedent. The region is the primary entity. It is the region's camp. Phil said rent was \$55-60K annually. Since moved to camp, no rent expense is recorded. No cash spent for rent, therefore, it is not recorded as an expense.
- Gladys pointed out potential deficit situation. Current RSVP's project \$127K deficit. If 120 campers, then a deficit of \$90K which is close to depreciation figure of \$92K. If 150 campers, then \$57K deficit and therefore profit of \$35.5K. Phil Hunt asked how to cover the loss. Gladys, said additional fund raising. Gladys pointed out that cash is available in Church Extension in short term investment to earn interest. Total investment \$1.1M vs. \$600K last year. We may draw on investments. Phil asked about setting aside funds for future assets and repairs of camp. Gladys explained that current capital reserves are \$4,643 which should be increased to meet future needs. Gladys is okay with current year small deficit of camp income/expense cash spending.
Diane Bartlett explained that since depreciation is a non-cash line item, no cash is necessary to cover the total figure. Any future repairs and/or capital spending should be reported in a capex projection. The depreciation line item represents the cash spending in prior years to build cabins, dining hall, the lodge, dig the pond, etc. It does not represent future spending.
- Rev. Harris said a summer of great camp experiences with lots of kids will restore future finances as much as anything. Allen asked that all council members invite someone to attend. This will supply funds to meet deficit. A good summer of camp will restore confidence to boost future registrations.
- Adopt-a-Camper program is being implemented. As well one of our churches may match funds raised through Adopt-a-Camper program. Dr. Alecia-Hayes asked about visioning of camp use in the future to increase use in off season. Bruce Bowerman-Jett reiterated Rev. Harris's statement that a good summer of camp is the best way to profit for camp.

Depreciation figure appears to be more of a five figure as far as future capital spending needs.

- Rev. Terry Williams said this conversation is identical to the conversation on-going in UCC regions for its summer camp. The question is will it be back to normal after COVID? What we need is as Rev. Harris said, a great year of summer, campers are safe, campers have a wonderful experience. We are likely to hit the 120 number or higher since many are growing more secure in safety and others are really anxious to get out. The deficit is similar to UCC camp numbers and much better than many smaller camps. Bruce commented that we need to be careful not to talk about the huge deficit of camp because it sends the wrong message to congregants. We are close to break-even and we need to lead with positive reinforcement.
- Candis Wilson reminded us that camp property must be used as much as possible. We are in a position to use the property often. We need to communicate our pride in the property and keep it in use as much as possible. We must remain positive in our communications. If we love the property, we need to use it as much as possible.
- Dr. Alecia-Hayes asked if we are thinking about changing the name of camp to elicit more of a conference center?

Gladys added that the difference between 120 and 150 campers is only food cost. Every camper over 120 adds profit to financial situation. Fees increase by \$40K, while food increase only \$10K. Rev. Harris asked that we hold off conversation of camp visioning to another meeting, not the work for RCC meeting. Candis said we need to honor the winner of the sign contest and if a new sign has not been completed that they be included in any changes and/or design be honored.

Business Items:

- Area Regional Minister Resolutions of Gratitude & Thank You

Be it resolved:

That the Regional Church Council for the Christian Church in Ohio, meeting on Saturday, May 15 recognize 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, writes to their home Regions, "It has been a blessing that you have shared your Regional Ministers with us these past 2 1/2 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.

Moved by the Executive Committee and 2nd by Phil Hunt and Thomas Barnes to accept the resolution thanking the Visiting Regional Ministers for their contributions

- **Celebration of Roger Osgood, Anne Sowell, Margot Connor, Eugene Fisher and Ed Allen for their support.**

Resolution to recognize service of Roger Osgood and Anne Sowell for roles and contributions to Ohio region. Anne Sowell and Rev. Roger Osgood, Co-chairs of the Anti-Racism/Pro-Reconciliation Commission of the Christian Church in Ohio.

Be It resolved:

That the Regional Church Council for the Christian Church in Ohio, meeting on Saturday, May 15 recognize the service, commitment, leadership, and vision of the Anne Sowell and the Roger Osgood as Co-Chairs of the Anti-Racism/Pro-Reconciliation Commission of the Christian Church in Ohio. Anne 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 is with deepest gratitude and heartfelt appreciation that this Region recognizes Anne 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.

Moved by the Executive Committee and 2nd by Phil Hunt to accept the resolution to celebrate Anne Sowell and Roger Osgood. Motion carried.

Resolution to recognize the service of Rev. Eugene Fisher and Rev. Ed Allen as Regional Elders.

Be it resolved:

That the Regional Church Council for the Christian Church in Ohio, meeting on Saturday, May 15 recognize 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. We offer Rev. Fisher and Rev. Allen our gratitude for their faithful service to the church and to this Region.

Moved by Executive Committee and 2nd by Alecia Hayes and Kevin Kauffman to accept resolution. Motion carried.

Resolution to recognize Margot Conner as one of our Clergy Healthy Boundary Trainers and offer

herour thanks.

Be it resolved:

That the Regional Church Council for the Christian Church in Ohio, meeting on Saturday, May 15 recognize the five years of service by the Rev. Margot Conner 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. We offer Rev. Connor our gratitude for her faithful service to the church and to this Region.

Moved by Executive committee and 2nd by Phil Hunt to accept resolution. Motion carried.

Rev. Harris added that these resolutions help to build our Region into one of gratitude.

- **Regional Pastor and President Salary Allocation:** Rev. Harris requested \$15,000 of salary be allocated to housing annually.

Moved by Phil Hunt and 2nd by Alecia Hayes to allow \$15K to housing allowance.

- **Heartland Conference Board Representative** – Just as Rev. Terry Williams is UCC representative to OH Regional Council, OH in turn will ask for a volunteer as representative to the Heartland UCC Board. Rev. Alecia Hayes has volunteered to represent our Region to the Heartland UCC board. Rev. Harris stated we already have a strong alliance with the Heartland Conference. This is a strong ecumenical connection.

Moved by Cory King and 2nd by Thomas Barnes to accept Alecia Hayes as the representative to the Heartland Conference.

- **Catering Contract for Food Service** at Camp Christian for summer 2021- Vendor “An Evening Out”, owned by Bruce Bowerman-Jett, to provide food service for summer 2021 camp and conference. Contract period is 7/1/21 – 8/4/21 at a cost of \$11,000. Agreed upon food cost is \$15/day per person, \$47,580 estimated total cost. This falls within food budgeted on 2021 Camp Budget. Caterer supplies own liability insurance. All food for Chi-Rho, CYF, Advanced, Junior camps will be provided by this catering service. Rev. Harris thanked Finance committee in its due diligence in review of details of the contract. Alecia Evans-Hayes offered to jump in to volunteer as a substitute if a situation arises.

- **Freedom and Truth Christian Church**

Proposed resolution to proceed under the care and guidance of a newly appointed New Church Committee by the RCC, to move towards becoming 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.

Be it resolved:

That the Regional Church Council for the Christian Church in Ohio, meeting on Saturday, May 15 recognize 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. It is understood by this resolution 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.

Guests from The Freedom and Truth Christian Church: Annie Adams, Danyale Lee, Rev. Shauna McGhee, Jean Lightfoot from new church Freedom and Truth Christian Church in Cleveland, OH. Rev. Shauna McGhee is pastor. Oct 4, 2020 1st outdoor service during COVID. Seek to address needs of the total needs of the person. To empower every child of God regardless of gender, class, orientation. Rev. McGhee shared pictures and the Vision statement. Meet on Free Conference every Sunday for worship and Bible study every Friday at 6:30 pm. Community activities are important to their mission and vision. Rev. Harris mentioned that RCC has funds available in new church fund to assist planter and core team with attending training. Also, Pentecost offering will give 50% of receipts to New Church fund. Rev. Harris is excited to see Rev. Shauna McGhee's enthusiasm and passion to continue growth of this new church. Gladys Davis stated how exciting it is to see growth in the region. Thanks to Rev. McGhee for taking this on. Thomas Barnes welcomed Rev. McGhee to black pastor's ministry in Ohio.

Motion to accept the resolution as put forth by the Executive Committee, 2nd by Gladys Davis and Thomas Barnes. Rev. Harris explained 2 categories: Congregation in Formation (new church start to affiliate with DOC) or non-denominational church that may wish to become affiliated. This allows 501(C)(3) for tax purposes. The other category is Chartered Congregation. Motion carried unanimously. This is a wonderful celebration for the Region of Ohio as well as the congregation of Freedom and Truth Christian Church.

- **Boardman Christian Church Request** – Boardman Christian Church request the region relinquishes its rights of reversion of their real property. The church is relocating from this location. Originally, \$0 dollars changed hands when acquired by ODEC. Believe the property was donated. No money seems to therefore be due to the region since no money was ever invested into this property. The building is being sold and is close to final sale at this time. Region of OH is being asked to sign a document to confirm right of reversion of the property if request is approved.

Moved by Kevin Kauffman and seconded by Phil hunt Alecia Evans- Hayes *that the Christian Church in Ohio (Disciples of Christ), as successor in interest to Ohio Disciples Extension Corporation, relinquish its rights of reversion of the real property owned by Boardman Christian Church, Boardman, Ohio, set forth in the deed recorded in Mahoning County and return to Boardman Christian Church all legal options for the management and disposition of property located at 565 Boardman-Canfield Road, property number 29-102-0-136.00 this date forward.* Motion carried

- **Other Business:** Phil Hunt mentioned that at our last meeting a mention was made of a Co-Minister. Candis Wilson said it would be advantageous to give Rev. Harris time to become acclimated to the Region before having this discussion in further detail. It will be discussed at a later RCC meeting alongwith next year's budget.

Phil Hunt asked about lunch for the June 5 work day. It is a bring your own lunch day. Breakfast type items will be provided.

Remarks from Regional Pastor & President: In the future, I will send out a report, but can vary how I proceed based on what you wish to see. See Rev. Harris Summary report and power point.

- Committed to re-imagining staffing, collaboration of staffing. It is not sustainable to be successful in the future with a single Regional Pastor. As well, all current staff is white. This is also not sustainable. Financials are important. Giving increased in Ohio through Disciple Mission Fund. All gifts and donations to all funds impact our Region's congregations, pastors and ministries. Christmas offering critical since 100% of gifts come to Ohio. A development team necessary for fund raising. It is a specific skill set. Rev. Harris needs the regional pastoral position to be maintained. All the work done by Rev. Dicken is impossible to accomplish if it all falls only to Rev. Harris. It is necessary to work to maintain Rev. Dicken position which allows Rev. Harris to continue his work and be successful.
- PowerPoint presentation of remarks.
- Discussion of the challenge, heartache and uncertainty during that last 4 years. Listening conferences and transition teams have done much work, but many in the region have been waiting for a new Regional Pastor and President to finally process what happened with the previous Regional Pastor and President. Something has to happen within the Region to fully address the past before we can fully embrace the challenge to move forward. We must genuinely address what happened in a way that avoids traumatizing congregants again. But we need to fully address concerns.

Important Calendar Dates: See future calendar dates included in docket. Please mark your calendar.

The meeting closed with Communion. Prayer offered by Diane Bartlett. Words of Institution offered by Bruce Bowerman-Jett. Candis Wilson closed the meeting with prayer of thanksgiving and praise.

Minutes submitted by: Diane Bartlett