



CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN OHIO
DISCIPLES OF CHRIST
A COVENANT NETWORK OF CONGREGATIONS



Ohio Regional Newsletter - August 2021

Across The Region And In My Heart

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

"So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up." ~ Galatians 6:9

These words from the writer of the letter to the Galatians have come to my heart recently as we have learned of the once again rising infection rate and increasing number of deaths due to the new variant of the COVID-19 virus (see



<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/dashboards/current-trends> for an up-to-date report). Sadly, the absolute most effective way to protect ourselves and the most vulnerable among us, vaccination, is still well under 50% in Ohio (As of August 4 Ohio's full vaccination rate was only 46.21% (see <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/dashboards/covid-19-vaccine/covid-19-vaccination-dashboard> for today's rate).

The Apostle Paul, writing to one of his new churches, seeks to teach these new believers the power of caring for one another as a matter of our faith in Jesus Christ. Earlier in the same chapter he writes, "Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ." He also calls us to hold one another accountable when we do *not* "bear one another's burdens" and we *do* "grow weary in doing what is right." For Paul, mutual care, respect, and responsibility are integral to being a healthy part of the Body of Christ, the Church, and not mere suggestions, mild inconveniences, or frivolous requests. Being a follower of Christ means we actively and joyfully seek care for our neighbors (*"Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."* Matthew 25:40)

I know, my beloved friends and colleagues in Christ, we are tired of wearing masks, we are over "rethinking church," we are exhausted by the physical distancing limitations and the closures of our

favorite restaurants and limited availability of our entertainment venues, and we are eager to get on with life. But as followers of Christ we are committed to living the life of faith to which we were called, no matter how long the journey or how hard the circumstances. A faith which survived the crucifixion of our sovereign and savior can surely withstand the inconvenience of wearing masks and not singing hymns!

And as a gentle but firm reminder, some of the most vulnerable among us are children under 12 who are not yet eligible for vaccination, those who are older, those who have no or inadequate health care, and those with existing health limitations. It is important to note that many of these limiting conditions are due to systemic and societal injustices, particularly racial and economic injustice where those who are African American, Latinx, Asian American, Pacific Islander, Indigenous, as well as those who live in poverty of any race, are less likely to have adequate health care and more likely to have susceptible health conditions.

Therefore, as your Regional Pastor, I would like to strongly urge you to "not grow weary in well doing." I recommend that we as individual disciples of Christ and as congregations that are part of the Body of Christ consider for the foreseeable future:

- Wearing masks anytime we are indoors with other people, even if we are vaccinated ([Disciples Chalice masks are still available for purchase!](#))
- Sitting, standing, and walking at least 6 feet away from those outside who do not live with us ([See how one church had some fun with maintaining social distancing in the pews.](#))
- Refraining from singing hymns (At Good Shepherd Christian Church in Macedonia/Twinsburg they have the music leader sing the hymn – masked – and the congregation hums the hymn – also masked – while the words are shown on the screen.)
- Meet outside for worship when possible and for fellowship events ([Recently Lyons Christian Church and First Christian Church Wauseon gathered for worship, food and fellowship at The Pond, a nearby recreation center!](#))
- Washing our hands well and frequently is *always* a good health practice ([One church even created a hymn sheet for washing hands!](#))
- Also refraining from handing out bulletins and passing offering plates and communion trays. (First Christian Church, Mansfield, has prepared plastic communion cups with one grape and a fish cracker on top for worshippers to pick up on their way into worship!)
- And, of course, honoring vaccination as a gift to ourselves, as individuals, and the communities in which we worship ([The World Council of Churches has a beautiful prayer service for vaccinations](#))

As you can see, one way of not growing weary is to have some fun with our safety practices and approach the necessary tasks with joy and good humor. My hope is that together we will support one another as we seek to do the right thing and maintain the energy, enthusiasm, and even joy in protecting the most vulnerable among us.

Faithfully Yours,
Allen

Sponsor-a-Camper Matching Gift

REMINDER, the First Christian Church of Athens, Ohio has generously offered a \$10,000 matching grant for the funds raised by the Sponsor-A-Camper Fund this summer! If you give now, you double your offering and help to make a HUGE impact at Camp Christian!

CAMP CHRISTIAN ~ SPONSOR-A-CAMPER



As of August 3rd, we have received \$5,385.00 in donations. ANY dollar amount will be matched up to \$10,000! Please share widely to help maximize this giving opportunity! The deadline for the matching gift has been extended to the end of August.

Thank you SO MUCH for your continued love and support for Camp Christian and the Summer programs that change lives there!!

For more details, including how to donate, go to <https://www.ccinoh.com/ccio-blog/2021/july/27/sponsor-a-camper-matching-gift.aspx>

Summer 2021 Camp Christian Recap

On Wednesday, June 30th the summer staff began to trickle in to Magnetic Springs to begin training for their role as Ministry Associates for Camp Christian 2021. Although camp programming hadn't officially started, the summer had begun!

Chi Rho Camp 2021 was a huge hit – So many kids were so glad to be back at Camp! By combining all three Chi Rho Camps, directors, counselors, ADs, nurses, and traditions, we were able to have a totally new, fun-filled, and faithful week at Camp Christian! The Quest truths for the week centered around Jesus' teachings and love. The Chi Rho kids certainly got closer to God in the love of Christ through morning prayers, sharing meals, singing songs, vespers services, evening activities, and a whole lot of fun!





CYF Conference was up next and although it rained most of the week, the spirit of Camp was high and dry as the youth went through a week with the theme "Love My Selfie." By focusing on self-esteem in scripture and in life, these amazing young people were able to have such a meaningful return to Camp Christian. CYF was blessed by incredible keynote presenters and the youth dived into the new week with excitement and energy. The campers helped to lead vespers, consecration, banquet, fundraising, talent show, senior favors, and a whole week of faithful fellowship! The Leadership Team along with the help of many volunteers helped to guide CYF

Conference to an amazing week back home at Camp Christian!

Junior Camp could not have been more fun! With amazing volunteers leading crafts and games and activities throughout the day, our 2nd-5th graders were able to learn about important Bible stories, share their faith, and realize that Kids Can Too! Although the camp was only from Sunday-Wednesday, a LOT of great memories and faithful talks were shared by all!



Advance



Conference rounded out the summer with an incredible week for young adults at Camp Christian. Keynote speakers, faculty, and young adults alike came together for a truly memorable time. For young adults in their 20's, Advance was a fantastic opportunity to restore and rejuvenate their spirits after a long couple of years without being at Camp Christian.

It was not an easy summer. Many adjustments were needed, many difficult decisions were made, and many tough lessons were learned as we planned and experienced Camp in the context of Covid-19. Still, the summer was abundantly good and God's love was once again wastefully poured out on the hearts of every person who set foot on the sacred grounds at Camp Christian this summer. We are so grateful for all the volunteers, ministry associates, parents, grandparents, and loved ones who helped to make Camp Christian 2021 a possibility this year. May you all be blessed and we look forward to seeing you all (and many more!) next summer!

JOB ANNOUNCEMENT REMINDER

Christian Church In Ohio Campsite Manager (Full-Time)

The Christian Church in Ohio is currently recruiting a Campsite Manager for Camp Christian located in Marysville, Ohio. This person will perform all duties related to our camp facilities maintenance and management. Must have at least 3 years' experience in camp management or related work experience. Strong communication/written skills a must. Experience in building/grounds/lake maintenance, wastewater treatment, and equipment operation a plus. This person must be self-motivated, well-organized, and can multitask. This person also has to be computer/technology proficient for administration and reporting requirements. This person must be willing to live at the Camp. Must have a high moral standard and ability to work with all individuals. **We are accepting resumes through August 9, 2021.** Interested parties please send resume to: revdrpamela@outlook.com.

Please note: the current Interim Campsite Manager will be able to apply for and be considered for the position.

A more detailed job description can be viewed at <https://www.ccinoh.com/ccio-blog/2021/july/19/job-announcement-campsite-manager.aspx>.

Disciples Fellowship Retreat **September 3-5 at Camp Christian**

What a great way to get away from the hustle and bustle of your every day life and enjoy the out-of-doors! Spend a weekend with God and friends (both old and new) and go home feeling refreshed and relaxed. This is a great opportunity for you to come and experience camp, whether you have grown up here or are a first time camper. It's also a great chance for younger children to see what camp is all about when they are able to attend the summer camp programs. And, if you've ever been a counselor, now it's your turn to just "be a camper"!!!! Hope to see you soon!!

For more information, including how to register, go to <https://www.ccinoh.com/ministries/adult/disciples-fellowship.aspx>





Introducing Our New Advance Conference Officers

Congratulations to our new Advance Conference Officers for 2021-2022 elected at Advance Conference on July 30! They are (l-r) Erica Brown, Brian McLean, and Kaitlin Thompson! Erica's home church is Bailey Road Christian Church in Cuyahoga Falls, Brian's home church is First Christian Church, Wadsworth, and Kaitlin's home church is First Christian Church, Middletown. They will help plan and lead the Winter and Spring Retreats as well as the summer Advance Conference. Please hold them in prayer as they lead our Ohio Regional Young Adult Ministry in the coming year.

Thank You Camp Christian Ministry Associates

We give thanks to our 2021 Camp Christian Ministry Associates who, though small in number this year, were mighty in spirit! Pictured (l-r) are: Zachary Stratton, Samantha Hudzik, Katie Strayer, Addie Reese, Lauren Johnson, Tomas Hernandez, and (not pictured) Colleen McDaniel, who worked remotely. Over the course of our camp season they did everything from mow the grass, process camper registrations, clean the cabins (especially important during the COVID-19 pandemic), provide maintenance and upkeep around the campsite, to leading the hoe down and offering the eagerly anticipated staff skit for talent nights! Our Camp Ministry Associates are an integral part of the entire camp and conference program of the Christian Church in Ohio. We thank the Rev. Alan Dicken and Tom Bowerman-Jett for their leadership of these young adults during their time with us.



If you know a young adult who may be interested in being a Ministry Associate at Camp Christian for the Summer of 2022, please contact CampChristian@ccinoh.org for details.

Volunteers Solicited for Dayton Disaster Response Teams



Recovery from the 2019 Memorial Day tornado outbreak is ongoing. While most families who owned their homes are nearing completion of their repairs, a significant housing gap remains for renters displaced by the storms. In the greater Dayton area, the disaster ministries of the Disciples of Christ and the United Church of Christ have partnered with the Miami Valley Long-Term Recovery Operations Group to support the Tornado Survivors' Pathways to Homeownership Project. The goal of this project is to leverage the skills of volunteers and local nonprofits to transition "nuisance" properties and vacant lots to affordable, single-family housing options for tornado survivors, stabilizing both families

and the community.

Week of Compassion, UCC Disaster Ministries, the Christian Church in Ohio, and the Heartlands Conference are collaborating to receive volunteer build teams willing to serve 3+ days, with an anticipated start date of mid-October. All skill levels welcome. A few logistical details need to be finalized before registration can officially open, but interested teams can find out more and make tentative reservations by contacting Rev. Caroline Hamilton-Arnold (caroline@weekofcompassion.org).

All volunteers who are eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine must do so before serving.

NOTE: There will be a special workshop on this topic during the Disciples Virtual Gathering on Saturday, August 7th

Register HERE: <https://disciples.org/2021-virtual-gathering/>

Week of Compassion Workshop

"Not If, But When: Disaster Preparedness for Churches & Leaders"

When it comes to disasters, the question is not "if" but "when." In this workshop, participants will receive an introduction to disaster preparedness, response, and recovery; get connected with denominational resources; and engage in conversations and activities for developing context-specific disaster plans. Drawing on the experiences of Week of Compassion and local congregations, participants will consider how they can protect their members and their properties and be ready to care for their neighbors following disasters. The Week of Compassion workshop will be offered in English, Spanish, and Korean.



You can still sign up for the August 7th Disciples Virtual Gathering



What is the Disciples Virtual Gathering? We are glad you asked! It's a one day event on August 7 where Disciples from across the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in United States and Canada will gather virtually to:

- Hear Bible lectures with dynamic teachers
- Worship together, celebrating that NOTHING can separate us from the love of God

- Attend interactive and engaging workshops on relevant leadership and ministry topics
- Engage in a virtual exhibit hall that is informative and interactive
- PLUS a virtual lounge where participants can connect and chat with each other

You can see the full line up of speakers and a schedule the website at <https://disciplesconnect2021.vfairs.com/>.

It's all happening live on August 7, but you will have access to the exhibit hall and platform a few days early so you can browse, get a feel for the experience and prepare for a day of reflection, study, worship and learning.

We can't wait to see you there and celebrate that NOTHING can separate us from the love of God!

PLUS, you can now view a brief tour of the Disciples Virtual Gathering platform on the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Youtube Channel. See some of the features and learn where to go and what to click on the day of the event. See the video at <https://youtu.be/ItgjaXZf1Zs>.

New Executive Director for Disciples Women Announced

We are excited to announce that a candidate has been selected and accepted the position of Executive Director for Disciples Women. Her name is Rev. Angéle Saunders Johnson. She is an ordained Minister in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), she brings experience, passion, and expertise to this role. Most recently, Rev. Johnson served as the Minister of Discipleship and Outreach for Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church in Memphis, Tennessee. Her prior experience includes faith-based community organizing, executive pastoral leadership, and Serving as Director of Christian Education for New Covenant Christian Church in Nashville, Tennessee. The decision by the IDWM Search Team was unanimous. She will begin her new role on August 16, 2021.



For the announcement, go to <https://disciples.org/congregations/disciples-women-names-new-leader/>.

Congregational News



Bowling Green Church Gets News Coverage For Drive Through Community Dinner

The members and pastor of First Christian Church, Bowling Green, in partnership with other local churches and agencies, began a once-a-month Meal Drive-Through to meet the special needs in their community during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Starting last October the members gather grocery items and pack them in bags, ready to be handed out to those who need food assistance as they drive by in their cars. Their Pastor is the Rev. Matt Every.

To read the entire story and watch a video about it, go online to: https://www.sent-trib.com/news/church-feeds-soul-and-body-first-christian-offers-free-drive-thru-meals/article_264b7b12-e4a2-11eb-aa88-4f3e8b7de872.html#utm_campaign=blox&utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social



Rev. Christopher Schilling Concludes Ministry at First Christian Church, Findlay

Sunday morning, August 1 the Rev. Christopher Schilling concluded his final service as Pastor of First Christian Church of Findlay, Ohio. This fall, Rev. Schilling will begin a Master of Clinical Counseling program at a local seminary while continuing to serve as a chaplain (and as of last week, now an APC board-certified chaplain) with Bon Secours Mercy Health System. Rev. Schilling writes, "Serving as pastor of First Christian Church of Findlay since 2019, truly was an honor. Their dedication to sharing God's inclusive love for all and the love they have shown me is something I will always hold in my heart."

We wish Rev. Schilling our best wishes on this transition and in his new ministries and we hold First Christian Church, Findlay, in our prayers as they seek to call a new pastor.





Rev. Faith Solon Installed As Associate Minister and Rev. Cynthia Adcock as Senior Minister to Northwest Christian Church, Columbus

On Sunday, July 11 Regional Pastor and President, the Rev. Allen V. Harris, led the instillation service of Rev. Cindy Adcock as Senior Minister and Rev. Faith Solon as Associate Minister at Northwest Christian Church in Columbus. This change in leadership follows the retirement of the Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Wheeler last April. Please hold these two gifted leaders and the entire congregation in your prayers as they live into a new future in this vibrant congregation.

You can check out the full service on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/NmeDdVKFk>

Rev. Amanda Moore Installed at First Christian Church, Kent

Your Regional Minister, Rev. Allen V. Harris, worshiped with the good and faithful disciples of First Christian Church, Kent this morning and preached for worship and shared in the installation of their new Pastor, Rev. Amanda Moore along with Regional Elder, Rev. Terry Bartlett. Please hold this gifted pastor and grace filled congregations in your prayers as they boldly imagine their new future together.

You can check out the full service on Facebook at

<https://www.facebook.com/1stChristianChurch/videos/3444935135609079>



Rev. Nina Merkle Nestlerode Installed at Good Shepherd Christian Church, Macedonia

Your Regional Minister, Rev. Allen V. Harris, and Regional Elder for District 3, Rev. Terry Bartlett, participated in the August 1st Installation Service (1 year from the date of her beginning) for the Rev. Nina Merkle Nestlerode as Lead Pastor for Good Shepherd Christian Church in Macedonia/Twinsburg. She serves with Rev. Jill Harkins Goodman, Pastor of Faith Formation. Welcome, Pastor Nina, to this wonderful community of faith!

Save the Date!
For a Virtual & In Person

*Ohio Regional Celebration
&
Installation of Regional Pastor & President
Rev. Allen V. Harris*

October 23rd at 2pm ~ Location TBA

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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