

Regional Church Council Annual Meeting
Christian Church in Ohio (Disciples of Christ)
November 4-5, 2022

Friday, November 4, 2022

On-Site Attendees: Gena Stone-Phillips, Patricia Brown, Matt Every, Heidi Barham, Brenda Sanford, Beckie Linn Gregory, Erica Brown, Katie Baird, Kevin Poe,

On-Line Attendees: Pamela Barnes-Jackson, Willie Barnes-Jackson, Philip Hunt, Thomas Barnes, Kathy Bagley, David Ellis, Candis Wilson

Regional Staff: Allen Harris, Tom Bowerman-Jett, Bruce Bowerman-Jett

Introductions and Roll Call of those present

Opening Worship – Rev. Harris

- Song: “I Don’t Know What You Come To Do”
- Litany
- Gathering Song: Open the Eyes Of My Heart
- Scripture: Acts 6
- Reflection of Scripture:
 - What is the context in which this story is being told?
 - There is a change
 - Needed help so recruited more people
 - Identified a problem and came up with a solution
 - New voices demanding their problems, hurts, issues be heard
 - What leadership traits are exhibited in this text?
 - Delegation
 - Witnessing
 - Ownership to fix the problem
 - Discernment around who they chose to serve
 - Effective Communication
 - Growth requires CHANGE
 - Training- Growth of Leadership
 - What do you find most engaging, challenging, inspiring for your work on the Regional Church Council from this text?
 - Challenges- Alternative tracks, Prophetic leadership is not always welcomed, Equality- Not leaving the lessor out
 - Encouraging/Inspiring- No time for kicking the can down the block- Problem= Solution, Creativity and Ingenuity, Did not get distracted by the need- Stayed appropriately focused
- Offering- Name aloud/sticky note/ZOOM Chat gifts, graces, skills, perspective, talents that you have to offer the Christian Church in Ohio as well as the Regional Church Council in the coming two years

Overview of Regional Ministries and Creative Imagination Session

Standing Committees present that shared their purpose:

- Regional Elders (Phil)
- Personnel Committee (Pamela)
- Membership Development (Candis)
- Vision (Allen/Willie)

Ministries present that shared their purpose:

- Commission on Ministry (Beckie Linn)
- Ohio Black Pastors (Thomas)
- Ohio Disciple Women's Ministries (Gena)
- Pro-Reconciliation/Anti-Racism Commission (Thomas)
- Spiritual Life (Beckie Linn)

Meeting participants shared their creative and innovative ideas for programming and possible changes for fruitful ministry via newsprint placed around the room.

Meeting adjourned with Thanksgiving by Rev. Allen Harris

Saturday, November 5, 2022

On-Site Attendees: Gena Stone-Phillips, Patricia Brown, Glenn Nestelrode, Brenda Sanford, Matt Every, Heidi Barham, Beckie Linn Gregory, Erica Brown, Katie Baird, Kevin Kaufman, Emily Schmidt, Alecia Evans-Hayes, Kevin Poe,

On-Line Attendees: Pamela Barnes-Jackson, Willie Barnes-Jackson, Philip Hunt, Kathy "Kitty" Bagley, David Ellis, Albert Brantley Jr., James Semmelroth Darnell, Felix, Ortiz-Cotto, Candis Wilson (Gladys Davis, Mary Jo Bray, Chris McCreight – for their part of the meeting)

Regional Staff: Allen V. Harris, Tom Bowerman-Jett, Bruce Bowerman-Jett

Introductions and Roll Call of those present

Devotions- "Better Together", Acts 2:42-47 – Candis Wilson

Approval of August 6, 2022 Minutes

Moved by Phil Hunt and seconded by Katie Baird. **Motion Carried.**

Introduction of Rev. James Semmelroth Darnell – Ecumenical Representative

Motion to give the UCC Ecumenical Representative voice and vote on the RCC

Moved by Brenda Sanford and seconded by Matt Every. **Motion Carried.**

Elections of Officers:

Nominations were not received from the floor as members were not comfortable doing elections today. Motion by Katie Baird and seconded by Heidi Barnham for Phil Hunt to run the rest of today's meeting but not be the Moderator until a called meeting can be had to elect a slate of officers. Motion Carried. Allen will propose dates to the RCC for a called meeting before the meeting is over

Regional and Standing Committee Reports

- **Campsite Manager, Tom Bowerman-Jett** – Major repairs to Cabin Cluster 2 have been completed at great savings to the CCinOH. Next project is Cluster 1, getting Heat Pump for Lodge great room, and update rooms for linens and towels, min-fridges, coffee pots, and decor on one side of the Lodge. Addressed water smell in the Lodge, with the Dining Hall next. Continued improvement in accessibility across campus. This past year was our 5-year EPA inspection took place and we had 4 small violations (3 of 4 have already been fixed). Improvements in the well house to log daily water use. Remediation in busted pipes. The RCC agreed we are blessed to have Tom!
- **Free Store, Bruce Bowerman-Jett** - Started in 2008. Served 110 people this past year. Change in need was clothing and bedding but now it has shifted to food and personal hygiene after Covid. Current donation push is these items plus blankets and coats. Long-term vision is to have a pantry. With the help of local partners, we are moving forward and re-organizing the space to accommodate the current and future needs. Planning for a Christmas Marketplace December 3 and Free Store Christmas Party December 17.
- **Food Service, Bruce Bowerman-Jett** - Wonderful camp season. Adjusted menu offering this year to stay in-line with cost due to inflation. Finding ways to improve in staffing and labor costs. Working with Camp Christian Committee and other donors to find more ways the camp can be utilized in the off-season. Phase 1 to re-do one side of the Lodge with amenities and HVAC. Airbnb site is now up and running to get more guest during the week. Thanksgiving Day will be a family meal offering for Magnetic Springs community.

Questions:

- 5-year guarantee on the compressor is coming up. Does this need to be reviewed before it is up? Answer: No sign of issues and seems to be working great. Last repair was done by Tom for minimal cost.
- Rates for Airbnb? Current rate is \$69. Airbnb gives suggestions due to time and events happening during the stay period. Rates are still similarly in-line with our current rental schedule.
- **Regional Elders, Phil Hunt**- Aware that we have a number of churches with part-time ministry and those with no clergy and have pulpit supply. We realize that all of these churches have elders but need training to equip them with sermon prep and biblical references, so the RE are working on a Lay Preacher Academy.
- **Personnel, Pamela Barnes-Jackson** - Filled the opening for Food Service Director and hired Bruce Bowerman-Jett. Have two new members, David Ellis and Erica Brown. Completed update of the Employee Handbook. Made Juneteenth a floating holiday. Death of committee member, Mary Beth Corbett. Future focus that we remain ready, willing and able.
 - Note: Regional Pastor & President is still focused on coming up with innovative and creative solutions to staffing. Not forgotten but has just become delayed due to

overwhelming task that are Regional Pastor & President specific and current needs of staff

- **Membership Development- None (Open)**
- **Vision, Alecia Evans-Hayes** - Upon the hiring of Rev. Harris believed our first task was to review and understand the current mission and vision statements of the region. Work continuing over the year and will have something new to present at the beginning of 2023.
 - o Question: Are you looking for new members? Yes
- **Pastoral Relations Committee** - Written report from Rev. Don Baird received

Ministry Reports:

In-person reports were received from the following:

- **Grandparents Camp, Mary Jo Bray:** Numbers were down compared to pre-covid, but this year was one of the best. Additional day was added in 2022 was a success and much received. Will continue again in 2023. One of the goals is to expose the kids to camp in a safe way so a lot of the activities trend with an actual camp experience. A great time for kids to have one on one time with their grandparent away from life. New additions to leadership team, Laureen Roe and Richard Hinkleman.
 - o Question: Has there been any thought to expanding the age limit? Yes, on a case by case. Program is really designed as a one and one. Have thought about having a second camp that would be for all grandparents and grandchildren. Rev. Harris informed that UCC has a grand camp program that has no age limit and is for all. Good opportunity to piggy back off and/or partner with to offer to our families as well.
- **Commission on Ministry, Rev. Chris McCreight:** Working to standardized the requirements and processes for all teams. Pause on Apprentice Track due to lack of standardization across the church. Pause will allow for development of more uniformity and standardization from the General Church. Enhancement of communication across teams and candidates. Lifted up the changes in leadership (retired and new). Thanks to Allen and Jennie.

Questions:

 - o Question around standing requirements for retired and inactive clergy? Requirement for current trainings is beneficial to our congregations. Need to create categories, what each is required, and tracking accordingly. Goal for 2023 to better enhance their technical and tracking systems.
 - o Seminary Requirement, clarification (affiliation commitment)? Any accredited institution for ordination track. Commissioned track will require case-by-case assessment of the programs they have completed and or enrolled in. The quality of the program matters to be beneficial to the training they are receiving to be best prepared.
 - o Request for roster of all team members. Rev. McCreight will work to create a directory of the teams and their contact information
- **Ohio Black Clergy, Thomas Barnes:** Revitalized ministry. 60 African-American clergy in Ohio, 14 of which are serving predominately African-American congregations. Recent gathering in

August, theme “We Are Better Together,” with leadership by Regis Bunch, preacher: Chad Anderson, message by Judy Alston, social justice discussion by Jack Sullivan. Looking forward to July camp offering at Camp Christian to meet the needs of our black youth.

Name Change- Ohio Black Clergy

- **Ohio Disciple Women’s Ministries, Patricia Brown:** Looking to get more younger woman involved. Fall retreat was great and had our first male attendee. Purpose of the retreat is to provide time for education, fellowship, and spiritual renewal. Please make sure your local Women’s Ministries and women’s groups are connected to the regional ministry
- **Spiritual Life, Beckie Linn Gregory:** Spring retreat focus on spiritual retreat and renewal. Silent Retreat in the fall. This year was the first time we offered free spiritual direction sessions. Next retreat is January 24-26, 2023. Keynote will be Rev. Monique Crain Spells
 - o Questions:
 - Why plan retreats in the middle of the week? The focus is on clergy so we avoid weekends.
 - Any future emphasis on interfaith spirituality? Yes
 - Can we expand to include bi-vocational clergy? Committee wants to, limited by needing more team members.
 - Working on getting a directory of spiritual directors across the Regional Church
 - Open to new members
- **Pro-Reconciliation/Anti-Racism Commission, Thomas Barnes:** Move from “training” to “awareness conversations.” First one held October 2022. Goal is to build relationships and awareness conversations around certain areas of racism. Want to make it known that we are willing to come to your congregations for these conversations or provide grants to support programming within your communities. Next gatherings scheduled for March and October 2023.
- **Camp Christian Committee, Rev. Harris:** 2023 Summer Conference and Retreat schedule shared with members. Working to balance rich traditions while moving to a model that is sustaining. New ways and culture change is needed.

Business Items

- **Treasurer Report – Gladys Davis** (filling in for Nina Merkle Nestlerode) – Presented the Regional Church Financials – We in the black now and should remain that way in the foreseeable future.
 - o Alecia Evans Hayes moved to approve reports, Katie Baird Seconded – **Motion Carried.**
 - o Question: How many years can we move money around like we are doing? We can’t afford many more years of deficit camp spending, maybe one more.
- **Housing Allowance Designation:** Request from Regional Pastor and President for designation of \$20,000 of compensation for Housing Allowance for 2023.
 - o Willie Barnes-Jackson moved, Heidi Barham seconded. **Motion Carried.**

- **Regional Church Council Conflict of Interest Policy and Disclosure Forms** were distributed and all RCC were urged to sign and return theirs.

New Business:

- **Request from Freedom & Truth Christian Church** for grant for pastoral salary support.
 - o \$5,000 grant recommended from the – moved by Philip Hunt, Seconded by Brenda Sanford. **Motion carried with 2 Abstentions**
 - o It was requested that Rev. Shauna McGhee attend our next Regional Church Council Meeting to give us a report about Freedom & Truth Christian Church.
- **Renewal Initiative Report – Jennie Stoddart Bernard** via text
 - o Renewal Initiative totals as of November 3, 5 p.m.:
 - \$63,411.02 Total
 - \$11,518.52 - Ohio Regional Operating
 - \$13,066.00 - Camp Christian Operating
 - \$38,826.50 - Where Needed Most

Regional Pastor and President Report – Rev. Allen V. Harris

Apologies were for no written report. With Jennie’s illness/treatment and an already heavy work load this just wasn’t possible. Hopefully this will be forthcoming.

Reminder that language is important: I encourage all Regional Church Council members to use “Regional Church” and not simply “the Region,” as well as “Regional Church Offices at Camp Christian” when referring to the Regional Office and not always/simply “Camp Christian”

A big thank you to regional church staff going over and above beyond the call, especially with personal and family illnesses and complications. An appreciation/support card for Jennie Stoddart Bernard was shared.

A reflection on the “Power of Presence” and how that related to the huge Success of the Regional Assembly. Rev. Harris reflected that an exceptionally high number of participants at this year’s Regional Assembly he had met in person since beginning his ministry with us. He believes there is a direct correlation between showing up and participation in the Regional Church.

Reflections on ways we are trying to do regional ministry more effectively:

- First and foremost for everyone to fulfill their responsibilities that have been chosen or given to their best
 - Working with Regional Elders to the greatest extent possible.
 - Creative use of volunteers in the Regional Church Office and elsewhere.
 - Working with ecumenical partnerships and networks is critical to expanding ministry.
- Rev. Harris explained this is the reason he has been so involved with the Ohio Council of Churches and the Heartland Conference UCC (He attended both their annual meetings this year and meets regularly with both Rev. Dr. Jack Sullivan, Jr. and Rev. David Long Higgins, their respective leaders). Related Concern: **We have need for a representative to the Ohio Council of churches working with Rev. Harris.**

Other Disciples/UCC Initiatives include:

Camp and Conference conversation continue with the Heartland Conference UCC. Both staffs have toured each other’s facilities (Templed Hills near Mansfield and Camp Christian) and we are working on joint promotional materials for next summer’s camp and conference season.

Sharing ministry networks including: green chalice, into a ministry network, LGBTQIA, disaster relief Ministries, anti-racism ministry.

This is in addition to our ongoing shared ministry with Interim Ministers (support and training) and Disaster Preparedness and Relief work.

Questions/Comments:

- Glenn Neslterode noted that Camp Gwinwood Northern Lights Region has done a good job of non-camp rentals.
- It was also noted that the Upper Midwest Camp turned around under the leadership of the Rev. Bill Spangler-Dunning
- UCC Camp Finances – can we get their reports?

Feasibility Study - Rev. Harris - Rev. Harris presented the “Christian Church in Ohio Feasibility Study Proposal” for a Capital Campaign from Disciples Church Extension Fund (attached.) The study was discussed in depth and the general consensus was that such a study would benefit the Regional Church more if it were broadened beyond just determining if there was interest and capacity across the Regional Church for improvements to Camp Christian, especially a pool, to more broadly determine if there was capacity for a Capital Campaign to support the Regional Church as well as Camp Christian.

- Question: does the Regional Church Budget have the money to do this? Gladys indicated we did have the funds to do this.
- It was moved by Alecia and seconded by ??? that the Christian Church in Ohio engage Disciples Church Extension Fund to lead the Capital Campaign Feasibility Study. Rev. Harris will report this to Belinda King, President and CEO, and Brock McCracken, Area Representative.

Acknowledgements

- Gratitude to Rev. Margot Conner as she concludes her role as District 5 Regional Elder
- Thanks to outgoing RCC Members: Candis Wilson – Moderator, Bruce Bowerman-Jett – Vice-Moderator, Diane Bartlett – Secretary (took over from Faith Solon), Cory King – Assistant Secretary, and Gladys Davis - Treasurer

Important Calendar Dates

- November 11-12- CYF Leadership Training
- November 20 & 27- Thanksgiving Offering (Higher Education & Leadership Ministries)
- November 27 - Advent Season Begins
- December 18 & 25- Christmas Offering (Regional Church Ministries)
- January 6-8- Advance Winter Retreat
- February 19 & 26- Week of Compassion Offering
- General Assembly of the Christian Church in the United States & Canada – July 29 - August 1, 2023 in Louisville, Kentucky

Upcoming RCC Meeting Dates for 2023: All Saturdays

- February 11th (virtual)
- May 13th (virtual)

- August 12th (virtual)
- November 3-4 (Friday night and Saturday) Annual Meeting in person at the Regional Church Offices at Camp Christian

Called Meeting to elect RCC Officers – Saturday, December 10 at 8 a.m.

Set Regional Assembly 2024 dates (tentative) Proposed: Friday, September 13 and Saturday, September 14, 2024

Closing Worship (Including Communion)

Adjournment