

# The Indiana Christian



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## Indiana Disciples Welcome Afghan Neighbors

This summer, as the US military presence ended in Afghanistan, nearly 7,000 Afghan citizens were relocated to Indiana for processing at Camp Atterbury in the central part of the state. These families, including many children, included individuals who had served as translators and support to our government for over 20 years. Their security and safety were challenged with the change of government, and so they ended up in Indiana.

Most of the evacuees arrived with only the clothes on their backs and some were shoeless. Disciples across Indiana sprung into action to assist. Leading the effort have been Rev. Kyrmen Rea, of the Trafalgar Christian Church, and Rev. Mark Parkinson, of the Union Christian Church, in Franklin. Both congregations are located near Camp Atterbury. Kyrmen and Mark got organized by quickly staying in good communication with each other. They summoned gifts of clothing and baby formula from their congregations and

neighbors and put the word out across the Region for support. They connected with Team Rubicon, the volunteer agency working with the National Guard at Camp Atterbury to meet the needs of these new residents.

It has been a heroic and effective effort. You can read Kyrmen and Mark's reflections on their experience in this issue of *The Indiana Christian*. The activity of these two pastors and congregations caught the attention of local news media with numerous stories about the effort running on television, radio, and in newspapers.

It also got the attention of Rev. Sharon Stanley-Rea, Director of Refugee and Immigration Ministries for our church. She invited Kyrmen to share her experience with Disciples across the country as we begin the process of assimilating tens of thousands of new Afghan residents. Most every state will receive some Afghan evacuees with California and Virginia expected to receive the most. It is a challenging opportunity. You can read



IMAGINE  
*God's Love*  
REVEALED  
BEAUGHT

2021 Christmas Offering

You may make a gift to the Christmas Offering through your local church or online at [indianadisciples.org](http://indianadisciples.org)



**We imagine God's love revealed when Jesus called disciples to follow him**

And we imagine God's love revealed when our Region nurtures persons for ministry preparing them for ordination and commissioning.

**We imagine God's love revealed when Jesus drew his disciples into retreat**

And we imagine God's love revealed when our Region gathers children, youth, and adults in summer camps.

**We imagine God's love revealed when the Apostle Paul cared for congregations and helped them find their leaders**

And we imagine God's love revealed when our Region provides care for our pastors, encouragement to lay leaders, and support in transitions.

**We imagine God's love revealed when the early church found ways to break down racial, political, and economic barriers to form true community**

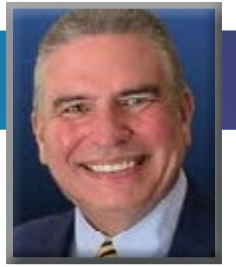
And we imagine God's love revealed when our Region assists pastors and congregations to honestly confront racism in our own time.

**We imagine God's love revealed when a young couple in Bethlehem, overwhelmed by God's love, gave birth to one in whom they could see God's face**

And we imagine God's love revealed when we see the face of God in our neighbor, the stranger, and the refugee.

We invite you to share your gift to the Christmas offering supporting the ministries of our Region as we continue our witness to God's love in our midst.

# In The Spirit Richard L. Spleth, Indiana Regional Minister



## Let's Celebrate the Gift of Sobremesa

I learned a new word last month from my friend, Disciples pastor Bere Gil Soto. I did not know this word before, but...it's meaning I knew. It describes something I have cherished throughout my life. The word is "sobremesa." It is a Spanish word which literally, technically, translates "over the table." But that is not at all what it means. Sobremesa describes the liminal time following a meal, a lingering unrushed time where coffee

seeking the sobremesa—when stories were told, jokes were shared, connections and linkages were made, and identities were formed. Because of the sobremesa I came to a better understanding of my family and thus of myself. Sobremesa, for me, was sweeter than any dessert that might have been simultaneously shared.

Bere knows sobremesa because she is a native of Mexico. Spanish speakers around the world know not

lest we inadvertently bring harm to our loved ones and neighbors. Lingering has been lost as well.

And in the church our sacred meal has been less than satisfying for 20 months now. Thank goodness somebody along the way invented those prepackaged communion cups, we have needed them. But wow, it is just not the same. How I long for the chance to hold a tray to serve a fellow worshipper or dip a hunk of bread in a common cup. That would be

did not reflect the variety of the whole human family. So, the stories we had capacity to share were consequently limited. How much richer it has been later in my life to share the sobremesa with more diverse dining partners. I can honestly say that my life has been more greatly blessed by the expansion of my table companions than the expansion of my palate.

As we emerge from this great sequester and can feast with one another again,

don't rush away from the table. Linger. Savor. Enjoy one another's company. Seek out a stranger or a new neighbor to share a meal. Model this in your congregation and in your home. And learn some Spanish. Sobremesa.

Blessings on you and your congregation.

Richard L. Spleth  
Regional Minister

***"As we emerge from this great sequester and can feast with one another again, don't rush away from the table. Linger. Savor. Enjoy one another's company."***

or dessert might be served, but the main course that is shared is conversation.

When I was a child at extended family gatherings, I would watch for opportunity to relocate from the "kid's table" to the big people's table to get in on the sobremesa. This would usually occur when my Mother or Grandmother had risen to clear the table or to prepare the dessert. I was a sobremesa stalker. Truthfully, the chairs at the big people's table were generally more comfortable and the table sturdier, but I was not seeking a furnishings upgrade. I was

to rush from the table when a meal has been consumed. There is something more to share. If you go to a restaurant in Mexico the waiter will never bring you a check until they are summoned. To do so would violate the sacredness of the sobremesa. They understand the precious gift it is to be "at table" with others.

This has been, for me, one of the profound losses we have experienced because of the pandemic. For good reason we have limited dining together in large groups. We have attempted to create safe space from one another

so good. But because Bere taught me a new word, I know that the most valuable part of a shared meal is not the food itself but the opportunity it provides for sharing "over the table"—the sobremesa.

Jesus did not speak Spanish, but he knew this concept. According to the Gospel of Luke, "after supper Jesus took the cup" and declared it to be a sign of the new covenant. "After supper" he did that. In the sobremesa.

The sobremesa of my childhood that I remember with such affection was not perfect. For one, it was typically all male. And for another our table gathering

### 2021-2022 Regional Calendar

#### DECEMBER

- 4** Regional Board Meeting
- 9** Flourish Celebration
- 12 & 19** Christmas Offerings
- 23** Regional Office closes for Christmas

#### JANUARY

- 4** Regional Office reopens
- 5** 2022 Camp Registration Opens
- 17** Martin Luther King Jr. Day, office closed

#### FEBRUARY

- 8** Nurture and Certification Meetings
- 10 & 17** Week of Compassion Offerings

#### MARCH

- 5** Regional Board Meeting
- 8** Nurture and Certification Meetings

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**SPRING ISSUE  
DEADLINE  
MARCH 2, 2022**





# Ties that Bind

By Rev. Krymen Rea, Trafalgar Christian Church

Over the past few months, the tempo of life has accelerated considerably at Trafalgar Christian Church. The congregation stepped up to help meet the needs of Afghan refugees—ten miles from our church—at Camp Atterbury. Our building became a donation drop-off site.

Along with partners from other congregations, we sort donations and deliver them to a warehouse at the edge of the base. I have had the privilege of receiving calls, texts, and emails from pastors, lay leaders, school principals, community leaders, business owners, and neighbors from around the state and beyond as they seek to find channels for sharing with our newest neighbors.

My trips to the base have put me in touch with the dedicated volunteers from Team Rubicon who continue to work tirelessly to meet the material needs of our Afghan guests.

While there have been many remarkable experiences, one stood out. I received a call from Kashif, a Pakistani Christian who lives in Carmel. He wanted to know how he could assist. We exchanged several texts over a couple of days that resulted in the delivery of infant formula that a friend of his wanted to donate. On the day we had arranged for him to drop by, I received a text from Kashif that read, “I’m very excited!” Turns out, Kashif’s friend works for a food distribution company. He donated over 700 cans of formula!

It was too late in the day for a trip to the warehouse, so we unloaded the formula into my garage. Kashif and I stood in my driveway and talked as he shared stories of his exuberant faith.

A couple of hours after Kashif left, I received a phone call from a woman in Mississippi named Kelly. She is the wife of a retired Army officer, Greg, who served in Afghanistan, and she had seen my name and number in a news article. She and Greg had been keeping up with the brother of Greg’s translator and his

family, who were being processed at Camp Atterbury. The father of this family had expressed that they were being treated very well, but that baby formula was now being rationed, and their baby was not getting enough formula.

Kelly was determined to do something about this and wanted to know if I could help. Well...I just happened to have 700 cans of formula in my garage! My son and I drove it to the base the next morning. When I arrived, I saw a familiar Team Rubicon volunteer and told her I had heard they needed formula. “Oh yes!” she exclaimed. “We have a serious formula shortage. We realized last night that we only have enough to last through today. We’re not sure what we’re going to do.”

When I opened the hatch of my van and she saw it loaded to the brim with cans of formula, she staggered backwards and tears filled her eyes. I celebrate the ties of friendship and community that are being forged through the outpouring of hospitality and generosity that has flowed so freely. God’s grace abounds! †



*Rev. Rea continues to stay in touch with Kelly, exchanging stories about their work to collect donations. Kashif texts frequently and chose to spend his birthday sorting donations at the church.*

*The needs at Camp Atterbury are constantly changing. The need for warm clothing (especially men’s), undergarments, scarves, hats, gloves, socks, shoes, blankets, diapers, and other items for all ages is great. They are also collecting used luggage, duffel bags and backpacks for those leaving the base for permanent homes. As of this writing, the Department of Defense is supplying some formula to refugee families, but donations are still needed.*

## Ministry Milestones

### MINISTRY CHANGES

**Josh Jackson** began serving as Associate Minister at Allisonville Christian Church, Indianapolis on July 15

**Diane Zehr** concluded serving as Interim Minister at Hazelwood Christian Church, Muncie on July 18

**Pamela Pettyjohn** began serving as Interim Minister at Hazelwood Christian Church, Muncie on July 19

**Ron Degges** concluded his interim ministry at Speedway Christian Church, Speedway on July 25

**John Williams** concluded his ministry at Downey Avenue Christian Church, Indianapolis on July 31

**Kyle Hunter** began serving as Senior Minister at Speedway Christian Church, Speedway on August 1

**Melody Merida** began serving as Senior Pastor at Downey Avenue Christian Church, Indianapolis on August 1

**Samantha (Sam) Copeland** began serving as Youth Minister at Geist Christian Church, Indianapolis/Fishers on August 7

**VJ Stover** concluded his interim ministry at West Street Christian Church, Tipton on August 8, and began serving as Interim Minister at First Christian Church, Frankfort on October 24

**Ashley Sherard** concluded her ministry at Beechwood Christian Church, French Lick on August 8 and began serving as Senior Minister at West Street Christian Church, Tipton on August 9

**Karen Fraser Moore** began serving as Interim Minister at Bethany Christian, Evansville on August 15

**Ronn Oren** began serving as Senior Pastor at First Christian Church, New Castle, on August 29

**Mark Parkinson** began serving as Senior Pastor at Union Christian Church, Franklin on August 29

**LuWanna Scott** began serving as Pastor at Woodhaven Christian Church, Bloomington on September 1

**Don Smothers** concluded his ministry as Pastor at Orestes Christian Church, Orestes on September 5

**Frank Everett** began serving as Interim Minister at Danville Christian Church, Danville on September 12

**Gale Stutz** concluded serving as Senior Pastor of Eastgate Christian Church and Franklin Central Christian Church, Indianapolis on September 12 and began serving as Senior Pastor at Carmel Christian Church, Carmel on September 20

**Frank Hibbard** concluded his ministry as Interim Pastor at Carmel Christian Church, Carmel on September 19

**Steve Garrett** began serving as Interim Pastor at Eastgate Christian Church, Indianapolis and Franklin Central Christian Church, Indianapolis on September 19

**Pam Ditson-McCall** retired from ministry at First Christian Church, Frankfort on Sunday October 10

### DEATHS

**Rebecca Nunnally**, retired Disciples minister and former Regional Team Minister, died on October 6

### BIRTHS

**Nate Kibler**, Senior Minister at Central Street Christian Church, Lebanon and Theresa Kibler welcomed a daughter, Miriam Joanna, on August 2 †





## Shoes of Hope for Our Neighbors

By Rev. Mark Parkinson

Union Christian Church, Franklin, had hopes of helping our Afghan neighbors as soon as we saw the stories in the local news. We had been watching the development of the rescue effort for several days before it was disclosed that some of the refugees would be relocated to Camp Atterbury—and that the first group would be arriving soon. My first thought was how great it would be if we could help these people. That same day, one of our Trustees sent me a text message: “We need to help.”

I reached out to the Chaplain's Office at Camp Atterbury by phone but did not receive a response to my message—guessing that they were already being slammed with calls. I was also in conversation with our church Treasurer. He had been invited to a town hall meeting that very day with the City Manager and other leaders to learn how to prepare for the impact of these new guests at Camp Atterbury. I asked if I could tag along with him.

Our church was offered as a drop-off site. We began sharing that information on our website and social media pages. Within a couple of days, Regional Minister Rick Spleth had seen some of our posts and those of Rev. Kyrmen Rea from Trafalgar Christian Church. We were trying to do the same thing, so he sent an email to both of us for the purpose of possibly combining our efforts.

Early donations were bountiful. In our first delivery with Trafalgar Christian, we had 11 vehicles loaded with personal supplies, diapers, baby wipes, personal hygiene products

and clothing. Members of Union Christian Church and the surrounding community of Franklin continued to provide donations and we made several additional trips to the warehouse to deliver goods.

During one of the trips to the warehouse, I asked a leader from Team Rubicon USA (resettlement organizer) about what the most urgent needs were. Her response: SHOES.

While serving a church in Virginia, we became involved in a back-to-school program to help local children with needed school supplies, a meal, a new pair of socks and pair of shoes. The outreach effort was in partnership with Samaritan's Feet, an organization that provides shoes and hope to children around the world. I was privileged to meet the founders of this organization, Manny and Tracie Ohonme.

I reached out to the Ohonmes to see if they would partner with Union Christian Church to help coordinate fundraising for shoes for our new Afghan neighbors—some of which had come here with no shoes, or shoes that would not suffice in Indiana winters.

Samaritan's Feet has been in existence for eighteen years and has the means to organize fundraising campaigns. Through their Shoes of Hope program, they are helping us provide shoes for all 6,600 Afghan neighbors at Camp Atterbury. If you would like to make a donation towards the purchase of new shoes please visit our fundraising page at: [www.justgiving.com/fundraising/unionchristianchurch](http://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/unionchristianchurch). †

## Online, for Now

By Rick and Sheryl Phillips, members of Carmel Christian Church

During these last months, we have attended church online. Sometimes we are reminded subtly and overtly that it would be preferable if we attend in person.

We appreciate that we are missed. Of course, we miss everyone in our congregation as well. But as this message has continued, we have asked our congregation to consider why some people are not attending in person.

For instance, Rick uses an immune suppressant that allows him to function with Rheumatoid Arthritis. It works by destroying cells that both provide immunity and cause inflammation in the body. In short, there is a cost. Right now, that cost is not attending in-person events or being in indoor spaces with people.

To help others understand this, Rick was interviewed by *The Atlantic*. The writer did a wonderful job of explaining why, in some cases, the COVID-19 vaccines have been ineffective.

We look forward to feeling comfortable in returning to the church building. But for now, we must continue to attend online. So please accept/include us from where we are, just now.



Considering any suggestion that we only count if we are there in person is disheartening. We continue our monetary pledges, pray for the church and her people, pray for our pastors (both professional and lay), and look forward to attending in person again.

If faith/commitment is acknowledged only when attendance is in person, the church may lose some when science determines how the immuno-compromised can safely attend. However, the immune-compromised community watches. If they feel unwelcome now, they may find other places that make them feel valued both in person or online when they can once again participate in person.

The *Atlantic* article can be read at: [www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2021/04/immunocompromised-vaccine/618596](http://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2021/04/immunocompromised-vaccine/618596) †

## Environmental Justice Resources Available

The Environmental Justice Team of the Commission on Unity and Witness is tasked to connect congregations and members of the Indiana Region on issues of environmental justice. This team has been asking questions like, “How do our choices affect our neighbors?” and “What can congregations and individuals do about environmental justice?” The team has started by providing resources on the Regional website under the Commission on Unity and Witness tab (<http://indianadisciples.org/commissions/unity-witness>).

commissions/unity-witness).

If you are interested in joining this team, have additional resources or ideas, your voice and presence are welcome. Please contact team leader, Dawn Barnes at [wienny1@aol.com](mailto:wienny1@aol.com). †







## First Richmond Offers Food, Clothing Outside Their Doors

**O**ur Lord gave us work to do: Love others. Feed the hungry. Clothe the naked.

First Christian Church, Richmond, is doing the work Christ calls us to do. With the help of the Barbee Blessing funds, we purchased and installed a Blessing Box and a Caring Fence. The Blessing Box is stocked with food and toiletries for our neighbors. The Caring Fence is used for clothing as well as food items. Our neighbors are invited to take as they need and leave what they can.

Various groups in our congregation—choir members, elders, deacons, youth, etc, each take a month to keep the Box and Fence filled. We have also invited nearby businesses to aid in this ministry to our neighbors.

The congregation had intended on purchasing and installing the Box last year, but the pandemic kept plans from being completed. The brief virus respite this year allowed the completion of the plans to finally put the Barbee Blessing funds to good use.

On Sunday, September 5, 2021, the congregation gathered outside after worship. A prayer was offered to bless the Box and the Fence and for all who take and for those who replenish. Congregation members then took turns putting items in the Box and on the Fence.

What a joy to be in partnership with God in serving our neighbors! †



## LED TO LEARN: A Civil Rights Pilgrimage

*“If you see something  
that is not right, not fair, not just,  
you have a moral obligation  
to do something about it.”*

– John Lewis

**T**hese words perfectly summarized the sentiments and hearts of the congregation at Downey Avenue Christian Church, Indianapolis. The tumultuous events of the past two years weighed heavy on our minds and we felt compelled to do something.

Through grants—and led by the pastoral staff—our journey began. Congregants started with an educational deep dive through Caste

Railroad; the site of the lynching of Lee Walker and had a private visit to the National Civil Rights Museum at the Lorraine Hotel, site of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Continuing to Birmingham, where some of the most horrific incidents had occurred, we toured the Civil Rights Institute, the 16th Street Baptist Church, site of the bombing claiming the lives of four young girls, and Ingram Park



by Isabel Wilkerson, *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo and *How to be an Anti-Racist* by Ibram X. Kendi. The book studies prompted thoughtful discussion, along with self-exploration of anti-racism and pro-reconciliation training. Our newly formed Social Justice Ministry gave us the chance to view the HBO documentary *True Justice: Bryan Stevenson's Fight for Equality*. Each of these activities led to a culminating event: a Civil Rights pilgrimage. We were called to experience, as best we could, the various locations along the Freedom Trail of the Civil Rights movement.

Led by our Senior Pastor, Rev. Melody Merida, a multi-generational group boarded a bus in Indianapolis, setting out for a week's journey to the south. Beginning in Memphis, we visited the Slave Haven, part of the Underground

Museum: From Enslavement to Mass Incarceration and to the National Memorial for Peace and Justice, remembering the over 4,000 souls lost to lynching, torture and murder.

Visiting Atlanta, we paid homage at the tomb of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. at the MLK Center for Nonviolent Societal Change. We later visited the Center for Civil and Human Rights, with its powerful displays, reminding us of modern-day injustices on basic human rights.

Our final stop was in Nashville to the Public Library with an entire floor dedicated to the Civil Rights Movement and a new installation titled Votes for Women, the Legacy of the 19th Amendment.

Before returning home Sunday, we spent time at Greenwood Cemetery and the tomb of Preston Taylor, a leader in the Disciples Church, followed by services at New Covenant Christian Church, where he had been a pastor. The moving and wonderful words from Pastor Tara Faith Williams reminded us that the Lord is always listening, always with us, even in our darkest moments and will always answer our prayers; a powerful message tying so well to the history just experienced, giving us strength as we move forward putting to use the lessons learned, in our moral obligation to do something about the injustices in the world. †

with its numerous statues remembering the atrocities of the movement.

In Selma, emotions welled as we walked across the Edmund Pettus Bridge—continuing to Montgomery for a moving visit to the Equal Justice Initiative's Legacy



**Westview Christian Church, Indianapolis**, turned 60 years old in 2020, but because of COVID restrictions, they were not able to gather to celebrate until this past September—closer to their 61st anniversary!

The outdoor celebration was attended by friends, members, former ministers and retired Regional Minister Rev. and Mrs. Howard Goodrich. Westview looks forward to continuing their service to Christ and community in the coming years.





## Graduation, and a New Grant Opportunity Coming Soon!

**T**he FLOURISH! Program is both thrilled and honored to be awarding twelve Indiana pastors a grant of \$10,000 this month as part of Lilly Endowment's National Initiative to Address Clergy Economic Challenges. This month's FLOURISH! graduation celebration is the fourth since the program began and these twelve join 52 pastors who have already graduated and been awarded grants.

The Indiana Region has been working in partnership with Lilly Endowment, churches, and donors across Indiana since 2015 to address individual pastors' educational debt, medical debt, and retirement planning and to help congregations more adequately compensate their pastors. It is not uncommon for pastors to graduate seminary with \$75,000-\$100,000 in educational loans. With Indiana Disciples ministers average annual salaries of \$50,000-\$60,000, loan repayment and/or retirement savings are definite economic challenges. Indiana's own Lilly Endowment recognized the need to provide financial assistance to pastors so that they can provide bold, confident leadership in our churches and communities.

With matching funds from donors and congregations, FLOURISH! has provided two-year cycles of education, coached peer groups, and financial consultation in addition to grant funds. Before funds are distributed, pastors must complete two sessions on personal finance and two on preaching and teaching stewardship and are joined by church lay leaders to participate in two sessions each on congregational best practices for governance and finance as well as stewardship. These "Financial Literacy Academies" take place in May and October of each year and are open to all Indiana Disciples clergy but required of FLOURISH! grantees.

In January of 2022, we will be accepting applications for Stewardship Mini Grants. Eligible congregations will be those who have not yet participated in the FLOURISH! grant programs. Successful applicants will participate in one year of Financial Literacy Academies and \$5,000 will be distributed per grant with \$1,000 going to the congregation to support their stewardship activities and \$4,000 to the congregation's awarded pastor. We also expect to hear soon about a supplemental grant application submitted to Lilly Endowment earlier this year. We hope to roll out additional initiatives in 2022-2024.

We offer our most sincere thanks to donors who have provided the matching funds to make these programs possible. We also want to recognize the commitment of many who have invested their time and energy into helping Indiana pastors and congregations to FLOURISH! †



*Sarah Riester,  
Program Administrator,  
delivers our  
annual report to  
Lilly Endowment Inc.*



## Mexico Initiative Continues with Conversations

**W**hile the COVID pandemic has interrupted travel of Indiana Disciples to the US-Mexico border and the interior of Mexico, the initiative itself has continued. We have discovered there is more than one way to get to the border and engage with immigrant neighbors near at hand. So, Conversations with Neighbors have been launched as a way for members of our churches to get to know those who work on our behalf with immigrants and refugees, most particularly those who are from Mexico and Central America. Already we have gathered by Zoom to link Disciples across the Region with:

- Kimber Nicoletti-Martinez, who works with immigrant people in Indiana who are the victims of sexual violence;

- Feliberto Periera, founder and Executive Director of Southwest Good Samaritan Ministries, Los Fresnos, Texas; and
- Rachel Van Tyle, Director of Legal Services for Exodus Refugee Immigration

More conversations are planned, and in 2022 we hope for the resumption of travel, first to Los Fresnos to engage in the work of our Disciples church partners at the border.

Want to be informed when conversations are scheduled or trips are planned? Contact Sandy Kincaid, [sandy@indianadisciples.org](mailto:sandy@indianadisciples.org) and she will add you to the communication list. †

## Northwood Turns 100 101!

**N**orthwood Christian Church, Indianapolis celebrated their 100th anniversary a year late due to the COVID pandemic, but joyfully gathered friends and members under a tent at 42nd and Central Avenue on October 2 just as the founders had done 101 years earlier. Now located in the center of the city, Northwood was founded on the northern outskirts of Indianapolis.

The congregation has had a storied history with a strong commitment to social justice, food ministries, ecumenism, and music and arts which continues to today under the able leadership of pastor Heath Jones. When the current building was constructed in 1952 the church built two. The other one was located in Mbandaka, Democratic Republic of the Congo. That building, the Mbandaka III church, is the largest Disciples church building on the African continent.

Today, Northwood shares its space with a variety of groups—three other churches, two schools, an artist, a yoga teacher, a dance teacher, a karate teacher, two chefs, and an AA group. It has become a dynamic community center that is humming with activity each day.

A wonderful video of the history of Northwood can be found on the church's website: [indyncc.org](http://indyncc.org) or on the YouTube channel of pastor Heath Jones. †





## Back Home in Indiana

By Dean Phelps

One of my influences on the guitar was Comer "Moon" Mullins. I first met Moon in Indiana, not long after John Matsel taught me the Merle Travis thumb and finger style on the guitar. Moon and I were both thumbpickers, and we would cross paths at various music events.



Moon and I would occasionally find an opportunity to pick together, and we loved to play the Indiana state song, "Back Home Again in Indiana." We would joke that we shared a lot in common, including neither of us being invited to play Back Home Again at the Indianapolis 500.

Moon passed away a couple of years ago, but I still play "Back Home Again in Indiana." The song brings me joy and recalls many wonderful memories. I learned the song and worked it out on the guitar while we lived in Indiana. I often paired it with "My Old Kentucky Home." "Back Home Again in Indiana" represented how much Indiana felt like home to this Kentucky native.

Indiana raised me up in regional ministry, and I will always be grateful for that. Indiana equipped me to serve alongside the Disciples clergy and congregations in Oklahoma, Central Rocky Mountain, Kentucky, and Ohio. I have been blessed by friendships across the church and across the country. So, when the opportunity came to rejoin Indiana's regional ministry team and fill in for a few months, I was delighted.

In many ways, it felt like I had never left, like we were getting the band back together. Coming back to Indiana brought my regional ministry journey full circle. Many people I had known and loved were still here. Others had entered their eternal rest, and some new faces graced my Zoom screen. Nevertheless, I was back home again.

I was back home among Indiana Disciples who had a new flourish! The partnership with the Lilly Foundation that gave rise to the FLOURISH! program is the biggest change I noticed. This program has been a blessing to congregations and to those called to serve, helping everyone hone stewardship, generosity, and financial management.

We have found ways to connect beyond our structures. Even though my travel was limited, I visited with several congregations through online worship services and video conference meetings. We can be proud of the ways we have adapted to a reality that was thrust upon us and will continue to be our reality. The circumstances called us to respond quickly, and we did, realizing that staying connected was vital to our call and purpose.

We are a church built on covenant and connection. Covenant requires community, and community requires relationship. In order to be the church that we are called to be, the church that we claim to be, we have to see and hear each other. Our relationships draw us together as one church. Our relationships make us a region.

I have long held that the church is at its best when we are singing together. Whether it's two guitarists having a jam or a choir uniting their voices in worship, making music together requires us to listen. We each carry our part while we listen closely to one another. Serving in covenant demands that same close attention.

Indiana Disciples, thank you for welcoming me back home if only for a few months. May you continue to make music together, hearing and seeing one another, facing the challenges, joys, and opportunities of ministry as one church.

Dean Phelps served as Interim Associate Regional Minister August-October 2021 during the sabbatical leave of Carolyn Reed. †

## Indiana Disciples Authors

### One Desire: A Book of Collects

By Eric Brotheridge



What if you could ask for the world by asking for one desire? What if God pays more attention

to a prayer asking for one thing than a prayer that resembles a grocery list? What if it's okay to pray for just one thing and to let go of praying for the entirety of the world's woes? What if asking for just one desire can be freeing; one desire for the moment, for the day, for the week or for any amount of time?



Brotheridge's book is a collection of Collects written in 2020. A Collect is a unique blend of scriptural commentary, poetry and prayer written/spoken with the intention of bringing about change in the speaker and the speaker's world.

Rev. Brotheridge is currently Interim Pastor at First Christian Church in Bedford, Indiana. He is a fifth-generation minister who grew up in a parsonage right next door to his childhood church in Flossmoor, Illinois—a south suburb of Chicago. He now considers himself a Hoosier having lived more than half his life in Indiana. Eric currently resides in Bloomington, Indiana.

Eric began serving as pastor and interim pastor at several churches in central and northern Indiana in 2002, with a 6-year hiatus with Amazon.com in 2014. He enjoys his spare time reading (poetry and fiction and anything good), strumming his guitar, playing video games (RPG's), and running. Most importantly, he loves just being "Poppa" for his beloved daughters.

### The Peacemaker's Path: Multi-faith Reflections to Deepen Your Spirituality

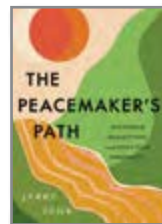
By Jerry Zehr



Rev. Jerry Zehr has beautifully crafted a forty-day journey

through religious traditions such as Bahá'í, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Native American spiritualities, and more. For a fuller picture of the divine, we must not focus on what separates us from others but rather what unifies us; this is the work of the peacemaker.

Through daily readings that explore the tenets, teachings, writings, and prayers of these diverse faith traditions, you will gain new insight, understanding, and connection with people from different religious backgrounds. Each day offers a reflection, scripture passages



from the world's religions, questions to contemplate, a call to action, and a closing prayer.

Jerry Zehr retired recently from Carmel Christian Church. After 36 years in parish ministry as a Disciples of Christ minister, he is now giving time to speaking and teaching on interfaith themes of his new book "The Peacemaker's Path." Jerry is available for zoom or in-person speaking and teaching opportunities. You can contact him at Jerryzehr1@gmail.com.

### Epiphanies From an Accidental Pastor

By Rick Vale



Rick Vale's book is a collection of short inspirational "epiphanies" taken from over 40 years of observing people and life in Christian Ministry.

From weddings to funerals, and everything in between, a minister experiences the best and sometimes the worst of human nature. But people and our interactions with them are still the best windows to the lessons of the Spirit of God.



Vale sees life inside and outside of his congregations through the eyes of someone who "accidentally" fell into the ministry. His stories reflect his personal belief

that "every spiritual truth has a physical metaphor"—there is something to learn about God from every encounter and observance—if one is paying attention.

Rick Vale is the Pastor at Central Christian Church in Anderson, Indiana, where he has served for 15 years. He has worked as a Music Director and Pastor in ministry for over 40 years.

Rick is now a retired professional actor who has performed onstage in the Pacific Northwest and New York state. He currently is the artistic director of the Alley Theatre Company in Anderson, Indiana.

He is also a composer and songwriter. His music has been commissioned and performed all over the world. He continues to perform as a vocalist around the Midwest, with symphony orchestras, and regularly with the Indianapolis Jazz Orchestra.

These books are available online through Amazon and Barnes and Noble.

### AFGHAN NEIGHBORS

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about how our whole church is responding at: [www.discipleshomemissions.org/missions-advocacy/refugee-immigration-ministries](http://www.discipleshomemissions.org/missions-advocacy/refugee-immigration-ministries)

Several hundred Afghan persons will likely be assigned to Indiana. Catholic Charities along with Exodus Refugee Immigration, [www.exodusrefugee.org](http://www.exodusrefugee.org),

a long-time partner of the Christian Church in Indiana, will coordinate the settlement of Afghan refugees into Indiana communities and will assist with housing, employment, medical care, legal assistance, and language classes as they begin a new life. They are dependent on partner

congregations to assist in this effort.

We give thanks for Kyrmen and Mark who saw a need and did not hesitate. Kyrmen told every news agency she talked to that she was part of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and providing welcome is what we do. Thanks be to God! †





Hi Camp Friends!

What a great year we had! After having to take a year off due to COVID, we had a successful and fun summer together this year! We all have our favorite parts of camp! I am super excited for next year too!

Behind the scenes, we are busy bees planning camp for 2022. The theme next summer is "What's in a Name." Each day of camp we will discuss a different aspect of a name such as name calling, name giving, and name changing.

Invite your friends and remember to carry camp with you wherever you go. Look for more information to come in the new year. Thanks for everything you give to this camping program. Your joy is our reason!

We look forward to seeing your smiling faces again in 2022!

Much love,

*Charissa*

Charissa Ramey  
Regional Coordinator of Camp Ministries

## 2022 CAMP DATES

SAVE THE DATE



### 2022 Geneva Camps

You & Me 1 (3 days)	June 13-15
New Beginnings (3 days)	June 13-15
Explorers	June 13-18
You & Me 2 (3 days)	June 20-22
MAD	June 20-25
Middle / High School	June 27-July 2
CROSS	June 27-July 2

### 2022 Bedford Camps

Explorers	June 20-25
New Beginnings (3 days)	June 27-29
High School	July 4-9
Middle School	July 11-16

#### 2022 Camp Early Bird Fees:

**6-day camps: \$415; 3-day camps: \$235**

**Add \$25 after May 15th**

**Registration Opens January 2022**

Visit <http://indianadisciples.org/commissions/commission-on-faith-formation/#camp> to register online or download a printable registration form

## ALL ABOUT 2022 CAMPS



#### **You & Me** (age 5+ and an adult)

You & Me Camps are designed for children who are at least 5 years old, plus an adult. The adult may accompany more than one child to camp and need not be a biological relative. It can be any older adult other than a parent. This 3-day intergenerational event is an opportunity for older adults and younger children to experience the wonders of camp together at Geneva Center. Both adult and camper need to register.

#### **New Beginnings** (completed grades 1-3)

New Beginnings is more than just an introduction to camp. It is 3 days of fun, study, worship, singing and relationship building. Second and third grade campers learn the traditions of camp and begin to create some of their own. Along with caring counselors, campers experience the unique flavor of a week of church camp in just 48 hours. Come, join the fun! Offered at Geneva Center and Bedford.

#### **Explorer** (completed grades 4-5)

At Explorer Camp, fourth and fifth graders experience a full week of fun, study, worship and singing with the new friends they will meet! Campers will discover much about themselves through the traditions of camp as they begin to explore their relationship with Christ. Offered at Geneva Center and Bedford.

#### **Traditional Middle School** (completed grades 6-8)

At Middle School Camp, campers have an opportunity to ask serious questions about life and about their relationship with God. You'll read the

Bible, talk about things most important to you, while learning more about who God and Jesus are and how all this helps you deal with life. A full week camp offered at Geneva Center and Bedford.

#### **Traditional High School** (completed grades 9-12)

High School Camp is one of the most important events of the summer. For a full week, high school students from across Indiana gather to build a caring Christian community of lasting friendships, where together they learn about God, Christ, the Bible, themselves, and how to live out their faith. Offered at Geneva Center and Bedford.

#### **M.A.D.** (Music, Art, Drama) (completed grades 6-8 & 9-12)

M.A.D. Camp appeals to youth with talents or interests in the arts. This camp explores creative ways of using the arts in worship in a local church setting. Interest group topics in the past have ranged from clown ministry and cooking to dance and drama. Camp culminates in a production for campers' families to attend. M.A.D. Camp will be offered at Geneva Center for a full week.

#### **C.R.O.S.S.** (Christian Recreation and Outdoor Sports Skills) (completed grades 6-8 & 9-12)

Campers don't sit still at C.R.O.S.S. Camp! C.R.O.S.S. is a very active camp, with a variety of sports, games, and activities to compliment the study, worship, and fun camp offers! C.R.O.S.S. Camp is offered at Geneva Center for a full week.