

# The Indiana Christian



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## Indiana Region Receives New Grant from Lilly Endowment Inc.

**T**he Christian Church in Indiana is pleased to announce the receipt of a \$1.25 million grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. in their Christian Parenting and Caregiving Initiative. The Region's application for this competitive grant was approved this summer and will support the launch of **quest: A Journey of Faith**.

This new initiative of our Commission on Faith Formation is designed to collaborate with congregations to equip, support, and empower parents and caregivers as they model and share their faith with their children.



**quest** will provide parents and caregivers guidance as they navigate the challenges of raising children in the Christian faith today.

**quest** is intended to address the current challenges of faith formation, recognizing that much of children's spiritual development is happening at home. The program was developed through conversations with parents and pastors around the

region. **quest** will address the primary concerns of parents, that they lack sufficient time and feel ill-equipped to teach their children about their faith. The program will also address the needs of the congregation, providing monetary and liturgical resources to help them connect with the families

in their churches. **quest** will provide engaging age-appropriate materials for each child in the program mailed directly to their home.

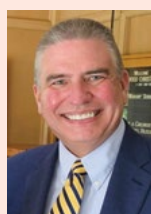
Planning for the launch of **quest** will begin this fall with the first unit scheduled to be offered to select Indiana Disciples families in the

spring of 2024. The five-year program will be built around the fruit of the Spirit found in Galatians 5:22-23. Galatians says, "By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things" (NRSVUE). Each of the nine attributes of the fruit of the Spirit will be explored in the context of the Bible, culture, and family life.

We celebrate this new opportunity for our families and congregations made possible by the generous grant of Lilly Endowment Inc. and look forward to inviting Indiana Disciples on this **quest**. †



## Celebrating Rick Spleth



**Come and celebrate Rick's ministry, both for the last 22 years as Indiana's Regional Ministry and the many years before that as a congregational pastor.**

**Where?** Indiana Interchurch Center, Krannert Hall, Second Floor  
1100 West 42nd St., Indianapolis, IN 46208

**When?** Saturday, August 26, 2:00 - 4:00 PM, program at 3:00 PM

**Send a Letter** You are invited to share your appreciation of Rick by sending a letter to be presented to him in a collection of greetings.

**Mail to the regional office, c/o Sarah Riester, or email to [sarah@indianadisciples.org](mailto:sarah@indianadisciples.org) before August 15.**

Christian Church in Indiana  
Attention: Sarah Riester  
1100 W 42nd St, Suite 150  
Indianapolis, IN 46208

### Submit a Video

You are also invited to send a video of yourself, your congregation, or another assembled group simply saying "Thank You." Again, these should be submitted to [sarah@indianadisciples.org](mailto:sarah@indianadisciples.org) by August 15 to allow time for compilation.

### Make a Gift in Rick's Honor

If you'd like to make a gift in celebration of Rick's ministry, he has requested that gifts in his honor support the Indiana Region's FLOURISH! Program. FLOURISH! supports Indiana Disciples clergy and their families. <http://indianadisciples.org/donate>

For more information about FLOURISH!  
or to make a gift, scan the QR code.



**T**he Reconciliation Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) was a movement born out of the civil unrest of the 1960s. With many challenges and battles fought then, we are still on the front line fighting to change today. Redlining. Poverty. Racism. The work of the Reconciliation Ministry, through its offering or throughout the year, supports programs and initiatives to dismantle racism.

The special offering benefiting Reconciliation Ministry will be collected on Sunday, October 1, 2023.

Your gifts allow us to offer training and will further equip our church to practice faithfulness concerning the elimination of racism, which exists in all manifestations of the church, to discern the presence and nature of racism as sin, to develop strategies to eradicate it, and to work toward racial reconciliation.

Please consider making a gift to the Reconciliation Ministry Special Offering. †

In The Spirit Richard L. Spleth, Indiana Regional Minister



My 22 Years as a Regional Minister have been Enriching, Fulfilling, and Life Giving

**R**andy Johnson was persistent, and I am grateful for that. Randy was the chair of the Regional Minister Search Committee in 2001. He asked me to complete an application, but I was not initially inclined to do so. I was happily serving Creekwood Christian Church in Flower Mound, Texas, a congregation I had helped launch nine years earlier and Diane had just entered seminary. I said no at first, but Randy was persistent. I am grateful for that. My 22 years as Regional Minister have been enriching, fulfilling, and life giving.

There have been surprises. When I began I thought I would spend my time with pastors, but it turns out that congregational lay leaders have always been substantive ministry partners. I loved it when someone in one of our churches, who I met years earlier, contacted me with a question, an idea, or a concern. That has helped me continue to be a pastor, not just an administrator.

Another surprise was the discovery of the financial fragility of too many of our pastors. I am grateful that Lilly Endowment prompted us to address this and provided the means for us to do so. I am glad that work will continue even as we joyfully begin a new ministry focus on faith formation with **quest**.

The Congo Partnership was a highlight. We generated \$165,000 in support for Disciples ministries there and sent 27 persons to visit from

Indiana, while welcoming 15 travelers to visit us. When a young girl in one of our churches jumped in front of me to introduce the guests from the Congo I had brought to her congregation, saying that “she knew them from camp,” I knew our partnership had succeeded.

*I have found Regional Ministry to be a very satisfying expression of my vocation. It is all about relationships and intersections.*

As I began, I inherited a “Discernment Process” on who could be ordained. That process required 12 years of discussion and conversation leading to an overwhelming vote to change our ordination criteria. I said at the time that if we do this with care it will assist us in having conversations about other challenges in the future. I still believe that is true.

A pastor in Oklahoma who is considering a ministry change wrote me recently asking what it is like to be a Regional Minister. Here is what I said to him:

*I have found Regional Ministry to be a very satisfying expression of my vocation. It is all about relationships and intersections. Regional Ministers are at the intersection between the local congregation and the general church and are interpreters of one to the*

*other. Regional Ministers are at the intersection of a pastor and their congregation, and at times are called upon to interpret one to the other. Regional Ministers are at the intersection of the church and the world and are called upon to speak to the world on behalf of the church, and*

*help the church hear the world speak. To stand in any of those intersections with any degree of effectiveness you must invest in and build relationships.*

*Search and Call is a significant part of the role. It requires increasing creativity and imagination to help our congregations identify and call the leadership they need.*

*Like the Apostle Paul, who was the first Regional Minister, we are called upon to interpret one part of the church to another. Paul tried to help the church in Jerusalem appreciate the legitimacy and faithfulness of the church in Galatia, even though the expression of their life as church was so vastly different. Paul, though, knew it was authentic, because he had travelled there and experienced it first-hand. Regional Ministers do the same.*

Similarly, he was compelled to interpret and collect an offering for the church in Jerusalem whose mission was bigger than they could manage alone. That was a precursor to Disciples Mission Fund.

*Regional Ministers steward resources that have been accumulated and sometimes make hard choices about those. Do you sell a church camp to do faith formation in a different way?*

*You cannot be thin skinned and be in Regional Ministry. And you need to be immune from getting caught up in the tension among those in conflict. You must guard against being triangulated.*

*I have loved my opportunity to serve in this role. I miss being a local church pastor at the same time—watching*

*more closely the faith development of individuals and the growth of children and youth—but Regional Ministry has preserved my opportunity to preach and I am thankful for that. I would do it again.*

I most definitely would. Thank you Randy for being persistent and not taking my no for an answer. And thank you Indiana friends for your being open to God’s persistent claim on us all.

Blessings on you and your congregation.

*Rick*

Richard L. Spleth  
Regional Minister

2023 Regional Calendar

- AUGUST**  
9 Anti-Racism Pro-Reconciliation Training (Disruptive Theology)  
15 Finance Committee  
26 Rev. Rick Spleth Retirement Celebration
- SEPTEMBER**  
16 Regional Board
- OCTOBER**  
17 Healthy Boundaries  
25 Indiana Christian Articles Due
- NOVEMBER**  
14 Finance Committee  
16 Commission on Ministry
- DECEMBER**  
2 Regional Board

**Regional Minister**  
Richard L. Spleth  
[rick@indianadisciples.org](mailto:rick@indianadisciples.org)

**Editors**  
Krista Hunter  
[krista@indianadisciples.org](mailto:krista@indianadisciples.org)

Candace Boyd Simmons  
[candace@indianadisciples.org](mailto:candace@indianadisciples.org)

**Managing Editor**  
Bridget Gurtowsky  
[bridget@gurtowskygraphics.com](mailto:bridget@gurtowskygraphics.com)

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WINTER ISSUE  
DEADLINE  
OCTOBER 25, 2023





# Celebrating Rick Spleth: A Look Back

Rick Spleth’s ministry of forty-five years has taken him many places—from Iowa to Indiana to Texas—and back to Indiana!

We celebrate and give thanks for the twenty-two years he has served as the Regional Minister for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Indiana! His faithful leadership has led him to pulpits, board meeting spaces, pastors’ offices, summer camps, area clergy groups, ecumenical meetings, Congo, Mexico, and Zoom! Left behind are more miles than can be counted, more hours on the phone than imaginable, and all the relationships that resulted from both. His wit, his smile, his insight, his positivity, his compassion, and his love for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and, specifically the Indiana Region, is immeasurable.

*Thank you, Rick, for all the ways you have given selflessly to serve!*



## Ministry Milestones

### MINISTRY CHANGES

**Chuck Armstrong** concluded his ministry at Northview Christian Church, Kokomo on March 18, and began his ministry at New Lisbon Christian Church, Union City on March 19.

**Elizabeth Wolf** concluded her ministry at First Christian Church, Gas City on March 20.

**Randy Miles** concluded serving as the Interim Pastor of Corydon Christian Church, Corydon on March 31.

**Pamela Pettyjohn** began serving as the Pastor of Corydon Christian Church, Corydon on April 1.

**Chad Boseker** was ordained at First Christian Church, Jeffersonville on April 1 and concluded his ministry there on April 23.

**Bill Johnson** retired from ministry at First Christian Church, Madison on April 23.

**Ben Brandt** concluded his ministry at Mt. Summit Christian Church on April 23.

**Lanny Lawler** concluded his interim ministry at First Christian Church, Vincennes on May 31.

**Jeff Shick** began serving as pastor of First Christian Church, Vincennes on June 1.

**Dorian Condre** was ordained at Speedway Christian Church, Speedway on May 21.

**Sarah Lynne Gershon** was ordained at First Christian Church, Bloomington on May 21.

**Rex Kibler** concluded his interim ministry at South Side Christian Church, Kokomo on May 31.

**Charissa Ramey** began serving as Pastor at Sixth Street Christian Church, Middletown on June 4.

**John Dunn** retired from ministry at Broadway Christian Church, Princeton on June 4.

**Broadway Christian Church, Princeton** closed its ministry on June 4.

### DEATHS

**Sadie, the Dog.** Faithful greeter at Nameless Creek Christian Church, Greenfield, at the age of 12 ½ (featured in the Spring 2023 edition of the *Indiana Christian*) †





## Central Christian Church, Anderson Offers Shelter From the Rain

When storms threatened a recent outdoor concert in Anderson, the Anderson Symphony Orchestra knew where they could find shelter—Central Christian Church. Central provided the needed space so the “show could go on.”

That would be no surprise to residents of Anderson. Since 1900, Central has participated in arts in the community. The congregation houses the Alley Theater, which performs a five-show season each year and will be celebrating its 10th Anniversary Season in 2023-2024. ([www.thealleytheatre.com](http://www.thealleytheatre.com))

And a variety of musical events take place at the church, including Mardi Gras Sunday (the last Sunday before Lent) and the Annual Jazz Worship service that will be held this year on Sunday, August 13, at 10:00 am.

Central's pastor, Rick Vale, is widely known in the arts community. He is a composer, performer, and the Artistic Director of the Alley Theater. He will be singing with the Anderson Symphony on August 10 outside, unless it rains. †



## Light of the World Christian Church Prison Ministry

By Re’Nita O’Bannon

It was 1970 when the late Charles and Elizabeth Speed, faithful members of Second Christian Church, now Light of the World Christian Church, under the leadership of Rev. Dr. Tom Benjamin, visited the Pendleton Reformatory with an outside organization. God moved on their hearts during that first visit, and within that year, our Prison Ministry began, which means Light of the World has one of the longest-running prison ministries in Indiana.

I joined the Prison Ministry Team in April 1977. We visited the Pendleton Reformatory, a maximum-security men’s prison in Pendleton, Indiana, twice a month. Before we departed for our 45-minute trip to the prison, we prayed that God would use us to show His love and share His word. We did not inquire about their crimes, and we did not judge. But for God’s grace and mercy, some of us coming from the outside could have been on the inside.

Our ministry team consists of a small, but dedicated group of servants who accepted the call to minister to what society considers to be the least, the last, and the lost. We meet with a group of 15-20 men for Bible study, sometimes by topic, other times by books of the Bible. We also have worship services with preaching, the prison gospel choir singing, and testimony sharing with larger groups of 60-100 men. For many years we were allowed to have an annual Christmas party where the men and their families looked forward to having a delicious, catered meal. Those were some great fellowships, and the men were very appreciative.

Ministering in a maximum-security prison, now known as the Pendleton Correctional Facility, where many men have lengthy sentences, means we have ministered to some of them for decades, yet they still have hope. They often share that they see us volunteers more than their family members. The prison chaplain once told us that the men participating in our Light of the World Prison Ministry have some of the best behavior and lower recidivism rates upon release, which lets us know that our labor is not in vain.

COVID arrived in March 2020 and shut us out of the prison. As difficult as it was for all of us to go through the pandemic, especially that first year, imagine being locked in a cell with limited access to medical care, COVID cases, and no family or ministry visits. We kept the men in prayer and prayed that we would be able to return in the future. June 1, 2023, was our first visit to the prison after a 3-year absence. We were excited, and the men were too!

We see the men released and living successful lives after prison, which makes our hearts glad. We know of many and are elated to share the good news. Our Light of the World Prison Ministry has been and continues to be a blessing to all involved. Glory to God! †

## CTS Calls Francisco Lozada As Dean

Following an extensive national search, Christian Theological Seminary has named Dr. Francisco Lozada, Jr. the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculty, effective July 1, 2023. Dr. Lozada joins CTS from Brite Divinity School, where he most recently served as the Charles Fischer Catholic Professor of New Testament and Latinx Studies and the Director of the Borderlands Institute and Latinx Studies Program.



“It is an honor to welcome such an accomplished scholar and highly esteemed leader to our team during this exciting time in our history,” shares CTS President Dr. David M. Mellott. “Dr. Lozada brings a wealth of experience in theological education, New Testament studies, Latinx studies, and seeking innovative solutions to societal issues. His life and career embody CTS’ values, and his commitment to centering marginalized communities will further expand accessibility to the degree programs and resources we offer as we grow to meet the world’s need for transformative leaders.”

At Brite, he has been a leading voice in addressing hermeneutical and theological implications regarding how the Bible is employed and deployed in ethnic/racial communities. He serves on the Board of the Hispanic Summer Program, guiding its efforts to shape the next generation of Latinx theological and ecclesial leaders, advises the Board of Pathways Theological Education, an online program affiliated with the United Church of Christ, and serves as a member of the CPE Professional Advisory Group at Baylor Scott and White Health All Saints in Fort Worth, TX. He has also served extensively in leadership roles for the Society of Biblical Literature.

“Joining Christian Theological Seminary is exciting,” says Dr. Lozada. “It is an honor and privilege to join this esteemed theological school and serve its faculty, staff, students, and the broader community. I look forward to working with the leadership team and the Board to promote academic and theological excellence and enhance student learning. I am delighted to work with President Mellott to advance CTS’s values and mission. I am honored to have been chosen for this new role and look forward to working with all my colleagues to make a difference in today’s world.”

Dr. Lozada holds a Ph.D. in New Testament and Early Christianity from Vanderbilt University, an MTS from Vanderbilt Divinity School, and a BA in Religious Studies from John Carroll University. He was born in Cleveland, Ohio, to Puerto Rican parents and is Catholic with a commitment to strong ecumenical and interfaith relationships. †





## Anti-Racism & Pro-Reconciliation Training Updates

By Candace Boyd Simmons, Reconciliation Program Coordinator

Civil unrest and the new imagining of how the Indiana region equips our clergy might not always go hand in hand. 2022 paved the way for a new lens to emerge of how the Indiana Region held Anti-Racism & Pro-Reconciliation Trainings. Over the course of two years our region has further equipped over 150 lay and clergy persons to imagine new and inventive ways to be an anti-racist and pro-reconciling church.

We were led in our journey by Disciples minister and author Sandhya Jha. During our time together we emerged with:

- The theology of the definition of racism and the ways it impacts the whole Church
- What theologies shape our work in the pursuit of justice
- Opportunities to engage hands-on tools to help define what being anti-racist means
- Speaking to the powers and doing our part to tear negative systems down

As our training year closes, we now look for ways to live out the message of being the kingdom of God, within us and among us. Our focus as an anti-racist and pro-reconciling community includes:

- Exploring the way we look at faith formation from an anti-racist lens
- Ecumenical partnerships with the United Church of Christ, Christian Theological Seminary and the Episcopal Church
- Equipping our region's clergy as trainers for our region
- Continued education and renewal through programs like **Living Justice: An Anti-Racist Practicum**, a five-week training practicum for Anti-Racist Training practitioners. †



## Carmel Christian Church Embraces Open and Affirming Identity

The congregation of Carmel Christian Church in Carmel, IN, began an incredible journey in May of 2022. Knowing we were already a warm and welcoming church, we didn't realize we weren't "Open and Affirming." We didn't understand that there was a whole process to go through, lots of conversations to have, many questions to explore, research to be done, and, finally, a congregational vote. Nearly a year later, on May 14, 2023, we officially voted to become an Open and Affirming church. We participated in our first Pride event on Sunday, May 25. Carmel Pride was created by Carmel High School students in 2021. About half of those from our congregation who participated in Carmel Pride are pictured above.

If your church is considering becoming Open and Affirming, please don't hesitate to contact us at [carmelchristian@sbcglobal.net](mailto:carmelchristian@sbcglobal.net). We'll be happy to share our journey with you. †



## Trafalgar Christian Church Celebrates 175th Anniversary

The Trafalgar Christian Church in Johnson County celebrated its 175th homecoming on June 25, 2023. There was a special afternoon dinner and program -- "From Goose Creek to Pearl Street" -- headed up by board chair, Connie Elliott, featuring five lifetime members after remarks by Regional Minister Rick Spleth. The church family also gathered around a fire to share prayers and dreams for the future in a closing ceremony based on Psalm 141. I

In the morning, the weekly service began with the ringing of the bells that members have rung by hand, pulling on the rope that drops down from the church's tower for more than one-hundred years. Special guests Associate Regional Minister Carolyn Reed and Regional Elder Howard Bowers participated in the service, and church members viewed the contents of a time capsule buried 25 years ago while filling a new one.

A special painting by local artist Martha Lindeborg Vaught that had been commissioned for the occasion was also displayed. The Trafalgar Church Family is very grateful to have been able to celebrate this special day with many former members and friends. †

## Lewis Turner Retires from Interchurch Center Staff

If you have been to the Indiana Interchurch Center anytime in the last 24 years, chances are you have been greeted and welcomed by Lewis Turner, long-time head custodian. Lewis' engaging spirit has helped the Interchurch Center, home to our Regional Office, be a place of welcome and community for over two decades.

On March 12th current and former employees of the organizations housed at the Interchurch Center gathered to celebrate Lewis' 90th birthday and retirement and give thanks for his gentle and genuine care of all.

The Indiana Interchurch Center, located on the Christian Theological Seminary campus, opened in 1976 as the home for the regional offices of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), United Church of Christ, Presbyterian Church (USA), United Methodist Church, and the Episcopal Church. The Indiana Council of Churches and the Church Federation of Indianapolis were also original tenants.

Today, the Disciples and UCC share an office suite, alongside offices for the Presbyterian Church and the American Baptist Church. The remainder of the building is populated by over 30 not-for-profit organizations, both faith-based and secular. All are driven by values of social justice and dignity: protecting the vulnerable, preventing environmental degradation, helping refugees in Indiana and around the world, promoting human and civil rights, and fostering interfaith dialogue and cooperation. †







## Allisonville Christian Church Launches Speaker Series

**H**ow can Christians help advance the work of racial justice? What's the purpose of Christians gathering together? How does Christian Nationalism threaten the Church's witness?

These questions (and many others) will be tackled in a new speaker series at Allisonville Christian Church called **The Allisonville Forum**. Held on the last Wednesday of each month, the series aims to educate and inspire attendees through interaction with Indianapolis-area scholars, faith leaders, and social activists.

"This city is an embarrassment of riches in terms of those working to create social change," explained Rev. Beau Underwood, who started in January as Allisonville's senior minister. "I'm excited to have this space for dialogue with these leaders and to see the conversations that emerge."

The first event was held on June 28 and featured the Rev. Dr. Leah Gunning Francis, IU Health's senior vice president and chief mission and values officer. She is also the author of *Faith after Ferguson: Resilient Leadership in Pursuit of Racial Justice* (Chalice Press, 2021).

Future speakers will include IUPUI sociologist Andrew Whitehead (Aug. 23), and the pastor, author, and mental health advocate Sarah Griffith Lund (Sept. 27). Each forum begins with dinner at 6 pm and a presentation at 6:30, which is followed by a question and answer session.

"As a church, we want to move from awareness to action, but that process starts with education," explained Cindy Coble, an Allisonville member helping organize the events. "We're going to be learning from experts who have studied these issues and those doing the work on the ground aimed at making our city a more just and equitable place."

The events are open to the public, but those planning to attend are asked to RSVP by emailing [office@allisonville.org](mailto:office@allisonville.org). They will also be live-streamed on the Church's Facebook page. †

## Supporting The Indiana Christian

**T**he Indiana Christian has been in continuous publication since 1891 connecting Disciples of Christ congregations in Indiana with each other and with our mission to the world. Today the publication reaches over 5,200 households, including yours, with news about our church. The paper is supported by a portion of Disciples Mission Fund and by the annual gifts of readers who value this publication for the way it connects and energizes our congregations consistent with our mission as the Regional church.

You are invited to use the enclosed envelope to make a gift, of whatever size, to undergird this communication ministry. Or you can go online to [www.indianadisciples.org](http://www.indianadisciples.org) and hit the donate button to make a secure electronic gift. Thank you for your support. †



## Indiana Disciples Women's Ministry Installation of Officers

**O**n Saturday, April 29, the Indiana Disciples Women gathered at First Christian Church & Bethel Christian Church in Noblesville. Following the theme of Wellness, the women discussed topics of physical, spiritual, mental health, and financial wellness. There was also a time for sharing ideas on how our Disciples Women ministries are changing and how groups in local congregations can shift and adapt for the future of women's ministries. We also shared a lively game of Bible and Disciples Women Ministries history trivia.



During our time of worship together, Rev. Cheryl Russell, Associate Regional Minister, led a service of installation for the newest officers of the Indiana Disciples Women's Council. An online vote was held in November of 2022, and these women began serving their two-year term as soon as their election was unanimously affirmed. These officers are:

**Paula Pettis-Garrett**, President, Alive in the Word Christian Church, Brownsburg

**Michelle Rundle**, Vice President, Bethany Christian Church, Evansville

**Krista Hunter**, Secretary, Speedway Christian Church, Speedway

**Deborah Daniels**, Treasurer, Light of the World Christian Church, Indianapolis

Thank you to all women serving on the Indiana Disciples Women's Council. †



## West Street-Tipton Launches Equine Program for Youth

**W**est Street Christian Church in Tipton, IN, received a grant from the Tipton County Substance Use and Prevention Council to provide equine therapy to "at-risk" middle school students. They have partnered with Agape Therapeutic Riding and the Boys and Girls Club of Tipton to choose ten middle school students to attend the program.

For eight weeks over the summer, volunteers from West Street come together to provide a morning snack, adults to travel to the center with the participants, and lunch upon their return to West Street. The kids spend an hour and a half learning to lead, groom, and care for the horses, all while gaining the necessary confidence and leadership skills to avoid substance abuse in the future.

West Street has been blessed to have this opportunity and looks forward to seeing it grow and blossom in the coming years. We are particularly thankful to our Social Action Team for their vision in making it happen! †





# Bedford Camp Pool and Donor Wall Dedicated

On Sunday, May 7 Indiana Disciples gathered at the Bedford Camp and Conference Center for the dedication of a new swimming pool and a donor wall celebrating the renewal of this historic camp, “filling the pool” and lifting prayers of thanksgiving. Over the last four years an investment of \$755,000 has been made in refurbishing the camp. Those improvements have been made possible by gifts from friends of the camp, Disciples congregations and members, the First Christian Church of Bedford, and the Indiana Region.

Last year the Indiana Regional Board committed \$100,000 for the replacement of the swimming pool, which was accomplished over the winter to be ready for this summer's camp season.

Other improvements include extensive remodeling of the Overlook Lodge, construction of the new Old Hearth Lodge and Cottage in the Woods, refurbishing all cabins with new mattresses and new HVAC units, and rebuilding the shower house. The grounds have been extensively improved, including a rebuilt amphitheater, and playground.

The Bedford Camp was acquired by the Region in 1952. In 1972 First Christian Church of Bedford purchased it from the Region to hold it in trust for the benefit of our congregations. Since that time the Region has partnered with the local congregation to provide summer camping opportunities and collaborate on capital development.

This effort continues. Want to help with the maintenance and development of the camp? Contact Chuck Bair, Camp Manager, [manager@campbedford.com](mailto:manager@campbedford.com). Want to help with summer camp as a counselor for children and youth? Contact Cheryl Russell, Associate Regional Minister, [cheryl@indianadisciples.org](mailto:cheryl@indianadisciples.org). Want to help fund improvement projects at the camp? Send your gifts to the Region or to First Christian Church, 1101 15th Street, Bedford, IN 47421 or contact Ric Olson, Bedford Task Force Treasurer, [ric@taxplan365.com](mailto:ric@taxplan365.com) †



# Youth Seek Haven in Martinsville For 25 Years

The Haven Youth Center in Martinsville, IN, has provided a safe place for youth to hang out with their friends, have fun, study, learn new skills, and do service projects for the community for the past 25 years. The program began when First Christian Church saw the need for a safe place after school for middle school youth and on Friday Nights for high school students. First Christian Church purchased the building where The Haven operates at 39 E. Jackson St. Seven other community churches and three local community organizations provided volunteers and financial support to get the program off the ground.

Since 1998 The Haven has been awarded several grants and received individual and group donations, which have allowed the after-school “Just Drop In” Program to continue to offer services to 5th through 8th-grade students free of charge. For the past 25 years, it has provided youth with a free summer program enabling youth to experience and discuss various prevention strategies, have fun with friends, and enjoy field trips around the state. The core of the prevention activities has been based on The Search Institutes' external and internal assets and the six Character Counts pillars.

The Haven Summer Program has had a different theme each year. This year's theme is Exploring Indiana through the senses. The youth learned interesting facts about Indiana and visited places they have never been to. Three State Parks were among the field trips.

On March 31st, 70 volunteers, staff, and supporters joined in a delicious meal, lively entertainment, and heard some powerful testimonies from former Haven participants. That evening The Haven Youth Center was recognized by the Indiana General Assembly Resolution Thirty-Three for their recognition of 25 years of service to the youth of Martinsville by Representative Peggy Mayfield.

Staff and volunteers for the Just Drop-In program continue the mission of The Haven, encouraging and empowering youth to do and be all they can be. Over the years, two of The Haven's volunteers, Jim Bickley and Judy Williams, have received Albert Merritt Awards for their dedication to Martinsville youth at The Haven. We want to think that our volunteers' efforts as supporters and mentors of youth at The Haven have helped youth become responsible teachers, technicians, inventors, FedEx drivers, Assistant Executive Directors, Operations Directors, Engineers, and company managers who serve our community and beyond. †



# Camp By the Numbers

By Rev. Cheryl Russell, Associate Regional Minister

It seems impossible that the 2023 Camp Season has ended! We had a great summer with dedicated and enthusiastic staff and super campers. The camp theme was **A FruitFULL Faith** based on the Fruit of the Spirit from the book of Galatians. During the first week of camp, one of the directors found a song based on the Fruit of the Spirit and taught it to their camp. That song passed from camp to camp all summer. And let me tell you, this one will get stuck in your head. We have even sung it in staff meetings in the regional office! It's a catchy tune, and you can't help but bop along. And really, that's how camp is. Camp is an experience that gets deep inside your soul.

For campers and counselors alike, the camp experience is a seed of faith that is planted and continues to grow and bloom throughout their lives. This summer, we learned how the Fruit of the Spirit has qualities that don't come naturally to us. Just like actual fruit needs to be planted and tended, these Fruit of the Spirit must also be practiced and developed. Faith is that way too. And camp is a place where this cultivation is happening.

It can't happen without the support of the whole region. Thank you to everyone who helps make camp happen! We have yet to tall up all of the offerings, but through the generosity of the camp community, a gift will be given to the Society of St. Andrew.

- **255 Campers**
- **96 Directors & Counselors**
- **12 Camps**
- **5 Weeks**
- **9 Fruits of the Spirit**
- **7 Scriptures Studied**
- **135 Meals Eaten**
- **11 Gallons of Tie Dye**
- **Countless Cannonballs**
- **Endless Fun**

