

# The Indiana Christian



Volume 106 • Number 1

IndianaDisciples.org

Spring • 2024

## Are You Ready to Begin the Quest?

By Rev. Anita M. Cobb

**H**ave you ever been on a quest? Maybe it was one you planned and maybe it was one you happened upon. Can you recall being a child and hearing the phrase, "X marks the spot"? Did you ever get excited to follow the "pirates" map to that very treasure? I can remember those moments. The joy of looking for a treasure. The frustration of not really knowing how to read a map so you went the wrong way first. Yes, pleasant, funny memories flood my mind as I think back to those moments. I think about the people who were with me and how we worked

together to accomplish the task. We needed the wisdom of an older kid who could follow the directions. We needed the adventurous kid who would take the risks. We needed the reasonable kid who kept most of us out of trouble. It was definitely a team effort. Teaching biblical concepts to children may also seem like a quest and it takes the work of pastors, elders, parents, and friends to make it all make sense.

Here in the Christian Church in Indiana we are ready to take you on a quest: a Journey of Faith. The treasure on this journey is discovering biblical truths as a family unit while also



learning about various biblical, historical, and contemporary individuals who have exemplified the principles of the fruit of the spirit. Over the course of three years, churches and families will have an opportunity to journey together learning how the

Fruit of the Spirit are lived out in our homes, churches, and communities at large. This will be an opportunity for parents to be equipped with the tools necessary to teach their children biblical principles in practical ways. Children will receive personal packages to help them on the journey. Churches will be provided with resources to be used in a variety of ways (devotionals, children's moments, sermon starters, etc.). Each Fruit of the Spirit is broken down into units and there will be three units each year. The program is set for children ages 4-11 years old, but all ages can benefit from

the contents. Are you ready to begin the quest?

quest: a Journey of Faith is made possible through a Lilly Endowment grant from their Christian Parenting and Caregiving Initiative. Additional support is provided by the Christian Church in Indiana Faith Formation Endowment created following the sale of Barbee Christian Camp and through your Disciples Mission Fund gifts that support the Christian Church in Indiana.

For more information on participating in quest connect with me via email:

[anita@indianadisciples.org](mailto:anita@indianadisciples.org)

Let's Journey Together! †

## Celebrating Carolyn Reed

**D**uring her ministry career, Carolyn Reed has served as staff for four churches. As a seminary student, Carolyn worked at Southport Christian Church, now Tapestry Church. After ordination, she served at South Side Christian Church, Kokomo, Indiana, and then moved to Chico, California where she served First Christian Church, Chico. Carolyn began work with the Christian Church in Indiana in May of 1999. About mid-way through her regional ministry tenure, Carolyn spent a couple of years in part-time congregational ministry at Geist Christian Church and part-time continuing to work for the Christian Church in Indiana. May 2024 marks 25 years of Regional Ministry with the Christian Church in Indiana.



Carolyn's regional work has included camp, youth, transformation, Commission on Ministry, and Search and Call. She has been a pastoral presence to many Indiana Disciples clergy and cares deeply for our pastors and congregations. Carolyn asks that gifts made in honor of her ministry be made to the newly created Clergy Wellness Fund, leaving a legacy for Indiana clergy in the years to come.

We hope you will come and celebrate Carolyn Reed's ministry career, including her 25 years as Associate Regional Minister of the Christian Church in Indiana.

### When?

Saturday, May 18 from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. EDT

### Where?

Geist Christian Church Promise Road Campus 12756 Promise Road, Fishers, IN 46038

You are invited to share personal greetings and well wishes by either bringing a card or letter to the celebration or by mailing ahead of time to:

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

Gifts for the Clergy Wellness Fund in Carolyn's honor can be made online at <http://indianadisciples.org/donate> or by sending a check to the Regional Office designated for the Clergy Wellness Fund. The fund will provide resources for continuing education and for counseling, both of which offer support for Indiana clergy and, by extension, Indiana Disciples congregations.

Questions? Please contact Sarah Riester, [sarah@indianadisciples.org](mailto:sarah@indianadisciples.org). †



## Words from the Wisdom Table

**Dr. Christal L. Williams**  
Indiana Regional Minister



## Becoming Dream Bearers

Indiana Disciples, it has been more than sixty-days since trading in the reverberating sounds of classic Country Music in Nashville, Tennessee for the sweet views of the farm and fields of the Heartland. I left on what seemed like the coldest and snowiest night in January. Heading toward the state lines of Kentucky and Indiana, I found myself speeding, a little. I was just trying to get here. To get home! Admittedly, once I hit the Louisville city limits there was a longing for me to drive across that long toll bridge, where for the first time in a while, I could breathe a deep sigh of relief. One that could exit all the trepidation, contention and even disappointment of the past. Church, there was some anxiety floating around in my mind, but not enough to keep me from stopping the car to embrace that big blue and white sign which says, "Welcome to Indiana." Yes, I know the sign comes along with the state membership. However, for a moment, I felt it was placed there just for me. Seeing that sign, and so many other "God winks" led me to believe that I was indeed closer to home; closer to family, and to the dream which bears the imprint of God's plan for our Region.

### The End of an Era— Welcoming God's Next

Rev. Rick Spleth, Rev. Carolyn Casey Reed, and those who served alongside

them built a two-decade plus Indiana Regional Machine. The depths of their leadership and pastoral care produced a cadre of thoughtful clergy, enthusiastic teachers, engaged leaders, and a variety of programs and partners who truly know what it means to be present throughout regional church life. During their tenure, the region was able to unify around inclusivity, a new vision for the camping program, the wellness of clergy and so much more. Rick's ministry was celebrated last August, and Carolyn's celebration is scheduled for May 18th. I invite you to join me in thanking God for such impactful leadership to our region. Their ministry will be missed.

However, I know that they would not want us to STOP NOW! They would be asking, "What's Next?" How will we continue the legacies of all who have served before us? I have the answer. Once we reach the end of an era, it is particularly important to ask the question, "What's God calling us to do NOW and Next?" Indiana Disciples, we are Disciples! We are people of covenantal unity and realized Dreams. We pray together, go to church together, sing together, and now I am asking us to DREAM together! Yes, pray, dream, and discern what God may have for us next. Together, we shall prayerfully, listen, discern,

and come to understand the nudging of the Spirit. We will travel in the Spirit until we gain new and powerful insights from God and one another. *Traveling in the Spirit or Moving in the Spirit* may be unfamiliar terms for some. Put simply, they invite the people of God to prayerfully listen and carefully respond to the gentleness of the God leading in all manifestations of church life and beyond. As we work together, we will be given our next Regional Assignment. We will be equipped and ready to engage like never before.

### For Now!

This historic call as the First Woman to hold this role in Indiana and my "return home" will be the prophetic catalyst to inform our work together as a region. Church, I am spending the first few weeks of my ministry getting to know every facet of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Indiana. I am moving from church to church, town to town, hoping to visit 130 congregations over the next twenty-four months. In the first ten weeks, I visited 22 congregations including board meetings, worship services, installations, ordinations, and have held conversations with more than two hundred people. I will minister directly with congregations, clergy, laity, and other Regional and General Church partners as meaningful impact is felt in every single pocket of our Indiana Region. I am VERY CLEAR! **"The work is not accomplished alone."**

Why? Because we are **One Region—One Church. All Means All!** (All churches, members, affiliates, and friends.) We need all claiming to be "Disciples" to reclaim, **"the covenant of love which binds us together."** We need those heralding from the Dunes of Lake Michigan to the Ohio River of Corydon and Madison waving our banner high from North to South, and East to West telling the Disciples story. It is the business of our 130 congregations to help build strong relationships while providing regional programming that will cause folks Old and New, Seasoned and Seeker to Flourish whatever the context.

### A Reason to Celebrate

Church, there is always a reason to celebrate. We have a staff of seven, twelve Regional Elders, and a variety of partnerships. We celebrate the work of our new Program Director for **quest**, Rev. Anita M. Cobb; Associate Regional Minister for Faith Formation including the Camping Program, Rev. Cheryl Russell Kunkel; Program Coordinator for **FLOURISH**, Sarah Riester; our Coordinator of Reconciliation, Candace Boyd Simmons; Ministry Associate, Krista Hunter; and Associate Regional Minister, Rev. Carolyn Casey Reed.

### A Time for Dreaming and Expectancy

Church, our region is on a new Journey. We have the Spiritual foundation to

stand and Dream Big! We must never be afraid to ask the question around the next wave of ministry within the local, regional, and general expressions of the church. Howard Thurman says, **"A dream is the bearer of a new possibility, the enlarged horizon, the great hope."** Our Region is clearly filled with this great hope. We have capacity builders—those who desire to see clergy, laity, and youth reach their full potential, and as pastors, teachers, leaders, and all-around children of God. We will continue providing cohorts, and small groups to help undergird the well-being of both clergy and laity. I am committed to strong leadership development, radical hospitality, and building capacity in clergy and lay leaders to establish frameworks for entrepreneurial endeavors and enlarging our idea of partnership. We want to cultivate an active narrative that keeps us from living under the headline, the **"best-kept secret."** It is time to tell the Greatest story that has ever been told, and how we are part of it. Join me November 2-3, in Indianapolis, for Installation Weekend.

Dreaming Faithfully,

Dr. Christal L. Williams  
Indiana Regional Minister  
[drchristal@indianadisciples.org](mailto:drchristal@indianadisciples.org)  
Lenten 2024

#### Regional Minister

Rev. Dr. Christal L. Williams  
[drchristal@indianadisciples.org](mailto:drchristal@indianadisciples.org)

#### Editor

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

#### Managing Editor

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

The Indiana  
**Christian**  
(ISSN 0279-179X)



Website:  
[www.indianadisciples.org](http://www.indianadisciples.org)

Published three times a year by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Indiana, 1100 W. 42nd St., #150, Indianapolis, IN 46208. This publication began in 1918. The present name, *The Indiana Christian*, dates to January 1891.

POSTMASTER  
Send change of address  
notices to:  
Christian Church  
in Indiana  
1100 W. 42nd St., #150  
Indianapolis, IN 46208  
Periodical postage paid at  
Indianapolis, IN 46206

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call 317.926.6051.

**SUMMER ISSUE  
DEADLINE  
JUNE 26, 2024**



## Update on Healthy Boundaries For 2024!

**O**n behalf of the Commission on Ministry, we are providing an important update regarding the maintenance of the every-five-years Healthy Boundaries training requirement for clergy with standing. This training is crucial for maintaining the integrity of our clergy and ensuring a safe and respectful environment for all.

In 2023, we contracted with LeaderWise to conduct our two Healthy Boundaries sessions. The feedback that we received was overwhelmingly positive.

In 2024, we have decided to continue our partnership with LeaderWise for a session primarily for Indiana Disciples clergy. This session is scheduled for Saturday, September 28, from 9:00 to 4:00 ET, with an hour-long lunch break. To register, visit the regional office's website ([www.indianadisciples.org/event/hb--fall-2024](http://www.indianadisciples.org/event/hb--fall-2024)). Please note: While you register through the regional office, LeaderWise will send you your Zoom link and meeting materials directly!

Also, in 2024, you can take the course with LeaderWise through their public sessions. These are ecumenical gatherings of clergy. For their public sessions, they do this over two consecutive days, three hours each day.

Here are the dates for this option:

5/15 and 16, 3:00 - 6:00 pm Central

8/7 and 8/8, 11:00 - 2:00 pm Central

11/12 and 13, 5:00 - 8:00 pm Central

If you choose one of these sessions, you will register directly with LeaderWise. Once you have completed the course, you must email a copy of your completion certificate to Candace Boyd Simmons at [candace@indianadisciples.org](mailto:candace@indianadisciples.org).

If you are unsure if you are "due" to take Healthy Boundaries this year, you can always email Candace, and she will be able to check for you. If you are new to Indiana, you will need to take this in your first year of service. †

## Central Christian Church Receives Reconciliation Grant

**R**ecently, Central Christian Church, Indianapolis, applied for an Indiana Reconciliation grant to enhance the outreach ministry of our Free Clothing ministry. We're now celebrating: the application has been granted!

For over two decades, the Free Clothing ministry has been a cornerstone of Central's outreach. Open for 2.5 hours every Monday, with a dedicated volunteer staff of 4-6 individuals, it serves an average of 32 clients each week. In 2023 alone, we welcomed 1,492 individuals, with 40% being African Americans, 30% Caucasians, and 25% Hispanics. Each visit allows us to extend our warmth, compassion, and kindness.

In February, we welcomed a woman with three sons. They had been locked out of their apartment and forced to leave everything behind. We were able to provide clothing, but we did not have jeans to fit the older boys.

Our grant will allow us to stock enough jeans and so many other items! We look forward to opening each day with several pairs in every size.

Thanks to all who contribute to the Reconciliation offering appeal! With this grant, we'll be more able to welcome people of all races, encourage them, and provide appropriate clothing for all. †



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20  
24

save the date  
**INDIANA  
REGIONAL  
ASSEMBLY**  
october 12  
LIGHT OF THE WORLD  
CHRISTIAN CHURCH

## 2024 Regional Calendar

### APRIL

- 20 Anti-Racism Pro-Reconciliation Training (Justice Language & Practical Application)
- 21 Experience Camp

### MAY

- 15 Early Bird Deadline for Camp Registration
- 18 Rev. Carolyn Reed retirement celebration

### JUNE

- 1 Regional Board Meeting
- 10-12 You & Me 1
- 12-14 New Beginnings
- 14-16 You & Me 2
- 17-22 CROSS Camp
- 24-29 Explorers Camp

### JULY

- 1-6 High School Camp
- 8-13 Middle School Camp
- 11-14 National Convocation July 2024, Greensboro, NC [www.nationalconvocation.org/biennialsession](http://www.nationalconvocation.org/biennialsession)
- 14-20 Mission as Justice Camp
- 17-20 NAPAD, Salt Lake City, UT [www.napad.net/new-events/2023/8/3/23rd-napad-convocation](http://www.napad.net/new-events/2023/8/3/23rd-napad-convocation)
- 15-20 M.A.D. Camp
- 20-22 Obra-Hispania, Kansas City, MO [www.obrahispana.org](http://www.obrahispana.org)

### AUGUST

- 16-17 Financial Literacy Academy
- 24 ARPR Confronting the Powers & Disruptive Theology

## Ministry Milestones

### MINISTRY CHANGES

**Rev. Lanny Lawler** began serving as Interim Minister at Nameless Creek Christian Church, Greenfield on December 10.

**Rev. Christina Dougherty** retired from ministry at Glendale Christian Church, Indianapolis on December 31.

**Cathy Clark** began serving as Pastor at Glendale Christian Church, Indianapolis on January 1.

**Rev. Stephanie Rolfe** began serving as Senior Minister, First Christian Church, Madison on January 2.

**Rev. Dr. Christal L. Williams** began serving as Regional Minister, Christian Church in Indiana on January 8.

**Rev. Anita M. Cobb** began serving as program director for **quest: A Journey of Faith**, Christian Church in Indiana on January 8.

**Rev. Sarah Zuniga** began serving as Associate Minister of Outreach & Growth at Allisonville Christian Church, Indianapolis on January 16.

**Rev. Bere Gil Soto** concluded serving as Pastor of Iglesia Hermandad Christiana, Indianapolis on February 11.

**Rev. Frank Everett** transitioned from Interim Minister to Minister of Linwood Christian Church, February 18.

**Rev. Pamela Pettyjohn** concluded serving as Senior Pastor, Corydon Christian Church, March 7.

### MARRIAGES

**Rev. Mia Smith and Matt Daniels** were married on December 22. Mia serves as a Chaplain at University Place Senior Community, West Lafayette.

### DEATHS

**Rev. Nelda Seger**, retired Disciples Minister, died February 21.

### BIRTHS

**Oliver GilSoto Bell**, son of Rev. Bere Gil Soto and Rev. Ronnie Bell, was born March 6. †

# From Prayers to Purpose: Utilizing Our Activities and Program Center for Love Unlimited's Community Outreach

By Rev. Paul J. Snyder, Central Christian Church-New Albany

In October 2023, Central Christian Church, New Albany held a special worship service to recognize the 10-year anniversary of our Activities and Program Center (A&P). During that service, we celebrated all the ways this building has allowed us to serve our community through our ministries.

During a moment of prayer, we invited people to write down their hopes and dreams for the A&P Center moving forward. People lifted up all sorts of visions.

Some said they wanted more opportunities for the community to use our facilities. Others suggested a homeless outreach. At least one person said they wanted to have a dance (we are still working on this!). We prayed over these hopes and dreams and asked for God to guide us into the future.

Shortly thereafter, like an answered prayer, Cathy Higgins, the Director of Love Unlimited, reached out looking for a space to host their Saturday meals for the unhoused in our community.

Love Unlimited began in 2020 by feeding our unhoused neighbors through a mobile ministry. For the past four years, they have met outside every Saturday. They converged in the sun, rain, snow, and sleet. They met when it was 100 degrees in summer and negative 20 in winter. Since their inception, their ministry has grown to serve up to 70 people every Saturday! In addition to offering a meal, they provide clothing, blankets, sleeping bags, tents, eyewear, and other health and hygiene supplies. They also connect people to housing resources, mental health, and addiction support services.

As a fully established 501c3 organization with a strong volunteer base, Love Unlimited needed a building to further its mission. Being a downtown church in a prime location, our church board jumped at the opportunity to partner.



Love Unlimited started using our A&P Center on December 2, 2023, and since then, they have been able to feed over 750 people, provide countless resources and supplies, and build meaningful relationships. Their outreach potential has expanded through the use of our building and Love Unlimited, and those they serve are beyond excited to have a space they can call home, even if it is just for a Saturday.

Beyond offering space, our church has become more involved with this ministry, hosting blanket and supply drives and committing to providing and serving three meals in 2024. We believe our community partnership with Love Unlimited has allowed our church to become a catalyst for ministry.

Jesus said the greatest commandment is to "Love the Lord our God with all our heart and with all our soul and with all our mind." As churches, we have the same opportunity.

Do we love the Lord our God with all our buildings? All our empty or half-used rooms? Those spaces we use just once or twice a week? Do we love the Lord with our basements and our closets especially those areas that collect dust?

We hope to continue finding new opportunities to partner with other local organizations so that we can fully utilize our facilities to minister to the many needs of our community and, by doing so, ultimately love the Lord our God with everything we have. †



## Lebanon Central Christian Church's El Salvador Mission Trip Updates

In 2006, Lebanon's Central Christian Church (DOC) embarked on a transformative journey. They sent 23 high school students and adults to El Salvador through a project created by Global Missions and their lead missionary, Marco Gonzalez. This ten-day trip profoundly impacted the students, sparking a mission to change lives in Puente Azul. Inspired by their experiences, the students rallied the church members to raise scholarship funds. This initiative, coupled with the sale of Equal Exchange products and the annual Equinox Golf Outing, has led to a significant milestone-18 high school graduates from Puente Azul.

When a delegation from Central Christian Church visited Puente Azul in 2009, they were met with a unanimous request from the community-'la luz'-electric lights. This simple yet life-changing need became the focus of the CCC's solar panel project, La Luz. With the support of Ricardo Barrera, an architect and activist in San Salvador, the community and the church developed a plan to install residential solar panels in each home. This collaborative effort, spanning eight years, brought 'la luz' to 63 homes by July 2019. By December of the same year, the promise of the grid finally reached the community, marking a significant achievement in their journey.

The community next asked for help upgrading to compostable latrines, a project that continues to this day. Seventy-five installations are complete, improving hygiene, benefiting the environment, and supporting agriculture.

The journey of Central Christian Church with Puente Azul is far from over. The congregation continues to raise funds and share their story, enriching the lives of both communities. Over the last decade and a half, they have brought health and hope to their partners in Puente Azul, and this commitment to their cause remains steadfast. †



### Oscar Haynes Exhibit at Light of the World Christian Church

Light of the World Christian Church is pleased to host the Oscar Haynes Exhibit on African American Disciples History. This exhibit was opened on Friday, March 15, in a ceremony held by Disciples of Christ Historical Society. †



## Join Us at the Indiana Disciples Women's Ministry Event

By Rev. Cheryl Russell Kunkel, Associate Regional Minister

In January 1949, a pivotal moment in the history of the Women's Ministry in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) unfolded at Turkey Run State Park in Indiana. Seventy-five women from across the United States and Canada, sensing a shift in the air, gathered in anticipation of changes and improvements. Their days were filled with worship, Bible Study, small group discussion and planning, and personal renewal time. This historic meeting led to the formation of the Christian Women's Fellowship, now known as Disciples Women's Ministry. The purpose of this newly formed women's organization was "To develop all women in Christian living and Christian service."

As we approach the 75th anniversary of the modern Disciples Women's Ministry, I warmly invite you, women from across the Christian Church in Indiana, to join us at Turkey Run State Park on Saturday, September 21. Just as the women who gathered on that same ground in 1949, we are witnessing a new chapter in women's ministry, and we are all invited to be part of this exciting journey. Together, we will explore what it means to develop women in Christian living and service in 2024. I eagerly anticipate the women of the Indiana Region joining us for this day of fellowship, discussion, learning, and worship. (More details about this event will be forthcoming.)

Regardless of your background, if you identify as a woman and a Disciple, you are a valued member of our community, and we warmly welcome you to this event! †

## Chaplain Corner: The Palliative Care Chaplain

By Ellen Corcella, Board Certified Chaplain

Chaplains work in a variety of settings outside of the Congregation, such as hospitals, hospices, universities, and prisons, with people of all faiths and no faith and with individuals we encounter, not because they entered our Church space, but because their life's trajectory thrust them in our path. For me, these are the blessings and privileges of chaplaincy.

I am a Palliative Care chaplain at Eskenazi Health. Palliative Care aims to alleviate ("palliate") the pain and symptoms accompanying chronic and life-threatening illness and injury through a holistic lens that addresses the medical, social, spiritual, and emotional needs of patients and families. The Palliative Care team, comprised of a multi-disciplinary team of doctors, nurse practitioners, social workers, and chaplains, also helps with Advanced Care Planning, facilitates goals of care conversations, and provides comfort and companionship to families and patients as they approach the end of life. I participate with the team by attending medical huddles, rounding with the medical team when they visit patients, participating in family meetings, conducting spiritual assessments, and developing a spiritual care plan.

My patients are facing the end stages of their heart, kidney, or liver disease, lack treatment options for their cancer, or have suffered devastating neurological injuries. I am called to step into the grey, ambiguous space of uncertainty, worry, distress, and spiritual angst. Will the next treatment work? Will my daughter wake up from her severe head trauma? When I dig deeper into distress, there invariably lies a more existential crisis—I have been a good person, so why is God punishing or abandoning me? My role is to establish rapport through an empathic presence and attentive listening, to sit with them in sadness and regret, to witness their trauma, and, ultimately, to establish a bond of trust so when the dam of emotion bursts, when the need to talk is greater than the need to pretend all is well, the patient, family, and staff members know I am a safe place upon which to unfurl their grief, anger, and sorrow. †

## "One Last Time"

By Carolyn Reed, Associate Regional Minister

I love the musical **Hamilton**. In one of the scenes (songs), George Washington enlists the aid of Alexander Hamilton to write his farewell speech. That song, "One Last Time," has resonated with me as I come to the end of my active ministry. One phrase says, "...we'll teach them how to say goodbye..." And that's what I'm learning to do—say goodbye.

In June 2024, I will complete 44 years of ministry—four as a student and 40 ordained. I will also complete 25 years as the Associate Regional Minister in Indiana. All of this led me to the place where I knew it was time to say goodbye. It is time to close this amazing season of my life.

One last time, I want to express my deepest gratitude for having served the Indiana Region as one of its pastors. Even on the most challenging days, I have been deeply thankful for the opportunity to serve. Walking alongside clergy and congregations in the ministry they do has been rewarding. The resilience, creativity, faithfulness, courage, and persistence with which ministry is happening throughout our region have warmed my heart.

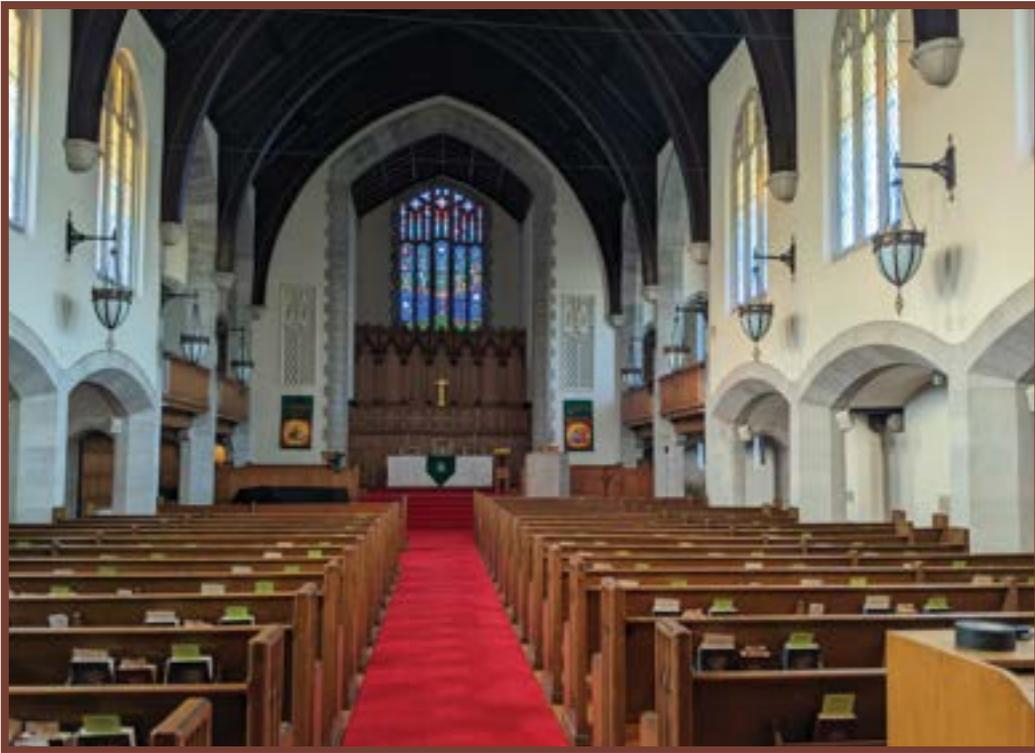
One last time, I want to encourage Indiana Disciples to embrace this new season in the life of the region. Dr. Christal Williams' ministry, vision, wisdom, and compassion will see us into a bright future. Honor the covenant we hold together as Disciples of Christ. Support the ministry with your time, your passion, your gifts, and your resources. Marvelous new things are and will emerge and YOU are needed!

One last time, I want to express deep appreciation to the many staff members I have worked with over the years. Each has taught me something about ministry and the work we have shared. Your gifts and your passion for this work have inspired me.

One last time, I want to say that I am retiring in what I believe to be the best time in my life to do so. I am ready for a new season in my life, for new things to arise as I let other things go.

And now, one last time, from the bottom of my heart, thank you to the Christian Church in Indiana for the many ways you have embraced me, prayed for me, encouraged me, challenged me, and helped me grow into the minister I became. †





## First Christian, Bloomington Receives Lilly Endowment Inc. Grant

By Rev. Kyrmen Rea, Senior Minister

**F**irst Christian, Bloomington is honored to be the recipient of a \$250,000 capital grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. These funds are being awarded by Sacred Places Indiana, a division of Indiana Landmarks, which has selected seven historic places of worship to receive gifts totaling over \$2 million.

First Christian inhabits a glorious 25,000-square-foot limestone building on Kirkwood Avenue in the heart of downtown Bloomington. Constructed in 1917, this glorious, gothic-style edifice houses worship and church ministries, including the Welcome Table breakfast, which feeds between 80 and 100 people every Sunday morning. Most of those who come to share the meal are experiencing extreme poverty and homelessness. For many, breakfast is a first step into participation in the life of the FCC community, as diners also participate in worship, learning, and fellowship opportunities. FCC recently began utilizing its building to host an interfaith emergency shelter, collaborating with other Bloomington churches to provide overnight shelter for women during severe weather.



Receiving this grant is not FCC Bloomington's first interaction with Sacred Places Indiana; the congregation is a graduate of SPI's New Dollars, New Partners program, which provides Hoosier congregations with training regarding the stewardship of historic houses of worship. Through its work with SPI, the church has gained momentum in its quest to seek partnerships with community groups to better use the space, which often sits idle during the week. Currently, the church is enjoying partnerships with Stages Bloomington, a youth community theater organization, Bloomington Watercolor Society, the Lotus Festival, Habitat for Humanity of Monroe County, and three recovery groups. Promising conversations with other community partners are in process as FCC strives to put its building to use seven days a week.

The size and age of FCC's building presents challenges to keeping it in good repair. While the church's Capital Projects Team has a long list of work that needs to be addressed, last fall, problems with the HVAC system, which is long past its life expectancy, pushed other priorities down the list. Confronted with the large price tag of replacing and upgrading this system, the church was grateful to be invited to apply for an SPI resource grant. The \$250,000 award will be matched by church fundraising and used to keep the building heated and cooled so that the life-changing ministry can continue.

FCC Bloomington is grateful for this opportunity to take care of its greatest material resource to continue serving as a center of compassion in downtown Bloomington. †

## Camp Directors Retreat



**O**n Saturday March 16, the 2024 Camp Director teams gathered at Bedford Camp and Conference Center for a director's retreat. This 2-hour training was led by Indiana Region's Reconciliation Program Coordinator, Candace Boyd Simmons. During our time together, directors embarked on a camp centered anti-racism and pro-reconciliation training. The group comprised of clergy and lay from all over the region, dived into the history of anti-racism work in our faith tradition and built a roadmap of what justice looks like at camp. Our directors enthusiastically participated in the discussion wanting to make sure that all youth feel welcome and safe at camp. The Indiana region is committed to making camp a fun and safe environment to all those who participate.

Want to learn more about Anti-Racism Pro-Reconciliation work?

Reach out to the Christian Church in Indiana and we can build a plan of kindom for all in your congregation.

Email Candace at [candace@indianadisciples.org](mailto:candace@indianadisciples.org) †



## First Christian Marion—Barbee Blessing's Dinner

If someone you didn't know well approached you with an invitation to dinner and entertainment at their church, would you receive that invitation as a blessing or with some skepticism? We recently and unexpectedly faced this question at First Christian Church in Marion. The question, the story, and the lessons we learned surround what our congregation grew to think of as our "Barbee Blessings Dinner."

With the sale of Barbee, we, along with other congregations, received a financial gift from this sale. Before we could decide how to use this money best, we were faced with a COVID shutdown, and for the safety of all, we didn't meet as a board or planning group for many months. Once it seemed safe to meet again, we faced many issues, and we couldn't come up with an idea that felt just right. We knew we wanted to bless others with this money, but who and how wasn't clear.

For the last few years, we have assisted with four community causes that are very close to the hearts of those who attend First Christian. First, we have supported a local elementary school in a variety of ways, but most importantly, working with another church, we have shopped for and packaged food each week for children identified by the social worker and principal as badly in need of food for the weekends. This weekend backpack program has grown substantially and requires a major commitment from our church.

The other three causes are related. After much study, we partnered with a Family Recovery Court run through the local court system and administered by the presiding judge. This program serves parents who, because of their addiction, are unable to parent effectively and in serious legal jeopardy. The expectations of this court-directed program are substantial, difficult, and, in many cases, life-changing. Our church hosts the graduations for those who successfully complete the program and provides a reception for the graduates, their families, friends, and the program staff.

As part of the requirements of the Family Recovery Court (FRC) program, all participants must attend and complete a 16-week parenting class, which includes a family mealtime during which the parents who do not yet have custody of their children can spend some time together in a family meal setting. Our church provides at no cost a space for this program to meet on several occasions each year, and provides a meal for the families to enjoy.

Any family joining the FRC has a CASA representative as an advocate for their children. CASA staff members are an integral part of these programs and interact with the participants in many of the activities that take place at our church. We also stand ready to assist them with requests from time to time.

A plan finally came together at a board meeting in the early spring of 2023. Why not show our appreciation in some way to the staff members at the elementary school, the FRC, the parenting class, and CASA who work with these children and families each and every day? Not knowing if we could pull it off, we decided to host a dinner and provide entertainment for these dedicated servers of children who let us walk beside them. Through the planning, this became known as our Barbee Blessings Dinner.

On November 9, 2023, the tables in our fellowship hall were beautifully set with white tablecloths, china, and gorgeous fall decorations. A fire blazed in the fireplace. On this special evening, we expressed our appreciation to approximately 60 dedicated men and women with a wonderful dinner prepared and served by an extremely hard-working kitchen crew of people attending FCC and friends volunteering to help. After a prayer, our guests were served at their tables, with a congregation member as a table host. Following dinner and words of explanation and welcome by our board chair, guests were entertained by an award-winning local high school jazz band. We concluded the evening with words of appreciation by Reverend Haley Asberry and a parting gift of sweets for each guest. We are a small congregation, but with God's help, we pulled it off.

While many of our guests were hesitant to join us, all who attended expressed appreciation for being appreciated! This made us realize how seldom someone offers something special with "no strings attached." All too often, we are not surprised if our hosts encourage us when we are together to buy something, like it on Facebook, or complete a card by giving them our contact info. In this case, our guests were blessed with a wonderfully relaxing evening. However, this experience was probably more of a blessing to our congregation than to our guests. Even though our congregation is much smaller than in past years, we can still plan together, fellowship while working together, and continue to serve others in our community. Thank you, Barbee. We hope we made you proud! †



## All About 2024 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 can be a grandparent, parent, or other trusted adult and may accompany more than one child to camp and need not be a biological relative. This 3-day intergenerational event is an opportunity for older adults and younger children to experience the wonders of camp together. Both adult and camper MUST 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. 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!

### Explorer (completed grades 4-5)

At Explorer Camp, fourth and fifth graders experience a full week of fun, learning, 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.

### 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! They will use scripture to talk about things important to you, while learning more about living out faith.

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

High School Camp is a week full of fun, learning, and leadership. Using scripture as a guide, youth gather to build a Christian community of lasting friendships, where together they learn about themselves, and how to live out their faith.

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

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 and living a life of faith. This camp encourages youth to explore and hone their talents while learning and have fun. Camp culminates in a production for campers' families to attend.

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

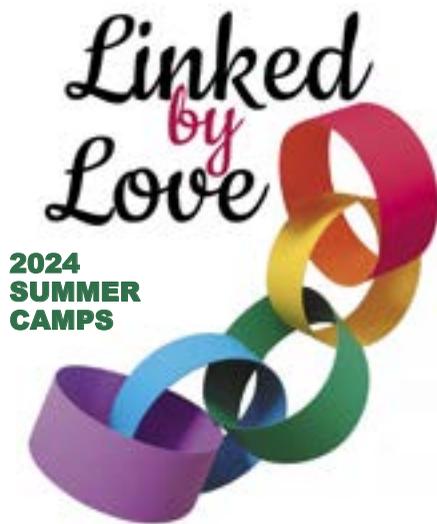
Campers don't sit still at C.R.O.S.S. Camp! C.R.O.S.S. is a very active camp, with a variety of sports, games, and activities to complement the learning, worship, and fun camp offers!

### Mission as Justice (completed grades 10-12)

Mission as Justice Camp is an experienced-based, learning-focused camp experience. The camp will be based in a church in an urban setting that offers access to shower facilities and a kitchen. There will be three topics offered on a three-year cycle. The camp will be for ages 16-18 due to the nature of the information and possibility of age restrictions for some of the activities planned. It will be limited to 20 youth and 5 adults.

### Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Indiana

1100 W. 42nd St. Suite 150  
Indianapolis, IN 46208  
Indianadisciples.org



You and Me 1 (3 days)	June 10-12	(age 5+ and an adult)
New Beginnings (3 days)	June 12-14	(completed gr. 1-3)
You and Me 2 (3 days)	June 14-16	(ages 5+ and an adult)
CROSS (Sports)	June 17-22	(completed gr. 6-8; 9-12)
Explorers	June 24-29	(completed gr. 4-5)
High School	July 1-6	(completed gr. 9-12)
Middle School	July 8-13	(completed gr. 6-8)
M.A.D. (Music, Art, Drama)	July 15-20	(completed gr. 6-8; 9-12)



### ALL CAMPS AT BEDFORD

Fees: 6-day camps: \$440; 3-day camps: \$260 (subtract \$25 before May 15th registrations)  
Visit [indianadisciples.org](http://indianadisciples.org) for Bedford camp registration/info.

## ◀◀◀ CAMP EXPERIENCES ▶▶▶

**O**n a sunny Sunday afternoon, I sat down with veteran summer campers, Maddie Wylie (10 years old, Light of the World Christian Church) and Aubrey Hunter (10 years old, Speedway Christian Church), over ice cream to discuss their camp experience. Maddie and Aubrey went to camp together for the first time three years ago and have been friends ever since. The girls were eager to share their camp experiences, why camp is important, and advice for first-time campers.



**Cheryl:** To start off, what is your favorite thing about church camp?

**Aubrey:** Learning about my faith.

**Maddie:** ...And s'mores!

**Cheryl:** Both are really important parts of camp! Tell me what Camp Bedford is like.

**Aubrey:** There are two lodges where we eat meals and do crafts that are really good for rainy day activities too. And there is a playground, a Gaga Ball pit, and a basketball court. There's

also a big field where we play games. And there's the pit with benches and a place for a fire where we have campfire and sing songs and eat s'mores.

**Maddie:** The cabins have bunk beds in them, and they are air conditioned, so you'll want to bring a blanket. There's enough room in the cabins so every cabin has a grown up for safety. The bath house isn't connected to the cabins but it has a lot of showers and sinks and stuff so it's really easy to get ready in there.

**Cheryl:** So, what kinds of things do you do while at camp?

**Maddie:** We do crafts and play games. There's also time to learn a Bible story. And then we have small group time where we talk about stuff, and we can learn more about the Bible story. Small group is a time when we can talk about all kinds of things.

**Aubrey:** There are also a lot of cool places around the camp where we can meet for small group. We have many different ways we learn about the scripture for the day. Sometimes we even get to act it out!

**Maddie:** After lunch we have FOB time which means Flat on Bunk.

**Aubrey:** It's a time to be really quiet and have a rest. You don't have to sleep but you do have to be quiet.

**Maddie:** But after FOB, we get to go to the pool! The pool is new and it's so much fun. We can play games in the pool, and someone is always there to make sure we are safe.

**Aubrey:** The new pool is definitely safer and there are steps to get in and out of the pool.

**Maddie:** And at the end of the day, we have campfire where we sit on the benches and sing silly songs and play games and eat s'mores...

**Aubrey:** ...We always have s'mores!

**Maddie:** And then we have worship before we go to bed.

**Aubrey:** I'm excited to go to Explorers camp (4th & 5th grade) because we will get to help plan campfire and worship!

**Maddie:** It's really special to get to help with worship!

**Cheryl:** Why is camp so important?

**Maddie:** You go to camp to learn about God, Jesus, and the Bible. And you get to be funny, be yourself and learn stuff...and have s'mores!

**Aubrey:** At camp there are a lot of fun things to do and sometimes you get to choose what fun thing to do. Camp is a really good place to learn about your faith. At camp, I learned who I am supposed to be.

**Cheryl:** And who are you supposed to be?

**Aubrey:** ME! Just like I was created to be!

**Cheryl:** What advice do you have for someone going to camp for the first time who might be nervous?

**Maddie:** Don't be nervous. There are always people at camp to help you.

**Aubrey:** Camp is a safe place and it's really fun. If you make a mistake no one will ever be mad, everyone will forgive you.

**Maddie:** Yeah! Because we're learning and camp is a great place to learn. And it's okay if you get homesick but there's no need to be because you'll always be having fun.

**Aubrey:** And if you get homesick, there is always someone there to give you a hug!

**Cheryl:** Is there anything else you want to say about camp?

**Maddie:** Camp is a great place to make friends! Aubrey and I are going to be friends for a long time, and we met at camp!

**Aubrey:** Camp is a really really great place to be!

If Maddie and Aubrey have you excited about camp, a camp schedule can be found on the Indiana Disciples website and camp registration is now open. All are welcome to come spend a couple of hours at Camp Bedford on Sunday, April 21, 2-5pm (Eastern) to Experience Camp. See you at camp!

