

The Indiana Christian



Volume 100 • Number 1

IndianaDisciples.org

Spring • 2018



OCTOBER 5 & 6, 2018

REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

LIGHT OF THE WORLD CHRISTIAN CHURCH
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

By Diane Zehr, Interim Associate Regional Minister

It has been said, "Life happens one conversation at a time." Whether it is two friends having coffee, a contentious board meeting at church, a political speech, a 'middle of the night' question from your

child, or even one's own internal dialogue with yourself, our ideas of reality and truth are discerned and affirmed or questioned one conversation at a time.

This year, the Regional Assembly will offer a time to have some of those important transforming discussions that perhaps can open our eyes, minds, spirits and hearts to each other in life affirming ways.

We will begin on Friday night with an All Assembly Dinner with our guest speaker, Reverend **Jennifer Baskerville-Burrows**, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis, who will offer some ideas for how we can have meaningful and transforming conversation. She is the first African-American female Episcopal bishop in the US. She has expertise in helping congregations and organizations address issues that matter.

Saturday morning will begin with breakfasts that highlight



Bethany Watkins Lowery speaking to women and **Raphael Sanchez** speaking to men. Lowery

is a development officer for Disciples Church Extension Fund and Hope Partnership.

Sanchez, a member of Tabernacle Christian Church in Franklin, is a news anchor and reporter with RTV6 in Indianapolis.



On Saturday we will connect with friends from the region of Indiana, do the business of the church, hear the news of our ministry in Indiana, and be inspired by music and worship together. We will also have the opportunity to choose to join in two conversations of your choice on topics that are challenging for all of us to have. We want to talk about issues that so often divide and isolate us and offer ways to expand our conversation to be life affirming and creative.

Dr. Ron Allen, professor at Christian Theological Seminary, will be our preacher at closing worship. Allen has taught preaching and the New Testament at the seminary since 1982 and will be retiring this year.



Mark your calendars and save the dates of October 5th and 6th to gather with a few hundred of your closest Disciple brothers and sisters at Light of the World Christian Church in Indianapolis. You may register online at www.indianadisciples.org. †

New Regional Staff Welcomed

We have welcomed three new staff persons to the Region in 2018. Joining us in January as a new **Ministry Associate** is **Sandy Kincaid**. Sandy is a professional graphic designer who was the creator of our Regional logo. She is an avid gardener and grandmother. Her husband, the late Keith Kincaid, served a number of Indiana congregations, the last of which was River of Life Christian Church in Logansport from where she recently moved. Sandy will serve as the Region's "conierge" and assist us with communications and registrations.



Minister of Faith Formation Maggie Archibald completed her work with the Region on March 4. She is now the Director of Communications for the Christian Church Foundation. Succeeding her as the new **Coordinator of Camping Ministries** is **Charissa Ramey**. Charissa is the pastor of Nameless Creek Christian Church in Greenfield, Indiana. She is a graduate of Christian



Theological Seminary and was ordained by the Indiana Region in 2015. She also holds a bachelor's degree in aquatics from Ball State University. She knows a lot about swimming pools! Charissa has been an active counselor and director in our Region's camping ministry.

Following Maggie in the area of **Youth Ministry** is **Nate Kibler** who began March 5 as the Coordinator of Youth Ministries. Nate is the Associate Minister at First Christian Church, Kokomo. He graduated from CTS in 2016 and was ordained by the Illinois-Wisconsin Region of our church. Nate's wife Theresa is a pediatric physical therapist and co-owner of their dog, Tillich.



We welcome Sandy, Charissa, and Nate to the Indiana Regional Staff! †

See back page for our full 2018 summer camp schedule.

EARLY BIRD DEADLINE IS MAY 15

Register now at www.indianadisciples.org



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



Thanksgiving for a Sacred Space

You can't really create a sacred space. You have to acquire them along the way. Sacred spaces, those places where the distance between God and humanity seems thinner, places where the Spirit of God seems to blow freely, are not described by a certain architecture or dimension. They are defined by experiences that have happened there. They are places where the holy happens.

Since 1952, one such space has been the Barbee Christian Camp in northern Indiana. It is a place where faith has been nurtured, friendships formed, and connections with the created world and the Creator have been forged.

We give thanks for Camp Barbee even as the Regional Board, after much prayerful discernment, has made the decision to sell the property this year. The decision has been long in the making. In 1994, the Region commissioned a study with the premier national camp consulting firm, Kaleidoscope. They suggested that the camp at that time did not meet standard expectations in its facilities. They recommended that the Region either make a substantial capital investment, which they did not think wise, or relocate.

Now, 24 years later, we are heeding their counsel to relocate. Last year we moved all our programming in Northern Indiana to the Geneva Conference Center in Rochester, Indiana. This camp has much newer cabins, a pool, a motel like



conference center, and a lakeside pavilion. You can view it at www.genevacenter.org. Disciples youth and adults who have been to Geneva have expressed appreciation for its facilities, while still holding nostalgic memories of Barbee.

Of course. That is because, since 1952, Barbee has been a sacred space. It was never about the facilities, which we all knew to be lacking in many ways, it was about communication with God. Former General Minister and President Sharon Watkins felt her call to ministry as youth during "morning watch" at Barbee. Countless others felt their call to ministry or a nudge to take a different direction in their life journey, or met their life partner, or made lifelong friends.

Barbee can never be replaced in that regard. But other places can be sacred spaces too. I know that is true because it has happened before in the history of our church. Barbee was not our first camp. Our first camp was called Bethany Park and it was located near Brooklyn, Indiana. Our Region built

Retired Disciples minister John Hinant accepted his call to ministry as a youth at Bethany Park, and Disciples lay leader Keith Gran found a date to take to his senior prom. It, too, was a sacred space. But after 68 years it came to its effective end.

Barbee was able to serve us well for 66 years because of the dedicated staff who have cared for it on our behalf. We owe a lot to Herb and Sharon Gillen, 1994-2004, Terry and Jill Best, 2004-2013, and to Larry Brey who has watched over the camp since 2013.

When I served as minister at First Christian Church, South Bend, in the 1980s I would regularly take youth for retreats at Barbee. The van

would be a din of voices on the drive down, but always, as we made the turn onto 400 N off of Highway 13 the youth would get quiet. They knew they were getting close. They did not take off their shoes, but I did sense them start to wiggle. They were entering sacred space, holy ground; their God was near.

Thanks be to God for the gift that Barbee has been to our church. May we discover, again, a new place to meet our Creator. †

May God's blessings be on you and your congregation,

Richard L. Spleth
Regional Minister

2018

Regional Calendar

APRIL

- April 6-7** Commissioned Ministers Nurture and Certification meetings
April 12 Commission on Ministry
April 14 Youth Conversations on Race

MAY

- May 4-5** Flourish Financial Literacy Academy
May 5 Anti-Racism and Pro-Reconciliation Training
May 26 Youth Conversations on Race
May 28 Regional Offices Closed-Memorial Day Holiday

JUNE

- CAMPS AT GENEVA CENTER** (Rochester, Indiana):
June 11-16 CROSS Camp (Grades 6-8; 9-12)
Explorer Camp (Grades 4-5)
June 18-20 You & Me Camp (Grades K-3, plus an adult)
June 18-23 MAD Camp (Grades 6-8; 9-12)
June 25-27 New Beginnings Camp (Grades 1-3)
You & Me 2 Camp (Grades K-3)

CAMPS AT BEDFORD

 (Bedford, Indiana):

- June 25-27** New Beginnings Camp (Grades 1-3)
June 28-30 You & Me 2 Camp (Grades K-3)

JULY

- CAMPS AT GENEVA CENTER** (Rochester, Indiana)
July 9-14 Middle School Camp (Grades 6-8)
High School Camp (Grades 9-12)
CAMPS AT BEDFORD (Bedford, Indiana)
July 2-7 High School Camp (Grades 6-8)
July 9-14 Explorer Camp (Grades 4-5)
July 16-21 Middle School Camp (Grades 6-8)
July 28 Youth Conversations on Race

Unless otherwise indicated, meetings will be held at the Indiana Interchurch Center. All times, unless otherwise indicated, are for the Eastern Time Zone. You can also view the regional calendar by visiting our website at: <http://indianadisciples.org/upcoming-events>.

Regional Minister
Richard L. Spleth
rick@indianadisciples.org

Editors
Sandy Kincaid
sandy@indianadisciples.org

Candace Boyd Wylie
candace@indianadisciples.org

Managing Editor
Bridget Gurtowsky
bridget@gurtowskygraphics.com

The Indiana
Christian
(ISSN 0279-179X)

Published four 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.

Website:
www.indianadisciples.org

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

Subscriber change of address or
request to subscribe e-mail name
and address information to
info@indianadisciples.org or
call 317.926.6051.

SUMMER ISSUE DEADLINE JULY 2



RECONciliation Time is Now!

Every day, there are news headlines plaguing television, papers, radio or social media showing us how far we have come from God's desire for creation—feelings of social superiority contributing to racism, heterosexism, genderism, ageism, xenophobia, and many other sinful human doings that continue breaking us apart from God. What could be more relevant in our angry and divided world today than reconciliation? True reconciliation is at the core of the gospel because it crosses distances, overcomes hostility, opens access, melts indifference, and cultivates peace, a genuine peace by which all God's children can live without fear and enjoy life abundantly. We are Disciples of Christ, a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world, and we cannot lose or waste any more time. Reconciliation time is now! Our sisters and our brothers are suffering from the consequences of the evil in this world, and they all need you. We can no longer keep silent waiting for someone else to do something, the time has come for us to be that someone.

The Ministry of Reconciliation in our region has been actively creating spaces and ways in which our church can make a difference and contribute to the healing and transformation of the broken world we live in. On February 10, 2018, one more group of our commissioned and ordained ministers gathered at Iglesia Hermandad Cristiana in Indianapolis and received their Anti-Racism & Pro-Reconciliation training. It was a thought-provoking and rich conversation. The sense in the gathering was a mixture of honesty, desperation, challenge, and above all the deep desire to change the course of history. Ministers gathered around tables, to talk, think and envision what could be done together as the church. By listening to each other, people began to realize how much they can do individually and with their congregations. The opportunities are many—from joining faith-based organizing networks in their cities to learning from and joining projects and programs that other congregations are already doing. Bringing anti-racism training and dialogue to their congregations, and expanding their Sunday School curriculum to address the sin of racism were other avenues utilized to teach reconciliation.

Another opportunity that every congregation around the region can take advantage of is the "Youth Conversations on Race" program. The event(s) will allow them to go on a national trip to different organizations working toward justice and reconciliation during the first week of summer 2019. Throughout this year, youth will meet at least five times to talk about race and its intersectionality. For more information and registration about these youth events visit: www.indianadisciples.org/youthconversations. †



Barbee Move Day!

**Saturday, June 2
at 9:00 a.m.**

Bring your trucks and bring your people. We need lots of volunteers who can gather at Barbee Christian Camp, Leesburg, Indiana on to load items to be taken to the Geneva Conference Center, Rochester, Indiana and to the Bedford Christian Camp, Bedford, Indiana.

We have equipment that has accumulated over 66 years, much of which can be put to good use to further our camping ministry at Geneva and Bedford—but it is a lot to move. Lots of help is needed. Many trucks are needed—the bigger the better. And many people are needed—the more the merrier.

We also need persons to unload that same day at Bedford and Geneva. Estimated time at Geneva is 2:00 p.m. Estimated time at Bedford is 5:00 p.m.

Can you help? Contact Sandy Kincaid in the Regional office, sandy@indianadisciples.org or 317-926-6051 to let us know you are coming. Have a question, contact Rick Spleth, rick@indianadisciples.org. †

2018 Summer Staff Positions Available

Assistant Cook Position Available

Bedford Christian Camp is searching for an Assistant Cook for Summer Staff. Applicants must be 18 years or older.

Please contact Carolyn Reed for more information: Carolyn@indianadisciples.org

Ministry Milestones

MINISTRY CHANGES

Stephen Yarbrough moved from Interim Minister to Pastor at First Christian Church, Sheridan on October 29.

Mike Sribljan began his Interim Ministry at First Christian Church Bargersville on December 3.

Aby Bauzo concluded his ministry as pastor of Iglesia Hermandad Cristiana, Indianapolis on December 3.

Bere Gil Soto began as her ministry pastor of Iglesia Hermandad Cristiana, Indianapolis December 4.

John Davis concluded his ministry as pastor of First Christian Church, Noblesville, on December 31.

Ken Thompson began his ministry as pastor of Central Christian Church, Van Buren, on January 1, 2018.

Blanche Wright began serving as Minister of Children and Youth at Carmel Christian Church on January 14.

Phillip Hayes began serving as Interim Minister at First Christian Church, Lafayette, on January 21.

Maggie Archibald concluded her work as Minister of Faith Formation at the Indiana Regional Office on March 4, after beginning her work as Director of Communications at the Christian Church Foundation on March 1.

Charissa Ramey began serving as Coordinator of Camping Ministries for the Region on March 5.

Nate Kibler began serving as Coordinator of Youth Ministries for the Region on March 5.

DEATHS

Jack Wachenschwanz, retired Disciples minister, died on December 15. Funeral services were held in Anderson, IN on December 19.

Tom Wood, retired Disciples minister, died on December 12. Memorial services were held at Eastgate Christian Church, Indianapolis, on December 22.

Al Johnson, retired Disciples minister, died on December 19. Funeral services were held in Martinsville.

Bruce Naylor, retired Disciples minister, died on January 31. A memorial service was held at Southside Christian Church, South Bend, on February 3.

Jim Craddock, retired Disciples minister, died on February 22. A memorial service was held at the Community Room at Robin Run Village Retirement Community on March 10.

Bob Schafer, retired Disciples minister, died on February 28. Funeral services were held at Northwood Christian Church on March 3. †

Wabash Christian Church Special Christmas Mission in Lagos, Nigeria

By Rev. Haley Asberry

Rev. Haley Asberry's husband, Tobi Oguntoye, is from Lagos, Nigeria. When Susan Beamer, church member and retired minister, found out that Tobi was going to visit his family in Nigeria after Christmas, she asked if the church would be willing to work on a special Christmas mission. It was decided that funds and clothing would be accepted for the Ijamido Children's Home in Lagos, Nigeria.

According to The World Bank Data, 62% of Nigerians live on less than \$1.25 per day. According to estimates by the United Nations, the population of Nigeria is currently around 193,000,000. 43.2% of the population of Nigeria is between the age of newborn to 14 years, so children are extremely affected by poverty. There are currently 165 children living in the Ijamido Children's Home who are affected by the poverty crisis. Of course, we know that Ijamido is just one of countless homes helping children in Nigeria.

In total, the special Christmas mission at Wabash Christian Church raised \$777—which is about 279,720 Nigerian Naira.

Tobi took the clothing and money with him to Lagos and asked the Ijamido Children's Home staff what was needed so he and the church in Wabash could help supply their needs. The staff at Ijamido decided that a year's supply of rice is what would be most helpful because it would be easy to store, so 250 pounds of rice was given to the Children's Home.



After the rice was purchased for the children, there was still money leftover so Tobi's mother and her friends gathered to prepare traditional Nigerian chicken and rice meals. Then Tobi, his mother, and their friends drove around

the city passing the meals out to anyone who was in need of food. In total, 500 people living in destitution were fed that day.

At Wabash Christian Church, we're grateful to be able to be the hands and feet of Christ. We are grateful to be able to help feed our neighbors in the local community and in our global community. †



Indiana Green Chalice Invites You to Green Café

If you wonder what you and your congregation can do about Creation Care, come to the Green Café for information and inspiration! The Green Café takes place on Saturday, April 28, 8:30 am to 12:00 pm at Zionville Christian Church, 120 N. 9th St., Zionville.

We will share coffee and conversation of course, but also worship with all of creation, consider scripture, share creation-care stories, discuss practical tips and tools such as the Task of the Month energy-saving toolkit, engage in hands-on activities for the young and young-at-heart (seed-starting, anyone?), nurture our network, and offer resources you can use at home.

Learn how you can start a creation care ministry at your church, even if your group is small. Even if YOU are your group. Hear about other congregations' creation care journeys.

There is no fee to attend, but registration is required. For more information and to register, contact Jennie Beth Baker at 317-889-6584 or send an email to jbbgrnch15@gmail.com. Registration deadline is Sunday, April 11, 2018.

Register online at <https://wmt.suran.com/main/preview/7059>.

The Green Café is brought to you by Indiana Green Chalice, dedicated to equipping Disciples for Creation Care. †

Little Hats on Their Way to Preemies

By Lou Ann Millett

Cyndi Day, a member of West Street Christian Church's Stitchin', Knittin', and Knottin' group, saw a large advertisement in the *Tipton County Tribune* last spring: The American Heart Association was seeking people to contribute little red hats for its next little hat distribution in February of 2018. This project for babies born prematurely was named Little Hats, Big Hearts.

Day brought this idea to the Knittin' group which gladly took on the project. With urging from Senior Pastor Linda McKiernan-Allen, the group also decided to offer this loom knitting project to attendees of the Disciples General Assembly that was to be held in July 2017 in Indianapolis.

Fifty small round looms and lots of red yarn were gathered together and taken to the General Assembly. Men, women, and teens stopped by



their mission booth, learned to loom knit, and, in the end, made little red hats. These new loom knitters were encouraged to take their looms home and teach people in their home congregations how to make these.

In less than six months, 415 hats were created.

One male pastor was very proud of his little red hat. He related that a ladies' knitting group at his church had been asking him to sit down and knit with them. He always declined, stating

he knew nothing about knitting. After loom knitting a cap, he declared he was taking his loom home and was going to show it to the group. He was prepared to teach them to loom knit so he could finally join them in knitting.

Grandmothers stopped by and told stories of their own grandchildren being in the neonatal intensive care unit at birth. Mothers and daughters together ventured into this project. A lady who was visually handicapped came to the booth and created a cap. During their "down time" between sessions, teenagers, both boys and girls, joined in on the project.

In less than six months, 415 hats were created. In the weeks following General Assembly, hats were delivered to West Street from loom knitters in Noblesville and Kokomo. Day expects there are little red hats being sent to other state units of the American Heart Association all across America just because she saw an advertisement and answered the invitation for Little Hats, Big Hearts. †

Being the Light at Spring Assembly

From March 2 - 4, over 50 youth and youth leaders from around the region gathered together for our Spring Youth Assembly. The theme for Assembly this year was "Be the Light" and the focus scripture was Matthew 5:13-16. Our keynote speaker for the weekend was the Rev. Yvonne Gilmore, the Associate Dean at the Disciples Divinity House at the University of Chicago. Rev. Gilmore is known for her creativity, particularly in poetry and spoken word. Rev. Gilmore led our youth in thinking about how they can let their light shine and be a light in this world. Youth and leaders had the chance to engage in interactive keynotes, have meaningful small group conversations, participate in fellowship together, and explore the Geneva Center grounds. We hope you will join us next year for this meaningful weekend! †



CONGO CONNECTION



In 2007, our Region was ready to engage in a new partnership with Global Ministries to connect our congregations with overseas mission. We had completed ten years of engagement with Nepal, and prior to that with a decade of connection to our work in Lesotho. Global Ministries suggested that we partner with the Disciples community in Mbandaka, Democratic Republic of Congo. There was a natural parallel between the Mbandaka Post and the Indiana Region. Both were “middle judicatories” with a substantial number of congregations and the general/national offices for each church were located within the judicatory in the cities of Indianapolis and Mbandaka.



Nine Hoosier Disciples traveled to Mbandaka in May 2008 and a formal agreement was signed between the two judicatories in the historic Mbandaka III church which had been constructed years earlier with funds from the Northwood Christian Church in Indianapolis. The partnership was renewed and extended at the 2012 Regional Assembly. Now, ten years later, this partnership has frequently been lifted as a model by Global Ministries for other Disciples Regions and UCC Conferences to consider.

An exchange of visitors has helped connect us. Since 2008, we have sent 27 persons to the Congo and we have received 15 visitors. Children across Indiana have engaged in a Congo themed Vacation Bible School—the *Congo Connection*—which grew out of the partnership and has been used widely across the denomination. Youth in our church have engaged with Congo themes and issues in summer camp, and adults have been sensitized in new ways to the interconnectedness of our lives with the Congo, most particularly around the unjust mining of coltan which powers our cell phones and electronic devices.



Over the years relationships have developed and enriched Disciples in Indiana and Mbandaka. Regional Minister, Rick Spleth, and his counterpart, Principal Supervising Pastor Bernard Ilumbe, have provided liturgical leadership in each other's congregations. A variety of projects have caught the imagination of our members and significant



funding has been generated from our congregations to address nutrition, pharmaceuticals, the construction of the Mbandaka District office, the purchase of musical instruments, bicycles and motorbikes, and support for a variety of microcredit projects. But the giving has not been all one way.



When our Congolese Disciples became aware of devastating tornadoes in Indiana they began taking annually the Week of Compassion offering to offer aid. Measured against their per capita income their offerings have eclipsed our own.

Susan McNeely, a member of Southport Christian Church, was commissioned by the Region to go to Mbandaka for three months in 2014 to teach English. Her extended time with our partners deepened our understanding and connection with the church. Rev. Ilumbe and his wife, Rosette, have been the most frequently traveled visitors coming to Indiana, having each made three trips here over the decade, so that many in the Region know them by name and readily greet them with the Congolese welcome, “Mbote!”



In 2016, the Region was asked by Disciples Refugee and Immigration Ministries to assist with the resettlement of a large extended family of Congolese political refugees, the Ilondo family. Jean Baptiste Ilondo, a minister, along with his brothers, Docta and Bojack, and their spouses and children resettled to Indianapolis. They were all lifelong members of the Disciples. Then, one year ago, Jean Baptiste organized a Congolese congregation and began hosting worship services

at Southport Christian Church, drawing together some of the growing number of Congolese families settling in Indianapolis.

The establishment of this new church may be one of the most profound outcomes of our ten-year partnership in the Congo. Had we not had this covenant relationship we may not have had the same impetus and imagination to welcome the Ilondos. The partnership helped us understand that these were sisters and brothers newly arrived.

As we come to the end of this decade of focused engagement we give thanks for the rich relationship that has developed. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) first sent missionaries to the Congo in 1890 and as a result the Disciples in the Congo now outnumber the Disciples in the U.S. and Canada. Now, with the arrival of the Ilondo family we recognize that the Disciples church in the Congo has sent missionaries to us. Thanks be to God. †



Funds Generated by the Christian Church in Indiana Congregations and Individuals to Support

Disciples in the Congo 2008-2018

Support of Partnership Visits:
27 travelers to Congo
and 15 travelers to Indiana:
Estimated \$165,000

PROJECTS TO ASSIST THE CHURCH IN CONGO

Transportation	\$10,245
Bibles and Hymnals	3,724
Health	6,296
Water	7,035
Microcredit/Women's Ministries	6,388
Emergency Relief	4,655
Musical Instruments	5,042
Education	5,970
Nutrition Center	31,526
Pharmacy	6,100
Post Office Construction/Technology	9,343
Industrial Saw	3,717
Radio	900
Undesignated	10,513
TOTAL	\$111,454



What is Your Commission on Faith Formation Up To?

The Commission on Faith Formation of the Christian Church in Indiana has been busy these past several months! While we explore the needs in the region in the area with regard to the broad topic of faith formation, we have been putting together a Faith Formation Tool Kit to resource churches with various kinds of spiritual disciplines. We are looking for “tools” to put in our “tool belts” under these 6 key categories (though we know there is certainly overlap):

1. Grow in relationship with God in whole life—individual faith
2. Live as disciples of Jesus at home, work, community, world—communal faith
3. Develop an understanding of the Bible—curriculum
4. Deepen spiritual life and practices—spiritual disciplines
5. Engage in service and mission to the world—outreach, charity v. justice
6. Participate in the life and ministries of their faith community

For example, we are exploring ways to create a Disciples of Christ Pastor’s Class “kit” which includes materials we already have with new ideas and resources. This is just one area of faith development we are hoping to equip pastors and lay leaders with up-to-date and effective resources. We know we are not the only ones with practices and ideas that are working really well in your churches! Would you be willing to share with the region the ways you are deepening spirituality in your congregations? We would love to add what is working for your church to the Commission’s Faith Formation Tool Kit! Please email Becky Sundquist at becky.sundquist@gmail.com by April 15th (tax day!) Look for the Faith Formation Tool Kit full of resources coming soon! †

South Bend Southside Celebrates Anniversary

Twenty-five years ago, Southside Christian Church in South Bend became the first Open and Affirming church in Indiana. This historic decision started when a group of members attended a conference in Indianapolis that introduced them to other churches in the country who were beginning the Open and Affirming process. As these churches shared their stories, Southside members became inspired. One church member, Irv Morse, said one simple sentence that would change everything. “We have to do this!”

Morse and others shared their experience at the conference with the church and their enthusiasm spread. It was not an easy process. It required

deep reflection and difficult conversations. They focused on one-on-one conversations, group discussions, studying scripture, and rethought the mission of the church. Eventually, the congregation voted. Southside would be the first church in Indiana to welcome ALL.

Southside remains a place for LGBTQ+ individuals to find a spiritual home. “When I first came to Southside, I was without a church for several years. I was rejected because of my sexuality so I didn’t attend church. My first visit to Southside, I was greeted with a smile and a hug. They welcomed me and gave me all the necessary materials to participate in the service. I walked into the sanctuary,



Impact:

Flourish Graduates First Group of Grantees

Though it was cold in December, the Christian Church in Indiana warmed the hearts of twenty-four clergy who graduated from the inaugural class of grantees through the FLOURISH! Project. They began the program in 2016, then completed all required programming which offered comprehensive training to include clergy and spouses attending two years of personal and congregational financial management training along with their lay leaders, two years of peer cohort coaching; and seeing a financial advisor.

“For the first time in decades, I am less anxious and more hopeful about my financial future!”

- Rev.L.H.

On the evening of the graduation, participants, staff, donors, coaches, committee and representatives of Lilly Endowment, Inc. gathered to celebrate their accomplishments. Participants received grant proceeds as applied for during the application process totaling \$220,000.

While the money is certainly welcome, clergy report feeling less anxiety about financial matters, increased confidence in preaching and teaching on stewardship,

chose my seat and immediately had an overwhelming feeling of being home. I felt like I could be me, worship God and not be judged,” said Karen Kaiser, Commissioned Minister, Co-pastor, and a Stephen’s Minister.

Southside would be the first church in Indiana to welcome All.

Karen’s experience of an overwhelming welcome is shared by many first-time visitors. Member Janet Fliger said, “I love that Southside

makes everyone feel like we are all a big family and everyone is included in whatever is going on. I couldn’t ask for a better place to be.”

Many members found Southside after facing rejection by other churches. Being Open and Affirming allowed Southside to provide a place for spiritual healing. Member Joseph Neloff remembered attending a church where they preached homosexuality was a sin. He was told he was going to hell if he did not change. “I wanted to say something, but realized it would be useless. I just left. Boy, was I happy that the

“As it was for me personally, I think our congregational members found some comfort in seeing that the Region understood our challenges and was significantly invested in helping.”

- Rev.J.D.

and increased confidence in having conversations about money. Many of our participants are now conversing and planning their financial futures with their spouses. They report that the burden has been lightened as it relates to both personal and congregational financial matters because they realize that they are not alone. Overall, the conspiracy of silence has been greatly reduced with this group and the burden of shame lifted.

Below is an excerpt from testimonials submitted by program participants:

Thank you to all of our partners who have helped us achieve these results! We continue to seek financial contributors to join this great effort as we move toward fully funding our required match (\$92,000 during 2018).

If you would like more information or would like to donate to the FLOURISH! Project contact cynthia@indianadisciples.org or www.indianadisciples.org/flourish †

next church I walked into was Southside. I felt at home as soon as I walked in the door.”

Southside celebrates its 25-year anniversary by giving thanks for the individuals who heard the message of love and welcoming, and stood up and took action. Their actions have changed the lives of countless people who have found healing and sanctuary.

Member Jonathan Taylor said, “It’s been 15 years since I first crossed the Southside threshold. I have friends that I never would have met thanks to those who were sowing the seeds 10 years before I arrived.” †

New Commission on Ministry Manual and Related Processes Approved

By Scott Cox, Commission on Ministry Chair

Last fall, the Indiana Commission on Ministry, and subsequently the Regional Board, approved a revision to the Commission on Ministry Manual. As a part of this process, the Commission also approved a requirement that all persons applying to come under care of the region on the ordination track or on the commissioned ministry track, undergo psychological testing as a part of this process.

Testing will be administered by the Counseling Center of Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis.

The cost for testing for those on the ordination track is \$900 and for the commissioned ministry track, \$600. This cost is to be divided evenly between the person seeking ordination, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Indiana, and the congregation sponsoring the person for ordination or commissioning.

The Commission on Ministry and the Regional Board believe that psychological testing will benefit the person being tested as well as the whole church. Testing can help identify any areas of needed growth

for the individual and any concerns that may need to be addressed by the candidate and/or the regional Nurture and Certification Teams.

This process also reflects a partnership between congregations and the region as we seek to identify and nurture persons for pastoral leadership.

For more detailed information, please contact Scott Cox or Carolyn Reed through the regional office. †



Called to
Lead

Called to
Care

Called to
Serve

Heartland Inter-Regional Gathering of Women Planned

The Indiana Women's Council encourages women from Indiana congregations to attend an inter-regional gathering of women (described by one person as akin to a "mini-Quadrennial") in lieu of the spring event this year.

The event will be held at Culver-Stockton College in Canton, Missouri. Indiana is part of the Heartland Regional Fellowship group. The IWC is responsible for hospitality, in partnership with the Christian Church in the Upper Midwest. Most council members will attend, but all women are invited. Registrations are due by June 1. (On site registrations will be accepted, space allowing. However, it will

involve a higher registration fee.) Churches are encouraged to bring a van load or a bus load.

The coordinators of the seven regions of the Heartland Inter-Regional (Indiana, Illinois/Wisconsin, Mid-America, Upper Midwest, Nebraska, Kansas and Greater Kansas City) met in January to plan details for the 2018 Inter-Regional to be held June 22-24 at Culver-Stockton College, Canton, Mo.

This event will feature top-notch speakers: Lori Tapia, Dietra Wise Baker and Teresa Hord Owens (General Minister and President of the Christian Church Disciples of Christ) along with Bible Study leader Rev. Marti Steussy. There will be workshops: liturgical dance, Exploring LAP (Leadership Apprentice Program), a report on the

Woman to Woman journey to India in 2017, prayer stations (led by Kansas' Angela DeVore), Sharing your Story and Finding Your Spiritual Gifts. Displays from area agencies and hands-on service opportunities will complete the weekend.

Registration costs will be \$130 for a shared room and \$160 for a private room. That includes housing, meals and all program costs. Offerings will be taken for service projects for agencies in India identified by the Woman to Woman team. Blessing Boxes will also be on-site for daily offerings. For more information and to register online go to: <https://kansasdisciples.org/dw-heartland-interregional-conf/> †

Together

Clergy Peer Group

By Carolyn Reed
Associate Regional Minister

The Manna Process reiterated the need for our region to renew relationships and connections with one another. Staffing is now configured to intentionally nurture relationships throughout the region. Some of our congregations have already found ways to share ministry. Other congregations are seeking these opportunities. This "Together" column is a space to celebrate the bridges being built and the ministries being shared. It features stories of coming together to be the region. If you have something you would like to highlight, send information to Carolyn Reed, Associate Regional Minister.



One of the ways we are living into being the region together is through intentional, clergy peer groups. There have been groups off and on over the years. In the past couple of years, it has been recognized that the importance of these groups provides impetus for creating more of them. One of the groups that was formed a little over a year ago was for some pastors in their first called position following seminary and ordination. This group of seven pastors has met monthly. Sometimes this has been an overnight retreat, sometimes a one-day meeting, or other times, they connect electronically. They also created a Facebook group to stay in touch, ask a question, raise a concern, seek counsel and get some encouragement.

This particular group is growing—in their confidence, in their faith, in their pastoral role and in their relationship with one another. They have created a space for confidential conversations. They share resources about Bible studies, sermon themes, Pastoral Relations Committees, governance, church finances and many other things. And they have a place to share their hearts as they engage conversations about their challenges, their anxieties, and their hopes.

Peer groups are one of the ways that regional life is lived out. Pastors build relationships with one another in ways that remove congregational and geographically barriers. It is a building up of our shared life as Disciples across the Indiana Region.

If you are interested in being a part of a clergy peer group, please contact Carolyn Reed at the regional office. †

Camp Offers Opportunities for Campers and Counselors

By Mike Van Heyningen, Pastor at First Christian Church, Rochester

I remember going to church camp since the mid 1970s. I first attended as a camper in middle and high school. While in college, I worked at the church camp in Ohio as a maintenance man. Once I entered seminary, I began attending church camp as a counselor. I soon moved to a camp director and even helped initiate a new church camp experience which included backpacking, canoeing, and repelling. I have served at 6 different camp sites with young people ranging from 2nd grade through college. I am a church camp advocate.

In the last 20 years, specialty camps have entered the church camp scene. Two of them that have survived in the Indiana Disciples are MAD camp and CROSS camp. MAD camp stands for Music, Art and Drama camp in which campers have a chance to explore the arts as a way of worshipping and loving Jesus. The big question MAD counselors continually ask their campers is "How are you going to use your skills for Jesus and the church?" CROSS camp stands for Christian Recreation and Outdoor Sports Skills. At CROSS camp the

youth explore 4 different sports a day ranging from yoga to soccer to frisbee golf. CROSS camp uses sports as a way to experience different parts of life like adversity, triumph, defeat, learning new things, helping others, and being helped by others to explore Christ's presence and call in different times of our life.

With the specialty camps and traditional camp meeting at the same time and place, last summer was the first year I had the opportunity to see how these camps worked and meet their counselors. It was fascinating to watch the different groups of young people interact and share their experiences through the week. It was even more fascinating to watch the adult counselors interact and share their experiences through the week. The week was different, but God showed up, friendships were forged, and God was praised. All and all, it was a good week.

Please continue to support our camping program and let me know if you would like to be a summer camp counselor. The rewards of being a part of a young person's life through these formative years is an incredible gift. †

Christian Church in Indiana Summer Camp 2018



BEYOND BELIEF!
THE UNIVERSE OF GOD

Camp:	Geneva Center	Bedford
Middle School	July 9-14	July 16-21
High School	July 9-14	July 2-7
CROSS	June 11-16	
MAD	June 18-23	
Explorer	June 11-16	July 9-14
New Beginnings	June 25-27	June 25-27
You & Me	June 18-20	June 28-30
You & Me 2	June 25-27	

Full Week Cost: \$300

New Beginnings and You & Me Cost: \$195

After May 15, 2018 - \$25 Cost Increase

For more information and to register online, please visit: www.indianadisciples.org

Please take note of NEW Bedford Camp dates!

Indy Pride Celebration Marked For June

Central Christian (Indianapolis) first began participating in the Indy Pride Festival in 2001 and in the Indy Pride Parade in 2014. Since that time, other Disciple congregations particularly in the central Indiana area have participated. The last two years there has been a combined table and booth at the Indiana Pride Festival involving Downey Avenue (Indianapolis), Westview (Indianapolis), Allisonville (Indianapolis), and Central (Indianapolis). Last year, Indiana regional churches participated in the march and exhibited under the banner "Open and Affirming Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Indiana". This year, Indiana LGBTQ+ Alliance (formerly GLAD Alliance) is heading up interest and participation in the festival and parade.

Indy Pride, Inc. exists to unite and serve its members and the LGBTQ community of Central Indiana through leadership development, educational and support programs, and community events that achieve inclusivity, equality, strong community connections, and awareness of LGBTQ issues.

Best known for the yearly Circle City IN Pride Festival, which has expanded to a week

long schedule of events celebrating every aspect of the community, Indy Pride, Inc. does philanthropic work throughout the year to support many organizations in Central Indiana. In addition to the festival in June, they organize Laugh OUT Loud, the Hoosier 250 Tricycle Race, Community Thanksgiving Dinner, educational and vocational scholarships, workshops and support groups (confidential and public), and partnerships with the Indianapolis LGBT Film Festival, Circle City Pride Softball League, and the Circle City Fest Volleyball Tournament.

The Indy Pride celebration will be held on Saturday, June 9th this year. Applications have been made for the booth space and parade with Southport Christian Church (Indianapolis) and North Christian Church (Columbus) joining in participation. Anyone in the Indiana region (church or individual), whether you are in an LGBTQ+ Alliance recognized Open and Affirming church or not, is invited to participate in this intercongregational effort. Please contact Kerry Armstrong at kerryvarmstrong@aol.com if you are interested in participating. †

