

# GB-22-1215

**Name of ministry:** Christian Church in Ohio

**Ministry**

**Executive/Regional**

**Minister name:**

Rev. Allen V. Harris

**Ministry**

**Executive/Regional**

**Minister email:**

[AHarris@ccinoh.org](mailto:AHarris@ccinoh.org)

**In what ways is your  
region/ministry thriving?**

- We concluded our time with the four visiting Regional Ministers on a very positive and resilient note for they served Ohio well for two years. Thanks to Rev. Allen, Rev. James, Rev. Phelps and Rev. Spleth, for all they did to help sustain our congregations, pastors, and lay leaders and guide our Council, Committees, and Commissions!
- In March we called a new Regional Pastor and President, Rev. Allen V. Harris. A Regional Church Celebration and Installation Service on October 23, led by our General Minister & President, Rev. Teresa Hord Owens, was held both in person at Gender Road Christian Church in Canal Winchester and online.
- Fifteen local congregations that were in the Search & Call process called vibrant and gifted pastors to serve them as Interim or settled Pastors and at least sixteen more are in the process of discerning, interviewing, and calling their own new pastoral leadership.
- We continued networking and supporting our ordained and commissioned clergy, both through our monthly Zoom Clergy Calls and monthly Congregational Leaders Mailing. We also expanded these efforts by offering a COVID Memorial Service especially designed for our chaplains, as well as gathering our retired clergy virtually, which will continue into the new year. Plans

are in the works to expand our networking and support of chaplains as well as with young clergy.

- The Commission On Ministry Team 1 met with and nurtured eighteen persons on the journey towards ordination and concluded the process with five of those discerning that they were, indeed, called by God for ordained ministry and had fulfilled all the requirements of our Policies and Criteria for Ordained Ministry! Four have been ordained: Rev. Lisa Reshad, Rev. Paul Bomeli, Rev. Ali Miguel, and Rev. Kenneth Oswald. The fifth, Naomi Calkins-Golter, will be ordained January 8th. Team 2 nurtures and cares for dozens of Commissioned Ministers and Team 3 ensures all our clergy are connected, cared for, and maintain the highest standards for ministry.
- Our Finance Committee has begun meeting monthly and has worked diligently to not only insure that our Regional Church finances are managed responsibly, but to provide full transparency of these finances (see last week's letter from Gladys Davis, our Treasurer, for an in depth review of the year's financial position.)
- We held a short but encouraging Camp & Conference Season and have planned a longer but still cautious season next summer, and the Camp Christian Committee completed a comprehensive look at its governing documents, and now turns to our policies and procedures, counselor training, and membership.
- We called a highly skilled and deeply caring Campsite Manager in Tom Bowerman-Jett who has completed not only a regular maintenance schedule, but also a list of necessary capital improvement to guide us in ensuring our camp and conference center is sustainable for the long haul. Plans are in the works to hire a Camp Christian Food Service Director as well as a new and expanded slate of Camp Ministry Associates for the summer.

**What are the biggest challenges facing your region/ministry this year?**

The year that is getting ready to close - 2021 - was more challenging than any of us could have expected, especially since 2020 was hard in epic ways. Yet the challenges continued, as new variants of the deadly COVID-19 virus spread across the globe expanding the sickness and death we had prayed was on the wane; the deep divides of politics burst open on January 6th and still continue to simmer unpredictability not far under the surface of our nation; tragic instances of inequities and injustices based solely on race, skin color, gender identity, and nationality seemed only to have intensified; weather disasters persisted farther into the colder months than ever before in our collective memory with horrific and unimaginable consequences; and the general exhaustion of navigating the shifting tides of culture and technology that seems to push the church as we have known it farther and farther to the margins of irrelevance wore us to exhaustion. But we have made it intact, even if bruised and tired. I know with absolute confidence that the Regional Church has made it through this year because of your prayers, your steadfastness, your gifts of resources and volunteer time, and your deep faithfulness and trust. For this we are profoundly grateful!

**What is something you hope to accomplish in the next year?**

- A Pool Exploratory Committee was formed and has begun doing the important background research on what it might mean for us to have a pool again at camp, the number one requested improvement! This will be very carefully considered and held alongside other capital needs for the camp as well as the entire Regional Church's financial stability.
- We are working more closely with our ecumenical partners, especially the Ohio Council of Churches under the leadership of Disciples clergy person, the Rev. Dr. Jack Sullivan, Jr. and the Heartland Conference of the United Church of Christ, under the newly called settled Conference Minister, the Rev. David Long-Higgins,

working together in fresh and innovative ways that will mutually benefit each organization.

**What is something you would like the General Board to know about your region/ministry?**

- We are caring for and assisting clergy in-between ministry settings with as much responsiveness and support as we can, whether by offering counsel, prayer, or technical advice, writing their Regional References, providing creative ways of communicating like our virtual “Regional Minister Search & Call Meet & Greet,” or simply by walking alongside them as they discern their future calling.
- Our Regional Church Council, under the able leadership of our Moderator, Candis Wilson, and with fully functioning Commissions, Committees, and Teams, provided strong and streamlined governance while also having honest and productive conversations about the challenges and the future of the Regional Church.

**How can we pray for your region/ministry?**

- Our cadre of wise and remarkable Regional Elders are working hard and dependably in their volunteer but crucial roles across the state. A new and expanded covenant outlining the role and responsibilities of Regional Elders was approved by the Regional Church Council. Trust, confidence, and vision are slowly but surely being regained in local congregations, in Districts, and throughout the entire Regional Church.
- We have improved communication with our monthly all-Region newsletter and have stepped up our work on promoting, particularly through social media, the ways in which individuals and congregations can support the mission and ministry of the Christian Church in Ohio, particularly through our three primary means of support: the Disciples Mission Fund, the Renewal Initiative, and the Christmas Offering.