



Christian Church In Ohio
DISCIPLES OF CHRIST
A covenant network of congregations in mission



Title: Report of Christian Church in Ohio

Origin: Dr. William H. Edwards, Regional Pastor and President

The following is provided for information to the General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

The Christian Church in Ohio's vision as a regional church states that we are **"A covenant network of congregations in mission"**

We are the Body of Christ gifted and called in covenant together as Disciples of Christ to be centers of transformation on the new mission frontier of our own communities.



We are organizing our work around three regional priorities that grow out of the vision:

- Strengthening Relationships and Building Networks (True Community)
- Leadership Development (Deep Christian Spirituality)
- Congregational Transformation and Evangelism (Passion for Justice)

The vision of the Christian Church in Ohio has called us to restructure our staff to better serve our congregations. Our new structure is based on the concept of equipping the people and congregations of the Christian Church in Ohio to live out their calling to be servants of Jesus Christ. This means that the regional pastors of the Christian Church in Ohio have shifted their tasks from being responsible for making ministry happen in the Regional Church to being the equippers of leaders from within the Regional Church who carry out the Regional Church's ministry. Also, the focus of ministry for our Regional Church is more clearly found in the local congregations of the Regional Church.

Regional Pastors facilitate and resource congregations in their relationships and networking with other congregations, the development of local leadership, and the spiritual transformation and faith sharing ministries in local communities. The Regional Pastors are a central contact point for congregations relating to the Regional Church, in partnership with the Regional Elders. Regional Elders are a volunteer cadre of (mostly retired) experienced ministers who serve as an extension



of Pastoral Staff in assigned Districts of the Region.

The Christian Church in Ohio is seeking to be intentional as we empower different commissions and committees to be inclusive of gender, race, lay/clergy, and geographical location in the makeup of such bodies.

The Christian Church in Ohio is actively involved in the Northeast Inter-Regional Fellowship (NIRF), which includes the regions of the Capital Area, Canada, Michigan, Northeast and West Virginia.



The Christian Church in Ohio has been consulting with Christian Church Foundation in establishing a Development Committee. This ministry team will be developing a fund raising and development strategic plan to financially under gird the present and future ministries of our regional church.

The Christian Church in Ohio is an active and vital member of Ohio Council of Churches. Our regional church supports the work of the Council financially and through participation of members of our congregations in its programming.

New Church

The New Church Committee of the Christian Church in Ohio is beginning the second phase of our 2020 vision to add 50 new congregations in the Ohio region. We have begun this new era by re-strategizing and re-prioritizing our service to this priority ministry. The ten new congregations that emerged and are in formation as a result of our first phase initiative are all, as anticipated, experiencing the “joys and challenges”, “frustrations and excitement” of new church planting.

In 2008, we continue supporting two regionally initiated new church plants in the Columbus area. This includes working in cooperation with the UCC New Church Development Committee for the area. The UCC is a partner in planting a new African-American congregation in the north/northeast section of Columbus. There is also a new church that has been launched in the Dayton Area. In 2009, a new church planter will be called to start a new church in Delaware, the fastest growing county in Ohio just north of Columbus.

Congregational Transformation

Taking into consideration the complexity of Congregational Transformation and the diverse nature of the conditions and scenarios that congregations within the Christian Church in Ohio find themselves, the region’s Congregational Transformation Ministry Team did not identify one single "cure all" approach. The Congregational Transformation Ministry Team is exploring and initiating ways that the Christian Church in Ohio can educate and train leaders, identify and utilize resources, and network congregations and leaders to share their learnings and experiences. The role of the Regional Church is be partner to resource congregations as they discern their own unique “spiritual strategic journey” of transformation.

The Congregational Transformation Ministry Team's primary focus is to create and implement:

- 1) Training and Educational Experiences for pastors and lay leaders, focusing on a team approach, and partnering with pastoral leadership.
- 2) A Ministry Network of Coaches/Mentors
- 3) A Leadership Network of Transformational Pastors.
 - Calling these groups together, orienting the process.
 - Establish a Covenant of Collegial Support
- 4) A Network of "Teaching Congregations and Learning Laboratory Congregations"
 - Surveying and networking congregations who are using resources for transformation.
 - Sharing the outcomes of congregational insights related to the use of transformation resources (creating a community of learning through the use of websites, articles within the Buckeye Disciple, and regional events.)
- 5) Continuing Resource Development
 - Evaluating and communicating to congregational networks the development of new transformation resources.

Leadership Development

In the area of leadership development, the Christian Church in Ohio continues to offer a variety of ministries to support and nurture congregational leaders. Through our CYF,



Chi Rho and Children camping program, we reach close to 1,200 youth per year. Our curriculum prepares and encourages them to be leaders in their local churches. We have trained 16 youth officers of the Youth Commission to be servant leaders. This workshop takes place over three days in one of our regional outreach communities. In February of 2009, the Christian Church in Ohio sponsored an International Affairs Seminar, where 39 youth traveled to

Washington, DC and New York, NY to learn what it means to be people of faith active in the American political process and global affairs.

Advance Conference (Young Adults 18-30), Ohio Disciples Men and Women's Ministries continue to hold spiritual leadership development retreats that empower and encourage members of Disciples congregations in Ohio as Christian leaders and people of faith.

Anti-racism Pro-reconciliation

The Anti-racism Pro-reconciliation Commission and Reconciliation Committee of the Christian Church in Ohio are now officially the "Ohio Reconciliation Mission". The two

have blended with leadership and membership (the co-chairs are comprised of leaders from both former entities). The key 2007 goal is to partner with at least four or five congregations and initiate the formation of congregational teams who will develop congregational anti-racism pro-reconciliation ministries with specific strategies for each congregation becoming anti-racist pro-reconciled.



The two congregations which have board approval are racially diverse, one in Cleveland and the other in Cincinnati. Once a congregational partnership is established, it is ongoing with all congregations until the Christian Church in Ohio authentically celebrates diversity.

Regional Staff:

- Rev. Dr. William H. Edwards, Regional Pastor and President (African-American, Male)
- Rev. Stephen Bentley Regional Associate Pastor (Anglo, Male)
- Rev. Dr. LaTaunya M. Bynum Regional Associate Pastor (African-American Female)
- Rev. Dr. Brenda Webster, Regional Program Minister (African-American Female)
- Duncan Draper, Treasurer (Anglo, Male)
- Joanne Arnold, Executive Assistant (Anglo, Female)
- Jennie Stoddart, Office Administrator (Anglo, Female)
- Rich Haines, Bookkeeper/Accountant (Anglo, Male)
- Sally Wears, Financial Clerk (Anglo, Female)
- Al Channell, Camp Christian Superintendent (Anglo, Male)
- Doris Woodson, Camp Christian Food Services (Anglo, Female)

Number of Congregations:	191
Total Members:	46,767
States included in Region:	Ohio

Recommended Action:

The General Board receives the report from the Ohio Region.