



The Buckeye Disciple

Christian Church in Ohio
Disciples of Christ
A covenant network of congregations in mission:
We are the Body of Christ gifted and called in

Volume 16, Number 6

November/December 2007

Christmas 2007



Give Thanks for the Gift

Open the Gift

Share the Gift

II Corinthians 9:15 "Thanks be to
God for His indescribable gift"

Your Gifts to Christmas Special
Offering Change Lives

Christmas Offering

The greatest gift we have ever been given is God's gift to us of His Son, Jesus Christ. The gift of Jesus is opened in our homes, in our churches and as we gather as God's people here in Ohio.

In our homes, we study the scriptures and God's word is opened to us through God's Holy Spirit. In our churches God's word is opened to us as we worship and fellowship together. As a covenant network of congregations in mission, God's gift is opened as men and women gather together in retreat. God's gift is opened as 1147 children, youth and young adults gather at Camp Christian. God's gift is opened as the staff of the Cleveland Christian Home minister to children from across Ohio. God's gift is opened as church groups continue to minister in recovery and rebuilding efforts in the south with the help of Week of Compassion and Disciples Home Missions. God's gift is opened as Ohio pastors gather in spiritual retreat. God's gift is opened as the Commission on Ministry gives oversight and guidance to 90 ministerial students and licensed lay pastors. God's gift is opened as we install Stephen Bentley, LaTaunya Bynum and Brenda Webster as regional staff. God's gift is opened as 130 Elders and Ministers gather in retreat. God's gift is opened as congregations and communities are transformed.

It is up to each of us to share the gift God has so graciously given to us. God has given each of us abundant and overflowing blessings. The Christmas offering undergirds the many ministries we share together as a covenant network of congregations in mission here in Ohio.

In this holy Christmas season we give thanks for God's gift, we open the gift in the ministry and mission of our churches. Now we share the gift, as we give our Christmas offerings. Give generously!

*"Every time we love,
every time we give,
it's Christmas."*

Dale Evans



Spiritual Insights Rev. Dr. William H. Edwards

"Mary gave birth to her first son, wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them to stay in the inn." Luke 2:7

"What is the first gift of Christmas?" We are looking forward to the presents and gifts, aren't we? Some of us will open them before Christmas. Others will wait expectantly for Christmas morning.

"What is the first gift of Christmas?" Our family received a Christmas card last year from a very dear friend that answers this question. The card said, "The first gift of Christmas is a child." "So what's new? We always knew that the first gift of Christmas is a child. Isn't that why we buy toys? Isn't that why we put up Christmas trees? Isn't that why we build manger scenes and put the baby at the center? Don't we always say that Christmas is for children? Isn't that why we spend what we do not have to make them happy?"

But the question is not, "Why do we celebrate Christmas?" or, "To whom does Christmas belong?" The question is, "What is the first gift of Christmas?"

Sometimes we give theological responses to that question. "We have been given One who will be known as 'Wonderful Counselor,' 'Mighty God,' 'Everlasting Father,' 'Prince of Peace.'" We assemble in church on Christmas Eve, amidst all the gift giving, dinners and parties to honor the true gift of this season—the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. We celebrate his birth. We look to the Word made flesh. We celebrate the Emmanuel, for truly God is with us. And all that is true, but when all the theologizing is done, when all the philosophizing and romanticizing is done, we must admit that the first gift of Christmas is a child -- a real, human child.

"Mary gave birth to her first son, wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them to stay in the inn." Luke 2:7

"The first gift of Christmas is a child." The child Jesus was given to all of creation as the first gift of Christmas.

At its best the spirit of Christmas is a mirror in which we see reflected the very best that life can be; at Christmas we see ourselves, moved by generosity, uplifted by love, inspired by joy, encouraged by hope, not only for ourselves but for this whole creation. All because, "The first gift of Christmas is a child." Christmas offers the whole world another opportunity to go visit and welcome the gift of the Christ child.

**Give Thanks for the Gift
Open the Gift
Share the Gift**

"Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift" II Corinthians 9:15
"The first gift of Christmas is a child." This is a hope that guarantees our very salvation.

Regional Calendar

November

- 1 Regional Elders @ RCO 10:00am
- *3 Men in Mission Retreat in Decatur, GA
- 7-8 RCO Staff Retreat @ Camp Christian
- 8 DOCSWO 7:30 – 9:30pm
- 10 Regional Cabinet @ Camp Christian 10 - 3
- 13 Commission on Ministry @ Northwest C.C.
- 15 – 17 Anti-Racism Commission @ Camp Christian
- 16 – 18 CYF Officer Training @ The Hocking Valley Parish
- 22 – 23 Thanksgiving, Regional Church Office Closed**

December

- 1 Deadline for entries into the Jan/Feb Buckeye**
- *1 Women's Advent Retreat @ Camp Christian
- 8 Ohio Disciples Outreach Meeting @ RCO 10 - 3
- 11 Regional Church Office Pastoral Staff Meeting
- 12 RCO Staff Meeting and Christmas Celebration
- 18 Commission on Ministry @ Northwest C.C.
- 24 Christmas Eve, Regional Church Office Closed**
- 25 Christmas Day, Regional Church Office Closed**
- *28 – 30 Advance Conference Winter Retreat

January 2008

- 1 New Years Day, Regional Church Office Closed**
- 8 Interim Ministers Working Group @ RCO 10:00am
- 9 Regional Church Office Staff Meeting
- 10 DOCSWO 7:30pm
- 11 – 13 Lakeside CYF Conference Midwinter @ FCC Mansfield
- 15 IMWG @ UCC Office
- 15 Commission on Ministry
- 16 Regional Church Office Pastoral Staff Meeting
- 17 Personnel Committee Meeting @ RCO 12 - 3
- 21 Martin Luther King Jr. Day. RCO Closed**
- 25 – 27 Phyto CYF Conference Midwinter @ Central, Newark
- 28 Minister's Convocation Dinner TBA
- 29 ODEC @ RCO 10:00am

February

- 1 Deadline for entries into the Mar/Apr Buckeye**
- 6 Regional Church Office Staff Meeting
- 8 - 10 Hiram CYF Conference Midwinter @ FCC Wadsworth
- 12 - 14 Spiritual Life Retreat for Ministers @ Camp Christian
- 16 Christian Education Committee Meeting
- 19 Commission on Ministry @ Northwest C.C.
- 22 - 24 Wilmington CYF Conference Midwinter, Middletown
- 29 - 1 Counselor Training at Camp Christian

March

- 3 Chi Rho Commission Conference Call
- 4 Executive Committee @ RCO 10am - 4pm
- 5 Regional Church Office Staff Meeting
- 8 Women's Lent Retreat @ Camp Christian
- 8 Regional Cabinet Meeting @ Camp Christian
- 13 DOCSWO
- 14 - 15 Counselor Training @ Camp Christian

** Indicates online registration is now available
RCO = Regional Church Office*

Regional Associate Pastor Rev. Stephen Bentley

In our "Seeds of Vision" it states, "In Covenant together, we are gifted and called to become True Community." Wow that is a statement! We are Called by God to become a True Community AND we are Gifted already with what it takes to get us there. So what is stopping us? Well, that brings us to our next point from our "Seeds of Vision" statement. We are called to be "Centers of Transformation." I believe we all like the idea of our churches being called centers of transformation. We believe that in many ways churches do transform the lives of those outside the church. But do we believe that those inside need to be transformed? Do we recognize that we have the need to be transformed? I long for that church of True Community spoken about in Act 2:44-47: *All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.* NRSV Becoming "True Community" means we transform our understanding of assets. Are our assets only for us or does everything we have; belong to a far greater purpose of fulfilling God's mandate to "Love our neighbor as our self?" What will it take to us to recognize that all we have is for the common good? What will it take for us to share what we have so that the needs of all those in the community are taken care of? It will take nothing less than being transformed by the love of God and through that transformation, recognizing that all we have already belongs to God. Then we can sing with the Psalmist: "Bless the Lord, O My Soul! And all that is within me, (all I have responsibility over, all my time, all my talent, my whole heart) bless God's Holy Name! (Psalm 130:1) SBPV (Stephen Bentley paraphrase version)

Stewardship presumes blessing and abundance. It is not about overcoming scarcity, or guarding against it, or getting something we don't have – or being prudent. It is not about giving to people in need. It is about recognizing all that we already have, helping both ourselves and others know and enjoy the abundance in which all can share, right now.



Thank You to Northwest Christian Church for hosting the Regional Associate Pastors and Regional Program Minister Installation Service.

Pictured L to R: Brenda, Bill, LaTaunya, and Steve



Regional Program Minister Rev. Dr. Brenda Webster

CYF

Newly elected CYF officers are looking forward to the Officer Training event taking place at the Hocking Valley Parish. The dates are November 16-18. The CYF Commission, which met at Camp Christian on September 21-21, welcomed 3 dynamic new members into its fold: Emily Schmitt, Nicole Curet and Roger Osgood.

Counselor/AD Training

Counselors and ADs are the backbone of our Camp Christian conference and camp programs. These wonderfully talented men and women of God deserve the best training available. Therefore, our training must be appropriately designed to meet their concerns and the challenges of a dynamic and growing program. Two (2) overnight training sessions have tentatively been planned at Camp Christian. CYF and Chi Rho counselors and ADs may attend either session. The dates are: (Friday and Saturday) February 29-March 1, 2008 and (Friday and Saturday) March 14-15. The times for both are Friday 7:00 p.m. until Saturday, 4:00 p.m. Please save the date that best suits your schedule. Additional details are forthcoming.

Calling All Camp Christian Alumni!

On May 2nd and 3rd, 2008, Camp Christian will "bubble over" with excitement. Camp Christian will have its first Homecoming and Open House event. Camp Christian Alumni from across the globe are being invited to revisit Camp for a time of reunion, revival, revelry and rededication. We are thrilled to combine the Homecoming with our annual Open House for a combination of food, fun and fellowship. Spread the word and save the date ... you'll be glad you did!

Regional Children's Ministry

Plans for the implementation of our Regional Children's Ministry are under way. Please watch the Buckeye Disciple for our first meeting coming up in December. Call the Regional Church Office if you have a particular interest in serving on our planning team.



A Heartfelt Thank You!!!

I just wanted to take this opportunity to say a HUGE thank you to everyone for their cards, well wishes, prayers, donations, gifts and volunteer hours over the recent weeks. Seminary never teaches what Pastors are supposed to do when floods come and traps 4 feet of sewage in your fellowship hall! But I was so overwhelmed by the immediate response from Week of Compassion, Ohio churches, Advance Conference, and the loving members of our sister congregations throughout Ohio, Pennsylvania and even Texas!

The Saturday after the August floods, Advance Conference young adults, members of various churches in Ohio, and the pastors from Genoa and Tiffin came to help us partake in the initial clean out phase after the water and sewage had been pumped out. On September 1st, another crew from Advance Conference, more members from sister churches, a crew from the Middletown Church and a pastor from Alliance all came to offer physical support.

During this time, monies from all over the state as well as around the country have been coming in to help in our rebuilding. I cannot tell you how blessed I have felt in opening each letter, well wish and donation. The members at First, Findlay are so very thankful for your concern and gift of hope that your donations have brought to us.

The rebuilding will take some time, but we are so hopeful and feel so empowered because of the promise of the Holy Spirit and its manifestation of witness through all of you. We could not hold on to this optimism had it not been for all of you.

Thank you again for your love, gifts, service, talents, time and prayers. Words will never be able to express just how much they have all meant to me and the congregation. God's blessings to you all.

-Rev. Nikki Mazza-Fredley and
the members of Findlay First Christian Church



Two Ohio Churches Merge

It is not unusual to see two or more dying churches merge as a method to keep the church's presence viable in a community. It seems to be a real rarity to see two healthy churches merge. But in the small community of Harrison, just that is happening. On October 7, the congregation of the 173 year old First Christian Church of Harrison voted unanimously to merge with the Harrison Christian Center. The merger had been proposed by First Christian's Lead Minister, Dr. William T. McConnell just a month earlier. Members of both churches met in information sharing meetings to hear the spiritual journeys of the churches' pastors, the history of each church, and to discuss the merger concept. The meetings were surprisingly positive filled with very excited members from both congregations. F.C.C. Harrison is known in the Region as an innovative, exciting and growing church, it has been a church experiencing transformation over the past fifteen years. The church's transformation began many years ago as the church leaders sought to deepen their spiritual lives and the spirituality of the entire congregation. They used a tool made available by the Disciples Home Mission, "Taking the Name of Jesus, A Strategy for Church Growth," which was very instrumental in starting the revitalization and transformation process. The church has experienced long term and healthy growth in spirituality, evangelism, lay leadership, worship attendance, development of small groups, multiple worship forms and involvement of the laity in ministry in this time of transformation. Worship has grown from 75 to 375 and membership has more than doubled to almost 700 members. Over 85% of the active members are presently involved in small groups. The other church involved in the emerging new church is Harrison Christian Center, a non-denominational church pastored by Rev. Mark Garrett, who has been the pastor of the church for over 20 of its 25 year history. H.C.C. averages around 175 people in worship and is known for its strong youth ministry. This church is also deeply dedicated to the small group ministry and, for over a decade, has been a community leader in helping the various churches in the community work together to impact the community for Christ. It was in the spring of 2007 that the time seemed to be right for the pastors to go deeper in the discussions of merging. The elders of each church were included in those discussions and responded positively to the concept. Following the vote to merge, teams were formed to work out the details of leadership, worship, outreach/service, administration, facilities, and staffing for the new church. Near the end of the merger talks between the two pastors, it was decided that the two churches would cease to exist, give up all of their programs and ministries and start up again as soon as possible as a new D.O.C. church. The new church has not yet been named. Suggestions for a name are being taken from the existing membership of the two merging churches. A holy and powerful excitement is flowing through the two churches about to become one. Many of the members are excited to be showing the community, both churched and unchurched, by example that churches can unite instead of always fighting and splitting and dividing. It is believed this new church will have a powerful impact on the community in the name of Christ.

Have you switched yet?

Did you know that Christian Church in Ohio has sent out 75,050 issues of The Buckeye Disciple in 2007 alone? The total number of pages in 2007 multiplied by the amount of copies sent out is 323,750 pieces of paper. And that's just the Buckeye!! There are also Minister's Mailings, Camp Registrations, Letters, Flyers, etc, all using tons and tons of paper. The environment is so important; protecting it should also be a ministry of the Christian Church. As of right now, there are only 103 people signed up for The Buckeye Disciple electronically. That averages less than 1 person from each of the Disciples churches in Ohio. How many of us email friends and family on a regular basis but still get newsletters in the mail that clutter up our kitchen tables, desk drawers, and night stands. I would love to think that each and every newsletter that comes from the region is cherished for years, but we all know that their final resting place is not usually storage but the garbage can. We want to reach everyone in the way that works best for them. If you are a hard copy sort of person, that's wonderful and we will gladly keep sending you the newsletter in the mail. But if you are like a lot of people, you would get equally as much if not more out of an electronic version but haven't switched over for whatever reason, please consider changing your snail mail version to an emailed one.

My goal is to turn the 103 into 1003. What an amazing thing it would be to start 2008 with a significant switch to electronic versions. Can you help me with my goal along with helping the regions greater goal of a more conscious caring for the environment? I know you can!

Peace and God Bless,
Jennie Stoddart, The Buckeye Disciple Editor

O Come, O Come Emmanuel Be Born in Us Today

ADVENT Retreat for Women

Saturday December 1
9 AM to 3 PM
At the Herald B. Monroe
Lodge at Camp Christian
Leaders: Margot Connor and
Kay McGlinchey



\$25 (after November 17th - \$30)
Come the night before for an additional \$20
Register: www.ccinoh.org

Join us for a day with God as we meditate, share, do a craft and prepare ourselves for the Holy Season of

To register offline send payment along with name, address, and phone number of the person registering to:

Christian Church in Ohio
355 East Campus View Blvd
Suite 110
Columbus, Ohio 43235



Divinity & Diversity

An Exploration of Christianity's Encounter with World Religions

Advance Conference (for persons ages 19 – 29 & out of High School) is hosting a weekend retreat, December 28-30th into the world of diversity and our place in it. What is diversity? How can we actively seek out and embrace diversity? Why is diversity so important? To help us explore these questions and many more, we have invited Dr. Dale C. Allison to join us at Camp Christian in Magnetic Springs, Ohio. Registration will start at 7:00 Friday night and the retreat will wrap up approximately at 11:00 Sunday morning.

Dr. Allison currently serves as the Errett M. Grable professor of New Testament exegesis and early Christianity at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. Some of his most recent books are *The Luminous Dusk: Finding God in the Deep, Still Places* and *The Love There That's Sleeping: The Art and Spirituality of George Harrison*. Although he is perhaps most renowned for his work on the Gospel of Matthew, he is also currently working on a full-length commentary on the Book of James.

For more information or to register on line please visit www.ccinoh.org. You can also visit pages for Advance Conference on Myspace and Facebook where you can learn more about Advance Conference and your 2008 officers Dave Bernard, Felix Ortiz, and Debbie Saxe.

GMP Decries Veto

Although President Bush vetoed a bill to reauthorize appropriations for a program that subsidizes health coverage for millions of low-income persons, the majority of whom are children, General Minister and President Sharon E. Watkins and other leaders are optimistic that members of Congress will get the votes to override the President's veto. On October 2, Watkins joined members of the Sojourners/Call to Renewal Board at the U.S. Capitol, to speak in favor of the bill. She called on members of Congress to override President Bush's anticipated veto of the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2007. Bush vetoed the bill the next day. The program is a joint state-federal effort that subsidizes health coverage for 6.6 million people, mostly children, from families earning too much to qualify for Medicaid but not enough to afford private medical coverage. There are 9 million uninsured children in the U.S. The bill had passed with strong bi-partisan support. It would have added \$35 billion to the program over five years and extended coverage to another 4 million children. It was to be funded by increasing the federal cigarette tax by 61 cents. In her statement Watkins noted that Disciples approved a resolution at General Assembly that calls on all Disciples and congregations to be advocates for children and to work to ensure health and mental health care for every child in America. "Simple human decency says no child should be left behind, Mr. President," said Watkins. "And denying health care coverage to children is leaving them behind."



Restoring Monroe Lodge

Would it surprise you to learn that the book of Nehemiah in our Bible is a book about love? It is not so much a book about love for people or even love for God but rather a book of love about a place where a people experienced God in a special way. After inspecting the walls of Jerusalem, which were lying in ruin after falling and left to the weather for many years, Nehemiah says, "Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem. . . I also told them about the gracious hand of my God upon me. They replied, "Let us start rebuilding." So they began this good work." Nehemiah 2:17b, 18. Much of the rest of the book tells the names of those who gave of themselves for this place they loved so much.

This past summer we became aware of an urgent need to replace the Monroe Lodge roof at our beloved Camp Christian where many in Ohio have experienced God in a special way. We received several bids for the removal of the existing roof and new shingles. An additional charge was included for replacement of sheet roofing if any were found to be damaged.

We asked the roofing company what would be the benefit if we removed the existing roof ourselves and they shared that we could save about \$10,000. We then discussed the likelihood of finding volunteers who would be willing to give their time, their energy, and their skills towards the task of doing the removal of the roof and we decided at least to ask the question. Through their ongoing volunteerism of helping on these kinds of projects, we knew some people. While this was a start, we knew this would not be enough to get the job done. We contacted churches, called others who had worked at camp during the summer, and advertised in a Clergy Alert that a date had been selected, September 22 and that help was needed. We quickly heard back and based on the response decided to go ahead and take on the job of both removing the roof and the replacing damaged roofing sections.

On that warm Saturday at 8:10am, the roof started coming off. Given the size of the roof, 130,000 square feet, most predicted it would take the weekend to complete the job. That was assuming the roof was in good condition. At 3:00pm that Saturday afternoon, the final shingle fell into the dumpster. At 4:00pm, the volunteers replaced the final roofing sheet, which was the 37th piece. Thirty-nine men and women worked together to make this happen. Most worked directly on the roof, but others helped by staying on the ground and picking up debris. Initially, one group was assigned the task of

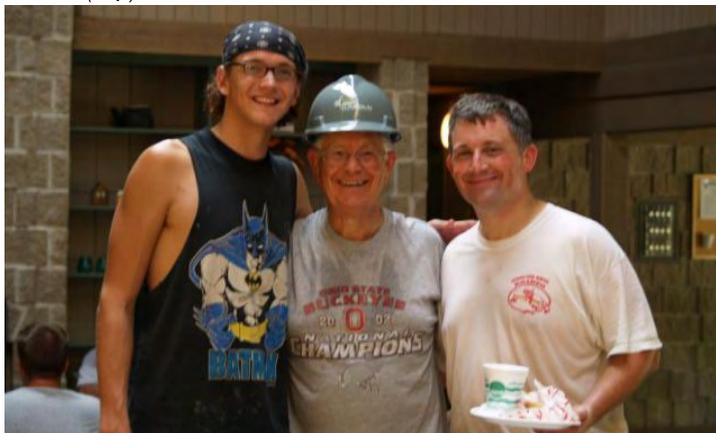
Continued in the next column

Restoring continued

replacing the roofing sections that needed that, and later a second group was added. They were supported by several people working on the ground by doing the cutting and sizing of the replacement sheets of plywood. These volunteers were of all types: older and younger, men and women, highly skilled and novices. They did however share in a common love and God and this place where God's love is so richly experienced. The roofing company representatives were amazed and commented that they had seldom, if ever, had seen a volunteer group work so hard and so efficiently. They accomplished all of this without a single word of complaint, with no concerns about the job assignments, and with a healthy smile and a happy heart. All who participated were grateful for all that they, with the help of God, had accomplished.

Love is about Giving! It does not matter whether it is giving of our financial resources or giving of our time, sweat, and energy. Those of us, who worked on this great day, shared our love of God and our love for Camp Christian. As we move into this fall season and reflect about our stewardship, let us respond out of our love for God and out of the abundance of God's love poured out on each of us.

Pictured below: 3 generations repairing the roof. Rev. Pete Smith (middle) with his son Mitch Smith (right) and his grandson Alan Dicken (Left).



Journey to Bethlehem

Euclid Avenue Christian Church's 25th year of Journey to Bethlehem will be on Sunday, December 9 continuously from 2 to 5 pm at the church, 3663 Mayfield Road, Cleveland Heights (across from Severance Town Center). Journey to Bethlehem is an indoor walk-thru drama depicting life in Bethlehem at the time of Jesus' birth with all the sights, smells and sounds of the marketplace. Between your audience with King Herod to the baby in the manger, you will see all the shops, smell and pet the live animals, and hear the voices of the Roman guards as they hurry the crowd along. You will be entertained during your indoor "wait" with music, puppets, etc. Over 100 costumed church members are waiting for you to experience the miracle of Christ's birth as we've told it over the years. This is our gift to the community - there is no charge. Journey is wheel-chair accessible.

For questions or more information call 216-382-5344.

Mission around the Region

The Grace and Andy Fund is a scholarship fund for students at Hiram College in memory of Grace Chamberlain and Andy Hopkins, victims of a drunken driver with 11 previous convictions. A run and walk was held in September at Hiram College. You can make a donation by sending a check to the fund in care of The Cleveland Foundation, 1422 Euclid Ave., Suite 1300, Cleveland, OH 44115-2001.

The Disciples Christian Church in Boardman uses the Karl Howell Fund of their church to make donations to missions, such as Disciples Mission Fund, Global Ministries, Camp Christian Operating and the Boardman Christian Learning Center. What a great way to support missions. Rev. Thomas Madden is the pastor.

First Christian Church in Salem is involved in the Missions Pantry Ministry. Members were asked to pick up grocery bags with a list of needed items and bring them to church. This is one of their ministries to the hungry in the Salem area. Leonard Moore is the pastor.

First Christian Church in Lisbon is involved in "The Banquet in Lisbon," a meal provided by area churches once a month. The churches provide, prepare and serve the meals on the fourth Monday of the month.

First Christian Church in Findlay is on the receiving and giving ends of mission. As we all know they had flood damage. \$3,000 was received from Week of Compassion along with phone calls from Johnny Wray. Many churches sent work crews, cleaning supplies all the way from Corpus Christi, TX, and \$3,000. They feel blessed. One of First Christian's outreach ministries is Adopt-A-Road Program, where they collect trash four times a year along Lima Avenue. Nichole Mazza-Fredley is the pastor.

First Christian Church in Portsmouth is involved with the Evangelical United Church of Christ in collecting items for CWS Disaster Cleaning Kits and Disaster Personal Care Kits. Michael Brown, a ninth grader, is working with the pastor on his God and Life Award. This is one of his service projects. Rev. Galen Hahn is the pastor.

Carthage Christian Church in Cincinnati recently celebrated its 175th Anniversary. Dr. Bynum and Dr. Edwards both preached at special services. Rev. Teri Garner is the pastor.

First Christian Church in Harrison is "Raking in the Blessings with Fall Outreach." Members were asked to BYOR (Bring Your Own Rake) to church on October 14th. Immediately following worship they headed out to rake and bag leaves in the Harrison community. What a great outreach! Dr. Bill McConnell is the pastor.



World AIDS Day December 1, 2007

World AIDS Day is the international day of action on HIV and AIDS which takes place every year on December 1. World AIDS Day is about reminding us all that HIV is an issue for everyone. Hundreds of thousands of new cases of HIV are being diagnosed around the world and the only way we can stop it spreading is by creating a more AIDS Aware society in which everyone takes action. The AIDS Ministry Network is committed to HIV/AIDS education around the world. Disciples Home Mission, Global Ministries, and other ministry partners have numerous resources that will empower your congregation to take part in the education of HIV/AIDS around the world.

Alternative Christmas Ideas for Churches

Greetings from Global Ministries! We are excited to invite your congregation to include information about Global Ministries Alternative Christmas opportunities in your Advent activities! Global Ministries will send you a display, suggested project list, and information on those projects for your Alternative Christmas giving table. We also will provide information cards for those wishing to honor someone specific with their Alternative Christmas gift. Once you set up a table with these items you are all set to go! If your activity encourages individuals to give Alternative Christmas gifts in honor of loved ones, they may select from our list of suggested projects for Christmas 2007, or you may develop your own list of projects from those that are posted on our website in the section Special Projects under each geographic Mission Area. You may also call or email us for additional project ideas to support. Each Giver should fill out an information card with her/his own information and that of the honoree and then should give you a check written to Global Ministries, with the project or projects to be supported and "Alternative Christmas" on the memo line. Givers who are unsure of the honoree's address, or who wish to present their gift to the honoree, can instead have notice of the gift sent to the giver's own address. You as the host should collect the checks and information cards and send them directly to:

Global Ministries
Office of Resource Development
P.O. Box 1986
Indianapolis, IN 46206

After receiving your packet of checks and information cards, Global Ministries will: Send each honoree a beautiful 2007 Global Ministries Christmas card, sharing the name of the person who gave the gift, the gift designation, and a photo. Send a thank-you letter and charitable gift receipt to each shopper. Gifts are sent in their entirety to our international partners for the designated purpose. No administrative fees are taken from gifts to Global Ministries because of the faithful giving from our churches to Our Church's Wider Mission and the Disciples Mission Fund.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call 317-713-2555.

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Due in the Regional Church Office by
December 1, 2007**

Central Christian Kettering Honors 50 years of service from Lois Sutherland

When Lois Sutherland played Central Christian Church Kettering's 1,927 pipe Schantz organ September 9, she commemorated 50 years as the church's organist, an accomplishment the American Guild of Organists has called "very rare". In recognition of her devotion and 50 years of service, the church honored Lois during its 10:30 service. Rev. David Turner, Senior Pastor said, "Lois has been the constant in our wonderful music program over the years. Her talent, love of music and dedication are remarkable. We have been blessed to have Lois these many years, and look forward to having her as our organist for a long time to come". In preparation for virtually every Sunday over the past 50 years, Lois has found time to practice and prepare to play organ solos, plus accompanying the church's Chancel Choir on both organ and piano. Every Sunday, the congregation counts on Lois to lead them in song, whether it be a traditional hymn or a more modern selection. She accompanies soloists and choral groups, and regularly plays organ and piano solos. "Being able to serve God through music is what keeps me playing." Just a teenager when she began as Central Christian's organist in 1957, the church had just moved to Kettering, and was holding services in what now is its Fellowship Hall. In that temporary setting, Lois began her long tenure at Central on a Baldwin organ. The much larger pipe organ, a two-manual Schantz organ, had been placed in storage awaiting the completion of the main church sanctuary in 1963. In 1979, the Schantz organ was upgraded to a three-manual, 30-rank organ, as it is today. Commenting on the changes in church music, Lois said, "Sometimes we forget that all types of music and musical instruments praise God. Not all types of music are everyone's favorite, but they all praise God. Classical, old traditional hymns, contemporary music, congregational singing, solos, duets accompanied by pipe organ, piano, harp, electronic guitar – they all give praise to God in different ways." Lois began taking piano lessons at the age of 6, but said she did not become a serious music student until age 13. Her music studies continued for many years, including studies from the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music. Music has played an important role throughout Lois's life. Her parents, Harriet and William Wollenhaupt both were musicians. Her mother played the violin into her 90's. Her father played the trumpet and had first chair in The Ohio State University Band. "They were my encouragement. They were my mentors," Lois said. Lois met her husband, Roger, when both were members of the Dayton Chorale. For many years, Roger has been a tenor soloist with Central Christian's Chancel Choir. The Sutherlands enjoy music in their Washington Township home, and often open their home and gardens for community events. They frequently attend the Dayton philharmonic and opera. Their personal interest and involvement in music has been passed to the Sutherlands' four grown children, all of whom live in the Dayton area. Lois and Roger have four grandchildren. Central Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), founded in Dayton in 1829, is celebrating its 50th year in Kettering throughout 2007.

Thank You

The family of Cynthia Bentley says "Thank You" for all of the expressions of Love and Support during her illness and death. Your cards, visits, phone calls, prayers, and hugs are so greatly appreciated. How wonderful to belong to such a loving Regional Church Family.

Cleveland Christian Home dedicates the George M. and Ruth Robinsteen Home

On July 27, 2007 Cleveland Christian Home had an open house and a dedication ceremony for the George M. and Ruth Robinsteen Home. The Robinsteen Home located on Cleveland Christian Home's campus will provide longer-term, apartment living accommodations for up to six young adults, ages 18 to 24, who are affected by chronic mental illness.

Residents of the George M. and Ruth Robinsteen Home receive little support from friends and family members, keeping them homeless and with inadequate access to medications and healthcare to support their recovery. These residents will be provided critical counseling and personal development support to enhance their capacity for self sufficiency.

"Because of this gift from the estate of George Robinsteen we will be able to help young adults and give them every opportunity to be independent and self sufficient" said David Lundeen, Cleveland Christian Home, President and CEO. The Robinsteens were a devoted Christian couple committed to supporting family, friends, the church and their community in a quiet unassuming way. They were married in 1942 and made Akron, Ohio their home. The Robinsteens were members of the First Christian Church in Cuyahoga Falls.

In 1983, Ruth passed away leaving George to carry on their interests and support of others. A part of George Robinsteen's childhood was spent as a resident at Cleveland Christian Home. George was always appreciative of the excellent care and guidance Cleveland Christian Home provided him. Mr. Robinsteen passed away in 2002. This unique program and facility became a reality through a legacy gift from the estate of George M. Robinsteen.

For an update on Cleveland Christian Home's activities, volunteer opportunities, news and details of our comprehensive programs and services visit our newly designed website at: www.cchome.org

Cleveland Christian Home is a founding member of the Disciples Care Network, a group of human service agencies in covenant with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). During the Disciples of Christ National Assembly in July the Disciples Care Network was accepted by the church's governing body to be an official ministry of the church. For more information about the Disciples Care Network contact Jim Runyon, CFRE, Director of Church Relations and Major Gifts for Cleveland Christian Home at: (216) 688-4140 or e-mail: jrunyon@cchome.org.

Chi Rho Camp

Camp Christian, Magnetic Springs, OH was the site of another of 55+ summers of Chi Rho Camping for young people who have just graduated from the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades. 2007 found 473 Chi Rhoers and Counselors and AD's enjoying a week of study and worship. (We study on a three year cycle: God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit). There were fun times (fun songs at breakfast and lunch, evening recreation, activity groups and free time in the afternoons, morning dip and afternoon swim time, fishing, basketball, volley ball, dodge ball, kick ball, etc.) The Quest Groups studied the Holy Spirit.

Our 8th graders led us in evening prayers each evening aided by drama groups and choirs. This summer each camp made a banner which we hope to display in the dining hall. And the week culminated, as usual, with a moving Consecration Service.

Our Chi Rhoers again were generous in sharing with others. This year's Good Samaritan Offering by the 5 Camps is divided equally between support for the ministry in the Hocking Valley Parish here in Ohio, providing camp scholarship funds for Chi Rho Campers, and to work of our Shared Global Missions (Southeast Asia/Pacific Rim). Camp Maumee also gave a special offering in honor of our guests from China who were there for over half of the week. This was in the form of buying goats at \$15.00 each. They gave enough to provide 20 goats.

And as we have become accustomed to, the food was great provided by our dietician, Doris Woodson, and a super staff. And the maintenance staff under the supervision of Camp Superintendent Al Channell kept the place in good repair. Our ministry associates (summer staff), composed of college age, former campers and conferees also added to the program life of the week.

Finally the men and women who give a week of their lives to Chi Rho Camp are the backbone of a very successful week of Christian education and leadership development, that happens in exciting ways at a place that has become dear to thousands called 'Camp Christian'.

Plans are already being made to provide a great week of Christian Camping for jr. high (or middle school) aged boys and girls in 2008. We are looking for, and planning to have, an increase in the number of young people experience the unique experience that we know as Chi Rho Camp. So we hope churches will promote and encourage their 6th, 7th, and 8th graders to put Camp on their schedule, and that our Chi Rho Campers will talk it up and invite friends to join us next summer.

Look for the summer schedule and make plans to attend. Scholarship aid is available if needed. And if you cannot come the week that your area usually comes, you can come to any one of the other weeks of the summer.

Fundraising Concert

Dear Disciples, I am excited to inform you about the third annual Advance Conference Alumni Talent Show and Fundraiser. It will be held at Tylersville Road

Christian Church in Mason, Ohio on April 25, 2008. This is an opportunity to reunite with old friends and enjoy some wonderful talent from current and past Advance Conferees. All of the proceeds will go to the Advance Conference Scholarship Fund which is designed to help conferees who can't afford go to Advance Conference pay for the expenses. We look forward to seeing you there. If you have any questions or comments please contact Dave Diehl hyperforam@aol.com, Jane Hilvers jehilvers@earthlink.net, Pat Fatig prfatig@msn.com, or myself rjgreen57@yahoo.com. If you have a talent and would like to participate, we would love to have you. If you know of anyone from Advance Conference or that would like to come please let them know of this event. Hope to see you there,

Randy Green (Pictured with Mark Harris from 2007 Concert)



Sunday School chairs for sale

Several dozen Beginner Dept. metal/wood chairs. Several dozen Junior Dept. folding metal chairs. Call Claude at Franklin Circle Christian Church, Cleveland, at 216-781-8232 for more information.



*From heaven unto earth
you come to bear good
news to everyone, O
God! Open our hearts
and minds to receive all
over again the assurance
of your presence among
us. In the newborn Child, may we find
newly born in our lives the gift of
generosity – the love that frees us to live
and give beyond cost and calculation.
Make of our money the gold and
frankincense of those who, like the wise
men of old, are “overwhelmed with joy”
in the spirit of Christ. Amen.*



Ohio Women's Ministries Fall Retreat a huge success.

There was a definite spirit of giving at the OWM Fall Retreat held at Camp Christian the weekend of September 14, 15, 16. Two hundred women learned how to "recapture their joy" as Rev. Dr. Robin Hedgeman of Bethany Christian Church in Cleveland presented four lively sermons on how to get joy back into their lives!

Friday night the women were asked to bring baby gifts for a "Baby Shower" complete with decorations and a special baby shower decorated cake. The ladies were very generous! Two tables were piled high and spilled onto the floor of the dining hall at Camp. More than 2000 disposable diapers and wipes were collected, along with thousands of one piece sleepers, shirts, booties, onesies, hats, socks, toys, and everything from memory books to changing pads. More than 5 dozen bottles of lotions, powder, and baby wash were collected as well as dozens of towels and wash cloths. Over 30 blankets were collected, some of which were knitted or handmade. Some of these gifts will be given to "Choices Shelter", a refuge for abused women and children in Columbus. What they cannot use will be shared with other agencies!

Our ever popular "Gift Basket Auction" grows bigger every year. The baskets are created and donated by women attending retreat. Throughout the weekend they write down their bids and the highest bid wins the basket! This money, which totaled \$1425.25, will be used to provide scholarships for women in Ohio who need help in attending any OWM sponsored function.

Blessing Box money was also collected during the weekend at each meal. Ninety-six dollars and sixty four cents will be sent to Church Finance Council. Half of this money will help pay the salary for the new staff person in the Department of Disciple Women in Indianapolis.

The offering, taken at Sunday morning worship, was \$1717.55, and will be divided three ways, to the Cleveland Christian Home, the Ohio Region Leadership Fund, and the OWM Commission.

The weekend was filled with the joy of worship, singing, fellowship with each other, the beauty of Camp and definitely filled with the spirit of giving

Tables and Chairs Available

First Christian Church in Sylvania has 8 tables and 100 folding chairs that they are getting rid of. All are in good condition. They are only asking for a donation. If any church is interested in these tables & chairs, you can contact the church via email at sylvania.fcc@ambt.net or by telephone at 419-882-3313.

Advance Conference Takes Action

Dave Bernard

Another fun and spiritually moving week of Advance Conference summer conference is in the books. Advance Conference is Ohio's ministry for Young Adults age 18-29. Summer Conference was held at Camp Christian August 12-19. The theme for the week was Action and how the twenty something generation can step up in their own spiritual lives and the lives of others in their world community. Each morning at camp began with a bible study of the book of Acts and the formation of the church led by the Advance Conference Co-Directors Rev. Margot Connor and Rev. Allen Harris. Each day following the bible study a keynote presentation related to the week's theme was given by one of the Advance Conference Faculty. The keynote presentations laid out the theme for the day's discussions and growth. Small group discussions provided a wonderful setting for learning, prayer, sharing and spiritual examination. Afternoon workshops gave conferees the opportunity to plan nightly worship, raise donation money, facilitate recreation, participate in camp improvement projects and plan mission work for the upcoming year. A worship service was planned by conferees each night focusing on the topics of the day. The worship services ranged from formal to laid back, serious to entertaining, but always focused on creating a meaningful and thought provoking experience for everyone involved. Every night had a different recreation including the ho-down, movie night out in the field in front of the Rec Hall, an open mic night/ coffee house, and the always entertaining talent show. Following closing circle the conferees enjoyed many long nights and early mornings of fun, fellowship and sleep deprivation. The week culminated with the interactive consecration service held on Saturday night. The service incorporated all the discussion topics of the week and served as a reminder of the importance of taking action in the world. The week was another fantastic example of the importance of taking time out in life so that we can all do our best to match our greatest talent with the world's greatest needs.

In addition to a wonderful week at camp, Advance Conference has been busy taking action in the community around them. Just one week after camp, Advance Conferees were busy rolling up their sleeves and taking action. Upon hearing about the devastating flooding in northwest Ohio, Advance Conference couldn't take action fast enough. Over two weekends, Advance Conference organized over 40 volunteers that helped in the cleanup efforts of First Christian Church in Findley. Plans are also currently under way for a second Advance Conference mission trip to help rebuild homes in New Orleans. There is no doubt that the young adults in Ohio are stepping up and taking action in their lives in order to better their world and the world around them.



Disaster Recovery Mission Trip to Slidell

On Sept. 29th a group of eight volunteers left Ohio to be joined by a ninth from Las Vegas in Slidell, Louisiana to help with picking up the pieces from Hurricane Katrina. There were four from Northwest Christian Church in Columbus, three from First Christian in Wadsworth, Ohio and two "friends" who joined in. For four of these it was trip number three. The population in Slidell has greatly increased since Hurricane Katrina (Aug. 29, '05) because it is the closest location to the 9th Ward in New Orleans lying just across Lake Ponchartrain on the north shore across a 5 mile causeway. Thousands of dislocated lower income families from there are in Slidell to be as close to their damaged or destroyed properties as they can. The labor force in the whole New Orleans area is very low and the volunteers who come are the largest source of labor and a very important one. In the whole of the New Orleans area a total of 350,000 vehicles were destroyed by Katrina. The Northshore Disaster Recovery, Incorporated is a interfaith organization consisting of about 85 churches and other nonprofit groups or agencies came together to mount a cooperative approach to the recovery effort and as a result the Slidell area is about 70% recovered. The full time staff of NDRI consists of 9 persons and is fully funded by The United Methodist Commission on Recovery. They average 200-250 volunteers per week housed in churches or other, 30% are youth and young adults, they use of \$1.5 million in materials a year provided by gifts, grants and donations, and they gutted 3,000 flooded homes in the first 6 months Northshore Disaster Recovery, Inc. has recently agreed to operate recovery services in East New Orleans and the Upper and Lower 9th wards of the city. Under the manager, Rev. Josh Baird, Disciples operate three mission stations in the New Orleans area out of local congregations that have agreed to provide housing and other support for volunteers who come to work in the area. We were housed and graciously hosted in the church by the good folks of the First Christian Church in Slidell. Disciples work there in cooperation and under the direction of the Northshore interfaith. The home that was worked on during this trip was owned by Doris Torregano who had been displaced from her longtime family home by Hurricane Katrina and, with her extended family, had fled to live some weeks with family members in first, Houston, then in Baton Rouge, then in South

Continued in next column

Disaster Recovery Continued

Carolina. Doris now lives temporarily in a FEMA trailer that sits on her property alongside her home. Our task was to pick up where other volunteer groups before us had left off. We put down cement board underlayment on floors that were to be tiled inside, then laid the ceramic tile. We hung and mounted the kitchen cabinets. And we also applied the vinyl siding to the entire exterior of the one story home. The work was hard and the weather hot and humid but Doris's warm hospitality made it all more than worthwhile. Disciples will have assisted in the rehabbing of some 500 homes through Northshore Disaster Recovery, Inc. This is along with work done in New Orleans and Lake Charles, LA, Gulfport, MS and Port Arthur and Beaumont, TX area by the end of this year since work began in January 2006. The Rev. Josh Baird coordinates our Disciple work in Slidell, Covington, and Metairie, LA. All of us who participated in the trip to Slidell felt very rewarded for our efforts and, as is always reported, the people of Louisiana are very gracious and appreciative of all who travel down to assist in the recovery work. If you have thought about taking a group to the Gulf think no longer, just get busy and do it. You'll be glad you did! You can look into it by contacting Tod Iseminger at Disciples Home Missions (888-346-2631) in Indianapolis.

Rev. Paul Lantis, (retired)

96 new churches so far this year

New Church Ministry announced today 96 new congregations have joined the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) since the beginning of 2007. According Rick Morse, vice president of Mission Initiatives and New Church Ministry, "we are excited about this announcement." "This is significant news worth celebrating," said James L. Powell, president of Church Extension. Since the 2020 Vision was first envisioned in 2001, a total of 533 new Disciples churches have opened their doors. During the General Assembly in July of this year, New Church Ministry celebrated opening 500 new churches. Since then, the number has continued to increase, with 33 additional churches being opened. "God is doing great things," said Powell. "This is an excellent opportunity for Disciples. We celebrate because it represents 96 additional mission fields opening doors to serve communities around the nation." "And as the nation represents a unique offering of diversity, so do the 96 Disciples churches that have started in 2007," said Morse. The new churches that have joined the Disciples this year include: Liberation Christian Church, St. Louis, Mo., Sojourner Christian Church, Ashville, N.C., and Primera Iglesia Cristiana, Laredo, Texas. "Our congregations are representative of various racial and ethnic backgrounds," said Powell. "And as Disciples, we embrace our differences while celebrating our similarities...our belief in unity and love for Christ," he said. "We are over half-way to meeting our challenge of starting 1000 churches by 2020 and if we continue with this momentum, I believe that we will exceed our goal," said Morse. Disciples have now shown a net gain in congregations for six of the past seven years.

For more information about New Church Ministry visit www.newchurchministry.org.

Christian Church in Ohio
Disciples of Christ
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

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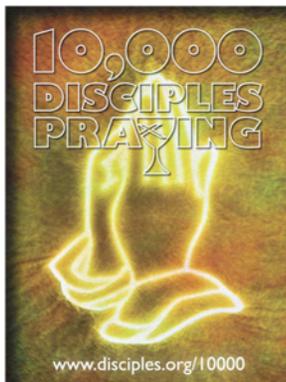
Regional Assembly Oct 17 & 18, 2008

Theme: "Body Building": "Strengthen Your Congregation For Mission"

Ephesians 4:11-13 *It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*

Be sure to watch future publications and the web site for more information.

Each of us has our own way of talking with God through prayer. In our harried, hectic 21st century life, we may find peace through prayer between periods at the soccer field, between phone calls at work, or while we're preparing breakfast. For 10,000 Disciples Praying, Jesus is recorded in Matthew as saying to His disciples: "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you." (Matthew 7:7, NIV)



The Buckeye Disciple

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