

the Kentucky Christian

December 2023



ABIDE WITH US



CHRISTMAS OFFERING

*A Special Day Offering of Disciples Mission Fund
supporting the ministries of our Regional church*



**Received in many congregations December 17 & 24. Learn more or give online at
disciplesmissionfund.org/special-offerings/christmas/**

ABIDE WITH US



Rev. Dr. Donald K. Gillett, II, Regional Minister

This Advent Season we are called to abide with one another as Jesus abides in us. The call to abide is a call for spiritual accountability for our brothers and sisters in Christ. Christ came into this world as the ultimate accountability for humanity. Christ lived his life understanding that God had provided enough for all.

This Advent Season we seek Jesus' abiding presence to bring us hope in the darkest places; peace in a world filled with violence and hatred; joy that transcends the physical realm; and love that lifts us up beyond our finite imaginations.

This Advent Season let us remember that Jesus abides in us as we abide in Him. The Christian Church in Kentucky has witnessed the abiding presence of God as:

- Regional staff has traveled to over 130 congregations.
- The summer camp programs at Camp Kum-Ba-Ya and Camp Wakon' Da-Ho nurture the faith of our youth.
- The Region hosted Disciples from across the US and Canada at the General Assembly.
- We gathered across the state to encourage one another, easing the load through the sharing of ideas, resources, tasks, workshops, seminars and worship.
- The regional Committee on the Ministry has been actively building up the body of Christ, inside and outside local congregations, shepherding those who are following their call into ministry.

These blessings are undergirded by your stewardship - an important example of spiritual accountability. This is why we partnered with the Center for Faith and Giving. Financial accountability requires us to give thanks to God for our abundance. Financial accountability requires us to prayerfully practice principles of faithful giving. Financial accountability requires us to be good stewards. This Advent Season as you consider your Christmas Offering to the Christian Church in Kentucky, reflect upon the many ways financial gifts to the church help us abide with one another. Financial gifts help us to care for and strengthen the ministries of CCK, and lift up our church family across our region and beyond.



Dr. Don attended Rev. Chris Owens' installation at First Christian Church, Murray on October 22, 2023, with Rev. Rachel Nance Woehler.



Rev. Freddie Lawton's installation on September 25, 2023 at South Carolina's Regional Assembly. Pictured with Dr. Donald Gillett, Rev. Terry Hord Owens, Rev. Freddie Lawton and Rev. Dr. Delesslyn Kennebrew.



Rev. Paul Anthony Turner was ordained on October 21, 2023 at Douglass Boulevard Christian Church. Pictured are Rev. Josh Snyder, Rev. Molly Smothers, Rev. Paul Anthony Turner, Dr. Donald Gillett, and Pastor Derek Penwell.



Dr. Don attended Sheila Edwards' commissioning at Third Central United Christian Church on Sept 10, 2023, along with Dr. Lon Oliver and Rev. Dave Carr.

For Unto Us a Child is Born.



Dr. Don at Arlington Christian Church, pictured here with Elders Joe Jones and Lonnie Jackson.



Dr. Don visited New Union Christian Church for their 189th Anniversary, seen here with Rev. Deb Phelps, Pastor & Rev. Dean Phelps.



Dr. Don attended Rev. Carey McGuire's installation at Butler Christian Church on Sept 17, 2023.



Rev. Dr. Paul Moore was ordained on October 15, 2023 at First Christian Church, Greenville. Pictured are Dr. Charisse Gillett, Dr. Donald Gillett, Rev. Jim Midkiff, Rev. Dr. Paul Moore, Rev. Rachel Nance Woehler and Rev. Dennis Gray.



Dr. Don attended the Kentucky Council of Churches Annual Assembly in Elizabethtown, pictured here with Charles Booker and General Minister & President Rev. Terry Hord Owens.



Rev. Braxton King was installed at First Christian Church, Somerset on October 1, 2023. Dr. Don represented the region.



Rev. George Irvin was installed at LaGrange Christian Church on September 24, 2023. Pictured are Dr. Don, Rev. George Irvin, Rev. Dennis Gray and Rev. William Garr.



I'm Ready

Rev. Molly Smothers

Associate Regional Minister for Congregational Development

As a parish minister I have read Scripture for over 25 Christmas Eve services. I have also read from *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*, *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*, and the following monologue from *Scrooged* – a 1988 film version of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*.

I submit this, not to be disrespectful or cavalier, but because I meet so many people who are worn out and weary and scared and unsure of how they can begin to make a difference in this world:

I'm not crazy. It's Christmas Eve.

*It's the one night of the year when we all act a little nicer, we smile a little easier, we cheer a little more. For a couple of hours out of the whole year, **we are the people that we always hoped we would be.** It's a miracle.*

It's really a sort of a miracle because it happens every Christmas Eve. And if you waste that miracle, you're going to burn for it.

I know what I'm talking about. You have to do something. You have to take a chance. You have to get involved. There are people that are having trouble making their miracle happen. There are people that don't have enough to eat. There are people that are cold.

You can go out and say hello to these people. You can take an old blanket out of the closet and say, "Here." You can make them a sandwich and say, "Oh by the way, here." I get it now. And if you give, then it can happen. Then the miracle can happen to you. It's not just the poor and the hungry; it's everybody who has got to have this miracle. And it can happen tonight for all of you.

*If you believe in this spirit thing, the miracle will happen, and then you'll want it to happen again tomorrow. You won't be one of these jerks who says, "Christmas is once a year, and it's a fraud." It's not. **It can happen every day.** You've just got to want that feeling. And if you like it and you want it, you'll get greedy for it. You'll want it every day of your life, and it can happen to you.*

I believe in it now. I believe it's going to happen to me now. I'm ready for it. And it's great. It's a good feeling. It's really better than I've felt in a long time.

I'm ready.

Let us not only READ the Gospel but let us BE the Gospel – one act at a time.



Rev. Molly brought the message to Second Christian Church, Lawrenceburg on September 10. She is seen here with Congregational Board Chair Edwin S. McKee and Interim Minister Sam Carr.



Women's Ministry

*Marsha Thornton, Jr.
Director of Women's Ministries*

We love because he first loved us. Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister. 1 John 4: 19-21

God's love is ever-present within our Women's Ministries! Let us reflect on the blessings of the past few months, and look ahead toward what is to come.

Fall Retreat

On the weekend of October 21st, the women of Kentucky gathered at our annual Fall Retreat at Barren River State Park. We ate, we fellowshiped, we sang, and we worshiped! Our theme was "The Command of Love," so we discussed ways to share and express God's love to everyone we meet.



Director of Women's Ministries Marsha Thornton, Jr. gathers with the Women of Kentucky at the 2023 Fall Retreat at Barren River State Park.

Quilters' Retreat

The Kentucky Quilt/Knit/Craft Spiritual Retreat began over 15 years ago - first as a quilting retreat for women, and then welcoming all kinds of craft (and even one brave man). The retreat grew from 15 women to just over 50 before Covid struck in 2019, when the retreat was suspended. This July the retreat began again at First Christian Church, Berea.

Genesis 2 gives us the image of the creator God blowing the breath of life into creation. The retreat's purpose is to remind folks of the sacred gift of creativity. We begin and end each day with prayer and celebration of works completed. The retreat finishes with communion - a service where everyone is invited to the table. A silent auction is always held; this year's funds supporting Week of Compassion's work in Western Kentucky. Participants are invited to breathe, let go of worries, enjoy God's people, and enjoy the creative gifts that each one shares.

Information related to dates and costs for 2024 will be available in the coming months.

Submitted by Petie McLean, retired DOC minister, retreat coordinator.



Crafters at work at the 2023 Quilter's Retreat in Berea.

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Photo by Sterling Staggs

*Kentucky Disciples Women's Choral Retreat, 2023.
Crestwood Christian Church, Lexington.*

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Upcoming: Choral Retreat

February 23-25, we will gather again at First Christian Church, Georgetown for the 2024 Kentucky Disciples Women's Choral Retreat. We will begin Friday evening and conclude with a performance in worship on Sunday morning.

A block of rooms is being held until January 23rd at the Home2 Suites by Hilton (270 Tiger Way, Georgetown). Call the hotel directly at (502) 570-4663 and reference the Kentucky Women's Choral Retreat to receive the group rate of \$125 plus tax. Registration will be open until February 1st, via mail or online at ccinky.net.

Shari Caldarelli, Madison Avenue Christian Church, Covington, is once again chairing the retreat planning committee. Email her at shari.caldarelli@gmail.com or call the Madison Avenue Christian Church office at 859.261.0226 with questions.



New Church Ministry

Pastor Chloe Specht

Staff Consultant for New Church Ministry

Merry Christmas from New Church Ministry! During this Advent season as we celebrate the gift of God's presence here with us, I am full of excitement for all the ways that new churches across Kentucky are beacons of hope, peace, joy, and love.

In the last year since I began working as the Region's Staff Consultant for New Church Ministry, I have had the privilege of visiting several of our new churches and have been profoundly encouraged at the vibrant spirit of each unique congregation. From joyous multilingual worship services, to advocating for the inclusion of our LGBTQ+ siblings in faith, to celebrating the re-emergence of a congregation after the pandemic, and so much more — what an incredible year we've had!

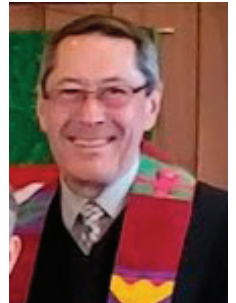
I can't wait to see what 2024 brings for New Church Ministry. The denomination-wide New Church Ministry has developed a new methodology to foster faith communities called DisciplesNEXT, and our regional team is exploring ways to integrate it into our new churches here in Kentucky. DisciplesNEXT offers a pragmatic framework centered in our collective mission to be "a movement of wholeness in a fragmented world" and emphasizes contemplative action, prophetic advocacy, and faith-rooted organizing. Learn more about DisciplesNEXT at newchurchministry.org/about/disciplesnext.

We're coming up on an exciting year for New Church Ministry. If you would like to collaborate with us, please send me an email at chloe@ccinky.net and join us for one of our quarterly meetings. Our dreams are growing bigger and bigger, and we would love for you to join us as we put those dreams into action across our region!

Meet Our Camp Managers

Rev. Dave Carr

Camp Wakon' Da-Ho Executive Director



In the recent editions of *The Kentucky Christian*, we've introduced you to camp directors and campers themselves, whose lives have all been shaped by the camping community. Now, we'd like you to meet the people that make this ministry possible: our camp managers.



Rebecca Teckenbrock is brand new and excited about the journey ahead at Camp Kum-Ba-Ya.

Hello! I'm Rebecca Teckenbrock, and I'm a resident of Marshall County and a member of First Christian Church, Benton. I graduated Frankfort High School in 2003 and married the love of my life, Wes, whom I met at The University of Louisville, where I majored in anthropology. I have three children: Liz, 20; Lucy, 13; and Gabriel, 7. We have a dog, several cats, and a turtle, Sheldon. I previously worked for a nonprofit in Louisville, Dreams with Wings, which works with adults with developmental disabilities. In addition to caregiving, I coordinated leisure events so our clients could experience all life has to offer - canoeing trips, vacations, ball games, etc. I would love to see KBY become more accessible for our differently-abled communities to better enjoy such a beautiful space.

Currently, I'm the event coordinator for a Benton-based nonprofit, A Soldier's Heart. We have a yearly fundraiser, Pickin' On A Soldier's Heart, which pays to help combat veterans with PTSD go on therapy retreats. I would love to open KBY for these retreats. I have seen the difference they make, as my husband is a USMC veteran.

I have worked for the last two years with some of my closest friends at The Sweet Tee Company, making custom T-shirts and learning vinyl crafting and screen printing. I've dabbled in embroidery, learned graphic design, and worked in custom picture framing. I look forward to using my artsy side to make camp beautiful and profitable. Some of my best childhood memories are from North Central 4H Camp in Carlisle, Kentucky, where I spent every summer I could, until aging out. I have loved counseling as an adult at KBY. Camp has been such a big part of my life, and I am so excited about more people experiencing the glory of God and the friendships in Christ that grow here.

*Blessings,
Rebecca*



Linda Lee has been at Camp Wakon' Da-Ho for fifteen years, so to an entire generation of campers, Linda has been a part of every camp they have ever attended.

Hi, I'm Linda Lee, the Camp Manager at Camp Wakon' Da-Ho. I moved with my husband to Casey County, his original home, from Georgia where we had lived for several years. I grew up in Northern Kentucky, and we lived for several years in Trigg County in the western part of the state. I was excited to get back to my home state.

We had been here a couple years when I got a phone call asking if I'd be interested in a job as kitchen manager at Camp Wakon' Da-Ho. I had never heard of the town, Yosemite, let alone the camp with the funny name. I had helped with a benefit breakfast at First Christian Church,

Liberty. Someone at that event had passed my name to the camp manager. I was working in the local school system in the special education department, so my summers were free. Mainly out of curiosity, I decided to check it out.

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My first summer was the best of times and the worst of times. There were so many problems in that first season. Days without electricity, others with no water, days when equipment broke down, times when food delivery wasn't timely, or correct. Had that been all there was to this camp, where I had to think of how to pronounce its name when answering the phone, I would never have come back after the first summer ended. Thankfully, there were some wonderful things about this place, too.

Camp Wakon' Da-Ho is a beautiful place, with lots of flowers in the spring and wonderful leaf color in the fall. I remember seeing some kind of wildlife almost daily – deer, wild turkeys, raccoons, geese, and all kinds of birds. As beautiful as the camp is physically, it was the people I fell in love with. The campers were great: polite, friendly, and gracious when food was a little late due to equipment issues. Counselors and directors were friendly and helpful. There were a few special people who brought comic relief that helped keep me smiling when things weren't going right. WKDH people quickly became special to me.

After more than a dozen summers, three in the kitchen and the rest as manager, Camp Wakon' Da-Ho has become home. There are still days when complications or obstacles take center stage, but the focus never changes. At the end of the day the spotlight is on greater love, and friendships. I'm thankful to be here and to be a part of the WKDH experience.

*Blessings,
Linda*

Our region is blessed to have dedicated adults that make our Outdoor Ministries possible. However, most of our directors find it a challenge to recruit counselors. It is our policy that at every camp, we have one adult for every six campers. Nothing saddens us more than having to turn a camper away due to staffing, while we have empty beds. **Please consider spending a week at camp this summer. You will not regret it, and you will become a lifelong memory to the youth with whom you council. If you are interested, call the Regional or West Area Office.**

Learn more about our camping ministries at <https://www.ccinky.net/ministries/camp/>



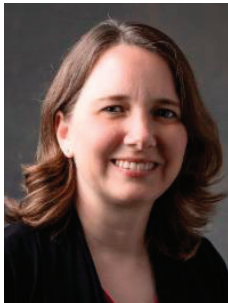
All smiles when canoeing at Camp Kum-Ba-Ya!



There is never a dull moment at Camp Wakon' Da-Ho.



Our campers build connections that can last a lifetime.



Rolling Up Our Sleeves in the West Area

*Rev. Rachel Nance Woehler
West Area Regional Minister*

In September and October, gifted and hard-working Disciples in the West Area have been rolling up sleeves and grabbing hammers, saws, and paint brushes to help neighbors and expand our ministries together.



FCC Paducah joined other Fuller Center volunteers to build a new home on a site impacted by the 2021 tornado in Mayfield.

FCC Paducah Hosting Disaster Response Work Days

Remember when Disciples framed a house at the Louisville General Assembly? First Christian Church, Paducah has been hosting work days on the third Wednesday of every month to help put the General Assembly house in its new place, among other projects. If you would like more information on how to get involved, contact their Missions and Outreach Director, Leah Eubanks at leubanks@fccpaducah.org.

Week of Compassion Tool Trailer Work Day

On Friday, October 13, Week of Compassion invited West Area Disciples and friends to help inventory, repair, and organize their newly acquired tool trailer for ongoing recovery efforts in Mayfield following the 2021 tornadoes. Disaster Response Organizer Raiza Spratt wrote, “Having an organized tool trailer helps improve the operations of our site, so that groups can work more efficiently by having tools and materials they need easily accessible.”



Mary Schubert, Becca Teckenbrock, John Yakel, Robin Crane, Chuck Schubert, and our camp neighbor Dennis, and Teddy Barrett showing off KBY’s newest ramp.

Ramp Building at Kum-Ba-Ya

The Ramp Building Team from First Christian Church, Glasgow offered their gifts, skills, and generosity to make the Billy Williams Lodge (including the dining hall, first aid room, craft room, kitchen, and restrooms) at Camp Kum-Ba-Ya more accessible to those with mobility challenges. Now all visitors will be able to enter the building together through the main camper entrance. This is the fourth ramp the team has built for our camp in recent years. Thank you, John Yakel, FCC Glasgow and friends.

Camp Kum-Ba-Ya Fall Work Day



Barney Bishop and Mark Dycus buck a dead tree on Fall Work Day at KBY.

On Saturday, October 21, Camp Kum-Ba-Ya held their Fall Work Day and introduced everyone to our new Camp Manager, Rebecca Teckenbrock! Becca officially joined the staff on October 9 in a very busy season at the camp. Read more about Becca in her letter on the cover of the October West Area Coordinator. Volunteers cleaned, repaired, organized, and split wood as we prepared the campground for more guests in the winter months. Thank you, volunteers!

As I’m typing this, that familiar hymn by Peter Scholtes is rolling through my mind:

“...We will work with each other, we will work side by side, and we’ll guard each one’s dignity and save each one’s pride.”

Maybe you’re singing along, too.



Got Enough Room?

Rev. Josh Snyder

Associate Regional Minister for Faith Formation & Treasurer

As I look around my living room, one of the first things I notice is the large number of books I have strewn about the place. There is no doubt about it – I am running out of room for books. There are two solutions here. One: go to a store and buy a new bookcase. That is the most comfortable solution. Two: find a new home for some of my books. The thought of doing that sends a chill down my spine.

Sometimes we must let go of what we have, to make room for what is to come.

This is a time of year when we celebrate the coming of Jesus, but also the many gifts that Jesus brought with him. The four Sundays of Advent center around Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. Those are big things. Big gifts. **Gifts that are so big that if we are crammed full of other things, we may not have room for them.**

Advent is the season of waiting, but it is also the season of making room. We all remember Luke's birth narrative that tells us Jesus was born in a stable - there was no room for Mary and Joseph in any of the inns in Bethlehem.

What do we do? Unfortunately we cannot simply create more space in our hearts, minds, and spirits. We must let go of what does not serve us. We must move some things out to make room for the hope, peace, joy, and love Christ offers.

I am finding in my own life how challenging this is - to let go of resentment, hurt, and my vision for my future.

What I have also found is that the more committed I have been to removing those things from my heart, mind, and spirit, the more room I have for Jesus and the gifts He has for me. As I let go of my own vision for my future, I find hope in God's plans. As I let go of resentment, I find peace. As I let go of past hurts, I find joy. As I let go of anger, I find love.

Do you have enough room for Jesus and what He offers?

Follow Him and He will guide you to make way for His blessings.

I pray your Advent is blessed and that you have, or make, enough room in your heart for the hope, peace, joy, and love of Christ.

God bless you.



This is a time of year when we celebrate the coming of Jesus, but also the many gifts that Jesus brought with him.



Rev. Josh with Brother Carey McGuire at Butler Christian Church, September 10.

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2022-2023 CCK Moderators

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Moderator

LEAH EUBANKS
1st Vice Moderator

SCOTT HOLLEY
2nd Vice Moderator

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Return Service Requested

Regional Ministerial Changes

- On **September 17**, First Christian Church, Mayfield celebrated the retirement of **REV. DR. MILTON WEST**. Milton has served in ministry for over 44 years. On behalf of the church, Co-Board Chairs Jim Heath and Beth Scarborough gifted Milton and Paula West stained glass from the former office in the tornado-ravaged building.
- **REV. RICK LOADER** began as Interim Minister of First Christian Church, Mayfield on **October 1**.
- **REBECCA TECKENBROCK** began her ministry as Camp Manager at Camp Kum-Ba-Ya on **October 9**.
- First Christian Church, Greenville celebrated the ordination to Christian Ministry of **REV. DR. PAUL MOORE** on Sunday, **October 15**.
- **REV. RACHELE HOLMES** began as Pastor of First Christian Church, Paris on **October 16**.
- **DR. CHRIS OWENS** was installed as the Minister of First Christian Church, Murray on Sunday, **October 22**.
- **REV. BRANDON GILVIN** began as Pastor of Central Christian Church in Lexington on **October 23**.



Wishing you and yours a Merry Christmas and a
Happy New Year, from the Regional Staff of the
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Kentucky.