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The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Virginia

Contact

The Christian Church in Virginia
1290 Enterprise Drive
Lynchburg, VA 24502-5744
(434) 846-3400, FAX (434) 528-4919
E-mail: ccinvaoffice@gmail.com
Web site: www.ccinva.org

Leadership

Bill Spangler-Dunning, Regional Minister
Mary Anstice, Administrative Assistant
Mary Mathews, Regional Assembly
Coordinator

Report to the General Board - December 2020

Good News of not having a Regional Assembly: Well, like so many others 2020 has been a year of adjustments and change. However, many of these changes have only helped the churches in Virginia make the needed changes for the future. We began the



year with plans to celebrate our Regional Assembly as we have always done with a 3 day event at the University of Lynchburg. However, in an attempt to reduce the costs and respond to the low attendance numbers from churches across the region, we experimented with a one-day format and the interest in attending rose greatly. Then, COVID hit and we postponed it to late fall only to adjust once again, changing it to a Virtual only assembly. Still, the interest held, and excitement was building. Then,

when it became known that our General Minister and President had a death in the family (and despite our GMPs willingness to still be with us) the leaders of the region gathered and prayerfully decided that care for our GMP was more important than a scheduled meeting. We simply found another way to be church. This experience has both fundamentally changed how we are church in Virginia and confirmed that this region is excited about where God is leading us.

COVID concerns and Technology Jumps: Like others throughout the church, Virginia has had to adjust during these COVID times. Virginia before COVID was far behind the technology curve but quickly adapted by learning from each other through multiple zoom calls. The first calls were tentative and mostly focused on learning how to use zoom and other social media platforms. However, soon the use of this technology provided a nudge for the commission on ministry to meet more often without the need for long days of travel. The Clergy gatherings that met via zoom provided opportunities for ministers to meet and form relationships with clergy from other districts across the region. Through zoom and facebook live usage many churches have been able to share worship and education with each other. We would not have chosen to enter this wilderness but once we were in it, God provided many opportunities that will help us be the church in the future.

Anti-Racism Progress: As the world finally began to take note of the Racial Injustice happening across our communities, our Anti Racism/Pro-Reconciliation team stepped up and used technology to hold book readings, monthly region-wide prayer service and online gatherings to support those participating in marches held across the region. We continue to seek new ways to keep the conversation and movement in the hearts and minds of this region.

Calling of new Camp Minister/Associate Regional Minister: We have been slowly developing a plan to rebuild our camping ministry in Virginia. The goals were both for physical improvements but also to secure a vision minded minister who both felt a call to camp ministry and had the Spirit to help with the overall ministry to mend old wounds in the Region. One of our goals from last year and manifested in the new structural documents was/is to become one region in line with a firm dedication to bridging a gap between our Piedmont District Convention camping ministry and the camping ministry that takes place at Craig Springs. After much prayer and vision followed by an intense search, we are excited to document here the calling of the soon to be Rev. Ryan Wilkerson as our new camp minister.



Overall growing energy despite 2020 issues: Despite the challenges 2020 has placed in front of us I believe the Disciples in Virginia will be stronger for the journey and I continue to be excited to journey alongside them as their Regional Minister.

Respectively submitted by

Bill Spangler-Dunning
Regional Minister and President
for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Virginia

Camp Ground

Craig Springs Camp & Retreat Center
30 Craig Springs Circle
New Castle, VA 24127
(540) 864-5768; FAX (540) 864-7099
Ryan Wilkerson, Minister and Camp Manager
craigspringsryan@gmail.com
www.ccinva.org/craigsprings/