

# CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST) IN NORTH CAROLINA

Bishop Valerie Melvin, Regional Minister  
Lisa Tedder, Administrative Assistant



October 9, 2019

Dear Regional Family:

Since January, my travels have afforded me the opportunity to meet many of you up close and personal, sharing a moment to celebrate your accomplishments and pray through struggles. However, there was one stop this summer, that even as I write to you now, brings tears to my eyes. It was the JYF/Chi Rho camp at Christmount.

The JYF and Chi Rho camps were combined this year to ensure the continued experience. In retrospect, I fully understand that this was a God move! The young people did not care at all that two age groups were combined; they simply wanted camp — a chance to be together for spiritual formation and lots of fun.

On Wednesday, after a day filled with activity, we gathered for evening vespers. Most middle and high schoolers must be coaxed into leading singing, but not this time. Suddenly, five young men stepped up on the outdoor chapel platform and began to sing "How Great Thou Art." That's right, a hymn! They took their song sheets, and without guitar accompaniment, sang all four verses with a refrain. At first, I heard a few giggles, and then other voices began singing along.



At that moment, I envisioned the full expression of our Region –local congregations and districts in perfect unity, empowering these young men with a holy boldness for leadership, affirming their call as the priesthood of believers. As they sang with confidence, the futures of these young men looked bright because of the continuous opportunities for spiritual formation and socialization afforded them by our Region. Your gifts of support helped to make this and many other camp and retreat experiences possible this year.

We extend to each of you an opportunity to share in the continued growth of our Region by supporting the 2019 Regional Fall Appeal. This Appeal asks each congregation to consider their covenant with the Region, and share from God's abundance by supporting our Programming and General Operations. Our goal is \$50,000.00. Your support ensures individual care for clergy and congregations, relevant Christian education opportunities, assisting in nurturing Camp Caroline, and repositioning our Region for immediate transformation resulting in long-term sustainability.

Let me share a few additional ways we see your handprint in the ministry of our Region. In 2019, the Search and Call process led by the Regional Minister assisted with filling 11 interim and 6 pastoral positions. We also offer an experienced pool of clergy for pulpit supply during vacations, sabbaticals, medical leave, pastoral vacancies or emergencies. We currently have 13 churches in the search process, and with your prayers, gifted ministers will be called to serve each of these congregations.

This year, more than 100 of our clergy completed the Racial Equity and Boundaries training, as well as the Pension Fund workshop. Our Regional Assembly on Barton College campus hosted 400+ disciples – a record number for a one-day Assembly.

Additionally, your spirit of generosity during the Assembly offering helped to further repair the damages incurred by Camp Caroline during Hurricane Florence, support the Barton Bold initiative, administer ministerial relief for our clergy in crisis, provide specialized training for Regional leaders, and decrease our budget deficit.



Camp Caroline exists to provide a setting for ministry to help form and develop young lives into greater Christlikeness and to provide transforming, nurturing, and challenging ministry for Christian leaders for the building up of the Church and the Glory of God. Recently, we celebrated the Groundbreaking ceremony for the new Jack and Kate Brinson Cottage, with an April 1<sup>st</sup> completion date. Casey Perry is leading the way in establishing ecumenical partnerships that will provide camp, conference, and retreat opportunities for many more communities.

Your Regional staff continues to be creative in establishing best practices as we serve you. Luke Miles, Youth Director, has taken a bold new step to transition all 2020 summer camps to Camp Caroline with “church camp transportation hubs” provided for the Central and Western districts to ease the long journey. The Regional newsletter has reconnected us by framing the happenings within our congregations, districts, and the larger church. We are thankful for the growing partnership with Barton College and have recently welcomed to the Regional Office as Student Intern, Avery Smith, a senior Mass Communications major working to increase our online presence. Our bond with Barton also includes a stronger network between our Commission on Ministry and the School for Congregational Leadership. Presently, our conversations are centered on a Certificate for Ministry program, which would provide more flexibility in fulfilling the requirements toward ordination. In that same vein, we remain committed to continuing education and fully support the Light of Life clergy series, as well as the Purcell, Sprinkle, and Sharp lecture series.

With a new vision for the future, our DWM and CMF combined their fall retreats and hosted 99 participants with talk of continuing the network between men and women again in 2020. Our New Church initiative has new vim and vigor, with an October 26th celebration planned to launch the new church-wide vision and celebrate NC church planters and their initiatives since 2000.

Regional Elders are a group of volunteers who provide contact and care on behalf of the Regional church for an assigned group of ministers and congregations. This ministry will launch in 2020, accomplishing one of our goals which is to increase Regional connectivity and support for you, our local congregations and leaders.

On September 21st, a team of 20+ disciples completed 82-days of Regional prayer. Every morning at 7:00 am, we used the book of Acts as our model for engaging prayer for each pastor and congregation. It was terrific, and we see the fruit of a more prayer-driven and spirit-led body!

Please prayerfully consider what might be your best group or individual gift. Your support is our lifeline. Checks should be made payable to the **Christian Church in NC** with a memo: **Regional Fall Appeal** and mail to **P. O. Box 1568, Wilson, NC, 27894** or you may make a donation online at [ncdisciples.org](http://ncdisciples.org) by clicking the **DONATE** button on the menu bar and selecting **Regional Fall Appeal**.

With a Resilient Hope,  
+Valerie J. Melvin,  
Regional Minister