

A CC in Ohio Message for the End of 2020

Dear Ohio Region,

As 2020 draws to its close, we wanted to offer a brief word from the Ohio Region, thanking you for all you have done this year. Together, we were able to have Lenten and Advent Devotionals, support the Green Chair Fundraiser, give to the Renewal Initiative, receive grants for the Free Store, speak out against racism, gather together via zoom calls, and now we are getting close to being able to call a new Regional Minister! Despite all of the twists and turns of this year, we have been able to be faithful in our shared ministry as the Christian Church in Ohio. Thank you for all that you have done to help us live out our calling as Disciples!



Although we have had a lot to celebrate, this year has been an unbelievably difficult one as well. We have seen such immense amounts of loss and pain. As we have progressed through 2020, we have been reminded of just how important it is for us to be in community and in relationship with one another. We appreciate the ways we've been able to gather together virtually, share our ideas abundantly, and mourn our losses collectively.

When Rev. Larry Pigg's wife Nancy Pigg passed away, I remember him saying to me, "I don't know how people who don't have the church could possibly get through this." Although we haven't been able to have church in the traditional way this year, I believe we have all come to share that sentiment. Without church, without one another, without the love of God through Christ, how could we have possibly hoped to get through this year?

We pray that years like this one will be few and far between. Although we know that when the new year rolls in, all our problems won't be instantly righted, we are still looking to the future with optimism because we have faith in a God of great hope. Romans 15:13 reads: *May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.* We have hope in receiving the vaccine, returning to worship when it is safe to do so, continuing to engage in creative services, restoring our camp programming, singing together, and perhaps most of all, we look forward to sharing warm embraces with friends and family that we haven't been able to hold for far too long.

For all that you did this year, please know that you helped others move forward. The only way we could have made it this far is by traveling together. Thank you for traveling with us. Thanks be to the Holy Spirit for always joining us on our journey. Thanks be to Christ for weeping with us when we lost our fellow travelers along the way. Thanks be to God for the gift of life and love, which we carry on with us into whatever tomorrow may bring.

May you always know that you are loved.

Peace and Love,
Rev. Alan Dicken
Regional Program Director
Christian Church in Ohio
adicken@ccinoh.org