

GB-22-1220

Title: **Report of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in South Carolina for 2021**

Origin: Minister, Dr. Freddie Lawton, Sr., Moderator

The following is provided for information to the General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Regional Staff:

Regional Pastor: Rev./Dr. Freddie Lawton, Sr.

Secretary: Barbara Williams

Regional Board Officers: October 2020-2022

Moderator: Rev./Dr. Freddie Lawton, Sr., Faithful Christian Church, Beaufort, SC

Vice Moderator: Reverend Charles Clary, First Christian Church, Columbia, SC

Secretary: Ms. Tanya Williams, Zion Pilgrim Christian Church, Ridgeville, SC

Treasurer: Dr. John E. Hughes, First Christian Church, Charleston, SC

This has certainly been a difficult and challenging year, but through it all God has continued to bless our region. Nobody said that our lives would be lived on a bed of roses and the year 2021 bears that out. We have faced trials and tribulations on every hand and even still we stand steadfast on the promises of God. Because we are disciples of Christ, our hope is in Jesus who promises never to leave or forsake us.

Covid-19 continues to impact many lives which has presented challenges and altered how business is conducted. As a result, adjustments were necessary to accomplish the mission.

(In addition to physical wellness, parishioners have also faced social, financial and mental challenges. Different personalities can sometimes face disagreements as conflicts arose and prevented us from attaining some of the goals and objectives.) Regrettably, some administrative adjustments were made which impacted personnel. It is my sincere hope that the changes will enable us to effectively and efficiently move forward as we strive to create a bright and sustainable future.

We are Disciples in Dialogue as an indispensable requirement for the answer of relationship. Discernment is agreeing to see, hear, and understand, without judging, in order to become aware of what God is calling us as Church, to be and do, here and now. Discernment begins with acknowledging that we are part of a historical continuum, that we have a past that can help or hurt us. Discernment

seeks deeper insight but does not ignore the obvious. Discernment gains spiritual understanding and direction from Scripture.

According to Thomas Campbell, The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is a Congregationalist movement that is "Christ Centered," "Biblical," "Free-Thinking," and committed to "the Unity of The Church." "The Church of Jesus Christ on earth is essentially, intentionally, and constitutionally one." Our denominational structure is not hierarchical. We do not have levels of authority/power. We have widening circles of covenant relationship... of "Servant Leadership."

As a region, we affirmed that we are self-governing congregations in covenant relationship and building a consensus toward a shared vision for our mission as a Regional Church. We affirmed that we are Disciples of Christ in South Carolina committed to the strengthening and development of our congregations so that we may serve our neighbors, here...and everywhere (Matthew 22: 36-40).

The Region is involved in the Pro-Reconciling/Anti-Racism Initiative. Rosemary Simmons Brown, Jerome Clark, Betty Turner, Charles Clary, John Hughes and Carol Hughes.

The Regional Conference was held at First Christian Church, Charleston, SC. Rev./Dr. Fred Clarke was the host pastor. The theme was "Greater Things to Come" based on John 14:12 which instructs us to believe and to perform works beyond that which some might think is possible. Reverend Jennifer Long was the keynote speaker. We were blessed to ordain three ministers: Jamel Cobb, Elaine Peppers, and Joseph Powe.

In an effort to ensure transparency and operate effectively, we are consulting with Treasury Services to determine the feasibility of having them handle the financial matters of the region.

Some areas of the ministry that we need to collaboratively assess are as follows:

- Governance structures and documents
- Regional Church Conference- purpose
- Districts-nature and function
- Administration-personnel
- Finances-best practices
- Commission on Ministry-nature and function
- Camp Christian-camping program
- Old Antioch Landmark Church Building, Allendale- use
- New Beginnings Outreach Ministry, Walterboro-relationship
- South Carolina Regional Financial Report

The 2021 budget was \$106,400.00. Presently, there are thirty-five congregations in the Region. The 2022 Theme is: Uniting together to build kingdom ministry.