

the Kentucky Christian

December 2025

**The Work of Christmas Offering –
Received in Many Congregations December 14 & 21, 2025**



...the One who began a good work in you will continue to complete it...
-Philippians 1:6



THE WORK OF CHRISTMAS



2025 CHRISTMAS OFFERING
supporting the work of your Region and its ministries

Learn more at disciplesmissionfund.org/special-offerings/christmas/

A WORD FROM THE REGIONAL MINISTER



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

The Work of Christmas

"I'm convinced that God, who began this good work in you, will carry it through to completion on the day of Christ Jesus." (Phillipians 1:3-6, GW)

This Advent Season, we are reminded that God has begun good work in us, and God will complete the work. Two thousand years ago, God, already at work in a stable in Bethlehem, chose to wrap Godself in human flesh and enter this broken and hurting world as a baby, ushering in the work of hope, peace, joy and love.

The good news is that God's work continues through Christ, in your witness and partnerships. God will continue this work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns. I believe that the ongoing work isn't always dramatic or obvious. Sometimes it's as quiet as a whisper of peace in the middle of anxiety or as simple as a realization that you're not alone in your struggles. It is in these ordinary moments that we witness Christ continuing work in the region, such as:

- Strengthening Regional partnerships with Cane Ridge Meeting House, Christian Care Communities, Kentucky Council of Churches, Lexington Theological Seminary, Midway College, Mission Behind Bars and Beyond, and Transylvania University.
- Forging new partnerships with Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary (Black Church Collaborative) and Lilly Inc. (Nurturing Children Through Worship and Prayer Initiative), and continuing denominational partnerships with the Christian Church in Ohio, Tennessee, Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina.
- Nurturing more than 600 youth through camping programs at Camp Kum-Ba-Ya & Camp Wakon' Da-Ho, and hosting region-wide youth retreats.
- Gathering across the state to encourage one another, easing the load through the sharing of ideas, resources, tasks, workshops, seminars, and worship.
- Providing opportunities for Men and Women to gather at retreats and choral events, allowing space for fellowship, caring, connections, and learning.
- Building up the body of Christ, inside and outside local congregations, and shepherding those who are following their call into ministry through the Regional Committee on the Ministry (RCOM).

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 continue the work of Christmas. Financial gifts allow us to care for and strengthen the ministries of CCK and support the ministries of the General Church.



Rev. Dr. Donald K. Gillett, II visited Crestwood Christian Church in Lexington on September 28th. Pictured here are Rev. Kory Wilcoxson, Rev. Steph Wallace, Rev. Dr. Donald K. Gillett, II, and Rev. Missy Wallace.



On September 7th, Rev. Steven Straub was installed as Pastor of Carrollton Christian Church. Pictured here are Rev. Dr. Donald K. Gillett, II, Rev. Steven Straub, and Rev. Josh Snyder.



First Christian Church, Paris held their Installation Service for Rev. Judi Ring on October 19th. Pictured are Rev. Dr. Donald K. Gillett, II, Rev. Judi Ring, and Rev. Josh Snyder.

The Work of Christmas - Howard Thurman

When the star in the sky is gone,
When the Kings and Princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flocks,
The work of Christmas begins.

To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry
To release the prisoner,
To teach the nations,
To bring Christ to all,
To make music in the heart.

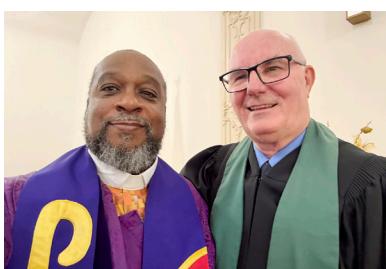
The God who began this good work at Christmas
will complete it. The work of Christmas
continues, and it continues through you.

"For Unto Us a Child in Born"



First Christian Church, Fort Thomas held their Centennial Celebration on September 21st. Pictured here are Rev. Dr. Donald K. Gillett, II, Rev. Mark Caldwell Reiss, and Rev. Ron Sinclair.

Rev. Dr. Donald K. Gillett, II visited Independence Christian Church on November 2nd and is pictured here with Jack Koch.



Rev. Dr. Donald K. Gillett, II attended the Installation of Rev. Mark Farris on October 26th at Oxford Christian Church. The two are pictured here.



Rev. Dr. Donald K. Gillett, II with Rev. Elizabeth King at the Kentucky Council of Churches Annual Assembly.



On November 9th, Seventh Street Christian Church recognized the Ordination and Commissioning of Rev. Marcius Garr. Representing the Region were Rev. Dr. Donald K. Gillett, II and Rev. Josh Snyder, with many friends, family, and clergy members in attendance.



Second Christian Church, Mayfield held the Commissioning of Rev. Letitia Gray-Overton on September 14th. Pictured here are Rev. Josh Snyder, Rev. Dr. Donald K. Gillett, II, Minister Letitia Gray-Overton, Rev. Dennis Gray, Rev. Antonio Sherrill, Rev. Jim Gearhart, Rev. Rachel Nance Woehler, and Marsha Thornton, Jr.



The Kentucky Council of Churches held their Annual Assembly October 23rd-25th. Pictured here are Rev. Jim Summers, Rev. Jackie Summers, Rev. Nancy Jo Kemper, Rev. Dikiea Elery, Rev. Jeff Sames, Pastor Wendy Hood, Deacon Natalie Greene Houston, Rev. Dr. Charisse L. Gillett, and Rev. Dr. Donald K. Gillett, II.

CHRISTMAS OFFERING 2025

The Work of Christmas Special Offering

“Be confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” Philippians 1:6

*When angels sing, and starlight twinkles
When kings reign, and sheep bleat*

*In a manger, wrapped in cloth, surrounded by love
An infant’s cries pierce the night,
and we know that Christ is among us*

But what about when the night goes silent and dark?

When empires fall and shepherds rise?

When the world turns upside down?

And the swaddling cloths fall away...

Do we know that Christ is still among us?

Do we offer our gifts with the Magi?

This is when the work of Christmas begins.

The work of Christ among us, in our Region’s ministries

In our calling and discernment, in our camps and conferences

In our care of clergy and new ministry adventures

In our collective calling to do Justice, love Mercy, and walk Humbly

With every gift to the Christmas Offering, the work of Christ in our Region begins.

The 2025 Christmas Offering will be accepted in many congregations December 14 & 21, or you can give online anytime at disciplesmissionfund.org. 100% of your gifts will support the work of our Regional Ministries. Your regional ministry works to:

- Connect congregations to each other
- Foster faith development
- Gather Disciples in camps, conferences, and assemblies
- Nurture the development of a new generation of pastors
- Assist churches in calling new ministers
- Interpret the global mission of the Church
- Represent the Church in ecumenical gatherings
- Counsel and pray with those who are troubled of spirit
- Lead the Church to address racism
- Inspire leaders to experiment and create
- Witness to the power of God to make things new

The Christmas Special Day offering supports all of these and many other ministries of our regions.

...the One who began a good work in you will continue to complete it ...
-Philippians 1:6



**THE WORK OF
CHRISTMAS**

 **2025 CHRISTMAS OFFERING**
supporting the work of your Region and its ministries



The Work of Hospitality and Healing

*Rev. Rachel Nance Woehler
West Area Regional Minister*

In the midst of the pandemic, the Camp Kum-Ba-Ya Advisory Team and staff cast a vision to shift our ministry from a seasonal summer camping ministry to a year-round retreat facility, open for ministry in every season. We hoped that the beautiful 45 acres that we steward might be a blessing to more people. What we didn't anticipate is all of the ways that the groups who use our campground have been a blessing to OUR ministry.

One of our new regular guests is A Soldier's Heart, Bluegrass & Muddy Waters (A Soldier's Heart), an organization that offers retreats and events for veterans and their families who experience the effects of combat-related Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and military sexual trauma (MST). We are grateful to be able to hold several men's, women's and couples retreats for them each year. At each of their retreats at Kum-Ba-Ya, they have offered to do a mission project to benefit our camping ministry, and the work hopefully aids retreatants in their therapy and recovery.

In October, A Soldier's Heart held a couples retreat. In addition to healing small group work, couples yoga, and fun and hang-out time, the group made time to assemble 14 side tables that will serve as nightstands beside cabin counselor beds, so next summer our counselors will each have a spot for their personal items. What a gift their shared work is to our ministry!

In his book *The Wounded Healer*, Henri Nowen shared,

"We are all wounded people, whether physically, emotionally, mentally, or spiritually. The main question is not, 'How can we hide our wounds?' so we don't have to be embarrassed, but 'How can we put our woundedness in the service of others?' When our wounds cease to be a source of shame, and become a source of healing, we have become wounded healers."

Good work in service to God has the power to heal us, even as our labor might be an attempt to do healing work for others. With God, givers become receivers, and receivers become givers. These are the gifts of hospitality.



During a retreat at Camp Kum-Ba-Ya, the folks from A Soldier's Heart (and camp manager Becca!) participated in couples yoga. Pictured here in the superman pose are Kristi and John Moon, and Becca and Wes Teckenbrock.

Continued next page

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WAYC Challenges Youth to Address Food Insecurity

Three new youth were elected to the West Area Youth Council (WAYC) for the 2025-26: John Carver, Kyndle Mahaffey, and Lucy Teckenbrock. They join WAYC returning youth member Abbie DeWeese and the adult leaders (Tiffany Baker, Teddy Barrett, Leah Eubanks, and Jinny McCormick) and staff in this important work.

At their first meeting this fall, the WAYC youth identified food insecurity as an area of concern that they wanted to learn to address as leaders. In response, they are planning a Winter Youth Retreat on February 20-22 at Camp Kum-Ba-Ya for grades 6-12, and have invited Minister Tineka Fitzgerald to serve as keynoter. Tineka is the Disaster Response and Resilience Coordinator with Week of Compassion, based at Second Christian Church in Mayfield. As she brings scriptures to life, she will share about the work she does through their food pantry and other initiatives to assist the community of Mayfield in their continued long-term recovery. Plus, we hope to challenge retreat participants to bring items (canned goods, boxed foods, and hygiene products) and monetary donations to help stock the new Second Christian Church Food Pantry with a month's worth of food and supplies. Our goal is to collect 350 items for the food pantry.

To further apply what the youth are learning, Tammie Sanders, an elder with First Christian Church, Princeton, will be helping develop hands-on learning projects for the retreat. Tammie is a Venture Crew leader, community garden director, and former Woman-to-Woman ambassador with a passion for feeding her neighbors in need. These interest-group projects will be designed to help the youth feel empowered to address food insecurity in their families, churches, and communities.

More details about the retreat are available in the December *West Area Coordinator*.
www.westareadisciples.org/newsletters/



Rev. Tineka Fitzgerald is the Disaster Response and Resilience Coordinator with Week of Compassion, based at Second Christian Church in Mayfield. She will serve as our Keynote Speaker at the WAYC Winter Youth Retreat in February.



Tammie Sanders leading youth in a craft project at the Youth Retreat last spring at Camp Kum-Ba-Ya. We are blessed to have her leading again at the upcoming Winter Youth Retreat.



In October at their Camp Kum-Ba-Ya couples retreat, the group from A Soldier's Heart made time to assemble 14 side tables that will serve as nightstands beside cabin counselor beds.



Camp Wakon' Da-Ho: Celebrating 2025 and Preparing for 2026

Rev. Steven Straub, Executive Director of Camp Wakon' Da-Ho

Camp Wakon' Da-Ho had a wonderful camping season in 2025, with over 470 campers in attendance (an increase in attendance from 2024!). We give thanks to Camp Manager Linda Lee, summer employees, directors, and counselors for all their hard work to make the camping season run smoothly.

Several upgrades to the camp occurred in 2025. At long last, campers had the ability to utilize the new bathhouse. This new bathhouse boasts increased privacy, state-of-the-art fixtures, energy efficiency, and heat, allowing us to use the camp all year-round. New concrete paths to the pool and bathhouse were constructed to increase accessibility. Finally, the camp added new benches to the campfire, as well as new rocking gliders to the front porch of the dining hall.

As we celebrate the wonderful memories made in 2025, additional upgrades are planned for 2026. Plans are underway to add "splitters" to the cabins to provide heat and air-conditioning, allowing the cabins to be used year-round, and providing some cooling relief to our campers during the hot summer months. Camp Wakon' Da-Ho has received a generous grant through an outreach program from Crestwood Christian Church (Lexington) to provide some necessary upgrades to the dining hall. Plans include replacing gutters, exterior siding, and windows, as well as building a retaining wall, replacing a stove, and more.

Directors for Summer 2026 have been selected, and camp dates are solidified. We are looking forward to using the curriculum, *In the Wilderness*:

Wilderness is a time or place where we encounter what is new, strange, scary, lonely, unknown or mysterious. The wilderness is a wild and beautiful time and place where we can discover the sacred within each person and all creation. The wilderness can inspire us and guide us, assuring us of God's constant presence. As the Spirit guides us through the wilderness, we find what we need to face our fears and the very real challenges that impact our world. The wilderness teaches us the importance of community and the ways we navigate challenges together. The wilderness reveals our strengths, growing edges, and potential as God equips us for the unknown still to come. The wilderness awaits us all, and God meets us there.

CAMP WAKON'DA-HO 2026 DATES

YOSEMITE, KY | CCINKY.NET

SPRING WORK WEEKEND

MINI CAMP (2-3)

CYF 1 (9-12)

EIGHTER'S CAMP (8)

JUNIOR CAMP (4-5)

CAMP 101A (K-2*)

CYF 2 (9-12)

CHI RHO 1 (6-8)

CHI RHO 2 (6-8)

CAMP 101B (K-2*)

Y' ALL CAMP (ALL AGES*)

APRIL 17-19

JUNE 5-7

JUNE 8-13

JUNE 14-20

JUNE 22-26

JUNE 26-28

JUNE 29-JULY 4

JULY 6-11

JULY 13-18

JULY 25

SEPT 4-6

*FIND DETAILS REGARDING AGE RESTRICTIONS, CHAPERONE REQUIREMENTS, AND PRICING AT CCINKY.NET/MINISTRIES/CAMP/WAKONDA-HO

Thank you, campers, counselors, and directors, for an amazing 2025. We look forward to seeing you "In the Wilderness" at camp in 2026.



NEW CHURCH MINISTRY



The Work of Christmas is Year-Round

*Rev. Chloe Peacock Specht
Minister to New Church Ministry*

Merry Christmas from all your friends at New Church Ministry! During this season as we are meditating on “the work of Christmas,” I am so thankful for everyone who helps us do the work of loving one another through our New Churches. Because the work of Christmas doesn’t just occur on Christmas Day or during Advent; the work of Christmas is a 365-day-a-year project.

The work of Christmas is feeding our neighbors. The work of Christmas is protecting and advocating for the marginalized. The work of Christmas is building bridges wherever divides exist. The work of Christmas is continuing to gather around Christ’s Table, even when our world feels chaotic and scary. The work of Christmas is our living faith. By definition, the work of Christmas is unfinished because the work is always ongoing. Our theme Scripture is Philippians 1:6 which says: “I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Jesus Christ” (NRSVUE). As Christ carries on his work in us, so must we carry on our mission in the world.

New Church Ministry has had a beautiful year. [Forest Church](#) launched in the spring, and [New Life in Christ Christian Church](#) graduated from the New Church process and became an officially chartered congregation. When you give to Pentecost Offering, you support our young congregations across Kentucky. And when you give to the Christmas Offering, you support the Region as a whole, which is an undeniable part of New Church Ministry’s crucial network of support and resources. You are a part of the ministry of all of our New Churches when you support us through giving to special offerings, through your prayers, and through your shared mission with us as Disciples to be a movement of wholeness in a fragmented world. Thank you for doing the work of Christmas all year long, my friend!

As always, our New Church Ministry Team in Kentucky is open for clergy and lay leaders to join us and help support the work of New Church Ministry across the region. If you are interested in joining our team or if you are feeling a holy nudge to start a new church, send Rev. Chloe an email (chloe@ccinky.net). There’s always room at the New Church table!



New Life in Christ Christian Church celebrated becoming an officially chartered congregation on September 11th. Pictured here are Rev. Dr. Donald K. Gillett, II, Rev. Chloe Peacock Specht, Rev. Carol Wieger, Rev. Rachel Nance Woehler, Rev. Steven Straub, and Marsha Thornton, Jr.



Rev. Joe Michael is the pastor of Forest Church in the Fort Thomas area of Northern Kentucky. Forest Church is the youngest New Church in the Kentucky region, having just officially launched in March.



Come, Holy Spirit, Come

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

The Kentucky Disciples Women's Ministries have just completed an exciting year of worship, fellowship, and in-depth spiritual reflection! We have worked this year on recognizing the Holy Spirit within each of us, and allowing the Spirit to do its work.

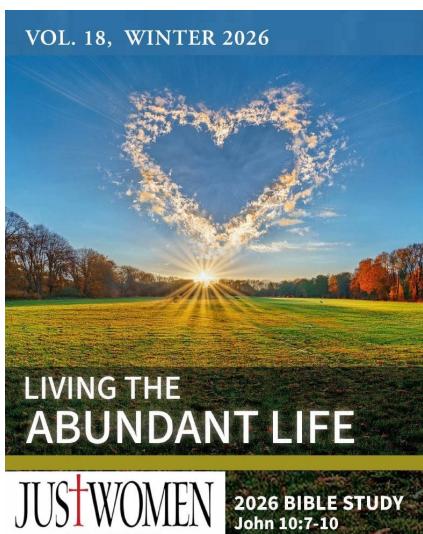
Take time to identify the gift that God has given you and allow the space for the Spirit to grow in it. Nurture each other and allow yourself to be nurtured.

When you find yourself full of doubt or at a crossroad, just say "Come Holy Spirit, Come," and allow.

Continue to work to include ALL our generations in the church. Provide the opportunity and space for all gifts and talents to be shared.

Get involved with what we as Disciples Women are doing:

JUSTICE: *Thursdays in Black* - In every country, gender-based violence is a tragic reality. We all have a responsibility to speak out against this violence. The *Thursdays in Black* campaign, initiated by the World Council of Churches, is simple yet profound. Wear black on Thursdays. Share your Thursdays in Black photos on social media, using the hashtags #ThursdaysinBlack and #WCC. Learn more about this campaign and find resources at www.oikoumene.org/what-we-do/thursdays-in-black.



SPIRITUAL FORMATION: The Disciples Home Missions 2026 *Just Women Bible Study* is available for preorder now! The theme is "Living the Abundant Life" and centers John 10:7-10. Preorder yours at www.discipleshomemissions.org/product/2026-just-women-bible-study-pre-orders/

FELLOWSHIP: We have SEVEN amazing conferences in store for Kentucky Disciples Women in 2026. Please save the dates below and make plans to join in fellowship with this incredible community.

Contact me and share your visions for the future! Where do you see the future of Disciples Women? How do you want to contribute? You can contact me directly at marsha@ccinky.net.



SAVE THE DATE for the 2026 Women's Retreats

- Choral Retreat – February 27-March 1, Louisville
- West Area Spring Conference – March 7, Dawson Springs
- Eastern Kentucky Spring Conference – March 28, Ashland
- Central Kentucky Spring Conference – April 18, Paris
- Quilt/Knit/Craft Retreat – June 29-July 2, Berea
- Fall Retreat - October 23-25, Barren River Resort Park
- Silent Retreat – November 13-15, Loretto

TKC 10

AROUND THE REGION

Save the Date – CCK Regional Assembly 2026

Join us September 17-19, 2026 at First Christian Church, Bardstown for **Pour: Regional Assembly 2026!** Stay tuned for more information in the coming months.

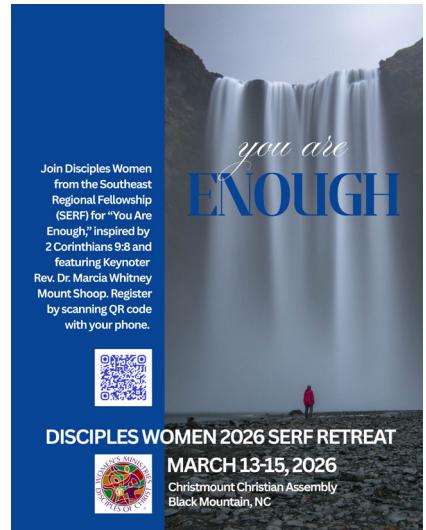
2026 Men's Choral Retreat – January 23-25, 2026



The 2026 Regional Men's Choral Retreat will take place January 23-25, 2026 at First Christian Church, Glasgow. Registration is \$65 – lodging and apparel not included. We will be singing at Sunday morning worship at FCC, Glasgow. To learn more and register, visit www.ccinky.net/disciples-men/. Contact Rick Jouett at RHJOUETT@aol.com with any questions.

Disciples Women 2026 SERF Retreat – March 13-15, 2026

Join Disciples women from the Southeast Regional Fellowship (SERF) for "You Are Enough," inspired by 2 Corinthians 9:8 and featuring Keynoter Rev. Dr. Marcia Whitney Mount Shoop. The retreat will take place March 13-15 at Christmount Christian Assembly in Black Mountain, North Carolina. Register by January 31 at www.alnwfdisciples.org/2026-disciples-women-srf.



Apply to be a 2026 Peace Intern – Due February 1



Disciples Peace Fellowship is now accepting applications for the 2026 Summer Peace Intern Program! The DPF Peace Intern Program provides a paid position (\$3,000 grant for the 12-week program) where DPF takes care of all the scheduling and pays for all of the travel arrangements. It is a life changing experience! DPF Peace Interns spend the summer serving as Ambassadors for Peace and Justice. In addition to serving on Program Staff at Church Camps throughout the United States and Canada, the 2026 Peace Interns will also have alternative service weeks where they work with Disciples Justice Ministry groups, Local Congregational Partners, and/or Ecumenical Peace Organizations to develop specific, pre-defined projects. Learn more and apply at disciplespeace.org/apply



The Good News of Christmas

*Rev. Josh Snyder
Associate Regional Minister*

In his letter to the Philippians, Paul writes, “**T**here has never been the slightest doubt in my mind that the God who started this great work in you would keep at it and bring it to a flourishing finish on the very day Christ Jesus appears.” Philippians 1:6, The Message

What is this great work? It is God drawing us to Him.

In May 1508, Michelangelo began painting the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, completing it in October 1512. Still today, the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel is considered one of the greatest masterpieces of all time. One of the most well-known sections of the painting is “The Creation of Adam,” which shows God reaching out to Adam. Over the centuries, many have offered interpretations of God’s pointing finger not quite reaching Adam’s relaxed hand. I believe that this detail offers us a visual representation of our relationship with God. God reaches for us, but we often do not reach back.

This state of relationship continues throughout Scripture: God reaches out, Adam hides. God reaches out, Jacob fights. God reaches out, Moses refuses. God reaches out, Jonah flees. Many of our Scriptural heroes, in one way or another, relaxed their hand as God reached out to them. At times, we do the same. And yet, God continued to reach out His hand of life, love, and grace. Despite the rejection, God did not stop reaching out. Just as Michelangelo worked over four years, tirelessly painting the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, God continued His work of drawing His people to Him. And one day, God reached out in a new way.

“Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Immanuel.” Isaiah 7:14

God is with us. In, through, and as Jesus, God is with us. In a shining moment, in an act of divine grace, in a way so familiar to each of us, God reached out to the world by entering it.

The good news of Christmas is God with us. The good news of Christmas is God reaching out to us as Jesus so that we can be close. The good news of Christmas is embracing God.

Will we embrace him? We know from Scripture that not everyone who encountered Jesus accepted him. Even on the night of his birth, there was no room for Jesus anywhere. This holy season reminds us of the choice we have: do we react to God’s reach with a relaxed hand? Or do we cling tightly to the Word made flesh? God is here. God’s hand is here, reaching out for you. Take it.

Michelangelo worked long and hard to create a masterpiece that has lasted a thousand lifetimes. God has worked much longer and much harder on His masterpiece: you, and being near you.

God’s desire is to be near us. At creation, God started this great work. God kept at it, and that work was brought to a flourishing finish on the day of Christ Jesus’ birth. We celebrate this good news. God is with us, and we are with God. What a joyous and wondrous work God has completed through our Lord and Savior, the Babe of Bethlehem, Jesus the Christ.

I pray you all have a Blessed Advent and a Merry Christmas.

God bless you.

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2024-2026

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Regional Ministerial Changes

- **Rev. Kevin Patterson**'s ordination was recognized and celebrated at **First Christian Church, Paducah** on August 24.
- **Rev. Robert Silvanik** began as Interim Minister of **Crestwood Christian Church, Crestwood** in September.
- **Rev. Leticia Gray-Overton** was commissioned into ministry at **Second Christian Church, Mayfield** on September 14.
- **Rev. Dr. Rick Loader**'s interim ministry was celebrated by **First Christian Church, Mayfield** on September 14.
- **Rev. Glen Schory** began as Senior Minister of **First Christian Church, Hopkinsville** in October.
- **Rev. Catherine DeMoss** began as the Associate Minister of Community Care at **Central Christian Church, Lexington** on October 26.
- **Rev. Mark Farris** was installed as Minister of **Oxford Christian Church** on October 26.
- **Rev. Jeff Mandrell** concluded his ministry at **Crofton Christian Church** in November.
- **Rev. Marcus Garr**'s ordination was recognized and celebrated at **Seventh Street Christian Church, Paris** on November 9.

*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.*

