

The Virginia Christian

October, 2025

www.ccinva.org/virginia-christian



Dream Seed Grant Report from First Christian Church, Hampton

In September of 2024 First Christian Church, Hampton hosted its first annual family camp. A camp designed specifically for people with disabilities and their families. The camp closed that year with a talent show which planted a seed for a new ministry. That being a choir made up completely of people with disabilities. In December of that year, the choir, known as the Exceptional Disciple Praise Team, was launched. The choir humbly began with 5 vocalists and has now grown to 20. These vocalists come with a variety of disabilities from blindness to developmental delays. Two of our vocalists are unable to speak without stuttering, one did not speak until the age of 5, and many have speech deficiencies. But each member brings their gift of voice to sing praises unto God.

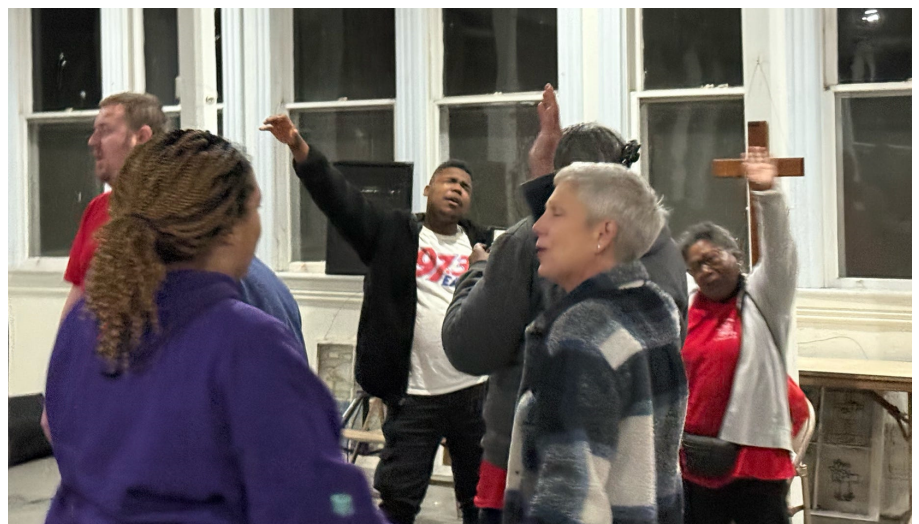
The Exceptional Disciple Praise Team, from this pastor's perspective is a living example of who we are as a denomination. Diverse in many ways, but one in God. The Praise Team is an ecumenical endeavor. Our choir director, an Ordained Deacon in his own church, Cornelius Hodges, comes from a different denomination as do 90% of our vocalists. Yet, each week we all gather at First Christian, Hampton, for choir practice, a fellowship meal, fun, and service. Through this ministry our vocalists have grown in confidence and self-esteem. Although they are a very tight knit group, their inclusiveness is awe inspiring.

This year we were graciously awarded the Dream Seed Grant from the region. This grant allowed us to take our choir members to Craig Springs for a 5-day camp. Although we only took 10 vocalists, the choir was able to lead worship at two locations in Blacksburg. Warm Hearth Village a senior living facility for those suffering with memory issues and Blacksburg Christian Church (DOC). The choir enjoyed making crafts with the residents at Warm Hearth and having pizza party with the congregation at Blacksburg Christian. The gift of song reached beyond the normal barriers of society; as race, age, and economic status melted away, as friendships were made and smiles were shared.

Our camp theme this year was "God In Us" with an intentional focus being hopeful, helpful, and humble. Throughout the camp we used Worship and Wonder stories to draw us into our focus of the day. On Thursday, as Reverend Elaine Austin began our time in the glass house with the story of the good Samaritan, God began to move. Through tears, stories were shared which turned into long conversations between unlikely pairs. Invisible walls fell and healing began to happen. These conversations continued off and on throughout the day as God continued to move. Through silent tears and wailing cries each of us found our own healing that night. We closed the evening with communion amid the glow of the campfire. Forever touched and anxious to return to the mountain next year.

Pastor Debbie Ott

Dream Seed Grant Report from First Christian Church, Hampton



Help Build Hope House in Hillsville Completed

David Finnegan-Hosey, Bon Air Christian Church

A day long awaited for...closing and move-in day for Josh and Amber & family! Winter weather and rain has made work on the house go slowly; however, Josh and Amber have both worked very hard to get it completed and were extremely excited for the big day! They are extremely grateful and excited, and they loved the framed floor plan with all of the names.

Thank you to all of the folks who participated in the wall build for making something that to Josh and Amber seemed impossible (didn't think they could have a home of their own) possible. They and we at Fuller Center for Housing Greater Carroll County Area are grateful!

~ Oliver



Register here: 3 options currently available -

<https://www.ccinva.org/boundarytraining>



Balance Boundary Training is a ministry of Revs Amy and Bill Spangler-Dunning. This is a new take and approach to boundary training for clergy and laity. At the core of the training/experience is the belief that boundary violations occur as a direct relationship to our life being out of balance. As human beings, we constantly adjust to keep our life going and “balanced.” The ways in which we make these adjustments can either be healthy or not so healthy. This boundary training seeks to provide tools and skills to help everyone make solid healthy choices to keep our lives in healthy balance. It is hoped that this proactive approach will reduce the need or frequency of unhealthy boundary behaviors. We accomplish this through a mixture of presentations and interactive activities. This experience is more spiritual retreat than simply a training lecture. We hope that this new approach will enrich the God-Created wholeness of who people are while improving the overall safety and health of clergy and laity throughout the church.

Rev. Amy Spangler-Dunning, LPC (Licensed Professional Counselor) & M.Div (Ordained Minister) brings together the mental health and ministry worlds to provide awareness and tools for maintaining our balance and boundaries in this world. Rev. Bill Spangler-Dunning, M.Div (Ordained Minister) brings his 25 years in regional ministry to connect the “what” with “why” for boundaries for clergy and laity.

Open Ministry Positions

Bethany Christian Church, 3115 Fleming Ave., Roanoke, VA is seeking a part-time bi-vocational minister.

Craig Healing Springs Christian Church, New Castle, VA is seeking a minister.

Doe Run Christian Church, 3536 Doe Run Rd., Rocky Mount, VA is seeking a minister. If you are interested contact me at bsdinvirginia@gmail.com

Hillsville Christian Church, 120 Edgewood Drive, Hillsville, VA is seeking a full-time minister. Reach out to me if you are interested at bsdinvirginia@gmail.com.

Loudon Avenue Christian Church, 730 Loudon Ave., NW, Roanoke, VA 24016 is seeking a full-time minister.

Philippi Christian Church, 17276 General Puller Hwy., Deltaville, VA is seeking an interim pastor. Contact me for more information at bsdinvirginia@gmail.com

Poole Christian Church, 7521 Trinity Church Road., Church Road, VA 23833 seeks a part-time minister (mostly pulpit supply). Contact me for further information at bsdinvirginia@gmail.com

Saumsville Christian Church, Saumsville, VA is seeking a part-time minister. Contact me for more information at bsdinvirginia@gmail.com

Slash Christian Church, located at 11353 Mt. Hermon Rd., Ashland, VA 23005 is looking for a part-time youth minister. Contact Michael Weeks at pastormichael@slashcc.org for more information.

Westside Christian Church, 535 Cherokee Road, Portsmouth, VA



Craig Springs Kitchen Renovation project begins to receive gifts:

Our Goal is 1.2 million and we already have currently in the Kitchen Renovation Fund Approximately 350,000. Over the last months I have learned of individuals, churches, past campers & counselors who have given \$10, \$50, \$1000, \$5000, \$8000 and more to support this project. Something like this is more than a building funding project as it is an affirmation of a ministry by congregations and individuals across the whole region. I have received word that congregations of all sizes are having bake sales while others are putting a set amount in their next year's budget. As of this month, Blacksburg Christian Church voted unanimously to send \$100,000 to support the kitchen renovation project to help enhance and protect the ministry we do at Craig Springs. We give thanks for this gift and all the gifts that have and will come in to help make this long awaited kitchen renovation happen.

We still have a ways to go but the energy and spirit are heading in the right direction. If you or your church would like to contribute/pledge toward this ministry project see the resources below. If it would be helpful to have myself and a small group come and talk about the details and deeper purpose of this project, please reach out to me and I can arrange a presentation. Again, I thank you for all the amazing things God and the people of this region are beginning to experience together. We really are stronger together!

Here is a video that expresses the WHY it matters:

<https://vimeo.com/1078484440/1fb9b918d7>

Downloadable version of brochure:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1CJL71maLEb52elGgSv1zP8OZgBkaeLQy/view>

or online version: <https://indd.adobe.com/view/fce928e4-5ca7-44af-84d6-4e9b3a47b33b>



Regional Mission Trip

We will return to Western NC for our Fourth Annual Multi-Generational Regional Mission Trip in 2026. Sunday, June 14 will be our travel day, and we will return home on Friday, June 9, 2026. Everyone ages 11 years old and above are welcome to be part of this wonderful and transforming week. The cost will be \$290 per participant. Registration will open up on January 15, 2026. We anticipate registration filling up very quickly. If you have questions, please contact the Mission trip co-leaders: Rev. Dr. Jonathan Webster, jonathanwebsterbcc@gmail.com or 434-774-8494 or Diane Clark, dianewclark@hotmail.com or 804-712-5728.



Register Here:

<https://christianchurchinvirginia.regfox.com/2026-launch-young-adult-retreat>



Christian Church in Virginia
Disciples of Christ

NEW CHURCH

**Young Adult Retreat
for High School Seniors to 25 years of age.**

LAUNCH 26

January 9-11, 2026
Location: Massanetta Springs
Conference Center
Harrisonburg, VA

Please arrive between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. on Friday,
January 9. The retreat will conclude at 11 a.m. on
Sunday. All meals are included.

Activities will include worship, bible study, special
presentations, community service, snow tubing at
Massanutten, and a trip to Buc-ee's.

Register Here!

*Includes Snow Tubing at
Local Ski Resort*

Dream Seed Grant

<https://www.ccinva.org/grantministry>

How the Dream Came to be?

(A Tale of Two Stories that form the underlying purpose and focus for the Virginia Regional Dream/Seed Grant Funds)

The Elsie Tease Principle:

Elsie Tease was a member of Battery Park Christian Church in Richmond. She asked for permission and the blessing of her minister and congregational board to take up "above and beyond" offerings from her church to create a fund that would be used to help people move into and/or live at The Summit. A few months later a check was received for \$124.86. It began with an idea and a few small gifts of change (coins mostly) that inspired something beyond the size of those nickels and dimes. This gift became the Seed money for the Care Fund to come alongside people moving into the Summit. **The Elsie Tease Principle is that sometimes a small gift of funds can help a small idea/ministry grow into something larger.**

The Carrie Burwell Principle:

Carrie Burwell was a member at Rocky Mount Christian Church in Rocky Mount. She went to her minister with the nearly unbelievable idea that "We need to build a Home for the Aging in Virginia." Her minister replied to her with words often spoken when ideas are seemingly too large to fully comprehend how they could ever come true, "Well, we will need money for that to happen." So, Carrie Burwell left her house to the Region in her will. This gift became the seed money for The Summit. **The Carrie Burwell Principle is that sometimes ideas for new ways of ministry are so huge and unimaginable that they need a significant starter gift to allow others to believe it is possible.**

The Three Grant Funds and what they are intended to support:

Each year the interest from the designated endowment will be received and utilized with the following purpose:

1. CARE FUND: 40% will be designated for the Care Fund. The Care fund is intended to provide solidarity grants to individuals wishing to move into The Summit. These grants and selection of recipients shall be the ministry and responsibility of the Retirement Center Board.
 2. Congregational Dream/Seed Fund: 40% will be designated for seed money to the Region for offering grants to congregations and other organizations of the Region with a priority given for ministries to or with Seniors, but other ministries may also be given consideration. *
 3. Region & Beyond Dream/Seed Fund: 20% will be designated for other Regional or General Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). *
- Grant Funds 2 & 3 shall be the ministry and responsibility of the Administrative Council of the Region

Criteria for Awarding Funds 2 & 3

1. The grant requestor must hold membership in an organization that has membership in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
2. The requested ministry must have the approval and support of the leadership of that congregation or ministry.
3. The ministry must meet the "Spirit" of being a New or innovated ministry. These funds are not meant to support ongoing budgets.
4. It meets either the "Elsie Tease or Carrie Burwell Principle"
5. Priority will be given to grant requests that address issues related to seniors and/or involve more than one Disciples congregation or ministry.

How to apply for a Dream/Seed Grant:

1. Simply follow this link or use the QR Code to fill out the short but important grant request form.
2. Develop a strong narrative to help the Administrative Committee understand your ministry idea.
3. Get feedback and support from your congregational leaders.
4. Be available to join the Ad-Council meeting to answer questions.
5. Plan to share your work/idea/story with the wider church.

<https://www.ccinva.org/grantministry>



As your congregation's leadership team gets your place of worship ready for fall, make sure that it doesn't let in the cold. But if it does, improve operations with Disciples Church Extension Fund's renovation loans to create more energy efficient facilities. Receive up to \$150,000 USD to:

- Upgrade heating systems
- Replace or repair inefficient windows
- Insulate, rewire, or weatherproof your sanctuary, fellowship hall, and other structures
- Improve operations that makes your community of faith more environmentally friendly

Contact your regional Building and Capital Services Advisor, Rev. Richard Williams, at 317.635.6500 Ext. 2537 and/or rwilliams@disciplescef.org today to care for God's creation!



Whether you're a startup or a well-established congregation, shape the future of your ministry with Disciples Church Extension Fund.

Sign up today for a free initial consultation.

Disciples Church Extension Fund



NOVEMBER 6, 2025
VIRGINIA COUNCIL OF CHURCHES
81st ANNUAL DAY CELEBRATION

With
Keynote Presenter -
REV. DR. CYNTHIA HALE
Founder & Senior Pastor,
Ray of Hope Christian Church,
Decatur, GA

LOCATION:
Wesley Memorial United Methodist Church
1720 Mechanicsville Turnpike
Richmond, VA 23220
Rev. Rodney Hunter, Pastor

10:00AM

Housing Options Are Coming Soon

We will have a day of worship, sistership fellowship and helpshops focusing on engaging, equipping, empowering, envisioning and anti-racism pro-reconciliation.

Register using this QR Code

