Assembly celebrates history, looks towards future

By Emily Martin, staff

Our 25th General Assembly was a celebration of our Church's history. But we didn’t stop there. We also spent time casting a vision for how our Church can grow in the future.

At the Monday dinner, National Convocation shared “Standing on the Promises,” an artistic expression of the ministry’s history, written and adapted by Rev. Monique Crain Spells.

In two workshops, Rev. Drs. Michael Kinnamon and Jan Linn presented their new book Disciples: Who We are and What Holds Us Together, and invited Rev. Lori Tapia, Rev. Dr. Timothy James, and Rev. Chung Seong Kim, leaders of Obra Hispana, National Convocation, and North American Pacific/Asian Disciples respectively, to respond to how the book on Disciples’ identity does and doesn’t reflect the full diversity of our Church.

On Tuesday, Rev. Dr. Rick Lowery, president of the historical society, facilitated “Our Second 50 Years,” a conversation with the outgoing moderator team and GMP Rev. Terri Hord Owens. The leaders discussed their hopes and plans for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) as a new generation of leaders step in.

Tuesday’s worship service celebrated the Merger and Design, the 1969 documents that formed our denomination. The Disciples of Christ Historical Society shared a video full of interviews, photos, and testimonials from Church leaders, reflecting on our story.

That service featured two powerful sermons. First, Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Hale, senior pastor of Ray of Hope...
Christian Church in Decatur, GA, explored the hard work of unity-building, and reminded the Church that we’re called – not to be peacekeepers – but peacemakers.

Hale was followed by Rev. Mark Briley, lead pastor of Harvard Avenue Christian Church in Tulsa, OK. Rev. Briley spoke about the trio of death, burial, and resurrection, encouraging the Church to not get stuck in the stiffness of rigor mortis, remembering that “hope is a group effort.”

After worship on Tuesday, former General Minister and Presidents Rev. Drs. Sharon E. Watkins and Richard Hamm led a discussion on “The Design at 100.” Both leaders spoke about the ways the Design is unique, as well as how we could adapt it for the 21st century.

In these formal conversations, and in informal ones, Disciples discovered we have a lot to celebrate. We also reminded ourselves that we have plenty of work to do as we continue our work to live into our call to be a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world.

Founding documents

The Merger Agreement between the National Christian Missionary Convention and the International Convention of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) was adopted in 1969, formalizing the relationship between the two organizations to serve the whole Church together.

As part of this agreement, the National Convocation was created with an administrative secretary which also acts as associate general minister, and three former NCMC positions were created in the new Church: in evangelism (now held by Reginald W. Calhoun, Sr., Executive for Evangelism & Congregational Transformation), education (now held by Sheila Spencer, Director of Christian Education/Faith Formation), and women’s ministry (now held by Chesla Nickelson, Program Director for Disciples Women).

The Design is our denomination’s governing document, which defines our covenantal relationship between the three expressions of our Church: congregations, regions, and general ministries. It also outlines the responsibilities for the general board and requirements for the General Assembly.

Merger took time

1917: National Christian Missionary Convention organized and approved as an auxiliary of the International Convention of Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ)

1935: R. H. Peoples hired as National Field Worker by UCMS, precursor of today’s Disciples Home Missions and Division of Overseas Ministries

1943: R. H. Peoples’ call for merger of NCMC and International Convention

1945: Emmett Dickson hired as Executive Secretary of NCMC

1947: Lorenzo Evans hired as Director of Christian Education by NCMC

1949: Charles Webb, Sr. hired as Director of Field Work and Evangelism by NCMC

1960: Merger of staff and services of NCMC with UCMS

1969: Merger of NCMC with International Convention

For other stories on the Merger, search Disciples News Service archives.
Abide was theme of worship in Des Moines

Some would say “you just have to be there” to understand the glory of worship combining more than 3,000 Disciples singing, stellar sermons and scripture made plain in four languages. (See below for recording information.)

The richness of music from Tongan drumming to familiar hymns, gospel classics and more contemporary praise songs wove throughout the hall. A full choir, praise ensemble, and soloists led the people gathered.

Sermons were challenging. Saturday evening, Rev. Teresa “Terri” Hord Owens, general minister and president, speaking of us as vines mentioned in our theme scripture (John 1:1-5), reminded us we need to be connected so we don’t dry out. Vines cannot grow alone, so we must work together and just as vines need structure to grow, so we need the structure of the Word and prayer to grow spiritually. She also cautioned that, just as the surrounding foliage (“canopies”) serves to protect, it can also kill the fruit. We must be careful that we focus on the fruit and not allow surrounding structures and human systems to smother the fruit of our work as the body of Christ.

Sunday evening, Rev. Dr. Nancy Gowler, senior pastor at First Christian Church of Puyllup, WA, and selected from the call for sermons last fall, challenged us to lace up our walking shoes and follow Jesus to see where he abides, and he always abides where there is a need. This was followed on Monday evening by Pastor Ruben del Pilar of the Community Worship Center of Gardena, CA, who showed us through the example of his “lem-orange” tree that what may look good from a distance may need pruning to bear fruit. He put it this way – “If there’s no fruit, you gotta check the root.” He also defined abiding as waiting in expectation, not a passive, comfortable place.

On Tuesday evening, the Disciples of Christ Historical Society shared a new video in celebration of the 50 years since the Merger and beginning of The Design, our governing document. Rev. Dr. Cynthia Hale of Ray of Hope Christian Church in Decatur, GA, called on the Church to continue the struggle to be one. She said, “We are one. Why do we make it so hard?” Rev. Mark Briley of Harvard Avenue Christian Church in Tulsa, OK, looked to the future reminding us of the process – DBR – death, burial and resurrection, not rigor mortis.

Finally, Wednesday morning, Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II of Greenleaf Christian Church in Goldsboro, NC and co-leader of the Poor People’s Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival, sent us out to raise up the rejected who are Christ’s cornerstones.

Among these powerful words were creative moments of prayer and praise. Saturday evening a prayer was led that sent blessings on the people in all four corners of the world with supplicants turning in place and raising hands to the four corners. On Sunday evening, soil from all over the Upper Midwest region was brought to the communion table in thanks for God’s blessings. Monday evening offered an opportunity for quiet reflection and prayer with regional ministers stationed all around the worship space.

All the worship services are available via Vimeo at disciplesga.org.

The drummers from First Tongan Church in West Valley City, UT, opened and closed the General Assembly with joy and praise. (Photo by Rev. Glenn Davis)

Tuesday evening’s communion was presided over by the new moderator team. L to R: Rev. Dr. Nestor Gomez, second vice moderator; Clyde Hunt, moderator elect; Rev. Belva Brown Jordan, moderator; Rev. Stephanie Kendell, first vice moderator. (Photo by Rev. Glenn Davis)

Photo by Rev. Baek Hee Kim, NAPAD staff
Local Mission Wrap Up

By Kurt Gwartney

The rich Iowa soil, tended by eight volunteers from Central Christian Church in Wooster, OH during General Assembly, will help produce tons of vegetables for Des Moines-area food banks. The fresh, locally grown produce from the Faith and Grace Garden is a welcome addition to food pantry staples.

The Central Christian Church team had been looking for a mission project outside of their hometown when their lead organizer, Ryan Mathys, was looking at the General Assembly website. He noticed the mission projects available and contacted Ashley Muff, one of the local missions committee chairs.

Mathys says he told her, “Whatever you have, sign us up. We’ll have eight of us.”

The team wanted to be a part of General Assembly but, more than that, they wanted to come and help with mission projects around Des Moines.

That’s no surprise considering Central Christian Church members are used to monthly mission projects and an every-other-year mission trip outside of Ohio.

“We like to do an outside-of-our-area mission project to get out of the state to stretch ourselves, go do something different,” Mathys says.

Central Christian Church members also presented information about one of their ongoing mission projects as part of General Assembly.

“We have a mission opportunity we presented at MissionFest of ‘Cleanse My Soul,’ where we provide cleaning products for people in the community,” says Merri Pycraft.

Pycraft says the team decided on the gardening project because they had two members who are landscapers. “It was more down their alley than making t-shirts or tying blankets,” she says.

But there were many other General Assembly participants who did create t-shirt bags and blankets as part of the local missions inside the exhibit hall.

G. Clague from Des Moines was a first-timer at turning old t-shirts into reusable cloth carrying bags.

“I’m retired and always looking for ways to help in the community,” he says.

By the end of General Assembly there were piles of t-shirt bags ready to go to Central Iowa Shelter & Services (CISS) to help the 2,000 people served by the shelter each year.

Blankets woven and tied by volunteers for local missions filled a table before they were packed for delivery to the Child Saving Institute and nursing homes across the region.

“The blankets are a symbol for either the children or senior citizens that receive them that they have not been forgotten,” says JoAnn Thomas, who coordinated the blanket program.

Local missions volunteers also donated blood, helped with food sorting at the Food Bank of Iowa, served a meal at the Central Iowa Shelter & Services, provided a variety of help at the Iowa Homeless Youth Shelter, and worked on several other activities, helping share the love of Christ across Des Moines.

T’s become bags to carry help

General Assembly attendees transformed gently, pre-owned t-shirts into bags for Central Iowa Shelter & Services (CISS) to serve the 2,000 people who are served by the shelter each year.

“This is living out our life as Disciples,” says Amy Caldwell from Washington, PA. “We’re helping out doing what we can for other people.”

G. Clague from Des Moines was busy cutting and cutting and tying a white t-shirt into a reusable, cloth bag.

“I’m retired and always looking for ways to help in the community,” he says. This was also the first time he ever made something like this.

The bags made at Abide 2019 will be used in the CISS clothes closet.

Making the bags does not require sewing, so this is a project that can be completed with t-shirts and scissors.

According to its website, the CISS closet has clothes for adult men and women of all sizes as well as warmer clothing and winter accessories during cold weather. The clothing closet is open to anyone in the community in need of clothes.
MissionFest at General Assembly this year embodied the idea that the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada is living out Christ’s mission in visible and tangible ways. Over 30 different ministries were highlighted through their presence in the Opening Ceremony on July 20th, at their booths in the exhibit hall, and through their formal presentations.

MissionFest sought to encourage connection and collaboration among individuals and congregational communities. Some MissionFest participants, like Connect Fort Worth, Building Hope, and First Christian Church of Texas City, TX offer the opportunity for group mission work and education. Other ministries, like Collective Cause Partnerships (through Missiongathering Charlotte), Florence Christian Church’s Shower Ministry, and Blue Valley Christian Church @ Silvercrest shared their ministries other congregations could learn from, adapt and modify based on the needs of their community.

Rev. Dr. Andy Mangum, regional minister in the Southwest Region, facilitated the presentations held throughout General Assembly. Mangum writes, “We heard about bold leaps of faith and sputtering starts and stops. We heard about the way God uses willing hands and feet to manifest the body of Christ in the face real human need.”

In all of the presentations, listeners heard and saw the passion for these ministries. Presenters inspired others to connect and learn and encouraged collaboration and cooperation among individuals and congregations.

If you missed the presentations or want to learn more about the different ministries represented at MissionFest, you can find recordings of the presentations on the Southwest Region’s YouTube channel.

Many thanks go to Mangum for providing presence and leadership, Shannon and Elaine Lawrence for hosting, Upper Midwest staff and ministry interns for media equipment, West Des Moines Christian Church for poster printing (used in the Opening Ceremony at seen at their booths), and Bill Spangler-Dunning, Allen Harris, Joan Bell-Haynes, Warren Lynn, Nadine Burton, and Lee Hull Moses for behind the scenes planning and implementation.

Donating life

By Kurt Gwartney

For Eric Nance Woehler, being a blood donor has a direct connection to his faith as a Christian and a member of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

“Christ gives us the opportunity to choose life all the time and this is like one of the most clear ways of choosing lifegiving activities to invest yourself in,” he says.

Nance Woehler, who is from Madisonville, KY, and attends both First Christian Church and Potluck Church there, says the opportunity to give at Abide 2019 came at the perfect time because it was on his to do list back home.

“This is much more up my alley than sitting in a session,” he says. “I feel like this is a good thing for me to do because there are many people who aren’t able to give as easily.”

Becca Caldwell of Washington, Pa. donated blood for the first time at the 2019 General Assembly. She recently turned 16 years old and donated with her mother.

For the Caldwells, giving blood “is what you do for other people.” The blood bank in their hometown recently closed due to low donor numbers, so donating at General Assembly saved them an hourlong drive to give where they live.


MissionFest brings creativity, energy to exhibit hall

By Allison Ruari

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StoryWagen: A Neighborhood Listening & Resource Center is a mobile digital story telling booth also providing training on Spiritual Health Issues such as trauma informed care, moral injury, resiliency, grief and bereavement.
Highlights of General Assembly business

A resolution on listening brought by the members of the General Youth Council. A “full communion” (not merger) agreement with The United Church of Canada. Formation of a new region. Topics ranging from Cuba to intimate partner violence and education about transgender issues to migration. These were but a few of the items brought to the business sessions of the 2019 General Assembly.

These business items can be read in their entirety at ga.disciples.org/business.

Business Items from the 2019 General Assembly

Reports received

GA-1901 General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) including the Office of General Minister and President
GA-1902 Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries
GA-1903 Christian Board of Publication
GA-1904 Christian Church Foundation
GA-1905 Church Extension Financial & Missional Resources (Disciples Church Extension Fund/Hope Partnership for Missional Transformation and New Church Ministries)
GA-1906 Council on Christian Unity
GA-1907 Disciples of Christ Historical Society
GA-1908 Disciples Home Missions
GA-1909 Disciples Women
GA-1910 Division of Overseas Ministries/Global Ministries
GA-1911 Higher Education & Leadership Ministries
GA-1912 National Benevolent Association
GA-1913 National Convocation
GA-1914 North American Pacific/Asian Disciples
GA-1915 Pension Fund of the Christian Church
GA-1916 Healthcare Benefit Trust
GA-1933 Council of Colleges and Universities and Council on Theological Education

GA-1920 Report on 2017 General Assembly Resolutions
GA-1921 Report from the Social Witness Task Force

Operational, Policy and Organizational Resolutions

GA-1917 Creation of a New Region in Montana and the Northwest (Change in regional boundaries)
GA-1919 Report of the General Assembly Committee – Time and Place (2023)
GA-1922 Resolution on Full Communion between The United Church of Canada and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada
GA-1923 Recommended Language for Prevention of Harassment for General Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
GA-1924 Resolution to Celebrate the Formation of New Congregations and Continue the Collective Commitment to Make Disciples
GA-1931 Report of the General Nominating Committee

Sense-of-the-Assembly Resolutions adopted

Please note: These resolutions were adopted by the majority of participants in the 2019 General Assembly business meetings and are intended to speak TO other expressions of the Church, not FOR individuals, congregations, regions or ministries.

GA-1925 Addressing the State of Global Forced Migration
GA-1926 Spirit of Active Listening
GA-1927 Concerning the Reopening of the U.S. Embassy in Cuba, Ending the U.S. Embargo Against the Island, and Promoting a Constructive Relation Between Both Countries
GA-1928 A Call to See and Respond to the Crisis of Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence
GA-1929 An Invitation to Education for Welcoming and Receiving the Gifts of Transgender and Gender-Diverse People
GA-1930 On Women and Just Peacemaking
GA-1932 Acknowledging the Covenantal Affiliation of Tougaloo College and Reaffirming our Commitment to Higher Education
GA-1934 Declaring that Impartially Providing for the Basic Human Needs of Others is a Virtue Consistent with Disciples Tradition
GA-1935 Concerning Steep Reductions in Overall Refugee Resettlement Arrivals to the United States

Colorful paper signs representing the new congregations started as part of the 2020 Vision were held up in celebration of surpassing the goal of planting 1,000 faith communities.
MISSION PROJECTS
• 190 blankets for Child Saving Institute (Omaha), Good Samaritan Care Center (Red Oak, IA), Fleur Heights Care Center (Des Moines), Northshire Care Center (Spencer, IA), First Christian Church (Minneapolis), and First Christian Church (Davenport, IA). The congregations will be sharing with helping agencies in their communities.
• 340 T-shirt bags to Central Iowa Shelter Services, a homeless shelter.
• 31 different individuals participated in the off-site mission activities. There was a group of 8 that participated in 9 different activities.
• 41 units of blood donated.
• 410 hours of preparation/planning time.
• 171 hours of volunteer time from 22 Local Arrangements Committee members to support missions during the event.
• 4 different gardening activities off site in addition to sorting donations and other hands-on work.

OFFERINGS RECEIVED
• $17,187 Saturday’s 13th Check of the Pension Fund.
• $10,465 Sunday’s Disciples Mission Fund.
• $13,613 Monday’s Week of Compassion fund.
• $13,676 Tuesday’s Reconciliation Ministry fund.
The offering page on the General Assembly site is still actively accepting donations.
• $2,015 in grocery gift cards collected by Disciples Women for trafficked women and girls.

MUSIC
• 62 choir members.
• 6 choir rehearsals.
• 12 hallway music sessions.
• 10+ musicians leading worship at various times.

REGISTRATION
• 2,723 Adult Registration.
• 28 Children 3 mos - 4 yrs.
• 67 Children K – 5th grade.
• 144 Youth (Jr and Sr High).
• 139 Young adults.
• 135 Seminarians.
• 3,236 total.

OTHER TRIVIA
• 2,400+ tweets tagged with #Abide2019 between Saturday and Wednesday afternoon.
• 9 shuttle buses and 18 drivers (plus a zoo run for the children of 2 buses and 2 drivers.)
Education at the General Assembly

Thanks to the participation of several general ministries and other groups across the life of the Church, education took a new turn in 2019.

One of the newer innovations was the addition of classes that could help clergy maintain their standing. To accommodate these more extensive trainings, some classes were longer than the usual 90 minutes allowing for a deeper dive into a subject.

The Local Arrangements Committee helped expand the offerings by inviting two local groups, one offering a refugee simulation and the other offering a hunger simulation. Stories on these appear elsewhere in this newsletter and on the Disciples.org website.

There was also a class on investing offered in Spanish as well as a bilingual class on church leadership.

The older youth were offered workshop tracks of their own on subjects from leadership to the arts and social issues.

Larry Morris of the National Benevolent Association led the session asking “Should I Start a Church or a Nonprofit?”, one of NBA’s most popular sessions led alongside New Church Ministries.

Participants in the “Letting Go to Start Something New” workshop presented by Hope Partnership for Missional Transformation were able to share with each other some of their thoughts on what they were hearing.

Global Ministries Awards of Affirmation presented at General Assembly

Global Ministries is pleased to announce the following Awards of Affirmation that were presented during the Global Ministries International Dinner at the 2019 General Assembly in Des Moines.

Africa
Reverend Dr. Francois-David (“Franck”) Ekofo Bonyeku of the Community of Disciples of Christ in Congo was recognized for his lifelong prophetic witness.

Mission Personnel
Reverends Joan and Allan Eubank were recognized for their almost 40 years of service in Thailand beginning in 1958.

Southern Asia
Reverend Dr. Mery Kolimon, Moderator of the Protestant Church in Timor (GMIT) in Indonesia, was recognized for her work enabling GMIT to be a sanctuary for victims of human trafficking, domestic abuse, and forced migration.

Latin America and the Caribbean
Reverend Daniel Romero of the Daniel F. Romero Center in San Diego, California and Tijuana, Mexico, was recognized for his participation in creating the general design of Global Ministries, as well as for his activism in defending the rights of migrants and asylum seekers at the U.S./Mexico border.

Middle East
Al-Ahli Arab Hospital, a ministry of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem in Gaza, was recognized for its crucial ministry of healthcare in one of the most densely populated and de-developed places in the world.

Global Ministries
Jim Moos was recognized for his co-leading role in Global Ministries and his commitment to justice, peace, and the reconciliation of all of God’s people. Global Ministries is grateful for his pastoral servant care of international partners and their ministries.

Europe
Perichoresis, a ministry of the Evangelical Church of Greece, was recognized for its courageous and humane response to the influx of refugees to Greece since its establishment in 2016.

East Asia and the Pacific
Dansalan College, an educational ministry of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines, was recognized for its resilience and dedication to carry on its important bridge-building mission to educate all of God’s children.

Global Ministries gives thanks for the mission and witness of these awardees and celebrates their ministries.
Excellent sales at the CBP/Chalice Press bookstore in Des Moines confirmed Disciples’ passion for resources about Disciples, congregational and pastoral leadership, Christian living, and social justice issues.

“For the past 14 years, General Assembly bookstores have been managed by other companies. This year, CBP/Chalice Press managed our own store – and to say it was successful is a huge understatement,” said Chalice Press’s Brad Lyons. “We exceeded our sales goal for the four-day event early on the third day. Of the 50 boxes shipped from our warehouse to Des Moines, only four boxes were shipped back. Clearly Disciples were thrilled to have a bookstore focused specifically on Disciples resources, and they want to support their denominational publishing ministry.”

Disciples: Who We Are and What Holds Us Together, by Michael Kinnamon and Jan Linn, was the bookstore’s best seller. Launched at General Assembly, Disciples sold out before noon Monday, and another quick-turn print run was approved from the display hall. Another new book recording solid sales was Seeking God’s Design: Disciples’ Quest for Unity and Wholeness (edited by Disciples historians Richard H. Lowery, Lawrence A.Q. Burnley, D. Duane Cummins, and Peter M. Morgan, with Foreword by Teresa Hord Owens).

Book signings helped produce strong sales for America’s Holy Ground: 61 Faithful Reflections on Our National Parks by Brad Lyons and Bruce Barkhauer; Derek Penwell’s Outlandish: An Unlikely Messiah, a Messy Ministry, and the Call to Mobilize; Timothy Charles Murphy’s Sustaining Hope in an Unjust World: How to Keep Going When You Want to Give Up; and Leah Gunning Francis’s Ferguson and Faith: Sparking Leadership and Awakening Community.

Chalice Press author William J. Barber II offered a rousing sermon in Wednesday morning’s worship propelling Disciples to do God’s work to change the world.

CBP/Chalice Press also launched a new Annual Fund for Disciples who want to support the ministry’s work through tax-deductible gifts, learn more about the press’ operations, and receive special perks with membership. Visit chalicepress.com/annualfund for more information.
The Local Arrangements Committee partnered up with two local organizations offering simulations for assembly participants. One, led by Linda Wolf and Vihn Nguyen, explored the challenges of being a refugee in the United States. The other, led by staff from the Des Moines Area Religious Council, helped participants understand the challenges faced by the poor in Iowa.

Upper Midwest Region volunteer Angela Dunston Johnson attended both workshops as well as one on welcoming immigrants and wrote about her experiences. (You can find them on the Disciples News Service page on disciples.org.) Among her discoveries were constraints that those with higher incomes and longer residency might not think about, such as aligning trips to food pantries with bus schedules and the stress that separation can inflict. There is also the sense that, even for second generations of immigrant families, they don’t really belong in the culture of their parents or the one they live in now.

For first-person stories, photos and action items on all experiences, go to disciples.org and look in the Disciples News Service story entitled “Experiencing otherness.”

As part of the simulation, “refugee families” were allotted a “cell” and supplies similar to those given to U.S. refugees during processing.
During the 2019 General Assembly, the Christian Church Foundation presented the Harry T. Ice Distinguished Service Award to Ms. Edith Kelly-Green of Memphis, TN and Mr. Nathan and Mrs. Claudia Higginbotham of Houston, TX. The Harry T. Ice Distinguished Service Award honors excellence in philanthropy within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Recipients demonstrate personal generosity, leadership in philanthropy, and a love of and commitment to the whole church.

The Foundation also presented the James P. Johnson Stewardship Award to First Christian Church of Minneapolis, MN. The James P. Johnson Stewardship Award recognizes a congregation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) that has demonstrated leadership, creativity, and integrity in answering God’s call to faithful stewardship, including the faith discipline involved in the stewardship of accumulated resources.

In addition to awarding the Harry T. Ice and James P. Johnson Awards, the Christian Church Foundation helped lead six workshops for individuals, congregations, and other ministries to learn how they can be the best steward of their resources and move money to mission. Rev. Dr. Gary Kidwell, Christian Church Foundation President, reported to the General Assembly and shared with everyone gathered that $20.7 million dollars were distributed for mission and ministry in 2018. The strength of the Christian Church Foundation is a testimony to the generosity of Disciples. Every gift received and every investment entrusted to the Christian Church Foundation represents the legacy and witness of faithful disciples.

Join us in Jacksonville!

We invite you to join the fundraisers, development officers, pastors, and other leaders of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) at the 2020 Disciples Development Conference! We will gather January 14-16, in Jacksonville, Florida. Our keynote speaker this year is Lani Starkey, a nationally-recognized philanthropic planning expert.

Registration will be available at christianchurchfoundation.org in August.
Disciples Church Extension Fund (DCEF) has recognized the innovative use of Holy Place for mission and ministry with the inaugural presentation of its new INNOVA award. The ceremony was held on the first night of the 2019 General Assembly. During the Branch and Vine Dinner hosted by DCEF, Hope Partnership and New Church Ministry, the stories of all five nominated congregations were told via video presentation to an audience of nearly 400.

Following the video presentation, two award winners were announced surprising nominees and event attendees alike. Casa View Christian Church and Iglesia Mision La Roca each received the INNOVA statuette and a $3,000 cash award. The other nominees received a certificate of recognition and $1,000 to aid in their ministries. To view all five INNOVA nominee videos, visit https://youtu.be/12eTcBNHHJU

To learn more, call 800.274.1883 (866.534.1949 en español), or visit disciplescef.org, hopepmt.org or newchurchministry.org.

Casa View Christian Church of Dallas, TX provides both church- and community-transforming resources like a Free Children’s Closet, Community Meals Mission and Free Community Events.

Triumphant Temple of Praise Christian Church of Flint, MI converted a nearby bingo hall to worship space with the help of the Michigan Region and DCEF, now serving the elderly and young alike.

Greenleaf Christian Church of Goldsboro, NC repurposed an abandoned grocery store and restaurant to serve as home base for the Christian Academy and Childcare Center, the STEM-focused Project Y.E.S.S. Academy, and Faith Estates - housing lots for first time home-buyers.

Glendale Mission & Ministry Center, Glendale, Ariz., a new ministry sprouted from the campus of the former First Christian Church with the help of the Arizona Region and DCEF to house a food and clothing pantry, local not-for-profits, a Head Start program, and three nesting congregations.

Iglesia Mision La Roca of south Dallas, TX raised enough money to purchase land with the help of the Disciples Men of the Southwest Region and received DCEF’s first ever Holy Places grant. Members now volunteer at nearby schools and with the Neighborhood Watch Association.

Known by our Missions and Ministry Partners

The mission of Disciples Church Extension Fund (DCEF) is to help churches plan and finance their Holy Places. We do this by making low interest church loans that are funded through investment vehicles offered to Disciples congregations, individuals and church-related organizations. DCEF also offers building and capital fundraising services.

The mission of Hope Partnership Services is to provide leadership development and congregational revisioning services to churches in transition. These services, including New Beginnings and the Epiphany process, are now available through DCEF at a reduced cost making them more accessible to the congregations that need them most.

The mission of New Church Ministry is to support the efforts of the local regional and area new church movement by assessing, training, and coaching new church planters. A variety of NCM resources aid this goal, including Leadership Academy and the webinar series New Church Hacks.

To learn more, call 800.274.1883 (866.534.1949 en español), or visit disciplescef.org, hopepmt.org or newchurchministry.org.
Disciples Home Missions deeply involved in General Assembly

Disciples Home Missions continued the tradition of selecting a recipient for the Distinguished Leadership Award. This year it was awarded to Rev. Kaye Edwards, former director of Family and Children's Ministries for Disciples Home Missions. Lisa Engelken, the Children Worship & Wonder Coordinator, shared about Rev. Edwards's passion for her ministry and her advocacy for the voices of children being heard. The reception also featured the gifts and music of the General Youth Council.

Disciples Home Missions offered Ministry Spotlights in the booth. President Sotello Long wanted this experience to give attendees the opportunity to hear about the multiple ministries connected with Disciples Home Missions and Disciples Women. Ministry Spotlights included presentations from Disciples Chaplains, Blue Theology (a new DHM mission station), Urban Spirit, Disciples Men, Refugee and Immigration Ministries, Ministries Across Generations and more. There were also opportunities to follow up with Rev. Yvonne D McCoy on GA -1928 - A Call to See and Respond to the Crisis of Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence. Disciples Peace Fellowship proudly awarded the Will Wittkamper Peace Award to Rita Nakishima Brock and Minta Colburn in recognition of their lifetime commitments to peace and justice.

Disciples Home Missions and Disciples Women staff were connected to 18 workshops that offered support to all of the ministries. The workshops ranged from “Bringing all Ages Together in Worship and at Home” to “Mission as Gifted Relationships”. Elders Training was offered by Leadership Initiative Team (LIT) and Disciples Women offered leadership insights through their “Bridle, Baton and Building Blocks” workshop. We also partnered with other Disciples justice ministry partners at the post-assembly rally at the Iowa Capitol which took place immediately following the conclusion of the General Assembly.
Disciples stand for justice at vigil, rally

Rev. Sharon Stanley Rea, director of Disciples Home Missions’ Refugee and Immigration Ministries, speaks to the crowd assembled at the candlelight vigil to pray for grace-filled solutions to the ongoing crisis faced by migrant children and families. (photo by Rev. Baek Hee Kim)

At Sunday night’s Candlelight Vigil for Children Detained and Who Died in Custody, Disciples gathered to remember and pray for families grieving the loss of their migrant children who were seeking protection in the U.S. (photo by Rev. Baek Hee Kim)

On Wednesday, many Disciples traveled from the Iowa Events Center to nearby Capitol Hill Lutheran Church to make signs. Rev. Dr. Dietra Wise Baker, NBA’s program coordinator for advocacy and activism (left). (photo by Jordan Whitt)

Local organization and Disciples justice ministry leaders led participants in prayers of repentance for the many ways society – and churches in particular – have sided with injustice. Pictured are Rev. Carol Devine and Rev. Scott Hardin-Nieri of Green Chalice, a shared ministry of Disciples Home Missions and the Kentucky region. (photo by Emily Martin)

General Minister and President Rev. Terri Hord Owens and Rev. Dr. William J. Barber, II (Wednesday morning’s Assembly preacher and co-chair of the Poor People’s Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival) both spoke to the crowd, encouraging participants to continue justice work in their communities and form networks around issues they value. Here, Rev. Owens is holding a sign from Disciples Public Presence, a ministry of the Upper Midwest region, and online justice network. (photo by Jordan Whitt)
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