Disciples Women’s Ministries is a general ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of the United States and Canada that creates avenues for women to seek renewal and ministry opportunities by and for women around the world. Since 1874, Disciples Women’s Ministries has worked to grow awareness of the need for women’s missions and ministry worldwide. We accomplish this through programming focused on justice, spiritual formation and renewal, and leadership development. These programmatic pillars are how Disciples Women’s Ministries works to help women to develop a sense of personal responsibility for the mission of the Church in the world. Based on Micah 6:8, Disciples Women’s Ministries is a conduit for diverse connections empowering each woman to find her voice and live out her call.

Disciples Women’s Ministries is thriving and is visible in the programming and DW gatherings that have taken place over the past year. While the world continues to navigate the effects of the global COVID-19 pandemic while finding ways to settle into some semblance of normalcy, I am happy to report that Disciples Women retreats and conferences are resuming as in-person or hybrid events across regions. In 2022, I delivered sixteen (16) keynotes and found these touchpoints to be excellent opportunities to engage Disciples Women up close and personally as they shared their experience
with this ministry. I am pleased to continue connecting with women this way and look forward to time together in the new year. Partnerships with other ministries continue to be the lifeblood and strength of Disciples Women, which include but are not limited to the following:

- Continued covenantal relationship with Disciples Home Missions partnering to provide robust, impactful ministry opportunities for Disciples.

- Global Ministries: Shared Resource Development Associate hired to strategize, organize, and implement a new fundraising and development plan to strengthen Disciples Women’s fundraising and development framework. Woman-to-Woman Worldwide was canceled in 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, this journey, designed for women to learn from women of faith in other countries, is slated to take place in 2023, focusing on intersections of peace in Japan and South Korea.

- National Benevolence Association (NBA): Educational resources on BIPOC mental health, justice issues, faith-based organizing, and community engagement in workshop and webinar format.

- Office of the General Minister and President: Collaborating with OGMP, NBA, National Convocation, and other general units of the Church to create peer groups, panels, and theological reflection on the issue of abortion.

  Based on Lamentations 3:19-24, the 2023 edition of Just Women Bible Study, Fanning the Flames of Hope, navigates the tension of being stuck between leaning into the hope of Christ, who lights the darkness, and the reality of our present circumstance, which often feels dark and isolated. The rising cost of printing continued supply-chain disruptions for paper and ink, as well as skyrocketing shipping rates, present the opportunity to strategize how to offer this study in digital format in the future. This year, we contracted a new designer to lead the design process giving the survey, which includes thirteen (13) lessons and feature articles, a fresh, new look.

  The Disciples Women Endowment Fund distributed $27,690 in grant funds in 2022 to support projects that edify women through leadership development, education, spiritual formation, and outreach initiatives. This grant is distributed twice a year (March and October) and is designed to assist individuals, ministries, or congregations that identify as members of the Christian Church Disciples of Christ with their efforts where women are concerned.

  Disciples Women possesses an excellent body of work engaging the issue of human trafficking that should not die on the vine. To that end, Disciples Women will expand its standing initiative focus
from human trafficking to gender-based violence, addressing domestic violence, human trafficking, rape/sexual assault, and the like through local mission support, training, and resources. Additionally, we will continue partnering with the World Council of Churches via Global Ministries/Division of Overseas Ministries to participate in the Thursdays in Black Campaign and connect domestic mission efforts by rebooting the Women’s Action Web and participating in the IDWM service project.

This year, resources will be available for Disciples Women, including print and live and pre-recorded virtual events focusing on issues that impact, such as mental health wellness for women, building strong teams for DW ministry, and rest as a form of spiritual healing. For example, we are launching a 5th Wednesday Worship series that will be available online.

As an additional layer of constituent engagement, the Women’s Resource Committee will begin meeting in 2023 to bring a diverse collection of voices to the table that will act in consultation with the Disciples Women Executive Director on various matters of the ministry.

We are grateful for creative partnerships and the ability to operate in a way that creates financial buffers for this ministry. For example, we released a part-time staff person back to DHM. Additionally, an in-kind partnership with Global Ministries allows our Resource Development Associate to work for Disciples Women without impacting our budget with an additional expense. Because of generous donors that invest in Disciples Women through individual donor contributions, Herstory legacy giving, Blessing Box, and the Easter Offering, we can have the ability to do ministry that provides women with opportunities to live out their call in this world.

Challenges and successes coexist in the world of Disciples Women. Nevertheless, I, along with the staff and Disciples Women leaders across the denomination, remain ready and willing to lead this ministry with integrity and zeal. I celebrate the completion of the website redesign, increased social media presence, reactivating the DW Connect Newsletter, my ability to conduct administrative process improvement, and the success of the Just Women Bible study. Most importantly, I celebrate and stand with the Disciples Women everywhere who are committed to re-engaging the work of this ministry post-pandemic in innovative ways. As the frontline of this ministry, they genuinely have the power to catapult Disciples Women into the future, serving women globally in the areas of justice, spiritual formation, and leadership development. To that end, Disciples Women will continue working under the theme, Disciples Women: Reignite! Re-engage! Reimagine! based on Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 reigniting the fire for Disciples Women through relationship building and re-engaging women by providing new resources for them to use in their context.
I am thankful for my staff, colleagues across the Church who have been great conversation partners, and every woman who commits themselves daily to the work of this Disciples Women’s Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada. Ultimately, the success of this ministry depends on each of us to do our part to harness the sacred power of women working together because, with God and our fellow sisters in ministry, nothing is impossible! We cannot fail! I remain prayerful and diligent about the continued evolution that will perpetuate the Disciples Women’s Ministries from this generation to the next.

Respectfully Submitted,

Executive Director, Disciples Women Ministries

The General Board receives this report and forwards it to the 2023 General Assembly for consideration and discussion.