STAFF

Yvonne T. Gilmore, Interim Administrative Secretary of the National Convocation and Associate General Minister and President of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Brenda Rossy, Director of Meetings (OGMP) and Ministry Associate for the National Convocation

General Board Report on 2022

Collaborative leadership, prophetic imagination and re-organization, and innovation in covenantal ministry and liminal communal care have been the central foci of the National Convocation of the Christian Church and the National Christian Missionary Convention in 2022. The National Convocation is a beacon for wholeness in the Black Church within the context of the movement for wholeness in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) over against the forces of fragmentation that undermine the flourishing of all of God's beloved children. It includes almost 600 congregations, ministry settings, and churches in-formation across the United States and Canada as we continue to nurture and welcome new churches and emerging leaders.

During this moment of spirit led innovation, greater connectivity online, leadership transitions, and mission re-alignment, the National Convocation continues to partner with the whole church in the service of the wholeness and flourishing of Black and multi-cultural Disciples congregations and leaders of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada.
27th Biennial Session of the National Convocation
Beloved Disciples of the National Convocation from all of our congregations, including members, elders, young adults, seminarians, historic conventions and fellowship groups, ministers, friends, and ministry partners, were invited to attend the 27th Biennial Session of the National Convocation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) online on Welcome (a digital platform) on Saturday, August 6, 2022 for a focused time of worship and fellowship followed by worshipful work, updates during our business session, and an educational workshop titled “Spiritual Formation For Tired People.”

“Refreshing Come” was the theme, inspired by 2 Corinthians 3:17-18: 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another, for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.

The opportunity to impact the world with the good news is amazing. The challenge of sharing the limitless love of God while fulfilling the vision of God, and balancing a budget in this economy while honoring diverse commitments is frightening. The joy of welcoming new officers and capacities to the family is beautiful. The grief of cascading losses and the frustration of conflict is heartbreaking. We need refreshing to come. We need fresh oil and anointing. The church needs the prophetic witness of the National Convocation. The world needs the light and refreshed ministry of the National Convocation and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Rev. Dr. William Crowder, President of the Board of Trustees, presided. Dynamic and bold preaching from Rev. Dr. Gina Stewart was offered, and a moment of remembrance for the faithful cloud of witnesses that have transitioned to their heavenly home including Jean Brown, Vincent Dial, and Marilyn Foulkes, and all those who have languished from Covid-19 over the last two years, was observed. New officers were elected to the board of trustees. A litany of installation was led by Rev. Dr. Crowder, Board President, Rev. Dr. Belva Brown Jordan, Moderator of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and Rev. Yvonne Gilmore, Interim Administrative Secretary of the National Convocation.

Resourcing Black Disciples for ministry during Covid and post-Covid 19

Let Us Pray

Black Disciples clergy, historic fellowship groups, Christian Missionary conventions and regions, gather every second Tuesday for prayer and zooming from strength to shared strength, death to life, courage to blessing, and anointing to preparation. The discovery of new faces and ministry priorities and possibilities has also commenced.
Prayer Leaders by Convention or Region

January - Central Rocky Mountain Region
February – Christian Church in Tennessee
March – NCCC and the OGMP
April – Illinois and Wisconsin
May – Northeast Region
June – Georgia Region
July – Covenant Project Prayer
August – Indiana Region
September – New Church Movement – New Black Disciple churches
October - Multicultural Communities and Decentralized Disciples
November – South Carolina Region
December - Advent Prayer

Black Disciples Endowment Fund

In gratitude for resourcing that builds and expands our capacity for ministry and innovation that tutors our holy imagination to bless and not curse, and constructive witness and collaboration beyond condemnation and survival, the faith filled work of the Black Disciples Endowment Fund (BDEF) and the 2021-22 recipients is here acknowledged:

- **Canaan Christian Church** in Moncks Corner, South Carolina, an area challenged by food scarcity and homelessness started a Soup Kitchen.
- **The Root Church** in North Carolina, a new church in formation, hosted a Black farm service and baby dedication.
- **My SupaNatural Life** is located in California and online, and provides innovative approaches to the work of leadership development and coaching.
- **Walk in the Light Christian Church** in Indianapolis, Indiana, invested in equipping a cohort of young adult ministry technicians during the transition to online worship.
- **Evangelical Crusade Christian Church** in Brooklyn, New York, organized area ministers around refugee & immigration advocacy and traveled to Washington, DC to advocate on behalf of our Haitian siblings.

Merger staff

As Disciples Home Missions and the National Convocation continue to live into the historic merger of 1960, a structural commitment to collaboration and transformation that established three merger positions in education, evangelism, and women’s ministries, and revised staffing arrangements, and orientation and evaluation processes in 2003, a greater commitment to implementation and assessment has been practiced over the last year in hopeful care and in response to the National Convocation’s review of its own operational dynamics, governance, and ministry covenants.
Rev. Monique Crain Spells, Director of Christian Education and Faith, has been writing and curating resources to equip our national, regional, and local ministries to grow and adapt to meet current and future Christian education and faith formation needs and serving the whole church on the General Assembly planning team. At the 27th Biennial Session of the National Convocation in August, she led the sole workshop offering titled “Spiritual Formation & Fatigue: Caring for Self and Others When Tired.”

Rev. Dr. R. Wayne Calhoun, Director of Evangelism and Transformation, Disciples Home Missions/NCCC, moderates the National Convocation’s Legacy and Vision series, an hour-long program every third Tuesday in collaboration with Rev. Yvonne Gilmore, Interim Administrative Secretary. It provides a platform for ministry partners and general units to acquaint the National Convocation with their vision, mission, programs, future plans, and a space to highlight resources, equity and anti-racism/pro-reconciling institutional initiatives, and areas of ministry and service that are particular to Black Disciples. Tragic events and loss of life in Buffalo, New York and Uvalde, Texas in May 2022 were overwhelming. The National Convocation hosted a Soul Care Conversation, a space to pause and process recent violence and racial trauma with Joselyn Spence, Director of the National Benevolent Association’s Mental Health and Wellness Initiative in June. Below is the full record of engagement and ministry of the Legacy and Vision series.

LEGACY & VISION

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Ministry/Program</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>New Church Ministry – Rev. Terrell McTyer</td>
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<td>February</td>
<td>Disciples Church Extension Fund (DCEF) - Belinda King</td>
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<td>March</td>
<td>International Disciples Women’s Ministries – Rev. Angele Johnson</td>
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<td>April</td>
<td>Refugee &amp; Immigration Ministries – Rev. Sharon Stanley-Rea</td>
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<td>May</td>
<td>Reconciliation Ministries – Rev. April Johnson</td>
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<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Soul Care Conversation following tragic events in Buffalo, NY &amp; Uvalde, TX</td>
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<td>July</td>
<td>National Benevolent Association – Mark Anderson</td>
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<td>August</td>
<td>Certificate of African American Ministry – Lexington Theological Seminary</td>
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<td>Dr. Charisse Gillett and Rev. Dr. William Lee</td>
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<td>September</td>
<td>Disciples Peace Fellowship – Rev. Brian Frederick</td>
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<td>October</td>
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<td>November</td>
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New leadership for the future

At the December 2022 board meeting on Zoom, the Board of Trustees of the National Convocation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), per the recommendation of the Advisory Council voted to call the Rev. Dr. Delesslyn Audra Kennebrew as the Administrative secretary. Dr. Kennebrew is an attorney, a pastor, a theologian, an activist, a thought leader and indeed a historic selection to lead the National Convocation at such a time as this. Rev. Dr. William Crowder, President of the National Convocation, led the advisory committee tasked with the search process leading to her call. The extensive search followed the executive search model. She will begin on March 1, 2023.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Rev. Dr. William Crowder, President (Illinois)
Tera Daniels, Vice President (Texas)
Rev. Dr. Joanne Flowers (Arkansas)
Orlando Scott, Treasurer (Georgia)

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Rev. Aaron Smith (Georgia)
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Brittany King (Illinois)
Dr. Megan Lowe (Tennessee)
Fellowship group leaders
Rev. Eddie Anderson (California)
Rev. Milton Bowen (Oklahoma)
Claudette President (South Carolina)
Rev. Edward Williams (Alabama)
Rev. Marilyn Fiddmont (Texas)
Deborah Garr (Kentucky)

Merger staff - Disciples Home Missions
Sheila Spencer, Christian Education
R. Wayne Calhoun, Evangelism & Transformation
Vacant, Disciples Women

Ex-Officio members of the board
Terri Hord Owens, General Minister & President, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Sheila P. Spencer, Interim President, DHM; Chris Dorsey, President, DHM
Yvonne T. Gilmore, Interim Administrative Secretary

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