

## SCHEDULE

### Saturday, July 29

9:00am – 11:30am Opening Ceremony  
and Business

11:45am – 1:15pm Lunch Events

1:30 am – 1:45pm Gathering Moments

1:45pm – 4:45pm Business

5:00pm – 6:30pm Dinner Events

7:00pm – 8:30pm Worship

Preacher: Cha. Maj. Owen Chandler

Offering: Pension Fund's 13th Check

8:45pm – 10:00pm After Sessions

### Sunday, July 30

7:00am – 11:30am Worship in the Community

11:45am – 1:15pm Lunch Events

1:30pm – 2:45pm Education A

3:00pm – 4:15pm Education B

5:00pm – 6:30pm Dinner Events

7:00pm – 8:30pm Worship

Preacher: Rev. Yolanda Norton

Offering: Reconciliation Ministry

8:45pm – 10:00pm After Sessions

### Monday, July 31

7:00am – 8:30am Breakfast Events

8:45am – 10:00am Education A

10:15am – 11:30am Education B

11:45am – 1:15pm Lunch Events

1:30pm – 2:00pm Bible Lecture

Speaker: Dr. Anatheia Portier-Young

2:00pm – 4:45pm Business

5:00pm – 6:30pm Dinner Events

7:00pm – 8:30pm Worship

Preacher: Rev. Dr. David Anderson Hooker

Offering: Week of Compassion

8:45pm – 10:00pm After Sessions

### Tuesday, August 1

7:00am – 8:30am Breakfast Events

8:45am – 10:00am Education A

10:15am – 11:30am Education B

11:45am – 1:15pm Lunch Events

1:30pm – 2:00pm Bible Lecture

Speaker: Edwin David Aponte, Ph.D.

2:00pm – 4:45pm Business

5:00pm – 6:30pm Dinner Events

7:00pm – 8:30pm Worship

Preacher: Rev. Terri Hord Owens

Offering: Disciples Mission Fund

8:45pm – 10:00pm After Sessions

#### Exhibit Hall Hours:

Saturday, July 29, 8 am – 6 pm

Sunday, July 30, 10 am – 6 pm

Monday, July 31, 8 am – 6 pm

Tuesday, August 1, 8 am – 6 pm

**For an interactive schedule, map  
and more download the General  
Assembly app:**

Apple Store



Google Store



## CONTENTS

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### Information

Schedule	1
General Assembly App	3
Who We Are	4
Sponsors	5
Elected Leaders	6
Local Arrangements	7
Planning Teams & Staff	8
Worship Team	9
Speakers	10
Kentucky International Convention Center Maps	12
Assembly Services	15
Mission Opportunities	18

### Worship/Education

Worship in the Community (Sunday morning)	19
Worship and Education in the App	21

### Business

Preamble to the Design	22
The Life of a General Assembly Resolution	23
Order of Business	24
Reports	28
Business Items/Resolutions	150

## GET THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY APP

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The General Assembly App is your one stop place to manage your General Assembly experience. Sponsored by Disciples Church Extension Fund, the General Assembly App will enhance your assembly experience with a variety of interactive tools.

### Featuring:

- Customized schedule
- Interactive map
- Speaker information
- Worship materials
- Workshop materials
- Children and Youth Information
- Connect with Exhibitors
- Engage with fellow attendees

### Download via the QR codes

- Once you have downloaded the app from Apple or Google store
- Enter your name and registration confirmation number
- View your General Assembly meals, schedule and more

**For an interactive schedule, map and more download the General Assembly app:**

Apple Store



Google Store



## MISSION IMPERATIVE/VISION/MISSION/IDENTITY

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### Identity Statement

**We are Disciples of Christ, a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world. As part of the one body of Christ, we welcome all to the Lord's Table as God has welcomed us.**

### Our Values

The confession of faith that Jesus is the Christ, son of the Living God, and our Savior.

The open, inclusive Lord's Supper, God's Table.

The call to ministry that is on every Disciple.

The love of unity that God gives us.

The practice of the justice of God.

### Mission Imperative

Adopted July 2000 in our quest to embody Christian unity, led and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we believe God calls us.

### Our Vision

To be a faithful, growing church that demonstrates true community, deep Christian spirituality and a passion for justice. (Micah 6:8)

### Our Mission

To be and share the Good News of Jesus Christ, witnessing, loving and serving from our doorsteps "to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

### Our Imperative

To strengthen congregational life for this mission. (Ephesians 4:11-13, 15-16)

### Our Covenant

In accepting our vision, mission and imperative, we affirm our need to

Be a pro-reconciliation/anti-racist Church

Strengthen relationships among all expressions of the Church

Share mutually and more fully the stewardship of God's gifts of our life in Christ

Encourage our growing diversity within our Church family and communities

Work with our ecumenical and global partners to heal the brokenness of the body of Christ and the human community.

# 2023 SPONSORS



*We are grateful to our many sponsors and their support of the 2023 General Assembly!*

INFORMATION

## GENERAL MINISTRIES



## PLATINUM

## GOLD



## SILVER



## ELECTED LEADERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY



**Teresa "Terri" Hord Owens,**  
General Minister and President

*"Once Jesus was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming, and he answered, "The kingdom of God is not coming with things that can be observed, nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There it is!' For, in fact, the kingdom of God is among you." Then he said to the disciples, "The days are coming when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. They will say to you, 'Look there!' or 'Look here!' Do not go; do not set off in pursuit."*

— Luke 17:20-23 NRSV



**Belva Brown Jordan**  
Moderator

Dear friends –

"Among" means within, in the midst of, inside. I invite you to share in the long-awaited joy and rekindled fellowship that comes when we meet for the 2023 General Assembly. When we gather in Christ, and Christ among us, in the midst of one and all together, the kin-dom is present. I am looking forward to our time together as we assemble within and among – surrounded, included – together with Jesus Christ in Louisville as we learn more about the ministry and imagination of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada. As we return to in person worship – united and strong – the table is set for uplifting worship. Learning and reflection will be plentiful. Opportunities for shared fellowship and service are deep and wide.



**Stephanie Kendell**  
First Vice Moderator

We will be enriched by Bible study and prayer, workshops and shared meals, arts of ministry in music and visual expressions, and worshipful work. May we persist in our conviction that we are called together to the Lord's Table to show the world that it is possible to stay at the table both when we agree and disagree, and yet go out as one to work to build God's kin-dom here on earth.



**Nestor Gomez**  
Second Vice Moderator

Please take time each day during General Assembly to pray for our church, for those gathered at the General Assembly, and for each community we serve in the US and Canada. If you haven't already spent some time meditating on all three of our theme verses, please do so as you prepare for each worship, business session, and workshop. Prayer enables us to be spiritually ready to be the people we say we are – as we gather this week and return home to share and continue the good work that God has begun within us and among us.



**Clyde E. Hunt Jr**  
Moderator Elect

Join in the General Assembly with an openness to the limitless love of God moving among us. Enjoy the hospitality extended by our host region, the Christian Church in Kentucky, while in Louisville with Disciples from across the United States and Canada. *In Christ's name and by his grace, let us accept our mission of kin-dom witness and service to all.*

With love for you and our Church –

## LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE

Listed here are the planning partners from the Christian Church in Kentucky who have worked to create a welcoming and fun General Assembly experience in Louisville, Kentucky. For each of the names listed, there are dozens of additional people who have given generously of their time and talents to make this event successful.



Erin Cash is Project Director for the Thriving Congregations Project at Lexington Theological Seminary.



Molly Marsh is a life-long Disciple, alumna of Transylvania University, and Certified Meeting Professional with more than 16 years experience in professional education and conference management.

**Erin Cash**, Co-Chair, Local Arrangements

**Molly Marsh**, Co-Chair, Local Arrangements

**Gene Caston**, Vice Chair, Treasurer

**Kim Cowherd**, Vice Chair, Planet

**Don Gillett**, Regional Minister

**Alisha Hunt**, Director of Nursery

**Laura West**, Directory of Preschool Program

**Sarah Parrish**, Director of Elementary Program

**Kara Foster**, Director of Local Missions

**Jeff Bruce**, Director of Local Music

**Kory Wilcoxson**, Director of Communion/ Diaconate

**Ann Shepherd**, Director of Hospitality

**Topher Endress**, Director of Special Needs

**Brian Gerard**, Director of Pulpit Supply

**Diana Hodges-Batzka**, Director of Communications

**Jim & Jackie Summers**, Directors of On-Site Registration

**Chris Cash**, Director of Transportation

**Merideth Sprigler & Foster Frimpong**, Directors of Guest Reception

**Janice Burgess**, Director of Welcome Center

**Marsha & Sonny Driscoll**, Directors of Green Room

**Mark & Lisa Caldwell-Reiss**, Director of Chapel

**Tracy Siegman**, Director of Experiences

**Michael Swartzentruber**, Director of Volunteer Services

## PLANNING TEAMS, VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF

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Special thanks to the moderators, general ministry partners, volunteers and staff for working together to manage the logistics, program and details of the 2023 General Assembly.

### GENERAL ASSEMBLY OFFICERS

**Terri Hord Owens**, General Minister and President, Indianapolis, IN

**Belva Brown Jordan**, Moderator, Claremont, CA

**Stephanie Kendell**, First Vice Moderator, Washington, D.C.

**Nestor Gomez**, Second Vice Moderator, Stamford, CT

**Clyde E. Hunt Jr**, Moderator Elect, Memphis, TN

**William Bailey**, Parliamentarian, Fullerton, CA

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### STAFF OF THE OFFICE OF GENERAL MINISTER AND PRESIDENT

**Cara Gilger**, Director of Communications

**Yvonne Gilmore**, Vice President and Chief of Staff

**John Goebel**, Vice President Finance

**Conni Kelley**, Administrative Coordinator

**Delesslyn Kennebrew**, Administrative Secretary of the National Convocation

**Lee Hull Moses**, Executive Director, Proclamation Project

**Shannon Pope**, Executive Assistant to the General Minister and President

**Brenda Rossy**, Director of Meetings and Ministry Associate for National Convocation

### PLANNING COMMITTEE

**Lara Blackwood Pickrel**, Youth Programming

**Charles Anthony Bryant**, Director of Music

**Erin Cash**, Local Arrangements

**Suzanne Castle**, Plenary Production Manager

**Cara Gilger**, OGMP Director of Communications

**Don Gillett**, Regional Minister of the Christian Church in Kentucky

**Yvonne Gilmore**, Vice President and Chief of Staff

**Lorraine Grogan**, Conference Direct

**Sara Nave Fisher**, Children Programming

**Tyler Heston**, Arts Engagement

**Conni Kelley**, Administrative Coordinator

**Stephanie Kendell**, First Vice Moderator

**Molly Marsh**, Local Arrangements

**Lee Hull Moses**, Executive Director, Proclamation Project

**Terri Hord Owens**, General Minister and President

**Shannon Pope**, Executive Assistant to the General Minister and President

**Brenda Rossy**, Director of Meetings and Ministry Associate for National Convocation

**Monique Crain Spells**, Director Christian Education/Faith Formation

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### PRODUCTION TEAM

**Suzanne Castle**, Production Coordinator

**Nathaniel Cook**, Assistant Stage Manager

**Tonee Jordan**, Stage Manager

**Initial Production Group (IPG)**, Arvada, CO

## WORSHIP TEAM

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### WORSHIP PLANNING TEAM

**Charles Anthony Bryant**, Park Avenue Christian Church, New York, NY  
**Kelsey Cobbs**, The Federated Church of Weatherford, Weatherford, OK  
**Rae Karim**, Light of the World Christian Church, Indianapolis, IN  
**Stephanie Kendell**, First Vice Moderator, National City Christian Church, Washington, DC  
**KyeongJung (KJ) Kim; First Christian Church of Stephenville**, Stephenville, TX  
**Catina Green Martin**, Chaplain/Salem VA Healthcare System, Salem, VA  
**Sarah McClelland-Brown**, First Presbyterian Church, Warner Robins, GA  
**Terri Hord Owens**, General Minister and President  
**Lara Blackwood Pickrel**, Hillcrest Christian Church, Overland Park, KS  
**Brandon Proffitt**, Evergreen Christian Church, Evergreen, CO  
**Olivia Bryan Updegrave**, Minister for Ministries Across Generations at Disciples Home Missions  
**Milca Rivera**, Iglesia Cristiana De Deltona (Disciples of Christ), Deltona, FL  
**Luther Young, Jr.**, Alliance Q - Disciples LGBTQ+ Alliance

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### WORSHIP TEAM

**C. Anthony Bryant**, Vocalist  
**Sabrina Carten**, Vocalist  
**Renee Credle**, Vocalist  
**Noah Garabedian**, Instrumentalist  
**Lia Holman**, Vocalist  
**Eric Johnson Jr.**, Instrumentalist  
**Byron Sowell**, Instrumentalist  
**Lonnie Reed Jr.**, Vocalist  
**Kali Wilder**, Vocalist

## SPEAKERS

The 2023 General Assembly welcomes a diverse selection of preachers and Bible lectures from across the life of the church to lead the assembly in worship, spiritual reflection and biblical study at the General Assembly. Bringing a wide variety of ministry experience and expertise, this year's speaker line up promises to bring inspiration and insight to the theme *Kindom of God Within Us, Among Us*.

### Saturday evening



**Owen Chandler**  
Chaplain (MAJ) Owen R. Chandler is a US Army Chaplain, husband, and father of three from Kentucky. Currently, he serves the historic 1st Infantry Division as the Brigade Chaplain for the 1st

Armored Brigade Combat Team, the Army's oldest Brigade, located in Fort Riley, KS. Formerly, he served as a congregational pastor within the Christian Church (DOC) in several states culminating in the honor of leading Saguaro Christian Church, Tucson, AZ for 8 years. Owen has deployed to Iraq, Qatar, Jordan and Kuwait. He is the recipient of the Bronze Star Award and the Four Chaplains Medal among his other military honors. As a lifelong Disciple of Christ and alumnus of Transylvania University and Brite Divinity School, he is deeply moved to share his experiences and perspective as a chaplain a one of the preachers at the 2023 General Assembly of the Christian Church.

### Sunday evening



**Yolanda Norton**  
Rev. Yolanda M. Norton, one of the preachers of the 2023 General Assembly, is the founder and executive director of the Global Arts and Theology Experience. She has a long

commitment to justice, especially as it relates to women and children, and she is excited about the possibilities for what God is doing in and through Black women in this season. GATE is borne out of her creation of the Beyonce Mass, which has been featured in *Essence*, the *New York Times*, and HBO's *VICE*. In addition to her work at GATE, Rev. Norton currently serves as the Crump Visiting Professor of Black Theology at the Seminary of the Southwest; and is Assistant Professor of Hebrew Bible and H. Eugene Farlough Chair of Black Church Studies at San Francisco Theological Seminary.

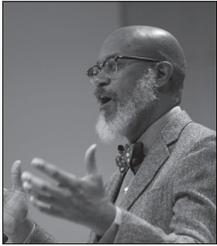
### Monday afternoon



**Dr. Anatheia Portier-Young**  
Anatheia Portier-Young, one of the bible lectures for the 2023 General Assembly, is Associate Professor of Old Testament at Duke Divinity School and directs the program in Gender, Sexuality, Theology, and Ministry. Her book *The Prophetic Body* is forthcoming with Oxford University Press. She is also the author of *Apocalypse against Empire: Theologies of Resistance in Early Judaism* (Eerdmans, 2011) and co-editor of *Scripture and Social Justice: Catholic and Ecumenical Essays* (Lexington, 2018). In addition to her work in biblical studies, Dr. Portier-Young also teaches and writes in the area of Christian preaching and is a frequent contributor to *workingpreacher.org*. She is also a runner, dancer, quilter, gardener, and mom.

## SPEAKERS

### Monday evening



#### David Anderson Hooker

David Anderson Hooker, PhD, JD, M. Div. is Founder and Principal Narrator of CounterStories Consulting, llc. One of the preachers of the 2023 General Assembly, Hooker is interna-

tionally recognized for his theory and practice regarding the role of narrative in post-conflict trauma healing, community building, and identity formation. He is former Associate Professor of the Practice of Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding at the University of Notre Dame's Kroc Institute. Since 9/11 his research and practice has focused on the role of generational and cultural trauma and narrative in identity construction in post conflict contexts.

### Tuesday afternoon



#### Edwin David Aponte

The Reverend Edwin David Aponte, one of the bible lectures for the 2023 General Assembly, is Dean of the Theological School and Professor of Religion and Culture at Drew University. Previously

he served as Executive Director of the Louisville Institute, a granting agency fully funded by the Lilly Endowment Inc. Aponte holds degrees from Gordon College (B.A.), Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (M.A.T.S.), and Temple University (M.A., Ph.D.). As a cultural historian Aponte explores faith, spirituality, and culture, especially the intersections of race, ethnicity, and religion, congregational studies, as well as religion and politics. Aponte also explores issues of diversity, inclusion, and multicultural and intercultural realities.

### Tuesday evening



#### Rev. Terri Hord Owens

Rev. Teresa "Terri" Hord Owens is the General Minister and President of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada. She is the first person of color

and second woman to lead the denomination. Since her election in 2017, Rev. Hord Owens has led the denomination with a passion for spiritual formation grounded in Biblical scholarship and a commitment to justice. Rev. Hord Owens, a graduate of Harvard University and University of Chicago Divinity School, is actively committed to the Disciples' priority of being an anti-racist church, being a movement for wholeness, welcoming all to the Lord's table as God has welcomed us. Her exhortation to the church is "Let's be the church we say we are. It is in *being* who we say we are that we actively bear witness to God's limitless love for all."



# KENTUCKY INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTER MAPS

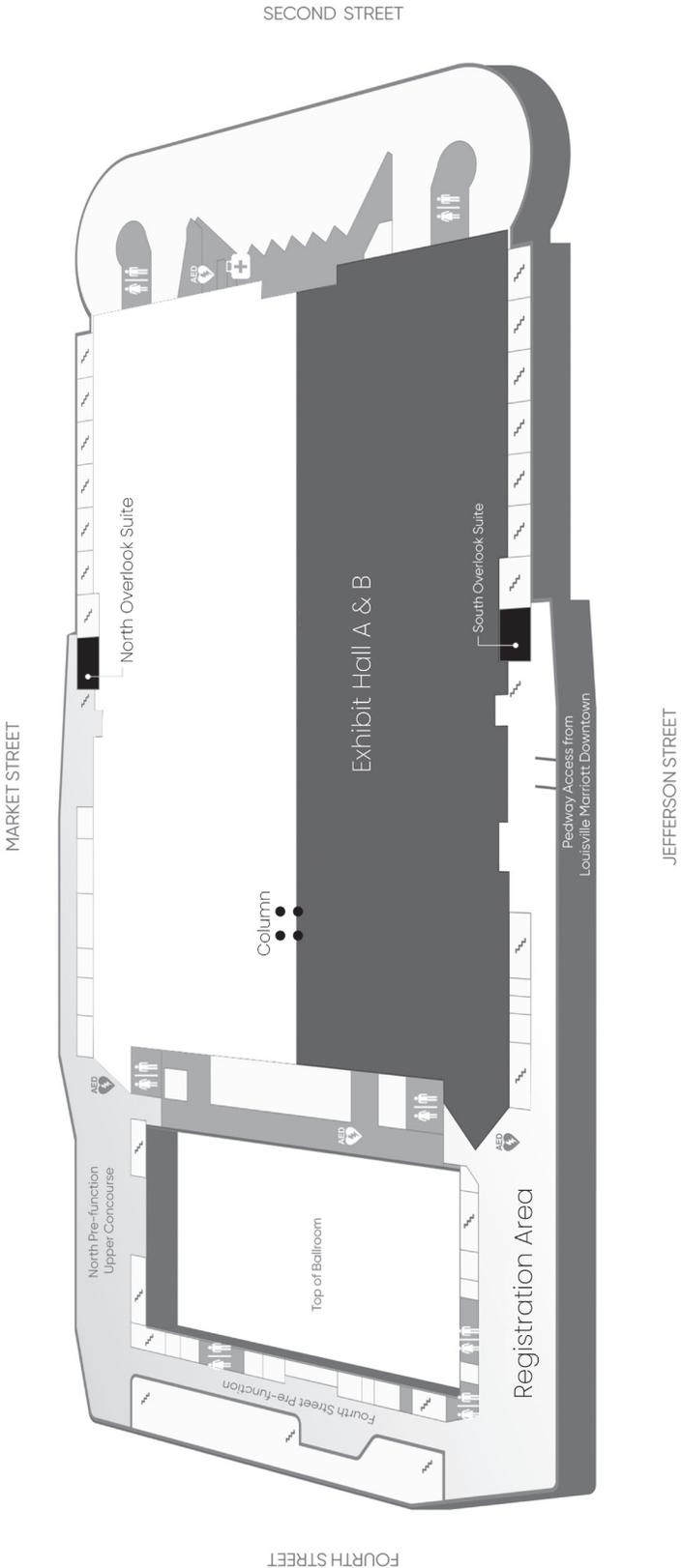
## MAIN CONCOURSE



# KENTUCKY INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTER MAPS

INFORMATION

## UPPER CONCOURSE



# KENTUCKY INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTER MAPS

## LOWER CONCOURSE



## ASSEMBLY SERVICES

### Registration Center

Sponsored by the Pension Fund

The registration booth is located in the Kentucky International Convention Center Upper Concourse and will open each day throughout the Assembly during the following hours.

Friday, July 28	1:00 pm – 6 pm
Saturday, July 29	8:00 am – 6 pm
Sunday, July 30	10:00 pm – 6 pm
Monday, July 31	8:00 am – 6 pm
Tuesday, August 1	8:00 am – 6 pm

### Meal Tickets

You will be able to purchase meal tickets onsite at the meal tickets kiosk in the Welcome Center.

Tickets will be available until the meal is sold out. The General Assembly Office does not print or mail paper tickets – all meal tickets are electronic purchases!

### Chapel

The Chapel is located on the Main Concourse of the Kentucky International Convention Center along the corridor that runs parallel to Market Street.

### Exhibit Hall

Visit more than 70 exhibitors to see new products; build and maintain professional contacts; meet new vendors; and learn about the many Disciples institutions of higher education.

In addition to a wide array of ministry partners and vendors hand selected to support and enhance your ministry, the General Assembly is pleased to have added several unique experiences to the Exhibit hall this year. Take time to explore the hands on, interactive and immersive Arts Engagement experience. Enjoy a coffee or snack or take a moment to rest or connect at one of several lounge areas. Entertain the kids at the kids play area. And don't forget to write a prayer on the building frame of the Week of Compassion build located in the Exhibit Hall.

### The Exhibit Hall will be open

Saturday, July 29	8 am – 6 pm
Sunday, July 30	10 am – 6 pm
Monday, July 31	8 am – 6 pm
Tuesday, August 1	8 am – 6 pm

### First Aid Room

The first aid station is located on the Main Concourse of the Kentucky International Convention Center along the corridor that runs parallel to Market Street. Should you need assistance, any usher can direct you to the first aid station. Emergency medical technicians will staff this room at all times. Always carry identification in your purse or wallet with your full name, home address, and information about any health concerns or medications.

## ASSEMBLY SERVICES

### Welcome Center

The Welcome Center, serves as the booth for facility information, mission information, RV Parks, restaurant locations, area points of interest, information for doctors and dentists, auto repair, etc., in the area. The Lost and Found Booth will be in the Welcome Center. It will be open during the Assembly to accept/ return lost and found items. The Welcome Center will be located on the Main Concourse of the Kentucky International Convention Center at the entrance area at the intersection of Fourth and Market Street.

### Voter Credentials

Obtaining your Voter Credentials

All members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) who register for the General Assembly shall have all privileges of the Assembly, except voting privileges, which are limited to the following:

- Certified voting representatives from congregations;
- Certified voting representatives from regions;
- Ordained/licensed ministers with ministerial standing. (Clergy Ribbon);
- Chief administrative officers of institutions and general ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ);
- Members of the General Board;
- Past Moderators and Vice Moderators of the General Assembly.

The voting credential kiosk is located in the Registration Area on the Upper Concourse and will be open during regular registration center hours.

Friday, July 28	1:00 pm – 6 pm
Saturday, July 29	8:00 am – 6 pm
Sunday, July 30	10:00 pm – 6 pm
Monday, July 31	8:00 am – 6 pm
Tuesday, August 1	8:00 am – 6 pm

“Voter” RIBBONS. A voter certification form will be available at the Credentials kiosk. Voters from the above categories should complete and sign their form and submit it to the volunteer. Once Voters are certified, they will then receive a RIBBON to apply to their name badge. Voter RIBBONS entitle voters to sit in a voters section for all business sessions of this Assembly.

“Clergy” RIBBONS. All confirmed ordained/licensed ministers can pick up their clergy ribbon at check in in the Registration Area.

## ASSEMBLY SERVICES

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### **Committee on Reference and Counsel**

The Administrative Committee of the General Board is the Committee on Reference and Counsel for the General Assembly. Announcement of meeting times will be made from the platform during plenary sessions.

### **Communications and Media**

e-mail: [news@disciples.org](mailto:news@disciples.org)

### **News Operation**

Communication Ministries staff will be co-located with the General Assembly office. The staff works with secular and religious news outlets, providing news and information about the Assembly. Secular and religious press (writers, bloggers, photographers, etc.) should contact Communication Ministries at [news@disciples.org](mailto:news@disciples.org) for appropriate credentials.

### **Audio and Video Recordings**

Due to copyright concerns, please do not record and post portions of worship services, learning track events, or concerts on media sharing sites without permission from Communication Ministries.

### **Amateur Photography**

Photographs are permitted during Assembly; however, we ask that you limit recording and taking close-up pictures of speakers to after sessions or during the first two minutes of an address. Flash or flood lights are not permitted except for designated assembly staff. Photography during communion services and business sessions is discouraged except for designated assembly staff or media credentialed by Communication Ministries.

### **Handouts**

Only material approved in advance by the Assembly Office can be distributed in the Convention Center. Items handed to participants as they enter or leave the plenary hall must be directly related to Assembly business or services and approved by the office. They will be handed out by designated ushers. You must contact the General Assembly Manager to obtain permission. Contact the Assembly Office if you believe unauthorized materials are being distributed within the Convention Center.

### **Recording for Historical Archives**

All plenary sessions, including business sessions, are recorded by the assembly production crew for historical purposes.

## MISSION OPPORTUNITIES

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### **Friendship Bracelets for Worship**

It really feels like summer- and that means we're on the go. Maybe a trip- time in the car, time sitting and waiting, time catching up with friends and family. During assembly, at worship on Sunday night, we will celebrate the different threads and different place we come from to be Kindom.

Can you make a friendship bracelet? Did you bring friendship bracelets to General Assembly? Some of us know of this tradition from school or crafting or camp, and our cultures have different ways of interpreting what these bracelets look like. We want to see the many and diverse ways in which friendship bracelets appear in this community, and we want for you to pray over them as you make them.

Tell the recipient who made them, and where you come from. You can do this by writing your first name and church or region or camp on a piece of masking tape. (Ex: Alex, Camp Christian, Georgia or Sally, First Christian Church of Greenville, Mi). Bracelets may be dropped off at the Welcome Center.

### **Help Build Hope – Framing a House for Habitat for Humanity**

Join Week of Compassion and partner Help Build Hope as we frame a house that will be going to the Fuller Center Disaster Rebuilders in Mayfield, KY. Kentucky has faced historic flooding in the east and devastating tornadoes in the west. This house will help Fuller Center to be one step closer to welcoming a family into their new home.

The entire build will take place in the Exhibit Hall and is open to any skill level, ages 5 years and up. The pre-building cutting & prep work will happen on Saturday the 29th 5 to 7pm by the Disciples Men. Volunteers will frame the house on Sunday, July 30th from 8am-12pm. Volunteers are required to register before the event online through their registrations for Assembly.

After the house is framed, we encourage everyone to come by and walk through the house & write words of blessings, prayers, and scripture on the framed walls. This event is sponsored by Week of Compassion. To learn more about Help Build Hope: <http://www.helpbuildhope.com>

### **Blood Drive hosted by the Kentucky Blood Center**

Every 2 seconds someone in the United States needs blood. You can save someone's life by donating blood. All volunteers will do a quick health screen before donating. Join the Kentucky Blood Center on in the Exhibit Hall Monday, July 31st 8:30-2pm (No appointment necessary. Drop In)

### **Youth Shoe Drive**

WaterStep is an organization in Louisville ([waterstep.org](http://waterstep.org)) that provides clean water and training around the world. One way they do this is by collecting donated shoes and selling them, then using the profits to fund those water initiatives. We will be a collection site during the assembly – they will provide us with two collection boxes to place in the Exhibit Hall where assembly participants can drop off shoes that they bring with them. Shoes should be gently used or new.

Youth will sort the shoes donated (as well as other shoes already at the WaterStep facility) and pickup will be the responsibility of the organization.

## WORSHIP IN THE COMMUNITY

All across the greater Louisville area, congregations are opening their sanctuaries to welcome General Assembly participants to their seats and guest speakers to their pulpits. Take this opportunity to get outside the convention center and be inspired by local worship opportunities. Congregations are listed alphabetically by their names.

### Cane Ridge Meeting House

**Worship at the Cane Ridge Meeting House**, historical site of the Cane Ridge Revival, an important event in the history of the Stone-Campbell movement. Worship will include guest preacher Dr. Joel Brown, President of the Disciples of Christ Historical Society. Transportation and lunch is available for \$35 for those who register in advance (\$25 lunch only for those providing their own transportation). Register and find more details in your General Assembly registration or ask onsite at the Welcome Center.

### Worship Hosts

**Beargrass Christian Church's** two morning services will both feature local art plus music led by Andra Moran. Preaching at 9:00am is Rev. Kelley Dick (Saguaro CC) and at 11:00am is Rev. Dr. William Barber (National Poor People's Campaign). Convenient to downtown at 4100 Shelbyville Road (shuttle services available via pre-registration with the church, or please consider arriving early via carpool or ride-share service). Nursery/childcare available with optional luncheon to follow (registration required). More details at <https://beargrass.org/plan-your-visit/>

**Central Christian Church in New Albany, IN** invites you to join them for worship at 10:00 a.m. Green Chalice Minister, the Rev. Scott Hardin-Nieri will be preaching. They are located at 1315 E. Spring Street New Albany, IN 47150. For more information, visit <https://centralchristianna.org>

**Crestwood Christian Church in Crestwood, Kentucky**, invites you to join them for worship on Sunday, July 30, 2023. at 11 a.m. They are located at 6525 W Highway 22, Crestwood, KY 40014. You can learn more by calling 502-876-3969.

**Douglass Blvd Christian Church in Louisville** invites you to join them for worship on Sunday, July 30, 2023 at 11 a.m. They are located at 2005 Douglass Blvd, Louisville, KY 40205. For more information visit <http://douglass.church/>

**First Christian Church of Jeffersonville, IN** invites you to join them for worship on Sunday, July 30, 2023 at 10:30 a.m. They are located at 3209 Middle Rd, Jeffersonville, IN 47130. For more information visit <https://www.fccjeff.org/>.

**First Christian Church of Louisville** invites you to join us at 10:30 a.m. for worship. Our guest preacher will be Rev. Nathan Wilson currently serving the World Council of Churches in Geneva. They are at 7700 US 42 Louisville, KY 40241. For more information check out [www.fcclouisville.org](http://www.fcclouisville.org)

**First Christian Church of Taylorsville** invites you to worship on Sunday, July 30, 2023 at 11:00 a.m. We are located at 403 Main Cross Street in Taylorsville. You can learn more about us by calling 502-477-8553.

## WORSHIP IN THE COMMUNITY

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**Grace Immanuel United Church of Christ** invites you to worship on Sunday, July 30, 2023 at 10:15 am. Our guest preacher will be Rev. Chris Furr, Senior Minister of Covenant Christian Church in Cary, North Carolina. We are located at 1612 Story Avenue in Louisville. You can learn more about us at [www.graceimmanuelucc.org](http://www.graceimmanuelucc.org).

**Hurstbourne Christian Church**, invites you to a Traditional yet Informal Worship Service at 10:30 am In-Person at 601 Nottingham Parkway, Louisville KY 40222, or Streamed live on Facebook. Our Guest Preacher will be Rev. Ryan Starr.

**Jeffersontown Christian Church** invites you to worship on Sunday, July 30, 2023 at 10:45 am. Our guest preacher will be Rev. Dr. Richard Voelz, Associate Professor of Worship and Preaching at Union Presbyterian Seminary in Richmond, Virginia. We are located at 10631 Taylorsville Road in Jeffersontown. You can learn more about us at [www.jtownchristian.org](http://www.jtownchristian.org).

**LaGrange Christian Church in LaGrange** invites you to worship on Sunday, July 30, 2023 at 10:45 a.m. They are located at 214 North First Ave, LaGrange, Kentucky 400031. For more information, visit <https://www.lagrangechristianchurch.org/>.

**Middletown Christian Church** invites you to join us for worship on Sunday, July 30, 2023, at 8:30 (traditional), or 9:50 and 11:10 am (modern). Sr. Minister Brian Gerard will be preaching. Childcare available for all services. We are located at 500 N. Watterson Trail Louisville, KY 40243. Please visit [www.middletownchristian.org](http://www.middletownchristian.org) for more information.

**Newburg Christian Church in Okolona** invites you to join them for worship on Sunday, July 30, 2023 at 11 a.m. They are located at 5225 Poplar Level Rd A, Okolona, KY 40219. For more information call 502-964-1500.

**New Century Fellowship Christian Church** invites you to worship on Sunday, July 30, 2023, at 12:00 pm. We are located at 1875 Farnsley Road in Louisville. You can learn more about us on our Facebook page, NewCenturydoc, or by calling 502-416-7389.

**Radcliff Christian Church** invites you to worship on Sunday, July 30, 2023. We are located at 300 South Logsdon Parkway in Radcliff. You can learn more about us by calling 502-552-0451. **Shepherdsville Christian Church** invites you to worship on Sunday, July 30, 2023 at 11:00 am. Our guest preacher will be Rev. Dr. Lisa Davison, Johnnie Eargle Cadieux Professor of Hebrew Bible at Phillips Theological Seminary in Tulsa, Oklahoma. We are located at 337 Lees Valley Road in Shepherdsville. You can learn more about us at [www.shepherdsvilleecc.org](http://www.shepherdsvilleecc.org).

## WORSHIP & EDUCATION

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## PREAMBLE TO THE DESIGN OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST) IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

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*As members of the Christian Church,  
We confess that Jesus is the Christ,  
the Son of the living God,  
and proclaim him Lord and Savior of the world.  
In Christ's name and by his grace  
we accept our mission of witness  
and service to all people.  
We rejoice in God,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
and in God's covenant of love  
which binds us to God and to one another.  
Through baptism into Christ  
we enter into newness of life  
and are made one with the whole people of God.  
In the communion of the Holy Spirit  
we are joined together in discipleship  
and in obedience to Christ.  
At the Table of the Lord  
we celebrate with thanksgiving  
the saving acts and presence of Christ.  
Within the universal church  
we receive the gift of ministry  
and the light of scripture.  
In the bonds of Christian faith  
we yield ourselves to God  
that we may serve the One  
whose kingdom has no end.  
Blessing, glory, and honor  
be to God forever. Amen.*

*-Preamble to The Design  
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United  
States and Canada*

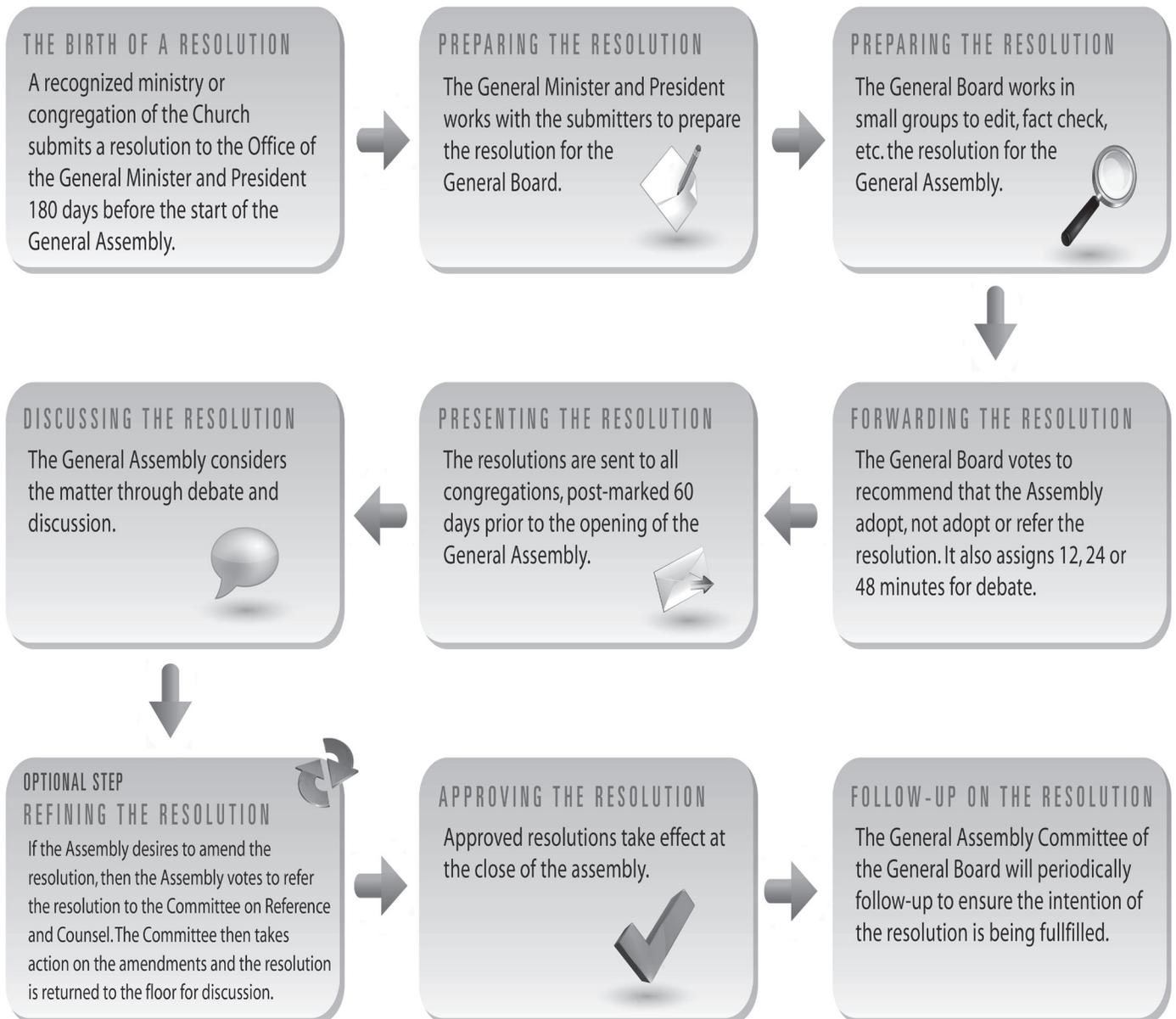
**You may view  
the full Design  
by visiting:**





## THE LIFE OF A GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION

For more on General Assembly business, visit [ga.disciples.org/business](http://ga.disciples.org/business)



# KINDOM OF GOD WITHIN US AMONG US

GENESIS 11:1-9 • LUKE 17:20-21 • 2 PETER 1:3

*General Assembly 2023 • Louisville*

## 2023 GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST) IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

**ORDER OF BUSINESS**  
July 29-August 1, 2023 Louisville, KY  
*Subject to change*

### Saturday, July 29

8:30 am

**Doors open**

9:00 am

**Opening Ceremony**

**Welcome and Introductions**

Belva Brown Jordan, Moderator

**Business Session Procedures**

Bill Bailey, Parliamentarian

**Plenary Reminders**

Belva Brown Jordan, Moderator

**Approval of the Agenda**

Néstor Gómez, Second Vice Moderator

**Presentation of Business**

Néstor Gómez, Second Vice Moderator

*(Discussion time is 12 minutes unless otherwise indicated)*

GA-2346\* Ratify Actions of the General Board

GA-2309# Disciples Home Missions

GA-2310# Division of Overseas Ministries

GA-2338^ Concerning Food Waste, Food Insecurity, and Environmental Justice

GA-2339^ Compelled to Witness: Answering the Cry of our Palestinian Siblings

Musical Interlude

GA-2303# Christian Board of Publication

GA-2302# Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries

#### **Business Item Classifications**

\* Operational, Policy, Organizational

# Report

^ Sense-of-the-Assembly

GA-2342\* Dissolution of the Pastoral Commission of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada  
 Speak Out  
 Announcements & Benediction

**Saturday, July 29**

1:15 pm

**Doors open**

1:45 pm

**Opening Prayer** Stephanie Kendell, First Vice Moderator

**Welcome and Plenary Reminders** Belva Brown Jordan, Moderator

**Presentation of Business** Néstor Gómez, Second Vice Moderator

*(Discussion time is 12 minutes unless otherwise indicated)*

GA-2307# Disciples of Christ Historical Society

GA-2305# Christian Unity and Interfaith Ministry

GA-2315# Pension Fund of the Christian Church

GA-2336\* Christian Church Health Care Benefit Trust Closure and Distribution of Assets

GA-2343\* Amendments to the Design of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
*(Discussion time: 48 minutes)*

Musical Interlude

GA-2341^ Calling the Church to Oppose Christian Nationalism  
*(Discussion time: 24 minutes)*

GA-2314# North American Pacific/Asian Disciples

GA-2312# National Benevolent Association

Speak Out

Announcements & Benediction

**Monday, July 31**

1:00 pm

**Doors open**

1:30 pm

**Bible Study**

Anathea Portier-Young

2:00 pm

**Opening Prayer**

Stephanie Kendell, First Vice Moderator

**Welcome and Plenary Reminders**

Belva Brown Jordan, Moderator

**Presentation of Business**

Néstor Gómez, Second Vice Moderator

*(Discussion time is 12 minutes unless otherwise indicated)*

GA-2313# National Convocation of the Christian Church

GA-2308# Disciples Women

GA-2304# Christian Church Foundation

GA-2340^ Building on our Commitment to Faith-Based Investing

GA-2337^ Recognition of a Truth and Healing Council to Honor Our  
Covenantal Relationship with Indigenous Peoples and to  
Discern Ways of Reparations for a Path to Reconciliation

Musical Interlude

GA-2311# Higher Education and Leadership Ministries

GA-2350# and GA-2351#

Report of the Council of Colleges and Universities and the  
Council on Theological Education

GA-2306# Disciples Church Extension Fund

Speak Out

Announcements & Benediction

**Tuesday, August 1**

- 1:00 pm **Doors open**
- 1:30 pm **Bible Study** Edwin Aponte
- 2:00 pm **Opening Prayer** Stephanie Kendell, First Vice Moderator
- Welcome and Plenary Reminders** Belva Brown Jordan, Moderator
- Presentation of Business** Néstor Gómez, Second Vice Moderator  
*(Discussion time is 12 minutes unless otherwise indicated)*
- GA-2301# General Assembly, including Office of General Minister and President
- 2:15 pm Order of the Day: GA-2345\* Reelection of the General Minister and President
- Musical Interlude
- GA-2348\* Report of the General Nominating Committee
- GA-2349# Report of the General Assembly Committee
- GA-2347\* Time and Place of the 2025 General Assembly
- Installation of the 2023-25 Moderator Team
- Speak Out
- Announcements & Benediction

## REPORTS TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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- GA-2301 Report of the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) including the Office of General Minister and President
- GA-2302 Report of the Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries
- GA-2303 Report of the Christian Board of Publication/Chalice Media
- GA-2304 Report of the Christian Church Foundation
- GA-2305 Report of the Christian Unity and Interfaith Ministry
- GA-2306 Report of the Disciples Church Extension Fund
- GA-2307 Report of the Disciples of Christ Historical Society
- GA-2308 Report of the Disciples Women
- GA-2309 Report of the Disciples Home Missions
- GA-2310 Report of the Division of Overseas Ministries/Global Ministries
- GA-2311 Report of the Higher Education and Leadership Ministries
- GA-2312 Report of the National Benevolent Association
- GA-2313 Report of the National Convocation of the Christian Church
- GA-2314 Report of the North American Pacific/Asian Disciples
- GA-2315 Report of the Pension Fund of the Christian Church
- GA-2349 Report of the General Assembly Committee

From the Standing Rules of the General Assembly

### 2.1.Reports

2.1.1. Reports are summaries of ministries performed, plans for ministry, and audited financial statements of each general ministry, commission or other entity established or recognized by the General Assembly.

2.1.2. Annually the General Board shall review such reports and make whatever comments or recommendations it deems advisable.

2.1.3. In the year in which the General Assembly meets, the General Board shall forward the Reports to the General Assembly.

2.1.4. If a Report contains only an account of work done and is primarily for information, after appropriate General Assembly consideration, no action shall be required.

2.1.5. If a Report contains recommendations for action by the General Assembly or if the General Board proposes recommendations for action by the General Assembly, such recommendations shall be submitted separately as an Operational, Policy and Organizational Item.

2.1.6. When the timing of the General Assembly prohibits a General Ministry from including an audit of its financial statements in its report, such an audit shall be provided for the next meeting of the General Board. The most recently completed audit shall be provided to the General Assembly.

2.1.7. Covenantal relationships are demonstrated by annual informational reports of regions to the General Board and annual statistical reports of the congregations in the Year Book and Directory of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The reports of regions and congregations are not business items for the General Assembly.

**GA-2301**  
**Report of the General Assembly,**  
**including Office of the General Minister and President**

**GENERAL MINISTER AND PRESIDENT**

In the last year, my work has focused on moving the following initiatives forward:

- **The Covenant Project:**
  - The Governance Committee of the General Board continued its work to develop a proposal for changes to the Design that will help the church live into its call to be a covenant church and increase engagement and connection with congregations, regions and general ministries ; create greater capacity for listening, learning, discerning and deciding in faithful ways; move toward a more nimble future that allows the church to continue to evolve and change as we imagine who we must be as a new church in this new world. Grounded in the theological understanding of Disciples as a covenantal church, the work is now known as the Covenant Project. This work began in the fall of 2019 with the Governance Committee in retreat, and at each subsequent Administrative Committee and General Board meeting, discussion has helped the vision to emerge. In the fall of 2022, over 35 virtual Covenant Town Halls were convened to share the proposed changes, get feedback, and answer questions. Conversations have been held with regional and general ministry leaders. A website, <https://disciples.org/covenant-project/> was created to provide ongoing updates and answers to frequently asked questions. With feedback from each Town Hall, and each conversation, the page has been updated. This work has been submitted as resolution GA-2343. The resolution proposes a 2-year implementation planning period, with an implementation team being named and charged to bring back to the General Assembly in 2025 proposed changes to the Standing Rules of the General Board and the Special Rules of the General Assembly.
  
- **The Church Narrative Project:**
  - As we continue to imagine who we must be as a new church for a new world, the work of Dr. David Anderson Hooker has drafted the work to create a new church narrative. It is not enough simply to update our training, either for anti-racism, or even adaptive change. The preferred narrative of our shared future can only be built when together we are listening to one another's stories, identifying collectively what the problematics are in the life of the church, and naming the ways in which

we wish to live into we say we are. How we get from here to there is the work. Dr. Hooker offers this analogy: if our stories are the cars, the narrative is the highway. The highway controls where we can go, how fast, etc. Unless we change the narrative, i.e., build a new highway, our cars will be bound by the existing pathways. Using Dr. Hooker’s Transforming Community Conferencing methodology, we held two preliminary webinars in 2020 and 2021. In 2022, I appointed the Rev. Yvonne Gilmore to lead the Church Narrative Project, working with Dr. Hooker and his team to develop a plan to engage the church region by region, inviting general ministries to come alongside in support. Like a “reverse musical chairs” game, the goal is to add regions to the conversation. The first session was held in October 22 in Colorado, followed by Illinois/Wisconsin/Michigan in early March, with Arizona to follow at the end of April. Through the end of 2023, we have regions scheduled to participate in this project. The Cabinet of General Ministries was led in a powerful and productive retreat by Dr. Hooker in September 2022, and a suggestion has been made to bring the College of Regional Ministers together with the Cabinet to engage in this process together.

- o By learning to listen deeply to one another, name the problems and imagine together, through the Church Narrative Project, we are also building capacity across the church to participate in the new model proposed by the Covenant Project. Regionally based sessions also help to strengthen connection among congregations in each region, allowing them to optimize their own collective ministry as regional church, and better prepare them to participate in church-wide ministry and decision-making.

- **The Proclamation Project:**

- o In December 2022, the Office of the General Minister and President was awarded \$1 million by the Lilly Endowment’s Compelling Preaching grant initiative. The funds will be used to create a Center for Proclamation, designed to support the continued growth and development of Disciples clergy as they proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. For many clergy, the COVID-19 pandemic presented new challenges in using new modes of communication and new modalities for proclamation. From social media to livestreaming, from drama to dialogical sermons, it is important to stay abreast of the ways in which younger generations communicate and the ways in which we must continue to be relevant in the proclamation of the gospel. Resources for preaching, workshops to help preachers hone the craft of preaching, and opportunities for continuing education and development are the initial goals of the Center. The Rev. Lee Hull Moses

has been appointed as the Executive Director of the Center for Proclamation, having served as the Vice President and Chief of Staff in the OGMP for the past 4 years. Rev. Moses led the effort to prepare and submit the grant proposal, utilizing the collective wisdom of several Disciples' clergy and scholars. The first event was a preaching worship held in January 2023. Nearly 200 clergy listened as 3 Disciples ministers preached on the General Assembly 2023 texts. The positive response lets us know these resources are needed and welcomed by our clergy.

- **ALEX – Data for Disciples:**

- A more detailed report can be found below. At the beginning of my tenure as GMP in 2017, I set a goal to create a data warehouse to support the gathering of “church intelligence”. Since first being used for gathering data for the 2020 calendar year, Alex has continued to develop from an online tool for entering congregational data for the Yearbook to developing ways in which we can mine and analyze the data to help us better understand congregational life and clergy. We have work yet to do and it is important to understand that we are among the very last of the mainline denominations to develop this capability. We continue to benchmark ourselves and share ideas with our full communion partners, the United Church of Christ and the United Church of Canada.

- **Ecumenical Leadership:**

- I was a delegate to the World Council of Churches World Assembly in Karlsruhe, Germany in late August 2022. The Church was also represented by Bethany Guy, delegate and Paul Tche, advisor. Leaders from several Disciples ministries were represented, including Week of Compassion and Division of Overseas Ministries. Week of Compassion supported the attendance of several seminarians, including 2 students who attended the Bossey Institute. I was elected as a member of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches, following in the footsteps of former GMPs Rev. Dr. Sharon Watkins and Rev. Dr. Dick Hamm.
- I continue my service as Treasurer of the Governing Board of the National Council of Churches (NCC), and chair of its Finance Committee. Bishop Vashti McKenzie, retired bishop in the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, was called in April 2022 as the Interim President and General Secretary of the NCC. Under her leadership, the visibility and credibility of the NCC has been enhanced. It has been my honor to work to create greater transparency of financial reporting and oversight on behalf of the Governing Board. I have also served as a member of the NCC Race Task

Force, focused on working to dismantle racism in the interactions of the Governing Board. In May 2022, we held a retreat at the Legacy Museum in Birmingham, AL, facilitated by Dr. David Anderson Hooker, as we explored ways in which to both identify and dismantle systemic racism that threatens the relevance and credibility of this ecumenical body.

- o I am the NCC representative to the board of Friendship Press, the arm of the NCC that oversees the New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition (NRSVue) Bible. Rev. Dr. Sharon Watkins, former Disciples GMP, currently serves as the chair of the Friendship Press board.
- o The NCC will launch the celebration of its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary (to be observed in 2025) at its May 2023 Governing Board meeting, to be held at National City Christian Church in Washington, DC. I am honored that one of our congregations in the US capital city will host this historic launch event.
- o We continue to develop and strengthen our relationships with our full communion partners: the United Church of Christ and the United Church of Canada. During 2021 and 2022, I met with the heads of communion of these churches to keep each other updated on our ministries and the state of our churches. In March 2023, a tri-lateral meeting of the heads of communion and ecumenical officers of each communion was held. In the fall of 2023, we will hold the first tri-lateral meeting of leaders from each of the churches. This replaces the bi-lateral partner meetings held between the Disciples and the UCC, and between the UCC and the United Church of Canada. We are all excited about future opportunities for collaborative ministry across the 3 churches.
- o I will be part of a Global Ministries delegation to the Middle East April 18-28, 2023.

Over the past six years, the last three of which have been impacted by a global pandemic, it has been my honor and great privilege to serve as General Minister and President. May God continue to give us imagination to be who we need to be in this new world, and courage to be the church we say we are. I am grateful to serve with you.

## **Report to the General Board - 2023**

### **CHRISTIAN CHURCH SERVICES**

Christian Church Services (CCS) is the umbrella corporation that coordinates the shared services of the Disciples Center such as building lease, phone system, reception, insurance, and coordination with building ownership and management. The

board of Christian Church Services is comprised of the heads of the ministries which lease space in Disciples Center. CCS contracts with the OGMP and Treasury Services to provide bookkeeping, management, and daily operations.

In 2022, some of the ministries in Disciples Center have come back to the office nearly full time, though most are working on a hybrid or fully remote schedule. The CCS board continues to explore possibilities for decreasing costs to ministries given new office space realities, including considering subleasing some office space and renegotiating the operations agreement with the OGMP. Todd Adams served as board chair in 2021-2022; Gary Kidwell will be the chair in 2023.

### CENTER FOR FAITH AND GIVING

This will be a verbal report.

### COLLEGE OF REGIONAL MINISTERS

**President:** William Rose-Heim, Greater Kansas City

**President-Elect:** Christal Williams, Tennessee

**First Vice-President:** Denise Bell, Georgia

**Second Vice-President:** Bill Spangler-Dunning, Virginia

**Secretary:** Paul Koch, Mid-America

<https://disciples.org/regional-ministries/>

Adaptive challenges occur more rapidly now than ever before in the religious cultures of Canada and the United States and call for prudent yet bold experiments in structure and function. The work of the College of Regional Ministers (CRM) continually evolves and diversifies as does the makeup of its members. The lead staff members of each Region and the leaders of the North American Asian Pacific Disciples, Obra Hispana, and the National Convocation, together with our General Minister and President work to connect congregations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) with each other, General ministry partners, and ecumenical.

Regional ministers are in congregations every week, often several times during a week, listening, observing, and responding to the joys and concerns, successes and challenges, hopes and sacrifices of Disciples in our regions. We gather and share information to help strengthen covenant relationships within the whole Church. At any time, we may be called upon to be present with pastors, chaplains, and lay leaders, in a variety of roles; pastor, administrator, preacher, coach, co-explorer, mediator, and representative of the whole Church. It is daunting, humbling, and incredibly joy-filled work and we thank God daily for the privilege of serving among you.

Each of the thirty-one regions in the U.S. and Canada is part of a fellowship group that meets to offer support, explore opportunities for collaboration, and sharing best practices in their geographical and cultural contexts.

- Western Regions in Ministry (WRIM) – Northern Lights, Oregon/SW Idaho, Northern California/Nevada, Pacific Southwest, Arizona, and Central Rocky Mountain regions
- Regions of the Sun Equipping and Serving (ROSES) – Southwest, Great River, and Oklahoma regions
- Southeast Regional Fellowship (SERF) – North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Kentucky, Alabama/NW Florida, Tennessee, and Virginia regions
- Heartland – Illinois/Wisconsin, Indiana, Nebraska, Kansas, Mid-America, Greater Kansas City and Upper Midwest regions
- Northeast Inter-Regional Fellowship (NIRF) – Ohio, Pennsylvania, Northeast, West Virginia, Michigan, Canada and the Capital Area regions

Having started hour-long monthly online gatherings during the pandemic in 2020, the College of Regional Ministers decided to keep up the practice on second Wednesdays. We check-in, pray, consider how we might respond prophetically and pastorally to occasions of violence, discrimination, or disaster, catch up on developments within the wider Church, and encourage and exhort one another. Lately, in online meetings on third Wednesdays, available members explore in greater detail procedures common in all regions (like Search and Call) and consider how these may be improved and more consistently practiced.

With lowered health risks, the CRM has begun to gather in person again at least two times a year (at annual meetings of the General Board and for a late autumn or early winter retreat). During even-numbered years, Regional Ministers and Regional Moderators meet separately and together in a summer gathering called the Forum of Regional Ministers and Moderators. When the General Assembly meets, the CRM, in addition to participating in the worship, activities, and learning opportunities, will set up and staff a booth in the exhibit hall to engage with and celebrate Disciples from across the life of the whole Church and share information and opportunities for ministries and missions.

All members of the CRM serve in a representative, service and/or leadership capacity within the College. Regional ministers serve as officers and or directors on at least one of the boards and committees of General ministries, seminaries, and other Disciples institutes of higher education. Regional ministers also serve on ecumenical, nonprofit and civic boards and justice movements within their geographic areas. This is one of the ways that we do our part to strengthen covenant connections among Disciples.

The work of the College would not be possible without the dedication and sacrifice of program and administrative staff (in regions fortunate to have either or both). The wider

Church seldom gets to see them or hear about the great work that they do but regional ministry would not happen or happen as well without them. Alongside them are the pastors, chaplains, leaders and members of congregations, Sunday School classes, and fellowship groups. As we move from a hub and spoke model of regional ministry to more of a covenantal, neural network model where all of us serve and lead according to our spiritual gifts, there is more bold innovation and courageous transformation and deeper experiences of the presence of God within, among, and around us.

## Celebrations

Regional ministers gathered with regional moderators at First Christian Church in Dallas, Texas in August 2022. It was our first in-person gathering in two years and made for a poignant reunion. Naturally, we also made it a hybrid meeting so that colleagues who were unable to travel could still participate. We enjoyed time in prayer, immersion in scripture, sharing updates and observations, and learning about the innovative missions and ministries in the host congregation. Worship with the Asamblea of the Obra Hispana was one of the highlights of the gathering and a prescient reminder of the opportunity and challenges before us as the Church evolves by the grace of God away from an assumed, historically Euro-centric identity to a more covenantal, multicultural expression of the Body of Christ.

In December 2022 we were hosted by the Christian Church in Arizona and their Regional Minister - Rev. Dr. Jay Hartley - for a three-day retreat at the Redemptorist Renewal Center in Tucson. We limited the business session to just over one hour so that we could devote needed time for prayer, building stronger relationships of trust, and resting in whatever form fit the need for renewal. The Center is on one hundred and twenty acres adjacent to the Saguaro National Park with great hiking trails. Near the place where they intersect are petroglyphs left on the rocks from those who lived there long before the first Europeans invaded the North American continent. Rev. Dr. Denise Bell led us in a Racial Wealth Gap Simulation Game from Bread for the World that helped us all to appreciate more the unrelenting impact of systemic racism and resulting economic inequity. A local spiritual director led us in sacred reading and guided meditation and journaling. We gathered at tables for curated conversations about our covenantal relationships, lifecycles of manifestations of the Church, and the search and call ministry. Many of us traveled with Rev. Pedro Ramos Goycolea to Nogales where we saw the wall that divides the U.S. from Mexico, heard stories of faith and fear, sacrifice and sacrilege. While at a welcoming center that helps asylum-seekers (legally allowed to enter the U.S.) to connect with sponsoring family members and assist them with their travels, a family new to the U.S. stepped through the doors to continue their long journey in hope. On our last evening together, Rev. Hartley, playing the bagpipes, led us to an outdoor worship area overlooking Tucson and the Santa Catalina mountains at sunset, where, with bread, cup, and prayers we remembered Jesus at a stone table with Rev. Dr. Chung Seong Kim, Rev. Dr. LaTaunya Bynum, and Rev. Dr. Richie Sanchez.



All new regional ministers bring unique gifts and fresh perspective to the work of the College. When regional ministers retire, resign, or accept new and different calls to serve, their wisdom, dedication, and witness to the goodness of God continues to influence the work of the College going forward.

During the past two years there have already been nine major transitions among regional ministers:

- Rev. Dr. Eugene James – retired from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Michigan
- Rev. Dr. Teresa Dulyea Parker – added to her regional ministry in the Christian Church in Illinois/Wisconsin serving as regional minister in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Michigan as part of a new partnership between the two regions
- Rev. Dr. Dale Braxton accepted the call to be the interim regional minister for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Alabama/Northwest Florida following the retirement of long-term regional minister, Rev. Dr. John Mobley
- Rev. Betsy Goehrig retired as regional minister of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Florida
- Rev. Sandi Messick completed her ministry in the Northern Lights Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and began serving as regional minister for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Florida
- Rev. Bill Robey accepted the call to serve as interim regional minister for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Northern Lights Region
- Rev. Dr. Donald K. Gillett, II began serving as regional minister for the for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Kentucky in 2022
- Rev. Dr. Jennifer Garbin , regional minister for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Canada completed her ministry there in December 2022.

We have recently learned that Rev. Dr. Rick Spleth will retire in 2023 as the Regional Minister for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Indiana. Rev. Dr. Cathy Myers-Wirt and Rev. Dr. Doug Wirt will retire as Regional Ministers for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Oregon and Southwest Idaho.

We are thankful for Rev. Dean Phelps who keeps our confidential website populated with frequently used resources, policy and procedure updates, and helpful instructional videos which are especially invaluable for new Regional Ministers. He has recently been called to serve as the Interim Regional Minister for the Capitol Area Region.

## Challenges

The biggest challenges in regional ministry are adaptive. They include a rapidly evolving religious landscape in which Christians are in the minority in both the U.S. and Canada, a growing number of younger adults that are not interested in religious faith and practice, and harmful legacies of Christendom that still live in our collective DNA – like systemic racism, economic inequity, and sanctioned violence. The congregations

we serve wrestle with the same challenges and those that are not in denial are having to find a more courageous and faithful way to thrive.

Adaptive challenges cannot be fixed with expertise. We are in uncharted territory but not without direction. The witness of Jesus, the Scriptures, and church history give witness to numerous times when a season of “the way we’ve always done it” starts to end before the next one has fully emerged. We are in that liminal space now. We have to admit that we are not as confident that we know exactly how best to serve and lead among you as we once might have been. We need to be more aware of the presence and wisdom of God, to admit that we have much to learn, and to pay attention to covenant relationships so that we can, together, discern the opportunities for partnership and innovation.

One of the College’s most important challenges is to model for the congregations that we serve the kind of trustworthy collegiality and accountability for healthier outcomes that we recognize in those faith communities and general ministries that are thriving and adding value. The work that went into creating the Northern Lights Region, the experiments in partnership between the Illinois/Wisconsin and Michigan regions, and a tri-regional partnership initiative among the Nebraska, Kansas, and Greater Kansas City Regions are just a few examples of how we are exploring new models.

### **What we want the General Board to know**

We are in the work ahead of us all with you and the whole Church. We strive to be trustworthy companions. We are experimenting with ways to work better together across traditional boundaries with more consistently and more responsively. We are humbled and grateful to be a part of this covenantal community, to be with you, disciples of Jesus the Christ in this movement that bears his name.

### **Prayers**

Change is a non-negotiable of growth. As we change with you and pray for you, please pray for us to keep seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit in all that we do, to be open to how our work with you will change each of us, and to keep faith with Christ and all those saints who have gone before us so that there will always be a Church that gives credible witness to the limitless love of God.

<https://disciples.org/regional-ministries/>



## THE DISCIPLES CENTER FOR PUBLIC WITNESS

Executive Director and Team Leader - Rev. Dr. Ken Brooker Langston

The Disciples Center for Public Witness (DC4PW) is a unique ministry among the Disciples of Christ, a multi-issue justice advocacy ministry the mission of which is to contribute to and support the creation, promotion, and full implementation of laws and policies that move all of us closer and closer to the Beloved Community envisioned by The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. This we do not only by working in partnership with diverse Disciples, ecumenical, and multi-faith justice advocacy coalitions, but also by educating, connecting, and equipping Disciples and other people of faith for multi-issue justice advocacy in the United States and Canada. In short, we work with denominational, ecumenical, interfaith, and secular partners to apply to important laws and policies a faith-based ethical vision drawn from our denomination's passion for justice, our vision of true community, and our commitment to wholeness in a fragmented world.

The Center (DC4PW) came into existence as a partnership between the Christian Church Capital Area and the National City Christian Church Foundation and then invited into this partnership the seven founding churches: the four DC congregations plus Bethany Beach, Light of the World, and Ray of Hope. Soon other churches became supporting congregations and, along with other ministries and individual supporters, joined this community of common concerns on a shared journey to justice. The Center (DC4PW) continued to develop into a ministry for the whole church and is currently an associate ministry of Disciples Home Missions, a partner in advocacy with the Division of Overseas Ministries, and, by a vote of the General Assembly, a recognized organization of the church that reports to both the General Board and the General Assembly primarily through the Office of the General Minister and President.

In 2022, through the hard work of our interfaith justice advocacy team and the visionary leadership of a Board that represents the whole church, the Center (DC4PW) continued to inform, inspire, and invite into greater involvement Disciples and other people of faith throughout the United States and Canada. In the United States, we worked on a number of important issues through the lens of our priority issue-areas: economic justice and racial equity. These included criminal justice reform, immigration reform, stopping hate crimes, better training and greater accountability of police officers, the right to form unions, preventing gun violence, expanding healthcare, protecting and expanding food programs and day care for the children of economically struggling families, providing paid sick leave, securing paycheck equality, closing the wage gap, increasing the minimum wage, diverse religious liberty concerns, justice for farmworkers, factory workers, and day workers, and various policies affecting Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East. In Canada our sister ministry, the Disciples Centre for Public Witness, worked alongside ecumenical partners to address such issues as

immigration, poverty, creation care, peace, and the rights of First Nations and indigenous peoples.

2022 saw changes in Board leadership at the Center (DC4PW) with the co-founder and long-time president (now President Emeritus) “stepping down but not walking away” from the ministry of the Center (DC4PW), the election of new co-presidents and a new vice-president to guide us into the future, and new members coming onto the Board because of (1) transitions in the leadership of general ministries represented on the Board, and (2) our increasing outreach to ecumenical partners in Baptist churches.

Financially, despite a great number of fundraising challenges facing all small nonprofits, many of our congregations, and even our denomination as a whole, the Center (DC4PW) is in relatively decent shape. We basically broke even in 2022, with the majority of the funds needed for 2023 already pledged by the end of the year, and enough money in the bank - without raising any more funds - to cover our projected costs for 2023 and slightly beyond. God is good!

### **EUROPEAN EVANGELISTIC SOCIETY**

**PO Box 24560**

**Indianapolis, Indiana**

**[www.eesinc.org](http://www.eesinc.org)**

**317-299-0333**

**Tony Twist, PhD, D.Min., President  
2022 General Board Report**

The European Evangelistic Society (EES), incorporated in 1946, has now been in existence for 78 years. The Institute for the Study of Christian Origins was established in Tübingen, Germany in the early 1960s. Its purpose is to encourage and guide research in the earliest church and to focus the application of that research on the church today.

The essential mission of EES in its 78 years of history has not changed. It remains: To develop Christian leaders for significant service through higher learning. The vision of EES is that every nation has effective leaders of disciple-making movements who make a global impact on their churches, cultures, and countries for Christ. This vision reflects the common mission priorities of the Disciples of Christ as a movement for wholeness that welcomes all to the Table, and fulfills the last command of Jesus – “. . . as you are going, make disciples of all nations immersing them into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, teaching obedience to all that I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:18-20).

The mission of the EES is focused on this concern of leadership development necessary to realize the Four Priorities of the Church as outlined in the 2020 Vision of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The EES views its priorities in terms of

developing Christian leaders and future Christian leaders for significant service, especially among international students who gravitate to the University of Tübingen for theological studies. EES staff and partners provide practical assistance, counsel, and hospitality when students and visiting scholars arrive on site in order to establish relationships. This initial assistance is complemented through prayer, fellowship, and studies as students become more involved.

Through the Institute for the Study of Christian Origins in Tübingen, Germany, the EES is actively involved in promoting research and publication. This mission expresses itself in three primary areas of ministry:

- To develop international leaders through advanced studies;
- To assist emerging leaders in research and publication of relevant articles, books, and other materials in their respective global settings;
- To help encourage the establishment and development of churches, colleges, and agencies focused on evangelism and disciple-making.

The Institute for the Study of Christian Origins is being positioned to help develop dedicated leaders for significant service throughout Europe, Russia, Central Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and beyond.

The educational ministry at The Institute for the Study of Christian Origins, currently led by Director Dr. Dennis Lindsay, continues to function alongside the Protestant Faculty of Eberhard Karls University in Tübingen, Germany. The Institute has a long and productive relationship with the prestigious and influential University. The influence of this ministry has been felt all over the world, as international students and scholars have come to Tübingen for research and study. It promotes research, offers colloquia through the academic year, organizes international symposia every three or four years, provides highly specialized library resources in Early Christianity, and engages in continuing dialogue with scholars and students from around the world.

The **English-German Colloquium in New Testament** meets weekly throughout the academic year and serves as a forum for visiting professors and scholars to present research work in progress. The Colloquium also provides an opportunity for doctoral students to present their work (dissertation proposals, a chapter from the dissertation, conference papers, etc.) and to receive feedback. Moreover, it offers an unusual opportunity for scholars at all levels—master’s students, doctoral candidates, post-doctoral fellows, and professors—to meet and to discuss current research with one another. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Colloquium continued to take place in online format, which opened the dialogue forum to participants beyond Tübingen, increasing its appeal and outreach. The Colloquium is now routinely conducted in “hybrid” format (in person and online) so that scholars from all over the world—Germany, Norway, Italy, India, USA, and beyond—have been able to participate and present papers at the meetings.

**Courses in Theological German and Theological English**, listed in the University catalogue, are offered by approved EES staff in the seminar room at the Institute.

**Theological German** offers newly arrived international students the chance to read and discuss theological texts written in German, while **Theological English** attracts mostly German students, some of whom are preparing for an exchange semester/year abroad. Both classes include readings from a rotating selection of prominent Christian authors and a variety of topics (e.g., in the recent Winter Semester the Theological English class focused on the History of Early Christian Literature, with readings from modern authors and primary texts). The classes are designed to enable students to: 1) develop and hone language skills for reading and discussing theological texts in the respective languages; 2) engage in theological reflection on important topics related to biblical theology; and 3) deepen relationships with God and others. These classes, offered as they are in the University setting, attract students from a variety of religious and non-religious backgrounds. Students represent a range of involvement in the local church, from pastors to nominal church members, to members of other faith traditions, to professed agnostics and atheists. A common discussion of theological texts and ideas within this circle often leads to stimulating conversations and insights about the Christian faith.

**International Symposia and Publications:** In fall 2018, the Institute—in cooperation with Professor Michael Tilly (the University of Tübingen) and Professor Loren Stuckenbruck (University of Munich)—hosted an international symposium in Tübingen on “The Lord’s Prayer: Origins, Significance, and Reception”. The papers from this symposium have now been published as a volume in the *WUNT* series under the title: *The Lord’s Prayer*, ed., by Beth Langstaff, Loren T. Stuckenbruck, and Michael Tilly (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2022). The volume is prefaced by a special tribute to Dr. Beth Langstaff, long time Director of the Tübingen Institute, who passed away in early 2022. The volume is available for purchase at the following website: <https://www.mohrsiebeck.com/buch/the-lords-prayer-9783161614408>

**Hospitality:** The Institute offers overnight and short-term guest accommodation to visiting scholars and Colloquium presenters.

#### **EES Goals:**

- Develop relationships between EES and other universities to help provide access to resources and research opportunities for the growing number of graduate students needing advanced studies.
- Provide doctoral mentoring, supervision, and opportunities for graduates and others through the EES networks.
- Provide opportunities for
  - ◊ Mentoring doctoral students
  - ◊ Teaching theological English and theological German to students at Tübingen University
  - ◊ Preparing students from Eastern Europe and Central Asia to conduct research, write, and publish quality materials in their own languages

- Conduct the German-English Colloquium in conjunction with Protestant Faculty at Tübingen University.

Although the EES does not work specifically in any one congregation, it seeks to promote the cause of reconciliation throughout the world by developing leaders who will demonstrate our commitment to the idea of a faithful, growing church that exhibits true community, deep Christian spirituality, and a passion for justice. The EES seeks to be an international witness for the Christian gospel in one of the most influential theological settings in the world. In keeping with the original vision of the European Evangelistic Society, the goal is to see churches thriving and flourishing throughout the world by equipping capable leaders to serve.

The EES is characterized by a deep and abiding interest in the oneness of the Body of Christ. The original purpose of the organization was to effect a channel through which it might cooperate in accomplishing the divine mission transmitted to the Church through the New Testament, and that its fraternity in this cause should be recognized as a fellowship for advancing the Christian mission. That interest has not changed with the passing of 78 years of ministry. The European Evangelistic Society is one of the few ministries among Stone-Campbell churches that has historically sought to work among all three streams of the American expression of this ideal. For over half a century, the dream of a united Church, bound by its commitment to the New Testament as the revelation of God about the person of Jesus Christ, has been the unchanging focus of its mission.

### **GENERAL COMMISSION ON CLERGY(GCOM)**

The General Commission on Clergy (GCOM) is chaired by the Rev. Pamela G. Holt, Regional Minister from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Oklahoma. Her term began in October, 2021 and will end December 31, 2023. The sub-committees and chairs are: Standards, chaired by Rev. Sandy Messick, Regional Minister from Florida; Search & Call by Rev. Josh Patty, Regional Minister from Iowa; and Support, by Rev. Bill Rose-Heim, Regional Minister from Greater Kansas City. Counting the General Minister & President, GCOM currently has 17 members who represent the whole church.

GCOM has undergone a few changes in the last two years. First, we meet twice a year for two days each meeting via Zoom. This has been a productive and cost-efficient way for us to do our work together. Second, the standing forms for clergy, whose standing is held with GCOM, have been shortened for pertinent information, and are now completed online and housed in CDM+. This is a major change and allows the process of standing forms to be much more efficient. Third, GCOM appointed a task team to do a deep dive into the Theological Foundations and Policies and Criteria for the Ordering of Ministry to explore if this document needs to be changed to fit the changing demands of how we understand the call to ordained and commissioned ministry. This team is chaired by Rev. Sandy Messick and is comprised of 14 members representing the whole church. Their work has revealed that this is a document in need of revision and

some systemic and polity challenges that will lead to wide interpretations of the document across regions. Their intention will be not only to offer a new framework for authorization of ministry, but also some best practices for regions as they seek to interpret and implement the new framework. GCOM received proposed recommendations to be considered for standing with GCOM in unusual situations, and GCOM has approved alternative options and expanded options for taking the required Healthy Boundaries, as well as a revised Standing Form which was used this year. Search & Call is exploring other denominational search & call systems to see how our system could be revitalized and could we create some alternative profiles for congregations to use. We are grateful for the work of GCOM, which provides guidance and support for all our clergy, and this year we are especially grateful for Shannon Pope and Dominic Dorsey who are working on the GCOM website, as well as Dean Phelps and Dominic Dorsey who have provided tremendous IT support for all the transitions.

### **UNITED CHURCH INSURANCE ASSOCIATION dba INSURANCE BOARD**

January 30, 2023

Rev. Terri Hord Owens

General Minister and President

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

P.O. Box 1986

Indianapolis, IN 46206-1986

RE: 2021 General Board/General Assembly Report

Dear Reverend Owens:

In accordance with the request of the Office of the General Minister and President (OGMP), I am pleased to offer the report of United Church Insurance Association dba Insurance Board in support of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is an ecumenical partner of the United Church of Christ, in Full Communion. Insurance Board is a Recognized Ministry Partner of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) whose mission it is to support and protect churches within the denominations of several ecclesiastical partners of the United Church of Christ including:

- Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
- Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
- Reformed Church in America
- Alliance of Baptists

As of 12/31/2022, Insurance Board provided insurance coverage to 573 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Churches. Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) churches represented 14% of the participants in the Insurance Board program. Notably, at the end of 2022, 29% of Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) churches were located in the states of Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, and Texas. Many of these churches would have a difficult time obtaining property and liability insurance coverage in these areas due to the threat of extreme weather. Over the past 6 years, these states have been plagued by some of the most severe weather in the United States due to Hurricanes, Tornadoes, Hailstorms, and a severe freeze event (aka The Texas Freeze 2021). Unlike other church insurers, our ministry calls us to provide insurance coverage to churches in all 50 states; following our church partners wherever they exist in furtherance of the Gospel. We are unique in this regard.

As part of our relationship with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Insurance Board supported a number of events over the course of the year, including the following Regional sponsorships:

- Virginia Region
- Southwest Region
- Great River Region
- Florida Region

Additionally, Insurance Board supports and participates at General Assembly and National Convocation events when such events are assembled.

Our organization considers its commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion as a core principle of its workforce and employment culture. 32% of our staff are Black, Indigenous, or Persons of Color, with 60% identifying as female, and 40% as male. 2 of our Board members represent the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Insurance Board continues to offer one of the broadest suites of insurance coverage available to Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) churches and affiliated ministries, from generous liability limits for general liability, sexual misconduct liability, and umbrella liability, Directors and Officers and Employment Practices liability, to crime coverage, a robust property coverage form, and others. We also offer more than insurance. Our comprehensive library of loss control resources is designed to help churches become safer places for ministry. A sample listing of some of our resources (most of which are available for free to Disciples of Christ churches and ministries) follows:

- Background check services (discounted for participating churches)
- Covid-19 Resources
- Emergency Preparedness
- Cyber Security Toolkit
- Water Sensor Technology
- Quarterly Loss Control Newsletter (*The Steward*)
- Boundary Training financial assistance

- Legal Helpline
- HR tools
- Abuse Prevention
- Many others available at [www.Insuranceboard.org/safety-central](http://www.Insuranceboard.org/safety-central)

Insurance Board is a 501 (c)(3), non-profit organization, and our ministry only offers insurance coverage to churches and their affiliated ministries. We have been protecting Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) churches from the financial consequences of insurance losses since 1991 and are privileged to be a Recognized Ministry Partner.

Increasingly, Climate Change is impacting our weather in a way not previously experienced. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the U.S. has sustained 341 weather events reaching or exceeding \$1 billion (CPI adjusted). Their data indicates that there was an average of 3.1 such weather events in the 1980's, 5.5 in the 1990's, and 6.7 in the 2000's. From 2010 to 2019, there was an average of 12.8, and in 2022 alone, there were 18 separate events reaching or exceeding \$1 billion in damage. The severity of weather activity is difficult to dispute when objectively evaluating the data. Solid insurance coverage continues to be an important consideration for churches to adequately protect their property assets. In 2022, Insurance Board paid out nearly \$2,000,000 in property related insurance claims for Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) churches, and it continues to be our privilege to serve the church in this way.

In Christian service,



Timothy Harris, CPCU  
President & CEO  
Insurance Board

**NATIONAL CONVOCATION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH  
and the  
NATIONAL CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY CONVENTION**

E-mail: [nationalconvocation@disciples.org](mailto:nationalconvocation@disciples.org)

Web site: [www.nationalconvocation.org](http://www.nationalconvocation.org)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/NationalConvoc2/>

**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.

**27<sup>th</sup> 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 27<sup>th</sup> 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: <sup>17</sup> *Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.* <sup>18</sup> *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 27<sup>th</sup> 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

January	New Church Ministry – Rev. Terrell McTyer
February	Disciples Church Extension Fund (DCEF) - Belinda King
March	International Disciples Women’s Ministries – Rev. Angele Johnson
April	Refugee & Immigration Ministries – Rev. Sharon Stanley-Rea
May	Reconciliation Ministries – Rev. April Johnson
June	Soul Care Conversation following tragic events in Buffalo, NY & Uvalde, TX
July	National Benevolent Association – Mark Anderson
August	Certificate of African American Ministry – Lexington Theological Seminary
September	Dr. Charisse Gillett and Rev. Dr. William Lee
October	Disciples Peace Fellowship – Rev. Brian Frederick
November	Christian Education and Faith Formation – Rev. Monique Crain Spells
	Black Disciples Endowment Fund – President Jackie Bunch Immediate Past President – Mary Lou Kegler

## **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**

### Executive Board

Rev. Dr. William Crowder, President (Illinois)

Tera Daniels, Vice President (Texas)

Rev. Dr. Joanne Flowers (Arkansas)

Orlando Scott, Treasurer (Georgia)

### Trustees at large

Rev. Aaron Smith (Georgia)

Juanita Greene (Kentucky)

Anne Sowell (Ohio)

Rev. John Ray (Indiana)

Rev. William Smith (Texas)

Rev. Dr. Darren Phelps (Florida)

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

**RECONCILIATION MINISTRY**

Rev. April G. Johnson - Executive Director

*“Reconciliation Ministry advances the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)’s journey toward wholeness by empowering each expression of the Church to implement structural change to address historic fractures caused by racism and the systems that perpetuate it. It is the goal of our shared work to foster life-giving community within our church and in relationship with the whole family of God.” We are pleased to provide 2022 highlights of our Ministry as follows:*

- **Funding** improved in 2022 but has not returned to pre-pandemic levels where we were enjoying a larger participation in the Special Offering contributions. We are encouraged that receipts grew over 2021 to 2022 giving by 17%.
- **Granting Program** –The funds awarded during the 2021/2022 cycle, provided for scholarships for major support for Disciples Historical Society’s Kirkpatrick Lectures: *Systemic Racism, Antiracism, and Reconciliation in Our Shared History and Tradition*. Our smaller granting program named after our former Executive, Rev. Dr. Ernest Newborn, Sr. funded scholarships for seminarians to attend the Samuel DeWitt Proctor annual conference as well as for two congregations in the Ohio Region to receive awards for their programs for ecumenical anti-racism education. We are pleased that participants from each of the grant-awarded programs describe specific learnings that deepened their commitment to their individual and collective calls to disrupt and dismantle harmful narratives that continue to perpetuate systemic racism.
- **Anti-Racism Education** – Disciples Regions are assuming a larger role in the trajectory of their anti-racism education program. There are currently 17 regions that have anti-racism/pro-reconciliation commissions or teams. These teams work in collaboration with anti-racism education facilitators in their Regions and with the General Reconciliation Ministry Core Trainers to design and offer curriculum objectives for their ARPR mission. Regions and General Ministries provided 26 anti-racism educational events attended by over 700 participants in 2022. Several regions and congregations continue to host regularly scheduled informational and educational events, with examples like *Critical Race Theory* explained in the Regions of Upper Midwest and Greater Kansas City.
- **Becoming Anti-Racist Congregations** - Our Executive Director convened a task force of pastors and practitioners with the objective to describe and define

the marks of an anti-racist congregation. The task force was populated by Sarah Lynn Gershon, Chris Wilson, Alfred Walker, and Darryl Searuggs, representing the Regions of Indiana, Greater Kansas City, Southwest, and Central Rocky Mountain, respectively. The results of their collaboration and recommendations constitute, not only the ‘marks’ of an anti-racist congregation, but a continuum toward congregational anti-racist identity. This group will present their work at the 2023 General Assembly in Louisville, Kentucky.

- Governance Restructure - Approved by General Board in the Spring of 2022, the updated Standing Rules for Reconciliation Ministry allows for greater efficiencies and opportunity for recruiting for specific gifts, passions, and talent that will provide support toward emphasizing the funding and programmatic aspects of the ministry. Specifically, the new structure will exploit the natural synergies of education and development of the mission fund, focus on increasing partnerships with diverse talent without expanding the size of the governance body, increasing efficiencies and collaborative witness throughout each expression of the Church.

## **NATIONAL CITY CHRISTIAN CHURCH FOUNDATION**

As National City Christian Church and National City Christian Church Foundation’s Executive Minister, Steven Baines, I am delighted once again to provide a written report of all the exciting projects and ministries that continue at Five Thomas Circle in Washington, D.C. There were numerous challenges, difficult staff changes, and continuing ramifications of a global pandemic that caused the combined congregation and Foundation to rethink how we are being “church” in this new post-COVID reality. Despite the frustrations and ever-changing landscape, National City successfully navigated several new ministries.

Thanks to a challenge grant by the Board of Local Trustees (BOLT), National City members and friends raised \$22,000 in funds for an Afghan refugee family who had resettled in the D.C. metropolitan area. With the Trustees’ grant, we helped the Rahimi family find residence and establish a home for a family of eleven! BOLT also contributed several thousand dollars to assist in the immigrant crisis that continued to deepen in 2022. With their assistance and dozens of volunteers, National City was able to purchase clothing, food, and transportation for hundreds of immigrants being bussed and abandoned from the US-Mexican border.

As COVID began to subside in late spring, the Minister Search Committee cranked into high gear and resumed in earnest their search for our next Senior Minister/President of NCCC-Foundation. The work that Chairperson, the Honorable Jane Campbell, and the Committee accomplished during the year was astonishing. I was delighted to provide administrative assistance during a time when the Capital Area Region’s office was

unable to aid in the search and call process. National City owes an enormous debt to our Search Committee members who performed a Herculean task, and ultimately, the Foundation and Congregation were led to our new Senior Minister/President, the Reverend Stephanie Kendell, who previously served Park Avenue Christian Church in New York City as their Executive Minister.

Facilities Superintendent, Morris “Moe” Jackson continues his nearly 40-year exemplary service to NCCC-Foundation despite the nearly 100-year-old Sanctuary and combined facilities showing increasing signs of their age and deferred maintenance. This continues to place unnecessary strain and resources on our maintenance staff – now only two full-time employees. Now dubbed the “dynamic duo,” the facilities’ maintenance staff continue to work tremendously hard in making sure the facility is running smoothly; plumbing and electrical needs are operational; and on-going repairs are completed on a timely basis.

In the summer, National City unfortunately had major water damage due to a cracked drainpipe - original to 1929 - running the length of the height of the Sanctuary down to the basement. Gratefully, we were able to replace the cracked and rusted iron pipe with PVC pipe and replaster and repaint the walls before a major performing arts concert was scheduled in August. The building staff used the remaining COVID hiatus during August to make sure everything in and around the campus was ready once again for in-person worship and DC-community events that resumed full-force in September.

The old Campbell Building, formerly housing Phillips Chapel, the main auditorium and fellowship hall, classroom spaces, and the commercial kitchen and shower facilities for the Bunkhouse Ministry, has undergone major renovation and construction by its new owners, the Akelius Group. The new construction has added two new stories onto the existing building, redeveloped the existing plaza between the Sanctuary and new building, and will soon replace an aging Howland Center roof that desperately needs replacing due to significant water leakage. While the new construction and opening of the new building for commercial real estate will bring a vibrant and bustling environment around the NCCC-Foundation campus, the construction continues to leave exorbitant dirt, debris, and much cement dust to render use of Howland Center inoperable until September of 2023.

Our current facilities’ roster of non-profit social agency and social justice organizations for 2022 included: House of Ruth; DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence; Ujima (now a fully independent, non-profit organization from the DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence); Council of Churches of Greater Washington; the Poor People’s Campaign; Thrive Impact; the Hymn Society; and the National Children’s Chorus. Space on the fifth floor that was vacated by the Workers’ Rights Consortium has been renovated and repainted. It will be advertised and shown for rental in early 2023.

NCCC Foundation Trustees continued in their search for a national consulting agency who can lead a dynamic and diverse capital campaign to address many of the

aforementioned issues and concerns. This national campaign, expected to launch in mid to late 2023, will bring to scale a fundraising effort that is Christ-centered, well-documented and strategic for growth and vitality, and comprehensive in projected contributions and elevated planned giving! Its launching will propel the entire Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) ever closer to its “national church’s” Centennial Celebration in October 2030, a moment sure to gratify the legacy and dreams realized of Alexander Campbell.

## **THE UNITED CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY**

Bernard C. Dorsey - President

The United Christian Missionary Society continued to furnish financial support for the Division of Homeland Ministries, dba Disciples Home Missions, and the Division of Overseas Ministries, by investing and managing its endowments and permanent funds for the benefit of the two Divisions.

The UCMS continued to be involved with ethical issues which related to its investments and was active with the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility (ICCR). This is an ecumenical organization of 17 Protestant denominations and approximately 200 Roman Catholic orders which cooperate concerning ethical and social concerns as expressed by actions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

The UCMS, which has eight trustees and four officers, has no active employees. Beginning in 1993, The UCMS contracted with the Christian Church Foundation, Inc., to perform the treasury services for the Society. The 2023 officers of The UCMS are as follows: Bernard C. Dorsey, President; LaMarco Cable, Vice President; Kathy Watts, Corporate Secretary, and Lonna Owens, Corporate Treasurer.

Four trustees are nominated by each of the two Divisions served by The UCMS. They are elected by the General Board of the church and serve a term of four years. Their responsibilities are to oversee and determine policies concerning the investments of assets owned by The UCMS. The protection as well as the income realized from these assets is of paramount concern for the trustees. Their invaluable service is recognized and this report is submitted in their behalf.

The UCMS distributed the following from the investment pool in 2022: DHM - \$700,375; DOM - \$992,775; and other entities - \$58,215.

## **WEEK OF COMPASSION**

Cindy Kim, Chair, Board of Stewards

Vy Nguyen, Executive Director

[www.weekofcompassion.org](http://www.weekofcompassion.org)

**MISSION** *As the relief, refugee, and development mission fund of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Week of Compassion works with partners to alleviate suffering throughout the world.*

**VISION** *A world where God’s people transform suffering into hope.*

- CORE VALUES**
- connection** - Partner with individuals, congregations, and organizations to serve the needs of the world.
  - integrity** - Honor the commitment to faithful stewardship, ensuring gifts entrusted to Week of Compassion are making the most impact.
  - accompaniment** - Embody God’s grace by committing to a long-term presence with communities in need.

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As the world begins to come together again, **Week of Compassion finds daily reminders of the ways in which lives are changed forever** as a result of global pandemics, human-made disasters and armed conflict, and more frequently by increasingly extreme storm activity in tornadoes, floods, or typhoons. These major disasters are in front of us and are on the news, reminding us of the current challenges. There are also ongoing disasters that do not make the news and where many already feel forgotten: the political crisis in Afghanistan, extreme floods in Pakistan, hunger and starvation in the Horn of Africa, global refugee crises in Syria and Myanmar, conflict in the Middle East, and much more—all crises in which the church has been called on to care and respond.

The two most urgent issues before Week of Compassion that continue to emerge within the work that we do and the work that many of our domestic and global partners do on a daily basis are climate change and political/government instabilities.

From a low water level in the Colorado River and extreme droughts throughout much of the western US, to more tornadoes in the Midwest and milder winters in the North, to stronger and more frequent hurricanes, we don't have to look far to find tremendous local impact of climate change on our communities. Until recently we did not see many disasters that caused over a billion dollars in damage, but now **billion-dollar disasters**

BUSINESS

**are regular events.** According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, in five of the last six years, costs from climate and weather-related disasters have exceeded \$100 billion annually. The average number of billion-dollar disasters has surged over that time, too, driven by a combination of increased exposure of people living in and moving to hazardous areas, vulnerability due to increasing hazards like wind speed and fire intensity, and a warming climate. Around the world, every region is impacted by climate change—Europe with wildfires and severe droughts this past summer from the high summer heat, both Africa and Asia with extreme droughts, and the melting ice caps at both poles. For Week of Compassion, the issue of climate change is a higher priority than ever, as it impacts how we do disaster response, approach global sustainable development, and respond to displaced people. As we engage in sustainable development projects and collaborate with partners to provide disaster response, climate change continues to be a key issue, both in immediate responses and in strategizing for long-term recovery.

In many parts of the world, regime change and government instabilities have made the work of humanitarian response more challenging, and in many ways have set development work back. For example, as of this writing in January of 2023, women's rights and girls' access to education in Afghanistan has been taken away by the new government, and will have consequential effect for decades to come. In addition, **the prolonged and deepening conflict in Ukraine has considerable direct and indirect impact on our work.** Many of our partners continue to provide emergency assistance along bordering countries and are helping families who have fled Ukraine to find support during a transition period and into resettlement. Caring for refugee and internally displaced populations, health and safety, medical and psychosocial care, winterization and seasonal readiness, and access to education and vocational assistance stand out as key concerns. Week of Compassion continues to work with ACT Alliance, International Orthodox Christian Charities, European Baptist Alliance, and Global Ministries to respond to the ongoing conflict in Ukraine and the surrounding region.

Indirectly, the conflict in Ukraine is impacting other international programs that were already hurting prior to this conflict. Many partners opted to reallocate their humanitarian funding away from those needed places in order to focus more on Ukraine. In addition, the global food crisis is only getting worse as a result of production and transportation blockades on food and grain from Ukraine, and the energy crisis surrounding Europe is making heating and electricity more costly. **The situation in Ukraine, alongside the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and the increasing climate crisis are combining to produce a downward spiral effect for developing countries regarding food security, with the world's most vulnerable people becoming most impacted.**

Families see more drought and have difficulty growing their own food, while food prices are currently at their highest since records began 60 years ago. While many of us see the conflict in Ukraine right before us, it's also important that we focus on how the global food prices and production will affect sustainable development worldwide. Week of

Compassion is already engaging with partners to create a strategy to help reduce the burden on so many communities affected by rising food costs.

**As the needs of the world continue to shift, Week of Compassion continues to adjust in order to align its structure and personnel with the changing needs of ministry.** With increased and intensified natural disasters, and an unprecedented global refugee crisis, it has been necessary for Week of Compassion, as the disaster response arm of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to grow to more fully meet these needs. Week of Compassion has expanded its staff to include two new positions and has worked to align its current staff roles to more effectively support and equip congregations as they engage in the work of disaster, refugee, and immigration response.

**Domestically, Week of Compassion continues to support immediate disaster relief to and through Disciples congregations; engage in long-term disaster recovery through informational and financial support, as well as volunteer coordination; and develop resources and relationships for refugee and immigration response with local congregations.** The new organizational structure connects the ways in which we minister to, support, and respond to these myriad domestic needs as a cohesive ministry. Staff leadership works to cross-pollinate the disaster and refugee response sectors to better provide support to the most vulnerable communities in times of greatest need. Although natural disaster response and refugee response vary in many ways, this expanded organization helps the church be prepared and respond as we see the increasing severity and higher frequency of natural disasters while at the same time the numbers of displaced people continues to increase daily.

**Both refugee and natural disaster response require multitudes of partners and collaboration; we do not do this work alone.** Week of Compassion has been in conversation with resettlement agencies and mission partners around the country, building relationships and creating a database of resources available to congregations interested in refugee response. Week of Compassion continues to build our capacity to respond quickly to the needs of churches offering assistance and to refugees entering this country.

In the spring of 2022, Week of Compassion led the launch of a digital tool for connecting and resourcing congregations for disaster preparedness: *Willing to Respond*. Congregations have registered on the platform, receiving direct follow-up by staff, and a preparedness newsletter every other month. Regions have requested training related to *Willing to Respond*, and congregations have engaged in detailed preparedness conversations, made connections with other Disciples ministries and colleagues, and are fluent in rapid response following a severe weather incident. **Preparedness and response is a cycle that goes hand in hand.**

Knowing that disaster preparedness is especially important for communities of color that do not always have access to training and preparedness resources, Week of

Compassion is intentionally engaging with National Convocation, NAPAD, and La Obra to better partner with our Disciples leaders and congregations. Staff have participated at national and regional gatherings, and a four-part preparedness training, developed and led in Spanish, welcomed dozens of leaders of Spanish speaking congregations online from all over the country.

In the last year, major disaster events in the United States and Canada, flooding in eastern Kentucky and the greater St Louis area, Hurricanes Fiona and Ian, as well as multiple localized fires and severe storms, have put the preparedness and response cycle to the test. Of note, the response to Hurricane Fiona presented a new opportunity for Week of Compassion to coordinate virtual volunteers for an assistance call center with National VOAD partner, Crisis Cleanup, providing valuable resources and engaging a new model of remote volunteer opportunity that could dramatically expand Disciples' immediate response to domestic disasters.

**Even as new disasters responses unfold, Week of Compassion remains committed to supporting long-term recovery in multiple locations across the country** including:

- Hurricane Ian (2022) - Florida
- Hurricane Fiona (2022) - Puerto Rico
- Flooding (2022) - Missouri & Kentucky
- Tornado Outbreak (Dec 2021) - Kentucky
- Hurricane Ida (2021) - Louisiana, Gulf Coast, East Coast
- West Coast Fires (2020) - California & Oregon
- Hurricanes Laura & Delta (2020) - Louisiana
- Hurricane Florence (2018) - North Carolina
- Hurricanes Irma & Maria (2017) - Florida & Puerto Rico
- Hurricane Harvey (2017) - Texas

with emerging responses including:

- Severe Storms/Flooding (2023) - California
- Earthquakes (2022) - California
- Winter Storms (2022) - Multiple States
- Wildfires (2022) - New Mexico and California
- Water Crisis (2022) - Jackson, Mississippi

These long-term responses include informational and relational support to congregations and local organizations; grants to local long-term recovery groups; and facilitation of volunteer opportunities through a network of referrals and partnerships. Information is available on the Week of Compassion website about current volunteer

opportunities in Kentucky, Louisiana, and North Carolina, and developing opportunities in Puerto Rico, Florida, Missouri, and Texas.

**We give thanks for the steadfast generosity of local churches and individuals,** including increased recurring and endowment gifts. Such faithfulness deepens Week of Compassion's impact in vulnerable populations, as we accompany and provide relief and livelihood support to communities all over the world. At the end of 2022, overall unrestricted giving was up a little over 5.5% compared to 2021, totaling just over \$2.9 million. 2022 designated gifts totaled \$3.3 million, a 160% increase compared to 2021. Overall, 2022 total revenue for Week of Compassion was over \$6.2 million, enabling the church to increase its support to partners, both domestic and global.

Amid so many disasters that impact so many lives, in the United States and Canada and around the world, we remain grateful for the Disciples' diligent response to one disaster after another. Week of Compassion continues to adapt to our changing landscape and the changing needs of the church. **In all that we do, we are working toward responses, whether they are for natural disasters or humanitarian crises, that can be sustainable, accessible, and visible.** It is our prayer that as Week of Compassion steadily grows into our ministry and responses, we also help broaden and deepen the heart of the whole Christian Church, constantly recommitting to love our neighbors, especially in times of greatest need and vulnerability, and in the best ways possible.

## WORLD CONVENTION OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST

No Report Received

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

## GA-2302

### General Ministry Report of Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries

#### Report to the General Board- 2023 Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries Rev. Lori Tapia-National Pastor

Throughout 2022 the Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries underwent fruitful transformation shifting for operational reorganization to enable continued growth as a ministry, both in capacity and relevance. This has increased connection, expanded learning opportunities, and allowed for greater presence as the Obra Hispana for the whole church. The CPOHM continues to experience growth and vitality, demonstrated in different areas of the ministry such as an increase in lay leader, youth and young adult engagement, a healthy financial position, and expanded collaborations within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and beyond.

In January 2022, the joint decision was made to cancel *The Experience: It's Real*. This joint assembly, to be held with our sibling from the National Convocation and NAPAD, had been in the planning process since 2018 and the decision to cancel was difficult. The three executives of these ministries remain committed to finding relevant ways to strengthen the connection of our ministries to and as a witness to the whole church. The Obra Hispana Board made the decision to move forward with its Biennial Assembly, held in July in Fort Worth, Texas. The Assembly theme reflected the theme of the year and was a blessed and very transformative experience, the first in person gathering since 2018. The Obra Hispana is grateful to the College of Regional Ministers for demonstrating solidarity and support of the Obra Hispana by joining in worship during the Assembly.

The theme of the year, Church of Impact: A Renewed, Relevant, and Relational Church, greatly guided the ministry throughout 2022. The Obra Hispana sought to live this, not only in words, but to embrace it as a church in all areas so that the world could distinguish it.

Some ministries that fostered a Church of Impact were:

1. Virtual Pastoral Retreat in January: Leading from Rest and Not Burnout
2. CONTIGO- live program every Friday
3. Continuing Education Opportunities
4. Healthy Boundaries in Spanish
5. Accompaniment to Conventions in crisis
6. Strategic and Planning Retreat - May
7. Biennial Assembly 2022- Fort Worth, TX
8. Pastors Retreats, Training for church leadership and local church administration
9. Connecting and strengthening internal and external relationships (growth)

#### **PASTORAL COMMISSION**

In the December 2021 meeting of the Pastoral Commission, the Commission, which includes the Hispanic Board of Directors, unanimously approved the decision to dissolve the Pastoral

Commission as the decision making, governing body, and liaison to the General Board for the Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries and the Obra Hispana. This decision enabled a pathway for the Hispanic Board of Directors to assume the responsibility to serve solely in this role, understanding the capacity and ability to do so without the need of additional members “named” by the Administrative Committee and the College of Regional Ministers. This decision went to the Obra Hispana Assembly by resolution, which passed unanimously. This decision was not made with the intention or desire to exclude participation from the wider church, but rather to place the decision-making process on whom to invite to serve on the board in hands of the Hispanic Community, allowing for a more diverse and relevant representation on the board according to the needs of the ministry. The Obra Hispana understands the covenantal relationship and embraces this as a manifestation of full covenant.

## **COLLABORATIONS** (does not represent a complete list)

### **College of Regional Ministers**

### **Cabinet of General Ministries**

### **National Benevolent Association NBA:**

- Peer Groups
  - Hispanic Pastors (completed in 2022)
  - Young Adults | Young Adults (to be completed in 2024)
- Assembly Support 2022-
  - Donated \$10,000 to give scholarships to our Hispanic community to attend
  - Scholarships for young adults to the assembly
  - Youth and Young Adult Night Sponsorship

### **DCEF**

- Partnership and extensive loan to support "La Hermosa" project in New York

### **Pension Fund**

- "The Gathering" scholarships for Hispanic pastors to attend this pastoral retreat
- Continued collaboration for the development of healthy and relevant practices to assist and support the Hispanic pastoral community

### **Disciples Home Missions**

- Disciples Women
- Disciples Men
- Disciples Immigration Legal Counsel – provide funds towards salary
- Refugee & Immigration Ministry

Work together in areas of advocacy, letters in favor of immigration reform, and other programs to support immigrants and refugees

- This program ended its existence as it is currently known under the direction of DHM's present leadership to enter a time of transformation. The CPOHM remains committed to this work.

### **Week of Compassion**

- Continued collaboration to reach, support and communicate with our churches in times of natural and man-made disasters such as shootings and other acts of violence

### **Latino Christian National Network**

- National Pastor serves as a board member of this organization which is comprised of national leaders from Christian denominations and organizations.

#### **Exponential en Español**

- "Charter Sponsor" sending more than 35 pastors a year to conferences on the multiplication of churches, leaders and believers

#### **ANCLA- National Alliance of Christian Latino Americans**

- Participate in advocacy actions for areas of social action such as immigration and poverty

#### **Garden of Eden Health Clinic (Jayuya, Puerto Rico)**

- Ministry Support and Missionary Work

#### **Southwest Good Samaritan Ministries**

- Financial support to the ministry, and special offering to honor Rev. Feliberto Pereira

#### **AWANA in Spanish**

- Create collaborative relationships to provide training and support to local churches to implement AWANA programs in their child and youth ministries.

## **EDUCATION**

In 2022, seven of our leaders were ordained to the ministry. The Obra Hispana invites you to join us in celebrating the ministries of the following servants:

Rev. Milca Rivera (FL)  
Rev. Héctor Iván Santiago (FL)  
Rev. Carlos Pérez (FL)  
Rev. Tania Lopez (CA)  
Rev. Martin Tapia (IN)  
Rev. María Zamarripa (AL)  
Rev. Liza Miranda (FL)

Additionally, programs that support ministerial development and theological education continue to be foundational for the Obra Hispana. Graduations from the CMS/DMS programs of the Disciples Seminary Foundation and the Certificate in Hispanic Ministries from Lexington Theological Seminary celebrated over 60 students completing their programs.

With great enthusiasm, leaders of our congregations continue to be prepared and trained for ministry, and our educational efforts must grow to provide greater opportunity to all who wish to continue growing in knowledge and capacity. We are exploring relationships with seminaries to increase access to graduate study for those who understand a call to this, and we thank God for the relationship started with Western Theological Seminary, which received the first cohort with more than 25 Hispanic Disciples students in the fall of 2022, studying an MA or MDiv entirely in Spanish.

Continuing education efforts and training courses by the Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries reached more than 400 diverse Hispanic clergy and lay leaders, and beyond in Puerto Rico, Mexico, Panama, Costa Rica and Columbia. Required courses were provided to

maintain their ministerial licenses such as Healthy Borders and Anti-racism in Spanish, making these courses more relevant and effective for our pastors.

**FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

In 2022, through CPOHM funds we have provided offerings to pastors, churches and members of Obra churches to help in times of illness and different crises. Natural disasters, death and other crises always exist in life, and we have sought to be of support to our pastoral families with great intentionality especially in these moments for them. We continue to see an increase in need and are amazed at how God continues to surprise us with the resources.

**FUTURE**

The 2023 theme for the Obra Hispana is *Building Eternal Legacy: we are makers of generations of heirs*, grounded in Hebrews 6:9-15 and 1 Peter 1:3-9. Called to extend the legacy of Jesus Christ, the work we do to build up generations is critical and this is the focus of the Obra Hispana. Expanded programming to create multi-generational connections and strengthen relationships that foster storytelling, discipleship and shared learning will lead us in 2023, and we look forward to the collaborations and partnerships that bear fruit along the way. Won't you join us?

**HISPANIC BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

<b>MODERATOR</b> Evangelina Perez Southwest Region	<b>MODERATOR ELECT</b> Carlos Perez López Florida Region	<b>VICE-MODERATOR</b> Bernice Rivera Or/SW Idaho Region	<b>PAST MODERATOR</b> Samuel Ramirez PSW Region
<b>SECRETARY</b> Ivan Elizarraras Southwest Region	<b>ASSISTANT SECRETARY</b> Alba Castillo Florida Region	<b>Y.A. REPRESENTATIVE</b> Yoli Barragan Or/SW Idaho Region	<b>YOUTH REP.</b> Valeria Acosta GKC Region
<b>Representative to the General Board</b> Milca Rivera (dual role) Florida Region		<b>MINISTERIO DE MUJERES</b> Milca Rivera- President	
<b>SOUTHEAST CONVENTION</b> <i>Moderator</i> Alba Castillo  <i>Representative</i> Robeto Llavina	<b>MIDWEST CONVENTION</b> <i>Moderator</i> Rossy Ricart  <i>Representative</i> Roberto Romero	<b>NORTHEAST CONVENTION</b> <i>Moderador</i> Vacant  <i>Representative</i> Miriam Martínez	<b>SOUTHWEST CONVENTION</b> <i>Moderator</i> Roberto Elizarraras  <i>Representative</i> Norma Gonzalez
<b>ARIZONA CONVENTION</b> <i>Moderator</i> Minerva Guzman  <i>Representative</i> Gerardo Garcia	<b>PACIFIC CONVENTION</b> <i>Moderator</i> Soriliz Rodriguez  <i>Representative</i> Luis J. Orozco	<b>NORTHWEST CONVENTION</b> <i>Moderator</i> Bernice Rivera  <i>Representative</i> Vacant	<b>CENTRAL</b> <i>Moderator</i> Rodolfo Acosta  <i>Representative</i> Jorge Vela
<b>SOUTHCENTRAL CONVENTION</b> <i>Moderator</i> Jose Díaz	<i>Representative</i> Carmen Reyes	<b>EX-OFICIO</b> <i>General Minister &amp; President</i> Rev. Terri Hord Owens	<b>EX-OFICIO</b> <i>National Pastor</i> Rev. Lori Tapia

**Final Members- PASTORAL COMMISSION OF GENERAL BOARD REPRESENTATIVES**

**(Dissolved per Resolution 2022-01 on 7/22/22)**

**College of Regional Ministry Representatives**

Richie Sanchez, Pacific Southwest | Regional Minister  
Andy Magnum, Regional Minister | Southwest Region

**Administrative Committee Representatives**

Clyde Hunt, Tennessee Region  
Laura Phillips, GKC Region

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

BUSINESS

**CHRISTIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION/CHALICE MEDIA GROUP**

ChaliceMedia.org and ChalicePress.com

Facebook.com/ChalicePress – Twitter: @ChalicePress

800-366-3383 – customerservice@chalicepress.com

**Staff and Consultants**

Brad Lyons, President and Publisher

David Woodard, Operations Director and Associate Publisher

Chuck Blaisdell, Development Consultant

At Chalice, we work to build a community that is vibrant and energizing – a worldwide force for justice, peace, love, and multifaith cooperation. Chalice envisions a world in which:

- all people, regardless of their faith tradition, are inspired and encouraged to find our common ground, and work together for justice.
- racism, discrimination, and bigotry are rejected in favor of reconciliation and understanding so we can continue our journey toward the Beloved Community.
- the wondrous diversity of our LGBTQIA+ neighbors is fully accepted and loved in the way of Jesus.
- harmful theology is rooted out and replaced with a healthy, growing faith.
- families can grow in their faith and their love through daily faith practices and experiences across generations.
- spiritual-but-not-religious people have resources to inspire them on their unique journeys.
- the greed that creates a vast gap between the rich and the poor, as well as the stealthily crafted social policy that sustains that gap, are exposed and confronted.
- our stories and imaginations reflect the way of Jesus so that the world we present is the one love creates.

Our reputation as the go-to publisher for books and materials on social justice, inclusive community, spirituality, and leadership development continues to grow.

**Did you know?:**

- Chalice Press/CBP receives no support from Disciples Mission Fund or special offerings. We are entirely dependent on sales and gifts for the continuing vitality of our ministry.
- If you purchase Chalice Press books from Amazon or other sources, that retailer keeps at least half of the income from that sale. When you purchase directly from Chalice Press, through our website, our 1-800 number, or at an event, 100% of the income supports your shared ministry.
- Only about 25% of our authors and our revenues come from Disciples sources.
- You can support Chalice Press, a 501c3 non-profit, by joining our Annual Fund. Visit [www.ChalicePress.com/AnnualFund](http://www.ChalicePress.com/AnnualFund) to make your gift. Individuals and congregations can also support specific projects through subventions. We are grateful for your support.

## **2022 Summary**

2022 continued the decades-long trends of contracting book-buying markets and the Christian reading audience. We are still learning how congregations and church camps have been impacted by post-COVID changes in congregational life and vitality. On top of these factors, supply chain issues and inflation increasing the cost of hiring quality editors and designers have increased production costs and reduced our already thin margins. These factors combined to make 2022 a disappointing year for Chalice.

Despite these challenges, Chalice looked to brighter days with our rebranding under the name Chalice Media Group — “Chalice” for simplicity’s sake. Over the next several years, in addition to the non-fiction work for which Chalice Press is known, we aim to produce fiction under the Chalice Stories brand and podcasts under the Chalice Voices banner.

## **2022 Titles from Chalice Press**

### **Religion, Culture, and Social Justice**

- *Are You Still Watching? Using Pop Culture to Tune In, Find God, & Get Renewed for Another Season* (edited by Stephanie Kendell and Arthur Stewart)
- *Blessed Youth: Breaking the Silence about Mental Illness with Children and Teens* (Sarah Griffith Lund)
- *Blessed Youth Survival Guide* (Sarah Griffith Lund)
- *Parenting for a Better World: Social Justice Practices for Your Family and the Planet* (edited by Susanna Snyder and Ellen Ott Marshall)

### **Spiritual Formation and Faith Practices**

- *A Time to Mourn & A Time to Dance: A Love Story of Grief, Trauma, Healing, & Faith* (Jennifer Ohman-Rodriguez)
- *Be Ready: An Advent Devotional* (contributors organized by Week of Compassion; edited by Courtney Richards)
- *Colors of Hope: A Devotional Journal from LGBTQ+ Christians* (edited by Melissa Guthrie)
- *Dear Son: Raising Faithful, Just, and Compassionate Men* (Jonathan B. Hall and Beau T. Underwood)
- *Faithful Families for Lent, Easter & Resurrection* (Traci Smith)
- *Rise: An Authentic Lenten Devotional* (John Pavlovitz)
- *Searching for the Sacred: Sixty Meditations on Faith, Hope, and Love* (Cameron Trimble)
- *Unsettling Lent: A Devotional* (Brian Kaylor, Angela Parker, and Beau Underwood)
- *Wonder Awaits!* (Caroline Hamilton-Arnold)

### **Congregational Life and Mission**

- *Annual Planning Guide and Calendar 2023-2024*

- *Breakthrough: Trusting God for Big Change in Your Church* (Dawn Darwin Weaks)

### **InsideOut Christian Camp Resources**

- *What's In a Name?* (Lee Yates, project manager)

### **Board of Directors**

Julie Burch (Vice Chair), North Carolina, '24

– Retired

Delesslyn Kennebrew (Secretary), Greater Kansas City, '23

– Minister

Larry Morris, Illinois-Wisconsin, '24

– Minister

Lee Hull Moses, Indiana, '23

– Minister

Lara Blackwood Pickrel, Greater Kansas City, '24

– Minister

Rob Robuck, Great River, '23

– Commodities broker

Karen Georgia Thompson, Ohio, '25

– United Church of Christ Minister

Bob Williams, Southwest, '24

– Retired

Christopher Wilson (Chair), Greater Kansas City, '24

– Minister

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

## GA-2304 General Ministry Report of Christian Church Foundation

General Board Report 2022  
Gary W. Kidwell, President

2022 was a challenging year: Russia's invasion of Ukraine, a slew of natural disasters, inflation at a 40-year high, and financial markets in turmoil. Meanwhile, a pandemic that has killed more than six million people, raged on.

The year was also one of the most complicated investment environments in decades. Normally, bonds are less volatile than stocks, and furthermore, the two are historically not highly correlated. So, bonds typically offset stock selloffs, serving as a sort of ballast. In the past 30 years, there have been six years when the S&P 500 stock index was down—with the average loss being 15%. The average return of the Bloomberg 20-Year Government Bond Index during those six years was +13%. That was not the case last year. Bond prices dropped dramatically as the Federal Reserve aggressively hiked interest rates. In other words, there was nowhere for investors to hide. Our investment pools suffered declines last year, but performance relative to the benchmarks was solid.

The Christian Church Foundation, despite the headwinds of 2022, continued to move dollars to mission. Last year, the Foundation distributed \$13,047,659 to the Church for ministry. This amount does not include the amounts distributed from invested assets owned by partner ministries. Our conservative estimate of those regularly scheduled distributions was \$17.9 million last year. New permanent fund gifts totaled \$8,479,165, less than our record breaking 2021 but right on track with our 10-year average. Our partners opened or added to their investment accounts totaling \$20,862,176.

After two years of COVID-exile, last year we were finally able to start reuniting. Foundation staff celebrated being back together in the office. Our development staff were able to get back on the road. Zoom, Webex, GoTo Meeting, and all the video conferencing platforms are very useful and efficient, but they will never replace the synergy created by sitting at a table together. God created us to be in community.

Lori Lucas was promoted to Senior Vice President in January, following the retirement announcement of Ruth Weaver. Lori is a Certified Public Accountant and has worked alongside Ruth as the planned successor since 2002. Lori has always overseen the Foundation's accounting, and her transition into the new role has been seamless. Also in January, Sue Hansen was promoted to Vice President of Gift Administration and Joe Hartman was named Vice President of Investment Services. Ruth Weaver served the Foundation for 2 decades and her work and dedication was key to our tremendous growth. But the greatest evidence of Ruth's outstanding service was her work to develop strong leaders to follow her.



As a financial ministry, the Foundation is positioned to serve the church now and into perpetuity. Our balance sheet is rock solid, and we have built operating reserves to ensure our ability to fully serve all Disciples no matter the market cycle. This financial strength helps undergird our commitment to provide you with the best service at the lowest cost possible. However, our financial strength is not what makes me most confident about the Foundation's future. Our people are our greatest asset. We are blessed to have a staff of talented professionals for whom this is more than just a job; this is ministry. They are the ones who built, and consistently maintain, the Foundation's reputation for responsive, caring excellence. For them, I am grateful beyond measure.

Looking toward the future, the stewardship of legacy gifts has never been more critical for our church. Sustained by your partnership, we will remain singularly focused and passionately committed to helping you change the world. We have an exciting journey ahead of us, amazing people surrounding us, and a faithful God leading us. What more could we possibly need?

Thank you for being our partner in ministry.

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



**GA-2305**  
**General Ministry Report of Council on Christian Unity, Inc**  
**Db a Christian Unity and Interfaith Ministry**

Council on Christian Unity, Inc.  
 dba  
**Christian Unity and Interfaith Ministry**

Paul S. Tch e  
 President

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**Report to the 2023 General Board and General Assembly**

**Mission Statement**

The mission of the Christian Unity and Interfaith Ministry (CUIM) is to embody the Disciples vision of unity and collaborate with ecumenical and interfaith partners to create a more just and peaceful world.

**Introduction**

The ecumenical movement and interfaith engagements have been affected by the global pandemic to such an extent that everyone in the ecumenical and interfaith communities has begun to reconsider the ways in which we have been engaged in dialogues and activities. Our programs in these two areas heavily rely on relationships, specifically friendships of trust, which are more likely to be formed during in-person encounters, conversations, and fellowships. For the past three years, unfortunately, our ecumenical and interfaith communities have been almost isolated from one another during lockdowns and have had only a few opportunities to see one another and to thus build friendships and seek mutual understandings.

To make our situation worse, the economic crisis hit in 2022, and it has created considerable anxiety among our ecumenical and interreligious communities—we are exceedingly afraid that our uncertain economic situation may deprive us from traveling and being engaged in dialogues and common activities, which will further perpetuate isolation among our communities.

There is no doubt, however, that ecumenical and interreligious communities once again prove to be resilient and creative in times such as this. Our communities are rooted in faith after all, and history has shown that faith always prevails, even during the grimmest human challenges. Our faith has always helped us see beyond challenges of life, and our faith in God (or the ultimate being) and humanity have never been diminished under any circumstance.

In any crisis or challenge, ecumenical communities actively seek a lesson. As the ecumenical communities have anticipated the end of the pandemic, we have diligently shared reflections and lessons with one another in efforts to compile the wisdom that we have obtained through this pandemic. Those reflections on and observations of our collective life under the global pandemic are theologically well articulated and sociologically insightful and will help us further navigate this current sea of uncertainty.

As any crisis does, this pandemic has also required our ecumenical and interfaith communities to be more pastoral and to give significantly more attention to one another. We have acknowledged that we are one community of distressed humans facing the challenge and that we can only overcome it through our collective wisdom and care for one another. Ironically, the pandemic has rather promoted deeper relationships among divided churches and diverse interfaith communities. We now have deeper and broader awareness of one another because we have paid more attention to one another in our daily struggles.

The pandemic has prompted the ecumenical and interreligious communities at the national and global levels to become more attentive to what happens at the regional and local levels. The local and regional communities have collaborated more to tend those who are more effected by the pandemic, and more local initiatives have been organized to help care for those in need. The decentralized collaborations among ecumenical and interfaith communities have offered us new insights about the future of ecumenism and interfaith engagements. Although we recognize our ecumenical and interfaith activities may be fragile during any human crisis, we are cautiously hopeful that we will always find new directions and new ways to be engaged with one another.

### **Churches and Ecumenical Communities Responding to the Pandemic**

For the past three years, the church has responded to the pandemic in various ways. New activities have emerged to respond to this interruption of the ministries and works of the churches. Some denominations have endured restructuring. Other churches have conducted a series of surveys to assess the current social, cultural, and religious landscape. The churches have created financial programs to support clergy and local

congregations. They have increased their support of social services and have been part of the national or international vaccine distribution initiatives.

What surprises us is that new programs have emerged during the pandemic despite many churches allowing their ministers and staff members to work remotely and disallowing any national staff members to travel or visit any partners in person.

Among many attempts to systematically assess how churches have responded to the pandemic, the most well-documented one is from the Catholic Church. The Pontificia Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU)—its office was promoted to be the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity in 2022—published a document titled *Ecumenism in a Time of Pandemic: From Crisis to Opportunity* in January 2022, and then, the PCPCU held a hybrid event to discuss this document with the World Council of the Churches in February 2022.

The PCPCU surveyed Catholic bishops throughout the world regarding what they have learned from the pandemic. It asked questions concerning these areas:

- local reflection on theological and ecclesiological issues raised by the pandemic;
- new opportunities provided by the pandemic;
- opportunities to draw inspiration from other Christian communions;
- new problems or tensions arising as a result of the different churches' responses to the pandemic; and
- the impact on the work of the joint dialogue commissions (because the Catholic Church has entered dialogues with most Christian world communions).

Surprisingly, or not so surprisingly, the reflections from Catholic Bishops' Conferences in the world are identical to ones made by Orthodox, Protestant, and evangelical churches.

The document has three sections. The first part of the document reports about the opportunities that were offered by the pandemic. According to the document, against our assumptions, the pandemic has strengthened ecumenism and inter-church activities. Every church has dealt with the same challenge and sought out the wisdom of other churches, as beforementioned. What overall challenge did the pandemic pose for churches was not a challenge that a single denomination, including the Catholic Church, could address alone. Ultimately, no single church possessed enough wisdom to overcome this enormous challenge. Thus, the churches reached out to one another to seek wisdom and guidance in overcoming this crisis. The churches have valued

different ways to respond to COVID and have adopted them. The pandemic also provided an occasion for valuing other Christians’ practices and initiatives. Furthermore, one interesting aspect that the PCPCU’s report points out is that ecumenical relationships have been strengthened because the churches have come to realize that they all have a common destiny as a human family with shared vulnerability.

Here are the main points in the first section of the document:

- The pandemic has not allowed us to establish new contacts, but it has, in a way, allowed communities to gain a deeper understanding of each other. The fact that so many church activities were accessible online provided an opportunity for Christian communities to gain a greater knowledge of one another.
- With the pandemic, new spirituality emerged, including a new way of being a worshipping community.
- Another outcome of the use of digital tools was an increase in participation in ecumenical initiatives and local churches’ worship services and activities.

The second section of the document addresses the negative impacts of COVID-19:

- Theological and liturgical divergences: different concepts and celebration of sacraments and different understandings of the holy space—where do you livestream your service? a church building or home?
- Different understandings of the pandemic: Another dividing issue among Christians has been the differences in interpreting the pandemic. Reports often mention that denial or conspiracy theories of the crisis, apocalyptic/divine punishment interpretations, the rejection of vaccines, and proposals of nonscientific or magical cures have resulted in tensions and negative consequences among Christian communities.
- Different attitudes toward public health restrictions: Opinions have varied widely as some more conservative Christians have viewed the restrictions as an assault on religious freedom while more liberal denominations have not perceived any threat.

In sum, the PCPCU’s document highlights four areas in which the pandemic has raised internal issues for all churches:

- Spiritual: Christian lifestyle has been questioned and challenged by providential and eschatological approaches—“God will take care of us, or is this pandemic God’s punishment?”
- Ecclesiological: A new way of being a church developed because of a deeper understanding of the Church as a community, a growing participation of laity, and a stronger experience of a “domestic church.”

- Liturgical/Sacramental: The lockdown has resulted in a new way to participate in worship virtually, challenging the understanding of the role of sacraments in the Christian life.
- Missional: Will people come back into the churches? How can new people following online services be integrated into the church community? These questions pertain to all churches.

If you are interested in this document, please visit this website for the full text:

<http://www.christianunity.va/content/unitacristiani/en/documenti/altri-testi/-ecumenism-in-a-time-of-pandemic--from-crisis-to-opportunity----.html>

One point that the document does not address, in my opinion, is that there is no mention about Christian relationships with other religious communities, especially during the pandemic. In the United States, many Eastern religious groups including Asian Christian churches have suffered most from unbearable hatred, including physical violence and vandalism of properties, because of the origin of the pandemic. It is necessary now more than ever that the Church walk in solidarity with interfaith communities who have been targets of hatred and racism.

### **Interfaith Engagement as an Ecumenical Call**

As the ecumenical and interreligious officer for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada, I am always asking myself and my disciples and ecumenical colleagues this question: “What does it mean to be a church here today?” This question implies that there is an ontological purpose for a church of which we need to remind ourselves constantly. Moreover, it alludes to God’s call for a church to exist in a particular time and place. Specifically, I am asking how we can be the church God has intended for today. I also believe such is the fundamental question that the ecumenical movement is asking.

Obviously, the Church does not exist in a vacuum. The Church is Christ’s institution, given to us through the Holy Spirit for the sake of God’s mission for the world. It is planted among people in the world. It is located within the web of relationships. God’s redemptive action is not a magical act that exists far away from our reality. God’s redemption occurs in the process of building relationships. The Church has been called to be a redemptive community as it builds harmonious, just relationships with all creation here on Earth.

The problem is that the churches have betrayed God’s trust in them—to exist as a redemptive community—by becoming a broken and divided community. The churches are not only divided among themselves but have also put one another in harm’s way.

The ecumenical movement is an honest and sincere effort of the churches to turn back from their collective sin so that they can be the Church God has intended us to be. It has been meaningful and fruitful.

I understand there has been frustration toward the ecumenical movement recently. Some Christians, particularly among younger generations, dismiss ecumenism as a thing of the past. However, we should remind ourselves that ecumenism still matters because it is not about us Christians but rather our relations to the world. The Christian unity movement is for the world. Therefore, we need to place the churches in the current context where our life happens.

As we continue our journey to the visible unity of the Church, we need to know the world. We need to acknowledge the context of today. Here are two challenges that I want to highlight out of many:

- The Church is not at the center of the universe anymore, even in what used to be Christendom. Besides, COVID-19 has accelerated secularization.
- Even in the global South, where Western Christians are excited to believe Christianity is growing, Christianity is still only one of many religious groups. Christians in the global south have never experienced what Western Christians have experienced: wholly dominating culture and society.

Even though it has been said in many different contexts, it should be reiterated now: Challenges and problems in our lives often become blessings in disguise as long as we can and are willing to address them together as one body of Christ.

As the churches humbly recognize that the Christian community is now one of many religious communities globally, there is a call for the church that arises from this acknowledgment. The churches are called on to build authentic relationships with other religious and nonreligious groups, and the churches should respond to this call.

As the churches strive to build authentic relationships with others, we should ask what gifts the Christian community—as a “small” part of the world and one body of Christ—can offer the world.

Interreligious conversations matter to the ecumenical movement because they challenge the Christian churches to engage with other religious groups as one Christian community. Will we live in harmony with differences, or will we live without any significant sign of unity—creating confusion for other religious communities and nonbelievers alike?

Expanding Christians' interreligious commitments is an ecumenical call. As each Christian engages in interfaith activities, we will not abandon who we are with a confessional identity. However, we should be able to present ourselves ecumenically as we do.

As we are engaging interreligiously, the call to build relationships with other religions should not be confused with the call to be in communion with them. Seeking the unity of all humankind is different from seeking Christian unity. The Christian community as one body should articulate with other interfaith dialogue partners what it means to seek the unity of humankind.

It should also be noted that it is an ecumenical call, not ecumenism itself. Ecumenism and interfaith engagement have different starting points. The Christian churches are already one in Christ. However, unity in the world is something we Christians should “achieve” with others, and what it means to be in unity with one another as fellow human beings should be discussed together.

Although Christians should commit to interfaith dialogue, we should not attempt to understand others by substituting other religious terms with Christian ones or their spiritual understanding of God and creation with Christian theological doctrines. I see this as another form of imperialism—our bad habits from the past.

Many have dismissed ecumenism as a movement irrelevant in the modern world. However, we should understand that being ecumenical means being in authentic relationships among the churches in terms of God and the world. In this case, the churches are nothing but ecumenical. From this understanding of ecumenism, Christians see the churches within the larger context of the world and seek relationships with other religious groups to build together a better community for all. Thus, Christians' interreligious commitment is an ecumenical call that will ensure the churches are related to the world as one body of Christ.

For the full text, visit this webpage:

<https://www.disciplescuim.org/publications/interreligious-commitment-as-an-ecumenical-call/>.

### **Disciples and the Confession of Faith**

The Disciples of Christ began its journey as a Christian unity movement first on the frontiers of the United States in the 19th century. However, this Christian unity movement in western Pennsylvania and Kentucky became an international movement

soon after its inception. The vision of Christian unity at the Lord's Table inspired Christians beyond North America to promptly join this movement.

Because of the desire “to die, be dissolved and, sink into union with the Body of Christ at large” as the Church's founding document, *Last Testament and Will of the Springfield Presbytery* (1804), states, some churches within the Disciples' heritage have been part of or have led a uniting and united church movement. And I expect that more churches in the Disciples of Christ World Communion will be joining the uniting church movement.

It must be noted, too, that there are also the churches within our global communion that have intentionally decided not to join other communions to keep the distinctive identity as the Disciples of Christ. Undoubtedly, the churches of the Disciples of Christ throughout the world have dedicated themselves to seeking Christian unity; yet, instead of seeking organic union with others, many Disciples churches have decided to pursue visible Christian unity in common mission and ministry with other churches within the ecumenical movement.

Since the beginning of the movement, the Disciples of Christ has been clear that its unity begins at the Lord's Table where we are made one in Christ. It is Christ who has made his followers one, and, therefore, the founding fathers of the Disciples believe that the invitation to the Table has been extended by Christ and that there should be no test of fellowship to come to the Table.

Alexander Campbell, one of the founding fathers, was greatly disappointed that the creeds were typically used as tests of fellowship among Christians. He used even harsh words to express his disappointment at and frustration with the way Christians used the creeds. He said that “because they were made indispensable and authoritative terms of communion, or justifiable and valid grounds of exclusion; —because the terms and phrases, or the mental abstractions and opinions in them, propounded as the essential doctrines of Christ, expressed in human terms, were placed upon the same footing with the Oracles of God, and sometimes above them, insomuch that it became a greater sin to oppose or controvert the words of the creed than the words of the Bible” (Campbell, “Creeds Versus the Bible, Millennial Harbinger, Series 3, Vol. 3, 1846: 566).

This frustration, however, did not mean to Campbell that the Disciples is anti-creedal. In 1855, Campbell reflected on the creeds, suggesting that the Apostles' Creed is worth all the creeds created over the past seventeen centuries, and he asserted that every word in the Apostles' Creed is true. (Robert Cornwall, Robert, “Disciples of Christ: Confessing Faith as a Non-Creedal Community,” *Journal of Discipiana*: vol. 74: no. 1, Article 11;

DCHS: Bethany, WV, 2021. Available at:  
<https://digitalcommons.discipleshistory.org/journalofdiscipliana/vol74/iss1/11>)

The Disciples of Christ is non-creedal not because it denies the truthfulness of the creeds but because it refuses the way that Christians and the churches use them.

The churches within the Disciples of Christ tradition have expressed their confessions of faith with more biblical terms. Historically, the members of the Disciples churches have confessed their faith simply by reciting Matthew 16:16. Today, however, many national bodies of the Disciples of Christ have developed a confession of faith in contemporary languages.

However, it is undeniable that the Disciples has never suggested a list of approved ecumenical creeds even though the Disciples recognizes the value of many ecumenical creeds, including the Apostles' Creed, and the Nicene Creed. From this long theological stance of the Disciples regarding the creeds, one significant question has arisen: What makes the Disciples of Christ throughout the world a confessional body among other Christian communions?

In other words, what bounds the Disciples of Christ as a community of faith? It is our *sacramental vision of Christian unity*. It does not simply mean that the most members of the Disciples of Christ asserts that we are seeking visible unity among Christians. It is unity at the Lord's Table that we are called upon to seek with other Christians. The members of the Disciples of Christ believe that God has called on us to fulfill the vision that all, without any exceptions, who confess that Jesus is Christ, son of the living God, and who are determined to follow Christ should be able to come to the Table and participate in the eucharistic feast without hindrance. Our communion with God, Christ, and one another at the Table enables us to witness the message of reconciliation and hospitality that we have experienced in our being welcomed.

### **Full Communion and Bilateral Dialogue Partners**

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada has two full communion relationships: the United Church of Christ (UCC) and the United Church of Canada (UC Can). The Disciples of Christ entered into the full communion relationship with the UCC in 1989, and, since then, the two churches have worked closely in our ministry and mission. The Global Ministries of the Disciples of Christ and the UCC is the most unique example of how the two churches witness together to the gospel in mission. In the history of ecumenism, there is no precedent of such a collaboration between two communions. Even today, the two churches remain strong and steadfast in

their relationship and dedication to common witness to the gospel, and the year 2021 marked the 25th anniversary of the joint witness.

The UCC is now in the process of searching for a new general minister and president. Rev. John Dorhauer will not seek a third term and will retire from the position in 2023. Another significant transition was that the UCC has completed the process to move its national office to a new location in Cleveland in 2022 and has reopened the new office.

Our relatively new full communion partner, the UC Can, had its 44th General Council in 2022 and elected Rev. Dr. Carmen Lansdown Kwis'lakw as its 44th moderator. She is the second indigenous person to be elected in the history of the UC Can.

At its prolonged online council meetings, the General Council approved five strategic directions with objectives: (a) Embolden Justice: Collaborating to Mend Church and World; (b) Invigorate Leadership: Adapting and innovating for Bold Discipleship; (c) Nurture Common Good: Equity and Sustainability in Resources; (d) Deepen Integrity: Living Climate Commitments; and (e) Strengthen Invitation: Humility and Confidence in Sharing Faith.

In March 2021, the Disciples entered into a bilateral dialogue with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), and the two churches finally met in person for the first time in April 2022 to consider case studies and to identify themes and topics for further exploration. We are deeply invested in this dialogue, and we have begun our journey to learn each other's traditions and to build relationships with one another.

After this first in-person meeting, Rev. Dr. Robert Cornwall, Disciples cochair of the dialogue, shared his reflections:

When the restart of the dialogue was proposed by the leaders of the two denominations, full communion was a possible outcome but not the only possible outcome. The overarching goal established by the leadership involves the following: "Defining a new ecumenical relationship: What form of ecumenical relationship will enable the two churches to affirm their common confession of the Christian faith and to witness to the good news of Christ together more fully in local, mid-judicatory, national, and global expressions of the Church?" This would be accomplished through four actions:

1. Studying together each other's understanding of the mission and responsibility of the Church: How do we understand mission and ministry theologically and missiologically?

2. Collecting examples of current collaborations between both churches as well as examples of where deeper relations are desired: Where have the two churches been working together? What are the hopes for deepening mission and ministry?
3. Identifying and formalizing the areas in mission and ministry for the further partnership: How can the partnership be formalized? What are the mechanisms needed? What are the marks of mutual commitment and mutual accountability?
4. Establishing formal communication channels to foster collaborations and witness the Gospel together.

In October 2022, the Lutherans and the Disciples gathered again online to reflect on the spring meeting and to explore a convergence text of the World Council of Churches to identify areas of convergence between our churches and within the broader ecumenical movement. Rev. Dr. Thomas Best, former Director of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches, convened our conversation around the theological convergent text “The Church: Toward a Common Vision.”

### **Conciliar Bodies**

The World Council of Churches (WCC) convened its 11th General Assembly in Karlsruhe, Germany, from August 31 to September 8, 2022. The 4,000 participants gathered in Karlsruhe under the theme “Christ’s Love Moves the World to Reconciliation and Unity.” Although COVID-19 still lingers and the war in Ukraine is ongoing, the assembly was held successfully.

On behalf of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada, five official delegates were sent along with observers and guests, including Rev. Belda Brown Jordan, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada. The official five delegation consisted of the following: Rev. Terri Hord Owns, delegate representing the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States; Ms. Bethany Guy, young adult delegate representing the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States; Rev. Paul Tche, advisor to the delegation, representing the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States; and Rev. Janet Anstead, delegate representing the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Canada.

A “Unity Statement,” a key statement that will direct the WCC in its programs and activities until the next assembly, was adopted by the 11th assembly (<https://www.oikoumene.org/sites/default/files/2022-09/A05rev1-Unity-Statement.pdf>). The “Unity Statement” asks a critical ecumenical question in our time as the assembly

affirms that “a true unity is always founded in love”: “Can we open our hearts so that Christ’s love may move us in ways that breathe new life into the search for full visible communion?” It is our hope that every member church of the WCC strives together to answer this question.

The assembly approved and adopted four “public statements” and four “minutes,” with regard to the issues of justice and peace in the Middle East, the war in Ukraine, and the Korean Peninsula

(<https://www.oikoumene.org/news/worlds-churches-converge-on-germany-city-of-karlsruhe-to-pray-and-act?fbclid=IwAR1lpj3BlavNdw1s01vus2NYZgQVEu8DyBqhiXb4ZVUO4NmsFYj4MpLGBvY>). Also, the assembly approved the formations of two new commissions: one on health and healing and the other on climate change and sustainable development.

The assembly, held every eight years, is the highest legislative body of the WCC. The assembly offers not only governance and future direction of the WCC but also opportunities for the 352 member churches and other guests to reflect on the Church and the world, exchange ideas, share different gifts, meet as confessional and regional bodies, provide cultural excursions and fellowships, and rally justice and peace campaigns. However, in noting the carbon footprints of 4,000 participants and inequity in financial resources among the member churches, the WCC—as the fellowship of the churches—should ask whether such a mass scale of the meeting is sustainable. As a body of Christ, the WCC has to be responsible in preserving creation, prevailing upon justice and peace of all, and promoting equity.

At the Central Committee meeting in June 2022 in Geneva, the new general secretary of the WCC was elected: Rev. Dr. Jerry Pillay, former president of the World Communion of Reformed Churches and professor at a seminary of Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa, will lead the WCC, beginning in January 2023. The election process was extended because of the pandemic and took almost two years for a decision

(<https://www.oikoumene.org/news/wcc-general-secretary-elect-rev-prof-dr-jerry-pillay-if-we-learn-to-trust-the-work-of-the-holy-spirit-we-can-find-each-other-even-through-difficulties>).

The National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States (NCC) held its annual Christian Unity Gathering under the theme “The Challenge of Change: Serving a Never Changing Christ in an Ever-Changing World” in October 2022 once again online. Session topics included Christian leadership, the impact of trauma, humanitarian crises,

the future of faith formation, racism/Christian nationalism/White supremacy, and domestic unrest and dramatic change.

The Churches Uniting in Christ (CUIC) had its annual meeting virtually in June 2022 and elected a new leadership team: president, Abraham Wright, International Council of Community Churches; vice president, Jean Hawxhurst, United Methodist; secretary, Hermann Weinlick, Moravian; and treasurer, Christian Choi, Presbyterian.

At its annual meeting, the Academy of Ecumenism was proposed and approved. The proposal—from a task force of Rev. Hawxhurst (United Methodist), Rev. Pettis (United Church of Christ), Rev. Rose (Episcopal Church), and Rev. Tche (Disciples of Christ)—envisions a gathering of young adults, ages 24–35, ideally half lay and half clergy, comprising two students and one teacher from each CUIC communion, for ten sessions online and four days in person. Each participant would be expected to initiate or carry out an ecumenical project in their environment.

### **Other Ecumenical Organizations and Spaces**

The National Workshop on Christian Unity, which has advanced unity and reconciliation among various Christian communities for more than fifty years and continues to be the only gathering of its kind at a national level in the world, met at Christ Cathedral in Anaheim, CA, from May 3 to 6, 2022. Rev. Paul Tch  (Disciples of Christ), Rev. Margaret Rose (Episcopal Church), Ms. Kathryn Lohre (ELCA), and Rev. Jean Hawxhurst (United Methodist Church) conducted the seminar, which was organized to answer these three questions:

- Why do you care about the unity of the Church? Was there an event in your life that was a catalyst to make ecumenism matter to you?
- Where do you see the greatest possibilities in today’s Ecumenical Movement, and where do you see its greatest frailties?
- What trends do you see in the Ecumenical Movement in the USA today, and what questions do those trends answer?

The Christian Churches Together held its annual forum in Indianapolis in September 2022. At the gathering, Christians from a broad fellowship of churches and Christian organizations considered the question “Who does Jesus Call our Christian Churches to be in a Polarized Society?” with keynote addresses from each “family” (Evangelical/Pentecostal, Historic Black, Mainline Protestant, Orthodox, and Roman Catholic), theological learning, spiritual sharing and reflection, a walking tour of landmark churches and monuments, and worship with member churches. Adelle Banks, Religion News Service, and Adam Taylor, Sojourners, were the guest speakers to lead conversations related to the theme, and Rev. Terri Hord Owens, General Minister and

President, was one of the keynote speakers representing the mainline Protestant church family.

### **Interfaith Dialogues and Engagements**

The Christian Unity and Interfaith Ministry (CUIM) continues its participation in the national Christian–Hindu, Christian–Buddhist, Christian–Sikh, Christian–Muslim, and Christian–Jewish dialogues through the NCC. These dialogues were held in person for the first time in three years since the pandemic began, except the Christian–Sikh dialogue, which took place virtually in August 2022, wherein I give a brief presentation about the Christian understanding of salvation.

The board members of the CUIM met with Nina M. Fernando, Executive Director of the Shoulder to Shoulder Campaign, in September 2022. Shoulder to Shoulder was organized with the vision of directly engaging faith leaders in the United States to be strategic partners in countering discrimination and violence against Muslims, and the Disciples of Christ has participated in the campaign from its beginning. Dr. Peter Makari, Global Ministries, has represented the Disciples on the campaign’s steering committee. At the online meeting, the board members learned in depth about its programs and promised to actively promote this campaign.

The CUIM continues to work closely with the Religions for Peace, USA, (RFPUSA) and supports it financially. In 2022, an election year, the RFPUSA has given more attention to Christian Nationalism and political violence.

### **Publications**

The CUIM has published three online booklets in 2022:

- Clark Williamson, *The Church and the Jewish People*, republished online
- Paul Tche, *Interreligious Commitment as an Ecumenical Call*
- Robert Welsh, Charles Blaisdell, Jess and Rebecca Hale, and Guy Waldrop, *People of the Covenant*

### **Disciples of Christ World Communion**

The Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council (DECC), which is the Disciples of Christ World Communion, had its confessional meeting at the 11th Assembly of the WCC in Karlsruhe, Germany. Rev. Paul Tche, General Secretary of the DECC, convened the meeting, where about thirty people gathered, including participants who are not members of the Disciples of Christ World Communion.

Seven member churches were present at the gathering:

- Rev. Eliki Bonaga, Église du Christ au Congo - Communauté des disciples du Christ
- Rev. Bladimir Coro Mogro, Iglesia Evangélica Discipulos de Cristo en Argentina
- Rev. Terri Hord Owens, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States
- Rev. Janet Anstead, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Canada
- Rev. John Gilmore, Churches of Christ in Australia
- Most Rev. DrPrem Chand Singh, Church of North India
- Rev. Sarah Moore, United Reformed Church in the United Kingdom

This gathering was featured in the WCC assembly daily news digest:

### **Disciples: “God speaks before we ever do”**

About 30 people from the family of churches known as Disciples of Christ/Churches of Christ gathered, celebrating that the group is growing with at least a quarter present being young adults and seminarians. The Disciples church family grew out of an early 19th century movement with origins in both the United Kingdom and the United States of America. Identity and ecumenism were key topics in their discussion.

The spirit of encounter was expressed by Rev. Allison Bright, currently studying at the Bossey Ecumenical Institute: “The most moving part of ecumenical work here is that these stories have faces now. They are real and they are tangible, and they are heartbreaking. I don’t always know what to say, but I know that God speaks before we ever do.”

([https://www.oikoumene.org/news/assembly-participants-come-together-as-church-families?fbclid=IwAR1\\_ThcPiLYQJ-PNtG5S5KBjTGaDcx0DoF0PIkvIrMFixLbW4VuxSYrhQdc](https://www.oikoumene.org/news/assembly-participants-come-together-as-church-families?fbclid=IwAR1_ThcPiLYQJ-PNtG5S5KBjTGaDcx0DoF0PIkvIrMFixLbW4VuxSYrhQdc))

### **Disciples–Catholic International Dialogue**

The first session of the sixth phase of the International Commission for Dialogue between the Disciples of Christ and the Catholic Church (the Commission) took place in Melbourne, KY, USA, June 24–29, 2022. The Commission consists of fourteen Catholic and Disciples members appointed by the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity, Vatican, and the Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council, Indianapolis, IN, USA. The goal of the dialogue, which started in 1977, has been understood to be full visible unity between Catholics and Disciples of Christ.

For the sixth phase, “The Ministry of the Holy Spirit”—based on 2 Corinthians 3—has been chosen as the overall topic through which to explore the work of the Holy Spirit, particularly in the life and ministry of the Church.

Prior to this session in person, the Commission held three online meetings to allow its members to get to know one another, to discuss the Basic Outline of the Sixth Phase, and to help the Catholic members understand the history and polity of the Disciples of Christ.

On the first day, the Catholic cochair, the Most Reverend David L. Ricken, Bishop of Green Bay, WI, USA, and the Disciples cochair, Rev. Dr. Robert Welsh, Indianapolis, IN, USA, opened this session with a prayer service. On the following day, Bishop Ricken led a Lectio Divina on Acts 2 to deepen the spiritual understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit, and Dr. Welsh reviewed the previous five phases of the dialogue.

Meeting in Kentucky provided the Commission with the opportunity to meet with local ecclesial leaders and to visit historic sites of the Disciples of Christ. The Commission was first welcomed by the Most Reverend Roger Foys, Bishop Emeritus of the Diocese of Covington, where the meeting was held. On Sunday, the Commission attended the Sunday worship service at Central Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Lexington, Kentucky, a congregation founded by Barton W. Stone, one of the Disciples’s founding fathers. Rev. David Shirey, Senior Pastor, and the church members welcomed the Commission warmly and hosted a luncheon for the Commission to facilitate further conversations. The Most Reverend John Stowe, Bishop of Lexington, also attended the worship service with the Commission. After the service, the members of the dialogue visited the Cane Ridge Meeting House, where Dr. Newell Williams presented a paper highlighting the most significant moments of the 1801 Communion Revival, which gave birth to a movement that became the Disciples of Christ. At the closing prayer service, Rev. Dr. Don Gillett, Regional Minister of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Kentucky, brought greetings to the Commission on behalf of the regional church.

The program of this meeting also included a Bible study on 2 Corinthians 3 by Prof. Ian Boxall. Two papers on the Holy Spirit and the Ministry of the Church were presented to the Commission: “Disciples of Christ, the Holy Spirit, and Ministry” by Dr. Thomas Best and “The Ministry of the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 3): Laying Foundations” by Msgr. Michael Clay. Each day, the Commission began and ended its activities with prayers led alternatively by the members.

“The Holy Spirit as a Gift” is the topic for the 2023 session, planned to be held in Rome.

**GA-2306**  
**General Ministry Report of Disciples Church Extension Fund**

**2023 Disciples Church Extension Fund Report**  
**General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)**

Applause, cheers, and a couple of “Amens” greeted the approvals of modest Disciples Church Extension Fund (DCEF) loans to Disciples congregations in mid-December 2022. The casual observer might have wondered, “Why all the fuss?”

But DCEF Staff Loan Committee members understand it can take months — even years — to help a congregation move through the pipeline from application to loan approval. Plus, these loans were the first approvals for two of the newest Building and Capital Services Advisors, just six months on the job. Committee members naturally applauded their new colleagues for reaching this benchmark.

However, the outsized response to the action also could be attributed to a sense of new hope: Even a trickle of new loans indicates Disciples congregations are finding their bearings again in a challenging ministry context. That alone is worth “all the fuss.”

The last three years have been fraught with ministry tests that persist in this new era:

- the Covid 19 pandemic
- a long-overdue, and appropriately challenging racial reckoning
- increasing fallout from climate change
- the staggering human and global economic impact of the Ukraine/Russia war

Ministry practices as fundamental as worshiping together or feeding hungry neighbors have required innovative thinking and pluck to continue; qualities Disciples congregations demonstrated as they faithfully rose to the occasion. Of course, they did. The Good News of God’s unconditional love is more relevant, and more needed than ever in such times.

**DCEF’s aim is to come alongside faith communities — not only to help them endure complex challenges but to help them make the most of what they are learning as they respond to God’s call in this daunting season.**

### **The Context**

With congregations in survival mode, DCEF’s work in 2020 and 2021 shifted to helping partners thrive during the worst of the unprecedented times we all faced. For example:

- DCEF supported congregational efforts to apply for government Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans — and then to take the appropriate steps for those loans to be forgiven through the program.

- DCEF provided grant funding to help congregations acquire the technology necessary to remain in touch with parishioners and serve hurting communities that could no longer meet in person. We continue to support this transition by offering our lowest rates for technology loans.
- DCEF suspended loan payments to allow congregations time to regroup in the new context for ministry. As congregations and other partners re-establish their financial footing, we remain mindful of the stresses on budgets as loan payments resume.
- DCEF leaders met with Puerto Rico congregations throughout the multiple climate crises on the island, crafting services to support their recovery and continued growth. This included a long-overdue, face-to-face visit of the DCEF Board mid-year to testify authentically to DCEF’s continued commitment to a 123-year-long partnership.

This advocacy and support came at a time when DCEF was experiencing its own challenges.

### **The Cost of Advocacy**

Following a strong performance in the investment portfolio in 2021, the DCEF board approved a 2022 budget that included an operating loss of \$173,606. Leaders understood Disciples — and thus DCEF — faced a year of recovery.

Meanwhile, one of the cushions for DCEF’s operations — the investment portfolio — was about to go on a roller coaster ride. The S&P 500 began its descent in January 2022, a slide that resulted in a bear market by mid-June that continued throughout 2022.

Thanks to significant containment of budgeted operating expenses, the final *unaudited* balance for 2022 showed an operating gain of \$20,758. But the market slide was beyond our control. Our unaudited figures showed unrealized loss of \$3,023,205 in investments. (“Unrealized” simply means the funds are invested, and thus not a cash loss. As the market recovers, the investments should recover as well.) Combined with other amounts besides unrealized gain/loss on investments that also are applied against the operating gain, DCEF’s *unaudited* Total Change in Net Assets for 2022 shows a \$2,021,868 loss.

### **Finding Balance**

DCEF’s significant reserves, and its partnerships — both ecumenical and denominational — have protected DCEF and its investors in this difficult season. DCEF’s lasting power has helped the 139-year-old ministry weather many a storm. Furthermore, the DCEF Board has approved a break-even budget for 2023, which includes tightening the proverbial belt and pursuing additional income streams.

**DCEF’s new vision statement: “We will be the catalyst for change in the renewal and rebirth of our congregations,” sums up DCEF’s driving intention for the coming season. DCEF is a guide for congregations facing**

**a rapidly changing context for ministry. Not only will benchmarks for DCEF’s performance be driven by this call, but they must be quantified by a realistic sense of market potential — and be backed by a robust strategic effort to maximize impact.**

Such ingenuity requires a full complement of staff. So, as 2022 dawned with staffing in flux, the first order of business was to onboard strong, competent new leaders aligned with DCEF’s mission and values.

Staff changes started at the top. New President and CEO Belinda King, MBA, officially took the helm in January 2022. Her 10-year history with DCEF and partner congregations, as well as her background in banking, meant she was not naïve about the struggle DCEF would face in her first year. Her presidency began with the need to fill significant staff positions left vacant at the close of 2021 and into 2022.

### **New Church Ministry**

The next staff change announced was Rev. Dr. José Martinez, who stepped up from Associate Minister to overlap with the outgoing **New Church Ministries** leader at the end of 2021. By late January, Rev. Martinez was leading the churchwide ministry as Transitional Minister of New Church Strategies, which operates with oversight by DCEF. A national search will result in calling the new Minister. Meanwhile, Rev. Martinez and his team have not missed a beat.

- The New Church Hacks webinars marked success in 2022, by matching content with the changing needs of both new and existing congregations. Webinars titled “Trauma-Informed Ministry and Pandemic Recovery,” “Navigating Grief in Children and Youth Ministries,” and “Creating Best Practices for Creation Care,” drew hundreds of participants.
- While Leadership Academy drew a respectable attendance as well, plans to reboot this gathering are expected to improve its impact.
- Exploration of a new initiative — “Disciples NEXT” — in partnership with the College of Regional Ministers, seeks to develop core competencies that train leaders as movement initiators, rather than perpetuating a model of church growth based on a history of colonization.
- The inaugural Leader’s Retreat focused on the spiritual health and wellness of those who are involved with starting a new movement.
- Meanwhile, the 2022 Pentecost Offering, which supports the ministry, was on pace with gifts the previous year.

### **Fielding a Team**

By June, DCEF had called new **Building and Capital Services Advisors** Brock McCracken and Rev. Richard Williams, bringing deep connections among Disciples.

Existing advisors, Rev. Gilberto Collazo, Jim Michel, and Rev. Rosario Ibarra, bring the team to five. The search for a new Vice President for the department continues, with Rev. William Bass, retired veteran DCEF advisor, assisting the team in the interim.

Two additional Disciples veterans came on board as directors in mid-year: Rev. Patricia Case, Transitional Senior Director for Marketing and Services, and Katy McFall, CFRE, Director of Development.

As Covid restrictions lifted, staff logged hundreds of miles catching up in person at dozens of regional assemblies and in face-to-face gatherings with congregational leaders and donors across the country. When travel is not advised, as waves of viral variants ebb and flow, virtual meeting skills — sharpened in the pandemic — will continue to provide cost-effective gathering opportunities to strengthen relationships.

Meanwhile, serious illness and one resignation combined to leave the **Finance Department** short-staffed for much of the last two quarters of 2022. The remaining finance staff worked heroically to keep day-to-day operations on track while their colleagues grew strong enough to return to work full-time. Furthermore, leadership moved quickly to bring in Christy Paddock, CPA, CGMA, of Paddock Advisors, LLC, to bridge the gap, as a national executive search commenced for Chief Financial Officer. Christy's background in supporting such transitions for non-profits proved a solid fit for DCEF's needs.

Both Board Chair Jeff Champeau and Vice Chair Martha Brown agreed to continue their positions to further continuity in the transition. Elected to join the board with terms that began January 1, 2023, were Regional Minister of the Christian Church in the Southwest Rev. Andy Mangum; Andy Sherrer, regional president of First United Bank in Oklahoma and member of First Christian Church, Norman; and Candis Wilson, who serves as bursar at Central State University, Ohio Regional Moderator, and is member of First Christian Church in Xenia, Ohio.

### **Signs of Recovery**

Signs of recovery do not end with modest loan approvals, or with filling mission-critical leadership positions:

- **A new strategic planning** process, which began in Q4 2022, continues into Q1 2023, with expectations for new initiatives that can take DCEF's work to the next level in helping congregations thrive.
- The strong performance of the silent phase of "**New Ways into the World,**" the **first Capital Campaign for DCEF**, sets the tone for a General Assembly public launch of the drive. The campaign will strengthen new DCEF initiatives to help congregations thrive in a new landscape for mission; bolster New Church Ministry as the church-wide effort pivots for its next phase; and support DCEF Disaster Relief Services that provide expert consultation on such things as

property and casualty insurance settlements, and complex engineering reports — all at no cost to the recovering congregation.

- New **Ministry Relevance Services**, designed to help guide congregations in a changing landscape for ministry, will maximize the core resources of faith communities: their people, property, and finances. These innovative new services will help congregations identify and leverage **all** their resources for their unique mission and ministry context.
- Continued ecumenical partnerships through **Hope Ecu** provide a growing market for congregational transformation services crafted by the DCEF-related ministry formerly known as Hope Partnership.
- A new initiative within New Church Ministry — **DisciplesNEXT** — focuses on identifying and equipping a new generation of leaders with a passion for restoring the core strength of Disciples as a movement — and shifts Disciples away from colonizing models of church growth.
- A goal to widen DCEF’s impact for ALL Disciples congregations drives new initiatives to support **historically underserved faith communities** — primarily those ministering to communities of color, low-income neighborhoods, and other marginalized groups.
- With the awareness that climate-driven disasters will only increase in coming years, DCEF continues to work with partners to help congregations prepare for and navigate the fallout of a crisis through enhancements to **Disaster Relief Services**.

**In short, DCEF continues to step up:**

- To meet congregations and other ministry partners where they are;
- To listen as they name their historic ministry and the new ways they feel called into ministry in today’s new context; and  
To identify ministry assets — people, property, and finances — that can be leveraged in service to faithful, effective, and innovative ministry.

Can we get an “Amen!”?

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

**GA-2307**

**General Ministry Report of Disciples of Christ Historical Society**

Disciples of Christ Historical Society  
2023 General Board Report

***Introduction — Who Are We?***

The Disciples of Christ Historical Society (DCHS) is the premier collection of Disciples and Stone-Campbell Movement materials in the world. The mission of DCHS is to preserve and proclaim the story of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) within the context of the broader Stone-Campbell tradition out of which it grows. We are a general ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) with the special mandate to serve all three major streams of the Stone-Campbell movement: the Churches of Christ, the Christian Churches/Churches of Christ, and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). We preserve records and artifacts common to our traditions and foster collaboration and conversation through historical research, publications, and lectures. Our ministry is driven by the belief that by celebrating our past and telling its hard truths, the church is empowered to make history now and is better equipped to help shape a future ever more faithful to God's dream of unity and justice for all.

Since 1941, DCHS has preserved the many documents, books, periodicals, audio and visual materials, and precious artifacts that tell the story of the Stone-Campbell heritage. We have made these available for personal and academic historical research. We hold the largest collection of Stone-Campbell material in the world, including a large number of historic photographs and paintings, a great number of rare books and artifacts, biographical files and congregational, regional, and general church records and documents. We promote original research by scholars, students and other interested persons. We have a global audience for our materials posted online on our Digital Commons website. We are focused on telling the whole story of our church within the broader Stone Campbell tradition, with a special emphasis on stories of historically underrepresented communities. Currently, we are digitizing and publishing scores of important journals and other resources directly relevant to African American Disciples history and will be increasingly adding materials pertinent to Asian and Hispanic/Latinx Disciples experience. We are also leading the way among other denominational historical repositories in implementing a digital humanities approach for church history archives. We would love to have interested Disciples visit us, in person or online, in the coming years to learn more about our work and our shared history.

***Our Recent Work and Accomplishments***

I (Joel Brown) have only been on the job as President for a few months as I am penning this, but one thing I do know is that the future of DCHS is bright, and I want to tell you why I believe that to be the case. DCHS has benefitted from strong and innovative leadership in recent years. I am extremely fortunate to have the opportunity to build on the tremendous work of DCHS's previous President, the Rev. Dr. Rick Lowery. Rick helped guide DCHS to a place of stability, respectability, and ministerial effectiveness, so that DCHS is not only surviving but it is positioned to thrive. This is a

testament to Rick’s leadership and to our Board of Trustees’ vision, courage, and stewardship.

Our finances are sound thanks to strong endowments and solid management of them by CCF, DCEF, and Treasury Services, as well as the careful stewardship of our Board. Our budget is balanced. Gifts and memberships continue to be strong. In addition to our ongoing work of receiving and processing papers and important records from pastors, congregations, regions, and general ministries of the church, we have worked on several important new initiatives this year.

The Historical Society is currently engaged in and committed to a robust project of digitizing artifacts from our physical archives. Whoever writes Volume Two of DCHS’s published history will likely title the chapter covering these years, “The Digital Turn.” This is the future of the humanities and archival preservation, and DCHS has positioned itself to be a leader in exploring this digital frontier and determining what the digital turn means for denominational archives and historical societies. At DCHS, we are forging a digital humanities approach for historical preservation and public history that will help us better fulfill our mission to *preserve* and *proclaim* our history for the betterment of our church, the Stone-Campbell Movement, and the world. As an organization engaged in the work of public history, the goal of digitization is not only to make our archival materials accessible, but also to help our churches, ministries, and partners make sense of the texts and artifacts they encounter in our archives and understand their significance for our history, identity, and mission as a church. The digital *proclamation* of our history will require collaboration between historians, archivists, and digital humanities scholars, among others, and we will have to raise additional funds to support it. However, the return on our investment for expanding our “digital” presence will be worth the cost. Our churches, ministries, and partners in the other streams of the Stone-Campbell Movement will have ready access to quality digital content that not only invites them into the history of our movement but also helps them understand its significance for our life and witness as a church, and they will be better equipped to engage and narrate that history more faithfully.

Our digitization efforts have been blessed by several gifts donated for this project, and especially by a major gift from Dr. Edmund Short, which has helped us purchase the necessary equipment for our digitization efforts and supported digital archival staffing. Thanks to these gifts, we are well on our way toward digitizing the history of our church, and we are leading the way for other church-related historical repositories in this work. Our digital presence (which includes our online publications, digital newsletter, our Digital Commons website, and our online *Journal of Disciplina*) is allowing us to reach a wider and more diverse audience than we have since our founding in 1941. We have some incredible digital projects coming up that we look forward to debuting in the next year and beyond (see below).

One of our most significant accomplishments in the past year was the DCHS Kirkpatrick Academic Conference, “Visions of Wholeness: Systemic Racism, Antiracism, and Reconciliation in Our Shared History and Tradition,” which took place at Phillips Theological Seminary in Tulsa, Oklahoma in March 2022. This historic gathering of scholars, church leaders, and participants throughout the church, in-person and online via livestream generated new scholarship and conversation about this critical topic in our history and in our life as a church today. We had a day and a half of intense,

informed reflection on the experience and witness of Indigenous, African American, Hispanic, Asian, and Asian American communities in Disciples and broader Stone-Campbell history. The response has been very positive, and the conference is continuing to bear fruit. Since the conference, videos of the presentations, which are available online, are being used by regions and congregations for education and conversation in their own locations, as well as in seminary classes and for continuing education for ministers. We are also working to publish some of the papers/presentations in our *Journal of Disciplina*, and we are hopeful that we will have the edited book with the conference presentations ready for purchase at General Assembly. In the Kirkpatrick Conference, DCHS lived out its vision that denominational historical archives are not just repositories of religious texts and ideas, but at their best they are sources for the church's work for justice and wholeness in the world. We look forward to continuing in this work.

As we live into our mission to *preserve and proclaim* the history of our church, we are committed especially to telling stories of historically underrepresented groups in our church. We are using awarded grants and special donations to fund projects that help to elevate and share the fuller history of our church. One placed where we focused our efforts in this regard this past year was in the installation of the Oscar Haynes Exhibit at Light of the World of the Christian Church in Indianapolis. The exhibit explores the history of African American Disciples, and it currently focuses on the histories of institutions of higher education. We look forward to working with churches, regions, and general ministries to put together more exhibits like this one that can be experienced digitally or in person.

We are also sponsoring and publishing significant research about the church's history and identity this coming year. We have a number of historical manuscripts that will be published in the coming year (see below), and we are gearing up for a productive year with our *Journal of Disciplina*, which is the scholarly journal for the study of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the Stone-Campbell Movement. We recently named Dr. Timothy Lee, as the new General Editor for *JoD*. Dr. Lee is Associate Professor of the History of Christianity as well as Director of the Asian/Asian American and Pacific Islander Church Studies Program at Brite Divinity School. We are thrilled about Dr. Lee's vision for the journal and look forward to seeing how it will help shape the activities of our church's scholars and institutions of theological education.

### ***Ministry Challenges***

There are three significant challenges we face in the coming year. First, our ministry is still in the midst of a season of leadership transition (that said, we are in the latter stages of that season). In September 2022, Rick Lowery retired as President and Joel Brown began his tenure. As far as presidential transitions go, this was one that has been relatively smooth—thanks be to God! The DCHS Board of Trustees also welcomed five new members at the start of 2023. We are thrilled about the energy, ideas, and support these new members will bring to the board, but it will take some time for everyone to get oriented to the organization. We are excited about our new leadership, but we would also cherish your prayers and support as we learn to work together in this ministry.

Second, we are still working to fully inventory our collection following the move from Nashville. Moving a massive historical repository from one location to another is a monumental endeavor, and reassembling that collection is also no small feat. We employ one full-time archivist for a collection whose size probably requires several. With the help of support staff and volunteers, we have been able to make significant strides toward having an updated inventory/catalogue of our collection, but we still have significant work to do before our collection is fully accessible for the public. One of our goals is to publish an electronic catalogue of our entire collection, so that anyone with internet access can explore our holdings, but we are not able to do that until we have processed everything that was moved from Nashville. We look forward with great anticipation to the day when we will have completed this work related to our move, but we are not there yet.

Finally, we are continuing to address issues related to archival space. As we reported last year, since our move to Bethany, WV, we have received a number of new files and boxes from regions, general ministries, congregations, and individual ministers. This, to a large degree, is a sign of confidence in our work. People in the church know we have the capacity and the expertise to care for these precious records that tell the story of our church. Although we are not yet “at capacity,” we are aware that we will reach capacity sooner than we had first anticipated. We have taken two steps to address our space issue this year: First, we hired an archival consulting firm to do a space consultation with us. Second, we partnered with Bethany College to lease space on their campus to serve as offsite space for additional storage at an easily accessible location close by. It is likely a temporary solution to a pressing problem, but it gives us the breathing room we need to plan carefully for the longer term. We give thanks for the partnership and hospitality of Bethany College, and we covet your prayers, support, and suggestions as we move forward in each of these three areas.

### ***Looking Forward***

We have a great deal we are looking forward to in the coming year. The Historical Society will embark on one of its most ambitious projects in recent years. As part of our digitization program, we are going to be leading a collaborative project to compile, digitize, and make available the entire corpus of Alexander Campbell’s writings, along with many of the writings of his father (Thomas) and family. The “Campbell Papers Project” will unite several institutions associated with the Stone-Campbell Movement to bring together all of the extant writings of Alexander Campbell and make them available in a single online digital repository. As the institution that has made significant technological advancements for digitization, DCHS will lead the project and will also be host it on our Digital Commons website. We are in the process of applying for grants to help fund this project.

We will publish a number of books this year: We are nearing the release date for the memoir of John Humbert, adding to the already existing biographies of Dale Fiers and Kenneth Teegarden, giving us books on our first three GMPs. We also will publish biographies of African American Disciples leaders Preston Taylor (by Edward Robinson) and Sarah Lue Bostick (by Yvonne Gilmore) within the next year. We will also publish the theological memoir of Keith Watkins. Finally, we are nearing completion of the manuscript with the presentations, lectures, and sermons from the Tulsa Kirkpatrick

Conference (see above), which we hope will be ready for purchase (or at least preorder) at General Assembly in July.

We are also thrilled to be launching the Disciples Oral History Project this year, an effort to support the church's larger Church Narrative Project. We will be hosting workshops and producing materials to help congregations, regions, and general ministries conduct their own oral history interviews to capture the stories of our sacred past that are living in our pews. We believe that telling and hearing these oral histories can be transformative for congregations, and we also hope they will share these oral history recordings (audio and video) with us so that we can preserve those as part of our history as a church.

We are looking forward to General Assembly in Louisville this year, where we will be hosting three events. First, we are co-sponsoring a dinner with CUIM which will include our biennial Reed lecture, which will focus on "Christian Nationalism and Our Churches: Past and Present." The lecture will be given by one of the foremost scholars of Christian Nationalism, Dr. Andrew Whitehead, Associate Professor of Sociology and Director of the Association of Religion Data Archives at the Center for the Study of Religion and American Culture at Indiana University (IUPUI). Second, we will be hosting our Stalcup Congregational History workshop as part of our Disciples Oral History Project. The session will train clergy and lay church historians to conduct oral histories in their contexts and will include a panel of experienced church historians and ministers who have engaged in oral history collection. Finally, we are co-sponsoring the Sunday morning excursion to Cane Ridge, which will include worship, lunch, and a tour. Our President will be preaching at the Cane Ridge service.

### ***Pray for Us***

We cherish the support and prayers of our Disciples churches and ministry partners. We would ask for prayers as we are coming out of a season of leadership transition and are gearing up for a season of ministerial effectiveness. Pray also for our continued financial well-being and faithful, effective stewardship that we may live more fully into our stated vision of "celebrating our past and telling its hard truths, [seeking] a church empowered to make history now and thus to shape a future ever more faithful to God's dream of unity and justice for all." There is much work yet to be done on this front, but we are so grateful to have your prayers and support as we work to realize this vision.

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

**GA-2308**  
**General Ministry Report of Disciples Women's Ministries**

**DISCIPLES WOMEN OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)  
 OF THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA**

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**REPORT TO THE GENERAL BOARD & GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

January 2023

*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.*

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Disciples Women 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,

Rev. Angéle Saunders Johnson, M.Div.  
Executive Director, Disciples Women Ministries

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



**GA-2309**  
**General Ministry Report of Division of Homeland Ministries of the  
 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Inc dba Disciples Home Missions**

**Division of Homeland Ministries  
 dba Disciples Home Missions**  
 1099 North Meridian Street, Suite 700  
 Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-1036  
 P O Box 1986  
 Indianapolis, Indiana 46206-1986  
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Division of Homeland Ministries, dba Disciples Home Missions (DHM), traces its history and legacy back to the early days of the Stone Campbell movement when the first commitment was made for congregations to engage in coordinated mission work. A time when congregations recognized that pooling our resources to spread the gospel and change the world was an important part of being the church. That tradition is alive and well at DHM, even as we move through a season of transformation and renewal.

After a series of leadership changes over the past 5 years, the board of directors of DHM called Bernard Chris Dorsey to be President and CEO, and issued the charge to transform the ministry and continue boldly in mission and ministry. In a few short months, much progress toward our short-term and long-term goals. Not only have we changed our logo and branding to reflect the vibrancy and excitement of the ministries of DHM, but we have also begun to solidify our priorities and how we carry out our mission of *equipping Disciples for Christ and connecting people to the life-changing love of God while facilitating faithful and effective ministry*. We have identified three key priorities that have always been core to who we are, but we are now articulating them more clearly:

- **Mission – Engaging in coordinated missions on behalf of the whole church.**
- **Advocacy – Acting and speaking to promote greater justice and mercy.**
- **Programs – Providing innovative programs and resources to congregations, regions, clergy, and laity.**

**Mission   ·   Advocacy   ·   Programs**

These priorities are not new to DHM. They have been with us throughout the history of the ministry. They are part of the DNA and are woven throughout our various ministries and programs of Disciples Home Mission. In the coming months, the wider church will be re-introduced to DHM, not as a new ministry, but as a transformed, transforming, and

transformational ministry. We invite you to get to know DHM again, and join us in changing the world.

We are also changing the way do our reporting. Rather than a series of sub-reports from several different ministries, we are offering a summary report with a few highlights from across the various ministries of DHM and the associated ministries and mission sights.

**Office of Christian Vocations** – The OCV has responsibility for search and call, scholarships and grants, the minister’s directory, chaplains and specialized ministries, and other aspects of supporting the training, nurture, and professional development of clergy and lay leaders. A recent change in leadership of the office is prompting us to evaluate the full range of programs and services offered by the OCV. There was already an effort underway by the search and call committee of GCOM to evaluate the systems used to support search and call. That work will now be combined with a more comprehensive evaluation of the work of the Office of Christian Vocation. Some of the key areas of focus will include improving the process for awarding scholarship and grants to achieve greater diversity and inclusivity; strategically assessing the technology used in the search and call process to develop a system that better meets the needs of congregations, regions, and clergy; giving greater attention to the health and wellbeing of clergy.

**Christian Education / Faith Formation** – Under the leadership of Monique Crain Spells, the work of the office is receiving a creative and energetic boost. While ensuring that the established offering from the office continue to be distributed throughout the church, we have also begun developing a series of webinars to provide leading edge theological content to the wider church. These “Theological Mana” webinars have been well-received and well-attended. In the coming months we will be developing a long-term strategy to providing educational content that is relevant and impactful.

**Office of Evangelism** – The office continues to support education and action in the area of evangelism and congregational transformation. Under the leadership of R. Wayne Calhoun, we are embarking upon a process of developing a new and sustainable model for supporting practices of hospitality and witness, to better connect people to the life-changing love of God. This will be a months-long process of engaging an advisory group to help ensure that the work of the office is in line with contemporary practices and approaches to evangelism.

**Justice and Advocacy Ministries** – DHM is in the process of developing a strategic approach to coordinating DHM’s engagement around a variety of justice issues; promoting and supporting advocacy efforts by congregations, regions, and ministry partners; and providing ongoing informational and educational content regarding critical social justice issues. To lead this effort, we are looking to fill the position of Director for Justice and Advocacy Ministries. This is an exciting endeavor for us and the position will take its place alongside the many other justice related ministries throughout the wider

church, and will ensure that DHM remains committed to transforming society toward greater justice, equity, and mercy.

**Families and Children** – Using an intergenerational approach, DHM continues to lead the way in moving toward a more holistic and integrative approach to ministries with families and children. It is not relegated to a silo approach, but rather seeks to build a broader and strong table of ministry participants who span the generations. While Children Worship and Wonder remains a solid part of our offering, Olivia Updegrave has also been pushing us to engage in faithful and deliberation conversations around what it means to do *ministry across generations*. This has included unique educational opportunities for church leaders, parents, and others to learn how to meet the needs of not just families and children, but to attend to community in a way that brings all the voices to the table.

**Youth and Young Adults** – We are entering into a time of transition with our youth and young adult ministry work. We are currently looking to fill the parttime position of Coordinator for Youth and Young Adult Ministries. While we have had such positions before, this will be a new approach that allows the person in the position to be a more active part of determining what the work will look like and how to best serve the wider church in this way.

**Green Chalice** – The ministry continues to make a difference in the world by helping Disciples address the planet-threatening reality of climate change. This is done through congregations signing on to become Green Chalice congregations, committed to making changes in their practices to reduced CO2 emissions; and individuals can sign up to become Green Chalice Ambassadors.

**Black Ministers Retreat** – This year DHM continued its long-standing work of planning and hosting the Black Ministers Retreat. This was the first time the retreat was held in-person since 2020 and the start of the pandemic. The event took place in Birmingham, AL and we had over 100 registered and participating. The theme of the retreat was “Letters from the Heart” and we celebrated the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Martin Luther King, Jr.’s Letter from Birmingham Jail.

## Conclusion

There are just a few of the highlights from DHM over the last year. We look forward to connecting with the whole church at general assembly in Louisville, KY this summer. We will host an afterhours reception on Saturday, July 29, 2023, and we look forward to seeing you all there!

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

**GA-2310**  
**General Ministry Report of Division of Overseas Ministries  
of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Inc**

The Division of Overseas Ministries (DOM) continues to live into its mission “to receive and share the Good News of Jesus Christ by joining with global and local partners to work for justice, reconciliation, and peace.” 2022 was filled with transitions that created opportunities for realizing the more significant potential for mission in the 21st century and beyond. Partners continue to participate in transforming ministries that support local and global communities. Despite facing various challenges related to climate and environmental justice and areas of operations, partners remain optimistic. DOM continues to accompany partners in humanitarian relief efforts due to natural and human-made disasters and in response to economic challenges, the refugee crisis, and emerging challenges during the global pandemic.

After nearly three years of working from home, the Division of Overseas staff returned to the 1099 North Meridian Office building on a hybrid schedule on September 6. The staff is in the office two days a week. Staff resumed travel in June, marking a renewed opportunity to be physically present with partners. In these travels, staff are connecting with overseas personnel and witnessing how Global Ministries' accompaniment has been helpful to the partners.

In 2022, Krista Johnson Weickel was called to be DOM's Vice President for Administration and Programs. Also in 2022, DOM adopted the following logo: The logo shows moving waves representing DOM's active connections around the world, collaboration with international partners and local congregations and regions, pathways to peace with justice, the movement of the spirit and a focus on the Disciples chalice.

### **Africa**

The global pandemic continues to affect the African region. Following the sixth wave, the number of COVID-19-reported new infections and deaths on the continent declined to its lowest levels since the onset of the pandemic. However, at the end of 2022, there was a five-week increase in new coronavirus cases. In Africa, as in the rest of the world, mask mandates and travel restrictions have been lifted. Health officials continue reiterating that Africa must remain vigilant with COVID-19 vaccinations and strategies to control infection. The Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), World Health Organization, and other multi-sector partners have led major initiatives on vaccine acquisition and production on the continent. According to the WHO, only three countries have vaccinated more than seventy percent of their populations, and four have vaccinated fifty percent. This is far from the projected 2022 global goal of preventative measures for seventy percent of the people. Therefore, partners continue to collaborate to achieve equitable access to COVID-19 testing, vaccines, and medications and carry out programs to dispel myths and misconceptions about COVID-19 vaccines to increase vaccination rates on the continent.

The **United Congregational Church in Southern Africa** (UCCSA) held its 41st General Assembly in Gaborone, Botswana, from September 22-27, 2022. The Assembly voted to extend the UCCSA's mission into Malawi and unanimously welcomed the Evangelical Congregational Church in Angola (IECA) into UCCSA's membership. On December 6, 2022, IECA welcomed its first delegation of UCCSA church leaders to Angola as a UCCSA member church. The delegation's visit was the first of ongoing exchanges that will take place over the next year two years to integrate IECA into the denomination. The integration process will conclude at the 2024 UCCSA General Assembly, which will be held in Mozambique.

The year culminated with several historical events. Within the last quarter of 2022, Africa experienced a recent coup d'état in Burkina Faso and a failed coup attempt in Sao Tome and Principe. In December 2022, South African President, Cyril Ramaphosa, attended King Charles III's first state visit at Buckingham Palace as the reigning monarch. President Ramaphosa's visit came amid calls for his resignation and possible impeachment due to allegations of corruption and failure to disclose vital information.

On November 1, 2022, Dr. Kahala Cannon began her ministry as the Global Relations Minister for Africa for the Division of Overseas Ministries and Global Ministries. Before permanently accepting this role, Dr. Cannon served as the Acting Executive for the Africa Office.

### **East Asia and the Pacific**

September 21 marked the 50th anniversary of the onset of Martial Law in the Philippines under the former dictator Ferdinand Marcos. The anniversary was made especially poignant—and far from an abstract historical marker—by the fact that in May of this year, Ferdinand "Bongbong" Romualdez Marcos Jr., the son of the former dictator, was elected as the new President of the Philippines. Global Ministries supported two representatives to participate as election observers for an **International Observer Mission** sponsored by ICHRP and the **National Council of Churches in the Philippines**. Partners remain highly concerned about threats the new Filipino administration poses in the government's long-standing persecution of human rights defenders and civil society leaders, including church leaders.

While most regional countries are fully open to visit, some, like Hong Kong and Taiwan still have limiting COVID protocols, while China Tight travel restrictions remained in China throughout 2022. A focus has been on nurturing new partnerships with the municipal **Baoshan Christian Council** and provincial Yunnan Christian Council in China's mountainous western Yunnan province. These judicatories work heavily with the Lisu, Mao, and other minority communities, providing basic ministerial preparation, public health care, and other diaconal services like drug and alcohol intervention. A special webinar with the Yunnan partners was held in November, focusing on traditional Thanksgiving celebrations and HIV/AIDS ministries. As China's COVID policy shifts, travel to China will hopefully resume in 2023.

In Hong Kong, this year saw the reality set in of greater socio-political control by mainland China on the Special Administrative Region, leaving ecumenical partners to navigate the parameters of the new public space tentatively. In 2022, the **Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants (APMM)**, whose advocacy and service ministries to migrants in Hong Kong were heavily supported by Global Ministries throughout the pandemic, began working more closely with another main partner, the **Hong Kong Christian Council**.

The **Pacific Theological College (PTC)** has engaged Global Ministries in supporting a multi-year process of restructuring its curricula to provide a broader array of instruction beyond theological education. A key area for expansion includes developing a new School of Pacific Philosophy that will “teach indigenous philosophical foundations, worldviews and ways of being.” Throughout 2022 Global Ministries supported various research projects at PTC that develop youth and inter-sectional engagement on climate change and related social and development issues facing Pacific communities.

### **Latin America and the Caribbean**

Partners in Latin America and the Caribbean have been working, through 2022, mainly with the social consequences of natural phenomena such as hurricanes, earthquakes, bolts of lightning, and fires. They have been committed to assisting victims and providing their communities with first aid resources. Similarly, they have continued to serve people with other spiritual and social needs, seeking, at all times, to be those “wounded healers.” Hope and solidarity in this “Abya Yala” or Great Homeland reborn from pain and brokenness through participation and mutual healing through each other's sorrows.

In 2022, Cuba dealt with two major disasters. The first was an accident in the first weeks of August. A fire set off by a lightning strike at an oil storage facility raged uncontrollably in Matanzas. Four explosions and flames left one dead, injured nearly 121 people, and 17 firefighters missing. Then, on September 27, Hurricane Ian stormed through “Isla de la Juventud” (“Youth Island”) in the south of Cuba. It also passed through Pinar del Río, a province at the west end of Cuba. Ian, then a Category 3 hurricane, hit with sustained winds of 205 km/h and gusts, also causing damage in the surrounding provinces. Much of the infrastructure, housing, agriculture, electrical, and telephone services have been devastated, and the entire country was left without electricity. For the first time, a blackout of the whole national territory caused by the effects of the hurricane added to the energy crisis that the country has been experiencing for several months. The Island has been undergoing a massive socioeconomic and health problem, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the critical energy scenario, and the proliferation of dengue in recent months. The first response has consisted in providing support to the affected people and their families, as well as evacuees with medicines, basic food, and spiritual accompaniment, all from local churches and other nearby provinces and ecumenical member organizations of the **Cuban Council of Churches (CIC)**, acronym in Spanish). A group of mission

ministries in the US, Global Ministries included, have had conversations through the second semester of the year to assess the damages and to coordinate the aid and the accompaniment there. The Reverend Joel Ortega Dopico, CIC's President and Global Ministries' International Board Member, assisted the ministries with that assessment.

Nearly 80 participants from 20 US, Latin America, and Caribbean theological institutions participated in two virtual gatherings (Students Forum, January 24-25, 27-28; Women Theologians Forum, May 23-24) throughout the year. One of the main tasks of those forums was to reflect on how theological education could respond to the social challenges in the continent. They also shared contextual analysis of the social and theological realities and explored partnerships and mutual accompaniment. They reflected on ideas like personnel and student exchanges, joint programs, and other creative ways of walking together in the reflection and praxis of the theological effort of the institutions. In 2023, the process will resume its activities with a Professors Forum and a Continental Event, also in virtual mode.

### **Middle East and Europe**

In February 2022, Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered an invasion of Ukraine that quickly became a full war. The incursion has led to massive displacement of Ukrainians and non-Ukrainian residents – inside the country and as refugees in neighboring countries. Disciples and United Church of Christ leaders responded to the crisis on March 3, drawing attention to the complexity of the consequence of the war.

Two partners who have received direct support are the **Reformed Church in Hungary**, working closely with its neighbor, the Reformed Church in Transcarpathia, and the **Evangelical Church in Greece's Perichoresis**. The Reformed Church in Hungary coordinates closely with the Reformed Church in Transcarpathia due to their historical connection and current collaboration. This relationship has allowed for direct aid provision in Ukraine through a program called "Helping the Helpers." This initiative welcomes, hosts, and cares for thousands of internally displaced persons in western Ukraine in schools, diaconal institutions, and local congregations of the Reformed Church in Transcarpathia. Perichoresis, in northeast Greece, is providing housing and holistic care to refugees who have arrived there, including rent for a furnished apartment, utilities, food, hygiene, and COVID supplies, in addition to English and Greek language lessons, computer and sewing lessons, and psycho-social support for children and for families, all of whom have experienced the trauma of displacement. Perichoresis covers these services six months at a time. The Reformed Church in Hungary/Transcarpathia and Perichoresis have received support through Global Ministries.

Following an outpouring of concern and support during this crisis, the Disciples have responded to those in need through the ACT Alliance global ecumenical network of which the UCC and Disciples are members and bilaterally with partners in the region,

which is offering a meaningful response. Even so, the massive displacement of people and destruction of cities and properties continue to garner attention. What is often lost is the direct impact on other parts of the world, including countries in the Middle East like Egypt, Lebanon, and Syria, which rely on Russia and Ukraine for up to 80% of their grain and cooking oil imports as other staples. Due to the war and international sanctions, these imports have been reduced or cut off altogether. The war in Ukraine has compounded with struggling economies, widespread poverty, refugee migrations, and the lingering reality of the Coronavirus and its variants. It has also exposed inconsistencies in applying international and human rights laws. Our partners in various places continue to respond to needs, be they direct or indirect consequences of such geopolitics, and our engagement with partners remains robust.

Amid a debilitating financial/economic crisis, a political stalemate, and the continuing effects of COVID and the Beirut Port explosion (Aug. 4, 2020), partners remain resilient but are adapting to the contextual challenges. Among our partners engaged in life-changing ministries are the **Middle East Council of Churches** as well as its Department of Service for Palestinian Refugees, the **Fellowship of the Middle East Evangelical Churches**, the **Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East**, and **Haigazian University**, the **Near East School of Theology**, and the **Forum for Development, Culture, and Dialogue (FDCD)**. We are pleased to be present through the appointment of mission co-workers serving in Lebanon, **Nishan** and **Maria Bakalian** (Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East and Haigazian University), and **Leda Zakarison** (FDCD), who have been in Lebanon since before the pandemic began and have accompanied partners in exceptional ways through this period of unexpected and exceptional challenges.

The MECC, the FMEEC, and the FDCD have also continued to respond to the needs of Syrian refugees and internally displaced persons due to the simmering war in Syria, which began in 2011. Their steadfast care for the most marginalized and forgotten segments of Syria's population has been supported by Week of Compassion through Global Ministries.

### **Southern Asia**

2022 marked a transition in Global Ministries' Southern Asia office, with the departure of the Rev. Dr. Deenabandhu Manchala as Area Executive in mid-year after eight years of service in this capacity. The context of the region is complex, given its vast geography and immense diversity. A variety of issues present themselves in the region. The ruthless suppression of dissent, misuse of sedition laws, incarceration of scores of human rights activists, and abuse of democratic institutions have become commonplace in India, Sri Lanka, and Nepal. Furthermore, those involved in advocating for human rights, social justice, environmental rights, and the right of religious minorities are also intimidated and dissuaded by many cumbersome regulations in receiving foreign funds. The challenges of neo-fascism, COVID-induced social and economic disabilities, anti-human trafficking, casteism and racism, violence against religious minorities, increased domestic violence, and further impoverishment of women, and the impact of

climate change continue to be the core points of engagement with all partners and their projects.

### **Advocacy**

The pandemic shifted the Advocacy Staff's work to virtual gatherings, and there were some unexpected advantages to this time of working virtually. It has allowed the Associates, based in Indianapolis and Cleveland, to participate more fully in working groups based in Washington, DC, and New York City. Another welcome shift was the number of video updates received and shared from partners and the opportunity for partners to engage in virtual webinars and even virtual pilgrimages. A cornerstone advocacy event Global Ministries sponsors annually is Ecumenical Advocacy Days (EAD). This conference continued to be online in 2022, and the Associates are involved in planning for another virtual EAD, scheduled for April 25-27, 2023, with the theme "Swords into Plowshares: Achieving Enough for All & Pursuing Peace." In addition, the Advocacy Associates led four Quarterly Advocacy Focus campaigns in 2022 focused on: Human Rights, Israel/Palestine, Climate Justice (related to the Mission Dash Virtual 5K), and the Thursdays in Black campaign.

The DOM President, Rev. LaMarco Cable, General Minister, and President Teresa "Terri" Hord Owens, and Rev. Sheila P. Spencer, Interim President of Disciples Home Missions, signed *Compelled to Witness: A Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Pastoral Letter Affirming Justice, Rights, and Accountability in Promoting Peace in Israel/Palestine*. From the letter: "In this time when a resolution to the conflict in Israel/Palestine seems as distant as ever, and advocacy for a particular kind of solution may not be effective, we support a rights-based approach that will ensure the rights, equality, and dignity of all people concerned, especially the most vulnerable, based on principles of peace and justice, human rights, and international law."

### **Resource Development**

Global Ministries' inaugural Mission Dash Virtual 5K for Climate Justice occurred in August 2022. The three main objectives of the race were:

1. Fundraising for climate justice projects of international partners.
2. Advocate for climate justice efforts.
3. Engaging with new donors/followers.

Three hundred twenty-seven individuals registered for the event, 96 of whom held their own personal fundraisers. There were 45 teams registered for the event, including regional and conference ministries, congregations, and families. There were 418 donors and 201 first-time donors to Global Ministries. All proceeds from the Mission Dash will be divided evenly among the Area Offices for climate justice projects.

Global Ministries called Jake Brooks to be the new Program Associate for Resource Development and Disciples Women. This new collaboration between DOM and Disciples Women created an opportunity for the two ministries to share staff.

### **Child and Elder Sponsorship**

In 2022, a new Program Manager, Rev. Phyllis Richards, was hired to oversee the program after the retirement of the former Program Manager, Linda Lawrence, who had been the administrator of the program for nearly 30 years. A Program Associate, Jane Duncan, was also hired (mid-year) to increase the program's ability to grow -- adding more children, sponsors, sponsorship centers, partners, and opportunities to be engaged with the program.

Sponsorship centers continue to find incredible ways to make their programs better. Children and elders thrive and become physically and emotionally healthy as they are wrapped in the love, consistency, and sheer resiliency that the programs offer and teach. Children with sponsors are more likely to stay in school and complete their education, and elders with sponsors engage in their society and are able to offer their gifts to the community.

In Jamaica, young men are being helped with education through the Child and Elder Sponsorship Program and **Mt. Olivet Boys Home**. After graduation, some of the young men go on to attend college, but many do not. The Center wanted to help the young men learn a trade and get the tools needed to earn a living wage. This program is being developed and in 2023, will receive a grant offered by a sponsor who, after visiting Family Village Farm in India, pledged support to assist children after they aged out (at age 18) of the program. Family Village Farm will also benefit from this sponsor's generosity. They have received funds to assist aged-out students with fees and other expenses related to getting into college.

### **Mission Personnel**

Through the Global Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ, mission co-workers are participating in ministries of critical presence worldwide. They are engaged in various ministries, including theological education, leadership development, community and development work, human rights, health, children's, and pastoral ministries.

96 mission co-workers served in 42 countries in 2022, serving in the following categories:

- 30 fully supported mission co-workers
- 16 global service co-workers (long-term volunteers)
- 10 global mission interns
- 40 global associates

The distribution of mission co-workers by area: Africa, 12; East Asia and the Pacific, 23; Middle East and Europe, 36; Latin America and the Caribbean, 20; and Southern Asia, 5. In addition, we had two short-term volunteers due to continuing travel restrictions from COVID.

Due to the outbreak of the Coronavirus, the following people were evacuated from their sites of service: Kahala Cannon (Eswatini); Mark and Danielle Murry-Knowles (Lesotho); Andrew Larsen (Philippines); Victor and Sara Makari (Israel/Palestine).

One person was appointed to church and/or church-related institutions around the world, including ten re-appointees.

Terms varied from Fully supported, Global Service Workers, and Global Mission Interns. This distribution by area of total appointments was Africa 1; East Asia and the Pacific 4; Europe 2; Latin America and the Caribbean 3; Middle East 1; Southern Asia 0.

One Global Service Co-Worker (one year or longer) was appointed or re-appointed in 2022: Guangyu Lou, China. One global mission intern was re-appointed: Abigail Reed, Korea. Two people were appointed to the short-term volunteer program in 2022: Tracy Hughes (Senegal) and Kimberly McKerley (Zimbabwe) as short-term volunteers.

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



## GA-2311

### General Ministry Report of Higher Education and Leadership Ministries, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Inc

Interim President's Report to the General Board and General Assembly  
Higher Education & Leadership Ministries of the  
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
January 30, 2023

When I addressed the HELM Board of Directors on November 12, 2022, it was my 89th day as the Interim President of Higher Education and Leadership Ministries (HELM) of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). I reminded the Directors that in the field of numerology the number 89 is a building number generally with a humanitarian objective. The number 89 builds institutions, systems and procedures, buildings and roads: it builds infrastructure. It is always considerate of natural resources. What 89 builds are large structures that benefit society and that endure for a long time – like HELM's 128-year history. Eighty-Nine is efficient and pragmatic. It tends to manage teams effectively for achieving a common goal. People with that energy see the steps required to get things done.

I would like to think that HELM is in such a numerological space having transitioned from the seven-year leadership of Chris Dorsey to my interim leadership. Eighty-Nine days into this position and my focus has been on building, organizing, communicating, and partnering with staff, board, and other General Ministry, Regional Ministry, and congregational leaders to strengthen the relationship between our higher education communities and the church. As former HELM President, Dennis Landon, wrote in the June 2004 issue of "Tomorrow's Leaders Today,"

*"Before anything else, we are a ministry of the whole church focused on nurturing leaders for a faithful future. We will continue our work with and on behalf of Disciples educational institutions and campus ministries, but we now understand that work in a larger context. We want to do everything in partnership with other institutions and ministries."*

It is precisely in the act of extending partnerships that the miracle of networking occurs, allowing us to create greater synergy that strengthens the whole of institutional life. If there has ever been a time in our denominational history for re-building our partnership capacity and accentuating relationships between institutions, it is now. For over thirty years we have witnessed the growing cracks and gaps in our institutional foundation. We have patched the cracks and plugged the gaps, buying us a little extra time. But at some point, temporary fixes will no longer hold. I believe that the very foundation of our faith is calling us to greater collaboration between all segments of our church which will lead to a new found institutional vitality to the glory of God.

To begin the process of greater collaboration between HELM and our educational institutions, I penned a letter back on August 30, 2022, to College, University, and Theological School Presidents and Deans. In part it read:

*“I am truly thankful for the contributions you and your educational institutions make every day to the lives of students and the betterment of society. The quality education you provide produce learned citizens and and leaders for church and society. There is no greater calling than this.*”

*“In the beginning days of my work, I wanted to introduce myself, reach out to you, and pledge my support to the vital work you do. I will be intentional about recommending our colleges, universities, and graduate schools of theology to our congregations, prospective students and their families. I will be respectful and supportive of the institutions you represent, and of your educational mission. I will advise benefactors of the important role higher education plays in the life of our church.*”

*“In partnership with you and the wider church, it is my prayer that our divided world might become a little less divided as we embrace the blessings of diversity, truth, integrity, and love. Please know that I am here to provide support and encouragement to you during my time as Interim President.”*

I assure you that Higher Education and Leadership Ministries is all about leading our church to a new found institutional vitality. The General Ministry leaders of our church met in retreat September 26-27, 2022. The purpose of the meeting was to explore the narrative metaphor and ask the question: “What happens when the dominant narrative does not empower anymore?” Retreat leader, the Rev. Dr. David Anderson Hooker, provided leadership responding to the question, “When the dominant narrative does not empower anymore, it creates a problem story.” Dr. Hooker led us through a process of externalizing the problem, mapping the problematic story, reverse mapping through story sharing, choosing a preferred narrative, and building a transformative, not restorative or reconciling, but transformative action agenda. It has the promise of helping our church develop the capacity for greater collaboration leading to a new found institutional vitality. You will be hearing more about this in the days to come. Our General Minister and President, Terri Hord Owens, is providing leadership for this initiative. Both the Administrative Committee and General Board are charting a pathway to the future.

On September 28, 2022, I was privileged to meet virtually with the Kentucky Region’s District 9 clergy, Transylvania University’s President Ryan Lewis, Director of Spirituality and Religious Life, Emily Miller, Director of Alumni Relations, Katherine Alexander, and

the Kentucky Regional Minister, the Rev. Dr. Don Gillett. President Lewis spoke about the challenges and triumphs of university life. I was invited to present an overview of HELM's ministries at the gathering by Convener, Deb Phelps.

On October 7-8, 2022, HELM hosted the Association of Disciples for Theological Discussion (ADTD) annual conference at Butler University in Indianapolis, IN. Theological discussions ensued around three topics: (1) Eva Gore-Booth with a presentation by Tish Duncan from Texas Christian University, (2) The State of Brite Divinity School enrollment and the future of theological education by Michael Miller from Texas Christian University, and (3) A panel discussion on "Public Theology in a Divided Society." Both Rick Lowery and Newell Williams received honorary retirement status. President-elect, Michael Miller, will serve as Convener of the October 6-8, 2023, as well as the October 5-7, 2024, conferences. The group offered kudos to Scott Seay from Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis for his leadership of ADTD over the past two years. Many thanks to Luke Soderstrom for serving as HELM Staff assigned to this event.

On October 12-15, 2022, I was privileged to attend the Beecher Lectures at Yale University Divinity School in New Haven, CT. Professor Enjoo Mary Kim of Vanderbilt University is the first Asian female to ever deliver the Beecher Lectures over the past 155 years. Her lecture title was: "Preaching Jesus: Postcolonial Approaches." It is interesting to note that the last time the name Jesus was in the title of a Beecher Lecture series was in 1945 when Reinhold Niebuhr delivered the lectures. Yale Divinity School submitted an article for the November 2022 issue of the Higher Education Digest. We lift up our two Disciples students at YDS, Mark Dingler from Texas and Lily Jurkis from Florida.

On November 3-6, 2022, thirty-one HELM Fellows met in Washington, D.C. Students from across the life of our church engaged in conversations around environmental justice and public witness. Each of the four cohort groups (freshmen, sophomore, junior, and senior) met with theological guides to explore the writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Martin Luther King, Jr., Jamaica Kincaid, and Parker Palmer. The Steinbruck Center housed the students. We met at National City Christian Church on Thomas Circle and toured both National City as well as the National American Museum of African History and Culture. We offer thanks to the leadership of the Rev. Dr. Bruce Epperly, the Rev. Dr. Delores Carpenter, and the Rev. Dr. Ken Brooker-Langston, and President and Founder of ecoAmerica, Robert Perkwitz, for providing a contextual context to our meeting. At the event the HELM Fellows presented former HELM President, Chris Dorsey, with an appreciation gift from the HELM Directors for his leadership to the Leadership Fellows Program over recent years.

Of course, we thank our HELM Leadership mentors: Christian Watkins (new as mentor to the first-year cohort group) and co-Mentor with Christian, Brandon Johnson, Joshua Mata (second year cohort group), Lonora Graves (third year cohort group), and the Rev. Colton Lott and the Rev. Michelle Scott Huffman (fourth year cohort group). Of course, none of this would have been possible without the steady leadership and administrative

support of HELM staff member, Katy Wing Sundararajan. The Leadership Fellows Retreat was by all measurements a great success. The 2023 Leadership Fellows Retreat will be held November 2-5, 2023, at a Wildcard Event location still to be determined.

HELM was present at the November 19-22, 2022, American Academy of Religion and Society of Biblical Literature meeting in Denver, CO. Our Disciples scholars and emerging scholars need to be supported by the whole church while attending such prestigious academic events. HELM sponsored a wine and cheese reception to which, over the course of two hours, 38 Disciples scholars gathered for fellowship and relationship building. HELM is working with HELM Board member and President of the Council of Colleges and Universities (CCU), Dr. Lester Newman, to identify ways to support the Council of Independent Colleges (CIC). The theme for this January's gathering of CIC is "Designing the Future of Independent Higher Education." The President's Institute is an occasion each year for Presidents of Colleges and Universities across the United States to be present with one another to build collegial relationships and exchange information about each other's institutions. It was a joy to attend this event and visit with some of our College and University Presidents who attended the event.

Our theological schools that participate in the Council of Theological Education (CTE) have selected March 9 & 10, 2023 to hold an in-person CTE meeting. The location of the meeting will be Indianapolis, IN. Plans are underway for three additional 2023 events:

- (1) The Global Mission Trip for HELM Fellows Cohort Group 3 is scheduled to be held May 26 through June 1, 2023. The place is still to be determined, and
- (2) The Emerging Leaders Conference (formally Seminarians Conference) which was postponed from November 2022 to sometime in 2023. General Ministry leaders and the Presidents and Deans of our Seminaries, Divinity Schools, and Graduate Schools of Theology are currently being polled about available dates to meet in 2023. Once a date is identified a location will be chosen, and
- (3) The General Assembly to be held in Louisville, KY, July 29-August 1, 2023. There will be a HELM dinner on Sunday, July 30 where the Alexander Campbell Award will be presented, the name of the recipient presented to HELM's Executive Committee and Board meeting next Spring. In addition to the Alexander Campbell Award, the first notices have been distributed to identify the recipient of HELM's T.A. Abbott Award for Faculty Excellence. The Executive Committee and Board will also act on this at the Spring 2023 Executive Committee and Board meeting. There will be a HELM table in Exhibit Hall near the displays of our colleges, universities, seminaries, and theological schools. The theme for the 2023 General Assembly is: "Kindom of God Within Us Among Us."

I have been attentive to some important business concerns for HELM. I worked with Carole Veatch, HELM’s account representative at the National Bank of Indianapolis, to add greater fraud protection to our operating accounts – Reverse Positive Pay and an ACH Debit Filter. Both protections will keep our accounts safe from fraudulent activities. I have worked with Elizabeth Knysak, CPA and Managing Director at Forvis, who manages audits for HELM. The last completed audit for HELM was the 2016 audit. The 2017 audit was initiated but never completed. Our ministry finds itself now in early 2023 with many years of unaudited books and records. The audit firm recommended to me that it would be in HELM’s best interest to roll audits from 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021 into a formal 2022 audit and bring our audit trail up to date. After consultation with HELM’s Board of Directors and Finance Committee, I have signed a letter of engagement with Forvis to bring everything up to date. We anticipate that the 2022 audit will be completed by April 2023. It is my recommendation to the HELM Board of Directors and Finance Committee that HELM conduct biennial audits and in the off years a formal review of its financial statements.

There is one other business item that was recommended by the Board Life and Work Committee at the Spring HELM Board Meeting, April 1-3, 2022. This item regards identifying HELM Ministry Associate, Lisa Hubbard, to serve as the Corporate Secretary for Higher Education and Leadership Ministries. Lisa has agreed to serve in such a capacity. In this role, she will organize and maintain files of all documents relating to HELM. She is currently brushing up on parliamentary procedure and soon to become a notary. The Board Life and Work Committee plans to incorporate this position into the organization’s By-laws as they are reviewed with the newly called President.

Let me express deep gratitude to the National Benevolent Association (NBA) for the services it provides to HELM in terms of accounting support. Lesley Durham, Director of Operations Accounting; Amy Johns, Chief Financial Officer; and, Christie Koetting, Associate Vice President of Accounting, all three provide accurate, timely, and professional financial recordkeeping, reporting, payroll, grant and scholarship payments, as well as advice to HELM regarding our investment strategy and calculation of investment returns. The support they provide is critical to HELM’s well-being.

On October 20, 2022, General Minister and President, Terri Hord Owens, met with HELM’s Executive Committee to provide information about the Executive Search Process and tips on conducting a search. A Search Committee was chosen during HELM’s November 12, 2022, Board of Directors meeting and authorized to conduct a search for an individual to become the next President of Higher Education and Leadership Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The Rev. Colton Lott was named as Chair of the Search Committee with members, H. Ben Bohren, Charisse Gillett, Billie Lynch, Carmen Waters, and Khalia Williams. Dani Loving Cartwright is serving as a resource and consultant to the Search Committee. It is my desire as Interim President that the Search Committee identify a leader who will guide this General Ministry into its next chapter – a leader with a heart for our colleges, universities, seminaries, divinity schools, and graduate schools of theology. There is no

doubt that God is preparing an individual right now to accept the mantle of leadership that comes when the church extends a call.

My dear General Board members, it is no accident that the first name given to those who followed Jesus was that they were followers of ‘the way’ or ‘the road.’ When they found Jesus, they found their way and it became for them their hope. It is what moved them forward. Don Sarton, retired Executive with the Christian Church Foundation and my colleague and friend for many years would say, it is what moved the early Christians ‘onward.’

I have always loved that great story about the Mission Board Executive who was talking to the great Livingstone, of Stanley and Livingstone greatness, who were missionaries to the continent of Africa. The Executive said: “Dr. Livingstone, is there a good road to where you are?” If so, we have a couple of men who would like to come and help you.”

David Livingstone replied: “If they need a good road, don’t send them. I need men who can come, road or no road.”

I often think that our women would not have thought twice as to whether there was a road or not. They would just go. And our Disciples Women did just go when the American Christian Missionary Society created the Christian Woman’s Board of Missions on October 21, 1874. It would take two decades longer for our beloved church to create the Board of Education (1894), the Association of Colleges (1910), the Board of Higher Education of the Christian Church (1938), the Division of Higher Education (1977), and HELM (2004).

Do you remember how I started my report to you at the beginning – referencing the field of numerology and my 89th day on the job? That the number 89 is a building number generally with a humanitarian objective? That the number 89 builds structures that benefit society and that endure for a long time – like HELM’s 128-year history?

Now listen, if we are to move forward as the church it is imperative that we let our creative juices flow forward and onward. It never hurts to take a look backward, but to get stuck there prevents us from looking through the front windshield of what is yet to be.

Kierkegaard would challenge us to take a “leap of faith” into the future. Cicero would call us to gaze at that ‘somewhere beyond the stars.’ It is our faith that calls us to walk forward into uncertainty of all kinds with the surety that God is with us always, even to the end [Matthew 28:19-20].

We know very well what kind of church we have been over the past years. We know that our church and higher education institutions share the same DNA. What kind of church is God calling us to become? We can only discover this as we move forward into God’s future. So, let’s use the gifts that God has given us – church and academy – to create a narrative that captivates us, seals our life together, and reaches out to a world

longing for solutions to real problems. We can help the world be a better place for everyone. We must help the world be a better place for all.

I thank the church for giving me the opportunity to provide interim leadership to HELM during this period of transition in its organizational life. I will always hold the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) near and dear to my heart. Now, let us continue to be about moving forward into HELM's and our church's future!

Ronald J. Degges,  
Interim President HELM  
January 30, 2023

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

**GA-2312**  
**General Ministry Report of National Benevolent Association  
of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)**

**National Benevolent Association of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)**

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\* denotes independent contractor

**GENERAL BOARD REPORT FOR 2023**

Serving as the Disciples health and social service general ministry since 1887, the National Benevolent Association (NBA) exists to: inspire and connect the people and

ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), to accompany one another in the creation of communities of compassion and care, and to advocate for the well-being of humanity. This mission guides the work of the NBA each day and especially through our shared experiences of this past year—from navigating a global health pandemic, to addressing systemic racism and inequities experienced by people of color, to responding diligently and with care to the needs of Disciples health and social service nonprofit ministries. Following are program updates, meaningful accomplishments, and the comprehensive directory of Disciples health and social service ministries with whom we partner.

### **Young Adult Leadership Development**

The NBA has engaged with young adults (persons aged 18 to 30) in a multitude of ways throughout our history. Whether via our Leadership Scholars Program in the 1990s, to our work alongside congregations and nonprofits with missions to serve young people, or hosting the NBA XPLOR Residency program, intentionally and thoughtfully working with young adult communities has been an important part of NBA programming.

The recent years have been an intentional time of reflection, conversation, and visioning regarding NBA's young adult initiatives. In 2022, we held multiple feedback sessions to hear directly from young adults and those who work with them about what young people need most. After much consideration and analysis, we have decided to discontinue the NBA XPLOR residency program. This time of reflection has led to understanding that the NBA should engage with young adults in new ways that meet the changing needs of this demographic.

This year, we will launch our Young Adult Leadership Development program which seeks to co-create spaces for learning and engagement with and for young adults ages 18-30 that will:

- Cultivate healthy and wholistic identity formation,
- Discover and/or affirm leadership potential,
- Explore leadership opportunities that transform the landscape of church & communities through health and social services and justice,
- Build capacity and life skills for leadership in health and social services and justice related fields.

The NBA has also launched young adult Peer Learning & Wellness Groups that center activists and Hispanic leaders. In addition, we are actively laying the groundwork for a peer group for Asian-American and Pacific Island young adults, plus a leadership experience for young Black women, and special granting opportunities to support professional development and continuing education.

### **Mental Health & Wellness**

We believe creating communities of compassion and care begins with an integrated vision of wellness that prioritizes a holistic approach centered in justice, equity, theology, spirituality, and clinical awareness.

In 2022, we created a video series named “Celebrating Our Stories of Cultural Resilience: Sharing Diverse Mental Health Stories,” that centered the experiences of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) Disciples. Along with the work of our 2021-22 Mental Health Equity cohort, we have begun developing a wellness retreat model for BIPOC clergy that will support communities in creating their own space for clergy wellness. We look to finalize a toolkit and offer a pilot version of the retreat model in 2023.

In 2023, NBA plans to begin developing, implementing, and evaluating a substance abuse and recovery initiative. For some time, NBA has listened and engaged in conversations with those impacted by substance abuse, their loved ones, and their journeys toward recovery and rebuilding lives. We have seen that stigma continues to be a pervasive barrier to addressing substance abuse. The NBA will intentionally explore developing a substance abuse and recovery initiative that offers insights and justice implications for congregations, wider church, and social service partners.

### **Community Engagement**

Our vision is to inspire and invite people of faith into activism and advocacy for communities that are often overlooked and underserved. NBA nurtures engagement strategies to transform the root causes of social injustice. Our commitment is to bring to light how we are complicit in maintaining unhealthy systems of discrimination and oppression. NBA actively supports denominational efforts to be an anti-racist and pro-reconciling church, including our shared efforts as a member of the Disciples Justice Ministries working group. In addition to these efforts, our Community Engagement program also includes our Peer Learning & Wellness Groups and our Prison & Jail Ministry focus areas.

#### **Peer Learning & Wellness Groups**

NBA calls together Peer Learning & Wellness Groups (PL&WG) around common areas of ministry or professional roles. The Groups provide an opportunity for Disciples to engage in peer support and encouragement, mutual dialogue, spiritual renewal, and peer-to-peer learning. In 2023, NBA will host a multitude of new and ongoing cohorts, such as: Executive Leaders of Disciples nonprofit ministries (2021-23); La Lucha (The Struggle) (2021-23), people of color working in justice and advocacy; Hispanic young adult leaders (2021-23).

NBA’s Director of Community Engagement, Rev. Héctor J. Hernández Marcial and team are strategizing on how to share our PL&WG model across the church so that congregations and ministries can form impactful cohorts in their local communities.

#### **Prison & Jail Ministries**

Our recent efforts have been focused on education and resources for restorative justice and other alternatives to the punitive U.S. incarceration systems. Visit [NBAcares.org/resources](https://NBAcares.org/resources) to access a variety of webinars, liturgical materials, and information about restorative justice, immigration, returning citizens, and more.

### **Social Entrepreneurship**

NBA's Social Entrepreneurship program encourages and supports the development of new and innovative faith-rooted social enterprises that embody care and compassion in tangible ways. One of the ways we accomplish this is through our annual SENT Seminar, which will continue virtually this September for the eighth consecutive year. The Seminar became a virtual workshop in 2020 in response to the pandemic. The online model enabled more people to attend and was so successful that we continue to run the workshops virtually. In 2022, our SENT Seminar keynote speakers included Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II, Rev. Dr. Mary Donovan Turner, and Rev. Dr. Otis Moss III. Look for announcements about the 2023 SENT Seminar lineup this summer.

Incubate Partnerships are another way we seek to accompany and resource social entrepreneurs in launching their organizations, anywhere from the start-up phase to nonprofits that have been operating for some years (1-10 years). In 2022, we welcomed Empower Hope Center (Louisville, KY), the Global Arts and Theology Experience (Austin, TX), and Camp Sunflower (Wichita, KS) as new Incubate Partners. Applications for Incubate Partners typically open in early spring.

The NBA Social Entrepreneur Cohort is entering its third year in 2023. This year's Cohort is comprised of 10 members whose social enterprises are in the initial launch stages. Their ministries cover a range of area such as professional development for adolescent men, mental health care for LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC individuals, and trauma therapy for women.

For NBA, we understand that impact investing means making an intentional commitment to systemic and transformative change through financial investment in leaders and their organizations. In 2023, we are laying the groundwork for direct impact investing by building a fellowship program for social entrepreneurs. The fellowships will enable two social entrepreneurs to move from part-time or 'side hustle' roles with their ministry into a full-time role with a salary. Applications will be open to members of our Incubate Partners and Social Entrepreneur Cohort, further deepening our relationship with new nonprofits on an established path to sustainability.

### **Mission & Ministry Grants**

Launched in 2017, the NBA Mission & Ministry Grants program has made purpose-restricted funds available for Disciples' congregations and health and social service ministries for six years. As of 2022, the NBA granted a combined total of over \$1,235,350 to ministries that educate disenfranchised youth or support older adults.

In 2022, the NBA increased the allotted funds from \$200,000 to \$400,000. Also in 2022, we began accepting applications in two cycles each year, the original Fall cycle and the new Spring cycle. With the addition of funding and the second application cycle, NBA added additional promotion and awareness campaigns which led to receiving applications for the first time from states and Regions such as Montana, Hawaii, and Pennsylvania.

The 2023 Spring Cycle will be in February/March, and the Fall Cycle will be in August/September. The application period is open for roughly six weeks. Learn about the qualifications and how to apply for a Mission & Ministry Grant at [NBACares.org/grants](https://NBACares.org/grants). Information is available in English, Spanish, and Korean.

### **Disciples Health & Social Service Partners**

The NBA continues to accompany and support our network of health and social service partners. In 2022, some of the ways we supported our partners included:

- Engaging with the board and staff of a nonprofit to identify a new executive director after a long-term leader retired.
- Providing emergency crisis care grants for natural disasters and public service outages for ministries in the southeast.
- Offered on-site mental health retreats and workshops for health and social service organizations who have experienced pandemic-related burnout.

### **Creating Communities of Compassion and Care**

Our NBA vision of creating communities of compassion and care faithfully continues and, in many ways, expands into new areas of compassion, healing, and justice during these ever-changing social times. On our [NBACares.org](https://NBACares.org) website, we welcome you to follow the stories, ministries, and people making possible transforming and meaningful health and social service ministry each day.

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

(date indicates end of term)

Rev. Dr. Judy Ann Alston, Ohio Region, '24,  
*Professor, Ashland University*

Sarah Page Barbour, Virginia Region, *Family  
Services Specialist, City of Lynchburg*

Lisa Buday, Pennsylvania Region, '25, *Attorney*

Rev. Jabari Butler, Georgia Region, '23,  
*President, CIO Service Group/Technology*

Rev. Dr. Jacquelyn Foster, Mid-America Region,  
'25, *Retired Clergy*

Emmanuel Freeman, Pacific Southwest Region,  
'25, *National Director, The Actors Fund*

Rev. Danny Gulden, Indiana Region, '23, *Clergy,  
Geist Christian Church*

Rev. Thomas Harshman, Pacific Southwest  
Region, '24, *Retired, Financial Services*

Rev. Clarence Johnson, Northern  
California/Nevada Region, '25, *Clergy, Mills  
Grove Christian Church*

Sue Morris, Nebraska Region, '23, *President,  
Omaha Philanthropic Trust*

Rev. Darren Phelps, Southwest Region, '23,  
*Community Regional Minister for Church  
Growth, Southwest Region*

David Rodriguez, Northeast Region, '25, *Senior  
Vice President, Ponce De Leon Federal Bank*

Rev. Dr. Elaine Sanford, Tennessee Region, '25,  
*Executive Director, HER Faith Ministries*

Rev. Orlando Scott, Georgia Region, '24,  
*Chaplain, Gwinnett Medical System, Pastor,  
Amplify Christian Church*

Wanda Scott, Northern California/Nevada  
Region, '24, *Founder and Principal Consultant at  
Wanda Scott & Associates*

Rev. Shanna Steitz, Greater Kansas City  
Region, '23, *Clergy, Community Christian  
Church*

Jamar Doyle, United Church of Christ, ex-officio,  
*President, Council for Health & Human Services  
Ministries UCC*

Rev. Richie Sanchez, Pacific Southwest Region,  
ex-officio, *Regional Minister*

Rev. Terri Hord Owens, Indiana Region,  
ex-officio, *General Minister & President*

Mark D. Anderson, Mid-America Region,  
ex-officio, *President & CEO, NBA*

**DISCIPLES-RELATED HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICE MINISTRIES**

*For the most up-to-date information, please visit [NBACares.org/partners](http://NBACares.org/partners).*

<b>Be The Neighbor</b>	<b>Southwest Region</b>
Revs. Mary Lu Johnston, Allison Lanza, Co-Exec. Directors 15907 Braesgate DR, Austin, TX 78717	(512) 218-4335 <a href="http://BeTheNeighbor.org">BeTheNeighbor.org</a>
Reach Beyond Mission is a fully planned youth mission/poverty education experience. Youth join youth from other churches across the country to explore issues of culture, gender, and poverty in an urban setting. Participants volunteer at numerous metropolitan area nonprofits working with the homeless, low-income families, children, people with disabilities, and the elderly. Summer mission week focus on food justice, housing, or advocacy. RBM provides speakers, age-appropriate activities, and discussion starters to help young people explore the biblical, theological, economic, social, and political issues related to poverty. Our goal is to help youth begin to explore how to spend a lifetime changing the systems that sustain poverty through their votes, career choices, and how they spend their money.	
<b>Broken, Mended, and Restored</b>	<b>Pacific Southwest Region</b>
Rev. Dr. Lisa Enders Tunstall, President/CEO Los Angeles, CA	(310) 639-5974 <a href="http://Team-BMAR.com">Team-BMAR.com</a>

Broken, Mended and Restored (BMAR) is an organization that equips churches with the knowledge and resources necessary to provide emotionally healthy environments for the emotionally traumatized and relationship abuse victims. Founded in 2008 by Rev. Dr. Tunstall, their mission is to engage communities in promoting abuse-free relationships, family violence prevention/intervention education and resource/referral information. For more than a decade, the organization has held conferences and learning opportunities for clergy and faith leaders in efforts to shed light on the type of abuse that can happen behind closed doors and across communities.

<b>Camp Sunflower</b>	<b>Kansas Region</b>
Finn Lanning, Executive Director 5620 E 21st ST N, Wichita, KS 67208	316-390-3503 <a href="http://CampSunflower.org">CampSunflower.org</a>
The mission of Camp Sunflower is to create places of safety for youth of all sexual orientations and gender identities where each person is celebrated and a healthy life-giving community is modeled with love. The Camp Sunflower experience is designed to engage LGBTQ+ youth in: leadership development; Identifying a personal sense of safety; Developing self-awareness; Making life-long connections with others; Learning new coping and advocacy skills.	

<b>Chain Reaction Ministries</b>	<b>Southwest, Oklahoma Regions</b>
David Finklea, Executive Director Memorial Drive CC: 11750 Memorial DR, Houston, TX 77024; First Christian: 3700 N Walker AVE, Oklahoma City, OK 73118	(713) 789-0060 <a href="http://ChainReactionBikes.org">ChainReactionBikes.org</a>
Chain Reaction Ministries provides freedom of transportation to those in need through a ministry of bicycle recycling. Started at Memorial Drive Christian Church in Houston, Texas, CRM recycles bicycles by linking donors with identified needs in the community. CRM had humble beginnings in 2009 by answering a call by Westside Homeless Partnership for used bikes for kids in their program. People have an emotional attachment to their bicycles. It was their first bike, or their kid's first bike – and they don't simply want to set it on the curb, or donate it to a large, faceless charity. They want to know that their bike can provide the same freedom and hope to a person in need that they experienced.	

<b>Child Saving Institute</b>	<b>Nebraska Region</b>
Peg Harriott, President and CEO 4545 Dodge ST, Omaha, NE 68132	(402) 553-6000 <a href="http://ChildSaving.org">ChildSaving.org</a>
Child Saving Institute provides a safe haven and healing for thousands of innocent young victims of family crisis, neglect, and abuse. We offer the vital services necessary to make at-risk children safe and fractured families whole through programs such as early childhood education, foster care, adoption, an emergency shelter, parenting classes and therapy. Our mission is "responding to the cry of a child," but it is our vision that guides us as we work to give the children we serve safe, happy childhoods. Our vision is that all children have homes where hope is kindled and dreams can be achieved. This is our work, and they are ALL our children.	

<b>Christian Care Communities</b>	<b>Kentucky Region</b>
Mary Lynn Spalding, President/CEO 12710 Townepark WY, STE 1000, Louisville, KY 40243	(800) 662-1738 <a href="http://ChristianCareCommunities.org">ChristianCareCommunities.org</a>
Christian Care Communities is the oldest provider of older adult care related to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). We are Kentucky's largest faith-based provider of housing, long-term care, adult day centers, and community-based services for older adults. We serve approximately 3,000 individuals and their families throughout Kentucky. We actively work with churches helping them with older adult ministries.	

<b>Christian Church Homes</b>	<b>Pacific Southwest Region</b>
Don Stump, Interim President and CEO 303 Hegenberger RD, STE 201, Oakland, CA 94621	(510) 632-6712 <a href="http://CCHNC.org">CCHNC.org</a>

BUSINESS

At Christian Church Homes (CCH) we build and manage affordable housing communities where seniors can live and thrive in the comfort of their own homes, because we believe doing so is better for communities as a whole and the seniors we serve. Having served more than 100,000 seniors over 50 years, CCH has now grown to 57 caring communities that are More Than a Home to residents in seven states.

<b>Christian Services for Children in Alabama</b>	<b>Alabama/NW Florida Region</b>
Scott Strissel, Executive Director 1792 Highway 14 E, Selma, AL 36702	(334) 875-0608 <a href="http://CSCAlabama.org">CSCAlabama.org</a>
Christian Services for Children in Alabama strives to be an organization that has a positive, recognizable, long-term impact on ALL children and youth in our care by providing professional, cost-effective, and timely services. CSCA is a pioneer for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of Alabama/Northwest Florida in promoting ministries that nurture, restore, and reclaim those children who have experienced various types of abuse and neglect. We provide opportunities for families and individuals (who wish) to share their love, time, and resources to nurture vulnerable children and youth toward independence and enriched lives.	

<b>Cleveland Christian Home</b>	<b>Ohio Region</b>
Charles Tuttle, CEO 1400 West 25th ST, 2nd Flr, Cleveland, OH 44113	(216) 671-0977 <a href="http://CCHome.org">CCHome.org</a>
Cleveland Christian Home exists to be a haven of hope and healing for children, youth and families struggling with mental illness, abuse, and neglect. Cleveland Christian Home will be a center of excellence providing the highest quality services to meet the physical, emotional, intellectual, cultural, and spiritual needs of children, youth and families.	

<b>Columbia Area Older Adult Ministry</b>	<b>Mid-America Region</b>
Rev. Sally A. Robinson, Chaplain 101 N 10th ST, Columbia, MO 65201	(573) 819-5043 <a href="http://Columbia-OlderAdultMinistry.org">Columbia-OlderAdultMinistry.org</a>
The Columbia Area Older Adult Ministry (CAOAM) provides spiritual and emotional support to the growing elderly population in long-term care and retirement communities in the Columbia, MO, area. Though this is an ecumenical ministry, it is recognized as a ministry of First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of Columbia, MO. Currently CAOAM provides spiritual support in seven long-term care and retirement communities on a regular schedule.	

<b>Disciple Homes Management Group</b>	<b>Southwest Region</b>
Susie Blakeley, Administrator/CEO 327 Eden DR, Longview, TX 75605	(903) 845-7638 <a href="http://DiscipleHomes.org">DiscipleHomes.org</a>
Disciple Homes has been providing quality affordable housing for senior adults (age 62 years or older) and their household since 1972 in Northeast Texas. In partnership with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, rental assistance is available to all of our residents that qualify. Qualified residents pay 30% of their adjusted income for rent and utilities. Disciple Homes Management Group provides social services and housing to meet the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual needs of person, in the loving and caring spirit of Christ.	

<b>Disciples Retirement Community of Oklahoma</b>	<b>Oklahoma Region</b>
Sallie Spillman, Board Member 301 NW 36th ST, Oklahoma City, OK 73118	580-821-6561
Disciples Retirement Community of Oklahoma (DRCO) provides funding to assist Disciples older adults living in Bradford Village senior living community in Edmond, OK.	

<b>Empower Hope Center</b>	<b>Kentucky Region</b>
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Rev. Syvoskia Bray Pope, Executive Director 1875 Farnsley RD, Louisville, KY 40216	502-416-7389 <a href="http://EmpowerHopeCenter.org">EmpowerHopeCenter.org</a>
The mission of the Empower Hope Center is to empower families, change lives, and bring transformation in the community. Our vision is to offer a diverse range of programs in social services, that are designed to empower individuals and strengthen families in our family success plan. Through life skills classes, career pathways, financial education, and entrepreneurship training, single mothers support and parenting, youth development, food pantry, senior care and these families can be better prepared to meet the demands of life.	

<b>Florida Christian Center</b>	<b>Florida Region</b>
Rev. Kimberly Weir, Executive Director 1115 Edgewood AVE S., Jacksonville, FL 32205	(904) 981-3095 <a href="http://FLChristianCenter.org">FLChristianCenter.org</a>
The Florida Christian Center provides ministry, pastoral care, worship services, classes on faith and aging and other programs and services focused on the physical, emotional, and spiritual health of the senior and disabled residents in our community. Serving more than 300 residents in three buildings—Sundale Manor Apartments and Florida Christian Apartments provide subsidized housing for senior and disabled adults, along with Edgewood Condominiums, a senior community on-site—and with a full-time Activity Director and full-time Chaplain/Executive Director, FCC seeks to provide an array of services that honor the body, mind and spirit.	

<b>Garden of Eden Health Center</b>	<b>Florida Region</b>
Alicia Rodriguez Davila, Founder/CEO 2833 Eagle Eye CT, Kissimmee, FL 34746	(407) 414-5511 <a href="http://GardenofEdenHealthCenter.org">GardenofEdenHealthCenter.org</a>
The Garden of Eden Health Center (GOEHC) is a vision of a future community health clinic; a faith-based health education program focused on women, infants, and children; and a senior and therapeutic health center, deep in the heart of the central mountain range (Cordillera Central) of Jayuya, Puerto Rico. As a not-for-profit healthcare organization, GOEHC aims to provide quality healthcare, preventive medicine, and holistic health education to higher risk communities (rural residences, women, children, and seniors), while also providing local work and volunteer opportunities for children, youth, and families.	

<b>Global Arts and Theology Experience</b>	<b>Southwest Region</b>
Rev. Yolonda Norton, Executive Director 505 Rathervue PL, Austin, TX 78705	202-487-0711 <a href="http://WomanistGATE.org">WomanistGATE.org</a>
The Global Art and Theology Experience (GATE) is a new initiative focused on cultivating resources, programs, and pathways for Black girls and women. GATE develops practical and experiential curriculum centered on womanist thought and theology and constructs creative mechanisms for dissemination. Currently, the primary project of GATE is the Beyoncé Mass—a Christian womanist worship service that uses the music and life of Beyoncé as a tool to cultivate an empowering conversation about Black women—their lives, their bodies, and their voices. The Beyoncé Mass is a space that encourages a practice of Christian faith that sees and acknowledges people where they are and for who they are. The mass is a space story, Scripture, and song that calls for the liberation of all people by creating welcome, fostering healing, and engaging contemporary conversation and culture as a part of Christian identity and praxis.	

<b>Good Life Care Resource Center</b>	<b>Pacific Southwest Region</b>
Rev. Hyo-Cheol Kim, Executive Director 3388 W 8th ST, STE 103 Los Angeles, CA 90005	(213) 841-5480 (English), (213) 820-8855 (Korean) <a href="http://GLCRC.org">GLCRC.org</a>

Founded in 2018, in Los Angeles, California, Good Life Care Resource Center (GLCRC) was created to support immigrant and low-income families. The organization is supporting these communities in a variety of ways including providing free daycare, preschool and afterschool programming for children; offering Spanish and Korean translation services for families looking for support in the city; and transportation services for those in needs.

<b>HER Faith Ministries</b>	<b>Tennessee Region</b>
Rev. Dr. Elaine Y. Sanford, Executive Director 3396 Park AVE, Memphis, TN 38111	(901) 324-3705 <a href="http://HerFaithMinistries.org">HerFaithMinistries.org</a>
HER Faith Ministries is a 501(c)(3) Christian charity that provides assistance to homeless and needy women and children. The ministry provides emergency food, clothing, transportation, dental assistance, and housing to impoverished women and children. HER Faith also provides family counseling and programs for ministry and reading to incarcerated individuals.	

<b>Hiram Farm</b>	<b>Ohio Region</b>
Leeanne Saro Jereb, Executive Director PO Box 157, Hiram, OH 44234	(330) 569-3441 <a href="http://HiramFarm.org">HiramFarm.org</a>
Hiram Farm is a nonprofit organization, agricultural setting that serves developmentally disabled adults, with an emphasis on adults on the autism spectrum. The Farm provides opportunities for these adults to grow, learn, and work in a setting focused on respect and support for individuals and the environment. Here, farmers can develop both professional and social skills and accomplish meaningful work. The program began serving six adults with autism in June 2009. Today, the Farm has grown to provide meaningful work for 24 farmers.	

<b>Juliette Fowler Communities</b>	<b>Southwest Region</b>
Nicole Gann, President and CEO 1234 Abrams RD, Dallas, TX 75214	(214) 827-0813 <a href="http://FowlerCommunities.org">FowlerCommunities.org</a>
Juliette Fowler Communities is a neighborhood of choice and connection, of caring and service, of faith and fulfillment. Founded more than 120 years ago as an intergenerational community, Fowler serves children, youth, and seniors, as well as their families, at our East Dallas location. As a continuing care retirement community, Fowler's residential services and care offerings for older adults include Independent Living, Assisted Living, Memory Support, Health and Rehabilitation, and Affordable Senior Housing. As an intergenerational community, Fowler's residential offerings for children, youth and young women include: Foster-to-Adopt and The Ebby House.	

<b>Kansas Christian Home</b> <i>(also a DHM partner)</i>	<b>Kansas Region</b>
Karen Sturchio, CEO 1035 SE 3rd ST, Newton, KS 67114	(316) 283-6600 <a href="http://KSChristianHome.org">KSChristianHome.org</a>
In the loving memory and caring spirit of Jesus Christ, Kansas Christian Home (KCH) exists to provide social and health services to meet the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual needs of its residents. Our emphasis of service is to the elderly, although we recognize God's love has no limits.	

<b>Manistee Manor Apartment Homes</b>	<b>Arizona Region</b>
Debi Windahl, Administrator 7987 N 53rd AVE, Glendale, AZ 85301	(623) 915-5039 <a href="http://ManisteeManor.com">ManisteeManor.com</a>
In the loving and caring spirit of Christ, Disciples House of Glendale Inc. and Manistee Manor are passionately committed to exceed the needs and expectations of our residents by providing quality senior housing and other services to enhance the lives of those we serve in a friendly family-style community environment. A place our residents are proud to call home. Manistee provides apartment home rentals for our low-income senior residents in a safe and caring environment where they can continue to age in place independently (with or without the help of out-side services) in an active senior community	

<b>Mission Behind Bars and Beyond</b>	<b>Kentucky Region</b>
Rev. Dr. D. Anthony Everett, Executive Director PO Box 22-34, Louisville, KY 40252	(502) 396-3543 <a href="http://MissionBehindBarsandBeyond.org">MissionBehindBarsandBeyond.org</a>
Mission Behind Bars and Beyond is a nonprofit, faith-based organization providing community-based mentoring programs for those released from prison and returning to communities in Kentucky. In conjunction with a Disciples of Christ congregation, New Life in Christ Christian Church, which is located in a women's halfway house, we minister to those incarcerated, train outside volunteers to form Nurture, Support and Accountability Groups (NSAG) and connect returning citizens with a NSAG which will then walk alongside each person for six months to a year to equip them for a successful re-entry into the community to which they are returning.	
<b>New Communion</b>	<b>North Carolina Region</b>
Rev. David Harrison, Jr., Director 2320 Country Club RD, Winston-Salem, NC 27104	(336) 722-2714 <a href="http://NewCommunion.org">NewCommunion.org</a>
New Communion is a faith-based organization with the goal of enhancing community relationships and diminishing the impacts of hunger and food insecurity. We are committed to providing nourishing food and being in relationship with those experiencing food insecurity and hunger in the communities we serve. Through the model of Asset Based Community Development, New Communion emphasizes shared abundance in ways that transform individuals and systems of poverty. We function as an interfaith organization and utilize interdisciplinary practices in order to promote healthy food systems through shared abundance and redistribution of resources. Currently, New Communion is feeding over 150 local families a week, and would like to continue to grow, increasing the number of families being fed, using shared abundance and expanding our food and financial sponsorship to support securing healthy nutrition for all.	
<b>Oakland Peace Center</b>	<b>Pacific Southwest Region</b>
Alexandra Candia, Operations Director 111 Fairmount AVE, Oakland, CA 94611	<a href="http://OaklandPeaceCenter.org">OaklandPeaceCenter.org</a>
As an emerging social entrepreneurship nonprofit model of ministry, the Oakland Peace Center exists as a physical space (40,000 square feet gifted by First Christian Church of Oakland) and a network of people and organizations (over 40 Bay Area based nonprofits). It brings together more than 40 direct service, advocacy, youth empowerment, art and culture-shift nonprofits to connect and collaborate with each other in the struggle for peace and justice.	
<b>Oklahoma Family Empowerment Center</b>	<b>Oklahoma Region</b>
Rev. Sharyn Cosby, Executive Director 1020 S Garnett RD, Tulsa, OK 74128	(918) 551-6017 <a href="http://OFEC.co">OFEC.co</a>
Oklahoma Family Empowerment Center, a related organization of In the Spirit Christian Church, is a not-for-profit agency that seeks to provide resources and assistance to individuals and their families that will empower them to live a successful and purposeful life. In an effort to reduce the disparity of minority contact with law enforcement, Oklahoma Family Empowerment Center has entered into an agreement with the City of Tulsa and partnered with various state, local, and community agencies to implement the Tulsa County Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) Community and Strategic Planning Demonstration Project through a grant funded by the Office of Juvenile Affairs	
<b>Opportunity Tulsa (formerly Tulsa's Table)</b>	<b>Oklahoma Region</b>
Rev. Christy Moore, Founder and CEO 2232 S Nogales AVE, Tulsa, OK 74107	(918) 984-8225 <a href="http://OpportunityTulsa.org">OpportunityTulsa.org</a>

Opportunity Tulsa is a project of StoneSoup Community Venture, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization established in 2010. Our identity springs from the heart of the stone soup folktale, in which community members provide valuable contributions that turn a soup of stone into a nourishing, sustainable meal. The mission of Opportunity Tulsa is to provide enriching, seed-to-table educational experiences as solutions to hunger and poverty for youth living in at-risk communities in Tulsa. Our objective is to nourish community for a purpose by providing opportunities for youth to obtain solid job and life skills through the learning laboratory operations of a food production garden and our pay-what-you-can community café. The long-range goal is for our garden and café to be fully operated by graduates of our programming who develop a sense of ownership in the operation through their learning experiences at Opportunity Tulsa. The garden will supply fresh, locally-grown food to the café that will function five days per week, serving lunch or dinner to everyone on a pay-what-you-can basis.

<b>Patchwork Central / Sozo Health Ministry</b>	<b>Indiana Region</b>
Rev. John Rich & Amy Rich, Co-Executive Directors 100 Washington AVE, Evansville, IN 47713	(812) 424-2735 <a href="http://Patchwork.org">Patchwork.org</a>
Patchwork Central has worked to serve its neighborhood through flexible and innovative programming that matches the talents and interests of those involved to the needs of our community. Today, Patchwork serves individuals and families with a food pantry (since 1982), neighborhood hospitality (a cup of coffee, telephone usage, someone to listen, etc.), a community garden (created in 1995), low-rent facilities for other community organizations, a bicycle program for the homeless, a Health Ministry, and unique art/education programs (Arts & Smarts) that have been available free of charge to at-risk children and youth since 1980. As part of the community fabric, Patchwork Central changes the lives of those it serves by giving them a sense of hope, a place of acceptance, and a bright outlook for the future.	

<b>QC Family Tree</b>	<b>North Carolina Region</b>
Revs. Helms & Greg Jarrell, Executive Directors 2910 Parkway AVE, Charlotte, NC 28208	(704) 654-7429 <a href="http://QCFamilyTree.org">QCFamilyTree.org</a>
QC Family Tree's mission is to be kinfolk rooted in discipleship in West Charlotte, NC. They embody this mission through creativity, prayer, and welcome. The Family Tree offers hospitality in their homes to neighbors who are in transition. Participants enjoy family-style meals each evening with neighbors and guests and gather for prayer every weekday morning and midday. The ministry has grown to include: Freedom School summer literacy camp, Wednesday evening dinner and devotionals for youth and children, twice monthly community meals, arts activities, young adult leadership development through internship programs, edible gardens, community outreach activities, and microbusiness in order that provides employment to neighbors as well as sustainable income to their nonprofit.	

<b>Recovery Café San Jose</b>	<b>Northern California/Nevada Region</b>
Kathy Cordova, Executive Director 80 S 5th ST, San Jose, CA 95112	(408) 294-2963 <a href="http://RecoveryCafeSJ.org">RecoveryCafeSJ.org</a>
Recovery Cafe San Jose is a healing community for those traumatized by homelessness, addiction, and mental health challenges. We are founded on the belief that every human being is precious, worthy of love, and deserving of the opportunities to fulfill his or her potential. Located in the heart of downtown San Jose, Recovery Cafe San Jose members come for long-term support in a safe, sober, and supportive environment. Program elements include Recovery Circles (small, peer-support groups), School for Recovery classes in job and life skills, group meals, guest speakers, creative activities, and connections to community resources. Through the Cafe, members gather the skills and strength needed to gain and maintain employment and housing, and achieve their goals in health, family, and sobriety.	

<b>Safe Haven Day Shelter</b>	<b>Virginia Region</b>
Joni Laurence and Donna Hawley, Co-Coordinator 6165 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22044	(703) 532-8220 <a href="http://FCCFC.org/safe-haven/">FCCFC.org/safe-haven/</a>

Safe Haven in Falls Church, VA, is a drop-in program working together with Northern Virginia Family Services to provide a welcoming environment for those experiencing homelessness and poverty. This program began as an outreach program at First Christian Church to an average of 15-20 individuals and has grown to a drop-in program serving more than 100 clients weekly, now an interfaith coalition of faith-based communities contributing hot meals and volunteers to the program.

<b>Serra Center</b>	<b>Northern California/Nevada Region</b>
Lisa Senadenos, CEO 2610 Central AVE, STE 120, Union City, CA 94587	(510) 477-1000 <a href="http://SerraCenter.org">SerraCenter.org</a>
Serra Center offers three types of support services for individuals with developmental disabilities. Intermediate Care Facilities (ICF-DDH) provides 24-hour care and supervision in six-bed homes in residential neighborhoods. Individuals in Supported Living Services live in the environment of their choice, with care and support based on their individual needs. Independent Living Services provide services focusing on specific identified living skills, working toward eliminating the need for services when the skills are mastered. All individuals served are active during the day either at jobs or in a day program.	

<b>SHARE (Sharing Hands: A Respite Experience)</b>	<b>Southwest Region</b>
Traci Hopper, Executive Director 3500 N A ST, STE 2200, Midland, TX	(432) 818-1250 <a href="http://ShareWTX.org">ShareWTX.org</a>
Upon the diagnosis of a child's disability, families find themselves on a lonely journey in which they are isolated from friends, other families who care for children with special needs, and the community. The constant care demands of the child's disability create stress and leave little time for relationships and personal care. SHARE provides respite care for these families, including parent support groups, counseling services, family events, and programming for siblings. SHARE cares for the whole family because strong families are needed to provide care for the person with special needs—now and well into the future.	

<b>Southern Christian Services for Children &amp; Youth, Inc.</b>	<b>Great River Region</b>
Jamie Himes, Executive Director 860 East River PL, STE 104, Jackson, AL 39202	(601) 354-0983 <a href="http://SCSCY.org">SCSCY.org</a>
SCSCY provides services through 11 different statewide locations including therapeutic group homes for children and youth, a transitional living facility for older teens who are homeless, an array of adoption, therapeutic foster care, and post adoption services, and education services that include independent living preparation for teens in the foster care system, and abstinence education for at-risk youth.	

<b>SquareOne Villages (formerly Opportunity Village)</b>	<b>Oregon/Southwest Idaho Region</b>
Rev. Dan Bryant, Executive Director 458 Blair BLVD, Eugene, OR 97402	(541) 606-4455 <a href="http://SquareOneVillages.org">SquareOneVillages.org</a>
As we grow into an organization with multiple projects, Opportunity Village Eugene has recently evolved to SquareOne Villages. Our mission continues to be to create self-managed communities of low-cost tiny houses for people in need of housing. SquareOne Villages has two projects: Opportunity Village Eugene, which provides transitional shelter for approximately 35 people, and Emerald Village Eugene, an affordable housing project of 22 tiny homes being built in fall 2016. Both communities provide stable, safe and sustainable places for people in need of housing through alternative, cost-effective approaches.	

<b>StoryWagen</b>	<b>Greater Kansas City Region</b>
Chaplain Jose Martinez, Founder 1712 Main ST, Kansas City, MO 64108	(660) 864-3503 <a href="http://StoryWagen.org">StoryWagen.org</a>

BUSINESS

StoryWagen is the brainchild of Chaplain Jose Martinez, Associate Minister at New Church Ministry. The organization serves as a mobile resource and listening center focused on spiritual health. The organization's goal is to provide free resources about issues such as grief, moral injury, shame, guilt, and other spiritual health issues that affect the mental health of individuals, community groups, and faith communities. In addition to offering resources, StoryWagen serves as platform for community members who want to share their story. They ensure they are providing a safe space when doing so by meeting people where they are at and giving these storytellers an opportunity to be heard without judgment or shame.

<b>The Summit</b>	<b>Virginia Region</b>
Gina Meadows, Executive Director 1400 Enterprise DR, Lynchburg, VA 24502	(434) 941-7606 <a href="http://SummitLynchburg.com">SummitLynchburg.com</a>
The Summit is a senior living community providing an environment for each resident to be engaged in life. We provide services, amenities and facilities that support an active lifestyle in Independent Living for each individual. As residents' needs change, The Summit's campus has a continuum of care available through Assisted Living and The Summit Health and Rehab Center.	

<b>Tennyson Center for Children</b>	<b>Central Rocky Mountain Region</b>
Mindy Watrous, President & CEO 2950 Tennyson ST, Denver, CO 80212	(303) 433-2541 <a href="http://TennysonCenter.org">TennysonCenter.org</a>
Tennyson Center provides 24-hour intensive residential care, day treatment, special education and home/community-based services for approximately 150 children and their families every day. Children with severe behavioral and mental health problems along with educational delays are the primary client population. The families of these children have experienced or are experiencing extreme trauma, physical and/or sexual abuse, mental illness, substance abuse, or extreme poverty and/or homelessness. Tennyson is a leader in advocating for the needs of all children and families in need in Colorado through legislative and policy development.	

<b>Whosoever Will Community Assistance Program</b>	<b>Northeast Region</b>
Rev. Dr. Edwin Lloyd Beltsville, MD	(301) 257-2264 <a href="http://WhosoeverWillCC.org">WhosoeverWillCC.org</a>
Their mission is to reduce food insecurity, increase nutritional value in their community, enhance self-sufficiency, provide health and wellness information, and impart hope. During the pandemic, members of Whosoever Will realized just how much food insecurity was plaguing the Beltsville community and they wanted to do something about it. The organization wants to create multiple avenues in which the quality, safety, and efficacy of food distribution are ensured. They have a deep understanding of what their community needs in order to access fresh, healthy food and therefore they are working to fill the gaps. Already this year, Whosoever Will has held several food drives where they've been able to donate food to the community. Their partnership with NBA will allow them to continue this important faith work and expand it as well.	

<b>Woodhaven</b>	<b>Mid-America Region</b>
Dan Soliday, CEO 1405 Hathman PL, Columbia, MO 65201	(573) 881-9840 <a href="http://WoodhavenTeam.org">WoodhavenTeam.org</a>
Woodhaven is a caring team advocating for those with disabilities. Its Community Living program supports more than 100 men and women in more than 50 apartments and homes, and its Community Connections program provides opportunities for individuals who do not work during the day. Our mission is not just about providing supports; it is about working toward a fundamental shift in how the community perceives people with disabilities. Every day, the people we support are living full, independent lives as active members of the community. With every shirt they buy, hour they work, and life they touch, they are changing the face of ability.	

**GA-2313****General Ministry Report of National Convention of the Christian Church****National Convocation of the Christian Church  
and the  
National Christian Missionary Convention**

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**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.



## **27<sup>th</sup> 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 27<sup>th</sup> 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 27<sup>th</sup> 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

- January New Church Ministry – Rev. Terrell McTyer
- February Disciples Church Extension Fund (DCEF) - Belinda King
- March International Disciples Women’s Ministries – Rev. Angele Johnson
- April Refugee & Immigration Ministries – Rev. Sharon Stanley-Rea
- May Reconciliation Ministries – Rev. April Johnson
- June Soul Care Conversation following tragic events in Buffalo, NY & Uvalde, TX
- July National Benevolent Association – Mark Anderson
- August Certificate of African American Ministry – Lexington Theological Seminary
- September

October	Dr. Charisse Gillett and Rev. Dr. William Lee
November	Disciples Peace Fellowship – Rev. Brian Frederick Christian Education and Faith Formation – Rev. Monique Crain Spells  Black Disciples Endowment Fund – President Jackie Bunch Immediate Past President – Mary Lou Kegler

### **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**

#### Executive Board

Rev. Dr. William Crowder, President (Illinois)

Tera Daniels, Vice President (Texas)

Rev. Dr. Joanne Flowers (Arkansas)

Orlando Scott, Treasurer (Georgia)

#### Trustees at large

Rev. Aaron Smith (Georgia)

Juanita Greene (Kentucky)

Anne Sowell (Ohio)

Rev. John Ray (Indiana)

Rev. William Smith (Texas)

Rev. Dr. Darren Phelps (Florida)  
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.

**GA-2314**  
**General Ministry Report of North American Pacific/Asian Disciples**

**2022 General Board Report**

**NORTH AMERICAN PACIFIC/ASIAN DISCIPLES MINISTRIES**

Chung Seong Kim, Executive Pastor  
 1099 N. Meridian, Ste 700, Indianapolis, IN 46204  
 PO Box 1986, Indianapolis, IN 46206  
 (317) 713-2685  
[ckim@napad.disciples.org](mailto:ckim@napad.disciples.org)  
[www.napad.net](http://www.napad.net)

**NAPAD Board of Directors**

Yunkyong Lee Hill (Moderator),  
 Neomai Uesi (Moderator-Elect),  
 Miseon Choi (Secretary),  
 John Ahn (Representative to the General Board)

*Members at Large*

Larry Sotam  
 Jeffrey Illagan  
 Aiono Kalala Fano  
 KJ Kim  
 Kikuo Yerem

*Representative*

Pending (College of Regional Ministers Representative)  
 Angele Saunders Johnson (Council of General Ministries Representative)

*Ex-Officios*

Teresa Hord Owens (General Minister & President)  
 Chung Seong Kim (Executive Pastor).

**NAPAD Ministry Team**

*National Ministry*

Chung Seong Kim, Executive Pastor

*Ethnic Ministry*

Lian Jiang – Chinese Ministry  
 Saitumua Tafaioalii – Samoan Ministry  
 Nerleb Likisap – Chuukese Ministry

### Regional Ministry

Kyungmok Lee – NAPAD Ministry Team, Pacific Southwest Region.

Daniel Lee – NAPAD Ministry Team, N. California-Nevada Region.

Hyoung Chel Yang – NAPAD Ministry Team, Illinois Wisconsin Region.

### **Mission of NAPAD**

The North American Pacific/Asian Disciples of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) affirms the cultures and heritages of Pacific/Asian peoples within the historic and living Christian faith. As part of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), we join with other Disciples in the total mission of the church, to recognize and promote the gifts and presence of North American Pacific/Asian Disciples in the life and work of the Church.

### **Purpose of NAPAD**

To participate in God’s mission through the various expressions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada.

To contribute to the wholeness and unity of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada.

To advocate for Pacific/ Asian Disciples within and outside the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada.

To share the gifts and traditions of Pacific/Asian Disciples with the wider church.

NAPAD ministry continued to thrive in accordance with the Disciples identity in becoming “*a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world*”. NAPAD is faithfully on the frontline of accomplishing the four mission priorities of the Church: Becoming a Pro-Reconciling and Anti-Racist Church; New Church Establishment; Congregational Transformation; and Leadership Development.

### **I. Becoming a Pro-Reconciling and Anti-Racist Church**

There are about 121 churches (19 among them are new churches or newly joined less than four years) in 2022 which consist mostly of 18 different ethnic and linguistic groups: Burmese, Cambodian, Chin, Chinese, Chuukese, Filipino, Indian, Indonesian, Japanese, Karen, Korean, Laotian, Mongolian, Montagnard, Samoan, Tongan, Vietnamese, and Zo. We gather to form one community – the NAPAD community. NAPAD contributes to the Disciples being “a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world.”

We have offered culturally adapted anti-racist training (in Korean) in Pacific Southwest Region in consultation with the Reconciliation Ministry. Several ethnic group leaders are being trained to offer language and culture adapted training in several languages. We are working with Reconciliation Ministry to develop new

way of educating public in NAPAD.

We are continuously seeking to educate new leaders who can have anti-racism training in each ethnic language. Our new focus has been on Chuukese and Samoan community since 2020.

Since the Covid 19 pandemic, there has been a significant increase in physical and verbal threats and violence against the Asian community. We have been working closely with other ministries and our ecumenical partners to speak out against this racism and provide our communities with the tools to resist it.

We are working with Reconciliation Ministry to award grants to support programs and education for anti-racism in the NAPAD community.

## II. New Church Establishment

NAPAD ministries have been working diligently to plant new churches. In partnership with the New Church Ministry and Regional Committees of New Church Development, we have initiated and established 19 new NAPAD congregations since the last convocation in 2020.

Training of new church planters is an ongoing process that requires the collaboration of congregational, regional, and general ministries. Our ethnic leaders have been participating in leadership academy hosted by the New Church Ministry.

NAPAD has been working with Chuukese Church leaders to plant new congregations. Especially, with great leadership of Rev. Nerleb Likisap, the Chuukese community has been the fastest growing group in NAPAD. With help of the Oreon Scott grant and the generous support of Oregon Southwest Idaho region, we were able to support the Chuukese Easter and Youth Rally which had the first face-to-face meeting in two years. We are diligently working to develop new church leadership and seek to educate them, which includes the translation of educational materials into the Chuukese language.

NAPAD is in process of establishing new Disciples Congregations in Tucson, AZ, Louisville, KY, El Paso, TX, Atlanta, GA, and Tulsa, OK, Virginia Beach, VA.

## III. Congregational Transformation and Pastoral Care

In December 2014, in honor of the late Rev. Harold Johnson, who was pivotal to the establishment and development of the ministries of NAPAD, the Harold Johnson Legacy Fund was established.

This fund serves to support the NAPAD congregation as they develop and strengthen their children, youth, and women ministries.

First Tongan Christian Church, WOW ministry, Fort Wayne Jo Christian Church and Chuukese new church ministry has been beneficiary of these grants in recent years. NAPAD keep supporting several congregations in their efforts to revitalize their ministries through diverse outreach programs.

#### **IV. Leadership Development**

NAPAD supported seminarians by providing funds for their study in seminaries and internships in congregational and general ministries. This was done with the hopes that they will apply themselves in developing their ministerial skills and leadership capabilities.

NAPAD has two scholarships, Kagiwada scholarship was awarded to Geonyul Byeon in (CST) Soonguk Choi Scholarship to Taulau Tupua (CST) in the 2020-2021 School year.

#### **V. Establishing Sound Financial Foundation and Management for the Future.**

The NAPAD office has been working closely with the Board of Directors to establish a sound financial foundation and management policy for the future of our ministry. The financial condition of the ministry has been greatly improved in terms of careful planning and transparent administration practice. We have been setting up a balanced budget for the last 7 years and achieved no deficit financial results every year since 2017. For last two years, we were able to reduce our expenses mainly by saving from face-to-face meetings and travel expenses. But also increasing individual contribution to the ministry. We were able to increase our NAPAD Vision Fund, which was established in 2019. By 50.000 To 150.000. I encourage you to visit our website and use the online donation link for the Napad. A summary of financial report is available on our website. We plan to continuously improve our financial condition through sound management and development effort.

#### **VI. Cancelling The 2020 Experience “It’s Real”.**

The ministries of National Convocation, Obra Hispana, and NAPAD have prayerfully decided to cancel “It’s Real: The 2022 Experience.”

We continue to be encouraged and challenged by Revelation 7:9 and look forward to continuing to work together to safely listen, learn, and worship together online in the future. The good work that the holy spirit began among and between us will take a different form. Stay tuned for the vision that is yet to emerge.

## **VII. Covid 19 related**

The last several years are marked by an unprecedented event of the Covid-19 pandemic. There have been great challenges for our congregations and their members. We lost some of our members to the covid. From the early 2000 to the end of 2021, the NAPAD ministry has been focusing on supporting congregations and individuals who are affected by Covid-19. These experiences fundamentally changed how we do our ministry and what is our priority. Especially for the small congregations who do not have enough resources to cope with new difficulties. We are working closely with other general ministries, such as NBA Week of compassion and Church Extension to support our congregations and church members in this emergency. We are slowly out of Covid 19 but the condition and landscape of our ministry are fundamentally changed. But we also see this new environment is challenging us to focus on the crucial part of the NAPAD ministry.

## **VIII. For the future.**

I am pleased to report that the NAPAD ministry is strong even in these difficult conditions. New challenges which we are confronting now, not only include finding new financial resources in decreasing DMF funding. But more importantly, finding and developing, and supporting new leadership in this ever-changing ministry environment is a more urgent task. We are planning a youth and young adult ministry leader retreats in near future.

Many young leaders in the NAPAD community are recognized throughout wider churches and play important roles. We are fulfilling our promise to share the gifts and traditions of Pacific/Asian Disciples with the wider church.”

I want to express my deep gratitude to God and our beloved community. The NAPAD community is growing as one of the most vital parts of the Disciples. Your support and prayers help us to work for our mission faithfully. We are a community of faith with Evangelical Passion, Radical Inclusiveness, and Responsibility to the World.

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

**GA-2315  
General Ministry Report of Pension Fund of the Christian Church**

**Pension Fund of the Christian Church  
Report to the General Board 2023  
Submitted by Rev. Dr. Todd A. Adams, President/CEO**

**Retirement Plans**

In 2022, Pension Fund awarded a 10% Special Apportionment Credit (SAC) to all pension accounts (active, inactive, and retirees) based on 2021 market performance and plan valuation. In 2021, the SAC award was 10.5% based on 2020 performance and plan valuation<sup>1</sup>. Over the course of twelve (12) months, fully funded credits for all pension plan account holders increased by more than 20.5%, given the compounding effect of the year-over-year increases. This means retirees in the United States and Puerto Rico received a greater than 20.5% increase in their gross monthly payment between July 1, 2021, and July 1, 2022. The valuation of the Canadian RCA plan did not support SACs.

Good Experience Credits on interest-bearing accounts also set a record during this same period. The combined base rate of interest plus Good Experience Credits were (2020/2021<sup>2</sup>):

Tax-Deferred Retirement Account: 4.56% / 20.38%  
Traditional IRA: 3.56% / 7.79%  
ROTH IRA: 3.56% / 11.11%  
457(b): 1.78% / 13.02%  
Benefit Accumulation Account: 5.04% / 13.37%

While there was not a GEC awarded in 2022, and the investment year has seen periods of uncertainty and high volatility, our portfolio continues to weather the market well and perform as designed.

In anticipation of changes in federal law affecting retirement contributions under the age-50 catch-up provision, and to assist members who wish to diversify the taxability of their retirement income, Pension Fund launched in January 2022 a Roth sibling to the Tax Deferred Retirement Account. The Roth product allows employees to contribute post-tax dollars through their employers and provides for tax-advantaged growth and tax-free distributions in retirement. Beginning in 2024, age-50 catch-up contributions must be contributed on a Roth basis.

Since the Assembly last gathered, Pension Fund also launched a 457(b) product, available only to those in colleges, seminaries, benevolent care facilities, and other

<sup>1</sup> Special Apportionment information for 2022 was not available at the time this report was due.

<sup>2</sup> The 2022 fiscal year had not closed at the writing of this report.

ministries defined as non-Qualified Church Controlled Organizations. The 457(b) allows highly compensated employees to defer additional income beyond the traditional contribution limits.

### **Ministerial Relief and Assistance (MRA) including Excellence in Ministry (EIM)**

Pension Fund serves as the steward of these historic programs that were foundational to our creation in 1895. Over the past four years, Pension Fund has provided more than \$9MM in financial assistance through the seventeen programs of MRA.

Our largest programs serve low-income retirees and those who were not afforded the opportunity to contribute to retirement savings during active ministry. Additionally, these individuals qualify for our 13th Check program and assistance with Medicare Supplemental Insurance.

Over the past seven years, we have focused on expanding programs for active clergy, such as Emergency Aid, Chaplaincy dues, Student Gift for seminary students, and Funeral Assistance Programs for those without the Pension Plan death benefit. We now offer parental leave assistance grants to help new parents collaborate with their local congregation to extend leave at the birth or adoption of a child, including helping congregations develop parental leave programs and matching retirement contributions to new church pastors, and helping these pastors bridge providing full retirement savings to their pastor over the course of five years, among others.

Additionally, Pension Fund has stewarded gifts of \$2.5MM from the Lilly Endowment to create Excellence in Ministry (EIM)—a financial literacy training program for clergy in their first five years of ministry. EIM works in partnership with organizations like Bethany Fellows and Your Money Line/Pete the Planner to engage clergy at the beginning of ministry in topics such as debt and the associated guilt or shame, household budgeting, taxes, and negotiating compensation. The program aids church workers applying for student loan relief. Through the program millions of dollars of debt have been paid off or restructured, and pastors have saved additional funds for retirement and/or emergency savings. In March 2023, a group of church leaders are meeting to shape ideas for EIM beyond Lilly, as we expand the work of financial literacy among clergy.

### **Clergy Health and Wellness**

Pension Fund understands the vital role we play in helping clergy families save for a strong, smart, and secure retirement. We also recognize our role in helping clergy reach retirement age mentally, physically, financially, and spiritually intact. To this end, we have launched clergy health and wellness initiatives, funded by MRA as follows:

Learn to Live (L2L). L2L is an online mental health support program that seeks to address life issues associated with alcohol or chemical dependency, depression, social anxiety, sleep disorders, and general anxiety issues. This free online service can also include a coach to help guide and hold a pastor accountable to working through the resources. This resource is available to active clergy and any members of their immediate household over the age of 13.

Your Money Line (YML). YML is a financial companion service that can work with any Pension Fund member on all non-Securities and Exchange Commission-related financial questions. YML's financial companions help members shape household budgets, conduct check-ins on spending and savings goals, and offer insights related to debt management and overall financial wellness. YML is provided free to all members.

The first Gathering for Clergy was held September 2022 in New Orleans. More than 350 pastors gathered for three days of learning, worship, and engagement. The event featured the American Spiritual Ensemble, worship led by Andra Moran, and presentations of Working Well by Dr. Matt Bloom, who has been researching helping professions and wellness for more than twenty-five years. The next Gathering will be scheduled for 2024 or 2025 based on the decision of the General Assembly of a biennium or triennium. Through the generosity of our donors, Pension Fund contributed more than \$200,000 in financial support to increase the accessibility of the event.

### **Strategic Initiatives**

Pension Fund's current strategic plan includes two strategic initiatives in addition to our ongoing efforts for Member Self-Service / automation and Cyber-security.

Our first initiative is Lean Process/Six Sigma Training for staff. All Pension Fund staff are now Six Sigma White Belt certified; additional staff have earned their Yellow Belt and/or Green Belt certification. Our Senior Project Manager has earned her Black Belt Certification. The tools and processes learned through these training courses assist Pension Fund employees to identify and eliminate waste, help us problem solve with efficiency, and improve our focus on clarifying the voice of the member.

Our second strategic initiative focuses on Diversity, Equity, Belonging, and Accessibility (DEBA). For our staff, our Pro-Reconciliation/Anti-Racism Team continues to offer ongoing training and engagement. Our Leading Effectively through Accountability and Development (LEAD) program for supervisors includes additional training on implicit bias. Rev. Gabriel Lopez-Patina serves as the Director of DEBA. Ingrid Hernandez joined our staff as our fourth Spanish-speaking employee and works in our call center. We have added a feature that allows those who prefer to speak with a Spanish-speaking employee to press one and be directly routed to a Spanish-speaking agent.

As part of the market research and to confirm some of our assumptions regarding historically underserved communities, Pension Fund engaged P3 Development, a consulting firm in Milwaukee, WI, that specializes in assisting historic institutions understand engagement with communities of color—both those that are participating with the organization and those that are eligible but not participating. P3 began by interviewing the heads of our three Racial/Ethnic Ministries. They then conducted twelve additional one-hour interviews with leaders identified within each racial or ethnic community. The fifteen interviews shaped the desk survey, which is scheduled to be circulated widely in late February 2023 to members and nonmembers. The surveys will

be followed by focus group interviews. We are working to leverage established events, such as the Korean Pastors Convocation and the Black Minister’s Retreat, Hispanic and Bi-Lingual Fellowship Conventions, and social media groups such as the Black Disciples Clergy Women to reach further into the church beyond those who are participating members.

The survey and focus group data will be summarized by P3 in May 2023. From this report and with Rev. Lopez’s leadership, we will review our current marketing and membership, development approach to tailor to each of our three major racial and ethnic communities, enhance awareness of our programs and services available to each community, and seek to create generational connections regarding Pension Fund’s programs and services. One early indicator from the interviews is the desire to not only “see myself in Pension Fund’s staff” but also to be connected to an elder within the racial or ethnic community who has used Pension Fund’s programs and services. We are currently working to develop an Ambassador program, which will leverage the experience of elders within each racial/ethnic community and their story with Pension Fund to create a warm introduction to those who do not know our story.

In 2024, Pension Fund’s marketing and communications staff, as well as the Client Relations Team, will be retooling our approach to ensure everyone understands the multiple entry points to using Pension Fund’s products and services.

We remain grateful for the opportunity to steward the retirement assets of pastors and church workers; to our donors who make possible the programs and services of ministerial relief and assistance; for the trust the church places in us to make wise decision in managing the funds and appropriately advocating for justice in its many forms; and to our board of directors who give of their time, financial resources, and industry expertise to ensure accountability, transparency, and prudent standards of fiduciary management are met.

Pension Fund’s board of directors include the following classes:

<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>
Linda Hernandez Williams	Rev. Sydney Avent	Randy Clayton
Rev. Denise Bell	Rev. Jabari Butler	Grace Caress
David Burch	Rev. Glen Miles	Rev. Esteban Doble-Gonzales
Sam Colson	Audrey Roling	Greg Smith
Cynthia Newman	Martin Sallee	Mark Southard
	Josh Santana	Rev. Nancy Brink
	Chad Turner	

Our board members are: 7 men and 11 women, representing all regional clusters, range in age from 30s-70s, and are 45% persons of color. Their professional backgrounds include, but are not limited to: CPA, small business owner, clergy, Medicare actuary, investment banking, Investment / Retirement manager, commercial property development, personal wealth management, computer / IT systems and security, Chief

BUSINESS

Financial Officer, attorney, bank trust officer, retirement plan administrator, and defined-benefit actuary.

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



**GA-2349****REPORT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE**

It is with humility and thankfulness that we bring news from the General Assembly committee, formerly known as the Time and Place committee. The committee has historically and still thru today had two responsibilities. First, we are charged with reporting on resolutions adopted at our last assembly. Second, we are charged with discerning locations for future assemblies and making those suggestions to appropriate staff.

With a focus on the resolutions adopted at the 2019 General Assembly in Des Moines, OGMP staff and committee members offer up a variety of updates that are included within this report.

In terms of future assemblies, we are grateful for the work of the Governance Committee, the General Board, the OGMP Team and all those involved over recent years as we envision new ways to gather and increased opportunities to connect both in person and online. As both the world around us and the church evolve the committee is excited for new ways to live out its charge and do the work of the church. In doing so, we acknowledge that the work of the General Assembly committee has been in flux and will be in transition going forward.

In terms of future assemblies, this summer we look forward to gathering in Louisville this summer from July 29<sup>th</sup> – August 2<sup>nd</sup>. The theme for the 2023 General Assembly is “Kingdom of God Within Us, Among Us.” And is based on three scriptures: Luke 17:20-21, Genesis 11:1-9, and 2 Peter 1:3. This is a call for Disciples to strengthen their relationship to God both individually and communally through an expansive in person and digital gathering of the church in Louisville. The past two years, we have had to be separated but we have also innovated new ways or God’s limitless love to be revealed in our church, our communities and around the world.

We have long affirmed our desire to gather for a General Assembly in Memphis, Tennessee, and in 2025, we will be able to do just that, when the Assembly gathers there July 12-15, 2025.

Looking beyond 2023 and 2025, our committee is excited about how the proposed changes will allow for the church and those charged with its care to not only gather in new ways and more frequently, but to do so in ways that are most operationally efficient and allow for greater connection. The committee stands ready to assist the forthcoming Implementation Team as we work through the details about new cycles and new ways to approach resolutions.

**Previously Shared Update on 2019 General Assembly Resolutions**

*A link to a full list of the resolutions is here: [GA 2019 Resolutions](#)*



### **GA-1917 Creation of a New Region in Montana and the Northwest**

Update: The region began operation as the Northern Lights region in January of 2020.

### **GA-1918 Time and Place 2021**

Update: At a special called General Board meeting in July 2020, the 2021 General Assembly was cancelled due to the pandemic.

### **GA-1919 Time and Place 2023**

Update: At a special called General Board meeting in December 2020, the time and place of the 2023 General Assembly was changed to July 29-Aug. 1, 2023, in Louisville, KY.

### **GA-1921 Report of the Social Witness Taskforce**

Update: At the 2015 General Assembly in Columbus, Ohio, GA 1524 called for a task force to be formed by the Office of General Minister and President, Disciples Home Missions and the Division of Overseas Ministries for the purpose of: "...bringing to the 2017 General Assembly, meeting in Indianapolis, IN, a jointly sponsored process for discussion of and education about important religious, ethical and social issues." The work of the committee continued through 2017 and 2019. In 2020, the Social Witness Task Force concluded their work by submitting a report to the Governance Committee of the General Board. The Governance Committee is incorporating the work of the Social Witness Task Force into its considerations for proposed changes to be brought before the General Assembly in 2023.

### **GA 1922 Full Communion with The United Church of Canada**

Update: The agreement was celebrated in a joint ceremony in Canada, streamed to the U.S. in October of 2019. In spite of the pandemic, meetings on ministerial recognition between the two bodies are continuing.

### **GA-1923 Recommended Language for Prevention of Harassment for General Ministries**

Update: A number of general ministries have adopted this recommended language in their personnel policies.

### **GA-1924 Resolution to Celebrate and Reaffirm New Church**

Update: A New Church Impact report was shared with the General Board in April 2021. The report celebrates the impact of new and revitalized congregations formed since the conception of the 2020 Vision.

### **GA-1925 Addressing the State of Global Forced Migration**

Update: Global Ministries has taken the lead in raising awareness of this issue, publishing a report in October 2019 and supporting the work of partners listed in January 2020. The issue was highlighted in a June 2020 article. Partnering with the World Council of Churches, Global Ministries called for reform in European immigration practices in September 2020. This work has continued through 2021, along with

advocacy, education, and direct service provided by Week of Compassion and Disciples Home Missions through Refugee and Immigration Ministry.

**GA-1926 Spirit of Active Listening**

Update: As encouraged by this resolution, the many expressions of the church have endeavored to be safe places for difficult conversations in which we listen to each other carefully and recognize our common humanity.

**GA-1927 Concerning the Reopening of the US Embassy in Cuba**

*No update available.*

**GA-1928 A Call to See and Respond to the Crisis of Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence**

*No update available.*

**GA-1929 An Invitation to Education for Welcoming & Receiving the Gifts of Transgender & Gender-diverse People**

Update: Disciples AllianceQ has offered additional training opportunities as well as resources to help with dialogue and education, and many expressions of the church are also working to broaden our understanding and welcome.

**GA-1930 On Women and Just Peacemaking**

Update: Disciples Women, the Women's Empowerment Fund of Week of Compassion, Global Ministries, Disciples Peace Fellowship, and many other expressions of the church continue to affirm, celebrate, and empower women as peacemakers around the world.

**GA-1932 Acknowledging the Covenantal Affiliation of Tougaloo College**

Update: Tougaloo College was acknowledged as a covenantal partner and remains connected through Higher Education and Leadership Ministries.

**GA-1934 Declaring that impartially providing for the basic human needs of others is a virtue consistent with Disciples tradition.**

Update: No further action was needed; the resolution stands on its own as supporting those who provide humanitarian assistance as motivated by their faith in Jesus Christ.

**GA-1035 Concerning Steep Reductions in Overall Refugee Resettlement Arrivals to the United States**

Update: Refugee Immigration Ministry and Week of Compassion have continued their education and advocacy regarding refugee resettlement efforts in the United States.

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**The General Board has reviewed GA-2349 Report of the General Assembly Committee. The report is submitted to the General Assembly for presentation and discussion. No action is required. (Discussion time: 12 minutes)**

## LIST OF RESOLUTION TITLES

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- GA-2339      Compelled to Witness: Answering the Cry of our Palestinian Siblings
- GA-2340      Building on our Church’s Commitment to Faith-Based Investing
- GA-2341      Calling the Church to Oppose Christian Nationalism
- GA-2342      Dissolution of the Pastoral Commission of the Christian Church  
(Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada
- GA-2343      Amendments to the Design of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
- GA-2345      Reelection of the GMP
- GA-2346      Ratify Actions of the General Board
- GA-2347      Report of the Time and Place Committee
- GA-2348      Report of the General Nominating Committee
- GA-2350      Report of the Council of Colleges and Universities
- GA-2351      Report of the Council on Theological Education



## GA-2336

**CHRISTIAN CHURCH HEALTH CARE BENEFIT TRUST CLOSURE AND  
DISTRIBUTION OF ASSETS**

**(Operational, Policy, and Organizational)**

**WHEREAS**, the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) ("General Assembly"), by action of the General Board, entered into a trust agreement with Pension Fund of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) ("Pension Fund"), as Trustee, to establish the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Health Care Benefit Trust ("CCHCBT") effective September 1, 2003, in order to provide a funding mechanism for health and other benefits provided to employees of churches and church-related organizations through plans established by Pension Fund;

**WHEREAS**, Pension Fund, as Trustee of the CCHCBT, established the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Health Care Plan ("Health Plan"), effective January 1, 2006, to provide health benefits and other benefits to employees of churches and church-related organizations;

**WHEREAS**, the CCHCBT provides a funding source for the Health Plan;

**WHEREAS**, the Health Plan was most recently restated in its entirety effective January 1, 2017, to limit eligibility under the Plan to Medicare-eligible employees and retirees only, and was amended once thereafter to close the Health Plan to new participants effective January 1, 2019;

**WHEREAS**, Section 7.01(n) of the CCHCBT provides that the Trustee may borrow for the purpose of the CCHCBT in such amount and upon such terms and conditions and from such person or persons (including Pension Fund) as the Trustee, in its absolute discretion, upon such terms and conditions as it deems advisable;

**WHEREAS**, the Ministerial Relief Fund made a two million dollar loan to the CCHCBT in 2016 in order to ensure that Medicare-eligible employees and retirees were not required to subsidize the run-out costs for active employees no longer eligible under the Health Plan effective January 1, 2017, which loan with interest is currently valued at approximately three million dollars;

**WHEREAS**, Section 3.02(c) and Article IV of the CCHCBT provides that the Trustee shall be reimbursed by the Trust for all reasonable expenses (direct or indirect) incurred in administering the Health Plan and the CCHCBT, including any reasonable administrative charge established by the Trustee;

**WHEREAS**, Section 7.01(g) of the CCHCBT provides that the Trustee may employ suitable agents and counsel and pay their reasonable expenses and compensation;

**WHEREAS**, Pension Fund, as Trustee, has not reimbursed itself from the CCHCBT the full amount of its reasonable expenses incurred in administering the Health Plan and the CCHCBT since 2017 to ensure the financial viability of the plan;

**WHEREAS**, Pension Fund's Heartbeats of Faith campaign raised approximately \$1.3 million dollars in donations which Pension Fund paid to the CCHCBT for the purpose of funding clergy health and wellness with an approximate market of \$1.8MM;

**WHEREAS**, Section 14.02 of the Health Plan provides that the Board of Pension Fund has the right, in its sole discretion, to terminate the Health Plan at any time;

**WHEREAS**, Pension Fund has determined that the provision of health benefits under the Health Plan is no longer cost effective for participants;

**WHEREAS**, Pension Fund terminated the Health Plan and made available to participants a Medicare secondary policy exchange with VIA Benefits, a division of Willis Towers Watson, effective January 1, 2023;

**WHEREAS**, the CCHCBT will no longer have any health or welfare benefit plans to fund and the General Assembly has authority to terminate the CCHCBT after receipt of all remaining rebates and contributions and payment of all remaining liabilities under the Health Plan;

**WHEREAS**, in light of the Health Plan's impending termination, Pension Fund, as Trustee, desires to make certain payments and reimbursements from the CCHCBT, as permitted by its terms;

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Pension Fund approved the repayment to the Ministerial Relief Fund of its 2016 loan to CCHCBT, with reasonable interest;

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Pension Fund approved, at such time that the CCHCBT is terminated, the repayment of the Heartbeats of Faith campaign funds, at current market value, to the Ministerial Relief Fund, to be used for the support of clergy and their wellness consistent with original donor intent; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Pension Fund authorized and directed the appropriate officers of Pension Fund to take such additional actions that may be necessary or appropriate to the implement the foregoing resolutions and to provide for the orderly winding down of the Health Plan.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) meeting July 29 to August 1, 2023 in Louisville, Kentucky approves the termination of the Christian Church Health Care Benefit Trust after all expenses, debits, and income have been reconciled and the endowment funds transferred to Pension Fund for Ministerial Relief and Assistance;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the desire of the General Assembly is to ensure these assets remain in perpetuity to provide financial support for programs that benefit Disciples of Christ clergy;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the General Assembly names Ministerial Relief and Assistance for Clergy Health and Wellness and the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Inc. (Office of the General Minister and President) as co-beneficiaries of the remaining assets;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Trust make a distribution to both beneficiaries in December 2023 and December 2024 equal to one year's distribution based on the Christian Church Foundation's recommended payout distribution rate times the remaining assets as of November 30 of each year;

**AND FINALLY BE IT RESOLVED** that the General Assembly directs the trust to transfer any remaining assets as soon as administratively possible to the Christian Church Foundation, who shall invest, manage, and determine the annual payout distribution in accordance with its own policies for the benefit of Ministerial Relief and Assistance for Clergy Health and Wellness and The General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Inc., (The Office of the General Minister and President), with each entity receiving fifty percent (50%) of the annual distribution beginning in January 2026.

Christian Church Health Care Benefit Trust

BUSINESS

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**The General Board recommends that the General Assembly ADOPT GA-2336.  
(Discussion Time: 12 minutes)**

**GA-2337**

**RECOGNITION OF A TRUTH AND HEALING COUNCIL TO HONOR OUR  
COVENANTAL RELATIONSHIP WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND TO DISCERN  
WAYS OF REPARATIONS FOR A PATH TO RECONCILIATION**

**(Sense-of-the-Assembly)**

**WHEREAS**, as justice is an essential part of God’s nature, manifesting itself as a method of restoration and healing;<sup>1</sup> and

**WHEREAS**, as people of faith we recognize reconciliation as a biblical principle and a tenet of our faith tradition, understanding that reconciliation is based upon relationships that are reciprocal and respectful, where all parties in the relationship are valued as equal and beloved by God; and

**WHEREAS**, the history of white Euro-Americans and Indigenous peoples of the Americas has not been a relationship based upon reciprocity, mutual respect and honoring covenantal relationships but sadly has been a settler colonial history of a relationship of power given to white people by U.S. and Canadian nations to hold over Indigenous peoples that has used Christianity and the Church as tools of social control and oppression; and

**WHEREAS**, the appalling reality of the history of the Canadian residential schools and U.S. boarding schools that sought to assimilate Indigenous children into white society demonstrates the need for reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people as nearly 1,000 unmarked children graves were discovered at former residential schools in British Columbia and Saskatchewan, Canada and over 500 deaths at 19 schools in the United States (though the Interior Department said that number could climb to the thousands or even tens of thousands) of children buried in unmarked or poorly maintained burial sites far from their Indian, Inuit, Métis, Native, Alaskan, Hawaiian, Indigenous homes and families, often hundreds, or even thousands, of miles away;<sup>2</sup> and

**WHEREAS**, the consequences of federal Indian boarding school policies including intergenerational historical trauma caused by the family separation and cultural eradication of language, traditions, and religion inflicted upon generations of young are undeniable; and

**WHEREAS**, the idea of boarding schools to provide a basic Western education and Christian indoctrination originated from Christian missionaries of various denominations

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Richard Rohr, *Dancing Standing Still: Healing the World from a Place of Prayer* (New York: Paulist Press, 2014), 38–40, 87–88.

<sup>2</sup> NPR, “U.S. report identifies burial sites linked to boarding schools for Native Americans,” May 11, 2022, <https://www.npr.org/2022/05/11/1098276649/u-s-report-details-burial-sites-linked-to-boarding-schools-for-nativeamericans>.

and were approved by government agents before the Bureau of Indian Affairs also founded additional off reservation boarding schools based on the assimilation model in the U.S., it is fitting that as Christians reflect on their institutional structures, historically, they soon learn to recognize instances where these institutions participated in the system of colonization of the Canadian and U.S. landscape; and

**WHEREAS**, understanding Christian complicity in the destruction of Indigenous familial and community structure gives Christians the moral authority to compel Church and Government(s) to become accountable for acts of colonization, an obligation is inherent and relevant for Christian institutions who have recognized their complicity by repudiating the Doctrine of Discovery, like Disciples did by affirming the resolution GA-1722 at the 2017 General Assembly and who proclaim themselves as a “movement for wholeness in a fragmented world,” and

**WHEREAS**, becoming institutionally accountable to the Indigenous landscape allows Christians to move beyond statements of apology, confession, or solidarity to become more accountable to the landscape shifting Christianity theology to include a hermeneutic of Indigeneity where Indigenous well-being is valued over agendas and outcomes, where Christian institutions publicly name their participation in the evil of colonization, and where the Indigenous landscape is known as family; and

**WHEREAS**, by recognizing there are stages between truth telling and reconciliation: 1) reparative work must be done to prepare mindsets and institutional governance for change; 2) once reparative work is well along in changing minds (but before completed), institutional reparations—substantial institutional changes in governance, restitution, and finances—begin; 3) when reparative work and reparations have occurred for some time, then the work of restoration begins and restorative work brings about right relationship to that which was once natural and created; and 4) after years, if not generations, of reparative work, reparations, and restorative work, reconciliation can then begin;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada, meeting July 29-August 1, 2023, in Louisville, Kentucky, offers its support of the work by the Center for Indigenous Ministries (DOC) who believes such justice work is possible by collaborating with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to support the Truth and Healing Council who will: 1) openly listen to Indigenous voices; 2) hear how the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)’s work impacted Indigenous lives, the lives of their ancestors, and the lives of their children; 3) gather historical and current Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) institutional documents authenticating Disciples colonial-settler relationship with the Indigenous landscape and her People(s); 4) document and record the haunting stories and histories arising from colonial-settler relationship; and 5) create a generational restorative and reparative path toward harmony; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that local, regional, and General expressions of the Church discern paths toward reconciliation with Indigenous peoples in the United States and Canada; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that working collaboratively to advance reconciliation in North American society might include acts of reparation such as: 1) the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in all its expressions which have accumulated financial sustainability working within a North American construct that has also provided wealth to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), are encouraged to begin a formal process of review of that history to begin reordering wealth and power towards Indigenous healing within and without the church; 2) all Disciples related colleges and seminaries who have benefited from the generational wealth acquired from Indigenous removal and the land on which their institutions reside, and from the wealth of their constituents and alumni who also benefited from the generational wealth accrued from Indigenous removal, are encouraged to review their financial legacies in light of generational Indigenous injustice and to consider reallocating annual funds and/or a percentage of the annual budget to Indigenous work under the management of Indigenous guidance who are not accountable to their institutional structure; 3) regions and individual congregations are encouraged to begin to examine their historical context of complicity in settler colonialism and find avenues to support issues of social justice for Indigenous peoples; and

**FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Office of General Minister and President shall work with the Center for Indigenous Ministries to discern and propose the most faithful and effective way to recognize their ministry in the life of the church.

Yakama Christian Mission, White Swan, Washington  
Englewood Christian Church, Yakima, Washington  
Bethany Christian Church of Farmington, New Mexico

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**The General Board recommends that the General Assembly REFER GA-2337 to the Office of General Minister and President for further study.  
(Discussion Time: 12 minutes)**

## GA-2338

## CONCERNING FOOD WASTE, FOOD INSECURITY, AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

## (Sense-of-the-Assembly)

**WHEREAS**, the stories of Creation in Genesis teach us that all of Creation is good, that food is provided for all living things, and that human beings are put in the Garden to till and keep it; and

**WHEREAS**, Earth is a delicate ecosystem that requires the balance and sacrifice of all living creatures to sustain life, yet human actions have tipped the balance to rapidly accelerate climate change to the point of creating unhealthy and unsustainable living conditions for all creatures, including humans; and

**WHEREAS**, the story of “the least of these” in Matthew 25 teaches us to feed all who are hungry in the same way that we would readily feed Jesus; and

**WHEREAS**, climate change negatively affects agriculture and fisheries by decreasing food harvests causing greater food insecurity and loss of food worker livelihoods;<sup>1</sup> and

**WHEREAS**, climate impacts on food systems are projected to increase occurrences of malnutrition and diet-related mortality;<sup>2</sup> and

**WHEREAS**, thirty to forty percent of all food produced in the United States is wasted,<sup>3</sup> accounts for about a quarter of the trash sent to landfills,<sup>4</sup> and generates the same amount of greenhouse gas emissions as 32.6 million cars;<sup>5</sup> and

**WHEREAS**, beef produces more than five times the amount of greenhouse gas emissions per serving as poultry and more than sixty times that of potatoes and carrots;<sup>6</sup> and

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<sup>1</sup> Nina Krebs, “Fact Sheet - Food and Water,” October 2022, [https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/downloads/outreach/IPCC\\_AR6\\_WGII\\_FactSheet\\_FoodAndWater.pdf](https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/downloads/outreach/IPCC_AR6_WGII_FactSheet_FoodAndWater.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Nina Krebs, “Fact Sheet - Food and Water.”

<sup>3</sup> “8 Facts About How Food Waste and Global Hunger Are Connected,” *World Food Program USA*, accessed January 4, 2023, <https://www.wfpusa.org/articles/8-facts-to-know-about-food-waste-and-hunger/>.

<sup>4</sup> Megan Marples, “Composting Has Some Benefit to the Environment, If Done Right. Here’s How,” *CNN*, last modified September 14, 2022, <https://www.cnn.com/2022/09/14/world/composting-benefits-methane-environment-scn/index.html>.

<sup>5</sup> “Fight Climate Change by Preventing Food Waste,” *World Wildlife Fund*, accessed January 4, 2023, <https://www.worldwildlife.org/stories/fight-climate-change-by-preventing-food-waste>.

<sup>6</sup> “Carbon Footprint Factsheet,” *Center for Sustainable Systems*, accessed January 4, 2023, <https://css.umich.edu/publications/factsheets/sustainability-indicators/carbon-footprint-factsheet>.

**WHEREAS**, many cities in the United States have demonstrated the ability to dramatically decrease greenhouse gas emissions in landfills by providing city-wide composting programs;<sup>7</sup>

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada, meeting in Louisville, Kentucky, July 29 – August 1, 2023 urges all Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) congregations, organizations, ministries, and institutions to take seriously our responsibility to care for all Creation and “the least of these” by reducing our production of greenhouse gases and food waste that contribute to climate change and create unjust, unhealthy, and unsustainable living conditions for all creatures, including humans; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the General Assembly urges all Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) congregations, organizations, ministries, and institutions to take seriously our responsibility to care for all Creation and “the least of these” by advocating for public policies and/or personal actions that create just, healthy, and sustainable life on Earth; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the General Assembly urges congregations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to educate our members about food waste, greenhouse gases, composting, and environmental justice; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the General Assembly urges congregations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to take steps toward sustainable living such as:

- Compost food scraps and coffee grounds rather than throwing them away;
- Create a plan to share leftover food following church dinners;
- Encourage potluck dinners using plant-based foods;
- Serve water from refillable pitchers;
- Eliminate the purchase of disposable plates, cups, utensils, napkins, and tablecloths;
- Create a culture of dishwashing as a spiritual practice and time of fellowship;
- Convert church lawns into community vegetable gardens;
- Provide space for local farmers’ markets and food distribution centers;
- Utilize established resources provided by Green Chalice; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the General Assembly urges members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to take personal steps toward sustainable living such as:

- Compost food scraps and coffee grounds rather than throwing them away;
- Purchase and prepare only the amount of food needed;
- Manage food storage by eating foods before they are no longer edible;
- Bring home leftovers from restaurant meals;

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<sup>7</sup> “How To Reduce Your City’s Climate Footprint? The Answer May Be In Your Trash Can,” accessed January 4, 2023, <https://nextcity.org/urbanist-news/how-to-reduce-city-climate-footprint-zero-waste>.

- Replace one beef meal per week with poultry, fish, legumes, vegetables, or pasta;
- Utilize established resources provided by Green Chalice; and

**FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED** that the General Assembly urges congregations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to work faithfully with local governments to create affordable composting programs in our neighborhoods.

Fireside Christian Church, Aurora, Colorado

## BACKGROUND

Climate change affects all of us, but especially the poorest and most vulnerable. The task of reversing it – or even slowing it down – is overwhelming. Such a task requires the church’s prophetic voice to till and keep the garden and its faithful action to care for the least of these.

Methane, a greenhouse gas emitted in landfills as food decomposes, is 80 times more powerful than carbon dioxide when it comes to trapping heat in the Earth’s atmosphere.

Remarkably, rich countries in North America and Europe waste as much food as sub-Saharan Africa produces,<sup>8</sup> a clear example of squandering the Earth’s resources without regard for those who are hungry.

Eliminating food waste by producing less, preparing just what is needed, and composting food scraps instead of throwing them in the landfill is a relatively easy way to make a big difference.

Working with local governments to create affordable composting programs is a faithful response to our role as stewards who till and keep the garden.

Our actions make a difference.<sup>9</sup> By taking care of the Garden, we care for the least of these.

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**The General Board recommends that the General Assembly ADOPT GA-2338.  
(Discussion Time: 12 minutes)**

<sup>8</sup> “8 Facts About How Food Waste and Global Hunger Are Connected.”

<sup>9</sup> “UN Says Ozone Layer Slowly Healing, Hole to Mend by 2066,” *NBC News*, last modified January 9, 2023, <https://www.nbcnews.com/science/environment/un-says-ozone-layer-slowly-healing-hole-mend-2066-rcna64927>.

**COMPELLED TO WITNESS: ANSWERING THE CRY OF OUR PALESTINIAN SIBLINGS**

**(Sense-of-the-Assembly)**

**WHEREAS** the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada sent its first missionary to Palestine in 1851 and, through more than a dozen Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) mission partners in Israel and Palestine, Disciples have worked alongside the people there with appointed mission workers and financial support; and

**WHEREAS** the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) has a history of commitment to racial, economic and social justice; and has spoken clearly and participated actively in movements for civil rights and anti-racism in the US and Canada and for human rights and the just resolution of conflict around the world; and between 1973 and 2019, our General Assembly has articulated clear positions in support of justice and peace for Palestinians and Israelis<sup>1</sup>; and

**WHEREAS** the establishment of the State of Israel led to the 75-year displacement and dispossession of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from their homes and property—amounting to a modern-day form of settler colonialism and creating a refugee population that now numbers more than 7 million<sup>2</sup>; and the State of Israel has imposed a harsh 56-years-long occupation of East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza Strip; and

**WHEREAS** globally recognized human rights organizations—including B’Tselem-The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, Human Rights Watch, and Amnesty International—and the United Nations’ Special Rapporteur have issued detailed reports<sup>3</sup> describing the State of Israel’s apartheid system; and

**WHEREAS** in February 2022, Disciples leaders issued a Pastoral Letter, *Compelled to Witness: Affirming Justice, Rights, and Accountability in Promoting Peace in Israel/Palestine*<sup>4</sup>, naming actions and circumstances that have led to the deterioration of hope for a just peace in Israel/Palestine, and finding that “Israeli policies and practices that discriminate against Palestinians—Christian and Muslims alike—are consistent with the international legal definition of the crime of apartheid as defined in the International

<sup>1</sup> Disciples General Assembly resolutions related the Middle East: [https://www.globalministries.org/mee\\_resolutions/](https://www.globalministries.org/mee_resolutions/)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.anera.org/blog/who-are-palestinian-refugees/>

<sup>3</sup> B’Tselem, [https://www.btselem.org/publications/fulltext/202101\\_this\\_is\\_apartheid](https://www.btselem.org/publications/fulltext/202101_this_is_apartheid); Human Rights Watch, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/27/threshold-crossed/israeli-authorities-and-crimes-apartheid-and-persecution>; Amnesty International, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde15/5141/2022/en/>; United Nations Special Rapporteur,

<https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/report-special-rapporteur-situation-human-rights-20>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.globalministries.org/compelled-to-witness/>

Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid (ICSPCA, 1973)<sup>5</sup> and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (2002)<sup>6</sup>; and

**WHEREAS** a just and lasting peace between Israel and Palestine must be grounded in the message of Scripture, both in the Hebrew prophets<sup>7</sup> and the life and teachings of Jesus, as well as international law and globally recognized human rights conventions; and

**WHEREAS** in December 2009, our mission partner Kairos Palestine issued *A Moment of Truth: A word of faith, hope, and love from the heart of Palestinian Suffering*<sup>8</sup>, a profoundly theological document grounded in the Biblical texts, which declares:

...We believe that our land has a universal mission. In this universality, the meaning of the promises, of the land, of the election, of the people of God open up to include all of humanity, starting from all the peoples of this land. In light of the teachings of the Holy Bible, the promise of the land has never been a political programme, but rather the prelude to complete universal salvation. It was the initiation of the fulfilment of the Kingdom of God on earth (KP 2.3); and

**WHEREAS** *Cry for Hope: A Call for Decisive Action*<sup>9</sup>, issued in July 2020 by Palestinian Christian leaders and theologians, states that “the very being of the church, the integrity of the Christian faith, and the credibility of the Gospel is at stake,” and “support for the oppression of the Palestinian people, whether passive or active, through silence, word or deed, is a sin”; and

**WHEREAS** in 2022, Kairos Palestine published *A Dossier on Israeli Apartheid: A Pressing Call to Churches Around the World*<sup>10</sup>, a resource that: points to the conditions necessary to establish the crime of apartheid; offers a Biblical/theological reflection that describes the sin of apartheid; reminds readers that “The church has named and resisted the sin and injustice of apartheid in the past”; and repeats the Palestinians’ cry,

<sup>5</sup> According to the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid (ICPCA, 1973), the international legal definition of apartheid is, “inhuman acts committed for the purpose of establishing and maintaining domination by one racial group of persons over any other racial group of persons and systematically oppressing them.”

[[https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocities-crimes/Doc.10\\_International%20Convention%20on%20the%20Suppression%20and%20Punishment%20of%20the%20Crime%20of%20Apartheid.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocities-crimes/Doc.10_International%20Convention%20on%20the%20Suppression%20and%20Punishment%20of%20the%20Crime%20of%20Apartheid.pdf)] The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965) defines “racial discrimination” as “any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.” [<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/cerd.pdf>]

<sup>6</sup> Article 7 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC, 2002) defines the crime of apartheid as “inhuman acts ... committed in the context of an institutionalised regime of systematic oppression and domination by one racial group over any other racial group or groups and committed with the intention of maintaining that regime.” [<https://www.icc-cpi.int/sites/default/files/RS-Eng.pdf>]

<sup>7</sup> E.g. Isaiah 61:1-2; Isaiah 5:8; Micah 6:8; Amos 5:23; Hosea 2:21; Luke 4:18-19,

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.kairopalestine.ps/index.php/about-kairos/kairos-palestine-document>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.cryforhope.org/media/attachments/2020/06/30/cry-for-hope-english.pdf>

<sup>10</sup>

<https://www.kairopalestine.ps/index.php/resources/publication/a-dossier-on-israeli-apartheid-a-pressing-call-to-churches-around-the-world>

“Are you able to help us get our freedom back, for this is the only way you can help the two peoples attain justice, peace, security and love?”;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada, meeting in Louisville, Kentucky, July 29-August 1, 2023:

- Embraces an understanding that the Bible’s narrative—beginning with creation and extending through the calling of the Israelites, the prophets’ witness, the ministry of Jesus, the witness of the apostles, and Revelation’s vision of a new heaven and a new earth and the Tree of Life, the leaves of which are for the healing of the nations—speaks of God’s blessing extending to “all the families of the earth (Genesis 12.3)”; and
- Believes that all people living in Palestine and Israel are created in the image of God deserving of equal dignity and their human rights; and
- Affirms the 2022 Disciples leadership Pastoral Letter, *Compelled to Witness: Affirming Justice, Rights, and Accountability in Promoting Peace in Israel/Palestine*; and
- Asserts that the continued oppression of the Palestinian people is a matter of theological urgency and represents a sin in violation of the message of the Biblical prophets and the Gospel, and that all efforts to defend or legitimate the oppression of the Palestinian people represent a fundamental denial of the Gospel; and
- Rejects any theology or ideology including Christian Zionism, supercessionism, antisemitism or anti-Islam bias that would privilege or exclude any one nation, race, culture, or religion; and
- Condemns speech and acts of antisemitism, and rejects the notion that criticism of policies of the State of Israel is inherently antisemitic; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the General Assembly:

- Affirms that many of the laws, policies and practices of the State of Israel meet the definition of apartheid as defined in international law, documented in the reports cited above, and described as such by some of our mission partners over the past two decades, and affirmed in our Disciples leaders’ pastoral letter, *Compelled to Witness*; and
- Affirms that all peoples have the right to self-determination and to their aspirations for full and equal citizenship in the shaping of their corporate religious, cultural, and political life, and that a just resolution of conflicting claims is only achieved through the equal protection of civil and human rights, the fair and just sharing of land and resources, and peaceful negotiation based on international law and UN resolutions; and
- Calls for an end to Israel’s occupation of the Palestinian territories consistent with international law and UN resolutions; and

- Affirms the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes if they so choose or to be compensated for their loss of property, consistent with UN General Assembly resolution 194; and
- Insists on the U.S. constitutional right to freedom of speech and assembly to protest the laws, policies and practices of the State of Israel and to support the rights of Palestinians, including the use of economic measures by individuals, institutions, corporations and religious bodies that advocate for lasting peace with justice<sup>11</sup>; and

**FINALLY, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that congregations, regions, general units and related institutions and organizations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) be encouraged to:

- Listen to the voices of Palestinians, with special attention to statements such as *Kairos Palestine: A Moment of Truth* (2009) and *Cry for Hope* (2020), and;
- Participate in travel opportunities that expose pilgrims to the Palestinian community; and
- Make use of resources from Global Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ<sup>12</sup>; and
- Use this resolution to guide their support for the aspirations of our denominational partners in the region and in our advocacy with the governments of the United States and Canada consistent with the call in *Compelled to Witness*.

Heart of the Rockies Christian Church, Fort Collins, CO  
 Division of Overseas Ministries  
 United Christian Church, California, PA  
 Disciples Peace Fellowship  
 Tapestry Church, Bargersville, IN  
 Harbor Christian Church, Newport Beach, CA

## BACKGROUND

Justice is turned back,  
 and righteousness stands at a distance;  
 for truth stumbles in the public square,  
 and uprightness cannot enter,  
 Truth is lacking...

The LORD saw it, and it displeased him  
 that there was no justice.

<sup>11</sup> [https://www.globalministries.org/employing\\_economic\\_measures/](https://www.globalministries.org/employing_economic_measures/)

<sup>12</sup> [https://www.globalministries.org/resource/mee\\_resources\\_index/](https://www.globalministries.org/resource/mee_resources_index/)

He saw that there was no one,  
and was appalled that there was no one to intervene...”  
Isaiah 59:14-16

This resolution is a response to the cries of our Palestinian mission partners and the February 2022 Pastoral Letter— *Compelled to Witness: Affirming Justice, Rights, and Accountability in Promoting Peace in Israel/Palestine*<sup>13</sup>—issued by our denomination’s three church officers authorized to speak on behalf of the Disciples. At its March 31, 2022 meeting, the Board of Directors of the Division of Overseas Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) affirmed and endorsed the “Compelled to Witness” pastoral letter, and urged robust education, advocacy, and engagement of the matters raised in the letter, through Global Ministries.

The resolution affirms the Disciples’ past stands for justice and, referencing reports from globally recognized human rights organizations, calls on the General Assembly to declare that, through its laws, policies and practices governing the lives of Palestinians, Israel has established an apartheid system which is a contradiction to the message of the Hebrew prophets and the life and teachings of Jesus as well as international law and globally recognized human rights conventions.

Further, the resolution explicitly condemns speech and acts of antisemitism, rejects any interpretations of Scripture that use the Bible to elevate the rights of one people, Jews, over another, Palestinians, and calls on the three manifestations of our church to use this resolution to guide their support for the aspirations of our denomination’s mission partners in the region and in our advocacy with the governments of the United States and Canada consistent with these principles.

Most recently, our mission partner Kairos Palestine published *A Dossier on Israeli Apartheid: A Pressing Call to Churches Around the World*<sup>14</sup>. The dossier clearly defines apartheid according to international law and offers a Biblical/theological reflection describing the sin of apartheid. Also included are summaries of and links to reports from widely recognized human rights organizations citing Israeli apartheid, and statements made by churches, faith groups, and international leaders (including prominent Israeli Jews).

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**The General Board recommends that the General Assembly ADOPT GA-2339.  
(Discussion Time: 12 minutes)**

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.globalministries.org/compelled-to-witness/>

<sup>14</sup>

<https://www.kairospalestine.ps/index.php/resources/publication/a-dossier-on-israeli-apartheid-a-pressing-call-to-churches-around-the-world>

**GA-2340****BUILDING ON OUR CHURCH'S COMMITMENT TO FAITH-BASED INVESTING****(Sense-of-the-Assembly)**

**WHEREAS**, our biblical, theological, and historical heritage calls us to responsibility in all areas of our lives, including the management of money; and

**WHEREAS**, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada calls for ministries of the church to engage in a theology of justice, kindness and walking humbly with our God; and

**WHEREAS**, the Christian Church Foundation, Disciples Church Extension Fund, and the Pension Fund of the Christian Church (our "Financial Ministries") are stewards with a fiduciary and covenantal responsibility to manage resources responsibly; and

**WHEREAS**, all expressions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)—congregations, regions, general ministries, and affiliated organizations—have covenantal responsibility to manage their resources responsibly; and

**WHEREAS**, the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana, July 7-12, 2017, affirmed, by Resolution GA-1720, its shared accountability in addressing environmental, social and governance issues; and

**WHEREAS**, faith-based investing<sup>1</sup> is a critical tool in furthering the transformational ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); and

**WHEREAS**, the discipline of faith-based investing continues to evolve and mature; and

**WHEREAS**, social and environmental issues, injustices, exploitations, and degradations in the world continue to proliferate, resulting in social, economic, health and political disparities and inequities, and war; and

**WHEREAS**, our Financial Ministries, in Indianapolis, Indiana, July 7-12, 2017, by Resolution GA-1720, reaffirmed their commitment to be engaged with the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR<sup>2</sup>), an association of faith-based and values-driven institutional investors dedicated to direct engagement with corporations to effect positive change; and further, in Des Moines, Iowa, provided an educational program for the 2019 General Assembly addressing responsible investing policies and practices in support of the church's total mission; and

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada meeting in Louisville, Kentucky, July 29- August 1, 2023, affirms its shared accountability in addressing environmental,



social and governance issues through the faith-based investments of our financial resources; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) reaffirms its support of our Financial Ministries who invest in public markets, and their engagement with ecumenical partners through the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR<sup>2</sup>); and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that our Financial Ministries explore and study through dialogue with other General Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) ways to respond to global and domestic partners' concerns about investments; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Office of General Minister and President create space annually for reports by and discussions with our Financial Ministries concerning their utilization of faith-based investing strategies including, but not limited to, responsible investing policies, board resolutions, analytical tools, strategies, practices, costs, qualitative and quantitative impact reports, and performance data in alignment with the evolving discipline of responsible investment and in alignment with the Church's total mission; and

**FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Church's Financial Ministries be asked to prepare educational resources—for example, study guides, sample faith-based investing policies and resolutions, strategies and suggested tools to measure performance and impacts—to assist our congregations, regions, general ministries, higher education institutions, and members in their investing.

Disciples Home Missions  
Disciples LGBTQ+ Alliance

## BACKGROUND

<sup>1</sup> Faith-based investing is an investment strategy which considers both financial return and the values of the church. Faith-based investing includes, but is not limited to, informed assessments of values, risks and returns utilizing human rights, environmental, social and governance screens, and direct proxy voting, among other tools.

<sup>2</sup>ICCR ([www.iccr.org](http://www.iccr.org)) was founded in 1971 and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) was a founding member. ICCR is not an investment manager or advisor, but rather a coalition of 275 faith-based institutional investors. By partnering with other faith-based investors we gain a broader and deeper source of information about corporate and societal issues, and can achieve greater impact.

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**The General Board recommends that the General Assembly ADOPT GA-2340.  
(Discussion Time: 12 minutes)**

**GA-2341****CALLING THE CHURCH TO OPPOSE CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM****(Sense-of-the-Assembly)**

**WHEREAS** Christian Nationalism is a cultural framework that fuses a radically exclusionary form of Christian supremacist identity with the political and civic participation of a nation’s citizens through the appropriation of Christian language and imagery to amass political power; and

**WHEREAS** Christian Nationalism, while present in varying degrees throughout modern history, has taken on more aggressive and overt form in contemporary United States and Canadian public life; and

**WHEREAS** Christian Nationalism promotes, with violent rhetoric and authoritarian approaches to civic life and public policy, an extremist ideology of social hierarchy, including white supremacy, antisemitism (and other forms of religious bigotry), xenophobia, persecution and scapegoating of LGBTQ+ persons, misogyny, and ableism; and

**WHEREAS** Christian Nationalism appropriates the name of Jesus Christ and the language and imagery of scripture to promote this ideology, in direct contradiction to the gospel Jesus preached, a liberative and loving gospel that the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) cherishes (Luke 4:16-21); and

**WHEREAS** Christian Nationalism in practice denies the imago Dei in every human being (Genesis 1:26-27) as it seeks to diminish, control, subjugate, and even erase persons and points of view that do not concur with or conform to its ideology; and

**WHEREAS** Christian Nationalism misrepresents our faith to our neighbors, thereby, turning people away from the life-giving love of God, by identifying Christianity with hate, social hierarchy, fear of the “other,” and violence; and

**WHEREAS** Christian Nationalism runs counter to the very heart of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) identity by promoting division and stratification of the human family to the detriment of the unity and equality that our baptisms beget (Galatians 3:28) and the Lord’s Table celebrates (1 Corinthians 11:17-34); and



**WHEREAS** Christian Nationalism is currently making significant inroads as an effective political ideology, seizing power in civic life from hyper-local expressions of government to the halls of national policy-making institutions, as evidenced in a dramatic rise in book-banning, LGBTQ+ erasure in public life, revisionist histories and curricula that refuse to reckon with systemic and individual racism, and many other institutionalized forms of bigotry and bullying:

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) denounces Christian Nationalism in all its forms as a distortion of the Christian faith, and commits to opposing it wherever it appears, for the sake of the gospel and the good of the human family; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Church in all its expressions commit to educating ourselves and our constituencies about the societal and spiritual dangers of Christian Nationalism, how to talk about Christian Nationalism theologically, and how to counter it in both ecclesial and public life; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the general and regional expressions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada will work to equip congregations and pastors with information and resources to faithfully oppose Christian Nationalism; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Church in all its expressions will continue to prayerfully discern, confess, and repent of our own complicity with Christian Nationalism; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Church calls on its leaders and members to take every possible opportunity to speak out and act boldly against Christian Nationalism, ensuring that the love of God known to us in Jesus Christ may not be distorted by this ugly and false appropriation of our faith, but proclaimed with generosity and grace to all peoples, from our doorsteps to the ends of the earth.

Brentwood Christian Church, Springfield, MO  
Central Christian Church, Great Falls, MT  
Christ Church Uniting, Kailua, HI  
Douglass Boulevard Christian Church, Louisville, KY  
Downey Avenue Christian Church, Indianapolis, IN  
First Christian Church, Fullerton, CA  
First Christian Church, Portland, OR  
First Christian Church, San Bernardino, CA  
Galileo Christian Church, Ft. Worth, TX

Lake Washington Christian Church, Kirkland, WA  
 Palm Lake Christian Church, St. Petersburg, FL  
 Vista La Mesa Christian Church, La Mesa, CA  
 Welcome Table Christian Church, Arlington, TX  
 Yale Avenue Christian Church, Tulsa, OK

## BACKGROUND

Christian Nationalism is a cultural framework that fuses a radically exclusionary form of Christian identity with the public political and civic participation of a nation's citizens. Christian Nationalism contends that government and public policy at every level of civic life (from national government to state and provincial legislatures to hyper-local boards, such as school boards, library boards, city councils, and the like) should reflect values identified with an extremely restrictive Christian ideology that upholds nativism, white supremacy, xenophobia, and heteropatriarchy. Christian Nationalism asserts that this form of Christianity should be privileged in public life over other belief systems, and that power belongs in the hands of persons who are white, natural-born citizens. In most cases, individuals and institutions that subscribe to Christian Nationalism do not call themselves "nationalists" (although some public figures have begun defiantly claiming the identity as it gains political traction). The Christian Nationalist ideology is most often asserted in the public square as "patriotism" or "pride in (or love for) my country." But Christian Nationalism is quite distinct from true patriotism.

Patriotism entails love and appreciation for one's homeland and certain features of its existence, including the highest ideals of its founders and the shared possibilities for its good future; and produces humble gratitude for one's citizenship, honesty about the nation's shortcomings, a commitment to work for the common good of fellow citizens, and a spirit of generous sharing of the gifts afforded by one's citizenship.

Christian Nationalism, by contrast, privileges certain citizens over others; imagines one's homeland to be under constant threat of "takeover" by those who do not share the privileged identity; and produces protectionist rhetoric, policy, and even violence in service of establishing social hierarchies and safeguarding privilege.

Patriotism operates from and engenders love for one's nation and neighbors; Christian Nationalism operates out of fear and actively seeks diminishment unto disappearance of the "other."

As Christian Nationalism has gained a foothold in the governments, policies, and political discourse at every level of public life in the United States, and its influence is growing in Canada, many organizations have formed or have expanded their work to combat its toxic influence in public life and its ugly distortion of Christian faith, identity, and theology. Organizations that are leading this work include:

- Faithful America, an ecumenical association “organizing the faithful to challenge Christian nationalism and white supremacy and to renew the church’s prophetic role in building a more free and just society.” <https://www.faithfulamerica.org>
- Christians Against Christian Nationalism, a project of the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty. <https://www.christiansagainstchristiannationalism.org>
- Public Religion Research Institute, a nonpartisan organization dedicated to conducting independent research at the intersection of religion, culture, and public policy, which has made Christian Nationalism a focus of recent reporting. <https://www.prrri.org>
- Word and Way, a publication dedicated to consideration of Christian witness in U.S. American civic life, with Disciples pastor Beau Underwood as a contributing editor and Disciples pastor Robert Cornwall is a regular book reviewer. <https://wordandway.org>
- Christian Nationalism has been the topic of any number of books by theologians, sociologists, journalists, political theorists, and historians with the aim of disclosing and opposing its toxic influence on both public civic life and Christian public witness. Among the most recent and helpful books are these:
  - Andrew Whitehead and Samuel Perry (sociologists of religion), *Taking America Back for God: Christian Nationalism in the United States*, 2022.
  - Pamela Cooper-White (professor of pastoral care), *The Psychology of Christian Nationalism: Why People are Drawn In and How to Talk Across the Divide*, 2022.
  - Angela Denker (Lutheran pastor and journalist), *Red State Christians: A Journey into White Christian Nationalism and the Wreckage it Leaves Behind*, 2022.
  - Philip Gorski and Samuel Perry (sociologists of religion), *The Flag and the Cross: White Christian Nationalism and the Threat to American Democracy*, 2022.
  - Paul Miller (Christian scholar and political theorist), *The Religion of American Greatness: What’s Wrong with Christian Nationalism*, 2022. (Especially helpful on the difference between nationalism and patriotism.)

- Anthea Butler (historian of U.S. American and African-American Christianity), *White Evangelical Racism: The Politics of Morality in America*, 2021.

Christian Nationalism is the topic of any number of articles, reports, discussion guides, and podcasts, such as these:

- Andrew Whitehead’s articles from Time:  
<https://time.com/6214724/christian-nationalism-threats-united-states/?fbclid=IwAR13yxpHFqxf2dMqZziT30DIN5PGJWPOZu0uRmdAgD0gBYcfH8q2cWNYuE>
- <https://time.com/6052051/anti-democratic-threat-christian-nationalism/>
- Diana Butler Bass’ 3-part series, articles with discussion questions for small groups:  
[https://dianabutlerbass.substack.com/p/understanding-christian-nationalism?utm\\_source=substack&utm\\_campaign=post\\_embed&utm\\_medium=email](https://dianabutlerbass.substack.com/p/understanding-christian-nationalism?utm_source=substack&utm_campaign=post_embed&utm_medium=email)
- Word and Way podcast episode featuring Lutheran pastor & journalist Angela Denker:  
<https://wordandway.org/2022/09/14/angela-denker-on-white-christian-nationalism/>
- “Christian Nationalism 101” from Word & Way:  
<https://wordandway.org/2022/09/15/christian-nationalism-101/>
- “White Nation Under God,” five podcast/video episodes from pastor and public historian Jemar Tisby:  
<https://jemartisby.substack.com/p/wnug-ep-5-how-i-escaped-the-web-of>
- “Canadian Christian nationalism not Christian, it’s not Canadian, or patriotic either,” by Michael Coren  
<https://www.thestar.com/amp/opinion/contributors/2022/08/17/canadian-christian-nationalism-not-christian-its-not-canadian-or-patriotic-either.html>

These resources (and so many more) are essential to unmask the principles of Christian Nationalism as profoundly not Christian and profoundly dangerous to the health, well-being, and common good of the human family in the United States and Canada.

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**The General Board recommends that the General Assembly ADOPT GA-2341.**

**(Discussion Time: 24 minutes)**

**GA-2342**

**DISSOLUTION OF THE PASTORAL COMMISSION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH  
(DISCIPLES OF CHRIST) IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA**

**(Operational, Policy, and Organizational)**

**WHEREAS** In 1992, when the Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries was established, the Pastoral Commission was formed as the entity that serves as the liaison between the Obra Hispana and the General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada to accompany, advise and affirm programming and the operational budget of the Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries; and

**WHEREAS** at the joint meeting of the Hispanic Board of Directors and the Pastoral Commission on December 9-11, 2021, it was unanimously approved to carry out the appropriate processes for the dissolution of the Pastoral Commission, thus understanding that as Hispanic people we have the capacity and the right to carry out and manage the ministries and affairs of the Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries and the National Hispanic and Bilingual Fellowship, and the dissolution of the Pastoral Commission is an act of justice and reconciliation, as we are an Anti-racist and Pro-reconciling Church; and

**WHEREAS** the Confraternidad Nacional Hispana y Bilingüe (National Hispanic and Bilingual Fellowship) has a covenant relationship with the various expressions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada; and

**WHEREAS** we are an integral part of the body and the Design of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada; and

**WHEREAS** we understand that the Junta Directiva Hispana (Hispanic Board of Directors) can be a direct liaison to the General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada without the need for additional members named by the Administrative Committee and the College of Regional Ministers; and

**WHEREAS** we have functioned as a Pastoral Commission, according to Article V of the National Hispanic and Bilingual Fellowship's By-laws, and we understand our purpose, processes, and responsibilities; now,

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Pastoral Commission for Hispanic Ministries is dissolved and the Hispanic Board of Directors:

- serves as the liaison between the Obra Hispana and the General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ);
- defines the mission and establishes the policies of the Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada;

- affirms the programs and operational budget of the Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries;
- nominates the National Pastor for the Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries;
- reserves the right to invite members from the various expressions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), including but not limited to the College of Regional Ministers, to be part of the Hispanic Board of Directors and to work together for the good of the Obra Hispana.

**FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Assembly of the National Hispanic and Bilingual Fellowship, having ratified and affirmed this action on July 22, 2022 at its Biennial Assembly in Fort Worth, Texas, calls on the General Assembly to affirm the dissolution of the Pastoral Commission and the establishment of the Hispanic Board of Directors as the formal decision-making body and liaison between the Obra Hispana and the General Board.

National Hispanic and Bilingual Fellowship (the Obra Hispana)

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**The General Board recommends that the General Assembly ADOPT GA-3242.  
(Discussion Time: 12 minutes)**



**GA-2343**

**AMENDMENTS TO THE DESIGN  
OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)**

**(Operational, Policy and Organizational)**

**WHEREAS**, the Standing Rules of the General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada require that the Governance Committee of the General Board “. . . shall review *The Design* and other governance documents for suggested changes and modifications;”<sup>1</sup> and,

**WHEREAS**, the Governance Committee, having discerned a need for the Church to reexamine our understanding of God’s covenant with us and Disciples’ covenant with one another considering unprecedented challenges facing the whole Church; and,

**WHEREAS** the whole Church has been given important work to do: we are called by God to make disciples of Jesus Christ, equip disciples to work from their spiritual gifts, coordinate that work more effectively, and be faithful stewards of our resources; and,

**WHEREAS**, we are committed to being a “movement for wholeness in a fragmented world,” even as the landscape of the church is changing; and,

**WHEREAS**, we want all expressions of the church to be more connected to each other and to have more of a voice in the present and future of the church; and,

**WHEREAS**, participation in General Assembly every two years prior to the pandemic of 2020 was declining; and,

**WHEREAS**, during the pandemic the Church developed digital competencies we did not have which now make it possible to have more conversations, more often, about issues and opportunities vital to the mission and ministry of the whole Church; and,

**WHEREAS**, the pandemic also helped us more fully recognize and appreciate the importance of gathering regularly in person; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Governance Committee, having produced and propagated resources for the Church in all its expressions, offered multiple opportunities for curated conversations that have informed the work of identifying and making recommendations

for the work of the Church to be even more closely aligned with our renewed appreciation for covenant-keeping;<sup>1</sup>

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that changes in the language of the Design of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada as indicated in the following ***PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE LANGUAGE OF THE DESIGN OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST) IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA*** be adopted by this General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada meeting in Louisville, Kentucky July 29 – August 1, 2023; and,

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the approved changes in the language of the Design of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada be implemented following the conclusion of the 2025 General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada; and,

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that an Implementation Team be appointed by the duly elected Moderator of the General Assembly and affirmed by the Administrative Committee to report its progress to the General Board at its next regularly scheduled meeting regarding a plan for implementing adopted changes, including recommendations for sufficient funding and staffing ; and,

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, to facilitate the implementation of these Design changes adopted in this resolution that the following proviso is adopted: if the current General Minister and President is reelected to serve a second term, the term shall be for an 8-year term instead of the 6-year term identified in the Design, with the 8-year term concluding at the end of the 2031 in-person General Assembly; and,

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the General Board and its committees shall have the authority to meet digitally as needed until the Design changes adopted in this resolution come into effect; and

**FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED** that the General Board shall have authority to act on behalf of the General Assembly as needed to implement the changes adopted in this resolution.

General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

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<sup>1</sup> For more information about the work of the Governance Committee, including a list of Frequently Asked Questions, visit [www.disciples.org/covenant-project](http://www.disciples.org/covenant-project).

## BACKGROUND

### *The Journey*

The proposal presented in this resolution is the result of several years of work by the Governance Committee of the General Board, in what became known as the Covenant Project. When Governance Committee of the General Board met in retreat in the fall of 2019, they committed to the work of aligning the Design of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) with God’s design for the church, and to claim the power and potential of covenant. To that end, the committee took two important steps: the first was the development of the Covenant Conversations Curriculum, a small group resource for congregations to explore their identity as covenantal partners in the wider church. The second was a process of a review of the Design, with an aim to explore how the church’s structures and practices might shift to better serve the church, with two main areas of focus. The first area of evaluation was the General Assembly, which refers to not just a gathering but the governing body of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada. The second area of evaluation was centered around the General Board.

In the fall of 2020, The Governance Committee presented to the Administrative Committee a framework of possible changes to The Design. Those changes were also reviewed by groups of church leaders including the General Cabinet and the College of Regional Ministers. In April 2021, a refined framework was presented to the General Board for review and comment.

One year later, at the 2022 General Board meeting, the Governance Committee again presented a further refined framework and proposed changes for the Board to engage in discernment, dialogue, and prayer.

In the summer and fall of 2022, clergy, congregations and leadership across the church were invited to attend a series of digital and in person town hall-style listening sessions. Hundreds of Disciples participated in dozens of these sessions and their feedback helped to affirm the work of the Governance Committee and fine-tune the recommendations for the proposed changes.

In our aspirations of and commitment to being a movement for wholeness, conversations and questions around this topic (particularly the role and make up of the General Board) is not new. Resolutions came to the General Assembly in 1997 and 2005 and were close to passing but ultimately failed. Conversations around Mission First! that the General Assembly adopted in 2015 had a board restructure component that helped inform and empower the Governance Committee of the General Board to move forward in imagining a structure that serves and enhances the mission, purpose,

and identity of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada. While these changes were not implemented, they laid the groundwork for the work before us now.

### ***Proposed Changes***

The proposed changes call for the General Assembly to meet more often during a three-year cycle. Every three years, there will be a hybrid meeting, with opportunities for participation in person and online; in the other two years of the cycle, the Assembly will meet in online-only gatherings. This change will allow more people to participate in the General Assembly and engage in a variety of ways. Under the new General Assembly model, congregations will appoint three representatives to serve three-year terms. Representatives to the General Assembly will shift the focus of their work from primarily voting on resolutions to engaging in dialogue, discernment, and prayer with increased frequency. With more regular meetings and dialogue, representatives will provide feedback from their congregational and Regional circles about the priorities of the church to the General Board. The new model, along with different meeting formats, will increase the number of voices from across the church who will be engaged in this work, particularly including those who have not always had access to decision-making structures. Congregational representatives will serve three-year staggered terms, with one representative being new each year. This model provides continuity of participation in the General Assembly meetings while developing new leaders.

The proposal also calls for changes to the General Board. Currently, the General Board consists of representatives chosen from each of the general and regional ministries, the executive leaders of each of those ministries, at-large members selected by the General Nominating Committee, ecumenical representatives and representatives from colleges and universities, along with the elected officers of the General Assembly. In the new model, the General Board will become a working board that meets more often than once a year. Members will serve on one of three committees: Mission, Finance, and Executive. Committees will meet and work together on an ongoing, regular basis. The General Board will be reduced in size. Rather than the board having representatives from regions and general ministries, board members would be mostly at-large and selected by the General Nominating Committee for essential skills and experience, while also reflecting the diversity of the church.

The General Board will receive missional priorities from the congregational representatives who are gathering for dialogue and discernment through more frequent General Assemblies. The General Board will also act on behalf of the church in making statements of social witness following the church's engagement at General Assemblies, establishing mission priorities, acting on policies and procedures as needed,

maintaining 501(c)3 status, recommending changes to The Design and approving regional boundary changes. Stewardship will become a core responsibility of the General Board, which would regularly evaluate, revise and improve the church-wide funding system.

### ***The Way Ahead***

If adopted, the proposed changes to the Design of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada will be implemented following the conclusion of the 2025 General Assembly.

The General Assembly Committee (informally known as the Time and Place Committee), will begin planning for an in-person Assembly to be held in 2028.

The Moderator of the General Assembly will appoint an Implementation Team which will begin their work as soon as possible.<sup>2</sup>

#### *Purpose*

The Implementation Team will work to assist the General Board to put into effect the changes proposed in GA-2343.

#### *Accountability*

The Implementation Team is accountable to the Administrative Committee of the General Board. The Implementation Team members and members of any special task groups may or may not be members of the General Board.

#### *Membership*

The Implementation Team will include a minimum of seven individuals recruited for the skills they bring to complete the work described above, with a commitment to the wide diversity of the church. Composition of the team will be communicated to the General Board and the wider church.

The Implementation Team will have authority to enlist the help of individuals to serve on a short-term basis or in longer-term task groups, taking advantage of the covenant-commitment, talent, and wisdom from the wider church.

#### *Scope of Work*

The Implementation Team will collaborate closely with the Governance Committee of the General Board which is responsible for recommending revisions to the Special Rules of the General Assembly and the Standing Rules of the General Board to accommodate the changes necessary after the approval of GA-2343. The Implementation Team will meet as necessary to do its work prior to the General Assembly in 2025, consulting with the regional ministers, general ministry leaders, and other church leaders for input and collaboration.

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<sup>2</sup> The Standing Rules of the General Board 10.1, 10.2, and 10.6

The Implementation Team will work closely with the Office of the General Minister and President and other leaders to develop a plan for implementing the proposed changes, including recommendations for sufficient funding and staffing resources. The Implementation Team will report regularly to the Administrative Committee and the General Board, which will have the authority to make decisions on behalf of the General Assembly as needed to begin implementing the changes.

The Governance Committee will continue working, in close collaboration with the Implementation Team, to revise governing documents, such as the Standing Rules for the General Board, as appropriate to implement the changes.<sup>3</sup>

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**The General Board recommends that the General Assembly ADOPT GA-2343.  
(Discussion Time: 48 minutes)**

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<sup>3</sup> The Standing Rules of the General Board 6.2.5.



1     ***PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE LANGUAGE OF THE DESIGN***  
2     ***OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST) IN THE***  
3             ***UNITED STATES AND CANADA***

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5  
6     ***Proposed insertions are indicated with underlined text; proposed deletions are***  
7             ***indicated with strikethrough text.***  
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14             ***THE DESIGN OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)***

15  
16     **PREAMBLE**

17  
18     As members of the Christian Church,  
19         We confess that Jesus is the Christ,  
20         the Son of the living God,  
21         and proclaim him Lord and Savior of the world.  
22     In Christ's name and by his grace  
23         we accept our mission of witness  
24         and service to all people.  
25     We rejoice in God,  
26         maker of heaven and earth,  
27         and in God's covenant of love  
28         which binds us to God and to one another.  
29     Through baptism into Christ  
30         we enter into newness of life  
31         and are made one with the whole people of God.  
32     In the communion of the Holy Spirit  
33         we are joined together in discipleship  
34         and in obedience to Christ.  
35     At the Table of the Lord  
36         we celebrate with thanksgiving  
37         the saving acts and presence of Christ.  
38     Within the universal church  
39         we receive the gift of ministry  
40         and the light of scripture.  
41     In the bonds of Christian faith  
42         we yield ourselves to God  
43         that we may serve the One  
44         whose kingdom has no end.  
45     Blessing, glory, and honor  
46         be to God forever. Amen.  
47

48 1. Within the whole family of God on earth, the church appears wherever believers in Jesus  
 49 the Christ are gathered in His name. Transcending all barriers within the human family, the one  
 50 church manifests itself in ordered communities bound together for worship, fellowship, and  
 51 service; in varied structures for mission, witness, and mutual accountability; and for the nurture  
 52 and renewal of its members. The nature of the church, given by Christ, remains constant  
 53 through the generations, yet in faithfulness to its nature, it continues to discern God's vision and  
 54 to adapt its mission and structures to the needs of a changing world. All dominion in the church  
 55 belongs to Jesus, its Lord and head, and any exercise of authority in the church on earth stands  
 56 under His judgment.

57  
 58 2. Within the universal Body of Christ, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is  
 59 identifiable by its testimony, tradition, name, institutions, and relationships. Across national  
 60 boundaries, this church expresses itself in covenantal relationships in congregations, regions,  
 61 and general ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), bound by God's covenant of  
 62 love. Each expression is characterized by its integrity, self-governance, authority, rights, and  
 63 responsibilities, yet they relate to each other in a covenantal manner, to the end that all  
 64 expressions will seek God's will and be faithful to God's mission. We are committed to mutual  
 65 accountability. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and  
 66 constantly seeks in all of its actions to be obedient to his authority.

67  
 68 3. We commit ourselves to one another and to God in adopting this *Design* for the Christian  
 69 Church (Disciples of Christ) in order that we may faithfully express the ministry of Christ, made  
 70 known through scripture; provide Christian witness, mission, evangelism, and service from our  
 71 doorsteps to the ends of the earth; furnish means by which all expressions of the church may  
 72 fulfill their ministries with faithful Christian stewardship; assure unity in Christ while respecting  
 73 diversity; and work as partners in ecumenical and global relationships.

74  
 75 4. In keeping with this *Design*, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) shall establish,  
 76 receive, and nurture congregational ministries; provide for regional and general ministries and  
 77 such other organizations as may be required; have a General Assembly, and a General Board,  
 78 ~~and an Administrative Committee of the General Board~~; define policies and criteria for its Order  
 79 of Ministry; develop or recognize new forms of ministries for mission and witness; maintain  
 80 appropriate relationships with institutions of higher education historically related to the Christian  
 81 Church (Disciples of Christ); provide appropriate consultation and procedures whereby existing  
 82 organizations may make any necessary transition within the provisions of this covenant; and  
 83 engage in continuing renewal, reformation, and adaptation as necessary to minister in the world.

#### 84 85 **NAME**

86  
 87 5. The name of this body shall be the CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST).  
 88

#### 89 **MEMBERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION**

90  
 91 6. As a member of the whole Body of Christ, every person who is or shall become a  
 92 member of a recognized congregation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) thereby  
 93 holds membership in the region in which that congregation is ~~located~~ recognized and in the  
 94 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada.  
 95

96 7. Regions and general ministries may develop procedures of recognition whereby other  
 97 persons and groups who support the purposes of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) can  
 98 participate in regional and general work.

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**CONGREGATIONAL MINISTRIES**

8. Congregations constitute the primary expression of the community of faith within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Through congregations, individuals are brought to the saving grace of Christ, baptized into the Body of Christ, nurtured in their faith, and gather at the Lord’s Table. Joined in discipleship, congregations partner with their regions and the general ministries of the church to share the good news from their doorsteps to the ends of the earth.

**RECOGNIZED CONGREGATIONS**

9. All congregations listed in the latest *Year Book and Directory* of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) shall be recognized congregations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Other congregations desiring recognition and congregations desiring to withdraw from recognition in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) shall follow established procedures for *Year Book and Directory* listing. Congregations that follow the procedures for listing after the publication of the latest *Year Book and Directory* and that are recorded in the *Year Book and Directory* office shall also be recognized congregations.

- a. A congregation seeking recognition takes congregational action expressing its desire and intention to be a recognized congregation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and be listed in the *Year Book and Directory*.

The congregation then provides its regional office with a copy of a document containing the declaration of its desire and intention to be a recognized congregation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The document may be the congregation’s charter, constitution, bylaws, or a notarized statement of the congregation’s action.

Regional endorsement of the congregation’s request for recognition and listing, attested by the regional minister, is sent to the Office of General Minister and President for filing with the *Year Book and Directory*.

- b. Once a congregation has been listed, it can be omitted from the *Year Book and Directory* if:
  - i. The congregation has taken action to withdraw as a recognized congregation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the Office of General Minister and President has received a notarized statement from the congregation of its action, which the regional minister has certified; or
  - ii. There has been no congregational activity reported in the *Year Book and Directory* of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) for a period of five (5) consecutive years and the regional minister certifies that the congregation does not participate in or contribute to area, regional or general church program(s), including participation in ~~Disciples Mission Fund~~the church-wide mission funding system.
  - iii. A congregation may also be omitted from the *Year Book and Directory* by action of a region if the region can demonstrate actions or statements on the part of the congregation that are deemed detrimental to the covenantal relationship with all expressions of the church. When a region takes action to omit a congregation for either of the above stated reasons, the region will send

notification of the intent to remove the congregation's listing to the congregation via certified letter. If within thirty (30) days of the notification, the congregation makes no objection to its removal from the listing, then the removal will be final.

iv. Regardless of which entity initiates the action, reasonable attempts will be made to renew the relationship between the congregation and the region before removal is finalized. Once the removal is final, the region will notify the congregation that it has been removed from the *Year Book and Directory*. A congregation may appeal the region's action in accordance with paragraphs 17 and ~~66-64e~~ of this *Design*.

## RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

10. In adopting this *Design*, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) affirms that congregations in their freedom in Christ have both rights and responsibilities. As part of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), congregations share creatively in the church's total mission of witness and service. Equally, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in its general and regional ministries sustains congregations through commitment to their welfare and needs. Thus, concern for the integrity of each expression is shared and witness is given to the interrelatedness of the whole church.

11. Among the rights recognized and safeguarded to congregations are the rights to manage their affairs under the Lordship of Jesus Christ; to adopt or retain their names, corporate documents, and organization of ministry; to determine, in faithfulness to the gospel, their practices; to own, control, and encumber their property; to organize for carrying out the mission and witness of the church; to establish their budgets and financial policies; to call their ministers; and to participate through voting representatives in forming the corporate judgment of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

12. Among the responsibilities by which congregations demonstrate their mutual concern for the mission and witness of the whole church are the responsibilities to proclaim the gospel and administer baptism and the Lord's Supper; to provide for the spiritual nurture of their members and families; to grow in understanding that the church is a universal fellowship, transcending all barriers within the human family, working for reconciliation across racial and ethnic lines; to engage in evangelism; to sustain their ministers in faithfulness and honor and, in matters pertaining to relationships with them, to seek counsel from the regional minister; to be faithful in Christian stewardship, striving to share proportionately in providing the resources for the total life, work, and witness of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); to choose voting representatives to the General and Regional Assemblies; to share with other ministries of the church in the establishment and nurture of new congregations; and to seek to realize the oneness of the church of Jesus Christ through cooperation with other congregations and with present and emerging ecumenical structures.

13. While congregations are responsive to the needs of general and regional ministries, as established through the participation of the congregations' representatives in the General and Regional Assemblies, all financial support of the general and regional programs of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) by congregations and individuals is voluntary.

201 **REPRESENTATION IN REGIONAL AND GENERAL ASSEMBLIES**

202  
203 14. Congregations are represented in the General Assembly by voting representatives of  
204 their choosing. Each congregation is entitled to be represented in the General Assembly by ~~two~~  
205 three voting representatives, ~~plus one additional voting representative for each 100 participating~~  
206 ~~members or major fraction thereof over the first 100~~. These voting representatives shall be in  
207 addition to the congregation's ordained and ~~licensed~~ commissioned ministers, who are voting  
208 members as provided in paragraph ~~38c~~ 39c.

209  
210 15. Congregations may submit items ~~of business~~ for consideration by the General Assembly  
211 by filing such items with the General Board through the Office of the General Minister and  
212 President ~~at least 180 days in advance of a meeting of the General Assembly~~. Congregations  
213 will receive from the Office of the General Minister and President notification of a General  
214 Assembly meeting and a copy of all items of business to be considered by the General  
215 Assembly at least 60 days in advance.

216  
217 16. Congregations are represented in their Regional Assemblies according to the provisions  
218 of the corporate documents and organization of their respective regions.

219  
220 17. Congregations and individuals exercise their rights and responsibilities by participating  
221 through their voting representatives in the General and Regional Assemblies, of which they are  
222 a part. In the fulfillment of their ministries, congregations are encouraged to hold in high regard  
223 the actions, decisions, and recommendations of these Assemblies, expressing in love any  
224 dissent from such actions or positions. Where other procedures have not been provided by the  
225 General Assembly or General Board, matters of grievance and appeal may be referred by  
226 congregations and individual members through the Office of General Minister and President to  
227 the ~~Administrative-Executive~~ Committee of the General Board, as provided in paragraph ~~662e~~.

228  
229 **REGIONAL MINISTRIES**

230  
231 18. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) also expresses itself in geographic ministries  
232 called regions. The following principles shall guide the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in  
233 the development of its regions.

234  
235 **NATURE AND PURPOSE**

236  
237 19. The primary nature of regions is drawn from the Acts of the Apostles in Paul's desire to  
238 nurture, support, and engage congregations as unique entities and as gatherings of  
239 congregations related to one another in their mission. Regions should embody the character of  
240 the ministry to which Christ calls His people in their mutual commitment to Him and to one  
241 another.

242  
243 20. The primary purpose of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in regions is twofold:

244  
245 1) to extend the ministry of Christ in mission, teaching, witness, and service among the  
246 people and social structures of the region; and

247  
248 2) to establish, receive, and nurture congregations in the region, providing help, counsel,  
249 and pastoral care to members, ministers, and congregations in their mutual  
250 relationships, and relating them to the worldwide mission and witness of the whole  
251 church.

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**MEMBERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION**

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21. As a member of the whole Body of Christ, every person who is or shall become a member of a recognized congregation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) thereby holds membership in the region in which that congregation is ~~located~~recognized.

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**FUNCTION**

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22. Regions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) perform within their established boundaries the function of the church related to their two-fold purpose of mission and nurture:

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23. *Mission.* In fulfilling the mission of the church, regions are sensitive to the needs of the world about them and lead their members in identifying and serving such human needs. Regions take initiative in developing new forms of ministries in mission, witness, and service, and in dealing creatively with their roles in the whole task of the church. Wherever ecumenical action is possible to fulfill their mission, regions should join with similar geographic units of other religious bodies and with present and emerging ecumenical structures.

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24. *Nurture.* Regions are concerned for the continuing renewal of the life of congregations, members, and ministers, and offer leadership in matters of mutual concern. Within policies developed by the General Assembly, regions provide help, counsel, and pastoral care to ministers and congregations in such matters as standing and credentialing of ministers, ministerial search and call, ordination, ~~licensing~~commissioning, establishment and dissolution of pastoral relationships, and installations of ministers. Regions seek to supply ministry for congregations without full-time pastoral services and to offer counsel and assistance in cases of difficulties between ministers and congregations.

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25. As an integral part of the whole church, regions witness to the unity of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) by calling congregations to an awareness of their opportunities and responsibilities beyond local concerns. They also help to relate congregations to the total ministry of the whole church including working for reconciliation across racial and ethnic lines. By calling the general expression of the church to an awareness of the needs both of congregations and of regions, the regions help to relate the general expression to the life and work of congregations.

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26. Governing and enabling documents of regions shall be in harmony with this *Design*. Updated copies should be filed with the Office of General Minister and President.

291

**SHAPE AND BOUNDARIES**

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27. Identifiable geographic, cultural, sociological, and political factors provide boundaries, which the church may use to establish its own regional structures

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- (1) by which the church carries out regionally its ministry of mission and nurture;
- (2) in which congregations and ministers find their primary relationships of mutual support and encouragement;
- (3) which provide opportunities for regional fellowship, worship, and assembly for the consideration of matters of mutual concern; and
- (4) which help to relate the three expressions of the church — congregational, regional, and general — to one another in the functioning of the whole church.



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Regions may vary in size and shape. It is recognized that, in response to the changing imperatives of mission and the conditions of human life, new expressions of the church may emerge in the process of developing the shape and boundaries of the regions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

28. The General Board shall provide procedures for the continuing modification of the shape and boundaries of existing regions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in keeping with the principles set forth in this *Design*.

29. In the development of any new regional boundaries, existing regional organizations shall remain intact, subject to modification by mutual consent of the regions involved, in the light of the corporate judgment of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) as expressed through the General Assembly Board. The process of reshaping regional boundaries (even if only one congregation is affected) includes the participation and approval of the parties involved, ~~the Administrative Committee, and the General Board, and the General Assembly.~~

### **STRUCTURE AND STAFF**

30. Regions develop their particular structures and organization for the most effective fulfillment of their ministry and mission. Regions may establish or recognize area or district organizations within their boundaries. Regions secure or retain their own governing documents and formulate their declarations of covenantal relationship, consistent with the principles of this *Design*. With due regard for the welfare of the other expressions of the church as a whole, regions exercise rights and responsibilities as they share creatively in the total mission of witness and service. Regions own and manage their property, determine their budgets, and administer regional finances within the limits of resources available. Through their Assemblies, regions provide for worship, for the education of their members, for fellowship, and for the transaction of business by voting representatives from the congregations.

31. Regions call regional ministers as their spiritual and administrative leaders serving as the chief executive officers of the regions. Each region develops stated processes for nominating and electing its regional minister, including procedures for seeking counsel from the Office of the General Minister and President of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Regions are encouraged to use current Disciples search processes and safeguards, as established by the General Board so that all qualified ministers might be considered. Regions employ other regional staff as required to meet their responsibilities in mission and nurture and so the whole church's commitment to be a pro-reconciling/anti-racism body can be fully honored in each region.

32. Regions are represented in the General Assembly as provided in paragraph ~~3839b~~. Regions may submit items ~~of business~~ for consideration by the General Assembly, filing such items with the General Board through the Office of the General Minister and President ~~at least 180 days in advance of a meeting of the General Assembly~~. Regions will receive from the Office of the General Minister and President notification of a General Assembly meeting and a copy of all items of business to be considered by the General Assembly at least 60 days in advance ~~of the opening of the Assembly~~.

33. ~~Regions are responsible for electing members to the General Board as provided in paragraph 56b: Each region elects from that region one member of the General Board. In~~

354 addition, the regional minister shall be a member *ex officio*, without vote, of the General  
 355 Board. ~~In the selection of the General Board, as provided in paragraph 56, regions may submit,~~  
 356 ~~in consultation with the regional minister, Regional ministers will provide advice and counsel to~~  
 357 ~~the General Nominating Committee when the Nominating Committee is selecting names of~~  
 358 ~~persons for possible membership on the General Board.~~

359  
 360 34. In the selection of the General Nominating Committee, as provided in paragraph 7981,  
 361 regions may submit to the ~~Administrative-Executive~~ Committee of the General Board each  
 362 ~~biennium~~ names of persons for possible membership on the General Nominating Committee.

363  
 364 35. As provided in paragraph 6555, the budgetary procedures for financing the various  
 365 regions, general ministries, and institutions of higher education shall have regular review and  
 366 evaluation by the ~~Administrative Committee~~ General Board.

367  
 368 36. Where other procedures have not been provided by the General Assembly or General  
 369 Board, matters of grievance and appeal may be referred by regions through the General  
 370 Minister and President to the ~~Administrative-Executive~~ Committee of the General Board, as  
 371 provided in paragraph 6664e.

## 372 373 374 375 THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

376  
 377 37. The general ~~representative-covenantal~~ body of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
 378 shall be the General Assembly. In all of its worship, deliberation, and ministries, the General  
 379 Assembly shall seek to manifest the wholeness and unity of the Christian Church (Disciples of  
 380 Christ) within the one Body of Christ.

## 381 382 NATURE AND PURPOSE

383  
 384 38. The General Assembly, whenever and however it meets, shall gather for worship,  
 385 education, dialogue, relationship building and when necessary, the transaction of business. The  
 386 General Assembly is in perpetual existence and can hold meetings digitally and in-person.

## 387 388 MEMBERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION

389  
 390 ~~3839~~. All members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) who register for the General  
 391 Assembly shall have all privileges of the Assembly, except that voting privileges shall be limited  
 392 to the following:

393  
 394 a. *Voting representatives from congregations.* Each congregation of the Christian  
 395 Church (Disciples of Christ) shall be entitled to have ~~two-three~~ voting representatives,  
 396 ~~plus one additional voting representative for each 100 participating members, or major~~  
 397 ~~fraction thereof, over the first 100.~~ These voting representatives from congregations shall  
 398 be in addition to persons holding standing in the Order of Ministry.

399  
 400 b. *Voting representatives from regions.* Each region shall be entitled to ~~have a minimum~~  
 401 ~~of three voting representatives, for the first 1,000 members, as stated in the most recent~~  
 402 ~~Yearbook. In addition, each region may have an additional representative for each 1,000~~  
 403 ~~participating members, or major fraction thereof, within the region.~~ These voting  
 404 representatives from regions shall be in addition to persons holding standing in the

405 Order of Ministry. ~~The voting representatives from each region shall include women and~~  
406 ~~men, persons of varied racial or ethnic backgrounds, young adults ages 18 to 30, and~~  
407 ~~youth under the age of 18.~~

408  
409 c. *Ministers.* Persons holding standing in the Order of Ministry in the Christian Church  
410 (Disciples of Christ), in accordance with the policies and criteria established by the  
411 General Assembly through its General Commission on Ministry.

412  
413 d. *Exceptions.* Members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) not otherwise  
414 voting members, who are the chief administrative officers of institutions of higher  
415 education and general ministries that are recognized by the General Assembly;  
416 members of the General Board not otherwise voting members; and former Moderators  
417 and Vice Moderators not otherwise voting members.

418  
419 ~~3940.~~ Voting members of the General Assembly, who are representatives from congregations  
420 and regions, shall serve from the beginning of one General Assembly to the beginning of the  
421 next General Assembly a three-year term with one representative being selected by the  
422 congregation and/or region each year. Terms begin January 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. No person shall  
423 have more than one vote in the General Assembly, and no person shall vote *in absentia* or by  
424 proxy. Congregations and regions may name alternates to replace voting representatives  
425 provided for by paragraphs 38(a) and 39(b) who are unable to attend.

426  
427 ~~4041.~~ Members of churches ecumenically or historically related to the Christian Church  
428 (Disciples of Christ), upon invitation of the Chair, may have the privileges of the floor of the  
429 General Assembly, except the vote.

430  
431 GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETINGS

432  
433 ~~4142.~~ The General Assembly shall will: plan and conduct Assembly programs for worship;  
434 provide education of its members; engage in dialogue, formation, discernment and prayer on  
435 matters of social witness and other matters deemed essential to the witness and ministry of the  
436 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); and transaction of business; receive and act upon  
437 proposed policy and program, reports and resolutions, and other items of business duly referred  
438 to it as hereinafter provided; The business agenda for the in-person Assembly held every three  
439 years will include: election of officers of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); election of the  
440 General Board members; election of the General Nominating Committee; and operational,  
441 policy and/or organizational business forwarded by the General Board for action including but  
442 not limited to the following: for which it is responsible; make provision and approve procedures  
443 for the financial support of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), including its regions,  
444 general ministries, and institutions of higher education; be a place of accountability for the  
445 church's work toward racial justice and inclusion; determine determining the basis of  
446 cooperative relationships of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) with other religious  
447 bodies, organizations, and agencies; being responsible for authorizing unity and union  
448 conversations, consultations, and negotiations with other Christian communions; and  
449 maintaining appropriate national ecumenical relationships in both Canada and the United  
450 States.

451  
452 43. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Canada, which is related to the General  
453 Assembly both through congregations and through the All-Canada Committee, shall be  
454 responsible for matters pertaining to the ecumenical and Christian unity concerns of national

455 bodies in Canada, and may take the initiative in relating itself to any and all Canadian and world  
 456 ecumenical bodies.

457

458 ~~4244. Regular meetings of the General Assembly shall be held every second year at a time~~  
 459 ~~and place to be fixed by the General Assembly upon recommendation of the General Board.~~  
 460 ~~The General Board shall maintain an appropriate process for making such a recommendation.~~  
 461 ~~Under extraordinary circumstances the General Board may call special meetings of the General~~  
 462 ~~Assembly. The General Assembly will meet at least one time every calendar year. These~~  
 463 ~~meetings will be held digitally. Every third year a meeting will be held in-person. The in-person~~  
 464 ~~meeting will be held at a time and place fixed by the General Board. Participants (voting and~~  
 465 ~~non-voting) can attend the business sessions of the in-person meeting digitally or in-person.~~

466

467 ~~4345. The General Assembly shall have such committees as it may deem necessary, including~~  
 468 ~~Committee on Reference and Counsel, which shall serve as the business committee during the~~  
 469 ~~General Assembly and Assembly Program and Arrangements Committee. Committee~~  
 470 ~~membership where the election procedures are not further defined by *The Design* or the Special~~  
 471 ~~Rules of the General Assembly shall be elected by and report to the Administrative Committee~~  
 472 ~~and reported to the General Board.~~

473

474 ~~4446. All items of business to be considered by the General Assembly, except in cases of~~  
 475 ~~emergency, shall be received by or originate with the General Board. Items of business may be~~  
 476 ~~filed with the General Board by any congregation, region, institution of higher education, general~~  
 477 ~~ministry, or organization with recognized relationships with the general expression of the~~  
 478 ~~Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), or by the governing board of any such body. Such items~~  
 479 ~~of business must shall be filed through the office of the General Minister and President at least~~  
 480 ~~180 days in advance of a meeting of the General Assembly in order to allow sufficient time for~~  
 481 ~~the General Board to review and refer them with appropriate recommendations to the General~~  
 482 ~~Assembly. All items of business shall be circulated made available among the congregations,~~  
 483 ~~regions, and general ministries by the Office of the General Minister and President at least 60~~  
 484 ~~days in advance of the General Assembly meeting.~~

485

486 ~~45. — An item of business may be considered an emergency item if its content is of such~~  
 487 ~~nature that it could not have been regularly filed 180 days prior to the Assembly. Such items of~~  
 488 ~~business may be filed with the General Minister and President when submitted by 10 or more~~  
 489 ~~voting members of the General Assembly from not fewer than five congregations. The General~~  
 490 ~~Minister and President will see that the items get to the Committee on Reference and Counsel,~~  
 491 ~~which shall decide whether such items are emergencies and, if so, make appropriate~~  
 492 ~~recommendations to the General Assembly as to their disposition.~~

493

494 ~~4647. A quorum for the transaction of business by the General Assembly shall be the voting~~  
 495 ~~members present and voting at each business session of the Assembly.~~

496

497

498

## 499 OFFICERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

500

501 ~~4748. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) shall have two kinds of officers: non-salaried~~  
 502 ~~officers of the General Assembly and salaried general officers of the Christian Church (Disciples~~  
 503 ~~of Christ).~~

504

505 4849. *Non-salaried officers of the General Assembly.* The non-salaried officers of the General  
506 Assembly shall be a Moderator, a Moderator-Elect, a First Vice Moderator, a Second Vice  
507 Moderator, and such other officers as the General Assembly may from time to time determine.  
508 These officers shall be nominated by the General Nominating Committee and elected by the  
509 General Assembly for terms of ~~two~~three years, unless otherwise noted.

- 510
- 511 a. The Moderator shall preside at the sessions of the General Assembly, the General  
512 Board, and the ~~Administrative-Executive~~ Committee of the ~~General Board~~, and shall  
513 assume such other responsibilities as may be assigned by these bodies.
- 514
- 515 b. The Vice Moderators shall assist the Moderator in presiding at the sessions of the  
516 General Assembly, the General Board, and the ~~Administrative-Executive~~ Committee of  
517 ~~the General Board~~, and shall assume such other responsibilities as may be assigned by  
518 these bodies.
- 519
- 520 c. The Moderator-Elect shall serve for ~~two~~three years and then serve as Moderator for  
521 ~~two~~three years. The Moderator-Elect shall assume other responsibilities as may be  
522 assigned by the General Board or ~~Administrative-Executive~~ Committee of the ~~General~~  
523 ~~Board~~.
- 524
- 525 d. The Moderator, Vice Moderators and Moderator-Elect shall be active members of the  
526 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and shall include ~~at least one woman, one man, at~~  
527 ~~least~~ one lay leader and one minister with standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of  
528 Christ), ~~with a commitment to gender diversity and representation.~~ ~~The moderators and~~  
529 shall include persons from different racial or ethnic backgrounds. These officers shall  
530 take office upon the adjournment of the regular in-person meeting of the General  
531 Assembly in which they are elected, and shall hold office ~~through the next regular~~  
532 ~~meeting or until~~ their successors have been elected and installed.
- 533
- 534 e. A Parliamentarian shall be appointed by the Moderator with the approval of the  
535 ~~Administrative-Executive~~ Committee of the ~~General Board~~. The Parliamentarian shall  
536 serve during the business sessions of the General Assembly, the General Board, and  
537 the ~~Administrative-Executive~~ Committee of the ~~General Board~~, advising on parliamentary  
538 questions that may arise. Unless otherwise provided, all proceedings shall be governed  
539 by *Robert's Rules of Order, Revised*.

540

541 4950. *Salaried officers of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).* The salaried officers of the  
542 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) shall be a General Minister and President, a Secretary, a  
543 Treasurer, and such other officers as the General Assembly may from time to time determine.  
544 The Secretary and Treasurer shall be designated from the Office of the General Minister and  
545 President. The Secretary shall keep the record of the proceedings of the General Assembly, the  
546 General Board, and the ~~Administrative-Executive~~ Committee of the ~~General Board~~; shall serve  
547 as the Corporation Secretary as may be required by law; and shall perform such other duties as  
548 may be assigned to this office. The Treasurer shall be the Corporation Financial Officer and  
549 shall perform such duties as may be assigned to this office. The Secretary and the Treasurer  
550 shall be elected by the ~~Administrative-Executive~~ Committee of the ~~General Board~~ on nomination  
551 by the General Minister and President for terms of ~~two~~three years and may be re-elected.

552

553 5051. The General Minister and President shall be recognized as pastor to the Christian  
554 Church (Disciples of Christ) and president of the organization.

555

- 556 ~~5152~~. As pastor to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the roles for the General Minister  
 557 and President are to:
- 558
- 559 a. Provide spiritual leadership to the church in all of its diverse manifestations and  
 560 exercise pastoral authority over concerns of the church in times of crisis.
- 561
- 562 b. Embody the spirit of *The Design*.
- 563
- 564 c. Articulate and interpret *The Design*.
- 565
- 566 d. Serve as the primary ecumenical representative for the Christian Church (Disciples of  
 567 Christ).
- 568
- 569 e. Lead and give oversight to the continual discernment of God’s vision for the Christian  
 570 Church (Disciples of Christ),
- 571
- 572 f. Give oversight to mutual accountability among all expressions of the church.
- 573
- 574 g. Represent the whole church in collegial leadership in gatherings of regional, general,  
 575 and congregational ministries.
- 576
- 577 h. Offer advice and counsel to commissions, committees, and task groups of General  
 578 Board and regional bodies.
- 579
- 580 i. Convene various congregational, regional, educational, and general church executives  
 581 and pastors for dialogue and reflection on the whole life of the Christian Church  
 582 (Disciples of Christ).
- 583
- 584 ~~5253~~. As chief executive officer of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the presidential  
 585 roles of the General Minister and President are to:
- 586
- 587 a. Have full access to boards of general ministries, ~~racial ethnic ministries including~~  
 588 ~~National Convocation, North American Pacific/. Asian Disciples and the Central Pastoral~~  
 589 ~~Office for of Hispanic Ministries,~~ and regions with voice and vote, as appropriate.
- 590
- 591 b. Hold fiduciary responsibility for the Office of the General Minister and President’s  
 592 finances.
- 593
- 594 c. Give oversight of Office of General Minister and President in all of its functions.
- 595
- 596 d. Serve as primary spokesperson for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
- 597
- 598 e. Sign official documents of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
- 599
- 600 f. Serve as corporate Resident Agent for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
- 601
- 602 g. Designate Office of General Minister and President executive staff to serve in  
 603 representative capacities, as appropriate.
- 604
- 605
- 606 ~~5354~~. Qualifications and accountability for the General Minister and President are:

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- a. The General Minister and President shall be an ordained minister with standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
- b. The General Minister and President shall be elected and called to this ministry by the General Assembly upon nomination by the Administrative Executive Committee of the General Board through the General Board, for a term of six years and may be elected to one additional term.
- c. The General Minister and President is accountable to the Administrative Executive Committee of the General Board, General Board, and General Assembly.
- d. The General Minister and President may be removed from office by a two-thirds majority vote of the General Board upon recommendation of the Administrative Executive Committee of the General Board.
- e. In the nomination and election of the General Minister and President, a two-thirds vote of those present and voting in each of the Administrative Executive Committee of the General Board, the General Board, and the General Assembly shall be required. In the event of a vacancy in the position of General Minister and President, the Administrative Executive Committee of the General Board shall name the person to fill the vacancy until the next in-person General Assembly.

## THE GENERAL BOARD

~~5455.~~ The General Assembly shall establish and elect a smaller deliberative body governance board responsible to the General Assembly that shall be called the General Board. ~~Under broad policies determined by the General Assembly, the~~ The General Board is called to be in covenantal relationship with the whole church as connective tissue in doing its worshipful work and will manage its work in at least these three committees: Mission, Finance and Executive. The General Board shall:

- a. Receive topics/issues for dialogue and education from the Church and establish the agenda for , review, and refer to the General Assembly meetings. with appropriate recommendations all items of business presented, as provided in paragraph 41.
- b. Establish the procedures for the Church to dialogue about topics/issues of interest to the church and society including education on the topic/issue and ways to take action. whereby the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) may engage in planning its total program of work and witness.
- c. Establish mission priorities after dialogue, formation, discernment and prayer of the General Assembly.
- d. Take action on matters of social witness after dialogue, formation, discernment and prayer of the General Assembly.

~~Receive, review, and approve the financial objective of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).~~

- 658 ~~de. Coordinate, Review~~ review and evaluate the program work of the Christian Church  
 659 (Disciples of Christ) in accordance with its recognized mission, including general  
 660 ministry, regional ministry and other ministries, and enact structural reform when  
 661 necessary and make appropriate recommendations to the General Assembly.  
 662
- 663 ~~ef. Receive and initiate proposed policy to be referred with recommendation to the~~  
 664 ~~General Assembly for action~~ Establish policies as needed.  
 665
- 666 ~~fg. Establish procedures for review of the Design and all Special and Standing Rules at a~~  
 667 ~~minimum of every three years and make recommendations for changes.~~ continual  
 668 renewal and structural reform.  
 669
- 670 ~~gh. Create and establish the church-wide mission funding system and review and~~  
 671 ~~evaluate the program for effectiveness at a minimum of every three years and make~~  
 672 ~~recommendations for changes as appropriate.~~ Consult and confer with staff members in  
 673 consideration of matters under review and evaluation.  
 674
- 675
- 676 ~~hj. Receive, review, approve and give oversight, advice and counsel to the financial~~  
 677 ~~program status of the ministry organizations of the Church. Create procedures to~~  
 678 ~~allocate and reallocate funds based on mission priorities.~~  
 679
- 680 ~~i. Elect or confirm the governing bodies of general ministries for which it is responsible.~~  
 681
- 682 ~~i. Elect the committees of the General Assembly.~~  
 683
- 684 ~~k. Recognize, Following election, recognition by the Christian Church (Disciples of~~  
 685 ~~Christ) shall be bestowed upon a new Administrative Officer by the General Board in an~~  
 686 ~~appropriate act (elect, confirm, affirm) based on the governing documents of the General~~  
 687 ~~Ministry, following election.~~  
 688
- 689 ~~l. Approve regional boundary changes (even if only one (1) congregation is involved)~~  
 690 ~~once all parties involved have participated and approved (congregations and regions~~  
 691 ~~impacted).~~  
 692
- 693 ~~m. Act on behalf of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to maintain 501 (c) (3) tax~~  
 694 ~~status with the Internal Revenue Service on behalf of the General Assembly,~~  
 695 ~~congregations, regional ministries and general ministries in good standing with the~~  
 696 ~~Church. Upon dissolution of any organization under this section, assets shall be~~  
 697 ~~distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of Section 501 (c) (3) of~~  
 698 ~~the Internal Revenue Code.~~  
 699
- 700 ~~n. Set time, place and format of General Assembly meetings.~~  
 701
- 702 ~~o. Take action on policies and procedures of the General Assembly when timely action is~~  
 703 ~~needed between assemblies.~~  
 704
- 705 ~~jp. Assume and discharge such other responsibilities as may be assigned to it by the~~  
 706 ~~General Assembly.~~  
 707

- 708 g. Fill vacancies in offices elected by the General Assembly, subject to ratification by the  
709 General Assembly.
- 710
- 711 r. Have anThe Executive eCommittee which will serve as the Board of the Office of  
712 General Minister and President.
- 713
- 714 s. Where other procedures have not been provided by the General Assembly, matters of  
715 grievance and appeal may be referred by congregations, individual members of  
716 congregations, and regions through the Office of General Minister to the Executive  
717 Committee of the General Board for final decision.
- 718
- 719 ~~55. — Between meetings of the General Assembly, the General Board may take interim action~~  
720 ~~within established policy of the General Assembly on behalf of the Christian Church (Disciples~~  
721 ~~of Christ), subject in all matters to a review of its action by the subsequent General Assembly.~~
- 722
- 723 56. The General Board shall consist of members elected for terms of ~~four~~ six years. Such  
724 elected members shall include ~~laymen, laywomen~~ laity, and ministers with standing in the  
725 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), not more than one-half nor less than one-third of whom  
726 shall be ministers. They shall be elected in the following manner:
- 727
- 728 a. The General Nominating Committee shall nominate, with attention to the full  
729 diversity of the church, and the General Assembly shall elect ~~17 members~~  
730 ~~— representing congregations, at least two of whom are between the ages of 18 and~~  
731 ~~— 23 at the time of election~~ one (1) member from each region and one (1) member from the  
732 current or former membership of each general ministries’ board, including boards of National  
733 Convocation, North American Pacific/Asian Disciples, and Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic  
734 Ministries.
- 735 b. The General Nominating Committee shall nominate, and the General Assembly shall  
736 elect two (2) members from ecumenical partners, one (1) representative from each full  
737 communion partner. The governing body of each Region shall elect one of its members to serve  
738 on the  
739 General Board.
- 740 c. The governing body of each General Ministry shall elect one if its members to  
741 serve on the General Board. Two (2) members ex-officio, one (1) from seminaries and  
742 one (1) from colleges and universities. These members will be selected by the Council on  
743 Theological Education and Council of College and University Presidents respectively.
- 744 d. The governing bodies of the National Bi-Lingual Hispanic Fellowship, North  
745 American Pacific/ Asian Disciples and the National Convocation shall each elect  
746 one of its members to serve on the General Board  
747 The officers ex-officio: Moderator,  
748 First Vice Moderator, Second Vice Moderator, the Moderator-elect and the General Minister and  
749 President.
- 749 e. Each regional minister will serve ex-officio without vote.
- 750 f. The chief administrative officer of each general ministry will serve ex-officio without  
751 vote.
- 752 g. Three (3) members ex-officio without vote: Corporate Secretary, Corporate Treasurer  
753 and Parliamentarian.
- 754
- 755 The following shall be members ex officio: the Moderators; General Minister and  
756 President; two ecumenical members, each from a different North American communion;  
757 and the former General Minister and Presidents. The following shall be members ex  
758 officio without vote: the Secretary, Treasurer, Parliamentarian, the Chief Administrative

759 ~~Officer of each general ministry; each regional minister; two Chief Administrative~~  
 760 ~~Officers of institutions of higher education designated by Higher Education and~~  
 761 ~~Leadership Ministries as representatives of liberal arts education and seminary~~  
 762 ~~education.~~

763  
 764 57. ~~Terms on the General Board begin and end at the close of the in-person General~~  
 765 ~~Assembly where the member is elected, and the member serves until their successor has been~~  
 766 ~~elected. Each member serves one (1) six-year term. One-half of the Board membership is~~  
 767 ~~elected at each in-person General Assembly. The moderator-elect is elected to one (1) three~~  
 768 ~~(3) year term in that role and then serves one (1) term of three (3) years as moderator. The~~  
 769 ~~General Minister and President may be elected to two (2) six (6) year terms. The other elected~~  
 770 ~~officers serve one (1) three (3) year term. Elected members of the General Board who have~~  
 771 ~~served two full consecutive~~  
 772 ~~terms shall not be eligible for re-election until one biennium three years has have elapsed.~~

773  
 774 58. ~~Ex-officio members are on the General Board due to their roles. If they no longer serve~~  
 775 ~~in the role from which they were elected, their position on the General Board becomes vacant.~~

776  
 777 59. ~~The General Nominating Committee will seek advice and counsel from regional~~  
 778 ~~ministers and general ministry presidents chief administrative officers when nominating General~~  
 779 ~~Board members. Nominees are to be involved members of congregations and regional and/or~~  
 780 ~~general ministry life. Nominees will be sought with specific gifts of mission, finance, and/or~~  
 781 ~~governance and the full diversity of the Church will be considered.~~

782  
 783 60. ~~Vacancies shall be filled by the General Board upon recommendation of the Executive~~  
 784 ~~Committee of the General Board.~~

785  
 786 61. ~~Regular meetings of the General Board shall ordinarily be held at least twice annually at~~  
 787 ~~a time, and place and format to be fixed by the General Board, except that the meeting in the~~  
 788 ~~year in which the~~  
 789 ~~General Assembly shall convene shall be held not more than 90 days nor less than 60 days~~  
 790 ~~prior to the beginning of the regular meeting of the General Assembly. Meetings will be held~~  
 791 ~~digitally or in-person. When an in-person meeting is held, members can also participate and~~  
 792 ~~vote digitally. One-half of the voting membership of the General Board shall constitute a~~  
 793 ~~quorum. The meeting of the full General Board in a year in which a General Assembly is not~~  
 794 ~~held may be canceled by majority vote of the General Board, being secured by mail ballot,~~  
 795 ~~online form, or other appropriate communication means by which a reply can be verified. The~~  
 796 ~~Moderator may call special meetings of the General Board under extraordinary circumstances.~~

797  
 798  
 799  
 800 5962. ~~In addition to the Mission, Finance and Executive committees, the General Board shall~~  
 801 ~~may appoint committees as necessary to facilitate the work of the General Board. General~~  
 802 ~~Board committees, when used, will be assigned to reinforce the wholeness of the General~~  
 803 ~~Board's job and so as never to interfere with interaction between the General Board and its~~  
 804 ~~constituencies.~~

805  
 806 a. General Board committees ordinarily will assist the board by preparing policy  
 807 alternatives and implications for board deliberation.

808  
 809 b. General Board committees may not speak or act for the General Board except

810 when formally given such authority for specific and time-limited purposes.

811

812 e.

813 63. The General Board shall maintain Standing Rules that guide and govern its work as  
814 assigned in *The Design*.

815

816 **THE ADMINISTRATIVE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL BOARD**

817

818 64. The General Board shall establish an Executive Committee of the General Board. The  
819 Executive Committee shall serve as Executive Committee of the General Board and the Board  
820 of the Office of General Minister and President.

821

822 The Executive Committee of the General Board shall:

823

a. Implement policies and actions of the General Board.

824

b. Fulfill duties and functions assigned to it by the General Board.

825

c. Prepare the business agenda for the meetings of the General Assembly and the  
826 General Board.

827

d. Appoint committees not otherwise provided for.

828

e. Where other procedures have not been provided by the General Assembly or the  
829 General Board, matters of grievance and appeal may be referred by individual  
830 members, ministers, congregations, regions, or general ministries to the Executive  
831 Committee for final decision.

832

833 The Board of the Office of the General Minister and President shall:

834

f. Approve the budget and policies for the Office of General Minister and President and  
835 other organizations that relate to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) through  
836 the Office of General Minister and President.

837

g. Provide guidance and oversight to the General Minister and President.

838

a-h. Handle grievances filed against the General Minister and President.

839

840 ~~6065.~~ There shall be an The Administrative Executive Committee of the General board shall be  
841 elected by the General Board from the membership of the General Board. This Administrative  
842 Executive Committee shall consist of twenty-one (21) persons; ~~nine (9)~~ nine (9) members from the voting  
843 membership of the General Board; ~~nine (9)~~ five (5) members as *ex-officio* (The General Minister and  
844 President; the Moderator; the Moderator-elect; and the two (2) Vice Moderators of the General  
845 Assembly); two (2) regional ministers, *ex-officio* without vote, and two (2) general ministry  
846 presidents chief administrative officers, *ex-officio* without vote); and ~~7~~ three (3) members as *ex-*  
847 *officio* without vote (the Corporate Secretary, Corporate Treasurer, and Parliamentarian of the  
848 General Assembly); ~~2~~ two representative from the Council of General Ministries; and ~~2~~  
849 representative from the College of Regional Ministers.)

850

851 ~~6166.~~ Administrative Executive Committee of the General Board members shall be elected to a  
852 term of ~~two~~ three (3) years, beginning at the first meeting of the Administrative Executive  
853 Committee of the General Board following their election to the position. A member may be  
854 elected to one ~~consecutive~~ additional term to the Administrative Executive Committee of the  
855 General Board, but not to extend beyond the member's service on the General Board. Members  
856 of the Administrative Executive Committee of the General Board who have served two full  
857 consecutive terms shall not be eligible for re-election until ~~one biennium has~~ three years have  
858 elapsed.

859

860 ~~6267. The Administrative-Executive Committee of the General Board shall meet at least two~~  
 861 ~~times each year and shall be organized to carry out its work in committees and to implement~~  
 862 ~~policies and actions of the General Board,~~

863  
 864 ~~serve as the board of directors for the Office of General Minister and President, and handle~~  
 865 ~~grievances filed against the General Minister and President, and shall assume and discharge~~  
 866 ~~such other duties and responsibilities as may be assigned to it by the General Board. The~~  
 867 ~~officers of the General Assembly, in consultation with the General Minister and President, shall~~  
 868 ~~have the authority to cancel one meeting of the Administrative Committee in any year in which~~  
 869 ~~there is not a General Assembly. Specific reason for the cancellation shall be furnished to the~~  
 870 ~~members of the Administrative Committee, and a unanimous affirmative vote of the~~  
 871 ~~Administrative Committee shall be secured by mail ballot, online form, or other verifiable means~~  
 872 ~~of communication as required by Indiana law. The Administrative-Executive Committee of the~~  
 873 ~~General Board may call on additional members of the General Board, and others as it deems~~  
 874 ~~necessary, to serve on subcommittees and task forces needed to accomplish its work.~~

875  
 876 ~~63.—The Administrative Committee shall provide for long-range planning for the work of the~~  
 877 ~~Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and shall forward all resulting proposals for review and~~  
 878 ~~evaluation by the General Board and disposition by the General Assembly. It shall promote and~~  
 879 ~~coordinate the activities of the several general ministries to assure that such actions conform to~~  
 880 ~~the policies of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).~~

881  
 882 ~~64.—The Administrative Committee shall fill vacancies in offices elected by the General~~  
 883 ~~Assembly, subject to ratification by the General Assembly at its next regular meeting. It shall~~  
 884 ~~submit to the General Assembly through the General Board any recommendations it may deem~~  
 885 ~~useful for the development of the effectiveness and efficiency of the life, mission, work, and~~  
 886 ~~organization of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).~~

887  
 888 ~~65.—The Administrative Committee shall be responsible for regular review and evaluation of~~  
 889 ~~the budgetary and promotional procedures for financing the various regions, general ministries,~~  
 890 ~~and institutions of higher education of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The~~  
 891 ~~Administrative Committee shall act on behalf of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to~~  
 892 ~~maintain 501(c)(3) tax status with the Internal Revenue Service on behalf of the General~~  
 893 ~~Assembly, congregations, regional ministries, and general ministries in good standing with the~~  
 894 ~~Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Upon the dissolution of any organization under this~~  
 895 ~~section, assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of~~  
 896 ~~Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.~~

897  
 898 ~~66.—The Administrative Committee shall prepare the business agenda for the meetings of the~~  
 899 ~~General Assembly and the General Board, and appoint committees not otherwise provided for.~~  
 900 ~~Where other procedures have not been provided by the General Assembly or General Board,~~  
 901 ~~matters of grievance and appeal may be referred by individual members, ministers,~~  
 902 ~~congregations, regions, or general ministries to the Administrative Committee for final decision.~~

903  
 904 ~~67-68~~ Two-thirds of the voting members of the Administrative-Executive Committee of the  
 905 General Board shall constitute a quorum.

## 906 **GENERAL MINISTRIES**

907  
 908  
 909 ~~6869.~~ The General Assembly, upon recommendation of the General Board, shall establish or  
 910 recognize general ministries for broad areas of work, central administrative functions, and

911 specialized study and service to meet responsibilities of the Christian Church (Disciples of  
912 Christ) in its mission of witness and service to the world. It is an imperative of the Christian  
913 Church (Disciples of Christ) that general ministries are created to strengthen congregational life  
914 for the church's mission.

915

916 ~~6970.~~ The National Convocation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the National  
917 Hispanic and Bilingual Fellowship ~~National Hispanic and Bilingual Fellowship~~ Central Pastoral  
918 Office for Hispanic Ministries and the North American Pacific/Asian Disciples witness to the  
919 diversity within the church. These ministries, with their unique historical relationships within the  
920 Christian Church and the rich cultural gifts they share, are empowered to speak to particular  
921 cultural contexts within the ecclesial needs of Disciples in the United States and Canada and  
922 are charged with the development of their particular ministries.

923

924 These ministries make reports and are represented in places where general ministries are  
925 called upon to serve the life of the church through reports and representation. Their executive  
926 ministers shall serve in partnership and collaboration with regional ministers and other  
927 leadership groups throughout the church.

928

929 ~~7071.~~ The General Board shall approve the purpose and function of each general ministry and  
930 shall elect or confirm the members of the governing body of each. The responsibilities, manner  
931 of selection, and tenure of office for the members of the governing body of a general ministry  
932 shall be determined with reference to its purpose and function and shall be specified in its  
933 bylaws or rules of procedure, which shall be filed with the Office of General Minister and  
934 President.

935

936 ~~7472.~~ Each general ministry shall select its officers and staff using the current Disciples search  
937 processes, as established by the General Board. Each board shall be called upon to enter into  
938 an agreement with the General Board or to include in its bylaws or rules of procedure a  
939 provision for any new chief administrative officer to be elected by its board following consultation  
940 with the General Minister and President, as provided for in paragraph ~~5255~~, and with the advice  
941 and counsel of the Administrative-Executive Committee of the General Board. Following  
942 election, recognition by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) shall be bestowed upon a new  
943 Chief Administrative Officer by the General Board in an appropriate act.

944

945 ~~7273.~~ A general ministry may be incorporated and shall administer its program and financial  
946 affairs and establish or retain its bylaws or rules of procedure in accordance with provisions  
947 established by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) through the General Assembly.

948

949 ~~7374.~~ Each general ministry shall facilitate policy decisions of the Christian Church (Disciples  
950 of Christ), accounting for its work through regular reports of its plans and actions to the General  
951 Board, ~~which shall refer them to the General Assembly with recommendations for appropriate~~  
952 ~~action. General ministries shall provide interim summary reports to the Administrative~~  
953 ~~Committee to enable it to exercise its responsibility for promoting and coordinating the activities~~  
954 ~~of the several general ministries to assure that such actions conform to the policies of the~~  
955 ~~Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).~~

956

## 957 **RECOGNIZED MINISTRY PARTNERS**

958

959 ~~7475.~~ The Administrative-Executive Committee of the General Board may recommend to the  
960 General Board relationships of  
961 ministry partners and other organizations whose mission and ministry support the overall  
962 mission of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The General Assembly, as coordinated by

963 the Office of the General Minister and President and the Ministry Partner's sponsor(s), shall  
 964 appropriately celebrate newly recognized ministry partners.

965  
 966 ~~7576~~. A ministry desiring such recognition shall request such a relationship through an  
 967 appropriate general ministry. Each General Ministry shall establish evaluation criteria for  
 968 recommending ministry partners to the Administrative-Executive Committee of the General  
 969 Board, but shall include at a  
 970 minimum action by the General Ministry's governing board.

971  
 972 ~~7677~~. The Administrative-Executive Committee of the General Board shall maintain the criteria  
 973 by which Ministry Partners are  
 974 evaluated for recognition beyond the process of a sponsoring General Ministry.

975  
 976 ~~7778~~. The plans and activities of such an organization will be reported to the General Board  
 977 through the sponsoring general ministry. A review of such reports and the action of the General  
 978 Board shall be included in the report of the General Board to the General Assembly. Ministry  
 979 partners failing to report for three consecutive board meetings will be removed from status as a  
 980 Recognized Ministry Partner.

981  
 982 ~~7879~~. The contact information for the ministry partners shall be listed with the sponsoring  
 983 ministry ~~of in~~ the Year Book and Directory.

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## 987 CONTINUAL RENEWAL AND STRUCTURAL REFORM

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989 ~~7980~~. The General Board shall maintain procedures for continual renewal and structural reform  
 990 under policies approved by the General Assembly, taking into account implications for racial and  
 991 ethnic congregations and clergy. To further the process, existing general ministries may be  
 992 called upon to reassign staff, budget, and functions for this purpose. In any inter-unit  
 993 adjustment, as well as in development of any new general ministries of the Christian Church  
 994 (Disciples of Christ), existing organizations remain intact, subject to modification by mutual  
 995 consent of the organizations involved in light of the corporate judgment of the Christian Church  
 996 (Disciples of Christ) as expressed through the General Assembly. Full protection shall be given  
 997 to all legal and contractual relationships, including trust funds and pension funds.

998

## 999 NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

1000

1001 ~~8081~~. There shall be a General Nominating Committee consisting of ten (10)-members elected  
 1002 by the General Assembly. The General Nominating Committee shall be widely representative by  
 1003 gender, age race and ethnicity, and not more than one member shall be from any one region  
 1004 except as may be necessary to ensure representation from National Convocation, National  
 1005 Hispanic and Bilingual FellowshipCentral Pastoral Office ~~for~~ Hispanic Ministries, North  
 1006 American Pacific/Asian Disciples and other such ministries that may be recommended by the  
 1007 General Board and recognized by the General Assembly. One-half of the members at the time  
 1008 of their election shall be from the membership of the General Board, and not more than one-half  
 1009 nor less than one-third shall be ministers. Each ~~biennium~~ triennium the Administrative-Executive  
 1010 Committee of the General Board shall nominate five persons for election by the General  
 1011 Assembly to a term of ~~four~~ six (6) years on the General Nominating Committee. A member of  
 1012 the General Nominating Committee may serve only one full term.

1013

1014 ~~8482~~. The General Nominating Committee shall accept suggestions from throughout the  
1015 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and shall maintain records of suggested nominees and  
1016 their qualifications. When selecting candidates for offices, the General Nominating Committee  
1017 shall consider, but not be limited to, all names suggested.

1018  
1019 ~~8283~~. The General Nominating Committee shall select one nominee for each of the following  
1020 offices to be elected by the General Assembly: Moderator, First Vice Moderator, Second Vice  
1021 Moderator, Moderator-Elect and members of the General Board whose election is vested in the  
1022 General Assembly, as provided in paragraph ~~4142~~.

1023  
1024 ~~8384~~. The report of the General Nominating Committee on these nominations shall be sent to  
1025 the congregations and regions at least 60 days prior to the meeting of the General Assembly  
1026 where the election will be held. Provision shall be made for nominations from the floor of the  
1027 General Assembly. A simple majority is needed for approval.

1028  
1029 ~~8485~~. The General Nominating Committee also shall present to the General Board the  
1030 nominees for positions whose election or confirmation is vested in the General Board, as  
1031 provided in paragraphs ~~4155 and 65~~, including the members of the governing bodies of the  
1032 various general ministries, members of the ~~Administrative-Executive Committee of the General~~  
1033 ~~Board~~, and members of committees and  
1034 commissions, noting terms of service and status (elected, *ex-officio*, *ex-officio* without vote,  
1035 etc.). The Office of the General Minister and President of the Christian Church (Disciples of  
1036 Christ) shall provide staff and counsel for the General Nominating Committee.

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1040 **MINISTRY**

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1043 ~~8586~~. The fundamental ministry within the church is that of Jesus Christ. ~~He-God~~ calls ~~His-the~~  
1044 church to participate in ~~His-Jesus'~~ ministry.

1045  
1046 ~~8687~~. By virtue of baptism in the church, every Christian enters into the corporate ministry of  
1047 God's people. Within the corporate ministry, each Christian fulfills ~~her-or-his~~their own calling as  
1048 a servant of Christ sent into the world to minister. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
1049 shall seek to provide all of its members with opportunities to exercise this ministry.

1050  
1051 ~~8788~~. In addition, the church recognizes an order of ministry, set apart under God, to equip the  
1052 whole people to fulfill their corporate ministry. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ),  
1053 through the General Assembly, shall approve general policies and criteria for the order of the  
1054 ministries, within policies developed by the General Assembly; regions certify the standing of  
1055 ministers and provide help, counsel, and pastoral care to ministers and congregations.

1056  
1057 ~~8889~~. The offices of elder and deacon are ordered by the congregations, through election and  
1058 recognition with appropriate ceremony, for the performance of certain functions of ministry  
1059 appropriate to the offices.

1060  
1061 a. A person elected elder is authorized to exercise within the congregation which elects  
1062 ~~her-or-him~~them the ministerial functions it assigns for periods of time which it specifies,  
1063 such as sharing in the ministration of baptism and the Lord's Supper and the conduct of  
1064 worship, and sharing in the pastoral care and spiritual leadership of the congregation.  
1065 The eldership is a voluntary ministry, each congregation having a plurality of elders.

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b. A person elected deacon is authorized to serve in the congregation which elects her or him~~them~~ for periods of time which it specifies by assisting in the ministration of baptism and the Lord's Supper, in the conduct of worship, and in the pastoral care and spiritual leadership of the congregation. The diaconate is a voluntary ministry.

**REVISION AND AMENDMENTS**

~~8990.~~ Revisions and amendments to this *Design* may be made by a two-thirds vote of the voting members ~~present and voting at~~ of the General Assembly ~~present and voting~~, providing such revision or amendment shall have been ~~regularly filed 180 days in advance of the meetings of the General Assembly and~~ circulated among the congregations and regions 60 days in advance of the General Assembly where the vote will be taken.

**ASCRIPTION**

Now to God, who by the power at work within us is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or imagine, to God be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen

— Ephesians 3:20-21

i. The general ministries now recognized are:

- Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries
- Christian Board of Publication
- Christian Church Foundation, Inc.
- ~~Disciples Church Extension Fund~~ Financial & Missional Resources, Inc.
- Council on Christian Unity, Inc. dba Christian Unity and Interfaith Ministry
- Disciples of Christ Historical Society
- Disciples Church Extension Fund
- Division of Homeland Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Inc. dba Disciples Home Missions
- Division of Overseas Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Inc.
- Higher Education and Leadership Ministries, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Inc.
- The National Benevolent Association of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
- National Convocation of the Christian Church
- North American Pacific/Asian Disciples,
- Pension Fund of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

ii. ~~The racial and ethnic ministries now recognized are:~~

- ~~National Convocation of the Christian Church~~
- ~~North American Pacific/Asian Disciples, Executive Council~~
- ~~Central Pastoral Commission Office for Hispanic Ministries and Hispanic Caucus~~

**GA-2345**

**RE-ELECTION OF THE GENERAL MINISTER AND PRESIDENT**

**WHEREAS**, the Administrative Committee of the General Board has complied with the procedures and requirements set forth in The Design for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the Standing Rules of the General Board, in the nomination of Rev. Teresa “Terri” Hord Owens for re-election as General Minister and President of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada; and

**WHEREAS**, in accordance with those procedures, the General Board has voted “to forward the name;”

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) meeting in Louisville, Kentucky, July 29-August 1, 2023, re-elect Rev. Teresa “Terri” Hord Owens, to a second term as General Minister and President of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada.

General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

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**The General Board recommends that the General Assembly ADOPT GA-2345.  
(Discussion Time: 12 minutes)**

**GA-2346****RATIFY ACTION TAKEN BY THE GENERAL BOARD**

**WHEREAS**, paragraph 55 of the Design of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) states that “Between meetings of the General Assembly, the General Board may take interim action within established policy of the General Assembly on behalf of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), subject in all matters to a review of its action by the subsequent General Assembly;” and

**WHEREAS**, the General Board voted July 19, 2020 to adopt GB-20-1156, cancelling the 2021 General Assembly and electing the General Nominating Committee class of 2025; and

**WHEREAS**, the General Board voted December 7, 2020 to adopt GB-20-1158 changing the time and place of the 2023 General Assembly; and

**WHEREAS**, the General Board voted April 2021 to adopt GB-21-1193, electing the following people to the General Nominating Committee class of 2025 on behalf of the General Assembly:

Kevin McNeil  
Linda Necker  
Candyce Black-Wells  
Lydia Charlebois  
Miseon Choi

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) meeting in Louisville, Kentucky, July 29-August 1, 2023, ratify these actions taken by the General Board on behalf of the General Assembly.

General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

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**The General Board recommends that the General Assembly ADOPT GA-2346.  
(Discussion Time: 12 minutes)**

**GA-2347**

**REPORT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE – TIME AND PLACE**

The 2025 General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) will be held in Memphis, Tennessee, July 12-15, 2025.

General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

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**The General Board recommends that the General Assembly ADOPT GA-2347.  
(Discussion Time: 12 minutes)**



**GA-2348****General Nominating Committee Report for Election of Officers of the General Assembly and Members of the General Board**

In accordance with the Design of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the General Nominating Committee presents the following candidates for election as officers of the General Assembly.

**For Moderator Elect: Cindy Kim-Hengst**

Cindy is a Korean-American lay leader hailing originally from Indiana, but currently residing in Elmhurst, IL. She has been a Disciple for just over 30 years and a charter member of the first Korean Disciples congregation in Indianapolis. She is a member at Chicago Christian Church, the oldest Korean Disciples congregation in IL, where she serves on both the senior leadership and worship teams. During her time as a Disciple, she has served and experienced the Church in a variety of ways including: camp counselor in Indiana, Disciples Women, DOM/Global Ministries, NAPAD, NBA, and WOC. Cindy's experience with the variety of ministries in the church has led her to appreciate and gain an understanding for the need of all aspects of church work from congregational ministries impacting the local community to those ministries in the Church that make a difference in the lives of brothers and sisters on the other side of the globe.



Professionally, Cindy worked in healthcare, specifically Radiation Oncology, for 13 years. She was originally led to this field due to close family experience with cancer and Radiation Oncology, but she continued to pursue this field because she wanted to care for and connect with people in a meaningful way. Her skills and proficiency led her to managing a Cancer Center for the last 6 years of her career before stepping away for family. During her time in oncology services, Cindy found a deep appreciation for the daily reminders of gratitude and has continued this practice even after leaving the world of healthcare. Currently, Cindy works as a Public Adjuster with a roofing contractor where she continues to make connections with clients.

Cindy's experience, both professionally and in the church, have provided her with a broad range of leadership, communication, and people skills. She hopes to be able to continue to use those experiences along with the gifts provided by God to serve the church in this season as Moderator-elect.

Cindy resides with her spouse and daughter and in her spare time, enjoys reading and downtime with family. When the weather is decent, the family can be found outdoors honing volleyball skills for her daughter. Cindy also enjoys taking her daughter to live theater for music and shows. Cindy also enjoys food and particularly trying new foods over fellowship.

### **For First Vice Moderator: Liza Miranda**

Rev. Liza L. Miranda is a loving and devoted wife, mother, and follower of Christ with a passion for music, worship, equipping leaders, and serving God and the Church. Born and raised in Bayamón, Puerto Rico, Rev. Miranda has roots in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Puerto Rico since she was a child.

After graduating high school, Liza migrated to the mainland to study. Currently a doctoral candidate at the Robert E. Webber Institute for Worship Studies in Jacksonville, FL, Rev. Miranda has a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance from Chapman University, Orange, CA., and a Master of Arts in Church Music from Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis, IN.

Rev. Miranda is an associate pastor at Conéctame Church/Discípulos de Cristo in Miami, Florida, and serves as minister of worship, women, and youth.

Over the last fifteen-plus years, Liza has committed to teaching Hispanic leaders at Wesley Seminary in Marion, IN, Lexington Theological Seminary, Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, and Disciples Seminary Foundation as adjunct faculty in their master and certificate programs.

With experience at the national and international levels, Liza traveled as a soloist, preacher, and keynote speaker, served as Quadrennial band director, and coached various music ministry teams. For those that know her, Rev. Miranda is a leader who loves God deeply and serves with an open heart.



### **For Second Vice Moderator: Erik Free**

Erik Free is the pastor of Keizer Christian Church in Keizer, Oregon. He has been an active member of a Disciples congregation in the Oregon and SW Idaho region since he was 15.

During that time, he has served in many capacities and with many congregations in the areas of youth ministry, directing youth camps, hospital chaplaincy at the VA hospital in Portland, pastoral ministry and serving on the regional board as moderator and co-chair of the commission on ministry.

Erik and his wife, Kim, also spent time with Global Ministries as co-workers in Mozambique. He loves being with people and helping them grow in their faith and grow closer with God and each other. He is committed to connecting with the local and wider community as well, spending time volunteering with and supporting refugee resettlement programs and local feeding ministries among others.



Erik is a lifelong Oregonian who loves the outdoors, fishing, camping, and canoeing. He is excited at the opportunity to serve the wider church as a member of the General Board.

**They will join Moderator Clyde Hunt, who has served as Moderator-Elect since 2019.**

Clyde E. Hunt, Jr. is a lay leader from Memphis, Tennessee and is retired after a long career as a civil engineer. He is a 30-year Disciple and is an active member of Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church, Memphis, Tennessee. He has served in various leadership capacities including Chair of the Diaconate Ministry, Elder Board Chair, and has contributed his gifts in several committees and Boards of the church, community, and Christian Church (DOC) Tennessee Region.



**In addition, the General Nominating Committee presents the following candidates for election to the General Board:**

For a two-year term ending in 2025\*:

- Sage Appleby (White, Lay, Female, OK, 40-49)
- Jessica Braxton (Hispanic, Clergy, Female, NC, 19-23)
- Stephanie Crowder (Black, Clergy, Female, IL-WI, 50-59)
- Calvin Curry (Black, Clergy, Male, VA, 50-59)
- Amanda Groves (White, Clergy, Female, IL-WI, 50-59)
- Cecelia Johnson (White, Lay, Female, AZ, 60+)
- Adria Patterson (Black, Lay, Female, KC, 40-49)
- Beau Underwood (White, Clergy, Male, IN, 30-39)
- Kikuo Yerem (Asian/Pacific Islander, Clergy, Male, OR-SI, 40-49)

For a four-year term, ending in 2027\*\*:

- Judy Alston (Black, Clergy, Female, OH, 50-59)
- Toni Colbert (Black, Clergy, Female, IN 60+)
- Miseon Choi (Asian/Pacific Islander, Clergy, Female, PSWR, 30-39)
- Isaac Elizarraras (Hispanic, Lay, Male, SW, 30-39)



Steven Gower (White, Clergy, Male, OH, 30-39)

Rich Lubbers (White, Lay, Male, OK 30-39)

Janet Maykus (White, Clergy, Female, TN, 60+)

Kathryn Tovar (White, Lay, Female, SC, 23-29)

*\*When the 2021 General Assembly was cancelled, the terms of General Board members were extended such that all the members of the General Board nominated by the General Nominating Committee are ending at the 2023 General Assembly. These nominees are being elected for a two-year term in order to reestablish staggered terms.*

*\*\*These terms may be adjusted if the proposed changes to the Design are implemented as indicated in GA-2343. The General Assembly would be asked to ratify all changes to terms of the General Assembly Officers and the General Board members at the 2025 General Assembly.*

### **New Members for the General Nominating Committee**

For election to a four-year term:

Jeff Champeau (L, W, M, 40-49, OK)

Brian Irwin (L, W, M, 40-49, KAN)

Pedro Ramos-Goycolea (C, H, M, 40-49, AZ)

Gabriel Trie-Pfefer (C, W, M 40-49, IN)

Beau Underwood (C, W, M, 30-39, IN)

They will join the following members of the General Nominating Committee, who are continuing their service:

Kevin McNeil (C, B, M, 40-49, VA)

Linda Necker (L, W, F, 40-49 AZ)

Candyce Black-Wells (L, B, F, 30-39, IL/WI)

Lydia Charlebois (L, W, F, 18-22, CAN)

Miseon Choi (C, API, F, 30-39, PSWR)

In keeping with the Design of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the members of the Corporation of the Division of Disciples Home Missions and the Corporation of the Division of Overseas Ministries were elected by the General Board at its April 2023 meeting. They are reported here to comply with the bylaws of the two ministries:

#### Disciples Home Missions

*The General Board elected the following persons:*

Beverly Bell  
 Charles Tatlock  
 Chimiste Doriscar  
 Chrissy Stonebraker-Martinez  
 Daniel Lyvers  
 Darlene Brewer  
 Derrick Perkins  
 Eronica King  
 Jeanne Thompson  
 Jennifer Larson  
 Lynette Li  
 Nadine Burton  
 Reuben Sancken-Marx  
 Ryan Moreno

#### Division of Overseas Ministries

*The General Board elected the following persons:*

Antonio Rodriguez  
 Baek Hee Kim  
 Bernice Rivera  
 Carla Aday  
 Cyndy Twedell  
 Dale Braxton  
 Dara Cobb Lewis  
 Jeremy Gillett  
 LaVerne Thorpe  
 Matthew Fehse  
 Megan Lowe  
 Merillat Flowers  
 Nestor Gomez Morales  
 Selena Reyes Martinez  
 Tyler Reeve

*Note: These rosters may have changed since the time of their submission to the General Nominating Committee.*

**GA-2350**

**COUNCIL OF COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES REPORT**

Submitted by  
Lester Newman

Chair of the Council Colleges and Universities

Disciples related colleges and universities represent a broad range of opportunities for students to experience the richness of a liberal arts education infused in the Disciples' tradition of faith, reason, and wholeness. There are fifteen colleges and universities that are in covenant with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) across the United States. While they are diverse in their settings and academic offerings, all have a commitment to academic excellence, a passion for social justice and inclusiveness.... thereby promoting a campus community that respects all people and cultures.

The covenant affiliated colleges and universities are listed below:

Barton College	Jarvis Christian University
Bethany College	University of Lynchburg
Chapman University	Midway University
Columbia College	Texas Christian University
Culver-Stockton College	Tougaloo College
Drury University	Transylvania University
Eureka College	William Woods University
Hiram College	

Disciples' schools focus on character, service, and leadership; providing many opportunities for students to get involved in the community, explore faith and values, and connect to new ideas and perspectives. All institutions offer Disciples scholarships and financial aid to help make higher education affordable. Each offers a wide range of undergraduate and/or graduate degree opportunities with a unique scope of majors and programs of study.

Established in connection with the church, through Higher Education and Leadership Ministries, the primary purpose of the Council of Colleges and Universities is to provide an avenue for discussion of common concerns and issues and for the sharing of its members' expertise. Additionally, the Council also exists as a forum at which the institutions may discuss strategies for denominational understanding and for the development of denominational fiscal support. The Council also serves as a venue to provide advice and recommendations to HELM and is a means by which institutions can explore appropriate ways of working with HELM and the wider church. In addition to providing a forum, the Council is a means for fellowship of the chief executive officers of the institutions holding membership in the Council.

Since the last in person General Assembly, the biggest challenge for the colleges and universities has been the global pandemic. This significantly disrupted the ability to

provide consistent in person education to student populations across the country. Several of our schools were negatively affected by the pandemic, by decreased student enrollment levels, increased costs due to covid protocols, increased cost to dramatically increase technology for the provisioning of on-line courses, and many other issues. Funding available from the federal government helped, but the challenges left many of our schools struggling to ensure they were providing quality education, engaging in innovative research, and helping to advance increase knowledge and contribute to societal advancement.

Highlights of the work of the council include:

Over the past several months, many of our DOC institutions have developed strong connections to the regions where they are located and have also worked to improve relationships with the wider Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

HELM's Council of Colleges and Universities (CCU) continues to promote and encourage Disciples' students to consider Disciples' colleges and universities as vital options for them to pursue their educational endeavors. The council's primary focus is to support these students during their undergraduate career through financial assistance, leadership development programs, and other resources. HELM's CCU also focuses on providing opportunities for adult and continuing education, both in person and through online access.

The HELM Leadership Fellows Program (LFP) received ten (10) new students, of which five are currently attending one of the DOC related colleges/universities. Through involvement in their churches, schools, and communities the new Fellows have already demonstrated their character and leadership skills. As this is a four-year Leadership Fellows Program, HELM will continue to nurture and support each Fellow's undergraduate studies and their on-going leadership development so that they can make a positive impact in our communities and beyond. Applications for the 2023 LFP cohort were due April 15, 2023.

Additionally, HELM awarded the William Gilbert and Florence Leonard Jones Ph.D. Scholarships to six Disciple students, two of whom attended a DOC institution during the 2022-2023 academic year. HELM awarded the Ann E. Dickerson Scholarship to two Disciple students who also attended a DOC institution during this academic year as well.

Accomplishments of a few of the DOC affiliated institutions:

- In 2021, Barton College was recognized for its honorable commitment to engaged, hands-on education by Colleges of Distinction, a one-of-a-kind guide for college-bound students. Barton was also named as a North Carolina College of Distinction.
- Eureka College has received a \$1.25 million lead gift for a \$2.5 million project to create a 27,000 square foot Student Success Center inside the Melick Library.

- Jarvis Christian College became Jarvis Christian University, now offering graduate degrees in Business Administration and Criminal Justice. Jarvis was ranked #20 among the top 25 Hidden Gems in the Online Schools Guide in Texas. Additionally, Jarvis was one of nineteen HBCUs recognized as a Fulbright Institutional Leaders for 2022.
- Midway University received and accepted a \$5 million pledge from Trustee Jan Hunter and her husband Richard, earmarked for renovation and conversion of the top floor of the existing Little Memorial Library into a student residential living area.
- Transylvania University received a \$25 million grant to help keep and attract top educators.
- The University of Lynchburg received a \$300,000 Ceasefire grant to curb gun violence.



**GA-2351****Higher Education Leadership Ministries**

The Report of the Council on Theological Education

Dr. Charisse L. Gillett, President

All of us are called to serve God with our lives. Some, however, feel called to serve in specific vocational ministries. For those who are discerning this calling, considering the possibility of theological education and where that might take place is crucial. Throughout the history the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and throughout the entirety of the Stone-Campbell movement, Disciples have been committed to the education and training of those serving in ministry. And while the context in which ministry takes place today is very different than in previous generations, the commitment to excellence in education continues.

Our schools of theology directly confront the feelings of lostness that many persons are experiencing today — a sense that everything is whirling out of control. Many in our congregations and institutional life are looking at how we can create a safer and more equitable future for all people. Disciples of Christ theological schools help us to confront the complex challenges facing us in ways that are beneficial to all of humanity. Today there are seven seminaries and divinity houses that are in covenant with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) across the United States. Each of them offers various degrees, certificates, and programs, as well as varying approaches in journeying with students. Prior to the COVID-19 global pandemic, many offered a traditional, residence-based experience, others had on-line classes with short on-campus intensives throughout the year, and still others had a blend of on-site and distance learning. Responding to a world amid a global pandemic Disciples theological institutions shifted to an online educational context and many of our theological institutions have continued to reach students with online theological education. The classes may differ in the format as well as specific degrees and programs, yet all have a commitment to journeying with students in discerning their calling, equipping them with the knowledge and experience to serve God in the wider church and world.

Established in connection with the church, through Higher Education and Leadership Ministries, the Council on Theological Education is an organized means of communication and cooperation both among its member institutions and between its membership and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The Council includes up to two voting representatives selected by each theological education institution affiliated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Current Members: Brite Divinity School; Christian Theological Seminary; Lexington Theological Seminary; Phillips Theological Seminary; Disciples Divinity House of the University of Chicago; Disciples Divinity House at Vanderbilt University Divinity School, and Disciples Seminary Foundation. Responding to the realities of the pandemic, the Council on Theological Education met online for two years but joyfully returned to an in-person meeting March 2023 in Indianapolis and were hosted by Higher Education and Leadership Ministries at the Disciples Center. Highlights of the meetings include:

- Presentation from and conversation with General Minister and President Teresa “Terri” Hord Owens. The conversation focused on The Narrative Project, the Compelling Preaching Initiative and the goals and priority of the Office of the General Minister and President, as well at the church’s commitment to strong theological education institutions.
- Presentations from and engagement with leaders from the Association of Theological Schools. Rev. Chris Meinzer, Senior Director and Chief Operation Officer and Dr. Deborah H.C. Gin, Director of Research and Faculty Development presented data on enrollment trends at schools across North America, with a focus on Disciples schools and the numbers of Disciples students enrolled in ATS schools. CTE committed to engaging in strategic and intentional conversations and action around increasing enrollment of Disciples students at Disciples theological education institutions.
- The Council engaged in conversation with President Brien Lewis and Rev. Emily Miller, Director of Spirituality and Religious Life at Transylvania University and met with Dr. Gary Kidwell from the Christian Church Foundation.
- The Council acknowledged leadership changes at Brite Divinity School, Christian Theological Seminary, Disciples Divinity House at Vanderbilt, and Disciples Seminary Foundation since the last General Assembly. We welcomed the leadership of Mr. Michael Cooper-White, Interim President of Brite Divinity School; Dr. Michael Miller, Executive VP and Dean of Brite Divinity School; Rev. Dr. David Mellott as President of Christian Theological Seminary; Rev. Dr. Nancy Pittman, President of Phillips Theological Seminary; Rev. Dr. Belva Brown Jordan, Executive Director of Disciples Seminary Foundation; We celebrate the continued leadership of Dr. Kris Culp at Disciples Divinity House of the University of Chicago; Rev. Beth Pattillo, Interim Dean Disciples Divinity House at Vanderbilt; Dr. Charisse L. Gillett, President and Rev. Dr. Loida I. Martel, Dean and Vice-President of Academics at Lexington Theological Seminary. We are grateful for the support of Rev. Dr. LaTaunya Bynum and Rev. Ron Degges and former HELM President, Rev. Chris B. Dorsey.
- The Council offered thanksgiving for the witness of Dr. Newell Williams as president and scholar in his retirement from Brite Divinity School.

When you attend a seminary of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), you’ll learn how to bring the beauty and challenges that we share in our life in common into conversation with the variety of theologies, practices, and rituals of our Christian faith. In addition, you’ll be introduced to the wisdom available to us through other religions and world views, which will create meaningful opportunities to help us serve our communities together. Authentic and faithful Christian leadership today requires us to be able to reflect deeply on the world we share and to invite others into that reflection. It also requires us to pay attention to the ways our theology could liberate or could oppress. When you attend a seminary of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), **you join God in the transformation of the world.**