

“It is given that those who have been given a trust, be found faithful” (1 Cor. 4:2)

Happy Independence Day Great River Region! I pray that your holidays are filled with cool summers, family fun, and glow of the Spirit that touches the hearts of others. I have been reflecting on this scripture as we are surrounded by financial opportunities in the Regional Office. During the summer months, I am often persuaded to give up some habits that takes me seasons to develop. Summer makes me lazy. I can lose a habit just as easily as I developed the discipline to be consistent with it. And then I have to start all over again!



We are now receiving Treasury Services Reports as a result of transitioning to become their client in January of this year. And we are challenged. We have a huge deficit, particularly with the building repairs being completed. With the deficit and building repairs, we are staring at (\$60,000). We have to look at the realities, especially when we are crunching numbers. We are tightening the reigns on our monthly expenses, and we will have to begin looking at salary, staff cuts, and travel – the ways that we support you, our partners in ministry.

We need every congregation to step up and consider making a donation to the *GRR Operational Income*. We have permanently restricted and temporarily restricted endowments, however, those monies cannot be used for operations. So with all of that being said, I ask you to be faithful to your giving during the summer months. If you can give more, please do. If you have never given to the work of the region, I challenged you to begin to giving to this ministry.

I am a faith leader, and I believe that if everyone gives a little bit, it will offset the expenses that we have. This will allow us to continue the work that God desires, and that my heart desires on your behalf! Be faithful – its trustworthy!!!

An update from Executive Regional Minister Search Chair, Jennie Gregory

The GRR Executive Regional Minister Search Team is made up of Gail Akins (MS), David Britt(LA), Lester Brooks (MS), Renee Eakin (LA), Ronny Nowell (AR), Robert Palmer (AR), Margaret Shelton (MS) and Jennie Gregory (AR, Chair). This dedicated Team is following the process outlined by the Christian Church (DOC) executive search process. A part of that process allows for an appointed Regional Minister to serve as a trainer and consultant for the Team. We have been blessed to receive guidance and good counsel from Rev. John Mobley, ERM Alabama/North Florida in the form of two formal training sessions and considerable correspondence.

After holding the information gathering session throughout the Region in the fall, the Profile and job description for the Executive Regional Minister was developed, approved and posted on appropriate websites. A call for letters of interest was issued and we received 11 such letters by our stated March 31, 2016 deadline. All of the interested candidates were sent a letter thanking them for their interest, asking them to respond in writing to four questions, and to complete their profiles in Search and Call. All of this information was provided to an independent evaluator for review and assessment. His report was thorough and extremely helpful to the Team as we discussed and deliberated our own individual assessments of the candidates.

We have moved three candidates to the next level of consideration. References are being checked and conference call interviews are being scheduled for August. After the conference calls, we will spend some time in prayerful discernment prior to bringing in our agreed upon top candidate. With the candidate here, face to face interviews and other introductions will occur. If things go as planned, the Team enters into formal negotiations with that candidate. After the terms of the Letter of Call are amicably agreed upon, the Board will be presented with the candidate and an official vote on the candidate and the Letter of Call “seals the deal”.

You can see that we still have a lot of work before us and given that, we have recommended to the Board that official action be taken to extend Rev. Dr. Nadine Burton’s Letter of Call through the end of 2016. There is a possibility that the Team will be ready to introduce the new Executive Regional Minister to the Assembly in November, but it is unlikely that their start date will be close to that time.

We continue to covet your prayers for the Team, for the candidates and for our churches as we work through this process and listen for and to God’s guidance.

Jennie Gregory
ERM Search Team Chair

2016 Camp and Conference Update:

AHHHHHMAZING! If I had only one word to describe our GRR Summer Camp experience at Camp Couchdale, I would choose amazing! Our Youth, were **amazing**, our Youth Leaders were **amazing**, our experiences together in the Spirit were **amazing** and most of all the presence of God was (and always is) **AMAZING!**

CYF Conference was an amazing journey of faith, fellowship and fun throughout the week as we focused on Psalm 139:14 “I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well”. Through debut Keynoter Allison McElroy’s messages we learned how to create our own Butterfly Circus and experience joy through celebrating God’s creation in and through us.



At Discovery and JYF Camps we learned how to worship together and even created our own musical instruments and used them to make a joyful noise to the Lord. By the end of Camp, Youth were able to recite our memory verse from John 4:23 "But the hour is coming and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in the spirit and truth". In lieu of a monetary offering, the Youth collected school supplies to donate to the Ouachita Children's Center and as a result they experienced the joy of serving others.

Busting Stereotypes was the center of our Chi Rho Camp as Youth were motivated and given hope to break down barriers while learning how to be more Christ-like. Youth grew closer together as they embraced their differences and celebrated their similarities.

All of our Summer Camps were filled with spiritual growth and learning alongside rekindled and new friendships surrounded by passionate Youth leaders jumping at the opportunity to encourage our Youth and be part of the overall camping experience. I know our Youth gained invaluable experiences, but I wholeheartedly believe I gained so much more from our Youth and Youth leaders coupled with being in the midst of God's beautiful creation, and for that I am truly blessed.



2016 Magnolia Camp and Conference Update:

The Magnolia camp was nestled in the woods of Roosevelt Park in Morton, MS. The theme, "*Fearless Faith: Courage in Community*," helped the kids to focus on the spiritual disciplines of a daily morning watch, prayers, and worship. It was also filled with spiritual lessons, arts and crafts, and a talent show. The kids designed their own T-shirts. Their creativity was amazing! Some of the kids went fishing and swimming, while others focused on praise dance and singing. An excerpt from one of the poems, says "My life and destiny is calling me to praise the Lord, every step my journey unfolds, only I can sing my song of the great moments, I've experienced as God continues to lead me on my life journey, I've got to sing my song of courage as I praise his mighty name" (*Josie McClorine*)

[Upcoming Camps - including 2017!! - click here](#)

[Camp Pictures 2016 - if you have pictures from camp, please send them to wendy@grrdisciples.org](mailto:wendy@grrdisciples.org)

Focus - July: The Center for Faith & Giving

The Center for Faith and Giving provides educational materials and serves as a conduit to other related resources that teach stewardship as a spiritual discipline.

We understand that stewardship is about more than money. It is about the faithful management of all of the resources and gifts that come into our lives, including, but not limited to the care for the earth; the observance of Sabbath; care for ourselves; care for the Gospel; and the care for our material goods and possessions.

We also provide access to both current trends and traditional understandings about "best practices" that relate to the handling of matters of church finance.

- **2016 Annual Campaign Materials**, based on Luke & Acts **are now available** on centerforfaithandgiving.com
- Do you know what **36 Questions YOU should be able to answer about your church?** Find out [here](#)
- **Study resources** - "Abundant Living - Re-thinking Stewardship, Personal Finance Workshop, Stewardship with Children, Stewardship in the First Testament, Stewardship in the gospels and much much more
- **Administrative, Worship and General resources** available
- Wondering what other Disciples are reading? Our **Book Review Team** reads and evaluates new and recommended books on the subject of Stewardship. These reviews are intended to help you make positive choices about resources that can be of help to you or your congregation.
- Curious about a book you have heard about? Read what others are saying about it and decide if you want to own a copy. Not sure what to read but looking for help? Browse through the reviews and see what captures your interest. Have a book you would like to recommend for review? Or, would you like to join our Review Team? Contact us at bbarkhauer@disciples.org

Take advantage of all the fabulous resources that are made available to you through the Center for Faith and Giving website centerforfaithandgiving.org - these are but a few of the offerings that Bruce Barkhauer has prepared for you, the Church, to use!

UPCOMING EVENTS in the Great River Region

Clergy Boundary Training - How current is your Boundary Training? If you need to update it, join us at the Mississippi Christian Missionary Convention Assembly PRE-Event on Wednesday July 6th at First Christian Church in Moss Point, MS. Rev. Donna Rose-Heim will lead this training - if you need to attend, please contact the regional office so we are prepared for you!! Call 501-562-6053 or email us (tina@grrdisciples.org or wendy@grrdisciples.org)

The **124th Convocation of the Mississippi Christian Missionary Convention** will begin on Thursday, July 7th - the theme is "*Living as Christians in Today's World.*" and the scriptures are Amos 5:14-15 and Philippians 4:8

Disciples Women Retreats - registration and scholarship information [here](#).

Disciples Clergy Retreat - September 26-28, Subiaco Abby. Rev. Bob Hill, Keynote Speaker

Regional Committee on Ministry - September 29-30 (in central Arkansas)

Regional Assembly 2016 - November 11-13 at Northside Christian Church in West Point, MS
- Information and registration coming soon

The Regional Committee on Ministry will be meeting with ministerial candidates and clergy under care in September in central Arkansas. Following is a part of the "Policies and Criteria for the Ordering of Ministry" for the Great River Region Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

The Regional Committee on the Ministry (RCOM) of the Great River Region (GRR) of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) ***works with candidates for ministry and their sponsoring congregations or bodies to see that those who feel called into ministry are prepared and qualified to serve and have the skills, education and experience to equip them for relevant, fruitful ministry.*** RCOM works in accordance with the Policies and Criteria for the Order of Ministry in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and ***acts on behalf of the GRR in matters pertaining to the care and nurture of ministerial candidates and certification for ordination, commissioning, and ministerial standing.*** It is important to note that this process is the ***joint responsibility*** of the candidate, congregation, and region and therefore requires a willingness of all three partners to invest in the process.

There are two categories of the Order of Ministry in the CC (DOC) which are officially certified by the Region – they are Commissioned Ministers and Ordained Ministers and it is with these ministers that the Regional Committee on Ministry meets. (As Disciples, we affirm that all persons are called to ministry and while Lay Ministry offices within the congregation play an enormously valuable role in the life of the local church, lay ministry offices do not need to seek official certification through the RCOM or the GRR).

Upcoming Events in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

- **Disciples Men [SESSIONS](#)** - July 7-8 at TCU in Fort Worth
- **Hispanic [Assembly](#)** - July 14-15 at Central Christian in Coral Gables FL
- **[Association of Disciples Musicians \(ADM\)](#)** - July 17-22 at the University of Indiana, Evansville
- **National Convocation of the Christian Church [124th Biennial](#)** will be held July 21-24 in Kansas City, MO - [register online](#).

- [DOC & UCC Youth](#) Event - July 26-29 at Disney World, Orlando
- [North American Pacific/Asian Disciples Convocation](#) - August 3-6 at Raynor Park Christian Church in Sunnyvale CA
- **General Committee on Ministry (GCOM)** - August 15-17
- DHM Presents **Children's Worship & Wonder training** on August 19-20 at First Presbyterian in Shreveport - click [here](#) for flyer and registration info
- [General Assembly 2017](#) - registration for GA 2017 begins in July!!

'I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one.' John 17:20-21a, NRSV



Wondering about current Joys & Concerns as well as what's happening with congregations in search? Check them out on the regional website - grrdisciples.org

If you've read through to this point, you're aware that our newsletter is undergoing a transformation - it is a process! Our dream for Currents is that it be a tool and a resource for you, the church, in the Great River Region. We will share goings on around the region that we hope will inspire you, maybe stimulate your creativity, and ultimately to share tools and resources with you from the Christian Church (DOC). We'd be interested in hearing from you what you'd like to know more about - Disciples Mission Fund, Week of Compassion, Higher Education & Learning Ministries, Regional Committee on Ministry? Email Wendy at wendy@grrdisciples.org with your thoughts about what would be helpful to you in this space. In the meantime, hold the Region in your prayers - prayers for the Search Committee as they continue the work to find us a new Regional Minister, prayers for our ministers as they lead our congregations, prayers for regional finances and prayers for constituency groups in the Great River Region. Until next month, blessings to you all!