



Great River Region Newsletter

9302 Geyer Springs Road, Little Rock, AR 72209

December 2016

grrdisciples.org

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As moderator of the Great River Region Board of Directors, I am happy to announce that Dr. Nadine Burton has been elected to serve as our permanent Executive Regional Minister. Dr. Burton has done an excellent job as Interim Minister, dealing with a number of unexpected challenges and visiting a terrific number of our congregations in the process. She has earned respect and appreciation not only from our congregations but at the national level as well.

This was something of an unexpected result in the sense that when we hired Nadine as our Interim, all were agreed that the Interim could not be considered for the permanent position during her one-year contract. Nadine has scrupulously honored that agreement in every way. However, when the year expired, the Board asked her to extend her ministry with us for several months, and Nadine agreed. During that extended time, and after considering many other candidates, the Search Committee felt both free and strongly led to approach her about the permanent position after checking with the General Minister & President's office to be sure they were honoring all protocols.

Please join me in thanking Search Committee chair Jennie Gregory and all members of the Search Committee for their diligent and prayerful work that took over a year to complete.

Trades of Hope Theme Week of Compassion
Nationally Feeding Bread Youth Walk Homeless
Curriculum Share Bringing People
Community Acceptance Needs
Discover Churches Division Mission
Benevolent Love Money Prayer Participate Outreach
Train Teach Activities



This word cloud represents the Great River Region's conversations from our Mission Gatherings events earlier this year! I pulled it directly from the Mission Gathering Data Report that I sent out to pastors last week. I spent this past weekend with a diverse group of representatives across the life of the Christian Church (DOC). Representing the Mission Council – It was an intense three days. We filtered through the data, prayed, conversed, added to the previous day's conversation, and attempted to answer many questions that would move us to a place of consensus regarding the future mission priority for the denomination. Chris Dorsey, President, Higher Education & Leadership Ministries, reminded us that we are "way finding, finding our way into God's mission." We still have work to do.

Back to the word cloud. Words that jump out at me are, "**Community, Needs, Prayer, Churches, Mission, Youth, and Outreach.**" These words depict who we are, who we desire to be, and what we are called to do as a regional body. What words jump out at you as you trim the tree, stuff the stockings, prepare the desserts, and plan for your family gatherings? These words call us into relationship with a new born baby. A baby, who became the living word and sacrifice for our redemption. Manger born, but one who died on a tree!

I pray that the cloud that forms us as a body, will transform us into a great cloud of witnesses, prepared and eager for neighborhoods waiting on us. We find our way in Jesus Christ, "Emmanuel with us" during this Christmas Season. ***"The word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood. We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory, like Father, like Son, generous inside and out, true from start to finish."*** (John 1:14 The Message).

*Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning,
Jesus, to thee be all glory given;
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing!
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!*

The Gospel of John opens with the beloved words,

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In him was life, and the life was the light of men...And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:1–4, 14)

Theologians may disagree about the meaning of the phrase “Word of God.” But the apostle John and writer of the carol above agree in their interpretation of the phrase: The Word is Jesus. “And the Word became flesh...” This is the miracle of Christmas.

An adage in education is the following, “I hear, and I forget; I see, and I remember; I do and I understand.” God wanted us to understand His love, so He communicated with us by doing something completely unexpected: He became us.

“O come, let us adore Him”

Advent Devotion contributed by Rev. Dr. Bobbie Yellott

Do you know the Great River Region's Mission Statement? If you don't I encourage you to learn it right now!

"...to build up the Body of Christ and strengthen the ministries of the Disciples of Christ in Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi."

Have you seen the mission of the Great River Region fulfilled? I have.

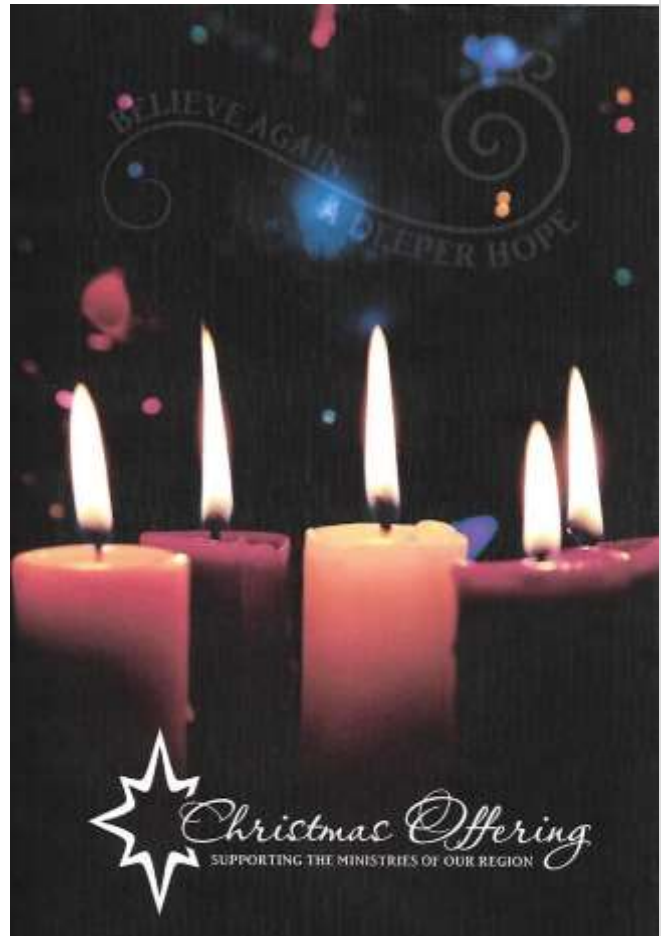
At Regional Assembly Dr. Burton announced that she had driven over 33,000 miles in the last year. Now, according to Dr. Randy Olson, a Senior Data Scientist at the University of Pennsylvania, Dr. Burton could have made a road trip of epic proportions across the United States and visited 50 important historical and national landmarks...TWICE. She did not, however, take the Clarke W. Griswold approach and instead she visited our congregations. She drove 33,000 miles in one year within the geographical boundaries of Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi to care for US; to build up the Body and support the ministries.

And we fail to support.

When you or your Pastor receive Ministerial Standing Forms, Currents, Regional Assembly Materials, invitations to retreats, etc. you are experiencing the administrative strengthening of the ministries in the Great River Region. When you attend Regional Assembly, Women's Retreat, Men's Retreat, Youth Camp, Minister's Retreat, you are experiencing the administrative support of the Body of Christ in the Great River Region. Those things don't happen without support, knowledge, and assistance from Wendy.

And we fail to give back.

In times like these, when things are tough and decisions must be made, your Regional



Board gathers Disciples from all over these three states, representing the rich diversity of our congregations, to be YOUR voice to the Regional Minister and staff.

But we remain silent.

Today I issue a challenge. My wish for the Great River Region on December 11 and 18 is that each congregation hears the impact the Region has had in supporting the ministry and building up the Body of Christ, that means YOU have to speak up, give a testimony, share on Facebook, tell a friend. I challenge every congregation to send in a Christmas Offering this year as 100% of the funds designated to the Christmas Offering stay right here in the Region to support the mission of supporting the ministries and building up the Body. Let's get the Great River Region back in black for 2017!

Rev. Ashley Sherard

Volunteer Stewardship Liaison for the GRR

(Also available on youtube.com, <https://youtu.be/dQAXOF4yrdg>)

Regional Assembly Wrap Up

Great River Region of the Christian Church (DOC) Regional Board, 2016–2018:

Position	First	Last	Email
*Moderator	David	Britt	dvbritt@gmail.com
*Moderator Elect	Robert	Palmer	therev@aristotle.net
*Secretary	Linda	White	lqwhite@comcast.net
*Treasurer	Carol	Johnson	carol.johnson123@yahoo.com
*RCOM Chair	Don	Morrow	dmorrow@nwadisciples.org
*Exec Regional Minister	Nadine	Burton	drnburton@grrdisciples.org
General Board	Zedric	Clayton	zkclayton@hotmail.com
Member at Large	Laura	Cosgrove	lkcosgrove@gmail.com
Member at Large	Renee	Eakin	bandcreakin@yahoo.com
Member at Large	Carole	Montgomery	cmontrx@aol.com
Member at Large	John	Johnson	jjohn@mvsu.edu
Member at Large	Charlie	Wallace	crwallace35@gmail.com
Member at Large	Gina	Anthon	ganthon985@gmail.com

Member at Large	Jason	Ferguson	sawyerandfinn@hotmail.com
Member at Large	Meagan	Cravens	meganbcraven.dvm@gmail.com
MCMC	Freddie	Harris	rev.freddie.harris@gmail.com
AR State Fellowship	Rita	Richardson	ritarich@suddenlink.net
Disciples Women	June	Pierce	j-pierce43@hotmail.com
Disciples Men	Charles	Curtis	charlesnancycrt@aol.com
Disciples Youth Rep	Ryan	Brooks	rybrooks405@cox.net
Disciples Young Adult Rep	Tamara	Smith	tamarasmith214@yahoo.com
Regional Elders	Miles	Cook	milescook@outlook.com

**Executive Committee*

BUSINESS OF THE ASSEMBLY:

Youth Camp at Disciples Crossing, 2017 – We are calling together a Youth Ministry Task Force to do strategic planning around the future of the Youth Program. What we have learned so far is that we have to seek new ways of giving our kids the opportunity to get the best camp experiences. We have an interim plan that will work for Summer 2017 (See Disciples Crossing Flyer). The majority of the pastors who send children and youth to camp agreed to try this trial proposal at Disciples Crossing. This will give us time to have these critical conversations and make strategic decisions about the future. If you're interested in serving on the Youth Ministry Task Force, please contact the Regional office.

Time and Place Resolution – passed by the Assembly

King's Highway Christian Church in Shreveport, LA issued a request to host the 2018 Regional Assembly – passed by the Assembly. Mark your calendars now for November 3–5, 2018!!

Recognition for Host Congregation – passed by the Assembly

We express our deep appreciation to Northside Christian Church, West Point, MS for the many sacrifices made by its members for their investments of time, talent and resources to make this a memorable Assembly in the Great River Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

General Assembly Resolutions

The two Resolutions presented to the Assembly were:

1. Becoming a People of Welcome and Support to People with Mental Illness and/or Mental Health Issues – passed by the Assembly – and –
2. “Substitute Resolution from the General Board on Gun Violence” – removed from the table by the Assembly

A few photos from Regional Assembly!!



To see additional photos, visit grrdisciples.org

Save the Dates – January 17th & 18th, 2017

Dr. Diana Butler Bass is a world– renowned scholar on the state of religion in the United States and the world today. Rev. Dr. David Britt, pastor of First Christian Church Pineville, Louisiana, has arranged for her to visit Alexandria, Louisiana as part of the Alexandria Rotary Club's 100th anniversary celebration. Dr. Butler Bass will speak at the First United Methodist Church in Alexandria at 7:00pm on Tuesday evening, January 17th. Admission is free, and a book signing will follow. The following morning (Wednesday, January 18th), Dr. Butler Bass will meet with interested clergy and lay leaders in an informal discussion session.

Anyone interested in finding out more, or in receiving advice about local hotels and other local attractions, is invited to contact David Britt at 318–308–0897 or email him at dvbritt@gmail.com. (He says Alexandria has a great zoo!) Anyone interested in finding out more about Dr. Butler Bass can consult her website: www.dianabutlerbass.com.

Please continue to hold the Region in your prayers – prayers for the new Regional Board, the Youth Task Force, the new Disciples Women Cabinet and our new Settled Regional Minister. Have a blessed and Merry Christmas and we'll see you in 2017!

Until next month, and next year!, blessings to you all!

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