



Currents

A publication of the Great River Region of the Christian Church (DOC)

Great River Region Newsletter

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grrdisciples.org

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Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

This is an excerpt from the sermon that I preached on Monday night at the Louisiana Interchurch Conference Worship Service:

Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. This then (By this) is how we know that we belong to truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God. And whatever we ask, we receive from Him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. And this is his commandment: that we should believe on his name of his son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment. (1 John 3:18-23 NIV)

As communities of faith, we profess a love for God, but we see and experience hate by our neighbor, aimed at our neighbors, and at ourselves if we take a particular stand on issues. We look out at the horizon and find ourselves in communities that we don't recognize and who don't know us.

When I joined MBCC in 1988, I fell in love with God and did not realize that loving others was a part of the package deal. I learned and I am learning to love others the way God loves me. The writer of John highlights self-examination of the ways we are called to love others. We've heard it from the beginning. Love is the most important commandment in life, and requires a human response. We've heard what this love is and how we are called to exemplify this love in action and in truth.

The challenge in this text is indifference and turning blind eyes to loving others, while claiming that we love God. The two do not go together. We are called to love in action and truth. To love God, we must love others. We cannot love God and hate others. We understand the need to love our brothers and sisters, check our actions, and see love as the commandment that brings our faith to bear fruit in meaningful ways.

When we love in action and truth, we set our hearts at rest in his presence. We are called to live the faith that we hold in common. As believers, God gives us assurance in his presence that will satisfy a potentially condemnatory heart. When our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence toward God. This is my prayer:

“We all must take, precautionary measures, if love and peace you treasure, Then you'll hear me when I say, Oh that Love's in need of love today, love's in need of love today Don't delay, don't delay, Send yours in right away, right away, Hate's goin' round, hate's goin' round, Breaking many hearts, breaking hearts, Stop it please, stop it please, Before it's gone too far, gone too far. (Stevie Wonder – Songs in the Key of Life)”

The Ministry of Regional Elders, by Miles Cook, Regional Elders Coordinator

Did you know that the Great River Region has an ongoing ministry of Regional Elders?

Initiated and commissioned during the 2012 Regional Assembly, Regional Elders serve the Great River Region as pastoral leaders, supporting our Region, our Executive Regional Minister, and offering pastoral support and friendship to all ministers and their families. Each Regional Elder has a “shepherding group” made up of ministers within a geographical area.

We have monthly “conference calls” with our Executive Regional Minister, **Dr. Nadine Burton**, for the purpose of ongoing communication. A major focus of our conference calls is a time of prayer for the concerns and celebrations of our region and our region’s ministers and their family members. We are currently planning a Regional Elders retreat for early June.

Our 12 Regional Elders are named below along with their home church and the geographical area they serve:

- **Rev. Mona Lisa Garrett**, First Christian – Bossier City, serving north Louisiana
- **Rev. Sherry Horton**, First Christian – Tupelo, serving northeast Mississippi
- **Rev. Zena Featherston - Marshall**, First Christian – Ft. Smith, serving western Arkansas
- **Rev. Carol Miles**, Cross Street Christian – Little Rock, serving northwest Mississippi
- **Rev. Susan Miller**, Pulaski Heights Christian – Little Rock, serving southwest Arkansas
- **Rev. Russell Myers**, United Christian Church – Jackson, serving central Mississippi
- **Rev. Bob Parks**, First Christian – El Dorado, serving northeast Arkansas
- **Rev. Ryan Pfeiffer**, First Christian Church – Fayetteville, serving northwest Arkansas
- **Rev. Ann Pickett - Parker**, New Generation Christian Fellowship – Pascagoula, serving southeast Mississippi

- **Rev. Glen Schory**, First Christian – Greater New Orleans, serving south Louisiana and south Mississippi
- **Rev. Ashley Sherard**, Jerusalem Christian – Lafayette, serving central and southwest Louisiana
- **Rev. Miles Cook**, Park Hill Christian – North Little Rock, serving central Arkansas

GRR Disciples Youth Summer Camp Registration is now open!!

Early bird registration closes April 1st; Regular registration closes 5/1; For information regarding Disciples Crossing camps, [Registration Instructions](#); [Cancellation Policy](#); and [Frequently Asked Questions](#), please contact the regional office at 501-562-6053.

The Regional Commission on Ministry met on February 19-20 at Kings Highway CC in Shreveport. In addition to reviewing clergy Standing Forms and discussing the future of Anti-Racism & ProReconciliation training for clergy, they also conducted seven candidate interviews for commissioning or ordination in the Great River Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Those recently commissioned are: Laura DeMann-Savage, FCC Bossier City; Barbara Driscoll, FCC Bossier City; Vince Endris, FCC Lake Charles; HollyJo Engle, FCC Blytheville; and Angie Ruggia-Kretzer, FCC Hammond. Odette Woods was affirmed for transfer of ordination.

Regional Commission for Ministry meetings are currently scheduled for:

- June 6-7, 2017 in Jackson
- October 9-10, 2017 in central Arkansas
- Feb 18-19, 2018 in Shreveport
- June 4-5, 2018 in Indianola
- August 27-28, 2018 in central Arkansas

From "Who Moved My Pulpit" to "Walking in the Dust of Rabbi Jesus" and "Beyond Church Walls", books by Dr. M. Eugene Boring, Brene Brown and Max Lucado - these are just a few of the long and varied list of books that the clergy of the Great River Region have read in the past year. Curious to see what else is on the list, call Wendy in the regional office (501-562-6053)

Great River Region of the Christian Church (DOC) Regional Board will be meeting on March 17-18, 2017 at Covenant Christian Church in Byram, MS.

The Disciples Women Cabinet of the Great River Region met recently to plan Disciples Women activities across the region for the upcoming year. Our theme & scripture for this year is *Many Branches, Rooted in Love*, Ephesians 3:17-18 (Common English Bible). Please mark your calendars now for Spring Workshops and Fall Retreats:

- April 1 - Arkansas workshop, central Arkansas location TBD
- April 20 - South Louisiana workshop at FCC, Baton Rouge
- April 22 - North Louisiana workshop at KHCC, Shreveport

- April 29 - Mississippi workshop at Covenant CC, Byram
- August 4-6 - Arkansas Retreat at Arkansas 4H Center, Ferndale AR
- September 15-17 - Mississippi Retreat at Eagle Ridge Conference Center, Raymond MS
- Sept. 29-Oct 1 - Louisiana Retreat at Wesley Center, Woodworth LA

General Assembly 2017 - *'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.*



Need Registration or Housing Information? Call Wendy in the regional office.

Never been to an Assembly before? Imagine this:

Worship that lifts your soul ~ Stories that touch your heart ~
 Educational resources to assist your congregation in ministry ~
 Conversations that stretch your mind ~ Messages that call you to action ~
 Connections that remind you that God's family is bigger than a local congregation

*All this and more in five short days! And 2017 will feature historic events – the election of a new **General Minister and President** as well as hearing the results of the **Mission First! pilot project**.*

Grace Disciples of Christ in Covington, LA is relocating and has items available for the "taking". If you are interested in any of the following, please reach out to Diane Troyer at 985-377-3544. Items include: the complete sanctuary, some office furniture, fax machine, phones, bibles, hymnals, folding tables, and sundry other items.

Oreon E. Scott Grant Applications - due June 1, 2017

Grants have to be written and submitted in conjunction with the Regional Office. If or your ministry teams have been sitting on a vision for your ministry because of funding, I would be glad to partner with you to look at ways we can get funds through Oreon E. Scott. The maximum grant amount is up to \$15,000. With a June 1st deadline, we have time to think, vision, and write a well-thought out grant. For a copy of the Oreon E. Scott grant [Guidelines and Application](#), contact Wendy in the regional office.

Please continue to hold the Great River Region staff, pastors, leaders, and volunteers in your prayers - for safe travel for Board members, for Dr. Burton as she travels to be with you in congregations for meetings, fellowship, guidance and direction. Continue to pray for our finances, needed staff, training and development, and a bright future in God's Kingdom.

Until next month, blessings to you all!