



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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- Assembly, Healthcare & the Regional Office - updates from Dr. Burton



General Assembly Update

It was good to be in a space where everyone knows your name! Meeting old friends and new colleagues, and spending time at the College of Regional Ministers booth, showed me the connectedness of the body of Christ called the Disciples. The Assembly Planning team did an outstanding job of planning the services with an intentionality on “Oneness.” The nightly worship experiences reminded me of an old time worship meeting, with everyone singing, on one accord, and waiting to see what would happen next. I want to give a special shout out

to John and Libby Ray, the praise band, and choirs, who provided leadership for the Music Ministry!

The nightly preachers challenged us to model Jesus’ example of oneness. One of the highlights for me was on Tuesday night, when Rev. Virzola Law, Pastor, Lindenwood Christian Church in Memphis, TN brought her new grandbaby, Ava Jonan, to the stage and shared her hope and prayers for a unified Disciples church for this fifth generation Disciple.

During the opening night of worship, Rev, Ronny Nowell texted me to share that the Youth from Northwest AR, who completed their summer mission in Columbus, OH in worship. He asked if I could come back and say hello. I walked back there and saw a sea of orange T-Shirts. It was a great moment to see our Youth in Worship. After worship, while waiting for their bus, someone struck up the song Father Abraham, and it was on. They received a lot of attention that night!!!

Our new General Minister and President, Rev. Teri Hord-Owens, received well over 2/3 of the votes to become the next General Minister and President. It was a solemn moment during worship; a moment of joy, and celebration to observe this woman of faith and integrity rising to

the occasion; a moment that will be recorded in Disciples polity and history books for future generations, to reflect on and understand how we as denomination got to this place of diversity.

Rev. Hord-Owens challenged the Assembly to go back to our theological and biblical roots, to pick up our bibles to study, and pray. She also challenged us to “Show Up” because the job is too big for one person. She hoped that “nothing would be high enough or divisive enough to diminish the integrity of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Because nothing can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord”.

Other Highlights from GA Included:

- GRR Disciples met at Spaghetti Warehouse to get acquainted, and share our stories around good food and fellowship. We were 30 strong around two tables!! The GRR will show up!!! We welcomed the new Pastor of First Christian Church, Fort Smith, Jarrett Banks and his spouse Lori Banks to an ever expanding table. Let’s pray that they transition well as Fort Smith prepares for new leadership.
- Ben Bohren, Retired Regional Minister for Northern California was the keynote speaker for the Pension Fund Breakfast. Ben shared his story when he lost his voice while actively engaging ministry as a pastor, and how his only glimmer of hope was a small light that kept blinking in the recesses of his soul. With that light, along with the support of a rehabilitation therapist who did not give up on him, and the financial assistance from Pension Fund, he slowly found his way back to “voice,” with wisdom for the journey, and a testimony that inspires many.
- At the Lexington Theological Seminary Luncheon, President Charise Gillette shared the story of the seminary’s proactive transition to a temporary space, financial stability and a 10-year accreditation approval from ATS.

I want to encourage you to visit the General Assembly website

(<http://ga.disciples.org/business/>) to see the activities and results of resolutions that were passed. ***Resolution 1728 “Proposed Amendment to the Design of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); Removal of congregations for cause of Inactivity,” is an important amendment that will affect congregations who do not report to the yearbook within a three year period.*** Please engage the resolutions, discuss them in your bible studies and Sunday school classes - some of you may want to embrace them now, based upon your vision for ministry, mission and passion for justice in your local communities.

The Regional Board will work through the list of Resolutions, and offer those for consideration of adoption at the 2018 Regional Assembly in Shreveport, LA.

Following are the General Assembly Resolutions that were **adopted** at GA 2017. If you would like to read about each resolution, please follow this link (<http://ga.disciples.org/business/>):

Adopted

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| GA-1717 | Resolution To Celebrate And Reaffirm Our Commitment To The Vision Of Planting 1,000 New Congregations By 2020 |
| GA-1718 | Concerning An Understanding Of The Merger Agreement Between The National Christian Missionary Convention With The International Convention Of The Christian Churches (Disciples Of Christ) |

- GA-1719 A Call For The Christian Church (Disciples Of Christ) To Advocate For The Rights Of Children Living Under Israeli Military Occupation
- GA-1720 Affirmation Of Our Commitment To Responsible Investing
- GA-1721 A Renewed Commitment To Reconciliation Ministry
- GA-1722 Repudiation Of The Christian Doctrine Of Discovery: A Call To
- GA-1723 On Becoming Immigrant Welcoming Congregations
- GA-1724 Resolution Concerning Carbon Neutrality
- GA-1725 Recognition Of The Region Of Canada As A Traditionally Underrepresented Cultural Community
- GA-1726 Proposed Amendment To The Design Of The Christian Church (Disciples Of Christ): Clarity On The Role Of Racial And Ethnic Ministries In The Design
- GA-1727 Proposed Amendments To The Design Of The Christian Church (Disciples Of Christ): Recommendations From The Racist Language Audit Task Force
- GA-1728 Proposed Amendment To The Design Of The Christian Church (Disciples Of Christ): Removal Of Congregations From The Yearbook And Directory For Cause Or Inactivity
- GA-1729 Report Of The Time And Place Committee
- GA-1733 Change In Regional Boundaries: Southwest And Kansas
- GA-1734 Election Of The General Minister And President
- GA-1735 General Nominating Committee Report For Officers Of The General Assembly
- GA-1739 CONCERNING EXECUTIVE ORDER 13780 (Emergency Resolution)
- GA-1740 CONCERNING SUPPORT FOR THE “NEW POOR PEOPLE’S CAMPAIGN: NATIONAL CALL FOR A MORAL REVIVAL” (Emergency Resolution)

DATED INFORMATION - Update on Health Care for Clergy and Church Employees - read more [here](#)

Todd Adams, Pension Fund President, shared the following announcement during the Health Care Update of the Business Session:

We have the opportunity to create Healthcare Zones that would be based on groups of church employees. We are going to make available all of the options – from private insurance, the ACA plans and a preferred option of pursuing Healthcare Zones where our pastors and employees would share together in the

cost of a partially self-funded plan with a maximum cost or exposure that functions similar to a fully insured plan. The success of these Zones will be dependent upon pastors and church leaders, community organizing to ensure a critical mass of people within each zone. Our goal is reasonable premiums with broader access to providers. I want to be clear this is not a restart of church-wide healthcare, but an alternative to throwing up our hands and doing nothing.

We must hear from you by August 15, 2017 via healthcare@pensionfund.org You will be provided with a link to fill out, providing confidential and important underwriting information. Please pick up the phone, call your friends and colleagues because the success of this program is not dependent upon Pension Fund, it is dependent upon you! PFCC is organizing a conference call for the week of July 31. Gracie will offer several webinars about the products.

Regional Office Clean Up

The office clean-up is slated for the week of August 14 -18, 2017. If you are in the area, we would ask that you stop by and lift a box, go through a file, clean out a cabinet and help us label, and organize items for transition to our new space at Pulaski Heights CC. There is no cost to attend!!!

My August – September Calendar

In August, I will be presenting a two-part Bible Study at the Arkansas Disciples Women Retreat, presiding over the recognition of the transfer of ordination of Rev. Odette Woods at Mt. Sinai Christian Church in North Little Rock, preaching at Highland Christian Church in Bella Vista and meeting with FCC, Maumelle, AR.

In September, I will be attending a seminar at CDM+ to learn about new ways to utilize the Search & Call system, and will be presiding over the installation of Rev. Walter Rogero at FCC, Mountain Home, AR. I will also be attending the Christian Board of Publication Board meeting in St. Louis and will finish up the month at the Clergy Retreat in Subiaco, AR.

GRR Disciples Youth Fall Fandango - October 13-15 - mark your calendars and watch for more information to come!!

The Regional Commission on Ministry (RCOM) will meet and conduct clergy candidate interviews on October 9-10, 2017 in central Arkansas (Location to be determined).

Great River Region of the Christian Church (DOC) Regional Board will meet on October 20-21, 2017 in central Arkansas (Location to be determined).

GRR Disciples Clergy Retreat - September 25-27, 2017 at Subiaco Abbey in Subiaco, AR

"An Acceptance Based Approach to Spiritual Growth" - We are growing not to become included but because of the good news that "I am already included."

Keynote Speaker: Rev. Dr. David Artman, FCC, Harrison

Registration form, click [here](#)

Disciples Women of the Great River Region

Order your Retreat shirt [here](#). This year, we're doing something new - you can go online, place an order for your shirt/s and pay for them/pick them up when you arrive at Retreat.

Arkansas Retreat, August 4-6 at 4H Center ~ Speaker - Martha Lester

- Saturday afternoon workshops at Retreat this year: Card Making & Stamping with Linda White and her "crew"; Woman2Woman Worldwide Presentation on the Middle East 2016 trip by Anne Page, FCC, Vicksburg and a Bible Study with Rev. Dr. Nadine Burton.

Mississippi Retreat, September 15-17 at Eagle Ridge ~ Speaker - Rev. Dr. Pat Donahoo

- New this year - Retreat begins on Friday evening with supper!!
- Saturday afternoon workshops: Card Making & Stamping with Linda White and her "crew"; Making Blessing Jars with Avis Phillips; Angel Jewelry with Anne Page & Avis Phillips.

Louisiana Retreat, September 29-October 1 at Wesley Center ~ Speaker - Rev. Angie Ruggia-Kretzer

- Saturday afternoon workshops: Laughing Yoga led by Khadijah Tucker; an Indoor labyrinth led by Tina Lewis; Bible Study with Patty DeVille; Crafting crosses out of old hymnals and/or burlap with Yvonne Taylor and Suzanne Lara.
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Attention Clergy - Disciples History & Polity Class offerings

The next **Center4Ministry.org** course will begin on October 10, 2017. You can register at center4ministry.org

Phillips Theological Seminary will have an online History & Polity course in Fall 2017

Disciples Seminary Foundation is also offering a Disciples History & Polity course - scheduled for August 16-19 at DSF in Claremont, CA. You can register at <https://www.dsf.edu/history-polity>. For more information, please contact Jess Kimm at jkim@dsf.edu.

Until next month, blessings to you all!