



## Great River Region Update

4724 Hillcrest Avenue, Little Rock, AR 72205

December 14, 2018

[grrdisciples.org](http://grrdisciples.org)

### A Christmas Story

I got the opportunity to spend time in the Mountains of Georgia, celebrating the birthday with a colleague. Family and friends shared this milestone in her life. That Saturday afternoon, we attended a Christmas Musical show and later had dinner. What we did not anticipate later that evening, was a snow and ice storm at the top of the Mountain. After dinner, we made our way back up the mountain. The further we climbed, the more ice and snow we encountered, until we could go no further.

We knew that the cabin was right around the corner and if need be, we could have gotten out and walked the rest of the way. However, my friend's brother took over the wheel and navigated us around the slippery slope. Her other brother drove the van behind us. We made it to the other side of the one-way ridge. And there we were, for the next two days, together yet isolated, comfortable yet anxious, and trusting yet uncertain.



We were in a luxurious cabin that was spacious enough for everyone to get into their own cubby hole, and we did not feel cramped for the extra two days that we had to stay in. The homeowner told my friend on the phone, "whatever is in the house, you can have." From games, to movies, pool and ping pong, reading, laughter and plenty of cooking, we began to know each other in more intimate ways. Two days later, we were able to make our way down the mountain.

We experienced gratefulness and thankfulness. We experienced the safety and security of being welcomed in a stranger's home. We had enough food to sustain us until the tree branches could be moved from the road. ALL of our airlines tickets were changed with no fees, and we were upgraded to a suite in our hotel room on Monday evening.

I learned some valuable lessons from that experience. I will share one of them with you. When we are stuck, and we know that our destination is just around the corner, God will send someone who can handle the road ahead. And if we keep going, with the grace and care of a shepherd, we will make it to a place of safety, just on the other side of the ridge!

Merry Christmas Great River Region! May the love of the season keep you warm, safe, and close to family and friends, as we celebrate the birth of a savior who can take us on the other side of the ridge.

## ***Christmas Offering***

*The Christmas Offering highlights Regional Ministries. It is a time to give back to the Great River Region because we believe in the work. Our ministry is to you - our congregations, and ministers, to support your vision and work in your communities of faith. I shared once with someone when visioning about the future office space and our building on Geyer Springs Road, "The Great River Region is my boardroom." All three states, 106 congregations. Its virtual, communal, face to face, and necessary ministry. Thank you for partnering with us and giving generously to this ministry.*

### **Christmas Greetings from Dr. Burton**



Christmas Special Offering dates  
December 16 and December 23

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### **Priorities for 2019**

- Develop Future Vision Story Strategies and Tactics for Congregational Engagement
- RCOM (Regional Commission on Ministry) nurture of candidates for Ministerial Credentials
- Pro-Reconciliation/Anti-Racism and Boundary Training development for All Clergy
- New Church Committee Development: Recruiting a New Church Planter for Covington, LA Project
- Hiring of Part-time Youth Coordinator, Camp and Conference
- Congregational leadership (laity) training and development

### **Future Story & Capacity Report Goals:**

- To develop transformational Clergy Leaders who foster good collegial relationships and teach each other
- To facilitate and resource congregational program life through the development of the Great River Region Institute
- To re-develop congregations through strategic partnership and new church development
- To seek Racial Reconciliation and justice and full participation of all church in regional life

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### **Regional Assembly Highlights**



We lingered for a while on another mountain, in November with our Regional Assembly! It was an awe inspiring, educational, and meaningful time of ministry. I want to thank my wonderful planning team who implemented a thought-provoking, educational, and worshipful Regional Assembly. Our host Church did an amazing job: Pastor David Brice, our host pastor and Renee Eakin, our host chair and members went out of their way to welcome and make us feel right at home! Our kitchen crew showed out because we all love

good food! Thank you so much for your hospitality. Our Music Director, what can we say! Dr. Jeffrey Murdock, the Regional Assembly Choir, host musicians and that 8 string horn section on that Sunday took us to new levels in high church! Thank you! Most of all I want to thank all of you who came and sacrificed your time, talent, and resources. It was a high time!

Wendy and I rested well since November 4. I pray that you have too. We turn our attention to this advent season, to celebrate the Savior, Jesus Christ our Lord. We are busy with Christmas shopping, baking, making travel plans for families! Jesus' birth and witness brings us to the reality that "yes, its time to come down from this mountain, because there is much work to be done." We pause and reflect that we have a future vision story, core values, goals, and congregations to engage. It's been an amazing year. The best is yet to come. We pray that you are with us in 2019 and beyond!

**From Kay Shaddock, El Dorado**

I am a glass-half-full person, so I enjoyed very much being a part of the recent Regional Assembly in Shreveport. My "glass" grew full as I felt the love and concern that flowed throughout our time together. It has been at least 20 years since I attended a Regional Assembly and it was really a pleasure to greet longtime friends and meet new ones.

**From Rev. Robert Palmer, Pastor at Cross Street Christian Church, Little Rock and Moderator, Great River Region Regional Board 2018-2010**

There is a story of four preachers who met for lunch. During the conversation one pastor said, "Our people come to us and pour out their hearts, and confess their sins and their desires. Since confession is good for the soul, let us do the same for each other." The first confessed he had a gambling problem and would go to a casino when he was out of town. The second confessed he struggled with lust. The third one confessed to materialism. The fourth Preacher remained silent. The others urged him to participate. Finally, he answered, "It is gossiping and I can hardly wait to get out of here!"

After attending our Regional Assembly, I feel like the fourth preacher – I don't want to gossip, but I do want to go forth and let people know what a blessed experience it was. There are at least three reasons why I feel the Great River Region Regional Assembly was a blessed event.

First, we adhered to our Regional by-laws. In them it is states: *"The program and business of the Regional Assembly shall include: worship, education of its members, and the transaction of business. In organizing for business the Regional Assembly shall receive and act upon proposed program and policy, reports, resolutions, other items duly referred to it and elect leadership of the Regional Church."* We accomplished this.

Next, we demonstrated our Covenant which states *"In accepting our Vision, Mission and Imperative, we affirm our need to: be an antiracist/pro-reconciliation church, strengthen relationships among all manifestations of the church"*

I overheard the following comments from my brothers and sisters who were in attendance: *"This is the best workshop on Reconciliation that I have ever been to."; "We did not agree with everyone but we love everyone"* and one sister said *"I wish more people were here because we all need to see and hear the music and the message."* Last but not least someone commented, *"This church is a wonderful place to meet, Nadine and Wendy did a great job putting this together."*

In these times of dissent and polarization in so many of our communities and some churches, it is with a thankful heart that I feel blessed to be a part of the Great River Region of the Christian Church (DOC) and to serve as your newly elected Moderator.

## The Business of the Region

Great River Region October 2018 Financial Statement, click [here](#)

Great River Region congregational giving YTD comparison (DMF, Blessing Box, Designated for Operating and Christmas):

- Giving by Congregation - [November 2018](#)
- Giving by DMF amount - [November 2018](#)

For previous month's giving reports by congregation or DMF, visit [grdisciples.org](http://grdisciples.org), [Disciples Mission Fund](#) page

Great River Region's Giving as of November 2018:

- Disciples Mission Fund (includes Blessing Box) giving is **down 24.7%**
- Christmas Offering **down 17.7%**
- Designated for Operating is **up 14.7%**
- Week of Compassion is **up 25.6%**
- Reconciliation is **up 20.8%**
- GRR Operating deficit of **-\$67,586\***

\*as of October 2018

For additional giving reports, visit Disciples Treasury Services website, [here](#)

## Meet Your 2018-2020 Regional Board

Officers - Executive Committee					
Moderator	Robert	Palmer	therev@aristotle.net	Cross Street CC	Little Rock
Moderator Elect	John	Johnson	jjohn@mvsu.edu	E. Percy Street CC	Greenwood
Secretary	C. Shawn	Allen	csallen89@gmail.com	First CC	Slidell
Treasurer	June	Vander Molen	junevm@bellsouth.net	First CC GNO	Metairie
RCOM	Ryan	Pfeiffer	ryan@fccfayetteville.org	First CC	Fayetteville
Executive Reg'l Minister	Nadine	Burton	drnburton@grdisciples.org	Cross St CC	Little Rock
Board Members					
General Board Rep.	Charlie	Wallace	crwallace35@gmail.com	First CC	Little Rock
Member at Large	Carol	Johnson	carol.johnson123@yahoo.com	First CC	Hot Springs
Member at Large	Paul	Seal	paulrayseal@gmail.com	Highland CC	Bella Vista
Member at Large	Carole	Montgomery	cmontrx@aol.com	Covenant CC	Byram
Member at Large	Linda	White	lqwhite@comcast.net	Park Hill CC	N. Little Rock
Member at Large	Ruby	Howard	rubyhoward81@gmail.com	Bethel CC	Coila
Member at Large	Gina	Anthon	ganthon985@gmail.com	First CC	Hammond
Member at Large	Jason	Ferguson	sawyerandfinn@hotmail.com		
Member at Large	Megan	Craven	meganbcraven.dvm@gmail.com	First CC	Gulfport
MCMC	Rufus	Edwards	rufusedwards42@yahoo.com	Christian Chapel	Port Gibson
AR State Fellowship	Rita	Richardson	ritarich@suddenlink.net	Central CC	Russellville
Disciples Women	Renee	Eakin	bandcreakin@yahoo.com	KHCC	Shreveport
Disciples Men	Charles	Curtis	charlesnancycrt@aol.com	Utica CC	Utica
Disciples Youth Rep	Ryan	Brooks	rybrooks405@cox.net	FCC	Rogers
Disciples Young Adult Rep	LaShaundra	McCarty	lashaundratsmith@gmail.com	New Generation CF	Pascagoula
Regional Elders	Miles	Cook	milescook@outlook.com	Park Hill CC	N. Little Rock



## Giving to the Annual Fund of the Great River Region

When you make a pledge to the Annual Fund of the Great River Region, you help strengthen the financial base for the program work that we do in the Great River Region: congregational visits, clergy visits, workshops, camp and conference ministries, Regional Commission on Ministry (RCOM Administration), and regional and general church life and participation.

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### GRR Disciples Clergy

**Clergy Standing forms are due in the Regional Office on January 15, 2019.** If you are clergy with standing, click [here](#) to complete your standing form online.

The Regional Commission on Ministry will conduct their first meeting of 2019 with clergy candidates on February 6-7 at FCC, Monroe, LA. Additional dates for 2019 interviews are, July 8-9 (central MS) and October 1-2 (central AR).

**Clergy Training Event:** Pro-Reconciliation/Anti-Racism Training will be held on Saturday, March 9 at First Christian Church, Pine Bluff. The event is free, but you must register. Online registration coming in January.

#### Are you considering seminary?

If so, NOW is the time to consider applying to Brite Divinity School in Fort Worth! Brite has a long history of transforming the world through scholarship, justice, and practice. We accomplish this through excellence in theological education & preparation for ministry. If you have achieved a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or greater in undergrad and are planning to complete a Master of Divinity degree, Brite has an excellent opportunity for you right now! January 15<sup>th</sup> is the application deadline for Brite's Major Merit fellowships. Major Merit fellowships provide for FULL TUITION, plus an annual stipend of \$10,000 for three years of study. Brite also offers merit awards that include a full-tuition grant plus annual stipends ranging from \$1000-\$5000. Learn more about Brite Divinity School at [www.brite.edu](http://www.brite.edu).



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### Upcoming Disciples History & Polity course offerings at Phillips Theological Seminary (PTS):

- January 7 – March 3 (Registration deadline December 20, 2018)
- August 19 – October 13, 2019

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### Search and Call

The region currently has three congregations engaged in a search process to call a new pastor; First Christian Church, Mountain Home; First Christian Church, Berryville; First Christian Church, Slidell LA; We also have an opening for a New Church Planter in Covington, LA. For more information, please contact the regional office.

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### GRR TRAINING INSTITUTE

#### Pro-Reconciliation / Anti-Racism training event

March 9, 2019  
First Christian Church, Pine Bluff  
Registration required – no cost to attend  
Registration opening soon

#### Congregation Leadership Training event "The Elder as Congregational Leader"

March 9, 2019  
First Christian Church, Pine Bluff  
Registration required – no cost to attend  
Registration opening soon



## Constituency Groups: Youth, Disciples Women, Disciples Men, MCMC, ASF

Mark your calendars now for:

### Great River Region of the Christian Church (DOC) MCMC Assembly Pre-Event Seminar

Wednesday, July 10, 2019  
9 am – 3 pm (lunch on your own)

### Mississippi Christian Missionary Convention (MCMC) Annual Assembly July 11-13, 2019

PreEvent and Assembly all take place at:  
**Christian Church of Deliverance (DOC)**  
**Port Gibson, MS**  
Host Pastor: Minister Columbus Felton

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## Great River Region Youth

### SNOASIS

February 22-24, 2019 at Camp Couchdale  
Ages: 6th - 12th grade

Theme: **"Identity Crisis: Who are you?"**  
Cost: \$130

Click here to [download registration form](#)

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### Disciples Crossing Camp Dates 2019

June 7-9	Discovery Camp
June 10-15	ChiRho Camp 1
June 17-22	CYF Conference & Niners
June 23-29	Eighters
June 24-29	ChiRho 2
July 1-5	JYF 1
August 5-9	JYF 2

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### June 24-30 Magnolia Camp & Conference

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### Disciples Peace Fellowship now accepting Applications for 2019 Peace Interns!

Information about this extraordinary summer internship, the application process and all online application materials can be found on our website, [DisciplesPeace.org/apply](http://DisciplesPeace.org/apply).

All applications and references for this paid internship **must be completed and submitted by February 10, 2019**. If you have any questions about the internship or the application process, please reach out at [DPFintern@gmail.com](mailto:DPFintern@gmail.com) or 480-399-6945.

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## Disciples Women

Disciples Women cabinet will be meeting in early 2019 to plan for all activities for the year.

The ROSES (Regions of the Sun, Equipping & Serving) InterRegional Disciples Women Leadership Training event will take place on September 13-15, 2019 at First Christian Church in Tulsa  
More details coming soon.

Please mark your calendar and plan to be there to represent the Great River Region Disciples Women! Registration info coming soon.

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## Around the Region in our Congregations

### Join Pulaski Heights Christian Church for

#### *The Good News Through Jazz*

Sunday, December 16 at 3 pm  
4724 Hillcrest Avenue, Little Rock  
All are welcome

### Join First Christian Church, Sherwood Service of Remembrance & Hope

Friday, December 21, 2018 @ 7:00 pm

Blue Christmas - when the holidays hurt  
For anyone who is hurting or experiencing loss  
the death of a spouse, child, family member

For anyone who is alone, isolated or stressed. For anyone who is experiencing emotional pain. The light shines in the darkness



## Campus Outreach ministry starting at FCC, Russellville

We are in the process of establishing a campus ministry at Arkansas Tech University. We plan to provide Bible studies, prayer groups, and an “adopt a student” program. If you know a student who is enrolled at AR Tech (or, if you are a student enrolled at Tech) – please reach out to Minister Scot Crenshaw at [scotcrenshaw@gmail.com](mailto:scotcrenshaw@gmail.com), or by contacting the church at 479-967-3874. First Christian Church in Russellville looks forward to serving in this way and we believe it will be a great benefit to those who participate – students and members alike.



### Looking for some (vintage) choir robes?

First Christian Church in Sulphur has 14 solid medium blue robes made of what feels like cotton as well as 18 off-white with built-in red surplice and "FCC" monogrammed on the collar. These are a typical choir robe dry-cleanable fabric. If interested, please contact Rev. Bobbie Yellott at [turtle\\_lady\\_8@yahoo.com](mailto:turtle_lady_8@yahoo.com)

## **Across the Disciples**



**SAVE the DATE**  
March 4-7, 2019  
**45th Annual Black Ministers Retreat**  
Embassy Suites by Hilton- Nashville Airport  
Nashville, TN

Join us in 2019 for more fun, fellowship, memorable preaching, and education relevant to your life and ministry.  
[www.discipleshomeissions.org/black-ministers-retreat](http://www.discipleshomeissions.org/black-ministers-retreat)



## **General Assembly 2019**

July 20-24, 2019 ~ Des Moines, IA

Registration is now open

[General Assembly Registration](#)



## **Resources for your congregation?**

Check out these resources from the Center For Faith and Giving:

[Sample Gifts Policy](#)  
[Electronic Giving](#)  
[Weekly Giving Guide](#)  
[Tithing Calculator](#)  
[Electronic Giving Card](#)

[How To Prevent Fraud](#)  
[Pass the Digital Offering Plate](#)  
[Sample Campaign Letters](#)  
[Handbook for Treasurers](#)  
[Most Wasted 2 Minutes in Church](#)

### **DHM Student Scholarship Program**

- [Guidelines for ministerial student scholarships](#)
- [Application form for ministerial student scholarships](#)
- [Reference form for ministerial student scholarships](#)

### **DHM Scholarship Descriptions**

- [African American Scholarship Fund](#)
- [Disciple Chaplains' Scholarship \(first-year seminarians\)](#)
- [Edwin G. & Laretta M. Michael Schol \(ministers' spouses\)](#)
- [James M. Philputt Memorial Scholarship/Loan \(see specifics\)](#)
- [Katherine J. Schutze Memorial Scholarship \(women seminary students\)](#)
- [Lloyd and Iva Mattison Youth Ministry Scholarship \(sem students focusing on Youth Ministry\)](#)
- [Michelle Jackson Scholarship Fund](#)
- [Nebraska Legacy Fund](#)
- [Rowley/Wolfe Ministerial Educ Scholarship \(sem students\)](#)
- [Star Supporter Scholarship/Loan \(for African-American ministerial students\)](#)

### **Additional Scholarships Beyond D.H.M.**

- [HELM financial aid](#) for undergraduate and doctoral programs
- [Eureka College](#) accepts applications for full-tuition ministry fellowships, contact Chaplain [Bruce Fowlkes](#) at [\(309\) 467-6429](tel:3094676429).