

SPRING 2016

COVENANT

A Report to the Church

Journal

Administrative Committee meets in Indianapolis

As members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) we are called to be one by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Working together in covenant, we share both joys and burdens in all the expressions of the Church – congregational, regional and general.

To that end, the Administrative Committee (AC) of the General Board, led by Moderator Tony Rodriguez, met in Indianapolis, April 18-19, 2016. The AC functions as a permanent standing committee whose duties include implementing policies and actions of the General Board. The AC also serves as the board of the Office of General Minister and President.

In April 2015, the General Board cancelled its 2016 meeting and assigned its duties to the Administrative

Committee for the year, so resources would be available to fund a Mission Council meeting for the Mission First! pilot project. The project is a pilot of both visioning and governance. This action led to the Administrative Committee acting in several capacities during their day and a half meeting. First Vice Moderator Tom Perring led devotions throughout the meeting as a reminder that the work being done was worshipful work. In the evening, members of the AC took part in a Mission Gathering. The experience

prepared them for an update on the Mission First! pilot.

A portion of the AC meeting was spent in executive session to receive the report from the General Minister and President Search Committee chair, Jackie Bunch. In keeping with the confidentiality surrounding this process, all staff members from the Office of General Minister and President were excused from this session.



Sharon E. Watkins



Antonio Rodriguez



Tom Perring



Mary Lou Kegler



Sue Morris



Approved

- Angela Kaufman was named to represent the AC on the Hispanic Pastoral Commission.
- Timothy Butler will finish Jennifer Garbin's term on the AC.
- Reconciliation Ministry updated its grant timeline to have applications due and funds disbursed in the same calendar year.
- The supplemental document to the Executive Search Process created out of the report from the Cultural Competency Committee was divided into a recommendation for possible updates to the Executive Search Process and a document to supplement the Executive Search Process. The results will be brought to the next Administrative Committee meeting for review and potential approval.
- GA-1524 – A Call to End Solitary Confinement-an Item for Reflection and Research will be addressed in the 2017 General Assembly Justice Track in consultation with the submitting organizations.

Received

- The General Nominating Committee Report was received.
- 2015 Audit for the Office of General Minister and President
- Report from the Christian Church in Kansas Regarding their Regional Allocation
- **General Minister and President Search Committee** - The Administrative Committee adjourned into Executive Session to hear the report from the General Minister and President Search Committee.
- **Annual Reports from the General Ministries, Racial/Ethnic Ministries and the Office of General Minister and President:** Among the highlights from the general ministries were reports of new partnerships between Disciples Volunteering and ecumenical partners to serve those affected by flooding in South Carolina; the progress of the Middle East Initiative of the Division of Overseas Ministries/Global Ministries and the learnings from partners there; transitions in the Office of General Minister and President staff; a report from Treasury Services which included that 15 of the 32 regions are utilizing Treasury Services bookkeeping, saving literally thousands of dollars in each of those regions.
- **Annual Reports from the Regional Ministries:** Many regions are renewing their commitment to pro-reconciliation/anti-racism work. Several regions are working to more fully unite the ethnic groups and conventions in their geographic area. Several regions are concentrating on rebuilding bridges with churches that have been marginally involved in recent years. Two regions that have had strongly defined area ministries in the past are looking at new ways to work together as unified regions. Thirty-two new churches were either started or have joined the Disciples including several new ethnic groups. Regions are taking advantage of technological changes in an effort to focus more dollars towards mission in several ways. Five regions now operate without rented or owned space; Regions are forming inter-regional partnerships; Regions are refocusing their regional ministers' time; At least two regional ministers are now bi-vocational.
- The final report from the Racist Language Audit Task Force, created by GA-1328, The Removal of Any Racist Language in the Governing Documents of the Christian Church (Disciples Of Christ) in the United



States and Canada provided specific recommendations regarding The Design, Theological Foundations and Criteria for the Ordering of Ministry for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Standing Rules of the General Board and the accountability documents and agreements related to the racial/ethnic ministries of the church. It also recommends that the church in all of its expressions not only review its foundational documents, but also its behavioral documents (procedural, orders of operations, personnel documents, process for standing, etc.). The recommendations in the report are being forwarded to the appropriate committees and/or ministries for development of next steps.

- In 2015, the Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries forwarded a letter from the Hispanic Board of Directors to the General Board requesting a number of issues be addressed. Sharon Watkins reported that the six regional convenciones will be listed in the Yearbook and Directory of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) as part of the Hispanic and Bilingual Fellowship. They include Arizona, Midwest, Northeast, Pacific, Southeast and Southwest.
- The Task Force for Social Witness, created by GA-1524, Call for a Church Wide Task Force on Sense-of-the-Assembly resolutions, has begun its work with a goal of bringing a recommendation to the February 2017 General Board meeting.
- The Task Force for Just and Ethical Meeting Locations, created by GA-1537, Regarding the Future Location of General Assembly, General Board and Administrative Committee Meetings or their Successors, recommended collaborating with the Justice Table on how to incorporate justice issues into the site selection process used by the Time and Place Committee for General Assemblies as well as for other meetings of the church.
- The General Assembly Futuring Task Force, created to explore alternative models of gathering as a General Assembly which would be financially sustainable at our current attendance levels, is currently gathering information about different models used by other organizations.

Mission First

Mission Gatherings, the first step in the Mission First! process, have begun in earnest. Over 60 Mission Gatherings have been scheduled throughout the life of the church. (Please note: Since the meeting in April, the number of Mission Gatherings has grown to at least 70.) Disciples will gather for these discussions at regional assemblies, the racial/ethnic biennial meetings, general ministry board meetings, youth camps, colleges and universities, seminaries, regional Hispanic convenciones, regional women's meetings, cluster and area meetings. The energy has been high, with one gathering host saying, "The atmosphere was electric."

The Mission First! Implementation Team, chaired by Lonora Graves, will give the findings to the Mission Council in preparation for its December 2016 meeting. The council's goal is to analyze the findings, identifying a unifying common mission focus for the Disciples of Christ. The Mission Council is made up of representatives from local congregations, regional ministry, general ministry and institutions of higher education. (Find out more at missionfirst.disciples.org.)

And finally – the pilot will be evaluated during the February 2017 General Board meeting. If the General Board is in favor of moving forward, changes will be drafted for *The Design* to accommodate a Mission Council and Governing Board to replace the current General Board configuration. If the General Board approves the drafted changes, those will be brought to the 2017 General Assembly in Indianapolis for approval.





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JOHN 17: 20-21a

2017 General Assembly July 8-12

The 2017 General Assembly Program, Planning and Arrangements Committee meeting in February 2016, selected **ONE** as the theme for the 2017 General Assembly. This theme comes out of John 17:20-21a, where Jesus prays that his followers may be **ONE**.

First Vice Moderator, Tom Perring, reported that the song, *They'll Know We Are Christians*, will be used to tie together the five evening worship services for the Assembly. Education tracks topics are: Resources, Justice, Worship and Transformation. Communication during the Assembly will be enhanced by use of the new Disciples' app for iPhones and Android.

Membership of the Administrative Committee

2015-2017 Moderator Team: Tony Rodriguez, Moderator; Tom Perring, First Vice Moderator; Mary Lou Kegler, Second Vice Moderator; Sue Morris, Moderator-Elect

General Minister and President: Sharon Watkins

Board Members: *Delores Carpenter, Jennifer Garbin, *Danny Gulden, Angela Kaufman, Young Lan Kim, Serbando Peralez, Bernice Rivera-Martinez, *Dawn Robinette, *Tanya Tyler

Ex-Officio Members (without vote)

General Ministry Representatives: Julia Brown Karimu, Chris Dorsey

College of Regional Ministers Representatives: Ruth Fletcher, John Mobley

Parliamentarian: Bill Bailey

Corporate Secretary: Beth Sullivan

Corporate Treasurer: Timothy James

*Class of 2016 members will complete their Administrative Committee service at the start of the Fall 2016 Administrative Committee meeting.

