

GB-2101

General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

including the

Office of General Minister and President

Elected Officers of the General Assembly

Teresa “Terri” Hord Owens, General Minister and President

Belva Brown Jordan, moderator

Stephanie Kendell, first vice moderator; Nestor Gomez, second vice moderator

Clyde Hunt, moderator elect

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OFFICE OF GENERAL MINISTER AND PRESIDENT STAFF

Teresa “Terri” Hord Owens, General Minister and President

Yvonne Gilmore, Interim Associate General Minister and Administrative Secretary
of the National Convocation

John Goebel, Vice President of Finance

Lee Hull Moses, Vice President and Chief of Staff

Cherilyn Williams, Assistant Vice President for Marketing and Communications

Shannon Pope, Executive Assistant to the General Minister and President

Mark Ratliff, Controller

Kent Heffelbower, Financial Reporting Accountant

Kim Hamilton, Financial Reporting Accountant

Brenda Rossy, Director of Meetings; Ministry Associate for National Convocation

Gwen Woodard, Director of Payroll and Accounts Payable

Michael Sweck, Receipts Processor

Jasmine Williams, Financial Administrative Assistant

Emily Barnett, Receptionist

Associated Ministries

Bruce A. Barkhauer, Minister of Faith and Giving

April Johnson, Minister of Reconciliation

Vy Nguyen, Executive Director of Week of Compassion

Caroline Hamilton-Arnold, Associate Director for Domestic Disaster Response of
Week of Compassion

Erin Wathen, Associate Director for Marketing and Communications of Week of
Compassion

Suzie McKay, Administrative Assistant, Week of Compassion

Report of the Office of General Minister and President

In Times Like These...

As the COVID-19 pandemic engulfed the US, Canada and the world, I began a weekly Friday video to simply connect with and talk to the church as we faced unprecedented times together. I have and am still leading weekly prayer times on Facebook Live, along with a time of prayer and conversation for clergy and chaplains on Fridays via Zoom. While I have not been traveling, I have “Zoomed in” to preach, share in elders’ meetings and Bible studies, and I have sent recorded sermons and greetings through the church. The Moderator Team has met more frequently to do the research required around General Assembly decisions, and to ensure ongoing communication with me and the OGMP staff.

In the Communications report below, you will see how the communications strategy continues to evolve to create connections that are more necessary now than ever before.

Across every expression of the church, Disciples have reached down to keep congregations in worship, to maintain their ongoing ministries to their communities. General ministries have responded to the needs of congregations, adapting existing programs, re-directing existing resources, and collaborating in new ways. Regional ministries have stood alongside clergy as they have carried the heavy weight of pastoral care in a time of grave sickness and death, a time when physical presence has not been possible, and communal forms of comfort and support are not available to allow us to grieve together. And yet, God is still at work. In this world whose fragmentation continues to grow, we have stood firm on the promises of God, and reclaimed our call to be a movement for wholeness, to bear witness to God’s limitless love, and to be an anti-racist, pro-reconciling church. New churches are still being started, the work of ministry to our local communities to meet immediate needs and to advocate against systemic injustice continues. Our colleges, universities, and theological educational institutions are adapting, still teaching, still helping to form our young people and our future clergy.

In times like these, we give thanks to God, whose love is limitless, whose grace is sufficient, and whose faithfulness to us continues to be great.

Ecumenical ministry

Given the travel restrictions necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the customary partner meeting with the United Church of Christ leadership was cancelled. Instead, I met the heads of communion for both the United Church of Christ and the United Church of Canada for an online one-day meeting. Each of these three denominations

now has full communion agreements with the other, and going forward, we will plan to leverage these relationships as we identify ways to serve, learn and collaborate.

A working group has been formed and discussions have begun with the United Church of Canada to develop guidelines for the mutual recognition of clergy, pursuant to our new full communion agreement.

We have begun initial conversations with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America to explore some form of ecumenical dialogue. Conversations are in the earliest stages.

The World Council of Churches has postponed the meetings of the Central Committee and the World Assembly to 2021 and 2022 respectively. It remains to be seen whether these gatherings will be able to be held.

Regional and congregational

In the midst of the pandemic, regional ministers have risen to the challenge of providing guidance and resources to congregations across the church. The College of Regional Ministers began meeting weekly at the start of the pandemic, and now meets bi-weekly. These meetings help to identify common issues across regions, but also provide for a forum to collectively problem-solve and support each region in their work. Regional prayer, clergy gatherings, Bible study, regional board meetings, and other online gatherings have been essential in maintaining relationships in these times. Regional Assemblies were held in virtual fashion, with a wide range of creative approaches being used.

General Assembly

The General Board voted to cancel the General Assembly scheduled to be held in July 2021 in Louisville, KY. Subsequently, following research and negotiations by OGMP staff, the General Board, acting on behalf of the General Assembly due to the circumstances, voted to hold the 2023 General Assembly in Louisville, KY, July 29 – August 1, 2023. This arrangement will allow the church to avoid significant cancellation fees and penalties resulting from the cancellation of the 2021 General Assembly. Regrettably, this means that Memphis, TN, will no longer be the site of the 2023 GA. We are committed to ensuring that the Kentucky has the support of the church to host the 2023 gathering, and that we find the next best opportunity to gather in Memphis, TN.

Governance Committee

The Governance Committee of the General Board has been working since the February 2020 General Board meeting to move forward its work to develop resources for the church on what it means to be in covenant as a church. They are also reviewing and reimagining how we make decisions, how we understand accountability and authority, and how we need to both structure and govern ourselves for this new world. That work will be among the agenda items for discussion during this General Board meeting in our small group conversations.

Racial/ethnic ministries

The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated the rescheduling of “The 2020 Experience: It’s Real” - a joint gathering planned by the National Convocation, Obra Hispana, and NAPAD. The event has been rescheduled for 2022. Each ministry held their own gatherings virtually, further demonstrating the immense capacity for creativity and resilience across the church.

The Rev. Dr. Timothy James retired from his ministry as the Administrative Secretary of the National Convocation and Associate General Minister. We welcome the Rev. Yvonne Gilmore as the new Interim Administrative Secretary of the National Convocation and Associate General Minister. This position sits also within the OGMP, so we welcome Rev. Gilmore to the OGMP staff as well.

Justice ministries

The OGMP and Reconciliation Ministry co-sponsored a series of online town halls, *Love is an Action Word*, inviting the church to focused conversation about what it means to be an anti-racist church. Reconciliation Ministry is engaged in work to reimagine its governance, and to partner with the OGMP and other ministries in the church as we re-shape the broader narrative of the church we say we are. A Transforming Community Conference was held in May 2020 online under the guidance of Rev. Dr. David Anderson Hooker of Notre Dame University as a first step in this process of naming our larger narrative as a church.

Disciples Justice Ministries, a collective of justice ministries across the church, sponsored Disciples Justice Summer. Each week, a ministry of this collective was highlighted as a way to educate the wider church about its work. Disciples Peace Fellows, who would normally have been in residence at various church camps, worked to tell the stories of these ministries all summer long.

Many Disciples across the church participated in the virtual Poor People’s Campaign Moral Assembly and March on Washington online on June 20, 2020. Over 3 million people participated in this online action to name poverty, racism, militarism, ecological devastation and immigration as key issues, and present a 14 point policy platform to address these issues. I continue to be active in support of the PPC.

Cabinet

The General Ministries COVID-19 Task Force was convened to coordinate the response of several general ministries as they worked to resource regions and congregations. You will find reports from these ministries in their reports: NBA, Week of Compassion, DHM, Christian Church Foundation, Pension Fund, HELM, DCEF, College of Regional Ministers. In addition to re-directing resources to support clergy, families and congregations, these ministries collaborated in new ways. From grants to continue congregational ministry programs, to support for clergy and their families, including assistance earmarked for those ineligible for assistance from federal

programs, to guidance on the Payroll Protection Program, curation of resources for clergy trauma, and guidance to manage debt in difficult times; from support of overseas mission co-workers to support of students, faculty and staff at our colleges, universities and seminaries, the general expression of the church has shown up. Our initial weekly meetings are now monthly.

ALEX:Data for Disciples

A new database to capture congregational data across the church, known as “Alex” is being used for the first time to report Yearbook information for 2020. During 2020, regional ministers and teams of trial users from regions and congregations worked to provide feedback. This year, congregations will enter data Yearbook data online vi Alex with the usual deadline of March 15, 2020. Summary data will also be available at the regional and church-wide levels. Congregations will have online access to 20 years of financial data as part of the first phase of Alex’s implementation. Online reporting will soon be in place to address a wide range of inquiries, helping us to identify trends and patterns across the church. Regions and OGMP staff will work to support those congregations who need help and support to make this transition.

Treasury services – John Goebel

OGMP Treasury Services' (TS) eight-member team continues to evolve our processes with utilizing the available technology, learning new skills, and improving teamwork in our new remote work setting. We assisted many ministries navigate and procure the SBA Payroll Protection Program’s loans and am in the process of applying for forgiveness and investigating round 2 of the latest relief package.

We are thankful for the following partnerships as we provide accounting services:

- seven ministries of OGMP,
- seven other ministries: Council on Christian Unity, Christian Church Services, National City Christian Church Foundation, College of Regional Ministers, Disciples of Christ Historical Society, Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries, and Disciples Seminary Foundation, and
- twenty regions: Florida, Greater Kansas City, Upper Midwest, Illinois-Wisconsin, Indiana, Kentucky, Northwest, Mid-America, Capital Area, Georgia, Pennsylvania, Central Rocky Mountain, Southwest, Oklahoma, Great River, Ohio, Arizona, Michigan, Nebraska, and Virginia.

Communication – Lee Hull Moses, Cherilyn Williams

Over the course of 2020 the work of communications shifted as the church pivoted in response to the pandemic and as staffing changed. Collaboration among the ministries became more common and new projects continued to move forward.

- One of the most noticeable changes was the General Minister and President Terri Hord Owens reaching out to the church through regular [Friday video recordings](#) that were distributed across social media. She also began a Wednesday live prayer time on her [public Facebook page](#) in addition to a more private Zoom gathering with clergy on Friday.
- General ministries responded to the COVID crisis by [pooling information](#) to support congregations from help with pandemic financial relief to a full suite of materials for [Easter online worship](#).
- The results of a communication audit indicated a need to grow our newsletter offerings and [email lists](#), so preparations in the last part of 2020 enabled the launch of two new newsletters in January 2021. At the same time, all the existing newsletters were revised to match the GMPs messaging around imagining God's limitless love.
- Web-based ways of doing the business of the church included adding a new [microsite](#) for meeting materials for the Administrative Committee, General Board, and General Nominating Committee.
- The unrest caused by the killing of George Floyd over the summer prompted a series of anti-racism town halls via Zoom that were resourced by Reconciliation Ministries and OGMP. These are [available for viewing](#) on the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) YouTube channel.
- Disciples Justice Ministries cooperated around a [#DOCJustSummer](#) project featuring weekly stories written by Disciples Peace Fellowship interns for 12 weeks. Social media cross posting of the stories increased the reach.
- The efforts to launch the new [Alex: Data for Disciples](#) project began in the summer of 2020 and continue into the 2021 yearbook reporting period.
- Regular postings to social media continued, including managing Facebook groups. Included are: Facebook ([Disciples](#) page, [Rev. Terri Hord Owens](#) page, [Disciples Exchange](#) group, [Disciples Local Impact](#) group), @DisciplesNews Twitter, @ChristianChurchDOC Instagram, and Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) [YouTube](#).

Disciples Mission Fund/promotion – Lee Hull Moses

One of the biggest concerns at the start of the pandemic was the impact it would have on Disciples Mission Fund contributions. Indeed, it was a difficult year, with some months showing a nearly 13% decrease from the same month in 2019. Special day offerings declined even more dramatically. By year end, the overall drop in DMF contributions was 8% compared to 2019. While certainly better than originally feared, this decline has significant implications for ministries across the church, especially smaller ministries without the resources to develop other funding sources.

Even so, there are reasons for celebration: The second annual DMF Day – an online giving day focused on individual donor's engagement – was a success, raising more than \$40,000 from 400+ individual gifts. A webinar held in collaboration with the Center

for Faith and Giving helped congregations think about how to do virtual stewardship campaigns and highlighted the benefits of congregational giving to DMF. Virtual worship in most congregations has necessitated evaluation of special day offering promotion, moving toward fewer printed materials and more digital resources and creative collaboration across ministries. An active Mission Finance Committee has led to increased engagement from the General Board, as well as a place to evaluate and support our common funding system.

Yearbook – Cherilyn Williams, John Goebel

The [Alex: Data for Disciples](#) project launched in the fall. The first phase of the project includes free tools for congregations to use to track their attendance and giving. In addition, this winter (January – March 2021) all the yearbook data previously collected via paper forms and the legacy DDI system will be entered via the Alex app. In addition, the financial information on Disciples Mission Fund giving from congregations is automatically uploaded to the congregation's home page in Alex. As the project continues, reporting capabilities will be added as well as connection to ministerial assignment data, putting a real-time directory of congregations and their leadership in the hands of subscribers.

In addition to the new mechanics of data collection, the questions and information gathered is changing. One difference instituted last cycle for which we refined the definition is *Participant* numbers rather than *Church Members: Participating* to reflect the fact that not all active participants in the lives of faith communities have formal membership there. This year we added instructions to account for the move to online worship attendance, using a multiplier recommended by the Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies to align our numbers as closely as possible with other faith bodies.

Another feature is that we are going to be able to get a better picture of who Disciples are demographically. We do not have reliable data on language use, ages, racial/ethnic identity, or what ministry context our congregations consider themselves (urban vs. rural, etc.) We are asking these questions to be able to better target our regional and general church resources.

We are working toward making this more of a two-way communication tool. For instance, we are asking congregations if they would like to be connected with resources in the general church such as information about making facilities welcoming to those with disabilities and connecting congregations with resources for anti-racism training.

A paper yearbook will be produced for 2021, but it will have a different look and contain slightly different reports than in previous editions. A decision on whether to produce a paper version in 2022 has not been made.

Recorded in 2020: 10 congregations were added; 18 were closed; 3 were removed; 2 merged; and 10 withdrew.

Center for Faith and Giving

Vision: To create a culture of generosity across the life of the whole church

Mission: To provide resources that teach stewardship as a spiritual discipline and whole life response to the abundance of God.

Board of Stewards: Melissa St. Clair (Chair), Eugene James, Bruce Indermill, Sam Ramirez, Peter Yoon, Jeremy Hopkins, Tanya Tyler, Jackie Byrd, Willie Garcia, Lee Hull Moses. Randy Johnson, Shelia Spencer, and Terri Hord Owens serve Ex-officio with voice and vote.

Minister for Faith and Giving/Executive Director: Bruce Barkhauer

What is new? The biggest change since our last report is the reorganization of our governing structure. With assistance from Terri Hord Owens, Lee Hull Moses, and the approval of the Administrative Committee, we have redesigned the oversight of the ministry into a 13-member Board of Stewards to more clearly express our understanding that the Center for Faith and Giving is a ministry of the *whole* church. While still reporting to the church through OGMP, the expanded board offers a new and wider ranging accountability for the Center and provides room for more and greater diverse voices to guide its resource development and maintain its mission focus.

The new Board of Stewards held its first meeting in January of 2021, to organize, equip, and receive orientation to the new governing documents as well as for members to embrace their new responsibilities. We thank Gary Kidwell of the Christian Church Foundation for facilitating our discussions. A second meeting for “regular business” will be held after this report has been submitted, but the agenda will include offering the 2021 annual campaign materials “Created To Be a Steward” for free; and to seek out 11 congregations and one region interested in piloting a new “virtual version” of Generosity Plus consulting services. Look to our website (<https://centerforfaithandgiving.org>) for more information about these programs and for how to sign up for the free campaign materials as well as how to register for Generosity Plus services.

What is next? In 2021 the Center will seek to complete a special resource section of our website that deals primarily with “best fiduciary practices” for churches. Short videos with downloadable information sheets will populate the site with topics ranging from how to do an internal audit to the best ways to build a budget. We are grateful to the Oreon E. Scott Foundation for the financial gift that is providing for the cost of producing this material. Expect to see the page appear by late March and be completed by the end of the summer.

What is good? Despite the many challenges of 2020, the Center for Faith and Giving finished the year with a positive financial balance! Though we were unable to travel, our mission was fulfilled by providing congregations, regions, and the whole church with zoom meetings, webinars, informative articles, and many, many, phone conversations! Not surprisingly, electronic giving was our “hottest topic” in the early part of the year, only to be eclipsed later by what can best be described as “how to run an annual campaign and/or build a budget in pandemic” conversations as churches addressed new realities related to not meeting in person. We were grateful to be called upon and to provide meaningful assistance in this time of crisis and uncertainty.

We view the current shifts in how we are “doing church” during the storm of this virus as a potentially positive time. We are having to ask ourselves important questions about what it means to be the church, what are the essential resources we need to carry out our mission, and how can we connect – and stay connected to our communities when physically being there is not a possibility. Change, while not always desired, can be a good thing and it can be the catalyst to stimulate meaningful reformation and innovative transformation. Our prayers are with you as we move through these times together.

Christian Church Services, Inc.

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Terri Hord Owens, President

Todd Adams, Board Chair

Christian Church Services (CCS) is the umbrella corporation that coordinates the shared services of the Disciples Center such as building lease, phone system, reception, insurance, and coordination with building ownership and management. The board of Christian Church Services is comprised of the heads of the ministries which lease space in Disciples Center.

In 2020, CCS met often to discuss the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. In March, all ministries began working remotely, with a few staff going to the office to manage essential duties. Over the next months, CCS discussed issues related to returning to the office, managed mail delivery for ministries working remotely, and coordinated with building management as procedures and protocols changed. In addition to the disruption of these changes, one particular challenge was the loss of community chapel services and “building-wide” social events, which bring together employees from across Disciples Center. The OGMP, on behalf of CCS, applied for and received a grant for nonprofits in Marion County, which funded the purchase of supplies such as masks, gloves, and hand sanitizing stations for Disciples Center.

At the time of this writing, most ministries are still working remotely, with very few employees in the office. Some ministries have plans to return to full in-office work when it is safe to do so; others are evaluating plans for possible long-term remote work.

Gary Kidwell served as chair of the board in 2019 and 2020. Todd Adams was elected chair at the December 2020 meeting and will serve in 2021. CCS contracts with the Office of the General Minister and President to manage CCS matters and building management relationships. Lee Hull Moses serves as staff liaison, John Goebel manages finances, and other OGP staff provide additional support.

College of Regional Ministers Report to the General Board - 2020

President LaTaunya Bynum, Northern California-Nevada
President Elect, William Rose-Heim, Greater Kansas City
First Vice President, Nadine Burton, Great River
Second Vice President, Andy Mangum, Southwest
Secretary, Christal Williams, Tennessee

The College of Regional Ministers is made up of lead staff members of each of the 31 regional churches and the leaders of the three Ethnic Ministries. We have met regularly during the current COVID-19 pandemic. We gathered by Zoom call each Wednesday for several months in 2020. We have continued meeting every other Wednesday afternoon since late summer. We will continue to meet by Zoom until it is safe for us to meet in person.

The CRM is divided into five fellowship groups based on geography. The Fellowship Groups usually (when will we get back to usual?) meet in person once a year for community building and program coordination. The CRM work is funded through annual dues contributed by the regional churches, invested funds, and regional church budgets through voluntary work done by its members. The funds of the CRM are managed by the OGMP Office.

One of the challenges/opportunities of the CRM is the high level of turnover in the membership. The report submitted to the **2018 General Board** listed this range of service of the regional ministers in regions by their amount of tenure. Add two years to each category for 2020.

- Five regions have been served for 14-22 years;
- Six regions have been served for 6-11 years;
- Six regions have served for 3-4 years;
- Seven regions have been served for 1-2 years;
- We were pleased to welcome to the College two new Regional Ministers: Dara Cobb of South Carolina, and Joshua Patty of the Upper Midwest. Jeff Stinehelfer began serving as the Capital Area. Bill Spangler-Dunning formerly the Regional Minister in the Upper Midwest became the Regional Minister in Virginia.

We have:

- Pamela Holt (Oklahoma) serves as Chairperson of the Calling, Advisory, and Orientation Committee to assist Regions in leadership transition. She works with the General Minister and President to recommend persons to serve in positions of interim leadership. She assigns CRM members to partner with search teams in Regions that are seeking new regional ministers.
- Five of the CRM members serve on the General Commission on Ministry.
- There are two representatives from CRM on the Administrative Committee.
- The CRM maintains a webpage for the public to learn about their work with a private area for confidential business. The CRM also maintains an active listserv system for fluid and quick communication.
- Andy Mangum (Southwest) represents the College as he works with FORM (Fellowship of Regional Moderators). They were not able to meet in 2020 but have planned a series of Zoom gatherings in meeting in 2021.
- The CRM continues to address some challenging conversations that it must have. These conversations will address the deeper systemic issues of institutional racism that still haunt the structures of our denomination; the challenges facing our current regional structures and the need to explore alternatives that will carry our witness and work forward for generations to come; the changing landscape of congregational life and its impact on our current ministry structures (education, ministerial identity, recruitment, and Search and Call). Of course, all the conversations are taking place in the context of the pandemic.
- Twelve of the General Units have at least one Regional Minister on their Board of Directors/Trustees. Regional Ministers serve on all the Ethnic Ministries boards, Disciples Women Leadership, Reconciliation, Week of Compassion and General Commission on the Ministry. Four Disciples Colleges and six Disciples Seminaries have Regional Ministers on their boards.
- The four Regional Ministers from the five contiguous regions to the Ohio Region (Kentucky, Indiana, Michigan, and Pennsylvania/West Virginia) continue to provide Regional Ministry support services to congregations/ministers of the Ohio Region during this time of transition and renewal for that Region. Four geographic areas have been identified and one assigned to each of the four Regional Ministers.

Goals as we move into 2021 will be a continuation of intentional self-reflection and the actions they call forth:

- Continuing to form a deep and collegial relationship with the new GMP;
- rewriting our training manual for regional ministry;
- reengaging at a deeper level our anti-racism work;
- re-examining the distribution strategy of the regional church pool of DMF;
- creating innovative methods for regional churches to work together in new partnerships;
- taking better advantage of on-line meetings to share resources and training;
- initiating a monthly online conversation about aspects of regional ministry;

- creating a covenant around search and call practices with representatives from CRM and all three Ethnic Ministries' leadership;
- rewriting the CRM bylaws; and reviewing the Ministerial Code of Ethics, the Congregational Code of Ethics, and a review of the document "Theological Foundations and Policies and Criteria for the Ordering of Ministry".
- redefining the CRM identity considering new emerging models of regional ministry leadership; and
- continuing to find ways forward in collaboration with all the ministries of our whole church that we may be a CRM that helps to bind together the work of the whole church and the congregations through mutual relationship, vision and action.

Dr. LaTaunya Bynum, President of the College of Regional Ministers
February 5, 2021

DISCIPLES CENTER for PUBLIC WITNESS (DC4PW)

Rev. Dr. Ken Brooker Langston, Ph.D., Executive Director
Rev. Dr. Beverly Goines, Ph.D., Associate Director

The top priorities of DC4PW remain racial and economic justice and those critical issues that intersect with these primary concerns.

In the United States, we were focused primarily on the elections and the ongoing collective efforts to end racism and poverty. In partnership with DJAN (Disciples Justice Action Network), we launched 'Faithful Decision 2020,' an election-year program that concentrated on voter information, voter registration, encouraging people to vote, voter protection, and issue education. We also co-sponsored an online interfaith panel on voter suppression and voter protection. It drew 1000 viewers.

We worked with the Trump Administration in the areas of criminal justice reform, worldwide persecution of religious minorities, and distribution of COVID-19 information from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. We worked with the U.S. Congress on COVID-19 relief, election reform, criminal justice reform, climate change, worker justice, and continuing support for children in economically struggling families.

In the post-election period, DC4PW helped produce and widely distribute an interfaith letter calling for all votes to be counted, for people to practice peace and patience and avoid any form of violence, and for all people to begin coming together and working together to heal our nation, promote "liberty and justice for all," and move ahead in the shared project of building the Beloved Community.

In the areas of racial and economic justice in the U.S., DC4PW worked closely with the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival, promoting and participating in a number of physical and virtual events, and advocating to law-makers about issues

of shared concern. We also promoted and participated in a number of events organized by the Black Lives Matter movement.

In Canada, our sister ministry is the Disciples Centre for Public Witness. With and through this ministry, we maintain partnerships with Kairos Canada and Citizens for Public Justice, working primarily on issues of poverty, creation care, and the rights of First Nations and indigenous peoples. Our Canadian board members have been working with the region of Canada to establish a part-time social justice position there.

European Evangelistic Society

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Tony Twist, President

2020 General Board Report

The European Evangelistic Society (EES), incorporated in 1946, has now been in existence for 70 years. The Institute for the Study of Christian Origins was established in Tübingen, Germany in the early 1960s. Its purpose is to encourage and guide research in the earliest church and to focus the application of that research on the church today.

The mission of EES in its 70 years of history has not changed. It remains: To develop Christian leaders for significant service through higher learning. The vision of EES is that every nation has effective leaders of disciple-making movements making a global impact on their churches, cultures, and countries for Christ. This vision reflects the common mission priorities of the Disciples of Christ as a movement for wholeness that welcomes all to the Table, and fulfills the last command of Jesus – “. . . as you are going, make disciples of all nations immersing them into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, teaching obedience to all that I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:18-20).

The mission of EES is focused on this concern of leadership development necessary to realize the Four Priorities of the Church as outlined in the 2020 Vision of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). EES views its priorities in terms of developing Christian leaders and future Christian leaders for significant service, especially international students who are coming in increased numbers. This is done through providing practical assistance, counsel, and hospitality when they arrive on site in order to establish relationships; then through prayer, fellowship, and studies as they get more involved.

Through the Institute for the Study of Christian Origins in Tübingen, Germany, EES is actively involved in promoting research and publication. This mission expresses itself in three primary areas of ministry:

- To develop international leaders through advanced studies
- To assist emerging leaders in research and publication of relevant national articles, books, and other materials
- To help encourage the establishment and development of churches, colleges, and agencies focused on evangelism and disciple-making.

The Institute for the Study of Christian Origins is being positioned to help develop dedicated leaders for significant service throughout Europe, Russia, Central Asia, the Middle East, and beyond.

At the present time, the educational ministry at The Institute for the Study of Christian Origins, led by Director Dr. Beth Langstaff, continues to function alongside the Protestant Faculty of Eberhard Karls University in Tübingen, Germany. The Institute has a long and productive relationship with the prestigious and influential University. The influence of this ministry has been felt all over the world, as international students and scholars have come to Tübingen for research and study. It promotes research, offers colloquia through the academic year, organizes international symposia every three or four years, and engages in continuing dialogue with scholars and students from around the world.

The **English-German Colloquium in New Testament** serves as a forum for visiting professors and scholars to read works in progress. The Colloquium also provides an opportunity for doctoral students to present their work (dissertation proposals, a chapter from the dissertation, conference papers, etc.) and to receive feedback. Moreover, it offers an unusual opportunity for scholars at all levels—master’s students, doctoral candidates, post-doctoral fellows, and professors—to meet and to discuss current research with one another.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Colloquium has been meeting online during the 2020-21 winter semester. Scholars from all over the world—Germany, Switzerland, Italy, India, USA—have been able to attend the Zoom meetings.

A few **presentations** in 2020:

- February 2020 (at the Institute): a discussion of N.T. Wright, *History and Eschatology: Jesus and the Promise of Natural Theology* (SPCK, 2019)
- November 2020 (online): Daniel Schumann (University of Tübingen), “Methodological considerations for discourse analysis illustrated with example of the Jewish prohibitive vow”
- December 2020 (online): Claudia Bergmann (University of Erfurt), “A Dry World? The Lack of Beverages in the Ancient Jewish Texts about the Meal in the World to Come”

Courses in Theological German and Theological English, listed in the University catalogue, are held in the seminar room at the Institute. The classes include readings from a variety of Christian authors and traditions (Lutheran, Catholic, Baptist, and Mennonite) with a view toward deepening relationships with God and others. It should be noted that these classes, offered as they are in the University setting, draw students from a variety of religious and non-religious backgrounds. Students represent a range of involvement in the local church, from pastors to nominal church members. Some know the Bible backwards; others are completely unfamiliar with it. Courses include, on occasion, professed agnostics or even atheists, and such world views have led to stimulating conversations about the nature of faith or forgiveness.



The **Theological German class** offers newly arrived international students the chance to read and discuss theological texts written in German. In the winter semester (2019-20), we read and discussed the writings of Karl Barth and Dietrich Bonhoeffer on prayer.

The **Theological English class** is made up mostly of German students, some of whom are preparing to head overseas for an exchange semester/year. During the winter semester (2019-20), we studied American Christianity; in one of the last class sessions, we discussed eschatology and the concept of the “Rapture” (with excerpts from the “Left Behind” novels)—a concept completely foreign to most German students.

In the past months, travel restrictions have reduced the number of students travelling to and from Germany; the Theological German & Theological English classes have not been held since the spring.

Publications: In the fall of 2018, the Institute—in cooperation with Professor Michael Tilly (the University of Tübingen) and Professor Loren Stuckenbruck (LMU Munich)—hosted an international symposium on “The Lord’s Prayer: Origins, Significance, and Reception” here in Tübingen. Speakers included Ronald E. Heine, Rodney A. Werline, and Dennis L. Lindsay. All 14 papers have been submitted and reviewed, and the collection will be published by Mohr Siebeck this coming year.

Hospitality: The Institute offers guest accommodation to visiting scholars and Colloquium presenters; Loren Stuckenbruck, Professor for New Testament at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität (LMU) in Munich, and his wife Lois (photo) visited just before the lockdown in March. Sadly, the pandemic meant that other planned visits had to be cancelled.



EES Goals:

- Develop relationships between EES and other universities to help provide access to resources and research opportunities for the growing number of graduate students needing advanced studies.
- Provide more doctoral mentoring, supervision, and opportunities for graduates and others through the EES networks.
- Provide opportunities for
 - ◆ Mentoring doctoral students
 - ◆ Teaching theological English and theological German to students at Tübingen University
 - ◆ Preparing students from Eastern Europe and Central Asia to conduct research, write, and publish quality materials in their own languages
- Continue to conduct the Colloquium in conjunction with Protestant Faculty at Tübingen University.

Although EES does not work specifically in any one congregation, it seeks to promote the cause of reconciliation throughout the world by developing leaders who will demonstrate our commitment to the idea of a faithful, growing church that exhibits true community, deep Christian spirituality, and a passion for justice. EES seeks to be an international witness for the Christian gospel in one of the most significant theological settings in the world. In keeping with the original vision of the European Evangelistic Society, the goal is to see churches thriving and flourishing throughout the world by equipping capable leaders to serve.

EES is characterized by a deep and abiding interest in the oneness of the Body of Christ. The original purpose of the organization was to effect a channel through which it might cooperate in accomplishing the divine mission transmitted to the Church through the New Testament, and that its fraternity in this cause should be recognized as a fellowship for advancing the Christian mission. That interest has not changed with the passing of 70 years of ministry. The European Evangelistic Society is one of the few ministries among Stone-Campbell churches that has historically sought to work among all three streams of the American expression of this ideal. For over half a century, the dream of a united Church, bound by its commitment to the New Testament as the revelation of God about the person of Jesus Christ, has been the unchanging focus of its mission.

General Commission on Ministry

Greg Alexander, Chairperson

The General Commission on Ministry [GCOM] of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is composed of members appointed by the General Minister and President in consultation with various constituencies across the life of the church. In odd-numbered

years, the General Minister and President may present a slate of members to the General Board for confirmation.

In 2020, the following persons served on the General Commission on Ministry: Greg Alexander, Director of Disciples Men/Retired Regional Minister, Christian Church In Kentucky (GCOM Chair); William Almodovar, local pastor, Indianapolis, IN; Linda Brown, layperson, Main Street Christian Church, Parker City, IN; LaTaunya Bynum, Regional Minister, Christian Church in Northern California; Pam Holt, Regional Minister, Christian Church in Oklahoma (Search and Call Sub-committee Chair); Eugene James, Regional Minister, Christian Church in Michigan (Standards Sub-committee Chair); Timothy James, Associate General Minister and Administrative Secretary of the National Convocation; Chung Seong Kim, Executive Pastor of the North American Pacific/Asian Disciples; Sheila Spencer, Disciples Home Mission Interim President; Elizabeth Dilley, United Church of Christ Representative; Terri Hord Owens, General Minister and President, ex-officio; William Rose-Heim, Regional Minister, Christian Church of Greater Kansas City (Support Sub-Committee Chair); Matt Rosine, Pension Fund Representative; Lori Tapia, National Pastor for Hispanic Ministries; D. Newell Williams, Seminary Representative [President, Brite Divinity School, Fort Worth, TX]. In addition, Warren Lynn, Director, Office of Christian Vocation, met by invitation with the Search and Call Committee to share information directly related to his work. Shannon Pope, Executive Assistant to the General Minister and President, provided staff support to the Commission as a whole and in particular to the Support Committee which reviews applications for ministerial standing. A special thanks to Cherilyn Williams, Assistant Vice President for Marketing and Communication, for her support of GCOM in a time of transition in 2020.

GCOM welcomed two new additions at the end of 2020, Valerie Melvin, Regional Minister, Christian Church in North Carolina, from the College of Regional Ministers, and Yvonne Gilmore, Interim Administrative Secretary of the National Convocation.

- GCOM meets twice per year. In 2020, we met January 13-14 in Indianapolis and August 24-25 via electronic conferencing. By the time this General Board gathers, GCOM's first meeting of 2021, January 25-26, via electronic conferencing, will have concluded.

Since GCOM last reported to the General Board, it has addressed the following issues:

- Policies and Procedures for Responding to Clergy Misconduct: The Response Team of the General Commission on Ministry was called to respond to three accusations of clergy misconduct filed against clergy under GCOM's care. The Response Team's work tested in real time the changes to these policies and procedures in 2019. They proved to be fortuitous changes. The Response Team also identified parts of the policy that require greater clarity. Those revisions were part of the January 2021 meeting.

- Annual Ministerial Standing requirements: Thanks to Shannon Pope and Terri Hord Owens an online system was installed for the renewal of standing by all clergy under GCOM's care. It was implemented at the end of 2020 allowing all clergy under GCOM's care to complete their annual standing forms electronically. A full evaluation of the effectiveness and any warranted revisions will be reported in next year's General Board Report. All indications are that it was a positive step forward for everyone.

- The Search and Call sub-committee, led by Pam Holt, began to gather information about the effectiveness and lack of effectiveness of the Search and Call System. The pandemic hindered the work of this assessment process. What was revealed is that Search and Call was designed for a much different church in a much different cultural milieu. The systemic issues are far more complex than wordsmithing the protocols. The Search and Call sub-committee continues to broaden its information gathering process with the hope of presenting a comprehensive review and strategy for addressing the identified issues in the August 2021 meeting.

- Like the Search and Call system, it has become increasingly clear that The Theological Foundations for the Policies and Criteria for the Order of Ministry (TFPCOM) was developed for a different church in a different cultural era, even though it is only a little over ten years old. It reveals the striking speed of change in the church and culture. GCOM has asked for assistance from the College of Regional Ministers to establish a protocol for a comprehensive review of TFPCOM. This will include feedback from regional commission/committees on ministry, the College of Regional Ministers, and our ecumenical partners (the United Church of Christ and the United Church of Canada). A comprehensive strategy for addressing the identified issues will be presented at the August 2021 GCOM meeting.

- The Clergy Code of Ethics and The Congregational Code of Ethics both need serious attention. GCOM asked the College of Regional Ministers to take on this project as the regional ministers are the ones most impacted by these codes.

Our new ministry partnership with the United Church in Canada requires the development a process for the mutual recognition of each communion's clergy. Terri Hord Owens (General Minister and President), Greg Alexander (GCOM Chair), Jen Garbin (Regional Minister, Christian Church in Canada), and Sandy Messick (Regional Minister, Christian Church in the Northern Lights Region) are meeting with a team of leaders from the United Church in Canada to prepare a draft of the necessary protocols to present to each body for approval.

- Standing granted to clergy for whom Standing is lodged with GCOM: **148** clergy were granted standing renewal.

- The members of GCOM prayed for all those under GCOM's care and for any specific requests identified on the standing forms.

It is important to note that each of the projects identified are enormous undertakings. The sense of urgency to address these important processes to our order of ministry and its antecedents requires us to tackle all of them at once. This will require GCOM to invite other people with the necessary expertise to assist it with this work. This also comes at a time when the pandemic is rewriting the way collaborate work is done. GCOM solicits the prayers of the General Board for its work ahead.

It is also important to note how much extra work this places on the General Minister and President and her staff. The work ahead touches every corner of life together as Disciples which means it will include the OGMP. GCOM is grateful for the excellent leadership and support we receive from Rev. Hord Owens and her staff (especially Shannon Pope).

We welcome your input, comments, questions, ideas, and concerns.
Respectfully submitted, Greg Alexander, Chair

National City Christian Church Foundation

Oh What a Day...Night...Year—2020

I remember that afternoon vividly. I was finishing up National City's weekly Food Pantry ministry when Rev. Dr. Stephen Gentle buzzed and asked if I could have a late lunch with him at the local Thai Tannic restaurant. My first thought was it is the beginning of the year, maybe the budget could not support my continued position and I would be looking for another job. Then I had a gnawing suspicion that maybe my colleague and friend might be ready to share some important news of his own. WOW—I was right, but who knew it would be his wife, Rev. Miriam Gentle, who would answer that call that many a minister knows you just cannot resist—no matter how hard you may try. I knew saying goodbye to my pastor and dear friend would be hard, but I had no idea how hard the next twelve months would be for National City Christian Church Foundation (NCCC-F) and National City Christian Church Congregation (NCCC-C).

During that month of transition, the ministerial and executive staff began working with both Boards to make sure National City was ready for a seamless interim transition. After modification to my new job title and description, I thought we had things planned to the "T" in coordination with the Interim Pastor Search Committee for a smooth Lent and Easter. Two weeks into this well thought out plan—COVID happened, and our lives will never be the same again.

Friday the 13th has now forever been etched into my mind for all the foreboding that superstitious prognosticators correctly forecast. On Friday, March 13th, I assembled the staff and talked about the challenges we would be facing. It was like a tsunami of virus heading straight towards us, and we were scheduled to host more than 700 high school choral students the following week. We decided the best action we could take for the safety of all concerned was to immediately go into lockdown and suspend day-to-day

operations. Once we had discussed the matter thoroughly with NCCC-F Board Chair, John Arterberry, and NCCC-C Moderator, Alan Williams, well, the rest is history.

Lights, Camera, Action

With that decision made, I began to think how we would carry on with worship. One thing that Dr. Gentle had instilled into me was that worship must always happen—even if it looks nothing like what you had planned. I am fairly sure he never meant for his words to be carried out like we have done for the last twelve months, but carry on, we did! On Sunday, March 15, I set up my cellphone in my upstairs study at home, logged-on to Facebook Live, and conducted our first National City virtual worship. Fortunately for me, more technical experts came to my rescue in the persons of my husband, Rick Mohn; Building Superintendent, Mr. Morris Jackson; Diaconate Chair and journalist, Anthony Mague; Writer and Executive Producer, Robin Hamilton; and media consultant, Karla Williams. Soon we had a production team assembled to make sure worship would return to National City's glorious Sanctuary, and while virtual, we—the National City family—would be able to stay connected to one another, the wider church, our global friends and partners, and to Christ through weekly worship. PRAISE BE TO GOD!

Wait—What?

There is a wonderful commercial currently running in our local media markets in which a man playing computer games on his mobile phone suddenly hears the announcer say that the action is so real, you have to be tackled by the starting linebacker in order for him to be paid. As the linebacker charges into the living room, you hear the young man say startlingly, “Wait—what?” As I sat those next few weeks, I felt exactly like the man in the commercial. I mean for goodness sake, we were in the middle of Lent; Easter was coming in six weeks; lilies had already been ordered for worship; a Capital Campaign was being launched; the weddings—all 8 of them AND brides; the *Let's Sing* fall conference was being planned; and what about the building, that enormous building, what, how, and who would continue the excellent care of that building. I again heard, “Wait—What?” We still were in the final rounds of interviews for an Interim Senior Minister!

Help is on the Way!

Luckily for all of us concerned, the talented Search Committee NCCC-C and NCCC-F had commissioned was still very much functioning and never missed a beat. Under the leadership of former Mayor Jane Campbell of Cleveland, OH, they began to learn the intricacies of Zoom and meetings began in the virtual world. It was a genuine pleasure to observe the Committee function in prayer and respect for the process and for one another. After much prayer, reflection, and research, the Search Committee, Congregation & Foundation Boards, and the entire congregation were unanimously united with the selection of good friend and former D.C. colleague from Calvary Baptist Church and historic Riverside Church in New York City, Rev. Dr. Amy Butler.

On a personal note, it was a genuine pleasure and affirmation to work alongside one of the most talented and dedicated staff assembled: Rev. Dr. Beverly Goines, Pastor Valeria Foster, and Mr. Kevin Biggins. This team worked like a weathered crew on a massive tanker to keep faithful worship and Christian educational programming functioning on a weekly basis. Their skills in worship planning and joy in service made those long nights of my worry easier to contend with during the continued days, weeks and months. Before Pastor Amy would join this motley crew, we had made sure Easter morning was greeted; Memorial Day remembered; Pentecost was celebrated; graduates recognized; Christian study was continued; shepherding of members by the Elders and Diaconate ensued; and earthly goodbyes rendered to friends, Ms. Drucilla McCain, former Church Administrator, Paul Rosstead, beloved Disciples' colleague, Rev. Narka Ryan, and Ms. Peggy Washington

Never Waste A Good Quarantine

With Pastor Amy onboard, the ship was truly cruising, albeit still sailing through turbulent waters. It was clear that Pastor Amy had energy, creative vision, and lots of out-of-the box thinking—the exact qualities the Search Committee had been desiring in their selection. When I first heard Pastor Amy say never waste a good quarantine, I did have to do a double take. Wait—what? But she had soon convinced us all that during this time, when the building was mostly unoccupied, would be the best time to refresh and clean out. Under his guidance of years of institutional learning, Moe Jackson set us to the task of the places to clean and what to discard—truly discard—meaning our dumpsters took a workout. As the summer ended, we saw organization in rooms and hallways I was always scared to enter before, and a Foundation and congregation working hand-in-hand to make sure not even the worst pandemic since the 1918 world flu would keep this “national church” from standing faithful on Thomas Circle.

Shining Brightly at 90!

We are extraordinarily blessed to have two accompanying companions in the NCCC-F and NCCC-C. If I have said it once, I have said it a thousand times—there would be no National City Christian Church without the Foundation and the Foundation only exists to seek the perpetuity of National City Christian Church. Alexander Campbell's vision and legacy for generations to follow is not just the building on 5 Thomas Circle, it is the people, their lives and living as community, that are the heartbeat and lifeblood of this vital national church of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

On October 19 from the roof of our glorious Sanctuary and again from places all over the globe on All Saints Day, November 1, we worshiped as Christ's living church, celebrating 90 years of ministry and mission to the glory of God. The worship service was complete with former minsters and musicians spanning 60 of those 90 years of service and devotion. It was a remarkable feat, made even more transcendent due to the COVID pandemic and this transitional time NCCC-F and NCCC-C have found

ourselves. Yet, we still proclaim loudly and in unity, God is good, all the time; all the time, God is good. I am so thankful to be serving with you and for you.

Blessings,

Steven C. Baines

Reconciliation Ministry

April Johnson

“Reconciliation Ministry advances the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) journey toward wholeness by empowering each expression of the Church to implement structural change to address historic fractures caused by racism and the systems that perpetuate it.”

Context: The ministry efforts of this reporting year reflects our adaptation of our program in response to the confluence of crises of racial injustice, COVID-19 pandemic, and economic retrenchment. Our goal to shift our anti-racism education content toward expanding skills and application was enhanced by the shift to virtual learning.

Ministry Highlights –

In our work to deepen the analysis and application of our education program, Reconciliation Ministry expanded our programmatic offering through new platforms and new partnerships. Utilizing webinar, conferencing, and web-based instructional tools as new platforms, we were able to expand our reach within each expression of the Church.

- In collaboration with Lexington Theological Seminary, we offered our first combined Healthy Boundaries and Anti-Racism Introductory course. The cohort exceeded 30 students including auditors accomplishing their certification needs for clergy standing. Additionally, we facilitated 15 online and in-person events including new events for the congregational expression.
- In partnership with Disciples Peace Fellowship Interns, we were able to develop an online Bible Study entitled “Choose Your Own Adventure.” This offering was launched during the ‘Just Summer’ online promotion of Disciples Justice Ministries network which highlighted cross-functional ministry collaboration.
- In association with the Office of General Minister and President (OGMP), we co-hosted two educational events. With support from an Oreon E. Scott grant, we sponsored a two-day online equipping conference, “Transforming Community Conversations” featuring Dr. David Anderson Hooker. Reconciliation Ministry engaged with Dr. Hooker in our efforts to expand our training program and to develop metrics for defining success in this mission imperative. Participants represented nine members of the College of Regional Ministers, six Core Trainers, and six members of the Reconciliation Ministry Commission.

- Also, in co-sponsorship with OGMP was our seven-part webinar series “Love is an Action Word.” This series featured leaders from each expression of the Church in dialogue with each other addressing the racial justice ‘pandemic’ informed by the backdrop of the 2020 Black Lives Matter summer outcry.

Application: Grant recipients in the 2020 cycle included:

- The Constructive Theologies Project – A continuation of the convening of a young adult ‘Think Tank’ coordinated through Disciples Divinity House Chicago exploring a theology of reconciliation and anti-racism.
- Greater Kansas City Region – Becoming Beloved Community a project of preparing for repentance and reparations.
- Bethany College – Equity Communications Project in cooperation with Disciples Historical Society, Bethany Memorial Church, and the regions of Pennsylvania and West Virginia.

Funding:

Our Special Offering resources were adapted to accommodate virtual worship by providing downloadable media. While promoting the Offering, we learned that both paper and online media should expand to accommodate to diverse giving modalities in our congregational settings.

The United Christian Missionary Society

1099 North Meridian Street,
Suite 700, Indianapolis, IN 46204-1036
P. O. Box 1986, Indianapolis, IN 46206-1986
Julia Brown Karimu, President
Sheila P. Spencer, Vice-President
Email: shansen@cef.disciples.org

The United Christian Missionary Society continued to furnish financial support for the Division of Homeland Ministries, dba Disciples Home Missions (DHM), and the Division of Overseas Ministries (DOM), by investing and managing its endowment and permanent funds for the benefit of the two Divisions.

During 2020, there were no gift annuity contracts nor residual amount released. There was no activity on released life income contracts. When gift annuities or life income agreements are released, the funds are either distributed outright to DHM and DOM or added to the permanent endowments of the Society depending on the beneficiary designation. The Society received \$49,822 through 8/31/2020 in Miscellaneous Unrestricted Receipts with \$15,000 each distributed to DOM and DHM and the remainder is invested in the pool of the Campbell Multi-Strategy Fund and Beasley Growth Fund at the Christian Church Foundation.

The Society continued to be involved with ethical issues which related to its investments and was active with the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility (ICCR). ICCR is an ecumenical organization of 17 Protestant denominations and approximately 200 Roman Catholic orders which cooperate concerning ethical and social concerns as expressed by actions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

The Society, which has eight trustees and four officers, has no active employees. Beginning in 1993, the Society contracted with the Christian Church Foundation, Inc. to perform the treasury services for the Society. The current officers of the Society are as follows: Julia Brown Karimu, President; Sheila P. Spencer, Vice President; Kathy Watts, Corporate Secretary, and Lonna Owens, Treasurer. Four trustees are nominated by each of the two Divisions served by the Society. They are elected by the General Board of the church and serve a term of four years. Their responsibilities are to oversee and determine policies concerning the investments of assets owned by the Society. The protection as well as the income realized from these assets is of paramount concern for the trustees. Their invaluable service is recognized and this report is submitted on their behalf.

The Society distributed the following from the investment pool in 2019: DHM - \$693,905; DOM - \$988,428; and other entities - \$56,726.

The Society distributed the following from the investment pool in 2020: DHM - \$714,549; DOM - \$1,016,409; other entities - \$58,694.

WEEK OF COMPASSION

2021 General Board Report
Jake Caldwell, Chair, Board of Stewards
Vy Nguyen, Executive Director
P.O. Box 1986, Indianapolis, IN 46206
317-713-2442
www.weekofcompassion.org

Mission: As the relief, refugee, and development mission fund of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Week of Compassion works with partners to alleviate suffering throughout the world.

Vision: A world where God's people transform suffering into hope

Core Values:

- CONNECTION* Partner with individuals, congregations, and organizations to serve the needs of the world.
- INTEGRITY* Honor the commitment to faithful stewardship, ensuring gifts entrusted to Week of Compassion are making the most impact.
- ACCOMPANIMENT* Embody God's grace by committing to a long-term presence with communities in need.

2020 was a year of challenge and constant change. As domestic disasters continued to grow in frequency and severity, we witnessed historic wildfires in the West; a record-breaking hurricane season that impacted Central America and the U.S. Gulf Coast; and other disasters worldwide. As the global refugee crisis continued to escalate, the U.S. administration continued to place restrictions on U.S. resettlement. And the COVID-19 pandemic created a wide range of needs, while affecting every other area of our work. Together with our partners, Week of Compassion has been working to adapt and continue ongoing responses and critical development work, while also responding to the critical needs of our neighbors--in our local communities, and around the world.

Throughout the pandemic, Week of Compassion has engaged in a wide-ranging response to meet growing needs. Through local Disciples congregations, we share support as churches work to feed and care for members and neighbors in need. At the same time, we support our network of global partners as they continue and adapt their critical work, including meeting the urgent needs of refugees and investing in WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) programs around the world to help improve sanitation and prevent the spread of disease.

The past year brought about many instances of compound disaster-- communities that experienced one or more significant natural disasters, while also navigating the pandemic; the explosion in Beirut that strained an already struggling healthcare system; and refugee populations living in pandemic realities while also coping with the trauma of being displaced, just to name a few. In these circumstances, those who are already vulnerable --whether because of age, race, gender, or economic status-- sustained the greatest impact.

One of the greatest concerns throughout the pandemic has been for refugee and displaced populations. Displaced persons often live in settings of close proximity where distancing is not possible, and safe water and sanitation facilities are not readily available. This makes those in a tenuous situation even more vulnerable. At the end of 2019, the UN placed the number of forcibly displaced people worldwide at 79.5 million; and that number continued to increase throughout 2020. The 2020 fiscal year cap for resettled refugees was 18,000 - a 40 percent reduction from 2019. However, the number of refugees actually resettled was far lower-- fewer than 12,000. This is a record low in the history of the U.S. resettlement program, which has a historic average of 95,000. Despite these restrictions, Week of Compassion and ministry partner Refugee and Immigration Ministries, in the office of Disciples Home Missions, continue to work on behalf of the wider church to advocate for refugees to enter the United States. We are hopeful about indications that the new administration intends to restore, or surpass, historic resettlement numbers; supporting more humane and compassionate policies for welcoming refugees and asylum seekers.

Meanwhile, Week of Compassion continues to work through Global Ministries and partners through ACT Alliance, helping to provide critical support particularly for Syrian and Iraqi internally displaced people and refugees in the Middle East; as well as Rohingyas in Bangladesh and in Myanmar. Now more than ever, we are grateful for the many partners who work closely on the ground with internally displaced people and refugees, domestically and internationally: Global Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ; Disciples Home Missions' Refugee and Immigration Ministries and Immigration Legal Counsel; Church World Service; and ACT Alliance. The presence of these partners in so many places around the world is critical in supporting refugees who are at even greater risk during a pandemic.

Week of Compassion is strategizing with partners about moving to the next phase of livelihood support for communities impacted by COVID-19. In many instances, these projects mark decades-long endeavors that have either been modified, put on pause, or halted completely due to the pandemic.

This is true both for global refugee and development programs, as well as domestic disaster response. In the wake of disasters, the usual approaches to response and recovery have been modified to allow for social distancing and other mitigations. Local agencies, congregations, and other partners have been flexible and innovative in finding ways to meet the need while also keeping people safe from the virus. Partnerships with local congregations have been especially important for responding in the COVID-19 context.

Week of Compassion remains committed to supporting communities through every stage of recovery following a disaster; and to helping congregations prepared before a disaster. Most volunteer efforts for long-term disaster recovery were suspended or

significantly restricted due to the pandemic. In March 2020, Week of Compassion and Disciples Volunteering paused Disciples-led mission station operations. Yet, Week of Compassion continues to support long-term recovery through partnerships with local communities recovering from past disasters, including the Hurricanes of 2017 (Harvey, Irma, and Maria) and 2018 (Florence and Michael); the 2018 wildfires in California; and multiple floods and tornadoes across Oklahoma and the midwest. Conversations are ongoing about when and how to restart volunteer opportunities, including limited openings for Spring and Summer 2021.

Looking ahead to the coming year, Week of Compassion anticipates the many needs that may emerge in 2021. We can expect that the scale and scope of disasters will continue to increase as the effects of climate change begin to be felt more deeply around the world; that the refugee crisis will continue to escalate; and that the economic fall-out from the pandemic will have ripple effects for years to come. With that in mind, some of the urgent priorities for 2021 include:

- Support for refugees and internally displaced people who have been neglected as they faced even greater challenges during the pandemic; and working with partners to provide vital support.
- Continued support for communities impacted by natural disasters in recent years, domestically and internationally, and providing long-term recovery support.
- Support livelihood programs for developing communities where progress has been impeded by the pandemic, especially around support for women's empowerment and girls' education.

At its Spring meeting in April, the Week of Compassion Board of Stewards approved dipping into reserve funds in order to support a range of responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. As of December 2020, \$365k was distributed for domestic needs, and over \$700k for global partners.

Week of Compassion's financials remain strong due to the generosity of our congregations and donors. The faithfulness of the wider church enables Week of Compassion to accompany and provide relief and livelihood support to communities all over the world. At the end of 2020, overall unrestricted giving was up nearly 3% compared to 2019, bringing in a little over \$2.2 million. 2020 designated gifts came in a little over \$450k, a -24% difference compared to 2019. Since 2015, the yearly increase in unrestricted giving has averaged around 2%. This growth indicates Disciples' commitment to responding to the greatest needs of our neighbors, especially during the unprecedented pandemic.

With ongoing and growing need around the world, and with the exceptional challenges of this season, the mission and vision of Week of Compassion--to alleviate suffering and transform suffering into hope-- remains crucial in 2021. Our leadership remains

committed to working together with partners, responding with compassion to those in need.

General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Name is followed by the region where the individual resides

Spring 2021

Voting members

Terri Hord Owens, IN
General Minister and President

Moderators

Belva Brown Jordan, PSW
Moderator

Nestor Gomez, NoE
Second vice moderator

Stephanie Kendell, NoE
First vice moderator

Clyde Hunt, TN
Moderator elect

Class of 2021

from the General Nominating Committee (GNC)

Kristin Alstott, UMW	Eula Pagdilao, PSW
Jackie Compton Bunch, OH	Allison Ruari, TN
Katie Hays, SW	Candis Wilson, OH
Angela Kauffman, NL	

Class of 2023

Sage Appleby	Chanhee Her,
Valeria Bejar, AZ	Hubert Reece, CAN
Toni Colbert, IN	Miriam Rodriguez, CCA
Stephanie Buckhanon Crowder, IL-WI	Beau Underwood, MID-AM
Steven Gower, OH	

Ecumenical representative

Daniel Hayward, United Church of Canada

Former General Ministers and Presidents

John Humbert, OH
Dick Hamm, IN

Sharon Watkins, WV

General ministry representatives

Robert "Bob" Bock, FL
Christian Church Foundation

Disciples Home Missions

Teresa Crist, MID-AM
Christian Unity and Interfaith Ministry

Deborah DeWitt, TN
Division of Overseas Ministries

John Powell, KY
Church Extension Financial and
Missional Resources

Lonora Graves, N-Cal/Nev
Higher Education & Leadership
Ministries

Chris Wilson, SW
Christian Board of Publication

Caleb Wang, SW
North American Pacific/Asian Disciples

Rogelio Martinez, PSW
Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic
Ministries

Don Gillett, TN
National Convocation

Archie Jenkins, GA
Disciples of Christ Historical Society

Jacque Foster, MID-AM
National Benevolent Association

Candyce Black-Wells, GA

Bill Lee, VA
Pension Fund

Regional representatives

Stuart Price, AL-NW FL

Marla McElroy, CCIW

Linda Necker, AZ

Julia Johnson, IN

Roy Dungca, CAN

Diane Watkins, KS

Cheryl Tatham, CCCA

Erin Miller Cash, KY

Jessa Decker-Smith, CRM

Barbara Hemphill, MI

Karen Ramos, FL

Paula Holliday, MID-AM

Justin Floyd, GA

Robert Cayton, NC

Laura Phillips, GKC

Michael Hamm, N-CAL/NEV

Keela Neumann, GRR

Amy LaCroix, NL

Maria Lopez, NoE
Tom Stephenson, OH
Jeff Champeau, OK
J. Stephen (Steve) Perotti, OR/SW-ID
Jana Quisenberry, PA
Darrell Haley, PSW

Rosemary Simmons-Brown, SC
Whitney Waller-Cole, SW
LaVerne Bobo, TN
Tim Butler, UMW
Kevin McNeil, VA
Steven Smith, WV

Nonvoting members (ex-officio)

Corporate officers

Bill Bailey, PSW
Parliamentarian

John Goebel, IN
Corporate treasurer

Cherilyn Williams, IN
Corporate secretary

General ministries

Gary Kidwell, IN
Christian Church Foundation

Disciples Home Missions
Julia Brown Karimu, IN
Division of Overseas Ministries

Erick Reisinger, IN
Church Extension Financial and
Missional Resources

Patricia Donahoo, PA
Disciples Women

Brad Lyons, MID-AM
Christian Board of Publications

Chris Dorsey, IN
Higher Education and Leadership
Ministries

Lori Tapia, IN
Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic
Ministries

Chung Seong Kim, IN
North American Pacific/Asian Disciples

Paul Tche, IN
Christian Unity and Interfaith Ministry

Yvonne Gilmore, IN
National Convocation

Rick Lowery, WV
Disciples of Christ Historical Society

Mark Anderson, MID-AM
National Benevolent Association

Sheila Spencer, IN

Todd Adams, IN
Pension Fund

Higher education

Tamara Rodenberg, WV
Colleges and universities

Charisse Gillett, KY
Seminaries

Regional ministers

John Mobley, AL/NW-FL

Jay Hartley, AZ

Jennifer Garbin, CAN

Jeffery Stinehelfer, CCCA

Joan Bell-Haynes, CRM

Betsy Goehrig, FL

Denise Bell, GA

William Rose-Heim, GKC

Nadine Burton, GRR

Teresa Dulyea-Parker, IL-WI

Rick Spleth, IN

Ken Marston, KS

Dean Phelps, KY

Eugene James, MI

Paul Koch, MID-AM

Valerie Melvin, NC

Thad Allen, NoE, PA, WV

LaTaunya Bynum, N-Cal/Nev

Chris Morton, NEB

Sandy Messick, NL

Pamela Holt, OK

Cathy Myers Wirt, OR/SW-ID

Richie Sanchez, PSW

Dara Cobb Lewis, SC

Andy Mangum, SW

Christal Williams, TN

Josh Patty, UMW

Bill Spangler-Dunning, VA