

## GB-2213

<b>Name of ministry</b>	National Christian Missionary Convention
<b>Ministry Executive name</b>	Rev. Yvonne T. Gilmore
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<b>In what ways is your ministry thriving?</b>	<p>The National Convocation is a beacon for wholeness in the Black Church within the context of the movement for wholeness in the Christian Church over against the forces of oppression and fragmentation that undermine the unity and flourishing of all of God's beloved children. The National Convocation and the National Christian Missionary Convention has been building on its adaptive capacity for online interaction, discovery, and worshipful work through the meaningful participation of leaders and friends from each of the historic conventions and fellowships every second Tuesday. Convention and regional leaders share their ministries and leadership at every monthly "Let Us Pray" second Tuesday event. They have been well attended. The strengths, convictions, and passion for prayer exhibited by convention leaders has been a source of strength and fuel for everyone in attendance. Justice and the importance of community have been echoed consistently during the moments when a centering thought is shared.</p> <p>January - Indianapolis, IN - National Convention</p> <p>February - Mid-America &amp; Northeast Regional African-American Convention</p> <p>March - Piedmont District Convention, South Carolina Missionary Convention</p> <p>April - Southern and Western District Churches of Christ, DOM greeting</p> <p>May - Kentucky Christian Missionary Convention</p> <p>June - Alabama Northwest Florida Christian Missionary Convention</p> <p>July - Texas Christian Missionary Fellowship</p> <p>August - Goldsboro/Raleigh Assembly (West of Tarr River)</p>

September - Michigan and Oklahoma Missionary Fellowship

October - MOKAN Fellowship and Mississippi Christian Missionary Convention

November - Washington and East Norfolk District Churches of Christ, East of Tarr River

December - Pacific Southwest African American Convention

Fellowship groups and the Fifth Sunday "Hour of Power"

Each group has led the worshipful work and visioning each fifth Sunday. They include:

Fellowship of Black Disciples  
Clergy Women  
Young adults and youth  
Clergy Fellowship  
Men  
Clergy Partners

We also celebrate historic programs that engaged the participation of the whole church:

Post capitol insurrection prayer service - January 12, 2021

The Juneteenth celebration on June 19, 2021 explored Black Disciples history and involved multiple generations from across the country. It was well attended and has been viewed by over 1400 people.

"Legacy and Vision" is a monthly series that launched in July. It features resources and focused interaction with our historic ministry and general unit partners to support the transformation & flourishing of our congregations. In 2021, the work of the Pension Fund, Week of Compassion, and the Christian Church Foundation, was featured. They also discussed the way that their commitment to equity and justice informs their work.

The Black Disciples Endowment Fund opened up a new grant cycle this fall. Two new funds were created including the Rev. Dr. Timothy and Mrs. Joyce James

named fund and the Snow Hill Christian Church named fund. The James fund was established in recognition of Rev. Dr. and Mrs. James sustained witness as servant leaders and committed advocates for Black disciples and courageous partnerships across the whole church, and in celebration of the 104-year legacy of the National Christian Missionary Convention and the National Convocation. Greenwood Cemetery continues to serve the "least of these" with excellence and dignity. It remains the most affordable option for decedent care in Memphis, Tennessee.

A high functioning and capacious team currently serves the National Convocation. Rev. Yvonne Gilmore serves as Interim Administrative Secretary. Brenda Rossy serves as the Director of Meetings. Rev. Dr. R. Wayne Calhoun serves as the Executive for Evangelism and Transformation, DHM. Rev. Monique Crain Spells began serving as the Director of Christian Education and Faith Formation, DHM, on November 1.

**What are the biggest challenges facing your ministry this year?**

1. Encouraging, strengthening, and healing leaders and communities during this time of loss and uncertainty.
2. Identifying mission priorities and strategic planning in the service of that mission in a way that moves beyond identifying low hanging fruit, paths of least resistance, and merely agreeable possibilities to have eyes to see "God's limitless love" alive in new ways in our shared ministry.
3. Discerning whether and how to move forward with It's Real: The 2022 Experience mindful of the public health crises we face and the capacity and needs of all of our faith communities across the life of the church.

**What is something you hope to accomplish in the next year?**

1. The NCCC and NCMC board hopes to discern institutional needs, update structural policies, and clarify and define the present mission of the NCCC and NCMC in relationship to its history, the needs of our congregations, emerging leaders, clergy, the growing number of "nones" or unaffiliated, the Black diaspora today, and the current character of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
2. The NCCC and NCMC board is committed to successfully completing a search for a permanent administrative secretary.
3. "It's Real: The 2022 Experience" was rescheduled after it became untenable in 2020. We look forward to continuing to plan this historic event to live into the

multi-lingual, multi-national, multi-cultural witness of faith narrated in Revelation 7:9 and embodied in our collaboration between leaders from across the National Convocation including the Texas Christian Missionary Fellowship (TCMF), Obra Hispana, NAPAD, the Christian Church in the Southwest.

4. We look forward to working with Rev. Dr. David Anderson Hooker and his approach to transforming historical harms through facing history, making connections, healing wounds, and taking action.

5. Relatedly, we look forward to using the covenant curriculum created by the Governance Committee of the General Board, and to reflecting on the Design of the Christian Church and ways of renewing and strengthening our covenantal identity and relationships.

**What is something you would like the General Board to know about your ministry?**

Identifying layers of identity, aspiration, mission alignment and misalignment, testing new possibilities, and re-imagining its shared work for the future have been the central foci of the National Convocation in 2021. While the pivotal mission priorities and programs have been discussed above, a few emerging developments are summarized below:

The National Convocation was grateful and pleased to partner with the Conference of National Black Churches (CNBC) to overcome Covid-19 vaccine hesitancy in the Black community. The CNBC secured a grant from the Centers for Disease Control to offer training and resources to 3,000 clergy and faith leaders. Many National Convocation clergy attended the sessions in 2021, and other will participate in 2022.

In November, an online pilot event titled, "Preparing for College," co-sponsored by Chapman University and the Office of Church Relations, Higher Education Leadership Ministries, and the National Convocation was offered on a weekday evening and a Saturday for youth, young adults, parents, and youth leaders. The program featured all of the Disciples related colleges and universities and testimonies from current Chapman students, faculty, and parents. A pizza party was offered for youth groups that were interested in attending the event together. The event was recorded and shared with the wider church. We look forward to refining and expanding this opportunity next year.

Rev. Yvonne Gilmore and Rev. Terrell McTyler started and recorded a podcast titled, "Are We Whole Yet?" Seven episodes were recorded in 2021. It will officially

launch in February 2022. Rev. Eddie Anderson, President of the Youth and Young adults fellowship group, will join the leadership team and help to integrate their work on the podcast.

**How can we pray  
for your ministry?**

Please pray for our leaders and congregations as they do the work of ministry amidst the challenges that come with COVID, economic uncertainty, violence in schools, and the trauma of racism. Prayer is also invited for the National Convocation as it continues to invite the holy spirit to stretch and bless its theological imagination and capacity to live into new possibilities. Finally, prayer is also invited for the NCCC and the NCMC board as it discerns vision, mission, and leadership needs over the coming year to live into the future plans that God has prepared.