



THE CHRISTIAN ALABAMA-NORTHWEST FLORIDA

A Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) In Alabama-Northwest Florida Publication

Volume 108

October 2010

No. 5

The Regional Office is located at 861 Hwy 52, Helena, AL 35080
205-425-5245 * 205-425-5246 (FAX)

REGIONAL STAFF

Regional Minister
John Mobley
jpmobley2@aol.com

Associate Regional Minister
Dale Braxton
braxtondale@hotmail.com

Admin. Asst./Office Manager
Susan Henderson
alnwfl@aol.com

Women's Ministries
Betty Wright
btywright@aol.com

Youth Ministries
Nisha Warbington
nisha7@aol.com

Young Adult Ministries
Diane Wood
dwservant@aol.com

Minister of Anti-Racism and Reconciliation
Sekinah Hamlin
revhamlin@gmail.com

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

OCTOBER

- 2 Division of Mission (10:00 a.m.) - Regional Office
- 3 World Communion Sunday and Reconciliation Offering
- 8 - 10 Regional Women's Retreat - Camp Chandler (near Wetumpka, AL)
- 13 Licensing and Ordination I (9:15 a.m.) - Regional Office
- 16 Disciples Men's Cabinet (8:30 a.m.) - Regional Office
- 16 Division of Nurture (10:00 a.m.) - Regional Office
- 23 Division of Administration and Stewardship (10:00 a.m.) - Regional Office
- 30 Program Committee on the Regional Assembly (10:00 a.m.) - New Hope Christian Church, Letohatchee

NOVEMBER

- 4 - 5 Senior Adult Retreat - Rolling Hills Camp and Conference Center
- 6 CWF/Disciples Women's Cabinet (10:00 a.m.) - Regional Office
- 9 Licensing and Ordination II (9:15 a.m.) - United Christian Church, Montgomery
- 13 Regional Convocation Board (10:00 a.m.) - United Christian Church, Montgomery
- 14 T.A.S.T.E. Sunday (Take A Student To Eat)
- 19 - 20 Retreat for Delegation going to Honduras in March, 2011 - YMCA-Hargis
- 20 Luncheon/Orientation for Persons interested in Going to Honduras as part of the Regional Partnership with Honduras - YMCA-Hargis (Dining Hall)
- 21 - 28 Thanksgiving Offering (for Disciples Colleges and Seminaries/Divinity Houses)

DECEMBER

- 1 Committee on the Ministry (10:00 a.m.) - Regional Office
- 11 Reconciliation Committee (10:00 a.m.) - Regional Office
- 11 Executive/Personnel Committee (11:00 a.m.) - Regional Office
- 14 Staff Planning meeting (10:00 a.m.) - Regional Office
- 12 - 19 Christmas Offering (for ministries of the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region)

SENIOR ADULT RETREAT IS SET FOR NOVEMBER 4 - 5, 2010



The ninth annual Senior Adult Retreat will be held at Rolling Hills Camp and Conference Center in Calera, AL, on Thursday and Friday, November 4 - 5, 2010. The theme of the senior adult retreat is “Sweeter As the Years Go By.” Joan Teeters, a member at South Baldwin Christian Church in Foley and also a member of the Senior Adult Cabinet for the Region, is giving leadership to the program for this year’s retreat. She says, “participants will have an opportunity to look at how happiness or fulfillment in later years is a direct correlation to one’s attitudes. Expanding one’s scope of thinking can bring more “sweetness” into one’s life. A major part of the joy of living is knowing why we are here in the first place. Having a “sweeter life” in later years comes with an understanding of the purpose and aim for our lives.”

The senior adult retreat will include music and singing led by George and Judy Dudley, members of First Christian Church, Birmingham.. The annual business session will be conducted by the senior adult cabinet members. An election of new officers will be held. There will also be a talent show and a Bible Bowl. The senior adult retreat always features rich fellowship and fun for all who participate. The retreat begins with lunch on Thursday and concludes in the early afternoon on Friday.

Motel-type rooms are available at Rolling Hills on a first-come, first-served basis. Registrants will receive a confirmation either verifying their reservation at Rolling Hills or informing them that they may need to obtain lodging on their own at the nearby Hampton Inn or Quality Inn. There are a variety of cost options, depending upon the lodging requests of participants. All of the registration information and costs were included in the July Leader’s Packet. Please contact the Regional office if more information is needed.

GOD’S ACTIVITY AMONG US

(stories of how God is using the Christian Church to touch and transform lives)

Tuscaloosa, First - It is pretty well documented by experts and observers alike that these days people tend not to be tied to the denomination of their childhood, or even their most recent church home, when they move about the country. Just because people are born into Disciples of Christ families does not mean they will settle into Disciples congregations when they move into a different location.

However, God seems to be making an exception to this trend in Tuscaloosa. In recent months two families have “knocked on our doors” saying, in effect, “We have Disciples ties; may we worship with your congregation?” One family even emailed from a west coast state asking essentially the same question. In both cases, the families transferred their membership in less than a month. The teenage daughter of one of the families asked to be baptized, and of course we were joyful to be a part of that event.

In addition, three other families have “knocked on our doors” in the past five years because they had Disciples ties.

As you can see, all we did was welcome these people. It was God who sent them, and God gets the glory.

– Phillip L. Hayes, Interim Minister, First Christian Church, Tuscaloosa

[Editor’s note: This story is testimony to the fact that there are many people out there who are looking for a church that lives out the historic values and traditions that are characteristic of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).]

Greenville, Ambassadors for Christ Ministries - Going into the streets of Greenville and visiting door-to-door to tell people about the love, grace, and power of Jesus Christ has been a ministry priority for Ambassadors for Christ Ministries from the very beginning of this congregation's inception over two years ago. Many times Pastor Pamela Wilson and others who visit with her will not see immediate results from these contacts in the community. Nevertheless, there is a strong belief that these people in the community are loved by God but are not being reached by the church with a message of healing and salvation. Many persons have felt judged by the church and have rejected church due to feelings of unworthiness and shame. Consequently, they do not hear much about God's grace. They do not have many reasons for hope. They need the church to come to them.

Ambassadors for Christ Ministries continues to be steadfast in proclaiming to individuals the message of healing and forgiveness that is central to the ministry of Jesus Christ. This consistent message is preached to friends and strangers alike. The communion table is a weekly witness to all who worship with this congregation about God's grace and God's call for the unity of all God's people.

Several weeks ago a woman came to the church for the first time and was drawn to this message of hope and grace. The next week more members of her family came with her. They found the hospitality and message of the church to be life-giving. Extended family members began to come, bringing the total of persons from this family to about 20 persons, nearly doubling the church's attendance. As it turns out, two of these new visitors informed the pastor that she had been in their homes months earlier as she was visiting door-to-door. Pastor Wilson had not remembered that. It all goes to show that we may not even know the effect of our presence and our words on other people. God can use the seeds we plant, in God's own timing, to bring a harvest of healing and transformation to the world around us.

– Story based on a recent conversation between the Regional Minister and Pastor Pamela Wilson

“We are Disciples of Christ, a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world. As part of the one body of Christ, we welcome all to the Lord's Table as God has welcomed us.”

– 2007 Disciples Identity Statement

[Editor's note: Stories, submitted by our readers, are needed for this regular feature of our newsletter. Pastors, in particular, are asked to share stories that celebrate the ways that God is working in the lives of Disciples in Alabama-Northwest Florida.]

REFLECTIONS FROM THE REGIONAL MINISTER



In a little over nine months, the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) will gather for the 2011 General Assembly in Nashville, Tennessee. The theme of this General Assembly is “Tell It!”

I am thrilled with this theme because I believe that our church needs to grow in our ability and in our desire to tell the story of God's presence and activity in compelling ways to a world that needs to hear. The new feature of this newsletter, “God's Activity Among Us,” is an attempt to facilitate the sharing of our testimonies about what God is doing through the ministries of the church. As we read these stories, we should offer prayers of thanksgiving that we still serve a powerful, compassionate God who is very much alive and well. How tragic it is when the world observes a silent church, one which seems to have no good news to share about the God it claims to know.

Let's not wait until the next General Assembly to “tell it” in the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region. As you read this newsletter, which is full of items to celebrate, let not forget to use these items as part of our story. Combine them with your own story of God's activity in your own life. God IS working among us. God IS transforming lives and giving new hope and purpose to Disciples in Alabama-Northwest Florida. Are you paying attention? God IS present – in and through our ministries.

Your partner in ministry,

John P. Mobley

HONDURAS PARTNERSHIPS HAVE BEEN CONFIRMED!!

In recent weeks the Region has received correspondence from leaders of both groups in Honduras to whom the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region had extended an invitation to be in a ministry partnership. Below are the letters received.

Dear Rev. Mobley,

Warmest greetings from the Christian Commission for Development staff in Honduras! It is with great joy that we have received from Global Ministries your invitation to establish a mission relationship with CCD. We will be honored to work in partnership with you to serve our Lord through the work we will do together to improve the life condition of those most vulnerable in Honduras.

There are several projects that you can help us develop. We have submitted some proposals to the delegation that visited us in January this year. Besides, one of our goals is to encourage mission groups to come to work with us in our projects. As the Coordinator of the Solidarity Program, I will be very happy to plan your future mission trips with CCD through Global Ministries!

We welcome your suggestion to channel our work together with Global Ministries as we have a wonderful relationship with them that has been built throughout years of partnership. We have gotten to grow in spiritual support and solidarity and have certainly experienced God's accompaniment in our work and lives, through them.

May the Lord bless our relationship and make it fruitful!

In His love and service,
Marisela Araujo, Christian Commission for Development in Honduras

To: Rev. John P. Mobley,

Dear brother,

It fills us with much joy to know about your enthusiasm to share a relationship with us. That "fervent spirit" is the result of our service to the Lord Jesus Christ; that, without any doubt, will be strengthened through our relationship.

We give thanks to the Lord for this opportunity to share brotherly love in this relationship, and accompany each other in mission and ministry. I know that by being one in the Lord, we are presenting ourselves as a living sacrifice, in gratitude for His unmerited love (Romans 5:8); in this context of love, our Lord will use His beloved church to bless many.

We give thanks to God for the help and counsel of Global Ministries, which will help us to determine the specific forms in which this relationship can be developed.

Welcome, beloved brothers/sisters to this relationship!!! Honduras opens its arms to you.

In Christ,
Rev. Carlos Ramón Ortega, Evangelical and Reformed Church in Honduras

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN BEING PART OF A MISSION TRIP TO HONDURAS?

A registration form has been created for persons to complete and return to the Regional office to indicate their interest in being part of a Regional mission trip to Honduras during the next five years. If you are interested in being a part of one of these trips, please contact your minister for a registration form or contact the Regional office for a form or see the Region's web-site www.alnwfldisciples.org.

All who are interested in being a part of a future trip and who complete a form will be invited to a lunch meeting in the dining hall at YMCA-Hargis on Saturday, November 20, 2010. This meeting will include Rev. Felix Ortiz, Global Ministries Executive in the Latin America and the Caribbean Office. Rev. Ortiz will help future delegations understand important aspects of a partner relationship with a global partner that will enable the partnerships in Honduras to be mutually beneficial.

REGIONAL BOARD RECEIVES NEW CONGREGATION



At its meeting on Saturday, September 18, 2010, the Alabama-Northwest Florida Regional Board voted to extend full recognition to Ambassadors for Christ Ministries in Greenville, Alabama, as the newest member of the Disciples family of congregations in Alabama-Northwest Florida. Associate Regional Minister Dale Braxton has given oversight to an affiliation process which began formally in June, 2009. Monthly meetings of a Partnership Advisory Team (PAT) have included persons from the new congregation as well as eight persons from other Disciples congregations in District 4. During the affiliation process, the new congregation has hosted a District meeting and has given financial support to ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Pastor Pamela Wilson, a PEPP graduate, has received ministerial standing for her ministry with Ambassadors for Christ. She has attended denomination training events for new church planters which have further equipped her for her role as a new church pastor.

Ambassadors for Christ meets at 822 South Street in Greenville, Alabama. A formal certificate recognizing the congregation's relationship with the Region will be presented to the congregation in worship on October 17, 2010.

Congregations that have formally committed to expressing "true community" through intentional efforts to work against racism and toward reconciliation.

First Christian Church, Anniston
First Christian Church, Birmingham
Valley Christian Church, Birmingham
First Christian Church, Ft. Walton Beach
Snow Hill Christian Church, Mt. Willing
First Christian Church, Huntsville

NEWS OF THE CLERGY

Franklin Nettles has been approved for a ministerial license for his ministry as pastor with Mt. Zion Christian Church in White Hall. A ministerial license will be presented to him in worship on Sunday, October 31, 2010. **Betty Wright** has been approved for ordination by the Committee on the Ministry. A service of ordination is planned for 1:30 p.m. on Sunday, October 24, 2010, at Union Christian Church, Tuskegee. **Mark Underwood** has begun a ministry with Madison Christian Church as its student associate minister. Mark is currently a Master of Divinity student with Lexington Theological Seminary. **Amber Churchill** has been formally named Youth Minister with Grace Christian Church in Helena.

Kristi Hill concluded her ministry with First Christian Church, Huntsville, as Minister of Music at the end of August.

CONGREGATIONS SEEKING A MINISTER

Athens, First
Cullman, First
Hartselle, First
Pensacola, Westwood
Tuscaloosa, First (Phillip Hayes is Interim)



A graduation service was held at First Christian Church, Birmingham, on Sunday, September 19, 2010, in which certificates of completion were given to seven persons who have completed the PEPP curriculum. Pictured are: (front row) Gerri Johnson, Kristi Hill, and Betty Wright; (back row) Fran Osborne, Mickey Johnson, Joe Cunningham. Graduate not pictured: Mary Beth Johns.



Beth Thomason was installed as Senior Minister at Madison Christian Church on Sunday, August 22, 2010. Pictured here are: Jim Samuelson, Board Chair, Tim Thomason, Beth Thomason, Carolyn Lawson, Search Committee Chair, and John Mobley, Regional Minister.



Approximately forty ministers in Alabama-Northwest Florida attended a Clergy Summit convened by the Regional Minister at First Christian Church, Montgomery, on Saturday, August 7, 2010. Participants received a challenge related to the Region's Mission Priorities, and they received information about a variety of other ministries in the Region. The gathering included fellowship, worship and communion.

OUTREACH GIVING UPDATE

The giving, through August, 2010, by congregations in Alabama-Northwest Florida to the Disciples Mission Fund and the four Special Day Offerings (Easter, Pentecost, Thanksgiving, and Christmas) is showing a 5.31% increase from the amount given in 2009. Church-wide gifts to Disciples Mission Fund and the four Special Day Offerings decreased by 6.94% from the amount given year-to-date in 2009. Week of Compassion giving in Alabama-Northwest Florida (regular and designated) increased by 138.34% over the amount given through August, 2009. The 2010 Easter Offering total in Alabama-Northwest Florida has grown by 10.29% over the 2009 year-to-date amount. The Pentecost Offering total in Alabama-Northwest Florida has grown by 44.26% over the 2009 year-to-date amount.

Disciples outreach ministries are carried out in partnership between general ministries, ministries of higher education, Regions, congregations, and other related ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The financial support given by your congregation enables this partnership to be effective in carrying out the ministry of Jesus Christ. Your commitment to our shared ministries is greatly appreciated.

REFUND POLICY

Refund Policy for events sponsored by the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region: 100% refund for emergencies, provided that notification is received prior to the beginning of the event; 50% refund for emergencies in which notification(written) is made after the beginning of the event; 100% refund for non-emergencies if requested in writing at least seven days prior to the first day of the event; No refunds will be given for non-emergency cancellations after seven days prior to the beginning of the event. Written requests for refunds must be received by the Regional Office, 861 Highway 52, Helena, AL 35080 (email <alnwfl@aol.com>), within seven days of the last day of the event.

While refunds are not available other than as outlined in this policy, substitutions will be allowed as long as the original registrant, or responsible adult, is able to locate an eligible participant who is able to take the slot and as long as the original registrant, or responsible adult, communicates this information to the Regional office. The Region will not be responsible in assisting in identifying a substitute. Notification should be provided to the Regional Office as soon as possible and any substitute must complete the necessary paperwork prior to arrival at the event.

Approved by the Regional Board, February 20, 2010

THANKSGIVING OFFERING

November 14 & 21, 2010

The Thanksgiving Offering provides direct support to Disciples colleges, universities and theological institutions. Disciples have a long history of post-secondary and theological education. This offering provides a direct connection to 14 colleges or universities, 3 seminaries and 4 seminary foundations/divinity houses. Gifts from the Thanksgiving offering continue a Disciples tradition of developing leaders for our communities and the church.

T.A.S.T.E. SUNDAY (Take A Student To Eat)

Who?	You!
What?	Intentional welcome to young adults
Where?	Restaurant or home, you choose
Why?	So you can get to know one another
When?	Sunday, November 14, 2010
How?	Gather some volunteers and personally invite young adult members and visitors to lunch after church.

This event was inaugurated in 2009 and met with great success in many congregations. One now has 24 young adults regularly participating. In another church, an adult Sunday School class "adopted" several college students and sent them various goodies during the academic year. Another church decided to include high school youth in order to establish new relationships within the congregation. Some folks had a meal at church instead of going out. Do whatever works for your family of faith - just do it!

Rev. Diane Wood, Director of Young Adult Ministries
Alabama-Northwest Florida Region



The steward from the Alabama-Northwest Florida region was Celia Thomason, Huntsville, Alabama. Pictured with Celia is former steward Brittany McNeill Price, (left), who was in attendance.



Awake! Awake! The representatives at the 2010 Quadrennial Assembly were awakened by their presence at the recent gathering in Greensboro, North Carolina. Participants were involved in workshops, Bible study and receiving inspirational guidance from our guest leaders. In our group, we had members of the production staff, an honored educator, a steward, and members of the QA choir. This group certainly left Greensboro awakened to many challenging ministries.

Is Your Will Legal and Up-To-Date?

***Have You Remembered Your
Congregation And Your Region In
Your Estate Planning?***

Please contact the Regional Minister if
more information is needed.

205-425-5245

Please remember to register your email address on our website. This will allow you to receive regular newsletter updates that will keep you informed on all of the latest news and events in the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region.

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

Go to www.alnwfldisciples.org

Click on "register" in the top left hand corner and follow the process

It's that simple!

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Alabama-Northwest Florida website is brought to you in cooperation with WebMedley.

WebMedley offers full-service website design and marketing services that go beyond the competition. Regardless of the desired outcome of your site - e-commerce, fund-raising, online advertising - WebMedley will make sure it's a perfect fit and has the ability to change as your needs change.

In February, WebMedley launced their newly revised website highlighting a variety of web-based services including hosting, customer support, customer site design, social media, online marketing and e-newsletters.

Why WebMedley? It's simple. We listen. Nobody knows your business better than you do. WebMedley will customize your message based on what you need and set the tools in place to get you where you want to go. For more information, e-mail info@webmedley.com or give them a call at 800.434.8607.