



THE CHRISTIAN ALABAMA-NORTHWEST FLORIDA

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

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IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

JUNE

- 9 - 14 Beach Camp ("The Lighthouse" Retreat Center at Romar Beach Baptist Church)
- Orange Beach, AL
- 21 - 23 Regional Convocation Assembly - Sellers Memorial Christian Church,
White Hall, AL
- 22 - 24 Discovery Camp - YMCA-Camp Chandler (near Wetumpka, AL)
- 24 - 28 Junior Camp, Chi Rho Camp, and CYF Conference - YMCA-Camp Chandler

JULY

- 1 Project Advisory Team for New Church (6:30 p.m.) - Westwood Christian
Church, Pensacola
- 13 - 17 General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) - Orlando, FL
- 20 Commissioning and Ordination North (9:15 a.m.) - Regional Office, Helena
- 27 Commissioning and Ordination South (9:15 a.m.) - United Christian,
Montgomery

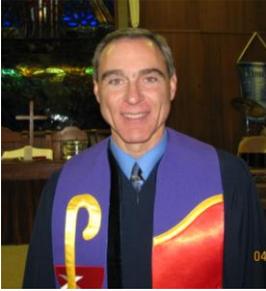
AUGUST

- 10 Clergy-Women's Luncheon (11:30a.m. - 1:30 p.m.) - Regional Office, Helena
- 14 Commissioning and Ordination North (9:15 a.m.) - Regional Office, Helena
- 17 Gathering of Moderators/Board Chairpersons (Noon-3:00 p.m.) - First Christian
Church, Montgomery
- 24 Anti-Racism Team (10:00 a.m.) - Regional Office
- 25 "Senior Adult Sunday" in the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region

"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

REFLECTIONS FROM THE REGIONAL MINISTER



Does your family have Family Reunions? I am blessed to be part of a family that sees value in having family reunions. We have “gatherings” of family members at other times as circumstances allow. Usually only a few of the extended family can participate in the “gatherings.” But the family “reunion” is once every three years, and everyone on my mother’s side of the family is expected to participate. It is a big deal. Everyone in the family receives the date more than a year in advance. Everyone goes to much trouble and expense to be in attendance, although in a family our size there are always some who have unavoidable conflicts.

Why is there a need for a “Reunion”? Why can it not simply be a “gathering”? Actually, I have spent some time thinking about this. I am convinced that the goal is more than just to gather. The goal is to be re-united – to nurture the sense of unity that comes through the bond of family kinship. I believe “reunion” is the correct term. It is more than a “gathering.” It is a time of solidarity and oneness, reminding ourselves that we belong to one another. We share history together. We have ancestors in common who helped shape us and give us a family identity.

During the three years in between these family reunions, we tend to go our separate ways. We do not communicate as well as we should. Some of us stay in contact regularly, but many of us lose touch. We do not really know the major issues that many of our own family members face on a day-to-day basis. We live, practically speaking, as though we were not kin at all. And yet we know that is not how it is supposed to be. For that reason, we welcome the announcement of the next family reunion and we place high value on it.

I want to suggest in this article that the General Assemblies of the Christian Church are more like “family reunions” than denominational “gatherings.” They are times for us to be reminded of our kinship and to nurture the bond we share in Christ. They are opportunities to remember our common history and to celebrate the DNA that is central to our understanding of who we are as a special family within the larger body of Christ. Though we may live in a day-to-day existence that seems quite remote from many of our brothers and sisters, we are nevertheless kin. Thus, we need to experience re-union. We do that through worshipping together, through fellowship, through interaction that better equips us to represent the family name when we return home.

In many families there are colorful personalities that seem to stand out, either positively or negatively. Some family members may test my tolerance level, yet they are family. They are “in the fold”, so to speak. They are a part of me. They are family, even when I cannot support their decisions or actions. In like manner, my place in the family is secure. No matter how I may have changed in the intervening years since the last reunion (new look, new marriage, new self-awareness, new physical or mental challenges, new outlook on life, etc.), I am welcomed with open arms to take my place at the family table at the next reunion.

In July, there will be a great family reunion at the General Assembly in Orlando. You and I are welcome to be there for we are part of the Disciples family. And there will be a family table there as well – the table of God’s grace which makes us One. We all belong to this family. None of us can say to other family members, “you don’t belong.” Why would any family member say that to another family member?

The General Assembly only happens every two years. I pray that it will be a sweet time of “re-union” as we celebrate our common life together and as we nurture in each other a better understanding of who we are called to be as the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Your Partner in Ministry,

John P. Mobley
Regional Minister

REGIONAL CONVOCATION PLANS WEEKEND ASSEMBLY - JUNE 21-23, 2013

The Convocation of the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region is sponsoring a weekend Assembly on June 21 - 23, 2013, at Sellers Memorial Christian Church in White Hall, Alabama. The theme of the Convocation Assembly is "Lord, Teach Us To Pray." Special guests include Rev. Sheila Spencer, Associate with Disciples Home Missions and former Program Director with Disciples Women, Rev. R. Wayne Calhoun, Sr., Minister of Evangelism, Disciples Home Missions, and Rev. LaMarco Cable, Associate, Bread for the World. There will be activities for children and teens. All Disciples in the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region are invited to participate in this Assembly.

The registration fee for adults is \$25 and for youth is \$15. Included with the registration fee is lunch and dinner on Saturday and dinner on Sunday. Mail registration forms and payments to Maldonia Jackson, 191 Jackson Road, Hayneville, AL 36040.

EFFORT TO ESTABLISH NEW PENSACOLA CONGREGATION IS SET TO BEGIN ON JULY 1, 2013

The Project Advisory Team for the new church start in Pensacola is working out the final details to launch an effort on July 1, 2013, to establish a new congregation in west Pensacola that will focus on ministry with the Spanish-speaking population of that area. Westwood Christian Church, Pensacola, is a strategic partner in this effort as they are exploring ways for the new congregation to share space at their facility for worship and other programming.

The Project Advisory Team is excited about the candidates who are giving prayerful consideration to leading this new ministry. More information will be reported in future communication from the Region.

NEWS OF THE CLERGY

C. J. Cobb has been called to serve as Interim minister with First Christian Church, Athens. **Tom Youngblood** has announced his resignation as pastor with Union Christian Church, Tuskegee, effective at the end of June.

CONGREGATIONS SEEKING A MINISTER

Athens, First (C. J. Cobb is Interim)
Birmingham, First (Jane Hull is Interim)
Florence, First (Tim Murtaugh is Interim)
Tuskegee, Union

STATEMENT AFFIRMING AN ANTI-RACIST IDENTITY

Recognizing the division that exists within the human family due to the sin of racism, the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region confirms its commitment to the call of the gospel of Jesus Christ to be an ambassador of unity and reconciliation. The Alabama-Northwest Florida Region confesses its own participation in the sin of racism and is committed to the dismantling of racism wherever it exists in its own institutional life and in the life and witness of its congregations.

Therefore, the Regional Board, on February 23, 2002, affirms all current and future efforts within the Alabama-Northwest Region to become an Anti-Racist manifestation of the Body of Christ. This affirmation will be demonstrated through prayer, allocation of resources, and organized efforts to challenge racism wherever it exists within the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region.

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

First Christian Church, Anniston
Primera Iglesia Cristiana Hispana, Anniston
Village Christian Church, Auburn
First Christian Church, Birmingham
Valley Christian Church, Birmingham
First Christian Church, Dothan
Snow Hill Christian Church, Ft. Deposit
First Christian Church, Ft. Walton Beach
Primera Iglesia Cristiana Hispana, Fort Walton Beach
First Christian Church, Huntsville
Grateful Life Community Church, Huntsville
Mt. Pleasant Christian Church, Mathews
First Christian Church, Pensacola
Mt. Calvary Missionary Christian Church, Tuskegee
Union Christian Church, Tuskegee
First Christian Church of River View, Valley

ALABAMA-NORTHWEST FLORIDA REGION PARTICIPATES IN ECUMENICAL GATHERING



On April 14-15, 2013, Christian Churches Together (CCT) sponsored an event in Birmingham in conjunction with the 50th anniversary of the “Letter From A Birmingham Jail,” written by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., on April 16, 1963. The ecumenical gathering included time for dialogue and presentations and it resulted in a formal response from the ecumenical community to the challenges included in Dr. King’s letter. The written response is available through CCT.

Disciples of Christ were well represented in this gathering. Pictured here is General Minister and President Sharon E. Watkins with the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region’s Co-Chairpersons of the Anti-Racism Team, Tommy Morgan and Katie Wallace-Davis. Other Disciples present included former General Minister and President Richard L. Hamm, Anti-Racism Team Member Rob Davis, and Regional Minister John Mobley.

ANTI-RACISM TEAM LEADS WORKSHOP FOR CLERGY



On April 12-13, 2013, the Alabama-Northwest Florida Anti-Racism Team gave leadership to an anti-racism/pro-reconciliation training event for clergy. The event was hosted by First Christian Church, Montgomery. All ministers with standing are required to participate in formal anti-racism training at least every 10 years in order to maintain their ministerial standing. The Team offers training in the spring of each year when there is no Regional Assembly. Approximately 40 ministers participated in the event which was aimed at raising awareness, building a foundation for understanding racism and its effects on communities, and challenging church leaders to be advocates of unity and reconciliation. Anti-Racism Team members include: Tommy Morgan and Katie Wallace-Davis, co-chairpersons, Fannie Ashley, Kelsey Blankenship, Dale Braxton, Rob Davis, Jan Mackenzie, Franklin Nettles, and Loretta Rucker.

OUTREACH GIVING UPDATE

The year-to-date giving in 2013 by congregations in Alabama-Northwest Florida to the Disciples Mission Fund and the four Special Day Offerings (Easter, Pentecost, Thanksgiving, and Christmas) has increased by 29.35% over the amount given year-to-date in 2012. Church-wide gifts to Disciples Mission Fund and the four Special Day Offerings are showing a 9.62% increase over the amount given through April, 2012. Week of Compassion giving in Alabama-Northwest Florida is showing a 6.5% increase from the amount given through April, 2012. The Easter Offering is showing a 32.1 % increase over the amount given in 2012.

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.



DISCIPLES WOMEN SPONSOR A GATHERING ON MAY 18, 2013

The CWF/Disciples Women's Cabinet sponsored a Spring Event for all women in Disciples congregations on Saturday, May 18, 2013, at First Christian Church, Montgomery. The special guest for the occasion was Rev. Sheila Spencer, former Associate in the Office of Disciples Women and now an Associate with Disciples Home Missions in the areas of faith formation and leadership development. The theme was "Lord Teach

Us To Pray: Generation to Generation." The women worshiped together and received encouraging and challenging words from the keynoter. They were given helpful resources aimed at equipping women's groups in their worship, fellowship, and service. They also enjoyed a delicious meal together.

The Cabinet did an outstanding job preparing for and leading the event. Ellen Rawls currently serves as the Region's CWF/Disciples Women President.

‘Here I am, Lord’



Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Alabama-NW Florida

Disciple Women's
Fall Retreat
at
Camp Chandler, Wetumpka, AL
on
October 11-13, 2013

Resource Leader: LaVerne Thorpe
International Disciples Women's Ministries Vice President



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
in Alabama-Northwest Florida

FAMILY CAMP 2014

March 21-23, 2014

at

Oak Mountain State Park, Pelham, AL

Children Worship & Wonder Training Event July 26-28, 2013

July 26-28, 2013
(Fri. 6-9; Sat. 9 – 5; Sun 2-5)
Story Teller Training



First Christian Church
1705 Taylor Rd.
Montgomery, AL 36117

Trainer: Jane Nettles

\$120.00

if received by July 12, 2013

\$150 after early bird deadline

**A GATHERING OF MODERATORS
AND BOARD CHAIRPERSONS**

All Moderators and Board Chairpersons are invited to a special gathering for a luncheon and a time of fellowship, conversation and sharing. The goal is to help Moderators and Board Chairs be better equipped for the important leadership roles they occupy in the life of the congregation. Pastors are also welcome to accompany their Moderators/Board Chairpersons to this gathering.

**Saturday, August 17, 2013
Noon - 3:00 p.m.**

**FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH, MONTGOMERY
(1705 Taylor Road 36117)**

NOTE: There is no cost to attend. However, reservations must be made by contacting the Regional office by mail, fax (205-425-5246), or email <jpmobley2@aol.com> prior to August 9.



**YOU CAN BE A PART OF THE
ALABAMA-NORTHWEST FLORIDA**

ANNUAL FUND

The *Annual Fund* is ...

...an invitation for individuals to give additional financial support for the ministries of this Region. While the Region is supported through the Disciples Mission Fund and through the Christmas Offering, these dollars alone will not maintain current ministries and develop new ministries that are envisioned.

...an opportunity for individuals to make a difference in the lives of children, youth, young adults, men, women, pastors, and students. Gifts to the *Annual Fund* directly impact people right in your own congregation and in neighboring Disciples of Christ congregations.

...an opportunity to undergird this Region so that we can achieve excellence in everything we do. Nothing less is worthy of the Christ we serve.

-----Please clip and return-----

Enclosed is my/our gift to help the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region continue its current ministries with excellence and to develop exciting new ministries which will strengthen congregations for mission and ministry.

Name _____

E-Mail

Address

Phone _____

Congregation _____

Amount of Gift \$ _____

Payable to:
Christian Church in Alabama-NW Florida
861 Highway 52, Helena, AL 35080

Thank You for Your Support!!!