

Disciples Home Missions

President's Report

National Convocation Board of Trustees Meeting

December 2019

Disciples Home Missions (DHM) is a collective of ministries working out of their particular passion for ministry giving witness to the life-changing love of God! As the “hands-on” General Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), DHM resources foundational congregational ministries for all of God’s children and creation!

The vision of DHM is to connect people with the life-changing love of God. We live into the Gospel of Jesus Christ by accompanying and working with congregations, Regions and partners in strengthening and developing partnerships through our core areas of (1) supporting congregational transformation; (2) resourcing leader development; (3) sustaining faith formation; (4) providing mission opportunities; and (5) advocating for justice.

DHM is about ministry that draws on Christ-like Compassion to make Courageous Connections! We are committed to the Great Commandment to love God and neighbor as we love ourselves; and, the Great Commission to do our part to “go and teach all nations.”

That said; let me acknowledge the integral and valued relationship of DHM and the National Convocation of the Christian Church (DOC) in that certain officers of DHM are members of the National Convocation Board of Trustees. The same officers also have the privilege to serve as Trustees of the National Christian Missionary Convention. DHM is the general ministry carrying the designated African American positions of evangelism, Christian education and women’s ministry by virtue of the merger agreement. Note that the women’s ministry stands on its own agency by virtue of a separate “Principles of Mutuality” agreement between DHM and the office of Disciples Women. I expect that the Trustees have received or will receive specific reports reflecting the work of these ministries with respect to the interests of the National Convocation.

Let me emphasize that Disciples Home Missions (DHM) is a collective of ministries! God has given us, the Division of Homeland Ministries doing business as Disciples Home Missions, the awesome privilege of being a part of a collective of ministries integral to the life and witness of Jesus as the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the US and Canada!

We are faithful to our mission that Disciples Home Missions, in relationships with its partners, equips Disciples for Christ and connects people to the life-changing love of God...and we do this while facilitating faithful and effective ministry.

With this faith, we support congregations and their leaders who have discerned their need to transform congregational life and find their future by:

1. Identifying congregations and leaders who are committed to the care of creation and assisting them to become Green Chalice congregations in partnership with the Christian Church in KY; Eco America, Blessed Tomorrow and Creation Justice Ministries.
2. Housing Family and Children's Ministries through which we lead children in discovering their wonderfully creative understanding of the gospel of Christ through story-telling utilizing Children Worship and Wonder (CWW).
3. Coordinating Youth Ministries and Young Adult Ministries; and, partnering with the Racial Ethnic Ministries in faith formation and leader development. Such collaborations embrace the leadership of youth through our General Youth Council (GYC) and our young adults through our Young Adult Commission (YAC).
4. Serving congregations and Regions through Evangelism & Congregational Transformation, and Black Ministries in coordination with Disciples Church Extension Fund's Hope Partnership Services.
5. Offering opportunities for Disciples across the United States and Canada to participate in mission trips to help rebuild churches and homes in the aftermath of natural or human-made disasters and to work on special projects in between disasters through Disciples Volunteering and Church of the Brethren Disaster Services for Children.
6. Providing resources for congregational leaders to strengthen faith, inspire excellence in ministry and congregational leadership, and inform them through social and printed media highlighting the myriad of ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

7. Continuing to explore the possibilities of greater collaboration and partnership with our General Ministry partners in our work, mission, and ministry.

Becoming a Pro-Reconciling/Anti-Racist Church

DHM has established a Pro-Reconciliation and Anti-Racism (PRAR) Team comprised of staff and board members engaged in its transformational journey as a vital part of its commitment to becoming a pro-reconciling/anti-racist church. Dr. Carolyn Browning Helsel, Assistant Professor of Homiletics at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Austin, Texas and the author of the book, *Anxious To Talk About It, Helping White Christians Talk Faithfully About Racism*, was our awesome facilitator for our November 2019 PRAR day for our board and staff. I appreciate the leadership our co-chairs Kate Epperly and Brenda Tyler and the rest of the team.

The Office of Evangelism and Congregational Transformation DHM is a collegial partner in the formation of new congregations and the transformation of existing congregations through its Office of Evangelism and Congregational Transformation, the Leadership Initiative Team (LIT) and collaborations with New Church Ministry. This ministry works on empowering local Disciples congregations to move into their vision and mission.

The Office of Evangelism networks with Evangelism Connections, which is an ecumenical group of Christians who strive to frame evangelism, hospitality, and church vitality mission and ministry in a 21st Century context.

We are connecting with regions in leader development through the Leadership Initiative Team

This ministry initiative, simply called, “LIT” involves leaders from diverse expressions of the church representing Evangelism, Congregation Transformation, Christian Vocations, Christian Education, Disciples Women, Ministries Across Generations, Justice and Advocacy for Family and Children’s Ministries, Global Ministries, New Church Ministry, Regional Men’s Ministry, Curriculum Design/ Inter-personal communications, Youth, and Young Adults collaborating in the service of leader development. They work collectively around any contextual focus of congregational or Regional ministry in developing local leaders. If your ministry needs resources or help designing resources for leader development around evangelism, social justice; men’s ministry; women’s ministry; youth ministry – you name the interest, then LIT is available to help.

LIT designs ministry from the ground up starting with listening to you, the active leaders who are engaged in the ministries, of the Regions, Districts, Fellowship communities, and Congregations among other recognized bodies. We are enthusiastic and optimistic about the “LIT” team convened by Disciples Home Missions (DHM) as a part of its leadership initiative. It is a commitment to living into “*accompaniment leadership*” as a focal point where we walk alongside partners in preparing leaders.

Additional Partnerships

DHM follows Jesus’ call by partnering with mission centers and ministries that offer a whole array of services for the betterment of thousands of individuals and families each year.

These include Agencies Serving Youth, Association of Disciple Musicians, The Office of Black Ministries (OBM), Christian Education, Christian Vocations, Chaplains’ Endorsement, Disciples Men, Disciples Volunteering, Disciples Women (DW), Evangelism, Family & Children’s Ministries, Green Chalice, Refugee and Immigration Ministries*, Immigration Legal Counsel, Disciples Farm Worker Ministry, Scholarship Opportunities, the Young Adult Commission, and the General Youth Council. It includes the Mission Centers & Legacy Ministries of:

- All Peoples Christian Center
- Inman Christian Mission Center
- Kansas Christian Home
- Kentucky Appalachian Ministries now evolved into Disciples Appalachian Scholarship Ministries
- Southwest Good Samaritan Ministries
- Urban Spirit
- Yakama Christian Mission
- Oakland Peace Center and
- Blue Theology Mission Station

Some of the many bright spots to share are:

1. The roll out of the DHM app at this year’s General Assembly enabling more options for connecting with the collective ministries. Be sure to download the app on your phone.
2. The care of staff through program staff sabbaticals and ministry associates paid time off for Rest and Renewal.
3. The empowerment of Disciples through Our School of Faith and Life is an annual opportunity for leader development and we are exploring ways to

expand its outreach in cluster, regional, district and other advantageous ministry contexts.

4. The establishment of the Disciples Appalachian Scholarship Ministry has resulted in seven students from Appalachian communities each receiving a \$2000.00 scholarship at Disciples undergraduate institutions of Bethany College, Midway University, and Barton College.
5. The planning of Sessions 2020 involves the leadership of the General Conference of Disciples Men in collaboration with our Disciples men staff. Session 2020 will be July 10-12 at TCU in Fort Worth, TX. The men will gather for worship, team building and receive curriculum resources for broadening local Disciples Men Fellowships through “The Jesus Way” journey.
6. “Ministries Across Generations” (MAG) emphasizes an intergenerational approach to Family and Children’s Ministry! This initiative is leading the challenge for the church to recognize and value its intergenerational connections in education and faith formation.

A Challenging Note!

We were challenged when the final accounting of the 2018 Disciples Mission Fund showed a one hundred thousand dollar deficit. Given the DHM declining trend, a conservative proposed budget projection for 2020 reflected an approximate \$90,000 deficit. We had to balance the budget and in my second year an abrupt staff cut was not a just option – particularly approaching the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays! In consultation with my VP for Finance, the proposed balance budget reflects a cut in administrative and/or travel costs that reduced the deficit to approximately \$20,000. We applied special funds sufficient to balance the budget.

Meetings are in process alerting staff that we are exploring ways to increase ministry revenue by engaging in development as well as emphasizing the goal of 100% DHM board and staff giving. Further details and developing plans will come from the Finance Committee Report.

We will be assessing the ministries of DHM with emphasis on the core ministries of evangelism and congregational transformation; Christian education and faith formation; leader development; justice and missions. We will walk faithfully adjusting how we operate with a goal of doing ministry in 2020 and beyond well within the resources provided. We will also stretch ourselves in ministry opportunities that are congruent with our core ministries in collaborations with

integral and valued partners. Finally, we will walk in the faith that connects all of God's children and creation that we reach with the life-changing love of God!

Glad to be in service with you knowing that the best is yet to come!

Let me close with at least seven shout outs as to why the best is yet to come as I *turn my faith loose!*

- 1) The best is yet to come at the 2020 Black Ministers Retreat, March 9-12, in Nashville TN ...under the theme: Be Bold!
- 2) The best is yet to come at the 2020 American Climate Leadership Summit, March 25-26, in Washington, DC...under the theme: "Ambition. Restoration. Justice."
- 3) The best is yet to come at the Oregon – South Idaho Regional Assembly, May 15 -16, Salem, OR - where yours truly is the keynote speaker!
- 4) The best is yet to come at the 2020 Bethany Bash, June 26-28, at Bethany College, Bethany, WV - an encampment for DOC Boy and Girl Scouts and extended to all DOC youth of CYF (high school) age with a special invite to youth from the Church of Christ tradition to the home of Alexander Campbell. The purpose of such an event would be to introduce DOC Scouts to the Campbell heritage and to become better acquainted with the town of Bethany, Bethany College and appreciate Campbell's passion for education.
- 5) The best is yet to come at the 2020 Disciples Men Sessions, July 10-12, at TCU, in Ft Worth, TX ...under the theme: "I Am My Brother's Keeper!"
- 6) The best is yet to come at the 2020 Chaplains Retreat, September 29 – October 2, at Christmount, in Black Mountain, NC and last but not least in this shout out and definitely not all
- 7) The best is yet to come at the 2020 Experience, July 22-25, at TCU, in Ft Worth TX ...under the theme: "It's Real!"

Yes, the best is yet to come!!!! For we walk by faith and not by sight!!!