

Rev. Yvonne T. Gilmore, Interim Administrative Secretary of the National Convocation

Formed out of a call to unity and restructure, the National Convocation is a historically orienting and transformative covenantal partner in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). It's vital ministry of fellowship, education, advocacy, and discipleship has long sustained it's mission to "nurture a realization of the merger vision." Living into the great commandment (Matthew 22:36-40) and the great commission (Matthew 28:16-20), it has attended to the command to love neighbor and self, care for systems, congregations, and African-American persons, while honoring the commission to go make covenant relationships and disciples of friends, neighbors, and enemies.

I am grateful for a meaningful and well planned transition into the role of Interim Administrative Secretary as my term begins with an immediate opportunity to engage the leadership and gifts of Rev. Dr. Irie Session and the board, and an overlapping month with Rev. Dr. Timothy James. I look forward to building on the strategic momentum of the National Convocation and the National Christian Missionary Convention to further the exceptional work of the Black Church, and I am earnestly excited about the unique opportunities afforded by this interim period to assess future possibilities for ministry and to advance operational resources for engagement in the wider ecology of ministry, vision, and service in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) across the United States and Canada.

Our movement for wholeness is moving by faith in the promises of God amidst a new landscape. Movements are meant to move cultures, people, institutions, values, and resources. Many of us are adapting to the challenges presented by COVID-19 and the cultural shifts around us. Among the shifts that present unique opportunities is the fact that many leaders and congregations have become acclimated to online engagement while travel and the practice of presence is restricted. I anticipate building on this adaptive capacity for online interaction during this interim period of assessment, discovery, renewal, and planning over the next year by working with the board, National Convocation members, and supporters to take the following steps:

- ***Meet with clergy and lay people from 5 congregations a week to assess needs, and invite imagination regarding future possibilities. How is the compassion of Jesus moving the Convocation and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) today? What are we called to share? How is God calling us to do ministry and to flourish in new ways? What steps do we take to integrate and move with our grief, our compassion, and our resources?***
- ***Start a podcast and video live-cast to feature the gifts, wisdom, and adaptive capacities of the National Convocation and the Christian Church, Disciples of Christ***
- ***Explore the possibility of a "Fifth Sunday movement"***
- ***Apply for a major grant from the Lilly Endowment to support the flourishing of National Convocation ministers and congregations***

I thank God for this sacred call to ensure that significant resources are invested in discerning future ministry, strengthening and amplifying the voice and leadership of the National Convocation, and in cultivating innovative leaders for the future. During this period where many echo the reminder that Black Lives Matter, I am grateful for this interim period to assess how National Convocation is supporting Black lives and how we can better support Black ministry in the coming days through spiritual assessment, strategic planning, scaling, and judicious evaluation to sustain a high functioning and growing team in collaboration with the boards of the NCCC and the NCMC.