



THE CHRISTIAN ALABAMA-NORTHWEST FLORIDA

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

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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

All meeting locations are at the Regional Office unless otherwise noted

NOVEMBER

- 1 Commissioning and Ordination II (9:15 a.m.) - United Christian, Montgomery
- 3 - 4 Senior Adult Retreat - Rolling Hills Camp and Conference Center, Calera, AL
- 5 CWF/Disciples Women's Cabinet (10:00 a.m.)
- 14 Workshop for Clergy (10:00 a.m.) - First Christian Church, Birmingham
- 20 - 27 Thanksgiving Offering (for Disciples Colleges and Seminaries/Divinity Houses)
- 21 Orientation for Advisors (10:00 a.m.) First Christian Church, Montgomery
- 29 - Dec. 1 College of Regional Ministers - San Antonio, TX

DECEMBER

- 3 Regional Nominating Committee (10:00 a.m.)
- 10 Executive/Personnel Committee (10:00 a.m.)
- 12 Committee on the Ministry (10:00 a.m.)
- 14 Regional Staff Planning Meeting (10:00 a.m.)
- 11 - 18 Christmas Offering (for ministries of the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region)

JANUARY, 2012

- 9 - 11 Ministers and Mates Retreat - Hilton Garden Inn, Orange Beach, AL
- 13 - 15 Young Adult Retreat
- 18 Commissioning and Ordination I (9:15 a.m.)
- 18 - 25 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
- 20 - 23 Youthtopia, YMCA-Hargis Retreat Center
- 28 Committee on Recommendations (10:00 a.m.)

DISCIPLES VOLUNTEERING

On April 27th, Tuscaloosa County and other counties in north and central Alabama were devastated by a severe outbreak of tornados. In Tuscaloosa, over 7,000 homes and businesses were severely damaged or destroyed including three elementary schools, the Salvation Army headquarters, and the American Red Cross headquarters. Fifty individuals lost their lives as a result of the storm. First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Tuscaloosa received monies from Week of Compassion and other Disciples Churches throughout the nation to assist members of the congregation and others in our community to meet immediate needs. Soon after the storm, members from First Christian Church and Cottondale Christian Churches met with our Regional Minister, John Mobley, Brandon Gilvin, Week of Compassion, and Josh Baird, Disciples Volunteering, in partnership to begin the process of becoming a mission station for long term recovery efforts in our Region.

One of the first projects was to provide a place for the mission station coordinators to reside while Disciples groups were working in the area. A couple from White, Georgia, David and Connie Spear, offered their time and talents to do some renovations in our Joseph Hornback Disciple House to make it more useable for this purpose. In just a few days, they completely renovated a bathroom and leveled some areas of the house in order to accommodate a couple who would be overseeing groups of volunteers. Then a youth mission group (Chi Rho and CYF) from First Christian Church, Huntsville, arrived and did some major cleaning out of other areas in the Disciple house and also did some volunteering in the community.

On July 31st, Rex and Pattie Williams, Mission Station Coordinators from Cherry Log, Georgia, arrived to identify the work that was being done in Tuscaloosa. They toured the city and met with various groups who were also involved in long-term recovery needs in order to form partnerships for helping the community. A mobile shower unit and work trailers were brought to Tuscaloosa from Nashville where they had been in use for flood recovery efforts over the past year.



The first group of twenty-two Disciples Volunteering from First Christian Church, Richlands, NC arrived on August 7th. They were hosted by Cottondale Christian Church and shower facilities were provided for them by Cottondale United Methodist Church (across the street).

The group, some veterans and some first time volunteers, spent from Monday through Friday doing a variety of jobs ranging from working in the Salvation Army warehouse and distribution center to debris cleanup and working on a Habitat for Humanity home in Holt and another severely damaged home in the Alberta community.

The group met the home owner, Abraham and his son Darrel, who inspired them more than they realize by telling their survival stories, especially of leaving their house after the tornado when all they could do, as they walked down the street, was sing praises to God for sparing their lives while at the same time as they were surrounded by those who hadn't been so fortunate.

The group enjoyed a wonderful pot luck supper on Wednesday night provided by the members of Cottondale Christian. The ladies of Cottondale really outdid themselves. Carolyn and Buddy McGee graciously offered the use of their pool to the volunteers as well. The pastor of Richlands Christian Church, Rev. Gary Edens, and several members on the team knew our own Rev. Gary Edge, minister at Valley Christian Church in Birmingham, and a number of them had even been baptized by him. He was able to join them for a meal on Thursday evening. What a closely connected group of Disciples we are!



If you would like to know more of the first hand experiences of the Richlands group, you can find them, complete with pictures, on their web site: www.fccrichlands.org.

The members of First Christian Church and Cottondale Christian Church are so thankful that we have been able to unite with other Disciple churches as we begin the process of long term recovery in our area and we are eagerly awaiting the arrivals of more groups in the near future.

REFLECTIONS FROM THE ASSOCIATE REGIONAL MINISTER



The Fourteenth Biennial Assembly of the Regional Convocation Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) was held at New Hope Christian Church, Letohatchee, Alabama on June 24-26, 2011. The Theme for the assembly was, "Many Gifts, One Spirit," based on Ephesians 4:4.

The weekend was filled with inspirational singing, profound preaching and educational workshops. Regional Minister, John Mobley was the opening night preacher, Dr. Nadine Burton, from New Church Ministries opened the Saturday morning session, and Rev. Howard Jones, Pastor for the host congregation, brought the message for the final session on Sunday morning.

There were 120 registered participants from 18 Convocation Churches. The Convocation is a fellowship group of the Regional Church and all are welcome to come and worship and learn together. If you would like to know more about the convocation please contact the Regional office.

A special "Thank You" goes out to New Hope Christian Church for a splendid job in hosting the event!

In His Service,
Dale C. Braxton

NEWS FROM WOMEN'S MINISTRIES



The Clergy-Women's Luncheon was held at the Regional Office on August 13. This was a time for fellowship, networking and encouragement to the women clergy in the Region. Sarah Draper, member of the Committee on Ministry, acted as our hostess. Elena Huegel, our Global Mission Partner in Chile, was our special guest. Elena presented each clergy woman with a beaded bracelet crafted by a child after the earthquake in Chile. This was the child's "Thank You" gift for the many ways others had assisted with their recovery.

There was a picture of the child with each bracelet, and Elena shared a story about the child.

Our Women's Fall Retreat will be underway by the time this is published. The Co-Retreat Directors, Deborah Viglione and Sharon Van Hoose, Pensacola First, along with the CWF/DW Cabinet has worked very hard to provide an outstanding Retreat with the theme, "A New Day~~A New Heart." We are looking forward to our time with Rev. Barbara Stephens, "Mama Hug," of Abundant Life Ministries.

In relation to Hurricane Irene along the Eastern Seaboard of the United States, Week of Compassion partner Church World Service has provided affected areas with blankets, as well as hygiene and cleanup kits. If your group is looking for ways to assist, these projects can assist as we prepare for future disasters.

Start planning now for Quadrennial Assembly in 2014 to be held in Atlanta, Georgia.

May God bless you in your ministry,

Betty L. Wright
Regional Staff for Women's Ministries

DOES YOUR CHURCH HAVE ENOUGH YOUNG ADULTS?

If your members are lamenting the absence of young people, perhaps they would like to learn about ministry to and with today's young adults. Diane Wood is available to bring her informative and lively updated presentation *The Millennial Mindset* at YOUR church. The presentation covers the many ways that today's young adults are different from previous generations, and offers suggestions about reaching out to them. Diane will have some Sundays free during her year-long CPE Residency at UAB Medical Center, so contact her soon to schedule a visit to your church. You can email Diane at dwservant@aol.com or call her at 256-658-1171.

SENIOR ADULT RETREAT IS SET FOR NOVEMBER 3 - 4, 2011



The tenth annual Senior Adult Retreat will be held at Rolling Hills Camp and Conference Center in Calera, AL, on Thursday and Friday, November 3 - 4, 2011. The theme of the senior adult retreat is "The Gift of Years." Rev. Jim Powell, retired president of Church Extension, a general ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), will be the guest leader for the retreat. Jim states that his goal is to help retreat participants "in exploring who we are becoming in this, our third stage of life, sometimes called retirement." Rev. Powell thinks this stage of life is best described as the harvest time of life. Rev. Powell will facilitate small group and large group conversations about what we are learning about ourselves and the difference we can make in our families, our church, and our world...at our own sacred pace. Recommended reading, prior to the retreat, is a book by Joan Chittister entitled, *The Gift of Years: Growing Older Gracefully*, published by BlueBridge Press.

Rev. Jim Powell currently serves as Senior Advisor for Advancement. He served as president of Church Extension from 1995 until beginning his current position in August 2010. Prior to becoming president, he led the denomination's new church initiative and served as vice-president for congregational services. He earned a B.S. from the University of Maryland and an M.Div. from Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis. He served as pastor of two congregations in Indiana and as Associate Regional Minister in the Indiana Region prior to being called to Church Extension.

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, games, and book reviews. 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.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!!!

Miracle Day is set for June 2, 2012, at Madison Christian Church in Madison, Alabama. Beth Thomason is the Pastor.

ENGAGING THE ANCIENT SPIRITUAL PRACTICE OF THE LABYRINTH



Any congregation or fellowship group may reserve the portable canvas labyrinth by contacting Diane Wood. If the spiritual discipline of the labyrinth is a new concept for your congregation, Diane can provide an introductory program and facilitated labyrinth walk. Listed below are just some possible occasions for use of the labyrinth:

- All-Saints Day Nov. 6
Remembering those who have joined the great cloud of witnesses
- Thanksgiving Special Offering
- Advent
- Weekly walks focusing on Love, Peace, Joy, and Hope
- Leadership or Congregational Retreat
- Pastoral Retreat
- Men's, Women's, or Youth Group meeting or Retreat
- Community Prayer Event

You may reserve the labyrinth by contacting Diane Wood at 256-658-1171 or email her at dwservant@aol.com.



Carl Flock recently celebrated 60 years in ministry. The celebration and reception took place on August 14, 2011, at First Christian Church, Birmingham, where Carl is a member. Family and friends helped to celebrate this joyous occasion with Carl.

**2012 MINISTERS AND MATES RETREAT
JANUARY 9-11, 2012**

***"Remaining Healthy While Navigating through the Joy and Turbulence
of Parish Ministry"***

**Location: Hilton Garden Inn – Orange Beach, Alabama
Resource Leader: Rev. Dr. Charles H. Chandler**



This Retreat will encourage ministers to be proactive in their efforts to remain healthy. Each minister must develop a solid support system, essential and innovative tools for leadership, and a discipline for good self-care. Spouses may provide accountability for the minister as they proactively attend to their own physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health.

A native of Cedartown, Georgia, Charles H. Chandler was the second of five sons to Reverend and Mrs. Gordon R. Chandler. He moved with his family to Alabama at age 11 and graduated from Jacksonville High School, Jacksonville, Alabama. He earned the B.A. degree from Samford University, Birmingham, in mathematics. Two months later, he married Betty Lou Horton of Bessemer, Alabama, and they moved to Louisville, Kentucky, where he enrolled at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary from which he earned three degrees; Master of Divinity, Master of Religious Education, and Doctor of Ministry.

Committed to pastoral ministry, Dr. Chandler has served as pastor of seven churches: Fellowship Baptist, Harrodsburg, KY; Deer Park Baptist (associate pastor), Louisville, KY; Baptist Tabernacle, Paducah, KY; First Baptist, Metropolis, IL; Pennsylvania Avenue Baptist, Urbana, IL; Huguenot Road Baptist, Richmond, VA; and Trinity Church, Baptist, Richmond.

In 1994, Dr. Chandler led in the founding of the Ministering to Ministers Foundation, Inc., an organization which seeks to serve as advocates for clergy and their families in all faith groups who are experiencing personal or professional crisis due to deteriorating employment or congregation-clergy relationships. A centerpiece of the ministry is the five-day *Healthy Transitions Wellness Retreats for Ministers and Spouses* held in various locations across the nation. The retreats combine small group dynamics, didactic sessions, and inter-action therapy led by professionals. He has served as Executive Director of MTM since its inception.

Dr. and Mrs. Chandler are the parents of four grown children – the oldest of which drowned in a kayaking accident in 1998. They have six grandchildren.

FLORIDA REGION WELCOMES NEW REGIONAL MINISTER



The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Florida is pleased to announce that on Saturday, August 20, 2011 the Regional Board called the Rev. Dr. Juan Rodriguez to be the next Regional Minister of Florida. Rev. Rodriguez was recently the organizing pastor of Iglesia del Pueblo-Hope Center in Hammond, Ind. He has also served as the First Vice Moderator of the General Assembly during the 2009-2011 biennium.

NEWS OF THE CLERGY

Rev. Rebecca Littlejohn will conclude her ministry as pastor with First Christian Church, Anniston, on October 23, in order to begin a ministry near San Diego, California.

CONGREGATIONS SEEKING A MINISTER

Anniston, Primera Iglesia Cristiana Hispana
Auburn, Village
Cottondale, Cottondale
Fairhope, Fairhope (John Alford is Interim)
Foley, South Baldwin
Montgomery, First (Associate)
Tuskegee, Union

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
First Christian Church, Birmingham
Valley Christian Church, Birmingham
First Christian Church, Dothan
First Christian Church, Ft. Walton Beach
Primera Iglesia Cristiana Hispana, Fort Walton Beach
First Christian Church, Huntsville
Mt. Pleasant Christian Church, Mathews
First Christian Church, Pensacola
Snow Hill Christian Church, Mt. Willing

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.

OUTREACH GIVING UPDATE

The year-to-date giving in 2011, through August, by congregations in Alabama-Northwest Florida to the Disciples Mission Fund and the four Special Day Offerings (Easter, Pentecost, Thanksgiving, and Christmas) decreased by 3.41% from the amount given year-to-date in 2010. Week of Compassion gifts have increased by 4.17%. Church-wide gifts to Disciples Mission Fund and the four Special Day Offerings are showing a 5.40% decrease from the amount given year-to-date in 2010.

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.

THANKSGIVING OFFERING

November 13 & 20, 2011

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 Disciples Mission Fund Thanksgiving offering continue a Disciples tradition of developing leaders for our communities and the church.

DR. JACK SULLIVAN JR. CALLED AS REGIONAL MINISTER

On August 20, the Regional Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Pennsylvania elected the Rev. Dr. Jack Sullivan Jr. of Cleveland, Ohio, to serve as Regional Minister and President. An ordained minister of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Dr. Sullivan currently serves as Senior Pastor of Fifth Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Cleveland. His prior service includes pastorates of many congregations and has also served in the Division of Homeland Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) as Associate for African American Educational Ministries.



Vacation Bible School was held July 22nd and 23rd at Cottondale Christian Church. The theme was "Shake It Up Cafe: Where Kids Carry Out God's Recipe." For their mission project, the children asked the congregation to help supply items to make "Manna Bags." These bags contained items such as bottled water, snacks, hand sanitizer, and an "ingredient" (a craft made at VBS) for carrying out God's Word. Since Cottondale is serving as a Disciples Mission Station, the bags will be given to the Disciple Volunteers that are helping rebuild Tuscaloosa after the tornados of April 27th. Pictured are the children and the "Manna Bags."

**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!!!