



THE CHRISTIAN ALABAMA-NORTHWEST FLORIDA

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The mission of the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region is to encourage and equip its congregations and pastors for the ministry of Jesus Christ in local communities and throughout the world, while seeking to nurture them into deeper relationship with God, with each other, and with the whole Church.

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

AUGUST

- 10 Commissioning and Ordination North (9:15 a.m.) - Regional Office, Helena
28 "Senior Adult Sunday" in Alabama-Northwest Florida

SEPTEMBER

- 6 Commissioning and Ordination South (9:15 a.m.) - United Christian, Montgomery
10 Anti-Racism Team (10:00 a.m.) - Regional Office, Helena
14 - 16 Southeast Regional Fellowship Retreat - Christmount, Black Mountain, NC
17 Regional Board (10:00 a.m.) - First Christian Church, Birmingham
20 - 22 Church-wide Outdoor Ministry Summit - hosted by Upper Midwest Region
23 - 25 Women's Retreat - YMCA-Camp Chandler
25 - Oct. 2 Reconciliation Offering Promotion (for Anti-Racism efforts)

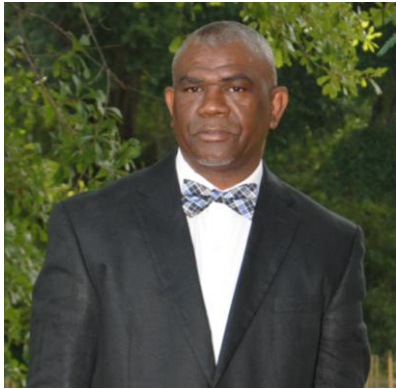
OCTOBER

- 1 Program Committee on Church Development (10:00 a.m.) - Regional Office
2 World Communion Sunday and Reconciliation Offering Sunday
8 Division of Nurture (9:30 a.m.) and Division of Mission (1:00 p.m.) - Regional Office
12 Commissioning and Ordination North (9:15 a.m.) - Regional Office, Helena
13 Optional Arrival Day for Young Adult Beach Retreat - Orange Beach, AL
14 - 16 Young Adult Beach Retreat - Orange Beach, AL
14 - 15 2nd Annual Hispanic Encounter - YMCA-Camp Chandler
22 Disciples Men's Cabinet (8:30 a.m.) - Regional Office
22 Division of Administration and Stewardship (10:00 a.m.) - Regional Office

"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 ASSOCIATE REGIONAL MINISTER SENIOR ADULT SUNDAY



August 28, 2016 has been set aside as the day to celebrate “Senior Adult Sunday” in Alabama- Northwest Florida Region. As Christians, we have the privilege to be in relationship with senior adults in our churches and in our communities. We have the privilege of relationship to God through Jesus Christ. That privilege comes with obligation- the obligation to share stories of the faith with one another. The history of our faith is not limited to the scripture stories. In our churches we have many wise and deeply committed older adults who have many stories of faith to share. They are a vital part of our church’s witness to the world.

In our churches, too often we are not intentional about engaging our older adults in ministry. Sadly, in worship and program planning, we often do not consider that our spiritual growth and church experience can take on a new life as we age. We fail to remember that one of the blessings of aging is the opportunity to leave a legacy. There is a rich history and tradition in our churches and denomination that only those who have experienced it can pass on to younger generation and new members. The stories of the faith learned and experienced by our older adults needs to be honored and celebrated.

For several years, the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region has designated the 4th Sunday in August as Senior Adult Sunday. Churches have been encouraged to show appreciation and support for the senior adults who continue to enrich and strengthen our faith communities. The 4th Sunday in August should be a call to action in addressing the needs of older adults in the congregation and community. Senior Adult Sunday is a day to show appreciation for their many contributions. Invite your church to celebrate Senior Adult Sunday by having the senior adult's recognized in your congregation for:

1. Their positive attitudes and happy smiles.
2. Their support of the Lord’s work through his church.
3. Their regular and consistent presence in the activities of the church.
4. Their many years of teaching, serving on committees, and leadership in the life of the church.

The theme for the 2016 Senior Adult retreat is "Pay it Forward!" What a way to end Senior Adult Sunday if someone from your congregation adopted and paid it forward for an older person to receive a paid registration to attend the Senior Adult Retreat, November 3-4, 2016 (St. Bernard Retreat Center) Cullman, Alabama. The leader will be Rev. Mary Pat Spencer, retired Disciples Pastor.

SENIOR ADULT RETREAT IS SET FOR NOVEMBER 3 - 4, 2016

The fifteenth annual Senior Adult Retreat will be held at St. Bernard Retreat Center, Cullman, Alabama, on Thursday and Friday, November 3 - 4, 2016. The theme of the senior adult retreat is “Pay It Forward!” The leader will be Rev. Mary Pat Spencer. Retired Disciples Pastor living in Birmingham.

The senior adult retreat will include music and singing led by George and Judy Dudley, members of First Christian Church, Birmingham. There will be an annual business session, a movie viewing, table games, and times for Biblical reflection. 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.

The motel-type rooms that are reserved include two twin beds and a private bathroom. Different cost options are available, depending on whether registrants want a single or double

room. Limited financial assistance is available for those who request it from the Regional Minister. All requests for financial assistance will be kept confidential. 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.

[Note: All pastors, whether they consider themselves seniors or not, are encouraged to attend the Senior Adult Retreat along with the senior adults from their congregations.]

DISCIPLES WOMEN'S FALL RETREAT

It may be the hot days of summer, but fall will be here faster than you think. The Disciple Women's Fall Retreat is scheduled for September 23-25, 2016. This year's retreat theme is 'Won't You Be My Neighbor?' The location will once again be Camp Chandler in Wetumpka, AL which is just north of Montgomery, AL.



Our retreat leader is Chesla Nickelson from the Office of Disciple Women in Indianapolis, IN. Chesla currently serves as Program Director and is part of Merger Staff. Chesla T. Nickelson was born and raised in Newport News, Virginia where she led and participated in a multitude of church, community and school activities. In 2005 Chesla received a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology with a minor in Religion from Spelman College. In 2013 Chesla received both a Master of Divinity and a Master of Arts in Marriage

and Family Therapy from Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis, Indiana. She was ordained in 2014 at Light of the World Christian Church, Indianapolis, Indiana. Chesla became a Disciple when she joined Ray of Hope Christian Church (Atlanta, GA) in 2001. Since that time, Chesla has been immersed in various aspects of the Christian Church. She has served with the Executive Committee of the Disciples Peace Fellowship and the Disciples Leadership Institute and has been an intern for Global Ministries (Division of Overseas Ministries) and Reconciliation Ministry. In 2013, Chesla served as the Minister of Leader Development for Hope Partnership for Missional Transformation. As a member of Light of the World Christian Church (Indianapolis, IN), Chesla has served as the Assistant Youth Minister and with the Young Adult Ministry. She is a fan of the Justice League, loves roller coasters and is the reigning Game Night Champion of Taboo. As Chesla strives to live out her purpose and calling in a way that pleases God, she lives by a two word command; Love unconditionally. Also at retreat will be Christina Small (Washington, NC) who will share her experiences from her Women to Women trip to China.

As usual retreat will have many activities to participate in as well as time to relax and fellowship. Mark your calendars for the Disciple Women Fall Retreat.



Disciples News Service

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disciples.org/dns

July 8, 2016

Dear Church,

The nation is reeling from the shock of the violent loss of lives over the last three days, which has resulted in confusion and a sense of hopelessness. Our grief for the families of the victims, for many of us, is unbearable.

"Thus says the Lord, 'A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children, because they are no more.'" (Jeremiah 31:15 - New American Standard). Just as Rachel wept, God is weeping today for the deaths of Alton Sterling, Philando Castile and the five police officers who were killed in Dallas, as well as the injured. There is so much grief and anger in the face of these deaths.

There is a fear for our children, particularly our sons. We are saddened that they are being judged, not by their actions, but by the color of their skin. The list of names keeps growing ... Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, Alton Sterling, Philando Castile... Argue what you will about their actions, what is clear in each case is the violent outcome in the street was not justice.

We also fear for those dedicated police officers who care deeply for people who they are called to serve and protect. Our communities are rife with the effects of racism, hate and violence. We know that many police departments and individual police officers are taking measures to identify and address systemic racism in policing. And we pray for all officers on the streets, recognizing the quick decisions they must make.

These tragic incidents are symptoms of a criminal justice system where in the eyes of some officers, the color of a person's skin is seen as a threat. The disproportionate number of people of color incarcerated in the prisons of the United States speaks volumes about the problem the nation has with equitable treatment and opportunity.

We call on each of you, as Jesus' followers to pray for the families of those who lost loved ones in these tragic incidents. We pray that we will move beyond numbness to turn our tears and sense of hopelessness into action. We must have honest conversations about race, grounded in the love and hope God gives us. We must model civility and mutual respect even in emotionally charged conversations. We must seek to share God's love and we must persevere in calling for justice.

As Rachel's tears were a sign of loss, they were also a sign of hope for the future. We, too, must live in hope as we denounce violence, bigotry and hatred, and seek to create a world where the dignity of all of God's creation is affirmed and respected. Let it be so!

Rev. Julia Brown Karimu
President, Division of Overseas
Ministries

Rev. Dr. Ron Degges
President, Disciples Home
Missions

Rev. Dr. Timothy James
Associate General Minister
and Administrative Secretary
of the National Convocation

Rev. Dr. Sharon Watkins
General Minister and
President

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
First Christian Church, Florence
Snow Hill Christian Church, Ft. Deposit
First Christian Church, Ft. Walton Beach
Primera Iglesia Cristiana Hispana, Ft. Walton Beach
Sellers Memorial Christian Church, Hayneville
First Christian Church, Huntsville
Grateful Life Community Church, Huntsville
Madison Christian Church, Madison
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

YOUNG ADULT BEACH RETREAT - October 14 - 16, 2016

All young adults in the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region are invited to participate in a time of renewal, fun, conversation, and relationship-building on October 14-16, 2016, at the 2016 Young Adult Beach Retreat. The group will be using the retreat facilities of Romar Beach Baptist Church in Orange Beach, AL. For more information about the site, visit <<http://www.facebook.com/Romar.Beach.Baptist>> Although the Retreat formally begins with dinner on Friday, October 14, persons who desire to have an extra day at the beach are welcome to arrive on Thursday, October 13, at an additional cost of \$35. Those wishing to arrive early must indicate on the registration form their planned arrival date.

Young adult activities in the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region are intended to include persons in a variety of categories: students, non-students, singles, married, young families, etc. Anyone who considers himself/herself to be a young adult is welcome to be involved. The lodging will be dormitory style, separated by gender. We are unable to provide child care for this event.

Thanks to a subsidy from the Region, the cost of the retreat is only \$50/person (or \$85/person for those arriving on Thursday). The registration deadline is October 5. The registration form will be available on the Region's website and also in the July and September Leader's Packets.

APPLICATIONS FOR SCHOLARSHIPS FROM THE MILDRED B. WATSON MEMORIAL FUND ARE BEING RECEIVED THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30, 2016

The Mildred B. Watson Memorial Fund is a permanent fund established by the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region, in partnership with Valley Christian Church, Birmingham, and the Christian Church Foundation, that will provide annual income to support leadership education for persons in the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region. Mildred Watson supported the entire Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and had a strong desire to see young people and young adults gain exposure to the ministries of the wider church. She valued education for all Disciples and she particularly wanted to see ministers have the education, resources, and support they need for their service to the church. The Mildred B. Watson Memorial Fund will provide resources which address these commitments that were dear to Mildred Watson during her lifetime.

Persons interested in applying for a scholarship should contact the Regional office to request an application. The application deadline for 2016 grants is September 30, 2016. Decisions regarding scholarship recipients will be made during October.

NEWS OF THE CLERGY

Guy McCombs surgery went well in June. Clifford Jackson is recovering from surgery he had in May. Danny Barfield had triple by-pass surgery in June. Rick Eichenlaub passed away on June 24, 2016, and a memorial was held in West Palm Beach, where Rick's mother lived. Paul Ingram passed away on June 28, 2016. Funeral services were held on June 30 in Mobile. Our sympathy and our prayers are extended to the Ingram and Eichenlaub families. Rev. John Lambert (retired) had a brief stay in Jackson Hospital followed by rehabilitation, and is now recovering at home.



2016 BEACH CAMP

Campers learned more about SERVING as they participated in mission work around the Gulf Coast and enjoyed a visit from Elena Huegel.



This was a great year for our camping program. All of our camps were amazing. Each had its own personality, special events, and adventures but each was filled by God's presence in a real and wonderful way. We had so much fun with our little ones at Genesis Camp as they explored the lesson that "Together is Better" as the Body of Christ. Our Discovery Campers, using a Dr. Seuss theme, learned about being good stewards of our environment with *The Lorax* and how important it is to be open minded with *Green Eggs and Ham*. We are also glad that both of those groups got to enjoy Worship & Wonder at camp as well.



The older campers at Traditional explored the theme of Parables - The Secrets of the Kingdom.



We are grateful for the leadership offered at all of our camps. Wonderfully gifted counselors took time away from their lives to pour themselves into the mission of our camping program. Our directors, counselors, interns, and RYC volunteers were truly unbelievable in their service during the 2016 camp season. We are also grateful for each of the campers who came to grow together, and for their families who sent them. We offer thanksgiving for the congregations, ministry groups, and individuals around our region who supported us with prayers, supplies, money, scholarships, loaning us their pastors for camp, and other blessings.

Planning for summer camps 2017 is already underway, so mark your calendars and make plans to join us next year for another round of wonderful!!!

June 1-5, 2017

Beach Camp at The Lighthouse Retreat Center in Orange Beach, AL. Please note that the camp will run from Thursday-Monday and will return to our previous location in Orange Beach, AL!

June 19-23, 2017

Junior (4th/5th Graders), Chi Rho (6th-8th Graders), and CYF Conference (9th-12th Graders) at YMCA Camp Chandler - Please note that Chi Rho will be moving to the Monday-Friday schedule. This is possible due to the addition of new dorm space built this year. We are excited to be able to house all of our week long camps during the same time frame.

June 23-25, 2017

Genesis (K/1st Graders) and Discovery Camp (2nd/3rd Graders) at YMCA Camp Chandler

Pictured here (standing) is Minister Vivian O'Neal of Harrison Street Christian Church, Greenville, Alabama. Minister O'Neal is presiding over the Mission First Gathering with attendees.



The Alabama-Northwest Florida (Disciples of Christ) Convocation One-Day Workshop was held at New Salem Christian Church, Hayneville, Alabama on June 25, 2016.

Minister Jones, youth leader from New Hope Christian Church, Letohatchee, Alabama, leads a skit presented by youth and children attending the Regional Convocation Workshop. The skit was entitled "Put on the Whole Armor of God."

