THE CHRISTIAN
ALABAMA-NORTHWEST FLORIDA
A Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) In Alabama-Northwest Florida Publication

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IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

OCTOBER
2 - 4  Pastor’s Conference (sponsored by the Office of the General Minister and President) - St. Louis, MO
5 - 7  Regional Women’s Retreat - Camp Chandler
7  World Communion Sunday - Reconciliation Offering
10  Commissioning and Ordination North (9:15 a.m.) - Regional Office, Helena
13  Division of Administration and Stewardship (10:00 a.m.) - Regional Office
19 - 21  Young Adult Beach Retreat - Orange Beach, AL
20  Division of Mission (10:00 a.m.)- Regional Office, Helena
27  Disciples Men’s Cabinet (8:30 a.m.) - Regional Office, Helena
27  Division of Nurture (10:00 a.m.)- Regional Office, Helena

NOVEMBER
1 - 2  Senior Adult Retreat - Rolling Hills Camp/Conference Center, Calera, AL
3  CWF/Disciples Women’s Cabinet (10:00 a.m.) - Regional Office, Helena
5  Commissioning & Ordination South (9:15 a.m.) - United Christian, Montgomery
17  Program Committee on the Regional Assembly (10:00 a.m.) - FCC, Fort Walton Beach
18 - 25  Thanksgiving Offering (for Disciples Colleges and Seminaries/Divinity Houses)
27 - 29  College of Regional Ministers - San Diego, CA

DECEMBER
10  Committee on the Ministry (10:00 a.m.) - Regional Office, Helena
15  Executive/Personnel Committee (10:00 a.m.) - Regional Office
18  Regional Staff Planning Meeting (10:00 a.m.) - Regional Office
16 - 23  Christmas Offering (for ministries of 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.”
Susan Henderson, the Region's Administrative Assistant and Office Manager, has been with the Region for 12+ years. She is responsible for the bookkeeping of the Region's finances and payroll records, mail-outs, event registrations and various other office-related duties.

Susan was born on September 9, 1973, to Doug and Gwen Bell, and has one older sister, Sharon. Susan graduated from Minor High School in 1991 and immediately entered the workforce. She has worked in different fields spanning from switchboard operator for a medical software company, to an inside sales position for a company in the tube and pipe mill industry. She was led to join the staff of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Alabama-Northwest Florida in May, 2000. On June 9th of that same year, Susan was married to Jeff Henderson. Jeff is the Machine Shop Foreman for Shelby Machine & Tool, Inc., located in Helena. He is an avid hunter and will find any excuse to be outdoors. Together they share four children and one grandchild. Susan is Mother to Clay and Cailyn, Step-Mother to Jeremy and Jessica, and NeNe to Madelyn. Susan's family is her prized possession!

Clay is 20 years old and is employed by the U.S. Navy, aboard the USS Miami, a fast-attack nuclear submarine. He serves as a Torpedoman's Mate, currently stationed in Kittery, Maine. Clay has been in the Navy since November of 2010, after graduating from McAdory High School in May of that same year. Navy life has Susan scheduling her vacation time around Clay's visits home!

Cailyn Grace is 16 years old, and is a Junior at McAdory High School. Cailyn is a member of the National Honor Society and the Mu Alpha Theta Honor Society, and is the Captain of the Majorette Squad for the McAdory High School Band of Gold. On any given Friday night during the Fall you will find Susan in the stands with her black and gold shaker cheering the Yellow Jackets on! Cailyn keeps her busy!

Jeremy is 25 years old and works alongside his Dad in the Machining Department of Shelby Machine & Tool, Inc. He is a 2005 graduate of McAdory High School. Jeremy has always been interested in the video-gaming industry and hopes to one day pursue a career in that field. He resides in Vestavia with Christy.

Jessica is 24 years old. She is Mother to Madelyn Grace, Jeff and Susan's first grandchild, born in March of this year. Jessica graduated from McAdory High School in 2006. She attended the University of Montevallo, graduating in 2011, with a Business Marketing Degree. Jessica is currently employed as the Marketing Relationship Ambassador for Jim 'N Nicks Bar-B-Que in Alabaster. Jessica, Chase and Madelyn live in Alabaster.

Susan loves spending time with her immediate and extended family, often planning cookouts and get-togethers at her home in the McCalla area. Susan enjoys a nice pedicure, camping, going to the beach, watching college football (Roll Tide!) and playing scrabble.

Susan recently participated in a training conference in Lexington, Kentucky, for the Region's new computer database. Susan is known as "the voice on the phone," to most of the Disciples in the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region. She enjoys getting the opportunity to put faces with names and meeting the people she serves throughout the Region.
Thanks for the Miracle!

As I write this article I am looking out my office window and can see the newly built playground and the beautiful outdoor worship area at Madison Christian Church. Thanks to the loving witness and hard work from you, our brothers and sisters around the Region, a vision for revitalization and outreach has been born. More than a year ago our congregation began the journey toward Miracle Day with this scripture as our guide:

“God can do anything, you know—far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams! He does it not by pushing us around but by working within us, his Spirit deeply and gently within us.” ~Ephesians 3:20

We believed that God, working within Madison Christian Church and within the Region of Alabama-Northwest Florida, would revitalize our worshiping community through a renewed sense of purpose for ministry. We had witnessed it as participants in other Miracle Day events.

And, indeed, on June 9th, God did far more than we could ever have imagined or requested in our wildest dreams! 194 workers from over 23 congregations around Alabama and Northwest Florida came WAY up to the top of our Region to help us paint our building, build a new road sign and storage building, and landscape our 6 acre grounds with gardens, a playground and an outdoor worship center. People stopped by off the street and offered to help and community was built through shared conversation, work and the breaking of bread.

Your generosity on Miracle Day has given us much more than a physical renewal! We now have a renewed sense of mission. We are actively discerning ways to reach out in love to our surrounding community. In keeping with our denominational vision “To be a faithful, growing church, that demonstrates true community, deep Christian spirituality and a passion for justice” the work on Miracle Day has, indeed, helped us create an atmosphere of welcome for our worshiping community and for the surrounding community of Madison. Thank you so much for helping us realize God’s miracle of renewal. We couldn’t have done it without you and we can’t wait to be a part of God’s work on Miracle Day 2014!

Peace,
Beth Thomason
Pastor, Madison Christian Church

REGIONAL BOARD MEETING
September 22, 2012

The initial meeting of the 2012-2014 Regional Board was held on Saturday, September 22, 2012, at First Christian Church, Birmingham. The Board worshiped together, approved rosters, heard ministry reports and approved a written Covenant that summarizes the expectations of Board members. The next meeting will be on February 23, 2013.
The eleventh annual Senior Adult Retreat will be held at Rolling Hills Camp and Conference Center in Calera, AL, on Thursday and Friday, November 1 - 2, 2012. The theme of the senior adult retreat is “Living Abundantly in the Transitions of Life.” The leader will be Rev. Dr. Dan Moseley, retired pastor and professor of practical ministry at Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis, IN.

Dan Moseley is a respected executive coach/consultant who has helped individuals and organizations navigate the changes and conflicts in life. He is a nationally known lecturer and workshop leader in issues of leadership, loss, change and transition. Dr. Moseley has decades of experience in teaching and supporting others in their journey of life. He was a seminary professor for 13 years at Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis, IN. Prior to that work, he was pastor of 3 congregations for over 30 years. His Masters and Doctor's degrees were earned at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, TN. Dr. Moseley has served on Boards and Committees of organizations throughout the world as an ecumenical leader and educator. He has been instrumental in the development of organizations offering Pastoral Care and Counseling and Grief Healing. He has authored several books and served as contributor and editor of many other publications.

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. There will also be a talent show, a silent auction, and a handbell concert. 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. 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 and September Leader’s Packets. 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.]

CONGREGATIONS SEEKING A MINISTER

Anniston, First (Sam Fuson is Interim)
Anniston, Iglesia Cristiana
Florence, First (Tim Murtaugh is Interim)
Valley, First of River View
Dr. Charisse L. Gillett and Reverend Dr. Donald K. Gillett, II, will Co-Lead the 2013 Ministers and Mates Retreat, January 14-16, 2013

The 2013 Ministers and Mates Retreat will be held at the Hilton Garden Inn in Orange Beach, Alabama, on January 14 - 16, 2013. Dr. Charisse L. Gillett and Rev. Dr. Donald K. Gillett, II, will be the retreat leaders. Dr. Charisse Gillett is the president of Lexington Theological Seminary and Dr. Don Gillett is the senior pastor of East Second Street Christian Church, Lexington, KY, where he and the congregation received a Lilly Sabbatical grant in 2007.

The theme of the 2013 retreat is “Thriving in Ministry: Sustaining Pastors and Families in Ministry.” The joys and challenges of ministry can often deplete both clergy and their spouse. Drs. Charisse and Donald Gillett will discuss the life giving value of an annual sabbatical, the concept of clergy wellness and the implication for theological schools and congregations for sustaining pastors in ministry.

Dr. Charisse L. Gillett became the 17th president of Lexington Theological Seminary in September 2011. She has more than 20 years of successful administrative experience in higher education, including service at Transylvania University, Midway College, Robert Morris College and the University of Northern Iowa. She holds a doctorate in education from Northern Illinois University. A former moderator of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), she has been a commissioned minister of the Christian Church in Kentucky since August 2010 and is Associate Minister at East Second Street Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), where her husband, LTS D.Min. alumnus Dr. Donald K. Gillett, II, serves as Senior Pastor. Dr. Gillett served as Vice President of Administration and Special Projects at the Seminary prior to her appointment as president. She is also a former LTS trustee and officer of the Board of Trustees.

Dr. Gillett is deeply committed to the church and the work of the Seminary in shaping students for ministry. An energetic and dedicated leader, she works closely with a team of trustees, faculty, staff, students, and congregations to grow the Seminary’s new program, which is designed to serve the needs of the church while continuing the Seminary’s storied history of shaping people for ministry. Dr. Gillett’s appointment is an historic one in the 146-year history of the Seminary. She is the first woman and first African-American to lead the Seminary as president.

Reverend Dr. Donald K. Gillett, II, has been the Senior Pastor at East Second Street Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) since July 1999. Prior to his call to ESSCC, he served as Youth Minister and Associate Minister at Park Manor Christian Church in Chicago.

Reverend Dr. Gillett holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Mathematics from Jarvis Christian College in Hawkins, TX; a Masters of Divinity from McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, IL; a Masters of Business Degree from Indiana Wesleyan University, Marion, IN and an earned Doctorate of Ministry Degree from Lexington Theological Seminary, Lexington, KY.

Reverend Dr. Gillett is Chair of the Division of Overseas Ministries Board of Directors of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and Co-Chair of Global Ministries of the Christian Church Disciples of Christ and the United Church of Christ. He is the immediate past Moderator of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in KY and the immediate past President of the Kentucky Christian Missionary Convention. He serves on numerous boards including the Executive Board of the Kentucky Council of Churches.
Reverend Dr. Gillett has preached and conducted workshops in the US and other countries on the continent of Africa. He has traveled to historic places where Jesus and the Apostle Paul walked. He was the recipient of a Pastoral Renewal Grant from the Lilly Foundation. He has four children, Jeremy, Liyah, Tasia, and Donald, III (Trey) and one grandchild Jayda.

The Ministers and Mates Retreat is open to all ministers with standing---active or retired, commissioned or ordained---in the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region. Those who are under the care of the Committee on the Ministry in the Region are also welcome to attend. Hotel information and registration forms is being sent to all ministers with standing in October. Join us for a stimulating event, combined with opportunities for rest and relaxation in a beautiful setting.

**NEWS OF THE CLERGY**

**Tim Murtaugh** has begun his service as Interim Senior Minister with First Christian Church, Florence. **Laura West** has begun her service as Associate Minister with Children and Families at First Christian Church, Huntsville. **Carlos Martinez** was called in early September to serve as pastor with Primera Iglesia Cristiana, Anniston, effective immediately. **Trudy Betts** has resigned her position as Associate Minister with First Christian Church, Montgomery, in order to return to Florida to deal with family health issues. **Allen Hollis** has resigned as minister with First Christian Church of River View in Valley, Alabama. His resignation takes effect at the end of October.

An Honored Minister Pin was presented to **Betty Wright** on September 23, 2012. Betty retired at the end of April. Honored Minister Pins are scheduled to be presented (on the dates given) to the following ordained ministers who have moved into retirement in recent months: **Jim Clifford** (October 14, 2012), and **John Gregory** (October 14, 2012).

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[Images of Milford Walters and Betty Wright, and Wendell Miller and his associates.]
YOUNG ADULT BEACH RETREAT - October 19 - 21, 2012

All young adults in the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region are invited to participate in a time of renewal, fun, and relationship-building on October 19-21, 2012, at the 2012 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>  Participants may arrive any time after noon on Friday, October 19, and may stay until Sunday afternoon, October 21.

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. The registration deadline is October 1. The registration form will be available on the Region’s website and also in the September Leader’s Packet.

BISHOP WILLIAM WILLIMON TO PREACH AT THE REGIONAL CONGREGATIONAL TRANSFORMATION EVENT, FEBRUARY 8-9, 2013

The Region’s Program Committee on Church Development has sponsored four congregational transformation events since 2008. Moving to an every-other-year schedule, the next event will be held on February 8-9, 2013, at First Christian Church, Birmingham. These weekend events have included prominent preachers and a variety of workshop leaders. These events have provided ideas and inspiration to help congregational leaders to be agents of transformation in their own congregations. Our Friday night preachers have included Dr. Fred Craddock, Dr. Sharon Watkins, Dr. Bill Lee, and Dr. Todd Adams, all of whom have brought us powerful messages.

Although the details of the 2013 Congregational Transformation Event have not yet been determined, the Region has received a commitment from Dr. William Willimon, retired Bishop of the North Alabama Conference of the United Methodist Church, to preach at the Friday night worship service on February 8, 2013. Several years ago Dr. Willimon was listed by Newsweek magazine (along with Disciples preacher Fred Craddock) as one of the top 12 most effective preachers in the English-speaking world. Dr. Willimon is a prolific author, preacher, and workshop leader. You will not want to miss an opportunity to hear him next February.

Mark your calendars to be in Birmingham on February 8 and 9, 2013.

The Alabama-Northwest Florida Region and the Christian Church Foundation sponsored "Generation to Generation" workshops on September 15 and 16, 2012. Rev. Randy Johnson, Vice-President with the Christian Church Foundation, led the workshops. The workshops were hosted by First Christian Church, Montgomery, and First Christian Church, Decatur.
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
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

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 2012 by congregations in Alabama-Northwest Florida to the Disciples Mission Fund and the four Special Day Offerings (Easter, Pentecost, Thanksgiving, and Christmas) has decreased by 9.87% from the amount given year-to-date in 2011. Church-wide gifts to Disciples Mission Fund and the four Special Day Offerings are showing a 3.89% decrease from the amount given through August, 2011. The 2012 Easter Offering in Alabama-Northwest Florida is showing a 3.27% decrease from the amount given year-to-date in 2011. The 2012 Pentecost Offering in Alabama-Northwest Florida is showing a 31.28% decrease from the amount given year-to-date in 2011. Week of Compassion giving in Alabama-Northwest Florida is showing a 55.80% decrease from the amount given through August, 2011.

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.
Valley Christian Church in Birmingham celebrated going green with a very inspiring worship service called “Green Sunday” on Sunday, August 12th. The worship included Biblical Readings, special creation lyrics to familiar hymns, and a liturgical dancer interpreting the care of God’s earth. Following Communion the congregation went outside to form a circle of love. As a sign of our commitment to be good stewards of God’s garden, we sang “We’ve Got the Whole Earth in Our Hands.”

The service kicked off the congregation’s commitment to become a Green Chalice Congregation. The Green Chalice Program of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) exists to encourage and assist local congregations who wish to live out their faith by caring for God’s creation. The program recognizes congregations for being good stewards of God’s gift and aims to empower them with ideas and resources to enable them to walk gently on earth.

Valley’s Green Team worked for several weeks to lay the foundation of going green and proposed three changes aimed at helping to conserve resources and promote awareness of the need to protect and care for God’s creation.

The three changes at Valley proposed by the Green Team are: 1.) Establishing an annual Green Sunday Service to celebrate God’s gift of creation and affirm our united commitment to caring for it; 2.) Recycling paper and plastic products; 3.) Converting the Voice (Valley’s newsletter) to an electronic format for those who have e-mail in order to reduce our use for paper. Valley will sponsor a “Build Your Own Rain Barrel” workshop at the church in early spring to help promote water conservation.

The Green Team is composed of a wonderful group of dedicated servants of the Lord. These good stewards include Eve Harman, Chairperson, John Gregory, Ed Guindon, Lola Kiser, Jamie Ligon, Carolyn and Terry Nunnelly, along with Valley’s minister, Gary Edge.
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!!!