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

JUNE
5 - 12 Global Mission Partner, Elena Huegel (serving in Chile), will be making visits and presentations in the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region
5 - 10 Beach Camp - Dauphin Island, AL
11 Disciples Men's Cabinet (9:00 a.m.) - Regional Office, Helena
20 - 24 Junior Camp and CYF Conference - YMCA-Camp Chandler
20 - 23 Ministry School - Lexington, KY (sponsored by the Kentucky Region)
24 - 26 Genesis Camp - YMCA-Camp Chandler
24 - 26 Discovery Camp - YMCA-Camp Chandler
25 Regional Convocation One-Day Workshop-New Salem Christian, Hayneville,
24 - 28 Chi Rho Camp - YMCA-Camp Chandler

JULY
9 Commissioning and Ordination North (9:15 a.m.) - Regional Office, Helena
14 - 16 National Hispanic and Bilingual Assembly - Coral Gables, FL
21 - 24 24th Biennial Session of the National Convocation - Kansas City, MO
26 - 30 National Youth Event (UCC and Disciples) - Orlando, FL
30 Commissioning and Ordination South (9:15 a.m.) - United Christian, Montgomery

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

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 REGIONAL MINISTER

What an absolute privilege it is to serve in ministry with the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region. On March 1, 2016, I completed 20 years of service as Regional Minister. Valya and I were quite surprised on the first night of Regional Assembly to be called to the front of the sanctuary to be formally recognized by Moderator Jan Pooley for 20 years of service and presented with a generous monetary love gift from individuals and congregations from all across the Region. This presentation was followed by an extravagant reception in our honor, with beautiful flowers and an abundance of food provided by the host congregation.

I want to express our deep gratitude for these gestures of love and support. To all who expressed their care for us through monetary gifts, we are deeply moved and grateful. To all who gave cards and wrote personal words of affirmation, we say thank you. To be surrounded by such a wonderful community of support means more than I can possibly express in words. Just know how much Valya and I love you and appreciate the relationships we have formed with you over these 20 years. I am humbled by the trust you have placed in me to serve as your Regional Minister, and I am thankful each day for the gift that this ministry has been in my life.

As I said in my brief response at the Regional Assembly, I look forward to additional years of service as we do ministry together in the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region. Twenty years is simply a significant milestone along the journey. I do not believe we have yet reached our final destination in this ministry that began so many years ago.

May God bless each of you as you continue to offer yourselves in faithful service to God through the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Alabama-Northwest Florida.

Your Partner in Ministry,

John P. Mobley
Regional Minister

REGIONAL MINISTER BEGINS SABBATICAL IN MID-JUNE

The personnel policies of the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region provide a three month sabbatical for the Regional Minister after each five years of service. The sabbatical time is intended to enhance the ministry of the Regional Minister as it provides time for rest, renewal, and reflection. Sabbatical time is not understood as vacation time, which is provided each year. Sabbatical time is for the purpose of “dis-engaging” from the tasks of ministry in order to “re-engage” in fresh ways upon returning to the ministry. This “re-engagement” happens as one is rested and has spent time in reading, reflecting, and replenishing the spirit.

John Mobley will begin his sabbatical time on June 15. He will return in mid-September. During his absence, the duties and functions will be completed by other staff members. Congregational concerns and/or pastoral needs may be directed to Associate Regional Minister Dale Braxton. Rev. Braxton may be reached at 334-412-4057 (cell) or 334-227-0011 (w). Assistance may also be provided by Susan Henderson, Administrative Assistant/Office Manager, who may be reached at 205-425-5245.
ELENA HUEGEL, MISSIONARY IN CHILE
(Global Mission Partner for the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region)
is coming to a location near you in June, 2016

The Division of Mission has developed the following itinerary for Elena Huegel while she is in Alabama-Northwest Florida. Appreciation is expressed to those congregations that have agreed to host gatherings and invite other District congregations to those gatherings. Each gathering listed is open to the entire District where the gathering will take place. Please contact the person listed for more information about a particular gathering. At each event, a light meal will be provided. There will be a donation basket to receive contributions for the meal.

**Sunday, June 5 - 4:00 p.m. - District One**
congregations will gather at First Christian Church, 1701 Carridale St. SW, Decatur 35601 (contact pastor Mickey Johnson <mickey@tvpinc.com> or call 256-565-5958 for more information)

**Monday, June 6 - 6:00 p.m. - District Three**
congregations will gather at Union Christian Church, 1111 County Road 69, Tuskegee 36083 (contact pastor Danny Shoemake <dannysandra2002@yahoo.com> or call 404-861-2815 or Stuart Price <pricesb@auburn.edu> or call 334-821-1123 for more information)

**Tuesday, June 7 - 6:00 p.m. - District Four**
congregations will gather at United Christian Church, 1116 Edgar Nixon Blvd., Montgomery 36105 (contact pastor La'Rue Smith, Jr. <laruesmith@wildblue.net> or call 334-850-1641 for more information)

**Wednesday, June 8 - 6:00 p.m. - District Five**
congregations will gather at South Baldwin Christian Church, 19489 W. Keller Road, Foley 36535 (contact pastor Tim Clarke <timmclarke@gmail.com> or call 251-424-7923 for more information)

**Sunday, June 12 - 4:00 p.m. - District Two**
congregations will gather at Valley Christian Church, 2600 Cherokee Place, Birmingham 35216 (contact pastor Gary Edge <garyhe33@hotmail.com> or call 205-879-0419 for more information)

NEW OFFICERS ELECTED FOR THE 2016-2018 BIENNIAL

At the 2016 Regional Assembly, five outstanding leaders were elected to serve as officers for the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region for the 2016-2018 biennium. Rev. Cameron Douglas, (pictured left), Interim Senior Minister, First Christian Church, Huntsville, was elected Moderator. Kathy Mason, member at First Christian Church, Tuscaloosa, was elected Moderator-Elect. Rev. Roger Peadro, Senior Minister, First Christian Church, Fort Walton Beach, was elected First Vice Moderator. Floretta Timmons, member at Snow Hill Christian Church, Mt. Willing, was elected Second Vice Moderator. Kanessa Doss, member at Union Christian Church, Tuskegee, was elected Secretary-Treasurer.

The five officers of the Region serve as the Region's Executive Committee. They also serve as the Personnel Committee of the Region. Along with the Regional Minister, the Moderator and the Secretary-Treasurer serve as trustees of the Region for the next biennium.
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 Spellman College.

As a college student, Chesla played an integral role in HIP 4 HOP (Happiness In Praise 4 His Overflowing Presence), a campus ministry that worked with local churches and other organizations to develop youth and young adult ministries as well as ministry with people who have never been associated with a faith community and people who have been hurt by and thus disassociated from faith communities.

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. Chesla has worked as a mentor and a tutor for the YMCA, volunteered as a Chaplain for spirituality groups for the homeless veterans, and continues to facilitate workshops and therapy groups concerning young adults Christians, marital preparation, sexuality and spirituality, social justice and clergy self-care among others. 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 a 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.

On June 2014 Chesla began her role with Disciples Women’s Ministry as Program Director and Merger Staff. Part of these duties includes head of the editorial board for Just Women magazine and co-editor for Umoja newsletter.

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 two words; Love unconditionally.

--Article submitted by Dale Braxton

Do you have a legal, up-to-date will? Have you remembered your congregation and the larger church (including the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region) in your end-of-life planning? (Contact the Regional Minister for information about becoming a Legacy Partner in the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region.)
Shane Isner was installed as Senior Minister with First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Montgomery on Sunday, May 24, 2016. Previously Rev. Isner served as pastor with Plymouth Creek Christian Church, in Plymouth, Minnesota. Pictured (l to r) are: Rev. John Lambert, retired pastor and oldest member of Montgomery, First, Jim Brooks, Interim Minister, Shane Isner, Pastor, Dale Braxton, Associate Regional Minister and Edd Spencer, Interim Minister.

District IV of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) awarded the Mitchell James Scholarship at Big Union Christian Church during their 5th Sunday Fellowship. Pictured are: Rev Timothy Silmon, president, Trent and Stacey Woodley, Holley Woodley, and Associate Regional Minister Dale Braxton

The first year of courses in the Hispanic Ministry Certificate Program at Lexington Theological Seminary was held May 23-27, 2016 at LTS. There were 42 ministry students involved, three of whom were from Alabama-Northwest Florida: Carmencita Ortiz, Ivan Roman, and Maria Zamarripa.
Mission Gathering at the Baptist Campus Ministries building.

The Assembly gathered in worship.

New Officers for 2016-2018 being installed.

The communion table adorned by the woven ribbons each person received at the beginning of the Assembly.

Rev. Rebecca Hale leading a workshop on Saturday morning.

An extravagant reception on Friday night honoring John and Valya Mobley for 20 years of service.
Rev. Tom Stephenson retired from active ministry and received the Honored Minister Pin on April 10, 2016, at First Christian Church, Robertsdale, where he has served as pastor for over 13 years. Pictured here (l to r) are: Alan Woods, Board Chair, Rev. Stephenson and his wife Rev. Diane Stephenson, and Regional Minister John Mobley.

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 |
NEWS OF THE CLERGY

Tom Stephenson retired from active ministry on April 10 and was presented with the Honored Minister Pin. He completed his service of pastor with First Christian Church, Robertsdale, where he served for more than 13 years. Jack Baldwin has announced his plans to retire from active ministry at the end of August. Jack has served as pastor with First Christian Church, Jasper, for nearly 23 years. Beth Thomason, pastor at Madison Christian Church, will be on sabbatical from June through August. Interim Ministry will be provided for Madison Christian Church by Mark Underwood and C.J. Cobb. Mark Foglio has been called as pastor with First Christian Church, Pensacola, beginning in July. Paul Ingram will completed his service as Interim Minister with First Christian Church, Pensacola, at the end of June.

CONGREGATIONS SEEKING A MINISTER

Huntsville, First (Cameron Douglas is Interim Minister)
Meridian, First (Stan Wright is Interim Minister)
Mobile, Azalea Hills (David Chambers is Interim Minister)
Robertsdale, First

OUTREACH GIVING UPDATE

The giving through March, 2016, 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 22.14% from the amount given for the same period in 2015. Church-wide gifts to Disciples Mission Fund and the four Special Day Offerings have increased by 1.44% compared to the same period in 2015. Giving to Week of Compassion in Alabama-Northwest Florida has decreased by 8.2% from the amount given through March, 2015. Church-wide Week of Compassion giving has decreased by 6.5% from the amount given for the same period in 2015.

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.
"Top Ten" Lists for 2015

Statistics never tell the whole story. The vitality of a congregation is most accurately measured by seeing persons drawn closer to God and by seeing lives changed through the worship, fellowship, and service of that congregation. Statistics, however, can offer us signs of hope that such vitality is being experienced in our Region. We celebrate these signs of hope and affirm those congregations on our "Top Ten" lists for 2015.

### Ten Largest Congregations in 2015 (in participating members)

1. Birmingham, First (329)  
2. Florence, First (295)  
3. Huntsville, First (269)  
4. Meridian, First (241)  
5. Montgomery, First (177)  
6. Ft. Deposit, Snow Hill (170)  
7. Pensacola, First (152)  
8. Ft. Walton Beach, First (150)  
9. Decatur, First (149)  
10. Athens, First (107)

### Highest Percentage of Net Growth in 2015 (in participating members)

1. Birmingham Primera Iglesia (50%)  
2. Haynieville, Mt. Zion (46.67%)  
3. Greenville, Ambassadors (40%)  
4. Falkville, Cedar Plains (21.42%)  
5. Pensacola, Westwood (21.21%)  
6. Huntsville, Grateful Life (20)  
7. Florence, First (15)  
8. Hartselle, First (14)  
9. Tuskegee, Union (10)  
10. Montgomery, First (10)  

### Highest Average Worship Attendance in 2015

1. Huntsville, First (174)  
2. Birmingham, First (161)  
3. Florence, First (158)  
4. Ft. Deposit, Snow Hill (135)  
5. Meridian, First (100)  
6. Greenville, New Bethel (95)  
7. Pensacola, First (85)  
8. Greeneville, Harrison St. (84)  
9. Fairhope, Fairhope (82)  
10. Tuskegee, Union (75)

### Most Baptisms in 2015

1. Pensacola, First (12)  
2. Huntsville, Grateful Life (6)  
3. Haynieville, New Salem (6)  
4. Greenville, New Bethel (5)  
5. Meridian, First (4)  
6. Ft. Deposit, Snow Hill (4)  
7. Huntsville, Grateful Life (3)  
8. Foley, South Baldwin (3)  
9. Birmingham, Macedonia (3)  
10. Pensacola, Renovando Tu Fe (3)

### Most Total Additions in 2015

1. Huntsville, Grateful Life (20)  
2. Birmingham, First (14)  
3. Pensacola, First (12)  
4. Florence, First (12)  
5. Huntsville, New Vision (10)  
6. Florence, First (9)  
7. Huntsville, New Bethel (8)  
8. Fairhope, Fairhope (5)  
9. Decatur, First (5)  
10. Tuskegee, Union (5)

### Highest Disciples Mission Fund Support in 2015

1. Birmingham, First ($34,946)  
2. Montgomery First ($27,511)  
3. Florence, First ($15,000)  
4. Helena, Grace ($14,017)  
5. Birmingham, Valley ($12,936)  
6. Pensacola, First ($10,156)  
7. Fairhope, Fairhope ($9,388)  
8. Ft. Walton Beach, First ($7,596)  
9. Tuscaloosa, First ($7,508)  
10. Meridian, First ($7,000)

### Disciples Outreach (including designated gifts) in 2015

1. Birmingham, First ($43,613)  
2. Montgomery, First ($34,188)  
3. Meridian, First ($33,884)  
4. Florence, First ($28,978)  
5. Huntsville, First ($26,966)  
6. Fairhope, Fairhope ($17,195)  
7. Birmingham, Valley ($16,451)  
8. Helena, Grace ($16,250)  
9. Tuscaloosa, First ($14,932)  
10. Pensacola, First ($13,456)

### Highest Disciples Outreach Giving in 2015

1. Tuscaloosa, First ($229.72)  
2. Haynieville, Mt. Zion ($218.18)  
3. Montgomery, First ($193.15)  
4. Helena, Grace ($216.66)  
5. Fairhope, Fairhope ($207.16)  
6. Birmingham, Valley ($198.20)  
7. Montgomery, First ($193)  
8. Haynieville, Sellers Memorial ($191.25)  
9. Decatur, First ($144.69)  
10. Meridian, First ($140.59)

### Highest Week of Compassion Giving in 2015

1. Huntsville, First ($2,855)  
2. Fairhope, Fairhope ($1,307)  
3. Florence, First ($1,125)  
4. Montgomery, First ($1,020)  
5. Birmingham, First ($2,162)  
6. Helena, Grace ($1,220)  
7. Avery, Village ($935)  
8. Mobile, Azalea Hills ($939)  
9. Tuskegee, Union ($350)  
10. Birmingham, First ($330)

### Highest Reconciliation Giving in 2015

1. Huntsville, First ($2,968)  
2. Florence, First ($2,504)  
3. Birmingham, First ($1,797)  
4. Fairhope, Fairhope ($727)  
5. Tuskegee, Union ($655)  
6. Hartselle, First ($580)  
7. Madison, Madison ($565)  
8. Huntsville, First ($517)  
9. Tuskegee, Union ($500)  
10. Pensacola, First ($404)

### Highest Pentecost Offering in 2015

1. Huntsville, First ($2,786)  
2. Florence, First ($2,645)  
3. Meridian, First ($1,157)  
4. Birmingham, First ($1,100)  
5. Cottondale, Cottondale ($825)  
6. Fairhope, Fairhope ($752)  
7. Montgomery, First ($590)  
8. Hartselle, First ($565)  
9. Tuskegee, Union ($500)  
10. Pensacola, First ($404)

### Highest Thanksgiving Offering in 2015

1. Tuscaloosa, First ($2,815)  
2. Fairhope, Fairhope ($1,915)  
3. Birmingham, First ($1,513)  
4. Cottondale, Cottondale ($1,054)  
5. Huntsville, First ($615)  
6. Tuscaloosa, First ($945)  
7. Madison, Madison ($500)  
8. Spain, Union ($425)  
9. Huntsville, First ($417)  
10. Pensacola, First ($404)

### Highest Christmas Offering in 2015

1. Huntsville First ($3,878)  
2. Florence, First ($2,420)  
3. Mobile, Azalea Hills ($2,012)  
4. Hartselle, First ($1,685)  
5. Fairhope, Fairhope ($1,589)  
6. Tuscaloosa, First ($1,499)  
7. Meridian, First ($1,390)  
8. Hartselle, First ($1,200)  
9. Haynieville, Sellers Memorial ($1,000)  
10. Cottondale, Cottondale ($945)

Note: Only those congregations that returned Year Book Report Forms are in the growth/attendance statistics.