At least two persons in each congregation, the Minister and Board Chairperson, and perhaps others, receive this Packet. Please review this material carefully to determine how it needs to be shared most appropriately within your congregation.

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Christian Church in Alabama-Northwest Florida, 861 Highway 52, Helena, AL 35080
CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN ALABAMA-NORTHWEST FLORIDA
861 Highway 52
Helena, AL 35080
(205) 425-5245
(205) 425-5246 (fax)
e-mail: alnwfl@aol.com
website: www.alnwfldisciples.org

Regional Officers and Regional Staff
September, 2019

Moderator: Kathy Mason
16287 Hagler Mill Drive
Northport, AL 35475
205-339-6560 (h) 205-246-9652 (c)
e-mail: mason217@att.net

Moderator-Elect: Fannie Ashley
3126 Old Dobbin Road
Montgomery, AL 36116
334-279-1889 (h) 334-430-0255 (c)
e-mail: fannieashley@aol.com

First Vice Moderator: Jeanette Martinez
2639 W. Michigan Ave., Unit A
Pensacola, FL 32526
850-860-5515 (c)
e-mail: martinezjean65@yahoo.com

Second Vice Moderator: Ed Guindon
1317 Panorama Circle
Birmingham, AL 35216
205-709-6626 (c)
e-mail: ejguindo@hotmail.com

Secretary-Treasurer: John Nettles
1139 Terrace Acres Drive
Auburn, AL 36830
334-703-6360 (c)
e-mail: jwnarchitect@att.net

Regional Minister: John Mobley
861 Highway 52
Helena, AL 35080
205-425-5245 (w) 205-533-3810 (c)
e-mail: jpmobley2@aol.com

Associate Regional Minister Dale Braxton
8420 County Rd. 45
Ft. Deposit, AL 36032
334-227-0011 (w) 334-412-4057 (c)
e-mail: braxtondale@hotmail.com

Youth Ministries Staff Person: Nisha Wariblington
15561 Dockery Road
Coker, AL 35452
205-330-8968 (h) 205-454-2054 (c)
e-mail: Nisha7@aol.com

Administrative Assistant: Susan Henderson
861 Highway 52
Helena, AL 35080
205-425-5245 (w)
e-mail: alnwfl@aol.com

Regional Representative to the General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), 2018-2021:

Stuart Price
613 Owens Road
Auburn, AL 36830
334-821-1123 (h) 334-707-3165 (c)
e-mail: pricesb@auburn.edu
ITEMS OF INTEREST
(from within the Region)

OUTREACH GIVING

The giving through September, 2019, 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 1.72% compared to the amount given for the same period in 2018. Church-wide gifts to Disciples Mission Fund and the four Special Day Offerings have decreased by 0.27% in 2019 compared to the same period in 2018. Church-wide giving to Week of Compassion is up 10.3% compared to the year-to-date amount for 2018. Year-to-date Week of Compassion receipts in Alabama-Northwest Florida are showing a 10.19% increase from the 2018 year-to-date amount.

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.

NEWS OF THE CLERGY

Gary Edge concluded his ministry with Valley Christian Church, Birmingham, on October 6, in order to retire from full-time active ministry. He was presented with the Honored Minister Pin on his final Sunday. Dan Barton has begun his service as pastor with South Baldwin Christian Church, Foley. His installation service took place at South Baldwin Christian Church on October 20. Edd Spencer has been called to serve as Interim Minister with Valley Christian Church, Birmingham, beginning in November. Phillip Gilbert has resigned as Pastor with Cedar Plains Christian Church, Falkville, and will have his final Sunday on October 27.

CONGREGATIONS WITH MINISTERIAL VACANCIES

Birmingham, First (Mary Alice Mulligan is Interim)
Birmingham, Valley (Edd Spencer is Interim)
Century, Edward Point (Associate Minister Sherry Johnson is preaching)
Cottondale, Cottondale (Fisher Humphreys is Interim)
Falkville, Cedar Plains
Mobile, Azalea Hills
Robertsdale, First (Alan Woods is Interim Supply)

(Continued on Back)
JOYS AND CONCERNS OF THE CLERGY

Ron Shephard (Pastor, First Christian Church of River View, Valley, AL) is facing hernia repair surgery on Nov. 14 and will be in a time of recovery in the weeks following. Ron’s wife, Glenna, is under the care of retina specialists to address problems she has been experiencing related to diabetic retinopathy. Annie Hunter, mother-in-law to Dale Braxton (Pastor, Snow Hill Christian Church, Mt. Willing, and Associate Regional Minister), died in early September. Kathy Menser (Chaplain, Westminster Village, Pensacola) is recovering from surgery she had on October 15 at University of Florida Health Shands Hospital in Gainesville, FL. Cassandra Silmon, spouse of Timothy Silmon (pastor, Big Union Christian Church, Letohatchee) is undergoing several weeks of treatments in Birmingham. Ester Jackson, spouse of Clifford Jackson (Pastor, Sellers Memorial Christian Church, White Hall) is undergoing tests and conferring with doctors at UAB Medical Center in Birmingham. Sachuo Hacer, father-in-law of Aisek William (Pastor, Pacific Islander Agape Church, Pensacola) is very sick and in hospice care. He is living with Aisek and Lathy during this time of illness.

*Please notify the Regional office of other joys and concerns.

Mark your Calendars!!

2020 Regional Assembly in Alabama-Northwest Florida

April 24-26, 2020
First Christian Church, Meridian, Mississippi
Theme – “What Does the Lord Require of You?”

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION AVAILABLE (through the Association of Religion Data Archives)

Congregations in the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region can access demographic information on their communities by going to <www.thearda.com> and following these instructions:

* Under the US Congregational Membership tab, select GIS Maps
* Enter the zip code you are interested in (this will bring up a map of churches in that zip code)
* Click on a particular church and then select “Profile” on the right hand side of the screen
* Several categories will be offered to help you learn more about your community

Christian Church in Alabama-Northwest Florida, 861 Highway 52, Helena, AL 35080
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>CWF/Disciples Women’s Cabinet (10:00 a.m.) - Regional Office</td>
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<td>Commissioning and Ordination South (9:15 a.m.) - United Christian, Montgomery</td>
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<td>Senior Adult Retreat - Saint Bernard Retreat Center, Cullman</td>
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<td>Ministry Support Network (11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.) - First Christian Church, Montgomery</td>
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<td>Regional Assembly Planning Committee (10:00 a.m.) - First Christian Church, Meridian</td>
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<td>Thanksgiving Offering Promotion (for Disciples Colleges/Seminaries)</td>
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<td>Christmas Party for Christian Services for Children in Alabama (CSCA) - Selma</td>
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<td>Committee on the Ministry (10:00 a.m.) - Regional Office</td>
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<td>Executive/Personnel Committee (10:00 a.m.) - Regional Office</td>
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<td>Christmas Offering Promotion (to benefit the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region)</td>
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<td>Regional Staff Planning (10:00 a.m.) - Regional Office</td>
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<td>January</td>
<td>Luncheon for Retired Ministers/Mates (Noon) - Hilton Garden Inn, Orange Beach, AL</td>
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<td>Youthtopia - YMCA-Camp Chandler</td>
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<td>Young Adult Winter Retreat - YMCA Camp Chandler</td>
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<td>CWF/Disciples Women’s Cabinet (10:00 a.m.) - Regional Office</td>
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<td>Commissioning and Ordination South (9:15 a.m.) - United Christian, Montgomery</td>
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<td>Division of Administration and Stewardship (10:00 a.m.) - Regional Office</td>
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<td>Regional Board (10:00 a.m.) - First Christian Church, Birmingham</td>
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<td>Week of Compassion Promotion</td>
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<td>College of Regional Ministers - Indianapolis, IN</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ash Wednesday</td>
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<td>March</td>
<td>46th Annual Black Ministers Retreat - Nashville, TN</td>
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<td>SERF Interregional Women’s Event at Christmount - Black Mountain, NC</td>
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<td>Men’s Retreat - Rolling Hills Retreat Center, Calera, AL</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“Healthy Boundaries” workshop for Clergy (9:00 a.m.) - Regional Office</td>
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APRIL, 2020
5 - 12 Easter Offering Promotion (for general ministries)
10 - 12 Easter Rally for Chuukese Disciples - Pensacola, FL
15 Commissioning and Ordination North (9:15 a.m.) - Regional Office
24 - 26 Regional Assembly - First Christian Church, Meridian, MS

MAY, 2020
5 Commissioning and Ordination South (9:15 a.m.) - United Christian, Montgomery
13 Committee on the Ministry (10:00 a.m.) - Regional Office
16 Biennial Planning Session (10:00 a.m.) - Regional Office
24 - 31 Pentecost Offering Promotion (for new congregation establishment)

JUNE, 2020
15 - 19 Junior Camp, Chi Rho Camp, and CYF Conference - YMCA-Camp Chandler
19 - 21 Genesis Camp and Discovery Camp - YMCA-Camp Chandler
27 Regional Convocation One-Day Workshop - New Bethel Christian Church, Greenville, AL

JULY, 2020
10 - 12 “Sessions 2020” - Disciples Men’s Event - Fort Worth, TX
11 Commissioning and Ordination North (9:15 a.m.) - Regional Office
18 Commissioning and Ordination South (9:15 a.m.) - United Christian, Montgomery
19 - 21 College of Regional Ministers/Forum of Regional Moderators - Fort Worth, TX
22 - 25 “The 2020 Experience” - Fort Worth, TX

AUGUST, 2020
12 Commissioning and Ordination North (9:15 a.m.) - Regional Office
23 “Senior Adult Sunday” in Alabama-Northwest Florida

SEPTEMBER, 2020
1 Commissioning and Ordination South (9:15 a.m.) - United Christian, Montgomery
5 Anti-Racism Team (10:00 a.m.) - Regional Office
8 - 10 “The Gathering” (an event for pastors, sponsored by Pension Fund) - New Orleans, LA
14 - 16 SERF (Southeast Regional Fellowship) Retreat at Christmount - Black Mountain, NC
18 Regional Board (10:00 a.m.) - Location TBD
24 - 26 Disciples Women’ Fall Retreat (tentative) - Location TBD
26 - Oct. 3 Reconciliation Offering Promotion

OCTOBER, 2020
3 Division of Nurture (10:00 a.m.) - Regional Office
10 Program Committee on Church Development (10:00 a.m.) - Regional Office
14 Commissioning and Ordination North (9:15 a.m.) - Regional Office
17 Division of Mission (10:00 a.m.) - Regional Office
24 Division of Administration and Stewardship (10:00 a.m.) - Regional Office

Christian Church In Alabama-Northwest Florida, 861 Highway 52, Helena, AL 35080
REGIONAL PRAYER CALENDAR
FOR NOVEMBER, 2019 - JANUARY, 2020

CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST) IN ALABAMA-NW FLORIDA

Note: Congregations are urged to lift up in prayer during worship the congregation(s) designated on each Sunday of the year. Special prayers are encouraged for the ministers listed as well. A phone number is listed for each congregation (in some cases an e-mail address is also listed) in order for persons to make contact with that congregation to learn of special joys and concerns prior to the Sunday when it is listed.

November 3 - Tuscaloosa, First (205-758-2968) Tim Trussell-Smith, Minister (e-mail: <reverendtimts@gmail.com>)
November 10 - Valhermoso Springs, First (256-778-7921) Jeremy Harbin, Minister (e-mail: <pastorjeremyharbin@gmail.com>)
November 17 - Jasper, First (205-384-6302) C.J. Cobb, Minister (e-mail: <car5y.cobb@gmail.com>)
November 24 - Valley, Fairfax (334-756-3941) Duwayne Bridges, Minister (e-mail: <burningbridges@msn.com>)
Montgomery, United (334-262-3382) La’Rue Smith, Jr., Minister (e-mail: <lsmith7106@gmail.com>)

December 1 - Valley, River View (334-756-3538) Ron Shephard, Minister (email: <parson63@yahoo.com>)
December 8 - Pensacola, Westwood (850-456-2092) Betty and David Massey, Co-Pastors (e-mail: <dmassey745@aol.com> or <howdybetty@aol.com>)
December 15 - Ambassadors for Christ, Pamela Wilson, Minister (334-437-5423 or e-mail: <pamlove@camelliacom.com>)
December 22 - Hayneville, New Salem, Willie Smith, Minister (334-324-4338 or email: <pastorwjsmith@gmail.com>)
December 29 - Meridian, First, Mark Benson, Minister (252-933-3733 or email: <mark@fccmeridian.com>)

January 5 - Athens, First (256-232-5611) Clint Coffey, Minister (e-mail: <jclintjr@juno.com>)
January 12 - Anniston, First (256-236-1316) Laura Hutchinson, Minister (e-mail: <laurahutchinson@bellsouth.net>)
January 19 - Auburn, Village (334-887-5111) Pat Parvin, Minister (e-mail: <pparvin@wellsprinting.com>)
January 26 - Dothan, First (334-792-2401) Bill Smith, Minister (e-mail: <bsndh1n@gmail.com>)

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Alabama-Northwest Florida, 861 Highway 52, Helena, Al. 35080
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| TOTAL                        | 164,922.54 | 162,728.57 | 1,544.62 |

NOTE: THIS REPORT COMPARES GIVING FROM JAN - SEPT 2018 TO GIVING JAN - SEPT 2019
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REFUND POLICY

Refund Policy for events sponsored by the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region: 100% refund for emergencies, provided that notification is received prior to the beginning of the event; 50% refund for emergencies in which notification (written) is made after the beginning of the event; 100% for non-emergencies if requested in writing at least seven days prior to the first day of the event; No refunds will be given for non-emergency cancellations after seven days prior to the beginning of the event. Written requests for refunds must be received by the Regional Office, 861 Highway 52, Helena, AL 35080 (email <alnwfl@aol.com.>) within seven days of the last day of the event.

While refunds are not available other than as outlined in this policy, substitutions will be allowed as long as the original registrant, or responsible adult, is able to locate an eligible participant who is able to take the slot and as long as the original registrant, or responsible adult, communicates this information to the Regional Office. The Region will not be responsible in assisting in identifying a substitute. Notification should be provided to the Regional Office as soon as possible and any substitute must complete the necessary paperwork prior to arrival at the event.

Approved by the Regional Board, February 20, 2010

ADDENDUM

Non-registered persons are NOT eligible to take the place of persons who have already registered unless they communicate the exchange with the Regional Office at least 5 days prior to the start of the event. A late fee will be assessed as required by the Fee Schedule.

Approved by the Regional Board, February 24, 2018
Thanksgiving Offering
Received in many congregations on Nov. 17 and 24, 2019

The Thanksgiving Offering benefits the Colleges, Universities, Seminaries, and Divinity Houses affiliated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Higher education has been an important focus for Disciples since the very beginning of the movement. Throughout our history, Disciples have founded institutions of higher learning to educate students and form leaders to make a difference in the world. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is still committed to higher education. Your gift to the Thanksgiving Offering helps support the education of thousands of students at our fifteen colleges and universities as well as our seven seminaries and divinity houses.

The Colleges and Universities of the Christian Church provide quality education through classes offered by some of the nation’s top undergraduate and graduate faculty. Many of the campuses are comprised of state-of-the-art facilities, offer diverse degree programs, include dynamic student life activities, offer exciting athletics programs, and much more. The Thanksgiving offering supports everything from scholarships, to religious life offices, to faculty growth and development. By giving to the Thanksgiving Offering you are helping our institutions invest in students as they prepare themselves to become leaders.

The Thanksgiving Offering also provides scholarship and support for our theological education institutions. Each of our seminaries and divinity houses is committed to educating and forming Christian leaders for church and society. Generations of pastors, community leaders, and agents of social transformation have been educated at our theological institutions. They have flourished and made a difference in the world, thanks to gifts from Disciples congregations and individuals throughout the ages. These institutions continue to prepare leaders for the present age and the age to come.

Support for Disciples Mission Fund and gifts to the Thanksgiving Offering are a critical part of the ongoing collaborative work of church and higher education that is such a foundational part of the heritage of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Please give generously to this offering. You gift makes a difference in the lives of our students and it makes a difference in the world.
Christmas Offering
Received in many congregations on Dec. 15 and 22, 2019

Our finest gifts support the work of regional ministries this Christmas. Your regional ministry works to:

- Connect congregations to each other
- Foster faith development
- Gather Disciples in camps, conferences, and assemblies
- Nurture the development of a new generation of pastors
- Assist churches in calling new ministers
- Interpret the global mission of the Church
- Represent the Church in ecumenical gatherings
- Counsel and pray with those who are troubled of spirit
- Lead the Church to address racism
- Inspire leaders to experiment and create
- Witness to the power of God to make things new

The Christmas Special Day offering supports all of these and many other ministries of our regions.

Please give generously to this year’s Christmas Offering.
Introduction Page for

Bulletin Inserts

Note: The following two pages in this Leader’s Packet are “copy-ready” pages which have been produced for use in worship bulletins on the four Sundays prior to Christmas. Simply copy them in the quantity needed and cut them in half. They may be used in addition to promotional material that may be sent to you electronically.

The first page includes bulletin inserts for December 1 and 8. They are promotions for the 2019 Christmas Offering which will support the ministry of the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region.

The second sheet includes bulletin inserts for December 15 and 22. They are also promotions for the 2019 Christmas Offering which will support the ministry of the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region.

Your Help Is Needed:

A strong 2019 Christmas Offering in each of the Alabama-Northwest Florida congregations is very much needed in order to help this Region reach its ministry goals for 2020. Lay and clergy leaders are asked to be advocates for the ministry of the Region in their promotion of this special day offering.

In addition to using the next two pages as bulletin inserts, you may also use them in the following ways:

- as “Minutes for Mission” during worship
- as teaching tools in Sunday School classes, youth groups, men’s and women’s groups, Board meetings, Elders/Deacons meetings, etc.
- as flyers placed in church hallways
- as newsletter inserts

Christian Church in Alabama-Northwest Florida, 861 Highway 52, Helena, AL 35080
Sunday, December 1, 2019

Gifts to the 2019 Christmas Offering will strengthen the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region for its ministry.

All Regions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) have made a commitment to the document “Marks of a Faithful Regional Church.” This document directs and describes the ministry to which Regions are called. These ministries are highlighted in the 2019 Christmas Offering promotion.

"CARING FOR CONGREGATIONS"

A major part of the ministry of the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region is caring for its congregations. Just as congregations provide care for their participants – nurturing them spiritually, offering pastoral care and support, and connecting them to opportunities for service – so also do Regions invest much time and energy into the well-being of congregations.

Every program that is offered by the Region (camps, retreats, workshops, etc.) is intended to be an addition to each congregation’s own programming. These opportunities are intended to strengthen participants for their roles within their home congregations. In this way, the Region supports congregations.

Regions support congregations as they have special needs. Congregations that are facing a transition in ministerial leadership rely on the Region to guide them through a process of seeking a new minister. Congregational leaders receive training and guidance from the Region to be better equipped for their roles of service. Congregations in conflict call on the Region for help in mediating and moving past the conflict in healthy ways.

Regions support congregations on special occasions and remind them of their kinship with other Disciples congregations.

The Region communicates with congregations through letters, emails, and a web-site to inform them of opportunities for involvement. Congregations know they are not alone as they seek to be faithful to God. They call on the Region as a valuable partner with them along the journey. Caring for congregations is a major part of what a Region is called to do.

All gifts to the 2019 Christmas Offering are directed to the ministries of the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region. Please give generously!

CHRISTMAS OFFERING - DECEMBER 15 - 22

Sunday, December 8, 2019

Gifts to the 2019 Christmas Offering will strengthen the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region for its ministry.

All Regions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) have made a commitment to the document “Marks of a Faithful Regional Church.” This document directs and describes the ministry to which Regions are called. These ministries are highlighted in the 2019 Christmas Offering promotion.

"CALLING OUT AND DEVELOPING LEADERS"

The Alabama-Northwest Florida Region has an important role in helping persons discern God’s call upon their lives. Through involvement in Regional ministries, persons often discover gifts and graces that the Region helps channel into leadership roles, whether through clergy or lay leadership.

Many ordained ministers in the church remember their experiences in Regional camps, when they were teenagers, as being the times when they began to sense the call of God upon their lives. The camp setting, along with the encouragement of caring adults, provides an opportunity for young people to begin asking meaningful questions about God’s desire for their lives. Regional camp experiences have also been important times for the adult counselors to grow in their own sense of call into Christian service.

The Region’s Committee on the Ministry works directly with ministers and ministry candidates. Through nurturing and supportive relationships, enlistment of mentors and advisors, allocation of financial resources and scholarships, this committee helps leaders and future leaders be equipped for the ministry to which they are called.

All gifts to the 2019 Christmas Offering are directed to the ministries of the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region. Please give generously!

CHRISTMAS OFFERING - DECEMBER 15 - 22
Gifts to the 2019 Christmas Offering will strengthen the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region for its ministry.

All Regions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) have made a commitment to the document “Marks of a Faithful Regional Church.” This document directs and describes the ministry to which Regions are called. These ministries are highlighted in the 2019 Christmas Offering promotion.

"CARING FOR MINISTERS"

Every person in ministry also needs to receive ministry. Ministry can be rewarding in so many ways, but it can also be challenging, frustrating and exhausting. Ministry is spiritually and emotionally demanding. Ministers are expected to be at their best in every ministry situation in which they find themselves. Congregations deserve to have pastors who are healthy, focused, and engaged in their ministry. The Region plays a vital role in helping ministers be at their best. A few ministries aimed at fostering healthy ministry include:

- Pastoral counseling services through the Pastoral Institute
- "Healthy Boundaries" workshops
- Colleague Group ministry to encourage mutual care and development between ministry colleagues
- Retreats for clergy and spouses
- A Ministry Support Network which is in regular contact with ministers to befriend, mentor, and encourage them in their ministry
- Pastoral support for ministers and their families in times of stress or emergency through Regional staff
- Providing grants for continuing education, spiritual enrichment, or to address financial emergencies for ministers and their families
- Promoting Week of the Ministry to celebrate persons in ministry

All gifts to the 2019 Christmas Offering are directed to the ministries of the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region. Please give generously!

CHRISTMAS OFFERING - DECEMBER 15 - 22
REGIONAL MINISTRIES SUPPORTED THROUGH OUTREACH DOLLARS

When an individual contributes to the Annual Fund or when a congregation in Alabama-Northwest Florida makes a gift to the Disciples Mission Fund or to the Christmas Special Day Offering, the following ministries of the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region are made possible:

Camp and Conference
  Christian Youth Fellowship (CYF) Conferences (each summer)
  Chi Rho (Junior High) Camps (each summer)
  Junior Camps (older elementary age) (each summer)
  Discovery Camps (younger elementary age) (each summer)
  Genesis Camps (kindergarten and first grade) (each summer)
  Specialty Camps, such as Beach Camp, Mission Camp and Family Camp

Young Adult Ministries
  Support for Congregations in their outreach to young adults
  Winter Young Adult Retreat (each January)
  Young Adult Green Team ministries
  Young Adult Scholarships

Retreats for Spiritual Growth and Fellowship
  "Youthtopia" (for Chi Rho and CYF youth - each January)
  Women's Retreats (each September or October)
  Men's Retreats (each spring)
  Senior Adult Retreats (each fall)

Leadership Development/Educational Events
  Christian Women's Fellowship/Disciples Women (CWF/DW) Events (each spring)
  Training/Networking for Adult Leaders of Youth
  Region-wide Training Workshops (annually)
  Convocation-sponsored workshops (each June)
  Hispanic Ministries Commission events (annually)
  Youth Council Officers Training/Orientation (biennially)
  Training for Moderators/Board Chairpersons/Treasurers (biennially)
  Themed Events for congregational leaders
  Workshops on Stewardship and Outreach
  Presentations from Global Mission Partners
  Facilitating Global Mission Trips and Partnerships
  Training in "Children Worship and Wonder"

Ministry Support
  Ministers/Mates Retreats (each January)
  Clergy Colleague Groups
  Continuing Education workshops
  Hispanic Ministers' Training at LTS (annually)
  Anti-Racism Training (every two years)
  Boundary Training (annually)
  Relational Support through the Ministry Support Network
  Support for non-parish ministers
  Ministry Assistance Program
  Funding for Ministerial Education and Support
  Providing Accountability for ministers, maintaining standards for ministerial standing
  Enlisting mentors/advisors for persons in Ministry Care
  Giving counsel to ministers in the Search and Call process
  and facilitating their consideration by congregations

(Continued on back)
Assemblies
Regional Assemblies (every 2 years)
Convocation Assemblies (every 2 years)
Hispanic Encounters (every year)
SERF Events and Gatherings (Southeast Regional Fellowship)

Congregational Support
Listening Conferences
Congregational Transformation Events (in non-Regional Assembly years)
Sponsorship in Ministry Planning (with Hope Partnership)
Boundary Training for Volunteers
Children Worship and Wonder Training
Consultations on Congregational Programming
Consultations in times of conflict and/or crisis
Sharing in significant events in congregational life
Maintaining a resource/lending library for congregations
Giving counsel to search committees and facilitating their consideration of prospective ministerial candidates

Communications
"Regional News and Notes" (6 issues a year - sent electronically)
E-mail regarding pastoral concerns of clergy
Leader's Packets by mail (6 times a year - also sent electronically as "Information for Leaders")
Sharing information/resources from the General Church
Offering resources and ideas through a website
Maintaining permanent files on congregations and clergy

Facilitating Shared Ministries
Establishing and receiving new congregations
Miracle Days (normally every two years)
Mission trips - Partnerships in Honduras
Reconciliation and Anti-Racism Ministries
Justice Ministries through Alabama Arise and Faith in Action Alabama
Resource sharing between congregations
Supporting involvement with Christian Services for Children in Alabama (CSCA)

Leadership and Pastoral Care
Facilitating Colleague Groups for Pastors
Pastoral relationships with clergy and lay leaders
Advocating for greater unity and inclusivity in the church
Giving witness to covenantal relationships and facilitating partnerships between congregations and other entities of the church
Promoting faithful stewardship of the church's resources
Promoting new forms of mission and ministry

How Much Should Our Congregation Give to the Disciples Outreach?

In past general assemblies of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), congregations have been urged to give at least a tithe (10% of all receipts) to Disciples outreach ministries through Disciples Mission Fund and the Special Day Offerings. Some congregations exceed the tithe, some give less. Whatever your congregation gives for Disciples Outreach, it should be given not out of obligation but out of gratitude for the privilege of being a part of the common mission of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). These dollars result in the faithful communication of God’s redeeming love for humanity, made known in Jesus Christ.

Thank you for your commitment to the whole mission which God is giving to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

June, 2019
Children Worship & Wonder Training Event

**Date:** Fri. November 15, 6p–9pm
Sat. November 16, 9am–5pm

**Location:** First Christian Church
700 N. Wood Ave
Florence, AL 35630

**Cost:** $120 per person
Plus purchase of book
*Young Children and Worship*

Register online:

**Deadline:** November 8, 2019
(Cost after deadline: $150)

For more information or to register by phone:

(317) 713-2641
Marissa Ivey, Ministry Associate

**Trainer:** Jane Nettles
Auburn, AL
2020 MINISTERS AND MATES RETREAT
Hilton Garden Inn – Orange Beach, Alabama

January 13 -15, 2020

A Time for Reflection and Discussion with
Colleagues in Ministry

Theme

“It’s 2020: Now What?”

Two former General Ministers and Presidents for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), plus our
current General Minister and President, will offer written reflections on the priorities for the Christian
Church (Disciples of Christ) as we move into 2020 and beyond. Although Richard Hamm, Sharon
Watkins, and Terri Hord Owens will not be present at the retreat, panelists from the Alabama-
Northwest Florida Region will offer their responses to the written reflections of these key leaders in
the life of the church. There will be ample opportunity for all participants to express their own
thoughts about where the church needs to be placing its greatest energy and resources as it moves into
a new decade.

Cost — $40 per person
(includes administrative costs and cost of Monday banquet)

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 were sent to all
ministers with standing in October. Please contact the Regional office if this information is needed. Join us for
a stimulating event, combined with opportunities for rest and relaxation in a beautiful setting.

Christian Church in Alabama-NW Florida, 861 Highway 52, Helena, AL 35080
Retired M & M Luncheon

January 13, 20/20 12:30 - 2:30

Hilton Garden Inn - Orange Beach, Alabama

The PAST The FUTURE

Focus for the Retreat:

?It’s 20/20, Now What?

Focus for the Retirees’ Luncheon:

?It’s 20/20, What Did We Learn?

Sign up on the M&M registration form.

Cost of meal per person $10.00
2020 Youthtopia
Winter Retreat for Chi Rho & CYF (Grades 6-12)
At CAMP CHANDLER
www.campchandler.org

Join us as we enjoy a weekend of games, challenges, and adventures led by your Regional Youth Council

WHEN: January 24-26, 2020
(Begins at 7:00 pm Friday - ends at 10:00 am Sunday)

Cost: $130.00 (includes lodging, meals, snacks, and T-shirt)

Each church is expected to provide one paid registered adult for every 1-6 youth attending the event. All adults attending must register and pay fees.

What to Bring?

BIBLE
Offering
Sleeping bag/ bedding
Fitted twin sheet/Pillow
Toiletries
Towel
SNACKS to share
[Girls Sweet and Boys Salty]

Sturdy shoes
Flashlight
Jacket/ Raincoat
Camera
Closed toe shoes for high ropes
Bug spray

We Are a Drug-Free Community - no drugs, alcohol, or tobacco!!!
REGISTRATION FORM FOR Youthtopia
DEADLINE: January 6th, 2020

NAME_________________________________________________________

M/F_______ GRADE_______

ADDRESS____________________________________________________ CITY __________________________

STATE__________ ZIP_______

PHONE ____________________________

EMAIL ____________________________

T-SHIRT SIZE - (subject to availability if registration is not received by deadline) __________

CONGREGATION________________________________________________

ADULT ACCOMPANYING YOU: ________________________________________
2020 COVENANT for Participants
CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)
IN ALABAMA-NORTHWEST FLORIDA
Please read (or have read to you) the following. Sign this covenant, obtain parent signature and mail with completed camp registration form and appropriate fees. Thank you for your help!

- I will come to retreat expecting to grow in my faith and in relationship with others, becoming a special part of the retreat community. In order to do this, I covenant to follow all the rules and guidelines set by the Christian Church in Alabama Northwest Florida and any others set for this event. With this, I commit myself to the following: To be on time, attend and be attentive for all activities and participate in them fully.
- Have fun and make sure everyone else has a great time.
- To respect each other regardless of age and to respect others’ feelings and thoughts.
- I will not go from adult to adult until I get the answer I want.
- Be myself and open to making new friends.
- Be inclusive at all times.
- Cooperate with the leaders, keynoter, director and other staff members at all times.
- Be respectful of God’s beauty in this special place and only leave footprints behind.
- To take all that I learn about God and share it with my friends, family and church.

Youth Signature

Parent/Guardian Signature

2019 MEDICAL INFORMATION AND RELEASE
MEDICAL HISTORY

Please answer with (yes or no):
- ______ Do you have any health problems?
- ______ Are you currently under the care of a physician or psychologist?
- ______ Do your require handicapped-accessible facilities?
- ______ Do you have any food or other allergies?
- ______ Do you expect to have any difficulty with normal event activities?

- ______ Do you take any prescription medication?

Detail All Medical and Dietary Issues Below:
(if more room is needed, please attach a sheet to this form)

Circle Below: Should your child be allowed appropriate over-the-counter medications to be given as needed?
Yes or No

SIGNATURE, AGREEMENT AND RELEASE:
In case of emergency, I hereby give permission to the physician selected by the camp director to hospitalize, order injections, anesthesia or surgery for the child named above in order to secure necessary, proper medical care. I understand that I will be contacted immediately in the event that something unforeseen happens requiring my attention. I release the Noah's Ark staff and management, camp directors and counselors, and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Alabama-Northwest Florida and its staff, from all responsibilities in case of sickness or accidents causing injury occurring during camp. I have provided proof of insurance to those in charge.

Signature of Parent/Guardian
(Signature required regardless of age of camper)

Emergency Contact(s) Name & Phone Number:

Insurance Information:

Name of Insurance Company, Address and Telephone Number

Member Name Member ID

THIS MEDICAL FORM MUST BE COMPLETED TO PROCESS YOUR REGISTRATION.
CHAPERONE REGISTRATION FORM FOR Youthtopia
DEADLINE: January 6th, 2020

NAME____________________________________

M/F_____ Have You Completed Safe Gatherings Training? ___ Yes ___ No

ADDRESS____________________________________ CITY ________________

STATE_______ ZIP_______

PHONE______________________________

EMAIL______________________________

T-SHIRT SIZE - (subject to availability if registration is not received by deadline) ____________

CONGREGATION______________________________

Safe Gatherings trainings is required for ALL Regional Youth Volunteers. If you have not already completed this training, please contact Nisha7@aol.com to begin the process. While adults are allowed to attend events without the training, they are not able to serve in the full capacity of leadership during the weekend. The process can take several weeks so please contact Nisha ASAP if you need to complete Safe Gatherings.
2020 COVENANT for Participants
CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)
IN ALABAMA-NORTHWEST FLORIDA

Please read (or have read to you) the following. Sign this covenant, obtain parent signature and mail with completed camp registration form and appropriate fees. Thank you for your help!

- I will come to retreat expecting to grow in my faith and in relationship with others, becoming a special part of the retreat community. In order to do this, I covenant to follow all the rules and guidelines set by the Christian Church in Alabama Northwest Florida and any others set for this event. With this, I commit myself to the following: To be on time, attend and be attentive for all activities and participate in them fully
- Have fun and make sure everyone else has a great time
- To respect each other regardless of age and to respect others’ feelings and thoughts
- I will not go from adult to adult until I get the answer I want
- Be myself and open to making new friends
- Be inclusive at all times
- Cooperate with the leaders, keynoter, director and other staff members at all times
- Be respectful of God’s beauty in this special place and only leave footprints behind
- To take all that I learn about God and share it with my friends, family and church

Youth Signature

Parent/Guardian Signature

2019 MEDICAL INFORMATION AND RELEASE
MEDICAL HISTORY

Please answer with (yes or no):
- _____ Do you have any health problems?
- _____ Are you currently under the care of a physician or psychologist?
- _____ Do you require handicapped-accessible facilities?

_____ Do you have any food or other allergies?
_____ Do you expect to have any difficulty with normal event activities?
_____ Do you take any prescription medication?

Detail All Medical and Dietary Issues Below:
(If more room is needed, please attach a sheet to this form)

SIGNATURE, AGREEMENT AND RELEASE:
In case of emergency, I hereby give permission to the physician selected by the camp director to hospitalize, order injections, anesthesia or surgery for the child named above in order to secure necessary, proper medical care. I understand that I will be contacted immediately in the event that something unforeseen happens requiring my attention. I release the Noah’s Ark staff and management, camp directors and counselors, and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Alabama-Northwest Florida and its staff, from all responsibilities in case of sickness or accidents causing injury occurring during camp. I have provided proof of insurance to those in charge.

Emergency Contact(s) Name & Phone Number:

Insurance Information:

Name of Insurance Company, Address and Telephone Number

Member Name Member ID

THIS MEDICAL FORM MUST BE COMPLETED TO PROCESS YOUR REGISTRATION.
STATE OF ALABAMA )

__________________________ COUNTY )

YMCA HOLD HARMLESS AGREEMENT

I, ________________________________, as the parent or guardian for

(Parent's Name)

_______________________________, a minor child who is in my care and

(Child's Name)

custody, do hereby grant my permission for my child to attend a program or event at YMCA Camp

Chandler. I fully understand the nature of camping and recreational activities associated with the

use of the camp facilities and/or programs includes an inherent risk of danger, which may result in

personal injury or harm to my child. I understand that my child will be under adult supervision at all

times but, notwithstanding any level or degree of supervision, that accidents may occur which may

result in physical injury or harm to my child. It is with the full understanding of the risks associated

with these types of activities that I grant permission for my child to participate in the program to be

conducted at YMCA Camp Chandler, and I agree to indemnify and hold harmless YMCA Camp

Chandler, the Montgomery Metro YMCA, its staff, directors, employees, agents and/or

representatives from any claim for any injury or damage which may result from my child's

attendance and participation in the program conducted on camp property. Permission is granted

for my child to participate and I understand that by signing this form I am voluntarily and knowingly

accepting responsibility for my child's participation in the activity or program to be conducted at

YMCA Camp Chandler. I also grant permission for pictures and images of my child to be taken

while participating in activities and used for YMCA promotional purposes.

Dated this __________ day of __________________, 20 __________.

Parent’s Signature: ________________________________
YOUNG ADULT
WINTER RETREAT

YMCA-Camp Chandler
near Wetumpka, Alabama

January 24-26, 2020

Theme

“To Thine Own Self Be True”

Guest Presenter

Elizabeth (Beth) Gregory
(Exploring personality insights through the Enneagram)

Cost — $50 per person
(This event is subsidized by the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region)

****************************************************************************************************************************

The Young Adult Winter Retreat is open to all who consider themselves to be young adults in the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region. Persons in this group might be students, and non-students, married or single, with children and without children. Young adults in Alabama-Northwest Florida are a diverse group, yet they all are needing to be nurtured in their faith and strengthened through their fellowship with one another. Being together in the retreat setting will allow participants to grow closer to God and to each other.

Christian Church in Alabama-NW Florida, 861 Highway 52, Helena, AL 35080
YOUNG ADULT WINTER RETREAT 2020
[Special Guest Presenter, Elizabeth (Beth) Gregory, PhD., LPC]

January 24 - 26, 2020 — YMCA-Camp Chandler
Check-in begins as early as 4:00 p.m. on Friday. The Retreat officially begins after dinner on Friday at 7:00 p.m. and ends Sunday morning after worship and before lunch

Please note: Lodging is dormitory-style.
Attendees are reminded to bring their own bedding, towels, and toiletries.

“To Thine Own Self Be True”

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Please detach and return
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

REGISTRATION FORM
(Use a separate form for each person)

Name:________________________________________________________________________

Address:______________________________________________________________________
Street ________________________________________________________________________
City ________________________________________________________________________
State ________________________________________________________________________
Zip _________________________________________________________________________

Phone No.: ______________________ E-Mail Address: _________________________________

Congregation __________________________________________________________________

**Please note any food allergies on this form.

Any young adult who is wanting to participate in this event but who is unable to pay the registration fee is asked to contact John Mobley <jpmobley2@aol.com>. Limited financial assistance may be available. All grants will be kept confidential.

Please enclose payment of $50 with this Registration Form
Payment must be received by January 15, 2020.
On-line registration is also available at www.alnwfldisciples.org/young-adult-ministry

Mail To:
Christian Church in AL-NW FL, 861 Highway 52, Helena, AL 35080 Phone (205-425-5245) Fax (205-425-5246)
Save the Date for SERF 2020 Women’s Event
March 13-15, 2020 at Christmount Christian Assembly, Black Mountain NC

Join your Disciples sisters for “A Mountaintop Experience” featuring
• The Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Hale – Founder and Senior Pastor of the
  Ray of Hope Christian Church, Decatur GA, and
• The Rev. Terri Hord Owens, General Minister and President of the
  Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the US and Canada
• Dynamic Worship and Workshops, Fellowship, and Fun

Registration and more information coming soon!
(“SERF” is the Southeastern Regional Fellowship of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
which includes Alabama/NW Florida, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina,
South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.)
MEN'S RETREAT
(Rolling Hills Retreat Center - Calera, Alabama)

March 20 - 21, 2020
(Registration/Check-in begins as early as 2:00 p.m. Retreat officially begins with dinner on March 20 at 6:00 p.m. and ends Saturday by 2:30 p.m.)
Optional Arrival Date - March 19, 2020 Men may come a day early for fishing, hiking, table games, and fellowship time (Added cost - $35, no meals included).

"Men in Motion"

Retreat Leader:

Rev. Roger Peadro
Pastor, First Christian Church, Ft. Walton Beach, FL

Registration Cost: $100/person ($90 if received before March 6)
** Saturday Only - $60/person ($40 if received before March 6)
MEN’S RETREAT 2020

March 20 - 21, 2020 — Rolling Hills Retreat Center, Calera, AL
Registration/Check-in begins after 2:00 p.m. on Friday. The Retreat officially begins with dinner on Friday at 6:00 p.m. and ends Saturday by 2:30 p.m.

Optional Arrival Date - March 19, 2020 Some men may wish to come a day early for fishing, hiking, table games, and fellowship (Added cost - $35.00, no meals included).

Rooms at Rolling Hills Retreat Center are motel-type rooms. Bedding and towels are provided. All men will be assigned a roommate. Roommate preferences will be considered. Men are also reminded to bring their Challenge Goal offerings to the Retreat.

“Men in Motion”

REGISTRATION FORM
(Please use a separate form for each person)

Name: ____________________________________________

Address: ______________________________________
Street __________________________________________ City __________ State __________ Zip __________

Phone No.: ___________________ E-Mail Address: ___________________

Please check one: _____ I will arrive March 19, one day early _____ I will arrive March 20
(If arriving on March 19, add $35 to registration payment)

_____ I will be coming Saturday only (cost is $60, or $40 before March 6)

Roommate Preference: ______________________________________

Will this be your first Alabama-NW Florida Men’s Retreat? _______ Yes _______ No

Congregation ____________________________________________

Limited financial assistance may be available upon request by pastors to either David Lynch, Men’s President, or John Mobley. All financial assistance grants will be kept confidential.

Please enclose payment of $100 with Registration Form (or $90, if received prior to March 6). This payment covers the cost of registration, three meals, and lodging at Rolling Hills. Persons coming for Saturday only should pay $60 (or $40, if received prior to March 6), which covers breakfast and lunch on Saturday.

Payment in full must be received no later than March 13.
By registering for this event, you agree to the terms of the Region’s Refund Policy.

Mail To: Christian Church in AL-NW FL, 861 Highway 52, Helena, AL 35080 Phone (205-425-5245) Fax (205-425-5246)
Continuing Education Opportunity for Ministers and Persons in Ministry Care

"HEALTHY BOUNDARIES"

a Workshop for Ministers and those in the Ministry Care Program of the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region WHO HAVE NOT PREVIOUSLY COMPLETED THIS WORKSHOP IN THE PAST 10 YEARS

Attendance at this workshop is required in order to maintain Ministerial Standing or be continued in Ministry Care. Must be repeated after 10 years.

Resource Leaders:

Dr. Dale Braxton and
Dr. Nisha Warbington
(Certified Trainers through the FaithTrust Institute)

FRIDAY, MARCH 27, 2020
9:00 a.m. until 3:30 p.m.

Note: For those with Ministerial Standing or who are in the Ministry Care Program who are required to attend this workshop, there is no cost to participate. For all others, the cost is $50. Reservations are necessary for ALL persons planning to attend and must be made by calling 205-425-5245 or by emailing <alnwm@aol.com> by March 120.

Location of the Workshop
Regional Office
861 Highway 52, Helena, AL 35080

Christian Church In Alabama-Northwest Florida, 861 Highway 52, Helena, Alabama 35080
Learning to Love Variety in Worship Song Selection

Andrea, music director at the Blue Note Church, straps in and selects her song picks for the worship team to consider for Sunday. She decides to pick some of her favorites that match the week’s theme. Letting out a big sigh and worried that her congregation might be stuck in a musical rut, she grabs her satchel and heads to the meeting.

What could help Andrea’s uncertainty and how can music leaders let go of old patterns? Breaking out requires the music leader—whether pastor, music director, band leader, instrumentalist, or singer—to be more objective in selecting songs and find variety. Making this easier, the past fifty years has seen an increase in the variety of music available to churches in denominational hymnals, song lists by Christian Copyright Licensing International (CCLI), and platforms like YouTube. To help in song choice, Constance Cherry, professor of worship at Indiana Wesleyan University, acknowledges the vast range of worship music and sorts them into two broad categories, short and long form. By considering the types of songs available instead of the songs themselves, music leaders can avoid the rut of favorites that have always been used.

Longer Form Songs

Classic Hymns sung by Western Protestant churches in the last six hundred years are perhaps the most familiar congregational songs. The long format allows for a more developed statement of theology, witness, or praise. Often organized into stanzas, some hymns use a refrain to tie the themes of each stanza together and deepen worshippers’ connection to the material. When considering classic hymns, don’t forget contemporary hymnists such as Brian Wren, Thomas Troeger, Carl Daw, Richard Leach, Ruth Duck, Shirley Murray, Daniel Damo, Sylvia Dunstan, Fred Kahn, John Bell, and Jane Marshall.

Gospel Hymns emerged out of revival camp meetings of the Second Great Awakening. With hymnals and trained song leaders in short supply, preachers would improvise a call and response, singing out a phrase, and congregation would respond with “Amen!” or “Hallelujah!” Or the preacher would sing stanzas to a familiar hymn as a solo with the congregation joining in the refrain. Through plain words and a simple, swinging melody, Gospel Hymns use a direct, unvarnished approach to conveying the message of a salvation available to all.

Metrical Psalms are hymns that paraphrase a specific biblical psalm and arrange it musically. Unlike hymns that are based on psalms (such as “O God, Our Help in Ages Past” based on Psalm 90), metrical psalms restate the psalm verse by verse as strictly as possible. This type was developed out of the early sixteenth century by Reformers like John Calvin, who did not approve of hymns not strictly based on Scripture. Metrical psalms allow worshippers to more deeply internalize the meaning of the psalms through giving voice in song, and can be used to better highlight the Scripture of the day.

Modern Worship Songs emerged from the contemporary worship movement and drew inspiration from the praise choruses of the 1970s and 1980s. Some songs, such as Graham Kendrick’s “Shine, Jesus Shine” resemble traditional hymns in their use of stanzas, regular meter, and rhyming. Others adopt a verse and chorus structure.
typical of popular music. These writers sought longer songs with more musical complexity (including more elements such as a prechorus, bridge, and tag) and theological substance. Congregations would benefit from incorporating these songs when they want to experience understandable lyrics with soaring, emotionally satisfying melodies as heard in contemporary popular music.

**Shorter Song Forms**

**Praise Songs** use only a few measures to communicate a single idea, often personal and devotional in nature. The songs are often “through-composed,” moving forward phrase by phrase without repeating material, such as in Laurie Klein’s, “I Love You, Lord.” Simple in structure, praise choruses do not often require written materials and are accessible to anyone regardless of age or musical training. To get started, look for praise song collections from the 1970s and 1980s, use it in the worship service for two or three weeks, then return to it again once in a while.

**Global Songs** have become more available in recent decades, aided by the internet and social media. Diverse in language, rhythmic patterns, and compositional form, these songs are difficult to characterize, except that many are short, cyclical (meant to be sung over and over), and originate from places with strong oral traditions and a high regard for community. To get started, visit ethnic or multicultural congregations, listen to global songs on the internet, buy songbooks, or visit the website of the International Council of Ethnodoxologists, an association of worship leaders exploring world music in worship.

**African American Spirituals** often use a call-and-response structure. Reflecting the pain of the American slave experience but also the joy of God’s love, these brief songs can be highly flexible and rhythmically complex, opening space for improvisation. Listen to recordings of spirituals performed *a capella*, identify the structure, and perform them without instruments. Small percussion instruments may be added later if necessary.

**Black Gospel Songs**, though similar to spirituals, arose out of an urban experience and drew inspiration from popular American music. Songs are more musically complex and reliant on electronic instruments such as keyboards and guitars, as well as percussion instruments. To get started, listen to recordings of late-twentieth-century artists such as James Cleveland, Edwin Hawkins, or André Crouch, or more recent artists such as Israel Houghton, Dorothy Norwood, or William McDowell.

**Taizé Songs**, written by Brother Robert and Jacques Berthier of the Taizé community in France, are sung over and over in a meditative fashion. Acoustic instruments such as strings or woodwinds can accompany the song, with layers of sounds added or removed with each repetition as intensity builds or subsides over time. Try introducing a short song in worship in place of a spoken prayer, with the leader singing once with an instrument, then inviting the congregation to join. To learn more, visit the Taizé website, visit a Taizé service in your area, or buy a collection of Taizé arrangements from GIA publications.

**Service Music** refers to vocal music interwoven into the liturgy, often to make transitions from one part of the service to another. Examples include a doxology such as the ever popular “Praise God from whom all blessings flow” sung to the tune “OLD 100th” or the Kyrie eleison (“Lord, have mercy”). Though historically used in more traditional churches, any congregation can experiment using any musical style. To get started, look for places in the service where spoken words could be sung instead, then find a familiar chorus or song fragment to insert.

**Build Community through Song**

Breaking old habits in song selection can be difficult, but beneficial. By doing so, music leaders may strengthen the bonds of community in many directions—with the communion of the saints from ages past, with the global church in its diversity, and with fellow worshipers whose taste at times may seem unfamiliar. “Sing to the Lord a new song!” (Psalm 96:1, CEV).

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1. https://songselect.ccli.com/
3. Ibid., 155-156.
7. Ibid., 129.
8. Church leaders, especially those from privileged backgrounds, have the opportunity to use global or African American music from a stance of “cultural humility” and a commitment to learn from other cultures. See Ismael Ruiz Millán, “Cultural humility can help us become better leaders and better Christians,” *Faith and Leadership*, Feb. 5, 2019, https://faithandleadership. com/ismael-ruiz-millan-cultural-humility-can-help-us-become-better-leaders-and-better-christians
Writing as a Tool for Community Engagement

Writing can help church leaders in their efforts to reach out to the community. Typically seen as a solitary activity, writing may seem like the opposite of active engagement. Yet writing creates a space for reflection that could benefit even the most hands-on activist. The journal, the mission statement, the memo of understanding, and the program history can help teams in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of outreach work. Beyond the team itself, writing can empower our neighbors as they tell stories about themselves in their own words.

After the Mission Trip
Ten years after the event, Dee Ann reflected back on her time as a student on a travel and study seminar to Central America sponsored by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). She described a feeling of “danger and cautiousness” in visiting Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua during the El Salvador civil war and recounted visits with business, church, and social justice leaders that gave her “new eyes, new heart, new view of life.” She remembered that “Through many of the people we met . . . we experienced a level of faith that before had been unimaginable.” Writing can be used not only to recollect but also to maintain a real-time record of events. Some mission teams keep a group journal, asking a different person each day to record the group’s experience from his or her perspective. The resulting account can be copied at the end of the trip and shared with everyone, or excerpts can be used for articles and presentations about the trip.

Keeping a Journal
Church leaders can benefit from keeping a daily journal, or two journals: a spiritual journal and a management journal. The spiritual journal provides a way of listening to God and reflecting on feelings, prayers, readings, or critical incidents that lead to spiritual discernment within one’s life experiences. The management journal, while no less honest or personal, can be more focused on the work of ministry (whether lay or ordained) in guiding the team or congregation. What key people, events, challenges or experiences does the leader or group face? Record in each journal at different times of the day, and review them every month to gain a broader perspective by reflecting on recurrent themes in the daily writing.

When Clarifying Purpose
Some outreach teams find that a mission statement helps clarify purpose. Describing briefly why the team exists helps members focus on what’s really important and enables the group to achieve a shared understanding. For that reason, be sure to include time for discussion and debate before writing it down. Before beginning the process, instruct the group in this way: “When we craft a mission statement, the statement is more than words. It represents the debate and discussion we’ve gone through to write it. It gets pulled out and used regularly. It helps us make good decisions.”

The revision process helps to focus on the group’s broad intentions rather than on wordsmithing. The end result should be a brief, clear, inspiring statement describing why the group exists. Read it aloud...
at meetings and spend a few minutes discussing key words or sharing stories about how you fulfilled it. A large Presbyterian women’s group worked hard on a shared statement at a retreat. Three months later, the senior pastor approached the group with a request for them to take on a new task. After spending a minute to review their mission statement, the members decided the project was not in alignment with it. The pastor was impressed with their focus. The statement made it easy to decide what action to take.  

**When Collaborating with Others**

A memo of understanding (MOU) functions somewhat like a mission statement, though its focus is more external. The MOU serves to clarify how the team will collaborate with others, ensuring that its partners, including donors, expert advisors, social service agencies, and even the program’s beneficiaries, are all on the same page. A typical MOU creates a blueprint for action that states the goal of the program, the activities to be carried out, and what is expected of each partner. How will differences be resolved? Will a pastor or wise elder be consulted, or will an arbitration team consisting of representatives of each partner group be appointed?

The final product could be brief, usually no more than one or two pages long. Not a legal document, the MOU simply ensures understanding by everyone involved. For example, a church mission team wants to develop a community garden in order to supply the neighborhood with fresh produce. Partners might include volunteers supplied by the church or community, expert gardeners from the local garden club, and city officials who give approval. A well-written MOU could ensure that the partners do not work at cross purposes due to misunderstanding.

**Keeping Track of Actions over Time**

A program history, written to keep track of actions taken over time, offers another writing tool for ministry teams. Christ Lutheran Church in Whitefish, Montana, created a program history after it developed Shepherd’s Hand Clinic, a free medical clinic for people unable to afford health care. As the ministry began to expand, its leaders felt compelled to keep track. They decided to document their steps in a simple record of what steps were taken when. This running history gave the leadership an idea of the amount of time needed for each step and allowed them to look back and evaluate how they met their initial goals or fell short.

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**Empowering Low-Income Neighbors**

Everyone should be invited to write, including the low-income residents that so many churches serve. Brown Memorial United Methodist Church in Syracuse, New York, offered writing exercises for customers at its food pantry. Located on the city’s impoverished Near West Side, the church serves as a community center for the neighborhood. After shopping at the pantry, residents were invited to sit at a table in the corridor where people lined up to enter. Writers were offered printed sheets with a writing prompt at the top of a page, which was otherwise blank. One topic was sidewalks, with the prompt: “Do you use the sidewalk? What do you think of the sidewalks?” Spanish speakers were offered prompts in Spanish, with the account to be translated into English later. Those who could not write could draw a picture, and others chose to both write and draw pictures. Used initially as an organizing tool for resident groups to seek action from the city council, these writings were also published in a small, inexpensive paperback, *West Side Walks*. The program’s director, Steve Parks, associate professor of writing at Syracuse University, got the idea from the Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers in the United Kingdom, a thirty-year-old network of community writing groups. Parks notes that “Our mission is to provide opportunities for local communities to represent themselves by telling their stories in their own words.” Church leaders wanting to empower the neighbors they serve should consider asking them to write.

**It’s for Everyone**

Writing belongs to everyone. For some people, writing may seem to be a difficult, unpleasant, and nearly impossible task. For others, it can be exhilarating, satisfying, and self-revelatory. Everyone should have the opportunity to try it.

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