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.

Our Vision is to be a faithful and growing church that demonstrates true community, deep Christian spirituality and a passion for justice. Micah 6:8

Our Mission is to be and share the good news of Jesus Christ, witnessing, loving and serving from our doorsteps to the ends of the earth. Acts 2:8

Our Imperative is to strengthen congregations for this mission

Called by God’s covenant of love, the Office of the General Minister and President (OGMP) convenes the church in mutual accountability for witness and service.

Mission First
Mission First is a collaborative effort across the life of the church involving members of congregations, regions and general ministries. It seeks a shared mission priority and shared engagement in God’s mission.

Over eighty Mission Gatherings took place in 2016 in all but four regions in regional assemblies and clusters, among Disciples Women, youth, college students, National Convocation, NAPAD and Hispanic and Bilingual Fellowship. Nearly 3000 Disciples participated in the small group experience and responded to three questions in discussion and writing.

Analysis of the responses by a contract researcher and others, including Chapman College students, used the following methodology: Three hundred representative early responses were read closely to identify frequently occurring words, phrases and ideas
which were organized into a framework of categories and sub-categories. All remaining responses were read and coded according to the sub-categories. In a final report, frequencies of responses were presented for all respondents and for various demographic groups such as gender, race, or age.

The report of Mission Gatherings was presented to the Mission Council, December 2-4, 2016. With keynote inspiration from the Rev. Dr. Moiseraele Prince Dibeela of Botswana, South Africa, the Mission Council discerned a shared mission priority for our Church working with and for children, youth, and young adults. The Mission Council also urged the church to continue to provide protection and care for the vulnerable, create communities of healing, learning and transformation; and resist racism and other forms of injustice.
The Mission First pilot now calls for the Mission Council to facilitate strategic planning across ministry lines for implementing and resourcing the church’s shared mission priority together.

Evaluation of the Mission First! initiative, both as church-wide mission discernment and as a governance model, will include review of the Mission Gatherings, the experience of the Administrative Committee functioning as General Board (or Governance Board in the new model) and the effectiveness of the Mission Council in determining mission and charting a direction for implementing mission together. The OGMP and Moderator team propose that another biennium of experience with the model is needed in order to write the proper new rules and Design changes.

Thanks to the Mission First Implementation Team (Lonora Graves, chair, Mark Anderson, Denise Bell, Lynnette Li, John Mobley, Cathy Nichols, Bernice Rivera, Tony Rodriguez) for their creativity and guidance in the Mission Gathering process. Thanks to the Mission Council Planning Group (LaTaunya Bynum, Gilberto Collazo, Ron Degges, Rebecca Hale, Bill Spangler-Dunning, Paul Tche, Cathy Myers Wirt) for planning a truly inspirational Mission Council.

Racist Language Audit
The report of the Racist Language Audit Task Force, Sandhya Jha, chair, is one of the most significant documents of the Church in recent years. OGMP senior staff has reviewed the report and proposed a timeline of response. Communication is ongoing with the various ministries who will have the opportunity to respond to recommendations in the report. (GB-16-0977)

Governance Committee of the General Board
The Governance Committee is working on three major issues: Removing Congregations from the Yearbook for Cause or Inactivity (forwarded by the College of Regional Ministers), issues arising from the Racist Language Audit of Governance Documents (resulting from General Assembly resolution GA-1328), concerns of the Hispanic Ministries Board (raised in a letter to the General Board in January 2015). Changes to the Design or other governance documents resulting from the Mission First! initiative will be their focus in the next period.
Transitions and Travel
The GMP’s role with regional transitions was particularly active in this period as one fourth of the regions are in some phase of leadership transition, including four regional ministers retiring at once – the most anyone can remember at one time. Attendance at the National Convocation Biennial Session, the Hispanic Assembly and the NAPAD Convocation along with the National Youth Event and the World Council of Churches Central Committee in Trondheim, Norway, made for a busy summer 2016, followed by the fall regional assembly season.

General Assembly
The OGMP General Assembly team meets regularly to plan for all areas of the assembly. Planning for worship, education, communications and logistics are all on schedule. The local arrangements committee, led by Dale Pellman is well staffed and ready to welcome visitors from around the world to the Indiana region.

We are pleased to share that our early registration numbers are outpacing the last three assemblies. The new registration system is helping to make registration less cumbersome and requires less staff time to manage. We currently have 433 registrations. Here are some of the demographics of those registered:

Total Registered as of 1/17/17  433

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Count</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seminarian</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Age</td>
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<tr>
<td>Young Adult</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth</td>
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Race:
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<tr>
<td>Asian American</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multi-racial</td>
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<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Ethnicities</td>
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Ministerial Status:
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<tr>
<td>Lay / Non-Clergy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ordained</td>
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<tr>
<td>Visiting Clergy</td>
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Age:
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Registrants</th>
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<td>Under 40</td>
<td>56</td>
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<tr>
<td>40 – 49</td>
<td>73</td>
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<tr>
<td>50 – 59</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60+</td>
<td>218 (oldest registrant is 95)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Various task forces created by business items at the 2015 General Assembly have been meeting and will present business items to the 2017 general assembly.
Communication Ministries

Over the last year, Communication Ministries was engaged in the following activities most often partnering with or facilitating collaboration among ministries – especially the general ministries of the church:

**Mission First! Furthering the priority of the Church “to be … the Good News” with a passion for justice.**
Managing communication: weekly prayer prompts, monthly updates, Mission Gathering reports including some translation, social media and special reporting after Mission Council meeting; staff served on implementation team to assist with data gathering, etc. Production of video.

**GMP Search Committee Furthering the priority of the Church to be pro-reconciling and build true community**
Assisting with distribution of communications and translations including survey material Drafting an introduction plan for nominee in coordination with search committee

**Websites Furthering the priority of the Church to build true community and share in justice**
Completed in-house facelift of disciplesmissionfund.org and centerforfaithandgiving.org Ga.disciples.org 2017 theme launched in June 2016; registration live July 2016 Continued support for missionfirst.disciples.org and other ministry websites

**Reconciliation Ministry Furthering community and sharing of resources**
Assisted with communication during absence of Reconciliation Ministry executive Collaboratively managed production of Reconciliation Ministry special offering materials

**Communicator Forum Furthering community and sharing of resources across ministries**
Collaboration on new introductory videos for 15 ministries for disciples.org and for use at the 2017 General Assembly; Collaborate with Chalice Press and other ministries for Annual Planning Guide and online calendar

**General Assembly Furthering the Church’s priority of true community and a passion for justice**
Implementation of communication plan: social media, paper mailings, electronic newsletters and advertising Promotional materials on the website include video, PowerPoint, worship materials and logos for download

**Other activities** Monitoring and posting in social media Producing the *Disciples News Service* (weekly, general audience) and *Disciples Together* (pastors, twice a month) e-letters Quarterly meetings in support of National Council of Churches communication staff
Received funding from Oreon E. Scott Foundation for translations of The Design and Standing Rules of the General Assembly are up to date in Spanish, French and Korean.

Disciples Mission Fund *Furthering community through shared mission*
Sent thank-you letters to top givers to Disciples Mission Fund and collaborated on letters enclosed with quarterly reports to congregations
Managed production and distribution of special day offering web presence and printed materials – Easter, Pentecost, Thanksgiving and Christmas.
Convened group of recipients to discuss trends in electronic offering promotions
Attended Christian Church Foundation Development Conference for strategic approaches and networking; met with Center for Faith and Giving to discuss strategy.

**Treasury Services**

OGMP Treasury Services' team has expanded to 7 ½ members. We have partnerships in providing integrated accounting with: (9) entities of OGMP, (6) ministries: Council on Christian Unity, Christian Church Services, National City Christian Church Foundation, College of Regional Ministers, Disciples of Christ Historical Society, and Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries, and (15) regions: Florida, Greater Kansas City, Upper Midwest, Illinois-Wisconsin, Indiana, Kentucky, Northwest, Mid-America, Capital Area, Georgia, Pennsylvania, Central Rocky Mountain, Southwest, Oklahoma, and Great River. The team completed the 2015 audit with new auditors for the first time in 11 years. OGMP TS continues the challenge of fully implementing several pieces of integrated software such as contribution/distribution, credit card/expense/travel, paperless and accounting that started in late 2015.
The Year Book and Directory provides the annual listing of ministries recognized as part of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The Year Book also maintains a listing of those congregations, regions, general ministries, and Disciples’ related organizations and institutions and certifies to the Internal Revenue Service that they are capable of receiving tax deductible contributions.

Each year, the Disciples are augmented by new congregations recognized by their respective regions. In 2016, 17 new congregations were officially recognized. The following are the number of new congregations per region:

- California-Nevada, North: 2
- Canada: 2
- Central Rocky Mountain: 1
- Indiana: 1
- Kansas City, Greater: 1
- Kentucky: 1
- Mid America: 1
- Nebraska: 1
- Northeastern: 1
- Southwest: 5
- Upper Midwest: 1

The Year Book also works with regions to maintain an accurate listing of congregations by acknowledging congregational losses in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). In 2016, 74 congregations were removed from the official list of congregations: 51 congregations were listed as closed, 20 congregations withdrew, 2 congregations had the region withdraw recognition of their status, 1 congregation were removed through the process outlined in GA 9516.

Of the number listed above, 17 were formation congregations. Those congregations were removed from the listing because: 12 closed, 3 withdrew, 2 were removed from regional under care status.

The Year Book also lists ministers with standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). This listing is provided by the Office of Search and Call in Disciples Home Missions. 6,642 ministers were listed with denominational standing.
Christian Church Services (CCS) is the umbrella corporation that coordinates the shared services of the Disciples Center. Since the last assembly, the ministries housed in Disciples Center have settled into their new offices. CCS oversaw the negotiations, build out and relocation of the Disciples Center. Management of the building is now handled by Cushman & Wakefield – a global real estate company. Cushman & Wakefield have dedicated staff with offices in our building to address any questions or concerns. A representative from their staff, typically the Vice President, meets annually with the CCS board to discuss improvements and ongoing projects.

The CCS board is comprised of the general ministry presidents from each ministry housed in the building. The board meets 1-2 times annually to review finances, set and approve budgets, approve holidays and closing dates, and evaluate the management of the building. Rick Reisinger served as board chair for 2015-2016. Todd Adams was elected chair at the December 2016 meeting. Sharon Watkins, General Minister and President continues as President.

The Office of the General Minister and President renewed its contract with CCS for two years. Key leadership is provided by Sharon Coleman for management of the building operations and John Goebel for management of the finances.
Standing Committee
Spring 2017 Report

Our Members: Robin Hedgeman (BFC), Erin Wathen (WFC) [Vice Chair], Eric Farris (WML) [Chair], Sam Ramirez (HMC), Denise Bell (BFC), Ron Degges* (WMC), Gary Kidwell* (WMC), Sharon Watkins* (WFC), Bruce Barkhauer (WMC) [Director]. *Denotes Ex-officio member.

Our Vision: To create a culture of generosity across the life of the whole church.

Our Mission: To encourage and promote the understanding of stewardship as a faith discipline and life practice in response to a generous God.

Our Work: Involves the creation and curation of stewardship related resources for and by the church. This includes educational materials on the biblical and theological underpinnings of stewardship, the teaching of “best practices” relating to congregational and personal financial wellness, the coaching and encouraging of pastors and lay leaders, and the joint sharing of the latest stewardship trends and understandings with our ecumenical partners. Simply put, we teach generosity and the conditions that allow it to flourish.

Notable activity in the last year includes the publication of Community of Prayer (Christian Board of Publication) authored by our Director, Bruce Barkhauer. This book is a 29-day stewardship devotional, designed to accompany readers on a journey toward generosity utilizing a daily encounter with scripture, meditation, and prayer. It will find its most effective use in congregations who use it as a preparation for either an annual or capital financial campaign.

Our annual campaign material “Go and Do the Same” was widely used across the church and new material for 2017 “The Journey to Generosity” is now available. In 2016, the United Church of Christ Office on Stewardship and Philanthropy commissioned an adapted version of “Go and Do the Same”. Sales were brisk and we are negotiating a similar arrangement for 2017.

Stepping Into Stewardship was a joint event with the United Church of Christ in 2016, that brought a tremendous group of stewardship leaders from across the country together for a three-day seminar in Orlando, FL. While the event suffered financially (see our financial report), it was incredibly valuable to those in attendance and significant toward strengthening our partnership with the UCC. A similar event is being planned for Dallas, TX in 2018 under the umbrella of the Ecumenical Stewardship Center. This arrangement should protect us better financially, while furthering our UCC
partnership. More events with the UCC are being planned for 2017 with the CFG as a paid contract resource.

With the awarding of an Oreon E. Scott Grant, the Center for Faith and Giving was able to begin the “Generosity Network” a cadre of leaders who will provide an extension of the Center’s ministry within participating Regions. In 2016 we began the training of 15 leaders from 15 Regions who will comprise the first class of trained stewardship resource agents. We look forward to expanding in the number of participants in 2018 for which we are seeking an additional grant.

The Center is serving as a resource in the execution of several of the national Lilly Grants on Clergy and Finance. Our Director serves as a mentor in the Indiana Region’s Flourish program, and as a presenter for the Pension Fund’s grant in its Lexington Theological Seminary venue. CFG will also resource the Ohio Region’s Lilly Grant, (details pending). This means both exposure for the Center as well as income. The Director also serves on a team engaged with a Lilly funded study on bi-vocational ministry, housed at Lexington Theological Seminary. (This position is without remuneration.)

Director Barkhauer continues to teach graduate studies in stewardship as an adjunct faculty member for Claremont School of Theology, Disciples Seminary Foundation, and Lexington Theological Seminary as well as having been a guest lecturer at Christian Theological Seminary.

The most important work continues to be maintaining a central point of resource curation and access through our website, and via our Director, the building of relationships across the church by providing a workshop leader, preacher, and resource person for stewardship and generosity within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). We have active partnerships with the Christian Church Foundation, Church Extension, Hope Partnership, The Pension Fund, Homeland Ministries, Higher Education and Leadership Ministries, and most of our 32 Regions.
The College of Regional Ministers is made up of the lead staff members of each of the regional churches and the leaders of the three Ethnic Ministries and meets 2-3 times annually for spiritual renewal, mutual encouragement, continuing education, and matters of church oversight and service. On non-General Assembly years, the CRM holds a meeting in the summer which includes the Moderators of each of the regional churches for community building and skill building. The CRM also meets for a meal function at each General Assembly and invites the former members of the CRM and their spouses to the function at a reduced cost to continue the ties of friendship and fellowship within this group of church leaders.

The officers of the CRM, known as the CRMX, meet 6-8 times a year online for business between the formal meetings of the CRM. Officers of the CRM are elected for a two year term of service during the off General Assembly year gathering in the summer.

The funds of the CRM are managed by the OGMP Office. The CRM work is funded through annual dues contributed by the regional churches, invested funds, and regional church budgets through voluntary work done by its members.

One of the challenges/opportunities of the CRM is the high level of turnover in the membership. Six members have served between 21-12 years; eight of the members have served between 9-4 years; ten of the members have served 2 years or less; and seven regions are served by interim ministries. This translates into the reality that half of the CRM has been in position 2 years or less.

Highlights of 2016-2017

- CRM met in April and in August of 2016. Guests from the General Ministries Cabinet were in attendance for a portion of the April meeting. The CRM will meet in 2017 following the General Board meeting February 28-March 2 and again in November for 3 days in Indianapolis. Meetings for 2018 will be set following the March 2017 CRM meeting.
- Approximately half to the CRM attended the Developer’s Conference hosted by Christian Church Foundation in January in California. CCF hosted a track through the conference specifically for the needs of the CRM. Effort was made through scholarship funding to encourage the newer half of the CRM to be in attendance to receive this valuable information.
• John Mobley (Alabama NW Florida) assists in the assigning of CRM senior members to assist Regional Churches in transition of staff. Currently the following regions are in transition: Nebraska, Kansas, Southwest, Florida, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Virginia. Great Rivers Region and Central Rocky were in transition during 2016 and called new Regional Ministers in the past few months. This leaves six regions in interim and one region (Pennsylvania) in a partnership with West Virginia. Coaches for the regions assist General Minister and President, Sharon Watkins, to move through interim and permanent staff selection.

• Ten Regional Ministers represent the CRM on the Mission Council. Eight of the ten attended the December Mission Council meeting in Texas and offered leadership in planning, facilitating, and follow up work from the meeting.

• Ruth Fletcher (Montana) and John Mobley (Alabama NW Florida) represent the CRM on the Administrative Committee.

• The CRM maintains a webpage for the public to learn about their work with a private area for confidential business. The CRM also maintains an active listserv system for fluid and quick communication.

• Susan Gonzales-Dewey (Pacific SW) attended the Moderators August meeting (Forum of Regional Moderators) planned and led by Sotello Long (South Carolina) in order to prepare to lead the 2018 meeting. Susan has initiated, and is encouraging, the networking of the Regional Moderators. The Moderators have elected officers and plan to gather at the 2017 General Assembly.

• LaTaunya Bynum (Northern California Nevada) is conducting a survey among the CRM membership to learn the level of training of each member in the Anti-Racism/Pro-Reconciliation work of the whole church. She will also learn about the structures within the regions that move this work forward. Anti-Racism Training appropriate to the soon to be assessed actual need of the CRM will be offered at the November 2017 meeting and an Anti-Racism Team of the CRM will create a plan for this work moving forward. With so much transition in the CRM in the past 3 years, this work needed to be reframed for the future.

• Twelve of the General Units have at least one Regional Minister on their Board of Directors/Trustees, Regional Ministers serve on all of the Ethnic Ministries boards, Disciples Women Leadership, Reconciliation, Week of Compassion and General Commission on the Ministry. Four Disciples Colleges and six Disciples Seminaries have Regional Ministers on their boards.

Goals moving into 2017-2018 include forming a deep and collegial relationship with the new GMP; increasing skill building opportunities for our membership; reengaging at a deeper level our anti-racism work; and continuing to find ways forward in collaboration with all the ministries of our whole church that we may be a CRM that helps to bind together the work of the whole church and the congregations through mutual relationship, vision and action.
The Disciples Center for Public Witness is doing very well. Our advocacy team is effective, our leadership is engaged, our partnerships are strong, our supporters are invested and generous, our volunteers are talented and committed, and our finances are sufficient to support our two-fold mission: informing, connecting, and empowering Disciples and other people of faith for ecumenical and interfaith justice advocacy in the United States and Canada; and applying to public policy issues and concerns our denomination's passion for justice, our vision of true community, and our commitment to wholeness in a fragmented world.

**Partnership Ministries:** Much of the work of the Center is carried out in partnerships, networks, and coalitions. One of our main partnership ministries is Refugee and Immigration Ministries (RIM), a ministry of Disciples Home Missions (DHM) in partnership with the Center and the Christian Church Capital Area (CCCA). RIM is actively involved in education, action, and advocacy on issues related to the rights of immigrants, refugees, and farm workers. Highlights include: protecting refugee rights in the face of many anti-refugee bills, especially those that seek restrictions based on religion and/or locations from which refugees have come; responding to the crisis of unaccompanied minor children from Central America with, among other things, a prayer vigil outside the White House and a "Shadow Summit" at the same time as the President's official Refugee Summit; supporting the New Sanctuary Movement, highlighting as an example the reception by University Church of Hyde Park (Chicago, IL) of an immigrant facing possible deportation; standing in solidarity with farm workers who seek fairer pay, better working conditions, humane treatment, and recognized representation, primarily those working on farms related to companies that buy and use such products as tomatoes, berries, and tobacco; and working with churches and various faith-based organizations to advocate for more humane and just immigration policies and, especially, to advocate against those policies that tear families apart.

Another partnership ministry is the Ecumenical Poverty Initiative (EPI), a ministry the Center shares with national, state, regional, and local ecumenical groups and various faith-based organizations in the United States. Recent EPI activities include: successfully working with other faith-based organizations to urge all candidates seeking their party's nomination for President of the United States to produce a video sharing with people of faith and the general public their views on poverty; helping shape the
"We Say Enough" campaign in which religious and other community leaders were brought together in virtual mass meetings to discuss the intersection of race and economic justice; engaging churches, clergy, and faith-based advocates in states across the country to take action against payday lending; participating in meetings on Capitol Hill dealing with the potential negative effects on economically vulnerable families and persons by the repeal of the American Care Act; and initiating a sign-on letter about the serious questions and concerns shared by many people of faith about the positions of the incoming Administration on issues of race, poverty, and health care.

Still another example of our partnership ministries is Human Rights Ministries (HRM), a partnership with Disciples Home Missions which focuses on such issues as criminal justice reform, torture, the death penalty, human trafficking, gun violence, and the rights of Native Americans (United States) and First Nations (Canada). Before the 2016 elections, criminal justice reform was making a good deal of progress as a bipartisan effort; but now, with new leadership in the White House and at the Department of Justice, the future of this effort is uncertain. On another front, public and federal government support for the land rights of indigenous peoples has been slowly but surely increasing in both the United States and Canada, often with people of faith taking the lead in promoting this support.

A final example of our partnership ministries is Racial Justice Advocacy, a partnership with Disciples Home Missions and Reconciliation Ministries that works with our ecumenical and interfaith partners to identify, analyze, and eradicate racism, primarily in the United States. One of the projects of this partnership ministry is the formation and staffing of a task force that evaluates and responds to both U.S. public policy and the social witness of our church in light of racial justice as understood in relation to the emphases of Black Lives Matter. This work has become especially crucial in light of the number of persons of color whose deaths have resulted from police action and the increase in the instances of racially motivated intimidation and violence during and since the 2016 elections.

**Partners in Ministry:** Within the denomination, the Center works closely not only with the Office of the General Minister and President, Disciples Home Missions, Reconciliation Ministries, Week of Compassion, and the National Benevolent Association, but also with a number of ministries that deal with specific issue areas that have strong justice advocacy components or implications: these include Disciples Women (human trafficking, violence against women, and paycheck fairness), Family and Children’s Ministries (Family Medical Leave, day care, public education, and children’s nutrition programs), Green Chalice (global warming, wildlife preservation, clean air and water, and national parks and monuments), and the Yakama Mission (the political rights of indigenous persons, the protection of the lands of indigenous peoples, and exposing and countering the harmful effects of the Doctrine of Discovery on our laws and public policies).
Coalitions: The Center also provides Disciples presence at, participation in, and leadership to a large number of coalitions, the main ones being Creation Justice Ministries (climate change, endangered species, public lands, water justice, clean air), Interfaith Worker Justice (wage theft, minimum wage, worker safety, and the right to organize unions), the National Religious Campaign Against Torture (Guantanamo, solitary confinement, violence against Muslims, and torture sanctioned and/or practiced by the United States), the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (the rights of women to full knowledge about and full access to the full range of options and procedures related to reproductive health care), the Coalition Against Religious Discrimination (religious liberty in workplaces and prisons, religion in public schools, and vouchers for religious schools), Kairos Canada (First Nations, migrant justice, gender justice, and creation care), and Citizens for Public Justice (poverty, refugees, and climate change in Canada).

With and through Refugee and Immigration Ministries, the Center also participates in the Interfaith Immigration Coalition (immigration reform and welcome for refugees) and the National Farm Worker Ministry (fairer pay, better working conditions, humane treatment and officially recognized representation for farm workers, primarily on farms producing tomatoes, berries, and tobacco). The Center also participates in and provides leadership to several groups associated with the Washington Interreligious Staff Community: the Health Care Working Group, Domestic Human Needs, the Religious Advocates Working Group on Reproductive Healthcare, and the Heads of Washington Offices.

Ecumenical Gatherings: The Center is a regular participant in two annual ecumenical justice advocacy conferences: the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference, which is becoming the primary social justice network for African American religious leaders and faith-based advocates from communities of color in the US; and Ecumenical Advocacy Days for Global Peace with Justice, which brings to Washington, DC, about a thousand Christian advocates from around the US to worship together, share information through workshops, and advocate about specific justice issues and concerns to their elected representatives on Capitol Hill. At the latter gathering, the Center usually invites other interested Disciples ministries to join with it in planning a special event for Disciples. The Washington office of the United Church of Christ's Justice and Witness Ministries is usually a partner in this planning, and members of the United Church of Christ are invited and encouraged to join with Disciples in this event.

Choosing Issues: In terms of its work on particular issues, the Center works on (1) justice issues and concerns that are grounded in the sense-of-the-assembly resolutions through which the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada speaks to (not for) all Disciples, instructs staff, and allows the world to know which issues concern the Assembly; (2) justice issue areas prioritized by the Justice Table and/or the Center's Board of Governors; and (3) justice issues and concerns authorized by commitments made to ecumenical and interfaith partners by
one or all of the general ministries authorized by the General Assembly officially to carry out and oversee the justice advocacy and social witness of the church: the Office of the General Minister and President, Disciples Home Missions, and the Division of Overseas Ministries.

**Location:** Located primarily at National City Christian Church in Washington, DC, the Center also has space available to it at the regional office of the Christian Church Capital Area in Chevy Chase, MD, Twelfth Street Christian Church in Washington, DC, Park Avenue Christian Church in New York, NY, and the Disciples Center in Indianapolis, IN; and recently, the Center was given office space on the West Coast of the US by the Oakland Peace Center in Oakland, CA. The Center has a presence in Canada through the Disciples Centre for Public Witness in London, Ontario.

**Funding:** The Center is funded by grants from foundations, project grants from other Disciples ministries, financial gifts from congregational partners, and contributions from individual donors. Special funds to provide scholarships for young adults to attend justice advocacy gatherings and events are provided through the Center's Brian P. Adams Justice Education Fund. Financial oversight is provided by both the Center's Board of Governors and the Christian Church Capital Area. Donations to the Disciples Center for Public Witness are received at 8814 Kensington Parkway #208, Chevy Chase, MD, 20815, and online at [www.centersupport.org](http://www.centersupport.org).
The European Evangelistic Society (EES), incorporated in 1946, has now been in existence for 71 years. The Institute for the Study of Christian Origins was established in Tübingen, Germany in the early 1960s. Its purpose is to encourage and guide research in the earliest church and to focus the application of that research on the church today.

The mission of EES in its 71 years of history has not changed. It remains: To develop Christian leaders for significant service through higher learning. The vision of EES is that every nation has effective leaders of disciple-making movements making a global impact on their churches, cultures, and countries for Christ. This vision reflects the common mission priorities of the Disciples of Christ as a movement for wholeness that welcomes all to the Table and fulfills the last command of Jesus: “. . . as you are going, make disciples of all nations, immersing them into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, teaching obedience to all that I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:18-20).

The mission of EES is focused on this concern of leadership development necessary to realize the Four Priorities of the Church as outlined in the 2020 Vision of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). EES views its priorities in terms of developing Christian leaders and future Christian leaders that have unique access to the University, especially international students who are coming in increased numbers. This is done through providing practical assistance, counsel, and hospitality when they arrive on campus in order to establish relationships. Then through prayer, fellowship, and studies as they get more involved.

Through the Institute for the Study of Christian Origins at the University of Tübingen, Germany, EES is actively involved in research supervision and publication. In conjunction with the Protestant faculty, a doctoral colloquium is offered in which international doctoral students have the opportunity for research supervision at a major European University. This mission expresses itself in three primary areas of ministry:

- To develop international leaders for significant service through advanced studies
- To assist emerging leaders in research and publication of relevant national articles, books, and other materials
- To help encourage the establishment and development of churches, colleges, and agencies focused on evangelism and disciple making.
The educational ministry at The Institute for the Study of Christian Origins, led by Director Dr. Beth Langstaff, continues to function alongside Eberhard Karls University in Tübingen, Germany. The Institute maintains its long and productive relationship with the prestigious and influential University. The influence of this ministry has been felt all over the world, as international students have come to the University for academic purposes and have been a part of the Institute. It pursues basic New Testament research, offers colloquia through the academic year, and engages in continuing dialogue with professors and students from around the world.

Courses in Theological German and Theological English are taught at the University with some translation and logistical work. The classes include readings from a variety of Christian authors, in addition to Scripture, all with a view toward deepening relationships with God and others. The colloquia provide good opportunities for probing questions as well as opportunities to meet outside of class for deeper discussions. Increasingly the colloquium is serving international students as well. The position that the Institute has by being part of the University officially gives us a great advantage and status as we develop these ongoing relationships. In order to serve more effectively as Bible college professors, presidents, mission directors, and in other high capacity positions, many from these networks will need the type of advanced preparation that EES can provide. The Institute for the Study of Christian Origins is being positioned to help develop dedicated leaders for significant service throughout Europe, Russia, Central Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and beyond.

**EES Goals:**

- Develop relationships between EES and other universities to help provide access to resources and research opportunities for the growing number of graduate students needing advanced studies.
- Provide more doctoral mentoring, supervision, and opportunities for graduates and others through the EES networks.
- Provide opportunities for
  - Mentoring doctoral students
  - Teaching theological English and theological German to students at Tübingen University
  - Preparing students from Eastern Europe and Central Asia to conduct research, write, and publish quality materials in their own languages
- Continue to conduct the Doctoral Colloquium in conjunction with Protestant Faculty at Tübingen University.

Three events sponsored by the European Evangelistic Society help to fulfill the mission of the EES to stimulate study of early Christianity among scholars so our movement to restore New Testament Christianity can be taken seriously at the highest level.
On the basis of the respect earned by EES, the Institute was able in 2016 to sponsor the first Tübingen Institute International Lectureship series which took place in Ukraine during March. Dr. Bruce Little, who is a Senior Professor of Philosophy at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, traveled 800 miles, had two TV interviews, one newspaper interview, addressed a group of Christian elementary school teachers, and gave lectures at six universities. The lectures were well received and Dr. Little was invited back to every university at which he lectured and he received invitations from other universities that heard he was conducting the lectureship tour. Each lecture was introduced as sponsored by the Institute for the Study of Christian Origins at Tübingen. Lecture topics included: Between Anarchy and Tyranny, The Plausibility of God and Scientific Naturalism, Life and Meaning, The Emergence of the Postmodern Mind, Personal Responsibility as the Guardian of Freedom, The Conflict of Worldviews, and The Foundation of Law and Social Justice.

The 2016 lectureship tour was an excellent beginning for the lectureship series and opened doors for future opportunities. The lectureship series will result in the advancement of the Gospel of Christ through collaborative efforts to expanded regions of the world.

With the help of Tübingen’s New Testament faculty and that of the University of Munich, two symposia with scholars from around the world have been held. A third symposium is planned for 2018. These international gatherings, focusing on our work of developing leaders, serve to encourage us all to take seriously the Great Commission of our Lord and to support with prayers and resources those who are engaged in the work around the world. Our hope is that God will use the symposia to stimulate and encourage His servants everywhere.

The Dean E. Walker Lecture, sponsored by EES, provides an opportunity for thoughtful leaders in the Kingdom of God to present their ideas about what the church ought to be, especially in regard to the idea that Christ prayed that the church might be one. The lectures are given in honor of the life and work of Dean E. Walker and through the years have taken place at the North American Christian Convention, the General Assembly of the Christian Church, and at the World Convention of Churches of Christ. The ideas presented have always been anchored to the idea that in the person of Christ and the record of God’s self-disclosure in Scripture, the church can discover the will of God for the people of God. At times these lectures have been historical reviews of where the Stone-Campbell churches have been and are headed. They regularly have sought to look at those kinds of questions in the context of the consistent witness of God in Scripture and the ever-changing nature of modern culture.

Although EES does not work specifically in any one congregation, it seeks to promote the cause of reconciliation throughout the world by developing leaders who will demonstrate our commitment to the idea of a faithful, growing church that exhibits true community, deep Christian spirituality, and a passion for justice. The work of EES in Germany at the University of Tübingen is truly a multi-cultural community. During 2015,
about 1.1 million migrants (2/3 of these were refugees from Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan) arrived in Germany, most crossing by sea from Turkey – a perilous journey. Almost half a million have applied for asylum. The influx and assimilation of so many refugees have not been easy.

At the same time, the arrival of these refugees is bringing EES staff into direct contact with people from many different backgrounds and from other faiths. A few recent contacts: a conversation with a Syrian Muslim who was observing Ramadan and fasting until sunset; talking in simple German about prayer and fasting in Islam and in Christianity; a conversation with a Syrian refugee who shared photos of his home reduced to rubble and the family members he had left behind; sorting out clothing and shoes for a family of ten; worshiping on Sunday morning with an Afghan family who have been attending the local church.

Here at the Institute in Tübingen, we are praying and considering how we might use our resources to help these refugees and to work together with Tübingen churches to minister to those affected by the violence, and for those who are seeking refuge here.

EES seeks to be an international witness for the Christian gospel in one of the most significant theological settings in the world. In keeping with the original vision of the European Evangelistic Society, the goal is to see churches thriving and flourishing throughout the world by equipping capable leaders to serve.

EES is characterized by a deep and abiding interest in the oneness of the Body of Christ. The original purpose of the organization was to affect a channel through which it might cooperate in accomplishing the divine mission transmitted to the Church through the New Testament, and that its fraternity in this cause should be recognized as a fellowship for advancing the Christian mission. That interest has not changed with the passing of 70 years of ministry. The European Evangelistic Society is one of the few ministries among Stone-Campbell churches that has historically sought to work among all three streams of the American expression of this ideal. For over half a century, the dream of a united Church, bound by its commitment to the New Testament as the revelation of God about the person of Jesus Christ, has been an unchanging focus of our mission.
The General Commission on Ministry [GCOM] of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is composed of up to sixteen members appointed by the General Minister & President in consultation with various constituencies across the life of the church. In odd-numbered years, the General Minister and President may present a slate of members to the General Board for confirmation.

In 2016, the following persons served on the General Commission on Ministry: Cynthia Adcock, pastor, Northwest Christian Church, Columbus, OH; William Almodovar, Interim National Hispanic Pastor; Greg Alexander, Regional Minister, Christian Church in Kentucky; Howard Bowers, Office of General Minister & President, administrative staff; Jinsuk Chun, Executive Pastor of the North American Pacific/Asian Disciples; Ron Degges, DHM President; Ann Dotson, Pastor, First Christian Church, Rowlett, TX; Pam Holt, Regional Minister, Christian Church in Oklahoma; Eugene James, Regional Minister, Christian Church in Michigan; Timothy James, Associate General Minister & Administrative Secretary of the National Convocation; Paxton Jones, Regional Minister, Christian Church in Kansas; Belva Brown Jordan, Assistant Dean, Claremont School of Theology; Sandy Messick, Regional Minister, Northwest Regional Christian Church; Saundra Michael-Bowers, Pension Fund Representative; Holly Miller-Shank, UCC Representative; Rossy Ricart, laywoman, Iglesia Hermandad Cristiana, Indianapolis; Glen Stewart, retired Regional Minister, Nashville, TN; Newell Williams, Seminary Representative [President, Brite Divinity School, Fort Worth, TX]; Tom Yang, pastor, Glenview (IL) Christian Church; and Sharon Watkins, General Minister & President, ex-officio. In addition, Warren Lynn, Director, Office of Christian Vocation, met by invitation with the Search & Call Committee to share information directly related to his work.

During our August 2016 meeting, Rachel Hackenberg represented the UCCs in place of Holly Miller-Shank, who was on sabbatical; Chung Kim, Interim Executive Pastor, represented NAPAD; and Lori Tapia, newly named National Hispanic Pastor, represented the Central Pastoral Office of Hispanic Ministries. New to GCOM this year will be Gene Fisher, representing the Pension Fund, as Saundra Michael-Bowers has retired.

GCOM meets twice per year. In 2016, we met in Indianapolis on February 22-23 and on August 15-16 we met via a series of video conferences. By the time this General Board gathers, GCOM’s first meeting of 2017, January 23-25 in Indianapolis, will have concluded. Although for the past two years our second meeting has been conducted electronically, this year we will meet on August 21-23 in Indianapolis to welcome the new General Minister & President into our midst and orient her/him into our work.

Since GCOM last reported to the General Board, it has addressed the following issues:

1 Although I retired as Regional Minister at the end of 2016, Sharon Watkins asked me to continue as Chairperson until my term ends on 12/31/17 to help with the transition of the new GMP.
• REPORT OF THE TASK FORCE ON ELIMINATING RACIST LANGUAGE FROM GOVERNING DOCUMENTS (GB-16-0977): Created by General Assembly action in 2013, the task force made two observations regarding our Policies and Criteria:
  o For most clergy, ordained or commissioned, there are parallel regional documents that are more specifically pertinent to what happens to those persons. We recommend Regions engage in an audit of their own documents on policies and criteria, looking for ways in which their policies might need to be made more inclusive.
  o In order to be a fully inclusive church, we recommended provision of translation services for those clergy for whom the English language may be challenging. This seems especially important in experiences dealing with Committees on Ministry and questions of ordination or maintenance of standing, both at the regional and general expressions.

GCOM affirmed these recommendations and will work with OGMP and Reconciliation Ministry to provide CRM with resources and criteria by which to audit their regional documents and with CRM, NAPAD and the Central Pastoral Office of Hispanic Ministries to help provide translation services for those clergy and committees who need them.

• CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS: Our UCC counterpart negotiated a renewed contract for Criminal Background Checks with Oxford Document Management on behalf of both denominations. The new contract reflects a minimal increase in cost.

• AMENDMENTS TO TFPCOM: After the Theological Foundations and Policy and Criteria for the Ordering of the Ministry was approved by the 2009 General Assembly, some regions believed that in adopting it as their regional policy it was permissible to amend TFPCOM so long as those amendments did not contradict the original document. This is incorrect. GCOM affirmed that TFPCOM can only be amended by the General Board or General Assembly. Regions may, however, establish additional policies as long as they do not conflict with TFPCOM.

• COLLABORATION WITH CRM: A policy was approved allowing Regional Ministries to use their discretion in submitting Regional Directives for potential candidates from other regions who have never had Standing.

• STANDING FOR CLERGY WHOSE STANDING IS LODGED WITH THE GENERAL COMMISSION ON MINISTRY: Standing was granted in 2016 to 170 clergy serving in general, senior regional, chaplaincy and missionary situations; this number includes 4 UCC General Staff members.

• VETTING OF FILES PERTAINING TO DECEASED CLERGY: The question of whether the permanent files in OCV and Regions of clergy who die should be vetted before being sent to the Disciples of Christ Historical Society was sent to the Disciples general counsel, especially as it pertains to uncensored names and

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2 GA1328.
3 GCOM applied for a grant from the Oreon E. Scott Foundation in order to begin this process for Search & Call documents, but the application was regretfully denied. Other funding options will be sought.
possible liability. Upon advice of Counsel, a policy was approved and will be sent to CRM with the recommendation that each Region adopt and implement it.

- **Completed updates/reviews on:**
  a. GCOM Standing Request Form and letter for 2017
  b. Appeal Process and Misconduct Policies (reviewed annually) —and reattached the *Guidelines for Inter-Regional Cooperation on Matters of Fitness for Ministry* to the latter.

**Future projects:**
  a. Review the *Letter of Call* in the light of UCC’s Covenant and Call documents and the end of Churchwide Health Care
  b. Reiterate where Standing should be lodged for clergy serving both a congregation and a general ministry part-time
  c. Explore ways in which the Core Competency list developed by the Ministry Development Council may be used

As always, we welcome your input, comments, questions, ideas, and concerns.

Respectfully submitted,
Paxton Jones, Chairperson
The National Convocation Board of Trustees is elected by the General Assembly as the Trustees of the National Christian Missionary Convention, Inc. The trustees are basically tasked with the oversight of the assets willed to the National Christian Missionary Convention by Preston Taylor, funds contributed to the Black Disciples Endowment Fund and to offer continued guidance to the Greenwood Cemetery of Nashville, Inc.

NATIONAL CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY CONVENTION:

National Christian Missionary funds are held in investments with the Church Extension Fund and Christian Church Foundation. Expenses related to NCMC operations are paid by the National Convocation which makes NCMC primarily an investment-holding corporation.

The Black Disciples Endowment Fund is owned by the National Christian Missionary Convention. BDEF is purposed to strengthen the ministry of Black Disciples. The BDEF assists in sponsoring the School of Faith and life during the Biennial Session, scholarship funds for Black Disciples and programs for the recruitment and development of leaders.

A portion of the Lillian Merchant Fund held by Christian church Foundation is allocated to the Black Disciples Endowment Fund for the purpose of ministerial recruitment and nurture. The Office of African American Clergy Leadership and Development functions to recruit and nurture prospective ministers and to continue the legacy of training clergy through the Preston Taylor Institute. William L. Lee is director of this office.

Trustees of the National Christian Missionary Convention are: Patricia Penelton, President; Donald K. Gillett, Vice President; Edward Cushingberry, Secretary; Gloria Gilliard, Treasurer; Preston T. Adams, Valildra Berry, Irvin Green, Shannon Dycus, Milton Bowens, Delesslyn Kennebrew and Ken Brooker Langston. Ex-officio trustees are: Sharon E. Watkins, Ronald Degges and Timothy James.
GREENWOOD CEMETERY:

The Greenwood Cemetery of Nashville, Inc. is a nonprofit corporation organized to manage the Greenwood Cemeteries, which are owned by the National Christian Missionary Convention. Under the able leadership of General Manager, Dwayne Bell the cemetery has grown and become more attractive to the citizens of Nashville. The cemetery operates on three sites and efforts are being made to make these settings beautiful and serene, for families to regard these grounds as a comfortable final resting place for loved ones.

Members of the Greenwood Cemetery Board of Directors are: William L. Lee, Chairman; Freddie Lawton, Vice Chairman; Juanita Greene, Treasurer; John Foulkes, Investment Comm. Chair; Dale Braxton, Patricia Penelton, John Tiggle, Beverly Dickason, Jesse Jackson, Ahmed White, Norman Reed and Marvin Owens. Ex-officio officers: Timothy James, Corporate Secretary; Dwayne Bell, General Manager.
National City Christian Church was created to live out Alexander Campbell’s vision to uphold a momentous church facility in the city known for its national and world leaders so that the Gospel of Jesus Christ might be proclaimed. National City Christian Church Foundation is honored to be one of the recognized organizations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada. The Foundation holds in trust the ownership of the church property and its facilities on behalf of the wider church. It is led by a national Board of Trustees and reports to the General Assembly. The Foundation is yoked in partnership with the congregation of National City Christian Church to provide a national facility for worship, study, ministry, and mission in the U.S. capital.

National City Christian Church Foundation exists for the purpose of maintaining the financial and physical assets of the Foundation so that the congregations and/or wider ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) may pursue mission at 5 Thomas Circle. In order to accomplish this, the Foundation shall: preserve and grow the endowment; manage its facilities and property to maximize its use by tenants whose purposes are consistent with the values of the Foundation and its donors; and maintain the facilities in a manner that protects the Foundation’s assets and honors perpetual care agreements.

Richard L. Hamm leads the Foundation as the chairperson of the Board of Trustees. For Dr. Hamm’s institutional knowledge and bold leadership, the Foundation is very grateful. National City Christian Church is appreciative and truly humbled by the remarkable leadership and generous support of the Foundation trustees, congregational leadership, and Disciples from around the world.

The National City Christian Church Foundation, in partnership with the congregation, launched a two-year capital campaign called “Renew and Transform” with the purpose of addressing deferred maintenance and repairs to the facilities. The goal of $800,000 was overwhelming supported and presently $1,025,134 has been raised. The following projects were completed: boiler replacement, Beasley Building roof replacement, air
conditioning repair, security entry system installation, carpet for the Sanctuary and the Beasley Building, courtyard pavers replacement, courtyard fountain repair, portico railings replacement, flat roof of the Sanctuary repair, exterior Sanctuary doors restoration, and the front steps received some much-needed repair to its damaged limestone. The Foundation is grateful to the capital campaign leadership team led by chairperson Kathleen Burger Gerada and consultant James Powell. In conjunction with the capital campaign, the Foundation relaunched the Ambassador program led by Thomas and Kay Jewell of Oklahoma. The 12 Ambassadors have been commissioned to share with other Disciples information about this unique national witness in the U.S. capital.

Presently the Board of Trustees is in the midst of a discernment process concerning the 63-year-old education building that was formerly occupied by a public charter school. The Board is presently working with a developer and hopes to complete the sale in 2017.

The Foundation is grateful to Senior Minister Stephen W. Gentle, the staff, and congregational leadership that is engaged in ministry and mission in the Washington, D.C. area. The congregation has completed its five-year strategic plan. In the last five years, 110 new members have joined the congregation. Over 550 new individuals have come to one of the worship services for the very first time, with a majority of those guests returning for worship. A Disciples 101 class was launched for new members, along with the classes called Spiritual Practices 101 and Disciples Church History 101. Significant connections were made each week with young professionals, persons within the LGBT communities, and multicultural families – the congregation’s three top demographics for outreach. The new congregational bylaws are in place as it right-sized the congregational governance board and established the ministry partnership for coordinated congregational program planning. Many lay persons have invested themselves in the volunteerism of the congregation, donating significant portions of their time to staffing the front desk, the food pantry, yard work and gardening, cleaning the sanctuary, counting money and maintaining financial records, development work, and hospitality at music events, to name just a few areas.

In addition, the facilities of National City Christian Church continued to be a gathering place in the U.S. capital for Disciples of Christ and ecumenical partners. Some gatherings and events in the past two years have included:

- Higher Education and Leadership Ministries (HELM) Fellows annual training; Disciples Home Missions Board of Directors meeting; United Nations Youth Conference of the Ohio region, Moral Revival Poor People’s Campaign teach-in led by William J. Barber II

- Partnering with the Christian Church Capital Area, National City hosted a region-wide leadership training event called “Salt and Light” and the 2017 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. worship service with CTS Professor Frank Thomas preaching.

- Hundreds of young people “bunked” down at National City to experience a life-changing trip to Washington, D.C., including 475 youth from the summer program called Team Effort, the Christian Church in Kansas, the University of Massachusetts spring break, First Christian Church of Salem, Pfeiffer University fall break, Trinity United Methodist Church, and Howard University.

- Offices and meeting spaces are provided by the Foundation for Disciples Center for Public Witness, Disciples Home Missions’ Refugee and Immigration Ministries, and the Ecumenical Poverty Initiative. The Oscar Haynes exhibit of the Disciples of Christ Historical Society will be dedicated in November, 2017, as a display that is shared between National City and the Disciples of Christ Historical Society, Bethany, West Virginia.

- National City hosted several musical events, including weekly Friday organ concerts for the community and quarterly two-day Heritage Festival choral adjudication events for high school groups from across the U.S. Music groups from around the District also performed in the sanctuary: the 120-voice Congressional Chorus, Washington Sinfonietta, Fessenden Chamber Ensemble, Heritage Signature Chorale, Thomas Circle Singers, and the newly formed National Children’s Chorus, which is also housed at National City.

- National City opened its doors to share with many of its neighbors: 10,000 bags of food were distributed to those who were hungry; hundreds of persons were welcomed with hospitality and face-painting at the church booth at Capital Pride; and many neighborhood pet owners and their canine companions joined in the annual blessing of the animals on the portico steps. Several of National City’s unique ministries continued to thrive and grow, including the Hispanic congregation, the young adult ministry (YADA), the LGBTQ Fellowship, and the community children’s playgroup.
- Minister of Music J. Michael McMahon prepared worship materials for the Sunday before the 2017 U.S. Presidential Inauguration and were made available to Disciples congregations and ecumenical partners for their worship experiences in January.

- Church Historian Peter M. Morgan and Videographer John Scott Williams created a four-part educational DVD on the history of National City Christian Church in the context of the Stone-Campbell movement. Copies of the DVD may be obtained by contacting Office Manager Colleen Walsh at cwalsh@nationalcitycc.org.

As a multiracial/multicultural, bilingual, open and affirming congregation, National City Christian Church enjoys welcoming and worshiping with Disciples from all around the world every Sunday. National City is your church in the U.S. capital. Tours of these facilities are available during the week upon request. All are invited to learn more about this unique Disciples witness by browsing to www.nationalcitycc.org or visiting in person your Disciples facility in the U.S. capital.
April G. Johnson  
Minister of Reconciliation  

**Mission Statement:** Reconciliation Ministry advances the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)’s journey toward wholeness by empowering each expression of the Church to implement structural change to address historic fractures caused by racism and the systems that perpetuate it.

**Context:**

The United States continues to grapple with the tragic killings of unarmed men of color by police officers since our last reporting period in 2015. As well, the end of this year was marked by divisive rhetoric during the 2016 election cycle effecting an uptick in hate crimes and religious intolerance. The months of July and September of 2016 were particularly egregious due to the frequency in which events were occurring. Protesters took to the streets, again which helped raise awareness of the need for intentional and transparent efforts toward racial justice for families and the communities we serve. Disciples offered responses through statements from the College of Regional Ministers and Moderators to the Church. Reconciliation Ministry responded faithfully through the following highlights:

**Ministry Highlights –**

- New guidelines for grants to Reconciliation Ministry were approved and distributed via the Reconciliation Ministry web page. The changes to the guidelines include incentives for Regions with multiple congregations working together to address structural racism through community organizing are now eligible to submit proposals to General Reconciliation Ministry.

- The Minister of Reconciliation served as consultant to two Regional Boards in their efforts to draft resolutions that called for Anti-Racism training as a requirement for clergy standing as well as promote regional leadership participation in the regularized anti-racism training events. Both, Georgia and Indiana Regions approved their resolutions.

- In collaboration with ministry partners of Week of Compassion, National Benevolent Association and Disciple Justice Action Network, Reconciliation Ministry accompanied the Regions of North Carolina and Oklahoma in their responses to the recent shooting deaths and associated demonstrations to listen
as well as to provide pastoral and mental health presence in Charlotte, North Carolina and Tulsa, Oklahoma.

- Final recommendations from the Task Force on Eliminating Racist Language from Governing Documents were received in April of this year. The findings of the Task Force rendered the conclusion that the language used in our documents was not overtly racist or exclusionary. When viewed as behavioral documents, however, evidence of perpetuating racism became evident. From the recommendation document: “Most importantly, it is important to remember that our choices as a church are not between being racist and being non-racist. On their face, our foundational documents do not by and large include explicit and obvious racism. Our choices are between being racist and being anti-racist. Insofar as our documents are not explicit in their commitment to anti-racism, they uphold racism (race prejudice + misuse of power by systems and institutions). Insofar as our documents center whiteness or treat whiteness as normative and treat communities of color as additional to the rest of the church, they uphold racism. Insofar as our documents are not explicit in their accountability to anti-racist communities of color, they uphold racism. As a church committed to serving all of God’s children, this is the project our task force set out to address.”

- Training in the introduction and the analysis of racism continues to increase in capacity and demand. As the Church navigates significant transition in Executive leadership in the College as well as the General Cabinet, new trainers have been recruited and cultivated in the regions of Pacific Southwest as well as Oregon and Southwest Idaho. To meet the continual needs for contextualization as well as increased Regional needs for leader development, our Core Trainers have shifted their roles to coaching and training new facilitators of the one-day introductory module of anti-racism training.

January 2017
The United Christian Missionary Society continued to furnish financial support for the Division of Homeland Ministries, dba Disciples Home Missions (DHM), and the Division of Overseas Ministries (DOM), by investing and managing its endowment and permanent funds for the benefit of the two Divisions.

During 2016, there was no gift annuity released. There was no life income agreement income to report. When gift annuities or life income agreements are released, the funds are either distributed outright to DHM and DOM or added to the permanent endowments of the Society depending on the beneficiary designation. The Society did not receive any restricted bequests.

The Society continued to be involved with ethical issues which related to its investments and was active with the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility (ICCR). ICCR is an ecumenical organization of 17 Protestant denominations and approximately 200 Roman Catholic orders which cooperate concerning ethical and social concerns as expressed by actions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

The Society, which has eight trustees and four officers, has no active employees. Beginning in 1993, the Society contracted with the Christian Church Foundation, Inc. to perform the treasury services for the Society. The current officers of the Society are as follows: Julia Brown Karimu, President; Ronald J. Degges, Vice President; Kathy Watts, Corporate Secretary, and Lonna Owens, Treasurer. Four trustees are nominated by each of the two Divisions served by the Society. They are elected by the General Board of the church and serve a term of four years. Their responsibilities are to oversee and determine policies concerning the investments of assets owned by the Society. The protection as well as the income realized from these assets is of paramount concern for the trustees. Their invaluable service is recognized and this report is submitted on their behalf.

The Society distributed the following from the investment pool in 2015:
DHM - $674,139; DOM - $953,277; other entities - $53,872.

The Society distributed the following from the investment pool in 2016:
DHM - $725,604; DOM - $1,024,104; other entities - $57,924.
Week of Compassion—the relief, refugee, and development mission fund of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)—continues to serve and respond faithfully to human need and suffering in North America and around the world. By offering hope, compassion, and healing to individuals and communities in need on behalf of the entire church, Week of Compassion’s ministry is one of the expressions of wholeness in a fragmented world.

Through Week of Compassion, the church is present with families and communities when they are affected by natural or human made disasters. Many of these disasters range in scale, from small floods to an entire country devastated by a major hurricane, such as we saw in Haiti last year. No matter what the disaster is and no matter which communities are affected, Week of Compassion is well positioned to respond quickly and compassionately through our church and ecumenical partners to meet the immediate and long-term needs of the people and their communities.

In recent years, we have witnessed unprecedented levels of global displacement generating more frequent and drastic crises, especially as the civil war in Syria continues to worsen. In this past year alone, the world witnessed the tremendous rise in the global migration and refugee crisis, where the number of displaced people worldwide in 2016 reached the highest level in human history, surpassing the number of displaced people after World War II. The international community’s response is becoming increasingly inadequate, as there does not seem to be a foreseeable end in sight to these conflicts and wars. The crises we face today represent a challenge to both the human rights of displaced people, migrants and refugees, and to international norms and standards. As such, Week of Compassion focused our tremendous resources on three geographical areas of refugee conflict in 2016: The Middle East, especially inside Syria and the surrounding refugee camps in Jordan, Iraq, and Syria; Tanzania, where Burundian refugees are fleeing conflict and facing increasingly dire living conditions due to inadequate facilities to host the refugee families; and Eastern Europe, through which refugees from the Middle East are migrating. Together with Global Ministries and Disciples Home Mission’s Refugee and Immigration Ministries, and our partners at Church World Service and ACT Alliance, we have prioritized our efforts to reduce vulnerability at all stages of movement, including emigration from a conflict area, entry into asylum countries and resettlement in safe countries.

While migration is not a new occurrence in the world, at this particular moment in time more people than ever before are leaving their homes under severe circumstances, compelled by the destruction and severity of drought, floods, famine, and extreme violence. All hoping to find refuge elsewhere. As Christians, our calling has always
been to welcome strangers and to offer a place of refuge and a safe haven. Week of Compassion accompanies many of our displaced sisters and brothers through our partners for the long journey.

In North America, many floods and storms affected communities across the United States and Canada. In May of 2016, a wildfire began southwest of Fort McMurray, Alberta, Canada, and destroyed close to 2,500 homes and buildings, forcing the largest wildfire evacuation in Alberta’s history. Week of Compassion partnered with the United Church of Canada to meet the long-term recovery needs for individuals and families impacted by the wildfire.

Week of Compassion was also present in Louisiana, West Virginia, the Carolinas, and many other communities when major floods took place this past year. We continue to work with local congregations to provide solidarity grants to families impacted by the floods and remain partnered with Disciples Volunteering at Disciples Home Missions for long-term recovery efforts. By working with Church of the Brethren, we are also able to provide spiritual and emotional support to children through the Children Disaster’s Services. In addition, we continue to work closely with the United Church of Christ and the Church of the Brethren to support the Disciples Response Support Initiative (DRSI) to assist local communities in holistic recovery after a disaster. The DRSI models support, mentor, and encourage the development of local Long Term Recovery Groups through the sustained on-site presence of a Disaster Recovery Support Team (DRST), consisting of a Case Management Specialist, a Volunteer Construction Specialist, and a LTRG Group Formation Specialist.

Week of Compassion is committed to walking with communities through sustainable development programs to help communities become resilient and sustainable. Our partner at Prosperity Catalyst has been implementing income-generating business for women in Haiti, and particularly in Iraq where the cultural tradition does not allow women to work. These businesses, such as bread baking and high-end candle making, are a way to help women support their families and community, giving them more protection and a powerful voice within their daily living to make impactful change.

As of the end of November 2016, Week of Compassion’s undesignated giving totaled $1,725,061—a slight increase of 0.3% from the prior year. Designated giving remained strong at $540,237—an increase of 23.8% from prior year. Income from Week of Compassion’s endowment program and other funds in the Christian Church Foundation equaled $116,847 at the end of November 2016, an increase from $87,692 from November 2015.

Week of Compassion is able to respond locally and globally on behalf of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada because of the generous support that comes from our congregations and individuals. Such generosity puts our compassion into action throughout the year around the globe. As we work together through this life-saving ministry, we serve as a vital, visible sign of our witness to Christ in the world, so that we can bring healing, reconciliation, and wholeness in a fragmented world.
WORLD CONVENTION
(CHRISTIAN - CHURCHES OF CHRIST - DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)

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2016 REPORT

In 2016, God blessed the two-fold mission of World Convention—to encourage fellowship, understanding, and common purpose within the Christian-Churches of Christ-Disciples of Christ global family of churches and to relate them to the whole Church for the sake of unity in Christ Jesus.

This two-fold global mission supports the mission of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) “to be and to share the Good News of Jesus Christ, witnessing, loving and serving from our doorsteps “to the ends of the earth.”

World Convention related our churches to other Christians in many ways in 2016. The most notable was participation in Joint Catholic-Lutheran Commemoration of the Reformation, held in Lund, Sweden on October 31. This joint worship service begins a year of remembrance leading to the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation on October 31, 2017. In this anniversary year, Catholics and Lutherans hope this common commemoration under the theme of “From Conflict to Communion” will “affirm the common conviction that there is more that unites than that which divides us.”

World Convention represented the Stone-Campbell Movement at this historic service since its theme of Christian unity is at the heart of the mission statement of World Convention:

**In Christ, all are reconciled to God and to each other, and in the Spirit, God calls us to proclaim this good news throughout the world. World Convention (Christian-Churches of Christ-Disciples of Christ) embodies and encourages fellowship, understanding, and common purpose within this global family of churches and relates them to the whole Church for the sake of unity in Christ Jesus.**

In relating World Convention to the whole Church at the Lund meeting, we also were living out our heritage as Stone-Campbell Christians, since both Campbell and Stone saw their work as continuing and enhancing the Reformation with its emphasis on Scripture. They also often spoke of their work as “catholic,” that is, reflecting what the whole church has always believed.
For more on the meeting in Lund, see https://www.lutheranworld.org/news/press-release-rediscovering-who-we-are-christ or https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=plK6zNHP_0

However, most of the work of World Convention in 2016 was in encouraging fellowship, understanding, and common purpose within the Christian-Churches of Christ-Disciples of Christ global family of churches, connecting these churches everywhere every day.

Every few years World Convention holds a Global Gathering. Gatherings bring together people from the ‘Stone-Campbell’ family of Churches (Christian – Churches of Christ – Disciples) from around the world. The Gatherings focus on meaningful worship (including outstanding preaching and inspirational music), learning (with study of significant themes), contemporary evangelism (Bader Lectures) and global fellowship. Our New Delhi Gathering, January 12-15, 2017, will be our first in Asia. In 2016, much of the work of World Convention was in preparing for the Gathering in India.

The General Board has reviewed GA-1701 from the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Including the Office of General Minister and President. The report is submitted to the General Assembly for presentation and discussion. No action is required. (Discussion time: 12 minutes)