Disciples Women’s Ministries is a conduit for diverse connections empowering each woman to find her voice and live out her call. 

Disciples Women’s Ministries continues to work in close covenant with Disciples Home Missions working together in joint efforts to protect refugees and immigrants from becoming vulnerable to human trafficking as well as keeping families united through the process. We partner with Refugee and Immigration Ministries and Children and Youth Ministries to share resources to help us all be more cost efficient. The ministries work together in our anti-racism/pro-reconciliation efforts and training and numerous other efforts.

We continue our Woman-to-Woman Worldwide (W2WW) journey to our global partners each year. W2WW is a program in partnership with Global Ministries who provides partnership with area executives who have built relationships with global partners and help prepare delegations for what they will encounter during journeys. We select countries based partly on the current and upcoming initiatives established by Global Ministries. In 2016, a delegation journeyed to Ghana and South Africa. In 2017, the delegation will visit India in preparation for the upcoming initiative.

Disciples Women and the published resource, Just Women Magazine, select an annual theme. This year the theme is Freedom: Promise and Struggle and the global study focuses on South Africa. Next year the theme will be God’s Purpose and Calling. This resource has undergone a number of changes including a new editor, designer and publisher as well as also being published as an e-resource. A new section, "Connections", has been added to provide a place for women across the DOC to connect to one another. We continue to seek cost effective ways to provide this resource in Spanish. Additionally, we are planning a new volume of Wisdom of Women hoping to work with the leaders of NAPAD.

We are currently testing an Iphone app to keep women connected to Disciples Women’s Ministry and each other. This will allow us to share information with those who choose to download the app.

After the retirement of our long-time ministry associate in February we chose to change the position to a half-time position and called Elizabeth Clough. We are working to accomplish the goals of our ministry now with 2 half-time support staff. We are currently in partnership with HELM who employs Ms. Clough half-time as well to provide her full-time employment while helping both ministries control expenses.

Both the Executive Director and the Program Director lead and participate in a number of events with congregational, regional, general and ecumenical connections providing keynoting, preaching, teaching, guidance, or other resources as requested.

The Executive Committee of Disciples Women has requested that interregional gatherings held every four years be expanded beyond leaders and potential leaders to include a wider group of women so
more connections can be made and stronger networks built. We continue to develop DWConnect which is a vehicle to get a better understanding of what the current and future needs are of women in the DOC by pairing women well-versed in Disciples Women’s Ministry with those who are unfamiliar with the ministry.

The program staff will be trained through the Disciples Development Conference and a Lilly seminar on the spirituality of fundraising to find ways to sustain the ministry financially. Blessing Box giving, like DMF, continues to decrease.

We are currently evaluating changes to the structure of the Executive Committee rotating team members at different dates rather than replacing entire team and having a difficult learning curve.

Our program director, Chesla Nickelson, continues to update and improve the Leader Apprentice Program (LAP) to continue to provide leadership training for women of color. Past graduates are now serving at all levels of the Disciples church.

Disciples Women continue to contribute to the whole mission of the church through their ministries and giving. Funding for Disciples Women’s Ministry is through a portion of what Disciples Home Missions receives from Disciples Mission Fund and through a portion of the giving through Blessing Boxes. These funds are budgeted and administered by the Disciples Women Executive Committee.

Respectfully,

Pat Donahoo

Patricia A. Donahoo
Executive Director, Disciples Women

The General Board has reviewed GA-1709 from Disciples Women. The report is submitted to the General Assembly for presentation and discussion. No action is required. (Discussion time: 12 minutes)