

GA-1909

DISCIPLES WOMEN OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)

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Report to 2019 General Board and General Assembly

Disciples Women's Ministries is a conduit for diverse connections empowering each woman to find her voice and live out her call. Micah 6:8

Disciples Women are serving in ministry in various capacities. Women continue to try new ways of doing ministry and of being Disciples Women groups. Both the Executive Director and Program Director have keynoted, preached, led workshops, led international journeys, marched, served with, and/or gathered in conversation with regional women's groups, justice groups, congregations general ministry partners, general cabinets, interregionals, trainings, Obra Hispana assembly, NAPAD assembly, National Convocation Assembly, regional assemblies and observances, ecumenical colleagues, Christian Theological Seminary, and both have attended training in the Executive Certificate in Religious Fundraising training offered by Lilly and the Lake Institute. I attended a conference in Kupang, Indonesia in partnership with Global Ministries with churches and partners in the region faced with the challenges of widespread Human Trafficking issues.

We continue in close covenant with Disciples Home Missions and continue in anti-racism/pro-reconciliation efforts and training. We have a healthy partnership with HELM in sharing Lisa Hubbard as a Ministry Associate to provide full-time employment for her while handling both of our support needs.

Our Woman-to-Woman Worldwide (W2WW) program facilitates journeys to visit our global partners each year. In partnership with Global Ministries we prepare delegations for what they will encounter during journeys through study, training, and conversation. Since the last General Assembly, we have led delegations to India and Cuba in partnership and cooperation with Global Ministries and Global Ministries Initiatives. Next year the delegation will be going to Morocco followed by a journey to Southern Asia in 2020 as part of the new global ministry initiative focused there. Among other projects, last year's delegation to India was excited and moved by the work being done to fight trafficking especially for the most vulnerable. The delegation was excited to fund a project that would provide training and support for 7-10 women to begin their own business to provide for their families and keep them safe from the dangers of poverty and trafficking. The \$6,000 goal was reached through the generosity and enthusiasm of Disciples Women in the US and Canada.

In its 10th year of publication, *Just Women Magazine*, the designated resource for Disciples Women has begun to publish the Bible study annually. The theme for 2019 is "The Church: Mission Possible". Due to low subscriptions we discontinued the quarterly publication and are working to find ways to continue to communicate regularly with Disciples women across the continent. We have published our first e-newsletter and share information regularly through our app.

Because of generous donors to the Disciples Women Endowment Fund we offer grants twice a year for new and creative ministries by Disciples Women for the benefit of Disciples Women. This is an opportunity to support innovative ideas that need a bit of seed money to begin or to support those serving in new ways that benefit women's ministries.

Disciples Women continues to use #DWConnect as a means of better understanding the value of shared stories, resources, and concerns. Recognizing the strength of being connected to one another helps to provide for the needs of women throughout the United States and Canada. We will also be providing finger labyrinths to General Assembly attendees to encourage the development of spiritual disciplines and will label each with the woman's name, congregation, and location to celebrate that Disciples women are serving in ministry far and wide.

New members for the Executive Committee began their terms in 2019. This is our first time with a President-Elect and staggered terms for members. We are excited about the help this will be in continuity of leadership.

Chesla Nickelson, program director and merger staff, 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. We are currently in the process of developing a similar program that will focus on young women, middle and high school age, to include not only leadership training but also financial responsibility, and body and personal agency. Chesla is also working on new volumes of our Wisdom of Women by interviewing women leaders to capture and share their wisdom.

Disciples Women have been invited to participate in the UN's Commission on the Status of Women in 2019. Both the Executive Director and Program Director as well as the IDWM President will be part of the delegation.

Disciples Women continue to contribute to the whole mission of the church through their ministries and giving. We appreciate the covenant with DHM that continues to share funding from DMF. With our current funding we are unable to do the breadth of ministry we are called to do. We continue to explore ways to improve it. We have established a legacy fund in hopes that we can inspire women to participate in the ministry by remembering Disciples Women in their estate planning as well as provide gifts to an endowment fund to support the ministry into the future. We will be celebrating our 145th 'birthday' in 2019 and are hoping to celebrate it by encouraging Disciples to celebrate by giving monetary gifts to the ministry.

Respectfully,

Pat Donahoo

Patricia A. Donahoo
Executive Director, Disciples Women

Recommended Action

The General Board receives this report from Disciples Women and forwards it to the 2019 General Assembly for consideration and discussion.