

The Great River Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)



Regional Office
4724 Hillcrest Avenue
Little Rock, AR 72205
Local 501.562.6053
Fax 501-562-7089
grrdisciples.org

Regional Board
Executive Committee
Robert Palmer, Moderator
John Johnson, Vice Moderator
C. Shawn Allen, Recording Secretary
June Vander Molen, Treasurer
Ryan Pfeiffer, RCOM Chair

Executive Regional Minister
Rev. Dr. Nadine Burton
dmburton@grrdisciples.org

Regional Church Administrator
Disciples Women Coordinator
Currents Editor
Wendy Paquette
wendy@grrdisciples.org

Regional Youth & Young Adult
Pastor
Rev. Kaycee Young
youth@grrdisciples.org

Pinnacle Outreach Ministry
Miles Cook, Director
milescook@outlook.com

Christian Church Foundation
Bobby Hawley
Marilyn Fiddmont
P.O. Box 100686
Ft. Worth, Texas 76185
(817) 923-0422

November 21, 2019

U.S. Congressmen and Senators:

We send you greetings on behalf of the Regional Board of the Great River Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) from Mississippi, Louisiana and Arkansas. We are 106 churches strong that are part of denomination of more than 3,800 in the United States and Canada. We write with concern on our hearts about the immigration crisis across our region and country. We want to begin by sharing two important portions of Scripture. ***“For the Lord your God...executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing. Love the sojourner therefore; for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt.”*** (Deuteronomy 10:17-19) Jesus said, ***“Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs.”*** (Matthew 19:14)

Our hearts grieve the deaths of children on the U.S.-Mexico border and in detention facilities while in U.S. custody which are at odds with our call to welcome. We urge the release of immigrant children and adults held captive within our land in detention holding centers reported in recent weeks by the Office of Inspector General to have “issues of dangerous overcrowding” and sub-standard hygiene requiring “corrective action...critical to the immediate health and safety needs of detainees.” We are appalled by the “prolonged detention of children and adults,” despite regulations aimed to ensure children are housed only in sanitary conditions, are released without unnecessary delay, and would be placed in the least restrictive conditions.

Closer to home we are confronted by the action of the ICE on Wednesday August 7, 2019 as they raided seven distinct chicken packing plants in Mississippi. They arrested 680 employees that once again separated families. During these same raids not one employer was detained in the efforts to send a message of deterrence to the immigrant community.

Because we believe that love can transcend every cultural divide, we join with ecumenical and interfaith partners to urge all persons seeking asylum be granted full due process and opportunities to pursue protections as guaranteed by national and international laws. We confess US foreign policies have contributed to exploitation of Central American countries and created root conditions that encourage persons to migrate.

We urge our elected officials to join us in solidarity to defend the sojourner and their families. We understand that the immigrations system is broken and must be fixed. We call upon both Democrats and Republicans to pass broad-based policies that make a route towards citizenship for all concerned. While we wait for this process to culminate in a positive solution for all people, we request that human

dignity be respected by ICE, the Border Agents along with the Homeland Security staff. In this critical moment, aware that our “ancestor Jacob was a wandering Aramean who went to live as a foreigner in Egypt...but...became a large and mighty nation” (Deuteronomy 26:5, NLT), we seek to faithfully assume our responsibilities to care for the sojourner. For we remember Jesus’ words that “as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me” (Matthew 25:40).

Sincerely,

Rev. Dr. Nadine Burton
Executive Regional Minister

Rev. Robert Palmer
Great River Region CC (DOC) Moderator

Pastor C. Shawn Allen
First Christian Church, Slidell, LA

John Johnson
E. Percy Street Christian Church, Greenwood, MS

Gina Anthon
First Christian Church, Hammond, LA

Carole Montgomery
Covenant Christian Church, Byram, MS

Ryan Brooks
First Christian church, Rogers, AR

Rev. Ryan Pfeiffer
First Christian Church, Fayetteville, AR

Rev. Miles Cook
Park Hill Christian Church, North Little Rock, AR

Rev. Rita Richardson
Central Christian Church, Russellville, AR

Megan Craven, DVM
First Christian Church, Gulfport, MS

Rev. Paul Seal
Highland Christian Church, Bella Vista, AR

Pastor Rufus Edwards
Christian Chapel Church, Port Gibson, MS

June Vander Molen
First Christian, Greater New Orleans, Metairie, LA

Rev. Jason Ferguson
All Souls Church, Scott, AR

Rev. Dr. Charles Wallace
First Christian Church, Little Rock, AR

Ruby Howard
Bethel Christian Church, Coila, MS

Rev. Linda White
Park Hill Christian Church, North Little Rock, AR