



Currents

A publication of the Great River Region of the Christian Church (DOC)

March 23, 2020

Great River Region, 4724 Hillcrest Avenue,
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From the Desk of Rev. Dr. Burton

Read my General Board Report [here](#)

"Bless the Lord O My Soul,
and all that is within me,
bless his holy name. Bless
the Lord O my soul and
forget not all his benefits;
who forgives all your
iniquities, and who heals
all your diseases; who
redeems your life from the
pit, who crowns you with
lovingkindness and tender
mercies. (Psalm 103:1-3)."

During my quiet time, I was reminded that God is bigger than Coronavirus. Now is the time for us to trust God and each other, to use the moments that we have been given wisely, to sit in God's presence, and be humble in our thinking and actions. Richard Foster, in *"Celebration of Discipline,"* also reminds us that we have a portable, inner sanctuary, within our hearts. This portable sanctuary does not stay in the church building when we leave on Sunday. It goes with us - the Spirit of the living God. Wherever we go, the Spirit of God is with us. As we practice social distancing and worship in our homes, I encourage you to tap into your inner sanctuary. Be open to alternative ways to connect as the Church. The building is good, but during these times, we have what we need on the inside to carry us forward.

Our Disciples Covenant binds us to God and one another, even at a distance. This Covenant calls us to lean in, stand firm in our faith, and remember the one to whom we belong. So now is not the time to quit, give up, or fear what will happen in the future. I encourage you to be the Church in Covenant during this time!

What's Happening Around the Region

We started 2020 with a wonderful transition! Two new staff people, Kristen Beach and Teonicka Russell, bring a wealth of gifts to the Great River Region. Our ministries are functioning well. Our Regional Elders are shepherding pastors and their families. Our RCOM Team met with seven candidates; two were approved for Ordination (Vince Endris, Pastor, FCC, Lake Charles, LA, and Claudell Wilson, Assistant Pastor, Rose Hill CC, Lorman, MS). Our Women's Ministry Cabinet is planning for workshops and our fall retreat. Our Disciples men are gearing up for two Men's retreat soon. Jarrett Banks is on the ground in Covington, LA, in the new church planter role.

The Regional Board recently met in Shreveport LA at Kings Highway CC. We are making plans for Regional Assembly, "*Keep the Main Thing...The Main Thing*" the first weekend in November 2020. We are considering a new Vision and Mission Statement. As you recall, we have a GRR Future Story and values that drive our ministry together. You can check them out on the website and give us your feedback. I am encouraged that we are financially strong, debt-free, and monitoring our budget (You know I will squeeze a dime out of a budget)! The Coronavirus may halt some of our plans, but be encouraged and open to do something different in the future.



Kristen Beach
Ministry Program Coordinator



Teonicka Russell
Administrative Assistant

Dare to Stand in Your Suffering

I really want to encourage you not to despair, not to lose faith, not to let go of God in your life, but stand in your suffering as a person who believes that she is deeply loved by God. When you look inside yourself, you might sometimes be overwhelmed by all the brokenness and confusion, but when you look outside toward him who died on the cross for you, you might suddenly realize that your brokenness has been lived through for you long before you touched it yourself.

Suffering is a period in your life in which true faith can emerge, a naked faith, a faith that comes to life in the midst of great pain. The grain, indeed, has to die in order to bear fruit and when you dare to stand in your suffering, your life will bear fruit in ways that are far beyond your own predications or understanding. . . . Spend some time each morning doing nothing but simply sitting in the presence of God and saying the Jesus Prayer. Gradually, God will enter your heart in a new way and bring new light into your struggle.

-Henry Nouwen

Response from the General Minister and President About Coronavirus

Hi all,

Week of Compassion is serving as an emergency response ministry in this time of Coronavirus. Please do contact them if you have reported cases in congregations so that they can provide any needed logistical or financial assistance.

-Rev. Teresa "Terri" Hord Owens



Rev. Teresa "Terri" Hord Owens

Disciples ministries respond to the coronavirus: A statement of compassion

"As a church body we need to pray. Pray for those infected by the coronavirus in China and around the world, for those who care for them, for health specialists and authorities who are combatting the spread of infection, and of course for all who at this time are feeling anxious," offers Linda Manns, a parish nurse at Loudon Avenue Christian Church in Roanoke, VA. [National Benevolent Association](#), [Week of Compassion](#) and the [Office of General Minister and President](#) offer [this statement](#) to the whole Church followed by some useful links to a variety of resources.



Resources for Congregational Safety and care to the Church

- ❖ [CDC Get Your Faith Based Organization Ready for COVID 19](#)
- ❖ [Protocol for the National Benevolent Association \(Staff Procedures\)](#)
- ❖ [10 Ideas for Church Financial Leaders Amid the COVID-19 Crisis](#)
- ❖ [A \(tech\) idea: Set up a free Zoom account for video conferencing and let your friends know when you'll be hanging out to chat](#)
- ❖ [How to set up Livestreaming for Worship](#)
- ❖ [Taking Care of Your Mental Health in the Face of Uncertainty](#)

Rev. Dwight Bailey

By David Chisham- FCC Baton Rouge

In my sermon this past Sunday I told the story of a pastor I met last week. His name is Rev. Dwight Bailey, and he is a retired pastor living in Shreveport, and a member of the King's Highway Christian Church. As I said in my sermon several months ago while attending a meeting in Mississippi, Rev. Bailey had a bad fall and suffered a "C6 incomplete spinal fracture". That injury is as bad as it sounds: presently Rev. Bailey is paralyzed from the neck down.

Our Regional Minister, Rev. Nadine Burton, also invites us to send donations to help offset some of the medical expenses. Rev. Bailey will need a custom wheelchair that he can control with whatever limited movement he has, and that wheel chair will cost around 20,000. Beyond that are so many out of pocket expenses. For this reason, Rev. Burton has started a Go-Fund-Me campaign: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/rev-dwight-bailey>. So far, a little over \$20,000 of the \$50,000 goal has been raised. If you are able to give, please know your generosity will be appreciated.



Rev. Dwight Bailey at the Willis Knighton Progressive Care Center

Excellence in Ministry (EIM) Program

By Rev. Matthew Rosine (Executive Director of Programs- Pension Fund of the Christian Church)

Pension Fund is again receiving applications from across the U.S. and Canada for the **Excellence in Ministry (EIM)** program. This program, funded in part by Lilly Endowment, strengthens the ministry of our most outstanding early-career pastors by providing them training in financial literacy and a grant to reduce financial stress. The grant is \$10,000 and can be used to pay down educational debt, start an emergency fund or save for retirement. The literacy education is provided by Pension Fund and financial partners and includes seminars in both personal and congregational finance. This will be the 5th year of the program and so far, 80 of our Church's pastors have benefited from the EIM program.



To be eligible to apply, pastors should be:

- serving a paid position in congregational ministry (does not need to be senior pastor)
- in their first five years since ordination or commissioning
- credentialed Disciples of Christ with standing in the region (ordained or commissioned)
- committed to attend the learning event with their spouse (all expenses paid) on August 6-8, 2020

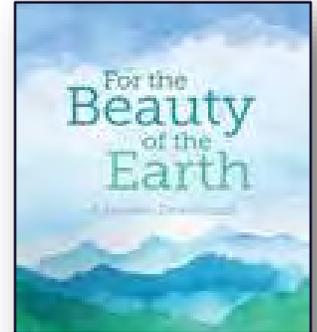
Potential applicants can read more about the program and **apply by April 30, 2020** at www.pensionfund.org/eim.



A Lenten Devotional

By Rob Robuck

As we enter Lent, we explore how our faith is connected to Creation care in "*For the Beauty of the Earth: A Lenten Devotional*," which is a new nature-themed daily devotional by Leah Schade. Each devotion includes a Lenten scripture, a brief reflection, and a set of questions to ponder, or a spiritual practice to try. As you undertake this sacred journey through Lent, may this resource from Chalice Press help you grow. You may purchase this devotional for \$5.99 and other resources at <https://chalicepress.com/>. Bulk pricing available for churches.



Priorities for 2020

- Caring for pastors and leaders during the Coronavirus Social Distancing
- Mission and Vision Statement Development
- Regional Assembly Planning, November 6-8, 2020, FCC Fort Smith Arkansas
- Monitoring 2020 Budget
- Boundary Training Development

Search and Call

The following is a list of all congregations engaged in the search process:

- Kings Highway CC, Shreveport, LA
- FCC Greater New Orleans, Metairie LA
- FCC, Harrison, AR
- FCC, Leesville, LA
- FCC, Little Roc, AR
- FCC Fort Smith, AR

Upcoming Meetings

- MCMC Board Meeting; March 28-29, 2020
- Clergy Coronavirus Meeting; April 1 at 6 p.m.
- RCOM; June 1-2, 2020; October 6-7, 2020

Business of the Region

Click [here](#) for the Great River Region February 2020 Financial Statement

Great River Region Giving as of February 2020:

- Disciples Mission Fun giving is down 11.7%
- Christmas Offering down 8.7%
- Designated for Operating is up 16.0%
- Budget Deficit - (-\$31,307)

Regional Board Update

Regional Board meetings are scheduled for June 26-27, 2020(via Zoom Conference); August 21-22, 2020 in Little Rock, AR

Snoasis 2020



Great River Region Youth

Youth Commission (GRRYC) Overview

The Great River Region Youth Commission is comprised of a group of Youth called to be role models among their peers; modeling their faith and willingness to serve.

It is an opportunity for spiritual growth and leadership development in conjunction with personal growth. Commissioners plan and implement youth activities during GRR events. Commissioners also contribute to GRR Board Meeting updates.

All Youth Commission applicants for the school years 2020-2021 must submit the specified documents to the GRR Office no later than March 29th, 2020.

Download the application [here](#).

WHAT: The Magnolia Camp and Conference Click [here](#) for
WHERE: Roosevelt State Park, Morton, MS the registration

WHEN: June 15-20, 2020

WHY: To Have an Encounter with God through Exploring Bible Scriptures,
Praise Dancing, Drama, Crafts, Story-Telling, Hands-on-Explorations

WHO: 3rd through 12th Graders

Disciples Crossing Camp Dates 2020

May 22-24	Family Camp
May 29-31	Grand Camp
June 1-6	Adventure Camp
June 5-7	Discovery Camp
June 8-13	ChiRho Camp
June 15-20	CYF Conference
June 21-27	8'ers Camp
June 29-July 3	JYF 1
July 20-24	Camp Create
Aug 3- 7	JYF 2

(Disciples Crossing) For fees and registration click [here](#)

Parents may contact Mrs. Josie McClorine's Cell phone at 601-415-1762 or an adult sponsor from your home congregation. Parents please send your Health Insurance Information to camp with your child.

Disciples Women 2020 Events

SAVE THE DATE
DISCIPLES WOMEN
RETREAT
SEPTEMBER 18-20, 2020



1500 Raymond Lake Road
Raymond, MS 39154
Phone: 601-857-7100
FAX: 601-857-372

Keynote Speaker
To be announced

"Come Sit by Me at the Table"

1 Corinthians 11:13 and Romans 12:16 - "Live in harmony with one another."

Disciples Men 2020 Events



July 10-12, 2020
Texas Christian University
www.sessions.life/2020
Click [here](#) for more
information on how to
register

Mid America Men's Retreat
May 1-3, 2020; Please contact
Charles Curtis at 601-885-2355
or by email
(charlesnancycrt@aol.com)