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The Oldtimers' Grapevine, Volume 25 (November 2015 - November 2016)

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The Oldtimers GRAPEVINE

November, 2015— April, 2016

Volume 25, Issue 1

A LETTER FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT



There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven. Ecclesiastes 3: 1 (NIV)

Beloved Grapevine Readers,

As seasons change from winter to spring - we release the old and prepare for new beginnings, new hope, and new opportunities...

Over the years, the Grapevine has been blessed with excellent board members, whose dynamic leadership has made this publication the best it can be. Rev. Dr. Cynthia Hale, a longstanding and faithful board member has recently expressed her intention to resign from the board. We know from Ecclesiastes that there is a season for every activity under heaven. Our Sister in Christ Cynthia has let us know that her season for service on the Grapevine Board is over. It has been a good and fruitful “season” and we will remain cognizant of her legacy and spirit. It is with great gratitude and some sadness that we accept her resignation. We will always consider her a true friend of the Grapevine and we know she is no more than a phone call away from our plea for help. We wish her Godspeed as she continues her exceptional ministry at the local and national levels.

There is no way we can “replace” Sister Cynthia, however we will move forward to recruit new leadership for the Grapevine Board. We consider it a privilege and a pleasure to produce this Newsletter. Moreover, we are confident that we will attract the leader-

ship this Newsletter needs to carry on the proud Grapevine tradition. New beginnings.... New hope... New opportunities....

Your Sister in Christ,

Norma Ellington-Twitty, Ph.D., Board President

MLK AND THE PULPIT'S LOST POWER

By Dan Carpenter

From dream and mountaintop to nightmare and crash to earth.

From harmonious music of the black church to somber strains of mourning over dashed ideals.

When politicians, preachers and pundits line up to pay tribute to the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. on this holiday, they'll focus in their various ways on what he had to say to a nation in need of re-examination and renewal.

They'll pay too little attention to how he said it.

King's soaring superlatives, irresistible rhythms, controlled fervor and deft mixture of formal, biblical and plain country speech cast him with America's greatest orators. Indeed, when it comes to rhetoric alone, the champion of equality may not have an equal. But how important is that gift, in the social and historical scheme of things?

I asked two eminent students of King's language who come from different worlds – an African-American professor at Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis and a scholar who runs diversity and equality programs – in Sweden.

Frank Thomas, professor of homiletics (the art of preaching) and Director of the Academy of Preaching and Celebration at CTS, says the power of King's verbal genius can't be overestimated, because it bridged the religious folk vernacular of the black South and the lingo of white liberals so poetically as to create a national conversation.

Just as important, and unhappily, a shift in his speaking style and substance near the end of his life sig-

naled grave doubt as to how far that conversation could go.

“His early speeches were jeremiads [prolonged lamentations or complaints], expressing the view that America’s problems were grounded in the inability to follow America’s values,” Thomas says. “The pinnacle for many people is the I Have a Dream speech of 1963; but I argue that the speech at the end of the Selma march in 1965 was his most hopeful. It was the last time his speeches would be picked up live across the nation. It was the zenith.

“But then, in 1967, came Beyond Vietnam, in which he said the problems of America were not in failure to live up to its values, but lay in the very structure of the society – the so-called triplets of materialism, racism, militarism.”

Thomas, who wrote his doctoral dissertation on King’s speeches post-1967, adds that the style differences follow the change of heart and mind. Selma rolls famously with Scripture-driven exultation – “Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord” – and electrifies the crowd with the refrain “How long? Not long!” The Vietnam speech – “We must speak with all the humility that is

appropriate to our limited vision, but we must speak” – is grim by comparison. And less ecclesiastical. The hope isn’t gone, but it is bestowed on the oppressed people of the world and no longer on the U.S. as their beacon.

King’s music was never of the easy listening variety, Fredrik Sunnemark points out. An associate professor of the history of ideas, he directs the Centre for Studies of Diversity, Equality and Integration at University West in Sweden. In 2003, he published an analysis of King’s rhetoric through Indiana Press, and it was entitled *Ring Out Freedom!: The Voice of Martin Luther King Jr. and the Making of the Civil Rights Movement*.

“King was not a comforter and much more attention should be given to the challenging nature of his rhetoric rather than as a historical source of goodness,” Sunnemark says. King’s words, he adds, “are of course often understood as very important difference-makers in American history as such, not only in the U.S. but also in the rest of the world. He is that kind of figure and his rhetoric is known and understood also in this sense. But what is sometimes forgotten is the critical, acute political situations they were uttered in and constructed in relation to. In this context, his speeches and sermons become fundamentally political and parts of a historical event and should be understood in relation to it. They are

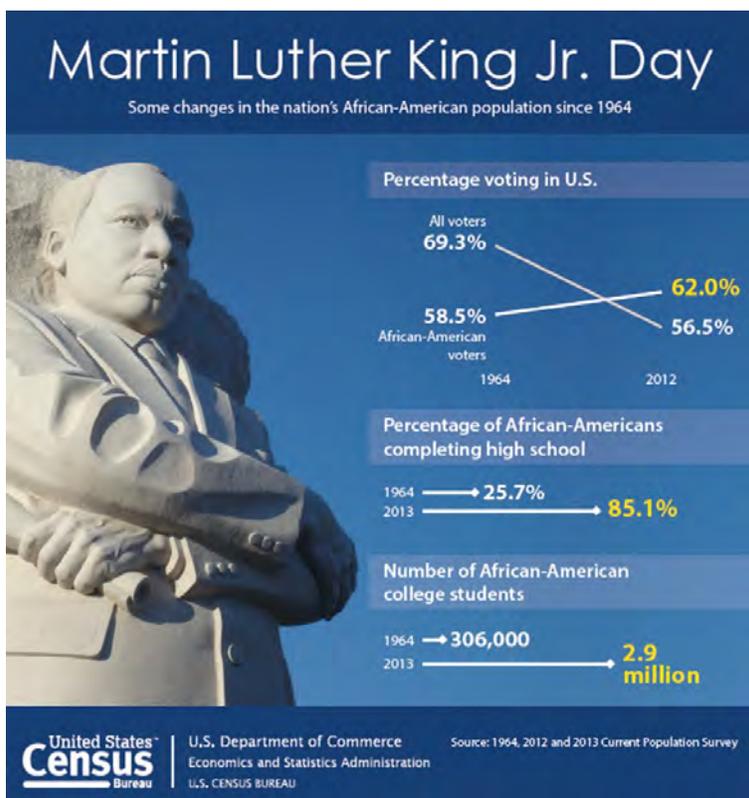
not just general words, it is not just general rhetoric – it is words and rhetoric that were parts of a struggle and deeply imbedded in the strivings of a movement at the core concerned with change.”

In a nation still polarized, nearly a half century later, around the issues King confronted, is there a successor at the tall pulpit he occupied? Barack Obama with his church-steeped eloquence on such occasions as the memorial service for the mass shooting victims in Charleston, South Carolina, may be the closest we’ll get. But Thomas and Sunnemark note that

Obama’s office – and the inference that his election made America “post-racial” – limit his role and rhetoric as a prophet of change.

Thomas traces King’s oratorical legacy into the Obama era in his book *American Dream 2.0: A Christian Way Out of the Great Recession*. There is a larger and more ominous question now, he says. Young African-Americans, living with police brutality and other vestiges of King’s day, aren’t up for uplift from anybody.

“There’s a tiredness of trying to get across to whites. They will accept help in their struggle, but they are not doing moral suasion anymore,” says Thomas. “And they’re also not looking for a charismatic leader. When he is assassinated, the movement dies.”



CTS OFFERS WORLD'S FIRST PHD IN AFRICAN AMERICAN PREACHING AND SACRED RHETORIC



Christian Theological Seminary (CTS) announced approval of its PhD in African American Preaching and Sacred Rhetoric by the Association of Theological Schools, CTS' accrediting body. This approval opens the door for classes to begin in January 2017.

The new PhD program will focus on the special role that preaching has in the African American community, viewing it as an art form, a force for social change, and an area overdue for further academic study.

"For people of color, the man or woman in the pulpit is often the heart and face of the community," said Rev. Dr. Frank A. Thomas, the Nettie Sweeney and Hugh Th. Miller Professor of Homiletics at CTS and Director of the Academy of Preaching and Celebration. "That is a unique role that carries a unique responsibility, and we want to prepare men and women with both the scholarship and practical understanding of preaching to be worthy of that call."

CTS believes the new program also has relevance for the whole church and Christianity worldwide. "One of the goals of PhD program is that the African American preaching tradition becomes an equal partner in homiletical discussions, both in the American context and the global homiletical community, especially the Global South," added Thomas. "The African American preaching tradition as an equal partner with Euro-American, Latino/Latina, Korean and other preaching methodologies has the potential to ignite a preaching renaissance in the U.S. that could lead to a revival of American Christianity in the 21st century."

To that end, the program will differ slightly from traditional PhD programs by emphasizing the training of "practitioner-scholars" rather than exclusively developing full-time, tenure-track professors, Thomas said. It is expected that graduates of the program will continue to engage in scholarship but will also actively participate in ministry.

"We expect these students to discern a deeper understanding of their own call, to contribute to the

understanding of the pulpit's place in African American culture, to teach, and to strengthen the life and witness of a congregation," said Thomas. He is an international authority on African American preaching and author of the influential book *They Like to Never Quit Praisin' God: The Role of Celebration in Preaching* and *Preaching With Sacred Fire: An Anthology of African American Sermons, 1750 to the Present*. He led the effort to develop the PhD at CTS.

Dr. Matthew Myer Boulton, President of CTS, said, "African American preaching is an American treasure, and the time has come for it to be honored and advanced by a dedicated PhD program. CTS is proud to be the first institution of higher education to acknowledge and fill that gap — and we couldn't have done it without the leadership of Dr. Frank Thomas."

SEATTLE CHURCH INITIATES AFFORDABLE HOUSING EFFORT

BY MAGGIE HUBBARD

On Dec. 9, University Christian Church (DOC) of Seattle witnessed a significant turning point in the dream to provide affordable housing in their community; a dream that has been part of this congregation for over 20 years.

Below is the announcement that was sent out by the UCC Housing Development Committee: "Today, the UCC affordable housing project for low wage individuals and families, and homeless families, reached a long awaited milestone. This morning Mayor Ed Murray announced the Seattle Office of Housing list of funded projects for 2015 from the main lounge of the church building."

Fall 2015 held three important milestones for the project. In October, the Master Use Permit comment period ended without challenge, and the decision was published. In November, the King County Office of Housing awarded the project a \$400,000 grant. In December, the Seattle Office of Housing funded the UCC project at the requested amount of nearly \$6,610,000.

In the fall, University Christian Church will prepare for the building of a 133 unit housing project that will serve as affordable housing for singles and families as well as 40 units that will be reserved for people who are transitioning away from homelessness.

"This housing project not only reflects the congregation's passion for justice but also their continued care for serving their neighbors with love. As their current pastor, I am excited to be part of this faith community as they continue on this important journey," said Rev. Adam Harmon.



ed in Pro-Reconciliation/ Anti-Racism training, spent time building covenant with each other, and focused our energies in active listening and engagement. We established a timeline that will take us from writing the position description through interviews and final recommendation of our denomination's spiritual leader and Chief Executive Officer.

The implementation team for Mission First! has been hard at work throughout October and November refining the design for the mission gatherings which will take place across the United States and Canada in 2016. Subgroups have been working on worship, questions, data gathering techniques and other logistics. They have also run several test gatherings - at Disciples Center and in two congregations - to find the best ways to approach the work.

Generally, the mission gathering will go something like this: after an introduction to a few key concepts and a short time of worship, small groups will talk about their experiences of mission with a designated facilitator. They will identify possible areas of focus in mission for Disciples today. The small groups will share their thoughts with the larger group. The responses will be recorded and added to the feedback from all the mission gatherings.

In December of 2016 a Mission Council will meet to surface common themes from the Mission Gathering input. The Mission Council will identify a shared focus in mission for Disciples today - something Disciples can become known for. As the various ministries of the Church collaborate around the key focus area or areas, Disciples will make a difference.

Meanwhile, the Administrative Committee of the General Board is functioning as a prototype for a Governing Board to do the business of the Church in mission. The General Board meeting in 2017 will propose the way forward after this pilot.

UPDATE: SEARCH FOR THE NEXT GENERAL MINISTER AND PRESIDENT JANUARY 2016

Progress: In this first communication, we are pleased to inform you that the General Minister and President (GMP) Search Committee of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) has been approved by the General Board. With a sense of humbleness and gratitude for being called to this important task, the committee met from Jan. 15-17 in Dallas, Texas to begin the search process. During this two-day meeting, we prayed with each other for God's guidance, participat-



Communication: It is important that we engage everyone in the church. Everyone - from the folks in the pews through the General Church. With this communication, we invite you to walk this journey with us. We have established a GMP Search Committee informational page which will serve as a way for you to communicate your thoughts and ideas with us. A questionnaire will be provided to solicit your input and we will be sending updates throughout our process. If you would like to take part in this questionnaire and receive updates, please sign up.

Request for prayer: Finally, in recognition of the central role God plays in our process, we have committed to be in prayer with each other on Wednesdays, sometime between the hours of 6 and 10 am. Regardless of where we are physically located, this prayer time will spiritually bond us. We invite you to join us in this prayer life.

General Assembly task forces working through the biennium

Most folks recognize that the staff of the general Church continues working beyond each general assembly, but there are also dozens of volunteers who are working behind the scenes. Moderators, board members and task force members are meeting now to bring proposals forward that will affect the life and work of the Church for years to come. Three task forces directly addressing meetings of the General Assembly have begun their work.

Just and Ethical Meeting Locations [GA 1537](#)

This task force was called for during the 2015 General Assembly in Columbus. Its charge is to outline justice-related parameters for locating Church-sponsored meetings of more than 25 individuals. While there has always been a preference for "green" facilities, etc., the issue came in stark relief when, in 2015, the General Board voted to move the 2017 General Assembly in response to a discriminatory bill passed by the Indiana legislature. When the legislature "fixed" the legislation, the General Board decided to re-choose Indianapolis for the 2017 meeting.

Future of the General Assembly [GA 1532](#)

Changing cultural patterns and technology, cost considerations and the need for face-to-face connections - these issues and more have bubbled to the surface during the last several years, particularly related to the General Assembly. How can Disciples effectively maintain relationship and steward our resources well while doing God's work in the world?

Social Witness (resolutions) [GA 1524](#)

How can we impact the culture around us on matters of faith with statements and action without causing pain and division within our congregations? Since the inception of [The Design](#) about 50 years ago (and before) the Church has used "resolutions" from the General Assembly to speak to the issues of the day. Efforts to move issues into study and reflection have had mixed results. Current parameters are included in the [Special Rules of Procedure](#) for the General Assembly.

2016 Remind & Renew featured Barber, Watkins

By Phillips Theological Seminary staff

Rev. Dr. William Barber II and Rev. Dr. Sharon Watkins embrace at the Remind & Renew conference as Phillips Theological President Gary Peluso-Verdend looks on. The event was held at First Christian in Tulsa, OK.

The church and people of faith have a great responsibility for engaging the conversation about race in the United States, according to speakers at the [2016 Remind & Renew](#) conference. (Audio of all speakers available on [website](#).)

"What would happen if we all got together?" asked the Rev. Dr. William Barber, II. "What if we put away this puny language about 'left versus right' and started talking about what's just?"

Point-by-point, Barber connected decades-long policies of federal, state and local governments that cut funding for public services, including education and health care, to deep seated efforts to maintain control by a white majority. He said when justice-seeking people come together, change will happen.

"The Christian Church is primed to be that voice because we believe that everybody is invited to the table," Barber said.

"The same people fighting Medicaid expansion and the same people fighting health care for women and the same people fighting the LGBT community and the same people fighting labor rights and the same people fighting public education, the same people fighting voter participation, are the same people. They're like the Sadducees and Pharisees," said Barber, pastor of Greenleaf Christian Church in Goldsboro, North Carolina and founder of the Moral Monday movement and NAACP North Carolina president.

More than 230 people attended the two-day event at Phillips Seminary in Tulsa, Okla. The speakers were asked to address the question, "What is the conversation about race Christians in the U.S. should be having, and how might that conversation contribute to liberty and justice for all?"

During a public keynote address Jan. 13, The Rev. Dr. Sharon Watkins, General Minister and President of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), said, "After a decade of anti-racism work... we know that racism is race prejudice plus the misuse of power by institutions and individuals to the benefit of white people."

"We selected the topic for the 2016 Remind & Renew gathering to stoke the conversation about race Christians should be having. The racially charged tragedies in late 2014 and 2015 which preceded the conference have, tragically, continued, which made the conference even more timely and urgent," said Gary Peluso-Verdend, president of Phillips Seminary.



CANADA NAMES NEW REGIONAL MINISTER



The Christian Church in Canada welcomes the Rev. Dr. Jen Garbin as the new regional minister. Garbin will begin June 1, 2016. She comes from her current position as senior pastor of one of Canada's new congregations in formation, Sugarbush Christian Church (DOC), located in Guelph, Ontario.

Garbin has served on area and regional boards and committees as well as the General

Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada. She is actively involved in the Ontario Area's camping program and OCYF as a director and adult advisor. Ordained 10 years ago, Garbin has served congregations in Nova Scotia and Ontario. She earned her MDiv and DMin from Emmanuel College (Toronto School of Theology, University of Toronto).

Garbin says, "I'm a total church nerd and I believe whole-heartedly that although the church in Canada is changing, we are on the edge of something incredible, an opportunity to not only transform the world around us, but be ourselves transformed."

Garbin is married to Gianni Garbin and they have two children, Rita and Victor.

TENNESSEE NAMES NEW REGIONAL MINISTER

Rev. Dr. Christal LaShawn Williams was elected regional minister for Tennessee at a called assembly April 16. Williams has held positions such as associate regional minister in Illinois-Wisconsin. She has also served in Illinois, Iowa, Ohio and Indiana. She will begin her term on Aug. 1.



A native of Cleveland, Ohio, Williams earned her bachelor's degree from Jarvis Christian College in Hawkins, TX. She earned her MDiv from Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis and doctor of ministry degree from the United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio.

Williams is the founder of Credo International Women's Ministries and A.W.O.K.E. (Anointed Women Overseeing Kingdom Endeavors) and is the author of three books. She is a proud member of Delta Sigma Theta sorority.

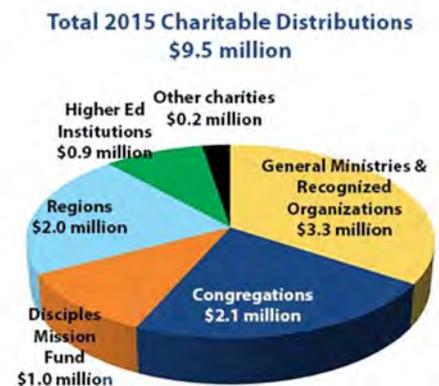
Currently, Williams serves as the president of the Disciple Women Leadership Council of the Christian Church, Wisconsin Council of Churches and a member of the Board of Trustees of Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis.

FOUNDATION DISTRIBUTES RECORD \$9.5 MILLION

A record \$9.5 million was distributed to Disciples-related ministries and other charities in 2015 from permanent funds and other donor-directed gifts held at the Christian Church Foundation. In 2014, \$8.4 million was distributed.

Gary Kidwell, Foundation president, also reports the Foundation received \$8.7 million in new permanent fund gifts in 2015 – another record.

"This is a sign of hope as people who love the church provide the resources through legacy gifts to support the future ministries of congregations, regions, general ministries and other Disciples-related witnesses," he said. "It is an honor for the Foundation to be entrusted with these gifts and to stand in the donors' shoes in perpetuity."



ECONOMIC CHALLENGES FACING PASTORAL LEADERS GRANT

Pension Fund of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Inc., has received a grant of \$1 million as part of Lilly Endowment Inc.'s National Initiative to Address Economic Challenges Facing Pastoral Leaders. The initiative supports a variety of religious organizations across the nation as they address the financial and economic struggles that can impair the ability of pastors to lead congregations effectively.

Pension Fund's Endowment grant will fund the launch of an "Excellence in Ministry" pilot program intended to alleviate financial stresses that impede pastoral leadership of clergy and congregations they serve. In partnership with Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) seminaries, regional ministries and related institutions, the Excellence in Ministry program will offer financial literacy events to clergy, spouses, congregational leaders and seminarians. A limited number of financial relief grants will also be made available for select program participants. Program details continue to be finalized and will be made available in months following via Pension Fund's website.

"The Excellence in Ministry program aligns with Pension Fund's mission and long history of serving those in ministry both spiritually and financially," said James P. Hamlett, President of Pension Fund. "We hope to relate to a new generation of ministers at a time of their greatest financial need."

"Pastors, especially those just beginning in ministry, accept low salaries as part of their commitment to God and to church. Many enter ministry with significant debt from their undergraduate and seminary years and often have little financial resiliency when financial emergencies arise," said Dr. Christopher L. Coble, vice president for religion at the Endowment. "These organizations understand the importance of the financial wellbeing of pastors and the implications for the congregations they serve."

FROM RON DEGGS, PRESIDENT OF DHM

Si enim comprehendis, non est Deus

I learned the meaning of the above saying early in my ministry and so was released from trivial theological and personal pursuits that would amount to nothing. I think this is a pretty good place to begin as a minister: If you have grasped something, whatever it is that you have

grasped, you can be sure that it is not God. The saying is attributed to Saint Augustine of Hippo [354-430 CE]. God is beyond our grasping, finding, re-finding. God is above our understanding. God is not to be had.

Way back in the 1970's Tom Wolfe coined the phrase, "The Me Generation." It referred to the baby boomer generation and the genesis of the Yuppie movement or 'Young Urban Professionals.' It was later popularized by writer, Christopher Lasch, as a generation focused on creating a culture of narcissism. Concepts like self-realization and self-fulfillment became commonplace and the self-help aisle at book stores became the most trafficked. The notion that a strong 'I' and 'Me' would create a strong 'We,' flourished. Unfortunately, the stronger the 'I's' and 'Me's' became, less attention was paid to the 'We's' of community life. Individual fulfillment, accomplishment, and promise became the hallmarks of the good life. During this time seeds were planted which have led to the erosion of communal and congregational life.

Evolving out of this 'Me Generation' mentality was the concept that bigger is better. Many smaller congregations came to view their ministries as less significant than the ministries of larger congregations, setting into motion a sense of congregational inferiority. Meanwhile, large mega churches with star studded pastors were claiming the day as the new religious alternative. Even though the mega church phenomena is still with us, many of the mega churches have boarded up their doors and gone away.

The lesson for me is that the church is all tied up with God. When will we ever learn that we are not at the center of things? God is. And it is God who pursues us, touches our hearts and minds, inspires us to better living, forgives us our sins, and leads us in the way of eternal life. One of the leaders in my former parish used to regularly remind the congregation that it is all about God and not about us. If we can get this one thing right, then regardless of our congregation's size, our pastor's appeal, our budget, or our desire to do it all on our own, God might just have God's day with the church.

I am sure of one thing: If the church has grasped something, whatever it is that it has grasped, you can be sure that it is not God. Instead of grasping, let us set God loose in our congregations. We just might be surprised at what God can do!

Ungrasping-ly yours,



National Convocation 24th Biennial Session



July 21-24, 2016
Kansas City, Missouri

Hindsight • Insight • Foresight

Habakkuk 2:2



Registration opens August 1, 2015

www.nationalconvocation.org



PRE-EVENT FEATURES LEARNING FOR LAY, CLERGY

The Pre-Convocation Lay and Clergy Leadership Institute will take place on Thursday, July 21, from 9:00 am - 4:00 pm. It is an opportunity for leadership development for both clergy and lay leaders.

The clergy session will be led by Dr. Brad R. Braxton, "Preaching and 'Public Health': Serious Preaching in Dangerous Times"

The Lay Leadership Track will offer a variety of sessions that serve to inspire and strengthen gifts, passions and leadership. All are led by presenters who have prayed over this time.

The cost of the pre-event is \$50 which covers breakfast, lunch and materials. It is co-sponsored by The Institute for African American Faith and Life, Black Disciples Endowment Fund and The African American Clergy Institute Development Office

If you have already registered for the 24th Biennial Session of the National Convocation, contact Kimberly Caudle at: (317) 713-2406 or by e-mail: kcaudle@disciples.org. Please leave a message if no answer.

Riveting "Black & 25" Comes to OSU Student Union Theatre

Los Angeles-based actor Jeremy Gillett performed his one-man show "Black & 25 in America" at OSU's Student Union Theatre on Tuesday, February 23, at 7:30 p.m. The performance was free and open to the public, and funded by OSU's Division of Insti-

tutional Diversity.

"Black & 25" explores issues of race, class, gender and personal identity through the life stories of several African-American characters in their mid-20s, people like Big Man, the high school football standout who couldn't escape gang life; Joshua Thomas Northington III, a conservative, preppy black man who struggles with privilege, and Marcy, a woman of mixed black and white parentage who has to carefully navigate two clashing cultures while keeping her sanity. Through these narratives and more, Gillett gives his audience insight to what it is like to be a young, black adult in the first decades of the United States in the 21st century.

Says Gillett, "The idea for the show came to me while I was still an undergraduate theatre major at the University of Kentucky. I had classes with excellent mentors like playwrights Herman Farrell and Ver-shawn Young, and from a distance I admired the authenticity of the writing of Kentucky poet laureate Frank X. Walker. They've written about the black experience in America, but I found that my generation's experience is different and unique. I found the voice of my generation was missing. Thus, I wrote about people I knew. My own life, yes, but also the many different people I'm close to. We live in the same towns, go to the same schools, but we struggle with vastly different issues. I wanted to capture the ambiguity, humor, and pathos of it all."

The show took its current form when Gillett was a graduate student in Arizona State University's M.F.A. in acting program, and where he received several scholarships and fellowships to develop the show. He graduated in 2013 and has since performed "Black & 25" in venues from coast to coast—all while pursuing a successful career in L.A. "I want to share the stories of characters in such a way that people want to care about them regardless of their station in life. Acting is my way of helping all of us see the humanity of another person," Gillett says.

Andrew Kimbrough, Head of OSU Theatre, has arranged for Gillett's production to come to campus. "I saw 'Black & 25 in America' a few years ago and was simply stunned. The writing is poignant—both funny and tragic—and very thought-provoking, especially at a time when issues of race are hotly debated on college campuses. But Jeremy's acting makes these very interesting and very different characters accessible and engaging. He's a master character actor, able to transform himself completely into half a dozen other people from all walks of life. I have to thank Dr. Jason Kirksey and Craig Jackson of the Division of Institutional Diversity for making this event happen."

THE HONORABLE FERN FLANAGAN SADDLER



On February 24, 2016, the Greater Washington Area Chapter, Women Lawyers Division of the National Bar Association (GWAC) and the GWAC Foundation hosted their 28th Annual Charlotte E. Ray Award Ceremony.

The 2016 Charlotte E. Ray Award was presented to The Honorable Fern

Flanagan Saddler, Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia, in recognition of

her strong commitment to mentorship, outstanding leadership, dedication to the advancement of female attorneys, and overall excellence in the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. community.

Since 1989, GWAC and the GWAC Foundation have annually recognized one outstanding African-American woman from our local bar in honor of Charlotte E. Ray—the first woman admitted to practice law in the District of Columbia and the first African-American woman certified as a lawyer in the United States.

Judge Saddler is married to The Reverend Dr. Paul Harvey Saddler, Senior Pastor at Twelfth Street Christian Church in Washington, DC. Judge Saddler is a delightful First Lady and an ordained Elder at Twelfth Street Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

PASTOR APPOINTED DEPUTY MAYOR

Indianapolis Mayor Joe Hogsett is seen with his new appointees announced Thursday, including the Rev. David Hampton and former Lt. Gov. Kathy Davis.

Recently, Hogsett, a former U.S. attorney for the Southern District of Indiana, said Indianapolis was mired in a "public safety crisis." The city has faced a surge in criminal homicides this year, topping 140, which city officials have said is tied to a rise in drug-related crimes.

"The broader crime-related challenges that we confront were not created overnight, they were created over years," Hogsett said. "And they stem from larger systemic problems."

Hampton, senior pastor for Light of the World Christian Church, said he sees his position as expanding the

role he already plays in the community. In the past, he has been a critic of the previous administration's handling of crime and community relations.



"I view this as an opportunity to continue to serve in the capacity as I have as not only a religious leader, but also a civic leader in the city I love," Hampton said.

Hogsett, who attended the Christian Theological Seminary with Hampton, said residents of the city's neighborhoods have told him "they feel like local government is talking at them, not with them."

Hampton's role will be ensuring that the administration really serves the needs of the people of Indianapolis, Hogsett said.

He also will remain in his position as senior pastor in the church.

BLOOD

By Cynthia Hibbler

The blood of a perfect lamb covered
The doorposts of the Hebrew families.
The Angel of Death
Passed over the homes of God.

Blood covered
The hands of the beloved warrior, King David.
Building a temple to honor the One and Only God
Passed over David to his son Solomon.

Mary gave birth to a son called Jesus,
In the lineage of King David,
A king by birth. Blood and
Embryonic fluid covered Him when He entered the world.

The blood was gently wiped away by his earthly father Joseph.
Angels were singing a lullaby,
"Glory to God in the Highest. Peace. Goodwill to men".
Kings stood over a sleeping, long awaited, promised baby.

Woe to the babies slain by the wicked Herod,
He wanted to kill the 'King of Forever'.
Woe to the mothers who will never give milk from their breast
To their sons. Gone are their lullabies, forever.

"And multiplied in the daughter of Judah mourning and moaning"
Blood refused to
Stop its flow in a woman until
She touched the hem of Jesus' garment.
The bleeding stopped. She was healed.

Blood flowed from
The wounds of a lunatic man. Jesus said
"Come out!" The power to control his life was restored to him.
The man never cut himself again.

Jesus' sweat was like great drops of blood
As He prayed on the Mount of Olives.
*"Please let this cup pass from me, yet...
Not my will but your will be done"*.

Blood from Jesus' slashed and beaten body
Splashed and mingled on the wall and floor
With the blood of the just and unjust.
His blood was Holy without sin.

Blood covered His body as He was crucified on the cross.
Blood from His crown of thorn, blood from His pierced side,

Blood from his scourging, blood from His hands and feet,
Blood was the price for our daily rebellions from God.

"Abba Father!"

Blood covered the dead body of Jesus as He
Was removed from the cross and wrapped in clean linen.
He was placed in a borrowed tomb.
The Sabbath was nigh.

Bringing burial ointments and fragrance to clean away the blood,
The early arrivals found no blood or body in the empty tomb.
An angel asked *"Why do you look for the living among the dead?"*
Jesus has risen from the dead. He is alive.
He is with the living.

Blood covers Him no more.
His glorified body reveal the marks of the crucifixion.
The nails in His hands and feet, his pierced side.
The thorn pricks on his head are barely visible.

Jesus sit on the Throne of Heaven because of the blood.
All crowns from kings and counselors are cast at his feet.
*"Worthy art thou, our Lord and our God,
to receive glory, and honor and power;
for thou has created all things,
and because of Your will they existed,
and were created"*.

*"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to
receive power and riches and wisdom
and might and honor and glory and blessing"*.

Oh the Blood! Oh the Blood!

REV. CHARLES WEBB, JR.

"I remember the moment my son let me win the wrestling match. I remember the moment when I swelled up and exerted my maximum strength and knew in my heart I was going to overcome. I remember, now, the way my son matched and met my maximum exertion and at that moment, confident of his ability to meet the maximum exertion, backed down and smiled ruefully in my direction as if I had gotten him once more. That's love!! The willingness to let your daddy pimp off like he'd done something. And love your daddy all the more, never once wanting or needing to take it back. "

POET'S CORNER

A MOM - A SON

She was a pretty 'Lil Mrs.
She was a lovin 'Lil Mom.
She bore a 'Lil baby
She loved and called him Tom.
Tom loved his 'Lil mother
With all his 'Lil heart.
Said "she is like non-other
She is wise and she is smart.
When one day I leave this home
T'will be for one like mom;
A sweet, lovin, thoughtful lass
Who'll be forever mine.
We'll watch the setting of each sun
And rising of the same.
I'll love and ever cherish her
For she will bear my name.
And we will have a 'Lil Tom
We'll train and teach him well
As my 'Lil mom taught me.
We'll watch our 'Lil Tom grow
And plant his own 'Lil tree."



May Reed
Written Sat., April
23, 2016

Answer to the Q: The inventor who has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame and had only three months of schooling was Thomas Alva Edison, born Feb. 11, 1847. His mother educated him.

LIFE IS A CLASS ROOM

Life's formative years begin in elementary school. Of course, before this you learn to drink, eat, walk, talk, go to the bathroom and brush your teeth. Some learn to comb their own hair and dress themselves. These things need to be taught before a child begins kindergarten.

A child needs to learn to share. When a child is allowed to have their way about everything it will become a problem for the teachers and for themselves. Parent(s) do their child a disservice when they pamper and spoil

them. Children don't stay little and as they grow some will become increasingly difficult to deal with. Children aren't toys; not just something to play with. But they are little people who, when they become grown-ups, will need all the tools of life that will lead them forward in ways to help them become responsible, and worthwhile citizens to themselves and to the community in which they live. Teach them now.

CHUCKLES

When the Sunday School teacher told the class they should follow Jesus – one little fellow replied "But I'm not allowed to leave the yard." Another child asked "Why do they take up a collection? Is God retiring?"

Continued Look at our Founding Fathers

Walter Scott "The Voice of the Golden Oracle" was born in Moffatt, Dumfriesshire, Scotland on Oct. 31, 1796. He arrived in New York, NY, in 1818.

He was eloquent and mighty in the scriptures and a peerless evangelist. He developed what became known as the "Five Finger" exercise to outline the steps to conversion. This formula is still used in some Disciples congregations. Pointing to the fingers on his hand he would start with the thumb to the little finger "Faith; Repentance; Baptism; Remission of Sins; Gift of the Holy Spirit." Often when he was to preach in a town or city he would go about sharing this exercise with the children who would run home to tell their parents and many would come out to hear this Christian preacher. He learned and taught that in baptism the penitent believer receives the assurance of the remission of his sins and is the culminating act of conversion. "His voice was gentle as the Lute, or like the thunder strong; Melted the stony hearts to tears, and moved the listening throng."

Scott possessed a powerful pen. He wrote much for The Christian Baptist. He had suggested the name for this periodical to its editor, Alexander Campbell – feeling that the title would invoke the curiosity of the Baptist – which it did. Scott also served as President of the first institution of higher education of the Christian Church – Bacon College at Georgetown, KY., organized Nov. 10, 1836.

FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS

Ella Louise Kimbrew Bates Evans

June 15, 1925 - December 13, 2015



Ella Louise Kimbrew Bates Evans, aged 90, passed on December 13, 2015 in the Health Care facility at Robin Run Vi-
Annette Smith Jackson transitioned the bounds of the earthly and eased into eternity on Tuesday, April 7, 2016. Blessed to walk this earth for 98 years. Survived by family, friends and her loving Church Family, Alameda Christian Church.

Pastor Perry D. Wiggins, III officiated; Rev. Dr. Norman Reed, Eulogist — “Fundamentally Sound” Mat.. 5:28-31. Interment, Greenwood Main.
lage. She was the oldest of three children born to Rayfield and Jessie (Gish) Kimbrew and raised by her father and stepmother, Mary Catherine (Johnson) Kimbrew. Born in Indianapolis, Louise attended public schools and graduated from Crispus Attucks High School, class of 1941, 13th in a class of 226. She grew up in Second Christian church (now Light of the World CC) and continued an active member and leader in churches wherever she lived.

She retired from the General Office of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Division of Homeland Ministries as Director of Family and Children's Ministries. Louise continued this work with the National Council of Christian Churches (NCEC) as Director of Family Ministry in Black Churches Project. Her interest in Family education was fostered by a B. S. in Home Economics Education, M.S. in Child Development and Family Life from Purdue University and a Doctorate in Adult Education from Indiana University. Before joining the staff of the Christian Church, Dr. Louise Bates (Evans) was Assistant Professor of Family Studies at Purdue University, West Lafayette IN and Virginia Teach in Blacksburg VA. She also taught at Wintrop College, Rock Hill, SC., IUPUI in Indianapolis and Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis.

Louise is survived by sons William Raphael Bates, Louis Allen Bates (grandson whom she raised); broth-

er Raphiel Kimbrew; grandsons Michael Kimbrew and Gordon Winters and granddaughter Carmynn Bates; step daughters Stacy Duke and Eddie Lo Griffin and their families; great grandsons, one great, great grandson and several nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her parents; a daughter, M. Josephine Winters ; husbands William Bates and Lorenzo Evans and a sister, Mary Kathryn Sayles..

Annette Smith Jackson

Annette Smith Jackson transitioned the bounds of the earthly and eased into eternity on Tuesday, April 7, 2016. Blessed to walk this earth for 98 years. Survived by family, friends and her loving Church Family, Alameda Christian Church.

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Richard R. Lance



Mr. Richard R. “Rick” Lance, former President of the National Benevolent Association of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), died on April 21, 2016.

Lance served as NBA President from 1982 to 1996, succeeding William T. Gibble upon his retirement. By 1988, Lance had led the NBA to be recognized by *The Non-Profit Times* as one of the top charities in the United States. In his 14 years as NBA President, he led NBA growth from 42 to 82 care-giving facilities across the United States, and assets increased from \$78 million to \$305 million.

“Rick was not a corner-office president,” said Leon Whitney, former NBA CFO during Lance’s tenure. “He cared about the people we were serving, as well as the local and nationwide staff who were helping him get the job done. He made us dream big, then plan big. He stretched us and made us grow.”

A career U.S. Air Force officer, Lance retired in 1974 from his post as Deputy Director of Intelligence Estimates at Strategic Air Command (SAC) headquarters in Omaha, Nebraska. During his 20 years with the Air Force, he served as a crew member and was selected for the Air Force University in 1964. From Second Lieutenant, he rose rapidly through the ranks—serving as Division Chief-Operational Readiness Surveys, Director of Bomber Operations, Director of Strategic Weapons Concepts, and Director of Strategic Intelligence—and ended his military career as a Colonel.

Upon returning to civilian life, Lance was appointed Executive Director of Child Saving Institute (1974-77) and later served as Executive Director of Kansas Christian Home (1977-1982). This made him the first NBA chief administrator since Fannie Shedd Ayars—one of NBA’s original founders—to have had previous experience operating an NBA program.

“Rick’s keen intellect was matched only by his deep commitment to the church,” said Gary Kidwell, President of the Christian Church Foundation. “During his service on the Foundation’s board, I came to depend upon his wise counsel and his unwavering support of this ministry. The church has lost another giant, and I have lost a dear friend.”

“Rick was a beloved leader who touched the lives of many,” said Mark D. Anderson, NBA President and CEO. “I’m grateful for the wisdom and leadership of this saint of our Disciples Church. The NBA follows in the footsteps of our founders, caring for the ‘least of these,’ and strives to carry on the legacy of leaders like Rick Lance.”

Fern Bernice McLean **September 22, 1912 - December 5, 2015**

Fern Bernice Hodson was born to Elmer and Pearl Hodson, Anderson, Indiana, September 22, 1912. Her sisters were Beatrice, Catherine, and Dorothy. The family enjoyed the many gifts of farm life, raising chickens and pigs, milking cows, plowing with horses. The summers were filled with the abundance of

garden and orchard. Church was the center of the family’s religious and social life. It would be the church that would be the important expression of Fern’s life.

Fern was the first of the three daughters to leave home and seek an education that would equip her to be a bookkeeper and secretary in the years to come. Fern married William Stegall McLean on November 6, 1937, the brother to the Sam McLean who was the minister to her home church, Bethany Church.



Their married life moved them to ministries in the Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ) in Pittsburgh, Pa., Throntown, In. where their first son, James was born; Elsberry, Mo. where their second son Douglas was born; Dawson Springs, Ky.; Bakersfield, Ca.; Delphi, In.;

Dunnsville, Va.; Pembroke, Va. It was in Pembroke where Bill died, causing Fern to move with her two sons to Indianapolis, In., in 1957. It was there in 1957, Fern became a staff member of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Missionary Society, General Offices in Indianapolis. Fern worked at the Missions Building until her retirement in 1977.

During her years in Indianapolis Fern was active in so many things that gave her excitement and education. She danced at the Indianapolis Senior Citizen’s Center, enjoyed the Indianapolis Symphony annual concerts, traveling throughout the States and Europe, winning awards in bowling, and most of all enjoying the accomplishments of her two sons and their growing family.

Fern is the mother of James and Doug. Fern is the grandmother to Michael McLean, to Kim Johnson, Sheila Hall, Andrew McLean. She is the great grandmother to Magie Cron, James Cron, Kirsten Hall, Tucker Hall, Tate McLean, Drew McLean, Reed McLean, step grandmother to Baker and Coffman Johnson.

When Fern moved to Indianapolis, she joined the Downey Avenue Christian Church. It was this church family that was so important to Fern’s life while she began a new life, new work, and to assist her two sons to grow. It was this church family that was so important to Fern’s life from her arriving in Indianapolis, where her son, James, became a “Timothy” in ministry, all the way to her years living in her home on Downey Avenue.

Elder Patricia Parker



Elder Patricia Parker presently served as Pastor of the East Percy Street Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Greenwood, Mississippi. She began serving there as a transitional Pastor in June 2001, and in March 2002, she was installed as their first female Pastor and became the first female to become pastor of a Disciples of Christ church in the State of Mississippi.

Elder Parker received her Bachelor's Degree in Biblical Studies in June 2003 and Master's Degree in Biblical Studies in June 2005 from the Exodus School of the Bible in Cleveland, Mississippi. She graduated with honors from both the Amanda Elzy High School in Greenwood, Mississippi in 1980 and Alcorn State University in Lorman, Mississippi with a Bachelor's Degree in Nursing in 1984. Elder Parker was an active member in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) on the local, state, regional, and national level. She was just recently elected to serve as a member on the National Convocation Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) for the 23rd Biennial Session in 2014. Elder Parker has been married for 29 years to the former Mayor Walter Parker, Sr. They are the proud parents of three children: Walter, Jr., LeAndra, and Tepolian; one grandson, Walter Parker, III; and one God-daughter, Jamika Beverly.

Marian Elisabeth Rodgers

July 2, 1921 ~ January 7, 2016



I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God...
Psalm 84: 10b (NIV)

On January 4, 2016 Centennial Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), in St. Louis, Missouri celebrated the life of Marian E. Rodgers. She is legendary as a result of her proud and faithful service as a member of Centennial. Marian confessed her faith

in Christ under the pastorate of Rev. William Alphin, Sr., and she was baptized on Easter Sunday in 1930. She was a mem-

ber of the Deaconess Board and the Christian Women's Fellowship. Her true passion was being an usher. Marian was a proud and faithful member of Centennial's Usher Board for more than sixty years, serving as President for more than thirty years. Even after her retirement from this position, Marian was not reluctant to provide input and support to fellow Ushers when needed. Her beloved Centennial Usher Board conducted a memorable tribute to Marian during the service. Beyond Centennial, Marian was active in the Church Ushers' Alliance of St. Louis where she served as Chairman of the President's Council, Counselor for the Young Adult Department, and a member of the Courtesy Committee and the Education Department.

Marian Elisabeth Haney was born on July 2, 1921 in Memphis, Tennessee. She was the elder of two children born to the union of Augustus and Edith Cloyd Haney. She attended St. Louis Public Schools, and completed her education at Vashon High School. After spending her early adult years as a dancer in New York City, performing regularly with Redd Foxx, Moms Mabley and LaWanda (Aunt Esther) Page, Marian returned home to St. Louis to be with her family. She was joined in holy matrimony in June 1965 to the late Roy Rodgers. She was employed in the dietary department of Barnes Hospital, and in later years, at Famous-Barr Department Stores, where she always invited her friends to "come and sample my French Onion Soup".

Marian is the aunt of Linda McKnight, whom many of our readers will remember as former Treasurer and Board Member of the Grapevine. Linda also served the general church as Treasurer of both the Division of Higher Education and Jarvis Christian College. It was Linda, along with her brother Lawrence McKnight, who provided faithful and loving care throughout Marian's prolonged illness. These beloved relatives were also responsible for the wonderful home going service for Marian.

Marian leaves to cherish her memory: her "babies", her nephew and niece, Lawrence McKnight and Linda McKnight; her great-nephew William Whittington (Lawanda); her great-great nephew Stephan and great-great nieces LaQueta (Brandon), Kayla, Radazaih, Anastasia and Areanna; a special niece, Sheila Davis; and a host of other family members and friends. Marian Elisabeth Rodgers was an avid fan of the Grapevine, supporting the Newsletter since its inception in February 1991. Over the years, she would often receive her copy before this writer. When greeting this writer after Sunday service, Marian would say that she read the Grapevine and "Baby you all did a fine job." Marian would be very pleased that Grapevine readers will have the opportunity to read her story. Throughout the time spent on Marian's tribute - this writer could hear her say upon completion: "Baby you did a fine job." In response: "So did you Marian, your legacy continues..."

Dr. Norma Scarborough



Dr. Scarborough served as an associate professor and Site Director in the Couples and Family Therapy Program at Alliant International University. Dr. Scarborough was a member of the Community Action Advisory Collaborative in partnership with the Department of Mental Health and Family Services. She received her Doctorate in Marriage and Family Therapy from Loma Linda University, and has been an adjunct professor for Pepperdine University, Fuller Theological Sem-

inary, and Pacific Oaks College, where she taught theory, research methods, couples therapy, and domestic violence courses to marriage and family therapy master's level students. In addition, Dr. Scarborough co-founded and served as Program Administrator for Secure Transitions Foster Family Agency, an agency that has served the needs of abandoned, neglected, and abused children/adolescents for the past 18 years. Dr. Scarborough served as the Clinical Director for **Project Impact** and served as Treasurer and President of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy-California Division (AAMFT-CA). Dr. Scarborough was one of our presenters at our CCWC meeting in October 2015 on the topic "*Courageous Conversation - Race Disparity in our Child Welfare System*".

issippi. Sara was the youngest and only girl of seven children. Her love for education was cultivated during her formative years in Crawford. Her family's decision to move her to St. Louis was to provide her with more educational opportunities for a better life. She attended St. Louis Public Schools and graduated from Vashon High School in 1947. Sara furthered her education and received her B.A. from Stowe Teachers College and a M.Ed. from the University of Illinois (Champaign). Sara lived a life that exemplified her commitment to education and community service. Her career in education spanned 50 years and included her work as an elementary classroom teacher, one of the first African Americans in the St. Louis Public School system. She taught reading certification courses at Harris-Stowe, her alma mater, in the School of Education and in later years served as Supervisor of Student Teachers. The work she was most proud of was her time as the Director of the Northside Reading Clinic in the St. Louis Public Schools, working with underserved and under-resourced children and families. Many of her former students often share how she cultivated in them a love for reading. She was known to form book clubs during recess to keep her students out of trouble on the playground.

Sara's community and civic involvement were expressed in her 60 year membership in Alpha Kappa Alpha. She served as the 34th President of Gamma Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha. She was instrumental in the development of many "firsts" and successful programs for the sorority during her active membership, including Fashionetta, Gamma Omega Literacy Center at All Saints Episcopal Church, Pink and Green Gala Reactivation Event, Arts & Cultural Community Fundraiser, An Evening with Maya Angelou, and the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program.

In addition to her sorority work Sara served on several boards: Metro YWCA; Literacy Council of Greater St. Louis; Founder and President of Concerned Families for Home of the Aged; and a lifetime board member of the Grace Hill Settlement House. Her community contributions have had a lasting impact on the elderly, children and families in and around the St. Louis metropolitan area.

Sara leaves to cherish her memory: Her most dedicated and devoted husband of 60 years, Henry Scroggins, Jr.; her one and only son, Carlton; two grandchildren, Jared and Jillian; one great-granddaughter, Arrow; and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, God-children and friends. Relatives believe if Sara's health had not failed before the arrival of Arrow, she would already be a proficient reader!!! What a legacy...

Sara Marshall Ingram Scroggins

August 1, 1928 ~ Dec. 26, 2015



On January 4, 2016 Centennial Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), in St. Louis, Missouri celebrated the life of Sara Marshall Ingram Scroggins. She is legendary because of her faithful and excellent leadership within the church and the community. She modeled the Christian spirit by actively doing the work of Church Modera-

tor, as well as other responsible positions related to capital campaigns and other milestone events in the life of the church. Her many contributions over her 40+ year membership at Centennial are still highly regarded.

Sara Marshall Ingram Scroggins was born August 1, 1928 to George and Betty Hairston Ingram in Crawford, Missis-

PARALEE MEANS SHERARD

March 30, 1932 - April 19, 2016



Paralee Means Sherard was born on March 30, 1932 in Maybinton, South Carolina to Shealey and Eliza Jane Aughtery Means. Paralee moved from the family home when she was 14 to attend high school which was 50 miles away. After graduation she attended Benedict College in South Carolina graduating with honors. In her senior

year of college Paralee met and married Lieutenant Austell Oceio Sherard.

Paralee began her teaching career in Winnsboro, SC, where she led the first Head Start program in the region. In 1963 the Sherards moved to Tuskegee, AL where Paralee continued teaching and with her husband became the part owners of the first Black-owned Holiday Inn in the US.

The Sherards moved to Indianapolis where Paralee continued teaching as Director, early Childhood, Noble Industries retiring after 25 years of service. Paralee became a member of the Seekwell Baptist church at age 12. Paralee joined Light of the World Christian Church in 1972 where she served as Deacon, Elder, The Bereavement Team, and Sages Ministry. Paralee became the chair of the elders, member of the church council, member of the pastoral search committee and founder of the Dorcas Sewing Group.

LOUIS WAYNE STEWART

Louis Wayne Stewart was the first born and only son of Joe and Thelma Stewart born on February 18 1942. Louis Wayne received his general education at Fulbright elementary under the principle ship of his grandmother and finished his High School studies at Cheatham High in Clarksville, Texas. Louis went on to further his education at Prairie View A & M University.

Louis Wayne received his discipleship at a very early

age in the Christian Church and was told by the Elders that he would become a minister one day.

Louis met his wife Evelyn F. Jones in 1961. The two were joined in marriage on May 25, 1963. After marriage the Stewarts moved to Wichita, Kansas, started a family and united with the North Height Christian Church. Louis was a very active layman in Men's ministry and served in many other capacities. In 1976 Louis was licensed as a Lay Minister and began to serve his denomination in the State, Region and National levels. Louis became known for his preaching style and was sought by many to speak at Conferences, worship services and retreats. North Height Christian Church honored Louis and made him an Elder. The Regional CMF saw Elder Stewart's (as he was now called) dedication and decided he had more to give and encouraged him to further his biblical studies. After strongly thinking about how he could make this all work Elder Stewart answered his calling in 1978.

August 5, 1978 Elder Stewart announced to North Heights that he had been called by God to become a full time Minister. The State of Kansas was overjoyed of Elder Stewart's calling and supported him in making the decision to study at Northwest Christian College in Eugene, Oregon.



September 12, 1978 the family moved to Eugene Oregon where he studied full time and the State of Kansas supported the family. Elder Stewart was a member of Springfield Christian Church where he remained active in Men's work and bible studies. On June 9, 1981 Elder Stewart received a Bachelor of Arts from Northwest Christian College.

Elder Stewart and the family returned home to Texas and became members of Warren Avenue Christian Church under the pastorate of Rev M.C. Dickson. Elder Stewart did his internship at Warren Avenue and continued studies at Texas Christian University's Brite Divinity School, where he received the degree of Master of Divinity on May 18, 1985.

On May 26, 1985 Elder Stewart was ordained by the

State of Kansas and took on his new name Reverend L. Wayne Stewart. In July of 1985 Rev. Stewart was called as senior pastor at Denley Drive Christian Church and later as Community Christian Church's senior pastor where he served until March 1993. In 1993 Rev. Stewart ran for the office of General Minister and President of the Christian Church Disciples of Christ. After a loss in that election, Rev. Stewart was called to serve in the National office as Director of Reconciliation of the Christian Church Disciples of Christ in Indianapolis, Indiana. Rev. Stewart served in this capacity until 2002.

Rev. Stewart was honored with the degree of Doctor of Divinity, honoris causa from his Alma Mater Northwest Christian College in Eugene Oregon on June 15, 2001 and became Rev. Dr. L. Wayne Stewart.

Upon retirement Rev. Stewart taught Old Testament studies at St. Paul Bible College, Philips Temple CME, and as an adjunct professor at Martin University, Indianapolis, Indiana.

He penned his first novel "Mr. Gilmore's Place" in 2008. In 2010 he became a counselor and facilitator for the Department of Children's Services of Indianapolis where he served until his illness would no longer permit.

An avid outdoorsman, Rev. Stewart enjoyed hunting, fishing, and was an amazing storyteller.

He leaves behind to celebrate his life, his wife of 53 years, Evelyn, his five children; Jacqueline Roberts, Treva (Ronald) McFadden, LaVena (Willie) McKeever, Brian (Tonya) Stewart, and Kevin (Tonya) Stewart; 14 grandchildren, and 4 great grandchildren; four brothers in law and three sisters in law and a host of friends and family through Christ.

He is preceded in death by his parents Joe and Thelma Stewart and his sister Carolyn J Phillips. The heavens are rejoicing at the reunion of family and friends.

Harold R. Watkins

Harold R. Watkins, president emeritus of Board of Church Extension (now known as Disciples Church Extension Fund) died on Dec. 2, 2015.

A graduate of Bethany College, Bethany, WV and College of the Bible (now Lexington Theological Seminary), Lexington, KY, Hal began his career serving as organizing pastor of Park Avenue Christian Church, Tucson, AZ, followed by a pastorate at First Christian Church, Tuscaloosa, AL. Board of Church Extension, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) General Unit which assists Disciples congregations

with capital planning and financing, recruited Hal to serve as a general representative with primary responsibility of new church beginning in January, 1958. The job required extensive travel, with Hal having visited nearly 200 congregations each year in his first 10 years of providing counsel and fund raising leadership. Hal served as Board of Church Extension's President from 1980 through March 1995 after serving in every executive position of the organization.

In his retirement, Watkins spent the 1996-97 and 1998-99 academic years as the director of field education at Lexington Theological Seminary and was the interim president of LTS for the 2001-02 academic year. He also was called upon to help coordinate the merger of Church Finance Council

into the Office of General Minister and President in 2007-08.

Hal served on the board of trustees of Bethany College; the National City Christian Church Foundation; the board of directors of the United Church of Christ Insurance Board; the board of directors of the Ecumenical Church Loan Fund (ECLOF), Geneva, Switzerland; a past president of the Interfaith Forum on Religion, Art and Architecture (IFRAA); past moderator of the Denominational Investment and Loan Administrators (DILA); and past president of the World Convention of Churches of Christ.

Watkins was ordained at First Christian Church, Wauseon, OH in July, 1950. He was granted honorary doctor of divinity degrees from Phillips University, Enid, OK and Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis, IN. In 2010 the Disciples Historical Society honored Hal and his wife Evelyn by naming a reading room at their Nashville, TN headquarters for them, which will be relocated to the new facility being built at Bethany College.

Hal Watkins is survived by his wife of 65 years, Evelyn, son Mark (Kim), daughter Nancy, five grandchildren and 6 great-grandchildren.



NURTURING THE GRAPEVINE

The Rev. Dr. William K. Fox, Sr. was an extremely gifted critical thinking pastor who invested himself in persons and systems that would enable the optimal development of the means of being church imaged as the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Those of us who had appeared in his scope soon realized that Dr. Fox was always scrutinizing something or someone, in the words of The Rev. Dr. Raymond E. Brown, “working on something.”

It wasn't surprising that after several years of retirement he recognized the untapped potential of “Golden Agers” and raised the question among them about the viability of a communication system functioning like a “grapevine” for the Golden Agers that he fondly called “oldtimers.” This communication system would be:

- a “newsletter” whose purpose would be grounded in Jesus Christ and the enhancement of Christ's Church,
- free of institutional support or control,
- free of charge to the “grapevine”,
- supported by donations from the “grapevine”,
- untainted by church or societal politics,
- highlighting the contributions of African Americans and their associates to exemplify wholeness and togetherness in Christ as the actualized environment.

Oscar Haynes, the Publisher and Senior Editor who succeeded Dr. Fox, was identified by The Rev. Joan Bell, before she was “Bell-Haynes”, when told by a friend that “I think Oscar loves you”, replied, “Oscar loves everybody.” The leadership of this “lover of everybody” permeated every facet of the “Oldtimers' Grapevine” during his leadership. Response to that leadership naturally placed in parallel devotion to the servant that embodied “love for everybody” and the instrument through which that part of that love was manifest – The Oldtimers' Grapevine.

When Oscar's health began to limit his aggressive love the Board of Directors of The Oldtimers' Grapevine called me to be the Publisher and Executive Editor. As my fifth grade teacher noted in a Chicago Public School's Superintendent's meeting decades later, “I never encountered a student who asked so many questions.” He didn't know that my fourth grade teacher had tried to have me transferred to the city's “bad boys school.” I really have tried to exemplify the graces of Dr. Fox and Oscar. Often my aggressive questioning masks my love for everybody. I press for credible answers supported by verifiable evidence. When inconsistencies occur bet-

ween my questions and the resulting answers I seek to design Gospel centered options. This process is not always understood as love.

My commitment, as stated in my initial article, is to nurture the Oldtimers' Grapevine and press that grapevine to fulfill her mission. This “Oldtimers' Grapevine” is properly rooted, nurtured by gifted and committed servants and observed by the broadest community of spectators. There are however some questions that the “Oldtimers' Grapevine” needs to ask herself.

- ◆ What is hindering the members of the Grapevine in their sharing of the tremendous evidences of God through Jesus Christ blessing their lives so that they can bless others? We receive limited input from our community.
- ◆ How do the “elders” of the church bring “wise Counsel” not political counsel to the issues confronting the church?
- ◆ In an age when financial resources and changing communication preferences has limited “printed” forms of communication, how do we provide that physical reflective resource?
- ◆ How do we enhance the ministry of the “Oldtimers Grapevine” when “free” and “independent” through “donations” may mean free without investment?

I will pause the questioning at this time, I don't want you to act like my fourth grade teacher nor become plagued like my fifth grade teacher. As I noted earlier, I press for credible answers and seek Gospel centered options to address those answers. As you reflect on my questions or raise some of your own, PLEASE send your thoughts to:

- our email address, oldtimers.grapevine@gmail.com,
- write your thoughts to our mailing address, 5314 Moonlight Dr., Indianapolis, IN 46226,
- or just pick up the phone and voice your comments, (317) 545-9335.

We will create a forum based on your reflections. Thank you in advance for your reflections.

Pray with us as we seek to fulfill our purpose.

Your Publisher and Executive Editor,
John Richard Foulkes, Sr.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ENABLING FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THIS MINISTRY

The "Oldtimers' Grapevine" profoundly thanks the members of the grapevine listed below who contributed to make the publication possible throughout 2015 and during this first quarter of 2016.

Mr. Richard & Mrs. Sheila Allen, Dr. Wayne H. Bell, Ms. Marjorie Bennett, Mr. Richard & Mrs. Violet Bierce, Mary Helen Blackwell, Mrs. Daisy Chambers, Louada Chisholm, Christian Church Foundation, Mrs. Shirley Compton, Dr. Paul Crow, Jr., Dr. D. Duane Cummins, Mr. Charles R. Dickerson, Dr. Norma R. Ellington-Twitty, Ms. Louise Griffin, Dr. Giley Griffin, Mr. Glenn & Mrs. Kathy Helme, Karen S. Vroman & Donald S. Hiscox, Ms. Ruth Hobbs, Ms.

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From: Ruth P. Hobbs

God's Garden
Lettuce be kind to one another.
Squash gossip.
Turnips at church.

Author Unknown



***The Oldtimers' GRAPEVINE* Good Faith**

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OLDTIMERS' GRAPEVINE is a free print and electronic ministry published four times a year through tax exempt donations. The ministry networks Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) seasoned pilgrims by: 1) enhancement of communication and sharing of mutual experiences; 2) conveying a holistic view of aging and health; 3) being an advocate for seniors to become a supportive, loving and caring community; 4) giving honor and dignity to the lives of those included in "For Whom The Bell Tolls"; and 5) highlighting opportunities for the maintenance of a high quality life style and service in retirement. We are enabled by the vision of our founder and publisher/executive editor emeritus; and servants ordered as Board of Directors, administration and editorial staff.

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The Oldtimers' GRAPEVINE

May—November, 2016

Volume 25, Issue 2

FAITHFUL OLDTIMERS READERS

The Oldtimers Grapevine was founded and published by editor, Rev. Dr. William K. Fox, in February of 1991 and established as a nonprofit organization in the October of 1991. For 25 years, this newsletter has been published to provide fellowship news and information to the Disciples of Christ (DOC) faith community. Targeting those readers who were in retirement and who have been serving the church locally, statewide, regionally or nationally, the "Grapevine" has been a way to "keep in touch". Passing on concerns, joys and sorrows to this targeted community of seasoned Disciples and engaging younger Disciples to read and understand the rich heritage of service in our DOC church community, the Grapevine has continued to be a significant publication.

Here we are friends, 25 years after establishing the Oldtimers Grapevine, still working to bring you news about individuals and events in our local and national church. We were led initially by Rev. Ernest Newborn who passed the torch to Norma Ellington-Twitty, as President the Board in 2008. We truly appreciate and thank them for 25 years of faithful service to the Oldtimers Grapevine. Following in the tradition of our two former editors and publishers, Dr. Fox and Oscar Haynes, our current editor and publisher Rev. Dr. John R. Foulkes, continues to provide this newsletter with faithfulness and excellence. We are truly grateful for Dr. Foulkes gifts and efforts, along with the OTG volunteer staff in publishing the Grapevine.

We also wish to thank our current Treasurer, Doris Daughtery of Washington, DC, for her years of service to the Grapevine. Her dedication and faithfulness has been greatly appreciated by the Board and the staff. We pray for her continued service to her local church. The Board accepted her resignation in October.

As we approach the next 25 years, it is my prayer that you, the readers, keep the OTG Board and staff in your prayers in this new season. God continues to be faithful (Lamentations 3:23) and with thank Him continually for His faithfulness. Our Board wants to continue to provide the Oldtimers Grapevine free of charge to all who wish to receive it. Your tax-deductible donations have been the only funding source we have to continue

this publication. We thank those who have donated for this purpose. As you read this issue, please consider a gift to the Grapevine as you make your donations throughout the year, especially as our 25th year ends. Let us know by email if you wish to receive the Grapevine as an electronic copy by email rather

than a paper copy.

Keep in mind also, that **you** are our "reporters"! Is there is church news in your area that needs to be in the Oldtimers Grapevine, please send this information to our editor Dr. Foulkes. I am sure that my Dad would be so pleased to know that his legacy publication continues to spread the news. So, keep the legacy alive!

At this remarkable time in our nation's history, stay in prayer for healing in our country, our President and President-elect, our new Congress, state and local government leadership. We need to remember that as members of the Christian community, we must continue to pray and work to help heal the divisions in our country. We are one America, no matter what our differences, but are first Christians and we are commanded to "Love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matthew 22:39). As our political leaders begin to perform their roles in our communities, we must remind them that their ac-



tions impact the lives of individuals. Our actions as individuals, as Christians must be to remind them and keep them accountable to the community because "You are your brother's keeper".

Lastly, God bless you and your families as we move into a season of Thanksgiving and celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. We are His Church. Let us continue to let them know us by how we love, what we do and not just what we say or believe. God is Love.

Katherine Fox-Cunningham
Vice President



A WORD ABOUT THE ELECTIONS IN THE UNITED STATES

from General Minister and President
Sharon E. Watkins

*I lie down and sleep;
I wake again, because the Lord sustains me. Ps 3:5
(NRSV)*

As we awake to this day after the election, some things have not changed. Whether we are rejoicing or we are feeling stunned and disappointed, the Gospel still calls us to love God first of all with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. It calls us to love our neighbor as ourselves. In the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), where the hero is the racial, religious minority, Jesus reminds us that our neighbor is the one, next door or around the world, who shows mercy. Jesus calls us to show mercy and to receive mercy. Jesus calls us to "love one another." (John 13:34)

The Gospel does not change with an election; what the Gospel requires of us does not change. Jesus' first inaugural address began with these words, "the Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor..." (Luke 4:18) God, now and always, is on the side of the poor, and we who follow Jesus must be also. No matter who is in charge of our governments, we are charged with loving God and loving neighbor, even in costly, self-sacrificial ways. We are called to be loyal to the reign of God.

American Disciples, as part of a movement for wholeness, will no doubt struggle to regain our footing with each other in these immediate days. This was a bitter, divisive campaign. The echoes will continue to reverberate for a while. To those who are rejoicing, we recall "... but (if I) have not love, I gain nothing." (I Cor. 13:3.) To those who are fearful this day: "Perfect love drives out fear." (I John 4:18)

On this day, our job as disciples of Christ, is still the same as it was yesterday, as it will be tomorrow - to proclaim by what we say and what we do that God is a God of love, and we are people of love - for all God's children. Our call is to work together for the common good, to welcome all to the table, people of all races, ages, gender identities, abilities, religions, and yes, politics, and to find ways to work together to extend to each other - across the whole human family - the abundance of a generous God.

No matter who won the election, today we Disciples were still going to be, and still are, a pro-reconciling/anti-racist church. We are still a church that works tirelessly, led by Disciples women (clergy and lay), to end human trafficking. We are still a church that welcomes more refugees and immigrants than almost any other compared to our size. We are still a church seeking to offer grace and welcome to LGBTQ brothers and sisters. We are still a church that learns from and shares with Christian and interfaith partners around the globe. We are still a church that seeks to walk lightly on this earth, knowing that "all of creation waits for revealing of the children of God." (Rom. 8:19). Today we are still a movement for wholeness, seeking a community where nothing is broken and no one is missing, seeking to receive God's gift of oneness already given to us in the life, death and resurrection of Christ Jesus. We are still a church seeking to be diverse but not divided in Christ, striving to be one in our love of God and our visible love for each other.

We are still a church that will gather together at the Lord's Table this Sunday celebrating our unity in Christ. And we are still a church, no matter what political affiliations we have, that will pray together each week, "Thy kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven." And we will join our hands and hearts to make it so.



HISPANIC ASAMBLEA CALLS INTERIM NATIONAL PASTOR

*Once you were not a people,
but now you are God's people;
once you had not received mercy,
but now you have received mercy.*
(1 Peter 2:10)



We are chosen by God. That chosen-ness influences our identity, our mission and our testimony. Pastor Lori Tapia delivered a message of unity and identity as chosen Disciples at the opening worship of the Hispanic Asamblea at Central Christian Church in Coral Gables (Miami), FL, July 14. Flowing easily between Spanish and English, she explained how being chosen is a blessing but also a responsibility to serve. Pastor Samuel Ramirez followed up on Friday showing that we find our identity in being chosen as God's people, not in our nationality or culture, our status or our age.

Tapia will serve as interim national pastor for the Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries (CPOHM) for the next two years as the search continues for a settled pastor. The executive committee of the Hispanic Bilingual Fellowship requested the appointment and the Asamblea affirmed the choice. She is a divinity student at Claremont School of Theology. Tapia was vice moderator for the fellowship until this appointment as well as being a leader in Disciples Women. She will be following Rev. William Almodovar who has filled the position temporarily after the April 2016 retirement of Rev. Huberto Pimentel. Tapia will not be eligible to apply for the settled position.

Pimentel was honored by the Asamblea for his decade of service as national pastor, and his wife Arlene was also acknowledged. Pimentel assisted with the communion service that accompanied the installation of

Tapia and the Hispanic Board of Directors and Pastoral Commission.

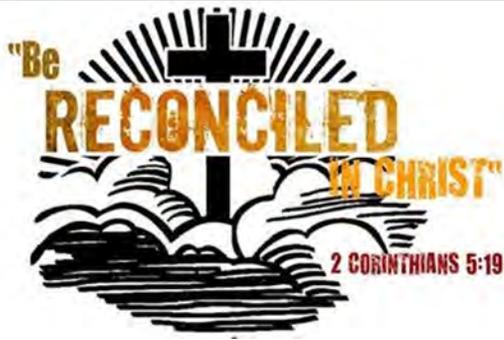
Worship Thursday, Friday and Saturday morning featured powerful music, youthful liturgical dancers and more preaching by Almodovar on how we are called to share our testimony with our neighborhoods. Musicians came from across the five convenciones and the Central Christian worship team also contributed their talents. Youth were present for worship, but also had their own activities including a supervised "party bus" Friday night.

Participants in the Asamblea also had several breakout discussion groups on topics such as social justice, evangelism, youth and the Hispanic gift to the Church. Some of the ideas that surfaced included providing language classes as a matter of justice; strategies to move from initial decision to deeper discipleship as part of evangelism; reminders from the youth to not to be too serious; and identifying the gift of family and closeness at the Table as something the Hispanic community can model.

Members of the Hispanic board were reaffirmed to ensure continuity during the transition, adding Bere Gil Soto, a seminarian at Christian Theological Seminary, to fill Tapia's position.

A colorful poster for the 18th National Hispanic and Bilingual Assembly. The text reads: "ESCOGIDOS con una Identidad, Misión y Testimonio 1 Pedro 2:10". Below this, it says "18.ª Asamblea Nacional Hispana y Bilingüe" and "14-16 Julio 2016 Coral Gables, Florida". The poster features silhouettes of a woman and a man with their arms raised in praise. At the bottom, there is a logo for "SOMOS UNO" and the text "Confraternidad Nacional Hispana y Bilingüe Iglesia Cristiana (Discípulos de Cristo) www.obrahispana.org".

NAPAD HAS THEME OF RECONCILIATION



that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrust-

ing the message of reconciliation to us.
2 Corinthians 5:19 (NRSV)

The community gathered for the North American Pacific/Asian Disciples' 19th Biennial Convocation serves as a model of unity, not uniformity – a founding principle of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

With 18 language groups in the NAPAD community and just as many cultural tradi-

tions, the group continues to model a celebration of the gifts of all.

Lecturer Rev. Dr. Soong-Chan Rah of North Park Theological Seminary in Chicago focused on the book of Lamentations, challenging the congregation to recognize the healing power of acknowledging loss of all kinds – of home, of identity, of community. He said,

“Disruption and confusion in spiritual life is needed for growth.” He also noted that “God finds us in the rubble.”

The richness of multiple cultures and ages was most evident in worship. The opening worship featured members of the Burmese, Chin, Chuukese, Indian, Japanese, Korean and Tong-

an communities. Thursday afternoon included Chinese, Filipino, Malaysian, Mongolian, Montagnard, Jrai and Samoan leaders and the installation of Interim



Executive Pastor Chung Seong Kim. Saturday's closing worship was led by the NAPAD youth and their 10 teen guests from the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea belting out a medley of “One Love” and “We Are the World.”

In addition to NAPAD's internal business and learning opportunities, the community spent two hours on Friday in a Mission First!

Mission Gathering where all members were invited to share the mission their communities are already doing as well as do some dreaming about the mission of the larger Church. One group was conducted in Korean and at least two groups were young people.



And, of course, Friday night's Cultural Night was a magnificent celebration of both ancient and modern art. Korean fan dancers with bright fuchsia silk costumes mingled with the

high energy of Samoan and Tongan dancers. Young people taught the group a dance to a Justin Timberlake tune. Christian contemporary music was performed and a brass ensemble played.



Saturday morning the new officers of the board were installed. They include: Timothy S. Lee, Moderator; Jae

Young Rhee, Moderator-Elect; Eula Pagdilao, Secretary/Treasurer; John D. Roh, Immediate Past Moderator; David Thawma Lian, Representative to the General Board; Yeah-wa C. Lee, Member-at-Large; Salesa Fatu Faalau, Member-at-Large; Cisa Payuyo, Member-at-Large; Caleb Wang, Member-at-Large; Tavita Uesi, Member-at-Large; Ron Degges, General Ministries Representative; a member of the College of Regional Ministers (to be named in August); Chung Seong Kim, Interim Executive Pastor and Sharon Watkins, General Minister and President.

NATIONAL CONVOCATION MEETS IN KANSAS CITY AREA

National Convocation 24th Biennial Session



July 21-24, 2016
Kansas City, Missouri

Hindsight • Insight • Foresight
Habakkuk 2:2



Registration opens August 1, 2015
www.nationalconvocation.org



Then the Lord answered me and said:

Write the vision;

make it plain on tablets,

so that a runner may read it.

For there is still a vision for the appointed time;

it speaks of the end, and does not lie.

If it seems to tarry, wait for it;

it will surely come, it will not delay.

Habakkuk 2:2-3 (NRSV)

With a theme of “Hindsight Insight Foresight” participants of the National Convocation’s Biennial Session scanned history and the present for keys to their future. A new reprint of the 1990 history book, *Journey Toward Wholeness*, was presented as well as a renewed commitment to educating the Church about the historic 1968-71 Merger Agreement between the predecessor organization, the National Christian Missionary Convention, and the General Assembly’s predecessor, the International Convention and the United Christian Missionary Society of the Christian Church.

The overview of the present situation included the topics of recent deaths of African-Americans in encounters with law enforcement, but also systemic issues that affect families, such as mass incarceration, poverty and other issues that disproportionately afflict people of color. And from the general Church, a report on eliminating racist language from governing documents (GB-16-0977) is now available for review.

And in a look to the future, preachers exhorted participants to be agents of reconciliation, peace and action. Calls to renew support of the existing Reconciliation Ministry also included calls to individuals to be active

and activists in their own communities. In addition, more than 100 participants experienced a **Mission First!** Mission Gathering to give their ideas for the direction of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). A showing of the documentary **Injustice Anywhere** and a panel discussion of church leaders led by Rev. Dietra Wise Baker was a feature of Friday afternoon’s learning opportunities. The film, produced by a member of Liberation Church in the St. Louis area, incorporates several Disciple responses to the unrest in Ferguson, MO, in late 2014 and 2015 in response to the death of Michael Brown on Aug. 9, 2014. The **National Benevolent Association**, based in St. Louis, hosts the study materials and video for this effort.

In addition to the frank discussions of the issues faced particularly by African Americans and the differences between generational approaches, traditional elements of the Biennial

Session were celebrated. The T-shirt & Jeans service Friday night featured leadership among the youth. The Generations Banquet on Saturday evening was awash



in colors as each generation wore their own color from purple and green to white and red. And, of course, the music and preaching was powerful.

Honors were extended, particularly the Liberation Awards on Saturday evening. Rev. Dietra Wise Baker of St. Louis who has been a leader in the Ferguson response, was a recipient as well as Rev. April Johnson of the Disciples of Christ’s Reconciliation Ministry.

On Sunday morning, though Congressman Emanuel Cleaver was scheduled, his duties for the Democratic National Convention prevented him from joining the session. Instead, the senior pastor from Kansas City’s Central Christian Church, Rev. Antoine Lee, reminded the congregation that “God has faith in us to be who God called us to be.”



AFRICAN PROVERB



New officers for the National Convocation were installed and include: Patricia Pendleton, president; Donald Gillette, vice president; Ed Cushingberry, secretary; Gloria Gilliard, treasurer; and board members Milton Bowens, Perry Spencer, Jr., Ken Brooker-Langston and Delessyn Kennebrew. And waiting in the wings for the 2018-2020 board are Gillette as president-elect; Irie Session as vice president; Pamela Dubose as secretary; and James Vertreese as treasurer.

"When you climb the ladder the right way, there are always shoulders to help you up and back down." But when you just step on people going up the ladder, there are no shoulders coming down.



CHICAGO CHURCH BUILDS BRIDGES

by Rev. Dr. Edward Morris, Sr.

[Parkway Gardens Christian Church](#) on Chicago's south side has had connection with the Parkway Garden Homes and Woodlawn community since 1957. The church was planted in the community through the efforts of the City of Chicago, the residents of the Parkway Gardens Co-Op Homes and the Council of Churches. Over the years through gentrification and economic change the community transitioned from a vibrant middle class African-American community to an economically, educationally and socially depressed community.

A couple of years ago one of Chicago's major newspapers ran an article describing our community as one of the most dangerous blocks in the city. Through the efforts of our partnering with the 3rd District Police and Clergy Committee to which our lead pastor Rev. Dr. Edward J, Morris Sr. belongs, we set out to change the image and relationship between our community and the police department.

We participate in monthly Community Walks, Resource fairs, Rides against violence and other relation-

ship building strategies formulated in partnership with the community clergy and the police department.

During their community roll calls we meet with the officers and other stakeholders in the community to pray for the police. The police sponsor and participate in many of our community focused outreaches such as our Annual Back to School rally, Curfew walks, Y.A.S (Young Adult Servants) Radio Broadcasts discussion groups. We believe that honest relationship building is the avenue to changing the perception of both communities bring about healing and lasting positive relationship between the two.



Elder Willie Keys prays with police.

LWCC, 150 AND COUNTING

Light of the World Christian Church of Indianapolis concluded the year long celebration of her 150th anniversary in November. That celebration noted the critical role that this community of faith has played in the development of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Light of the World Christian Church was founded as a Christian Mission Church in 1866 with Lay preacher, Brother D. Orr, served as the congregations' first leader. The first permanent pastor, Dr. Rufus Conrad. Dr. Conrad was not only the preacher; he was a teacher and a medical doctor. The period from 1871 - 1894 were considered the "lean" years for the church. There was a marked absence of pastoral leadership with lay preachers providing direction for the congregation which ranged in size from 50 - 100 members.

In 1873, the name of the church was changed to Salem Chapel, and the congregation moved into a small church building located at Fifth and Illinois Street. Between 1884 and 1888, the church moved to Fourth and Howard Street. Additionally, during this period, the church name was changed to Second Christian Church. The real growth for the church began in 1895 with the national ministry of Alexander Campbell, a well-known Disciples leader, and it continued under the leadership of Mansfield F. Womack until 1898.

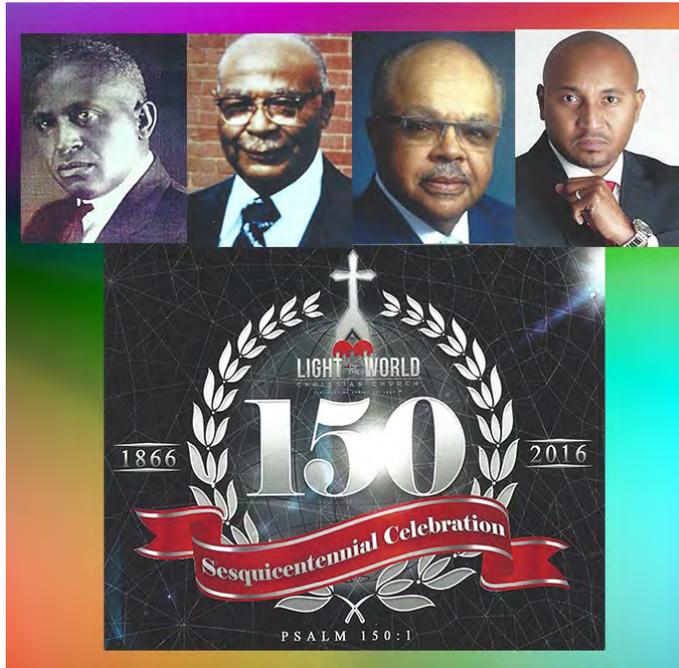
In October 1898, Rev. Henry L. Herod, became pastor of Second Christian Church. Nationally, along with other leaders, he established The National Christian Missionary Convention. Their expressed purpose was to promote the work of the church in leadership training and evangelization of Negroes.. Rev. Henry L. Herod died in 1935.

The calling of Rev. Robert Hayes Peoples, on October 1, 1943, marked a new era of life and work for Second Christian Church. Rev. Peoples had just completed a significant decade of service as the National Field Secretary for the Direction of Religious Education and Church Development among Negroes. This training prompted him to launch an extensive self-evaluation of Second Christian Church to determine new goals and means by which to realize these goals. In June 1948, the church realized its first major goal and moved to 29th and Kenwood.

On the first Sunday in October, 1969, Pastor T. Garrott Benjamin, Jr. accepted the torch from Rev. Peoples and

entered the pulpit to preach his first sermon, "Under New Management".

In 1980, Second Christian Church was recognized by the National Headquarters as the largest and fastest growing Disciples congregation in the world. As the church continued to grow, Pastor Benjamin had the vision that more space was needed to meet the spiritual goals of this congregation. He began a campaign "Miracle on 38th Street" as the church prepared to move to its new home at 5640 E. 38th Street. Through faithful prayer and an unprecedented million dollar loan to an African-American church, the congregation purchased the property and moved in 1982.



Dr. Benjamin was consecrated to the Bishopric by an ecumenical group of national bishops in 1996 at the Indiana Convention Center. He is also the Presiding Bishop and founder of the Christian Ecumenical Covenant Fellowship (CECF), a national interdenominational fellowship of ministers and pastors who seek the covering and counsel of Bishop Benjamin.

A special succession search committee selected Dr. David A. Hampton to succeed Bishop T. Garrott Benjamin, Jr. in 2012. Dr. Hampton was unanimously voted in as the new Senior Pastor of Light of the World Christian Church and was installed December 2, 2012. Pastor Hampton is

married to First Lady, Hope Hampton, and a father of two children, Taylor and Gabriel. A native of Indianapolis, he attended Lawrence North High and earned a bachelors degree in criminal justice from the University of Indianapolis in 1994. He holds a master of theological studies degree (2000) and a doctor of ministry degree in practical theology (Summa Cum Laude) from Christian Theological Seminary in 2006. Dr. Hampton transitioned from his role as senior pastor at Historic Bethany Baptist Church in Brooklyn, NY to assume this position. Before being pastor at Bethany, he served as pastor of Zion Hope Baptist Church in Indianapolis and also established Antioch Church, a nondenominational congregation.

Dr. Hampton believes in the rights of all people and preaches a biblical word with real life application always encourages his congregation to "Get Involved". Whatever your gift, use it in the service of God.

In addition to serving his congregation, Dr. Hampton is the Deputy Mayor of the city of Indianapolis..

WATER ISSUES ADDRESSED BY DISCIPLES



Crystal Coppage, 17, of Vermont Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Flint, Michigan, helps her mom and dad prepare the church for worship each Saturday. It was a simple task before the city switched its water supply to the polluted Flint River more than two years ago. Now every drop of water they use - from

mopping, to filling the baptistery - comes from a bottle.

The photo of a teen filling the baptistery at her church with bottled water is not an image that was captured by the national press in their coverage of what often has been called the "Flint Water Crisis." Also overlooked in the complexity of the crisis has been the collaborative efforts of the church to turn this crisis into action. The summer 2016 issue of *Just Women* magazine features a report and update on work being done in Flint by Vermont Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Flint, Michigan; the Disciples Michigan Region; the Michigan Conference of the United Church of Christ; the Week of Compassion; as well as other partners to bring clean water -- and justice to Flint. The feature article is only one of the ecojustice topics covered in the issue.

NORTHEASTERN REGION CELEBRATES HAITIAN MEMBERS' ACCOMPLISHMENTS

History in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), particularly Northeastern Region, was made at this Regional Assembly. Seven Haitians (three pastors) completed the three-year education process which will lead to their obtaining standing in the Northeastern Region. The three years of study covered the 16 areas of competency required by the Commission on the

Ministry. This is the first group of Haitian pastors in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to complete this process and involved many hours of painstaking translation in monthly classes.



DCHS RELOCATES TO NEW HOME IN BETHANY, WV

by Rev. John Imbler, interim executive director

The Disciples of Christ Historical Society has just completed its move from Nashville (TN) to Bethany (WV) adjacent to the historic Campbell study and mansion. Near the Old Meeting House and across the road from the Campbell cemetery, the area is steeped in the rich tradition of Alexander and Thomas Campbell as they engaged a new religious experiment on American soil. Bethany College has provided invaluable support to this project, and the community has been welcoming to its new resident.

Although construction of the facilities is in its final stages, the climate-controlled archives room was sufficiently outfitted with compactor shelving to receive 11 semi-trailer loads of books, papers, memorabilia, and artifacts representing four centuries of ministries and missions of the three streams of the Stone-Campbell movement. The finished complex will be ready for its dedication service on Saturday, Sept. 10 concluding with the Kirkpatrick Lecture by Dr. Newell Williams, president of Brite Divinity School, Fort Worth (TX), and communion in the Old Meeting House.

To help offset the costs of the move and construction, a capital campaign is underway which has already realized gifts and pledges from over 50 individuals and families. Notable among those is a \$100,000 gift from the Irvin C. Chapman Foundation of Orange, CA. In order to participate, contributions or pledges can be directed to Disciples of Christ Historical Society, PO Box 1986, Indianapolis, IN 46206.



Preacher Brings Down The House At The Democratic Convention

Laurel Raymond

General Reporter at ThinkProgress



Speaking at the Democratic National Convention, Reverend William Barber [pastor of Greenleaf

Christian Church in Goldsboro, N.C.] brought down the house—hitting hard at those who would use faith to justify hatred.

“In my heart I’m troubled, and I’m worried by the way that faith is cynically used by some to serve hate, fear, racism and greed,” he said. “Jesus, a brown-skinned Palestinian Jew, called us to preach good news to the poor, the broken, and the bruised, and all those that have been made feel unacceptable.”

Barber, who is the President of the North Carolina NAACP, has been a leader in the fight against restrictive voting rights laws in North Carolina, passed shortly after the Supreme Court gutted the Voting Rights Act. He previously told ThinkProgress that the laws are “a racist attack on our sacred right to vote, a right that was won with blood and the lives and souls of martyrs throughout the south.”

In addition to being a lead plaintiff in the court case against the laws, Barber is the leader of the Moral Monday protest movement, a social justice protest against the extreme measures pushed through by North Carolina’s right-wing controlled legislature.

In a fiery speech, Barber electrified the stadium at the Democratic National Convention on Thursday.

“When we fight to reinstate the power of the voting rights act, and we break the interposition and nullification of the current Congress, we in the south especially know, that when we do that we are reviving the heart of our democracy,” he said. “The heart of our democracy is on the line this November and beyond.”

“Now, my friends, they tell me that when the heart is in danger, somebody has to call an emergency code, and somebody with a good heart will bring a defibrillator to work on the bad heart. Because it’s possible to shock a bad heart and revive the pulse. In this season, when some want to harden and stop the heart of our democracy, we are being called like our foremothers and fathers to be the moral defibrillators of our time. We must shock this nation

with the power of love. We must shock this nation with the power of mercy. We must shock this nation and fight for justice for all.”

“We can’t give up on the heart of our democracy, not now, not ever,” he said, to thunderous applause. “And so, and so I stopped by here tonight to ask, is there a heart in this house? Is there a heart in America?”

“Then stand up. Vote together. Organize together. Fight for the heart of this nation.”

REV. DR. CYNTHIA HALE

KEYNOTES CBCF

BREAKFAST

A vice chairman of the Democrats’ convention platform committee will deliver the keynote address at this month’s Congressional Black Caucus prayer breakfast.

The Rev. Cynthia Hale, senior pastor of Ray of Hope Christian Church in Decatur, Georgia, served as a platform vice chair on the Democratic National Committee Convention held in Philadelphia in July, when Hillary Clinton was nominated.

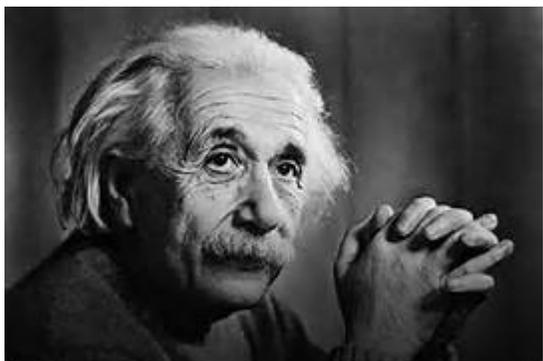
Ms. Hale is no stranger to the intersection of politics and the public square. Within a few months of Barack Obama’s entrance into 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, she was appointed a member of the President’s Commission on White House Fellowships. And in 2015, after Mrs. Clinton had announced her second run for the presidency, Ms. Hale led a prayer circle in Atlanta on her behalf.



Michael Eric Dyson, a prolific progenitor of black America, provided the audio and the visual of the pastoral event for New Republic. “Clinton stood in a prayer circle with a coterie of black ministers” led by the “tall, strikingly beautiful.”

He then quoted Ms. Hale: “You knew before the foundation of the world that Secretary Hillary Clinton would be in this place. In your providence, God, you have positioned her to be elevated. And we agree with that, oh God. So we’ve come to hold hands, to direct our thoughts and prayers towards her so that she might have strength for the battle. Thank you God, for her own intellect, her abilities, her integrity, her heart, her compassion for people. And for the ability that she has to run a nation.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN: THE NEGRO QUESTION (1946)



I am writing as one who has lived among you in America only a little more than ten years. And I am writing seriously and

warningly. Many readers may ask:

"What right has he to speak about things which concern us alone, and which no newcomer should touch?"

I do not think such a standpoint is justified. One who has grown up in an environment takes much for granted. On the other hand, one who has come to this country as a mature person may have a keen eye for everything peculiar and characteristic. I believe he should speak out freely on what he sees and feels, for by so doing he may perhaps prove himself useful.

What soon makes the new arrival devoted to this country is the democratic trait among the people. I am not thinking here so much of the democratic political constitution of this country, however highly it must be praised. I am thinking of the relationship between individual people and of the attitude they maintain toward one another.

In the United States everyone feels assured of his worth as an individual. No one humbles himself before another person or class. Even the great difference in wealth, the superior power of a few, cannot undermine this healthy self-confidence and natural respect for the dignity of one's fellow-man.

There is, however, a somber point in the social outlook of Americans. Their sense of equality and human dignity is mainly limited to men of white skins. Even among these there are prejudices of which I as a Jew am clearly conscious; but they are unimportant in comparison with the attitude of the "Whites" toward their fellow-citizens of darker complexion, particularly toward Negroes. The more I feel an American, the more this situation pains me. I can escape the feeling of complicity in it only by speaking out.

Many a sincere person will answer: "Our attitude towards Negroes is the result of unfavorable experiences which we have had by living side by side with Negroes in this country. They are not our equals in intelligence,

sense of responsibility, reliability."

I am firmly convinced that whoever believes this suffers from a fatal misconception. Your ancestors dragged these black people from their homes by force; and in the white man's quest for wealth and an easy life they have been ruthlessly suppressed and exploited, degraded into slavery. The modern prejudice against Negroes is the result of the desire to maintain this unworthy condition.

The ancient Greeks also had slaves. They were not Negroes but white men who had been taken captive in war. There could be no talk of racial differences. And yet Aristotle, one of the great Greek philosophers, declared slaves inferior beings who were justly subdued and deprived of their liberty. It is clear that he was enmeshed in a traditional prejudice from which, despite his extraordinary intellect, he could not free himself.

A large part of our attitude toward things is conditioned by opinions and emotions which we unconsciously absorb as children from our environment. In other words, it is tradition—besides inherited aptitudes and qualities—which makes us what we are. We but rarely reflect how relatively small as compared with the powerful influence of tradition is the influence of our conscious thought upon our conduct and convictions.

It would be foolish to despise tradition. But with our growing self-consciousness and increasing intelligence we must begin to control tradition and assume a critical attitude toward it, if human relations are ever to change for the better. We must try to recognize what in our accepted tradition is damaging to our fate and dignity—and shape our lives accordingly.

I believe that whoever tries to think things through honestly will soon recognize how unworthy and even fatal is the traditional bias against Negroes.

What, however, can the man of good will do to combat this deeply rooted prejudice? He must have the courage to set an example by word and deed, and must watch lest his children become influenced by this racial bias.

I do not believe there is a way in which this deeply entrenched evil can be quickly healed. But until this goal is reached there is no greater satisfaction for a just and well-meaning person than the knowledge that he has devoted his best energies to the service of the good cause.

THE REV. DR. WILLIAM L. LEE RETIRES



The Rev. Dr. William L. Lee retired on October 23rd, his 65th birthday, after serving 39 years as the Senior Pastor of the Louden Ave. Christian Church of Roanoke, Virginia. Dr. Lee, Bill as he is widely known, received his Bachelors of Science degree in Special Education from Virginia State University with honors (Cum Laude) in 1974, his Masters of Divinity from the Divinity School at Duke University in 1978 and his Doctorate of Ministry Degree from Ashland Theological Seminary in June 2009.

William serves as a member of the Board of Trustees of Lexington Theological Seminary, the Black Endowment Fund of the Christian Church and the Greenwood Cemetery, Nashville, Tenn. William also serves on the Duke Divinity School's Board of Visitors. He is the Director of the African American Leadership Development Program.

William is the founder of New Horizon Health Care, a Federally Qualified Health Care Center and serves as Chairman of the Board of Directors. In November of 2009, the Board of Directors of New Horizon Health Care honored William by naming the educational wing The Rev. Dr. William L. Lee Educational Center.

Dr. Lee also serves on the following boards: United Way of the Roanoke Valley, President of the Board of CHIP – Child Health Investment Partnership, and BB&T Bank.

William is a Paul Harris Fellow with the Rotary Foundation of Rotary International and recently received the Faithful Servant of the Year Award presented by the Disciples of Christ Historical Society for his faithful service to the Christian Church in the United States and Canada.

William served as Moderator of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada

from 2006-2008. The Roanoke City Council named the Rev. Dr. William L Lee as the citizen of the year for 2011.



5 QUESTIONS WITH FRANK THOMAS, AN EXPERT ON BLACK PREACHING

Amy Lynch, IndyStar correspondent

Frank Thomas first became intrigued with the subject of preaching as a teenager, after hearing a pastor deliver a eulogy for one of his best friends.

“After the eulogy, I felt so much better, and I wondered how he made the word of God so relevant and alive,” he recalled. “I took a deep interest in black preaching.”

Throughout history, and especially during tense times of social injustice, African-American preaching has offered transformative words of hope and unity.

“Much of the genius of African-American preaching has been oral, and as such, has traveled for years in the oral tradition,” said Thomas, the Nettie Sweeney and Hugh Th. Miller Professor of Homiletics at Christian Theological Seminary.

“Some of the best African American preaching has gone to the grave, because much of that genius was not captured or archived in written form. It’s here that a critical need for scholars to research, explicate, capture, archive and publish their findings locates itself.”

That interest led Thomas, an internationally renowned expert on African-American preaching, through a series of extensive academic studies and to a stint as a pastor at a Disciples of Christ church in Memphis.

In 2013, he relocated to Indianapolis to join the Christian Theological Seminary staff, where he teaches best practices of preaching and directs the Academy of Preaching and Celebration, the only institution of its kind exclusively dedicated to the research and study of African-American preaching.

Thomas says the concept of a seminary dedicated to the practice of ministry and CTS president Matthew Boulton’s support of the idea to create a doctoral program in African-American preaching were what attracted him. Classes for the new doctoral program begin in January 2017.

“I believe people are looking for hope, and African-American preaching and its emphasis on celebration

have offered hope in some of the most degrading situations and circumstances,” Thomas said. “African-American preaching has addressed volatile social climates before and inaugurated positive social change, such as the civil rights movements of the 1960s. African-American preaching made this a better nation.”



Question: What does the word “leader” mean to you?

Answer: “I heard Rudolph Giuliani say once: ‘A leader is the calmest person in the room who is always looking for solution.’ Leadership has to do with being calm and looking for solutions.”

Q: What are the best and worst parts of your job?

A: “The best part is that I get to teach preaching, write about it, read it, study it and do it. The worst part is anything that takes me away from spending time on preaching.”

Q: What has been the most surprising thing you’ve learned in your career?

A: “First, how long and hard real change is for us as human beings. Second, how resilient and determined the human spirit is in the face of overwhelming odds and disappointments.”

Q: Do you have a professional work philosophy you try to follow?

A: “Do the right things in all relationships. I focus on doing the right thing and I find that it leads to integrity, teamwork and mutual respect.”

Q: What’s the best career advice you’ve ever received?

A: “‘Please,’ ‘may I’ and ‘thank you’ will take you much farther than money and degrees.”

POET'S CORNER

FEELING GOD'S PRESENCE

By May Reed

I felt the angels hovering
just above our heads
to see and hear all,
everything done, everything said.
They must have been smiling
as the choir stood and sang;
And utterly rejoiced
as the preacher's message rang.
Surely they mouthed the scriptures
as each verse was read,
reverently bowed and
lowered hallo heads
as the preacher prayed and
blessed the Bread.
Such times like this are needed
for the children of Light.
Times like these are blessings
for the healing of man's strife.
We have only the ONE SAVIOR,
Lord and King of all.
He modeled for us the Kingdom,
We need only heed His CALL.



ABOUT DR. JUDY D. CUMMINGS

I wrote the above poem after the installation of the Rev. Dr. Judy D. Cummings, New Covenant Christian Church, (formerly Gay-Lea), Nashville, TN. The date was Nov. 14, 2010, and hosted by the Woodmont Christian Church. The Rev. Dr. Cynthia Hale brought the message as only she could.

'Twas truly an eve'n of rejoicing.

Dr. Cummings has a magnetic and dynamic personality. She has immersed herself in the life and fabric of the Church and the Nashville community. She is a graduate of Tennessee State University School of nursing and has 20 years service as a nurse; the University of St. Francis; the Master of Divinity degree from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and has earned the Doctor of Ministry degree in Preaching and Church Leadership from Asbury Theological Seminary. Her dissertation, "The Stained Glass Ceiling in Black Baptist Churches: The Continuing Para-

dox of Liberation" has contributed exponentially to the study of the role and function of clergywomen, particularly in the African American Church. Dr. Cummings is the first woman to Pastor this 157 year old church, and also the first woman to serve as President of the Interdenominational Ministers Fellowship of Nashville. Prior to her becoming pastor at New Covenant she had served 8 years as Executive Pastor of the historic Fifteenth Avenue Baptist Church. Pastor Cummings holds many positions of service she gives to the city of Nashville. She serves with open heart and outstretched hand; dedicated and faithful to her calling. She emphatically says "I am a Disciple of Christ." As installation chair I was honored and humbled to be a part of this historic occasion. I and my family continue to lovingly hold her up in prayer. Praise God.



Continued Look at our Founding Fathers

The first African American Christian Church in Nashville, TN. was organized in 1859. It was known as Grapevine Church. They held services on the land of General Harding. Later they worshipped in an old brick house on 7th Avenue No. Peter Lowery gave it leadership and was assisted by a Brownie Yateman. In 1881, 18 members moved into their new church home which was located on the corner of Vine and Crawford Streets. They decided to change the name to Second Christian Church. When they relocated to Gay Street the congregation would change its name, this time, to Gay Street Christian Church. They first built the basement and worshipped in it until they were able to complete the sanctuary.

A TIME TO LAUGH

A father fussing at his little 4 year old son for getting so dirty got the response "You'd be a lot dirtier too if you were this close to the ground."

A Rock

From "A Teachable Garden"
by Cynthia Hibbler

Digging up a garden with tools can be very strenuous and tiresome.
The garden fork hit a hard object in the soil.
It was a rock:
A smooth beautiful rock.

And David picked up five smooth rocks in preparation for a long battle with Goliath.
He laughed at David's stones.
David used one smooth stone to kill Goliath.

Did he know that our God can use simple things to confuse
the wicked and the foolish?
Did he know that David could kill vicious bears, lions,
snakes, and wild dogs?

Did his laughter remain on his lips after
David cut off his defeated head?
He removed laughter from the camp of the ungodly with one stroke of a blade.
A decapitated terrified body fell to the earth.

Jesus is our One Smooth Rock.
He is always ready to help us win our battles. Ready to fight your giants"
In Him we will find refuge, peace,
and victory.

6/26/16

NAME THESE CHRISTMAS TUNES

Submitted by Ruth Hobbs

Decoration is taking place _____
Romance is taking place _____
An invitation _____
Definitely quiet _____
Some cooking is going on _____
The Blue bird is mentioned _____
The name of a metal is in the title _____
Excitement and adoration are taking place _____
The word sweet is high lighted _____
A command is given _____

FROM RON DEGGS, PRESIDENT OF DHM

Back on March 30, 1986, a little over 30 years ago, Dr. William Sloane Coffin delivered an Easter Sermon to the good folk at Riverside Church in New York City. In that

sermon he said:

"Let us ask . . . if we can expect to find the Risen Christ in the Christian church. The answer has to be a qualified yes. Yes, if the church remembers that the integrity of love is more important than the purity of dogma. Yes, if the church remembers that she cannot bind herself to the Prince of Peace and go awhoring after the gods of war. Yes, if the church remembers that she cannot proclaim the Gospel of Christ while officiating at the altars of anticommunism. Yes, if the church remembers that she cannot stand for peace while lying prostrate before the shrine of national security. Yes, if the church remembers that "the greatest of these is love," that Christ came to forge by love a community that excludes no one."



I have often thought about these words as I travel from congregation to congregation as President of Disciples Home Missions. Regardless of whether it is Easter, I expect to find the Risen Christ in each and every congregation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). I expect to hear and see that Christ's great gift of love is celebrated more than the purity of the church's dogma; that the way of peace is lifted up as the singular alternative to war; that the Gospel of Christ frees us to cross ideological boundaries rather than blind us with narrow minded myopia; that the broad sweep of God's reign brings global security rather than national advantage; and, that love is the true hallmark of the Christian faith resulting in Christian communion and community that is unapologetically inclusive of all.

My expectations aside, each of our congregations should expect their ministers and congregational leaders to: (1) Point them toward Jesus; (2) Equip them with the best theological reasoning and understanding available; (3) Challenge them to have a solid understanding of themselves and their inner life; (4) Teach them to openly and honestly express their true thoughts and feelings; (5) Be theologically and culturally relevant; (6) Make competent, and at times difficult, decisions with a calmness that is grounded in faith; and, (7) Provide them with a sense of resiliency in the face of adversity.

Coffin ended his sermon by saying: ". . . let us pray that Christ today be resurrected in the heart of each of us, that we may give rapt attention to each other's existence, become sisters and brothers to all the world, and help the church draw a circle of love that includes everyone. The powers of death have done their worst/But Christ their legions has dispersed/Let shouts of holy joy outburst: Alleluia!" Let's be the church and the leaders that God has called us to be.

Unapologetically and joyfully yours

FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS

BARRY DESMOND FISHER

Barry Desmond Fisher was born in Columbus, Ohio, on March 11, 1961, and departed this life on September 10, 2016. At an early age, he professed and made a confession of faith in Jesus Christ and later united with Revival Center Ministries.

With hard-work and perseverance, he was a football standout at Columbus Eastmoor Senior High School (Ohio). This along with his natural talent afforded him the opportunity to attend college on a football scholarship. He graduated from California State University, East Bay with a degree in Sociology.

After graduation, he made his home in Vallejo, California where he lived life to the fullest enjoying family and friends. Barry worked as Federal Probation Officer in the Oakland and retired in 2015 after more than 20 years of service. Barry loved his children! He enjoyed music, traveling and was a huge fan of the Kansas City Chiefs. He was also actively involved in coaching his children's youth sports teams for many years and was a member of the Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity.

He was blessed with two children Cameron Fisher and Courtney Fisher of Vallejo, CA and a brother, Tyrone Eugene Fisher (Angela) of Carmel, IN. In addition to a host of family and special friends.

Barry was preceded in death by his mother and father, John and Leah Diggs Monegain.

To this union three wonderful daughters and one granddaughter were born.

Throughout her school days, Vivian was a well-rounded scholar, excelling in the classroom and with a variety of extracurricular activities such as cheerleading, the debate team, the glee club, and the drama club. She graduated from James Whitcomb Riley High School in 1976, and enrolled at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana where she joined the Delta Pi chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., and participated as a leader in the Upward Bound program on the campus of Notre Dame University among other activities. She would complete her studies in 1980 and earn a B.S. Degree in Business.

While at home for college summer break, the Lord allowed two hearts that grew up 750 miles apart to meet during a dance at a disco. Later, this Midwestern lady and her Southern man would fall in love and be bonded forever and a day. Their courtship blossomed and on September 5, 1981, was sealed in holy matrimony as husband and wife. Upon being married Vivian joined her husband in Mobile, AL. The new couple while in their early to mid-twenties became active leaders at the then Saint Mark Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), a small church that while short in monetary resources, showed a lot of love and a deep commitment to community outreach.

After relocating to Nashville Tennessee, Vivian and her family became active leaders at Alameda Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). She taught church school, co-directed the youth choir, started and initially funded the Alameda College Scholarship with her husband, co-chaired the Mobile Food Pantry Ministry, served as interim superintendent of church school, and was a member of the senior choir. Vivian served as a Deacon and was active in the local, regional, and national Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). She was instrumental in getting Alameda Christian Church involved in NOAH, a faith-led coalition that is multi-racial and interfaith, involving congregations, labor unions, and other organizations. As a member of NOAH, she was a board member and served on the Affordable Housing Taskforce, and the Economic Equity and Jobs Taskforce. NOAH engages ordinary people in political & economic decisions affecting their lives, uniting the faith & justice community and giving voice to the marginalized.

In addition to her civic activities, her thirst for knowledge would continue throughout her life later

VIVIAN REED HAYES



Vivian Reed Hayes was born on November 2, 1957 in South Bend, Indiana, the youngest of four children to Roger William Reed Jr. and the late Lillie Mae Dobbs Reed. She confessed Christ at an early age and united with the Greater Saint John Missionary Baptist Church. She was united in holy matrimony to Arnold G.

Hayes on September 5, 1981, thirty-five blissful years.

resulting in an A.A.S. Degree in Computer Information Systems from Nashville State Technical Institute, Nashville, TN, and a M.S. Degree in Social Work from the University of Tennessee Knoxville, Knoxville, TN. Vivian had broad work experience, with stops in the childcare, optometry, banking, manufacturing, pharmaceutical, and health care industries. Career highlights included time spent as a Zone Coordinator and Machine Operator with Ford Motor Company, a certified pharmacy technician with the Kroger company, and her most recent role in what she called her "second act" career path as a Social Worker with Cigna-HealthSpring. She was grateful for the period of time that she worked part-time for the Christian Church in Tennessee, during one of her most challenging times.

SABINE JAMES



Sabine McKinstry was born in Detroit, Michigan April 19, 1954 to Helen and Chalmus McKinstry. Both preceded her in death as well as her brothers Jimmy McKinstry and Mackie McKinstry.

Sabine was a graduate of Cass Technical High School. While attending Cass she worked as a

student co-op employee at Detroit Edison where she was hired full time after graduation and worked there until she retired.

Sabine married Eugene James February 12, 2014

Sabine was known for her kind and generous spirit. Throughout her life, she was surrounded by a loving family and this love flowed and shined through her as she battled for her life right up to the end.

Not once did she complain of pain when asked how she was feeling. Not once did she think of only herself. She was always thinking of ways to help others and how she could care for her family and others. And she did.

Sabine smiled often even when she didn't feel up to it. Sabine was filled with compassion and integrity. She walked with dignity all her life.

Sabine James; beloved wife, mother, grandmother, sister, aunt, cousin and friend; is survived by her husband Eugene James, her son Bakari Wilson, her two grandsons: Maliky and Bakari Jr., her sister Diane

McKinstry, two brothers, James Dale McKinstry and Chalmus McKinstry, along with nieces and nephews and great nieces and nephews.

Sabine's smile and spirit will live on as family and friends remember and savor those pleasant and fun loving moments in our hearts and minds forever.

EMMA W. SAUNDERS

Emma W. Saunders was born November 12, 1915 in Midway, Kentucky to the late Estella Walker Jackson and Mitchell Jackson, Sr. Early Sunday morning May 29, 2016 God called her name and she quietly went home.



She confessed a hope in Christ at an early age at St. Matthew AME Church, Midway, Kentucky. After graduating from Midway High School, she united in marriage to Rev. Richard Saunders. They moved to Brooklyn, New York where Richard became the Pastor of Stuyvesant Heights Christian Church and she became the "First Lady". Together they traveled to London, Germany and Scotland for different church events. Mary also worked for several years while in Brooklyn at the A&S Department Store in the linen department.

After returning to Louisville in the 80's, she united with Hill Street Christian Church under the leadership of the late Rev. James A. Turner, Jr. She served faithfully as a Sunday School teacher and member of the (CWF), Christian Women's Fellowship and was a devoted member until her health began to fail.

Emma was a very independent person, a voice of reason. She never met a stranger and never complained. Her favorite saying was "I Love You More".

She was preceded in death by her parents: husband; brothers, Samuel, Luther, Mitchell Jackson Sr.; sisters, Virginia Dedmon, Bertella Samuels, Frances Burdette, Florence Bush.

Emma leaves to cherish her sweet memories a son, Robert

E. Saunders; sister, Georgia Raglin; a granddaughter, Celeste Saunders; great grandchildren, Tatiana Barnes, Devon Saunders; great-great granddaughter, Aubrey Barnes and a host of nieces, nephews, friends and church family.

NORMA JEAN VADEN



Norma Jean Vaden, 74, of Nashville, Tennessee passed away on the morning of September 23, 2016.

Norma Jean was born to Rossanna Tate on September 26, 1941 in Alton, Illinois. She was preceded in death by her loving mother and son, William Vaden.

Norma Jean and brothers, Ronald and Steven Tate grew up surrounded with family. Cousins, Melvin

Bell (Clotee) were like siblings and shared enduring, touching memories. While attending Alton High School in Illinois, she studied and graduated with honors as a member of the class of 1959. These were some of her most memorable times. After high school, Norma Jean attended Southern Illinois University where she was actively engaged in studies and was a lively student.

She worked as a generous hearted nurse giving care to many patients. She was also actively involved in local communities and was a vigorous member who tirelessly served for the goodness of others. Serving as the vice-president of the Residents Association of the James A. Cayce Homes she charismatically led neighbors and friends in organizing committees which rallied and fought against the prejudicial malpractices

of the local government.

Dedicated and devoted to her work at the Historical Greenwood Cemetery in Nashville, Tennessee. Touching many lives and serving as one of their most faithful and honored employees. She graciously retired after committing thirty years of life serving others in their time of bereavement.

Her spiritual commitment to GOD was reflected in service to her church and others. Serving as a faithful member she organized and prolifically served as chair of the Vacation Bible School Committee.

In addition, she served as a loyal member of the Missionary Society and adoringly taught Sunday School.

Norma Jean enjoyed life, loved good food and socializing with family and friends. She was always willing to take a seat at her favorite restaurants to enjoy her favorite dishes. Mom's palate for good food was relished and always brought a smile to our faces. She also enjoyed seeing great theatrical performances and never denied an opportunity to go shopping.

But her greatest joy was her loving children and grandchildren.

Norma Jean was survived by her loving and devoted children: Kimberly Tate, Gregory Tate, Dana White, Verdia Vaden, Jonathan R. Vaden (laconya), Gwanyca Vaden-Broadly (Orlando), and William Vaden (deceased). She was the beloved grandmother to six beautiful grandchildren: Ahmad Tate, Ashonda Tate (deceased), Jonathan R. Vaden, Jr., Gwanyca Vaden, Iyla Vaden, Ahmad Vaden and one great grandson: Jonathan R. Vaden, III. She is also survived by close and dear friends, JoCarolyn Russell, Judith Hill, Deb Setzer and Debra Roan.

FOUNDATION IN BEST FINANCIAL CONDITION

The Christian Church Foundation is in the best financial condition of its 55-year history, Senior Vice President Ruth Weaver reported to the Foundation Board of Directors.

The Board, at its fall meeting, approved a 2017 operating budget that offers services to the church below actual costs. This is possible because of earnings from the Foundation's endowment. Strong market returns and partnerships with a growing number of ministries have increased the Foundation's total assets under management.

"We've preached for years and years about the importance of endowments as an additional stream of income," said Foundation President Gary Kidwell. "Because of distributions from gifts that were given to support the Foundation's ministry, we are able to

support the services that the Foundation provides to individuals and ministries at no cost to them."

Endowment earnings provide vital support. "I think we've become our own best example of how endowments can expand ministry," said Vice President and Controller Lori Lucas.



2017 Board Chair Bob Williams visits with incoming Vice Chair Todd Reed

An Open Letter from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Regional Leadership to the Church in the United States and Canada

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

In this contentious campaign season, we write as leaders who have witnessed firsthand the prophecy of our Lord that "five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three;" (Luke 12:52 NRSV). In a week when we have gathered to confer about the spiritual health of our church, both sides of America's divided family have called one another racist. As a body that has claimed a pro-reconciliation, anti-racist priority for two decades, we the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada write to offer a word of hope from our experience.

First we offer reflections on some of the more difficult learnings of these past two decades.

As faith leaders, we look back on the history of the United States and Canada, and we see that we have too often been on the wrong side of history with regard to public policy. Too many of us were wrong on slavery. Too many were wrong on Jim Crow. Too many were wrong on residential schools for indigenous children, and too often we have turned our backs on treaties with indigenous brothers and sisters. When we said nothing about such policies, we supported the status quo by default. Then and now, however, the voice of God calls us to bring our faith to participate actively in shaping public policy, "Ah, you who make iniquitous decrees, who write oppressive statutes, to turn aside the needy from justice and to rob the poor of my people of their right, that widows may be your spoil, and that you may make the orphans your prey!" (Isaiah 10:1-2 NRSV) Our faith has political implications.

A serious reckoning with the ministry of Jesus compels us to embrace not a politics of left or right or Democratic or Republican parties, but to further God's politics as best we can determine it. Jesus directed us to pray for God's kingdom to come here on earth as it is in heaven. Jesus gave us our public policy directive in his first address, as told in Luke 4:18: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free." (NRSV)

Our experience has shown us that racism is embedded in public policies and systems, favoring some people

and discriminating against others. This "institutional racism" creates inequities between the poor and rich, those with health care and those without, those who are welcome in our country and those who are not, those who face disparity in the criminal justice system and those who do not, those with access to good education and those who lack it. In health care, voting rights, education, criminal justice, immigration policy, and housing,

We have a responsibility to name structural inequities, to join with others in the public square who are seeking the good of the whole, and to work for moral policy that roots out racism from our common life.

Jesus not only endorsed policies that would ensure liberty and justice for all. He also moved among the people who were made poor by systemic inequality, offering healing and value to all. Jesus broke bread with people from all walks of life and intentionally developed relationships across the dividing lines of race, gender and nationality. Jesus invited people into diverse, beloved community where they could learn to face their own implicit bias and heal from the hatred that had been sown in their own hearts.

To follow Jesus in North America today is to both advocate for anti-racist public policy and actively seek to build community across the dividing lines of race and class in our communities. Our call as people of faith is to pave the way for public justice by becoming the kind of community we pray and work for in society. The values that undergird this two-fold ministry of public witness and life together include love, justice, compassion, mercy, grace, hospitality to strangers and prophetic challenge in the face of injustice. Jesus called these things the "weightier matters of the law" (Matt.23:23 NRSV).

As Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said half a century ago, "we as a nation need to undergo a radical revolution of values." Rev. King insisted then that it was time to break the silence about the injustices in society. The truth must be told, he said.

The truth must still be told. We challenge every sitting politician and candidate for public office, and we challenge ourselves: this is not about party politics. It is

about redeeming the soul of our two nations.

Sisters and brothers, it matters how we talk about these things. Our words and tone will resonate beyond this particular political season. We choose today whether we will speak from a place of mutual respect and care for each other and value for the establishment of justice, the common good and equal protection under the law in our life together, or whether we will choose to side with likeminded friends and family, "three against two and two against three" in a fight to societal devastation.

Two ways are laid out before us: one that leads to destruction and another that leads to life. For two decades, our church has tried to walk the narrow way of anti-racist community building and public witness. It has not been easy, and we are still striving to go deeper and become more just in our own church life, but we write to testify from our experience that this way leads to life. We pray in these difficult days that we will continue to have the courage to walk together in the way toward liberty and justice for all.

In Christ,

Regional Ministers and Moderators of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada, meeting in Indianapolis, August 25-26, 2016.

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