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2019

The Oldtimers' Grapevine, Volume 28 (January - December 2019)

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The Oldtimers' GRAPEVINE

January to April, 2019

Volume 28, Issue 1

LETTER FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

Ruth P. Hobbs:

A Heart of Wisdom, Love, and Service
"Teach us to number our days,
that we may gain a heart of wisdom."

Have you noticed that "common sense" is not that common anymore. As you look at decision-making by people in the private and public sectors; do you ever find yourself asking: "What were they thinking?"

Well, if you are fortunate enough to know Ruth P. Hobbs; you experience her common sense, good judgment, and wisdom - all with a sprinkling of humility and a low key, no-nonsense approach to life. For example - on the occasion of wishing her well on the celebration of her 104th birthday recently: something I saw as a significant milestone and a very big deal. In response Ruth calmly and quietly chronicled a series of birthday events and gifts - always expressing profound gratitude and awe for the goodness that was shown to her by family and friends. Moreover, she repeatedly expressed gratitude to God for blessing her to live past the century mark. She also expressed gratitude to God for her sister, Hilda Powell Faulkner, who lived to be 108 years old (see related article in For Whom The Bell Tolls).

Ruth attributes her blessed life to a mother, whom she described as: "Very strict." As a young child she did not appreciate this strictness; however, later in life she realized that her mother was teaching her discipline and preparing her to be a productive citizen. Ruth attributes her education and her career as an educator to her mother, who taught elementary school for 54 years. She is quick to add: "You are never too old to learn." She demonstrates this love of life- long learning by her involvement in a Literary Society, as well as three bible study groups. Ruth is truly a woman of God who continues to learn and serve a loving God.

We as Grapevine Board and staff sincerely want to express our deep abiding love for Ruth and our gratitude for her service to this ministry. Ruth is the only founding member of The Oldtimers' Grapevine Board that is alive and still serving since 1994.* Ernest J. Newborn, retired Grapevine board president is living in the Claremont, California area.

To you Ruth, we wish you many more years of good health and service. May we all develop a heart of wisdom, love, and service as our dear Ruth P. Hobbs.

**As a brief historical moment, we celebrate the following who were founding Grapevine Board members: Sere S. Myers, Board Chair; Flo Kallenbach, Vice Chair; George Lakes, Secretary; Reubena M. S. Fox, Treasurer; Cornelius W. Arnold; Kitty Austin; Ruth P. Hobbs; Roland Huff; and Ernest J. Newborn.*

Joyfully submitted,

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



A BRIGHTER NEW YEAR BY RUTH P. HOBBS 104-YEAR-OLD

2018 has pulled its curtain down and pinned it with a star;

2019 has been ushered in No matter where you are.

We reminisce about 2018, But 2019 we now look forward to,

for always the beginning of another year
Bring challenges for me and you.

There have been some days of bitter sweet -
Some sweet memories lest we forget,
But now let's focus on the New Year

Choosing ideas that we'll never regret.

May we not be held hostage by the past -

And live with deep regret and fear,

But with our loving Savior's help

Have a Blessed & Prosperous New Year!



RECLAIMING JESUS: A CALL TO PRAYER, FASTING, AND ACTION

As the elders who wrote the declaration “Reclaiming Jesus: A Confession of Faith in a Time of Crisis,” to which 5 million people responded, we now issue “A Call to Prayer and Fasting.” We urge Christians to remain steadfast in their faith and engage with the deepening challenges our nation faces.

In 1863, at the height of the Civil War—the most divided time in American history—Abraham Lincoln proclaimed a national “day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer.” Today, we also believe our national crisis calls for prayer, fasting, humility, and repentance. With the season of Lent before us, we ask how we can apply Lenten spiritual practices to our lives and to the dangers facing our democracy.

We pray with those who suffered during the unconscionable government shutdown and with those who face poverty and hunger every day. We pray for those who live in fear of deportation and family separation. We pray for those who face violence—especially parents who fear for their children of color—and those who endure language of racial divisiveness. We pray for the soul of the nation and the resilience of our government’s processes. We pray for those who have lost hope.

Above all, we pray for God to take away our fear and stir within us certainty in the fact that Jesus Christ is Lord. We pray that all will come to know that Jesus is love and that this knowledge will permeate our lives. We pray that we may have wisdom to discern and speak truth, and courage to stand for it in our public squares. We pray that we may be bridges that bring God’s love to our angry national discourse. We pray for pure hearts.

Therefore, we are calling for national prayer and fasting beginning on Ash Wednesday, March 6, and continuing through the season of Lent. We call upon church leaders, pastors, and local congregations to respond to the ongoing devastation that so many people face. We also call upon church leaders to stand up to the misuse and abuse of political power, in protection of the constitutional checks and balances of government and the common good.

We announce this “Call to Prayer, Fasting, and Action” to local cathedrals and churches, for Ash Wednesday services around the country. We call on clergy to pray and preach the gospel message and lead their churches to serve as the conscience of the nation. We call on clergy to foster dialogue that builds unity. We call on clergy to offer prayers that our political leaders will make decisions not for their self-interest

but for what is right for our nation and those whom Jesus called “the least of these.”

Let us assemble for prayer in national and local worship spaces across denominational lines. Prayer turns us to God and fasting focuses our attention on repentance. Gathering to pray will anchor us for the days ahead. Our Lenten prayers in our homes and our churches can be weekly and daily, individual and corporate, personal and public. As we pray, let us also discern what our best responses should be in such a time as this. It is time to reclaim Jesus—and have Jesus lay his claim on us.

We must pray and ask God to take us deeper and prepare us to give a response that comes not from the Left or the Right, but because we are, first and foremost, followers of Jesus. Lent is traditionally characterized by prayer, penitence, and almsgiving—which is defined broadly as solidarity with the most vulnerable. Prayer and fasting will help us find the spiritual vigilance and availability that are necessary for action.

May God bless and keep us, guide and direct us, and prepare us to reclaim Jesus.

SIGNERS:

Bishop Carroll A. Baltimore, President and CEO, Global Alliance Interfaith Network; Dr. Amos Brown, Chair, Social Justice Commission, National Baptist Convention USA, Inc.; Rev. Dr. Walter Brueggemann, Professor Emeritus, Columbia Theological Seminary; Dr. Tony Campolo, Cofounder, Red Letter Christians; Dr. Iva Carruthers, General Secretary, Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference; The Most Rev. Michael B. Curry, Presiding Bishop and Primate, The Episcopal Church; Rev. Dr. James Forbes, President and Founder, Healing of the Nations Foundation and Preaching Professor at Union Theological Seminary; Rev. Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, General Secretary Emeritus, Reformed Church in America; Rev. Dr. Cynthia Hale, Senior Pastor, Ray of Hope Christian Church, Decatur, Ga.; Rev. Dr. Richard Hamm, former General Minister and President of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); Rev. Dr. Joel C. Hunter, Faith Community Organizer and Chairman, Community Resource Network; Senior Bishop Lawrence Reddick, Christian Methodist Episcopal Church; Rev. Ray Rivera, President and Founder, Latino Pastoral Action Center; Fr. Richard Rohr, Founder, Center for Action and Contemplation; Dr. Ron Sider, President Emeritus, Evangelicals for Social Action; Rev. Jim Wallis, President and Founder, Sojourners; Rev. Dr. Sharon Watkins, Director, NCC Truth and Racial Justice Initiative; Dr. Barbara Williams-Skinner, Co-Convener, National African American Clergy Network; and President, Skinner Leadership Institute; Bishop Will Willimon, Bishop, The United Methodist Church, retired, and Professor of the Practice of Ministry, Duke Divinity School

GENERAL MINISTER AND PRESIDENT OFFERS NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS TO RECONNECT

"I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ." –



Philippians 1:3-5

As we begin a new year together, I am filled with hope for our Church family across the United States and Canada. As individuals, we often use this time to think of a resolution, a goal or intention to set for the year – perhaps to break a bad habit or to develop a new skill. As congregations, and as Disciples, I invite you to join me in considering what a resolution to reconnect might look like in 2019.

In my first 18 months as your General Minister and President, I have been reminded of the many ways we can live better together. Perhaps your resolution will be to launch a new ministry in your community, commit to new forms of evangelism, or develop a new relationship with a nearby faith group.

It is in this spirit of new beginnings, that I invite you, and your congregation, to prayerfully consider ways you can renew your covenant with our wider Church.

You might reach out to your regional ministry to find new ways to collaborate with Disciples in your area this year, like regional assemblies, youth events, and professional development opportunities.

I hope this covenant includes a commitment to support Disciples Mission Fund, our Church's common funding system that sustains a variety of our life-giving ministries. You can find a variety of resources to help tell the DMF story online.

Your New Year's Resolution may be to connect with Disciples online by exploring our general ministries' websites and social media platforms. Your congregation will find a variety of programs to participate in, webinars to attend, and resources to use.

I would also encourage you and fellow members to attend our General Assembly in Des Moines, IA this July – an opportunity to witness and participate in the full diversity of our Church. Your congregation might even encourage attendance through sponsorship or fundraising.

One easily achievable resolution is to report to the Year Book and Directory by submitting your report by March 15. This action not only secures your nonprofit status, but also demonstrates clearly your connection to the Disciples.

No matter the resolution you set for 2019, I want to thank you for the work you're already doing to carry out God's mission, and I look forward to continuing that work together, "for we are God's servants, working together; you are God's field, God's building" (I Corinthians 3:9).

TOUGALOO COLLEGE FORMALIZES AFFILIATION WITH DISCIPLES

Higher education has been a priority of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) from the earliest days of the movement. Alexander Campbell once said, "Colleges and churches go hand in hand in the progress of Christian civilization." It is that idea and vision that has propelled Disciples across the generations to be committed to promoting education through the establishment of colleges, universities and theological institutions across the country. Disciples remain proud of this heritage and committed to keeping our institutions of higher education strong. One of the schools that is part of this legacy is Tougaloo College in Mississippi.



Having been founded in 1882 by the Home Missionary Society of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the Southern Christian Institute of

Edwards, MS, served black students during the Jim Crow era and trained several generations of African American educators, clergy and other leaders. In 1954, the Southern Christian Institute merged with Tougaloo College and continued its central mission of education, while also playing a critical role in advancing the cause of freedom justice during the Civil Rights Movement.

While Tougaloo was not an original signatory to the 1977 Covenant between the colleges and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Tougaloo has continued to appreciate its affiliation with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and has stated such in its mission statement over the years. Beginning in 2015, Rev. Dr. Alivin O. Jackson, retired Disciples clergy and member of the Tougaloo board of trustees, began facilitating conversations to try and strengthen the relationship between Tougaloo College and the Disciples. These conversations led to a formal meeting between Dr. Beverly Hogan, President of Tougaloo College, and Rev. Chris Dorsey, President of HELM, where both agreed to work toward Tougaloo achieving full affiliation with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

At a recent Tougaloo College Board of Trustees Meeting in October 2018, the Board voted to affirm its commitment to the current Covenant between Colleges and Universities and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and officially requested to join in full affiliation with the other fourteen affiliated colleges and universities of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). In November, the HELM Board of Directors voted to approve Tougaloo's request for full affiliation, and this was followed by an affirmative vote by the Presidents who make up the Disciples Council of Colleges and Universities. Finally, the Administrative Committee of the General Board voted to approve Tougaloo's request. This brings the total number of Disciples colleges and universities to fifteen!

At a time when many private colleges and universities are giving up their affiliations with churches and religious organizations, it is rare that a school would seek to strengthen its relationship with the church. Furthermore, as the church celebrates the merger agreement that brought together the National Christian Missionary Convention with the International Convention of the Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ), this is an opportunity for the Church to welcome another HBCU into a full affiliation with the Church. We give thanks for the deepening of the relationship between the Disciples and Tougaloo College as we continue to strive to make Campbell's words a reality.

OHIO COUNCIL OF CHURCHES SELECTS REV. DR. JACK SULLIVAN, JR. AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Ohio Council of Churches (OCC), the 100-year-old state ecumenical organization, has named the Reverend Dr. Jack Sullivan, Jr., a career pastor, ecumenist and social justice advocate, as its new executive director. Sullivan, 59, has served as senior pastor of First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of Findlay, OH since February 2017. He began his ministry with the OCC January 1, 2019.



A native of Cleveland, Ohio, Sullivan is an ordained minister in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) US and Canada. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Communication from Ohio University, Athens, OH; a Master of Divinity degree from Lexington Theological Seminary, Lexington, KY; and a Doctor of Ministry degree from United Theological Seminary, Dayton, OH. Sullivan was awarded an Honorary Doctorate from Bethany College, Bethany, WV.

With prior service as pastor, Christian educator, regional minister, and death penalty abolitionist, Sullivan is past convener of the OCC's Justice and Advocacy Team. He is president of the governing board of Ohioans to Stop Executions; co-president of the Disciples Justice Action Network; life member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. and the NAACP; and member of the governing bodies of EcuMentors men's ministry; the Ohio Region, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); the Ohio Conference, United Church of Christ; Findlay's mental health agency Century Health, and LGBTQ+ Spectrum Support Group; the Ohio Poor People's Campaign; Death Penalty Action; and Journey of Hope: From Violence to Healing, a national anti-death penalty organization. Sullivan has given leadership to committees of both the National and World Councils of Churches, and has participated in ecumenical gatherings in Zimbabwe, Switzerland, and Israel/Palestine.

Bishop Marvin Frank Thomas, Sr., President of the Governing Board of the OCC says: "The Ohio Council of Churches is very fortunate to have Reverend Jack Sullivan take the helm as our Executive Director, for such as time as this. We know without a doubt, that he is the one God has chosen to lead us as we seek our way forward as a major ecumenical voice and presence in the State of Ohio."

CTS WELCOMES DR. DAVID M. MELLOTT AS SEVENTH PRESIDENT



After an extensive search process by the Board of Trustees, Christian Theological Seminary is excited to announce that **Dr. David M. Mellott** has been named the Seminary's seventh president. His tenure will officially begin on July 1, 2019.

Since 2011, Dr. Mellott has served as Vice President for Academic Affairs,

Dean, and Professor of Theological Formation at Lancaster Theological Seminary in Lancaster, PA. An ordained minister with the United Church of Christ, Dr. Mellott provides an especially unique perspective for the ecumenical Indianapolis campus; he grew up with roots in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and was previously ordained a Roman Catholic priest in 1982.

Dr. Bill Kincaid, Interim President and Herald B. Monroe Associate Professor of Leadership and Ministry Studies, noted that Dr. Mellott brings significant leadership experience in theological education and "a personal temperament for the opportunities and challenges before us. His teaching interests, advocacy efforts and passion for social justice initiatives reflect the historic impulses and stated values of Christian Theological Seminary. I very much look forward to working with him when I return to the faculty," said Kincaid.

"Dr. Mellott joins CTS at a vibrant and promising moment in an institutional history spanning more than 160 years," said Liz Klimes, Chair of the CTS Board of Trustees. "The Seminary's innovative programs including a first-of-its-kind PhD, distinctive models of advancing pastoral care, counseling and theological leadership, and a forward-thinking partnership with Butler University. We're excited to see how Dr. Mellott's leadership will help CTS serve as a flagship North American Seminary," noted Klimes.

Dr. Mellott said he is compelled by the Seminary's legacy of integrating a rich theological education with a vision to serve the common good. "Christian

Theological Seminary has long been a regional and national leader in delivering ecumenical theological education that serves the world," he stated.

He added the Seminary's culture and legacy of inclusiveness is particularly relevant today. "Christian Theological Seminary's commitment to racial and gender justice is now, as much as ever, essential to being faithful, authentic and engaged," said Dr. Mellott. "I am honored to serve as president of such a distinguished school with a substantial mission to serve the world."

Upon embarking on his new role as president at CTS, Dr. Mellott will reside in Indianapolis with his husband, the Rev. Lance Mullins.

THE REV. DR. NANCY CLAIRE PITTMAN NAMED PRESIDENT OF PHILLIPS THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Following a seven-month long search that yielded an impressive and diverse pool of applicants, the Board of Trustees of Phillips Theological Seminary has named the Rev. Dr. Nancy Pittman as the school's next president. Pittman has served as interim president of the Seminary since July 1, 2018 and will immediately assume the presidency.



"Dr. Pittman is the clear choice because of her strong leadership skills and vision for the future of theological education," said Claire Meredith, chair of the seminary's board of trustees and the presidential search committee.

"It was a tribute to the seminary that we attracted so strong a pool of candidates for the presidency and a clear affirmation of Nancy's abilities and readiness to lead that she emerged as the ideal fit for this time in Phillips' history," Meredith said.

Pittman has served Phillips in several roles before being named president. She was Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean before being named interim president. She has also directed the seminary's Doctor of Ministry program and taught courses in the practice of ministry and the New Testament.

“I appreciate the confidence the board has in me to lead Phillips into the future,” Pittman said. “As we continue to develop habits of hospitable inclusion of persons from many diversities, we will be better equipped to serve our mission of teaching and learning the ways of Jesus to a world that needs to hear of the compassion, grace and justice he offers the world. And we will remain firm in our historic commitment to train pastors of local congregations, ministers of various institutions, and religious leaders in a variety of settings.”

Pittman was named president of the seminary Jan. 3, 2019 by the Board of Trustees following a national search by the Presidential Transition Committee.

Pittman was ordained into the ministry by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Southwest on April 1, 1984. She received her BA from Texas Christian University in 1979, her MDiv from Brite Divinity School in 1984, and her PhD from Southern Methodist University in 1997.

“I hope we renew our concern for churches and communities that are seeking to be faithful to Jesus in the neighborhoods they serve in ever new, ever inspiring ways,” Pittman said. “We have much work to do as we live into the transitions that have come and are coming our way.”

STRENGTH TO LOVE



“No man should become so in his personal ambitions that he forgets that other people exist in the world.”

In the flurry of quotes that we borrow and attribute to the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., that reach their precipice this week that we celebrate his birthday, this one arrested me this year. They are found in the notes – handwritten – from his trial sermon at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama in January of 1954. In this message entitle the Three Dimensions of a Complete Life, Dr. King spoke to his audience about the length, breadth and the height of life. He was encouraging the congregation and community on an essential component of our life of faith

from John’s revelation on the isle of Patmos and John Donne’s poem “No Man is an Island” emphasizing that we are both earthly and heavenly-focused creatures. While the length of life, he explained is our natural inward push to achieve our personal goals and ambitions, the breadth of life is our outward concern for others. Then as now, there is the tendency to us to embrace and exemplify in our relationship with the world and proclivity for one or the other. We either are totally inwardly focused on ourselves, our needs and what others can do for us or we are deeply committed and passionate about serving others. At any given moment, however, I contend we can fit in one dimension, the other or both. This is where Dr. King’s words that I quoted earlier made their way into his message. There are moments in our individual and collective lives as church that we actually forget that other people or at least their concerns exist and also demand our time and attention.

As we reflect on the life and legacy of Dr. King, we are compelled to note that Dr. King’s legacy is not solely his accomplishments on the battlefield for human rights.

It is his courage to love.

I would like to gather our thoughts this morning on the theme taken from one of his most poignant collections of sermons, “Strength to Love.” There is video footage of Dr. King marching in Chicago arm in arm with Ralph Abernathy when a loud noise goes off like that of a gunshot. Dr. King immediately flinches as if to duck the oncoming threat. His anxiety and intensity are obvious on his face, but he does not break his stride. In that footage and episode, he demonstrated the third dimension of the complete life from his sermon in Montgomery years before. There is the height of life, which he explains is our reach upward – not just inward and outward – to the Creator of heaven and earth. God is larger than our hearts and our fears. When we embrace that we are messengers of the God who is the source and the end of our life, we begin to embrace our capacity for the courage to love.

by Rev. April Johnson



RECONCILIATION
MINISTRY

QUEEN BEES, AMONG OLDEST LIVING TEACHERS

The following excerpt from the March 3, 2019 issue of the Bay City Tribune was sent in by Elder Betty Brown of University Christian Church, Houston, TX. Elder Betty Brown added that both Wilhelm Moye and Tena Simien are active members of Bethlehem Christian Church.



Nonagenarian sisters Wilhelm Moye of Cedar Lake and Tena Simien of Sweeny are among the oldest living teachers in America, born 1922 and 1924 respectively. Nearly eighty years of service together in the Van Vleck and Sweeny Independent School Districts, these living legends have witnessed and participated in every phase of American public school education beginning with the segregated community schools, segregated ISDs, “Freedom of Choice,” and ending in the fully-integrated Independent School Districts. Thus, this royal duo are history-makers in their own right who earned their tiaras through diligence, dedication and determination to the teaching profession. Moye, Prairie View alumna and Simien, Jarvis Christian College alumna, are the last surviving members of Matagorda county’s preeminent educators’ family, proud representatives of the metaphorical apple in the adage, “an apple never falls [fell] far from the tree. Their father Joel Williams Sr., Tuskegee math engineer graduate, served nearly fifty years as principal, teacher, and bus driver in Van Vleck ISD. Siblings Joel Williams Jr, Wharton ISD teacher/Van Vleck High School principal, Girtha Woodard, Van Vleck elementary teacher, Augustus Williams Sr., HISD teacher-counselor, and Fay Woodard, TSU art education studies are also members of this elite club. While their brother Ralph Williams Sr. never attended college, he often jokingly reminded them that as foreman at one of America’s largest metal companies, he possessed “degree-worthy knowledge” in the production and manufacturing of aluminum, steel, iron, and other precious metals-“the car y’all drive, the spoon y’all use, the soda can and fountain y’all drink from was made by workers like me.”

The BEES vividly recall their first teaching assignments in the 40s walking ten to twelve miles round trip through open fields, weeds, and unpaved dirt roads to Sargent Colored School (Moye) and Jerusalem Community School (Simien). During inclement, “bad” weather, Simien remained overnight in the home of Principal Samson’s family and Moye in the home of Sargent relatives. Years later, they purchased their cars of choice: Buick Century/LeSabre for Moye and Lincoln Continental Town Car for Simien.

Moye taught typing, shorthand, bookkeeping and business math at OH Herman High School coupled with secretarial duties as school secretary in the 50s and 60s. During the first phase of integration “Freedom of Choice,” Van Vleck ISD transferred her to Van Vleck High School in 1965 as its first black teacher. “I was devastated with this decision and almost resigned, but my mother convinced me that the move “wouldn’t be so bad, that I would adjust.” Moye credits Principal Keenon, Freedom of Choice Student Linda Harrison, and a nice white male teacher for helping her cope in this new teaching world. Reflecting on this time period, she sighs and speaks pensively. “At first, the environment at Van Vleck High School was not a very welcoming one, but I survived and later became close friends with the very ones who had shunned me.” Moye retired in the late 80s.

Simien, on the other hand, high school supervisor, speech-drama club sponsor, programs’ director, and high school English teacher at George Washington Carver, was one of six black teachers hired in Sweeny ISD for the 1966-67 school year when full integration went into effect. She recalls a friendlier setting at Sweeny Junior High, stating that “I [she] had decided to remain in my [her] room with the door closed throughout the day, including lunch. “But the sixth grade white teachers had a different plan. On the first day of school, they knocked on my door and insisted that I ““come out, you can’t stay cooped up in this room,”” we ‘re all going to the cafeteria together.” This septuplet coterie formed a formidable, tenable bond that remained from that day forward. Simien continued to teach Junior High English until her retirement in 1984.

Together, the Queen BEES (Business/English Education Sisters) have instructed impacted, impressed, inspired, and influenced countless students. They continue to opine and reflect on their “God-given” teaching talents for teaching was, and still is their passion, especially Simien who continues to correct all family members’ grammar. Behind the scene, she is called the “Grammar Queen.” Moye, on the other hand, suffered a mild stroke several years ago and communicates less frequently, except in the case of “heresy”

church financial news which provoke memories of her and her father Joel's seventy-plus years of service as church secretary; she also has an affinity to discuss and attend community funerals, as well as, interact with children in the family. From walking to driving, teaching to retiring, Moye and Simien continue to live fruitful productive lives, traveling, eating out, and attending church. Both agree that "every outing is a class reunion because some student, somewhere always recognizes them. People often speculate and ask them about the number of students they have taught through the years. They reply, "I don't know. Maybe a thousand. Maybe thousands." Then they begin gloating and melodically naming the careers of students they once taught. "Van Vleck Superintendent, Sweeny mayor, Van Vleck school board members, coaches, Bay City courthouse clerks, Sweeny's florist, fire chief, retired principal, community leaders, Sweeny school board members, Sweeny City council members, pro-football players, track stars, bank executives, city managers, postmasters/mistresses, teachers..."

Moye and Simien's influence in Matagorda and Brazoria counties is immeasurable and indelible. The Queen Bees live on!

MY FATHER'S FIRST CHILD by Damon Isiaiah Watts



He wasn't my father's first child but I'm sure today we might consider him his first son. His name was Malik and in many ways, he was my first big brother. While my big sister Alicia had to grow up splitting time, Malik was with him 24/7.

From the time he could fit into my father's pocket, to his tag-along terrible 2's and 3's, to his untimely

death. I'll get to that dreadful day, but first I'd like to talk about my brother from another mother.

Malik always was more like Watts than me. He was incredibly quick and athletic. He possessed the kind of ingenuity that could be both creative or crafty. He had an almost intuitive street-sense and smarts about him at all times. Perhaps most like Pops, he had an aggressive disposition that comes with being of smaller stat-

ure and seemed to always carry a boulder-sized chip on his shoulders. In hindsight, it's easy for me to see how such traits contributed as much Malik constantly being in trouble as it did to my father's success. For my dad, that mellowed with age and experience. Malik unfortunately never got that chance to grow.

I remember that day in May of 2004 as if it were yesterday. It was my last day of First grade and my baby sister's last day of Kindergarten. The night before my mom had given me back my Gameboy and PlayStation 2; she even secretly made arrangements for my best friend Alon to come over all the way from the Westside. The teachers and administrators at Robert Lee Frost IPS 106 decided to end the last day with a schoolwide Walk/Run for charity. It seemed like an idyllic way to end the last day. The weather was gorgeous. Sunny with a calm breeze that kept the heat in check. We were all giddy after our charitable actions and glad that we had aced another year of school. It was supposed to be a celebratory day.

It seems fate had seen it differently. Malik had loved our old neighbor, we all did. But her son had seen fit to put her in a home and moved in with his kids shortly after. Malik and the neighbor boy had been at it from the start. I was always taken back by their drama. Malik was a mere fraction of his size on a good day. That particular day while we were all away, their words escalated into actions. I never did get the full story. It quickly became a bad day. I remember my uncle getting his own severe injury attempting to break it up. Him and my dad rushing Malik to the hospital with huge wounds throughout his torso. The neighbor doing the same with bloodied bruises and scars on his boy's face and a significant wound to his neck. We all waited through the night for updates in panicked prayer. I remember praying to God, "Save them both, but if only one Lord please choose my big brother." I believe they both survived the blood loss, but Malik died on the operating table. I remember questioning God's sense of justice. It was the first time I ever witnessed my father cry. It was my first encounter with demons on my back demanding revenge. The neighbor boy died post-op due to infection from his wounds. However, I never felt relieved from this seemingly divine retribution.

Fast-forward to 2018, where our culture often encourages, and occasionally praises, the pursuit of animalistic characteristics in our artificial habitats. While I've been blessed to have many more big brothers and comrades come into my life, Malik was there first and the second I saw go. How would it change the story if I told you they were both black?... How much would your perspective warp if I told you while I've yet to lie, both Malik and the "neighbor boy" were actually a Miniature Pincher and a German Shepherd.

Regardless of what this revelation did in your opinion of this short story, to this day it still feels as if he left too soon. Regrettably, I've watched way too many humans follow a similar fate. I'm certain millions of people can relate to that pain. For reasons beyond our comprehension they're gone and we're still here. With the backdrop of sociocultural-political differences like the "All Lives Matter" vs "Black Lives Matter" debate beginning to manifest itself as Neo-Nazis doubling down on paramilitary training for an "impending race war"--apparently the masses have yet to hear about--and emboldened reactions from groups like Antifa, I

pray for a near-future where we embrace our collective humanity and put an end to this toxic escalation. For all those that died, let us seek peace.

To my people and the vast majority of people that simply wish to live their lives; who hope and work daily so that their children might have a brighter future where they can do the same, I'd like to paraphrase the words of Claude McKay.

If we must die, let it not be like dogs Hunting and penning others in inglorious spots. While round us bark the mad hiding in fogs Making their mock at our divided lot.

If we must die, O let us nobly die
 So that our precious blood may not be shed
 In vain; then even the damned we defy
 Might be constrained to honor us through life!
 O, kinsmen! We must meet our common foe! They're
 far outnumbered so let us be brave,
 And for their countless blows let them sew Whatever
 awaits before and beyond the grave!
 Still human, we'll face the barbarous, cowardly pack,
 Stressed through a wall, half-dying, but fighting back!



**SAVE
THE DATES!**

JULY 22-25, 2020

2020 EXPERIENCE
IT'S REAL
 NYC   *Revelations 7:9-12*

DALLAS DOES NOT REPRESENT OR EMBODY MARTIN LUTHER KING'S DREAM



As we think about the national holiday to commemorate the profound legacy of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., the irony is not lost that, as a society, his dream is far from a reality, especially in Dallas.

The city of Dallas does not represent or embody King's dream. We are still waiting for justice to "roll down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream."

We are yet to be governed by elected officials who "will do justly and love mercy and walk humbly." Instead, our city leaders continue to "trample over people with the iron feet of oppression" and we are plagued with unlivable wages, unaffordable housing, a treacherous and criminal justice system; and our most vulnerable members of society are readily discarded like yesterday's garbage. We are still waiting to cash "a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice."

The theme for this year's Martin Luther King Jr. Commemorative Week is Reconciliation: Moving the Dream Forward, yet Dallas has some of the most oppressive policies and largest social and economic disparities in the country. So how, pray tell, are our elected officials moving forward the legacy and work of King? What reconciliation has come to fruition?

To celebrate King without also seeking to live into the ethical demands intrinsic to his legacy is an affront to his work and everything King stood for in life and in death. So, we must ask ourselves why the city of Dallas chooses to commemorate King at all. Grand gestures such as galas and parades lend appealing optics and might placate the conscience and ego, but a real tribute to King would be putting his legacy into action.

How can the city pay homage to a man who fought for economic justice while refusing to pass a living wage ordinance?

How can the city celebrate a civil rights crusader like King while celebrating — with monuments, plaques and the like — a revisionist history of our city, state and country?

How can the city memorialize a leader who advocated for fair and affordable housing while neglecting to establish policy and partnerships to provide this basic right to its people?

The city of Dallas will not use those of us who fight and scratch daily to protect people from unjust laws and inequitable policy to underscore the myth of a progressive city. We see you, and no longer will we accept a few seconds at your podium in exchange for true justice in our communities.

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free." — Luke 4:18

King is revered as one of the most preeminent civil rights leaders and justice advocates in history. As a faith leader and pastor, King stood firmly on the foundation of his faith to relentlessly fight for the safety, equity and advancement of all people, highlighting the untenable struggle of black people in this country. All clergy — and black pastors in particular — are members of a deep legacy of women and men who walk boldly in this same spirit of supernatural strength. The baton has been passed and the next leg of this race is up to us.

If Dallas truly wants to embody, uphold, and honor the legacy of King, our elected officials will enact our policy plan for more affordable housing, worker's rights, Confederate monument removal and citizen review board for the police department. When our city leaders truly desire safety, equity and justice for our city they will not simply celebrate King with wreaths and parades, but with policies and resources. They will not merely quote and commemorate his life's work, they will take their place as a vital part of that legacy.

If our city officials fail in this ask then they will have failed our community and, therefore, have fallen woefully short of doing their part to help the city of Dallas live into the Dream that we all long for so deeply.

Frederick D. Haynes is senior pastor of Friendship West Baptist Church.

Irie Session is co-pastor of The Gathering: A Womanist Church.

They wrote this column for The Dallas Morning News.

A VISIT TO A TIJUANA MIGRANT CAMP

by Rev. Sadie Mizisin-Cullumber, senior pastor of Harbor Christian Church in Newport Beach, CA

Over the last few weeks, I have really struggled as I've tried to write about my recent trip with Matthew 25 to the migrant camp just outside of Tijuana in Baja California. How can I put words to something like this? Honestly, most of my time in the camp was spent feeling completely useless, completely speechless, wandering aimlessly. I remember wondering what would happen to this open airspace once the rains began. I remember the sound of a loud cheer that spread quickly through the camp once a group of migrants succeeded in constructing a large tent that would cover many smaller tents and at least keep some of the impending rain out. I remember thinking quietly to myself how I would possibly be coping with this reality if I didn't have the promise of a warm car to drive me home to a warm bed and good food. What would I do if I had my two young daughters with me? How would I possibly be able to show the resolve that these absolutely remarkable individuals were demonstrating, as they faced unreasonably tight quarters, a looming torrential downpour, and an insecure food supply?

I could go on and on in describing the desperate conditions of the camp: the broken plumbing in the bathrooms, the pop-up tent kitchen with a single burner that was trying to prepare food for the whole camp, the tents set up wherever there was a space, the children, the babies.

But if I spoke only of the desperation, I would be missing an essential part of this experience. Because in the midst of the desperation, what I witnessed was the indomitable human spirit. Things that literally would have broken me were being managed with incredible grace and strength. An example of this hopeful spirit came toward the end of my time in the camp. A large group of mostly young men and women began to form in one of the few open spaces. And then, suddenly, a young man began to play music and sing into an old microphone that someone had wrestled up. I have no idea what he was singing because there was so much noise and activity that I couldn't make out the beautiful Spanish words. But somehow, even though I couldn't understand all of his words, I could feel the strength of his spirit and the strength of spirit of those who surrounded him and sang along. In this moment of tragic desperation, this young man chose to sing, and others joined in.

Minutes later it would rain, and the singers would be dispersed as they tried to find what little shelter there was, but for that brief moment, I got to glimpse Christ's strong spirit, that spirit that sings, even in the face of injustice. And I felt an incredible sadness at what my country is missing out on by believing the lies about refugees being criminals that need to be kept out. In truth, our dear country would benefit so profoundly by welcoming the people I met. What a rare thing it is to witness hope in the face of such incredible injustice. It seems to me, our nation has much to learn from the refugees that we have turned our backs on. In shamefully ignoring the growing humanitarian crisis unfolding along our southern border, we are not only causing harm to those who are in desperate situations, we are also missing out as a nation on welcoming remarkable people into our country, people who will continue to strengthen our country through their perseverance, through their audacious hope, and through their deep compassion. How shameful that we allow this dehumanization. How shameful that we allow ourselves to believe the propagandistic lies about refugees.

I believe we can do better as a people, and it starts with listening to the stories of those who have set out on this harrowing caravan journey, guided only by hope and strength of spirit. It begins with standing in awe of those who can find reason to sing even in the most hopeless of situations. And once we have heard the stories and the songs of hope, we must not fail to act and to call our government to act. As a church, we are being tested. What side of the crisis will we fall on? The side that wraps itself in politically motivated and dehumanizing lies? Or will we one day look back on this horror and be able to say that we stood in solidarity with those who are suffering, just as we know our Lord Jesus would have us do? I pray we choose solidarity, however painful this road will be. And I pray that as we stand with our refugee brothers and sisters, it will build in us strong spirits of hope and courage, the kind of hope and courage that I saw that rainy day in the migrant camp.

INVITATION TO ORDINATION



The Region of North Carolina Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and Covenant Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Cordially invites your presence and prayers for the Ordination to Christian Ministry of

Marilyn Francene Williams.

**Sunday, April 7th from 3:00 - 5:00 p.m. At:
Covenant Christian Church
2911 SW Cary Pkwy,
Cary, NC 29713**

Reception at the church following the service.

A PLACE FOR THE SINGING OF ANGELS

Rev. William L. Lee, D. Min.

I read each year during the advent and Christmastide season in conjunction with the biblical account of Jesus' birth, Howard Thurman's, "The Mood of Christmas." The combination of Thurman and the scriptures aid me in developing a positive mood for Christmas. It is my desire to assist any and all who read this some needed help in developing a positive mood for Christmas.

My explicit statement concerning developing a positive mood hints at an implicit possibility that some may be experiencing a negative mood during this season. I struggle with saying negative because truth be told most of the time our mood is neutral. It is neither positive or negative. I since even if your mood is neutral, it feels negative during season of lights, crowded malls, traffic congestion and the inundation of so many commercials that declare you must be joyful.

You push back at all of this excitement by rehearsing in private moments the thing or things that have placed an ominous cloud over your soul and has caused a not so positive mood to Hoover over you. "They just don't know what I am going through." You are absolutely correct. They, we, me, I don't know and

we will suspend judgement. If our collective experience were the same they are not the same.

What I offer is a ray of hope in your darkness. I cannot and maybe should not try to lift the darkness. I offer something that may alter your mood in the darkness. Howard Thurman states "there must be always remaining in every man's (person) life some place for the singing of angels."

It occurs to me that angels are always singing, at least that is the theology of my formative years. The saints of my up bringing sung, shouted and testified that "all night and all day angels keep a watch over me my Lord." My belief is that they sung while keeping surveillance. My momma heard angels sing and she sung with them, "up above my head I hear music in the air, there must be a God somewhere."

The shepherds, while watching vigilantly over their flock at night found space to hear angels sing. Everyone did not hear that night, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests." If busy shepherds on the outskirts of Bethlehem found that place for the singing of angels, surely we can wherever we reside.

Howard Thurman says there remains in all of us some place for the singing of angels. I pray that no matter how crowded your soul maybe with pain, sorrow or the stuff of life - find that place where you can hear the singing of angels.

That is what Job 35:10 testifies to, "But no one asks, 'Where is God my Maker, who gives us songs in the night.'" After all he had been through he was seeking that place for the singing of angels.

I heard angels sing in worship yesterday. One angel in particular unknowingly came into the place where I needed to hear angels sing. She sung to me:

God sent His son, they called Him Jesus;
He came to love, heal and forgive;
he lived and died to buy my pardon,
An empty grave is there to prove my Savior lives!

Because He lives, I can face tomorrow,
Because He lives, all fear is gone;
Because I know He holds the future,
And life is worth the living,
Just because He lives!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

May you find the place TODAY where you will hear angels singing.

March 4-7, 2019
45TH ANNUAL

Black Ministers Retreat

Retreat Leaders

Location

Lecturers



Rev. Dr. Frank A. Thomas

Nettie Sweeney and Hugh Th. Miller
Professor of Homiletics | Director of the
Academy of Preaching and Celebration
Christian Theological Seminary
Indianapolis, IN

Dr. Thomas will lecture and do workshops on “How To Preach A Dangerous Sermon”



Dr. Stacey Floyd-Thomas

E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Chair in
Ethics and Society
Associate Professor of Ethics and Society
Vanderbilt Divinity School
Nashville, TN

Dr. Floyd-Thomas will lecture on Ethical Guidelines for this day and time.



Dr. William Turner Jr.

James T. and Alice Mead Cleland Professor
Emeritus of the Practice of Preaching
Duke Divinity School
Durham, NC

Dr. William Turner, Jr. will lecture and do a workshop on “Pneumatology”



**Host Location:
Embassy Suites by
Hilton-
Nashville Airport**

10 Century Blvd.
Nashville, TN 37214

Preston Taylor Institute



Rev. Dr. Khalia J. Williams

Assistant Dean of Worship and Music; Assistant Professor in the Practice
of Worship; Co-Director of the Baptist Studies Program
Associate Minister, Providence Missionary Baptist Church
Atlanta, GA

POET'S CORNER by May F. Reed

A LITTLE PUPPY STORY

Joffy always wanted a puppy but mom said they just couldn't afford one. 'Lil Joffy wasn't too sure of that reason as he watched the scraps being thrown away after meals. He decided he'd assess the left-over throwaways and try to figure out some way to alleviate the problem because he so much wanted a puppy. He would be willing to do all the care and grooming, so if he could figure out how to have enough food to feed a puppy then his mom would have to let him have one. He decided to ask Mr. Miller at the corner store if he would save scraps that a puppy could eat. He stopped at the store the following school day to ask Mr. Miller if he would help him if he had a dog and needed extra food to feed him. Mr. Miller told Joffy that he'd be happy to help and would save scraps that a puppy could eat. Joffy was very happy and ran home to tell his mother but she still was not too sure if it was a good idea. She felt Mr. Miller would get tired of saving the scraps and might forget some days and puppy would be hungry. But Joffy pleaded for her to let him have a puppy and at least let him try. Finally, one day they went to the City Pound to see if there was a puppy they could get for Joffy. The only puppies they had were \$56.00 and mom did not have the money. Joffy was very unhappy as they began to leave but just then the Keeper said "there's a little brown snoazer that's been hanging around but we haven't been able to catch him. If you think you might be able to coax him to come to you – then it wouldn't cost you anything. Joffy said "I'd certainly like to try." His mom agreed to let him. Joffy began to plan what day would be best for mom to bring him back to the Pound to watch for puppy. That Saturday the Pound called to tell Joffy the puppy was there just across the street.

Mom knew how much Joffy wanted a puppy.

She reluctantly drove him to the Pound and sure enough there sat the fuzziest little brown doggie they'd ever seen. Mom stopped the car just a little ways from puppy and Joffy got out. He sat down on the curb just in front of the car and began snapping his fingers and humming a little tune. The little dog didn't run away like it always ran from the Pound's Man. Joffy laid back in the grass. The little dog then stood up and stared at him. Joffy kept humming and snapping his fingers. He took the pork chop bone he had from the day before and laid it a few feet from puppy. Right away puppy smelled the scent of the bone and began to pace uncertainly back-and-forth. Joffy acted as if he didn't notice puppy and kept humming and snapping his fingers. And then in a flash puppy trotted over and picked up the bone. Joffy never moved. And

then puppy came closer and began sniffing Joffy. Joffy began laughing while puppy continued sniffing as though to see if he could find anymore bones. And all of a sudden boy and doggie were romping about on the ground as though they knew one another. I guess puppy knew Joffy was someone who wanted to love him. Joffy gathered puppy in his arms as the Pound Keeper came out. He waved across at him and yelled a loud "Thank you. I'll take good care of him. Mr. Miller is going to help me." Joffy got back into the car with puppy squirming about like a little squirrel. Mom saw the joy on his face and knew she had made a right decision. She knew everything would be alright and was very glad she had said yes. Puppy grew to be a very important part of their home and became the most vigilant watch dog for the whole neighborhood.

+THE END+

May Reed/Written 11/25/2018



"I have written so many little stories like this but have not shared or published them. I thought of Jessie Brown Pounds who had numbers of such short stories in the old Christian Standard and the Christian-Evangelist periodicals that I enjoyed so much reading, and I

thought – maybe I ought to share some of mine along with my many poems; And here's the first one. I sure would like to know if you like it.

A THOUGHT

Any woman worth her salt – wants a man that is filled with it.

FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS

HELEN ALENA ARMBRISTER



Helen Alena Armbrister was born on October 11, 1929 in Overton, Texas to John and Everline Wilson (Deceased). Helen went to be with the Lord on February 17, 2019 in Houston, Texas. Helen was educated in the Overton Texas Public Schools, Butler College, Tyler, Texas and Prairie View A&M earning a Bachelor

of Science in Education

Helen married Ollie Armbrister in 1956 and was a teacher retiring from the Houston Independent School District after teaching at the historic Gregory Lincoln Elementary for more than 40 years.

Helen was a member of University Christian Church since 1969 serving the Deacon Board, Sunday School, Children's Ministry, Usher Board, Women's Disciple Group, Evangelism and Outreach Benevolence.

REV. CURTIS McMASTER COOPER, JR.



Reverend Curtis McMaster Cooper, Sr. was a resident of Houston, Texas. He was the fifth son born to the late Essie Josephine Bluit Cooper and Frank Coedrendt Cooper on March 15, 1928.

Rev. Cooper was a minister for fifty-two years before his retirement from the Christian church (Disciples of Christ).

He was a product of the Houston Public Schools, graduating from Jack Yates High School in 1946. Later, he attended Jarvis Christian College and graduated from Alcorn A&M University with a bachelor of Science in Biology and Secondary Education.

In 1950, he was ordained as a minister of the Gospel in Memphis, Tennessee. While attending Jarvis, he studied religion and philosophy. He continued his ministerial training at Indiana University and Butler

University in Indianapolis, Indiana and earned a Bachelor of Sacred Literature and Theology from Emmanuel College of Religion in Johnson City, Tennessee.

In the field of education, he received a Masters of Education from Texas Southern University in 1960.

He was employed by the Houston Independent School District for fifty-seven years. Starting as an Elementary school teacher, he taught at several schools. He then became an Administrative Consultant—Pupil Assistance Services of the Houston District.

Rev. Cooper served as Pastor of five Churches in Texas; The New Fellowship Christian Church in Palatine, The Second Christian Church in Galveston, The First Sacred Memorial Christian Church in Bay City, The Garden Grove Christian Church in Houston where he served for nine years..

HILDA POWELL FAULKNER

Celebrating Her Spirit

Ruth P Hobbs, 104 Year Old
Grapevine Board Member
Celebrates Her Sister Hilda
Powell Faulkner's 108 Years
February 22, 1910 - November
19, 2018



Crossing The Bar

Sunset and Evening Star,

And one clear call for me!

And may there be no moaning of the bar,

When I set out to sea.

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,

Too full for sound and foam,

When that which drew from out the boundless deep

Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,

And after that the dark!

And may there be no sadness of farewell,

When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place

The flood may bear me far,

I hope to see my Pilot face to face

When I have cross the bar.

Alfred Lloyd Tennyson

My sister Hilda Powell Faulkner passed away in November at the age of 108, but when she first became ill, she frequently cited this poem to her children and me when I went to visit her. She said that she wanted us to abide by this poem. Even at an old age, she spoke with wisdom. Faithful daily living with God's guidance, was her daily prayer.

She accepted Christ at the age of 12. As a young adult, she accepted numerous positions in her church. In 1930, she and Elmer Faulkner were married. They had three lovely daughters. They had forty years of marriage, however he deceased soon afterward.

Hilda's education consisted of K-8, under the direction of her mother who taught school for 54 years. After completing 8th grade, she went to live with her favorite uncle who lived in Louisville, Kentucky. While there, he saw that she enrolled in Lincoln Institute, where she completed grades nine through twelve. Returning home, our parents enrolled her in Southern Christian Institute, Edwards, Mississippi where she completed Junior College.

Her career consisted of caring for young children at the Los Angeles Board of Education until her retirement at the age of 65. After retirement, she completed classes to qualify to teach kindergarten. She taught in Hollywood California for several years.

Her church memberships were at the East Twenty-eighth Street Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and United Christian (Disciples of Christ) in Los Angeles. She became a member of First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Pomona, California, after residing with her daughter Beverly - where she deceased.

JIM OLLIE HURDLE



Family. Faith. God-fearing. These words aptly capture the essence of Jim Ollie Hurdle's well-lived life. Born in the tiny Texas town of Normangee in 1930 to Jim Ollie and Mable Rhinehardt-Culton, the importance of family was rooted at an early age which she espoused all

her days here on earth.

As a toddler, Jim Ollie moved from the sparsely populated town of Normangee to the big city of Houston with her parents and siblings for the promise of greater educational and economic opportunities. During adulthood's formative stage, she pursued higher education vigorously in the form of a Bachelor's Degree in Music followed by a Master's of Education at Texas Southern University in 1961. The music major blazed a melodic trail, having sung with the Houston Symphony and various operas.

Prior to the pursuit of her Master's Degree, Jim Ollie married fellow "TSU Tiger" James R. Hurdle in 1952. To this blissful union, two sons were born, James and Jerald. If you knew Jim Ollie, it was no secret that the loving mother laid down the parental law and abided by family-first, dotting on her sons in partnership with her beloved husband. She especially reveled in exposing her children to a glimpse of the world outside of their Third Ward windows with road trips throughout the East and West Coasts.

Propelled by the belief that 'one must be right with God if things are to go right,' it was faith in action that brokered the decision to be one of the first blacks to volunteer for a transfer from Assistant Principal at Highland Heights Elementary School to Principal at Emerson Elementary School during the era of segregation. She upheld the notion that all children, regardless of color, were worthy of a quality education. Her commitment to academic excellence was evidenced when she exhibited a 'can do' spirit for student success, relocating briefly to Iran, TX to homeschool a young black student who was forbidden by law to attend non-black schools. Ironically, that student was her niece.

True to her strong foundation in Jesus Christ, Jim Ollie was one of 30 founders of University Christian Church; she joyously sang in the choir and was a devoted member of Christian Women's Fellowship and Widow Mite. Additional organizational affiliations included Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. and Top Ladies of Distinction.

Russell James Parker Sr.



Mr. Russell James Parker Sr. of Indianapolis, Indiana, passed away on Sunday, March 3, 2019. The family will honor his memory with a Memorial Service, to be held at a later date in the Spring. Private entombment: Crown Hill Cemetery.

joyed fishing and bowling . He worked for Pipefitters Local 392 at Seagrams Distillery.

He is survived by his loving wife, Ruth Todd; 2 sons, Perry (Amy) Todd Jr. of Lawrenceburg, IN, Jason (Amy) Todd of Windermere, FL; 3 daughters, Jeanine Todd Jones of Lawrenceburg, IN, Jo Ann (James) Slater of Marion, OH, Jennifer (Wayne) MacDougall of Lawrenceburg, IN; 14 grandchildren; 32 great grandchildren; and his sister, Evelyn Tittsworth of Cincinnati, OH.

REVEREND HANNAH JANE HURDLE TOOMEY



Hannah Jane Hurdle Toomey was born in Greenville, Texas on February 18, 1932, the youngest child of Catherine and Reverend Andrew J. Hurdle, who founded Texas Christian Theological and Industrial College in Paradise, Texas, an institution affiliated with the Disciples of Christ. Hannah attended San Joaquin Delta College in Stockton, California,

and California State University in Turlock, California, receiving a B.A. degree in Sociology. She received a Master of Divinity degree from San Francisco Theological Seminary in San Anselmo, California, and later continued her education at the Missouri School of Religion, Jefferson City, Missouri. In 1988, Hannah was ordained into ministry by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

From 1980 until 1983, Hannah served with the Community of Disciples of Christ in Congo (CDCC) as a teacher appointed by the Division of Overseas Ministries, a predecessor mission body of Global Ministries. She served the Girls Boarding School in Mbandaka in different positions, including as its Director. She also worked as a social worker and secretary to the General Secretary of the CDCC. As she completed her appointment and home assignment time, Hannah wrote, *[t]he three years that I served as a missionary in [the Democratic Republic of Congo] was the realization of my fondest childhood dream to serve God in this way.*

From 1993 through 1996, Reverend Toomey again served as Global Ministries mission personnel, this time in Jamaica, appointed to the then recently-formalized United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJCI). Hannah worked in Jamaica as a pas-

Jarvis Christian College
In Memoriam 
Winifred U. Perpener

May 1, 1929 ~ December 10, 2018
 Fort Worth, Texas




Dean of Student Personnel Services
 (1981 Bulldog Yearbook)

PERRY L. TODD



Perry L. Todd, 82, of Lawrenceburg, Indiana, passed away on Friday, March 8, 2019. He was born September 30, 1936 in Lawrenceburg, Indiana, son of the late Owen and Goldie (Brightwell) Todd.

Perry was a veteran of the US Air Force. He was a member of the Union Valley Baptist Church, Lawrenceburg Lions Club and Lawrenceburg American Legion Post #239. He en-

tor-developer of the new congregation, Hellshire United Church. In February 2018, Hellshire United Church celebrated its first 25 years of ministry, with the presence of Global Ministries staff.

Over the years, Hannah Toomey worked in California in areas of computer and data skills, and in Liberia, West Africa, in government administration. In Missouri, she pastored Fifth Street Christian Church in Columbia. According to a tribute given after her death, during this time, Reverend Toomey played a key role helping Committed Caring Faith Communities to establish a faith-based substance abuse prevention and recovery initiative. In her last years, Hannah resided in Oregon.

TUSKEGEE AIRMAN, COL. CHARLES MCGEE, CELEBRATES 99TH BIRTHDAY IN THE AIR



Tuskegee Airman Col. Charles E. McGee takes the controls of a HondaJet to celebrate his 99th birthday.

When Jet It founder and CEO Glenn Gonzales found out that Tuskegee Airman Col. Charles E. McGee was about to celebrate his 99th birthday, he jumped at the opportunity to do something special for the war hero. A former Air Force pilot himself, Gonzales invited McGee to take a flight in Honda Aircraft's HA-420 HondaJet. It would be the first time the fighter pilot took the controls of an airplane in 37 years and the smile on his face clearly illustrated his excitement.

Colonel McGee is the only known fighter pilot who flew more than 100 combat missions in each of the following wars: World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. He served in active duty for 30 years, flying more than 6,300 hours, and in 1972 he became the first black commander of a stateside Air Force Wing as the commander of the Richard-Gebaur Air Reserve Base in Missouri. In addition to the P-51s that the Tuskegee Airmen became known for mastering,

McGee flew the Bell P-39 Airacobra, Republic P-47 Thunderbolt, North American B-25 Mitchell, Lockheed F-80 Shooting Star, Northrop F-89 Scorpion and McDonnell RF-4.

REV. DR. CRYSTAL WALKER PROMOTED

Congratulations to our friend and colleague Crystal Walker! She has been named Dayton CVB's Director of Sales and Services!



Crystal has worked in the Dayton CVB Sales Department for over nine years. She had been serving as Interim Director of Sales and Services since December of 2018.

"Crystal's combination of quality experience in the hotel and convention industries, along with her drive to succeed and inspire others, made her the obvious choice when determining who would lead our talented team," said Jacquelyn Y. Powell, President & CEO of the Dayton Convention & Visitors Bureau.

Walker has a bachelor of arts and science from the University of Louisville, a masters of divinity from Payne Theological Seminary, a Doctor of Ministry from United Theological Seminary, and is a Certified Meeting Planner and Certified Hotel Sales Professional.

"This is an incredible opportunity to lead a top-quality team of sales professionals and share my knowledge and experience," said Walker. "I look forward to expanding and enhancing our efforts to maintain our already outstanding convention and group business and attract new and exciting business to Dayton and Montgomery County



GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

July 20-24, 2019

Des Moines, IA



The Oldtimers' GRAPEVINE

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OLDTIMERS' GRAPEVINE is a free print and electronic ministry published three 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 to August, 2019

Volume 28, Issue 2

LETTER FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT Celebrating Grapevine Board Leadership

“Serve as long as you can and as well as you can; without hoopla. Remember it is all about Christ and kingdom building; it is not about us.”

Dear Grapevine Readers,

The above quote by Oscar Haynes, Grapevine Publisher/Executive Editor Emeritus provides inspiration to celebrate faithful Grapevine family members: some of whom are new to the Grapevine; and others who have served this ministry over the years.

At the Grapevine Board Meeting of April 26, 2019 five candidates were elected to the board. Thanks are due to the Chair of the Nominating Committee, Katherine Fox-Cunningham and Nominating Committee members Sandra Bryant, Patricia Clark, Arnold Hayes, and Ruth P. Hobbs for submitting such a strong slate of candidates.

We were successful in recruiting new board members in areas where we needed strengthening: three persons under age 70; three males; two clergy; a regional minister; a retired educator; as well as a person with fund raising expertise, and another with a background in finance and budgeting. We are confident that their leadership, when coupled with current board members, will ensure a bright and progressive future for the mission and ministry of the Grapevine.



We Celebrate New Board Leadership!

“I have not stopped giving thanks for you.” Ephesians 1: 16 (NIV)



Eric Brown of Columbus, Ohio: He serves as Pastor of Woodland Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). His interests include running and chess. Regarding his role with the Grapevine, he states: *“Being a the director of the Black Ministers Email Network, I should be able to contribute information on clergy for sure, but in some cases, laity as well. I’ve also kept up to date*

on activities happening around the denomination and in ecumenical circles that I can provide to the Oldtimers’ Grapevine.”

Kirby Gould of Olathe, Kansas: A former National Benevolent Association Development Officer, she serves as Vice-President, North Central Zone,



of the Christian Church Foundation since 1997, bringing strong fund-raising expertise to the board. She has deep roots in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and she currently is a member of Hillcrest Christian Church in Overland Park, Kansas. She and her husband John have a three year old grandson. For fun, Kirby plays viola in the Olathe Community Orchestra.

Eugene James of Lansing, Michigan: He serves as Regional Minister of the Michigan Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). He is quite knowledgeable about the local, regional and national structure of the church; has extensive networks within the church; and is a member of a family of faithful servants who have served the denomination at all levels over several generations.





Norman Reed of Greenwood, Indiana: He served as Manager of Greenwood Cemetery of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) for 15 years. He is retired Pastor of Alameda Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Nashville, Tennessee. He states: *“I have a genuine appreciation for the mission and ministry of the Grapevine and a desire to help it*

continue to prosper. I have some experience with treasury functions of small non-profits which I will share with this entity. I am willing to invest time, energy and finances to be an enabling agent of the Grapevine.” In addition to being elected as Director, he was also elected as Grapevine Treasurer.



Norweida R. Spencer of Shreveport, Louisiana: She is a retired educator, whose interests include crafts, floral design, and Sudoku puzzles. A newly wed, she recently moved from Jackson, Mississippi, where she was a fellow church member with Ruth Hobbs, her dear friend and mentor. She states: *“It is exciting to be considered to*

continue the ministry of the Oldtimers’ Grapevine and, if I am selected, I look forward to using the knowledge that I have gained from numerous boards and leadership positions to do whatever I am charged to do to insure the mission of the newsletter is achieved.”!

We Celebrate Faithful Service!

As new leaders have been brought into the fold, faithful servants of the church who have blessed the Grapevine with their service over the years are rotating off the board. Their commitment and devoted service to the Grapevine have been exceptional. We will always be appreciative of their contribution to the mission and ministry of our beloved newsletter.

We express deep gratitude for these beloved Grapevine board members: **Rev. Dr. Paul A. Crowe, Jr.** of Indianapolis, Indiana: former President of the Council on Christian Unity of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); **Carolyn Day**, of Indianapolis, Indiana: former Grapevine Treasurer; **Claude and Patricia Maples** of Dallas, Texas: devoted Pastors and denomina-

tion leaders; and **Terri Hill** of Indianapolis, Indiana, formerly Grapevine Development Consultant, as well as board member.

Although we say goodbye to these board members, in terms of their active participation on the board; we will always consider them an important part of this ministry. We will continue to celebrate their contribution to the Grapevine and the Disciples denomination as a whole. To God Be The Glory!

Joyfully Submitted,

Your Sister in Christ,

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

GENERAL MINISTER AND PRESIDENT REFLECTS ON GENERAL ASSEMBLY



Dear Church –

My heart is still singing from the holy time we shared in Des Moines last month. The Spirit was present and real in worship. The discussions were deep in the workshops. The joy was tangible at the meal events. Our programming for youth and young adults included education about the governance of the church, and we saw how important multi-generational worship is when we gather. Many of those gath-

ered spoke strongly for justice in the business sessions, at the candlelight vigil and the post-assembly rally. As the General Youth Council reminded us with their resolution, we must continue to invite one another to listen and discuss, even when we disagree. To walk together in love even when we disagree is at the heart of being “Disciple”.

I am genuinely hopeful for the future of this Church. I saw signs of life and growth everywhere, of Disciples who are learning to abide whether that means waiting with expectation or tarrying a while in the Presence. While we spent some time celebrating our past, I also heard from many dedicated Disciples that we are a group whose time has come in this fragmented world. A look at the MissionFest projects made me both proud and excited about the ministry that Disciples are engaged in across the US and Canada. To quote the Week of Compassion team, “Good work, Church!”



In partnership with the Disciples of Christ Historical Society, we celebrated the 50th Anniversaries of The Design and the Merger Agreement, two documents which shaped our current manifestation as church together. As many of us gathered to look forward in the “Design at 100” and “Second 50” workshops, I was encouraged by the presence of two of our former GMPS, Sharon Watkins and Dick Hamm, as they facilitated a conversation about what our church needs to look like in the next 50 years. Disciples from across our church stood to speak truth into the room, naming both our challenges as well as our hopes. This kind of real talk must continue to be part of our work as we move forward together. The conversations revealed that we are not as afraid of change, and that we are confident in God’s ability to empower us for ministry.

In the midst of the celebrations, we marked two very important occasions. One was the culmination of a major part of the 2020 Vision. Former General Minister and President Dick Hamm set the vision before us in the 1990s and he was there to announce the achievement of one of the goals of beginning more than 1,000 new faith communities. While not every start continued, we have more than 60 percent who did. But another effect of those planting operations was to work new church ministry into our DNA, to make the planting embedded in who we are today.

We were also blessed to affirm our full communion agreement with The United Church of Canada. We were already in partnership through two of our Canadian congregations and our shared relationship with the United Church of Christ. This agreement closed the triangle to make all three denominations stronger with shared ministry. Not a merger, but a partnership, this agreement will be celebrated in October in Winnipeg.

Disciples, while we are primed for growing into what the Lord has in mind for us – to become a healing, helping force for good in this fragmented world – we must make it a priority to be connected to the Vine, Jesus Christ, through the disciplines of prayer and Bible study. We must be strengthened in our spiritual beings in order to bear the fruit that is only possible through Christ. I invite you to do that work together, wherever you are, wherever you serve. We will be stronger as a church because of it. We must continue to abide, to remain, to persist.

I am looking forward to what we can accomplish before we meet again in Louisville, KY, in 2021. I am honored to be on this journey with you.

With God’s love,

Terri

AROUND THE OLDTIMERS'/GREENWOOD BOOTH



WORSHIP AND WORSHIPFUL WORK

Governance Committee

- Standing Committee of the General Board
- Re-establish and encourage spirit of continual reflection and renewal
- Educate and revive understanding of the church's ministry and history, especially with regard to understanding covenant and how the Design calls us to theological understanding of our communion.
- Ensure that the Church can be more nimble and efficient in its decision-making, allowing it to respond to the needs of the time and communities it serves.



"Church intelligence"

- Church-wide data initiative
 - Yearbook
 - Mining and correlating the data - Church repository
- Data-driven analysis
 - Congregational
 - Clergy
 - Contextual, demographic
 - Identify needs for local, regional and general ministry priorities
- External funding



Reconciliation Ministry

- Strategic evaluation and planning
- Recommendations to strengthen methods, reach and effectiveness across the Church
- Moving beyond training
- Support as Church priority – living into PRAR



AT THE HERITAGE BANQUET

Aside from the rich fellowship and great food at the National Convocation General Assembly Heritage Banquet the community was introduced to a play written and adapted by Rev. Monique Crain Spells. The following are excerpts from the program

SCENE I: RAISING THE BAR

PRESTON TAYLOR.....TERRELL MCTYER
 IDA TAYLOR.....DIANA BUSH-HARRIS

SCENE II: ONE SOUL, TWO TABLES

SARAH LUE BOSTICK.....RAE KARIM
 ROSA BROWN.....DELESSLYN KENNEBREW

SCENE III: GUARDIAN OF THE PROMISES

MR. ALMAGAMATION.....ANTONIO REDD

FINALE: A MEDLEY OF PRAISE

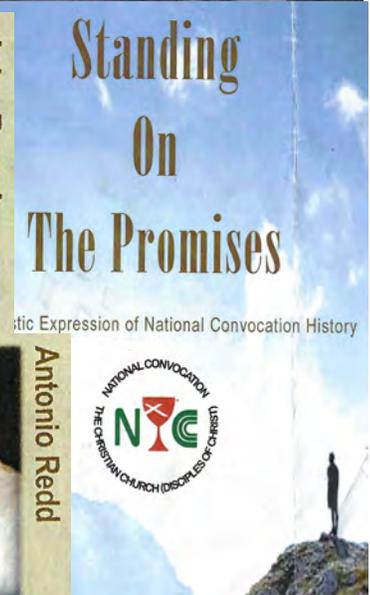
Written & Adapted by: Monique Crain Spells
 Musical Director & Pianist: John Ray, Jr.



Monique Crain Spells



John Ray, Jr.



Terrell McTyer



Rae Karim



Delesslyn Kennebrew



Diana Bush-Harris



Antonio Redd

NATIONAL CONVOCATION ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY ANNOUNCES 2020 RETIREMENT DATE



For almost 16 years, Rev. Dr. Timothy James has been an associate general minister and the administrative secretary for the National Convocation. By his retirement date of Dec. 31, 2020, he will have had more than 17 years in the position.

“I have had such a wonderful time serving over

these years. I am deeply honored to have served with the first woman General Minister and President, Rev.

Dr. Sharon Watkins and the first African American General Minister and President, Rev. Terri Hord Owens. A lot of changes have occurred and I am confident, more are still to come.”

James has been associate general minister in partnership with three general minister and presidents, beginning with Rev. Dr. Chris Hobgood in 2003, followed by Rev. Dr. Sharon Watkins and Rev. Teresa (Terri) Hord Owens.

During his tenure as administrative secretary, he has overseen eight biennial sessions of the National Convocation and is deep into planning his ninth, “It’s Real: 2020 Experience,” in conjunction with the North

American Pacific/Asian Disciples and the Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries. This joint meeting of the three communities is a first for Disciples.

“I have so appreciated working with Dr. James these past two years,” said General Minister and President Hord Owens. “He was so welcoming when I arrived on the scene two years ago. His collegial attitude and easy-going ways will be missed in the Office of General Minister and President. This next year of transition is an exciting time in the 100+ year history of the African-American community of Disciples.”

“Dr. James is a good friend and colleague,” said Rev. Dr. Donald K. Gillett II, current president of the Na-

tional Convocation’s board. “We are going to miss his deep spiritual gifts as well as his ready laugh.”

The board of the National Convocation will be opening a search process this fall with the hope of having a successor to introduce at the July 2020 Biennial Session in Fort Worth. Application processes will be outlined and posted on both the disciples.org and nationalconvocation.org websites. When the application window opens, notification will be provided via *Selah*, *Disciples News Service*, and *Disciples Together* e-letters as well as National Convocation and Disciples of Christ Facebook pages.

BETHANY COLLEGE HONORS DOC LEADER REV. JULIA BROWN KARIMU WITH HONORARY DOCTORATE OF DIVINITY

Called a personal and professional mentor by Bethany College President Tamara Rodenberg, Rev. Julia Brown Karimu displayed pure joy on stage as she received an honorary doctorate of divinity from Rev. Dr. Rodenberg and the Bethany Board of Trustees during the College’s 179th Commencement ceremony, May 11.

Karimu, a Mississippi native who serves as president of the Division of Overseas Ministries of the Christian Church – Disciples of Christ (DOC) and as co-executive of Global Ministries, addressed the graduates during Friday’s Baccalaureate, where she shared wisdom and strategies for “Owning Our Privilege,” the title of her remarks.

“You have been privileged with the intellectual ability to excel academically,” Karimu said. “You have been privileged with the discipline to remain steadfast as you pursued your degree. You have been privileged to live in a world for such a time as this.

“My sending forth prayer for you this evening is that you will decide to use your privilege, the precious privilege given to you by God, to transform the world into one in which the dignity of all people is respected, that your core will sustain you for this journey, and that you will be open to God’s surprises.”



Founded by Alexander Campbell in 1840, Bethany College was the first college to be affiliated with DOC. This religious body, of which Campbell was one of the

principal founders, continues to support and encourage the College.

Throughout its history, Bethany has regularly invited DOC leaders and influencers to speak at events, including Rev. Teresa Hord Owens, general minister and president of the Christian Church (DOC), who was invited to speak at the College’s Founder’s Day Convocation earlier this year.

Ordained by the Christian Church (DOC) in 1990, Karimu has a strong presence of involvement in the DOC church both personally and professionally, as her job requires her to travel the world to be a witness of DOC.

Board of Trustees member Rev. Dr. Janet Long, disciples minister and senior pastor of Washington Avenue Christian Church, introduced Karimu for the well-deserved honor during Commencement and officially welcomed her into the Bethany family.

“I am so honored by this,” said Karimu, explaining that global engagement opportunities caused her to miss out on her own commencement ceremonies both at Jackson State University and Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis, Indiana.

“And so this is my first real commencement,” she squealed. “Thank you, and God bless you.”

ARIZONA CALLS NEW REGIONAL MINISTER



The Christian Church in Arizona is overjoyed to announce its calling of Reverend Jay Hartley as Regional Minister and President. On Saturday, July 13, 2019, the Region held a Special Regional Assembly to hear the Regional Search Team’s nomination and overwhelmingly approved calling Rev. Hartley to the position.

Rev. Hartley is a graduate of Vanderbilt Divinity School and will come to the Christian Church in Arizona from Eastwood Christian Church, where he has served since August of 2000. The Region looks forward to Rev. Hartley exercising his collaborative leadership style, his long history of mentorship, and his deep abiding love for the Gospel in his new role in

Arizona.

The Region expresses tremendous gratitude for Rev. Richie Sanchez who has served as our interim Regional Minister and President for nearly two years. Rev. Sanchez’s guidance and spirit of joy will be missed. But we are heartened by the knowledge that he will be serving nearby as Regional Minister of the Pacific Southwest Region.

The Christian Church in Arizona is poised for great things in the future, and our excitement and enthusiasm are elevated by the potential represented by calling Rev. Hartley. Amen!

James E. Barton II, Regional Moderator, Search Team Chair

PACIFIC SOUTHWEST CALLS REGIONAL MINISTER

We are pleased to announce that on Saturday, June 15th, 2019, the Regional Board unanimously and enthusiastically called Rev. Richie Sanchez to serve as the next Regional Minister of the Pacific Southwest Region, and he has accepted the call. Praise God! Richie will complete his service as the Interim Regional Minister of the Arizona Region this summer. He will begin serving in the PSWR in the fall when the term of the current Co-Regional Ministers is completed.



Sanchez was born to parents who immigrated to the US from Puerto Rico, and he grew up as a native Spanish speaker in the midst of cultural diversity in Brooklyn, NY. His parents were members of the Disciples of Christ Church and spent his formative years as a member of the First Hispanic Christian Church in Brooklyn, NY. His conversion experience occurred at 18 years of age, and he developed leadership skills by working in youth and young-adult ministries. These experiences awoke Richie to answer the call to ministry, after which he served in a number of commissioned roles in local and regional ministry leading up to his formal education in seminary, be-

coming an ordained Minister in 2015. He has a regular practice of journaling, prayer walks, devotions, and personal retreats, stating that “prayer, stillness, biblical reflection, and rest are my constant.”

Richie started out his professional work life in the corporate world, working for 4 years with ATT network services. He left this position to serve as the Administrative Assistant to the Regional Minister in Florida during a particularly difficult transitional period. In this position, he was the contact for the Committee on Ministry (COM) working with congregations and pastoral call, managed special projects and improved office technologies. After 2 years in this position, he became the Special Assistant to the Regional Minister, and he spent 3 years in this position supporting the executive staff, COM, leading the visioning for moving the regional office, and developing deeper relationships with the Latino constituencies in the region. He then was selected as the Associate Regional Pastor and served as the “Pastor to Pastors,” managed seasonal camp programs for children, youth, and young adults. He supported the launching of several new congregations, the transformation of others and the closing of a few ministries. After 3 years as the Associate Regional Pastor, he moved to Indianapolis for Seminary, and for 1 1/2 years he served as a Student Minister at Light of the World Christian Church in Indianapolis. His service to this very active and large African American congregation included preaching, teaching, pastoral care, and fostering a new congregational culture. After seminary, he spent the next year serving as the interim pastor of 2 churches (FCC New Castle, Indiana and Danville Christian Church in Danville, Indiana) before being called as the Interim Regional Minister and President of the Arizona Region. He has served in this role since August of 2017.

EMU ANNOUNCES NEW DEAN OF STUDENTS

Eastern Mennonite University announces the appointment of **Shannon W. Dycus** to the dean of students position. Dycus, most recently co-pastor of First Mennonite Church in Indianapolis, Indiana, brings experience in the pastorate, higher education and K-12 education. She will begin August 1.

The Dean of Students is the senior student life representative at EMU, responsible for the co-curricular aspects of learning and living on campus.

The dean collaborates with student life operations and supervises various directors.

“We saw in Shannon exceptional gifts, skills and dispositions that will serve well our students and staff,” said Provost **Fred Kniss**. “She is a strong and thoughtful leader who will combine emotional intelligence and wisdom with administrative savvy in leading our highly skilled team of student life staff. Her combination of experience with students in an academic setting and with pastoral support of persons in crisis in her congregational setting prepares her well for this role.”

Before and during her time as co-pastor of First Mennonite Church, Dycus served as academic advisor and adjunct faculty in the humanities at Franklin University of Ohio. She also taught courses in critical thinking, ethical reasoning and learning skills. At First Mennonite, she led missional and faith formation ministries.

Dycus has also worked in the chaplaincy, K-12 education and with a youth-focused nonprofit.

“In this new role, I see one of my primary responsibilities as helping to nurture the culture at EMU rooted in our shared values,” Dycus wrote in an email from the Mennonite Church USA convention last week, where she served on the worship planning team.

“Whether in classrooms or sanctuaries, my experience has taught me the necessity of cultivating inclusive and creative spaces, the soil from which academic success flourishes. Student life at EMU had excelled at this and I hope to encourage ongoing efforts for the sake of this community and its impact on those around it.”



Dycus holds a Master of Divinity degree from Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis, Indiana, where she was awarded the Excellence in Liturgical Worship Leadership Award. She is completing a diploma in the art of spiritual direction from San Francisco Theological Seminary.

She earned her BA in middle and secondary education with a certification in psychology, sociology and economics at Butler University.

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN DETENTION & AT THE BORDER: A WORD TO THE CHURCH

“For the Lord your God...executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing. Love the sojourner therefore; for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt.” (Deuteronomy 10:17-19)

Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs.” (Matthew 19:14)

Dear Church,

Our sacred scriptures are filled with stories of uprooted peoples and prophets in movement, with constant presence and direction from God. We are inspired by the leading of our Lord who liberated the Israelites, comforted the community as they faced exile and later repatriation, and guided Jesus’ family to safety as they fled persecution under Herod. We therefore are ready to live out our call to demonstrate radical hospitality and welcome today’s immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers who are likewise searching for protection from persecution.

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

We remember how Jesus announced his ministry “to preach good news to the poor... proclaim release to the captives and...set at liberty those who are oppressed” (Luke 4:18). We reaffirm our previous commitments against family separations and efforts to end child detention, and we again demand these practices

that are keeping children detained in dozens of facilities be ended. Together with the Oklahoma Conference of Churches, we speak out against the housing of immigrant children at Fort Sill Army post where Japanese Americans were interned during World War II, and “cannot stand silent as this history is repeated with innocent children who will, no doubt, incur trauma and life-altering consequences.”

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

As people of faith, we are eager to “not neglect to show hospitality to strangers” (Hebrews 13:2) and to strengthen our efforts to become “Immigrant Welcoming Congregations.” Therefore, we urge our government leaders to positively and urgently address the crisis at the border; such as establishing regional refugee processing centers, strengthening asylum protections in the US and Mexico, modernizing ports of entry, using existing funding to US Customs and Border Protection to hire child welfare professionals, supporting proven and community-based alternatives to detention, and addressing the root causes of migration.

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

In Christ’s love,

Leaders of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
[See web page for list of signers.]

PASTORAL LETTER ON THE EL PASO SHOOTINGS



If you really change your ways and your actions and deal with each other justly, if you do not oppress the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow and do not shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not follow other gods to your own harm, then I will let you live in this place, in the land I gave your ancestors for ever and ever. But look, you are trusting in deceptive words that are worthless.—Jeremiah 7:5-8

Rev. Dr. Alvin O'Neal Jackson

One week ago, we were in El Paso at the invitation of the Border Network for Human Rights to highlight the violence that their community has been suffering. We heard stories of families separated, asylum seekers turned away and refugees detained like prisoners of war. We heard how their community has been militarized and how poor border communities have been especially targeted. We promised that we would do everything in our power to compel the nation to see this violence. Just a few days later, a terrorist opened fire in El Paso. And then another attack occurred in Dayton.

In reflecting on these outbreaks of violence, our hearts are broken. This moment demands a moral reckoning with who we are and who we want to become as a nation.

The truth is that, while every generation has worked to push us toward becoming a more perfect union, we have also tolerated lies that beget violence. America's founding fathers spoke of liberty, while drafting documents that called Native Americans savages, accepted the enslavement of Africans, and ignored the voices of women. This hypocrisy created space for slaveholder religion to bless white supremacy, pseudo-science to justify eugenics, a sick sociology to pit people against one another, and predatory policies to

scapegoat non-white immigrants and blame poverty on the poor.

Politicians who try to denounce the racism of an individual, but do not denounce racist policies refuse to deal with the depths of the problems we face. We cannot address the violence of white nationalism without stopping the policies of white nationalism and the lies that are told to justify them. In 1963, George Wallace began to spew racist rhetoric from the governor's office in Alabama. By the end of that year, Medgar Evers was dead, four girls in a church were dead, and a President was dead because these words and these policies were a breeding ground for violence. It always has been that way. Whenever we've had these words and policies, they have also unleashed this kind of violence.

For this reason, we call on President Trump, Members of Congress and Presidential Candidates, our people on the ground in movements and communities of struggle, people who have embraced the lies of white nationalism, and our religious leaders and people of faith and conscience to revive the heart and soul of this country.

Mr. President, we recognize that you are a symptom of our decaying moral fabric and you have ignited a modern day wildfire. The coals of white nationalism are always smoldering in our common life, and they have fueled the violence of indigenous genocide, slavery, lynching and Jim Crow. Stop stoking the fires of violence with racist words and policies. Mr. President, you must repent in word and deed if your leadership is to bring us together, rather than tearing us apart.

To Members of Congress and our elected representatives, we ask you to ensure our domestic tranquility. You can take immediate action to stop the President's racist attacks on immigrants. You can act to ensure voting rights, pass gun reform to keep weapons of war out of our communities, end federal programs that send military equipment to our local and state police departments, pass immigration reform that allows us all to thrive and build up the country, ensure good jobs and living wages and relief from our debts, and guarantee health care and social programs that meet our

needs. The lies of white nationalism have prevented action on all of these issues, and those who have enabled the President or remained silent are culpable.

As you return to Washington D.C., we call on Congress to honor the August 28 anniversary of the March on Washington and the murder of Emmett Till by passing an Omnibus Bill that offers a comprehensive response to the systemic racism that connects the issues facing 140 million poor and low-wealth people in this country.

To all candidates running for President in 2020, we call on you to address both the violence of racism and the policies of racism and white nationalism in the public debates. We ask you to connect these policies of systemic racism to poverty, ecological devastation, the war economy, militarism and a distorted moral narrative that accepts, justifies and perpetuates systemic violence.

To our movements and organizations on the ground, do not go back to your silos; instead we must build a moral fusion movement. We have been organizing in separate streams, often along lines of race, issue area or geography, but we need much more than our own fights can win. This is not the time to become entrenched in those divisions. We need to come together across race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, issue, geography and other lines of division to make a fight for everything we need and make sure we are all in — nobody is out.

To those who have embraced the lies of white nationalism and racism, we humbly recognize the power of fear. We live in a time when many people do not know if they will have work today or health care tomorrow. Many families do not know what agency is coming for them or their children. We do not know who to trust and have been left to fend for ourselves and



whoever we believe to be on our side. Let us find strength in our pain, mourn our losses, and remember that we are all part of a common human family. Let us reject every attempt by politicians and corporate interests to pit us against one another. Let us confess that white nationalism is a myth that has not served most people, even those it claims to protect.

Let us fight for each other and for a world where everyone can thrive.

To our religious leaders and people of faith, we call on you to offer moral leadership in the public square. If

you have condoned the lies of white nationalism or remained silent, you have failed to keep your sacred vows. We ask you to recall the struggles of our ancestors so we can work together to build up a more perfect union in our common life.

We call on all people of faith and conscience

to sign on to this letter and share it throughout your networks. Let us prevent this violence from defining who we are as a nation and people.

Forward together, not one step back.

Rev. Dr. William Barber, II, President, Repairers of the Breach and Co-Chair of the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival.

Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis, Director, Kairos Center for Religions, Rights and Social Justice and Co-Chair of the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival.

Rev. Teresa Ward Owens, General Minister and President of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Rabbi Rick Jacobs, President, Union for Reform Judaism.

Minister Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, Red Letter Christians.

ASSOCIATE GENERAL MINISTER PARTICIPATES IN POVERTY TOUR



The Real National Emergency

Saturday morning, April 27, 2019, I, with the company of my wife Joyce, joined the National Emergency Truth and Poverty Tour. I was inspired by the purpose which is: “To shine a light on the plight, fight, and insight of the poor in Cincinnati and real national emergencies.” It was encouraging to know that we were touring in Cincinnati, Ohio, while other tours were taking place in 10 other states. This is a movement that has caught on and with continued commitment, solidarity, unity, collaboration and prayer can’t be stopped.

The National Emergency Truth and Poverty Tour is designed to shift the false narrative to enable the truth of the real national emergencies to be told and heard. Each tour gives the riders the chance to hear first-hand the stories from people who live in environments that are poverty stricken, rated high in crime, drug infested, food deserts, lacking decent transit systems, no hospitals and in need of employment and educational opportunities for students.

Cincinnati was the city where I served as a student associate minister in local congregation during my first year in seminary. Not being a Cincinnati native, and the short time I served, I was completely unaware of the communities of Winton Hills and Price Hill. These areas have a long history of poverty and crime. It was pointed out that in Ohio, 41 percent of the population lives at or below the poverty level. In Cincinnati, 36 percent of the population live at or below the poverty level.

We heard personal stories that were most impactful. The stories made the tour both informative and impactful. It is clear to see how knowledge is power. The powerless poor need their plight, fight and insight

lifted to the national stage for the attention of leaders and policy makers. The national emergency is poverty, its systemic and is likened unto darkness. Jesus said, “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” (John 3: 19). The ignorance of the pervasiveness of poverty coupled with the policies that maintain poverty’s status quo, need to be lit up and shouted from the roof tops. This was a positive experience. The comradery and collegiality was a bonus.

Rev. Dr. William Barber, II and Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis would be proud and pleased with the enthusiasm and preparation the Ohio Campaign brought to the National Emergency Truth and Poverty Bus Tour.

"DHM CONNECTIONS FOR LIVING INTO THE GOSPEL!"



Are you living into the gospel? I'll answer the question as if I were being asked. The answer is a resounding yes! Yes, I am living into the gospel because of the love of Jesus, the One who is the Christ! In Christ I have a new identity and position in God's design. In Christ I am destined for a heavenly reunion with my sister,

Teresa, and my dad, Carl, who are present with the Lord. When it's my time to go I want them to join as a chorus in the gracious greeting from the Lord, "Well done you good and faithful servant!"

Leadership in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) for me is about living into the gospel in every aspect of life. I am witnessing this in the service of the general ministry established as the Division Homeland Ministries which is now doing business as Disciples Home Missions. This ministry connects people with ways to live into the gospel! The gospel to immigrants is that there is a place for them (Refugee and Immigration Ministries/ Immigration Legal Counsel). The gospel to pastors is that there is help along their ministerial journey and resources to feed their spirits.

(Christian Vocations - Well Fed Spirit). The gospel to parents is that there is help in the faith formation their children (Christian Education and Faith Formation & Ministries Across Generations). The gospel to women is that there are women empowered as leaders (Disciples Women). The gospel to men is that there are men who gather to uplift others (Disciples Men). The gospel to children is that there are places to worship and wonder (Children Worship and Wonder). The gospel to congregations is that there is help along their journeys of transformation (Evangelism and Congregational Transformation and The Leadership Initiative Team). The gospel to youth is that there are youth whose voices are valued (General Youth Council). The gospel to chaplains is that there are opportunities for life-giving connections (Chaplain's Endorser). The gospel to young adults is that there are young adults building community around their passion (Young Adult Commission & Disciples Peace Fellowship)!

The gospel to ministerial students is that there are scholarships (DHM Scholarship Ministry)! The gospel to disaster stricken communities is volunteers helping them recover (Disciples Volunteering). The gospel to humanity is that God has given us the awesome gift of God's creation (Green Chalice) and re-creation in Christ!

I believe in Jesus and I believe in you! Check us out a ministry of interest to you. We are at your service. We serve to embody the gospel through all of our various ministries because of the love of Christ!

May God's richest and best be yours!

Sotello
DHM...connecting people to the life-changing love of God!

TCMF INSTALLS OFFICERS



TCMF installed its new officers at their 137th Assembly. The new President is Rev. Robert Lofts of New Mt. Olive C.C. Henderson Tx. The Assembly which

was formerly held at Jarvis Christian College now convenes every two years at various Hotels around the state.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY "PAPA"



March 25, 2019 - Today, I remember my paternal grandfather, the late Rev. Noel E. Hord, who would have been 100 years old today. It is still hard to imagine that he has passed from this earth. I grew up in the church he pastored, and he baptized me, as he did each one of his children and

grandchildren. He was a force for justice, and fought to desegregate public facilities in Terre Haute, IN. He was brilliant, erudite, prophetic; he was funny, mischievous, and down-to-earth. He worked to build interfaith and interracial coalitions. He was the force behind the building of the Charles T. Hyte Community Center in Terre Haute, IN (he would be so sad to see how it has declined). He was a pastor to so many, especially for the many young adults, college students and children in our church and community.

Papa taught us to play ping-pong, pool, and softball. He was very competitive, and told us to "cheat fair". He was the first black athlete to play baseball at

Franklin College in Franklin, IN. He read voraciously and was an early proponent of black liberation theology when James Cone was not popular among black ministers. He led the local NAACP, and when Dr. King was assassinated, he organized the city's memorial service, leading a procession of Terre Haute's religious and community leaders. He always reminded us that we were just regular human beings, and that no matter how smart or successful we might be or become, there were other people in the world besides ourselves, and we needed to think about how our actions impacted other people.

Papa left us an example to follow and a legacy to pass on. When I told my grandparents I had accepted a call to ministry, he smiled and Grandma shouted ☺. "That's wonderful, daughter", he said. He passed away 6 months before my ordination. I was ordained in his robe, and I wore that robe and stole as I was installed as General Minister and President of the Chris-

tian Church (Disciples of Christ). How I would love to talk with him about how the church must minister in today's context. He would tell us that Black Lives Matter, and that the church must transform to meet the needs of this generation and beyond. He would tell us to register to vote, and he would still be reminding us that there are other people in the world besides ourselves. He would remind me to laugh, to get away, to read, to spend time with my family, and he would still be competitive on the softball field. I know that he is looking down from the balcony of heaven, with his head tilted to the side and smiling. It is because of Papa that I use the name Rev. Teresa HORD Owens....If you knew him, you know why.

Happy 100th Birthday in heaven, Papa! I know Grandma is shouting, and that you are smiling...we all miss you so much.

Terri Hord Owens

DAUGHTERS

Call us 'Sisters in the Spirit' or 'Children of the Church', we are 'daughters' connected to each other and this church by the love and service of our fathers to it.

One Sunday afternoon this summer, we were excited to be greeting each other at an ordination service.

One brother observing our comradery asked what the connection between the four of us was and I proudly replied that our fathers had all spent time in the general office of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). He responded enthusiastically that this was a historical moment. We agree, as we are:



Amelia Webb Walker – daughter of Charles H. Webb, Sr., Director of Evangelism and Development for the National Christian Missionary Convention (NCMC) and Pastor

Katherine Fox Cunningham – daughter of William K. Fox, Sr. – Administrative Secretary for the NCMC and editor of the Christian Plea and founder of the Oldtimers's Grapevine newsletters

Stacy Evans Duke – daughter of Lorenzo Evans, Director of Christian Education for the NCMC

Denola Brown Burton – daughter of Raymond Brown, Vice President of the Board of Church Extension and Pastor

The bonds were forged as these men worked to develop leaders and congregations around the country and instilled in their sons and daughters the same love and

respect for service to God and church that inspired them. We maintain the bonds as we meet and greet one another in service and fellowship opportunities, still. We're proud and honor bound to keep the connection going!

PASTOR JANA E PITTS-MURDOCK CALLED AS INTERIM SENIOR PASTOR OF LIGHT OF THE WORLD CHRISTIAN CHURCH

They were all trying to frighten us, thinking, “Their hands will get too weak for the work, and it will not be completed.” But I prayed, “Now strengthen my hands. (Neh. 6:9 NIV)

“This short verse identifies a crucial, yet often overlooked, turning point in the post exilic melodrama. You remember that the Jews, the people of God, Yahweh’s chosen people, were living their best and beautiful lives, their fanciful and fabulous lives, their self-indulgent and self-centered lives, when they were conquered, captured and carried away to exile in Babylon.”



After formal introductions to the congregation by Rev. Richard L. Spleth, regional minister of Indiana; Shatrese Flowers, the president of LWCC; and

Dwayne Montgomery, the chair of the pastoral search committee; Pastor Janae Pitts-Murdock began her inaugural sermon. “LET’S GET TO WORK” was the subject of the sermon. Pastor Janae will serve for fifteen months with two possible three month extensions as the interim senior pastor of Light of the World Christian

Church.

EXCERPTS FROM *SIGNS OF AUTUMN* Poem by Ruth P. Hobbs, Grapevine Board Member



At 104 years of age, Ruth P. Hobbs, of Ridge, Mississippi remains active, creative and appreciative of God’s wonderful world. We share excerpts from her recently submitted poem.

Summer has pulled its curtain down
And pinned it with a star,
Autumn has come smiling in - no matter where
you are.

Some flowers have lost their color,
Lovely Summer roses used to grow,
Though fluttering butterflies now depart

Signs of autumn here we know.

Listen to whisper of gentle breezes
Colorful leaves flying to and fro’
Music of beautiful Autumn chiming -
Graceful sound o Autumn bestow.

No season is more beautiful than
The Autumn time of year.
Everything is still beautiful - falling leaves flying everywhere.

The sky is heaven’s canvas, Which is always on display
It brightens up all the seasons, As we journey on our way.

Thank God for all the seasons,
They all have the reasons to be.
To be glorified by mankind,
To be appreciated by you and me.

POET'S CORNER by May F. Reed

MAY THERE BE HORSES IN HEAVEN

Hay, apples, oats and corn give strength to the mighty steed of keen, perceptiveness, power, sense and smell; a playful, spirited creature who prances and dances, whinnies and neighs. At birth he is awkward, stumbles and sways but quickly acquires a feel of stability to stand and run upon the land. Green, grassy meadows are to be his home, prepared by nature a splendid place to roam. Some horses lead a wearisome view, while others enjoy good things such as we do. When the stallion rises upon his hind legs, holds forelegs in air, what a beauty to behold. When he swishes his tail and tosses his head, and the wind catches his mane, it is poetry in motion and beauty to behold. And when he canters, trots, then breaks into a gentle gallop – with head held high and tail exquisitely arched, flowing gracefully in the wind– it is a stunning, breathtaking sight. And when we mount upon him, he awaits your command. You feel his massive frame beneath you as he lifts his head, ears perked, and turns slightly, allowing you to catch a glimpse into his eye and he into yours which expresses his readiness to carry you forward. You tap his sides gently as you draw firmly the reigns and with a toss of his graceful head he is ready to go forward. You might lean and pat softly the nap of his neck as his stride begins. Your feet planted firmly in the stirrups allows you to stay seated in the saddle. As you shift from side-to-side a little, just steady yourself in the stirrups. When the point of destiny is reached –pull back gently on the reigns and this mighty steed will come to a halt. Your will indicated becomes a command and there you are a sharing – horse and whoa-man. You've mounted on his left so be sure to do the same in dismounting, and in doing that you'll remain n-tact. And may there be horses in heaven for me.

May Reed

WHAT WOULD LIFE BE WITHOUT LAUGHTER

When the teacher caught some of her students with

gum in their mouths, what do you think she did???

SHE CHEWED THEM OUT.

(anon)

The kids texted me “Plz” which is shorter than please. I texted back “No” which is shorter than Yes.”

(anon)

A CELESTRIAL CONVERSATION

Said Sun to Moon one day “Am I not the brightest beam in the sky!” Moon moved slightly but gave no

notice, gave no reply. And then the planets began to speak – yet still Moon uttered no sound, not a peep. Then all the stars began to blink and sing, and Sun rolled back in wonder as their voices did ring. Celestials had gathered to assist ole Moon but Moon still, not a mumbling word said. And when Sun began again to boast, Pluto, farthest from Sun **shouted “You’re not the heavenly host, HE gave you such light. So be mindful, Sun, button your lip up-tight.”**

Neptune, 8th from the Sun, then rang out to say **“You sound like an earthling, talking that way.”** And Saturn, 6th from Sun, added **“DITTO”** and Jupiter, 5th and largest of them all, simply grunted softly to conclude it all – said **“Well!”** Now then Sun replied, **“You’ve all had your say, and I apologize, Moon, that I’ve bellowed and boasted and acted this way. I know I’m bigger & brighter than all of you but your remaining unified has changed my thoughts, changed my view. I’ll remember before I next speak, to manage civility and not havoc wreak.**

May Reed

Written Tue., Aug. 13, 2019

MY THOTS

The sense of God is like non other. I’ve always felt his presence, and I know the EARTH and all of HIS creatures do too. One day when all this wonder is passed away, all this which we had no part in creating – we will then be able to see, know and understand that which he has truly planned for his creation and the struggles and strife will be no more.

AMEN and AMEN



FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS

REV. CURTIS McMASTER COOPER, JR.



Forgive the following omission from Rev. Cooper's obituary in the last issue of *The Oldtimers' Grapevine*. "Rev. Cooper served nine years as the pastor of University Christian Church of Houston, Texas.

RUSSELL JAMES PARKER SR.



A JOURNEY REMEMBERED 1921-2019

As Russell journeyed through life,
He left footprints wherever he
went.

Footprints of kindness and love,
courage and compassion,
humor and inspiration,
joy and faith.

Even now when he is gone,
we can still look back
and clearly see the trail he left behind —
a trail bright with hope that invites
Us to follow.

VIVIAN HANNAH

Vivian Hannah Passed away July 13, 2019. Daughter to Clem Hairston (deceased) and Ada Hairston (deceased). Former wife to William W. Hannah (deceased) and mother to son William (Bill) Hannah and daughter Helen Mack. Vivian was born in Beckley Ohio July 5, 1929. She is survived by her grandchildren Lynne Reynolds, Deidre White, Denise (Mack) Johnson, Husband Jerrell Johnson and grandchildren Micah Johnson, and Mariam Johnson, she is also survived by Her Sister Helen (Hairston) Taylor. Memorial services were on Saturday July 20, 2019 at Fifth Christian Church of Cleveland.

REV. DR. CHRIS HOBGOOD, FORMER GMP, PASSES



The Rev. Dr. William Chris Hobgood, former general minister and president of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) passed into new life in Christ May 31, 2019. Hobgood was general minister and president from October 2003 to July 2005.

In addition to his work in the general Church, Hobgood was regional minister in Arkansas and the Capital Area and most recently pastor of Bethany Beach Christian Church in Delaware. The author of books such as *Welcoming Resistance: A Path to Faithful Ministry*, *Once and Future Pastor*, and *Born Apart, Becoming One: Disciples Defeating Racism*, Hobgood was a tireless voice speaking up against racism, making that a theme of his term as general minister and president.

"We were so blessed to have him as a leader in our Church. I was blessed to be in pro-reconciliation/anti-racism training with him several times," said current general minister and president, Rev. Teresa "Terri" Hord Owens. "His leadership in a transitional time called us to faithfulness in our witness as a pro-reconciling anti-racist Church."

Hobgood's daughter, Dr. Laura Hobgood, said "His anti-racism and justice work was always at the heart of his ministry." She noted his long affiliation with the Disciples Center for Public Witness as well as the mission trips his congregation took to assist with rebuilding after Hurricane Katrina.

Born in July of 1936 in Lotumbe in what was then the Republic of Zaire, Hobgood was the son of missionaries. He received his bachelor's degree from Transylvania College (now University) and his divinity degree from the College of the Bible (now Lexington Theological Seminary) while serving several Kentucky congregations in the late 1950s. He earned his doctor of ministry from Lancaster Theological Seminary in 1982.

JOANNE T. HUMBERT



JoAnne T. Humbert (nee Trimbur), age 88. Beloved wife of 66 years to Rev. Dr. John O. Humbert; dearest mother of Deborah Humbert (Tom King, deceased), Jeffrey Humbert (wife Cindy) and the late John D. Humbert;

loving grandmother of Emily Dengler-King (Adam), Nicole Gibson and the late Jessica Humbert-Long and Neil Cody; dear sister of the late Marilyn Thorp, William Trimbur and Richard Trimbur. JoAnne Trimbur Humbert was a native of Niles, Ohio, graduating from Niles McKinley High School. She received her Bachelor's Degree from Mount Union College in 1953. JoAnne was an elementary school teacher for 28 years in Kentucky, Maryland, Ohio and Indiana, later receiving her Master's Degree from Butler University. JoAnne's gentle kindness and loving compassion were her hallmark in teaching, in her role in the church, with her husband, and with her family. She was a Master Gardener, family and friends finding great joy in her beautiful gardens. She was dearly cherished by so many, who were the recipients of a lifetime of love and caring

REV. RUFUS LEWIS, JR.



Rufus Lewis, Jr. was born on June 7, 1933 in Birmingham, Alabama to Rufus Lewis Sr. and Jasena Lewis (both preceded him in death). Rufus' stepmother, Emma Lewis preceded him in death as well.

Rufus was an only child and grew up in Birmingham

where he attended school and graduated from A.H. Parker High School of Jefferson County in 1952.

Rufus was employed in various occupations, however the one that gave him most joy of which he retired was the United States Postal Service. He began his occupation with the Postal Service as a mail carrier.

Rufus was trained by the Postal Service in other areas such as counseling, communication and conflict resolution.

Rufus accepted Christ at an early age and has always been a member of The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) denomination. From 1990 – 92, Rufus served as the National Convocation Secretary and from 1992—1994, served the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Alabama—Northwest Florida region as Moderator. It was during his service to the church that he heard and answered the Call to Ministry and enrolled in Beeson School of Divinity where he earned his Master of Divinity. Rufus pastored both the Sellers Memorial Christian Church in Haynesville, Alabama and Macedonia Christian in Birmingham, Alabama.

In the year 2000, Rufus was called to Detroit as the Pastor of the United Christian Church of Detroit. It was there that Rufus met and married Rhonda Moore on February 16, 2002. Together they worked on various ministries of the church and surrounding community. Rufus became a member of the Cody Rouge Coalition and a Detroit Police Chaplain of the 6th precinct.

Rufus enjoyed watching movies, his daily five mile walk at the Mall, and bowling. Rufus also loved to sing and sang with the Voices of Joy Men's Choir and was a member of the "Singing Preachers." All who knew him knew that he loved to eat and one of his favorite meals was a two-piece dark from Popeye's Chicken. Rufus was an amateur photographer that took pictures of everything and everybody. Birmingham was his home where he would vacation to visit his family, classmates, and friends.

Rufus was a loving, kind and giving man that loved the church and people. He envisioned that "love" would conquer all! Throughout his pastorate at the United Christian Church his motto continued to be that of love and Rufus was the epitome of a loving man of God. Until his health began to fail and caused him to retire, he continued to show love to all he met.

SAVE THE DATES!

July 22-25, 2020, Fort Worth, Texas



2020 EXPERIENCE
IT'S REAL
NIGI  Revelations 7:9-12

The Oldtimers' GRAPEVINE

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OLDTIMERS' GRAPEVINE is a free print and electronic ministry published three 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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Founder

OSCAR HAYNES (1916-2014)
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GOD'S POWER COUPLE A TRIBUTE TO THE FOUNDER AND HIS BRIDE - Ephesians 6:2 & Matthew 19:19

By Katherine Fox-Cunningham, Grapevine Board Vice-President

On a Saturday afternoon, as I researched my family genealogy and history and as the calendar approached the anniversary of my parents' birthdays, Rev. Dr. William K. Fox on September 25th and Reubena Stultz Fox on October 7th (her 100th Birthday this year), my thoughts turned to memories of my parents. I thought about how blessed my brother William Jr. and I had been to have had these two people as parents for over 57 years. Dad joining the Lord in October 2004 and five months later, Mom, February 2005. Unfortunately, Judy Fox, my sister-in-law, and the rest of the family lost my brother, William, Jr. (born October 26th), just a few years later in December 2008. (Judy & William Jr were part of the Grapevine's first publication staff). The three individuals who were in my life the longest are gone to be with the Lord, but not forgotten.

Thinking about what we now consider a fashionable label "Power Couples", I think my parents deserved the title of "God's Power Couple". Reflecting on my parents' lives, I thought about their beginnings as a young married couple on December. 30, 1943 at Fayette Street Christian (DOC) Church in Martinsville, Virginia. They were introduced to each other by Rosa Page Welch, a Disciple pioneer, at a National Christian Missionary Convention in Missouri. The young minister and his teacher bride immediately left after their wedding for Mississippi. What an adventure, it must have been to start married life and a new ministry in teaching positions at the Southern Chris-

tian Institute. Both the grandchildren of enslaved Africans, the son of a Wisconsin Baptist preacher/writer from Nashville, TN and an elocutionist and the daughter of a Virginia businessman and a homemaker, both of my parents were amazing individuals.

Although my Dad's father died when he was only three years old, I think that my Dad inherited my grandfather's love for the church, writing and music. My grandfather, George Fox died young but was an innovative Milwaukee pastor, a published Black newspaper writer and published composer of religious music. Dad became the Centennial Christian Church pastor and newsletter editor, the editor of "The Christian Plea" (published by Christian Board of Publication), the author of several books



on the History of the Black Disciples and in 1991, founder and editor/publisher of the Oldtimers Grapevine.

"Bill" Fox was a graduate of Tennessee A&I State College (now University), the University of Chicago, and Christian Theological Seminary (CTS). Dad was the first Black student to ever live in the Divinity House in Chicago. He later returned to Tennessee State as Dean of Men, Chaplin and history professor. Bill left St. Louis to become a Lilly Fellow at in Indianapolis and work for the Church Federation. He was recognized as a Distinguished Alumni of CTS. Retiring as the Administrative Secretary of the National Convocation and Associate General Minister of the

Church, Dad pastored churches around the country from Nashville, TN, to St. Louis, MO, Dayton, OH, Jackson, MS to Kansas City, MO. Other ministries were with local and statewide interdenominational organizations in Indianapolis and New Jersey such as the DOC Historical Society, Board of Church Extension, local Mental Health Association, SCLC, NAACP. He founded & participated in the General Assembly Bike Rides from Indianapolis to San Antonio (1983 at age 66) & Kansas City to Tulsa (1991 at age 74) which raised funds for Disciples Racial Reconciliation Ministries. He also founded the Jarvis Christian College annual “Hands-on-Mission Project” bringing others on board to beautify the campus. Travel was also part of his life and opportunities took him throughout the world. Mom was always supportive, always with him when possible and was the “hostess with the mostest” for every guest who stayed at our home and sat at our dining room table.

My mother, Reubena Fox, was all about education and teaching. She was a natural beauty and very smart, she attended Bluefield State College and later graduated from Harris Teacher’s College. In her first teaching job as a single young woman, she drove in her Model T4 Ford to teach in one room schoolhouses all over Henry County, Virginia. Reubena was a very active young adult in the church’s Piedmont area. In a different time, she may have chosen to become a minister herself. She loved working with young children and women’s ministries. She was an active member of the Christian Women’s Fellowship (CWF) and the Girl Scout Council as a troop leader and a Board Member. As a young girl I noticed, that Dad was an ardent supporter and mentor for women in ministry and women’s rights. In contrast, I remember, however, that as a young minister, Dad wanted his wife to be a “stay-at-home Mom”, perhaps because his mother struggled as a widowed single parent. Not the choice for Reubena, whom he fondly called “Bena”, once I started school, my mother, being an independent thinking woman, decided to continue



her teaching career. She became President of many church organizations including CWF and the National Convention Ministers Wives Fellowship and was active with Church Women United, an interdenominational group. My mother was also Dad’s confidant and sounding board and Dad was hers. Recognizing the true value of my mother’s opinion, there was very little that my Dad accomplished that he did not discuss and share with his life partner “Bena”. My mother was a rock for me and my brother as a “Superwoman” – always there for us and her nieces and nephews.

The importance of the church, family, music, family history, Black History, American History, Civil Rights activism, and helping others were all a part of my rich upbringing. Protests, marches and meetings with civil rights icons like Whitney Young, Stockley Carmichael, Jesse Jackson and Andrew J. Brown were a part of my family agenda as a pre-teen and teenager.

Family travel throughout the North America & the Caribbean from California to New York, Canada, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Jamaica and Haiti, all before I was 18, facilitated my love of travel and appreciation of different cultures. Working in Migrant Ministry as a young college student helped me realize how blessed I was to be raised in my family. The stories I could tell! I never realized until I was an adult, how important this exposure would be in shaping my life, interests and career in public service.

My husband, Rev. Dr. Jerry Cunningham, was also greatly influenced by my parents, a youth member of Centennial Christian in St. Louis, he became one of my Dad’s Timothy’s. Jerry retired from the Justice Ministries in Homeland Ministries for the Christian Church. I thank God for my parents every day and pray that I have shown to my own family even a portion of the faith in God, love, support and exposure that my parents gave to me. Gone but not forgotten – Lessons learned not forgotten and the Oldtimers Grapevine is here 28 years later to remind us to remember them. Praise God!

A MOMENT FOR WELLNESSÉ



Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, just as it is well with your soul.

3 John 2 (NRSV)

When I first heard someone talk about self-care, I wondered like many others why this was so important. What was so important. I began to listen much more carefully when it emerged within the ministry circles that I frequent. There was more talk regarding burn out and leaving the field. Yet burn-out is not unique among ministers. Anyone can become to burned-out. It didn't take much for me to realize that there was more about self-care that needed to be explored and define.

A simplistic definition of self-care is that it includes care of one's physical body, emotional, and mental state. It is taking care of the whole body and not just one part of the body. Another unique difference is that self-care is an intentional plan. Self-care is deliberate and self-initiated. These factors are not necessarily unique.

Most people do the basics of self-care such as brushing their teeth, bathing and putting on clean clothing. It is going beyond the minimum of personal care. We want to do our best to serve God. Sometimes that means taking better care of ourselves to do so. A good self-care plan means going beyond the minimum. A good self-care plan is individualize to meet the specific needs of that person. A good plan is reviewed and changed as needed. Examples of good self-care plans can be found on the internet or Pinterest.

Good self-care has far-reaching benefits for the person and their relationship with others. It not only improves their health and well being, it helps a persons mood and emotion. It generally is not developed in consultation with the help of a doctor or other professional but it can be.

Some of the other benefits of self-care include:

1. Improve resistance to disease.

2. Improved self-esteem.
3. Increased self-knowledge.
4. Increased resiliency.

Try it for yourself and see if it can make a difference in your life.

*FINALLY BE STRONG IN THE LORD
AND IN HIS MIGHTY POWER*

EPHESIANS 6:10 (NIV)

Be Well!!!

Rev. Dr. Betty Miller Green

Wellnee Coach and Consultant,

Associate Pastor, Woodland Christian Church

Columbus, Ohio

REGIONAL REPORTER ARTICLE

Norma Ellington-Twitty, Ph.D., St. Louis, Missouri



On November 2, 2019 thirty-five current and former employees of the National Benevolent Association of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) gathered for an "inside picnic" reunion at Community Christian Church

(Disciples of Christ) in Manchester, Missouri. Hosted by former NBA Treasurer Leon Whitney and his wife Linda, the event was a casual, low key event, much like the host, with lots of good food and good conversation. Overall the event was fun and very upbeat; however at the beginning Leon acknowledged five persons who departed this life in 2019: Victor Barr, Arthur Buell, Cindy Dougherty, Cheryle Dyle-Palmer, and Dick Savage. As ever, the privilege, the joys, the ups and downs of serving in this ministry permeated the discourse throughout. As ever - we look forward to the next reunion - we can never get too much of NBA!!

POET'S CORNER by May F. Reed



LIFE LIVED, LEARNED AND LOVED

Of those who love deeply, richly, widely, loftily, they are surely revered by the angels. Sometimes we are so busy doing, working, going to-and-fro that we really don't notice those close around us and aren't aware

of others true feelings. It is at these times that we need God's covering to ward off the wiles of the evils around us. The world is teeming with immoral, evil minds; haters. Folk smile then run swiftly to tell those who don't have one's best interest at heart and to do mischief. They don't think twice about the things they say or do. Everything my little family has done was and is centered around uprightness. When the children were still at home we would sit around our kitchen table which was and is the center of our home. We often invited others to sup with us around that table. There was nothing fancy or special about our little wooden table but I always felt good when I sat down at it. Each day at meat our conversation was shared on what had happened that day. The children would express their thoughts and feelings about different things they had had to deal with at school and in the neighborhood. They asked so many questions. We answered most of them and sometimes I'd say "let me think about that."

We made others welcome at our table and believe me many were happy to share. I suppose if the Pope came, or Oprah, the Queen of England or Barrack-we'd end up sitting around the kitchen table. We often never exited the kitchen, never got to the Living Room (John and Marilyn Foulkes are witness to this fact). But no one ever seemed to mind. We prayed there, chatted, planned and studied. We so enjoyed the visits of friends and neighbors. It always felt so good to be at home around the table with family and friends. It has always been the most used area of our home. You could tell by the way the design was rubbed off from the edges of the table mats. We

wore out three sets of chairs. I suppose if the table had to be moved about like the chairs - we'd have needed to buy a third table also.

Well, as we are approaching the holiday seasons, looking forward to Thanksgiving and Christmas, I know you'll be inviting family/friends to sup with you or you'll be going to sup with them. Make this a joyous time of memorable fellowship that will last both in your hearts and theirs. Be blessed as you ask blessings and give thanks for those you know and love. May this be so in each home and in each heart.

MORE LAUGHTER IS MORE FUN

The teacher asked the little kindergartener "Are you mineral, vegetable, or animal?" The child answered "Vegetable. I am a human bean."

A mother said "sometimes you wonder what kids are really learning. Yesterday a teacher pointed at the flag and asked my six-year-old what it was. He said, "It is the flag of my country!" The teacher couldn't leave well enough alone. She then said "Now tell me the name of your country." And he answered "Tis of thee."

A HINT TO GARDENERS

Do you want to grow greener, more lush, leafier plants next Spring? Just sprinkle gelatin over your seeds when you plant them! Any flavor as-long-as it has sugar in it, not artificial sweetener. It will encourage bacteria while adding growth-enhancing nitrogen.

DON'T JUST SIT

He just sat around until he got old;
Then he got mad and that was too bad.
Don't just sit around doing nothing,
Get up and try doing something.
You may find it hard but do
more than whine and sigh.

When things don't work out don't quit, don't cry.
Work won't kill you - that's a plain hard fact
And laziness only earns you pity and lack.

May Reed-Written November 12, 2019

LIVING IN THE MIDDLE

BY Cynthia Hibbler

My home has blue uneven shutters
a sparkling stained glass Cross is on a
pane of glass next to a Roman font
“Jesus Saves” poster
the façade of the second level is a
rustic crimped pink
low-cost metal bars cover the
windows on the first floor
keeping me in
keeping everyone out
The neighbors to my right and left are
gone
they moved away months ago
leaving me noise-less, smell-less
hello-less
When Mr. Ludlow moved away
he gave me his window flower boxes
with
trumpeting petunias perfect pink, valor violet and
patriotic red
he went to an assisted living apartment
“no plants allowed”
he said
I said goodbye to Mrs. Shallow
she held Lucy close to her tear streaked cheek



to smell the freshly licked calico fur
coat
before going to live with her daughter
“no cats allowed”
she said
The wistful trumpets play limp music
during the long sweaty summer day
before the sun scrapes its way across
the humid sky
into the languid night
Lucy spew sorrowful me-yowls
living in the middle
Mrs. Shallow’s scent avails in a
corner with books and magazines
Lucy affectionately weaves
through my legs
into the placid night
Lucy washes her settled paws
living in the middle.

WHAT’S NEXT?

By Ruth Hobbs

A new wind is blowing in our
world today,
All of it is not good;
But let us accept with grateful
hearts.
Trusting God daily as we should.
Let us develop a gift of laughter
Practice smiling instead of the
frown.
Plant faith in the Blessed Savior
He will never let you down.
Technology is really advancing
It’s up to us to prepare and grow.
Many books are available
To assist us for things we don’t know.



We’ll experience some joy and
some sorrow
We’ll be faced with some bitter-
ness & some sweet.
Let us climb though rocks be rug-
ged -
We’ll encounter different experi-
ences to meet.
Yes, Joy will come in the morning
-
As we experience a different world
and day.
May we keep our faith in Christ our Lord
He surely will stand by us each day.

EAST SIXTH STREET MARKS 100 YEARS

by Carla Hinton/The Oklahoman



A predominantly black church with strong ties to its surrounding neighborhood marked its recent 100th anniversary with praise and a president.

The Rev. Jesse Jackson and his congregation at East Sixth Street Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) ushered in the church's centennial with special guests, including local Christian Church ministers and church members; the Rev. Pamela Holt, Oklahoma Christian Church regional director; and Nancy Pittman, president of Philips Theological Seminary in Tulsa.

The highlight of the recent anniversary worship service was the message preached by the Rev. Teresa Hord Owens, guest minister for the occasion. Owens serves as general minister and president of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada. An Indiana native, she became the first black person to lead the denomination and the second woman when she was elected to the post in 2017.

Owens preached from Philippians 1:6, which she said is her personal Scripture: "... being confident of this,

that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

The minister congratulated East Sixth Street members for carrying forward the legacy of the church's forefathers, who likely dreamed of the day that the church members of the future would celebrate 100 years of Christian ministry.

Owens said those forefathers put their faith in the Lord, not people, to see the work survive and thrive.

"For 100 years your confidence can't be in people. People will fail you every time. All human organizations have drama. My confidence is in Him," she said.

Owens shared her own journey to the ministry as an example for the congregation to consider. She said she had a passion for the Christian arts and had hesitated to fulfill her divine call to preach. Eventually, she heeded the call and began her pastoral ministry career as pastor of a small white congregation in suburban Chicago, where she "saw what God can do when you simply preach the Word and love the people." She said there was no "blueprint," but she trusted God with her future.



GLOBAL MINISTRIES INVITES YOU TO LEARN ABOUT EBOLA IN THE CONGO AND PARTNER RESPONSES

In this 2019 Congo Week we are acutely aware of the spread of Ebola in Eastern Congo and how it intersects with the long-lasting conflict. The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is currently grappling with the world's second-largest Ebola epidemic on record which the World Health Organization (WHO) has declared a public health emergency of international concern. According to the WHO, there have been a total of 3,228 cases including 2,153 deaths since the outbreak was declared in August 2018.

An epicenter of the current outbreak is in Beni, on the east-

ern border of DRC which is not only struggling with the ebola epidemic but also a long-standing violent conflict which makes it much more difficult to prevent the spread of Ebola. There are concerns that the virus might spread quickly across the border and throughout the Great Lakes region.

Global Ministries partner the Church of Christ in Congo (ECC) is working to respond with a project in Beni focused on preventative measures: strengthening washbasin and soap devices in the parishes, schools and health facil-

ities of ECC churches as well as increasing awareness about how hygiene and sanitation measures can limit the spread of ebola. This includes local radio programs focused on ebola prevention, workshops for community leaders, pastors, local leaders, and the indigenous population, and outreach to teach hygiene and sanitation principles in high-risk villages. According to ECC: "Involving the community in the fight against Ebola is the key to success in eradicating this epidemic."

The local community in Eastern Congo, especially the areas most impacted by the conflict, has expressed a great deal of skepticism and distrust about outside organizations suddenly present and seeking to respond to the ebola outbreak.

The ECC says: "In Beni, North Kivu, community resistance has hindered the efforts of health specialists. But to defeat Ebola, the population is the best ally... It is therefore urgent that the Church of Christ in Congo engage in the response given its demographic weight in the eastern region of the country."

Rev. Marco Cable, Global Ministries Area Executive for Africa, says: "Global Ministries partnerships in the Democratic Republic of Congo date back 120 years. We have a deep abiding love for the people in Congo, and the current Ebola virus outbreak is deeply concerning for us. The presence of Ebola is truly devastating communities in eastern Congo, and it is very troubling for those in other parts of the country and neighboring countries. The good people of DR Congo have suffered so much from human and natural disasters. It is our prayer and earnest hope that the Ebola virus is quickly contained and eliminated. We are committed to accompanying partners through the full elimination of Ebola and into the unforeseen future."

How you can get involved?

- Advocate. Call on your Member of Congress to support the Ebola Eradication Act

- Give. Support the Church of Christ in Congo (ECC)
- Learn. Utilize the Congo week resources from Global Ministries
- Pray. Prayer and Worship materials are available in the Congo Week Resource Guide

DISCIPLES HOME MISSION



DHM is a collective of ministries that in relationship with its partners, equips Disciples for Christ and connects people to the life-changing love of God while facilitating faithful and effective ministry! As president, I encourage Christ-like compassion for making courageous connections! It is a privilege to offer leadership and collegial ministry with a staff of gifted colleagues in our denomination's breadbasket of ministries for program and mission in Christ in North America.

tries for program and mission in Christ in North America.

A few of DHM ministries are:

- Black Ministers Retreat
- Chain of Prayer
- Christian Vocations
- Disciples Men
- Disciples Women
- Refugee & Immigration

To see a full list of all ministries of DHM and the many resources available click [here](#).

DHM partners with Mission & Retreat Centers

Disciples mission centers are great destinations for individual and group work trips. They provide a broad range of social services and spiritual resources to support and transform their local communities, bringing hope and hospitality, healing and peace, justice and compassion. Click [here](#) to see full list of Mission & Retreat Centers.

Pray for these ministries designed to be of service to you. In the words of Carol King, "You just call out my name and you know wherever I am I'll come running to see you again...winter, spring, summer or fall! All you have to do is call And I'll be there You've got a friend!"

Be blessed and be well! Sotello

CHRISTIAN CHURCHES TOGETHER (CCT) MEET IN MONTGOMERY JAMES WATTS OBM DIRECTOR



Pictured Catholic Family Delegation: Cliff Petty, Fr Manuel Williams, Matthew Walker, Very Rev. Vernon Huguley, Donna Grimes, Mar Munoz-Vasco, Fr Walter Kedjerski with second from left Bishop Joseph Bambera, Diocese of Scranton Chairman of USCCB committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs

Christian Churches Together is one response to our Lord for His Church. Our Lord prayed that all who believe in Him might be one with God and with one another so that the world would believe in Him as God and Savior. We live in a world divided by ideologies, politics, race and religion. CCT is the only movement in the USA that promotes and nurtures dialogue and cooperation between the theological and ideological spectrum of American Christianity. It offers a space that is inclusive of the diversity of Christian families in the United States — Evangelical, Orthodox, Pentecostals, Historic Protestant, Historic Black churches and Christian organizations. The whole church is represented in Christian Churches Together. CCT is the first national ecumenical group that our United States Catholic have joined with over 67 million members, our Catholic Church is the largest church in the United States. Christian Churches Together is unique improving the only venue where churches from all the major groupings of churches, representing over one hundred million Christians, to come together for prayer, dialogue, fellowship and witness.

The United States of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) invited representative from our Diocese of Birmingham to participate in this conference; Very Rev. Vernon Huguley, Matthew Walker, and myself. Matthew is a

bright and intelligent 23-year-old young adult Catholic. These are his thoughts about the conference: As a recent college graduate who participated in several campus ministries, I got to meet learn, and engage with students who were not believers In Jesus Christ. One common theme as to why they were skeptical of faith is because of the atrocities the church had down in the past. The biggest of these topics was the church's position, or lack thereof, of racism. Racism, in my eyes, is a subject the church sometimes does not do a good job of discussing. It brings up a hard past where religion was used to justify many acts of oppression towards people of different races. The frustration that was shared to me was how the church seemed ignore its past transgressions. The CCT, however, not only faced the past but engaged with it head on.

I was struck by how open the church leaders present spoke on how the church in the past had failed people. They gave no excuses. In fact, they lamented on how negligent at times they were In the past to support people of different racial back grounds. As someone who was consistently told that the church doesn't do enough about racism, the experience was the antithesis of what people had told me original. My favorite thing was there not only a lament of the past crimes, but a call to action to ensure that racism will not invade the church. In a time where people want to see action over words, I am proud I got to be part of the planning process to put actions In motion.

The CCT is something more people should know about. Seeing church leaders show remorse for what the church has done in the past is a sight many non-believers need to see. Not only that but people need to know about the actions that the church is making to prevent racism within itself. There is a movement happening in the church that people need to know about. A movement where the church reconciles with those it has wronged in the past, but also ensures their safety in the future. My heart is on fire after the convocation and my prayer is to share the CCT's message to all.

WORKSHOP OPPORTUNITIES AT THE 2020 EXPERIENCE

2020 EXPERIENCE
IT'S REAL
Revelations 7:9-12

The ministries of the National Convocation, Obra Hispana, and NAPAD of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) will come together to listen, learn and worship, as we celebrate together in a joint 2020 Experience under the theme "It's Real" and the scripture of Revelations 7:9-17.

This unity will also be modeled in the educational offerings. The 2020 Experience seeks workshops that will address areas/topics that impact the Obra Hispana, National Convocation and NAPAD communities. These topics include, but are not limited to, congregational life, faith formation, spiritual practice, and justice issues that impact our world. The 2020 workshops will be open for ALL attendees, but please let us know if your workshop is targeted toward a particular audience - for example - young adult, clergy, lay, women, etc.

Workshops will be offered on Thursday and Friday.
Thursday 2:00 – 3:20 and 3:40 – 5:00
Friday 2:00 – 3:30

There will be two workshop options for Thursday.

- The first option will be workshop sessions that will have Part 1 and Part 2, that will be last for a total of three hours. In this format, the first part will feature topic by the presenters. The Second Part will feature a panel with representatives of NAPAD, Obra Hispana and National Convocation that will contextualize the topic discussing practical strategies and examples of the topic. This time will conclude with at least 15 min. for Q&A.
- The second option will be the opportunity to attend two different workshops for an hour and a half

The final selection of all the workshops and leaders is at the discretion of the Education Experience team.



DISCIPLES MEN

The General Conference of Disciples Men invites you to join us at TCU July 10th to 12th, 2020 for Sessions 2020! The weekend will be filled with opportunities to learn and grow as a man, as a disciple of Christ, and as a Disciple of Christ! Rick Lowery will be presenting three keynote presentations on the theme "I Am My Brother's Keeper." We will lift our voices in praise with music led by John Malget and Dean Phelps, and have Bible study led by Warren Carter. Sessions 2020 also features workshops on the Wounded Warrior project, Week of Compassion, Male Spirituality, and The Jesus Way. And you won't want to miss out on the Saturday afternoon presentation by Santiago Piñón.

WCC REFLECTS ON ECOLOGICAL RACISM AND CLIMATE JUSTICE AT CONFERENCE IN CRETE



"Ecological racism and prophetic voices for ecological crisis – Climate justice". This was the theme of the 6th international conference on Ecological Theology and Environmental Ethics organized at the Orthodox Academy of Crete under the auspices of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I on 23-26 September.

The WCC was represented by Dr Louk Andrianos and Dr Guillermo Kerber. Andrianos, organizer of the conference since 2008, is a WCC consultant for care of creation, sustainability and climate justice. Kerber is a WCC advisor and former programme executive for economic and ecological justice.

Participants heard messages from “Green Patriarch” Bartholomew I and WCC general secretary Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit.

The conference was started in 2008 to promote the interfaith and interdisciplinary search of solutions to important environmental problems of our time.

“The increasing number of young theologians participating as well as the multi-faith character of the conference are signs of hope for the promotion of eco-justice and environmental ethics,” said Andrianos.

The theme of this year’s conference contributes to the thematic focus of WCC on racism for 2019. Participants from many different countries (Canada, Norway, India, Germany, Netherlands, Belgium, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Switzerland, Turkey, Ethiopia, Qatar, USA, UK, Greece) and diverse faith traditions presented their visions. “Discussions were a clear expression of the spirit of dialogue of the ‘symphilosophiein’ of the Orthodox Academy of Crete,” noted Antonios Kalogerakis, head of the academy’s Institute of Theology and Ecology.

Interventions made by scientists and faith representatives of various Christian denominations and Muslim participants showed the relevance of the concepts of ecological racism and climate apartheid to address the continuing threat of the life on planet earth due to climate change and human greed. In various ways and from various regions in the world, participants stated

how threats continue to undermine biodiversity, how unlimited greed has led to the depletion of natural resources and poverty, how species continue to disappear, and how the increase of the force and frequency of droughts, floods, hurricanes, as well as the increase in global average temperature and CO2 emissions reflect the reality of climate change.

Reflection on the “Economy of Life” helped deepen the understanding of Christian eco-theology. The contribution of basic sciences, psychology, philosophy and religious studies have become indispensable for developing eco-theology and environmental ethics. *Laudato si* recommendations, contemporary ecofeminism and green institutions were also discussed.

“Our daily life, our routines and our choices—such as our eating habits, our immediate relationship with the environment, our choices in consuming water and other resources—can be the means of directing us towards an authentic way of life or—conversely—drive us towards extinction,” said Sister Dr Theosemeni from the Monastery of Chrysopigi in Chania.

During the three-day conference, participants visited a church monastery, natural botanical park and garden of Crete as well as a local environmentally-friendly olive oil factory. The contribution of youth to the discussion was strongly appreciated by all participants who committed themselves to strive for more involvement of youth in environmental ethics discourse.

CTS STATEMENT ON RECENT SHOOTINGS AND THE PLAGUE OF GUN VIOLENCE

Sobering. Terrifying. Demoralizing. These are just a few of the words we could use to describe the recent events in the United States. On August 5th, CBS News reported that we have had 255 massacres so far in 2019, with 5 happening within 8 days of that report.

Hope that our leaders will be compelled to take decisive action is fragile at best. We have been in similar spaces far too many times, hoping that any one of the brutal murders that have taken place in our schools, religious buildings, army bases, malls, parks, theatres, workplaces and streets would have been enough to convince the nation that we are allowing our fears, ignorance, prejudices, and violence to destroy us.

Furthermore, instead of facing the roots of our brokenness as a country, we tend to blame individuals. We have refused to understand or acknowledge our communal problem.

A perfect example of this is the tendency to blame mass shootings and gun violence on mental illness. Research is clear that this claim is not only wrong but also harmful. It increases stigma for the more than 46 million people in the US who have been given a mental health diagnosis at one point or another. Research shows that only about 1% of all violent acts against strangers are committed by people diagnosed with serious mental illness using a firearm ([Gun Violence and Mental Illness](#), American Psychiatric Association,

2016). The number is even less for mass shootings. A study released by the FBI in 2018 on the characteristics of 63 mass shooters between 2000 and 2013 makes clear that mental illness cannot be blamed as the cause of mass shootings. The only clearly established link between gun violence and mental illness is associated with suicide. Most people taking their lives suffer from significant emotional difficulties. Over 50% of the more than 47,000 annual suicides involve a firearm.

Most mass shooters in the US, research indicates, feel aggrieved by social rejection, are extremely angry, and harbor violent revenge fantasies often tied to desperate homicidal-suicidal narcissistic ideas such as “I’ll make people recognize me after all.” But they do not typically present with diagnosable mental illness. Among the six identified subgroups of mass shooters are those who direct their rage against a particular group and those who target family members. The El Paso shooter was emboldened by the current political anti-immigrant ideology tied to white supremacy and explicitly targeted Hispanics. The Dayton shooter targeted a location he had visited with his sister that night.

Instead of speaking of mental illness when we try to understand the epidemic of gun violence — with mass shootings as the horrific tip of the iceberg — we should speak of a social psychological and even spiritual sickness. As a society we apparently lack the collective empathy for victims of gun violence (annually more than 14,000 homicide victims killed; nearly 40,000 injured in attempted homicides; more than 20,000 taking their life with a gun). We refuse to imagine as our own the horror and pain people experience in such shootings. If we applied the Golden Rule to gun violence we would live by the motto “do not let happen to others what you do not want to happen to you” and take every possible action to further prevent gun violence from happening. The recent spike in mass shootings targeting racial and ethnic minorities makes it imperative that government leaders and other lead-

ers in influential positions refrain from hateful language targeting particular communities, since such rhetoric will be perceived by potential mass shooters as incitement and sanction to translate their rage into bloodshed.

While we should not stigmatize mental illness for gun violence, we can indeed learn a key step from mental health professionals in gun violence prevention: among the first interventions when faced with clients in danger of suicide or homicide is to ensure they have no access to lethal means. Our country has consistently refused to prevent potential mass shooters from getting their lethal means. A key spiritual reason for this is the fear-based worship of guns that characterizes the US like no other country. The weapons used in the recent El Paso and Dayton attacks, an AK-47 and an AK-15, were created for the military and should have no place in civilian life. They are glamorized by the \$52 billion/year gun industry and its lobby, the NRA, in everyday paranoid scenarios as “survival rifles” without which no freedom or safety is possible. A perverse symptom of the brokenness of our country is the fact that the staunchest ideology promoting the worship of guns is white Christian nationalism. In Orwellian fashion, it has turned the message of peace and love Jesus lived and preached on its head. It has done so by infusing the idea of God with fantasies of fear and hate. Instead of seeking safety and freedom in God, Christian nationalism seeks it in guns and country which are conflated with God. Instead of widening the circle of love to everyone, it sanctifies xenophobic, hateful tribalism.

Our collective resolve is required to counter the fear-based worship of guns as God. Faith communities and faith leaders can adopt a three-pronged approach:

1. Stand unequivocally on the side of the victims of gun violence by demanding publicly, prophetically, and unceasingly from legislators and business people in their own faith communities who profit from the horror and pain of gun violence to radically and effectively restrict access to military style guns.

2. Counter hate against minorities by offering the vision of a beloved community rooted in a radically all-embracing, absolute Love in which no one is left out.

3. Offer an antidote to the deep-seated fears of loss of freedom that underlie the hate of xenophobia, racism, and white supremacy by cultivating spiritual practices that engage the deepest existential and relational fears of death and insignificance, and absolutely affirm the value of each person in the eyes of the divine.

Gun violence cannot be overcome by more guns. The core motivating factor of social rejection points to deep-seated fears that ultimately can only be overcome by

an equally strong trust. Religious faith at its best offers just that kind of deeply rooted trust.

Dr. David M. Mellott

President

Dr. Leah Gunning Francis

Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculty

Dr. Matthias Beier

Director of Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program

FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS

GWENDOLYN BISHOP CHAMBLISS

Mrs. Chambliss was born on March 22, 1933 and passed away on Thursday, August 22, 2019. Gwen was educated in the Corinth, MS school system and received her high school diploma from Corinth Colored High School in 1951.

Gwen was an active member of United Christian Church of Jackson, MS and a staple of the Mississippi Christian Missionary Convention.

ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS

By Patrick Semansky/AP



Rep. Elijah E. Cummings, a Baltimore attorney and civil rights advocate who served in Maryland's legislature before representing the state in the U.S.

House, where he took on a lead role in investigating President Trump, has died. He was 68.

Cummings, the head of the powerful House Committee on Oversight and Reform, died early Thursday at

Johns Hopkins Hospital from complications related to longstanding health challenges, according to The Associated Press.

"He worked until his last breath because he believed our democracy was the highest and best expression of our collective humanity and that our nation's diversity was our promise, not our problem," said Cummings' wife, Maryland Democratic Party Chair Maya Rockey-moore Cummings. It's been an honor to walk by his side on this incredible journey. I loved him deeply and will miss him dearly."

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi called Cummings "my brother in Baltimore" as she spoke about him on Thursday.

"In the Congress, Elijah was considered a north star," Pelosi said. "He was a leader of towering character and integrity." She added, "He lived the American dream, and he wanted it for everyone else."

President Trump issued a statement via Twitter saying: "My warmest condolences to the family and many friends of Congressman Elijah Cummings. I got to see first hand the strength, passion and wisdom of this highly respected political leader. His work and voice on so many fronts will be very hard, if not impossible, to replace!"

Former President Barack Obama issued his own state-

ment saying, "Michelle and I are heartbroken over the passing of our friend, Elijah Cummings.

"As Chairman of the House Oversight Committee, he showed us all not only the importance of checks and balances within our democracy, but also the necessity of good people stewarding it," Obama said.

The 12-term congressman had failed to return from an unspecified medical procedure and missed two legislative roll call votes on Tuesday, the first day after a two-week recess, according to *The Baltimore Sun*.

In a statement on Sept. 30, Cummings said his doctors expected him to be able to return to Washington "when the House comes back into session in two weeks." It said he'd be in "constant communication" with his staff and congressional colleagues while he was away.

Cummings was among the three Democratic committee chairmen who signed a letter last month that accompanied a congressional subpoena of Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, who has declined to testify in the ongoing impeachment inquiry of the president.

According to an official biography of Cummings, the Baltimore native attended Howard University, where he obtained a bachelor's degree in political science and served as student government president. He later obtained a law degree from the University of Maryland School of Law.

He served for 13 years in Maryland's House of Delegates before winning his congressional seat in 1996.

"Congressman Cummings has dedicated his life of service to uplifting and empowering the people he is sworn to represent," his official biography says.

"He began his career of public service in the Maryland House of Delegates, where he served for 14 years and became the first African American in Maryland history to be named Speaker Pro Tem," it says. "Since 1996, Congressman Cummings has proudly represented Maryland's 7th Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives."

Cummings was born and raised in Baltimore and lived there his entire life in what he described as the "inner inner city." He was one of seven children of parents who worked as sharecroppers before moving to the

city in the 1940s, according to the *Sun*.

Discussing Cummings' connection with his constituents in Baltimore, Sherrilyn Ifill, president of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, tells NPR's Noel King, "he really was a moral force in the community."

"People trusted him in the unrest after Freddie Gray was killed — it was Elijah Cummings who could walk into the crowd and be recognized and have people respond to him," Ifill says. "And so I think what the country has seen of him over the last year is a reflection of what many of us here in Baltimore have known for the 20 years of his leadership. A man of tremendous, tremendous integrity."

As a prominent Democratic lawmaker, Cummings frequently found himself on the receiving end of Trump's Twitter account. In an infamous series of tweets in July, the president referred to Cummings' Baltimore district as "rat and rodent infested" and suggested that the congressman seldom goes there.



Hours before he died last week, Rep. Elijah E. Cummings (D-MD) performed what might have been his final official act while in office. According to CNN, aides to Cummings drove from the U.S. Capitol to Baltimore so that he could sign two subpoenas related to an investigation into the Trump Administration's policy on whether seriously ill immigrants, including immigrant children, may remain in the U.S. for medical treatment. "Chairman Cummings felt so strongly about the children, that he was going to fight until the end," an aide explained.

CHERYLE F. DYLE-PALMER

Cheryle Dyle-Palmer, a tireless advocate for underserved children and families departed this life on April 13, 2019. A celebration of her life was held at Centennial Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in St. Louis, Missouri on April 19, 2019.



Two years ago she retired from Parents as Teachers (PAT) National Center after serving as Interim President and as Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer.

Many readers will remember Cheryle Dyle-Palmer's thirteen years of dedicated service at the National Benevolent Association (NBA) of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), prior to her tenure at PAT. Her vision, leadership, and strong work ethic led to the formation of a record number of new and innovative early intervention/community based programs for children and families. With existing NBA programs, her work led to new levels of program excellence and effectiveness.

Cheryle Dyle-Palmer was born on September 30, 1949 in Birmingham, Alabama to Anderson Coleridge Brunt and Tessie Lee Smith Brunt. She was educated in St. Louis public schools. She received a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and Master of Arts in Sociology from the University of

Missouri-St. Louis. She attended the Harvard University JFK School of Government, Executive Management and Leadership Program and many other educational programs. She was a life-long learner.

Cheryle Dyle-Palmer was active in the church as a child and an adult. At the time of her passing she was a faithful member, elder, Sunday School teacher, choir member (beautiful soprano voice), and Church Moderator at Centennial Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

She is survived by her husband, Barry L. Palmer, life-long Disciple; son, William D. Dyle V (Pamela); stepdaughter, Lori C. Palmer; two grandchildren, Chase E. Dyle and Macy L. McLaughlin; six sisters; nieces, nephews and cousins; members of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.; fellow classmates from Sumner High School; and a host of extended family and friends.

THE REV. DR. ERNEST J. NEWBORN, SR.,



The Rev. Dr. Ernest J. Newborn, Sr., died Wednesday, Nov. 6, 2019, in Pomona, CA. He was 92 years old.

"The Church is so grateful for the work of Dr. Newborn," said General Minister and President Rev. Terri Hord Owens.

"His gentle heart and manner, his care for the oppressed, and his leadership in the ministry of

reconciliation leave an example of Christian love, giving and commitment that we can boldly emulate."

After graduating from Tennessee State University in 1951 with a degree in sociology, Newborn continued his studies at Howard University School of Religion, earning his master of divinity in 1954 and his doctor of ministry degree from Christian Theological Seminary in 1983. He served as a pastor in Tennessee, Ohio, and Washington, DC as well as associate regional minister in Mid-America in the early 1970s. In 1978, he started a new chapter with the Church Fi-

nance Council as administrative director of reconciliation, where he continued until 1992.

"Dr. Newborn's legacy is unparalleled in our Church and in Reconciliation Ministry," said Rev. April Johnson, Reconciliation Minister. "He taught us the importance of relationship-building in ministry and development of this mission and this mission fund. I pray he is riding his bike in heaven today, rejoicing with the angels and reunited with his cycling buddy, Bill Fox."

Newborn was the fourth director of Reconciliation Ministry, following Revs. John Compton, Thomas Griffin and William Fox.

Dr. Newborn was the first president of the Oldtimers' Grapevine, a retirement gift from Dr. William K. Fox to the church. Ernest served as a member of the editorial board of that publication until called home.

He is survived by his wife Janice, who also worked in several general ministries, a son and a daughter. Memorial arrangements are still in progress.

THE OLDTIMERS' GRAPEVINE

Dear Friend and Reader of the Oldtimers' Grapevine: The board and staff hope that you enjoy reading every edition of our newsletter. It is a labor of love by those who produce it, write for it, and the board that oversees its realization. We are forever grateful for the saints like Dr. William Fox and Oscar Haynes who worked tirelessly to make sure this free publication is available to anyone who desires to receive it.

Of course, there is a cost to produce the Grapevine, but ongoing donations from many faithful donors as-

sure the Grapevine is available to all. The board and staff want to give you the opportunity to provide your own support—at whatever level—to make sure this important newsletter continues.

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OLDTIMERS' GRAPEVINE is a free print and electronic ministry published three 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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Founder

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