Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
1011 North Main Street
Bloomington, IL 61701

The Christian

Summer 2015

A Disciples of Christ (IL-WI Region) Quarterly Publication

Disciples Are Starting New Churches

Since 2001, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) has started 850 new churches in the United States and Canada and the numbers continue to grow! Because of the new church movement, Disciples are spreading the gospel to more than 60,000 individuals, who may not have had a relationship with God. During worship, 28 languages are spoken in Disciples congregations every week. It is a Pentecost movement!

You can join this movement by supporting the Disciples Pentecost Offering, which will be celebrated on Sundays, May 17 and May 24. The Pentecost Offering is a special-day offering that will help Disciples establish 1,000 new congregations by 2020. Each year, the Pentecost Offering supports the Disciples New Church movement by making it possible for the Church to recruit, assess, train and coach new church leaders. One half of the offering is dedicated to each respective Region or Area, while the other half is used by Hope Partnership for Missional Transformation to support new church ministry.

In our Region, Root & Branch Church in Logan Square, Chicago, is doing new church in a new way. They offer "dinner church" and Sunday morning services. They are open, welcoming and thoughtful. Young adults are drawn to a different kind of church experience that meets them where they are and encourages them to grow in the context of a faith community. Lives are being changed and our gifts to the Pentecost offering help this happen! For more information, go to http://www.rootandbranchchurch.org/. This truly is an amazing new Disciples church.

Your gift to the Pentecost Offering is vital to keeping the new church movement alive and thriving. It helps create God's Church, inspire the old to dream and fill the young with vision. Hope Partnership has created a two-minute video that we encourage your church to play on Pentecost Sundays. To access the video and for more information about how you can make a gift to the Pentecost Offering today, visit http://www.hopepmt.org/.



"Good News" Stories



Root and Branch has been a meaningful needed addition in my life and I am grateful for the opportunity to be involved. Your support in the start-up of this church has been so appreciated from this community. I recently moved to the Logan Square area and was looking for a church. I had been involved in many churches of different denominations and I was truly searching for a place where my ideas would be challenged and there are conversation that build me up and remind me of what is truly important. This is a space that has been accepting, accessible and welcoming to everyone and for that we are all so blessed.

Thanks again.
Melissa

First Christian Macomb, IL celebrated the re-dedication of their renovated sanctuary on Sunday, Jan. 25. Over the past year they have seen many improvements in their facility. This was a culmination event for sanctuary, fellowship area, new sign, logo, and renewed energy for outreach. Congratulations to the congregation and their pastor Rev. Kelly Ingersoll.



REGIONAL MINISTER'S MOMENT

Rev. Dr. Teresa Dulyea-Parker

Signs of Life!

Our world is awakening from its winter slumber. It's good to be a witness to the unfolding pattern of spring; the return of red-wing blackbirds, crocus in bloom, daffodils unfolding, farm fields and baseball fields open for business, Easter! Let us be grateful every day for the ability to experience it.

There are fresh signs in our congregations, as well. Glen Oak Christian Church in Peoria just opened a new tiny library for their neighbors. 15th Avenue in Rock Island is partnering with their neighbors to provide mentoring relationships with folks in poverty. Parkway Gardens in Chicago is partnering with their neighboring housing facility to provide safe space for young people throughout the summer. Park Manor is also finding ways to engage young people in the neighborhood in life-giving ways. Galesburg First has just completed a visioning process and they are ready to launch new small groups with an emphasis on mission.

In the Quad Cities, this is what is happening: The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Illinois and Wisconsin is partnering with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Upper Midwest, National Benevolent Association, Eureka College, First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Moline, IL, First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Davenport, IA, and Cedar Memorial (Disciples of Christ) in Davenport, IA to establish a Quad-City XPLOR House beginning in 2015 and running through June 2016. Residents of this house will be engaged in justice ministries through 30 hour per week Residency programs with local social service agencies including: Broadway Presbyterian Church, Quad City Interfaith, St. Joseph Worker House and Breaking Trafficking and 6 hours per week in ministries with the congregational partners; they will be living in community as they explore discipleship principles of simple living and vocational exploration. (Read more in related article.)

We also have refreshing news from our Camping Ministry. We have hired Jared Reno as our Camp Program Coordinator. Jared is working with our Directors and Counselors to provide the very best experience for our young people this summer. Jared is the Associate Minister at Central Christian Church in Jacksonville, IL, and is under care with the region as he pursues Ordination. We welcome Jared to our Ministry Team.

So, in what ways is God's Spirit moving in your life, congregation and ministry? Why not share that Good news for the building up on the body of Christ. It's easy. Go to our website and click on share a Good News story, then tell us your story. Or, if you have an event you want to share with the your partner churches, click on Event Creation and then share your information. Let's continue to join with each other in God's mission for the world.

Blessings, Teresa

Things to know about:

CCIW Summer Camp coming soon! Early registration discount ends on April 30. May 15 is the final deadline.

Ministry Leadership Team will be retreating on June 5-6 to the former FCC, Gurnee facility. And, interspersed in this Christian are thank you notes from our newest church to you! Be blessed.

Prayer Concerns

Health Concerns: Marilyn Merkle, mother of Rev. Nina Merkle Nestlerode;
Sherry, daughter of Rev. Sharon Patton
Rev. Barbara and Don Short

Deaths: Faye Ridgeway, wife of Rev. Don Ridgeway;
Judy Clark, mother of Rev. Dawn Victor;
Rev. Courtney Montgomery Chandler's grandmother;
June Dobson, mother of Rev. Tracy Armstrong;
Sister-in-law of Rev. Robert Sherman;
Rev. Evelyn Hale;
Betty Hershberger, mother-in-law of Rev. Bob Miner
Rev. Harvey Lord
Brother of Rev. Jeff Nielsen
Rev. Robert Bushey's father

Recovering from Surgery:
Rev. Mary Bilew
Rev. Jim Holiman

Pastor Changes

Michael Plezia to Decatur Crestview
Dawn Ingram to UMidwest
Jim Watterman—retiring 5/30
Dwight Bailey to Interim at Aurora Grace
Raymond McLaren to Interim at Lomax
Janet MacLean - Hometown CC
Jennifer Kottler—Geneva Presbyterians
Patrick Chandler to St. Peter's UCC in Ferguson, MO
Tim Davis to First Christian, Bement
Connie Green concluded ministry at Decatur Prairie Avenue
Amy Johnson concludes ministry at Mackinaw CC on 5/10

Regional Clergy Staff

Teresa Dulyea-Parker, Reg. Minister & President	teresa@cciwdisciples.org
Scott Woolridge, Associate Minister	scott@cciwdisciples.org
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Camp Contacts

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Jared Reno	jared @cciwdisciples.org

Regional Moderator

Cheryl Jackson	cpjackson77@att.net

Global Mission Partners
Rev. Angel Luis Rivera-Agosto

Ecumenical Council of Churches in Guatemala
Rev. Dr. Vitalina Similox and Gloria Vincente

Christian Church Foundation Representative

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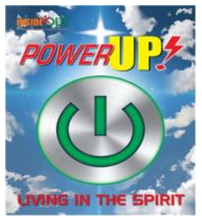
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CCIW OUTDOOR MINISTRIES CAMP DATES FOR 2015



Camp registration ends May 15th. Sign up now for one or more of the many camps offered.

FAMILY WEEKENDS

Church Family Reunion Memorial Day Weekend	*Jane Cahill*	May 22-25
Church Family Reunion Labor Day Weekend	*Jane Cahill*	September 4-7

JUNE

Camp Acts 20:35 (CWS – Work Week)	*Jackie Summers*	June 7-13
CYF (CWS)	*Jim Summers, Amy Gillespie*	June 14-20
JYF (PP)	*Jonathan Grant, Terri Grove*	June 21-27
Grandparents & M3 (CWS)	*Arvil & Jennifer Bass*	June 21-24
Beginners (CWS)	*Ed Taylor, Kris Light*	June 24-27

JULY

Beginners (PP)	*Cecelia Bauer, Courtney Chandler*	June 28-July 1
Chi Rho (PP)	*Randi Grodjesk*	June 28-July 4
~~CYF (PP)~~	*CANCELED*	~~June 28-July 4~~
JYF #1 (CWS)	*Nicole Fauser, Donna Gladson*	July 5-11
Chi Rho #1 (CWS)	*Tracy Armstrong*	July 5-11
Post-High Weekend Retreat	*Tim Akers*	July 24-26
JYF #2 (CWS)	*Rebecca Nevius, Evan Williams*	July 26-August 1
Chi Rho #2 (CWS)	*Jared Reno, Ruth Erickson*	July 26-August 1

CWS – CAMP WALTER SCOTT **PP – PILGRIM PARK**

The **Church Family Reunion Memorial Day Weekend** will be a fun and exciting time for families. Plan now to attend! May 15th is the deadline for registering! Registration forms and additional information can be found on the website www.cciwdisciples.org.

Check the website for the winning **Camp T-Shirt Design!** It is Awesome!

DAILY THEMES

Power Up with the Promise of Peace
Power Up and Celebrate the Spirit
Power Up to Imitate Christ
Power Up with the Fruit of the Spirit
Power Up as One Community
Power Up with Courage
Power Up for Peace Wherever You Go

New Day 2016 - Congregational Transformation in CCIW

Picture a transforming church for the 21st Century – faithful, healthy, life-changing, nimble, outwardly-focused – living out God's vision in the congregation and in the community.

New Day 2016 is an offering of the Regional church to help congregations create an atmosphere open to God's transforming power. Together we pray, we listen to God, we take risks, we experiment with new ideas, we let go, and we focus on ministry opportunities outside and inside the congregation.

We are on a spiritual journey and God is guiding our path. Our current reality might be marked with decline and frustration. If we will invest in deepening our relationship with God and one another, new perspectives can be opened. A vision of God's next chapter for us can be revealed. We have the courage to try something new and learn from our experiences. New opportunities and new ideas come to us. New energy feeds the life of the community and the church. We see what can emerge in our ministry context and who we are created to be.

It's not about a dying church; it's about new life and a commitment to a change for the better. For many of us, the old way is not working. We have lower worship attendance and lower giving in the offering plate. It's time for something better! When we tap into God's loving power, things change. Lives change. Commitments change. Churches change. Again, it's change in a positive direction – one we can handle, one that can bring us joy.

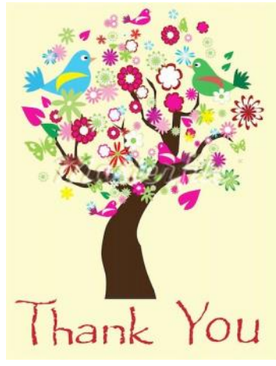
New Day is a new approach to congregational transformation. Driven by deeper spirituality, enriching partnership and ongoing support, churches find their path to a faithful future. This is not a cookie cutter program. Each congregation has its own journey of transformation. There will be training retreats for church leaders to get the process started, monthly coaching calls for the ministers, and follow-up events to hear about progress and offer more resources. Congregations with similar interests and similar callings can work together. The Regional church is making a huge commitment to help with congregational transformation.

Want to join in this partnership? Want to know more? Go to http://cciwdisciples.org/2014/10/new-day-2016/ or contact Scott Woolridge – scott@cciwdisciples.org



2015 General Assembly is coming!

The 2015 General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is set for July 18-22 in Columbus, Ohio and planning is well underway. If you've been before, you'll find a bounty of new worship experiences and learning tracks. If you've never been, there is a website with a wealth of information, including a page just for you. Go to ga.disciples.org to see the schedule, workshop offerings and register online. See you in Columbus!



CCIW,

Thank you for supporting Root & Branch Church. For the past few years I assumed church was no longer an option. Church didn't seem to be a place I could go without sacrificing vital parts of myself. The spiritual boost from church didn't seem to be worth the loss.

Root & Branch surprised me by being a church community brimming with opportunities for growth while allowing me to bring all parts of myself to the community. Thank you for supporting such a refreshing community; your support has given the church back to me.

Deep gratitude,
Lee

XPLOR comes to Quad Cities

In 2014, initial conversations were held between the National Benevolent Association (NBA), the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Illinois and Wisconsin (CCIW), the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Upper Midwest (Upper Midwest), congregations in the Quad Cities, key disciples leaders in the community and Eureka College. Out of these conversations a covenantal partnership evolved that has led to the establishment of the Quad City XPLOR House. The Quad City XPLOR House is a partnership ministry providing a 10 month intensive residential experiences for young adults as they work in local social service agencies and worship in local Disciples congregations.

At the heart of the NBA XPLOR program is the desire to cultivate a heart of care in young adults. Part of the way that NBA does this is to "embed" young adults with congregations that are already committed to accompanying their neighbors and have a passion for coming alongside young adults as they consider the deep connections between faith and life. In these communities the Residents can explore their faith and develop their leadership abilities, develop hearts for justice and discern how to focus their life's works on faith and justice. Living in a small and diverse community, Residents are supported as they seek to cultivate sustaining spiritual practices, develop professional skills and leadership potential, and discern how and where their relationship with God calls them to their best potential which in turn can be transformative for communities, congregations, and the lives of the Residents.

Residents –
The project is directed to 21 – 30 year olds who hail from Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and United Church of Christ congregations who seek an extended residential experience during which deep spiritual reflection, communal living and hands-on service will help them explore God's call on their lives. The Residents are provided opportunity for hands-on service with social service agencies in the community. Identified Residency sights for the Quad City include: Broadway Presbyterian Church, Quad City Interfaith, Breaking Trafficking, and St Joseph's Worker House. These agencies address issues of food insecurity, victims of human trafficking, job discrimination as they serve the homeless, the poor and minorities within the Quad Cities.

The XPLOR experience can be considered an unbridled success:
When our XPLOR Residents find a deeper understanding of their call as faithful children of God
When our congregations and partner ministries discover wisdom to share as well as something to learn from our XPLOR Residents
When our service sites and the people they care for find support and hope through the energy and innovation of the XPLOR Residents – and vice versa.

Thank You!!

CCIW,

Your continued support for the Root and Branch community is invaluable for our church and so I am writing to express my gratitude; but also what the existence and growth of this church has meant to me. A little over a year ago, I met Neil and started attending services. As someone who grew up nonreligious, I first was unsure whether something called "church" could really be a place for me, or whether I would be welcomed. But what I found has been profound for my life in Chicago and for my spiritual growth; I was more than welcomed and really feel a part of this community, through music and dinners and conversations both personal, philosophical, and theological. What R&B does is utterly unique in the world: the space they create is one I never imagined could exist, and I'm so glad it does. I look forward to the growth of this community, which I believe is absolutely the future of humanity. Thank you for your support of this church plant!

Catherine

NEWS FROM THE GENERAL CHURCH

Mission First

It's likely your faith community has done some visioning in the last few years. The general expression of the Church is doing the same. As the year 2020 nears, it is time to listen for God's continuing call and to seek together where God is calling Disciples next in our shared mission and ministry.

Addressing the 2014 General Board, General Minister and President Sharon Watkins set out a challenge: "The time has come to lighten our load and tighten our focus - on mission! I am inviting our church, in all its expressions, to join in a conversation on God's mission for Disciples today."

Since General Board, a group of Disciples from many professional and cultural backgrounds has been meeting about just how to find this new focus. They will present a proposal called Mission First! to the General Board in April 2015. The proposal will include a call to mission and a pilot model for helping us identify a common direction in mission. If the General Board approves the process outlined, we will discuss it further in Columbus at the General Assembly.

Mission First! addresses the need to find a new shared focus in mission. We are not setting aside pro-reconciliation/anti-racism, new and transforming churches or leadership development. **Mission First!** seeks to help Disciples identify the next mission priorities God has for us as we move toward the year 2020 and beyond.

At the heart of this process are Mission Gatherings where we hope you and your leaders will participate in sharing what your congregation is passionate about doing in the mission field. These gatherings may take place at your 2016 regional or racial/ethnic assemblies or at camp or other places where Disciples gather. A Church-wide Mission Council will receive the information from the gatherings and identify a mission focus for a specified time.

Moving forward in this way would call for reorganization of our general church governance structures, so Watkins is asking for a provisional try - a trial run up until 2017. Based on what we learn, we would anticipate making some permanent changes at the 2017 assembly.

Reflections from General Minister & President, Rev. Dr. Sharon E. Watkins

Dear Disciples,

The General Board has determined that the 2017 General Assembly should take place in Indianapolis "as a continued witness for wholeness".

Two weeks ago, the board authorized a move away from Indianapolis due to a new Indiana law called The Religious Freedom Restoration Act (SEA101 or RFRA). This law raised concern that some of our members and friends might not be welcome in Indiana businesses.

Following a groundswell of opposition to the bill – including our own action to move our assembly – the concerns raised by the General Board have been addressed. **SEA101 has now been amended so that it cannot be used to open a new door to discrimination**. There is a newly invigorated statewide understanding that Indiana needs improved laws and ordinances protecting all people from discrimination. **Disciples will be part of that movement – a clear voice of faith.**

The events around the Indiana RFRA have left some feeling bewildered and even hurt. The first stand was a bold move against discrimination in the guise of religious freedom. There is concern that the second decision undermines that bold stand. Locating our assembly in Indianapolis, now that our concerns have been addressed, positions us more strongly as a moral voice in the movement for equal protection under the law for all.

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) will continue to advocate for wholeness and dignity for all people. We are a church of an open table where all are welcome in Christ's name.

Indianapolis is now a more welcoming place for all our assembly-goers than it was when we originally decided on Indianapolis for our 2017 site.

My prayer is that through our presence and action, our church and our communities will be stronger representatives of God's love for all people. May the power of the risen Christ be in us all for life and love in Jesus' name.

Sharon E. Watkins, General Minister and President